

2012



Fraggle Rock; showing entrance area: debris removed 19th Oct 2011

Sixtieth Year Anniversary of the Pegasus Club Nottingham

1st January Fraggie Rock (UBSS reference S10d?)

Altitude 9m ish

INGR (R 07222 x 99687)

Townland: Glasha Beg

Solo

Weather cold and very windy; sea conditions rough: a neap tide. Walked over to look at the sea conditions; a lot of sea spray about, obviously. HW 10:18. These “quieter” conditions are an improvement on the last four weeks. This site may be problematic to sort digging appointments during restless weather. Cheg is going to like this spot it really has a good feel about it. This whole area holds more development, Poulnafearbui being only 200m east and some 20m higher. The weeks of illness have been detrimental.

5th January Upper Poulmagollum
Cheg Chester

A superb clear night: approaching full moon. Laddered the rift and descended. The first time into this part of the cave for CC; a steady trip up to Pollbinn entrance and back: a lot of water about. It's about a year since CC had the stents fitted, he looks and sounds so much better and is in great form, it's been a worry to see a close pal so ill.

7th January Black Head
Solo

Prospecting the area around the lower southeast slopes: a useful trip to retrieve fitness.

8th January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW10:30 with a moderate sea. Took CC his first visit, he is quietly impressed. The last four or five weeks have been quite bad weather conditions with very high seas. So, it's going to be interesting to see the effects after the removal of the cobble plug. No evidence of debris below on the lower limestone bench, though there was some scouring of the cave deposits. PC hauling and CC digging a pleasant hour was passed, after a change over, dug until 13:00, took photos to send to Tony Boycott.

12th January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

Opted to dig rather than do Pouldubh tonight; owing to find Pouldubh North entrance in the woods, in the thick mist. On a falling tide; HW 19:19: set up, progress was one metre from last time so now at 7.4 metres. The floor has risen slightly but the roof level remains constant. CC suggests a pulley to assist skid removal and retrieval. The deposit is darker and denser on the right hand of the excavation. Mild temperatures from the dense cloud cover; to the Roadside for a warm and a Black and Gold; courtesy the Burren Brewery

13th January Black head
Solo

Weather cloudy and cold: continued regaining fitness lost during five-week illness, combining prospecting Black Head. Searched lower southwest terraces; little found.

15th January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 09:02. Prep'd drill kit to install rawlbolts for the pulley system; installed three about a metre apart so set for the next three or four trips. Meanwhile PC forgot to bring the skid so focused on drilling, and removing some of the larger cobbles. Headed back CC noticed a water worn section of rock near the edge of the coast. Further searching found the remains of cave passage some four metres high, by 15m long; destroyed with sea action; worth recording the site with photos and survey.

16th January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

With a longer rope, the property of the late Martin Bishop, and the pulley this time, set about installing the new line, which proved brilliant, a useful system to move the skid in and out without hassle for the face digger. Progress was almost another three feet. That makes the passage now some eight metres in length. LW 16:05. Noticeable, PC's fitness is returning, the walk back to the truck carrying the equipment pack was without stops.

19th January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

In high winds, approximately two hours before LW 19:52, the pair worked their way down to the cave in the pitch darkness. The present tidal state is neaps with only a two-metre range; therefore, with the wind effect the sea was quite noisy below the spoil drop. The hauling set up was quickly installed and digging commenced. Within a short time though it was decided to move the pulley position forward; about a metre, to the next drilled hole. CC began digging first, the progress was twenty-five large loads of around twenty kilos each, following a shift change PC dug and progressed the undercutting and collapsed the overburden, leaving a sizable pile. Progress was excellent; CC did another turn and all the spoil was cleared to surface. Distance was almost another metre; though the height of the deposit is increasing. The width of the passage appears to be increasing. The floor line appears to be leveling off parallel to the roof level. At least two supports for the return hauling line are required to keep the line away being trapped beneath the skid during hauling.



Fraggle Rock 8th January
Cheg: at seven metres, showing deposit & cross section of passage stratigraphy

21st January Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

Lovely day but windy, commenced digging only to notice the passage seemed to be becoming even wider. After another foot the passage began turning right, at quite an angle! Moved the pulley position up to the last 14mm hole; drilled at a stretch. Need to

install more line supports to suspend it above the skid run. Two good hours of effort then off to the Roadside. LW 09:25.

22nd January Poulfaicaislean

Cheg Chester

Having left the area to stabilize for a while the pair returned to reassess the situation at the bottom of the shaft. On arrival the boulder previously blown to reduce its overhang had fallen apart with several large lumps falling away, a further fall on the NW corner had occurred; all this had fallen into the bottom areas of the shaft surround, not inside it, but had caused significant pressure to form on the shoring. Taking Joe Garners concerns into account and the fact that it really is only Cheg and I digging here we have to back fill the hole for public relations and maintain a good name. Bugger!

27th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

14:00 early visit to dig on a lovely bright, cold day. LW 13:32. Found evidence of wave action in the passage. Continued around the corner that has appeared; the fill is almost to the roof. PC drilled a further hole for the pulley on the turn in the passage, to reduce friction. Best part of another metre dug out. The deposit is becoming more loosely packed making digging easier. The pile dug previously was washed away from the bench.

29th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

Since the 27th in excess of 40mm of rain has fallen. On arrival the team set up the normal hauling system and commenced to dig. It was soon noticed the face of the dig was water logged; water had accumulated and had caused the face to become unstable. So digging was easier. A total of 44 skids were removed and photographs taken to illustrate the strata of the working face and considerable volume of water issuing from the beddings to the south of the dig. The pulley position was moved forward to the point where the corner is obvious. The pile of debris dug on the 27th was still there today. The deposit has changed in its nature and formation. On the bend a collection of cobbles collapsed; falling out as a pocket. The clay deposit too has changed position from bottom left at around five metres to mid right at eleven metres. There is also an increasing sticky clay deposit, not too much but there, adjacent to the clay, mid'ish right: see photo of 10/11m for details. What is interesting is the quantity of fresh water issuing from the bedding along the bench outside and the quantity seeping through the digging face.

30th January

North Clare Historical Society

Ennistymon

Asked to present a talk on the Phosphate Mines of Toomullin, Doolin, paper.

9th February Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

Distance of the working face is now some 34 feet in. The deposit is packed solidly to the roof, with an interesting development at the base. An increasing thick deposit of sand is appearing, now almost 150mm. The overall passage length was increased a further 0.6m. The upper sand and stone deposit are a well packed fill, the sand tightly packed between the jammed stones. No gap or air space is present. The team is becoming concerned of this sea deposition and how far the sea could have managed to press sand through the

gaps in the stones. HW 18:19. Progress is slowing with the passage completely full and the compacted fill, and the ever-increasing distance from entrance for hauling.

Theory:

The team discussed and believes that successive lumps of the coast have repeatedly fallen off, over time; each time the coastal bench recedes the passage is “exposed”. This section of passage, previously being at a greater distance away from the previous (original) line of the coast, has an amount of loose deposit present which is now exposed to the power of the sea; only now any wave action entering the open entrance does not have to travel quite so far up the passage. Similar to the water pressure is the air pressure created by the wave filling the passage, almost a water piston so to speak blasting the looser sand forward. The team’s conclusion is there should be a point encountered, where the sand becomes looser and the air space gradually returns and increases in size. What happens then to the clay and cobble streamway deposit is another guess.



Cheg; 29th January Fraggie Rock at 9-10 metres

12th February Poulfaoicaislean
Cheg Chester

PC arrived at 09:30 to commence disassembling the top section of the shaft shoring. CC arrived around 10:00 with the top section removed the work to fill the shaft started. No sign of BS or CMcG. After some two hours the shaft was leveled to above ground level with the rock and stone removed previously. A great disappointment; so the pair went to the Roadside to drown their sorrows.



Deposition/stratigraphy of fill at around thirteen metres

13th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

Parking up bumped into Pat Connolan who has cattle on the commonage; after introductions amused him trying to explain caving. HW 21:08. Set off, arriving at the dig to a superb blood red sunset; set up shop with a 120-foot rope. Another rope from the very late Martin Bishop climbing gear bequeathed to PC. A small amount of debris had fallen from the face, this was quickly cleared and the real work commenced. Progress now appears to be some 0.6m per shift with a minimum of 0.5 of a tonne removed. Distance of the working face from entrance at the end of work tonight was some 36 feet. The deep sand deposit at the base has now disappeared, the bottom half and top quarter of the face is still very wet. The bottom is so wet that it has no structural integrity and digs very easily. The normal procedure is to remove the lower deposit causing the heavier clay deposit to collapse under its own weight.

16th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

A misty evening with wind from a westerly direction: visibility deteriorating. HW 18:22. Set up as normal, digging with a new skip PC had made earlier. Within half an hour CC announced that the left-hand wall was beginning to turn, shortly after probing, CC confirmed the right-hand wall had turned a sharp right-hand bend, to the south. Digging continued with PC using a gauging trowel to remove the top sandy layer, again to follow the left-hand wall to confirm if lower and upper sections of the wall were continuing

together. This fact confirmed the pile brought down was removed and tidied. Progress was another two feet, so distance some 38 feet from entrance. The team hopes the bend corrects as soon as possible to avoid future problems such as a right angle, to drag the skip out. A survey is required, the terraces could then be prospected for other evidence.

18th February Black head
Solo

Continuing the return to a reasonable fitness level; got to cairn after 47 minutes. Encountered Rescue 115 conducting exercise; attempting a low hover just north of cairn; crouched, waited and watched, in sight of pilot. On the way back wandered too far north coming down from cairn, corrected route. The recently purchased Montane Primaloft shell jacket; very good in bitter cold, 40/45 knot winds, with a light fleece and T shirt.

19th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

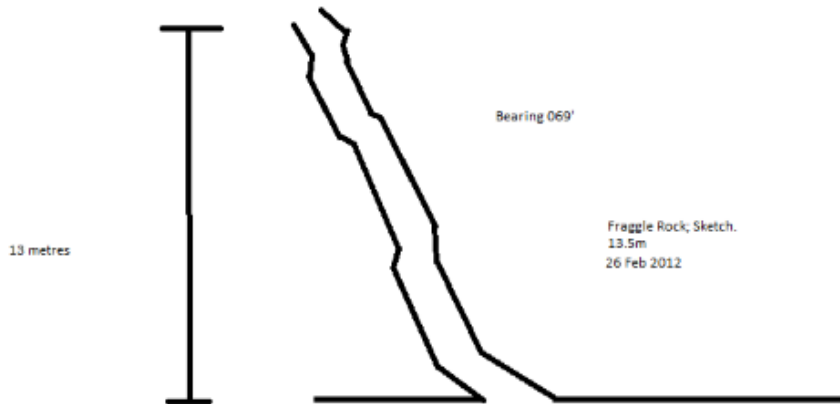
A fabulous day; sunny, cold and very bright: LW conditions with a westerly wind 10-15 knots. HW 15:41. Found evidence of yesterday's rough sea conditions having disturbed the dig face at 38+ feet. Several skids worth of debris scattered on the floor so cleared that first and commenced on the face. With the previous progress the last pulley hole was now behind the digger somewhat, which proved awkward to reach back and retrieve. So, the pulley position needs to be moved forward by some two metres so PC took down the drill and installed two, one this side of the bend with the other on the left apex of the bend. CC had previously pulled his back so he opted to do the digging for the whole shift while PC did the hauling and lifting; the pair managed 44 skids. Today's progress has exposed the length of the "bend" to where it is turning back left, thankfully, CC took a bearing along the passage to PC who was holding the light; bearing is 069' to 070' and coincides approximately with the evidence of a fault on the surface. Because drag was experienced during pulling the skid back inwards other bolts needed to be installed to align the rope to reduce such drag, so PC drilled a further two, this should do for now.

