

Matienzo Caves Expedition 2024

SAM DAVIS
PHOTOGRAPHER



Cueva de Riaño, new chamber 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 2023 to October 2024. 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 two special projects: completing the securing of the entrance to the Giant Panda entrance to the Four Valleys System where land slip had threatened access, and using the access via Torca la Decepción (4732) to carry out more resurvey work in the far reaches of Cueva Horouca where the original survey dated from over 40 years ago.

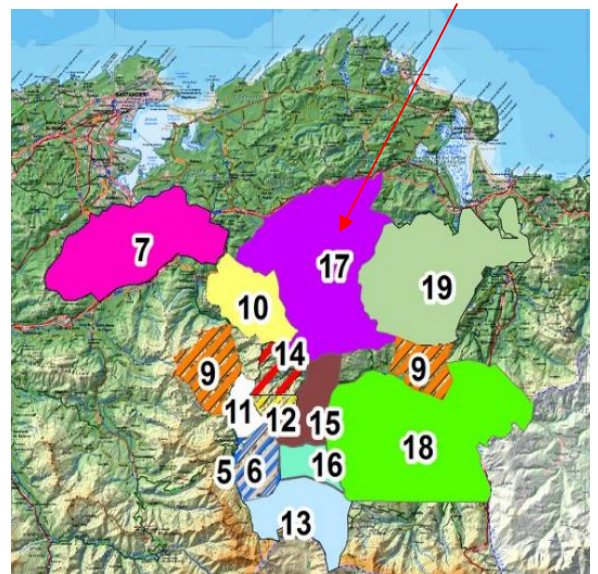


Fig 1 Expedición Británica área de permiso para el 2024

Just over seven kilometres of new cave were found and surveyed in 2024 of which just under four kilometres were in the Four Valleys System bringing this cave up to just under seventy-seven

kilometres long. In addition, fifty-one new sites were identified and recorded. The main finds this year were in Cueva de Riaño (0105), Cueva Hoyuca (0107), Fridge Door Cave (1800) Torca de Pena Encaramada (3380) and Fuente Aguanaz (0713). A number of surveys are still 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.

Photographers of photographs used in this report are: Diane Arthurs, Simon Cornhill, Juan Corrin, Sam Davies, Nigel Dibben, Rob Eavis, Pete Egan, Jim Lister, Phil Papard, Jon Pemberton, Andy Quin, Torben Redder, Alex Ritchie, Ioan Roberts, Chris Scaife, Mark Smith, Peter Smith, John Southworth, and Mike Wise.

Matienzo Caves - newly surveyed caves November 2023 to October 2024							
Cave	Name	Area	Grid Ref	Datum	Previous length (m)	New length (m)	Extra length (m)
			ETRS89				
0105	Cueva de Riaño	Riaño	30T 448137	4794052	72973 ¹	76908	1793
0107	Cueva Hoyuca	Riaño	30T 451816	4799805			1442
1800	Fridge Door Cave	Riaño	30T 451162	4800782			551
4732	Torca la Decepción	La Secada	30T 453011	4798395			102
5368	Vaca Bypass	Riaño	30T 451279	4800925			47
3380	Torca de Peña Encaramada	Hornedo	30T 447739	4801293	4086	4931	845
0713	Fuente Aguanaz	San Antonio	30T 446482	4801430	4776	5299	523
0028	Cueva del Selvijo	Ozana	30T 454086	4794584	244	693	449
0019	Cueva de la Loca1	Ozana	30T 454217	4794721	100	458	358
0017	Cueva del Jivero 2	Ozana	30T 453618	4794705	284	517	233
0733	Cueva Vallina	Arredondo	30T 450017	4792405	38361 ²	38591	230
2538	El Cubillon	Moncobe	30T 446058	4796484	2673	2797	124
4937	Nepa Hole	Beranga	30T 453064	4806504	0	121	121
5411	Shafts 2	Quebraduras	30T 453241	4803040	0	95	95
0429	Shaft	N Vega	30T 452748	4796771	0	35	35
0103	Cueva de la Espada	Riaño	30T 451082	4800727	2345	2380	35
0024	Cueva de la Puerta	Ozana	30T 453528	4795371	0	34	34
5445	Shaft	Solórzano	30T 451616	4801974	0	0	22
2101	cave	La Secada	30T 451429	4797619	0	20	20
1261	Alzado, Cueva del	El Sedo	30T 453518	4795561	0	14	14
5162	Shaft	S Vega	30T 452977	4794243	0	14	14
3684	Cave	Cobadal	30T 448672	4796685	5	18	13
5362	Shaft	La Secada	30T 453032	4798514	0	11	11
3685	Shaft	Cobadal	30T 448643	4796695	0	11	11
0816	Shaft	Cubija	30T 450139	4796974	0	11	11
Total new cave surveyed to BCRA 5c							7133
(1) Four Valleys System, (2) Length Includes 0753 Rotura and finds by Espeleo Club Tortosa							

Research Work

Water tracing took place between the Selvijo depression and Cueva del Selvijo (0028) and Cueva de la Loca 1 (0019), detectors in both caves and the Loca resurgence were positive confirming the presumed connections. A water trace from a sink in Cubija valley (near Regatón) proved unsuccessful. Detectors had been placed in the *Riotuerto Inlet* in Cueva Molino and Fuente el Escalón, thus more work is needed on this test area.

The work led by Dr Peter Wynn of Lancaster University continued, assisted by the Matienzo Caves Project in collecting samples from the test area below agricultural farm land in Cueva-Cubío del Llanío (3234), Riaño.

Archaeological Finds - During the speleological exploration of the Bencano River Valley (Riotuerto), a human skull was found in Cave 3754, about four meters from the mouth. We explored this sector of the municipality of Riotuerto with the agreement of the Pistruellos Speleology Group, the owners of the area. After seeing the skull, the exploration of the cavity was stopped and then the Cultural Heritage service of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport was informed on June 11, 2024.

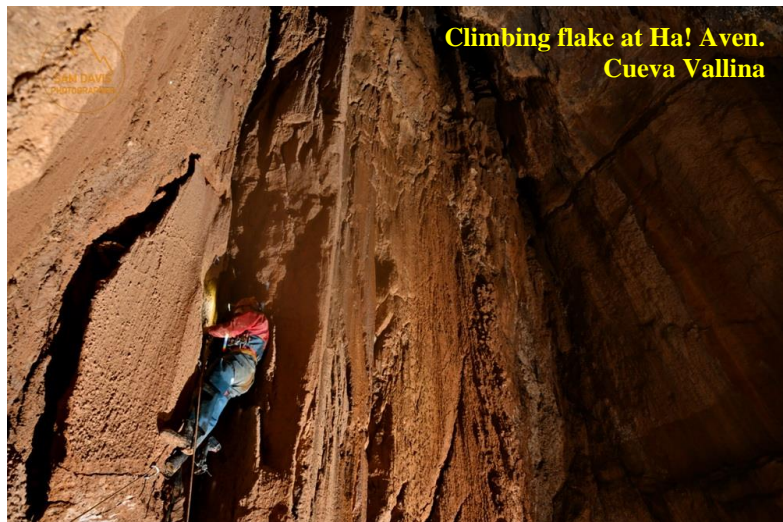


cráneo humano en la Cueva 3754

Southern Sector

Cueva Vallina (0733). The agreement between the Matienzo Caves Project and Expeleo Club Tortosa to share exploration in Cueva Vallina has worked well with pushing and surveying work done by the Tortosa group, mainly in Vallina II. The details of this work by the Tortosa group will be presented by them and not in this report. However, the Matienzo Caves Project website shows all the work conducted by the Tortosa group as well as updates to the survey of this cave complex.

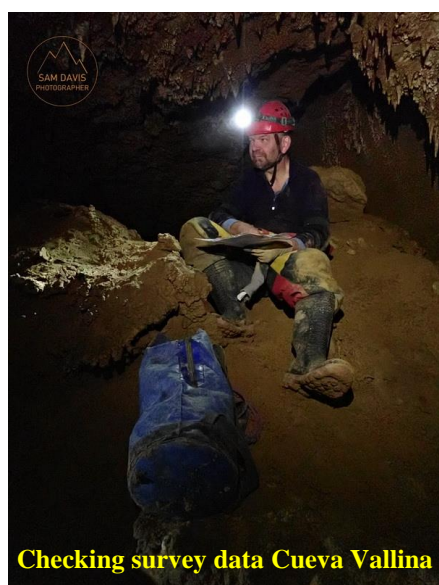
Work continued at the end of the Sunday Stomps reached from the original Vallina entrance (Top Entrance) at a new pitch, TLC Aven, which is further west than Ha! Aven that was bolted to a chamber. From here Far Left Passage and a traverse was bolted.



Climbing flake at Ha! Aven. Cueva Vallina

This area was found to be very loose however on reaching the top no good prospects to progress the cave were found. A sandy crawl leads to some formations and then flat out to some loose chambers and a further traverse with a crawl to a pitch near and a likely link to the original bolted climb at the end of the Sunday Stomps. Some possible leads remain but do not look promising. Survey work suggests an error may have

crept into the original survey or in the 2024 survey although no obvious error was found. A



Checking survey data Cueva Vallina

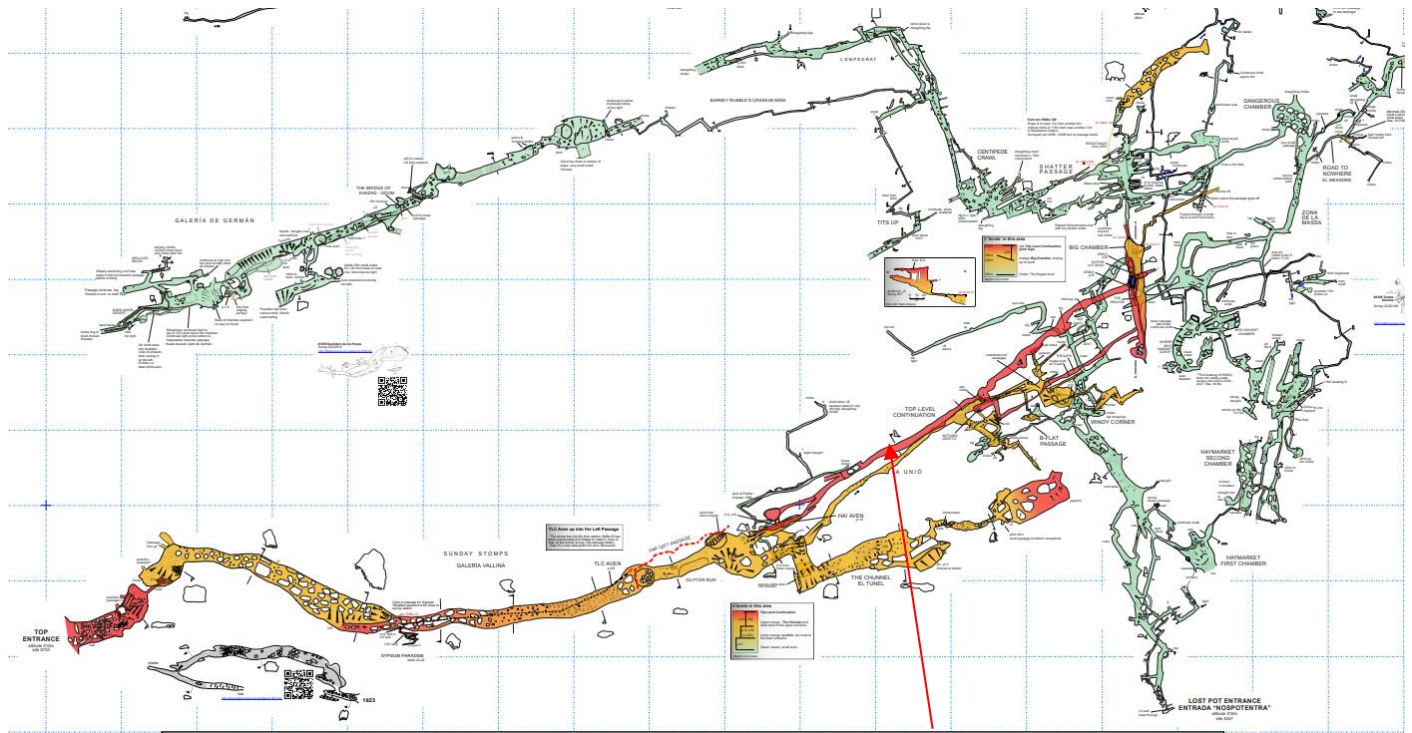
resurvey of the area is likely to be needed to solve this problem. Diving the main downstream sump was severely hindered by the cave flooding in July, August and then in October, when gear was washed away, but luckily later recovered once the water levels had



Diving gear recovery team - Cueva Vallina

dropped. Work will continue at this site, but it does need a period of stable weather to transport and locate the rebreathing and other technical equipment in order to pursue the advanced diving needed.

