

# Vertical. Nature. Base.

A collaborative project by Echo Echo's Steve Batts and artist Dan Shipsides. Based at a Donegal coastal climbing location and a city exhibition base, V.N.B. is a residential experimental climbing / art / dance project that investigates the contrasting and comparable notions of climbing as sport and climbing as creative engagement. Interested people can join the camp in September (details tba) for various activities and camping. This blog is an insight into V.N.B.'s creative development.

Tuesday, 21 August 2012

## THE COVE - developments

Thanks to the help of Marty the platform set for The Cove is well under production:



After some battles with the world of geometry and the curvature of the earth we are closing in on the final structure. It's an endlessly configurable structure which has one specified configuration of a sloping plane based on the original we made in the Port a Doris cove last Sep.

I conceive of the structure - and the movement and configuring of the structure - being a very live element in the choreography - and one that offers an unpredictable (probably starting) ground for each performance. dan

Posted by Dan at 14:04 No comments:  


## The Cove Autumn 2012 Tour

Tour Dates 

## Background info

Background info 

## Blog Archive

- ▼ 2012 (1)
  - ▼ August (1)
    - THE COVE - developments
- ▶ 2011 (26)
- ▶ 2010 (3)
- ▶ 2009 (5) 

## Further Links & Funders

- Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company
- 
- Dan Shipsides
- 
- Legacy Trust UK
- 
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland 

## Dan's related projects

- Elastic Frontiers
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- Radical Architecture
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- Rochers a Fontainebleau
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- Touchstone Testpiece
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- T5 field cinema
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- Shipsides and Beggs Projects 

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Friday, 30 September 2011

## New Ground

Tomorrow is the last day of the installation and at 8.30 pm there will be the last performance by Bridget and Esther, of the movement material that we have developed. It has been really interesting to see the way the movement material has gone through different phases since the opening.



The first couple of performances felt exciting and special but they were followed by one or two rather dull ones. After that we went back to the rigour of the embodying process. Emphasising again the fact that the movement as performance is simply real movement in real time and real place. This is the reality of the compositional material. However the rigour of the real time composition is sustained by the understanding that the roots of the movement decisions lie in the attention and the way that creates the basis for intention and then action. So the issue is the way the attention is guided. In this case the attention is on the specifics of memory.

Not the generalised memory that degrades into nostalgia but the focused memory of the specific locations in Port a Doris that were the sites of the deep sensory, kinaesthetic, and affective investigations. So the movement is just movement but the micro-compositional and interpretative decisions are guided by an integrity of the attention. This rigorous process liberates the intuition. Relying on the fact that the work has been done and that the attention is focused on the appropriate things the intuitive taste to make one particular sequence of shapes or one specific tonus pattern or rhythmic form can be relied upon to produce some form of "sense".

It was interesting that after re-focusing in this way Esther said that the performance seemed so normal and easy. The quality of the performance was amplified enormously and it began to develop textures and depths that had only been hinted at in the early showings.

## Twitter Updates

- Watch another fantastic video made for us by Rory McSwiggan and Danny Kelly. This time it's 'The Feel of Play'- in... <http://t.co/FsUnQf42> 7 days ago
- Haha very good! <http://t.co/AQdJ580P> 14 days ago
- @legacytrustuk have u been practicing? Some of us are busy Haha #crossthatourtimeissomuchslower ;) 14 days ago

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We used various versions of the soundtrack; sometimes just the sea, sometimes with the clips of the discussion between me and Dan, sometimes the ambient sounds of the flapping tent, bits of chat, the swirling sea and crunching pebbles. It feels more and more that the sea on its own is really enough.

I'm very happy with the outcomes. It feels like the ground has been broken for a major development of working methods and performance approaches.

The installation grows on me day by day. I'm around it all day most days submerged in hours and hours of the sea on the sound system. Beautiful. Relaxing in a way but

also full of variation and tension.

Favourite bits? They change from day to day, but most days the slow motion rolling on the pebbles attracts me. The sound is fantastic. The Rope God is a very "balanced" piece. It is very acceptable, satisfying without being demanding. It just sits there. Of course the platform itself is wonderful. It still has this amazing quality of "belonging" where it is. It was just like that in Port a Doris too. It has a very gentle presence. Of course you can't miss it, but on the other hand its effect on the memory is rather subtle.

