

XITU 2013

Logbook #2

//AURORA

EL PURITAN

IAN + EASHA

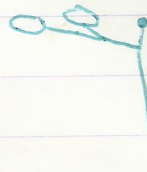
(P1) 10m - from
FLAT IRON



(P2) 10m



(P3) 10m - INTO THE
TURD SANCTUARY



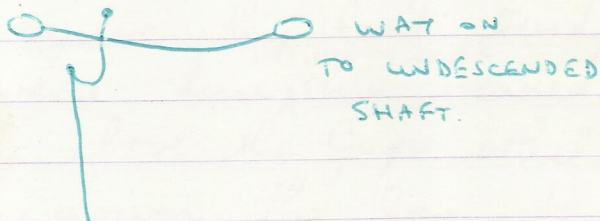
(P4) 5m



BYPASSES

(P1) + (P2)

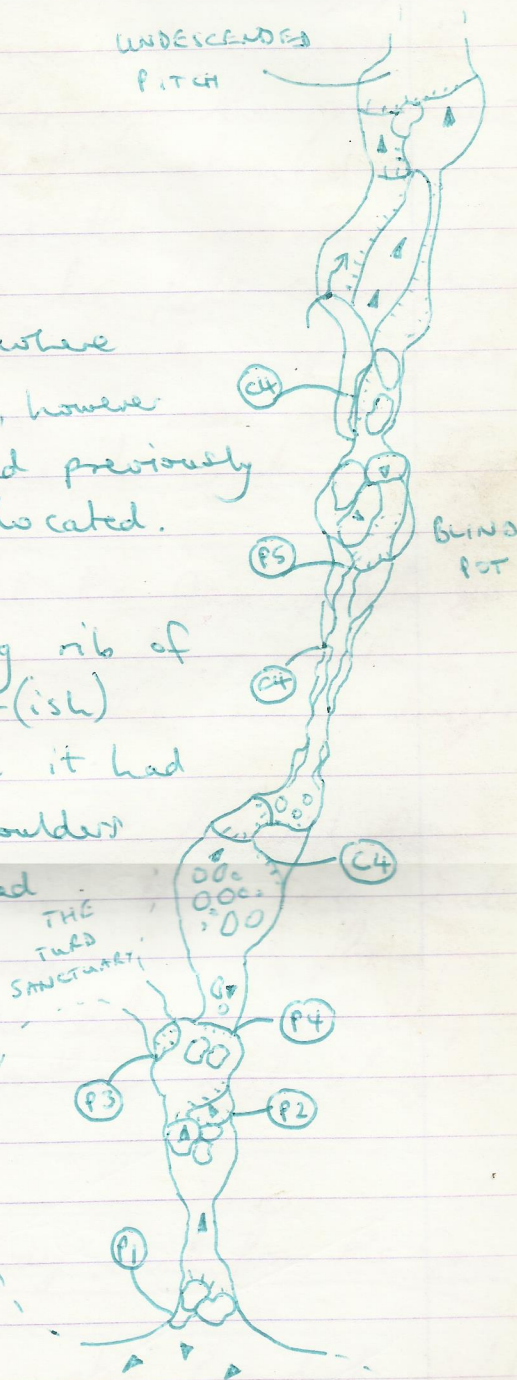
(PS) 15m - BLIND POT



UNDESCENDED
PITCH

Difficult to ascertain exactly where previous explorers have got to, however the blind pot had been dropped previously as two old spit bolts were located.

The chamber with a descending rib of rock after a short, but tight(ish) rope climb, did not look like it had been entered. Unfortunately boulders dropped down the undescended pitch could be heard in camp! Extreme care should be taken along the whole length of the El Puritan lead as various holes probably link into the main route below.



The lead probably connects with the main route at some point, but should be pushed to completion. The passage carries a good draft but it may just be circulating air from Flat Iron.

17 July 2013

here: Exploration from the Gap to mid way Teresa series
(descriptions below to be read as such)

to: Sandy and Avelina

The Gap lead

We ascended the rope directly above the Gap to explore this lead. Sandy traversed around the traverse line ^{+down on rope} and headed further up the passage high above the Gap whilst Avelina abseiled some way down the Gap to assess the situation from below. Sandy went as far as he felt comfortable and Avelina and Sandy were still in line of sight. With our lights on mass, we could not see a continuation and we had no rope to continue the traverse line.

A better option might be to abseil the Gap pitch, go to the other side of the chamber and approach / explore from the bottom of the chamber with a bright light!

Whilst we were up the rope, we ~~went~~ followed the route back towards the Teresa series. There is an inlet which is the same as the one people drink from at the top of the Gap. This looked like a possible, but wet climb and may be worth a look if you don't mind getting a soaking!

