

2000

2000

1st January Doolin River Cave

Barry Sudell

Swift recovery from the superb all-night Millennium party in Susan's. First trip of the new century; severely ordered by Doll, to be back in the bar before dark for the dinner. Bright day, normal stream. In through St. Catherine's; a really nice amble, with a fine pal, stopped at Poulacronaun inlet, pulled out a few more rocks from the choke.

Business manic

Jan/Feb Dive Girl 2000 Show, London.

Martyn Farr

Attended as an Instructor representing Technical Diving International. Unnerving; a lot of interest shown in technical diving from some with questionable experience beyond basic dive skills. With no specific project to apply such knowledge. Pleasant enough chats emphasizing the significant investment required to pursue a project or career. Met up with Kevin Gurr, Dave Crockford, et al. for the Friday Night; superb curry and pints in Brick Lane, Saturday. John Sinclair, (Suunto), and others offering technical and material support for any future Dark Shamrock Projects.

February undated (12th?) Alum Pot

Martin Bishop, Geoff Pickering, Ian Parsons

Request from GP to assist photographing the place. Wet, cold conditions added to the difficulties. Communications a likely issue, over the thunderous noise, suggested use light signals, if whistles ineffective. A long day; but GP believes he has his desired shot.

February undated (13th?) Juniper Gulf

Martin Bishop, Geoff Pickering, Ian Parsons,

Visited previously with the LADS, some twenty years back; without GP would not have found the entrance so quickly. The "bold step" just as daunting, though successfully passed, (leapt). The only ones in the place: swift trip to the bottom and out. Exiting, a thin scattering of snow an omen, fortunately little enough down at the motor. To Bernie's to pick up kit ordered by MB; not in as yet. Spoke with Johnny Shaw over pints in the Craven Heifer. Departed, heavy snow. Got as far as Wray; encountered a salt lorry, followed him to the M6, it too becoming covered, steady drive back: dropped MB in Radstock, 3am. Bristol by 4am. Warily noted first appointment booked for 8am.

25th February

Lost Rich Websell

26th February Swildons

Martin Bishop, Ian Parsons

Tourist trip for IP; wet conditions. Pleasant wander through to IV, down the streamway, exiting Paradise Regained. IP wants to return and photograph parts of the IV streamway.

27th February Kent's Cavern, Torquay

Pauline M Cronin

Pauline began open water training; left her in the hands of Instructor John Hammond: headed to Kent's. Just missed one of the seemingly irregular tours; wandered off to find tea and sticky bun. Normally closed this early in the season, spoke with Adam, a guide?, regarding information on the archaeology. Suggested the Pengelly Trust would be a good start. Collected PMC at 3pm; frozen solid, having completed two, thirty-minute dives in a

2000

wetsuit; ocean bitter cold. After ten minutes PMC, fast asleep; dead to the world; only waking on arriving home. Though she's tough, need buy her a drysuit, if this carries on.

4th March Swildons I - III

Martin Bishop

MB rang; sump I line reported in poor condition. Free dived, replaced lines in I, II & III.

5th March Kent's Cavern, Torquay

Pauline M Cronin

Left PMC with her instructor; weather grim, rough seas, metre swell. Arrange to meet John Everette at Kent's. Superbly informative wander through the place; nice seeing remains and artefacts; arranged another met with him. Collected PMC from the beach.

Observing PMC's previous level of post dive fatigue, replaced bottle contents with Nitrox 32%; without her knowledge. Had checked with her instructor the maximum depth of both proposed dives, confirming the seabed at high tide is a max of -11m. The aim, to see if industry claims of using elevated oxygen levels truly reduces post dive fatigue, especially in cold water. Departing for Bristol measured PMC's blood O₂ content, 98.8%. Noted PMC remained awake until Exeter.

8th March Stoke Lane

Martin Bishop

Delayed at sump IV; line broken and the pool choked with silt? Curious as MB had heard someone had been to VI, quite recently? Used helmets to scoop out the silt, gravels etc. all packed to the side of the passage, out the main flow, back up stream; need return.

