

Matienzo Caves Expedition 2023



Vaca Bypass with explorers – photo by Sam Davies

Introduction

This report covers the expedition speleological work in the permit area 17 shown in figure 1 below in the period from November 2022 to October 2023.

This covers Ribamontan al Monte south of the A-8 autopista, Solorzano, Entrambasaguas east of the CA-651 and Ruesga north of Cruz Uzano. The permit also covers work in Cueva Vallina which was proved to link hydrologically with the South Vega system in Matienzo in 2016. The expedition has agreed formal agreements with Club de Espeleología la Cambera to jointly work the Ribamontan al Monte area and with Espeleo Club Tortosa to work in Cueva Vallina.

This year some time was spent on a number of projects including: work to connect Fridge Door Cave (1800) to Cueva-Cubio del Llanio (3234) and to locate and then excavate and make stock proof a new entrance needed for better and safer access for divers; stabilising Giant Panda Entrance (2691) which had started to collapse and installing a large diameter tube to protect from any further collapse; and with easier access via Torca la Decepción (4732) undertaking a resurvey of *Rocky Horror* to *Duckham's Sump* area where some 1.235km of resurvey were completed.

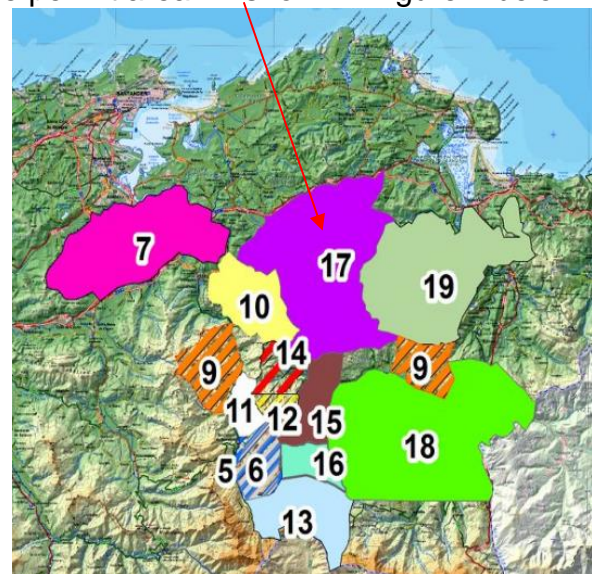


Fig 1 Expedición Británica área de permiso para el 2023

| Matienzo Caves - newly surveyed caves November 2022 to October 2023 | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Cave | Name | Area | Grid Ref Datum ETRS89 | Previous length (m) | New length (m) | Extra length (m) |
| 0733 | Cueva Vallina | Arredondo | 30T 450017 4792405 | 36771 | 37536 | 765 |
| 1800 | Fridge Door Cave | Riaño | 30T 451162 4800782 | 70059 ¹ | 72973 ² | 818 |
| 5368 | Vaca Bypass | Riaño | 30T 451279 4800925 | | | 408 |
| 0107 | Cueva Hoyuca | Riaño | 30T 451816 4799805 | | | 234 |
| 4732 | Torca la Decepción | La Secada | 30T 453011 4798395 | | | 215 |
| 3234 | Cueva-Cubio del Llanio | Riaño | 30T 451519 4800779 | | | 23 |
| 5369 | Tomb of the Oil King | Trillos | 30T 448137 4794052 | | | 0 |
| 0258 | Torcón de la Calleja Rebollo | Seldesuto | 30T 448780 4795064 | 7902 | 8208 | 306 |
| 4867 | Resurgence | El Rincon | 30T 451027 4805506 | 0 | 155 | 155 |
| 2538 | El Cubillon | Moncobe | 30T 446058 4796484 | 2522 | 2673 | 151 |
| 5023 | Villanueva resurgence | Villanueva | 30T 447757 4804095 | 782 | 915 | 133 |
| 3254 | Shaft | Seldesuto | 30T 449046 4793657 | 0 | 105 | 105 |
| 0008 | Cueva del Anderal 1 | Ozana | 30T 453958 4794801 | 80 | 185 | 105 |
| 4669 | Torca del Dron | S Vega | 30T 452097 4794840 | 499 | 593 | 94 |
| 5336 | Bus Stop Cave | Beranga | 30T 451600 4806553 | 0 | 80 | 80 |
| 3450 | El Suto | San Antonio | 30T 445949 4800807 | 139 | 216 | 77 |
| 0085 | Abrigo de la Cuevona | El Camino | 30T 452748 4796771 | 0 | 47 | 47 |
| 4941 | Cueva La Centinela | Hazas de Cesto | 30T 452779 4805796 | 0 | 44 | 44 |
| 3355 | Cave | S Vega | 30T 451361 4795347 | | 43 | 43 |
| 0151 | Cueva del Anio | La Secada | 30T 451488 4797364 | 0 | 41 | 41 |
| 0713 | Fuente Aguanaz | San Antonio | 30T 446482 4801430 | 4738 | 4776 | 38 |
| 5372 | Cave | Trillos | 30T 448063 4794077 | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| 2908 | Bus Stop Shelter Cave | Cobadal | 30T 448032 4798083 | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| 0890 | Cave | Bosmartín | 30T 449508 4796801 | 0 | 24 | 24 |
| 5321 | Shaft | S Vega | 30T 451396 4795364 | 0 | 21 | 21 |
| 1149 | Cave | Seldesuto | 30T 449138 4793611 | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| 5371 | Cave | Trillos | 30T 448070 4794076 | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| 0539 | Shaft | Trillos | 30T 448110 4794175 | 0 | 19 | 19 |
| 5361 | Arch Cave II | Hazas de Cesto | 30T 452673 4805889 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| 5382 | Four Entrance Cave | Hazas de Cesto | 30T 452888 4805803 | 0 | 17 | 17 |
| 5370 | Cave | Trillos | 30T 448075 4794041 | 0 | 15 | 15 |
| 5209 | Shaft | Seldesuto | 30T 449227 4794321 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| 5334 | Vaca-Cud | La Secada | 30T 452517 4796638 | 0 | 14 | 14 |
| 5026 | Cave | Villanueva | 30T 447955 4803684 | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| 3762 | Shaft | South Vega | 30T 451899 4794331 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| 5317 | Cave | El Naso | 30T 451437 4797163 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| 5338 | Cave | Beranga | 30T 451834 4806683 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 5374 | Shaft | Trillos | 30T 448055 4794080 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 5384 | Cave | Cubija | 30T 449980 4796598 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 1312 | Cave | Seldesuto | 30T 448345 4794172 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| 5381 | Ravine Cave | Hazas de Cesto | 30T 452887 4805835 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| 5340 | Cave | Beranga | 30T 451777 4806653 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total new cave surveyed to BCRA 5c | | | | | | 4574 |
| (1) Four Valleys System, (2) Length Includes sites 1800 and 5368 both joined via 3234 in 2023 | | | | | | |

Just over four and a half kilometres of new cave were found and surveyed in 2023 as well as identifying and recording some seventy seven new sites and entrances. The main finds this year

were in: Fridge Door Cave (1800); Cueva Vallina (0733); and new sites Vaca Bypass (5368) and Tomb of the Oil King (5369). A number of surveys are in the process of being completed and will appear on the Matienzo Caves Project website (<http://matienzocaves.org.uk/page1.php>) when complete along with details of all the sites and caves found in our permit area.

Research Work

After the gap caused by Covid 19, the bat survey work has resumed with five species of bats identified in over 13 active sites. A separate report on their work will be uploaded to the Matienzo Caves Project website.



A team led by Dr Peter Wynn of Lancaster University started the Speleothem Phosphate Palaeothermometer project aiming to provide a breakthrough in the field of temperature

reconstruction by developing a new palaeothermometer using phosphate-oxygen isotopes contained within speleothems. The NERC-funded project uses Cueva-Cubío del Llanío (3234) in Riaño as the collection centre. As part of this work 150 litres of sample water were collected for transport back to Lancaster for testing.

No water tracing took place partly due to the dry weather conditions during expedition times; we expect to resume this work in 2024.

Southern Sector

Cueva Vallina (0733)

At the end of the Sunday Stomps the climb at the end of the large passage from the top entrance was climbed and over three trips over 700m of mainly large passage (Top Level Continuation) was found. One passage was found going back above the Sunday Stomps before connecting back into the main passage. A climb and some leads are left to be looked at in 2024.



The work in the area around *Zona Blanca* and *Swirl Chamber* continued to tie up some loose ends and confirm links between passages. Exploration in this section of the cave is now complete.

Nearer the entrance, a side passage off the *Sunday Stomps* was found. This consisted of 42m of passage with numerous gypsum flowers on the walls, and so it was named *Gypsum Paradise*.



Jim Lister and Mark Smith dived upstream sump 9 to find it to be only 7m long to 120m of low then flat-out passage that is still going, but small. It has yet to be surveyed.

South Vega

Over thirty caves were visited in this area, including 14 sites inspected as part of the Bat Project -

most had active bat occupation. There were several trips into Cueva del Comellantes (0040) including a Citizen Science meet, leading people (including children) in a search for bats. This proved very successful and popular with about 12 Schreiber's bent winged bats, 6 lesser horseshoe bats and 1 greater horseshoe bat located and identified.

