

1997

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1st January Collapses, Doonmacfelim Td. – Urchin Cave

Tim Shannon

TS spoke of poutaloons appearing, irregularly in a field above Fisherstreet. He back fills them with sand. Pat Redmond very kindly loaned his new GPS; largest collapses at ITM 506807 x 697164, ITM 506824 x 679141. PR explained the ITM national grid system, which will replace the old NGR grid, being of greater accuracy. Each collapse has sunk three metres. In this vicinity the limestone is covered by sand deposits up to a thickness of ten metres. At Noel O'Connor's, is a collapse at, ITM 506950 x 696911, the western corner of his barn. Rainwater off the barn sinks in this hollow. At the back of Susan Daly's, (O'Connor), place are two others, one in the field, the other right outside the dining room window, ITM 506986 x 696853 and ITM 506990 x 696864. There is a rumour of a hole in the Aille riverbed, near the Castle. All sites are within five hundred metres of each other.

Doubtful of tide height, chanced Urchin's: entrance passage subjected to a metre swell. Laddered down; entered, wash through the boulders too forceful. Headed to McGann's fireside.

2nd January Urchin Cave

Solo

Sea state slight. Less wash entering; water waist deep. Reached the end of main passage. Here the water was greater than chest deep; swam. Took time exiting to admire the sea life; quite the array; care required walking over the floor or touching walls. A buoyancy aid would have been handy.

3rd January Kilfenora

Solo

Shallow conical collapse at Grid Ref 21976 x 93377; in the townland of Ballyclancahill: Kilfenora. The field and surrounding area subject to flooding; though a possible turlough its more likely to be poorly draining land. Two streams converge, one flowing from the east the other from the south. The sink is twenty-seven metres from the verge of the Corrofin – Kilfenora road, (R476). At an altitude of some fifty-two metres; appears to have potential.

4th January Toomullin Phosphate Mine

Solo

Wanted to check on No. 5 adit entrance. Found migration of soil choking the entrance. Three hours digging opened a stable-ish hole. Unwilling to crawl too far; the lamp illuminated the water surface, level pretty much as previously experienced. The nearby, stream saturates the area; destabilizing the entrance surroundings. Will try and find a metal tube to maintain access. Will need ask Petie Tierney for permission.

6th January Tom O'Dwyer's Dig

Located owner of Kilfenora site, thanks to Noel O'Connor; TO'D granted permission to dig. Informing that the new, wider road was laid upon new foundations; accomplished by filling a large hollow near the intended dig site. Before improvement commenced a dairy lorry ran off the road near this spot. To get it back on the road hundreds of pint bottles of milk were dumped into said hollow. The Turlough's obvious sink is some fifty metres from that area.

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18th January Wookey Hole

Martin Bishop

Reviewed lead weight layout, to attempt resolve occasional back ache; repeated trips to the Slot to test the new position deployment; relocated weights suspended on snoopy loops, for swifter/easier/finer repositioning; far, far better. Realize subtly differing kit requires subtle lead repositioning, focusing on this will make diving less of an effort.

Business manic

1st March Wookey Hole

Andy Walchester, Martin Bishop

Training for AW 9:2 to 20: observed AW as methodical, cautious and quietly confident.

23rd March Poulelva - Poulmagollum

K Wills, Alan Steans, Dave Gough, Andrew Walchester, Tony Bennett.

Abseiled Poulelva pleasant amble through to the streamway and out main entrance, into the Irish Arms for a swift few then O'Connor's.

24th March St. Catherine's – Fisherstreet

K Wills, Alan Steans, Dave Gough, Andrew Walchester, Tony Bennett.

High water conditions; a steady trip; AS surprised to experience light issues!!!

25th March Poulmagollum - Poulelva

K Wills, Alan Steans, Dave Gough, Andrew Walchester, Tony Bennett.

Reverse of previous trip, the beddings wetter, following last night's rainfall.