It is interesting to see who bothers to spend time with the video pieces. I know that when I go to an installation piece, or any exhibition really, I am quite obsessed with getting everything I can out of it. I try to see everything and to spend a lot of time with each element. Most people who come into the space seem to just drift really. They get a feel, an impression, but I worry that they miss a lot of the layers and depths. When someone really bothers to explore by reading the blog, watching the videos right through, sitting and thinking a bit, they evidently get very engaged and drawn in to the work. It is also noticeable how these people begin in different places. For some the entrance point is the blog, for others the photo's, for others the videos. I wonder what are the ways of encouraging people to put this effort in. With too much explanation, on a gallery guide for example, or a written distilled explanation of the project it feels that it would be too leading, too much with a tendency to explain, to close the doors of the imagination. On the other hand one can see the lack of confidence that some people have to begin to engage with the work independently.



I don't mean at all that we've had negative responses: quite the reverse in fact. However I feel a certain restrained diffidence in many peoples engagement with the installation.

Perhaps there is simply too much in it?

I miss Port a Doris. I am in the memory of it so much because of my daily

proximity to the installation. It is so different to sleep in a bed. To hear the cars not the sea. To be dry most of the time. What I most miss is the consistent practical physical effort necessary for living at the camp. Everything demanded some form of disciplined attention. It wasn't a holiday, but somehow, for me, there is a relief and a serious pleasure in the necessities of daily existence when they are so closely framed.

Posted by Steve at 23:28 No comments:  

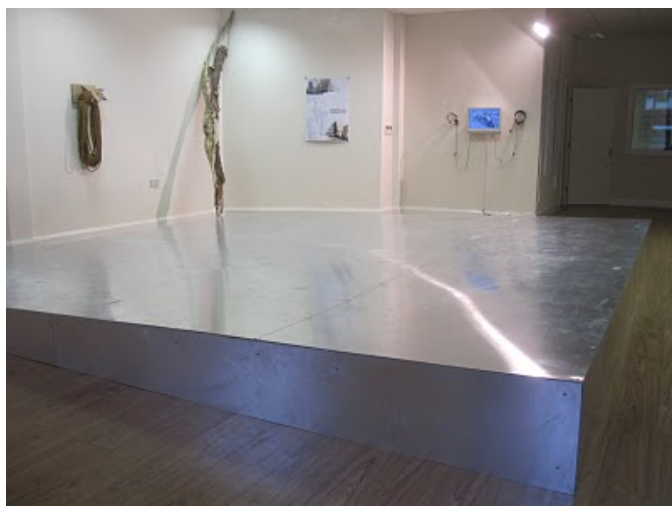
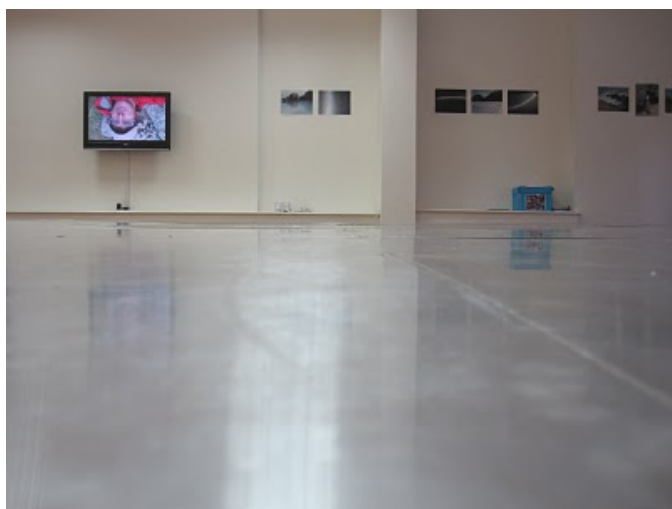
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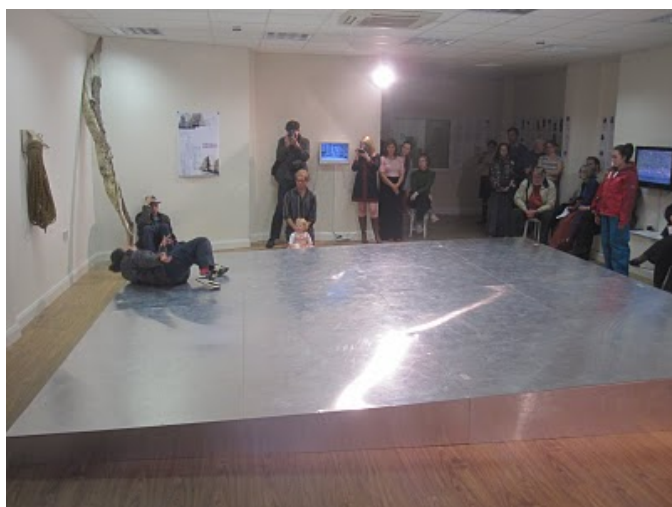
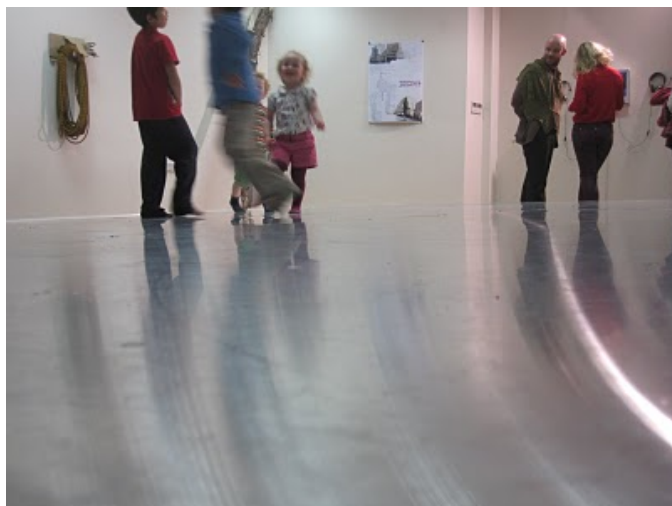
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Sunday, 25 September 2011

