

2010

9th January Cullaun Five

Cheg Chester

Suggested the Red-Carpet Series, checked on the Rescue Dump, exiting, crawled up Hunch Back Horror to the stal grill. Water bitter cold; four inches of snow.

16th January Poulsallach to Roadford

Solo

Dropped at the bay by Pauline, settled weather, some overcast. Set off south via S4. The shaft just open; though much plastic debris has washed in. To Poulnafearbui, took about 50 minutes. Ascending slightly inland, through terraces, level with the mid-distant high point; nothing of note. Arrived, McGann's after three hours.

5th February Poulmagollum

Cheg Chester, Barry Sudell

A very cold day; swiftly through Muddy Links to Branch Passage. Down to the pitch, abseiled and pulled through. Steady trip out, low stream. A nice, enjoyable trip.



Photo Pat Cronin

Lisdoonvarna – Ballyvaghan road; Cheg changing for Cullaun Five; 9th January

House building continues apace; minor delay as severe weather hinders outside tasks. Now weather proof, can start second fixing.

12th February Knockalough, 15th century Castle, (souterrain?)
Barry Sudell

Rumour inferred an underground passage on the island. Maiden voyage of the inflatable canoe. The first ruin; a small single room dwelling with the door and two windows facing south, the room had a low-pitched roof and single fireplace, (servants' quarters?). This "dwelling" and its walls are in reasonable condition. The adjacent 15th century Gaelic tower house has dimensions of a small engine house. Missing its western wall, the others are six metres high by a metre thick. There is coursed stone work around the north of the island, the best quality opposite the north bank of the lake; a landing place for boats? This Towe House, on an island, (possible Crannog), would be a formidable "refuge" in unsettled times, it appears to have once had three floors, each, perhaps a single room. The "dwelling" has one room, six metres by four, there are no other obvious signs of habitation on the island other than an area that may have once been a vegetable garden? Witnessed a beautiful sunset, lighting low cloud to a breathtaking degree. No souterrain found, maybe never there; the island surface is just above water level.

16th February Pauline admitted to Hospital; bacteriological infection within the bone; danger of losing the finger from a cat bite.

22nd February Still there, infection spreading; consultant warned she may need the hand amputated.

25th February Released from Hospital, hand intact, thank fuck.



Photo Cheg Chester

Entrance to Poulbeagnacoillte, the tight bedding crawl flooded; 14th May

2nd May Coolagh River Cave
Solo

Stable weather. In through the field entrance, stream normal height. Old bits of foam in the roof of the upper end of Double Passage. Used a handline to descent the climb into the main streamway. Stream level fine. Continued upstream above Balcombe's Pot into Polldonough passage. Decided to meander out this route. Still sunny outside; enjoyed the chat with Willie, (Chicken), Scales, owner, invited take tea and cáca.

14th May Poulbeagnacoillte
Cheg Chester

Heavy rain these couple of weeks; found the dig flooded; scouted the area for other sites.

16th May Polldonough
Cheg Chester

Rain the previous evening, stream level at entrance half welly depth and quite wide. Encountered normal clothed German tourists just inside the entrance. A swift trip to first bedding cave, through small rift to a pot then down to bedding just before main drain. Down Balcombe's Pot, then up the climb to Polldonough South passage, out to a beautiful day; another handline found on the climb.

19th – 24th May Snowdon
Nigel Burns

Drove to Knock Airport; flight to Bristol; arrived 15:00. Picked up on A38 by NB, straight to North Wales. 20:00 pitched camp.

20th May Lead Mine

Climb to rock strata high above valley, via old lead mine, located three trial levels, none driven far, forty metres max. Continued to +2000ft, skirting spur, located strata of sea bed. Also, found many fine fossils on level area at top, behind main outcrop.

21st May Snowdon

Set off to climb opposite peak, weather very bright, reached +1800ft; left knee an issue; abandoned trip. Limped back for a brew, off to check out local slate quarry, back late.

22nd May Snowdon

Knee a pain, to rest it, drove to book shop. Later tried to enter quarry, security man was present. To Hafren Mine, and sites exposed by forest clearance, recorded several levels.