Using the bottom entrance the area around Shatter and Dangerous Chambers were visited to try and link them. However, it was confirmed the area was too "dangerous" with loose boulders thus



Cueva Vallina entrance series showing new passages (coloured red) above HA! aven

limiting

However, two new passages were found (89m surveyed) and surveyed in this area. Around the Matienzo-Arredondo ridge six sites were checked for correct GPS and two new sites were found but not yet pushed.

work.

South Vega

In **Cueva de los Tablons** (0242) the leads found in 2023 at the bottom were found with no or little draught and were a poor prospect. The main draught in the final chamber goes down between big boulders and not as though previously in the 2023 leads. This is a key site but the possible way on in the final chamber looks difficult due to the big and loose boulders – a massive project.

Twelve sites were visited to check their gps location and possible prospects so that the website could be updated. Several were worked on, including site 5052 which draughts in strongly and good progress was made to reach a pitch head, but more work is needed to progress. In addition, six new sites were identified. Of the sites checked site 1272 was descended to a choke with a draught and will be worth more work. A 34m deep dig 0311 was surveyed. However, it was found that below the surface 6m pitch it is very loose, and great care is needed to descend further. No good prospects of extension were found of the other new sites Torca de Hiedra (5405), was found to be a 10m deep rift with ivy growing down the back wall and choked at the bottom with sheep bones with



no prospect of extension. Site 1875 has a slab of rock and fence posts round the site and was thought worth more work to get past a big boulder, but low draught suggested its prospect are limited.

With other sites being extended and surveyed the resurvey work in Cueva-Cubio de la Reñada was put on hold until 2025.

Trillos (Alisas area)

Five known sites were checked out for correct location and prospects. Of these sites 2052 at Alisas was found to be shorter than stated with about 25m to a tight section and then an estimated 15m drop below. The tight section was too small to safely descend by the team and needs a very thin person to get down and return safely. The other sites showed some promise with good draughts, but a lot of work is needed if any are to progress. A new 6m long cave (5419) called "Plant Pot Cave" was found situated in a sandstone bed.



At Tomb of the Oil King (5369) it was found that the entrance drop had been sealed with big boulders that had fallen in. The team tried going over the traverse line and carrying on (instead of going down into the big boulder chamber) into 5 to 10 metres of cave but were then stopped again by more loose sandstone boulders. Great care is needed by any visitors to this cave.

The sink 2930 was draughting out cold air, this site lies at a high elevation above passages in Torcón de la Calleja Rebollo (0258). The hole was cleared of mud to reveal a couple of large boulders with a 30cm diameter 5m deep hole entirely within mud that made further work a low priority, the hole was blocked with large rocks to make it child and animal proof.

North Vega including Cubija valley and El Naso

The strongly draughting site 0813 was worked on to remove rubble some of which may have come from the road above. This site is in a promising location with a draught.

Indicating a connection to the North Vega System. Substantial progress was made at this long-term project.

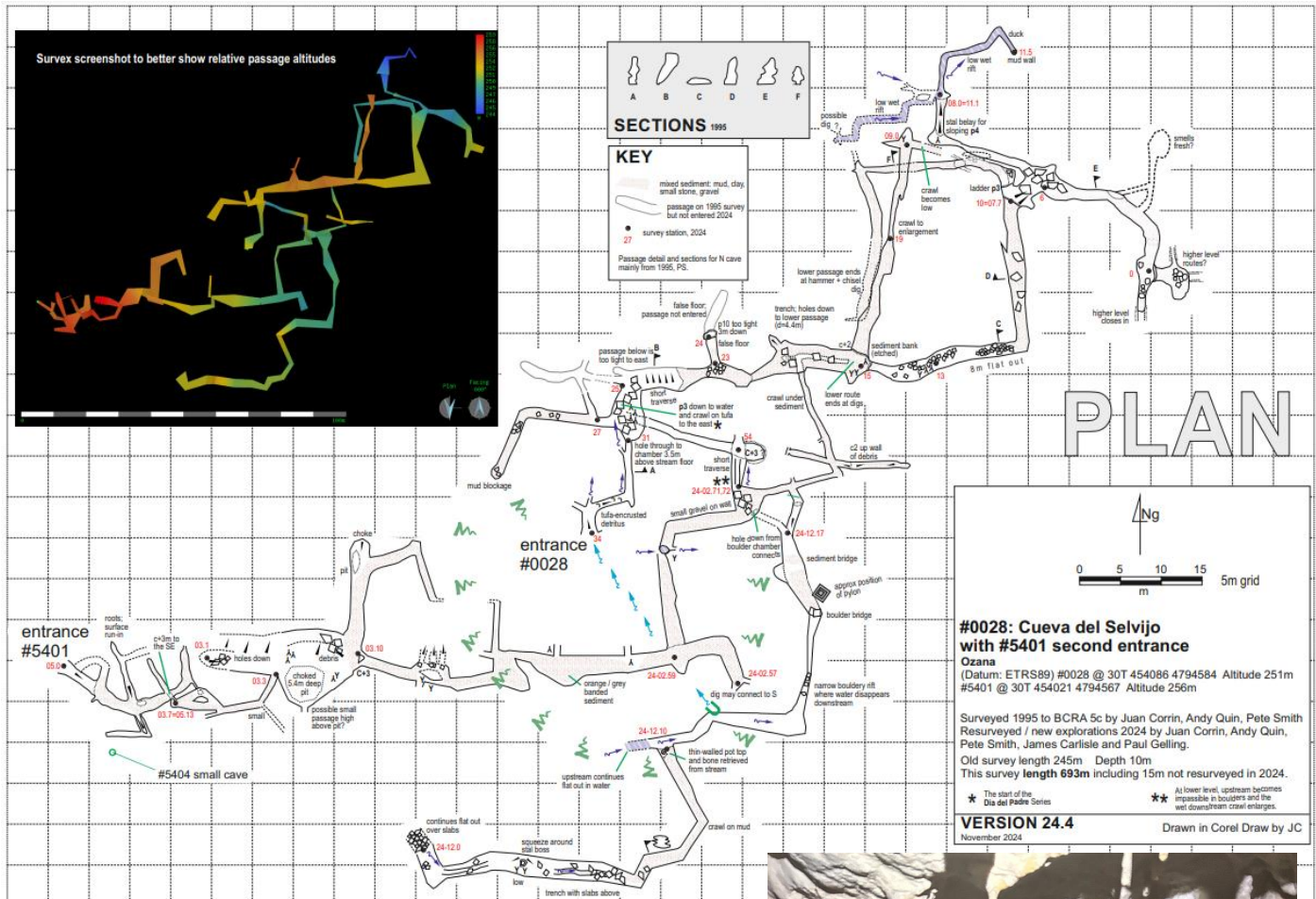
Two new sites were located (5402 and 5403) but not pushed in 2024. Site 5403 needs some work to remove fill but have some promise with stones bouncing down a slope to what sounds like a small chamber below. In Cueva de Rascavieja (0077), a quick look at both chokes showed that the one on the right that has some green string through the best route through the boulders, had a strong draught and is worthy of more attention in future years.



The shaft 0593 was descended 3m followed by a 10m pitch with a tight top and then a 5m drop that requires some loose boulders to be moved to gain access. There is some draught, making this a reasonable prospect. It was noted during a photographic trip in Torca del Mostajo (0071) that the route to some exceptional formations is well trodden with many reflective markers in place. So far there has been no noticeable damage to the formations, but this will be monitored.

El Sedo, La Colina, Cubilla and Ozana

The sites **Cueva de Jivero 2** (0017), **Cueva de La Loca 1** (0019) and **Cueva del Selvijo** (0028) were re-explored and re-surveyed over many trips throughout the year. These caves were all first

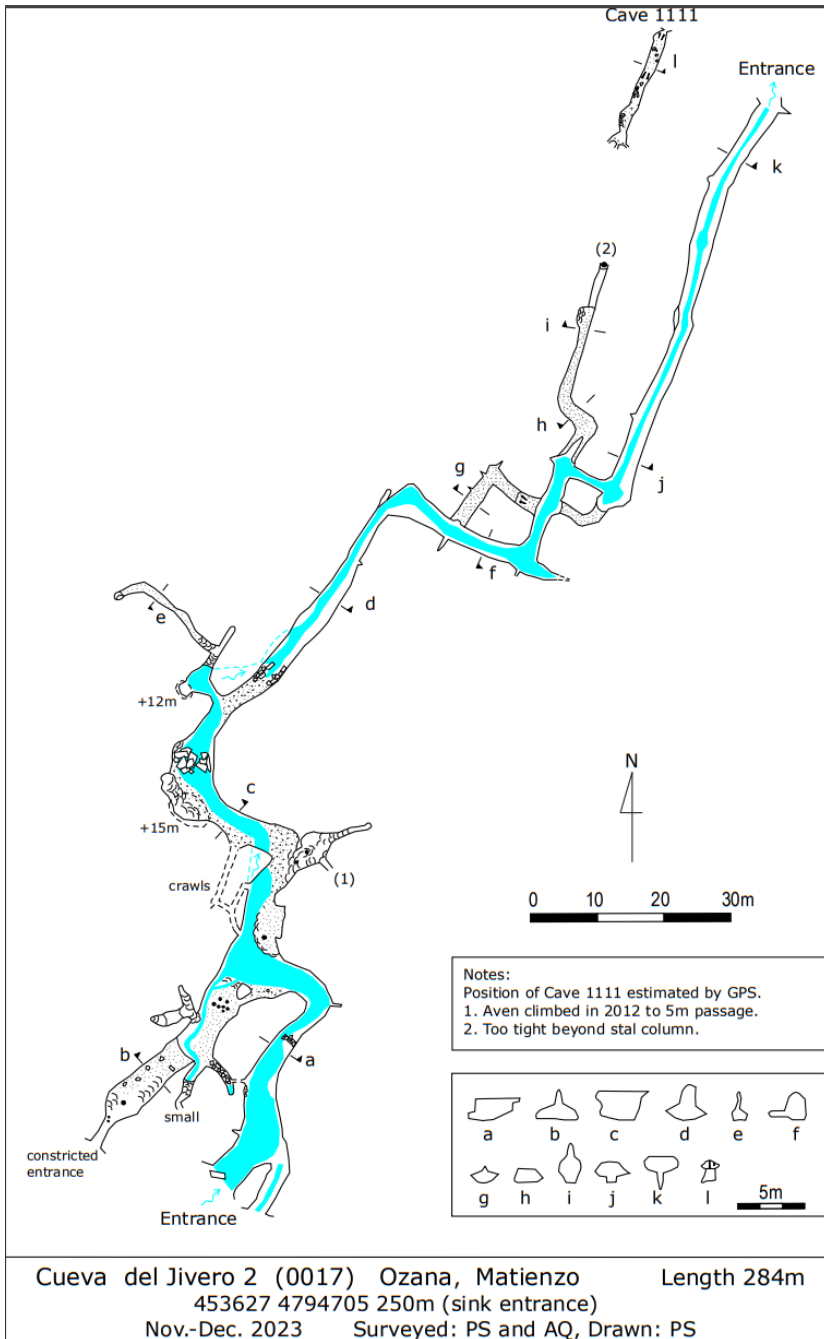


explored over 40yrs ago and Cueva del Selvijo had not

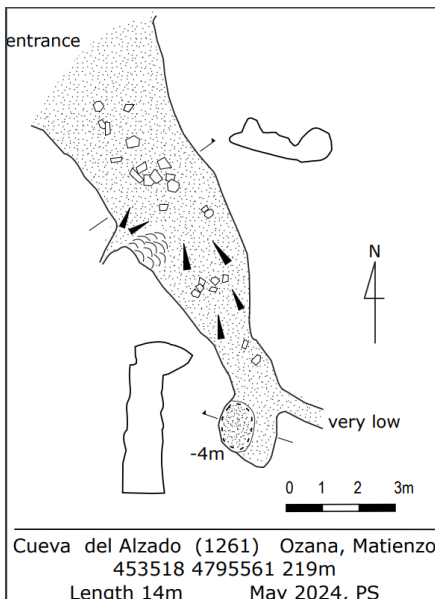


been visited since 1995. In total over one kilometres of new passage was found, including a new streamway

