

1982

1st January Swildons Hole

Martin Bishop, Geoff Pickering,

4am: first of the year. Someone, (MB?), had the bright idea of doing the Round Trip in boots, underpants and bin bags: back at Bishops, 7am, very sober; indescribably cold.

2nd January Wookey Hole

Ken James

Collected the remaining climbing gear from 20 stowed after Bishop's recent climbing project; visibility stunning; chose to dive on to 22: collected kit on return.

3rd January Longwood

Ken James, Martin Bishop, Chris Batstone

To Great Chamber making it into a round trip; moderate stream conditions.

January undated (29th?) Pinetree Pot

Pete Eckford, Ken James

Another charge set at the top of the aven; vaporized the offending boulder.

11th February Reads Cavern

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns, Sean Edwards

Tourist trip; finally entered the far chamber: a loose place, requiring a lot of respect.

19th February Willy Stanton's Secret Dig, Charterhouse

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns, Ken James

23:45: swiftly through the first gate only to find a second; minor delay figuring out the obscure locking system, found it an Alan bolt down the far end of a steel tube, used the hacksaw to cut a keyway in the end of the longer of the tyre levers. Beyond, descended a sequence of artificial steps in partly mined - enlarged cave passage, passing some nice sized gours, then up into a pretty chamber, descending again to a low passage in marl through to a rift chamber. In the terminal "chamber" a pool may obscure a flooded crawl: a dam is constructed with large bailing capacity; a "fishing line" disappears into the pool; undoubtedly another clever mechanism only allowing access by operating a remote drain valve; didn't disturb said mechanism lest it be damaged. Left replacement lock and keys just inside the first gate. Bristol 6:15am for breakfast in the Midland Road café, next to the "Gin Palace". Sent postcard to WS, complimenting his designs. Replied with, "thanks for the replacement lock and not damaging anything".

26th February Pinetree Pot

Pete Eckford, Ken James

Set another charge at the top of the aven, more debris brought down than previously; optimistic assessment by PE; a potential mud sump lay beyond the narrow bit.

27th February Mangle Hole - Pinetree Pot

Pete Eckford, Ken James

The aim, dive the reported sump, adjacent the mud slide: found it to be a chest deep pool; much hysterical laughter. Left kit at the ladder, dug for two hours in Aldermaston Chamber; it has potential, though very much a long-term project. Returned to Pinetree to check on effects and clear spoil.

13th March Eastwater

Ken James,

Dug Morton's Pot for two hours; another hour in a rat hole near Baker's chimney.

1st April Doolin River Cave, Gortaclob Townland

Martin Droney, Ken James

Late start: stream a little high, MD's concerns disappeared at the connection; stream level being normal. In the bar by 7pm; very few people about: superb session.

2nd April Coolagh River Cave, Ballynahown Townland

Ken James

In Polldonough North, route finding a struggle; realized mistake, retreated toward the entrance to find the climb down. This is a long route to the sump, headed out up main stream exiting Polldonough. A little over a two-kilometre trip. A superb evening, met with Noel and Sean O'Connor, headed for McHugh's. The bar packed to capacity; maybe thirty, in total. A hilarious night, finished up back at O'Connor's. Jim Shannon mentions Bristol cavers arrive in a few days.

3rd April Quinn's Cave, (aka Poulawee), Poulbehan, Moy Townland

Ken James

Found Quinn's Cave late afternoon; asking around, invited in for tea by Mrs Quinn. Over which she explained Poulawee was once the only source of water for the settlement. John Quinn, her son, arrived for the dinner, but told to show the nice visitors the caves before eating. A cheerful JQ showed five cave entrances, one a deep, near vertical flooded shaft; there appears to be an alcove, or passage, at around four metres depth; without dive kit difficult to say. Delighted; returned the hour to O'Connor's, making plans for tomorrow.

4th April Quinn's Cave – Poulkinaff, Moy Townland

Ken James

Waded the pool around the edge of the cliff feeling for submerged openings; visibility poor. Ducking a couple of times, thought an opening was present around a metre depth? Looked at a large depression fifty metres south of Mrs Quinn's cabin; bowl shaped, no sign of an opening. Called in the Admiral's Rest, to scrounge dive kit; unsuccessful. Told the compressor was only pumping to 60bar: desperately needing a service. Called to Noel Walsh, no dive kit available. Huge PU in O'Connor's: superb music; finished up in Ivy Cottage, cracking session.

