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OUCC EXPEDITION to PICOS DE EUROPA,
NORTHERN SPAIN

8th JULY - 21st AUGUST 1979

MEMBERS

OUCC	Martin Lavery	- Leader (!?) (until 30 July).
	Simon Fowler	the whole bloody time
	Mark Godden	"
	Dave Thwaites	"
	Pete Ireland	(until 30 July).
	John Singleton	TWIST
	Graham Naglor	(until 27th July)
	Mike Buscheri	TWIST Announcing!
	Stephan Green	(until 23rd July) Interpreter
	Colin Nicholls	(From 25th July) Tacklemaster
	Jim Sheppard	(From 25th July) Deputy leader until 14th August

Others	Kevin Senior	} Southampton U.K.C. (until 30 July).	
	Kathy Young		(until 26th July)
	Ian Dumbekton		
	Liz Lloyd-Jones	(I.C.U., S.O.U., Royal Victoria Hospital) ^{Coursework}	
	Alan Cousins	(OUCC) (until 13th August) (until 26th July)	
	Shank (Mike Clarke)	} W#MSEG	
	Shippy (Chris Anicorn)		

(* Intensive Care Unit, Surgical Ball-up Unit)

+ appearances by a newick Escort, a middle aged VW and
our elderly Land Rover!

~~8th~~ 7th - 10th July

The group started to meet on Saturday at 2:00 pm. Once Gorg had finally beaten Turner (5:00 pm), the 3rd person arrived and parking commenced and continued for the rest of the afternoon, with much loading and unloading. Finally, with the VW loaded down to its spring steps we retired to Nag's Head for food, then to the Chequers for quite a few beers and then on to Gate of India for a celebratory curry send off, which we still 'felt' the following morning.

On Sunday the Land Rover turned up bearing Shunk and Shippy at about lunchtime. The rest of the luggage was loaded up and we set off separately. The VW stopped at Bath to pick up Al, Simon, Kev and Kathy, plus half a ton of kit. After a zigzag route across the Mendips we joined the M4 and headed to Plymouth.

At Plymouth, once the LK had arrived (after explaining the details; remaining on after leaving M4), we visited the various hostels about town, finding it too late to search for any decent area to sleep in. Most of us curled up in awkward positions in the various vehicles awaiting the early morning sailing. The men and women living in six (I've never found this place for, says Colin) found a nearby B and B, and consequently nearly missed the boat the Monday morning.

The crossing was smooth and safe, no waves

27 July - 65 183

of mal de mer. In fact a few layers produces a sort of rolling that cancels out the ship's motion anyway.

On Tuesday, we arrived in Spain at last, and were actually so early that ~~see~~ the Customs were had not arrived by the time the boat docked. Ian, Liz and Al were dispatched to the station in Santander. The next ~~feb~~ of us in company toward Cangas along the Oviedo road. At St. Vicente we stopped for our last lunch (no lunch on sailing esp!) and a bit of shopping.

Arrived at campsite next to Lago de La Erina \approx 6.00pm, where we met Stephan.

Wednesday 11th July

Osu - Skunk, Skippy, Ian, John, Graham, Simon, Kevin ~~&~~ went down Osu, the surveying of which was to be our first project.

Entered Osu and followed ~~see~~ the survey points to a 15' pitch, which was rigged (5m higher, 12' below). Big pitch came soon after - various holes in the floor drop into shaft as well. A bolt was placed at the second attempt & ~~was~~ a large very secure looking jughandle was used as a backup below. Kev was sent down first - amazingly the bolt held! A rather loose boulder ~~there~~ bypassed a large drop down to the 'streamway'. Upstream goes nowhere - but it was virgin! Downstream a large rift-like passage goes on to a T-junction. Before this was reached I noticed an inlet and Skippy & I climbed up it. After several climbs & crawls (one past another inlet) we entered the bottom of a 30' shaft. Skippy climbed 10' up a rather

contains water
mess

Sketch survey of inlet ~~at~~ C. de Osn.



← does this mean anything to anybody? (except Simon)

Very probably not
 (note the lack of a mirror!)

← Simon sitting wine glass using log as a funnel.

Dave, Al, Stephen and Mike practiced SRT down Potho Las Nieves ($\approx 50'$, S. side). The rest went shopping or mended wet-suits etc.

The high point of the day and following night was the continuous heavy rain $\approx 3''$, we think, and the mist. Al dug yards and yards of drainage channel.

Thursday 12th July

0800 - Skank, Skippy, Sean, John, Graham, Dave, Al.

loose wall to a narrow ^{vertical} slot about 6' x 6". One side of the slot ~~is~~ moved when touched. At this point some footholds gave way & Skippy descended very rapidly, joining the heap of debris on the shaft floor. Gravelly he ascended again! ~~The~~ A couple of blows ~~is~~ on the slot wall resulted in it collapsing into the slot — a few seconds later there was a loud crash, immediately followed by some ~~not~~ ^{unconventional} words of astonishment from us. We estimated the depth as about 50/60'.

We met the others at the streamway. They had explored ^{upstream} up and downstream to the T-junction to a variety of snags, chambers etc. Skippy, Skunk & I then went downstream & found an inlet. While I sat bouncing on the pebbly floor Skippy went through a tight wet squeeze & Skunk climbed up & found a chamber + some stal.

Soon after this we went out — aiming to return the next day to push our two virgin inlets.

Simon

12th July - Osu. Surveyors: Dave, John, Graham
 'Pushers': Skunk, Skippy, Simon

Only a brief note really needed. One party started surveying — off to pitch. By this time S, S & S had lugged gear up the inlet & started rigging. All was halted when we heard the surveyors on the pitch — who were suitably confounded with our cries of "where are we?". Sightings were taken and tackle was dropped down from our windows. ~~The inlet from a short time~~ Then we got the hell out of there, emerging finally at 8.45 pm to mist & rain.

Friday's Menu ↑

CHIVERS RESTAURANT



Hughes
Cover

MENU:-

Starters

- ~~Sea on the cots~~ off
- ~~Assorted pear~~ off
- ~~paté & toast~~ off
- ~~French vegetable~~ off

MAIN MEALS

- ~~chilli con carne~~ off
- ~~Roast beef & ale~~ off
- ~~Pattaturoe~~ off
- ~~Duck a la Orange~~ off

SWEETS

- ~~Ice cream~~ off
- ~~Black cherry~~ off
- ~~Suprae~~ off
- ~~Banana split~~ off

~~Coffee cheese & biscuit~~ off

HOUSE WINE AVAILABLE AT BAR

NEVER MIND!

KATHY & LIZZIE

INVITE

YOU TO TRY OUR
DELICIOUS MEAL

Bring a bottle.

If you want pay please wash up.



fat cover

after our meal!

note web suit

bursing at the

Seamus!

Martin, Stephen and Mike played about in the nearby mine
workings, more SRT produce
Mark, Pete, Ian, Kevin, Liz, Kathy. We decided to
investigate the nearest valley, ~~which~~ (to East of campsite)
which contains a very promising line of shotholes in the floor,
and several obvious entrances in the valley walls - these all turned
out to be blind. Three or four possible entrances were found. The
best was a shaft in a shothole we estimated at 20-30 m
deep. We decided to return for the descent tomorrow.

P.S. I found the entrance to *Pessimista Paha* on this trip. Ken.

Friday 13th July

Ian, Kevin, Pete, Mark. We returned to our shothole in
order to descend. It was a fairly large pot, approx 38 m deep
with a baldy pile at the bottom. A narrow downwards-sloping
rift at one end ^{of the floor} was found, but it was too tight and
unstable to risk joining a descent. While Ian, Mark and
Kevin descended this shaft, Pete went off to find the shepherd. He
was shown a very obvious deep shaft, which we had somehow missed
the previous day. We bolted it up, and Mark ^(ie me) volunteered to
descend first. I decided to come up after descending 20', because
of a crow below. I made a b. awful changeover, and then Kevin
descended - and regretted it. No trouble with the bird, but the
pot was full of silt, and didn't go anyway.

pushers, photographers, biologists etc

(8)

1st surveying party + Mike?

Osc - Skunk, Skippy, Simon, Al, Dave, Graham, John, Stephen
Mike, Martin.

Dave, Graham & John continued surveying from pt pitch (re-measured & found to be 30 m, not 28.3 m). Discovered DS cave? (Other entrance).

Skunk, Skippy, Simon & Al took 2 pieces of pitch under the severest conditions of flashlight failure, monumental drip-onto-camera rate etc. Simon & Al then took pieces in the inlet with some help? from Mike. Skunk & Skippy went on to push various bits. Al found a spider! Simon & Al pushed on and explored Skunk's chamber. This formed a closed circuit with Skippy's little chamber - the water came from another tiny chamber which it entered by a tiny hole.

Simon & Al then decided to investigate the final sump - which proved to be a long way! We passed up under the 2nd surveying grasp and Skunk & Skippy (without me realizing it!). Eventually got to a sump, with an obvious bypass under a chamber or it. Streamway went on and on frequently changed character remarkably. Some cascades were reached with wires rigged. These were very wet & quite spouting. My "dry" kit got totally soaked on the last one. Finally got to sump & Al went for a swim, declaring it rather cold. No immediately obvious bypasses. Plenty of inlets were passed, and much surveying to do. Met Skippy & Skunk at 1st sump & left them to bottom the lake - unfortunately for them an exploding carbide etc prevented this.

Found some Proasellus sp on way back. ~~Rock~~ Boulder in chakra had moved providing some hectic moments. Mike had some antics on pitch providing a few more slightly less hectic moments (for us, not him!?). Sedate exit to a superb sunset got S, S, S & Al back to camp by ~~about~~ about 10.15, with mist just engulfing the tents, cars, Festering Injeks, grassy ~~clay~~ Waps etc.

Sat. July 14th

In Search of the Fabled Resurgence. ~~at the~~ ~~of the~~ ~~of the~~ ~~of the~~
EZ HOYO LA MADRE

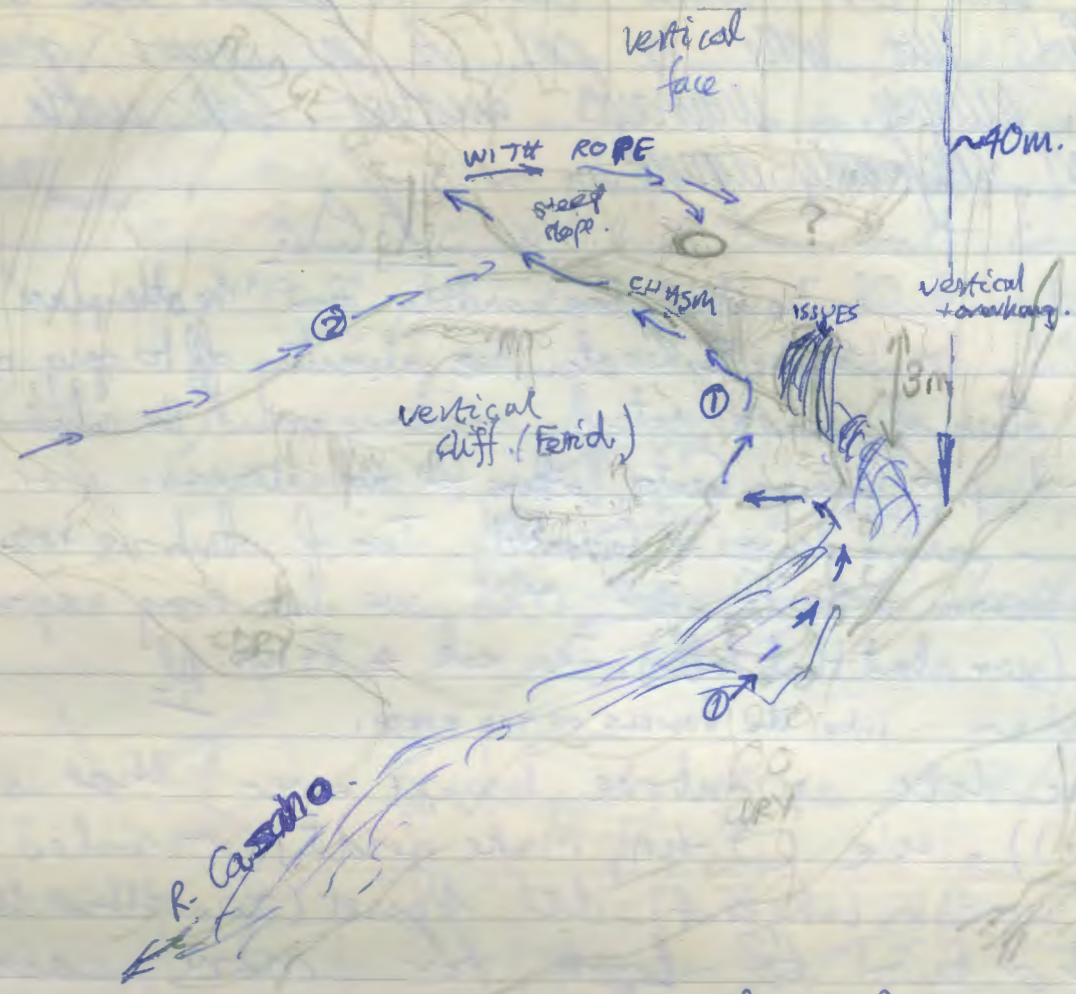
After putting away all the gear everyone else had left strewn around the camp, Simon, Pete, Ian and myself (Kov) set off with full packs toward the R. Casoria. A large resurgence had been reported on the last expedition with rather a vague description of its location.

We took a rather difficult route to the northern end of the moraine near Belbin. We walked to the north and looked over a vertical drop. There was a sound of a large waterfall way down in the valley. It was not possible to be sure this was the resurgence, or a feature of the main river.

The packs were left at the top because of the obviously difficult descent. Eventually Simon & I climbed all the way to the valley bottom, ~ 300m, and found that the river was being totally supplied from a waterfall which issued from a hole ~ 5m up the right hand wall of a steep gorge. See sketch. Other holes were seen further up but access to these will clearly prove rather difficult & possibly acrobatic.

Above the vertical face from X upwards, there is ~ 50m of very steeply sloping grass to another ridge. It was not clear if this was the top.

Easy Route
To Belbin??
R. Casana



Possible Routes up. ①.
②.

It may be best to follow the valley down from near Belbin, ~~then~~ to get to the resurgence. (see later notes) The problem of getting to the two visible holes remains.

Siman and I climbed back up - knackered as completely. Pete & Ian had wandered off to look at a festering sheep shelter.

We looked at the small sink at Belbin. Siman got in it & reckons it will go with some digging. Rather tight. Should trace water to the resurgence.

Pete and I am looked down a small hole near the
steps ^{no} but with a pot. A low crawl goes into
the hillside, warrants another look with a smaller
person. (Preferably drunk)

Ken, where?

14th July. I feel 'tis about time somebody from "the other place" wrote
something here!! While Si, Ken etc. were galivanting off to some glorified
spring, others of us were actually wandering around the ^{2???} ruins. Stephen & F.
wandered up to Serrano Cactus, looking for cave entrances. 11 or more were
found, in varying degrees of favorability. Two of which we hope to look
down tomorrow or the day after. Others were also being vagrant in the
ruins (more about that later). This took \approx 8+ hrs. fl

And now... into the VOWELS OF THE EARTH:

Same date as above (what ever that is (and who
cares)), we (John, Mike and I) visited the
Jove (something like that) del Agua (to within the odd
vowel or two) to look for more cave entrances
but after finding many promising 'digs' we only
found one genuine, immediate entrance which
smelt strongly of some smoked food substance
and the main passageway (littered with
paper bags, bootmarks, gas canisters etc (some
had been discovered before)) was ended by an iron
door (locked) but could be climbed over. Mist then
fell quickly and we decided to slowly make track
for home. Had dinner and then came up to the bus
(where I am now) and got hammered into the ground
and wrote this piece

* see overleaf

Graham

2 1/2 / 10
1/2 hr in 1st in P

I've never heard of this

Saturday 11th, Dave.

After the morning shopping (and unloading of loads!) I went searching for cave entrances on the plateau above Oca. I didn't have a lamp so I apologize in advance for "any finds" that turn out to be nothing much. Plan of discoveries follows; I investigated on Sunday.

290° (mag)
↓

* Top Cairn (Dave)

2nd 2 trees down

Revised shafts

Collapsed shaft

Alt. Cairn?

4th shaft

* 1st Cairn (Dave)

DISC

Old stream direction?

Leaf-Cave

DISC

Oca

Snow plug shaft

Walking Stick Pot

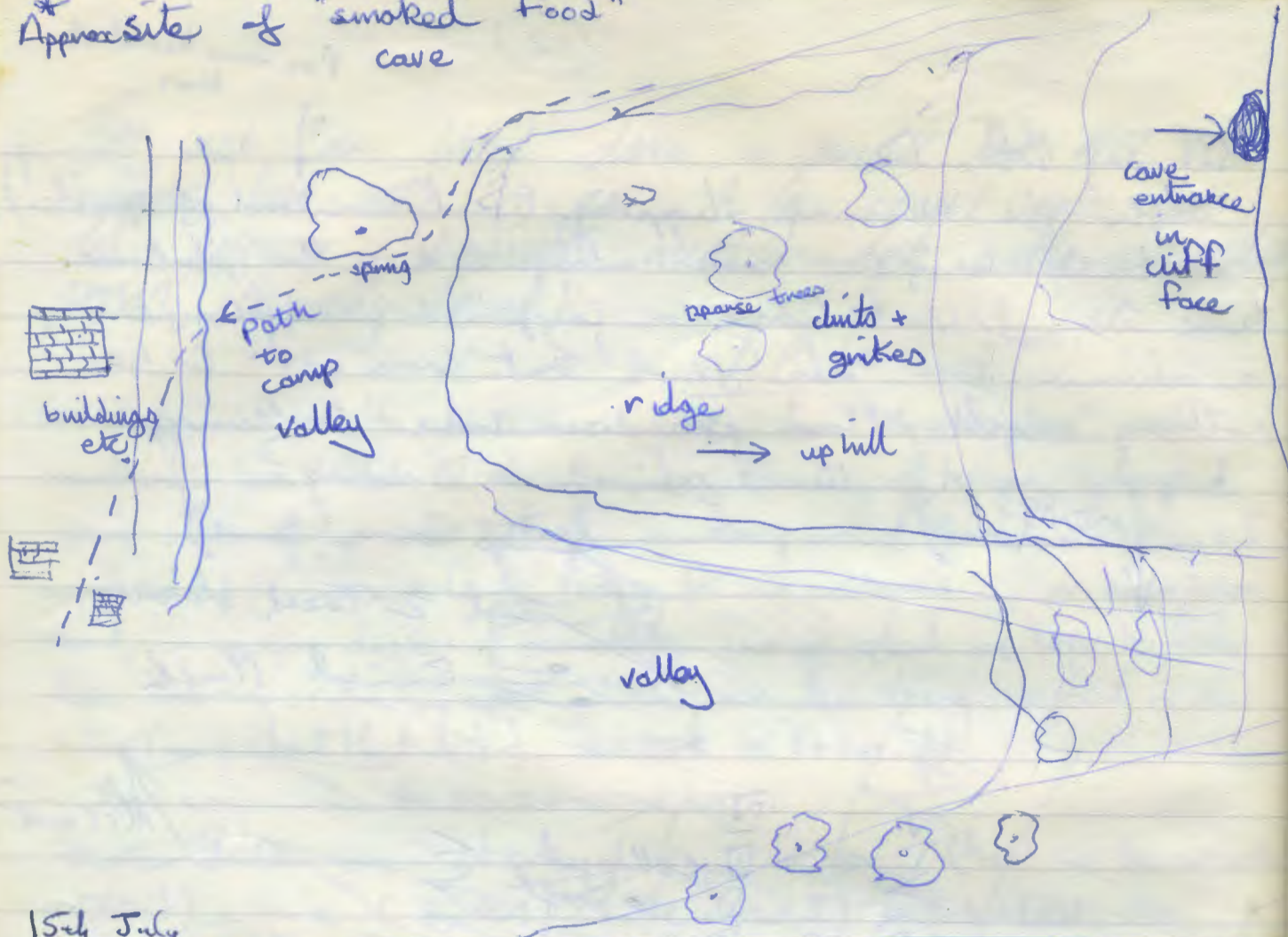
Legos Enclosed

Dave

Physic)



