

## Shorter Accounts of Caves, Co. Clare, Eire

### CULLAUN ZERO\*

The original entrance (Acke, 1953-54) was looked at again in 1956 and it was found that the cave could be entered. The entrance is on the southern edge of a re-entrant of the limestone, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of Cullaun 11. The cave was followed for 130 yards along a low wet passage to another hole connecting with the surface. Thirty yards farther south the cave was entered again and this time followed for 110 yards. At this point the stream disappeared down a narrow bedding cave too tight to enter. Here another roof opening connected to the surface. The passage followed a single joint along the 196° direction, and showed no tendency to meander. The passage was between 6 and 4 ft. high. The valley south of the final exit was searched for more accessible entrances without success. At no point was the water from Cullaun Zero-1 encountered and this tends to disprove the theory that the water from Cullaun Zero-1 enters Cullaun Zero. This water possibly flows south-west.

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### POLLCACHERMAAN

In July, 1956, a further examination was made of the shale outcrop running east-north-east from Upper St. Brendan's, F 3 (Ollier and Tratman, 1956, *Plate 6 A*), to Poulawillan, G 2; at the swallet, C 6, a passable entrance was found just south of the active swallet in the townland of Cahermaan. This swallet lies about 100 yards south of the plotted end of Cullaun V (Jenkins, 1955, p. 108) and was thought to connect with it. The entrance is a tight squeeze followed by a bedding plane crawl, which soon leads into a canyon stream passage about 4 ft. high. This meanders tightly for 30 yards with the height gradually increasing to 10 ft. as the floor gradually drops. There are several other surface openings that connect with the roof of the cave but none is passable. Then comes a 30-ft. deep pot with vertically fluted sides. At the foot of the pitch a passage leads off. Its direction is in general about due west as it follows three parallel calcite filled joints, whose direction is known (Ollier and Tratman, 1956, p. 140). This passage has a typical canyon form with a flat roof and a faint T-form at roof level. Its width is about 18 in. and the height varies from 7 to 11 ft. The roof is formed by a single bed from the bottom of the pot to the end point reached and variations in height are due to variations in the slope of the floor in relation to the constant dip slope of the roof bed. Small vadose scalloping is well developed on the walls of the passage.

The passage meanders tortuously and sideways shuffling is the only method of traversing it for the first 1150 yards from the pot. After this the canyon widens to 2 ft. and the floor gradient becomes less than the roof slope so that the explorer has to crawl in the stream. At 1300 yards from the pot the stream flows down a narrow slot, which it was not thought worth while to try to follow. The only tributaries were three small ones on the left, south, side of the passage, trickling out of the bedding plane roof. The absence of tributaries is rather surprising as the start of the cave is very close to the plotted end of Cullaun V and its end is close to that of Cullaun III (Acke, 1954, p. 17 and *Fig. 1*). It seems possible that Cullaun V turns east, but it may turn west and run parallel to Polcahermaan, and Cullaun III may also run parallel, although Polcahermaan does not extend far enough to be altogether certain about this.

There is evidence all along the cave that it fills to the roof under flood conditions. The direction of the cave is given by the calcite filled joints followed and the length has been estimated by pacing. On the surface the approximate line of the cave is marked by a dry valley. This is indicated by the re-entrant in the 500-ft. contour in *Plate 6 A* (Ollier and Tratman, *op. cit.*). As it goes west the valley deepens until

\* C-O in *Proceedings*, 1956, Vol. 7, *Plate 6 A*.

its floor is about 30 ft. below the general level of the area. Approximately over the end of the cave the dry valley turns sharply south only to turn back west, after a short distance, when it has run into a second dry valley running west. The waters of the cave must run to St. Brendan's Well as the cave is heading directly towards this rising and has been followed for rather more than one-third of the distance from the swallet to Upper St. Brendan's Well.

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#### REFERENCES

*Proc.* = *Proceedings, University of Bristol Speleological Society.*

- ACKE, P., 1954, "The Cullaun Series of Caves, County Clare, Ireland", *Proc.*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 7.  
JENKINS, H. M., 1955, "Cullaun IV and V, County Clare, Ireland", *Proc.*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 105.  
OLLIER, C. D., and TRATMAN, E. K., 1956, "The Geomorphology of the Caves of North-west Clare", *Proc.*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 138.