5th April Poll-E-Puthe-Kittleon - Johns Quinn's Cave, Moy Townland

Ken James, Jim Smart, Neil Scallon

Had made a pact with Jarratt, the first to find cave in Ireland would call it Polly Put the Kettle On. In a Hazel copse, one of thousands, scattered across the karst landscape; a steep slope of loose boulders stopped at a possible choked pitch. John Quinn related the boulders were cast in to block the entrance to protect cattle. Took turns digging; as KJ stood up in the hollow he'd created, a large thin flagstone slid out, just like a blade. KJ would have been seriously injured and firmly secured in place. Decided to leave it settle a while; will return. Turned attention to the next site; John Quinn's Cave is a small, ten metre long solutional cavity. If the water level in the bottom of Poulbehan is anything to go by, the average surface elevation is around thirty metres? In O'Connor's delighted to see Jim Smart walk in, followed by the Bristol Poly. Of their group two stand out, Mark Lumley and Steve Milner. A Bristol boy's birthday; Rupert achieved insensibility by 8pm.

6th April Poulelva – Poulmagollum, Caherbullog Townland

Ken James

Made a lot of rain last night; at the bridge, the river was four feet below the field gate. Abseiling in noted a ladder rigged in the corner of the pot. Good sized stream in the low sections; up to Branch Passage cascade, found another ladder; no lifeline. Ascended so as to exit Branch Passage Galley, met no one. Called in the Roadside for a few pints; later in O'Connor's, Jim Smart confirmed the kit wasn't any of theirs: another cracking evening.

7th April Poulbehan – Poul Blaith Gairdin, Moy Townland

Ken James, Neil Scallon

Issues relocating the site; the karst landscape, a huge wilderness. Dense pockets of Hazel enclosed in small drystone walled field systems; visibility often less than twenty metres. Eventually found the flooded pot late morning; the water level seemed higher. The pool contains a lot of dead foliage. The midday sun illuminated the pot; a potential opening seems likely. A steep climb; likely a sod issue when wet. Climbed to the northeast corner, to a tiny gap. Dug three hours at a small crack. Rewarded with twenty odd metres of nicely decorated passage. Delighted; into Linnane's, Kilfenora. A little gem of a bar.

8th April Moy area

Ken James

Did sketch surveys of caves seen so far. Back in the bar heard the tale of Bullock Pot. The boys did well to get that far, leaving the kit in for another push tomorrow: Steve Milner is grinning a lot though; it could be a con for the others in their group. Time will tell.

9th April Coolagh River Cave

Ken James

On hearing of the trip Bristol Poly suggested meet up in Coolagh; left early to visit the sump; steady trip down main streamway: never tiring of its grandeur. Managed to pass the canal on tip toe. Encountered Steve Milner etc. exiting Polldonough.

11th April Llangattock – Agen Allwedd

En-route, Doolin to Bristol; caught the late ferry out of Rosslare, intending join the Pegasus Easter assembly in Crickhowell; arrived at the camp site 4:00am, slept by the motor. 8am, normal people up and about. Looked for tents surrounded with evidence of fun. Found Al Steans, with tea mug, his eyes seemed in training for imminent death.

Afternoon; Agen Allwedd

Alan Steans, Dave (Icarus) Gill, Martin Butterworth, Russell (Mr. Pastry) Smith, Vic (The Wop) Holland, Dave Gough, Ken James, Dave Epton. A delay while some of the boys got their act together meant time for a couple in the Horseshoes. After several hours of fun, frolics, hysterical laughter and only minor injuries, surfaced. Finished the chips just as the bar opened; a seriously funny night.

12th April Dan-Yr-Ogof

Alan Steans, Dave (Icarus) Gill, Martin Butterworth, Russell (Mr. Pastry) Smith, Ken James.

After the lunchtime session, met the cave leader, "call me Jeremy", in the car park and headed for the Great North Road. Exhaust gases discharged throughout the long crawl made for a desperate trip; Jeremy bitterly complained he was not impressed with the odoriferous company and that far too many were the worse for drink. Complained still that no respect was shown him or the cave by such behaviour. Any more would force him to write to the secretaries of the respective clubs. The silence following this threat ended

with hysterical laughter, upsetting him all the more. The lengthy trip demonstrated to Jeremy that the visitors were actually able to cave, though pissed; all obstacles easily overcome. Whilst Jeremy made a show of his sandwich and tea flask the others shared out two Mars bars and a flask of strong drink. Swift trip out, fearful at loss of drinking time, Jeremy left far behind. Swiftly into Crickhowell for more excellent fish and chips; into the Beaufort, the Bridge, finishing up in the Horseshoes, the enthusiastic landlord urging The Pegasus to return soon, any time at all; as he'd doubled his takings.

