

# 1975

10<sup>th</sup> January Pitten Swallet, Mewslade, Bishopston Valley, Gower

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns, Jeff Price

Digging at JS & NB's dig; slow progress over two days of hard work; not much to show for it. Noted several unrecorded sites along the Bishopston valley

25<sup>th</sup> Jan Tan-yr-Ogof and mine adit

Phil Nuttall, Peggy Faulknan, Tony Jarratt

Assisted Jarratt with digs in two of the caves, 4 & 5, later scampered along the side of the road and hid behind bushes to break through a bricked up entrance into an adit. Many interruptions but eventually opened an 'ole; squeezed into about 100 foot of passage. A superb flooded side shaft was walled off the main way, nearby a winze also flooded.

26<sup>th</sup> Jan Glyn Mine, North Wales

Phil Nuttall, Jarratt

Entrance is a narrow gap in the wall tight against the road, no footpath. Dug away the entrance collapse to lower the water; eventually entered at waist depth, a cracking mine. Wooden ladders ascend to upper workings, unclimbed, for the moment.

9<sup>th</sup> February Bishopston Valley, Gower

Nigel Burns, Jeff Price

Walked down the Bishopston valley, just passed our old camp site, noted a small resurgence. Continued up the dry river bed to a junction of three feeders; headed up the larger then cut directly up hill to cross over to Kittle, en-route noted several depressions.

10<sup>th</sup> February Birchwood Cornish Engine House, Swansea

Nigel Burns, Jeff Price

In superb condition; surprizing being so close to an urban area, as yet un-vandalized!

16<sup>th</sup> February Pensford, Clutton and Rookham Wood Mines

Jeff Price

Pensford Mine: extensive surface buildings remain, most in good condition.

Rookham Wood Mine: Showed JP the location of the two shafts, searched the dense undergrowth for more.

Clutton Mine: ultimately became brickworks. Adjacent the chimney is a small brick lined adit/drainage/service tunnel, need return to follow it.

22<sup>nd</sup> February Parys Mountain

Nigel Burns

Returned to continue researching this superb area; so many remains. Noted many ancient shafts exposed as the main opencast was expanded in size, encroaching into the landscape. The engine house is a magnificent building, though decaying; the adjacent settlement tanks are full of scrap steel recovering the copper in solution.

23<sup>rd</sup> February Gwynfynydd

Nigel Burns

Wandered along the main adit, the incline and underground head frame still in good condition; outside followed the suspended walkway above the river bank, excellent.

1<sup>st</sup> March    Giants Hole

Martin Bishop

A swift round trip before tonight's PU. Great trip and one hell of a cracking dinner: how did Torchy swing the Palace Dinner for three quid a ticket? The new manager bewildered at the price; only minor damage from stomp in the Ballroom.

5<sup>th</sup> March    Dundry Stone mines

Jeff Price

Introduced JP to this part of underground Bristol, the entrance has had builders debris dumped recently in an attempt block it; likely more will follow.

28<sup>th</sup> March    Parys Mountain Copper Mine

Nigel Burns

Continued to investigate this wonderful, industrial landscape; the amount of copper won here immense. Found several more timbered shafts around the edges of the vast open cast though choked from possible reworking in the 19<sup>th</sup>C. Some had the remains of very nice ginging. Eventually reached the ruins of the windmill, standing adjacent a large open engine shaft several hundred feet deep. Expanded search around the area and located the entrance to an underground incline at the end of a short section of drystone walled gully. No caving kit handy; will return tomorrow. Continued walking among the moonscape; continually encountering superb mining remains: deep joy, a forgotten place; counted 57 open shafts of varying diameters; some of obvious antiquity.

29<sup>th</sup> March    Parry's Mountain Mine

Nigel Burns

Mid morning toiled up the mountain with kit and descended the small, steep incline, to around fifty feet deep where it drops into a passage, a drop of some seven feet, down an elderly wooden ladder. Opposite a light timber balustrade surrounds a large diameter shaft some thirty feet plus deep, (once an ore pocket?), gingerly descended using the elderly wooden ladder. At the bottom, turning a corner carved stone steps lead the unwary into crystal clear water, the steps seen to descend far below, for quite a distance. Back at the bottom of the entrance incline the large horizontal passage meanders among several flooded "shafts" or maybe just deep pools of water, to a larger, blind area. As NB climbed onto the short wooden ladder at the base of the incline the framework and ladder collapsed into dust. The next two hours were spent trying to get up over the slight six foot high overhang into the passage above, which had no form of hold whatsoever, even when using all manner of acrobatics. NB repeatedly climbed onto PC's shoulders, eventually succeeding in gaining a purchase deploying a knotted waist length, and a lot of trust; a delighted pal followed him to the surface.

