

# 1) SLOVENIA '98 : TO -1000M (WELL, ALMOST!)

FRI 17<sup>th</sup> JULY

Early flight tomorrow so last bus to airport (Aberdeen) in evening and camp out in a field near the viewing area. Fortunately, despite rain earlier in day, the sky cleared up and there were only a few slugs crawling over me in the morning.

SAT 18<sup>th</sup> JULY

The journey was absolutely pants. 0650 flight ABZ → LGW. 1240 flight LGW → LJU with a load of <sup>overexcited</sup> school kids and a very very long wait in between shopping for sunglasses and duty free films. The last flight was late in arriving at LJU so making it to Tolmin tonight was out of the question. A 6am bus to Ljubljana after changing money in a machine at the 'aerodome'. After an icecream in the trendy cafe society of the capital I whiled away the evening in the park close to the bus station and had a warm sleepless night on a patch of grass sandwiched between the main road and the railway line.

SUN 19<sup>th</sup> JULY

A 6-15AM bus to Tolmin took around 3hrs to arrive, broken by a cafe crawl on route and 2 <sup>tablespoons of</sup> free/coffee courtesy of the bus conductor who wanted me to go swimming with him. After scanning the best eats in Tolmin for any signs of <sup>or van</sup> caver and finding them all closed, I had an ice cream (-the next best thing to a pizza) and started up the hill by the path almost immediately. Reaching Ranne almost without stopping I found a bunch of mates ~~at~~ <sup>looking</sup> outside the farmers house, quite at home, the reason being that it was deemed unsafe to live in and the farmer had moved out after the earthquake (In fact this had been home for the last week while they ~~had~~ <sup>had been</sup> carrying kit up the mountain and the whole building including hot shower and flushing loo had been taken over). <sup>A group of guides who had come off the mountain sung us a song before departing.</sup> The heat of the day delayed the stomp to the bivvy until late afternoon. I, sprinting for the top, took the route to the bivvy via the <sup>new</sup> landslide at the face of Migovec given that noone had told me that this section was hopelessly unstable and frightening to cross. The groups first night at the bivvy was notable for the 5-min bottle of Baileys and a fine curry around the fire followed by a fine clear night under the stars.

MON 20<sup>th</sup> JULY

Cooked chappattis all morning, enough to feed 5000, then went carving after lunch. Intending to do a bounce trip to the Hotel Tolminka with <sup>Mad</sup> Martin with a couple of light but bulky bags each, we spent 7 hours to get to the bottom of XXX pitch and made the right decision to dump the kit there and get out at a reasonable hour. Jan + Tetley

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set up a stash of survival goodies at Bikini Carwash (brewkit, carbide, shit kit and sound system) but Martin performed a rescue on Blondie and a few batteries which had been accidentally dropped in the rift. Although we'd had a memorable moment at Spirit of Elvis and got lost in Exhibition Road on the way in we headed out in a caravan of 4 without incident being joined by another couple, Clewin + Phill, at Titanic after pushing this likely lead. Non-carried tortellini welcomed us back at the bivvy and the rescue team were kept awake 'til 3am when Jim + Muck returned from a rerigging/exploration trip in the Stal Extensions.

TUES 21st

Another hot and sunny, boil in the tent, morning which turned into another hot and sunny 'but who cares 'cos we're going caving' afternoon. A British University start to the trip down Titanic with Phil to push at the end and survey ~~made~~ a fast descent, stops burning down Britannic and bolting the next undescended pitch 'Olympic' at somewhat less speed. Despite our belief that this pitch was near bottomless it turned out to be a ~40m freehang unfortunately <sup>the rift continuation was</sup> blocked at the bottom with 2 stubborn boulders so we had no choice but to turn back and survey out. Due to a lack of tape measure we gave the surveying a miss and just headed out. Unable to keep up with Phil I struggled out from hothine alone and arrived totally shattered <sup>and dehydrated</sup> back at the bivvy around ~~midnight~~ <sup>eleven</sup>, hardly able to chew the curry put under my nose.

