

2017



Considines Cave, 22nd September 2016

Cheg Chester

2nd January Considines Cave

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The first digging trip of the year; delighted to encounter JN and wife KN on site. A cold clear bright winters day, the ground very wet and frosty, a small stream present. The recent heavy rainfall had washed away the small mud dam which formed the small reservoir supplying the hose pipe, swiftly repaired the team descended and began shoring. Cautious removal of stones meant a sort of “controlled collapse” of the debris from behind and above. As part of the rift has narrowed work here is little constricted nonetheless with the combined support four pieces of shoring were juggled into position and secured; following CC's suggestion horizontal lengths of 10mm rebar were pushed between the stones, behind the shoring, to support the disturbed debris. With the support cable moved to the lower shoring and secured PC took over the hauling while TB barrowed. CC then cleared the floor along with the debris slope toward the shoring. Another two pieces of shoring were fitted, once again inserting rebar with timber lathes placed on top to control any vertical migration of debris as new sections of shoring below are inserted. Large rocks continued to appear, many were “Lamped” reducing both their size and weight. During one “Lamping” episode the section of floor beneath the “Lamped” rock sank 50mm! The draught was clearly felt today by both TB and CC issuing from among the floor debris. A lot of the walls and some of the timber shoring were dry. TB took back the rope to wash: a good session. PC leaves for Panama soon, but will be there for the Thursday. To the Roadside for JS's porter cake and pints Hrs 13, 302

5th January Considines Cave

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

A cold enough evening chilled by the northern wind the ground beginning to dry out; a small stream present. The plan: for CC to complete the installation of the second ladder fixings, and dig. JW digging, CC barrowing, PC hauling. A steady, regular pace dropped most of the floor to about one metre below the bottom most lintel of the northern ginging; so the depth is now some ten metres. Large boulders continue to regularly appear, the final one requiring the three to haul it to surface, estimated at 58 kilos. The floor pile moved again under JW's efforts the disturbed boulders appearing to settle; perhaps a safety line is required? From -9 metres the west wall of the rift has gently sloped inward gradually narrowing the floor area. Fortunately, at -10 metres, looking through the boulders, it appears to step back under itself, similar in form to the previous step at around -5 metres, the subtle slope also occurs at the narrows, directly beneath the alignment of the ladder way. The east wall however continues on down vertically. Once the fill at the base of the shoring is removed another ladder will be needed.

NB. The impact load on digger from a 1kg stone falling from the platform would be in the neighbourhood of 100kg, its not the sort of neighbourhood to be in; so no movement of spoil or materials whatsoever around the shaft collar while the hauling lid is open. To the Roadside for men's talk and pints

Hours 9, 311

8th January to 10th February; Panamá 2017

James Cobbett, Roger Day, Dig Hastilow

Left Doolin the 8th January by car to Galway to catch the airport bus to Dublin. Meeting with DH and RD in Schipol for the Tucumen flight: assemble at JSC's place in Panama City the evening of the 9th January. The plan: to focus on four project areas.

One: Lago Bayano, (Panamá province).

Two: Yaviza, (Darien province).

Three: Boca de Tulu, (Panamá province)

Four: Ailigandi River Cave (Darien province)

Report in progress; completed 14th April 2017.

8th Jan Considines Cave from PCN log

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Housekeeping day in absence of PC departing to Panama

Cleared brush from the boulder chute and measured up for tyres; before they are acquired, worth putting the 4 short pole sections in place as rounded boulders could just go far enough from the chute now. CC descended & removed more mud, then continued the ginging of the North Rift down nearly a metre on a base of rebar. More mud removed & there doesn't appear to be any left here now. TB hauling: much easier than expected, possibly due to Aloe Vera intake, but definitely much less friction without the crab atop the pulley and also no accumulative spin. Loose boulders not used in ginging rearranged at the bottom, one extra large one may require gads or plug & feathers.

3 Hours (314)

19th January Considines

Jim Warny, Matt Randall, Cheg Chester

Two short lengths of Telegraph pole were fitted at the top of the shoring providing a barrier against tipped spoil from falling down the ladder way. These will eventually be replaced with a stack of large tyres (850mm outside diameter) forming a barrier up to ground level. With CC digging and JW & MR hauling / barrowing the floor was lowered to approximately 300mm below the step-back on the west side. MR changing

with CC later on in the evening There is now an unstable pile of rocks forming a ramp up to the shoring which will need removing next. The south end continues to widen and may present a problem with finding a vantage point to rest the required ginging on. This should be checked at the next session. Cheg Hours 329

13th February Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

10:00 start, the ground wet: recent rainfall apparently being heavy: a small stream present. The working platform pristine condition; no doubt scoured by the rain. The plan; recent ginging had suffered from collapse of wet clay; likely the result of the high level stream discharging just short of the original north rift pot finding its way down through the debris, so need to extend the pipe and dig. PC to digging at the base of the shoring with CC in support at arms length from beyond the narrows, TB hauling, (his returned ability to haul kibbles the result of a Hawaiian masseur ... huba huba! With TB's new found flexibility the kibbles fair whizzed up the shaft. As the floor at the base of the south rift was reduced PC dropped a small boulder, which punched a hole in the floor to expose a large void beneath them. Nervous chuckles accompanied further careful spoil removal. The east wall below the shoring is seen to be significantly widening this may present issues for future shoring. The two remaining pieces of pole were fitted to secure the base of loose hanging boulders, other support packing was installed; more poles needed. With the shoring completed as far as possible PC gave TB a break hauling. CC eventually cleared the shaft of all stacked spoil, which was quite an amount. PC abseiled down to extend the stream pipe to discharge directly down the old pot; this needs further work to allow caving access to the pot. TB measured the depth at 10.7 metres. To the Roadside where PC received abuse and hugs from Billy. The team regaled the prodigal digger of the powerful warm draught experienced during the last session; pints of Black and Gold most welcome; long time no decent drink. Hours 15, 344

16th February Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

An overcast day: occasional light drizzle: a good size stream. The plan: to sort the area in the northern rift to complete the ginging and dig. TB digging: PC hauling and CC barrowing. A good amount of spoil lifted, depth attained later measured at over eleven metres. Joss sticks were used to observe the draught, temperature at the base of the shaft was 7.7C at surface 8.9C; the draught sucking in. TB back filled the large voids in the floor that had appeared, with cobbles to stabilize this area beneath the front of the south shoring. TB and CC exchanged tasks, CC completing the ginging using a stemple he designed to hold the soggy debris in place whilst installing the ginging stonework, which is now some seven metres in height/depth. TB used his battery grinder to swiftly cut 25mm rebar to aid ginging support. The aluminium ladder presently rests upon very unstable ground; this area being some 1.5 metres above the actual shaft bottom, care is required. The next fixed ladder will have to contend with the "narrows", fixing it to the front of the ladder above will likely best the best solution for offsetting it to reduce the effect of the narrowing rift formation. The new hosepipe purchased by TB, was used with great effect by CC to hose down the dig area. To the Roadside for drink Hours 15, 359

20th February Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Poor visibility due to low cloud: drizzle: a good sized stream running. The plan: as PC had obtained a further sixteen one metre sections of poles on Saturday shoring was to be the focus. TB hauling, PC shoring, CC in support. Five sections of poles were swiftly

inserted and the area behind back filled with stone. The support cable then lengthened. Reaching the second ladder to climb out to assist TB hauling became an issue with the regular removal of the spoil at the base of the shoring. CC reset the shoring cable support, and the task repeated with a further three pieces of shoring inserted. However, with the east wall curving away a short section of pole was placed vertically to accept the shoring and keep it as inline as possible. The ladder issue was revisited, likely solved by the use of the very slightly narrower ladder already on site, which should pass down between the narrows without too much hassle. The distance between the bottom of the second ladder and the base of the shoring area is presently 3.6 metres. The aluminium ladder is now too short. Forty five sections of poles have been installed to date, the view from the shaft bottom quite striking. A bone was found in the south rift deep among the washed stone, this has been given to TB to investigate. An excellent session with a lot accomplished. To the Roadside for pints

Hours 15, 374

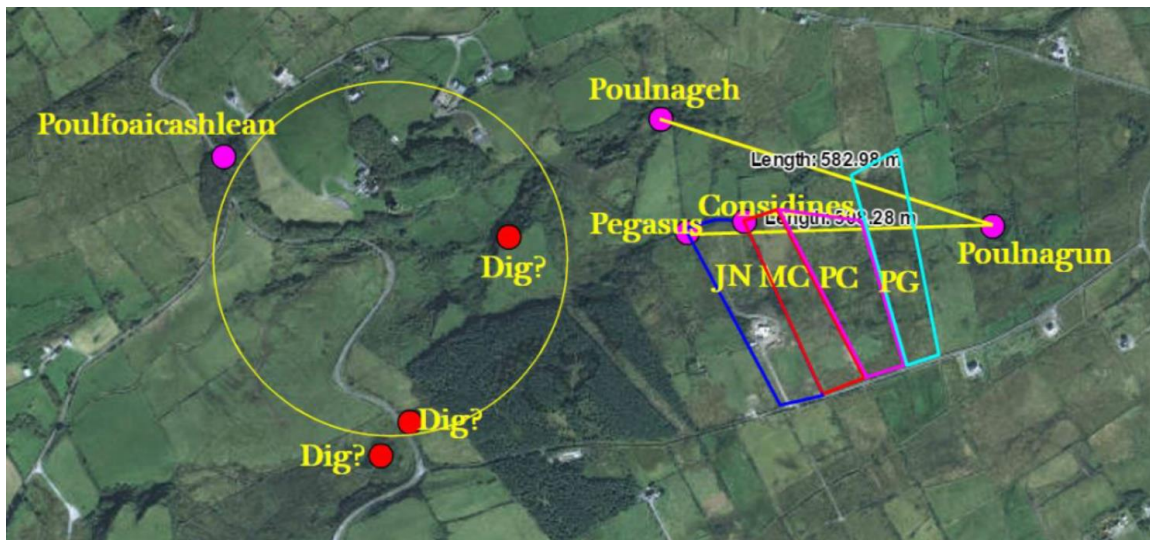


Image to reconcile land owners and known sites.

23rd February Considines

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Storm Doris had all but passed leaving in its wake busted trees and minor flooding. It did however blow away the clinging fog. A fair sized stream running: evidence of extensive flooding at the base of the shaft. Though the west wall almost dry from the draught. A swift assessment for the next section of ladder established the 3.8 metre length need be cut in half to manage its installation in the narrow rift section. CC digging, PC hauling, JW barrowing. The debris from the last shoring session was cleared and an exploration of the area below the narrows conducted. The area does widen slightly so access through this point should be possible when reached. CC and JW exchanged jobs; the floor was then lowered by around a half metre. The exposed clay deposit in the northern rift will be attended during the next ginging session. The west wall continues down vertically, the east side bulging slightly. A good sized joint – rift is beginning in the west wall widening as it descends, goods news, the room is needed. The base of the southern rift beyond the narrows is now some four foot above the main shaft floor. Over the next few sessions the ladders need fitting, the ginging needs extending, the southern rift floor needs lowering which means all the poles in stock will be used, more required. Peering through the loose debris of the narrows the irregularity of the east wall seems to continue therefore the

next cut of poles should be left and cut to suit whatever span is uncovered. To the Roadside for fun Hours 7.5, 381.5

27th February Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Storm Ewan had passed dumping a lot of rain therefore a decent sized stream was running: a cold day with showers of snow, hail and rain. The base of the shaft had been thoroughly washed removing some of the exposed clay deposit. The plan: to install the third fixed ladder. The 3.8 metre ladder was cut in two to allow diggers to wriggle into the main shaft between its lower end and the floor of the ladder way. A lot of juggling was involved positioning the ladder precisely in the confined rift. Eventually after almost two hours the task was completed. CC digging, TB barrowing PC hauling. The area in front the shoring was removed in preparation for the next session, a slope constructed to allow for further debris to slide down into the main shaft for easier loading and hauling. The remaining clay deposit in the north rift then removed ready for the next metre of ginging. To the Roadside for well earned pints Hours 13.5, 395

2nd March Considines

Cheg Chester, later Tony Boycott

Cold and damp with heavy rain midday: a normal stream running. The plan: to complete preparations for the ginging. CC digging: PC hauling. Progress was slow as the collapsing clay was gradually removed and stonework fitted to stabilize the area. Half the main shaft floor was lowered by a half metre. The rain increased in severity penetrating everything, or should that be every-thong? Thoroughly soaked underpants added to the severe chill which, stopped play, though not before the work was done. TB arrived with hot tea and bread pudding. By close of shift the stream had increased and continued to rise almost filling the pipe. To the Roadside for drink Hours 9, 404

6th March Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

NB: The rain over Friday, (3rd), had caused severe flooding at Kilcorney the field and area flooded to a depth of two foot over the road, (the following morning the flood had almost completely ebbed away). The effects of high rainfall were evident in Considines, everywhere clean washed; a good sized stream running half way up the pipe diameter. CC digging, TB barrowing PC hauling. Steady work dropped the shaft bottom some half metre. During digging CC managed to complete the previous ginging; the next section is now ready. An undercut which began to appear in the east wall was further exposed during TB's shift; this is directly below the ribs of limestone adjacent the shoring. Several very big rocks were hauled out, some requiring two men to lift. The next few sessions will focus on more shoring and perhaps installing a fourth ladder. To the Roadside where the team bumped into MC, the landowner, who was fascinated by the Team's progress from the photos on CC's mobile phone. Hours 14, 418

9th March Considines

Cheg Chester

A mild day with some sun, no breeze, the ground still very wet, a small stream present. The plan: to install the ginging down to floor level. CC digging: PC hauling. A steady pace removed the remaining clay up to and from the area to be supported; many of the supporting stones obtained from the clay deposit. The rift being ginged is twenty inches wide and likely to increase. The bottom most pole of the shoring is now some three metres above the main shaft floor level. The next session will commence installing the

shoring to as low to the shaft floor level as possible. The rift feature in the west wall has faded away. There is at least one huge boulder in the floor which may require “nudging”. The “Narrows” widen at twelve metres, once the shoring is lowered past this point access can resume from the climbing shaft after a further ladder is installed. Adjacent the huge boulder the west wall is seen to continue vertically down, for at least a metre, though the east wall bulges out slightly. The area dug by TB was measured as thirteen metres deep, the average overall depth being twelve and a half. To the Roadside for superb pints

Hours 8, 426

13th March Pouldubh South

Solo

With the Team either absent on holiday or in bed recovering from treatment “PC no mates” went for a scamper down Pouldubh to the old terminal choke. The place awash from numerous inlets along the route of the main streamway

20th March Considines

Solo

An awful day of alternating sleet and horizontal hail showers; the ground still very wet. Four x four foot lengths of poles were cut and carried to the dig platform ready for use next session. A hasty retreat across the field beat all three donkeys back to the Hilux. CC returns soon, and JW is on the mend; hooray!

23rd March Considines

Cheg Chester

Cold: the northeast wind really bitter. The plan; to install the next four sections of poles in the widening area of the south rift then assess what becomes visible below.

Unfortunately PC thought the pole section, used as a barrier to stop spoil sliding down the slope, was actually one metre long, hence the next section cut to 1.2m, alas these are 150mm too long. So lots of hassle ensued resulting in failure. The team managed however to install three one metre lengths to stabilize the area and expose the rock rib below: 1.05m poles will suit this span. The area behind the shoring is very unstable indicated by the rumbling of rocks during excavation, almost accompanied by a similar rumbling in adjacent trousers. A lot of spoil needs lifting out next session. A tough session: to the Roadside for well earned pints.

Hrs 9 435

30th March Considines

Cheg Chester

A warm day: the ground drying: a very small trickle present. Drove down into the upper field area to drop off 6, (x 1050mm), lengths of shoring to shorten the carry. The plan; to install these new shoring lengths, however the plan morphed into lifting to surface the incorrectly cut shoring and clearing away all spoil created during the previous session.

CC digging: PC hauling and barrowing. A steady pace cleared the entire amount, barrowed along the path and deposited where the other stream enters. A close inspection of the shoring, following the loud rumblings, (23rd March), discovered some shoring had indeed moved though not too seriously. The minor rift feature forming in the east wall was observed to continue on down below the floor increasing in width and curving sharply toward the north appearing to form the roof of a broad undercut. Through a gap in the floor CC clearly observed a depth of three metres, so too the continuing rift feature; this area is adjacent the huge flat boulder presently jammed on edge among the floor debris. The floor hereabouts is very loosely compacted; no doubt the result of the jammed boulder. The narrows have finally widened enough to allow PCs chest to pass! So no more need to climb the wrong side of the ladder way: a superb effort preparing the

place for the next shoring session though resulting in two, knackered, individuals. To the Roadside for excellent pints and abuse
Hours 9, 444



Considine's Cave installing second fixed ladder, to also act as a brattice
Left to right Cheg and Pat

31st March Souterrain CL002-068002

Solo

Three souterrains were surveyed in the 1830s by TL Cooke of Birr, County Offaly. Comparing these surveys with other Burren souterrains they each appear as significant undertakings. Present evidence accepts souterrain construction being contemporaneous with ringforts occurring, predominantly, during the latter half of the first millennium, (500-1000AD). Research eventually led to a field on the west of Finavarra peninsula. In conversation the Farmer confirmed the souterrain has three large chambers so it may be that this souterrain opening is indeed one of Cooke's. Visited the Farmer to ensure permission granted in December 2016 remained extant. Though the Farmer was out shell-fishing, (low tide), his wife confirmed all was well and to "work away". Sped off to the site in an attempt to beat approaching storm clouds, this threat ensured the survey equipment remained in the Hilux. Opting to conduct a surface survey of features unrecorded by Cooke torrential rain swiftly arrived. Briefly: the site is a ringfort situated among fertile pastureland on the south-west slope of a low limestone hill. First impressions of the denuded ramparts suggest a sub circular shape; no evidence of a fosse present or any other form of exterior circumferential earthwork. The eastern rampart is obscured by a modern field wall and hedge. The flattened southern perimeter illustrates erosion from farm stock. Along the western side pieces of stone project from the earth their origin unclear. On the northern perimeter is a short section of vertical stonework of substantial limestone blocks lain in dry courses. The souterrain entrance is located off centre in the ringforts north-west quadrant. Obscured by briars the entrance is a vertical

opening. GPS I.T.M. recordings in the national database for both ringfort and souterrain are identical suggesting the centre of the ringfort location was also applied to record the souterrain entrance; likely taken during digitally scanning the six or twenty-five inch ordnance survey maps as part of the protocol transcribing data. Today's GPS recording was taken with a Garmin Oregon 300 suspended for thirty minutes, (to stabilize the signal input), directly above the souterrain entrance. It illustrates a discrepancy of three metres east by five metres north with the national database record which does comply with the actual location of the souterrain opening. The Farmer has kindly offered to cut away the briars prior to the next visit.