30<sup>th</sup> March    Gwynffynedd Mine, Mid-Wales

Nigel Burns

Located the main adit and explored for at least five hundred feet. The only dry shaft was a small diameter service shaft. An unsecured two inch diameter compressed air pipe was used to slide down this near vertical five foot diameter shaft. At a depth of fifty odd feet the 70 odd degree shaft increased to 90°; remembering the pipe was only fixed at the top, hence the wobbling around a lot, and thinking such extreme movement, and the combined weight of two explorers might cause it to snap at the threaded joint, both carefully ascended back to the main level: need a ladder. Climbed up the huge timbered stope using the many original wooden ladders; ascending, the angle here became almost vertical. Progress was made up through the many platform traps to the next level, and so

on. At the top of the 20foot wide stope found a timber bridge, a log, 12 inches square, spanning the stope, from our side to the other leading through a doorway cut in solid rock on the opposite side; depth below this “bridge” some 200 feet. Decided to cross the beam to access the other mine workings and the upper area of the mountain side surface features; delighted to emerge into bright sunlight in the base of a huge opencast working; many mining remains: a delightful trip, which will not be here in the years to come.

31<sup>st</sup> March Cwmystwyth  
Nigel Burns

Walked up the Nant-y-Onnen investigated the adits and surface workings; rich in early mining remains. What appear to be stone malls, (stone hammers) are plentiful.

19<sup>th</sup> April Southwest inlet, GG RESCUE  
Ken James, Martin Bishop

Late start after a fine Pegasus PU, Bishop still really ill from the session, George Cooper arrived to say Bill McGuiness had fallen down Bar Pot. Fearing the worst arrived to find BMcG had only fallen part way down the entrance pitch, but busted his leg. CRO swiftly arrived and hauled him out. Meanwhile the contingent of Pegasus and Eldon left him in good hands for an excellent pub crawl; presented a collection of cash to the CRO.

25<sup>th</sup> May Stoke Lane Slocker / Bishops P.U.  
Pete Eckford, Martin Bishop

Trip to replace the line through sump IV: much buggering about in the silt. PE eventually returned, so all took a trip through, gardening as they entered; line finally secured, again, hooray.

Bishops fancy dress PU became outrageous; among the casualties Teapot, (Derek Stables), dressed as a flasher in long overcoat, and only pants beneath, set off to shock the revellers. At one point a scream announced one victim of Teapot’s display had chosen to rip off his pants, inflicting injuries to his jewellery; later another woman found the image so exciting she grasped his tackle, dragging him off upstairs; much drink, and fun. Teapot found naked and unconscious on the village green next morning.

12<sup>th</sup> June Stag Week Doolin

On the announcement of Pauline McDermott and PC’s engagement last August Jarratt suggested a Stag week to celebrate; it won’t work and its too long was the realistic response. In spite of misgivings invites were sent out to that effect. Thinking of the sixty odd caving guests invited maybe half might appear; on the appointed day most appeared in Doolin, the remainder Dublin. Mistaking the dates Pete Eckford arrived a week early; his dilemma, how to make his cash last until the others arrived? Forage for food in order to save the limited cash for the impending pissup, or, drink this week and have less drink next? Choosing to forage, he’d lost a stone in weight by the time the party started. Delivered a Neil Robinson stretcher to Martin Droney including all associated ropes and lifting tackle; (scrounged from H.M.S. Fox, Bristol). Also four caving helmets, scrounged from the G.P.O, two Oldham lamps and a charger. MD has renovated his shed; it’s now dry and airy. The stag week became a formidable event, caving in the afternoons, drink and dancing into the small hours, sleep confined to a few hours in the mornings; a wonderful, liver crippling event.

13<sup>th</sup> June Stag Week: Poulelva – Poulmagollum

Pete Eckford, Ken James, Martin Bishop, Noel Shannon, Martin Droney

Serious PU last night; Doll wouldn't shut the bar; left well after 4am; Jarratts stag week idea will never work. This is hopefully the first of many trips. Stopped en-route in the Roadside to tell Mary the news; she swiftly passed drink around; stopped at four pints. Abseiled in Poulelva and ran up the streamway to get back for the evening session; a superb day and an amazing session, finishing in Ivy Cottage.

