

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 Roducas (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. H.

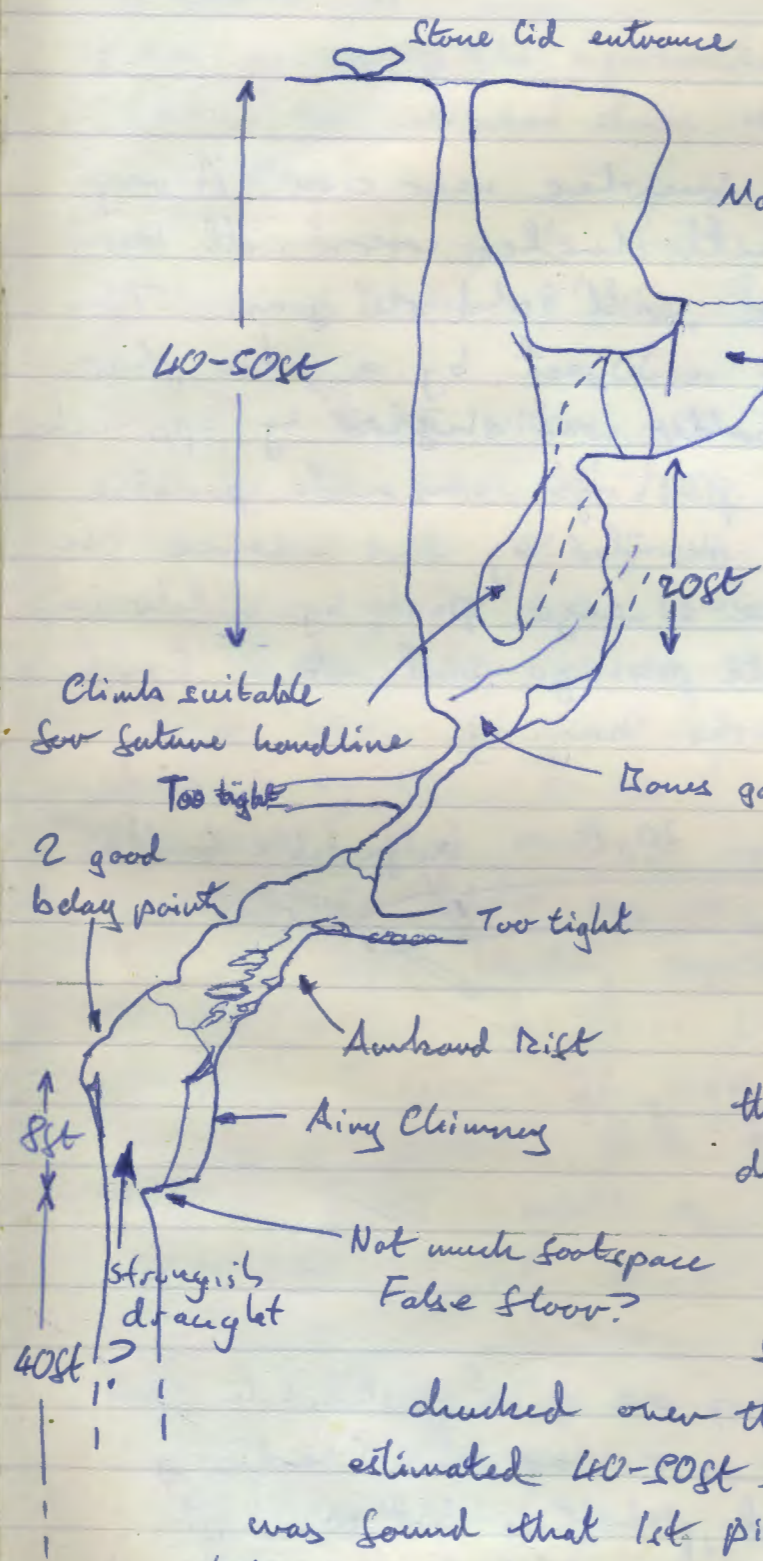
Monday 23rd July
Mark and Dave

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 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?