12th March Pridhamsleigh

Pauline M Cronin

Delivered PMC to her open water instructor. Both her lightweight Faber 80s filled with Nitrox 40%; checked the marine charts, and again confirming with JH, that even at high water both dives would be a maximum of -11m. Left them to it. Departed for Prid. Encountered a party of ten children, with three adults. Changed swiftly; scampered off. Pleasant wander about the place; remaining as far away the shrieking mass as possible. Picked up PMC, complexion good; soft tissue extremities pink, little visual evidence of cold. PMC wide awake until Bristol. Arriving home, enquired how she was feeling; good, much better than previous dives. Described experiment; PMC not phased, at all.

15th March Stoke Lane

Martin Bishop

Took a short spade and line reel and a four litre a piece. Dug out pool, relined sump.

19th March

Lost Graham Balcombe

Illegible entries.

PEGASUS CLUB NOTTINGHAM
PROUDLY PRESENTS, TRY A DIVE WEEKEND
Porth-yr-Ogof, South Wales

Barry Sudell, Andy Walchester, Martin Bishop, Dave Gough, Alan Steans, Malcolm Scothon,

In response to many requests, arranged a Club weekend introduction to diving/cave diving. Based at the Westminster hut, the adjacent Red Lion, an excellent bar. Training

conducted in the Port-yr-Ogof meadow pool and resurgence. Instruction throughout the Easter weekend. Non divers delighted with themselves underwater for the first time ever.

7th April Pegasus Dive Camp, South Wales.

Barry and Ceily Sudell, Martin Bishop, Dave Gough, Andy Walchester, Simon Halliday, Alan Steans... and lots more. After much discussion among members, was approached to improve/develop/expand their dive skill set. So arranged a Dive Camp in South Wales. Prepared specific lectures for BS and MB to deliver. Based team at the Westminster Hut; drinking in the Red Lion. Included slide shows, one being of the recent Wakulla II trip.

8th April Porth-yr-Ogof

Started with lectures, reviewing extant knowledge, imparting more. Asked BS and MB to conduct talks and demonstrations, whilst dealt with the less experienced.

Midday: Porth-yr-Ogof, divided the group between Resurgence pool and Meadow pool. Accommodating a wide range of abilities. Though limited with kit, had "men" in water, with others receiving tuition on the banks; no time lost whatsoever, a tough enough day for experienced and newbies. Exercised tight control of who was where and doing what with whom; a full days program, knowing Saturday night would be a serious celebration.

9th April Westminster Hut

Completed the camp, with further demonstrations of first aid and equipment choices. Camp closed midday, for most of the lads to return northward. The camp well received, all those taking part appear to have benefited.

23rd – 30th April Orange Hotel, Nassau, Bahamas

Pauline's Diving Club

PMC, PC and ten other open water divers

Trip to celebrate the forthcoming 25th wedding anniversary. Pleasant week diving, two small caves examined using a Mickey Mouse search reel. Each a small development. Other diving fascinating; shown the Vulcan bomber of a Bond movie, made of scaffolding with convincing covering. Fish life superb. Watched from above as PMC, and instructor, calmly swam among dozens of reef Sharks, quite an experience: she has become quite the consummate diver, focused, calm, methodical; whilst enjoying the environment. PMC did not panic but adeptly sorted out the issues caused by others colliding with her! Unimpressed at the complete lack of spatial awareness of the "experienced" divers of her club; who "talk a good dive".

Dives: Schoolhouse Reef; Vulcan Bomber stage prop; Bahama Mama; Shark Pit; Cessna Reef; Goulding Cay Reef; Black Coral Forest; Tears of Allah; Jacks Jump; Edward Williams wreck; Exhuma Cays, South Dig Wall; Highburn Wall.

May (11th?) Cae Coch Sulphur Mine

Martyn Farr, Phil Dotchon

Fascinating wander around these workings, developed during WWII; photographic trip for the imminent, forthcoming Underground Wales book.

15th May Otter Watersports compressed neoprene dry suit; superb fit. John Womack called about PMC's measurement, they don't add up; checked, he is right. Ordered the trilaminate for PMC. Having suggested his kit to the BBC, in return he won't take payment for the suits.

