

2016



Poul Eich Oíta, (Drunken Horse Hole).

Pat Cronin

1st January Site in Crumlin Townland

Tony Boycott

As there were only two available today the wet conditions were considered problematic to drilling in Fraggie Rock. So PC took TB to the site discovered on the 29th December 2015 with NB. After some confusion PC located the site which they probed and found a layer of good top soil over stones. TB confirmed the value of the site so PC will call JC to inspect the site prior to erecting a fence. The pair then wandered south along the karst looking for evidence of other cave, which was absent. Its noteworthy the site is close to the slope that ascends to the base of the higher benches. The site appears pre glacial.

4th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

LW 19:03: neaps: very little wind: sea state rough. The large stream issuing was measured at thirty millimetres. The plan: as the regular elevated stream, and available room, prohibits the use of drills in the "Freezer" it was decided as an alternative to commence digging "Jim's Passage". After a swift assessment the stone revetment into "Jim's" was removed and passed to PC who placed the rocks in front of the spring at the beginning of the "The Burrow". As CC dug the minor rise of the floor unexpectedly descended to a depth of some four inches allowing a pool to form. With TB stacking the

skids, PC packing cobbles behind the revetment and CC digging progress was swift. A distance of one metre was removed achieving exposing differing coloured clay deposits. The exposed edge to the entrance shows it undercut the corner during its formation, this will require revetting avoiding stream erosion. CC hopes to have the truck serviced for Thursday. There are some twenty odd skids now stacked at the Terminus. 7095

5th January Crumlin

PC spoke to the owner of the land in Crumlin Townland, James Callinan regarding permission to dig the site found by PC and NB on the 27th December 2015. James was once a trainee of PC's in the Coast Guard. Permission was eagerly and unequivocally granted to dig where PC likes. This presents myriad opportunities to comb the area.

7th January Fraggie Rock

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

LW 21:31; a cold easterly wind, sea state very rough. The issuing stream was measured at twenty millimetres at the reference point. No evidence of deposits until the bends and at the Terminus. The plan: to set up the tram serviced by CC and remove the twenty six skids. CC to the Loading Bay, JW tramming PC dragging to ten metres past the old hauling position. The grease given to CC for the tram service is of such viscosity as to be closer to glue on the lubrication scale. This will be replaced next week. All skids out into heavy rain and tumbling seas; two waves broke the lower bench during operations. The first skids of the year out. To the Roadside where, after giving surgery to his Landrover, Matt joined the throng. 26 7021

9th January Crumlin Dig

Cheg Chester

The plan was to show CC the site and its location. The team did take a large shovel to clear some of the top soil to obtain a better view of its perimeter. Taking turns on the shovel the area was cleared of grasses and the site dug down. Stones of varying sizes appeared between the sticky soils. An odd light brown coarse gravel appeared below the top soil and below some of the larger stones: is this of glacial origin? Having dropped the floor an average of two feet CC took some photos while PC was the model, which made the shaft look bigger. PC used two G.P.S.R.'s to locate an accurate position both units did not reconcile each other, the 64s device being off from the 300 by 2 m east and 3m north. En-route home the team went to the Roadside to warm up from the bitter cold conditions. 3

11th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Matt Randall, AB = Aileen Byrne.

HW 18:07 springs: Very cold north-westerly winds; force seven gusting eight at times; the stream measuring fifteen millimetres below the reference. The original plan was for CC and PC to re-grease the tram and tip away in "Jim's Passage". As the team had swelled to five MR, JW and AB started at the "Loading Bay" to show AB around, with CC and PC at the "Terminus". Using a pulley once again at the "Terminus" the tram was not so difficult to move; so re-greasing appears unwarranted for the moment. Digging commenced with skids being stacked at the hauling point until JW arrived filming to record the whole digging process and system. PC then moved outside to haul, supplied by CC. Whilst tramming JW sent back empties so the possible twenty six skid session increased to a total forty six. A very much shorter and shagged out PC was joined by JW who managed to film the last part of the digging process. Once again the wind force, and direction, required the tipper to stand in the empties to avoid them blowing away.

Should the team manage to regularly achieve six in number then digging along “Jim's Passage” would be very swift requiring no stacking of skids; each session having spoil straight to surface: hurry back TB!! Following a swift change the team headed to the Roadside where AB was introduced to Billy together reminiscing of their home county of Carlow. All in all a fine productive evenings work. 72 7067

14th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Cathal Mullane

HW 20:18 going to neaps: very cold wind from the Northwest; the good size stream issuing was level with the reference point. The plan; with no stacked skids to remove first of all the team set to digging immediately, PC and JW took turns at the face in “Jim's Passage” with CC at the “Terminus”. As the face progressed the stratigraphy became pronounced with several isolated small pockets of clean washed gravel amongst the layering. The sandbags in place were caulked with clay to water proof against the main stream; PC then managed to bale the pool dry. This exposed a slight rib in the floor that separated two depths of trough the deeper being the right hand side, this developed the adjacent undercut that enters the “Loading Bay”. Any large cobbles found were used to continue backfilling “Quasimodo's 'ump”. CM arrived later on to take photos. Twenty six skids were sent out into the biting cold. To the Roadside for a warm up and drink, where talk turned to cave names, winches and metal suppliers: Clod Pot, a possible alternative to Pegasus; a long story. 98 7093

16th January Crumlin Dig

Cheg Chester

Milder temperatures with occasional banks of low cloud; generally overcast with a threat of rain. The plan was to erect a secure fence around the dig site as soon as possible to demonstrate to James and his Father our resolve, appreciation and respect. Early today PC rang James, (the Owner), to inform him of the plan, also asking to drive along the track to drop off the materials and tools; permission was as ever eagerly given. After assessing the area for the potential installation of a future winch, and surface tramway, the fence was finally erected to create a rectangular “paddock” about five metres by eight metres. This offers plenty of room to manoeuvre inside. The barb wire provided by TB was barely long enough, but did complete the job. Outstanding is the need for two further fence posts to complete the task and two four foot slats of timber secured to the wire stays on the corner posts to avoid damage to inquisitive cattle: all in all a very professional job indeed, which will certainly be scrutinised. The wire was secured to the exposed bedrock by fixing to steel bars inserted into drilled 12mm holes. To the Roadside for a well earned pint. Hours 3 + 5 = 8

18th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester

LW 17:53: neaps: increasing fog/low cloud, a very light, fresh, north-west breeze, sea state rough. The stream was level with the reference upon entry; upon exit it had risen six millimetres. With two the plan was to send up the empties and rotate the digging. Once CC had bailed out the face area worked commenced. The entire face now seems to be very much looser, the previously compacted nature of the fill has eased. The stratigraphy remains constant, but possibly wetter, with the same mixture of gravels, pale cream clays and various sized cobbles/erratics with the added appearance of a pocket of very soft grey clay. Progress was about a half metre; the exposed floor exhibiting a curious mixture of ridge and furrow like undulations not quite the expected continuation of the main passage; the first of the bends begins to appear beyond which

the passage widens perhaps to double the present. Distance now dug is some two and a half metres, which broadly means there is another five to the previous limit of exploration. The floor surface continues to slope down; the deepest point now being some 0.15 metres below the, then, stream level outside the sandbags. There is the hint of the floor surface levelling off, perhaps even rising. Twenty five skids were filled and stacked with the equivalent of five skids worth of cobbles back packed into "Quasimodo's 'ump". Swiftly to the Roadside for pints

98 7093

21st January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny Aileen Byrne

HW 15:09; going to springs. South-east wind force 3, sea state rough. The stream was noted at ninety millimetres below the reference, though plenty of water flowing. The plan was to remove the stacked skids and press on. AB and CC to the Loading Bay, to first send out the full skids then to dig away, with JW at the Terminus and PC outside. With the stacked skids swiftly sent outside the pace slowed as those being filled made their way out; this pace, with a team of four, actually worked reasonably well; the toughest work being for the poor sod at the Terminus who had to tram, drag, and send them out. In all four skids of cobbles are ready for packing into Quasimodo's 'ump while fifty one went outside. The density of the deposit has reverted to a hard compacted fill, bugger; however the floor is beginning to rise. AB produced some eighteen skids from the face, a significant effort: AB is a very welcome asset to the team, please note that in this context asset means useful and does not mean a little donkey..... which does in fact apply to the work outside. Swiftly to the Roadside for drink and stuff; JW entertained with the video of Pegasus Pot.

149 7144

24th January Crumlin Dig

Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne, Matt Randall

Mild temperature, with an easterly wind The plan; to install the outstanding two fence posts and the wooden wire stay protectors to complete the fence and to dig. While AB and MR installed the posts CC and PC dug away; CC throwing spoil up to the grass where PC shoveled it to begin a mote wall along the line of the fence with the ultimate plan to bury it. AB joined in the digging, MR had to take a back seat with a sprained back. The base of the shaft was eventually flattened with its edges squared off and exposed, there are at least three large boulders beginning to appear. The water worn features of the walls continue. The two posts need tidying with a saw. Best part of a tonne and a half of spoil, in total, was removed. The situation will soon demand a lifting frame, and windlass, of sorts, to reduce digging effort of throwing up the spoil to surface, also, ideally, a wheel barrow would be of great use. In the Roadside talk turned to winches and frames. Six man/girl hours of labour

14 hours

25th January Fraggie Rock

Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne. Kevin Walsh.

HW 18:09; springs. Cold, blustery conditions with intermittent showers, sea state very rough. The stream was forty millimetres below the reference. The mountainous sea was accompanied with a southerly wind causing waves to crash, and cover, the lower bench; after five minutes assessing it was decided to enter. The plan was to fill the skids and stack them at the Loading Bay, as KW was an unknown quantity. CC found that the pool of water at the dig face was higher than the stream, so removed a sandbag to drain some of it; the rest by bailing. It was wondered if the water was from elevated main stream flow, (no significant rainfall noted of late), or whether it had percolated from ahead? Taking turns KW, CC and AB progressed the face to over three metres from the

revetment. Some seven skids of cobbles stacked; not much room remaining. On completion of the session the face exhibited the most unusual stratigraphy yet encountered. A clay like deposit in the form of an isosceles triangle pointing to the roof. While to the left a light coloured granular matrix occupies the area to the wall, the other side appears of normal deposits. It desperately warrants a photograph prior to commencement of the next session! Twenty six skids were filled and stacked. It appears that KW is the son of Noel Walsh; members would have met Noel long ago when he lived near Doonagore Castle. Equipment secured the team scampered off to the Roadside where talk turned to homes for the elderly, and bewildered, winches and engine sheds.

149 7144

28th January Crumlin Dig

Kevin Walsh, Aileen Byrne, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Storm Gertrude supplied the cool, high winds and accompanying light rainfall experienced throughout the session. The plan was to continue on down and expose the boulders that threaten to be large in size. While KW and AB commenced the others took turns offering "encouragement" and abuse, whilst transporting the spoil to the mote wall. Taking turns at each task, to maintain warmth, the depth swiftly increased to the point where PC couldn't see over the top; at either end of the pot is evidence of some type of water action, to the north the wider gryke suggests a point of entry, the south end too exhibits water erosion; going into or coming from the gryke is unclear at this stage. The pothole walls remain vertical. After some ninety minutes of constant digging the suspected boulders were fully exposed estimated at weighing between fifty and one hundred and thirty kilo's. Injuries were confined to PC regularly hitting AB with his spade during the digging frenzy. The site now requires a better method of removing spoil, or longer shovels. The smallest boulder was heaved out; the team deciding to cap the rest next Monday as sea conditions may not have settled sufficiently to enter Fraggie Rock. Hours 7.5 21.5

25th January

Dave Lucas, Pegasus CN, passed away today; cancer.

31st January Drunken Horse Drop/Pot; A.K.A. Crumlin Dig.

Cheg Chester

The early effects of Storm Henry were becoming manifest throughout the day. As Fraggie Rock would not be accessible tomorrow PC suggested removing the boulders left on the 28th January. This would mean digging could commence without delay on the Monday evening. In fierce wind conditions the pair struggled up with the battery drill, capping equipment, sledge hammer and the gads. Using only the gads and the sledge, within an hour, all boulders were reduced and removed to the boulder pile leaving a clear work area. PC had made enquiries about the old Coast Guard tripod; he was informed "if it can be located the team can borrow it until further notice". Another session, or two, will see the depth perhaps too great to easily throw spoil up to the surface, with the present shovel lengths; perhaps we need utilize a Cornish shovel for the moment with its much longer handle. This would however mean only one digging in the pot at a time. An idea to assist shoveling the thrown spoil away from the edge of the pot is rather than use a piece of flat metal is to clear the turf from the edge of the pot down to the limestone surface; this could drop the surface level some 0.2 of a metre and also provide a smooth surface to, a) run the shovel along, and, b) prepare the area for a suitable supports for the intended cover. To the Roadside for abuse from Peter; ahhh bliss. Hours 2 23.5

1st February Poul Eich Oíta, aka Cave of the Drunken Horse

Aileen Byrne, Cheg Chester

Storm Henry, the eighth such tempest this winter, arrived with all its ferocity; the walk to the dig, and back, was.....quite an effort. AB set to in the shaft probing the soil cover; several loud chinks were heard, these are either boulders or its the Chinese. Meanwhile CC and PC began to remove the turf around the very edge of the shaft, however the increasing depth of humus required AB to assist the pair. After ninety minutes, an area of bedrock, two metres by one metre, was eventually cleared, at the surprising depth of sixteen inches, this surface exhibits water worn features up to the shaft edge. This flat surface will now allow digging in the shaft to continue without immediate recourse to hauling; the spoil can still be thrown out, only now onto a flat limestone surface for much easier disposal than trying to shovel it away from atop the heather. The cleared area will ultimately be used to secure the support frame for the impending concrete pipe. TB reported earlier picking up the winch drum materials from NB. To the Roadside for pints a warm up and talk of winches and supports. Hours 4.5 28

4th February Poulacapple Pot

Jim Warny, Aileen Byrne

The plan: to retrieve the ladder and the huge angle iron it rests upon; installed in 2006. To also locate the other angle bar left somewhere nearby among the heather, again in 2006. During the drive up, to the nine hundred foot summit, the weather deteriorated with high cross winds and rain. While PC and JW descended to get the ladder and bar, AB probed the heather searching for the missing angle bar; alas no luck. While PC went back to the truck with the bar JW returned to the pot with AB to view the site. The stream still filled the four inch pipe directed straight down the shaft. When the flow abates a trip is needed to see what effects the falling stream has had on the sediments at the bottom of the shaft. Though a short session on the mountain side the team enjoyed a lengthy one in the Roadside

4th February Lost Charlie Self, the result of cancer.

7th February Poulacapple Pot

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The plan: to intensify the search for the missing angle iron, utilizing spades and garden forks. Storm Imogen, the ninth storm this winter, began to arrive as the team ascended the slopes of Poulacapple. In gale force winds and driving rain the trio searched for the angle iron required to build the frame over the shaft at Poul Eich Oíta; without success. Drying out, in front of the fire, at the Roadside, as they dripped upon the floor talk turned to alternate frame support materials. Several sources will be investigated. AB is unavailable this Monday, CC absent next Thursday.

8th February Drunken Horse Hole, Poul Eich Oíta

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The plan: to measure the shaft dimensions to see how the proposed installation of a concrete pipe could be accommodated, and dig. Storm Imogen remained extant; the lee of the hill providing no respite from the ferocity of rain and hail, as yet the strongest storm of the winter period. TB was recovering from injuries sustained in the UK so remained on the surface clearing away the spoil to the mote walls, while CC and PC



worked away below. Beneath a thin layer of mud large stones appeared once more. These were slowly exposed as the gaps between were quite narrow, the smaller ones were removed leaving one large boulder protruding from the northern rift this will be cleared next session as we now have the boulder net retrieved from Poulacapple. With the boulders cleared from the central area of the shaft the exposed ground is soft to at least a spade depth; a mix of clay and the gravel matrix again. The shaft depth is approaching the limit once again for the diggers to comfortably cast spoil onto the exposed limestone ledge; the scaffold frame will be needed soon for hauling purposes. The builder's ladder recovered from Poulacapple was left on site; used to exit the shaft. As the team returned to the truck they endured the full force of the force eleven wind and hail and heavy rain. A swift change then to the Roadside for cold points and a warm fire Hours 4.5 32.5



View south-west Poul Eich Oíta before erection of tripod and tyres. Pat Cronin

10th February Poul Eich Oíta  
Tony Boycott

The plan: to carry up a four foot RSJ, being part of the proposed frame support, and to see how it would fit against the back wall to accept the two other supports for the concrete pipe; to also assess a suitable route to convey the concrete pipe by tractor as close to the dig as practicable. The spontaneous afternoon visit was bathed in sunshine with no wind whatsoever! The clarity of the air offering superb views to the Aran Islands and far beyond Feeling light headed at the lack of adverse weather TB and PC set to investigating suitability of the rock as a foundation for the RSJ. If the RSJ is set at the back, parallel to the pot, atop a thin limestone bed, it will allow the other supports to be almost level with the bedrock of the recently exposed ledge. These may then be swung, or pivoted, to accommodate the diameter of tech concrete pipe before being permanently secured to the limestone. Still stunned at the lack of being battered by rain and hale the eagle eyed TB found among the spoil several pieces of stal and at least one small erratic. A medium sized crow bar was used to loosen the large boulder exposed by CC. The capping kit will be taken up tomorrow. Ambling back to the truck the pair meandered among the terraces - whilst a route appears to exist among the upper levels there are

several areas where the safe traverse of a tractor, carrying a heavy pipe, becomes debatable; the idea is to show PS the area as soon as he returns from holiday and let him suggest what may be the solution. Hours 2 34.5

11th February Poul Eich Oíta  
Jim Warny, Aileen Byrne

The plan: to arrive in daylight to make a photographic record of the site before work commenced, to cap the large boulder and dig. The team assembled around 17:00 on yet another fine evening, arriving at the dig after fifteen minutes; with good light levels remaining. The small dolmen, recently erected by persons unknown, was intact yesterday, (10th); today it was knocked flat; perhaps we need reflect on security of equipment intended to be left on site. While JW began to video and photograph the area PC commenced capping the large boulder; completed in turn by JW; this boulder turned out to be half as large again, concealed within the clay. Digging in turns exposed a further three large boulders, two of which were capped the third left; it can be lifted out using the net. As darkness fell the shaft was illuminated by JW's video lights; issuing a superb amount of light: perhaps we should consider using some L.E.D.s in the shaft fed off the generator? With AB driving the men folk onward to greater effort a depth in excess of another half metre was ultimately achieved. The walls remain vertical, as do the internal dimensions of the shaft. The rear of the half section pot has assumed a more vertical section. At this depth there is now need to erect scaffold to haul spoil out; throwing it is almost impracticable. A six inch diameter white/black erratic was found by AB at a depth of two metres in the heavy dry beige/brown clay deposits this has been placed safely in the area termed by JW as "Boykers Corner" to be inspected by TB at his pleasure; regular deposits will follow. Presently left on site is a crow bar, the boulder net and a four foot RSJ, no rope. Measurements were at the top of the shaft; a minimum length of support for the width of the pot is six feet this will allow sufficient length to be adequately secured to the bedrock. As the fetch of the sea has subsided perhaps we should visit next Monday to remove the skids and maybe progress Jim's passage while we await the scaffold installation. To an empty Roadside and a warm fire Hours 9 43.5