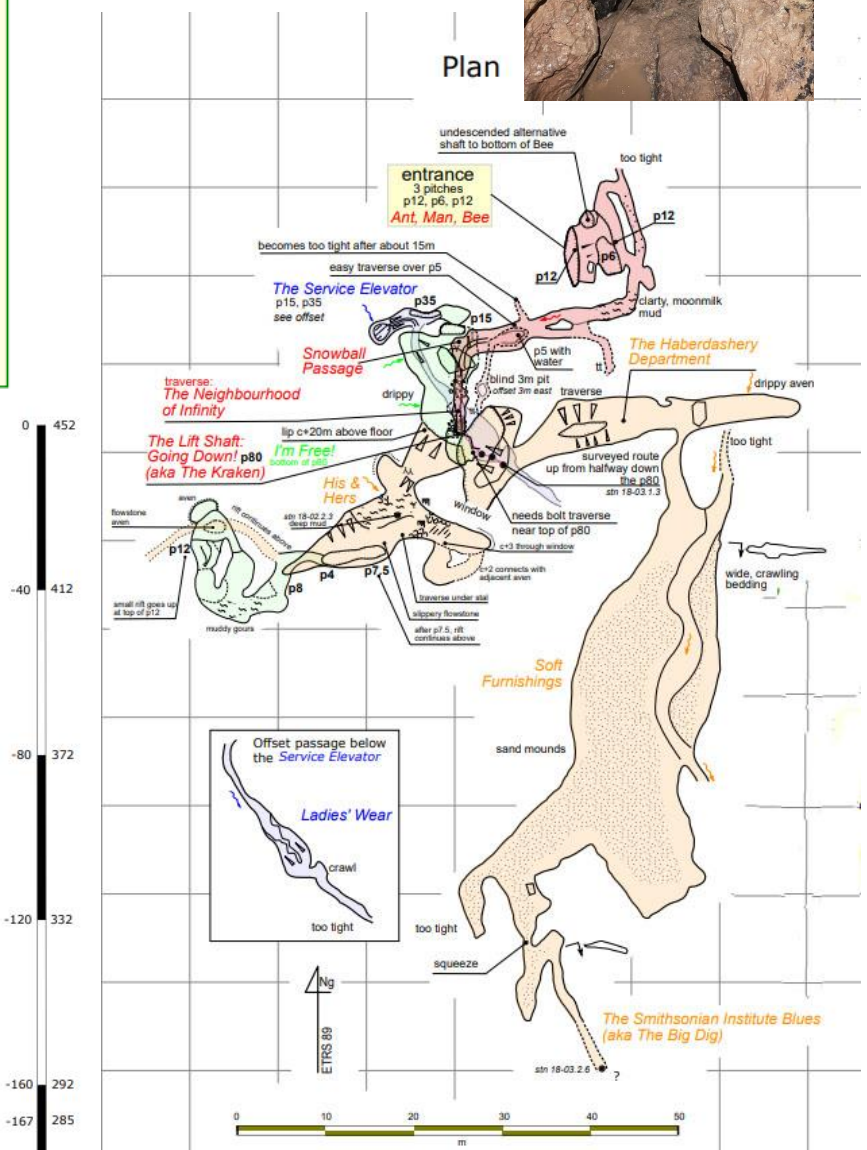
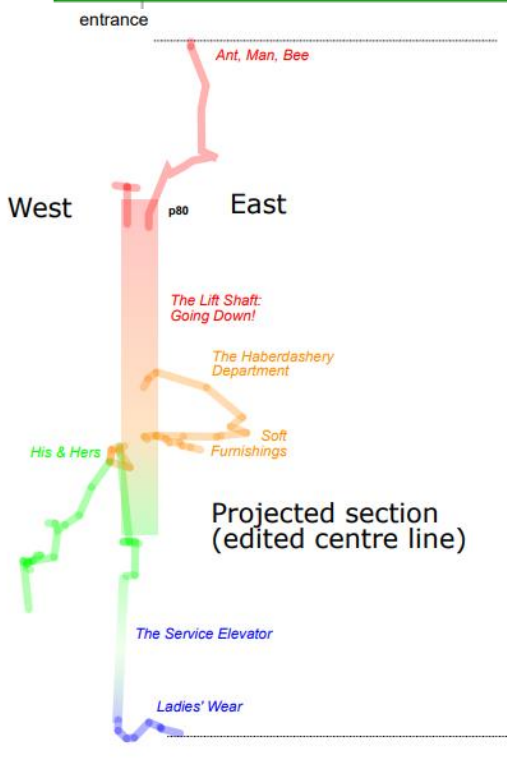


In Torca de Azpilicueta (0333), an attempt was made to survey the 87 Series that goes off next to the rift pitch prior to the big pitch however rigging proved too problematic due to excessive muddy and flaky walls and it was decided the best option would be to rig and survey site 0675 that intersects this series and survey from that end.

At Torca del Dron (4669), nearly 100m of new cave was surveyed in the His & Hers area. The "water splash" pitch was dropped followed by two more pitches then a muddy crawl to two further pitches that both entered the same chamber where there was no way on. There are still a number of other leads at this site to investigate.



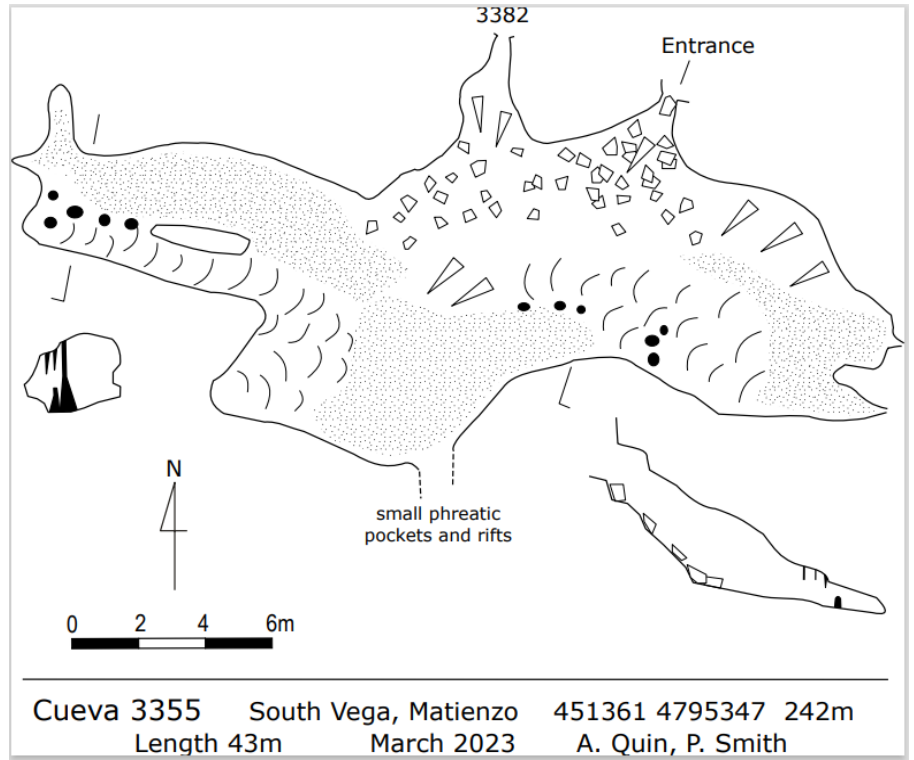
site 4669: Torca del Dron
 South Vega 30T 0.452.097 4.794.840 (ETRS89) Altitude: 452m
 Length: 593m Depth: 167m
 This cave survey is aligned to the ETRS89 grid which is 0.4 degrees to the west of True North.
 Surveyed: April 2018 - 2023
 Survey grade: UISv1 4-3-A
 Batch 18-01 **James Carlisle**, Bill Nix, Phil Gillespie. LM,C&C
 Batch 18-02 **Diane Arthurs**, James Carlisle, Simon Cornhill, Alex Ritchie. DistoX.
 Batch 18-03 **Diane Arthurs**, James Carlisle, Simon Cornhill, Alex Ritchie. DistoX
 Batch 23-01 **Andrew Northall**, Gracie Sharp. DistoX
Version 23.01 May 2023 Drawn in Inkscape: Juan Corrin
 Note that a horizontal passage off the head of the main pitch has been explored but not surveyed. See logbook 22/4/19; 14/8/21 and sketches linked from the description. Also batch 19-01 near head of p80 is not shown for clarity.
 Matienzo Caves Project 2018 - now



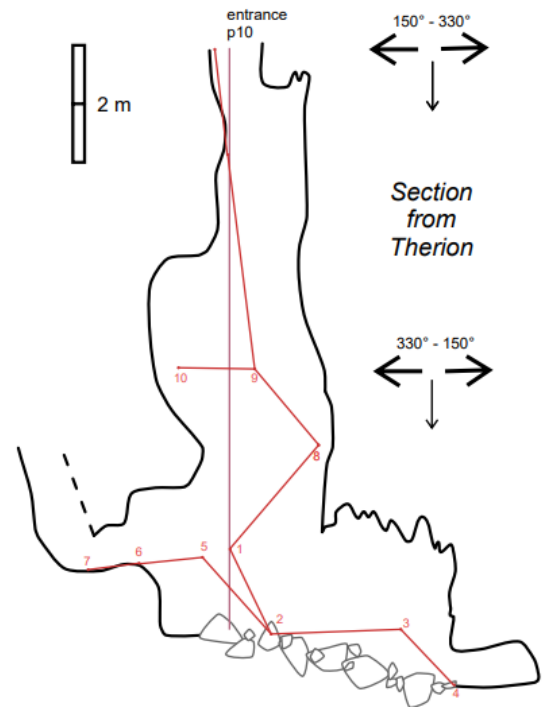
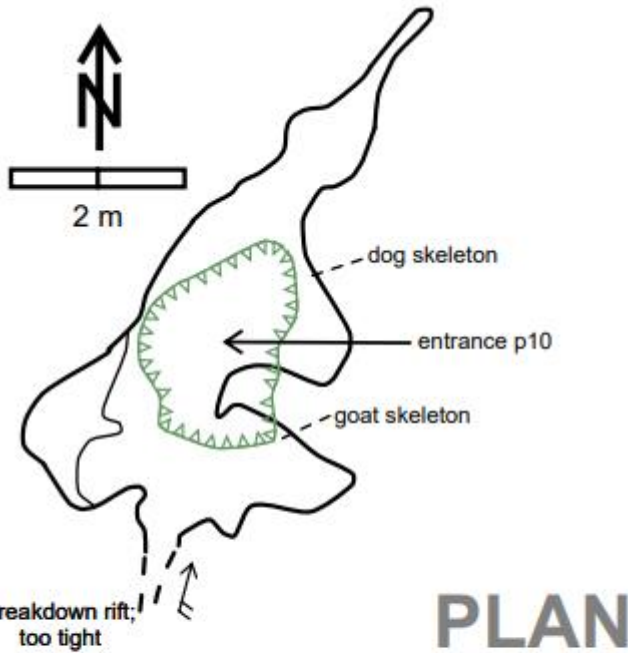
Cave 3355 was pushed and surveyed to 43m.



Cueva 3355
NW end of chamber



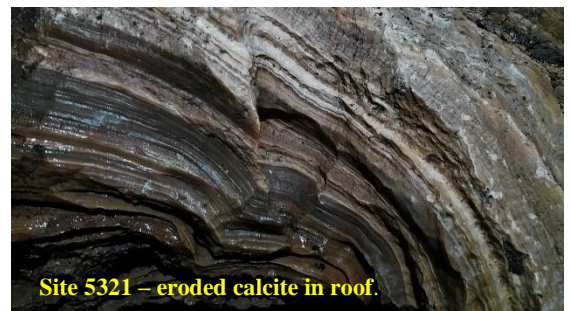
A 21m-long new site (5321) on the edge of a wood, covered in cut branches, was 10m deep to a small chamber with a short passage opening up to a clean washed aven.



5321:shaft

South Vega 30T 451396 4795364 (Datum: ETRS89) Altitude 223m
 Length 21m Depth 11m
 Surveyed by Martyn Grayson and Jess Eades, April 2023
 Drawn in CaveRenderPro by Juan Corrin

A significant development was at Tablons (0242) where a comprehensive check for where the main draught comes from was made and a rift passage was pushed in the final chamber to two strongly draughting leads that now need some digging work. The rift passage is tight but should be passable by moving loose fill and rocks on the floor at this



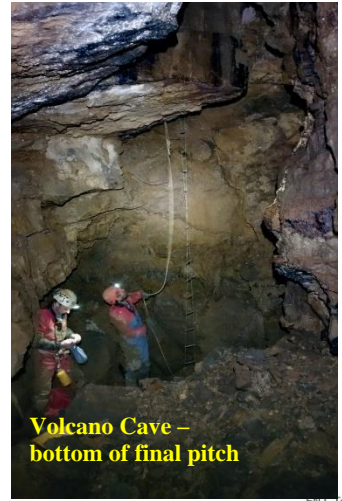
Site 5321 – eroded calcite in roof.

key site.