* Approx site of "smoked Food" cave

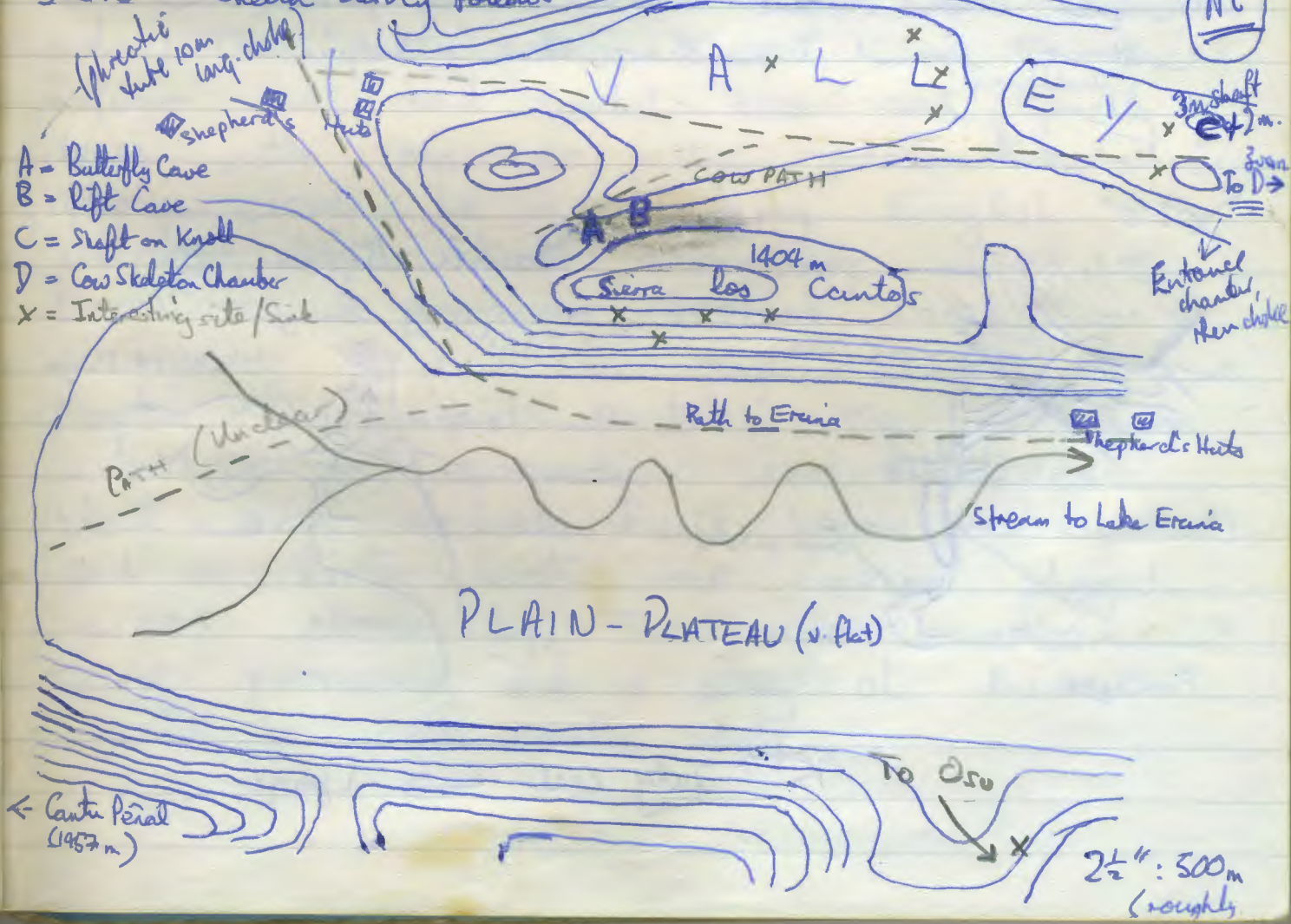


15th July

15/7 Stephan, Mike & I left camp ^{this morning} with high hopes for the caves located yesterday (~~the morning~~); hopes doomed to be dashed. Work was concentrated on the southern face of valley to the south of the Sierra los Cactus. Two "hopeful" caves - one, a horizontal tube under a rock-lip, spiralling clockwise downwards and optimistically labelled "Butterfly Cave" by Stephan (a "sample" for the bug-collector of the Expedition was caught here!!) - sloped off to about 25'. The other, 25 yards down the valley, mindless (luckily), started as a tight horizontal crawl into a sharply descending, quickly narrowing rift ending to the left - which narrowed much too quickly. Disappointment overcome we then looked along the whole valley-bottom to the south of S.L.C. and large parts of the face of the hill opposite. Two very interesting shafts / entrances were found. One, on top of a knoll

was discovered by Stephan, who, descending through a boulder choke at the bottom of the 10' shaft for a further 5', declared the thing to be "Too tight" and "unstable." Further down the valley, passing many sinks a further large entrance was found, ^(by me!!) leading into a chamber close to the surface - 6' x 8' x 20', containing a cow's skeleton (at least, we presumed it was a cow!!) However, of three possible exits from this chamber, three were blocked by boulder chokes. Last despair overtake all, tho', it must be "noted" that the four entrances "noted" (by sight) in the northern face of S.L.C. still remain to be looked at. And that interesting possibilities were observed to the south and west of the valley beyond.

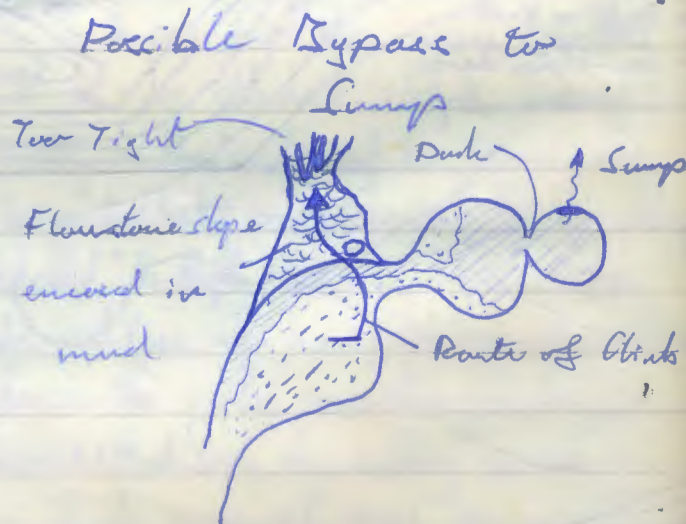
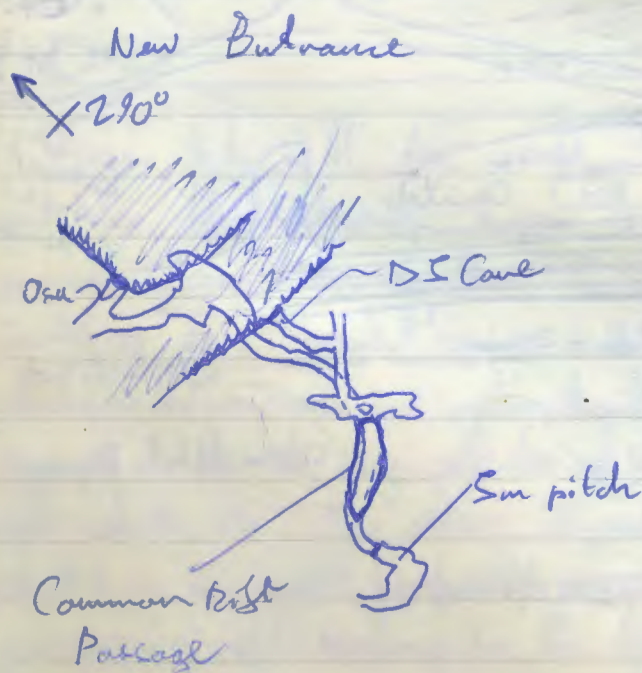
S.L.C. Sketch survey follows:



Mark, Martin, Pete - One of Martin walks V. hot 'Diced' route to visit
 6 hrs. Planted dye detector in a resurgence.

15th, Edie, Dave, Cavalham

Down Oca again, ~~was~~ let to leave the camp
 yet again! Mind you, it was only just before
 the morning was out. Finished surveying up to
 upstream cophon. Also visited downstream camp.
 Attempted to push first obvious possible bypass
 but after a dangerous climb up, it proved not to
 bear fruit. On the way out visited a small
 cave entrance above Oca. From passage
 dropped into deep rift, a slot which
 proved to be the top part of the Oca rift
 passage above the 5m ladder pitch. So
 we have found another Oca entrance.



15th July cont → 1 page

16th Dave, Amaliam, Simon, Mike and Al.

Visited the Caves George, paddled, SETed, walked, piccied and assisted Simon catching butterflies.

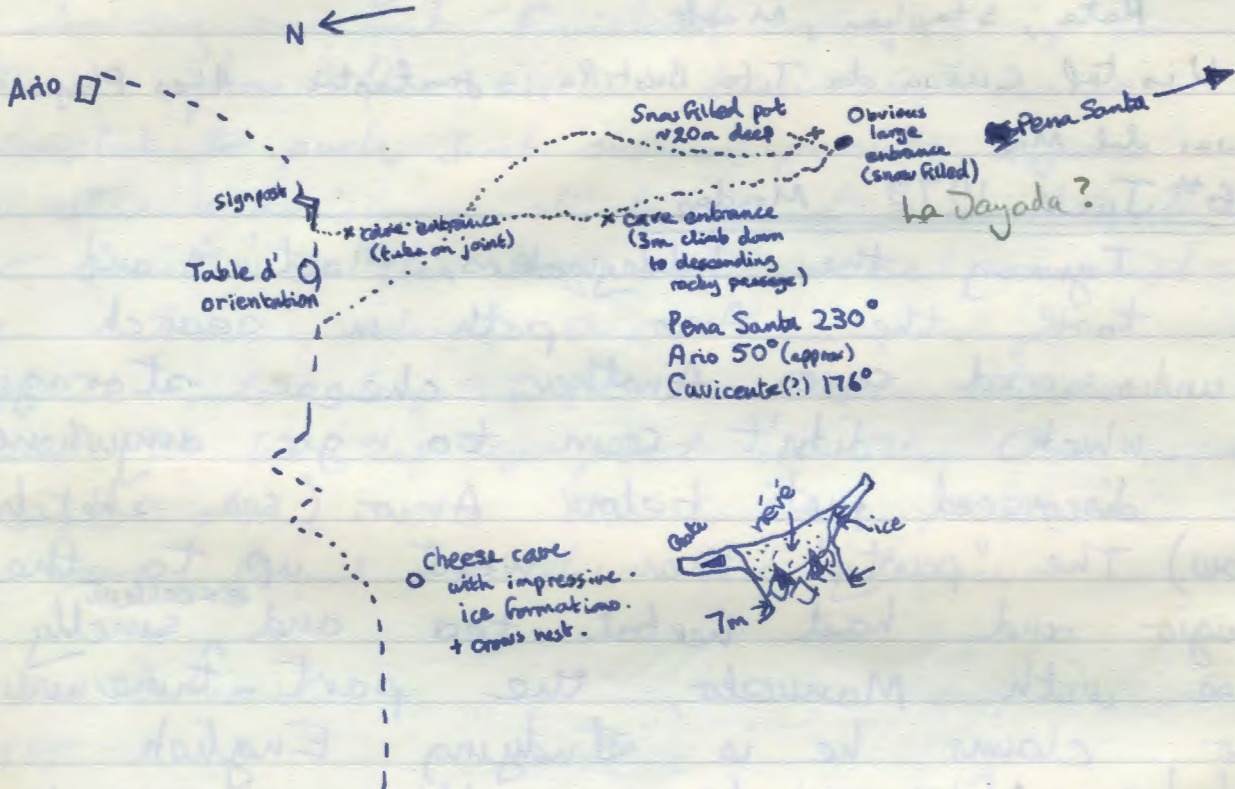
Pete, Stephan, Mark

Visited Cueva de Tito Bustillo - fantastic. Also Playa de Cuevas del Mar

16th July 1979. Monday

Ignoring the holidaymakers, Martin and John took the Arrio path in search of undiscovered caves. Another cheese storage cave which didn't seem to go anywhere was discovered just below Arrio. (see sketch below.) The "party" then went up to the Refugio and had herbal tea and ^{excellent} ^{smelly} cheese with Manuelo, the part-time warden, who claims he is studying English philology. After much scrambling among the limestone, a promising looking cave was discovered in a ten foot shaft by Martin. The final visits of the afternoon were to an enormous snow filled cave about seven hundred feet below the summits and a forty foot deep snow plugged shaft close by. The area seems very promising and a stay at Arrio would be well worth while.

CAREES GORGE



Pena Santa 230°
 Ario 50° (approx)
 Cavicente(?) 176°

cheese cave
 with impressive
 ice formations
 + cross nest.

La Jayada?

15th July (cont)

A party (Skunk, Skippy, Simon, Kevin, Ian, Lizzie & Kathy) set out in Skunk's land rover to enter & explore the resurgence of El Hoyo. We set off on a track past the mines to Belben and then over into the next valley. Here the party split Simon & Skippy following the previously blazed trail, Skunk, Kevin Ian (myself) Lizzie & Kathy starting down an apparently easier route. After a few hundred metres the going proved difficult and hand over hand descent ensued. Eventually all parties met up at the resurgence. Simon & Skippy had rigged the entrance pitches (to get to the entrance) & discovered the existing river passage beginning with the lake at the entrance. After much cold & swimming up river & exciting cascades for 50m a sump was reached. Returning & telling the tale of a rift in the ceiling Skunk, Kevin & myself & the others returned to explore the rift & found a bypass to the first sump & many side passages, rifts & evidence of previous covers. A 2nd section of streamway above sump 1 was found this sumped after 50m and no by pass found on this trip.

We returned rather late to the land rover
& after 7 people lifting a land rover to
allow a wheel change arrived back at
camp just after a rescue party had
left at $\approx 12-30$ pm. All returned
safely.
Ian

17th July (Tuesday I think) Skunk, Skippy, Kew
(the pushers)

El Hoya la Madre - again.

Pete, Ian, Simon (the
surveyors - for a bit, anyway).

An unbelievably early start resulted in the group standing outside the
convergence at 11 am, with high hopes of discovering many miles of great
stream more? We started surveying from the entrance, not surprisingly,
and soon had finished the lower series including Sump 1. Being extremely
cold we then exited for some lunch in the baking sun. After the
~~statutory~~ statutory lunch break the work was resumed. The climb to
the bypass provided some amusing antics whilst tape holding etc.
At the top we met the Otter, who had just returned from their ~~inlet~~
highly draughting inlet - which rather curiously sumps after approx 700' (!?).
Surveying was continued for at least another 3 kgs! At this point the
large chamber was reached. An obvious passage off to the right was followed
by Pete and myself (Simon). This continued upwards with grotty

stal flows to a chamber after about 100'. A climb up, descent & another climb up in the large rift leaving the chamber, led to a sandy crawl for about 30' to a squeeze suitable for the smallest Crayfish in ~~the~~ Eriina. Yet another climb up a stal covered rift further back in the passage (before the above mentioned chamber) led to a bit of decorated high level oxbow about 15' long. From this a chimney went up about 30' to a squeeze which probably had not been passed before (I broke a stal - shock, horror). A crawl continued for ~ 30' to a point where you could actually stand up! Unfortunately after this the passage was only suitable for more Eriina Crayfish. After this we exited - S, S & K followed a short while later. The time was a utilised 6 pm - still hot enough to make the walk back extremely sweaty. The flies were little sods - one even got into the beer.

The report of the pushes should now follow: - (gosh, the suspense is killing).

Somewhat later: - (29-7-79) Kev., Skippy & Skunk.

We found a narrow passage off to the left ~~side~~ in the upper series, where the pithles end just before the large rift chamber. About 20' of angular passage gave into the streamway! I thought I had heard through another side passage last trip. Presence of another stream was thus confirmed. Proceeded upstream past numerous sumps to final sump. Then up slippery, moon-milk covered rift to chamber. From there Skippy went up and found it dead. The daylight seemed to disappear?? No obvious bypass was found. Back to main upper series passage. Then Skunk noticed the climb above point where snap ^{lake} drains into streamway. Skunk got a long way up, but no bypass seems likely.

Bit disappointing really. It really does seem to end. Shame!
Kev.

17th July Mark, Martin, Stephan
Surveying in Ocu

17th July Dave, John, Abraham
Went to investigate the holes that ~~Dr~~ Dave found
on Ocu plateau (Hills). Last cave was fully diked
with earth and leaves. Only few super dedicated diggers.
The 45° shafts were full of boulders, and the ~~two~~
most westerly one we shifted $\frac{1}{4}$ ton of boulders to
no real avail, 2 1/2 clear but tight passages leading
off. The collapsed shaft remained collapsed. The
most westerly of the southerly 2 pots looked
promising through a pile of boulders and a further
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ton of shifted boulders revealed a 45° tube
which Dave finally squeezed into. It dived after
20ft. A frustrating day had by all.

Dave

18th July (Wed) Mark, ~~Mark~~^{Ian}, Stephen, Dave, Graham, Al
Completed survey of Main passage in Ocu
Skunk, ~~Stumpy~~, Liz, Kathy, Kevin, Simon, Mike, Martin
Tara Party. No caving

Pete - went down Viento with Bill Collis, in dry kit, only to
find it wet. He found some new passage in the entrance
series

The exciting part of the day was a hailstorm with massive
hailstones, up to 1" across, and a late finish in the
bar

Thursday 19th July

~~Basically no work done. ~~Nothing to report.~~~~

Late start, cold ^{wet} weather, general apathy, so no caving by anybody
In fact, nothing by anybody except Dave & John (below). In the
evening we went to the Restaurant for a sooper meal, which was
great

Wed. Thursday 19th July

Dave and I walked up to the smoked foot cave and
looked more carefully at the entrance. As well
as several dozen cheeses over small walls
metal doors etc. a small vertical pneumatic
tube was found. It looks
worth a third visit... (bump!)
(with Gward)

FRIDAY 20TH JULY

Cueva de la Caña (Walking stick pot)

Dave, Al, Stephan and I ^(John) surveyed Walking Stick Pot. After a speedy start yours truly dropped the pencil down an inaccessible crack and in spite of growling by Stephan and Dave had to return to camp for another. Meanwhile, the others decided to push... led initially by an intrepid Al as far as a small choke, part of which promptly decided to attack him, we pressed on; Al's bruises compelled him to return to the surface so Stephan and Dave continued. The 'duck' turned out to be a squeeze (the duck was too low) and was negotiated easily (?!!). This led via a small muddy chamber into a delightful wet crawl, about twenty yds long after which the passage opened into a rift. This was followed for about yds to a boulder choke which was impassable, We ascended ^{nearly} to the top of the rift and Dave found a high level continuation above a false floor, This came to an end after yds, but the rift continued downwards, though we did not follow it. Dave & Stephan returned and surveying was resumed up as far as the "duck-which-wasn't". By which stage cold forced all three of us to exit hurriedly - walking on the surface looking for likely entrances ensued - two or three of which we poked our noses down. One extremely hopeful shaft was found by Dave - we descended 5m and intend to return later. Location \approx 100m west of Osu. Al

Simon, Kev, Mike
 El Hoya La Mabe — yet again. Picky trip. & Graham.

A relatively sedate dingsy start off us to the entrance at about 1pm. Apart from my flashlight gun not working at first the photography went well. Mike did ~~well~~ a good job of swimming with only a few complaints. We picked to the 1st sump and then exited to have lunch! Despite exploding stoves ~~and~~ and ancient egg deposits (ex Anglesey) — the hot tea was vaguely edible. Bread + spirit jam, chocolate etc were also consumed: highly civilised. At this point the cloud lifted by about 200' — for a brief moment: we returned to the cave with high hopes of a sunny emergence (retrospective joke).

Mike hereby continues: — In the upper series even I kept dry for a while. Quite a long time was spent by our technicians in setting up a shot of a pool with reflections, after which Graham departed under a false floor and the rest of the party continued to the final sump. Eventually I was persuaded to swim in this and the serious photographic recording was complete. Simon and Kev took a few snaps of the streamway whilst I made my way out, to find Graham stuck at the foot of the ladder without a light. Simon then appeared in a similar condition, but we made a safe exit and with much moaning about the humid weather, proceeded back to camp in a very wet condition.

Cueva del Viento.

Party:- M. Lavery. Pete. Skippy. Ian. Mark. Skunk. + LIZ.