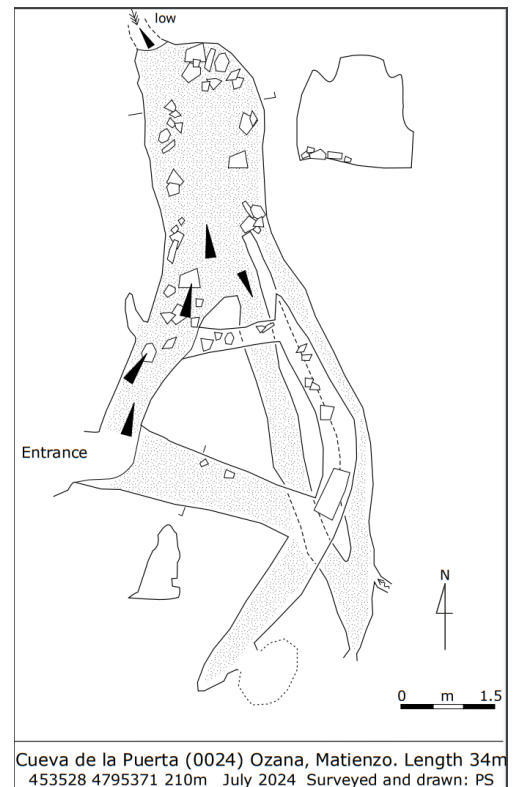




where some surface waste debris (a broken pot and an old bone) was found. A new entrance (5401) was found to Loca 1 and a very likely third entrance (5404) in a jungle-filled depression needing work to get to its floor. Later in the year a spot in Loca 1 was found where daylight could be



seen and a surface rift (5436) was located at this spot, but no work to gain access was done. In the same area a draughting bedding plane (5435) was found that may link into this compact but complex system with a bit of work. Water tracing confirmed water connections to Cueva de la Loca 1, and it is hoped that more connections and passages will be found in coming years.



This work showed that very productive visits are possible when re-

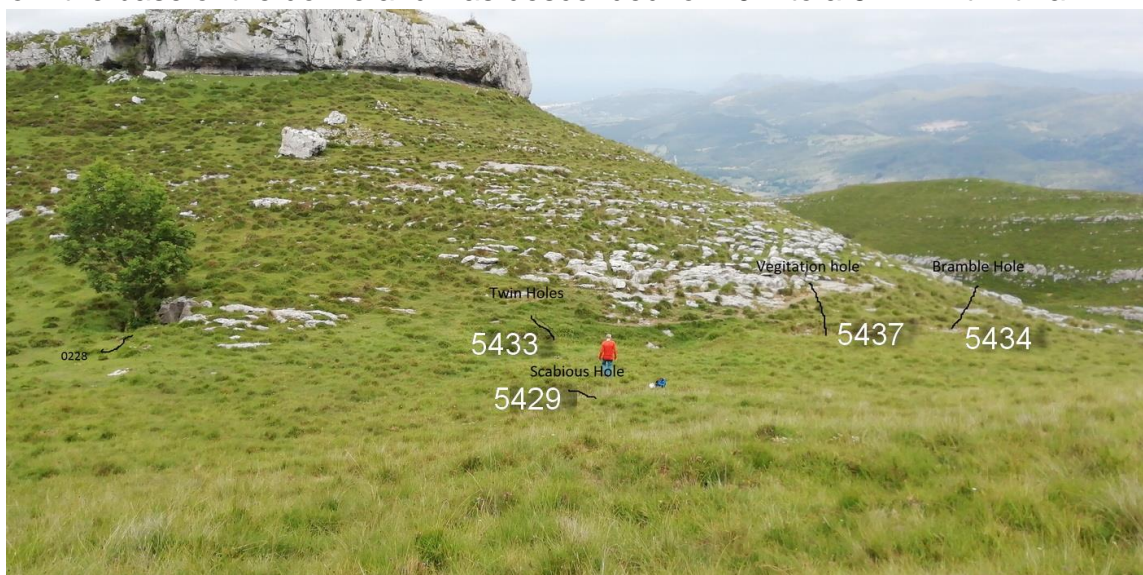
exploring caves first looked many years ago when other systems were actively being extended thus diverting attention.

At El Sedo, three sites were re-surveyed and photos taken - (Cueva de la Carrasquilla (0011); Cueva de la Puerta (0024) and Cueva del Alzado (1261)).



In Sima-Cueva del Risco (0025) a safe route was developed to access Arco Gallery. This required a 15m bolt climb to provide a free hanging pitch and a safe way up to the elevated levels in Risco, without needing to trust bolts put in place on a traverse over 30 years ago. Using this access route a small extension was made in the Disneyland area. Now there is a safe and simple access to this area we plan in 2025 to conduct some resurvey work and then to push leads shown on the original survey where passages were left not fully pushed and were close to the Dambuster Series.

On Mullir ten sites were checked for prospects and correct locations. Of these Shaft 3600 was found to be 10m from the base of the doline and was descended for 10m to a 6x1m rift with a slight inward draught where stones can be dropped down between rocks for further 10m. Shaft 3601 was confirmed as being a tiny slot down 2m to a choked floor with no real prospects. Seven new sites were found and recorded. Of



these Scabious Pot (5429) is a 6m drop to a ledge and a further 7m to a choked floor with no way on. Shaft (5431) is a 7m blind pot and Top Hole (5432) is an 8m free climb down to a choke with small holes continuing below. The other sites found need work on the surface to gain good access through the dense vegetation.

The North-East Sector and The Four Valleys System

La Secada

In **Torca la Decepción** (4732), to make entry easier the floor of the 322/1/6 Super Duck in Decepción was excavated to allow easier and more importantly, safer passage when there is significant water in the stream.

The hole in the west wall at the top of Small Slam pitch was found to be a small aven closed at the top with the drop below joining the main pitch. Lots of eroded stal make it clear that this is an old passage that has been re-excavated, probably by flood water from a bedding just a few centimetres high. Opposite this is an area of cobbles and mud and what looks like a possible old phreatic passage that has been infilled with this mixture. There are no prospects in this small area for an extension. In October it was noticed that it had been very wet since the summer as the floor of the crawls were becoming scoured down to bedrock in places and ripples had formed in the remaining sediments.



322/1/6 Super Duck

A high-level boulder chamber was climbed into on the SE of the passage just before End of the World Way. This chamber links two access climbs from the passage below, a route through boulders has not yet been pushed. A lead next to End of the World Way was found to be a climb up a mud slope to a large space beyond. This will require bolting to access. Some small finds and links in the Morton's Fork area were recorded, but not yet surveyed.

At the top of Small Slam Pitch an inlet that feed water down the pitch in wet weather was pushed for 4m to a tight right hand bend that prevented further progress, a further 3m could be seen to a left bend, a tool to remove spoil on the floor is needed to gain access.



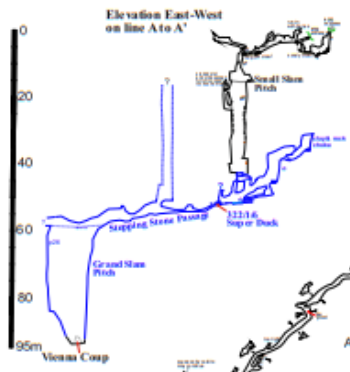
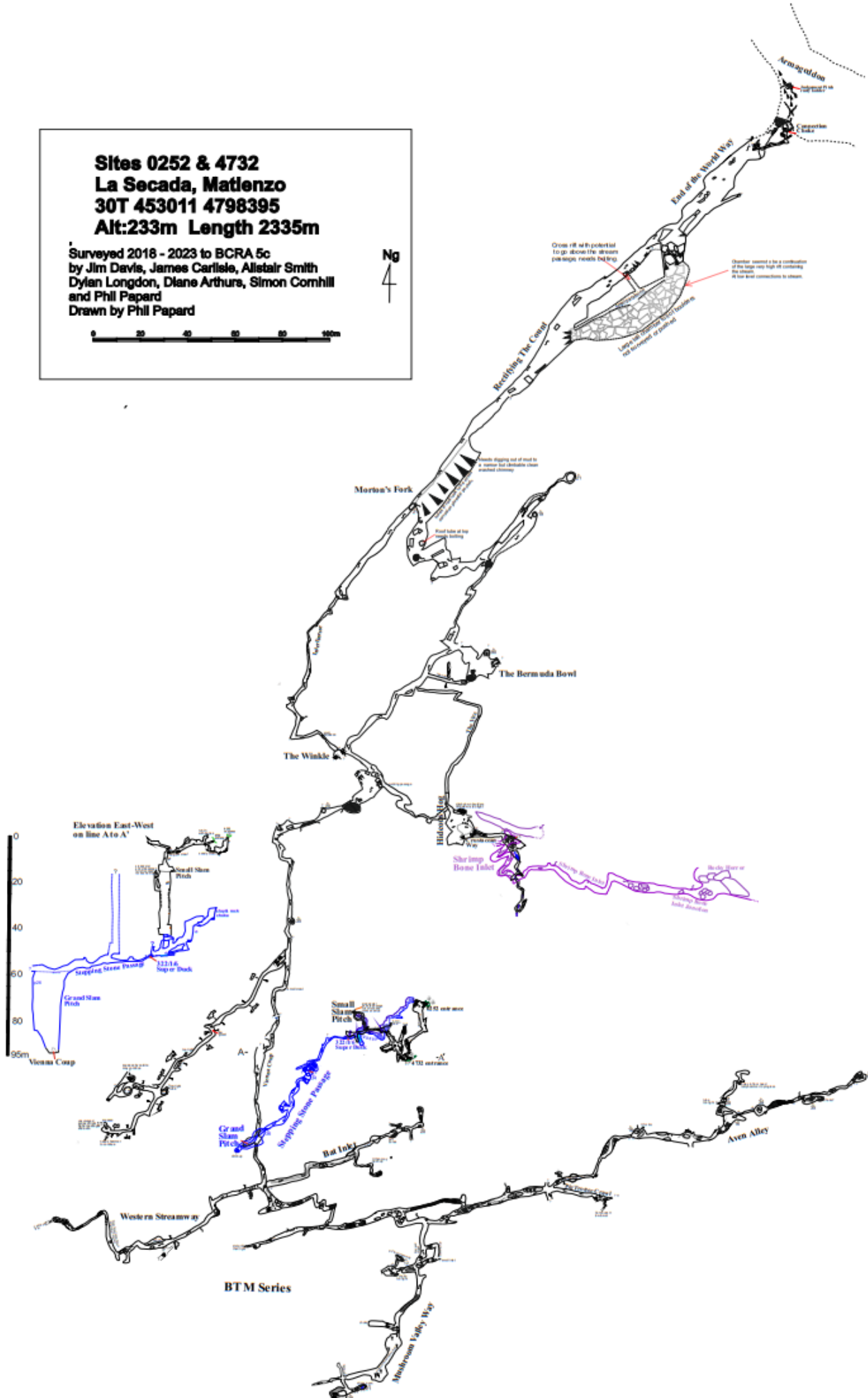
Top of Grand Slum Pitch

Various leads around the bottom of Grand Slam were examined and surveyed. The first lead involved climbing to a hole 8m metres up from the large ledge at the bottom of Grand Slam pitch. On reaching the hole a 6m pitch down was found but this only led to a tight muddy rift which ended overlooking the BTM streamway.