15th February Poul Eich Oíta  
Aileen Byrne

The Plan: manpower would be less this session: CC attending DL's funeral in Nottingham and TB at CS's funeral in Bristol, PC opted to cap the protruding bedding to accommodate the proposed RSJ, and to remove the remaining debris pile in the south end of the shaft. To make use of available daylight he arrived at 16:45 and carried up spades and capping kit; AB arrived soon after. Capping the bedding proved awkward, working off the ladder, but there is now a cleared area which only needs trimming by hammer and chisel to provide a flatter surface. AB worked away on the debris pile using the longer handled Cornish spade to cast spoil up onto the surface; tough going. The compacted spoil consisted mostly of small fractured stones among which were several sizes of similar coloured erratics to previous ones all taken from a depth of two metres and deposited in "Boykers Korner". Once the debris pile was removed it allowed a view into part of the narrow southern gryke which is surprising clear of silt but with several jammed stones. The peak of a large boulder emerged from the shaft floor as PC dug down eventually managing to topple it into the prepared void; at around ninety kilograms it needs attention from the gads. The digging situation is now impracticable without a hauling system. The origin of the "Dolmen" turned out to be NG, searching for the digs location; leaving a calling card. NG has offered an "elderly" wheel barrow to the



"elderly" team. NG also visited Poulacapple with his metal detector to search for our lost angle iron; unfortunately it ain't there. To the Roadside for drinks DL = Dave Lucas and CS = Charlie Self Hours 3-5 47

18th February Fraggie Rock

Aileen Byrne, Jim Warny, Susan Byrne

LW 20:10; neaps; sea state very rough. Stream depth measured at eighteen millimetres. The plan: to photograph the fascinating stratigraphy previously exposed, (25th January), prior to its removal, and remove the twenty seven skids from the "Loading Bay". A piece of sea weed jammed at the entrance announced the sea had earlier entered the cave, likely at HW 14:02, further in deposits of sand were regularly encountered as were more pieces of weed and a great number of very dead mussels. The inlet at fifteen metres has become further enlarged; the jammed boulders now washed away making its length now five metres for a slim person. At the "Terminus" the two hauling ropes were a knotted ball wrapped around the rails At, and in from, the "Boars Heads" a large amount of sand has been deposited up to and including the "Loading Bay". At the "Loading Bay" the truck was off the rails, several of the stacked skids washed down "Jim's Passage" along with the four by three inch wood spar and the red hauling rope. Some of the stacked "Deads" at the "spring" have been disturbed and are likely the stones found washed downstream. The hollow in the floor leading to the face was filled with an estimated one tonne of sand and a lot of sea weed. The pair set to collecting up the weed into a plastic bag, unraveling the rope and placing the sorted equipment above the working face that too has been subject to some minor destruction though the stratigraphy remains reasonably clear. With tidying almost complete PC moved back to unravel the hauling ropes at the "Terminus" during which time AB with sister SB arrived after having difficulty locating Fraggie in the darkness; the pair went in to JW to view the place and prepare to tram. AB and SB at the "Loading Bay" with JW and PC at the "Terminus" all skids removed into a cold evening wind. The sand needs removing. To the Roadside where Billy thought he was seeing double as the Twins, AB and SB entered the bar several minutes apart!

176 7171

22nd February Poul Eich Oíta

Solo

As members of the team were unavailable or nursing injuries, the plan was altered to just remove the two boulders in the shaft. Making use of the bright evening PC arrived on site at 17:40. Both boulders were drilled for the Gads, first with an eight millimetre drill bit then enlarging them to sixteen millimetres. Using the thin Gad the largest split into three pieces, the larger piece requiring a further Gadding to achieve a size suitable to lift; the other, smaller, boulder split very easily too. Three of the pieces appeared suitable for the proposed "stile" so were set in place in line with the shaft on the proposed wheelbarrow route through the mote wall. CC has come up with a clever alternative for the proposed concrete pipe, three tractor tyres secured together: a far easier option to transport up the terraces and to finely position once in situ. In the meantime, ideally for the Thursday session, using his long van, JW need pick up the scaffold poles from PC's place, at the same time collecting a pole at CC's: PC has renovated seven scaffold clips. Hours 1, 48

25th February Poul Eich Oíta

Jim Warny

The plan: to take up the three scaffold poles and clips, (three fixed and four swivels), and to dig away. Team members were remained unavailable due to injuries and work commitments; to maintain momentum digging continued in the deepening shaft

surprisingly successful, though the depth requires significant effort to throw spoil out from this level, (or a perhaps longer shovel?). The character of the deposit has changed once again; the mid dark brown stiff clay giving way to a softer, lighter brown matrix, immediately beneath this a finer deposit can be felt. The half metre of depth achieved was over two thirds of the base exposing the ridge of a large boulder, estimated at least two feet long by a foot square, and possibly weighing over a hundred kilos. The need is now for erection of the frame, preparation of two plastic kibbles and the hauling kit for same; this kit should include pulleys to achieve a minimum ideally of a 3:1 mechanical advantage. MR is going to contact his mate in Kinvarra who may have some tyres available. Also needed soon are the struts, two metres long, to support the tyres across the shaft. To the Roadside where the place was packed with eight people! Talk turned to Caverns measureless to Man!

Hours 4, 52

29th February Poul Eich Oíta

Kevin Walsh, Aileen Byrne, Cheg Chester

The plan: to assemble the hauling frame and secure it in place, and, if sufficient boy/Girly-power available, to dig too. Carrying up a pile of kit, including the drill, shovels, rope, gads and sledge the team arrived as daylight faded. CC and PC began to assemble the frame while KW dug and AB used the kibbles to haul out the spoil: a tough undertaking. With the frame erected the front "A" frame section was positioned by dropping the ends of the poles over large protruding bolts hammered into sixteen millimetre holes drilled into the bedrock, the frame will be finally secured by turnbuckles and cables also fixed to the bedrock. The rear spar of the frame is almost horizontal onto the terrace behind, and only requires a steel strap to secure it from moving back and forth. CC began to dig away the overhanging spoil from the northern gryke; PC assisting from beneath until a half metre of fill was removed from the rift vertically down to floor level, at the bottom a large boulder protrudes from the rift. KW tipped away at the clay floor gradually exposing the boulder previously uncovered by PC. This boulder grew in dimensions as the stiff clay was cleared from around it, as did other boulders appear as the floor was lowered; fearing the worst PC located a gap among them and dug down the vertical wall to see if it continues; fortunately it does! The pile of spoil in the south end actually turned out to be another huge boulder. In short there are now two very large boulders; the northern one is estimated at four hundred kilograms, the other greater than five hundred. Could these form a cap to an open shaft below? Between these two boulders are at least three other each in the order of fifty kilos apiece. Removing these will require the frame, and hauling equipment to be working; the lifting net is on site. CC intends to make the securing strap for the spar perhaps by Thursday while PC hopes to have the other cross member for the tyre support too for that session, JW too may have at least one tyre by then. The northern boulder should split partially by Gadding as its in a suitable position to wield a sledge. As the pot is now two and a half metres deep, with a slippery edge, it needs covering as soon as practicable. The wheel barrow kindly offered by NG will be picked up ASAP as it will reduce the effort of moving the spoil to the mote wall enormously. With the floor of the shaft reasonably cleared up the team finished at 21:00. To the Roadside for refreshments

Hours, 10, 62

3rd March Poul Eich Oíta

Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne, Jim Warny

Earlier in the day, 10:00, PC had borrowed a large trailer and delivered two more scaffold poles, two short scaffold planks, two six foot by six inch concrete lintels and two tractor tyres; all dropped off at the field gate: JC, (Farmer), informed by text. AB and JW "girl-handled" the immensely heavy lintels up to the dig one at a time; CC and PC attempted to follow the distant laughter whilst struggling to roll the tractor tyres, at times, up vertical rock faces. What at first seemed a straight forward task eventually took the team two hours to perform; getting all the equipment up to the site and setting the lintels and tyres into place so as to assess what else may be needed for the next session. AB then scampered off into the night, back down the hillside, to fetch the remaining two scaffold poles left at the gate. Discussion ensued regarding the positioning and heightening of the hauling frame to accommodate tipping the kibble above the tyres, and how best to cover the remaining openings left and right of the tyres; steel and steel mesh is needed. CC came up with the idea of using the thick turf planned for removal to secure to the rock the temporary hand winch, to cover, (landscape), the area surrounding the shaft: a much lighter option to stone, and already grassed. The diameter of the tyres has successfully covered the principle area of the shaft leaving only the southern opening, (2.5×3.5 feet), and the northern opening, (3×2 feet), to be covered with steel mesh and plastic voting posters. The entire evening was tough work involving giggles and exposure to an extremely painful cold temperature; descent and changing was therefore swift, as was the drive to the Roadside; where the team drank pints and compared aches and strains: PC suggested taking up more kit up tomorrow ahead of the Monday session.

Hours 8, 70

4th March Drunken Horse

Cheg Chester

The plan: to carry up the extra kit needed to heighten and secure the hauling frame, and to fix the lintels in place that support the tyres. After the pair had struggled up with the drills and extra ironmongery; the scaffold poles, fetched by AB last night, were cut to prepare their ends for insertion of the clips that would allow their length to be extended thereby offering room above the tyres to tip the kibble into the waiting wheel barrow. Once assembled the frame alignment was checked for centring over the shaft opening; finally the rear spar was secured with a metal strap and two rawlbolts to the bedrock. The five foot steel angle was secured up against the tyre lintel ready for the next set of lintels intended to cover the southern gap; measurements were taken to manufacture two other metal bars as additional supports. Alas, a late afternoon finish meant no Roadside.

Hours 4, 74

5th March Poul Eich Oíta

Cheg Chester

Having prepared a wooden form to support the inside of the top tyre, CC went to the dig to assess its form, shape and snugness of fit prior to mass production; also carrying up a five foot galvanized steel channel support, it was installed ready to accept the four foot lintels on Monday evening. Upon arrival CC noticed the Good Fairy "Nicklearse" had gifted the team a present in the form of a wheel barrow. On closer inspection the wheel barrow was found to be a changeling, a Pooka, in appearance the shape of a wheel barrow. It looks like a wheel barrow, it squeaks like a wheel barrow, it handles like a wheel barrow.....if only it were a wheel barrow; a priest need be sought to exorcise, or at least exercise it.

Hours 1.5, 75.5

7th March Poul Eich Oíta  
Cheg Chester

PC was informed earlier in the day of the death of Ray Mansfield; an immense loss to Janet and his friends. The plan: to carry up another three concrete lintels, length of timber, drill and fixings to finally secure the tyres in place and cover the opening to the south. Arriving at 18:00 the pair swiftly brought the kit to site; while CC began to drill and secure the tyres together, also inserting the wooden forms to stiffen the tyre walls and drill drain holes, PC placed the lintels and fifty millimetre galvanized mesh in position with a cover of plastic voting poster sheeting to stop any small deposits migrating through. After much heaving and straining, the session finished with several flat stones being positioned around the tyres and over the lintels. Next session will see the south area virtually completed. The northern gap, the wide gryke, has been suggested as an access route, rather than through the tyres: PC has a large piece of steel that, as a trap door, would certainly take the weight of any inquisitive cow. Several more lengths of scaffold pole are needed; ideally two pieces two metres long. To the Roadside where the place is beginning to receive the first signs of the tourist season, and an increase in the cost of the drink.

Hours 5, 80.5

9th March Poul Eich Oíta  
Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne

A bright but very cold day: the wind from the north. The plan: to press on with the "preparation work" of securing the big 'ole, so as to get digging again as soon as possible: so the team arrived at 10:30. More gear was carried up allowing the tyres to be finally fixed and the area to the south and rear of them back packed and landscaped. It was decided to install a "lid" or trapdoor, over the north gryke for ladder access; JW's plastic pallet forms the perfect lid, it completely covers the shaft opening and will allow any passing visitors to look down, but not fall in; the plan is to secure the pallet with a bolt through a chain, rather than a lock. The final piece of timber was secured to the bedrock completing the fixing of the tyres and lintels into place; some photographs were taken. The turf was cut back from in front the shaft and used to complete the landscaping; the only liability remaining is the northern opening. The plan is to return tomorrow afternoon to open the required gap for its installation and measure up for the trapdoor lid and frame: so no digging for Thursday, (10th), night; but certainly digging next Thursday (17th). To the Roadside where the early appearance drew comment. 7.5, 88

10th March Poul Eich Oíta  
Cheg Chester

The plan: to break away the small bedding to make room to accept the proposed trapdoor frame and to measure up the metal work to assess its fit prior to welding up the frame. The pair encountered the neighbouring farmer "John", who related that he and JC's Father, "Jim", had visited the dig site.... conversation ensued which included permission granted by John to the team to visit the old Silver Mine on his land; when convenient to ourselves. This permission confirms in the most subtle of ways that the team has conducted the correct approach installing the fence etc. so as to protect the cattle; so no problems so far with the work carried out, or indeed for the foreseeable future. Today's loads consisted of steel and tools so the gentle walk up was more of a stagger. On arrival CC pressed ahead redoing some of the bolts in the tyres while PC excavated rock for the trap door. While CC measured up the metalwork an idle PC began to tidy the stone heap constructing a dry wall; ultimately levelling the area: the place now

looks cared for to anyone passing with an opinion on such matters; and there are a lot about. A heavy duty pulley, chain and hauling rope were left on site. To the Roadside for a very nice pint  
Hours 6, 94

12th March Poul Eich Oíta  
Cheg Chester

The plan: to install the trap door, and frame made by CC, to close off the northern gap, landscape the area, install a support, and Tell-Tale, beneath the southern covered area and align the hauling system ready for the Monday session. Shouldering the metal work, and associated bags of equipment, the pair waddled up the hill as sunshine tried to break through the thinly overcast sky. With minor juggling the frame was swiftly installed and secured to the bedrock with rawlbolts; as CC completed this task PC installed a bolt to accommodate a deviation pulley for the hauling system. The two large "flat" boulders previously accumulated at "Boykers Korner" were utilized, as was the enormous boulder found hiding beneath the clump of heather; together these three large stones now landscape and successfully secure the northern gap. In the shaft, previously noted by AB, an existing sag in the galvanized C section girder was attended to, supported, for peace of mind, with a substantial vertical galvanized support: this sag was actually present when the team "borrowed" it from a dead electric pole. Installation of the support to the girder effectively shortens the overall span by about half. A Tell-Tale bolt was inserted into the top hole, to indicate any subtle movement; whilst a sixteen millimetre galvanized bolt was hammered to a depth of six inches into a sixteen millimetre hole drilled into the wall of the gryke, this substantial bolt has a large hook that may be utilized for other purposes. The hauling system was set up and adjusted for centring in the tyres; the mechanical advantage proposed is 2:1. For the uninitiated of the team, a 2:1 system effectively means the hauler will be lifting half the weight of the loaded kibble, though to do so means pulling twice the length of rope through the system. This system will incorporate the end of the hauling rope secured to the top of the "A" frame. It will then descend, again vertically, passing through the pulley attached, by karabiner, to the kibble handle. It then rises vertically back to the top of the "A" frame where it passes through another pulley hanging on a chain, to then pass, obliquely, down to the deviation pulley, secured to the bedrock, arriving horizontally into the hands of the hauler positioned off to the north side of the "A" frame. Away from any accumulating crap on the ground that would dirty the rope, also leaving room for the removal the kibbles, and also allowing room for the proposed truck and rail system to facilitate swifter transportation of heavier loads. In testing the hauling system, as PC filled several kibbles, a lengthy horizontal crack was exposed in the very large boulder, which was easily prised apart. However this top chunk is still too large to lift so was drilled with two sixteen millimetre holes in preparation for the Gads, as were two other boulders. Beneath the trapdoor the gryke now needs to be scrapped clear of all loose debris, as indeed does the southern gryke, to reduce future risk of injury; this should be carried as soon as possible before much more depth is achieved. The hauling rope and pulleys are stored below, hanging out of sight, in a tackle sac on the hook. One outstanding task is fitting the shaft grill cover; this will be secured by a bolt, as is the trap door: to complete this job two scaffold poles are required, 1 x 5 foot and 1 x 6 foot six inches. At one point the sun shone through a gap in the cloud raising the temperature to a very pleasant level around the shaft, however stepping away, to fetch tools, coats were swiftly applied as the cold breeze cut into the soul. To the Roadside where pints were thoroughly enjoyed among the increasing number of summer visitors; another phase completed a step closer to resumption of digging. Hours 5, 99

14th March Poul Eich Oíta  
Cheg Chester, Kevin Walsh

The three enjoyed the walk up in warm glorious sunshine. After the hauling system was set up CC commenced breaking up the previously drilled boulders and swiftly sending them to surface via the new hauling system; inclusion of the waist high deviation pulley affords haulers the capacity to comfortably hold onto the rope and also reach the raised kibble without too much effort: hooray! NB: a cleat secured to the "A" frame would significantly improve control of the hauling rope and safety. The huge lump that was previously separated from the large central boulder required further Gadding; even after attention from the sledge it still remained a big lump; as is its obscured partner in the floor. All boulders were removed with the boulder net, including several others which appeared; fortunately these were smaller or fractured in two. KW then began to clear out the northern gryke, which thankfully narrows off; sizeable limestone flakes were teased out from it along with much coarse clay and other detritus; an excellent effort considering the awkward situation and inappropriate tools available for the task; removing this debris will reduce the chance of future injuries. Climbing access was discussed; another metre depth and the present builders ladder will be too short: if the northern gryke continues downward in its present profile almost any form, or method, of vertical access could be easily accommodated within its shape, being sufficiently far enough away from any hauling procedure. As a crystal clear night formed the temperature plummeted; wind chill grew as wind speed increased. To the Roadside radiator for warmth, pints and talk of men's stuff; PC away at Ray Mansfield's funeral Thursday Hours 7.5, 106.5

21st March Poul Eich Oíta (Drunken Horse Hole)  
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne

The welcome return of TB also meant an extra pair of hands, feet, teeth and ears. With the replacement wheel barrow, two scaffold poles, drill etc. the team waddled up to the dig in failing daylight; no breeze present at all. While PC drilled the terrace to accept the scaffold clip for the rear pole, CC and TB descended to start work. TB in the southern half with CC clearing out the northern rift – gryke down to floor level, in doing so CC uncovered a small gap among the debris, soon a larger hole appeared, through which a depth of a metre could be seen, and a draught felt by both CC and TB; this implies a cavity below, (albeit of unknown size), and most fortuitously, as the shaft depth increases, any build up of CO<sub>2</sub> will not become an issue with such natural ventilation. The volume of debris CC removed from the northern rift was considerable, estimated to be equal to lowering the entire shaft bottom by some six inches. Meanwhile TB managed to loosen several large boulders from the southern debris pile, these, with others from CC, were swiftly removed using the hauling system and boulder net. The two larger boulders lifted were each approximately one hundred kilograms; the 2:1 mechanical advantage allows two people to just about manage such a weight. A safety lid is needed to close the shaft while such lumps are suspended above. AB then changed places with CC and set to clearing the compacted clay from around the larger boulder in the floor, as TB removed yet another large stone; as depth increased around the big rock AB exposed the western edge and finally its northern end; ultimately moving it much to the surprise and relief of the team who had feared its increasing size could present a serious removal problem; whilst large it is a triangular flake. As equipment was gathered up for the night PC drilled three sixteen millimetre holes in the two boulders for Gadding next session. Several of the large rocks were placed on the flagstone covering the north rift for added security. To the Roadside for pints and fun Hours 12, 118



23rd March Poul Eich Oíta  
Tony Boycott

The plan; a late afternoon trip to finish securing the scaffold clip to the rock ready for the rear scaffold pole support, to assess ladder access and to Gad the two boulders drilled on Monday. A nice bright day with very little breeze. PC swiftly completed the scaffold clip fixing and began to set up the hauling system to the musical accompaniment of TB wielding the sledge below: the rear scaffold pole looks as though it requires refitting at a slightly higher level to accommodate the intended "rails" for the safety cover. By now both lumps of rock were reduced to a variety of sizes, two of which remained quite large-ish. With the boulders removed TB began to reduce the large debris pile at the south end eventually clearing the area: noticing a draught emanating from this rift too. Work progressed well during which PC managed to install the front horizontal scaffold pole on the "A" frame to also accommodate the grill and the safety cover; using the two scaffold clips he brought up today, leaving the others stored below. As TB was finishing up JC, (landowner), arrived much to the delight of the team. JC was genuinely surprised at the depth, and other work, achieved by the team. PC then spoke outlining the ideals of avoiding hassle for the landowner, and negative, comment from others and to ensure the safety of the grazing beasts; JC dismissed all these concerns, robustly adding "do what you want, work away", and, wait for it.....as PC outlined the intended winch JC pipes up with "you could do with a shed up here to put it kit in couldn't you"! This comment followed PC requesting permission to spread future spoil around the area; again JC repeated "do what you like". After helping empty the remaining rock and several kibbles JC accompanied the pair back down to the truck. Tomorrow's session can now concentrate on digging out the clay fill. A quick change and swift journey to the Roadside where a very patient Billy attended to cocktail requests from bewildered visitors: all in all a cracking digging session and wonderful support from James. Hours 5, 123.5



12th March 2016, left, north gryke covered and secure with stone and trap door.