20th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 16:24 springs.
Arrived once more in the dark, made all the worse by the very dense mist, Inis Oirr lighthouse was totally obscured. CC commenced and progress was quite swift, continuing to expose the extent of the outside of the "bend". PC noticed that the change of position of the bolts along with the use of pulleys for supporting the return line was superb, almost no friction present at all. PC then entered to give CC a break and drew down a lot of the upper sand deposit, about ten skids worth. So CC re-entered and the final clearance was completed. PC did make a deep hole in the sand deposit to see how far the upper section of passage that constituted the bend extended; he followed the curve for about half its arc, so the dimensions of the existing passage appear to continue. PC believes that after another ten metres or so the need will arise for a monorail to convey the spoil. A total of 53 skids removed in 75 minutes: at a minimum average of 10 kilos that's at least 500 kilos of spoil dug out. Not bad for two old sods.

23rd February Fraggie Rock

HW 18:15. Abandoned the visit tonight due to 40 knot southwesterly winds with a 5m Spring tide, the upper bench will certainly be awash. Plan to visit tomorrow afternoon.



Rough sketch; Fraggle Rock trending on 069° Mg.

24th February Fraggle Rock
Cheg Chester

HW Springs is at 18:50. With this in mind and the present sea state chanced climbing down to the bench. The walk down fantastic; a superb blue sky and warm, very nice. Privileged to see a display of the sea crashing upon the shore; PC took the chance to get some photos while CC prepared the set up. CC had previously made a skid up with two runners to reduce the effort of hauling and had brought this along. Once at the face PC sent both skids in so as to try out rotating the filling and removal. CC removed evidence of wave ingress from the floor and began to dig, by the time four skids had been removed it began to dawn on PC that the system was very swift, But, there was no minor break between skids to stand and stretch the back or take a breath! But within a very short time 54 skids were dragged out!! The team is still following the bend around to the left. The cobbles are gradually becoming larger, the clay layer appears to becoming thinner, and the lower layer is increasing while still loosely packed and therefore easy to dig. The upper sand layer seems to be remaining a constant thickness. Both were shagged out so packed and staggered back to the truck and went to McGann's for a swift one. The place was busy for a Friday; it's the Russell Weekend.

26th February Fraggle Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 19:59 Bumped into Pat Connolan again; passing a while with him. After a quick set up, which involved installing another line support rawlbolt, digging commenced and swiftly amassed 25 skids, after a shift change a further 20, finishing with a total of 65 skids removed. At a conservative average of 15 kilos apiece that's around 900 kilos of spoil. Both the team felt the effort so visited the Roadside for a beer, Billy had found a 25 kilo tub for the next skid, good man Billy. CC has suggested we dig Wednesdays and Fridays and Sundays, PC is up for any digging at any time. So as of the 29th we move

from Thursdays to the Wednesday and Friday nights. Final distance measured as 13.5 metres to the face.

NB: BS turned up in the evening with PC's new battery drill charger, PC explained the possible need for a monorail, BS is going to prepare some 1.2m lengths of bar with joining brackets hopefully ready for experimentation later on.



Cheg at entrance to Fraggie Rock 24th February

29th February Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

LW 15:27; HW 21:53: Texted CMcG earlier to inform of the trip tonight for 18:30; proceeded to set up the lines; work commenced with CC doing first shift. CMcG & PC did the hauling and tipping, with two people the work is less taxing. CMcG then took over from CC and did a further 20 skids; total skids removed was 50. CMcG impressed by the progress since his visit of 31st Oct 2011. His assistance would very welcome to reduce effort of just two and increase excavation rates. Having passed the dog leg, into the dark zone, a light is required to dig by. The small piece of bedding catching the skids needs removing, to reduce hassle. The pulley position is now some two metres back from the face so another needed for the next session. CC & PC went to the Roadside. PC voiced his long-term concerns regarding the distance being steadily gained and the physical effort of drawing out the spoil, i.e. utilizing something like a monorail. Discussion proceeded to favour a narrow-gauge railway that could be extended out from the entrance crossing the gully, cross over the bench to tip over the edge; reducing any lifting to a minimum and speeding up the hauling. Total distance now 14.3 metres.

1st March Kilinaboy X-Po

As part of a team of three, asked to repeat talk on the Phosphate mines of Toomullin Doolin. Mattie Shannon gave a talk on the flora and fauna of the Burren and Michael Shannon gave a talk on the McNamara family history. A superb setting; maintained in its original state by a local history group.

2nd March Fraggie Rock Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

LW 18:05 neap tides the surf turbulent. PC installed a new bolt and repositioned the hauling pulley. The ropes were set up quickly and CC began, producing 20 skids, CMcG then took a shift for 17 skids. Suddenly the waves began to break over the upper bench, the wind easterly! The team s abandoned the dig. CMcG took a photo looking inward.

3rd March Fraggie Rock Pauline Cronin

As it turned to a nice sunny day we had a short walk, PMC wanted to see the cave. On arrival at 14:30 the sea was quite rough, HW being 13:31, explained the occasional wash of the southern bench. PC left PMC on the cliff top and went down onto the upper bench and into the dig for a look. Evidence of wave penetration, the spare skid washed to the face that's 12 metres in. What spoil was left when we swiftly left has been washed about, entrance very full of water; Brian the boulder was back inside the entrance; again.

4th March Fraggie Rock Cheg Chester

A cold but bright day with snow flurries; nothing came of them: HW 14:38 neaps. At the dig the team set up to remove spoil left from the dig on the 2nd March having left prematurely owing to wave action over the bench. The spoil pile left was significant, to add to this there was some debris washed down from PC's visit yesterday. Once the spoil was cleared the team excavated the face. PC began to undermine, as usual, then changed to clearing the drier upper sand deposit. The sand was indeed softer to dig as previously discussed with CC. The centre is very soft so this was followed to a point of 49 feet. Here between two small stones appeared to be a gap. A little further scraping produced a definite air space between the stones and the roof. PC went to get the camera while CC remained; meanwhile CC removed a single stone to give a better view of the gap. After a while CC announced that the passage now has a draught and accompanying odour, an almost sour sort of ammonia smell. Now obviously this may well be a cross connection draught to the sea cliff; however, need wait and see if the odour remains. Temperature in the end of the dig, previously normally hot, was noticed as colder. The face is now 47/48 feet, (14.6m) the air space was found at 49/50 feet (14.9m) Cleared up and removed a small section of spoil from the left wall to facilitate the hauling line, 51 skids removed. About to leave the team hurriedly sheltered in the entrance as a heavy squall arrived.

10th March Fraggie Rock Solo

Low water 12:13 (0.1m) With CC in the UK PC was burning to see the extent of the air space previously uncovered on the 4th March. PC opted to use a short line, (Gus and Crook), to drag out the skids, two at a time, fixed to each end of the rope, dragged behind him. There was evidence of wave action up to the face. Within a few inches the gap grew larger, the top of the fill becoming something like 50 – 75 mm below the crown of the passage arch. Clearing above the clay band, to a depth of a spade (0.7m) uncovered a solitary clean cobble with condensation on it; this is in an arch, a small opening on the

north side of the passage. It would seem, perhaps, that this is the source of the draught previously noticed. With the area now open it is possible to see that the passage is turning again, to the right, PC had half expected it to turn left, for a while, to mirror the previous passage shape; obviously this is not the case. Really should survey this cave now. A total of 17 skids full were removed. As more deposit was removed two things emerged, 1) the small hole on the left (north) is certainly where most, if not all, the draught originates, 2) the deposit for the next two metres is no longer up to the roof. This may bear out the theories of how far the sea can compress deposits such as sand through cobbles. It may well be PC's imagination but the roof line appears to be bearing right again. A tape measure was used to check the passage length: previously PC had used the length of his Wellington boots; (the length of which is 1 foot! Arf arf). These appear to be reasonably accurate as the distance to the face today is indeed 48 feet. The length of the passage that had been packed to the roof has been some 16 feet (5m) the bolt on the under hang is at 43 feet (13m). Really looking forward to the next four trips



Cheg, with air space, at 15 metres; 4th March

11th March Fraggie Rock

Solo

Low water 12:51. Arrived at the dig under an overcast sky with a little drizzle coming down but it wasn't a cold day. Straight into the face to tip away at it while CC still in UK, with NB, DG, PT and other Pegasus; he's back Monday. Continued filling two skids at a time so one trip could empty them both. A total of sixteen brim full skids were removed. On one exit, PC's sudden emergence scared a visiting lone French climber, spragged above the entrance. He pointed to the entrance, with PC covered in sand and mud and in

broken English asked “is that a cave?”, PC looked at the cave, then the climber replying, yes, that is a cave.

14th March Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

Low water 15:13. Sunset/dark at around 19:00 the day is beginning to stretch out. On arrival the team found that three young climbers (2x female 1x male) students from NUI Galway, bouldering next to the entrance. It seems the French climber from the 11th March was correct; it is a popular spot. Said hellos and started to set things up. Again we found evidence of some wave action. Showed CC the hole and the deposit levels. PC put another bolt in near the face and digging commenced. After 20 skids PC did a shift change, CC had progressed the face, PC attacked the upper sand fill and opened up a distance of some 4 feet (1.2m). With this amount of progress, the passage can be seen to be definitely bearing right. Another shift change and dug the face level with the draught hole. Distance from the entrance now 50 feet (15m); left the blue rope to facilitate the next digging position.

16th March Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

LW18:13. Set up hauling system as normal, positioning the hauling pulley at the forward bolt. This is now too far to use the red rope alone so PC utilized the short blue left here on the 14th. A cracking clear cold evening with some cloud west over Inis Oir, dissipating later, to give the team a superb panorama of the firmament. Normal shift rotation, CC first, who progressed the face about a foot; PC moved it further on another foot. No upper sandy spoil was removed, just the lower strata. During his shift PC explored water issuing from the hole on the left, and dug it out to a depth of about 18 inches, sure enough a steady amount of moisture appearing from the deposit there. Distance gained was another two feet; 52 feet (15.8m). 47 skids removed. The passage has turned right and reduced in width by some 6 inches! This suggests that even with just the two digging they will be dealing with some 20% less spoil, so progress may return to the previous yard per visit, if only. At the roadside the place was busy; most likely for tomorrow's St Patrick's Day festivities. Tony Boycott should be well pleased and surprised, perhaps, with our progress since his last visit of 4th November 2011; with his valuable help as the third man the progress will be very swift. As previously proved with CMG's assistance

18th March Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

LW 08:14. The Team arrived at the gate in the most glorious sunshine but with a cool breeze from the southeast. Set up the gear and commenced to dig PC feeling very stiff, so had a slow start to the hauling. The deposit around the area of the small hole appears to be more compacted than previously encountered, perhaps wind or water pressure has entered here and caused this compaction to occur. However, the team moved the face a further two feet (6m); the upper sandy deposit was removed for a metre without any air space. At the end of the shifts CC made up the last skid from the upper sand deposit and opened the air space once again. From this emanated the awful smell and draught again, growing in intensity as the pair sat there. The point where the air space reappeared is at about 57 feet (17m). Face is now at 54 feet (16.5m) 60 skids were removed minimum average 10Kgs; though in reality the weight is closer to 15Kgs. PC took several photos of the passage shapes. The team then headed to the Roadside for a Black & Gold.



