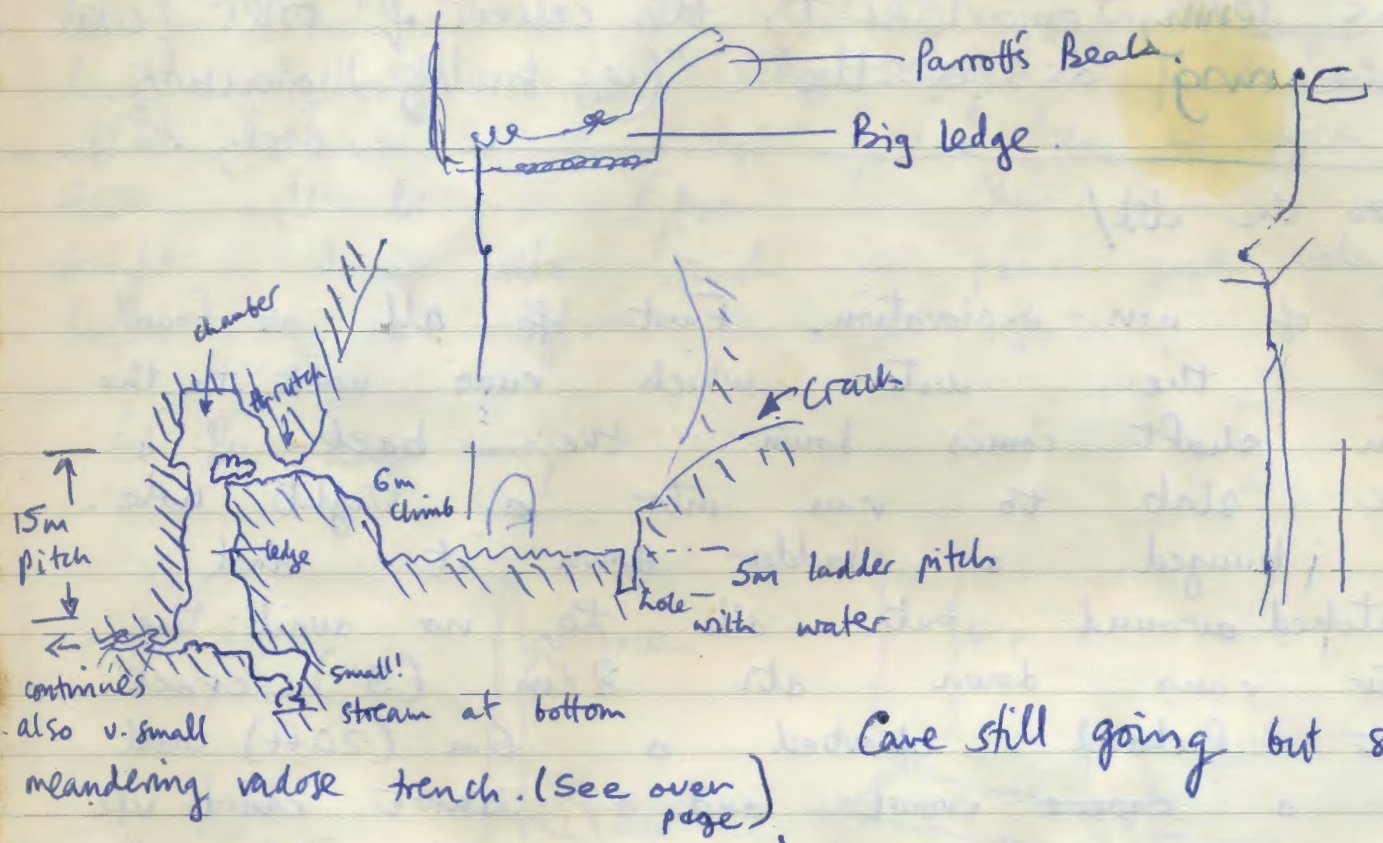


Richard, John, Paul & Alvaro down C4: Playschool.  
Pushed on at bottom of 40m pitch



Cave still going but small++.