In the BTM area a number of leads were pushed and surveyed. Of these a 3m climb up from the base of Grand Slam pitch ended in a tall aven and a further lead led up into a passage downstream which ends dropping back into the streamway. In total of 102m was surveyed.

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



BTM Series

The area on the west side of La Secada has many strongly draughting sites and is a key prospect area between the Four Valleys System and the North Vega System. It was decided to try to be more focused and the very strongly draughting Socks (1017) was chosen as a site to target. Over nine trips, spoil was removed from the entrance shaft and the top mud slope stabilised. Substantial progress was made, and it was noted that the main draught is not from the crawl in the bottom chamber but from between boulders at the bottom of the entrance rift. Stabilizing work here is needed and a little more work on the bottom of the entrance shaft is required. This is likely to be a long-term dig but given its key location and prospect, it will be pursued in 2025.



Cueva de los Tres Niños (0565) was visited, and it became clear that some roof falls had occurred with a lot of big new blocks on the



floor making the main chamber area dangerous.



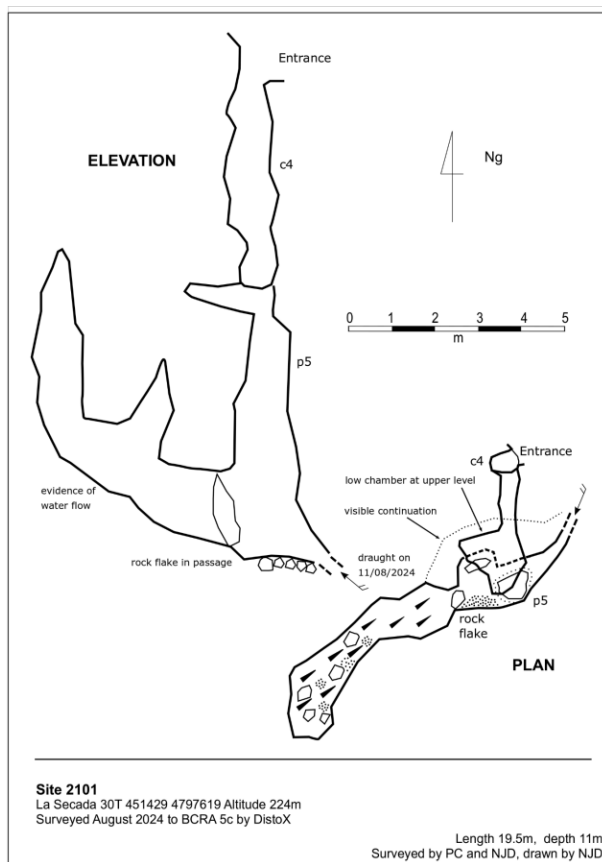
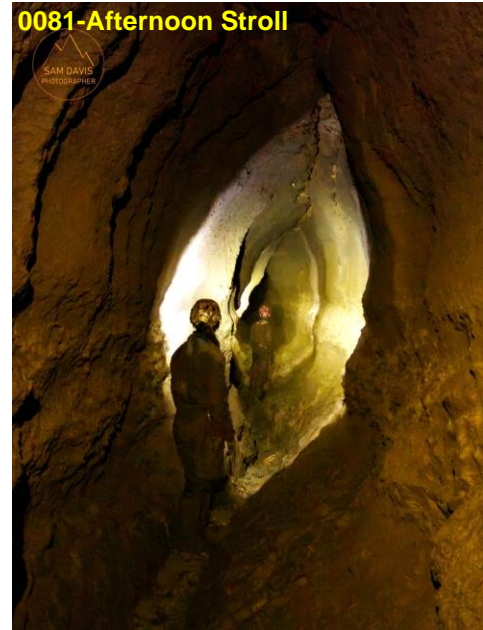
About 100m away in **La Cuvia** (0086) it was reported that the route down between boulders into the main chamber had changed and a way down could not be found. A very likely possibility is that boulders have moved, and this could be associated with the roof falls in Tres Niños.

Cueva de Carcavuezo (0081) was looked at with a view to future work to extend the western area to Cueva de Volvo (0098). The normal entrance was found blocked with logs but later dug out. A search for an entrance below in the recently modified flood overflow channel was found, it was

cleared of flood debris and used to access the cave. The main objective was for the young team who had not been in the cave before to familiarise the cave and the routes through

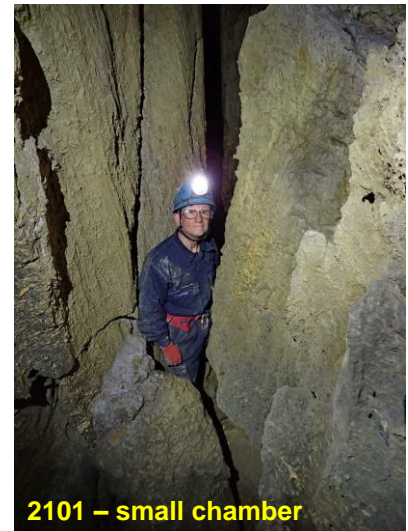


the cave to access the upper levels. It was noted that the route up the rifts to the *Western Series* are not well marked and the traverse line needs some work to make this route safe. On the way to the *Eastern Series*, a new passage with several chambers and a good draught was found at the start of *Afternoon Stroll*. These finds are still to be surveyed in 2025, and the end of the *Western Series* pushed.



Eight known sites were visited to check their prospects and if locations are correct and any errors corrected.

The entrance squeeze to cave 1506 was passed and a dig at the end of the high-level passage worked on to remove loose rocks, but more work is required. The draughting dig 2101 above the road to Fuente las Varas, was



extended over five trips to reach a small chamber with a draughting rift down to a passage. One way led up-slope and appeared to be an inward route for water. The other way goes to a draughting rift that will be the target for 2025. The site is now 20m long and

11m deep.

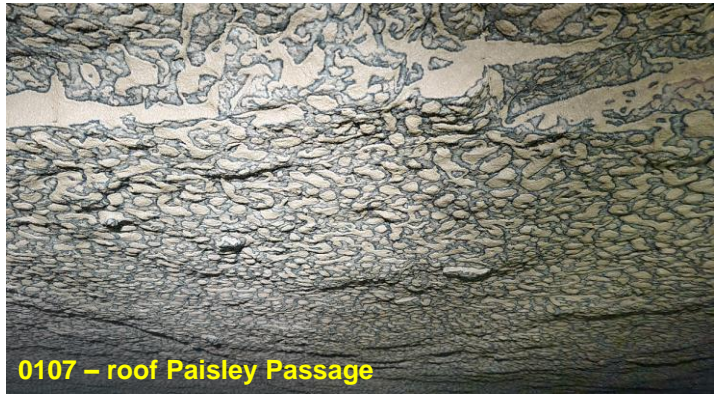
Fresnedo

Cueva del Torno (2366) was visited on two occasions to familiarise team members who had not been in the cave before. Route finding was difficult as the description names do not all appear on the current survey making it difficult to follow. Access to this site is important if we are to link it to Cueva de Riaño (0105), so to help route finding annotations to the survey will be pursued.



Riaño

In **Cueva Hoyuca (0107)** the far reaches were targeted using the Torca la Decepción (4732) entrance. Time was spent in the Trident Passages, particularly the Gypsum Traverse. This is



entered up a climb over a calcite blockage off the northern arm and heading back ENE at high level towards Rocky Horror. Resurvey work included the "stunning" Snow White (part of the Left Hand Passage) where a previously un-surveyed, smaller walking-sized passage had amazing gypsum-encrusted walls. This passage eventually rejoins the main route after a climb up from a trench in the floor. Numerous cross rifts and alcoves were investigated. Judgement pitch in Armageddon was equipped for SRT and the inlet off Paisley Passage was re-surveyed and pushed. After passing through avens, 45m and 37m high, a further thrutch "landed the team in an impressive very large, circular aven (Indomba) with a custard-coloured flat floor". The disto would only read a maximum of 62m up *Indomba* due to the spray from falling water - however it is much higher as a powerful 3000lm torch could not illuminate the top. Further resurveying was

0107
Trident
left-hand passage

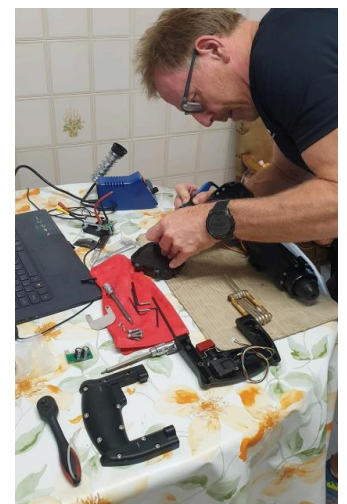


needed to check a previous survey from the summer. A lot of resurvey work in Shrimp Bone Inlet took place as well as climbing the original bolt climb up the 10m waterfall towards the end of the inlet. In total 1121m was re-surveyed. At

the waterfall an ancient 25+ year old climbing rope was found still hanging down the imposing looking waterfall but was thought unsafe to climb. An alternative and dry climb from the ledge at the start of the chamber looked the best prospect for 2025 tin order to gain access to the chamber and leads above. In total just under 1.5km of new passage was surveyed.



At **Fridge Door Cave** (1800) numerous trips were made using the Boob Tube (5000) entrance. Over seven trips the diving team of Jim Lister and Mark Smith pushed the sumps and dry passages beyond. Diving started at the sump 4 dive base. The sump was found to be restricted with a thick silt floor and the diver shortly reached a sizable above water chamber and a further 20m of sump reached a large cross rift that was pushed to an air bell with no open dry continuation. Inspection of the air bell was made by the diver with his hood removed and he heard running water from a small inlet. This was pushed for 40m of walking sized passage to Sump 5. Back in the chamber there was a slippery mudbank which both divers scaled and by removing mud reached a small blind alcove. A ramp on the left of the chamber was climbed, but only after slipping down mud for 7m in the attempt, to reach the top of the chamber 16 metres above. There they found a 2x7m well decorated passage that quickly closed down.



Repair to diving gear

Sump 5 was found to be 6m long to a walking sized streamway that continued through restricted Sumps 6 & 7, and further streamway to reach Sump 8. This was found to be partly blocked by mud a short way in and needed underwater digging to make progress. This sump was passed to a walking sized stream passage for 50m to Sump 9. Side passages in this section closed down. Sump 8 requires more work as the mud slope was found to slump in on the divers making route finding difficult, requiring a lot of digging to get through on both in and out dives. On the next trip, Sump 8 was found slumped in and blocked completely. It is hoped that a flood over the winter will wash out some of the mud to allow diving of sump 9.