April undated (23rd?) GB

Bob Lewis, Andy Porter, Doug McFarlane, 1 x girl, Bob Evans

A fine trip taking in virtually everywhere in the place, best part of five hours.

April undated (26th) St. Georges Cavern, Wells

Nigel Burns, Jim Smart

Visited the new hole in Milton Lane, near Wells; need a short ladder to descend.

28th April St. Georges Cavern, Wells

John Widley, Ken James Nigel Burns

A cave, found by digger driver Pete Cosgrove, while cutting trenches for British Telecom. He'd breached the roof of a small chamber, which goes twenty odd metres via crawls and squeezes, to other small chambers; needs further digging. Chatting with Pete Cosgrove, found his home is near Kilinaboy, just outside Corrofin, County Clare.

1st May Nettle Hole, Mendip

Ken James

Pleasant scramble; two hours done at the dig, but little to show for it other than clearing away recent bang spoil, possibly a result of Alan Mills ongoing endeavours.

2nd May Ubley Warren Pot

Ken James

Returned to this dig, looks a while since last visited, two hours of clearing spoil, though banging is still needed to progress along the rift. Need ask Alan Mills for assistance.

16th May Chartist Cave, Wales

John Dukes, Ken James, John Widley

Nice walk over stunning moorland to this fascinating cave of significant social, historical interest. The visit's primary reason for more photos to be taken. En-route to the motor enjoyed an impromptu picnic in the sun; nice.

May undated (25th?) Raven's Well, (May Lane Mine)

Ken James, Nigel Burns, John Widley

Told all the entrances were sealed. Checked; lane and railway cutting entrances are both open. The railway entrance has a pile of chicken wire stuffed into it, this is easily pulled aside to access, though not really needed if using the land entrance.

2nd June Raven's Well, (May Lane Mine)

Nigel Burns, John Dukes, Brian Court,

BC expressed an interest to visit; after an exhaustive wander around the place visited the flooded section adjacent the railway cutting entrance, over which the railway been built. Ancient stonework becomes modern brickwork extending into a low passage which has a

six-inch airspace stretching away above filthy water. It needs pushing to see if more old, ancient passageways exist beyond; don't fancy it, when disturbed the stench is awful.

10th June Raven's Well, (May Lane Mine)

Nigel Burns,

Wore dry grots to avoid damaging a wet suit from the scum covered, oily water; they can be burnt. NB stayed at welly depth. The engineering brick lined passage has a flat roof of concrete. Available airspace is a fortunate sixteen inches, with a surface scum of oily film and floating lumps; the smell, fucking terrible: repeatedly stifled gag reflex: water bitter cold. Oxygen level OK. After twenty odd metres, surprised to emerge through the brick wall perimeter beneath a locomotive turntable, situated the other side of the cutting from the railway entrance. The water runs around the turntable's perimeter to exit via another bricked passage. Within a few metres engineering brick becomes ancient stonework with, what looks like, lime mortar? At some two metres high, it continues an arched passage, after a few metres a "Y" junction is encountered. Immediately, to the right, the arched passage is choked by collapse. Left, after about ten metres the passage emerges in foliage in the vertical bank of the River Avon. Attempted climb up the riverbank but soil too friable; reluctantly returned through the liquid shite to a patient NB. Very unlikely will ever pass through this biological hazard a third time.

20th June Bowery Corner Swallet

John Widley, Ken James

Tynings Barrow was the plan; delayed arrival of JW knackered the idea. Went in search of Bowery Corner Swallet, a potential dig. Found it in the overgrown verge of the road from Green Ore to Cheddar, almost opposite the lay-by, south of the firing range. Two metres below road level, a small bowl-shaped hollow has a two-foot-long crevice, which takes the stream without backing up. This overgrown sink appears long forgotten.