26th March Tom O'Dwyer's Dig

K Wills, Alan Steans, Dave Gough, Andrew Walchester, Tony Bennett.

Pegasus digging extravaganza; frantic excavation soon exposed a loosely compacted area of boulders among fine silt; abandoned dig due to overall instability of the ground. KW videoed the event.

27th March Cullaun I

K Wills, Alan Steans, Dave Gough, Andrew Walchester, Tony Bennett.

A very wet trip; KW videoing this event. A grand day, later relived, by watching KW's video on the TV in O'Connor's Bar. Sat at the back, watching a wider, bemused audience.

28th March Oughtdarra

K Wills

Relocated a sink and small spring at an elevated position west of Lysacht's Cave adjacent the ruined cottage. Interesting hole, 180° to Ballynalacken Castle x 272° to Inis Oir light.

5th April Porth-yr-Ogof

Martyn Farr, Michael Thomas

A Draeger Atlantis re-breather was supplied to assess its potential and suitability for the forthcoming Turkish expedition. Found MT, to be a helpful individual; knowledgeable constructive and pleasant with it; without an attitude. A decent bloke.

April

Lost Brian Murliss

9th April Doolin Mine – Doughbranneen, (Black Head).

Solo

Arranged interview Jack Garrihy, speaking of the mine and his personal experiences; it was enchanting; enjoyed lunch with him.

Departed, headed to a cave reported near the summit of Doughbranneen. This area of Karst is vast and wonderfully remote: description, a small diameter, deep depression on a terrace another 100ft above the fort: fort is at 600ft. Continued ascend the regular limestone terraces; some small seepages noted, on to a broad open area, moved south and began to sweep the area; the surface broken by glaciation. No sign; arrived back at the fort as darkness fell. The place warrants checking.

1st May Stoney Cove, Midlands.

Richard Bull, Martyn Farr

Instructor Richard Bull, Current State Diving, Bristol, conducted part one of a two-part Rebreather Course at Stoney Cove quarry, Midlands. Numerous tests and skills to -10m. Cold conditions. RB impressed at practical skill levels and technical knowledge; nice.

3rd May Elton Mine

Dave Gough, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns, Paul Thompson, Pete Forster
Bank holiday. Shared winching and surface duties with PF; the boys plan to remove a concrete dam, with hammer and chisel and access the passage beyond.

5th May

Lost Rob Palmer

12th May Current State Diving

Richard Bull

Completed training in advanced nitrox gas usage, RB tough on theoretical and practical skills, surprised mathematic content not a personal issue; delighted exam achieved 91%.

15th May Dan-yr-Ogof

Martin Bishop

To the Battle Of Britain Series, entered via the sump at the base of the show cave steps. Pleasant wander, MB impressed with Nick Geh's logical discovery. Called to Martyn.

25th May Stoney Cove, Midlands

Richard Bull, Martyn Farr

Dräger Atlantis re-breather Course, Part Two; tests and emergency scenarios from -20m.

Undated June Yatestoop Sough

Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns, Dave Gough

Got to the connection, found it collapsed; seemingly a regular occurrence. Had fallen in, during the last two weeks. Dug for a while without success; no tools to assist efforts.

22nd June Poulanionain

Solo

Dropped in to see Myles Arkins; long time no see. A very nice hour chatting. Uneventful trip to the chamber, and down to the sump. Seems like more gravel has washed down the streamway. Rolled several large boulders into the area of the rift, at the bottom of main chamber, as a catchment area. Back at the sump began to sweep gravel left and right, this occasion more difficult as the once small, available gap was much smaller. Continued for two hours; some progress, but the gravel is quite fine, therefore unstable during high

flow. Encountered cavers from Sligo, in the small chamber; explaining the aim of the project, most smiled and said little. Don't believe they've ever encountered digging.

23rd June Poulanionain

Solo

Took down ten metres of rope and another plastic tray made from a twenty-five litre water container. Three hours spent dragging back the gravels, packing them above estimated flood level. Wild night in O'Connor's, Pauline dancing up a storm.