Fraggle Rock from 10 metres, minus its fill: Cheg outside, 18th March
(Note floor scallops and roof radii)

21st March Fraggle Rock

Sean O'Conner, Cheg Chester,

HW 16:39. The sea was running a two-metre swell but no waves breaking over the bench, from the dryness no waves had covered the bench prior to arrival at the tides peak. CC had invited SO'C to assist. After picking him up at the Church the team progressed to the gate and thence to the cave. During setting up CC found that some type of mammal had left a small pile of poo on the upper bench among the sand. It is Oval-ish in shape; not sure of its route into this point. The small air space doesn't seem large enough to allow ingress: however, the smell is still around, it is even in the sand so perhaps the team is digging through the mammal's toilet area of its burrow? Once set up the team set to and changed shift every ten skids. PC drilled a hole for a small hook to attach the rope end to at the entrance. At the end of the shift another bolt hole was drilled a foot back from the face. A knot for hauling was repositioned on the red rope an obvious indication of forward progress. PC estimates that as of today the distance is some 56 feet (17m). SO'C did well considering it takes quite a bit of getting used to the hauling as well as balancing on the edge of the cliff to dispose of the spoil; he is a very useful asset. A total of 48 skids were moved. All swiftly changed and headed to the Roadside for some Black and Gold

23rd March Fraggle Rock

Sean O'Conner, Cheg Chester,

HW 17:48: Springs: New Moon, wind easterly and very cold. Changed quickly and set off to the dig. PC went to check on more poo, fortunately no deposits on the deposits, arf,

arf, arf. Set up the hauling system and CC began. SO'C followed. During PC's shift, as the sand was removed, an area of roof was exposed with severe fractures. One piece actually dropped out as the cobble was removed beneath it. Two other items found appeared to be clear plastic sheet and some other sort of thin black plastic sheet (silage wrapping?) located behind a sand blockage but on a surface. The fracture area is interesting, beneath it and not part of it were several angular stones rammed in quite tight. PC could not see any other deformation of the phreatic arch, doubting there will be any problems digging beneath. Once opened the airspace was seen to continue, though small, in the centre line of the roof. The sand appears to have "pockets" of heavier, coarser gravel on the right-hand side. The occurrence of the plastic suggests the air gap, however small, has been open in very recent times. Its presence there has been assisted by animal or the action or wind or water. Face distance measured at 57 feet (17m); 54 skids removed. While hauling CC noticed difficulty in dragging one of the skids, alas the bottom has worn through and curling up to form, as it were, a brake, PC has two others to use. As some corrosion was noticed on one of the rawlbolts all of them were removed to cleaning and oiling: PC in the UK until Saturday 31st.

NB: Digging resumes Sunday 1st April. TB arrives the 31st March. The team braved the 40 knot winds back to the vehicle; to the Roadside.

1st April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

HW 13:39, approaching the end of neaps: a lovely bright dry day with a sea state of smooth to slight, Connemara clearly visible. PC had only just returned from MF's place in Wales last night at 22:30, eagerly anticipating the morrow's digging. CC arrived at PC's then to TB's cottage to pick him up; TB looks well if a little tired: only to be expected following the recent death of his mother. A swift trip to the dig, on route showed TB the cave remnant found by CC previously, perhaps this may be the cave previously noted by UBSS member Brian Otway? TB impressed by progress of the dig since his last visit in November 2011. Once TB was brought up to speed on the various aspects the team commenced digging; producing significantly larger/fuller skids of spoil than normal with just two regular diggers present. The face was pushed forward almost 3 feet, the upper sand deposit pushed on a further three feet, or so. During PC's shift another bend in the passage was noticed to be forming to the left (north). The roof fractures are still present; another metre of progress will bring us beneath the principal area: the cracks can be seen to extend forward. A measurement at the cessation of operations showed the face to be some 59 feet (18m) from the entrance. Total number of skids removed was 66; however, with TB present the skids were virtually brim full so a reasonable allowance of an extra 1/3rd could be credited so a total of some 80 to 85 average sized skids would be more accurate. PC showed TB the two rose-coloured erratics found previously in the face. The next trip will require the bolt to be moved forward by some six feet or so. The consensus is to survey the cave and the adjacent sites and transpose the passage limit to the surface. Moving to the Roadside for Black and Gold's at 3 euro each! The price maintained until it rains; that was why the packed bar was praying for a drought.

4th April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott, Pete Glanville, Martin Grass,

HW 16:30 springs. The team assembled at Liam Frawley's cottages near McGann's after picking up TB; MG & PG followed in their own truck: a swift walk down in a cold breeze. CC commenced after PC had drilled the hauling bolt hole within a foot of the face. It was crowded with so many, but work continued at a steady pace. Some delay while PG did his artistic photography. After an hour or so MG & PG left to walk back to attend a dinner.

The threesome remained and completed 46 skids. Erratics are still being removed from the spoil. A rougher granular grit is appearing in small deposits throughout the face. The stones from the upper sand level have become surprisingly larger. Distance achieved is some 61 feet (18.5m)

6th April Fraggle Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

HW17:48, springs. On arrival, prior to digging, a swift inspection of the surface some 60 feet from the edge of the bench was carried out to ascertain if there were any evidence of the passage below; there was none, beyond several joints all of which are not visible below. Having said that, the shattered area below is localized with a crack heading inward. Owing to the physical weariness of the individuals it was decided to do some house keeping down in the dig and to try out the idea of a truck to convey the spoil. After several attempts it was considered a disaster in its present design and form: alas, back to the drawing board. CC commenced and for a change cleared off the upper sandy deposits first of all, to see the direction the passage will take. That done, for over a metre depth, TB changed shifts then continued with removing the main face and progress finished at a paced distance of some 63 feet (19+m) a tape was used as a straight-line measurement from the entrance to the face that gave a distance of 18.6 metres. In the end the Team's evening of light work idea evaporated and 43 skids were completed. The spoil heap beneath the bench has increased, as no substantial wave action has occurred in the last two weeks. What continues to concern PC is that if the average size of the team is CC & PC progress will slow proportionally, to maintain production with just the two, as the distance increases, some other method of extraction is needed. During the dig a substantial phreatic pendant was found, also the stones deposited in the upper sandy layer are becoming significantly less compacted with sand; the sand is not as prevalent as before. Does this mean or indicate that we are reaching a point where the resultant air compression etc of the wave action is approaching its limits of being able to blow sand along the air gap?

8th April Fraggle Rock & The Tube

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The plan was to survey and, perhaps with enough time remaining, dig. The team commenced setting out a base triangle on the bench outside both entrances to survey off from, set between the two sites. The first cave, (S10c?), was measured at almost 30m then a swift line survey done of Fraggle Rock, measured at a straight line of 18m. Once completed, time being short today the team took advantage of the low spring tide to fix the Chart Datum for future use. PC ventured down to the waters edge while TB measured and CC took a clinometer reading. The average wave swell indicated that adding another 12" (1 foot) would be acceptable to approximately indicate water level to chart datum relevant to that time and day.

NEW FINDS

Next, the team moved south into Ballyvoe Townland, to the two sites recorded last year by TB & PC. The first tube PC checked turned out to be some 14m, the furthest one, entered by TB, at a height above chart datum of some 0.5m, has gone some 15m along a wet crawl into a two-metre square passage with a chamber about 4/5m diameter! These sites position just above chart datum means it is virtually covered by all states of the tide, with the exception of a spring tide below 1m this suggests that entry may only be some three or four days a month. Access will be problematic, when small waves present.



Photo Pete Glanville

Cheg Chester, Pat Cronin, Tony Boycott and Martin Grass; 4th April.

9th April S10f, Ballyvoe

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 13:30 springs. PC drove down to the pier to ascertain the state of the sea: it appeared to have a one metre swell. This put in doubt the chance to enter the low bedding. PC then went to TB's place to discuss options.

Plan "A" enter, explore as far as conditions allow and survey out.

Plan "B" Remove the pallet obstructing entry into an adjacent hole to S10f.

Plan "C" To Fraggie Rock to dig.

Upon arriving in the area, the bench was awash, the entrance submerged; with each wave a significant amount of water entered. Observed by PC who managed to reach the corner of the cliff and, while washed by the waves, could see around the corner to the entrance. PC then monitored the situation for five minutes to see the volume of water washing into the cave, this was substantial. During observation, no air was expelled as the cave filled. Nor did there appear to be any reduction in speed with which the sea entered the entrance. TB took some photos to illustrate the situation. The team then moved back to make the climb up and over to be able to gps the caves position from the bench directly above it. This bench has much sea life present; barnacles etc. so is an excellent datum for judging sea levels in the cave and the adjacent "bay" just around the corner. The team moved on to the lower area of the small bay, attempting to scale the far bench and investigate the cliff and benches further south. PC managed to get almost level but no handholds were present on the slippery surface, the plan is to return and fit a bolt to hang a rope or ladder. In the distance, at the base of the cliffs a substantial entrance

can see seen, perhaps some 40 metres wide and 4 metres high? PC states this area seems familiar; from the trips of the early 80's? The team climbed back up the cliff and moved off to Fraggie Rock to finish the day off. Thirty skids were removed and the face progressed by some 18" about 0.45m. The previous day's rainfall, some 25m, had created some minor falls and the resultant ready-mix. While TB was hauling the area was hit by a severe squall, grabbing the bags etc. he couldn't save a skid which blew away to the bench below. During the squall PC could hear a dribble of water start falling into the passage somewhere toward the entrance. An excellent fun day out!



Photo Tony Boycott

PC observing "Watergate" flooding, located around the corner.

11th April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

HW 21:30; Neaps. Arrived at the dig on a beautiful sunny evening, CC commenced digging and completed twenty skids, during of which the red ropes outside sheath failed. Immediately on TB's shift this proved to be a problem; catching in the pulleys: so, CC went in to TB to assist, dragging the empties back in. PC remained hauling for the duration. The final tally being 53 skids with the distance now being some 66 feet (20m); at this point a slip off slope appears to be forming on the north (left) side and at the beginning of a minor bend in the passage, also there appears to be a widening of the passage and an arch at roof level, suggesting an inlet, TB suggests that this possible inlet may only be developed above the calcite bed, hemispherical as it were. Some gardening of the main way allowed a good view of the passage length ahead, estimated to be 2.5 to 3 metres. The air space appears to be increasing and there appears to be less sand deposit. Not sure what this implies. CC is to sort out a braided rope (120') as a replacement. As

distance is increasing necessitating a lighter load in the skids; the need for a deep skid is moot. The average weight is now 10-12kgs. Therefore, PC intends to cut a skid in half making two out of the one an economic use all round. The draught felt tonight was substantial, the wind outside was westerly straight onto the face and blowing up the hill. Is this draught from cave or from the large Lackglass entrance some fifty metres north? Is the large entrance catching the wind and funneling it through to the dig? TB's last dig prior to his departure, he returns to us at the end of June.

12th April The Bay Area, Ballyvoe

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 16:02; Neaps. The intention was to revisit the holes located previous; to remove the pallet and look-see at the hole behind the boulder: and to drill a hole to hang a ladder from to access the benches to the south. On arrival CC & TB worked on the pallet while PC climbed up a boulder spragged across and drilled the hole to hold a belay bar for the ladder. Meanwhile the pallet was destroyed and access into a small area was gained. The other hole was looked at and several smaller boulders removed. This one big bugger needs destroying. The echo is astounding. TB tried to relate the distance etc he traveled to the immediate surface features. CC & PC will return to remove the couple of boulders jammed in the entrance. The water in the entrance appears 1m+ deep and level with the sea, though no swell was noted, even though there was a one metre swell present beyond the boulder field. The team then climbed up to the bench and investigated several "holes" none went at all. The huge rock shelter – sea cave is 50 metres wide, six deep and some 5 metres high, obviously created by the many boulders at its base; some the size of large cars. The team managed to get to the major collapse to the south side of the cave, no other sites found.

15th April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

HW 14:08. Arrived to find the place heaving with climbers; advised them to park considerably: pressed on and set up the new 42m rope supplied by the late Gerry Chester. Digging progressed steadily and the arch on the left (north) side began to develop, it does look like a side passage that contributed to the water flow in the main passage. Seventy-one skids removed in total, minimum weight therefore 700kgs. The main section of passage exhibits indications of erosion from the water entering from the side passage. The working face is very wet, to the point of constant collapse during disturbance from digging forward. The team has managed to just exceed the 20-metre mark. Still draughting!!!!