VNB exhibition Walk thru video

Hectic week:







Been a hectic few weeks and days. The show opened - a good turn out, lots of buzz and the performances with Ester and Brigit (who spent a lot of brave time at the cove too) went very well - very unstaged. I'm very happy with the work and how it resolves as an exhibition. The video elements work well and the objects, performance, images and platform give a good account of the project but more importantly add something in and of themselves. I particularly like the rope piece - which I've titled, "The Rope God and its Protection".

Here's a quick post of a low resolution video which shows the walk through of the exhibition of V.N.B. at Echo Echo's studio in Bishop St. Derry. It gives you an idea

I'll post more images of the show and opening and performance very soon. And more images and info soon to be up on my website:  
[www.danshipsides.com](http://www.danshipsides.com)

Dan

Posted by Dan at 19:43 No comments:    
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Tuesday, 20 September 2011

TRANSITION – SEP 2011

TOPOPHILIA AND TOPOPHOBIA - JUNE 2009

DANCE NOT DANCE CLIMB NOT CLIMB - AUG 2009

SENSING. FEELING. DOING - OCT 2009

CIVILITY AND ALTITUDE - OCT 2009

UNPREDICTABLE SPACES - NOV 2009

TEXTURES IMPRINTS FRAMEWORKS - JUNE 2010

EMBODYING LANDSCAPE AND VERTICAL LEVELS - Sep 2010

THE DAY SNOW CAME - Dec 2010

MEANING AND LOCATION - Jan 2011

THE LOCATION IS WHERE IT SHOULD BE - Jan 2011

IDEA BASE CAMP - Jan 2011

THE COVE - Mar 2011

NAMING SOME THINGS (1) - MAY 2011

NAMING SOME THINGS (2) - MAY 2011

SOPHORIFIC RAIN - JUNE 2011

ANTEBURN and AFTERBURN - JUNE 2011

HAMNATARRUTTIBADGIEE - SEP 2011

THE PLATFORM - SEP 2011

SURFACE PRESENCE - SEP 2011

SURFACE PRESENCE 2 - SEP 2011

TOPOPHILE / TOPOPHOBE - SEP 2011

TOPOPHOBE REFLECTIONS - SEP 2011

TRANSITION – SEP 2011



Update:

After two beautiful and eventful weeks at the cove we broke camp and carried everything out.

It meant dismantling the platform and packing it so it would be good to reinstall in the studio gallery.

Gary and I worked late into the dark taking off the sheets – after the dibond came off it was interesting to see the stains and marks on the plywood – straight dark lines where the dibond joined – stained with water, dirt and salt – then damp stains and some mould. This was in the dark so the head torches really illuminated these colorfully – the plywood looked bright orange.