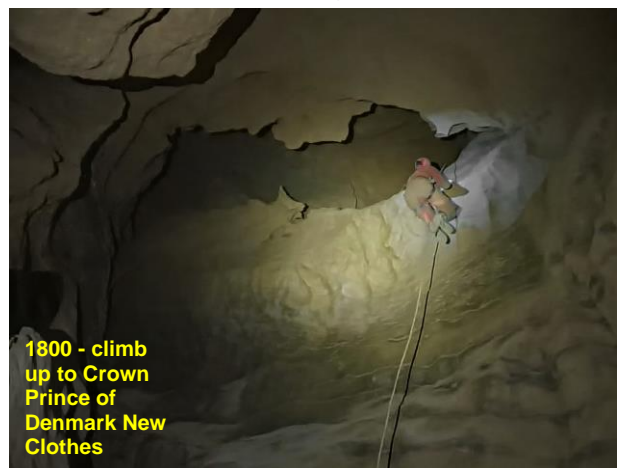
The survey up to sump 8 showed that about 300m of new cave was found. The presence of formations and helictites in the air bells in sump 4 were considered and in correspondence with Professor John Gunn (University of Birmingham) he thought that they suggested some connection above the sumps, so some change of air must occur. If this were not the case carbon dioxide levels would not be low enough to cause a CO₂ reduction in the water drops and hence precipitation of calcite.



Formations in sump 7 bypass

On trips by non-divers was pushed and surveyed from the end into a passage with many stalactites. After 8m, a pit was noted but it closes down. About 12m of passage follows but it gets smaller as it slopes down. It may continue through a 30x40 cm slot, but no draught was felt. In the same area the east-west intersecting chamber heads up towards the west where it also slopes down and ends in a mud dig. A few climbs and drops were pushed, and two new areas were found and surveyed. A trip was made to push leads in the Matienzo Hash House area. Several climbs and ramps were checked using bolting and a new 15m pitch was found, it is still to be surveyed. In Low in Knickers the end was pushed in two places but only 14m was found.

On trips by non-divers Crown Prince of Denmark's New Clothes was pushed and surveyed from the end into a passage with many stalactites. After 8m, a pit



1800 - climb up to Crown Prince of Denmark New Clothes



1800-Crown Prince of Denmark New Clothes

was noted but it closed. About 12m of passage follows but it gets smaller. It may continue through a 30x40 cm slot, but no draught was felt. In the same area the east-west intersecting chamber heads up towards the west where it also slopes down and ends in a mud dig. A few climbs and drops were pushed, and two new areas were found and surveyed. A trip was made to push leads in the Matienzo Hash House area. Several climbs and ramps were checked using bolting and a new 15m pitch was found, it is still to be surveyed. In Low in Knickers the end was pushed in two places but only 14m was found.

FRIDGE DOOR CAVE

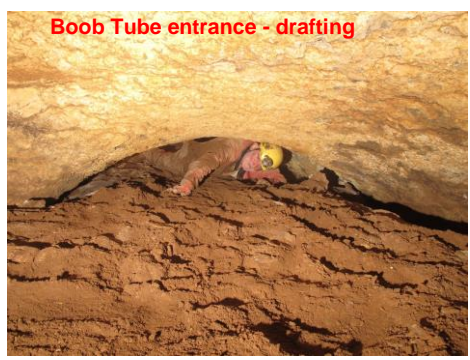
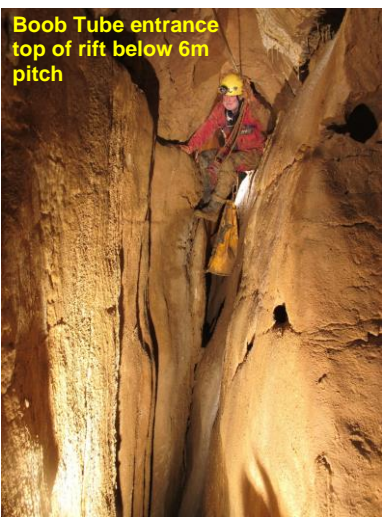
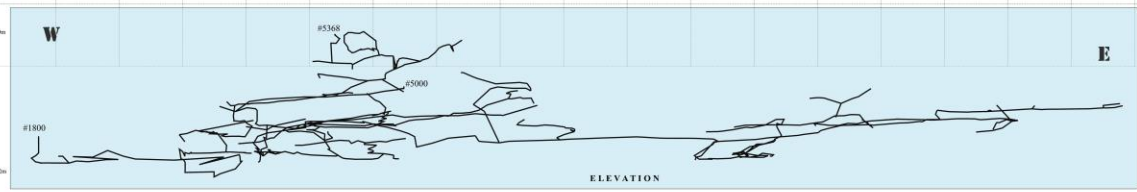
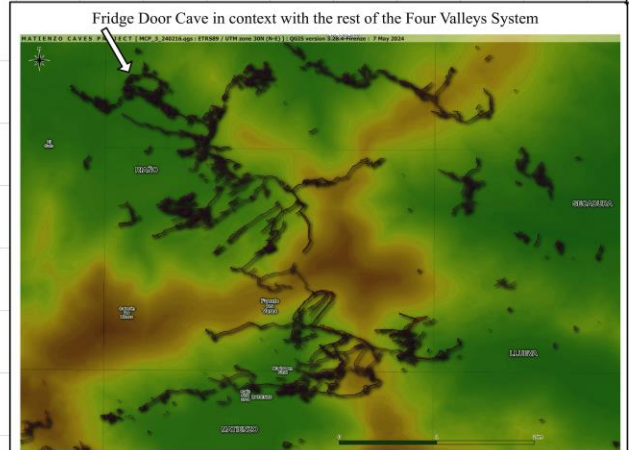
Geographic Name: Fridge Door Cave
Location: York Region, Ontario
Map: Ontario Cave Project Database 2013, 2016, 2022, 2023, 2024
Survey: 2013, 2016, 2022, 2023, 2024
Surveying: using GPS, 10m, 5m

Site 1808: Fridge Door Cave
 2013 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2016 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2022 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2023 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2024 Surveyed by: [Name]

Site 1809: Boob Tube
 2013 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2016 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2022 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2023 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2024 Surveyed by: [Name]

Site 1810: York Region
 2013 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2016 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2022 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2023 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2024 Surveyed by: [Name]

NOTES for the Fridge Door Cave System:
 2013 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2016 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2022 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2023 Surveyed by: [Name]
 2024 Surveyed by: [Name]

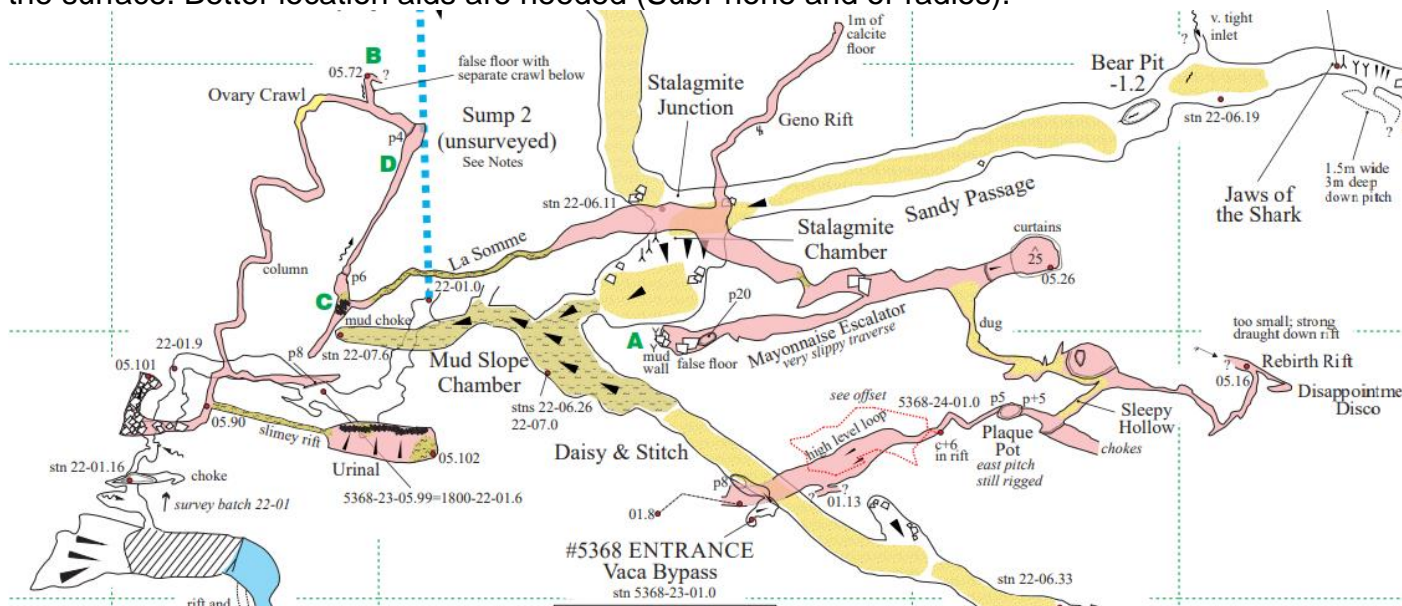


A rift nearer the Boob Tube entrance was rigged and loose rocks removed giving access. This gave access to a walking size passage with ways on ahead in a low arched passage with calcite and mud floor. One walking sized passage slightly above where the team entered the rift led to a 3m diameter chamber with an echo lead. A

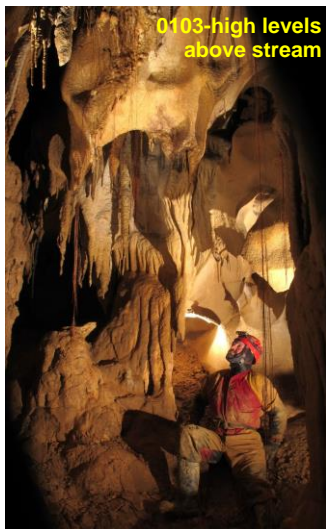
flat-out crawl with a draught lead to a dig in pebbles. A passage heading in the same direction as the entrance to the rift entered a 2.5m diameter domed chamber with a slope down to easy walking passage. This led to a low section becoming too small but with a draught. In total 551m of hard-earned cave was surveyed

In addition, the old (1800) entrance was checked out for a possible dig to connect to Cueva de la Espada (0103). The only possible dig is at the bottom down a slot, but it was flooded at a time of wet weather. We know it takes time for the water to drop so it needs digging in a longer spell of dry weather.

At **Vaca Bypass** (5368) two trips were made to investigate a pitch just past the Mayonnaise Escalator (survey below is section of the main Fridge Door survey – Vaca Bypass is mainly in pink except in the bottom left where it drops and links to rest of cave). The pitch was dropped 10m to a ledge and then 10m to a 5x2.5m area with a passage that looks like an old stream way needs a small person to push. At this point, one of the team had a lucky to escape as a large flake became dislodged narrowly missing their back and head. While rigging Crackpot, a climb up was made into the rift leading two ways, the right to stalagmites and a crawl with roots on the left wall. An attempt was made to locate this potential entrance, but the whistle blown in the cave could not be heard on the surface. Better location aids are needed (SubPhone and or radios).

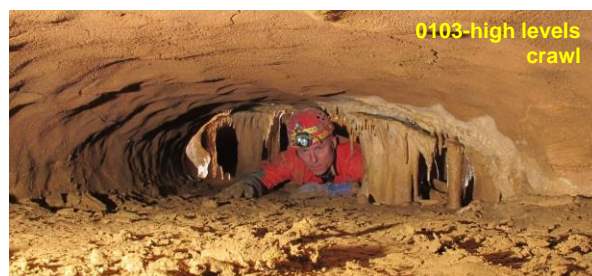


In **Cueva de la Espada** (0103) a number of leads in three areas were examined over three trips in the upper levels in the eastern end of the system, 35m were added to the system.



