

2018



Photo Tony Boycott

Considines, view north, 4th January, top to bottom Pat Cronin & Cheg Chester

1st January Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Bright, cold, rain showers, ground very wet, large stream. Among the festivities the previous evening involved reviewing the video taken by CC of the potential way on. Unfortunately Northward has no development, the stream can be seen flowing to the south. The decision was made to commence preparatory work clearing the area of the rift which extends some six metres to the south from the present working platform. Once completed the six metre long by some metre wide rift will have all the deposits removed. Whilst CC dug down through the pile of stones; spoil previously deposited there, PC and TB cleared away the foliage exposing the rift in its entirety. CC eventually located the edge of the previously noted pot and began to construct a dry stone retaining embankment off the bedrock. The level of the bedrock is not deep below the soil. An area along the rift edges will be cleared upon which a secure cover will be placed. Future photos will better explain these comments. To the Roadside for New Year Pints:

Hours 8, (Total 1079), Southend (8)

4th January Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Cold, bright spells, showers, ground very wet, large stream. The plan; to prepare the area around the southern surface end of the rift.. While CC continued building the dry stone

buttress, TB cut away the remaining foliage, PC dug away the soil along the edge of the rift to expose beautiful limestone fluting beneath in readiness to install a temporary cover over the open rift to stop adjacent steep debris slope producing items which may injure to those digging below. Tea drunk: bread pudding eaten. Much achieved (photos). To the Roadside for some really fine pints: Hours 10, (Total 1089), Southend (18)

8th January – 9th February Panamá 2018 Expedition

Team: Roger Day, James S Cobbett, Dig Hastilow & Pat Cronin.

Pleased to inform the Club of the discovery of Limestone, and first caves ever recorded in Darién province; report will be written and submitted to the Pegasus website and UK, National Geographical Society.

8th January From PCN dig log.....PC absent in Panamá

Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

The main danger to the team was frostbite! Work started on the removal of the overburden along the West edge of the rift. This is much more difficult than the East side as all the spoil has to be put in kibbles, taken up to the barrow and disposed of. Stone of any size was added to the dry stone buttress at the South end. Cheg

Hours 5 (Total 1094), Southend (23)

11th January 2018

Considines, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

After nearly two inches of rain the previous night the site was extremely slipping and sticky. A large section of the East wall which had detached itself was broken up and lifted on to the buttress wall, after which the two lumps that appeared at the back of my ears turned out to be my balls. A one metre length of the rift at the foot of the buttress was covered over with short lengths of telegraph pole. To have excavated this area to accept the proposed plastic pallet cover would have involved the removal of too much material and could have de-stabilized the buttress. To facilitate a level platform over the new shaft part of the existing barrow way needs to be lowered, started today by TB, the spoil being added to the buttress. Cheg

Hours 4 (Total 1098), Southend (27)

15th January 2018

Considines Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Work continues preparing the ground around the top of the South end of the rift. Conditions are 'mucky' to say the least where the top soil has turned into mud with the never ending rain, but we are seeing progress. The accumulated boulders along the side of the barrow-way which posed a danger are gradually being removed and added to the buttress wall. We hope to retrieve all equipment from the bottom at -25metres on Thursday. Cheg

Hours 6 (Total 1104), South end (33)

18th January

Considines Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Work continues preparing the ground around the top of the South end of the rift. Conditions are 'mucky' to say the least where the top soil has turned into mud with the never ending rain, but we are seeing progress.

The accumulated boulders along the side of the barrow-way which posed a danger are gradually being removed and added to the buttress wall. We hope to retrieve all equipment from the bottom at -25 metres on Thursday.

Hours 6 (Total 1110), South end (39)

22nd January 2018

Considines (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Another 5 man hours shoveling shite and rocks but the site will soon reach the stage where further progress will need the rearranging of the tripod, working platform and winch. So only come back from Panama if you are fit, well and roaring to go Pat: Cheg.

Hours 5 (Total 1115), South end (44)

26th January

Considines

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

We have now reached the point where further progress will require the moving of the tripod and associated infrastructure.

Hours 6 (Total 1121), Southend (50)

15th February Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Bright, bitter cold wind, sleet showers, Site meeting to design changes to the infrastructure for digging out the southern extension of the rift. Decided to install a scaffolding frame system, re-jig the sentry box, re-locate the tripod and reposition the winch; most likely start Saturday evening.

Hours 3, (Total 1124), Southend (53)

17th February Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Becoming increasingly cold: clear sky: good size stream. The plan; clear the shaft of tools and equipment. CC to -25m, PC hauling and winching. Even though a swift set up of ladders and lines was achieved the task of collecting the various bits of digging accessories, and sending them to surface, took some time. During which PC enjoyed the climate, basking in the near freezing conditions; thoughts straying to recent poolside revelries at Cobbett's place in down town Panama City. Phone and signalling cables were released, with difficulty, and recovered up to the Plank; nothing now remains below this point other than the Rebar steps, which will be removed once surveying and photography is complete. Prior to TB's departure surface preparations for digging the "Southend" had been significant. TB and CC's efforts have reduced the overhanging edge from the barrow way and removed our recently constructed dry stone wall. Much of this stone used to supplement the retaining wall at the south end of the rift; its shape and bulk now likened to a WWII Atlantic Wall Bunker. TB and CC also exposed the top of west side of the south rift; the stability of some sections possibly suspect. So: to the Roadside for renewed abuse from Billy the Barman and fine pints accompanied by excellent Appalachian music.

Hours 5, (Total 1129), Southend (58)

19th February Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Overcast, mild, good sized stream, ground very wet. The plan; begin to relocate the infrastructure. Within an hour most of the weather canopy was stripped down and stacked away and tripod dismantled. With two reassembling the tripod became somewhat of a circus manoeuvring its five metre legs down the slopes into the narrow depression was a real ball ache. Underfoot muddy slopes and loose fitting pallets covering the open rift added to the fun likened to dancing on ball bearings. Eventually an

hour after the rain began the tripod was erected, at the second attempt, pretty much in its final position; only minor adjusts are required to complete this task. Soaked to the skin the Team covered the remaining site equipment and squelched off to the Roadside. A grand, damp day out! No digging Thursday night, Next proposed session is Friday at 10:00 for Part 2 of the great relocation saga. Hours 8, (Total 1137), Southend (66)

23rd February Considines Cave, (South End)
Cheg Chester

Bitter south-east wind arriving from Siberia, small stream, ground drying, dam cold. The plan; continue re-locating the infrastructure. Balancing on the top of the ladder application of a lever to release the jammed tripod bracket proved unsuccessful. However several whacks of an eight pound sledge hammer did the job. Now straightened, a plumb line was suspended from the pulley bracket allowing the new hauling shaft arrangement to be built around this vertical guide line. Much work involved releasing, replacing, dragging and lifting pallets into their new positions. The "Sentry Box" was swiftly dismantled and moved eastward some ten inches, also extended southward with the addition of a second pallet to position the new shaft collar centrally below the tripod pulley: forthcoming photos will clarify these ramblings. Work required completing the support of the farthest pallet here. The proposed location for the winch is at the northern end of the rift. The shoring suspension cable was released to allow the "Sentry Box" to be dismantled. Some of the boulders previously removed by CC and TB weigh twice what limestone does....? A significant amount of the shaft walls were bone dry. On a recent cold day CC popped down to check on the site; opening the shaft cover he experienced a howling gale of very warm air. The shaft is not sealed, gaps around the platform are manifold, no restriction of flow can be present. This volume of draught cannot surely be issuing from the small gap at the bottom of the shaft; it must be supplemented through the gaps in the boulders remaining in the south end of the rift. Late finish + commitments = No Bar. Hours 9, (Total 1146), Southend (75)

26th February Considines Cave, (South End)
Cheg Chester

Temperature falling steady as predicted severe snow event approaches, dubbed, "The Beast from the East", meanwhile Storm Emma approaches from Biscay. Small stream, some thaw to frozen ground. The plan: to continue repositioning the infrastructure. Railway lines and sleepers lifted, shaft collar timber work removed and shaft covered by installing fresh pallets, "Sentry Box" stripped down, again, and rebuilt to slightly different design. Wiring stripped. Winch moved to new location, aligned and secured. More pallets required. Another movie made of the work. The caravan previously used for changing is due for scrapping; permission to use adjacent shed granted; just in time to avoid impending weather systems. Another good session, likely another two should see the task complete: to the Roadside. Hours 10, (Total 1156), Southend (85)

28th February Considines Cave, (South End)
Solo

Amid snow flurries went to pick up more pallets for the dig. Of the forty odd previously left most had vanished from the yard; apparently some local eastern Europeans have found pallets a useful heat source, bugger. Found two excellent ones for the railway supports and three lesser ones; to protect the winch from weather. Encountered contractor removing caravan, so unable to drop pallets in lower field; contractor offered to complete this errand. Hours 1, (Total 1157), Southend (86)

1st March Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Around two inches of snow, dark overcast, some drifting, second day of sub zero temperatures, significant wind chill, frozen ground. The plan: to move the pallets. Once the brakes were freed on the Hilux the road trip was hampered by slippery sloping sections. The contractor, (28th Feb), was better than his word, depositing the pallets over at the stile; what a nice man; moved pallets to work platform. Cut and cleared the bushes directly behind the winch, installed a pallet to receive the winch counter balance weight; rather than stone or pallets perhaps use the stock of telegraph poles: they do need storing somewhere. Released and temporarily relocated the telephone wire, positioned a very good pallet beneath the tripod and hung a Mk 4 kibble to centre the hauling line in preparation for cutting open the shaft collar. Vertically erected several pallets; as an experimental housing for the winch. As limb articulation became increasingly difficult "Plan B" was adopted; Part 1, head for truck, Part 2, make for fireside, Part 3, drink tea thaw out. Hours 2, (Total 1159), Southend (88)

3rd March Bishops Anniversary, (2005)

Started to clear the deep snowfall on the hush to access the main road; joined by three neighbours Cleared up to "Curly's" place at the forest, 1/2 a kilometre of deep snow and drifts.

5th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Thaw well underway, mild. The plan; continue with the infrastructure. Having scrounged enough timber to complete "engine house" sped off. Route through snow bound lanes made for eventful driving. Upon arrival at the final section of lane leading to the dig progress halted by succession of extensive snows drifts \geq five feet: no camera. Sod: JN to carve route through later today using an eight tonne digger.

7th March Poulmagollum

Solo

The plan: scamper to the base of Branch Passage cascade. En-route noticed resurging stream in high flow at the road bridge: though thawing much snow remained above the five hundred foot contour. Abseiled in: secured a ladder for exit. Good sized waterfall from upper series. Melt water obviously bitter cold. From confluence of first waterfall average stream deep; just below welly depth: the draught from the waterfall stunning. All the way to Main Junction, the stream, though in high flow, was crystal clear; conditions similar in Branch Passage streamway. Normal visibility in such flow rates normally less than one metre. From water mark stream level had fallen half a metre. Water so superbly clear found submerged, but knackered, aluminium karabiner, (red gate): placed same on ledge for owner to find. Crawling in dry gear along the streamway to the cascade chilled the extremities, somewhat; great fun.

8th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Mild, ground wet, small stream: the plan; continue rebuilding infrastructure. With CC unavailable assembled prefabricated side frames to fix atop pallets. Fixed spar to tripod to support weather cover. Phaffed about thinking how to hold frame while securing in place Hours 2, (Total 1161), Southend (90)

10th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Mild; bright; ground very wet; good size stream. The plan; continue with infrastructure. Completed assembling two shed sides, secured all three canopy supports in place to joist. More work required to complete canopy. Hours 3, (Total 1164), Southend (93)

12th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Bright; wet ground: cool breeze, small stream. The plan; continue the rebuilding task. Took over more timber to build rear side of "shed"; a bit of head scratching needed arranging the winch counter balance through what will be the northern weather proofing. No. 2 battery for PC's Bosch 24VDC drill finally died; bugger. CC prepared the power supply cables for winch and sockets. JN has kindly donated several lengths of scaffolding, nice man. No Roadside. Hours, 4 (Total 1168), Southend (97)

15th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Overcast; mild: small stream. The plan: press on with rebuilding. Fitted lower half of weather cover around the three sides of the winch shed, secured the roof canopy, completed securing roof spars to shed frame for improved stability in high wind. Secured both scaffold bars through rear of shed to accept pallet and counter balance weight. Canopy completed just as light rain became torrential. To the Roadside for some nice Black and Gold: Hours 6, (1174), Southend, (103)

17th March Considines Cave, (South End), & Doolin St Patrick's Day Parade

Tony Boycott

Cold east wind, overcast: small stream. The plan; continue rebuilding, still! An early start, 09:00), as PC driving IRCG vehicle in the Parade at 13:30: Finished securing the canopy sides; completed enclosing the winch shed; only minor areas of the covering to be secured with timber lathes; secured emergency winch stop; reviewed shaft collar area beneath tripod. Set shelf up for communication equipment. Outstanding tasks; complete area below tripod; install two remaining pallets for wheel barrow way; install scaffold support frame around shaft collar; install rails for truck. Perhaps another two sessions, or so, and digging can thankfully recommence. Hours, 4, (1178), Southend (107)

21st March Considines From PCN ...Log.

TB & CC

More building, battening on winch shed continued & added some hooks. Started bringing the scaffold down the hill. Light installed in the shed. The winch will need moving as the cover is fouling both the drum and the wall. Need to take a sledge next time to free lengths of scaffolding before carrying down, and a magnet or grabber to retrieve some lost screws when the box disintegrated! Forecast is terrible for Thursday, maybe reconvene Friday, or Saturday as usual; Pat - there is a pallet at the Roadside we have permission to remove - they have 2 a week uncollected. Tony B

Hours 4, (1182), Southend (111)

21st March Creevykeel Court Tomb

Cliffony

Sligo

Solo

En-route home from Derry Beag, Donegal, paid visit to the multi-chambered burial mound site. An impressive monument akin to West Kennett long Barrow, Wiltshire UK:

some 350 recorded throughout Ireland, only five south of a line between Sligo and Dublin. The clear weather meant the burial mound on Knocknarea was visible for a considerable distance.

23rd March Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Overcast, bright spells, light breeze, small stream. The plan: guess what; determined to finish as much of the infrastructure as practicable today. Laden with scaffold clips, adjustable scaffold feet, scaffold poles and timber, had to make several trips to assemble all kit on site; therefore knackered before starting work. Began installing and securing the remaining platform pallets to create the barrow run. Installed the rail supports, rails and truck, Cut out opening to create shaft collar. Relocated generator and support pallet six metres closer to the winch providing another discreet area to deposit spoil. Installed pedal control to winch Installed more hooks in winch shed to hang ropes etc. from to dry. Ran up generator, tested winch and lights; all OK. Tasks to do; Shaft collar requires several minor touches to complete, kibble receiver to be secured to truck, fit weather cover over top of tripod, install scaffolding to support far end of hauling platform. A weary trio plodded back up to the trucks. To the Roadside; gasping for drink after a, superb day, great progress. The Roadside is now our source for very good quality pallets. Hours 10, (1192), Southend (121)

26th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Tony Boycott

14:20. Overcast: misty: small stream. The plan: to assemble the scaffold frame as extra support for the extended hauling platform. Drilled 16mm holes in the limestone edges of the rift for 16mm galvanized steel pins to fix scaffold verticals in position on the uneven surfaces; each leg fitted with an adjustable foot. Fore and rear frames were erected; these now require horizontal poles to tie them together to make the entire scaffold a solid frame. Two horizontal bars threaded through the hauling pallet and adjusted to support, and take any shock load, during hauling, in this precarious position above and on the edges of the rift: to the Roadside for well some deserved pints. Hours 4, (1196), Southend (125)

27th March Considines Cave from PCN dig Log.