Hole in Floor of passage a little way back from the Gap

A 2m climb down with a little water. Crawl to right hand side on far wall which pops you out half way down the pitch of the Gap where Avelina had a chat

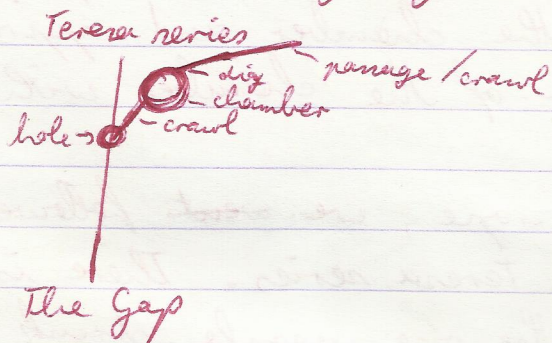
with Jack who was lounging on the rope.

Climbs to left of passage between the Gap and Servicio
Sandy climbed up at several places to check for leads. Was pretty loose and seemed untouched, but he did not find anything that provided him with much excitement! There was one point where he climbed back over the passage below up a muddy, loose climb, but found nothing.

* Hole below Servicio (The U-bend)

Survey

Felicia climbed down past the old carbide drum and old Sardine tins in the hole in the floor directly below the pitch at Servicio. This spiralled downwards and then headed off in a direction that felt like it was going in this kind of direction:



Once down the climb, a downward sloping crawl led past some loose conglomerates that I had to crumble off the wall to get past into a chamber of maybe 2m x 2m. To the bottom right of the chamber there was a crawl sized passage with an initial obstacle that would need to be broken up. A big hammer and a strapping young man might do it!

As it is very close to the main passage, it may at

Series, continue straight on into rift. Climb up into it. Follow it + feel the howling draft. Climb up slightly again. It's quite tight + you may choose to remove metal work, although I didn't. It snakes around for a further 10 m or so over very bizarre, foamy formations. They are very white, fluffy and a bit like marshmallow/v. fluffy snow. Some is now destroyed as we crawled over it!

You pop out into a 10-15 m high rift. To your right is solid floor and a possibility of climbing up higher. In the floor immediately on entering is a 7/8 m pitch which we did not/could not descend with a little running water. No obvious way on visible from the top, but may be worth descending to check.

To the left on entering the chamber/rift, the passage continued large enough for maybe 10 m and became v. narrow. It looked wider above, but would need to be climbed to check.

Would be good to get this surveyed!

Check
crawl
with
draft

On exiting the new rift (Fvelina's bit) and returning to the main junction, there is a Sandy/muddy crawl just off the main junction.

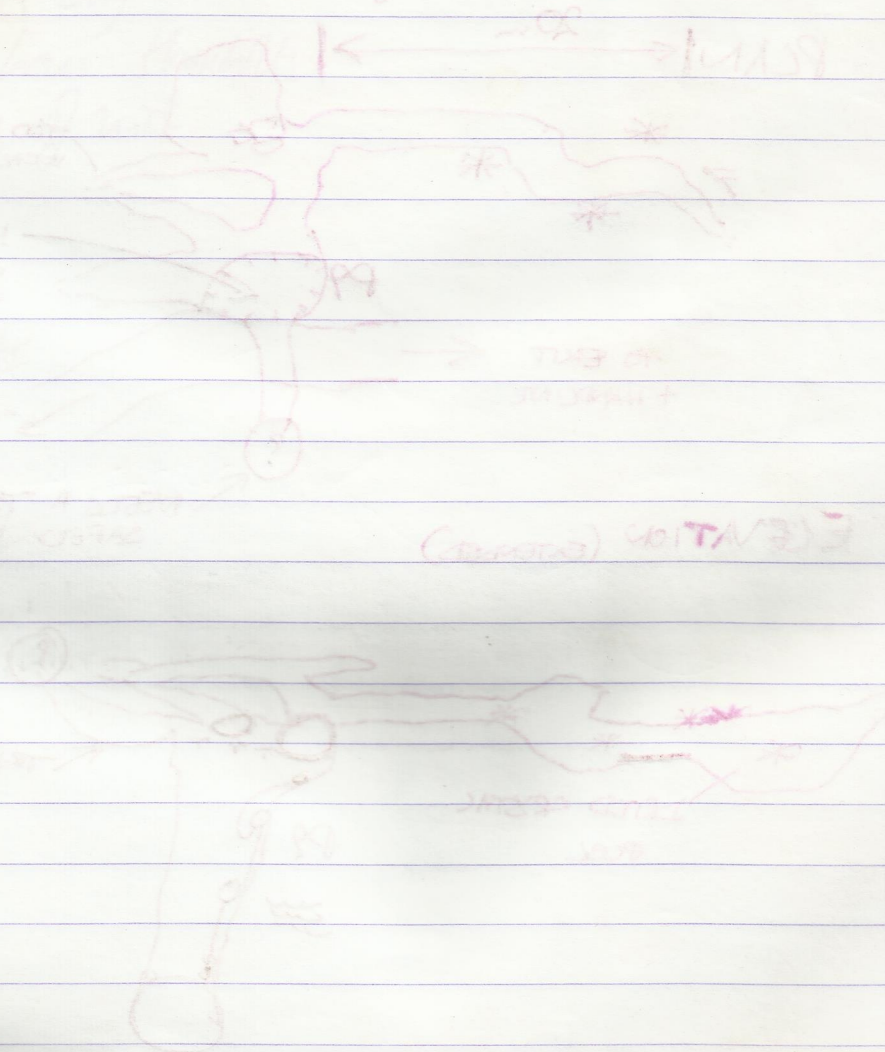
This has a big draft. Easy crawl, but has a pool in it. We did not enter as Sandy was getting hungry!