28th May S4

Solo

The rift, again, again affected by turbulent seas; debris blown in from the southwest. Using the sledge, hammered off some 15% of the large slab overhanging the rift; can now reach the boulders beneath. Cleared spoil; will bring along Barry Sudell's lightweight generator and the 750w, SDS drill to chisel and drill the larger, lower boulder. This will allow access to boulders jammed in the side of the shaft.

29th May S4

Solo

Carried generator, drill and ancillary equipment to the dig site; only took four trips. After six hours had removed three boulders and debris. The occasional layer of soil ideally requires a trowel. TB's plug and feathers worked ok but made better progress driving a wedge into the holes; the plastic feathers seem too soft to split the rock. Perhaps have drilled the holes too far apart; must ask. Next boulder ready to lift.

31st May S4

Solo

More debris removed, but, after three hours of frustration cannot move the large boulder without compromising the stability of the shaft.

31st May Bought the Hamworthy 5.5cft compressor off Nick Geh.

1st June S4

Solo

Found timber spars and short length of rope on the adjacent storm beach, lashed up a cantilever system. Managed lift the large boulder, causing only minor disturbance.

3rd June S4

Solo

Moving smaller spoil, large boulder suggests it might not be the best place to dig. Intend to try another site within the rift.

10th June Dive scooter arrived.

Illegible entries

14th July 65th Anniversary of the First cave Dive at Wookey

Cast of thousands

Graham Balcombe's ashes scattered in Chamber Seven; a plaque unveiled of the 14th July 1935 event. Nice to catch up with old pals.

July undated (4th?) Current State Diving, Bristol. Biomarine Rebreather course

Richard Bull.

Three days at Stoney Cove. Tough going; RB very severe, requiring each procedure and emergency drill conducted correctly and precisely without error or slightest hesitation.

July undated (17th?) Current State Diving, Bristol. Biomarine Rebreather course
Richard Bull

Further three days in Stoney Cove. Series of increasing, physically demanding tasks and emergency drills. Exited water exhausted, made to take written exam immediately. Feel that the Bio-Marine is far and away the better of available units. Delighted to pass 92%.

19th -21st July Fort Bovisand
Solo

Introduction by Richard Bull to Eric Carthy, for training, operating the re-compression unit. Intensive three day course, ten hours/day, involving calculations to check divers tables including a night shift, involving a "casualty". Stressful, but rewarding, surprising the volume of useful data spin off from the core aim of the course. Inherent command of accurate, mental arithmetic a shock/surprise to EC, RB and others in attendance.

Illegible entries

August (8th?) Pollaloughabo – Poulbehan (Dark Shamrock Traverse).
Martin Bishop

A another item on MB's ever increasing bucket list. Visited Gerard Nyland, enjoyed a pleasant hour catching up, drinking tea. The firm ground allowed the van to the dive site; MB increasing impressed at the size of the area PC explored these twenty odd years. Walked over to rig a handline down the climb of Poulbehan, left the wheel barrow there. Using three ten litres each, dived downstream, (west), following the 6mm line installed by Nick and Martyn. Visibility at best, a metre; arrived at the rift to Poulbehan; surfaced. MB truly delighted with himself. Showed MB Poll Bliath Gairdin, set in the east side of the pot; a nice bedding cave dug open with Ken James, early 1980s. Loaded some kit into the wheel barrow, ambled back. GN insisted a meal and tea before departure. At the cottage filled bottles. Cracking session in McGann's; approached by a Dutch female, asking for a trip down Fisherstreet, offered her tomorrow.

August (9th?) Fisherstreet
Martin Bishop, Ineke de Lange

As agreed, Met IL at McGann's; breakfast. Rigged Fisherstreet whilst MB drooled over IL's chest dimensions. Airspace over three feet; minor shower last night. The plan, take IL upstream, as far as she was comfortable; no more. Dressed in MB's spare kit, IL moved well, obviously fit; delighted exiting into the sun from St. Catherines. Called to the farm; forced to enjoy tea and cáca. IL bemused at the hospitality. Mihal drove the team back to McGann's. There IL's focus set upon a loud, wealthy American with no volume control; stayed for a couple, left at midnight; diving tomorrow.