1st April Considines

Cheg Chester

A cool evening, clear skies, since Thursday over an inch of rainfall: a small stream present. The base of the shaft thoroughly washed clean. The plan: to introduce CCs new method of back packing shoring. With only two there was a slow start lowering the kit required and stacking it to leave enough room to shore. PC shoring: CC in support. The loose nature of this smaller debris means anything touched falls out, swiftly followed by its neighbours. The area below the shoring was dropped two feet and a piece of pole successfully inserted without any serious dislodgement from beyond. Beneath this two bars were pushed into the debris upon which slats of timber were laid. Upon this stone and chatter were spread to fill the gap and form a level base which, on completion is pressed vertically up under the bottom of the shoring area above. The large gap was mostly filled with stone. With both poles in place and backfilled level to the top the eight foot 4x2 timber was applied beneath as a lever to lift the section of shoring into place, the existing bars were then removed, this gap closed and the shoring finally secured in place; thank F**k. The working area between the shoring and the narrows is only just body size so everything need be handed through the narrows; awkward! The entire affair was a success and enormous relief. To the Roadside for good music and great drink

Hours 6, 450

3rd April Considines

Cheg Chester

Rain, and lots of it: stream almost filling the pipe. Walls of rift very wet from trickles of ground surface. CC digging: PC hauling and barrowing. The slope in front the shoring was reduced in preparation for the next shoring session. The area in the northern rift was also dug to expose how much the rift narrowed into the main shaft. With both areas attended to the floor was dug to expose the emerging huge vertically jammed boulder, (3 feet x 2 feet x 7 inches), behind which is the three metre hole too small to enter; will likely nudge it perhaps next Thursday or maybe Saturday. Spoil was removed as far as practicable, ready for shoring. The next digging session should lower the main shaft floor to expose more of this alcove. To the Roadside: drinking interrupted by American asking to video Team talking caving, good grief.

Hours 6, 456

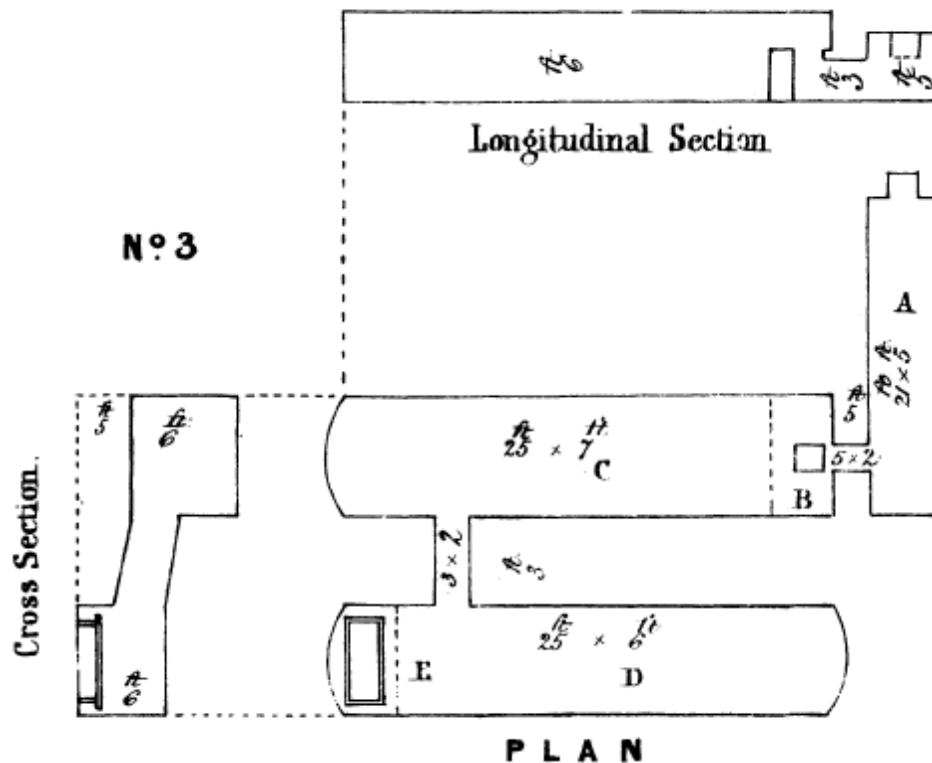
6th April Considines

Cheg Chester

A warm day: overcast: a small stream present. The plan: to insert as much shoring as possible. Six further sections of shoring were delivered. PC shoring: CC in support. A task that was expected to be a breeze became an endurance test, three tough hours to fit two pieces of shoring! The idea was to remove as little as possible from the debris pile, thereby causing minimal disturbance, however this method reduces available space for pole insertion. A catalogue of trivial issues increased the delay. The confined space between the narrows and the shoring is the principle problem, there is no room to turn,

once a piece of shoring is received to insert into place the fun really begins. Eventually the two pieces were secured. The large boulder in the floor was drilled ready for nudging. Only various minor injuries were incurred, surprizingly. To finish the day fifteen kibbles were raised to surface. CC took a few photos. Ideally a third man at surface would have helped enormously. An exhaust pair headed for the Roadside

Hours 9, 465



Survey of souterrain No. 3; after TL Cooke, 1830s

10th April Considines
Cheg Chester

A bright sunny day: with a really cold WNW wind. The plan: to secure the next section of ladder. Freightied drills, chainsaw etc. to site; while CC connected upper part of the next ladder PC chainsawed the poles in preparation for installation. There are now 12x1050mm and 4x1000mm stacked on the surface ready for use. Joined CC to drill 16mm holes for ladder bolts; fortunately managing to drill into the awkward curve of the adjacent wall also installed a bolt belay for use with a lifeline, as the rift is narrowing and floor integrity increasingly suspicious. During operations CC slipped on the large greasy boulder sustaining an injury to his shin; a debilitated CC continued preparing for the scaffold pole and other materials required to complete the ladder installation for the next visit. To the Roadside where upon given drink told our money was no good: happy days. Conversation involved the website and comparing injuries.

Hours 5, 470

13th April Considines
Cheg Chester

Overcast and cool: very small trickle present. The plan: to install more shoring and secure the ladder. The scaffold bar cum stemple was inserted and secured successfully, requiring a further coach screw to compete fixing the ladder in place. Total depth of fixed

ladder is now a little over ten metres; a further two to the bottom of the shaft. The shoring process resumed using CCs' method, one aspect requires honing but overall it is the safest approach to attempt control of the loose packed debris. Careful packing behind the poles means less space for debris to move about. What needs more attention is calculating the precise diameter of the two poles and allowing just enough space with the one above to allow backpacking to take place. The base area of the ladder way is almost level with that in the main shaft. Soon digging will recommence. The constricted area between the narrows and the shoring continues to make hard work of manoeuvring the poles into place but the chamfering of the pole ends has reduced effort. The Ali ladder was removed to make more room below. To the Roadside where money could not be spent, again.

Hours 8, 478

15th April Considines
Cheg Chester

A cold west wind, overcast, sunny spells a small stream present. The plan: to clear the accumulated spoil from the bottom of the shaft and ladder way to prepare for the next shoring session. Together the team installed the final coach crew into the ladder. CC digging PC hauling - barrowing. The shaft base was cleared to some halfway down the, still extant, huge flag like boulder, presently jammed vertically; previously drilled for nudging. The curious development of crevices in the east wall continue to increase in size; a possible, useful area for storing the kit. Upon clearing spoil closer to the shoring movement became commonplace, a fine example of how loose the debris actually is, akin to digging marbles. The raised spoil was deposited along the path to improve conditions underfoot. Next session should see at least two more pieces of shoring in, ideally four. This will mean we can sink the shaft a further metre or so before having to ashore again. The Shepton have arrive en-mass, stopping in the Doolin Hostel for the week. To a busy Roadside for pints: TB to arrive the 20th, unless Vurley goes in which case he'll be delayed

Hours 5, 483.

17th April Considines
CZH, Cheg Chester
CZH = (Chris, ZOT, Harvey, B.E.C.).

Warm, sunny spells, small stream present. The plan: to install further shoring to bring it as low or as close as possible to the extant main shaft bottom. PC shoring CC in support Zot at surface. Two pieces of shoring were installed, surprisingly swiftly, even though a problematic stone threatened collapse to part of the face. Once completed the whole installation then jacked into position, and secured. This process, designed by CC, is being honed as emerging practical issues are overcome in their turn. Two pieces of shoring and associated backpacking are the total weight limit able to be jacked up into place. Since adopting this method the loose areas behind the previous three shoring installations appear, (sound), more stable as successive shoring has been installed. CC digging: Zot hauling and barrowing, rotating with PC. The spoil temporarily stacked over the main shaft floor was removed to where virtually the whole of the large upright boulder and its neighbour are exposed, the ladder-way too cleared in preparation. Numerous gaps and spaces are present throughout the fill of the rift causing issues of stability underfoot. The "Narrows" have widened allowing the return to enjoy a safe stance during hauling and lowering procedures: an excellent session; as ever a pleasure to have ZOT around. To the Roadside for pints

Hours 12, 495

20th April Considines

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Tony Boycott

A glorious sunny evening: Inisheer light clearly visible six plus miles distant: a small stream present. The plan: to nudge the big boulder, (Adolf), and remove same. CC digging: JW and PC hauling: TB barrowing. The nudge was reasonably successful, the remains, some very large, were brought to surface. JW took over digging to finish the session lowering and levelling the floor of the main shaft to some half metre below the original base of the large boulder. Lowering of the ginging is required in the north rift as is further shoring in the southern. One gap in the floor offers a view of over two metres depth. The curious rift features continue to develop. To the Roadside

NB. In answer to a recent question, actual digging began on the 22nd September 2016. Prior, sixty six hours were consumed with building the platform and setting up the site. This data does not include sundry work such as constructing the tripod. Happy Birthday Mr. Hitler
Hours 10, 505

24th April Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A cold NE wind: sunny, a very small stream present. The plan: to install more shoring. PC shoring: CC in support: TB surface. The shoring proceeded well; the previous shoring session stabilizing the upper area very securely, far more than ever before, even when a large rock or two needed removing to insert the second timber. So the process continues to improve working. The timber lathes were installed horizontal resting upon the two lengths of rebar pushed into the gaps in the rocks behind and below the shoring, upon which were lain layers of flat stones to spread the weight. Upon jacking the entire arrangement upward into place it was noticed the east side support bar had moved from its inferior support allowing it to remain low in relation to the lifted section, this needs lifting by hydraulic jack prior to installing the next shoring. Longer lengths of rebar are required to avoid this sort of issue arising. PC hauling: TB digging: CC barrowing. Three short pieces of rebar were inserted into drilled 14mm holes as removable steps to ease climbing in the confined lower section of the ladder way, depth below the lowest fixed ladder now approaching two metres. TB dug the main shaft base to expose the narrowing northern rift to begin installing ginging once again, during which he thought he could hear falling water causing an echo? Thursday will be a slow day, ginging needs sorting as does several other issues, so likely little actual digging will take place; perhaps though, a good opportunity for photography. To the Roadside where the Team met the landowner who urged them to dig deeper; what a pleasant man.
Hours 12, 517

27th April, (11:00). Water Gate

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

LW 12:22, springs, sea state smooth, wind WSW 9 knots. The plan: to complete the survey. After a protracted wait predicted sea, tide and weather conditions suggested possible access, through Seaside, into the series of low entrance passages of Water Gate, hitherto unsurveyed, normally taking wave action. The plan was to be at the entrance an hour before LW. To monitor the sea state CC remained outside, with whistle, to notify the Team of the slightest, adverse, change in sea conditions. At 11:37 TB and PC entered making for the base of Oubliette, and began to survey out, in the main passage all compass readings, looking in; in the branch passage readings were looking in. The main passage is stunning so full of life and superb colours, crabs, starfish, anemones, shrimp, etc. etc.... Quite the spectacle; exited at 12:00. During the twenty minutes the expected tidal fall to 0.10 metres above Chart Datum continued, sea state remained stable throughout; a wavelet of between 0.3m and 0.5m regularly broke along the edge of the

minor limestone step to the south of the shelf. To the Roadside, survey completed. It is worth reopening Oubliette for the photographer alone, after all only four have ever been inside.

27th April (18:00). Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Overcast, cool: a trickle running. The plan: to sort the ginging before it becomes unreachable by further lowering of the shaft. CC to ginging: TB in support, PC spare so wandered off to sort the catchment pool, installing a nine inch pipe under the wall to channel the stream, back packed the area to use as a footpath. The small dam was rebuilt and the water pipe installed to supply the water barrel on the working platform. CC's effort resulted in over a metre height of ginging installed from a superbly fitting chock stone wedged perfectly into the rift. Beneath, the exposed rift descends obliquely some six inches wide heading north toward the original choked pot, (this dig hopes to pass below its base). PC to shoring, using a bottle jack the sag of the lathes was lifted, following steel bar collapse, a replacement bar therefore fitted, over one metre in length. Supporting the two free hanging pieces of shoring became a pain in the arse as the loose stone floor continually moved downward beneath the pressure from the jacking materials. The hose pipe was finally fitted beneath the working platform away from the tramway. An exhausting evening's work, but lots achieved; alas TB, (Tea Boy?), omitted to bring his life sustaining tea flask so no delay heading for the Bar. To the Roadside for drink

Hours 7.5, 524.5

29th April Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A cold wind: overcast: a trickle present. The plan: to install two more pieces of shoring. PC shoring: CC in support: TB surface support. The confined shaft bottom meant TB sent down equipment etc. when requested leaving the available space for working. The area excavated for the next section produced four big boulders causing concern as the hollow area quickly increased with associated bits of collapse, and gaps appearing. To the east, through one gap, a corner could be seen turning away to the east; the area beyond the shoring does seem big. Using the one metre length rebar this hollow was not the problem it had previously presented; three lengths were pushed between the loose stones and secured to the first piece of timber shoring. Two lathes were then placed horizontally behind the shoring for flat stones to be set upon spreading the load, and allowing back filling to take place. The second timber was swiftly installed and back packed, the whole arrangement then jacked up into place whilst "thumping" the shoring with the sledge to "shake them up" to close the gaps between the shoring. Once in place, gaps closed, the support cable was lowered and secured to the new shoring. This is the first occasion where, even though issues of stability occurred, the shoring procedure went really well. The main area of evolution is the use of longer lengths of rebar to reach much further into the more "stable" stone area. Some of the spoil removed was used as ginging the remainder, some big sods, were sent to surface. The ladder way floor is only a metre above the shaft, we are catching up. A further fixed ladder will be needed very soon. TB had provided tea and bread pudding, nice one. To the Roadside to enjoy the "Father Ted" weekend festival, lots of Priests, Nuns in stockings and a great many Mrs. Doyles' wandering about the place; Ooo err

Hours 7.75, 532.25

1st May Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A bright warm day: no stream at all: around one inch of rainfall for April. The plan: to install more shoring to reduce the height difference between the ladder-way floor and that in the main shaft. Preparing the area in the narrows CC removed a rock whereupon the floor dropped about a foot; quite a surprise. The shoring installation went without issue, three pieces of shoring swiftly fitted. This amounts to around sixty odd pieces set in place. One more temporary step was drilled and fitted. The next fixed ladder is needed ASAP. The depth of the main shaft is now fourteen metres, fixed ladder about eleven metres. Thursday the target is to drop the main shaft floor a metre. To the Roadside for lovely pints; told beer festival the end of the month! Hours 10.5, 542.75

3rd May Souterrain CL002-068002

Tony Boycott; (CF = Carl Fahy)

As the day promised sunny and warm, TB was invited to join in the surveying of the souterrain site on the windswept Finavarra peninsula, located on the south coast of Galway Bay, west of Ballyvaghan. While TB cut away briars surrounding the souterrain entrance PC set up the base line, plane table and dumpy level to produce both plan and profile of the site. During sun drenched operations a local, CF, introduced himself; interested in history etc. he told of an opening into a cave like space offering to act as guide to the site, available most evenings and Sundays. The plan is to accept his very kind offer as soon as practicable. Though CF also spoke of a possible souterrain on the adjacent Scanlan's Island, very possibly associated with the Ringfort, (CL002-019---), and a building of indeterminate date, (CL002-019002), no record of a souterrain is within the national database. Having only a caving helmet a brief look was rewarded with a superbly constructed souterrain of large proportions. Lintels up to two tonnes span the 1.6 metre square passage. The walls are battered narrowing toward the roof. A glimpse through a gap of the recently deposited stones near the base of the entrance slope promises more passage. Though the entrance chamber does not quite match the TL Cooke survey, circa 1834; it is possible he miss measured, though the distance quoted from New Quay in his description does match. It is presently unclear if this is the original entrance. As the surface data was all but recorded the next stage is to survey the actual souterrain from the fixed survey station, (Station O, yellow peg), installed at the top of the entrance slope. The plane table drawing produced a raised, curious shape; no sign of anything resembling a rampart is visible. The fertile top soil is underlain by glacial deposition visible in the two cubby holes either end of the entrance chamber. The depth of this deposit can be clearly observed along the adjacent northern coast. Lintels forming the roof appear to be a half metre, or so, beneath the raised area suggesting its purpose was to cover the souterrain. The pile of stones at the base of the entrance were placed by the owner to create a ramp allowing the young bullock who made a surprise visit to return safely to the surface. Called in to the owner to apprise him of progress

4th May Considines

Tony Boycott, Jim Warny

A cool bright evening: the smallest of trickles attempting to flow. The plan: to dig. With the departure of his grandson, CC took delivery of a severe cold, therefore absent from the session. The next two metre ladder is on site. TB & JW digging: JW, TB & PC hauling and barrowing. Regular appearance of large stones required the net. A steady pace dropped the floor some one metre below the timber temporarily installed to prevent slippage from the debris cone in the ladderway, this depth is now close to fifteen metres, approaching the bottom of the adjacent 1980s pitch and climb. With further removal of

the clay infill, looking into northern rift, (toward the 1980s pitch), the narrow dimensions appear to increase, slightly, this makes sense. The explored, recorded depth was a nine metre ladder pitch from where the stream pipe discharges, then a five metre climb to a mud choke. Measuring from the pipe the reported mud choke is only some three metres below tonight's session. By contorting himself JW managed to take photos, while TB and PC enjoyed tea in the sunset, ah. To a virtually empty Roadside

Hours 7.75, 550.5

6th May Considines

Tony Boycott

Overcast: cold easterly wind: barely a trickle. The plan: to prepare for installation of next two metre ladder. CC still battling the Dreaded Lurgi. Much awkward phaffing; holding the ladder craning body through rungs; holding pencil, marking location for the support bracket and drilling 16mm holes. It's an "effing" narrow place. Temporary rebar steps were in the way, (removed), so had the three metre Ali ladder lowered to work off, (it is only three rungs above the upper ladder). Using the plumb line the location for the bracket holes found to be in a very narrow area, (restricted room for drill), though managed to drill one hole squarely the other is off alignment to it by some 25/30 degrees, (absolute distance between rift faces = 362mm). Disappointed to find the new ladder frame is a 1/2 inch too wide, (PC used an old former). This needs reducing to fit the existing ladder, no special design required for the vertical metal joiner brackets, straight plate will do. TB's angle cutter will be needed to shorten rebar rings. The vertical ladder line will just about work. If a longer ladder were used, once the floor is dug down, then a better, wider, support bracket location becomes available another two metres or so lower down. Looking through the north rift, exposed by JW, (75mm), an area three metres away, and down by 46 degrees, looks to widen. It also appears to be sloping down toward the main shaft. Another vertical alcove/rift has developed in the east wall this promises a little more room to dig. TB dug a session lowering the floor another foot and exposing the eastern alcove further. The midges arrived in force at 20:00, by 20.45, it was Hell. Did not tarry to drink Tea: fled for the truck, pursued; under attack PC found he'd forgot his change of clothes, however PMC had thoughtfully delivered same to the Roadside; the drink superb.