Snowcastle

Sandy didn't let me check any more holes as he

wanted to find Snowcastle and wanted food.
We climbed up a sloping, slippery climb to
the right of the sandy chamber after the ~~way~~
first & sandy crawl when exiting the cave.
This matches the survey and descriptions and also
looked fairly worn.

Once the slope was climbed, we traversed over
a big bolder over the passage below and continued
climbing up and up, through a small hole into a large,
separate chamber. There was another large chamber
with some pretties and various ways on to our right
just before the small gap which we explored later.
Sandy's tummy still rumbled



20/7/13

Comms AT 10pm, 11pm, 12am

Camp Cuppernagh inventory:

- porridge
- 12 pasta
- soup
- snacks
- coffee
- 5 boy slus
- 10m rope
- 40m rope
- 60m dynamic
- 3 drill batteries (unknown charge)
- 2 handbolting kits
- 11 mauls + hammers
- 4 thumbolts long
- 10 short brass thumbolts
- 4 lengths of wire

Require:

- condoms
- hot chocolate
- wet wipes
- poop bags
- survey kit

many mebes were dropped then after Page B Page the
(basically) having left. The Fedies ~~discovery~~ delight boulder
choke, we became familiar with but realised the way or we
actually over the top before the 'choke (prow). Camp 2 (Pugotay)
was passed, the amp never came into existence which was probably a good
thing because the sleeping area would only have slept 2 or
intimately.

Classic numbers was fun carving and down lots of blades
mainly waterfalls, great spotting early. I said to Ranan
"time to stop cutting comes now" the 2nd time I ended
up part submerged in a plunge pool.

The Death Series was a lot of climbing on popcorny
rocks which would break off milky-silly. At one point we
found ourselves emerging at the bottom of a pitch which
bypassed by climbing down loose as sick boulders and
pexom. Got down to the bottom alive and I was like "oh
my camp and show my light in it that raised a stream
flowed out of it and we weren't there yet... lots of boulders
later we got to the actual camp which was breathtaking.
Ranan threw in a good few rocks then we headed home to camp.

Pythagoras was alright but I burned out a bit on Sarcobatus.
Panned on and back to camp in no time. Eukha and Tom
found El Purton wasn't too promising but Steph and
Gaalen had found a lead so I went with Jeff,
Jack and Vidley the next day to stand in a old
waterfall while they explored a lead.

Tue 16th
July

Wed 17th
July

Going a bit insane and body clock becoming confused and
eventually got out of bed, ate very nice Smokey chicken soup + spam,
and headed for the surface about 3am. Out 9am.

Paul, Tiggy, Fran, Olla, Eick
Claire
21st July - walk to Top Camp.

Re-built top Camp Cairn, tracked path, took photos of possible camping places - good enough for a couple of tents - not perfect though.

* Will download track and e-mail along with photos of camping sites when back in UK, also GPS on possible entrance.

(Paul will e-mail Steph all info).

* CATTLE TROUGH 2 30T 0343228 *

20th July -

UTM 4788906

Paul & Tiggy brought up:

Snappers

18V battery - now gone back down 23/7

23rd July 2013

Dear All

I WISH I HAD THE TIME &
ENERGY TO GIVE THIS THE
JUSTICE ~~IT~~ ITS DESERVES

but

THANK YOU SO MUCH &
EVERYTHING, for all your work
& passion that's made this
possible.

I have had the most amazing time ☺

lots of love & cuddles

till the next adventure

Yer

Mountain Maria ☺

Tuesday 23rd July - 9am Comms

Frances (surface) talked to Eabha (WG)

3/4 people back from the sump at 8am, all going to sleep until late afternoon and then all exit cave (Eabha, Jack, Paul M. and I)

Expect all four out of cave tonight or Wednesday morning.