On the Monday we awoke from a night of near force 11 gales. By mid morning the main tent had collapsed - the poles splintered. It had lasted just long enough.

Steve had real life to deal with and went off to Derry with Tonya for a baby scan – we all had various segments of important other life filtering into cove over the last few weeks – it is useful to think how significant other things effect the experience in the cove. I spoke to Maggie, Leo and Anna most days and that connection to our kitchen (where they were on the phone) had a surreal ness.

We first packed everything up – tents, kitchen, equipment etc. Then Gary and I finished dismantling the platform. Ailbe, John and Jay arrived – our helpers to help carry out the material.

Carrying was difficult in the wind – we were unsure if we could do it over the headland parts of the path. Safety was an issue. Gary and I tested a few single sheet carries and managed ok – you had to dodge the gusts and be prepared to set the sheet down and also take several rests. But we did it in the end – the wind dropped slightly – it was ok – you had to be careful and take time – but it was ok. My arm was ok actually – the carrying technique avoided any painful movements. I was happy I could do it. But it was grueling work for 3 or 4 hours.

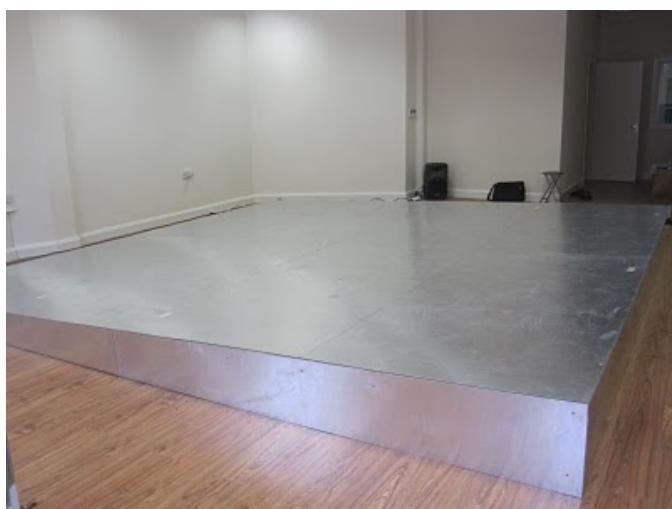
The saviour no.1! Steve arrived back – with good news from the scan *and* with a bag of sandwiches and drinks.

Then saviour no 2!! – the local farmer arrived with his tractor and trailer to lift the materials from the bottom of the long steep muddy hill up to the road and the van. This saved us another days worth of hard carrying.

All loaded into the van and drove to Derry where we unloaded around early evening. The amount of equipment and materials looked pretty crazy when strewn around the studio space in Bishops st. The boards tho looked beautiful.

Then a few days off back home – to return at the weekend – when Gary and I rebuilt the Platform in the studio over sat to sun midday – it was bit of a marathon effort. Gary slept on the floor – I slept in the van to protect it from drunken louts. I really respect Gary’s effort and resilience.

We added a new angle to it – so it slopes down to the left – so it’s not an obvious dance floor – or disco stage. It works well – it reinforces the object quality of it – the sculptural artwork. Gary also pointed something out which to me is really cool – it counter points the slope of Bishop street so when you look out f the door you see the intersecting slope of the street. The surface of the dibond remains fascinating to me – the stains, smears, scratches and dents – without this – new dibond sheets in the gallery space would have not had the resonance I feel with it. It will be a challenge to bring its history into the foreground.



Now we’re developing other material ready for the final install this week – for the opening on Saturday. Steve has been working with Ester and Brigit with some movement pieces – for performance. It’s a quick transition – but in a way that’s important to keep it fresh to the phase one experience.

Posted by Dan at 10:58 No comments:  

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re-re-re-flections





Hi Dan,

I have no sense that you climb for competitive reasons or encourage competitiveness when you are supervising other people. In fact I'd say quite the reverse. Sorry if I gave that impression.

I wasn't thinking of you at all when I reflected on the absence, in me, of a very strong drive to succeed on the beginning of a climb.

