

Picos 1991 Top Camp Log Book — YUCPC

Wednesday, 10th July

Arrived at Top Camp (Steve, John, Andy and Dave) at 9p.m. Lots of snow. Discovered gear store (M1) under snow. Went back down to base camp.

Thursday, 11th July

Arrived at Top Camp (all four). Played in snow and went sledging.

ESTHER, TO DAVE — *"Is Andrew your Leader? He is very thick."*

Friday, 12th July

Went and dug out M1; not all the pots and pans had been washed up from the previous year; also found many tins of meat balls and tuna in M1 - members were allowed to look at them. Set up Top Camp. Went back down hill early afternoon.

Dave returned on last carry at 11:40p.m.

Saturday, 13th July

John and Steve, having set off at 6 a.m.(!), arrived at 9:20 a.m.; Andrew much later, after having breakfast at Base Camp.

Dave, John and Steve with Esther set off for β 47. Due to memory loss, we could not find the cave. Went to look at β 31 (next to β 10). John inserted himself into a very tight canyon (*at the bottom of the entrance pitch*) in shorts and T-shirt - ripped his shorts and sunburn.

Juan (pronounced Kwan) found β 47. Steve and Dave went in to rig. Dave Heatherington and Paul Eastwood obviously didn't like Spits. Steve went out early with knee problems (old war wounds). Esther made it to the top of the second pitch. Dave and John continued to top of the 50.5 m pitch.

DAVE, ABOUT β 47 — *"..behind the small grey knobble
by the snow, near the sheep."*

Sunday, 14th July

Andrew and Dave followed after Esther and Spanish to β 47 for an evening cave. Removed knot change over [*pitch 2*], rerigged pitch 3 and rigged pitches 6 to 9 (up to Baby Bouncer). Arrived at Top Camp at 5 a.m.

Monday, 15th July

JOHN'S 1ST DAY. [*What ever that refers to.*] Rigging with Nester. [*They rigged the next three pitches.*]

Tuesday, 16th July

Dave and Andrew went shaft bashing in β -area on limestone bulge beyond $\beta 47$ (from $\beta 6$). Mostly snow plugged. One joint controlled 'shaft' choked at 5 m given \otimes but no name. In channel next to $\beta 47$ water heard sinking through rocks next to blocked snow plug. Appeared too tight - snow plug promising.

Thursday, 18th July

Dave, Steve and Andrew rigged remainder of $\beta 47$ and looked at un-descended pitch. Went down at 5 p.m. and came out at 9 a.m.

DAVE, *"Next time I go through Rip Start, I'll go through with nothing on."*

Friday, 19th July

[Pete and John] took bolt driver (*Bosch*) and 30 m rope in. Engineered 4 m pitch out of Secret Meander. Put 70 m of rope down next pitch (with knots) but bolt gun ran out of steam after 4½ holes. Cave continues BIG with un-descended pit of 25 m+.

Saturday, 20th July

[Dave and Pete] took 45 m of rope to previous limit. Dropped next pitch 20 m+ into large chamber with inlet stream (*aven*). Large fissure opposite with jammed boulder - needs climbing.

Other places to look for ways on are the ramp just below the 1st rebelay on the 85 m pitch and two windows on the 35 m pitch.

ANDREA TO PETE, *"Why don't you give me a broom
to stick up my arse
so that I can sweep the floor as well."*

Sunday, 21th July

Dave and Andrew went and did some surface surveying in β -area.

[John and Steve went] shaft bashing. Found $\beta 911$. Located on highest point on way to $\beta 47$ up to right. Large cave entrance found lower down gully from $\beta 47$. Abseiled down for 20-30 ft. Around corner still going. Rocks fall another 20-30 ft down snow. Not marked.

DAVE ABOUT QUOTES, *"None of the things I say are stupid..."*

DAVE ABOUT ANNE, *"She's got lots of squashable bits."*

Monday, 22nd July

[Dave] went down $\beta 10$ with Spanish. Large cave - you can even walk along the runoff between ramps.

