

AUGUST 2021

FRIDAY 30/7

Erin & I drove up from Clon on Friday night to the Hoo. It was a long drive, we arrived shortly before 2300, having left at 1700. Amazingly we were not the last to arrive. It was a fairly quiet evening, I had a chat with Aodhán and Odhrán both of whom I hadn't seen since the Refresher's Trip of 2020. We saw a very brave or tame fox who strolled around the yard of the Hoo with no fear of humans. Oh and I got (limited) 4G sitting at the firepit behind the Hoo, kind of a sad thing that shows the ever forwards march of technology & connectivity as it encroaches upon the wonderful isolation of the Hoo.

SATURDAY 31/7

Today we were up early despite the late night, it was decided that I would be a secondary on a Poll Tagha - Poll Prochlaise through trip. Aodhán, Emma, Barbara, and myself went into Tagha, while Matthew, Erin and Oisín went into Prochlaise. I ended up crossing swapping with Matthew at the cross-over and lead the way back out of Tagha. I poked my head above the surface at 1830 after de-rigging. Aodhán was to have come out to take over the callout and we knew he had been surface-side but did not know the callout status, so we headed back across the bog to the cars to call Joe for ourselves.

Long story short Erin and I walked back to the caves to see what was taking the others so long, I headed into Prochlaise to the first pitch to see what the story was and encountered the group coming up. I said do you know it's 1930 and my cave has been de-rigged for an hour? Erin and the girls headed back across the bog to get changed, while Matthew and I waited for Aodhán to surface with the rope & rope bag (that had burst). Turns out Aodhán had been out for nearly an hour before he came over to Oisín and then went in to check on things and ended up de-rigging. Suffice to say we went to the chipper in Blacklion ... no matter how good a cook Jimmy is we weren't waiting.

SUNDAY 1/8

I had a chat with the DCG folks who were up at the Hoo as well, I reminded them of where to find John Thomas, and they were able to tell me about Upper Cradle and roughly where I could find it. So I hatched a plan to take a group of freshers to John Thomas, get all muddy and then (hopefully) find Upper Cradle to wash off in. The group I rounded up was myself, Emma, Zuzanna, both Oisins and Mary.

Since Zuzanna had been in John Thomas on Saturday, I put her in charge of leading, with me only taking over at the climb over the traverse. I think she did well.

After JT, we stopped back at the Hoo to redo the callout and have a break. I think set us out to find Upper Cradle. I lead us out from the Hoo past the loo towards Marble Arch, I asked Zuzanna to point me in the direction of Marble Arch (this was a mistake on my part because we actually needed to head South-East not North-East). I fuffed around looking for a hole in the right field but probably about 100 metres too far North.

In the end rather than wasting more time I brought us up through the geopark and up the Marble Arch driveway to where we could see over the valley, and the field that I had stomped about a few minutes earlier. I also got 4G up there too so I checked Google Maps. We found a gate and headed down the field again. We all spotted a massive crater of a hole ... and just then the three DCG folks pop out.

After a quick chat we headed down and to the right into Upper Cradle. It was a nice little cave, quite a bit wetter than I expected. Or rather the water was deeper than I expected but I had a wetsuit for the next day so what did I care? We went all the way to the sump, we actually missed a climb that we could have done so I would like to go back some other time.

It was a wonderfully sunny day at the Hoo and we all enjoyed lounging around in the sun.

MONDAY 2/8

The previous evening I had arranged to bring Odhrán and Zuzanna to Poll na gColm of the Boats with Erin and I on Monday, because they had wetsuits.

That was a fun trip. We went all the way to the back of the cave, I found

myself warmer this time than I was the last time. I think that it might have been because I was the leader on this trip, where as there wasn't really a leader on the last one with just Adam and Erin. A weird one I know.

We left Odhrán and Zuzanna to lead out, and they did grand, they did miss the cairn at first but that's normal. Erin and I tried to do a Paul Fowler by standing and obscuring the cairn while they were trying to find it.

SATURDAY 28/8

After coming up the back roads from Clon. to the Hoo last night, we ended up doing no caving today. The weather was just too nice. We did however go for breakfast in Clancy's, which apparently was renamed. After farting around the Hoo in the sun for the day we went to buy bbq food for dinner, and go for a dip in the lake. Which I must say was a very good idea, the lake was lovely and warm, even if it was muddy. Even though there was no caving it was a good day.

SUNDAY 29/8

I'm actually writing this on my laptop in the Hoo, while everyone else is still asleep. It is 10:00 we should be getting going. There was talk last night of a few of us going to do the Indiana Jones' Series in Pigeon Pot II.

And we did actually end up getting there in the end. We started first with another breakfast in Clancy's^{1/} which wasn't intended but we had to go there because the deli in the service station in Blacklion was not open on Sunday mornings. It was 1400 before we were parked up on Cuilcagh, and 1530 by the time I had rigged and gotten to the bottom of the first pitch. I had gone to Pigeon Pot with the intention of doing the Indiana Jones Series before (in 2017) but we had not done it, I remember Junior who was rigging being concerned with rope rub but I don't remember any more detail than that. Anyway today we didn't have any such problems, we progressed into the series only to run out of rope at the head of the first pitch. Had we rigged differently we could have gotten further but not really far enough to be meaningful. We'll need to return again but I don't think any of us are in a hurry to do that right now. Maybe in the winter when the midgies

^{1/} Now renamed Lavender.

are not absolutely awful.