

2005

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1st January Boulder Pot
Solo

First of the Year. This dig returned to mind; no issue finding it, though trees etc. have grown a bit. Upset, finding it almost brim full with domestic crap and refuse.

6th January Battle of Britain Series, Dan-yr-Ogof
Martin Bishop

Mid-week. Dived in from the show cave steps. Water levels similar to when first entered with Nick Geh, Aug 1990. Today, duck between streamway and Gwyn Saunders Hall sumped. Went to the aven originally climbed, washing line still in place. Exited by the same route. Looked at the old dig; sand fill had collapsed, partially choking the passage.

15th January Keld Head
Martin Bishop

MB wanted to revisit the one thousand metre junction; before age caught up. Eventually persuaded to accompany him. MB had spoken with his pal, the farmer so able to once again camp close to the resurgence. No drink last night; deciding an 08:00, start; dived on three eighties, two Poseidon 300s and a 5000, MB used three eighties, the US divers Conshelf and two Poseidon 300s. If plan worked out would exit via Wooding's Passage. Dived five minutes apart, visibility some three metres, with slight current mid channel. Met at main junction, all good, MB led to objective. Met and conferred near 750m; visibility not so good along the smaller passage. Using line maps MB eventually confirmed 1000m Junction. Uneventful exit to main junction; checked gas reserves, agreed plenty enough to exit Wooding's Passage. Followed MB with little enthusiasm; on surfacing delighted to have done so. All packed by mid-afternoon; suggested a meal in Bernie's, then to South Wales. The New Inn not quite so dismal; no Owen? Slept out at the Bridge car park, chill night, delighted with the new sleeping bag.

16th January Little Neath River Cave - Bridge Cave – Porth-yr-Ogof
Martin Bishop

River entrance submerged. Each took a two litre through Bridge sump; left kit in Sand Chamber. Intended a round trip, found the canal sumped. Retraced route, exited against a strong flow. To Porth, quite the river sinking. Descended the pot near the path; a good route to observe a subterranean flood; unable to progress sat and watched the spectacle for twenty minutes. Radstock by early evening, grabbed a Chinese enroute into MB's. Finished the trip in the White Post.

20th January Desolation Row, Swildons Hole.
Martin Bishop

MB pressed to revisit Desolation Row; finally summoned the enthusiasm. Each took a four litre, the same supplied by K Wills; very fine bottles for such trips. A slow trip, having worked late yesterday, somewhat tired. Reached XII, as MB the better climber he led off, utilizing the kit hanging there but took up a rope. The old kit should be retired, but noted on a ladder a new looking belay strap. Climbed on MB's top roping. The place as drab as remembered. Jarratt's naming of this place very appropriate. Decided leave the rope in as unwilling to trust the existing to descend upon. Had thought to check the dig, but both weary; so, a slow trip out; Hunters shut, so into Wells for Tea and Medals. Nice to see MB delighted with himself, having climbed the shite pitch.

Illegible entries.

11th February Dartmoor Inn, Dartmoor

Nigel Burns

The 1997, 110 Landrover runs well; diesel, a huge improvement. Camped the night near the bar, a fine session; the owner from Corofin, County Clare.

12th February Tavy Consols, Dartmoor

Nigel Burns

Dating from the 18th century, surviving surface features are superb, the place needs these features recording and conserving. Cracking evening session in the Dartmoor.

13th February Lydford Gorge

Nigel Burns

Superb breakfast; de-camped to Lydford Gorge, a cracking walk through a place full of interest; fossils and very nice waterfall.

24th February Poseidon UK, Alton, Hampshire

Pete Mulholland

Further training course to service the new range of Poseidon valves. Delighted to bump into PM. Departing, asked into the office. Stunned when offered the Poseidon agency for Ireland by Brian Bickell, no fees required; need consider the wonderful offer, more than a little concerned it may get in the way of fun. How's that for a conflict of interests.