John and Steve went down [$\beta 47$] with two Bosch batteries to attempt a bolt climb. Re-rigged 50.5 m pitch on new 10 mm rope. Requires a 10 m piece of tat(???) to complete the rig at the top and release the 'naff' 62 m. Lengthened the loops on the 80 m due to the fact you could not get more than three rack bars on. On the last pitch, placed second bolt into wall near the bolt with no wedge to make Y-hang.

Put six rawl bolts on bolt climb, but due to shitty rock only three were any good to climb on. Top left hand bolt as you face the wall should not be used as it is not placed correctly. Way on looks more promising from view on third bolt.

Tuesday, 23rd July

Andrew and Steve went shaft bashing near β 47. β 911 was found to be marked with extremely faded paint; something like β 16 Y/S \otimes . Went down β 913.

[Dave] went on first pushing trip in K903 with Philippe. Following the climb at E4 the way becomes constricted in places. At base of 15 m pitch, the downstream continuation leads to small chamber. Continuation along constricted passage leads to stream which is about 2 m wide and knee deep.

Wednesday, 24th July

Steve went with Andrew, John, Pete and Bob to β 47, but forgot Ariane base (convenient excuse) and came back to Top Camp. Went down as far as Baby Bouncer looking for ways on. None found. Took rope to rig top of 50 m. Forgot spanner. Forgot what happened on rest of trip. Forgot....

The others made it to the bottom and continued the bolt climb up to 15 m from where the boulder choke was free climbable. The roof was in sight with no promising way through.

Thursday, 25th July

Pete and family made the one hour walk from camp to π 906. Situated near 'bear' cave. Obvious entrance rift on fault. 20 m pitch from daylight with ICE on the walls. Pitch of 10 m un-descended due to light failure. 34 m rope left in place.

Friday, 26th July

Vaughan and Chris went to look at the 'hole in the wall' on P35 [β 47]. Rigged upper window, with 9 m pitch into blind pot (Piss Pot). 3 m up wall is draughting rift with tight section for 2-3 m (not passed). Larger passage is visible at the end.

Pete and Jean-Pierre had an excellent trip to the previous limit of K903. Good ropes and rigging. KNOT changes on 70 m and 130 m.

From previous limit continued horizontal for 100 m to muddy fissure. Descended 10-20 m to siphon. Probable depth 680 m checked with altimeter. Crawl over siphon in muddy tube continued for 50 m+ (draughting in) but stopped by constriction.

At 670 m draughting tube dug for 2 m and continues. Requires 2 m+ of digging (entrenching tool would be useful). Probable way on.

Saturday, 27th July

Found hole in large depression beyond stone rings (H area). Short drop led to chamber.

Continued to π906 [arriving 4 hours after leaving top camp] [where Dave and Vaughan] placed two bolts following traverse at head of 2nd pitch. Used Black and Decker. Very effective - a little slower than the Bosch. Didn't descend due to lack of spanner and hammer.

Sunday, 28th July

John, Annie, Chris G. and Andrew took survey gear into β47. Andrew did not get past the corner(?) in Rip Start and came out. Three hours to Chapel of Rest. De-rigged boulder choke. Chris took out a full sack of rope to the surface. Annie and John surveyed C of R. Took Bosch, rope, etc. to bottom of 35 m pitch with windows. Came out.

Vaughan, Jerry and Dave went for a long walk - via π(or H)906 - code named 'ICE CAVE ZEBRA' or 'CUEVA DE HIELO CEBRA' which was pushed down two further pitches. We walked back along the fault into π-area. Several interesting holes need looking at. In far K-area (beyond and below K903) are several interesting shafts.

Jerry had a look at some holes up the valley from π906. Heavily undermined area of pavement. Most holes can be climbed down. One required 11 m abseil. All choked with snow and rocks. Holes are about 100 m uphill from π906.

ANDREW ABOUT RIP START, *"I'm too thin to get through"*

Monday, 29th July

Jerry pushed the π906 down two further pitches to a snow ramp where the way on becomes blocked. Dave and Dave Mid. surveyed down the cave.

