

Lefka Ori, Crete – 2005 - Expedition.

RRCPC – WRPC



Picture: our 'Mavri Lefka' – looking west towards Aligas Gorge

Lefka Ori, Crete – 2005 – Expedition Objectives

The joint UK expedition to the Lefka Ori in Crete took place from August 25th to Sept 7th 2005. The expedition consisted of two of UK's major caving clubs – the Red-Rose Cave and Pothole Club (RRCPC) based in Lancashire, and the White-Rose Pothole Club (WRPC) based in Yorkshire.

For the benefit of humour the expedition call themselves The Pink-Rose in Crete!

Objective 1 Dracolaki Cave, Annopolis

- a) The prime objective was to commit a cave-diver into the Huey Siphon at the far end of Dracolaki, with the intention of finding major extension to the cave beyond the water.
- b) To push possible leads in an area above the sump known as the 'Oversight'
- c) Have our cave-diver look into the Dapper Siphon – the other sump on the survey, half-way through the system.

Location:- 35.15274 24.03094

Altitude:- 1140m

On the 1st day a party of 4 led by Dalek rigged Dracolaki to a standard suitable for the conveyance of diving equipment to Huey Sump at the far end of the cave. The next day a large party transported the equipment to the sump where the cave-diver (Graham Huck) suited-up in preparation to enter the water. His dive however was short lived as the sump choked with sand and gravel a metre below the surface.

A thorough examination around the perimeter wall undercut resulted in 100% blockage with sand and gravel. There was no way through.

(This blockage may not be permanent and could be open on alternate years – similar to the sand blocked passage in Tzani Cave. [down to the left just at the steep incline to the big Chamber] This steeply descending passage opens and seals pending the water regime during that particular winter; Dracolaki could follow a similar characteristic.)

A small party went up into the Oversight but were short on tackle to push risky climbs. Despondency had set in due to disappointment at the Huey Sump – there had been a lot of high expectation riding on this.

Dapper Sump was not looked at on this occasion.

The following day the cave was de-rigged and all effort was concentrated on our 2nd Objective

Objective 2 To prospect for cave development in an area as described by SELAS as 'Mavri Laki'.

This is a different Mavri Laki from the 2006 Sheffield University Expedition. Our Mavri Laki is a bare valley that lies between the mountains Pachnes and Zaranokafela, the westerly limit is the drop-off into Aligas Gorge.

This area was noted on a previous walk in the hills in 2004 and appeared to contain many features of speleological interest.

Although many openings were descended, (see location files) everything was small scale with no real major cave system discovered. One or two places may justify a return trip for completion, but the area has so much it certainly was not exhausted and could easily support further investigation.

The included files are locations, surveys, notes, photos, sketches of many of the sites explored plus a list of all the locations visited.

Conclusion

The logistics of exploring an area with no water was very demanding on our resources and as a result many details of our trip suffered. Much emphasis, which was unavoidable, was put to the supply chain for our High Camp. Unfortunately record keeping suffered badly with too many people keeping different pieces of information and it has taken all this time to collect it and present it to you.

When you pick your way through the files you'll find there is no real speleological breakthrough on this occasion, for the area we were prospecting in.

In saying that we will be looking to return in 2007 and continue where we left off in
a) Dracolaki area. b) A few sites in the Mavri Laki that require finishing.

Pink-Rose Expedition Members List

Richard Bendal	Bill Sherrington
Bob 'Dalek' Bialek	Shaun Sinnot
Roy Button	Chris Smith
Nadia Button	Eileen Stevenson
Linda Cregg	Jim Stevenson
Tim Eastwood	Paul Thomas with Karen
Heather Eastwood	Steve Warren
Graham Huck	Maude Warren
Hillary Parker	
Phil Parker	<i>and last but not least, Ruby (age8)</i>
Dave Ramsey	

PS01



Reference - PS01 (Tweetie Pot)