18th April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester,

HW 16:37. The weather during the day had been very poor, heavy rain showers and high winds. Crab Island was beset with waves from the west. As the team arrived it was immediately noticed that the bench was completely clear of all debris from previous digging, looking over the edge not only the huge pile but all the other debris washed into the various hollows was gone. The previous day of wind and turbulence had wiped the area clean. Inside the entrance the small hollow in the floor was empty of debris and there was obvious evidence that walls had been thoroughly washed out. At the working face a long slope of debris welcomed the team, it could be seen that the wave action had not only filled the entire passage but had passed into the air gap above and beyond the working face over 70 feet in! Some debris had fallen from the face, but not much, maybe a couple of inches, when the face was squared up a claggy, shaley deposit was found at

the base, of a red – brown colour. In the side passage at 50 feet, where the bucket is stored, PC found a little shale round stone, the only piece of shale found so far here, of a diameter of some 60mm (2.5 inches). After setting up the shifts rotated and cleared the debris, 56 skids were removed. The passage shape has now become irregular, the rounded phreatic bottom has given way to an almost “V” like trough, and this is opposite the “other” side passage that appears to have been an inlet to some degree. Another metre of progress will show what shape the passage maintains..... Virtually all the debris removed was wet to very wet to slurry.

22nd April Fraggie Rock

Sean O’Conner, Cheg Chester,

LW 12:30. Set to digging forward, following the clear up of last Wednesday. Set up a larger diameter pulley without success, it handles the rope well but it needs to be placed in a better, more aligned position, PC will drill another bolt hole next week. S’OC swept out the water and smaller stones, to prevent the skid from jamming. CC dug forward to just level with the next side passage. PC continued and dug away part of the entrance to the passage, which took almost the whole of the 31 skids of his shift; this passage, larger than the one at 50 feet, appears to be the principal source of the white clay deposit. Ahead no white clay appears present in the face only the yellow/cream coloured stuff. At the base of the face there appears to be a brown layer, a sort of shale deposit, though it isn’t shale? On the right, directly opposite the passage the ledge has been eroded from above and below, forming almost a pendant. The undersides of these pendants appear to have had the force of water against them causing them to have an appearance like a stalactite. PC intends to photograph them next week. On the left and right sides, beyond the pendants there seems to be a gentle widening of the passage. Was the narrowing of this section due to the stream coming in from this north passage? PC did dig into the northern passage a little to ascertain the nature of the fill, it is mostly the awful white-ish clay, very sticky, and it would be brutal to dig that out. Gerry’s 42m rope will be too short once the pulley position is moved forward. PC is going to sort out some 6mm dive line for the return line. PC has given some thought to the increasing distance etc. and still consider the monorail for a transport system. The idea now being that once installed the carriers would be metal pails hung on individual rollers, chained together as a train. The two diggers at the face one digging one filling and hanging the pails, then pulling them out to empty. Smaller pails would mean ease of lifting into position.

26th April Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester,

The weather was horrendous; a vicious northeast gale. LW 14:43. PC drilled two more holes for the hauling system and prepared the lines, while CC set up the suspension krabs and pulleys. The passage is turning to the right slightly, by quite how much will become clearer in another metre of progress, though if the previous nature of the passage is considered it won’t be by all that much. The good fortune is twofold one, CC removed two large cobbles and the draught increased immediately and significantly; and two, the lower section of the passage is widening to about the 2.5 feet width again, and this will allow room to dig easily once more with the skid by the diggers side. It’s been very awkward to dig in the “narrows” trying to fill the skid. PC had cut two skids from one container. This means more economic use of them. Also, they cannot be overfilled and run really well, not only that as they weight about the 10kg they fit the bill on all fronts. Over two feet progress and 60 skids removed. The draught is such that is it very cold when working next to the opening, how’s that then! But it there could be the chance that it is from the adjacent cave of Lackglass, but somehow the team doesn’t think so. It has

to be born in mind that for the draught to increase so quickly the passage beyond must be of a larger size to accommodate the flow of air currents. This means they may be coming closer to the point of breakthrough; PC measured the distance at 70' (21m). During finishing up a small stone dropped onto PC, from the roof, although he looked, he couldn't find exactly where from.



Fraggle Rock; stratigraphy at around 18 metres; 22nd April

29th April Fraggle Rock

Cheger Chester

Northeasterly – easterly winds so temperature very cold; wind force 6/7: sea state rough. HW 11:32, Set up with a different pulley and started digging, some of the face had collapsed but nothing too much. CC carried on the spadework with a minor niggling back pain so PC opted to do a longer shift outside. PC noticed that the lighter skids being used are showing signs of wear. At 42 skids the team changed shifts and PC commenced removing debris from the upper fill, now much less sand present yet more cobbles, both rounded and angular. A large stone on the left could not be moved so further removal of surrounding debris was carried out. It soon became clear that the stone was part of the original roof and had dropped down by some 0.1m, so there must have been a gap beneath it, most likely the pronounced bedding we have previously seen on the left, but choked with clay etc. The immediate area of the roof shows signs of fracturing once again. PC continued to squeeze over the top to remove the obscuring cobbles so as to get a better view of the stal curtain (small). To the point where he pushed even further forward and cleared the area to clearly expose the solid forefield wall and a very large undercut to the right suggesting that the passage turns sharply to the right (south). There

should be quite a slip off slope hereabouts. PC refrained from telling CC the discovery so as to give CC a pleasant surprise on the shift change. While PC cleared the rest of the debris the draught was noticed to be of a slightly lesser force but sensed across a greater area of the passage dimension. Over his initial pleasant surprise CC wriggled forward along the narrow gap to ascertain the nature of the passage, which turns south then very soon to the east. The deposit the far side of this section is descending so therefore it looks good. 67 skids removed. The sharp right hand turn here suggests that it is the reason for the accumulation of sea debris. Perhaps to the water that issues through the bedding on the coastline comes from this area, for quite some distance now the deposits have become increasingly wetter, also the deposit becomes wetter in response to rainfall, little rain has fallen in the last five days.

2nd May Fraggie Rock (New Find)
Cheg Chester

HW 15:04. The aim was to dig over the face to reach and enlarge the bend to get a better look at the far passage. Using PC's Garden rake the level was reduced and CC managed to squeeze around the corner but became a little jammed, some more work got CC around the corner and away for some ten metres to a point where some cobbles block the way, but can be easily removed to the side. The passage is some 1.2m wide and about some 0.6m high, and does show the course of the stream serving the springs in the area. So the lads theories were correct on several points, from the compressed air by wave action, the sand thinning out, the cobbles becoming less packed to the stream being blocked coming out the main entrance. PC is very pleased. CC is well chuffed. CMcG and Jim Shannon with son arrived during their walk. To the Roadside for a liquid reward, bumped into Bryan Ellis.

5th May Fraggie Rock (New Find)
Cheg Chester

LW 11:03. The aim was not to dig but to push the passage from where CC got to. PC managed to get around the tight corner without any more digging and followed around the second to where CC dug to a point where he could see for another six metres. While waiting PC drew a survey of the new bit. After a while CC backed up and the pair left. NB: Further thoughts on spoil removal and actual forward progress lead PC to suggest the removal of the debris up to and including the double bends to prepare an area to work forward from. The general idea being to install progressively another hauling system similar to previously utilized. With the spoil packed along the passage the residual stored in larger tubs at the prep area, thence to surface. Meanwhile, taking the floor to the calcite level, so in wet weather digging would be above stream level.

(Ref, entry for 8th April 2012) "Watergate" (Extended Find)

LW 11:03. Once outside the dig PC suggested that as the sea state was almost smooth and that it was a low spring tide, they could look at the site Tony Boycott entered when last here. They sped off and reached the entrance which was fully exposed, with a swift assessment of the mirror like sea conditions at 11:40, PC immediately crawled in. After some 15 metres the wet crawl rose to a stoop, and then rose again to walking passage where dry land was encountered. To the right daylight could be seen. (Likely "Echo 'ole" Ref 12th April) Pressing on the route became two metres square and increasing. Passing over several large, partly submerged boulders, then dry land once again. A little further to a cross rift, right hand passage ended after three metres, left bifurcated again, hard left nothing, the right a large tube blocked with compacted sea cobbles; well worth a dig. Back at the skylight PC encountered CC; together they hurriedly took photos and used a

measuring tape for the rest of the survey out. Establishing the site chosen because of its echo outside was in fact a possible, alternate entrance. In sight of daylight at the low part of the entrance crawl, PC explored a passage on the northern side; this small passage went 12 metres to where daylight is seen through low, choked bedding. Back at the entrance bedding junction PC held the tape and urging CC to exit. During this time the sea had risen some nine inches significantly reducing the airspace; CC now faced a very small air space to reach the surface. By the time PC exited he'd free dived three metres to get past the low bit of the roof. LW was 11:03 the team had entered at 11:40; exiting at 11:58. At 12:02, as the pair watched the entrance submerged. A grand day out, with a distance both measured and conservatively estimated of 80 metres. Total new cave passage today, combined with Fraggles is 100metres. Emailed TB of the finds in his cave, Toe is thrilled.

9th May Fraggles Rock
Cheg Chester Conor McGrath

HW 20:24. The aim was to remove the debris dug and piled up at the face from the undercut allowing CC & PC to pass the tight corner on 2nd May. The pile of debris was very wet and could perhaps impede the drainage of the face. A puddle has appeared in the area beneath the undercut. A steady task on a cold day, total skids moved 37. CC & PC went to the Roadside; planning the next phase is well underway. PC took several photos of the "breakthrough" point.

11th May Fraggles Rock
Conor McGrath

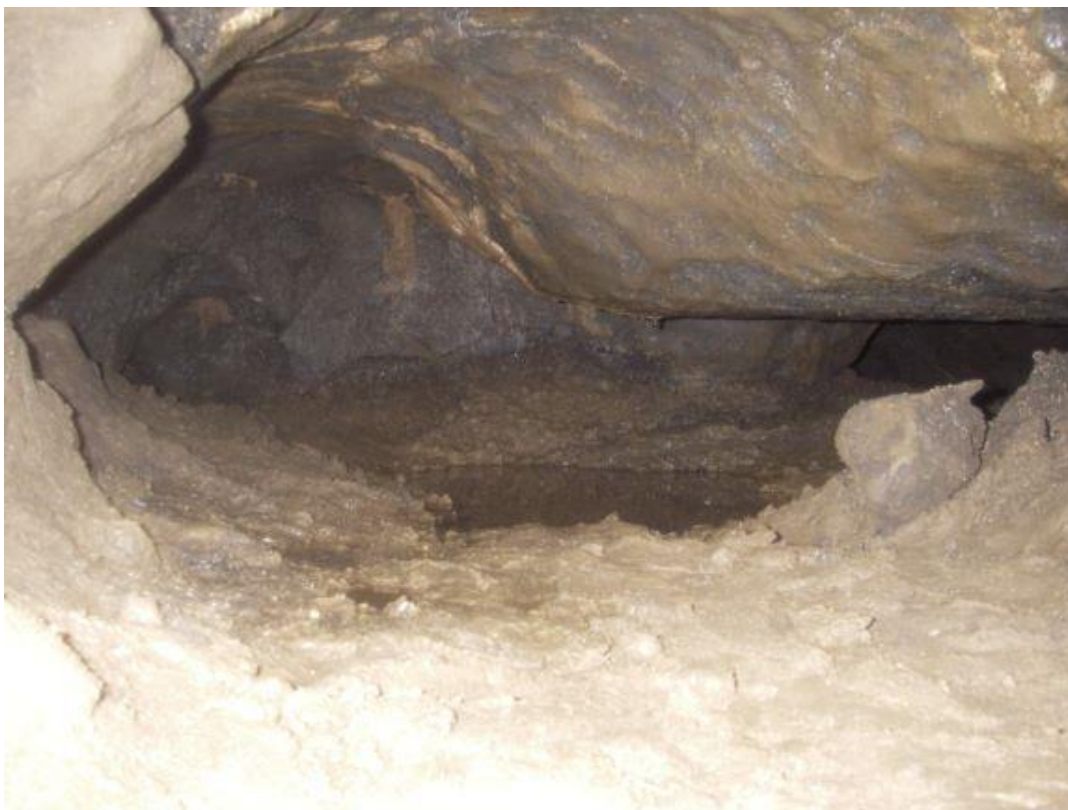
LW 15:48. With CC in Dublin it was just the two. CMcG did the first shift, PC the second progressing the face to approximately 72 feet (22m). The debris was very wet and meant the skids were very heavy to haul. A total of 64 skids were removed. A piece of granite was found, of similar colour to Connemara marble, a lovely soft green. Also, two pieces of dark brown coloured sandstone that needs checking out.