↑
8ft
X
40ft
|
|

Notional elevation looking north.



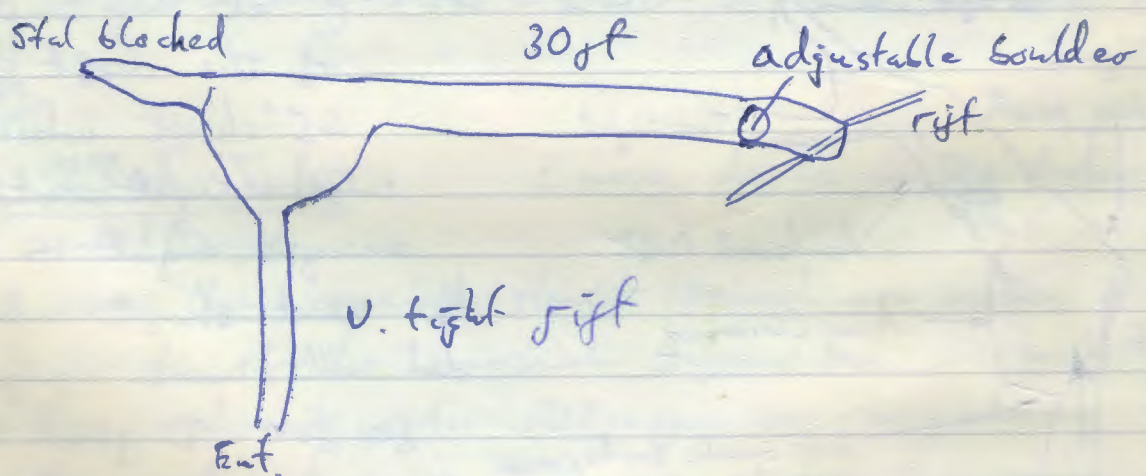
The abseil ended on a floor littered with bones of beasts both great and small. A small exit down at the southern side of the shaft leads into 45° shaft which gives into a tight rift. This emerges right on top of the next shaft which we did not have equipment for. 2 good belay points were noted for future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



Another cave

Steep mud slope at bottom of one of set of shelves above O.u. leads to lightish 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, ^{Kevin} Cavatory, Coco & Pete went up to cueva del Friero 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