Actually, when I wrote that bit, I wasn't even thinking about the new route. I was reflecting on my inability to get up the first stage of the climb Pauline's Crack. I watched two strong guys go up it with determination and others not manage. I am quite sure that I have in me the physical strength and drive to arrive at the ledge about 3 or 3.5 metres up, but for some reason I just don't access the energy. In some sense that must be because it isn't important enough and I'm trying to understand what it is that would trigger the necessary determination and effort and whether I have any interest in that "trigger". I used to be able to be really physically competitive with myself and towards others but these days it seems like too much trouble beyond a certain level. Maybe this has to do with age, but also maybe with having had so many injuries from dancing and before that from sport and not wishing to pop my shoulder or twist my knee by going to the edge of my capability. I wonder what my reaction to the necessity of physical effort for the first bit of Pauline's Crack would have been if that rock formation was the second stretch, higher up, especially if I was leading. Of course this is a hypothetical and there is no "answer" to that question but I think perhaps the feeling of necessity would be the trigger. I have very contradictory feelings about whether I really want to put myself in conditions of necessity like that. In relation to those feelings I have to say I actually really enjoyed the comment about me having too many commitments already. I thought it was funny and accurate

I understand your broad definition of enjoyment. I think I make a distinction between how I view the pleasure of an event before and after. After an event I can pretty much enjoy whatever it gave me (I speak from experience of injury and suffering as a consequence of my decisions as well as "nicer" outcomes). I suppose I view the past from the continuous present of being happy with and grateful for my experiences, as they were, without regret.

Looking into the future is a bit different. I definitely don't equate the potential of a twist, pop or bang emerging from commitment and necessary effort with the potential of a pleasant feeling of balance co-ordination and

calmness.

Of course I understand that there is a process of risking one thing to get another and also realise that in retrospect the most valuable and/or enjoyable experiences are often ones that are outside the "plan". I don't think that understanding this removes the process of planning and evaluating and making taste-based judgements about intent or preference. Even the decision to climb a certain route because it offers a particular challenge has an evaluation in it that the kind of challenge offered will be worthwhile. Looking at a route and thinking " mmmm... that looks nice", is explicitly an aesthetic value judgement.

So when I tried again and again to "solve" the beginning of the Pauline's Crack route I was definitely on the careful side of effort, not wanting to commit myself beyond the level of muscular effort where I felt I could remain "intact".

This led me to the search for a more "technical" solution. I was looking for a way of getting up that first bit more with balance and rhythm than with direct maximum muscular effort. I didn't find it. I didn't find the movement in me to find a good accommodation with that bit of rock. That is in one sense a pity but that doesn't stop it being an enriching experience which I enjoyed having.

I think this differentiation between attitudes to "value" judgments about the past and future is significant in creative practice too. It always find it interesting to observe myself in creative processes between the future and the past just getting on with dealing with the "score" as it unfolds and seeing the value judgements I make as I go along.

I agree about the inadequacy of the success/failure dichotomy.

I didn't at all feel pressured to try to second the new route. I backed off pretty quickly, before even arriving at a difficult or especially challenging move for a number of reasons. I realised that I would need a lot of that strong muscular effort to get up the part where your foot slipped and I didn't feel I had that in me. Partly because of seeing you hurt but more clearly because of the reasons I outlined before about the start of Pauline's Crack. Your injury just deflated me a little more. I was also concerned that you might need to look after yourself immediately. Of course that was your decision and you were clearly happy enough to secure yourself at the top so I could climb, but that feeling also sat with me.

When I wrote that I "didn't have the guts" I meant it viscerally. I didn't have that feeling of being able to access the strong pattern of Ki energy from my Hara, from my belly to be able to meet the task. I didn't mean that I felt cowardly or a failure.

My feeling of disappointment isn't really to do with "failure". It is largely focused on the lack of time to revisit things and to develop skills, sensitivities and strength in an organic way and to try approaching things with different attitudes and attentions.

I have really begun to enjoy climbing again and I'd like to do more but as someone with a low level of skill and experience and a highly developed sense of fear, rooted in experience, I feel dependent on more experienced people to open the opportunity for me.

When I described the climb as "ugly" I wasn't clear about what I meant.

Obviously the rock formation isn't ugly. In itself it isn't anything except what it is. Actually I find it really very beautiful, the way the crack leans towards the beach and the way it persuades me that it is actually perpendicular. The way that its base is available at low tide but not when the sea comes in. The feeling of age, weatheredness and crumbliness

halfway up. I like these things.

Writing again I probably wouldn't choose the word "ugly". Perhaps "unsettling", "disturbing" or "unattractive" would be more accurate because those words describe my experience not the objective facts of the rock, the route, or your ascent.

