

## 2021

An Taoiseach introduced Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions, to be reviewed the 12<sup>th</sup> Jan.

1<sup>st</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain

Solo

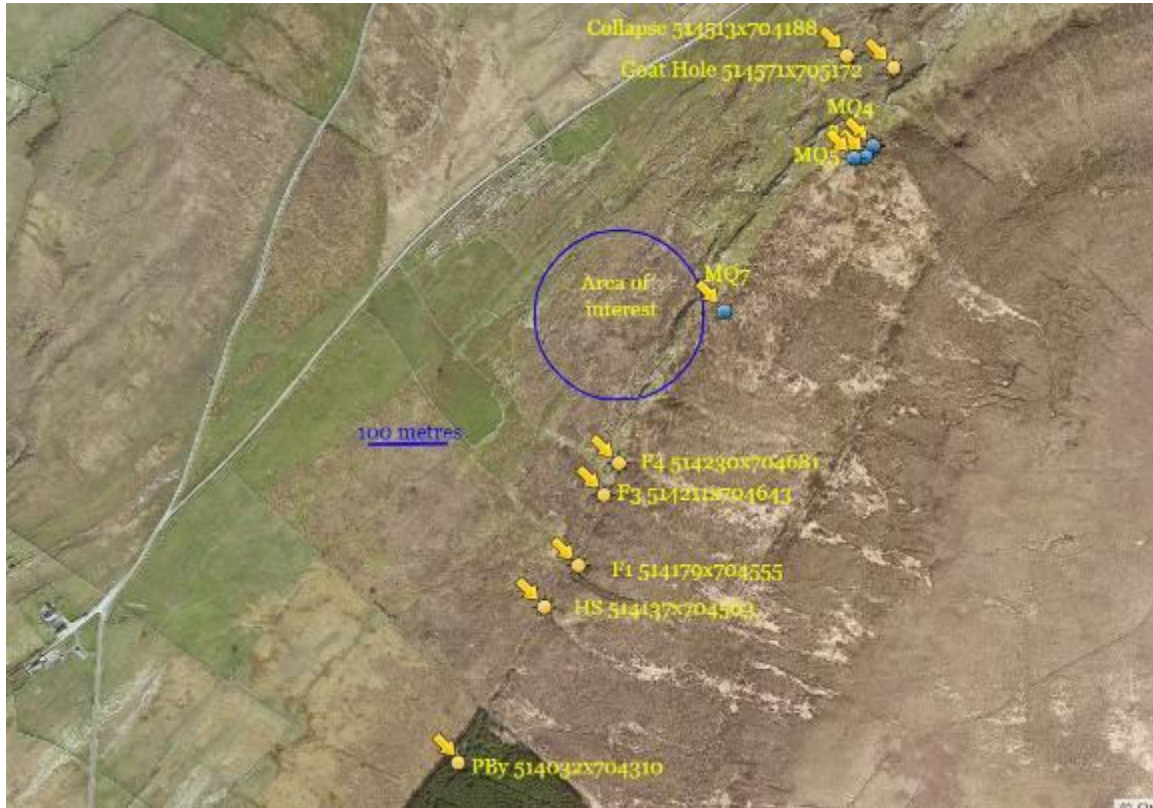
First trip of the year: Cloud 75%: Wind NW, F2: Cold: Visibility >35Nm: Ground sodden. The Plan: Reconcile actual location of Faunarooska to MQ6. Suspecting difficult walking conditions, took no rucksack, just the staff, (curtain pole). Began walk from the first gate on the green road. Ground conditions awful; slow progress across knee deep heather and bog. Encountered many small depressions filled with limestone boulders; continued to the shale boundary. Identified Faunarooska by a bit of caver's rope attached to the barb wire closing the fence near its entrance. Worked north encountering lots of minor boggy depressions along the shale – limestone boundary; some three hundred metres north located another hole, (MQ7). The opening is some two metres deep with the sound of a small stream; little rain recently. This site requires a rope to accurately check its true potential: creeping toward the tantalizing opening, across the soft floored surface, the heart raced a little when a foot disappeared through the grass onto nothing solid below. Reed stems are surprisingly strong; retrieved foot: cautiously retreated.



Much of this area, beyond an electric fence line is un-grazed. This means the heather, grasses and sphagnum moss have become a rich, regular, knee-deep pile carpet. Pressed on and located MQ6, some hundred metres further on. Returned to MQ7, orientated self and headed downhill, to check a small hazel filled depression; no opening but could repay digging. Another depression was found further west, all aligned on a bearing of 080° /260° magnetic, over a distance of perhaps, three hundred metres. Found yet another depression some two hundred metres west-ish of Faunarooska; fifteen metres diameter and seven metres deep: possible opening in the base of its east side: will return with GPSR to record these sites and Pollballinelly. On the way in could not locate Hawthorn Swallet, perhaps filled in?

2<sup>nd</sup> January Request from UBSS for information

Request from Graham Mullan for data of the Pegasus Sliabh Eilbh project, and of any updated ITM's of recorded caves. Sent GM the corrected Poul an Phúca ITM position, its 2019 published entry obviously incorrect, being the west side of the boundary wall. Also sent the ITM for Poul an Tobar; an obvious slip of the keyboard, the book entry placing it two hundred metres south of its actual position. Goat Hole ITM also sent; previously the site was recorded by Lloyd as lost, bulldozed flat: a comment typical of his arrogance.



ITM data in the 2019 book is surprisingly incorrect. Hawthorn Swallet (HS) and Pollballiny (PBy) are shown above are in their corrected positions supplied from the QGIS data sent by GM. Making so much more sense. Using the book, it places HS and PBy quite some distant to the northwest.

3<sup>rd</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain

Solo

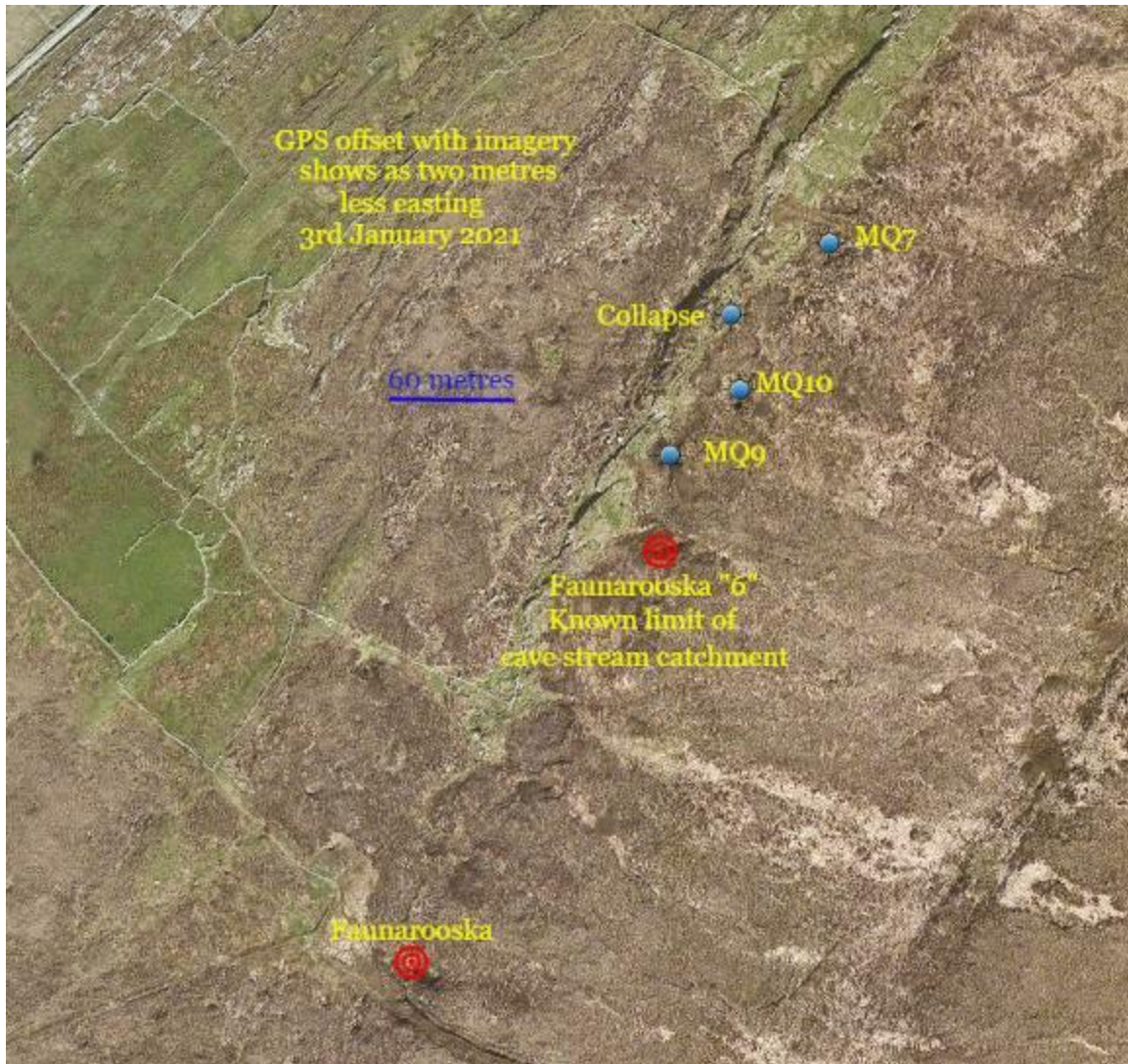
14:00. Cloud 5%: Wind N, F2: Temp -1°C: Ground frozen: The plan: accurately GPS sinks feeding Faunarooska, to confirm recently recorded sites as being “unconnected”.

Used the Garmin Oregon 300, calibrated it and took a reading of the first stile along the green road to check accuracy against the digital imagery of Archaeology.ie; established as reading two metres less eastward. Headed back to Faunarooska, GPS'd the entrance then worked north; during the process discovered another possible hole, found and accurately recorded MQ7, previously, without a GPS, (2<sup>nd</sup> Jan), needed to guesstimate its position; human error was eight metres east and five metres north. Returned to the Hilux by way of Poulballyelly; recording a different position some seven metres further east and three metres south, placing it correctly in the narrow, dry gulley and not on the adjacent ridge. Took the coast road to avoid ice issues up the mountain road from Kilmoon; big mistake. Sheltered sections of the road, particularly between the coast and Ballynalacken castle



2021

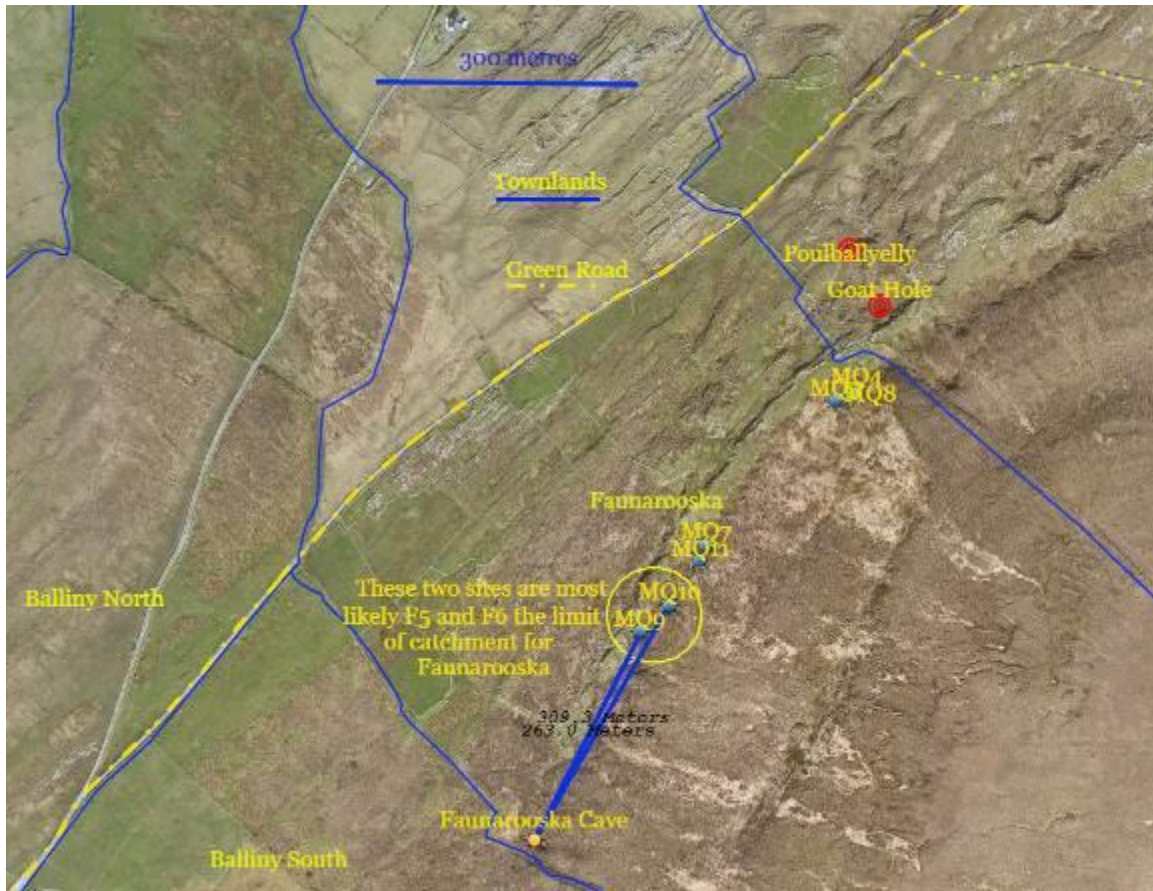
were a death trap; stopped bus at Ballynalacken to warn of road conditions. Stopped, and asked to recover a bent car from a ditch and convey the four passengers to Lisdoonvarna; each miffed when informed the only seats available in this Covid climate was the tailgate.



3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021; showing locations of southern area of interest

4<sup>th</sup> January

Simon Halliday's 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary  
Lost to Lancaster

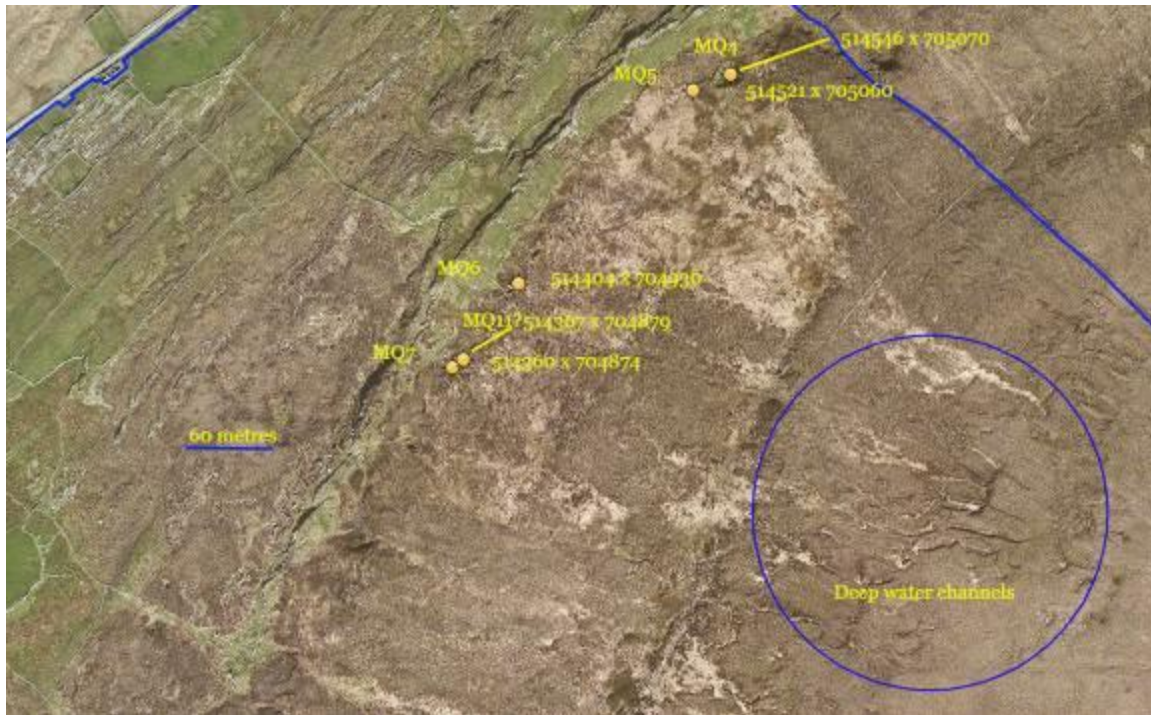


6<sup>th</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain

Cheg Chester

Cold: Wind O. Sea, a mirror: Ground frozen: -5°C last night: Sections of road remain icy: The Plan: continue checking the newly recorded sites. The un-numbered hole, adjacent MQ4 was checked first; it's a partly filled rift which appears to be on the same joint as MQ4. It is slowly opening by subsidence of the loose humic material fill. South of MQ4 delightedly experienced a phenomenon never before witnessed in Ireland, or the UK; a column of condensation rising three metres vertically from an undescended rift among dense foliage. Realized the condensation was only visible when viewed with the sun behind the column. Swiftly deployed a ladder secured to a fence post of unknown heritage; held on with one hand whilst thrashing through the undergrowth with the other. The rift is some three metres deep, three long and three quarters of a metre wide. No obvious evidence of a significant stream sinking. Broke off the branches of a dead tree to complete descent; the floor is a mixture of degrading shale, a greasy, sticky grey clay. Several pieces of sandstone are present. A gap to the west side of the floor was dug out; exposing a 225mm wide rift heading west-ish, after almost two metres it assumes two metres of depth and turns left. The right hand, (north), wall is solid, with a shallow sculpted stream gully. The south wall consists, from the top down, of a large boulder, seemingly entirely detached, sitting upon bedrock formed with deep vertical fluting. From here, assessed the rift width increases at -2m. It would be awkward, but possible; to remove the protruding bits on the left wall to reach the vertical section, and see what around the left-hand bend. Heading back to the trucks checked the depression west of Faunarooska. A small conical collapse was found in the base, on the east side, with several items of domestic debris. A cracking day; delighted: if only the bar was open.





MQ9 and MQ10 suspected as the northern most feeders to Faunarooska; for the moment MQ7 is the southern most unrecorded site. The N/S jointing averages  $015^{\circ}$ ; the passage in MQ5 is estimated heading off on something like  $285^{\circ}$ .

8<sup>th</sup> January Ballyhagline, Doolin  
Solo

After departing the Rescue Station scampered along the coast to check the status of the survey baseline installed by PC some years ago, from which to establish the positions of any Mesolithic finds. Surprized at the extent of storm damage; ten metres of the foreshore is swept clean along to the River Aille, which still flows through the huge storm debris ridge. It is possible to walk from the car park to the river on solid rock.

Much of the limestone terrace close to the shore is broken apart and appears to have contributed to the huge amount of storm debris mounted up against the sand dunes, running parallel to the ocean. The only survey disc found was an intermediate datum, secured to the large rectangular ten tonne limestone boulder, near the base of the ten metre sand dunes. The base line appears decimated. Some seventy metres east of the huge boulder is a small exposure of clay; this clay deposit is what the Mesolithic remains were found within. Michael Lynch informed of this new clay exposure.

9<sup>th</sup> January Souterrain CLO04-016040  
Solo

13:00. Bitter cold: Wind SW, F4: Visibility >30Nm: Ground thawing. The Plan: establish depth of ground above the souterrain roof lintels to complete the profile - section survey. Significant areas remain frozen in the lee of Sliabh Eilbh. Excruciating wind chill encouraged speed of project. Replicated the souterrain passage route over the surface using fifty metre tape measure and compass; the single change in direction of the passage from  $155^{\circ}$  to  $183^{\circ}$ ; indicated with a peg. The surface profile and underground survey based from the datum in the garth entrance. Erected the new toy; a Leica L2P5G laser level, securing the receiver to the survey staff. With this new equipment the ground

profile was delightfully swift and accurate; very welcome in such desperate conditions. The breach or collapsed area of the souterrain is clearly surrounded by a feature, which abuts the Cashel rampart wall. It is likely to be a hut dwelling, however only excavation will answer the jumble of stones. It does appear possible that the souterrain passage once extended northward, beneath this walled feature, below and beyond the perimeter wall.

10<sup>th</sup> January MQ4: Halliday's Hole  
Cheg Chester

Cloud base 200m: Visibility 300m: Wind SW, F3: Light showers: The plan: push MQ4. Laden with Hilti drill, ladder and a pile of kit the team walked in from Faunarooska Cross. While PC laddered, and descended the five/six metre pot to prepare the offending boulder, CC assembled his equipment. After the application of Dr. Chester's, Wonder Boulder Eraser, entry was gained into the visible, confined area. Immediately beyond a sharp right-hand bend turns south, through a gap of 250mm. Some three metres on, a nicely sculpted chamber is entered, with a bright Iron-stained flowstone deposit; Nice. Four metres diameter – perhaps five high, its broken roof appears to be, oh so close to the surface. Another rift heads north for about three metres to a 1.5m step, beyond the rift tapers, horizontally to nothing over five - six metres; the stream sinks on, or about the short step. Surveying will allow closer examination of the potential to dig the point where stream sinks. Simon was lost to Lancaster Hole a year ago; PC respectfully names this modest find as Halliday's Hole.

12<sup>th</sup> January Lost Bob Proctor

16<sup>th</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain  
Solo

Cloud 90%: Wind W/NW F4: Cold: Visibility >25Nm: Ground sodden: The Plan: check sites MQ7 and MQ11. Found MQ6, identified by its circumferential, elderly fence, on an elevated area. The AA cells purchased earlier today were useless when asked to work the GPS; a real pain as the area is without surface features to relate to, so a GPS is needed to "sort" each site among the numerous depressions. Believed found MQ11; after much tentative stepping through deep foliage found a sizable collapse taking a good stream; rained last night, but no passage. Crept gingerly across to the other side of the depression, finding a very small collapse; the stream here noted running toward the first seen collapse. Inching forward found another, hidden under a curtain of reeds; one metre diameter. Possible to see the cavity extended under the obvious perimeter of the opening. Set up the ladder, climbed down into a two-metre-deep pot taking a good-sized stream. Solid limestone has a humic overburden of one metre thick. The base may repay digging, but the sides will require support; it has the appearance of the top of a pot. Believe MQ7 was found next; the stream sank into the obvious collapse; no passage. Moved around the perimeter of the depression to reach a specific area, without success; foliage is chest deep in places, with suspect footing. Will return to this spot; next time approaching from the southeast. After two hours struggling among the awful ground cover had had enough; en-route to the truck encountered Jim Warny, post his Pouldubh trip. Enjoyed a half hour catching up on things; two metres apart.

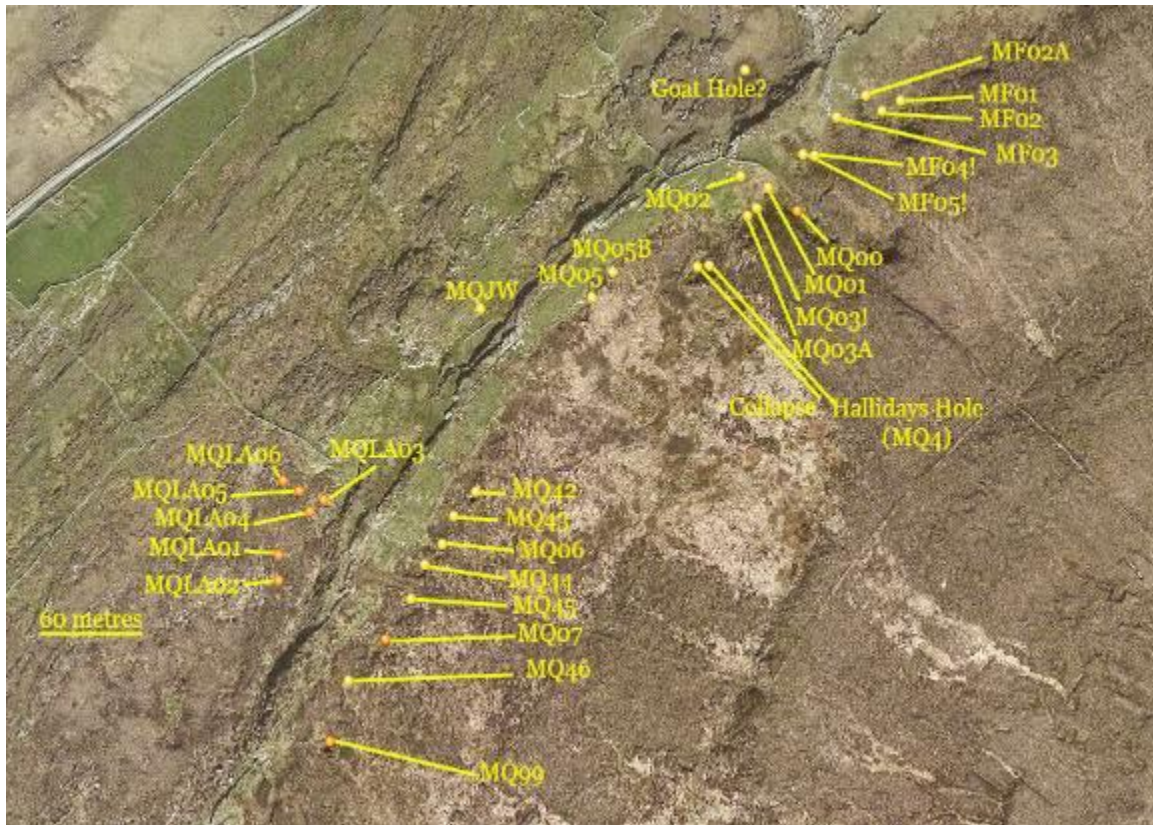
21<sup>st</sup> January

Lost Jim Hanwell; a pure gentleman

21<sup>st</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain

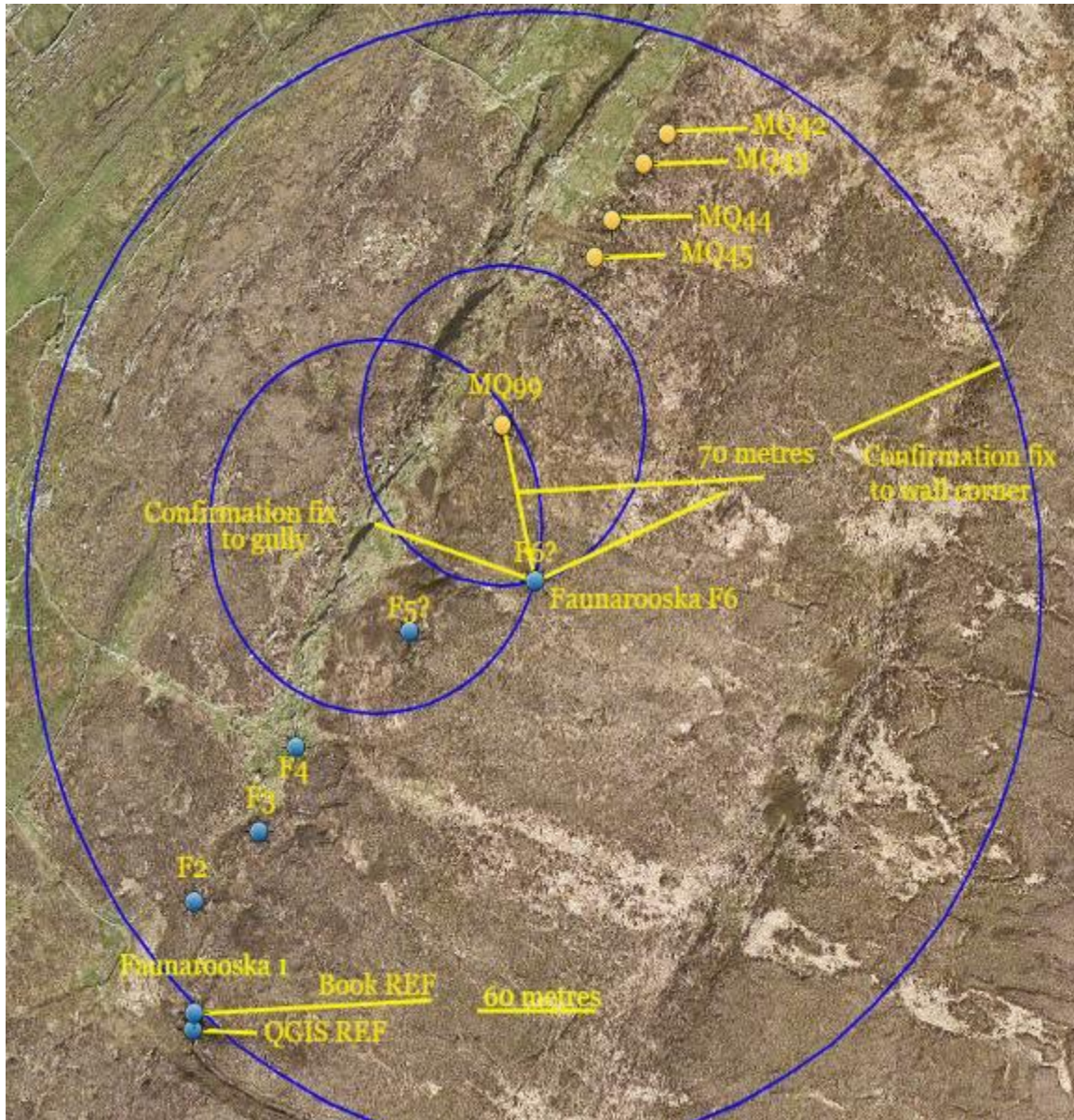
Jim Warny

Cold: Wind W, F3: Visibility >25Nm: Showers: Ground sodden. The Plan: reconcile IDs of recent sites with new GPSR recordings. Met JW at Faunarooska Cross, 10:00; walked to Poul an Phúca. From here took JW through the potential of the project area. Four hours of thrashing about resolved so many conflicting memory issues, and found several other sites. The result of working south from Poul an Phúca, writing up each site; now knowing that there are so many of them. Is the relocation and identification of holes lost amidst the overwhelming volume of data; operator error without doubt: no note book. Checked a shakehole in the area below the 270m cliff edge, to confirm suspicions of a convergence of two drainage routes, (MQLA); the site is of interest, well worth digging; after permissions. NE from this site shake holes confirm an active route of drainage feeding it. Almost every MF referenced site is a hole partly covered with large boulders. Stopped today's southern progress at MQ99; believed to be Faunarooska 6. Delighted to have a fine result from sorting the data chaos; now have three open entrances to explore.



Four sites offer significant promise. MQ03, MQ42, MQ43 and MQ45; each is a sink with a large stream; each entrance is a vertical rift, or pot. MQ03 is around two metres deep. The other three are three metres deep, MQ45 almost four metres deep. The edges of each overhang, this is moss, grass etc.





Reconciled positions of Faunarooska with new sites; F's are locations taken from the UBSS QGIS project. There are also positional discrepancies for Hawthorn Hole. The above confirms a minimum distance of seventy metres from MQ99 to the northern most sink of Faunarooska, and at least twice that to the group of MQ 42 – 45: pure delighted.

22<sup>nd</sup> January Press rumours suggest Covid restrictions may extend until 5<sup>th</sup> March.

23<sup>rd</sup> January An Taoiseach suggests Level 5 restrictions may extent to end of February.



23<sup>rd</sup> January Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cold: Ground frozen/thawing – sodden. Cloud 100%: Visibility  $\leq 20\text{Nm}$ : Wind NW, F2: Snow on the Mountains of Connemara: Large stream: The Plan: create an alternate route to the fixed ladder. Use of the normal route to the ladder is has ceased; the integrity of the pallet is increasingly suspect. A new route was excavated around, and beneath the east side of the working platform. Digging out the stiff clay, riven with roots warmed the digger; the clay was dug down to the water worn, undulating bedrock. This task may indirectly assist with future installation of a permanent entrance lid, and installation of the proposed scaffold grill, even replacing the dodgy pallet, as room to access the area is now improved. Today produced twelve kibbles of clay, manhandled up into the barrow, and deposited at the far end of the spoil area. Ten of the twenty scaffold clips were left there, all prepared with a coat of Hammerite; the 3.5 metre length of tube will do as the west side support of the frame, the two lengths on site will do the longer central spans.

An Taoiseach suggests Covid restrictions remain until the end of February, early March.

Hours 3 (2692), Southend (1642), Kibbles 12 (5331), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6201

24<sup>th</sup> January CLO05 044002 Souterrain

ITM 522632 x 705980

Donal Hogan, (Sharon Parr and Tim O'Connell's colleague) sent through the reference for the souterrain on his land; within an earthen ringfort in the Ballyvaghan valley.

25<sup>th</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain

Jim Warny

Cold: Cloud 70%: Wind SE, F4: Snow, 70mm: Ground frozen/thawing: Visibility  $> 25\text{Nm}$ : The Plan; identify the sinks suspected to be F5 and F6. Met at Faunarooska Cross; 13:00. No map reference seems available for the sinks in question. Using data from the UBSS QGIS project combined with Archaeology.ie digital imagery, PC plotted the limits of both passages heading toward either sink; both passages described as impassable beddings. F4 is adjacent a wall corner, this was thought best from where to orientate the survey. However, among the terrain this obvious shake hole, with extant domestic debris, though initially identified as F4; later found to be incorrect. Along the shale margin are far more sinks than those recorded potentially relating to Faunarooska. So, the team started at F1 to GPS the main entrance, from which to start the survey. Fissures and shake holes south from F1 illustrate Faunarooska's initial shallow route. The image shows most of the sites recorded in this section of the project, as of today. The group of sinks MQ42 – 45 may drain to those shake holes indicated on the lower area; the orange icons. Much more work is required, not least entering the open sinks. Clearing snow, PC stood on a dodgy belay as JW laddered down MQ99 into a clean washed, choked rift; has potential. More work required. In plummeting temperatures and darkening skies returned to the trucks.

26<sup>th</sup> January An Taoiseach announces Level 5 restrictions to continue until March 5<sup>th</sup>.

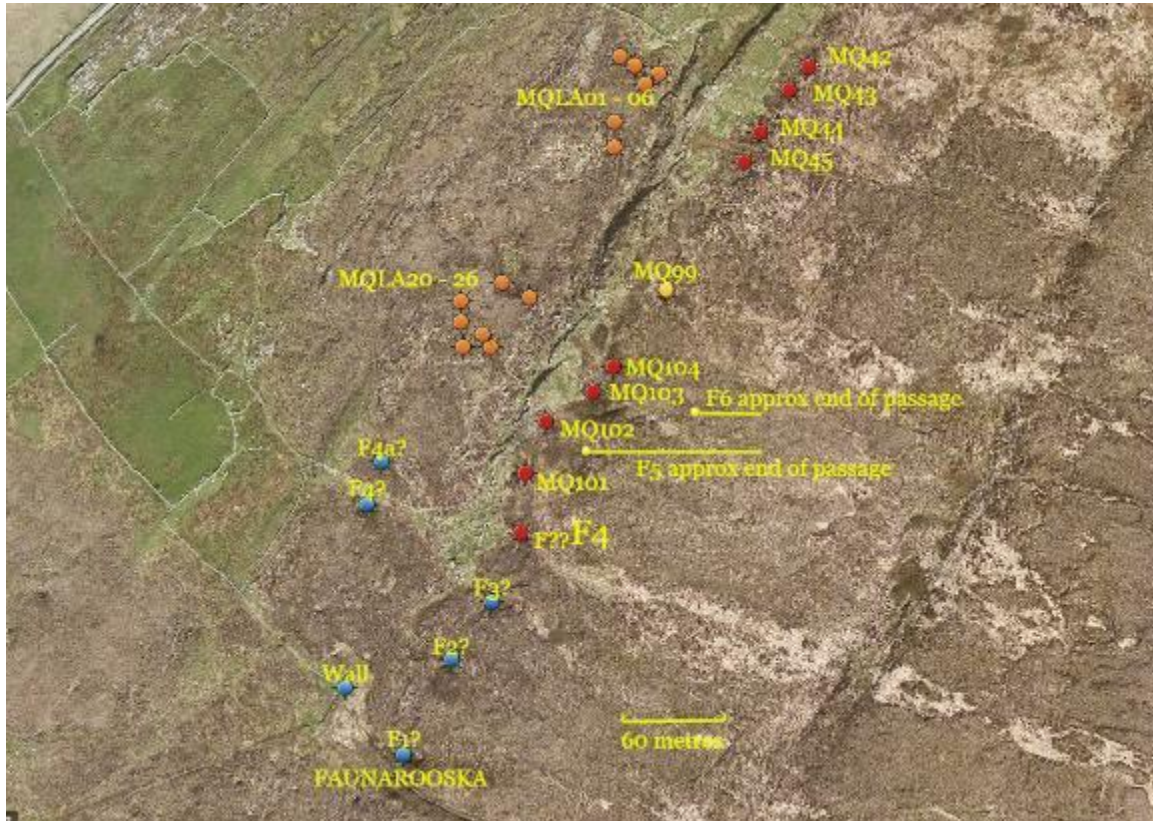
27<sup>th</sup> January Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cloud base 80m: Visibility 300m: Wind SW, F1: Ground Sodden: Large stream: The Plan: erect the grill over the North End shaft, (-25.5m deep). Eventually managed to manoeuvre - thread the 3.5m galvanized scaffold beneath the working platform. With this western horizontal support in place the two previously delivered two metre scaffold

lengths were inserted into prepared holes, in the eastern overburden. Both rest securely upon bedrock they were secured to the western tube. To complete this “grill” will require another twelve, perhaps fifteen metres of heavy-duty tubing. Back at the truck bumped into CC arriving to check correct operation of generator and winch. Discussing the extant travel restrictions; PC suggesting that during this period of “Down” time several major maintenance task could be accomplished, reducing future loss of digging time.

Hours 2 (2692), Southend (1642), Kibbles 0 (5331), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6201



Project area showing identified sites and further new finds. The groupings MQLA are on the lower area, below the small limestone cliff face. These are sinks and shake holes. Only a small amount of this lower area has been covered. The two blue F4's are in fact shake holes; F4 being quite large. The two ends of the passages heading towards F5 and F6 are plotted in an attempt to identify their sinks. F6 appears to be some ten, perhaps fifteen metres above the shale boundary; a group of bushes suggest a sink present. The red icon “F??” is in fact F4.

28<sup>th</sup> January Intimation that Level 5, with caveats may extend from March 5<sup>th</sup>.

31<sup>st</sup> January Slieve Elva Mountain  
Solo

Cloud base 250m: Visibility  $\leq 30$  metres: Wind E/SE, F4-6: Ground awash. The Plan: try to establish location of Poul na Phúca II, and maybe A1e. Decided to visit Poul an Phúca III first off, and record its location, from the overhang, directly above the entrance, (ITM



514765 x 705430). Found recently deposited boulders had all but blocked the entrance, a small hole remains; will return to examine extent of blockage. Some thirty odd metres to the south found a shallow depression. Twenty metres to the SW of this found another, deeper depression. These sites are eighty odd metres NNE of Poul an Phúca.