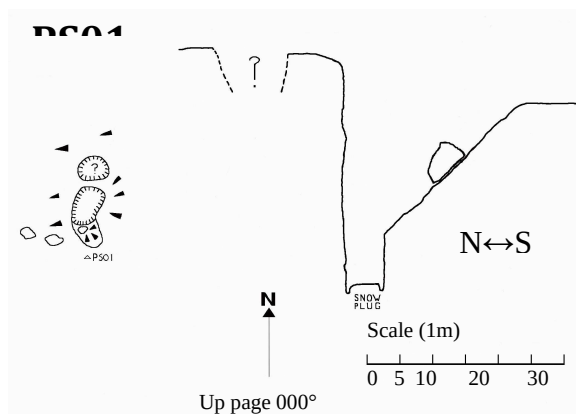
Location - 35° 17.152 N 024° 02.240 E

Altitude - 2158m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A vertical shaft originally estimated as 20m deep and probably the pot noted by Richard Bendall during the previous visit to this area. Named Tweetie pot because of the birds which are present in the shaft. The shaft was descended and found to contain a snow plug at a depth of 34m from the Northern end. A knot was tied into the bottom of the rope and the rope was then measured to give the depth, all other measurements are estimates of the original explorers.



PS02

Reference - PS02a, PS02b, PS02c, PS02d, PS02e

Location - 35.28345 24.035633

Altitude - 2152.3m

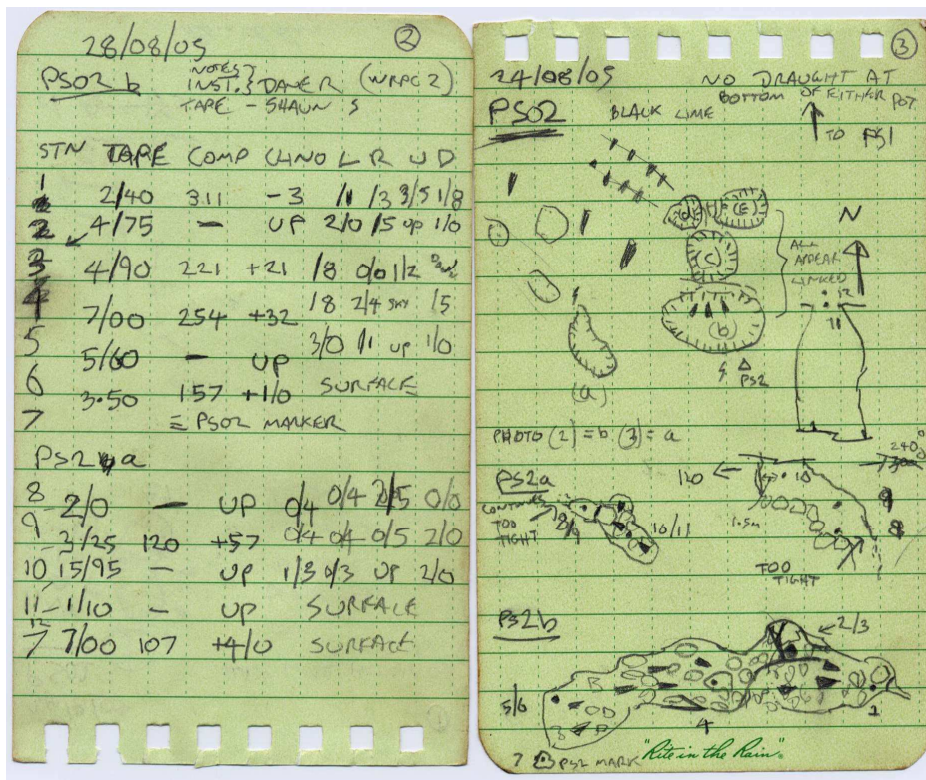
Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A group of 5 pots, with at least one more located to the North (up slope and within 10m). The lowest and most Western given the suffix (a), the pot to the East (b), North from (b) is (c) and so on. The pots b, c, d and e all appeared to be linked, of which only b was accessible, with c, d and e blocked with rubble.

PS02a - A small opening gave immediate access to a fine shaft of some 16m opening out as the descent was made and becoming almost a rift like feature. The floor was of boulders, SE closed in but NW a further drop of 2m led to a too tight continuation.

PS02b - A 5m drop (possibly free climbable) led to a boulder floored slope which was followed down under perched boulders (holes c, d and e?) to a further drop of 5m into a chamber, again with a boulder floor which sloped down to an exit which was too tight to follow. At the bottom of the first 5m drop against the South wall was a stack of boulders which could have either fallen in from the surface or could possibly have been man made, these were not disturbed.