26th February Swildons XII

Martin Bishop, Ian Pickering

IP working in Marlborough; delighted of his surprise visit and a chance to play. Took a two litre, MB a Seba, IP a four litre. Slow trip so IP could admire the place. IP wants to return and photo VII and the IX pool. Uneventful trip to XII; IP entered to see the choke. Condition of Ladder to Desolation Row uninviting. Steady exit. Into Bristol for a curry; completed a cracking night in the obscure Rhubarb Tavern; wonderful.

3rd March Lost Martin Bishop, to second heart attack, devastated.

Missed enters: OFD and P8.

March (18th?) MB's funeral, Bath. Pissup in the Hunters.

March (19th?) Wookey Hole

Solo

Left the crowd, spoke with Barney Butter who kindly ignored normal procedures. Used a pair of over pumped sevens, drifted along to 22, sat on the shore and wept.

Illegible entries

30th April Drosgol Mine

Nigel Burns

Camped in Rhayader: headed to a stream confluence above the eastern valley: above Marchant Fawr. (TIP 1) SN 95522 x 74612, located six kilometres north of Rhayader. Found a small spoil tip adjacent the shaft, filled to surface. Moved to the next area (TIP

2) SN 95476 x 74349, here is another area of spoil tips. An obvious collapsed adit located with adjacent elongated spoil tip. Back to town for fine food and drink.

4th May Thrupe Lane Swallet

Dave King, Mark Lumley

Nik-Nak's alcove; dug vertically down some two feet encountering sand. The south wall may be widening. Good session.

16th May Handed company to Nephew; am free to play, but am now without Bishop.

18th May Thrupe Lane Swallet

Mark Lumley, Rich Witcombe, Dave King and Clive North

Assisted ML with photography at the pitch; the team straight to dig to move spoil into Old Wells Road. The snug conditions threatened interfere with CN drilling process, as the boys wriggled back and forth. The depth of rift, 3.5 Cronins, equalling six metres.

May undated (20th?) Poulacapple

Julian Walford, Tony Boycott, Linda Wilson, Jayne Stead

Transported the U.B.S.S and generator to the cave in the 110. Informed them intend pursue the dig once established in Doolin. Both JW and TB welcomed this. Promised to update both of any progress. Observed the way on was down beneath the main boulder pile and not along the unpromising, immature rift the UBSS had previously excavated.

Poulacapple, Caves of Clare, 2003, Quoted measurements

INGR, M18730 x 04110.

Alt 268m

Depth 10m, below moorland surface, (needs checking).

Field measurements taken

INGR M18790 x 04064 At northwest edge close as possible to the shaft.

Alt To be confirmed

NB. The difference in the two INGR is some six metres both north and east this could be explained by the earlier reading taken on the opposite side of the depression.

Illegible entries

3rd June Pouldubh North

Mike Simms, Julian and Carol Walford, Linda Wilson, Graham Mullan,

Wet conditions, down the streamway, to the terminus, exiting Pouldubh South.

Interesting for JW, seemingly not caved in Clare for thirty odd years.

4th June S4

Nick Geh

The extra pair of hands improved spoil removal. Can see a deposit of fine silt; excellent.

8th June Poulmagollor

Tony Boycott, Linda Wilson, Graham Mullan, Jayne Stead

Sherpa for TB, diving the terminal sump. Kitting up found a lot of gas gone from one of the bottles. TB abandoned dive. Fascinating stream cave; beautifully developed. Collapse by the path leading to Poulmagollor, enters Poulmagatig; stream cave, gated due to bat colony. Landowner very pleasant, even though had parked in his yard; nice bloke.

9th June Gragen West One

Graham Mullins, Linda Wilson, Tony Boycott, Jayne Stead, Cheg Chester

Raging hot day. The area recently deforested. Eventually, GM identified a likely looking hole, descended a tight, vertical slot into a low active streamway. Headed downstream with TB, to Card Pack Chamber? Upstream followed a snug meandering crab walk for a kilometre. A tight, short squeeze through a limonite deposit; exited covered in red shite.

