

2013



Fraggle Rock working face; fourth bend: 17th February 2013.

11th January Ballyryan and Fraggie Rock Area
Solo

HW 16:47. An attempt to get out and do something after the ripped knee ligament and bronchial episodes, PC went to the Fulacht Fia, near the road at Ballyryan, to continue the survey by taking several photos. The sun made an appearance at midday, with quite a low

angle in the sky this made for a good shadow on the monument contrasting the inner shape against the grass mound. PC took advantage of the low grass cover to take some more photos of the megalithic tomb on the other side of the road. Once Mary Howard had picked up her memory stick PC went to Fraggie Rock area. The knee held up well, with only one or two twinges. PC took along the GPS to do the sites once again this time in ITM. Sites recorded were Lost Sole, Fraggie Rock and Poulnafearbui.

Poulnafearbui	507381 x 699634:
Fraggle Rock	507196 x 699718
Lost Sole shaft	507232 x 699765
Lost Sole	507228 x 699764

16th January Pouldubh

Matt Randall, Jim Warny

The plan was to do Cullaun 5, but as there had been 19mm of rain in the previous twenty four hours, PC suggested the beddings would be impassible and suggested Pouldubh. Locating the parking place was fun as the cloud was down and visibility was down to ten metres. While the others changed PC went to check if it was the right spot. A steady walk in the poor Vis did not show the lads the full picture of the place. A good stream was present at the entrance waterfall. A steady pace down to the waterfall junction with MR doing some video work; onward to the original end where PC stopped to avoid hassle with his knee in the crawls. The others pressed on down to where they got through the gravel crawl to the stream that leads down to Gerry's Junction. PC took video of their return back up; hoping he hadn't cocked up the task for MR; a swift change in the thinning mist then down to the Roadside.

23rd January Fraggie Rock

Matt Randall, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 15:05: neaps. Last dug 26th September; almost four months since PC injured his knee. JW texted earlier to say he'd had to work late. After a swift setup the team managed to move the debris by 41 skids, all but clearing the area and tidying the face. A trip to the Roadside where the Gold was on offer for the winter at 2.50! It is so good to be back active. PC's knee performed surprisingly well. (41)

4th February Caher Valley Cave – Oughtdarra sites

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

After discussing the chance of Mesolithic inhabitants visiting local cave sites TB suggested C.V.C; on a cold and windy day the trio located the site, after a quick look nothing stood out, it needs caving kit to lie in the mud and look properly. The team moved off returning to Doolin PC diverted the team up to Noel Thynne lands and showed them the sites indicated by NT. PC took positions as the rain came in; adjourned to the Roadside.

6th February Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 13:53, springs: Arrived to find the place destroyed by the recent high tide and stormy seas; spent some time sorting the place out and untangling the rope, PC had prepared some more skids so there are 13 in total. The face area had seen massive washing as was evidenced by the debris spread over the area. The plan is as formulated previously, fill and stack them the send them out together; the best and most practical use of manpower. CC filled them, TB did his donkey impressions dragging them out and PC emptied them and pulling in the returns; forty five in total: to the Roadside for Black and Gold's. (86)



Pat Cronin

View west-north- west. Cheg at entrance to Caher Valley Cave, TB inside

8th February S3, S4, Poulsallach Bay

Tony Boycott

Walked the bay searching to locate the intertidal resurgence for Coolagh without success; en-route searched for drums to convert into digging skids; got a total of three.

10th February Fraggie Rock

Jayne Stead, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 17:19; springs. The team quickly set up the hauling system and began to dig; the plans being to fill a stack of skids then draw them out together. PC had found several others so together there were another 10 making a total of 23. CC and JS did the digging assisted by TB and PC who then moved outside to haul assisted then by CC while JS connected the hauling lines. PC managed to drop one skid over the edge; another was temporarily retired. A heavy sea was running; the wind was northerly, sea state rough. Fifty two (52) skids removed. TB came up with an idea for the hauling system; an endless rope so as he walks back to the start after pulling out the skid he drags the empty inward. The huge boulder to the south could be drilled for a fixing. This means that with three digging could be achieved; three inside to fill then two move outside to haul.

(137)

11th February Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott

HW 17:59 springs. A running sea with a large swell; as the half hour passed waves crept up the bench. TB photographed the curious fossil, while PC went to drill multiple holes for a securing line near the working face. Once outside the drill battery was spent; so will drill the other holes for the new hauling system on next visit. The large stone removed Wednesday was found back inside by some sixteen metres along with its two smaller neighbours.

13th February Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 06:51: springs. CC and TB went in to commence filling the skids while PC drilled and set up a trial hauling system outside, during this he pulled a muscle in the upper thigh-lower back area. TB then arrived outside to assist PC with the hauling after some twenty five skids PC couldn't carry on and after striking the system he left with the drill and other kit early to stagger back to the truck. The walk back was occasionally made on his hands and knees. CC took over the tackle sac to spare PC. A hot bath soothed the area. (162)

14th February Cullaun II
Solo

PC decided to do a trip to strengthen the back commencing with Cullaun II a steady trip in and out against a sizable stream. Lungs, knee and lower are improving.

17th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 09:34 neaps: only two of the team were available this concerned PC regarding his musculature problem; on arrival the plan was to fill twelve skids at a time then remove them. Using the "come hither" bar the skids were easily dragged back along the passage around the bends and into position in the narrows; this point is now found to be best suited to stack the filled skids ready for removal. CC remained inside while PC went out to drag them: a quick turn about was achieved with a grand total of 36 skids shifted, not too bad for two diggers. The come hither was tried outside on the bench to drag the skids to the cliff edge; this has now been proved to be the most useful item of our equipment for this heavy work: no lifting of the severe wet weight, likewise no getting soaking wet. PC has already asked NB for two more "come hithers" one at 0.8m and one at 1m long for use both inside and out. It has proved to be an excellent piece of digging equipment; avoiding lifting and carrying the very wet skids: well done to NB for its provision. Forward progress was almost 450mm (18 inches). PC took a few photographs to show the strata appearing again in the fill and also the formation of the passage, which is now becoming more "U" shaped by losing the slip off slope on the right. A small filled inlet choked with very fine sediment was exposed on the left (North) this was probed but left. The distance to the visible bend is now some ten feet; if the present passage width and volume of spoil means that it takes some twelve skids to progress some six inches, and, if forty skids are moved each visit, that's some 250 buckets and over six visits to reach the bend; the point to where CC reached in May 2012. The pair swiftly adjourned to the Roadside for a very well earned Black and Gold. With TB away PC will try to see if MR and JW are available for next Wednesday. (198)

20th February Fraggie Rock
Matt Randall, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

HW 13:34. In failing light (18:15) and a strong, cold, blustery wind the team made its way down to the dig, noting the ground is drying out from the recent dry cold easterly winds, though there are still some areas of puddles in the distant fields downhill toward Doolin. On arrival MR and JW were at work on the face so CC and PC commenced rigging the hauling system. As there were four men it was decided to fill all the available skids and repeat the previous method of drawing to the entrance. Twenty one skids were removed to surface and the procedure recommenced. A second shift of twenty one skids were dug and removed

outside into an increasing cold temperature and wind speed. PC announced he wanted to dig on account the last number of sessions he had drawn or hauled. It was decided that about half the number of skids would be removed; at the face PC encountered the boulder that obstructed MR; after another nine skids the boulder was levered out and slid back to the corner for later capping. A cursory glance estimated that there is significant progress along this section, away from the actual corner of the last bend; between some seven and eight foot. A total of fifty one skids removed, not bad considering everything. Away then to the Roadside for some well earned Black and Gold's. (249)

24th February Fraggie Rock – Lost Sole
Cheg Chester

LW 10:16. A fabulous cold, clear and bright with a light wind: a steady trip down with drill kit to gad the boulder PC dug out the face last Wednesday. Drilled out several 15mm holes to where the battery began to die off; it doesn't like to work this hard with drills not as sharp as they could be! The remains stacked on the ledge prior to removal later. As it looked like they would only have time to do twelve skids now PC suggested they use the time to check out the state of Lost Sole for any damage following the rough sea conditions that devastated Fraggie Rock. Both descended a hand line to the ledge and found the sea had entered and washed out the timber PC had previous carried down, bugger. The steel rebar step that PC fitted last year had some rust but not as much as feared. After an assessment of the storm effects the pair worked out a plan to commence constructing the railway system. Once back up the rope a further idea of drilling a hole for a suitable belay on the upper rock arose. Then to the Roadside for reward and to run the gauntlet of pissed revelers of the Russell weekend.

27th February Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 18:12; quite a high swell, evidence of earlier encroachment of the southern end of the bench: very dark due to the thick overcast cloud. As there was just the two the hauling plan was adjusted, rather than fit the pulleys etc, the hauling would be done as before but using the rope as CC pull in and PC pull out. The pair did the first run with eight skids then a second run of twelve; a total twenty from the face to outside. It's tough enough from far inside with just the two, but we did expect this. PC is going to arrange a forty metre hauling rope to accomplish this method. The progress is now some seven feet from the acute bend; about halfway to the next bend. TB will notice a difference. Even though CC left his change of clothes at home, the pair enjoyed the Roadside for a swift one. (269)

2nd March Teergonean souterrain and ringfort/cashel
Solo

Following a discussion with his university tutor PC returned to commence the survey of the enclosure (CLO08-001003) that contains the souterrain (CLO08-001004) as the project requires the enclosure to be included in the overall survey of the monument. By walking the "square" shape he established the area of the rampart on the south west and east side, this was reasonably visible. The north side is obscured by briers. The grass had been well grazed by the cattle so this made identification all the more easier. By setting ranging rods at the corners measurements were taken, included diagonally to fix the stations. Next the shaft and northern entrance of the souterrain were fixed by three compass angles and tape measurements. With the grass so low a search around the shaft entrance of the souterrain revealed a minor linear feature on the west side some three to four metres long, but no other evidence of a building covering the shaft was observed. RJ appeared enjoying the sun and disappeared over the hill, continuing his walk. Also bumped into Dennis (Denny) O'Driscoll, son of Dennis O'Driscoll one of the commoners, he directed PC to a site, a hole, of interest north of the parking area, and granted permission to cross his land.

3rd March Lost Sole and Fraggle Rock
Solo

LW 14:34, Neaps. PC decided to take down the drill to set in place the anchor holes for personal safety when tipping spoil over the edge. First descending to Lost Sole were he drilled several pulley holes along the passage then a 16mm hole for the personal anchor just on the right of the passage. Next Fraggle Rock, where he took photos of the passage shapes. Then several holes were drilled along the passage, for later pulley installation. Outside an existing personal anchor hole was drilled out to 16mm to accept the forthcoming fall arresting system when tipping spoil. To complete the shift he dug twelve skids of spoil and removed them to surface, at one point pulling out a train of three skids; this is too much!, though pulling two skids at a time appears to work reasonably well. On emerging he bumped into Paul Daly and separately Joe (from Fanore). Martin Bishop's anniversary (2005) (281)



Pat Cronin

First bend of the two double right angled bends, looking downstream 3rd March 2013 showing detailing of the water worn change of direction.

