Base Camp Log

La Verdellueca 1994

BASE CAMP
LOG
LA VERDELLUENCA
1994

O.U.C.C.

(D)

LA VERDELLUENGA '94

INTREPID EXPLORERS ARE:

- James "Aubergine" Hooper (Bill) "SEX4TSHIRTS"
- Rob "Life of..." Garrett (Horsley)
- Alex "Bertie" Harding
- John Percy "No-Nuts" Nathanael Pybus. (Ben)
- Anette Bechler "Look at these caterpillars"
- Chris 'hands off my tapeworm' Densham
- Wlodek Szymanowski ~~didn't~~ "didn't drink, don't drive"
- PETER "SNABLET" MACNAB
- TIM (BIOHAZARD) GUILFORD
- Bill (real) Naylor
- Miche "phone home" Nickerson
- Paul "How big's your boyfriend" Man
- Jim The incredible doctor Sex Ramsden
- Sara
- Richard Bouncing Bomb Barnes
- Dave Larey "Underwear"
- Steve "Cultural vegetarian" Phipps
- Shara "forgot to put my name in earlier" Curtis
- Gavin "forgot to put his name down at all" Howe
- Urs "Snow Levels" Mead.
- Harvey (I keep my socks on) Smith
- Tony "Sand-Turtle" Seddon.
- Chris "Techno Notice" Vernon
- Rero "Bazd-meg"
- Judit "Squeeze Poodle" ?
- "BRADFORD" PETE GARDNER
- Jlka "definitely" Agricola
- Gerhard (looking at this list, must have been ~~around when~~ walking up from this base since Ridge Cave was first formed) Nitschsch
- Wookey
- Andy Atkinson
- Steve Robcuts (Return of the Native Detackler)

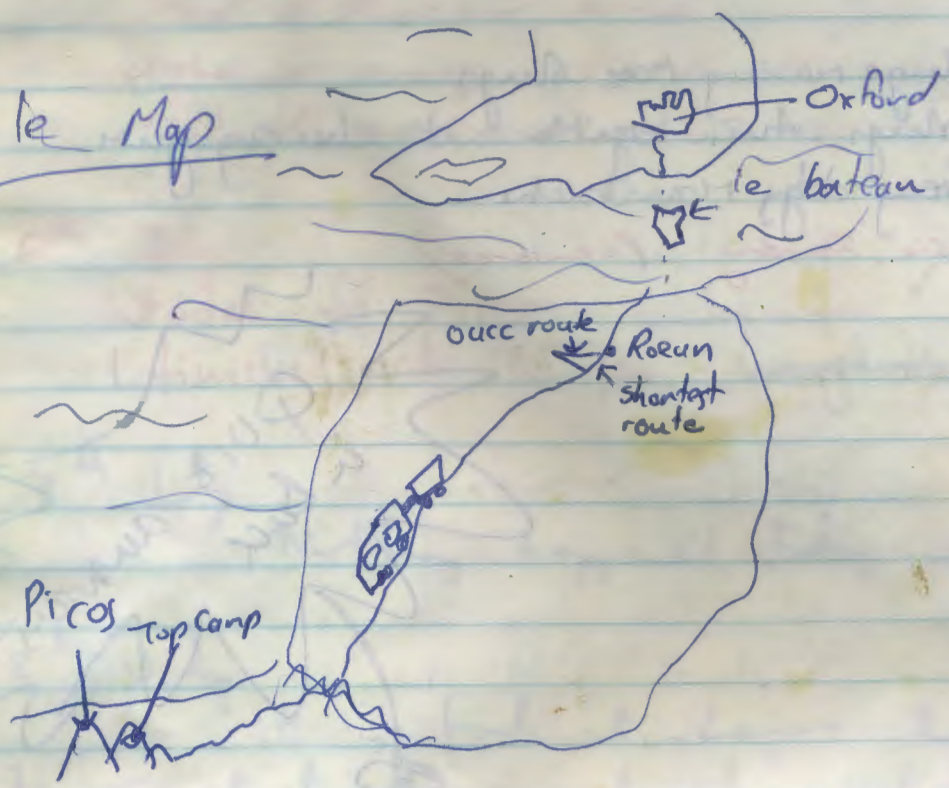
THE STORY HAS BEGUN.....