Whilst descending with Alvaro at chengover on 2nd SRT pitch Alvaro omitted to dip into his figure of eight, unclipped his cowtail and bent sub! Not a good idea! He managed to hold onto the rope with his arm wrapped around it, and then clipped every available cowtail etc into his figure of eight. Subsequently he couldn't manage the chengover since he had nothing left to clip in as a cowtail! Hence I had to climb down a pass on ~~by~~ over my cow tails. He managed to finish the pitch.  
Beware! Ascenting is dangerous !!

We attempted the climb into the large chamber. Didn't finish it but crushed the crux. It will go if required.  
MC

Meanwhile Richard and I pushed on to the

27/contd

Mark + I gapped off to the Lakes for provisions. Actually I was only going ~~to~~ for a change of undies as Penny objected to the colour of ones I was wearing as "aesthetic" (ie: smelly) grounds.

Andy R

on to the dtd/

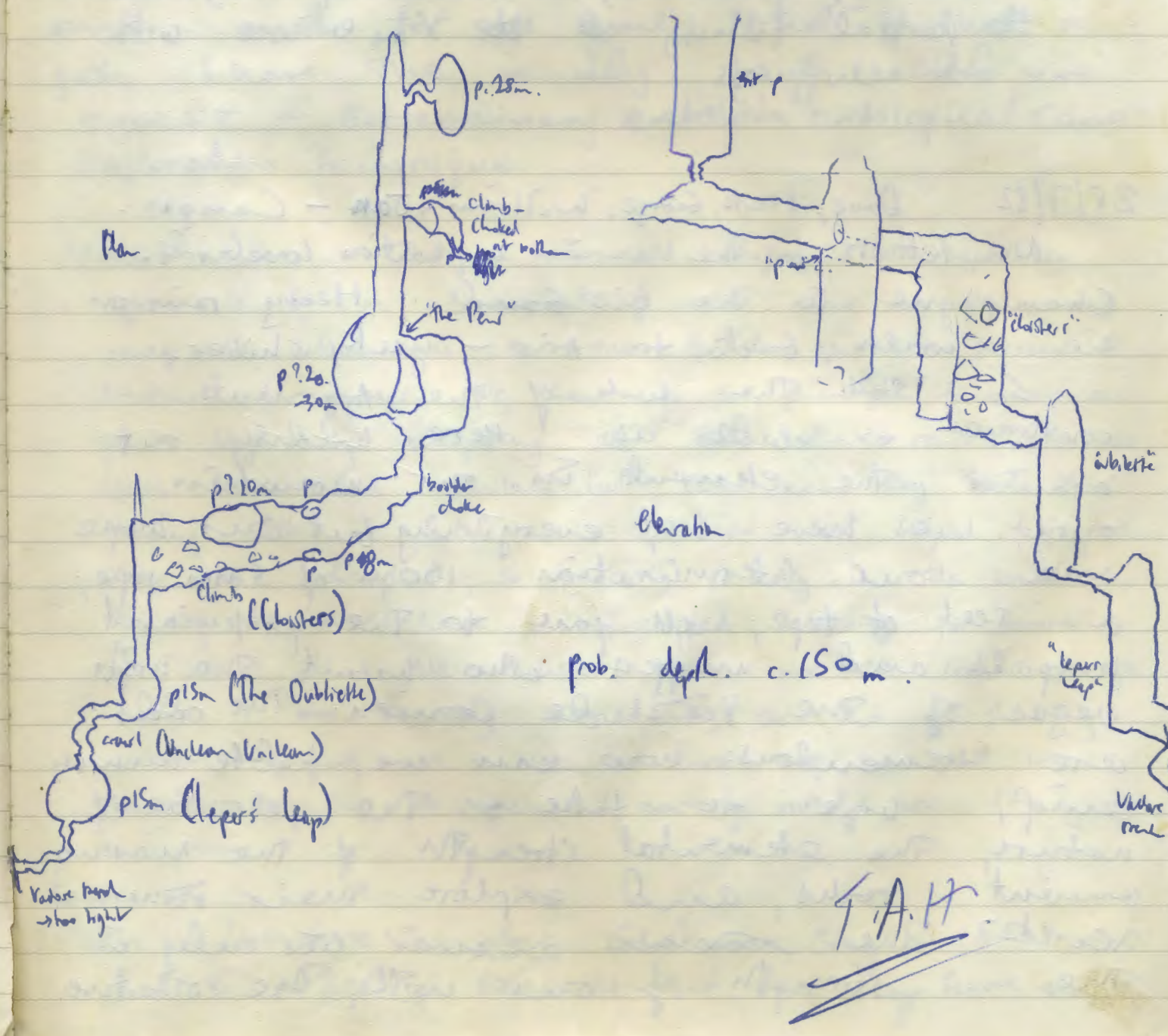
limit of non-exploration. First of all we found that the water which runs next to the main shaft comes down the back of a huge slab to run into a tight hole. I bunged a ladder down it and thrutched around but all to no avail: the water runs down a 8cm (3") crack. Next Richard climbed a 6m (20ft) wall to a ~~space~~ crawl and a short climb up into a chamber. A 15m (50ft) pitch drops into tight vadose trench: as we didn't have enough ladders, Richard went down to a ledge and I lowered the ladder down to him on the mega belay. (the first attempt left Richard hanging from the bottom rung about 2m (6'6") from the ground grunting and groaning) the vadose trench now needs a little man with a large hammer to hit it several times. Many thanks to Paul for putting a bolt in next to the nasty peg!