6th March Fraggle Rock
Matt Randall

LW 18:27, neaps, dark and overcast. Bumped into Nils Shannon at the parking place who voiced an interest, without pressure, to visit and perhaps dig next Wednesday! While PC set up MR commenced digging the plan to fill and stack the twenty skids and then fire them out. TB's method of donkey work is really the only appropriate, suitable method particularly when there is only two; PC will prepare a better harness for the donkey work. PC hauled out the skids and another twenty swiftly followed; forty in total: very rewarding for just two diggers. The progress is exposing the development of the trench more; the meander showing significant evidence of water flow, also the "terracing" on the south side suggests lengths of

time where the water volume/flow changed significantly yet remained constant for some while causing the terrace effect in the limestone slip off slope. Distance moved forward was some 0.3m...from this point it was possible to see ahead another three/four metres, beyond the next subtle bend to where the passage appears to be bending slightly to the right (south) this is just beyond where CC got to on the 5th May 2012. Well shagged out PC made his way back up to the truck, the fitness level is slowly returning after the long layoff with the torn knees ligaments, yippee. (321)

10th March Fraggie Rock
Solo

LW: 10:00: springs. CC is still away until sometime next week so PC worked away, TB is back on the 21st closely followed by PG and MG; hopefully we'll get an afternoon out of them during their visit. No real need tonight to set up the whole hauling system so straight in to dig. Matt had previously left a tidy working face, upon PC's arrival it was noted that a slump had occurred from the right hand side of the face, which consists of more coarse gravel sediment than clay. Most of the face is very wet, except the right hand side with the clay deposit, though there is moisture coming through the adjacent bedding. The passage is becoming quite uniform across its section and has a slow curve to the right. The 9mm of rain that fell the other evening has provided a quantity of stream flow that had come over the top of the passage spoil and caused the face to collapse, also filling up the pools in the main passage that were all but empty, but there was no flow from the outside beddings. PC removed the slump within four skid loads then continued to dig away as normal. Having previously managed to drag out two skids at a time using the Dr. Boycott Donkey method, the plan this time was to drag along two skids on a tape attached to his waist tape as he went out to the entrance in order to pull out another two skids tied to the blue hauling line. So per single trip outward meant four skids removed: this method proved reasonably efficient so was repeated; the total removed being twenty four skids. (345)

13th March Fraggie Rock
Solo

LW 18:10, springs. With CC in the UK and MR and JW unavailable PC decided to tip away. Nil's Shannon enquired but as it was only himself PC put him off till next week. The plan was to fill all the skids first then drag them out in twos as previously. The "come hither" bar is the tool that makes solo digging so practicable, the reduced effort is significant. The deposits are gradually returning to those previously experienced; pockets of fine silt with heavy clay and coarse gravels. There is still a small amount of water/moisture trickling out of the right hand bedding as the clay is removed from the joint. PC paced back from the face to the bend; this length of passage is some three and a half metres (12 feet). Total of twenty skids taken out. (365)

17th March Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

St. Patrick's Day: LW 14:12, neaps. Cold; with a northern wind, so changing was swiftly carried out. While CC went in PC set up the hauling pulley and the fall arrest system he recently made for the boys. A small amount of water was flowing from the entrance. There was a small amount of collapse from the face that had taken place since the 13th March. CC quickly cleared this and filled twenty skids, while PC dragged them back to the narrows. PC then dragged out two and the rest as CC connected them. A further twenty soon followed making a total of 40 skids. CC had brought with him two more come hither rods made by NB in Bristol; there is now one at each point of greatest need. An Ennis climber arrived who had met the pair last year; seemingly dazed at the fact the pair are still digging. To finish up PC squeezed over the face to view ahead, a reasonably straight passage could be seen for some ten metres until it turns to the right. It'll be worth taking a bearing along this straight section to see if it is the same as previously taken. Off then to the Roadside for Black and Gold's. Pauline was in the Doolin Parade, so PC nipped down to cheer her on. (385)

20th March Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Matchek

LW 17:15, Neaps, with barely one and a quarter metre range, a clear sky, with a cold north wind beginning to build. CC and PC arrived to find JW and “M” waiting at the entrance, CC, JW and M went in to start digging and set up while PC prep’d the fall arrest and the pulley system. M is a Polish digging machine, not a caver, an open water diver friend of JW. PC commenced to drag out the single skids but this was taking too long so asked JW to pair them together. At thirty four skids CC came out to spell PC for several pulls, the team continued digging until the final total of seventy one skids were removed. PC then viewed the digging face which is now at the point of the change in direction of the passage; this is the point where CC reached a body length beyond in May 2012, his boots were just visible to PC from the fourth bend, while he was sketching a grade one survey. This distance from the fourth bend now is something that requires attention; possibly installing another pulley system from the digger back to the “Seaside”. The progress tonight was substantial, PC has communicated with Pete Glanville, (Organtown), who has agreed to assist with the dig over several nights during their visit, excellent. Off then to the roadside for the obvious pints. NB. Matchek is a polish lad from Limerick (416)

24th March Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 09:07, moving to springs: very cold with a blustery easterly wind; on arrival bumped into climbers again. With just three the team dug and stockpiled the 20 skids, some of which are beginning to show signs of wear. With CC digging TB dragging back from the face and PC dragging them back to the rawlbolt the time went quickly as did the filling of the skids. Two and a half swift shifts meant that fifty were removed; meanwhile TB opted to take out the busted rock pieces, previously destroy by CC & PC making a total of fifty six skids removed, not bad for some two hours of work. An interestingly shaped stone emerged with a profile like a prehistoric Bison; this was just on the corner (the fifth bend where CC got to); now referred to as Bison Boulder Bend or just Bison Bend. PC paced out the distance from the bend at thirty six metres, this almost ties in with the original estimated length of thirty eight metres during the breakthrough in May 2012; PC is pleased with the accuracy of the estimate. The wide appearance of the route does appeal to PC that a trolley of sorts would assist when it’s just CC and him, whereas previous passage shape (like at the narrows) will not allow a trolley to function at all well. Away to the Roadside where they arranged to meet up with Martin Grass, PG, et al. They duly arrived just as the team was settling down for the well earned pint; thereafter a very fine afternoon session occurred. (472)

27th March Fraggie Rock

A cast of thousands: Matt Randall, Martal Baines, Basher Baines, Martin Grass, Pete Glanville, Nigel Cox, Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 10:51, springs; Previously PC had emailed the others in the UK, prior to their departure, for assistance with the dig. And so it came to pass they descended upon the dig and swiftly removed 121 skids. The effect was that the face swiftly traveled forward at least some five feet; TB and PC let the others enjoy the dig while they dragged out the skids, ably assisted by Basher (MB); there after they went to the Roadside for pints, and a rest. (593)

31st March Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

The clocks leap forward!

LW 14:30, springs; very cold: the wind from the east – southeast; a swift trip down to the cave where the sea was demonstrating long, slow wave lengths occasionally covering the lower bench. The huge pile of spoil was found.....gone! This must have been due to the large

swell witnessed by the boys on their way back from Poulmagrai. The plan was to repeat the normal (now normal) shift system, fill 'em, stack 'em and drag 'em. With CC digging, TB moving the skids back towards PC, who then dragged them to the hauling point. The distance now from the face back to the hauling point is some fifteen metres; even with NB's come hithers it's quite a strain on the lower back. Talk has turned to the need to improve the system, the weekly distance ever increasing; today the face was progressed by some eighteen inches (0.45m). This distance is due to the passage width narrowing from the wide bend. If the team has discussed using a railway in Lost Sole then it makes sense to utilize it in the back end of Fraggles. Final tally of the shifts was fifty skids. Then to the Roadside when they met up with JS. (643)



Pat Cronin

Bison Bend; start of shift 24th March

1st April Lost Sole

Tony Boycott,

LW springs; TB wanted to see Lost Sole so the pair ventured off in the very cold and windy conditions. As they approached the area of Fraggles Rock PC suggested pacing out the route to see if the recent calcite vein exposed during digging could be found on the surface as a reference point for the survey etc. As PC paced out the distance and the passage shape TB located the vein; the rough pacing seemed to bear out the estimated position. They then descended to Lost Sole where PC took TB through the plan of attack. En-route back they dropped down onto the bench to examine the spoil, several examples of erratic were found, some of them really are quite beautiful, TB loaded some into his tackle sac and staggered back up the hill: TB away to the UK on Tuesday.

3rd April Fraggles Rock

Chester, later Conor McGrath

LW 17:42 neaps: a very bright day, though the wind has moved a little north so still quite chill. MR and JW are diving in Poulbehan tonight, so we'll be a little short handed; with TB back in five days. What is now noticeable is the amount of effort involved dragging the skids back from the face to the hauling area; talk has now returned to the idea of a railway; with TB around the system works well enough but even so its tough enough for just three, let alone two. PC has the steel conduit that JW supplied. The distance in, now some forty metres

or so, with the areas of deep-ish pools, should be sufficient distance in from the causal curious visitor, thus avoiding any interference with the equipment, likewise the distance and the number of bends may reduce the effect of any wave action; though the washing effect would still account for some debris scoured from the walls and deposited around the place. A railway would mean that any dragging would only be from the "Seaside" where the skids are stacked to the hauling place. CC dug and PC dragged the skids, the suggested ten at a time doesn't work for PC it seems a better system to fill and drag the twenty then haul, a method long enough to get into the swing of it. CMcG arrived and assisted for the remaining time to remove a further twenty skids: then to the Roadside for talk and drink. (673)

10th April Fraggle Rock (& Souterrain)

Tony Boycott

13:30. the plan was to meet earlier in the day and to carry down some rails to assess the bending to shape in the cave, en-route found cattle being loaded into trailer blocked the way so abandoned trip until later on. Whilst waiting PC took TB onto James Fitzgerald land to locate the whereabouts of the recorded souterrain; found it almost immediately, proving the Archaeological survey of Ireland details are reasonably correct/accurate. It is un-enterable and appears to have three openings; occasionally used by a mammal. To the south are a scattering of larger stones suggesting an archaeological site. Though PC thinks that there is an ancient field system close by which it may be part of; he'll check to see.

10th April (con't)

18:30; HW 18:11, springs: The pair carried down the rails and the survey kit to do a line survey to establish where the end was in relation to everywhere else. The estimated distance to the far bend was measured at seven (7) metres using TB's Disto, not far off the original visual estimate. The face is presently thirty five metres from the entrance. The line of longest sight was used rather than following the winding lower half of the passage. It'll be grand when the survey is done properly. While TB had a go at wriggling over the space at the face PC attempted to bend up the rails to accommodate the bend (some 45 degree or so) just back from the face; successfully: they now align with the general trend of the inward passage, and are set up to the centre of the approach to the next bend going back to the "seaside". It may pay to terminate the rails out into the passage to the ledge the skids are stored on allowing easier removal of the loaded skid. Whilst in the bar PC explained a theory to TB regarding the digging; it involves the digger progressing forward as normal but rather than send out all the spoil, a percentage (perhaps a third) is stacked behind the digger and the railway ran on the top. This would obviate the problems with volume of spoil from the varying width and the extra on the bends of the passage. PC is sure it will ultimately come to this; meanwhile the plan is to progress the seven metres to the observed bend and decide from there.

12th April Quealys Cave Co. Mayo (suggested name)

Tony Boycott

Elevation 17m

ITM 511544 x 757266

Following on from information gained from Sean Quealy of Coillte, the team drove up to Clonbur to locate the unrecorded cave; Sean had been informed that an instructor from the adjacent outdoor centre had spent between 3 and 5 hours underground, so expectations were high, also there was reference to a deep pool inside, PC imagined that this may connect into one of the routes between Lough Mask and Corrib. The location map given to PC was not that great neither was the description; after two hours nothing could be seen that matched the description of the cave entrance area. Even though there was a light shower the day turned sunny; fortunately. Walking back up the track PC wondered about the slight change in height marking a limestone bench all be it hidden in the undergrowth to the left and right. Within ten metres of walking north into the dense area an obvious entrance was found by TB among the moss covered limestone bench and boulder area. A quick change and into the entrance, which was exactly as described by Sean, vertical and narrow, within eight metres the passage height became lower, with a parallel rift feature to the left and another entrance,

a small pool (3m x 1m) was to the right, onward the passage split and closed down, one too tight the other just closed in an area of solutional erosion. Back to the pool which was not bottomless but one metre to a boulder bottom, traversing across this the bedding area opened wider, turning left the passage narrowed slightly to say three metres and continued for some fifteen metres until the silt floor almost blocked the passage. Estimated length seventy to eighty metres; the cave is mostly a silt floored bedding cave, the water levels when filled rarely become deeper than 0.45m as no silt was on the roof and the Moonmilk formations. The water sink is the pool as less silt was in the area surrounding it. There were several opening into this cave that seems to run west along the edge of the small limestone bench, only three could be entered. Prior to this PC found a sink on the edge of the adjacent pool while TB found a possible entrance in the woodland, all had their position recorded in ITM by PC.