They have found new leads !!! and surveyed them

Eabha requests more people to go down to survey the leads, as they seem to be heading to Culicembra. Told them Ross + Gaelan due in today

No more food is needed at camp, except cave snacks if available

NEXT COMMS 6pm TONIGHT [Tell them then what needs bringing up out the

Kit Going in the Cave for Storage.

1x Small Darren Drum = Containers

Maillans = 49 +

Hangers = 0 +

1x Large Darren Drum = Containers

Drill Bits = 8 off 8mm x 150mm Long 3 off 10mm x 100mm

Thru' Bolts = 20 off 8mm x 97mm Long

30 off 8mm x very long

17 off 8mm x mixed length

Approx 30 off spits + Cones

Approx 30 off Short Spit Bolts.

1x Bag of Gas Cans (clear plastic bag)

1x Large = half empty

4x Medium = FULL

1x Small = FULL

Removed from
Cave due to
Corrosion Risk

- 1x Clear Plastic Bag Contents
- 10m 2cm Slings BLACK
 - 2m Slings BLACK
 - 1.5m Slings BLACK
 - Coil of Cotton/Slings material (white)
 - ear Plug + ~~many~~ MANY

Kit in cave entrance

- 4 Ropes + 6 Ropes
- Digging Kit (CAPPING + SNAPPING KIT) - Removed
- 3x ROLL MATS
- 1x Bag of gas cans (see opposite). Removed.
- 1x Clear Plastic Bag (see top of sheet).

Kit Going Down Hill.

- ERIC 21/7 15 x Hangers +
ERIC 23/7 18 x Maillons
taken PD - 23/7 2 x Vango Storm Shelters ~~2~~ + 1 Sen Argushin)
5 off Raumer Percussule Drivers
taken by figgy 23/7 1 x BOLTING KIT (OCU - Dragon - bag)
taken by figgy 23/7 } ~~1~~ 1 x Bolting Driver + Bolting bag.
1 x Junior Hack Saw.
taken by PD 23/7 1 mallet
taken by PD 23/7 OUCS spits + cones (2 plastic containers)
taken by PD 23/7 1 MSR tin
taken by figgy 23/7 2 mess tins
taken by figgy 23/7 2 sleeping bags (SA)
taken by figgy 23/7 1 chisel - (Share Mc)
2 SA mess tins
Boss 23/7 } 2 x DRY BAGS (BIG-RED)
1 x Tackle bags
1 x Sam split
ERIC } 1 x MAP Protector
1 x Beal Rope Bag
ERIC } 1 x Vango Storm Shelter
3 x Orange bivvy Bag
1 x Steph size over suit LYON.

Frances - Paid Refugio Bill of 2 lodges 2 cooks = £9

Chunder Pot Jerusalem

And did those boots, in '81,
Walk Chunder Pot's mysterious lead?
And did Dave Rose's carbide shine,
On virgin passages unseen?
And will this path, now lead us on,
To join new rifts, and streams and caves?
And will the Chunder lead take us to,
Two-seven's hallowed streamway's waves.

Bring me my lights, with burning bulb,
Rig me the handline I desire,
Bring forth the bolts, oh slings unfold!
To chase the lead with heart's afire
We shall not leave, the hading rift,
Nor shall our drills sleep in our hands,
Till we have pushed the Chunder lead,
In Xitu's wond'rous underland!

Vicky & Richards butt shredding adventure

It was a spur of the moment trip. Both of us needed to be out by Tuesday leaving only two days for a trip, so in the interests of doing something helpful, we decided, at 1pm on Sunday, to go straight down the cave, pass camp, continue to Chunder Pot, push the rift there, and head back up to camp for about Tam for a short sleep before heading out that afternoon. A slight upgrade from Richards original plan of surveying in Teresa and then pouring camp overnight, it was perhaps ambitious but I was stoked for one last big trip down Xitu and Richard, bless him, was too good to say no.

The trip to camp was uneventful with us making good time to arrive around four. A quick brew and instant noodles later we set off for the deep, with some dynamic rope optimistically packed, just in case. With Dave Rose's description of walking passage and unsecured pitches rigging in our ears we travelled down the cave, hindered only by Richards' wayward butt-flap which had decided to stay attached to his oversuit and instead become prone to catching on every available protrusion while leaving his tender rear exposed to Xit's more brutal ministrations. By the time we got to the Flyer, a large T-shaped section was flapping and his undersuit had snugly followed leaving only a thin layer of damp boxer to shield his arse from direct contact.



Undeterred we passed the "Anay with the Fairies" (or whatever it is in Irish) dink and found, just around the corner, another inlet of water coming down the same wall. Climbing up about 10m it seemed the rift may have a way up but short of attempting a very dodgy climb over an overhanging boulder, or a scary traverse around from the opposite wall, there was nothing more we could do.