Time:- 6 hours (approx).

A low crawl and damp bit lead to active streamway and previously swamped areas and then a refreshing swim.

Pete said that the water level had risen approximately 4' since his last visit 2 days ago in dry's.

The next bit was like a maze and much time was lost route finding. Eventually the rift was located and with easy traversing quick progress was made. A muddy phreatic area led to some confusion. Skunk scrambled down a previously unentered rift and emerged halfway up a chamber lower than the main rift with a small active stream flowing through it. Martin also looked down some phreatic tubes nearer the sump which led to another sump - not noted on the 1961 O.V.C.E survey. Eventually the terminal sump was located and the charcoal deep detector placed. A draughting squeeze was pushed (not very far) by Skunk till it got too tight. As this is mud floored it will be worth a return with a trowel.

Most people had an uneventful quick exit but not so Martin. An IKA attempt on his life failed dismally at the terminal sump however it did promote bowel action which was relieved on the way out. As the attempt was unsuccessful Martin was

left on his own in the cave with no light under the pretence that Sam and Skunk were still in there. Eventually the party weakened and went to his aid. Will another attempt be made? Following reports will reveal all!

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G.)

Saturday 21st July '79

Walking Hilda Cave

Dave, Al, John

Suggestions that we rename it Cueva del Boston? Carried on surveying from the 'duck'. Immediately became very wet and muddy and consequently cold. The subsequent crawl in water and low distance between stations proved too much for Al who retired with cold feet. ^{literally} Dave and John carried on and investigated the deep rift with failing lights. The top of the rift is easy to negotiate but the flowstone which cuts off the top part of the rift. Creeping down into the rift will be very tight for the groups who finally made it; our 2 attempts to descend were unsuccessful. At this point we refilled our failing lights with muddy water. This was fatal as the valves became jammed. Both lights went out as we were returning through the wet crawl. We finished the crawl to the duck in complete darkness and spent a desperate 10 minutes trying to clear the valves. ~~That~~ After giving this up in despair we spent 10 mins

were trying various other ideas until we finally triumphed by striking a flint into an open carbide tin into which a drop of water had been poured. The flame produced blinded us for $\frac{1}{2}$ minute. We made our way out after lighting a smoldering candle and repairing a carbide.

We also surveyed the upper Osa entrance to the rift above the 12' pitch and fully surveyed the snow plugged shaft. South ridge above Osa explored. Not much found. ll
Dave.

Quote:- "I'm 'ungry!'"
(My stomach). (Many times).

Osa - Ian, Mark, Mike

Our intention was to try and find a sump bypass, and to investigate any high-level series and inlets. No by-pass was found. Above the streamway, just before the sump, very muddy slopes, which could not be climbed without the aid of an ice axe. A small inlet flowing over flowstone in the chamber before last may lead to an upper series, but the climb was a little hairy and was not finished. 4 other inlets were looked at but all ~~are~~ forced us with 40 ft climbs. As time passed on & carbides got low and no new passageway discovered we returned to the surface.

Mark & Mark
(Could this be the same one as I attempted on 5th? Dave)

Sunday 22nd July.

Martin, Skippy, Skunk, Kew & Kathy → find Cueva del Frieru in order to see if the water flows into C. del Viento.

Mucho mist necessitated a compass traverse over promising looking ground until arrival at what the leader recognised as the Hoyo Seco after having arrived there at a similar time (but with sunnier conditions, heat exhaustion etc. & Pete & Mark) one week before. Had he but realised it, exquisite navigation (ie luck) had brought the party within ~10m of the cave entrance. However, not realising quite how fiendish the French & Spanish can be it was assumed that Vega de Justillagar was not the Hoyo Seco & so bread & chorizo was washed down with vino while a further route march was contemplated to the next closed depression to the E (now assumed to be called something other than Justillagar). Just before the ed over into this, however, Skunk noticed a diminutive arch in a cliff face & inserted himself. He did not notice that a similar arch emerged from the same face about 6m to the left and slightly lower and did not realise the through trip was on until he had decided that the first draughting squeeze was scarcely Skunk-sized. Skippy then ~~aided~~ aided & abetted the attempt on Skunk's life and most people decided that it was a pity that Skunk's boots would not fit through the second squeeze - but the prospect of either carrying a sack of cement up or of camping outside so as to feed the hapless caver appealed to few. Skunk, however, finally decided that maybe the through trip was not on and returned, with the help of a few palaeolithic implements in ~~knocking~~ knocking projections off the first squeeze. 2½ hrs and most of a new boiler suit after entering, Skunk emerged to the news that it had been decided that we should never have left the Hoyo Seco anyway.



Return was made to said Hoyo & C. del Frieru duly located (name painted as entrance) about ½ hr after ETA back at camp. Nevertheless, Skunk & Martin + a bottle of Fluorescein entered the cave, found lots of cotton threads (orange as at Hoyo la Madre), but failed to find any water in a 15 minute foray. Emerged to find me bagged dragonfly and made a rapid & easy return to the hand tower & to spag. bol. à la M.G.

Martin

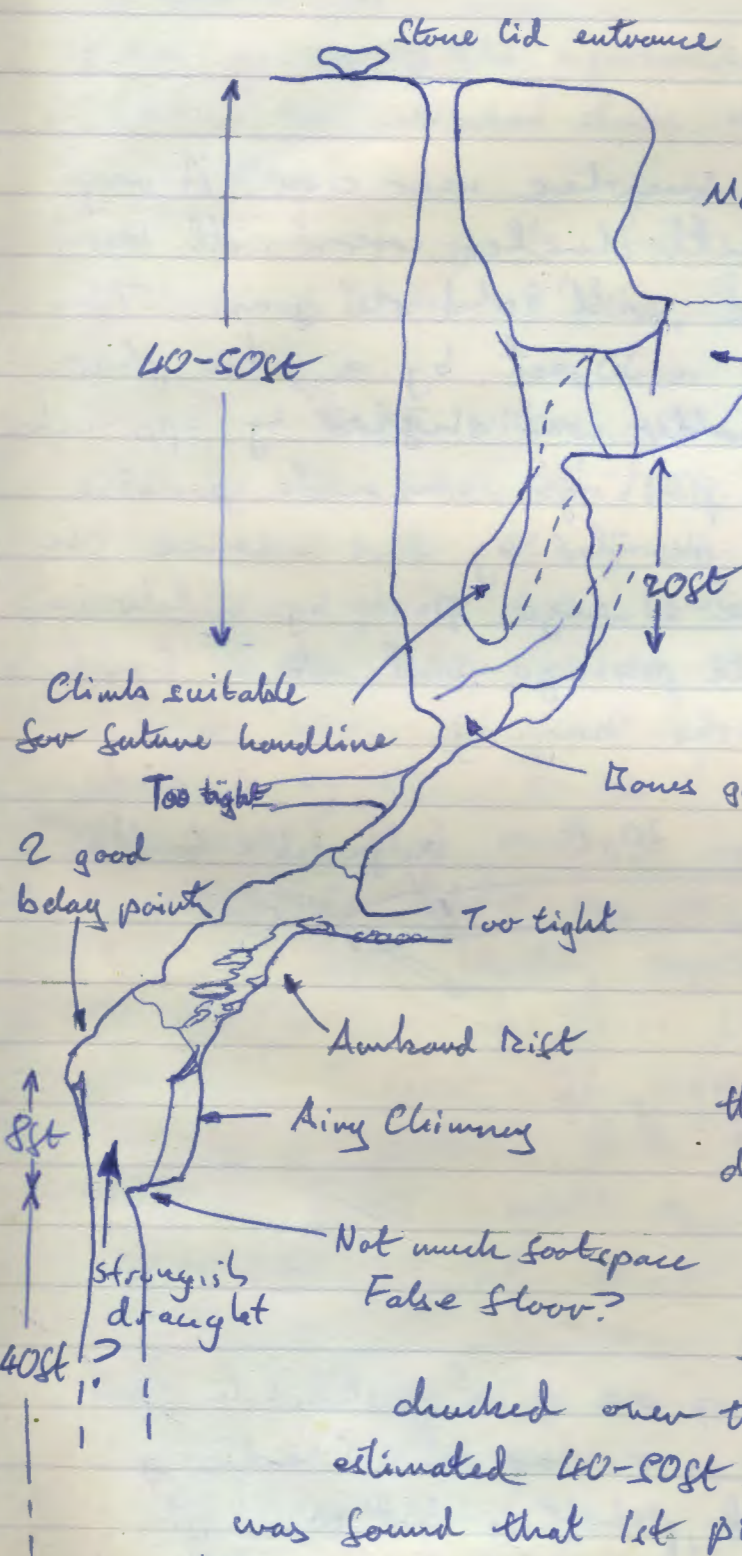
Sunday 22nd. Wandered deep into the Darkest Mist of the Picos. Directly south of Encina for about 4km. Couldn't see more than 5m in any direction. Climbed to 1600m+ and was still enveloped in the all-pervading fog - thicker, if anything, than at Lake level. The two shafts in Ocu (Rio Ocu) valley were relocated. A shaft (8m) was found in the valley above and to the east of Ocu valley. Looks possible but not particularly hopeful. Climbing the ridge towards Cueva Roducos (or something like that) a steeply inclined rift was found and descended for 45-50 feet. At the bottom the S.E. end of the rift was found to be choked, and the N.W. end developed into a too tight crawl. One further shaft was located, 7-8m deep, with a draft. Looks hopeful but, without tackle, was impossible to descend - worth a second visit, definitely. The thickening, depressing mist necessitated a return on compass bearing alone - which, in places, was rather airy. A

Monday 23rd July
Mark and Dave

Cueva de la Stone Lid

This was the hopeful shaft found on 20th on the far side of the marked depression 100m W of main Ocu entrance. An SRT rope was rigged through a the not obvious entrance above the main shaft to give a free-ish hang of @ 40-50ft. This entrance is made accessible by lifting a stone lid which normally prevents animals falling down the ~~entrance~~ shaft, hence the name. Bad isn't it? Any other suggestions?

Notional elevation looking north.



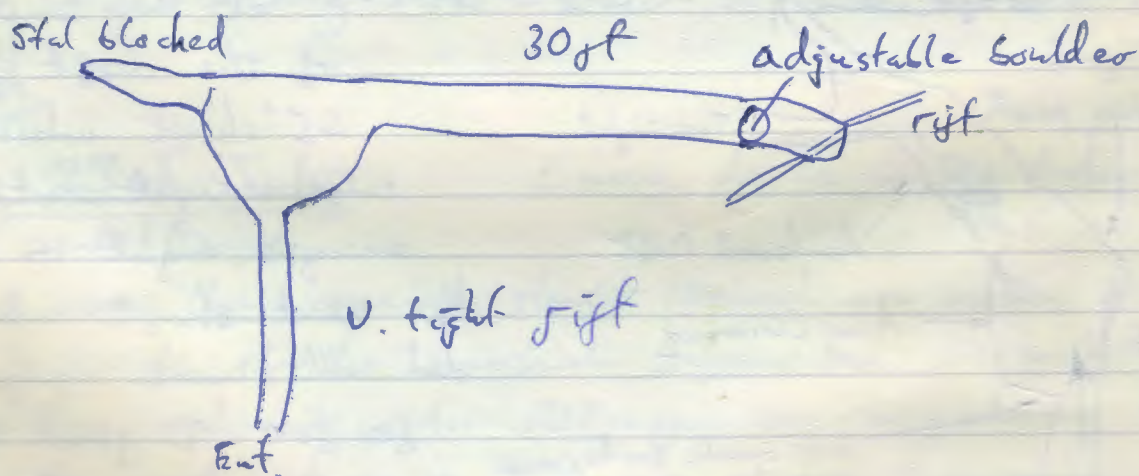
The abseil ended on a floor littered with bones of beasts both great and small. A small exit down at the southern side of the shaft leads into 45° shaft which gives into a tight rift. This emerges right on top of the next shaft which we did not have equipment for. 2 good belay points were noted for future use and stones were

chucked over the edge giving another estimated 40-50ft shaft. On the way out it was found that 1st pitch could be climbed. We still did not have sufficient equipment for the 2nd

pick (belays and things) so another trip will be necessary tomorrow.

Other Holes Attempted - Crowbar Cave

Mark (ie me) found this, somewhere near Ocu. A very tight squeeze into ~~was~~ a small chamber covered with leaves led to a smallish passage, with old stal joints. The way on was blocked after ~ 30 feet by a false floor and large boulder. This boulder was shifted by application of wedges, and ~~was~~ the passage was made possible by the use of a 5' branch provided by Dave - hence the name. Good, isn't it. The squeeze past by boulder was still v. awkward, and the passage went into a 6 inch rift immediately afterwards, anyway.



Another cave

Steep mud slope at bottom of one of set of shelves above Ocu leads to highest 8' drop in v. sharp rock. Clamber over a few rocks to another, blocked, shaft, about 10-12 ft
(This one first brought to our attention by Steph)

Yet another pot

A rift in one of the aforementioned slabs, found by Stephan recently. Dave climbed down about 25', to find it blocked

And another

on the near side of the depression (ie east side) previously found by Dave and Stephan. 8' deep. 9 volunteers & needed to survey.

23-7-79 Shippy writing here. Me Skunk, Cavatory, Coco & Pete went up to Cueva del Frierio to put some fluorescein in the water to see if it connects with Viento.

Cracking pace up to cave, Cavatory actually knowing its location today. Heartbeat rates measured on ascent. Pete grossly unfit.

Entrance series photographed by me despite 3rd degree burns administered by coco to me. I exited when it got hard. But others found crabs & water to keep them happy and enough to dissolve dye in. Total trip time = 2 1/2 hours.

On way back Cavatory expressed desire to revisit Viento & Pete & Kevin dragged in to look at "NEW" crawl.

Meanwhile I found 3 more caves on "opposite" side of valley & persuaded skunk to crawl up one of them but it choked. Worth a revisit though. Swift walk back to L.R. & camp. Nice clear evening for a change.

Shippy

Stephan left today 23rd

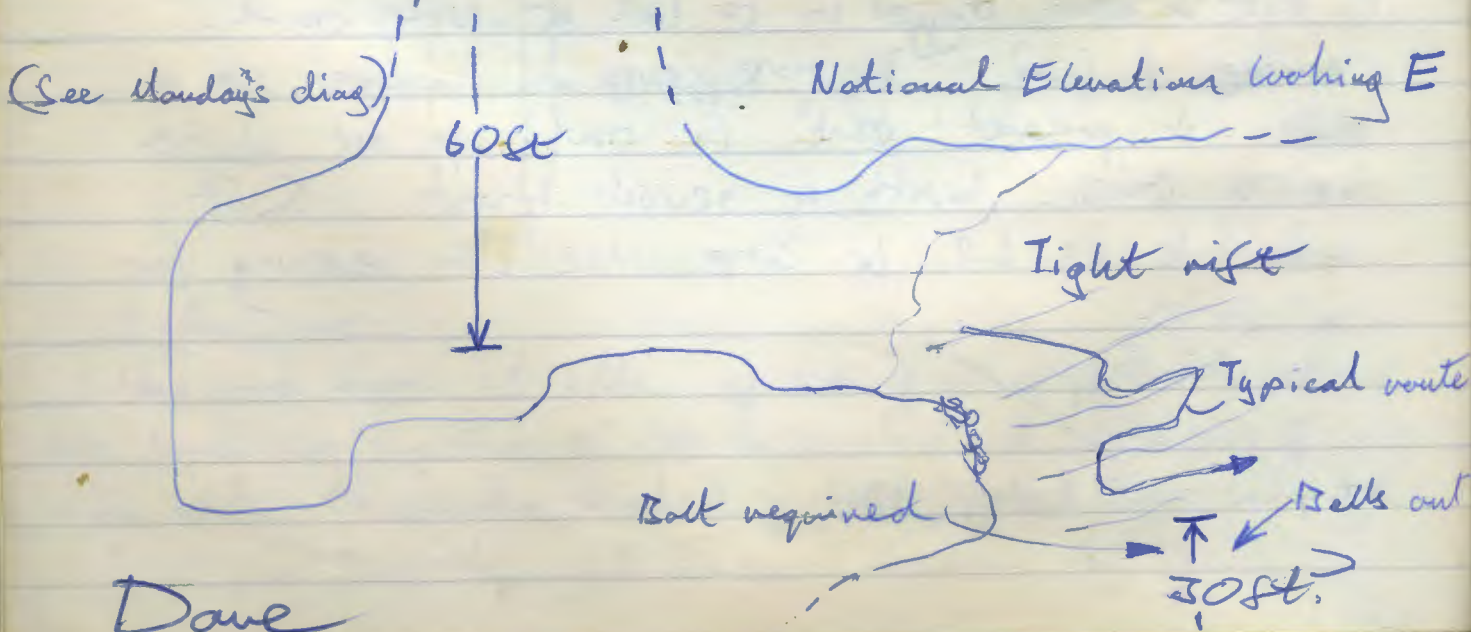
Tuesday 24th July

Cueva de la Trad 10.6.14

Mark, Dave and Shunk

Mark and Dave revisited yesterday's success and spent some 1/2 hour dithering at the top of the pitch, the limit of yesterday's exploration, wondering how to rig it. The 2 good belays were really only one belay which we thought was so low that a Tarzan style swing would be required to get onto the rope below it. We returned to camp to search for a bolt or bit. No bolt bits were to be found so we retired to the bar.

At this point Shunk started to take an active interest in what we were doing. An hour later we went back up to the cave and the experienced Shunk made short work of rigging the pitch. The 60ft drop ended in a fair size chamber with light descending with from it. A bolt bit will be required to get to the bottom of this!



Ario Report

Sunday 22nd → Tuesday 24th

Liz, Iain, Simon, Anabauer, John

Follow path to gorge 20 yards before
blue signpost
2/5 is on left
3/5 is on right
4/5 up to signpost. 30^m to right over small ridge
5/5 500m up right hand side of valley
(24/5) past two sinkholes up a grassy slope

Xitu
1/5 Follow path from Ario to
Los Lagos. 50^m after the viewpoint,
turn left and walk 20^m and no 1/5
is before you. (Popular name viewpoint pot)

+ Several holes we can't re-locate!
(Rough note)

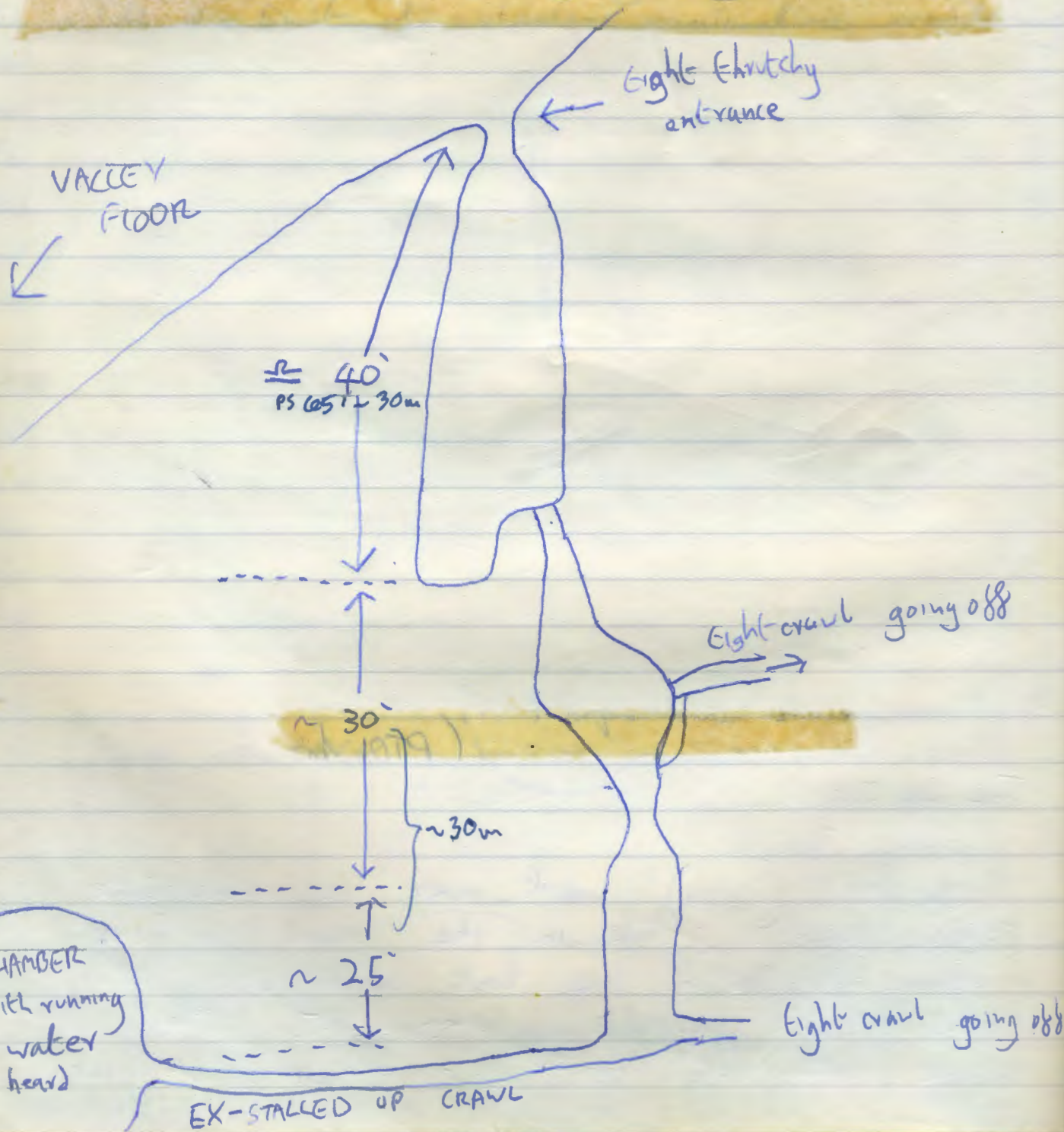
Here such large message (PTOI for Ario report.)