14th April Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

10:00. LW 14:50 going to neaps; very blustery and overcast: A trot down in threatening rain clouds. With CC digging and TB behind with PC dragged the skids back to the hauling position; once stacked PC and TB to outside to drag them out. During the hauling, even with the low tide conditions, the heavy swell began to regularly wash up over the bench to the point where the gulley was filled after one wave ran up the entire bench, the sea water running into the entrance pool; with accompanying colossal waves opposite the Lackglass entrance in excess of sixty feet high and very, very wide covering most of the Lackglass bench; PC regretted he had no camera present. Meanwhile CC was working away inside oblivious to the increasing turmoil of spume outside. With TB dodging the water twenty skids were ran out and the work called a halt: a swift job was carried out tying down all equipment inside then quickly out and straight to the bar, where the lads enjoyed a well earned Black while PC had to suffer a blackcurrant drink; where they bumped into Julie, Matt, Fionn and Elizabeth Randall. Matt informed the assembly that he and JW found the bedding plane approach to sump three in Fergus River cave had become almost blocked with mud and silt, further plan of an underground camp is in train. The Fraggie Rock plan is, now that with TB going to the UK for a month or so, the railway will commence construction, most likely starting with the planning layout next Wednesday evening. (693)

17th April Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 16:15, going to springs: the primary aim tonight was to assess and measure up for the installation of a railway. In a strong wind and drizzle the pair carried down the tools and timber for the sleepers. On arrival it was apparent that at least a foot of sea water had entered the cave as far as the face as parts of the wall were washed clean of mud and other debris to this height, all deposited at the working face. The idea of an elevated railway some 18" above the floor utilizing the bedding seems all the more sensible now when such a regular volume of water could be expected to inundate the passage as far in as the present face, some thirty five plus metres. The aligning of the rails suggested that it may be possible to extend the terminus closer toward the first of the double bends, but, the lowering of the roof area on the third corner may prove otherwise. The principle cross ways supports (sleepers [3" x 2"]) should work out at around 1.2m centres supporting longitudinal (2" x 2") supports for the rails along their length. There was a significant amount of fresh water issuing from the cave and the adjacent bedding, even inside there was a series of drips and dribbles from the various cracks in the roof. There was also significant evidence of a stream coming over the face as the left hand side was eroded. It was pissing down with an increasing wind speed (gusting force 8) upon the team's emergence so a swift trip up the coast and a fast change; then a warm and snug couple of pints in the Roadside. When who should walk into the bar but JW and a polish fella after their trip into Poulmagollum: caving talk of caverns measureless to man, a nice evening; 24mm rainfall at Carnane. (693)

24th April Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 17:09, going to springs: The plan was to commence installing the railway, CC lead off with the drill, other tools and a couple of pieces of timber while PC took the five sleepers and most of lateral rail timbers for the longitudinal rail support; a slow difficult stagger down to the site, equipment and gear were both very heavy. Once inside the team began to clear the places previously decided for the sleeper positions and fixed them into position with screws, timber wedges etc. The layout is good; the bedding is quite consistently even allowing the sleepers to be aligned and leveled quite well. The bending of the steel conduit rails for the first acute turn of the passage should now present no problem. It is likely that this planning will allow the rails to extend beyond the skid storage area to the third bend, thus removing the effort to negotiate bends three and four with the loaded skids; perhaps even unto the very first bend, that may be useful. Finally emerging around 20:45 into a heavy rain shower: so swiftly away to the Roadside for a couple of well earned pints.

26th April Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 12:03; springs; in steady rain the pair carried down two rails to assess the possibility of bending on site, likewise the drill and other tools. A good volume of water was issuing from the cave and the other sites along the bedding outside. The lateral rail supports were measured, cut and set in place and aligned to the upstream bend. A swift job well planned, then to the Roadside for a couple of pints.

28th April Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 13:30; going to neaps; cold wind from the NW: the flow had reduced from the entrance: PC had prepared some bends to two rails; the plan was to take them down to check their alignment with the bend in the passage. The fifth sleeper was quickly set in place and the extra lateral rail supports put into position and secured with 100mm screws. Next the rail bends were checked and looked good, though an adjustment is needed on the apex of the bend of the northern rail to equalize the gauge on the bend. An inspection of the terminus area was carried out, the best suited place is between bends two and three; this will allow the pulling to be done in the wider section of the passage, next to the skids, the loaded skids then dragged to the hauling position only some ten metres away. The rails were marked and carried back to the truck; then to the Roadside for a pint.

1st May Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 16:15, neaps: A straight forward evening, the plan was to check the layout of the rails and to decide on the positions of the foot plates for welding; then to the bar for a Black and Gold.

4th May Lisdoonvarna

Met Joe O'Loughlin; who owns the fishing shop in Lisdoonvarna; PC enquired as to accessing the land above Caherdoon for the archaeological project, Joe offered to take him up anytime and also said work away. PC began to speak of Poulmagrinn but was interrupted by the arrivals of customers, so PC will return, as invited by Joe for a further chat. Yippee!

12th May Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 13:15, springs; an overcast day with slight rain: the aim was to transport the kit, which consisted of the rails for the fifth bend, fixings, and the truck, to assess the quality of the prefabricating work. The sea had penetrated the place as evidenced by CC finding a lump of Thrift sat on the floor adjacent to the face. PC fixed the rails to the existing lateral supports once CC had adjusted them into position relative to the mobile loading ramp. Once fixed the truck was driven along the short five/six metre section of rail; no problem at all, though a

guide to control the draw and hauling ropes is required on the fifth bend, both before and perhaps after. A discussion then took place where both voiced their concerns regarding the tram road being brought to almost the first bend. It was decided to terminate the tram road at the third bend, allowing for a number of considerations to be accommodated, not least the threat of the sea. If all goes well the tramway should be finished by the time of TB's arrival. The plan is to return Wednesday and fit the two rail supports to extend the tramway to the planned terminus, and assess and measure the rails required. Then a slow trip back up carrying the truck and the loading ramp; heavy: to the bar for a pint, tasted the "Hobbit" ale, very strong, 6%, and too cold, but with a nice after taste. (693)



Pat Cronin

The above image shows the track at Bison Bend; the white up-stand is the guide for the hauling rope; the rope is tied to a sleeper, its job is via a clamp to hold the loading ramp securely in place.

15th May Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 15:00, going to neaps; sea rough to very rough. Temperature was still quite cold for May. The pair struggled down in a very high wind blowing from the west/nor-nor-west. Last night the wind was force. During the descent PC, who was carrying the eleven foot lengths of timber, did fine impression of a weather cock. The plan tonight was to install the rail supports and secure them to the floor at the terminus point and provide a mid-position sleeper; to complete the work by assessing the bend required for the rails to follow the slight bend, the change in height down to the buffer terminus. The work progressed swiftly as the general design had been gone over several times. CC then went into the face to complete the securing of the last rail support while PC managed to set a bend into the rails and mark the positions to have the securing plates welded on. There is a buffer required to absorb the

impact of the truck particularly at the terminus: the estimated weight could be between 50-60 kilos: to introduce some sort of break PC suggested a pulley above the track near the terminus through which the hauling rope passes, as the truck passes beneath the rope can be used to “break” the momentum of the truck. This pulley along with the final rails, the truck and hauling ropes will be installed on Sunday morning. PC is away to the UK for Harper’s 60th so all will be ready for digging when he returns with TB in June. Had a look around for PC’s missing cold chisel; no luck, may be in the shite at the base of the face. To the Roadside for a pint: quite busy with the summer visitors. (693)

19th May Fraggie Rock

Jayne Stead, Cheg Chester, Matt Randall

LW 13:03, neaps; sea state slight to moderate, a warm day, no wind. PC loaded up with the two thirty metre ropes which will do the hauling to the entrance; the existing one will be used for the railway. MR had kindly turned up to assist so offered to carry the drill down, with CC and JS carrying the rails. After MR left to return home PC & CC continued installing the prepared rails and studied the buffer question, MR has offered a soft rubber material that will do the job. PC then suspended a pulley into position above the rails to keep the hauling rope out of the way and to also act as a break for the descending truck. JS meanwhile squeezed over the face for some two body lengths and thought the distant roof may be rising slightly. PC then cleared the face area, throwing the debris over the top of the face, to accept the forthcoming ramp. The place will be ready to recommence digging on PC’s return from the UK. A swift pack up and a slow trudge to the truck: then to the Roadside for the Black and Gold. So far this is the eighth trip working on the railway system.

26th May Reservoir Hole, UK

The Frozen Deep

Pete Glanville, Martin Grass, Tony Boycott, A young Chinaman! Nigel Cox

A cracking trip on a fabulous day! Stopping at Mac’s with the Cobbett: Off to Rob Harpers place for his 60th, bumped into Chris Hannam, not a well man. Rob invited PC to Sri Lanka to check out some “cenotes”, now the local hostilities are over. The week spent flying around and seeing Kevin etc.

2nd June West Kennet long barrow and Avebury

Nigel Burns

Stopping at NB’s an enjoyable reunion was had, and a nice day out to the burial barrow at West Kennet, walked on to Avebury; the biggest circle in the UK.

5th June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott Cheg Chester

HW 16:04; springs: carried down the remaining kit to complete the railway, the buffer and the loading ramp. While TB and CC installed the ramp PC hammered the rock to a flat-ish shape to accept the vertical timber for the buffer it was then screwed to the base timber and to the wall, completed with a hard rubber mat covering. Five horizontal supports were screwed in place to tie the laterals together and support the impact of the buffer area. The new thirty metre lightweight two ropes were left on site, perhaps they may be serviceable, time and use will tell.

7th June Quealys Cave, Co. Mayo

Tony Boycott

Following the trip of 12th April 2013, the plan here was to survey the cave. With breakfast in Kilcolgan, the team reached Clonbur and was underground by 10:30. The survey was useful as one passage was noted that was unentered previously; though only short and to a choked entrance. The gryke noticed by TB was entered afterwards and found to be just that an enlarged joint. Over tea at “Mrs. Miggins” pie shop, the café, in Cong, the rough total was

calculated at 90m. The end does seem to beckon beyond the low muddy bit.....it appears to go on though requires some digging.



Photo Pat Cronin

Tony Boycott, Quealys Cave, 7th June 2013.

9th June Fraggie Rock

Matt Randall, Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 12:16, springs: A fabulously hot sunny day. The truck, constructed by CC, was carried down along with various other bits to run the railway in “anger” it ran well with very minor adjustments required; CC dug, TB drew the trucks, MR moved the skids from the terminus to the hauling point and PC dragged them out, 51 in all; not back considering the time lost in

preparing and setting things up etc. The two new thirty metre ropes have a question mark over them, but time will tell. The two 13mm ropes were brought back. There is some effort required to pull the loaded truck up the loading ramp. Then to the bar for gold's all round; (744)

12th June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

LW 14:06; going to neaps: No wind and overcast with a threat of rain later. The team had little to carry this time, the plan to continue digging. CC at the face TB hauling the truck to the terminus and PC dragging the skids from the terminus to hauling place thence outside. The two shifts of twenty skids went quickly and well, the truck was tested with a large rock from a collapse and worked without pause, later dragged out by TB on a length of rope. A sandy layer has appeared at the base of the fill, the whole of while remains quite wet even though the period of some two weeks without rain. Heavy rain quickened the pace outside, though this was gone on the next haul out. The pulley outside needs be a 50mm one to reduce the effort hauling, though a 50mm length of webbing has been looped to the end of the rope for comfort. The return ascent was through increasing rain so the lads timed it well for Gold at the bar. (784)



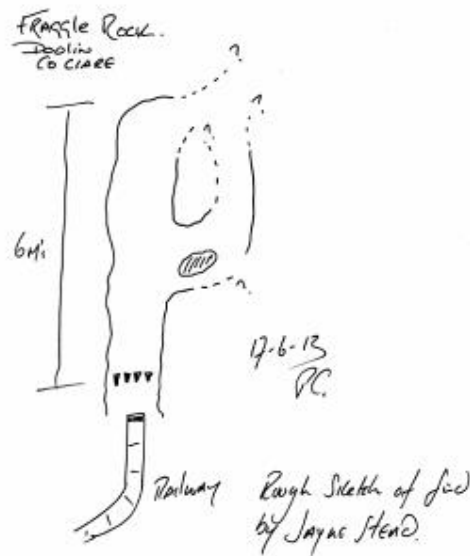
Pat Cronin

Fourth bend toward Bison bend before and after rail installation.

16th June Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Jayne Stead

HW 11:11, neaps: With three in the team JS & CC went to the face while PC set up about the terminus. Following a large collapse CC set about clearing it, a significant amount of water had issued over the face during the last few days, as witnessed by the rainfall. The first twenty skids were swiftly filled and removed, the next twenty very much the same. Between the shifts CC squeezed over the top to have a look see; as did the others, JS getting the furthest, some four metres. The area was agreed to widen with a small pool/puddle on the right ahead the passage seems to bear right behind a bulge in the roof, or rather a broad squat pendant, the right side appears to pass behind this. Clear observation is obviously restricted in the low space. The overall impression is that of another broad bend, which may be the reason for the undulating floor contours arising first left then right. The place was very wet with a significant amount of water issuing from the inlet on the third bend. Water was continually flowing over the face too, causing consistent collapses of the working face. A further observation is of the speed with which the wetness of the gravels and clays returned following the dry spell, perhaps as a result of the stream flowing over the consolidated deposit. Outside a gaggle of students played on the climbs. Stripped down the truck to carry back as no digging here for the next fortnight, so a slow and heavy return up the coast was endured, though not too bad. Into Lisdoonvarna for pints of Gold; bumped into Nic Geh and Helen, NG had prepared a pile of digital photos of his and PC's early exploits, (1980s + 90s), in France, Majorca etc, a nice surprise. (824)



Pat Cronin

Loading ramp around Bison Bend; TB with rock effortlessly removed by rail

25th June Valentia Island Quarries

Pauline Cronin

Another late start; so what! PMC wanted some extra exercise so focused on Geokaun cliffs which are only some half mile from the Cousin's cottage, a steep walk brought the pair to the upper car park from where the circular walk around the summit leads off; bright and windy, a fabulous day with great views. Back to the cottage for lunch then down into Knightstown to see the heritage centre then onto the Tetrapod fossilized footprints; brilliant! Drove up to the slate mine to have a look around; found the area behind the grotto to be a working mine. PC wandered past the workers to look at the curious holes high up in the walls; he stopped a man walking past who turned out to be Pat O'Driscoll, one of the two owners of the mine. A very pleasant and obliging man who took PC on a guided tour showing the 19th century remains of the overhead gantry for the moving of the slate. After saying goodbye PC and PMC were outside taking photos when Pat O'Driscoll stopped off en-route home for another lengthy chat, a very nice man! The stone stack outside the mine is a chimney for a steam boiler.