24th June Poulanionain

Solo

Took down a sandwich and a flask of tae; planning a good shift. After six hours had created a channel along the rift. Removing gravels in the bedding, left and right, in which to pack large cobbles. Slow crawl out; hot tea, a life saver.

25th June Poulanionain

Solo

More of the same, dragging smaller gravels back to the base of the slope.

26th June Poulsallagh

Solo

Attempt to remove large cobbles presently choking the passage running toward the high point of the western cliff. Estimate it forty metres away? Possible passage entering from the east about eight metres in front of present limit; a feeder to this passage?

27^h June Poulsallagh

Solo

To reduce effort, cobbles placed on the floor where possible, filling gaps, levelling the floor back toward the shaft entrance. Surprise birthday party for Pauline in O'Conner's a long, cracking night of fun and dance.

28th June Poulsallagh

Solo

A late start meant the tide and rough sea conspired to foil digging, managed two hours before spray arrived with thunderous clap sending spray up the passage; exited smartish. Used the remaining daylight prospecting northwards along the coastline.

29th June Toomullin Mine

Jack Garahy

Met JG for another walk around the surface remains; sheer delight, having more of the curious lumps and bumps explained. JG also explained the original route of the river and the area where the ninth century penannular brooch was found.

30th June Loc Mór, Inis Oír.

Pauline Cronin

A smooth crossing, took water samples for Stuart MacManus to determine salinity of the Lough water, being so close to the ocean.

July undated Elton Shaft, Derbyshire

Cheg Chester, Paul Thompson, Pete Foster, Dave Gough, Nigel Burns

Finally breached the old dam, accessing extensive, de-watered system beyond.

1997

17th August Lost Rob Parker, to Four Sharks Hole, Bahamas
RP recovered by Brian Kakuk

11th – 25th August Turkey 97
Martin Farr, Pete Fowler, Tony Donovan
Reconnaissance trip for 1998 expedition, to push Altinbesik. Numerous caves visited and assessed. TD a delightful, capable, consummate team member Of particular interest, the underground city of Derinkuyu, quite wonderful. Experienced a serious bout of food poisoning, really, really serious.

September undated (10th?) Rob Parker's funeral, Bristol
Many in attendance.
After the crematorium, headed into Bristol for a meal. Suggested settle into "The Hare on the Hill", above Stokes Croft; Farr, Bill Stone, Kevin Gurr and many more in attendance. A cracking evening. Long chats with KG and BS; BS kindly inviting PC to visit the States.

September undated (14th?) Swildons XII
Martyn Farr, Gavin Newman
Delivered Parker's remains to XII sump pool.

Illegible entries

12th November Schwyll Rising, Bridgend, Swansea.
Martyn Farr
MF had previously dived to 200m; today's plan; push on. Loaded up with two buoyant line reels and a lead block. Paused for photographs before experiencing the difficulties descending the shaft against the high flow. At -6m needed to squeeze between the pipes and brick foundations. The current here stronger than previously experienced by MF; owing to last night's two inches of rain? Struggled against the flow; depositing the kit at 150m. Return was like doing the Cresta Run: checked an alcove on the junction, some 30m before the base of the shaft; nothing of note. MF dived, picked up the kit, managing reach 260m in the severe flow, quite the achievement.

