

# LAOIS - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Poulastore</b>		
Other names used for site	Poulashore, Poulastare		
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Killone, Kilmurry, Ballythomas</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Stradbally</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>14</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>655211E 700974N</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.</b>	<b>15</b>

## **Outline Site Description**

A cave situated in the top of Killone Hill.

## **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 is one of very few caves in Laois, despite the widespread bedrock of Carboniferous limestone. It is found almost at the top of Killone Hill, which is one on 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 Killone 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.

Early descriptions of this cave tend to strongly exaggerate the size and danger, but one from 1794 is interesting in describing "the most brilliant scene ever exhibited by nature, or described in fairy tale; the sides, roof and every pointed rock, are instantly covered with festoons and bouquets of pearls, diamonds, rubies, and every other precious stone, in full oriental splendour, caused by the drops of water issuing from the calcareous rocks; though there are no incrustations to be seen." The phenomenon is one that cavers will have seen in some caves where the drops of water combine with certain algae to give bright silver and other glistening reflections to their head torches. A 1965 description by Jack Coleman in his book 'The Caves of Ireland' also describes "fungoid structures" in the deepest chamber.

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

This cave merits inclusion as a County Geological Site in Laois, simply from its rarity. It may have importance as evidence of ancient landscapes but has not been studied.

## **Management/promotion issues**

The cave is on private farmland and unsuitable for promotion and there should be no access without landowner permission. The cave also provides its own restriction on access as after about 10m the further reaches are only accessible through a very tight muddy squeeze. Only experienced cavers in recognised groups should consider seeking landowner permission.



The entrance to Poulastore.

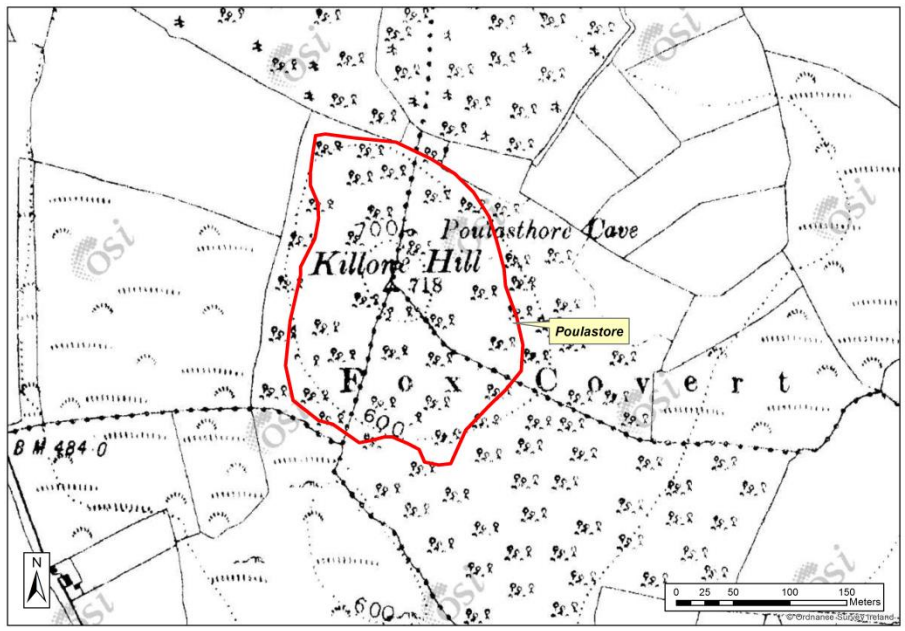
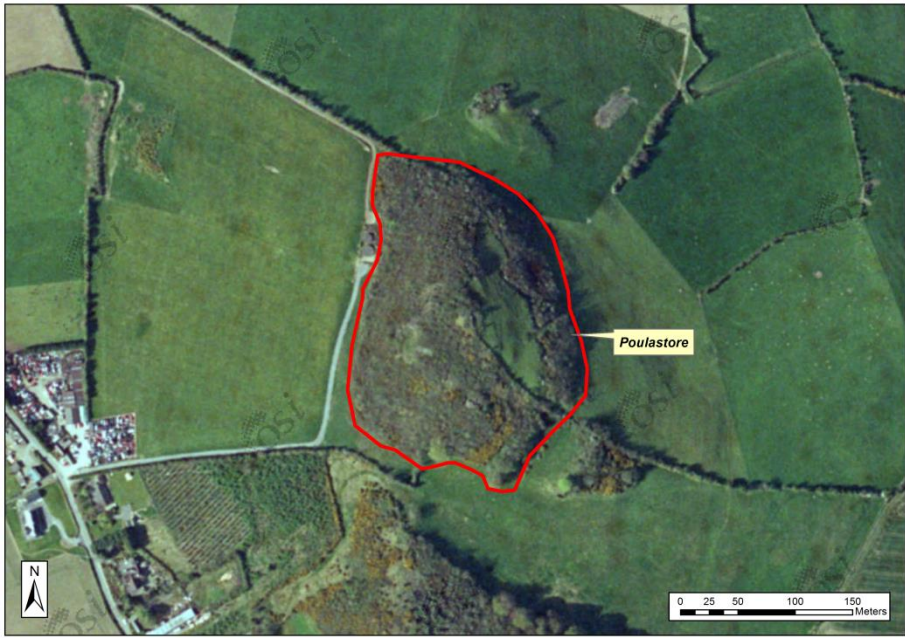
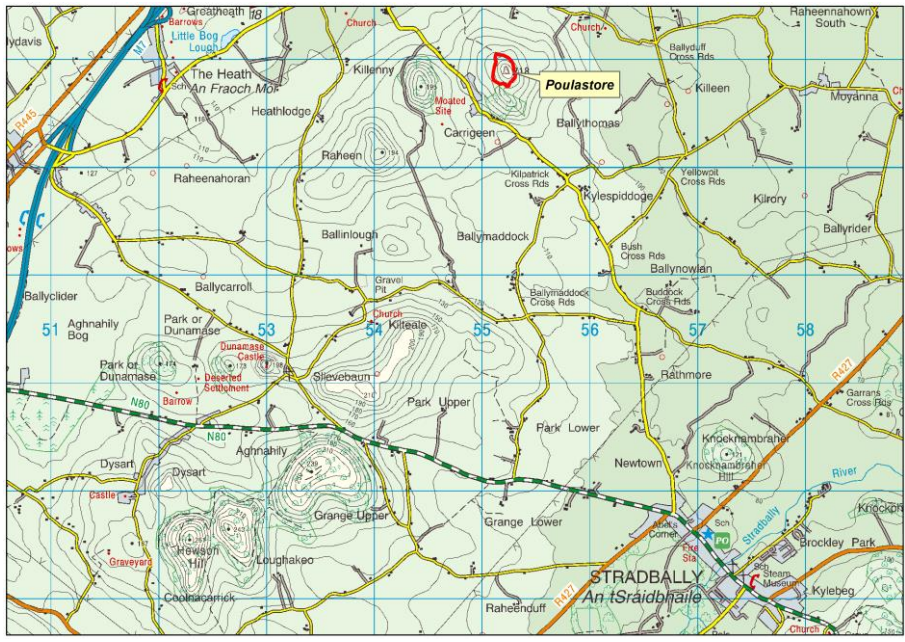


Killone Hill viewed from the north east side.



Gold coloured reflections from algae with water droplets.





# Poulastore, Co. Laois

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