WED 22nd

A well earned dos day where I had pleasure in doing as little as possible. Cooked spag. bol for 15 people eaten with bivvi bread and angel delight

THURS 23rd

About time that the camping team got themselves together but only really myself and Tetley were prepared, and wanted, to go camping - the others being either to unfit injured or more interested in rerigging/other higher leads - and we were a day out of sync for <sup>long</sup> caving trips. It being Phil's last day on the mountain he and I considered doing a bounce trip to the Hotel including rerigging Powaden, but as there were already 5 bags left within easy reach of the Hotel it seemed unnecessary to take ~~the~~ <sup>down</sup> the last 2 bags required when the camping team could do this themselves. Hence we packed a heavy bag of digging kit (crowbar, hammers, chisel etc) and a complete surveying kit and went underground before noon (just) with big intentions to push the bottom of Titanic, now at approx. -450m. An hour down to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Titanic traverse in Exhibition Road where we dumped the bag and continued for a tourist trip down to Bikini Carwash. This had been made into a decorated grotto with mellow candles hung

around the walls, orange bivvi sacks to sit on and an up-and-running surround-a-sound. (As if you really want to spend time in this mediocre set up, just get yourself together and get out the cave where there's dry sleeping bags, a warm fire and a selection of tasty hot or cold foods.... but anyway...) Returned to Titanic and descended to the blocked rift left on Tuesday. Caving was a heavenly experience without a tackle bag I can tell you! - Actually enjoyable! Using the crow bar and chock stones we eased the boulder over, tantalisingly balanced on one edge, but enough to unblock the rift. Drove in one spit, rigged it and I descended through the squeeze, descender on a cavstail. Very tight. It was a goer with a <sup>decent</sup> pitch - bang, bang, splash - almost immediately. Returned through the squeeze with some difficulty, drove in another bolt to eliminate the rub point and Phil went down to bolt the next pitch while I widened the squeeze with hammer and spike. The next pitch (~40m) <sup>'Canberra'</sup> was rigged with the <sup>rope from the</sup> Olympic pitch pulled tight and that way, if you were lucky enough to land perched on a boulder on the pitch floor, you wouldn't break a leg when you abseiled off the end of the rope. The rift continued obviously at the far end of the chamber but we didn't have enough rope to rig the next pitch. Also there was a lead from a swing <sup>across</sup> on the rope to a shelf. Huggy was there to inspect and geologize the finds and continued to geologize while we surveyed out to the top of Olympic (using a highly tangled mass of string to measure the pitches) and a small extension, "Winter Olympics", a short climb up shattered rock into 3 <sup>small</sup> independent chambers. Prussiked out, but despite having the bag on Titanic/Britannic and a lighter bag from there I was reasonably unstressed and alive when I returned to the bivvy (~13 hrs) and was able to chew the reheated chilli on the stove before turning in.

FRI 24th

A change in the weather but still no rain which we desperately needed for <sup>replenishing our</sup> water supplies. A team had spent several hours yesterday rigging M10 and hauling up snow to melt on tarpaulins. The level of snow is lower this year than in previous years despite the expedition being earlier than ~~usual~~ <sup>usual</sup>. Intended to investigate M19/M17 but it started to rain (and promptly stopped) as we were getting ready and caving never <sup>actually</sup> happened. Had smash for breakfast and smash for lunch then went walking down the side of the plateau below T.T./M2 to look at some blowing hdes. Huggy had identified one <sup>blowing</sup> dig, similar to Tom T. entrance, which emerged from the hillside where hotline would be expected to surface. With an hours digging rubble below the overhung bedding plane we were able to get through to a fair sized, walk-in

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chamber to another, slightly more awkward, dig of a similar nature inside. A very promising lead, pumping out freezing air at the entrance. Unfortunately the rock <sup>rubble</sup> was sharp, very sharp, and after 30 mins. handling freezing rocks in shorts and T-shirts by the light of a mag light we were happy to resurface <sup>and</sup> leave it for another day. We all <sup>(Clive) but then Clive had his badger</sup> emerged <sup>from the screen-run entrance</sup> with scuffed legs, ripped shorts and some no shorts at all!!

