

2020

*2nd January Considine's Cave (South End): from PCN Log
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott*

Due to unforeseen circumstances associated with the Coastguard PC did not arrive at the dig site for duties. With TB dressed for digging and CC in his Sunday best for winching only (Unloading and barrowing is a shitty job) it was decided that all we could achieve was to fill all the empty kibbles in preparation for the next session. So a new record was achieved for the least number of lifts in a session! ONE kibble and that was not emptied: to the Roadside for a well undeserved pint.

Hours 2 (2438), Southend (1388), Kibbles 1 (4752), Nets 0 (816), Total 5568. Cheg

4th January Lost Simon Halliday; Pegasus, devastated

*6th January Considine's Cave (South End): from PCN Log
Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott*

Housekeeping. TB descended & drilled new hole for the Comms box also extended the hosepipe. CC changed the oil & filled the generator. Then both carried on wall building, cleared out the washing drum and cleared misfired rocks from the field behind; also emptied the one kibble. Happy New Year to all Tony.

Hours 6 (2444), Southend (1394), Kibbles 1 (4753), Nets 0 (816), Total 5569.

9th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

18:00. Dark: Cold: Wind NE increasing, F 4: Ground sodden: medium stream: Visibility $\geq 30\text{Nm}$: Fuel PC: Continue incredulous of the loss of Simon: The Plan: Dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. TB continued the 0.5m face northward reaching, this session, almost even with the narrows. Of the thirty lifts were one net, and twenty nine kibbles; eleven of assorted gravels and clays. Small boulders were tossed onto the pile behind the retaining wall, completed by CC on the 6th Jan: to the Roadside.

Hours 7 (2451), Southend (1401), Kibbles 29 (4782), Nets 1 (817), Total 5599.

11th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

18:00. Dusk: Ground totally awash: Large stream: Wind WSW, F2: Visibility $\geq 25\text{Nm}$: Still stunned, and incredulous losing Simon to Lancaster; a fit, methodical and focused friend. The Plan: Dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. Popeye continued the 0.5m face into the narrows, about 0.3m beyond the "first rib on the west wall, and to just level with the signalling box. The ladder to replace the two 2.3m extant ones is under construction; its installation will require the present floor level to remain undisturbed on which to place the aluminium ladder from which to secure the lower support stemples. The session produced thirty kibbles comprising nineteen gravels and clays: to Kilshanny House for a very nice pint.

Hours 7 (2458), Southend (1408), Kibbles 30 (4812), Nets 0 (817), Total 5629.

13th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

18:00. Dusk: Storm Brendan present: Wind WSW, F8; gusting F10: Wind chill factor significant: Temperature $\approx 7^{\circ}\text{C}$. Cloud base $\approx 900\text{ft}$: Brief, heavy rain showers: Visibility $\leq 10\text{Nm}$: Ground waterlogged: Large stream: Conditions above and below, challenging:

The Plan: Dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. TB swiftly moved the 0.5m face toward the base of the ladder way, stopping just short of it to leave room on which to erect the aluminium ladder to assist removal of the two extant 2.3m ladders, and installation of their replacement, a 4.6m ladder. Popeye recommenced digging the south end; removal of spoil exposing the known undercut further, which descends at some 20° toward the east; further exposure suggests there may be a possible rift forming. The communications system proved itself during the session as, at times, wind noise produced levels equal to an express train, clearly audible -20m below. Thirty lifts were achieved; one net and twenty nine kibbles, of which twenty two were, assorted gravels and clays, two kibbles were of heavy blue clay. The enclosed gravel and clay deposition area is swiftly filling, encroachment onto the path to the dig, from the stile, needs avoiding as does creating an excessive slope up onto the increasing elevated spoil surface up which to run the barrow. PC will request permission from Jonathon to clear an area, ten x five metres, within the adjacent dense copse on the west of the boundary wall, (ground level presently, at least, one metre lower than the existing spoil dump), to extend the spoil area. Generator shows just below ½: fuel on site: To a windswept Roadside. Hours 7 (2465), Southend (1415), Kibbles 30 (4842), Nets 1 (818), Total 5660.

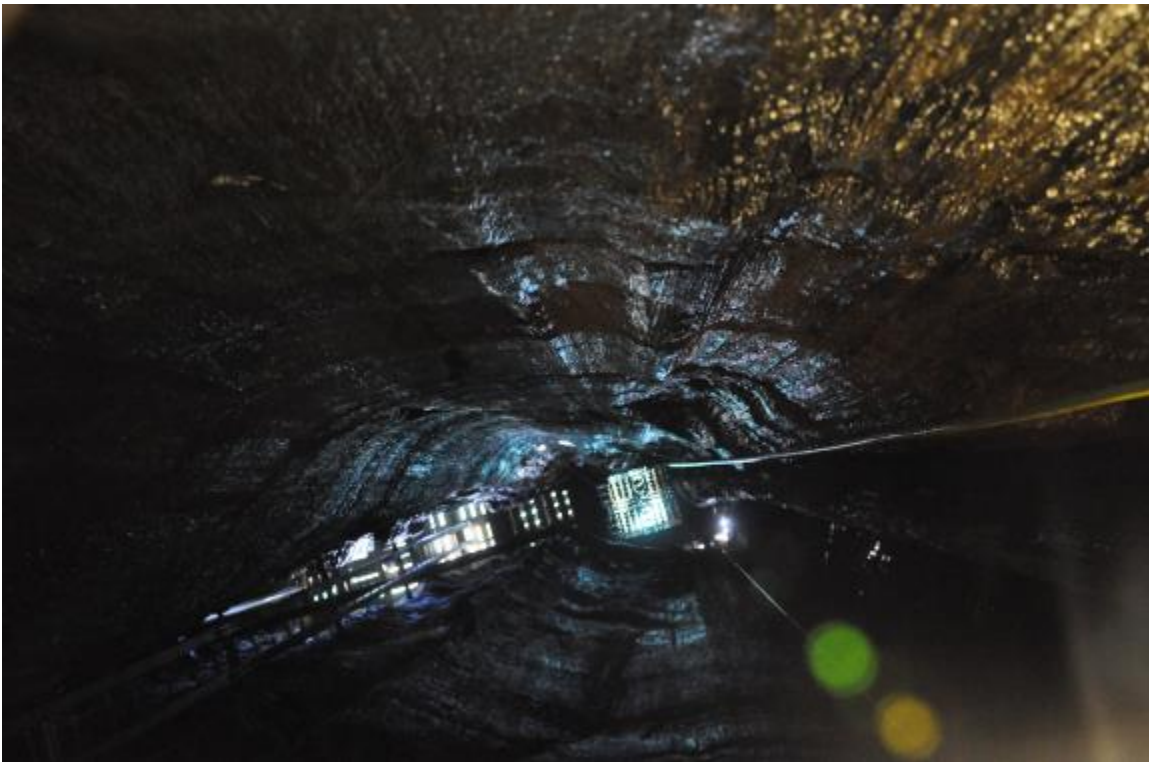


Photo Cheg Chester

Considines from -20m; left is the fixed ladder and Cleft through to the northern shaft.

14th January Considine's Cave
Solo

Explained to Jonathon the desire to extend the spoil area; request swiftly granted.

16th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

18:00. Dusk: Cold: Ground sodden: Large stream: Wind SSE, F 4 gusting 6: Cloud base 1200ft: Visibility ≥ 30 Nm: The 4.6m fixed ladder is constructed and delivered to dig. The Plan: Clear debris from the "Cleft". Just prior to deploying CC into the north shaft a small amount of soil debris fell off a face of the overburden surrounding the depression, cascading past the position where CC would have been suspended: clearing the "Cleft" is postponed until the "questionable" area is checked. Plans change, so an inspection was conducted, using a plumb line, of positioning the new ladder to accommodate the change in shape of the lower walls in the shaft. CC returned to surface, TB began to clear out the south rift sending up ten kibbles of awful clays, doing so floor debris fell away, allowing Popeye to see down between three and four metres, perhaps five. Generator just below 1/4 full: fuel on site: New ladder suspended in the roof of the weather canopy. The closing of the open northern rift at surface requires completion this spring.

NB. Jonathon has granted PC permission to create spoil/moot wall in the adjacent western copse. The plan will be to clear foliage to within a metre of the northern boundary wall. Deposition will commence from the party wall separating the two areas; Jonathon's land to the west, Considine's to the east. Of import is that the Donkeys seek do shelter within the copse from inclement weather, so perhaps one way to consume some of the stone would be to build a small cabin for them?

Hours 7 (2472), Southend (1422), Kibbles 10 (4852), Nets 0 (818), Total 5670.

18th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester, Tony Boycott

18:00. Dusk: A fine stretch coming to the day: Temperature, -1°C: Almost no wind: Visibility infinite: Ground sodden: Medium stream: Cloudless firmament: The Plan: Dig. TB digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. Popeye continued digging at the south end excavating beneath the undercut, from the eastern gap there now issues a welcome, warm draught. An improved view of the depth between the boulders allows a more accurate estimate of 2.5 metres; still a good depth. PC remained near the shaft collar as it was the warmest place around during operations. The demand for a program of maintenance increases regarding the preparation of the new clay/gravel spoil area, the new southern boulder pile area and installation of the replacement ladder, and its lower neighbour to name but three. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Another 127 kibbles will bring us to 5000, (190 tonnes); 180 nets will mean 1000, (68 tonnes). PC departs Spain Monday; Popeye departs UK Tuesday. The session produced two heavy nets and twenty three kibbles, of which nine were clays and gravels. To the Kilshanny House; on entering the Bar the team encountered funereal celebrations; thoughts turned to Simon's family.

Hours 7 (2479), Southend (1429), Kibbles 23 (4873), Nets 2 (820), Total 5695.

20th January Considine's Cave (South End) From the PCN Log

TB & CC

Dry and Sunny!!!! A quick afternoon trip to carry out measurements for the new stemples which will support the re-positioned ladder below the staging at minus 14 metres CC descended first to do the measuring and then managed to clear out a few stubborn rocks, which were jammed in the south rift. TB then began to lower the floor at the North end below the ladder, sorting out the rocks from the mud and gravel and sending ten kibbles of shite to surface: a quick pint in the roadside.

Hours 4 (2483), Southend (1433), Kibbles 10 (4883), Nets 0 (820), Total 5705. Cheg Good draught from the East rift, lots of cobbles/boulders left stacked? below. Aluminium ladder now 2 feet lower & no longer at right angles to the main ladder, but well footed on a boulder slab: Back in 4-5 weeks. Tony

21st January

Lost Russell, (Mr. Pastry) Smith; Pegasus.

22nd January Castillo de Santa Barbara, Alicante

Pauline Cronin

Located at 166m it's an imposing fortification; precisely what the builders wanted it to be. Local enquiries of Castle of Santa Barbara describe it as the largest medieval castle remaining intact in Europe, which eventually led the team to an anonymous steel door set in a rock face, located below a two kilometre long terrace of ten story buildings, adjacent the main coast road through the city of Alicante. Seemingly, regularly developed and enlarged from the original 9th century Moorish fort, it was reportedly abandoned by the mid 19th century, though graffiti carved in the parade ground flagstones attest some form of military occupation in 1937; the Spanish Civil War 1936/1939. Where the underground aspect enters this log is that behind the tatty steel door a modern, stainless steel lined 250 metre tunnel leads arrow straight to the 143m lift shaft. Arrival at the summit is precisely central within one of the medieval towers; quite the feat of engineering. All walls, fosses, defenses and buildings contained within this complex are in a superb state of preservation.

25th January Museo de Agua

Pauline Cronin

This obscure, small museum allows access to three ancient underground cisterns that once stored, and supplied water to the settlement of Alicante. Carved from what appears to be a fine, granular light coloured limestone, (geologist required), they were dug downward, through a one metre opening, expanding in diameter to some seven metres at a final depth of about ten metres. Today these three remaining cisterns have been breached at their lowest levels to allow the public to walk from the museum through to the largest cistern. This one was supplied with beautifully carved steps from a conventional, medieval doorway to the cisterns base. Within the middle cistern is an example of stone trough/gulley and stone capping covers. Nice.

30th January Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Dusk: Cold: Ground sodden: Medium stream: Wind SW, F 4: Visibility $\geq 20\text{Nm}$: Fuel CC. The Plan: Dig. CC digging: PC winching, unloading and barrowing. Good to be back. Prior to the impending installation of the 4.6m ladder CC had prefabricated the three stemples; now on site. Tonight's session removed the pile of boulders dug out by Popeye on the 20th January and also cleared the area directly beneath to accept the next 2.3m ladder, which will reach to floor. Digging out the floor, where the ladder will be secured, CC managed to glimpse both walls, each appear to be widening, very slightly. The session produced twenty lifts of which were four very heavy nets, two kibbles of gravels and clay, and fourteen of rock. The generator shows $\frac{1}{4}$ full: fuel on site. Platform surface has become treacherous: to a deserted Roadside, for a very nice pint.

Hours 5 (2488), Southend (1438), Kibbles 16 (4899), Nets 4 (824), Total 5725.

1st February

Lost Willie "Chicken" Scales,
Owner of Polldonough, (Coolagh River Cave)

1st February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester,

18:00. St. Brigit's Day: Dusk: Cold: Wind W, F2: Ground awash: Visibility $\leq 20\text{Nm}$: Cloud base 1000ft: Large stream: The Plan: prepare for new 4.6m ladder. CC descended to the staging, at -14m, receiving Hilti drill, materials and other kit. Stowing much of said kit, CC continued to floor level, (-21m). PC followed; previous visit to the bottom being 14th Sept 2019: the shaft viewed from the staging is truly awe inspiring. Removal of the floor by over two metres, since Sept 19, has further exposed the south end's sculpted development, beautiful radial water worn forms step back sequentially beneath each other toward the southeast forming a quarter of the shaft's circumference between the Signal Box around to the tall, vertical opening of the south rift. The walls of this rift have become vertically parallel, and appear likely to continue beneath the present floor level. The small eastern crevice also appears to be developing beneath, toward the northeast. The floor area of the South End area has increased; estimated at 2m x 3m. When viewed from the staging the floor shape resembles that of a keyhole: photo desperately required. Back at the -14m staging PC drilled two 16mm holes for a new stemple secured directly above, and tight down against the staging timber floor to act as topmost, accessible fixing to secure the new ladder. With fascinating, at times unnatural contortions, CC, managed to balance atop the yet surviving, trusty, really, really wobbly, builder's ladder, to remove two existing, unwilling 180mm ladder bolts, and replace the lowest stemple at -18.5m; ascending to -16m attempted removal of the middle stemple's bolts, one successfully removed, the other remaining though likely as easy to withdraw. Owing to the potential risk of falling kit, each task was conducted in turn; no injuries incurred. The volume of remaining work required for the operative, exposed on the -14m staging is significant warranting installation of two anchors for said operative's cowstail. It is a very small platform presently at seven metres up the shaft, originally designed to accommodate the essential offset of the vertical ladder and offer access to the northern shaft. It was never, ever considered a working platform: there is, in effect enough room for a pair of size 11's. Generator $\frac{1}{2}$ full: no fuel on site. To Kilshanny House for a well earned pint.

Hours 5 (2493), Southend (1443), Kibbles o (4899), Nets o (824), Total 5723.

3rd February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

13:00. Cloud 80%: Wind W, F4 gusting F6: Cold: Hail showers: Ground sodden: Large stream: Visibility $> 30\text{Nm}$: The Plan: secure the ladder. A discussion was conducted prior to starting; so each part of the complex process was fully understood by both. There followed a series of tasks whereby CC, below, released and separated both existing ladders by performing great feats of acrobatics. Communications were acceptable; each request verbally repeated to avoid mistakes. A 2.3m ladder weighs about 20Kgs, when released each were winched to surface. The 4.6m, (40Kgs), was lifted from the bottom of the shaft carefully into its final position projecting above the -14m staging stemple for marking its fixing holes; then raised further for drilling of the two 10mm holes; not an easy task, then lowered again for its final securing with 180mm bolts, through the ladder frame and through the steel stemple. After a very productive three hours the ladder was finally secured; the fixing of the middle and lower stemples will be much easier now the precision manoeuvring is completed. No Roadside, Crikey!

Hours 6 (2499), Southend (1449), Kibbles o (4899), Nets o (824), Total 5723.

6th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Dusk: Cold: Storm Kera approaches: Wind E/SE, F2 gusting F4: Cloud 100%: Visibility >25Nm: Ground sodden: Medium stream: The Plan: Continue ladder installation. CC below PC up top. Following deployment of tools, materials and equipment, and ultimately CC, into the depths meant PC could only watch and cheer from on high as CC conducted his performance in the much acclaimed "Monty Chester's Flying Sircuss". The simple task of "only fitting a few bolts" actually required much balancing, and obscene contortions to successfully drill and install said fixings to ensure the ladder was correctly vertical. Secured top and bottom, the middle stemple was then removed for drilling back at CC's workshop to accept the new location of the ladder now some 150mm further eastward. CC noted the warm draught, whilst outside the wind chill approached -100°C! Depth from shaft collar to average floor level is -20.6m. This is about +1.4m above the level of the "Pinch" in the northern shaft, and +5.4m above the pint where the stream is seen to disappear toward the south end. The lifeline needs washing. Generator shows ¼ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 5 (2504), Southend (1454), Kibbles 0 (4899), Nets 0 (824), Total 5723.

8th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

11:00. Storm Ciara imminent: Wind S, F4, gusting 6; increasing: Cloud base ≤1000ft: Showers: Visibility <5Nm: Ground sodden: Medium stream: Fuel PC. Torrential rain predicted for tonight with 120km winds: The Plan: change visit to the afternoon, avoiding the worst of Storm Ciara to complete ladder installation. CC below PC up top. CC to -20m, receiving tools and materials lowered from surface; ascending then to -16m to finish fixing the ladder's central stemple. Though awkward, multiple holes were drilled, bolts inserted and secured; task complete. Prior to the next plan survey of the shaft, at -20m, a datum was established at floor level to mark the centre line of the hauling way. From this datum changes of shaft size, shape and inclination as it deepens may be accurately recorded. Significant rainfall is promised from 14:00 over the next twenty four hours, so the signal box was raised to -10m to avoid water damage from potential flooding, as occurred end of August 2019. Prior to surfacing CC decided to descend the northern shaft to assess the amount of spoil remaining in the "Cleft", between the two shafts, down to the "Pinch" at -22m. looking through the "Cleft" a depth of 0.5m is estimated below the floor of the southern shaft to where the "Cleft" heals up, become the squeeze, The "Pinch". Generator ¾ full: no fuel on site. To the Roadside for a very fine pint of Gold

Hours 4 (2508), Southend (1458), Kibbles 0 (4899), Nets 0 (824), Total 5723.