24th March Poul Eich Oíta, (Drunken Horse Hole)

Tony Boycott, Jim Warny, JS = John Schmidt The plan: with the boulders cleared away, to remove the exposed clay sediments beneath, hopefully without any boulders appearing too soon. TB and PC arrived at 17:30 and commenced work; water was noticed on the clay floor from the previous night's rainfall, forming a sort of unpleasant mush: something to avoid. TB began removing the debris from the "Sentry Box", to level off the base of the shaft: a small piece of plywood was positioned for the kibbles to land on and be filled, without becoming covered in crud from the sticky wet floor. Soon JW arrived and took over hauling so PC turned attention to opening the gap through the mote wall ready for future wheel barrow access. Within minutes JS appeared and joined the crew; JW changed positions with TB continuing to lower the floor of the "Sentry Box" area; digging continued at a steady pace; the mote wall steadily growing in height and width. The next shift change saw TB and PC working below together; the work becoming manic. While TB worked the south side PC cleared away below the opening of the northern rift; the bottom of the remaining debris fill that CC previously cleared rests upon a jammed stone, directly beneath this, through the fissure, the visible narrow area obviously experiences quantities of periodic water flow: above this the debris in the rift appears secure. Toward the end of the session PC dug down further to form a channel for future rainfall to drain away to the north; this practice should be maintained. The evenings session achieved a depth of some six hundred millimetres around the shaft perimeter, maybe a little more, the remaining elevated kibble stand in the centre indicating this. TB estimates the depth achieved below the surface is two Cronin's, which is around three metres. The only stones found among the clay fill were jammed into the north rift opening, with only two others of note directly below shaft opening; the nature of the clay varied between very stiff to soft sand and gravel mixes. This sort of digging is both swift and relatively easy. The ladder will be too short after another session like last night. A thoroughly shagged out team then headed down the mountain to the Roadside for very some nice pints: JS has expressed an interest to join the digging team. Hours 10.5 134

27th March Fraggle Rock / Poul Eich Oíta, Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott

HW 08:19, Storm Kate was dissipating, sea state very rough, wind force seven south-westerly, occasional heavy showers of rain and hail. A large stream was issuing, measured at forty millimetres. The plan: to assess the status of accumulated storm debris throughout Fraggle Rock. On arrival the sea was breaking over the edge of the upper terrace; tasting the brackish water issuing from the bedding proved it had earlier flooded the terrace to a greater extent. PC watched the sea conditions for several minutes before deciding to abandon going to the far end; only focusing on assessing the effects on "Jim's Passage". En-route deposits of sand were noted along the passage, at the "Terminus" both ropes and skids were still intact secured in their respective positions. From the "Boars Head" to the "Loading Bay" sand, and other heavier debris lay in the stream; the truck was found secure on the rails. The stream was the full width of the step; at the base of the step heavier gravels have been washed down from upstream. "Jim's Passage" had not suffered further since the trip on 18th February. The place was still levelled with a sand floor and associated shrimps. All in all little change following the recent sequence of heavy seas. Mildly concerned about the sea state the pair exited and decided to go to Drunken Horse Hole. On arrival at the dig the normally sheltered spot was subject to the very cold wind. TB descended and began to dig away the "pedestal", upon which the kibble rested, levelling it to the floor; PC hauled. Difficulties arose with the clay having received a scatter of the recent heavy rain; this meant clay migrated from digger to kibble karabiner, haulers gloves and finally onto hauling rope: the hand winch will reduce this

mess enormously. It will be wise to maintain a slope for rain to run off before sinking into the clay; hauling wet clay is.....difficult: perhaps provide a cover for the hole, or the surface of the clay itself? With the "pedestal" removed TB surfaced and assisted PC removing more of the turf to facilitate the installation of the proposed hand winch, manoeuvre the filled wheel barrow, and creates a clean route for the wheel barrow and to reduce transference of mud from walking to and from the mote wall onto the limestone. Once the "Gate Posts" are secure the barb wire between then can be replaced, with a gate so the wheel barrow can be used to tip outside. A trowel is desperately needed to clean out the clay from the kibbles. To the Roadside for a welcome drink; CC returns later today.

Hours 3, 13

#### 28th March Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester, Aileen Byrne, Tony Boycott

A bright fine, cold evening; with only a few items to carry up digging swiftly commenced. The bottom of the shaft was a little glutinous after the showers. PC cut the fence wire; so a trial was initiated utilizing the wheel barrow to dump spoil in the adjacent hollow; until, alas, the supports for the wheel collapsed: back to basics. To avoid mud and crap transferring to the hauling rope, PC remained hauling while AB (Titan?) carried the kibbles, two at a time, to the wall. As CC and TB tipped away the depth and shape of the "Sentry Box" began to become less pronounced, likely in another metre or so it may merge into the east wall and disappear altogether. On the west wall a minor opening of the vertical joint was utilized as another source of drainage. Finishing up for the night, a shallow drain was cut around the shaft base perimeter to convey rainwater to the closest 'ole. A superb effort, particularly from AB who single handedly carried all the spoil to the mote wall. The depth of the shaft is now three metres; still no boulders among the spoil, its been about a metre now since the last group: the walls continue down. The ladder now rests upon the clay "pedestal" so is unsafe; without this extra height the ladder will not reach the tyres. Tasks 1) Obtain new wheel barrow 2). Prepare level wheel barrow route. 3). Secure "gate posts". 4). Obtain "gate". 5). Install hangers for builder's ladder, and "step" beneath trapdoor. 6). Winch. To the Roadside where talk turned to hauling options, and winches.

Hours, 8, 145

#### 30th March Killilagh Collapse

Mattie Shannon

Following a conversation about sites around Doolin Mattie Shannon took PC to view the collapse that has occurred on three occasions in the last year; each occasion has resulted in more stone dropped into the 'ole. Other reports to PC, over the last ten years, seem to allude to the same place, collapsing on two previous occasions. The increase in the cycle of collapse may be for several reasons, not least the increase in rainfall events during this last year; and the stream way beneath. MS related at one point the hole was at least some four metres deep; another report said ten metres! It is in a thin shale cover, rather than the previously reported sand fill: unless of course there is another collapse site nearby? On land above Fisherstreet several sites, at least five, are known to regularly collapse; and are subsequently back filled. MS will speak to the owner to see if he is amenable to an investigative prod with a digger? PC was then taken to a second area, behind MS house, located close to the route of Doolin River Cave; at some distance along a modern land drain the water now swiftly disappears into a hole in the side of the ditch. The depth of soil here is known as less than two metres: MS intends to open the area with his son's digger to have a "Look See", hooray! When measurements are taken from both the western extremities of Poulmagrai and also Poul Aillte the distances to Drunken Horse

Hole become; to Poulmagrai less than 500 metres; to Poul Aillte some 750, though from the survey above the purple line appears the sump survey, meaning the dry survey is absent, and therefore that much closer.

31st March Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott, Cathal Mullane, Matt Randall, Luke Randall, Fionn Randall, Jim Warny

Laden with the new wheel barrow, ladder and other items the team ascended to the dig. PC had the idea how best to best utilize the barrow by depositing the spoil along the mote wall; using the short planks to build the wall in horizontal layers from the ends of the fence and working back to the gate; this works well, provided the barrow is loaded with only two kibbles worth of weight. CC and TB began to dig while the others rotated among the other tasks. The remaining area of turf was removed to prepare for installation of the forthcoming motorized winch. At the end of the session JW noted the bottom of the "Sentry Box" seemed to be returning to its original cross sectional shape and depth, this change occurring, possibly, from the appearance of a horizontal joint. The builders ladder now barely reaches the top; PC tried the new wooden ladder to see how best to install it, exploring various alternatives, in the narrow confines below the trapdoor. Safety lines for diggers will hopefully be installed over the weekend. The risk of serious injury, from falling items, will continue to increase exponentially from the hauling process as the depth too increases. Total attention is now required from all personnel during the hauling procedure to avoid anything dropping onto unsuspecting diggers below: clear loud instructions with tight control of the hauling line are important at all times to avoid problems.

Consider this thought; in the event a half full kibble, weighing say twenty kilos, were to fall from the top of the shaft, landing less than a second later upon a digger occupied three metres below, the impact of said kibble upon will be in the order of 588.6 kilograms, or half a metric tonne, the resultant impact would spoil the session for all present. So, clear communications and a flat refusal to let go the hauling line until the situation is safe, along with the forthcoming installation of a safety lid will means we won't be at home to Mr. Cockup.

Hours 12, 157

2nd April Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott

The plan: to install climbing aids to facilitate access. A nice afternoon; though cool; after the heavy rain there was very little standing water in the shaft. While PC reviewed options in the rift TB installed the long bolt securing the rear scaffold tube, ready to accept the lid frame; managing also to remove the redundant "A" frame bolt. While PC installed two pole steps, each secured with three rawlbolts, TB created a drain from the bottom of the "Sentry box" into the southern rift. The remaining steps and lifeline belays should be completed over the next few trips. The broad shape of the lower part of the northern rift will allow the regular use of pole steps without causing obstruction with hauling larger kibbles. To the Roadside where the pair bumped into RS and QC

Hours 4.5 161.5

3rd April Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott

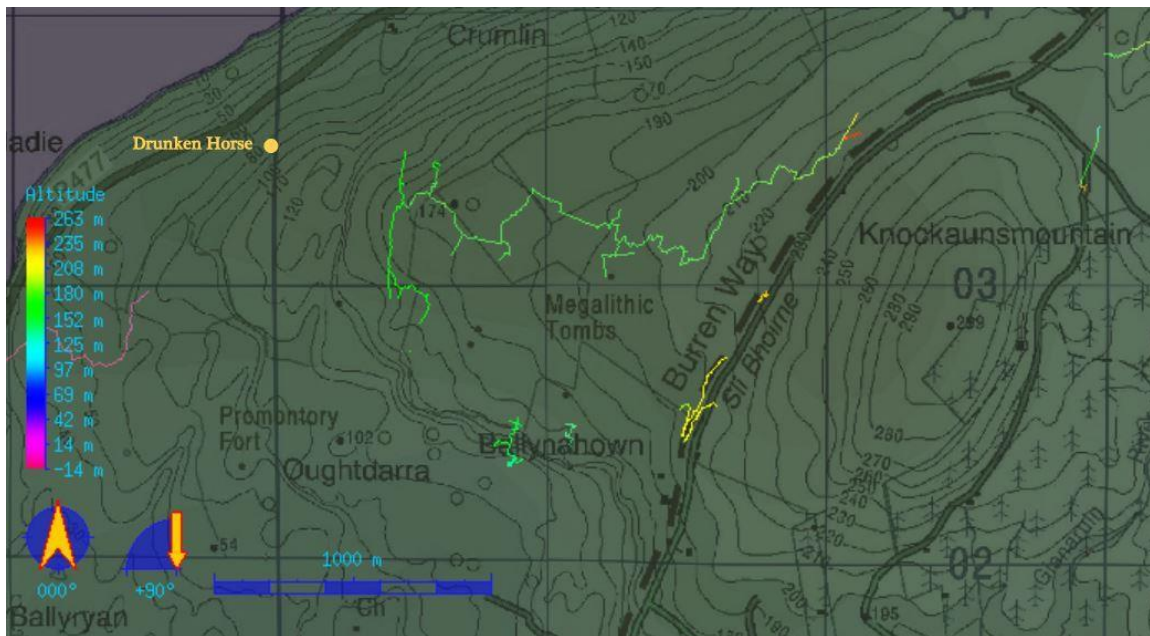
The plan: to complete the steps in the rift below the trapdoor: fantastic sunny afternoon. Crossing the stile the pair encountered the contented landowner; very impressed at the level of care and respect demonstrated at the dig. With TB as the go-for, PC installed the steps made from ten millimetre rebar, also installing two stainless hangers either end of the pot, finally installing the sixteen millimetre hook/hanger for self life-lining on the



entrance pitch. Toward completion JW and Hashish (his partner) arrived enjoying the sun and taking action photos of the workmen! To the Roadside for the pints  
Hours 3.5 165

4th April Drunken Horse Hole  
Cheg Chester

The plan: with most aids in place back to actual digging. In light rain the pair set up the hauling kit; CC below, PC up top. A steady pace cleared away almost half the bottom of the shaft to a depth of sixteen inches, from the south end to the middle. Several grykes were filled with spoil to receive small lengths of timber; for ease of wheeling the barrow. To reduce the wet conditions below a cover for the shaft is required, likewise several short planks for diggers to stand on are needed. Two further steps are required near the trapdoor. The walk down the mountain side, at 20:50, was in the company of a glorious sunset across Galway Bay: to the Roadside.  
Hours 5, 170



From UBSS site

Imagery showing end of entrance sump in Poul Aillte and proximity of Poulmagraí

7th April  
Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Matt Randall, Cathal Mullane

A chill evening from a north-westerly breeze, which gradually increased in strength to force three. The six man team started work rotating among the different positions. CM took surface and underground photographs. With the pedestal removed, a further sixteen inches was sunk across the entire bottom, exposing a widening of the three rifts; curiously commencing at what appears the same horizon. The west rift is now open for drainage. As the ground was removed the soft surface morass becoming a stiff spoil, then, a series of much harder thin beds of sediments of widely differing colours; at the end of the session a granular green - grey marl like deposit appeared. The widening of the rifts could suggest a debris cone, but the almost bone dryness of the substrate

indicates excellent drainage; perhaps a void beneath? Either way the shaft is now over four metres deep. To the Roadside where the subjects of the winch, associated safety issues and introduction of a digging fund of one euro, per person, per week ensued: no talk of girls .....alas. Hours 15, 185

10th April Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott

The plan: a housekeeping visit; to install steps at both the top and bottom of the shaft. A bitter cold day from a north-easterly wind. Two steps were installed, at sixteen inch centres, to within a metre of the base of the shaft; two steps, made of rebar, were fitted below the trapdoor: a bolt and hanger now secures the lower end of the taught lifeline. To the Roadside; to hug the radiator Hours 3, 188

11th April Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

A cold north east breeze The plan: to dig. With CC and TB below PC hauled; all spoil barrowed across to the hollow to the north. The overall depth achieved was some nine inches without including the pedestal height. The hard granular, dry, nature of the central deposit continues; against the walls its a little wetter: the "Sentry Box" is slowly fading in depth gradually disappearing into the east wall. One hundred and four kibbles later the team enjoyed a balmy evening walk down to the truck. The steps installed in the shaft appear appropriate for the variety of leg lengths. To the Roadside for pints and talk of cave formation Hours 7.5, 195

*14th April Drunken Horse Hole from PCN log*

*Cheg Chester*

*Changed the hauling rope and recovered the existing one to be cleansed of several weeks of mud. With TB digging and CC hauling and emptying the barrow a total of 43 kibbles of material was removed. This is approximately two thirds of the floor to one spade depth. The "Sentry Box" has all but disappeared and the whole perimeter at floor level of the pot appears to be closing slightly inwards apart from the grykes which appear to be getting wider. A new bedding is just visible on the East wall. To the roadside for a swift pint Cheg Hours 4, 199.5*

16th April Clooncoose Cave

Solo

To continue the archaeological survey project. Today, walking the sub square enclosure in front of the cave entrance, planning the drop hole opening, assessing whether the foundation stone for the wall feature is either one or two lintels spanning the cavity beneath and to photograph the remaining features throughout, this time with a better looking ranging rod in the pictures. By good fortune the entire area of the drop hole fitted within the one metre square planning frame making the job of drawing the contents to scale an infinitely easier task; the natural undulations of the cave passage falling neatly within the frame perimeter. Next, a variety of contortions allowed an arm to be pushed beneath the wall feature to where the author could feel the edge of what seems to be a linear joint; strongly suggesting the foundation is actually two blocks, each being some four foot long by eighteen inches wide by ten inches deep. Using 2611 kilograms for solid limestone from the table of weights for materials' ([http://www.simetrix.co.uk/si\\_materials.htm](http://www.simetrix.co.uk/si_materials.htm)), an estimated weight for the entire foundation block would have been in excess of seven hundred kilograms; quite an unwieldy lump to manoeuvre along five metres of narrow passage. Two separate,



narrower lintels, at three hundred kilos a piece, make far more sense in the over all construction of this particular souterrain. Many photographs were taken of the wall feature and drop hole with, and without, the planning frame along with the many other features throughout the cave. Out to glorious sunshine

18th April Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

A bright sunny evening: becoming very chill later on. The plan: to expose the western wall base to see how far the "shoulder" extended into the shaft. CC and TB were digging; PC hauling. After one hundred and twenty six kibbles the "shoulder" extended out by some twelve inches, (300mm), however when viewed from the shaft collar the narrowing is actually about half that distance, even so, this minor change will significantly reduce the volume of spoil to remove. The urge to find out what was happening to the lower part of the western rift meant protocol was abandoned; the area was dug down two feet where the opening widened then narrowed merging into the radius of the shoulder; a curious effect being the reducing profile of the "Sentry Box" and the fading western rift opposite one another: this investigation has left a large step in the floor: reconciled Thursday. Most of the southern mote wall is now above the fence wire. The weather cover to the shaft works well the base was dry after the heavy showers yesterday. TB returned the previous rope, washed clean; its stored in the green tackle bag below. As the depth is over five metres the new hauling procedures will mean that the digger in the northern area is the ONLY one who controls the lowering and raising; all instructions loudly exchanged, and answered, to confirm intentions. He/she is the one closest to the centre of the shaft and any falling objects. The kibble with the larger handle empties very easily; no large lumps of spoil becoming caught; this improvement will be made in turn to each kibble. To the Roadside where interpretive talk followed. Hours 9 208.5

19th April Pouldubh

Solo

A very warm and sunny afternoon. The possibility of paid work meant a pre-meeting trip to check the layout, distances and suitability for the "trip" with Conal et al tomorrow. Low water presented a small waterfall. Drew plan of middle to south entrance

20th April Pouldubh

Ray Murphy, Conal? Brendan? Declan? John?