Ambling back as the clouds started to roll over the Skribina ridge towards Mig we noticed several other <sup>open</sup> black and blowing holes just there for the taking and took it in turns to drop a couple of particularly good ones which both opened out almost immediately beyond the entrance into stand-up chambers and continued in <sup>blowing</sup> rubble heaps or rifts. An excellent area for prospective lower entrances which we desperately need for ease of pushing and rescue. Returning late to the bivvy to find that no one had planned dinner we had the <sup>drawn-out</sup> entertainment of <sup>Jim and</sup> Clive cooking macaroni cheese and burgers before trailing off to bed.

### SAT 25<sup>th</sup>

Still no camping - yesterday's Titanic pushing trip resurfaced at 6-30 AM today - and no rain. Two teams went caving - one to rig the Gladiators Traverse with wire and the other to push and survey the stal extension off Exhibition Road - which left no one else to play with so reluctantly I packed 2 tackle bags for camp TOMORROW and ~~spent~~ <sup>wasted</sup> the rest of the day.

### SUN 26<sup>th</sup>

Planned to go to the Hotel in two pairs. Huggy and I were ready first, around 11 AM, and went underground with a bag each of camping stuff intending to add a few bolts in the lower approach to the Hotel to make the pitch heads safer and easier. Put in a Y-hang at the top of XXX, ~~a~~ bolt in the traverse of XXX, a deviation at the top of Pawoden to reduce the rope rub and a bolt in the penultimate pitch before camp. This took some time given that these were Huggies 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bolts respectively and he has a tendency to faff when deciding <sup>exactly</sup> where to put the spit. Picking up an extra bag each along route we arrived at the Hotel early evening with carbides just beginning to play up. Unfortunately Jim and Tetley had the BDH full of carbide and were picking up the other bags of bedding at the bottom of Pawoden. There was no sign of them. We made up a brew and sat around for a long wait. The Hotel was mouldy - the Trangia was furry, the sand was grey and there was a huge mountain of spent carbide on the best Hotel shelf. The karrimats were wet and there was a considerable amount of Slor litter. Then it got cold and we were seriously considering going out. About 3 hrs later we could hear J+T <sup>coming through</sup> the passage above, 2 bags each

and another bag between them. Thank Goodness for that! Despite a host of weak excuses I spank them both for being slack then ~~set~~ about making up the four beds and brewing some more tea. After a period of faffing to <sup>the music of</sup> some of Mad Martin's tapes ~~we~~ <sup>three of us</sup> were ~~at~~ snuggled up in our warm dry sleeping bags listening to Blackadder Goes Forth and Huggy went off alone back up to Pawodon to do some trendy geology, returning approx 3 hrs later. The home-made polartec furies, polartec sleeping bag liner, Buffalo bags and bivy bags made for a ~~good~~ <sup>sound</sup> nights sleep and the close proximity of the piss BDH meant that there was no incentive to venture far away from the safety of ones bed until the container was filled to the brim. We finally got it together around midday of Monday.