PMC at the steam engine chimney Valencia slate mine.

26th June Leacanabuaile souterrain
Pauline Cronin

Yet another late start, the mist and fog very dense, a cracking holiday; so the plan was to visit Cahersiveen, shop then onto Leacanabuaile and Cahergall forts. At Leacanabuaile fort PC quickly stripped off, as he had no caving gear and disappeared down the very tight souterrain entrance, more than a little surprized at its confines he wriggled on to find a place to turn around, the draught was what spurred him to pursue the passage thinking he could do a “through” trip, after some six metres the passage appeared to end, but to the right was a narrow gap through which he could see another bend lit by daylight, through this squeeze and there was the exit, securely gated and locked. The size of the passage here was much bigger, a metre wide and 700mm high, turning around and taking a photo he made his way back only to find the exit was far more awkward to emerge from, after some more wriggling he got his arm back, to narrow his shoulders, and slid out to the waiting presence of PMC, relieved to see him. On then to Cahergall, no more than five hundred metres away, presently undergoing renovation. Very nice but almost too nicely put back together, one question or query is what was the original height as there is one section, not the gate area, which must be

almost six metres high, where as the height of the wall near the renovation section is only some two and a half? On the way back into Cahersiveen for groceries found a lone Spanish female that cadged a lift to town; a final shop for bits and pieces then back to the cottage for another great meal and a movie.



Inner hut at Leacanabuaile with “restored” entrance to souterrain, the locked exit is in the outer wall; noted tapered concrete.



Photo Pat Cronin

Inside Leacanabuaile souterrain

Image of the inside of Leacanabuaile souterrain looking in from the grilled outlet in the wall, this poor photo barely describes the turn into the modern, very purposely narrowed double bend approached from the wall, to all intents it appears to be a dead end likewise from the inside, though the draught could be felt on squeezing in no light could be seen until PC's head was close to the narrow section. The souterrain is entered by dropping down into it from the outside, so a clear view of the hole is difficult.

30th June Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott

HW 11:24, springs: CC away in the UK, so carried down the truck following its routine maintenance. Arrived to find the place subject to some high water; the rock TB had removed had been blown back up the passage some five metres, likewise the spoil pile had gone as was the evidence on the top of the bench. No other damaged was noted in the cave. Set up the truck and installed the pulleys to assist with hauling and also breaking the trucks descent to the terminus. TB noted the previous progress. During hauling there was some trouble with the truck bogie jumping the line at the top of the ramp; most likely due to the angle of the ramp and the closeness of the bend, this should sort itself out once the next section of track is installed, which should be quite soon. The pair plodded away with two shifts of twenty skids. TB managed, unfortunately, to pull his lower back muscle whilst setting the loaded truck back on the rails: a possible future problem? As the dig progressed the suspect big boulder fell out narrowly missing TB, its size will require its capping before digging the face can resume. The total distance has increased another couple of feet; PC needs to measure the distance next time, perhaps even redo the survey to give TB's back a rest? (864)

3rd July Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott

HW 14:45, neaps: The aim today was to cap the rock that TB dropped out from the passage fill. PC set up his kit and quickly fractured the elongated boulder into four main pieces, and a lot of smaller sharper fragments, even with the use of the aprons a tiny piece of shrapnel hit and cut PC's hand; most likely a ricochet. There was evidence of water once again flowing over the face, hence the crap on the floor. All was left for Sunday when the area can be brushed and cleaned up; then to the bar for a pint of gold apiece.

4th July Sturgaddy – Sturgadan Cave
Tony Boycott

The aim was to locate the cave since TB located it on the historical 6" map held by Archaeology.ie. Ascending the road into Eanty Beg PC's memory wouldn't work well since the twenty odd years since he and Mark Lumley worked the area. After an assessment from the car PC noticed a woman and stopped to ask who owned the ground; Mrs. Davoreen directed PC and TB to her husband, Paddy. After pleasantries permission was freely given to roam the area. After a further uneventful spell fighting their way among hazel etc no cave was found, so back to the research table; TB suggested Westropp may have used note books and wondered of access to them, as PC sent Maureen Comber (Clare Librarian) some photos of the Phosphate mine she may help in this, as she also edited Westropp's book for its publication by CLASP. PC stopped to thank Paddy who invited them to roam whenever they liked. He also said of the land near the area of the boreen near the head of the Eanty Beg valley, to work away to look at the souterrains. The owner's nephew who farms thereabouts has a red caddy.

7th July Fraggie Rock
Tony Boycott

LW 11:24, Springs: The day was overcast, yet warm, promising to be hot, perhaps. The aim was to clear out the capped boulder and continue digging. First PC disappeared in to take a few photos, then returned to set up the equipment; TB to the face and digging commenced with clearing up the area and removing the boulder pieces. The truck now regularly jumps the rails, possibly due to the proximity of the ramp to the curve or even not aligned correctly. The team was visited by climbers who were here last year, impressed by the progress. Meanwhile for some reason the pair found the effort far more than normal digging trips, with only twenty skids and a large fragment of boulder removed. TB is away to the UK until around the 5th August. (884)



Pat Cronin

Loading ramp, 7th July 2013

14th July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

LW 09:40, neaps; another very warm day. Today's aim was to take measurements for the next section of track to be installed having placed the next sleeper support in position across the passage in the bedding, from which was chipped the calcite and crud. The plan also included taking out as many skids as possible; however shortly after their arrival PMcG arrived so once the measuring had taken place the team removed 2 x 18 skids. PC went to the face to see the effect of CC's and TB's efforts, impressive, and broached the issue regarding the logistics of spoil extraction to CC; the idea of back filling and progressing at a swifter pace. This backfilling would require a substantial "break water" to protect the looser spoil fill. We could have used the three huge pieces removed this last month for just that task. The team spoke of the need to survey the place as the actual direction the passage is heading is now somewhat debatable. PMcG was amazed at the amount of engineering and humorously questioned the team's sanity; his previous visit was 5th August 2012. (920)

17th July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 18:44, neaps; earlier in the day the pair had each prepared the rails and the support frame for the next rail section to be installed. The frame prepped by PC was installed and secured to both sleeper supports, once done the inward sleeper was wedged into its secure final position. The rails prep'd by CC were then aligned and screwed into position, with the loading ramp set up and secured by its anchor rope now attached to the new frame section and therefore now correctly in line with the loading ramp turn buckle. CC had also made another rope guide for the bend and installed it; once complete a test run of the trunk was carried out to everyone's satisfaction. The truck now takes the bend very well. A look at the route ahead suggests that the route lay beyond the "bump" in the roof; this will become clearer in another metre or two. The width of the roof is similar to the first bend and may well provide a similar bench arrangement. If so the worry is the clearance o admit passage for a loaded truck. PC has spoken to MR and JW who have both confirmed that they are

unable to assist with an afternoon digging session, so to accommodate their possible involvement we need to bare their commitments in mind when planning a regular digging date. TB and JS return within three weeks so with their assistance and the others progress should increase significantly.

17th July CLOO8-001003/4, Medieval Enclosure souterrain
Solo

The aim was to carry out the cross section survey of where the souterrain comes out from the rampart. During the survey a further lintel was found almost at the base edge of the rampart, a little further on is quite a deposit of stones of varying sizes, possibly the remains of a wall. Heat and the insects were horrendous.

21st July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 10:29, going to springs: The aim was to just dig, now't else; as the track was now installed: making the total rail length now around twelve metres from the terminus to the loading ramp, inclusive. The usual setting up took a little while, but soon 19 skids were removed, followed by another 19. During a lull CC pressed over the face to try and get a better look see; the area is still inconclusive. Interesting stratification appearing in the face once again; sand, cobbles, clay's etc. CC breached another pocket of water, with the dip in the passage floor this will make for a period of wet knee digging. The passage seems to be following the team's theory, crossing the dip and collecting the rainwater up dip from it, a survey would provide an accurate idea of the angle of dip and from that a surface search would ID where the bedding comes to the surface, from this could be established and estimated catchment area! It is felt that this passage could easily enter a larger "main drain" one from the north or northeast. The surface of the deposit in the passage remains much the same level yet there is evidence of flow causing a slight lowering of that area, perhaps this may become more pronounced further in, where the team could crawl over it. (958)

24th July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

18:00. HW 19:08, springs: The thundery showers of the last three days were still threatening and later put in an appearance when PC was hauling the first shift to the surface. The team had brought along two replacement skids. The red rope was previously left attached to the truck through a krab which saved some ten minutes phaffing about setting up the system and made drawing the truck back to start operations much easier and swifter. The rail system with the new two metre flat section extension makes the trucks approach to, and cornering, of the curve at "Bison Bend" enormously better, though the loaded truck still requires a push up the loading ramp to get it going. PMcG has offered to donate a forty metre length of retired climbing 9mm rope which will replace the existing crappy cheapo rope, which won't last much longer. The two hauling ropes are now contained in two retired skids. Work commenced and the first shift seemed very much like hard work with one or two minor hiccups during the hauling process: the krab on the front needs to be connected to the ring bolt and not into the mallion; this reduces the height of the rope during hauling reducing the chance of it jumping the deviations. The second shift went much the same though CC had a further look see over the face into the unknown.....Little different than last time; perhaps the roof will be higher behind the obscuring dip in the roof? There is certainly evidence of a lower "channel" where water has flowed to the south side of the passage beyond, perhaps this is another area where the water leaves to issue forth at the surface beddings? The sandy deposit at the bottom was very hard on Sunday, yet tonight was water logged. It has also become thicker now some five to nine inches in thickness. Does this mean that we are at some limit of the reach of the sea, or has this sand washed in from above? The recent rain meant that a great deal of water was entering through both the inlets, the one at the terminus and another at the present working face, making for a reasonably wet working environment. The area ahead where JS had a look see (16th June) appears much wider than previously

appreciated, PC asked CC to excavate the right side to assess the possible forthcoming bend and ledge. The area ahead does look very similar to the terminus area; a wide roof span, which may have a wide ledge, buried from sight on the right hand side, and also, the normal, so far, narrower lower passage width. CC had earlier taken a compass bearing along the possible route ahead, and another back toward Bison Boulder Bend. Ahead was between 130 – 140 degrees while behind, back to Bison Boulder Bend, was 290' minus 180 = (110 degrees). The bearing of 130 – 140 suggests that we could be heading southeast! If this becomes so it may well confirm PC's hypothesis that this passage cuts across the dip, collecting other stream courses thereby capturing most of the sources of the existing springs issuing from the beddings to the south. The plan for Sunday is to fettle the trucks bearings, clear the cave up, to measure the length of passage and do some twenty skids, which would take us over the 1000 this year, making a conservative total of 3500 though in truth closer to 3700 skids, at a conservative estimate of fifteen kilos a skid that's over fifty metric tonnes. Gold's in the Roadside. (998)

25th July Souterrain, Teergonean
Solo

The aim was to complete the measuring of the outer section of the southern entrance through the rampart, during which PC found a substantial cill, one metre long, in situ, in line with stone work of the outer rampart or wall. Then a cross section of the main passage at its greatest height and at the point near to the shaft entry, the shaft was measured, with finally the northern opening measured. The horse flies were awful.