U.S.

25/7/82. Dave, George, Tom down Optimists

Descended unexplored pit - c. 15m. - static pool at bottom & entrance to winding vadose canyon. Canyon ultimately becomes too tight: phreatic zones explored also seen to lead nowhere (bc too tight but there might be a bypass? There is a substantial draught down the trend - poss. greater things beyond if a bypass can be found?

Ad. I ~~pass~~ survey -



28/7/82

otherwise known in medical circles  
as "Michelangelo's thumb"

The reason I'm not writing very legibly is that my thumb is  $\approx 2 \times$  normal size! Graham, Tom + I spent many 'happy' hours today powdering limestone preparing a site for Keith's plaque. If we were all stonemasons around 1000 AD, Westminster Abbey probably wouldn't have been finished till the year 3000. To cut a short story, shorter, we haven't finished it yet, despite vast quantities of information (?) from ~~at~~ Big G. and loads of muscular effort from the 'Butcher'.

P.S. The only good thing to come out of today's work is the partial filling of the Xite entrance with our rock chippings.

28/7/82 Dave, Mark, George, William + Jan - Cangas.

No letters for the various expedition lovebirds.

Champagne in the Rio Grande. Heavy rain on the walk back to Ario - yuk, shivers.

So. Still, the link of the Argonauts continues to elude us. Here, holding out against the elements in our mountain cycle, we have lost everything but our hope and our determination. 100m of 9mm rope; a reel of tape; all gone to the professional footpads and muggers who haunt the high vegas of the Picos de Coruion. The odds are tremendous: how can we, feeble human beings, hope to take on the colossus of nature, the elemental strength of the massive, ancient rocks, and explore their elemental secrets? The answer lies only in the strength of our wills, the collective

expression of our delication and overwhelming unity which even the snowpigs, icy monsters guarding the depths we long to plumb, cannot but yield. Around the corner, lie detronents and perils which even we can only imagine. But so long as our lamp of hope continues to burn, ~~they~~ Their natural sentinels of rock and snow ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> living on borrowed time. William, boldest of us all, has bought some fertiliser. All we need now is a detonator, with which to blow asunder the secrets of these mountains one and for all time. And if that fails, I have the remedy. It is called EXOCET - Extraordinary ~~ontological~~ <sup>ontological</sup> Cave Exploration Technique.