VAUGHAN, *"This time the chances are I'm going to get shafted."*

Tuesday, 30th July

It Rained.

We Ate.

We Played Silly Games.

Wednesday, 31st July

Still foggy and windy.

Steve, Dave, Vaughan and Chris go down β47 to de-rig and photograph the final chamber. Descended at 15:30 after extended lunch, dinner and snack; no port and cigars though. Walk over to find Steve's furry hasn't gone walkies; hence he has to go caving. Four hours to bottom after Vaughan re-rigged the ever increasing loops on the 80 m. Took some photos of final chamber and pitches. Blew up one of Steve's flash guns.

On outward trip de-rigged final pitch to find we (Vaughan and Steve) only had one rope bag to put over 75 m of rope in - Dave and Chris had escorted the other two Classics out beyond Rip Start. Excess rope from final chamber and next two pitches was dragged through cave until Dave was in shouting distance. De-rigging continued to top of 80 m pitch.

Dave and I (Steve) followed Vaughan and Chris out. Rope on exit to Baby Bouncer was caught about 10 ft up. Had to use combined tactics to retrieve it. Uneventful exit apart from Dave lobbing choss at me down the 50 m pitch. Be warned, the top is loose. Please be careful.

Got out at 7 a.m. to find lentil dinner at top camp (YUK).

Thursday, 1st August

Miguel and Chris G. went shaft bashing in I-area.

I9103. Evil looking shaft in I-area near I36, seems to be at "point of contact" between limestone and whatever there is to be in contact with (although that is probably wrong), just under Peña Santa. 50 m rope only got to ice ledge. STILL the possibility that it continues although looking down didn't reveal anything. Nice position.

Various small entrances in I-area dug. All unmarked. None continued.

Unmarked entrance low down in same valley used to get to K903. Continue down valley just past an overhanging wall on left (with a cave in it). Triangular entrance on R.H.S. of valley with upper entrance. Nice narrow passage leads to an inlet and a too-tight pot. Real wet pitch - would need explosive to pass.

Sunday, 4th August

All complained about $\beta 47$ 'dragging on' so three of us (Dave, Andrew and John) went down to de-rig and/or look at phreatic windows in 35 m pitch, two below Glorious Leader.

De-rigged four classics (to bottom of 50 m) and then daisy chained rest of rope. Took photos of 32 m, ramp by 4 m, 50 m, top 50 m and chamber by bottom of 20 m. Hauled all gear out and put it by entrance. Only took 11½ hours.

Vaughan and Steve went shaft bashing in π -area. Found cave in entrance opposite $\pi 912$ ($\pi 912$ is a \otimes). Come back in 200 000 years or with 20 kg of bang.

Monday, 5th August

John, Dave and Andrew went to photograph and de-rig the snow route in Ice Cave Zebra. Following the de-rig we (John) climbed from the fossil ramp into window by tension traverse.

The window gained access to a shaft - three second drop followed by a four second trundle. A window in the north wall of this shaft leads to further shaft. A Bosch back-up leads to a Y-hang (natural and Bosch). 15 m down you land on a thin bridge where the lateral shaft joins. To the East a short traverse leads to a further shaft which joins up with the other two shafts below. The Northern most side gives a good free hang, but the Bosch bolt took a fall factor 1½ when the '60' kg natural (Y-hang rebelay) detached itself from the bridge - destroying a twisty and maillon. Bosch bolt can be used for deviation - but should not be used on its own. Below the shaft appears to slope to the north.

One Bosch battery placed 3½ bolts whilst the other placed 2½. The Bosch chuck is crap.

Tuesday, 6th August

Annie and Jerry went for a tourist trip down the French Cave. Found a bypass to the squeeze at the base of the big pitches. Climb up boulders above rope climb, then traverse in top of rift (scary in places!), followed by climb down rift in water. After that we got lost! Stayed too high in the rift and kept going till we realised we were a long way above the bottom. Came out.