TB & CC

Sunny, 8 deg but -6 deg wind chill

Cut scaffold bars for rails, awaiting clips. Replaced broken pallet & supported 1/2 pallet at the back. Created support for the scaffold bars counterbalancing the winch. TB to the plank, and released the signal buzzer, but could not be hauled out without cutting the wire, so rope left in. Retrieved 2 crowbars: Installed skip truck on the rails & greased wheels. Removed clamp from the back tripod leg. Tidied up & removed some rubbish. To the Roadside following a lethal hay lorry -4 rolls high, unstrapped & stopped on a blind bend so we had to pass! Tony B

29th March Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Bright spells; ground still wet; small stream: The plan; complete tasks to get back digging again. Completed scaffold frame; extended platform to help unload kibbles; completed cutting out, and supporting, lower shaft collar; recovered signalling cables to surface; prepared poles as winch counter balance. Secured rails, installed rope to act as position

location control for shaft lid kibble receiver. Some minor tasks remain; almost there: to the Roadside for pints. Hours 10, (1206), (135)

30th March Considines Cave, (South End) & the Roadside Bar
Holy, (Good), Friday
Tony Boycott

Bright, some cloud, ground drying, small stream: The plan, continue preparation work. Completed pulley rain cover on top of tripod, Installed brace between canopy spars, fitted shaft collar area work light, refitted 240vac sockets in winch shed, laid out barrow way route. Light needs new bulb. Following the session visited The Roadside to celebrate the first opportunity in 90 Years where Bars have the choice to open on what was known as Black Friday. Hours 4, (1210), (139)

31st March Considines Cave, (South End)
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Some cloud cover, bright, ground drying; very small stream: **first actual digging session since the 22nd January!** Repositioning the infrastructure has taken at least 94 man-hours. The Plan; to DIG; hooray: CC winching, PC digging TB barrowing. A slow start gained speed as the tumble from the preparation work was cleared away and new ground broken. The exposed stratigraphy of alternating different coloured clay beds; Marl like in form. Working back and forth along the rift each pass removed the soft deposit to spade depth, (250mm). Some 500mm down the ringing of the spade heralded the expected arrival of boulders. The rift "floor" is now almost level for its length. This large volume so swiftly moved tonight was due to PC filling the kibbles to their capacity, the winch's design ability to lift great weight and TB swiftly emptying the kibbles and running the barrows over to the spoil tip despite being regularly subjected to Carbon Monoxide poisoning when passing the merrily chugging generator: my, he did have a lovely red complexion. To the Roadside for some cracking pints

Hours 9, (1219), (148), (Kibbles 40), (Nets 4)

Observations; though the rope occasionally creaked under load the winch itself did not move. The signalling system requires re-installing for clarity of commands. Handles required to the kibble receiver for ease of movement. The extra loading area adjacent the shaft makes for easier handling of kibbles. The lower shaft collar needs 100mm cut away to avoid swinging kibbles catching its edge. Though the majority of the southern stream source has been captured by surface drainage work, by the owner, potential flooding of the clay floor requires the south end of the rift to be kept lower. Both aluminium shoring support cables require securing. The main central steel can now be recovered. A detachable deviation to facilitate dragging boulders from the Southend of the rift is needed. A limestone joint below the topmost bed offers the potential to install lintels to safely close off the rift to curious cattle.

2nd April Considines, Southend

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Overcast; light rain, cold wind; good sized stream. The plan; to dig, great! CC winching, TB digging, PC barrowing. TB dug down through soft moist mud, directly behind the shoring. This will create a pit from which a working face will allow easier/swifter excavation by being able to drop spoil from the face straight into awaiting kibbles beneath. Working from the shoring end will mean progress toward the south should maintain reasonably dry conditions, without the working area incurring flooding from the southern stream inlet. TB sent up fifty kibbles of mud, muck and rock, making quite an impact on the floor level of the rift. As work progressed tools, platform, men and kibbles disappeared beneath a layer of mud. This deposit of *total mud* should not last too long, hopefully. Rocks were placed against the north dry stone wall whilst the mud and clay was deposited among the undergrowth. Another cracking session: all systems working well. A rather chuffed and weary Team headed to the Roadside for pints and abuse.

Hours 10, (1229), Southend (158), Kibbles 50, (90), Nets 4, (8)

5th April Considines, Southend

Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Mild; misty rain; gusty; small stream at either end of rift. The plan: dig. PC descended to the Plank to install two short chunks of timber in the small gap left in the shoring to support same during future operations; recovered shoring support cable; recovered other digging odds and sods from the general area: rebar steps from bottom of ladder to the Plank left in place, hose pipe released and ready to pull up. CC winching, JW & CM digging, TB unloading kibbles: PC barrowing. A steady pace resulting in seventy kibbles lifted: CM took over unloading kibbles following injury to TB. Depth of the rift floor below the horizontal bedding is now some two metres; time approaches to install concrete lintels to cover over that end of the rift whilst it remains easy to reach. En-route to the Roadside 80% of personnel abandoned this important appointment due to unforeseen demands: therefore PC, ("I got no mates"), drank away to the strains of regular abuse from the assembled team of Barmen and some fine music; great fun.

Hours 11, (1240), Southend (169), Kibbles 70, (160),

Nets 4, (8)

7th April Considines, Southend

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Sunny; mild; Inis Mór clearly visible; small stream. The Plan: maintenance. TB and CC to fettling equipment, and review safety around the shaft collar, PC prepared to cover the open rift to prevent loss or harm to livestock. Two galvanized steel RSJ lintels were fitted into the upper horizontal bedding of the rift and secured in place. Measurements indicate installation of one further lintel will complete the span from the south stream up to the present hauling shaft. On these lintels will rest plastic pallets, upon which will lay a membrane, upon which will be a shallow layer, (600mm) of boulders with clay on top, to act as a shock absorber; thus landscaping that half of the rift. This effort also prevents debris falling from the steep sides of the depression into the rift, and digger below. The timbering at the base of the dry stone buttress, both previously installed by CC, will have two lintels inserted beneath the timbering to catch and support the collapsing debris when the timber eventually rots away. Photographs of this preventative work will show the landowner the Pegasus made good its agreement, to maintain a safe site during, and after, its operations, (ref, Drunken Horse Hole). The volume of spoil removed over the previous three sessions has exposed the superb vertical fluted walls of the rift. Such swift progress has been entirely due to the winch, which has performed well beyond expectations, lifting very full kibbles without any sign of struggle, (creaking of the rope

around the capstan being the only indication of weight). Two 12mm holes were drilled to receive rebar fixings to secure both the temporary support cables fixed to the existing shoring, once completed the excess cable can be cut off, out the way of digging. The top most piece of shoring is now some one metre above the present rift floor; a good safe height to avoid falling backwards into the adjacent open shaft. TB departs the UK tomorrow for some four weeks; another pair of hands would be very useful during CC's recovery. Thoughts finally turned to a simple, effortless method of tipping kibbles into the barrow, these swiftly altered to the Roadside for pints.

Hours 6, (1246), Southend (175), Kibbles 70, (160), Nets 4, (8)

9th April Considines, Southend

Cheg Chester

Mild; overcast: very small stream. The plan: to cap limestone projections to install a plastic pallet. CC worked away at sorting much of the surface infrastructure and equipment that required cleaning and fettling. During this PC conducted three capping procedures removing just enough overhanging rock to allow an entire plastic pallet to fit into the space between, to rest securely on the two RSJ's. Both shoring support cables were then fitted with independent fixings, each adjusted to remove slack and tighten the shoring timber into place against the rock face. Final task, drilled a hole to receive the mount for the signal system button. Several photos taken were by CC. To the Roadside for abuse from Billy, and cracking drink.

Hours 4, (1250), Southend (179), Kibbles 70, (160), Nets 4, (8)

12th April Considines Cave, (South End)

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Mild; some cloud: islands clearly visibility; ground drying; very small stream: The Plan; Dig. CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing: below, JW up to his eyes in mire. Signalling system fitted. The slow pace due to PC recovering from back injury, nonetheless fifty kibbles were raised and tipped among the copse. The volume of clay spoil produced will soon require a second, or larger area cleared among the undergrowth. The extant mound of spoil is now almost three feet high at its far end; this height accessed via a series of planks that meander among the trees. Another tipping area will allow the present spoil to dry, shrink and consolidate prior to recommencement of tipping. JW focused on removing the dense wet clay floor directly beneath the shaft opening, up against the shoring, achieving a depth of 0.6m, (2 feet), over an area some 1.5m, (5 feet): diameter; almost 1 cubic metre. Clay is some 1.8 tonnes per/cubic metre. A concrete lintel to receive the next plastic pallet was cut to length by JN, (the landowner), and brought to site by PC; installing likely Saturday evening: to the Roadside:

Hours 8, (1258), Southend (186), Kibbles 50, (210), Nets 1, (9)

14th April Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Blustery; mild: stream a trickle. The Plan: maintenance. CC re-connected the pulley bracket to avoid the hauling rope rubbing against the tripod cross member while PC installed the next concrete lintel and cut down the plastic pallet to fit, some fettled with a sledge completed the job. Both tasks mean the rope is now free from wear and the once open rift now reasonably secure; requires final landscaping. A sliding plastic pallet will

be the safety cover for the lower opening of the shaft collar. A surprising amount of water trickling into the dig in this drying period: to the Roadside.

Hours 4, (1262), Southend (190), Kibbles 50, (210), Nets 1, (9)

15th April The South Pole

PMC and PC

Finally reached the South Pole; Annascaul, Co. Kerry, to pay respects and raise a glass in the bar originally opened in 1927 by Polar Explorer Tom Crean, RN: (1877-1938); recipient of the Albert Medal and three Polar Medals.

The term, Hero, falls woefully short describing this gentle mans actions.



The South Pole, Annascaul, Co. Kerry

20th April Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Warm and bright: a trickle. The plan: maintenance. The digging area is swiftly approaching a liquid state, therefore a six metre length of 100mm pipe was ordered. This was suspended beneath the recently installed lintels. At this chosen level it should capture the array of trickles issuing from the Southend conveying them into the main shaft, hopefully allowing the digging area to dry out a little. Using a series of pipe fittings,

upon completion, the pipe will not encroach into the area of the hauling shaft. This task was conducted now whilst PC can still reach it from the present floor level. The Team received a visit from JN, suitably amused at the project. Whilst PC was below CC installed a cover from the pallet tight to the edge of the receiver to prevent debris falling down through the gap into the shaft: to the Roadside!

Hours 3, (1265), Southend (193), Kibbles, (210), Nets, (9)

26th April Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester Cathal Mullane

Cool, bright, small stream, ground wet. The plan: secure pipe conveying south stream into main shaft. "L" shaped rebar brackets had been prepared and were hammered into 10mm holes, the pipe then secured with 6mm dive line. The planned pipeline route to pass around the hauling area proved satisfactory; there is a clearance of some 250mm when lifting a kibble and around 200mm, a net. It's important to ensure that prior to hauling the suspended kibble, or net, is not swinging at all. Any swing of the load could possibly damage the pipe. CM's arrival was heralded by the sound of a swarm of Bees, above the Team noticed a drone. CM assisted completion of the north end of the pipework, and began to dig the "step" south from the shaft. CC winching, PC emptying and barrowing. En-route to the trucks a stunning sunset displayed the impression that America had been Nuked: to a busy Roadside.

Hours 7, (1272), Southend (200), Kibbles, 34 (244), Nets, 2 (11)

28th April Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Sunny: the distant islands crystal clear: small stream. The Plan; capture water from the Southend to reducing digging in porridge. Having chipped off a few high points a plastic "voting" sign was manoeuvred into the thin bedding beneath the drips, catching most. More phaffing about produced a design for pipework to capture the main stream, water collected by the plastic sign and adjacent trickle: more pipe fittings required. To the Roadside

Hours 2, (1274), Southend (202), Kibbles, 34 (244), Nets, 2 (11)

29th April Souterrain CL002-068002

Jim Warny

Sunny: increasing cloud cover: windy: The plan; to incorporate the initial calibration of JW's DistoX with digitally surveying the site. PC rang BK to inform of our intent; again told to "work away". PC had previously established three datums, (29th Oct 2017), Station 0 on the surface, Station 1 in the first chamber, Station 2 leveled from Station 1 through the squeeze into the second chamber. JW could utilize these secure datums to rotate the DistoX upon to obtain multiple measurements of distance, bearing and inclination. Whilst JW experimented with the DistoX PC squeezed through the defensive drop-hole creep into the third chamber; much larger than imagined. Now dry of all flood water a better idea of the state of the place was achieved; it is much the same dimensions as the other chambers. The place was cleaned by removing remains of fertilizer bags. A large rectangular flagstone lay on the floor, originally part of the entrance drop-hole surround. The floor of the drop-hole to the creep is purposely sloped, which when the flagstone was in place, would present an individual with medium leg length difficulty wriggling down into the creep, (is this why it's lying on the floor?). Any invader wriggling through such a constricted passage would have their head and upper torso exposed to attack from any individual taking refuge within; even the young and the elderly could sustain an attack from such location that is until supplies ran out. This third chamber is set at a right angle to the second. At its far end a slope of washed in top soil rises from floor, almost to

ceiling, the area beyond is sealed by large boulders; apparently placed not by collapse; no damage to ceiling or walls is visible. The dry stone work appears to end among the top soil. Surveying this defensive feature will be fun. Previously BK had asked PC if a video of the souterrain could be made, JW has willingly obliged.

3rd May Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny

Mild: misty with drizzle: The plan; dig. CM and JW digging; CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. The floor up to the south end was lowered level to where JW had dug down the pit next to the shoring. Another 0.6m deep pit requires sinking against the shoring to repeat this successful process. Perhaps once dig out this floor could have a timber bottom to facilitate clean hauling from this location? The very large boulders from the south end were removed by net, deposited on the "Big Boulder Pile". Barrowing began behind the south end to prepare the other spoil area for further landscaping. Another spoil area is urgently required. PC bought more fittings and bits have been purchased to complete the pipework, possibly Saturday night. To the Roadside:

Hours 10, (1284), Southend (212), Kibbles, 41 (285), Nets, 10 (21)



Drone view southwest, of the dig toward Ballynalacken and the islands; 19:00, 26th April



Drone view of Considines; photos Cathal Mullane

3rd May Considines, Southend from PCN dig Log.

CC, CM, JW and PC

Mild: misty with drizzle: The plan; dig. CM and JW digging; CC winching; PC unloading and barrowing. Prior to commencing the dig, a corrugated aluminium sheet was placed over the south end of the shaft, diverting drip water into the drainage pipe. CM focused on the southern floor of the shaft now comprised mainly of boulders interspersed with rotten tree branches. Floor is still a sticky mud consistency wetter to the lower northern end. Spoil removed is predominantly wet clay, but larger stones are being seen more regularly than before. The floor up to the south end was lowered level to where JW had dug down the pit next to the shoring. Another 0.6m deep pit requires sinking against the shoring to repeat this successful process. Perhaps once dig out this floor could have a timber bottom to facilitate clean hauling from this location? The very large boulders from the south end were removed by net, deposited on the "Big Boulder Pile". Barrowing began behind the south end to prepare the other spoil area for further landscaping. Another spoil area is urgently required. PC bought more fittings and bits have been purchased to complete the pipework, possibly Saturday night. To the Roadside: Cathal.