14<sup>th</sup> June Poulawillin

Pete Eckford, Martin Bishop, Martin Droney, Ken James

Eventually located the entrance, (memory had faded), with a decent stream sinking, almost from the entrance the passage is snug, turns a corner and gets snuggler, then another corner; snuggler still. Early on MD vomited and retired to the motor. KJ said we need dig out the floor to progress; MB suggested the Bar. Result MB won, KJ lost.

15<sup>th</sup> June Doolin River Cave

Ken James, Pete Eckford, Jim Shannon, Noel Shannon, and an awful lot of others...

A seriously pissed group, several of whom actually had lights, went below and finally emerged from the depths of Fisherstreet Pot. Gerard accosted PC offering his warmest congratulations on the forthcoming event. Invited to join the session, at some point Gerard disappeared returning with poteen, which did the rounds. MB upset Gerard by dosing the poteen with lime cordial, and then added ice cream to the mix? Moved on to Jamesy's place again, lotsa music, drink and dance.

16<sup>th</sup> June Poulanian

Martin Bishop, Harriett Lomax, Jarratt, John? Maria? Neil Rigiani, Henry?

PC called into O'Connor's to get breakfast makings; Doll pulled a pint; soon joined by MB, and Jarratt, after several rounds joined by the others; several pints later set off. A wonderful hilarious trip to the accompanying concerto of farmyard noises: cracking trip.

18<sup>th</sup> June Cullaun Five

Jim Shannon, Ken James, Pete Eckford, Noel Shannon, Martin Droney

The evening session destroyed most plans for today; determined to keep going PC convinced the others it would do them good. Laying in the wet beddings most changed their minds, the warmth of the bar far more attractive. Found the others recovered after last night and ready for tonight's session starting in Joe McHugh's, Liscannor.

19<sup>th</sup> June Doolin - Dublin

Late morning, sat in the bar, Jarratt casually asked when we had to be in Dublin to be fitted for the wedding suits, the 17<sup>th</sup> replied PC; ahhh, today's the 19<sup>th</sup> said Jarratt. As they sped through Roscrea, they stopped so PC, (no cash), could ring the operator for a reverse charge call to Pauline's home to let her know they were enroute. The operator said she wasn't allowed to do that; PC explained the plight, she said that she finished work at five and would call Pauline from her own home to pass on the message. At quarter past five Pauline received a phone call from the operator informing her of the Grooms general whereabouts, and offering best wishes for future happiness from her and all the girls at the telephone exchange. The others, left in Doolin, packed up the abandoned camping and caving kit while Jarratt conveyed the Groom to Dublin; arriving two days late for the suit fitting for Stuart MacManus, (Best Man), Tony Jarratt, (Groomsman), Patrick Cronin, (Groom's Father), and PC, all fittings completed at eleven that night.

20<sup>th</sup> June    Wedding Day

The 3pm appointment meant a long pissup was available before the event; the Bride arrived half an hour late, pinned into her unfinished, unstitched wedding dress; many guests arrived well pissed from visiting the bar next door to the church, barely before the Bride arrived at 3:30. Only eight guests mislaid; among them four of PC's uncles and aunts; lost between the church in Ballsbridge, Dublin, and the hotel in Killiney. They finally arrived, long after the dinner had finished. Uncle Mossy and party arrived guided, or rather escorted by a Garda car: a wonderful crazy event. A day declared a success.

23<sup>rd</sup> June    Cueva del Drac, Majorca

Pauline Cronin

A nice tourist trip involving boats, an orchestra and a lot of opera; great fun

24<sup>th</sup> June    Small bay south of Cueva del Drac

Pauline Cronin

Enjoying the beach noticed a small hole at the base of a thirty foot cliff. Bought two cigarette lighters from a beach vendor and ventured along the 4 foot high passage, which meandered for sixty odd feet to a sump pool which moved; so it's connected to the sea.

3<sup>rd</sup> July    Berger invite

Postcard from Martin Bishop informing both he and PC were invited to the forthcoming Berger trip.

July undated (12<sup>th</sup>)    Pouldubh

John Dukes, John Widley

In through the north entrance, down to the terminal choke; exited South entrance.

July undated (14<sup>th</sup>)    Doolin River Cave

John Dukes, John Widley

Raining; got to the connection; JW unhappy with the volume of water; uneventful exit.