29/7/82. Here we sit in our cold refugio. The expedition appears to be in a moment of crisis. Have we the moral courage, the determination the true British spirit to succeed? Sometimes I wonder. We have, so far, managed to keep our spirits high by relegating the ~~other~~ other ranks to the tents below this mountain hut. Until now they had been sleeping with us, but this separation has helped to restore order and discipline; so obviously lacking in the locals. Some of the men have even stopped dressing for dinner - we cannot allow the enlisted men nor the locals to see this. I am seriously worried by the lack of shaving cream - if we are to let standards drop, how shall we succeed? Long live the Queen. I must go outside now I may be some time.

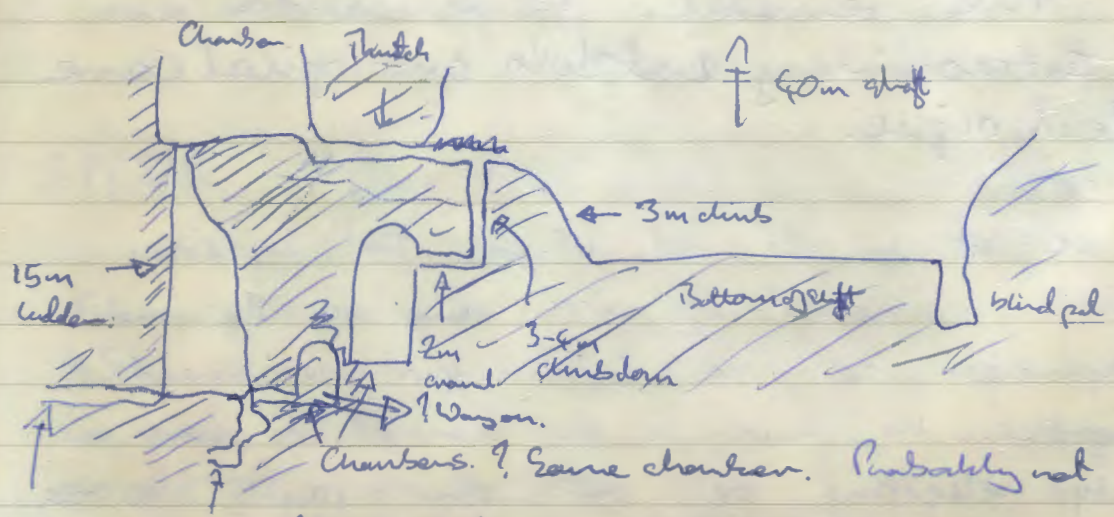
29/7/82 I endorse the above. Good man, Gregson. What we need is a bit of Falklands spirit. We may have to

make an example of one of the enlisted men to encourage the others - a playing alive or something. The lower officers need something to take <sup>out</sup> their frustrations - if Bradford has to be sacrificed, it will be in a good cause, and as ~~an~~ owner of a large medici supply he can expect no better.

28/7/82

Pushing / Photography C4  
 Surveying C4  
 Bottom of cave now looks like

Pink & Martin  
 John + Richard.