10th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Third day of Storm Ciara: Wind W, F8 gusting 10: Rain: Hail: Ground awash: Severe local flooding: Three inches of rain recorded between midnight Saturday 8th and 08:00am Sunday: Fuel CC. The Plan: Dig: CC digging; PC winching, unloading and barrowing. At the end of the previous session, (8th Feb), CC positioned several "tell-tales" at various heights around the shaft as indicators of potential flooding. This was to test the suspicion water found within the signal box, 31st August 2019, was due to the shaft flooding on the 30th August 2019 following four inches of rain. At the time this idea seemed a little off the wall. On the 8th Feb 2020, as a precaution, the signal box was raised from -19m to -10m. Arriving at the shaft floor CC found all "telldales" on the floor, among the kibbles; one kibble actually stuck/jammed in the south rift some two metres

off the floor. Work began. Communications were poor; noise from the 120/130km/hr gale was constant, and deafening; clearly audible at -20m. Peaks of the gale occurring at 19:07, 19:45 and 20:05; this increased the bouncing of the entire platform. Of the twenty lifts two were very heavy nets, of the kibbles six were gravels and clay the remainder rocks. The area through the "Cleft" into the north shaft is all but cleared of debris through to the top of the "Pinch"; it will be interesting to see how this "healing" up of the "Cleft" in the north side, at this depth, is represented in the south end, in the area below the proposed ladder route. Departing for the bar PC's boot disappeared through a pallet; item needs replacement. Generator 1/2 full: fuel on site.

Hours 5 (2513), Southend (1463), Kibbles 18 (4917), Nets 2 (826), Total 5745.

13th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Daylight: Storm Dennis approaching: Cold: Wind SW/W, F2: Ground water logged: Medium stream: Cloud base 2000ft: Visibility >25Nm: The Plan; Dig. CC digging PC winching, unloading and barrowing. Operating in the "Kill Zone" in the base of the hauling way, CC removed the remaining debris from the "Cleft", exposing where east and west walls finally join to continue down as a narrow joint. This level was cleared to the south to accommodate installation of the next 2.3m ladder, which will mean fixed ladder to a depth of \approx -21m. Of the twenty kibbles raised nine were clays and gravels. Generator just below 1/2 full: fuel on site. PC obtained 2 x pallets as replacements, more required. To the Roadside for Golden pints

Hours 5 (2518), Southend (1468), Kibbles 20 (4937), Nets 0 (826), Total 5765.

15th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

14:00. Storm Dennis: Cold: Wind SW, F8 gusting 10: Ground awash: Large stream: Visibility <20Nm: Cloud cover 70%. Localized flooded: Tonight's session was cancelled owing to increasing storm force winds and predicted rainfall. Noted within the storm pattern, a two hour break was estimated to pass between 14:00 and 16:00. Rather than loose an entire session the plan changed to replacing the broken pallet above the 26m shaft during the lull. By 14:00 the wind had not dropped so rolling the shiny new pallet across the open field became challenging; the wind finally fell at 14:25, just as the pallet was eased into place. Removal of the pallet allowed further assessment for covering the entire northern shaft opening; an important political - legal factor; the dig site regularly surrounded by inquisitive cattle. Previous rain events, one of 4 inches, (Aug 19), and the most recent 3 inches on the 9th/10th Feb, flooded the base of the shaft to a depth of, at least 2m. Neither inundation lasted long both freely draining away without leaving any evidence of silt deposition. The rainfall of the previous twelve hours has been slow and steady; no sudden downpours. It may be that the Coolagh River system didn't back up to flood Considine's as previously surmized. Perhaps the simple answer is that it's just the rock and clay within the shaft restricting the volume of any sudden flood pulse. That the stream outlet from the northern shaft actually passes through/beneath the fill in the southern shaft, and this is the answer? Though the debris removed from the north shaft where the stream enters the small opening had no silt present. Other minor maintenance tasks were conducted; debris blocking the piped stream was cleared out, and to finish the session the area behind the winch was assessed for spoil deposition; it is a large area of reasonable accessibility. To the Roadside for some chilled pints.

Hours 2 (2520), Southend (1470), Kibbles 0 (4939), Nets 0 (826), Total 5765.

17th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

16:30. Dam cold: Wind W/NW, F2 gusting 4: Cloud 70%: Visibility >30Nm: Hail and Rain showers: Ground sodden: Medium stream: The Plan: produce a survey of the shaft's dimensions at -20.5m, and install the next fixed ladder. PC arrived early to record the shaft, abseiling in rather than climbing without a lifeline. At -20.5m the almost levelled floor allowed for a swift survey, constructed using a cross laser level and fixed tape from which offset horizontal measurements were taken. The total, horizontal length from the entrance of the south rift to the north shaft, measured through the impassable "Cleft" is 8m metres; 5.3m of which constitutes the south end: 1.2m is the length of the "Cleft". The shape appears significantly changed from the survey at -18m. CC arrived just as PC surfaced, CC swiftly descended to begin fitting the next 2.3m ladder; this now reaches the present floor level. Outstanding is the prefabrication and fitting of the ladder stemple and final bolting together to secure it to the wall and the ladder above. Generator almost 1/4 full: fuel on site. To the Roadside; this weather is when the toasty fire is sorely missed.

Hours 5 (2525), Southend (1475), Kibbles o (4939), Nets o (826), Total 5765.

20th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cold: Wind NE, F4 gusting 6: Visibility <20Nm: Rain showers: Ground sodden: Large stream: The Plan; Maintenance. PC descended to drill 2 x 16mm holes for the stemple an awkward task as the "Cleft" is 475mm wide, the drill and bit 500mm long. Even using the laser level there was much phaffing about leveling both the holes, then trying to operate the drill at arms length behind the ladder. CC investigated the communications and signalling system; recent exchanges being unintelligible. While PC is away in Panamá CC will inspect the comm's system. Generator almost 3/4 full: no fuel on site: to the Roadside.

Hours 3 (2528), Southend (1478), Kibbles o (4939), Nets o (826), Total 5765.

24th February Considine's Cave (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cold: Wind westerly, F2 gusting 4, pulling in Polar air: Cloud 60%, decreasing: Ground wetter than a Haddock's bathing costume: Very large stream: Rain and sleet showers: The Plan; complete ladder installation. This straightforward task was hampered by PC who had misunderstood the precise location of the next stemple; (second rung up). Located in the narrow approach to the "Cleft", meant though PC checked the gap, as recorded by CC, the same width was also at the fourth rung up, which PC mistakenly took as the correct position, and so drilled the 2 x 16mm holes. CC descended, discovered the error and accommodated this location. This involved an awful lot of bugging about involving hassle with drilling the holes in the ladder etc. To finish up, the comm's were checked and found to contain water, again, even though suspended after the previous session three metres above the floor; the box was removed for refurbishment. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. To the Roadside where Billy announced his surprise departure; by reason other than his own.

Hours 4 (2532), Southend (1482), Kibbles o (4939), Nets o (826), Total 5765.

27th February

Lost Alan Harrison; Pegasus, devastated



Photo Pauline Cronin

L – R Pegasus members, Alan “Big Al” Harrison, Stuart McManus, Paul Thompson, Self, Pete, “RatArse” Webb, lower right front, Roger Day; PC’s house warming 2011.

27th February Considine’s Cave (South End)
Cheg Chester

18:00: Very cold: Wind N/NW, F2: Ground Awash: Visibility >35Nm: Cloud 20%: Large stream: The Plan: Dig. CC digging, PC winching, unloading and barrowing. The first digging session since the 13th February; hooray! Despite no electrical communications all went well; digging within the “Kill Zone”, CC removed the high section in the central part of the floor working from north to south. Average depth \approx -21m. Of the twenty lifts two were very heavy nets; one a single boulder: the kibbles of equal measure, rocks and assorted gravels. The gravels were deposited along the western party wall bordering JN’s land to create, in part, a mote wall to contain the Donkeys. Generator shows $\frac{1}{2}$ full: no fuel on site. Tonight’s session somewhat muted following the loss, earlier today, of “Big Al”, a good friend and nice bloke: to the Roadside, where else?

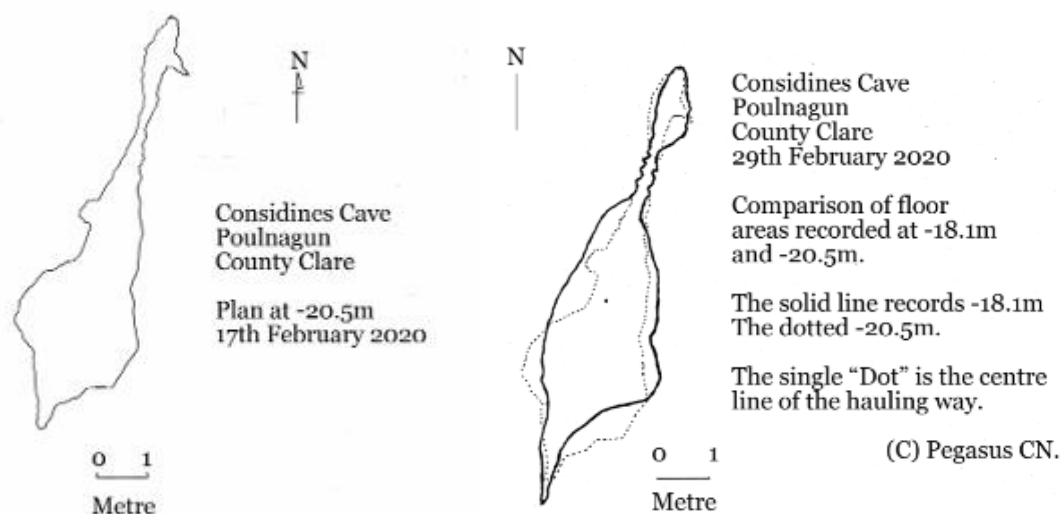
Hours 5 (2537), Southend (1487), Kibbles 18 (4957), Nets 2 (828), Total 5785.

29th February Considine’s Cave (South End)

Session abandoned due to injury; also onset of Storm Jorge; wind speed \leq 147km/hr.

Hours 0 (2537), Southend (1487), Kibbles 0 (4957), Nets 0 (828), Total 5785.

Plan surveys of floor areas at -18.1m and -20.5m, with comparison of development.



3rd March Martin Bishop's 15th anniversary; missed so very much

4th March First Corona case discovered in Ireland

4th March Stone features surrounding Glacial erratic, Ballyryan
Solo

As the sun unexpectedly appeared, headed out to this site visited some six years ago with Tony Boycott during PC's archaeological course at NUI Galway; then TB found the site while PC was assessing an adjacent enclosure, CL004-047---, ITM509219 x 703001. The brief inspection of the stone arrangements, at that time, suggested a possible burial place; ITM509235 x 702965. A large glacial erratic has three stone features around it. The possible burial area is the linear stone feature on 080°, extending eastward for some three metres, and a single large stone wide. Closer assessment suggests it may be linked to the adjacent enclosure forty metres to the northwest. A small two metre enclosure, facing southwest may once have held lambs, or goat kids; this prospect relates to the nearby enclosure as its wall thickness is only of one stone. The Burren has many of such enclosures, called Moher's, some remain in use. On the Aran Islands there are few gates, the norm to access fields is to remove a specific part of the wall, (one stone thick), and replace, a swift process.

5th March Conor's Dig
Solo

With Cheg in the UK, and Tony Boycott arriving in a week or so; took advantage of the reasonable weather. Thought of a site dug with Conor McGrath some ten years ago; not

so much thinking to create another Fraggie Rock, but to establish its location among the scheme of things along the coastline; recorded at ITM 506560 x 698659.

From the parking area at the end of the road opposite McDermott's in Roadford, cross the stile and head toward the sea. On the right of the lower area of field, set in the boundary hedge is a Court Tomb, (CLO08-002001); circa 4000/3500 BCE. At this point cross over to, and through the left hand wall. Keep this wall on the right, follow until it ends, after some two hundred metres; from here maintain the wall alignment and descend the broken limestone shoreline, after a further sixty metres there is a lower, less broken limestone terrace, the site is here. Previously a passage was open for some twenty metres emitting a draught; hence CMcG's interest. Today the entrance is partly choked with large boulders; smaller debris lay beyond this.

6th March Lisnanroum area

Nick Geh

A pleasant cold day, enroute to surveying the northern "souterrain" encountered NG at the parking place. Abandoned the project to guide NG to the potential "Holy Well" noted the 26th December 2019, when walking north toward the souterrain, CLO09-021014, located on Luke Davoren's land. After some twenty minutes located the spring; likely the reason for establishing the adjacent cabin; in this landscape water sources are scarce.

9th March Panamá 2020

Roger Day, James Cobbett, Dig Hastilow

See expedition report for details of the Cueva Porton dive and the discovery of Cueva Porton's sink Cueva Lenin.

After about a week encountered the serious manifestation of Covid-19; Panamá closed down; staying at James place repeated flight cancellations and lack of information promulgated by KLM did not help. Much phaffing about whilst fortunately staying in James place, Panamá City. DH managed to get a flight some three days before RD and PC got out on the last diplomatic flight from Tucumen Airport; a Dutch Embassy chartered flight. The airport then officially closed until further notice.

29th March Dublin Airport- returning from Panamá

Roger Day

Following a ten day wait in Cobbett's place managed to get a possible flight via Marilyn's contact at the British Embassy who explained the Dutch were sending out diplomatic flights; the last departing the evening of the 29th, to be there at 15:15, no later. Departed 20:30, on a half full plane; destination and departure point both virtually deserted. An over night stop required in Schipol, in "The Yotell", accommodation consisting of the Japanese form of small boxes: adequate though, slept fairly well, knackered of course. The Heathrow and Dublin departure gates were two apart, the flights a half hour apart; so left RD as the flights were called. On the flight to Dublin twenty three were on board. In Dublin airport only two Gardai were checking passports. In the arrivals hall three car hire companies were open, with one customer. Outside found that Bus Éireann was the only bus company operating nationally, also no people about. PC took the Galway bus; only two others got on at Busáras, (Bus Station), Dublin, alighting at Loughrea. Fifteen minute wait at Galway and once again PC the only passenger on board. Dropped at Garrihy's Cross by the bus driver; Sean. Met by Pauline, who gave PC her car to drive home, she got a lift from her friend: PC went straight into isolation in the apartment for the next fifteen days. After almost a week of recovering, began to work around the place.

22nd April Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

12:30: Cool: Wind NE, F2: Ground drying: Visibility >25Nm: Cloud 90%: No visible stream: The Plan; to check on the site. Generator started at first pull; run same for ten minutes; tank 1/2 full; closed tank valve, ran until carburetor was empty. All lights checked and found operational. All the pallets, erected as barriers for cattle, by CC, were in situ; a further barrier erected adjacent the generator. Recovered the Petzl Rig; used for lifelining, to lubricate and service. Looking down the open shaft arose the longing to dig. Looking down the shaft realized its present depth is similar to the main chamber pitch in Lamb Leer, Mendip.

Hours 1 (2538), Southend (1488), Kibbles o (4957), Nets o (828), Total 5785.

29th April Considine's Cave (South End)

Solo

15:00. Cool: Wind NE, F4: Ground drying: Visibility >30Nm: Cloud 30%: very small stream. The Plan: to check on the winch. Stripped the cover off the winch, checked drive pulleys all moved well, started generator, and commenced running the winch for fifteen minutes. Pottered about, placing more barriers to impede cattle, and generally tidying. On the 5th May Covid-19 regulations ease for some, increasing travel to five kilometres; it appears, if the public adhere to the reg's, that restrictions might finish before September. Hours 1 (2539), Southend (1489), Kibbles o (4957), Nets o (828), Total 5785.

6th May

Lost Paul "Torchy" Forster; Pegasus

9th May Doline, Crumlin Townland

Solo

11:00. Wind NE, F2, cool: Sunny: 19°C. From Drunken Horse Hole prospected the area south, toward Cliff Cave, (Poul Aillte). Crumlin Townland has evidence of an ancient field system and several enclosures; a cursory look observed 0.8m thick walls, which does not suggest them medieval; site CLO04-025---- at ITM 510114 x 703277 is recorded as a Cashel, most likely during the ordnance survey of the 19th century. With only a couple of hours available conducted a systematic search from the high ground at +130m along the ridge between the valley at the base of the cliffs and the descending ground to the south-south-west. This exposed area is karst, heavily broken by glaciation and weathering, irregularly interspersed with small fields for grazing. Found a doline at ITM 509868 x 703075; some forty five metres long fifteen metres wide and four metres deep, (below averaged, adjacent karst surface). When viewed in the digital imagery of the Archaeology.ie website it would appear this doline is indeed on, or very close to the route of Cliff Cave, (Poul Aillte), which appears as the fault line seen in the imagery. Landownership would appear the same as Drunken Horse Hole; the site is a long term dig, and likely compacted with melting glacial debris.

24th May Poulsallagh to Poulcraveen

Solo

Wind SW, F6; Sunny; Low Water springs, 12:48. The Plan; arranged with Pauline for a lift to Poulsallagh and pick up at McGann's; (Closed, Covid-19). Walked to Poulsallagh Cave; the shaft entrance has a large boulder deposited by the sea in the passage heading

toward the cliff, but remains passable. Low water conditions allowed the depth, and nature of its unroofed canyon passage to be appreciated; at some 0.5m wide and three metres deep. As the unroofed section enters the limestone terrace a boulder is jammed at the edge of daylight; unable to assess access. Continued to S4, a choked rift dug to -3m; by PCN; prevailing storms assail the adjacent bay, some four hundred metres distant allowing turbulent seas to pick up and deposit debris often far beyond S4 position.

