

00 Cave Club

1984 Eryda

Ariz Log

Oxford

University

Cave Club

La Verdelluenga 1984

Ario Log Book

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Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July

Dave and Ukey set out for 12/5 without gear as due to mist it was thought that the entrance might be difficult to find. This turned out to be true and the entrance remained undiscovered until 1-30 pm when it was found only after much searching and consultation of maps. This meant that the cave wasn't descended until about 2-30. A 15m entrance ladder was rigged from a cherry natural belay and descended. The second ladder pitch was rigged using the better of two rotten bolts. This ladder pitch needs a line, a ~~rope~~ tackle, as Ukey found out on descending it. The squeeze above the second drop is reached by descending down two short climbs in the rift from the bottom of the ladder. The squeeze was gauged and then looked possible. So two bolts were hammered in and a 20m rope hung down the pitch to the 1st visible ledge. Then Ukey squeezed her way down, and managed to get well and truly stuck. Four hours later and 4 inches removed from the right hand wall at the top and Ukey made a second attempt. No success. After a further hammering a another attempt at the squeeze the cave was left for the day. On arrival at Arica we were greeted by

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a starving <sup>89</sup> Graham & Silvia who had just spent 3 days <sup>at</sup> Ceres Lodge (on 1 day food) Fortunately the inestimable Fred had brought us some food during the day (we had been resigned to surviving on 2 tins of pilchard) So we had pilchard vindetta and beer at Arip

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Up early to go caving unfortunately breakfast was locked in the Refugio which didn't open until 10 o'clock. So didn't get below ground before 11 o'clock. Hammered away at the squeeze for hours with little effect Both of us made attempts at passing the squeeze, unsuccessfully, but not much more to do. We gave up at 5-30 due to boredom

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July

Dave and Steve arrived at Arip at 8-45 PM, had a look at the entrance and decided to postpone my descent until next morning

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July Stephen G., Dave H.

Reached 12/5 about 1100. I went on to hammer at the rift, while Dave rigged a rope on the second pitch. I managed to trim back some rock from the fissure, but eventually the hammerable fracture lines had all been bashed and we had to start on the fresh rock (wonderful, coarsely crystalline stuff, dammit!). Taking it in turns to bash away with just a short break to climb around the higher levels of the entrance series (where there are several formations, impressive by Picos standards), we eventually enlarged the rift sufficiently for Dave (the thinner member) to insert himself.

With some forcing, he managed to get past the tight point of the rift. However, since he would not have been able to reverse the manoeuvre had he proceeded any further, he came out to allow us to hammer away some more rock. The rift is now passable, though, at the moment, returning might be something of an epic. Another day's hammering might sort things out. By the way, the second

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pitch is 10-12 m rather than the 15 m given in Proc. O.U.C.C. 10, p. 28. Left the cave about 1845 due to fear of onset of terminal arthritis in hammering hand.

Sunday 22nd July

Ion + Sean

After walking up from Base Camp, the thin man beam finally arrived at 12/5. This heroic team comprised Sean and the not-so thin Ian. After a slight delay in finding the cave, we arrived at 'the crack'. It definitely looked feasible so I (Ian) re-rigged the squeeze from the flowstone above using a very long wire, so the rope extended right out of the squeeze and up the rib. We spent a minimal amount of

time hammering, and then Sean prepared for the descent. He got down with no trouble, using cord tied round his central railon to raise his descender 3' to well away from his body. He then continued down the main pitch, contriving a well placed flake belay backed up by one of the squeeze bolts (we found a use for them in the end!) I waited at the head of the crack, to assist Sean with any problems he might have on the return. Sean continues the tale...

With great interest in the cave (well, I might have to spend the rest of my life there!) I went down the

pitch I had rigged. This is circular in plan with a projecting slice :



- no, not a

Paceman. at the bottom of this flat sided shaft which is about 40m depth, there is a level debris-covered floor. On the far side a small hole leads, by a couple of short climbs, down to a small chamber. all this time Ian was sitting at the crack feeling jealous.

There are two ways on at this point. One gets too tight and bouldery. The other descends via a mass of floustone pretties down a cylindrical shaft and evidently continues.

The shaft (40m) I named The Oasthouse and the chamber beyond Eileen's Waiting Room. (Explanations on application!)

I pushed back up to the crack to make my escape bid. I passed my helmet and generator through, then tried to proceed, only to have my chest ascender jam - then it wouldn't unclip; and so I was stuck. at this point I nearly panicked - claustrophobia sets in, goodbye mummy ... !!

Then I got my chest ascender undone and retreated. Escape bid 2. This involved the chest ascender being on an extended cord somewhere

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above my head. This worked perfectly and I got out with no trouble at all!

Then the (fractionally) larger Ian had a go. After a couple of fitting sessions in the hole, and alterations to it with the hammer, he succeeded in wiggling through. Then we both set about it with hammers.