28th July Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 09:56, going to neaps: As things turned out today the pair completed a line survey to ascertain the present end and its ongoing direction in relation to the cave and the surface. Once concluded the pair did a shift of twenty four skids, taking them over the 1000 for the year! There will be a need for another section of track after the next digging session as the distance is slowly increasing; now some six feet in front the loading ramp. Though the actual direction to go remains unclear, and therefore how to lay the track, patience is the name of the game until they have an idea of what lay ahead in the wider area. The draft was passing inward today, clearing the atmosphere quite swiftly. (1022)

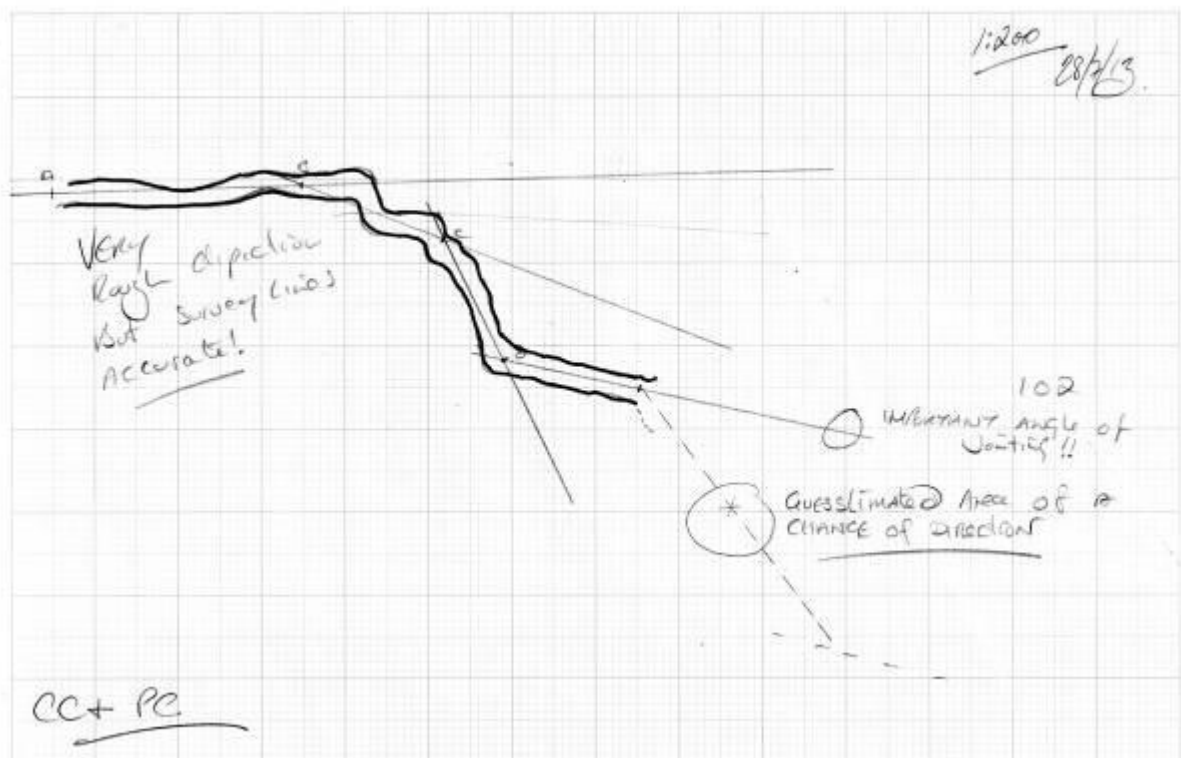
31st July Fraggie Rock
Jim Warny, Matt Randall, Cheg Chester

LW 19:15, neaps: With the two others support the team's optimism was they could shift as many as sixty skids! As the team dropped down onto the bench PC noticed the two most northern springs were dry, yet, the lower ones, the ones that issue adjacent and beneath the boulder pile were gushing out. On CC's arrival at the entrance he found the short red rope out on the bench, slightly above the gulley, still neatly coiled!? Having been previously neatly coiled and stored in the inlet hole at the rail terminus. So, CC hurried on to the face to find debris strewn down the passage; silt and finer sand was deposited up the sides of the main passage around various bends indicating a substantial water flow. CC remained at the face, now joined by JW, while MR worked the truck and PC sorted the dragging to the hauling point.

The scene around the face was one of devastation; a volume of water that had come over the top of the face with such force as to scour the face and spread it over the passage to beyond the loading ramp; some three metres, washing much of the clay deposits away, leaving quite clean sand, gravels and cobbles. The tin can, seen for the last while was easily reached at arm's length by CC. After a little while during which the lads got used to the rail system, the work began apace. Once eighteen skids were accumulated PC went outside to haul, after forty PC entered to assist further with CC moving about to give the lads experience and a chance to dig, which they did with gusto! The distance progressed over the last few trips meant that

another section of rail is needed so CC & PC moved in to measure up; while the stacked skids were swiftly removed by MR and JW.

The concept of the amount of water flowing out is one subject to the imagination of the optimistic digger....however a piece of plank used as a kneeler by CC was found lodged near the terminus suggesting significant turbulence at that corner, sufficient to jam the timber into its final vertical resting place. (See photo "Fraggle Rock 71d+e"). The direction that the cave is heading leads PC to believe that the stream in Poulnafearbui will not enter Fraggle Rock, as it is too far back from the coast, some twenty five metres higher, and that the angle of the dipping bedding (SW) will cause it to head more toward Uisce Geata (Watergate) . At the end of the shift CC & PC poked their heads into the space to listen to the previous reported sound of the stream; two levels of noise were actually present, the first was the sound of water passing into a small hole and sucking in air. (No doubt heading to the springs), the second was a subtle echo. Using a penetrating beam, PC is sure he could make out that beyond the present dip in the roof, the roof beyond is higher some six or so metres ahead, this, coupled with the lower water channel may make the passage ahead accessible to crawling?. The gang then had a cool libation in the Roadside. (107)



A rough sketch of Fraggle Rock: drawn along accurate compass bearings with PC's estimated position of a change in direction to realign with jointing.



Photo Cheg Chester

Face on 31st July following some 1.6 inches of rain from 08:00 to 15:00.



Photo Pat Cronin

31st July following inundation kneeler suspended at terminus; note sand deposit below.

1st August Fraggie Rock and area
Solo

Following yet more heavy rain showers; PC ran off through them to see the effects at Fraggie Rock, arriving at the climb down he was actually shocked to see the volume of water issuing from the entrance, (see photo), he soon noticed the volume issuing from a number of other springs, the estimated position of Otway's 'ole (1974) was visited and photos taken of several large springs issuing from beneath the storm beach boulders. He then climbed down a bench to get some shots of the "Fraggle" cascading down into the sea. Entering the cave the force of the, deeper than a welly, stream was very strong. Making his way upstream he snapped away at any inlets. Arriving at the "terminus" the water was just welly depth. Continuing upstream to the working face he found the stream cascading over the top having already washed down a substantial amount of debris, the water appeared to fill the passage beyond the top of the

face, spreading across to the upper left of the face. Kneeling on top of the submerged debris in some six inches of water his head was pressed against the ceiling. A steamy atmosphere, no draught, caused some of the photos to be less than perfect however the fifty odd he took more than illustrate the overall effect of the previous two days of intermittent heavy showers and the rainfall since last night's digging session. Leaving Fraggie Rock he visited Lost Sole and witnessed a colossal amount of water falling out the ceiling of Lackglass sea cave and also a small amount from the entrance of Lost Sole. From here he made his way home, stumbling across a huge stream from Poulnafearbui. On closer inspection the stream is exiting Radgers Hole having pushed out old mammal bedding; the entrance to Poulnafearbui was well and truly sumped!



Fraggle Falls: 1st August 2013



Returned to a normal resurgence



View downstream at the Terminus



Terminus inlet



Upstream over the loading ramp



The Fraggie cascading over the face



View downstream from Bison Boulder Bend



View downstream from loading ramp



Lackglass



“Dry river valley” from– Radgers Hole



Poulnafearbui



Radgers Hole

4th August Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW, 10:28; springs: a sunny, clear day. The aim today was to assess the devastation caused by the floods of the past several days, and to survey a length of the surface to fix the survey to Bing maps to represent it on the surface, and also survey out a leg to locate the present end of forty metres on 086 degrees. A trickle was barely resurging as CC set up and PC went in to photograph the situation, on arrival he found the loading ramp buried and no working face at all, just a dark oval passage stretching off into the hillside. Taking photos as he went he was finally stopped at small formation arrangement, stals etc, in the centre of the passage, blocking it temporarily. Retreating he joined CC and together they did the outside survey. Afterwards they entered to commence sorting out the mess; CC took the tape to PC's limit

which was measured at eleven metres from the last survey point! So the cave is now at least some fifty three metres long (in the straight lines of the minimum survey). After digging out the loading ramp a discussion agreed the plan to back fill, for the moment, so as to get room to dig ahead. A careful assessment of the rail system was also undertaken; as the working face was situated at a slight “S” bends in the passage, from beyond its almost straight for ten metres. PC is of the opinion that the passage is bigger beyond, and that the sound of the water gurgling toward the springs is only just ahead. The back packing debate continues; though they don’t exactly like the idea this close to the surface/sea, logistically it may be the only way to make progress later on. Outside the pair located the old end of the cave at forty metres and later made their way back via Radgers and Poulnafearbui. An immense amount of old bedding had been ejected from Radgers; the water in Poulnafearbui had been some two metres deep. CC will sort the rail and PC will build the timber frame. Then off to the Roadside for a beer, a fine day indeed. TB arrives tomorrow early PM.



Photo Pat Cronin

Loading ramp buried beneath flood debris End of passage 4th August 2013

7th August Fraggle Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 18:35; springs: Now joined by TB the aim was to look at the blockage and assess removing it; it was finally considered best left until we were in a better position to truck out the spoil. So, PC dug out an area for the loading ramp in the temporary backfilled area, while TB joined CC up near the blockage, then while TB remained digging at the blockage CC joined PC to commence digging the flood debris from the terminus upstream, without pulleys and krabs PC dragged out the twenty four kids while CC dug the spoil beneath the rails, and TB dragged it back to the hauling point; a difficult evening for all. TB and CC carried up the truck for its periodic maintenance while PC staggered ahead with the digging kit. To the Roadside where drink salved bruised bodies. (1100)

10th August Fraggle Rock (Additional Log supplied by TB)

Cheg & Aileen Chester

CC carried the truck back down, all into downstream terminus and reassembled it: AB then rat-holed solo for 2 feet hoping for a better view of the way on. Partially successful, not sure

if we are approaching a junction or a wide low chamber, but passage drops 2 feet into a pool and can be seen to continue for 3-4 metres straight ahead, may just be passable by very small people; also appears to go right beyond the stal bank. Draughting inward, very strongly. We still need to clear out the whole passage, and the stal bank looks pretty hard. (1100)

11th August Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 14:30, going to neaps: The aim was to clear out the flood debris previously strewn beneath the rails and back packed to uncover the loading ramp. Previously the plan was to leave the worst and backpack the debris under the rails, the pair felt uncomfortable with this plan so this trip continued to remove the section beneath the rails around the corner and along to where the ramp was. Progress was steady as CC dug TB loaded the skids and PC hauled them from Bison Bend back to the terminus, once twenty were stacked then the team moved them out. At forty CC estimated another twenty would see the bulk of the area clear; so the team pressed on. At sixty skids the team were fair knackered, but the area was cleared to a point where a little more would see the loading ramp re-installed in its original place, prior to the flood. The plan is to remove all the debris and clear toward the stal obstruction. The rainfall that caused the flooding on the 31st July, with that of the flooding on the 1st – 3rd August has so far resulted in 54 + 24 + 60 skids as of today without counting the couple containing the large rocks, and those pieces removed by TB: then to the Roadside for drinks and talk. (1160)

14th August Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester Tony Boycott Jim Warny, Matt Randall

LW 16:53, neaps: the aim to continue to remove the flood debris. The team spread out and commenced. The first twenty skids were swift then JW came out to assist PC which was great. JW then returned once the backlog was cleared, a little later MR came out to haul. The total was 100! A swift trip to the face area showed the area cleared beyond the face's old position. A fine evening, so the team retired to the Roadside for drink: 100 skids; now that was a superb effort. (1260)

15th August Pouldubh mid to south entrance

BMcM, CMcM, CMcM, IL, NL, DL, ML, + another adult and two other kids and PC

PC was asked to accompany BMcM leading the parents and children through the cave, all had a fine time.

16th August Doonaunmore Promontory fort and new caves.....