July undated (16<sup>th</sup>)    Avoca Mines

John Dukes, John Widley

While the others wandered around the Tigroney surface remains, PC climbed the hill to the Cornish engine house; pushing through the undergrowth suddenly became stuck on barbed wire, which surrounds the square stone lined engine shaft; lucky, lucky boy. Took photos; a nice example of the engine builder's art. Walked over the hill to the huge opencast to meet the others, noted several inaccessible levels high in the opencast face.

20<sup>th</sup> July    Swildons Hole

Gordon Parkin, Martin Bishop

Haven't seen GP for many months, so a swift, fun trip around the Round Trip, following a very fine party at MB's indeed. Delighted GP's going to the Berger, apparently so are quite a few from Derbyshire. The plan is for the three of us to use Eric Howell's car. EH rang about a last minute opportunity to him fill a space in a motor from Manchester; believing his car not up to the journey. Spoke to MB who suggested we buy a cheap van and drive it there. MB appeared with a dodgy Hillman bought from Green Ore for £20.

31<sup>st</sup> July Gouffre Berger

David Blake, Eric Howell and a cast of thousands

Met up with the others at Dover; initially kept up but after the engine boiled a couple of times the delays meant being left far behind. The entire trip was well worth the last minute rushing about, the forgotten bits of kit and the dodgy motor. At the cave though working in small groups these changed regularly as the cave, the expedition needs and individual fitness altered. The expedition was uneventful, the only injury being Bishop burning his hand near the end of the trip when his carbide lamp ignited around the seal. PC managed to seal the burn in a plastic bag and electrical tape; redressing regularly with drinking water to reduce the chance of infection. Eric Howell had some iodine so spread this lavishly on the wound, resulting in Bishop screaming and dancing about camp; still no infection! PC asked by control if he wanted to be in the fourth team to bottom the cave; eagerly accepted their kind offer. So many decent people with an abundance of positive vibes; no politics allowed to be present, just nice people.

24<sup>th</sup> August

Lost Chris Murray, (Spain).

25<sup>th</sup> August Meander Cave

Nigel Burns

NB cleverly predicted and easily opened this site, with two sumps. PC pushed the down stream sump to a depth of 14 feet and along a circular passage for 25 feet. Visibility in the silt was zero; a flood might help clear this sump. The other sump feels small, and deep.

13<sup>th</sup> September Ireby Fell

Eric Blake, Robert Stallard

A pleasant cave of relatively short pitches; caver ruckle on the way out; delayed exit.

14<sup>th</sup> September Marble Steps

Eric Blake, David Blake, Robert Stallard

Another superb trip, couldn't bottom the cave due to DB's motor not working at all well. DB observed PC's SRT layout had room for some improvement.

27<sup>th</sup> September Dido's Cave, Derbyshire

Solo

Not so much a cave as a mine; not too far a carry; used Sulo's 22c/ft aluminium bottle signs suggest this area submerges in higher water conditions. Entered the water, noticed a small opening to the left; followed a beautiful hand cut coffin level to another junction; no place to secure line: surfaced in an elongated air bell, had trouble remaining afloat, no buoyancy aid or anywhere to hang on to assess location. Submerged to see passages head off in either direction, northeast-ish and southwest-ish, both obviously mined. Dived along the awkward south-ish passage for some fifty feet, used the air bells where possible to a forefield; the deads and supports don't inspire confidence. Returned to the junction taking the north-ish passage for another fifty odd feet until low on air, seen to continue, returned to base; recovered the line. Paul Thompson believes it could be Haggs Mine?

4<sup>th</sup> October Poulmagun

Solo

Jim Shannon had mentioned a big steep sided depression north of Ballynalacken Castle, near a crossroads. Found a small hole near a small cliff, laddered the drop using two

twenty five foot ladders. Abseiled; landed among an area of boulders. No obvious way on; scrambled about the boulder pile eventually locating a small passage, which led to a second pitch, no more ladder; abandoned trip, need to return; an interesting place. From the surface the dry valley heads away south-ish, there is a sink to the west, from where a shallow valley continues toward the sea.

5<sup>th</sup> October Doolin Road Sink  
Solo

Borrowed Noel Walsh's wet suit trousers; entered the sink to remove flood debris; there may be a possible route into Doolin Main Streamway, though rumour says it's likely to be a tight bedding. Spent several hours pulling out branches etc, until worshippers, from Mass, after visiting the bar, stopped to enquire what was happening. No objections raised just people being curious. Stopped mid afternoon after losing the feeling in both legs; a small collapse in the field opposite wants checking; need ask who owns the land.