Ian tried to climb out with a similar system of ascenders to me. After a lot of struggling and gesturing he got his head and shoulders through. The effect was rather like seeing a grown man trying to climb out of a milkbottle. He sounded much calmer than I was - huh! Confidence prevails so he escapes. We live to cave another day and so back to the horrible, Plydden Ario camp.

We then had a good, though overlarge meal for 4! due to Sean's inaccurate measurements we eventually managed it all, split  $2\frac{1}{2} / \frac{1}{2}$ . Cans troubled us during the meal. Probably the ones that damaged the Gear tent. We hid the fresh food in an inaccessible rock.

PS The Ario Max/Min thermometer appears to



have been stolen. It was not in its previous spot and its shelter has been demolished. Hence no readings. We made substantial repairs to the gear tent, by the way.

Monday 23rd July

Ian + Sean again

Today we set out to do some proper pushing in 12/5. We both passed the squeeze, without too much trouble, and reached the bottom of the Oasthouse. Ian had a look round the bits I had seen yesterday and then rigged a line down the short pitch I had stopped at. The amount of interesting formations increased, until at the bottom we were in a chamber filled with flintstone fragments and with an entire wall of layered gravel deposits. Via some very broken rock chinks and squeery fits we found the tops of three shafts (all apparently linked). At this point Ian and I were feeling rather tired and apathetic for some reason, so we ate our food. Ian rigged the easiest pitch on a dubious belay, and this gave a superb hang.

At the bottom of this pitch the cave started to open up. The way on was by a classic vadose canyon, which gradually

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acquired a small stream. We kept following this, apparently vanishing by the second. After a few tricky climbs and small waterfalls we came to a large chamber at about 4m up. We thought that was it, as we were out of rigging gear, but I (Sean) found a way down (Due to rampant exploration fever!). The streamway continued through a varied selection of passages until eventually, time, and a very tricky climb forced us back.

The way out was difficult in places (it is easier to climb down than up!) but straightforward. The same was true for the complicated procedure needed to get up through the squeeze. (This entails me climbing through it in the dark, then having my helmet sent up) We emerged in the mist having had, we felt, a very successful pushing trip.

Total Time out from where we got to: 18:05 → 20:42  
(2 hrs 37 mins) Est depth below 'Crack' at least 100m

Horizontal passage ~ 200m. The winding nature of the passage, jagged side, pools etc will make surveying a long job.

A really enjoyable trip.


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Tuesday 24th July. Sam  
left for Base camp.

Nicola had beaten him by an hour from  
the following excuses: thick cloud, long (safer in mist) way round, bad  
start of day, moved down by Hor. Riley's school of physical fitness.  
He is now going to care today - bad knees being the ~~main~~  
issue. Spent hour out + packed for the morning, leisurely large meal. Fire  
ready for night (~ 20.20). Managed knees etc.

WED. 25 JULY.

Up early at 07-15. Breakfast. Nicola goes off to take met. readings. Nicola  
comes back. We both go to take met. readings, find rain gauge but NOT  
thermometer. Since we are unlikely to find it tomorrow someone else must take the  
readings or come + show us where it is. So must for early start. Leave for  
care at 10.30!

Booted again. Spent 50 mins looking for 12/5, both of us were certain it  
was by the  signpost (it isn't). Felt depressed so went back to camp  
for lunch + hot tea to prepare us for nega epic ahead. .... its going to be  
one of those days!

You wassocks! <sup>find something?</sup> Mike & I have gone to try to find  
the thermometer & if we do we will reset it & leave  
note there to say so, but not bother taking readings  
as it is now 20.55 Weds.

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Still WEDS. 25 July. Philip + Nicola?

Got underground at 14.20, out at 00.50. WHAT A FASCINATING CAVE! Sean + Ian mentioned various things about it but not what a geological exoticism it is! Stalagmites 4" in diameter, in gravel, mud layers on top, thin flowstone. Evident signs of re-dissolving flowstone, clear traces of many <sup>different</sup> layers at the bottom, GREEN stalagmites + flowstone (copper greenish). They weren't bullet hitting about the squeeze things.

We rigged a ladder (appalling!) on Sean's chest down streamway, bypassing the 4m drop from window into chamber that we found. Also rigged rope on rubble slope + 5m drop. Then we found what could be a cairn but couldn't see how the others could have got there without rigging it. Left tackle bag with bobby wires & 15m rope at top of that slope. Then lots + lots of canyon at streamway in vadose canyons blocked with rubble + flowstone, always a way through at stream level. Multiple light fixtures so we went out leaving tackle bag with 70m (8mm) rope + 40m rope in but reminiscent of a spiky lost Johns for roof traverse. P. took 2 goes at getting out of squeeze and frightened himself (took off harness), N. got out first try.

Got a little bit lost on way back in starlight... and so to bed.

Lots of gear down the cave as well as what we brought.

Thoughts about caves geological interest re-echoed by Nicola... who spent much of the trip oggling at green rock beds as well as the yellow ones.