

OCTOBER 2018

FRIDAY 19/10

I met my group (Adam, Kash, Thomas, and Damaris) in the sports centre at 1600 (more like 1640 by the time we all got there). We headed up to the Aldi and then headed toward Athlone at 1720 where we found out that the McDonalds was gone! So we had to settle for KFC, we were the first to arrive at 2050, followed seconds later by Ronan. Within a few hours we had all arrived, we were able to enjoy the evening without the concern of planning caves because Patrick had it done by the previous Wednesday.

SATURDAY 20/10

I was the first up on Saturday morning at 0800 and my car was the first to head off after making sure everyone had enough gear. We (Jill, Aodhán, Emma, Katie, and I) drove to Faunarooska first, then we were due to head to Doolin River.

It took me a little time to find Faunarooska, or as we often refer to it "NO FUN-arooska". I had only been there once at dusk so I'm still claiming I did well. Jill lead the cave, and we got all the way to the wet pitch head at the end, Jill and I then started to go down the dry route, we were thinking of letting the freshers have a little climbing practice. But Aodhán noticed a boulder (probably weighing 1500 kg) that I had my hand on which probably wasn't going anywhere but why take the chance...

On the weight out we decided that heading to the chipper for a supplementary lunch was a good idea<sup>1/</sup>, so while we did let the freshers lead out and we did let them walk past the exit on purpose we only let them go a few metres beyond the junction because chipper. Sadly the chipper was closed so we headed into the pub off the square in Lisdoonvarna and had some nice albeit expensive sandwiches and chips. I woulda murdered a pint.

Then we headed to Doolin River, parking at St. Catherine's B&B. I thoroughly perplexed the owner when I asked could we head up to the cave. Neither myself nor Aodhán had been into Doolin River in about 3 years, since the DIT forum went someone fell through a ceiling, and Jill had never been there. I don't recall the cave being so loose or seemingly precarious. I can recall one slab of stone about 8'x3'x6", balanced on another similarly sized slab, balanced upon a wafer thin piece of stone, balanced on a fist sized stone upon another wafer of stone... yeah. Because of my long absence from the cave I even printed out and laminated the survey! Which did turn out to be useful enough, and it actually held up fine. We didn't go that far into the cave to be honest, and I was encouraged by the group

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<sup>1/</sup> In hindsight I might as well have driven back to Carran oh well.

to turn around.

After heading out of the cave Aodhán suggested we head to Doolin Pier to have a look at the sea. Well you guessed it, it was still there with a fierce wind blowing across from the States. Following this we headed to the off licence and back to Carran, where the people who had only done one cave, had been drinking for what (appeared) to be a far while.

If I'm honest the night is a bit of a blur, there was a coin flipping game that involved oversuits, helmets, duct tape, and cling film.

### SUNDAY 21/10

Once again Jill, Aodhán, and I headed off caving but this time with two other freshers, Audrey and Barbara (two girls doing the same degree as I did). We had a good time in Culaun II and we went as far as the "Pool that get's your balls wet if you're not careful Chamber". There was a fair bit of flow from the river which made some of the foot work on the way in and out a little bit tricky, a hand was needed to get up by the waterfall but nothing major. We all got out grand headed back to Carran for a bite to eat and to pick up a 4th passenger. We got Octavian and the three freshers fell fast asleep in the backseat, while Jill kept me talking in the front. We made a short detour to give Aodhán back his glasses, then later on got lost in Athlone looking for the KFC. All in all we got home pretty quickly.

Also I don't think the car has ever felt so heavy as that Sunday evening, which is strange because I've had 5 people in the car with all their stuff, and wet rope & rigging gear too and not felt the same heaviness. On top of that the number of freshers with suitcases was crazy, do people not own rucksacks?