6<sup>th</sup> October Coolagh River Cave  
Solo

Polldonough South entrance found choked by flood debris. In through the field entrance; unsurprisingly branches and rubbish bags had also collected here. Pushed through the "log" jam to clear the route; overwhelmed by horrific stench, vomiting immediately. Had pushed into the carcass of a long dead animal; swiftly wriggled downstream as fast as possible, tumbled about in the stream attempting to wash off the stuff stuck all over; vomited again, used a stone to scrap off the fatty muck covering head and shoulders. Didn't fancy returning to surface by that route; at Balcombe's Pot stripped off, washed self and kit more thoroughly: the constant stench horrific. Abandoned the idea of going to the bottom; headed out via Polldonough.

1<sup>st</sup> November Moss Rake

Martin Bishop, Paul Thompson, Vic Holland, Alan Harrison, Young Steve Watson, A late start due to volume of drink drunk; Bishop appeared ready for burial, the second casualty this morning. Some going to Hollandtwine to locate the climbing shaft; others going into Buxton, VH needed pick up repaired boots. PT suggested a pint while waiting; finally arrived at Moss Rake. Not enough people to get very far; managed to rig main shaft and two climbing shafts; ran out of people, and getting close to opening time. Moss rake has been pushed to a serious depth earlier this year in very unstable conditions.

15<sup>th</sup> November Lancaster – County Pot  
Dave Collins, Eric Thompson, Stewart Sheehan,

Result of chance meet, a swift trip assisting a dig fancied by the team, spent four hours digging near a place called Wretched Rabbit? It's a dry, choked passage some eight feet wide and three foot high approached via much smaller bedding. Connected it'll shorten the time to reach somewhere by an hour, which apparently, normally takes two? They're convinced it'll go; exited County.

17<sup>th</sup> December Fergus River Cave  
Solo

Lucky, Lucky, Lucky, no rainfall for almost five days. On arrival found Noel Walsh had kindly filled the bottles; ready to go. NW now, very kindly dropped kit and diver at the gate. Below in the valley, the river had very little flow. From his dive report it sounded that the crawl Tony Boycott found could be dug out. Carried one of the 22's, and lead weights through to sump one. Noted the smooth surface throughout the mud banks; no

recent sign of cavers. Still early so returned to “CPC 60” to collect rest of the kit and carry it in. Well ahead of schedule; exited and hitched to Doolin: can dive fresh tomorrow.

18<sup>th</sup> December Fergus River Cave

Solo

Yet another lift from Noel: a nice bloke. Swiftly to sump one; kitted up, dived, and swiftly located the exit. Tony Boycott had said to free dive sump one keep to the right; spot on. Followed TB’s line through to III; here the description was of a long, low crawl, partially choked but with air space. Reached the end of the left crawl pushed by TB, much heavy clay silt and boulders present. Began to dig along the centre of the crawl finding the occasional boulder well stuck, others easy enough to move were stacked to the side; after three hours returned to the kit for a drink and a Mars bar. Now stopped quickly became cold, returned to dig for another two hours; produced a body size trench some twenty feet long. Above the small air gap the passage seems to continue, perhaps gain height? Other than dropping a bottle, returning through the “Nick”, bending its valve stem had an uneventful exit. First car to appear stopped; got a lift to Doolin from Paddy Sharry who insisted he’d fit all the dive kit in his packed van, rather than arrange another trip for its recovery. Enroute PS described how he had worked in Toomullin Mine.

19<sup>th</sup> December Poulmagollum

Solo

After breakfast Doll rang Michael, the milk man, and told him drop PC off at the lane to Slieve Elva, where, almost immediately picked up by Albert Stringer, who dropped PC off near the cave entrance. The noise of the cascade clearly heard crossing the field: the climb a little greasy; stream levels in the main passage a little high. At the first waterfall the volume was enormous, deafening; the air vibrating. Beyond, the stream significantly increased; at main junction the volume from Branch passage augmented the already large main stream. Just downstream the low opening, through which the entire river passes, had sumped: turned about and made a tiring exit against the current. Changing, a car stopped, driven by Mary, who enquired why are you undressing in the rain? On explaining was offered lunch with her family. Clean and fed John, the husband drove, and joined PC for pints in Doolin.