2nd June Doughbranneen, Black Head
Solo

Prospecting and exercising knee, walked the entire 700ft contour; found several minor springs in the SW quadrant; no evidence of cave.

6th June Kilinaboy
Tony Boycott, Jayne Stead

Noted escarpment south of the short cut on the Kilinaboy - Gort Road; arranged to walk the area. The escarpment is longer in length than first assessed, with a Turlough present. Thoroughly dry today, many erratics present, some, apparently freshly split from frost action at the beginning of the year.



Photo Nigel Burns

Undulating rock is the fossilized bed of the sea; + 2000ft

12th June Slieve Elva - Doolin

Solo

Walked home from Poulmagollum: twelve miles, four hours. Several sites noted along the western flanks of Knockaunmountain; each worth a close look. Spoke to Christy O'Brien of the rumour Pollomega and Poulballynahown been filled. CO'B replied maintenance of land drainage required keeping them open, so, no, they're not filled in.

16th June Doughbranneen, Black Head

Solo

Prospected the area northwest of the 650ft contour; incorporating fitness; delighted to find small, choked depressions nothing worth digging: knee behaving.

17th June Pigeon Hole, Cong, Co Mayo

BBC Radio x 2, Helen? Mike Simms, (UBSS)

Asked by BBC for an interview concerning the underground world of the Cong Isthmus, between Mask and Corrib.

30th June Cullaun 2

Solo

Sped to pool chamber along the high-level route, the whole cave dry, torrential rain forecast tonight predictions in excess of 30mm. Knee holding up well.

10th July Lough Inchquinn – Fergus River

Barry Sudell

The plan, canoe from Cross Bridge, (R261x918) to the slip, at the car park, on the south side of Lough Inchquinn (R275x894). Chances good of noting sinks or resurgences. The weather, deteriorating; light rain initially accompanied the journey. The first hundred metres was shallow, requiring walking the canoe through rapids. There then followed a pleasant paddle through meadows and fields with swan's, cygnets and cows for company. Rain passed; sun shone. The river meanders among pasture, passing below a superb double arched stone bridge (Poplar Bridge, R271x911), reachable along a small road from the Kilinaboy - Corrofin road. Found no evidence of sinks or resurgences. A mile on the river enters Inchquinn; here for a distance of some hundred metres a vast weed bed obstructs the route to the lough; the low water conditions: forced to walk the canoe to deep water. Unfortunately, the shallow water hid deep silt in which both sank up to the family jewels. Using the canoe as support, gained the deep water and continued to the southern edge of the lough, passing two islands enroute and a ruined building. Arrived as the shower turned torrential. A grand day out. Two hours; the route passed through limestone; no sign of springs or risings.

12th July Poulmagollum

Solo

Late start 19:30, made for Poulmagollum in threatening weather. Midges overpowering; used handline to descend entrance climb: a relief to get into the cool below. Steady trip to main junction. Small stream issuing from Branch Passage; continued downstream. There remain the ever-greasy cobbles underfoot. Nice to see clay figures being made. Through to Poll Eilbh; back to Poulmagollum. Mark Lumley arriving soon.

15th July Poulnafearbui (Radgers)

Mark Lumley

Started clearing old bedding accumulated by Mr. Brock, (or Mr. Reynard), in the prospective dig. Meanwhile ML rummaged in the thicket, the left of centre of the dry river feature discovering a small cavity. Six hours, and the cavity could be stood up in and a way on seen beneath a small constriction.

16th July Poulnafearbui

Mark Lumley

Returned weary after yesterday: an awkward dig beneath the constriction. At four metres the rift passage turns ninety degrees; narrowing. The echo, and stream beckoning. Dug down out the sandy floor, on the bend, to deepen the area. As ML couldn't turn and also to allow spoil from in front to be dumped into said hole. ML, reached along the 0.4m wide rift with a Cornish shovel. Very quickly reaching another squeeze. Here, after a brief delay the passage beyond entered; decorations cover the walls, and delightful gour pools. With the sound of the stream echoing the pair crawled to the corner, encountering a streamway, one metre high, two wide. Upstream led to a junction; up to the right, goes to a breakdown area with dig potential. A vertical rift straight ahead was not entered. Straw formations along the streamway; care taken crawling beneath. From the main junction, downstream, the sloping stream passage was followed for four metres, turning left into a

crawl. After three metres, i gravel constriction, easily dug, and a semi-buried boulder beyond. Surfaced delighted, called CC asking if available tomorrow to join BS and Team to explore further. A very fine session.