Hours 10, (1284), Southend (212), Kibbles, 41 (285), Nets, 10 (21):

5th May Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Bright: Breezy, Cool: The plan; to complete the southern pipework. The minor flow from the south turns the floor into a quagmire. Difficulties were experienced using expanding foam to seal the gap between rock and prepared pipework. The extant trickle was diverted into the pipe by constructing a small mud dam. The trickle free area then thoroughly washed clean of debris and allowed to dry of excess water; with the surface still damp, (to improve adhesion), foam was then applied and failed to stick anywhere in intended target area. Rubbing to obtain adhesion to the rock ended with it covering PC: a total waste of time. So, adopted yet another plan; the pipework is now complete

discharging the water to the shaft. The present seal is of a stiff, sticky mud, which will allow a concrete seal to be set and dry in place to complete the task.

Hours 2, (1286), Southend (214), Kibbles, 41 (285), Nets, 10 (21)

10th May Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Bright and overcast: Mild; small stream: Cool SW breeze. The plan: maintenance. Whilst PC shaped a plastic voting poster in the bedding to catch myriad drips from beneath the southern stream channel, CC developed a tipping system to empty kibbles into the barrow. The system to catch as much of the water from the southern inlet should significantly reduce the volume of water in the dig area, though only in normal flow conditions. PC also landscaped both spoil areas creating easier runways for the barrow. Early in the evening JW rang diverting to Fergus River to carry in yet more equipment in preparation for the push, as water levels were surprisingly low for this time of year. All met up in the Roadside for abuse and cracking pints.

Hours 4 (1290), Southend (218), Kibbles, (285), Nets, (21)

12th May Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cool breeze, bright, trickle running. The plan: to secure the pipework. After reviewing the previous pipework arrangement it was stripped down as PC thought it could be improved. A short section of four inch pipe was eventually concreted in place; this will discharge the south stream into the northern area of the rift. This procedure was repeated with a smaller diameter pipe to collect the subsidiary trickle from the west side. The mix used was quite strong to assist adhesion between pipe and limestone. The new arrangement means a little more phaffing about with pipework, but it's for the best. The pipework into the shaft was also prepared for the final length into the shaft; this needs the plumber to be dangled from the platform to complete the task; terrific. The dig floor was awash with puddles, from rain yesterday? So PC dug a gutter to capture water from the south and to drain the general area. CC arrived and began to install the tipping system for the kibbles; this will greatly assist the poor sod who has to hold them whilst emptying same into the barrow, not an easy task. Part of this proposed system requires a loop secured to the bottom of the kibbles; 6mm, dive line was used. Hopefully the pipework will be completed next session. To a busy Roadside: no Billy so delay in getting drink.

Hours 4 (1294), Southend (222), Kibbles, (285) Nets (21)

13th May Considines Cave, (South End)

Solo

Overcast, sunny spells, cool. The plan: steal a march on the Monday session; attempt completion of pipework. Laden again with kit waddled across the field to the dig; one length of scaffold and adjustable foot now on site, the three metre scaffold bar is by the track. Prior to assembling the pipework a wide, thick clay garland was created around the edge of the small bedding to convey extraneous drips into the prepared collection point. The constricted work area was a ball ache, but this bit of plumbing is finished; outstanding is the discharge pipe out into the shaft. The end plastic pallet was set in position on the galvanized RSJ's, so the rift can now be completely sealed off from the outside world, plus all and any curious farmstock; departing the site, managed to jam finger in truck door, so no digging Monday.

Hours 2 (1296), Southend (224), Kibbles, (285), Nets, (21)

14th May Considines Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Nick Geh

Overcast: bright spells: cool: trickle running. The plan: erect the support for the proposed kibble tipping system. An easy enough session for injured parties; the component parts swiftly assembled. A scaffold pole secured to the platform supports the central roof spar from which hangs the pulley. Testing proved all secure. Meanwhile NG ambled about reviewing the project and taking photos: To the Roadside for pints.

Hours 3 (1299), Southend (227), Kibbles, (285), Nets, (21)

18th May CLO04-016040, (souterrain) CLO04-016029, (ringfort, cashel)

Anthony Cronin, Victoria Cronin and PC

Sunny: warm: cool breeze. A second attempt to locate the ringfort and souterrain previously made 31st Dec 2017; part of the ongoing survey project. Now armed with a 1800s 6 inch map navigated straight to the ringfort mostly using the network of walls; some walls appearing Bronze Age in date; their heights apparently increased with later additions of smaller coursed stonework. Delightedly encountered two types of Burren orchid and four clusters of late spring gentians. The ringfort is situated adjacent a limestone terrace protected from the southwesterlies; curiously, the ringfort is unlike any other ever visited, its remaining walls of large ill fitted weathered limestone blocks, one block in width, with large gaps between, give an impression of construction by the inexperienced. The souterrain design and dimensions suggest its primary use as a storage facility and, perhaps, shelter during sustained inclement weather. The surrounding extensive field system contains both large and small enclosures; giving the appearance of a busy farmstead. Around the interior circumference of the ringfort are outlines of several small buildings within one of these is a large collapse exposing a souterrain. A second, smaller opening is located, some ten metres away, almost central within the ringfort. Descending the collapse a wide, (1.6m), high, (1.4m), passage, some eight metres in length is entered. At either end of this "chamber" well laid stonework tapers gently inward. At the top of the walls corbelling has neatly reduced the span for the stone lintels. The small opening is a narrower passage; its short length has had its floor raised some 0.6m: a possible attempt to restrict entry to intruders? An interesting site: to the Roadside for craic agus ceol.

19th May S4, (possible coastal resurgence for Coolagh)

Anthony Cronin, Victoria Cronin

During a walk from Poulsallagh bay to McGann's Bar PC observed the sea approaching low water, (spring tide, waxing new moon); diverted to locate S4, a potential resurgence of Coolagh River Cave. Gentians and orchids abound; hundreds. Located a significant resurgence in the expected area; stripped and entered to investigate site. A six metre wide, one metre high bedding gradually diminishes in height over four metres to a tight bedding which offers no further potential. Recorded location as ITM 0508423 x 0701584; taken three metres seaward of the entrance.

24th May Considines Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Warm: threatening showers: small stream: The plan; continue with covering over the rift. PC drilled several holes and inserted rebar as extra support to stone work that will cover the gaps along the edge of the pallets. CC continued working on the tipping system; only minor adjustments required. Midges galore: headed for the Roadside,

Hours 3 (1302), Southend (230), Kibbles, (285), Nets, (21)



CL004-016040/2



CL004-016040/12

Photo/s Anthony Cronin

Souterrain CL004-016040 within Ringfort CL004-016029; Caherbullog,
Slieve Elba in the background

26th May Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: Bright: Trickle: The plan; dig. Whilst TB reviewed progress CC sorted the tipping mechanism, PC installed the "Gantry"; a two metre long horizontal plank spanning the main shaft from the fixed ladder across to the shoring to facilitate access into the south end. A traverse line from the belay at the top of the ladderway to the new hauling way was also fixed in place for use with a cow's tail and jammer; this will require improvement and a proper belay located in the south end area to secure the end of the horizontal traverse line. Though temporary the three metre aluminium ladder way was "secured" with a lightweight line in the new hauling way. It presently stands atop a small pillar of mud which, once removed, following the next few sessions will be taken out of service. All access to the south end will be via the old ladderway and across the Gantry. TB digging PC barrowing CC winching. The new tipping system was used to great effect enhanced by cleaned kibbles. The spoil appears far less liquid than previously encountered even though TB dug away the "wet" floor surface toward the south. Perhaps the effort creating the south end water collection is paying off? As TB progressed further from the shaft the hauling line was brought forward and attached to the kibble using the power of the winch to drag the full kibble back into the shaft rather than the digger expend energy. Occasionally strangled squawks emerged from the depths these noises were found to emanate from the signal system and not as initially feared from TB. The tipping system was also used to empty the Net, again to great effect, though care is required lest the barrow become damaged from boulders falling from too high a position.

Spoil was deposited above and to the rear of the Bunker; a replacement barrow way plank required. The spoil tips are reducing as they dry and therefore easier to trundle a wheel barrow across. Fortunately the midges appeared toward the end of the session. The bottom of the new hauling shaft is now some four metres below the platform; ten poles visible. Though the speed of winching appears slow each kibble is full. This improves overall digging efficiency by a factor of three over the previous method of PC hand hauling from depth; it also means his knuckles no longer drag along the floor.

Hours 8 (1310), Southend (238), Kibbles, 31 (316),

Nets, 1 (22)

28th May Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Very warm, (+25°): Bright: Trickle. The plan: dig. CC winching TB digging PC barrowing. Steady progress raised fifty one kibbles even though extant injuries nagged at each of the team. Wet clay gradually clagged up the kibbles so around kibble 30 these were replaced with cleaned ones which solved several issues not least their weight but mainly the ease of emptying them into the barrow. Das Bunker spoil tip was used tonight, the next session will switch to the original spoil depository beyond the generator to allow tonight's spoil to dry and consolidate prior to further use. Midges were about and barely tolerated the serious thirsts created were not: to the Roadside for fine drink.

Hours 8 (1318), Southend (246), Kibbles, 51 (367), Nets, 1 (22)

31st May Considines Cave (South End) From PCN Log

JW, TB, CC and PC

Warm: Increasing overcast: Trickle: The plan: dig. CC winching, TB unloading PC unloading and barrowing JW digging. With little delay digging commenced, to reduce effort unloading the kibbles as they became clagged they were regularly replaced with clean ones. Digging below was hard going as the spoil and clay was dry and well compacted. Progressing away from the shoring poles JW dug 2 spades deep. By the end of the end of the session an area of 1,5m x 1m by 0,5m was cleared. A total of 70 kibbles were raised. The spoil was deposited beyond the generator filling the gap against the north wall allowing the Bunker pile to consolidate. regards Jim

Hours 10 (1328), Southend (256), Kibbles, 70 (437), Nets, 1 (22)

2nd June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: ground drying: small trickle: midges: The plan: dig. After severely thwacking the kibbles to knock off the dried mud digging commenced; TB digging CC winching and PC barrowing. At a steady pace TB lowered the area up against the shoring then began to work southward. Boulders of various sizes began to appear from amongst the clay. Thirteen pieces of shoring are now exposed some seven of these need removing that's about 10% of the total originally installed. Spoil was again deposited above the Bunker: the recent heat wave has allowed previous session spoil to consolidate swifter than expected. The three huge boulders lifted by net were emptied using the tipping system without any damage to the barrow, hooray. The Monday session could remove shoring, reposition the Gantry, secure the shaft collar cover and fit the safety rail: to a busy Roadside for drink. Hours 8 (1336), Southend (264), Kibbles, 40 (477), Nets, 3 (25)

4th June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Huge amounts of unstable air arriving from the northeast: humid: trickle: midges: The plan: maintenance. TB and CC attended to closing off the many gaps around the shaft

superstructure against debris falling through to injure those below. Meanwhile PC removed seven shoring sections; these were winched immediately to surface and the Gantry, now covered with a non slip mesh, was relocated at -4 metres and secured to the fixed ladder. The lifeline is also secured at the bottom via a 16mm bolt and stainless steel belay, (requires final tightening). This is the route to access the dig as the three metre aluminium ladder, hung on shoelaces is now removed. The lower shaft cover is now stable and slides to open within its two guides; to open and expose the full depth of the shaft requires some acrobatics, so the chances of a curious indeed nosey twat doing this and falling down are much reduced. The view along the excavated south rift is really encouraging; the soporific pace of winching and barrowing does not convey the volume of spoil removed in the work hours applied to this specific task. The area emptied is substantial. To gaze, dangling from the shoring, into the yawning maw of the north end is one thing, the shape and width of rifts south end promises at the very least an equal thrill: to the Roadside for pints, agus craic.

Hours 9 (1345), Southend (273), Kibbles, (477), Nets, (25)

6th June Poulawillin Cave, Eanty Beag

Solo

17:00 Visited Paddy Davoren to renew permission to seek cave on his land

7th June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:35 Very warm: barely a trickle: Horseflies: midges. The plan: dig. TB digging, CC winching with PC unloading & barrowing. Throughout the entire session arms flew around like windmills swatting horseflies. TB dug away southward sending up forty two kibbles and three nets finishing up some one metre from the South End. The barrow route boards above the Bunker were repositioned so the sessions spoil could be deposited much further up the eastern side of the depression. The new access route and safety line worked well, as did the sliding shaft cover: to the Roadside.

Hours 6 (1351), Southend (279), Kibbles, 42 (519), Nets, 3, (28)

9th June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: clear: barely a trickle: midges: The plan: dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued to progress toward the south end encountering a variety of debris; boulders huge, large and small, muddy chatter and clay. Sorting this spoil at surface meant most was deposited to the west area of the Bunker, smaller stones thrown up against the north wall, the flatter boulders kept to increase the height of the Bunker wall To the Roadside.

Hours 8 (1359), Southend (287), Kibbles, 45 (564), Nets, 7, (35)

14th June Considines Cave (South End) From PCN Log

CC & TB

TB underground CC surface TB spent the first half of this session cleaning the walls of excess mud and any small stones etc that could, at a later date be a hazard to those working below. Whilst this was going on CC busied himself with a bit of routine maintenance including topping up the oil in the generator. As a test to how the system can work with only two people, twelve kibbles were raised. For the person on the top this is a very busy process but a bit of a drag for the person digging: Cheg Chester.

Hours 4(1363), Southend (291), Kibbles, 12(576), Nets, 7, (35)

18th June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Overcast: cool: small stream: The plan: dig. TB digging, PC unloading and barrowing CC winching. A steady pace lifted fifty kibbles and four nets within which were very large boulders. TB uncovered two small bones at the measured depth of 5.5 metres below working platform surface. There appears an increase of stone and boulders among the spoil perhaps the bulk of clay overburden is now passed? With the passing of the fine dry weather the barrow route planks need covering with mesh to maintain traction as muddy conditions underfoot inhibit pushing the barrow uphill. Spoil was deposited beyond the generator, rocks medium and small against the northern field wall, large in the main pile. Hours 7 (1370), Southend (298), Kibbles, 50(626), Nets, 4, (39)

21st June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Bright: islands clearly visible; warm: small stream: horseflies: The Longest Day: The plan: dig. CC winching TB digging PC unloading and barrowing. Though PC arrived ½ hour late progress was swift, TB sending up kibbles and nets apace; to his later detriment. Each net contained a hefty to enormous boulder largest being ≥70kgs. Many of the kibbles contained boulders and cobbles, all produced from lowering the floor against the shoring; 11 pole sections now exposed. Clay deposited beyond the generator, stone along the north field wall “big flatties” at the Bunker. Perhaps the bottom of the dense clay stratigraphy has been reached? A thoroughly shagged out Team shuffled off to the Roadside for reviving pints. News of Grenville Blatherwick’s death received; a member who was very good to PC on joining PCN.