13th May Fraggles Rock
Cheg Chester

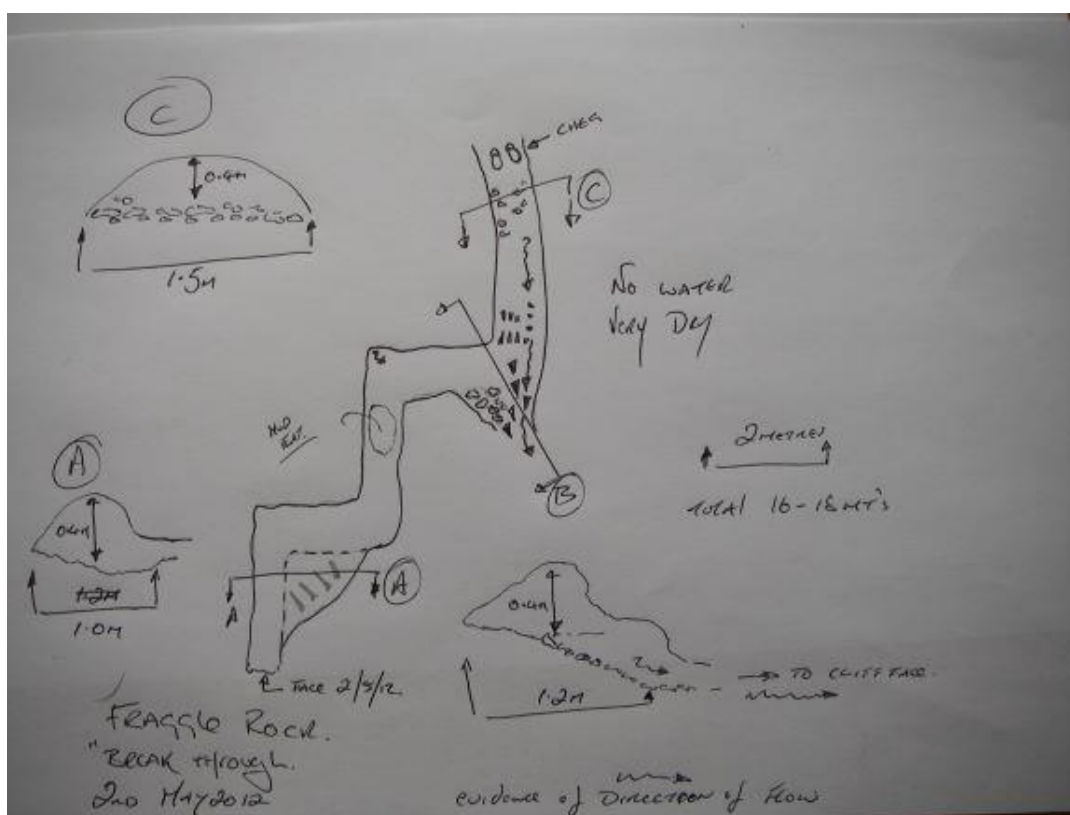
HW 12:03, high southwesterly winds creating rough sea conditions, Force six to seven. Arrived on site quickly; PC drilled a further two holes for bolts, one about a metre forward of the face that should be the last prior to clearing the way to the forefield, CC quickly sorted out the hauling system and began the first shift. The side walls were cleared of the loose debris and the face progressed. PC did a shift and dug under the hanging boulder and also into the area on the right where the bedding is beginning to open toward the area of the two right angles of the passage. PC noted that the floor appears to be falling away again. CC did another shift and found after disturbing the smaller boulder that ingress of water increased significantly, perhaps the small hole on the left of the forefield is its source? A total of 51 skids removed. A good deal of water is present in the face; the puddle that formed on the surface of the debris after the team had dug through the squeeze was still present. A distance of 74 feet (22.5m) was paced out to the face: PC will be pleased when the survey is commenced. The pair adjourned to the Roadside.



The face at about 21 metres, prior to digging, start of the “Narrows”, 22nd April.



Break through 2nd May



Sketch of 5th May extension, Fraggie Rock

16th May Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath

LW 21:21, no wind, a very still evening. The plan tonight was to progress the face and expose the large rock overhanging out of the left wall. PC swept out the water and loose debris while CC & CMcG set up the hauling system. CC commenced to dig and reached the point where wisdom took over. All three assembled to view the rock estimated to weight some 50kgs at least, the rest (unseen), unknown. CC gave the thing a prod with the spade and a little leverage, some movement though minor, PC got his shoulder under it and gave a shove where on it fell out the wall at his feet, its real size now apparent; the irregular lump estimated between 100 and 150 kgs. Previous PC had asked CMcG to bring along his capping kit, and PC would bring along the drill just in case. As it was the rest of the evening was spent reducing the boulder to manageable lumps. CMcG gave CC & PC the opportunity to “cap” something which was immensely enjoyable. Not only that but the many myths and incorrect information about capping were dispelled. A grand evening with 25 skids of debris removed with an additional 11 skids, the remains of the boulder. CC wrestled one lump all the way out which was so heavy it could barely be lifted. The face was moved forward some 1 foot (now 75 feet); estimated distance remaining to the forefield is some 5 feet. CMcG took several photos. There appears to be an undercut developing on the left-hand side of the passage beneath where the boulder was, which suggests significant water flow from around the next corner. It will be interesting to see if a slip off slope has developed in the bedding on the right. Over a couple of pints, the pair discussed the effect of winter seas scouring the furthestmost passage. The plan is, at the passage limit reached by CC, the roof radius is suggesting an arch of a passage some 5 feet wide. This being the case the proposal is they restrict to cutting a channel 2.5 feet wide by some 3.5 - 4 feet high this will allow the minimum amount of spoil to be removed with the maximum forward progress, However the winter storms will push waves beyond the double bends, this will happen more so once the fill there has been removed. So, the idea to prevent or reduce the wave erosion to the walls of spoil is to install a storm door of steel channel and strong timber. It won't stop the entire wave but should reduce the damage wreaked. Time will tell.

17th May Lough Bunny

Solo

A superb clear and sunny day, not a breath of wind, the kayak is stable and runs well. From the launch area, followed a bearing of Mag north, deploying un-measured sound line to locate rumoured holes in the lough. Average depth of route estimated at seven metres. No “holes” found as yet.

18th May Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

HW 16:43; Neaps: A warm but overcast day, good visibility, Connemara clear. During setting up the pair were interrupted by a curious Romanian climber, living in Ennis. Who enquired of the cave, our explanation over he appeared none the wiser. Having climbed hereabouts he'd previously wondered how big the cave was. The team completed fifteen skids before a change of shift, PC feeling a weary from the previous two days activity. During his shift he exposed the next bit of fractured boulder and also, on the right side, the beginnings of the lower passage bend turning right. After sixteen skids change places with another eleven skids. On completion the spoil pile was photographed for posterity. The pair then had a look above the cave across the bench pacing out the passage length to a general area with fractured narrow vertical jointing; they are uncertain as to this

area and its effect on the passage below. Once the double bends are cleared then the survey will commence and its route reproduced on the surface.



Remains of the single boulder, capped 16th May.

20th May Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

LW 11:29, going to Springs: a warm morning with some cloud. A late start, 10:30, from PC's place. Walking down the sun broke through; promising a hot day. Set up and started digging, all the ironmongery had been cleaned and oiled. CC dug away at the main face for twenty skids. PC dug the right to expose the corner and see what the corner is exactly. A nice curved section of wall appeared from the debris. The edge of the face is only some two and a half feet from the forefield. 41 skids removed

23rd May Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester,

HW 19:34. A superb evening; went to the dig with the aim to plod on; set up the gear and CC commenced. PC hauled out 25 skids then changed shifts. CC hauled the rest. The area of debris on the bend has an upper stratum of thick clay; a real sod to dig through. So PC cut a channel through it, a spade width, to get to the forefield face, eventually achieved. A difficult area to dig, and wide at that: some 43 skids removed. The team had hassle with the pulley system; this was overcome by the digger holding the end pulley to avoid the rope from catching the pulley cheeks. The slip off slope is emerging from the overburden on the right-hand side. Where the boulder fell out, leaving a potentially second loose section, this is not the case. Further digging has shown that the next bit is indeed solid

and part of the surrounding rock, yippee. However, two stone chocks have been installed beneath it so as to provide some level of support and a Tell Tale. Two of the smaller skids have been retired owing to the arse worn out of them. PC is concerned about the effort used to remove the spoil and is of a mind to attempt another trolley of sorts, maybe a three-wheeler for the bends?

30th May Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 19:20. PC prepared two new skids and had carried out some alterations to the Mk II trolley. It is now shorter with a wheel at each corner; it is also fitted with pieces of timber to stop the skid from moving and falling off. If this works it will increase progress. It did not, the “narrows” were a problem and so are the wheels; back to the drawing board. CC dug for the evening and PC hauled out the skids, 40 in total. Mostly through the dreadful thick clay encountered. CC exposed the left-hand side at the bend and the forefield; the inside bend appears more acute than previously imagined. CC has left a “bench” of heavy gravel so as to allow the clay to fall onto it rather than into the water. PC took progress photos. Off to the Roadside for Black and Gold, lots of German visitors.

3rd June Lough Cutra, Observation of fluctuating water level
PC placed in charge of safety cover, working from Kayaks, of the Triathlon swimmers. Observation at 15:00 – 16:00; the level of the lake water had risen some 200mm. HW was 17:00, at Galway. Lough Cutra is some 10 miles from the sea, yet it could be that the heavy rain caused the level to rise on account it couldn't flow away; however, it had only rained heavily the previous 24 hours. Prior to that, the year had been reasonably dry. Certainly, the ground was very dry. The number of grykes between Cutra and the Ocean is enormous. This network would have to fill before affecting the lake water level. The time delay would also be an issue.

6th June Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester, Martin Groves, Krisa Groves

HW 19:22, springs. The afternoon had dried a little, following the heavy rain of the last few days. When PC entered to set up the system there was much evidence of high water flow from the beddings, particularly the small tube in the corner of the forefield and the other two northerly tubes. There was discernible flow from the entrance. The only springs issuing from the bench were the ones adjacent and beneath the pyramid rock. PC set up shop quite quickly and CC commenced the digging, removing the washed down debris then clearing the ledge left previously and starting to remove the upper clay deposit following the passage as usual. After some 40 odd skids MG did a shift with PC carrying and dumping the spoil while KG did the return rope. Two skids were used, with the others assistance the speed was excellent and a total of seventy skids removed. Where the face was progressed by MG the cross section shows that the clay deposit is decreasing in depth, which is good news. The bend appears to be acute yet the angle between the end of the first and the beginning of the second bend looks as though a skid would negotiate the chicane. With the progress as is the need to improve the alignment of the return line supports needs attention. Most likely the rawlbolts will be replaced by screw eyes able to take a krab.

Since last Saturday (2nd June) there has been four inches (100mm) of rainfall; forecast is between 40 & 60mm for the next 24 hours. PC hopes to photograph the effects.



18th May: left of Cheg's left shoulder, where the boulder fell out. Just beyond the other end part of the localized fracture. To the right the bedding is beginning to reveal a slip off slope; at the shovel's handle, by Cheg's knee, is where the bend to the right commences. The forefield is now only some four feet in front of the face; approximately 80 feet from the entrance.

8th June Fraggie Rock & Area
Cheg Chester

Following the heavy rainfall of the previous forty-eight hours the pair went to look see the effects, if any in the dig. The area showed evidence of flow from the bedding, each of the small passages that had been encountered had issued water. Sand was found in small accumulations in the bottom of the main passage showing the direction of flow. PC took photos and exited. Taking advantage of the tide PC dropped down to the lower bedding to check out a hole spotted by TB. The hole appears to have a back to it, so a pair of binoculars may decide if it's worth bolting up to. Adjacent the southern end of Lackglass, the same bench of Fraggie Rock also has another cave, and another passage remnant. This remnant is well worth recording; it is easily visible from the bench outside the main cave entrance of Lackglass. The action of the sea appears to have caused part of the lower bed to fall away exposing the hole above. Utilizing a builder's ladder to gain initial height would reach the hole with only needing some four or five bolts.

