

CAVE NOTES: COUNTY CLARE, IRELAND

by

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I

INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the previous Cave Notes: County Clare (Boycott and Wilson, 1986) there have been further discoveries in County Clare which are documented below.

The caves are grouped geographically in an order corresponding to the Chapters in Caves of County Clare (Self, 1981), and are listed alphabetically within each group, except for the Doolin Point Green Holes, which are described from south to north (as on Figure 1), and the sites shown on the area maps of the Knockavoarheen Ridge (Figure 6) and Northwest Slieve Elva (Figure 4).

The grid references refer to the distance in centimetres east and north respectively from the southwest corner of the relevant 1:10560 series maps. The Green Holes can be located on sheet 8A, published with sheet 14; grid references on this sheet are measured from the south west corner of the inset sheet 8A and not the south west corner of sheet 14. A convenient point of reference is the tower on Crab Island; Clare 8A, E17.25, N25.15.

New sites are listed with alternative names and townland (Td.), and length, depth and altitude where appropriate. These are given for previously known sites only where a change has occurred.

DOOLIN POINT GREEN HOLES

Over the past four years there have been several expeditions to investigate the submarine caves of the Doolin Harbour area, as well as numerous dives by local cavers. These have resulted in much confusion and debate as to the discoverers of the various passages and also a proliferation of names. No attempt is made here to attribute passages to particular discoverers or expeditions, but all published entrance names are included. The references are taken from the most comprehensive descriptions, not necessarily the original ones. All these sites are in Td. Ballaghaine. Three general references to these sites are Jones (1988b) and The Green Holes Expedition Reports (Anon 1986 and 1987). These sites form four groups: the Reef Caves (Figure 1, 1-6) which have a connected length of 255 m; the Hell Complex (Figure 1, 7-11) with 500 m of passage; Mermaids Hole (Figure 1, 12-14) which is the longest of the known Green Holes; and Urchin Caves (Figure 1, 15). Poll Ballaghaine and the Dig Beyond Hell are not submarine caves but are included in the appropriate groupings based on their location. The numbers given in brackets after each name refer to the numbering on the site map of the Doolin harbour area (Figure 1).

The Reef Caves

HARBOUR HOLE (1)

Grid Reference: Clare 8a, E19.9, N26.8

The left hand branch of the T-junction at the end of this cave has been connected via a 75 m dive to Robertson's Cave (5) (Judd, 1986).

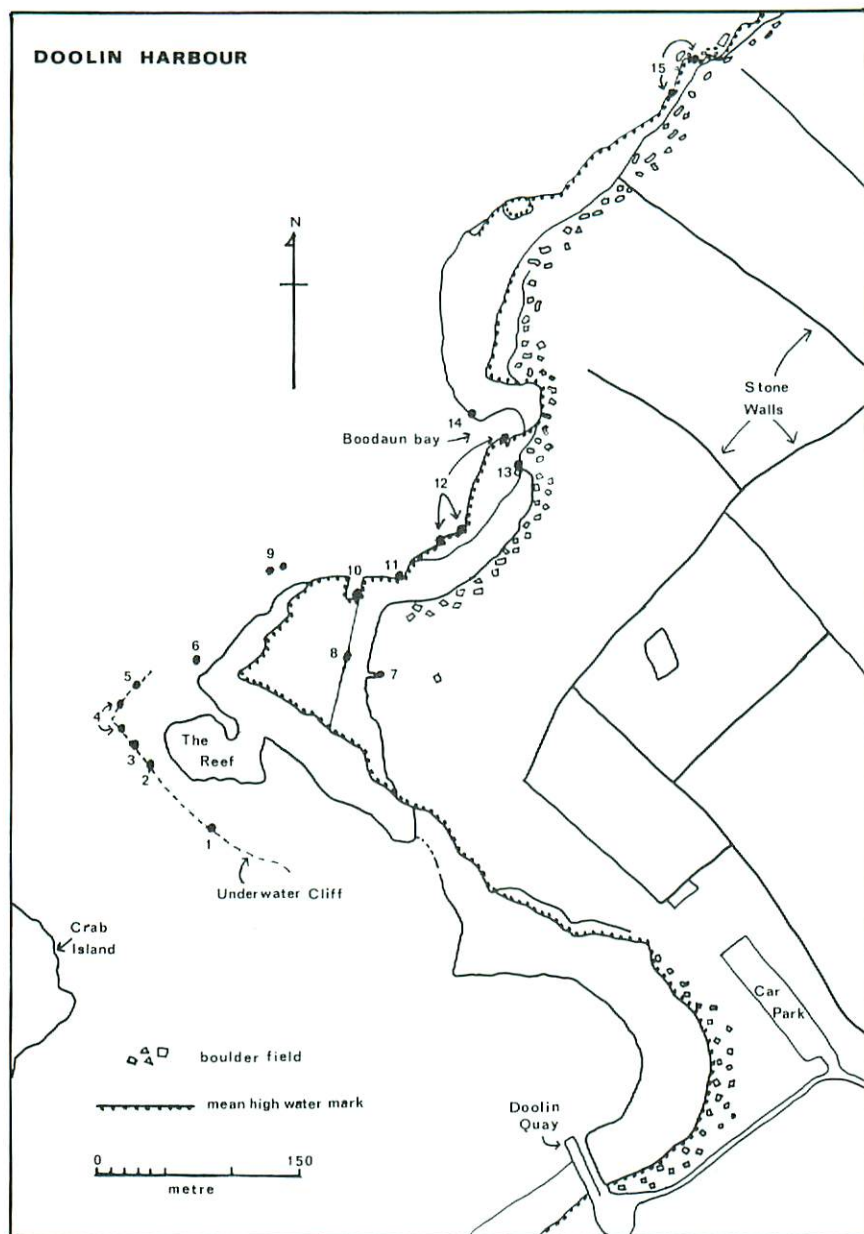


Figure 1. Location Map of the Doolin Harbour area. The numbered sites are: 1, Harbour Hole; 2, Chert Ledge Cave; 3, Lobster Pot; 4, Through Cave; 5, Robertson's Cave; 6, J.B. Entrance; 7, The Dig Beyond Hell; 8, Hell; 9, Sian and Sarah's Teashop; 10, Pol na Mongach; 11, Bedding Cave; 12, Mermaid's Hole; 13, Poll Ballaghaine; 14, Hot Tip Cave; 15, Urchin Cave.

ROBERTSON'S CAVE (5)

Alternative name Neil Robertson's Cave

Grid Reference: Clare 8a, E18.6, N27.5

Altitude -15 m

The entrance is 20 m north east of Through Cave (4) and is partially blocked by a large boulder. A passage 2 m square leads after 15 m to a junction which closes down to the right; a passage to the left closes down after 10 m (Jones, 1988b).

LOBSTER POT (3)

Grid Reference: Clare 8a, E18.6, N27.2

Altitude -15 m

The entrance lies between Through Cave (4) and Chert Ledge Cave (2). This cave connects to Through Cave, Robertson's Cave (5) and Chert Ledge Cave (Judd, 1987a and Jones, 1987c).

The Hell Complex

In this section, grid references of the entrances are listed as they occur in the description. The total length of this system is approximately 500 m. An alternative name for this complex is the Isca Silurum Tunnels (Adams, 1986, 1987a, 1987b).