22nd June Bowery Corner Swallet

Solo

2pm. Working in Blagdon experienced heavy rainfall; parked the British Telecom 16 tonner in the layby: observed the sink. Using a two-gallon pail, flow of the two streams estimated as 80,000 gallons a day; removed a few stones, received encouraging noises. 4:30pm. En-route back to Bristol, took a six foot crow bar, had a good wroggle about, pulled out several boulders; revealing a narrow cavity some three-feet deep.

8:30pm

John Widley

Returned with camera and crow bar, photos taken, some spoil removed to a depth of two feet, opening a hole, probed it to four-foot depth. No stream entering from the obvious field pipe; the two streams had not reduced in volume. Learnt BCS has been dye traced to Cheddar taking some 50 hours, (1976, WCC). Dug by Mike Thompson, (1960s), in clay deposits; MT cautioned it may be Council land: Stanton's book suggests no digging since MT's activities.

23rd June Bowery Corner Swallet

Solo

8:00am

Drove past to observe streams after last night's heavy rain, three flowing; no back up.

1pm

Solo

Spoke to Jon-Jon, in the Hunters about the location of BCS, which could be considered as the verge, rather than part of the field. JJ explained the Council engineer is a bastard; don't ask permission; keep it all low key. So, will erect a fence, implying ownership by the farmer. Will contrive to camouflage spoil; covered over the opening for the time being.

24th June Bowery Corner Swallet

John Widley, Brian Court

Placed two pipes along the ditch invert, over which spoil can be deposited, this can be extended along the ditch length, below eye level of road users. Removed spoil to a depth of two feet; a layer of greasy mud covers boulders; is this muck decomposed shale?

29th June Bowery Corner Swallet

Ken James

Replaced initial pipes with those of larger diameter; installed short metal ladder.

4th July Bowery Corner Swallet

Nigel Burns, Ken James

After five hours digging found two minor gaps and an intact glass bottle embossed "Lung Tonic": a potential site name? (Lung Tonic Pot?): encountered hard shale bed.

5th July Lung Tonic Pot (aka Bowery Corner Swallet)

Solo

Began to cut through the shale to widen the working area; problem, the cavity fills swiftly with water; need remove part of the roof or perhaps create a dam of the road ditch.

7th July Lung Tonic Pot

John Widley, Ken James

Digging the shale roof, without taking too much off. Brian Court and wife visited.

13th July Lung Tonic Pot

John Widley

Found recent flooding had washed away the loose debris exposing an eight-inch hole, some six feet long; it appears to have taken the entire flood. This possible, original conduit contains domestic debris; localized erosion may require shoring; timbering may be quick, but short lived.

24th July OFD II

Martin Bishop, John Compton, Ian Parsons

Late start: owing to the SWCC leader unable to get his act together; then cancelling the trip. Offered another, delighted, but too fast a trip, not at all enjoyable. Made up for the blatant rudeness with a superb session. Arriving back at the SWCC found sleeping bags and kit in a pile on the lawn. Asking why, told "we're full" by a big, ignorant, Londoner. Sharply corrected his attempt to bully; he and pal retired to the kitchen. Picked up kit, returned to bunk; slept soundly.

25th July Shakespeare's Cave, Swansea Valley

Martin Bishop,

John Compton and Ian Parsons left early for Leeds. An uninspiring trip, crawling along cold canals; a lot of time lost repairing lines through the ducks and sumps.

14th August Pasture Gill Pot, Yorkshire

Mike Lewis, Geoff Pickering, John Compton

A tough time carrying a lot of kit among too few; minor issues on the big pitch, needing a re-belay... repositioned. A wet trip, the canals causing ML some concern.

15th August Sleets Gill, Yorkshire

Mike Lewis, Geoff Pickering, John Compton

Another aquatic trip, the crawl being very wet, ML called the trip fearing the ducks in the long crawl may become sumped; later in the day heard it to have been a wise choice.

28th August Manchester Hole – Goyden Pot, Yorkshire

Charlie Watkins, Martin Bishop, John Compton

A superb trip, suggested by Geoff Pickering, a bit of everything, GP had left his kit in to facilitate a trip by his club pals. A swift trip because of the excellent pre-rigging. In the bar much, much earlier than expected; a cracking evening. Invited to join the Wanderers.

29th August Simpson's Pot – Valley Entrance, Yorkshire

Charlie Watkins, Martin Bishop, John Compton

Excellent through trip; CW sobering from last night; in the lower streamway found twenty odd waiting to get up the ladder, chilled whilst watching the climbing skills.