9th June Souterrain Monument CLO08-011002 Glasha Beg
Solo

Reference: Fieldwork book 1.

The aim: assess what is involved conducting a field survey of an ancient monument; as required in the two-year Archaeological Diploma course Galway University. The course

requires ten monument surveys. Previous research of the site via the Sites & Monuments Register for County Clare, located this principle and several other sites. The single site actually became three on further research of the SMR.

1) An enclosure. 2) An indeterminate house, within the enclosure. 3) A souterrain.

A very pleasant two hours was spent looking at the entire site figuring out how to survey it; solo. The field belongs to Suzanne Linnane, Fern Hill Guest House, as an old friend PC should not have a problem obtaining permission to work there. The souterrain has two openings, one in the northern edge of the “rampart” of the enclosure, the other in the area of the floor of the “house” it could be that this is one of the rarer examples of a souterrain in Ireland; a souterrain with an entry and an exit. The openings suggest this to be possible. (Field work book 1 page 13)

10th June Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

HW 10:26; neaps. The weather overcast but settled; very little breeze. A swift walk down to the site; there was quite a calmer sea than on Friday. PC set up the hauling system while CC brushed out the accumulated grit from the heavy rainfall of last week. CC then commenced to dig while PC did the hauling. Previously the pair had almost progressed around the whole radius of the bend, the effect during digging this area was similar to the other offset some ten metres back; they did not seem to be getting anywhere, even though they were removing regular amounts of spoil each visit, each time in excess of 0.45 of a tonne. Today, the debris was finally removed from the bend area and the face reduced in width; progress was swifter. On the left side, almost directly opposite the other, a sharp bend denotes the resumption of passage alignment. Both the bends are in line with the right-hand wall of the approaching passage. So, this offset will be minimal, though the large hump on the right side at floor level will cause some friction to the skids passing around it. Further good news is the floor that had become lower, causing water to pool on the bend, is coming up and therefore more like the normal level. The band of clay is still decreasing within the debris face which is very good news. During hauling CC pulled the hauling (return) line inward, this reduced the drag enormously on the hauling out by PC, this certainly needs attention to be able to avoid unnecessary hassle and effort hauling past the next offset. CC also removed debris from on top of the slip off slope on the right; this should reduce the effects of wave action scouring the place during winter. After storing the kit PC paced out the distance: centre of the bend to the entrance is (foot lengths) 79 feet (24m) actually 80 feet (24.4m) to the wall. During an idle moment PC asked CC when he'd started caving, 1961 was the reply, when added to PC's experience (1968); between them they have ninety-five (95) years of caving in; Good Grief. Forty-three (43) skids were removed. CC is away in the UK for a week so PC will most likely visit to realign the return line supports and dig a little. Walking back, they were asked by a passing climber if they owned the Toyota. PC had unknowingly lost his keys through a hole in the furry suit chest pocket; lucky, lucky, lucky.

24th June An Uisce Geata

Tony Boycott

LW 09:04, neaps. TB had brought the fine weather with him. The plan was to assess and drill the boulder blocking the other entrance – exit to the cave passage previous entered from the sea. TB & PC both took along their drills and drilled several shot holes for the snappers; the proposed date is Wednesday afternoon. The final hole drilled was a belay for the ladder; the entrance will be like an oubliette. The sea was clearly visible washing back and forth in the hole.

25th June Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Christy Healy

LW 15:38, neaps. TB was unavailable (surveying Coolagh River Cave) so enlisted help from CH who was visiting PC's place. A sunny, slightly overcast day; set up the hauling system and set to; CC commencing the shift. After some minor delays got the system working well and removed twenty skids. CH then took a turn and a further twenty-four were removed. The face is well around the 1st right hand corner and almost to the far side of the other; the composition of the debris is returning to the norm: a coarse sand/gravel with some interspersed clay strata. The right-hand side of the corner is sharper than first imagined and presents a flat (perpendicular) face to the next section of passage; this may prove a problem with the hauling.

27th June Bay Area

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The plan; to vaporize the rock obstructing the entrance: the team arrived as the wash of the sea was just beneath their feet. All the shot holes, previously drilled 25th June, were full of water so choosing the long hole, along the bedding PC dried and prepared the hole and the charge. The three assembled; one to hold the battery from a Petzl light, the other to hold the wire to make continuity among the batteries and the third to connect the wire, a loud crack; objective demolished: split into several large lumps. Taking turns the rock was reduced further with CC's sledge hammer to a point where the way on was ready for the Spring tides. The team ambled back to the Roadside for a very pleasant pint.

NB: At 15:00 the sea was just level with the roof of the entrance passage area. Later, at home, PC calculated the height of tide filling the passage to the roof at 15:00; the observed time. These rough calculations suggest that a tide height of 2.58m fills the passages to the roof.

28th June Cahercommaun and Clooncoose Cave (Archaeological find, {perhaps})

Jayne Stead, Tony Boycott

The aim was to investigate a souterrain had been constructed within the Fort and had made use of a natural rift as an emergency exit; this route would require a rope for the safe descent to the valley below. PC had researched the SMR for Clare and had found that two souterrains were in fact recorded there. Both close together. A thorough search produced no finds or clues to their positions; TB descended the cliff face to look for the rift but could not see one. Further research required. The team diverted on route to the truck to locate Clooncoose Cave. The cave is situated almost opposite the obvious house below the small cliff with hazel scrub. A partially blocked entrance gives way to a phreatic passage some 1.2m diameter. After some six metres the remains of a wall almost block the passage. On closer inspection PC deduced that it is the remains of a fortified entrance of similar construction to a drop entrance of a souterrain. On the inside there is an artificially built-up area that is almost level with the main lintel that suggests a type of trap door feature again similar to souterrain construction thus forming a defensive position. Just beyond an alcove some two metres in diameter is on the right with a wall like line of stones across its entrance, a little further along the passage an artificial area has been created forming a basin to collect water, another one though smaller is further inside the passage. At this point the passage bends right, to the east-ish and earth is piled on the left, the result of some digging by modern cavers to extend this natural cave. Here the passage reduces in size to a squeeze some five metres further there is a pool of fresh water, no further progress can be seen to be made.

29th June Ballyganner South Cave

Tony Boycott

09:30 Following PC's excitement at Clooncoose Cave (28th June) TB suggested a visit to Ballyganner South Cave, TB remembered that it exhibited alterations by man; a flag roof and dry-stone walling. Following the GPS it took the pair right to the entrance, situated in a hazel thicket. A slight stoop and scramble enters a passage some 1.5m high and 0.9m wide. A sharp turn to the right leads after another five metres to natural cave, where proper attire is required. A fine site to record for the project PC is pursuing. On the way back the pair called to visit the young element of the UBSS who have been here carrying out work for the forthcoming new edition.

29th June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00. PC had to abort plans for a Coast Guard callout at Black Head. The others deferred until all three could dig together.

30th June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 14:42, neaps. TB and PC arrived and set up the system. CC arrived just after. TB produced seventeen skids, CC followed and the total became forty-three. Finally, have managed to progress around the first and second ninety-degree bends and square up to the approach to the next section of passage, the effect here has been similar to the previous double bend, though the previous was not as severe. While TB was setting up, he announced that he could see a stream running toward him. On inspection sure enough there is running water coming possibly, from the third north passage inlet. The outside springs are indeed barely running and this flow inside equates to that outside. From where the water is lost visually there is only some two metres to the gap in the bedding which takes the stream normally. Still, the progress will be swift enough now we are back in a passage 0.75m wide, but it may well become wetter, so perhaps the team will need a plywood platform to keep dry? There was a possible plan to visit the Bay Cave Entrance to see if the squeeze was passable for TB & PC for later in the week, but unfortunately there was a westerly wind that produced a two-metre swell, driving straight into An Uisce Geata, so we will try again sometime.

Alas the Mark III trolley failed, it, (Cedric), kept falling over, so back to the drawing board. PC will try to re-site the hangers and supply a new rope for the hauling; these needs be some 100m in length.....to do the entire job; or 1 x 63 plus 1 x 33.

3rd July An Uisce Geata (Watergate)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

LW 11:15, springs. Light rain still falling. Arrived and slipped through the opening, though PC did have a moment's concern in the tight bit, just as gravity took over. TB was thrilled with getting a look see at the place at long last. Sea level had submerged the original entrance passage of An Uisce Geata so they moved upstream toward the choke. CC began to dig while TB & PC started the survey from the new entrance. All the while pulses from the wave action outside increased and decreased the internal water levels by some 6" (150mm). At one time washing away TB's surveying kit. The quick survey took place to increasing water levels and completed where CC was digging the choke. The team made its way out, another ½ hour and the trip would require swimming out the main passage back to the entrance chamber. At the entrance CC went first, PC pushed TB to assist with the squeeze. As PC tried to get out, he realized the tightness and problem of

movement, pushing hard against TB's tape ladder he spilt the webbing, this caused PC some concern, the barnacles providing a severe grip on the explorer. Later PC found injury to his sternum. Once out PC commenced capping the squeeze. The wet condition of the surface and the rain meant that there was some difficulty with the dust/mush in the hole jamming the firing pin. Prior to this PC had suggested snapping the offending squeeze as working on it was awkward, so this will be done as a matter of urgency prior to TB going back to the UK. The plan is to return tomorrow and snap it: LW 12:02.

4th July An Uisce Geata

Tony Boycott

LW 12:02, springs. Raining, showers; PC brought along the drill and snappers to vaporize the Oubliette entrance squeeze. Rain showers did not dampen enthusiasm; it was felt that without an easy exit, those with proper, man-sized chests would be at a severe disadvantage. PC drilled the first hole along the line of the squeeze TB prep'd the snapper and PC completed the installation. Most of the narrow bit had gone, however a short section still required attention, another drill and another snapper and the job was completed. TB took a video of the task and a photo of the now large hole, hooray. The pair packed up the kit and climbed the cliff face in torrential rain; here TB wanted to look for more erratics among the spoil from Fraggles Rock, while PC had to go to assist those up at the Fanore Mesolithic Dig. The plan; meet tonight 18:00, Fraggles Rock.

4th July Fraggles Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Following an earlier phone call enquiring about any digging JW arrived bringing with him a fabulous evening bright sun and dissipating clouds. The springs along the bench were issuing the greatest amount of water ever seen by the team; a small stream was resurging from Fraggles Rock, the first time in countless years. A stream could be seen at the double bends entering from the left and sinking to the right. No stream could be seen coming from the passage further in; though a draught was present. PC had brought along a seventy-metre rope to replace the return one, now too short. With its installation the frictional effort of pulling it back in to the face was significantly reduced. CC started with TB positioning the ropes to avoid entrapment beneath the rock formation "The Narrows" thus causing further friction. TB then emerged and PC went into check things, JW was then offered to join CC and dig. CC, TB and JW all went to the present limit to have a look and listen; even though waves could be heard several of the team thought they could hear running water a little further ahead. After wrapping up the team dropped TB off and went on to the Roadside. CC & PC discussed winter digging; insofar as commencing the hole to the north, S10b; adjacent Lackglass and on the same bed as Fraggles Rock. Here the entrance is not so exposed and so accessible to passing visitors, let alone the sea. Enquires have shown that 1" galvanized steel tube from the farm shop is 25 euro per six metre length. The plan is to visit Sunday and to assess the hole, likewise to realign the hauling system in Fraggles Rock.