POL NA MONGACH (10)

Alternative names Polluck Hole, Fogg's Hole

Grid Reference : Clare 8A, E20.0, N28.35

This has been dived to the surface in the enlarged inland joint known as HELL (8, Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E19.5, N27.6), and also connects with BEDDING CAVE (11, Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E20.25, N28.4), via a tight squeeze. The passage continues inland to the east, past Bedding Cave, to an area of breakdown followed by two squeezes. This area has been named C.J.'s Despair, and appears to be a very large passage filled with cobbles (M. Paganuzzi, pers comm. 1990).

A passage, 1.5 m high by 2.5 m wide immediately inside Pol na Mongach (Spider Crab Crawl) leads after 60 m to a double entrance, SIAN AND SARAH'S TEASHOP (9, Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E19.6, N28.4)

Midway between Pol na Mongach and the surface in Hell is a junction named the Crossroads. East leads after 40 m to Bedding Cave and C.J.'s Despair. The passage to the west (Anemone Arcade) is 3 m square and leads to a small chamber with daylight visible through an entrance which is too tight to pass. A junction half way along Anemone Arcade to the south leads via Sherpa Causeway to J.B. ENTRANCE (6, Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E19.0, N27.9) Two crawls on the north side of Anemone Arcade connect back to Sian and Sarah's Teashop. A passage leading south off Sherpa Causeway (Brittlestar Boulevard) leads after 60 m to a boulder chamber 12 m wide by 2 m high (The Honeypot). There is a tight oxbow (Urchin Oxbow) on the east side of Brittlestar Boulevard. A low passage (Rats Persuasion) leads from The Honeypot back towards J.B. Entrance (6); daylight can be seen but not reached.

THE DIG BEYOND HELL (7)

Alternative names The Cave of the Fish Smell, The Cape,

Buffalo's Personal Stereo

Grid Reference: Clare 8a, E20.0, N27.7

Td. Ballaghaine

Length 8 m Altitude 5 m

A pile of boulders on the platform 10 m east of Hell was moved to allow access to a small passage 1.5 m wide by 0.5 m high, which chokes in cobbles and silt (Barter and Wilkins, 1989). It appears that the boulders blocking the entrance are periodically rearranged by the sea, as this cave has been "discovered" on two further occasions (Irish Diaries, 1989, Mullan, 1990b, and C.C. Smart, pers. comm. 1990).

Mermaids Hole Area

MERMAID'S HOLE (12)

Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E20.75, N29.10 (Main/South Entrance)

Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E21.0, N29.4 (North Entrance)

Length approx. 1000 m Altitude -10 m

Mermaid's Hole has been extended to permanent airspace and a short streamway with a fresh water stream. A third entrance has been found on the south side of Boodaun Bay, which connects with the main passage 30 m from the entrance.

The main way on is found 30 m from the Main Entrance by following the bedding cave on the south side of the passage. This has been followed for 300 m from the entrance to a junction. The left hand passage surfaces after a further 170 m in a well decorated airbell. This is followed by a further airbell and a muddy chamber, 3 m square, named Pirate's Paradise (Adams, 1987a and b). A very muddy streamway can be followed for 60 m to a silt and boulder choke which has been passed to a further 18 m of walking passage (Fool's Paradise) ending in a mud choke. This appears to be a side passage.

The main passage continues from the junction to a further junction 330 m from the entrance. The left hand passage has been followed to air surface at a point 760 m from the entrance (Judd, 1988). From here, 30 m of air filled passage, Pooka's Peril, has been explored. There is an underwater continuation to the sump at 750 m. At 500 m a small side passage has been explored for about 10 m. The right hand passage at 330 m has been followed for a further 50 m. It is very low and silty and does not take much flow (M. Paganuzzi, pers. comm. 1990).

An archway on the north side of the main passage 100 m from the entrance has been followed for 60 m to air surface in a 3 m wide chamber with 3 m deep water. A low passage can be seen leading off at roof level but has not yet been entered. This area has been named Quiet Waters (M. Paganuzzi, pers. comm. 1990).

An electromagnetic survey has been carried out on the surface above the cave which corroborates the position of the known passage (Jones, 1989d).

POLL BALLAGHALINE (13)

Alternative name High Water

Grid Reference; Clare 8a, E21.3, N29.1

Td. Ballaghaline

Length 81 m Depth 7 m Altitude 5 m

The entrance is located on the lowest terrace, 20 m south of Boodaun Bay at the base of a boulder pile. A 5 m deep free-climbable rift leads via a squeeze to 80 m of cave passage (Figure 2), which is totally submerged at high tide. The entrance acts as a blow hole in rough weather. From the squeeze, a short crawl over boulders leads down a slope to walking sized passage. To the right, a rift 5 m high by 1 m wide ends after 7 m in a deep sump pool. This passage contains a stalagmite bridge at head height. A squeeze leads into a parallel rift, which chokes to the west and sumps to the east.

The original rift chokes after 20 m, beyond a boulder squeeze. A smaller parallel rift to the east chokes in boulders at one end and becomes too tight at the other (Irish Diaries, 1990, Wilkins, 1990). The sumps in this cave are close to the surveyed passage in Mermaid's Hole.

HOT TIP CAVE (14)

Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E20.6, N30.4

Length 30 m Altitude -10 m

A low, tortuous and uninspiring water-filled passage can be followed on a bearing of 330 degrees until it becomes too tight (Judd, 1987a).

URCHIN CAVE (15)

Alternative name Poulcaoen

Grid Reference: Clare 8A, E22.1, N31.8

Td. Doonmacfelim

Length 400 m Altitude 0 m

The entrance is located at the foot of a 6 m cliff, behind large boulders and is submerged at high tide (Jones, 1987b, Judd, 1987a and 1988). However, at low tide the cave can be explored for 150 m. The entrance is 10 m wide and 1.5 m high and leads to a low bedding plane, 10 m wide and 30 m long.