2:50 pm. Saturday 2nd July le Van Rouge leaves Oxford for le Picos de Europa.
3:30 pm. le Van Rouge breaks down.....

Gavin (on arriving at Newhaven at 8:36 pm)
"We have booked onto the 7:30 ferry.
Do you think we've missed it?".

Anette: "Ooh I want to be navigated by James"

le Map

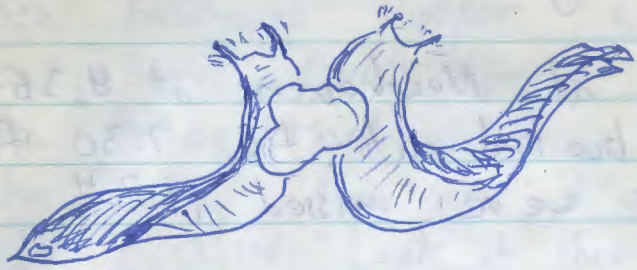


6th July 1994:

Tim arrived yesterday morning from Fuente De in the Central. Just about everyone (except Gavin and his bad feet) walked through the clag to top camp, building cairns all the while. The butterwort is in flower and the snow shone high on Verdelluenga. Lagos is horrible; but the sidra is good and Woodek knows how to pour it.

(2)

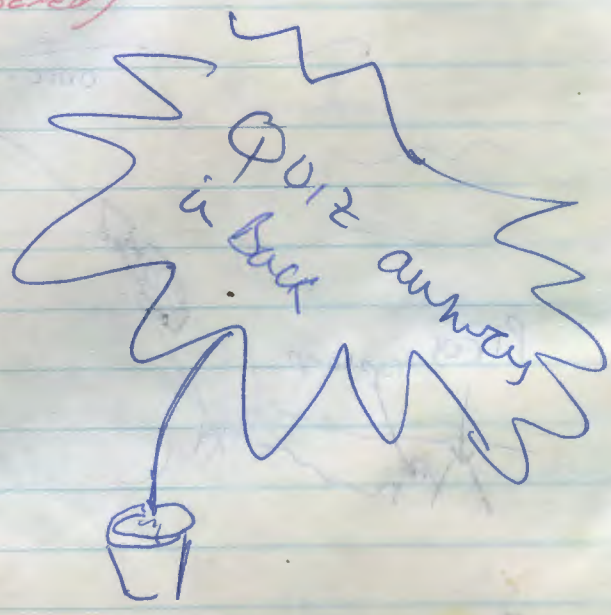
"Chris Denham is surprisingly expandable" says Mich.



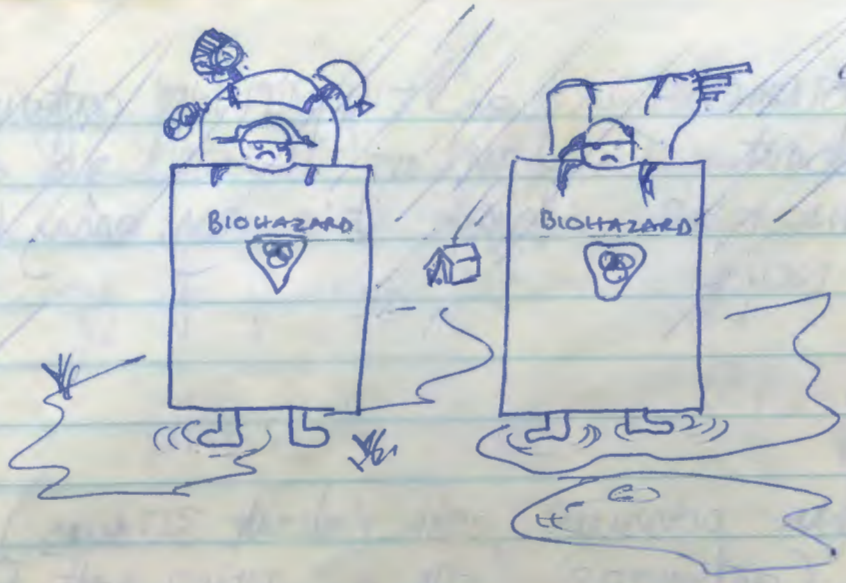
Zoological Quiz.
(1). What is this?