9th June Breda Meehan's Cottage, Fisherstreet

Tony Boycott.

Asked Toe take a look at lower right side of torso. Withdrew to the small bedroom. Examined; TB recommended, see own Doc, soon; get it checked.

12th June Knowle surgery.

Further to TB's examination, spoke with own Doc, to be sent for tests.

6th July Thrupe Lane Swallet; ATLAS

Mark Lumley, Dave King

A late start, down Thrupe, photographed entrance and Perseverance Pot. Missed the bar!

20th July Thrupe Lane Swallet; ATLAS

Mark Lumley, Clive North, Dave King

Cleared the debris from last Wednesday; deployed drain rods to dislodge the remaining the loose stuff. While ML took station, deploying the rods, PC wroggled them violently from further back. Lost a rod and almost Gonzo, as a large lump fell as ML gazed upwards. A piano is perched above; walls seem sound. The draught encouraging.

16th August Knowle surgery

09:00. Urgent phone call to attend practice. Doc announces have six months; based on test results. Pointed out, have just given the business away, sold house, and on Friday moving permanently to Doolin. Pointed out have no intention of dying, leaving Pauline to such circumstances.

20th August Permanently dwelling in Carnane.

21st August Pournagollum

Cheg Chester

Stream, at the gate, a foot below the lowest bar. Water levels high, many inlets issuing forth. Struggled up Branch Passage Gallery against an increasing flow, managed to swim through the corner in the rift. First trip living permanently in Doolin.

26th August Cullaun 2

Cheg Chester

Found high water levels at junction of entrance and cascades. Followed main streamway to terminal pot; did not attempt descend the torrent. Uneventful exit, CC climbed to check out a high-level inlet in main streamway; issuing from a very small hole.

1st September Coolagh River Cave

Cheg Chester

After no rain at all for three days, entered the cave via the field entrance, some debris obstructing the route. Steady trip to pitch into main drain. Found rigged with a handline. Water level in main streamway quite low. Good bit of foam along the canal and at the

sump. Encountered Jason Ryder, Eldon Pothole Club, walking the field, locating entrances for their trip next year, departing the next morning.

10th September Poulmagollum

Branch Passage Gallery/round trip out streamway to entrance pot

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath, Martin Grass

Entered via Gunman's, through Muddy Links to Branch Passage Gallery streamway. Water levels quite high. Steady trip to the pitch, abseiled into the lower streamway, down to main junction. Exited main entrance: pints in McGann's.

14th September Cullaun 2

Cheg Chester, Monique

A cracking sunny day; first trip for Monique: a Pole, a friend of Aileen Chester. Went at a steady pace; Monique took the whole experience in her stride. Reached the terminal pitch, did not descend. A pleasant two hours.

8th October Coolagh River Cave,

Cheg Chester

In Polldonough, within a short distance felt really crook, foolishly pushed on; had to abandon trip close to main streamway junction.

October (14th?) Shrulue, Galway

Nick Geh

Delighted at prospecting from aircraft, from NG's microlight, north toward Cong. Near Shrulue noted a deep looking pond, 20m diameter, five kilometres from the lough side, (ITM 525689 x 750423). It appears to have vertical sides. Some 1500 metres southwest is a large pond 200m diameter, at a similar distance from Lough Corrib.

16th October Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

Showed the site to the team, both enthused. U.B.S.S. (Julian Walford & Tony Boycott) had drilled and dug along part of the rift, aiming to reach a cross rift, bypassing the main shaft. Their plan is flawed; only enabling a view down an immature rift. The team excavated small stones and boulders from the base of the pot to a depth of eighteen inches. Managed to push the inch and a half diameter, five-foot crowbar four feet into a soft clay deposit. CC and CMcG investigated the snug U.B.S.S. route, agreeing it could be worked simultaneously with digging downward. CC suggested stabilize the boulder pile avoiding potential, future problems. In the event of the pot going a system of concrete pipes or secure shoring could then be installed permanently. Plan mid-week visit to install timberwork prior to next Sundays proposed trip.