Photo Mark Lumley

View Southwest, PC at Poulnafearbui

17th July Poulnafearbui

Mark Lumley, Cheg Chester

The plan; to push loose ends left yesterday. Downstream, beyond the gravel choke went a further eight metres to a boulder constriction and duck. This boulder needs reducing, to pass. Upstream, work carried out at a boulder ruckle, the area a little daunting, though workable. PC made a pace and compass survey to obtain general development; main streamway trends south of east. PC & CC will conduct a survey soon. Abandoned site, for the meantime, to continue work on the dig at the castle. Length; conservative seventy metres; delighted.

18th July Dig near Ballynalacken Castle (L90)

Mark Lumley

INGR R1007 0045: Landowner Joe Garner

Previously visited 8th June 2008; exploratory probe, enquiries eventually found JG, the owner, resident in the USA most of the year, delayed project until permission obtained. Granted permission from JG on the 16th July. The sink was started and another review of the potential boulder made. Still not sure if it's solid or just a huge boulder, need exercise caution. The area around the depression is unstable, wet and muddy; a sling was hung from a tree branch for hauling. A four-inch pipe was installed to conduct road drainage beneath the proposed spoil heap location.



Photo Mark Lumley

ML & PC after the breakthrough; Poulnafearbui.

19th July Dig near the Castle, L90

Mark Lumley

13:30 Met with ML in McGann's for lunch, after returning from a fishing trip with CC. At the dig continued to excavate soil and mud, having lifted out a boulder with a 2:1 system. Further down encountered falls from the loose stratigraphy; evacuated dig to observe any movement of the potential, large boulder. Midges awful.

19th July Urchins Cave

Mark Lumley

16:30 LW 17:59. Neaps. Laddered to boulder, climbed down the rest. Rough sea conditions; swell two metres. Water depth in the passage, balls deep. Accompanied by surges of sea water made it in through the beddings; ML took photos, swiftly exiting.

20th July Slieve Elva - Pollapooka 3

Mark Lumley

Prospecting north end of Slieve Elva; could not locate a site previously seen by PC. Pollapooka 3, M1479 0539 (taken by two Garmin Etrex): some eight metres of near vertical wriggling to the base of the entrance rift, a short squeeze to the head of a six-metre-deep rift; a problematic place to dig. Prospecting north of Pollapooka 3, found a collapse in the edge of limestone; cold draught issuing, (L91)

29th July Poulfaoicaislean L90

Paul McGrath, Conor McGrath, Barry Sudell, Cheg Chester

No stream at all. Started digging with an eye to the huge boulder, hauled out several large rocks that gradually exposed a vertical face. Further work suggests the rock might be solid: but doubtful. Used a builder's ladder to avoid disturbing the unstable edge.

5th August Poulfaoicaislean

Conor McGrath, Barry Sudell, Cheg Chester

19:00. Continued digging below the rock, indications suggest it is a large boulder; proof came with the large crowbar and removing some overburden. It appears to be a boulder at least two metres in diameter. Plan to temporarily install telegraph poles to shore up this monster, in order to access beneath for further assessment.

7th August Pouldubh

Pauline Cronin

Pauline fancied a trip; escorted her to the old terminal choke. Quite wet, following the recent showers.

15th August Poulfaoicaislean

Tony Boycott

Picked up TB; borrowed Mattie's trailer to transport lengths of telegraph pole to the dig. Very hot day; repeatedly stung by something sharp and painful.