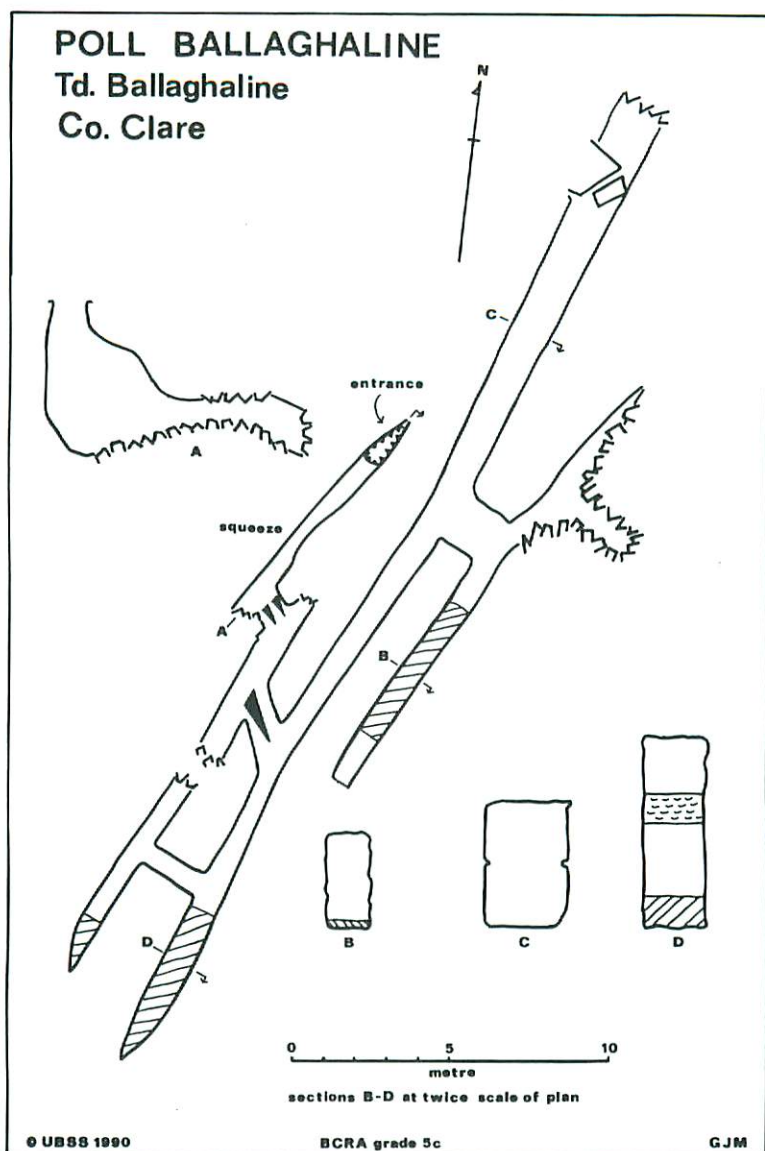


Figure 2. Survey of Poll Ballaghaline.

On the right hand side of the entrance, after 12 m, a small passage 1 m square leads to a chamber, 2 m high and 5 m wide with three exits to daylight visible at low tide (Figure 3).

At the end of the entrance passage, the floor lowers and a larger cross passage is reached, which chokes to the left in a massive sand slope. The right hand branch is a phreatic tunnel, 4 m high and 3 m wide. After 15 m, this passage turns to the left and passes a sump pool on the seaward side, this leads to a permanently flooded oxbow to the main passage with two impassable connections to daylight. There is also a flooded side passage on the landward side, which can be followed for 50 m. After following the main passage for a further 35 m, daylight can be seen through an impassable bedding plane. The passage continues over a boulder floor for 20 m and is now 5 m wide and 1 m high. This section is flooded at normal low tide, but at very low spring tides it is possible to reach

a low entrance in the Laminaria zone at the base of the cliff. The cave contains a wealth of marine life, including numerous large sea urchins, sea cucumbers, anemones and small crustaceans.

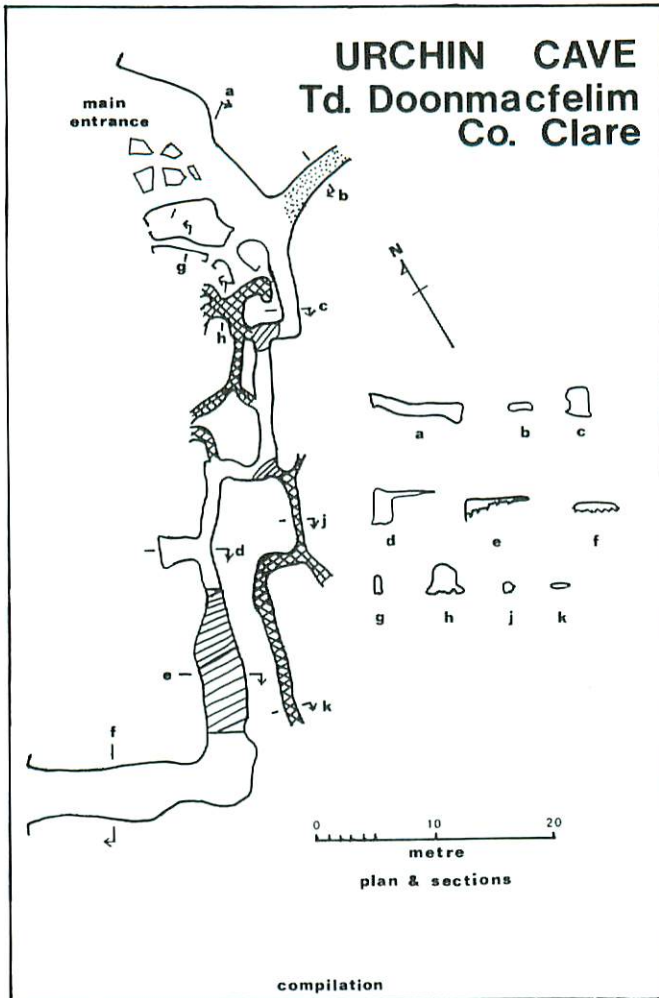


Figure 3. Survey of Urchin Cave compiled from several sources.

THE WEST COAST

COAST ROAD SPRINGS

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E24.O, N20.8

Td. Crumlin

Length 8 m and 2 m Depth 0 m Altitude 30 m

There are two small springs by the roadside to the north of Poulsallagh Bay. Both are too small to enter: the most northerly extends for 8 m in a low bedding cave and tiny canyon, the other is about 2 m long (Irish Diaries, May 1988).

GLASHA MORE (S9)

Grid Reference: Clare 8.E13.0, N54.5

Td. Glasha More

Length 30 m Altitude -5 m

The bay here has been searched for underwater cave entrances and 30 m of truncated phreatic passage explored (Judd, 1987a).

POLLTEERGONEAN

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E1.4, N36.5

Td. Teergonean

Length 8 m and 6 m Altitude 15 m

A small cliff, 4 m high and 150 m long, 130 m from the sea and 500 m north east of Poulcraveen contains a series of remnant caves. The base of the cliff shows evidence of old eroded cave wall with some phreatic pendants and scalloping. There are three short caves. The southernmost is a choked canyon passage with bedding plane roof 1 m wide and 0.5 m high this was dug out for 4 m to a boulder blockage and smells strongly of fox. The second, 20m north and halfway up the cliff has a 2 m high entrance, partially walled off to keep animals out, and leads after 4 m to a cobbled choke. This was dug for a further 4 m to a small chamber 1 m in diameter, floored with mud and recent animal bones. This appears to connect with a choked entrance in the cliff 5 m south. The third, 5 m north is a 1 m by 0.3 m bedding plane which smelt strongly of badger and so was not dug (Irish Diaries, May 1987 and July 1974).

POULGORM

Alternative name Blue Hole

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E57.7, N53.7.

Td. Craggagh

Altitude 0 m

This is a small bay with a fresh water resurgence and an impenetrable fissure accessible only at low tide (Irish Diaries, July 1960).

S1a

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E20.2, N10.4

Td. Ballyryan

Length 6 m Altitude 10 m.

100 m north of Pollsallagh is a 5 m deep cleft in the cliffs containing a remnant phreatic tube, 1 m by 1.5 m, passable for 6 m to a choke of glacial fill. The end of the cave is 0.5 m below the surface. The south side of the open cleft appears to be cave wall (Irish Diaries, Easter 1972).

THE SLUGGAGH

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E18, N2.0 approx.

Td. Ballyryan

Altitude -12m

Off the coast by the Coolagh resurgence (S3), is an area where fresh water wells up through the sand on the sea bed, 12 m down. This has been dived by Brian Judd but no cave was apparent (N. Johnson, pers. comm. 1989).

WESTERN KNOCKAUNS MOUNTAIN

POULNAGREE (A3a)

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E54.1, N26.5

Td. Crumlin

Length 1385 m

In Caves of North West Clare (Tratman, 1969), due to a misreading of the survey data, Tributary 2 was placed on the wrong side of the main passage. Self (1981) corrects this but has wrongly combined this with the decorated aven. The latter is in fact opposite the start of the roof traverse. Tributary 2 is on the west side of the passage and 50 m upstream from the start of the roof traverse. This inlet has been dug by the Galway Potholing Club (Gibson, 1988 and 1990; Jones 1988a) to reveal 70 m of small passage ending in a gravel choke. Further additions are another small inlet and a very narrow oxbow 10 m long, both on the right, between Tributary 2 and the phreatic section (Mullan, 1989a).