23rd October Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester,

Cut up five fallen trees, loaded onto the Landrover, transported to the dig. Re-arranging polythene to divert one of the streams, commenced removing spoil on the shaft slope. Timber supports cut to length and fitted. The space behind the horizontal supports, filled with stone and smaller spoil facilitating drainage.

31st October Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath, Eoin McGrath

CC & PC went early into the cleared forestry to cut up more shoring. All timber, except the twelve-foot length was used to complete the shoring. Not enough spoil was available to back pack the timber to support it in place.

Review: the lower section of shoring is fitted horizontal taking advantage of the shape of the shaft walls, whilst the upper section is secured vertically at the top and bottom from a horizontal piece fixed in narrow bedding. CC & PC left while CMcG & EMcG investigated sounding depth of the cross rift beyond the U.B.S.S. limit. CMcG believes there to be a two second fall...! if only. CMcG & EMcG managed to split two large boulders that had fallen during erection of the shoring, along with one protruding from the main pile. Deposited spoil behind the timberwork. In the week CMcG made a visit to the U.B.S.S. dig, capping further along the rift. Using a piece of waste pipe and weighted cord threaded through it, to negotiate the narrow rift. CMcG plumbed the depth of the rift as 6.5 metres; in two locations. If this depth is taken into consideration, with the present depth of the pot, then a difference in depth between the two is a further four metres.

7th November Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester

Issues attempting exit the Landrover, on the exposed storm lashed mountain top; abandoned the idea of installing hauling frame due to torrential rain and force 9 winds.



The landing stage prior to back filling the area Photo Cheg Chester

11th November Poulacapple Pot
Cheg Chester

Braved storm and torrential showers to cut more timber for the hauling frame. At the dig the two main cross piece supports were eventually installed, ready for the horizontal spar which will allow precise positioning of the main hauling pulley. The north support, in the alcove, is fixed into the narrow bedding, wedged against the opposite wall with a support. The other cross piece is set back from the shaft some ten feet at a height of about seven feet, secured both sides. The spar to be set on these two supports is five metres long. Both streams substantial, the smaller stream flowing into the southern end of the depression previously noticed by CMcG at four inches (100mm), though its depth on this occasion was only 2" (50mm). The chainsaw and fuel were left with CC; PC in Bristol for the next week, or so.

15th – 22nd November Bristol Royal Infirmary

Notified of appointments. The consultant had kindly ignored the fact am now abroad. Fortunately he's from Youghal, Cork. Biopsies and tests throughout the week. Lodged in Jury's Hotel, Bristol: agony from the puncturing; Bishop would chortle.

27th November Doolin Community Centre; ICRO training

Twelve students.

REC Level 5, Advanced First Aid, Rescue skills; awarded distinction.

4th December Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester

A tree for the five metre spar was found, as the hauling support; a further length of small diameter timber cut for extras. Transported to the dig. En-route met Dennis McMahon of Kilfenora, enquired the owners of this area of Poulacapple. He didn't know on account of he had never been up to the area of the dig. Suggesting ask Jimmy Howard, Gragen Castle, who works for the forestry, he lives somewhere left at the cross. Positioned the pre-cut length and aligned it. Set up a two to one system, reducing the effort of lifting. Therefore, it follows to have a strong container. CC also suggested a net for lifting "small" boulders. Investigated a method of controlling the streams is an urgent task; after and during the rain each stream produces a huge volume of water. This will be challenging, each point of entry of the streams does not allow for collection or easy containment. Before departing checked the northern depression. Saw a substantial stream sinking in several places; a minor rift & two beddings. This seems an overflow, not a permanent stream. Both sites can be dug without hassle, though domestic rubbish has been dumped here. GPS reading above the shaft of the dig (INGR. M18744 x 04733).