3rd September T.A.G country, USA

John Kelly, Geoff Pickering, John Compton

All GP's fault; almost three weeks of fun in Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. Heathrow to New York, to Huntsville, Alabama. GP organized the car, which was huge; accident insurance waiver a must have. Contacted Dan Spencer living near Albertville: about an hour away; arranged to meet in a bar. Dealing with JK, DS arranged a cabin for the stay; basic, but dry. A good time among caves varying in length, significantly; some vertical stuff with some pitches circumvented. Bangors Cave, Russell Cave and Stephens Gap Cave; had imagined the caves being much longer. Moved to Tennessee, contact there was Pete Newman. Again, lodgings were kindly sorted, as were permissions to cave beyond the public limit of show caves; Bristol Caverns and Cumberland Caverns. Managed to arrange a second trip to Cumberland, it's vast. PN kindly arranged for John Keogh to act as guide in Georgia, though short on time, visited Fantastic Pit; having heard of its five-hundred-foot pitch. Sought permissions, Friday afternoon offices are closed. Chris Mitchel came to the rescue inviting the team join his group on Saturday. The plan: abseil in the big pitch and exit up the three pitches of Ellison's Cave; a seemingly regular, round trip. However, after five hours the team decided to return up main shaft, except JC who had cut the palm of his hand assisting one of the others; who had stood on it. Average time ascending the main pot was a surprising ninety minutes; two on a rope is a truly awful experience. Drove overnight to Frick's Cave, a show cave. Louie Eastman a guide for the place also offered a place to stop and a trip the next day; nice. Mad dash back to Huntsville, having cocked up the actual flight time back to New York. Missed the flight, but the kind service girl sorted seats for the next. In New York arriving 3am; stopped in the airport as the UK flight was at 10am: cracking trip. Would love to visit T.A.G. again.

2nd October Lung Tonic Pot
Solo

Farmer, Wesley Volks, is chuffed with the fencing work, calling it neat; asked WV if could leave digging materials and tools in the barn; no problem. Dug two hours.

October undated (9th?) Marble Steps

Martin Bishop, John Compton, Ian Parsons, John Kelly

Offered the trip, returning to Bristol from Leeds. Arranged at short notice by JK, weather had been settled the past week. Delighted JK could give names to the numerous pitches. Below main chamber "The Intestines" were guardedly described by IP an "experience"; curious as IP is usually unphased by potential flood prone areas, is this place a bad one?

26th October Eastwater; MRO alert for PC's missing brother-in-law

9:20pm. Monica, rang concerned husband Wayne Dawes had not returned from caving with a friend. Eastwater and Manor Farm were mentioned as potential caves. Rang Stuart, (Mac), MacManus requesting assistance. SM initiated callout. Both caves visited; car located at Eastwater; both found near the entrance, in good spirits, having got lost and both lights failing.

30th October Mitchelstown Cave, Killavenoge, Cork

John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

Asked Jackie English permission to take photos; granted, so a three-hour trip began; "here's the key drop it in when you're leaving"; a great opportunity to amble about and explore the place; superb. JE a pure delight.

31st October Doolin area

John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

Arrived to find the river high. Fisherstreet Pot full to within four metres of the surface; Coolagh main entrance submerged below a brown, swirling pool; more rain expected. Discussed situation in O'Connor's until unable to speak; music, drink and dance hindered a conclusive decision.

1st November Gus O'Connor's Bar

John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

Torrential rain, river levels increasing; drove to northeast Burren: rain so heavy could not exit the motor. Parked the rented twenty-one-foot American camper directly outside O'Connor's front door, entered lunchtime; result, a sixteen-hour session.

3rd November Quinn's Cave, Moy Townland

John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

April, Mrs Quinn had explained the pool at the base of a cliff was the only water supply for the area. After prolonged drought the water became brackish and people were able to walk into a passage for six metres. Toured area to witness the effect of the heavy rainfall, rivers full and all active cave entrances submerged. Returned to dive the site. KJ used Sulo's 22cft bottle to check for passage; returning for a larger bottle after reaching -8m in a pot 25m from base. KJ dropped a boulder, watching it disappear in clear water. Strong currents issued from both pots, located at the base of a boulder cone. The smaller pot KJ descended to -6m. Concern of losing contact with KJ, via the base fed line, signalled return. Surrounding both pots are unstable boulders, that move at the slightest touch. Dived to confirm KJ's findings; the entire, steep boulder slope is loose: visibility very poor. During KJ's dive, noted the sand bar had become an island; the stepping stones

under six inches of water, after half an hour. Diving took place between 6.50 – 7.20pm. Later informed High Tide, Liscannor was 6.50pm. At 9.00pm, breakers on Fanore beach were noted as huge. Quinn's is best of two miles from the coast. Is Poulawee part of a much larger system, draining to the sea from the eastern mountains? The water is the salty side of brackish. Unable to fill bottles at the Admirals Rest, compressor still ill.