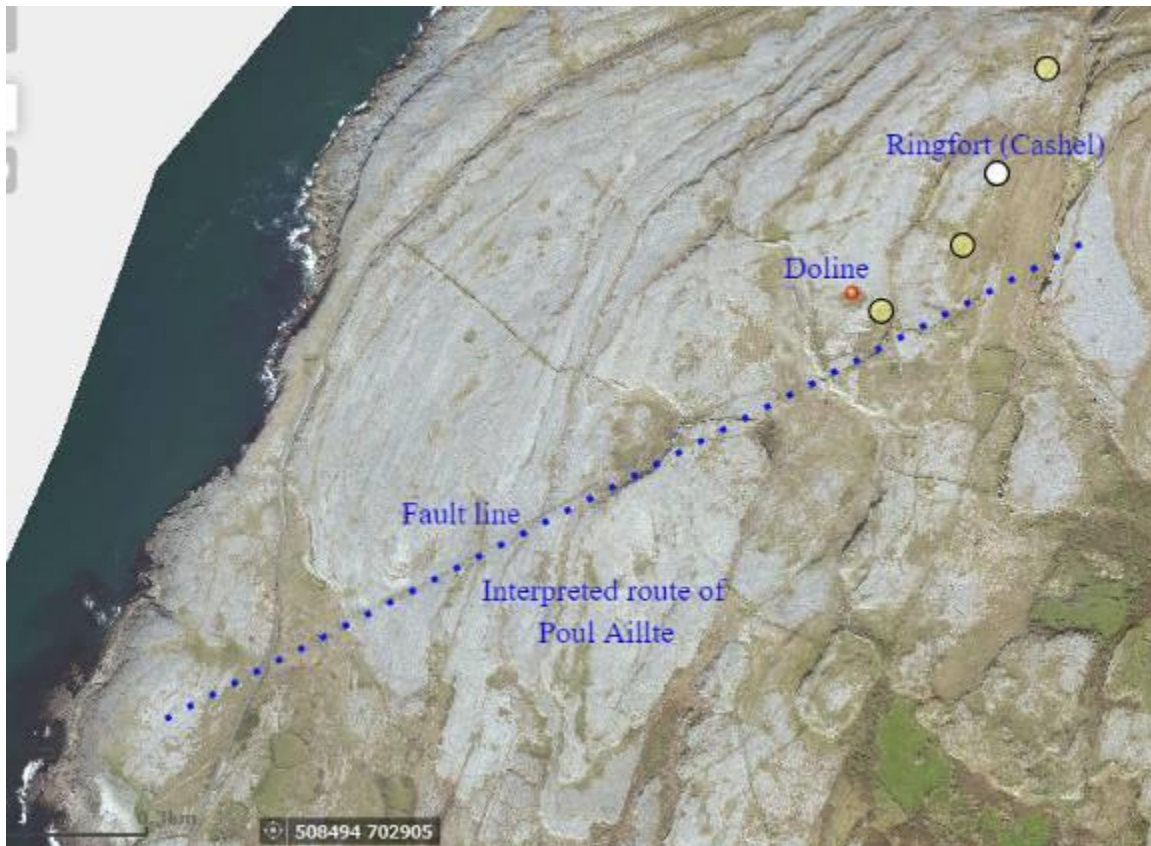


Image Archaeology.ie

Relative positions of Doline and projected route of Poul Aillte

Near S4, a Productus bed, (terrace), is crossed; the next terrace above this also contains Productus; each bed is some 0.8m thick. Headed inland, to avoid the unstable storm beach, onto the elevated pasture terraces; located the sea cave visited previously with Barry Sudell, took photos and recorded its position, (ITM 508162 x 700488), some one hundred metres beyond is a Cliff Edge Fort, (CLO08-124001), potentially Iron Age, or perhaps Early Medieval. Erosion has created an extensive cavity beyond the surface opening of the Sea Cave, beneath the south side. At ITM 507740 x 700170, a significant channel enters the sea having meandered some three hundred metres; it appears to be an unroofed cave passage; warrants further work. Stopped to brew up a kilometre south of Fraggie Rock; noted just the two Gentians among the other blooms; Violets, Pink and Pyramid Orchids were well represented, though many of the Orchids had all but finished. Continued on to just north of Poulcraveen; crossed inland to Killilagh Church, met up Pauline for Tea and Medals. Doolin and environs devoid of people.



S4, View north



S4, View east

S4, View East, the dig, a pot, covered by debris, the result of storms assailing the bay some four hundred metres to the southwest; the sea often reaches to and beyond here.



View south, Sea Cave; (ITM 508162 x 700488),

26th May

Lost Helen Farr; devastated

29th May Poulcraveen
Solo

HW neaps 10:48: Hot: Sunny: Sea State, smooth: The Plan; walk up the coast line from Ballyhagline to Roadford. Pauline provided transport, whilst the Hilux is being fixed, dropping PC at the Coast Guard Station. Even though the 5km travel restriction is still in force some visitors are present for the Bank Holiday weekend. Absence of ferries and people has allowed the sea to return to stunning clarity. Tide level meant hopping and scrambling around the collapse area of cliff face at Poulcraveen. Much of the remaining cave passage is filled with storm debris and rotting seaweed, creating a fearful stench. What hasn't been appreciated by PC is the northern end of the cave exposure, here is a surviving section of original cave passage; the floor covered with storm deposited gravel and cobbles, it does however offer a superb glimpse of the original passage size much now eroded away; width almost three metres, height almost six, well defined scallops and other fresh water eroded features present; nice. Temperature in the mid twenties; brewed up north of the cave; cut across the fields to Roadford to complete the circuit.



Poulcraveen, north end, view south, height six metres.
 Wall definition and detail: width at floor three metres.
 Cliff fragment, foreground right, obscures floor view.

3rd June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

13:00. Sunny: Wind NW, F6: Visibility >25Nm: Cloud 60%: No visible stream: Ground very dry; hard. The Plan: maintenance, and photos. JW descended taking photos from various positions. PC started the generator and ran the winch; all good, generator is ½ full. Touched on options of potential change to the digging regime, circumstances now require three for it to progress. Asked Jonathon permission to have deliveries of lintels to the house; granted.

Hours 3 (2542), Southend (1492), Kibbles 0 (4957), Nets 0 (828), Total 5785.

7th June CL005-065002, Souterrain Lislarheenmore

Solo

Cool: Bright: Wind W, F2. Drove north along the Cullaun road; stopped five hundred metres beyond the townland boundary of Lislarheenmore – Lislarheenbeg. Finding a field gate, adjacent a crush, with a serious chain attached. Decided against entering, this being the only gate accessing the extensive field system beyond until permission is granted; believe the owner may be John Casey; will check with Joe O'Loughlin. From the

elevated road, (220m OD), the view toward extends across the valley to Poulmagollum, and, southwest toward Lahinch, along its route are a number of low, rounded hills; the drainage appears to head straight toward the coast at Lahinch.



Photo Jim Warny

View up; Considine's Cave, "Red" RSJ supporting the "Guillotine" to the right of centre.



Photo Jim Warny

View south; Considine's South End bottom at -21m.

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

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Cathal Mullane

Sunny: Wind W, F2: Ground hard, bone dry: Visibility >35Nm: Large thunder head forming in the bay; torrential downpour visible to its NNW: No stream or water issuing from the supply pipe: Midges: JW and PC arrived early to prepare the surface kit for digging; the first actual digging session since 13th February, other February sessions had focused on installing the fixed ladder to the very bottom of the pot. PC took a while to remember where everything was to ensure safe working practice, all soon sorted; JW descended to continue levelling the floor at -21m. CM and CC soon arrived. CC winching, PC unloading, CM barrowing and JW digging. Though a relatively short session thirty kibbles were raised and four nets; that's manpower for you. However, the session ended due to dense clouds of midges forcing the Team to run for it. Generator almost 1/2 full: dodgy shaft light needs replacing: comm's cables released and ready to lift to surface. JW did well in Poul Aillte earlier today. No Roadside, No pints; misery.

Hours 9 (2551), Southend (1451), Kibbles 30 (4987), Nets 4 (832), Total 5819.

20th June

Lost Fred Davies

21st June Ringforts – Potential digs

Nick Geh

Sunny: Cloud 50%: Wind SW, F6 gusting 8: Returned to Caherdoon ringfort to review the exposed souterrain, which has had its roof lintels removed. Intend to return with reduced volume of surveying equipment to record both it and the ringfort.



After tea and munchies headed for Caherduff ringfort; enroute encountered a dig site; ITM 517762 x 703271; previously shown by Quentin Cowper to Tony Boycott and PC after a digging session at Poulcaherdoon. This large, obvious pothole entrance is choked with assorted sized boulders; it is a cracking site, though the possible owner may not be too accommodating for digging to take place: it's a lofty, remote location among very rough ground. Around Caherduff dolines and gulleys display an extensive, ancient surface drainage. Caherduff, (ITM 511300 x 703745), is situated seven hundred metres northeast of Caherdoon on a north facing terrace, well sheltered from the prevailing southwesterlies; it appears ruinous, the rampart wall, now, for the most part, is only one stone thick, and that is a recent construct; much of the rampart appears removed from site. Visible foundations illustrate an original wall thickness of some 2.5 metres. Within the garth dense hazel bushes obscure the ground surface. Fifty metres to the ENE a deep hollow within the face of the cliff has the appearance of an ancient resurgence; this site needs attention. Returning to the motors stumbled across Poulcaherdoon; ITM 510615 x 703537. This dig was once thought could access Poulmagraí beyond its sumps; now long abandoned. Assisting the then diggers it seemed the uneven, kilometre walk to the dig was not liked by many involved, particularly during the darker months: a cracking walk in good company.

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

Solo

Mild: Low cloud, (100m): Heavy drizzle: Visibility ≤ 5 Nm: Wind F4 gusting 6: Minor flow in stream. The plan: address practicalities to protect farmstock from the northern shaft.

One consideration has been to install a number of concrete lintels across the rift.

Dangling in the rift, examination of the northwestern point noted that where a useful two inch high bedding had developed, which was intended to be enlarged to insert the series of parallel lintels, is in fact three separate sections of bedrock, which appear separated from the main bedrock face by a thin vertical, calcite joint, and from each other by bedding joints; the areas integrity is therefore suspect. Further down the rift other horizontal joints have developed but only by a few millimetres; a significant amount of cutting would be required to insert said lintels, not least the erection of a platform to conduct this work from. The overburden the working platform frame rests upon is up to 1.2m thick; adjacent the rift edge it's something like 0.8m. This covers a reasonably level limestone surface beneath, as exposed when preparing to cover the southern rift opening. All things considered, the solution presented is that the overburden be dug away from the west and east sides of the rift to a width of say 0.4m, enough to kneel on during digging. The width of the rift at its widest point would be something like three and a half metres, too great a span for the originally proposed concrete lintels. The only practicable cover when all things are considered becomes a prefabricated arrangement of five galvanized 100mm x 100mm angle steels, between 2.5m - 3.5m long, set at something like 0.6m centres, fixed at their ends with equal sized lateral steel, inside which is inserted gantry mesh, an acknowledged, secure walking surface. This covering could be assembled by degrees beneath the existing infrastructure without any disturbance by two men. Design considerations yet continue, accurate measurements may only be made after excavating the overburden perimeter. No Roadside; bugger.

Hours 1 (2552), Southend (1502), Kibbles 0 (4987), Nets 0 (832), Total 5819.

24th June Pouldubh

Solo

Sunny: Cloud 30%: Wind SW, F2: Large stream: The plan; to take a trip. Approaching the parking area noted forest clearance adjacent the power line route. This extends along

the western side of the power route up to the road, and up to the parking area. Walked over and entered North entrance; a small stream present. At the base of the climb landed in a much larger stream; not too surprising, considering the recent short, but heavy rain. Lots of foam around, great rafts held in the stream eddies. The cascade into main passage was clearly audible up the passage; a good volume falling, as was from the two smaller inlets forty odd metres downstream. Down to the old terminal location; along the main streamway several places exhibited evidence of flooding; one particular step in a dry section of cobble and gravel stream deposits is now around 0.35m high, with crisp cut sides; several of the silt banks have changed, and shifted. Exiting Pouldubh South the entrance cascade was also significantly larger than normal; the entrance passage taking some overflow. Walking through the forest light levels were much greater with the absence of trees on the far side of the power route. Within a small area of this clearance four potential dig sites were noted; the largest, some five metres diameter, is directly opposite the entrance into the forest to Pouldubh, the others are smaller, less obvious collapses, all would repay investigation; they are not close to the line of Pouldubh. The larger depression has been subject to silting, which has allowed some ponding to take place; the pool is dry and the silt cracked, following the dry period; needs poking. No Roadside; No drink: COVID -19 still abroad, but not, presently in County Clare.

25th June

Lost Pete Watkinson; Pegasus, devastated

I believe it most likely I met Pete the 20th April 1969. I say believe, as when taken into the Hut, for the very first time, I encountered a large group of tough looking, no nonsense men and women, who immediately extended a refreshing welcome, and overwhelming hospitality to a stranger, something not previously experienced, yet has continued so ever since. I do not feel too qualified to speak of Pete; we only ever spoke briefly, and then on occasion. We never caved nor climbed; something I regret enormously. From the outset I was stuck by a transparent, genuine, constructive character. Though young, and tiny in stature, Pete made me feel of value. Quite simply, he was in fact a very nice bloke, a real Gentleman.

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

Cheg Chester

13:00. Cloud 80%: Midges: Warm: Midges: Humid: Midges: Visibility >20Nm: Midges: Small stream: The Plan; measure / survey the pothole entrance for its proposed cover. Whilst PC swung about below the platform CC trimmed back the seriously encroaching undergrowth. More poking was conducted to precisely identify the boundary between overburden and limestone. The area of questionable integrity appears stable. However, have no intention whatsoever of trusting it with any form of weight, or disturbance installing the framework; the lower of the three questionable lumps estimated at 120Kgs. The bars are likely to open soon; drinking will resume after waiting an appropriate amount of time enough for the beer in the pipes to be replaced with their latest delivery.

Hours 2 (2554), Southend (1504), Kibbles 0 (4987), Nets 0 (832), Total 5819.

29th June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Light rain: Cloud base <100m: Visibility <500m: Wind W, F6 gusting 7 decreasing: Tiny stream: The Plan; prepare ground for the proposed shaft grill cover. Set up an SRT rope off the tripod via a 50mm pulley deviation suspended from the vertical scaffold pole; rope threaded down through a pallet slot into the shaft below. Spragged across the shaft to excavate several holes at about 250mm centres, along the margin of the overburden and limestone. Difficulties experienced manoeuvring with the rope through the pallet slot; needs sorting. Locating a continuous limestone level initially proved illusive, the

area adjacent the fixed ladder being a hollow eroded by water, now filled with compacted clay. Using a nail bar four holes 150mm deep were easily dug out, virtually level with the proposed bedding on the west side. The shape at the end of the rift opening will likely require two longitudinal scaffold poles secured across the lateral ones protruding into said gap to support the heavy mesh intended to close off this gap; this will also add to the integrity of the grill. Next task requires the installation of the horizontal scaffold pole on the opposite, west side from which to secure those spanning the rift.

Hours 2 (2556), Southend (1506), Kibbles o (4987), Nets o (832), Total 5819.

4th July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cloud base <100m: Visibility <1Nm: Wind SW, F4 gusting F6: Small stream: Ground firm: The plan; install and secure the western, horizontal scaffold tube. Had made some rebar staples to secure scaffold tube to the rock. Reused the previous SRT rope route and set up; though appropriate for working on the south end, the rope route through the working platform caused issues excavating the northern hole, which is on good limestone. Unfortunately no limestone is present at the proposed point at the southern end, only compacted clays. The integrity of this deposit is non-existent; to address this issue the length of scaffold tube need be increased to some four metres, this will reach from the northern end to the exposed limestone on the far side of the hauling shaft frame, and will require two vertical stanchions either side of the original channel of the stream. Only when this horizontal tube is secured in position can the lateral tubes be accurately measured to span the shaft, estimated at around 2.2/2.3m long. Dangling in the shaft, eyeing up the two, both western and eastern fixing positions appear reasonably level with each other, hooray. Asked Jonathon for scaffold clips, believes he has a bucket of them somewhere, if found PCN can have them. Even so, have previously arranged for Tony Boycott to order some from Tubes, Clamps Direct Ltd; to reduce courier costs TB will arrange delivery to his place then here on his return sometime soon, August? Twenty clips of two types for £44: excellent.

Hours 2 (2558), Southend (1508), Kibbles o (4987), Nets o (832), Total 5819.

11th July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Sunny: Mild: Cloud 30%: Visibility 35Nm: Wind W, F2: Small stream: Ground firm: The plan: install two pins to secure vertical scaffold supports. CC untwisted the lifeline; a lengthy, but pressing task. PC clambered into the shaft around its western edge to drill the two 16mm holes; the re-jigged SRT rope route not too successful. Distances between the horizontal bar differ, each hole is in a different bedding, yet both in the best position directly beneath. Each hole is 100mm deep; the northern hole has had its galvanized pin inserted; the pole will slide down over said pin to rest upon the rock, stopping any potential, lateral movement. Asking around no other source of scaffold clips has been located, so far. PC's, (used) Hilti works well, with its Lithium battery it's some 1/3rd lighter than its predecessor; use at arms length is easier. With JW's four metre scaffold pole, the purchase of a further two six metre poles should complete the grill; once TB returns with the clips from the UK. This grill will provide peace of mind for the Team as the wooden pallets, which make up the working platform surface continue to deteriorate. Also, on completion of the project, the landowner will be left with a secure cover over the open pot by grateful Cavers; hopefully ensuring future access. No bars open as yet for a cool libation, bugger.

Hours 2 (2560), Southend (1510), Kibbles o (4987), Nets o (832), Total 5819.

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

Cheg Chester

Cloud base \approx 100m: Visibility $<$ 300m: Wind W, F2: Small stream: Ground softening: The Plan: begin installation of redesigned comm's system. CC had busied himself redesigning the comm's, and replacing the former 20w epileptic, disco lighting with PC's similar lamp of 10w. All equipment swiftly conducted to the dig via a wheelbarrow in one trip; the battery a particularly hefty item. After discussing options PC descended to release the two comms cables running down the ladder way to the bottom; during ascent threading said cables back through the working platform structure for re-routing, intend to run both cables directly down the southern half of the shaft. The "Plank", (\approx -14m), was found covered in debris from holes prepared to receive the forthcoming surface scaffold grill; this was cleared, "Plank" and the staging washed clean removing risk of missiles on anyone below. Though hampered CC swiftly assembled and tested the comm's system: superb, no more screaming in the shaft. The floor of the Shaft, (\approx -21.5m), is reasonably level. A rib of mixed debris, separating each half could be removed in one session. Once the comms are reinstalled in the shaft, for digging to progress, present circumstances require a third man otherwise the project will not continue, efficiently. Generator $\frac{1}{4}$ full: no fuel on site. Opening of bars delayed until August.