PS03

Reference - PS03

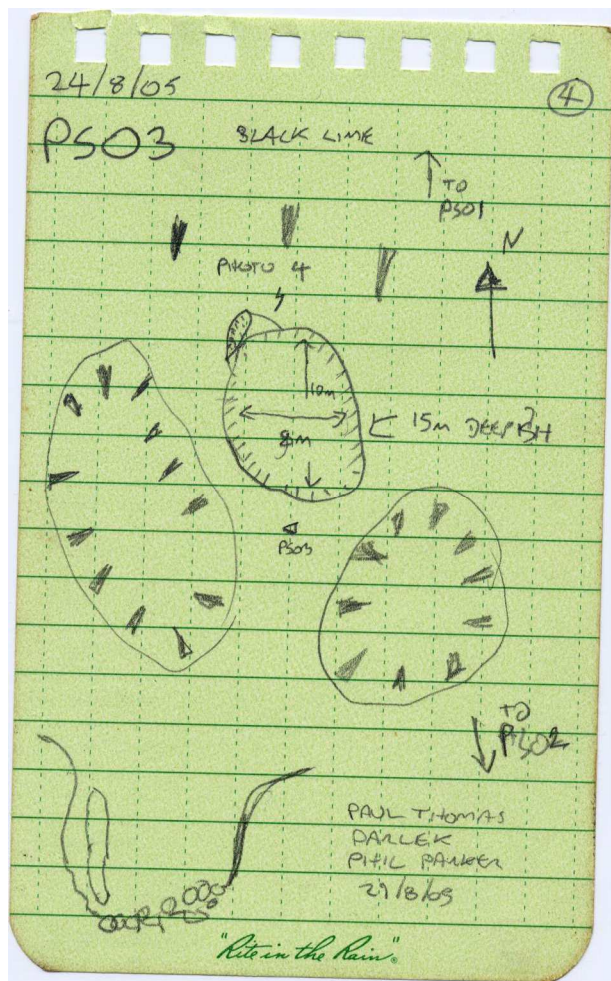
Location - 35.28460 24.036327

Altitude - 2155.4

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A round hole roughly 10m in diameter with a small entrance visible immediately to the NW to which it is linked. The pot was about 15m deep with sloping sides and a floor of boulders.





PS04

Reference - PS04

Location - 35.28902 24.044983

Altitude - 2206.5

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A very small pot approximately 10cm x 15cm partly blocked by rubble. It was felt that below the entrance, which would be easily enlargeable, the shaft opened out slightly but sufficient for a descent to be made. Stones thrown down the entrance rattled for a considerable distance (10 – 20m). Because the location was outside of our search area the pot was not descended due to time constraints.

PS05

Reference – PS05

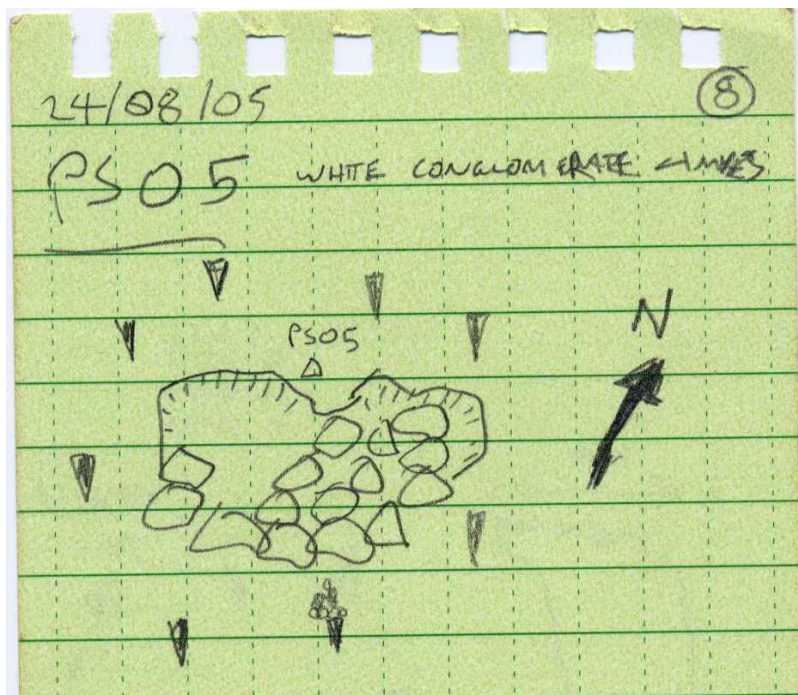
Location - 35.28938 24.046317

Altitude - 2183.4m

Limestone - White, Conglomerate

Draught - None detected

Description - As with PS04 this was outside of our search area and so was not descended. Solid walls to the North gave way to boulders on the South side but an opening was visible at the western end where access would be possible. Down slope and to the South-East were more possible potholes, none of which were investigated.