Hours 6 (1376), Southend (304), Kibbles, 50(676), Nets, 13, (52)

23rd June CL005-160039 Souterrain & Poulawillin

Solo

Clear skies: temp ≥23°C: Dam hot: The plan; continue the souterrain project. Souterrains CL005-160039 and CL005-160045 are two of five recorded in the townland of Cragballyconal near Kilcorney. Alas no entrances were found open but each site has hollow areas suggesting the line of a collapsed souterrain passage. Each souterrain is within a ruined stone ringfort, (cashel), both sites subject to extensive effects of cattle grazing. The adjacent cave Poulawillin had been entered in the late 1990s by ML and PC. To refresh the memory PC sought the cave. Using a machete to thrash along the overgrown cliff face, through blackthorn briar and hazel, the individual managed to fall off a narrow ledge into the waiting arms of a hazel bush sustaining minor brushing to his ego. Scrambling to a position immediately below the estimated entrance location, well hidden by undergrowth, a gps reading was taken. Returning to the top of the cliff this location was sought traversing ankle wrecking terrain. Eventually a large scoop in the limestone was recognized as being the place where the ladder descended in the 1990s trip was previously secured. With time running out the trip was abandoned for tonight’s digging session. The location below cave entrance was recorded as ITM 524901 x 700319 the more relative cliff top location will be taken on return. A chance encounter with the landowner found PC granted permission to explore all his land thereabouts and that around Cahercommaun, some five hundred acres plus of beckoning limestone upland. The names of adjacent land owners wherein are located the remaining souterrains in the Cragballyconal townland were obtained. Intend to return to Poulawillin to clear the foliage concealing the large cliff face entrance.

23rd June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

18:00. Clear skies: Great visibility: Trickle. Midges: Horseflies: The plan: dig. CC winching TB digging PC unloading and barrowing. The spoil lifted was more stone than clay. Of the 38 kibbles raised 10 were clays and sediments, deposited beyond the generator, the remainder of stone and boulders sorted for type. The smaller, cobble like stones were deposited along the northern wall, those of a flatter profile chosen for the Bunker wall. The relative ease of digging the exposed loose stone has significantly increased the pace causing other associated dig operations to increase. Eleven nets were raised within which were some very large boulders two over 70kgs. Twelve sections of shoring have become exposed; these will soon need removing, the gantry and associated works repositioned. Experimentation with the number of turns on the capstan proved successful and informative. The speed of progress is impressive the time consumed repositioning the surface infrastructure and CC building the winch is all justified when considering the previous slog of hand hauling the kibbles in two stages to surface. This frenetic activity repeatedly caused the barrower's thoughts to turn to the cool pastures of the Roadside and its fine ale. A new pint "Euphoria" may be here to stay; the Brewer explaining its beneficial effects to an enraptured team.

Hours 7 (1383), Southend (311), Kibbles, 38 (714), Nets, 11, (63)

24th June Souterrain CL002-068002

Solo

Hot: Clear skies: Superb visibility: Very little haze: The plan: continue the survey. Attempted another surface shoot for the video requested by BK; JW had previously made a video of the entire trip but surface wind noise was just too severe. Re-located datums in the second chamber to extend this centre line through the drop-hole creep into the third, (final), chamber: a vertical offset to pass the creep will be required. Three discreet ink marks were made as references to position the laser level to project along the low passage. The flagstones used to construct the roof are huge; the largest some 2m x 1.3m x 0.2m, conservatively estimated at a little over one metric tonne. An aerial photo by NG shows the site as a quadrant. Another aerial view shows the outline of a sub-square enclosure, (ringfort); taken looking north.

25th June Considines Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Hot: Stunning visibility, Islands and Connemara Mountains so clear: Trickle: Horseflies: Midges. The plan: Dig. TB digging, CC winching with PC unloading and barrowing. The small pieces of timber used for odds and sods were cleared from the main boulder pile for extra spoil space. Of the fifty three kibbles raised only ten were of clays and sediments the remainder washed stone and small boulders; something's changing. Much clay remains at the very base of the hauling shaft but this is likely the result of the trampling involved in such a busy area. The thirteen nets raised included one huge boulder; ≥80kgs. JN, (adjacent landowner), arrived fascinated at the progress and effort; impressed that the large open rift is being closed over with stable material. A lot more flat stones were deposited at the Bunker for further wall construction smaller and odd shaped rocks placed along the northern field wall. To the Roadside for cool pints, grand music and loud visitors

Hours 7 (1390), Southend (318), Kibbles, 53 (767), Nets, 13, (76)

5th July Considines Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Very warm: heat haze over islands: barely a trickle: Midges: Horseflies: The plan: to begin landscaping/covering the open rift. CC continued setting more stone along the Bunker retaining wall whilst PC laid a membrane over the plastic pallets and constructed stonework around the base of the Bunker wall covering the existing pole sections and gaps between the rift wall and pallets. This will reduce the chances of a digger, particularly TB, receiving another impact from above. The barrow way to the Bunker is slowly collapsing into the depression, likely from the lack of moisture reducing soil adhesion. Need to hack into some of the foliage away to increase the existing nine inch wide route. Two barrowing planks had mesh secured along them to improve traction when tipping spoil in the rain. Another pallet slat failed, four pallets need replacing ASAP. Covering the rift has removed all available light from the south end; work area lighting would be most useful. To a busy Roadside

Hours 3 (1393), Southend (321), Kibbles, 53 (767), Nets, 13, (76)

7th July Considine's Cave (South end)

Solo

Overcast: warm: barely a trickle: midges: The plan; to remove some of the shoring pole sections. Descended into the rift its appearance superb, the walls continue down vertical, fluted and scalloped: impressive. The floor is level except the last metre or so which is mainly boulders up against the south end. Counted the exposed sections of shoring, numbering eleven; one large piece distorted from the vertical. Removed Gantry and lowered the shoring by four poles. Had difficulty removing the large staples used to secure the support cables without damaging cables too much. The new location for the rebar hangers, which secure the turnbuckles, is further into the northern area which allows the tension applied by the turnbuckles tensioning the cable pulls the poles tighter up against the rift walls increasing overall shoring stability. Replaced gantry, to get out, and found it needs shortening by some eighteen inches so as not to project beyond the shoring into the dig area. Scampered up and down betwixt dig floor and winch to bring shoring pieces tools and equipment to surface. To do, gantry plank needs shortening: four pallets need replacement: timber left for handrail. With TB & CC in the UK and JW en-route to Thailand digging will be a slow process. To the Roadside for a cool pint!

Hours 3 (1396), Southend (324), Kibbles (767), Nets, (76)

9th July Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

AM: Very warm: Cloudless: Haze: Almost dry stream: Midges: Horseflies: managed to get six decent pallets transported same to dig; informed another character is after fire wood; asked if the hotel owner would direct this request toward using the older and busted pallets whilst the good ones are reserved for us.

PM: Inspected the working platform amid a cloud of flying pests. As previously thought four pallets require replacement. Some were destroyed during their removal. The two remaining positioned in line with the barrow route across the existing platform to spread the barrow load. The new pallets have not been secured to the joists below. To a hectic Roadside absolutely packed with visitors.

Hours 3 (1399), Southend (327), Kibbles (767), Nets, (76)

11th July Poulawillin Cave

Solo

18:00. Aim: to locate its entrance hidden in the cliff face. En-route called to landowner to confirm it OK to remove foliage. Laden with drill, machete and loppers carted the kit

across to the top of the twenty metre cliff. The limestone overlooking the cliff is severely weathered therefore not suitable for bolting. In order to reach the lower ledge PC moved around to the western side of the depression to access the steep slope down onto ledge. On this side of the “depression” a dense copse of hazel obstructs progress. A route was cut through this during which a small choked tube was uncovered. The previous trip noted a small diameter tube almost at roof level heading off to the left toward this surface cavity; perhaps one and the same? Potentially the area of cliff face obscured by the vegetation is where Poulawillin actually is? Carried on cutting through the hazel thicket only to be forced out toward the cliff; standing on a projecting rock could not get a clear view of the intended area. Climbed back to the top of the cliff and managed to find a way down onto the east side of the surface depression. Nothing came to mind as to where exactly ML and PC originally climbed down; 20 years back. Found an area of decent rock and drilled four 14mm holes ready for the hangers. The plan is to drop over the edge and work down through the vegetation; memory serves a 20 foot ladder was used previously to access the entrance so a three metre tether is also required. Landowner is up for a trip.

12th July Cullaun II

Solo

18:00. Warm: no stream in entrance series. An interesting trip in such low water conditions, the chert floor exposed for great distances: down to the terminal pitch wetted by a very small cascade.



Self, Cathal Mullane, Jim Warny, Asia, Mr. Warny Senior

13th July Shannon Airport

10:30 – 12:00 Aim: Asked by Asia accompany her and JW to pick up JW's kit on returning from Thailand and assist with the press of media coverage.

15th July Souterrains CL009-022006 & CL009-022007

Solo

Raining! Eventually managed to locate the landowner and, via the postal service, requested permission to survey and record these two souterrains. Some twenty years ago the larger of the two was noted during cave prospecting in the townland of Lisnanroum by ML and PC. Personal memory conspired initially with the hazel and associated vegetative growth to confound the searcher. After a brief spell the smaller souterrain, not previously noticed in the 1990s, was found some thirty metres to the north of the larger. The openings and breaches of the flagstone roof were referenced in ITM. The roof covering of both is elevated above the immediate surrounding area, though this is not quite as conspicuous as you'd imagine. The vast karst - pasture plateau landscape has a number of walls suggestive of farming dating from the Bronze Age, 2200BCE – 500BCE; souterrains are broadly accepted as an early medieval feature, 400CE – 1200 CE. There is no vehicular access to the site, though room for one motor to obstruct the gateway on the single track road. Hazel and nettles shelter in each souterrain opening so some amount clearance will be the first task. This fascinating landscape is crisscrossed by very many field walls stretching away into the distance as far as the eyes of a shortarse can see.

16th July Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Threatening rain showers: warm: no stream: The plan: dig. CC digging PC winching unloading barrowing. With two the platform is a busy place, the running back and forth was significantly reduced when PC extended the draw rope which closes the shaft to the winch position. This means without leaving the winch controls the lid can be swiftly closed with the receiver upon which the kibble or net can be lowered. Minor adaptations to the process of unloading the kibbles and sending them back down resulted in going back and forth just once, saving a lot of time. CC below worked steadily levelling the floor back to the south end by removing the pile of boulders and chatter. The clay and chatter was deposited beyond the generator, the boulders along the northern field wall, and several loads of cobbles by the Bunker. All things considered a good session: to the Roadside. Hours 5 (1404), Southend (331), Kibbles 28 (795), Nets, 8 (84)

19th July Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Overcast: warm: barely a trickle. The plan; Dig! PC installed a scaffold bar handrail to enclose the east end of the platform. CC digging, PC doing the rest. The south end was attended to reducing the clean washed boulders to a point below the general floor level. This is mud free and a good place to work back toward the hauling area, remaining out of the mud. As the depth has increased winching is practicable from the far south end, the winch rope not having to endure severe angles or creating stress on the shaft collar. No clay tonight, cobbles were sent to the north wall, larger flatter stone to the Bunker, chatter to beyond the generator. Steady progress removed fifteen kibbles and eleven nets all of which were heavy to very heavy; hooray for the winch! The installation of a draw rope from the cover to the winch position means the cover can be swiftly closed beneath

the rising loads without the need to leave it suspended above the yawning maw of the open shaft; to the Roadside for very nice drink.

Hours 5 (1409), Southend (340), Kibbles 15 (810), Nets, 11 (95)

20th July

Bob Craig, (Crange), 76; lost today to Alzheimers

21st July Poulawillin, Eanty More or Beg?

Cheg Chester

Warm: sunny spells: The plan: to locate the entrance hidden by foliage somewhere in the cliff. Fitted the remaining anchors, 2 for the SRT rope, 2 for the ladder. Once on the rope leaning over the cliff managed to double check where the recent path was previously cut, and moved east some two metres. Arrived level with the end of the 25' ladder to find no entrance, so ML and PC must have used two ladders. Continued on down to where a shadow was seen; cut away the foliage using machete and loppers. Fortunately uncovered the top of the entrance, continued cutting away Ivy, Briars and Blackthorn; a painful process. Finally swung into the entrance finding it larger than remembered: five metres square and some 1.7 metres high: as further foliage was removed the lower area of the portal was revealed. To the left a small corridor of 0.8 metres wide descends steeply, to the right appears a made up area; likely to form a shelter to the prevailing weather, from the southwest. Descending further cutting the Briars and Blackthorn continued to be a real sod dangling on a rope. Eventually cut a swath down two big limestone block steps to the top of the grass covered talus. The cave is now accessible via a builder's ladder; (with permission). The comment of the landowners Father, Paddy, that as a child he once climbed into the cave is very likely, without the present scatter of post cutting thorny debris it is an awkward but practicable scramble. Its location in the valley suggests an opportunity for archaeology, which is very likely in this intensely active ancient landscape of continuous farming since the Bronze Age. Updated Pat Davoren's wife, Rebecca, with today's progress and ran: to the Roadside for well earned pints. Bliss!

23rd July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Warm: humid: 100% cloud cover: trickle: no midges: no horseflies: mushrooms: The plan; dig. CC digging, PC up top. CC had altered the original rope drum for the forthcoming change of a longer hauling rope; it now sits on a turntable which allows it turn be spun to take out the twists that form in the hauling rope during its pass around the capstan. A reoccurrence of the curious grey marl like clay occurred through which, CC dug a sondage the stratigraphy continues below 0.4m. TB returns Friday, which will increase our present productivity. Twenty two kibbles were lifted of which twelve were clay; six very heavy nets were also brought to surface. The clay was sent beyond the generator; shrubs and trees in this area now need their branches trimmed to allow the barrow to be tipped correctly. A perimeter for the stone piled along the north wall was prepared to receive the finished dry stone wall facing required to stabilize the pile around the adjacent rift opening. A student from University Collage Cork, (U.C.C.), is doing her masters on bones, and is willing to assist with identification and dating of bones found in any of our digs. Her supervisor is Billy O'Brien, known to cavers/miners, who has previously conducted work on the Bronze Age copper mines of Ross Island, Killarney, Co. Kerry and Mount Gabriel, County Cork. To the Roadside

Hours 4 (1413), Southend (344), Kibbles 22 (832),



View northeast, 20m cliff face of Poulawillin Cave

Nets, 6 (101)

24th July Doo Lough, Galway

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

A chance thought during the day led PC to suggest an alternate evening plan. As water levels are the lowest in some sixty odd years, perhaps investigate Doo Lough Sink and its environs. Also, to look for the two dive sites found in the mid 1990s by Messer's Farr, Geh and Cronin within Garryland Wood. There followed a three hour trip which after a brief attempt didn't locate the 1990s sites. However, the team did find very interesting landscape exposed by the reduce lake levels, several choked sinks and a rather large resurgence with some dry passage. Doo Lough Sink is recorded as being at the base of a small cliff at north end of the lake, ten metres in length. Logic guided the team to look in the SW of the dry area, here two significant sinks were found. Following an ancient, shallow overflow channel a further choked sink was found. The large overflow channel led to an extension of Doo Lough and another large artificially blocked sink. This area is a broad basin narrowing to the north to another sink against a curious rock formation within which is a narrow rift to water. Further to the north are several more choked sinks. At the summit of the gentle slope is another impressive rock formation from which issues a resurgence in high flow periods. Behind, and to the right the principle opening is a jumble of boulders, within this JW found some fifteen metres of dry rift passage.