Answers.

Rob: two slugs making more slugs
Ben: two slugs stuck together with chewing gum.
Spoiler: A very dodgy moustache.
Paul: Pubic Parting (censored)



6th July (Still).
11.00 AM. Raining (Still).



The Biohazard boys set off for tent Camp. 11.45 am

6th July.
Pat & Richard arrive.
Which averages 80 kph Cacondango - Los Logos.
Michael writes sends his regards (end '81).

6th July
Wlodek & Pilar ".....
I finished at 11.00 pm (~~drunk~~)

7th July
Nothing happened today.

8th July
It is foul at Logos to a greater or lesser extent. Gains stopped. Wlodek went up & down. Tim went down & up. Chris & Annette went down & stayed there.

(4)

There's some houmous in a tupperware container; please eat by about Tuesday or it will go off. If you want some more, ~~though~~ it's very easy to make. Here's the recipe.

Houmous

Soak and then pressure cook (about 30 mins) some chick peas (gabanzos) (see the recipe book for instructions on cooking beans). Mash them and then add some smooth peanut butter (about ⅔ of the volume of chick peas). Stir well. You may have to add some water or oil to get a good spreading consistency. Eat on bread.

What?? This isn't Houmous!
Add lots of garlic - it's not too far off.

Sunday 10th July

Arrive, elated, at Los Lagos for my third expedition. Had an excellent journey - London Victoria to Los Lagos in 25 ¾ hours by coach and hitching. Snablet and then Richard fill me in on progress to date. So much discovered in so little time - this really is going to be a corker of an expedition. To the refugio for much drinking, before crashing out, ready for the many challenges that lie ahead.

Steve

Monday 11th July

Up at 7.30am. Beneath clear blue skies, Los Lagos is resplendent in the early morning sun. With Morriflakes in my stomach, my pack on my back and a song in my heart, I

set off for Top Camp. There's caves in them thar mountains and, somewhere, there's some as-yet-undiscovered passage with my name on. A carry of purely personal gear, I'm afraid.

Steve

What is this guy on ??

Pleasure!

17/7 We are here on a School trip! 3 teachers and 9 kids. Arrived on Wednesday through thick fog and had my glasses stolen by a drunken Spanish girl trying to get into the girls' tents. Went to the mirador de Ordiales the next day.

Took 5 hours to reach Ario when 50 people were fighting over the dribbling spring. Climbed Jultayu and Curiceuke. Major waterfight at Bobias. Now we're heading down to Langan to watch the World Cup final. Tomorrow the kids head off by themselves Amieva – Vegarciñu – Vega Huerta – Hoz – Ario – Carmameña

Splendid well-appreciated cup of tea. Thanks Sarah Jordan

Fred Wade

16/17/7

Wodeh, Tim, Snoblet, Paul

We spend all night on fiesta in Somio near Gijon. ~~Conditi~~ Paul's condition is very bad. He has black eye (from Snoblet elbow), bitch in few places by spanish girl.

17/7 3.00 pm

Snoblet is dead still.

(6)

Sunday 17 7 94
Jim "The Incredible Captain Sea"
Sara "
Arrive in Spiffin
The expedition has not reported to Cambalam
S. all is well
growing outlet
Time for some booze

Connection:
I got my thick lip from Snobbets shoulder, along with a sore knee leg and grazed hand from the car game. I have a bruised head from head-flashing with Snobbet too. The black eye came from a head butt from a spanish guy, along with a fist in the gut and a knee in the balls.

17th July.

It I have to go. It is the end of pleasure.

Pat

17/7/94

Warning! Do not leave litter around (particularly in the store tent) as it may be used in evidence against you!

18/7/94

Gavin in a cross mood this morning as he couldn't find his water bottle and he spent half the night chasing a cow away from the nibbish. That cow didn't half move fast when it saw Gavin!
Spent the day washing things. Me, the washing up, my clothes, my hair. All this would have been easier if I had found the spring earlier.