A muddy tube on the north side of the passage, 5 m downstream from the inlet sump has been

pushed for 10 m through a U-tube squeeze to a muddy, east-west rift. This chokes immediately to the east, and can be followed for 10 m west up a 2 m climb to a mud choke (J. Griffiths, pers. comm. 1988).

THE DOOLIN VALLEY

DOOLIN CAVE (D7)

Grid Reference: Clare 8,E28.4, N32.4

Td. Glasha Beg

The complex of passages around the Smithy area has been radiolocated and a survey of it in relation to the surface stream and sinks (Doolin Road Sink) was drawn in 1989. A recently opened passage between Smithy Oxbow and Smithy Grotto was found to be collapsed, the whole area is very unstable and the climb up to Smithy Grotto is best avoided (Mullan, 1989c). During the winter of 1989/90, a new upstream sink developed, 5 m downstream from the junction with the stream from the culvert, which now takes the whole flow in normal conditions. The sink is a slot in limestone, 2 m long, 2 m deep, 20cm wide and is impassable (Irish Diaries, May 1990).

NORTH WEST SLIEVE ELVA

A surface survey has been carried out by members of this Society from the point where the townland boundary between Coolmeen and Ballyelly crosses the green road, to E1. All karst sites have been noted on the accompanying map (Figure 4), regardless of whether they have any potential importance. The sites are numbered 1 to 27 and are all in Td. Ballyelly (Irish Diaries, 1987, 1988 and 1989).

1. A sink in a narrow grike under a corner of the wall.
- 2A. Open grike, 1 m long, 10 cm wide, 2 m deep.
- 2B. Bridged grike, 1.3 m deep.
3. An open hole, 1.5 m square, beside a vertical slab, chokes in an earth and rock floor. a stream sinks into this in wet weather from the marshy ground from the west.
- 4A. A 2.5 m deep hole with mud and rocks at the bottom.
- 4B. A small stream sinks between two rocks.
5. A grassy hollow contains a hole 0.3 m by 1 m, 2 m deep with a rock floor and fluted rock sides, too tight to enter.
6. A muddy pool, with an animal hole and a choked sink, 1 m deep.
7. An oblong hole, 1 m wide, 2 m long and 3 m deep, in an area of damp ground with run off water sinking into it, drops into a small chamber, 3 m wide with an impenetrable canyon at either end and a choked bedding plane at the bottom. The flow is north west. The hole contains some animal bones.
8. A sink 0.5 m deep at the end of a line of clints.
9. A hole, 1 m deep, under an overhanging clint at the edge of a boggy area, chokes in boulders.
10. Water sinks from an area of boggy ground into a tiny choked sink, 0.5 m deep.
11. A partially unroofed canyon 0.5 m deep, bridged by rocks to form three sections is located at the end of a large flat area of clints.
12. A round collapse in an area of boggy ground leads to a 2 m long hole possibly an animal den.
13. A grassy hollow forms a sink in wet weather.
14. A large boulder slab roofs over a section of canyon passage, 1 m deep which has an impassable bedding plane at the bottom.
15. In wet weather water sinks into a round collapsed pit. In 1987 and 1988, a cow skull was visible at the bottom. This is now covered by further earth from the sides of the hole.
16. A partially unroofed canyon, 2 m deep and 10 m long chokes in boulders.
17. A hollow forms a stream sink in wet weather.
18. An unroofed canyon passage, 2 m deep, under an overgrown boulder in a grassy hollow, chokes in rock.

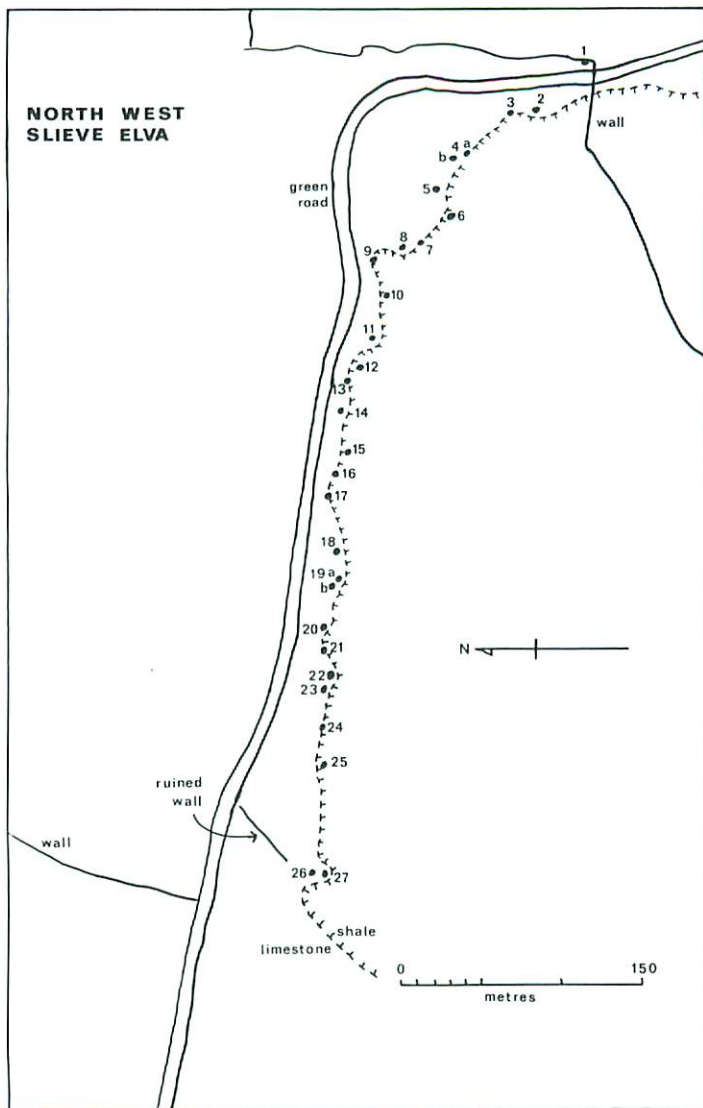


Figure 4. Location Map of North West Slieve Elva, showing numbered sites listed in the text.

- 19A. A stream sinks under a large flat slab at the end of a line of clints, beneath a low, widely spreading willow bush. The canyon passage at the northern end is too tight to follow.
- 19B. A stream sinks from a muddy channel under boulders.
- 20. A 2 m deep, open grike, 3 m long and 15 cm wide.
- 21. A 10 m long unroofed canyon, beside a willow tree has a bedding plane duck at either side of a pool.
- 22. Poll an Tobar Fifth Entrance. A 4 m long, 0.5 m deep unroofed canyon, contains a stone statue of the Virgin Mary, believed to have been placed there between May 1987 and May 1988. It was labelled 'Holy Well' in red paint, at the same time and is now marked from the track with a direction arrow. Numerous coins and small offerings have been placed here.

This site is labelled Toberanahircallough on the Ordnance Survey map and Tobar an Athar Calbach on T.D. Robinson's tourist map of the Burren.

23. A hole under a slab at the end of a line of clints forms the 4th Entrance to Poll an Tobar.
24. A round collapse, the third entrance to Poll an Tobar, was deliberately roofed over with boulders between June 1988 and May 1989.
25. Poll an Tobar 2nd Entrance.
26. Poll an Tobar Main Entrance.
27. E1.