25th July Poulawillin

Dr. Michelle Comber, Dr. Noel McCarthy

Short version: escorted Archaeologists, Dr's Comber and McCarthy to the cave; neither baulked at climbing the electron ladder up to the entrance, through the briars etc. They conducted a thorough assessment of the site suggesting the chert bed in the limestone had been possibly worked based on several observations. Therefore, if so, the site may potentially be an early mine. Returning back to Caherconnell stopped at the landowners

place to give an update, informing him that PC has left the ladder for him to have a look see himself. He asked if PC could accompany him this was agreed, so no digging for PC Thursday week.

26th July Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Overcast: mild: small stream: trickle from south pipe: midges: The Plan: Dig. CC digging, PC up top. The earlier rain had dumped some inch of rain across arid north Clare. The wet surface of the platform combining with the thin layer of spoil dust to produce a superb skating surface; pirouettes worthy of John Curry were achieved. Very wet clays, grey marl and mud were brought to surface and many large greasy rocks; twenty four kibbles, fourteen nets. CC has managed to drop the floor a half metre level back to the base of the shaft from the south end, upon which thinner larger stones have been placed as steeping stones-work surface. Probing the clays they appear to remain as thick deposits. TB back Friday. Oil levels OK in generator; its noise level becoming an issue when the comms system is not available: to the Roadside for a superb brew of Gold.

Hours 4 (1417), Southend (348), Kibbles 24 (856), Nets, 14

(115)



Image bing maps



Image from myplan.ie

Red concentric circles = sinks. Black circle = resurgence. Flag = Resurgence cave
 These sinks are the larger of those identified within the project area.

28th July Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Mild: 50% cloud cover: bright: small stream: midges: light showers: The plan: dig. CC winching TB digging PC unloading and barrowing. TB concentrated on the hauling shaft area lowering the "hump" almost to floor level created by CC exposing some nine pieces of shoring. Forty kibbles and fourteen often large net loads were lifted, among which was the **1000th load** from the South End. Digging in the South End actually commenced on the 31st March following 139 man-hours of infrastructure relocation; since then of the accumulated 215 man-hours 68 were expended upon ongoing maintenance and preparation, leaving 147 man-hours of actual digging to bring a total so far of 1025 loads to surface and deposited neatly about the place. The occurrence of the blue coloured marl like clay has been a matter of frequent discussion. CC located the following info.

Soil Characteristics

Soil Colour: Spatial variation in soil colour through the soil profile distinguishes different soil horizons and provides an indirect measure of important soil properties including drainage, aeration, organic matter content, as well as some of the chemical processes occurring beneath the surface. Generally, dark brown or black soils are associated with high levels of organic matter. Soils frequently saturated with water will often be a light gray or blue colour because iron and manganese particles have been leached away.

Maintenance urgently required; the foliage along the barrow route behind the generator desperately needs trimming in order to tip the barrow fully. The foliage along the barrow route to Das Bunker also needs trimming back. Weather canopy above winch needs attention, the platform surface needs cleaning, the generator needs relocating, the gantry needs to be a 6" wide plank, and the South End pipe needs extending and securing. To the Roadside for cracking, fine pints; the tasty ones bought by the owner.

Hours 6 (1423), Southend (354), Kibbles 40 (896), Nets, 14 (129) Total (1025)

29th July Clooncoose Cave

Catherine? Julia? Rebecca Kropp, Katie Perdue, Julia Ercolano

A Grand Day Out: warm: sunny: Three students from this seasons Caherconnell dig fancied an underground trip. Limited for time PC decided a swift trip to Clooncoose to offer them a cross between archaeology and caving; none had been underground before. On arrival bumped into the landowner who, several days previous, had received the Clooncoose Cave report prepared by PC. During the following brief chat, (30 minutes), the landowner granted PC permission to go anywhere throughout his land. The caving trip eventually began and explanation given to the various archaeological features throughout. A grand time had by all. Walked up to the 9th century high status trivallate cashel of Cahercommaun; the vast panoramic visibility illustrating its superb location.

30th July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: bright: small stream. The plan: maintenance. As it was dry and little wind CC and TB began to re roof the winch weather cover; extra to this is an apron to reduce the weather blowing in onto equipment from the side. PC arrived an hour late delayed at the Caherconnell archaeological dig and began to trim the foliage. A good bit done with more to do: to the Roadside.

Hours 6 (1429), Southend (363), Kibbles (896), Nets, (129) Total (1025)

2nd August Poulawillin

Tony Boycott

The plan: to accompany the landowner to the cave. On arrival found he had already visited the place and was fascinated by it; left him at home and continued on to show TB the place. A short and sweet visit: intend return to survey, photograph and conduct a dig to ascertain if archaeology exists.

4th August Considine's Cave

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm: excellent visibility: small stream: The plan: dig. Preparing to dig the generator pull system failed to engage; alas, requires attention, as does Cheg's shoulder. Employed Plan B, TB cleaned the walls of the rift of loose debris that could be an issue for diggers lower down, and later on. PC assessed the area for further boulder deposition along the north wall, CC checked over the winch status; the No-Go-Back-O-Scope removed for general servicing. The new canopy works well; recent heavy rain had not penetrated the rear of the "hut". CC likely to have a look at the generator tomorrow.

Hours 4 (1433), Southend (367), Kibbles (896), Nets, (129) Total (1025)

6th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Increasing visibility: overcast: some light rain: small stream. The plan: dig. CC had previously inspected the generator pull cord issue, finding within the cowling the old

fashioned starting cord attachment, so back in business, though awaiting parts for actual repair, likely c/o Barry Sudell. TB digging, PC unloading and barrowing, CC winching. Fifty five kibbles and one net were produced; a good session. Mostly clays the spoil was deposited beyond the generator creating a gentle slope to access the far end now at a height of some four feet, (1.2m). The stream requires piping to allow the spoil to spread over the wider area; the generator will need relocating soon to also allow for further spoil deposition. The improved weather canopy works well, perhaps extend it to shelter from the northeasterly winter winds: to the Roadside.

Hours 6 (1435), Southend (368), Kibbles 55 (951), Nets, 1 (130) Total (1081)

9th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Improving visibility: some overcast: cool: small stream: The plan; dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued to remove the deposits up against the shoring exposing thirteen sections of timbering, half of which now require removal. Forty four kibbles and five heavy nets brought to surface; the final boulder like an elongated cannon ball, about 70kgs in weight. CC installed the locking system on the scaffolding to secure the truck/receiver from rolling back to expose the shaft during unloading of awkward loads. Maintenance tasks increase. To the Roadside!

Hours 6 (1441), Southend (374), Kibbles 44 (995), Nets, 5 (135) Total (1130)

11th August Considine's Cave from the PCN Log

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester PC absent on callout

Heavy showers tested the canopy, gaps in the battens need closing to encourage water towards the rear rather than splashing inside. Jobs done: Changed oil in the generator. Cleared a path to the east in preparation for relocating the generator; extended drainpipes upstream to enlarge dumping area. Got fed up with the rain & midges so went to the roadside Tony B

Hours 3 (1444), Southend (377), Kibbles 44 (995), Nets, 5 (135) Total (1130)

13th August Considine's Cave from the PCN Log

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Evening's weather started off OK but gradually changed to miserable, wet and murky. TB digging, CC doing the rest (Slowly). Mainly muds with a few boulders were removed from the centre stretch of the dig lowering the floor in this area by around one foot. A total of twenty three kibbles were raised. All the large boulders were piled to one side and will need the net for removal at the next digging session. Roadside as usual Cheg Chester

Hours 4 (1448), Southend (381), Kibbles 23 (1018), Nets, 0 (135) Total (1153)

15th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

Overcast 100%: small stream: The plan: relocate generator. As TB became unexpectedly absent due to family commitments decided to re-site the generator to the previously cleared area east of the site, while impeding potential route of curious cattle. Set two vertical stakes into the sloping ground upon which was levelled a pallet to which was secured two more pallets - north and south sides, which will allow exhaust fumes to vent unhindered. Weather proofed, but need secure the side aprons which can open for normal working. Relocated generator and secured in new position; ran and tested same. Re-routed winch power supply cable. Suspended pulley through which threaded rope from the shaft lid closure system to avoid chaffing of adjacent relocated power cable: all

ready for digging tomorrow night. Heading across the field the heavens opened rewarding the digger with a thorough soaking.

Hours 3 (1451), Southend (384), Kibbles (1018), Nets, (135) Total (1153)

16th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott

Showers: small stream: windy: The plan: dig. TB digging: PC winch, unloading, barrowing. A slow, steady pace produced nineteen kibbles and eight nets. Fierce rain showers tested the canopy, no leaks. New location for the generator requires minor tasks to complete; engine noise not too much of an issue during communications; signal system requires battery charging. To the Roadside; cracking fun.

Hours 4 (1455), Southend (389), Kibbles 19 (1037), Nets, 8 (143) Total (1180)

18th August Doo Lough area

Tony Boycott

Warm: humid: lessening rain: As there was a break in the weather headed to one of the sinks noted 24th July. The lough water level seemed to be a little higher than three weeks back; but that could just be imagination: the lough water is touching the very end of the southern boundary field wall. Armed with pulleys, tapes and a rope constructed a 4:1 mechanical advantage system suspended from a bough almost directly above the boulder blocking the sink. With TB heaving and PC wriggling it, the awkward shaped boulder emerged from the 'ole. The other followed just as swiftly. Head down, PC observed the cavity to be a narrow two metre long rift with one side possibly a large rock; with a roaring, repeat roaring draught issuing. With head in hole listening hard could not pick up any sound of running water, though there was something like faint distant traffic noise, almost echo like. The water of the lough is some twenty metres, and some two metres lower. A piece of fractured limestone was lifted from the floor revealing an undercut on the left. It is from this gap the draught emanates. TB then took a look to confirm findings. This sink is a little higher than what appears to be normal lough water level, only taking water in times of flood. The entrance and wider area are surrounded by large boulders some overhanging the sink, their stability suspect, poised to move, each averaging between seventy to three hundred kilos. The worst two could be supported in-situ, the remaining snapped or plug and feathered. Following assessment of the adjacent sinks its worth committing at the very least two sessions to assess the practicalities of a dig here.; it may be that the sink is full of rock, but if these are large enough a possible route may exist between them, or be engineered. Adjacent the sink entrance are expanses of solid rock, so it may be that this exists beneath the boulders around the sink, so that stable ground may be swiftly entered.

Though this site appeals enormously the next sink, some sixty metres further south, formed along a narrow gryke warrants a closer look; not least it may be far more stable. The present wide pedestrian driveway path, which was followed by the team on the 24th July, did not appear to match PC's memory of twenty years ago. Then the team walked along a narrow muddy path from which several open dive sites were found not far off that narrow path. An encounter with a local walking party revealed that this wide driveway was the carriage drive up to the "Big" house, therefore always this width, and that muddy paths do exist, though less used, a little to the north, closer to the "Swiss Cottage" previously used by the team in the 1990s as a location reference point.

20th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Overcast 80%: warm: small stream: misty: TB absent nursing an injury: The plan; lower the timber shoring. CC up top and PC below. Of the twelve exposed horizontal pieces of shoring four were removed, lowering the height to around 1.2m above south rift floor level: (reminder, the other side of the shoring drops vertically to the Plank at -14m, and so on to -25m). Greasy conditions created difficulty handling everything, shoring, tools etc. Resumption of ground water content, and increasing run off is beginning to issue over the edge of the water catching system in the top of the south end. Using the three metre builders ladder a further section of plastic voting poster was inserted and bent to capture errant trickles. Comparing both halves of the entire rift at around -7m the southern half is much more vertical and parallel than the subtly undulating northern half. Meanwhile, up top, CC began to assemble the safety frame around the shaft collar to reduce the chances of items dropping into the shaft. The safety line belay needs relocating; perhaps better if the digger is lifelined directly from the winch drum? The gantry span from the fixed ladder to the shoring has reduced to around 1.2m. Discussion turned to local surface drainage, reflecting on how Considine's Cave and Pegasus Pot were formed? The general idea is that prior to the modern system of excavating deep field drains the many springs issuing from the top of the fields, along the shale boundary, amalgamated to create Considine's Cave, hence the better developed South End? Meanwhile, Pegasus Pot appears to have formed from water traveling down the valley, along a route just the other side of the northern field wall, which passes Considine's to sink in Pegasus some ninety metres further west. To the Roadside wherein encountered the Landowner, who spoke of yet another site, visited in his youth, close by Dylan's Bridge, which he adamantly insists we look at; as he owns the adjacent land we were to "work away". Arranged to meet with him to view maps to find out who owns land near Ballynalacken Castle, wherein are two other sites of special interest.

Hours 4 (1459), Southend (393), Kibbles (1037), Nets, (143) Total (1180)

23rd August Considine's Cave

Cheg Chester

Overcast 100%: mild: showers: stream: The plan: dig. CC digging, PC up top. Prior to descending minor work carried out securing the shaft collar frame; it now awaits its side covers and a brace. PC set up a different system of lifelining, secured around the winch drum, through a pulley, threaded through the pallet to the ladder below; it worked well and is far safer for the climber. CC found the place a quagmire, (beware quags!), lots of standing water; starting at the southern end CC worked toward the shaft clearing both liquid and mud, sending up thirty kibbles. Area levelled and a drain dug along the west side of the rift, CC also opened a drain hole so the lake at the base of the shaft has drained. Vocal communications becoming inefficient unless directed up the shaft: due to generator noise. Spoil dumped in respective locations; the cleared area near the old generator position makes for much easier barrowing; to the Roadside for some fine pints.

NB, 31st August is Jarratt's 10th anniversary assemble for session in the Roadside from seven. Hours 5 (1464), Southend (398), Kibbles 32 (1069), Nets, (143) Total (1212)

24th August Souterrains CLO09-022006 & CLO09-022007

Solo

Intermittent heavy showers: The aim; to assess the best way to survey the entire site. Conducted a circuit of the outer wall most of which is of single stone width. Much of the base of the wall is grassed over obscuring a clear view of its foundation. However in

several places the original base is visible suggesting a width of at least 1.2 metres, (estimated). The absence of so much wall material is likely been used as a source of stone for farming needs; the central dividing wall too is much reduced. An idle estimate suggests that there has possibly been some 720 cubic metres of wall material removed from this site. The two souterrains are twenty seven metres apart; the larger, southern souterrain is constructed within the central east-west dividing wall. In each of the corners of the enclosure appear to be smaller enclosures possibly pens for stock. Throughout the enclosure are a number of buildings, some quite small; most unclear as to their purpose. The survey proposal is to set up two secure datums forty metres apart each to plane table the entire interior. The datums, likely to be concrete blocks will ensure security for additional planning trips.

25th August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

25% cloud cover: mild: bright: Threatening heavy rain. The plan: dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading - barrowing. Dug from the base of the shaft to about halfway along the rift; the longitudinal channels along the west and east wall have captured water running down avoiding its pooling on the mud floor, so the place is now somewhat drier. Forty kibbles and one net lifted. Two further sections of shoring were exposed. The excess coils of cable used to fix the pieces of horizontal shoring together to avoid their possible falling out of place and onto a digger below, in the event of significant movement of the debris behind, was removed as it was becoming increasing in the way when using the Gantry to access the dig. Extended the new area of tipping, adjacent the old generator located, up to the boundary wall. Repositioned the lifeline pulley higher up the scaffold tube, out the way of those on the platform, replaced the webbing tape with a steel karabiner. Fitted a second pulley to the shaft cover closing rope to lift it out the way of the operatives Rain arrived; ran to the Roadside.