At Volcano Cave (1391) the dig in the final chamber was checked out.

This "dig" had partly collapsed since the last visit over 10 years ago. To make progress, shoring and significant digging is now needed. This is a key site between Reñada and Vallina due to its strong draught that must be related to at least one of these caves.

Elsewhere on South Vega the shaft 2082 was descended to 5.7m. A number of other sites were identified but most were choked and considered not realistic pushing prospects.

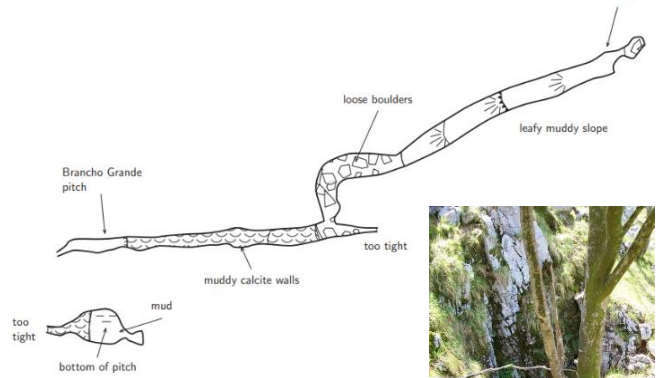
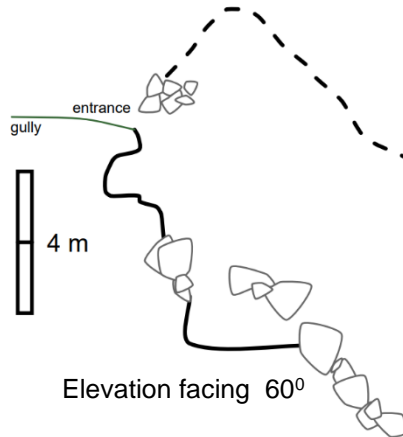
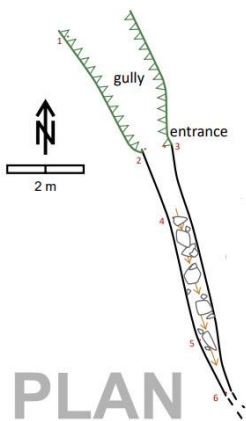


Seldesuto

Shaft (3254) was pushed and surveyed over three trips to a depth of 89m and surveyed length of 105m. The base needs more work to make progress although it may be possible to swing into a pitch higher up. It needs checking out for

5209: shaft

Seldesuto 30T 449227 4794321 (Datum: ETRS89) Altitude 463m
 Length 11m Depth 9m
 Surveyed by Martyn Grayson, April 2023
 Drawn in CaveRenderPro by Juan Corrin

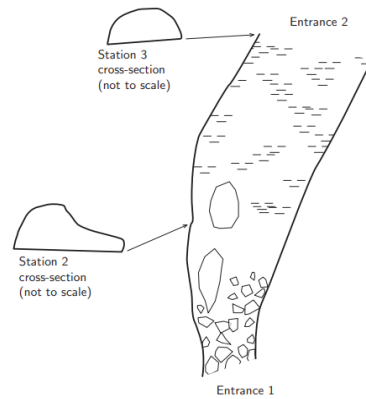


3254 - Tree Pot

Scale 1 : 200
 0 2 4 6 8 10m



Length: 105 m
 Depth: 89 m
 Surveyed by: Raoul Hidalgo Charman, Francesca McDonald, Carolina Smith de la Fuente, Michael Topsom 2023



draughts in hot weather to identify best prospects. Another shaft (5209) high on the hill was dropped into a rift for 15m to where more work is required. This also needs checking for inward draughts in hot weather.

Another cave (1149) named "Oh no, I ordered a Heineken!" was found, it is a descending twin entrance tunnel for 20m with no prospects.

Two new shafts were found (5329 & 5330) which dropped to chokes at 5m and 25m respectively and shaft 2796 was pushed down a 30m pitch to a flat floor with no way on.

1149 - Oh no, I've ordered a Heineken

Scale 1 : 200
 0 2 4 6 8 10m

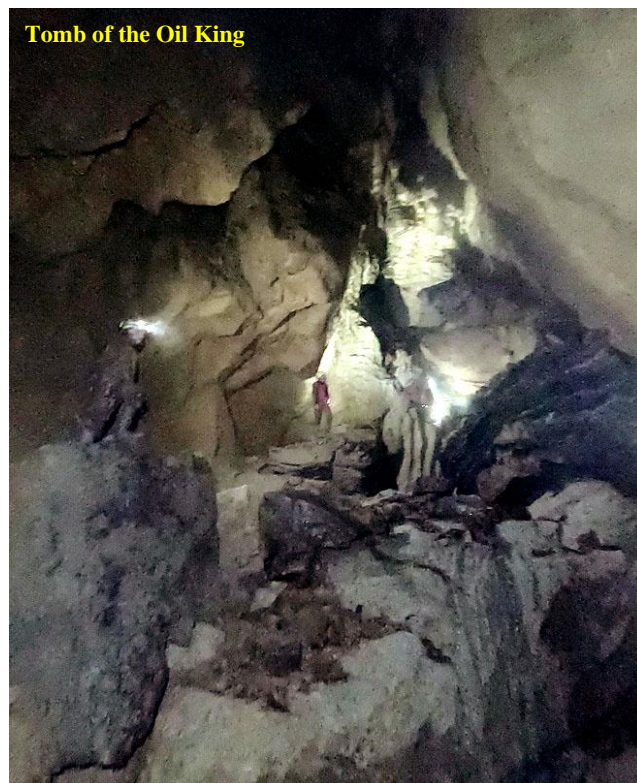


Length: 20 m
 Depth: 6 m
 Surveyed by: Raoul Hidalgo Charman, Francesca McDonald, Michael Topsom 2023

Over seven trips in the entrance series in Torcón de la Calleja Rebollo (0258) leads were checked out and about 300m of previously unsurveyed passages were surveyed. This area has now been well checked out and future prospects are further into and at the end of the cave.

Trillos (Alisas area)

An area and depression below the viewpoint at Alisas was examined and ten new sites were found and pushed. The most extensive was called Tomb of the Oil King (5369) at 365m long



and 90m in vertical extent. This site is quite complicated with a number of loose and dangerous boulder areas. Work was needed to stabilise some of the boulders to allow safer access and allow pushing at the bottom. The final boulder choke was pushed down but boulders choked any further way on. A survey was completed in October 2023 and is being drawn up and will appear on the Matienzo Caves Project website.

Of the other sites found, cave 5372 was pushed to a tiny streamway with no way on and surveyed to 35m; cave 5370 was surveyed to 15m to a chamber and



small sink and has bats present; cave 5371 was surveyed to 20m and was pushed to a pitch head but soft rock made bolt placement difficult; cave 5374 was pushed to boulders blocking access to

a pitch and so needs work to gain access. Another five new sites were less promising although a resurgence (5375) does draught well.

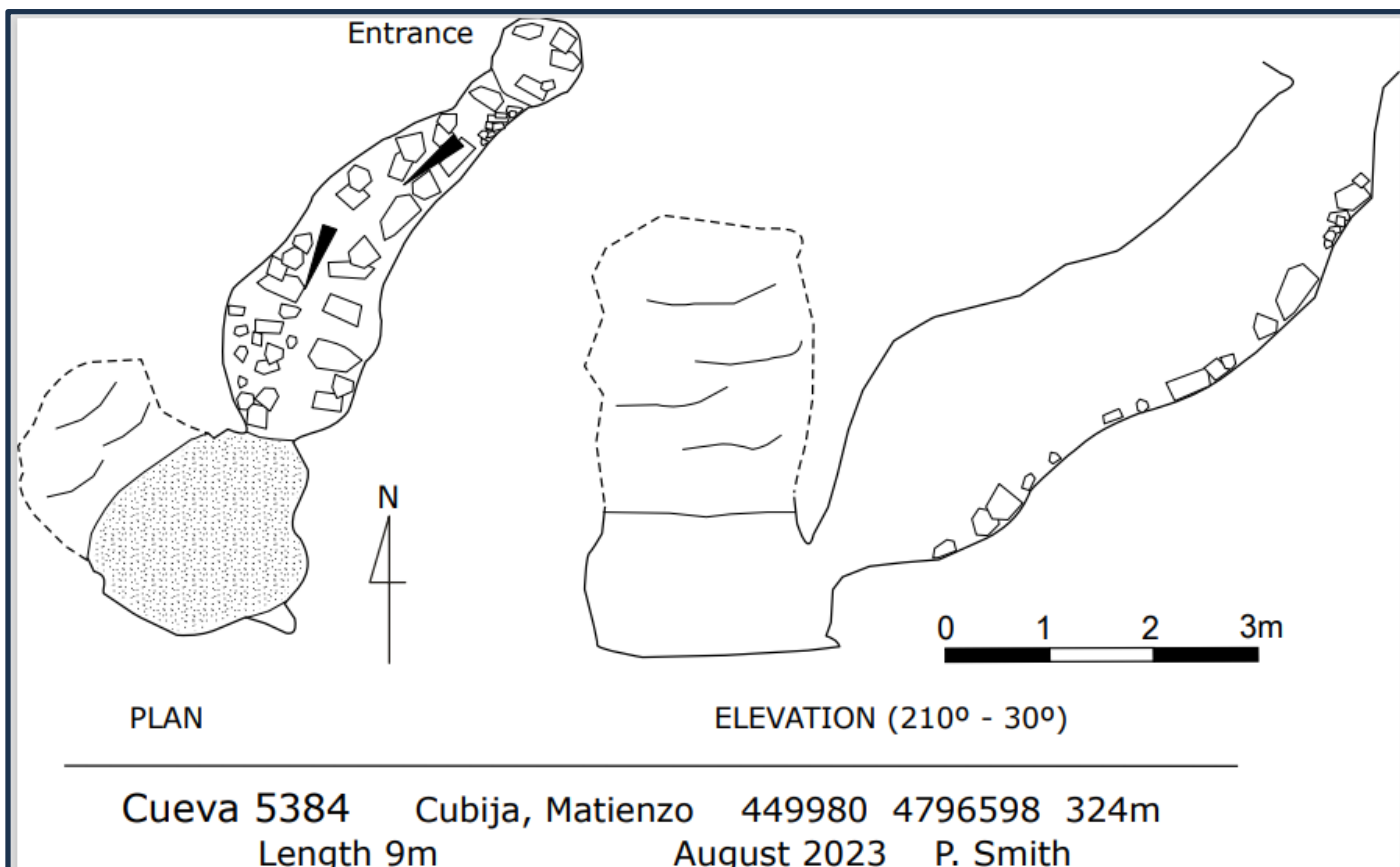
North Vega including Cubija valley and El Naso

At the strongly draughting dig 0813, that is situated above a blank area of the North Vega System, was worked on a number of occasions to progress down a rift by removing fill and loose rock. Two new sites with some promise were located (5323 and 5325) however both need more work to progress.