Tue 24 July.

Mike & I (Stippy) went over to investigate
Kevin's small hole in the ground in the
direction of Balbin we took with us the
shortest rope available - a 90m SRT. The
entrance is very tight but opens out into

an echoey aven.

Mike absailed down to the floor of a 40' high chamber, negotiating the entrance with some pain as he was only wearing shorts.



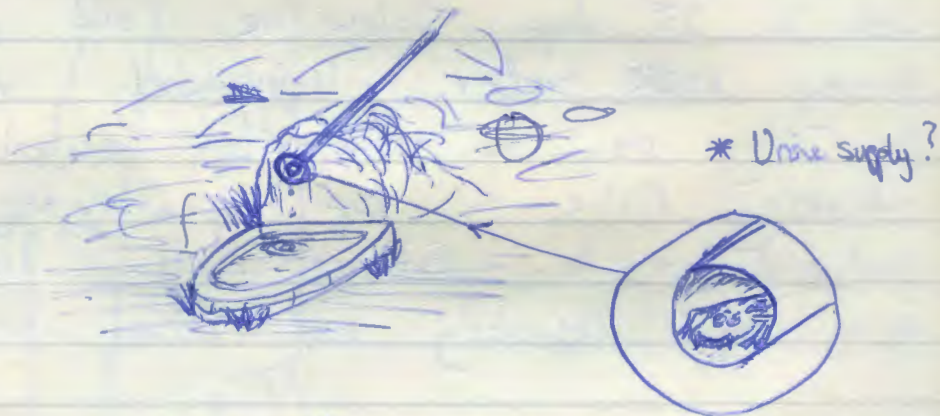
I followed, and then carried on a further 30' down a small rift crack in the corner of the chamber after re-belaying. This led to yet another crack in the floor which I carried on down another 25', landing in a small chamber with a crawl going off at each end. One crawl was all blocked up with straws & stabs so I gleefully smashed them all out of the way and crawled down it, emerging 1/2 way up an approx 20' by 30' chamber with a 25' drop below me and could hear running ~~water~~ water. Unfortunately no canteen left to carry on, so reluctantly exited back to shivering Mike in top chamber via bloody awkward prysite. Entrance also bloody awkward going out. Definitely must return with ladders.

ARIO REPORT

Liz, Ian, Simon, Graham & John.

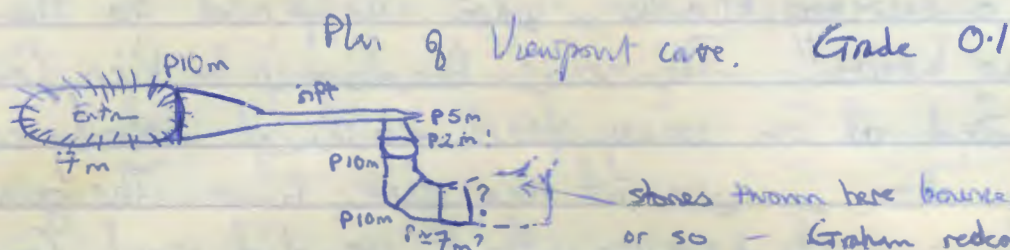
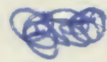
Having heard ~~the~~ of the failed Aris from Martin, Manda (the Warden) etc a rapid decision was made ^{to discuss it} as the 6th (?) wet, misty morning greeted us as we ~~so~~ crawled from the tents at about 11 am. Graham and John remained at ~~camp~~ Erasa for a bit — doing some ^{surveying} ^{L & Cans} ^{before} walking up to Aris. Liz, Ian and myself set off at a gentle pace, confidently expecting to burst out of the cloud within the first few 100 m. This did not happen. After ~~ascertaining~~ that we must be at the top for the nth time we found that we actually were (or

seemed to be). The mat was still very much with use -- since the rocks were still warm & dry this was obviously a particularly annoying case of Sod's Law. At this point Ian and I noticed a hole -- yes this was to be the deepest cave in the world. Boulders were tossed down in, and they thundered down for at least 1 second. Clearly a real "goer". The Refuge was soon reached & we introduced ourselves to Manda (from here on -- ~~the~~ Manda). Aho is definitely a rather smooth place: a water* supply with its own personal salamander ~~and~~



many prancing cows, no toilet (well it has one, but surprise surprise it's in bad condition), amazing herbal tea, endless (?) supplies of cold beer, fabada etc etc etc. Just to top it all according to Manda it is never misty for a whole day!

~~Feeling keen~~ Feeling super keen Ian and I investigated our find (No 1/5 - Viewpoint Cave). Unluckily for the 1st discovery it ~~is~~ proved very promising. Further descent with J&G the next evening reinforced this idea -- a rough survey goes opposite. The lack of any appreciable draught is however not so good. Next day was spent cave-hunting. Ian was attacked by a Shepherd yelling "Cuevas" & ~~he~~ attempted to follow him up & down the limestone lumps. Unfortunately Ian couldn't find many of the huge



stones thrown here bounce down for 6 secs
or so - Graham reckons on 80m.
It should be at least 50m anyway!

shafts that were shown to him. Altogether about 8 promising
entrances were found.

The following day we tried labelling the caves - not particularly
well. After this we climbed Jultaya - recommended by Marmel
as giving the best view in the Picos! Easy to climb (even Liz got up it)
& the views is fantastic: the bar is visible in one view &
the other the Ceres gorge is rather well displayed!

Shortly after returning to the Refugio an amazingly large
group of large scout-like Spaniards marched up - carrying flags etc & singing!
Kathy turned up followed soon after by Martin et al with loads
of pathos galore & ecstatic views. ~~The~~ The return to Ericeira
was made in pleasant evening sun - even at the lake! The latter
provided a ~~refreshing~~ refreshing swim & wash (somewhat required by
the stage). A major part of the latter half the ~~the~~ expedition should
be centred at Ario.

Tuesday 24th By 9.30am that heavenly orb which has, in the past
week so rarely graced us with its presence, had ascended to its
rightful place in the firmament - and various bodies were stirring
superficially, contemplating the imminence of "getting-up." And by 12.30
Rev, Pete, Al and Martin MacLaverly, clad in the best highland
tradition, were ready to depart, via "the backwoods," to Ario. Do

not ask, ô curious Reader, what happened to the three intervening hours!! The ridge leading up to Pico Conjustao (1935) was climbed at an easy speed - although nobody could agree precisely where we were at any given time. The general consensus suggests however that we did reach Conjustao. On the way up one of the shafts located by your truly on Sunday Martin obscurely says: "I think I've been here before." But says "yes," it should be worth a second visit as it may just coincide with the lower series of Forcan. Having attained the dizzy heights of Conjustao, (Pete succumbing to the glamour cast by "spiky limestone" on the way up, Martin echoing the spell by composing ahapsodic elegy to the rock!!) and spent about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr trying to ascertain that it really was Conjustao, we turned our faces to what would have been the morning glow had it been morning. Descending over very promising and difficult terrain we entered "the earthly paradise" - a green valley set between the desert peaks. In the first major depression of the valley a hole was found by Martin ("hey, I've found a hole quote, unquote"). It lies under a small snowplug and seems to be entered by a small rift - three feet further down a second snowplug can be seen. A cool but strong draught can be felt - suggesting further passages beneath the surface of Eden, beckoning the intrepid eaver into the velvet depths away from the agoraphobia - inducing heat and light. Arrio is "just over the next col" (Martin) or the next - or the next. Or the next. Having traversed endless cols Arrio was seen in the distance - ~~where~~ and we descended; there to meet the Arrio party. "Dr. Livingstones, we presume" R.

Liz's piece

What can I say about my holiday, I've never been camping before or mountaineering or canoeing or gone on long walks!

So consequently it's been a mixture of agony & ecstasy, but definitely more ecstasy (!?)

Everybody has been so friendly and I've enjoyed being one of the two only women here, It makes a change from doctors parties where there are 10,000 women to one man! I've also enjoyed cooking and tending to the sick and injured?

It certainly has been an eye opener, covers are gre-at! , wonderful senses of humour, enjoy drinking (very important) enjoy the outdoor life and of course their precious covers

All the appalling walks and drinks have been well worthwhile, the scenery has been unbelievable, as has the weather (say no more).

I can't possibly relate all my days activities here so I'll just relate about one night in Arico :-

Imagine the scene, the dormitory with the creaking bunk beds and scattered in all corners of the room various semi-conscious covers plus the tent (or "big tits" as she has been known). The covers were Ian, Simon, Graham & John; the reason for us being semi-conscious is of course due to a large intake of alcohol! (or us & the dreaded vino tinto). It was very dark and creepy & various people mentioned ghosts etc. The first noise I heard was like an engine, so I sat up in bed and asked if anyone else heard

I did a through trip!

it too, Simon sat bolt upwards with what I imagine was a startled expression, anyway we decided it was, yes you guessed, the wind! Then the bangings started and Jan's snoring also started. I'm convinced I was the last person to fall asleep, although John says he was. I spent half the night trying in vain to keep Jan on his side so he wouldn't snore because the noise seemed to annoy Simon for some unknown reason!

At one point I managed to drop off to sleep only to be awoken again by a strange figure shuffling in through the door, it was Simon, who had struggled for half an hour (slight exaggeration!) in total darkness to get to water as naturally he was very thirsty, apparently he couldn't get outside to pee because the door was locked so he wee'd out of the window (upstairs I believe!). What a night!

THE END

Martins great

Peter great

Skunk & Shippys great every body on the whole
Camps great and I love all of you,

Thanks

P.S Please don't forget to
write me to your re-union

Liz

X X X X

PPS Special kiss X for Graham.

PPPS Special kiss X for Dave

Colin & Jim arrived, and we went for another meet in the bar.

Wednesday 25th, Everyone, Fiestered,

Thursday 26th

Summary of holes near Oca so far
(postponed to following pages)

- Trips; - Hoyo La Madre, Surveying Inlet and Upper Series
Martin, Colin, Dave, John, Tim, Mark, Shippy and Stunk
Also appearances by 3 cave bugs!
- Oca, ~~Stunk~~ Rugs and Piccies
Simon, Kevin, Cavanaugh, Mike
Lan ladder disappeared.

Lan & Liz went home, and Al had his arm plastered up - in Oriedo, accompanied by Pete (the Taxi driver) and Kathy

Friday 27th

Four groups of people today;

Dave and Al, - surface mapping above Oca. In the course of mapping through the wood above the depression we found a 'Exclamation mark' cave, a very impressive set of entrances (all close to Crombar cave, N & D), found by AL. The main entrance is a hole (horiz) 20ft high by 1ft wide, definitely worth a visit. By all accounts it should emerge in Oca a little below the T junction with the stream passage. 6 hours surveying, and when we got back, there was no bleeding postcard to draw survey with!! Dave

Resurgence group: - Simon, Mark, John. Not back yet
(11:50pm). If they get back, report will be further
down page. Rescue sets off (again) at 1 am (Winnings)
(surveyed remaining passage starting at 4 o'clock) Dave
Osu, 2 groups, first Jim and Skunk
and Mike and Colin

Group No. 1. Jim and Skunk.

Destination - Terminal sump.

Quick trip in. Skunk derigged climb in inlet and
found that he had previously knocked down the
last pitch in the "Manhole" thus establishing a connection.

The terminal sump area was thoroughly investigated
all high level passageway near to the sump trended
upstream and a voice connection was established with
another climb further upstream. All other climbs close
to the sump were also investigated. No joy!

Osu would seem to end at its sump.

Skunk. (W.M.C.E.G.)

Group 2 Mike & Colin

- Objective to sketch entrance series.

We decided to try and make it a bit more sporting by trying to attain Grade
3. Having found compass or tape, we needed a climb so we half hitched Martin's protector
+ 6" of cotton, a 2 B.A. nut and sticky + ape - hence a dio. Walked to Osu
& started surveying - having done the main drag and discovered a side passage
we gave up as it would take forever. The end result is the bird's nest that will
(might?) appear on the survey. After 'surveying' Mike led me on a

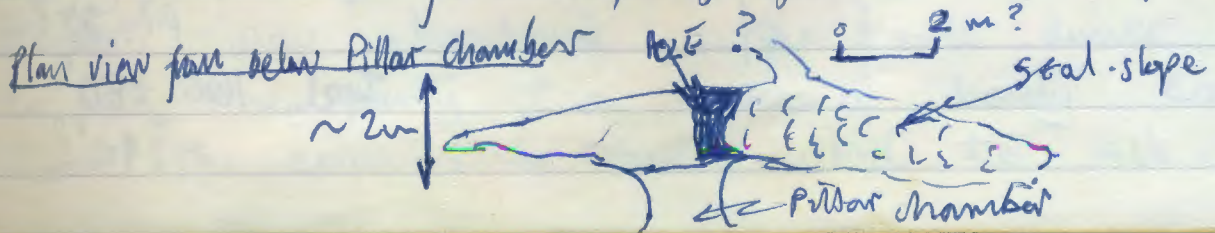
tourist trip down the rest of the cave, which I found impressive.
We left after a 7hr trip which was enjoyable & hopefully a bit useful
- but why do we walk up in the afternoon heat everytime?

Coli.

Skippy & Kev - "Kev's Cave"

After a rather long spell in Cangas flared by about an hour in Cavadauga reporting the theft of our ladder from Osa, Skippy managed to persuade me to look down the hole I had found near the start of the expedition.
The 5" diameter hole I had enlarged to just about man size was further enlarged (to my size!) with the help of a hammer.

Both got down to the point Skippy reached on the 24th. Ladder belayed with rope on the end. 15' pitch down side of chamber to ledge, with narrow meandering trends and hole in the floor. I went back up to get abseil/puusek gear, slung clothes in the process. At bottom of 15' hole there was a view over another 25-30' pit with trickle of water. No more tackle so went along narrow passage (dry) to vertical squeeze. Skippy went down, finishing chamber with wire formations and a further drop. He came back; I went down. My carbide was somewhat brighter than his I could see further passages ~~at~~ at the bottom of this drop.



El Hoya La Madre

Simon, Mark, John

Arrived back at 00.45 - sorry to disappoint the rescuers
 The late finish (out at 10-35) was due to a very late start -
 approx 3 pm. This was the last trip to the resurgence, to
 finish off surveying a few inlets, and to de-rig. The
 inlets were longer than expected - 51 stations. Simon
 collected a millipede and some dog-tooth sp. No more
 climbing down that ^{beautiful?} gorge.

Saturday 28th July

This is the 6th day morning that it has been hot and sunny

Cueva de la "Bad isn't it?"* (Cueva del Dave)

Dave, Colin, John.

The team of super heroes, set to connect
 the cave with Osu, got off to a good
 start and surveyed as far as the rift very
 quickly. Colin then made a "Firkly" descent
 of the rift followed ^{shortly} by Dave and the bolting
 of the pitch commenced. After about an hour's
~~climbing~~ ^{general cursing} of Petzl equipment, the
 attempt was abandoned as the bolt driver fell
 to bits. The party then made a hasty exit
 from the cave and then walked to Al's Cave.

Sat 28th July.

Kev's cave.

Party:- Skippy, Skunk and Mike. Sherpa's:- Pete.

Time:- 8 hours.

Many thanks to Pete the pack horse for helping haul some of our gear to the entrance of what is now known as Pessimista Pot²_{sp!} (pessimist pot; there is no spanish translation for optimist).

Skunk was optimistic talking of grand shafts and sporting streamways, Skippy was pessimistic talking of it closing down after the next short drop and Mike ... well, he was just complaining.

The entrance is somewhat narrow but nothing desperate and soon opens out into a fair sized chamber decorated with fossilised stal. Skippy had somewhat misjudged the length of this pitch and after hassling with Martin for ladders found to his disgust they did not reach the bottom. The entrance pitch is approximately 20 m. Skippy's estimate was 14 m, ^{= 100%} despite being prone to exaggeration.

The 2nd pitch follows immediately and was re-rigged with ladder. This was another 20 m. It is a bit awkward at the top with a tackle bag, ammo can, prussik bag etc and there is an eyehole 10 m down. There is a crawl quite close to the eyehole which has still to be investigated.

Tinkle crawl follows where stal smasher extraordinaire, Skippy, had gained entry to the head of a short pitch of 5m. Again moving tackle through has its problems and the pitch has an awkward take off.

A short 13m rope pitch follows belayed to a fair sized conical stal. It was found easier to get on the rope by following a short crawl and emerging approximately 2m down the rope.

Opposite the landing is a hands and knees crawl to a chamber with the sound of running water, still to be investigated and behind the rope is another pitch with a shallow pool in the bottom, still to be investigated. The way on is down a rift to the head of a short free climbable pitch with a large stal boss at the head of it. Virgin territory now. The rope was soon rigged to the boss and protected at the lip of the next drop. Skunk abbed down and had a look round. A traverse to the right overlooked a large chamber (bolt needed). A hole in the false floor which Skunk nearly fell down was soon descended and was found to be clear washed and freehanging. Shouts of "this is more like it!" etc. Ran out of rope at the bottom. 50m. Now standing on the head of another pitch.

Plenty of dubious belays the best of which was used. Skunk descended first announcing there was opening half way down and then continued down. After a good look round a large decorated chamber

at the bottom with no way on he reascended. For ease this was done on knots, a changeover at the hole and then a descent down a narrow wet stalled up shaft. Approximately 33m in all.

This gave access to large chunigle floored chamber with a miniscule stream running through it.

G2 passage followed (razor sharp etc) leading to some nicely decorated chambers. In case it closed down soon only one person pushed on to help preserve the formations. Skippy found more decorated chambers and thoutchy bits to a free climbable 13m pitch more cravts etc but sadly time was short and a return had to be made.

Skippy made a bit of an epic of the exit from G2 passage much to Skunk's amusement. Revenge is sweet. He finally exited with tattered boiler suit and a torn arse and back.

Mike had started prussiking out. Skunk and Skippy had light problems and were unable to contact Mike who should have been at the top of the 33m pitch.

Skippy prussiked up first. No Mike, no voice contact even. So he couldn't even be at the top of surprise shaft. Skunk prussiked up and then traversed round the head of the pitch to look for a corpse. There wasn't one. (Shame?)

Both shafts proved good prussiks. Still no Mike. We were becoming perturbed. He was eventually

located lightless past the short rope pitch at the base of the ladder pitch. Bollockings that were due were given etc. Less said the better.

A fairly uneventful exit was made and nobody had any real difficulties with the entrance pitch.

We are now down to approximately -500' having passed through a fossilised stal region and are now into active stal and still going!

<u>Pitches:-</u>	Entrance	20m
	2nd	20m
	Tinkle Crawl	5m
	Rope	13m
	Suprise Shaft	50m
	Bisector Shaft.	33m.

plus a free climbable 13m pitch. at end of G2 passage and various downward trends, odds + seds.

Skunk. (W.M.C.E.G)

P.S For the benefit of the Tacklemaster.

Marlow 90m. 3 abbs. 3 prussiks.