Passing the Flyer, and the large but sadly lead-less rift to the left which Jamie and I had tried to push two years ago, we emerged, deeper than I had ever been, in Ferdie's Delight and struggled through, arse-flap a-catching, to where Camp Purgatory, such as it was, had been left. At this point it was decided something just had to be done

about Richard's rear end. Raiding my first-aid kit duct tape was found but failed to stick to the damp and muddy remnants: more drastic measures were required. A plaster, as a last defense for Richard's bare skin, was deemed wise but having produced one, I realised that the application would require somewhat more contact with his quivering flesh than I particularly desired. There was nothing for it however, his rear defenses needed shoring up, and so, as he rumaged inside his suits to pull down his boxers, I gingerly checked the integrity of my gloves, and braced myself for the task ahead. Bending over, he presented me with a view of pink cheek, which I resisted the impulse to kick, and instead poked with trepidation through the plaster as I tried to get it to stick to the exposed skin. After a few moments of fearful prodding, I urged him to take one, unwilling to go the whole hog and just grab his ass to cement it on. "I'll just, err, apply pressure then, shall I?" he queried, slapping his butt with enthusiasm. "Right", said I, "then what do we do about your oversuit?" "We could sew it up?", "With what?", "Got some cord and a knife" ... "Right, this'll be for then."

The knife, cord, burgee case - stitching method



We settled on using the burgee cord from my spawner and the point of this knife in lieu of a needle and thread and I set to sewing after he stripped off and started boiling water for some dinner. To this oddly domesticated scene we applied ourselves until the suit was fairly mended and the dinner mostly cooked. With fuller stomachs and a patched case we started our exploration, heading up the rift at the Chunder Pot end. Just back from the pitch head, maybe ten or twenty metres ~~back~~^{up} I found a large walking passage going back to the left which had clearly been found and trodden

before (Paul Mackill later confirmed he'd been there).
Going horizontally to the left it narrowed down to
a couple of smaller cants through loose rift and
disturbed popcorn. After maybe five minutes
along, a pile of loose boulders blocked the way.
Climbing up them and following the natural way
up the rift, bearing slightly left, we carried on for
half an hour or more. The route was mostly
obvious, with broken popcorn and stal indicating
much of it had been pushed before. We passed
small pools and flintstone the higher we got but
the rift showed no signs of opening up or changing
in any way. Eventually, Richard up above me
reached a point at which he could go no further.
He'd had to push his way up using the ceiling
of the rift behind him for the last part and
looking up he decided it was just getting too tight
and steep to continue. He looked back to me, about
2 or 3 metres below, and saw a squeeze to my right
which was accessible only from below. Wiggling
through I came upon an opened up area where I
could stand with undisturbed mud and a larger,
deeper pool of water about half a metre across and
down. Below where I came in was a wider opening
which I directed Richard to until he crawled in from
the right (as I faced down the rift) and popped up
into the chamber where I was. Here was standing
and walking room for the two of us with routes
going on up and to the right (now facing up the
rift). Richard spotted a clutch of stal here
which were maybe 3cm in diameter but with the
bottoms missing and in their place thin straws growing

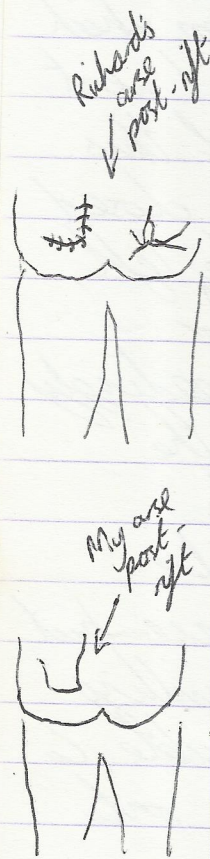
reforming
stal



popcorn with
a layer of fresh
growth

down which were maybe two to five cm long. No one had been here recently, for the muddy floor was print free, but it seemed someone may have been a long while ago and broken formations which had since regrown. Popcorn which was slowly reforming on top was also evident and as I went off through a crawl to the right I found a trail of this going up for a couple of metres until the ceiling closed down. Richard had more luck going up and to the left, finding smooth flonstone climbs that went up for another twenty or thirty metres before becoming exceedingly steep. Standing on his shoulder I scrambled up the rock but looking ahead saw a squeeze where the flonstone rounded off which was maybe half a metre wide and thirty high. Beyond that was dark space but it seemed the rift continued up through it. Unwilling to keep on and risk getting stuck in a hole inaccessible to Richard, I backed out and slid down the flonstone onto his waiting shoulder.