MON 27th

Faffed around making food (smash, soup, fish concoction as usual) then getting ready to go deep. left Hotel ~2 PM as group of four. Only Tetty really knew where we were going. After a slightly awkward section of crawling to get to Ramesses below Cold Feet Passage (-go through the hole in the floor and then left) we rejoined the water at a pitch, stuck in a back-up belt where the Slovs had used a dodgy natural and went down. Rerigged some snagged and knotted-up 9mm rope on the pitch below and dropped into Paradox Passage where there are several obvious holes in the floor of a fault plane which have to be stepped over to get to the next rope. Now were down to 9mm rope but it seemed to be safe. (Limestone Cowboys, the IC<sup>3</sup> lead, is at the far left of this fault and is by far the biggest of the holes but unfortunately its the wettest and ~~was~~ not rigged). ~~The next~~ <sup>passage and</sup> pitch (dry) led down to another hole in the floor, this one rigged off 8mm shoelaces! Huggy and I continued on down, rerigging as we went, while J+T followed on behind surveying (-this section had been entirely pushed by Slovs on 2 trips within the past month but their pencil had broken while surveying back out of the cave on the last trip and hence was totally unrecorded, except for a grade I ~~sketch~~ <sup>sketch</sup> made on the surface and Dejans altimeter watch depth of -950 m!) There were several leads at all levels but we continued following the Slov route down which kept looping <sup>back</sup> under itself ~~as~~ <sup>we followed</sup> the fault ~~into~~ deeper. One section, rather unpleasantly, involved sliding down a narrow, very muddy section of the fault and then wriggling through <sup>a low</sup> ~~narrow~~ narrow passage filled with clay-mud. Now completely covered in sticky mud the cave becomes active again and it's a really <sup>drippy</sup> ~~drippy~~ place to be hanging around. We came to the perfect example of a fault plane where a large streamway inlet flowed into the bottom of the fault which quickly drained away ~~far~~ below, cutting the fault ever deeper. ~~The~~ The traverse through the fault at a level wide enough to pass, however, was a little tricky and we thought it safer, being well below -900 m by now, to rig a traverse line. Huggy placed 3 bolts but it took him an age. By the time he had finished J+T had got dangerously cold surveying and called down to me <sup>long ago</sup> that they were going back to the Hotel, and I had sung every

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song that I could think of twice and then sat in silence and in fading light for another hour up in the fault on the point of shivering shouting to Huggy that he should get a move on every now and then. Beyond the fault <sup>plane</sup> there was a wider, circular section of <sup>muddy</sup> phreatic passage with the narrow slit in the floor where the fault cut it in two. There was another pitch at the far end which was very dodgy to get to and <sup>to</sup> where we rigged the end of our traverse line. At this point we headed steadily back to camp and arrived there at 6 am, T+J fast asleep (-but apparently quite worried!)

TUES 28th

The water was gushing down 'porcelain Pitch' when we awoke at ~ 10 am. There had obviously been a downpour on Migovec and the water was at least 4 times its normal volume. We had no option but to stay in bed and listen to another 2 episodes of Blackadder, doze off to sleep again afterwards and rouse again mid afternoon. It took a lot of psyching up to get back into caving gear given that the gear was muddy and soaked through, we were all still quite knackered and it was a hell of a way back to the surface, up, up, up all the way. We packed a <sup>tackle</sup> bag of rubbish each and I left camp first while the others continued to faff around. 5 hours of solo caving later I was back at the surface in intermittent drizzle. The <sup>deserted</sup> bivvy was in a mess but I feasted on left over onion bhajis and <sup>chocolate</sup> orange angel delight scrapings then went to bed in my wet sleeping bag laying in pools of water in Hugh's leaking tent. At least the water situation at the bivvy had been resolved ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> all available receptacles filled with ~~ferrous~~ <sup>farpaufing run off</sup> acid.

WED 29th

A small select group of happy Hotelers and dodgy knee-ers made a British University start down the hill to Ravne at a leisurely pace, leisurely ate mini-penguins at the farmers house until the stomachs rumbled for pizza and then drove down to Tolmin for a Tolmin Session: shower, pizza, ice cream and (optional) beer. Met up with a few key JSPDT Slavs at the ice cream parlour which stayed open for us until around 11 pm then crashed out on the floor of Andrej's barracks show-room.