18th August Poulcaherdoon

Robin Sheene, Tony Boycott, Terry Casserly + 2 American visitors

Invited to assist them digging; RS has plotted the dig as a close bet to enter Poulmagrai beyond its sumps; this excellent shaft is the result. Thirty buckets of stone raised.

19th August Poulnafearbui

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

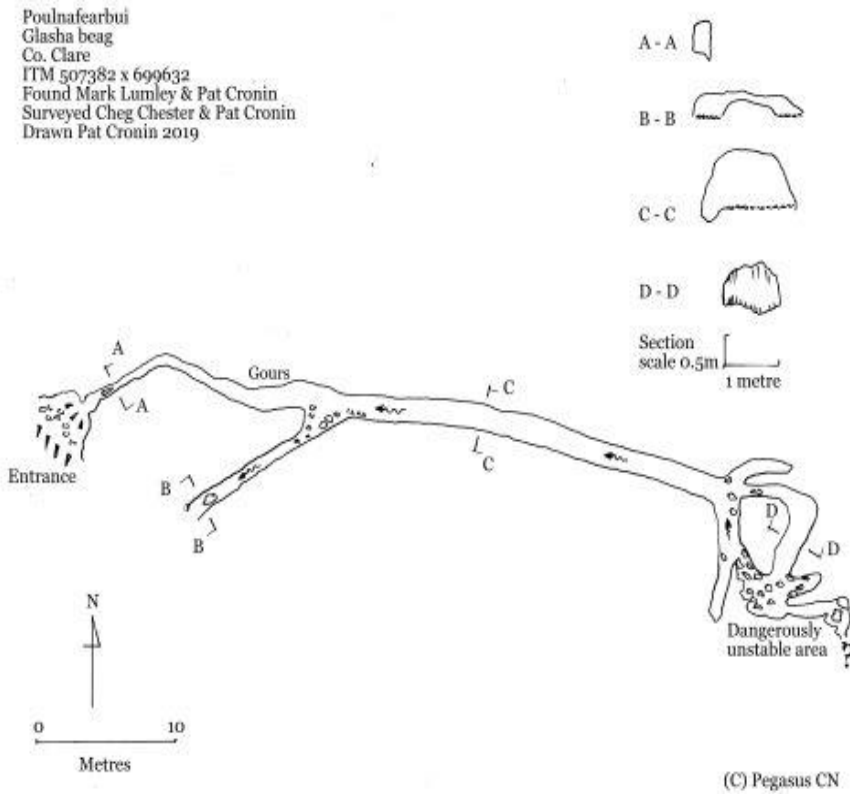
Once in TB took photos. Near the entrance junction then upstream to the boulder area. Using CC's cheating sticks removed large and small debris. The efficacy of the sticks a surprise to TB, particularly when removing stones as big as dustbin lids. There is still concern over safety, the roof appears not to have moved, but looks like it could. PC took monitoring measurements; discussed with CC placement of timber supports. TB took a video of the cheating sticks in action. As the team prepared to leave PC threw stones through the crawl; two hit water. Out to a misty evening; 21:20, some 2.5 hours. An excellent, enjoyable, productive trip.

23rd August Poulnafearbui

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The team returned with a section of railway sleeper to support the suspect area prior to advancing toward the pool. After setting the timber in place, CC inched forward along the

flat-out crawl; PC guiding his cautious advance, warning CC keep his arse low down. CC exited, PC entered, managing to view to the right of the pool area. The pool does seem the main way on; maneuvered right, under an aven to surface; seemingly formed on a fault. A large slice of rock has fracturing from the shaft side. Tapering to a point, it rests on a pebble the size of a pigeon's egg; all this rests on a lump of granite in the floor. A gap 0.5m wide and 2.5m high is formed within this fracture. Beyond this dodgy area, a small opening is seen in the southeast corner, partially obstructed by boulders. Manageable, it is not practicable to remove these rocks along the present size of the crawl. TB entered and probed the depth of the pool; a metre deep, with gravel bottom. The way beneath the breakdown chamber is still an option though cramped, likely safe... to a point. The other option is to lower the floor of the crawl by some two feet and support the whole ceiling forward the corner where it turns southeast. After a brief chat attacked the area two metres to the north of the crawl, progress two metres before encountering a narrowing of conditions and another area of suspect ceiling, more so than the crawl. This decision may be a wrong one, perhaps decreasing the overall stability? TB wriggled off downstream to assess destroying of the boulder obstructing the duck. During which became stuck, dug his way out through the gravel crawl around the other side of the boulder.