4th November Poulmagollum, Caherbullog
John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

5pm: Still raining, chanced a trip, managed to get below main junction; the duck a sump. Torrents issued from every possible fissure in the roof; excellent. Stream level remained reasonably constant and thunderous; JW increasing unhappy, exited to heavy rain. The stream at the bridge was two feet below the bottom bar of the field gate. Decided depart for Kerry; perhaps will experience less rainfall?

5th November Ballinahallia Quarry Cave, County Kerry
John Widley, Ken James, Nigel Burns

Called at a nearby farmhouse; seeking permission to descend. All invited in for tea and lunch. Afterwards shown entrance by the farmer's son, James, and told to return for dinner. A network of muddy tubes ends at a small sump pool, which isn't too inspiring. Invited back for more tea; shown a family movie recently sent from America; while dining a Nun entered the kitchen, the Farmer's sister; all desperately avoided cursing.

10th November Lung Tonic Pot
Solo

Two hours; frozen: a struggle to move: eight buckets worth.

14th November Lung Tonic Pot
Pauline M Cronin

Dug two hours; PMC patiently watching and waiting, only to comment "You're fecking crazy"; emerging, plied with hot tea, as the teeth danced like castanets.

November undated (20th?) Goatchurch

Charlie Watkins + eight Shepton Mallet Lion's Club members

CW asked assistance conducting his friends about the place; a nerve-wracking trip.

November (undated 22nd?) Singing River Mine - GB, RESCUE
Ken James

A pleasant trip in great company; the pitch superb: the mine reminiscent of so many in Derbyshire. Arriving at the BEC hut told of a rescue at GB: deployed to divert the surface stream to help stuck scouts exit a flooded Ladder Dig. Sent to collect as many buckets as possible, called to various farms – houses - bars to scrounge even more. Returned; sent to Tynings Barrow to check if a caving party had surfaced; at control reported they had to Chris Batstone. Sent below with Pete Franklin to carry in more buckets. A late one; left the MRO store around 2am; well shagged out.

24th November Lung Tonic Pot
Solo

Parked the British Telecom 16 tonner on the verge; used the pneumatic road drill to shave off the harder shale, deepening the floor. Used the rabbit to trim the edges and reach along the crawl. Police stopped, enquiring what the problem was; explained was searching for a blocked telephone cable duct; offered tea, which they enjoyed. Waving

merrily, they departed; resumed digging; squared the base, more room needed at the start of the crawl.

26th November Ubley Hill Pot

Ken James, John Widley, Wayne Dawes, Roger Marsh

Uneventful trip, nice to see RM, always enthusiastic and a really nice bloke.

28th November Lung Tonic Pot

Ken James

Bought fence posts in Weston, transported them to the site; erected more fence. Did two hours digging; five buckets.

6th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Roger Dors gave 50 feet of fencing; installed more posts and braces; secured wire. One hours digging; three buckets.

8th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Parked the Telecom lorry in the lay-by only to find the new compressed air hose three metres too short of the dig. Set out road signs, turned on yellow lights, relocated lorry fifty yards off the bend. Mike Wotton, (Foreman), settled down in the cab, to study his racing form. Used the road drill to great effect, a heavy unit but when rested on the boots the weight isn't too bad; a superb way of carving out the shale. After half an hour heard a shout, climbed out to the gaze of Inspector Ted Williams. Enraged, "Just what the hell is going on"? Claimed solely responsible, even so both docked a week's pay. Compensated MW, who refused take the money, saying he'd never had so much fun in years.

10th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Clearing the spoil pile created by the road drill; three hours before frozen. The extra area better for stacking the spoil before sending to surface; the area could be larger.

13th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Very wet; another two hours clearing the debris cut with the pneumatic road drill.

15th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Continued enlarging along the passage; packing spoil evenly along the pipe in the ditch; managing to maintain an almost invisible spoil tip; viewed from the road.