0103-high levels above stream

The most promising area was a narrow slot, with a strong draught. Looking into the slot a 4 m wide and 2 m high passage is seen going left and right. The slot is narrow only for a few centimetres and after a lot of work it was made big enough for a thin member of the team to get thorough and from the far end it was made bigger for the rest of the team. Past the squeeze a 2 m wide phreatic passage with a sand floor heads SW (left). It starts out crawling but then gets too low. To progress the sand floor needs moving to allow access to a higher section after about 2 meters. The draught comes from the SW. To the right of the squeeze it looks like the passage continues, but some spoil may have to be removed. An aven with bones of wild



0103-high levels crawl

boar, cow and other animals was found indicating a link to the surface. An upstream section going towards Fridge Door Cave was looked at. The first passage on the left led to a dig. This was muddy and squalid but the draughting small section of passage on the RHS looks like a good prospect for making progress in 2025.

In **Cueva-Cubio del Llanio** (3234), as part of the Lancaster University water chemistry project, water samples were collected on two trips. Unlike last year, the samples were partly treated in the cave meaning vast quantities of water did not need to be taken out of the cave.

Cueva de Riaño (0105) was the target of the main work in this area. In over thirteen trips, just under 7 1.8km of new and previously unsurveyed passage was found in a number of locations the



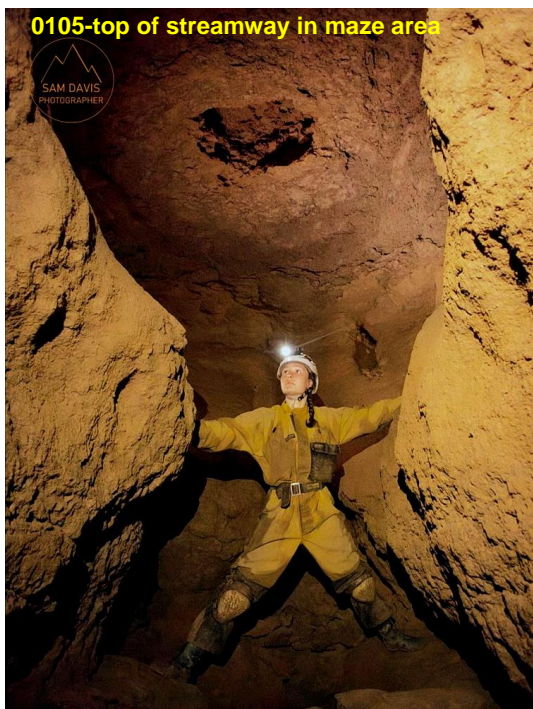
0105-dead fly covered in calcite

majority in the upper parts of the system. It was noted that the Upper Series east side had a very flat roof just past La Playa and still has the scallops on it from the original flow direction. A climb up and over a large greasy boulder halted

progress and now needs a fixed line to be left in.



0105-new passage east of streamway



0105-top of streamway in maze area

The main finds were north of the fracture area after La Playa and inlets off the streamway. This led to a maze that may have been visited before by one person - there was only one set of footprints. The area ended in boulders and surface signs (snails and bat claw marks) with some leads still to push. Other leads reached a passage with a large aven and, in the opposite direction, an 8m pitch and traverse above. The



0105-Pessimist Series rift passage

main route in this area was followed and surveyed to over 200m with side passage leads, to reach a chamber with signs that it is near the surface. A side passage (Mouse Print Passage) is a fine abandoned walking route which meanders with some small side passages. It draughts and lowers to crawling over dry mud. Broken snail shells in the low section and whole snails in the chamber were found. The locations with surface debris were looked at and pushed but no connection to the surface was made. A



0105 Pessimist Series crawl leading to upstream sump.

surface location project using the SubPhones now seems to be the best option.



Pessimist Passage and Redeeming Feature areas (see the latest survey when published on the Matienzo Caves website) were pushed to chambers and climbs needing bolting to possible further passages. These included a waterfall flowing into the far end of Redeeming Feature with what looked to be passable passage at the top, needing a 6m bolt climb. At an inlet 50m upstream of where the entrance series meets the main cave an inlet reached a rift and a “downstream” passage. This was pushed at an upper-level heading away from the rest of the cave. It was followed for 100m until it was partly blocked by calcite at a drop back down to the stream. This lower passage was forced for around 50m in a tight immature passage

that is still continuing with a good draught. At this point, the team realised that they were now going upstream. Checking, it turned out that the downstream water at the start of the rift disappeared almost immediately, meaning that what was thought was the upstream part of the rift was just a later interloper bringing in water. By the end of October 2024, the length of the 4 Valleys System had increased by 3,935m, taking the total length to 76,908m.

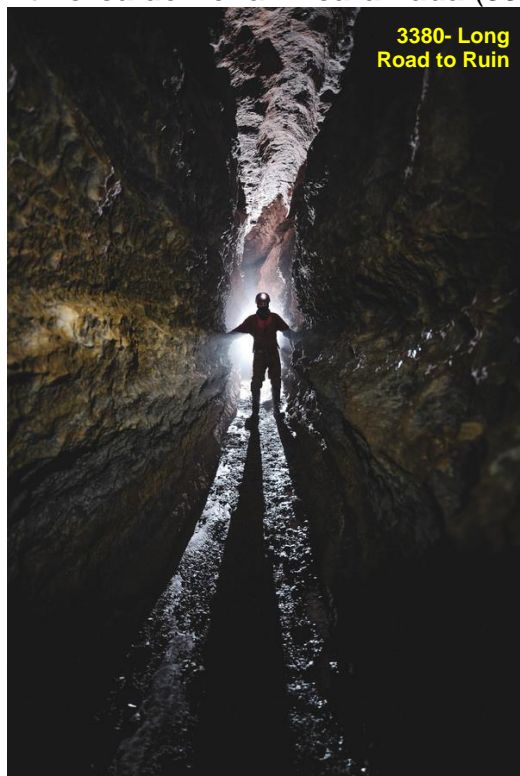


A new site, Cueva GeeBee (5406), was found and is a vertical slot filled in with rubble. The slot continues back some 1.5 to 2.0m with a window over the remaining rubble showing the narrow cave may continue with a lot of work. A nearby 2m wide shaft (site 0256) was investigated and found to be 8m deep. It was covered with a sheet of aluminium and filled with rubbish at the bottom. It is worth an easy dig to see if it has prospects.

Northwest Sector

Hornedo

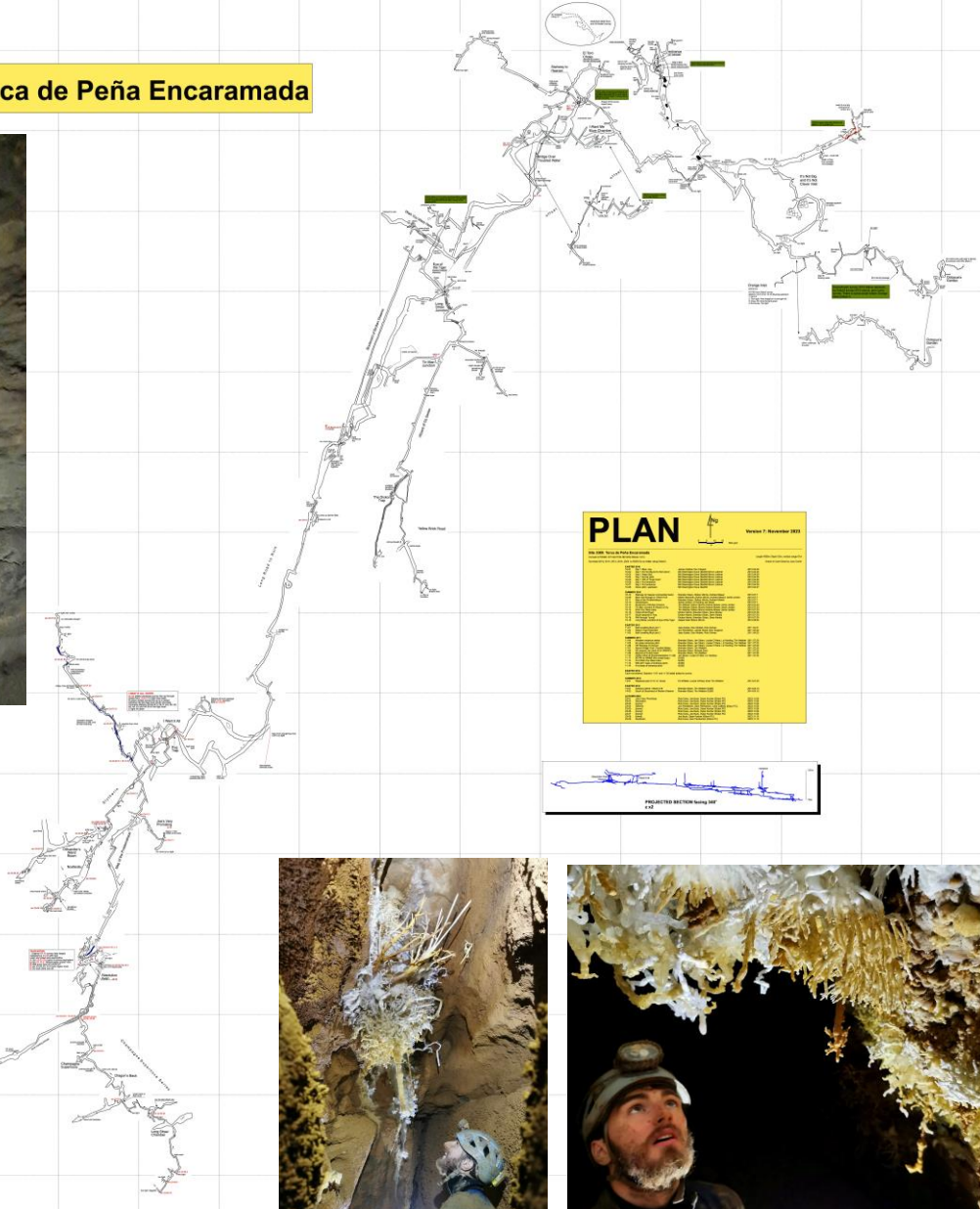
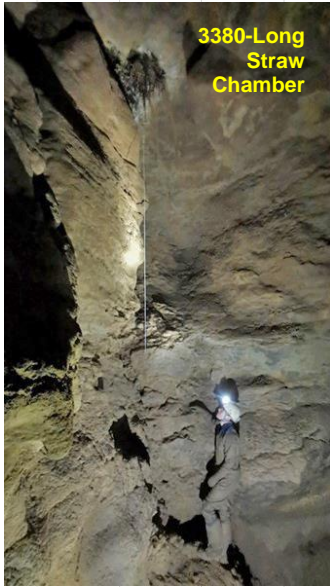
At Torca de Peña Encaramada (3380) a strong



team visited in November for a week and spent many hours pushing several areas of the cave. Over 845m were surveyed in low and elevated levels with number of leads still to look at. These finds brought the cave to 4931m long. This cave is close to Cave of the Wild Mare (0767) and some water flows to this site. If it could be connected it would add to the 23914m long Torca la Vaca (2889). An hour-long video taken by this team is on YouTube.