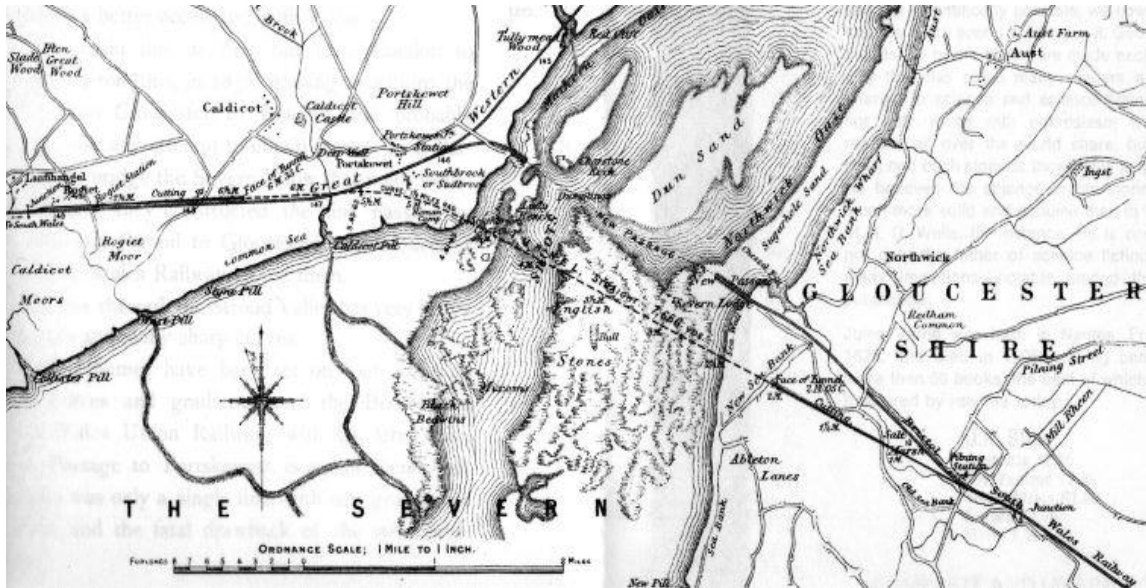
November undated (19th?) The Great Spring, Severn Railway Tunnel.
Martyn Farr, and another nice Welsh Water guide?
Relations with Welsh Water being excellent; chanced requesting permission to visit the Great Spring, with a view to possibly dive it; granted! Arrived Sudbrook pumping station. Here are many remaining features of the huge original project. Though the Cornish engines, are replaced with huge electric motors. So much associated engineering is in situ, to admire. Guided down multiple fixed ladders, using fall arrest devices on taught steel cables. Further descent to the spring conduit, to walk on a timber floor barely above the forceful resurging spring. Passed through the actual door, closed, by Alexander Lambert, to save the project. Witnessed firsthand the volume discharging, exchanged eye contact with MF. There is no chance of diving against such a torrent, unless propelled by hydraulic ram. Heading out, invited to visit the main railway tunnel; emerged from the large maintenance tunnel, upwards between the main railway tracks. Delighted with the visit; not too surprized at the current issuing from the Great Spring.