A trip to see if the cave system, proposed by PC, was what the team was required to act as part of the assessment for special forces. The trip was a success; the group very pleased with the chosen circuit and obstacles. Took Coast Guard climbing assessment at 16:30 – 17:30; passed with merit.

21st April Drunken Horse Hole

Aileen Byrne, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Cathal Mullane

Another fine evening: the plan, to expose the "Shoulder" emerging from the southern end of the pot. En-route heavy duty, (13mm), mesh was picked up to close off the opening to the compound from cattle; the bracing for the north gate post was also fitted. TB and CC began digging, the others taking stations on hauling, emptying and the wheel barrow. CC gradually exposed an increasingly, and alarmingly, large area of "Shoulder "; alas, this eventually crept out to become the southern floor: the southern rift however does appear to enlarge though. PC took over from a weary CC, who went up to do turns on the wheel barrow from AB, manically attacking the central pedestal exposing yet more of the light grey undulating floor. Almost level with the area of "Sentry Box" the spade

found depth within the fill. Shagged out PC requested replacement, CM continued; the focus becoming closer to the northern rift, particularly the base and the large loose flake fragments; the fill becoming wetter. The entire the team worked like demons; who all need exorcising.....? The state of play is that the pot has narrowed significantly; the base area of the northern rift offers the remaining opportunity therefore needs pursuing downward, though this will be a slower affair due to the confined area. No matter, the site requires a conclusion. The descent to the trucks was to the accompaniment of a glorious sunset. To the Roadside for drinks postmortem and a plan The summer months will offer opportunities for other sites to be investigated and continued, Fraggie Rock in the wet crawl and along "Jim's Passage", Poulbanbeag located beyond the summit of Black Head is a narrow rift, that is wide open, once possibly enlarged though JW may squeeze in; AB has been offered a look at an 'ole, previously unrecorded, by the landowner who has never allowed cavers in.

Hours 15 223.5

25th April Drunken Horse Hole  
Solo

A bright very chill evening courtesy of the force four  
A northern wind shortly after setting up JC, (landowner), arrived on site suitably impressed with the Team's progress. PC took the opportunity to repeat the plan for landscaping should the site be closed down; JC repeated his "How can I continue to help you" attitude toward the team. PC tipped away removing the remaining soil in the northern rift gradually exposing the very solid floor and fragments of boulders and flakes on the western side. Unfortunately his wide shovel could not remove spoil from the deeper recesses. The lower boulder is actually part of the floor. The two above it could be removed; this upper area of rift is slightly wider: though, overall, things do appear severely terminal. The entire floor was cleared of deposits resulting in thirteen over filled kibbles removed to the depression to the north. CC, and his visitor Craig, arrived at 20:00 to view the overall status agreeing it was worth removing the remaining deposit in the rift to exhaust every possibility. The white rope and red tackle sac was brought down. To the Roadside to scull some pints

Hours 2.5, 226

26th April Cullaun II  
Craig Topliss, Cheg Chester

A cold day with a minor hail shower: CC had an old pal stopping with him, Craig Topliss, so the plan was to have a trip down Cullaun II; the first since his school days some thirty odd years ago. No stream falling into the entrance so levels were low. A steady trip to the cascades then the climb into the upper route. Dropping into the streamway the team made its way downstream to the top of the terminal pitch. The steady pace reached the surface after some ninety minutes. Outside encountered a Dutch group was creating a virtual reality of the entrance for Extreme Ireland, an adventure tour operator. A grand trip made all the more enjoyable by the myriad helictites; to the Roadside for pints.

28th April Doolin River Cave  
Craig Topliss, Cheg Chester

A bright but cold day. Fisherstreet Pot was swiftly rigged: PC's truck left there with the change of clothes. At St. Catherine's water conditions were very low, no stream sinking, or indeed present in the immediate streamway. Entering at 10:05 the three were immediately met with a very cold breeze from within, which was a constant presence. The route through the upper section to the "connection" was made without any loss of direction; not bad since the last time either CC or PC were there was some ten years back. Considerable enjoyment was had experiencing this superb cave again; it has

everything needed on a caving trip. Lots of flood debris was visible throughout even stuck in the roof of the great rift. Once again route finding wasn't an issue though at one point the depth of water was for PC, who was on the verge of swimming. Aran View inlet didn't exhibit signs of algae or smell; nice. During the section to Aille River inlet five trout and two eels were seen. The ever present draught became a gale closer to the pot. Only the faintest of odour was noted by CC in the last section; the winter rains having flushed the deposits well enough. The climb out was swift, into a blustery bitter cold, overcast day: exiting at 14:25. Quite the achievement for CT this being his second trip: to the Roadside for a much needed warm up.

28th April Drunken Horse Hole

Jim Warny

A cold evening with a north-westerly wind. The plan: to excavate the lower part of the northern rift to allow a better view of the potential and to provide room to remove the boulders etc. Using the entrenching tool, at arms length, a steady pace removed the fill exposing a curious development of the rift line, it looks like a fault. The depth of the removable boulders would mean an increased width of ten inches. Once removed this should confirm the potential of progressing in this direction or closing down the dig. The lower one is ready to fall out; the upper large flag requires snapping. The pair then strolled along the northern terrace in search of 'oles. To the Roadside for pints and plans

Hours 4, 230

2nd May Poulbanbeag

Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Matt Randall

The plan; to push the cave visited by JS, TB and PC some years ago; its tight rift entrance only allowing JS, then, to enter. A cold, blustery, bright day. The steady walk up over Black Head to the cave took just over an hour; the site looking less promising, (much smaller), upon arrival: memory is an issue. CM entered up to a point then was replaced by JW who got some seven metres to a low uninspiring hole. After much effort JW made a return to the surface. Poul Eile, a small cave on the terrace above and some hundred metres south, was then checked out, again the prospects are debatable due to the remote nature of the site; though new tracks have been created, likely for handling of farm stock. A steady walk was made around the south side of the gigantic depression investigating several minor features en-route. PC took GPS locations while CM and JW took photos. A cracking day out: the weather holding off the promised downpours. To the Randall house for Tea, Cake and Medals

2nd May Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester

The bright evening: the continuation of early weather conditions, blustery and chill. The plan: to remove, or reduce, the boulders in the northern rift. Upon opening the lid the team were surprized, at their reflections looking back at them! The bottom of the shaft was flooded, likely from the previous evenings twenty millimetres of rainfall. PC gingerly lowered himself to the top of his wellies, at the critical point abandoning the idea; actual depth averaging some twenty inches. The lower boulder was drilled then the upper, the idea to nudge one out the way so the other had room to fall. CC prepared the area, which proved reasonably successful; the process was repeated creating a better view of the increasing width of the rift. The gaps behind the boulder and rock fragments indicate water flowed to the north, the rough gravel content of the spoil being quite soft, the crowbar easily pushed into the matrix. While the boulders and flag fragments remain as they are, not part of the western wall its worth continuing. Once the area becomes solid on both sides then it'll be time to close down. Meanwhile the passage width is best part of

two feet; plenty of room to dig. Much of the broken rock was lain in the water to facilitate a dry- ish work surface; the result of four nudges. The confined upper flag fragment may respond to TBs expanding tool!, a hydraulic jaw scissor jack, or to a series of large wedges driven in to the gap. To the Roadside for refreshments Hours 5, 235

5th May Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny later John Schmidt

A bright warm evening with a cool breeze. The plan; to excavate horizontally along the northern rift: the water level had fortunately dropped eight inches in three days. JW descended to remove the previous fallen debris to expose the lower extremities of the large flag fragment. This amounted to a considerable volume of rock, most removed from below water level. Attention then focused on breaking the flag away from the west wall using the Gads and wooden wedges. PC descended to assist wielding the sledge in the narrow confines; though the flag broke away from its host it remained hovering some two metres above the diggers in the narrow rift several heaves brought the thing cartwheeling out the roof to land partly in the shaft missing both diggers. Once JW had reduced it a little further, it was rolled out into the wider central area where it was finally destroyed using a five kilo sledge: at an average of one twenty millimetres thick, and over a metre square the thin sizeable chunk, (at some 300 kilos), was swiftly sent in pieces to surface. JW then began to excavate the loose fill along the rift. A view along the rift does show a small undulating drainage route; the team decision is to continue. To the Roadside for pints, where a soaked PC damped the seat covers. Hours 6, 241

9th May Fraggie Rock

Solo

HW 19:56 springs: sea state slight, wind north-easterly, the stream was eighty millimetres below the reference. The plan; as CC departed for the UK PC took the opportunity to check over the far reaches of Fraggie Rock, unseen since before of the winter storms, and unvisited on the previous trip of 25th March. Deposits of sea sand and broken shell were found along the main passage. At the "Terminus" the rope was a tangled ball, the truck sat there upon the rails, the skids and hauling equipment were all in situ. At "Bison Boulder Bend" large calcite debris lay in the stream, at the "Boars Head" a considerable amount of sea sand and shell, ( eight skids worth), has been deposited to the left of the sand bag venturi, coarser debris lay in the stream, the deposits previous noted just before where the dam was have been significantly reduced. Little change has occurred in the "Loading Bay" and along "Jim's Passage". Half way along "The Burrow" are two skids worth of debris. Just beyond a boulder and cobbles lay with sand accumulated behind, the low bedding to the right has been subjected to a lot of water flow, it is very clean. The quantity of debris in the streamway increases as "Anvil Chamber" is entered; this extends into the "The Bedding"; back at the "Weir" a large piece of stal floor with cemented stones is set aside for safe keeping. The junction area of 3Ts and its neighbour has received a pounding by the sea; the previously, totally blocked arched passage is now partly open: tools and rope lay in turmoil. From "Anvil Chamber" the debris changes in size and type, regular lumps of stall occurs. Further upstream other debris is encountered; "Coffin Corner" has been washed about. At "The Freezer" where PC had previously managed to lift a large flag to one side for nudging, the back packed spoil has been washed away likely the source of much of the downstream mess; the right-hand route around said boulder now wide open. The squeeze beyond and to the right of "The Freezer" has also been opened; severe scouring has taken place, the floor can be seen clearly around the boulder normally squeezed over. Beyond looks slightly larger. The stream volume made for a very cold wet trip; the scattered tools were collected and

left high and dry at "Coffin Corner". The return uphill was a slow affair as there was insufficient material to make a comfortable cradle to carry the tram back for its much needed maintenance.

176 7171

12th May Drunken Horse Hole

Jim Warny

A clear bright evening: very little wind. Carrying various tools, drill and replacement rope, the pair walked up in glorious sunshine. PC had the feeling that the canvas cover had been disturbed by a visitor. The pair descended landing in the pooled water, the depth of which appeared unchanged from last week. Assessing the northern rift potential, along which, JW's previous efforts had exposed a clear view, PC couldn't get too excited. Studying the shaft walls subtle evidence indicated a flow to the south. JW began excavating the southern rift while PC returned to surface to haul; three very large flake fragments and eighteen kibbles later a coffin level shaped passage was exposed, some three fifty millimetres at its widest point and fifteen hundred millimetres high; the concave shape to either side somewhat encouraging. The sequence is loose vertical flags with a soft silt fill between; easy digging though somewhat confined; similar to some Yorkshire pots. At the end of business PC managed to loosen another flag which JW immediately destroyed, making total forward progress over a metre in length! During operations, using the yellow kibble, over two hundred litres of water were sent to surface, this dropped the level significantly. The total flag weight amounted to over three hundred and fifty kilos; all used to extend the wall. A small bucket would remove the remaining water, a hoe would be useful to scrap out the debris loosen by the cheating sticks. To the Roadside for drinkies

Hours 5, 246

23rd May Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester

A fabulous sunny evening no breeze. The plan: to continue along the promising southern rift. The water level in the shaft had risen once again so some four hundred litres were removed to surface prior to digging. CC progressed along the rift a half metre before disappointment arrived. The lower eastern wall began to form a radius that significantly reduced the rift width; potential along this route suddenly evaporated. Attention, and in a little desperation, was turned to the area directly beneath the shaft, here the lowest part was bailed completely to show the contoured floor, the small amount of loose debris, from previous nudging, was removed to expose an honest solidity of the rock beneath. So, though arriving at a conclusion several questions arise. (1).What volume of water was needed to form the dimensions of this large and beautifully shaped shaft? (2).Where did the water flow to? (3).Why was the fill so dry? (4). How come the shaft was flooded now, when during the many winter storms there was far more sustained rainfall present? Both rifts have now been dug to where each inclined rift floor illustrates evidence of water flowing toward the shaft, and not away. Time was spent tidying the remaining spoil and sending it all to surface, likewise the kibbles. The tools were brought back along with the hauling rope and pulleys. The plan is to close the dig, this Thursday at 18:00, to strip the hauling frame and to fix the grill in place, to face the tyres with stonework, remove both ladders, and clear the site. Assistance would be welcome. A photographic record need be taken to conclude this project. Though disappointing the site has provided an enormous amount of fun. To the Roadside to plan the next project; most likely surveying Watergate, Poulnafearbui, Fraggie Rock, and Pegasus Pot

Hours 6, 252

30th May Poulnafearbui  
Cheg Chester

18:30: the aim; to commence an accurate cave survey and review potential. A fabulous, cloudless evening. In very dry conditions the first part of the survey took in the awkward entrance section, then to the start of the downstream bedding plane and finally a leg along the main passage. The station secured into the mud floor. To the Roadside

2nd June Poulnafearbui  
Cheg Chester

The aim; to continue the survey: another beautiful evening. The first leg was eighteen metres which carried the survey swiftly to the junction. From where a series of legs through pooled water, and sandy mud brought them to the small, confined, and very unstable chamber; the huge boulder remains supported by the railway sleeper. An all to brief assessment of potential was made as the evening was ageing; the survey hereabouts completed the pair made for the Roadside where drink was taken. The next trip will finish the survey in the downstream bedding and out to reconcile it with the adjacent inhabited "Radgers".

15th June Pouldubh  
Ray Murphy, Conor McGrath  
Employed by Work at Heights to assist Gardai selection board to monitor candidates

16th June Poulnafearbui  
Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

The plan: to complete the survey downstream of the entrance junction to the present obstruction "Boykers Boulder" situated just before the sump. A beautiful evening. The team swiftly arrived at the entrance and made their way in. CC had donned his wetsuit in preparation of wriggling along the lower stream passage. The concern that previous flood events had caused the once silt/sand covered boulder strewn floor of the main passage to migrate downstream was unfounded as CC managed to squeeze in once more. PC took up position at the previous survey station waiting patiently while CC manoeuvred to turn around to start surveying in the ridiculously low passage. Perhaps with all the squeezing it should be called "Colgate"? After a lot of effort the single length of survey was recorded. Once out from "Colgate" JW nipped in for a look to see how "exciting" the place was.... in a busy Roadside, sculling pints, talk turned to the next survey project while the weather is kind, and the land is dry.

20th June Fraggie Rock  
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW 18:11 springs, light westerly winds, sea state very rough. The stream was sixty five millimetres below the reference. The plan: to survey from the limit previously reached by JW, being some sixteen metres beyond the squeeze/s through the boulder at the "Freezer". CC got to where the second squeeze is without problems, however. JW is the only one who has managed to pass this severe pointy edged boulder; on his return it was drilled for nudging the next visit. Today, unable to fit CC through surveying was reluctantly abandoned; a disappointed PC suggested as the bottom of the boulder was now visible following successive flood events, why not try to use the large flag in front of it as a fulcrum to shuffle the lump to the right, now the stacked spoil is washed downstream and the "Freezer" area was a little larger to work in? TB crawled off to locate the big digging bar and shovel while CC cleared the debris from behind the boulder to make room. With CC's chest and head pushed into in the gap, his hands around the far



side of the bolder and his left leg pressed against the roof PC manoeuvred the five foot bar between his legs.....and followed it forward, oh err. What followed was the bar regularly springing off to barely miss Cheg's various body parts by a few millimetres as CC pulled it. Little by little the boulder crept to the right squeezing CC successfully up against the wall: all this effort took place in a passage some eighteen inches high. With the boulder now in place the large flag was pushed off the wall and into an 'ole in the stream bed, this circus was to the encouragement of TB who, as Go-fer, remained resolutely semi submerged for the duration. CC now exited so PC could move forward to dig away the exposed spoil to fill the vacated area. Cheg made the factual observation that this achievement is a Game Changer; this sodding awkward boulder obstacle, its accompanying squeeze and effect on moral, is now isolated, effectively gone, leaving only the sharp boulder edge to be evaporated; the way on will then be wide open! Thoroughly knackered the team made its way out; not one of the team had a dry area on their person; the low level of the stream at the reference does not imply a dry-ish trip up the bedding. To the Roadside for some very happy pints; discussion proposed that on Thursday 23rd nudging takes place and the area from "Coffin Corner" back to "Anvil Chamber" is cleared, the debris packed into the 3T's area. 176 7171

23rd June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott

Owing to a senior moment TB forgot his oversuit; a thoroughly knackered PC rejoiced. The team did however manage to reach the Roadside without further incident. 176 7171

27th June Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

LW 17:39: neaps: the issuing eighty five millimetres stream below reference. Overcast: light wind: sea state rough. The plan: to re-drill and nudge the obstacle and to begin to clear the debris back to 3T's area. Two short ropes and a seven foot plank were taking in to facilitate spoil transfer into 3Ts. PC then moved up to the "Boulder with no Name" and drilled it ready for CC. What on the last trip appeared to be a reasonable amount of room beyond the "Freezer", wasn't; removing helmet PC pushed the drill up to the "Rib Wrecker" to reposition the hole previously drilled by JW in order to remove its top to allow access into the slightly lower right hand channel beyond. The area in front of "Rib Wrecker" was scrapped of loose stones to expose the mud matrix, which began dissolving almost immediately, this bodes well as the stream flows in this position and will provide the opportunity to simply push exposed stones to one side on later trips. CC arrived and took over proceedings. Meanwhile TB was sorting the devastation around "Anvil Chamber"; the long hauling rope is now recovered from buried in the debris and stowed in its container. The large boulders at the beginning of the bedding were removed back into "Anvil", as was the full sandbag; now positioned in front of the "Weir" to stop migrating debris from entering the "Burrow". The boulders will be used to revet the debris once backpacked into 3Ts to protect against erosion from flooding. The first nudge was successful, the top removed, allowing CC to pass through to another boulder just beyond. This may require attention for PC and TB to pass. To the Roadside where suggestions were that get into the area beyond and push as far as possible to assess further potential beyond "Rib Wrecker" before effort is expended on clearing the debris from "Coffin Corner" back to "Anvil". 176 7171

29th June Poulmagrinn  
Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

11:30. Following discussions with Joe O'Loughlin a visit was planned to check out the area of Poulmagrinn; some thirty years on from when Mark Lumley first discovered the site and was then dug by Mike McDonald, Steve Milner, Mark Lumley and PC, (The Lads). After reviewing Joe's drawing illustrating land ownership of the general vicinity the team chose to walk up a field just mown approaching from the south to avoid criticism. Within some twenty minutes Poulmagrinn was located: last night's heavy rain had produced streams of significant size, one draining the field to the north-west flowing down the recently dug land drain to sink at the shale boundary. Upon approach a large hole with a narrow rift was found, (PNG 4); this has formed by collapsed, PC has a very vague memory of a shallow depression where the dig kit was stored: as the hole wasn't there in 1983! From within a stream was heard. Also the area of Poulmagrinn Two is another large, open collapse some three metres deep; beneath dense hawthorn. To the north of PNG 2 another previously unnoticed hole, PNG 5, is open taking a stream, which too was not noticed previously in 1983. PNG 1 was taking a large stream. PNG 3 is obscured but the western side of limestone wall is just visible. Most of the entire area is overgrown; edges should be treated as treacherous. The land ownership will be checked now the actual position of PNG has been established. En-route to the Bar the site near the junction was checked; appearing to be un-dug. To the Roadside for nice pints

29th June Pouldubh

Tony Boycott, Autumn Melby, Matt?, Benjamin?, Indrani, Mandy, Andrew?  
Students from the Caherconnell archaeology school wanted to experience caving; TB kindly assisted to accompany the trip as safety cover at the rear. They commented they had had a wonderful time. They want to go again.