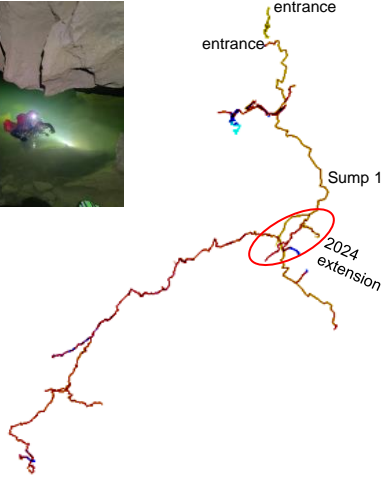


Site 3380: Torca de Peña Encaramada

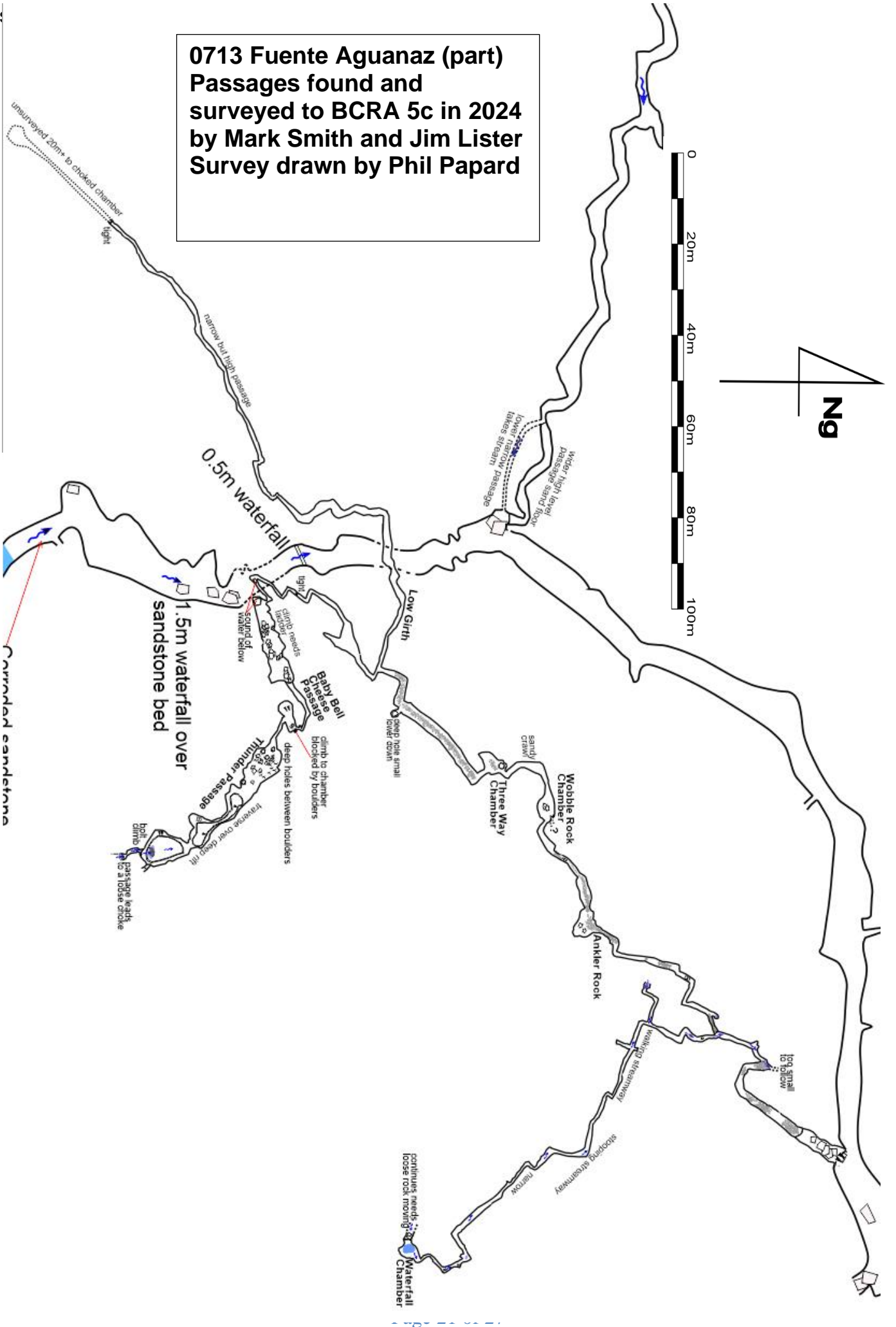


San Antonio

Fuente Aguanaz (0713) was the diving target of Jim Lister and Mark Smith. Their aim was to look at the final sump and adjacent boulder choke. This was reached and inspected but found to be impassable. However, on the way out, they discovered an inlet passage near sump 1 and so other diving projects were dropped when this new passage was found. Over 6 further trips, the team pushed and surveyed the new finds. The find started off in the main Aguanaz streamway, then passed through boulders and gravel to meet several chambers, including Wobble Rock Chamber and



**0713 Fuente Aguanaz (part)
Passages found and
surveyed to BCRA 5c in 2024
by Mark Smith and Jim Lister
Survey drawn by Phil Papard**



sound still to be investigated. A walking-sized passage with a cobbled floor and a large chamber with a climb and a potential new route were also discovered. Water levels were high on one trip but lowered soon after.

Over the next few trips these finds were surveyed and loose blocks removed to open a tight lead. A 16m high aven was found and bolt climbed over two trips.

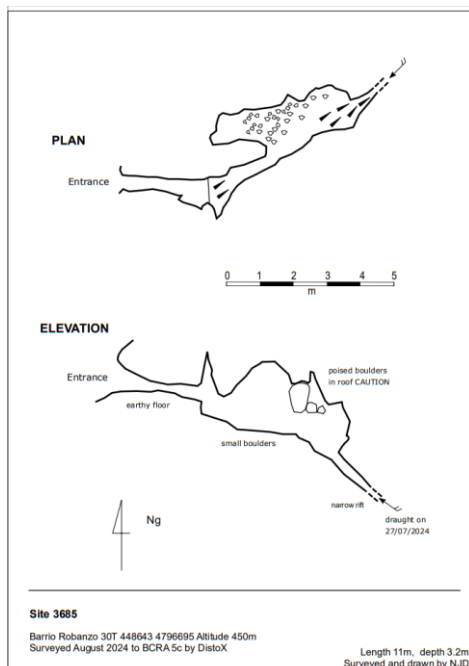
At the top, they encountered a stream passage in a large boulder choke and ascended into a large void. They bolted a right-hand route to avoid a wet area. Beyond, the passage ended at a blank wall, with a roof passage above requiring 3-4 metres of bolting to gain access. This was climbed up a loose boulder ramp, reaching a caravan-sized boulder. The team did not continue further due to the unstable choke. Another cave section requiring a descent through an unstable choke was noted. More rigging will now



be needed for further safe exploration in 2025. In total 525m was surveyed.

Cobadal

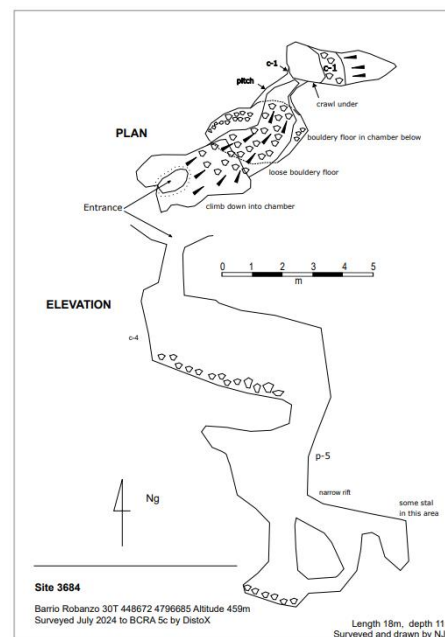
Prospecting work took place in this area high up to the south of Cobadal via access from the Alisas - La Cavada Road. The main activity was at cave 3685 where, over three trips, the entrance squeeze was opened and work done to drop down into a second small chamber with a boulder roof. This will need scaffolding or similar to allow access to push a draughting, boulder floor where the way on is visible.



The nearby shaft 3684 was descended into chamber followed by a shaft that led to chambers. The site was surveyed, but the site was viewed at having no

serious prospects.

Four new sites were located in the area. A shaft (5425) was descended part of the way down only and measured at 7.9m to a boulder floor. Three large, wooded depressions were noted all with little prospect but recorded (5426, 5427 and 5428) to stop people rechecking them.



La Gatuna

A new cave 5442 was found but not pushed.

Northern Sector

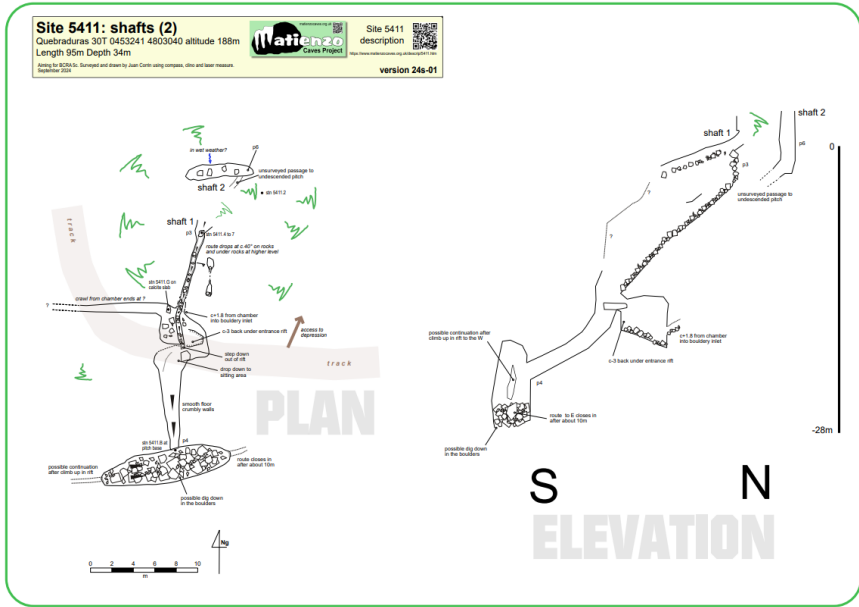
Solórzano including Quebraduras

Twin Shafts (5411) was found in this wooded area to the east of Solórzano but was difficult to access due to the thick undergrowth. The site consists of two parallel shaft sections. The south one was descended through a small slot into constricted rift and a 4m pitch into a chamber.



5411- entrance

4m pitch into a chamber. Several loose climbs in the chamber were looked at but closed down. The site was surveyed to 95m, and the second drop was descended



5411- bottom chamber

to a possible extension, but it seems likely to lead into the first cave, above the final chamber.

Another new find **Field Dig (5410)** was opened enough to get a better view down the small hole, and it was measured at over 4m deep, with a slight draught. Being in a farm field it was decided not to open it up further but in 2025 it may be looked at



Site 510

with an endoscope to see if it has any good realistic prospect. If there is a good prospect further options will be considered in conversation with the farmer.

Three new sites were identified but only one, Sofa Hole (5439), had any real significance and was descended over a sofa to drainage pipes and a choke at 5m depth.



Site 5445

Down in the Valley **Cave 5445** is just before the hairpin travelling down into Solórzano from Matienzo, the road drain on the left drops into a small shaft that appears to have been looked at by someone, but not the Matienzo Cave team. There is no record of this but there is a through-bolt in the small cliff above the cover the drain cover. The shaft was descended 10m to a slope which closes down after 10m to an alcove under the road. The cave was surveyed to 22m.

Cueva de los Cacoles (3997) was attempted and was found using the particularly good details in the original Spanish publication that put it near a house with 3 silos. This house was found but not the cave. A track before the house and silos has been developed recently and a large concrete slab covers a ditch on the track side. In addition, some land drains feed into this area, it is possible this work has obscured the cave entrance.

Hazas de Cesto (west)

Cave 4939 proved difficult to find in dense vegetation in an area of ravines and gullies. It was entered and found too tight at a "T" junction. The cave did not draught on a warm day. Another cave 5416 was found on the north side of a large depression in dense undergrowth, it was found to be 2m long to a roof fall blocking the way on.