PS06

Reference - PS06

Location - 35.16'839 24.01'872

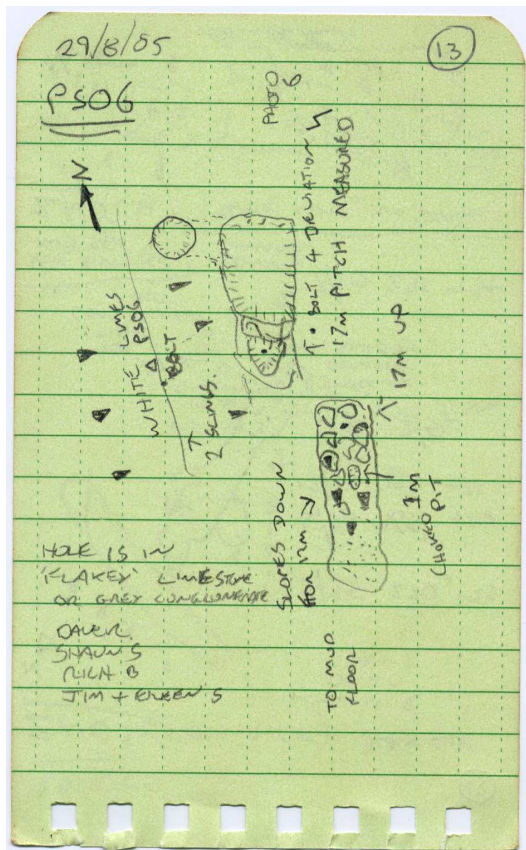
Altitude - 2039m

Limestone - 'Flakey' Limestone/Grey Conglomerate

Draught - None detected

Description - The pot is situated on an obvious boundary, to the West and up slope is a band of white almost marble like limestone whereas the hole itself is in a grey, flakey conglomerate type of limestone. The large open pot to the North is obviously choked with boulders but a small hole to the immediate south gave access to a deeper pitch. A bolt placed in the white band to the West, together with two slings gives a double 'Y' hang, tackle bags were needed to avoid rope rub. A bolt to the East, with a long sling deviates the rope for a free hanging pitch of 17m.

Part way down the pitch the jammed boulders of the open pot were visible to the North. At the bottom the chamber sloped to the South for 12m with a floor of boulders, at the far end of the chamber the boulders gave way to a floor of mud. Mid way down slope was a choked 1m pit.



