

# LAOIS - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Clopook Cave</b>		
Other names used for site			
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Clopook</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Stradbally</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>19</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>658300E 690770N</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.</b>	<b>16</b>

## **Outline Site Description**

A small cave is situated in the side of a possible relict karst tower.

## **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The cave is in Carboniferous Limestone rock, in the Clogrenan Formation which is the youngest part of the limestone sequence. The age of the cave is unknown but may be older than the immediate post glacial period of the last 10,000 years (Holocene).

## **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

This cave is neither long nor remarkable but is a relict of the broader landscape evolution of the Stradbally area. This is one of very few caves in Laois, despite the widespread bedrock of Carboniferous limestone. It is found on the flank of Clopook Hill, which is one of many hills in the area between Portlaoise and Stradbally that are widely believed to be tower hums. Hums is a term for remnant or degraded tower karst, of the type found today in China and SE Asia. The Ice Age would have removed most evidence of this, leaving only remnant hills such as Clopook Hill. The cave could date back to an interglacial period or even older. There is no active stream flow, so it formed under an entirely different hydrogeological regime and is now a 'fossil' or inactive cave. The shape of the open passage suggests that it was originally a large phreatic (i.e. water filled) cave passage, perhaps 5-10m wide. It is filled today, nearly to the roof, with earth and sediment. There is some potential for evidence preserved in this sedimentary infill that would give clues about the landscape that has disappeared from above.

## **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

This site is one of only three caves known in Laois and is important as a County Geological Site for its association with a hum, and potential landscape development information.

## **Management/promotion issues**

The cave is on private farmland and should not be visited without the permission of the landowner. It is of no interest to sport cavers, being so short and inactive. It is not suited to promotion as it is low and muddy, without stalactites or stalagmites and is possibly home to some mammals.



The entrance to Clopook Cave.



Animal burrows in the floor of the cave earth.



The entrance to Clopook Cave viewed from the inside looking out.



The limestone hill of Clopook, with the woods hiding the steep cliff or escarpment around the whole hill.



# Cloppook Cave, Co. Laois.

Survey: J. Dowds, S. Dowds, S. Mossop.