In Cueva del Molino (Agua) (0059) possible bats were seen, but too high up to confirm - viewing to confirm will need a very strong light! An ecological meet held by the Cantabrian Speleological Federation was well attended by cavers from across Cantabria. The aim was looking at the different fauna in the various cave environments as you move from the entrance to the inner area with no daylight. Nearby a new site Cueva Dana (5387) that draughts strongly was found by a dog named Dana. It was dug down 3m to a tight section where a boulder fill will need to be removed to make progress.

A new cave, 5384, above a pylon, is a steep scramble down to a restriction then a 1.5m climb down to a chamber with a mud floor and a 6m aven.

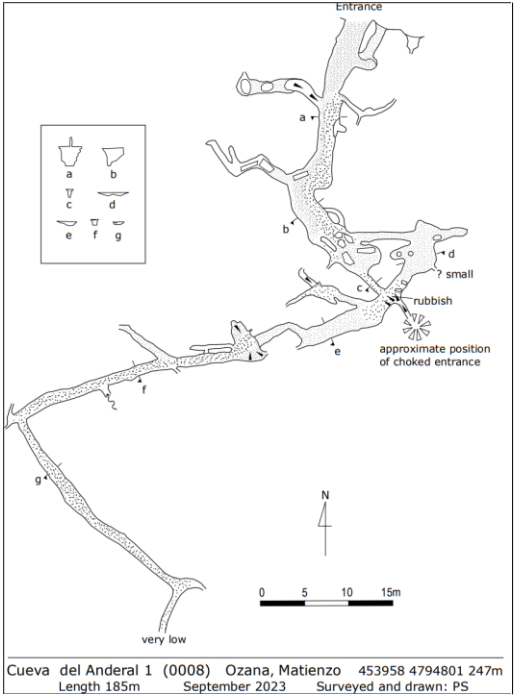


El Sedo, La Colina, Cubilla and Ozana

As part of the Bat Project, Cueva del Concebo (0012) and Cueva de Cuatribu (0013) were found to have active bat presence with four species identified in the latter cave. Cueva del Anderal 1 was pushed and re-surveyed.



On Mullir the shaft 1451 was pushed down 5m to where a tight slot stopped progress. It now needs work to remove loose rock to continue. A chamber can be seen below but no draught was felt. At Ozana, cave 3884 was checked and is thought to be worth digging as it has some promise. Cueva de Tiva (0026) was checked for draughts at a blockage. Draughts were found from boulders high up and also low down on the left with a 10m difference in vertical height between the locations, more work is needed to investigate these sites.



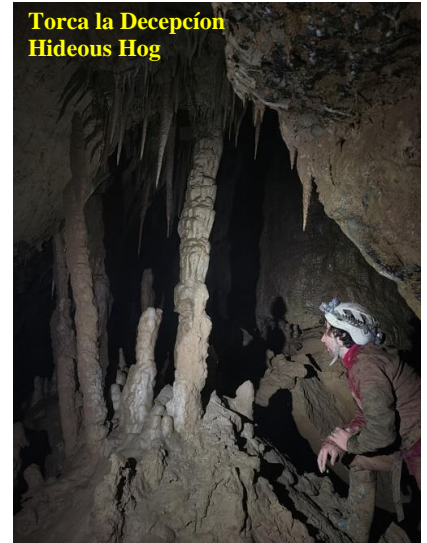
The North-East Sector and The Four Valleys System

La Secada

Here, the main work was in Torca la Decepción (4732) where, over



six trips, the rigging bolts were replaced with stainless captive type as the previous bolts had rusted. The main work was finding a bypass from the Griffins Club area to Hideous

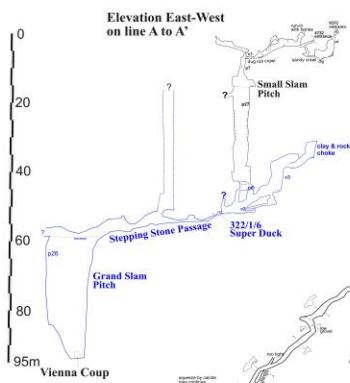
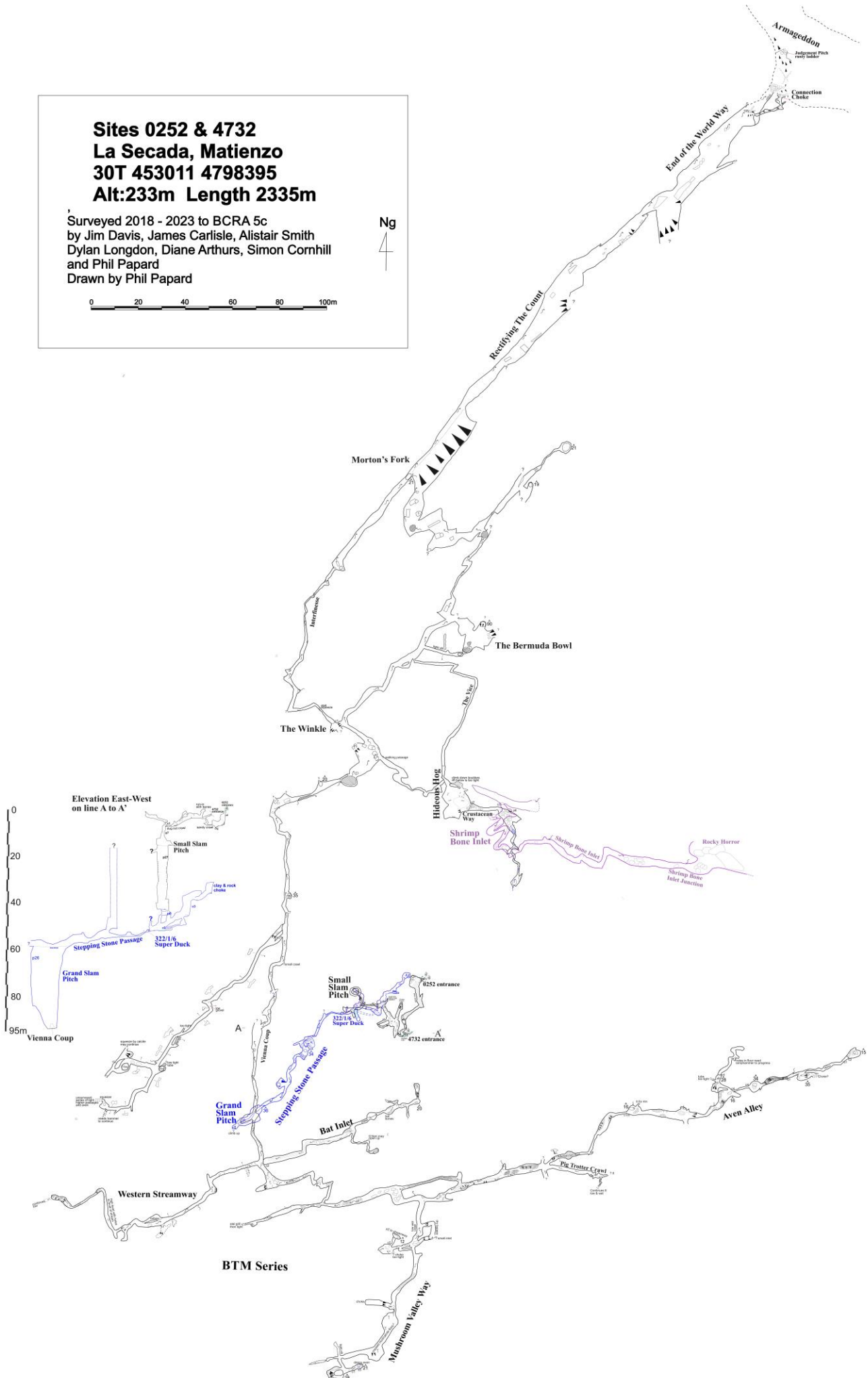


Hog as well as checking side passages in the same area. This entrance was then used to check for leads in Shrimp Bone Inlet, Rocky Horror and the Trident Series in Cueva Hoyuca (0107). The main surveying work was carried out in Shrimp Bone Inlet, where over 200m of passages were found. The route into the Trident Series is via a climb up the south wall from near the start of Rocky Horror to an old "campsite" chamber. A number of leads in Trident were noted and still need pushing and surveying. Using this entrance, a 1.235km of resurvey from Rocky Horror to Duckham's



Sites 0252 & 4732
La Secada, Matienzo
30T 453011 4798395
Alt:233m Length 2335m

Surveyed 2018 - 2023 to BCRA 5c
 by Jim Davis, James Carlisle, Alistair Smith
 Dylan Longdon, Diane Arthurs, Simon Cornhill
 and Phil Papard
 Drawn by Phil Papard



Sump area was completed. An inlet off the east of *Vienna Coup* was pushed and surveyed for 142m to where it closed down. There are still a number of climbs and possible digs to be looked at in the cave. The north wall at the end of *Rocky Horror*, where a possible passage is shown on the original survey, could not be reached due to high water levels at Easter and still needs checking out in 2024 as this lead may be important. This is because the extensions in Cueva Lueva (0114) suggest there could be higher level passages in this direction.

Passages off the *Big Bang Burger Bar* area of Cueva Lueva (0114) that were first found in 2014 were examined and a number of leads pushed. A climb bolted to within about 15m of the top ran out of rope so still needs to be completed. A number of small side passages and digs were identified but more work is required.

The river around the sinks at Carcavuezo have recently been cleared of debris by



Carcavuezo sink overflow channel

the local authority with the aim of reducing flooding. This work included clearing the overflow channel from the sinks to near the entrance to Cueva de Carcavuezo (0081). The main entrance was found to be blocked by logs, but below at the end of the



Cueva de Carcavuezo blocked entrance

overflow channel a site was found that should be fairly easy to open as an alternative entrance. In the past, an entrance in this area had been found (3895) but subsequently blocked by flood debris.

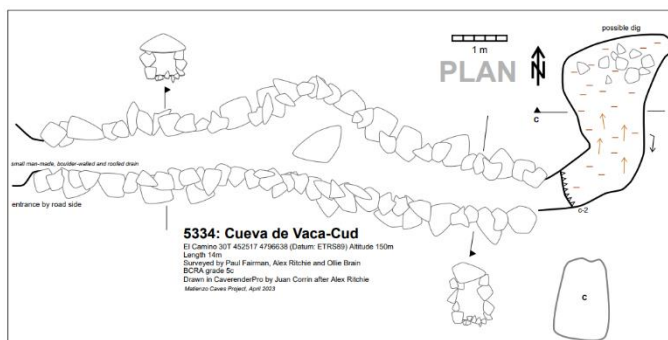
One of the more improbable caves was found adjacent to the main road in Matienzo just to the south of the river bridge. What looked just like an outlet for a field drain aroused enough interest for one member to get a



Vaca-Cud entrance



Vaca-Cud



light and explore in his normal clothes, finding it was in fact a cave (Vaca-Cud, site 5334). He returned with a team and surveyed the 14m-long cave. It has limited prospects, but does show that the limestone does extend to the valley floor in this area.