Sara
xxx

19/7/94

Arrived at Los hagos at 1930 after cycling 96 miles from Santander. The red van caught me up half way up the hill but by a miraculous act of will power I turned down Paul's offer of a lift. I was probably safer on my bike anyway. Going to spend an idle day tomorrow because everything from my feet up to my waist is knackered. (Yes, everything. That saddle rubs in some nasty places.

Dave

21/7/94

Back to the Clay off on a Small shopping trip and to contact Steve Roberts this should be fun fun fun

Ji

22/7/94

lots of boy Scouts and girl guides but it a nice day time for more Shopping in Cangas and ICE CREAM!

(or GOT Purchased) Shopping List 22/7/94 9.30 on Call

- ✓ ONIONS
- ✓ POTATOS
- ✓ ~~ORANGES~~
- ✓ SALT
- ✓ MARGARINE
- ✓ MILK POWDER
- ✓ Pepper + Spice
- ✓ SQUASH
- ✓ CHOCALATE/KAVE FOOD
- ✓ ROPE
- ✓ PLATES
- ✓ NOTE BOOK

- ✓ ~~BREAD~~
- ✓ PEANUTS
- Carbide
- tomatoes

22/7/94 5-30pm

It is wet here.

25/7/94.

"We're on expedition,
We don't have hormone problems" (J.H).

About Lea + Perrins "They only bite the hook because they want to".

26/7/94.

Devious shopping expedition needing many people to carry all the shopping & eat some of it in the sun on the sand at the beach-with-caves. At Zoy's insistence we buried him completely though its not normal behaviour for sea-turtles. Admired Spanish taste in swimming costumes - stripes with big floppy daisies on the neck/breast line... The van was unhappy on the way up the hill - weighed down by all the shopping so we sent Ws + Steve P off to hitch-hike (so one could pick Zoy up) & had to collect an also rejected Steve on the way.

I kept my 10lb on! Harney

Harney Smith's Sex Tips for Beginners

No. 1 - Always keep your socks on. It avoids getting cold feet. The collected response being - Surely you get cold feet before asking, not doing...

Janis's instructions for coping with 24hr French Service Station - Take out your card & see if the ~~[illegible]~~ kit.

Additions to the recipe book

- cooking chicken on over-heating radiator produces the Harney special 'Coq au Vare'.

Harvey claims that when he waves his arms about, something warm & meaty appears in his hands.

We had joy, we had fun, [illegible] the ground

Cheers :- Judithea and

29/7/94

I am taking down the yellow blue tent (for old lags - there's Polish tent). Please do not put it up again as it has been gored by a foraging cow. Which woke up to the sound of ripping - not amused - & became less amused on racing outside to find grinning Spaniards untying the ripping & smiling Hungarians who denied noticing a cow attacking a tent only a few metres from where they were packing rucksacks.