Heading back we went almost directly downwards, at one point at great speed as the popcorn I was climbing down suddenly gave, forcing me to slide uncontrollably for about four metres to the next ledge. I landed, luckily on my butt which, although sore, was undamaged, and shaken, popped back onto my feet to reassure Richard I wouldn't need carrying out as he feared. The entire way down took us maybe twenty minutes to half an hour although from above we easily found a route through wedged boulders and false floors which would be almost impossible to pick out from the other direction. To our surprise we came out above the Chander Pot end of the Fedie's Delight / Dingy traverse line, a good ten minutes carry from Camp



Purgatory. Back at the bags and rope of "Camp 2" we found the Daves drum of food which yielded two packs of jelly and Kerdal Mint Cake which we devoured. By now it was midnight and we'd been going since around 1pm and were beginning to feel it. Yawning, and deading the many pitches back to camp, we began our ascent. Our hours in the leading rift had proved as destructive as productive with Richard's right ass cheek of his oversuit and the left on mine falling victim to its malevolent clutches. The brand new Petrol waterproof oversuit I was trialling proved no match for snaggy popcorn and rear-first sliding and Richard was thus treated to flashes of my bright-red fury as we headed back. His own arse-coverings in tatters (but the plaster we'd applied still in place), Richard resigned himself to a butt-scatching trip back and looked forward to the prospect of cable ties back at camp. Still tired, I led the way up the Flyer to dump the bag with the dynamic rope at the Fairies' climb for later use.

About Pythagorous the immense amounts of sugar kicked in and it seemed to me the pitch had shrunk since my last trip, as I sailed up singing 5 Club 7 as which, luckily, Richard couldn't hear. We arrived at camp around 4am and were immediately confronted with requests for condoms by Brian and Emmy. Ignoring them, and the tackle sack, and the sleeping form of Jack, we set to making dinner, after which we collapsed into oblivion in the kindly vacated inner tent.

~~###~~

The next day after four or five hours sleep, instant mash, and porridge with custard, we began sorting our lives out. Unwilling to don the damp furo but wary of damaging my thermals through exposure to rock, I applied liberal amounts of duct tape to my arse, with the aid of Brian, while Richard used a million cable ties to re-seal his tattered arse patch. With bags of rubbish and poo we left camp and made it to the surface, only to find Ross, Claire and Fran lying in wait in the rift with camera equipment which they turned upon us as we struggled through with our bags on tired limbs. Losing the will to crawl, I cried out my last wish, "take a picture of my shiny silver arse!" which, in retrospect, pretty much sums up the entire trip.

21st to 24th July Paul M - Jan, Eabha joined by Jack
Xitu - the Sump - And NEW STUFF

To Culieburo?? By Paul Machill

I (Paul) hadn't expected to go back down Xitu this time and spending most of my time at Top Camp. This was not to be. I said "I'd see how it goes with my left hand" and with that I committed not to pop down to the Custines hall / Theresa Series or camp but bottom the cave... So with Jan & Eabha we attacked Xitu at 2⁰⁰ pm.

The cave passed swiftly - going down is fine I thought. Camp arrived at 6⁰⁰ pm and the thought of bottoming AND exploring turned all thoughts to a right sleep. - And we did in style until 10⁰⁰ on the 22nd!

Needless to say we didn't get away until 1⁰⁰ pm yet made the sump at 6¹⁵ pm. I was new at the bottom of the cave so I'd have to get myself out later...

On the through trip last year with Tony Seddon I'd noticed a roof tube and ramp above to sump. Whilst Jack & I checked for other ways

into the roof (and maybe other roof tubes) further back upstream
Jan & Eubha attached the clubs above the sump. They'd found a way
to another aven leading further up. It looked like this was more
than just a blind phreatic aven.

On minimal gear (strings cut from chord and a hand bottle kit)
Jan made the climb up a wall with a booming hollow calcite wall
onto popcorn and into an alcove which had an inlet to a sloping low
ledge to the head of the aven. I seconded & joined Jan.

Above was a beautifully scalloped roof & a PASSAGE leading
off. I stood up - climbed into it and found the passage ALSO WENT
BACK over the top of our climb!

Jan & I went off for a first reccé and soon found side passages
and continuing - Would we find a way over the sump?!

We rigged the aven & got Eubha & Jack up. We were off.
It turned out downstream, back over the aven & towards Culicubro - a 4m of
tube, dropped and blocked with mud but to the right had a slot to a rift
with a light draft. The thought of a dig of this depth is a NoNo - OR maybe?
I did a crawl up a calcited passage to the left which got too low.