At Cueva del Anio (0151) a tight rift not on the survey was found and this was pushed, and the cave surveyed to 41m where more work will be needed to make more progress. At La Cuvia (0086) the end was pushed until it became too tight. A number of sites in key locations continued to be dug with some progress but more work is needed. Site 2770 was dug to 9m but still needs more work. Extensive digging took place at Apprentice Cave (2108), but prospects now look



Apprentice Cave

poor, and attention moved to dig 2101 which was progressed for 5m. Socks (1017) is a strongly draughting site on the west of the valley that has many very strongly draughting sites nearby. It is situated not very far from the end of the North Vega System. The pitch in Socks was opened up to make it larger for better access and digging will continue. Site 2770 was dug to 9m long but still needs more work.

Eight new sites were found and recorded; all would need significant digging including shaft 5364 which was partly blocked by a tree trunk 3m down. Two further rifts can be seen dropping a further 3.5 m and 4.5m - removal of the tree trunk is needed to access these rifts.

Fresnedo

Site 2522, that should link into Cueva del Torno (2366), was dug at the bottom of the entrance shaft. It was found to need shoring to protect the person digging when more work takes place. The draughting dig (2414) below the east side of the road to Solórzano was dug on two occasions and more work is needed. Shaft 2662 could not be found - it looks like it may have been filled in.

Riaño

At Cueva-Cubío de Llanío (3234) the dig at the end of *High Pulse* was pushed through into Fridge Door Cave (1800) and made larger for better access.



Cueva-Cubío de Llanío – digging connection

These connections extended the Four Valleys System to well over 72km. Using this route - instead of diving - the traverse above "Jaws" pitch was pushed. It closed down, but a passage below continues small but passable with some work. A traverse line above sump 2 was installed to make

access to sump 3 easier and safer. A large void

was noted past the boulder choke in this area that needs bolting to access. The possible link from Fridge Door Cave to Cueva de la Espada (0103) was checked out from the downstream Espada end.



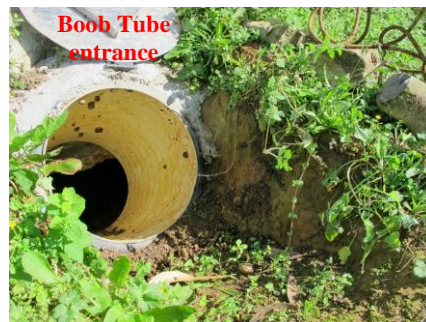
Cueva-Cubío de Llanío – connection crawl

There are a few possibilities, and it may require digging from both ends to get the link. At Fridge Door Cave (1800), the point close to the surface (Stairway to Heaven) was accessed by a team via Cueva-Cubío del Llanío (3234) and a surface team at Ron Taylor's SubPhones location point. The coordinated teams used radios, and a 1m drill bit drilled through soil and gravel fill below a limestone bed, which seemed to be a possible old entrance below the rock outcrop. The underground team clearly heard the drilling and, with some digging work, located the end of the drill. With excavations at the surface and underground lasting about an hour, the underground team were able to exit and make the first through trip.

The new entrance, now called Boob Tube (5000), was later stabilised with a drainage tube fitted into the opening and an unlocked lid fitted to prevent goats

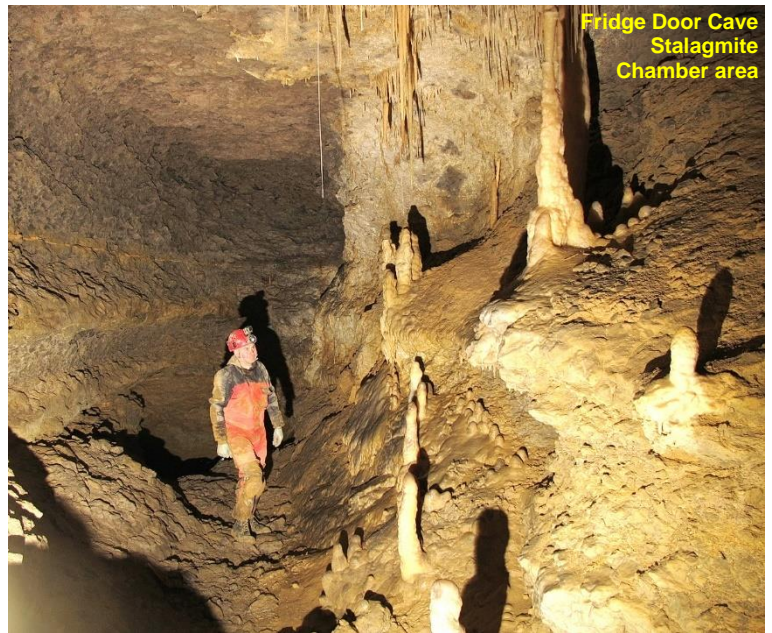


Boob Tube entrance under construction

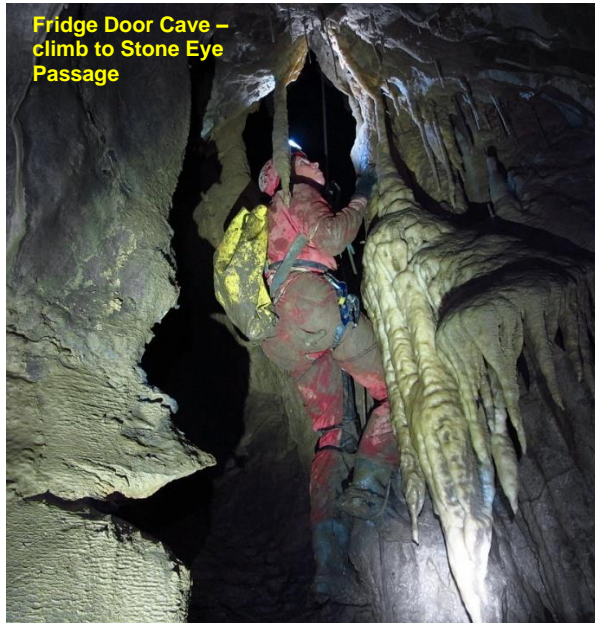


Boob Tube entrance

and other animals from getting in. Using the Boob Tube entrance, well over half a kilometre of new passage was explored and surveyed heading north and east, and a new sump 4 found. The dry route to this sump requires SRT or ladders as you need to climb up to higher levels and then drop



Fridge Door Cave
Stalagmite
Chamber area



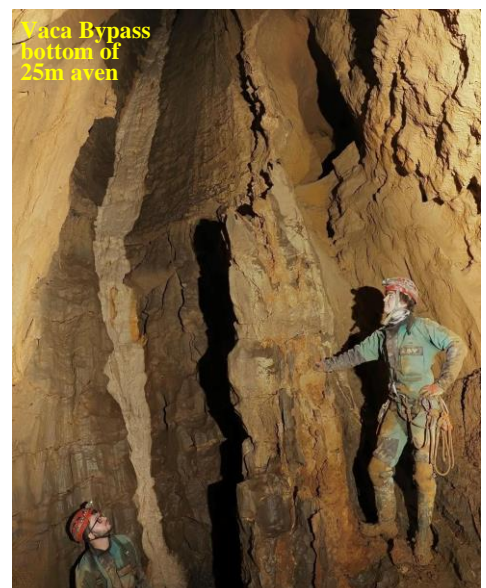
Fridge Door Cave –
climb to Stone Eye
Passage

down to the sump. The route through sump 3 was checked out by Jim Lister but it was found to be a difficult option and the dry route is probably the best for pushing in 2024.

One unexpected problem with the Boob Tube entrance is the strong cold draught it emits. It seems that cows in hot weather like this and, on one trip by a team who had not been there before, the entrance was hidden due to a cow and calf sitting over the hole! To avoid the animals, the team decided to look above the field for prospects and found a new site Vaca Bypass (5368). Over 5 trips this cave was pushed down a number of pitches and passages that required some technical traversing. Finally, an 8m pitch was dropped to a sump with a diving line belayed off, later identified as the start of Sump 2 in Fridge Door Cave, thus linking into the Four Valleys

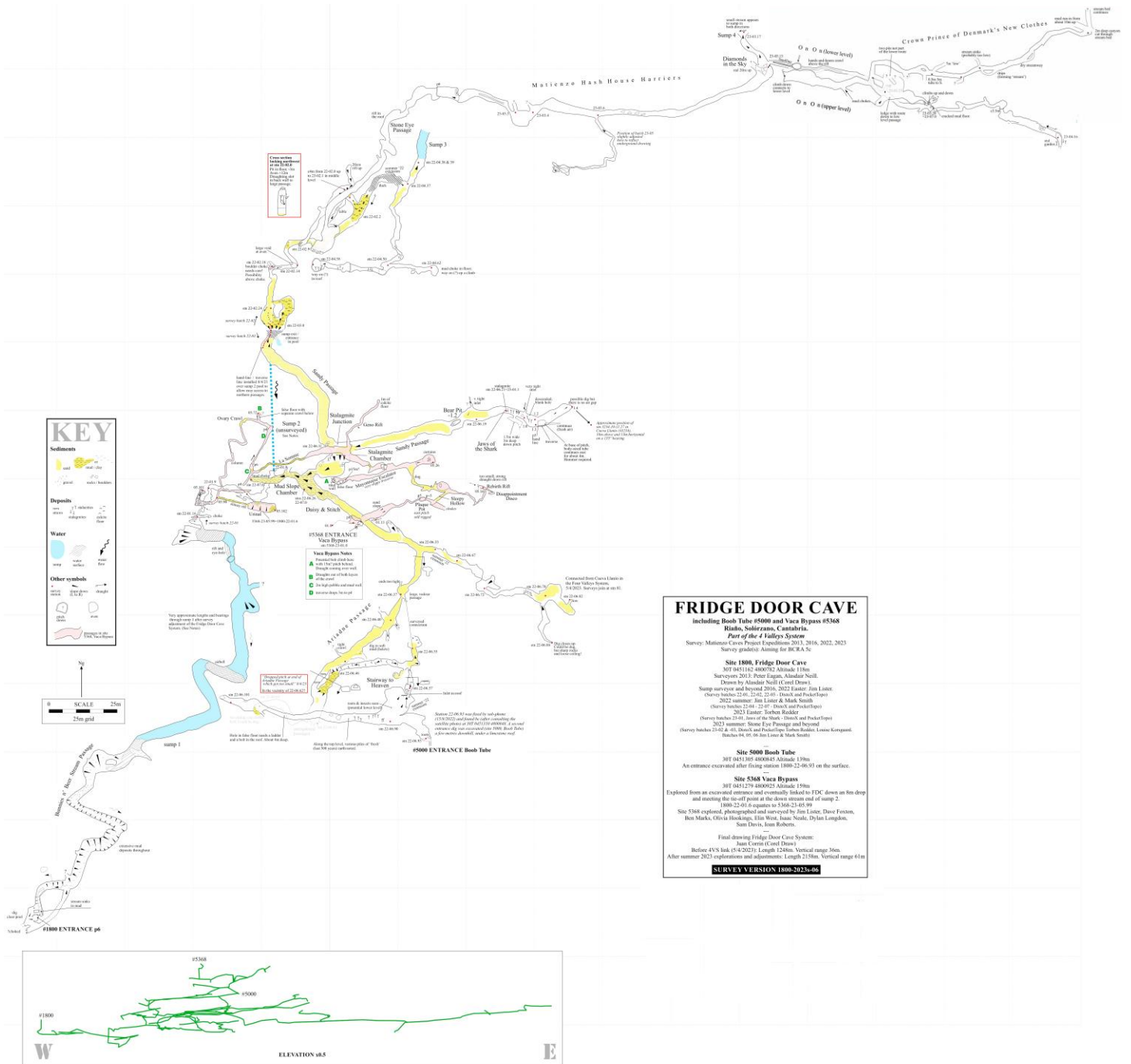


Vaca Bypass
rigging traverse



Vaca Bypass
bottom of
25m aven

System as well as giving yet another entrance, the 18th. This new find was surveyed to just over 400m.