Hours 5 (2565), Southend (1515), Kibbles 0 (4987), Nets 0 (832), Total 5819.

16th July Cullaun II

Solo

Cloud base 200m: Mild: Wind W, F3: Itching for a trip also needed to exercise the lower back structure. Scampered off to pool chamber; good flow at the cascades, though stream never more than ankle deep, and of poor clarity. Observed walls were entirely wet, no area/s of dryness noted throughout, similar noted in the dig; is this due to extant period of elevated humid... low cloud base?

18th July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud cover 10%: Warm: Wind W, F2: Visibility $>$ 20Nm. Small stream: Ground softening: The Plan: complete installation of comm's/signalling system. Both cables were completely recovered then threaded along their respective routes, removing the need for both coils of spare length stored adjacent the winch. PC descended to locate the signals box at -20m, from whence it was raised and lowered to prevent damage from inundation, previously witnessed, and further evidenced with the deployment of tale-tells showed it backed up to around -15m. Future flood issue may however be avoided with the exposure of the southeast rift. Experienced issues threaded the comm's cable through and a round the shaft cover; it now runs obliquely from the shaft collar down the west wall to the south rift. No chance whatsoever of it catching in/on the hauling line. The phone line, (comm's), is secured in the south rift; the phone will be recovered each session, being at risk. Generator remains $\frac{1}{4}$ full. No fuel on site; site now ready for actual digging.

Hours 3 (2568), Southend (1518), Kibbles 0 (4987), Nets 0 (832), Total 5819.

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

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Cloud 10%: Warm: Wind W, F1: Visibility $>$ 30Nm: Small stream: Ground soft: The Plan: Dig. CC winching, JW digging PC unloading and barrowing. Delighted actually digging again; last session 15th June. The redesigned comm's and signalling systems worked well. A steady pace produced thirty one lifts of which were twenty six kibbles of clay, gravel

and cobble matrix and five very heavy nets of boulders; one boulder in excess of 100Kgs. The floor all but levelled. Generator approaching empty: no fuel on site.

Hours 7 (2575), Southend (1525), Kibbles 26 (5013), Nets 5 (837), Total 5850.

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

Cheg Chester, Matt Palmer

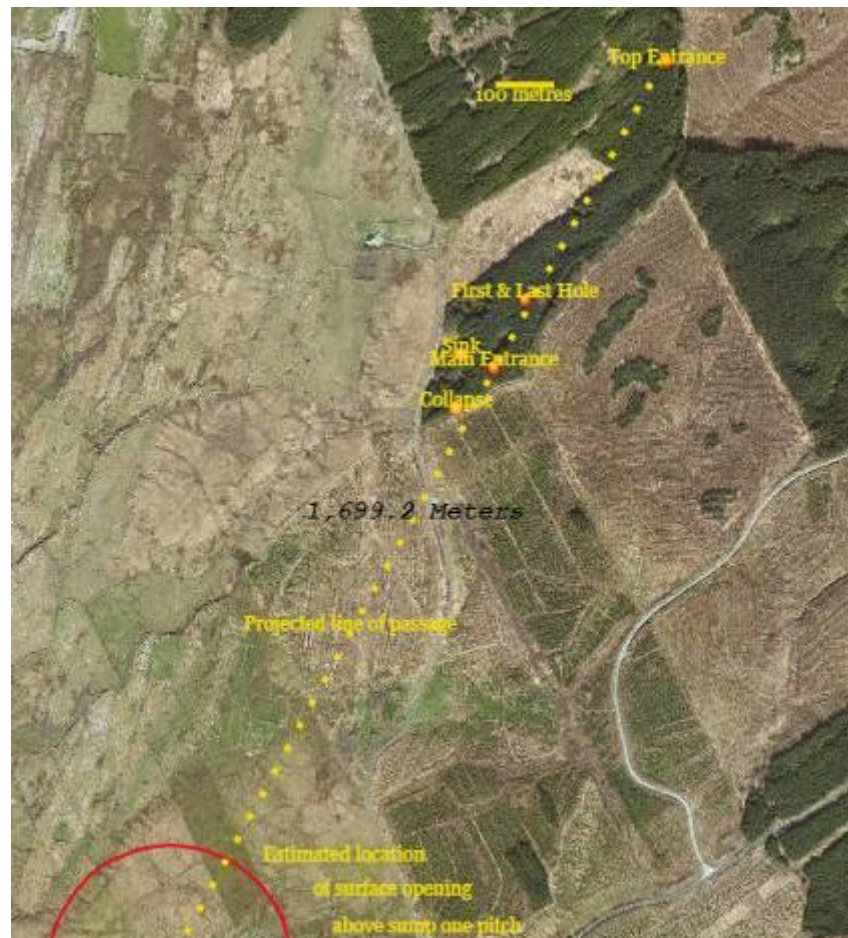
Cloud base 500m: Wind W, F4: Visibility <25Nm: Medium stream: Ground soft: The Plan: Dig. The Team were joined by Matt Palmer, (BEC); presently living in Oughterard, Co. Galway, (1.5 hours distant). Previous attempts between MP and PC to meet up, dig and cave were delayed by the Panamá trip and arrival of the Corona virus. After CC gave an induction of safety protocols, signalling system and phone MP descended, to produce a respectable fifteen kibbles and two heavy nets, considering having first to dig into a flat floor. Phones works really well, as does the signalling system. Generator fueled with ten litres, so it is full: none on site: Oil required: Bars still only serving drink with food.

Hours 6 (2581), Southend (1531), Kibbles 15 (5028), Nets 2 (839), Total 5867.

27th July Dig site, near Cullaun II

Solo

Cloud cover 90%: Wind W, F4/6: Visibility >20Nm: Showers: The Plan: investigate an old collapse. This active sink, as several depressions closer the main entrance of Cullaun II, has long been considered a feeder to the upper section of the cave.



Northern section of three images, showing collapse and sink with recorded entrances.

Visited the site taking GPS readings of it, the main entrance then looked for C2b sink in order to fix and reproduce the survey to triangulate the position of the collapse. This afforested area has recently been cleared; the terrain strewn with remains of tree stumps, logs and branches covering the landscape in places to a significant depth. Used a UBSS survey, reproduced 2019, walked fifty metres, slightly south of west, from main entrance, C2b was not obvious among the ground cover. After a further fifty metres, along the same direction, found an unrecorded, minor sink, in the edge of the shale boundary, now approximately one hundred metres WNW of main entrance so unlikely C2b. The timber contractors recognized the importance of natural drainage and constructed a canopy of logs above said sink, which offers accessibility to dig. Though some one hundred metres west of the main passage it is very likely a source of the stream issuing from Year Passage: but worth a rummage to see what's there. To address the location of the reputed surface opening above the terminal pitch extrapolated the averaged passage alignment to above the area of the terminal pitch and sump one, creating a search area adjacent to habitation.



Image to illustrate continuity of projected line of main passage; estimated area of reputed surface opening above the pitch, above sump one.

30th July Unregistered Souterrain & Souterrain CL008-130002
Solo

17:30. Sunny: Warm: Cloud cover 50%: Visibility >30Nm: Wind W/SW, F6. The plan: revisit souterrains in Teergonean and Ballycahan Townlands. The previous visit of 27th September 2012 with "Popeye" Boycott was curtailed when PC's leg fell through a grass covered gap between the roof lintels of a souterrain successfully ripping 95% of the knee ligaments from their attachments. So, on return cautiously approached the location, its precise outline obscured more than before; briars successfully colonizing. This souterrain has been constructed by the removal of a Clint, some 1.2m wide, its visible length estimated at some fifteen metres; quite an undertaking. Several lintels are missing, their absence from the passage below suggests removal for house construction; once a common enough occurrence. Some lintels were estimated at 1.5m long, by 0.3m thick, by 0.5m wide; around 500Kgs. The outlines of much larger lintels are visible among the ground cover. The souterrain's route can be traced from some five metres south of the Teergonean – Ballycahan townland wall to around ten metres within the ringfort compound, (garth) here its entrance is partly choked with limestone boulders. The opening is potentially central within the ringfort interior, though as the rampart is denuded this is difficult to precisely ascertain. Experienced the Garmin GPSmap 64s reporting "poor satellite signal", left unit to stabilize; later found the recorded positions to be inaccurate by up to twenty metres; need return to obtain sensible positioning.

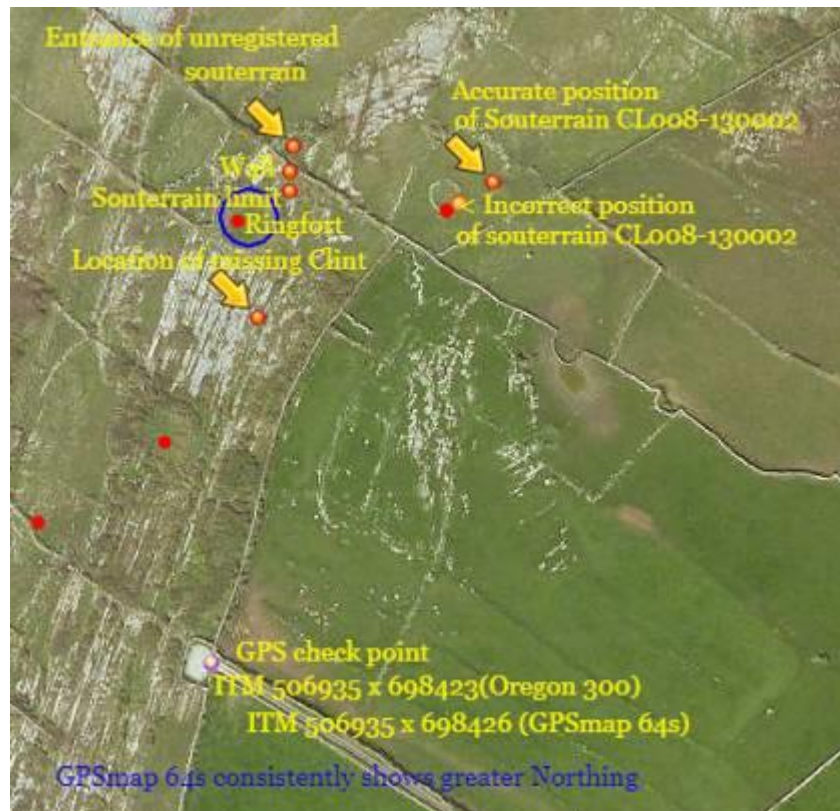


Unregistered souterrain, view south, drystone wall is townland boundary

Moved on to souterrain CLO08-130002, some seventy metres to the east-south-east; its rampart too much denuded, likely its stone used in the construction of nearby field walls. A weather eroded hummock feature contains the souterrain CLO08-130002; built upon the limestone bedrock. The souterrain passage, which follows the curvature of the mound, is visible through gaps among the exposed lintels on the weather side of the mound. This feature closely mimics the appearance of ancient burial mounds, and may have been purposely sculpted to camouflage the souterrains presence, and intent. Doolin packed with visitors; it'll end in tears with another lock down.

1st August Unregistered Souterrain & Souterrain CLO08-130002
Solo

19:30. Showers: Wind W, F4: Mild: Visibility >30Nm. The Plan: return to address the dodgy GPS positions taken 30th July. Heavy showers delayed start. Took both GPS units; brought along the Garmin Oregon 300 to check the erroneous readings displayed by the Garmin GPSmap 64s. During todays usage no "Poor signal" information was received by the 64s. With a close eye on the shower approaching from the Aran Islands, managed to record the registered and unregistered souterrains. Both entrances are in Ballycahan townland: the unregistered souterrain has no registered ringfort ascribed.



The passage of the unregistered souterrain begins in Ballycahan heading south into Teergonean townland; to get an estimate of its length took GPS positions of its entrance, where it passes beneath the townland wall and the general area where it terminates among foliage in the shadow of a Ringfort. Returning to the truck encountered a twenty metre length of karst where the Clint had been removed; (ITM 506952 x 698551). Was this preparatory work conducted by established settlers -farmers, abandoned owing to difficulties encountered during construction of another Ringfort? As foliage dies back each souterrain requires a survey of accessible sections. Doolin packed with visitors again.

2nd August Dig site

Solo

13:00. Cloud 95%: Mild: Showers: Wind SW, F4. Itching for a walk; decided to include a look at a past, potential dig site some three hundred metres northeast of Poulnafearbui. Dropped off at Poulsallagh by Pauline, just as the rain cleared toward the northeast; diverted to take a look at S3, imagining following the recent heavy rain peat stained water would confirm the resurgence exact location, however the tide had covered the area, no staining observed. Continued south: after some ninety minutes arrived at the dig site situated in the head of a dry valley similar to Poulnafearbui, (ITM 507613 x 699813). Climbed down into the briars and bushes; managed to tear the arse out the trousers. An obvious joint heads off northeasterly, it does appear to widen lower down, could not be accurately assessed as several large boulders need removing. It's possible these could be trundled downhill into the surrounding foliage. Walking up to the Fraggles Rock parking spot, encountered parallel walls, though only a few stone high, they appeared to edge a two metre wide track; Pat Connolan once related how along the edge of the slope to the coast he'd encountered such a track outline to the south of the parking area. Brewed up; enjoyed the cool circulating air.



Dig site with yellow arrow

3rd August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

18:00. Cloud 100%: Warm: Visibility >35Nm: No wind: The Plan: Dig. Replaced the lifeline with temporary, as could not remember if original reached the present bottom; used Petzl ASAP to self lifeline. Landed among stench of death; eventually located the deceased, a large rodent. Placed same in kibble; climbed out to dispose of carcass. Cleared away two boulders, one of 70Kgs, improving the view of the slowly widening east rift. Pebbles fell for some two/three metres landing with a dull thud; removed more debris allowing an oblique view, (45°), for three metres down toward the east; clearly

visible are several large horn like projections along this wider area of the rift; estimated 0.25m wide; projections appear water worn. Did not use the generator; no fuel on site.

Hours 2 (2583), Southend (1533), Kibbles 0 (5028), Nets 0 (839), Total 5867.

15th August Cullaun II

Matt Palmer

15:30. Warm: Humid: Visibility <10Nm. The Plan: MP had expressed interest in visiting Cullaun II, so obliged; though MP delayed by Galway traffic, soon underground. Pleasant trip to the terminal pot, here MP climbed some ten metres above to the base of the small aven wherein Tony Seddon is climbing toward the surface; the entry of 27th July suggesting a surface area to search for this long rumoured connection. Steady trip out during which showed off the beauty of the fine array of Helictites. Changing, realized the time, sped off to the dig to meet CC.

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

Cheg Chester, Matt Palmer

18:30. Warm: Humid: Visibility 15<Nm. Small stream. Arrived; CC had everything set up and in place; topped up the generator oil level. CC winching: MP digging: PC unloading and barrowing. Matt, (Two Pike) Palmer descended and extended the trench from the southeast rift opening around the south end of the shaft toward the southern rift. Kibbles were lifted continuously; eleven having been previously filled on the 3rd August. A short session, which produced twenty kibbles containing coarse gravels and boulders. Virtually all kibbles are full ready for the next session. Covid-19 regulations still inhibits drinking without dining.

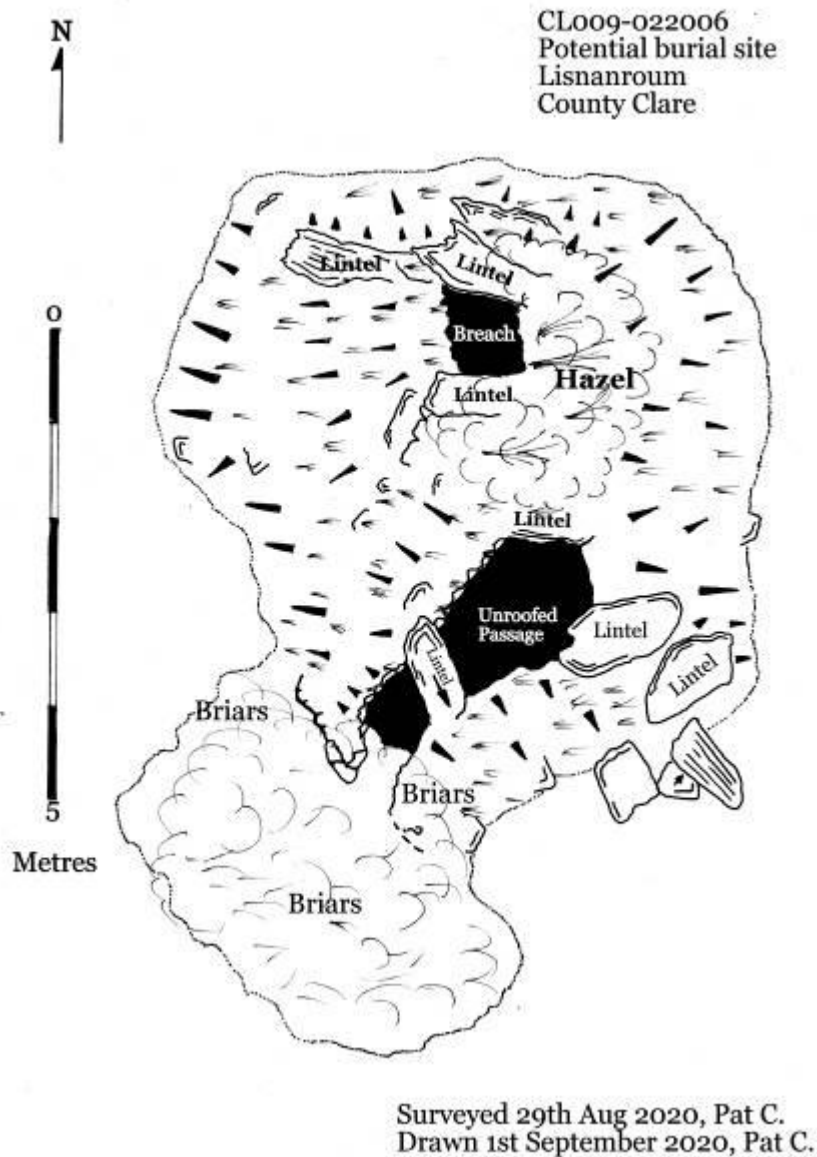
Hours 5 (2588), Southend (1538), Kibbles 20 (5048), Nets 0 (839), Total 5887.