Maybe the disturbing, unsettling, unattractiveness is located in my misjudgment of the degree of challenge the route offered. Maybe it was in my inability to remain at equilibrium and composed as I watched the climb unfold. Maybe it was in the fact that the climb seemed to demand awkwardness and dynamic strength and these things worry me. I prefer the prospect of challenges to my balance and imagination.

The main feeling I am now left with is the consciousness that my perspective is from a point of deep inexperience and lack of skill and the memory of how much I enjoyed the hanging belay.

Posted by Steve at 10:30 No comments:  

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## TOPOPHOBE REFLECTIONS - SEP 2011

### Reflection on a reflection; Topophobia - Dan



Thanks Steve,

That's a really interesting look at the events from below.

I'm not sure how to process your reflection around your stated lack of competitiveness – or lack of a need to climb it or not feeling failure for backing off. My comments about commitment were actually meant sincerely (tho with some light humour too)– marriage and a child on the way are two big things which I think put you "out there" exposed when faced with something grotty and ugly – or having seen an ugly event. I didn't feel competition was in the air or part of what happened – perhaps you felt that because of the camera, or Gary? I tried not to egg you on to do the climb. And I didn't have any expectations of what you might do.

It's good to hear those thoughts and reflections, although some sound like the assumed clichés of climbing motivation – I'm not sure "competition", "conquering" and "pride" were ever part of our reality of climbing – maybe it's a reflection on that weird place of backing off a climb feeling defensive or the need to justify. Personally I think it was significant that you backed off the climb – that's a key moment - strong in it's own way. Taking

responsibility and the emotional consequences of deemed "failure" – surely that's success of a kind?

Not sure if "success" is a relevant term for my efforts though (your question of in what sense is this a success?)– other than I got up it successfully – in that I didn't fall or resort to using the rope. Yes it was successful in that sense – but is that the point? Really? Success suggests a value system which probably has failure at the other end. What is failure in climbing? what is success? I can't live with this value system – I've fallen off climbs, I've had injuries I've had bad days – but none of these I would class as failure. It's all part of the full textures of doing it.

I guess the reason for climbing for some might be achievement based – maybe this to varying degrees is true for all who climb– the sense of achievement. But this surely runs thin after a while?– if you're not "enjoying" the doing experience then you are wasting your time. "The best climbers are the ones having most fun...."

"Fun" is a broad spectrum of the experiential....

I "enjoyed" the route – that's to say the experience with all it's "bad" and ugliness, uncertainties and worries and pain.

I don't feel I conquered anything, really - I did not beat the rock or any competitors, it wasn't a show of strength or bravado – was it?. If it was I didn't feel that. The experience really was strong partly because of the injury – but even with that I enjoyed it. I know it could have been worse – there could have been more serious consequences – had the climb been longer – but then the "what if's" are pointless to think about beyond adding to the experience log – if the climb had been longer then maybe there would have been perfect gear somewhere to lower off – a happier "what if". In the end I found an accommodation with the route and the injury and the pain and got up and safe.

Things I remembered and enjoyed – finding quite exposed positions to brace myself while I figured out my injury and gear placements. I was very calm at that moment.

The gear below wasn't great but one piece I was fairly confident would hold in that placement where it was pretty solid hard rock – a kind of ironised crystal rock – the the stretch factor of the rope was my risk in relation to my height and that goodish piece of gear. The three bits nearer the top were ok but I also felt fine with the moves from there being ok even with a bad arm.

I enjoyed the three higher gear placements – they gave me succor that a fall might be ok. Made me feel safe/r.

I didn't enjoy the sound of the fin but enjoyed using it later – kind of knowing that it was ok it would hold me if I didn't over exert on it – kind of suck it and see – or at least knowing I had to gauge and monitor it – watch myself.

I enjoyed being in that moment. I never wished I wasn't there during the climb. Conversely I wished I wasn't there when I pulled over the top and then later coiling the rope after the abseil – knowing I wouldn't climb for a while and fearing the next 5 days at the cove would be difficult (but they weren't).

I enjoyed the belay I set at the top – two great sling anchors back on the stack and a nice seat above the corner.

I enjoyed the abseil to clear the gear.