At Cueva Sin Sendero (5227) digging over two trips found a way on with a further 3m of passage. More work is now needed.



The Giant Panda Entrance (2691) in Riaño had been reported to be in a dangerous state.

Over four trips the scaffold and wood shoring were removed and, after trimming some boulders in the spoil walls, a large diameter tube of the same type as installed at SubPhone Entrance was placed in the hole down to about 1.5m from the base with an opening in the side of the tube for access. A "lid" of close-fitting scaffold tubes protects the top and an aluminium ladder was fixed in place for the short climb down. There had been some collapse of loose spoil since 2022: this spoil was removed and the gap to the walls at the base of the tube blocked up with concrete blocks and foam



Giant Panda Entrance
installed ladder



so further collapse would not fall down and block the base. This work makes the surface entrance shaft safe, but more work is needed at the top of the first underground pitch just past the short, smaller tube placed in the cave a few years ago.



Giant Panda Entrance
installed tube

Northwest Sector

Hornedo

A lot of effort was put into this area with some 14 new sites/digs found of these the most significant are reported here. A shaft 5328 was found a little to the east of Torca la Vaca (2889) dropping 8m and then a further 2m over farm rubbish with no way on. The main entrance to shaft 3736 has been bulldozed over and a new GPS of an alternative entrance recorded.

Site 5344 is a large depression with three draughting holes. The one on the south was dug and a boulder removed. This accessed a 10m long cave with a rift in sandstone and fractured limestone, with the way on down a 3-4m deep hole that needs more work.

Site 5350 is a narrow draughting slot that was opened up as a 5m ladder pitch into 4m of passage to a back wall with a side passage. This has an overall length of 9m, and work is now needed on a tight section between rocks. There is a good draught and stones rattle down about 7m.

Site 5352 is a 4m slide down into a boulder ruckle with 5m of passage and draught coming up a narrow slot from a larger space below needing work to progress.

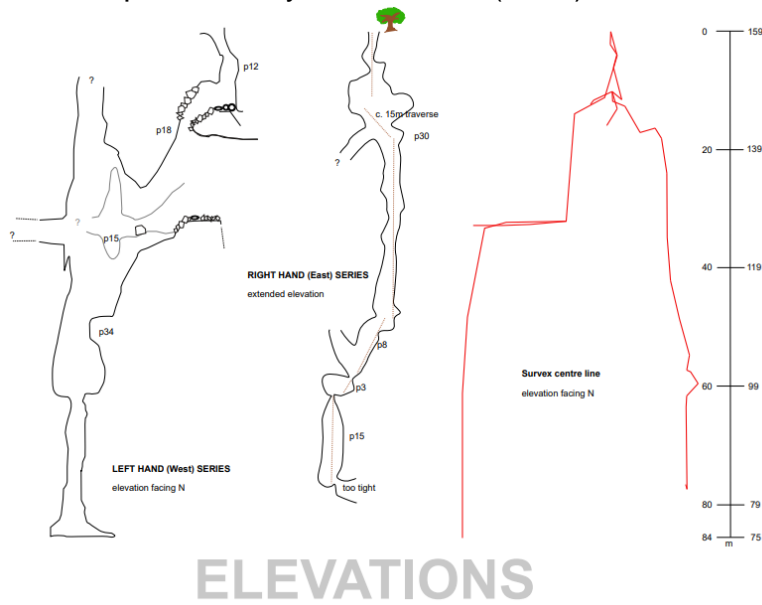
Site 5353 is a duck-in entrance to 5m of walking passage. A 2m climb down fluted pillars and calcite reaches a dig with a good draught where stones rattled down for several metres. This dig was worked on over three days to get 5m down to a narrow rift that heads back towards the entrance and a narrow downward tube that appears to break out a metre below where stones bounce away. More work is needed to progress.



San Antonio

At Fuente Aguanaz (0713), preparations were made with gear including a short ladder taken in to just prior to sump 1. Here, a drop down in full diving gear had proved awkward. On the trip to take gear through sump 1 to Sarah Jean Inlet, the line broke twice and had to be repaired and later replaced with thicker line. The opportunity was taken to check if there were any inlets in sump 1 that had been missed as the passage and water beyond seemed to be smaller. However, no inlets were found. The pushing trip by Mark Smith and Jim Lister to the end of Sarah Jean Inlet past sump 5b checked ongoing leads, but none were found going or worth continuing. The team notice green pollution coming in and saw it went to the downstream end of Sump 5b. A survey was completed of small finds. The main lead to push in this area is GH Aven as other leads need too much work in this remote location.

The complex shaft system El Suto (3450) was visited on five occasions with some resurveying of the site as well as exploring new sections, adding 77m to the total surveyed length. No way on was found at bottom of left-hand route but a traverse over the top of the big pitch is a possible way on. Some re-bolting is needed at the site.



Torca el Suto

(#3450) San Antonio, Entrambasaguas, Cantabria
 30T 445949 4800807 (Datum: ETRS89) Altitude 159m
 Length 216m Depth 84m

Left Hand Series surveyed April 2023 by Alex Ritchie with Oliver Brain and Paul Fairman
 Right Hand Series surveyed March 2023 by members of the Imperial College Caving Club
 Final drawing by Juan Corrin in Affinity Designer

Cobadal

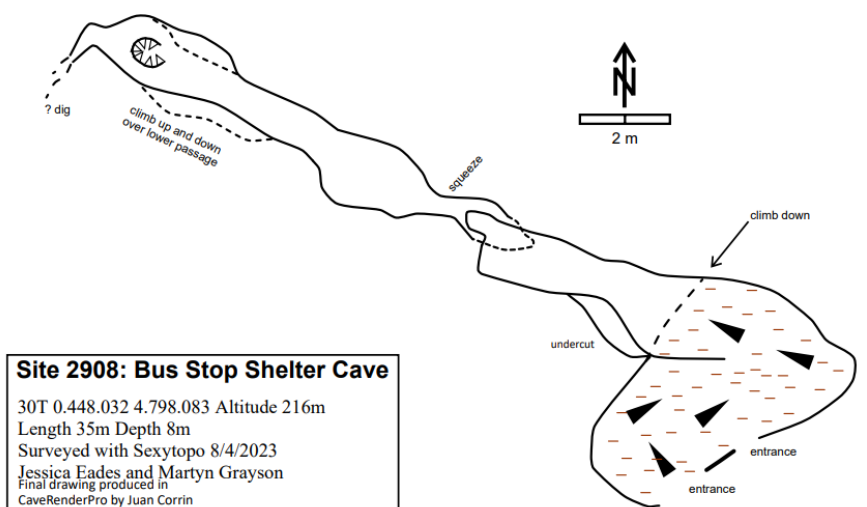
Shaft 3684 a climb of 2m met a slope down to a chamber 3m across with a pitch at its base. To



progress it needs a crowbar to move three rocks to get down the pitch of about 6m. A promising passage can be seen at the bottom. A chamber is visible at the draughting cave 3685, but it needs capping to make progress.



Bus Stop Shelter Cave (2908) was surveyed to 35m with limited prospects.



Site 2908: Bus Stop Shelter Cave
 30T 0.448.032 4.798.083 Altitude 216m
 Length 35m Depth 8m
 Surveyed with Sextopo 8/4/2023
 Jessica Eades and Martyn Grayson
 Final drawing produced in CaveRenderPro by Juan Corrin

Fat Boy GT (0613) was checked as part of the Bat Project and found to have bats present. The end of the cave was looked at for a digging prospect. This is possible, but will need scaffolding to secure boulders - a major dig.

The entrance to Sumidero de Cobadal (1930) was found to be passable and the route to the boulder choke above *Wessex Inlet* was checked out. Digging high up in this strongly draughting choke has much potential.

Northen Sector

Garzón

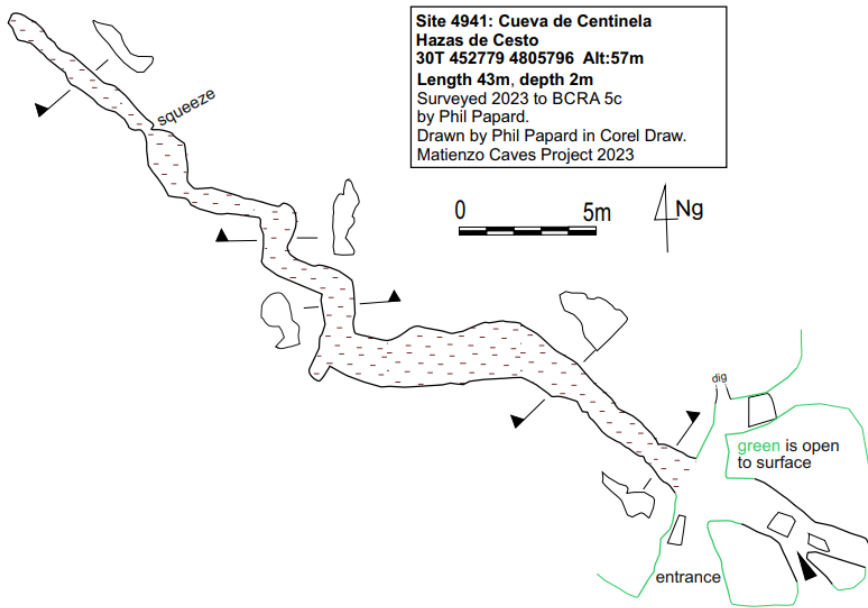
Cave 4132 was dug to remove a boulder and was found to be too tight after 17m and 9m depth. Shaft 4242 was dug to 5m depth and length.