The last two sites are now also roofed over with very large, deliberately placed clints. It is believed that this work was carried out in April 1989, with the aid of a mechanical earth mover (Irish Diaries, 1989). This was probably done to prevent loss of livestock, as in 1987 the muddy area around the Main Entrance to Poll an Tobar contained a cow carcass. Whether by accident or design, both entrances remain accessible.

POLL NA gCÉIM (B5a)

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E61.4, N23.9

Td. Knockaunmountain

Length 450 m Depth 130 m

This cave has seen intensive activity since its discovery in 1985. A venturi syphon has been installed in sump 1 and if this is working the sump becomes a dry crawl (Jones, 1987b). Downstream excavation has lowered sump 2 to a duck (Jones, 1987a) as has occurred at sump 3 (Jones, 1987c). Sump 4 also has a self syphoning system (Jones, 1989a, Bunce, 1990).

The aven before sump 5 has been freeclimbed for 20 m but the passage becomes too tight (Jones, 1987c).

Sump 5 has been passed (Jones, 1989b). It is 65 m long and starts as a tight muddy bedding plane, then turns west along a cross joint between mud banks until a small airbell is reached. The sump now changes in character to a 1 m diameter phreatic tube which runs north. Air surface is reached after 30 m. The phreatic tube enlarges and becomes a small canyon passage which drops down a series of cascades. There are several oxbows in this area. A number of boulder collapses are passed until a terminal boulder choke is reached after 250 m (Jones, 1989c). Here, a small inlet enters from the north (B. Judd, pers. comm. 1990)

THE COOLAGH RIVER VALLEY

COOLAGH RIVER CAVE

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E57.4, N62.2

Much of the Polldonough catchment has recently been gripped in preparation for extensive tree planting. This will increase the flood risk in this cave.

POLL CLOGHAUN (B10f)

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E49.9, N60.0

Td. Cloghaun

Length 216 m

Purgatory Pothole Club have reopened Poll Cloghaun (Jones, 1986). The downstream sump has been dived for 60 m to an airfilled rift. The sump continues (Farr, 1987, Judd, 1988). The upstream boulder choke has also been pushed to a 6 m long chamber, solidly choked at the far end (Jones, 1989d).

POULISKABOY

Alternative name Hole of Yellow Water

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E28.9, N57.4

Td. Pouliskaboy

This is a small resurgence draining an area of glacial moraine. The stream sinks after 100 m at a soakaway swallet. The water probably resurges at S3. Attempted dye tests from Cregg Lodge Swallet, Pol an Ionain and Coolagh River Cave, in 1963, were negative (Perratt and Tratman, 1975 p.103).

POULNAGUN FOXHOLES DIG (B11)

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E46.9, N55.9

Td. Poulmagun

Length 30 m Depth 10 m

The mud and shale choke at the end of this cave has been dug by the Burren Crawlers to a rift too tight to enter (B. Judd, pers. comm. 1987).

EASTERN SLIEVE ELVA

OWENTOBERLEA SWALLET (F2)

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E91.8, N57.9

Td. Killeany

In August 1988, a dye trace was undertaken to verify the connection to St. Brendan's Well and also to determine if there was another resurgence for the water, as the Killeany sink at Owentoberlea is said to function even when St. Brendan's Well is dry. 1 litre of optical brightener was used and proved positive at St. Brendan's within 12-20 hours, and continued positive for the following six days. Detectors placed at the Fergus River springs were monitored for 15 days, but were all negative (D.P. Drew, pers. comm. 1990).

POULNAGOLLUM POTHOLE - POULNAGOLLUM/POULELVA SYSTEM (E7)

Grid Reference: Clare 4, E91.5, N27.7

Td. Caherbullog

Length 13,881 m

Two extensions have recently been made to this system, and further details are available on some previously reported finds.

The two previous accounts of extensions to Sump Canyon given by Boycott and Wilson (1983, 1986), are confusing in that they both describe the passing of a terminal flowstone barrier. To clarify this situation it should be noted that the 50m extension reported in 1983 was to the end of Sump Canyon and the 280 m extension of 1986 was to the 'dry tributary' described in 1983. In addition, an oxbow to Sump Canyon reported to be 430 m in length has recently been found (Jones, 1989e).

In 1986, Purgatory Pothole Club re-discovered and surveyed a previously unreported find made by the RAF College Potholing Club. The passage has been named RAF '55 Series. At the aven 80 m south of Muddy Link, in Branch Passage Gallery, a 4 m climb up the left hand wall leads into a 2-3 m diameter phreatic tube, almost totally filled with sediment. This may be followed for 150 m towards the south-west, and then the west, before it abruptly halts in a solid sediment choke. This tube has been intercepted by two small canyon passages, which cross it from north to south, and both can be followed south back to Branch Passage Gallery (Dowds, 1987).

The survey (Figure 5) shows the extension to East Tunnel. This has previously been reported to be from 600 m to 1,000 m in length (Boycott and Wilson, 1983; Mullan, 1990a), however, the surveyed length is 326 m. From the end of East Tunnel the passage is a crawl, first to the south east, for about 50 m, then to the north east for a similar distance to an aven. This section is wet and will sump in wet weather. At the aven, a side passage may be followed to the north east for 10 m before becoming too low. The main passage leads off to the south east again and may be followed for a further 200 m to a junction with a 3 m wide passage trending north east, south west. This has been followed for 50 m to the south west to a point where progress can only be made by pushing through loose rocks on the floor. To the north east the passage has been followed until it chokes in breakdown. The entire extension is nowhere easier than hands and knees crawling; it is this arduous nature that lead to previous overestimates of its length. (J.D. Walford, pers. comm. 1990).

LISDOONVARNA AREA

OFFAL SWALLET (F5a)

Grid Reference: Clare 8, E71.6, N48.7

Td. Ballydonohoe

Length 0 m Altitude 130 m

This swallet, south west of Poulaloon is mentioned by Tratman (1969, page 172), but was not investigated due to its contents. Tratman wrongly numbers it in the text as F6, which is in fact the Kilmoon Stream Cave, but it is correctly numbered on the drainage map. Self (1981) does not mention this site, which is a swallet draining an area of marshy ground at the shale edge. At present it is completely choked with domestic rubbish, mainly broken glass (Irish Diaries 1989).