From earlier calculations, took a bearing of 245°T to the estimated location of (II), using the GPS to monitor increasing distance, starting search from Poul an Phúca III. Caves of Mid-West Ireland describe Poul an Phúca II being 200metres SW of Poul an Phúca III, yet its ITM reference suggests it some 400metres SW; 60 metres west of Poulballyelly. In grim weather stumbled across grim ground conditions. At the described distance of 200 metres began a circular, expanding search; the uneven area consisting of exposures of limestone, broad “sunken” areas with extensive tussocks of dense ground cover and deep grykes. Completed search of the chosen thirty metre diameter area; without success. Visibility reduced to less than five metres; abandoned play for the day. Walking back along the Drovers Track bumped into the land owner; arranged to look at his souterrain sometime the back end of next week, and perhaps a look at his unrecorded cave. Passing Queallys land breaks in the cloud offered fleeting glimpses of Fanore in the sunshine??



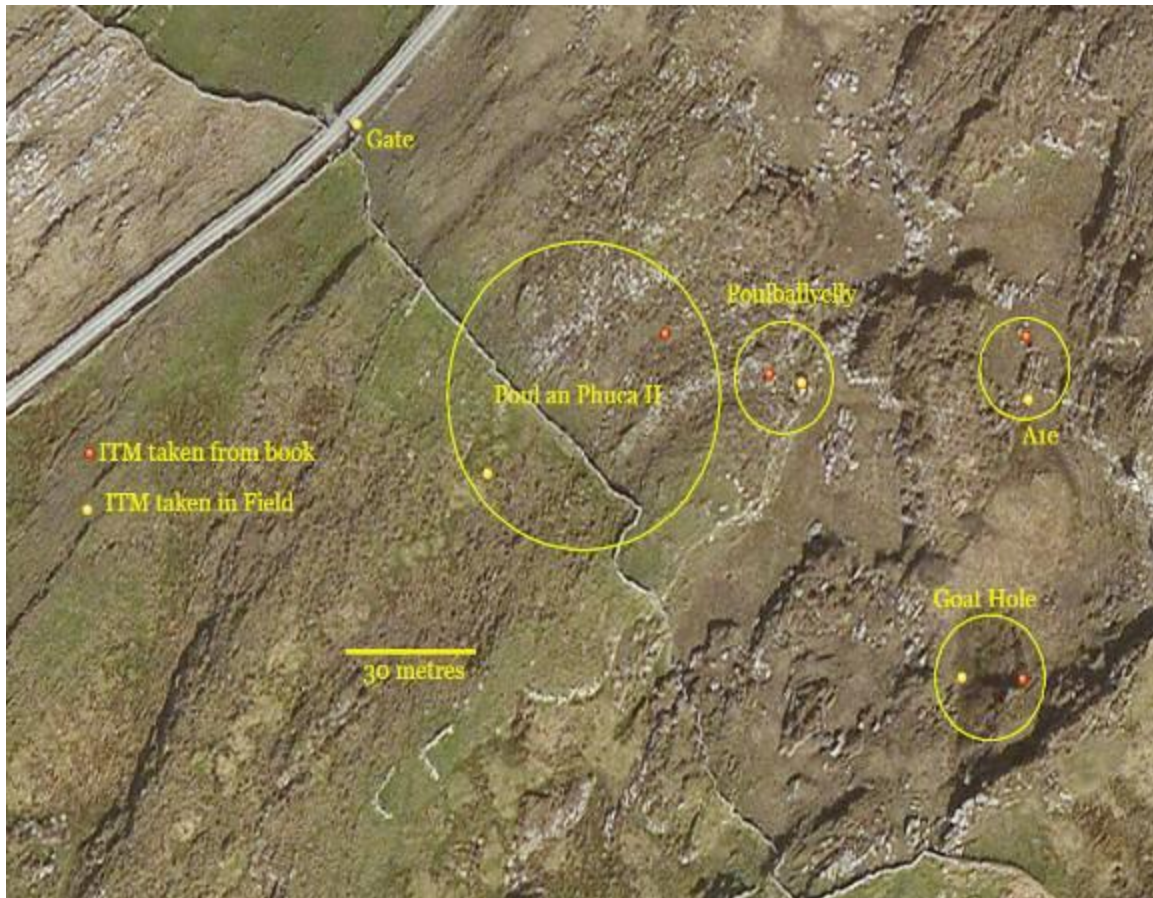
Calculations to attempt establish the real location of Poul an Phúca II.

3<sup>rd</sup> February Considine's Cave, (South End)

A ring around located a source of tractor tyres to build a new shaft collar; Gus Green Liscannor. Arranged to visit him Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb; also arranged trailer and fork lift.

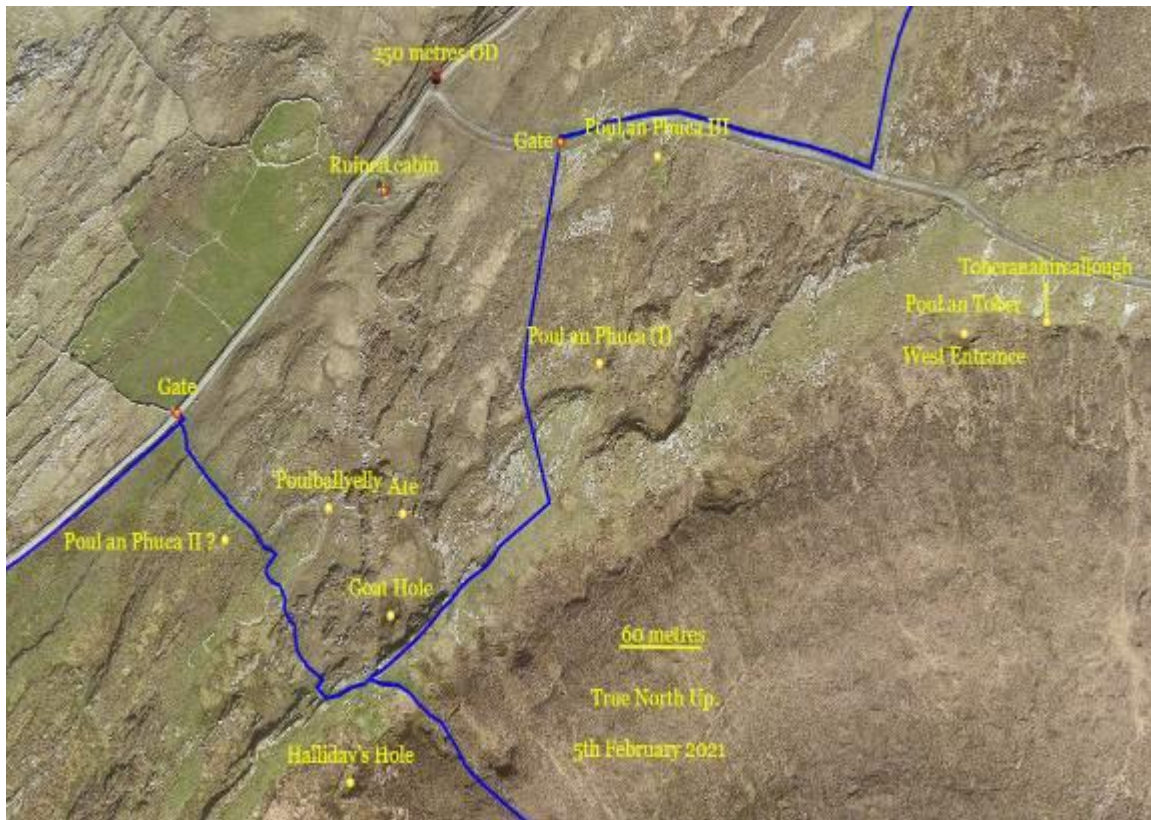
5<sup>th</sup> February Slieve Elva Mountain  
Solo

Cloud 60%: Wind W, F3/4: Visibility >25Nm: Ground awash. The Plan: resume search for Poul an Phúca II, and perhaps A1e. Programmed GPS with ITM's from Cave of Mid-West Ireland. Navigated to area previously prospected: no sink or site present. Checked the area north of the wall to the shallow valley where Poulballyelly is located; no luck. Moved south, beyond the wall; conducted a parallel search using the wall as reference. Found a small sink in a wet area; one metre deep, one metre diameter with steep sides. Though potentially Poul an Phúca II, it does not fit the book description. Being 375m southwest of Poul an Phúca III; twice that described. It is not a large depression; it's a sink on a small level area in the slope. But it is in alignment with Poulballyelly and A1e. More work required to ascertain identity. Moved on to A1e, using UBSS data located an area, which may have been "landscaped"; difficult to say. Headed south, up slope, from A1e, found an active sink, in rough pasture, under a small bush, fifty metres north of Goat Hole and fifteen metres south of the area of A1e. Preparing list of recorded ITM's.



Showing recorded locations and their precise locations.





Precise ITM locations corrected of published sites; 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

10<sup>th</sup> February Slieve Elva Mountain  
Solo

Bitter cold: Cloud 60%: Wind NE, F4/6: Visibility >35Nm: Ground frozen. The Plan: to explore vertical opening MQ03. Walked in from Faunarooska Cross; ascending the hill opted to return to the truck, prospecting the area west of the site found 5<sup>th</sup> February, this depression potentially being Poul an Phúca II. At MQ03, attempting to push the nail bar belay into the normally soft ground encountered rock 150mm beneath the surface. Treated nail bar like tent peg, inserting it at a shallow angle pointing toward the hole. Laddered three metres into a clean washed, one metre diameter cavity, with a floor of boulders; a strong draught issued from western bedding. Monitored draught suspending dried grass in the bedding; during ten minutes the draught remained constant. Outside the NE wind maintained F4 gusting F5, this did not appear to affect the draught; no vapour seen. Recovering kit and visited sink MQ05; poor sunlight did not help display the column of vapour photographed 6th January; none visible today. Descending the hillside west of the site, which may turn out to be Poul an Phúca II. Encountered a narrow rift like depression, invisible from ten metres away; no stream. Its floor is of soft organic material. Exposed a small gap, which emitted a possible draught; difficult to be sure as the site faces into today's wind direction. Without a GPS took bearings of the corner of a wall and to the sink, (potentially), Poul an Phúca II. From these bearings developed a map reference, which needs confirming with a GPSR. Admiring the view, delighted to receive a phone call from a pal, previously asked if he knew of pipe suitable for replacing the shaft collar at Considine's. He'd already checked one place, and was visiting another tomorrow. Pipe size requested, 0.75m/0.9m internal diameter by 1.5 metres long. An Taoiseach suggesting Level 5 restrictions may extend beyond Easter.

### Observations on incorrect published location of Poul an Phúca II.

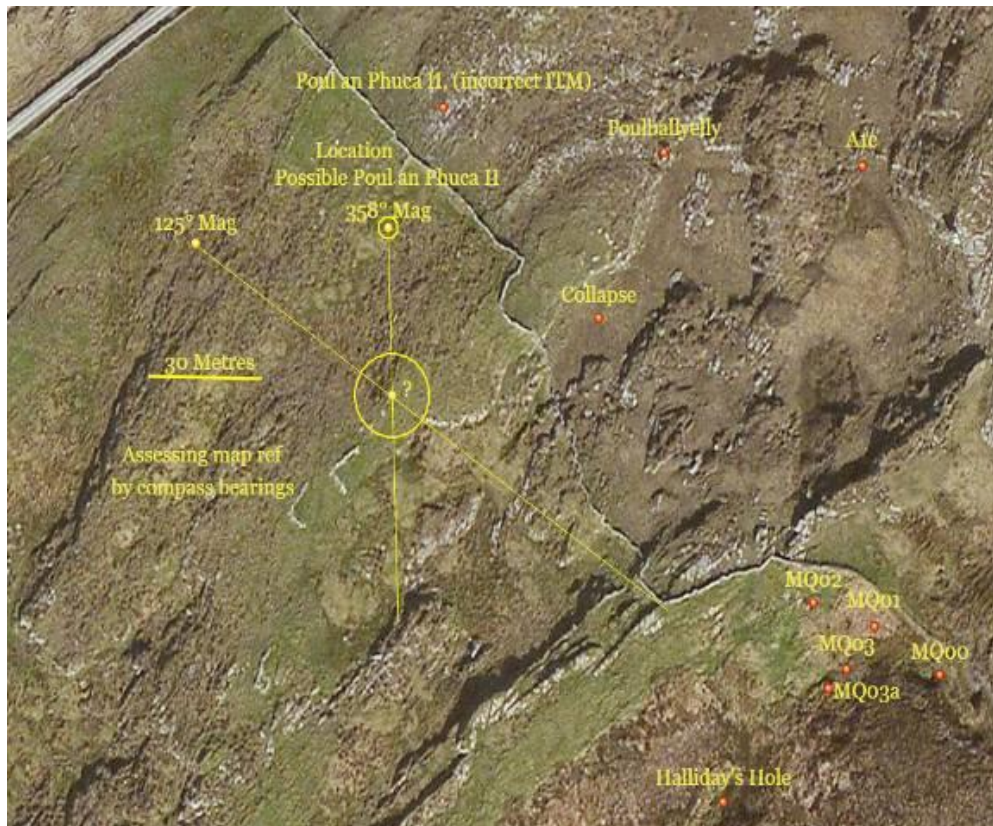
The location of Poul an Phúca II entrance is described as being within a large depression, 200 metres southwest of Poul an Phúca III. Poul an Phúca III is an obvious reference to use; on high ground, adjacent the western route of the drover's track. It is one of the few easily locatable references in a featureless landscape. The description further relates Poul an Phúca II's stream is next seen in Poulballyelly, though not where it appears inside the cave; suggesting work has been done to reconcile the hydrology; so, these locations were well known at that time. Unfortunately, the survey of Poulballyelly does not show where Poul an Phúca II stream enters; entering from either west or east. If it had done so then locating Poul an Phúca II would perhaps be a little easier.

The sink, A1e is fifty metres east of Poulballyelly, and may also contribute to its stream. A1e is fifty metres downstream, (north), of the large depression that is Goat Hole; at an elevation all but level with Poulballyelly entrance. Goat Hole is seventy metres up slope from Poulballyelly. Recent visits found another sink near the published ITM for A1e.

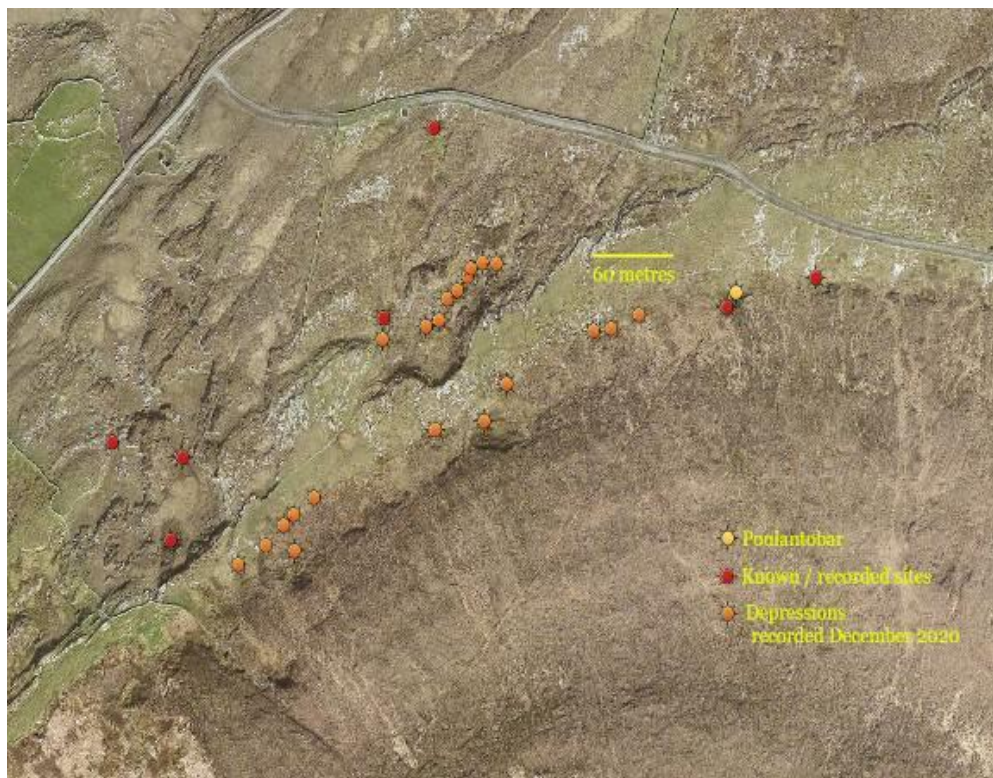
The ongoing search for Poul an Phúca II initially involved investigating its published ITM, visited on an elevated area south west of Poulballyelly; no depression or evidence of cave is present. A small active sink was found, (31<sup>st</sup> January 2021), thirty metres SSE of this incorrect ITM position. A recently found depression, (10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021), is seventy metres from the incorrect ITM position.

The area in which Poul an Phúca II is most likely located is as described in print; the incorrect ITM, simply a slip of the keyboard. Two hundred metres southwest of Poul an Phúca III puts it near the end of a broad, shallow, sodden channel. With the present stunted vegetation there appears to have been some "earth work" taken place. If so, there appears no reason for it; other than perhaps to fill in cave entrances. Virtually all these sites are on land owned by a third party, who has not been known to fill in holes. This is not the same farmer as those to the south, or the northeast.



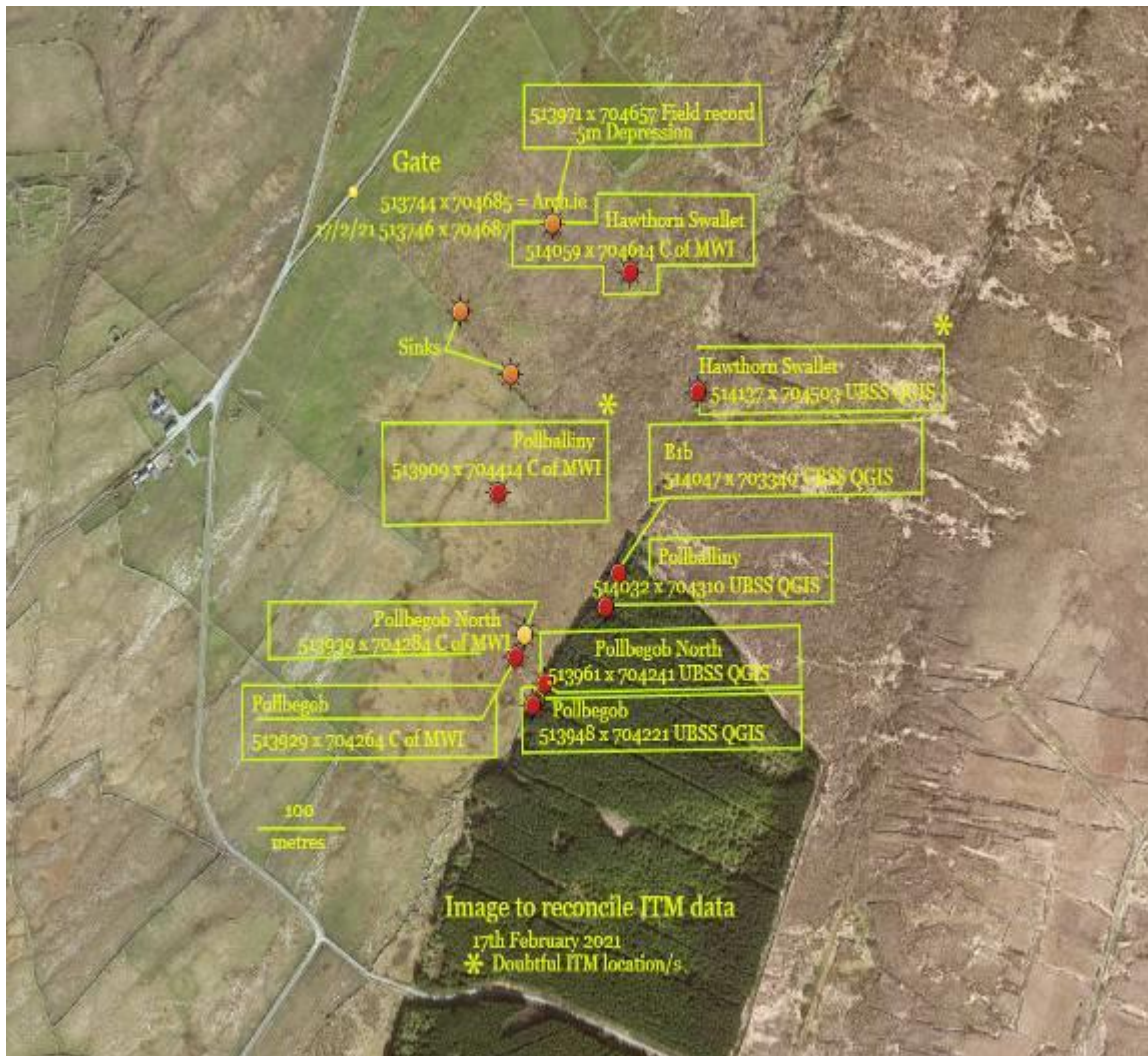


Small, circled site may, or may not be Poul an Phúca II, as with the new site.



Multiple unrecorded, invisible sites; orange unknown, red known, yellow, Poul an Tobar.





Further conflicting map references, up to two hundred metres of error

17<sup>th</sup> February Slieve Elva Project  
Solo

Cloud 70%: Wind S/SW, F3/4: Visibility <25Nm: Ground sodden: The Plan: reconcile ITM of published locations near Faunarooska Cross. Unavoidable delay meant a short trip, so focused on locating Hawthorn Swallet, (the one near Pollballiny). It is shown with two map reference locations. Programmed the GPSR with the ITM from the Caves of Mid-West Ireland; memory advised a hawthorn tree as the signpost among the moorland, not far from a wall. En-route found two sinks, likely draining into Faunarooska; these needs confirming. Both close to the southern wall, the larger has two mature, (15m) trees growing from it. Several other smaller sinks were noted; all filled with limestone boulders; this would need a digger to accomplish: no signs of disturbance from tracked or large wheel machines. Arrived at the programmed ITM; a promising area. A shallow gully draining to the NW, within several areas exhibited exposures of bare earth and out of character, lumps of limestone scattered about? Could not locate Hawthorn Swallet; again, memory hinted it was visible over the wall to the north when walking to Faunarooska. As rain arrived searched northwest along the south side of the wall, from the SE end of the field, a corridor fifty metres wide; no tree, no depression,



nothing. Began another search fifty metres to one hundred metres out from the wall, returning southeast; found an elongated depression about a hundred metres NW of the initial Hawthorn map ref; some five metres deep by ten metres long and five metres wide. No entrance in its sodden base. As rain escaped through the lace's holes, headed back to the truck. More effort needed.



17<sup>th</sup> February showing conflicting, published Hawthorn Swallet data

18<sup>th</sup> February Two Tree Sink, Slieve Elva Project  
Solo

Cold: Cloud 70%: Showers: Visibility <20Nm: Wind S, F3/4: Ground awash: The Plan: double check ITM for Two Tree Sink. Most of the wet ground traversed yesterday now submerged. Arrived at the sink, took ITM and swam back to the truck. Compared the ITM with the UBSS QGIS cave survey software; Two Tree Sink appears to be within five metres, (horizontally), of the Faunarooska streamway.

21<sup>st</sup> February

Lost Tony Dingle



Digital imagery © UBSS

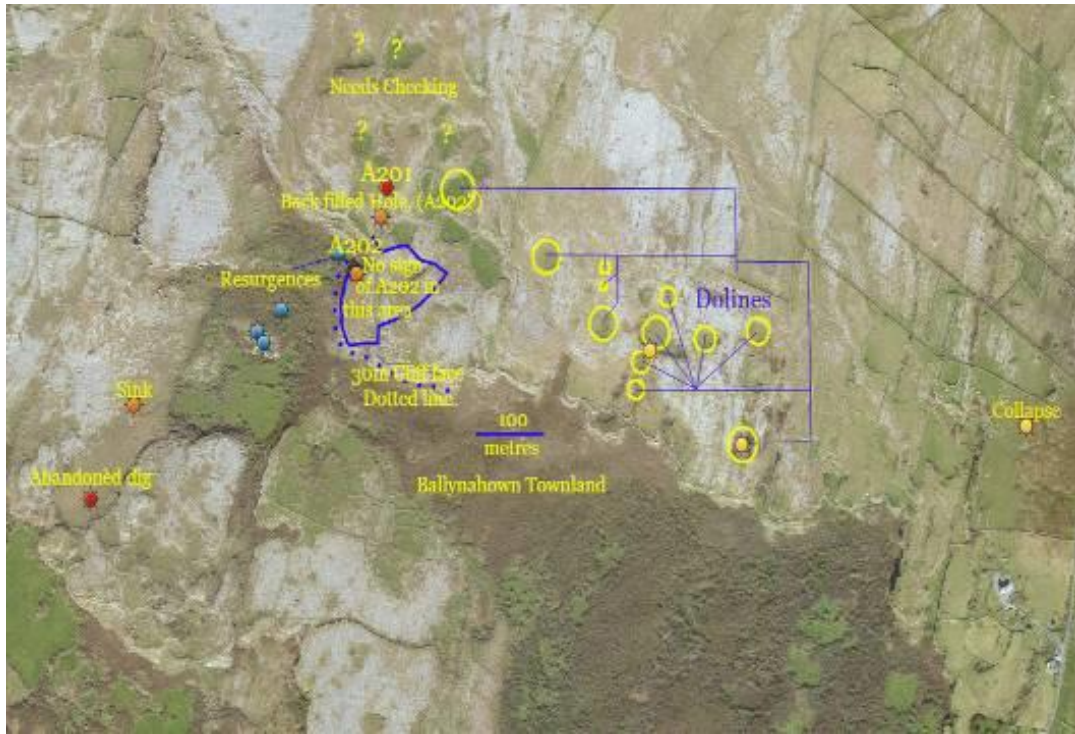
Two Tree Sink: in relation to Faunarooska streamway, (faint red line), approx., five metres away.

21<sup>st</sup> February Ballynahown – A201 – A202

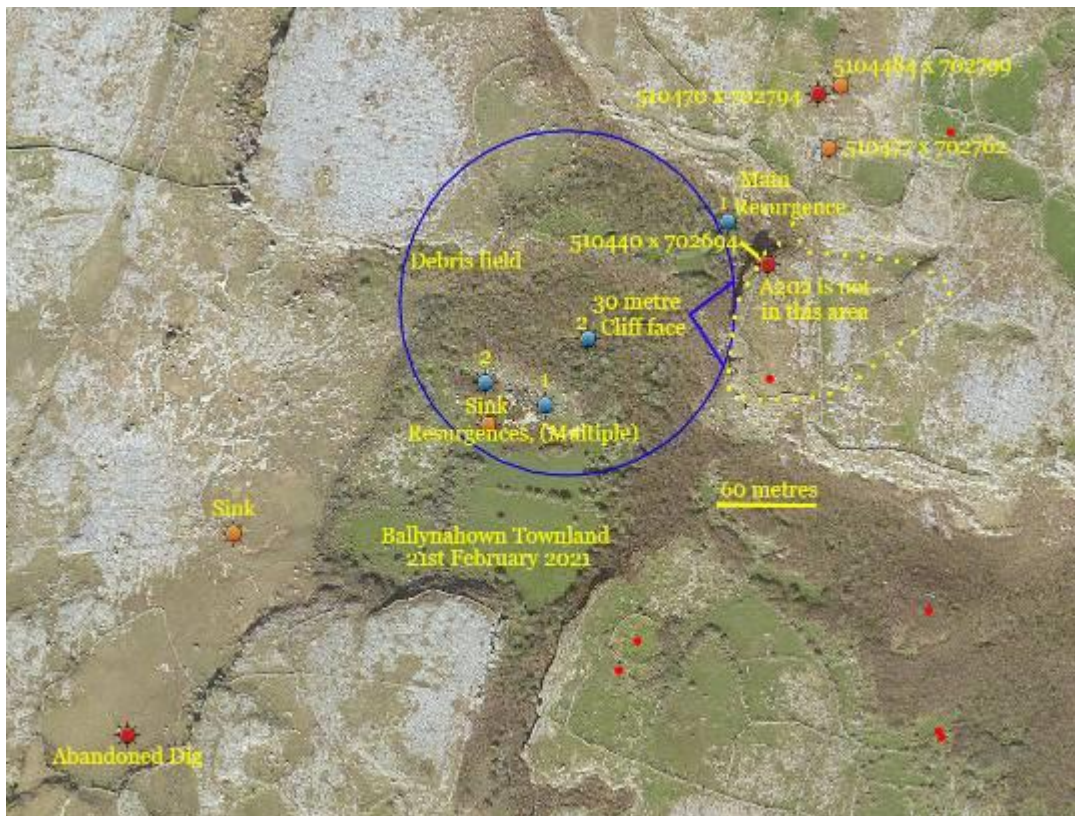
Solo

Cloud 10%: Cold: Wind S/SE, F2/3: Ground wet: Visibility <20Nm: The Plan: combine a walk with locating caves A201 and A202. Dropped by Pauline at 10:30, near Poulmagrai; recorded its ITM. Ambled along the Drover's Road, approaching Christy O'Brien's place headed west. Crossing the field found a collapse; the sodden sloping ground converges at this depression. It warrants installation of a large pipe to save it as a future dig site. En-route to A201 & A202 encountered a cluster of dolines, ranging in diameter from ten to forty metres. Their level, deep soil centres suggest use as Haggards, (small vegetable gardens). A necessary facility, as this elevated area is exposed to bad weather from the East around to the Northwest. Using its published ITM arrived in the general area of A201, soon found same. Began search for A202, en-route, some thirty-five metres south of A201, found a partly back filled hole in the same terrace. The area indicated by the ITM for A202 was thoroughly searched without success; thoughts turned to the back filled hole, is this A202? None of the terraces searched in its recorded area has anything remotely suggesting a cave entrance. Scrambled across to get opposite the cliff to see if A202 was actually in the cliff face; nothing visible. Descended the steep drover track to locate a known resurgence; found same, significant flow issuing. Wandered beneath the foliage canopy, an enchanting dappled area; half expected a Hobbit to suddenly appear. Followed the sound of water; locating six other resurgences, each emerging from beneath the huge debris field which extends beyond the base of the cliffs. After amalgamating the streams chatter along the surface for only a short distance then disappear into a sink. Headed out onto the pastureland, (recorded a sink), previously investigated with Cheg the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011; during which recorded seven sites in this area, including the now abandoned dig. Believe it was the Clare Caving Club, who was digging it, little enough spoil is visible. Reached the Promontory Fort at 13:25; previously visited with Roger Day, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Set up the Kelly Kettle in the lee of an Erratic; drank the tea reflecting on all those dolines: picked up by Pauline from Poulsallagh Bay.





21<sup>st</sup> February, area traversed, Poulmagrai to Poulsallagh Bay.



21<sup>st</sup> February detail of area searched.

22<sup>nd</sup> February Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cloud 30%: Cold: Wind S/SE, F3/4: Ground sodden: Visibility >30Nm: The Plan: obtain and deliver scaffold tube. Purchased two six metre lengths of galvanized scaffold tubing from the creamery; cut same into 1 x four metre length, and two metres lengths. Borrowed AG's trailer to convey piping to the dig; ground too wet to risk driving over, so carried it. The platform is like a skating rink. Unblocked water entry into main cistern.

Hours 2 (2699), Southend (1649), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

*Corrected stats: Cheg's visit on the 27<sup>th</sup> Jan = 1 hour.*

*Hours 1 (2700), Southend (1650), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201*

23<sup>rd</sup> February An Taoiseach announced Level 5 restrictions extended to 5<sup>th</sup> April

24<sup>th</sup> February Souterrain CLO04-016040, Caherbullog

Solo

Cool: Cloud 100%: Wind S/SE, F4: Heavy showers: Ground sodden: Visibility<15Nm: The Plan: resurvey the entrance passage. Parked up at Faunarooska Cross; took an hour to walk in. The passage from the centre of the ringfort to the souterrain chamber had been previously surveyed. Yet, when drawn, the arrangement of the limestone roof lintels did not work, they could not be reconciled with the length of the passage nor the point where the entrance passage enters the chamber; something very wrong, most likely the operator. Set up a datum in the entrance, secured a tape as centre line, fixing the other end central of the large lintel at the opening onto the chamber. The constricted nature of the passage likely contributes to the incorrect measurements. To improve accuracy on this visit, made a 400mm sided right angle triangle from a plastic election poster; applying this along the centre line, and a plumb line suspected from each roof lintel joint, precisely recorded each lintel's joint position directly to its distance from the datum on the centre line. This immediately illustrated the lintel angle in relation to irregular line of the entrance passage. Application of this triangle found the first lintel projecting forward of the datum by 200mm; this had not been previously noted as the authors head was confined in the small gap between roof and floor, the measuring conducted at arms length. This 200mm error does not to continue throughout the length of the entrance passage, though the width of each roof lintel is not as uniform as first assessed. Continued to survey each lintel in turn; left and right of the centre line. The triangle needs minor additions to improve ease of its deployment in such confined conditions; a sequence of parallel lines on each of its sides would allow ease of its alignment up against the fixed centre line. Though time consuming, this survey feels more representative: delighted. Outside to a watery sun; rain fell as the tea brewed: forty-five minutes back to the truck. Initial sketches show the triangle works well. Hooray!

25<sup>th</sup> February An Taoiseach implies some Level 5 restrictions maybe eased 5<sup>th</sup> April



26<sup>th</sup> February Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cool: Cloud 10%: Wind W/SW, F2: Visibility <20Nm: Medium stream: Ground sodden: The Plan; maintenance. Arrived early, carried over one length of scaffold tube, tools and various bits on to replace the two dodgy floor pallets on the west side of the winch shed. With the arrival of CC completed replacement of both pallets. CC then ran the generator and checked the winch; found an issue, which CC resolved with the application of engineer's logic, and a lump hammer. Having destroyed the dodgy pallets to remove them, the power line feeding the underground lighting, needed redirecting so lifted a previously laid pallet to accomplish. Whilst the northern shaft was exposed, took the opportunity to install three more two metre lengths of scaffolding; the grill is looking impressive, and more to the point increasingly safe. Generator 1/3<sup>rd</sup> full: Totals includes CC's maintenance hour of the 27<sup>th</sup> Jan.

Hours 7 (2707), Southend (1657), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201



Relative positions given in Cave of Mid West Ireland, against actual locations; school sink and Pollcloghaun

1<sup>st</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 5%: Wind ESE F2: Small stream: Visibility >25Nm: The Plan: Maintenance. The stable weather allowed a new cover of heavy gauge plastic to be fitted over the existing, deteriorating weather canopy; the winch area will now be much drier. Noted the weather canopy around the tripod is also deteriorating, this will need replacement sometime soon. There is an allusion by An Taoiseach that travel restrictions within the county may be eased to beyond the present 5k limit, subject to decreasing Covid-19 numbers. This may mean a return to actual digging; meanwhile will press on the maintenance. Generator 1/3<sup>rd</sup> full. March 4<sup>th</sup> will be the first anniversary of the first recorded death in the Republic.

Hours 6 (2713), Southend (1663), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201



Differences reconciling published data for Coolagh River Cave, (Pouldonough), with digital maps

3<sup>rd</sup> March (2005)

Martin Bishop, sorely missed.

3<sup>rd</sup> March CLO04-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog  
Solo

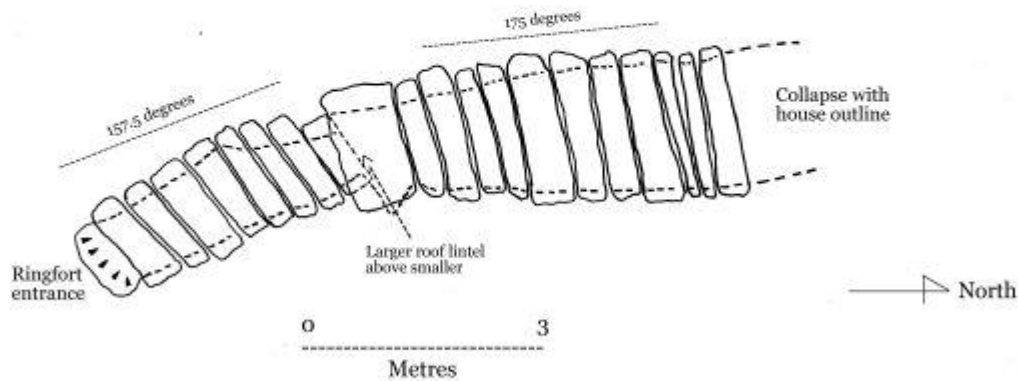
Cold: Cloud base 120m, (400ft): Wind NE, F1: Ground drying: Visibility twenty metres.  
The Plan: to continue surveying the souterrain roof lintels. Left the Hilux at Poul an Phúca III; the wide bit so driven cattle, and tractors could pass. Managed to find the field gate as the drover's track turns south. Followed the track to the lower field, marked by the western boundary wall of Caherbullog townland; turned north. Visibility laughable; after forty minutes walking encountered a townland wall not normally reached. Believed too far north by maybe five hundred metres. Checked the GPSR to program "Go To", realized the souterrains ITM was recorded in the other GPSR; bugger. Turned on the telephone to access Google maps; no cover. Visibility remained twenty metres. From the northern townland wall zigzagged southward; stumbled over the ringfort after a further hour's search: delight. Set up the GPSR suspended on the staff in the Ringfort entrance, left it for the duration. Took two hours to precisely record the locations of the roof lintels back to the base line tape; surveying this particular souterrain is becoming an endurance



test. After two hours the roof lintel survey was finally completed, for the second time. The reproduction of the data as a drawing should now work. Exited into fog; made tea, huddled in the depression of the souterrain's collapse; reached for sandwich, tea cup on the flat-topped boulder fell over; disgusted. Packed up kit; headed back, no sun, no Tea.

Souterrain  
CLO04-016040  
Caherbullog townland  
County Clare

Plan view of souterrain roof lintels  
Passage below shown as dashed line.



Surveyed 2020/21  
Drawn 4th March 2021  
(C) Pat Cronin

Drawing CLO04-016040- D006 is a second attempt to record the souterrain's roof lintels positions. Initially measured along the passage's centre line, it was assumed the lintels were of uniform shape and perpendicular to the passage; none were. Such foolish assumptions were evident when illustrating area where both passages meet; a large gap appeared between the roof lintels; obviously not an accurate record of its construction.

4<sup>th</sup> March            1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the first recorded Covid-19 in Ireland.

5<sup>th</sup> March    CLO04-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog  
Solo

Cloud 70%; Wind SE, F4; Ground drying, firmer: Visibility > 30Nm: The Plan; assess the ringfort for overall surveying. Left the Hilux at Poul an Phúca III; cattle are still being moved; took thirty minutes to reach the ringfort. Ringfort, (CLO04-016029), contains the souterrain, (CLO04-016040); both situated almost two kilometres northeast of Sliabh Eilbh summit, at an elevation of 250metres. Its location shelters it from prevailing weather; however, it is exposed from the northeast to the southeast. It commands a view south, down the fertile valley unto Liscannor bay, twenty kilometres away. The ringfort is within an ancient field system; surviving walls to east and north appear better preserved. The adjacent townland walls may be constructed from stones originating from denuded field walls to the west. Installed another datum in the ringfort entrance of the souterrain;

intending resurvey the passage dimensions, as not too happy with the present depiction. The area immediately to the west and southwest of the ringfort is exposed karst surface, multiple rows of clints and grykes present a possible defense feature for the settlement. Among tumbled walls within the ringfort appears to be at least five buildings; of import one directly above the north end collapse of the souterrain.