Hazas de Cesto

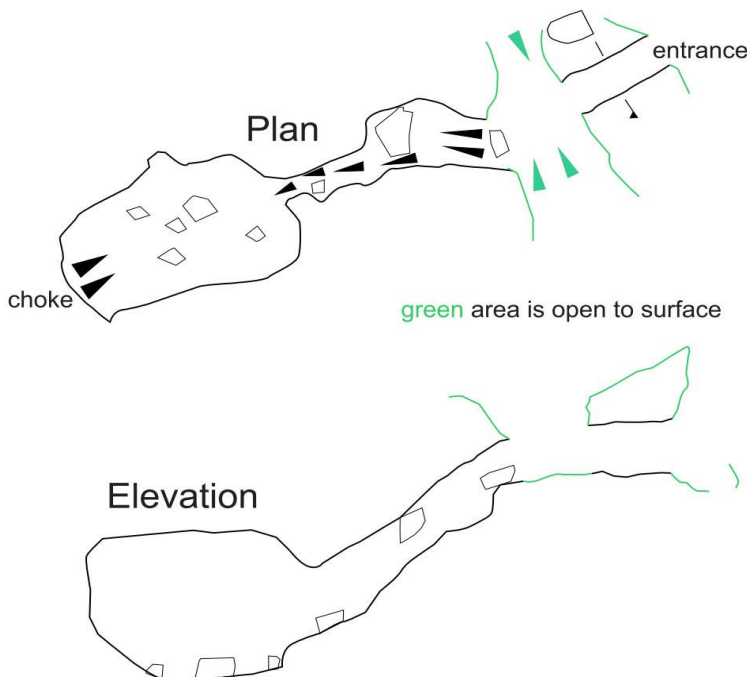
Cueva del Palomas (4004) in Riolastras was checked as part

of the Bat Project and groups of greater and lesser horseshoe bats were identified. The majority were in an area of heavily eroded limestone with a number of gulleys and drops mainly covered by trees. The caves here are clearly fragments of very old systems. Cueva la Centinela (4941) was dug open to a walking passage then pushed beyond a tight section to end after about a further 10m to give a 44m long cave. Gordon worked on excavating a crawl just past this new passage. A dig in an adjacent blocked passage in this site was dug but progress

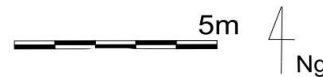


is slow, and prospects seem low.

Nearby Arch Cave 2 (5361) was explored down a 30 degree slope to a chamber giving a cave length of 18m.



Site 5361 Hazas de Cesto
30T 452665 4805883 Alt:67m
Length 18m depth 6m
 Surveyed 2023 to BCRA 5c
 by Phil Papard.
 Drawn by Phil Papard in Corel Draw.
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023

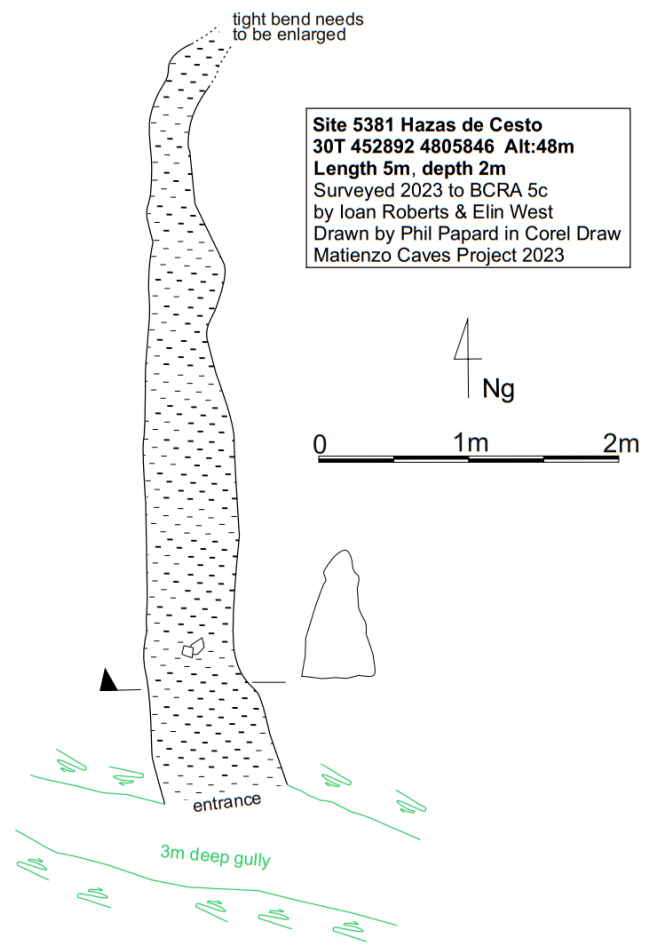


On the east side of the road is an area of well eroded bedrock with a number of small hollows and ravines.

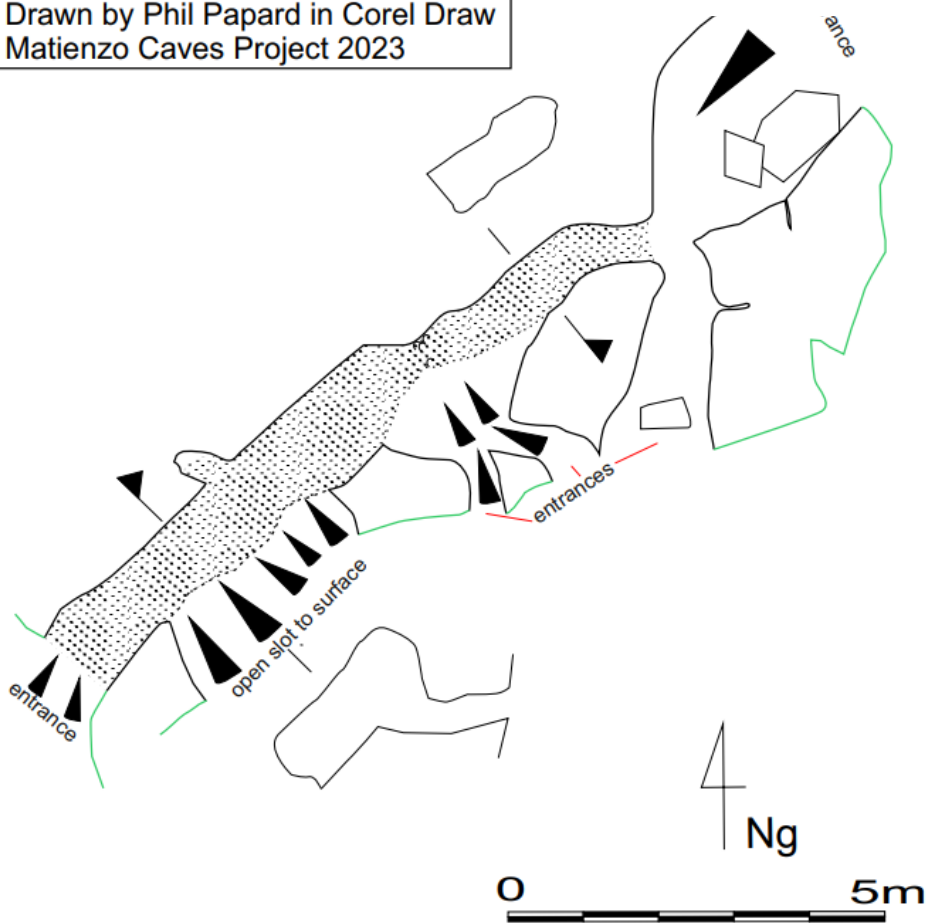
One small ravine runs off at right angles to the road and, after a few metres, a cave on the north wall, Ravine Cave (5381), was found. This went some 5m to a tight section on a bend and needs a very thin person or capping to continue. There is a small draught.

Just to the south in a wooded hollow next to the open fields, another cave was discovered on the west wall that ran through the limestone to an exit with two further openings to the surface (Four Entrance Cave, 5382). This was surveyed as a 17m long walking passage.

Site 5381 Hazas de Cesto
30T 452892 4805846 Alt:48m
Length 5m, depth 2m
 Surveyed 2023 to BCRA 5c
 by Ioan Roberts & Elin West
 Drawn by Phil Papard in Corel Draw
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023



Site 5382 Hazas de Cesto
30T 452883 4805808 Alt:49m
Length 17m, depth 2m
 Surveyed 2023 to BCRA 5c
 by Ioan Roberts & Elin West
 Drawn by Phil Papard in Corel Draw
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023



El Rincón

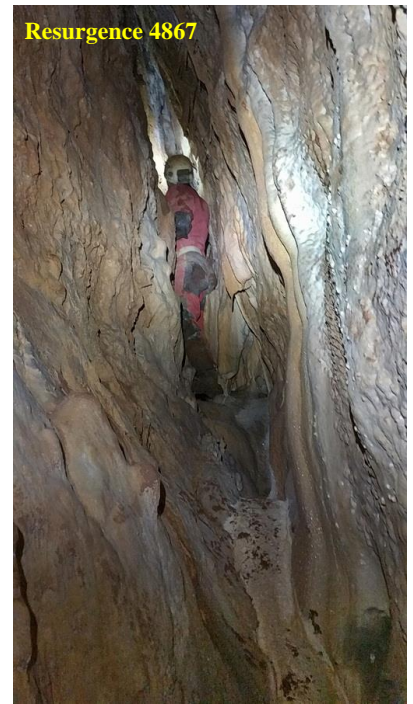
The resurgence 4867 was pushed and surveyed following lunch at the nearby El Rincón Bar. It had been assumed only a few tens of metres would need surveying, but the team found 155m of passage, some quite small and sharp. A possible sump was found but the nature of the passage will make access a little awkward. It is probably first worth a look



Resurgence 4867 – sump pool



Resurgence 4867

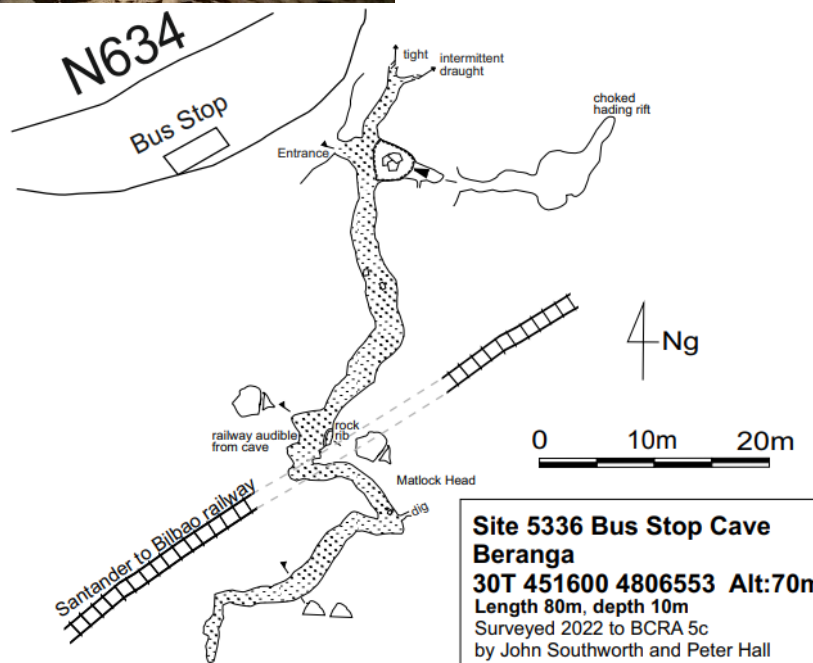


Resurgence 4867

with a small diving kit to check it is a sump that may go. There is some potential in the hills behind this resurgence for more extensive cave.

