

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 jammy choggles 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 CII and the passage beyond. Dave surprised himself by getting through ~~the~~ both major squeezes after some perseverance. After much humping of backside 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 dimple 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 Vingo, 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 first 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~~ ~~draft~~ issuing from a small hole through which the noise of either a distant large stream or a v. strong draft 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.

Proasellus sp (sim to Fresno) in pools + *Firmo* metho at entrance.

Later Jim went for a walk and came back with some Spanish coins dated 1776!

Mark & Kev visited the Iron Mine at Callan Riviera — Kev came back loaded heavily with haematite chunks.

Finally we discovered the worst biting insect I've ever come across — persistent, uncrushable horsefly type beast — bloody vicious.

Visited bar in Lattines & all got pissed — even the normally(?) restrained Jim did not refuse the extra bottle of wine ~~Sunday~~ and and final Ponche!

Sunday 5th Aug.

Weather still grossy. Food shortage desperate, relief urgently needed. Kev can't last ~~much longer~~ more than another few hours. Have to eat him if he goes.

I went down Fresno on a 2hr solo trip (superhero). Caught lots of beetles at new smelly bait & detached. Met others outside & returned to camp to eke out last rations.

Skippy and Skunk arrived eventually at ~ 2pm. We said goodbye to various villagers & finally left the shit piles of EC Mazuco behind. Probably for ever — particularly with the nearest bar being in Lattines. Landrovers got about 5 miles down the road when an ominous clanking was heard. This was located as arising from the front right suspension — which had bust. A sedate return ~~to the lake~~ delayed, with the noise finally disappearing when a section of leaf spring dropped off or the lake

does this say love or cave ???

(86)

fl

My El Magran Cave :-