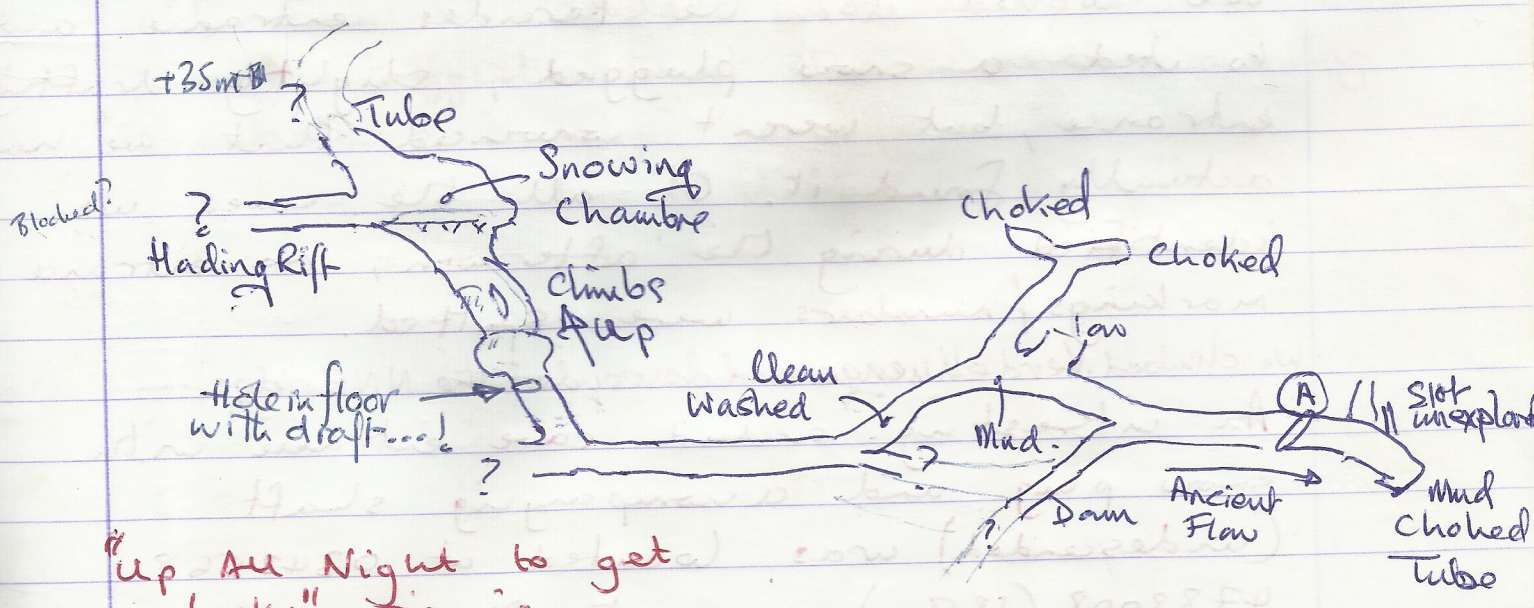
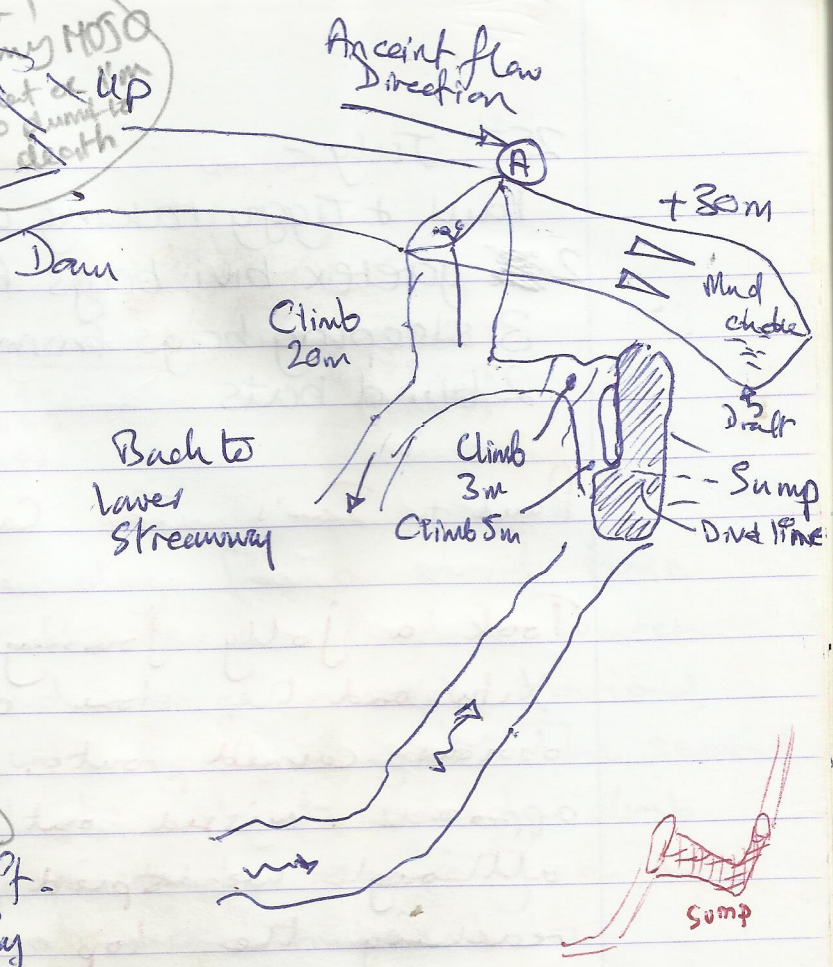
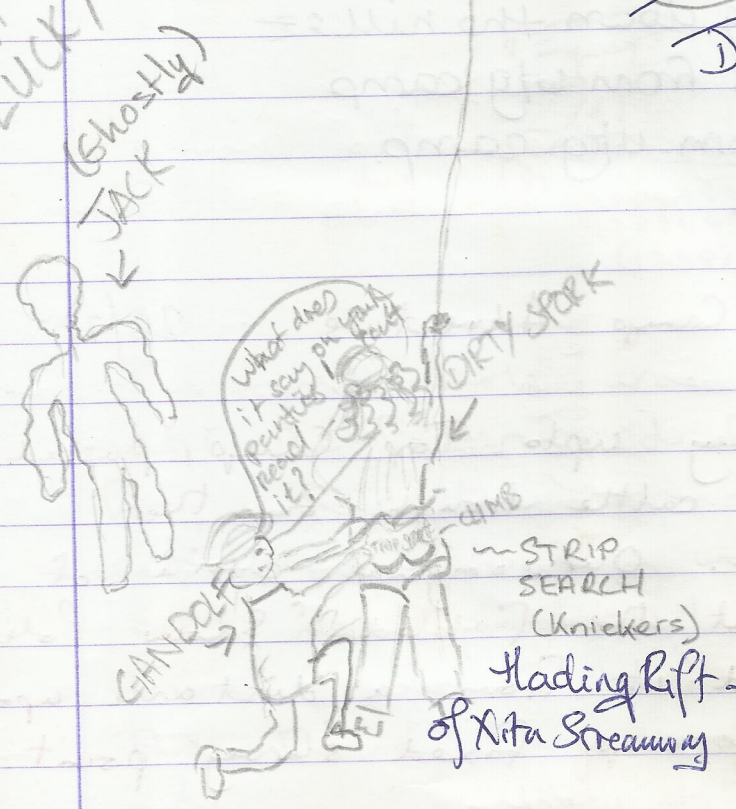
In the upstream direction, presumably up above the heading rift of
the inlet stream, we had a tube - and to the right a passage - which split
and choked but seemed to have air movement. On the main line the
tube dropped down, ~~flatter~~ levelled out and became more heading in
character. Allora white a passage - the largest part - set off up hill
up the rift. After a couple of climbs we had a chamber with snow falling
on our heads (!) I waved my hand & powder flew off the wall. I gave
a puff of air and the powder blew away completely. I assumed it is an
Aragonite deposit - strange too. We left the passage & continuing - both
up (tube) and across (heading rift).

