

## Cave

In Ireland, caves are confined to areas of limestone, which accounts for approximately 50% of the underlying geology of the country. Of the 700 or so recorded caves in the Republic of Ireland, 65 occur in Cork, the county containing the fourth highest number of caves (Drew 2004). This includes a number of important palaeontological sites and ten caves of archaeological significance. In all instances, the archaeological material was discovered prior to 1950 and the surviving excavation records are frequently poor. However, the evidence is consistent with the overall picture of how caves were used by prehistoric and historic peoples throughout Ireland. The lithics from Foley Cave (Power *et al.* 2000, 9809) and Carrigagour Cave (Power *et al.* 1994, 4287) suggest short-term occupation or shelter in prehistory. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the human remains from Connaberry Cave C (Power *et al.* 2000, 9807) and Killavullen Cave 3 (*ibid.*, 9806) reflect ritual activity of Neolithic date, possibly excarnation or token deposition. The Knockane Cave burial (also known as Castlemartyr Cave and Carrigacrump Cave) (Power *et al.* 1994, 6348) is one of a limited number of rich Early Bronze Age burials in Ireland. Park North Cave (*ibid.*, 4288), and to a lesser extent Carrigagour Cave, illustrate the use of caves during the early medieval period as places of habitation by lower status individuals. A human bone from Main Earth Cave (Power *et al.* 2000, 9808) has been radiocarbon-dated to the late medieval period and may reflect an individual who met an untimely death—whether accidental or by violent means. Human bones have also been recovered from Castlekevin Cave (17176), Ovens Cave (Power *et al.* 1997, 9431) and Killavullen Cave 4 (Power *et al.* 2000, 9805), but in the absence of radiocarbon dating it is difficult to interpret what the remains represent.

### 17176 CASTLEKEVIN

OS 25:16:3 (870,100) Not indicated OD 200–300  
162771, 101857 (ITM 562729, 601913)

*Cave* On 27 August 1934 the team that excavated the Killavullen caves at Ballymacmoy conducted investigations at 'Killura cave, 1½ miles [2.4km] NW of Killavullen' (unpublished records, NMI). No caves are indicated on the various editions of the OS 6-inch maps, sheets 25 and 26, in Killuragh townland, which is approximately 1.5 miles to the NW of Killavullen. However, a cave is indicated on

the 1st ed. OS 6-inch map (sheet 25) in the neighbouring townland of Castlekevin, c. 80m N of the boundary of Killuragh townland. It is quite likely that this cave in Castlekevin was the one that was investigated in 1934 and that the townland was mistakenly referred to as 'Killura'. No written records survive of the investigation, but three human bones that were found in the cave—fragments of a cranium, humerus and metacarpal, representing one adult—are located in the NMI.

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