Hours, 5, 555.5

8th May Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A fabulous sunny day: potential for 21 degrees: a trickle. The plan: to install shoring. The Dreaded Lurgi has all but left CC, hooray. The session began with a surprising, subtle change in rift width requiring shorter lengths of shoring, (940mm); bugger; more poles required. So: reverted to removing accumulated spoil dug out from the ladderway. CC digging, TB barrowing PC hauling. As the shift drew to a close a large stone was lifted from the eastern rift/alcove exposing a narrow three metre drop into bedding the width below appearing sufficient to wriggle into, and, perhaps, the lower bit may allow crawling. Both the floor of this and the northern rift are clean, appearing to slope, and terminate, beneath the present, ever decreasing available digging area. The depth of the shaft is around fifty feet, (15metres). The next shoring session will mean the Ali ladder will be several of feet short of the fixed ladder. Tea was enjoyed prior to departure for the Roadside.

Hours 9.5, 565

10th May Considines

Solo

Continued fine weather: a bit more of a trickle running; odd no rain. Obtained two more poles from Noel the Pole and cut same into 14×930/950mm lengths. Conveyed all to

working platform. Recovered two metre ladder to correct error of width back at workshop
Hours 2, 567

11th May Oubliette

Tony Boycott

Oubliette was opened by the Team to bypass the normally flooded tidal entrance crawl, (Seaside). It gave access to the higher, and dryer, passage beyond the crawl. Following numerous storm events, which wrecked a great deal of the County Clare coastline, boulders were found blocking the rift.

LW 12:15, (0.83m), springs, HW 18:36, (4.86m), range 4 metres; yet another fine day. The plan; to remove the offending boulder/s jammed in the entrance rift. Armed with ironmongery, drills, ladder, tea etc. the Team clambered down the cliff, (several pieces of which are now missing), to set up shop at 14:25 among the storm boulders at sea level. On arrival the Tide was found level with the top of the entrance rift. Fortunately the main boulder is not too large; others were cleared away using the five foot crow bar leaving the big one, and a little/r one. A nudge introduced a minor crack in the big 'un, with little else effect. With the tide rising operations were forced to cease at 15:35 as the area submerged. The next plan is to return using plug and feathers to remove the smaller boulder to create a hollow, then take the nose off the larger, winching it forward to topple into the hollow before it; well that's the plan... Of note is the presence of a huge boulder, (a piece of Cliff face), measuring some five by three by three metres, (Estimated at 118 tonnes), that once rested in the corner of the bay some five metres above sea level, now reposing fifteen metres from the cliff base. To the Roadside

13th May Considines

Tony Boycott

Cool bright evening; a small increase in stream volume. The plan to attend to the shoring left as too long for insertion. PC shoring: TB in support. The floor of the ladder way was lowered to allow insertion of shoring supports beneath the lowest horizontal piece, this gap allows the rebar rods to be pushed in to the debris and somewhere substantial for the end of the lever to rest to jack up the whole affair into place. Among the debris a large area of clay – stone matrix has occurred; this should help stabilize the area. Two lathes were placed behind, and the backpacking began. It only needs the final piece of shoring and the use of CCs tools to complete this section. Clearing the debris two large boulders have appeared these have to be removed for the next shoring, which should bring the ladder way base almost level with the main shaft, now at -15m. To the Roadside

Hours 5, 572

15th May Northern Road Trip

Donegal, Sligo, Fermanagh and Roscommon

Tony Boycott

Several points of interest combined to inspire this trip..... Poulnapaiste, Donegal, (a cave formed in green and white marble). The Pullauns, Donegal, a meandering, partly collapsed river cave, and a number of archaeological sites. Based in "The Hoo", a smaller, lesser version of the Axbridge Hut: akin to a quarter sized Pegasus Hut. Aughnahoo AKA "The Hoo" is close by Marble Arch Show Cave, (Fermanagh). Arriving just after a four hour trip eventually found it and dropped off the kit. Noticed, with some foreboding, elevated stream levels. Looked at the stream at "White Fathers Cave", appeared high. Drove on to Boho for pints in The Linnet courtesy of Des

16th May The Pullauns

After breakfast at Clancys, Glenfarne drove to Gweebarra estuary north of Glenties. Took the small lane too the north of the inlet just before the bridge attempting to walk from this side of the valley down hill to the site. The very steep, densely foliated valley forced a swift change of mind. Drove back to main road to park on the south side of the bridge: walked into the forest along the south side of the inlet, being forced down into the waters edge. At the end of the inlet found the large resurgence for Poulnapaiste at the base of an obscured cliff covered with foliage, briar's etc. Negotiating the climb with packs became problematic as the near vertical cliff was covered in moss and rotten remains of hazel, nothing whatsoever to offer a sound hand hold. Twenty metres up the ground levelled. Before the pair a young forest extended, so dense as to defy all attempts of entry. Here a "new" wire fence was crossed, without providing any real progress though only thirty metres from the cave, (if the coordinates are correct). Managed to locate the top of the climb by shear luck, the foliage really is that dense, visibility being only three of four metres. The final retreat to the motor was made using the north side of the inlet, an area used for grazing; a far easier route back to the road: disappointment. The route back to the Hut passed The Pullauns so were visited in readiness for tomorrow; on meeting the enthusiastic owner, Mrs Radine Hamilton, she directed her estate manager, Eddy Ward, to show us around; a very nice bloke. With the overwhelming welcome it was decided to do the trip there and then, rather than return tomorrow. The Pullauns is a number of large surface collapses into the shallow cave system, some sections are big. In flood the place fills almost to the surface, in places forty foot deep. EW offered further information of swallow holes within the grounds of the estate, and his mobile number, inviting our return, anytime; if possible to call prior to arrival.

NB. The Hamilton family has owned Brown Hall from at least the mid 18th century. During the Great famine, (an Gorta Mór), 1844 -1852, the Hamilton's of Brown Hall, Ballintra, made available a large amount of their wealth to elevate the needs of the starving population; today they remain a well respected family.

17th May Knocknarea

Low cloud coming in from the sea threatened finding a smothered peak. This thousand footer, situated to the south of Sligo, has a plateau summit upon which is erected a Neolithic cairn some sixty metres in diameter and ten high; the reputed burial site of Queen Medb, (a mythological individual): estimated at some 8000 tonnes. The twelve hundred metre walk rises steeply from the car park, taking about an hour. Superb location from which myriad summit burial cairns upon the surrounding mountains are clearly visible Visited Keash to size up parking etc. for tomorrows trip En-route to the Linnet, went via Poulmagollum Coolarkan, (H1221×4308), to view its large entrance.

18th May Caves of Keash

05:50! Good grief. Decided to leave early for Keash to also enable visiting a souterrain, (SLO46-014004), in the circular ecclesiastical settlement in the village of Monasteraden, Roscommon, en-route to picking up the N17 just north of Knock. A good breakfast was enjoyed at the service station at the junction of the N17 and N4, a kilometre south of Collooney. Plenty of signposts direct the traveller to the Caves of Keashcorran, one choice of parking is in Keash village. There are three spaces at the stile a mile or so from the village, arrive early. A ten minute walk up the slope provides access to all cave entrances along a common horizon. TB was particularly interested to visit Plunketts Cave, located at the southern end of the cliff face. This cave was the source of a great deal of archaeology excavated sometime around the early 1900s. Whilst all are obviously water formed several present evidence of mining just inside the entrance, this area

appears quarried and left with an unnatural squared off form, in several caves the chert has been chipped at, the age of chipping is any ones guess. This possible mining may have been for the plentiful number of chert bands of varied thicknesses apparent along the cliff face, and within the caves. The caves overlook a vast area extending to Knocknarea to the north, the Ox Mountains to the west and across the plain to the south. This is a Neolithic landscape as evidenced by the numerous burial cairns and court tombs. A chert industry would thrive in this society. It was a short journey to Monasteraden where the souterrain was located almost in the centre of the circular, still used graveyard. Short lengths of railway sleepers cover the entrance secured together with metal strapping. The report, found later, gives measurements of passage and chamber but also records the place was flooded, this would inhibit any close inspection. As rain appeared, headed for home, a good trip would recommend use of the "Hoo" as a mid week stop, as its size would be an issue for cooking etc. with another party present.

20th May Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Minor showers: overcast, a small trickle. The plan: to complete the shoring begun on the 13th May. The base of the ladderway continues constricted. The "Narrows" can be seen to be..... narrowing; the next ladder will inhibit movement between either work areas. PC shoring: CC & TB in support. The final piece was installed and the whole jacked up five inches into place; the floors are now just less than a metre in height difference. TB's 4" grinder came in handy when a length of support bar fouled the chocking of each side of the shoring; a great tool. The partly obscured lump of limestone is next to come out likewise what appears to be a large neighbour. To the Roadside where MC was enjoying the pints. During the chat MC explained the lower area near the dig is to be drained within the next few weeks; adding that an old "Sluggagh" may also be used as a drain. This sink, next to a 40/50 metre long wall, disappeared due to surface encroachment. PC suggested that when the digger was on site perhaps the driver could dig the unrecorded sink open? MC pointed out he would be on site to direct the work and, if he could locate the site, he would ensure its opening, Hooray...another project! Hours 7.5, 579.5

22nd May Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Clearing from light showers: no stream: The plan: to continue reducing the ladderway floor. On arrival met with DB and PB who are visiting TB. PB climbed down the original pot in Pegasus Pot, only to find S.W.C.C. written in the mud he also accompanied those UBSS who dropped the original pitch here. CC digging: PC hauling: joined later by TB. CC began to dig, upon removing a stone from the floor, created a hole below which the drop was estimated at three metres deep, a cautious look assessed the shaft floor is only some half metre or so thick! The attempt to put the stone back caused debris to fall away; the hole slowly increasing. A second lifeline was lowered and attached. Two pieces of timber were then lowered to spread any load across the floor surface, cover the hole and allow the debris pile in the narrows to be removed without it cascading into the depths. The forthcoming disappearance of the floor means the present shoring should come to an end, the area below remains partly obstructed. However, the shoring needs completing to existing floor level, measured at 15 metres. A steady effort filled day. To the Roadside for pints Hours 9, 588.5

25th May Considines
Cheg Chester

Some cloud cover, Inisheer lighthouse very clear, no stream at all. The plan: to insert more shoring. PC shoring: CC in support. The debris being shored had several large lumps of rock projecting beyond the normal vertical alignment, which proved problematic. Careful measurement and insertion meant three poles were swiftly inserted and back packed. Leaving only a gap of a foot between the upper and lower shoring, through which protruded the larger of the offending rocks, the exposed area was back packed with stone and will be finally closed up with vertical pieces of pole secured with metal straps. The width of the "Narrows" can be seen to reduce to 6 inches wide; this limited area in which to work is an issue installing shoring. However, the small width of the "Narrows", visible below, appears well jammed with debris; this is a huge relief. Therefore the process of shoring the southern rift, as we know it, has come to an end. Having managed to clear the minor east rift, with very little debris falling into the void, work recommenced digging the main shaft. CC did a fine impersonation of a ruptured ballet dancer, contorting his body in such a fashion as to be unsettling to those of a nervous disposition. Only by doubling up was he able to reach beneath the board, on he was balanced, to remove the debris; what remains of the floor was dropped over a half metre, the resultant rocks used to ginge the area above the narrows. This area of ginging has created a secure platform which will give stable access to the next offset ladder. Glimpses down through the choke give an impression of the area being slightly larger and, definitely three metres deep, so the shaft will soon be -18M. The choke is deeper than previously thought, but still only about a metre and a half. Thoroughly shagged out CC then set to installing the final fixed ladder. On completion the climb out up the fixed ladders will be around 14 metres. Beneath a baking sun the Team headed for the Roadside; the beer festival is this weekend!

Hours 6, 594.5

27th May Considines
Cheg Chester

Sunny, cool evening, a very small stream: midge city. The plan: to continue removing the choke. CC digging: PC hauling. Slow progress, in the confined, narrow rift CC had to reach around, and below, the 4x2 inch timber on which he balanced, to remove spoil. Eventually removal of the smaller stones and chatter exposed several boulders. PC joined CC and together removed a few more, to then poke the choke; Oo errr. The resultant cascade of debris opened the next three metres of shaft, which continues to narrow, slightly. Thankfully the east rift has opened too, a little, offering a tiny bit more room. Digging here will be slow and awkward, yet there appears to be a bedding joint, an edge, below, to the north...? Though slow, vertical progress will be much swifter, as regular trips to shore have ceased. As a 0.25 kg stone falling from the shaft collar would have an impact load of 44kgs, the plan is to create a shorter more precisely controlled haul from the ginging platform at the bottom of the ladderway; stack kibbles there too. The hauler to then relocate to the surface with the digger taking up post in the ladderway to deploy the kibbles through the narrows out into the shaft. Thoroughly knackered the Team headed to the Roadside, and drink.

Hours 6.5, 601

29th May Considines
Cheg Chester

18:00: a warm evening; a small trickle; midges. The plan: to see how digging will proceed in the lower section of the shaft. CC digging: PC hauling etc. CC completed securing the last fixed ladder, at -14m, then climbed down to -17m using the aluminium builders ladder; its presence severely restricts digging, once hefted out the way a big boulder was

hauled to surface, as were some kibbles, a very large boulder is next. PC descended to drill numerous holes, at 11 inch – ish centres, into either side of the narrow east rift, out the way of the hauling route. Into these holes will be inserted short, (175mm), lengths of reinforced steel bar, (Rebar), which will act as rungs. Those rungs closer to the bottom may be removed to ease the constricted digging space. A single narrow plank needs be fixed from the bottom of the ladderway through the “Narrows” for ease of access into the shaft, and from which to assist intermediate hauling, and also access the new “ladder” down the shaft. Regarding the rumour of an ancient “Sluggagh” MC was true to his word; he has had a digger excavate a drain across the field pretty much along the shale boundary, this drain and stream seem to disappear into a hole in the field mote wall; will inspect later. Overall an awkward session, so swiftly made for the Roadside.

Hours 6, 607

3rd June Considines

Cheg Chester

Warm and bright, light showers, midges, a trickle present. The plan: to dig. CC digging: PC hauling. The spoil that had accumulated at the base of the ladder way was cleared and sent to surface along with the remaining wooden shoring chocks and associated tools. Here in this confined area is where the spoil will be temporarily stacked prior to the main haul as no safe refuge is presently available in the bottom of the shaft during any hauling to the surface eighteen metres above. Some seven kibbles worth of spoil, in total, were removed to surface along with several large-ish boulders. More 200mm lengths of 12mm rebar were fitted as rungs into 14mm holes previously drilled, the aluminium ladder taken to surface. The hauling rope has now been fashioned to be easily, quickly, lengthened between hauling from the ladderway or the surface. A smaller diameter kibble is required to make filling in the shaft easier and to also decant into normal sized kibbles. A large boulder is now in the way and needs immediate removal, this will offer access to the other; then the floor of gravel can be cleared. The width of the east rift does appear to be increasing, and, appearing to cut/head under the northeast corner of the rift junction. Between a foot to eighteen inches were sunk tonight therefore more rungs need be fitted next session. To the Roadside

Hours 5.5, 612.5

5th June Considines

Cheg Chester

Clearing: from heavy showers: a trickle. The plan: to install levelled access through the narrows into the main shaft to facilitate hauling. CC had welded a bracket to hold and secure a 16mm bar upon which would rest a short plank, which would allow the hauler to pass to and fro through the “Narrows” for a short haul whilst the digger was directly below, exposed to any falling debris. This short haul will temporarily store spoil in the ladderway prior to being sent to surface. Once the rift walls were drilled the plank arrangement was swiftly installed, as was another rung in the lower shaft area. CC then descended and began to dig, to try out the system; it went well, though needs some fine tuning. The new short cylindrical “scuttle” like kibble worked well in the confined area. CC all but knackered himself doubled up removing a large boulder from beneath his feet, a great trick. A good session, particularly as the shaft bottom appears to be getting a little wider. To the Roadside for some fine pints

Hours 5, 617.5

8th June Considines

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cool evening: overcast: small stream running. The plan: to dig. CC descended once PC had set up a safer hauling system which included a 40 year old clogger, (jammer), on the 40 year old hauling rope, in preparation for lifting out the big boulder

in the very bottom of the shaft. On getting this rock into the net CC then ascended to the ladderway during hauling. The lift was uneventful, the hauler raising the lump, with some difficulty, but under reasonable control. With the boulder out the floor was gravel floor was exposed. PC descended to the “plank” to haul mostly chatter, (gravels), from below, filling the kibbles stacked in the ladderway from the new smaller “scuttle”; 4 scuttles = 1 full kibble = effing ‘eavy. All later lifted to surface using the jamming device. The shaft base area does appear to be getting bigger. The southern rift requires ginging. The northern rift was seen down through a hole in the floor to be getting wider. The east rift appears to be sweeping toward the north and may provide valuable digging room; a session digging here is exhausting. A tape was used to measure the shaft from the shaft collar; the previous estimate of 18 metres is actually 17.5M. It is 14.2 metres to the “Plank” level, (bottom of the ladderway). Recent heavy rain showers have not wetted the ground. To a packed Roadside, great music

Hours 5, 622.5

12th June Considines

Cheg Chester

18:00: a cool breeze: wet after heavy showers: a fair stream present. The plan: to ginge the “narrows” below the “Plank” as the loosely compacted fill is unstable and liable to collapse from an overflowing stream. Various bits of kit and drill brought along to do other housekeeping. While CC ginged, PC cut ten inches off the bottom of the fixed ladder, making the journey between Plank and Ladderway free of belting his head, drilled more holes orientated inline and directly below the fixed ladder, installed a hanger to guide the hauling rope during working from the Plank, it only requires a pulley to complete the task. Using stones from the base of the shaft to ginge, CC caused a hole to open allowing the lump hammer to be pushed beneath, and beyond, the adjacent rock face for some nine inches beyond. If this is for real then the place may be widening. Heavy westerly showers promised Wednesday. To the Roadside

Hours 5, 627.5

14th June Souterrain CL002-068002

Dr Michelle Comber, Dr Noel McCarthy

Further to an invite the trio inspected the site offering several explanations regarding a variety of aspects of its presence and use. Further to letting the owner know of the trip BK had very kindly, moved the cows from the field, turned off the electric fence and cut away the briars. How’s that for a symbiotic relationship!
The plan is to return and remove the recently placed stones obstructing the way on.