PS07

Reference - PS07

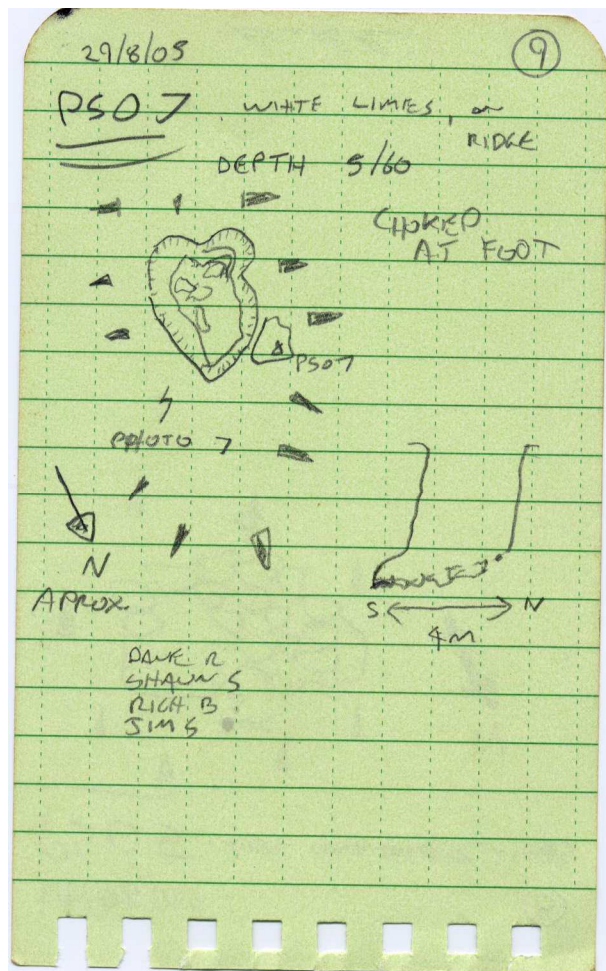
Location - 35.16'886 24.01'875

Altitude - 2099m

Limestone - White

Draught - None

Description - Situated on a ridge, a 5.60m deep pot which was choked at the bottom, although slightly undercut at the southern end.



PS08/PS09

Reference - PS08, PS09

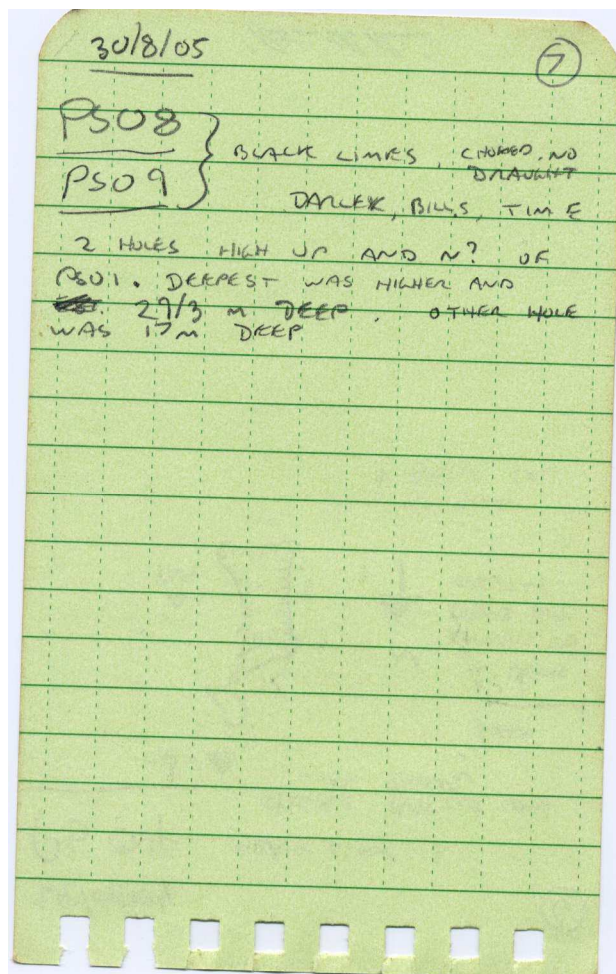
Location - 35.16'870 24.02'027

Altitude - 2091m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None

Description – 2 pots high up and North (?) of PS01. The higher pot was the deepest at 29.3m, the lower pot was 17m deep. **Jim: I have the notes on this hole, written by me, but they are written from a conversation from Darlek, Bill or Tim who found and descended the pots. Do they have any further info?**