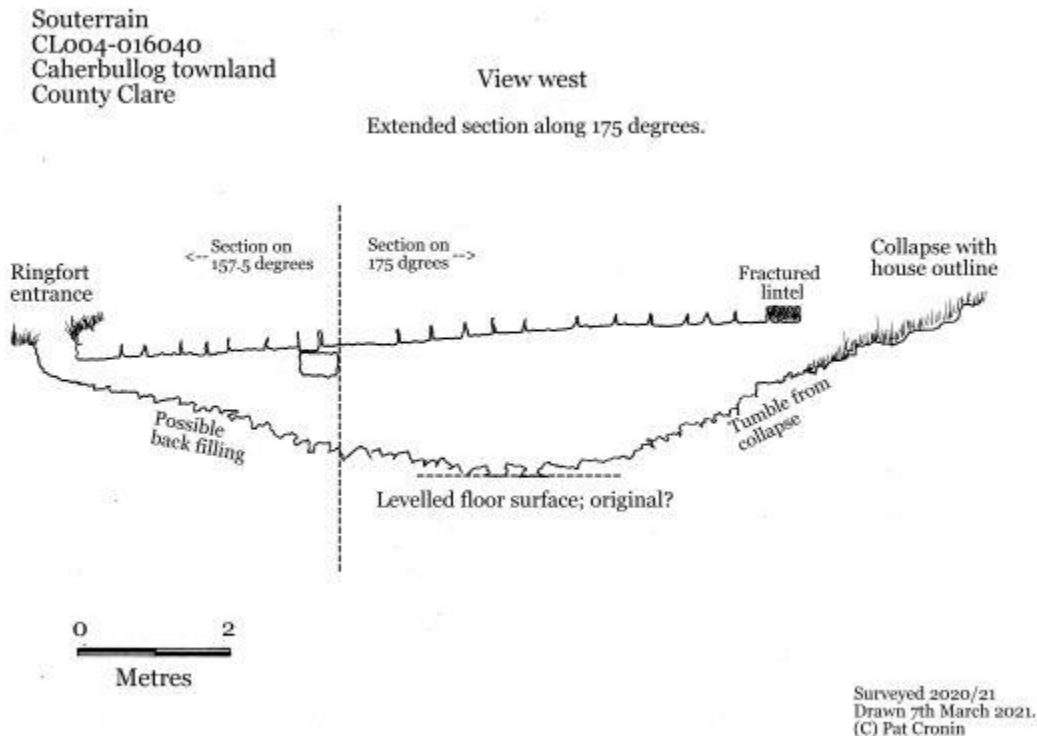
6<sup>th</sup> March

Cobbett's birthday

6<sup>th</sup> March CLO04-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog

Solo

Cloud 30%; Wind SE, F4; Ground drying; Visibility 20Nm: The Plan: resurvey passage dimensions. Left Hilux at the junction of the drover's road; walk took less than thirty minutes. Set up the laser level to project some 90mm below the lowest lintel to the entrance, establishing equal height datums from the entrance, via the junction of the passages to the edge of the collapse; installed a tape between each datum.



Had decided to measure the passage cross section at each roof lintel joint, (left, right, up, down); took the opportunity to record the curious triangular recess on the east side at the passage junction. The west side has well chosen boulders purposefully positioned to support the low lintel. This will require a specific set up to correctly record this feature. The next visit intends record the entrance, the area where the entrance passage meets the chamber, mid way along the chamber and the edge of the collapse; these specific points will offer the best illustration of the significant corbelling built to accommodate the then, available roof lintel lengths. Also decided when conducting profiles of the site

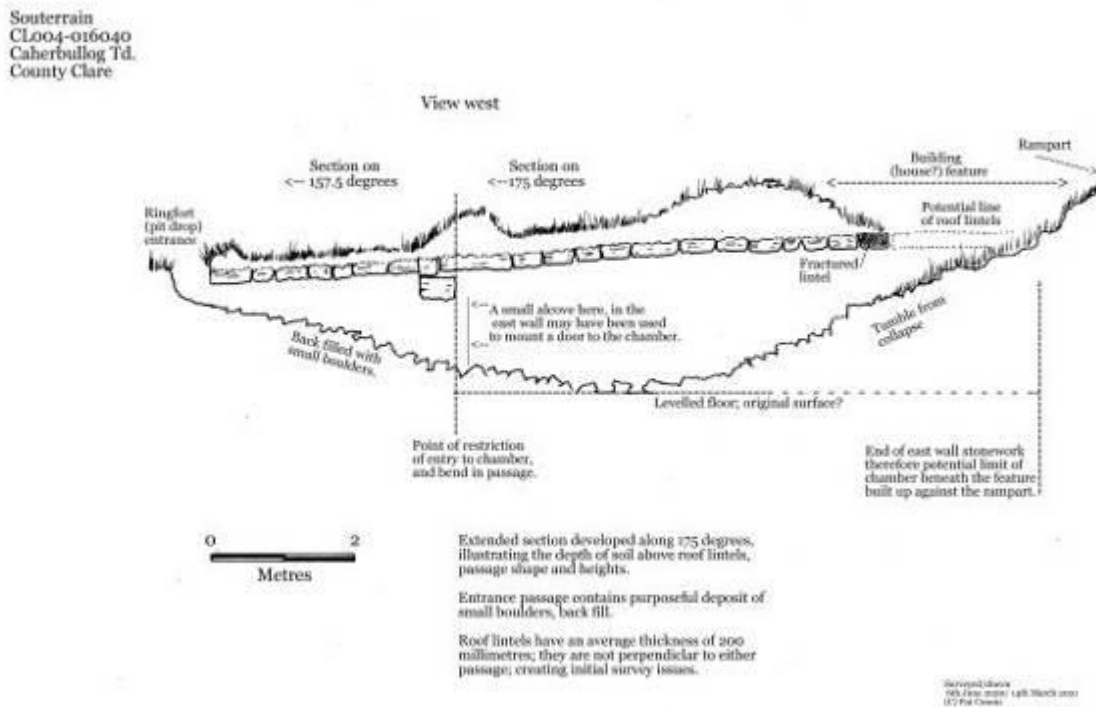


surface, will include both the entrance and collapse area of the souterrain, which will be on a bearing, something close too  $175^\circ$  Mg, the other profile set perpendicular to this bearing say  $085^\circ$ . When surveying the entire ringfort, the erection of a plane table will need be set on the limestone terrace, some three metres SE of the house, where it will be able to see / record the entire ringfort interior features. Managed to push head into hole in slope of the collapsed boulders, observed the end of the east wall stonework set against bedrock; suspicions the souterrain extended beyond the ringfort rampart may be unfounded. A cracking day; didn't spill any tea. Intend to invite others to assist with the site survey.

14<sup>th</sup> March CL004-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog

Solo

Cold: Showers: Cloud 100%: Cloud base  $\approx 700$ ft: Wind N/NE F3: Visibility thirty metres: Ground sodden. The Plan: check a measurement. Left the Hilux near Poul an Phúca III; the late start encountering poor visibility, did not use a GPSR, exercised memory, minor delay locating the ringfort in dense fog. Re-measured distance between base of the first lintel and entrance floor datum; measurement in fact correct: need write neater in field book! Near the unregistered, substantial enclosure thoughts turned to the cave entrance enthusiastically mentioned by landowner; need ask MF of exact location. Emerged from cloud base at drover's track junction; 800ft. Am much happier with souterrain survey.



15<sup>th</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cloud Base  $\approx 300$ ft: Rain: Visibility 80m: Wind SW, F1: Ground awash: Medium stream: The Plan: continue building the scaffold grill. The winch shed was delightfully dry; recent protracted, heavy rainfall being an excellent test. Ran the generator and the winch whilst dangling in the shaft; fitted the four-metre length on the east side; it is, for the moment

at an angle. This tube extends to the north edge of the shaft collar, similar to the tube on the west side. When the shaft collar is dismantled to replace the dodgy pallet, it will be possible to extend the lateral scaffold tube beneath the replacement pallets, improving overall support. Nine of the ten scaffold clips left on site used, leaving a total stock of eleven; originating in the UK, posted to Popeye, then kindly delivered by Matt Randall. UK prices around £2.50 a piece, Ireland around 25 euro each. Fairly soaked, turned attention to the winch, having it ran for an hour; capstan would not function, muddy and wet left stripping the winch for the moment. Generator ¼ full: five litres of fuel on site.

Hours 2 (2715), Southend (1665), Kibbles 0 (5331), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6201

17<sup>th</sup> March CLO04-016040 Souterrain, Caherbullog

Solo

Cold: Wind N, F2: Cloud 100%, thin layer: Watery sun: Ground wet: The Plan: record passage cross sections. Sciatica playing up: parked east of the Blessed well to reduce walk in distance, even so the kilometre took forty minutes to traverse. Chose to record section midway along the chamber and where the entrance passage meets the chamber. Hung tape measure from roof lintels; using a tripod mounted red laser for vertical precision. This area of the chamber is where the original floor surface may be exposed, among the scatter of stones, so may have the original chamber height. Intended to record ringfort entrance section and mid point in the entrance passage; discomfort decided otherwise. Departing, made NW to avoid crossing the rough area of clints and grykes. Thirty metres North encountered a curious pile of large rocks; similar to roof lintels; first impressions are the feature is a building. Painfully slow return to the truck; gate resembled that of a ruptured duck: reached the truck in Fog: Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Souterrain  
CLO04-016040  
Caherbullog Td.  
County Clare.

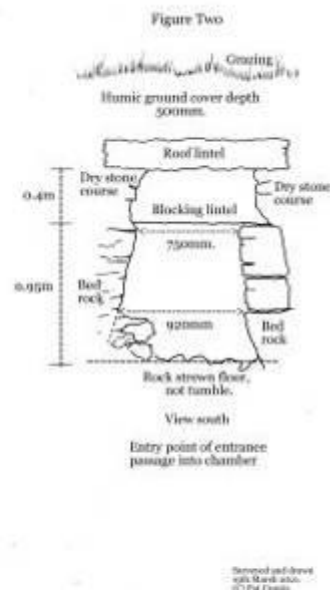
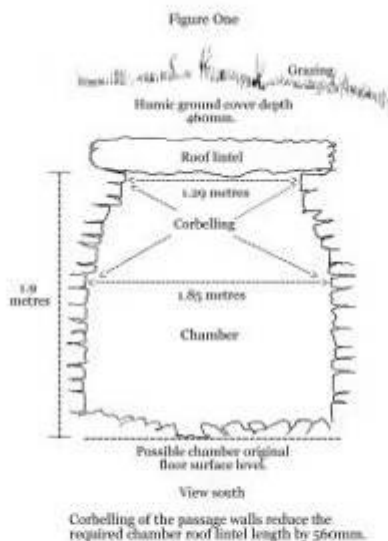
The souterrain entrance is located centrally within a stone ringfort. Its passage extending north to beneath a stone feature, perhaps the primary dwelling? Within this stone feature a collapse has exposed the chamber below. It is quite possible there once existed a private entrance into the souterrain chamber through the floor of this feature.

Throughout the length of the surviving souterrain its roof lintels have been installed uniformly along a gradient of 4 degrees, rising toward the north end.

Figure Two.

Where the entrance passage enters the chamber, its height and width have been significantly reduced, accomplished by utilizing the extant bedrock to narrow the portal, and by installing a large lintel to reduce its height; (see blocking lintel).

The blocking lintel forms an obstruction which may also have had a door to secure the chamber. There is an alcove in the east wall at the portal that might accommodate a door pivoting mechanism. Surplus food was a valuable resource and subject to theft.



18<sup>th</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cool: Cloud 100%: Wind N, F2: Visibility 5Nm: Ground wet: Small stream: The Plan: maintenance. The winch motor's ability to engage and release the drive to the capstan



required attention; enforced Covid absence from digging has likely cause corrosion to form on the drive shaft surface. An awkward, steady process of stripping the drive was temporarily halted for want of an imperial Allen Key to enable removal of the motor end housing. Task should be completed the next visit. Generator  $\frac{3}{4}$  full: no fuel on site.

Hours 4 (2719), Southend (1669), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

19<sup>th</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Mild: Cloud 90%: Wind N, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Small stream: The Plan: Strip out the winch motor. CC arrived laden with tools. Steady job removing the clutch housing. Care exercised to avoid dropping parts through the gaps down the north shaft. Scrutinized in daylight, the team mused over the practicalities of its further disassembly; a task for CC's workshop. Generator  $\frac{3}{4}$  full: no fuel on site: took photo of scaffold grill. Assessed impending dodgy pallet replacement procedure: PC has two pallets. For ease of removal will dismantle the entire section surrounding the suspect pallet. Intend to mount the replacement pallet upon scaffold tubes in addition to existing timber.

Hours 4 (2723), Southend (1673), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201



View northwest of North End protection grill beneath working platform 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

25<sup>th</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester

10:00. Cloud 60%: Wind N, F4: Visibility <20Nm: Ground wet: Small stream. The Plan: reassemble the winch. PC obtained two pallets, delivering same to the dig. The serviced clutch mechanism was swiftly reattached to the motor and ancillary linkages; testing, the system performed well; ready to winch. Reviewed procedure of stripping apart platform, shaft collar and crawl way through to the fixed ladder, to remove the dodgy pallet. Have settled on lifting two pallets from the platform to access the assemblage below; this way CC can lower kit directly onto a suspended PC. Generator  $\frac{3}{4}$  full: no fuel on site.

Hours 3 (2726), Southend (1676), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

27<sup>th</sup> March Clocks Spring forward

28<sup>th</sup> March Ringfort, (Cashels) CL004-016021 & CL004-016022  
Solo

Heavy rain: Cloud base 300ft: Visibility 30 metres: Wind SSW, F8/9: Ground sodden. The Plan: check above cashels for evidence of souterrains. These two cashels are square in form. Such cashels are suggested as potential medieval administrative centres, where tithes were collected - disputes settled. An exposed landscape, open to weather from all points of the compass: elevation  $\approx$ 970ft, (295m). Delayed with assisting Christy O'Brien round up wayward cattle, just as rain arrived, further reducing already poor visibility. Water poured off the land and down the ruts of the Drovers Road. Scampered off to find these cashels before Noah arrived, rain increasing torrential: abandoned search after, visibility reduced to five metres and water level in boots overflowed through lace holes; totally and utterly drenched. Turned west, through fog, located the Drovers Road, turned SW; sheltered from driving rain behind wall, near stile. Visibility lifted to one hundred metres. Noted a very interesting depression beyond the western wall; closer inspection is required. This area is a little further north from that prospected with Mark Lumley, some twenty years back. Encountered Christy again; enquired ownership of the depression, delighted to hear the owner is a friend of PC. Walked back to the Hilux at Faunarooska; thoughts turned to RA and Steve Milner busy sunning themselves in Australia, bugger.

29<sup>th</sup> March is the anniversary of departing Panamá as the Pox descended upon the world.

29<sup>th</sup> March Site in Ballyelly townland  
Solo

ITM 514873 x 705715

Elevation  $\approx$ 260 metres, (850ft)

Cloud 100%: Wind S, F6: Light drizzle: Visibility <20Nm: Ground wet. The Plan: visit the depression. Assessing the site from an elevated position sparked a distant memory of previously being here with Mark Lumley. An enclosed depression; estimated an acre in area: seventy odd metres diameter. Virtually circular, it's flat base is a conservative ten metres below the surrounding karst pavement and adjacent an OS spot height. A ten-metre-wide channel flows north; its invert some three metres above the "apparent" floor level of the depression. This floor is bog; soft, deep and yielding; experienced difficulty approaching the sinks. Of which there are at least three, all equally promising; further work required. Before becoming too excited need double check ownership and obtain permission. A year ago, today the remaining Panamá Project Team left Panamá, as the nation closed for the duration; never realizing we would not see Marilyn, ever, again.



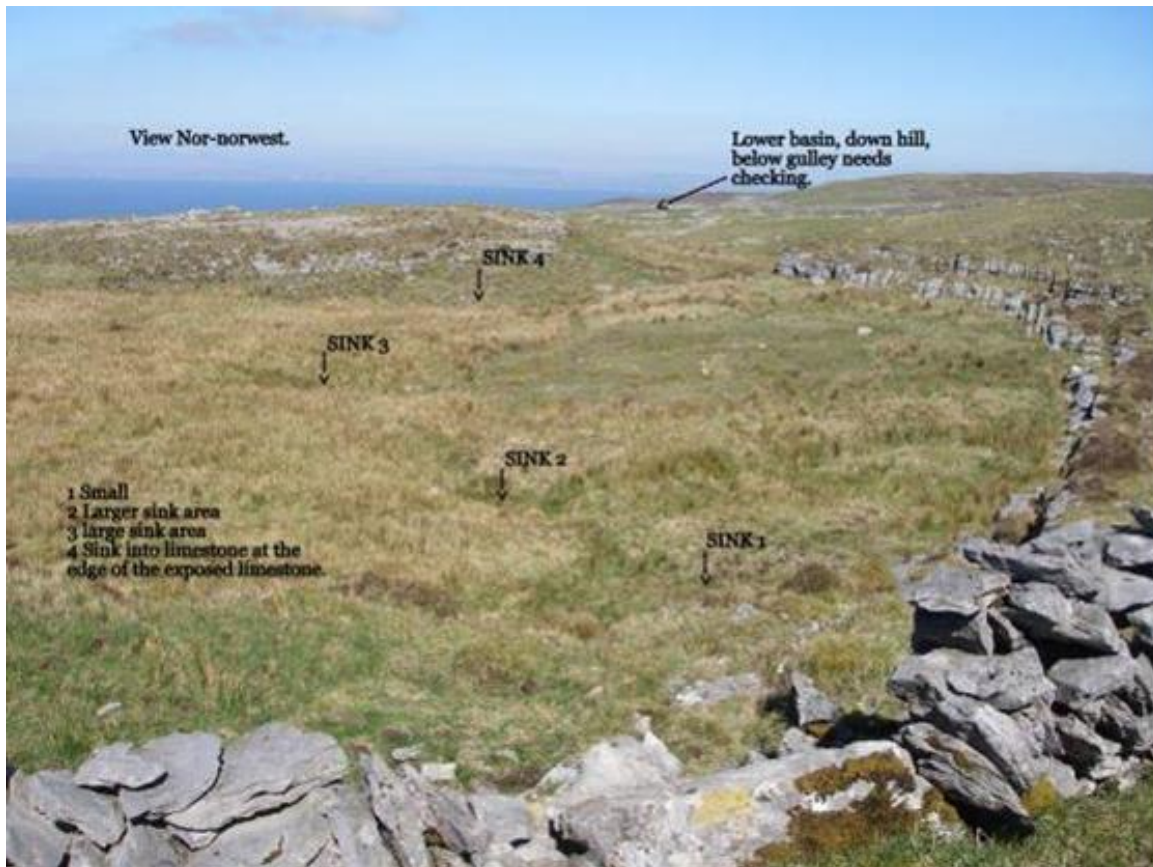
30<sup>th</sup> March An Taoiseach announces County wide travel from 12<sup>th</sup> April.

30<sup>th</sup> March Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Solo

Failed to scrounge pallets from the Creamery; a neighbour, overhearing the plea offered to deliver several he had. Unfortunately, they are 1000mm x 800mm, though heavy duty; will do to close off the sides beneath the platform. Slowly crept the Hilux toward the bend in the downhill track, stopped; deciding conditions too poor to proceed. Experienced a slow-motion slide, all wheels locked; slid sedately around the sharp bend finishing at the bottom of the slope; dropped off pallets. Managed to turn the truck in the shite; engaged low ratio, only managing some five metres up the 10° slope. Engaged diff locks, sat back and waited while the truck crept imperceptibly up the 30° slope. Twenty minutes reached the uphill side of the bend, but no further, no traction. Pete Williams and his tractor arrived to assist recovery; a very nice bloke.

2<sup>nd</sup> April Ballyelly Townland, North West Sliabh Eilbh  
Solo

Sunny: Cloud dissipating: Wind NE, F5/6. Wind Chill: Ground drying: Visibility >20Nm. The Plan; check sites adjacent to souterrain CLOO4-016040 and inspect the depression. Parked at Poul an Phúca III, walked to the depression; area much drier. Sink 1 is small, a minor hollow is present. Sink 2 is larger, some two metres in diameter; appearing a soak away; no obvious opening. Sink 3 is of similar size and conditions to Sink 2.



Sink 4 is the most interesting thus far; at the edge of the depression against the exposed surrounding limestone, here the area is silty, with a depth of 0.4m; very wet. Through the ancient surface drain gully, the previous estimated invert height, above the depression floor is incorrect; being closer to two metres; though four if measured from the invert of sink 2. The gully drains north, discharging onto a broad area, sloping down to an elongated depression: in the distance a cave tree is visible among taller, healthy-looking grass/reed growth at what appears the depressions lowest point. Before doing any more will obtain permission to poke about.

Walked two kilometres north to an area containing several archaeological sites; of which one particular sub-square ringfort may be of greater significance. This is one sector of the wider souterrain project area. Some of these sites may be contemporaneous with the souterrain; located one kilometre East-south-east. Such sites may help explain why the souterrain was constructed in its host ringfort location. Bumped into Christy O'Brien and Alan; searching for calving cattle. Alan expressed an interest in caving. Headed over to a pile of rocks, three hundred metres off the drover's track; found the remains of a Clochan, ITM 515422 x 705757, a form of religious habitation; no obvious features survive among the extensive pile of stones. Its original shape would be like a large, stone beehive. In this elevated position, ( $\approx 95\text{ft}$ ), it would have been visible for miles, perhaps the whole point; establishment some form of spiritual authority elevated above the secular?

Cashel, CLO04-016022, at first appears a modern farm enclosure, the south wall set with large thin boulders placed vertically. Deep joy: two parts of cashel wall survive. The west portion, some 1.2m wide, two metres high by some six metres long. At the south end of the eastern wall appears to be the cashels original entrance threshold. The north end of the eastern wall turns to the west here the internal corner is built as a very neat radius; this attractive, uniform shape is replicated externally. The interior floor of the cashel constitutes a broad flat surface, with no obvious features. This Cashel appears to have been an important settlement or place where a Noble's authority was manifest. Extensive effort has repaired and raised its severely denuded walls, it is highly likely the stone was used to build the nearby, substantial boundary wall between the townlands of Ballyelly and Coolmeen. Headed for the Wedge Tomb, encountering an unregistered hut circle, three metres diameter, ITM 515322 x 705918; a hundred metres east of said wedge tomb. This is not the only unregistered site; there are many other shapeless piles of stone which need a far more practiced eye. Ancient field system walls crisscross the landscape.

3<sup>rd</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Mild: Sunny: Cloud 10%: Wind S, F2: Ground drying: Small stream: Visibility >25Nm. The Plan: replace the dodgy pallet. Arrived 10:00, with tubing, tools and tea. While CC stripped apart the safety surround of the shaft collar, PC stripped out a pallet to remove the dodgy one via the east side and install two more galvanized scaffold tubes as extra support to the new pallet. The confined area beneath the platform above the yawning maw was problematic removing the existing secured timber work, which was immensely heavy being soaking wet. After three tough hours the scaffolding was secured in place and a new heavy-duty pallet in position. The previous two scaffold tubes were relocated in their final position and secured. Wrapping up PC suggested a solution to sort the issue of replacing the rotten lower shaft collar pallet, which fell apart during the initial process. The new structure will have greater support; so, much safer and stronger. Another session will complete this present task; possibly tomorrow night. The alteration to the



present 5k travel restrictions changes the 12<sup>th</sup> April, to travel county wide. Generator ¾ full, but not run, oil check required,

Hours 6 (2732), Southend (1682), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

4<sup>th</sup> April Unregistered souterrain, Ballycahan Townland

Ritchie Jones, Katie Theasby

10:00. Cloud 90%: Wind W, F2: Ground drying: Visibility >15Nm: Called by RJ to accompany him to the souterrain; he'd also arranged for KT to join in. What he wanted was a walk around the general area to pose a theory of a potential unregistered cashel, discuss the possible use of a tear drop shaped enclosure and propose the Neolithic Court Tomb is in fact a Bronze Age Wedge Tomb.

4<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cloud 100%: Cool: Wind N, F2: Visibility <20Nm. Ground drying. The Plan: complete the lower shaft collar assembly. Visited CC earlier on, picked up 2 x heavy 4x2 timbers to support the edges of the shaft collar pallet; carried same, harness, tools and other pallets to dig. Installed the new supports across the shaft to secure collar pallet to; followed by finally securing in place a heavy-duty pallet that forms the crawl way to the fixed ladder. Installed support rails, and guides which carry the lower, sliding shaft safety cover: (800mm x 1200mm plastic pallet). Inspecting the platform pallet adjacent the shaft, decided to replace it; as it takes the weight of the barrow when receiving spoil from winching. Outstanding; the open side beneath the platform, through which this work was carried out requires closing off, securing/safeguarding from dogs and the curious. Generator ¾ full, not run: no fuel on site.

Hours 4 (2736), Southend (1686), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201



Considines: view toward the covered, northern shaft. The red pallet replaced the rotten one; out of sight, to the left is located the hauling way with the second sliding safety cover. 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

7<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 90%: Wind NW, F2/3: Visibility >25Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: continue maintenance. Replaced the pallet on which the barrow is loaded; installing two separate supports to facilitate ease of its/any future replacement. Reassembled the shaft collar structure; reducing risk of debris falling down the shaft when loading the barrow. Refitted the pallet on the east side, closing off the crawl way. Refitted the draw rope that opens the lower shaft cover both lines secured to the plastic pallet. Generator not run: no spare fuel on site. National travel restrictions ease the 12<sup>th</sup> April; travel allowed within the County.

Outstanding tasks, at the very least:

Fit final pallet to platform area

Close off open area beneath platform

Cut out the new lower shaft collar opening

Close off west side of platform at the shaft edge

Re-route underground lighting cable through to the winch house

Clean kibble hook and lubricate

Test comm's and signal systems

Re-route power cable from generator

Check generator oil

Re-roof generator shed

Descend fixed ladder and check its fixings are secure

Clean all fallen debris from shaft ledges, pipework and the "Plank"

Check fixed lifeline

Install "flyline" to facilitate return of lifeline to the shaft base

Survey -22.5m level in shaft

Install "pallet wall" as rain protection for winch house from southwest weather

Re-cover the tripod with new weather cover

Hours 5 (2741), Southend (1691), Kibbles 0 (5331), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6201

9<sup>th</sup> April North West Sliabh Eilbh

Solo

Cloud 60%: Wind N, F3/4: Visibility >35Nm: Ground drying: The Plan: explore sinks MQ42 and MQ43. Parked at Faunarooska Cross; fifteen minutes to walk in. Started at MQ43; once again no suitable belays, used a 0.5m long nail bar pushed into soft bog. The pot is -3m; a water worn rift swiftly narrows, becoming blocked with fallen fragments of water worn limestone and lumps of bog. Recovered kit; moved twenty metres north to MQ42. Firmer ground here for the nail bar. This hole is -3m, at its base the circular pot was uninspiring; pulling aside a moss curtain, exposed a 0.5m wide, two-metre-long rift heading south. Of all the sinks so far, this one is wide enough to dig with relative ease.

10<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Chill: Cloud 20%: Wind N, F2: Visibility >35Nm: Ground drying: Small stream: The Plan: maintenance. Installed a temporary pallet, (ideally needs a heavier duty), adjacent the shaft, closed off the opening beneath this area of the platform; also closed off the gap on the west side of the lower shaft collar. Re-routed the power cable from the generator to the winch; now run at high level. Re-threaded the underground lighting cable between the shaft and the winch house; a metre of length is spare. Checked and topped up the generator oil. Cleaned accumulated silt from the large water cistern; refitted cover.

Hours 2 (2743), Southend (1693), Kibbles 0 (5331), Nets 0 (869), Total lifts 6201



2021



View north, MQ43 depression; 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021



View northeast, MQ43; 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021



Nail bar belay, view west, MQ43; 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

11<sup>th</sup> April Souterrain CLO04 062002

Ruth Hollingsworth, Katie Theasby, Ritchie Jones

Cool: Cloud 60%; Wind NW, F2: Ground drying. Waiting for the others to arrive at Oughtdarra church, PC was approached by John Morgan; Farmer, who, recognizing the Hilux, is aware of the digging at Considines. Twenty enjoyable minutes chatting about the world beneath the earth and local archaeology. During which he enquired if PC was out looking for caves “up above”, indicating the vast lower limestone terrace, just east of Noel Thynnes land. Answered, no, not today, but would love too; go ahead was the reply. When the others arrived, clarified with JM a route to his land; asking if OK to wander today looking at archaeology; again, no problem: a really nice bloke.

RH and KT are reading archaeology at Galway Uni; the same previously undertaken by RJ and PC. The Plan: introduce them to archaeology in the Oughtdarra and Ballynahown townlands. Enclosures, Cashels, Souterrains: a great selection. The Covid restrictions have severely curtailed their involvement with tutors, so such an outing gave them some level of introduction to field work, preparing them for their forthcoming field survey project. Witnessed the spectacle of some thirty odd feral goats effortlessly scaling the near vertical upper terrace cliff face. Four hours of sun, fun and laughter: Primroses, Orchids and many other blooms delighted the eye, a cracking trip.

12<sup>th</sup> April An Taoiseach announces county wide travel permitted from **today**.



13<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 30%: Wind N, F2: Visibility >35Nm: Ground drying: Small trickle: The Plan: maintenance. PC descended; cleaning fallen debris after installation of the scaffold grill. Applied the hose to expose the fill in the lower part of the gap between the north and south shafts; managing to wash away most of the loose items. Ascending, all stemple securing's were checked; staging at -14m and "The Plank were washed clean of its mud coating and loose debris. Gazing out into the shaft noticed a pink cylinder resting on the RSJ; it is a container for washing powder in which interesting items are placed exposed during operations. This was left at -23m; the RSJ is at -12m; water has filled the shaft to at least this level to set this item at its present elevation. The signal box had previously been raised to -3m to avoid such an inundation: continued ascent. Lower shaft collar cut open. Weather cover replaced on the generator shed and weather cover fixed to the open side of winch shed. Telecommunication system checked; hauling signal system requires checking. Generator ¾ full: no spare fuel on site. Almost, almost, ready to start digging.

Hours 4 (2747), Southend (1697), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

14<sup>th</sup> April Clahane, Liscannor

Ruth Hollingsworth, Katie Theasby, Ritchie Jones

Sunny evening: Wind NW, F2: Visibility >30Nm:

The Plan: to inspect carved flagstones on RH's farm. The two flagstones are vertical among the drystone wall. Each weigh ≈250/300Kgs. On adjacent wall are substantial dressed cap stones eighteen inches x five-foot x around four inches. The top is dressed with a wide radius. This is not their original placement.

15<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 60%: Wind W, F2: Visibility <25Nm: Ground Drying: Stream a bare trickle. The Plan: maintenance. Managed to cover one half of the head-frame; the remainder likely completed tomorrow, as the weather will deteriorate into showers over the weekend. The black plastic replacement is not as heavy duty as expected; time will tell of its strength. Generator not run: ¾ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 4 (2751), Southend (1701), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

16<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 80%: Wind SE, F3/4: Cool: Visibility <20Nm: Ground drying: Stream barely a trickle. The Plan: maintenance. Western side of the weather canopy was finished; task completed. CC prepared a route through the undergrowth behind the winch shed to the new spoil area. Generator topped up with fuel: no spare on site. Outstanding task, prior to winching is test the winch clutch under load. Need to clean and return hook.

Hours 4 (2755), Southend (1705), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

18<sup>th</sup> April Souterrain CL004-027008

Ruth Hollingsworth, Katie Theasby, Ritchie Jones

Cloud 100%: Visibility <10Nm: Ground drying: The Plan: archaeological. Requested to introduce the girls to more archaeology; took them to the imposing cashel, Caherdoon and its unroofed souterrain. En-route passed by Drunken Horse Hole, following the pass south. The girls are getting their eye in; successfully identifying several unrecorded hut circles. Climbed onto the west end of the middle terrace, which extends around the mountain from souterrain, CL004-062002; an area of extensive medieval field systems



and settlements. On this southwest corner of the terrace an idyllic cabin and its garden century, or as late as the 1950s? It is in excellent condition; its gables intact. This fine example of a stone-built cabin warrants accurate recording, as does the narrow track constructed up the side of the cliff face. Intend to survey this small building, it being the size and shape the cabin, the paternal Grandparents and their large family dwelt in at Whitepoint, Cobh, Co. Cork, until they immigrated in 1937 to Bristol.

22<sup>nd</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester

Cloud 50%: Wind SE, F4: Visibility <25Nm: Ground drying: Stream a trickle. The Plan: maintenance. Secured the lifting hook to the hauling line sit long abandoned. Remote, in the true sense of the word, this settlement is without date; stone built, can only guess it was constructed sometime in the very late 18<sup>th</sup> with a steel, oval, screwgate karabiner; tested the winch under load to check its recent servicing. Dismantled and reassembled the winch counter balance, to allow the wheel barrow to access the spoil area behind the winch shed. Trimmed Blackthorn along passageway to improving access and avoid injury. Telephone and signaling systems operational; some minor tasks remain outstanding but do not impact on digging. Generator full: no spare fuel on site.

Hours 4 (2759), Southend (1709), Kibbles o (5331), Nets o (869), Total lifts 6201

23<sup>rd</sup> April Tendered resignation of the Doolin Unit, Irish Coast Guard.

24<sup>th</sup> April Lough Awaddy  
Nick Geh

Cloud 10%: Wind E, F2: Ground drying: Visibility ≈25Km. The Plan: investigate the lough. Lough Awaddy is located five hundred metres SSE of Lough Aughrim, among a vast karst landscape. PC believes this area has similar, significant aquifers to what he discovered west of Gort in the 1980s. Further to an aerial image taken during a fly over, piloted by Dig Hastilow in 2002, Lough Aughrim was dived by PC in December 2003. The vertical walled, oval shaft was dived to -13m, during winter water levels. The base of the large pot exhibits an almost level silt floor; the sediment more than leg length deep. Its uniformity suggests a constant upwelling of flow. Wider scrutiny found several sites, in the area; Lough Awaddy was the next of this project. The almost featureless landscape caused issues identifying the site. Crystal clear water showed a depth of the northern pot to be perhaps ten metres; viewed from an adjacent limestone bench. Forty metres to the south the main pot is estimated at twenty-five metres diameter from the aerial image. A weighted plumb line was repeatedly deployed unsuccessfully from a position behind a reed bank. Estimated depth for part of the pot is similar the adjacent site of perhaps six to ten metres. The plan is to conduct a dive to ascertain its shape and depth. Theory; prior to glacial advance, such vertical pots may have linked an upper system to the present inaccessible aquifer. A worthwhile project to explore the nature of any and all submerged pots in the area: a cracking day in excellent company.

25<sup>th</sup> April Ballycahan Townland  
Ruth Hollingsworth, Katie Theasby, Ritchie Jones

Cloud 5%: Wind E, F2/3: Visibility <20Nm: Ground drying: Squeezed in a swift trip with the archaeological students; managed an hour's walk north along the coast before heading to Ennis for the Covid-19 jab; met with Dennis Driscoll.

25<sup>th</sup> April Treachys Hotel, Ennis

14:55, AstraZeneca vaccine inoculation: painless; without any immediate side affects.

26<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane

Almost cloudless: Wind NE, F1: Visibility <25Nm: Ground drying. The Plan: DIG. The availability of CM allowed the first actual excavating session since the 23<sup>rd</sup> January. CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing: CM digging. Arrived 09:30 to get the dig ready. CC and CM arrived 10:15. Set up a 2:1 hauling, to start removing the pile of boulders left since KLD's shift; the first lift caused concern. Clunks and knocks were emitted from the winch assembly. From the noise assumed the boulder to be very big; this was not in fact the case. Disassembled the 2:1, reverting to single hauling; noises lessened, but remained to a degree. Believe the issue to be the dry, stiff rope. Using the 2:1 noted only 100mm was left, available to hold, once the rope was around the capstan; need replace this rope. With the boulder pile left in situ, CM dug the south end, noting the subtle continued widening of the west wall. At surface, spoil was deposited in the original western area, however PC's upper body strength had deteriorated since the regular digging, that, or the residual affect of the Covid-19 jab yesterday pm. As weariness increased, spoil was placed in the new area behind the winch shed. Of the twenty-six lifts, twenty-five were very full kibbles, and one net. Generator all but full: five litres of spare fuel on site. Delighted to be actually digging again; noted error in running totals: corrected same.

Hours 6 (2765), Southend (1715), Kibbles 25 (5356), Nets 1 (870), Total lifts 6227



Photo/s Nick Geh

Boston is about a mile to the far right, near the end of the Famine Road; 26<sup>th</sup> April.



Lough Awaddy; Boston, main pot twenty-five metres diameter: 24<sup>th</sup> April.

27<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

Paul McGrath

Cloud 90%: Wind N, F4: Visibility <50Nm: Ground drying: Small trickle: The Plan: guided tour. PMcG has dug previously with the team, when work allowed. Suitably impressed at the endeavour; in Doolin for the summer, he could dig once a week.

28<sup>th</sup> April

Lost Michael Collins, Astronaut; a real explorer

29<sup>th</sup> April Considine's Cave, (South End)

CC, Paul McGrath, (PMcG)

14:00. Cloud 50%: Wind NE, F2/3: Visibility >35Nm: Ground drying: Tiny trickle of a stream: The Plan: Digging, introduce PMcG to safe digging operations and procedures.

CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing: PMcG digging. PC arrived 13:00 to install the remaining scaffold clips, securing the outstanding east side poles; there remains a small area which will need a further scaffold pole purchase: scaffold clips will soon arrive from the UK. 14:00 CC and PMcG arrived. The fitting of a longer hauling rope for 2:1 lifts was



deferred. Following an introduction to operational procedures PMcG descended, swiftly familiarized himself with the dig and safe hauling practices. The session produced a very satisfying twenty-five kibbles. Generator  $\frac{3}{4}$  full: five litres on site. Total number of lifts corrected, to date. CC absent in the UK for the next while. Potentially digging Thursday. Hours 7 (2772), Southend (1722), Kibbles 25 (5381), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6252

30<sup>th</sup> April ICRO retired rope.

Sent request to Terry Casserly and Adam de Ayto for a 70m length to allow a 2:1 system on the hauling line; present 50m is now, just not long enough to lift the large boulders.