Hours 7 (1471), Southend (405), Kibbles 40 (1109), Nets, 1 (144) Total (1253)

30th August Considine's Cave (South End)

Ken James, Pete Eckford, Cheg Chester

Overcast 80%: cool: small stream: All three Islands and Connemara very clear. KJ and PE had arrived earlier today from the UK so immediately put to work. The plan: dig. CC digging, PC winching KJ and PE unloading, barrowing and photography. CC continued to dig down below the shaft to create a step to gradually move southward. Forty one kibbles of rock and clay brought to surface. Considering the bewildering array of safety protocols, ropes and procedures the boys done good. To the Roadside where welcome pints went down well. PC has corrected the kibble count having previously under counted by two.

Hours 8 (1479), Southend (413), Kibbles 41 (1150), Nets, (144) Total (1293)

31st August Souterrains CL009-022006 & CL009-022007

Ken James, Pete Eckford,

Promised improving weather: Overcast 90%: The plan; to survey the site. Set up a base line to establish two datums from which to construct a plane table survey of the entire site that will allow the exposed sections of souterrain to be fixed in relation to adjacent remains. Set up datum "S" = South and datum "N" = North on even ground surface 25.7 metres apart, represented as two yellow pegs. A further walk around the southern enclosure found sections of original foundations protruding from vegetation and tumble. The central dividing wall is ruinous, the tumble obscuring both its original northern and southern edges. In the gloom of overcast conditions a laser distance measuring device

was experimented with against the light coloured limestone dry walls. It was then tried again against a dark target board measuring 600mm x 750mm with inconclusive results: will try again. The “Kelly” kettle was tried out and found successful boiling water in a few minutes; just as heavy rain set in. Abandoned the site to the weather and set up a new base in an almost empty Roadside at 14:00. Pints flowed; Jarratt’s do was for 19:00, left the bar at 18:30 for a quick change swiftly back for food, fun and a great night. The Lisdoonvarna Match Making Festival begun tonight with a wonderful array of the well heeled promenading the town in search of a mate.

Jarratt’s 10th Anniversary

1st September Considine’s Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Cloud cover 20%: warm: small stream: The plan; dig. TB digging, CC winching, PC unloading & barrowing; TB continued to deepen the area directly below the shaft. The steady pace produced forty kibbles and three nets. One boulder raised came in at around eighty Kgs. The weight of an average kibble is estimated at 20kgs. So, total volume raised in the South End, including tonight’s session is around some twenty six tonnes. This doesn’t account for the nets, many weighing in at thirty kgs, minimum, so perhaps a further four tonnes: totaling thirty tonnes. Arising maintenance issues will take place after TB departs next week. To Lisdoonvarna where hundreds of frenetic love hungry people from sixteen to ninety were out on the roads enjoying the dry weather and eyeing up each other. At the Roadside, joined by KJ and PE, a manic PC calmed sculling pint. Eleven Gardai running about and one ambulance: quite the party.

Hours 8 (1477), Southend (421), Kibbles 40 (1190), Nets, 3 (147)

Total (1337)



Image after Archaeology.ie

Souterrains CL009-022006 & CL009-022007

2nd September Roadside Tavern: Jarratt's PU.

Ken James, Pete Eckford, Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Jarratt's 10th Anniversary finished with an afternoon session; 13:00 until late, the fine pints creating a liver crippling event. Learnt the ambulances and Gardai running about on Saturday night were for three males who fell from the Spa Bridge into the river some eight metres below, fortunately there was very little water in the river or drowning may have occurred, unfortunately the river bed broke their fall, all three in hospital with serious injuries to spine and neck.

3rd September Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Warm, turning chill: bright: small stream: The plan: dig. CC winching, TB digging, PC unloading-barrowing. TB continued to lower the base of the shaft to create a working face some one metre high, which will be removed back to the South End; this process is a slightly easier method of excavation, allowing the spoil to fall into waiting kibbles. Fourteen sections of poles are now exposed. Briefly played with an additional water barrel and reconnecting the hose pipe. Nice sunset. KJ and PE departed for the UK today, TB too, shortly: to a lively Roadside.

Hours 6 (1483), Southend (427), Kibbles 40 (1230), Nets, 5(152) Total (1382)

*6th September Considine's Cave (South End) From PCN Log
Cheg Chester*

CC digging with PC winching, unloading and barrowing (Busy. Busy). Progress was towards the south from the beginning of the narrows with a digging face of approximately half a metre. Mainly the blue-grey mud which in places is the full half metre in thickness with very few stones-boulders in it: a total of 41 kibbles raised. The normal drinking venue was visited. Cheg Chester

Hours 5 (1488), Southend (432), Kibbles 41 (1269), Nets, (152) Total (1421)

*8th September Considine's Cave (South End)
Cheg Chester*

18:00. Visibility \leq three miles: light rain showers: decent size stream: The plan: maintenance. The four inch pipe which conducts the southern stream above the southern rift excavation was extended to span the main shaft discharging tonight's substantial flow into the original choked -9m shaft, explored by the U.B.S.S. in the 1980s; the resultant crescendo quite impressive as it amalgamated with the discharge of the diverted northern stream. The main shaft is now free of both streams. Timber lathes were fitted to either side of the weather cover to convey heavy rain to the rear of the "Shed". The hose pipe was recovered from the "Plank" -14m, a replacement hauling rope was prepared and installed, the very slippery working platform surface was washed down: a good session. Abandoned the Roadside no parking available; this, being second weekend of the Matchmaking Festival is normally much quieter. Not so tonight, hundreds wandering about looking for Luv. The first ever knee trembling caravan was announced, proudly supplied by local Match-Maker, "Willy Daly", (I kid you not), for those in need/search of urgent relief. You can't make this stuff up. Comments expected during tomorrows mass.

Hours 6 (1494), Southend (438), Kibbles (1269), Nets, (152) Total (1421)

*9th September Souterrain CL002-068002
Solo*

Sunny intervals: windy: The plan; to continue the survey of this significant three chambered souterrain. Previously the first and second chambers were recorded leaving the interconnecting passages, the smaller third chamber and the fixing of the souterrain entrance within the garth of the ringfort to complete. Use of the auto laser level made offsetting and transferring the survey levels much easier in the confined spaces maintaining accuracy of measurements along the drystone walling and flagstone roof. A photo session is the next task as is completing the video for the landowner.

*13th September Considine's Cave
Cheg Chester, Jim Warny*

Mild: heavy showers: small stream: The plan: dig. JW digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. While the others set up shop JW took photographs for the record. Digging began removing the half metre working face toward the south end, which involved forty nine kibbles and two very heavy nets, each in excess of seventy kilos. To the Roadside for pints; owing to a chance parking space,

Hours 8 (1502), Southend (446), Kibbles, 49 (1318), Nets, 2 (154) Total (1472)

*13th September Considine's Cave (South End) From PCN Log
Jim Warny, Cheg Chester*

Heavy showers making the platform work surface and the barrow way very slippery. JW spent a few minutes taking photographs both above and below. To work, with JW

digging, PC unloading and barrowing and CC winching. Digging proceeded by removing the half metre working face towards the South end: still predominantly mud and clay. A total of 49 kibbles and 2 (very heavy) nets were raised. After touring Lisdoonvarna for a few minutes a parking space was found and a quick pint had in the Roadside. Roll on the end of the matchmaking and a bit of peace and quiet. Cheg (corrected the numbers)

Hours 8 (1502), Southend (446), Kibbles, 49 (1318), Nets, 2 (154) Total (1472)

15th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Mild: 90% cloud cover: stream running: The plan: maintenance. CC up top, PC below. The session began with removing the exposed sections of shoring, which totaled nine. This lowered the shoring level to the safe of 0.9 metre above the working area reducing the chance of a digger falling into the main shaft ladderway. Delaying removal of the shoring to this height presents a number of issues not least the balancing act required to do the task. The new Gantry system was installed and the wire support system for the shoring re-secured. Prior to lifting the shoring pieces to surface CC positioned the flood light supplied by JW; this 10w 240v LED lamp illuminates the entire working area, superbly; its height adjustable.. The hose pipe too was prepared and lowered, so PC used it to wash some of the mud off the walls to expose a beautiful surface of white-cream stal. The sides of the shaft collar were finally covered with 6mm plywood to prevent debris falling into the shaft: all in all a good session. Abandoned the Roadside as the crowds and traffic were crazy

Hours 7 (1509), Southend (459), Kibbles, (1318), Nets, (154) Total (1472)

19th September Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

The effects of Storm Ali are still passing; visited site over concern for the integrity of the weather canopy. Meanwhile the landowner has given PC a key to the house should the team choose to use it to change during inclement weather. JN has also offered scaffold planks should we need them. Carried over two pieces of plywood to facilitate wheeling the barrow over soft spoil. On arrival the only damage appeared the "hat" over the top of the tripod, which shelters the main pulley.

Hours 1 (1510), Southend (460), Kibbles, (1318), Nets, (154) Total (1472)

20th September Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

100% cloud cover: mild: large stream: raining; ground increasing sodden: The plan: dig. CC below PC up top. Such was the daytime rainfall the southern stream was overflowing the arrangement of plastic sheeting, cascading down the South End drenching tonight's planned dig area. So, CC deepened the shaft instead progressing into the beginning of the narrows, during which he uncovered a gap against the west wall some three metres deep; perhaps approaching the end of the upper clay deposits? The rain increased in volume and intensity making vocal communication between surface and shaft bottom problematic, the wet platform surface also creating issues around walking and barrowing. To reduce mud migration loaded the barrow with three kibbles of spoil instead of the normal two, reducing runs to the tipping area; twenty eight kibbles and four heavy nets lifted to surface: to a much quieter Roadside for fine drink; though the guy playing the spoons needs lynching.

Hours 5 (1515), Southend (465), Kibbles, 28 (1346), Nets, 4 (158) Total (1504)

22nd September Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cooler: visibility ≥ 10 miles: large-ish stream: The plan: dig. CC below PC up top. CC worked away at progressing the step, (working face), toward the previous step, with the goal of removing all to a common level now the south stream is not overflowing, for the present. On reaching the other step the working face will be a total of one metre high. Other pieces of timber were laid on the floor to reduce the work turning it all to liquid mud. Though no cascade was present from the south end the east and west walls exhibited running water. The hose pipe deployed again to great effect cleaning the muddy walls to expose the beautiful white coating, and clean off CC prior to his ascent. Twenty nine kibble and seven very heavy nets raise to surface. No Roadside the place still mad. Hours 5 (1520), Southend (470), Kibbles, 29 (1375), Nets, 7 (165) Total (1540)

24th September Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

30% cloud: chill: stream: The plan; dig. CC below PC up top. The hosepipe was permanently installed down the west side of the shaft and put to good use. The pipework between the main cistern and the washing cistern completed. CC placed more plywood pieces over the mud floor to stand on whilst digging away at the face. Steady progress produced twenty eight kibbles and five very heavy nets, the floor surface level almost to the south end. A light would be useful at the main tipping area as would a plastic pallet in the base of the shaft. Reinstallation of phone system might be a good idea when only two are digging. Several items need attention so a maintenance session is required; to a quiet Roadside.

Hours 5 (1525), Southend (475), Kibbles, 28 (1403), Nets, 5 (170) Total (1573)

27th September Vurley Swallet – Cheddar Gorge

Stuart MacManus

Arrived Bristol Airport picked up by SM, saw MM and straight off to view, and have explained, the landscape and geology surrounding a Mendip digging consortium's dig at Vurley Swallet. Continued the walk down into Cheddar to the White Heart for drink; returned skirting the edge of the gorge, very nice.

28th September Plummer's Farm - Hunters – Plummer's Farm

Stuart MacManus

A walk from SM's place via various sights of interest to the Bar and eventually back, returning via the BEC hut. Be warned, the local ale, "Potholer" can produced effects similar to that of contracting Cholera.

29th September 45th Anniversary of Sulo Sulonen: P.C.N.

29th September 45th Anniversary of Sulo Sulonen

Stuart MacManus, Marilyn MacManus, Pete Webb (Rat Arse), Gill Webb

Meal eaten, drink taken

30th September Minneries Mining area

Stuart MacManus, Pete Webb (Rat Arse), Gill Webb

Walked from The BEC hut around the Minneries; taking in the extensive mining landscape.

1st October Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

100% cloud: mild: small stream: rain showers. The plan: dig. CC below PC up top. The extreme South End was worked on removing gravels, some clays and an increasing percentage of boulders. It appears the clay deposit may, just may, be coming to an end, at least for this layer, time will tell. The next session will remove the small amount of remaining deposits at this level and will also need lift out a large rectangular flagstone some 0.9m x 0.35m x 0.1m weighing around 70 kilos. Voice communication was problematic during periods of heavy rainfall upon the canopy. The "Winding Drum" wherein the hauling rope is payed into during operations rotates superbly meaning the twists created by the winch capstan in the rope are almost entirely removed. Steady progress lifted twenty nine kibbles and three very heavy nets to surface, though the platform and barrowing planks were like a skating rink. The foliage in the in the clay tipping area requires trimming, the weather canopy needs extending, also several other miscellaneous maintenance tasks in need of service. To a very quiet Roadside; the Matchmaking festival just ending, next weekend is the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transsexual event.

Hours 5 (1530), Southend (480), Kibbles, 29 (1432), Nets, 3 (173) Total (1605)

4th October Considine's Cave (South End), (65 today)

Cheg Chester

Cloud base ≤100m: mild: drizzle: decent sized stream: The plan; dig. CC below PC up top.

The large flagstone was swiftly removed, (≥ 70kgs), as was adjacent pile of gravels making the floor level back to the shoring. CC then commenced to excavate a sump to capture flood overflow rather than allow it to stream along the floor. Of the twenty two kibbles and four very large boulder nets sent to surface most were stone, with two of clay, the remainder gravels; this may indeed be where the thick upper clay deposit finally concludes, perhaps. The platform remains greasy to walk upon. The deployment of boards underground to walk upon the dig surface has significantly reduced the migration of mud etc. Minor maintenance tasks remain outstanding. To the Roadside for much needed birthday pints.

Hours 5 (1535), Southend (485), Kibbles, 22 (1454), Nets, 4 (177) Total (1631)

6th October I.R.C.O. Cave Rescue Warden meeting

Jim Warny

A day of administration and planning; arrived 13:00 left 16:00. Suggested PC organize a tighter regulation and maintenance of rescue dumps.