Marlow 13m. — u —

Marlow 50m — u —

Marlow 45m — u —

28 July. Another walk to Arco, Jim & Martin.

By not exactly the most direct route, Toddled up to Ocu and then kept on going. Skirted around Northern Fall of ~~PROPERTHUS~~ ^{Contra Cepal} (1451) getting good view of Farcan Valle on one side (W) and Hida de Redondiella on other.

Then down a Col and up other side rocky slope ridge to Summit of Jau del Agua. We got a good view of the latter, which should rpy investigation in the future. Midway up trail investigated a small shallow cwn snow-dug - Needs to be looked at - its on a flat bit near piked rock.

Turned de Sum of Jau to Vega de la Alameda, via a very long Pdise that carries open water. Coy. being rough, wind water consumption high, Sun v hot. ~~Excess~~ carried or tanks per. Rapid descent by Jim showed in ~~the~~ pot though roughly strongly was blocked by boulders.

Good dig for the future!!

Pushed guys down to Relajo at Arco. Dried gear as returned down - Jim's last disinterest for once ag.

Jim

29th July Sunday

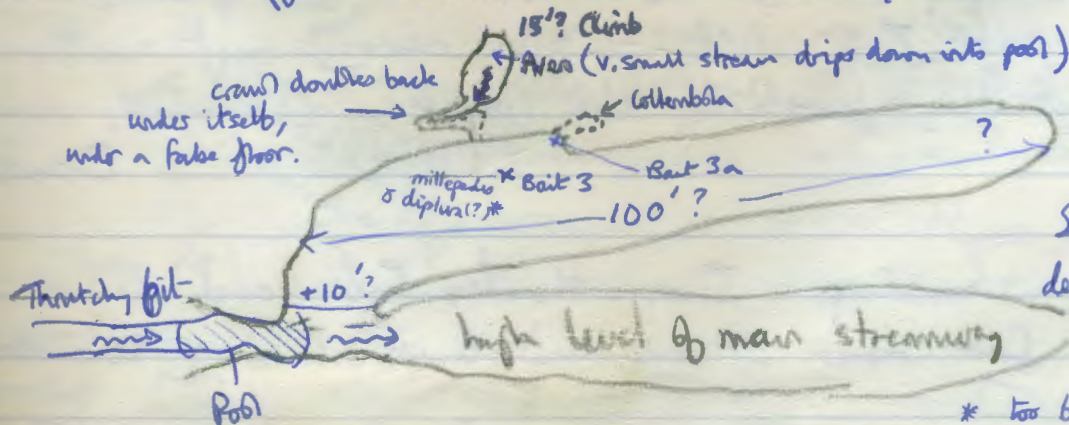
Cueva del Osu Sinan + Mike : Beattie & picky trip.

To that a Traps with Cagnish yielded absolutely nothing — changed their positions
~~to that a~~ trial Osu party can examine them. Bait is now in the following places (check with Mike) :-

- 1/ Pebble bank before obvious false floor just after T-junction
- 2/ Just after false floor, on pebble bank.
- 3/ In chamber off to left just after 1st throtchy bit of streamway (downstream).
- 3/a 10' from 3/ (to left as you face 3.)
- 4/ In large chamber in streamway (nr Dago's camp / tip).

- Prises taken of -
- 1) 'Cave coral' nr Skippy & Sinan inlet.
 - 2) Streamway just downstream of T-junction -
 - 3) Pretties soon after above.
 - 4) Martins' white bits, millipede habitat & me playing with a dead millipede.

Skunk's crawl off the chamber mentioned in 3/ & 3a above was looked at:



See Skunk for further details beyond 15' climb.

* too bloody small to tell.

29th July Completed surface ^{survey} above Ocu. Took in Ocu main valley towards Arico, near the entrance; the valley immediately above final camp; - and the valley beyond the east ridge and "cañon J." Prior to surveying, a bit of poking about in entrance of Ocu itself rooted out a large carabid beetle - near entrance "leafage," about 10m in. One of the sinks in valley above camp seems to go. Descended 35-40 feet and still had space beneath feet. Reascent of the rift proved somewhat tricky with one arm in plaster. Returned to Encina - and, not importantly, to the bar - at about 7pm.

HL

29th July Sunday, Daves Entrance to Ocu, Dave and Colin
After having been thwarted in our attempts yesterday to make the Ocu connection suggested by Shunk by Petzke last dinner we returned with spanner and successfully descended into upstream Ocu. Surveying was completed to a known survey point in Ocu and then the cave was detoured, a very laborious task ~~with~~ what with rifts, 20m of stiff bluewater ¹¹⁰⁰ and 2 possible bags, transported by only 2 people. ¹¹⁰⁰
On the way out tape measure was ripped off flitteringly while negotiating a rift and it was not possible to retrieve it. This left us to carry out last measurement by knabbing the rope. 6 hours, very tiring.
Dave

29th July Sunday. Jim, Mark, John and Simon
Get Saw Arico at various times during the day.

30th July Monday.

Martina, Pete and Kath left early in the morning. It is to be hoped that Pete had recovered from the ~~loss~~ impromptu leaving party of Sunday night ~~and~~ after having left his dinner in various quantities and states of digestion around the camp site!*

30th July Monday.

It is now 11.20pm and we are waiting up for a group who have been pushing down Kev's Pot. The entrance is not obvious so for the use of the people who may have to rescue the rescuers, here is a sketch map of 'how to get there?'



Monday 30th July.

Pessimisto Pozu.

Party:- Skippy, Skunk, Kev.

Time:- 12 1/2 hours.

The continuing saga of Pessimisto Pozu. A late start was made despite getting up early and we were down at 11.30. Half way down the 2nd pitch Skippy investigated a crawl leading off from the floor forming the eyehole. This lead to an aven and voice contact was established with Kev who was at the bottom of the short tuckle crawl ladder pitch. If this can be rigged with an SRT rope it will make ascents + descents easier and quicker. However this cannot be done until the original route is surveyed.

A crawl leading off from the base of tuckle crawl pitch leads past a breast like stal formation complete with nipple and led to a pitch into a fair sized decorated chamber. This will have to be investigated at a later date.

The belay for Surprise Shaft was changed to give a better hang. However there is still no back up as a bolt could not be placed securely in the walls of the chamber as they are solid? calcite. The rope was also rebelayed at the ledge. Here the Marlow rope had been cut through to the core. A sewn tape was used however this should really be replaced by a wire stop on the next trip in.

In the chamber at the base of the 'bisector' the pebbles were looked at closely during a break for a nibble of chocolate. They found to be fluorite rounded and shaped by

past stream activity. Some angular crystals were also found which due to their hexagonal pyramid shape had the geologist? (Kev) guessing. Dad still has!

Then to C2, Kev took one look at it and the epic Skippy was making of getting through it and said "you ain't bloody well getting me through there". However after a grunt, a groan, a fart and much abuse he exited into C2 grotto. His fine pea soup coloured overalls was now a two piece.

Throughout C2 grotto it is difficult to avoid damaging the formations and I think it would be wise to consider a photographic trip before many more are broken and muddled.

A 5m free climb is quite straightforward once you know where the footholds are, but looks awkward from the top. Soon after is a short exposed traverse around a 12m pot down which the stream flows. Skippy thought the rift leading off too tight and so the party climbed up into the roof, over a stal bank and then down again. Quite a strong draught was detected here. An angular very muddy crawl was then followed which led directly to a pitch of approximately 27m into a large chamber. Without tackle the party turned back.

Another draught was found issuing from a hole in a stal bank. This had to be enlarged to facilitate entry and Skippy and Skunk set off down with the ever faithful hammer in hand. Kev sat down in disgust saying that this pot was gradually making

Pippukui look like Duke Street. A gross exaggeration! Honestly!

A few climbs led back ~~back~~ to the original rift. Again enlargement was required in a few places. Once again time ran ~~short~~ out. There now remains one more flake to remove (we want a good man with a hammer) and then there can be seen a free climbable 5m wet pitch and then a small chamber overlooking the large chamber seen from the muddy crawl. Hopefully this will give us a better take off if bolts can be placed.

We returned to Kev, a poor lightless troglodyte suffering from a rapture of the depths and chilled. After a refill of carbide we made haste. It was a quick uneventful trip out, though both Kev and Skipper had trouble with their prussiking systems.

Now it is known what lies beyond g2 gear can be carried through next time and a good push made.

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G.)

P.S It was discovered on the way out, largely due to Kev's persistence, that g2 can be bypassed by a climb.

The stinkie dilemma - A wegee's guide to the peculiarities of refilling one's carbide lamp.

Some time, you, the ever safe caver, are going to find that your stinkie goes out through lack of water. So, what do you do? I recommend you take a few tips from certain members of the O.V.C.C Expedition to the Picos de Europa 1979.

The Laverty method:- Simplicity itself. Spit in it.

The Skunk method:- Think of water. Allow yourself to be influenced. You wish to urinate now don't you? So get it out and piss in it. Its just the tool for directing a jet of waste water into so small an orifice. However some past lorois' of the club was shy in Oseu and once again managed to piss all over his hands. Sorry Simon! And I shan't mention that you managed to piss all over a ~~suitable~~ club tackle bag at the same time.

The Kev method:- Find the muddiest pool you can find. Take a mouthful of water. Choke. Swallow.

The Kev method (ii) - Take your glove off. The one with the holes in the fingers. Fill it up from a suitable pool. and milk it, cow-like, into your stinkie.

The Fowler method :- Find a clean pool of water. Take a mouthful and by compressing your cheeks (No, not those you fool!) squirt the said water into the container.

The Pete method - Find a deep pool. Immerse stinkie till water container full. Whoops. The flint is wet. The jet is waterlogged. Your stinkie doesn't work.

Cavers are famed for their ingenuity I'm glad to see this tradition being carried on. Have you any to add?

Pete's method Mk. II. Stuck in dry part of cave with no water.

- 1) Remove Wellie
- 2) Asphyxiate colleagues with vile smell
- 3) Pour putrescent liquid from wellie into stinkie
- 4) Complain your carbide lamp smells odd.
- 5) Pass out.
- 6) Stinky goes out.

Kevin's method Mk III.

- (i) Allow stinkie to fall off when traversing across deep pool in wet cave e.g. La Madre
- (ii) Immerse body & feel around with feet for stinkie. This may take some time.
- (iii) Raise stinky from depths. See if full of water. If so then neglect (i). If yes then begin anti-lypohemia treatment.
- (iv) Pray stinkie lights.

* been down Osn pricing & beanie collecting with Mike till 7pm.

(64)

Ario report No 2

28th Sat : Various bolts carried a variety of gear up to Ario & left it in the care of Manuel in the Refugio.

29th Sun : Jim, Mark & John 'strolled' up to Ario following Jim's steaming wellies. Camp was pitched right next to the Refugio. Mark waved a tearful goodbye as J & J wentaving down their point cave (now named Pozo de Xitu). Jim buggered his fancy Retzl driver at Pitch 3. Meanwhile Mark prepared the meal & Simon* arrived late as usual (but still in time for the food!) At this point Jim was snorting about camp muttering darkly about bolts — basically there were only about 3 bolts at Ario.

30th Mon : Up early. ~~Simon went down to Los Lagos~~
Burr's noise was at 5am with unbelievably loud braying just outside tent: apparently he's a rinky ♂ & there's a desirable ♀ about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away down valley. For a good simulation of the noise ask John.
Simon went back down to Los Lagos (cries of Superhero please). Mist was met shortly after viewpoint & from there on condition got worse & worse.
In Pozo del Xitu modest paraplegic Jim banged bolts in with an abandoned gay (sorry — gay abandon). Eventually the triumphant ^(duo?) trotted with tenacity towards the traditional tent. An interesting feature of the pot was discovered as the party

excited : the sudden thundering sound heard at the 3rd pitch which John at first thought was Simon coming through the rift turned out to be a 2' high wall of water. While Jim was deciding which of his bolts to hang on to, John pissed off out at a tremendous rate.

That evening Simon arrived late again but equipped with bolts galore, Vitor Tinto & other vital carrying equipment. Oh yes - Mark & John surveyed Xitu to top of 70' pitch.

31st Tuesday : Pozo del Xitu again. Jim & Mark - bolting & pushing.

Simon & John - surveying.

Rapid descent to top of 70' pitch where Jim put in a back up bolt on 70' & traverse. Began surveying. A bolt was placed at the point Jim reached on Monday & a 5m pitch descended. A climb down led to another larger pitch which was rigged with the B/W 50m. Survey party had caught up by this time & the last station was marked on pitch edge, opposite below. Jim & Simon descended the pitch - prob. about 60' in all, to a loose section of big rift. Another pitch almost immediately of ~30'(?). 60' pitch will however need careful rigging - probably a bolt halfway down. Since we were now rather wet & cold it was decided to exit. Apart from carbides playing up exit was really quite pleasant : descent rigs make most of pitches easy.

Left campsite for Los Lagos at 7pm & met Al & Dave with news that there was no Arco party coming up that evening.

Simon

Tuesday 31st July

None Anio group did nothing. The Kev's Pat purchase of the previous day rested. The rest and the excuse of no car side or to go stopping yet again. During the day it was decided that we would be spreading our selves out too thinly if we had groups simultaneously in Anio, Bwind and El Mazuco. This was bound to annoy the groups already at Anio who had already made previous arrangements but we went ahead none the less and sent up only two people to Anio to inform the other groups what was happening. Much argument was expected from both sides but happily the situation was quickly resolved that evening when it was decided that 2 people should return to Anio for surface surveying, 4 people should pay a courtesy visit to El Mazuco and the remaining 5 should pack and survey Pessimisto Pot.

Wednesday 1 August

Colin, Shunk and Dave; surveying down Pessimisto Pot. Cool as low as 5th, with some nevigging and searching on the way out. 1 1/2 hours.

Wednesday 1st August

Al and John tramped up to Anio and set up the base lines for Al's superb 1:2000 scale map of the area. A few newly ^{discovered} pots were also descended by John and the results noted. John.

Wednesday 1st August

Skippy & Mike - Osu

Time - 3 hours

This was a quick tidying-up^s trip.

We made a fast descent to the bottom of the 30 m pitch and then Skippy hurried on to the first sump, where he made a sketch survey of the locality. I followed slowly behind him, looking at the baits set by Simon three days ago - there were even a few beasties caught (and some more, which I missed or squashed!).

We met as Skippy was finishing his artwork, and hurried to the top of the 30m pitch, which was de-tackled (before S.U.C.C.'s Bluewater went missing). The nasty handline which replaced the purloined ladder was also removed, and we exited from Osu for the last time. Three Cheers!

Mike Bushen

Thursday 2nd August

Dave, Skippy and Mike. Surveying in Pessimistic Pot. A late start, though not so long after Colin and Shunk had departed for the same pot brought us to the entrance of PP at 2.15. Our initial objective was to rig a bypass pitch to the lower 2nd, 3rd and 4th pitches which we

did after bits of struggles by Dave and Mike at the top of the new Ind pitch. Technique; if you can't get your bum through the upper right part of the crack, squeeze through the lower left with arms by the side of your body and ventral shoulder to the left of the downward projection. After all this, we found that the new pitch has numerous sub points and is not very advantageous other than saving a few ladders here and there.

We managed to ~~the~~ survey the new route despite the fact that the headline ~~compass~~ in the compass was half hanging off and jamming the motion of the dial. We connected back to a known survey point done on Wednesday's ~~the~~ trip. We then surveyed the 2 avenus at the end of Mammey passage (Bottom of Tinkle Pitch, the ex Ind pitch) and below the pitch below the passage. No direct connection (hitherto suspected by author) was found. At this point it was found that we would not have enough time to start surveying on the main drag at Cst, the last point reached yesterday. So we made our way slowly out, taking pictures on the way (Dave fondling 'it' for example) and arrived back at 10 pm

Dave

Thursday 2nd August; - Arvic Party.

Al took several surface readings until mist came down at 2pm while John ^{found and} poked his nose into ~~and~~ several holes in the area. After lunch (Curies of "decadence!" etc.) of Paté butties Al drew up his survey in the Refugio while John searched for holes in a small depression. Again mist defeated the afternoon's attempts. After a meal of Beef & Curry? and Rice, John departed for Base camp at 6pm while Al finished his map off. (He claimed he'd done about 1/30 of the necessary work:- he should still be here in September.)

John.

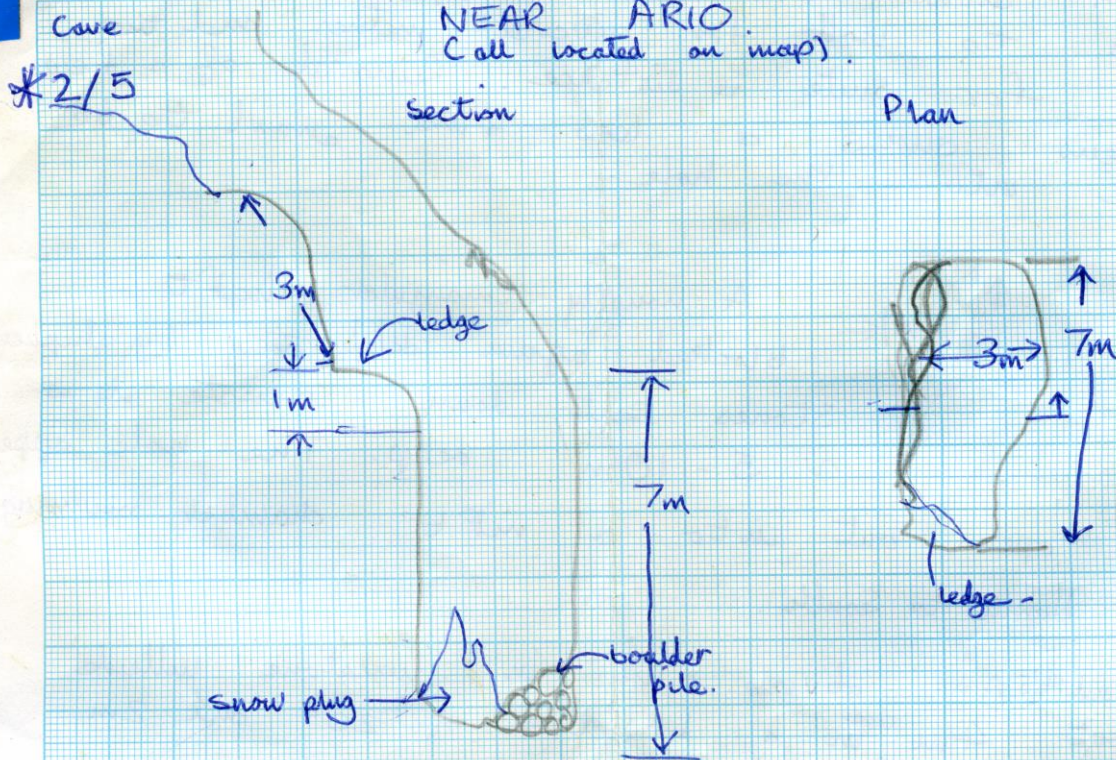
Here follows a stuck-in report of the Arvic Caves so far:-



Friday 3rd August:- 2-19pm and still the pushing party hasn't returned. Could this be a mission for the rescue party?

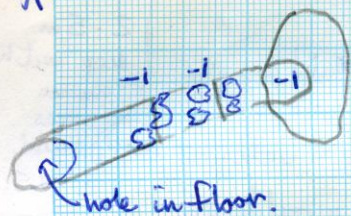
BRIEF NOTES ON ENTRANCES NEAR ARIO.

(all located on maps).



The ladder was belayed to a dubious boulder about 3m from the entrance. A descent was made to the ledge but no further progress could be made due to lack of ladders etc.

* Cave 3/5.



A rift can be descended for about 10m over a few boulder covered drops. A hole in the floor seemed to lead on for several metres more. The razor-like walls and ones regard for one's fell walking gear caused the abandonment of the penetration attempt. This cave is definitely worth a revisit.

← track to Jultaye

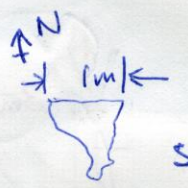
Cave 6/5 A 5.8m x 2m x 3m high rift leading nowhere, being partially open to the air and generally not worth noting. The belay used for the descent was a gain dubious. The only interesting thing was ~~the~~ fact that this cave seemed to be a surface continuation of the rift in 3/5.

Cave 7/5 A narrow rift running N-S. sections, the one to the left being too tight and the one to the right chocking straight away. Probably a surface feature covered with boulders.

