

CAVAN - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Western Cuilcagh – White Father’s Caves		
Other names used for site	St. Augustine’s Cave		
IGH THEME	IGH1 Karst		
TOWNLAND(S)	Loughan, Killycarney, Termon		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Blacklion		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	2		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	605274E 837528N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	26	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	7

Outline Site Description

This site comprises a cave system in three parts with an open streamway in between the sections where erosion and collapse have removed the cave roof.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The limestone hosting the cave is the Knockmore Limestone Member, a carbonate mudmound facies within the Dartry Limestone Formation, of Lower Carboniferous age. The cave development is probably post-glacial, but may have an older origin.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

White Father’s Caves are three short sections of one cave with unroofed sections between them. The river in the cave comes from the Barran rising about 2 km away to the southwest. It previously sank at Pollnagossan. The first cave is a dry bridge, a short natural bridge under the old road. Beside the new road the river passes into a 60 m long second cave section which passes under the road. The third cave is longer and runs for about 200 m before emerging to run into Lough Macnean. The entire cave is well decorated with speleothems.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The site is an important component of the Western Cuilcagh site proposed for geological NHA status.

Management/promotion issues

This site is a popular and accessible caving trip used by individual cavers and by organised outdoor pursuits centre groups. It has been the subject of various pollution and other problems over recent years. The White Father’s Caves Conservation Plan commissioned by the County Council, and promotion of the cave within the context of the Geopark, will hopefully see no future issues arising.



Steps to viewing platform installed as public infrastructure at the second cave.



Left: Signposted access by gate to section of unroofed cave between first and second cave.
Right: the first cave looking upstream.



Footpath access along unroofed cave section between first and second cave.