Rock Shelter Pot 1

Reference - Rock Shelter Pot 1

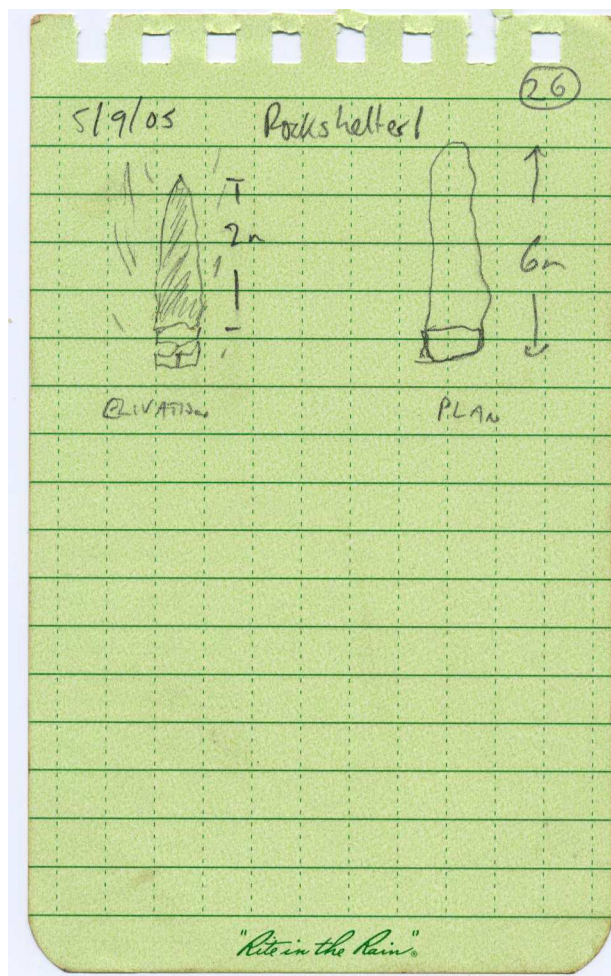
Location - 35.13'449 24.07'022

Altitude - 509m

Limestone - unspecified

Draught - None

Description - A partially walled rock shelter 2m high and 6m deep.



ZN03

Reference – ZN03 (Jim's Hole)

Location - 35.27951 24.020046

Altitude - 1955.5m

Limestone - Grey

Draught - Strong outward draught

Description - Low arched entrance at the South-eastern side of a large round boulder filled pot; a ridge of boulders/rubble divides the pot on the West/East axis. A slight draught issues from between boulders on the Northern side of the ridge.

Once inside the entrance crawl there was space to sit up in a hading rift, which sloped up to the east at an approximate angle of 45°, the draught came from between boulders to the South-east. Excavation revealed a short passage, which was again blocked by boulders; these were removed to gain access to a small round aven/chamber the exit being a small drop to the West. Hammer and chisel were employed to enlarge this section, which then dropped again to reveal a descending rift heading North. Unfortunately the rift was only (approximately) 20cm wide for the first 1-2m, after which it appeared to enlarge slightly.

[In the UK we would easily enlarge this passage with capping technology (chemical persuasion), and this would be deemed a very promising site.]



ZN04

Reference - ZN04

Location - 35.27909 24.020086

Altitude - 1975.2m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A choked pot, which was free climbable with care (hand-line used) at the South-eastern side. A floor of boulders sloped down to the West.





ZN05

Reference - ZN05

Location - 35.27914 24.02076

Altitude - 1985.5m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A complex area, the pot seemingly being formed on a double 'T' shaped rift with a choked pot to the South forming the vertical part of the 'T'.

Entrance to the pot is almost blocked by a large boulder, but a squeeze to the West gains access under the boulder. Slings either side of the boulder give a free hanging pitch of 16.5m which lands on to a sloping floor of boulders leading to a small choked chamber. [The original elevation and plan disagree as to which direction the floor slopes down, from memory I would say that the elevation is correct (so that is how it has been drawn up).]





ZN06

Reference - ZN06

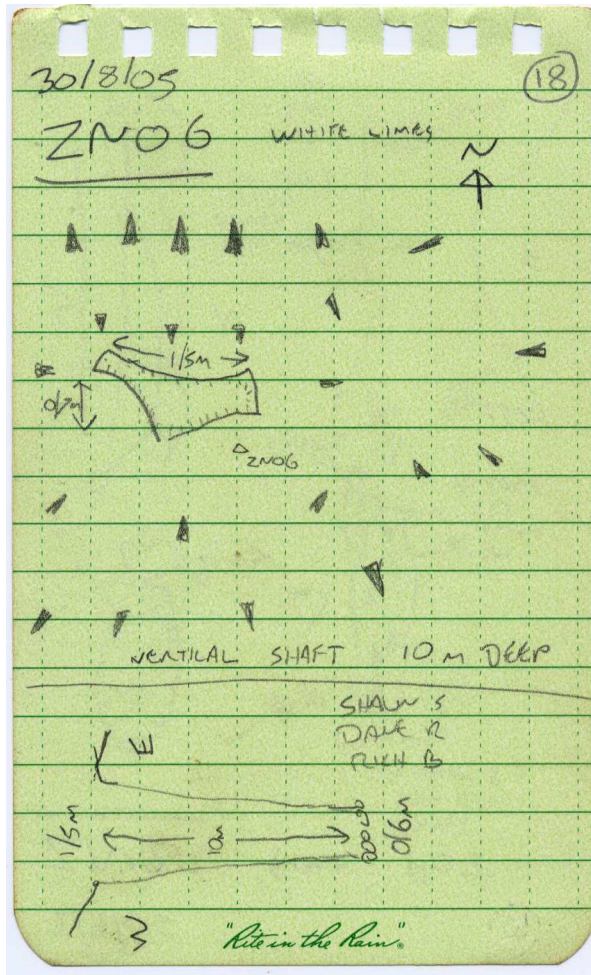
Location - 35.28117 24.019489

Altitude - 1969.6m

Limestone - White

Draught - None detected

Description - A vertical shaft measured as 10m deep situated on a ridge of limestone.
Choked at the foot and measuring 0.6m wide.