1<sup>st</sup> May MQ45, Sliabh Eilbh

Solo

ITM 514379 x 704899

Depth 4m

Length 5m

Elevation  $\approx$ 270m

Cloud 50%: Wind WSW, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Ground drying. Parked at Faunarooska cross; twenty minutes walk in, with pack. The Plan: explore MQ45. MQ45 is one of many unrecorded sinks discovered Dec 2020 – Jan 2021 by PC; MQ45 is one of four near the southern limit of the line of sinks. A similar formation of sinks was discovered along the western flank of Knockaunsmountain in the early/mid 1980s in association with Mark Lumley, Steve Milner and Mike McDonald. A GPSR was used to relocate the site among the featureless landscape and adjacent similar sinks. MQ45 is situated within an oval depression, measuring fifteen metres long, east –west and ten metres wide; some two metres below moorland level. Three collapses have formed; the eastern, at two metres deep, is choked with fallen peat overburden. The western, also two metres deep is also choked with humic debris. The central, open pot was ladderred. Except for the entrance of Halliday's Hole, at almost five metres wide, this is the largest shaft size of those so far descended along this sinuous line of sinks; the entrance rift a metre wide. This pot is also choked with humic debris; westward a vertical squeeze enters another section of rift, (beneath the western collapse). Here a small, clean section of floor is exposed; shards of thin stone, (shale?), are scattered in the bedding: here, no stream evidence is obvious passing the tumbled, intact lumps of peat. It may be this bedding indicates a shale, or chert bed, it's difficult to determine. The presence of such a formation may explain why many of the sinks descended only reach a depth of around three metres, and no more. Depth of this bedding within MQ45 is -4m; the rift is five metres in length. This trip completes investigation of this group of four sinks; MQ42 to MQ45. Prior to checking the original established ITM, a GPSR was left to stabilize whilst the trip took place; accuracy improved from an initial error of 14m to a final error of just 3m, over thirty minutes.

2<sup>nd</sup> May Northwest Sliabh Eilbh

Ruth Hollingsworth, Ritchie Jones

Overcast: Wind W, F3: Visibility <30Nm. Ground dry. The Plan: visit archaeological sites. Walked in from Faunarooska Cross to the Megalithic tomb; CLO04-016042. Onto the Clochan; CLO04-016044 north to the square cashel: CLO04-016022. Finishing at the souterrain, CLO04-016040, which is part of the ongoing project. Many flowers present throughout the walk; dozens of Gentians, hundreds of Orchids, thousands of Primroses. A cracking wander.

2021

5<sup>th</sup> May S4

Paul McGrath

Cloud 60%: Wind NE, F4: Visibility <25Nm: Ground drying. The Plan; review the coastal dig S4. Nice walk in blustery conditions; scrutinized the site with the view that previous was really only visiting, so time, and equipment constrained. Really fancy opening it, but will need to protect the excavation from ingress to the sea and storm-tossed debris.

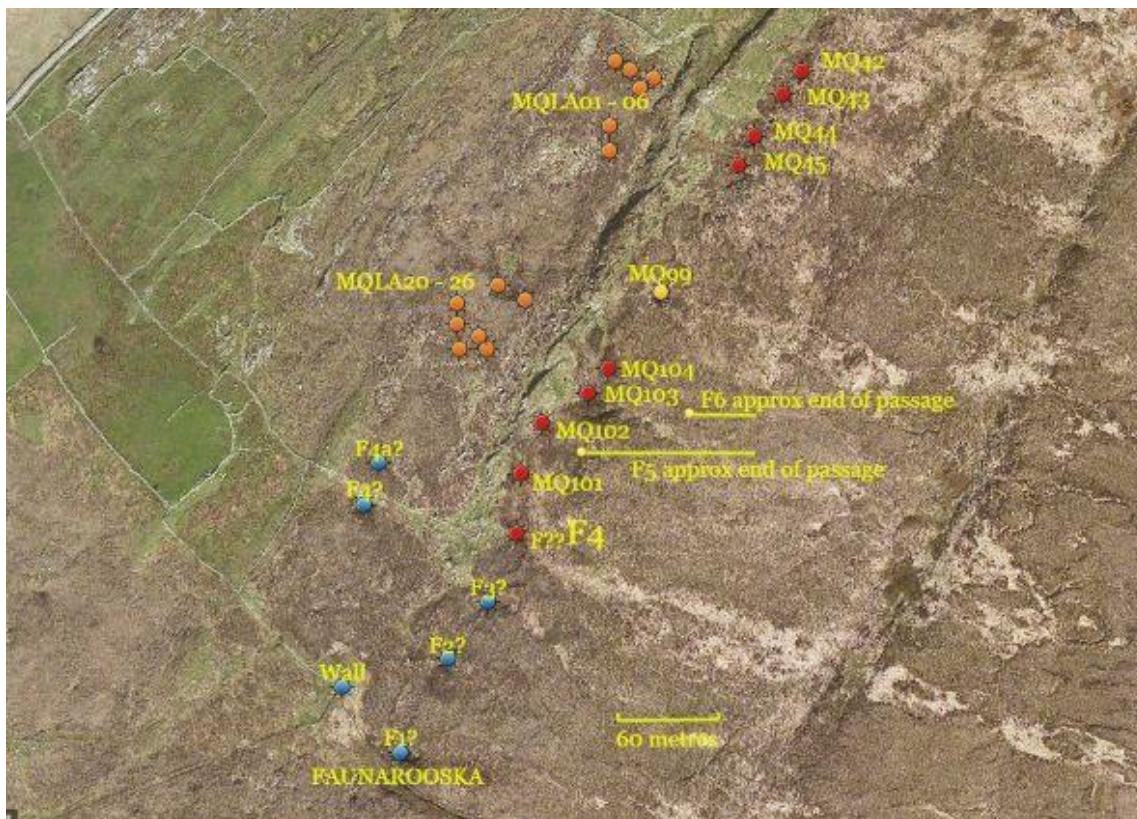


Image showing MQ42 – MQ45, along with other unrecorded sinks in the area; the blue sinks are those associated with Faunarooska Cave. 1<sup>st</sup> May.

MQLA: indicates sites found on the lower terrace.

MQ: indicates sites found on as specific farmers land, (Michael Queally).

6<sup>th</sup> May Considine's Cave, (South End)

Paul McGrath

Cloud 10%: Wind NW, F3: Visibility <30Nm: Ground drying: Very small stream. The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging: PC winching, unloading and barrowing. A minor delay meant digging was underway by 11:00. PMcG continued to excavate around the eastern wall, almost up to the projecting limestone rib; though not actually entering the potential Danger Zone. Of the twenty kibbles raised, six were of gravels and clays, the remainder boulders. The gravels were deposited in the spoil area behind the winch shed, the boulders cast upon the eastern end of the boulder pile; there is room enough for a good many more loads. The generator is 1/2 full: spare fuel on site. PMcG is a swift learner. KLD is presently occupied assisting with the Covid-19 vaccine rollout; will return as soon as practicable.

Hours 5 (2777), Southend (1727), Kibbles 20 (5401), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6272

10<sup>th</sup> May Poulmagollum  
Solo

Cloud 100%: Wind NW, F4: Showers: Visibility <20Nm: Ground damp: The Plan: visit Branch Passage cascade. Resurgence stream noted as quite high at the bridge. En-route, several surface streams noted as having a good flow. Upper Poulmagollum cascade clearly audible when half way across the field. Rigged a fifteen-metre rope off two tapes; abseiled in. Found a tree had fallen into the main pot, beneath the cascade. Water clarity, crystal; Gunman's stream had enough flow to produce two cascades into the main streamway. Evidence of very recent higher flow averaged six to eight inches above extant stream. Other tree branches encountered along the stream way. Approaching the first cascade, main stream depth averaged ankle deep, in cobble free sections. Minor inlets produced decent showers. At main junction installed a tell-tale within the sandbank; scampered off upstream toward Branch passage cascade. Along the crawling section found stream flow quite high; returned to Tell-Tale after twenty-minute absence noting main stream level had increased 27mm. Decided to exit; saw no obvious increase from the inlets. The first cascade showed a significant increase; beyond, the previous ankle-deep stream appeared unchanged. Surfaced to a heavy shower; used self lifeline to ascend climb. No obvious stream level increase at the bridge. The field in which Poulmagollum is located appears for sale; For Sale sign, with arrow pointing in its direction, is erected at the field gate.

14<sup>th</sup> May Considine's Cave, (South End)  
PMcG, PC

10:00. Cloud 100%, base 1200ft: Showers: Wind SW, F2: Visibility <3Nm: Ground damp: Tiny stream. Enroute PC liberated a heavy pallet. The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging/photos: PC winching, unloading and barrowing. PMcG took photos, before wresting two boulders from the floor; inadvertently creating a 0.6m high face. Taking the initiative, PMcG dug out the spoil northward, finding this horizontal digging method simpler and easier. The bothersome gap between the two projecting ribs is all but centre of the hauling way; the extant, almost parallel gap may continue downward, but remains to be seen. Presently, two steps, in the shaft floor ascend from the South End to the "Ribs". This spoil needs complete removal to see if the gap between the "Ribs" continues. In line with the centre of the hauling way, if the present gap width continues, there should be no hauling issues. If however the gap does narrow, or heal up, then CC's suggestion to deviate the hauling rope whilst in motion will require design, installation and implementation. Of the twenty kibbles raised one was of small stones sorted specifically to surface the new barrow way behind the winch shed: eight kibbles were clays and stones, the others of boulders. Winch working well since CC serviced the motor. Generator 1/2 full: spare fuel on site.

Hours 5 (2782), Southend (1732), Kibbles 20 (5421), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6292

17<sup>th</sup> May Non-essential, Irish, retail outlets open today.

21<sup>st</sup> May Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud base 2000ft: Wind N, F3: Visibility <20Nm: Showers: Ground soft: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG dug from the east wall around to the southern rift, lowering the floor by about a foot, (0.3m). Using the "cheating sticks", the fill in the south rift was removed to within a foot of the shaft floor. The base of the hole, excavated adjacent the southeast rift is estimated to be



around -24m; if accurate, this depth is approaching only two metres above the bottom of the North End shaft. The session resulted with a delightful thirty kibbles lifted of clays, cobbles and boulders. Finishing off the session PC topped up the generator, immediately noticing a lack of petrol odour from said fluid. Some two litres were poured into the tank containing some two litres. At home PC found it was not all petrol, but mostly water. Prior to the planned maintenance session, Monday 09:30, PC will drain the generator tank and replenish. Said fluid was bought at Aran View Station; visited to remonstrate with the staff, without success. PMcG related the place has a reputation for dodgy fuel.

Hours 6 (2788), Southend (1738), Kibbles 30 (5451), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6322



Photo PMcG

View northeast, aluminium ladder extension to fixed ladder; 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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

Solo

Cloud 75%: Wind W, F2: Visibility <30Nm: Ground wet: Small stream. The Plan: clean out dodgy fuel. Used small tube to drain fuel from service tap into can. Inserted clean linen cloths to soak up any residual fluid left in the fuel tank. Filled empty tank with five litres; this quantity is indicated as a shade under 1/4 full on the tank gauge. Started first pull, as always; ran generator ten minutes without any issue: ready for tomorrow session.

Hours 2 (2790), Southend (1740), Kibbles 30 (5451), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6322



Photo PMcG

Gap between “The Ribs”, hauling hook illustrates centre line of hauling way; 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

24<sup>th</sup> May Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

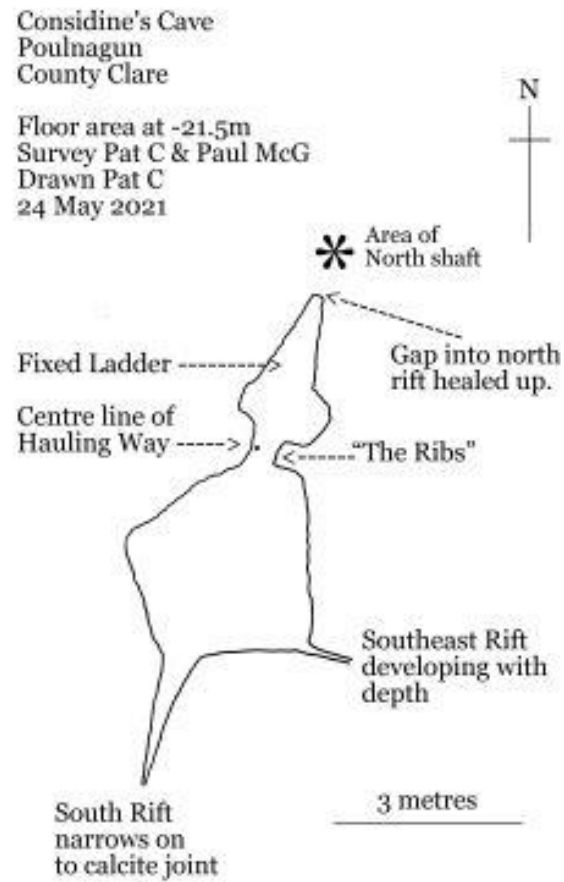
Cloud 70%: Wind NW, F3: Visibility 30<Nm: Ground wet: Small stream. The Plan: Survey and maintenance. With two planned to survey the issue of the lifeline arose again; rather the inability to get the line down to the next man waiting to ascend. PC secured a 13mm polypropylene line, (courtesy PMcG), adjacent the top of the fixed ladder. At the bottom this line was tensioned, by hand, and secured to a piece of rebar inserted into the drilled 14mm hole, adjacent the south rift. The process; the first man to surface clips the krab around this line, down which it slides, returning to the bottom, well away from the ladder, staging, cables and hoses. PMcG and PC began to survey; the uneven floor meant this planning was best made at -21.5m. A laser level was sited in the south rift to assist centring lateral measurements. A plumb bob from the surface centred the hauling way. The tape measure was secured into each narrow end of the north and south rifts. With the excellent help of PMcG recording the survey was swiftly concluded. Whilst PC then phuffed about, PMcG was itching to wrest rocks from the south rift, exposing gaps and an elongated cavity, some metre in depth. Meanwhile, upstairs, CC had investigated an intermittent vibration from the winch. Then cutting a hole in the pallet through which to easier deploy the lifeline, had laid boulders along the dry stone spoil retaining wall, (to increase its containment capacity), and trimmed the large shrub obstructing the east end of the boulder pile. PMcG topped up the generator with fuel: a cracking session.

Hours 6 (2796), Southend (1746), Kibbles 30 (5481), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6352

2021

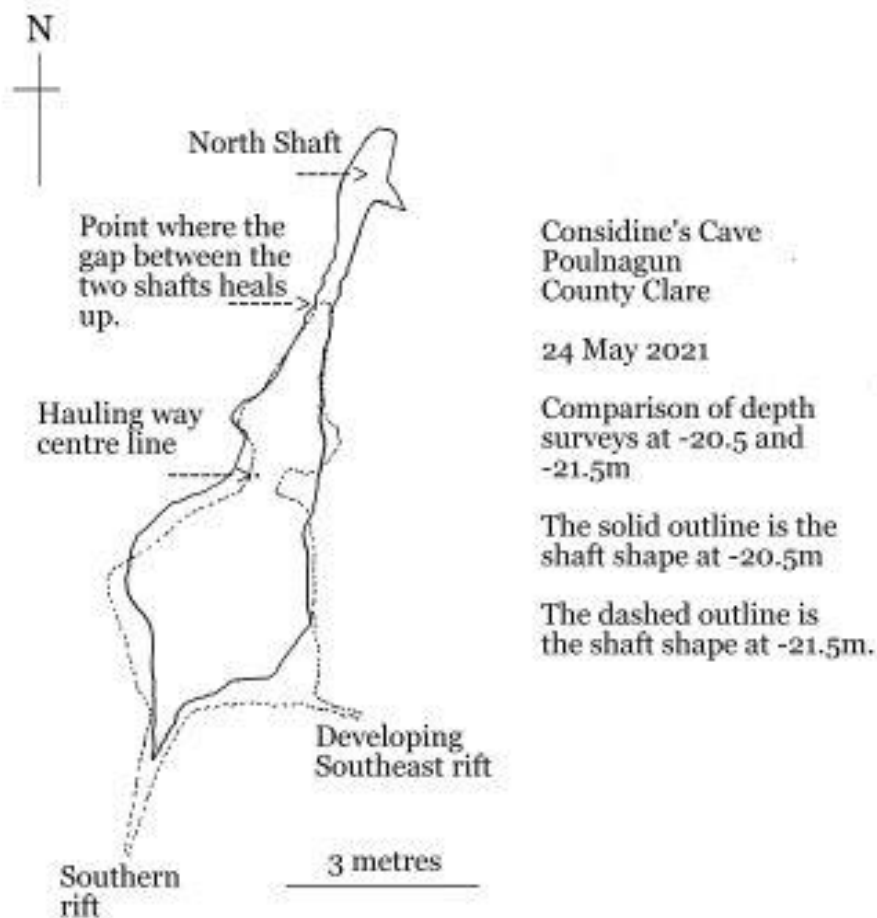
26<sup>th</sup> May Resigned from the IRCG; Handed in equipment.

26<sup>th</sup> May 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Helen Farr



(C) Pegasus CN.





These plans compare the shape of the shaft at regular depths. Surveys have been taken at -18.5m, -20.5m and -21.5m. The image above displays the change in shape and how the south shaft is presently not connected to the northern shaft.

The dashed outline of -21.5 level shows how the shaft continues to increase in size and alter shape toward the south end. The developing southeast rift, though narrow at present has an estimated depth of a further four metres. This places its invert just below that of the stream in the lowest part of the northern shaft.

(C) Pegasus CN.

27<sup>th</sup> May Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%, base 600ft: Rain: Visibility <4Nm: Ground wet: Small stream: The Plan: dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG continued to dig around the south end, toward the "Ribs"; lowering the uneven floor to an average of twenty-three metres, deepest measured at 23.9m. A steady pace raised thirty kibbles containing grim clays and boulders; PMcG manages to load the kibbles with many of the big rocks encountered, even so, five very large boulders await removal, requiring the net and 2:1, will do this next session. Need to install hangers for the mechanism to facilitate the vertical hauling process deviating around the "Ribs". Increasing depth will mean positioning the bolts will become more difficult. The small horizontal passage, beneath "The Pinch" in the North End, may very likely appear in the South Shaft as the floor is removed at the base of the fixed ladder. From it may be expected some southward development. There is the potential to utilize the area between the "Ribs" and the fixed ladder as a hopper, reducing the need for boulder spoil to be brought to surface. The spot depth of 24m is some 2.5m above where the stream disappears in the North End; these measurements suggest an estimated volume of nine cubic metres to clear the shaft to -26.5, being some eighteen tonnes. That the South Shaft continues to increase in diameter with depth, the South Rift is a constant feature, the Southeast Rift is formed at 90° to the fault and the approaching reappearance of the stream from the North Shaft are all encouraging: a cracking session. Generator 1/2 full: no spare fuel on site.

Hours 7 (2803), Southend (1753), Kibbles 30 (5511), Nets 0 (870), Total lifts 6382

31<sup>st</sup> May Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 90%, Wind SW, F4, gusting 5: Visibility <25Nm: Ground wet: Small stream: The Plan: lift assembled large boulders. PC arrived early to set the 2:1 hauling. The existing rope is short for the 2:1; therefore, a seventy-metre rope was substituted. CC winching: PMcG digging. To raise a net with the 2:1 took four minutes; during this PMcG continued to fill any available kibble. Planned as a short session, two nets of multiple boulders were raised along with eight nets containing one boulder; at an average off seventy kilograms each, these barely manageable boulders could only be placed along the edge of the path to the stile. The entire shaft floor is now workable; when the gravel layer is cleared large gaps are visible through the loosely compacted boulders. The 2:1 system was stowed and the fifty-metre hauling line reinstated. Comms and signal cables need rerouting to avoid future entanglement with each other. The lightweight pallet fitted temporarily, needs replacing with one on site. Generator 1/4 full: no spare fuel on site. A maintenance session is planned for Thursday, 09:30. Believe JW and "Sparky" enroute from Thailand.

Hours 6 (2809), Southend (1759), Kibbles 0 (5511), Nets 10 (880), Total lifts 6392

2<sup>nd</sup> June

Hotels and B&Bs throughout Ireland open

3<sup>rd</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

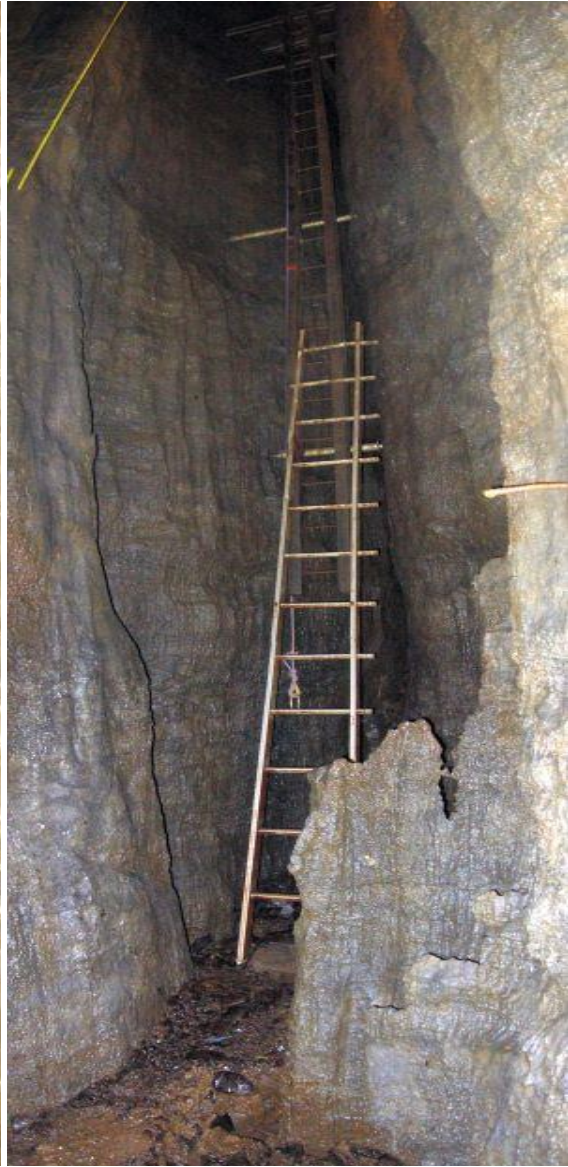
Cloud 50% Wind SW, F2: Visibility <30Nm: Ground drying: Small stream: The Plan: photography/dig. CC below PC up top. CC descended to take photographs recording the emerging, developing features I.E., southeast rift and the ribs. A minor collapse of the floor up against the western wall of the shaft, adjacent the south rift opening, occurred since the previous session. Like the cavity exposed below the south rift, the visible depth

of this collapse is also about one metre, possibly two. Difficult to assess, a bedding joint in the west wall appears to step back perhaps six inches, (0.15m). To make use of a man below ten kibbles were sent to surface, several remain against the far south end. Filled generator to 5/8<sup>ths</sup>: fuel CC. Signal box brought to surface for service and repositioning away from the suspended light, to avoid cable and line entanglements.

Hours 5 (2814), Southend (1764), Kibbles 10 (5521), Nets 0 (880), Total lifts 6402



View north of rift finally heals up at  $\approx$  -21m

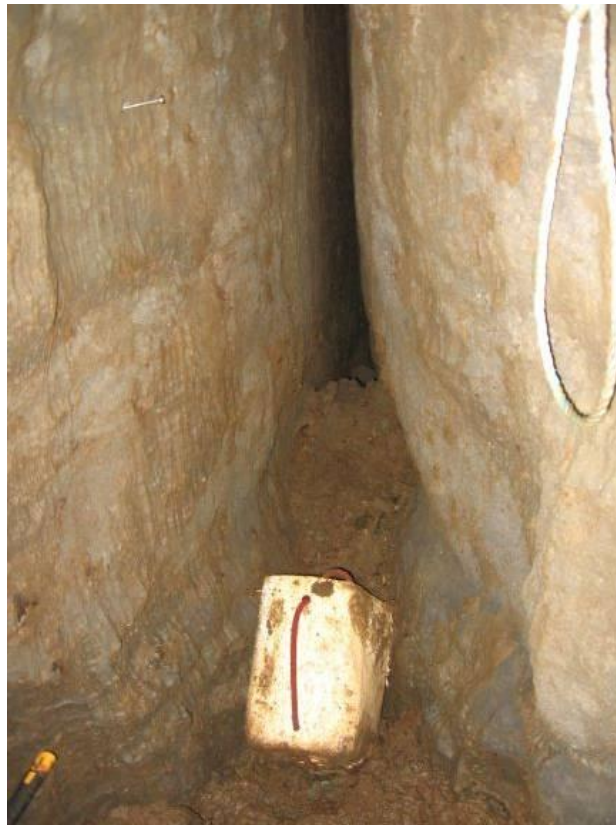


Photos Cheg Chester; 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021  
View north fixed ladder behind "the Ribs"





Photo, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 Cheg Chester  
View west collapse below west wall and step back of bedding,



View along south rift, cavity below kibble, west wall  
Collapse just to the right of image, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021: Photo Cheg

### 3<sup>rd</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

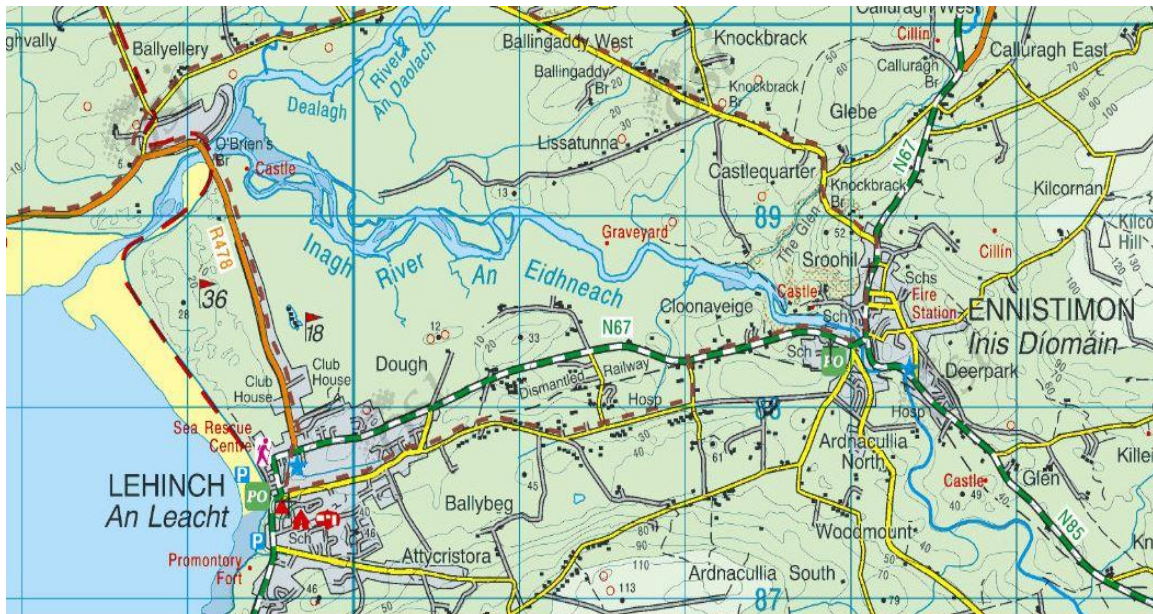
#### Additional observations

Both the base of the recent collapse against the west wall and cavity beneath the south rift have experienced water flow; unsurprising when the entire shaft is known to flood to at least -12m, proved by a plastic container floating up to rest upon the RSJ. This is a hydrostatic pressure of some 1.3bar; (13m). The base of the collapse is estimated at -25m, close to the depth where the stream disappears in the north shaft.

### 5<sup>th</sup> June An Eidhneach, (The Inagh), Ennistymon – Liscannor - Ennistymon

#### Paul McGrath

HW 15:09, Neaps: Cloud 70%: Wind WSW, F3: Visibility very good. The Plan: canoe the river. Intended to start from O'Brien's Bridge, Liscannor; experienced issues parking. The fine Bank Holiday weather enticed many to enjoy the coast. Drove into Ennistymon; parked behind the Falls Hotel to launch. The river gently meanders through the final section of a small wooded valley extending downstream from the waterfalls, the lowering bankside emerging into a broad flood plain. Occasionally negotiating shallows, the lower portion is subject to tidal influence. Along the entire length no limestone was observed. 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, with Barry Sudell, explored An Daolach, (The Dealagh), upstream for three kilometres to where it shallows completely; no limestone observed there either. At O'Brien's Bridge, turned, and headed back. Total distance covered ten kilometres. A sit on kayak has the aerodynamics of a brick compared to the sleek lines of PMcG's sea going kayak. Thoroughly enjoyed the trip, even though the arms now closely resemble those of an Orangutans; alas no limestone.



Myplan.ie scale 1:50000

### 7<sup>th</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

#### Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 90%: Wind SE, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Midges: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG continued to level off the floor at ~23m, clearing up to "The Ribs"; producing thirty well filled kibbles. The floor appears to be assuming a looser compaction; a minor subsidence occurred adjacent the east "Rib". The recent collapse up against the west wall, exposing an undercut, seems to be forming on the east wall. Shaft floor level is now about one metre

below that of the ladder way. Boulder spoil deposited along side the northern boundary wall; will require retaining wall. Need to drill new 14mm hole to secure signal box, as is now two metres above shaft floor. Also install fixings for the potential deviation needed for Hauling, should the present gap between "The Ribs" close up. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site.

Hours 6 (2820), Southend (1770), Kibbles 30 (5551), Nets 0 (880), Total lifts 6432

10<sup>th</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%, base 700ft: Wind SW, F2, increasing: Visibility >30Nm: Midges: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: maintenance. PC descended to drill holes to allow relocating the signal box at a lower level. Also installed two ringbolts, at -20m, opposite each other in the East and West walls; suspended from each will be the deviation system. Installation now avoids difficulties as the shaft depth increases. Relocated the travel line which allows the lifeline to be sent easily back to the base of the shaft. The depth of the undercut below the West wall varies from 0.5m near the southern rift, to 0.3m, as the wall morphs into the western "Rib". Photos required. Washed out the gap for a better view; unlike the "undercuts" encountered in the northern shaft this does not appear to be in a hurry to return outward again; adjacent the south rift its depth is almost two metres. Adjacent the southeast rift a minor collapse exposes a small projection, this lump forms part of the southeast rift wall; visible depth, two metres. The southeast rift wall was also washed obtaining a better view; depth estimated as three metres, though closer to four. PC believes as the ladder way spoil is removed it will expose the original stream route from the northern shaft; its junction with the southern shaft may be an addition issue for the hauling of kibbles. Up top, CC was plagued by midges, attempting build a new section of boulder spoil retaining wall. PMcG's systematic digging has lowered the leveled shaft floor almost a metre below the adjacent floor of the ladder way: one small step for PMcG, a big one for PC. JW donated a new wheel barrow; the previous one's trough worn out having only carrying a little over three hundred tonnes. PMcG donated an elderly heavy duty extension lead; tested fine so, with a length of 30 odd metres it will provide lighting to at the very least -30m. Generator not run: no fuel on site. Depth South End, -23.5m.

Hours 4(2824), Southend (1774), Kibbles 0 (5551), Nets 0 (880), Total lifts 6432

11<sup>th</sup> June Oughtdarra

Solo

Cloud 90%: Humid: Midges: Wind W, F2/3: Visibility <30Nm: Walked north from the church in Oughtdarra to the base of the upper terrace of cliffs; dark holed strong drink to support walkers from Ballyvaghan to Doolin; planning to overnight here. Almost all the resurgences were dry; only west and central Lackinaska springs flowing. Unable to reconcile the published ITM references of the resurgences; the data requires work to clarify/correct them. Found a small collapse, open, with small stream draining southeast from Lackinaska; recorded it as ITM; need return with kit. The sink below Lackinaska needs digging.

12<sup>th</sup> June Michael Keating of Loughrea, County Galway

Further to his recent email, spoke with MK at length; arranged visit for 10:30, 19<sup>th</sup> June. Strongly suspect these holes and tunnels are souterrains. The fact, his friend, a digger driver has found several implies unrecorded sites, delighted.

Hi Pat

*I am making contact with you regarding a large series of tunnels and chambers in the Loughrea area. There are miles of these tunnels which are very tight at the opening but expand inside it seems. Where they have collapsed it gives a better idea of the size of chambers etc. Would any of your team be interested in*



*having a look, or have you come across anything like this in Ireland before? I would love to know what they were used for, but don't have experience in this field. Kind regards. Michael Keating.*

14<sup>th</sup> June Walk, Ballyvaghan – Doolin, Burren Way.

Paul McGrath, Ray Murphy

Cloud 90%, thin layer: Bright: Wind WNW, F2/3: Ground drying: The Plan: walk to Doolin. Pauline dropped PMcG and PC in Ballyvaghan at 10:00. Meandered through Blackthorn and Hazel thickets; around the southern flanks of Cappanawalla Mountain: into the Rathborney valley. Visited Rathborney Church and Souterrain: (5k). Pre 12<sup>th</sup>, rebuilt 15<sup>th</sup> century, built within a curiously shaped enclosure, of a much earlier period. Located among the graves, the souterrains extant opening may be the likely result of gravediggers inadvertently breaching the 1.5-metre-wide flagstone roof: suddenly faced with a deep, dank, dark void, an unwelcome view into the ever-feared underworld.

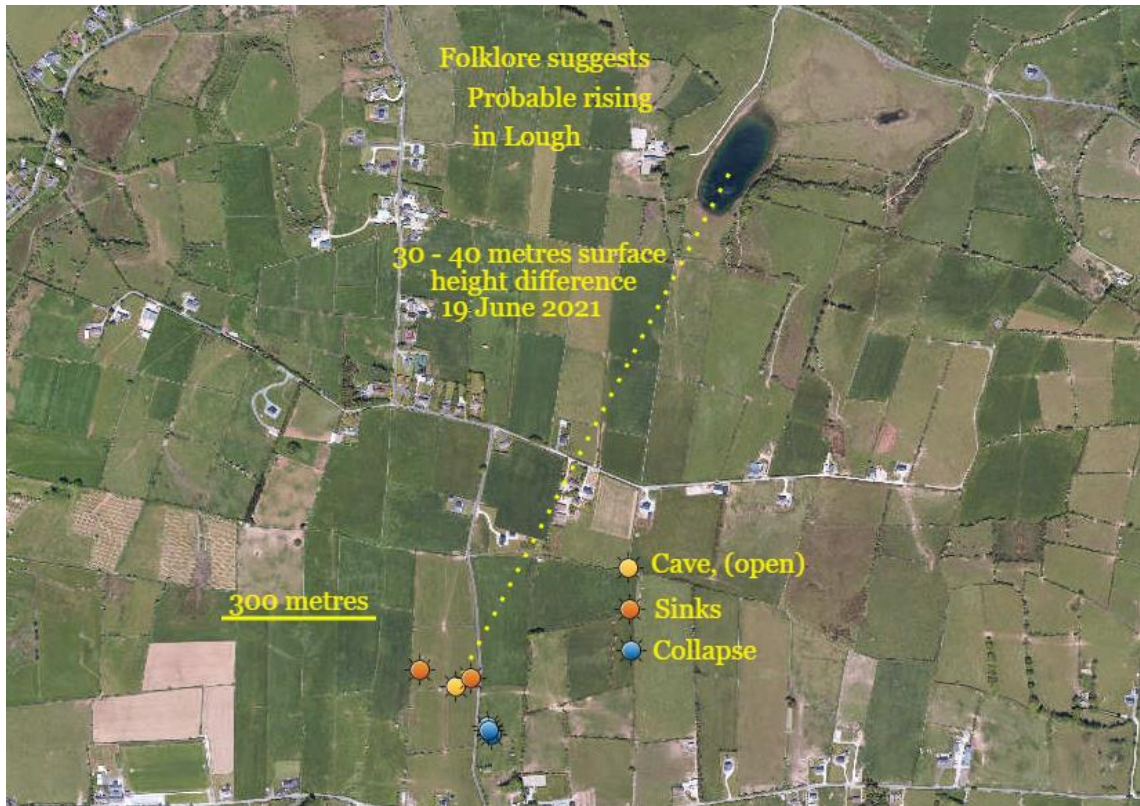
Headed north following the drovers track crossing the western ridge; as it descends into the Caher Valley, (9k (13:00)), a Cashel has been constructed, (~1000AD?), most likely to guard the pass and demand tithe. Inside the cashel two later dry-stone buildings have been built with material from the cashel ramparts; the stonework of excellent quality, by a good mason. One appears to have been a dwelling, the other supposedly a church; the latter could well be accurate. Penal Laws introduced during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, prescribed fines, imprisonment and death for celebration of the Catholic faith. Though eased in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Penal Laws were finally repealed in the 1920s. If this discreet building were such a place of worship, its elevation offered clear commanding views of the Caher and Rathborney valleys, providing adequate warning of an approach by crown forces. If so, its period of construction may be dated to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

West from the ruined church of Formoyle, (10k), in the Caher Valley, the drovers track ascends the northeastern flank of Sliabh Eilbh on its route to Doolin. Welcomed respite, as the track assumed a level nature. Experienced minor sciatic issues; yet made steady progress. Left the Burren Way, turning west onto the limestone cliffs above Oughtdarra, a hundred metres north of Christy O'Brien's farm, (18k (~16:00)). Landscape above the cliff is of fractured limestone pavement and rich pastures. Near the steep pass found RM pitching camp. Relocated same to the meadow some fifty metres below; en-route PC recovered the dark-holed wines and fresh water from inside the resurgence. Stiff of limb: established camp by 18:00, at Lackinaska resurgences, (20k). Tea, food, wine, sleep: a fine day out in good company. Pack weight is light, but not light enough.

15<sup>th</sup> June Ballyvaghan - Doolin

Paul McGrath Ray Murphy

Cloud 100%, Wind SE F2: Minor showers: Midges: Humid: Ground drying: The Plan: continue to Doolin. Cleared camp; securing all signs of presence. RM returned to his car, parked near the church at Oughtdarra; PMcG and PC resumed their walk. En-route, passing out the Promontory Fort and other sites: the place stiff with archaeology. RM had offered to meet the pair at Poulsallagh, (21k), to ferry their backpacks to Doolin; this significantly eased the sciatica. Showed PMcG the Cliff edge fort; deteriorated since the storms of 2012. Ascending the coast to the boreen to Killilagh, Roadford, (26k), met RM who had arrived to offer the pair a lift home; nice.



Tinageeragh Townland, Loughrea

19<sup>th</sup> June

Solo

Cloud 100%, Wind W F2: Visibility > 20Nm: Ground drying: The Plan: meet with Michael Keating to visit the sites discussed; MK had previously contacted PC, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2021,

*Hi Pat*

*I am making contact with you regarding a large series of tunnels and chambers in the Loughrea area. There are miles of these tunnels which are very tight at the opening but expand inside it seems. Where they have collapsed it gives a better idea of the size of chambers etc. Would any of your team be interested in having a look, or have you come across anything like this in Ireland before? I would love to know what they were used for, but don't have experience in this field. Kind regards. Michael Keating.*

Arrived 10:20; after an eighty-minute drive. Went straight to the first site, potentially a souterrain; possibly a ruined lime kiln: requires digging to assess nature of the cavity. No souterrain is recorded at this point. Crossing two fields, heading south: cave tree seen to the west: obvious sink. Informed it was indeed a sink; backfilled with a car and leveled. Further south shown a four-metre hole at the field edge; informed in the 1970s several locals ventured in. After walking through a chamber and across a muddy slope, they stopped, as the passage was getting smaller. It was into this sink wheat and chaff was thrown, reported appearing in the small lough eleven hundred metres to the northeast. East of the open cave, (*Chrissie's Cave?*), another active sink, (*Tinageeragh Sink?*), was visited; the remains of a five-gallon drum protrudes among the boulders and silt. This hollow regularly fills, and swiftly drains. In the adjacent field a series of collapses over some fifteen metres appear to drain toward *Tinageeragh Sink* passing through a culvert under the road. After tea, drove to a cultivated area in which MK believes mining may have taken place. The photos shown are inconclusive, as there is no scale, and PC didn't

have reading glasses to view the pictures of the passage. An immensely convivial time, with a nice bloke; MK will approach the land owner to clarify and finalize permissions. The lessee of the land appears quite happy to find out what is below.