17th December Lung Tonic Pot

Solo

Most of the fence line is prepared, though more posts are required for the other section. Heavy rain produced wet conditions; stopped owing to excruciating cold; extremities a lovely blue/grey hue.

27th December Coolagh resurgence, Ballyryan Townland

Solo

Given a lift to Poulsallagh by Noel Walsh, who explained as long as was at the bus by 8am, could have a lift to anywhere along his route, which took in the coast road through Fanore to Ballyvaghan, New Quay, Bell Harbour and Kinvarra. Sought out S3, being the supposed resurgence for Coolagh River Cave. The height of tide obscured the precise location of this intertidal resurgence, so moved inland to prospect further. Found the rift, formed on the north - south jointing; choked with boulders, flotsam and jetsam. Rooted about, chose the south end to dig, owing to remaining available daylight. Rocks exposed were far bigger than expected; little overall progress. To Liscannor with Sean O'Connor, to McHugh's; a great session.

28th December Coolagh resurgence area, Ballyryan Townland

Solo

8am; met Noel for a lift to Poulsallagh. Continued to dig, though limited by available tools; a fascinating site. It is highly probable to drop into passage feeding S3; doubtful it connects to Coolagh River via Poulanian as it would need flow northwest from there: then again, perhaps it does? But feel there may be later development somewhere further upstream, branching away from Poulanian.

29th December Fisherstreet Pot, Doolin Townland

Solo

Collected ladder and rope left with Martin Droney. Abseiled in finding the airspace a bit small; kept to the right along the rift, air gap increased. Arrived Aran View inlet; had planned a through trip, but conscious of the inclement weather. Half hour up the inlet, stream level appeared to be rising; watched it for ten minutes, decided about turn and exit. At the base of the shaft the airspace had increased, to eighteen inches? Water levels, flow and speed of run off may somehow be influenced by the state of the tide. Asked Jack Garrihy, who explained the twenty-foot tidal range. The weight of water may slow Doolin River Cave resurging into the sea and perhaps also influence the Gort lowlands drainage?

30th December Quinn's Cave, Moy, Kinvarra

Solo

Dropped by Noel Walsh in Kinvarra; walked to Moy. Called to Mrs Quinn, over tea and cáca given permission to walk the area whenever visiting. The changing water levels in the Kinvarra area are curious. Despite ridicule from CDG, remain convinced it connects to the sea. Though the closest coastline is some two miles distant; the quay at Kinvarra. Or the same distance to the springs on the coast, Krauser, the fisherman calls Corranroo. Using Sulo's full 22cft; reached the cone to the pots, visibility all but a metre. Again, on approaching the edge of the larger pot, boulders moved; unnervingly. Have accepted the pots may never be descended, in their present state. Packed up; more tea and cáca with Mrs. Quinn and a warm before the range. From Moy walked west, toward Corranroo, prospecting the area; light rain. Continued west; through many small fields. After an hour encountered larger fields; after another half hour found a boren: heavy rain. Turned north along this track toward the coast; met a farmer who offered a lift into Kinvarra. En-route he described how the vast extent of low-lying areas regularly flooded during the winter and after periods of prolonged rainfall. Whilst understandable, where is the water from? Mihal has observed that rainfall on the eastern mountains, increased stream flow hereabouts a half a day later. Does this mean there is more than just a large, single, stream under here, conveying this volume? Is there, perhaps a big river? Walked into a birthday party in O'Conner's; a very fine session.

31st December Coolagh River Cave, Ballynahown Townland
Solo

Last trip of the year: in field entrance; paused in Double Passage assessing the stream. Left tackle sac in Double Passage at the end of the canal, guessing the trip to the sump may be impracticable judging from the distant low rumble. Along Gour passage noted lumps of fresh foam clinging to the walls around knee height. At the pitch, the noise from upstream, Balcombe's Pot was huge. Observed main stream running just below the lowest ledge of the pitch; waited a while to soak up the experience. The strong draught, the air thick with spray and pulsating thunderous noise. Minor issue exiting the wriggle from canal to field entrance: success on second attempt, the approach all but submerged, needed move two boulders aside to make room to exit. At Polldonough South entrance, the stream was barely a hand span below the top of the bedding, (nine inches). Changed swiftly; walked to Doolin; superb New Year in O'Connor's; mostly locals, few visitors.