30th June Poulmagrinn  
Cheg Chester

An unexpected phone call led to an immediate meet with Joe O'Loughlin; an offer was presented to show the house of the landowner of Poulmagrinn, and other interesting adjacent sites. Meeting in Lisdoonvarna at 14:00 the tour lasted until 17:15 during which the guide thoroughly enjoyed showing the pair around, beating his way through briars and undergrowth. Other information regarding land ownership was imparted as the tour also involved driving around the vicinity. All in all an eventful visit with permission being given by Joe for us to wander his land. Two open sinks were visited, both likely recorded; one sink with a howling draught, (a gale), issuing located in government forestry, accessed via Joe's land park, in his barnyard; the other on Pat Collars land, also a significant sink, requiring removal of foliage and actual permission; seemingly investigated twenty plus years ago, by persons unknown. It may be that they are B8b and B8a; a thorough check will identify them. The site near the road junction is not recorded and fortunately on Pat Collars land too. PC will pursue the PNG landowner and Pat Colly for permissions.

2nd July Drunken Horse Hole  
Cheg Chester

The plan; prior to closing down the dig site a photographic record was required. A series of shots was taken by CC along with some video in reasonable sunlight, between the overcast.

Hours 1.5 255

4th July Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

The plan: to clear and reinstate the site. The threat of rain reducing beneath a clearing sky, following a brief discussion, TB descended to retrieve a hanger, pieces of timber and some odds and sods; the pot is now entirely clear of digging associated equipment. CC and PC recovered the hauling frame and investigated the best way of securing the top. Virtually all the rawlbolts were recovered for another day; the fence posts were loosened in preparation for removal and landscaping the mote wall. There remain the two ladders, the scaffold bars, three planks and ultimately the fence materials. Thursday evening the top frame will be finished, the fence removed and hopefully the landscaping commenced. To the Roadside where among the crowd Kieran showed the team to a reserved table!

Hours 6 261

6th July Cullaun II

Tony Boycott, Autumn Melby, Matt?, Benjamin?, Indrani, Mandy, Andrew?

Trip abandoned owing to increasing rainfall.

7th July Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

The plan: to continue to reinstate the area of the dig. TB used his battery angle grinder to cut off the rebar mesh fixed into the tyres; upon this limestone flagstone were placed, these will be covered with sods of turfs placed by some other old sods. A dry stone wall was completed in front of the tyres and the stone debris pile tided. The scaffold poles were brought down; this leaves several short planks, the fence materials and one scaffold bar. To reduce the mote wall will need two shovels, a mattock, wire cutters, gloves and something to roll the wire onto. One more visit will likely complete the work, requiring only one other trip to survey the pot. To the Roadside

Hours 6 267

9th July Poulsallach to Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Autumn Melby, Mandy, Indrani

The three American female students from Caherconnell field school wanted to experience a walk along the coastline; strong wind from the south-west, high seas and threatening rain accompanying the jaunt.

11th July Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

The plan: to complete reinstatement of the site. The Team swiftly set about the remaining tasks. The mote wall is now half its height; the removed spoil scattered across the adjacent area, the entire fencing materials were removed, including the buried wire sections, the shaft is now covered with turf and the adjacent rock heap has been lowered in height by eighteen inches and levelled off. With the removal of the plastic bags there are no superfluous digging materials whatsoever left within the dig. There only remains the plastic pallet and several short planks of timber, these can be retrieved after the final trip which will carry out the survey.

Hours 6 273

12th July Drunken Horse Hole

Tony Boycott

Planks and plastic pallet removed in four trips, nothing on the surface now. The 2 ladders down the cave will be needed for the survey \* removed afterwards, Best Wishes.

Hours 2, 275

18th July Joe O'Loughlin's Hole Ballynahown New site  
Cheg Chester

Following the walkabout with Joe O'Loughlin, (30th June), the team decided to have a look at the hole on his land at Ballynahown. A seven hundred and fifty millimetre diameter shaft, some four foot deep enters the limestone some two foot beneath the surface. Directly below the shaft continues for at least two metres, seen between the loose packed stone. to the south side beautifully worn tower pinnacles are present. The west wall is solid, the east wall is suspect; this is the route were the flood stream occasionally enters so the debris will be of assorted loose stone. It is in rough alignment with Pat Collys Hole, the opposite side of the boreen and another new site found below the cliff adjacent to this site. All downstream - downhill from Poulmagrinn; a chanced visit to the McMahon house for permission was unsuccessful. Joe's site needs covering ASAP; to the Roadside.

20th July Pouldubh  
Indrani, Autumn Melby, Mandy

To the old streamway limit, circa 1974, each taking turns to lead: water flow low-ish.

21st July B14,  
Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

The plan; to visit a sink which was previously described to PC by the owner of Pegasus Pot as taking "a lot of water", particularly after he had installed a network of drainage channels across his large field. This site is upstream from Pegasus Pot by some hundred metres or so. It is located approximately in the north-west area of the same field, but, actually some ten metres beyond the wall, in the next field, of different ownership. The area surrounding the hole is a dense hazel thicket; a short session with the loppers soon cleared a roomy tunnel beneath the canopy, once inside the copse an uninspiring trickle was followed until disappearing midway along the length of an open rift. This elongated rift is some ten metres long and a metre wide. At the eastern end is a well developed area which narrows slightly on its progression westward; at the eastern end is where the main stream volume enters from the valley, the area testifying to high flow conditions. The western end exhibits an ancient hanger, (UBSS, post 1981?), above the entrance to a small tube in the base of a narrow rift this leads to a constricted, vertical pot. As JW was the youngest and the thinnest the team kindly volunteered his services to go see. After installing another bolt in a more suitable place JW descended the awkward route to finally hang at the end of the ladder, the narrowness of the rift meant the ladder was useless for the most part in returning to surface; having become quite attached to the happy Belgian a plan was hatched to try and recover him; passing down a rope and his SRT kit along with encouraging shouts like "its getting late" and "get a bleeding move on". JW, after a lot of difficulty finally reappeared at the top of the very narrow rift. Meanwhile, to the sounds of rustling in the rift, the bottom of the open rift was studied, among the clean washed area no silt was present, clean washed stone abounds. At the larger, eastern end silt and floral debris are deposited, the pot base here being slightly lower then the overflow channel leading to the western end. JW had descended some seven metres seeing down a further two or so to a lower gap, an area which cannot be easily/comfortably dug; however the contents of the open rift could be mechanically dug with little effort, IF, permission can be obtained. PC will speak to JN to obtain details on the name and address of the Farmer, he can only say no. To the Roadside where beer prices charged to locals were explained to a new barman; amid a throng of French visitors..... *Self C, Ed. 1981. Caves of County Clare p90 (note in B13 paragraph) Mullan G, Ed. 2003. Caves of County Clare and South Galway, p107 JN = Jonathan Normoyle*

22nd July B14

Solo

Search for landowner. Spoke with JN; the owner of B14 is a Considine, a property developer who suffered in the crash who lives in Galway, seemingly, his brother looks after the land. He has the tractor garage near Kilmoon.

25th July B14

Solo

Spoke to Michael Considine, a real gentleman, recognized from the Team drinking in the Roadside. He has given PC permission without any hesitation. During the one hour chat MC regaled PC with the locations of many other holes, the landowner names, etc. Judged from his kindly demeanour the idea of digging will not be an issue. A description of JN's cave, and a little of what the team done was outlined; the intention is to revisit MC and show him JW's movie. He explained that his son had recently bought a rake of land..... also with holes in it; (Quinlands land?). He has very kindly invited PC, of a Sunday, to show the numerous holes he knows of; gleaned from hunting Woodcock for some fifty years. He is entirely fascinated with all things topographical. Mobile numbers were exchanged; PC explained that he'd ring prior to visiting the cave so MC would know when called by a neighbour if its rustlers. His field is both steep and very wet, PC will ask JN for permission to utilize access through his land via the newly constructed house. Ideally another route will be needed to reduce possible inconvenience to the Normoyle family once they have move in.

25th July O'Loughlin's Cave

Cheg Chester

The plan: to have a poke around to get a better idea of the potential and clear the edge of the hole. An overcast warm evening. CC dropped into the vertical shaft and began to dig about effectively moving loose stones exposing some more limestone wall and vertical fluted pillars. The assessment is that a larger area needs clearing to shore the edge which is part of an overgrown drain/ditch. The hole is covered with the plastic pallet, weighed down by rocks, to guard against beasts using the field. When viewed in the landscape with Poulmagrinn above, some two hundred metres away, and the collapse in Colleys land, the potential bears thinking about.

27th July Pouldubh

Kate1? Kate2? (Dr.), Rachael,

Caherconnell students and Dr. Kate wanted a trip, again these were first timers. Having seen the determination and confidence of the others directed them down Middle entrance, to the old streamway limit then out via the "tube" to South entrance; all thrilled, like the others of the whole experience of the approach through the forest and the darkness beneath eh canopy and the entrances.

3rd August

Cullaun II

Kate? Rachael?

Their second trip; fine rain had fallen all day however PC decided to take them down Cullaun II before they departed for the States on completion of their stint at Caherconnell. A large stream was present in the entrance, confirming earlier suspensions, which was followed to where it joined the cascades. Here the noise was terrific, while the pair sat at the top PC went down stream to check the climb; the volume of water was indeed far too much to climb back out. A gentle trip back out both enjoyed the spectacle of crashing water enormously. To the Roadside

8th August Considines Cave

Solo

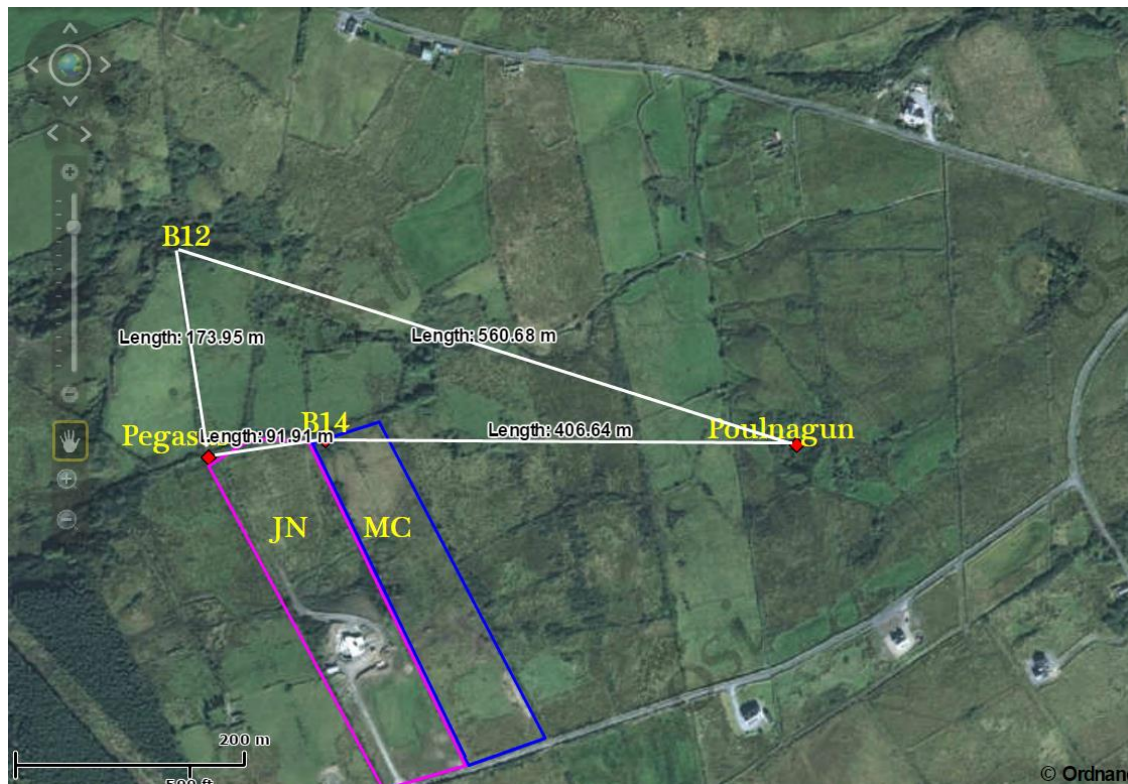
After several attempts to locate him spoke again to Michael Considine about his cave; requesting permission to dig, once again he very kindly said to "work away": a copy of Caves of Clare, (1981), was proffered as a thank you gift.

10th August

Aghaglinny Point- Cappanahaille

Aileen Byrne

The aim to explore a cave that the owners want explored, BUT, kept under wraps. Using the Hilux permission was given to use the rough steep track to access the area above the pass at the 280 metre contour. Following given directions the pair spent a windswept couple of hours on the summit and found very little; Gleninagh South Cave is in the vicinity of the furthest area investigated. AB spoke later to the landowner who will guide her to the actual site shortly.



Relative positions, distances and landowners



11th August Considines Poulmagun

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester, Matt Randall

ITM 510925×700308 With permission granted, the 8th August, the plan was to clear the surrounding dense foliage and expose a large working area around the top of the rift and open up the narrow cut path through the copse that lead from JN's field in which Pegasus Pot is accessed. Previously JN was asked if access through his land could be used while digging Considines, his reply was, "I'll cut the grass there to make things easier for you"; what a very nice man. A possible important relationship of these three sites; Considines at ITM 510925×700308, Pegasus Pot at ITM 510828×700289 and Poulmagun collapse at ITM 511341×700295. They are all within ten metres of the 700300 northing; an east – west, 270/090 degree, alignment: its all in the jointing. The team set to work and within two hours an area of some ten by five metres was cleared. The shape of the rift collar is clearly exposed and the necessary platform position identified so as to be directly over the base of the rift to haul efficiently. The dig area at the bottom of the rift is two metres by 0.7 metres; to the west the rift pinches in a little, to the east vertical formation will allow for shoring, if required, to be installed securely. The building of the platform will take several weeks to complete; meanwhile a pushing trip beyond the "Freezer" in Fraggles Rock is planned as soon as practicable. Next Monday the survey of Drunken Horse Hole will be carried out to conclude that project. To a busy Roadside for excellent pints

Hours 6, 6

15th August Drunken Horse Hole

Cheg Chester

The plan: to survey the pot and conclude the project. The site is beginning to recover with growth of grass on the shaft covering; the mote wall will take a couple of years; according to JC. While PC to rigging up a vertical survey base line from shaft collar to the bottom of the pot; CC settled himself in the warm evening sunshine to "Catch some rays" and record the survey data called out from below. Following the occasional scream, as acrobatics and ladder integrity failed, an accurate survey was completed. The large pool gone; only A small pool of water three inches deep was present. A good many spiders have taken up residence; fortunate for Jarratt he ain't about. Both ladders are ready by the trapdoor secured with dive line reachable from the trapdoor; no need to descend.....TB's roof rack is needed to recover them for B13. To the Roadside for some very nice pints

Hours 4 279

18th August Considines Cave B13?

Tony Boycott

13:00: Upon his return, a swift visit to show TB the cleared site; impressed. Found JN on site who imparted the news that Pat Colley had a house nearby, (1 x dig site on his land at Ballynahown).

Hours 6, 6

18th August Fraggles Rock

Tony Boycott, Cathal Mullane, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

18:00 HW 18:05, springs: sea state slight wind force two, a small stream issuing ninety millimetres below reference. The large amount of debris along the main passage to the "Loading Bay" had virtually gone. The plan; for CM and JW to push on beyond the "Freezer" and dig along the loose packed passage while CC and PC surveyed back to "Anvil Chamber", with TB collecting the tools spread along the length of the passage. On completion of this trip a decision had been made to put the dig in mothballs owing to logistical issues regarding regular manpower. Previous rain events had washed loose debris from the area enlarging the passage slightly, CM began to dig forward able to see a

further seven metres. JW assisted CC surveying in the area beyond the squeeze near the "Freezer", somewhere PC couldn't pass. Difficulties aside the survey wasn't too bad in the space available. TB by now had all the tools back at "Anvil" so once the team assembled these and some of the ropes were removed to surface. A swift ascent to the truck and on to the Roadside; so as not abandon the dig entirely one suggestion is to nudge the two squeezes quite soon so PC can dig the face following significant rain events. 00, 7171

19th August Considines Cave  
Solo

Drove to Kilshanny to speak to Noel the Pole, about buying telegraph poles, asked Noel to deliver them to Considines land in Poulmagun Townland; no problem. Then drove over to Michael's garage where Pdraig Considine, (son of Michael), gave permission for the proposed gantry to be built out over Considines Cave to facilitate hauling from a central position; PC also requested permission to have them delivered to the field, transportation of the poles down the steep slope provided by a four wheel drive tractor. Informed that the ground beyond the land drain and immediately adjacent to the dig is very soft and would bog down the proposed tractor; Pdraig advised best to use a quad bike to drag them across the dodgy area to the edge of the depression.