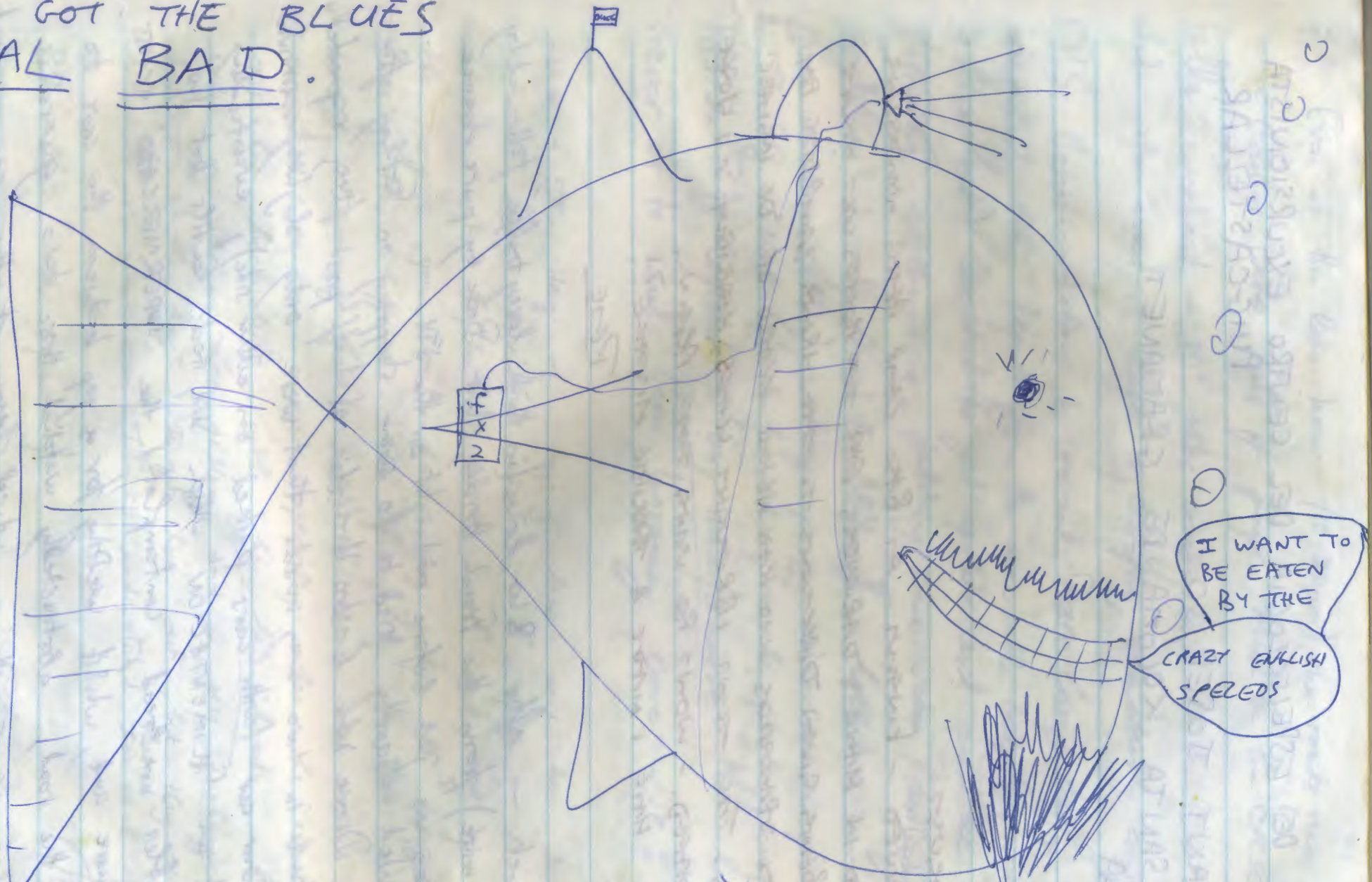
"I'm not a dangerous caver
I just follow Wlodek" (J.H).

31/7/94

Meet 6 Spanish cavers in the bar, wearing 'Sistema del Jitu -1135m' T-shirts. Average age about 17. They are the second group; the first has already rigged as far as The Gap. One of them is female - she wants to know if she's going to be the first woman to reach the Sump. We told her that she probably wasn't, but does anyone know for sure? Tried to get some of their T-shirts off them, but they say they've sold them all. Nonetheless, we gave them our address. Theirs is :-

(P.T.O.)

WE'VE GOT THE BLUES
REAL BAD.



Du soll im Brunfisch sein? Schau ehr aus wie im Wolf.

TERRY THE TUNA

"VERY VEGGY"

11

(12)

SECCION DE ESPELEOLOGIA DEL CENTRO EXCURSIONISTA PUIGCASTELLAR

ROUD SANT JOSEP, 20
08922 SANTA KOLOMA DE GRAMANET
BARCELONA
SPAIN

5TH AUGUST

ARRIVED – FINALLY – AT BASE CAMP AFTER WANDERING AROUND IN MANK & DARKNESS FOR TWO HOURS LAST NIGHT AFTER BEING GIVEN DIRECTIONS TO THE WRONG CAMP SITE BY VARIOUS SPANIARDS WHO HAD NEVER HEARD OF DE INGLASE SPELEOS. THE TENT I BROUGHT LEAKS HORRIBLY & I WOKE UP SOAKED. – WON'T BE USING THAT AGAIN.

HAVE I MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE?!

PETE

6TH August – after 8 hr drive (in thick lorry traffic followed by thick mist) from the French Border, hit Base by pure chance in zero vis just before midnight on the 5TH.