August (10th?) Pollduagh, Gort
Martin Bishop

Water flow middling. Changing, approached by Christy, asking we visit him after the dive. Ran in a jump line; eventually found the 6mm line, in less than a metre visibility. Each using three tens; likely a boring dive, but, conducted to support MB's pursuit of his Bucket List. Explained the dive reaches -30m, about one hundred fifty metres from the entrance. Agreed dive five minutes apart, turning the dive at thirty minutes; using a third of each bottle in turn to reach this location. If strong current, change to sixth's. MB 11:27, PC 11:32. Following MB visibility remained fairly constant, except when MB touched down to check or adjust kit. Reached 12:02, -32m, no MB. Each bottle 160bar. Planned wait for five minutes; waited eight. MB appeared, signalled he lead out. Deco required by

both computers. Surprized so much. No diving tomorrow, fancying a fine session; started in McHugh's, Cooley's, finished in McGann's; ejected by Mark 4am.

August (11th?) Poulballiny

Martin Bishop

1pm. Had a spare set of knee pads for MB; strongly advising their use. Reasonable trip MB complaining of getting old..... from the creaks in his knees and back. Found the duck water level quite high, the squeeze beyond still awkward. MB passed easily, barely noticing it; experienced the normal struggle. The size of the terminal passage remains impressive; spent an hour in the short passage in the boulder pile; very little headway. Slow trip out. Cracking night in McGann's, Cathy's farewell party, she's away to Boston.

Illegible entries

15th August S4

Martin Bishop

Spent a handy two hours clearing storm debris and spoil; grand with a second pair of hands. This site a metre further south. Attempting dig beneath another large bolder, to use it as protection. Wandered over to the southern shoreline, brewed up, and enjoyed listening to the murmur of the Western Ocean. McDermotts for the Ceoil agus Craic

16th August Lighthouse Cave

Martin Bishop

Further attempt to prospect the lower terrace below low water mark, A rough-ish sea drenched the prospectors. Lighthouse Cave is nothing like the published 80s description. Managed to inch south about fifty metres before abandoning the attempt; too dodgy. Moved north up to and around the headland, chased by the rising sea, nothing obvious. Reached twenty metres beyond the "corner" into the Bay, proper. Took MB around to O'Neill's, (O'Loughlin's) for a superb evening. MB mesmerized at this gem of a bar.

17th August Mirror Wall, Ballyryan.

Martin Bishop

After an hour's warm up on the smaller cliffs, MB scaled Mirror Wall on a bottom rope; consummate climber that he is, with a terrific reach. Twenty minutes, he was at the top, followed him up. Collected kit and ascended Doughbranneen, (Black Head), to scale the twenty metre cliffs near the 500ft contour. Superb; to Donoghues for an early session.

31st August

Lost Father

Illegible entries

4th October Cullaun III

Solo

Little rain the last two weeks, weather stable, confident the place is as safe as it will ever be. Small trickle present. Soon regretted the plan made last night; had forgotten the place is so narrow, becoming snug and snuggier. Found best to wriggle in the low part of the rift, pretty much along the stream gravel. Delighted after an hour, the passage size gradually increasing. Finally found the decorations Sean O'Ce raved about; they are truly impressive. Told they were obvious, and they are; the Gours cracking. Reached a short climb; used the waist length to descend. Disappointed the place becomes a crawl via some small chambers; digging might extend the streamway, but it's a long way in, to

enthuse a partner in a long term, long distance dig. A long trip; knackered at the surface. Fell fast asleep during the “surprise” birthday party in McGann’s.

5th October Poultaloon

Solo

Believing the entrance squeeze not as desperate as described decided to look. Completely wrong, very wrong. Removing over and undersuit, in just the knickers, could not make any progress, beyond a metre. Frustrations of a big chest.

Illegible entries

8th October Oxygen filter system and gauges arrive.

2nd November Portable gas filter system.

17th November Suunto Oxyspy O2 analyser.