Things I didn't enjoy – not finding decent gear low down to make the first

steep moves – and wasting energy and nerves looking. That started a little creep of anxiety that things were not as straight forward as predicted. I didn't enjoy finding out the flakes and fins were not as solid as I hoped and then confirming the rock on the right wall was friable but would need to be used. This brought a sense of seriousness that I didn't have at the start. This certainly focused my mind a good bit and made the sequence planning and decision making more intense.

At the time of the injury it hurt but it wasn't scary. I thought 'oh I might fall here – what's that gear like again?...' Once I regained a toe hold and made a move to a brace position I knew I wasn't going to fall – there was just one move ahead which was committing but finding the brace positions allowed me to feel ok there. I was in no rush to move quickly - the brace positions allowed me to get over the slight pump of the first steep section (which was tiring because of uncertainties of gear placements – hanging around too much). I felt ok there. The top move with a bad arm was just about being composed and strategically using the bad arm so it didn't take too much more strain.

I pretty sure Steve's observations of the ugliness of the climb and my climbing are spot on. But then I can't find a reason why this is better or worse than if the movements were graceful and beautiful. This is the broad spectrum of aesthetics of climbing movement. Ugly v Beautiful? – I'm not sure I would wish to apply a value system like that to this – it would seem to privilege something and degrade something else without a basis for doing so.

My moves probably became less committing in places as I found the lack of gear low down – more conservative movement, risking less – I guess that's less "beautiful" in a way(?)

Some of them I felt were exciting – at least from my memory – there was one airy pull up and thrutch, then some fun bridging and bracing. Then restricted movement when I injured my arm – that I'm sure was ugly! But effective.

I think and feel that it's a beautiful route – from the experience which was brutal but a powerful experience but also from the visual shape and situation of the route. The rock certainly has it's own entity as a route. It's quite contained, quite specific. I'm actually very surprised it doesn't seem to have been climbed before. I'm happy to have climbed it. I'm buzzing with the thought it probably is a new route too – that's ego bound surely – but also there's a desire to contribute to climbing culture, making, sharing – adding. We name artworks, we a credit authorship. That's important to me – I don't think that's the same as conquering or dominating or colonization. It's an imaginary line on a rock face. People might now know it's there and partake of its history. There's a responsibility to give that rock an entity and identity – so it can be shared with other people – brought into culture and consent.

### **Reflections on Topophobia - Steve**



Necessity... an extreme form of practical demand.

Necessity provides a psychological comfort. A clear focus of attention. Solving problems. You know what you have to do. There is something military about this.

Fear arises from the attention moving to the consequences of failing to be able to meet the necessity.

or

Awareness of the possibility that one may not have the ability to meet the necessity leads to fear.

The first can arise in situations that are very straightforward but with a serious level of exposure. Even going up a ladder or even the stairs... Dealing with this involves a simple self-discipline of focusing on the details of the necessities of the task

The second is far more uncontrollable because the more you focus on the practicalities of the task the more you become aware of the possibility that you don't have the strength or skill to deal with them..

I don't fear failure on the first few moves of a climb because I don't consider it that important to achieve something and to be as good as or better than someone else... to conquer the rock... For other people pride is probably a bigger motivator.

I do, however fear dying... so higher up...

The level of fear is related to the exposure.... what degree or kind of "necessity" are you embedded in?

Focusing on practicality and necessity can open the attention, expand the senses, brighten the perception, widen the horizons as it creates a frame for the inessential, the location of choices, of variation, of interpretation, of value statements, when fear takes over the expanded attention shuts down, down, only the immediate moment and the immediate future are present.

Dans voice changed as he climbed.

The first few metres of the climb were more challenging than predicted. At

the first little ledge it didn't look to me as though it was as possible to rest as it had seemed from just looking. The degree of the overhang became much more clear. He spent a lot of time trying to get some gear in while being in a quite awkward body position. He slid a chunky piece of gear in but it didn't "stick"... tried again... but the angle of the crack didn't really allow the thing to grip. It just sort of sat there gently balancing. There was probably an angle of pull that would have locked it in, but that angle wasn't one that bore any relation to the pull arising from any possible fall from above it. He wasn't high up... but the fall would have been onto some nasty rocks. He found another spot for a little nut... but not better really. More secure but it didn't look to me like the rock around it would hold if there was a fall... maybe slow it down a bit but not more. It looked like he was getting tired already. The feeling of belaying being a pointless job rose in me... looked like this was really becoming a solo climb...