11th December Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

Arrived with various materials; 1.2m x 1m pallet, thirty metre hauling rope, twin pulleys and clips, twenty litre plastic container, oddments of four-inch soil pipe and lengths of timber. The plan: to build a secure working area over the shaft to receive the bucket and investigate containing the left-hand stream. The previous GPS reading taken on the 4th Dec, appears incorrect. Checking his house with an OS map found the GPS reference system is Ireland 1965, not WGS 84. The reading taken at 14:00 was IM18790 x 04064. On arrival cattle and a lone herdsman noted to the north, in the field beyond the gate, the end of the track. CC made his way across to ask of the ownership of the area of the dig. Mickey Vaughan informed the area of the bog in question was divided up into many strips among many owners, who could be anywhere on the planet, so work away. Believe

have exercised enough enquiries seeking the owner to satisfy ourselves. The stream culvert opening was cleared and can be captured and piped without problem. The working platform was placed on top a hardwood joist; the rock then chiselled out to accept the width of the pallet. A removable pulley system was installed and positioned, the hauling system aligned, the spar fixed with pole steps screwed into its final position. It was loosely agreed, Wednesday evenings could be dig night, as the wet conditions only lend themselves to a couple of hours work in the shaft; digging midweek leaves the weekend for caving.

14th December Poulacapple Pot – Cullaun II

Wednesday trip abandoned due to specific materials as yet unobtained. Decided a swift run down Cullaun II to the pitch to exercise the limbs.

16th December Biopsies' results

Imminent death prediction downgraded. Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver diagnosed. Likely to live a while, however, informed am predisposed to cancer. Even though have low heart rate, Cholesterol, blood pressure,, don't drink spirits and am physically fit. Suggested have blood tested every six months to catch any signs of change early on, the one to look for is a rise in the present Cholesterol levels; LDL being 2.9.



PC in position to haul.

Photo Cheg Chester

18th December Poulacapple Pot
 Cheg Chester, later Nick Geh

Five consecutive days without rain. Arrived in light drizzle, with most of the required materials, except the battery drill. There are several deepening areas along the track that will need filling with gravel etc. Began to lay out pipework to convey the east stream, while CC assessed the main stream volume inside the alcove. One consideration was to pipe the two streams independently down the shaft. The ultimate decision was to use one four-inch pipe down the shaft, to maintain as much room for hauling and climbing. So, the east stream will be piped down into a tee piece that will connect to the main stream, from a cemented pipe, then down the shaft to discharge along the UBSS rift. CC began to remove the loose boulders in the alcove to facilitate installation of the plastic pipe outlet. The remaining boulders, some of which are substantial will be removed so the area of the alcove will be completely clear. Cut up a fresh road cone, and using some four-inch pipe, diverted the main stream across the alcove, onto the boulder slope, enabling cementing a section of pipe into the natural trough, catching all water collecting in the alcove. Due to the wet conditions decided abandon work in case of disturbing the setting mortar. Next visit, the area will be ready to pipe the main stream, though the east stream connection will still require final sealing. Any further increase in height required for the dam, containing the pipework will be a piece of cake as the worst job of sealing it all at bed rock level has been accomplished. NG suggests builders filling foam as the area is somewhat constricted; disagree. For the meantime have to manage with some sort of temporary seal until the winter weather dries the stream sufficiently for to work on the area. CC prepared two kibbles and net from a salvaged fishing net.

31st December Gragen West Cave
 Solo

Last of the year. Parked up at the cattle crush, en-route to Poulacapple. Serious local rainfall, judging from the waterlogged ground surface. A large stream sinking at Joyces Hole, at the junction with main streamway this volume was trebled. Crawled upstream, but flow quite high and strong; likely unable to exit the shaft at main entrance. Into the Irish Arms for a pint and a serious warm up.