23rd November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Martyn Farr, Dig Hastilow, Robby Smidt, Gunar Wagner

A two-week expedition to explore the region inland from Tulum: Christopher Columbus reputed making landfall on this headland.

Conversing with Mayan farmers a site was located in second generation jungle. Passing through the jungle, occasionally, walls were found; a comment from the farmer was that where there are walls cenotes are nearby. Over the following week Dos Pisos pushed on two levels, hence the Mayan name, Dos Pisos = Two Level Cave. The site was pushed to a depth of -20m by PC, down a tight vertical rift before returning up through a dense white out from descending calcite particles. A link to an adjacent cenote was made and via another the total distance explored become over 5 km, at an average depth of -6m. Objective achieved the opportunity was taken to conduct tourist – photographic dives.

23rd November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

SM, DH and MF dived up the main line to push on. PD and PC dived to search for a link to an adjacent cenote; after many false alcoves, among beautiful grottos, found a drop to -8m, which became a very small tube, penetrated ten metres in silty conditions; no room to turn, backed out. It looks to be going in the right direction, but needs checking. Others investigated the dozens of oxbows and beddings to around 400m, at just -5 metres.

24th November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Morning: PC continued to search his area; returned to the low point but zero visibility had expanded, possible flow inward? Other suggest allow for clarity. Searched left hand side into every alcove noted. PD continued with the same type of search on the right-hand side of the main passage. DH searched to the south, without any luck. MF and SM pushed the main line further still +600m. Afternoon: SM, MF and DH further searching for connection and surveying the place. PD and PC remained at base, in support. Mayan pot noted at -5m in small oxbow off left hand entrance pool.

25th November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

MF and PC in first to take photos of the Mayan pot; rest of day consisted of surveying and discovering pottery sherds and bones, possibly human, suggested record and leave in situ for the authorities.

26th November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr, Robbi Schmittner

SM and RS checked the area and drop, noted by PC, water much clearer, having found an adjacent cenote, this hole the most likely to connect. After an age they returned having pushed along low passage several hundred metres, almost to the other cenote pool. MF pressed on up the main passage. PC looked at a small side rift to -12m, the walls, covered in platelets of calcite caused a white out dislodged by exhausted gas, visibility fell to zero.

27th November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Predominantly photography, until camera failed; swam to end of push. Flow appears to be from the south. Returned to rift, pushed to -20m, in confined conditions, noted depth before whiteout vigorously returned. This site will go, but requires people to travel it to dislodge the thousands of snow white platelets, to achieve visibility other than zero.

28th November Cenote Dos Pisos, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr, Robbi Schmittner

Variety of dives; did another run of photography of the urn and area, much better. RS and SM did a through trip from Dos Pisos to the other cenote.

2nd December Grand Cenote - Crystal Cenote, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Photographic and tourist dive trip in Grand Cenote, PC back flashing models. Crystal Cenote repeated same, though swam some 500m up line, pretty but a little boring.

3rd December Car Wash, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr, Ronnie Valencia and Inez...

MF excited using a female, (Inez); more photography requiring PC asked to support. Several dives conducted, once more; during ascent developed reverse ear; took twenty minutes to surface from -14m.

7th December Bristol Royal Infirmary

E.A.R. department diagnosed an inner ear issue; inflammation of the Eustachian tube, had caused the "reversed ear". One week antibiotic course prescribed.

18th December Gort Lowland area.

Solo

At Poulbehan by 08:00: using Nick Geh's GPRS, began to systematically record each of the dive sites. Pollaloughabo and Poulbehan are known to be pretty much east and west of each other. Beginning to wonder if the seeming more remote sites are as remote as imagined. Perhaps the other sites share this or a similar compass alignment?

19th December Kinvarra Quay Rising – Dungaire Rising north
Solo

At low water, a significant flow issues adjacent the quayside steps. In conversation with John Greene; it is a stream from the village spring, before this area of the quay was built over. These works removed the ancient local fresh water supply; then replaced by a well pump; the well overflow the stream. Dungaire risings; north issue from among boulders, as does the southern rising; the area east, inland, levelled to accommodate the widened road. JG further explained huge boulders were placed into the main resurgence causing allowing it to flow and preventing children entering?? A Tidal Mill is adjacent the Castle.