22nd August Drunken Horse Hole, Considines Cave, {possible Heart Op Hole}  
Tony Boycott

ITM 510930×700309 The plan; for TB to load up four fifteen foot lengths of timber on his truck, then go up the coast to Drunken Horse Hole and retrieve the two ladders thus concluding the project. Then, travel to Considines to carrying the ladders etc. to the dig. A fabulous evening with clear views across to Inis Mór beneath high cloud cover: thoughts turned to Cheg in hospital, at the moment unsure whether to buy grapes, or a shovel. Following recent rainfall the two foot deep pool had appeared in Drunken Horse once again. Midges descended in the humid evening air, therefore work was carried out rather smartish. At Considines the gear was taken via Jonathan's field, normal route for the moment, and the timber threaded through the dense hazel and briar's an easy enough task, with a little more cutting the telegraph poles could use the same route. The timber was lain over the open rift and distances measured and support lengths calculated. With two central poles as main hauling frame support and two 4" x 4" supports set parallel the number of pallets required will be eleven. JW has three, PC has three, five more required. The tree on the north-east side needs cutting away to accommodate the pole installation; hauling frame centre will be some four feet from the end of the platform leaving just enough room to install the winch and allow the railway to pass by. Midges within the clearing became horrific; perhaps a brazier will help during operations? To the Roadside for pints

25th August Considines  
Tony Boycott

The plan; to clear more vegetation from the immediate area and to get a better idea of where to position the hauling gantry so as to be directly above the dig site chosen below. The pair swiftly set about clearing the overhanging tree and other foliage, in doing so exposed, and made their way through, an old path into Considines field emerging in the bottom of a narrow gully from among the dense undergrowth. This proposed route will be too difficult to deliver the poles through so they need to come via Jonathan's field. The old path was back packed with bushes to impede beasts. With the brazier lit the midges disappeared making life very pleasant. While PC scratched his head how to best place the timbers, TB descended to view the site and a reported elderly hanger; likely of 1970s

vintage. The heavy showers earlier in the day meant the small cascading trickle was significant larger than an average Fraggie stream, this will definitely need diverting and piping to avoid breathing issues below. When MC has the digger in to clear the drainage ditch at the bottom and side of his field its very likely the choked end of the rift will have a constant flow from the lowered water table. To the Roadside for superb pints

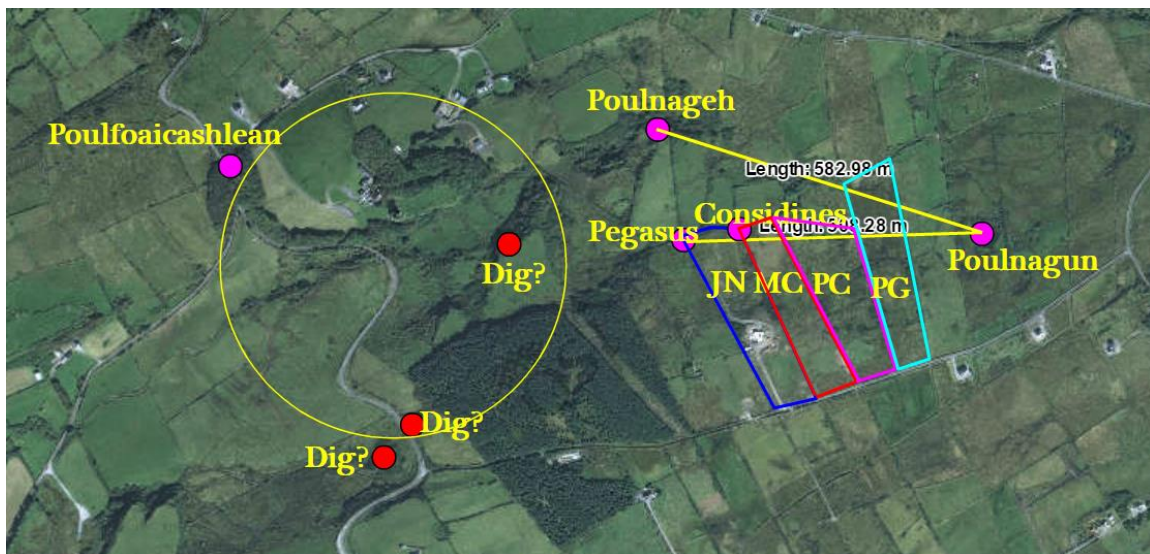
Hours 2.5, 8.5

28th August Considines

Tony Boycott

The plan: to carry on preparing the ground for installation of the hauling gantry. A three metre telegraph pole for use as a base for the floor, plus other equipment and materials were swiftly carried across the new mown field in glorious sunshine, promised for the next three days at least. The stream from Jonathan's land had reduced to its seeming norm. On the far side of the entrance rift PC cut the trench through the roots etc. to install the pole, while TB cut down two large shrubs. The ground is firm and well drained; the pole is located behind two tree boles, which will add to its overall stability. Levelling was accomplished using tripod, level and measuring staff. Once completed the levels of the horizontal pole base were extrapolated to the other side of the rift to accommodate the opposite frame support, see photo. Two "stakes" indicate the height of the pole base. The brazier kept the midges away; a worthwhile piece of kit. A frame template was made and set over the rift to see how the main frame will fit into place directly over the lower part of the rift. Tomorrow, ideally, both the main spans can go straight in and secured over the hauling position and some pallets secured. A weary team wandered back to the truck and eventually into a very quiet Roadside for some refreshing pints.

Hours 6, 14.5



Overview of some sites

29th August Considines

Tony Boycott. Cheg Chester

The plan: to set in place the main beams over the shaft to carry the proposed hauling platform, and, maybe, fit several of the pallets. After assisting TB to load his truck the two heavily laden vehicles made off. The drizzle and mist earlier in the day made for slippery driving across the field, so both trucks were parked on the crown of the slope to unload and avoid destroying the field surface. The route through the thicket was widened to allow the passage of pallets; the five yard long timbers were manoeuvred through



without too much hassle. The hauling template was removed and stripped down for other use later on, the prefabricated support timbers then set in place; blue heavy type pallets secured them parallel to each other with a 900mm square hauling opening finally sited centrally above the rift. The availability of two battery drills meant construction of the platform was swift. After further discussion the third main support was assembled and installed; the centres of the main supports for hauling are at 1000mm, (pallet width size), the adjacent, (southern?), area is set at 1200mm to accommodate pallet length dimensions a mid position support for the 1200mm span will be fitted to reduce movement. Final positioning of the tripod legs remain fluid until the route of the tramway, and winch location, are confirmed. It was realized that pallets have differing heights, the heavier blue pallets being seven inches, the others less. In the Roadside, whilst wondering where the hell to scrounge enough of them to complete the platform, luck struck, enquiring of Kieran discovered he has a regular supply so within a week or so there'll be plenty: more pints, and talk of getting to actually dig the place! Hrs 6, 20.5



Tony Boycott, end of work, 28th August; Considine's

1st September Considines  
Tony Boycott. Cheg Chester

Rain for most of the day well over an inch; reflected by the stream volume and field surface. Good fortune earlier on allowed PC to scrounge six blue pallets well ahead of expected delivery date, which meant most of the platform floor was completed tonight leaving only the Northwest? side open, and the frame supports to be cut and fitted. En-route to Galway TB had dropped off timbers to complete the supports. Mid afternoon PC

assisted CC preparing the tripod supports; CC will finish the tripod shortly, so another two or three sessions and actual digging can safely, and efficiently, commence. To a packed Roadside for pints and fine music  
Hours 10, 30.5

2nd September Considines  
Solo

The plan; with a forthcoming absence from Doolin another six pallets were obtained, delivered and unfortunately stacked in the field near the parking place owing to the sodden surface. Upon return, if ground has dried out, they can be reloaded for further transportation; otherwise its a long heavy carry. Called to Pat Colley's to seek permission for his land in Ballynahown, no one home  
Hours 2, 32.5

*4th September Considines from PCN log  
TB and CC Collected drainage pipes and connectors from Poulacapple Pot delivered all to Considines and moved the 6 pallets across the fields.  
Hours 7, 35.5*

*5th September Considines from the PCN Log  
Tony Boycott. Cheg Chester  
Finished fitting the framework with 6" screws this time & fitted several more pallets; all pallets on the frame are now screwed down, and are all good quality 7" ones.  
Planned the stream diversion pipe route and sunk a trap for the start. The route for the pipes needs a bit more cleaning and some connectors & seals obtaining. Hope to finish the pipe and erect the tripod on Thursday and can then actually start digging. We have enough pallets to finish the platform, but three or four more would create a clean path to the site. Cheers Tony  
Hours 5, 40.5*

8th September Considines  
Jim Warny, Tony Boycott. Cheg Chester  
The plan: to erect the tripod, pipe the stream away from the digging area and complete installing the final two pallets of the platform. Earlier in the day CC and PC had assembled, (tested), the tripod prior to carting it to site. Its totaled weight was an issue so two of the legs were disassembled to reduce the effort of lifting it. The stream had increased flow to greater than noticed previously, this soon abated. Without too much effort the tripod was manoeuvred through the dense foliage, assembled and erected, the entire affair finally positioned centrally over the shaft collar. A video camera was set up to record the auspicious erection..... However such was the concentration involved activating the "on" switch was overlooked until later on. The aluminium ladder recovered from Poulacapple Pot is the perfect height to access and maintain the tripod apex. Further items required more pallets, length of pipe and some pipe fittings. To the Roadside for pints, only to be surrounded by lots of girls, the Matchmaking season has arrived, phawww!  
Hours 11, 51.5

10th September Considines  
Cheg Chester

Prior to PC's departure for Dublin CC requested a swift trip to discuss the hauling system. The method of securing the shaft collar to prevent debris falling was assessed particularly during transfer of spoil into awaiting transportation. The rail gauge will be three feet to safely close off the collar opening, a wheel barrow used to empty the spoil into. PC will make another ladder to access the rift. The rift is aligned on bearing 012 degrees; virtually north-south. The Banksman will have to be on a cowstail whilst emptying kibbles. To the Roadside for some very nice pints and as the drink passed the

threat of being sung at by a wandering troubadour plainly desperate to entertain some poor sod; an unsuccessful Matchmaking individual among wall to wall women.

Hours 3, 54.5

*12th September Considines from PCN log*

*Tony Boycott. Cheg Chester*

*Because of the ever increasing depth of mud near the access point the stream bed was deepened and two pallets placed over it. Several more pallets would make a completely mud free walk to the digging site. The possible site for the winch was levelled after cutting out several large tree roots. The remains of the large tree trunk that lay across the Southern side of the entrance rift was sawn off to give open access for the soon to be installed ladder way.*

*Hours 3, 57.5 (Cheg)*

15th September Considines

Cheg Chester

The aim to install the platform supports, sort out the spoil transfer arrangement and perhaps sort the stream. The team arrived in drizzlable conditions, this one of the latest words entered in the O.E.D, superbly describing the conditions of the ominous lowering thick, dark, cloud base, and accompanying misty shower blanketing the area; the lower half Ballynalacken Castle visible against the distant seascape: the bend of the track is becoming terminally slippery. Removing the tree from the bottom of the rift PC set the ladder place and completed the two supports directly beneath the shaft collar, whilst hanging there the top of the stream pipe had fittings installed to direct the pipe down vertically; it awaits the delivery of the next bit of pipe. CC sorted out the truck arrangement for its location over the collar. The Banksman will have to be on a cowstail when adjacent the shaft collar. To the Roadside: the sombre mood reflecting the funeral earlier today of a local Volunteer of the Doolin Coast Guard Unit lost whilst on active service.

Hours 3-5, 61

17th September Considines

Solo

With CC away decided to take down the length of four inch pipe and install it to divert stream from digging area also, fitted the reservoir which does really need its missing sealing ring to properly solve the leak through the applied mastic.

Hours 1, 62

19th September Considines

Cheg Chester

A pleasant evening, with midges; the ground too wet to drive on. Laden with kit, two loads a piece, tools, wood, rails and truck frame were ferried in turn to site. Whilst CC assembled the new truck PC completed the pipework that conveys the stream down the northern end of the rift leaving the digging area dry. However, elevated rainfall would over come pipe capacity and flood the area to resume the original stream route. The shaft collar surround was finished adding strength to its edges, the rails were temporarily installed and the truck tried out, all seems to work well; some minor elements to be finished. The entire suspended platform is now secure and solid providing a level working area of some fifteen square metres directly above the rift making digging here a two man task. In fading light, 20:15, the pair headed to the Roadside only to encounter four lost Americans heading down the overgrown lane, south toward Ballynalacken, into a briar hell. Totally lost, unable to find their way back to their rented cottage the team lost valuable drinking time assisting them find their way home in the darkness: no details written down on a piece of paper. Comment from driver attempting to use Tablet in car, "Gee, there's no Wi-Fi out here", spoken at the side of the lane overlooking the



Atlantic.....? To the Roadside, at last, only to hear from John Brown, (Doolin Show Cave), that Myles Arkins had died yesterday; Myles Arkins, 90 odd, was a very nice bloke who owned Cregg Lodge Swallet Hours 4, 66

22nd September Considine's  
Solo

09:20. With the Matchmaking in full swing traffic was crazy throughout the day. Therefore unable to access the pallets yesterday in early afternoon so a visit at 09:20 today meant obtaining more was not an issue before the frolics kicked off again. Managed to squeeze in five dropping them off above the well sodden track by the house; took the opportunity to call on Petie Garner senior, brother-in-law of Joe Garner, (Poulfaicaislean). Whose house overlooks JNs field to advise the family of the forthcoming presence of lights during digging operations this winter and not to become alarmed. This gave an opportunity to reconnect with the family. Took a chance on visiting Sheila MacMahon, (Poulnagrinn); as SM was arriving today, using it as an excuse to call to ask if I could show him the site after so long, no issues there either. Sheene et al not seen by Sheila for many months. Called to see if Pat Colley was about, also no; finally called to Jimmy Garner, again advising of lights after dark being informed that there's no problem and to "work away!" Jimmy has the fields to the west of the dig which accesses Poulnageh and continues on south-west ish to Ballynalacken Castle; wherein are several known sites requiring revisiting. The Milner arrives shortly.

*22nd September Considines; part from PCN log*

*Matt Randall, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester*

*18:00: moved four of the five pallets to the site and extended the walkway through the mud, they now need levelling. Finished screwing down the rails and fitted the missing spacers to the truck wheels. (Missing screws needed for rail bearers). The hauling system was set up as a two-to-one to test the positioning of the tripod over the shaft and this was satisfactory. Approx three quarters of a ton of rocks was pulled out using the net but kibbles are required to remove the large quantity of wood/moss etc. that entered the pot during clearing the site. The site experienced it's first casualty when a fifty kilo rock that Jim was handling trapped his finger but he still managed to get it in the net and it was pulled up to surface. To sum up, the hauling system is OK at present and the truck works fine as a safety lid but needs some kind of catch to lock it in place when covering the shaft. PC eventually found Steve and Fran Milner in O'Connor's Bar; went to Roadside for pints hoping to catch up with the dig team. Hours 6, 72 18:45*

24th September Considine's  
Steve Milner

The rainfall during the night had produced quite an amount of ground water; the stream occupying some one quarter of the pipe during operations producing a symphony similar to consuming vast amounts of beer and curry the night before. The pair swiftly installed the new ladder built by PC: temporarily lashed to the platform. The large pile of stone drawn last Thursday is truly impressive, as is the depth achieved. SM descended and began to dig like he wanted to get back to Australia A.S.A.P., while PC hauled and sang to him. Once SM had removed several kibbles worth of assorted smaller debris he exposed a sequence of compacted flags arranged like cards weighing between thirty and forty kilos apiece. Little by little each was lifted out, toward the end of shift SM succeeded in loosening a particularly large shale flagstone, 900mm x 450mm x 250mm, (estimated 150 – 200 kilos), manoeuvring it into the net; it is ready to lift on Monday when, after replacing the now greasy rope, and perhaps installing a four to one, it can be lifted out.



The present lifting system works supremely well for the haulier, who is able to easily shut the trap and handle the loads with significantly reduced effort. The pair were however thwarted in their attempt to visit the Roadside for some well earned pints owing to vast numbers of cowboy hats wandering about; looking for a ride? Hours 4, 76

26th September

Considines

Steve Milner, Cheg Chester

The plan: to review the rain cover for the pulley and support system atop the tripod and carry on digging. A small stream was present. A large nail bar and sledge were taken to site as was another hauling rope. Two come-hithers, removed from Fraggie Rock earlier in the day, were also delivered. PC hauled while CC began digging sending up quite large pieces of boulders reduced by the sledge, SM did the next shift and progressed the total depth to some five feet below original site level. The original assortment of jammed boulders had covered a looser compaction of smaller boulders; digging this area is swift and easy, the west wall steps back under itself by some eight inches; both walls appear to continue vertical. The combined truck and shaft cover system, built by CC, works excellently, the haulier, whilst hanging on to the suspended load, is able to close off the shaft collar easily moving the lid, (tram), into place by use of a foot; the load can then be safely lowered onto the tram for trundling away. The end of the sixteen foot ladder is now some five feet above the working level; oops. The depth has exposed stratigraphy of both northern and southern ends of the rift, each require stabilizing by partial grading back and shoring. One idea is to step back the southern end; though lots of rocks spades will be also needed. A great deal of rock was lifted, deposited nearby; this has yet to be levelled or disposed of further away. Dark by 19:50, though caving lights were in use the platform area would benefit from its own lighting, perhaps some LEDs fed from a battery? There were assorted bits of kit left about the place following myriad tasks, as PC hauled, the slack rope accumulating on the platform inadvertently caught around a loose telephone pole step, this jumped in a neat arc only to plummet down the open shaft where, far beneath, "The Milner" was digging totally oblivious. The scream "Below!" alerted SM who was fortunately missed by said metal bracket landing close by. NB, 2:1 hand hauling results with the rope coiling across the platform surface. It was during this process the rope wrapped around the step, unnoticed. Therefore no kit whatsoever is to remain anywhere on the platform surface during hauling. The replaced hauling rope is total shite and requires urgent replacement ideally the next visit. Its twists make hauling a sod as the kibble, or net, comes close to surface the number of twists increase, the effort exerted enormous. To facilitate spoil removal the tramway needs extending by three more pallets, so three more lengths of steel conduit will be needed. Another couple of metres depth and the winch will certainly be needed. CC fitted two timber blocks at the open edges of the collar to avoid small pieces of debris rolling beneath the tram to fall down the shaft. To the Roadside for well earned pints: SM returns to Adelaide Thursday

Hours 6, 82

29th September Considines

Solo

With CC away, and SM and FM heading back to the Antipodes, the plan reverted to supporting the base of the stream pipe so the debris pile it rests on can be removed. Earlier in the day alternate hauling rope had been obtained along with six more pallets, these were taken down and left in the field; the ground condition very wet. Having carried down lots of kit, drill etc., much cursing followed realizing the required drill bit was left back home safe on the bench. Much phaffing about resulted with the pipe cut to suit and a timber support installed; the stones beneath may now be removed. The

hauling rope was replaced, though stowed in a bag away from ultra violet deterioration. Loose timber and pipe was stowed in the eastern area. The ladder needs sorting. Measurements for a rain cowl to protect the iron work and pulley were taken. Alas no Roadside, the wet digger made for home to avoid soaking the bar floor. Hrs 1.25, 83.25

30th September    Considines  
Cheg Chester

Heavy rainfall occurred in the afternoon; continuing as intermittent showers. The plan; to lift the boulders upon which the pipe rested and perhaps move the pile of boulder spoil stacked the end of the platform. Three pallets were trundled across as light rain began to fall. Inspecting the south end of the rift water flow similar to the half full pipe was noted. PC began to dig the adjacent material consisting of a top layer of soggy humus with a variety of coloured clays beneath and occasional stones. Heaping this debris to close, dam, off the southern pot feature a depth of two feet was achieved, with the original level left between it and the pot. CC returned to surface and sorted the pile of stones; directing his curses at the increasing weight of rainfall. Meanwhile an increasing wet PC ascended, joining CC on the platform to wring out their underpants; the rainfall continued, heavy and steady. By now the stream was flowing around the side of the pipe back along its original path to cascade into the pot. Whilst installing another pallet for the tramway, the stream was seen to overflow the top of the pipe flooding the entire area and presenting a superb image falling into the shaft. The water flowing into the rift from the southern end equalled the stream volume; a lot of water was entering the pot. The clay stratigraphy seemingly supporting the ladder was washed away from the debris pile exposing compacted stones beneath. SM had exposed a minor crack on the east side of the rift into which the water disappeared without backing up. The volume entering the pot was a shock after regularly noting the normal trickle. Thoroughly soaked and cold the pair made for the truck across a very wet field. At the gate a sizeable stream was running down the breen toward the castle. To the Roadside for a warm up, pints and more plans.