* indicates worth another look with appropriate gear.

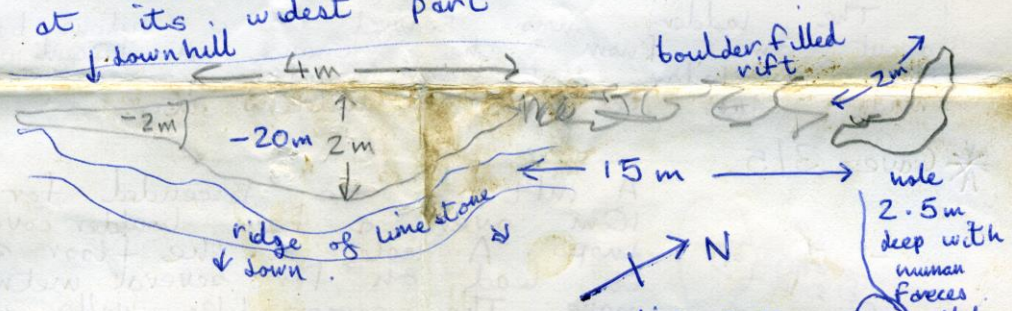
*815. A deliberately blocked hole at the base of a cliff about 15m west of 715. Stones sent in to roll for several metres and then fall for quite a distance. Removal of a few boulders made into the hole - first crawl to be

*915.



A roughly triangular shaft blocked again deliberately by shepherds. Stones sent down indicate it is $\sim 5-10m$ deep. The hole appears to open out into a rift chamber running \sim North to South.

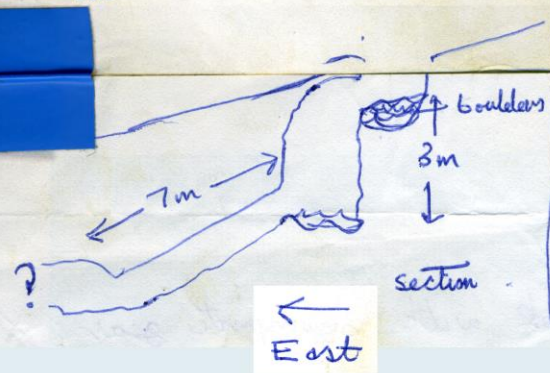
*1015 and 1415 An obvious hole in limestone hillside about 4m ^{wide} in a direction of 20° and 2m wide at its widest part



1415 is a hole 2.5m deep which bells out ^(now) called 1415. A ~~choked~~ rift choked with boulders would be an easy way down into 1015 if clear.

11/5 is a strongly draughting boulder choked hole under a snow plug in a deep ravine. Several other boulder choked holes emerge in ravine.

*215 is an obvious hole 1m x 0.5m in a depression in stratified limestone East of the path to Taltayn (running South) An easy 3m climb down leads to a boulder ceilinged chamber 2m x 1.5m with two small holes (easily climbable down) which seem to go for more than 7m down.



13/5 is a rift ^{0.5m wide} just below survey point P. The rift is about 7m deep appearing to bell out at the bottom. Possibly an enlarged dirt (or is it sinker)

No!!!

70

Thursday 2nd August Perissinis to Pozu - pushing party
Skunk + Colin
Winnie

Eventually managed to leave bar after statutory "café au crap"
and to the amazement of the weegee's staggered off in the direction of
Perissinis. Went down at 1:30pm. Arrived GII passage 2:15pm.
We then proceeded to the rift for some minor adjustments to the
calcite with skippy's 2lb lump hammer. After 1/2 hr. searching for
where I was supposed to be bashing I started leaving the hammer
Half a hour later, with 2" of flake removed and my right arm
absolutely knackered (I haven't seen practising much lately) I let
Skunk in to have a bash. A mere 20 minutes later he'd got through
the squeeze into the rift, but just a few minutes after that he'd
got past the obstruction without further bashing. We dropped down
about 3m to a shelf over a 50' (?) pitch with no visible
belays, having spent 1/2 hr. looking for natural belays we resigned
ourselves to two bolts in the calcite (yuk!) the pitch is
clean but wet, and opened into a chamber 50' x 30' with
a lot of large boulders and a lip over a 100' drop. The lip is surrounded
by very soft laminar material (viz Black Reef Yorks) which is easily
removed. Belaying on to some large boulders in the chamber Skunk
descended. I called to him that the rope appeared to be rubbing
but he thought it O.K. On my descent 12' from the lip I noticed
a gash almost through the sheath of the Marlow. Oh well, the
outside of my Damart was dirty before so it didn't matter that the
inside was dirty as well now. I changed over & prussiked back up
(Thank you New College Gym) re-rigged the pitch and waited at
the top - ^{using the} excuse of wanting to do something about rubbing points if
there were any to cover my cowardice about going down & (and backing up)

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a partially knuckled rope. During my alterations of the pitch to try & render it a little safer I showered Skunk with this loose shale - so it was christened 'Bombardier Pitch'. Meanwhile Skunk had found a very large chamber 100' x 150' with the water going down a tiny gap but 3 possible ways on - A plastic tube, round wood about 10' up a tank & a plastic tube halfway down the pitch on the right. Skunk came back up a "bloody good pressik" (i.e. wet and free) Thanks to my jamming choppers and intermittent light we made a slow exit. A long trip, but we (Skunk) had ~~made~~ added 150' + to the depth of the cave

13 hours

loti.

~~Friday 3rd August~~

Friday 3rd August

Dave and Ship

Pessimisto Pat

A further pushing trip after much persuasion by Ship of a reluctant Dave. The usual late start found us at the entrance by 2pm and we made medium pace progress down to C11 and the passage beyond. Dave surprised himself by getting through ~~the~~ both major squeezes after some perseverance. After much humping of tackle we arrived at the 'pitch of calcite ball belays'. This was rigged using 70m Bluewater. The subsequent 0.100ft pitch was also rigged, this time using a single large boulder as a belay rather than the previous 2 1/2 belay points since it was found that the 2 previous

boulder belays could be moved by hand. The consequences of a sharp tug on the belay points would admittedly not have been fatal; the large boulder would have rolled over onto a more stable face dragging the smaller boulder with it (?) but this would be very disconcerting for whoever was on the rope. (Actually the new belay is not all jay, there being no back, no tail and high stretch).

At the bottom of the pit is a large chamber previously entered by Shank the previous day. We feel that a good name for the place is Mud Palace since the whole place is dominated by a huge pile of mud which extends into every corner. Sadly it is for this reason that, after a full investigation of the chamber perimeter, ~~we~~ we were unable to find a way on at that level, everything being choked by the various grades of sedimentary deposit ranging from mud to coarse sand. We did find some passage leading off, notably a pneumatic ~~tube~~ tube leading off about 10 yds from the bottom of the pit (moving round clockwise). It appears to be an inlet which extends for 60-70 yds ending in a siphon which makes a strange bubbling noise. The whole place of course is covered in mud.

Next notable passage was a 45° downward pneumatic tube reached by a 10ft climb. This too continued for a fair distance, we penetrated to about 10 yds. Unfortunately the sand in the passage

was only inclined at 46° to the horizontal and so it seems inevitable that ceiling and floor will meet. (We did not go right down to this point; maybe the dedicated pusher will find it carries on ~~ad~~ ad infinitum.)

Next passage was a 45° slope reached by a small dimb covered in slippery mud. It descended 10ft into a small chamber 12ft diameter. Ways are choked. Together with these passages there were a fair number of mud sinks at various points around the edge. All these were too tight, including the one active sink which takes the small stream which comes down the pitch.

The mud formations in this chamber are really worth a look. In places there are what look like pebbles embedded in mud. In fact they are all mud in construction which rather surprised us. There were also mud valleys and cutting, mud flowers and thin veneers of mud on sand which quickly plated your hand when handled.

Progress out was slow, at least to the bottom of bisector since we were logging 45m of wet, diced Marlow. We both began to regret having persuaded / been persuaded by the other to go ~~down~~ down, at least until we reached the bottom of the first pitch where 2 cans of beer awaited us!! Out, down at 4am \Rightarrow 12½ hours.

Dave

PS, if surveyed for greatest depth, try 45° sand slope.

Shippy's Notes

Had been told by shunk + winnie of nasty abrasive pants at head of final pitch, so hauled rope up and studied flakes which were the main offenders. Then had enjoyable time dropping enormous boulders over lip of pitch & removing said flakes. pitch had now clear.

Exit protected by Dave also throwing things down various pitches, eg my gloves, his foot ascender. Dave insisted on going down to find his foot ascender, but seemed less keen on fetching my gloves.

Further notes on how to rekindle your failing carlside;

Shippy - find wet pitch, at least 20m. Hang down rope. Abseil down, get off rope, bend rope into V shape. Use drips from rope to refill water tank. Get water behind nozzle. Switch on NiFe instead.

Singleton no-nonsense, never fail technique - Open carlside container. Pour in water. Strike flint above container. R.I.P.

Saturday 4th August

John and Mike; Finished surveying Upper Ocu entrance.

Also attempted to finish C de la Cava but failed

Dave, Shippy and Colin; Showed interested Spaniards the entrance series (30 yds of!) to Ocu, then walked up to Anio where Colin was to assist Al in surface survey.

Sunday 5th August

El Mazon bunch returned. Future plans drawn out.

(Hopefully)

Jim wandered about camp, hand down the front of his ~~to~~ jeans, declaring that he was making "certain sacrifices for the sake of the Expedition."

The EL Mazuco report

Left Los Lagos on Wednesday ^{1st August} rather later than planned. Went via Cangas (bought whole chickens, mice etc) & Llanes (whose P.O. was closed). Navigated through shit in EL Mazuco to Alcalde's house where a gesticulating Jim laboriously made linguistic contact with a small high pitched unintelligible dwarf. Arranged the campsite in a small unbelievably flat mown field right next to a voluminous "fuente". Perfect except for the squadrons of Diptera well endowed with mandibles i.e. horseflies. These descended on us in droves while we unloaded still clad in the Los Lagos attire of shorts + T shirts: completely inappropriate for EL Mazucan ~~low~~ conditions. Skipper made a rapid escape wishing us good luck & we rapidly changed into long trousers, long sleeved shirts, socks, hats etc. Spirits were however lifted enormously by $\frac{1}{4}$ chickens & each worked in wine + plenty of self-imbibed vino a little later. The sun set pleasantly over the delightful rural scene and was not seen again until the return to Los Lagos.

Thursday 2nd August.

Mark and Jim strolled to the Toso de Viingo, a large flat alpine meadow at 400m. No great potential but a shaft ~ 10' deep was found in trees on the southern side. Also visited Callau River, Cuera a Sul, Ojo de Rio & an iron mine, but failed to find Cuera Castro. Pena Blanca in mist, so no possibility for shaft searching.

Kevin and Simon descended Fresno on creaky Marlow onto a cow's skull. Way on is obvious post decaying stal and following many footprints. Almost descended into lower series but being suspicious of a steep sandstone slope I sent Ker off on another route to find 10m pitch and rig it. Meanwhile I wallowed in particularly glutinous mud chasing a huge Proasellus sp & Collembole of various sorts. Set just bait. Eventually Ker returned having rigged 10m pitch. Took lots of pics above pitch and then bust film. Tried to manually wind it back into the cassette & probably pissed up the whole thing. (All Osu shots etc !!). Then descended pitch and pottered around main chamber deciding on future prices & collecting beasties. After ages and ages we decided to piss off out.

Friday 3rd Aug.

Got up late due to rain. Jim forced us down Fresno where we had short picnic & beastie trip \approx 4 hrs. Some elaborate lighting schemes in piccies. Beastie bait actually worked - caught some Chaptalia, Thyridoptera etc etc. Mark & Jim excited to make a cuppa for us while Ker & I continued collecting. Still raining when we made our gassy escape from Fresno. The rain gradually abated as the potveg was cooked - this time with sufficient flavouring. Jim then persuaded Ker to take a look at Bolugo - my excuse was beauty softing & Mark just dosed saying "I don't find cave entrances too interesting". They returned about an hour later, somewhat damp. A little later ~~Jim~~ hyperactive Jim tried again & Ker and I trekked with him to Boritha, & clambering unnecessarily along the slippery stream (Jim had

his fabled steaming wellies on). Impressive resurgence. Jim somehow managed to get to Bolugo while "navigating" on the way back. It was a bit steep - gently disturbed rocks hurtled to the bottom killing dozens of pterosaurs. Eventually returned to camp. Consumed 2 days Viro supply in the evening - even Jim reckoned we were piss artists, though nobody noticed any abstinence by him.

Saturday 4th Aug.

Weather slightly more promising - good excuse not to go to Lanewen anyway. Attempted an ascent of Pena Blanca - at best as far as the mist. Simon, catching butterflies, got somewhat left behind by the others who ended up waiting at the top of the valley. Simon managed to miss the others & continued on, descending down the next valley along, saw some superb eagles, found a cave and returned for lunch at camp. A little later the sound of sloshy wellies was heard & Jim and Co. appeared at camp having descended in search of Simon's dead body which much to their dismay was not to be found.

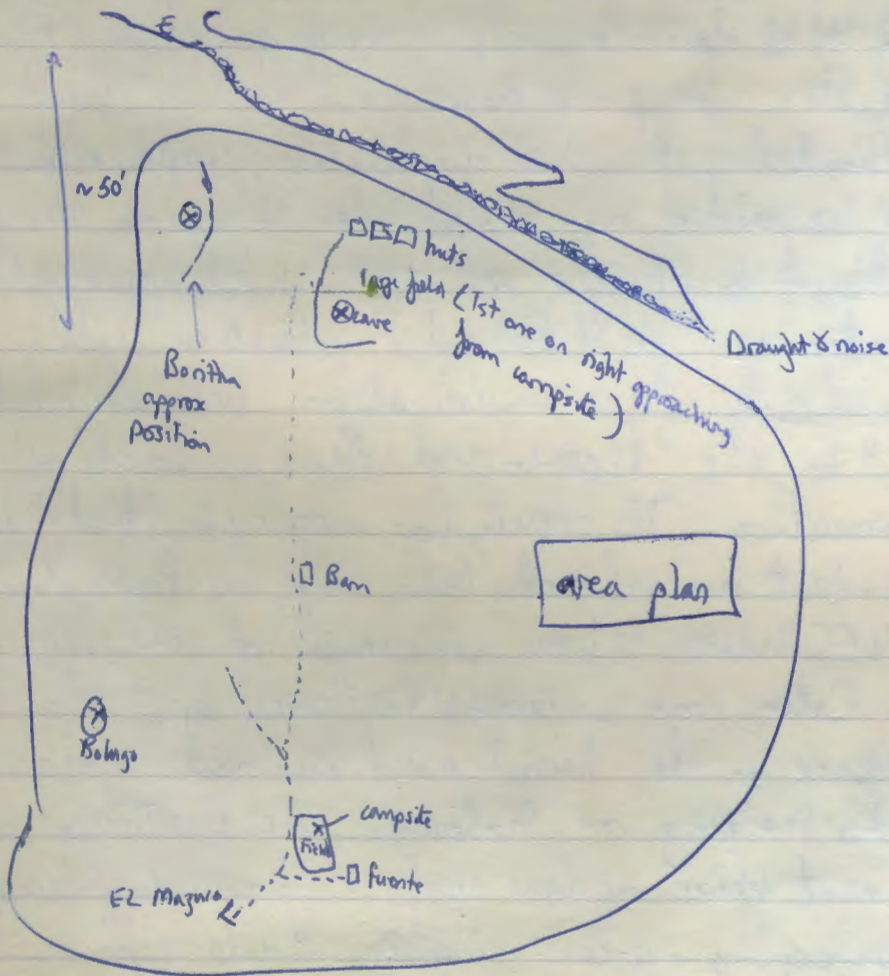
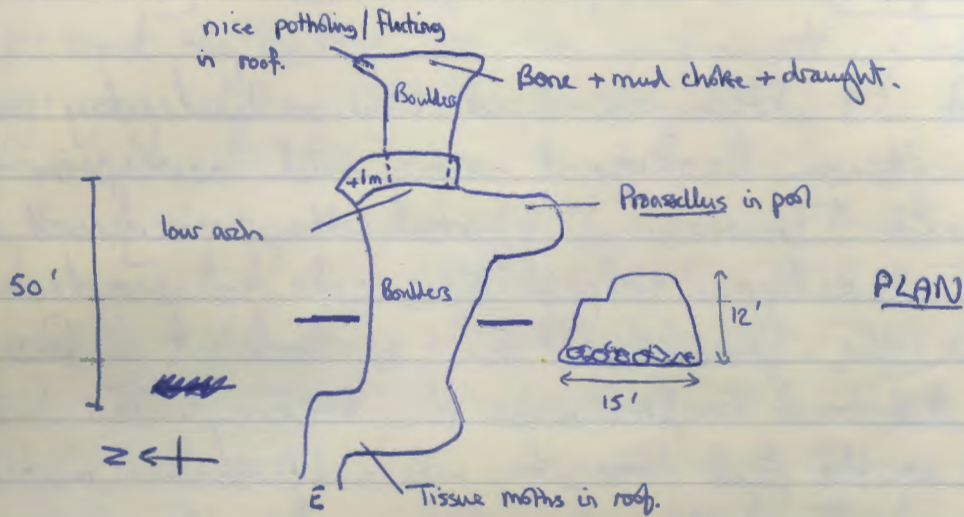
After lunch & tea & more tea, Simon, Jim & Mark set off to the aforementioned cave. Equipped with light & smelly kegs Simon boldly ~~descended~~ walked in. The cave consisted of a moderately large chamber descending to a mud and bone choke at $\approx 50'$ with a strong ~~draft~~ draught issuing from a small hole through which the noise of either a distant large stream or a v. strong draught could be heard. PTO for Grade (1) survey. Good potential dig site. Walls covered in white stal (moormilk). Plenty of signs of previous visitors, both animal (mostly still there) & human. Jim thinks it has probably been looked at before but was omitted by accident from the reports.

does this say love or cave ???

(86)

fl

My El Maguan Cave :-



At At Aris: The Return of the Magnificent One. Wednesday 1st August
to Monday 6th August.

Ascended to Aris with John over lunch-time on Wednesday: somewhat hot. Spent the afternoon looking at cairns and caves prior to surveying tomorrow. "Tomorrow" I started the survey and did most of the East Ridge. Helped John poke his nose down one or two holes-in-the-ground, and had a look at a few more. John went back to Los Lagos this evening. Found I was not alone in the tent however. - A subterranean visitor insisted on unleveling the ground, a mole. Friday was a fester-day since I couldn't see more than 10m due to the mist. And that doesn't help in triangulation. Played "kirk" with the SIE group up there and "talked" about caves and caving. Pointed out that duplication/triplication of effort cannot be avoided if people don't mark the caves they've done. Next day bright red circles had appeared on $\frac{1}{2}$ the cave entrances we'd found!! Further problem we agreed on was lack of communication between clubs who have "expedited" to the Picos - and thus a lack of centralized information. It seems, for example, that the Freix/Vento dye-test has already been done by Paris University - although even SIE haven't been informed of the result. Back to Friday: Colin was supposed to "come up" this evening - but didn't. Hence, as the bread had run out, yours truly was condemned to Astoveg or Astoveg... or Protoveg with Protoveg for the next three or four meals. Saturday was a good day surveying-wise. Colin came up in the

evening with a festering Dave and Skippy. They pointed out that they needed the compass I was using to survey P. P. but had neglected to bring up anything which might in any way replace it for triangulation. A good supply of compasses etc is a must. It's a waste of a day to have to go and get one or wait for one to be free. And man-days are setten. So Sunday was spent hurriedly surveying the rest while Colin fell down $\frac{9}{5}$ into which I had already put my foot - literally - two days before: which was the only reason that I found it. Compass departed at about 8pm and I went and played Risk with the SIE lot and copied up my figures. Monday morning - sketching the "features of the landscape" Monday afternoon - showing Mike & Dave "all over the area" and looking for more entrances. One only found - above $17/5$, $18/5$ and $19/5$ which I found on Sunday - along with $16/5$ which is $5/5$ - and $21/5$. $20/5$ doesn't look very hopeful. $17/5$ is already checked. Leaving $18/5$, $19/5$ and $21/5$ which all look (and sound!) good and new - $18/5$ and $21/5$ have, I think, definitely not been located before. Al

(P.S. Forgot to mention that arm came out of place on Saturday !!)