Tinageeragh Td. Co. Galway

ITM 562963 x 712948 Chrissie's Cave

ITM 562996 x 712963 Sink

ITM 562896 x 712982 Sink

20<sup>th</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Cathal Mullane

Cloud 100%, Wind N, F2: Visibility, haze >30Nm: Midges: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: maintenance and photography. CC and PC installed the converted extension lead, donated by PMcG; its new route to illuminate the bottom passes over the higher, lateral support to the "Guillotine", away from entanglement with the signaling cable. The previous light relocated to -3m to better illuminate large boulder nets approaching the shaft collar opening. CM descended to record exposed features and overall progress; later joined by model, PC: to make the place look bigger. The photographic extravaganza recorded all angles and features. Scallop shells noted protruding from the west shaft wall around -22m; adjacent, and a little above is a longitudinal exposed of crinoid, 125mm; a nice example Popeye would appreciate. CC has calculated the floor area from the -22.5m plan survey as 9.25 square metres. The east, west and south walls continue to slowly increase; the outward angle is estimated at 70°.

Observation; the undercut around much of the shaft perimeter, at -25m may be a function of the where the northern stream entered the Southern shaft from the Northern shaft. As the shaft floor level lowers the combined, piped surface streams, presently discharging into the northern-most shaft, to ensure dry digging, should reappear around -27m. Most likely arriving through the gap between "The Ribs"; this narrow, natural gap may be utilized as a dam. In the south rift at around -23.5m the subtle outline of passage abandoned development is now exposed as PMcG removed the fill. Generator almost ½ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 8 (2832), Southend (1782), Kibbles 0 (5551), Nets 0 (880), Total lifts 6432

21<sup>st</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 80%: Cool: Wind NE, F4: Visibility, >20Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging: CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG cleared the base of the ladderway; AKA "The Death Zone". Excavating this dangerous, exposed site directly below the hauling route, was strictly conducted; the shaft lid closed and firmly secured, only opened for hauling when specifically instructed by PMcG below, from his safe, (safe?), location. Clearing around "The Ribs" exposed a possible undercut; perhaps part of the original water route from the north side? Much of the ladderway was cleared level to the main shaft floor. A cautious session due to imposed safety protocols by Old Mother Cronin, producing twenty-seven kibbles, three nets and no injuries. A plan to descend the North End to precisely measure depths to "The Pinch" and the old water course to the South Shaft is planned for, soon. PMcG fuel: Generator ½ full: no fuel on site. Hours 6 (2838), Southend (1788), Kibbles 27 (5578), Nets 3 (883), Total lifts 6462

22<sup>nd</sup> June Treachys Hotel, Ennis

14:30. AstraZeneca vaccine, second inoculation; without any side affects.



22<sup>nd</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%: Wind NW, F2: Showers: Visibility, <5Nm: Ground drying: Tiny stream. The Plan: Measure depth to significant features in the North End.

Prior to CC's arrival PC fitted the final two metre galvanized scaffold pole to the 2 x 2 metre shaft grill. It's ready to receive the 200mm x 6mm square reinforcing mesh cover. Also replaced two 50mm pulleys in the lifelining system, and lubricated steel karabiners. Descended the north shaft, recording "The Narrows" healing up point at -21.5m; "The Pinch" is -22m. Measured the top of the water rift at -23.5m; it slopes gently down to the South; this narrow rift, some two/three metres high, was backfilled with spoil during digging. Managed to hover in the squeeze, to clear remaining ginging from the very bottom of "The Narrows"; casting it and several recovered supports, (short lengths of reinforcing bar), through the gap into the South Shaft. Remain impressed at CC's ability to dig in this vertically confined space; removing the spoil upon which he was standing. Where "The Narrows" finally heal up is clearly visible from the South End, behind the fixed ladder; a useful reference. Bottom of North End shaft is -25.2m; where the stream sinks -26.5m. No stream visible in the area. Began ascent, encountered issues passing the vertical squeeze; gravity no longer an asset. Memory of where the rebar steps were located by foot feel was no longer available. Generator not run: 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Very likely digging Thursday: 18:00.

Hours 3 (2841), Southend (1791), Kibbles 0 (5578), Nets 0 (883), Total lifts 6462

24<sup>th</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath, Jim Warny

Cloud 100%, base 500ft: Showers: Midges: Wind SW, F3: Visibility 300 metres: Small stream: Ground wet: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG & JW digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG & JW leveled the ladderway floor with the South shaft. Doing so exposed the southern end of the rift coming from North shaft. While JW cleared the rift into the North shaft, PMcG returned to the south rift, uncovering the one-metre-deep cavity previously noted. Digging was brisk, the pair below assisting each other, sending up loads as the other dug. Thirty kibbles and six nets sent to surface. JW emerged into the North shaft, almost two metres above the Northern shaft bottom. The formation of this rift passage, an extension of "The Gap", will likely bottom out at around -24.5m, as it passes between "the Ribs" into the South shaft. Generator about 1/4 full: no fuel on site. "New passage" entered, both Shafts now linked, round trip available.

Hours 12 (2853), Southend (1803), Kibbles 30 (5608), Nets 6 (889), Total lifts 6498

28<sup>th</sup> June Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 50%, Cirrus: Warm, (20°C ish): Wind NE, F2: Visibility >35Nm: Ground dry: Tiny stream: a beautiful evening. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. JW unavailable as diving a site near Crab Island, reported him by PC: (springs, HW 14:26). PMcG descended to dig the entrance area of the South Rift; further exposing the significant undercutting, creating a working face one metre high. Of the thirty loads raised six were nets; of the twenty-four kibbles, ten were of awful clays and silts. JN has recently had large drainage channels dug across his land. These collect the springs issuing along the shale boundary, all discharge into the ditch, and swallow hole in the upper area of said ditch, which feeds toward the dig. NB. Winch drive belts need checking, generator oil may need changing, need install barrow way boards to convey spoil to the far end of the new tipping area. Generator 1/2 full: Fuel PC: No fuel on site: a fine session.

Hours 7 (2860), Southend (1810), Kibbles 24 (5632), Nets 6 (895), Total lifts 6528

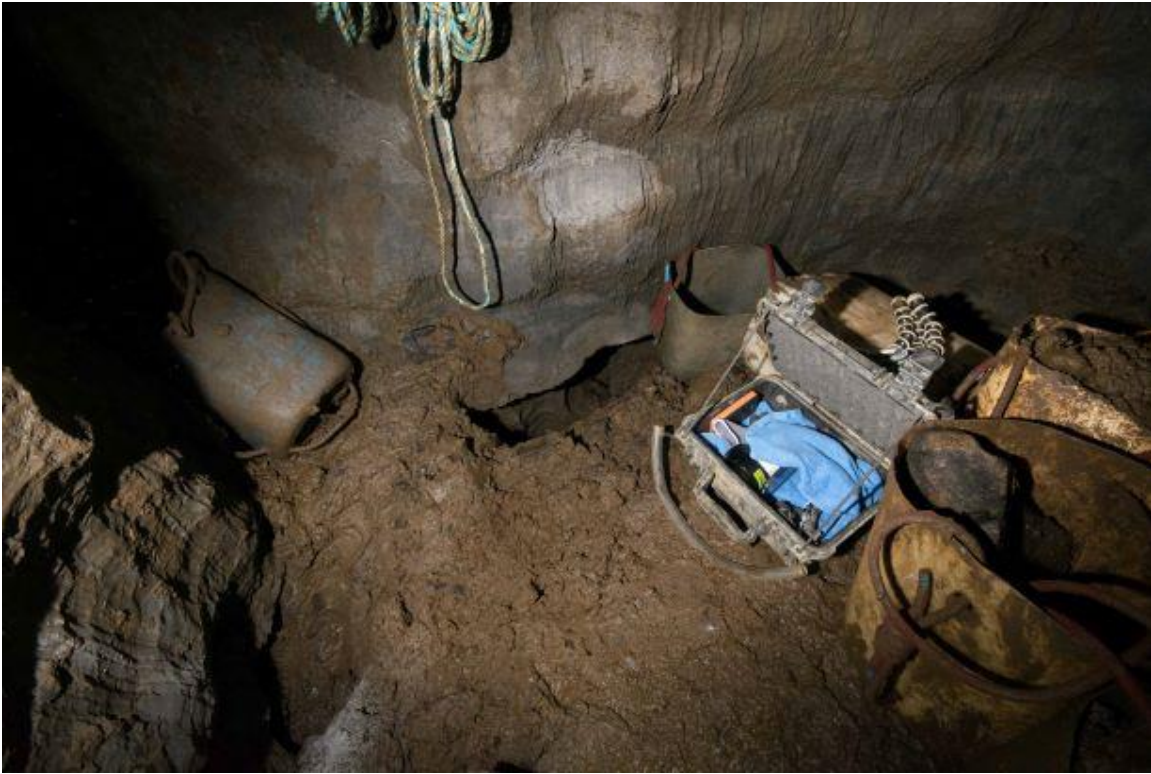


Photo Cathal Mullane

View southwest, (-23.2m), area below left-hand kibble, in the South Rift, dug by PMcG, 28<sup>th</sup> June.

29<sup>th</sup> June Souterrain CL004-016040

Katherine Perdue, Róisín Nic Cnáimhín

Cloud 80%, cirrus: Wind N, F2/3: Visibility <30Nm: Ground dry: Ocean, mirror like.

Had worked with the Girls at the Caherconnell Archaeological School; this being their first chance of a break during their respective MA and PhD courses. Meandered across the north area of Sliabh Eilbh to show them the souterrain; their first time in the field for an age. The four-hour wander took in Bronze Age wedge tombs, a Clochan, a sub-square Cashel, numerous hut sites and the souterrain. A cracking evening: needing drink to celebrate the thirsty journey.

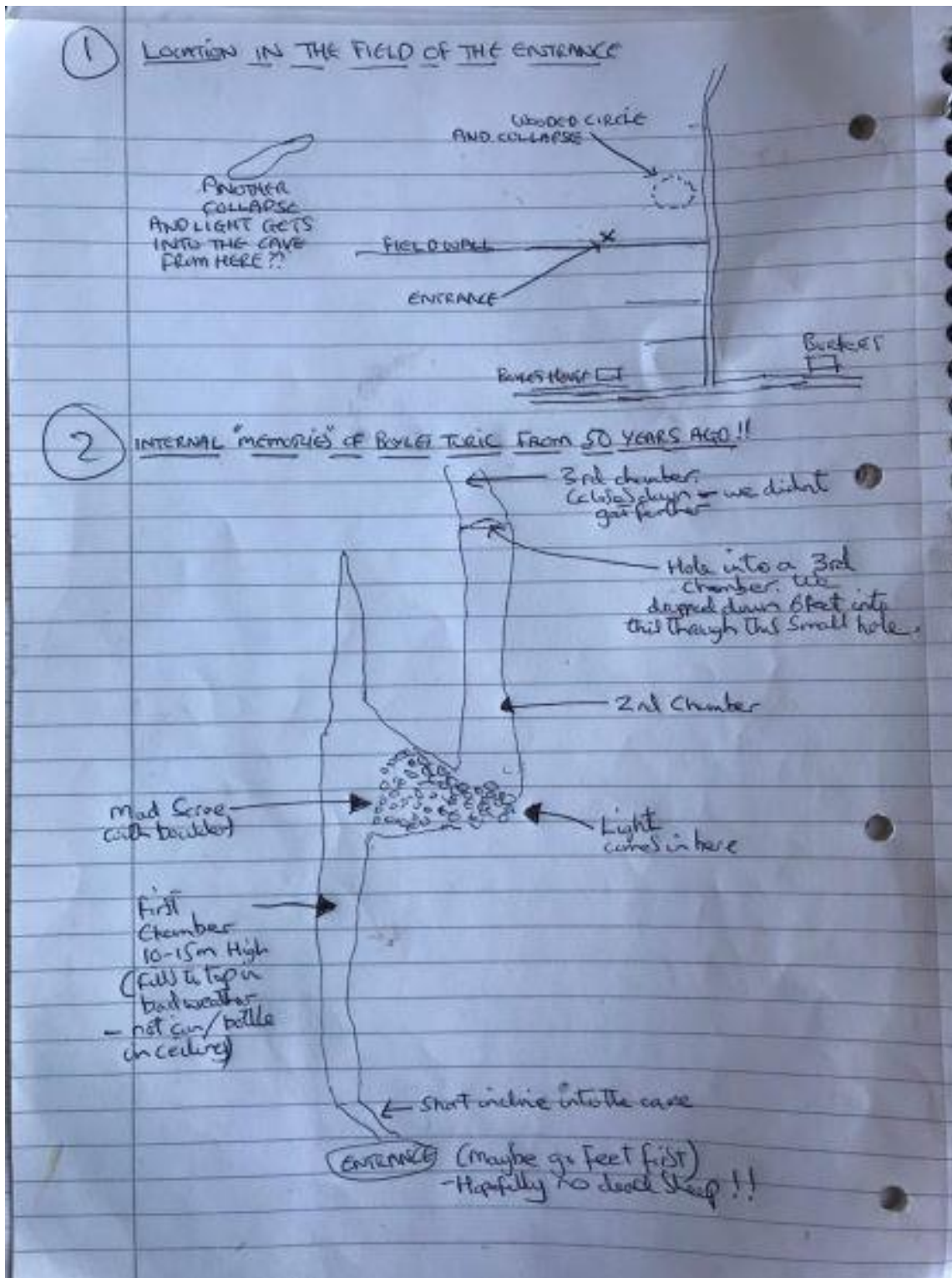
30<sup>th</sup> June Chrissie's Cave, Loughrea

Cheg Chester, Jim Warny, Nick Geh

Met in Gort 09:45: Chrissie's Cave by 10:20. This is an unrecorded cave; previously explored, in part, by locals in the 1970s. Producing a survey of their find; named by PC after the owner of the field. Permission previously obtained to park inside the field gate, off the narrow lane. The Plan: Press beyond their previous limit; survey and photograph. JW flew his drone over the area to record the landscape and relevant features; shortly after Wing Commander NG flew over in his microlight, also recording the area.

At Chrissies Cave cleared away nettles and briars, installed aluminium ladder down the three-metre entrance pot. At the bottom found a classic sink bedding structure, alas presently partly choked with clay, slumped in from the lower part of the entrance: bugger, bugger. Examined the choke; will return with spade: plenty of room to dump the clay in the adjacent undercut. Examined the larger, lowest, impressive sink; it's.... impressive. The stream feeding it dry today, but appears to emerge/resurge among

scrubland in the adjacent field. This choked sink was filled in the 1970s, and if practicable will arrange for the guy renting the field to use one of his diggers and clear it out.





Perhaps install a pipe to encourage its continued existence. Examined the sink adjacent the road, CC removed an old tin can exposing backfilling, also of the 1970s. There is exposed limestone bedding present; this site might, just might be the area on the 1970s survey alluding to daylight entering the cave. Spoke to MK updating him on the initial disappointment explaining the intention to dig the underground choke; also asking him to arranging a meet with the land renter, who is a digger contractor to discuss the area and possible opening of the larger sink: proposed a meet Saturday 10:30/11:00.

1<sup>st</sup> July Souterrain CL009-022007, Lisnanroum

Katherine Perdue, Róisín Nic Cnáimhín

Cloud 100%: Wind N, F2: Visibility >15Nm: Ground drying. The Plan: recover mammal skeletal remains previously noted by PC in the south chamber of the souterrain. RNC is doing her PhD at UCC on bones.

3<sup>rd</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 10%: Midges: Warm, (17°C ish): Midges: Wind W, F1: Midges: Visibility <30Nm: Midges: Ground dry: Midges: Tiny stream; a beautiful evening and Midges. The Plan: Digging & Maintenance. CC descended to view progress and assess work required to install the next section of 2.3m fixed ladder. A small amount needs removing from present floor level to accommodate this length. Yet installing this ladder may impede clearing out the passage into the North Shaft. Preparations to fix the fish plates to the existing ladder need be made before a lower floor surface puts this out of reach, working off the three-metre builder's ladder. Surfacing, into a cloud of Midges, CC commented, *"There are holes in the floor, everywhere"*. Decided to send up the filled six kibbles and one net, during hauling CC washed out the adhered clays from all kibbles increasing their capacity; ready for Monday, 18:00. Generator ½ full: CC fuel: Fuel on site.

Hours 3 (2863), Southend (1813), Kibbles 6 (5638), Nets 1 (896), Total lifts 6542

5<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 40%: Wind W, F2: Visibility<25Nm: Small stream: Ground drying: Midges: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing, wall building. PMcG developed the working face he'd created at the south end, progressing toward the hauling way; some one metre deep and a little over one metre in front of the south rift. Further exposing the significant undercutting; origins of this formation are under discussion. The formation of "The Ribs" appears to reduce the floor area; yet the Main Shaft's square shape remains some nine square metres. The fill is of increasing loose compaction, moving easily under foot. The position, depth and shape of the present working face will, temporarily, require hauling to operate at an angle. This passes close to the RSJ supporting the three tonne "Guillotine": though well secured, disturbance is not recommended. Thirty kibbles were produced and one net; the clays particularly sticky. A new section of drystone wall, behind the winch shed, is taking shape, the area behind filling with cobbles and boulders; clays and gravels are deposited in as level a surface as possible to allow future ease of barrowing. PMcG joined the team 29<sup>th</sup> April, as of this session producing 296 kibbles and 26 nets in twelve sessions; conservatively 12.8 tonnes. Generator almost ½ full: Fuel on site. Foliage needs trimming to fully tip the barrow.

Hours 8 (2871), Southend (1821), Kibbles 30 (5668), Nets 1 (897), Total lifts 6573

10<sup>th</sup> July Chrissies Cave, Loughrea  
Cheg Chester

Cloud 90%: Humid, 17°C: Wind SE, F2: Visibility >20Nm: Ground soft. The Plan: Dig. On arrival expressed concern over young bullocks in the field, fearing the inquisitive may be at risk from the unfenced pot entrance. MK arrived kindly delivering a short builder's ladder for the entrance. Mentioning concern over the bullocks, MK sorted out electric fence ribbon; later intending re-erect/position the existing fence posts around the hole. CC, JW & PC had previously assessed the potential location of passage entered in the 1970s; since when part of an adjacent earth wall has slumped obscuring any evidence where once it was. The survey, kindly supplied by Jeremy Boyle, original explorer, is immensely useful as to what was entered by his team. CC cut away part of a buried roll of



Photo Cheg Chester

PC digging the fill from the possible passage location entered in the 1970s by Jeremy Boyle.

fence wire allowing PC to stack more spoil. Started trench five feet back from the possible passage location, in order to create enough room to dig all the easier as the tunnel progresses. Two hours of steady work moved about a tonne and a quarter, exposing a significant undercut descending toward the north. At one point, two metres of distance was visible down the inclined air gap between clay and roof. In the soft earth found what appeared to be a sorry pair of Long Johns.....? Also found, in an air space, an elderly Lilt bottle; this item suggests the route taken by the occasional flood water. Clearing up, CC suggested a pallet to close of the small opening into the steep undercut leading to the dig, at the base of the open pot; to prevent a young bullock from falling/entering this confined area. Eighty-minute journey: superb session.

12<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

18:00. Cloud 70%: Wind W, F2/3: Visibility <25Nm: Ground dry: Small stream: Midges. The Plan: Dig. PC trundled across one of four previously scrounged heavy duty pallets. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading, barrowing. PMcG continued excavating the west wall northward toward the "The Ribs". In this northwestern area of the main shaft, PMcG exposed a downward sloping section of wall, protruding 0.6m into the shaft. Adjacent boulders obscured an accurate assessment, but it's believed the forward edge of the "tongue" resumes the vertical. The spoil removed here glutinous. Of the thirty kibbles raised just twelve were boulders: the two nets holding large boulders. Issues arose during barrowing; urgency required to create a sound barrow way at the rear of the winch shed and up into the western spoil area. Each decrease in available capacity as the approach slopes increase; the sessions effort produced a shagged-out team. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Foliage in spoil areas need trimming to allow the barrow to be fully tipped. The next net raised will be the 900<sup>th</sup>, a conservative total weight of fifty-four tonnes.

Hours 8 (2879), Southend (1829), Kibbles 30 (5698), Nets 2 (899), Total lifts 6605

Cathal's Considine's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssn5LZSFYTE>

15<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cloud base 500ft: Wind NW, F2: Visibility ≤500 metres: Ground drying: Tiny stream: The Plan: Maintenance. Cut away the foliage, consisting Blackthorn, Briar and Ivy. Creating a larger area to deposit spoil and facilitate ease of fully tipping the barrow. PC laid several planks on "sleepers" to stabilize the route during barrowing. CC checked and topped up the generator with oil and tidied up the piecemeal walling constructed by PC during normal hauling operations. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site.

Hours 3 (2882), Southend (1832), Kibbles 0(5698), Nets 0 (899), Total lifts 6605

16<sup>th</sup> July Oughtdarra

Paul McGrath

Fog: Sunny spells: Visibility 100m to >20Nm: Temp 25°C. The Plan: record ITM for Lackinaska resurgences. Walked in from Poulsallagh, joined a little later by PMcG; took about an hour: delighting in the remoteness. Recorded the four resurgences, west to east and the adjacent sink. The elongated mound, from whence they appear, seems glacial in origin, To the north, up to the upper cliff face the uneven landscape is peppered with shallow gulleys, sinks and risings; today most being dry-ish. All seem to have a common source. Among talus from the upper cliff, a medium sized stream is visible beneath a large boulder, (circa 2.4m x 1.5m x 1m; adjacent us a small pile of capped spoil. To the left, west, of the spoil a narrow crevice accesses a cavity where digging has taken place; evidenced by capping and other unsuccessful, violent means. The passage ends at a small pool, through which a possible continuation may exist. To the left a small passage may also continue. PC and chest managed to join PMcG in the cavity, a return for PMcG to press on through the pool is in train. The immediate surface area was examined, but the presence of midges, horseflies etc. did not encourage close scrutiny. The volume of capped spoil suggests, if three men were present, a day's work. Allowing for the fact Tratman used the average 2° dip of the limestone beds when surveying, there is a vague possibility this resurgence may, at least partly, originate from Poulmagrai, or close to. Meandering back to the truck encountered a shaft sectioned remnant, some three metres high by over one metre diameter. Near the promontory fort.





Relationship of remnant to promontory fort; view northeast of remnant, PMcG; kneeling.

17<sup>th</sup> July Chrissies Cave  
Cheg Chester

Cloud 5%: Temperature >22°C: Visibility 25Nm: Ground dry. Walking to the dig stopped by the land renter, a delightful, interested man; Brian Barratt. A cousin of his Father had been in the cave; plan to meet and debrief him, next week. The Plan: dig. Continued to lower the floor. Soon encountered clothing, refuse and plastic bags. Broken glass a nuisance; dropped the floor around 0.3m. Frustrated at the effort required digging through the crap began to reach beneath the undercut, hoping to follow the roof down rather than dig through glass and tough plastic sheet. Two hours of work produced a fraction of the spoil moved last week. MK and BB dropped by to see progress, described difficulties digging through crap. Some form of conveyance is required to move the spoil. MK gave permission to wander his farm and use what was required. By midday the temp was in the mid-20s; saw the bar, *An Crush Nua*, was open. Enjoyed the first pint since James Cobbett Junior's microbrewery beer, consumed, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Will attempt another digging session, if situation is untenable, will seek permission from Brian to open the roadside sink.

19<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

13:45. Cloud 5%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility ≤25: Ground dry: Haze: Temp upper 20s: Tiny stream: Sweltering: The Plan: Dig. PMcG suggested a midday session, as unable to dig tonight. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG continued to expose the western wall to "The Ribs"; doing so exposing an undercut. The debris is still glutinous, with large boulders, several awaiting a 2:1 lifting session. Thirty kibbles and two nets were raised; the 901<sup>st</sup> net, only 99 to the 1000<sup>th</sup>. The barrow way works well: if the canopy is trimmed a little then spoil can be deposited up against the east boundary

wall, and adjacent the generator shed. Generator ½ full: no fuel in site. Another pallet rolled to the dig; two on site, two more waiting on the track.

Hours 8 (2890), Southend (1840), Kibbles 30 (5728), Nets 2 (901), Total lifts 6637

24<sup>th</sup> July Chrissies Cave – Road Sink

Solo

Cloudless, >25°: Wind NE, F0/1: Ground dry: Visibility >20Nm: Haze: The Plan: Dig. En-route rang Brian requesting a mobile number for John McCardle; an explorer of the cave. Among the chat explained as attending solo today, would it be possible to begin opening the sink adjacent the road as the choke in Chrissie's cave was problematic; told "no problem, work away". Encountered Michael Keating on site who had delivered the ladder, wandered over toward the rising; MK explaining the area has many flagstones set about, which were used to step on to draw water. MK also confirmed the questioned presence of an old mill, some 400 metres west, driven by a large stream, which is still thereabouts. Like Chrissies cave refuse was deposited to close off the road side sink to children. During the first visit CC removed several rusted sections of 45-gallon oil drums. Commenced digging; managed to dig around, and remove remaining metal sections. Decided to dig as close to the tree as possible, through what appeared to be "original" soil deposition. Looking at the area, around a metre above the sink, an open hole is present, it takes the overflow; also, adjacent the tree is a horizontal section of bedrock; decided to cleave downward and square edges and face of the excavation. A few pieces of refuse found, though nothing as soul destroying as that in Chrissie's. Cutting the face downward exposed several conduits within the soil. A little deeper, exposed two chunks of limestone either side of the hole; north and south, some metre apart, at right angles to each other. The proximity of all these features and the bedrock suggests this may well be an easier route into the cave; need take along a camera: delighted.

26<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

18:00. Cloud 100%: Rain: Wind NW, F1: Visibility ≤25Nm: Ground damp: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. Trundled another pallet across to the dig, none left on the track. A mix up in communications resulted in no session. Generator ½ full: no fuel in site.

Hours 0 (2890), Southend (1840), Kibbles 0 (5728), Nets 0 (901), Total lifts 6637

29<sup>th</sup> July Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cooler, ≈17°C: Cloud 70%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Ground damp: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. Trundled the final pallet to the dig; four on site. CC descended to view progress; removing a few small stones to inspect the boulder adjacent the "Tongue" exposed by PMcG. The emerging undercut appears ragged and sharp. Previously filled kibbles were sent to surface; eighteen in total. Next to the tree the summit of the boulder pile has been reached, ≈3m. This height should not draw too much attention or comment from the neighbours: growth of boundary foliage should assist. Discussed hauling route needed to pass "The Ribs" to land and lift loads from the main shaft; offset being 0.6m – 1.m: this needs sorting soon. Two bolts already fitted to suspend the control lines, yet as shaft depth increases this simple system may become unworkable. Discussed some form of chute situated just above "The Ribs", with the ability to smoothly guide a full kibble or angular shaped net safely past this offset. Generator almost ½ full: no fuel on site. More trimming of foliage required; the temporarily light weight pallet needs replacement. Forgot to lift signal box above potential flood level.

Hours 5 (2895), Southend (1845), Kibbles 18 (5746), Nets 0 (901), Total lifts 6655

31<sup>st</sup> July East Sink, Tinageeragh  
Cheg Chester

10:30. Cloud 70%:  $\approx 18^{\circ}\text{C}$ : Wind NW, F2: Visibility >20Nm: Ground dry: Tiny stream: The Plan: Continue opening East Sink. PC deepened the hole started last week, dumping spoil onto the stream pipe being installed by CC; reducing spoil handling to just the once. Had notified MK and BB, were digging today; both appeared, offering support. Talk turned to local based John McCardle; who explored Chrissies Cave in the mid/late 1970s. BB departed, swiftly returning with JM who spoke with clarity of his solo exploration. Of import is his description of the entrance area of Chrissies cave; a far less steep approach to the beginning of the crawling passage. Added to this, BB described how he rebuilt the adjacent wall owing to subsidence, this explains the present steep slope of the entrance. This soft, virtually stone free soil ultimately flowed down to cover the deposited refuse, recently exposed. It was reasoned the bags of refuse, exposed at the deepest point, may not require too many removed to uncover the entrance to the crawl..... well, that's the theory. The Team felt JM's description of his 1970s trip can be trusted; he had been a miner in Canada, used to maintaining his wits of surroundings underground. He also added that the adjacent road was pushed through in the 1930s, using hardcore from adjacent mounds, at this time a significant stream conduit was installed.

After two and a half hours digging, East Sink was 0.8m by 1.2m and -1.5m, exposing several rounded boulders, and converging bedrock faces. The boulders appear on the same horizon, which may once have been the stream bed. Fortunately, the steady trickle of water soaked away, until the diggers position needed alter, choking the outlet. The pool level slowly rose to welly depth, remaining stable. BB and MK both described recent heavy rainfall in this area and its affect at this depression. Scrutiny of the sink, below the overflow and between the newly exposed limestone faces strongly suggest a rift entrance. Considering todays tiny stream, the Team intend remove the soil from between the limestone faces starting at the overflow. Doing so will follow an obvious drainage route, reducing wet digging. The next visit will return to Chrissies Cave to remove more refuse bags; MK intends assist the Team with this. From An Crush Nua, which overlooks the dig, MK saw the Team changing; ringing the mobile MK insisted they visit the bar so he could buy them drink!

1<sup>st</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester Des McNally, Lenny Smith

18:00: Cloud 60%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Ground drying: Small stream: The Plan: Initially, assess hauling deviation installation. At PMcG's birthday, last night, was approached by LS enquiring if he and DM could visit the dig; both accorded an invite. On arrival at the bottom surprised at the change in the shaft's characteristics; the place requires photography to record these significant features, starting at around -24m. The undercut, exposed by PMcG, runs around the shaft circumference interrupted by "The Tongue", "The Ribs", the Southeast rift and the Southern rift. This horizontal undercut edge is a ragged, water worn affair, stepping back under the shaft wall between 0m to 0.5m. "The Gap" width between "The Ribs" reducing to 0.15m. Delightful of all is the Southern rift; the one metre of depth, recently removed, exposed a wider rift section, close to the shaft, if not for the  $50^{\circ}$  slope of collapsed debris, descent would be possible, even for normal chest sized people. The length of this wider section extends south some two metres; at the far base of the slope the floor appears silt; to be expected considering the oft flooding of this shaft when the underground Coolagh River backs up following protracted rainfall. Discussed with CC the installation of a temporary hauling deviation, that is until the floor is lowered a further one or so metres. Immediate benefits, reducing the effort expended by the digger, later, a better understanding of the shape of the shaft,



contributing to a more appropriate, robust design. Looking down both rifts suggest a minimum, attainable depth of around -27/28m; this is around 5/6m short of Poul Eilbh pitch, which DM informs is thirty-three metres. PC ascended leaving LS, to be joined by DM, both offering dig. However, only four kibbles were sent up, as PC was under time constraint this evening.

Hours 4 (2899), Southend (1849), Kibbles 4 (5750), Nets 0 (901), Total lifts 6659

2<sup>nd</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 60%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility <15Nm: Ground damp: Small stream: Midges: The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging, CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG focused on levelling the floor. Beginning at the "Ribs", working south around the shaft's East wall. In front the southeast rift opening, a one-metre semi-circular rib of bedrock is emerging out from the floor; projecting from between the Southeast and Southern rifts, curving toward the shaft's east wall. Similar to the "Ribs", its peak too has jagged upward pointing teeth. Of the thirty-two lifts, two were nets; kibble content included eight of course gravels, all from the entrance area of the East Rift. The capacity of the two-metre-high boulder pile is reached. Boulder and gravel deposition will continue behind the foliage screen wall heading east behind the winch shed. The next fixed ladder requires no spoil removal to be installed. The deviation system need be installed, as further lowering of the floor will place the previously installed bolts out of reach of the vertically challenged, even using a three-metre ladder. Generator all but empty: no fuel on site. Ten full kibbles waiting. Various maintenance issues require attention.

Hours 8 (2907), Southend (1857), Kibbles 30 (5780), Nets 2 (903), Total lifts 6691

3<sup>rd</sup> August Knockcroghery, Roscommon.

Rock Stanton, Phillip?

Arranged met up with RS at Galey Bay campsite, with trailer to convey their kayaks to their start point of Belleek, NI, to canoe the Shannon, back to Knockcroghery. Superb evening, reminiscing with beer and wine. Bed 03:00. Loaded trailer with the 17-foot kayaks and drove to Belleek Marine, three hours. Goodbyes; four-hour journey home. Weather appears poor for the next five days; thunder storms predicted.

6<sup>th</sup> August Pete Hiscock, "Shepton Block of Wood", dropped by; nice. He's thinking of buying a fourteen-acre farm near Broadford, Co. Clare.

6<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

18:00. Cloud 100%: Rain: Wind NW, F6/7: Visibility <10Nm: Ground sodden: Large stream: The Plan: Maintenance. Recent emergence of a bedrock feature out of the floor surface urges installation the hauling deviation system. A bout of sciatica inhibited PC's descent. So, both collars of the shaft were examined, as was the scaffolding framework, for possible alteration to accommodate the required vertical offset needed to land the kibble at  $\approx$  -24m; missing troublesome, protruding bedrock forming the western "Rib". PC positioned the hauling rope in the far NE corner of the upper collar, measured at 0.44m NE of the normal vertical line; this may put the kibble in front of the "Ribs", it remains to be seen. Will run tests during Monday session. CC and PC brought fuel: Generator 1/2 full, fuel on site.

Hours 3 (2910), Southend (1860), Kibbles 0 (5780), Nets 0 (903), Total lifts 6691

7<sup>th</sup> August Chrissie's Cave and Roadside Sink, Tinageeragh.

Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%, base ≈600ft: Rain: Mist: Wind NW, F6/7: Visibility <15Nm: Ground damp: Eighty-minute drive. Called into MK's farm to collect the short ladder and scrounge a kibble. Descended Chrissie's Cave clearing the dig area; PMcG dragging up skids to the outside. PC decided to attempt moving the centre of the dig slightly eastward, to avoid extant refuse, as today's digging showed little evidence of this dreaded presence on this side; so far, so good. Dropped the floor about 0.2m, exposing a grey clay deposit with an adjacent, moist gravelly layer. PMcG took over pushing the forefield along the fault line, about 0.6m, exposing a minor calcite wall decoration. Small pieces of plastic sheet dotted the route suggesting flow did once take place. A system for extracting spoil is desperately needed. PC divided the session between the two sites; maximizing available energy.

At Roadside Sink the stream was larger than last week by a factor of, at least five; sinking in the base of the hole. No surface evidence across the previous dumped spoil of any high stream flow: in particular the rainstorm of Thursday afternoon. Started digging around the north side, creating a shelf off which to more easily shovel debris collapsed from approaching the overflow hole above. The bedrock noted in the hole, down on the left, may not be such; perhaps just a larger boulder: perhaps the cave may have a bedding entrance. MK called to discuss progress, then headed off. Into An Crush Nua for a pint.

9<sup>th</sup> August Chrissie's Cave

Returned missed call from Jeremy Bird, cousin of Brain Barrett. He explored the cave in the mid-1970s; he thinks 1974. He referred to it as Boyle's cave; "Chrissie's cave was adopted by PC, as Chrissie Boyle is the owner. So, the name will therefore be corrected to Boyles Cave. JB relates crawling over broken glass and dead sheep, through a short, low passage into larger passage; six metres high; daylight entered from what he thinks is the western sink. He believes a short rope was used to descend the short, (6ft), drop by his pal "Gerard". At the bottom a small, muddy, crawling passage continues. At this point exploration was ceased. JB was a caver with NUI Galway Caving Club. He hopes to meet up with the Team, maybe next Saturday.

9<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

18:00. Cloud, 90%, base 600ft: Wind W, F2/3: Visibility <25Nm: Ground dry: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. PMcG continued to excavate the vertical bedrock feature, which segregates the southeast rift from the main shaft floor. Dropping its interior floor some 0.6m, the feature's wall assumes a near vertical plane, with vertical, low-profile ribs. The shaft side of the feature demonstrates severe erosion, sharp, jagged vertical teeth suffuse its side and summit. A ten inch, (0.25m), gap bisects the feature, perhaps a stream affect. The length of the curving feature is some two metres. Mostly cobbles and coarse, wet gravel came from within this "enclosed" area on the edge of the drop into the narrow southeast rift. Once again, a steady pace produced thirty well packed, heavy kibbles. Issues returning a kibble down the shaft, missing the "Ribs", need addressing, swiftly. Pharting around offsetting the hauling with pulley and cord was only partly successful. Extensive discussions between CC and PC of workable deviations took place. Each, thus far is problematic. PC suggests trialing a sloping board, secured to a single horizontal bar, positioned just above the "Ribs"; it will capture the kibble on descent and allow it slide into position adjacent the digger, thus reducing effort recovering it. However, to avoid such an angled board directing a falling object toward said digger it should be moved into a vertical position during hauling operations.

Outstanding tasks; recording the southeast rift feature, a plan survey at around -24m, to also record the passage through to the North End, install the deviation board system.

Generator 1/2 full: fuel on site.

Hours 8 (2918), Southend (1868), Kibbles 30 (5810), Nets 0 (903), Total lifts 6721

12<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

13:00. Cloud, 70%: Heavy showers: Wind SE, F4/5: Visibility <20Nm: Ground damp: Small stream: The Plan: Maintenance/Dig. PC descended to install the fixed ladder, the end of which is level with the passage floor connecting to the North End; around -24m: measurements taken so CC can prepare the scaffold tube stemple. Two 16mm holes are drilled. The centre of the hauling way is used as a datum on which the surveys are built; fortunately, this centre line was confirmed as still being within the "Gap", between the "Ribs". Using a laser level, datums either end of the N/S rift was established, at -22.5m. This depth will allow the plan survey to record the connecting passage into the North End. Took time to study the feature exposed by PMcG; curiously, this almost circular feature sits on the very edge of the narrow, vertical entrance to the Southeast rift. It is a truly wicked looking feature, covered in razor sharp teeth. Its interior is of loose fill; the present floor level of the shaft is just below its summit. It would be wise to empty the fill before the shaft floor is lowered any further, avoiding the feature becoming a serious obstacle; requiring scaling to dig. Prior to CC taking photos, PC washed mud from the walls, doing so brought attention to both the South and West walls of the shaft, each still extending outward. CC's earlier comment "it's become more cave like", is apt. The walls below -24m are assuming severe water worn surfaces and still, steadily undercutting outward. The kibble deviation to bring it to the digger needs more work, in the meantime will trial a board secured in the "Gap". Inbetween photography and sending up waiting kibbles, CC examined the gap in the feature, removing a few small cobbles CC found the gap heals up some 0.3m further down. CC suggests the feature as "Paul's Pot". A very busy session with good results. Nine kibbles were raised, two waiting. Generator 1/4 full: Fuel on site. Can't help thinking the Southeast rift is a Red Herring; development remains along the fault, and down.

Hours 7 (2925), Southend (1875), Kibbles 9 (5819), Nets 0 (903), Total lifts 6730

14<sup>th</sup> August Boyle's Cave, Tinageeragh, (AKA Chrissie's Cave).

