

The cave is very tortuous, and it is difficult to assess general direction without an accurate survey, but the grade 2 survey indicates a roughly west-north-west general direction for the main passage. The cave starts with 30 ft. of steeply descending canyon passage, which enters the main streamway. The main part of the cave is 1300 yards of high narrow canyon passage, with many tight meanders and changes of direction. There are small pots and little waterfalls, sometimes in groups to form cataracts, and the descent is much steeper than is usual in caves of this area. Formations, including stalagmite barriers, occur occasionally all along the passage but are commonest towards the bottom end. Formations are sometimes so low as to necessitate crawling, but usually the passages are very high rifts, although only 2 ft. wide. Asymmetrical scalloping of the walls and floor is common, but near the entrance vertical fluting is more obvious.

At 1300 yards from the entrance is a small collapsed chamber and the water flows under a bedding plane. There is a small dry route leading on, which soon picks up the water again. At 1400 yards from the entrance the cave becomes different in character, after a small waterfall and a pool neck-deep in places. From here onwards the passages have a greater width relative to height, and have large scalloping on the walls and roof. This part of the cave appears to be of largely phreatic origin.

At 1500 yards a dry passage comes in on the left, and was obviously once occupied by a tributary to the present stream. It contains many fallen blocks and a flowstone "waterfall" which indicates a former direction of flow. There is a thick deposit of grey mud in this passage, of which only 60 ft. were explored.

The active stream goes down a 20-ft. pitch, after which there are several other pitches in quick succession until a sump is reached. It is estimated that the total descent from the entrance to the top of the 20-ft. pitch is 100 ft.

The lower part of Faunarooska is quite exceptional amongst the caves of North-west Clare, and is believed to be phreatic in origin. It must have developed below the water table when the sump was at the point 1400 yards from the entrance, where the well-marked change of form occurs. Upstream from this point the form of the cave is clearly vadose, similar in this respect to other caves of the area. Why, and when, the lower part of the cave became dry after its long period of phreatic development is not known.

C. D. OLLIER.

Pollapooka.—This pothole is on the north-west side of Slieve Elva on the limestone shelf, about 75 yards from the limestone/shale junction. Several accounts have appeared of this pot, which has a sheer pitch of 90 ft. There is no way on at the bottom.

About 600 yards north-east of Faunarooska a watershed on the limestone shelf separates two dry valleys. One runs south-west past Faunarooska towards Polldubh and thence to the Coolagh River Cave. The other runs north-east, diverging from the limestone/shale junction for about 400 yards. Then it turns abruptly east and after a steepening, sinuous course plunges abruptly into the Pollapooka depression. At the turn the original dry valley is continued on its old line for some distance, so the piece leading to Pollapooka seems to be the result of a beheading of the original valley. A second short, steep, dry valley leads into the depression from the north-east but cannot be followed far. The depression has the features of an old swallet.

From Faunarooska, past Pollapooka and round the north of Slieve Elva the limestone/shale junction is marked by the usual series of small swallets and shake-holes. These extend to the head of Pollnagollum. About 200 yards east of Pollapooka,

and just within the shale boundary, is a shallow, unroofed, short length of canyon passage with a small stream. The direction of flow is approximately south-east for the few feet that can be explored. Similar exposures can be seen further east with varying trends of passages, but they all tend towards the head of the Long Gallery Passage of Pollnagollum (Coleman and Dunnington, 1944). Presumably they are all tributaries, too small to enter, to that passage.

The main interest of these facts is in the drainage pattern presented. From Pollballiny the drainage is south to the Coolagh River Cave. Further north is Faunarooska, which, in its first part at least, takes a general west-north-west direction. Pollapooka, from its position and depth, probably also drains to the north-west, as its bottom is far below the upper reaches of Pollnagollum. Pollapooka must mark the extreme limit of the north-west drainage as all the streams nearby appear to run towards Pollnagollum. The north-west drainage area of Slieve Elva is thus of very limited extent compared with the southerly drainage of the rest.

E. K. TRATMAN.

Poulnagree.—This cave lies on the north-west side of Knockauns Mountains at the junction of the shales and the limestone. The entrance, over loose stones, leads into a small chamber with a strong smell of decaying animal matter. Leading off this in a westerly direction is a rift about 4 ft. high with steep slip-off slopes, too narrow to enter; beneath is a bedding plane enlargement, which could just be entered after breaking off a flake of rock, and which had a wet muddy floor along which we had to wriggle. (Fig. 27.) After about 15 ft. there is a 15-ft. double pot, which can be climbed without a rope; the belay rock is at its head. There is just room for four people and their ladders at its foot. The ladder is then passed through a tight squeeze, so tight that a climber returning needs to be pulled through it. A life-line is essential. The squeeze leads to a 30-ft. ladder pitch, which is an enlargement of the east-west rift. It has no notable features.

The only way on from this pothole is through a very tight rift to the west, which after a few yards abruptly enters another pothole, estimated by stone dropping to be 80-100 ft. deep. We went no further. Laddering of this pitch would prove difficult because of the narrowness of the approach and because there is no natural belay point.

Across the road north-west of Poulnagree, near a concrete bath, is a cave entrance in the bare limestone. This is a steep rift in the 196° direction, which is floored by large and small loosely packed boulders. After about 25 yards the rift narrows to about 1½ ft. just over a pitch of about 30 ft. To descend this it would be necessary to go over a pile of unstable boulders, and any attempt to do so would probably bring them all down. The rift can only lead into Poulnagree and so did not seem worth pursuing.

O. C. LLOYD.

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