Oughtdarra

Tony Boycott

10:30: The aim was to visit Noel Thynnes land and see if the hole had reopened since Noel had re-filled it, and to view the promontory fort prior to its survey. At first the climb through the scrub was quite awful and unsuitable for carrying a pile of surveying kit, however the summit was soon reached and found to be virtually devoid of archaeological features, other than the substantial northern wall now much deteriorated and tumbled. No obvious sign of a gateway was noted. The pair then moved across to the obvious cave entrance which needs abseiling into from above. Then they moved across to a cattle path which lead back down through a scrub covered gully, and dry stream bed, to the area where the truck was left. Two caves one entered were found, though very small (4m) the other possibly requiring a rope. The cave pointed out by TB shows promise, obviously seen by all who ever lived or passed this way, perhaps the haunt of artifacts?

16th August Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

15:00: HW 13:18 neaps: The aim to install the next section of rail up to the area of meander on the north side just to the side of where the old face was, which is still full of stream debris,

though bypassed by the flood. So the plan is to excavate the side deposit to create a sloping face rather than the present vertical one. Installing the rail today also meant that Sunday digging could go ahead with little delay. The problem of the subtle “S” bend exposed by the flood will be addressed with “doglegs” at rail joints to accommodate the passage bends. A trial run with the truck showed this sort of bend to be virtually unnoticeable, this method of bends in the rail will continue. Meanwhile as PC and CC installed the rail supports and sleepers TB had taken his Disto and compass to assess and estimate the passage beyond the blockage: on an average bearing of 090 degrees the passage appears to be between sixteen and eighteen metres long. A minor adjustment is required for one section of rail which CC will sort and fit Sunday, and the system will be fully operational; PC lay on the truck and sculled it along to the new section effortlessly, as the length increases this may be the quickest mode of accessing the face: then to the Roadside for a Gold and talk of caves measureless to man.



Pat Cronin

Face area now cleared of debris prior to rail installation; 16th August 2013.

18th August Fraggle Rock
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 15:38, going to springs: Sea state very rough: The aim today was to investigate, and possibly clear, the entire meander deposit and to install the final section of rail, while PC fixed the rail CC went to the face while TB untied the skids. Worked commenced; the fill was very compacted, very hard, so while a good deal of the deposit was removed the rest was sloped, the far north corner was exposed and exhibited a curious but beautiful piece of rock ledge and undercut that sticks out into the passage, this may be a difficulty in positioning the

rails, it all depends on how the rails approach that corner. The passage ahead appears narrower, so it may be man-riding on the truck will be necessary to reach the working face. The deep trench at the old face still continues; perhaps this was formed as the “S” bend evolved? One of the future intentions is to install a pulley beneath the loading ramp for the hauler to return the truck as well as pull it out; time will tell if this will work. Meanwhile it appeared that the team had twenty four skids available so shifts were completed accordingly. The total removed being seventy two skids; the effect of this on the team proportionate: to the Roadside for Gold’s and a rest. Clare beat Limerick today at hurling in the semi final, all Ireland championship. (1332)



Pat Cronin

Cheg and Tony from Bison Bend; note the “kink” in the rail bearing right; 16th August 2013. The vertical bar in the foreground is a hauling rope guide.

21st August Fraggie Rock

Jim Warny, Cheg Cheater, Tony Boycott

HW 18:05; springs: The plan was to dig the right hand side of the passage away from the very hard clay deposit. So CC and JW went to the face; with TB drawing the truck and PC hauling. Forty eight swiftly moved out, making a grand total of 4080, not including the first six metres of the dig or the larger rocks heaved out. PC managed to pull out four skids in one pull: not recommended as the norm; CC and PC measured for the next rail section, possibly to fit on Friday night. The face is now some three metres beyond the last survey point which is some two metres of deposit moved from the collapsed face position; in threatening rain the team heading off to the Roadside for a couple of Gold’s. (1380)

22nd August Watergate

Tony Boycott

11:00: LW 12:29 with 0.26m: With such a predicted low tide the plan was to survey the entrance passages; alas the tide fell but the breakers were such the passage barely formed an airspace, and the level of water indicated that the low point in the entrance passage was still

sumped the noises were fascinating. Meanwhile the team surveyed the smaller hole nearby, entered by PC last year, and during further prospecting found an 'ole beneath a boulder, definite passage development connected with Watergate, now detached from the bedrock, some eleven metres or so. During exploration both regularly soaked by the waves: great fun. Bumped into Suzanne Linnane who gave PC permission to walk her land and carry out his archaeological survey. Further, the pair went to the base of the spoil pile at Fraggie to view the washed debris, finding a variety of small erratics and pieces of stal, some having been formed on rock and individual pieces themselves. These have occasionally occurred in the skids for quite some time, now; they appear to becoming almost commonplace. PC found and retrieved a piece some three inches (70mm) diameter and 3/4 inch (18mm) thick, presently residing on his drawing desk

16:30: TB and PC to investigate an enclosure above CLOO4-085002 to see if it's an actual settlement with a possible link to the Fulacht Fia. The enclosure is a one metre high single stone thickness wall not quite circular, in good condition, perhaps once a stock compound. Fifteen metres to the southeast is an erratic: TB noted features that drew him to check further, it appears the hand of man has interfered and constructed a grave as part of the erratic.

23rd August Watergate

Tony Boycott

LW 13:10; springs: The aim again to survey the entrance passages, alas the wave pattern was similar to yesterday regularly entering the crawl. Too much to allow an airspace, the pair then measured the bench from above at seven (7) metres to the surface of the bench directly above. They also checked line of sight and realized they could use PC's intended Dumpy level to survey from Oubliette to the Main entrance so securing their positions.

25th August Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 08:40; going to neaps: The aim was to do a shift and install the next section of rail. After setting up the team actually did two shifts making a total of forty eight skids. Meanwhile the digging progressed through the difficult and compacted debris of the meander area gradually exposing a nice water-worn formation of the passage, resembling the snout of a Pig or Boar (Boar Bend?) it is however fractured and on the move and may well collapse before Wednesday. The floor appears to be rising, as the bedding is getting closer to it, could be bad news... PC believes that beyond the stal obstruction the passage (air space) should be larger as he thinks this point has been subject to the constant passage of water for the springs. The plan now is to remove the remaining fill in the meander. (1428)

28th August Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW17:04; neaps: The aim tonight was to commence to cap the boulder and hopefully remove some of the debris. PC had obtained some sand bags, and also brought down a new rope for the hauling: quite a weight all in all.

On arrival it was still in place, after some roggling CC brought it down. It measured an average of three feet by two feet by one foot; weighting in at about a quarter of a tonne 250 kilos. PC set to capping while CC drew the pieces and placed them into the skids and onto the tram. At the terminus TB (now known as Biceps Boycott) took the skids two at a time to the surface and deposited them in the usual place; quite a feat really when you consider there were a total of twenty four he shifted! While CC sheltered behind empty skids PC capped away; at the end a dozen or so caps were used and the boulder reduced and removed, the remaining smaller items of debris will be removed Sunday with the assistance of NB. All things being considered it was an excellent job done by the team. The area seems very wide now the boulders gone; the plan for Sunday is to clear the remaining spoil in the meander and on the floor up to the present face. To the Roadside where the best couple of pints were drank down. (1452)



Photo Pat Cronin

Meander area, (Boar Bends), note pooled water in natural hollow and compacted infill to the left, also the formation of the passage wall: a Boar? 25th August 2013.

1st September Fraggie Rock

Nigel Burns, Matt Randall Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 09:20; neaps: The aim today was to remove the spoil in the meander or alcove, as the team was five PC went outside to haul while CC and NB dug and MR and TB worked the tram and moved the skids to the hauling point.

Around 13:00 MR had to leave; meanwhile the team dug on with TB working the tram and dragging the skids to the hauling point: a tough task. At ninety seven all the spoil was cleared leaving a large area, excellent. The team then moved to the Roadside for drink to observe the aftermath of the Gay weekend, oh err missus. (1549)

2nd September Sheefry Mine, Linneaun, Co. Mayo

Nigel Burns, Tony Boycott

Left TB's at 08:30 and had breakfast at Kilcolgan, onward to the Sheefry hills, and Sheefry Bridge. Using what info they had they walked up the beautiful glacial valley. No sign of mining even though a good search was made, PC spoke to a commoner who directed them to the small spoil heap, previously noted, on the south side of the valley. An easy climb to a blocked adit that NB entered first, which went to an area of a stope and a little further an 80 degree inclined shaft. PC took photos. They descended to the expected lower adit and were not disappointed a fine open adit opening leading to a junction ahead a 10 metre plus shaft to the right a passage which, after some five metres split, to the left a forefield after twenty metres to the right another pair of descending inclined shafts. Once again PC took photos. Again the lads descended to find the deep adit entrance collapsed. A little "office" is situated next to the adit position. The team believe it worthwhile returning to descend the shafts and explore the lower level.

4th September Cave, Oughtdarra
Nigel Burns, Tony Boycott

10:00. The aim was to attempt ingress to the cave entrance above the west facing cliff above Noel Thynnes land; a beautiful bright clear day with a light wind. PC drilled the rock and set up a system for TB to descend via ladder and lifeline with NB assisting. TB climbed down around the overhang and swung into the cave, a chamber of sort's three metres long and at its highest three high. It does seem that earlier man would have accessed this, for whatever reason, as it is such a prominent entrance, directly opposite the promontory fort; on John Vaughan's land, so an idea is that a prod about in the earth floor may bring something to light.

4th September Fraggie Rock
Nigel Burns, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00. HW 17:29, going to springs: The aim was to remove the long section of wall/flake first and to continue as normal. CC, TB and NB moved off to the face while PC set up the new tram hauling rope; replacing the old red lightweight one. TB then returned to haul the tram while PC positioned for hauling the skids to the hauling point at the narrows. A slow start tramping out the large rocks, which PC immediately utilized as two superb shaped seats for the haulers, the other one set around the corner for later removal by Biceps Boycott. The face was very wet evidenced by the spoil exiting as porridge. No matter; work progressed finally removing a total of fifty one skids worth from the face. Then back to the truck through an overcast, lowering sky, to the Roadside. Alas TB departs for the UK tomorrow, returning around the 7th October (1600)

8th September Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

LW13:24: springs: A very nice day; temp about fifteen degrees. The aim today was to do at least a shift and to measure up for the next rail section; which is eight feet; the next bend formed in the rail alignment will not be too severe, so neither will the next, which will line up nicely for the run up to the stal obstruction. However there is a problem with the next section of bedding along from the "Boars Head" boulder "gap" that PC capped on the 28th August. There is a joint which may fracture as the team progress; the size of wall what may fall is presently inestimable. So the plan is to support it next Wednesday along with installing the next rail section; so it'll be a maintenance evening. Meanwhile twenty four skids were removed with CC digging and PC doing the hauling; it is quite a task for just two to dig now: without TB the progress is greatly diminished; and feels like more than twice the effort expended to remove half the skids. Of course the rails could be extended back to the first bend, which may be worth considering. The two large flakes in the fill were removed; one had a fine example of anastomosis beneath it, which no doubt TB will fall in love with and want to carry it back to his place, he'll need a bigger sac! The other, larger, flake was placed beneath the "Boars Head" area to temporarily chock it up; further work on this will take place Wednesday. The most exciting occurrence today was that PC found shale in the spoil, a "round stone". This is the first recorded piece of shale found in Fraggie Rock, and, of this singular circular form that is only created in running water! So, whether it was formed in a surface stream or in one underground is not the actual point; the fact is that it originated far above from the shale deposit covering the limestone, and has found its way to the area just upstream of "Biceps Bend", PC is rather pleased: first the passage shape, then the flood and now the round stone: chuffed or what. CC went up to TB's digging around the stal obstruction and could not see too clearly beyond, though later discussion in the Bar suggests it's a wide bend; again, similar to those previously excavated. Today Clare play Cork in the National final, so no Billy in the Bar, but the drink was just as good, particularly as NB gave PC some cash for drinks: nice one Nigel. So the Roadside was very enjoyable, very enjoyable indeed. (1624)

11th September Fraggie Rock

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

HW 21:59; neaps: The aim tonight was to commence installing the next section of rail passing Biceps Bend, and to also drill a footing plate from which to build a hardwood timber support pile beneath the next section along from the "Boars Head"; this Swift completed the rail was also positioned and secured, however it was not finished due to an oversight of forgetting some bits, no problem though the team dug and removed twenty two skids completing the nights efforts; to the Roadside to witness the Matchmaking circus. (1646)

15th September Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

HW 14:22, going to springs: Severe wind gusting to force 8, 45 knots! The sea conditions were three metre waves coming from the west-southwest, so capable of mounting the bench; so a weather eye was kept by PC during hauling out. The aim today was to complete the installation of the rails and dig. The pair set to and swiftly sorted the rails and their alignment. On completion the digging began and twenty six skids were sent to the surface; the first two taken out by PC to review sea conditions, which were.....ok....