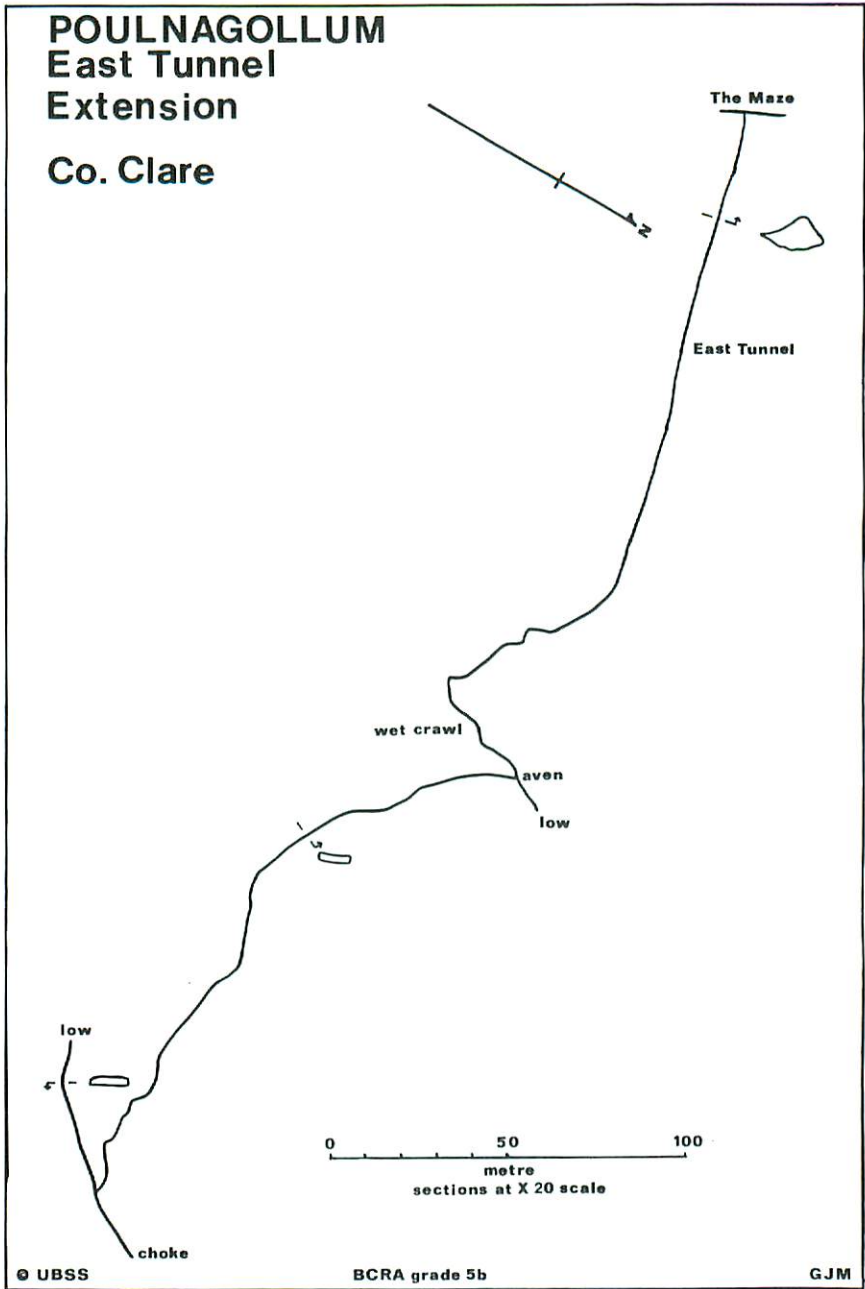


Figure 5. Survey of East Tunnel and extension, Poulmagollum-Pouelva System.

WESTERN POULACAPPLE

CULLAUN 1 (C1)

Grid Reference: Clare 5, E18.2, N16.1

Td. Cullaun

The extensions at the downstream end of the Gaffer's Gulch Old Streamway (Boycott and Wilson, 1986) have been surveyed (Bunce, 1989), giving a total length of 300 m.

CULLAUN 2 (C2)

Grid Reference: Clare 5, E19.0, N11.4

Td. Cullaun

In August 1988, 2 kg of fluorescein was placed in the streamway. Detectors were positioned at Killeany Rising east and west, St. Brendan's Well and Fergus River springs. A positive result was obtained at Killeany east and St. Brendan's after 40-60 hours. Both other sites were negative (D.P. Drew, pers. comm. 1990).

CULLAUN 3 (C3)

Grid Reference: Clare 5, E21.8, N10.0

Td. Ballyconnoe North

In August-September 1988 during a period of flood flows, 2 kg of fluorescein was placed in the streamway. Detectors were placed at St. Brendan's Well and the Fergus River springs. A positive result was obtained at St. Brendan's after 30-40 hours and there was a very dubious positive at Fergus River at +72 hours. (D.P. Drew, pers. comm. 1990).

KNOCKAVOARHEEN RIDGE

Work was carried out in this area in 1988, firstly, by a combined group of cavers from the Croydon Caving Club and the University of Kent Troglodytes who reinvestigated a previously unpublished site found by the U.B.S.S. in 1960 and pushed this past a squeeze to 800 m of passage. The cave has been named Poll Dearg. Secondly, further sites in this area were investigated by the Westminster Speleological Group (Barter and Wilkins, 1989), who explored several smaller caves and noted sites of speleological interest, using the original U.B.S.S. code numbers. All sites recorded are in Td. Cahermacnaghten, unless otherwise stated, and are described from west to east (Figure 6).

POLL CAHERMAAN (C6)

Td. Cahermaan.

C7. Soakaway.

C8. Soakaway.

C9. Small soakaway swallet at the limestone edge.

POLL BOREEN (C10)

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E.26.4, N50.0

Length 5 m Depth 5 m Altitude 174 m

A small soakaway swallet at the edge of the track was enlarged to a 2 m drop into a small north-south canyon passage, choked to the south and too tight to the north.

C11. Small swallet.

C12. Small swallet.

C13. Small swallet.

HAMMER POT (C14)

Alternative name The Colander

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E27.7, N50.3

The pothole is now filled with domestic rubbish and is no longer free-climbable.

C15 and C16. A surface trench.

C17. A soakaway swallet.

C18. A small swallet.

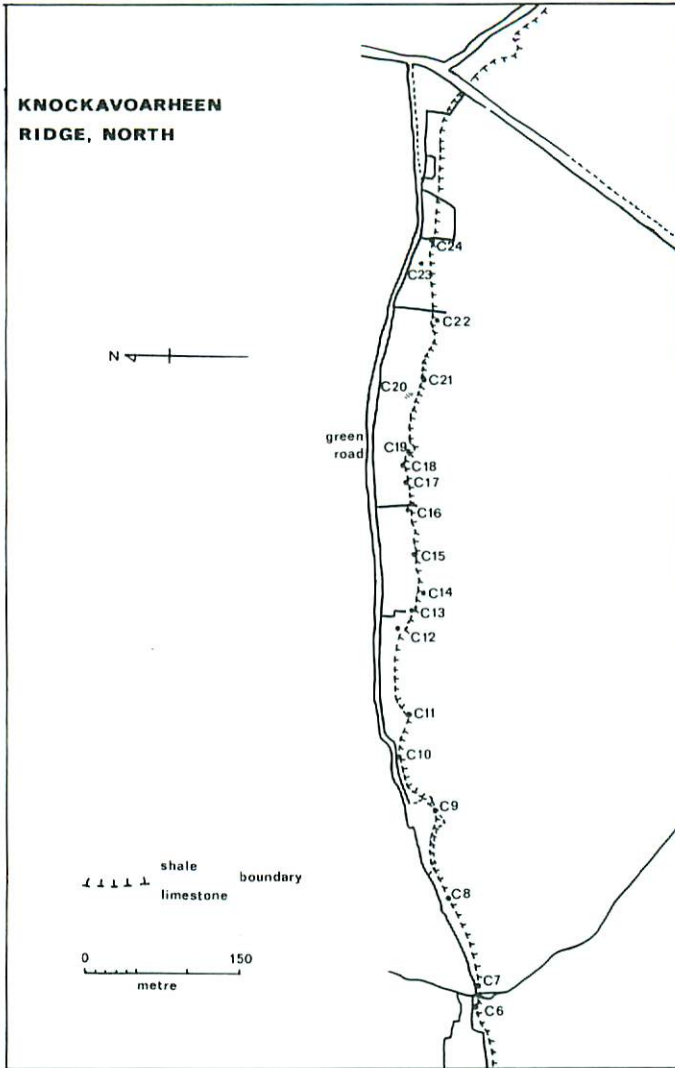


Figure 6. Location Map of the North edge of the Knockavoarheen Ridge, showing numbered sites listed in the text.