20th December Lug na Cumar
Solo

Good sized stream flowing; spoke at length with Brian Murray, about water levels in the valley west of the ridge. Ground surface very wet so BM carried the kit over in his tractor; offering return in two hours. This is the last, large, surface rising before the river enters the lake; believe there to be an alternate, parallel underground route. Descended below the inlet bedding from Scalp Dubh; landing on large boulders: noted increased current issuing from among these boulders. Visibility a metre; set a cast iron sash weight belay in the boulder floor. Dived among large boulders, attempting head southwest?? Ascended, negotiated narrow gaps; found a roof at -16m. Dropped back down among the boulders; had only travelled fifteen metres from belay. Back up to the roof, moved forward on 240° encountering 'solid' wall after a further five metres, twenty metres from shaft belay. Hit thirds, surfaced; BM waiting, patiently; taken to the home house for a fine lunch.

21st December Caherglassaun Lough - Coole Cave - Pollduagh
Solo

Below the Cashel, in a small, natural cutting in Caherglassaun lough is a sink, the gulley in line with the rift Pollnapasty. Overlooked during previous operations at Pollnapasty; 100 metres away. The lough is observed to rise and fall with the tide and rainfall. John Browne's, (Doolin), sister, who lives nearby, can tell the state of the tide from the lough's level. Dived among a jumble of boulders, after twenty minutes no opening located; noted minor flow sinking in the lower area, by the edge of the lough.

At Pollduagh; spoke at length to Stephen Killeen; enquired of other holes in the vicinity. Taken on extensive walk around the area of the Ladle; abandoned walk as heavy rain showers swept in. To finish off the day descended Coole, to see if the silt and crap deposited after the winter floods of 94/95 had washed away; no. The sump surface had a "floating coating". The place, filthy; everything covered in thick slimy silt; the stench of rot, overpowering. Exited; washed off in Main Rising. En-route home stepped into the Roadside; Skippy begging a lift into Doolin. After a few minutes those present remarked of a smell worse than anything they'd ever met before. Skippy opted to walk rather than share the truck; must have been bad.

22nd December Poulnadirk
Solo

Asked write the section on cave diving and dive sites for the forthcoming UBSS book and supply data on new finds etc. Spent most of the day preparing the best route description to this seemingly remote site. Eventually decided to have fun so went and had a look along the dry cave passage to see how water levels were in the bedding, visible through the crevice on the righthand side of the passage, no water visible today, likely only during higher flow rates. The pool in the bottom of this huge collapse just covered the tallest side of the concrete cattle trough; a slow eddy/current observed flowing southeast-

northwest; from this presently inaccessible bedding, with deep silt floor. This eddy is no guarantee of the real direction of flow.

28th December Dúnguáire Castle Rising

Solo

One of several risings on the coast, opposite the castle near the base of the wall by the road junction; observed a high flow rate, poked about, again, no chance of entry. In Greene's Bar, informed road construction contractors dropped huge limestone boulders taken from the shore as road foundation. At the same time lowering the resurgence invert to attempt reduce flooding level inland, (pers com John Greene). Fixed a marker to measure off water levels; some four hours after high water with the rising exposed, no discernible lessening of the outflow. How far inland does this water drain from?

29th December Polldeelin, Gort

Solo

The plan, repeat dive to Coole Main Rising, passing the now levelled depression in which domestic refuse and appliances were dumped. Straight to the short pot, following the old line. Found the line jammed between the left passage wall and the rear of a fridge. Felt around in the mirk, found what felt like other white goods. Would be useful to know what the state is on the other side of this "white goods" choke. Retreated to Nick's place.

31st December Moonmilk Cave, Oughtdarra

Solo

Returned to look at the boulder ruckle; found evidence of others having had a prod. Dug an hour with little inspiration, a long term dig. Need ask Mark Lumley to come and play, he'd previously mentioned investigating this place. O'Connor's for the evening; cracking music and dance; left around three for Susan's party.