Vaughan, Dave Mid., and Steve went to push the pitch Dave Milne had gardened. Re-rigged bottom pitch. Various windows on either side were investigated on the way down, all with no lead. Bottom of pitch is an impenetrable choss floor. The far wall could probably be gardened away until a complete cave system is through (ie, its loose). We all descended to the bottom and dug a hole in the floor to no avail. Went out; got cold. Went to find $\pi 902/3$; found it. Went back to Top Camp.

Wednesday, 7th August

John, Dave and Andy photographed and surveyed the extension for $\pi 906$. Following we looked at various windows in Tail pitch. These varied from shafts coming down, oxbow shafts and phreatic tubes.

Saturday, 10th August

Walked up after shopping trip. John still in base camp suffering from ? He's got all the vital supplies in his rucksack. Mornflake running low (Yippee!).

John Arrives.

Went to look at un-marked hole in I-area, just down from big hole, in rock plate with large bridge to the west side. Took photos of Bosch and Black and Decker drills. Pete joined us. Went to look at I41.

Also found an interesting through trip, I16 (?). Andrew had fun. John finished reading my book. Boredom ends.

Sunday, 11th August

Dave and Steve practiced photography down K903 - film not winding on. Steve found it necessary to find a new bypass to the squeeze - ten foot in rift above.

John and Pete popped to the bottom. Duck is not a duck - but a muddy bit. Lake is deep and 4 m across in places - possibly a sump. Phreatic on other side an inlet - no draught. possible way on in chamber above - up 15 m mud bank - draughting outwards.

Monday, 12th August

Dave, Andrew and John revisited $\beta 6$ to look at 'Chris's' window. Andrew started to rig - Dave took over. Took 4/5 photos. Found nothing new.

Tuesday, 13th August

Andrew and John looked at side rift in $\beta 6$ from * on plan opposite. Took helmet off in v. narrow bit. No draughts. Derigged out. All tackle back at top camp.

Dave and Steve went to $\pi 902/3$. Dave sat around. Steve rigged $\pi 902$ - snow plugged - various windows - one with obvious surface entrance - $\pi 903$. Steve did a wonderful rig for $\pi 903$. Snow 'ramp' initially follows major

joint - then turns right to rebelay - snow ends. Awkward slot - which Steve had problems with (being fat) - leads to start of ramp -blocked at end?! Overflow rift (required hammering) v. tight - bells out below for about 10—15 m. This pitch head requires more bashing for mere mortals to pass.

Bosch chuck is crap - lost 8 mm bit. Battery put in three bolts.

Wednesday, 14th August

John and Andrew go down K903. Andrew rigs entrance pitch with advice from John. Go down to top of P131. Leave bolting and survey equipment there. Dave goes walkies to Cares Gorge via Cain. Steve does carry down. Spanish leave giving us lots of food.

Thursday, 15th August

Ate lots of food. Dave away - unable to help (stop) us.

Friday, 16th August

Steve and Andrew popped down K901 (New Rift Pot). Rigged and de-rigged and took photos of big 'rescue chamber'. Lots of 'extra' spits on the pitch head probably due to rescue. One spit on first rebelay of second pitch has three cracks emanating from it in the rock. Advice - don't use it. Good one further down. No new leads found. Enjoyed 19 second rattle.

John and Pete bashed slot in π 902 for 2½ hours. Got bored. Looked at hole near π 103 and K903. Pushed connection to K903 top entrance.

Saturday, 17th August

John and Dave went to K903/912 to photograph, survey bottom and de-rig. I decided with so few cavers about that it wasn't sensible to go as far as the bottom. De-rigged as requested by French. Re-flashed cave and this time the film wound on.

Andrew and Steve went to far β -area (above β 10). Found small unobvious entrance - β 9150

Sunday, 18th August

John and Andrew surveyed new entrance to K903. Marked it as K903.

Monday, 19th August

John broke Land Rover chassis in Soto.

Tuesday, 20th August

Began carry downs and packing.