15th June Considines

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Overcast: mild: midges: a good sized stream. The plan: dig. CC digging, JW on the Plank, PC hauling from surface. Communications were excellent, hauling being swift and safe from shaft bottom to “Plank”. Stones, boulders and chatter removed. The half metre sunk this evening exposed more water worn wall features which still hinders our clear understanding what exactly is happening. Though the digging area is slightly larger, the northern rift appears to be widening. More ginging is required in the south rift. Gaps continue to appear among the fill so working on a safety lanyard has resumed. Two sessions of hauling were completed hence achieving the half metre or so of depth. Within the confined narrow rift this productive session means the lower rung is level with CC’s chest so at least three more rungs need fitting for CC to get out. To the Roadside, where an invite for free beer was extended to the Team at 16:00 on the 24th June, Yippee!

Hours 7.5, 635

17th June Considines

Cheg Chester

Bright: sunny: warm: midges and a small stream. The plan: fit more rungs and dig. PC drilled four more rungs to access the bottom digging area then sorted out a deviation opposite the "Plank" to arrange hauling from the confines of the shaft bottom more centrally up the shaft. CC set to digging and ginging the southern rift, which is widening. The eastern rift has become a scoop returned to the edge of the main rift with an uneven edge. Searching for ginging stone CC excavated an area down, and into, the north rift; below, a distance of some two feet, the east wall appears to cut under. Among the spoil were two large boulders. The exposed wall formation still offers no clear indication of what to expect except it is not narrowing. All stacked spoil lifted to surface. Depth measured with tape as 18.4 metres from shaft collar. To the Roadside for pints and good music

Hours 5, 640

18th June Pouldubh

Joe?, Chris?, Canada?, Jamie?

In through middle entrance, downstream to old terminal limit and out through South entrance. First time underground for all, 3 x male + 1 female

21st June Pouldubh

Emily? Ely? Erin? Ashley?

A first ever caving experience for three of the women from the Caherconnell dig In through middle entrance and out Pouldubh south via a trip downstream; a grand time.

22nd June Considines

Cheg Chester

Humid: a warm breeze: small trickle present: midges. The plan: to dig. CC digging: PC hauling up to the Plank. The lower hauling system is evolving; the new length of tape repositioning the haul from CC on a slightly better route and away from dragging against the wall. The east rift has all but healed up leaving an irregular edge in the main rift, beneath this the area does seem to continue to widen, slightly. Down through yet another hole, clean washed stone can be seen, their location appearing to indicate an undercut. Some ginging in the south rift took place, but digging produced some four kibbles and a stack of rocks, all left waiting hauling to the surface owing to a shagged out team. To the Roadside for pints

Hours 5, 645

24th June Considines

Cheg Chester

Overcast, lowering cloud followed rain showers, small stream present. The plan: to dig. The spoil stacked on the 22nd, at the Plank, was swiftly raised and evenly deposited along the path through the copse. CC descended to the bottom while PC set up shop at the Plank. Minor adjustment to the hauling position reduced the scuttle and kibbles dragging against the wall; more adjustment required. Boulders and chatter soon filled the Plank area causing congestion. Using his body as measurement CC estimated the latest depth at almost nineteen metres. Approaching the end of shift an 'ole was uncovered down which fell small stones. Several larger stones were then rolled into the gap to confirm the incredulous sound. A one second period of rolling down a slope was followed by a half second of silence, then a thud. This vertical feature is estimated at some five metres suggesting an overall depth potential of at least 24 metres. The northern end at the bottom of the shaft continues to widen descending at an angle of some 60/70 degrees. The bottom of the confined lower shaft is now some five metres

below the Plank. Increasing suspicion requires a better method of lifelining the digger; this heavier line will incorporate a full body harness the length of the lifeline being fully adjustable from the Plank position. TB returns soon, and will be thrilled with the progress. JW and CM were busy tonight preparing for their push in Fergus. A superb session: to the Roadside for drink
Hours 5, 650

26th June Considines
Cheg Chester

A dirty enough day: dark skies and heavy rainfall all afternoon: midges: a large stream running. The plan: to haul out the stacked spoil and install several hangers for the new lifeline system below the Plank and arrange a hauling deviation. Parked up at the house as wet, flooded ground surfaces were clearly visible, therefore drilling was abandoned. Expected to see evidence of flooding none was present, or had occurred. The team set to hauling out the stacked spoil enduring the weather conditions. CC descended to the dig gingerly removing a few boulders to spy out below. Though still somewhat obscured there appears to be a wide, (150mm), gap to the east, however, large stones were falling away to the north the roof of this rift appears to continue steeply downward at some 70/80 degrees. Another east rift is developing and seeming to curve toward the north as previous eastern ones have done so. Perhaps this may head toward the lower area of the 1980s pitch? The bottom of the ladderway was very muddy which migrates onto the hauling rope causing difficulties holding onto, and controlling, the heavy hauls from CC who is permanently exposed to any falling object. So, the confined working area, of about seven square feet, was covered with timber pieces to create an easy to clean floor surface using the hose pipe which was lowered into position. Next session will drop the floor in the south rift and ginge to control any collapse, then drop the northern end. Depth was measured at -19.1m, using a tape. As rain stopped the midges attacked, in force. To the Roadside for a dry out and pints
Hours, 5, 655

29th June Considines
Cheg Chester

Mild, overcast, wind force six gusting eight, no midges, a small stream. The plan: dig. Replaced the lower hauling rope with new and set up associated ironmongery as CC descended the shaft. As stones were lifted a hole appeared, then another, and so on. Thoughts swiftly turned to the massive collapse experienced near the Hydraulic shaft in Smallclough. So leaving CC suspended above the dodgy floor a further lifeline was arranged controlled via a self lifelining device so PC could have hands free to provide assistance. The working area is some 0.65 metre wide and 1.4 metres long. Varied inverted acrobatics and much prodding with the "come hither" meant CC conveyed loose chatter down through said holes and increasing gaps. Among the many falling rocks two in particular drew attention, both created a curious noise suggesting a cavity a little larger than normal shaft dimensions. Bit by bit CC exposed a sandstone boulder, the present Keystone. At some 0.8 metres long, 0.45 metres wide and 0.225 metres thick estimated as between 170/200 kilos. Further work cleared the surrounding spoil which also meant the loose fill in the southern rift disappeared downward too; this needs ginging urgently, as there's over a metre of assorted sized exposed unsupported overhanging debris. Should a flood occur it will likely wash away this entire deposit. After much more effort the keystone finally fell....hooray..... one metre, bugger. One end catching on a small projection in the northern rift, the other now sitting on compacted crap in the south; bugger, bugger. Eventually a shagged out Cheg climbed from the keystone jammed at just over twenty metres. The next session, 18:00 Saturday, will move the keystone, one way or another, and drop below. The hauling system was left in situ' a

rather fine session. To the Roadside for well earned pints over which Plan A: Plan B and a Plan C were conceived to rid the dig of this “turbulent rock”. Hours 5, 660

1st July Souterrain CL002-068002

Solo

10:30 Light drizzle, overcast. The plan: to commence the survey and to see if using the automatic laser level would replace the normal levelled string line. Called to owner en-route to inform of visit; grand to work away: took GPS to check against national database. After a lot of phaffing about eventually set up level on camera tripod using elastic cord; then installed three wedges, one opposite entrance slope the other either end of the main passage. The main passage is aligned on 041Mg, it has rounded ends which both contain niches, the passage average dimensions are 7.7 metres long x 1.6 wide and 1.8 high: this is a large passage for a souterrain. A high level, small, artificial conduit heads away on 299 Mg. Another, smaller sized one in the north-eastern end requires inclusion in the survey. Getting late, so cleared away the briars and other growth to exposed the low opening into the next chamber. Will wait for the Boycott to return before entering

1st July Considines

Cheg Chester

18:00: a cool westerly wind, midges, overcast, a trickle running. The plan: to construct the ginging prior to attending the Keystone. Drilling kit, eight foot scaffold bar, another kibble and assorted ironmongery was Sherpa'd over, and lowered down. After some awkward manoeuvring about on the Plank CC descended the next six metres to the Keystone only to find a vertical metre of loose fill in the southern rift had fallen out from the southern rift substantially covering the Keystone. Much hassle was endured finding a suitable point where a foundation stone could be jammed in the rift upon which to build the ginging, containing and controlling the remaining unstable deposits. The ginging foundation stone needs final securing in position, with a couple of rebar pins drilled either side, to prevent any forward movement from its location. On examination the Keystone gave the impression it had moved since Thursday night though the Team can't be certain, its north end remains caught upon the thin, small limestone rib. The thick covering of debris was gradually conveyed to the depths, along with the “come hither”, alas. The bulk of the Keystone is now exposed and ready for dropping. Using a powerful torch, shone between the wall and Keystone, a further depth of three metres was assessed. Also, the west wall appears to step back some six inches, whilst the east wall too steps back, the actual distance presently undetectable. The place is widening, a little, though for sure. A weary climb back out. SRT harnesses are now the norm for tired diggers. To the Roadside for some fine music, abuse and pints Hours 5, 665

3rd July Considines

Cheg Chester

Overcast, a cool breeze: midges: light rain: a trickle: The plan: secure the area and drop the Keystone. The usable area of the Keystone is a confined 0.4 metre wide by some 1.1 metres long; elliptical. The walls wet from rainfall. PC descended to secure the ginging foundation stone in the south rift prior to working on the jammed Keystone. Two, almost vertical, 14mm holes were drilled and 150mm lengths of 12mm rebar inserted securing the stone from moving forward. Two further 150mm lengths of 12mm rebar were then installed into 50mm deep holes just above the Keystone as a sort of stance from which to attack said Keystone directly below. Six belts of the surrounding debris, with the 8 foot scaffold bar, caused the debris and Keystone to fall away some three metres. Peering into

the darkness, between his feet, confirmed installing the two small rungs had been a good idea; there is no where at all to grasp or stand here in the rift. Though the rungs may bend a little they appear sound enough to work on the adjacent ginging. Following further gardening PC realized he'd forgot to bring along another electron ladder, so working from the stance six more holes were drilled to create another section of rebar ladder to descend further, as there were not enough rungs to complete the job others were swiftly "borrowed" from the upper ladderway; the climb out. Using the existing three metre electron looped over a rebar step PC managed to pass through the narrow section to just touch the top of the fallen Keystone with a boot; no more ladder. A swift look about showed a small wider cavity which obviously continues on down; presently blocked, but from which another east rift has developed. There is more room to work below the "Pinch", and a possible safer refuge whilst hauling. Its appearing the "Plank" is approaching a position halfway down the shaft. A complete review of lifeline and hauling methods is forthcoming. To the Roadside Hrs 5, 670

6th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cool, overcast, misty, midges, a small stream. The prodigal, injured, Boykers has returned! The Plan: to re rig the place. Cleared all materials from the Plank prior to PC installing lifelining bolt at head height above Plank (waist height for humans) With CC lifelining PC descended to find a suitable place to install a bolt for the ladder; none found. So the plan changed to fixing ladder adjacent to lifeline bolt, adding any extra ladder to reach the bottom. After getting stuck in the "Pinch", owing to harness ironmongery, PC dropped into the "Cavity" which, alas, is not as roomy as previously visualized. The Keystone takes up a lot of room so need be reduced to rubble. This area is small, similar perhaps to that previously encountered some three metres, or so, below the "Plank", which demanded a lot of effort. The "Pinch" is slightly off centre of the shaft, which may cause hauling issues. The overall depth was measured at just over 22m this is to the fallen debris dropped along with the Keystone, which is some metre or so in depth. CC also descended to assess progress. To obtain a clear idea the area needs digging. The rebar rungs are the favourite to use as climbing the electron is tiresome in the confined shaft. To the Roadside for drink and music, where thoughts turned to the far end of the southern rift and expanding the project Hours 8, 678

8th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Bright: warm: midges: a small trickle: The plan: to drill and nudge the Keystone. PC descended using a full body harness, lifeline on the back, which made passing the "Pinch" much easier. CC lowered the drill and in the extremely confined space drilling commenced. The Keystone is of very hard sandstone, the two holes consuming available battery life. During operations a large cobble fell to the south rift, rattling away below for some four metres. Once the Keystone is gone the rift width will increase to some 20 inches; the "Pinch" being twelve-ish. Hauling through the "Pinch" will be problematic. CC descended and prepared for nudging. All ascended to the surface: a loud noise signalled success. CC returned to the "Plank" to sort out a couple of safety issues. Pulleys etc. were removed for oiling and cleaning. To the Roadside Hours 9, 687

10th July Considines Cave from Pegasus Log

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Safety measures at the plank were completed to reduce the risk of any object falling down the shaft from this position. SC descended to the bottom to checkout the damage

to the keystone. The news is good and the pieces should pass easily through the pinch. NFB, No black at the roadside again, bloody tourists are drinking it all.

Hours 4, 671 Cheg

12th July

Toomullin Phosphate Mine, Roadford, Doolin

Cheg Chester

18:00: an unexpected journey to the site, to facilitate CC to take modern day photos of the architectural remains. Previous permissions granted some two years ago were double checked by calling in en-route at the landowner's home. TG confirmed all was still OK. Arrived around 19:45 to a vista brilliantly lit from a cloudless sky. No sign of the crane remains previously photographed by CC in 1971. Moved around to the north side of the river Aille to inspect the other buildings among them the 12th century church. The "Managers House", recently so recorded on a website, is more likely an office being adjacent the crushing plant and associated works. Encountered TG checking on his stock and enjoy an hours worth of information exchange: a very, very nice man. To the Roadside; for talk of the short comings of cave survey software Alas for CC; NFB

13th July Considines

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A cool breeze: overcast: small trickle: The plan: to remove the heavy Keystone segments to surface. CC to below the "Pinch", (-22m), JW to the "Plank", (-14m), PC surface hauling with TB. The elevated risk of an item impacting the digger has been developed. When only tow present spoil is lifted the eight metres to the Plank then once the digger has ascended from -22m to the safety of the Plank the stacked spoil is hauled to the surface. As there was a Team of four present a 14 metre length of rope was suspended beneath the pulley, maintaining the normal 2 to 1 mechanical advantage to lift spoil from the surface below the "Pinch" to the Plank. This allowed hauling to be conducted from the surface avoiding the ball ache of the hauling rope piling up around the haulers feet during operations in the seriously confined area of the Plank, the gap being only ten inches wide between the shaft and the base of the ladderway, where the spoil is stacked. The evenings seemingly slow task achieved its aim without incident, the remnants of the Keystone brought to surface. The exposed southern rift is narrow, its debris pile slopes 45/60 degrees down toward the south, the north rift is opening again, slightly. CC then began installing the ginging from just above the Pinch; this will consume a good bit of the spoil from below the Pinch. To the Roadside for pints of Gold, N.F.B, (No Effing Black), but a good session

Hours 10, 697

15th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cool, dense mist, a trickle present. The plan: to dig. CC to the bottom, TB on the Plank, PC surface hauling. To reduce rope congestion on the Plank PC lifelined CC down using the extended hauling rope. A steady evening's progress lowered the floor about 0.3m. There is slightly room to work, another half metre and CC will be able to position himself to avoid the rising kibbles rubbing against his face; this slow cautious haul past CC is agony on the arms, and hasn't improved his youthful good looks. The roofing felt lain over the pallets works well stopping pieces of spoil from falling down on CC. All ropes lifted out for washing and cleaning. To the Roadside; the boys are happy again, Big Black is back.

Hours 8, 705

15th July Possible New Cave

PC was told by John Brown of a recent hole opened in a field up on the mountainside above Fanore.

16th July *Fraggle Rock from Pegasus Log*

Tony Boycott

First inspection since last August as far as 3T's chamber. No major evidence of flooding past the hauling chair, no stones behind the dam. Removed all tools I could find, also the 2 outermost hauling ropes & most (23) of the skips. 4 trips up the hill 3 in the cave. Strange barking & movements heard at 3T's chamber so didn't go any further – I think we removed all tools back to 3T's last time anyway. On exit (not pursued by a bear) noticed some Otter spraint on one of the sandbags in Jim's Passage. Still a dozen skips to come out, plus the railway & 3T's hauling ropes, lots of wood, the dam & the railway itself. Cheers Tony

17th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Clear skies: warm: a trickle: The plan: to dig. The idea to replace the existing hauling rope with another prior to starting work became a disaster, twists in the replacement presenting severe complications. CC to the bottom, PC to the Plank, TB surface. PC refitted the cleaned hauling system at the Plank, lifelining CC down. TB supplied support from surface. The delay in setting up was offset by stacking spoil at the Plank for removal Thursday. At the bottom the widths of all three rifts are increasing as is the main digging area. A bolt for the digger's lifeline is required though no sounds of debris rattling away from beneath have yet been experienced. The spoil being removed remains that which was dropped through the gap around the Keystone, however new ground is beginning to appear. The place is definitely getting larger below the "Pinch". Amid bugs, flies donkeys and midges the team sped off to the Roadside. Hours 8, 713

19th July *Fraggle Rock from TB log*

Tony Boycott

More gear removal, remaining ropes & skips up the hill; apart from a few baulks of timber & the sandbags, only the railway & rock bolts are left. I didn't find the missing "come-hither", but it may be further upstream than I went in the wet conditions. Tony

19th July Considines

TB took photos following severe rainfall.

20th July Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Still air, heavy, humid, a trickle present, and thousands of midges, later on heavy rain. The plan: to dig. CC to -22.5m, JW to the Plank (-14m), PC hauling, TB in support. A swift haul of the stacked spoil allowed the Team to clear the Plank ready for the next haul session. Steady progress exposed more interesting features below; the widths of all three rifts are increasing, slowly, offering a clearer view. Several decent sized boulders were lifted out; other than some remaining chatter this spoil is new stuff. JW took photos from the Plank. To the Roadside for some fine music and excellent pints Hours 10, 723 NB. Rain began in earnest around 23:00 and fell throughout the night until around 16:00 Friday. TB sped to the dig to photograph a one metre wide cataract falling into the shaft.