29th August CLO09-022006; Lisnanroum

Solo

Wind N/NW, F4: Cool: Visibility >10Nm: The Plan; continue the survey of the enclosure at Lisnanroum. Following the visit by Dr's Comber & McCarthy on the 2nd October 2019, PC decided to produce a plan of the raised mound to attempt clarify its suggested origin; that as a possible burial mound. Significant settlements were established adjacent revered or sacred sites, supporting settlers, possible spurious claim to right of ownership of the wider landscape by association of ancestral links to those interred nearby.

Erected two tripod survey stations either side of the west and east of the north-south feature, orientating the stations with each other by distance and bearing. The majority of measurements conducted from the western plane table station. In order to locate the potential passage entrance struggled into the briar patch. Probing, using the survey staff could not feel any undulations significantly higher than the ground surface outside the briar patch; suggesting the briars obscure the very end of the mound; the possible entrance. Either way trimming these briars will expose the possible entrance area for recording. Virtually the entire enclosure's interior surface is uneven, broken. Two common ground levels are present, commoned height difference being approximately 0.45m. Areas do exist with a cover of humus, though among this rock protrudes. One area appears specifically quarried flat, possibly in preparation for the potential house in the southern enclosure adjacent souterrain, CLO09-022007. The differing levels within the enclosure suggest widespread quarrying producing material for the construction of its perimeter walls and other features. The more northern enclosure walls are of inferior build quality to that of the southern enclosure, which appears the original settlement. En- route to the enclosure, from the single track road there is an area which clearly exhibits quarry activity. Next: to survey the passage and produce profiles of the mound.



31st August

Jarratt's 12th Anniversary

3rd September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cathal Mullane, Cheg Chester

Cloud 40%: Visibility >30Nm: Wind NW, F2; gusting F4: Medium stream: Ground soft: The Plan; Dig. CM digging: CC winching; PC unloading and barrowing. Retrieved the flood lamp from -18m, discovered the faulty as flooded. Physical evidence of further flooding of the shaft; the general opinion is flood water backing up from the main river

route beneath the valley. The only known outflow for the Coolagh drainage is the S3 resurgence; narrow and low this bedding, about a kilometre south of Poulsallagh Bay, within the intertidal zone, needs a closer look during a low spring tide. S4, a dig, is some 200 metres inland from the resurgence and has reached a point where the upper edge of bedding was seen, down between the boulders; this could bypass the resurgence. Once signal and comms systems were connected CM began sending up the pre-filled kibbles along with excavating from the southeast rift opening around toward the southern rift opening. A steady pace produced thirty lifts of which twenty eight were kibbles, and two nets. Delighted with the session; great to press on with it. Removed the “Rig” to oil and service this lifelining device. CM made a video to illustrate the status.

Hours 6 (2594), Southend (1544), Kibbles 28 (5076), Nets 2 (841), Total 5917.

4th September Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Solo

Obtained six good pallets to replace those deteriorating within the working platform; this supply will cease soon enough.

Hours 0 (2594), Southend (1544), Kibbles 0 (5074), Nets 0 (841), Total 5915.



View southwest from ancient resurgence 6th Sept 2020, Cheg in image.

6th September Ancient resurgence, North of Poulnafearbui
Cheg Chester

ITM 507614x699812: Wind NW, F4; Visibility >30Nm. The Plan: assess a potential dig; an ancient resurgence. Using loppers descended through Blackthorn, briar and fern. Exposed the rift opening, which was found to be well choked with large boulders >80kgs; examined the rift, it appears the area to dig is directly below the obvious large rocks: stream erosion along the southeast wall is evident. Removal will require capping; at least four rocks rest upon one another. The upper area of the rift is narrow, too narrow to contemplate digging; lower, below the present floor the potential appears a little better. The gully seems deeper to the northwest of the rift, of further interest is its pronounced channel of vegetation illustrating poorer growth, possibly due to "regular" flooding from a, (for the moment), obscured source among the dense foliage. Will return to hack a way through and inspect this area; potentially shades of Poulnafearbui, where Mark Lumley checked behind a small bush discovering a small opening which, when dug out, led into the main stream way. Walked some eighty metres southwest, following a broad, shallow surface channel to a three metre high weathered limestone terrace. No obvious sign of water having issued from its base, or anywhere adjacent in recent times. The area needs further assessment following heavy rainfall. Bars may open the 21st Sept.

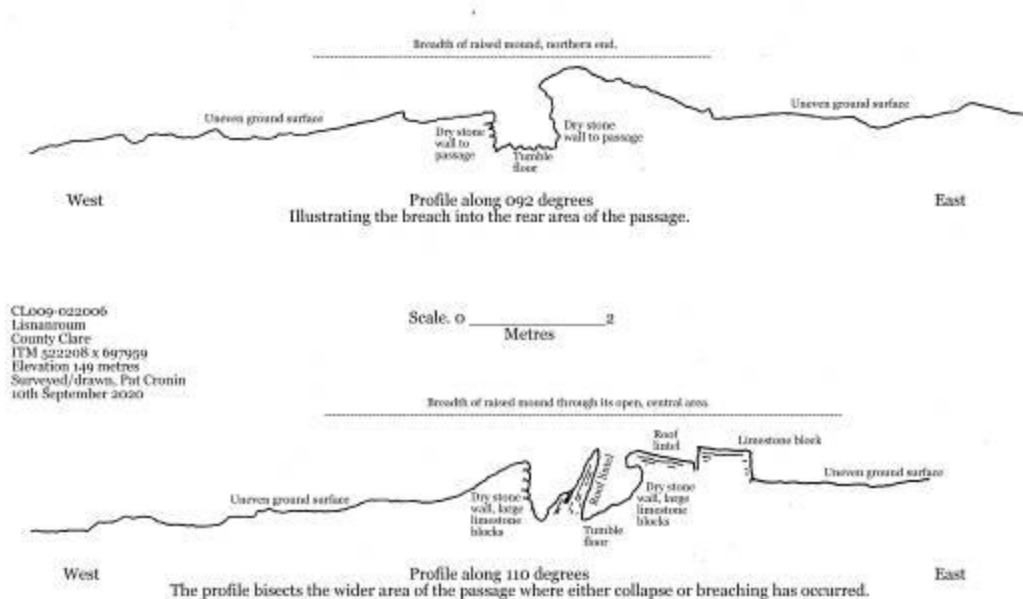


Ancient resurgence in relation to Fraggle Rock

10th September CL009-022006
Solo

Cloud 100%: Wind NW, F4; gusting F6: Brief sunny spells: Cool. The Plan; continue survey of possible burial mound. Decided to record profiles of the mound, from the western station; encompassing the breach of the subterranean passage at the northern end, and the central section where the roof is breached; picking up the disturbed roof lintels. Set up the new toy, a Leica L2P5G, green laser level, as the horizontal datum below which the ground surface could be replicated: this device was set up in minutes as

opposed the normal hour setting up a level string. In the occasional sunlight Laser detection, at distance was achieved with a receiver accurate $\pm 1\text{mm}$; another cracking bit of expensive kit. Green laser light is reportedly four times more visible in sunlight; using a receiver, the beam is detectable up to 80 metres. The speed of initial set up meant both profiles completed within two hours; wriggled into the north breach to install the datum for the underground survey; will need to cut away hazel growth obstructing the passage; need to clear the briars around the possible entrance.



12th September Poulmagollum

Solo

Cloud 95%: Wind F4: Visibility >20Nm. Recent reduced activity causing increased issues with lower back: sciatica? Descended entrance using ladder and fifteen metre rope; this length is just perfect; the end dangles above the mud. Scampered into Gunman's Cave a much underrated streamway of great beauty; slid down the climb into main streamway, on to Main Junction. Water clarity before the waterfall was crystal clear, below it of dark tea. At Main Junction headed to Branch Passage cascade; its colour of similar hue. About turned, headed out; discomfort receding.

13th September Ancient trackway, Glasha Beg

Solo

Cloud 90%: Wind F4: Visibility 30>Nm: The Plan: visit a possible ancient trackway. Supposedly this is the last fair day for a week or so; decided to take advantage of this. Laden with basic survey kit headed to the location; after much searching could not relocate the two lines of "kerb" stone seen the 2nd August; faulty memory, bugger: must try harder. Checked the digital view on Archaeology.ie; curious lines of stones appear to reflect the shape of said trackway, in the area previously seen.

17th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane

Clear skies: Warm: Humid: Small stream: \leq Visibility 20Nm: The Plan: Dig. CM digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. Great to be digging; winching began 19:00 by 20:00 twenty kibbles had been raised; quite the pace. CM focused on the southern end, clearing around several large boulders to enable their removal, and potentially obtain a better vertical view of the southeast rift. Prior to finishing CM dropped pebbles down the rift, these bounced and rattled for up to three seconds. The left side of this rift curves under to the north, similar to other water worn development along this side. In all thirty two lifts were raised, of which thirty were kibbles of rock and wet mud, and two heavy nets \approx 80kgs each. The generator is $\frac{1}{2}$ full: no fuel on site. The shaft floodlight requires replacement. Six heavy duty pallets are stacked at the end of the track. A cracking session. Kilshanny House should open next Monday, Hooray!!!!

Hours 6 (2600), Southend (1550), Kibbles 30 (5106), Nets 2 (843), Total 5949.

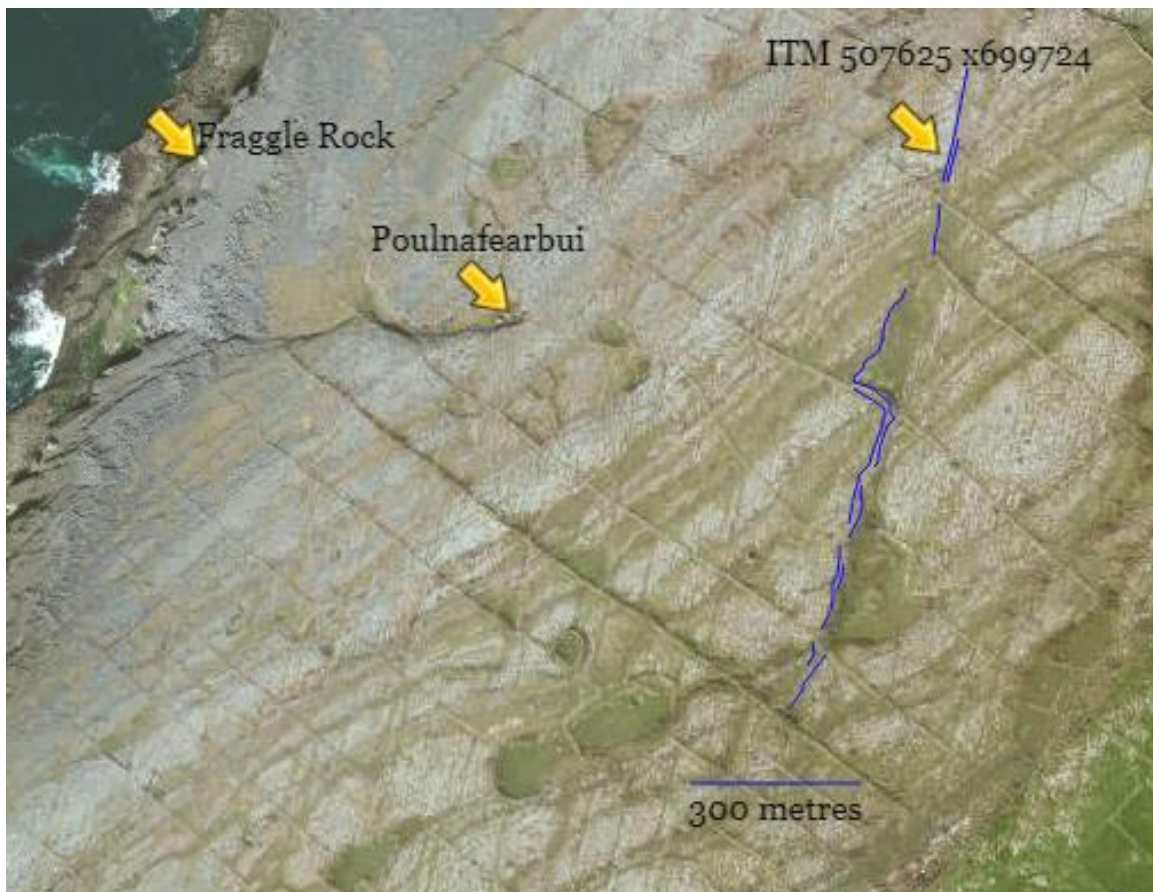


Image Archaeology.ie

Possible, ancient, north-south trackway: 13th Sept.

17 Sept 20 Considines from the PCN log;

CM, CC and PC Warm sunny evening, light wind. Ground dry with little rain in the preceding week:

The Plan; Dig CM digging: CC winching; PC unloading and barrowing. CM descended and began sending up the pre-filled kibbles. The focus for the dig centred on levelling the floor at the southern side and extricating a large boulder from the SE rift, it having being netted on the previous occasion. The footprint of the digging face is now a rough figure of 8. The northern

circle has a diameter of 2m, the southern circle a diameter of 3m. Once the Boulder (approx 90kg) was removed, efforts were concentrated on the SE rift. Upon removing loose gravel from this corner it was possible to hear stones and rocks cascading down further for 2-3m into a void below. A steady pace produced thirty kibbles, and two nets. Remaining at the dig face: nine full kibbles. Hours 3 (2595), Southend (1545), Kibbles 30 (5104), Nets 2 (843), Total 5947. Cathal Mullane.

19th September Considine's Cave, (South End)
Solo

17:00. Cloud 60%: Visibility $\leq 20\text{Nm}$. Small stream: Ground becoming firm: The Plan; attend busted flood lamp. Fashioned a "lampshade" from a 25 litre plastic container, to shield the replacement light fitting; wired same. Obtained ten litres of fuel; filled generator: five litres spare on site.

Hours 2 (2602), Southend (1552), Kibbles 0 (5106), Nets 0 (843), Total 5949.

21st September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Kate Lavender-Duncan

Cool: Cloud 100%: Visibility $\leq 30\text{Nm}$: Wind WSW, F4, decreasing: Small stream: Ground drying. The Plan: Dig. The Team were joined by Kate Lavender-Duncan; a potential regular. KLD descended; at the bottom PC explained the importance of observing the array of safe hauling/working practices and phone system. PC ascended. Winching began 18:55. CC winching: KLD digging: PC unloading and barrowing. KLD began extending the hollow in the southern end northward creating a level floor area. No obvious draught tonight from the southeast rift. KLD is a swift learner, enthusiastic and safe; producing a trouble free twenty five kibbles of assorted rock, clays and gravels. K.L.D., (*Kate Likes Digging?*) asked to attend regularly, Monday is her free evening; delighted at this prospect. The new light fitting works well: illumination a 100w, LED bulb. The extant junction box presents an issue when pulling the light up through the timberwork; ideally a longer, replacement cable required. Generator 7/8^{ths} full; five litres spare on site.

Hours 6 (2608), Southend (1558), Kibbles 25 (5131), Nets 0 (843), Total 5974.

24th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane

Cold: Cloud 10%: Wind NW F4/F6: Visibility $\geq 30\text{Nm}$: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. PC trundled two pallets across the field as replacements for potential dodgy ones on the working platform. CM digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. CM gradually excavated the face northward, dealing with the curious assemblage of boulders within the narrow area, before the danger area. Once again with three on site not one was idle, the steady, constant pace producing six very heavy nets, and nineteen kibbles of assorted clays and cobbles. The spoil is being deposited onto/into the boundary of Jonathon's field; cobbles etc. are being placed along the northern boundary wall, up to the hedge, this edging includes clays to help "bond" the mass together whilst it will also have a batter to improve stability of its face. As if in sympathy one piece of a pallet broke; this needs attention, ASAP.

Hours 6 (2614), Southend (1564), Kibbles 19 (5150), Nets 6 (849), Total 5999.

24th September Considine's Cave, (South End) From PCN Log

CC, CM, PC

Cold: Cloud 10%: Wind NW F4/F6: Visibility $\geq 30\text{Nm}$: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. PC trundled two pallets across the field as replacements for potential dodgy ones on the working platform. CM digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. CM gradually excavated the face

*northward, dealing with the curious assemblage of boulders within the narrow area, before the danger area. A number of large boulders are now evident at the dig face, including one well over 100kgs. Another smaller boulder blocks a promising lead into the south eastern rift. Once again with three on site not one was idle, the steady, constant pace producing six very heavy nets, and nineteen kibbles of assorted clays and cobbles. The spoil is being deposited onto/into the boundary of Jonathon's field; cobbles etc. are being placed along the northern boundary wall, up to the hedge, this edging includes clays to help "bond" the mass together whilst it will also have a batter to improve stability of its face. As if in sympathy one piece of a pallet broke tonight; this needs attention, ASAP.
Hours 6 (2614), Southend (1564), Kibbles 19 (5150), Nets 6 (849), Total 5999.*

26th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloudless: Cold: Wind NW, F2: Visibility >30Nm; Small stream: Ground firming: The Plan: replace the broken pallet. PC trundled a fourth pallet across to the site; this leaves three at the bottom of the trackway, with a spare on site. Reviewing the removal decided to replace two of the adjacent pallets; doing so threw up several issues as the 20m fixed ladder has its topmost fixings secured within the central pallet frame, as does the lifeline system. Removal of the three pallets produced a dark, gaping maw; CC took photos. An inspection of the platform joists, constituting the frame on which the pallet rests, revealed no rot present in any of these well preserved timbers; sourced from "Popeye" when he demolished his fencing. Though unplanned, therefore not having the requisite tools, the expanded project was completed successfully. The platform is finished and lifelining system fully operational; ready for the next session. Some debris fell into the shaft; highly probable the "Plank" will need cleaning - clearing of any potential missiles.