ZN07

Reference - ZN07

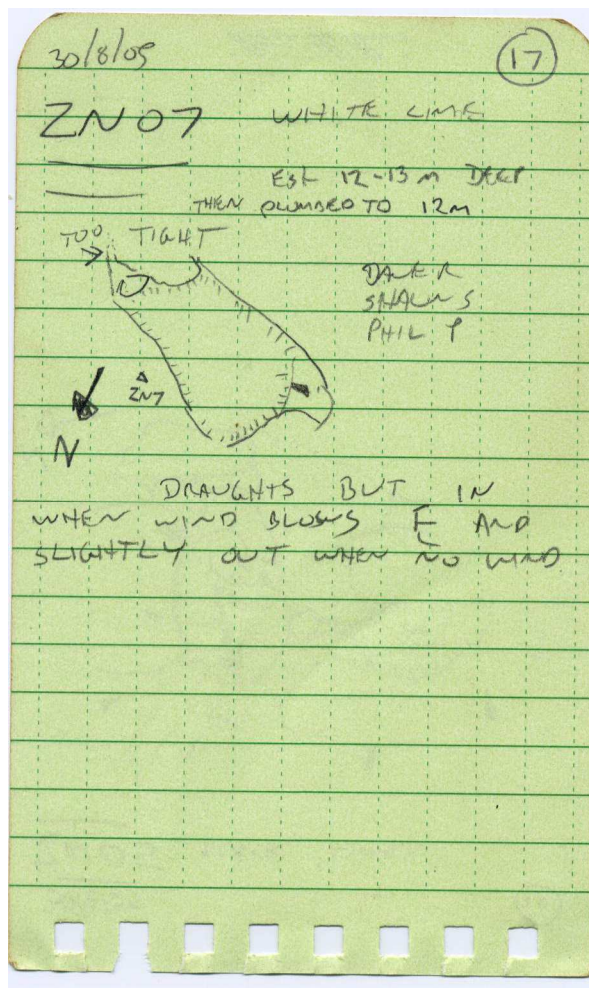
Location - 35.16'690 24.01'242

Altitude - 2010m

Limestone - White

Draught - Out (faintly) when no wind but when wind blows East it draughts in!

Description - Originally estimated as 12 –13m deep then measured as 12m deep. At eastern end is too tight continuation, which draughts as described above. On the other side of the ridge are some choked deep holes, one promising pot was recorded (as ZN?) but not descended.



ZN08

Reference - ZN08

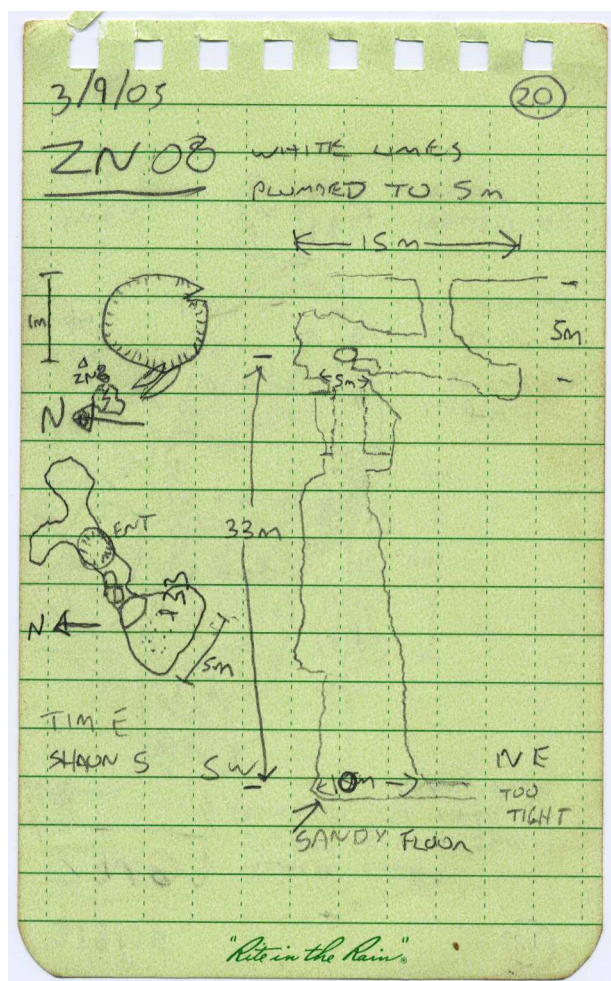
Location - 35.16' 756'' 24.01' 372''