22nd July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm, bright, some overcast, a large stream present, as were midges and flies. The plan; check the rift for loose debris following the recent inundation. On arrival the pipe was found to be blocked, but swiftly cleared. CC checked around the pot and cleared several pieces of stone. CC to the Plank from where the stacked spoil was brought to surface. CC to -22.8m, TB to the Plank, (14m), PC hauling. Steady progress landing more spoil at the Plank, during which CC managed to start ginging in the south rift, this will consume around three or four scuttles worth of stone, hooray. A few photos were taken to illustrate the confined dig area. The dig site has assumed a sub-circular shape some 0.7m in diameter. Though hanging from the tripod the hauling rope hangs free of the rift walls until passing through the "Pinch", an adjustment of some two inches to the east will allow the scuttle to pass here without any contact. During operations PC managed to entirely clear and tidy up the working platform of accumulated items to allow more fabric covering of the pallets. To the Roadside for a cracking music session and pints

Hours 8, 731

24th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

A very warm evening: stream present: midges: flies: donkeys, etc. The plan: to dig. Swiftly hauled out the previously stacked spoil: CC to -22.8m: TB to the Plank -14m: PC hauling. A seemingly slow start as CC began to ginge the southern rift with debris from the floor. A lot of hauling brought chatter and boulders to the Plank ready for next Thursdays session. The west wall has stepped back about 100mm increasing work space, this area is definitely assuming a sub-circular plan, a curious circumferential "tide" mark was uncovered on the walls at -23m. Hauling; the future of hauling requires review. The distance from the Plank to surface is 14.2m, the total distance to the bottom of the shaft is, today, 23.1m. The present method of hauling from the bottom to the Plank is with a 14m length of rope hung on the hook of the main hauling line. This transports debris up to the Plank without issue to the digger. This length of rope also comes to a stop at the summit of the main haul at the apex of the hauling tripod. Once a distance of fourteen metres is reached below the Plank, (an actual depth of -28m), then the ability to safely remove kibbles without the risk of dropping some of its contents on the poor sod below, will be compromised. Hauling directly from the bottom of the dig would not be an issue if the winch is installed as only a single continuous rope would be required. Alternately, if the available climbing/SRT rope could be used to haul by hand direct from the bottom, as a 2:1, were not so prone to twisting. To the Roadside,

Hrs 9, 740

25th July Fraggles Rock from TB's Log

Tony Boycott

More de-Fraggling All sandbags & bolts de-commissioned, most of the rails unscrewed & stacked at the Hauling Seat, didn't get to the bitter end as too wet, massive flood since the last visit & new pebbles everywhere

Rubbish & the loading ramp up the hill; still all the rails & timbers to remove, plus some loose timber, nothing left upstream of Jim's Passage. Cheers TB

27th July Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Mild: gusting wind: no midges: overcast: wet ground: showers: a good sized stream. The plan: dig. Once PC exchanged the short hauling rope extension for a new one CC descended to the Plank sending all the debris to surface. JW to -23.1m, TB to the Plank, PC hauling, CC supporting. A rapid digging session by JW lowered the floor to -23.25m,

the diameter of the area remaining constant at around 0.8m. JW observed the floor is loose and easy to dig. On ascent JW's bright lamp illuminated the shaft superbly..... it really is quite impressive, and a long way down. To the Roadside where MC and friend, VK, were shown recent photos of the project, VK was stunned into silence whilst MC was delighted informing CC of another adjacent site on a neighbour's land, which also takes water
Hours 10, 750

*28th July and 1st August Fraggie Rock from TB's log
Tony Boycott*

Everything unscrewable freed some bits of the frame & most of the cross members remain in situ. All short bits of wood, remaining track & curved track & 2 frame section up the hill in 7 loads; I estimate 10 more loads of the freed wood remaining. Today (1st?), enlivened by a 3 masted tall ship sailing past Doolin Harbour & out to Aran – looked like a mobile skyscraper when bow head on and hull invisible below the rock horizon at one point. Cheers Tony.

29th July Considine's

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Mild: dense cloud cover: light winds: very wet ground: similar stream present: The plan: clear the debris from the Plank. CC to the Plank, PC hauling, TB barrowing. The significant amount of spoil deposited on the Plank took about an hour to clear, Various bits of kit were brought to surface further clearing the area. This spoil is being spread beneath the copse canopy covering the now piped stream. This is because the previous area of dumping around the surface of the southern rift may, perhaps, be cleared; next? CC to -23m to assess the reported large "dinner plate" emerging from the floor; a decent sized hammer should sort it out. Further ginging took place below using stone from the dig while the surface party braved the torrential showers; some two kibbles worth of material being consumed. CC managing to lay down to stretch into the southern rift to conduct the work. Maintenance session urgently required. Dodging massive downpours made it to the Roadside, fine drink, good music
Hours 7, 757

30th July Reported cave at Fanore

11:00: PC spoke to JB to arrange an evening with neighbouring Farmer to visit site.

31st July Considine's

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: wet: overcast: donkeys: flies: midges: descent sized stream still running. The plan: due to infirmity maintenance was abandoned so dug. CC to -23m, TB to the Plank, a buggered PC hauling. Many heavy pieces of boulder were swiftly lifted following attention from a big hammer. All spoil stacked at the Plank; the final boulder being lifted onward to surface, after CC had arrived at the Plank. The place is definitely, getting wider, slowly. CC's helmet received the attentions of a small pebble falling from the Plank, ouch. To the Roadside for a four fiddle session, and pints
Hours 8, 765

3rd August New Cave

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester, Patsy Corrucan, John Brown

PC had been contacted by John Brown, (Doolin Cave), who imparted news that Patsy Corrucan had spoke of a hole above Fermoy, Co. Clare. The team assembled outside O'Donaghues, Fanore, before driving up to the green road that heads north from the Faunarooska crossroads. Passing out the Poulmagollum track the motorcade all parked off the main green track, before its descent, and walked northwards for some fifteen

minutes keeping the wall on their left, (west). Cloud base hovering around 900 feet. As the ground began to descend to the valley a small cairn was noted marking the narrow cleft some twenty metres east from the wall. JW, in kit, entered the two metre entrance passage, which swiftly lowered to a wet crawl then turned sharply to the right, (West?). Water was falling into the low passage near the corner. At this altitude, (290m), this valuable resource is the likely the reason for the narrow excavated entrance gully, created to divert the water out onto the surface for farm stock use. Photos were taken by JW and CC. A Holy Well, (spring?), is marked on the 6" OSI map a mile or so to the WSW of this cave. The area to the south is of well covered karst pavement, very flat in overall appearance. The plan is to return mob handed, excavate the wet crawl, survey the place and enjoy the superb view of the stone ringfort on Black Head. To the Roadside, where else?

4th August Kilcorney

Greg Davoren spoke of the hole referred to a month back as remaining open.

5th August Considines

Cheg Chester

Warm and humid, midges a small stream running. The plan: to install rebar steps around and below the "Pinch" to facilitate passage. The awaiting kibbles of chatter were swiftly hauled to surface leaving only the boulders stacked in the east rift to be lifted next session. CC on the Plank, (-14m), PC to -23m. An impressed PC arrived in a much "larger" dig area than imagined. The dig area is two metres along the rift axis and is 0.7m at its widest; sub-elliptical. Observations: the southern rift width at the Pinch, (-20m) is a vein of calcite, (effectively healed up). At -22m its width has become 0.18m, at -23.3m it is 0.45m, it continues to increase downward, facing south. The northern rift is an average width of 0.1m through this gap clean washed boulder's are clearly visible. Prior to drilling falling water in the north rift could be plainly heard but not seen; the obvious source the piped stream from above. A lifeline hanger was installed at +0.6m above the floor to eliminate use of the ladder as security, a pain whilst digging. A series of rebar steps were then fitted from existing floor level in the subtle flute of the east wall, these ascend to below the Pinch. From here a vertical bar is topside the Pinch as a handhold. Another handhold is in the east rift at the level of the lower edge of the Pinch. It is now possible to ascend from the dig, negotiate the Pinch, and reach the Plank on rebar. The width of the Pinch and the shape of the rift walls adjacent the Pinch prevents the use of large kibbles with the forthcoming winch. Therefore whilst hand hauling will be the norm from below the Plank a suitable secure "Floor" may be installed at the Plank to receive a large kibble from surface into which accumulated spoil may be lifted to surface, reducing effort and increasing rate the of clearance, without compromising safety. To the Roadside for some cracking music and fine pints

Hours 5, 770

NB. TB was unable to attend this evening session owing to having been "**Fragged**" earlier in the day; fortunately his back injury should not inhibit future drinking. His solo dismantling and clearance of the entire railway system, its associated works, dodging sea Otters, braving shite weather and avoiding wave action, to repeatedly carry all assorted well saturated timber supports, steel rails, associated ironmongery and tools, up the initial awkward climb, across the storm beach and up the sixty metre terraced hillside to the truck should be recognized as one of the finest, most committed acts of lunacy; you mad bugger Tony.

2nd 3rd 4th 5th August Fraggle Rock from TB's Log

Tony Boycott

Yet more de-Fraggling: you don't have to be mad but it probably helps. Everything fixed in the cave is now free, 3 loads left in the cave, plus the end needs checking if it ever gets dry enough. Total of 24 loads up the hill so far and then I slipped & ricked my back going down, luckily only 50m from the car. Cheers Tony.

7th August Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cool breeze: midges: broken cloud: very wet ground: good visibility to the islands; small stream present. The plan: dig. CC sent up the remaining boulders from the Plank, (-14m), then descended to -23m. TB to the Plank, PC hauling. At -23m the floor has a quantity of silt most likely washed down from the previous digging. The new step met with some approval. Uneventful hauling for the most part until the final lift of a rounded boulder: upon ascent it jammed in the Pinch. Whilst PC clung on to the hauling rope, a suicidal CC crept up to free it several times during its negotiation of this narrow bit: thoughts turned to the hauling ropes next birthday, circa 45 years. The plan is to replace this thirty odd metre rope with say a fifty metre length from stock. In the short to mid term this would allow the Team the opportunity to haul from a deeper point. If a fifty metre length is used, and the rift continues in its present form, depth of work could be extended to around thirty-six metres. To the Roadside for drink Hours 8, 778

9th August Fraggle Rock from TB's log

Tony Boycott

Final pieces removed and cleared up to the car.

10th August Considines

Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cloudy: breezy, small stream. The Plan: dig. JW to the Plank, CM hauling, PC offering guidance?, TB barrowing, CC cut away hazel etc. clearing an area below copse canopy; another piece of conduit is required to pipe the stream course. After CM was shown "how to haul" PC assumed role of overseer reclining in the chair whilst all around was a hive of activity. With the Plank cleared of spoil JW descended to bottom of shaft, TB to "Plank" (-14m). NB, communications between the digger at the base of the shaft and the Surface Haulier, (when in Haul position, remote from shaft collar), have become virtually non-existent. Upon his arrival at -23m the Belgian became possessed sending up spoil at a frenzied pace; CM coping impressively with the frenetic speed. Depth closing on 24m or so: (24.4m = 80 feet; Oo Err). The ladderway lifeline was replaced, and sent off with TB for washing. A trip is required to change the main hauling line, to configure, and install, hangers for a three point belay at around +4m above the Plank level, (-14m), in order to accommodate the lower two man digging/hauling system. This will need the use of a plumbline to locate precisely the centre of the "Pinch" to reduce the possibility of the boulder net becoming caught during its passage of this awkward slot at -20m. Thought is directed to removing self lifelining in the ladderway in favour of a "normal" system, thus removing any slack and reducing an impact load should a weary digger slip during ascent. To the Roadside for pints Hours 11, 789

12th August Considines

Cheg Chester

Clear sky, good Vis: cool breeze, small stream. The plan: to clear the remaining spoil from the Plank. CC to the Plank, PC hauling and barrowing. The large amount of spoil

was swiftly lifted and the Plank washed down to remove errant pieces of debris; potential missiles. Early completion allowed time to visit a site previously mentioned by the owner of Considines Cave; a small sink adjacent the east wall of his field. A brief search found said hole; it is indeed a small sink surrounded by wet bog. It requires lots of work and a good flushing by winter rains to expose any stable geology to work within. To the Roadside
Hours 3, 792

12th August Lost Brian “Scoff” Schofield to cancer

14th August Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Some cloud, cool breeze, midges, small stream. Recovering from a thumb injury TB descended to the base of the shaft have a look see, then exchanged places with CC at the Plank, PC hauling. Incorporating the two “new” half kibbles increased available storage room at the Plank swiftly filled with spoil. Future hauling through the “Pinch” could be improved by centring the rope some two inches to the northeast; this will reduce contact with the wall, important as the shaft deepens. Depth measured at 23.9m, (78 feet). To the Roadside where visiting musicians from Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Inis 2017 were in session, excellent.
Hours 8, 800

15th August Cullaun II

Solo

A scamper down the upper series and back out the streamway

16th August Fraggie Rock

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

HW, 12:24, Neaps. A dirty enough day, wind southerly with rain. Area and main passage free of debris. Stream at 80mm below reference Following TB's removal of all railway material and equipment this trip was to experience the main passage without the railway. It is a superb example of County Clare Cave passage. CC recorded video to contrast and compare with that taken some years back by MR. On exit the route back took in the lower storm beach. Many examples of massive chinks of limestone being reduced by wave action along the coast line. To the Roadside for lunchtime pints

17th August Considines

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Increasing wind force: darkening cloud cover, small stream. The plan: dig. JW to the Plank: PC hauling: CC & TB barrowing. Mid barrowing TB's previous back injury was jolted by a pallet plank breaking beneath his foot, unable to continue the Plan shifted to clearing the Plank of spoil. As the session neared completion PC was cleaning the main pulley when it swung slowly away from the cleaning cloth across the shaft collar to ding TB in the forehead, making his eyes water. A short conversation on winch position and installation followed. As the skies flooded with dark cloud the Team waited for TB to be struck by lightning. To the Roadside
Hours 5, 805

19th August Considines

Barry Sudell, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cloudy: cool: very wet ground, (previous day dropping some 1/2” of rain, and more to come!): a stream present. The plan: dig. Sporting various aches and injuries the Team took up their respective positions, CC to -23.9m, TB to the Plank, BS surface, PC hauling. Prior to operations a powerful lamp was lowered to illuminate the shaft produced by the

project; BS thoroughly enjoying the show. The provision of two “Scuttles” means there is no time wasted during between lifting the spoil to the Plank and filling the next. The haul caught several times on minor rock projections in or about the Pinch emphasizing the need to urgently reposition the haul to reduce this issue. The “Bin” was swiftly filled with stone and four “Kibbles” filled with chatter; considering the individuals assorted injuries it was a dam good session. The volume lifted equal to that when JW is below. Worth noting is once the winch is installed the stacked spoil at the Plank could be lifted to surface during the same session; an excellent prospect as a few more lifts and PCs knuckles will start dragging along the ground. Tonight the depth has confidently passed the 24m mark. To a packed Roadside
Hours 12, 817
NB.

- 1) “Bin”, the small narrow east rift adjacent the ladderway used to safely stack loose stone.
- 2) “Scuttle”, a 20 odd inch length of 6” diameter sewer pipe that will pass through the Pinch, four of these will fill a “Kibble”. Their shape resembles a coal scuttle.
- 3) “Kibble”, a 25 litre plastic container which will hold the contents of 4 x “Scuttle”

21st August Clooncoose Cave

Solo

11:00. the aim; as part of the souterrain project to complete the recording of the souterrain feature. Use of the collapsible planning frame replicated the front face of the defensive feature as a 1:20 scale drawing. The previous evening’s torrential rainfall had unfortunately turned the floor into a quagmire wherein the artist had no choice but to kneel to draw the lower sections of imagery. An accompanying crescendo of drips attempted to dampen the fun. Perhaps a canoe would have been a better choice than a pair of boots?

21st August Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00 Overcast, humid, midges, curious dense low level sea mist/cloud formations observed drifting into the bay from out of the west likely the remnants of Hurricane Gert, ground very wet from 2½ inches of rainfall in the previous twenty-four hours, large stream present, evidence of flooding, several cheerful trickles bypassing the pipework to run down the walls of the rift onto Cheg. The plan: dig. TB barrowing, PC hauling, CC to the Plank, after sending up the spoil CC descended to -24m, (79 feet). Owing to the wet conditions no digging from -24m was actually planned, however ginging began in the north rift behind which CC was able to cast some kibbles worth of spoil. Though this vertical gap is only some four inches wide it should accommodate a great deal of spoil significantly reducing the volume hauled to surface. The east wall has suddenly receded some six inches, (hooray, more room = more spoil!), which might have compromised the lower ginging of the south rift, fortunately a tiny ledge was found which will just suffice construction of the next section of ginging. TB departs on the morrow for the UK. From a query, when the dig began, three dates arise,

- 1) The first visit to the site was 21st July 2016; JW descended the existing blind pot,
- 2) Clearing the site and constructing the working platform began on the 11th August 2016,
- 3) Actual digging began on the 22nd September 2016 following 66 hours of preparation work.

To the Roadside, alas no Gold, misery

Hours 8, 825

23rd August Poulmagollum
Solo

Mild: overcast: heavy showers. The aim: to scamper down the main junction to keep the ageing body parts loose and flexible. Entrance climb was very greasy so used a handline, the lower slope too was slippery. There is another stainless bolt installed two thirds down the scramble toward the climb; actually in a better position for hanging ladder etc. The entrance waterfall was not the spectacle expected observing the level of the river. At the junction with Gunman's Cave passage a dull noise could be discerned. The crystal stream from main entrance turned dark brown at the main waterfall, the noise deafening. The stream now knee deep was followed to Main junction where the stream from Branch Passage Galley augmented the swift current. A brief wait at the sand bar confirmed no rise in water levels; a steady trip back to surface.

24th August Considines

Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Steady rain all day, (possibly same front as devastated Donegal), low cloud, mild, midges, a large stream, evidence of recent flooding, CM is becoming habit forming. The plan: dig. CM to -24m, JW to the Plank: PC hauling: CC directing operations. The entire session meant the four kibbles, two half kibbles both scuttles, three large boulders and the "Bin" were hauled to the Plank. During operations CM deployed his video camera up and down the shaft the results should display the shoring, fixed ladder, Plank and ginging. To a quieter Roadside for pints

Hours 10, 835

24th August Considines

Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Cloudy: damp and midges. Wet ground following a week of intermittent rain: The plan: to dig and record some footage of the operation using a go-pro camera and video lights suspended from the rope system. CM to -24m, JW to the plank, CC on the surface, PC hauling. Focus of the dig was on the northerly rift. Gravel and smaller stones were loaded to the 2 scuttles, with larger stones and boulders stacked in the southern portion of the rift awaiting removal via the net. Flowing wet mud was observed coming from behind the SW corner of the boulder pile and pooling in the centre making digging an extra messy affair. Fortunately a small cavity emerged upon removal of a couple of larger boulders from the NW corner of the rift, thereby draining the mucky sump. The cave wall on the E side appears to be flaring outward once again, with a widening also seen on the W side to a lesser degree. The ascending and descending camera system provided a good perspective on the dig operation; Vimeo link to the video below.