Solo

Cloud 100%: Rain, steady: Wind W, F2/3: Visibility 5Nm: Ground damp: Small stream at the Roadside sink, large one in the western sink. The Plan: Dig. Evened the lumps on the steep, slope between forefield and entrance. Continued the dig, cleared spoil previously left, lowering the floor a further 0.3m creating a trench 0.7m wide and 0.8m long. Four bottles removed; no other detritus encountered. Digging down into a grey clay layer, with small angular stones, looks glacial. Relocating spoil, a slow process: lean forward, load spade, lean back, make spoil on spade into a ball, cast up onto existing pile; repeat. BB and Jeremy Bird arrived; JB creator of the recent survey. Lengthy interrogation of JB ensued, focused on the position and dimensions of the entrance passage. JB and JM's memories agree on the location of the present dig as correct, and the short distance into the large chamber. Exited to wander the field; shown the site of another collapse, long since filled, between the cave and the western sink, adjacent the wall. Previous visit noted the western sink with a large pool of water in the depression, sinking in the south side. Today the pool had gone, a small hole has opened on the NE side, into which the stream sank. JB described, on climbing the mud slope, daylight entered via a small hole; he believes this sink to be that location. The large size of the



sink could produce a sizable slope of mud below. Ideally this project wants to be hit mob handed for a single session.

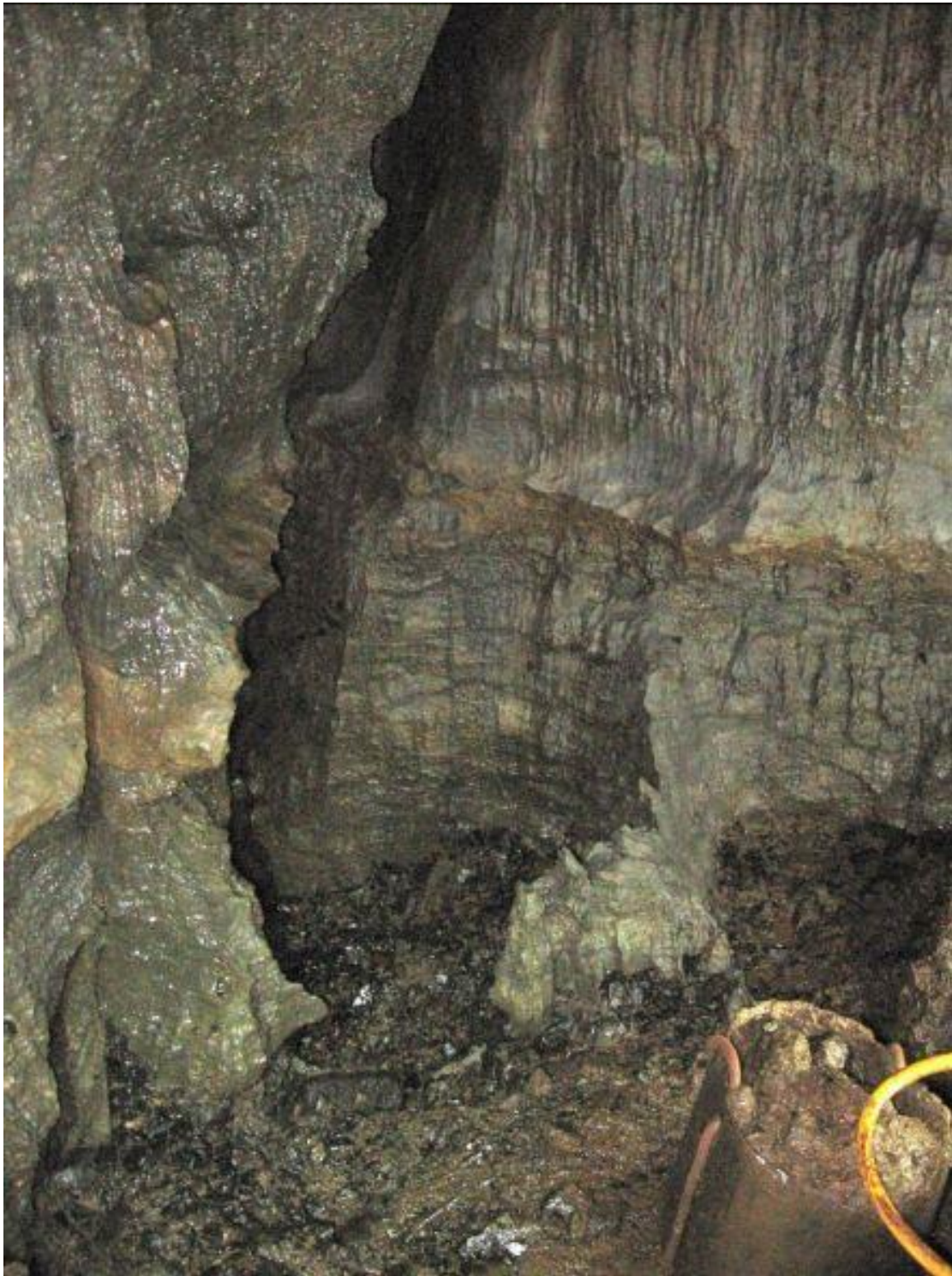


Photo Cheg Chester

View southeast; “Paul’s Pot”, at the very edge of the four-metre-deep southeast rift, the gap heals up some 0.3m below the present floor surface. The gap is ten inches, (0.25m), wide.

16<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%: Wind W, F3/4: Visibility 20Nm: Ground damp: Small stream. The Plan: maintenance. PC descended and completed installing the fixed ladder; total depth of fixed ladder 24m. Waiting for the builder's ladder and tools etc. to reach surface, PC continued washing potential missiles and mud off the walls. Moved into "Paul's Pot", as several lumps fell away could see the bottom area of the southeast rift was much larger than what has been followed down as the shaft was dug away. Washing several lumps off could clearly see the cavity is in fact a junction, the southeast rift connects, after some three metres with a parallel rift with the fault that developed the shafts. Measurements are conservative; 0.5m wide and walking height, heading south. Attempted produce an echo along this passage; failed miserably as most of the noise rattled around the shaft. Examining, again, the shaft perimeter, the walls still extend outwards. Plan to dig tomorrow evening as PMcG returns to Doolin tonight. Generator 1/8<sup>th</sup> full: fuel on site.

Hours 3 (2928), Southend (1878), Kibbles 0 (5819), Nets 0 (903), Total lifts 6730

17<sup>th</sup> August Northern Sliabh Eilbh

Dr's. Michelle Comber and Noel McCarthy.

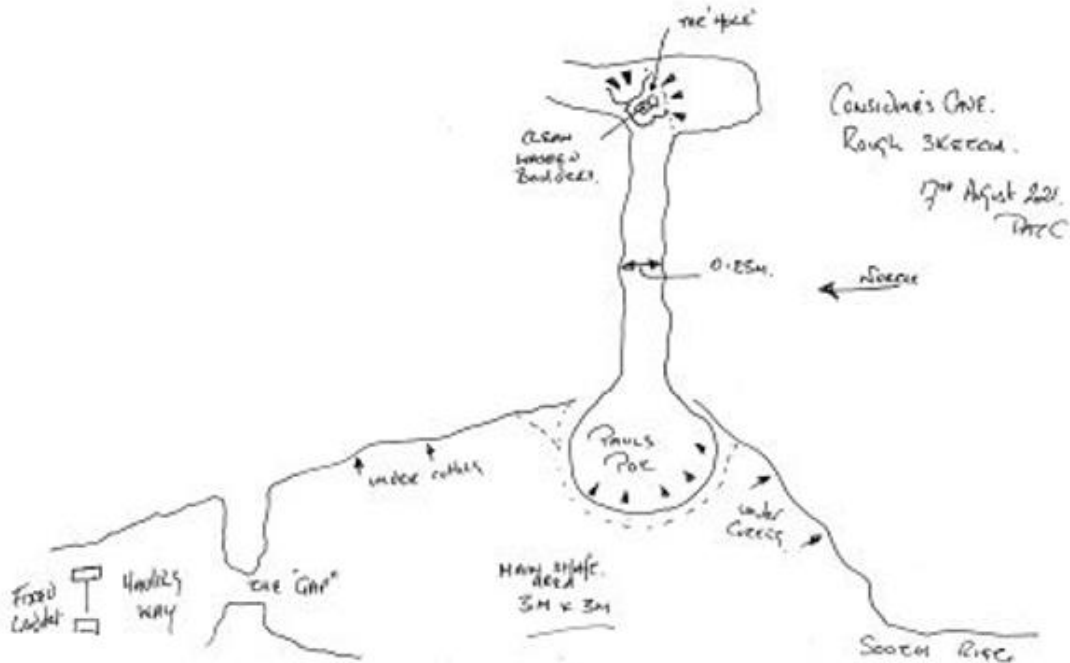
Cloud 90%: Showers: Wind W, F3/4: Visibility 30Nm: Ground damp. The Plan: show MC the square enclosure. Uncertain weather meant parking the Hilux near the western track, leading to Poulmagollum. Please wander via the prehistoric enclosure and tombs. A busy under recorded area.

17<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%: Drizzle: Wind W, 3/4: Visibility 10Nm: Ground damp: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG descended to begin clearing out the loosely compacted debris within "Paul's Pot, in between sending up seven previously filled kibbles to free them for use in "Paul's Pot". PC descended to assist; together excavating this superbly formed pot, in something approaching a frenzy. Lowered the pot floor about 1.5m, ( $\approx$  -25.5m); through fist sized stones, large boulders and a coarse, silty, gritty deposit. As debris was removed a portion of fill was left in the Southeast rift to prevent debris falling into the new area; this area of deposition was/is cobbles cemented with a very fine clay silt. Removing some of this improved the view into the new bit; the suspected passage heading south was wishful thinking, it ends as a water worn radius of the joint. In the bottom of the new area is a 0.3m diameter hole; within, at a depth of around 0.5m, clean washed boulders are clearly visible. The 0.9m diameter of "Paul's Pot" remains constant until around -25m when the pot's west wall begins to gently curve toward the opening of the southeast rift. CC's suggestion of using a Mk 4 kibble worked well within in the confines of the pot, when lifted, decanted into normal kibbles; (3 Mk4's = 1 kibble). Filling the kibbles with just gravels, and heaping up stones and boulders also worked well adding to the swiftness of excavation. The uneven base of the shaft is now strewn with thirteen packed kibbles and a pile of stone. Likely one session should clear it. The southeast rift wants another session to clear down the 1.5m to the "hole"; scrutiny of which shows the south wall of the SE rift curving slightly NW, and a 0.6m diameter boulder peeking from underneath its silt cover, forming one edge of the "hole". There does appear to be a gap beneath the "hole". Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. A very fine session: photos needed.

Hours 7 (2935), Southend (1885), Kibbles 7 (5826), Nets 0 (903), Total lifts 6737



19<sup>th</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%: Drizzle: Wind W, F2: Visibility 15Nm: Ground damp: Small stream. The Plan: remove accumulated spoil created the 17<sup>th</sup> Aug. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG descended, landing among the debris field following Tuesday's session. Hauling began; as the original barrow bowl had finally worn out, the new one, donated by JM, was deployed. Making weighty barrow trundling a far easier task, as the previous barrow's deformed/broken bowl acted as an excellent break upon the wheel; sheer bliss. The tempo of the session was constant, the winchman operating continuously as kibbles were raised, emptied and swiftly lowered. PMcG's appointment meant wrapping up by 13:30, even so, thirty kibbles and six large nets were raised by a shagged-out team; virtually all spoil taken from "Paul's Pot" is now on surface; some four kibbles worth of stones await. Between sending up the spoil, PMcG began to level off the main shaft floor surface, in preparation for the next session digging out "Paul's Pot". A superbly productive session. Generator almost 1/2 full: no fuel on site: PMcG paid for some twelve litres.

Hours 8 (2943), Southend (1893), Kibbles 30 (5856), Nets 6 (909), Total lifts 6773

23<sup>rd</sup> August Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 20%: Haze: Wind W, F1: Visibility 30Nm: Ground damp: Small stream. The Plan: maintenance. PC descended to install an offset in the hauling system, to accommodate a vertical haul up the 0.9m diameter "Paul's Pot". Secured a 16mm ring bolt and 50mm pulley at about -23m, in the bulge above the "Gap" on the west wall. Installed a second belay, and 50mm pulley, in the south wall, at around -24m, allowing lifts to be landed through the gap in the sharp bedrock feature surrounding the top of "Paul's Pot"; also added a length of tape to this pulley. When under load, the lift will align with the centre of the lower portion of the southeast rift. A further belay is required to fine tune the lift



centrally up “Paul’s Pot”. Ascending the ladder, a painful affair, the injured arm, sustained last session, making troublesome climbing. Resting, at -5m, observed the main shaft’s dimensions appear to increase markedly around -14m: the rift at surface starting at some 0.8m wide; at -24m achieving some three metres square. Generator ¼ full: CC fuel. Hours 3 (2946), Southend (1896), Kibbles 0 (5856), Nets 0 (909), Total lifts 6773

26<sup>th</sup> August Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 40%: Haze: Wind NW, F2: Visibility 25Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. A recuperating PMcG continued to level the main shaft floor, this assists the preparation to clear out “Paul’s Pot”, where accumulated kibble may be stacked for winching up the main shaft. Both “The Ribs” and “The Gap” were gradually exposed “The Gap” continues downward, its parallel faces showing no immediate signs of narrowing. Some 1.5m below the present Hauling way floor, is a faint suggestion the eastern “Rib” may be undercutting back to the east. His recent chest infection did not impede PMcG producing thirty kibbles, ≈1.2 tonnes, containing gravel, boulders and glutinous silts. The short ladder needs redeployment, this time to access the main shaft floor from Hauling way. Generator near enough empty: fuel on site. Winch requires some minor maintenance. Outstanding; replace pallet, trim back foliage, barrowing planks need wire mesh, to reduce wheel spin. Hauling operations for “Paul’s Pot” ideally needs the telephone reinstated. Survey needs doing, three datums in place.

Hours 8 (2954), Southend (1904), Kibbles 30 (5886), Nets 0 (909), Total lifts 6803

30<sup>th</sup> August Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility 35Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. The two-metre rigid ladder was lowered to ease access between the Hauling Way at ≈ -23m, and the shaft floor at ≈ -24.5m. While CC made minor adjustments to the winch drive belt, PMcG descended and continued leveling the floor, exposing the section of the West wall protruding into the shaft. This bulge like, shallow sloping area of the West wall resumes near vertical; surface razor-sharp fluting. Between it and the West wall a 0.15m wide channel, sloping at 50° descends to south. The shaft floor is now all but level, ready for working on “Paul’s Paul”. Three nets, and Thirty kibbles, were raised; boulders and gravels. Once again, heavy clay continues to be present near the entrance to the South rift. The impression from the exposed bedrock features is that the primary development will follow the fault down. The hauling rope for the offset down “Paul’s Pot” is prepared. Generator topped full: CC supplied one can of fuel, PMcG two. One and a half cans on site. Briars becoming a pain.

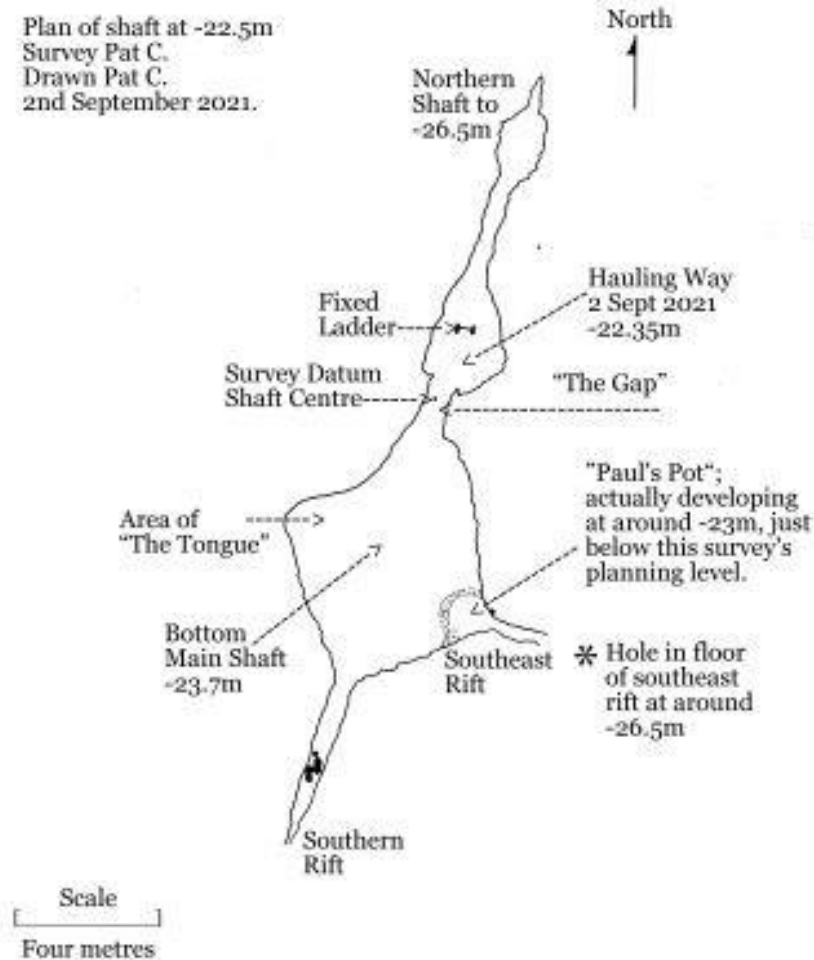
Hours 8 (2962), Southend (1912), Kibbles 30 (5916), Nets 3 (912), Total lifts 6836

31<sup>st</sup> August (2008)

Lost Tony Jarratt

Considines Cave  
Poulnagun Townland.

Plan of shaft at -22.5m  
Survey Pat C.  
Drawn Pat C.  
2nd September 2021.



2<sup>nd</sup> September Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility 25Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Survey and maintenance. PC installed a second belay for the offset hauling operations up "Paul's Pot". Fitted a turnbuckle to each bolt, creating a "Y" hang, adjusted each to align the haul so, when under load, a slim Mk 4 kibble may be hauled along the narrow rift. Happy with the alignment, the system; thirteen-metre length of rope, pulleys and krabs was recovered and sent to surface for storage. Meanwhile, CC inspected and cleaned out the water supply cistern, checked/topped the generator oil and trimmed encroaching foliage. Began the survey; all three datums, each previously installed at -22.5m, were double checked as being level using a laser level; fixed two datums with a yellow survey disc; the shaft's central datum, (within "The Gap"), and today's, above "Paul's Pot".

Extended the survey through the tight passage to fix it to the North End Shaft; delight. Relocated the lifeline return guideline to a 12mm pin fixed to "The Tongue". As judging from the visible depth of the South Rift, the shaft floor may drop a further three metres, so its future position fixed in the entrance to the south rift would be in the way. With the development of "Paul's Pot" and "The Tongue" the shaft's floor area has significantly reduced. So, the volume of spoil requiring excavation decreases: depth may be achieved, swiftly. Having said that, the south and east walls continue to undercut, outwards. An example of depth swiftly gained is the bolt, recently fitted for the offset hauling system, is now some three metres above the shaft floor, but can be reached from the "The Ribs". Accurate depths to features were established using a tape deployed from the surface; Ladder/Hauling Way, -22.35m. The main shaft floor, -23.7m. The bottom of "Paul's Pot", -24.5m; the hole, visible in the southeast rift, is an estimated -26.25m. "Paul's Pot" is ready to dig; if left for later on, staging may have to be erected around the bedrock feature to facilitate excavation, best to dig it out now. Generator  $\frac{3}{4}$  full: 1.5 cans of fuel on site. A good session.

Hours 5 (2967), Southend (1917), Kibbles 0 (5916), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6836

4<sup>th</sup> September Chrissie Boyle's Cave

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath, Michael Keating

Cloud 60%: Wind NW, F2: Visibility 15Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. PC resumed digging, following the occasional item of washed in debris; clearing out clay, some rocks and bottles: glass and plastic. Progressed slowly along the confined, narrow passage. Removing a clump of plastic bottles, exposed a glimpse of darkness; delight, the shape of the rock echoing previous explorers' description. Further clearance showed the darkness to be but a small oval development, seemingly in the topmost part of the rift. More excavation confirmed this; over the fifty years since the original 1970s exploration a significant amount of refuse has been dumped here cascading into the lower part of the depression, and the approach to the passage. Clays and silt from the adjacent, surface subsidence have indeed migrated into the cave, settling and obscuring entirely the entrance passage. Further to the comment that these three sites were filled to stop children entering, and that the dry-stone wall, adjacent the main entrance was rebuilt owing to collapse from ground subsidence by the present farmer suggest the latter may have happened some twenty years ago, thus refuse dumping could have continued until the 2000s. The way in is therefore some five feet below the level of the present passage, which follows the sloping roof. Today's effort provides enough information, where to pursue this dig requires a small railway to remove spoil straight to the surface, from the confines of the entrance passage; there is no other realistic, efficiently practical option. It would also require a minimum of three to operate the dig. As other projects press, will call BB to request him consider use of one of his diggers to clear the larger, western sink. Wing co. NG did a fly past.

6<sup>th</sup> September Updated Brian Barrett, requesting use of digger to open the west sink.

6<sup>th</sup> September Valentia Island, Co. Kerry

Pauline Cronin

Visited the cousin's place on Valentia Island, Kerry. Ten souterrains are present across the Island. Managed to assess the location of two; need locate farmers, now living in Cahersiveen.



9<sup>th</sup> September Considine's Cave, (South End)  
Cheg Chester

18:00. Cloud 100%, base 500ft: Wind W, F2: Visibility 35Nm: Ground drying: Small stream. The Plan: Dig and Photography. CC descended to photograph the emerging bedrock features, specifically to record "Paul's Pot", and its development: though hampered good images were obtained, though the place needs JW, or CM; their skills and photographic kit. In preparation for digging "Paul's Pot", possibly Monday, sent all full kibbles to surface. Upon return, washed accumulating silt/mud from each. Eleven kibbles were raised, of boulders and coarse gravel/silt. Generator full: fuel on site. Winch requires minor adjustment. Ideally the lightweight pallet needs replacing. Replacement for lower illumination ready to install. All but dark by 20:30.

Hours 3 (2970), Southend (1920), Kibbles 11 (5927), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6847



Photo Cheg Chester

View southeast. Image shows development of "Paul's Pot, off the main shaft. It's circumferential wall projecting some 0.4m above the floor of the main shaft. Height of kibble, about 0.65m.



Photo Cheg Chester

View west; equipment adorns “The Tongue”.

*11th September Considine’s Cave, (South End), Taken from PCN Log to maintain stats.  
Cheg Chester; Solo.*

*09:30. A report by the junior winch operator on the previous digging session indicated that the tone of the winch had changed, emitting a sort of throbbing noise. This can sometimes be caused by one of the two 'V' belts becoming slack but on inspection the tensions were fine. The third pulley in the drive sequence unfortunately is not secured by a keyway, only by a single grub screw engaging onto a flat on the drive shaft. When under construction I realized that this may be a weak spot in the drive so a hole was drilled through the pulley and drive shaft and a hardened pin inserted, held in place by two small locking collars on its ends. This pin is an interference fit and it was found that the grub screw was loose causing a small amount of radial movement in the pulley; it is believed that this may have been the problem (hopefully). The 40:1 gearbox grease level was checked but was found to only require a minimal top-up.*

*Hours 1 (2971), Southend (1921), Kibbles 11 (5927), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6847: Cheg Chester*

**13<sup>th</sup> September Considine’s Cave, (South End)**

**Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath**

Cloud 100%, base 900ft: Rain: Wind W, F2: Visibility 25Nm: Ground damp: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG and PC digging. PC descended and set up the offset hauling system, drilling a 14mm hole to relocate the signaling system adjacent the edge of “Paul’s Pot” for ease of operations, also reinstated the phone system. PMcG began to dig; depth gained swiftly down through the loose, wet gravels: boulders, 0.2m diameter, were regularly removed. Changing places with PC the floor was lowered to around -25.5m. Spoil removal expedited with a Mk 4 kibble; 0.2m in diameter; initially these were manhandled up the pot, as within reach of the digger above; it also avoided

ridiculously short lifts for the winchman; the stretch in the rope during operations was very noticeable, and a pain in the circumstances. The remaining compacted plug of clay and boulders in the rift was removed allowing PMcG to wriggle into the southeast rift. North from the “Plug Hole”, ( $\approx -26.5\text{m}$ ), a disappointingly thin, ( $0.1\text{m}$ ), yet lofty rift, aligned  $\approx \text{N/S}$ , descends vertically for at least two metres, ( $\approx -28.5\text{m}$ ), it was not possible to see if it increases in size as it descends. As the floor in “Paul’s Pot”, and that through the rift was deepened, no clear indication of an increase in rift width was evident.

With all fourteen kibbles filled with gravels and clays, and a pile of boulders stacked ready to lift, PC climbed down the three-metre pot, to view the floor area at  $-25.5\text{m}$ ; with further lowering, visible width achievable appears to be  $0.45\text{m}$ . Directed the water jet around the walls of the rift to wash off mud; observed that both rift walls undercut by some  $50\text{mm}$ , on either side: most encouraging. Looking up the southeast rift, it starts as a hairline crack, some five metres above the present level,  $-25.5\text{m}$ ; here appears the first point where an “undercut” is obvious. When compared to the severe digging conditions in the Northern Shaft, though awkward too, it should be straightforward enough, providing hauling is unimpeded through the nurgly rift. It was also noted, what appears to be Chert nodules project around the rift walls: though on the same horizon they appear isolated, there seems to be no continuous bed. During hauling, a large kibble caught under a projection highlighting the subtle angle of the pot walls; to avoid future issues another  $14\text{mm}$  hole was drilled to relocate the belay, in line with the Hauling Way pulley, yet further into the rift opening, to achieve a more vertical lift, away from the rough/nurgly walls. Overall, considering the number of factors in play, the hauling operations, signal system and preparation of spoil for removal to surface worked well; a good session. Generator over  $\frac{1}{2}$  full: fuel on site.

Hours 7 (2978), Southend (1928), Kibbles 0 (5927), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6847

16th September Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%: Wind SW, F2: Visibility  $20\text{Nm}$ : Ground damp: Medium stream. The Plan: remove spoil stacked on the 13th Sept. PC winching, unloading, barrowing: CC below. A steady pace raised nineteen kibbles; cobbles, clays and gravels, all from “Paul’s Pot”. A collection of boulders, left suspended in the south rift, as the main shaft floor has lowered, were released by CC using his “Cheating Sticks”. Minus these, the rift is even more impressive. To facilitate digging in the confined rift forming below “Paul’s Pot”, intend reintroduce the small diameter kibbles; of  $6"$  pipe and half the length of the Mk 4’s, these take up, less room and can be lifted easily by hand when full. Generator  $\frac{1}{2}$  full: fuel on site.

Hours 5 (2983), Southend (1933), Kibbles 19 (5946), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6866

23rd September Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Matt Randall

Cloud 100%: Wind W, F2: Visibility  $25\text{Nm}$ : Ground damp: Large stream. Dark by 20:15. The Plan: dig “Paul’s Pot”. CC surface support, MR and PC digging. First opportunity for MR to dig in the South End. MR dug out the loose, clean washed gravel in the base of the pot, moving forward into the slightly widening rift. Made easier, by deploying the smaller, shorter  $6"$  diameter kibbles, raised by hand hauling. The subtle radius in the lower part of “Paul’s Pot” shallowed swiftly, becoming a solid floor some  $0.5\text{m}$  wide; previously, noted left/right undercuts quickly became the waterworn radii of this rounded trench. A metre from the edge of the Pot, a step down in the solid floor was noticed, here silts and small cobbles were located. To achieve a little more room MR cleared several boulders stuck to the far wall; throughout the southeast rift, the floor was



lowered to -26m. PC squeezed in to assess. Disappointingly, this small, vertical rift, which extends downward, does not develop otherwise from this cavity. Lower in this crevice the stream which sinks in the North End, must enter, being on the same vertical jointing: likely, in high flow, it should be heard. At 50mm wide, this crevice is immature. It would be worth clearing the final area of spoil to see how the southeast rift from “Paul’s Pot” forms with the cavity and crevice. Likely requiring two kibbles of spoil, maybe a half an hour effort would do this. The large boulder, awaiting raising, was prepared for taking a snapper, a 6mm pilot drilled to a depth of 225mm. However, the 11mm drill would not comply. Without reading specs, part of the drill tip appeared/felt missing. Curious, as it was successfully used on the boulder in Halliday’s Hole, (needs surveying), earlier in the year: new drill bit required. Five kibbles of gravel stacked, adjacent, another pile of three kibbles worth of cobbles awaits.

Hours 7 (2990), Southend (1940), Kibbles 0 (5946), Nets 0 (912), Total lifts 6866

25<sup>th</sup> September First traverse of the Three Counties System.

Jason Mallinson, Chris Jewell

A host of others in support of the project.

27<sup>th</sup> September Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%: Heavy rain showers: Wind WSW, F4: Visibility <20Nm: Ground wet: large stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing.

Having all but concluded digging the Southeast rift PMcG returned to excavate the floor of the main shaft; starting between “Paul’s Pot” and the entry to the South Rift. Among the heavy silt deposits, a number of large boulders and angular cobbles were removed, exposing an extension of the circular vertical rib forming the opening to “Paul’s Pot”; this ridge of similar, sharp protrusions snakes into the shaft floor: where to? Good question. PC trialed a travel line from the tripod to the bolt above “Paul’s Pot”, which the kibbles will track along, following in an arc, delivering them to the digger. Though the present point of fixing below is not in the right place, as a quick test of its feasibility, it works; minor adjustments to follow. Unexpected bonuses of the travel line are; kibbles land next to the digger, so swiftly exchanged for full: seemingly a small amount of time, its a vastly significant reduction of the overall hauling period; CC noticed, particularly the absence of need to stop the kibble just above “The Gap”, for the digger to catch it, to guide it over the obstacle; only then allowing CC to resume lowering it to the shaft floor. A second bonus is any swing of the kibble is cancelled, as at the start of hauling a full kibble, the travel line is always under tension: delight! Even with a late-ish start thirty kibbles and two nets were raised. Several large boulders await the 2:1 system. Nine kibbles full. Generator almost ¼ full: fuel on site. A cracking session.

Hours 7 (2997), Southend (1947), Kibbles 30 (5976), Nets 2 (914), Total lifts 6898

2<sup>nd</sup> October Pouldubh, South.

Jim Warny

Assisted JW for an hour, facilitating German film crew to film the cascade.

3<sup>rd</sup> October Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 80%: Heavy showers: Wind W, F6/7: Visibility <25Nm: Ground wet: large stream. The Plan: develop the travel line. The 6mm dive line, initially used to test out the idea of a travel line, was replaced with an 8mm plaited rope. After eyeing up potential locations, installed two 6mm ring bolts in the Eastern wall corner of the South rift. Adjustments to

the length of the travel line length were made as CC repeatedly winched and lowered a full kibble up and down, placing the travel line under expected stresses and stretch. Adjusted line so it conveys the kibble a metre above “The Ribs”, sufficiently missing the RSJ, yet will land adjacent the digger. Finished drilling the Boulder in preparation for a snapper; the previous drilling issue found as simply being it’s a very hard rock; perhaps sandstone? PMcG’s observations are accurate; a branch of the bedrock feature extends into the shaft, perhaps to ultimately form a barrier, similar to “The Ribs”. Undercutting continues beneath the East and West walls, which form the South rift; suggesting the shaft will become inclined, with stepped features. If so, the kibble need be guided the last bit of distance by way of a shute, perhaps, to avoid lateral pressure from the Hauling rope during lifting. At surface, the travel line requires a jammer to facilitate deployment and adjustment. CC suggests using a counterweight to remove “slack”, constantly, from the travel line during operations, avoiding it twisting around the Hauling line. The lower area of the shaft remains heavy clay. The large surface stream made PC descend “Paul’s Pot” to listen for water in the cleft; a distant chuckling could be heard; this is likely the stream from the North End. Generator ½ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 3 (3000), Southend (1950), Kibbles 0 (5976), Nets 0 (914), Total lifts 6898

4<sup>th</sup> October Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

13:00. Cloud 95%: Heavy rain: Wind W, F3/4: Visibility <20Nm: Ground underwater: Large stream. The Plan: Dig. PC arrived early to set up shop and install the surface jammer on the travel line. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG climbed into the shaft, full of spray and cascading water overflowing the pipework attempting convey it from the southern stream inlet. PMcG began digging north, exposing the bedrock feature, producing thirty kibbles of cobbles and heavy clays. The Rib that began to snake out into the shaft, fortunately ends within a foot or so. Throughout PC fettled the linkage between the hauling hook and the travel line fitting a 50mm pulley to reduce wear; twisting remains minimal. Meanwhile, far below in the misty shaft PMcG used the lower jammer to make adjustments to precisely land the kibble near him. Overall, the travel line system appears a success, saving time and effort. By placed his head into the southern rift PMcG could hear the low rumble of a stream from below: nice. Generator ½ full: no fuel on site. Toward the end of the week, more heavy rain expected.

Hours 7 (3007), Southend (1957), Kibbles 30 (6006), Nets 0 (914), Total lifts 6928

4<sup>th</sup> October: additional

between 08:30 and 11:00, 28mm fell. Heavy rain showers continued until.15:30

Quarterly statistics; error transferring data

Hours 7 (3007), Southend (1957), Kibbles 30 (6006), Nets 0 (914), Total lifts 6928

4<sup>th</sup> October Poll an Eidhneáin; AKA Doolin Cave, AKA Brown’s cave

Martyn Farr, Rachael Smith

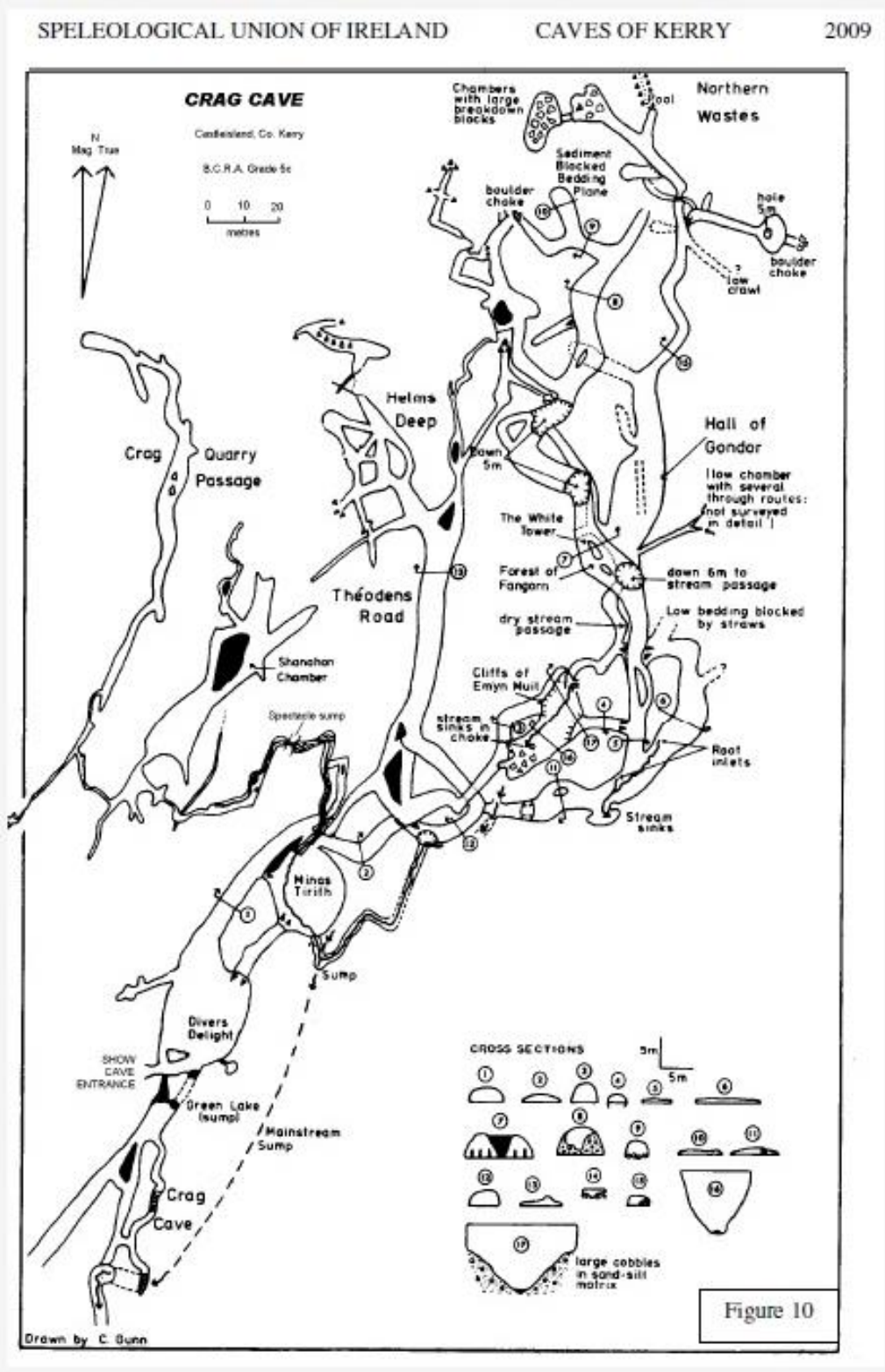
17:00. PC arranged with John Brown for an after-hours visit to facilitate MF and RS take photos. A pleasant two and a half hours.

6<sup>th</sup> October Crag Cave, Co. Kerry

Martyn Farr, Rachael Smith

Cloud 100%: Rain: Wind W, F2: Departed Doolin 08:30, arrived 10:49. Steady trip via the Limerick tunnel. Met Donal Ganey, owner; Caroline assistant and others. Had minor issues orientating selves, due to cluttered survey. Eventually located grotto, the primary

project. Exited to rain. Swift change, presented with dinner and gifts by Margaret Ganey and her son Donal and wife Lisa. Over long chat, invited to return and stop with them; Donal asked PC return, to look at archaeological Ogham feature and recently uncovered hole; a potential souterrain. Departed 19:00, Doolin 21:20.





**NB. Pollalahan, Co. Mayo.**

Seemingly unvisited/unrecorded; this site is located on a direct line between Aille River Sink and Polltoomary, (Bellaburke Risings): on the Togher Padraic at ITM 507728 x 781312. Surface elevation surrounding Pollalahan is approximately 190ft. Polltoomary is around 140ft. Aille River Sink is estimated at 150ft. The entrance collapse, on the hill is some 200ft. Height difference between sink and rising estimated as 10ft; taken from adjacent contours. From the 25" map a large depression with, possible, cliff face, has a surface opening of around one quarter of an acre. Warrants a look at, the cliff face drawn and the depth suggests during winter levels water could show where to dig.



Pollalahan relationship to the line of drainage between Aille River and Polltoomary.

**NB. Crag Cave, Co. Kerry.**

Having spoke at length with the owners, have been invited back. The survey is poor, areas unsurveyed owing to low sections. Bearing in mind the low section which access stunning areas, the place is well worth pushing.