7th July Lackglass & Fraggles Rock

Cheg Chester

The plan was to check and realign the hauling supports to further reduce friction. PC brought down a string line and commenced to set out the alignment. It turned out that virtually all the existing bolts were in the right place or very near the right place. At the forefield PC set two more holes, one high to straighten and carry the line from the narrows, the next set at low level, to ensure the hauling line also avoids catching on the pendants in the narrows. PC also set a bolt outside to facilitate hauling by walking (The

TB Donkey Method) with the rope; this avoids it becoming stuck under and in the bedding. The pair moved up to (S10b) above and to the south of Lackglass entrance. Using a ladder, descended the fractured cliff face, down a cleft, onto the bench and inspected the area and cave passage. This hole shows great potential, similar to Fraggles Rock formation. Another phreatic development; actually above the bedding: with a little development below it, a classic cross section of a child's drawing of a cave entrance. There are several large boulders that appear to have fallen from the aven that rises to the surface; presently blocked with a huge well rounded storm boulder. The plan is to cap the large boulders to clear the way for the railway, PC will do this on odd evenings. It is another great site. It is hidden behind, and below, several sections of cliff face that have parted company from the mainland. Directly opposite the entrance on the huge lump of parted cliff are the fossil remains of the old passage, cut along its length, so only half of its circumference remains.



First descent, 3rd July; Toe entering Oubliette, Water Gate: just a bit tight.

11th July Lackglass

Cheg Chester

LW 17:38, neaps. The team arrived to a very nice evening with sun and a clearing sky; decided to commence capping the large boulders in the adjacent cave: situated on the same bench as Fraggles Rock but some sixty odd metres further north. Even though the way on is open to a distance of some twenty metres, three large boulders obstruct the installation of the proposed railway. So the intention is to remove them to see exactly what amount of effort faces them. PC commenced drilling and capping the closest to the entrance. The team then began to work in parallel drilling and preparing to increase speed. The first boulder soon fell apart using No 2 caps; only about four were used.

However, the biggest boulder, around a tonne, was quite a different matter, inexperience perhaps allowed the team to be too greedy when drilling the holes. The result was some cracking of the rock but little falling apart. An increase in cap power, No. 6, or black, caused little difference, some was removed but the theory is that perhaps the mass of the boulder is such that the holes need be closer to the edge; otherwise, the shock is absorbed into the solid mass. It was now that the team realized the need for the sledge hammer. During work on the big boulder the last shot didn't fire, not only that but the firing pin became jammed, after much phaffing about PC managed to remove the tool only to find it bent. CC intends to repair and improve the design. All the debris was easily removed and deposited down the fracture immediately outside the entrance which is a pain at present; if not dangerous. On closer inspection it was noticed that the entrance area is surrounded entirely by fractured rock, there appears to be little of what could be described as solid stuff about. A pleasant, steady trip back up to the truck and a Black and Gold at the Roadside: surrounded by chattering French for a change.

14th July Souterrains, Teergonean; Doolin
Solo

The plan was to assist Burrenbeo moving the spoil to expose the Fanore Dig further, PC arrived at 09:45 and waited until 10:15, no one showed. Later, purely by chance, it transpired that the plan was altered to Carron for more ancient wall identification, and to visit Fanore dig, en-mass Sunday. So, PC implemented Plan B. Research had uncovered two recorded souterrains near Doolin for the NUI project. The first located was CLO08-001004, the INGR given by the SMR/RMP was spot on. PC then took photographs and managed to enter five metres to where loose soil from above has entered the passageway, here an opening to the right (east) gives immediate access to the surface. Straight on the main passage beyond the low area opens again to a similar sized passage as before. PC guessed perhaps another entrance may exist as the alignment of the passage suggested that it was going toward what could loosely be called a "rampart" partially obscured by bramble bushes. Poking around with a stick another opening was felt. To enter will require the brier to be cut back, before the opening can be entered. Total length of the souterrain is around eleven (11) metres; the passage width is 1.1m and varies in height, due to infill, from 0.2m to 1m. (Ref: Field Book 1, page 27). PC went in search of the adjacent souterrain, CLO08-001005. The area seemed familiar but no evidence of a souterrain was found, PC searched the inside and the perimeter of the enclosure; nothing. PC intends to speak to Mattie as he thinks he was brought here by him some years back.

15th July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 09:19, neaps. Owing to taking PMC to the aerphort, the team met earlier than usual, 09:30, on site for 10:10. PC set up the new system of pulleys at the forefield while CC set up the skids to dig. PC took a few photos of the face and area; with the face around the second corner, it is quite apparent that the pair have removed a huge amount of spoil to clear the area of these two ninety-degree bends. While PC was hauling out the spoil CC assisted him enormously by reducing the drag of the return rope through the suspension system by pulling on it to introduce slack to the outgoing hauling rope: the difference is enormous and leads the team to consider again the idea of a two-part hauling method. Part 1; from the working face back to the bend area for temporary storage then, Part 2, out as normal to the surface. This method of spoil removal, whilst time consuming, could be accomplished with just the pair of them. Regular assistance is somewhat scarce, therefore welcome when it appears.



Souterrain at Teergonean; entrance facing south (SMR ref CLo08-001004): 14th July



Souterrain at Teergonean; (SMR ref CLo08-001004): southern entrance, 14th July.
(One metre Ranging Rod with 0.1 segments).

..... Back to the dig: CC produced nineteen skids then changed shift with PC. PC had not managed to do any face digging for sometime allowing visitors the easier shift, digging; however, it was great fun for him to be back at the face again. PC removed some of the heavy clay which is slowly disappearing from the upper strata and cut a slot through to allow for easier digging next shift. The lower levels are a loose grit and cobbles matrix: totally unstable therefore the face was left off vertical to reduce the chance of slumping. A quick accounting of trips since 1st January; indicate 54 digging visits to Fraggie Rock: minimum. No Roadside visit today, because of PMC's imminent flight, but a plan was mooted to visit the other site (S10b) regularly on a Friday; perhaps this'll divide the work equally so we can progress both. At home CC had a lot of hassle removing the firing pin from the handle: he is of the opinion that the powerful black caps and too greedy a bite of rock are too much for the whole system.

18th July Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Conor McGrath, Paul McGrath

The weather had cleared, a little, even though the temperature was not exactly warm; a cool wind blew in from the N-NW. PC set up the hauling while the others had a look see: the first visit here for PMcG who went to the end of the crawl where CC had got to. Meanwhile CC commenced digging. With so many here for a change, agreed the ten skids each then change shift remained. So, the first pair dug and filled 20 then CMcG and PC the same, CC expanded the assisting the rope system to hauling in the skid, as well as hauling in the return the effect is quite surprising; the reduction in effort for the hauler is enormous. This bodes well for the pair when they'll be once more digging on their own. A further change of shift with skids whizzing out the cave the team finally finished the at 84 skids, now, these skids were much fuller than previous, and the progress of the face was almost three feet; linear distance now 86 feet (26+m). The passage has begun to resume its previous width of approximately 0.75m, which is superb, just the right sort of width and the minimum amount to remove so progress should be much more noticeable. What is emerging is that the original water flow has formed an undercutting to the left-hand wall similar to the approach to the first 90 bend of this sequence; also noticeable is that the roof span is beginning to broaden similar to the roof width in the passage that is resuming the general NNE direction. The working face is now almost up to the shield like raised mud bank; there was evidence of water flow through the cutting PC previously dug there should be more as this next section of spoil is removed so a significant volume will now flow from the entrance following rainfall. PC is of the opinion that somewhere ahead there is still a point where sufficient spoil is causing the water to back up to the level of the surrounding open bedding thus allowing it to pour along it to the various springs encountered along the passage and the bench outside. Having said that the quantity that was seen issuing from the Lackglass roof area does suggest that there is a substantial amount of water amalgamating and dissipating among all the springs along the bench, taking the assumed angle of the bedding in the area (McCluskey) the volume seen issuing above Lackglass some sixty metres north of Fraggie Rock suggests a significant volume of water arriving at the coast, far more than would be accumulated from the immediate area up to where the bedding gains the surface. This really does need serious thought as to the source and size of area of all this water.

NB: Previously diggers in FR thought they could hear a stream, particularly CH, a non caver; he had idea what this implies to cavers.

A very welcome effort tonight, the swift progressing of the working face this shift is in direct contrast to the previous work removing the spoil from the area of the double bends; there progress seemed painfully slow.



View downstream from third bend of the 1st and 2nd right angled bends, obstruction all hauling.

20th July Cave of the Lost Sole, (S10b)

Cheg Chester

Following the previous trip (11th July) CC is preparing another firing pin for the handle; meanwhile the pair decided to attack the boulders with the sledge and brute force. On a superb evening of sun and a slight breeze the pair arrived and set up the ladder to climb down part of the cliff. PC took several photos of a passage remnant on the detached section of cliff face and the entrance. A hard hour of work reduced the boulder in size; though it is becoming less easy to knock off bits: it's becoming rounded. A lot of the surrounding small cobbles etc. were removed likewise the two large-ish boulders or rather their fragments. So, at the end of the shift the only obstacle remains the big boulder. Thoroughly shagged out the team packed up and ascended the coastline, breasting the crest of the hill, just approaching the vehicle, CC announced that his new footwear was falling apart; the uppers and the sole were parting company: PC quipped the cave could be called "Cave of the Lost Sole": in hysterics the team changed, heading for the Roadside and beers. A very fine evening!

21st July, 10:00

Fanore More Mesolithic Dig

PC arrived and followed the Lynch's through the gate; the others arrived in dribs and drabs within the hour afterwards. PC then set to moving rocks and sand; backfilling and landscaping beneath Michael's direction. All done by 13:00; PC was then asked if he was interested in further involvement with processing the finds: he would be contacted in due course.

21st July, 13:15

Megalithic Tomb (Unclassified): Ballyryan.

CL004-085001

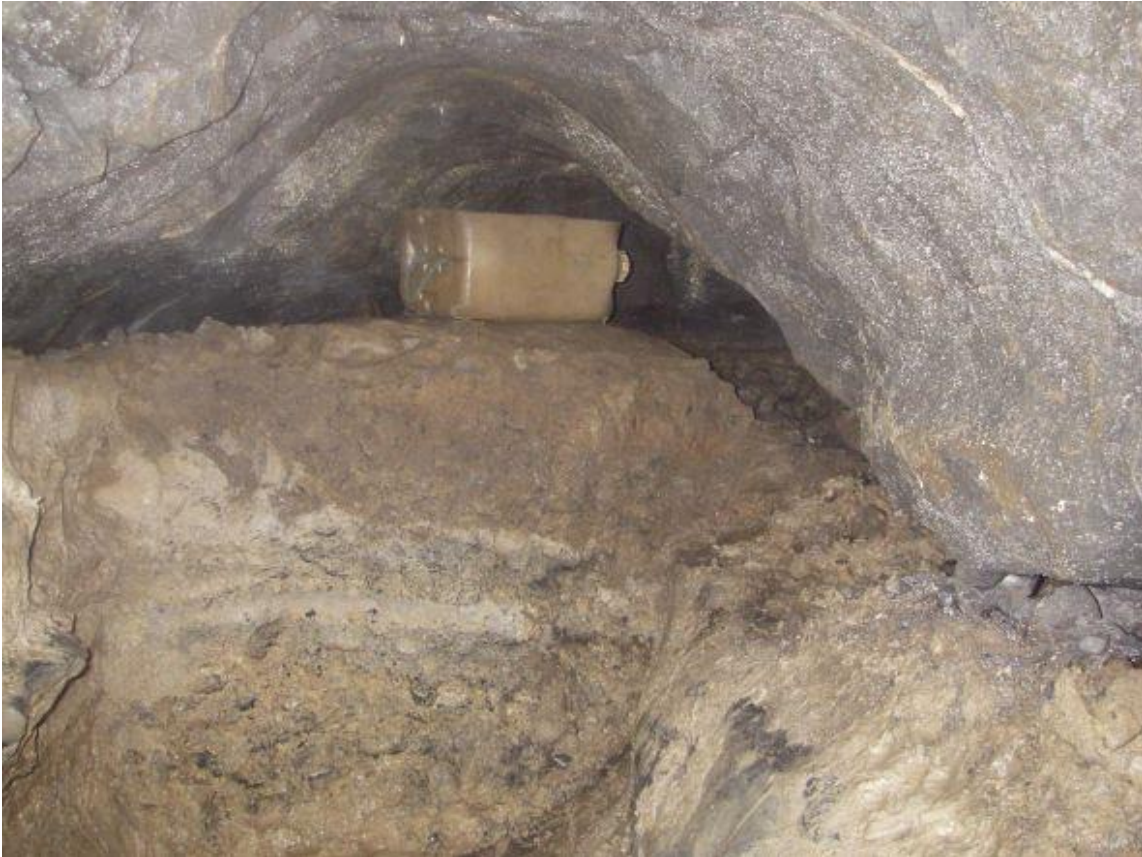
With the forthcoming course PC revisited this site to further develop and practice his observation and survey skills. He had made several sets of ranging rods and set them out to photograph the site. The bright sunlight made viewing the screen on the digital camera rather difficult so PC took very many of them. Prior to the previous visit (28th May 2012) he had assumed he would be looking for a large stone monument, at the very least a pile of stones or even a single stone; on discovering this site he realized the SMR was incorrect with its general description and classification. Upon asking ML he was informed that it was in fact a Cist (pronounced Kist) a type of burial. During this visit the plan was to survey etc. to get some idea of how to reproduce the information in front of the observer. During the measuring it was noticed that the overall length is 4.7m and width 1.7m. At first the Cist appears to be rectangular; on closer inspection, among the tall grass, there is an arrangement of stones at the western end that suggests a tapered entrance, pointing toward the west. Standing away and up on an adjacent mound the site appears to be on a low-profile circular mound with several other stones set in the ground almost forming part of an inner circumference, but care needs to be had with regard to imagination. The Cist is orientated along a bearing of 113 degrees Mg: almost an east west alignment. From his research so far, PC believes this monument to be a Bronze Age site rather than that listed; but doesn't understand the significance, if any, of the "Christian" east – west alignment. PC needs to investigate more.