Hours 3, 86.25

2nd October Considines

Cheg Chester

Quite a cold morning, winter temperatures appear to be sneaking in; dense fog, visibility barely twenty metres: A Sunday trip owing to predicted bad weather tomorrow. The plan to review how best to consolidate the southern rift debris fill, secure tramway pallet and lift the freed boulders from beneath the stream pipe area. Ten millimetre steel mesh is available F.O.C. from PS and CS at least one full sheet along with other cut off's. These will be collected by trailer a.s.a.p. though TB's battery mini grinder will be required. Carrying a pile of kit the pair arrived as the fog finally cleared to bright sunshine. PC hauled as CC sent up the boulders, which became quite a task as removal exposed an open narrow rift requiring some jamming of stones to garden the area safely. Almost a tonne was lift to surface. Further floor clearance meant the bottom is now some eighteen inches below where the west wall steps under. Once cleared attention turned to unblocking the hose reached by using the long ladder, a useful resource to wash hands free of mud prior to handling the pulley etc. The slope of debris from the southern end of the rift has become increasingly vertical and unstable since the dig began and the effect of the recent rain event; falls occurred as the ladder was installed into the outriggers, which will be its final position. The end of the ladder is presently suspended some distance above the floor against the slope, the shorter ladder is installed at its base to accommodate complete descent. Measurements were taken for lengths of cut telegraph pole to bridge the undulating wall of the rift in order to support the upper section of clay, some metre in depth. Some video attempted; a superb days work. To the Roadside for pints

Hours 7, 93.25

5th October Considines

Solo

Having spoken to "Noel the Pole" PC went to the yard and cut up two short sections and one whole telegraph pole; this proves fifteen sections at eight hundred and fifty millimetres in length; these will form the shoring for the debris in the southern section horizontally across the rift. Once cut and loaded they were transported by truck into the upper field area and by sack trucks to the gate: the three pallets were also trucked across ready for the Thursday evening session.

Hours 2.5, 95.75

6th October Considines

Cheg Chester, Jim Wary, Matt Randall

The plan: to commence installation of shoring in southern rift area to support the clay and boulder debris, to extend the tramway, and prepare ground for winch location. The normal stream volume trickled in both pipe and southern pot. A chilly autumnal evening; CC, MR and JW began to dig out the area and move the stone pile to lay two more pallets, extending the tramway the length of the stone wall presently being constructed from larger stones lifted out from the dig, the smaller rocks cast into the surrounding undergrowth up against the existing field wall. PC set to digging out the clay fill in the southern rift, gradually lowering its height to allow installation of four horizontal sections of telegraph pole, the removed spoil thrown back over the shoring into the open southern rift behind. The clay slope was eventually cleared to some three feet below the lowest piece of shoring exposing multicoloured clay layers inter mixed with pockets of brown humic soil, an unstable mixture, the majority of the composition surprising dry in nature; these deposits are not glacial, rather sediments from the surrounding landscape. Stones encountered were thrown to the very back of the rift so only loose clay spoil lay up against the poles offering a better chance to "lamp" them downward using the sledge. MR replaced PC removing the remaining layer of clay to

begin exposing boulders beneath ultimately allowing the long ladder to move from its awkward angular position to the vertical. The stiff clay area exposed beneath the shoring requires attention as soon as practicable to reduce the chance of slumping should rainfall become heavy or protracted. Both east and west sides of the rift appear to continue down, which is good news for future shoring with the prepared lengths of pole. Once the remaining debris slope is removed from the base of the shaft area the base of the shaft will be that much more elongated to facilitate retreat from falling items. The pallets for the winch platform were finally set in place, the ease of surface work enhanced by JWs installation a flood lighting illuminating the platform, an excellent facility. To a busy Roadside, where extensive joke telling caused serious personal injury to stomach and jaw muscles. A superb evening of work and fun  
Hours 8, 103.75

7th October Considines  
Cheg Chester

11:45: PC had been experiencing increasing unrest regarding possible concerns of the landowner, and his son, over the size of the platform and the projects overall similarity to that of a small mining operation, (see photos). Therefore a visit to MC & PDC was felt required to update them both on the Teams progress, explaining the reasons how and why the platform had evolved, and what the stout tripod was for. After lengthy descriptions during which there was much smiling and incredulous shaking of heads, MC very kindly replied "Work away", which evaporated existing concerns. Having also explained that all caves have a name, his permission was sought to call the site after his family, Considine's Cave; this was received with a little surprise but granted with what appeared to be appreciation. 18:00, the plan; to secure A.S.A.P. the unsupported vertical clay face beneath the present shoring, as CC and PC would be absent, in turn over the next seven days. A normal size stream was present. CC set to fitting the three remaining handles to the tram facilitating its ease of movement for the haulier, meanwhile PC, using a gauging trowel, undercut the existing shoring preparing for its downward movement from being "Lamped" with the sledge. A vertical opening of two feet was cut out the full width of the rift beneath the shoring and ten inches deep into the clay deposit. Two larger pieces of pole were manoeuvred into the opening leaving a gap to be closed off once hammered down on the topmost pole of the shoring. Bit by bit, in response to CC wielding the sledge, the entire stack of poles successfully slid down into place between the soft clay and the rift walls to dock upon the extant base of the slope. At this juncture it was decided to fit in another so the process was repeated. There are now nine sections securely in place supporting a vertical height of five feet, the bottom pole appears to be only some six feet off the existing shaft bottom. A suggestion is to extend the shoring upward toward the surface creating an area behind to dump spoil utilizing an area so close to the hauling point. At the base of the shoring the eastern side of the rift appears to be turning in, therefore the poles in stock may not be of sufficient length, so another pole need be bought, also a further pallet needs fitting into the slope behind the winch location. With the debris slope further reduced the long ladder is now suspended, (15 feet), so expect a bouncy experience for the moment. To the Roadside where the place was entertaining Transgender, Lesbian and Gay attendees enjoying the final weekend of the Matchmaking Season advertised as "The Outing" a happening for those looking for love.....? Over the heads of this mass of customers jostling for service the muddy faced pair, far to the rear, were swiftly handed their pints, attracting an array of confused, indignant looks: ah well, that's love for you.  
Hours 4, 107.75

13th October

Star Rock Resurgence, Castlemartin Pembrokeshire

Mark Lumley, Karen Lumley, Dylan the Dog

Following the Lumleys setting up home in Castlemartin, West Wales an investigation of the surrounding Limestone has established several interesting sites. Star Rock Resurgence being one of the most surprising. A stream cascades for twenty metres to the sea, issuing from impenetrable beddings and among huge boulders coursing between a sea stack and twenty metre cliff face. As the stream passed over a short section of sand its dimensions were estimated at 3 metres wide and 0.1 metre deep, flowing at 1 metre in 1 second, suggesting 0.3 of a cubic metre in one second, this part of the stream does not include two adjacent, lower streams each of equal volume. So a cautious total of 0.9 cubic metres per second is estimated to be resurging! A small tube is located just above low water mark, tucked away in a sea worn cavity, behind a large buttress at the western end of an idyllic beach, seemingly formed along the fracture, or joint, it can be entered for two metres before becoming choked by sea cobbles. The entrance is protected, in part, from the south-westerlies by the buttress; this position offers a fair chance to excavate the site without the recurring deposition from winter storms. NB. No rain had fallen on the peninsula the previous week. A Grand Day Out finished off in St. Govans Bar, a home for the thirsty and geologically bewildered.

17th October Considines

Cheg Chester

An overcast evening cooled by a south-westerly. The plan: to reduce the remaining boulder slope extending from beneath the shoring and remove the thixotropic clay deposit covering same. Evidence of a flood was present, the area clean washed, likely from the heavy showers earlier in the day. CC digging: PC hauling. A steady pace removed a lot of crap, PC ensuring the spoil was dumped as close to the wall as possible making as much stacking area as possible available ultimately to be faced with a stone wall. As work progressed hauling became problematic owing to migration of clay from digger to kibble to haulier to rope, due to only two digging; thus, on occasion, the haulier had intermittent "wheel spin" when under load. Matters became quite desperate as rain increased the slip factor. Even so the long slope was reduced to a vertical face to within two feet of the shoring, also the removal of the clay cover achieved a clear area below the bottom of the shoring of some eighteen inches this will allow insertion of the next piece of horizontal shoring. The exposed rounding corner of the left wall is not too severe so will likely take the prepared lengths of sawn pole, (850mm), for at least another two feet, vertically. The reduced area of slope at the base of the ladder is unstable so care alighting from the ladders is required. The mud covered hauling rope was removed for washing in The Good Doctor Boycott's Caving Kit Washing Emporium; the Pyjama cord rope will be its replacement next Thursday. Construction of another fifteen foot ladder need be undertaken soon, also a tub on site to wash/soak rope/kit in. The locking mechanism for the lid need be fitted a.s.a.p. TB returns this week. To the Roadside where thoroughly shagged out talk turned to websites and beer festivals. Hours, 4.75, 112.5

20th October Considines Cave

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Tony Boycott

The plan: to continue to shore the southern rift with the remaining sections of pole. Another cool evening, darkening even as the team set up shop at 18:20; a small trickle of a stream. PC to shoring, TB to digging, JW hand hauling and CC completing the tramway, hand hauling and anything else that needed doing or fetching. Accessing the excavation area directly under the vertical shoring was difficult to reach so most of the

remaining debris slope was removed, which exposed some half dozen very large boulders, mostly other than limestone, however one limestone block, equal in size to the others, needed three to haul; Limestone really is a heavy rock for its size! The completed tramway and shaft closer system works superbly well; all loads lifted are swiftly made safe at surface by the tram rolling over the open shaft collar where it automatically locks in position, closing the shaft off completely beneath the suspended load. If this fifty kilo limestone block fell the seven metres down the shaft its impact would be an unhealthy 3,500 kilograms: even a Petzl helmet won't avoid that sort of headache. As work progressed some slippage occurred of the shoring precipitating urgent action to contain the movement. Eventually three further sections of horizontal pole were inserted, later these were "Lamped" downward into position, with another fitted at the top most location to retain any migrating clay deposit: depth of shoring now >2 metres. Each side of the southern rift appear to continue downward, so that's good news for the length of shoring chosen as these can be inserted without too much excavation behind and beneath the existing timber work. As the slope was removed the clay deposit is reducing in size to pockets between the stones; another session and this should disappear entirely. Clean washed stone is clearly visible beneath. Two plastic barrels are on site, one for rope control from the capstan winch the other as a water butt for cleaning kit. To the Roadside for pints and even more fun

Hours 9.25, 122

21st October    Considine's Cave

Tony Boycott

The opportunity to obtain steel mesh arose as TB and his battery grinder have returned, the pair also picked up another five pallets, these are deposited in the field, the mesh should be suitable to form the bratticing: this is at PCs place.

23rd October    Chegs Barn

Cheg Chester

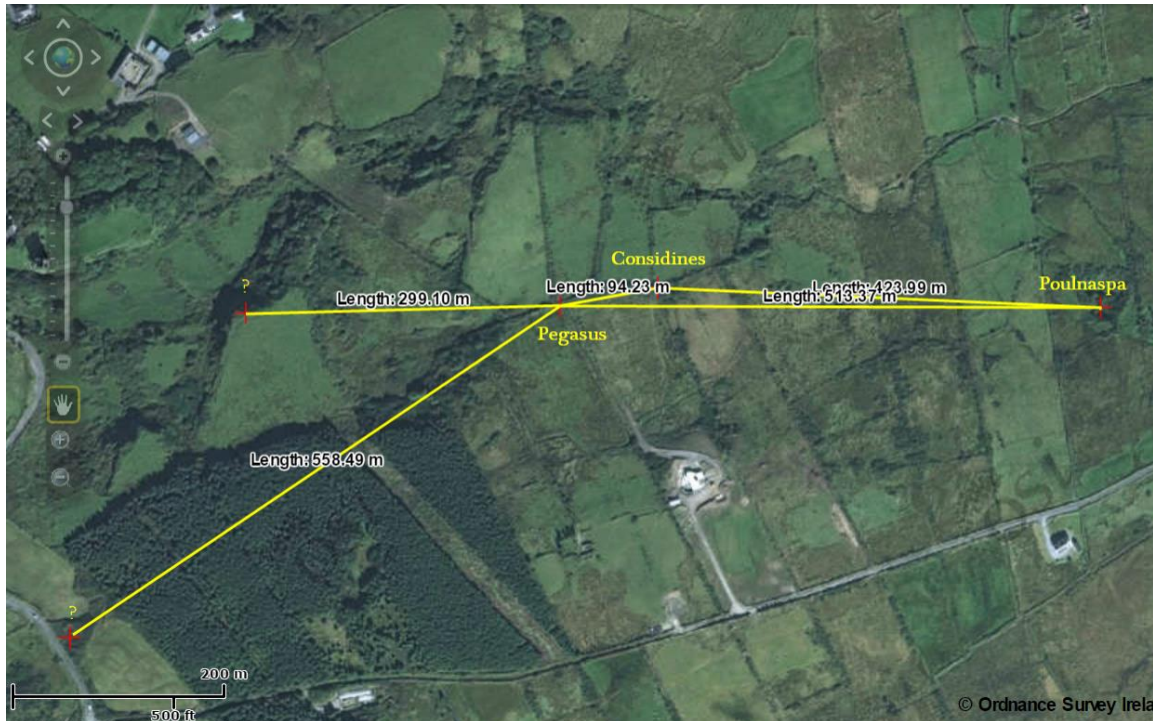
The plan: to assemble the winch within the barn and place it under its expected normal working load. Power is not an issue, demonstrated by hoisting and lowering the team repeatedly. The majority of the time was centred on the difficulty of a running turn occurring on the rope during hauling solved in part by the repositioning of winch-man's operating stance and use of a following pulley to ensure separation of the rope whilst revolving on the winch drum. Several other tasks remain before it is put into service. All in all a successful demonstration of its lifting capacity and ease of operating; driving lessons will follow.

25th October    Considines Cave

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A mild clear day with the normal trickle present: An afternoon session to avail of decent light to cut an area for the spoil and replace two pallets in the platform upon which to mount the winch. The pallets in the field were swiftly brought over, a further six required. TB and PC cut a swath through the undergrowth for twelve metres, following a contour in the depression to maintain a level wheelbarrow route. It terminates where the stream flows in from the southern field. CC fitted the support assembly for installing shoring was fitted, suspended from a scaffold bar. When slack was removed from the cable, by use of the turnbuckle, the lifting effect was immediate; it actually began to lift the lowest timber. This method will avoid hassle at the bottom of the rift, trying to support and install shoring simultaneously. TB removed several large roots to allow installation of the pallets at the end of the tramway to accommodate the intended route for the wheelbarrow; this also involved digging the slope out further to accommodate a

third pallet. The pyjama cord rope was turned about, its clean end now ready for use. A spare rope in a tackle sack is also on site. To the Roadside! Hours 9, 131



Relationship of caves within one kilometre of Poulnaspa, (B11)

27th October Considines Cave

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Mild, and overcast, with a misty rain; the stream had increased, slightly. The plan: to remove a further percentage of the southern slope in preparation for inserting more shoring. CC digging, PC hauling, TB moving spoil. Having two at surface meant the haulier need not touch muddy kibbles or boulder net, so whilst PCs hands and the rope remained free from troublesome shite TB became mired in it. There is virtually no clay/mud remaining, only that present beneath the shoring. The smaller gravel like debris is shattered shale. A steady supply of stone, boulders and gravels were removed, used to revet the barrow route. Before departure TB cut away a chunk of old tree root this will allow an awkward opening to be closed by insertion of a further pallet.

Meanwhile fog had descended causing the team to lose several valuable minutes of drinking time finding their way out the field. To the Roadside where a Jazz "happening" was errr... "Happening"; man Hours 7, 138

31st October Considine's Cave

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A mild overcast day: only a trickle in the pipe. The plan: to install more shoring below and the remaining pallets will complete the platform. PC shoring, CC hauling, TB tramming and revetting the barrow route. The final section of clay overburden was removed exposing the expected loose compacted stone beneath, and behind, the shoring, all spoil lifted out immediately. The shoring support cable system works well controlling the weight of timber shoring whilst excavation beneath takes place. Minor twisting occurred with the pyjama cord: due for washing. TB continued preparing the wheel barrow route around the cleared area, revetting it with stonework. The two pallets that



will form the start of the wheel barrow route were fitted after digging away the root strewn top soil. This will make barrowing spoil an easy task. A second area for spoil was opened to the north-west of the path this crosses the stream course heading to the corner of the field walls. Once the days shoring was completed an area was dug a foot deep in the shaft centre the loose stones still surrounded by open space. Both east and west walls continue vertically down, visible either side to a depth of at least one metre. The base of the shaft is a metre below the "Lip". The debris slope from the south end of the rift is enormously reduced; this is where most of the spoil removed has originated. Thursday will dig the floor back to the shoring. To an empty Roadside: winter approaches.