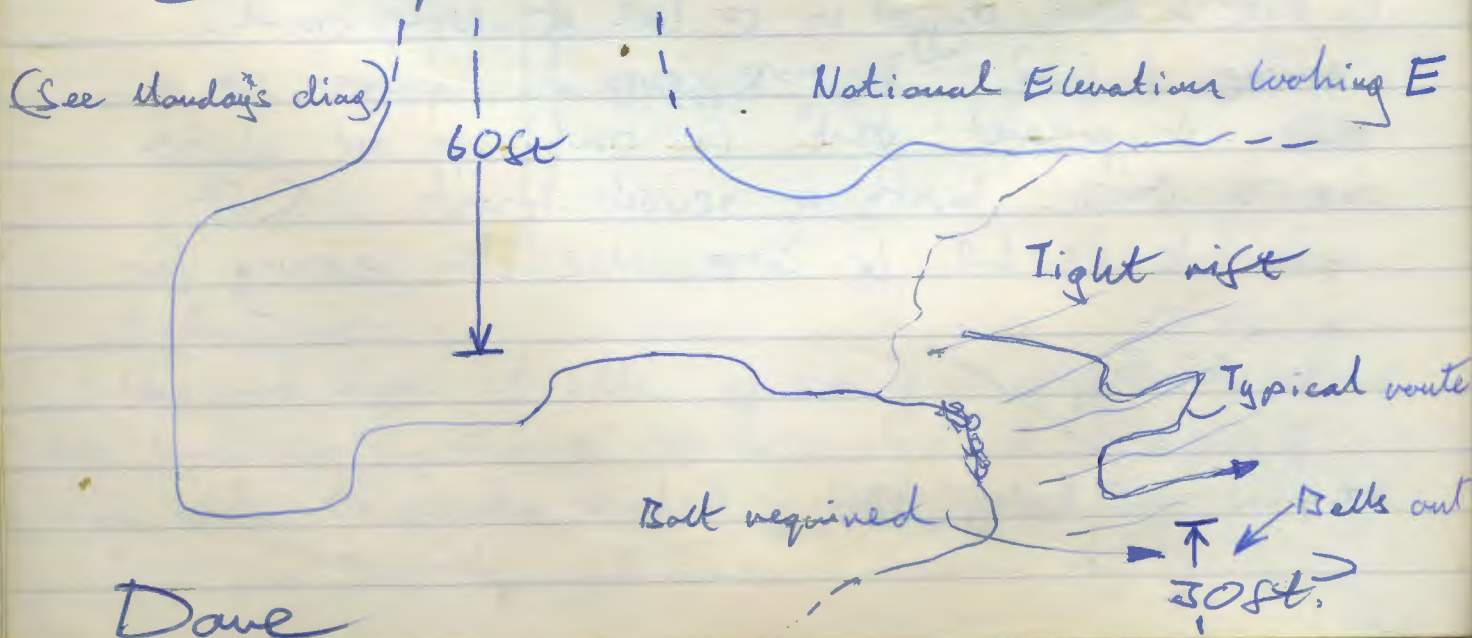
Tuesday 24th July

Cueva de la Trad 1516 ft

Maule, Dave and Shunk

Maule 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 a 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 rift from it. A bolt will be required to get to the bottom of this!



Anio Report

Sunday 22nd → Tuesday 24th

Liz, Ian, Simon, Andrew, 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 ~~yards~~ 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 Anio to
 Los Lagos. 50 ~~yards~~ m after the viewpoint,
 turn left and walk 20 ~~yards~~ m and no 1/5
 is before you. (Popular name viewpoint pot)

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

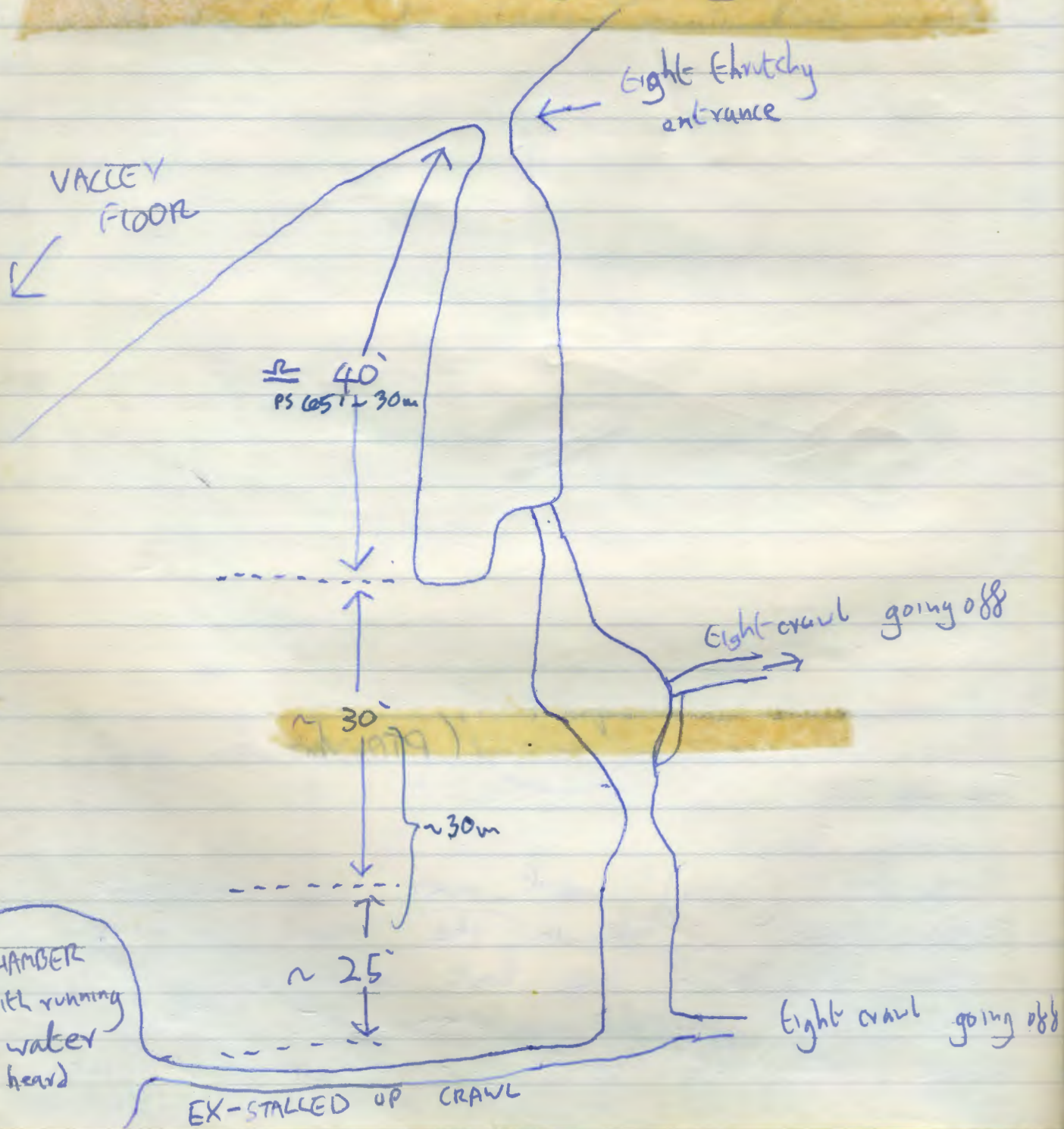
Here ~~is a large map~~ (PTOI for Anio report.)