Vadose  
 trenches.  
 Narrows

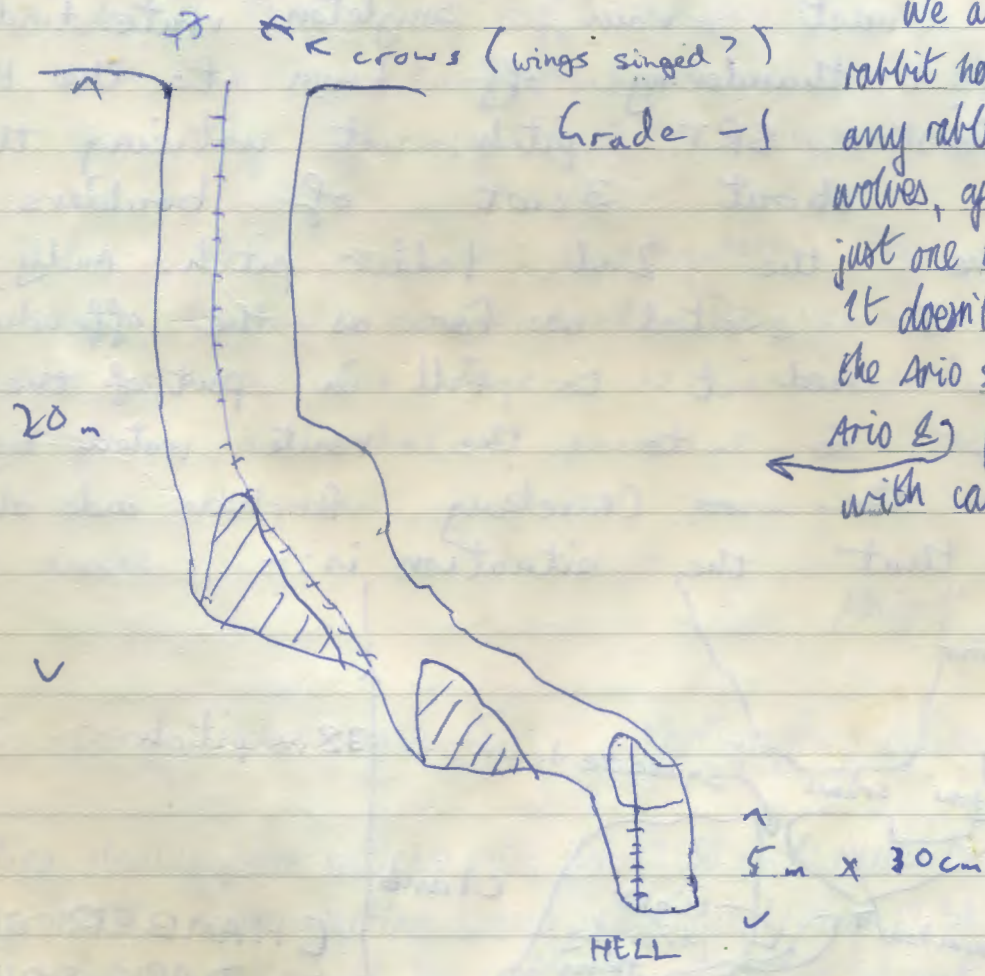
Too small to progress down  
 streaming

PNC.

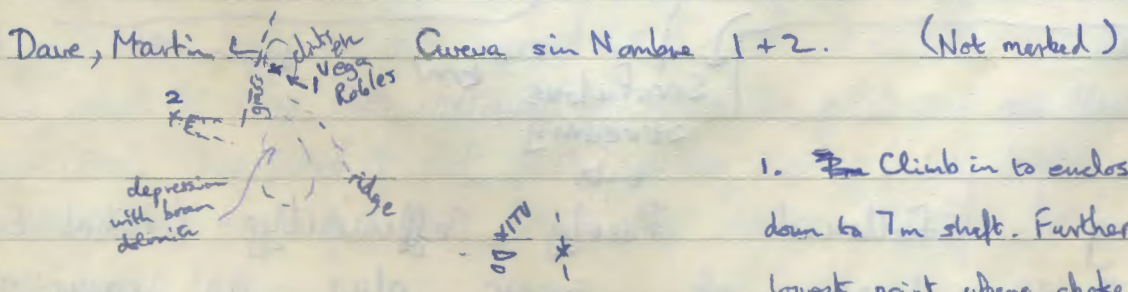
Survey completed in spite of loss of pencil!  
 JS.