Beranga

Five small caves were found on the south side of the N634: most seemed to be old, abandoned caves now truncated by the road cuttings. The most extensive was Bus Stop Cave (5336) that was surveyed to 80m passing



Bus Stop Cave

Site 5336 Bus Stop Cave
Beranga
 30T 451600 4806553 Alt:70m
 Length 80m, depth 10m
 Surveyed 2022 to BCRA 5c
 by John Southworth and Peter Hall
 Drawn by Phil Papard in Corel Draw.
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023

under the railway.

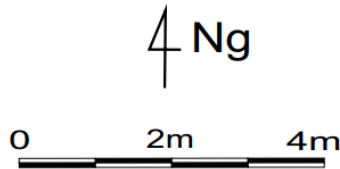
Another small cave, 5337, was partly explored and more work is needed.

Further to the east three caves in the road cutting were explored, two requiring Juan's extension ladders to reach. The most hazardous part of the exploration was getting across the N634 with the ladder.

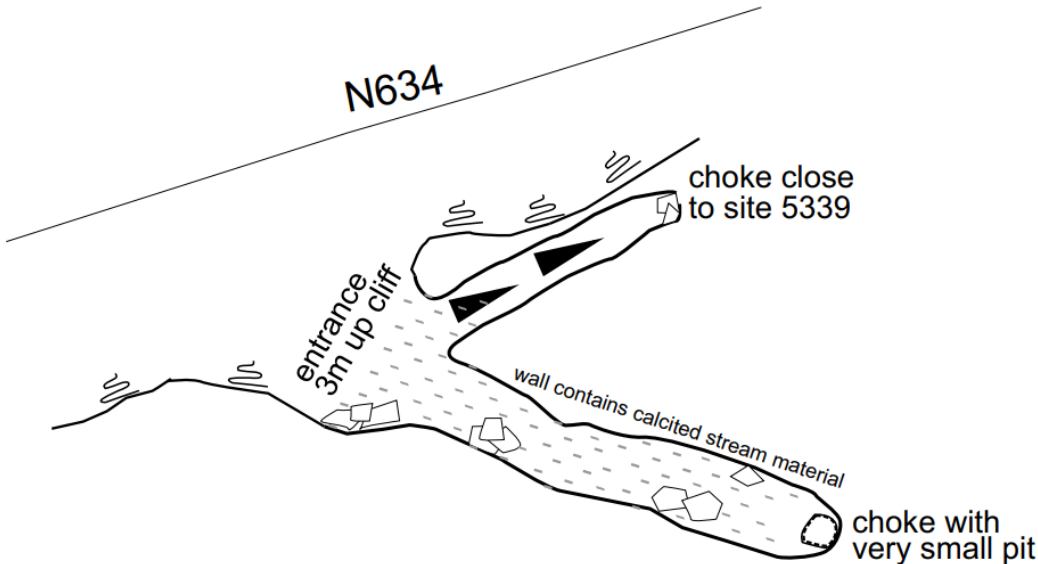


Cave 5338 getting access!

Site 5338 Beranga
30T 451834 4806683 Alt:75m
 Length 9m, depth 1m
 Surveyed 2023 to BCRA 5c and drawn
 by Phil Papard in Corel Draw.
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023



Cave 5338 is 5m up the rock face and the 9m cave is an excavated crawl to very small hole down with one wall of what appears to be calcited gravel and so may have been part of a very old, larger system. There is a side passage to a choke that may have connected to cave 5339 at the base of the rock face. That hole is an 8m long, 3m deep, blind cave.

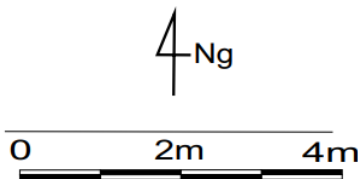
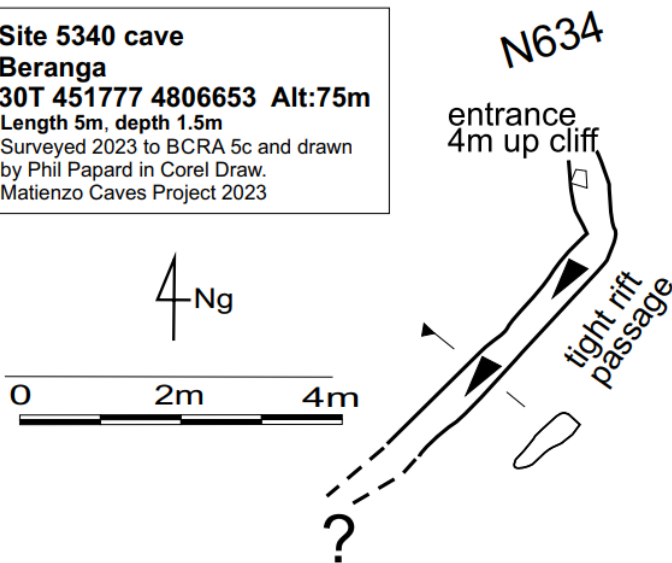


A little to the west is another small cave

(5340) high up. This is a slot in solid limestone that turns to the right to a tight rift needing a very thin person to



Site 5340 cave
Beranga
30T 451777 4806653 Alt:75m
 Length 5m, depth 1.5m
 Surveyed 2023 to BCRA 5c and drawn
 by Phil Papard in Corel Draw.
 Matienzo Caves Project 2023



explore.

The resurgence (4937) was checked out. This was first explored in 1977 and documented with a sketch in the logbook. The presumed entrance was found to be a dark rock face with water coming over from above. Further up the hill, a draughting hole with an old tree trunk blocking it up was found. On looking carefully at the old sketch, it seems that this is the hole found and explored in 1977. This site needs looking at in 2024, but it requires a



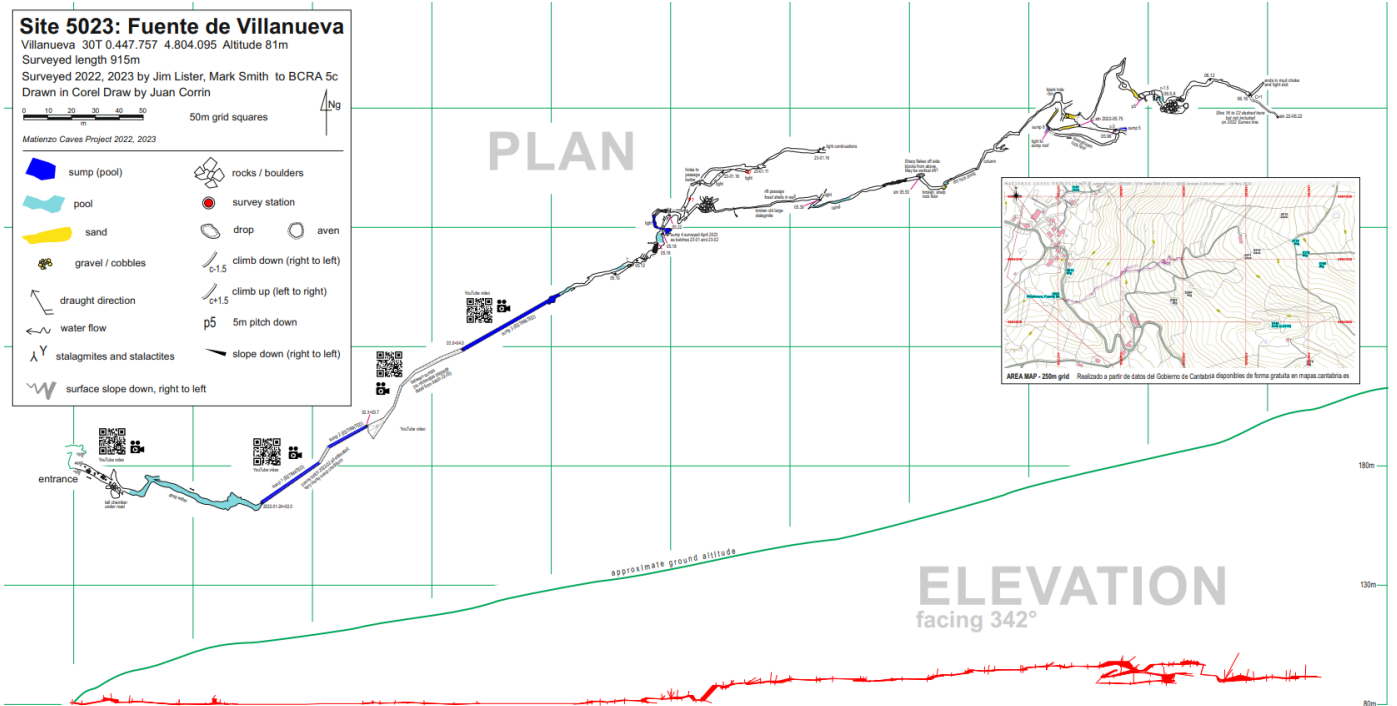
site 4937

chainsaw to gain access and then some sort of stock proof cover/fence provided.

Villanueva, Ribamontán al Monte - This area is shared with the Club Montaña y Espeleología La Cambera.

Cueva de Covachera (5036) was dug extending this cave to 15m. There is still a good draught at the end.

At the Villanueva resurgence (5023) Jim and Mark dived and pushed sump 4 and surveyed finds



to add 133m to the cave - more work is needed to push this system. Three other sites were looked at in the Villanueva area: cave 5191 was pushed 5m to a tiny sump and a sink 5345 and shakehole / collapse were located, but neither dug.

At the cave 5192, a descending hole was looked at near the section "b" on the survey but found to be too tight with no draught.

Moncobe work carried out with the agreement of the club G.E. Pistruellos.

At El Cubillón, 2538, work was made to complete survey and pushing work. Hilary Step passage was pushed but, after a couple of decorated chambers it was choked with calcite. A pitch that was found at Easter near the end of the system was rigged so Mark Smith could dive the sump. However, at the sump no belay for the line could be found and an undercut in nil visibility was too risky to continue. At the bottom of the pitch, a climb up into a series of chambers that reached a 40mm deep rift with the sound of a stream below.