8th October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cool: blustery: small stream: clear across to the Islands. The plan: dig. CC below PC up top. After a brief discussion CC returned to the south end to deepen the hollow created last session then began to work northward; twenty two kibbles and eight very, very heavy nets brought to surface. Eight of these kibbles were gravels, the remainder rock. Several bones recovered at around -8m from the south end; left for TB to enjoy upon his imminent return. The surfaces of the walls begin to exhibit subtle changes from small scalloping to a rougher surface. The clay deposit, which has been dug down from the surface finally appears to be at an end, the remaining thickness of clay floor below the hauling area, may now only be what CC has removed at the south end, so possibly only about 0.25m thick. As CC excavated, immediately beneath the clay, has been a layer of

what is termed gravels; tiny grains to pebbles, (Pebble = 4 - 64mm, Cobble = 64 - 256mm, Boulder ≥ 256 mm). Beneath which are found D.B.B's, (Dam Big Boulders). At end of play a large limestone boulder was exposed, conservatively measured as 0.9m x 0.3m x 0.3m, which weighs in around 200kgs. (Limestone = 2.611 metric tonnes per cubic/M); so that means its 'eavy. Using mechanical advantage the winch could easily lift this lump; however a snapper would solve all associated issues of what to do with it once it's brought to surface. The gravel spoil was placed across the clay spoil to create a less muddy surface. With only two diggers the number of lifts are reduced to average around twenty eight or so lifts, the increased presence of rock and gravels means the loads are significantly heavier; tonight's loads are estimated at totaling around 950kgs, (0.9T). The large nets contained many boulders meaning increased walks to and from the deposition area at the wall. However the contents of each large net equals around four kibbles worth so time is reduced during the lifting procedure. The rock spoil was placed to increase the height of the wall bordering Mr. Garners field which was found, once the foliage was cleared, to be only 0.6m high. The signalling system worked well, though blustery conditions occasionally made voice comms difficult, several maintenance tasks remain outstanding: to the Roadside for very nice music and some fine pints.

Hours 5 (1540), Southend (490), Kibbles, 28 (1482), Nets, 8 (185) Total (1661)

25th October Considines Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Cool: Light breeze: Good visibility: Small stream. The plan: Dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. TB dug northward developing a working face some one metre high exposing mostly compacted boulders and the occasional Bullion stone. The deep surface clay deposit appears to be passed, its total thickness an average of six metres, its bottom extent some eight metres below surface. Several more modern animal bone fragments were encountered likely small cow, or, perhaps a pony. The ease of digging boulders without resorting to tools swiftly out paced the surface support. Of the thirty two kibbles four were gravels and mud/clay, the remainder boulders; the eleven nets lifted ranged from dam heavy to the final huge non-limestone boulder estimated in excess of one hundred Kgs, this rock caused the generator to work hard evidenced by a significant chugging never previously experienced. Such boulders may now be recognized as requiring a 2:1 mechanical advantage to avoid excessive stress to the winching system. To a deserted Roadside for fine pints

Hours 7 (1547), Southend (497), Kibbles, 32 (1514), Nets, 11 (196) Total (1704)

27th October S.U.I.C.R.O, Lisdoonvarna

The voluminous room/bar/restaurant, aka The Storehouse, adjoining the Roadside Bar was this year's venue for the 2018 Irish Speleological Union – Irish Cave Rescue Conference, (S.U.I.C.R.O). Among the many talks PC gave two, one covering the numerous the Panamánian expeditions, the other on the various ongoing Irish projects, both well received. Later on the Team was approached and congratulated by various attendees for the skill, ingenuity and determination demonstrated in their pursuit of cave.

28th October Considine's Cave

Cheg Chester Pavil, Mihal, Daniel Stephen, plus five others of the Breifne Caving Club Cold: clear: small stream. The Plan: prior to the S.U.I.C.R.O event CC offered friends of JW to show them around the dig. The members of Breifne Caving Club wanted to visit to obtain advice and knowledge on Pegasus digging methods and techniques. The Breifne CC work the area of Cavan and Fermanagh enjoying many sites which, offer great

vertical potential. Two BCC descended to -25m and two others to -7m. All enjoyed the visit commenting on the planning and structure of procedures designed around just two operators. Awaiting Pavil from -25m PC viewed the southern dig area, (brightly illuminated by a suspended 240v LED lamp), where TB worked on the 25th Oct. noting that at surface the rift is some 0.9m wide. As the rift walls descend they subtly flare outward where at -8.5m the width achieves 1.35m, an increase of some 0.45m, (18 inches); the prospect thrilling. Members of the BCC approached the Team in the Bar pressing drink in appreciation; nice.

29th October Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

100% cloud cover: cold northerly wind: light showers: dark by 18:00: small stream. The plan: Dig. PC set up an external 240v lamp to illuminate the platform. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. With the temperature dropping by the hour the steady pace produced thirty five kibbles and nine nets. Meanwhile TB noted cavities beginning to appear among the boulder floor; small stones rattling away to some two metres below. This area of floor level was measured at some -8.5m; though beneath the shaft collar the floor is still -7.5m with around a foot of clay cover remaining. The extant one metre step, (working face), in the floor level makes for much easier removal of boulders; once again the ease of digging out paced the un-loading. The raised boulders used to continue increasing the height of the boundary wall with the adjacent field. Six kibbles of gravels and clays were among those raised. To the Roadside where the Team enjoyed a convivial evening with Lillian Romford, (BEC), Alan & Aileen Butcher, (Shepton MCC); nice, fun company and fine pints.

Hours 7 (1554), Southend (504), Kibbles, 35 (1549), Nets, 9 (205) Total (1754)

1st November Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Dark: clear sky: Mars clearly visible: cold breeze, small stream. The Plan: Dig. TB below, CC winching, PC unloading. Thirty five kibbles were raised of which six were gravels with some clay, and ten FBN's, ('effing Big Nets). One lift of such a net contains up five large boulders. PC is finding it increasingly difficult to hurl the boulders the three metre distance, and two metres up onto, the summit of the northern boundary wall. Concern was expressed regarding the thirty odd metres of fill estimated to remain down to the level of the "Plank", or rather where best to deposit it to maintain a tidy landscape? An area in the western bushes could be used but means relocating the water tank. A vertical flute in the west wall has been a constant feature; TB noted a significant draught issuing from it tonight. The kibbles have been often conservatively estimated at 20Kgs; it appears they may actually be closer to 25/30Kgs. The deployment of carpet across the platform surface to the wall has removed the slipping issue particularly when carrying boulders. Maintenance is urgently required to various areas, possibly next Monday afternoon. To the Roadside for nice pints: the recent change in the law means the first warning in court for drinking and driving has now been replaced by an automatic ban; so no second chance.

Hours 7 (1561), Southend (511), Kibbles, 35 (1584), Nets, 10 (215) Total (1799)

3rd November Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Dark: Mild: 40% cloud cover: Light breeze: heavy rain showers: large stream: The Plan: Dig. TB below, CC winching, PC unloading. On arrival found no power from generator; diagnosis found the main power cable open circuit and a breaker tripped on the

generator. Facing a no dig situation PC used a small knife to open the plug top, sever dodgy area of cable, re-make same: hooray power; intend to replace the plug adapter with alternate to avoid future creasing of power lead. The delay reduced productivity to thirty kibbles and thirteen large nets, of which four were clays and gravels; better than the initial expectation of none at all. TB has an almost level floor up to the shoring which is around the -8.5m level. One huge boulder was sent up utilizing a 2:1 system which was swiftly prepared and disassembled in a few minutes: this particular boulder estimated at ≥ 80 kgs. The heavy rain helped to produce superb skating rink conditions; digging in such conditions without the weather canopy would be uncomfortable. Several large boulders were lifted and set along the path through the copse. To the Roadside where yesterday CC and TB enjoyed pints from the Landlord for their assistance with the recent S.U.I. conference. CC entertained Billy in the Bar with photos of the digs progress via the website. Hours 8 (1569), Southend (519), Kibbles, 30 (1614), Nets, 13 (228) Total (1842)

3rd November 1968/2018 50 years of involvement with Cave Rescue

5th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Bright: Cool breeze: Ground very wet: Large stream: The Plan: site maintenance. Weather canopy extension built to offer shelter to the unloader. New plug fitted to power supply cable. The recovered shoring poles were laid across the southern rift to enhance the existing covering of plastic pallets and concrete lintels. Water tank relocated. Gap cut through the undergrowth behind the winch shed along the northern wall to offer extra space for depositing debris. Outside light secured. Generator weather cover completed. Stone steps and path were created to access the generator through the muddy area. Bearings greased on the winch. TB cleared the remaining hump of debris to level the floor; packed spoil waits lifting.

Hours 13 (1582), Southend (532), Kibbles, (1614), Nets, (228) Total (1842)

8th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Dark: Cold: Small stream: Ground wet: The Plan: maintenance & Dig. PC below, CC winching, TB was unloading. The pre-loaded kibbles and nets of the 5th Nov were cleared to surface to enable PC to access and remove the next section of exposed shoring, and reposition the "Gantry". First, the signal button was relocated to within a half metre of the floor so TB could reach it again. Seven pieces of shoring were swiftly removed and the "Gantry" refitted. The remaining time was used to enlarge the hollow commenced by TB; it is now one metre square and about half that deep, most of the area within the "Narrows". A total of twenty two kibbles and five nets finally lifted to surface. Prior to finishing the session the south rift was viewed from the "Gantry"; It is quite simply an impressive rift with its water worn features and wall decoration. Compared with the Northern side it really is the much larger, more developed half of the site. To the Roadside for very nice pints

Hours 7 (1589), Southend (539), Kibbles, 22(1636), Nets, 5 (233) Total (1869)

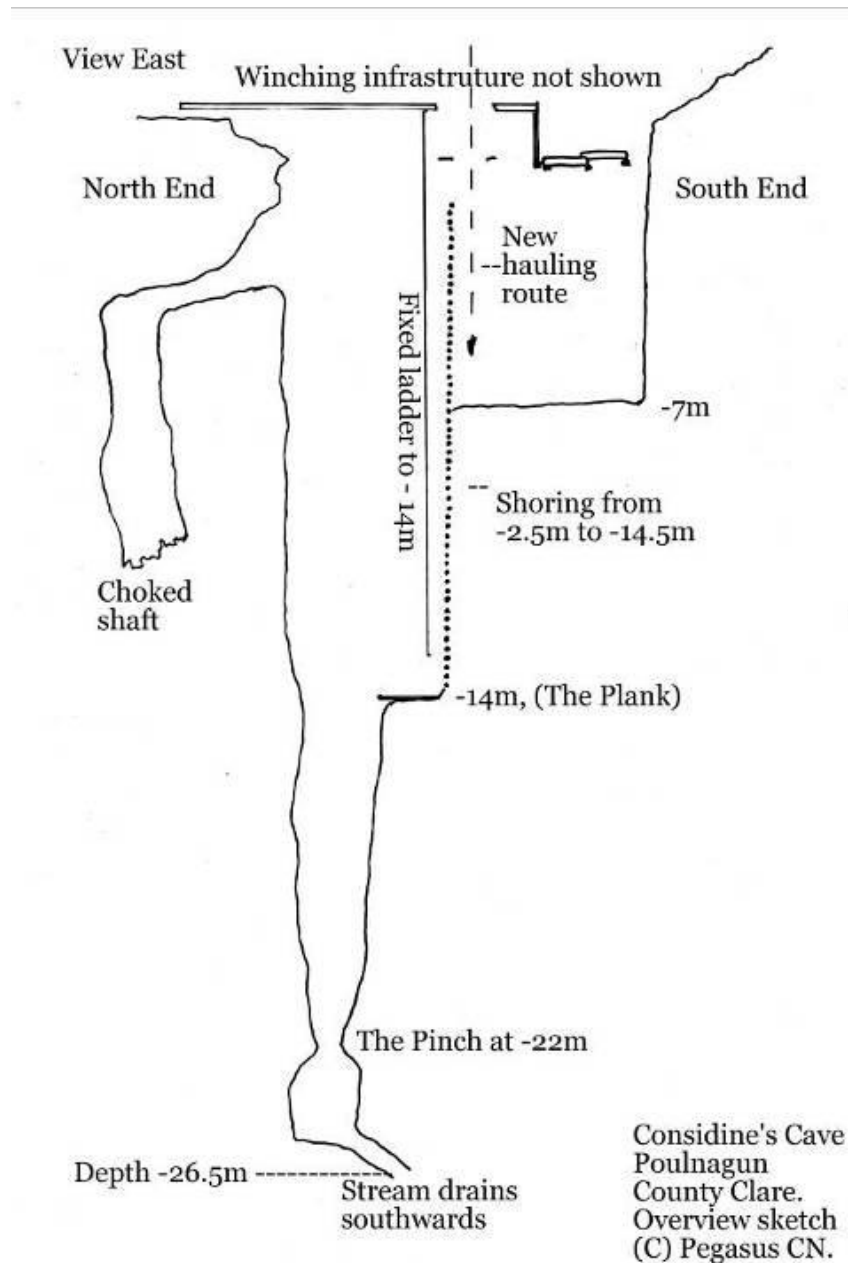
10th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott Cheg Chester

Dark: Cool: Large stream; Ground very wet: Some light rain: The Plan: dig. TB below: CC winching, PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued deepening the excavation in the narrows to provide the option to dig either way, north or south, creating a metre high working face which has been found much easier and swifter to dig. Of the forty four

kibbles eight were gravels, these were spread over the existing clay spoil to create a cleaner walking surface. Fourteen large nets were lifted containing some very big rocks. 8th Nov, CC had built up the existing low dry stone wall on the field side of the ever growing boulder pile; this level will be the controlling height of the pile, thereby avoiding an eyesore, and drawing comment. The edge of the boulder pile along the platform edge now requires consolidating upon which further stacking of spoil can take place: to the Roadside.

Hours 7 (1596), Southend (546), Kibbles, 44 (1680), Nets, 14 (247) Total (1927)



11th November Armistice Day, 100th anniversary of the ending of the 1st World War

*13th November Considine's Cave (South End) From PCN Log
TB & CC*

*Maintenance day (again) with everything dripping wet and a very big stream. The 7 poles from the shoring which were removed on the 8th of November were placed along side the ones already forming a substantial cover for the open south rift. Several more are required before the cover is completed. The added extension to the weather canopy was completed and the whole of the working platform and the shaft top were pressure washed to try and reduce the slippery surface. Work started on the construction of a retaining wall in front of the boulder pile as the angle was such that the spoil would soon be falling back onto the working platform. Cheg
Hours 8 (1597), Southend (547), Kibbles, (1636), Nets, (233) Total (1869). Incorrect = (1927)*

15th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Dark: Chill: Large stream: Ground sodden: The Plan: Dig. TB below, CC winching, PC unloading and barrowing The pace was swift producing forty four kibbles and eighteen often very large nets, containing some very large boulders. Hooray for the winch otherwise the option would be lengthy delays lifting such lumps of rock. Of the kibbles six were gravels. TB has all but levelled north from the pit he created to the shoring: a measurement was made to check progress; -9.4m is now the rough present depth beneath of the hauling shaft. The area behind the wall erected around part of the platform was all but levelled; useful large stones lain aside for further wall construction. To an empty Roadside for drink

Hours 8 (1612), Southend (560), Kibbles, 44(1724), Nets, 18 (265) Total (1989)

17th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Dark: Blustery: Large stream, Ground sodden. The Plan: Dig. CC winching, TB below and PC unloading and barrowing. A swift start; of the thirty six kibbles only five were gravels; nets numbered twenty two: tonight the Team lifted the 2000th load from the southern rift, this does not include the loads lifted from the northern half of the rift. The conservative assessment of a kibble is 20kg; that amounts to at least forty tonnes. The exposed section of the northern field wall is now at a suitable height so stones were thrown into the gap between the bushes and the hidden part of the wall going west. This huge, tidy pile of rock will now have further stone deposited to a maximum width of three metres; out to the side of the working platform. TB continued to level, and lower, the floor toward the shoring, exposing almost eleven sections of shoring. Holes are regularly appearing among increasing large sized boulders. This area directly beneath the hauling shaft approaches -10 metres, but to the south the level rises to -8.5 metres; TB departs next week so this area will be the focus from then on. The present, averaged floor level of around nine metres means there is only five metres of spoil to remove to arrive at the depth of the "Plank" ,(-14.5 metres). Either side of the narrows the walls continue to gentle widen downward. It was decided to extend the weather canopy around the timber work of the shaft to reduce rot from weathering. JN has very kindly installed outside lighting and sorted lighting in the changing room: read here utility room, of his new, forthcoming home. To the Roadside for pints: Happy Birthday Ken James.