Hrs 7.5, 145.5

3rd November Considine's Cave

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Dark by 18:00: with a cool wind: a trickle present. The Donkeys are around for the next while so securing all gates and electric fences is important. The plan: with much of the preparation completed, to get on and dig. The two planks brought along for the wheel barrow were laid off the platform up the minor slope, these need a non-slip surface. PC hauling: CC and MR digging, TB stacking spoil and revetting with JW taking photos and assisting, everywhere. CC commenced digging at the north end exposing the rift narrowing to seven inches, this width temporarily removes concerns of a second area requiring shoring. Into this width "deads" were stacked to secure any small debris behind. The evening's session successfully incorporated the use of the wheel barrow from the shaft collar; kibbles of spoil and the net containing Rocks..... Little, Large and "Effing" Large were swung sideways from the lift straight into the barrow then trundled away. However, this process highlighted the importance to ensure the shaft collar was always covered by the tram locked in position whilst the emptying procedure takes place to remove the risk of falling debris; regular sweeping also removed the smaller pieces of debris falling through the pallets. MR continued excavating back to the ladder: the floor was lowered an average of eighteen inches, (450mm). Larger gaps between the stones were noted. The floor now averages a metre below the "Lip"; both east and west walls can be seen to descend vertically: an excellent session. To an entirely empty Roadside, where Billy was discovered using "Silvo" to polish his knobs

Hours 11.5, 157

7th November Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A cobalt blue sky providing chill conditions: a small trickle present. The plan: to remove more of the area at the base of the shoring preparing to insert same. A small bore pipe was installed, some thirty feet upstream from the platform to supply the water barrel and hosepipe feeding the base of the shaft. The remaining platform pallet was fitted and weather shroud for the tripod pulley completed. Once the ancillary tasks were completed digging then commenced. PC hauling, TB barrowing, CC digging. During which CC installed ginging in part of the northern rift also lowering the floor beneath a further eighteen inches. The stream pipe is now over two metres above the floor! Tools and other items were removed from this ledge. The main ladder is now two metres short of the floor. Another session or so and the short ladder will also be of inadequate length. Discussion on repositioning the ladder to act as a brattice also took place with a broad plan proposed, this will need sorting soon. Lots of kibbles and large stones were lifted. Removing the spoil requires a seven metre lift. Strict protocols must be observed when transferring spoil to the barrow. The Tram must be locked in place until the barrow is wheeled away from the shaft collar, this will avoid falling debris impacting the digger. PC plans to visit MC with photos of the site to show progress. A long session of five hours, so to the Roadside for a swift pint

Hours 15, 172

10th November Considine's

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

A cool enough evening, the previous day's heavy rainfall had drenched the field, though only a trickle was present in the pipe. Evidence of a flood was present, residual water flowing down the walls of the dig. The size of both stream channels and swiftness of response suggests any rainfall occurs, and passes quickly, as a single pulse. Earlier in the day a second trial of the winch was carried out at Chegs, the addition by CC to the rope winding method working well. The plan: to insert the two remaining sections of shoring, and dig. CC hauling, JW digging, PC shoring and TB barrowing. Making room for the shoring four large to very large boulders were removed, the largest a lump of limestone around 100 kilos. Subtle radii began to appear on both walls meaning the pole sections, at 850mm, are too short for the increased width, replacements will be available Monday. CC changed with JW to complete the session below. The shaft floor is now some three metres below the stream pipe. The pyjama rope was removed for washing. House keeping for Monday includes completing the hose pipe down the shaft, installing shoring, completing ginging, extending stream pipe along rift away from digging area and levelling debris along barrow route. A fine session with a lot of spoil removed. To a very empty Roadside, for pints

Hours 10, 182

14th November Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A very foggy day, mild: a small steam running. Evidence of a flood was present. The plan, to install the lengths shoring, obtained earlier in the day from "Noel the Pole", and complete any outstanding tasks. PC hauling & shoring: CC hauling and TB hauling & barrowing. An area three feet high was dug out beneath the shoring into which was horizontally inserted the one metre lengths of pole, the area behind back packed with stone and clay. The minor gap between the existing and new timbers was closed by levering upward the new pieces of shoring; this was difficult so a maximum of four should be easier to manage. A well washed gap among the stones was noted beneath & behind the area of shoring, some 1 foot x 2 feet depth unseen. CC, and his clean hands, arrived to reposition the support cable and bracket support. The large boulders removed during the shoring process were all cleared to surface. The edge of grey coloured clay deposit appears to follow the vertical line of shoring, once the wet surface is removed the clay is dry and firm beneath. The base of the twenty one lengths of shoring is now some four feet above floor level. The shaft hose pipe was rearranged and now working; the ginging also was attended too, the northern rift appears to be widening! The fifteen foot ladder was prepared for relocating beneath the platform. Another pole is required. To the Roadside where a thoroughly shagged out team enjoyed Billy's company.

Hours 12, 194

17th November Considines

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A chill evening: the previous days producing a lot of rain; the stream filling half the pipe. CC digging, PC hauling, TB barrowing, JW hauling, digging and photography. The base of the shoring had been thoroughly deluged, the small pieces of timber used for chocking were stripped clean of mud, (this area is normally sheltered). The steady pace removed a lot of spoil, much from the thrust slope at the base of the shoring, now prepared to receive more shoring. The two metre ladder was replaced with the three metre aluminium; this too barely reaches the bottom of the upper one. The depth is now some eight metres this requires a safety line, perhaps fitted when the ladder is repositioned to also serve as the brattice. This proposed work may require several sessions to install fixings in the rift to secure the vertical ladder, and prepare the approach staging at the

top of the rift. Many large boulders were removed; at least ten wait the next session. TB has progressed the “barrow-way” from the platform around the depression to the southern stream, some fifteen metres in length. The decision to fill the southern rift to ground level was taken; this will solve several issues, not least salving possible concerns of the Farmer. Stone laid where the stream enters, clay and gravel deposits forward of this filling the narrow area up to the shoring which will be extended the remaining three metres to surface. Enquiries reveal thirty inch ID corrugated plastic drain pipe is four hundred euro for six metres. Heavy hail showers added to the lubrication of the platform surface. Doolin Show cave, (Poul-an-Ionain), have approached PC asking if he wants to dig in the cave. To the Roadside where, shagged out, the pints tasted great. Hours 9, 203

19th November Considines  
Solo

Rang “Noel the Pole” for more telegraph poles, went to the yard, cut up two in one metre lengths, also found and trimmed some offcuts; transported same to field. Met Christy Stack: neighbour farming the field to the west: who warned of the dangers of caving The Asses and (Christy’s) Horses now contained in lower field Area beyond lower parking area awash, hence stacking the poles on dry-ish land.

21st November Considines  
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The plan: to install a lower platform to access the new, proposed ladder location this will also double as a brattice. A bitter cold bright day: the same size stream present. While PC removed the overburden to expose the limestone below the existing ladder position, CC and TB carried over the remaining one metre sections of pole: one way of keeping warm against the freezing north-easterly wind. A body harness was shared among the team working on the precarious area, this was finally cleared; timber and pallets swiftly fitted. TBs reciprocating saw proved useful once again trimming errant undergrowth. After a lot of awkward manoeuvring the ladder was eventually suspended from the joists of the main platform: for positioning down the centre of the rift. Securing the lower section of the ladder needs completing before digging can resume so it’s planned to be carried out during the daytime on Thursday. So: no digging Thursday evening. A cracking if excruciatingly cold, session To the Roadside for some freezing pints and to drool over JWs latest photos  
Hours 11, 214

24th November Considines  
Cheg Chester

Another midday trip to avail of light: a much reduced stream: a very bright clear, but bitter cold, day. The plan: to secure the ladder near its bottom end. Unfortunately The Good Doctor Boycott, (G.D.B.), will be absent for a month. CC’s rethink of securing the ladder produced an infinitely more flexible and stronger method of fixing, meaning much less manufacturing, though needing a little more precision when fitting. After a series of acrobatics the upper brace was positioned, marked and drilled, the studs inserted ready for securing the horizontal scaffold bar; meanwhile CC had fitted a further pallet to close off the wide south-east opening above the top of the pitch; the place the dog fell from. Using his new toy video PC recorded the antics below, the results are dark, and atmospheric.....light required. Monday the first ladder will be finished and digging will resume. To the Roadside for very cold pints  
Hours 5.5, 219.5

28th November Considines Cave  
Cheg Chester

A slightly warmer day though the wind still NE, the stream much reduced. The plan: to complete securing the top ladder and to dig. Heavily laden the pair stopped en-route to feed the Donkeys. CC descended first and installed the bracing to secure the lower ladder, (videoed), once the top was screwed to the joists the entire ladder structure became solid. The shoring suspension cable was reinstated, now threaded down the back of the ladder access platform. CC removed some of the base of the shoring in preparation for insert more poles, finding that the clay deposit appeared decreasing in volume. The session finally ended with several loads brought to surface. To the Roadside for good company and superb pints, reminiscent of times past; a few locals in conversation

Hours 5, 229.5

29th November Poll an Ionain  
John Brown

PC was asked by JB to assess the chances of creating a bypass to circulate the tours to reduce bottlenecks and increase overall turnaround. The small clay passage to the right of the large clay passage would appear to head for the sump area; a possibility. The less obvious route is the minor passage to the west of the main chamber. This requires digging out the stream bed and enlarging the rift, but it is possible. Plan to return Friday and measure the distance

1st December Considine's Cave  
Cheg Chester

No rain these last few weeks though ground still wet, cold, the cloud ensuring a very dark evening, a small stream present. The plan: to mark out the next ladder brace-bracket position, and dig. Using two plumb-lines the vertical ladder was aligned the distance to the next stemple brace calculated and both anchor holes drilled. The required scaffold bar length measured. PC to surface to haul and barrow while CC dug: the northern rift width appearing to remain narrow, so good news. The base is now cleared of the loose stone; some eleven kibbles of gravel also lifted out. Stone and boulder spoil tipped into the southern end of the rift, gravel used to extend the barrow way. Nuts needed to secure top ladder to platform. Installation of lifeline to be completed: a short, (90 inch), ladder is being built to facilitate reaching the upper ladder whilst the team excavate the required depth to accept the next ladder of 3.8 metre. To an empty Roadside for pints: 5.5, 235.

2nd December Poll an Ionian  
John Brown

Stream flow very low as rainfall well below seasonal average: water temperature very cold. Dressed in neo-fleece, PC wriggled along the low streamway to measure the length of the passage between main chamber and rear chamber. Once inside the passage the possibilities of straight forward enlargement to provide a one metre wide route between chambers were revealed, resulting with a pleased JB.

4th December Souterrain CL005-027004  
Nigel Burns

The ecclesiastical settlement at Rathborney, Ballyvaghan, has a souterrain: visited, some three years ago, by PC. The plan; plot the graveyard enclosure and explore, and survey, the souterrain. A bitter cold day: though the present church is of 15th or 16th century origins the adjacent feature suggest an earlier settlement; the souterrain, the curved wall and the Bullaun stone. The equipment swiftly set up, the enclosure was plotted taking care with the irregular radius of the southern wall, perhaps an earlier enclosure? Gerry Clancy arrived to enquire as to the team's activities, a nice man, very interested in the heritage of the site and its preservation. The souterrain was entered and found to have a large collapse from the surface, now levelled, perhaps the result of digging a grave, many of which surround the souterrain. The passage from the entrance to the collapse is seven metres; the passage width is 1.6 metres and height 1.4 metres. This passage has a large cross section for a County Clare souterrain, the walls are of dry stone, most are water rolled possibly sourced from the adjacent Rathborney River, or perhaps the coast. The limestone lintels average 0.15 thick by 1 metre wide by 1.9 metres long, rather large. Sections of the walls are corbelled to accommodate slightly shorter lintels. There is an alcove 0.75m wide and 0.5 metre deep its true height obscured by the collapse. The souterrain floods: evidenced by debris in parts of the roof, and upper parts of the walls. Problems with flash photography resulted in desperate attempts at a video using a cap lamp for illumination. Gerry Clancy imparted folklore that the souterrain ran to, or from, the church; an escape route for the priest during Cromwell's time? (See video & report).

5th December Considines Cave  
Nigel Burns, Cheg Chester

A cold day: overcast: a small stream running. The plan: to install shoring and dig. PC installed the shoring using a different method which proved far swifter than previous, five sections of poles were swiftly fitted and less spoil excavated, the clay deposit has reappeared. NB & CC descended to review the dig. NB then dug, CC barrowed, PC

hauled. A lot of spoil removed; large boulders are becoming common place. The average depth below the platform is now eight metres; the parallel walls seen to continue down. The original water pipe was removed and the four inch branch pipe redirected vertically. The place washed down and cleaned, the team made for the Roadside to talk of caves measureless to man, and girls. Hours 12, 247

6th December Finavarra  
Nigel Burns

The visit to Parkmore Ringfort, (CLO03-006---), was met with a densely overgrown area consisting of briar, nettle, and blackthorn. The perimeter was almost circumnavigated. A return is planned with the loppers to cut a way in. The pair then made their way to Finavarra Martello Tower, (CLO02-070---), a superb relic of the Napoleon era. A return was made to the souterrain at Rine with TB. The souterrain, near Lough Murree, (CLO02-068002), was previously noted as being open, a search, then, for the landowner proving fruitless. Today the charming owner was successfully located and eagerly offered access. As easy talk progressed mutual friends were identified. The souterrain had been entered by the owner and a general description proffered....."Several chambers exist", "you'll need a flashlight". Permission to descend the souterrain was also freely given; the invite to visit extended to PC's wife and friends. A cracking day!



Photo Nigel Burns

View east from souterrain, plane table to right of image, survey station in foreground.  
Limestone solid 163lbs/ft<sup>3</sup> or 2611kg/m<sup>3</sup>

7th December    Considine's Cave

Nigel Burns, Cheg Chester

A mild enough day: extensive cloud cover. The plan: to refit the shoring support and to clear away the base of the northern rift. CC digging, PC hauling NB barrowing. A steady removal of spoil as CC exposed the northern rift who then ginged its narrow opening, with a great deal of difficulty; the confined space and heavy work raised the question can CC become erect after this enormous amount of effort....? Ooo err. Meanwhile spoil was deposited into the southern rift opening. The northern rift is now prepared for further downward progress. Thursday, the area of the southern rift requires removing; and thus more shoring. Alas, NB departs tomorrow. To the Roadside for pints                      Hours 9, 256

8th December    Poulsallagh

Nigel Burns

A bright mild day: the final morning of NB's visit, so a geological walk was conducted around Poulsallagh Bay taking the opportunity to GPS all the entrances to Poulsallagh. Found a Fraggie skid on the northern beach; retrieved same for future use.

9th December

Solo

Visited MC to update him of the dig status with photos; he was very pleased and interested at our progress. This allays PCs increasing concerns as the site becomes a mining operation. The proffered invite to visit and descend was accepted.

14th December

Lost John Buxton

18th December    Considines

Cheg Chester

A chill, bright day: evidence of a flood event in the shaft: a small stream present. The plan: to prepare the first ladder to accept the second and dig. The pair descended and set up both ladders to reach the drilling position. Once completed, the distance assessed, it was decided not to install the next ladder, (2.2 metres), until another metre or so of depth was achieved, allowing the digger to pass beneath to safety during hauling. There is insufficient room to squeeze between the ladder and the wall. With the spare ladders recovered to surface CC commenced digging. The gravels were deposited on the muddy path to the field, the boulders dropped into the southern rift and the flatter stones used to build the wall. CC managed to almost level the floor working from the northern rift. If this depth is maintained across the floor the second ladder and the next section of shoring can be installed. There is enough shoring for about another 1.5 metres of depth. The area adjacent the shoring remains dry, suggesting presence of a draught, Hooray! No Roadside as PC hurried home for erection duties.....involving a Christmas tree.

Hours 5, 261

22nd December    Considines Cave

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

A cool enough day, with a chill wind, a lot of rain made during the night evidenced by a pristine platform surface and a well washed base of the shaft; a small stream present. The plan: to check the next stemple for length and dig. CC digging, TB barrowing, PC



hauling. At one point TB thought he could hear voices. Was this divine intervention? Soon after, armed with a long pole, he went for a poke in the undergrowth... Ooo Err! Steady progress by CC lowered the floor southward to the base of the slope to the lower ladder, the ginging in the north rift is now just above floor level, the bottom of the shoring in the south end is almost two metres above the floor level. One metre of attainable depth is still visible down through the loosely compacted boulder floor. The length of the rift at bottom is now between four and five metres. Large boulders are becoming common place, as is the grunting noises from PC. Raised gravel spoil is now deposited along the muddy path to the field, to replace the pallets. The second ladder should be installed within the next two sessions thus improving brattice safety cover and climbing. A busy though straight forward digging session ending, surprizingly, in the Roadside, where the team enjoyed drinks from Peter with sustained abuse from Billy surrounded by his fairy lights, whose merry twinkling passed unnoticed by the thirsty throng.....This the season to eat, drink and be MARY Hours 9, 270.

25th December Considines Cave

Tony Boycott

A mild, misty overcast day: with heavy showers: a small stream running. The plan: to continue digging toward the shoring. PC hauling and barrowing, TB digging. Large boulders continued to appear among the lesser spoil, therefore wall was increased in height and breadth. One boulder required a 4 to 1 hauling system to lift; the length of the extant rope is only just long enough to cope, another foot of depth and it would need a longer rope. The spoil slope was slowly reduced exposing the narrowing of the rift, fortunately this narrowing is temporary as through the gap beneath the slope the bulge in the wall, and the passage width can be seen to increase once again as the wall resumed its verticality. The clay deposit that has been a constant presence behind the shoring has now disappeared, this means a change in shoring tactics as the stone exposed is unstable. The area behind is very wet. The floor now slopes to the south from just below the northern ginging. Watching TB ascend the fixed ladder from the bottom of the rift the feeling of depth hits home; it must be approaching ten metres. If both long ladders were now stood on each other they'd be short of the top. As the slope is unstable several pieces of pole length was fitted to reduce the chances of a run in. The shoring needs completion this Thursday, so that will mean a boring session for people. The 90 inch ladder needs fixing soon too as joining them will become an issue for ease of work. No drink, gasp.

Hours 6, 276

26th December Souterrain CL005-027004

Tony Boycott

To conclude the survey of the souterrain started on the 4th December 2016 by NB and PC. Another bright chill winter's day: on arrival the souterrain was found to be flooded to a depth of two feet so the plan was altered to locating and fixing the Bullaun stone position within the plane table site survey and to record the church exterior footprint, also measure the vault like mound adjoining its western wall. TB noticed stonework from the Romanesque doorway had been placed about the graveyard; these may have been utilized to indicate the presence of graves, (see report). To a quiet the Roadside for very nice pints

29th December Considines Cave

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

A cool dry evening: a small stream present. The plan; to get there an hour before JWs arrival to have the second ladder installed ready to dig. CC and PC managed to secure the ladder with only minor hassle, the task virtually complete when JW arrived flashing the assembled crew.....Ooo err! PC then attended to the very loose boulders that had

emerged from beneath the existing shoring, whilst attempting to ignore the loosening area in his pants; a further five sections of shoring were swiftly inserted, the area now safe and secure. The voids behind the shoring was then back packed with the smaller stone removed earlier thereby significantly reducing the amount of spoil to be sent to surface. The shoring, or rather the bottom of the shaft, is now well below the clay deposit, the stones are therefore without “glue”, so removal of stone to install shoring requires great care and attention. Vertical holes, some over one metre in depth are regularly appearing among the floor boulders, without a real sense of draught though, these glimpses show the walls continuing on downward. An observation from the 25th December session is the occurrence of a fog in the shaft bottom, when only TB was down there, (Wow, what speed was the Good Doctor digging at?!). This occurrence appears to prove further the presence of a warm air flow that regularly dries much of the rift walls. Digging resumed JW hauling: TB barrowing: CC and PC digging. As the pile of debris from the shoring process was reduced PC replaced JW hauling. There now remain nine pieces of shoring at one metre and about three at 0.85m, these offer the capacity to dig down a further five foot, or so. JW continued flashing, which clearly lit up the shaft; the completed ladders enhancing the sense of depth, later measured at thirty feet. To the Roadside for even more complementary pints

Hours 13, 289

31st December New entrance into Upper Poulmagollum.

Tony Boycott

Last Trip of The Year: the plan: to do the final trip of the year. As the team was about to leave BS arrived, only just returned from the UK, New Year Wishes and news updates exchanged Barry departed to do more visiting. TB & PC had thought of doing Poulmagollum to main junction, then, perhaps, Upper Poulmagollum to Pollbinn, on approach TB remembered a previously unpublicized opening that possibly bypassed the normal ladder pitch entrance of Upper Poulmagollum. The abstruse entrance was quickly located by TB, the pair following an impressive draught. Cautiously descending the relatively unstable boulder funnel like entrance to land in the low stream bedding, eight metres downstream from the waterfall and some three metres further downstream of the junction leading to the normal entrance pitch, via the crawl. The team then moved downstream descended several awkward short climbs finally arriving at the main Poulmagollum Pot cascade, with a view of the main pothole never previously experienced. A really fun final trip along a new route; nice. To the Roadside for end of year pints

Weights: Limestone (solid) cubic metre 2611 kilos Per Cubic Foot 163 pounds Limestone (broken) cubic metre 1554 Kilos Per Cubic Foot 97 pounds Limestone (pulverized) cubic metre 1394 Kilos Per Cubic Foot 87 pounds