THURS 30th

Tolmin Session continued: shopping, pizza, ice cream, söca, last minute dash up the hill arriving at sundown for an evening in the bivvy which turned out to be the best piss-up ever. The bivvy residents had been on top of Mig watching the sunset with a bottle, the Tolmin group arrived after having downed 1½ l of very cheap red wine at the top of the Mule Track and I had been downing rum to try to catch up with the others. The result was an absolute riot without a sober head on the mountain. It was a fine prune curry too Martin!

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FRI 31<sup>st</sup>

A girls trip down M17, the ice cave. Rigged entirely on naturals with just a couple of rub points, we went down to the ice rink, (the first level), where there were several very photographable ice formations and one way on down a sloping ice chimney next to the cave wall. Couldn't find any bolts so Cecile went down on a single ice natural (which I thought was scarily dodgy) another 30m or so to the end of the rope. We tried to place bolts but to no avail as the rock simply shattered so while Cecile and Catherine went out, shivering, Jackie and I went down again on a rope backed up ~~up~~ tent poles and, with an extra length of rope, tried to find a way on down through the ice at the bottom, the connection with NCB. However, my carbide was not working properly, my back up wasn't working at all and I <sup>promptly</sup> got stuck down a hole in the ice so we ~~beat~~ <sup>beat</sup> a retreat, finding a bolt on the way out next to the ice natural! Out at sunset for a tasty chilli.

SAT 1<sup>st</sup> AUG

A group of 5 Slovenians arrive early at the bivvy set to get that -1000m. A long drawn out debate yesterday morning about who wanted to go to the Hotel, when they wanted to go and what they wanted to push, <sup>had</sup> get a bit confusing (basically because everyone wanted to camp today and push the bottom (-now surveyed to -910m and going strong)). For whatever reason it was agreed that Tetley and Huggy would represent the British contingent on the Slov assault today. ~~After taking~~ <sup>After taking</sup> all of the available rigging gear from the bivvy the 7 of them set off for glory at -1000m which seemed to be a dead cert. Another 4 happy campers (Mad Martin, Jan, Catherine + Clewin) fuffed for another six hours trying to get together the dregs of rigging tat not required by the Glory Team, a matching pair of wet socks (-Jan) and the motivation to put on a carving-fury when it's so hot and sunny. Eventually they trail off around 4 PM. The current team of campers (Muck, Iain, Colm + Dave) were due out tonight. Jackie + Clive walk down the hill to check out the zuppons in the Tolminka for a few days. Shed + Jim go carving to Mig Country to bolt across the left-hand traverse <sup>leaving</sup> at around 5 PM. Ben and I avoid the piccadilly Circus of the M16 entrance series and go down to the blowing holes on the Eastern face of the Migorec Plateau (-found on Fri 24th). After rigging the obvious 15m pitch and kicking down some **BIG** boulders to stabilize the way on in the floor we climbed down another 5m which ended in a rubble dig. We dug for maybe 30 mins (before deciding we'd rather dig with a crowbar.) then surveyed out to Grade I. By 8 PM we were back at the bivvy, the camping team were cooking our dinner and later Cecile + Stephan arrived back from Tolmin with bags full of fresh fruit and bacon. — hmmm, yum!

SUN 2nd

The Titanic Series needs pushing, photographing and derigging as it seems to have stopped going and it's taking up a lot of <sup>rigging</sup> gear. Torn T needs hangers to rig faulty Towers <sup>to level?</sup> then derigging up Shreddies. Let's face it - these are both bummers of trips and (apart from me, of course) no one can really be arsed today. One team jaunt off to Razor where there's allegedly a 2 km cave entrance and extortionately priced beers. Another team do photography in the ice rink in M17. I sit around and write up the past week which I can fool myself is a constructive way to spend an afternoon, but I can't fool myself that it's ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> constructive as carving. Oh yes, the Slovenians are out of the cave before we get up after having gone ~~to~~ 10 mins beyond their previous frontier and found a sump pool at around -980 m. Shame! Made an attempt to clean up the mess tins, (but not with water, oh no!) The custard from 2 days ago has by now dried in the sun over a layer or two of curries and the only way to return to base metal is to scrape the tins with another hard metal object. Walked up Kuk where there was some ~~brezza~~ <sup>brezza</sup> at least with Ben and Dave then returned to the bivvy for the delights of Cecile's freshly cooked carbonara pasta and white chocolate angel delight. Fell about afterwards too bloated to drink.