Altitude - 2064

Limestone - White

Draught - None detected, but a later trip indicated a possible slight outward draught.

Description - A small pot, plumbed to 5m and which, on initial inspection did not look very promising. At the bottom of the 5m drop a passage led of in either direction, down to the North-east soon split and choked but up to the South-west the passage continued over a deep pot before it too, choked. The deep pot was a fine shaft of 33m to a sandy floor some 10m x 5m, to the North-east was a too tight continuation which may have issued a slight draught. (Was this surveyed? I don't think so, although it should have been!)



ZN09

Reference - ZN09

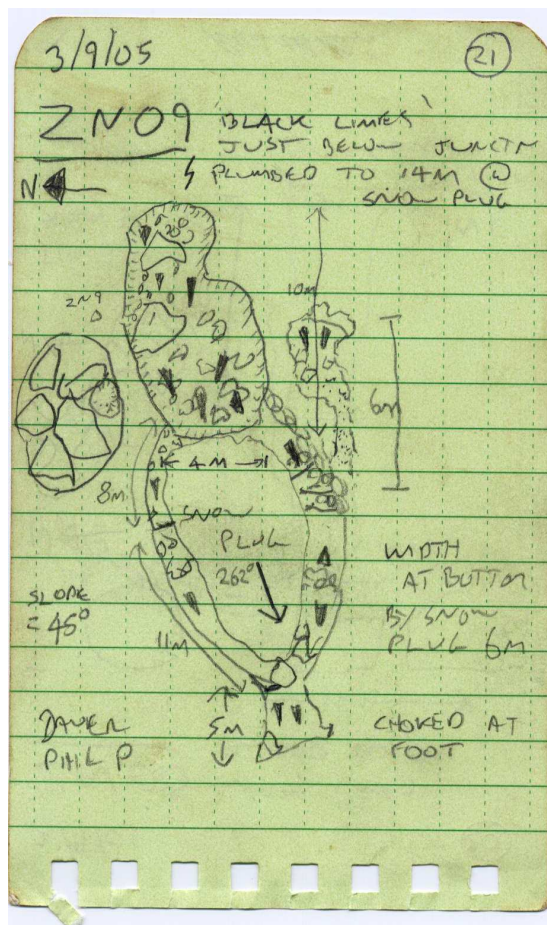
Location - 35.16741 24.01331

Altitude - 1938m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A large open shaft just below the black/white limestone boundary, to the North a gap in a small boulder filled hole also dropped into the pot. A pitch of 14m dropped to the edge of a large snow plug some 4m across which continued down slope to the West with a 1m gap on either side. To the East a steep boulder slope rose towards the surface. The gap to the North of the snow plug was followed for 19m to where the snow ended at a squeeze down between boulders into a chamber some 4m x 4m, which sloped down to a complete choke at its foot. Following the gap between the snow plug and the wall back on the South side led, after about 10m to another drop between boulders into a mud-floored passage trending East. This passage ended after 6m at a small chamber.



ZN10

Reference - ZN10

Location - 35.16'733 24.01'337

Altitude - 2039m

Limestone - Black

Draught - None detected

Description - A small shaft located partway down a long boulder filled rift feature, some clearing was required before access could be made under a large jammed boulder. The pitch was rigged via a small hole to the West of the boulder although entry was made via the larger gap to the south. Care was required due to the many loose rocks on the surface. Deviations were required to complete the 44m pitch. A squeeze through a gap of less than 1m led to the bottom, an elliptical boulder filled area 2m x 8m, no way on could be seen.