We'd valiantly tried to do some shopping on Friday afternoon. Drove into Castro Urdiales at half past five, repeatedly got stuck in two-way roads that were only slightly narrower than our car (with cars parked on either side), eventually found an 'ALIMENTACIÓN' which did stock lentils but no vegetables nor bread, contemplated the 'SUPERMERCADO' across the square and, whilst waiting for a gap between the cars to cross the road, abstractedly watched these two guardias playing games with a wheel clamp at the car parked in front of ours.. Well the town seemed too small for the four of us so we left, fast.

JLG

P.S. Even at the late hour (10:30pm), the roads near Arriondas & in Cangas were full of people. Must be the 'Descenso del Sella' weekend — 10^6 folks coming to watch the world's biggest white water event... Lagos is, therefore, remarkably empty.

P.P.S. Commendations to recent Base Camp staff, it's singularly tidy (apart from the inevitable tadpole pond in the kitchen tent). Decided to get up late and spend the day festering acclimatising, fetching some water (sterilizing tablets anywhere?!? only found the Miltons, so lobbed a some Micropur from my own cellar), washing up a minor number of items.

[Then G. decided to spoil her first holiday day by going to the camp with some heavy load *

P.P.P.S. This logbook is very uninformative No clues whatsoever as to what's been happening cave-wise!

— G.

17h 20 - This day of keeping base camp has been more ~~enter~~ entertaining since a big spanish luxus bus got hopelessly stuck in the mud; if you look around the campsite, you won't have any problem to recognize where exactly this happened. Was funny to see how a well dressed driver, transmogrified into a not so well dressed garagist — reminded me some carers, especially when he started digging out his backwheels with his bare hands... It still needed a dozen men pulling and a jeep pushing (don't look too close at the knots) to get him out, but they succeeded in the end. Was sorry I don't understand that much spanish...

Ilkd

| P.S. I hate those pencils. |

* and coming back the same nights left at 2pm.]

7 Aug 94 (14)

Right let's try to make this logbook marginally more informative to those who're still expected to arrive.

Hello Steve! Hello Wookey!

(1) This is Base Camp. It is normally unguarded. The van keys are in the trailer and Jim ought to have let you know where the trailer keys are. There are some tent spaces and eskimo bags here for your convenience.

The white container with the red lid is, at the time of this writing, the more recently filled one. I lobbed some silver tablets in.

The choughs are getting far more courageous than ever before... * →

(2) Top Camp has wandered c. 250m NNE and downhill to where the multicoloured snow pole is. There are caves going on either side of La Vardellvenga with depths of ~500m and ~300m reached. The former seems excellently placed to lead into the bowels of 217 catchment... Shaft bashing is also proceeding well (well... passing from question marks to crossed-outs, most of the time...)

(3) Six Barcelonese are rigging into Xitu. Latest I heard (yesterday afternoon) was that they'd reached the head of Pythagoras ~720m down, so they're getting close to the old bivouac site.

I have a mind of telling them s.th. Dave Rose told me once, concerning possible leads – beginning at the head of the Flyer... don't know how much time they're going to spend looking for continuations, apart from tourist caving, but this is a unique possibility – and I rather suspect there's an entire fossilised subsystem there awaiting discovery. Maybe there'll be a joint multinational Xitu follow-up Expedition one of these years?

G.

(* So are the cows. Last night one vaca spent hours trying to wrestle a rubbish bin from its steel pillar.)

(4) Don't ask me how the Kitty works or where the money is kept – I haven't found out yet.

G.

1994.08.08

Work & Andy arrive at about 1am Mon morning. We were truly astonished at the shiteness of the 'big road atlas of Spain' from the AA. DO NOT BUY, I am a victim. Had conflicting info on cost of Spanish motorways so tried one road St Sebastian were shocked by the £10 we had to pay for 50 miles so got off sharpish, only to discover that in the next region they were free (and the road names keep changing)

We come from the Pyrenees near PAU, starting at about 2.30pm.

got lots of traffic just past Binsky & more on N634 where motoring is still being conducted.
After that it went fine all the way to Coradoya. Then we headed up to Los Lagos and the rig was appalling - couldn't use dipped cos lights kept going out & temp gauge was knackered too.
Instructions said 'Drive past 1st lake', but there was no chance of seeing any lakes!
Eventually got to a refuge & end of road. Wandered about & found campsite full of spaniards - no sign of red van, or any other english cars.
Traced road back, re-found my van & came down to campsite - using headlights we found Red Van - hooray. However no-one here so we went to bed.