Pessimista por = Pozo del Cabezal home (Asturian)

or
Pozo del Cabezal del hombre (Castil)

Name of Area (S+E
"into")

Monday 6th August

Dave and Mike - Went up to Aris

Skunk, Skippy, Colin/Winnie, Mark & Simon took the two vehicles to Arriondas, for money/shopping/land rover repair. The repairs took only 6 hrs, and cost 4500 pts for new leaves and repaired puncture

Jim, John, Kevin - Surveying a Pessimista Pozo

An early start (:- 10 am down the cave) proved to be a good thing as Finkle crawl had to be rerigged (we couldn't find the correct squeeze to the head of the Maulow pitch) and Multiple light failure occurred below Limbo passage.

Jim and Kevin tried Geriatric squeeze and couldn't get through and so the party surveyed back to G2 passage and then made a speedy exit to emerge at around seven o'clock. p.m

~~Micro photographs in mud palace by Skippy, etc~~

Tuesday 7th August

Pessimista Pozo: Survey finish + photos + derigging.

Plan: John Skunk Mark Winnie & Shippy to survey from Geriatric squeeze to bottom, Jim Kev Simon to go to Arriondas to get parafin & then come in & help with detaching this side of Geriatric squeeze. Skunk Mark + John left at 11 am leaving Shippy + Win to wait for return of van, as Shippy's

photographic gear still in it. Skip & Winnie left at 1230 & caught the others up at G-II. Gerry Squeeze negotiated by all without too much difficulty & surveying of mid palace etc undertaken by John Mark & Winnie whilst Skippy took photos with Shunk as a model ??? (carefully positioned so as his back always to the camera)

Surveying done, A flash powder epic was arranged of mid palace which was a ~~and~~ spectacular success, Although John narrowly avoided 3rd degree burns lighting the 0.5 microsecond fuse, and annoyed the others by screaming, either with delight, fear or pain I'm not sure which.

A long slow exit slog then began with detackling, hauling etc. To cut a long story short Jim & co. emerged at about 3-am whilst Shunk & co arrived back at about 7am, suitably cream crackered, but a good job done.

Skippy

Wednesday 8th August.

Everyone rested (some more than others).
Skunk (W.M.C.E.G)

Thursday 9th August.

The big move to Ario. Skippy was well laden + slow and Suion, Ker, John and Winnie acted as sherpas
And Jim & Mark
Skunk (W.M.C.E.G)

Friday 10th August.

Pozu del Xitu.

Pushing party :- Jim and Skunk.

Time :- 8 1/2 hours.

The weather was glorious, Aris at its best. The SIE were just getting up as we left. On our walk to the pot we saw a young lady evacuating her bowel by the side of the path who smiled and said 'Holy ~~shit~~' and seemed totally unconcerned.

We entered Pozu del Xitu at 10:30 am with a 70m length of bluewater and made quick progress down a number of well rigged short pitches on Edelweiss and Bluewater, to virgin cave. The next pitch had a number of take offs and Skunk chose the largest for ease and banged in a bolt. A reasonable natural belay was used as a backup.

Skunk descended first and just managed to bottom the pitch on the rope available. Now standing on a rock bridge between 2 pots and in perfect line of fire, Jim descended and accidentally sent a large piece of rock down the pitch. This aim was perfect and hit Skunk a treat on the back of the neck. No blood, just a bump.

The next pitch looked a cracker. Jim's turn. 2 natural belays gave a good hang with a good back up. With visions of running out of rope Jim descended. Sadly this was not the case.

all he found was a Skunk type hole at the bottom so Skunk descended. After a wriggle it narrowed down to about 200mm, so we prusiked back up. At the top of the pitch a route led down to a large fossilised chamber with a rift in the floor. This was descended and led to a complex area of junctions and inlets. The passageway descended steeply with numerous short climbs. Finally we came upon streamway. About 0.5m size, more water and looking like ofr. Black limestone with calcite bands. Very impressive. A short cascade was freeclimbed and we were finally halted by a short 4m annoying pitch. A return with a ladder and botting kit is necessary. We then looked upstream till we thought time was running short (no watch!) and then made our way out.

A quick exit was made up this well rigged pitches.

A memorable trip - the epitome of cave exploration.

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G)

10/8/79 Shippy + Mark 8/5 push.

Late start due to good weather, apathy, loss of net holding Shippy's rack together etc. At entrance met shepherd who disappeared down & emerged with nibbled cheese, evidently damaged by rats. However, he made it clear that this was his cave & he did not mind us going down it. So we did, entrance full of smelly cheeses. Ripped 10m 1st pitch with a ladder, 2nd pitch followed immediately put 2 bolts in as no decent belay to give approx 22m nice pitch. Around 4m down followed then right- enlarged for a short- while. Dropped a 5m ladder down next bit of right- traversed along to find another right pitch, estimated about 40 feet. No tackle left, so derigged previous 5m pitch & freeclimbed it, then dropped that 5m ladder down on an excessively long belay. Shippy then climbed down (this was cold see the bottom about 25 feet from the bottom of the ladder. Leisurely uneventful exit made with resolve to return tomorrow. with more tackle.

~~Shippy~~ (w.m.c.e.c.)

P.S

Relationships with the S.J.E seem to be developing well. Bwup!

Q.O.C.C. Quotations.

Armando. Mañana sol.

Jui. I never made any pretentions to being a superhero.

Susan. Uno ponche por favor.

Colin. Oh dear its turned septic.

John. oh shit its broken.

Mark. It can't be that bad.

Skippy. Its about 40'.

Kevin (Oliver Twist). Is there any more food left?

Skunk. I dont know what you're complaining about, I can't smell a thing.

Al. Greetings, world

Mike. Oh dear this ropewalker is upside down.

Dave. Please God, don't let it rain while I'm having a crap.

Liz. If you roll it up smaller, it will fit in better.

Jan. I seem to have laddered my tights.

Kathy. Hang on a minute, let me get my breath back.

Pete. Whats the spanish for "I want to screw your daughter."

Martin. I'm not sure where we are, but I think its over the next hill.

Graham. Well... According to my calculations... a conservative estimate would be 80m deep.

Stephen. ... If this was Ffestiniog...

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G.)

S.I.E.

Francisco Chavarria

C/ VILADOMAT, 152 PRAL

Dr. Pagés 39 - Atico

BARCELONA, 15

Sta Coloma de Gramenet

SPAIN.

Oleguer ESCOLA
Museu de Zoologia
Aptº 593
Barcelonq - 3

(Barcelona)

This is a simile drawn between caving and women.
To be added to!

Quote: Winnie - It often seems that the worst thing you can do to a cave is discover it!

Swide: i) A cave starts off virgin but soon loses it. The more use it has the larger it becomes, also not as loose.

ii) The peculiarities of the cave become well known.

iii) The smallest holes often have the greatest potential

iv) Yorkshire holes are wetter than Mendip holes.

v) Some like 'em tight.

vi) Smaller holes have bigger draughts.

vii) Some holes need more equipment than others

viii) It is necessary to keep your gear clean to get anywhere

ix) Precautions need to be taken to prevent accidents

x) Skunk spent 2 1/2 hours in a short hole.

xi) Some holes require leaders

xii) Access fees are required for some holes.

xiii) Some holes are infected. (with weil diseases)

xiv) Some people spend all their life down one hole.

xv) Alternative entrances are often little used.

xvi) Sandy holes are a grind.

xvii) Oh dear 'ds Sumped!

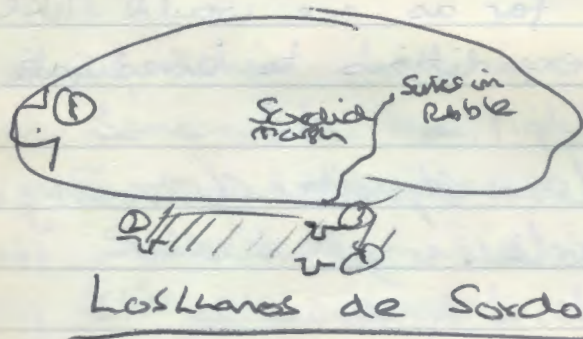
xviii) One can often end up with sores after a good

weekend.

- xix) From now on I fancy myself as a big shaft man... Quote - Jim.
- xx) Teamwork is essential.
- xxi) Tight holes often involve a lot of banging.
- xxii) Depth is not easily gained.
- xxiii) Some like them long, some like them deep.
- xxiv) Very few require swimming.
- xxv) Free diving is not advisable.
- xxvi) After many trips one gets to know every rock and cranny.
- xxviii) Holes often do not go as far as one would like.
- xxviii) Universities often arrange expeditions to investigate virgin holes.
- xxix) The entrances of some holes require clearing before entry can be made. *of Pessimists.*
- (xxx) After a trip on some holes, some time in a pub is required to recover.
- (xxxi) Some holes can only be entered safely at certain times.
- (xxxi) Every hole is different.
- xxxii) Usually, the further down some holes you push, the wetter they become.
- xxxiii) There is nothing worse than puncturing your rubber oversuit at the bottom of a wet hole.

Sat 11th August

The perambulations of Jim. Having developed a bad case of Caverns Elbas Jim decided to look for 'Pozos muy Grande' on the surface. Alas for such illusions!! A gentle amble up the lower slopes of P. La Rosa followed by a determined attack on the Alto Horrope of Ca. Salgado de Onis via the S.E. Slopes led to lunch above the 'Cue del Agua'. This contains Agua and no Cueva. A careful descent down the Piedras Quebradas led our cavernic explorer to Los Hornos del Sordo - which are very.



- ① - Very impressive Cave
Blue Cave - Feet dead
in shiv
- ② ③ ④ - see v. high
in penetrable (by one armed
cynical) entrance.

Heavy S.E. 'las Fuentes' was reached - which is a bit of a joke as there isn't even one Fuente. Beyond the Fuentes - about 1km 'is a shaft in the N side of the valley. Conversation with SIF later revealed that it is from an bottom at - 60m. Further shuffing our party began led to El Xira at the path home to Arica.

Saturday 11th August. Pozo del Zitu.

Pushing Party:- Skunk, Mark, John, and guest Francisco.

Time:- ~~11~~ 11 hours.

It was decided to invite one of the SIE down our new discovery in order to improve and cement relationships between OUC and the SIE.

After waiting 1/2 hour for mark to finish his marathon crap we set off. Francisco did not like the entrance rift and had ~~quite~~ ^{quite} a thrutch before getting through. However once past there he was ^{certainly not quiet!} found to be a good caver and very competent at SRT.

We quickly made our way down to virgin territory and Skunk banged a bolt in at the head of a small pitch and put a 5m ladder down. It was then necessary to free climb from the bottom of the ladder to the base of the pitch.

Another 50m of white calcite banded black limestone streamway led to the head of another pitch. About 12m. By traversing over the top an easier route down was found and also the old streamway carrying on. Mark and John investigated the old streamway and Skunk descended the pot on a handline.

The old streamway led to yet another pitch approx 20m and the active streamway also led to another pitch about 7m followed by yet another of unknown length.

We were unable to go any further with the tackle

available, ~~B~~ bolts were banged in at the head of both pitches. The first pitch was not really a headline pitch.

The strange thing is that ~~they are~~ the streamways old and new are going in different directions. Pozo del Xilita will need some determined pushing and surveying if it is going to be completed this year, and then that will only be the main drag.

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G.)

Saturday 11th August.

Surveying Party:- Colin, Simon, Kev.

Time:- 12 hours.

Surveyed as far as climb down into cross rift in fossilised streamway.

Mark bugged his fingers

Sunday 12th August.

Surveying Party:- Colin, Kev, Skunk. Time:- 11 hours.

Surveyed as far as short ladder pitch in streamway.

No problems except Colin's ^{floating} vlog dropped down a pitch necessitating descent, recovery - Kev.

Skunk (W.M.C.E.G.)

Sat 10th Aug (cont). Surveying Party - Colin - Simon + Kev

On second pitch Colin managed to drop the tape down the pitch before the reading was taken! At end of the

ropes, I went down the blind jet descended by Jim a few days ago with Colin's carbide since mine was duff. Descent was made with little trouble. Pat does with minor tinkle at the bottom leading left as you face rope from top of pitch. On way up, I caught the carbide on the rope. "Tinkle, crash, crash, crash, clump! Oh, shit!" Since I was near the top I pussed up, got Simon's light, (the last), then descended. I found the carbide but the jet had fallen out. With little hope of success I searched for it, and about 5 minutes later noticed it among pebbles about 5m below the carbide! Somewhat lucky. Si + Colin were a bit cool by the time I had got up thus there was little enthusiasm for survey. Not Skunk + Co who skinned no main drag. Decided that with limited time available we can only hope to survey main drag, noting meters ~~at~~ on the way.

-Rev.-

Sunday 12th August.

Simon, John :- Pushing.

A quick descent was made to the cascade through the flakes where light trouble occurred. Chaos followed as a pricker was lost among the tackle bags and N billion metres of rope had to be unpacked to find it.

On arriving at the handline pitch the 45m Marlow was rigged on Skunk's bolts. The second pitch and the third pitch were also rigged and a descent made

to a rifty climb down into a pool. Simon
climbed down using the Marlow as a lifeline
and found some excellent cave pearls and
another pitch. A rapid retreat was then made
with only one mishap:- One of John's rope
walker cases descended ^{accompanied by much cursing.} all the Edelweiss pitches
very ~~rapid~~ quickly. Time out: - 12-30 am
IS.

Monday 13th August
Skunk, John:- Pushing.

Pozo del Xile

The party got down to the climb down
into the pool reasonably quickly and Skunk
followed the stream down a small hole
to the right of the passage. Ten minutes
later he emerged looking like a drowned rat
proving that it wasn't a feasible way on.
Skunk and John each banged in a bolt
at the top of the cave pearl pitch
and John descended the 30m Marlow
to another pitch in a rift. It was then
decided to go out and so John prussicked
up the rope; losing another rope walker at the
top. Much cursing followed as John descended
again and grubbed around at the bottom.
The party got out finally at 11-30pm
IS.

Skippy, Jim, Mark, Dave and Mike took A1 to Arriadas

Tues. Aug. 14th

Xitu

Pushing party - Shippey, Simon & Kei.

Despite this being Skip's first time in Xitu we made rapid progress to the limit of exploration. 2 good natural belays used. ^{27m pitch} Skip descended first then Kei. As Simon was descending a huge rock flake peeled off from near the head of the pitch. This makes it easier to climb off. Downstream there is a 4m climb down with a difficult take off and very dubious rock on the right. Almost immediately there is another climb which is worse than the last. A policy of not trusting any jankholes is probably wise, but you don't get down (or up) that way.

A ~~few~~ couple of 2m or so climbs leads to a 5m marlar pitch which can just be climbed ^(take up) using a cog. After about 5 or 6m the stream drops over a clean washed slope. 2 belts. Main good, reserve pretty bad! In banging in the second bolt the screw thread in the driver shaved! Since I had messed up the reserve, I was closed to go down. Just enough rope. Pully about 20m. I looked downstream in narrow passage. Water drops into impenetrable life down to the left. Dry tube goes straight on then drops 4-5m to boulder pile. Stream in life is about 2/5m down to left. To right there is unstable boulder rubble with small black hole which may be a way on. Passage above boulders is fairly large but streamway is v-small and somewhat non-pulsing.

Finally smoothly: back to 25 pitch I took bluewater up. Then Si came up. Managed to drop carbide down! At top got rack tangled up in floating cam which took ages to shift. When Skip came up we managed to get Si's light working again. Rope walkers moving very slowly. At 3 marlar

pitch. So left cans tall to crab at bottom while Skip had to bring up. Skip took a while ascending. Hauled Bluewater to top of Pearl Pitch. At top of marlons another can of food + some sandwiches! From Above on I decided to go last to wet - nurse the unmanageable ropewalking systems.

So dropped sheath of ropewalker down last Bluewater pitch. Painfully slow progress at with Skip reverting to knots in frustration.

Unfortunately one of my fox leaps burst on the 25th and the other went on the very last step at the top of the last pitch! Pretty lucky. Out at 3am into rain. Lovely.

Kov.

Not half-joking. — It is necessary to have at least one person with sit-stand for people with ropewalkers to get out at all!

Wednesday 14th August.

Dave John Mike :- Surveying.

~~Another~~ The intrepid party surveyed down from the ladder pitch to the bottom of cave pearly pitch uneventfully finishing at about 8 pm. "Oh it's only 4 hours out from here" quoted John. In the end it took about 6 hours accompanied by "Bloody useless Bluewater" "These pitches are disgustingly rigged" "F...ing" rope walker" and noises ranging from abortions

Colin and Mark took Jim to Clanes

(98)

without general anaesthetic to pigs being slaughtered by Mike. The party emerged at ~ 2 o'clock and had Skunk's Faberda before going to bed.

15th August

O.U.C.C. More quotations (besides the ones above) heard yesterday

Dave "Where's the bloody rope?"

John "I hold my own rope: - I'm a self made man"

Simon - "I think it needs picking." ZS

Everybody took day off. John (down & up) and Mark (up and down) did some shepding

Aviso Memorandum

The reason that Mike and I and to some extent Al have not figured prominently in the ~~the~~ preceding pages is that we have been doing surface work at Aviso. This started on Monday 6th when we travelled up to Aviso after the great discussion of Sunday night. Immediately Al took us on a grand tour of the area covered by his celebrated map. This included up to a dozen possible paths, 50 or 60 survey points and various spotty paths all in the period of 2 hours. These we were supposed to commit to our photographic memories and revisit the following day to investigate further, whilst Al toddled off to the Lakes.

The following 2 days were spent in visiting

9 pots pointed out by Al, making rough notes on their possible carving potential and generally worked out if anything was worth further visits. Summary of this is elsewhere. We took 4 hours to find 19/5!

On Thursday we investigated two promising pots to as much as our limited tackle would allow. These were 19, the sawtooth cave and 2, the (ex-) cheese cave. Later in the day further groups came up from the lakes and we conducted them around the region.

On Friday we had a short trip to sheeping Bluewater to Jim and Shanks down Xita, then we returned to the lakes and shepherded / fastened / shopped until Monday evening when we returned to Avic.

Dave

Laeje - Good Map

Expedition caving - Excuses for not going - To be added to!

Person.	Excuse.	Marks out of 10.
Mark	'I can't get my ring off my finger.'	
Mike	'I went caving yesterday..... be fair!'	
Dave.	'My back is sunburnt!'	
Numerous.	'No carbide!'	Poor.
Skipper.	'I've got the squits!'	
John.	'I've got no money.'	
Colin.	'I've got to make a phone call sometime this week.'	
Pessimists	'No, not surveying again!'	
Pushing parties	- But I've only just gone to bed!	
Ropewalkers	- "Kev. refuses to hold the rope and collect our ropewalkers from the bottom of pitches" (Grouse! Grouse!)	Site-Stand Rules OK.
	<u>Wednesday</u> <u>Aug. 15th</u>	

Persa start rain in the morning made Si, Kev & Skipper change their minds about a plus trip to Xitu. We also only wake at 12-00am

Thursday August 16th

Today it took me 3½ hrs to get from Los Lagos to top of Tultayo and then to Refugio. What a hero. Took a few things back in a day-pack. I didn't eat too much of their prepared med. It was only lukewarm. I thought 3 bottles full a bit much for me alone, anyway. Threw the rest away.

Mark

Thursday 16th August

Okay everybody, the day you've all been waiting for! The last day of caring in Spain! Only one catch; the trip involves surveying, detackling and photographing much or all of the 12 pitches ~~and~~ and umpteen metres of passage of Xitua!

First group; Dave Colin and Shunk got up at 7:30am and after a few deep breathes and a bit of heaving about the bush made a reasonably easy entry to Xitua at 10am. We made quick progress down to the bottom of Pearl Pitch where our task of surveying was to begin. Colin went down the next pitch first and after a bit of a delay due to stinking socks, readings were taken. Shunk went down next but stopped half way, above a deep cut in the rope. This had been the result of one abseil post and abrasive point only! Colin had to wait while Shunk hurriedly prised back up and Dave went up Pearl Pitch to catch a spare length of Bluewater. The Manton was removed and the pitch rigged. Surveying was resumed after a delay of approximately 1 1/2 hours.