Cheg with the downstream remnant opposite the entrance to the Cave of the Lost Sole (S10b) this section of the cliff has been undercut and falling away from the main cliff face: note the developed gully in the floor and the slickensides: 20th July.



Cave of the Lost Sole (S10b): Cheg with the 80% of the Boulder: 20th July.



Forefield, end of shift 25th July

25th July Fraggie Rock

Jim Warny, Conor McGrath, Cheg Chester

A fantastic sunny evening; the team assembled and set up the hauling system: PC with his injured hand installed himself in the “Waiting Room” pulling in the slack on the hauling ropes. The others each dug in turn and shifted a total of 75 skids. The effect of this number of people in the group was to progress the face almost a metre in less than two hours. During the final shift CC removed part of the remaining section of the clay overburden releasing the stored water from the bedding beyond, the effect was superb, quite the inundation. PC took a photo, through the steamy atmosphere. The forefield is now barely a metre or so in front of the face. These two visits has made enormous progress is excellent; two or three of the same would have us to the point where the passage assumes its eastward course. Swiftly packed; headed for a Black and Gold.

26th July Fraggie Rock

Brian McMahon, Caoimhe and Cian McMahon, (children): Ian Lambe, Dáithí and Naoise Lambe (children).

HW 11:00, neaps. BMcM, CMcM (daughter), CMcM (son), IL, DL (son), NL (daughter) PC was asked to show their kids the dig. The evening's lovely weather lasted through to the morning. A very nice amble down through the meadows and karst to the dig: with the kids enjoying the adventure. A swift trip into Fraggie Rock followed by a climb up the bench face: culminating with a fine picnic enjoying the views of the Islands. Very nice!

27th July Cullaun II

Seamus Malone, Cheg Chester

A first ever caving trip for SM; a contact via CC: and as it turns out a neighbour of PC. Another nice evening similar to yesterday: but cloud building in the northwest. After kitting up SM the team set off on a steady pace down to Pool Chamber. PC remained with his injured hand avoiding the climbs further downstream. SM & CC continued. On their return the team caused SM to experience real darkness; then a swift trip out and into the Roadside. NB: SM is a natural underground; he has a fluid motion negotiating obstacles and passageways. It appears he made his way down to, and located, Fraggles Rock: that suggests interest.

29th July Cave of the Lost Sole

Cheg Chester

HW 14:34, neaps. With drill, 14lb sledge and mining Gad's the team ambled down the coastline in nice sunshine. The plan was to have a further go at reducing the size of the boulder. The holes were drilled using a 12mm pilot then step up the diameter to 20mm; in the end a 12mm hole was used (economic with the battery) to reasonable effect with the Gad's. After an hour's work the boulder was reduced by some 15-20% before the batteries ran flat and so did CC's; PC still nursing an injured hand, he wielded the sledge for the entire shift. The team had split off and broke up a large chunk off the north side. To Roadside; where today is the 1st Anniversary of the Burren Brewery: cheap beer from 15:00. Alas at 12:30 the team was too early to enjoy the discount.

1st August Cave of the Lost Sole

Cheg Chester

HW 17:21 springs. The aim was to continue to reduce the size of the boulder. En-route the team looked over the bench at Fraggles Rock noting the evidence of previous high-water flow among the sediments remaining within the channel, during the previous twenty-four hours eighteen millimeters of rain was recorded at PC's place. PC was still nursing an injured hand yet managed to use the drill and to fire the caps. The nature of the boulder is such that it is of a granular, crystalline structure, without any apparent bedding or cleavage; it's proved very difficult to break into manageable bits. PC used No.2's then 4's without much success, moving to the No. 6's and Hilti blacks. Both exhibited successes breaking off substantial pieces, considerable pieces at that. Once the black caps were used up CC had a go with the Gad's again, and, success, and surprise, the boulder, now reduced significantly, split yet again. A good chunk fell away; some 30% of the remaining chunk. Another visit with sledge and caps should see it reduced to the size where it can be rolled out the entrance. With this heartening progress the team loaded up and made their way up to the truck in superb sunshine.

3rd August Carnane, (Home)

13:40. 22mm rain fell in 10 minutes; never known to happen here in living memory: run off from land significant.

18:15 Cave of the Lost Sole

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

HW 18:49, springs. The plan was to attempt to clear the remaining chunk to prepare the route for the rails; the materials have been ordered by PC from BS. Using a 14mm drill, the one used for the hauling rawlbolts, PC drilled the boulder and CC used the Gad's; PC had also brought down more black Hilti caps. As it was the boulder was reduced in around an hour, to sizes just about movable to the entrance. PMcG was a great help here

clearing the area while the other two drilled and hammered away. So the next task is to prepare the rails and the truck base. On exiting the area was thick with midges so the team very quickly scaled the rock and ladder and enjoyed the strong sea breeze. Thence to the Roadside: for a couple of Blacks and Gold's.



Boulder now 50% of original size; start of shift 3rd August

5th August Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

10:00. HW 07:58; springs. The aim was to see what state the place was in following the torrential rain over the previous week. Part of the face was washed down, but fortunately not too much; about four skids worth. The inlet of this water was the small opening on the bedding, once again on the north side of the passage. Nothing has washed over the top from the way on. PC's hand was still a problem so harnessed himself up to the hauling line and walked the skids out; 45 in all. Another three digs with at least three ideally four personnel would have us at the start of the next section.

8th August Cave of the Lost Sole
Solo

HW 22:19, neaps. A fabulous evening; sun and clear skies: CC still in Dublin so PC decided to prepare the site rather than let the night go by without some progress by carrying down two eight-foot lengths of 4 x 3 timber for the front rail frame supports and to also drill a hole for a metal step to aid ascent from the bench up onto the boulder. Trying the timbers, they are a little too long so the next visit will require a saw and some wedges. Arriving on the ledge PC became aware of three people below him on the bench

covered by HW; a man and two children: the man conversant with the cave entrances in the area. After polite conversation he departed north. Within several minutes the whole area was subjected to dense fog. Having completed his tasks PC packed up the drill etc and made for the truck. At the truck PC met the gentleman; Ed Kelly: who had caved with the Clare Lads, but had not been able to attend the Sunday morning meets. He enquired after digging and asked to attend; PC will call him for the next trip.



Boulder gone, end of shift 3rd August

10th August Ballyryan
Solo

As preparation for the forthcoming course PC has searched the SMR for Clare focusing on the monuments situated on Commonage.

To search for the Souterrain, S.M.R. CL004-093002, sited within an enclosure among the hazel thickets and karst; some 1/2 mile east of Poulsallach; yet north of the coast road. Setting the gps to the coordinates PC navigated to a shallow gully of impenetrable hazel. Back tracking and weaving about brought PC to the summit of the small hill that has an excellent view for 360° traveling further north the enclosure was located but impossible to enter due to the thorny undergrowth. Circumnavigating the enclosure, no entry point was identified so PC attempted to navigate with the gps to the closest point to the souterrain entrance. Managed to get to within ten metres, (with accuracy present of +/- 3m), before stopped by the thicket. Traveling light did not take the paperwork from which he had taken the INGR, later a check confirmed that the indicated position on the aerial photo corresponds with the closest point reached. A return will require a machete.

10th August Cave of the Lost Sole
Solo

LW 17:56, neaps. PC had managed to scrounge two pieces of decking that provide four sleepers some 0.4m long, each will take a track gauge of 10" or 0.250m. The plan is to transport them down and to do some digging. A fabulous sunny day and a bright clear evening: daytime temperatures hitting 25°C. A swift walk down with only a few minutes to set up the ladder, before descending PC took a few shots with the new camera of the slickensides protruding from the bedding to the south. Once down commenced building up what rocks could be used as deads against the walls whilst digging to the bedrock. In this manner progressed some two metres and filled in the hollows toward the entrance. Black flies were abundant so scampered up the ladder onto the windswept cliff top.

12th August Cave of the Lost Sole
Solo

HW 14.15, neaps: CC had rung earlier (Only just back from Dublin) unable to attend so PC decided to continue with preparing and clearing the trench for the railway. Took a wood saw, a red rope and a skid; the working face is now a twilight zone.

18th August – 5th September Iceland

Phil Collett, Geraldine Collett, Janet Woodward, Tony Boycott, Pete Glanville.

At the MRO do in Mendip asked Phil of Iceland; he suggested organizing the trip.

Volcanos, Geysers, Glaciers, Moonscape interiors, lave caves and the Northern Lights.

A superb trip, enjoyed the remoteness immensely; until Phil became a complete arse, and pain. Jumped ship, spent the remaining three days travelling with TB and PG.

27th September Teergonean - Ballycahan
Tony Boycott

The pair went in search of a possible, unregistered souterrain in the townlands of Teergonean - Ballycahan; TB had found one marked on Robinson's map. Within a short while had found the monument: as PC stood back to photograph TB, the grass he stood on gave way into the souterrain beneath; the sudden change in altitude caused PC's left knee to fold, substantially. Completed the check of the area. As PC limped back to the truck an uneasy, nauseous feeling arose. By the time TB was dropped off PC couldn't stand at all. In agony, cajoled by the Doctor to take anti-inflammatory pills to shrink the swollen knee so it would fit in the MRI scanner. The following weeks, after total rest etc, there was no improvement, the eventual MRI scan showed severe damage to ligaments; torn to hell, however there was a little of each still attached. The advice is wait and see if they reattach, if not then operate. Dr. Jim Collins advises inactivity. Scan accomplished have stopped anti-inflammatory, pain killing pills.



Cave of the Lost Sole; end of shift 12th August: the large boulder gone, the floor hollows were filled with sand and stones to take the railway, the large stones have been set as deads against the walls.

Sanity over these many months of inactivity is the archaeological course. Essays are testing, but immensely enjoyable. Without Ritchie Jones, neighbour, attending Galway University would be impossible. Grades are B+; it appears am doing well; though it's not for the lack of trying. Rest, and gentle exercise is working, the pain gradually subsiding, but enough remains to remind the patient, be vigilant.

31st December Cullaun 2
Solo

Desperate to test out the knee, squeezed in the last trip of the year. A slow, cautious amble down a very wet streamway into pool chamber, the knee worked well; with occasional sharp twinges; a little happier.