Well done for the helpful info for our benefit - the only thing it didn't tell us was where top camp actually is! Fortunately given & pete arrived before we tried setting off in to direction of Arro / Vertalluenga in the hope of finding it.

Worthy
(& Andy Atkinson)

Even you wouldn't have found it by description.

8/8/94

Steve arrives

via ~~Plane~~ Bus, Train, Seacat - Train Metro ~~Train~~ Train Bus, Hitch Hitch. / Incidents

1) Nearly miss train in Paris owing to failure to reset watch to French Time.

2) Browbeat beaureacratic Frog conductor into submission on behalf of three dishy German hussets who are missing part of their Interrail paperwork. He goes away defeated. Germans fail to rip my clothes off in gratitude

3) At Irun use LOCAL KNOWLEDGE to walk from Irun station to Tavitrans bus depot - 2 miles away at the Frontier Bridge. When I get there, I find they have moved it ... to - just outside Irun rail station.

4) Fail to get picked up at Arriondas by team shopping by 10 mins, Hitch up again in v 1½ hrs. Hoorah!
Get in bar with Andy + Steve + Gavin

HOLA ESPAÑA!

(18)

11/8/94

ZASADZKA!
No Base Camp.

12/8/94

Ok, now that we've recovered a little, I'll explain. Got down at lunchtime yesterday to find every single tent flattened apart from the yellow 'n' grey Wild Country one. Scotched any thoughts of going back up the hill, and set to work clearing up, together with Andy, Wlodek and Alex who had also walked down. Surprisingly enough, it wasn't the cows that had contributed to the damage, but it must have been the storm on Tuesday (9/8/94) night. Damage sustained:

Gavin's green tent: Inner ok, but fly completely ripped down main ridge. Might be repairable with a sewing machine, but not here. Had to pack it up (before the rain came down) whilst slightly damp. Now in trailer.

Steve's Polish tent: Miraculously enough sustained the least damage. One bent tent pole. Mind you, that might have been from the car that ran over the tent. Andy did something miraculous to the tent pole and the tent is now up and functional again.

Tim's green tent: Fortunately it had been taken down and put in Gavin's tent so it was undamaged by the storm. However it was damaged at the rear (the metal hole was missing) and Alex

I told you to bring the hole-maker, Gavin!

reinforced the material with tape and Andy fortunately had one of those metal hole-makers with spare holes, so we were able to put that up as well, which was just as well otherwise we wouldn't have had anything to sleep under.

Stormhaven: What can I say? It wasn't. We found a tangled mass of ropes, cloth, glass, mess, yuck. Unfortunately there was damage to the cloth of the tent, at the place where it's supposed to hold the main ridge pole. It <u>might</u> be reparable back in England, but it certainly isn't out here. When the main ridge pole came down it smashed the light, smashing glass and gauze. Possibly the rest might still live to face another day.

Contents of Stormhaven: Mostly undamaged, as the tent remainder managed to act as a big tarpaulin, keeping <u>most</u> of the rain off. Things escaped mostly about as uncathed as this log book.

Red van was moved to the area, and food loaded into it. Went for a shopping trip in the Workmobile with Andy and Wlodek, after having recharged Porsche batteries. Wlodek was not a happy Wlodek, and consequently drank lots of red wine, and consequently I would urge you never to put a drunk Wlodek in charge of a shopping trolley. Only got 10 loaves of bread as I only have 10 fingers. This morning Wlodek vuroomed off to shop mae as we've eaten lots of bread and eggs. Phew.

(& WHO WROTE THIS?)

Oh. Sorry. It was me. Shaun.

(22)

Cuisine à la façon de Alex

Peanut butter sandwich:

~~Be~~ Tear off 9" length of bread.
Smear end with peanut butter
Bite off P'B'd end.
Repeat until no bread left.