Poulnafearbui

25th August Poul Caher Dhuin
 Tony Boycott, Robin Sheene, Terry Casserly, Quentin Cowper,
 Took TB's drill to cap the two boulders in the floor. TC arrived just after, followed by RS
 then QC. QC took over capping, once TB exhausted his batteries. A lot of spoil removed.

26th August Poulnafearbui

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

TB to plug and feather the boulder upstream the duck; CC followed him as backup. PC to digging around the left of the breakdown area. CC joined PC making a metre of progress. Meanwhile checks were made of the collapse to the right of the passage. There is an extension to the roof of the bedding that should allow safe cover; also discovered the floor of the bedding has begun to step down in line with the roof. In the confined duck TB managed, superbly to knock a few bits off the boulder, a big lump remains. Exited to a beautiful sunset, stopped for a good while in McGann's.

28th August Cullaun C5d

Tony Boycott

Both had an interest locating the entrance C5d; in good weather set off. PC had a bearing from the survey for its relative position in relation to C5; TB had an INGR for it. Results inconclusive, the area recently decimated by Coillte harvesting the pine forest; terrain is like the Somme, destroyed and difficult to traverse: let alone locate a small opening.

1st September Poul Chair Dhuin

Tony Boycott, Robin Sheene, Quentin Cowper,

TB & PC first at the dig; joined later by RS, then QC. Midges made life a misery.

2nd September Poulnafearbui

Conor McGrath, Barry Sudell

19:00, tourist trip to show CMcG & BS the new find, exited to another stunning sunset; McGann's until very late: encountered two M.U.S.S members Jill and one other?

5th September Doughbranneen, (Black Head)

Solo

Told of a cave in the south valley heading up to Aghaglinny depression. Located a small passage, two metres high, a metre wide and eighteen long, to a choke, some decorations. Terrific storm; lightning striking the summit: watched the show from the eastern cliff.

11th September Poulsallagh to McGann's

Solo

Weather unsettled: intermittent showers. In the eastern corner of the of the bay, where the coast turns south, above the top bench, is a cliff face over two hundred metres long, approach heavily vegetated. Only visible ascending eastward from the beach. Further south, along the coast, three hundred metres north of Poulnafearbui, at the very top of the shallow dry stream valley, is another dig site, (L93). A vegetated depression, with a wall covering all but three of its sides: an ill-defined path passes beside this ancient site. Poulnafearbui has proven cave passage is present, potential for this site increases.

16th Sept Poulnafearbui area

Mattie Shannon

A swift walk before dark to attempt confirm entrance GPS reference and the depression to the north. North site; R07647 x 99785. Poulnafearbui R07420 x 99618



Photo Cheg Chester

Poulnafearbui streamway, near main junction

30th Sept Balch Cave, Fairy Cave Quarry
ATLAS boys & Barry Sudell

Assisted Tav at the bottom of the pitch moving bags from Carpal Tunnel to the winch, assisted TB carrying them to surface. Picked up snappers for use in Poulnafearbui.

8th October Cullaun 2

Solo

An exercise trip; main light failed, deployed backup; ventured as far as Pool Chamber.

10th October Aghaglinny depression

Solo

Went again to inspect this huge depression, it is majestic, a huge collapsed chamber. A sink in its base, believe it the most likely source for the cascades above the coast road.

17th October Cullaun 2

Solo

Very wet of late; good stream flowing, tried to take photo of the cascades; poor results. Scampered to the top of the terminal pitch; exiting the upper dry streamway; knee OK.