Hours 6 (2620), Southend (1570), Kibbles 0 (5150), Nets 0 (849), Total 5999

27th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

During yesterday's session discussed availability of decent pallets. CC rang later to say Peter, at the Roadside, had several. Found five; loaded up, and delivered them to the stack on the track, near the dig. Sum total available now nine; each of good quality. Need change oil in the generator; fuel tank $\frac{3}{4}$ full; spare fuel on site.

Hours 1 (2621), Southend (1571), Kibbles 0 (5150), Nets 0 (849), Total 5999

28th September Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Warm: Cloud 80%: Wind W, F2: Visibility <20Nm: Small stream: Ground soft of firm: The Plan: replace two more pallets. Yet another pallet was trundled over, this, and the spare, were inserted into the barrowing route; a further three, adjacent the boulder spoil wall, need be replaced soon. Regular maintenance completed the session, ready for Thursday. Need to change oil in the generator; fuel tank $\frac{3}{4}$ full; spare fuel on site.

Hours 2 (2623), Southend (1573), Kibbles 0 (5150), Nets 0 (849), Total 5999

29th September (1973)

Lost Sulo to Eldon; sorely missed.

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

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane

Cool: Cloud 70%: Wind NW, F4: Visibility <25Nm: Medium stream: Ground wet: The Plan: Dig. CM digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. PC and CM trundled two more pallets across. CM continued to work northward, toward the hauling zone, levelling the floor surface. This produced thirty five lifts of which nineteen were kibbles and six heavy nets, a net averaging 100/120kgs. Issues arise in the spoil area; the meandering, upslope approach beginning to tell, will likely breach through the bank, on the west boundary, to deposit spoil beneath the copse canopy. Generator a little over 1/2 full: five litres on site.

Hours 7 (2630), Southend (1580), Kibbles 19 (5169), Nets 6 (855), Total 6024

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

CC, CM and PC

Cool: Cloud 70%: Wind NW, F4: Visibility <25Nm: Medium stream: Ground wet: The Plan: Dig. CM digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. CM continued to work northward, toward the hauling zone, levelling the floor surface. This produced thirty five lifts of which nineteen were kibbles and six heavy nets, a net averaging 100/120kgs. The South east rift, while still partially blocked by a small boulder, continues to be of interest: around 6m of open passageway is visible descending at around 20degrees from vertical. A very large boulder ~120kgs sits just above the slope into the rift and will need to be dealt with soon. Issues arise in the spoil area; the meandering, upslope approach becoming telling; will likely breach through the bank, on the west boundary, to deposit spoil beneath the copse canopy, creating a less strenuous route. Generator a little over 1/2 full: five litres on site.

Hours 7 (2630), Southend (1580), Kibbles 19 (5169), Nets 6 (855), Total 6024

1st October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Kate Lavender-Duncan

Cool: Cloud 40%: Wind SW, F4: Visibility >20Nm: Medium stream: Ground sodden: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: KLD digging: PC unloading and barrowing. Another pallet trundled across; this leaves four on the track. KLD continued CM's progress into the hauling zone. Conducted by ceasing all hauling and closing off the shaft as the area was dug, and multiple kibbles filled. Only then were these lifted when the digger was clear of the danger zone; this safe procedure was repeated several times. Twenty two lifts were raised; two of which were heavy nets. Conservatively some 1.5 tonnes; with last night's effort their combined weight some 3.5 tonnes. Generator 1/2 full: five litres on site.

Hours 6 (2636), Southend (1586), Kibbles 20 (5189), Nets 2 (857), Total 6046

3rd October Lisnanroum

Nick Geh

10:00. Superb sunny day: Wind NW, F2: Visibility, infinite: The Plan: continue survey project. NG was splendid as support and data recorder. Whilst PC set up the kit to survey the narrow, short section of passage, NG cut away the briars exposing the entrance area, which assumes an almost precise southwesterly bearing. Unfortunately the walls along this section of unroofed passage have experienced disturbance, and some collapse. The absence of roof lintels here, like part of the other, adjacent souterrain, strongly suggests them robbed for building materials. Minor issues were experienced where the sunlight affected visibility of the red laser; physical contortions sorted this. The landowner, Mary Davoren, paid a surprise visit; the first time MD and PC had ever met: a pleasant talk ensued, MD demonstrating a genuine interest in heritage and the landscape. PC mentioned he'd forgotten the tea bags; MD offered to drop some up by lunchtime: nice. After tea, and medals, the pair began to reconcile the locations of the recognizable features within both enclosures; the volume of resultant data quite significant. Parting,

NG described a souterrain, (CLO06-048001), in the townland of Pullagh, on land owned by acquaintances of his; plans afoot to visit, as soon as permission is obtained.

4th October Poulmagrai

Solo

Storm Alex: Rain: Wind F8, gusting 10: Medium stream. The Plan: birthday treat, and exercise the limbs. Changing was challenging, the open area at the road junction windswept: pursued an errant helmet for twenty metres until caught against the wall; no damage to lamp. No knee pads meant the crawls were a little painful, and a bit damp. Stared along the Traverse; decided to visit sump I. At surface, showers were torrential; returned home along the green road, to enjoy the march of approaching storm clouds.

5th October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Nick Geh

Cloud cover 100%, at ≈ 1000 ft: Visibility < 10 Nm: Wind NW, F4: Small stream: Ground wet: The Plan: maintenance. Another pallet trundled across; this leaves three at the track. CC lubricated the wheels on the receiver, (rolling shaft cover), and topped the oil in the generator. Meanwhile PC replaced the final three pallets on the barrow run, which fell apart when lifted. NG cut back briars and foliage: a very useful session. Generator $\frac{1}{2}$ full: five litres on site. National Covid sanctions to be updated, later today

Hours 6 (2642), Southend (1592), Kibbles 0 (5187), Nets 0 (857), Total 6046

6th October Nationwide re-introduction of Covid-19 restrictions; Level 3

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

Cheg Chester, Kate Lavender-Duncan

Cool: Cloud 30%: Wind W, F3: Visibility > 30 Nm: Small stream: Ground wet: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: KLD digging: PC unloading and barrowing. Trundled another pallet across to the dig; two remain at the track, and two spare on site. KLD continued removing the floor directly beneath the hauling way; to increase digger safety the shaft remained closed off, whilst KLD filled all the kibbles, which were then lifted whilst KLD retired to a safe place; this procedure was repeated thrice. Of the twenty five lifts, three were heavy nets, and twenty two kibbles of rock, gravels and clays. The floor surface is approaching level; some 1.5 metres below the fixed ladder, a depth reading should be made. The signal box fixing needs lowering. A rope was installed to raise the lamp within lifting it by its cable. Generator just below $\frac{1}{2}$ full: five litres on site.

Hours 6 (2648), Southend (1598), Kibbles 22 (5211), Nets 3 (860), Total 6071

10th October Considine's Cave, (South End), (10, 10, 2020)

Cheg Chester

Chill: Cloud 80%: Showers: Wind NW, F4/6: Visibility < 20 Nm: Medium stream: Ground sodden. The Plan: replace two pallets beneath the east winch shed wall; over the 25m pitch. Trundled another pallet across; one left on the track. Fitted two car jacks beneath a 4x2 horizontal timber, threaded through the vertical pallets forming the wall: method designed to lift the whole wall an inch to replace dodgy pallets with new ones: estimated some three years old. Task not as straightforward as first imagined, operating over the exposed, gaping Maw. In the circumstances decided to replace a third: the one in front the winch. Task completed, secured planks forming the small barrow ramp; all pallets along the barrow route have been replaced. Cleaned and cleared area of accumulated

detritus. Delighted with the progress, the Team checked the ladderway. Upon descent, a slat in the lower pallet, directly above the 20+ metre shaft, snapped, for a brief moment the world stood still, as PC peered through the hole: Discussing its ease of replacement, a plan swiftly formed. More pallets needed. Generator just below ½ full: five litres on site: a productive session.

Hours 6 (2654), Southend (1604), Kibbles 0 (5209), Nets 0 (860), Total 6071

14th October Souterrain, CL006-048001

Nick Geh

Cold: Wind N, F2: Visibility >40Nm.

Discussing archaeological sites, in the northeast of the Burren, NG described one souterrain's remote, lofty location. After a while, PC realized this was one of the one hundred and fifty in Clare listed for potential inclusion in the project. Fortunately NG knows the landowner, who is amenable toward such research. Today was to assess the souterrain, and any adjacent features. The souterrain is a kilometre north of the small mountain road, between Eagle Rock, Sliev carran, and the village of Carron. Met NG at this gate; parked up the motors. Walked the rough, drivable track for ½ km; here the track ends; bumped into Luke Davoren of Kilcorney.



Archaeology.ie

Cluster of features associated with CL006-048001, several unrecorded

Walked west for two hundred metres, from the water cisterns, encountering a faint hollow in the steep face, (60°), close to the wall; ascending this, a gulley develops. As the steep slope begins to ease, a ruinous wall feature is encountered, beyond which is a small hut circle; a little further are several, anonymous stone features. The gulley deepens, continuing north; the souterrain is located 300m to the northwest from this hut. Ascending the west wall of the gulley, hidden beyond the ridge, is an obvious area of settlement. A ruinous cashel sits on the brow of the steep hillside; behind it are at least two huts. Further uphill are three lines of stone walls, they appear constructed to create, and retain prepared, flattened areas, (cultivation of crops?). At the summit of gulley is a final terrace, in which is the small, souterrain entrance. Three metres away, a natural cavity in the cliff face mark the end of the souterrain passage; this cavity was utilized as the souterrains terminal chamber. The souterrain is at +270m elevation. The passage is 3.1m long, from entrance to cliff face. The natural cavity is two metres long; partly filled with a significant amount of stone debris. The souterrain interior illustrates the problem obtaining roofing lintels of the correct length: thus far, this system of support unseen; the two lintels adjacent the cliff face cavity rest directly upon four slim vertical flags, (columns), accommodating these too “short” lintels. A swift assessment immediately suggests the area is not one in which to linger long; the slim columns appearing unstable and fragile: though they have been there a thousand years. Coursed stone walls, the length of the passage have been so placed to reduce the width of the trench to facilitate use of the available lintels of a length barely of sufficient to span the open excavation. Location of the entrance appears to have been a deliberate choice; the small opening set within the possible cultivated area, its cover a boulder, rolled into position? As the three metres of passage approaches the cavity a large, natural step in the limestone bed raises up to the natural cavity floor surface level; the entire souterrain was relatively small; perhaps enough to secret a dozen non-combatants. The opening of the natural cavity in the cliff face was very likely to have been built up with stone work and further camouflaged with vegetation applied to match the adjacent, limestone cliff. The plan to survey the site, and its features need recognize the forthcoming winterage; when cattle ascend the Burren Mountains to feed throughout the winter and calve; likely will arrange to start next spring.

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

Cheg Chester, Kate Lavender-Duncan

Cool: Cloud 60%: Visibility>30Nm: Ground soft: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching, KLD digging, PC Unloading and barrowing. KLD descended, at first, drilling holes to reposition, lower the signal box so it can be reached; a depth measurement was also taken, -21.5m. Work continued removing the spoil from within the Danger Zone; again the shaft was closed off whilst excavation took place. The steady pace produced twenty lifts of which two were very heavy nets and eighteen kibbles of rock and gravels. The hollow produced during the session is now an estimated -21.8 m; this is virtually the same depth as the “Pinch” in the northern shaft. The hollow in the boulder pile, adjacent the north boundary wall is now filled; the shape of the pile more uniform. Gravel used to begin creating a slope up to the spoil pile adjacent the stile. Hose end opened to allow cistern to drain for cleaning out of debris. Generator ¼ full: five litres on site.

Hours 6 (2660), Southend (1610), Kibbles 18 (5229), Nets 2 (862), Total 6091

18th October Cullaun 1
Solo

17:30. Cold: Wind NW, F4. With much of the forestry cut down, finding the entrance is very easy. Used a handline on the five metre entrance pitch: scampered off downstream, reached the pot, about turned; uneventful exit.

19th October

An Taoiseach announces a six week lockdown from midnight 21st Oct. until 1st December.

21st October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Kate Lavender-Duncan

Cold: Wind N, F2/3: Cloud 50%: Visibility <20Nm: Ground sodden: Medium stream.

The Plan: Dig. CC winching: KLD digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PC trundled the remaining pallet across the field. KLD continued lowering the base of the hauling shaft, swiftly achieving below -22m depth, among well washed boulders and loose gravels; several large boulders were exposed which require removal by net. "The Pinch", in the north shaft is at -22m: the shape of the shaft, this side of the separating rib is much wider in section, Again, the procedure of securing the shaft closed whilst digging took place was conducted, to avoid any mishap. KLD then turned attention to the south side of the "narrows" removing a heavier clay/gravel matrix. Of the twenty six lifts, was one a very heavy net; kibbles consisted off fourteen cobbles and eleven gravels.

The boulder pile along the northern boundary averages some three and a half metres deep, two and a half high and nine metres long, and continues to grow, westward. Some nine more tonnes may be accommodated within its present retaining wall. The gravel, and clay spoil area grows, ever smaller, tipping now requires negotiating a narrow uphill route, so as to tip into the area within/beneath Jonathan's copse. The spoil area, to the north of the path, adjacent the stile increases in height, unfortunately it's small; washed gravels are being utilized to create a ramp up which to run the barrow to tip along the boundary with Jonathan's field. Whilst the lockdown continues it would pay to prepare a spoil area behind the winch shed; this will need two of the original pallets to be replaced to take the increased, heavy traffic; both are beneath, and support the west wall of the winch shed. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Lifeline descender removed for servicing. At midnight, tonight, a national, Level Five curfew is being introduced, predominantly to reduce Covid-19 hospital admissions, fearing available hospital beds will not cope with the normal seasonal intake of winter flu admissions.

Hours 6 (2666), Southend (1616), Kibbles 25 (5254), Nets 1 (863), Total 6117

23rd October

Lost Matthew Parkes

25th October Possible souterrain: Teergonean Td. Doolin, ITM 506952 x 698550

Solo

15:30. Torrential showers of rain and hail. Wind W, F6/7. Previously this site appeared to be a potential souterrain, abandoned during its construction. With the foliage much reduced, a clearer view noted that a geological fault along 020/200°True visibly extends for 600 metres. A narrow limestone vertical band formed along the fault has permitted quarrying of this narrow weak band to a depth of one metre, and then removal of the adjacent Clints. Reduction of vegetative cover allowed the edges of the wide gryke closer scrutiny. The conclusion is this artificially widened gryke is not an intended souterrain, rather the source of building materials for the five adjacent stone ringforts, (Cashels),

and six enclosures. It does however demonstrate the same process required to create such a trench in a limestone landscape, and then covered with lintels.

29th October Road Sign Hole

Historical

Pauline Cronin told of a “Sink Hole” appearing earlier that day, near a previous collapse, Fitz’s Cross Pot, 14th May 2008. At that time, 2008, several small collapses occurred across the large graveled car park, terminating at the largest hole, six metres deep. In poor, unstable ground, PC then recommended the owners install concrete pipes to reduce the potential of future collapse and associated legal claims by any losing vehicles down such an ‘ole. This would support the ground admirably, and also enable long term monitoring ground conditions; surreptitiously enabling digging into Doolin River Cave.



ITM 507666 x 696961

Elevation 24 m

Depth 4m

Length 0m

08:30. 29th October; further to watching a road sign sink slowly into the ground, a concerned driver swiftly called the Gardai, who swiftly advised him call the Council, who swiftly advised him to call the Coast Guard, who swiftly advised him to stay away from it, and by the way, did he have a ladder PC could use? On arrival council employees were

crowded about the hole; using John Doherty's ladder PC descended as the end of the ladder sank into the fine broken shale. Looking up from the bottom PC enquired of the plan to stabilize this collapse? Those present told of the imminent arrival of a 20 tonne lorry laden with big Limestone rocks. A swift assessment recorded the hole as two metres diameter tapering slightly to the surface; four metres deep, the walls consist of a shale and clay matrix: poking about the open hole in its base, the foreman threw down a spanner and asked, as the sign pole, and its concrete foundation was now irretrievable, as PC was down there could he remove the 80/50km signs, please. The ladder required attaching to the digger bucket to lift it out the shale it had sunk into. Exited to the rumble of the lorry; ten minutes later the hole was filled with rocks and levelled off. Last night some two inches of rain fell all the rivers very swollen; another three predicted tonight.

5th November

Lost Jim Rieuwerts

5th November Cullaun II
Solo

16:00. Cloud 80%: Chill: Wind NW, F2: Small stream. Needed to exercise the back; so chose the round trip. Took the high level passage; down the climb, back up the main passage. From just inside the entrance, to the cascades, the invert of the streamway was covered with a fine, beige/light grey deposit; on the return journey submerged footprints were still visible, unaffected by the current. The place really has cracking formations, a useful trip: the back much improved.

6th November Souterrain CL004-016040
Solo

Cloud 40%, increasing: Wind SE, F3: Cold. The Plan: to survey the ringfort surrounding this souterrain. Parked on the boreen east of Pollantobar, (*Tober an athar chalbhaigh*), took a slow, 1/2 hour walk across awful ground; many, many grykes hidden by grass. Arriving at the ringfort; wintering cattle were noted a kilometre to the northwest. Set up survey kit, in excellent sunlight began taking photos of souterrain entrance; surprised by stealth cattle, and their young, sneaking into the ringfort. Survey thwarted packed kit. By good fortune took the green road above Fanore; encountered another cattle herd, and its owner; Michael Queally. Enquiring, he knew the owner of the land this souterrain is on, Michael Fitz, and supplied his phone number; a very approachable man, hooray. MQ's pal, Pat McNamara, related potential sites that all need checking; an hour of great chat, invited to visit MQ's place to view his ringfort, MQ also told PC of the new landowner of Pollapooka; who very likely, also owns Poulballyelly; he's bought a lot of land.