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.



etc
greater
Grah
lavish
pace
few
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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 crack going off at each end. One crack was all blocked up with straws & stabs so I gleefully smashed them all out of the way and cranked 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 prissite. 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 discover it} as the 6th (?) wet, misty morning started so as we ~~we~~ crawled from the tents at about 11 am. Graham and John ^{survivors L & Cans} remained at ~~camp~~ Erasa for a bit — doing some ^{work} before walking up to Aris. Liz, Ian and myself set off at a gentle pace, completely expecting to burst out of the cloud within the first few 100 m. This did not happen. After ~~ascertaining~~ ^{ascertaining} that we must be at the top for the nth time we found that we actually were. Con

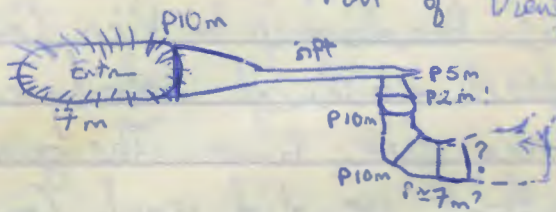
seemed to be). The mud was still very much with use -- since the rocks were still warm & dry this was obviously a particularly annoying case of Sod's law. At this point Ian and I noticed a hole -- yes this was to be the deepest cave in the world. Boulders were tossed down in, and they thundered down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



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 arriving to Manuel it is never misty for a whole day!

~~I like~~ Feeling super keen Ian and I investigated our find (No 1/5 - Venus point cave). Unluckily for the 1st discovery it is ~~is~~ proved very promising. Further descent with JSG 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 hangs. Unfortunately Ian couldn't find many of the huge

Plan of Viewpoint cave. Grade 0.1



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 Jultayn - recommended by Marmel
as giving the best view in the Picos! Easy to climb (even Liz got up it)
the view is fantastic: the bar is visible in one place
the other the Cares 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 potatoes galore & ecstatic views. The return to Escoria
was made in pleasant evening sun - even at the lake! The latter
provided a ~~refreshing~~ refreshing swim & wash (somewhat required by
this stage). A major part of the latter half the expedition should
be centred at Arco.

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
specifically, contemplating the imminence of "getting-up." And by 12.30
Kev, Pete, Al and Martin MacLavery, clad in the best highland
tradition, were ready to depart, via "the backwoods," to Arco. Do