Hours 7 (1619), Southend (567), Kibbles, 36 (1760), Nets, 22 (287) Total (2047)

19th November Considine's Cave, (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Dark: Chill: Ground sodden: Small stream. The plan: Dig. CC winching, TB below and PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued to lower the area toward the shoring creating a slope from around the -10metre mark up to -8.5m at the southern end. Thirty seven kibbles, of which four were gravels, were lifted along with fifteen nets. Fourteen pieces of shoring are now exposed: to the Roadside for golden pints.

Hours 7 (1626), Southend (574), Kibbles, 37 (1797), Nets, 15 (302) Total (2099)

22nd November Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Dark: Cold, dry east wind: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. CC below PC winching, unloading and barrowing. CC levelled the area at the base of the hauling shaft which is now around -10m below the platform. In doing created an almost vertical working face some 1.5m high. Of the twenty two kibbles fourteen were gravels, almost each of the twelve nets were big. The draught issuing was enormous considered too great to pass through the small hole at the bottom of the main shaft, so must also be passing through the loose present boulder fill of the southern side. Gaps continue to appear among the boulder floor, so the volume estimated to be removed to reach the level of the "Plank" is much reduced. Changing was very pleasant JN having left on the heating in the new building to accommodate cold cavers; nice one JN: to the Roadside for pints. Discussion in the bar showed each had independently considered using the shaft dug to -26m as a spoil dump filling it up to the "Plank", however both agreed it would be a shame to do so. It also transpired that each believe the dimensions of the shaft strongly suggest that its highly likely to continue below the present northern depth of -26m. Having said that Drunken Horse did heal up quite suddenly, though that appears to have been a pre-glacial development similar to Balcombe's Pot in Coolagh.

Hours 5 (1631), Southend (579), Kibbles, 22 (1819), Nets, 12 (314) Total (2133)

25th November Souterrain CLO05-027004

Solo

Bright sunny day: Cold. The underground part of the souterrain survey at Rathborne Church, Ballyvaghan, remained incomplete; previously abandoned when found to be flooded. Drove to site optimistic the recent, short dry spell would have reduced any accumulated water to below welly level, alas no. Unhappy the previous fix was slightly inaccurate a three point fix of the opening was constructed from the SW and NW internal corners of the graveyard enclosure and also from the NW corner of the church, where it abuts the northern boundary wall. These measurements were to a vertical survey pole which was secured against a roof lintel to protrude one metre above ground level, when placed upon the yellow peg datum inserted in the openings slope. From this fixed datum a laser level may be projected along the length of the souterrain passage and precise measurements recorded next time. Though the water was some 0.5m deep the use of the recently purchased Bosch GLM 50C laser measuring device allowed the basic dimensions to be recorded without entering the water. The passage is aligned along 119° Mg; the church aligned on 091° Mg. The dimensions of this souterrain closely match those of the souterrain on Finavarra and adjacent souterrains visited and surveyed by Cooke in the 1830s. It is curious that these five souterrains have such similar construction appearances; perhaps the result of locally based or imported specialist artisans. If this is the case then the area was likely controlled by a high status family able to afford such expense.

Souterrain entrance fix. From the NW corner of the enclosure 20.6 metres on a bearing of 139° Mg. From the SW corner of the enclosure 29 metres on a bearing of 041° Mg, from the NW corner of the church 38 metres on a bearing of 261° Mg; (field note book No. 4).

26th November Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Dark: Increasing cold: Small stream: Ground drying. The Plan: Dig. CC below PC winching, unloading and barrowing. CC recovering from the Lurgi, PC about to succumb. CC continued to excavate toward the south end; its possible another two sessions will clear the remaining fill to the present common level, (-10m, needs measuring). Of the twenty six kibbles nine were gravels, these were placed to create a stony track replacing the previously timbered barrow route, the timber recovered for other usage. Eleven nets, some with very large boulders, were also lifted to surface. Three kibbles were redeployed as part of the standardization to common the length of suspension rope. The draught continues; to the Roadside for some nice pints.

Hours 6 (1637), Southend (585), Kibbles, 26 (1845), Nets, 11 (325) Total (2170)

9th December Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

Dark: cold NW wind: ground sodden: large stream: working platform scoured further by recent torrential rains: With TB and CC in the UK; PC had all but recovered from the Lurgi, however suffering from cabin fever. The plan: remove exposed shoring. Sent down the drill etc and used the lifeline to abseil. The entire floor has been washed clean of almost all mud deposits; the pipework noisy conveying both present stream volumes. Disassembled the Gantry; managing to remove eight pieces of shoring. All lengths stacked vertical below the shaft ready to haul out. Much phaffing about trying to reach the anchor system left some three metres above the present level, (-10m); for accessibility best to lower these anchors each time shoring is removed. Reassembled the entire anchor system and that of the Gantry; all complete. Drilled new hole in lower location for signal button; ran the generator to provide lighting during task, likewise ran winch to avoid any component sticking from lack of use. Placed on standby, so no

Roadside Hours 2 (1639), Southend (587), Kibbles, (1845), Nets, (325) Total (2170)

10th December Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

Dark: cold NE wind: large stream: The plan: lift the shoring to surface. Let down thirty metres of a spare fifty metre rope to the bottom of the hauling shaft. Secured shoring pieces together in three groups, (2 x 3, & 1 x 2), at intervals of ten metres along the hauling rope using 3 x chest jammers. Time taken securing the pieces together with 6mm dive line to avoid their catching on the shaft collar during lifting Ascended, started winch, brought each group to surface without incident. This method meant only one load was on the winch at any one time and required one ladder climb.

Hours 2 (1641), Southend (589), Kibbles, (1845), Nets, (325) Total (2170)

13th December Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

Dark: Cold: Easterly driven rain: Ground sodden: large stream. The Plan: dig. Secured lifeline for use with self lining gear: Gibbs ropewalker descending, Petzl cam ascending secured to chest loop. Of the eight kibbles raised one was gravels; one net lifted. One boulder uncovered estimated 105kgs; will require 2:1 pulley setup. Found large gaps

among debris below boulders, which then collapsed. Multiple ascents kept the blood circulating on such a cold night. No Roadside.

Hours 2 (1643), Southend (591), Kibbles, 8(1853), Nets, 1(326) Total (2179)

15th December Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

Dusk: Storm Deirdre: Heavy rainfall: Ground awash: Huge stream off JN's field, smaller off MC's field: Pipework, almost submerged, produced thunderous roar: W/NW Force 6 gusting 8: The plan: Dig. Put a gallon in the generator. Set up an abseil rope off the tripod headstock to reduce effort getting down to the dig; placed small deviation on fixed ladder lifeline to keep it away from the narrow ladder rungs, when ascending. Cleared the clean washed boulders from the pile at the southern end, most quite large, some kibbles accepting only one at a time. Positioned the abseil line and its storage bag out of the hauling route: Loaded net with one large boulder; scampered back up: began to winch, realized something wrong, looked down shaft and observed had not connected hauling rope to net; twat. Descended, resolved issue began winching, again. Lifted ten kibbles and two nets; the large boulder, estimated at 105 kgs reappraised at 93kgs, was lifted effortlessly using a 2:1 mechanical advantage, the issue at surface getting it off the receiver into the barrow. Cleaned working platform: to the Roadside to drink with Billy to the memory of my friend Tony Oldham.

Hours 3 (1646), Southend (594), Kibbles, 10 (1855), Nets, 2 (327) Total (2182)

20th December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Jim Warny, Cheg Chester

Dark: Cold: Ground sodden: Large stream: The Plan: Dig. JW below, CC winching, PC unloading & barrowing Among the twenty seven kibbles were many large boulders; their increase in size becoming a common occurrence, though there are far more being removed from this side than ever was from the north side. Seventeen nets lifted, the majority too containing large boulders. The stone was graded, the larger and mid sized on to the main pile, the smaller onto the clay area to form a walking surface. The floor was levelled off around the -10m mark; JW then began to create the pit in the narrows. Delighted to find Tony Oldham not deceased, the caving community the target of a prank. The winter solstice: Stats corrected from previous.

Hours 6 (1652), Southend (600), Kibbles, 27 (1882), Nets, 17 (344) Total (2226)

22nd December Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Dark: Mild: Wet ground: Large stream. The plan: dig. PC carried down the pile of timber to extend the weather canopy. CC winching: TB below: PC unloading - barrowing. TB continued to sink the area started by JW on the 20th December. This pit allows the creation of a one metre high working face in either direction all the easier to dig into. At -10.5m a vertical channel began to appear in the east wall; described as 0.5m deep horizontally, two metres deep vertically and over a metre wide. TB also described the floor easier to dig as it is less compacted; one boulder suddenly sinking 150mm whilst TB was standing upon it. Of the 43 kibbles raised four were gravels, of the others, again the stone was graded for depositing in their appropriate, various areas. Sixteen nets were lifted some containing very large boulders. The next phase of depositing spoil will require the closing of access to the main pile so as to completely back fill this area with smaller stone. The area adjacent the north end of the rift, behind the winch shed will only be used if circumstances really demand. The cistern and washing area will be relocated, the area used for stacking being closer to the shaft, thereby reducing carrying

distance. The gravels will still be deposited in the normal area, which though somewhat distant has the capacity for significant volume: to the Roadside for pints.

Hours 6 (1658), Southend (608), Kibbles, 43 (1925), Nets, 16 (360) Total (2275)

Tony Oldham alive and well: hooray.

*22nd December Considine's Cave (South End) alternate entry from the PCN log
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott, Pat Cronin*

Dark: Mild: Wet ground: Large stream. The plan: dig. PC carried down the pile of timber to extend the weather canopy. CC winching: TB below and PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued to sink the area started by JW on the 20th December. This pit allows the creation of a one metre high working face in either direction all the easier to dig into. At -10.5m an empty vertical scoop began to appear in the east wall; described as 0.5m deep horizontally, two metres deep vertically and over a metre wide, just enterable if you were feeling suicidal. It will be difficult to avoid it filling with debris from above, but marks a significant widening of the rift at The Narrows. TB also described the floor easier to dig as it is less compacted; one boulder suddenly sinking 150mm whilst TB was standing upon it. Pit now 700mm deep, will need to clear towards the shaft next session to avoid collapse into the void. Of the 43 kibbles raised four were gravels, of the others, again the stone was graded for depositing in their appropriate, various areas. Sixteen nets were lifted some containing very large boulders. The next phase of depositing spoil will require the closing of access to the main pile so as to completely back fill this area with smaller stone. The area adjacent the north end of the rift, behind the winch shed will only be used if circumstances really demand. The cistern and washing area will be relocated, the area used for stacking being closer to the shaft, thereby reducing carrying distance. The gravels will still be deposited in the normal area, which though somewhat distant has the capacity for significant volume. To the Roadside for nice pints, Tony Boycott

Hours 6 (1658), Southend (608), Kibbles, 43 (1925), Nets, 16 (360) Total (2275)

24th December Considine's Cave
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Overcast: Dull: Chill: Ground sodden, Large stream: The Plan: maintenance. While CC built up the retaining enclosing the northern boulder pile TB extended the northern stream pipework in preparation of expanding the boulder pile area. Meanwhile PC extended the weather covering around the tripod to shelter the timber work beneath. During a quiet moment TB descended to fill kibbles for lifting the next session. Later, in the Roadside, encountered MC, the landowner, who regaled the team of a subsidence in what appears to be sandy soil west of the dig adjacent the Castle on Jimmy Garners land; need go see. He also reminded of potential cave adjacent Dylan's Bridge, (south of Williams Cross). Excellent pints were once again on the house; an excellent session.

Hours 9 (1667), Southend (617), Kibbles, (1925), Nets, (360) Total (2275)

25th December Pouldubh
Tony Boycott

Mild: Overcast: High stream: The plan was to do Poulmagrai however possible access issues meant a diplomatic change of plan. So had a leisurely trip from South entrance to the deep section and back. The place really has a superbly sculpted streamway. No Bar, alas.

27th December Considine's Cave (South End)

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Dark: Mild: Ground wet: Small stream: The plan: dig. TB below, PC up top, CC winching; fifty two kibbles were raised to surface of which five were gravels; the eleven nets lifted contained some quite large rocks. Rocks of $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cubic foot are appearing regularly. The floor area from the shoring to the bottom of the narrows is pretty much level, ($\approx -10.6\text{m}$), with nine pieces of shoring now exposed; the area toward the south end is next for removal. The white inside surface of the recent weather canopy extension reflects light from the 240v lamp on the tripod back onto the working platform; a useful, unexpected bonus.

Hours 7 (1674), Southend (624), Kibbles, 52(1977), Nets, 11 (371) Total (2338)

29th December Considine's Cave

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

Dark: Foggy: Mild: No wind: Large stream. The plan: dig. Depth of hauling shaft measured at -10.7m . TB below, PC up top, CC winching; the steady pace of digging continued as the entire floor yet remains loosely compact; a small quantity of muddy gravels have reappeared. Of forty six kibbles raised four were gravels, the twelve nets lifted supplied large, suitable shaped stones for the next area of walling. Moisture from mist and fog created a superb skating rink right across the platform; hooray for the strips of carpet. Twelve/thirteen poles of shoring are now exposed, around half will be recovered next session. At sessions finish depth, now some -11m , means the hauling shaft floor is about three and a half-ish metres above the level of the "Plank". The remainder of the dig floor slopes up toward the south end.

Hours 7 (1681), Southend (631), Kibbles, 46, (incorrect as 2031), Nets, 12 (383)

31st December Considine's Cave

Tony Boycott, Cheg Chester

Last of the Year: 09:30: No wind: Mild: Medium sized stream: The plan: maintenance. Whilst PC removed eight pieces of shoring and refitted the "Gantry" CC began to erect the drystone perimeter wall to contain the increasing boulder pile. While below, PC loaded also one net and eight kibbles ready for lifting next session. There remain some twenty sections of shoring to remove down to the "Plank", (-14.5m). The raised pieces of shoring were laid across the surface covering the south end. The final, dangerous, opening adjacent the hauling framework now securely closed against loose, falling debris. Cistern moved to new prepared position adjacent the platform and west tripod leg, the associated pipework adjusted; minor amount required to the wash tub to complete installation. Generator oil checked and topped up. Dead pallets were laid among the gravel spoil area ready for burial. TB worked the winch; completing his training, now a level I operator.

Hours 9 (1690), Southend (640), Kibbles, (2031), Nets, (383)

End of year tally, corrected; diggings logs have not always been promulgated during PCs absences with Coast Guard, hence the errors. Website figures are,

Hours total (1690), Southend (640), Kibbles, (2031), Nets, (384) Total (2415)