11th November Considine's Cave, (South End)
Solo

Cloud 100%: Wind W, F3: Rain: Ground awash. The Plan: see if shaft flooded. Steady rainfall, occasional heavy downpours throughout the night and all today. En-route, back to Doolin the landscape from Kilinaboy was saturated, roads flooded in places; decided to check if the dig was flooded. Field awash; the stream near the stile was audible from twenty metres away. Opened upper and lower shaft covers, dropped stone into darkness, no splash. Illuminating the shaft, witnessed water streaming down the walls; a large cascade tumbling down the southern end. Thunderous noises from streams racing through the four inch pipework, which vibrated under the flow rate; puddles at the base of the shaft. Hours 0 (2664), Southend (1614), Kibbles 0 (5252), Nets 0 (863), Total 6115

11th November

Lost Bob Dakin; Pegasus

12th November Possible ancient trackway; Ballyvoe – Glasha Beag – Glasha More Solo

Cloud 100%: Wind W, F6/8: Light rain: The plan: identify the trackway route. On the ground the kilometre length of this potential trackway is problematic to trace; crossing between three townlands. In the countryside these civil authority boundaries may be recognized by their substantial walls. It's likely these Townland walls were constructed with stone taken from any adjacent feature, such as the perimeter walls of the trackway. For the most of its length it follows the NNE-SSW alignment of the limestone jointing, occasionally following the edge of minor limestone terraces to elevate the wall height on the eastern side. Why the need for such a trackway in this region is puzzling, until a significant limestone terrace is considered, some 200-400metres to the west. This sheer three metre vertical drop is hazardous to farm stock; perhaps it's not too much a stretch that this possible trackway was constructed to convey farm stock through this section of the coast to the next area of richer pastures. The north of this possible trackway opens into a lower, sheltered, landscape. Much more work required.



Archaeology.ie

A sequence of parallel walls, seeming confirm Pat Connolan's comment of an ancient trackway

21st November Cullaun II

Solo

10:40. Cloud 100%: Wind W, F4: Ground sodden. Main entrance was taking a normal-ish stream, which was a surprising toe-cap depth before the descent to the cascades,

occasional inlets from the roof. Cascades were impressive; extending across six metres of width. To fulfill fitness demands, took the normally dry, high level route along which several active inlets created an impressive stream of toe cap depth. Puzzled by volume of stream noise, at this point in the upper passage, found an impressive inlet issuing from the left, (view downstream); ankle depth. Descended climb into a sizable main stream; began to plod out; strong current present. In the first rift found water knee deep, the second rift was of similar depth. A hand span, (9inches), of air space was at the “Bloody Guts”. Third rift, the water was waist deep. In the fourth rift, (narrowest), water chest deep; current formidable: traversed along the chert band. Imagination suggested the cascades had increased in volume. At surface, cloud 80%: its base at 1500ft. Rain seen approaching from the west-southwest; road was very wet from rain shower during trip, as was the Hilux. A cracking trip; note to self; body is no longer 18, even if the mind is.

22nd November Ringfort / Cashel CL008-020---

Solo

Cloud 60%: Wind w, F4/6. The plan was to inspect this ringfort for a souterrain; the weather had other plans. The ringfort is set within a significant field system. Managed to reach the edge of the concave cliff face, adjacent the site, as the rain arrived; took shelter from the torrent. Successive showers and high wind inhibited the search; need return.

27th November Caherbullog Townland

Contacted Michael Fitzpatrick, Senior, (MFS); enquiring as to who owned Caherbullog townland; explaining the aims of the souterrain project. MFS replied he was unable to grant permission as the land was in the process of being transferred to ownership of his son Michael, (MFY). PC left drawings of the souterrain and enclosure of Lisnanroum to illustrate the project's aims. MFY rang PC at 16:00: a lengthy discussion took place. MFY voiced his avid interest of archaeological features contained throughout the land; further explained the finding of Pollantobar, (*Tober an athar chalbhaigh*). The land they now own amounts to most northern end of Slieve Elba down into to the Caher Valley. Both agreed to meet Saturday; 17:00 MFY called to delay met to 11:00 Sunday.

29th November Souterrain CL004-016040, and area

Michael Fitzpatrick, (Younger), Ivor?

14:00. Wind W, F2: Ground wet: Mild: Dense fog above 100metres: Visibility thirty metres. The first actual meet with MFY after the phones calls and texts: very cordial. Taken on a circuitous route around numerous archaeological features; asked to identify same. Some were obvious, most admitted a guess. Among them a substantial wall, some 1.1 – 1.2m m thick; defensive in appearance and location. Semi-circular, of a long radius; in parts seeming almost straight; perhaps some one hundred and fifty metres long, by a hundred in depth: measurements guestimated owing to fog. Then visited the souterrain; MFY was unaware of the small entrance opening inside sub-square ringfort enclosure. Explained what is known of souterrains; talk turned to caves, and caving. Learnt it was the previous landowner who arranged the boulder to block the entrance of Poulaphuca owing to loss of cattle. Worth noting, many of the small sinks near the northern area of Poulmagollum, toward Tober an athar chalbhaigh have been filled with stone to prevent further loose of cattle; two beasts are lost annually, (total value ≈4000 euro). Back at the trucks, exchanged goodbyes; MFY granted permission to PC to wander whenever and wherever the fancy took him. Talk of caves and fencing them off, MFY related of a hole east of the track. Now dark he offered show PC another time; also offering to help carry the surveying kit and assist generally. He is a good soul, eager to learn. MFY then asked of Poulaphuca, its dimensions etc. PC waxed lyrical of its potential. MFY is without doubt

a very nice person, an amenable individual eager to know what exists in and beneath the landscape, just what the thousands of lumps and bumps are, or indeed indicate. Spoke of the dig at Considine's, work conducted and depth achieved, he was fascinated; interested. Will ask if he fancies a caving trip, and, perhaps come digging.

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

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny

Fog, base at 120m: Wind SW, Fo/1: Visibility 100m: Ground wet: Medium stream: The Plan: Dig. JW working in Doolin; took advantage of the situation, within lockdown constraints. CC winching: JW unloading and barrowing: PC digging. Descending PC was impressed at the depth achieved by KLD, from which a rib of rock has emerged from the east side. This rib creates a shaft some one metre diameter, separating the ladder route from the main shaft; access between the two is through the "Door", a gap 0.4m wide: the centre of the "Door" is all but the centre of the hauling. Started to clear spoil from around the "Door" into the main area; continued across the floor between hauling to the south rift opening. Sent up a 90kg boulder previously exposed by KLD adjacent the ladder way. The spoil in the southern rift now has a vertical face, about a metre high. Removed a large egg shaped boulder at the entrance of the developing eastern rift; exposing its north side, which appears to mimic other joint developments on this side of the shaft, by gently curving under toward the north; so appears to be widening. The walls adjacent and opposite the east rift were bone dry: no draught felt at the time. The mild weather and damp seem to affect the winch mechanism, it struggling with some of the heavier kibbles, which were well packed, and filled. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Lifelining conducted using an Italian Hitch, as PC forgot to bring along the appropriate descender. Errata, Stats one item short, not added correctly on the 21st Oct. The Covid-19, Level 5, restrictions alter 1st December; travel permitted throughout the county.

Hours 7 (2673), Southend (1623), Kibbles 18 (5272), Nets 5 (868), Total 6140

3rd December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Kate Lavender-Duncan, Cheg Chester

18:00. Frost forming: Visibility >35Nm: Cloud 10%: Wind NW, F2: Ground sodden: Medium stream: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: KLD digging: PC unloading/barrowing. Removed the cover from the winch to identify the source of the curious intermittent knocking noise noted on the 30th Nov. KLD descended and began sending up previously filled kibbles, whilst continuing to clear spoil from the south rift and levelling the base of the shaft. An enthusiastic net of boulders caused the generator to cough as it supplied power to the winch, when the load was only four metres from the top. Rather than send it back down for partial emptying it was helped to surface by PC assisting the hauling line. Of the twenty five lifts, one was the net ≈130kgs; the kibbles, a mixture of boulders, cobbles and awful clays. Generator 1/4 full: no fuel on site. Water supply to cisterns requires attention. Total weight removed from the south end is a very conservative **246.5 tonnes**.

NB. The rib of rock emerging from the east wall raises concerns regarding the future use of the present hauling route. Perhaps one solution is to erect an "A" frame extension to the tripod of scaffold tube, positioned above the southern end of the rift; the hauling way then aligned between the RSJ at -12m and the southern wall. If this were deployed issues of replacing the suspect pallet, which requires the dismantling of the entire shaft collar would not be quite such a time consuming undertaking. The present hauling way/shaft collar could have the intended entrance frame installed, which for the remaining life of

the dig could act as the route to the fixed ladder. Tomorrow the gastro-pubs and restaurants open; awaiting the third wave of the Lurgi to arrive.

Hours 7 (2680), Southend (1630), Kibbles 24 (5296), Nets 1 (869), Total lifts 6165

7th December

Lost Doug Scott; Nott's Climbers

8th December CLOO4-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog

Solo

12:30. Bright: Cold: Wind NW, F4: Severe wind-chill: A cracking day for a walk. Had loosely arranged to meet up with MFY: if he managed to finish work. No show, so headed off to the cashel. Many more cattle about than previous, most tucked in below and along the terrace, sheltering from the bitter north wind. Best route to follow is up against the field walls, avoiding the hundreds of foliage obscured grykes: less likely to snap a leg. Walked the perimeter of the cashel, from the exposed foundations, its original width appears to have been 1.2m. The remaining section of cashel wall, on the west side, is quite rough in construction; appearing almost careless of its final appearance.



Photo Pat Cronin

View south to garth entrance. The lintel lowers the height of the approach passage by some 0.4m. The rods are in 0.1m segments. The raised entrance passage floor appears a later alteration.

There are at least two Wedge Tombs, (circa 2200BCE -500AD), nearby. These, along with the hundreds of ruinous field walls, ringforts, enclosures and fulacht fia, (cooking places), the area appears to have sustained settlement and farming over 4000 years. The Plan: to record the roof lintel widths, and their span. Nineteen lintels were recorded the largest being, 0.9m, by 1.7m long, by 0.2m thick, estimated as 500kgs. They are all well situated upon corbelled walls. Uniform in shape, their abutted, squared edges leave almost no gaps between requiring insertion of cobbles to fill such gaps. Overall the lintel installation is well done, as is the supporting dry stone walls; photos taken: back by dark.

7th December

Lost Dave Turner

9th December Considine's Cave, (South End) From the PCN Logs

Another very wet day on the west coast. During the last digging session the winch was producing a range of clicking noises especially when tension was applied to the hauling rope as it comes off the capstan drum. On inspection it was found the V belt that connects directly with the Radicon Drive was slack and this caused the slight backlash in the drive to set up an oscillation. This belt was adjusted causing the belt from the motor to slacken. This was adjusted by repositioning the motor which then means the foot control needs adjusting. All this because of 3mm of slack! Generator topped up with 5 litres. Oil needs checking!

Hours 2 (2673), Southend (1621), Kibbles 18 (5270), Nets 5 (868), Total 6138 Cheg Chester

10th December

Lost Simon Hughes

10th December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Kate Lavender-Duncan, Cheg Chester

Cloud base 150m: Wind W, F2/3: Visibility <20Nm: Ground water logged: Large stream: The Plan: Dig. KLD digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. KLD continued to lower the south end toward and into the southern rift; this floor level below that in the ladderway. Many boulders are large requiring the net, these are piled ready for removal; some will definitely need the 2:1 to lift out. Twenty five kibbles were raised; clay, gravels and boulders. Clays tipped, as agreed into Jonathon's copse, gravels too. The smaller boulders and rocks used to round off the profile of main boulder pile. Water supply from the field tank needs cleaning, the flow reduced to both cisterns: pallets under the west side of winch shed need replacement: canopy weather proofing cover needs replacement. Generator 1/2 full: CC topped up fuel yesterday whilst servicing the winch, (2 hrs): PC brought a can of fuel tonight; also intend replacing the present lifeline with forty metres of 9mm Beal dynamic; ordered off Tony Seddon 11th Dec. So far this year some seventeen tonnes of kibbles were removed along with some four tonnes of nets; not bad considered the Covid-19 restrictions, reduced visits and available support.

Hours 7 (2685), Southend (1635), Kibbles 25 (5319), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6188

12th December CL004-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog

Solo

11:00. Cloud 80%: Cold: Wind W/NW, F4: Wind chill: The Plan; issues arose when creating a drawing of the lintels in this souterrain; the figures don't appear to fit. Most likely the fault of the man with the tape measure calling out the numbers: not the recorder. The front section of passage turns very slightly; in this confined section it is difficult to ensure a measurement is made at right angles from the tape. So, set up the

tape, and ran it the entire length of the passage, as before. Measured to each lintel joint then the upper width of the passage, the actual span. The amount of corbelling is quite significant, this requires accurate recording. Several lintels extend beyond the dry stone walling by up to 500mm, while others are supported on 200mm, on the dry stonework. The one metre wide lintel rests on 200mm to the west side, and 500mm to the east; it is presently estimated at 1.7m long, 1m wide and 0.175 thick; about a tonne in weight.

13th December Burrenbeo meet at Cappagh.

Sharon Parr, Margaret Duffy, Ilene, Martin, Ruth, Wendy + 1?

Cloud 90%; base 2000ft: Heavy Showers: Wind W/NW, F 3/4: Eight members of the Burrenbeo volunteers cleared encroaching Blackthorn and briars from within the bawn of a ruinous, 15th century castle and an adjacent settlement, which may be more than suspected house. This almost, enclosed basin is surrounded by Limestone Mountains offering some level of protection from the northerly and easterly weather. Enquired of permission to survey what may be a small lead mine trial in an adjacent valley; this is being processed. Access to this land is strictly controlled by the owner. Michael (Mike) McDonagh: 087 2533925.

15th December Souterrain CL004-016040

MFY related of being overwhelmed at work, hence his delay communicating.

15th December Lead Mine, Cappagh, (Burren Barony).

Michael MacDonagh returned a call left on his answerphone by PC earlier today, enthusiastically granting permission to wander his land as and when required, and to conduct a survey of the Lead Mine; very generously proffering the gate code; 9591. Told if encountering anyone working the land, explain permission given by Mike.

16th December Lost Marilyn (nee Pinzon), Cobbett; Pegasus, devastated

Marilyn fought without complaint for some seven years; her family originally arriving in Panamá on one of the three vessels captained by Columbus; that's some heritage.

23rd December Slieve Elva Mountain

Solo

Cloud 60%: Wind F6: Temp 4°C: Visibility >30Nm: Ground very wet. The Plan: to prospect the area between Poul an Phúca and Pollantobar. Pollantobar found by Milner, McDonald and Cronin, 17th April 1984. The area is wicked underfoot, obscured grykes abound; confirmed by regularly, inadvertently stepping into them; lucky, lucky, lucky. Cobbett's suggestion of using a staff is proving sensible. Tried to locate Poul an Phúca; memory failing dismally. Wandering the wrong area encountered a small collapse, ITM 514513 x 705188, elevation 270 metres; in level ground, upstream, and south of Poulballyelly. One metre wide, and one and a half long, the fill has slid vertically down a narrow rift, some 0.4m wide. This opening has appeared in the centre of an area regularly grazed by cattle; it warrants covering; need contact MSY. Checked the exposed limestone walls of the dry valley for Poul an Phúca, still without luck; memory states the

25m shaft was entered just off the side of the valley. Did relocate the large depression, (ITM 514575 x 705173), taken at the northeast side; a place that does want digging. Reviewing data found the map ref, in the new UBSS book, has a typing error putting Poul an Tobar 240m south of its actual position. When the sites are plotted it feels more likely the stream flows to the depression, to the WSW rather than Poul an Phúca.



Northwest Slieve Elba

Image unfortunately shows Pollantobar two hundred metres south of its actual location.

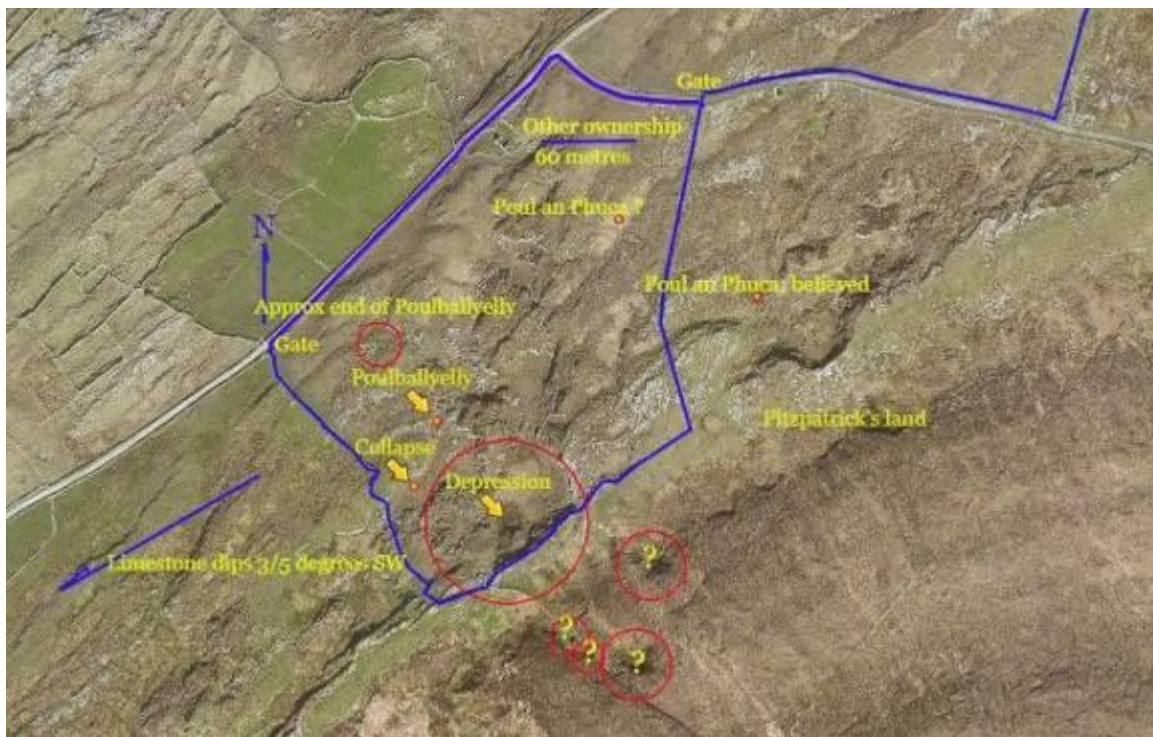
24th December Slieve Elva Mountain

Solo

Bright: Cloud 10%; Wind NW F4; Cold: Visibility infinite. Ground wet. The Plan: to locate Poul an Phúca, Pollantobar, and prospect inbetween. Parked at the gate one hundred metres east of the junction on the green road. At the gate remembered that to locate Poul an Phúca was to walk toward the trig point for around hundred metres. Within minutes arrived at the pot. Reports that a huge boulder was used to plug the entrance are incorrect. Several large boulders have been positioned directly in front of the 25m open pitch as a barrier between it and adjacent grazing; entry is unhindered. The digger has also filled in most of the shallow depressions which suggest the stream route from Poul an Tobar: running water is audible. The Poul an Tobar entrance is now lost beneath a levelled, boggy area. The result of filling this depression is that in flood the stream issues forth from the many openings among the thin limestone covering the stream below. Therefore, votive offerings washed along the streamway below, from the Blessed Well are deposited on the surface; returned offerings to their place of pilgrimage.