29.7.82 Mark, Jan, Paul (Spectator)

'Alvaro's Cave' - a reasonable-looking shaft with samples on path to Culicentro, 150 m past west of ridge joining 'Cabeza Talagosa' and 'Cabeza del Coru'. 20 m ladder, obvious natural belay. Slimey, snelly smooth-walled shaft to small snowplug. skirt round plug, climb down past second plug to top of narrow rift. Natural belay for 5 m ladder down rift. Chokes. Total depth  $\approx$  30 m



We also found a large rabbit hole. It didn't have any rabbits, foxes, badgers, sheep, wolves, gophers or djinns in it, just one human for about 5 mins. It doesn't go anywhere <sup>(where)</sup>. It is on the Arico side of the ridge between Arico  $\rightarrow$  on the path marked with cairns by Alvaro.



1. ~~From~~ Climb in to enclosed entrance sloping down to 7m shaft. Further 3m drops to lowest point where choke draughts & might

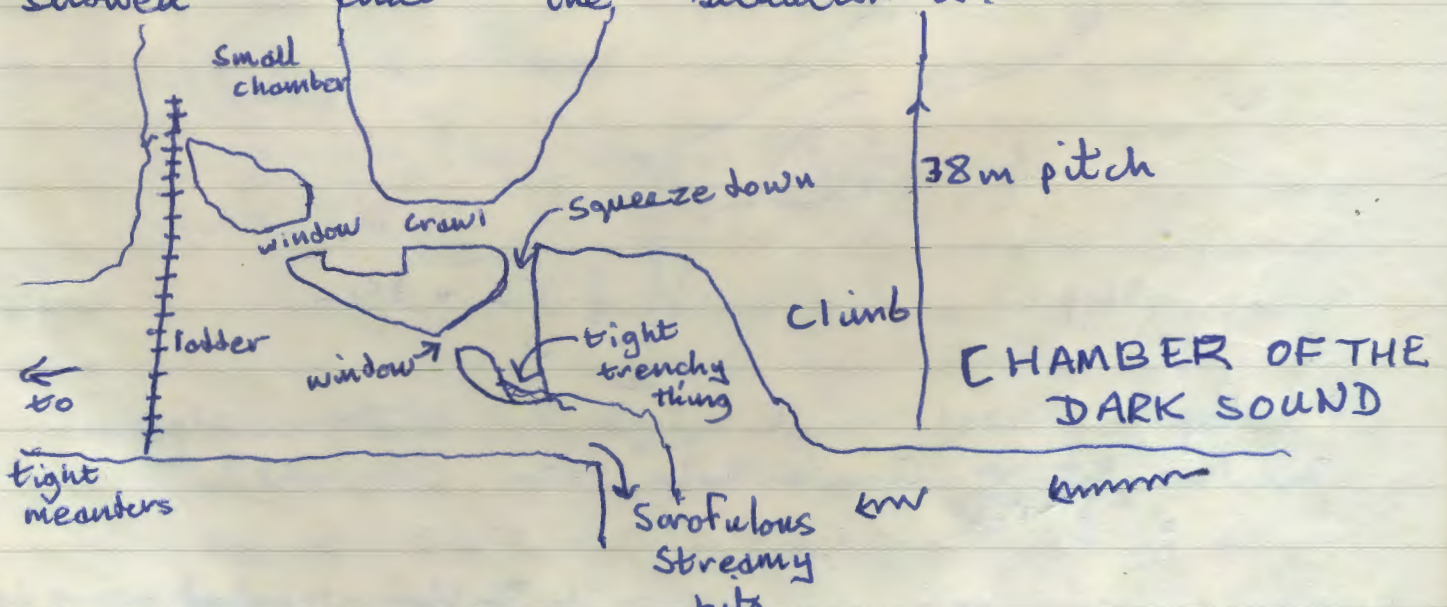
be diggable - we lowered the floor about a foot & increased the draught. A shovel would be useful.

2. Crawl at foot of vertical backwall to depression with prominent vertical fault leads into pleasant chamber with bouldery floor & rising rifts above. Nice place for a bivouac.