Hours 12, 847

All the best Cathal (entitled, 5 minutes in the life of a dig).

31st August Considines

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Jarratts ninth anniversary: Cool: Bright: clear evening, ground very wet, large stream present. The plan; to clear the large volume of spoil deposited at the Plank. CC to the Plank, PC hauling, JW barrowing. Once the debris was lifted CC descended to -24m to install one inch rebar for setting ginging upon; the floor area is now a matrix of fine silt, gravels and stone wetted by myriad drips from above. To the Roadside for talk of winches, and girls

Hours 8, 855

3rd September Considines
Cheg Chester

Almost two inches of rain between Friday and Saturday, the ground awash, overcast, cool, large stream present, clear evidence of flooding. The Plan: dig. CC to -24m, PC to the Plank. The view from the Plank suggested the bottom sumped. As CC descended this was proved otherwise, just very wet. Once PC set up a mid hauling system the fun began. Between hauls ginging continued. Hauling from the Plank is somewhat awkward but to progress with two it's the only option. A steady session half filled the east rift with boulders and two kibbles of liquefied spoil; deep joy. Depth can't be far off 25m. Short of 21:00 the shite covered pair emerged to a darkening evening; winter approaches. Prior to departure CC set up the auto camera to see what type of critter is using the water barrel; as The Boycott is in the UK it can't be him. To the Roadside where the first arrivals of the Matchmaking season were offering availability; brace yourselves

Hours 5, 860

4th September Considines
Cheg Chester

Overcast, humid, midges, donkeys, ground still very wet, large stream present. Further heavy rainfall predicted. The Plan: to clear spoil from the Plank. CC to the Plank, PC hauling. The working area is now three feet by seven feet, the nature of the walls promise further widening. All debris cleared to surface and the place washed clean. No sign of the mysterious water butt bather; am now certain it's not The Boycott; camera reset and left in situ. The midsection hauling rope removed and washed at surface, assorted ironmongery taken away for maintenance. To the Roadside for some excellent pints

Hours 3, 863

7th September Considines
Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Overcast, cool, some light rain, small stream present, ground very wet. The Plan: dig. CC to -24.4m, (80 feet), JW to the Plank, PC hauling, Prior to starting PC lowered a 10.5 inch diameter pipe to see if it could pass the "Pinch"; success. Conditions below were not as wet as previously experienced. Seven kibbles worth of liquefied spoil soon filled the Plank along with a fine selection of rocks; all should be lifted Saturday evening. Dark by 21:00: the landowner, JN, has offered us the use of his on site residential caravan to change in throughout the winter. To the Roadside; discussing winches, kibble diameters, scuttle lengths, spoil weights, lifting speeds, etc. An excellent session Hours, 8, 871

Hours, 8, 871

10th September Considines
Cheg Chester

WNW/NW, Wind force seven gusting eight, severe squalls, ground very wet, a small stream present. The plan: clear spoil to surface from Plank. The benefit of JN's caravan for changing was felt immediately, upon entering a heavy squall rammed into the place, the deluge observed from the comfort of the lounge windows, as it rocked to and fro. CC to the Plank, PC hauling and barrowing. Wind noise severely hampered clear communications. Two hours of windswept and rainswept effort saw the entire amount removed to surface, the Plank cleaned, all scuttles and kibbles washed, all ironmongery and ladders removed from below for maintenance. Next session the area will be prepared to install the winch.

NB. The process of hand lifting from the Plank to surface was timed, roughly, averaging one minute. Much the same time taken lifting a scuttle from -24m to the Plank. The winch speed is 40 foot, (12m), per minute. Therefore from 24m it'll take some two minutes to arrive at surface. Whilst the "Pinch" remains an issue for the maximum diameter of any scuttle or kibble, using the extant scuttles, of 170mm diameter and

400/450mm long, means the time and effort saved will be from unloading and reloading onto and from the "Plank". This means that during an average session of say two hours, if digging conditions remain constant, and a third scuttle is utilized, and, it takes another minute to return the scuttle safely to -24m, there is the capacity for a team of two to lift some forty scuttles during a session. To the Roadside, where a Sunday night during the Matchmaking is a quieter affair, perhaps all shagged out? Hours 5, 876

11th September Considines
Cheg Chester

Overcast: windy: small stream. The plan: to prepare installation of the winch. The pile of large boulders adjacent the hauling position was lowered level with the working platform surface; this will form part of the stance for winching. The boulders heaved northward to increase the bulk of the boundary wall. Repositioning the main lifting pulley, to accommodate the minor adjustment needed to centralize the lift through the "Pinch", requires a further fixing in the east tripod leg. The pallet of which a slat broke beneath TB was removed out and replaced. Both shaft lid rails were removed up to the water butt, it is in this area the winch will be mounted. The longitudinal sleepers left in situ to improve the structural integrity of the platform. The shaft lid cover level will be elevated by twenty inches to create a level surface upon which scuttles and nets may be deposited prior to emptying into the wheelbarrow, the edge of this area to protrude over the wheel barrow. A canopy to keep the weather off the winch was reviewed. Various other minor tasks were also undertaken. To the Roadside for a fine pint; PC returns from the UK the 20th. Hours 4, 880

22nd September Considines
Cheg Chester

Chill: overcast: stream present, ground very wet. The plan: layout the site for installation of the winch. CC had adapted the large pulley for ease of positioning it regarding passing the kibbles through the confines of the "Pinch". After playing around further adaptations are required to attach it to the eastern leg of the tripod for correct alignment below. As the winter approaches weather proofing the winch electrics etc. will require some sort of canopy, perhaps a frame of pallets and timber covered with a fabric? The shaft lid surface need be increased twenty inches for the wheel barrow to rest underneath for transferring spoil without spillage, once the lid is closed. The next few sessions will focus on these tasks. To a quiet Roadside Hours 3, 879

24th September Considines
Cheg Chester

Overcast, threat of rain, cool, small stream, ground very wet. After picking up the disassembled winch from CC's place its components were transported down onto the field, thence across the waterlogged surface to the dig. Its positions in relation for room for the barrow to pass and angle of the hauling rope off the tripod all seem fine, also a good place where the winch operator will be on the flat even surface of the working platform. The location for the winch motor remote control was reviewed and the issue solved, it will be operated through linkage by a foot pedal. Once the component parts were assembled thoughts turned to weatherproofing just as the heavy rain set in. To the Roadside where Peter Curtin, the owner, has offered and promised free drink on our breakthrough, now that's what I call an incentive! This day 2016, Steve Milner was present here from Australia. Digging actually began the 22nd September 2016.

Hours 5, 884

25th September Considines

Cheg Chester

Sunny – ish: overcast: cool: very wet ground: stream present. The plan: to continue installation of the winch. Pieces of timber were secured around the circumference of the winch, to the platform, to centre the winch and prevent it from lateral movement, two scaffold pole outriggers were secured to the winch chassis upon which to receive a plastic pallet upon which ballast will be stacked, its weight to counteract any lifting load. The reviewed operating pedal system was tried and found successful, a horizontal joist fitted to the tripod to receive timber frame of weather canopy. Cleaned and oiled hauling ironmongery was reassembled for normal operations. Outstanding tasks; complete pedal control system, forward stability pole for winch to be secured, rope jam safety system to be fitted, wire power supply from proposed, (quiet), generator location, wire in emergency stop, prepare remote area for generator and dry platform, build weather canopy, install communication system to base of shaft, build elevated kibble receiving platform on top of the shaft lid, clean slippery working platform surface of algae. Quite dark by 20:00: to the Roadside for pints and the gift of a new stainless steel kibble; a fine night
Hours 3, 887.

28th September Considines

Cheg Chester

Wind Force four gusting six, rain, overcast, flies, ground waterlogged, stream present. The plan: to erect the kibble receiving platform. PC constructed the prefabricated frame for the shaft collar; this will be what the kibble rests upon once the shaft is safely closed. Meanwhile CC prepared the copse for the generator just over the boundary wall on JN's land; sufficiently distant for its noise not to be an issue for the winchman. CC has charged the phones and radio system, all function. The session closed with preparing the stream area for sealing with concrete preventing water finding its way down the shaft to drench the digger. GD, a landowner near Kilcorney, has offered to show PC the location of "holes", plural? on his ground next Thursday, gosh.
Hours 3, 890

30th September Considines

Cheg Chester

Minor cloud cover, still air, not a breath of wind, stream present, ground very wet. The plan; continue preparations for winch. Transported more yet more ironmongery assorted tools and materials to site. Secreted the generator kindly loaned by MR, on a plastic pallet, beneath a waterproof cover, in the centre of the dense blackthorn copse. Completed alterations to the kibble receiver working height, fitted the foot activated remote control to operate the winch functions. Discussed the positioning the safety jammer. Flood debris grill fitted in front of stream pipe. Dark by 20:15: arrived in Lisdoonvarna to find it packed, (last weekend of the Matchmaking season), no parking available anywhere, the Roadside absolutely heaving. Took the unprecedented decision to abandon drink, good grief, therapy required!
Hours 3, 893

2nd October Considines

Cheg Chester

Overcast, showers, sunny spells, wind force six gusting seven, small stream present. The plan; continue winch preparations. An afternoon session; whilst PC cut away some of the foliage to prepare for the canopy frame, CC prepared to descend to install the communications cable. Once cable and equipment was secured, top and bottom, the system was tested, topside handset contacts require attention. Efforts turned to aligning the proposed single hauling rope; a lot of fiddling gave some idea of the final position

which will ultimately require moving the tripod eastwards to a better position for the pulley. Whilst below, (-24m), CC dug a little, sorting some of the ginging, on lifting a stone from the floor discovered, 1) a strong draught, and, 2) the noise of running water; this may well be the diverted stream from above, then again.....? Completed wiring the winch power supply and emergency stop cables also cleared more foliage. To the Roadside where to everyone's relief the Matchmaking season has come to a close, the only evidence this morning being people running for buses with shirt tails flapping about; I kid you not! Next weekend is the transsexual transgender gay lesbian festival should be a crack-in event. Hours 6, 899

4th October Kilcorney

Pauline Cronin

Further to GD informing of the hole into which his tractor wheel fell. PC visited GD and confirmed the appointment for 18:30 on the 5th Oct. GD drew map of site, just in case he couldn't make tomorrow night, so PC visited site en-route homeward. The small field, where the site is located, is above the average base level of the Kilcorney depression by an estimated fifteen metres. The tractor was cutting grass around the island of rushes when the rear wheel fell through the surface; this occurred in May. GD cautiously inspected the area and found a second and third hole within the group of rushes. Today the turlough was present at the east end of the depression, though the water level is relatively low. As its PC's birthday headed to the Roadside for food, drink, music and fun.

5th October Kilcorney

Greg Davoreen, Landowner, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

A prompt assembly at the cemetery saw the team move swiftly to the field located several hundred metres to the west. From the gate the small flat field northern boundary meets an extensive area of dense thicket of hazel blackthorn etc. Beyond the wall there appears a shallow valley heading away to the north, which warrants closer inspection; it is however owned by another farmer from whom permission will be sought. The obvious area of rushes was eventually reached crossing through a very deep waterlogged grassy marshland; a depth which PC's height regularly threatened the need to swim. On the western edge of the rushes the principle collapse measures some two metres by one metre it reaches a depth of a metre and a half in the very soft unstable peat deposit. Likewise the other two openings; the area demonstrates evidence of an active drainage route toward the main depression; local knowledge suggests the surface conditions flood in response to weather conditions. Though these three collapses are unpromising as digs go GD then showed two other sites in the main depression closer to Cave of the Wild Horses. One an active sink, the other a well developed deep depression. Both have obvious potential and very likely drain into the existing system, or perhaps not. GD pointed out several other minor sites including one in the northern cliff face on the opposite side of the depression from Cave of the Wild Horses, noted as a 1920s location for the local I.R.A. unit. GD very kindly offered the Team permission to dig etc. on any of his land; in the meantime he'll speak to the adjacent landowner on our behalf for permission to search for cave to the north; machetes required. To a quiet Roadside

7th October Considines

Cheg Chester

Overcast: dull: mild: showers: mist, fog: a small stream present. The plan: to continue installation of the winch. The nineteen metre length of cable supplied by JW was perfect for the job; suspended among the bushes its up out of harms way. Once wired the winch was fired up. A minor issue with the generator was that it responded poorly when the

motor demanded its start up load, this was obviated by activating the throttle manually at start up.. Once the motor had started it ran without a problem. Experimentation using the winch began with a middle sized boulder suspended in a kibble. A single turn on the capstan demonstrated it was all that is needed; no heaving on the rope is required. Lifting lowering and slipping the turn on the capstan works very well indeed. Suspending the rope down the shaft to position it for passing a kibble through the “Pinch” was achieved by moving the east leg of the tripod eastward; minor adjustments can be finalized by altering the length of the turnbuckle attaching the main pulley to the east leg, this stops the pulley from swaying about causing the kibble to make contact with the shaft walls. The design of canopy was reviewed. The surface of the pallets was washed to reduce its the slippery condition. The shaft cover, (and kibble receiver), need be moved along some eight inches to be central beneath the new pulley position. The donkeys are attempting a pincer movement by infiltrating the shrub two pallets were installed as a temporary blocking measure. To the Roadside for the “LOVE IN WEEKEND”, where national adverts proclaim “Lisdoonvarna for the Craic”! The diggers pressed themselves against the warm radiator feeling they were the hottest things in town. Hours 5, 904

9th October Considines

Cheg Chester

Fog, rain, mild, a large stream running, ground soaking wet, visibility down to fifteen metres. The plan; continue winch and infrastructure installation. Emergency stop control post erected, shaft lid, (kibble receiver), repositioned centrally beneath hauling pulley, the exposed shaft area covered with more timbering reducing the shaft opening, a bit more needed. Electron ladders recovered from below owing to most of the team abroad for the next week or so. In really filthy foggy weather trudged back to the truck. Changing in the caravan was most welcome. To a very quiet Roadside Hours 4, 908

11th October Considines

Solo

09:30. Heavy rain, overcast. Whilst visiting JN’s place in Oughtdarra CN was concerned about the loud noise of running water beneath parts of the adjacent meadow and beneath their driveway; whilst talking water began to appear in the meadow to the south of the house and continued to rise over the following two hours. PC was shown the area of subsidence where a modern drystone water had tilted and begun to sink. In the north meadow, some fifteen metres away, is another minor collapse. East of this area, over the boundary wall an ancient choked resurgence was noted 22nd December 1996, an active, small resurgence was discovered to the north, in the area of the meadows several other minor collapses were noted, (field book 6).

15:00: some cloud, sunny spells, very windy, rain, a large stream present. The plan; deliver pallets and continue preparations. During the night it had made a lot of rain; en-route to dig much evidence present of flooding with large streams along many roadsides. Aille River at Roadford had reached level with its banks. Earlier in the day picked up six good quality heavy pallets from a Lisdoonvarna hotel transporting same to top end of the field. The soaked soft ground conditions meant that only one at a time conveyed across the field into the dig area: six trips using sack trucks took a tiring fifty minutes.

Completed the timber work to the shaft opening, fitted spring to winch foot control, (needs adjusting), installed lock system to secure the closed shaft lid in place, secured remote emergency stop button to portable mounting, fixed spars to tripod to accept forthcoming canopy frame.

Hours 3, 911

16th October Considines

Solo

Storm Ophelia present, passing north toward Mayo, conditions a little breezy, large stream present. A swift trip to the dig check on the equipment etc, various items blown about, both pallets used as gates down, cover off winch, etc.; all put back and tidied. Managed to return across field in record time driven along by severe gusts

Hours 1, 912

17th October Considines

Cheg Chester

Bright, 50% cloud cover, barely a breeze, large stream present, sharp contrast to yesterday. The plan: to continue winch installation. A brief visit to review what's required to complete the system. While CC checked over and ran generator and winch, PC began to assemble the canopy frame and review possibilities. A list of materials etc. was made followed by an exit to the Roadside.

Hours, 3, 914

19th October (Greg's Hollow?), Kilcorney Spring Sink?, Poulnatobernanangel?

I.T.M. 0522506 0698817

Elevation 248m

Kilcorney

Kim Warny, Cheg Chester

The rain had all but ceased, having flooded much, Cool, ground waterlogged. GD informed earlier of the evening trip. The plan: to investigate the sites previously shown by GD, (5th October). The first site investigated is close to the gate, which takes the stream from the spring Tobernanangel. The volume of recent rainfall had formed a large pool in the adjacent hollow this ran off via two small channels to converge in the dig. Whilst CC and JW began to clear the debris and tree root choke PC walked west to the cluster of small depressions to record their position on the GPS. Back at the sink the exposed overburden displays a layer of humus, (eighteen inches?), beneath which is a beige coloured thick clay, (three feet?), this rests upon the bedrock. Moving a few small boulders a rift appeared, east and west both are solid walls. Northward they narrow, the south end is clay filled. The stream partly obscured a clear view below. Eventually, in reduced flow, a boulder blockage was visible; digging is practicable. Some four metres to the north is another collapse, and a further one some five metres beyond this. Their linear alignment suggests a common development, (better viewed in day light). This active sink has all the feel of a pothole, but that's PC being optimistic. Satisfied the Team moved across the main Kilcorney depression to the other deeper depression, (Frog Hollow?). A large boulder is prominent in the base of this steep conical depression around which part of the regular flooding swirls and sinks. Much of the obvious exposed strata is similar to the previous sink; it would quite likely repay attention. Two minor adjacent depressions suggest further local development. The active sink requires some pipework to enable digging in very wet weather; spoil can be deposited in the adjacent northern hollow.