20<sup>th</sup> December Poulacapple

Solo

Hitched to Corkscrew Hill; walked up the track to the summit. Returned to the big depression to try and dig between the boulders. Bit of a lost cause, the boulders are large and appear too close together to make any real progress inbetween. Walked back to the road along the shale boundary; found several streams sinking into small holes. The run off from the unceasing rain indicating sinks obscured among dense grass and reed cover. Near the road met a farmer leaving out cattle feed; Caoimhín, showed PC several other sites most pretty much south-ish, toward the road. These appear immature sites and extend beyond the main road, southward; one interesting sink, taking a good sized stream is some hundred metres northwest of his farm. After asking of other holes Caoimhín insisted PC work away, wander about the place and call in anytime when passing. Rain increased, by chance got a lift back to Doolin church by the Priest from Galway, who preached incessantly on the perils of strong drink, and loose women.



21<sup>st</sup> December Corkscrew Hill

Solo

Hitched to Corkscrew Hill; planning to prospect the area south of the main road and west of the Noughaval road, which drains away south-ish: very rough ground. Found several sites the most interesting a partly choked pot with the sound of a stream not too far below. Pulled out boulders and got down some six feet; it could be an easy dig, with help. Removing the spoil from such depths and in such confines means a long term, awkward solo effort. Carried on south following the shale boundary; the ground a sod to traverse. Eventually reached Noughaval locating several streams, the one sinking at the bend in the road seemingly the largest, following rain. Asking ownership the found Mr Hynes in his farmyard who said he had no problem with digging the hole out, as it might also improve drainage. Invited to return later for dinner; during which he related how just before the outbreak of WWII, a group of German archaeologists were surveying the area and found a passage beneath the church enclosure, (the present church being originally Church of Ireland and dismantled from its original location in Ballyvaghan). It is said they descended a short shaft and followed a tunnel, during which they “blew a bugle” so their route below could be followed by those on the surface. Distances of over of one hundred yards were sincerely related. This tunnel might be something called a souterrain, and could suggest the site is very ancient; more information on such things desperately needed. Mr Hynes also related how the smaller, adjacent church was once part of an extensive monastic settlement linked closely to the Diocese of Kilfenora. After dinner Mr Hynes dropped PC at the Roadside, where enquiries of the German archaeologists and passage under Noughaval church was known to a surprising number of people; need ask permission from the Priest at Noughaval to look around the church area; whilst avoiding strong drink and loose women.

22<sup>nd</sup> December St Catherine’s – Doolin River Cave

Solo

Rigged the pot with ladder and line; walked up to the farm. Knocked at the farmhouse to ask permission, which Maire swiftly gave with the insistence of breakfast with the family; just coming in from the farm. An hour later, well fed, PC waddled across to the entrance which had a decent size stream sinking; decided to take a slow trip keeping an eye on water levels. Reached the connection, where the water levels were high; waited for ten minutes to confirm level was indeed rising; swiftly exited. Seen by Marie walking back down the track invited in for tea and cake. Mihal asked after his cave; expressing delight at the few photographs recently obtained by PC.

23<sup>rd</sup> December Oughtdarra

Solo

Got a lift north of Poulsallagh Bay, Ballyryan, walked east onto the karst, spent the day prospecting the area; many large grykes, but as yet nothing deeper than two to three metres. Met PJ Cullinan, feeding his cattle, who explained the numerous Faerie forts indicated that long ago this was a well populated, fertile area. Adding that over the years much of the top soil had been washed away by persistent rainfall hence today’s rough uneven surface, and bare areas of limestone. Asked of streams PJ pointed northwest stating the only surface water hereabouts was a small spring on the next terrace above, some forty feet higher. Barely an hour left to dark, with a lot of cloud cover, could expect little usable light from the waning moon. Began to head back to the coast road; saying goodbye PC was invited to stop the night PJ’s home. Mrs Cullinan, his Mother, a delight. A superb evening, she too described this unique area, “The Orchard”, at length; produce

sown in this south facing natural amphitheatre ripens at least a month earlier than elsewhere. Slept on a mat Mrs Cullinan prepared in front the fire; bliss.

24<sup>th</sup> December    Oughtdarra

Solo

Walked northwest from the Cullinan home, eventually found the spring near a small ruined cabin; a single room, so tiny a place: the view stunning, but views won't put food on the table. The spring issues from limestone bedding but is too small to enter. As arranged found Pat Redmond, and other climbers in the Roadside, who had offered squeeze PC into their van to return him to Dublin for the family's Christmas festivities.