MON 3rd

Another invalid to add to the list: Clewin with bad knees, Ben with swollen foot and now Shed with a sore back. Prepared to go down to the Hotel as a cosy threesome with Cecile and Stephan. Slightly pissed off that I was going to be a gooseberry (but, in fact, I never felt like the odd one out while we were underground as they spoke English at all times). Went down just after 11am and crossed with the current camping team (Jan, Martin, Catherine, Clewin) just above the Northern line extensions which they had just been pushing. Did the normal sort of handover i.e. what the leads were, where the rope is, where the <sup>permanent</sup> survey stations are. Unfortunately no one thought to mention that the compass and clino were heading for the ~~exterior~~ as were a years supply of spits and cones mistaken for carbide. Also half of what Martin said went in one ear and got lost in the void. ... what did he say about the big boulder perched on a little boulder?! Continued down into Northern line dumping camping tackle at the junction. Nice lead: dry and lots of places to look for the way on. At the bottom of the first rope, continued on up a slippery boulder slab and right into another rift. Shortly came to a muddy passage on the R.H.S. (which had been surveyed to a short muddy climb by the last group) and continuing along the main rift, to a pitch characterized by a big boulder resting on a little boulder. While Cecile explored an inlet to the left at this point, Stephan and I rigged and descended the pitch from the dodgy boulders to find another pitch shortly afterwards, <sup>which we</sup> also rigged on a block. Climbing around a big



boulder obstruction in the chamber at the bottom of this muddy ~~pitch~~ there was another black void which seemed to be of a respectable depth. As we had no more rope and no means to belt we returned to ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> camping tackle and made our way to the Hotel. <sup>Stephan noticed another pitch in Northern line on the way back.</sup> At this point we realized that we had no surveying kit, ~~but~~ <sup>but there</sup> was enough food to feed an army and a spare set of bedclothes so we made ourselves very comfortable to the sound of Bruce Springsteen and had feast. I think C+S were pleasantly surprised about the luxury of the Hotel and took loads of photos of each other looking silly in the oversized sleeping furies. The slippers really made it the business! Unfortunately the previous campers had left piss in the pot and dirty pans and deserve a really hard spanking.

### TUES 4th

Slept until around 10ish and did the usual faffing to get ready to cave. I was really surprised how keen C+S were to get out of their sleeping bags once I had put the kettle on and we had a civilized breakfast sitting around the food pan on dartsen drum stools! The other two were quite keen to stay another night but, given that we were likely to run out of rope in Northern line and we didn't have the means to survey, we packed ready for the surface and took the bags up to Northern line along with more rope and a bolting kit. At the bottom of the first rope we had a choice: to continue rigging yesterday's lead or to drop Stephan's pitch. As <sup>it</sup> was Stephan's last caving trip we decided to drop the pitch quickly then to go back to the other lead later. Well, things never happen quite that quick! Although we rigged it on naturals (-dodgy boulders, of course!) the first pitch of ~35m dropped into a large shaft-like chamber with a large hole on the far side. There wasn't enough rope to bottom it and, although we had enough tat to reach a ledge ~5m down, the rock was too poor to rig the next drop below. C+S went to fetch the rope which we'd rigged yesterday while I started to place spits. <sup>safely</sup> Two bolts later, at least one bolt short of being able to go down, I realized that we had no more cones. When the others returned we all had a dangle just over the ledge edge, enough to see that the pitch dropped into a large <sup>long</sup> boulder chamber, and, rather gutted that we had been caught short, started the long trek to the surface leaving N.L. ~6:30pm. As a threesome we moved slowly and got progressively slower and slower. Pavidon, Sajeta and XXX were dead slow. Ceile eventually conked out at Bikini Carwash but was able to contrive after some tea and a bit of affection from Stephan (-the caring sharing blokey!) Out ~3 AM. Fruit ~~salad~~ <sup>salad</sup> back at bivi.