He continued. With some less than elegant "scrobbling" he found a half-reasonable hand hold directly above and smearing his shoes on the plate to the right of the crack heaved up... the small ridges on the rock just crumbled away under his feet... it didn't look good... a moment of just hanging... seemed to last a long long time from where I was... as I involuntarily measured the length of rope above what protection there was and compared it with the length below. Then... again inelegantly... he somehow hauled himself up with an "arghghgh!" as the big piece of gear several metres below him slipped down the rope bashing my knuckles as it arrived with me.

It wasn't a good safe spot. Again precarious... no real rest and the only gear a tiny nut in thin rock way below him giving zero protection and the rocks a few metres below that. I tried to turn off the looping flashback of the woman falling from the same height at the indoor wall in Arnheim. That was the reason I stopped really enjoying climbing for several years. The blood spreading across the floor she moaned "het doet mir pijn"... "it hurts me". She survived, just about, but she hit only a flat floor, didn't bang her head, and didn't seriously damage her spine as her legs and pelvis had provided a crush zone... one really really deep plie.

He called down that he'd done something serious to his shoulder. No choice from there though. The search for some where to put some gear in looked a bit desperate from my position. Nothing calm or elegant there. Just practicality. He got several bits in but the tone of his voice when he said they were ok didn't really convince. He was obviously in pain. The last couple of metres up and the haul over the lip of the cliff were as ugly as the rest of the ascent... but it was relief...

I tried to second it but I didn't have the guts. I reckon I could have got up it... later I felt a bit frustrated that I had given up too easily at the first moment where commitment was needed. He teased me that I had enough commitment issues and that I probably had enough commitments in my life already being freshly married and with a baby on the way in a few weeks.

An ugly, ugly climb.

Maybe it could have been done more beautifully a second time. But his busted armpit prevented that.

It what sense is this a success? Genuine question.....

Posted by Dan at 10:21 No comments:  

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Wednesday, 14 September 2011

TOPOPHILE / TOPOPHOBE - SEP 2011

**Topophile / Topophobe HVS 5a**



One outcome from the cove was a new route...

It's not listed in the Donegal guidebook or on the donegal climbing website database so it's mine to claim - unless anyone knows otherwise in which case please let me know as I'd love to share notes.

Haven't got a name for it yet: playing around "Topophobia topophilia" but I have some other ideas too.

It's a strange climb - looks quite easy from the front angle - then from the side you realise it's very overhanging. Then when you get on it you realise there's less holds, loose flakes and patchy gear.

Anyway I got up it but not without a world of pain when my foot hold crumbled and foot slipped way above any gear leaving a tendon wrenching move to somewhere vaguely safe and gearable...

I'm hesitantly grading it HVS 5a - but is possibly VS4a. It's quite tough though and with my injury it seemed pretty serious. I think seriousness alone makes it more daunting than a VS.





Here's my topo description:

**Topophile / Topophobe 16m HVS 5a**

The 3rd and overhanging corner seaward from the arch.

More strenuous than it looks.

Belay at low tide or from a hanging belay on middle slab (also avoids any potential rockfall)

Bridge and layback the corner.

Better gear nearer the top.

The large worrismatic sounding fin is best avoided if possible.

Some friable rock on left wall.

Love Hate.

D Shippies with Steve Batts (Echo Echo Dance) Sep 2011



I wrote this in my tent that night – it's quite raw, narrowly focused and reductive – but saying that perhaps less is more? It's just from when things got painful.

low

tide

high enough above gear

committing

reach

bridge bridge

search up right arm

toe hold crumble slip

left arm rumbling glitching tearing zzzzssszzzz

feels socket pulling out weight on

stop swing relax fuck

find feet brace

find right hand hold

find right hand hold found

shift weight

lengthen arm to bones

searing pain lightening

blue electric blue wow

keep grip make move

up pull even if it's loose

good ok brace legs and back

relax pain out oooooow

compose compose

gear gear

need gear here

looks ok

nut loose 4 out of 10

friend in crack 5 out of 10

friend in crack 7 out of 10 maybe 8

safer

what about that pain? Hmmm

not nice

wait wait

move pelvis up

big right ledge

find left hand hold

pain use it pain use it hold

move up

right holds

shuffle over the top

safe

examine pain don't

brutal nice route

bad pain

Posted by Dan at 13:59 No comments:



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