The wind was made worse by the gusts which threatened to blown anything away, so as PC emptied the skids he stood in them. Once again many skids were sent up to the face, the remainder tied p as normal. A swift trip up to the truck: then to the Roadside. (1672)

18th September Fraggie Rock:

Matt Randall, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

18:00. HW 17:02, springs: The severe wind now abating accompanied by an increase in temperature. A steady, minor trickle of water from the springs and the entrance reflected the recent rainfall. With the arrival of JW and MR the aim was to dig as much as possible, though the total achieved was only thirty eight owing to a delayed start and the removal of the remaining flake gradually exposed by CC; now set aside at Biceps Bend awaiting destruction. The total distance from commencement of digging on Sunday until tonight is a metre! CC measured from the face to the stal at three and a half metres, so not too far now; CC is concerned of the undercut continuing onward from the "Boars Head" so more timber chocks need be fitted, most likely for the next visit, though a drill and a hardwood form may be required. Then to the roadside where the pints were welcome and the boys repeatedly avoided the glances of the predatory females circulating the bar; it is after all September!

(1710)

22nd September Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

LW 13:26, going to neaps: A fabulous day, clear and sunny. The aim was to assess the layout of the next rail section and to measure up its length and that of the sleeper; discussion took place of the height placement of the sleeper above the floor as the floor depth is approaching the level of the bedding. The lengths were recorded and the final decision left until next Wednesday as to its height, as continuing with the present rail level may cause the truck loads to catch against the roof during transit. The next section will be six feet thus affording minor bends before and after this section to straighten up for the final approach to the stal. The undercut continues to give concern; PC believes its depth, or overhang will increase as it closes the bend, it, being formed by the wash of the water coming swiftly from around the bend. PC firmly believes the passage will turn to the right; partly based on this observation. The spring were issuing, but only very slightly, TB's idea that there may be a drop in floor level beyond the stal may well prove correct as water still appears from the beddings when dug. Progress was another half metre from a total of twenty four skids removed; this number was due in part to PC's back giving hassle. JS returns tomorrow, (TB around the 8th Oct) and may be available for the Wednesday night session as perhaps will MR and JW. Then the pair set off to the Roadside, through a town with cars parked everywhere possible; where much loud revelry was encountered; Lisdoonvarna in the sunshine brings out so many for the craic.

(1734)



Pat Cronin

Cheg at Biceps Bend; showing anastomosis flake (bottom left), completed section of rail and support and support where the Boars Head fell out!

25th September Fraggie Rock
Jayne Stead, Cheg Chester

HW 21:59; neaps: A humid evening, overcast, with no wind. The aim tonight was to install the next rail support and to measure for the rails. JS, fresh from her arrival forty six hours ago, went in with CC to dig at the face, while PC trammed and hauled. A swift twenty six skids worth was removed, three of large fractured rocks, found in the floor deposit. One slab was across the passage, which would require a significant amount of stream flow to pivot it into that position. The floor is now quite a flat surface; the lower phreatic cross section has all but disappeared; though the undercut continues, with the undercuts on both sides of the passage CC estimates a gap of only some 600mm once existed between their leading edges. Having now collapsed the space is about a metre wide. PC paced from the terminus pool to the face with the estimated distance of almost eighty feet; that's the same distance from the entrance to the apex of the first bend; so, soon the tram line will equal to that. JS then came out to assist PC with emptying the skids. JS made her way up to the truck while PC and CC disappeared inside to measure up the rail section. Another six foot length of rail support will be required. CC estimates that another five shifts will bring the team to the stal lump. TB arrives around October 7th/8th; so this should be accomplished by the end of October: the SUI weekend. Now very dark the pair walked up to the truck and away to the Roadside: for pints and some fine flute music; very nice. (1760)

29th September Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 14:09; neaps: A warm breeze, and overcast; the sea virtually still. The aim was to complete installing the next set of rail support and rail, almost touching the face. The installation went swiftly and the pair were soon digging. The digging was slow at first; CC breaking into the face, the right side of the face quite compacted. Twenty four skids were

removed. At the end of the shift PC had a look at the stall boss; doing an impression of a banana he used a decent beam and could see beyond, ahead for some five metres, straight ahead that is. To the right of the stal boss the area may be another alcove like Biceps Bend. Just beyond the floor dips but not by much, the passage fill appears to remain much the same, though a small shingle bank could be made out, the result perhaps of the flood. The pair then went to haul the skids out; Light rain welcomed PC which soon ceased. Then a slow trip as PC limped back to the truck: met a very happy Billy in the Roadside, Clare won the National Hurling Final!
(1784)

2nd October Fraggie Rock

Matt Randall, Cheg Chester

HW 16:30 going to springs: Still mild with some breeze. MR had brought along his video kit, so prior to digging sent the tram inbye with the camera and lights on it. The true magnificence of the passage was shown in the brilliance. On its return PC stopped the laden tram at Bison Bend and took some photographs using its light to illuminate the bend. Digging commenced. CC had difficulty digging the stiffening spoil heap, (from the calcrete?), with assorted large stones. A steady twenty four skids were removed to surface. The team then headed off to the Roadside.
(1808)



Pat Cronin

View of the change in roof profile and the floor; note the shape of the end of the pool that is Biceps Bend, and the undercuts. 29th September 2013.

4th October Mines on Ross Island

60 today, celebrated with a trip to the Chalcolithic Mines on Ross Island and a wander around Ross Castle; superb fun. Back for a wander around Killarney followed by a bottle of wine and a very nice meal: a fine day out all round.

5th October Colleen Bawn Caves

To Muckcross House to visit the extensive gardens: and assess the whereabouts of Colleen Bawn Caves, unsuccessful with the caves, but invited for a look see in the huge green houses there, normally out of bounds to the public, Kathleen the gardener noted the floral passion in Pauline. A fantastic break away; as always with Pauline.

6th October Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

LW 12:26; springs: The aim was to erect a dam across the passage at the “Boars Head” to prevent possible flood debris being scattered along the passage. While CC dug PC installed the sandbags; the lower line having two gaps to allow a low flow of water through; the upper line of bags has a dip creating a weir like arrangement, so a high flood would find a way over without too much pressure on the lateral sleepers. Ten bags were left in the dig while the rest were brought back to PC’s place. The layout of the passage shape is confusing, along with the trench forming in the floor. The forthcoming area of stal will be less straightforward than the team imagines. The passage seen ahead by PC does trend slightly left, perhaps this is what has caused the change in passage shape and enlargement of the stal area. En-route to the truck, near to Cheg’s Rift, noticed substantial damage to boulders on the shoreline, large chunks smashed off; the debris scattered everywhere. Then to the Roadside for a very quiet drink; spoke to Ciaran about a meal there on the 18th October, CC and TB will both then be back from the UK.

9th October Fraggie Rock

Joined later Matt Randall, Jim Warny

HW 20:53, going to neaps: Becoming overcast, with the appearance of the first blustery cold north wind. With CC away in the UK, and TB shortly arriving on the 12th Oct, PC had previously arranged with CC, spares, grease etc, so as to carry out maintenance of the bearings on the tram; no excessive wear was noted, though there is some discoloration and possible corrosion to the steel axle surface, this will only require a light burnish with some wet and dry. JW rang earlier confirming their attendance, inspiring PC to depart early to the dig arriving 17:00 to carry out the maintenance tasks prior to their arrival. At the face there was evidence of collapse from water flowing over the top. There was, however, no debris beyond the base of the face. When the team arrived all was in place to start; MR worked first sending out twenty four skids, though the spoil is becoming very stiff to dig. PC and JW fired them out to the surface after which JW went to dig another twenty four fully exposing the large flake in the floor noted by CC; it is yet another fine example of anastomosis: we’ll have a complete set of them soon. With the JW and MR removing the skids PC completed the tidying up, securing the tram with a new lightly greased bolt. The skids are now stored back at the terminus. The face was left with a stepped shape, the upper edge only some 1.2m from the first stal boss! The lower step at around 1.5m; the evenings progress has exposed another “spring” in the north bedding, causing a pesky pool at the face. Screws are required to secure a loose rail section some two metres beyond Bison Bend. MR has put his video of the dig on YouTube. Then off to an almost deserted Roadside where the pints tasted great. (1856)

12th October

ICRO stores

Met up with Niall Tobin (equipment officer), to go over the new protocols for controlling a rescue; including the paperwork and flow charts.

13th October Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott

HW 12:43; neaps: The aim was to dig but as PC visited Fanore prior to digging more time was lost than estimated so while TB had a look at the progress PC repaired the broken section of rail joint by removing the two sections and tapping out the receded inserts and

reinserting them. Once aligned the two rails were gently realigned and secured with screws. As this took a little while it was decided to have a look among the spoil on the bench below for collectible rock samples. PC showed TB the damage near the area of the rift that Cheg noted in the vicinity of Brian Otway's 'ole; PC noted that there is also a significant amount of rift further to the north, meaning this represents more cave than the previously estimated fourteen metres; it should be surveyed. No Roadside Bar today, owing to afternoon commitments.

16th October Fraggle Rock

Jim Warny, Matt Randall, Tony Boycott

HW15:57; springs: CC should return from the UK today. With a team of four there was the opportunity to have a loader at the face which speeded things up significantly. JW and MR did the shifts at the face while TB hauled the tram and PC the dragging. Forty eight skids were therefore swiftly removed to surface. It had made a lot of rain the night before which left a small flow in the cave, and at the springs. Emerging at 20:00 it was dark with a very bright moon hanging low in a clear sky. Then a pleasant step uphill to the truck: then to the Roadside for a couple of Gold's. (1904)

18th October Birthday Party at Roadside Bar

Pauline Cronin, Matt & Julie Randall, Cheg & Aileen Chester, Nick Geh, Barry Sudell, Tony Boycott, Jayne Stead

With the team assembled PC arranged for drink and a meal at the Roadside to celebrate his 60th several rounds of drink from the owners. A fine evening with an unexpected harp and later Breton pipes great fun & company!

19th October Fraggle Rock, Second anniversary of the dig

20th October Fraggle Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW12:24; springs: With CC returned from the UK the team set off to commence digging into the harder calcreted stal area. CC had had a difficult time with his back so the plan was to do one shift to see how things went. Twenty two skids were removed fairly quickly with CC and TB at the face; with a large section of calcite boss removed from the top of the pile; ahead the passage continues. There is every chance now that the wide area of the boss is an alcove so the plan is to dig through this and return to clear it away once the far side spoil is assessed. Then to the Roadside for a planning session: interspersed with Black's and Gold's. (1926)

23rd October Fraggle Rock

Chester, Tony Boycott, Jim Warny, Matt Randall

HW 20:46; going to neaps: With a team of five the opportunity to have a man at each station was seized, JW and CC at the face, TB tramming, MR dragging with PC outside hauling. With this arrangement sixty four skids were removed and the kit packed away by 20:15; now that's swift! Progress was almost a metre. There is now need for a further section of rail and replacement of many of the skids. This will be sorted on Sunday morning. The debris removed was an assorted range of sand, gravel, bits of stal with another section of anastomosis bedding uncovered from the floor. CC brought a long pointed piece of bar made by NB the team are not sure if it's a digging tool or for poking the diggers with. PC noted how cold it was becoming; particularly once the sun had set around 19:00. PC was also surprised in mid haul by a head torch appearing around the boulders on the head of a climber. PC acknowledged him and watched, between hauls, the climber setting up an LED lamp on a tripod so as to illuminate the cliff face. PC is unsure if he was using a video. This chap is regularly there, and expressed a desire to have a look in the dig. Then all off up the hill to the truck where changing in the decreasing temperature was a swift affair; to the Roadside where pints were enjoyed in the warm bar; still no sign of Billy! (1990)

25th October Quealys Cave
Tony Boycott

The plan was to finish the survey and write a description of the cave; also to dig the point to where PC had got to the 7th June 2013. A stop for breakfast at Kilcolgan set up the team and after a hour or so they were fighting their way through the overgrown path, thick with briers. Once inside water was noticed on the floor, hitherto unseen on previous visits, a little further and the water was that from the “pot” dry during June. Squeezing under the low roof and traversing across the pool PC went ahead to see if the crawls were sumped. Joined by TB the dig commenced using TB’s garden rake to remove soil obstructing progress. PC then squeezed through while TB completed the detailed survey, ahead the low and wide nature of the bedding widened further and lessened in height, negotiating a route through the pendants and mounds of soil PC reached a wide low bedding sixteen metres wide and fourteen metres in depth straight ahead. Horizontal distance gained beyond the dig is some thirty metres. Emerging, covered in crap, the pair were naked, during changing, as a family walked towards them along the forest track; oops! PC knew of a castle and souterrain in the forest so a search was made and an unusual tower house (see photos) found, but no souterrain, as yet. A drink in Cong then a swift drive back to Doolin.