BOULDER POT (C19)

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E28.7, N50.5

The pothole is now filled with domestic rubbish.

C20. Marshy sink.

POLL DEARG (C21)

Alternative name Blood Hole

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E29.5, N49.6

Length 800 m Depth 60 m Altitude 174 m

A gap between boulders in the north end of the swallet leads into a low streamway. The blood red mud constriction which gives the cave its name can be passed and after about 50 m a mud and

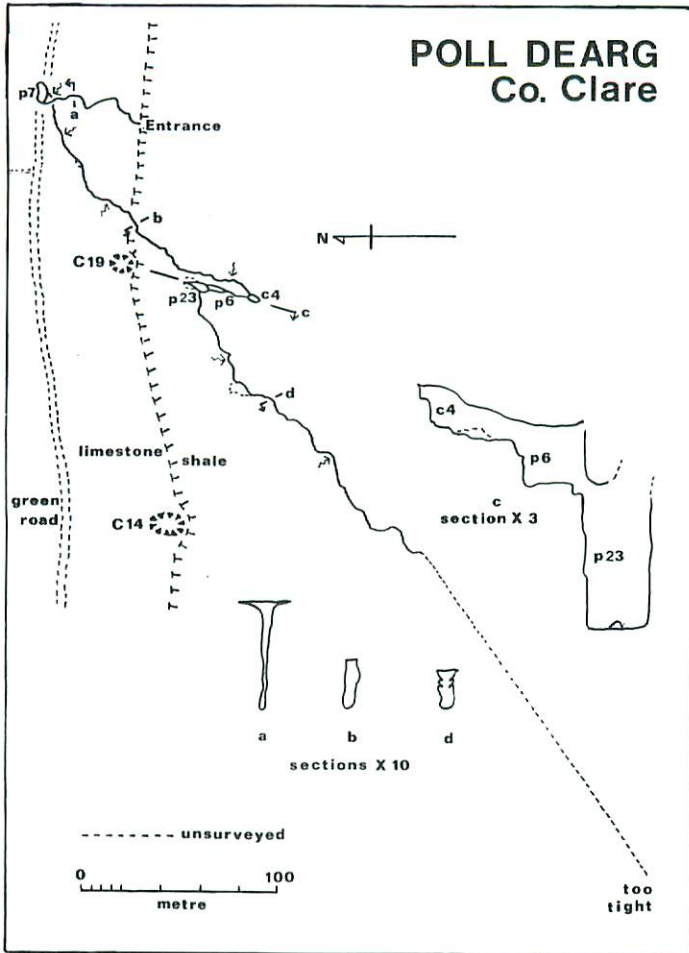


Figure 7. Survey of Poll Dearg.

A gap between boulders in the north end of the swallet leads into a low streamway. The blood red mud constriction which gives the cave its name can be passed and after about 50 m a mud and boulder blockage is encountered. This is probably the original entrance used by the U.B.S.S. in 1960, but the hole to the surface is now only 20 cm in diameter. Beyond the blockage is a winding stream passage (Figure 7). The passage here is 5 m high and no more than 0.5 m wide and continues for a further 12 m, where a medium sized inlet enters. A calcite constriction prevented further exploration in 1960, however, this was enlarged and beyond the stream the passage continues for 15 m to a 7 m pitch which drops into a large chamber. Leading off this to the south west is a small well-decorated stream canyon, 200 m long, which ends in a wet 4 m climb into a chamber. The passage now changes direction abruptly and follows a fracture which aligns with Boulder Pot (C19). From here the passage floor drops steeply and the water enters the chamber below through a narrow fissure. This can be by-passed via a dry squeeze which leads to an awkward 6m pitch into a 9 m long chamber. At the end of this chamber a further climb on the right hand side gains a smaller chamber before the 23 m pitch which drops into an oval-shaped 9 m long chamber. The stream passage now reverts to its original south-westerly direction for 500 m and is now smaller, rarely exceeding 1m by 0.7 m. This passage has been named Frog Street after its numerous inhabitants and is tight, sharp, muddy and unpleasant, ending in a bedding plane duck. It is doubtful if the passage could be followed much further as there is evidence of complete flooding (Pankiewicz, 1988; Stacey and Pankiewicz, 1989).

BUCCANEERS HOLE (C22)

Alternative name Twin Holes Swallet

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E30.4, N49.7

Length 150 m Depth 10m Altitude 174 m

A 2 m deep rift with a small stream leads into a crawl over boulders followed by a 6 m pitch into a well decorated chamber 5 m in diameter. In the south west corner a narrow muddy stream passage can be followed for 120 m to a stal. blockage, beyond which the passage can be seen to continue.

PENTHOUSE POT (C23)

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E30.7, N49.9

Length 0 m Altitude 174 m

A narrow slot beside a small area of limestone pavement 15 m south of the green road is blocked in both directions.

WALL IN THE HOLE (C24)

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E31.1, N49.8

Length 10 m Depth 1 m Altitude 174 m

A collapsed area underneath a wall on the west side of a small enclosure has been dug into a bedding plane at a depth of 1 m. A trench leads west and can be followed for 3 m before becoming too tight but the passage can be seen to continue. To the south, the passage is choked with boulders.

POLL BALLYKEEL SOUTH

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E20.0, N7.6

Td. Ballykeel South

Length 10 m Depth 3 m Altitude 75 m

A choked sink in a small limestone re-entrant, west of the road from Kilfenora to Lisdoonvarna takes three small streams. This has been dug to enter a 2 m diameter chamber, with a tight inlet canyon passage. Downstream, a squeeze over a boulder enters a further small chamber, 1 m square by 1.5 m high with a low bedding plane leading off east which becomes too tight after 3 m. (Irish Diaries, 1990).

NORTH WESTERN BURREN**POLL SALACH**

Grid Reference: Clare 1, E75.7, N26.4

Td. Murroughtoohy South

Length 5 m Depth 7 m Altitude 10 m

A small pothole, 9 m in diameter, has 5 m of bedding cave developed at its base. It is used as a rubbish dump by the local community (Ecock 1987).

RATHBORNY RIVER SINK

Grid Reference: Clare 5, E53.1, N40.8

Td. Gragan East

Depth 2 m Altitude 25 m

This river sinks in an impenetrable thicket. The sink, which is normally half full of water and overflows in floods, measures 3.5 m by 4.2 m. The site was visited with the intention of diving it but it was found to be dry and choked with gravel (Lloyd, 1971).

UNNAMED CAVE

Grid Reference: Clare 2, E14.5, N34.0

Td. Aghaglinny North

A cave was reported to Cork cavers after being unearthed by a bulldozer near the road south east of Black Head but was filled in before it could be explored (Ecock 1987).

NORTH CENTRAL BURREN

AILLWEE CAVE

Alternative name McGann's Cave

Td. Ballycahill

Grid Reference: Clare 5, E68.3, N39.6

Length 1170 m

An attempt to open a second entrance to the showcave has led to the digging out of a small passage off St. Patrick's series. This is now 100 m long, 2 m wide and 2.5 m high and has a railway installed for easier removal of spoil. The passage was originally entered from inside the cave, some tight squeezes were passed to 100 m of easy crawling followed by a short section of walking passage to what appeared to be a surface collapse. A voice connection with the surface was established and the choked entrance dug out. This passage appears to be the extension of the main river passage and has been named St. Bridget's Passage (Jones, 1987a). A crawl off the south side of the passage at roof level has been followed for 40m before becoming too tight to follow. A second inlet can be followed for 30m to a decorated chamber with a small inlet stream.