### WED 5th

Cooked chapattis until people were sick of them.

Really windy weather. Prepared for tomorrow's trip down Plop while another team of 4 (Jim, Iain, Colm + Tetley) put off going ~~to the Hotel~~ <sup>to the Hotel</sup> until late afternoon and others set off to do a photo trip in Exhibition Road or digging + logging holes on the East Pole blowing holes. Clive + Jackie returned

from the supping session. Had great fun trying to make custard filled donuts. An exquisite evening meal of sausage + cheese appetizer, ratatouille on rice and donuts. Gormet fest underway!

### THURS 6<sup>th</sup>

Underground midday with Catherine, bound for Plop, M16 entrance photos then straight to Level 2 armed with hammers, spike and bolting kit. Spent some time undoing knots and repacking <sup>bag of</sup> rope brought up from XXX before ascending through Faculty Towers and passing over the Void. Approx 4 hrs into NCB Passage. Rigged the traverse beyond Club Mig then proceeded directly to Plop where we took it in turns to hammer the squeeze leading onto the pitch. After about ~~90 mins~~ <sup>90 mins</sup> hammering at a loose flake and making it irritatingly wobbly we gave up on it and took off a few little knobs of rock lowerdown making it easier to slide out onto the pitch at floor level, feet first. Still awkward but not so tight. On the far side I placed the first bolt then persuaded Catherine to do a second on a lip a few metres below — a little skew but good effort for a first bolting <sup>experience</sup> ~~effort~~. Fiddled carbides having to go back over the traverse to get water. Getting late <sup>(10 pm)</sup> but agreed to put in one last bolt to see if we could bottom the thing — my last day caving. I got nominated to do the honours. Went down about 40 m below Catherine's bolt. Still a freehang below this but for ease of ascending I decided to pull myself over to the bulge in the shaft wall and place another spit — didn't want to bounce too much on that skew bolt! Besides, when you descended over the points in the rope where the XXX knots had been it was like going over speed ramps! Placed and rigged the bolt but as I <sup>still</sup> couldn't see the pitch bottom ~~and~~ I thought the rope probably wasn't long enough and so ascended immediately. Quote Jim re. Godzilla "I've done big pitches before"! I realized that I'd rigged the loop too short on the 3<sup>rd</sup> bolt when the rope ~~wasn't~~ <sup>got increasingly</sup> ~~very~~ tight as I went up. Had to derig the 2<sup>nd</sup> ~~bolt~~ <sup>rebelay</sup> as I passed it to avoid permanently stretching the rope. Although we had another rope to hand we were both tired and ready to go out so left a free pushing trip ~~for~~ for the next group. Suggested leaving via Torn T and was astonished when Catherine seemed keen! (Catherine! Joke!!) Exited via M16, out at around 3-30 AM, shortly before the camping group resurfaced. Gormet food awaiting at bivi including samosas and soup but couldn't be bothered to reheat it.

### FRI 7<sup>th</sup>

Up early and, after a solid shit, straight back to bed. Packed and walked down the hill. Everyone down for a session in Tolmin. Seven of us leaving tomorrow, just under half of the expedition. Odesj for food, Sica until the mozzies started to bite, then Andrej's for a game of cards. Andrej turned up at dusk complaining that he'd been drinking fruit juice all day so the session commenced in the Odesj and continued about town while I had an early night.

Dear Jim

19/8/98

Desperate to hear how the rest of the expedition went and particularly how Plop goes. Will phone you sometime soonish. Unfortunately offshore for the conf. Hope it goes well. Enclosed some receipts and photocopy of my (non-controlled) diary for reference.

Scuz