Gastronomique!

12/8/94
I have to head off home now, reluctantly. It's a pity that I can't be here for the last week, but I do hope that you all have a good week + journey back. Personally, I've had a great time and look forward to more coming back in the UK — and to Spain next year!
Enjoy your beach party and see you in Oxford for BCRA.

Steve P.

There was a young caver called James
Who found life was all fun + games
~~But~~ Now we've got the dirt
on how he got the shirt --
But then, ... we're not naming names!

— o O ○ o o —

There's also our Sharon + Gavin
They don't find much time to go cavin'(*)
The peaks echo round
With the rythmical sound
Of the fun + the games that they're havin'

"The only part of me that feels stiff is my left buttock" – Dave Lacey

HUH. I ~~thought~~ we were most quiet.

* sorry.

22

Then there's the caver called John
Half of our drinking times' gone
We've changed, in the van
While this dawdling young man
decides which sack to put on...

— o o O o o —

Then there's the charming Michelle
She goes down like a bat out of hell
But it's such a bitch —
- She curses each pitch -
When you've got to climb back out as well!

Wtodek's a speleo-pole
A nutter, if truth's to be tol'
He outpaces big rocks
And ~~Pa~~ tumbling blocks
As they rattle & roar down the hole.

— o o O o o —

To clear caves the crumbly Steve
has got a few tricks up his sleeve
The squeals, farts & howls
From his festering bowels
Cause cavers to rapidly leave...

Who's down F64 on his own? He
can only be our young friend Tony.
Why play with a hand
If you've got a good hand*
Teams are a load of baloney.

(* For bolting, of course).

— o O O o o —

Whenever there's a crap gap, Have fun

- Name for entrance to infh. at bottom of entrance pitch of C9 = "Crap Gap" (Double entendre - i.e. Harvey hates this bit of tortuous cave)

There was a young man called
Steve Phipps
He swears through the squeeze, he slips
slips
But the ladies of Canuck
Throw him into a panic panack
As he sticks by the ears, feet + hips.

There was an old coner called Pete,
Being from
~~Oxford~~ ~~Thought~~ Bradford, thought he could take the heat,
But on very first pitch
~~[redacted]~~ just made his feet itch
'Cause at Oxford its meters not feet.

John: "What rhymes with Frederick?"
Pete: "Big Dick!"
Frederick Alex replying: "That's hardly appropriate!"

(26)

~~There was~~

And then theres the cover called Dave,
Who thought himself rather brave,
But two days in the Pheak
Turned his bowels rather weak.
So he Shitted all over the cove

So we come to Mommy Smith
Who on his last night got rather pitted*
So he chosed an old cow
to Ercina somehow.
But he still had his sons to play with

---

* and sorry about the rather tenuous rhyme, but were all rather pitted ourselves

?

Alex, or should we say Frederich
On his Birthday had an epic
At the end of C9,
He thought he was fine,
Until he got left behind by Wisdom

17/8/94

1) Claggy (as usual).
2) Van a tip (as usual).
3) Vine Tinto carton not empty (not as usual).

2-30 : SGK, having had longer carry down than
[illegible] to working on #3 above

18/8/94

Some of those limericks rhyme. Some of them scan.
It's a pity none do both.

28

18 Aug 1994

The bug's going round...
now it's got me.

Gerhard

El Van Rouge:
"SEATING CAPACITY 11 PASSENGERS"

Mr Lacey.
"EATING CAPACITY 3 CAVERS (EQUIV.)"

19/8/94 Beach Party!

James & Steve + Pete build sandcastles, Steve loses his wallet & finds it again.

We swim into caves at Playa del Cuevas del Mar.

WE'RE GOING HOME!

and

21/8/94

You can tell we're bored – we've been playing French number-plate bingo ...
Emmental cheese yummy with French bread though!
Don't let Gavin go to a French barber – he'll end up getting a horse-cut (!). Also there exists a weird French mint-flavoured ice lolly labelled "Zit!".

Sharon xx

22/8/94

Grugh. 4.45 am, and then we still have to queue for ages...

Still, as Simon 'n' Garfunkel say, we're "Homeward Bound".