The show cave itself has been extended for 100 m along the length of The Highway.

Sump 2 was completely drained during dry weather to facilitate the installation of a new pump for the show cave (Judd, 1987a). The sump is completely choked and the water comes from between boulders.

OUGHTMAMA STREAM SINK

Grid Reference: Clare 3, E45.0, N9.1

Td. Oughtmama

Length 0 m Altitude 95 m

This is the sink for the water issuing from several springs at the foot of Turlough Hill. In August 1988 2 kg of fluorescein was placed in the sink under very low water conditions. Detectors were placed in springs at Lough Luirc, Bellharbour and Pouldoody. A weak positive result was obtained at Bellharbour springs at +72 hours, the other sites were negative. (D.P. Drew, pers. comm. 1990).

POLL BALLYCAHILL

Grid Reference; Clare 5, E75.3, N39.2

Td. Ballycahill

Length 4 m Depth 2 m Altitude 230 m

A small hole just south of the townland boundary wall drops into a 2 m diameter chamber in boulders, with a choked canyon passage in the floor. The walls are covered in moonmilk (Irish Diaries, 1990).

POLL NA b'FEDIR

Alternative name Maybe Hole

Grid Reference : Clare 5, E70.4, N36.9

Td Ballycahill

Length 8 m Altitude 225 m

High on the slope of Aillwee Mountain, almost directly above the entrance to the show cave in a small closed depression is a 1.5 m diameter phreatic tube which ends in a diggable sediment choke. On a rock shelf inside the entrance is a neatly carved inscription "MMcGANN 1948" (Mullan, 1989b).

POULDOODY SOUTH AND NORTH RISINGS

Grid Reference: Clare 3, E19.7, N20.3 & E19.7, N21.8

Length 0 m Altitude 0 m

Td. Dooneen

These were dived by O.C.Lloyd in 1971, neither resurgence has any accessible underwater opening (Lloyd, 1971).

NORTH-EASTERN BURREN

COSKEAM CAVE

Grid Reference: Clare 6, E47.5, N13.7

Td. Coskeam

Length 30 m

The grid reference given in *Caves of County Clare* (Self 1981, p. 177) is incorrect.

SOUTH-EASTERN BURREN

POLL UAIGNEACH

Grid Reference: Clare 10, E29.6, N38.0

Td. Tullycommon

Length 3 m Altitude 140 m

The entrance is a low arch on the east side of the Carran depression. The cave is 3 m long leading to a surface collapse. The passage appears to choke in sediment beyond the collapse (Ecock 1987).

SEVEN STREAMS OF TEESKAGH

Grid Reference: Clare 10, E25.3, N18.6

Td. Teeskagh

Length 65 m Altitude 130 m

The Seven Streams of Teeskagh sink after 350 m in a boulder choke, beneath a patch of hazel scrub. A fossil sink 10 m to the west has been dug by the Burren Crawlers through boulders into a short section of canyon passage which terminates after 65 m in a gravelly bedding plane sump (Jones, 1988a; Dowdes, 1988). The stream has been dye traced to the Fergus River risings and Buntober Springs (Drew, 1988). Most of the cave is loose and the terminal dig has recently collapsed (Bunce, 1990).

FERGUS RIVER AND COROFIN AREA

FERGUS RIVER CAVE

Grid Reference: Clare 16, E86.4, N42.7

Td. Roughaun

Sump 3 has again been dived by M.Farr (Jones, 1987c) for 195 m in a very wide bedding plane. The passage continues.

LEAMANEH SOUTH SWALLET

Grid Reference: Clare 16, E70.2, N53.4

Td. Leamaneh South

Length 0 m Altitude 50 m

A sink takes a moderate stream in the field south of Leamaneh Castle, next to a cattle trough in a small depression. This appears to be an unroofed canyon passage, choked with cobbles and is within the Fergus River catchment (C.C. Smart, pers. comm. 1990).

LOUGH ALEENAUN CAVE

Grid Reference: Clare 9, E80.1, N12.2

Td. Sheshymore

Length 5 m Altitude 79 m

The entrance is located approximately half way along the southern side of the trench that forms the westernmost extremity of the Lough Aleenaun depression. In the floor of the trench, close to the cave are numerous sinkholes which function when lake levels are very high. The cave is a muddy rift which descends to a choke of mud and badger belongings. (D.P. Drew, pers. comm. 1990).

MOYREE RIVER

Seven kilometers east of Corofin is a small hill of limestone (maximum altitude 25 m). The Moyree River sinks on the north east side at Poulduff, resurges 0.5 km to the south west at Poulnacally and flows after 1 km into the Fergus River below Adroon Bridge. A shallow dry valley can be followed

from sink to resurgence and at one point there is a collapse to water level. The sites have not been noted in a speleological context since Martel's visit in 1895 (Martel, 1897) The relief makes it unlikely that any dry cave will be found but the sites have yet to be dived (Irish Diaries, May 1989).

POULDUFF

Grid Reference: Clare 18, E8.1, N11.4

Td. Rathvergin

Length 0 m Altitude 20 m

The river is lost gradually over 200 m. Most of the sinks are mud choked, the southern most is under a collapsed limestone bluff and there is no obvious accessible cave or diving site.

POULNACALLY

Grid Reference: Clare 18, E5.6, N9.6

Td. Rathvergin

Length 6 m Altitude 18 m

The water resurges in an 8 m wide pool at the foot of a 5 m cliff. A narrow, wet cave passage can be followed for 6 m before it sumps.

DROHIDUNACHUCEAGH RESURGENCE

Grid Reference: Clare 18, E5.4, N10.3

Td. Adroon

Length 0 m Altitude 18 m

Water flows out of a deep clear pool, 100 m north of Poulnacally and joins the water from it to flow to the Fergus River. The original surface drainage pattern in this area is however, unclear as several drainage channels have been dug.

SURFACE COLLAPSE

Grid Reference: Clare 18, E7.0, N10.5

Td. Rathvergin

Length 0 m Altitude 22 m

This is a rectangular collapse, 3 m wide, 7 m long and 5 m deep with static water visible at both ends. The south end appears to be divable but the north is choked with boulders.

POULNACALLY SOUTH RESURGENCES

Grid Reference: Clare 18, E5.6, N6.8

Td. Rathvergin

Length 0 m Altitude 15 m

300 m south of Poulnacally on the left bank of the river are two subsidiary resurgences, under a 3 m high limestone bluff. Both are bedding planes, 10 m wide and 0.3 m high and do not appear to be penetrable.

RRA-GORT LOWLANDS

COOLE CAVE

Grid Reference: Galway 122, E87.0, N48.5

Td. Coole Demesne

The Main Gallery Extension Sump has been dived for 35 m in a 2 m diameter phreatic tube with a thick silt floor to surface in a choked rift. The sump probably continues north below the rift (M. Paganuzzi, pers. comm. 1990).

QUINN'S CAVE

Grid Reference: Galway 112, E91.2, N12.1

Td. Moy

A submerged passage at the north end of the pool leads to an underwater chamber after 10 m. A strong current emerges from the right, where a short boulder slope leads to the head of a rift choked by boulders. There is no way on. The current exits north from the chamber through a low bedding plane which was dug out to a further small chamber. A hole to the right entered a narrow rift solidly choked after 2 m (M. Paganuzzi, pers. comm. 1990).

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