After regrouping & surveying to the sump we returned to camp
after 7th exploration. Up to camp. 1⁵ - 7¹⁵ am on the 23rd July.

-- We ~~sp~~ slept - well I slept - until 4³⁰ pm. - I came out
of the cover 6²⁰ - 00²⁰ am on the 24th - My hand survived - only just
and I'd revisited the sump year after the traverse in another op
- But with going passage -

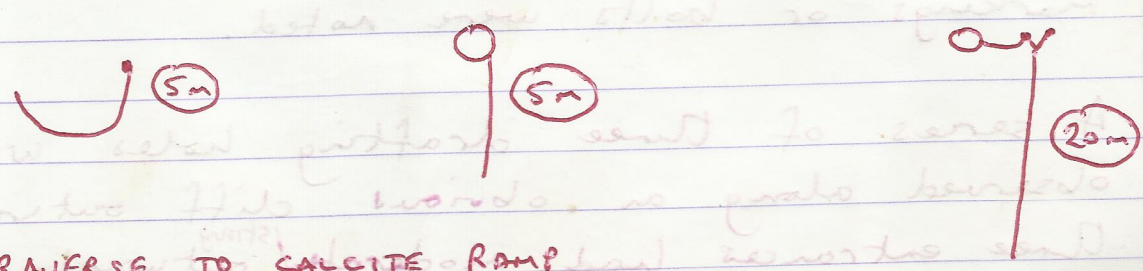
UP ALL NIGHT TO GET LUCKY
(ghostly)
JACK

DADDY DACHSTEIN →
I think I found my nose
either that or I found out about to my death



"Up All Night to get lucky" Digging.

SUMP CLIMB SECOND CLIMB "STRIP SEARCH" CLIMB



TRAVERSE TO CALCITE RAMP