1997

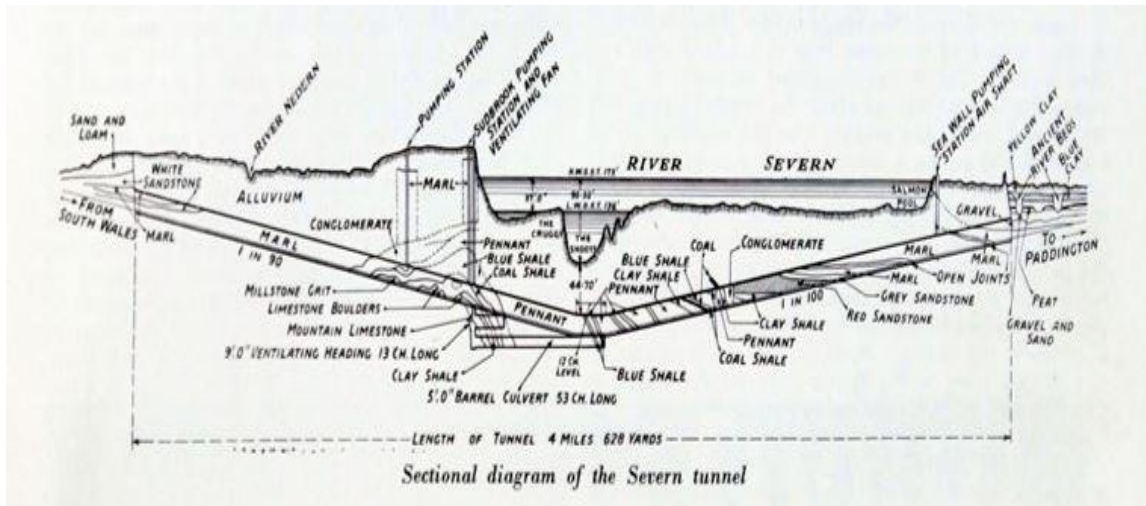


Schwyll Rising

Photo Farr



Route of the Severn Tunnel



Section of Tunnel depth and location of the Great Spring.

19th December Upper Poulmagollum - Pollbinn
Solo

Heavy rain; laddered Pollbinn, used a rope belay off the tree, avoided touching the abandoned ironwork, (farm machinery?), balancing on the lower ledge of the pot. To Poulmagollum, abseiled the short pitch. Pleasant wander upstream in very high-flow conditions; the two metre waterfall presenting a surprizing obstacle. Untangled the ladder from the scattered ironwork in the base of the pot. The stretch in the rope meant the top of the ladder travelled below the edge of the rushes; cautiously climbed up the wet rope. Sorted belay, trebled the rope to reduce the stretch, for the trip tomorrow.

21st December Pollbinn – E3
Solo

Rain eased; heavy since Saturday. The simple, short trip became an endurance test, with the size of stream. Delighted to exit an opening just before the sink of E3. Bliss, sheer

bliss; once or twice had thought, “Táim í dtribloid”; I’m in trouble. Straight into McGann’s, for dry out, warm up and strong drink, in front the fire.

22nd December Kilcorney 1

Solo

Ground remains sodden, light rain topping the content. Called into Michael Davoren for permission; spent time catching up, drinking tae, eating cáca. The turlough, opposite his house was shallow. No turlough in the field outside the entrance. Reached the pot; water five metres below the edge. Exited, said goodbyes, headed to Dublin for the Christmas.

28th December Kilcorney 1

Solo

En-route to Doolin, curious as to how rainfall affects this place. After tae with Michael Davoren, nipped in to see the pot; no water surface visible below. Tony Boycott relates how a UBSS group were chased up the pot and out the cave by swiftly rising water, that eventually sumped the entrance. At the pot, dropped a stone, no splash. Curious; MD reported the light rain had not eased over the last week; though never any real heavy showers, at least a constant drizzle.

29th December Kilcorney 1

Solo

Arrived 9am. Raining; drizzle. Dropped stone, no splash. Laddered the pot, descended. Several pools about, further along the passage encountered the water, waded until balls deep; retreated. Rolling up the ladder, at the edge of hearing was a distant, soft sound. Dropped stone, heard splash, and thud. Could just make out water at the base of the pot. Sheltered by the church, watched the field and entrance, expecting to see the field flood. Dozed off, woke soaked. Nothing appeared in the two hours.

30th December Kilcorney 1

Solo

Back at the pot, after twenty-six hours. Dropped stone, heard splash. Plumbed depth; water approximately nine metres below the pot. Plumbed depth every fifteen minutes; water level rose a metre during two hours. Placed pieces of wood, as tell-tales, along the edge of the pot and five more tell-tales in the entrance passage, at differing heights.

31st December Kilcorney 1

Solo

Arrived 10am; all the entrance passage tell-tales had gone. Found them clustered on the right-hand side of the entrance passage, looking inbye, in a hollow among the boulders. None of the tell-tales on the top edge of the pot had moved. Left them in situ; placed the others at various high and low points, including various heights along the entrance passage. Back for the New Year in O’Conner’s. Met cavers from the Midlands, bemused at set dancing, music and fun. Invited them to come and play, alas they leave tomorrow morning. The poor weather had put them off doing much, fearing flooding; a shame, had met them earlier we could have played together. Delivered them to the New Year party at Susan Daly’s; the four delighted at the numerous stunning women dragging them up to dance. A cracking time.