21st October Considines

Solo

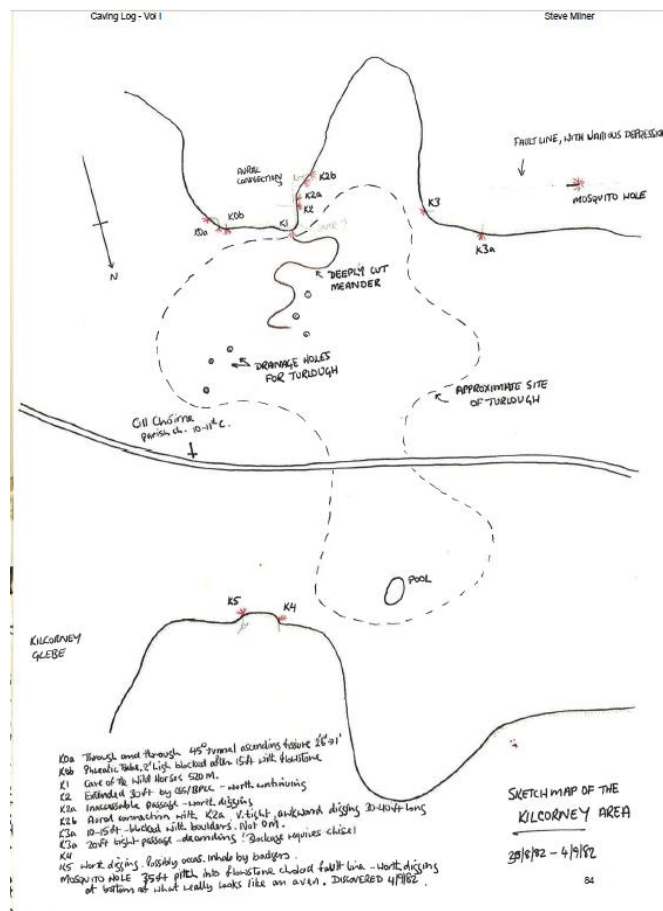
11:00. Storm Brian abroad (if only), force 10 gusting 11, (sixty knots+), heavy showers, waterlogged ground, very large stream present. Arrived at CC's place to pick up three off five metre lengths of timber: for canopy roof frame. The severe weather made carrying the long timbers across the field eventful. Positioned them on tripod frame to assess covering capacity; should work out well. Returned home to construct frame for "engine shed"

Hours 2, 916

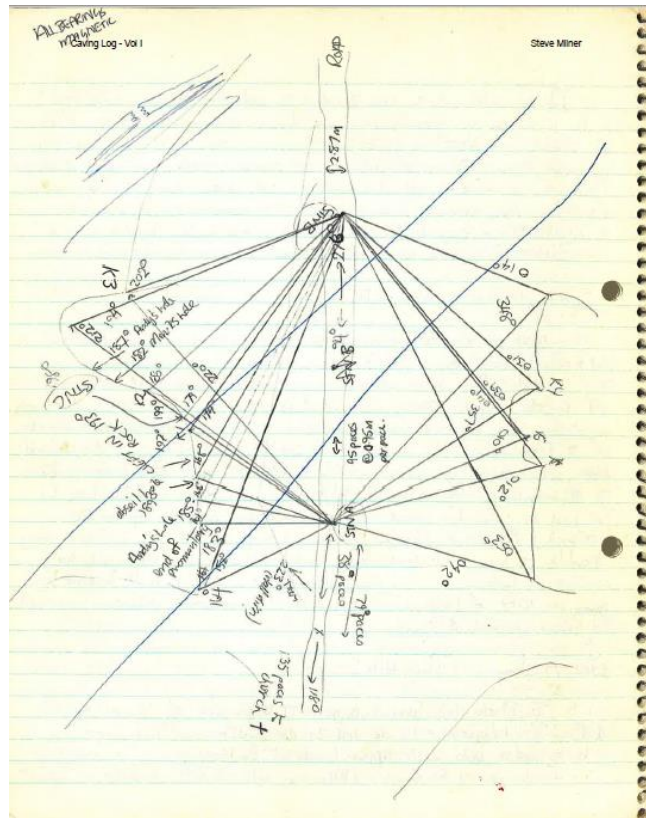
22nd October Considines
Cheg Chester

10:30. Bright, cloudy, light breeze, ground very wet, large stream running. The plan: to complete as many of the outstanding tasks as practicable in daylight and assess any remaining work. So 1) Generator repositioned to Considines land, wall rebuilt. 2) Winch wiring completed including facility for 2 x lights. 4). Bracket secured to avoid pulley swinging with descending kibble. 5). Walls of "engine shed" secured around winch. 6). Canopy roof spars secured between walls and tripod. 7). Shaft lid assembly completed. 8). Vertical support installed beneath tripod east leg. 9). Covering of gaps between pallets slats fitted. 10). Counter weight, (four timber pallets), for winch completed. 11). Removed shaft collar trimmer to gain a further two inches of hauling room eastward to reduce drag at -20metres against west wall. Outstanding; hauling rope safety stop brought back for minor adjustment. Hauling rope to be replaced, batten needed for securing covering over frame length. Complete canopy cover over winch. Existing southern rift shoring to be secured together with vertical heavy gauge wire To the Roadside for excellent pints and talk of recommencing the digging; videoed event.

Hours 6, 922



Taken from Steve Milner's Irish logbooks



Taken from Steve Milner's Irish logbooks

NB. Further to the Kilcorney trip on the 5th Oct, ML suggested PC check SM's Irish Logbooks. Found within are two diagrams of the work conducted over several trips at numerous sites in the Kilcorney depression and cliff face in early to mid 1980s. In one diagram SM accurately records the positions of the numerous small openings, which drain the turlough following its regular flooding, another clearly illustrates his radial survey of the entire depression using survey station/s set in the depression meadow. Studying the images there is no indication of the two sites shown to the Team by GD. During the walkabout GD explained how within his short lifetime, (30 odd years), the undulating surface of the depression had subtly altered, and, that to the best of his knowledge these two sites were of recent appearance. He also explained how the shallow drain holes in the meadow open at random. A further point of interest was his observations that after rain, sufficient to cause the turlough to flood, the field became submerged almost immediately, whilst in the Carran depression to the east, the same volume of rain takes a day to appear as a flood. The cave allegedly used as an I.R.A. base during the 1920s has been identified as K4, (Caves of County Clare and South Galway; 2003, 188).

Dear Team

I took the liberty, Steve, to refer to your log, mmmmm nice log.

I have yet to check yours Mark.

There are, as of Today, two openings which were not recorded then, (1980s), which, from their depth and diameter, and presence of cave tree, (Hazel), would surely not have escaped either the L.A.D.S. or any other previous attention. How fast does a hazel tree actually grow? These are some four metres high.

This morning I checked the 6" OS maps illustrating the UBSS field work, there is no reference at all in the depression other than K's 1 – 4, (1965?). Listening carefully to the landowner I do have the feeling that these sites are relatively "recent" collapses. The active one having had a drain directed into it within the last five years to convey the spring supply away from waterlogging the field.

This primary, (active), one is tucked away to the east near the road, from the bottom of a two metre hole, a vertical rift descends a further two metres to a boulder strewn floor! "Wild Horses", (K1), has developed itself away to the south, this sink is, some three/four hundred metres to the east/north/east, from the K1 entrance. This sink swallows the flow from the adjacent spring Tobernangel.

Depth potential in relation to the existing K1 (Wild Horses), cave is some 25m, horizontal distance as estimated above.

The bottom of the closer sink/collapse/depression to K1 is, at present, obscured; being a much deeper conical depression it exhibits a shape reminiscent of the classic approach to a Yorkshire pot. Be still my beating heart.....

Tobernangel is one of several springs referred on the evening by Greg, the landowner, this particular one supplied the home farm and house until the piped water arrived in the 1980s/1990s.

Over the next week or so CC is away for a short visit to the UK; CM and JW diving in Hungary, therefore as Considines yet requires further preparations, I may put the Good Doctor Boykers on a very short, tight leash and take him over there!! Har har. Unlimited access granted too, gosh heaven.

Well boys, ain't life a blast, eh?

Love, Light and Peace Pat

Data recorded 19th October at Kilcorney depression. Needs checking!!!

From the 6" maps two local benchmarks show approximately 370 and 380 feet.

Recordings need repeating for accuracy.

Kilcorney Field Depression, (Northeast). ITM 0522299×0698796. Elevation 101m, depth 1.5m

Kilcorney Field Depression, (North). ITM 0522293×0698796 219m????, depth 1.5m

Kilcorney Field Depression. ITM 0522292 X 0698770 219M (this elevation is incorrect!). Depth 2.5m

Kilcorney Spring Sink, (Greg's Hollow), (Poulnatobernangel), ITM 00522506×0698817 248m? Depth 2.2m

Kilcorney Spring Sink, (middle collapse). ITM 0522506×0698821 100m, depth 2m

Kilcorney Spring Sink 2, (north). ITM 0522508×0698828. 138m? depth 3m.

23rd October Considines

Cheg Chester

18:00. Mild, light wind, ground very wet, large stream. The plan; secure the shoring timbers. Over the course of removing the floor of the rift a matrix of clay and boulders was exposed in the south end of the rift to a depth of some thirteen metres. Over time, to stabilize these deposits, a dozen telegraph poles were purchased, cut to length, and inserted horizontally across the narrow rift section as shoring, (see photos). Prior to settlement of the disturbed deposit face one or two pieces of shoring remained loose, (without any apparent back pressure to hold in place). CC suggested a system of securing the poles using vertical heavy cables tensioned from top to bottom, thereby securing each individual pole to said cables. In the event of movement the offending pole would not be able to easily fall out of position onto the helmet of whomever below. Positioned in the top of the south end CC lowered both 8mm cables to the bottom of the climbing shaft

where each was secured in turn. Using a mixture of SRT, the fixed ladder and brute strength PC ascended fixing each pole. Near the top the width became too great for such short legs so circus antics were employed. To complete the task the top ends of both cables required terminating. A piece of heavy mesh will be fitted to the area at the top of the shoring to close off access. TB has been absent these two months; get well soon Toe, come back and brings the Tea! To the Roadside, where else? Hours 3, 925

24th October Kilcorney recordings

Comparing the GPS coordinates taken at Kilcorney 19th October: "Greg's Hollow" and the other five sites against the 25 inch maps many of the northing's are wildly incorrect. Even so a horizontal distance of 300 metres exists between K1 and Greg's Hollow. The altitude is also incorrect at 200+ metres, two local bench marks indicate heights of 370 and 380 feet, (=114 metres). A return visit is required with two GPS units.

28th October Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00. dense fog, mild, more fog, becoming very foggy, stream present, and fog. The plan: to trial the winch and associated procedures from bottom to surface. Owing to the dense fog, (Vis some forty metres), PC left a blue L.E.D. location beacon at the bottom of the track. As ever, without issue, the generator started, the darkness fleeing before the intense 240v illumination, (second lamp required over shaft), power point for kettle too! CC to -24.m, TB to the Plank, (-14m), PC on winch. Telephones tested, radio comms having minor issue, likely battery health. Using the phones clear comms were established between CC and winchman, (bag required for raising and lowering such fragile equipment). Though not too loud, the noise of the relocated generator with the noise from the winch does affect clear voice comms with adjacent surface team members at the shaft collar. Slowly lowering the Mk.4 Kibble allowed a visual check of its travel down the shaft and any points of contact. The new kibble is formed of corrugated plastic drainage pipe, its rounded leading edge allowing it to scuff past minor protrusions of the rift walls. The speed of the winch is just right allowing the winchman full control and awareness of any detrimental lifting event. Its vertical route, for the most part, is presently acceptable. CC filled a kibble with two small rocks for the initial trial lift, this came to surface uneventfully. A second kibble was half filled; no issues encountered. The third and fourth were filled and again came to surface without issue. In-between these kibbles several nets of boulders were lifted, two becoming jammed in the "Pinch", several metres above the digger; careful control and working the winch released both nets. The present "Pyjama cord", circa 45 years old, will be replaced with a static rope terminated with a figure of nine in which will be secured a nylon thimble; the figure of nine increases tolerance by up to 300 kilos, (this will mitigate any severe jamming of loads), the thimble will avoid wear to the bight of the knot from karabiners. The main focus for this session was to check the winch and comms systems for operational readiness; overall a success, with only minor observations noted for adjustment or improvement. Lifeling the second pitch from the surface requires a better system; this is due to cessation of the 2:1 hand hauling system. To the Roadside Hours, 7, 932

NB: The ITM recordings obtained on 19th October for "Greg's Hollow", by GPSR is suspect, particularly the northing. The altitude is also incorrect by 100 metres! Two local bench marks, located on the 25 inch maps, show an altitude of around 370 to 380 feet, (114 metres).

29th October Souterrain CLO02-068002

Solo

Bright: sunny: windless: The plan: to continue surveying. On arrival the west chamber was found flooded to a depth of some twelve inches; therefore surveying abandoned. To avoid a wasted trip squeezed through into the adjacent east chamber, (this was left to await TB's return, however), which was also flooded to a similar depth. It appears identical to the west chamber in quality of build, shape and dimensions. BK mentioned that three chambers existed, initially, when viewed from the squeeze, no other passage is visible. Removing footwear, the far end of the chamber was reached, (after 6metres). Obscured behind a low wall of boulders is an opening into a low crawl, also flooded with 200mm of airspace. This "duck" is estimated as one metre long, 700mm wide, 500mm, high. The area beyond the air space can be seen to open up, (BK's third chamber?). The size of these chambers suggests possible habitation during inclement weather. Returning through the squeeze a fresh fracture was noticed in the lowest limestone lintel, likely the result during egress of a large Bullock. To finish the session, levelled datums were established between east and west chambers. Water levels were measured from both these as sixteen millimetres higher in the west chamber. The previous survey of the west chamber need be redone working from the new datums to accurately project along the low crawl into third chamber.

30th October Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Fog once again, mild, ground wet, small stream. The plan; continue surface preparations. Main canopy completed, old hauling rope removed, lighting system finished, communication system finished, generator checked over and secured to pallet, new lifeline belay secured to eastern tripod leg, platform surface washed and cleaned, hauling rope jammer secured. An excellent session; back to actual digging next Thursday! To the Roadside for pints
Hours 11, 943

2nd November Considines

Jim Warny, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cool breeze, wet ground, stream present, five litres of spare fuel on site. The plan: Dig. Encountered JN and Family at house; arrangements for future caving trip agreed. Team briefing held explaining how system should work to include ancient, "S.U.D." signals, for succinct communication. All comms circuits functioning comms via loud speaker at winch clearly audible above adjacent noises. Old hauling rope replaced with fifty metre length. Barrow tyre pumped up. New lifeline belays secured direct to eastern tripod leg. JW to -24m: TB to the Plank -14m: CC barrowing: PC winchman. Prior to digging each depth position for Plank, Pinch and Base, were marked with tape on the hauling rope as visual references for the winchman. Work began. The speed of the winch appears slow, however in the hour of actual digging seven kibbles, (Mk4s), were lifted directly to surface along with five? Boulder nets (each nets weight too great for the old hand hauling method). Moving this volume would normally take two sessions.

Observations: 1). Another Mk4 kibble and another net will reduce waiting time for the face digger. 2). Rocks will be transferred from small boulder net into the old kibbles, once the digger ascends from the base these full kibbles will be lifted to surface. 3). With a compliment of four the lift will stop each time at the Plank, if a net then its rocks are transferred to kibbles, if a kibble the "Up" signal is sounded/repeated the lift continuing to surface; the only comms required to operate the system will be the buzzer. 4). the new hauling rope is bone dry and moves well around the capstan. Fortunately it will also slip if a jam occurs, as witnessed; the canopy and a covered rope tub should maintain this

status. An excellent result to a lot of preparatory work; to the Roadside for some tasty pints
Hours, 9, 952

4th November Pouldubh

Emily Gilhooly, Amanda Anderson, Kristin Doshier, Maria Cecchini

10:00. EM contacted PC requesting a second ever trip, and to introduce her three USA pals to the joys of Caving. In through South entrance down a lively streamway to the old terminus: out via Middle entrance; a fun time for all

18:00 Considines

Cheg Chester

Cold, northerly wind, force four increasing force six, heavy hail and rain showers, ground very wet, small stream. The Plan: to install signalling system for hauling purposes.

Experiencing a senior moment PC left power tools and materials in the workshop, so completion of canopy must wait. Attention focused on installing the new signalling system. The signal button for the Plank is now secured; the wiring down to the "Face" awaits installation. Signal system function tested. The benefits of a canopy were enjoyed during the rain and both hail storms. New lifeline system and its location works well for the ladder way or straight down the shaft for the lower pitch. To the Roadside

Hours 5, 957

5th November Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

14:00. Cold, bright, small stream. The plan: to continue winch canopy, and finish fitting signalling equipment. While PC continued enclosing the winch, CC descended to the Plank, then to -24m completing the signal system. PC left the Team after 2.5 hours to assist a neighbour. Lowering the floor slightly in the narrow north rift a place was found to position a chock stone to allow ginging to be installed. About 500mm of ginging installed. The Roadside like the Marie Celeste

Hours 8.5, 955.5

7th November Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

10:00. Chill, bright, small stream. The plan: to complete the weather canopy. All manhandled the five metre long roofing fabric frame securing it to the main frame and ground, diverting comms and signal cables to arrive beneath it. This "tent" will protect the winch, and operator, from northerly showers beginning to arrive. A minor issue with the signalling system was investigated and checked. The comms pack was brought back for charging of batteries. Unreported from previous two trips is the amount of draught issuing, evidenced by extensive areas of bone dry shaft wall. Other than a few minor touches the surface infrastructure is now finished! The last full digging session was the 10th September. Some ninety hours were spent preparing the surface infrastructure; not including construction of the winch. To a deserted Roadside

Hours 8.5, 964

9th November Considines

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

18:00. Mist, light rain, mild, small stream. The plan: Dig. After setting up the new lifeline CC descended to the Face. PC and JW took turns on the winch and barrowing. All spoil now being landscaped around the south end of the depression. This is the first session since September 10th wholly devoted to actual digging. Eleven Mk4 kibbles and eight nets all brought straight to surface; (one Mk4 kibble equals around one and one third of a scuttle), therefore under the old lifting system that totals some fifteen scuttles. Also, each of the boulder nets were too heavy to have been lifted with the previous 2:1 system. With hand hauling this volume of spoil could have only been lifted to the Plank awaiting

the second session to lift to surface. Speed of the lift, from the Face, (-24.5m), was 2.5 minutes including the brief wait to stop the load swinging, lowering took 35 seconds. The addition of the second kibble will speed things along further. In short the ninety odd hours of preparation are immediately paying off reducing effort by half and doubling spoil removal speed. The Team was very pleased with the result. To the Roadside where through lack of use, during the evening, the energy efficient Cash Till had turned itself off. Peter announced that the Roadside had won the title of Innovative Bar of the Year 2017.

Hours 8, 972, Kibbles 11, Nets 8

13th November Considines

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

11:00. Overcast, chill, drizzle, small stream running, much evidence of flooding in the shaft, the Plank washed clean. The plan; install more steps and prepare ginging support. PC and CC to -24m to discuss next section of ginging at the north and eastern rifts, TB surface support. As depth has increased some five foot below the last rebar step accessing the "Face" has become an issue; more steps required. CC surfaced to complete finishing touches to canopy, relocate the water butt and take a few photos. Meanwhile PC drilled numerous 14mm holes for the rebar and 16mm holes for ginging supports, also secured comms cable around shaft perimeter near the "Pinch" to avoid damage during hauling operations in this narrow section.