29/7/82 Quote of the day (By Jan Hussing):  
'Where do the Alps end and the Pyrenees begin?' 'There's France in the middle' (Martin L.)

29/7/82 Graham Andy John:- Derigging C4.

Usual 11 ish start meant that we were all at the cave by about 12-30ish, notwithstanding Graham making a detour to C3 and the mist, rain, singleton route finding etc. I went thundering off down to the bottom of the first SRT pitch, not noticing that there was about 3cwt of boulders balanced loosely above the 2nd ladder pitch. Andy informed me of this and I excited as far as the offending choss and used it to fill in part of the blind pot. And so to the route noted by Paul yesterday. ~~The~~ Chucking Rocks and shouting showed that the situation is:-



Detackling followed fairly efficiently (what English) and three bags of gear plus us came out at about 6pm. P.S. Graham had to have a slash eight times during the day (P)



PPS. The cave must be radioactive as we've smelt ozone on coming out for the past few days.

U.S.

And Now!

The Beer fest!

One or two other gems from William!
"Hunghyey! Can the doctor do anything for me"
"Somebody help me!"
"Why is the room spinning!"



30/7/82 (1am)

Quote of The day by William:

'As this the window Andy or am I being sick over the edge of my bed?' (After some drinks)

31. 7. 82. After intensive investigation by your fearless detective, I can now reveal the name of the phantom snorer of the Ario refuge: he is interested in cycling, half-german, and has a penchant for rucksac packing. Yes, the half-german, jackbooted Huming it was that kept us awake.

Maigret.

31/7/82 George, Helen, Mark, Jan Photographing Optimista

Starting abseiling down entrance pitch by 12:30 with rucksacks and heaps of ammo bins, tripods etc. George starting taking photographs by 12:31 and carried on until we reached the bottom of the last pitch. Slight problem just after moonmilk crawl with Helens light but only required two of us to sort it out. Helen waited at the oubliete while the other three continued on down the pitch and ~~one~~ through "unleanunlean" to "Leper's Leap". Then pissed off out fairly rapidly, cursing failing lights and avoiding large ~~un~~ boulders trying to slide down steep slopes. George took 40 (forty) pictures during trip.

120

30<sup>th</sup> July :- John, Tom + Paul :- Surveying C3

by the time <sup>we got down to hole.</sup> <sup>Hangovers etc.</sup> meant that it was 2pm since this was Tom and Paul's

First surveying trip and we had to measure the entrance shaft ("rigging like a spastic's shoe laces"?) it was quite late by the time we got to the head of the last pitch. Confronted by the spectre of the Haining/Naylor rig, we decided to retire, not having any bolt hammer etc. Everyone emerged to the usual clog at 9pm.

31<sup>st</sup> July ~~Last~~ Plays :- Eat your hearts out Penny et al!

1<sup>st</sup> August :- John Tom Andy. Finishing the job.

Awoke to thick clog and crashing of thunder in the peaks. As we departed for C3 the clouds descended and the banging got worse - by the time we got to the entrance there were some exciting pyrotechnics going on around us. Riley's helpful comments like "lightening strikes round caves a lot" and Tom's revelation that someone got vaporised on Whitby beach by lightening made me quite glad to get underground.

<sup>Huh! A bit less rig, a good freehang, very safe, and we couldn't use any rope as some ... had ...</sup> At the Haining/Naylor aboution, Tom banged in an extra bolt and the loop of rope was replaced by a tape.

Andy declined to descend and Tom and I completed the survey fairly quickly. Derigging followed: At first Andy tried to derig the entrance series rope before the rest of us got out by getting it tangled round his tackle bag. Tom and I had time for a quick discussion on the futility of prussiking gear without a rope before he noticed. Emerged <sup>to</sup> <sup>more</sup> <sup>high</sup> <sup>Pin</sup> <sup>like</sup>

and hailstones. However, it did stop by the time we got to the tent. Was this a result of Andy's offering of a piece of chocolate to the gods?

What are these things called means? ...