Reflecting on how Poulmagollum has developed, the presence of Poul an Phúca, the large depression, and the adjacent depressions elevated to the southeast; surely it's possible that this is the place to find the Master Cave for this side of the mountain? The Poul an Phúca map reference, in the UBSS new book places it some hundred metres to the northwest of its believed location, and some thirty five metres the other, wrong, side of the party wall; will return with GPSR to confirm.

Heading back met with Michael Queally, of Fan Oír, who once again invited PC to visit the ringfort behind his cottage; informed by MQ that Poulballyelly, and therefore the collapse, is on another's land. Also encountered Christy O'Brien, the gentleman who when asked in the 1980s announced he certainly didn't mind PC's digging Poulmagrinn; the diggers later discovered he didn't mind, because he didn't own the land. Found much later, one of the gentlemen watching the diggers from the side of the depression was actually the owner, Gus Curtin, (RIP): a real gentleman. Delighted to chance upon Cheg and Aileen, walking the area adjacent Pouldubh.



Northwest Slieve Elba

Continued research of unrecorded sites on the northwest of Slieve Elba

26th December Slieve Elva Mountain

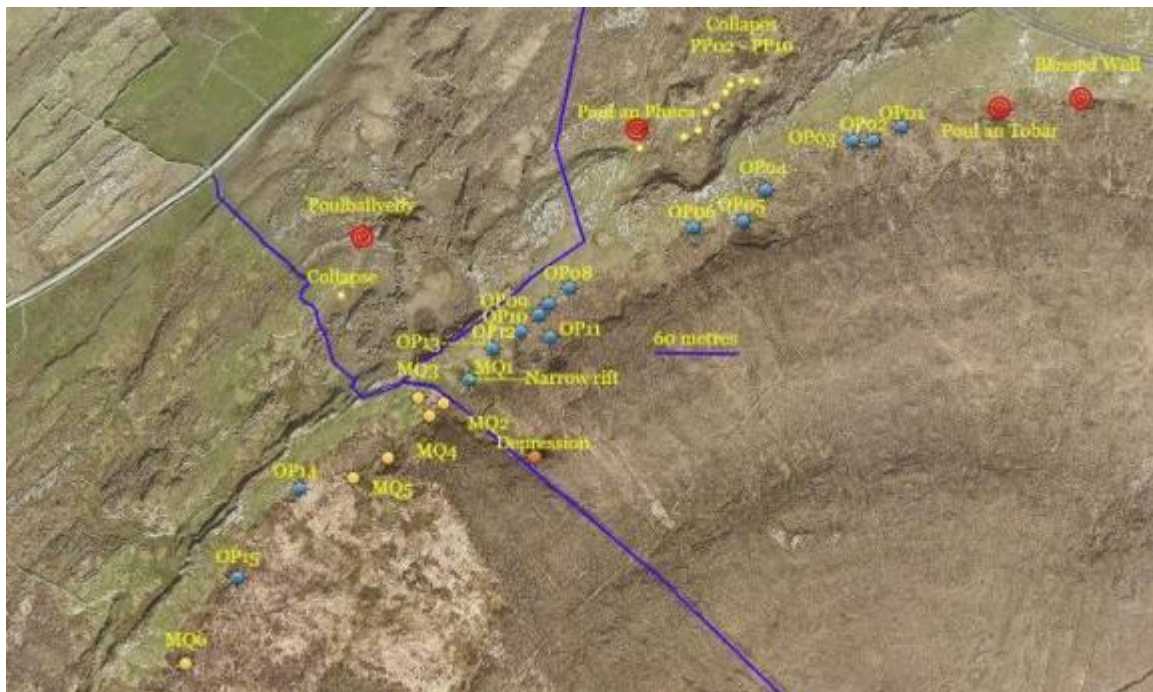
Solo

Storm Bella imminent: Wind SW, F8 gusting F9: Cloud 100%: Visibility >10Nm: Ground sodden. Driven rain; like needles. The Plan; reconcile the Poul an Phúca map ref given in the Caves of Midwest Ireland. From the gate aimed for the "Trig Point", actually a cairn, and counted a distance of 130m to the pot; its map reference is ITM514718 x 705304.

From the pot the valley was followed northeasterly, plotting a series of minor collapses; many filled with boulders: the landowner loses about two cattle a year. The blocked entrance to Poul an Tobar was plotted, as was the Blessed Well. From here the shale boundary was followed southwesterly, numerous minor sinks and sites were recorded. OPO3 is a sink covered by the landowner; down through a gap the walking stick, (curtain

pole), was inserted. Waving it around a passage at least 0.5m wide and over 1.5m deep was estimated. It may be possible to arrange access with the promise of a secure cover. Adjacent the boundary a narrow rift was found. Of particular significance is the group of sites, (MQ) on adjacent land, these have great promise; will request permission to access them from owner. A swift check in the Caves of Northwest Clare, does indicate most attention was given to the area below the limestone terraces that extend southwest from above Poulballyelly. This line of sinks mimics those on the northeast side of the mountain; almost everything east of the Blessed Well collectively contributes to the development of Poulmagollum.

26th December An Taoiseach announces six week lockdown; reviewed 12th January.



Northwest Slieve Elba

Image shows unrecorded sites, red indicates known caves.

December (undated) Lost Luke Davoren, Galway Bay, a bitter tragedy

28th December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 40%: Storm Bella passing: Visibility >25Nm: Wind NW, F6: Cold: Small stream: Ground wet. The Plan: Maintenance. PC replaced the existing lifeline with forty metres of new 9mm dynamic; 9mm because of ease operations through the Petzl "Rig". CC topped the generator oil. PC then descended to inspect beneath the pallets in the ladder approach; the 4x2 timber is fine: pallet really wants replacing. For the next while access

to the ladder is via the gap under the east side of the working platform. The 4x2 timber supports rest directly on the bedrock; it may be possible to insert 50mm heavy duty scaffold poles into the gap, for further support. At the bottom of the shaft KLD has been busy, the floor was punctuated with boulders, resembling Dragons Teeth; these were extracted and piled for the next session, which will focus on clearing the pile. The crevice into the northern rift was hosed to wash away potential missile debris. Doing so exposed the calcite joint on which the shaft is formed; at this point, east and west sides have joined, there is no gap to the northern shaft. Depth measured to -21.85m, this matches the "Pinch" in the northern shaft, which begins at -22m. Of interest is northern shaft descends a further three metres, then headed off east down slope, to a turn sharp right, into a 0.1m immature gap, where the stream disappeared. Into the southeast rift three small, round stones were cast, each rattled for some two metres, silence, then a small echo, then another bit of rattling, conservative depth estimated as 5 to 6 metres. This suggests the depth of the shaft could be, at least -29m. The sides of the hauling way were examined, these continue down vertically. The feature forming as protrusions from the east and west sides, creating a small "middle" shaft may present future issues hauling, as the centre line of the haul is within the gap. Up top CC re-checked the area behind the winch shed for spoil deposition; removing a minor branch for wheel barrow access. Much talk on sorting minor issues, such as pallet replacement beneath the winch shed. Generator 1/2 full: fuel on site.

Hours 4 (2689), Southend (1639), Kibbles 0 (5319), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6189

31st December An Taoiseach introduces six week Level 5 lock down from Midnight.

31st December Slieve Elva Mountain
Cheg Chester

Last trip of the Year: Temp -1°C: Visibility infinite: Cloud 60%: Ground Thawing: Roads very icy: Issues experienced ascending the icy mountain road. The Plan: explore recent finds; MQ1 – MQ6. A check of the recent UBSS book, (p95), indicates no sites in this area. Met at Faunarooska Cross; walked to the area along the green road. Delighted to meet John and Breda Casey, driving cattle from Ballynalacken to the Caher Valley; what the green road was originally used for. Enquired of JC ownership of land adjacent his own and his cousins, located southeast of Poulmagollum, where a souterrain is recorded.

MQ1. The grass and briar foliage was pulled back revealing a drop of a metre onto a gravel/clay floor into which the small stream sank. Here is a low chamber some two metres diameter. Most of the roof is a large slab of limestone with no visible means of support to three of its four sides. The way on is a narrow, immature joint: little potential.

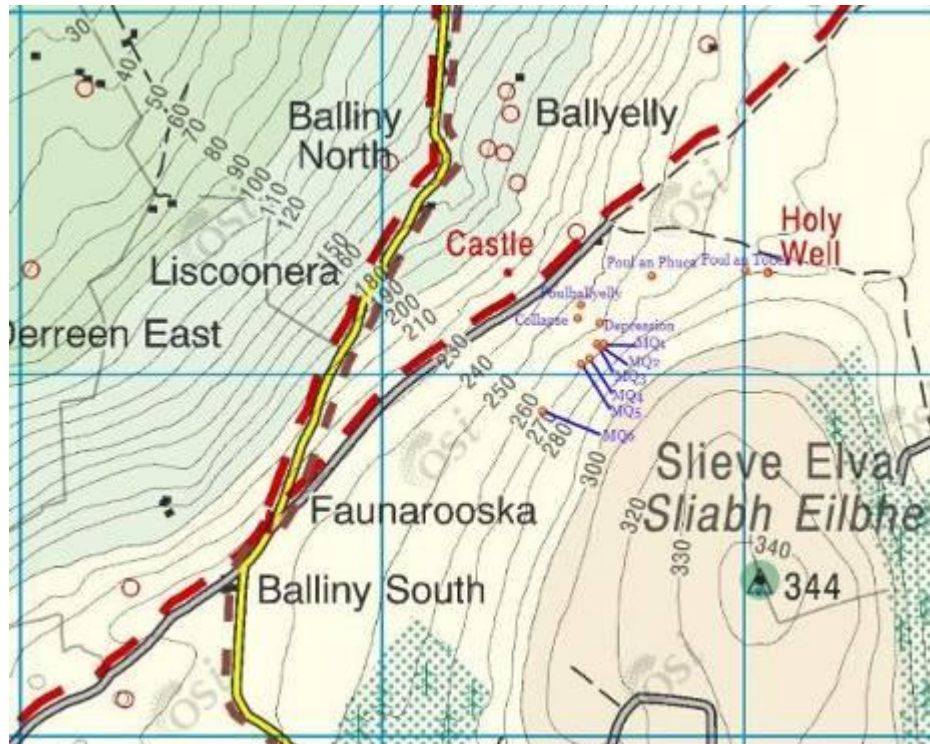
MQ2. Again the grass and briars were dragged back revealing a vertical drop, one and a half metres deep; all solid, and water worn. At the bottom, a 0.15m bedding heads west; a small area of water worn floor appears solid: little potential.

MQ3. Yet again grass parted, dropping another metre and a half, into another immature, active sink: would repay digging.

MQ4. Breached the foliage accessing a semi-conical shakehole, six metre drop and a narrow rift, obstructed by a boulder; would repay digging. Exiting CC presented a wet, frozen PC to a large mug of hot tea and a chunk of drizzle cake; superb.

MQ5. Did not enter the dense foliage filling this depression; to do so would create a corridor along which inquisitive cattle are likely to explore. Intend to return with cutters and descend the hillside from the east.

MQ6. Secured a handline, descended the steep slope to a recent collapse of clay/soil, either side are limestone walls: would repay digging.



1:50000 of the initial group of sinks
The ID given to these sites is the landowner's initials.

Cloud cleared, descended hillside via the large depression, and Poulballyelly entrance. Taking the green road back to the motors; encountered a lost guide and her party. In answer to her enquiry, orientated the page of her walking guide to correct reality: page printed as South Up? Thoughts strayed to an absent Boycott, and other missing pals.

Almost 10 feet of rainfall this year; 111.55 inches, or 283.34cm, or 2.83 metres

Considine's Cave, (South End)

Annual Report

The affect of Covid-19 was extensive and profound, likewise health issues encountered. Significantly impacting spoil removal was the absence of "Popeye"; presently in the UK. Good fortune shone with the arrival of KLD who joined the Team late September; she is, without doubt a real asset. KLD's attendance has allowed digging operations to resume as much as family commitments allow, and Covid-19 restrictions ebb, and flow.

28th December; the floor of the South shaft was measured at -21.85 metres, the end of the fixed ladder at 20.25 metres. Depth achieved this year is about two metres, the least during the digs history. Dropping stones, the depth of the southeast rift is conservatively estimated at six metres. This suggests the minimum, achievable depth is 28 metres.

Concerns over spoil volume removal, as the shaft's diameter continues to subtly increase, are mitigated by the appearance of two protruding ribs from the east and western walls. In plan this creates a figure of eight shape; the smaller area the ladder way, the larger the main shaft. Whilst the ribs walls descend vertically in the main shaft area, their walls sloping down into the hauling way suggest this small "shaft" may heal up.

Future ease of hauling depends on how these "Ribs" develop at depth, if the gap between them heals up this compromises the centre of the hauling line. CC is presently designing a deviation system to guide the hauling line through this potential offset of perhaps as much as one metre. If these ribs do heal up, as increasing depth may prove, the area within them, the present ladder way, could be used as a hopper in which to stack spoil within.

These ribs are some 1.2m in front of the ladder way, and, if the hauling rope deviation becomes a reality, PC suggests preparations for a second staging be conducted whilst there's still a floor to stand on and work. This potential staging would also accommodate fixings to secure the relocated the ladder route; where better than from such a staging? The platform could also accommodate the deviation device and any maintenance.

The top of the northern shaft needs be covered with the proposed scaffold tube grill; Matt Randall has delivered twenty scaffold clips ordered by PC. Some heavy scaffold tubing requires purchasing to complete this project. With the issue of the dodgy pallet in the crawling way to the fixed ladder, it may be worthwhile inserting scaffold tubes under the area. In the meantime access to the ladder is under the edge of the working platform.

The winch shed requires maintenance; a waterproof cover is needed as the existing is deteriorating, and leaking. This may be undertaken in concert with replacing the two pallets beneath the shed.

Statistics

During 2020 fifty-six sessions were conducted, twenty seven were maintenance and twenty nine were digging; compared to one hundred and twenty eight session in 2019. The digging sessions removed 570 kibbles and 53 nets, a combined weight of twenty six tonnes; an average of 0.9 of a ton per session. The time taken to bring a load to surface is an average of two minutes. Totaled digging hours; 160. Generator used some 45 litres of fuel, with a run time of some 130 hours. Top up oil to is not too easy to assess, but little enough was consumed by the engine. A winch drive belt developed a noise issue; minor adjustments resolved it. Some eight pallets were replaced in the working platform.

Legend

CC	Cheg Chester	Doolin
JN	Jonathan Normoyle	Doolin
TB	Tony Boycott	Doolin
PC	Pat Cronin	Doolin
JSC	James S Cobbett	Panamá City, Panamá
DH	Dig Hastilow	Woolacombe, Devon
RD	Roger Day	Cambridge
MGL	Mark (Gonzo) Lumley	Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire
KL	Karen Lumley	Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire
BK	Batty Kerins	Finavarra
PK	Philomena Kerins	Finavarra, wife
LK	Lorraine Kerins	Finavarra, daughter
GK	Gerard Kerins	Finavarra, son
CF	Carl Fahy	Finavarra
NMcC	Noel McCarthy	NUIG
MCo	Michelle Comber	NUIG
TG	Thomas Griffin	Doonagore
GD	Greg Davoren	Kilcorney
MR	Matt Randall	UK
JW	Jim Warny	Ennis
CM	Cathal Mullane	Limerick
KLD	Kate Lavender-Duncan	Ennistymon

Personal experiences coalesced to produce this song; tragic events 4th Jan, spurred its completion.
Dedicated to all, friends, past and present, who share our ethos.

The tempo repeats, the first verse of "He thinks he'll keep her" by Mary Chaplin Carpenter.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVL4mDFX3rY> Vocal
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHkTcGrhoSM> Instrumental

Pegasus Pride

I am a Ca-ver, I love the sound,
Of streams and ri-vers flowin' underground,
Marble Arch, the Fergus and the mighty Fraggie too,
Carve their way through Limestone like all rivers ought to do.
Into the land-scape Cavers descend,
Down gapping pot-holes, 'round awkward bends
Obstacles and dangers mean explorers must be brave
Searching for the missing and elusive Master Cave

Chorus...

The darkness haunts and calls to me
It's the place I need to be
Somewhere that I'm truly free
I am a Ca-ver.....
I've dug places mice can't pass
Entered sumps with lots of gas
Many friends have sadly passed
I am a Ca-ver.....

From rope and ladder to S.R.T
From stinky car-bide to L.E.D.
Once wool was against the skin it kept you nice and warm
Furiously scratching at the itching was the norm.....
Eldon took Sul-o, our flying Fin
Astonhill Swa-llet took our Dave Briggs
Lancaster took Simon, sorrow filled the breasts of men
Realizing that they'd never see their friends again

Chorus

My ageing bo-dy, it creaks and groans
Crawling through wa-ter and over stones
Enduring such discomfort that's the nature of my task
To find that sunless river an-d pursue it to the last
The darkness bec-kons to those who seek
A trip each e-ven-ing, or once a week
The siren call of virgin cave it cannot be denied
To stand upon the unknown filled with overwhelming pride

The darkness haunts and calls to me
It's the place I need to be
Somewhere that I'm truly free
I am a Ca-ver.....
I've dug places mice can't pass
Entered sumps with lots of gas
Many friends have sadly passed
I am a Ca-ver