12<sup>th</sup> October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Paul McGrath

12:30. Cloud 95%: Wind W, F1/2: Mild: Visibility <15Nm: Ground wet: Large stream. The Plan: Dig. A brief discussion favoured removing the accumulated boulders, which would soon hamper digging. Set up the 2:1 system, after initial phaffing about. Utilizing the travel line, pleasantly surprized the 2:1 system did not twist during lifting: another unforeseen bonus. Five lifts were made, the largest boulder ≈100kgs, being a 50kg lift. Though the winch made no sign of effort, 100kg should be considered the maximum; at 2:1 being some twelve kg more than a full kibble. Returning the net to the bottom, found

only four metres spare of the seventy-metre rope; after being doubled for the 2:1 and taken round the capstan. Another three metres of depth and a longer rope is needed. Prior to finishing PMcG descended “Paul’s Pot” to dig some of the remaining gravels and cobbles. It will be interesting to see how the rift morphs into the open narrow cleft as the confined space still offers some developing features. No water flowing to either washing cistern; cleaned filter and reservoir of sediment; both now working well. PMcG cleared out cobbles and stones from the washing cistern. Generator just ½ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 4 (3011), Southend (1961), Kibbles 0 (6006), Nets 5 (919), Total lifts 6933

13<sup>th</sup> October

Lost Bill Small

16<sup>th</sup> October Aille River Cave, Co. Mayo

Rachel Smith, Jim Warny, Paul McGrath, Martyn Farr, Una Donoghue.

Depression at ITM 506883 x 781070. Cloud 95%: Light rain predicted early afternoon: Ground, damp: The Plan: photography for forthcoming book. Caution required; this cave takes much of the significant, Partry Mountain catchment; response to even light rain is unknown. Departed Doolin, 0:7:50; picked up PMcG, Kilfenora 08:20, JW, Ennis 08:55. Met the others by the lake, 10:55, (ITM 506989 x 780828); located the end of the boreen from the road. Quick catchup, then swiftly to the cave. Descending the short scramble, below the depression entrance, enters the noisy river passage. Memory hazy of previous water levels, and route to followed along flowing river passages. At the first junction MF and RS began the photo process; shouting above the noise level, needed by the Director. Inflated dingy, JW ferried all and kit to the next sandy shore. Portered dingy etc. to next section. Along this elevated section, passages take on a superb, rugged character; river noise increasing. Reached the point where the passage becomes a lofty, metre wide rift, taking the entire river; noise thunderous. From an elevated position MF set up, directing others to perform gymnastic contortions, to achieve the perfect lighting. JW and RS straddled the river, adopting the shape of a Wishbone. Moving the dingy along this narrow channel was a stressful affair, trying avoid the razor-sharp projections. Above the pool, where MF previously sustained injured, just before the main river passage; stopped for more photography. Immersions chilled the party, UD was unaffected, up to her neck stabilizing the dingy and holding the light to help achieve The Shot. MF happy, exited. During packing, part of the pool was illuminated, showing “dry land”, this was not the case previously; the water levels at that time estimated a foot higher. JW wants to dive here, PC suggests May, invited PMcG and UD to support. Here the Limestone is black, with calcite strings, less than a millimetre wide; a wonderful place. Reversed journey. Arrived Linnane’s, Kilfenora, 19:15 mentioned to PMcG had not been inside for years; he suggested a quick one; enjoyed a very fine pint of Guinness; should start using this place.

17<sup>th</sup> October Doolin River Cave

Martyn Farr, Rachel Smith

Cloud 90%: Wind SW, F2/3: Ground wet. The Plan: photography. Rigged the pot with ladder and lifeline; began the photography. Water level up 0.3m from normal; airspace some 0.7m. Upstream to the Aille cascade, much artistry took place. More photos taking returning along the bedding to Fisherstreet, recording the foam-covered roof; so recently flooded. The available 3mm wetsuit all but destroyed PC, severely chilling the kidneys.

18<sup>th</sup> October Considine’s Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath, Martyn Farr, Rachel Smith, Basher & Martel, visiting

Visibility<20Nm: Dark 19:00: Cloud 100%: Wind S, 3/4: Ground Wet: Large stream: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading: MF – RS barrowing. PMcG worked hard, but steadily north, levelling the floor up to “The Ribs”. Depth at end of session 24.5m; this is estimated, as the top of the two-metre wooden ladder is now all but level with the -22.5m floor of the ladderway. Digging for PMcG was tougher tonight; the session called at twenty-five kibbles and a net. Nine kibbles await. Surprise from the visitors, as it appears the shaft is some ten metres deeper since BB and MB’s previous visit, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019; MF and RS impressed too. A gap created by boulders protruding from the net, caused the travel line to become trapped inbetween, twisting around the hauling line, tightening like a prussik knot: noticed by slack suddenly appearing in the surface part of the travel line. The reduction of the floor area is allowing depth to be achieved swiftly. So, the travel line bolt fitted at -23m needs relocating; another shaft plan survey is also required. Generator 1/4 full: no fuel on site. Photos taken by various.

Hours 9 (3020), Southend (1970) Kibbles 25 (6031), Nets 1 (920), Total lifts 6959

20<sup>th</sup> October Pouldubh

Martyn Farr, Rachel Smith

Cloud 80%: Wind NW, F2/3: Ground sodden: The Plan: photography. MF delighted at the location, particularly South; a large waterfall tumbling into this sink. Steady trip with stops to set up and take photographs; emphasizing the beautiful, underrated streamway and its superb features. Much time spent at the cascade; results are seemingly excellent. All but five hours underground; out to a sunlit sky, nice.

20<sup>th</sup> October

Mount Aso, Kyushu, Japan, erupts.

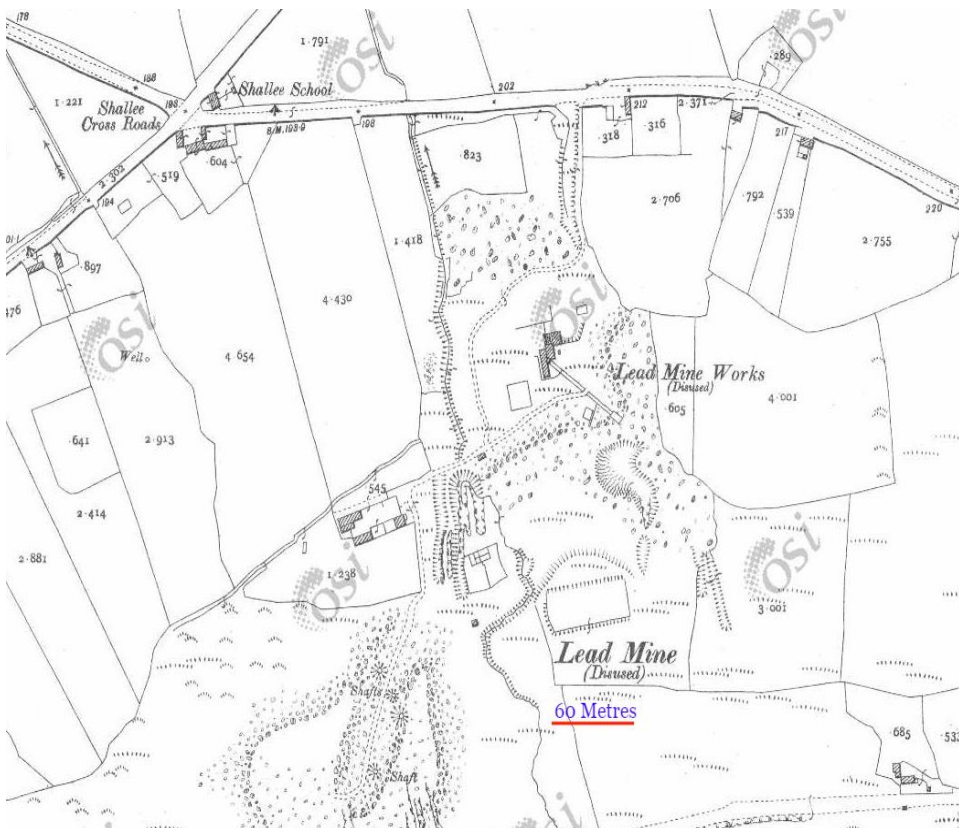
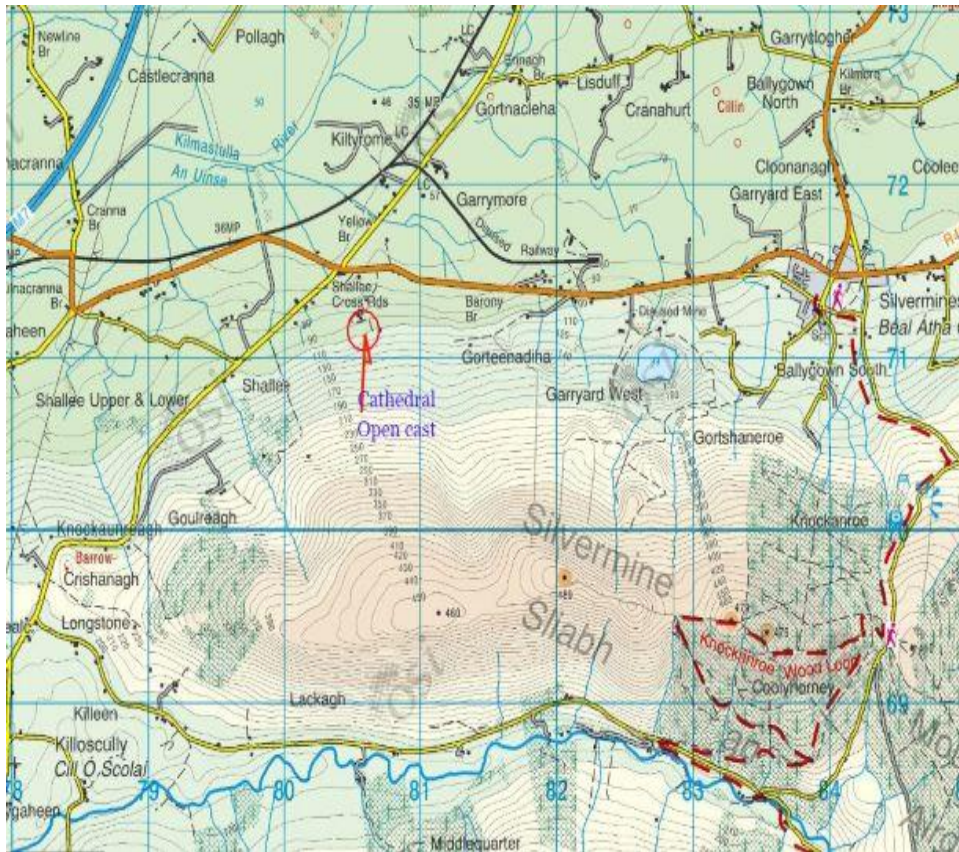
21<sup>st</sup> October Shallee Lead/Silver Mine, Co. Tipperary.

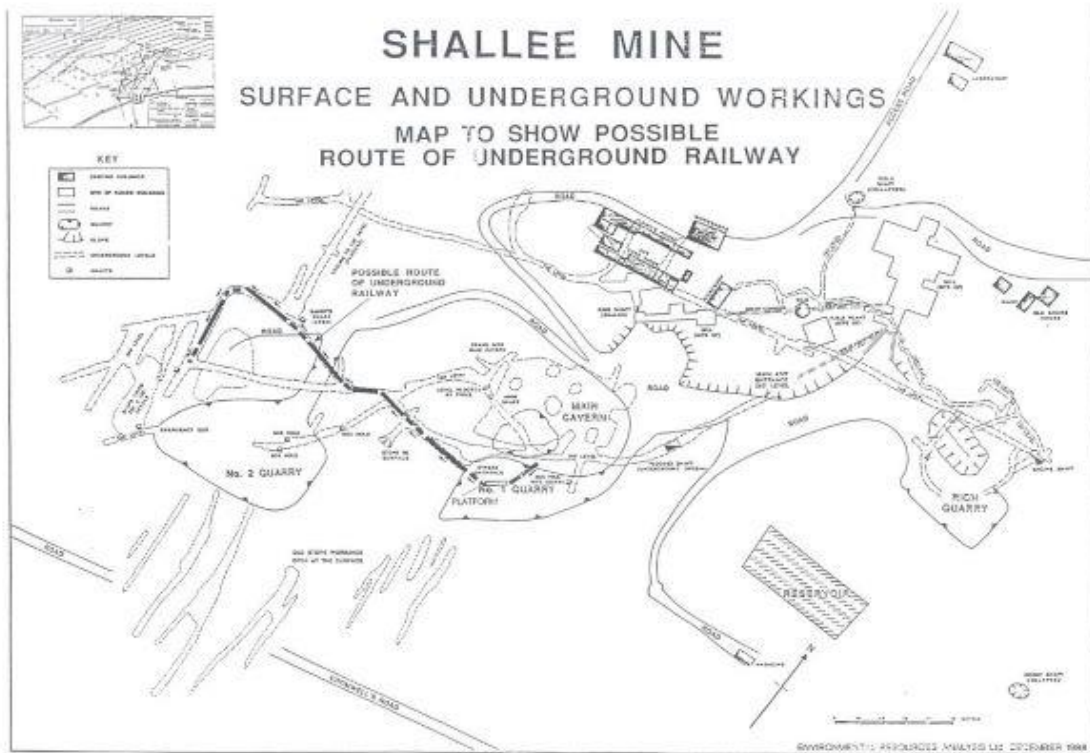
Martyn Farr, Rachel Smith

Cloud 10%: Wind NW, F2/3: Visibility infinite: Co. Further to suggesting include a mine, like Silvermines, in the forthcoming book, visited the site. Issues following tailing ponds drying out, allowing lead dust to be wind blown across the area, eventually dealt with by a ten million euro spend; treating and cleaning the area and enclosing the workings.

Developing the mine as a tourist attraction have not, as yet, come to pass. The place is a wonderful example of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century mining. The industrial excavations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century appear to have removed traces of smaller 19<sup>th</sup> century workings. A number of mine buildings survive. Found the Cathedral, uphill from the Engine House, spent a lot of time photographing the place. Found an inclined passage, holed into from the main cavern, followed it to a superb maze of tramways and vast caverns, with small diameter shafts to surface. An incline, with rails in situ and an Ore bin were two superb features encountered. More must lurk in the dark awaiting enjoyment. NB and CC have visited the place; but do not know if they accessed these workings; if not must do, at the earliest. One hundred and fifty metres east of Shallee Cross ITM 580521 x 671538, is a small pull in area. Here is the base of the track that leads uphill, the Engine house on the left. Straight on up the hill the track meets one coming from the left, going right, some fifty metres along an entire section of the green mesh fencing is missing. Entering here a narrow path through dense furze leads to the open cast; the workings are down to the right. On the right is the flooded workings, to the left the small hole, one metre diameter enters the shallow incline, fifty metres up a right turn enters a network of caverns and passages. Time constraints meant did not venture further afield; must return. Departed 18:30, Doolin 20:00. A dam fine trip.







View, south-ish, The Cathedral, Shallee Mine

Photo Pat C



2021

21<sup>st</sup> October 1966, (09:13)

Aberfan

22<sup>nd</sup> October Considine's Cave, (South End)

Martyn Farr, Rachel Smith

13:30: Cloud 100%, base 1000ft: Wind NW, F2: Visibility <25Nm: Ground awash: Large stream: The Plan: Photography. Before returning to Wales, MF and RS requested a visit, recording the results of the Team's combined efforts; expressing their appreciation of the volume of spoil removed, natural features and simple technology enabling two to dig. The resultant images illuminate the shaft. Sent images on to Cheg for the Website. Generator a little under ¼ full: no fuel on site.

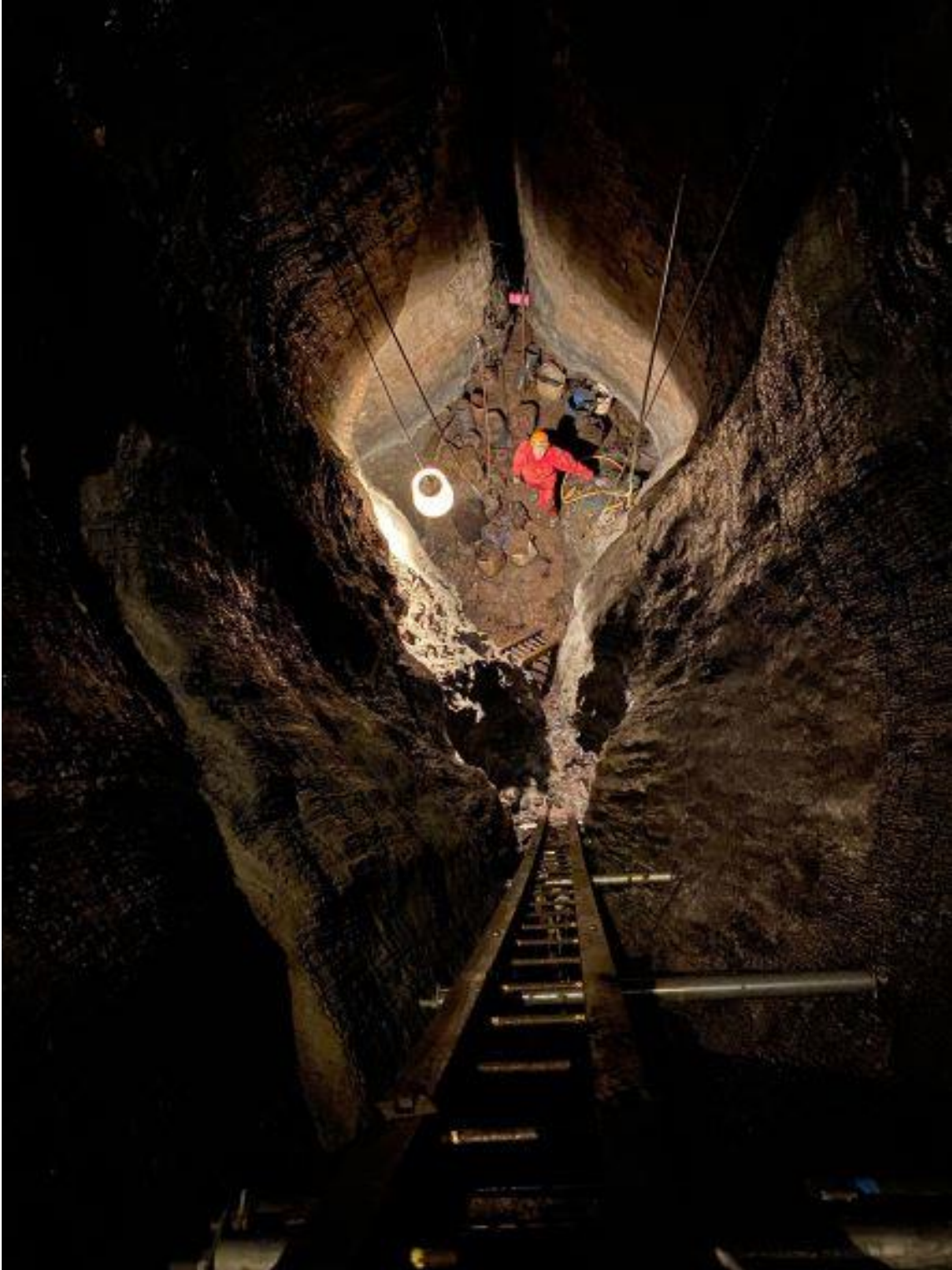
Hours 5 (3025), Southend (1975) Kibbles 0 (6031), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 6959



Photo Martyn Farr

View South; South End at -24.5m; "Paul's Pot" far left, "The Tongue" bulging into the shaft from the near right, covered in hoses and kit.





View South, "Paul's Pot" hidden, extreme left of image.

Photo Martyn Farr

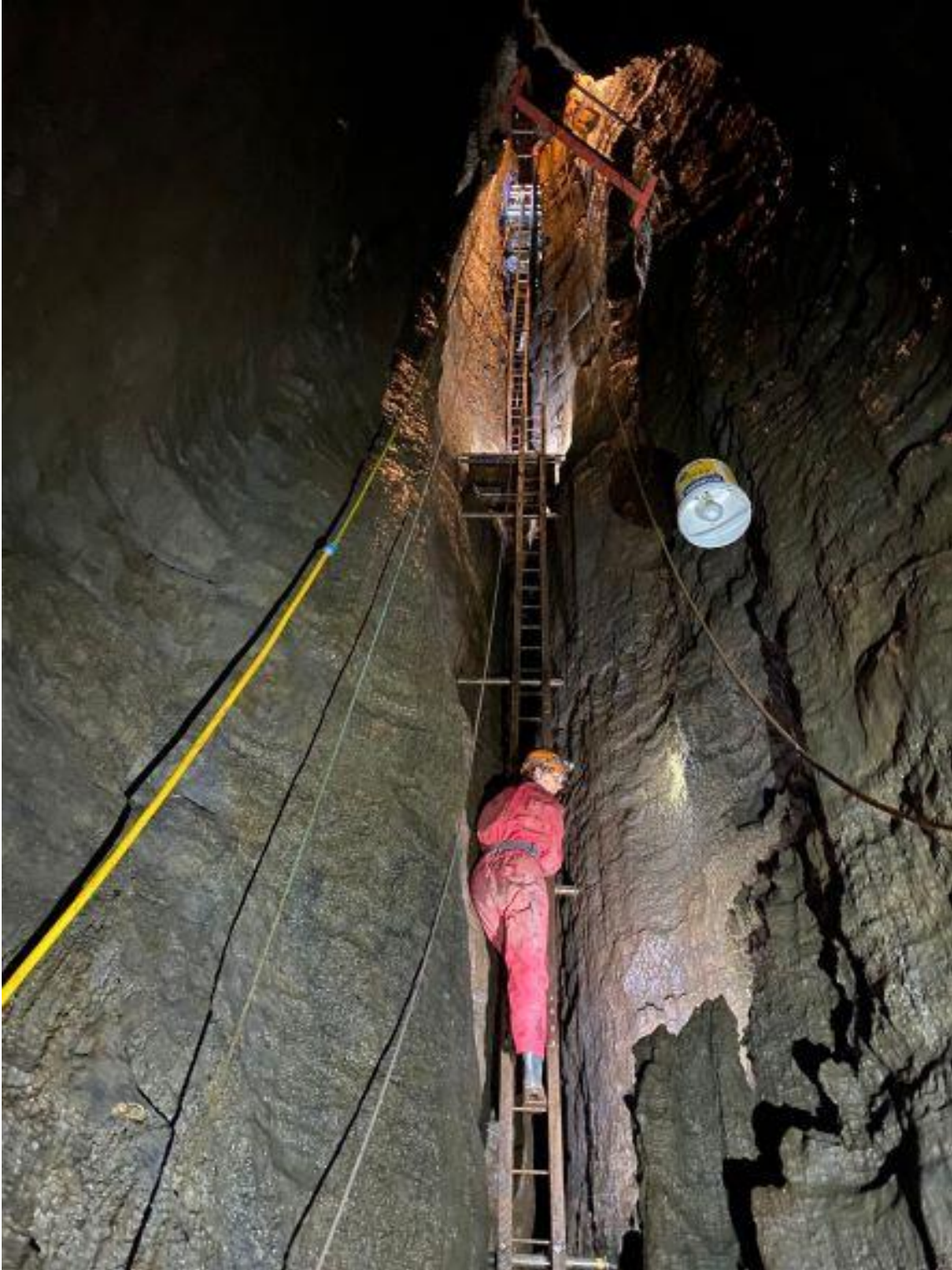


Photo Martyn Farr

View North, Rachel Smith, from -22.5m, “The Ribs”, projecting image right.





Photo Martyn Farr

“Paul’s Pot”; top of image, ≈North; southeast rift, image right. Flood water enters from the small crevice the far side of this rift.



Sink WNW of Aille River Cave, noted by MF, from NG’s Microlite



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

Cheg Chester, Lenny Smith

13:00. Cloud 80%: Wind NW, F3/4: Visibility <30Nm: Ground sodden; Medium stream: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PC unloading: LS digging. Sent down the Hilti, to drill new, lower position for the Travel line bolt; almost two metres above the floor, now about a metre; readjusted length of Travel line. Though exposed to a very steep learning curve, LS did well: safe working operations alone are a lot to take in. Steady progress achieved sixteen kibbles, LS working along the east wall from "Paul's Pot" toward "The Ribs". First kibble up had projecting tails from the lifting rope knot; these managed to catch and wrap the Travel Line around the Hauling line; time lost attending to the issues. Previously overlooked monitoring deposition of spoil during the last session; the large pile of clays and cobbles was leveled as best as possible, but the route needs an improved barrow way route over the spoil to access the far end. PMcG fuel: generator ½ full: no fuel on site.

Hours 7 (3032), Southend (1982) Kibbles 16 (6047), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 6975

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

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

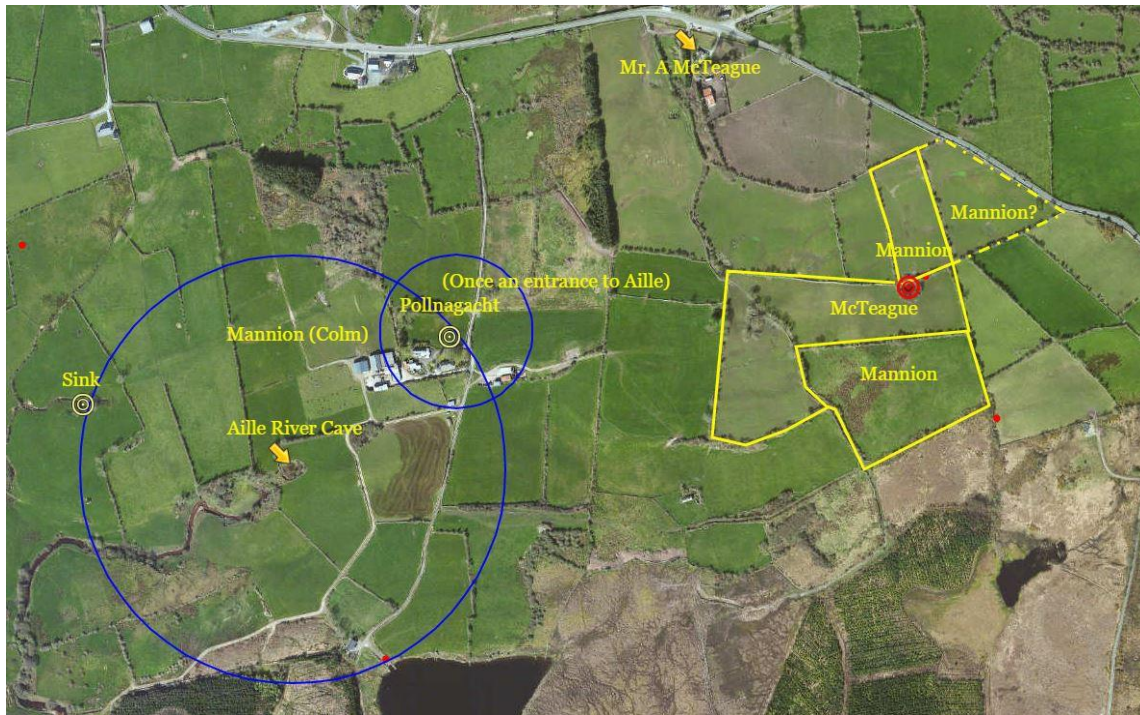
13:00 Cloud 95%: Wind W, F2: Visibility 30Nm: Rain showers: Ground sodden: Medium stream: The Plan: Dig. PMcG digging, CC winching: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG began to lower the floor in front the South Rift, producing clays, gravels, cobbles and boulders. The clay in this area of deposition appears to be lessening, becoming a form of gravel layer. On surface the clay is of a rich red/brown. A nice feature has appeared, on the outer perimeter wall of "Paul's Pot"; some nice vertical fluting. During this session the 7000<sup>th</sup> load was raised: delighted. Travel line continues to work well, minor adjusts ensuring avoidance of colliding with "The Ribs". Spoil deposition returned the area behind the winch shed, to form a slope on which barrow boards can be placed, to access the rear of the area. As the dense foliage lessens it is apparent that a larger dumping area may be attainable, by some trimming of same. Generator all but ½ full: no fuel in site. Numerous maintenance tasks will soon need attention.

Hours 7 (3039), Southend (1989) Kibbles 30 (6077), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 7005

6th November Aille River Cave – Pollnagacht

Jim Warny

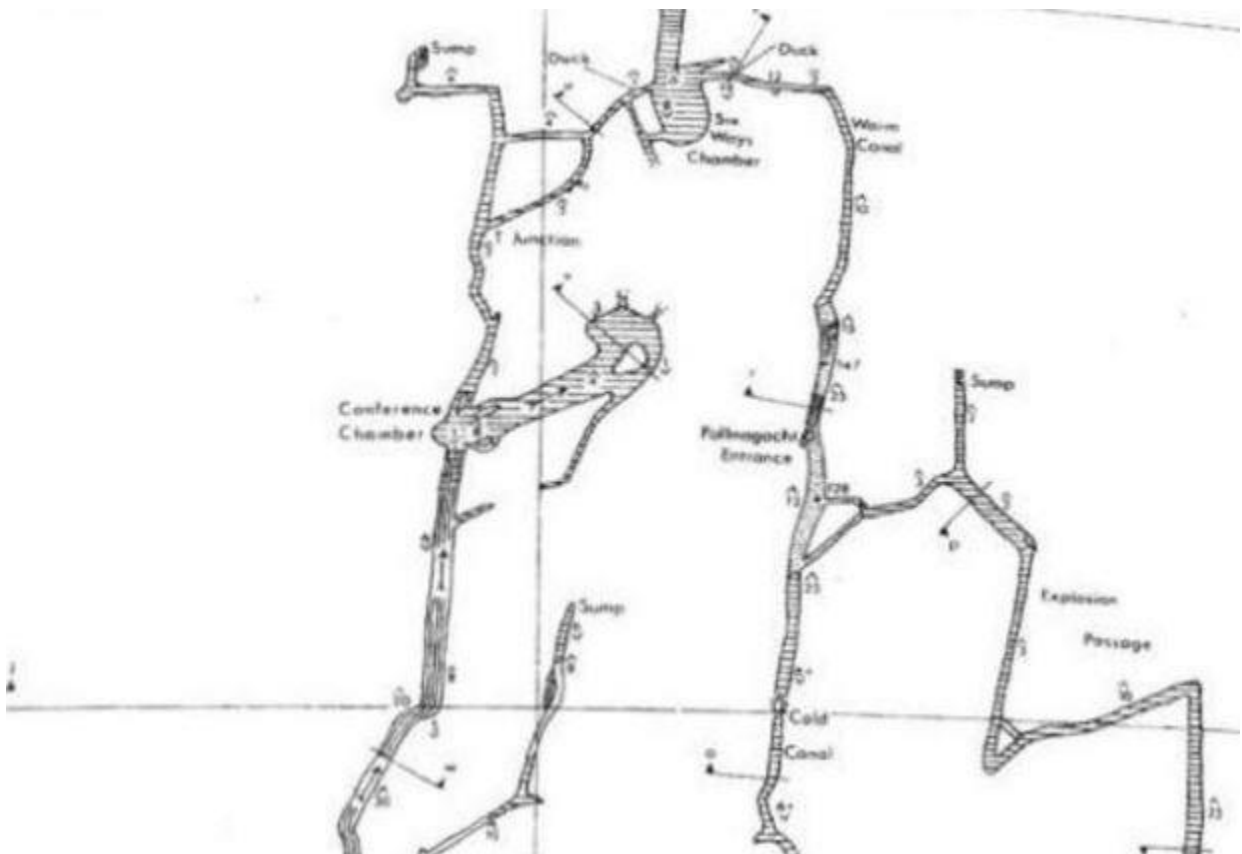
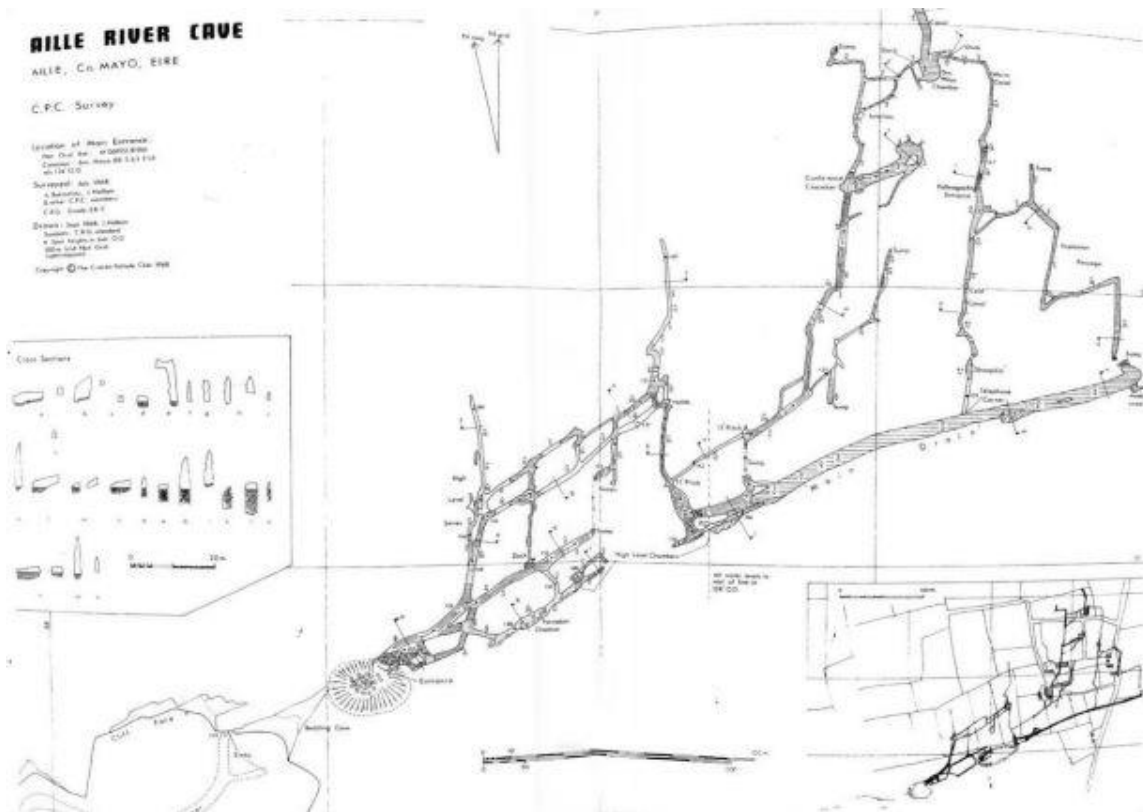
Overcast: Rain: Wind, F5/6: ground sodden. The plan: identify the owner of Pollalahan, with a view to pushing the place. Departed Doolin 08:50, arrived JW's place 09:30. Called to the farmhouse. Spoke to the resident, obviously suspicious of PC's enquiry for help, blatantly reluctant to pass on name or address of the landowner of Pollalahan. Stating the owner was away; won't back for some time. Neither would he offer his name. Asked, PC wrote name and phone number; gave up as a lost cause. Drove to the vicinity of Aille River Cave; called to the home farm enquiring as to ownership of Pollalahan. Whilst PC spoke to Colm Mannion, (son), JW encountered the father. Both amenable, confirming their ownership of Aille River Cave, explaining the owner of Pollalahan was Andrew McTeague, met earlier by PC. CM spoke of cavers "popping up" from holes in the ground around the farm; taken with a pinch of salt.... Later studying the survey found an entrance, Pollnagacht, once offered access to the far reaches of Aille River Cave. So, truth in CM's comment; likely these were Craven Pothole boys, exploring and surveying in 1968. Surface overlay places Pollnagacht almost within the farmyard. Back at JW's produced a plan. Requiring four/five/six persons. Rig travel lines on the lakes, bolt the climb, explore the main river passage to locate the sump and to check the end of the main drain as its end does not seem to fit with the development. Two surveys exist.....



Relationship of Aille River Cave sites



Survey sent from Craven Pothole Club 1968; absent extensions, drawn 1968.





6<sup>th</sup> November (14:30) George Linnane, injured, Cwm Dwr, OFD.

8<sup>th</sup> November Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud base 1000ft: Wind WSW, F4: Visibility <10Nm: Ground sodden: Medium stream: The Plan: maintenance. Replaced the lightweight pallet, within the working platform, with a heavier type; the gap beneath, offering access to the shaft closed by a plastic pallet. Cleaned the increasingly slippery pallet surfaces. Generator engine oil checked, at half full, topped and run. Discussed a Friday session to prepare for consolidating the loose debris within "The Gap" by inserting rebar near -24.5m, in the main shaft, on which to build the ginging. Also, see if there's sufficient depth to conduct another plan survey and to assess the installation of the next fixed ladder section. CC fuel: no fuel on site.

Hours 3 (3042), Southend (1992) Kibbles 0 (6077), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 7005

8<sup>th</sup> November (19:45) George Linnane, brought to surface

Unable to recover GL via Cwm Dwr, exited Top Entrance, (some 270 persons involved).

Nationwide callout.

12<sup>th</sup> November Considine's Cave, (South End)

Paul McGrath

13:00. Cloud base 500ft: Wind WNW, F4: Visibility 3Nm. Light showers: Ground awash: Large stream: The Plan: PMcG digging: PC winching, unloading and barrowing. PMcG continued to lower the floor, exposing the predicted, even feared narrowing of the shaft into rift formed along the fault. This predicted narrowing means depth swiftly achieved; the two-metre wooden ladder, from -22.5m just reaches the floor and is unstable: care required. Of the thirty kibbles most were of clays and gravels. This was deposited in the western area; boulders too were placed on the western end of the boulder pile. A tough enough session with developments not unexpected. Generator a little over 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Release of signal box overlooked to allow raising above potential flood levels.

Hours 6 (3048), Southend (1998) Kibbles 30 (6107), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 7035

13<sup>th</sup> November Souterrain Cloo9-022007: Noughaval.

Solo

Cloud base 500ft: Visibility 1/4Nm: Wind W, F2: Ground wet: The Plan: continue survey. Within the main chamber, set up the Bosch laser level to provide a vertical line from the point where roof lintels met the eastern drystone wall. Measurements were then taken from the joint of each boulder in the dry stonework, to the vertical laser line; process was conducted from floor to roof, repeated on the western wall: reproducing style, form and angle of the corbelling. In the context of a souterrain, corbelling allows builders create as wide a floor area as practicable, gradually narrowing the width as the wall heightens, this reduces the span, (length), of lintel required. From the collapsed, approach passage the entry to the main chamber is via a doorway; at some time, likely in recent times, the door was entirely closed by insertion of dry-stone walling. This has been breached, in part; the lower half remains in situ. Created a 1:20 scaled illustration of the interior view.