21st October Gleninagh South Cave
Solo

Started at the lighthouse: westerlies, force 8. Took shelter in Caherdoonfergus, +600ft. Crossed Doughbranneen, +1040ft, an exposed peak; hurried to the shelter of the eastern slopes. Base of the Aghaglinny depression wet; a small stream sinking beneath a boulder. Continued east over the summit of Aghaglinny South, +1040ft. Descended to the saddle, +700ft; the old route from Rathborney to Gleninagh. Began searching, one kilometre east of the pass. Found GSC on the south side of a low ridge; a large dry gulley ascends to the south: memory not entirely shot. Noel Walsh, Jim Shannon and others dug this site over several years. Removing a huge amount of spoil, much of the debris created when the overhang was blown up; an attempt to fill the hole, preventing beasts being lost. It is a site well worth digging: remote, few will ever be interested pursuing this project. It has huge potential. Ten-kilometre round trip; knee did well, strengthening.

25th October Doughbranneen, Black Head
Mattie Shannon

Encountered MS, whilst enroute, he expressed his wish to accompany. Followed him back to Doolin, to pick him up, after he returned the Coast Guard jeep. A painful walk to the cairn; cold 50mph winds; knee protested enough to abandon prospecting. Persuaded MS to wander around the mountain following the 500ft contour, looking for cave or springs, several noted, all issuing from impenetrable beddings.



Photo Tony Boycott

PC drilling at Poulfaõicaislean: 28th Oct.

27th October Faunarooska

Tony Boycott

Following heavy rain showers, walked to the entrance, passing out Pollballiny and Hawthorn entrances. Straight to the pretty area just before the increase in passage size; out to a clear night sky. Inisheer, red sector, clearly visible.

28th October Poulfaicaislean

Tony Boycott

Earlier, managed obtain a generator, SDS Max drill and a 30mm x 900mm drill bit; picked up TB, straight to the dig. Minor issue with 110v cable, once repaired drilling commenced. Shortly after starting to drill torrential rain arrived, adding to the saturated ground. A good stream running into the base of the hole, no ponding at all: water freely draining away. The 700mm x 30mm diameter hole was eventually completed by dusk; equipment area cleared. Rain. Return tomorrow to complete the other two holes for NJ.

29th October Poulfaicaislean

Tony Boycott

Arrived 10:00, started drilling, using smaller diameter pilots assisting overall speed. Almost completed the task when the generator ran out of fuel.

31st October Poulfaicaislean

Tony Boycott, Nicky Johnson, Barry Sudell,

Arrived and assisted NJ; charge fired; observed effect, lump of rock whistled overhead, passing over the road. Broke off a serious amount of the monster.



Photo Pat Cronin

BS & NJ after the fact

14th November Poulawillin

Solo

Weather cold, but dry. Domestic rubbish in the entrance and scattered along the passage, which made the decision to not go along the tight crawl. Judging from the refuse strewn along the bottom of the rift, the crawl would be awful. Reached the pitch, looking down could see many more pieces of dead plastic and tins; exited more than a little saddened.

House construction nearing completion.

21st November Poulfaicaislean

Cheg Chester, Barry Sudell

Arrived and cleared the area of debris, CC turned up and began to review the next phase. BS arrived shortly after. It was thought assembling four strong pallets as a digging frame would be the most effective method of shoring the uppermost area of the hole as the shaft progresses downward; ideally not too far. One problem is the stance, the area around the shaft; steep and muddy with little to firmly stand on. The three boulders, at one hundred and fifty kilos apiece, need reducing; the shaft floor requires leveling then the frame can be put in place. The plan; in the week sort the boulders for the weekend.

November undated (25th?) Doolin River Cave

Solo

Weather settled; laddered Fisherstreet, abseiled in. Airspace, three feet. No specific plan other than a wander; reached the connection. Enjoyed the trip so exited the same route.

31st December Inagh River

Barry Sudell

In search of limestone. From the bridge on the coast road, canoed upstream for a mile until extensive shallows impeded the trip. About turned and canoed to the coast road and back upstream to the start, a lovely trip. In the banks, on either side, no limestone seen. Checking map, found had travelled up the wrong tributary, the Dealagh River; that joins the Inagh River near the castle upstream of the Liscannor bridge. Hidden at high tide.