26th Doolin Store
ICRO AGM.

Offered the committee to run digging course for core team; accepted.

27th October Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott, Dave Drew

HW: 10:40: neaps. The aim was to install the next section of rail support and take down eight new replacement skids. The recent storm conditions manifested as two metre deep water over the bench! Wave action threw water sixty metres inland, with crashing waves throwing plumes one hundred twenty feet high over the huge Lackglass sea cave filling it to its roof!

28th October Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

HW 12:01: neaps. The aim was to see what damage was done and if it was possible to install the rail support. The sea had reached the face, a distance of almost two hundred feet. With much debris washed around off the walls and deposited around Biceps Bend accompanied with sea weed. While CC and PC installed the timber work TB filled eight skids and a bag of the seaweed to be drawn out next Wednesday. To the Roadside for a well earned pint.

30th October Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott

HW 14:08: going to springs. With CC ill the pair made off to begin the clear up. The weather is still unsettled with force six winds. Inside TB began to dig the debris from the terminus in, while PC hauled the skids by rope beneath the railway; TB soon reached the dam and started clearing the wider area of Biceps Bend. With the extra skids now full the pair made off to drag them out to surface, the deposit was a mash of sand, gravel and sea weed, if left in situ the stuff will stink the place out. Twenty nine were removed leaving the pair knackered. No bar, good grief.

(2019)

3rd November Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott, Dave Drew

LW 10:25; springs: The aim, to install the rails prepared by CC, for DD to have a look and assess the deposits, and to finish the removal of the storm debris. As the rails were being installed by CC and PC, TB and DD inspected the face; DD had viewed PC’s photos of the strata during the dig, his comments are that the cave is very likely pre-glacial (as the team previously suspected) though it would seem it is filled with these glacial deposits on top of an original stream deposit; thus the cave apparently pre dates the previous glacial maximum

(Midlandian 30, 000 – 80, 000) to the Munsterian glaciation period 130, 000 – 300,000BC. The team then set about digging with CC and DD up front with TB tramming and PC hauling progress was over a foot; PC then moved to outside where thirty two skids were hauled out. DD asked to join the crew. Once the kit was tidied up the team moved off to the truck and the Roadside for many pints!! (2051)

6th November Fraggle Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

PC was laid up with an injured elbow, so the pair carried on with the aim of digging over the top of the stal blockage; as they could see into passage.

7th November

Fraggle Rock

Matt Randall, Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 13:19, springs: A cold and very windy day with a rough sea; the aim was to look into digging the blockage out further to access the passage seen by CC last night. A swift use of the rake allowed access into a section of passage going off almost at right angles to the main passage, while ahead (slightly left) the passage continues for a further five metres but a little wider at 2m, the floor is washed stone cobbles, to a sand/clay bank. TB took photos. The passage right was five metres long with visibility beyond for another five metres at least, with many decorations along the length. PC plans to take more photos Sunday. The draught was howling inbye. Several skids were filled with the debris drawn out the crawl and stored for removal next Sunday. PC suggests the truck be altered to accommodate three skids to reduce time and effort of their transport. As the direction of flows is unclear at this moment; the plan is to dig a channel straight ahead through the stal blockage to the opposite wall (some three metres) to assess the passage characteristics. PC believes the main way is to the left, but the draught is going right; so too is the sound of the stream, though still out of sight! PC thinks that this area, this confluence is supplied by the larger left hand passage. The proposed excavation should give a further clue; no scallops could be seen clearly; to the Roadside for a pint.

10th November Fraggle Rock

Cheg Chester

HW 10:14; neaps: An easterly wind giving a cold day; with rain promised later. The aim was to remove the spoil from the rake through on Wednesday, and to press on with the digging. The small trickle was still present issuing from the entrance; the other spring rates were somewhat less than recent. Even though a lot of rain fell in the last few days none has flowed over the face. We should install some “tell tales” to assess which direction the flow emanates from; the right or the left. The right has to be the way on; the right seems to be heading toward the coast. PC has suggested extending the length of the truck to accommodate three skids thereby improving the efficiency of removing the volume of spoil from the junction ahead. The area of the junction may mean it could easily be used as a staging place for skids enroute to the surface; that or sink a shaft to it from the surface area of the storm beach! It was hard work with just the two; however the twelve skids of Wednesday’s spoil were removed along with another twenty nine from the face; a fine day’s work: then the Roadside; Billy serving the pints. (2092)

13th November Fraggle Rock

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Matt Randall

LW 19:24, neaps: Wind Force eight gusting to nine, sea conditions very rough with three metre waves, and heavy showers; like stair rods! Very dark; so a swift trip down. The springs were all running well. The plan was that JW and MR asked to press on along the south passage as far as possible, one at a time owing to its confines. While the other three dug etc. JW commenced while the others worked away. Once twenty nine skids were set up PC went outside to a maelstrom; approach low water the waves were beginning to break and spray the

bench. PC suggested, once the skids had been emptied, to abandon digging as the risk was increasing. Meanwhile MR was happily digging away up the south passage; progress was about one and a half metres. Progress was another foot or so, with the passage height remaining constant, so this bodes well for the main junction area. PC has suggested that there could be an issue with digging from so far in now; once the junction is cleared it could be used as a staging area for skids from both passages. As for a while both passages could be dug by two men apiece, their full skids collected at the junction on one visit with a hauling session the next. This would mean a significant increase in the skips underground. A quick trip uphill to the truck and to the Roadside: for a warm up, a dry out and some pints. (212).

17th November Fraggles Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 10:28; springs: A very blustery wind, and steady drizzle, meant the team changed quickly and shot off to the dig. All the springs were producing a high flow following night long light rainfall. CC had a look through the face dig into the passage and noted water ponding and flowing in the right hand passage; PC squeezed through to note that the stream was indeed coming from the left, as suspected, and flowing away off in front to the right, however, it is flowing around the back of the wall in front! The wall of the passage appears to actually be either; "A"; a large lump in the ceiling or "B", an actually solid pillar thus forming a route behind it. To the left PC could see a deep-ish pool; +0.1m whence came the flow. No flow came toward PC but around the "pillar".....? The silt/clay bank could be seen clearly, with a face cut across it from water flow, following its previous deposition. During the trip the water was increasing. A steady dig ensued; twenty nine skids were removed o surface. En-route to the truck the team looked at the other springs, whose collective volume was considerable, when captured the total flow from the entrance following rain will be something else; then to the bar for talk and drink. (2150)

20th November Fraggles Rock
Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

HW 18:04, springs: Damn cold, almost ran down hill to keep warm: a perishing wind from the north. Springs were barely running, with a very low flow from the entrance itself. Straight into the warmth of the cave: no draught to speak of. With CC and JW up front digging the team very quickly filled twenty-nine skids, tough work for one at the terminus. The width of the face is increasing and is presently some two to two and a half metres, which will increase as the face progresses to cut the passage junction ahead. The pair returned to the terminus and PC went outside into the teeth of the bitter wind and commenced hauling, soon joined by CC. A very swift task completed; as was the packing up: followed by a sprint uphill to change and head for the Roadside fireside. Much discussion of logistics ensued. JW gave a description of his solo visit on the *18th November* when he dug through to a small low chamber some two metres in diameter, from where the stream disappears through cobble fill etc. PC is taking PMC to Ennis on Sunday, so CC and PC likely to be digging on Friday. (2179)

22nd November Fraggles Rock
Cheg Chester

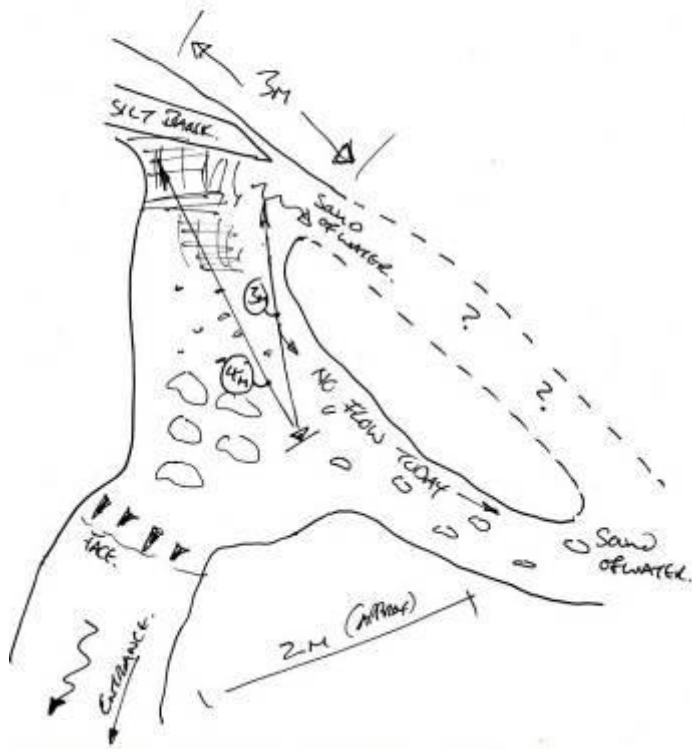
HW 13:33, going to neaps: The plan was that as PC was taking PMC to Ennis on Sunday the team would dig today: a contrast to the bitter Wednesday; bright and cold, no wind. The pair took some kneeling boards down for the face work. While CC dug PC trammed and hauled; thirty skids removed. The width of the face now displays a varied range of stratigraphy which PC needs to record a.s.a.p. A 250mm diameter pink erratic was removed from a depth of some 300mm below the surface, sat on top of the sand occurrence. Bumped into CH walking downhill to find us; he'd like to assist perhaps next week. CC rang JS for a drink in the Roadside: where the team spent the time explaining the site to Peter Curtin. (2209)

24th November Fraggle Rock
Cheg Chester

LW 15:05; neaps: Having returned from Ennis early the team headed off to dig. A mild enough day without the recent bitter wind; CC digging with PC hauling. A steady speed produced thirty skids. The face is now well advanced and has removed the crawl, it is now possible to squeeze into the area and touch the far wall with the head, looking left and right. PC observed the pool, where previously he had thrown a stone to estimate its depth at n75 – 100mm, this is now dry and of an estimated gap (depth from the roof) of some 16 inches, 400mm.....crawl-able, perhaps! It requires removing the top off the stal covered boss/blockage.....perhaps this Friday? With this number of skids removed today, it now leaves sixty one to do to complete the magic 5000! (2239) 61 to go!

Fraggle Rock
A rough sketch
17th November 2013

North is not supplied as it would be a guesstimate!



Sketch JW

19th November Fraggle Rock supplemental. From PCN log

Jim Warny: solo.

The plan was to continue to dig along the confined crawl as far as possible; after a lot of effort JW reached an area with a mud floor with an open void beyond. Removing just enough to squeeze through he managed to enter a low chamber some two metres diameter by some 0.7 of a metre high. The water disappears down a choked passage that seems to run almost parallel with the entrance passage, (see sketch). The water is entering the area from the left, which may fit with PC's observation of the water flowing left to right ahead of the dig face, and seeming to pass around the rear of the rock in front, (see PC sketch). The solution will be found once the face proceeds beyond the streams route.

29th November Fraggie Rock
Cheg Chester

HW 14:05; going to springs. The plan was to dig over the face and along the airspace to see around the corner. Using a trowel PC began to inch along the gap managing to make almost a metre and a half; CC took over and pressed on another metre. At this point CC described the general area; a small passage to the right, as previously suggested – predicted which carried the stream in most conditions. To the left the surprise that area previously estimated as crawl-able is just that, becoming a little lower further in as it bends to the right. It seems the area is a wide bedding chamber. PC then entered to have a look see; looking left he estimates he can see eight (8) metres across the silt bank beyond the small stal grill. Further, clockwise, around the circumference cannot be seen clearly. Ahead the roof increases slightly in height but it too is concealed by the silt bank. This sumped passage to the left provides CC with the opportunity for a longed for wish; Quasimodo's 'ump. Elated the team assessed the line of the next section of tramway; measuring up for Sunday's maintenance. Then to the bar; entertainment provided by Billy.

A conservative calculation of spoil removed since commencing dig.

2700 (2011-12) + 2300 (2013) = 5000 skids
5000 x 15Kg's = 75,000Kg's
75,000Kg's / 1000kg = 75 tonnes
5000 at the more realistic weight of 20kg per skid = 100tonnes