Removing part of tree - 4937

El Rincón

At **Cave 5417** spoil was removed to allow access for 3m to a right-hand bend. A low passage continued about 2m to where the roof lowered with a possible bigger space beyond. Further progress will need digging out the spoil fill from the entrance. It had a slight draught out on a cool day.

Beranga

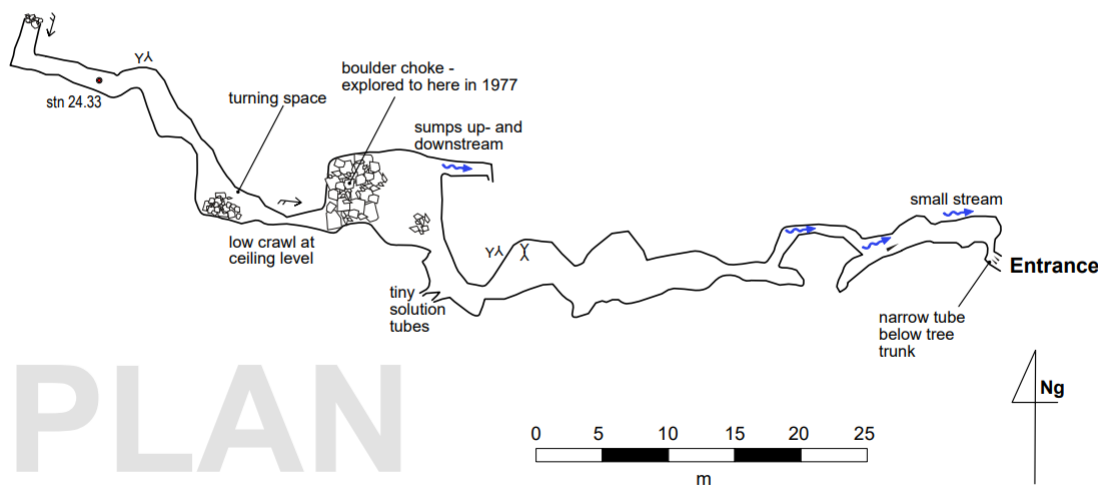
The **Nepa Hole** (4937) on the west of the road from Hazas just prior to the motorway was first partly explored in 1977 by the

expedition, but not surveyed. It has not been looked at since as it was not in our later permit areas. It is now in our revised permit area and was visited this year. The tree trunk that had been put in the hole to make it stock proof had a small part removed to just allow access down

#4937 Nepa Hole

Beranga 30T 0.453.064 4.806.504 (ETRS89) altitude 53m
 Length 121m Vertical range -3 +12m

DistoX survey by Chris Scaife with Chloe Almond and James Carlisle, August 2024
Survey version 24-02, drawn in Affinity Designer 2 by Juan Corrin



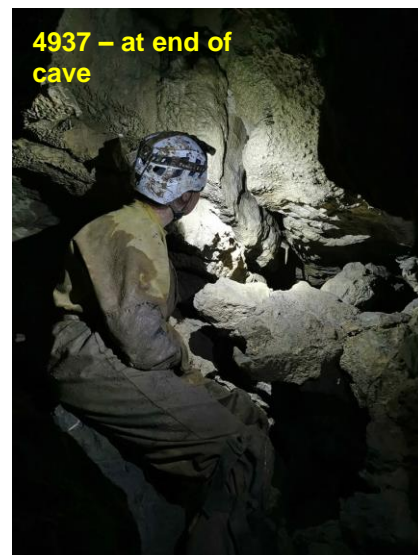
the depression. However, other rubbish and spoil had been dropped into the hole blocking the way down a small passage into the cave. Later in the year the spoil was removed and this site "called Nepa Hole due to the leaches present in the cave," was finally entered, pushed, and surveyed over two trips. The entrance is a crawl to a small chamber with the stream flowing through. The cave goes upstream, through a small tube, past a column, to a chamber. The boulder choke in the chamber was the previous exploration limit in 1977. This choke was pushed





with the blocks taking a lot of work to pass. A member of the team pushed through and, with working from both sides, the route was made passable for the whole team to crawl into a small chamber. This had a strong draught coming from a sandy tube that was followed to a further boulder choke, at the end of a flat-out crawl. There is a draught here but digging will not be easy at

this point. The cave was surveyed to 121m.

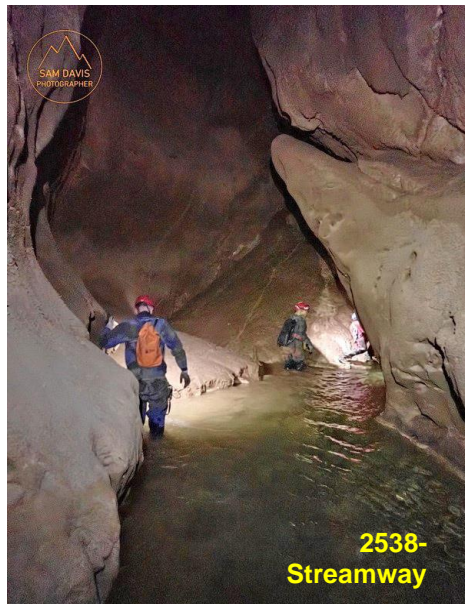


Some interesting features show up on the LIDAR map of the woodland to the SW of 4937 and these were checked out. The features are large mounds of earth and clay from excavation work with no prospects. Again, using the LIDAR map of the area, a depression beyond Bus Stop Cave (5336) was checked out but it proved negative for cave prospects.

Ribamontán al Monte - Area shared with the Club Montaña y Espeleología La Cambera. Villanueva

At Villanueva, **Cueva de Covachera** (5036) spoil was removed from the end having first checked that a badger had not returned to its den. Unfortunately, only a space 30cm x30cm over solid fill for at least two metres was revealed and with this the site is considered a low prospect. Due to diving elsewhere in the permit area further work on Villanueva Resurgence was left until 2025.

Moncobe work is conducted in agreement of the club G.E. Pistruellos.



At a a trip was made to survey and push extensions that were found in 2023. The team found the area extremely muddy making progress and surveying exceedingly difficult. An undescended pitch was located but it will need a lot of work in the very squalid conditions to push. Surveying of 141m was completed that also links in several known passages.



Site 2538: Cueva El Cubillon (Moncobe)

Moncobe, Cantabria, Spain 30T 0446058 4796484
(ETRS89) Altitude 235m
Length: 2797m Depth: 92m

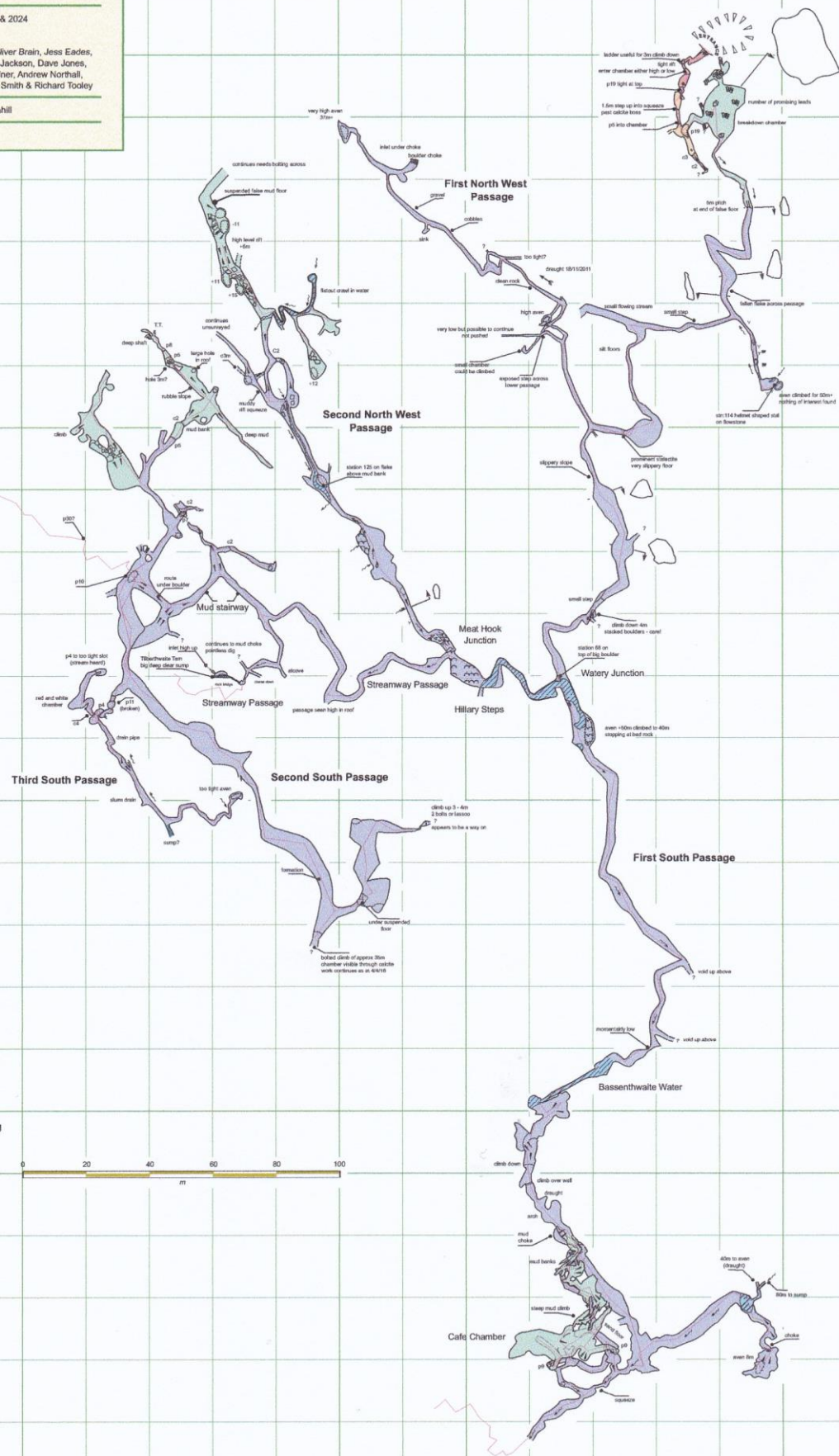
Surveyed: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2019, 2022, 2023 & 2024

DistoX & PDA

Surveyed By: Diane Arthurs, Martin Bamicoct, Oliver Brain, Jess Eades, Paul Fairman, Phil Goodwin, Tom Howard, Dan Jackson, Dave Jones, Brian Laitmer, Jim Lester, Steve Martin, Dave Milner, Andrew Northall, Jon Pemberton, Alex Ritchie, Chris Scaife Mark Smith & Richard Tockley

Drawn in Inkscape: Diane Arthurs & Simon Cornhill

Matienzo Caves Project 2024



Legend

- too narrow continuation
- unsurveyed passage
- sand wall in passage - majority of cave is sandy
- continuation possible
- water inlet: direction of flow
- stalagmite - stalagite - column
- straws - helictites
- slope
- pit: depth in metres
- aven
- pool
- large boulder
- small boulders
- stal flow

Cave 3754 was found in thick undergrowth after several failed attempts in previous years. The team started removing the spoil infill making the site 4m long to a slight lifting of the roof with boulders in the floor and needing more work to progress.

At the dig 4480 four trips were made to progress moving the spoil infill encouraged by a good draught. More work is now needed at this promising site. The shaft 4474 was searched for and the conclusion is that it has been covered by a big collapse on the true right wall of the valley.



Ideopuerta

The dig 2751 was checked out and it was confirmed it looks interesting and is worth a further return visit for a serious pushing effort.