We continued downwards, occasionally in doubt as to whether we were following the path as pushed by Tuesday's expedition. The 'Chessy' climb

were eventually reached. On the lowest of these — shock, however! Dave fell! (Haven't we heard that before somewhere?) Fortunately, considering the 17 pitches above us, not very low. He sustained only a bruised hip and a bashed knee and ~~so~~ so decided to take a rest from surveying for a while. Colin and Shunk moved quickly down to the previous limit of exploration (re Kev 14th August), pushed a little further and then salvaged back to the stricken cave. By this time the stricken cave had recovered somewhat and so, work completed and future possibilities studied, the I started the arduous task of detackling. We made our way slowly back to the end of the 'Meanders' and met Mike and John there at 10pm. Escorted at 3am onward. Survey puts depth at 353m; beats ~~anything~~ in England!

Third Group: John & Mike, after much deliberation, ^(by Kev & Simon) decided that the first group would take 8 hours to reach the top of the Marlow pitches, where it had been arranged that they would meet the intrepid early party. J & M therefore entered Xill at 4.30 pm and duly arrived at top of said Marlow at 6 pm.

Precisely four hours and twenty-five minutes

Later, the surveyors actually gained the top of the Marlow and made a fairly rapid exit from the cave, leaving John & Mike to remove two lugs of soldered Terylene rope. The outward journey, although cursed by stinking sulphur caused by high water levels causing down the top few pitches, was not eventful, but I did get lost on emerging from the cave, and took nearly an hour to find the helipad. A rather enjoyable trip, in all. Mike.

What about the swearing & cursing??

2nd Party - ~~Photographic & De-tackling.~~
Simon, Kev & Skippy

There was some reluctance to enter the cave because despite our calculations we expected that we would have to wait for the other parties. Entered cave at about 14-30. Uneventful descent except skip dropped his 8 into the narrow rift below the traverse onto the 70' sidewalls. This was heavily rebuked by Kev. (cheers!) Photos were taken v. slowly so waste time & resulted in everyone getting cold. More waiting and many bulbs used in shots in the dry upper series at base of B/W started to worry a bit since by about 5-00 pm the others had not appeared.

Effectively made contact after 10-00. Sent Dave & Co
 out, then Mike + John. I ended up abackling since
 the no-stand system did not need anyone to hold the
 rope! On the first B/W Skip dropped his floating
 clog ascender. With incredible luck to hit the rope
 I was holding and bounced into my trap. Thus it
 missed a chance of 20m or 37/5 in blind spots!!
 On the next pitch up I retrieved Skip's elastic
 cord which he didn't realise he had dropped!

Apart from these incidents the detaching went quite
 smoothly. The diff was a sad with all the gear.

Despite the "rather Enjoyable Trip" certain people
 were not seen returning to the pit to help Skip & I
 with our 2 bags, badders, & ~~ammunition~~ cases & 2 prussik
 bags.

Out by about 6-00 am for dinner / breakfast to
 visit + wind. Part of us left Mike at entrance as he
 insisted on making a neat job of coiling the entrance
 ladder.

Bye-bye Xitu. The photos had better be good!

← Ken.

Friday 17th August

Everyone tramped down to Los Lagos with gear. John and Skippy made the trip twice (super-heroes!)* and all the stuff was brought down by 8:00pm.

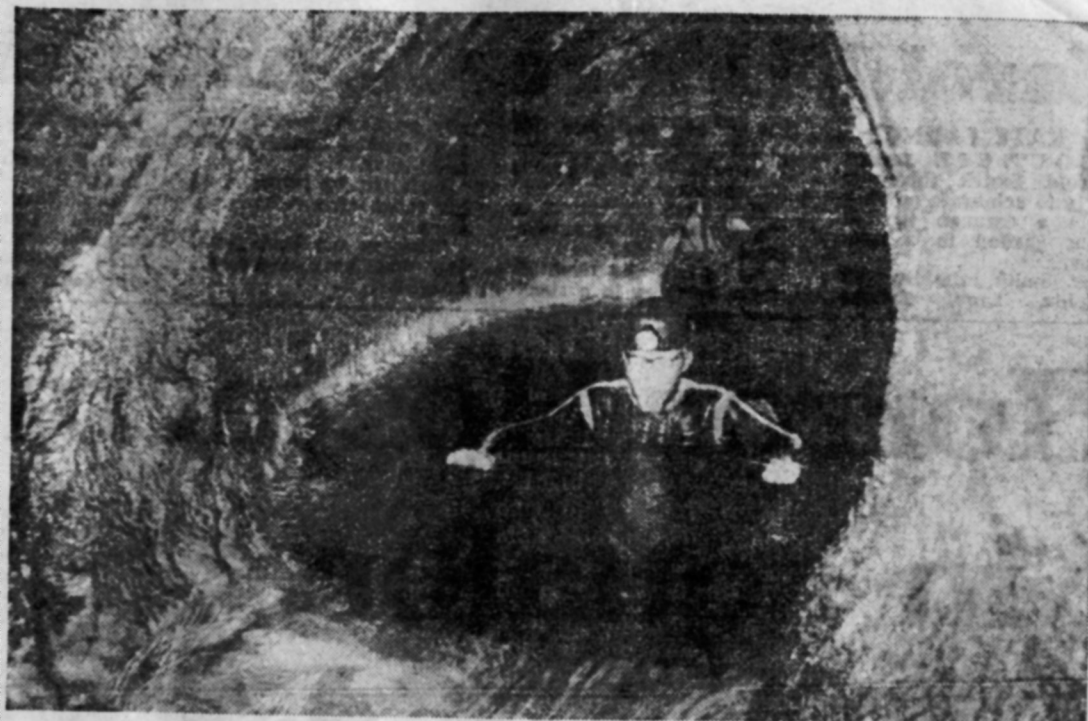
* Meeting an Irish Spaniard who used to live in Blackpool on the way

Tues 21st Aug: Colin + Martin - writing & debugging survey programme.
Dave, Mark, John, Mike → homes.

YAD 2839AD BHT TAW



COLOURFULLY described as Shelob's Lair, this cavern is also in the Cueva La Boriza.



UP TO HIS NECK in it . . . a member of a previous expedition swims through a "sump" — a deep underground pool — in the Boriza cave system.



A TYPICAL cave entrance in the limestone country of northern Spain

Hell hole is heaven for Colin

by ROLAND SMITH

COLIN NICHOLLS is going to Spain for his holiday this year, but he won't see much of the sun.

While the seething thousands will be flocking lemming-like to the sea, Colin will probably be inching his way along a water-filled passage 900 feet below the Cantabrian Mountains in the heart of Basque country.

For 24-year-old Colin, whose parents live in Yardley, is a member of the Oxford University Cave Club's 1979 expedition, and pot-holing is his idea of heaven.

Slightly mad

Of all the "adventure" sports, caving is perhaps the most difficult for outsiders to understand. Recent television films have conveyed some of the mystery and attraction of delving into the bowels of the earth, but pot-holers are still regarded with something like suspicion by ordinary mortals.

It is an attitude that slightly offends Colin and other cavers, especially now that mountaineering and climbing has been largely accepted by the public.

"Most people regard climbers as some sort of super-heroes, boldly going where no man has gone before," he told me in the common room of Brasenose College, where his is studying for a Ph.D. in low temperature physics.

"Pot-holing is still regarded by most people as slightly mad and a bit grubby and dirty compared with climbing.

"But really, there is just as much adventure and excitement in our sport — it's just that it hasn't got the glamorous, outdoor image."

Not that the image is going to worry Colin and his fellow 14 team members on their personal quest to "explore new worlds."

The aim of the expedition is to find new caves in the Picos de Europa and Picos de Cornion areas on northern Spain's Costa Verde. "It means the green coast — a comment on the local rainfall," explained Colin.

The OUCC has made this area of limestone hills its own special preserve, and this year's trip is just the latest in a series which

the club has undertaken in the last ten years.

"We have already discovered a cave 900 feet deep in the Picos de Cornion, which compares with the deepest in Britain at about 600 feet," he said.

"But what we hope to do this year is to find potholes on the 4,000-foot summits of the mountains and hopefully follow them through to where the rivers emerge.

"This will involve a high level camp at around 3,000 feet, within a short walk of permanent snow," said Colin.

Living off the land

In British terms, that is equivalent to finding a pothole on the summit of Ben Nevis, and following it through to Fort William!

Among the other objectives of the six-week expedition is to revisit a cave found last year but not explored, 40 feet up a cliff face with a stream issuing from it. "We will probably have to rope down to the entrance from above," said Colin.

Another group will be revisiting a cave near the coast where a biological survey was started last

year. Biologists will be looking at the various bugs and animal life of the cave to note any ecological changes since their last visit.

Colin is the tackle master for the expedition, and that involves the considerable logistical problems of organising and shipping around 3,200 feet of climbing rope, 200 feet of ladders, and several tons of other climbing equipment.

The expedition will use carbide lamps for their descents, because there is no electricity at their base camp high up in the hills.

"We will be living off the land for most of the time," says Colin. "We rely very much on the hospitality and friendship of the local people both for our food and to tell us where the caves are."

"We've already learned a lot from the local shepherds, who are real characters themselves," said Colin. "They walk around with large umbrellas and carry their belongings in old suitcases."

Previous expeditions have had no political trouble with the Basques, who are still pressing for independence from the rest of Spain.

As Colin says: "We reckon we are safer living among them than anywhere else. After all, they won't bomb their own people will they?"

So if you're going to Spain for your holiday this year, spare a thought for Colin and his colleagues . . . down below.

Hidden world yields its secrets



THE RAIN in Spain, to misquote Henry Higgins, goes mostly down the drain.

And in the harsh, limestone region of the Cantabrian Mountains on the north coast, the "drains" are natural pot holes which riddle the surface and honeycombe the rock like a huge Gruyere cheese.

Beneath that rugged surface which rises to snow-covered heights of over 8,500 feet, another magical world exists.

It is a world created over countless aeons by the subtly powerful action of water on rock. It is the world of the caver.

Birmingham cavers Colin Nicholls, Chris Ankcorn and Mick Clarke, were members of the Oxford University Cave Club's 1979 expedition to northern Spain which recently returned to England.

Two previously unknown major cave systems were discovered, explored and surveyed

by

ROLAND SMITH

during the six-week expedition, and much valuable knowledge of the subterranean splendours of underground Spain was gained.

The major "find" of the trip was the 1,600-foot deep Pozu de Xitu, which involved the exploration of 3,000 feet of underground passageways and has the potential to reveal much more.

Colin, who comes from Yardley and is currently studying for a Ph.D. at Brasenose College, explained: "In one of the larger chambers in this system there was a rift in the floor.

"We dropped a stone down and it took eight seconds to reach the bottom. This indicates there is much more to explore here."

Pozu de Xitu was largely explored by Colin, Chris, also from Yardley, and Mick whose home is in Erdington.

Mick and Colin reached the farthest point. On the last trip, it took 19 hours below ground to clear the cave of equipment and take the final photographs.

The cave, the entrance to which was ironically discovered only 20 yards off the main path from the expedition's high level camp at 5,500 feet, is the fourth deepest yet found in this part of Spain.

This compares with the 600-foot Gaping Ghyll pot in Yorkshire.

Xitu is what cavers call an "active" cave. That means it is still being formed by water which percolates constantly through it.

Ropes were required almost from the cave entrance — a narrow slit in the rock — as the first "pitch" dropped something like 600 feet in the first 50 yards.

Surprise

The other important new cave discovered by the party was given the significant name of Pessimisto Pozu.

"Its entrance, a tiny crevice in the rock about a foot across, was found less than 15 minutes walk from the main camp, and no one expected it to lead to much," explained Colin.

The descriptive names given to the various pitches or sections of the cave give some indication of the difficulties encountered.

First there was the Tinkle, named after the falling stalactites, then Surprises I, II and III, the Bombardier (after some injudicious "bombing" by Colin), Geriatric Squeeze, and Limbo Passage.

Pessimisto turned out to be 630 feet deep.

In Borneo

Martin Laverty, a geomorphologist and leader of the party, rated the expedition, which cost around £2,500, as the best in the history of OUCC — "especially when you consider that only two members had been to this part of Spain before."

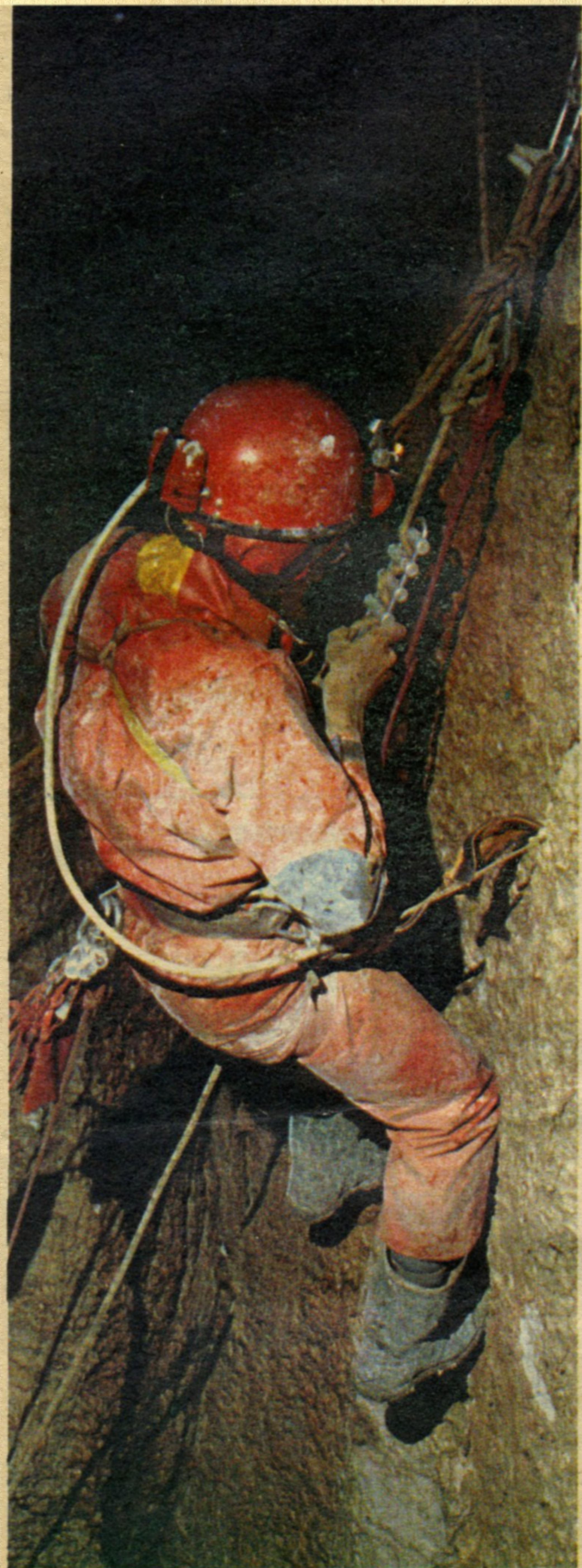
Now he's off on another to the even more formidable caverns of Borneo, while Colin, Chris and Mick are looking forward to the delights of such rendezvous as Black Shiver Pot beneath Ingleborough in Yorkshire.

The Pessimisto Pozu yields up its secrets...

TOP: Floodlights show in dramatic detail the major cavern discovered by the man from Birmingham.

LEFT: Colin Nicholls, from Yardley, Birmingham, needs all his caving skill to scale a particularly difficult pitch.

RIGHT: This massive stalagmitic column, formed by the joining of a stalagmite, growing up from the floor, and a stalactite, growing down from the roof, was used as a belay point for a 150 foot pitch in Pessimisto.



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Into the black depths



Potholer John explores new caves

PILLING potholer John Singleton was with an Oxford University caving party which plumbed new depths in previously unexplored caves in Spain.

He has told of the gruelling preparations for the expedition in his first "Evening Gazette" article. Today, he talks about the expedition itself . . .

John, who has lived in Pilling all his life attended Pilling Church of England Primary School and Fleetwood Grammar School before studying physics at St John's College, Oxford.

IT was with some trepidation that I boarded the Plymouth-Santander ferry on a cloudy June morning, full of doubts as to whether my single-rope technique system would stand up to six week's intensive caving.

The sea journey passed quickly and after a few hours drive through the sprawling dingy industrial towns of Northern Spain, the expedition's ex-army Land-Rover, minibus and car arrived at Los Lagos, our lakeside campsite 3,500ft above sea level. Los Lagos is in a range of mountains called the Picos de Europa which rise to around 8,000 feet and are among the most barren and inhospitable peaks in Spain.

After setting up camp we got down to the expedition's first task of surveying a large cave about a mile to the north, inspected only briefly by the expedition in 1976.

Cave surveying is not a pleasant job. It involves three people, one to hold the tape and a carbide lamp which acts as a survey station, another to sight up the lamp through an accurate compass and clinometer and a third who records the readings and sketches the passages.

My job was to use the compass, which often meant lying up to the neck in ice-cold water in some tiny uncomfortable hole for several minutes while the tape man got into a new position and then trying not to set my hair on fire with my carbide lamp as I illuminated the scale on the instruments. After two weeks of eight or 10-hour surveying trips I was feeling quite demoralised.

One of our objectives mentioned in my previous "Evening Gazette" article was to explore "El Hoyo le Madre," literally the mouth of mother, a cave high up a cliff face from which a large river issues.

Our proposed abseil from the top of the cliff into the entrance turned out to be 700ft long, which would have been a waste of two of our longer ropes. In the event, we climbed about 100ft up to the cave from the bottom of the cliff with the aid of several ladders.

On entering the cave, besides finding a river 8ft deep by 8ft wide, we found that French cavers had been there already. By the thousands of yards of cotton thread they had left around, they hadn't seemed too sure of their way out either! All our own attempts to explore the many passages upstream ended in impassable sumps. Some explosive might soon alter that but

the Spanish Authorities did not seem too keen.

An occasional scouting trip made a pleasant change from the horrors of surveying, as it gave me the chance to walk the rugged crags and plateaux of the range, stopping for the occasional word with solitary shepherd and his small flock of goats and sheep.

I found quite a few cave entrances during such trips but the first one I found sticks in my mind as it contained 30 or 40 cheeses left to mature by a shepherd. At first we could not work out what the overpowering smell was.

As well as discovering new passages and entrances in partially explored caves we found several new caves. However, time only allowed us to explore two of these thoroughly.

The first of these started as a 6in diameter hole in limestone pavement directly above 70ft shaft. A rope was dropped down

and the entrance enlarged to a size that a pygmy could easily get through (must keep it sporting, you know). On one occasion in my squirmings to get in while attached to the rope, I set fire to all the grass around the entrance with my carbide lamp. All my hair singed again!

The cave below proved to be very arduous and contained several pitches and tight squeezes full of jagged rocks and stalagmites. One of these has such a devastating effect on wet-suits that it was named "Gillette Crawl."

At the bottom, five hours in and 700ft down was "Mud Palace," a magnificent mud-floored chamber almost 200ft high. Our final trip lasted 18 hours, showing what a nasty and arduous cave it was. No wonder we called it "Pessimist's Pot."

Our other big discovery was Pozo de la Xitu whose entrance was at 5,500ft in the mountains. This cave contains almost three miles of stream passages at various levels and is 1,150 deep as far as we have explored it. Here a major subterranean river runs in passages varying from 50 to 200ft high and possibly emerges in the Cares Gorge nearly 4,000ft below the entrance.

One thing which Pozo de la Xitu emphasised was the danger of flash flooding. One day our usual exploratory group of three was emerging after a day's work of driving in rock bolts and hanging rope on the lower pitches. I was going out first and had just reached the top of the last rope pitch. Suddenly there was a tremendous roaring noise from the tight entrance rift some distance above me.

My first thoughts were that the roof was falling in the rift and that we were trapped.



These ponderings were rudely interrupted by the entrance of a 2ft high wall of water which promptly put out my carbide lamp, leaving me in darkness. After five minutes of fumbling with flints and blowing on hands while standing in ankle-deep rushing water, I relit my lamp to be greeted by the sight of my friend looking like a drowned rat emerging from the previous pitch which was now a waterfall.

Luckily we were close to the surface as it would have been a very unpleasant, if not dangerous, business climbing up all 17 pitches in such water apart from swimming the streamway which appears to flood to a depth of around 10ft.

After six weeks of every day excitement of some sort (for example on Friday, July 13 two enormous boulders narrowly missed me) my return to peaceful Pilling seemed quite a relief. Still, the dramatic majesty of the peaks and the enormous depth and challenge of the pot holes of the Picos de Uropa call strongly to my sense of adventure and I will be one of the first to volunteer for next year's expedition.



A cave deep under the peaks of the Spanish mountains where the expedition took place.