The colder temperatures have emphasized the draught, which dried most of the upper shaft walls. This significant evaporation has occurred following two inches of rainfall last Saturday. The ladder too has benefited from the change of temperature; no longer does its sides feel "greasy"; likely algae growth? The shaft cover arrangement is to be altered the cover will now travel to the east to expose the shaft collar improving vision for the winchman. A mesh barrier will be secured around the shaft opening. The lifelining control will be moved to the west of the tripod, a 50mm pulley suspended from beneath the main hauling pulley assembly. To an empty Roadside for fine pints

Hours 9, 981, Kibbles 11, Nets 8

16th November Considines

Nigel Burns, Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny

18:00. Cool north-westerlies, some cloud, small stream. The plan: dig. CC to -24m, NB barrowing, CM apprentice winchman and photographer, JW movie mogul, PC directing. After a slow start sorting out a few minor issues digging commenced: yet still achieving nine kibbles and five nets to surface All spoil continues to be landscaped around the southern end of the depression. As the east rift is now emptied ginging can proceed next session. Signal and comms systems worked well throughout. The Team is settling into the new efficient regime; time well invested in designing and setting it up; it will work with two, though obviously slower with each lift spoil will come to surface. The lifelining system requires completion as does the shaft collar barrier. To an empty Roadside

Hours 12, 993, Kibble 9, 20, Nets 5, 13

17th November Mullaghmore

Nigel Burns

Bright, cool. A pleasant walk across a karst landscape up to the summit of Mullaghmore Mountain The view presents a vast expanse of limestone, karst pavement and Turloughs extending toward Gort and the Slieve Aughty Mountains, the Shannon visible to the east. Little evidence of cave; hereabouts, superb landscape of lowland and mountain

18th November Archaeological walkabout

Nigel Burns

10:30. Overcast, drizzle, cool. A wander to visit;

Poulawack Cairn, (circa. 3500BCE), a Neolithic, (Linkardstown cist), burial cairn incorporated by later Bronze Age society.

Cahercommaun trivallate ringfort, (circa. 9th century), a high status stone Cashel built on the edge of a cliff.

Cashlaungar ringfort, (circa. 9th century): constructed upon a precipitous pinnacle of limestone within sight of Cahercommaun. The area is extensively rocky beneath the verdant growth of moss and hazel. Little of the area seems suitable for cultivation.

Perhaps this fort was a satellite of Cahercommaun as it looms above an ancient route meandering along the valley bottom it could exercise control over travellers.

Archaeological overloaded day, excellent!

18th November Considines

Nigel Burns, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00. Overcast, drizzle, cool, small stream. The plan: to commence ginging. As the generator the pull cord, "came off in me hand"; digging was therefore abandoned until pull cord replaced; bugger. To the Roadside for compensatory pints

19th November Considines

Nigel Burns

11:00. Overcast, cool, small stream. The plan; fix the generator. NB began to strip down the pull cord assembly while PC erected the safety frame around the shaft opening and installed another belay for the new lifeline position. With minor assistance from PC NB rewound new cord, refitted same to generator and tested repair; unit working, ready for the morrow.

Hours 2, 995, Kibbles 20, Nets 13

20th November Considines

Nigel Burns, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Low cloud: rain: mild: large stream: run off falling down shaft. The Plan; commence the ginging. After a minor delay chatting to the landowner work began. CC to -24m, PC winch, NB barrowing, TB surface. Water levels very high, a significant volume from the surrounding area draining into and falling down the shaft; below, therefore, very wet. Hammering from the depths indicated CC had not drowned, yet. Ginging commenced in the north and east rifts. As the south end of the rift floor was lowered west and east walls began to curve inward suggesting the downward continuation of the rift width may reduce significantly. Only time will tell. Twelve kibbles brought to surface. To the Roadside for pints: joined by Birthday Girl JS.

Hours 12, (1001), Kibbles 12, (32), Nets (13).

23rd November Considines

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane, Tony Boycott

18:00. Cold, clear sky, ground very wet, large stream. The plan: dig CM to Face: CC winchman: TB barrow-boy: PC on shaft collar. Rain over Tuesday caused flooding throughout the countryside and would, no doubt, have cascaded down the shaft; tonight some 60 percent of the entire shaft walls are bone dry! The significance of the draught became apparent as the evening worn on; by placing a hand over the shaft collar the draught was easily felt. No wind was present evidenced by the leaves on the adjacent trees and shrubs. CM continued to lower the floor further exposing the ledge/floor previously encountered by CC. On removing a stone at the north end of the rift the draught increased noticeably. Whilst the west wall appears to creep outward the east wall

appears to slope away retaining the sites potential. Signalling, comms and hauling systems worked well. Depth measured at -25 metres. Fuel tank filled with five litres. CM to write club log; to an empty Roadside Hours 8, (1009), Kibbles 9, (41), Nets 8, (21)

25th November Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

North-westerlies, cold, ground very wet, hail shower, fair sized stream. The plan: dig. CC to -25m, TB barrowing, PC winching. With the new lifeline system in place no delay descending to the Face. The north end of the rift was dropped about two feet, which better exposed the east rift, seen to be extending back and beneath the east wall, descending at an angle of around 15/20 degrees for perhaps three metres. The development of the shaft has edged ever closer to the north end encountering the diverted surface stream. This area may therefore present issues during, or immediately following County Clare rainfall; perhaps divert the stream to the southern end of the depression? Further to adding more boulders to the ginging CC sent up fourteen kibbles and six nets; thus far a record. To a lively Roadside: good music and drink. A minor error for hours on the 23rd Nov, they are totaled session man-hours.

Hours 6, 1023, Kibbles 14, 55, Nets 6, 27

25th November Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

North-westerlies, cold, heavy showers, large stream. The plan: dig. CC to -25m, PC winchman: TB barrowing. A minor issue with a phone handset slightly delayed the start, once sorted digging swiftly progressed, in spite of the stream inlet. CC lowered the floor a further half metre between sending up liquid porridge and using any stones encountered for the ginging. At close of session a thoroughly soaked CC could see along the east rift for some three metres to where its width increases, perhaps to as much as a metre; exciting! A total of twenty-one kibbles raised. A full, wet kibble may weigh about 20 kilos', (must check sometime). To the Roadside

Hours 8, (1031), Kibbles 21, (76), Nets 0, (27)

27th November Considines Cave

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Wet again. PC & TB surface: CC digging. Because of heavy rainfall the night before conditions at the dig site at -25 metres was pretty damp. The dig-able floor area has effectively been reduced by approximately 30% due to the severe narrowing of the southern end. The combined North and East rifts now have ample space to dig in. At the current floor level one metre into the East rift the passage is one metre wide but the depth of removable material below this horizon is an unknown. Soaked to the skin a retreat was made to you know where.

Hours 8, (1039) Kibbles, 21 (76) Nets, (27)

29th November Considines

Cheg Chester

Bright: cold: superb visibility. The plan: maintenance. Whilst CC took some photos and paved the muddy area PC braced the frame around the shaft collar and fitted a draw cord so the solitary winchman can close the shaft collar A.S.A.P. To an empty Roadside, literally; a search of the building and brewery found no soul about. After fifteen minutes the man appeared, as did the pints.

Hours 3, (1042), Kibbles (76), Nets (27)

30th November Considines

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane,

Bright: clear: cold, small stream. The plan: dig. JW to -25.5m: CC winchman: PC barrowing. All systems worked well resulting in nineteen kibbles sent to surface. The

shaft walls appear to be narrowing, offset heading downhill to the northeast, a “solid” lump in the floor debris suggests the bottom of the shaft? The width of the East rift, across debris surface, is almost a metre. Hours 8, (1050), Kibbles 19, (95), Nets (27)

3rd December Polldorragh

Christy Healy

10:30. Fine bright day: mild. CH had previously rung PC with news of a cave on land near Corrofin. Met in the village and drove the area northeast of Lough Bunny. Landowner delayed so attempted to locate the hole, much wandering about in karst area, colonized by Hazel and Blackthorn. Once owner arrived the cave was shown to be quite near the road, adjacent a high tension electrical pylon. Within scrub is a small concrete pump house. Next to this, on the ground, are several large concrete lintels and sheets of wriggly tin. Beneath same is a clean solutional shaft, some one metre in diameter, some two metres deep to water, the clear blue/green water is around two and a half metres deep; underwater the passage disappears down and around to the right. Single kit would answer the immediate questions. Five metres away a collapse suggests other development, possibly associated with the well?, possibly the original Polldorragh well site itself? A GPSR location was attempted beneath the dense foliage and adjacent overhead high voltage electrical supply lines, the result was somewhat doubtful. When this reading was checked the recorded location record is 750 metres to the SSE; wrong. As there is no precise point to refer to Polldorragh on the 6” map the ITM given above is judged in relation to the pylon location. The landowner, SK, has kindly granted permission to return and explore further, mobile numbers exchanged.

NB. From the 1800s six inch Cassini Ordnance Survey map a site, Polldorragh, is clearly illustrated in the vicinity visited; adjacent the pylon. Local knowledge relates this area as a long established fresh water source; once serving five households, now, (December 2017), only two homes are supplied. It is unclear which of these sites was the original Polldorragh; the collapse or the well visited the 3rd December 2017.

ITM 0538900×0697260, (taken off 6” Cassini map, on Archaeology.ie). More accurate reading

ITM 0538954×0696596, (taken by Oregon 300 beneath foliage near overhead high voltage lines)

Depth 4.5 metres, (including water to visible bottom).

Depth 2 metres, (to water)

Altitude 22 metres

Townland; Killourney, Lough Bunny. Corrofin, County Clare

4th December Considines

Cheg Chester

Overcast: cool, showers: small stream running. The plan; dig out the inclined east passage. PC to -25m: CC winchman. On arrival the eastern development looked very encouraging. Clearing the debris from the confined, inclined bedding was a little difficult. Debris was scrapped back using the long handled hoe, then shoveled directly into the Mk4 kibbles, these then dragged back into the shaft for hauling. The narrow bedding was gradually emptied of debris widening the passage to where a subtle bend partly obscures the way on. The debris floor was therefore cleared down a further two inches allowing the larger stones at the beginning of the next section of passage to be reached, and pulled back to improve vision. Head down, total progress forward, was some two and a half metres. Even with helmet removed the view ahead into the next section remained obscured, though the larger boulders were removed, causing a

significant change in the stream noise; even so PCs optimism wavered, a little. Eleven kibbles of debris sent to surface; exhausted, the session ended. To the Roadside, where a crap encrusted PC did Al Jolson impressions.

Hours 4, (1054), Kibbles 11, (117), Nets (27)

7th December Considines

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane,

North-westerlies, cold, snow, rain and some hail showers. The plan: to dig out the constriction in the East passage. JW and CM to -25m, CC winching, PC unloading and barrowing.. Due to the downward inclining east rift, digging was uncomfortable and wet so JW & CM alternated between digging and loading kibbles. Fourteen Kibbles and two nets sent to the surface. Progress was made into the rift, which was seen to close down after around 4m to a small T-shaped passage. The stream was observed flowing along the channel in the rift and disappearing into what appears to be a T junction with a narrow north – south aligned rift. CM pushed ahead with video camera mounted to a helmet at arms reach; the results later reviewed in the comfort of the Caravan. Some metre or so ahead this “T” passage enters as a branch. The plan is to reach this junction and assess future potential. Serious consideration is being directed toward opening the southern end from the surface as the entire infrastructure is available on site.. Upon departure to the Roadside snow arrived.

Hours 8, (1062), Kibbles 14, (131), Nets 2, (29)

18th December Poulmagollum

Jim Warny

Very mild; hence dense fog above 100m. The trip was planned to do the “Flyover”, a route discovered some ten years ago. Several routes are available to reach the twenty metre abseil down into the main passage. The route this evening was via Gunman's Cave leading into the middle section of Poulmagollum main passage rift. For those who were at the back of the queue when legs were being handed out the acrobatics required for 27” legs are.... quite demanding. Whilst JW strode across the meandering rift PC needed to throw himself across said rift, repeatedly, ‘til reaching the next section. By now PC had the shits of this and suggested the Bar. Abseiling to the streamway the pair finished the trip down to main junction. To a very quiet Roadside

23rd December New Cave

Tony Boycott

Planned to visit new cave above Fanore to survey and dig, unfortunately TB injured his back so postponed trip.

27th December New Cave: Fermoy West Cave?

I.T.M. 515664×707007

Altitude, 289m (confirmed by map and 2 x GPSR's).

Townland, Fermoy West

Tony Boycott

Bright and bitter cold: snowline about the 250 metre contour. Follow up trip to record and inspect potential. The route taken today avoided the troublesome ankle wrecking path previously followed; therefore effort reduced to a minimum. Took some photos of entrance and location; began survey from the end of the surface trench to the present limit, to illustrate the area excavated by previous unknowns to access the stream most likely for the use of grazing farm stock. TB pushed to the end reached by JW observing the route beyond. PC then viewed potential from same spot. Beyond the boulder the passage turns left after some three metres, the passage height lowering to some eight inches, (200mm). It is the sort of place that a full days digging would decide further

work. The walk back to the Hilux became a cold affair; the pair thoroughly soaked. The Holy Well on the six inch map may be fed from the stream/water inside the cave, though none was seen to be actually running. To the Roadside for free pints; informed that Jeremy Prince died this morning after developing double pneumonia; (JP was ex Craven Pothole Club).

28th December Greg's Hollow
Kilcorney
Tony Boycott

Prior to departure PC informed GD of intended visit. TB was still nursing a back injury so this was a visit to view the new site at Kilcorney and to redo the previous suspect GPSR readings of the sites. A significant flow was issuing from the direction of the spring and also from the field surface both sinking in the main site. All surface pools frozen. In light snow fall walked over to Cave of the Wild Horses and on to cave K2, actually up and around the gully to the west of the cliff face. Evidence in the main surface drainage channel of recent high water flow: took GPS recordings of both. After some Indian Tea: taken whilst enjoying the vista, sped off to the Roadside for more free pints.

(K1 = Cave of the Wild Horses = ITM 522245×699339 44m),

(K2 = ITM 522227×699300 Alt 127m).

The GPS recorded altitude for K2 approaches something realistic as the road through the valley is around 112 metres. The GPSR record of altitude for K1 is a joke, location obscured by the adjacent cliff.

30th December Considines
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

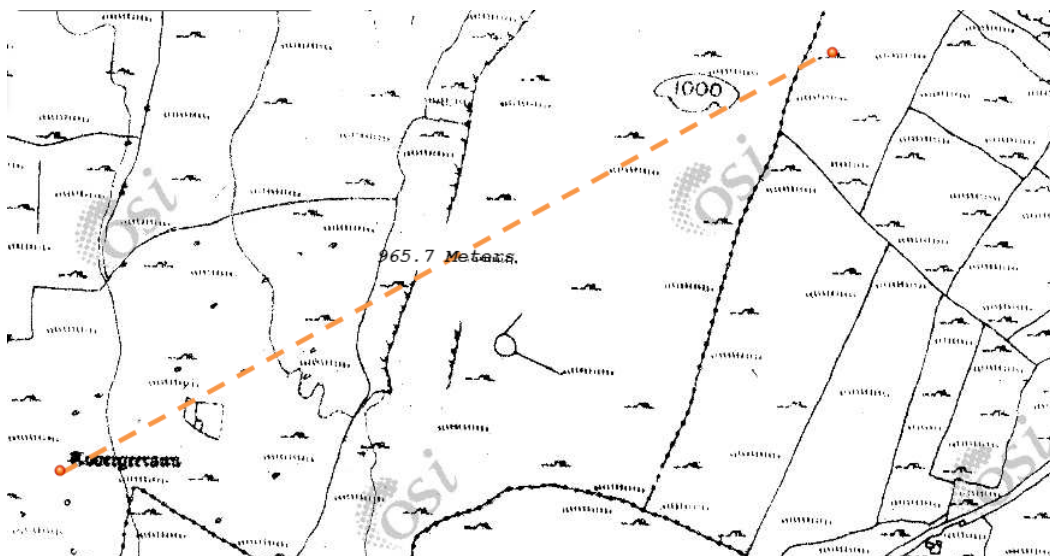
Cold enough, overcast, large stream, ground very wet following one inch of rain last night. The plan: to video the passage beyond the junction. CC to -25.5m, PC & TB surface support. TB brought Tea and Bread pudding, enjoyed whilst CC beavered below, bliss. CM and JW had previously removed a lot of spoil from the bedding crawl allowing snug progress to within a metre of the junction, (see video ref 7th December). CC fitted video and 10w lamp to an extendable aluminium pole which was pushed forward then turned 180 degrees to view both north and south sections of this apparent parallel passage. It may be we are in the top of a rift presently filled with debris, only excavation will prove this. To enlarge the approach further CC stacked spoil into the north rift and filled two kibbles left at the base of the shaft; total debris removed some five kibbles worth. The depth was measured at 25.5 metres to the "central" rib of rock. To the Roadside where the video was reviewed; it requires a big screen for clarity. Using a large kibble through the "Pinch" for carriage was proved useless when on lifting the assembled camera kit it became caught, as predicted, by its square edges. PC studied the aspects of securing the site from farm stock; thoughts of installing lintels, to then fill the depression with debris with a Mendip type concrete tube entrance have ebbed and flowed. The owner, MC, had previously recovered his Spaniel who had fallen into this rift at a depth of four metres; no mean feat, animals used for hunting frequent the area. The bedrock surrounding the entrance exposed during setting up the platform is reasonably flat, so, perhaps clearing more overburden away to expose the bedrock to install a series of posts bolted in place and surrounded by a strong mesh could be an option? It cannot be left as is. A minor issue with signalling speaker occurred, its final transmission sounded like a duck being strangled.

Hours 9, (1071), Kibbles 14, (131), Nets 2, (29)

Fermoyle West Cave, location



Aerial of location in relation to Blackhead, Galway Bay



Adjacent holy well 960 metres southwest, “downstream” from the new cave

31st December Souterrain Caherbullog Townland
Slieve Elba
Solo

Last of the year: Storm Dylan fading: cold, blustery: overcast: heavy rain and hail showers. With the Hilux out of action stole away in Pauline's car to check on a souterrain in one of the many Ringforts in Caherbullog townland. Parked at the cave and walked the track. The rainfall provided many streams off the flanks of Slieve Elba, so decided to GPS these sinks en-route. Delays occurred whilst accessing and recording at least fourteen or so sinks. Of note are two, close to the track some forty metres from the shale boundary; invisible when any flow is absent. One or two others also require closer inspection. This area is somewhere over the northern reaches of Upper Poulmagollum system, so likely to be tributaries, then again. Was going to record the sites around the mountain up to and including the Holy Well Toberanahircallough, beneath which exists a sinuous cave passage with several entrances, (*Lumley, McDonald, Milner, Cronin, 1980s*) but as the weather struck left these sites, so close to the track, for later, and struck out for the souterrain. The cracking area is one of numerous archaeological sites and field systems certainly of early medieval and, perhaps, even Bronze Age. When rain eventually reached the underwear abandoned the wide open spaces for the 3k walk back to the motor. Sinks really need checking out