CL009-022007  
Souterrain  
Lisnarrour  
County Clare  
ITM 522200 x 697930  
Elevation 150 metres

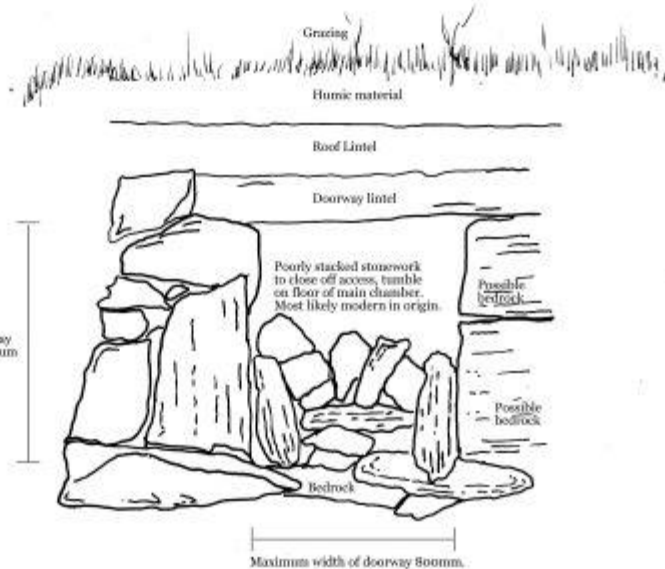
Detail.  
Doorway between  
approach passage  
and main chamber.

Scale 1:20  
Survey and drawn  
13th November 2021.  
Pat Cronin.

Scale  
0.5 metre

Height of doorway  
opening, maximum  
960mm.

View south, into approach passage.  
Toward potential enclosure dwelling.

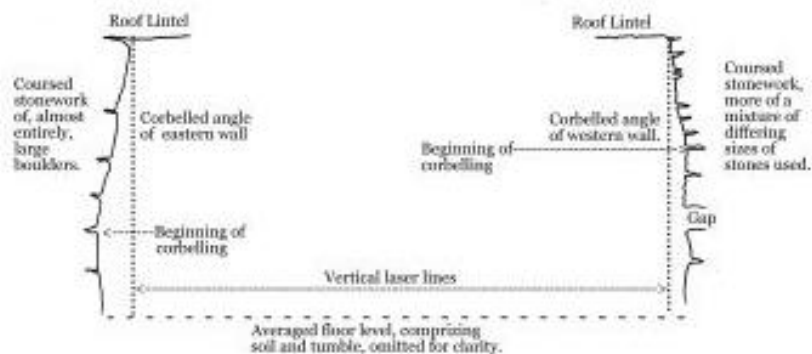


CL009-022007  
Souterrain  
Lisnarrour  
County Clare  
ITM 522200 x 697930  
Elevation 150 metres.

Detail.  
Corbelled angle  
of walls, main  
chamber.

Scale 1:20  
Survey and drawn  
13th November 2021.  
Pat Cronin.

View south from  
within main chamber.

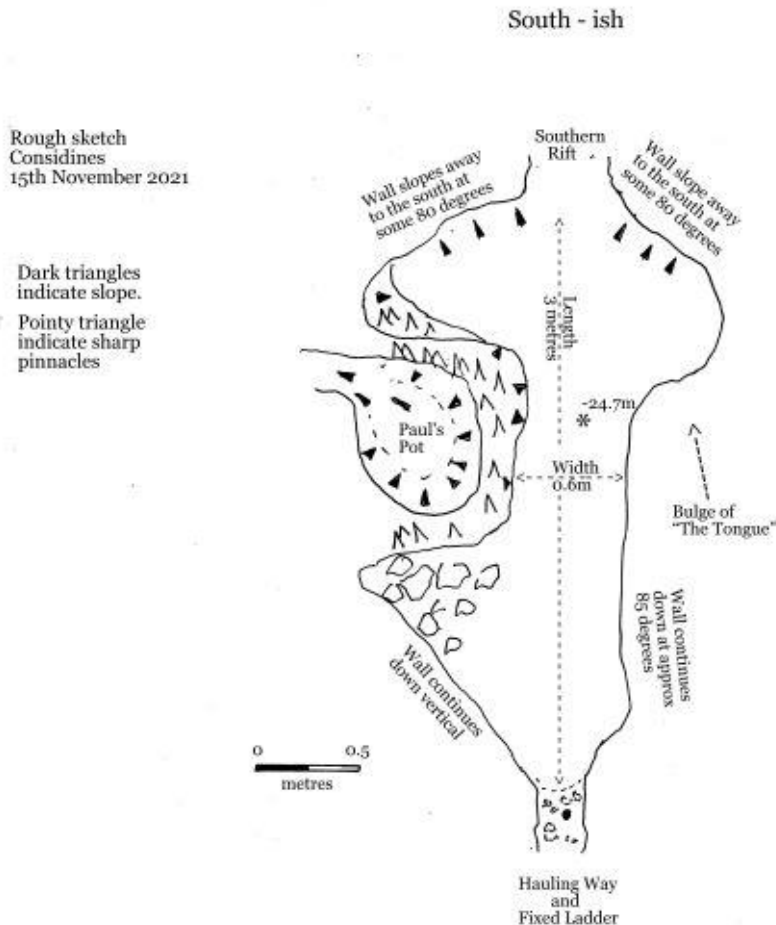


This view separates east and west walls for clarity, illustrating corbelling differences of each, constructing the main chamber.

15<sup>th</sup> November Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 90%: Wind W, F2: Visibility >30Nm: Ground sodden: Medium stream. The Plan: Maintenance. Descended to assess situation and install bolts; PMcG reported development of Paul's Pot and "The Tongue" in the west and east "corners" of the shaft, have formed a rift like channel some 0.6m wide, along the north-south joint. Among tasks, installed new location for signal box, adjacent southern rift. Three bolts from which to secure and adjust travel line. Installed two survey datums at -24m; present floor level is -24.7m. Tested new travel line location with full kibble. It misses the west wall in the forming rift and "The Ribs". Lifeline return line also relocated to a lower point for ease of reach. The two-metre ladder is becoming awkward to use, being lower than the fixed ladder floor area, and the other side of "The Gap". Reviewing matters, plan to fit eight rebar steps, drilled into the walls of "The Gap", affording safer access past this rugged area; lifeline still required. Inspecting the walls, though the shaft has narrowed, the southern area continues to slope toward the south it seems it will become the roof of a sloping passage. The east wall adjacent "The Gap" continues down vertically. Hope springs eternal. Builder's ladder repaired by CC. Some of the foliage in the spoil area behind the winch shed was cleared, but more required. Generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. Hours 4(3052), Southend (2002) Kibbles 0 (6107), Nets 0 (920), Total lifts 7035



(C) PCN



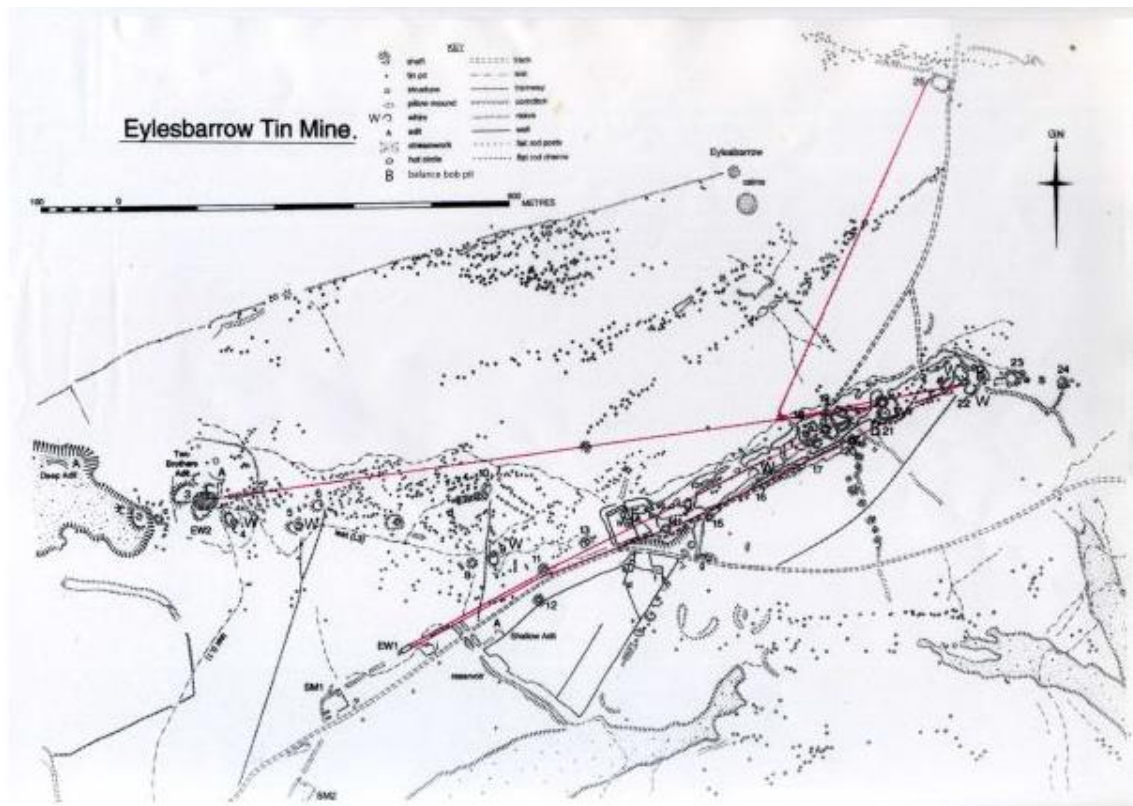
24<sup>th</sup> November Princeton, Dartmoor.

Irish Ferries cancelled the booked ferry; (22<sup>nd</sup> Nov). Arrived 06:00 to be informed the Stenaline ferry cancelled without notice; as still stuck in Fishguard. The only option of meeting with Nigel Burns, to travel north to Dublin, ferry to Holyhead. Extensive ill signed road diversions across North Wales and down the M5; a real ball ache. Eighteen hours later arrived NB's place 00:35; chatted until 03:25, left Bristol 10:30. Arrived Beardown Farm, two miles outside Princetown, set up camp; NB showed the adjacent Devonport Leat, an 18<sup>th</sup> century drinking water source for Plymouth Docklands, captured from the moorland; superb engineering. Thirsty, headed to the Prince of Wales for their micro-brewery "Jail Ale", excellent. Last tasty experience 1999?

25<sup>th</sup> November Eylesbarrow Tin Mine

Nigel Burns

Cloudless: Cold: Wind N, F4/6: Visibility >20Nm. Awoke surrounded by an inch of water; the tent works well; particularly the waterproof groundsheet. Made for the mine. NB relating his findings of this significant tin venture; many surface features remain spread over a wide area. Dartmoor enchanting, with these mine features, quite superb. Spent a cracking day as NB explained the mine's infrastructure layout, whilst identifying other features to continue his study. Possible sciatica giving hell; so painful, no bar. Northerly weather appears deteriorating.

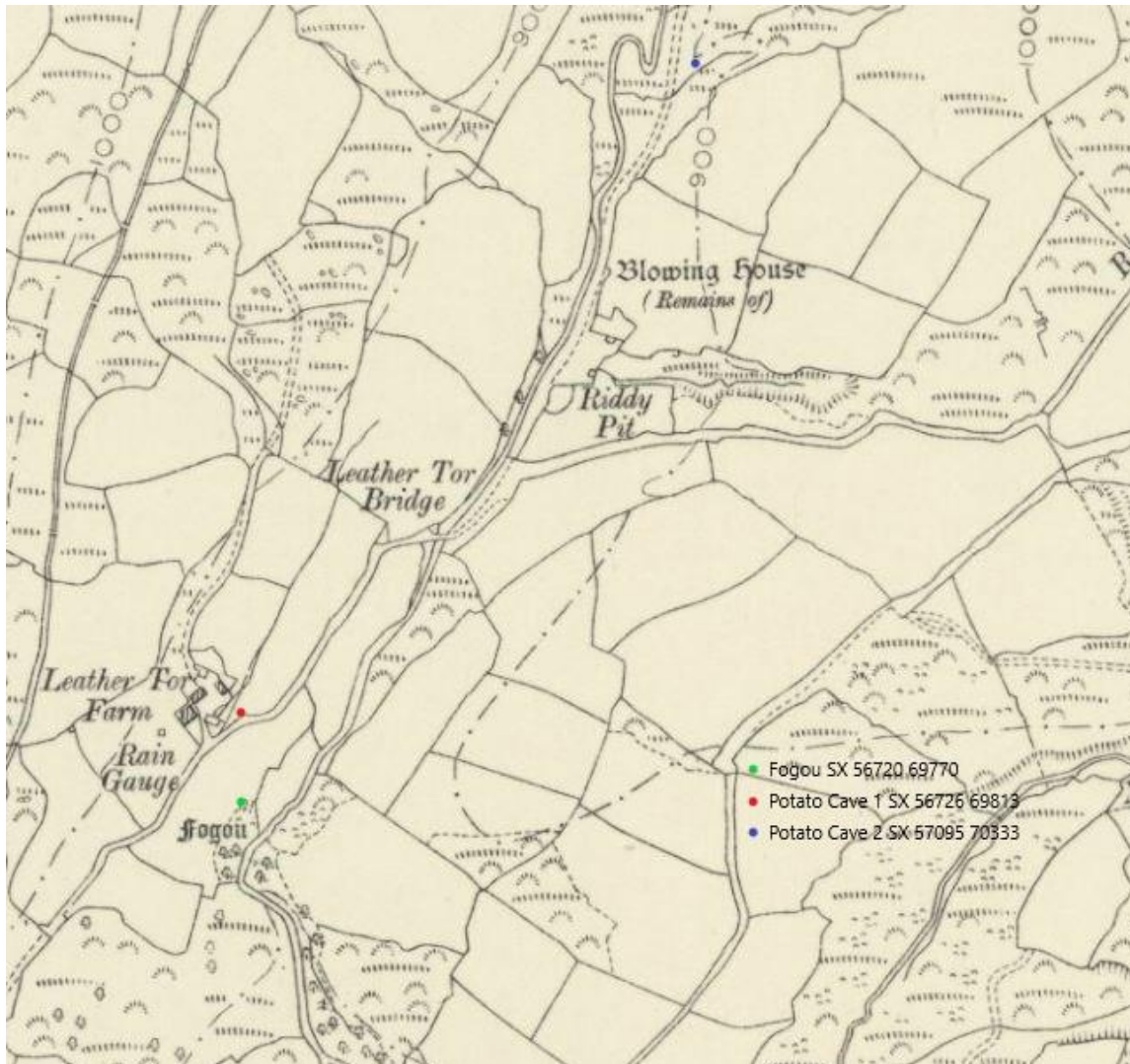


26<sup>th</sup> November Fogou and Potato caves.

Nigel Burns

Cloud 100%: Wind N, F8: Hail: Inch of snow: Temperature <0°: Rain. Storm Arwen arrived 02:00. New tent and sleeping bag performed well; perhaps even better if tent had been erected correctly: supplemented sleeping bag's comfort limit, in subzero conditions

with a cosy blanket. Delighted the tent's shape and lightweight construction survived the storm's ferocity. From the description provided by NB, wanted to examine this potential Fogou's, (souterrain's), construction and materials. Fogous broadly considered Iron Age, believed contemporary with Scottish Earth Houses. Among his research NB discovered this intact, preserved Fogou within the county of Devon; a somewhat surprising fact, based on fogous more widely, historically reported as a unique Cornish feature. A nice walk up to the Fogou, SX56720 x 69770; observed many birds, Woodpecker etc. following the Devonport Leat. Both features adjacent the ruined 14<sup>th</sup> century farm of Leather Tor. The Fogou below the track, in front the farm in the bottom of the valley to the east. Further long the track, at the next subtle bend, heading Northeast, is a linear ten metre tunnel. Potato Cave (1) SX56726 x 69813; averaging two metres high and wide. Excavated through a coarse, granular deposit, (perhaps glacial?), the interior found dry, and dusty. After conducting another basic survey, carried on up the shallow valley to Potato Cave (2) SX57095 x 70333, adjacent the Tin Works. Similar passage shape and length, also excavated in similar ground to Potato Cave (1). Its substantial portal built with a level of security in mind. The 14<sup>th</sup> century farm and tin works offer two options of storage; secured food surplus at the settlement; valuable metal ingots from the tin works.



25-inch map of Leather Tor, showing adjacent sites: data thanks to NB.





© Photo Nigel Burns

Leather Tor Farm, Potato Cave (1)  
Ranging rod of 0.1 metre segments



© Photo Nigel Burns

Riddy Pit, Potato Cave (2)  
Ranging rod of 0.1 metre segments





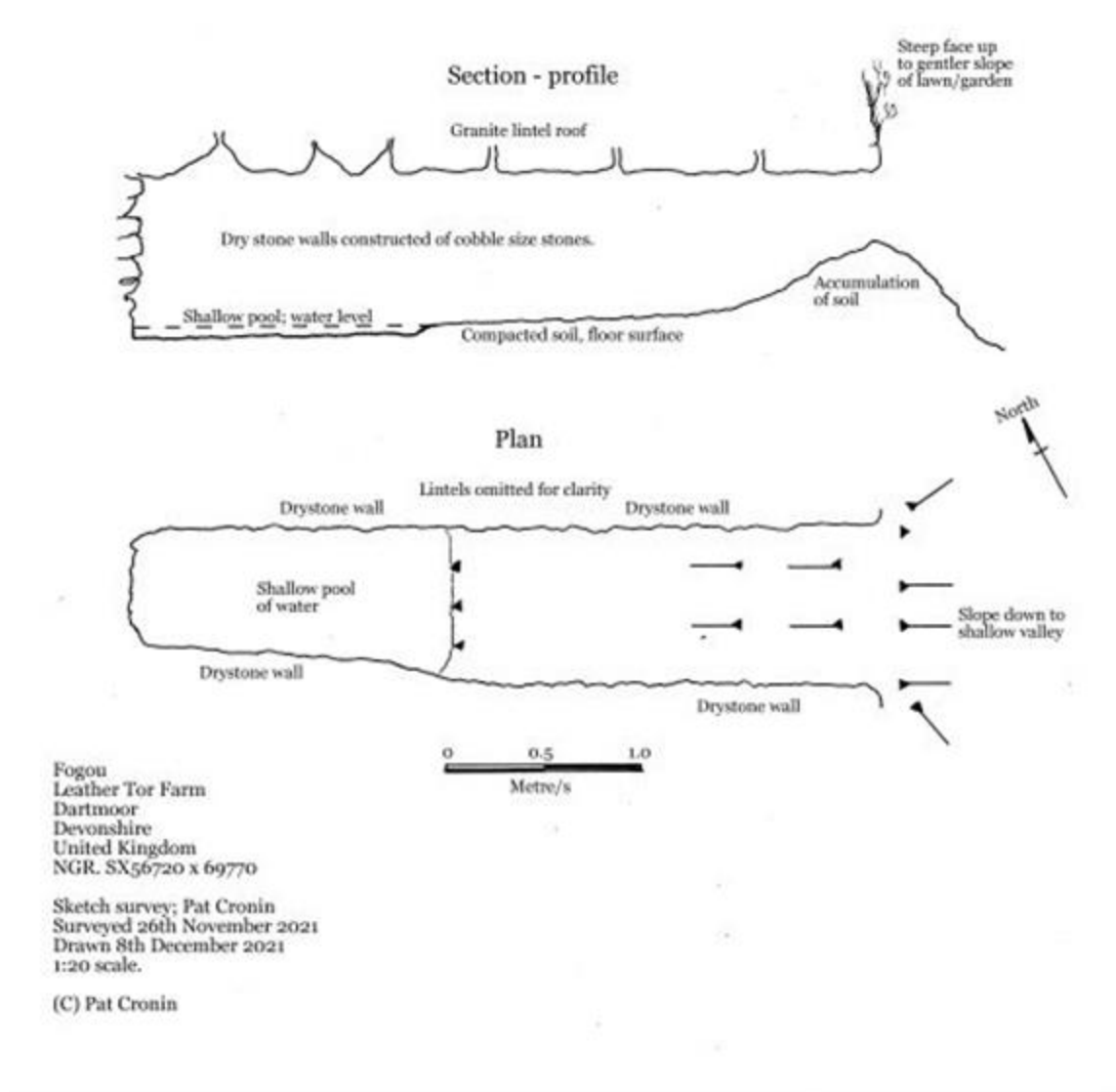
© Photo Nigel Burns

Leather Tor Farm Fogou; ranging rods 0.1 metre segments



© Photo Nigel Burns

Leather Tor Farm Fogou entrance location, Viewed West.  
Ranging rods 0.1 metre segments.



Fogou at Leather Tor Farm, Dartmoor, Devonshire; 26th November 2021.

1<sup>st</sup> December First Omicron infection identified in Ireland; a South African individual.

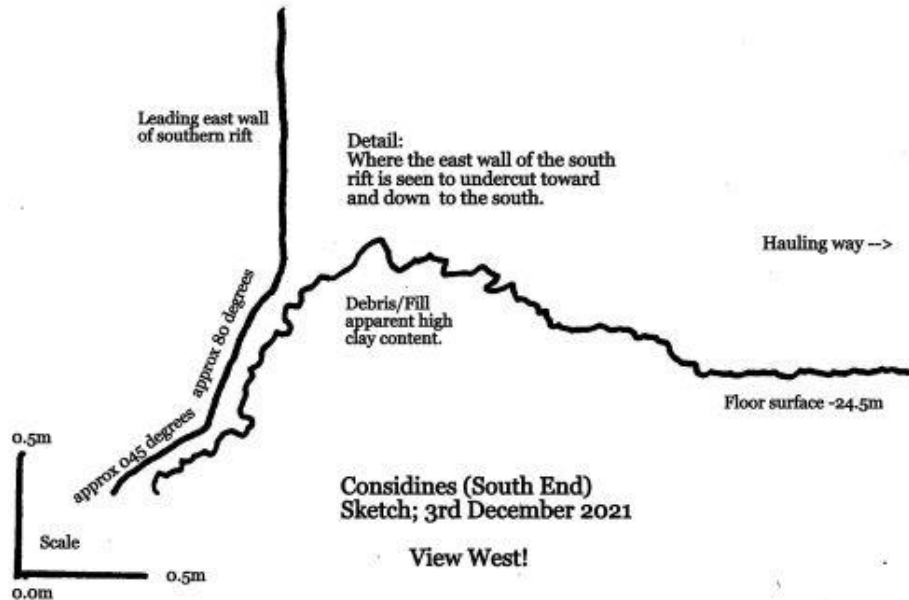
3<sup>rd</sup> December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester

Cloud 100%: Wind SE, F2: Visibility 20Nm: Ground sodden: Small stream: The Plan: maintenance. To prepare for the next digging session PC descended to install rebar steps in "The Gap", replacing the wooden ladder. Also, inserted two lengths of rebar on which CC will build ginging containing the unstable material within. Deployed hose to clear the gap between floor surface and walls, obtaining a view of what's happening to the roof. A change of the roof angle is clearly visible; changing to about 45° about a half metre below the summit of the debris; about equal to the present floor level of -24.5 (ish). Other areas of the walls are seen to descend almost vertically below the floor surface. Ideally digging

Monday afternoon should concentrate on clearing the area against the south rift. Leaving the floor at the base of "The Gap" of which Cheg can work. Generator content unknown.

Hours 2 (3054), Southend (2004) Kibbles o (6107), Nets o (920), Total lifts 7035



6<sup>th</sup> December

Booster, 3<sup>rd</sup> Jab; Pfizer, Ennis Hospital, 15:40.

7<sup>th</sup> December

Storm Barra approaching: Doolin wind, Force 11: snow: hail: rain.  
Shannon 130kilometres/hour  
Fastnet Light recording 156kilometres/hour

8<sup>th</sup> December

Cullaun II

Paul McGrath

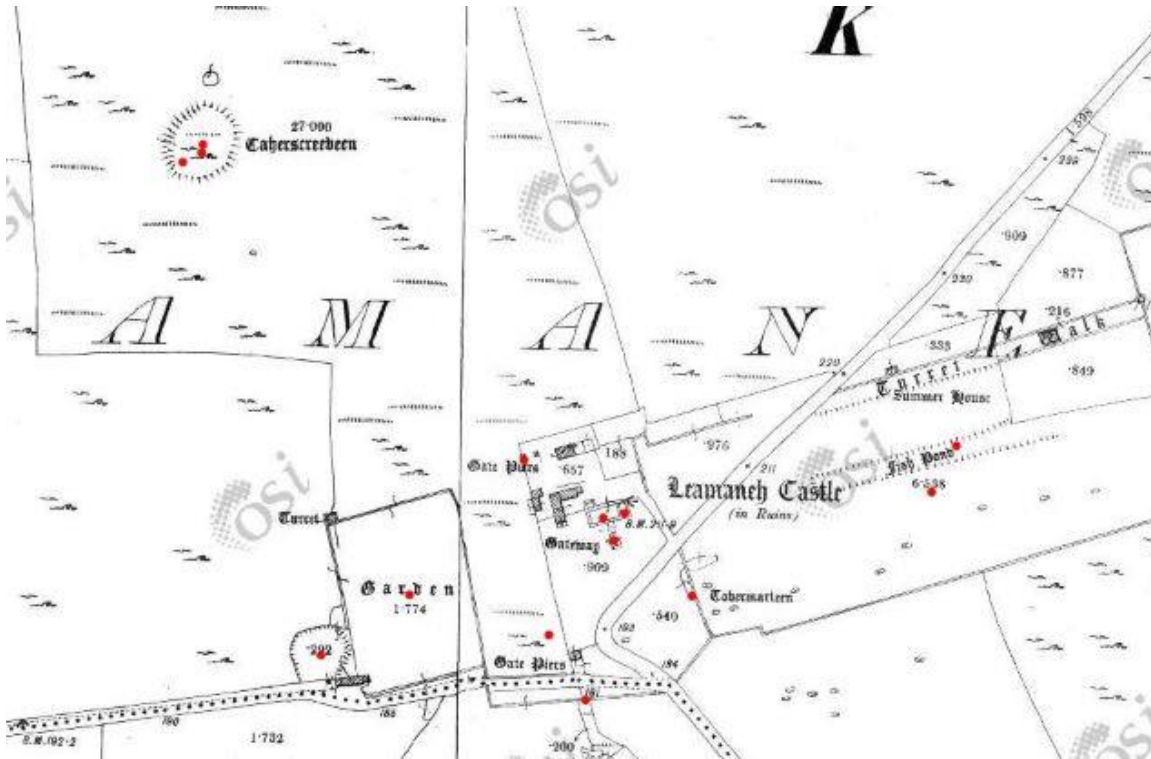
Storm Barra affects receding: Cloud 100%: Wind, NNW, F6: Showers: Medium stream. Needed a trip, for the exercise. PMcG last visiting the place a while ago. Steady trip down to pool chamber. Returning to surface, climbed along the rifts, searching for a flash gun left behind by Martyn. No sign so far; need ask for a photo of the location believed left at.

8<sup>th</sup> December

CL016-020037, Souterrain, Caherscreebeen, Leamaneh North Td.

17:00. Permission to access the site and conduct survey, received via Paul McGrath who knows the owners. Will arrange a meeting to discuss study a.s.a.p. Of note is the location of this cashel; an elevated position on the ancient route to the cathedral of Kilfenora. It strongly suggests a power base equal to, if not greater than Caherconnell.





Caherscreebeen located some three hundred metres Northwest of Leamaneh Castle. Potentially the original Leamaneh settlement. The souterrain rumoured to be a mural type; within the wall.

10<sup>th</sup> December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 100%: Wind SW, F2: Showers: Visibility 20Nm: Ground awash: Small stream. The Plan: Dig. Found Storm Barra had left the canopy ripped and tattered; requires repair. PMcG has some metal roofing sheets. CC winching, PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. Impending insertion of ginging into "The Gap" required the adjacent floor to remain intact until ginging is completed. Therefore, digging focused on removing the clay and boulder area at the entrance to the South Rift; at end of session -25m was reached. The debris being removed is fairly dry. But, unfortunately sticks to the inside of the kibbles; so, emptying such kibbles was tough. Requested PMcG squirt a small amount of water into kibbles as a release agent; very successful. Thirty kibbles and one net were raised. All spoil deposited in the western area. Surprized the winch shed and canopy escaped the storm so lightly. Generator 1/4 full: no fuel on site.

Hours 6 (3060), Southend (2010) Kibbles 30 (6137), Nets 1 (921), Total lifts 7066

13<sup>th</sup> December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath

Cloud 60%, clearing: Wind SSW, F2: Visibility >25Nm: Ground awash: Small stream: The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: PC unloading and barrowing. PMcG resumed digging in the south end, progressing, a small amount, into the subtly widening Southern Rift, expanding the face up to "The Tongue" and the thin limestone wall, which defines "Paul's Pot". The nature of the fill continues to alter; changing back to boulders and cobbles, the clay/silt appearing a little wetter. The wet hauling rope lost friction on the winch capstan, requiring extra effort to maintain tension. Depositing spoil was maintained in the western area. The spoil area behind the winch shed needs a new

barrow way constructed through it, the foliage there needs trimming to increase the fill capacity. The session produced thirty kibbles and two nets. Generator running on fumes: no fuel on site. The water cisterns were empty, no water supply from the reservoir in the field; it had become choked with stream detritus. Tasks: check plumbing throughout. Trim foliage. Replace hauling hook. Service hauling hook ironmongery. Conduct plan survey at or about -24m. Ginging required in "The Gap". Witnessed a most beautiful sunset; mist forming in the valleys.

Hours 8 (3068), Southend (2018) Kibbles 30 (6167), Nets 2 (923), Total lifts 7098 NB.

It takes two minutes and twenty-eight seconds to raise a load to surface from the present digging location, in front the South Rift, and forty seconds to return it. For a full rotation three minutes, eight seconds, start of haul to return of kibble to dig face.

21<sup>st</sup> December Cullaun II

Solo

Shortest Day – Longest Night: Cloud 100%: Chill: Visibility 15Nm: Wind SSW, F4: Tiny stream: The Plan: conduct another search for Farr's flash gun. MF supplied an image of the possible location, identified as the decorated area in the first rift upstream from "The Bloody Guts". Scrabbled to where Hugh Norton modelled and horizontally to where the walls became too vertical and smooth to progress. Checked ledges, folds, and pockets; found nothing. Descended and went downstream some ten metres; climbed five metres above the stream to look onto this wider area of development; nothing, bugger.

Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> day, of the 21<sup>st</sup> year, of this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

22<sup>nd</sup> December

Call from Olan O'Keefe requesting, return to duty to reconstruct the recently terminated membership of the Doolin Coast Guard Unit. Pointed out age barrier.

23<sup>rd</sup> December

Call from Olan O'Keefe, age barrier removed by HQ, facilitating resumption of duties as volunteer in the Irish Coast Guard.

27<sup>th</sup> December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Solo

Cloud base 450ft: Wind N, F2: Visibility 100m: Ground awash: Large stream. The Plan: produce plan survey at -24m. Deployed a static line; used a Petzl ASAP lifelining device. Admired PMcG's progress at the entrance to the South Rift; its floor about -25m. Set up a tape between the -24m datums: the northern datum requiring precise location, being a little south, and lower of the Hauling way Datum. Used laser level to accurately establish the lower datum's offset; (0.43m horizontal). Choose a notch in the wall of "Paul's Pot"; triangulating its position off the base line tape. From this notch took measurements of pot diameter to enable its representation too, at -24m. Delighted with the results; took a few photos with an Instamanic. Pausing on the "Staging" for a view of the shaft; noticed a dry area adjacent "Paul's Pot", ascending to -15m is a wedge shape, sloping, bone-dry surface, on both east and western walls. It appears that a decent draught was emerging from the narrow crevice in the back of "Paul's Pot". Fuel PC: generator 1/2 full: no fuel on site. During the previous session hauling was timed; from start of hauling to return of kibble to the dig face, takes three minutes and eight seconds. Canopy needs attention.

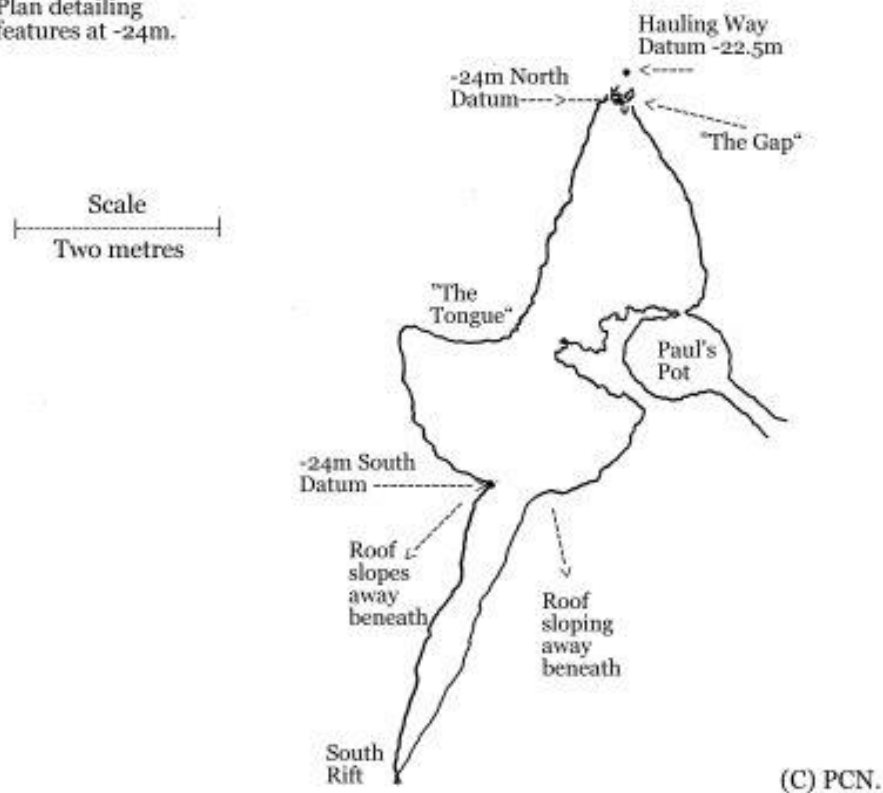
13<sup>th</sup> Dec, total lift statistics figure, 7096, is in error: corrected as 7098.

Hours 3 (3071), Southend (2021) Kibbles 0 (6167), Nets 0 (923), Total lifts 7098

## Considines Cave South End: at -24m

Surveyed & drawn  
Pat C. 27 December 2021

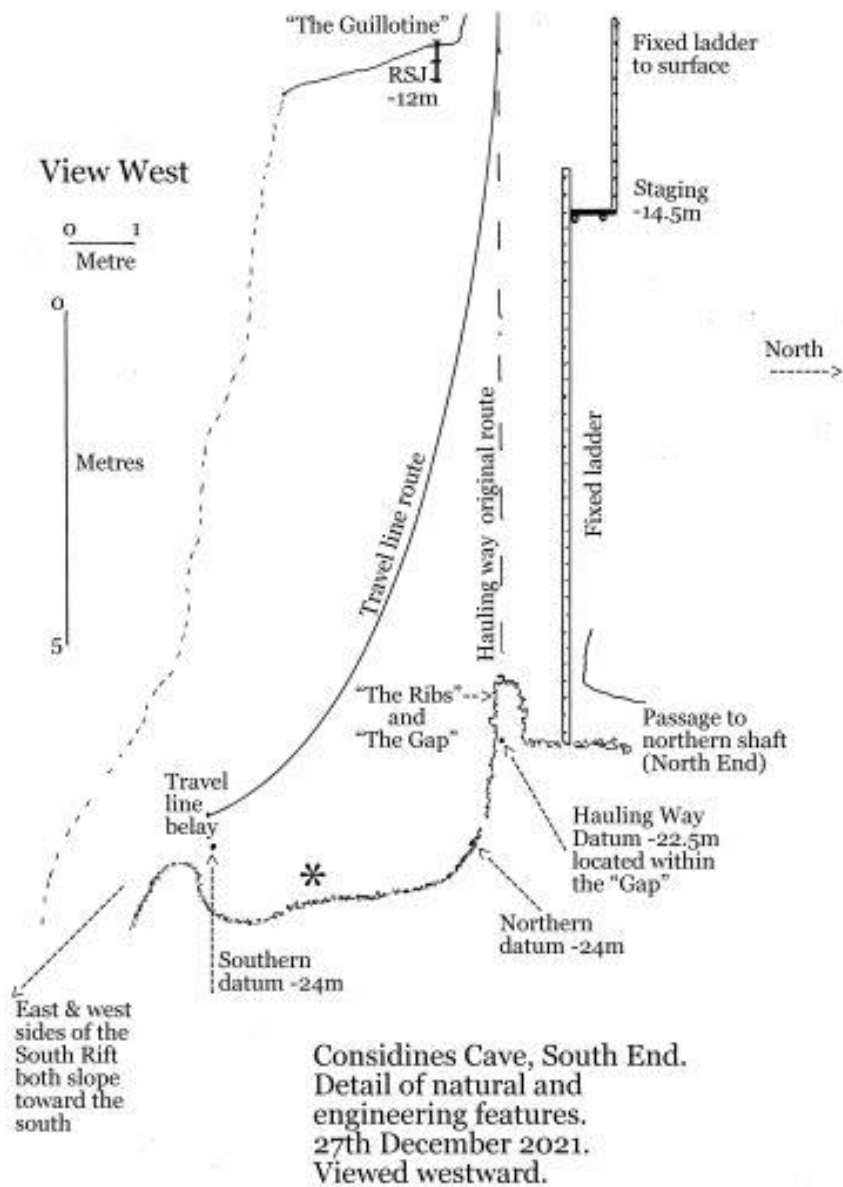
Plan detailing  
features at -24m.



28th December Pouldubh,  
Emmet McNamara

Cloud 90%, base 800ft: Wind W, F2: Visibility<10Nm: Ground awash. The Plan: tourist trip. First for EMcN after thirty-five years. Impressive waterfall at South entrance; owing to EMcN's time constraint, rather than go to the end showed the numerous aspects of cave's development: deciding exit Pouldubh Middle entrance; showed the decorated area to an appreciative visitor. The large stream producing an impressive cascade; EMcN requested another trip.





(C) Pat Cronin. PCN.

Travel line allows kibble to be landed adjacent the digger.  
\* Paul's Pot omitted for clarity



Photo Pat C.

Image: measuring tape around stainless screw datum at -24m. Also illustrating rebar steps set in "The Gap". Ginging will stabilize the extant loose gravel infill. Yellow water hose on right. 27 Dec.

31st December Considine's Cave, (South End)

Cheg Chester, Paul McGrath, Lenny Smith

Cloud 95%: Wind SW, F4: Visibility <15Nm: Ground awash: medium stream. The Plan: Dig. CC winching: PMcG digging: LS & PC unloading and barrowing. Investigation of the lack of water supply to the cisterns suggested peat particles settled in the pipe. While LS stripped apart assemblage, digging began. PMcG continued removing spoil from the point entry to the South Rift, penetrating some 1.5m; exposing what appears to be a curvilinear edge, with a vertical face; more exposure required. This is formed before the South Rift narrows significantly; further suggesting resumption of a vertical route. The stiff, clay deposit, sheltered within the South Rift, required effort to remove: a tough session all round, yet PMcG produced thirty kibbles. The ginging of "The Gap" by CC needs be done next week, during which a new barrow run could be prepared for the spoil area behind the winch shed. Generator a little under 1/2 full: no fuel on site. The small spade has been damaged by PMcG's productivity; needs welding. The cisterns water supply needs urgent attention. At -25m, Considine's South End is eight metres short of Poul Eilbh recorded as, -33m, this needs checking.

Hours 12 (3083), Southend (2033) Kibbles 30 (6197), Nets 0 (923), Total lifts 7128