

All dives carried out by RP Skorupka.

PETER PLUMMET, San Miguel de Aras, Llueva, Cantabria.

(FOSSIL ENTRANCE to the NACIEMENTO DEL RIO CLARION).

8-5-96

Vis was good and water levels normal. This was a set-up dive. One 9l tank of oxygen dumped at -6m, one 9l tank of nitrox dumped at -24m. A quick fin down to -35m led to the lip of the pot, where my line reel had been left last year. This was checked and running okay.

A major flood then intervened, and no diving was possible for one week.

13-5-96

Water level was up by one metre, and the vis was still hazy. The first slot was passed using 2 x 15l sidemounts and a chest mounted 7l cylinder, but was still very awkward. Two metres of slack were introduced from the surface, and this was completely relined at a lower level. This effectively removed the most awkward obstacle in this sump.

14-5-96

Water levels had fallen back to normal, but vis was still hazy, so this was used as a "rehearsal" dive to check the time taken to reach -34m. Also, both stage bottles, which had been in the sump all week, were turned on and checked.

16-5-96

The descent to -34m was made on air. Dumping the 7l chest stage, the shaft was descended on 2 x 15l trimix. Reaching -60m with the luxury of a clear head, the shaft was smaller and more rift like than remembered. After wasting a couple of minutes fumbling with the reel, the descent continued more slowly, down to a spike at -72m. By -74m, it was realised that this was a precariously balanced flake several metres high, which I was now below. As tables were only carried for 75m max depth today, the reel was belayed here. The shaft continued down, but was long, narrow and very spiky. It almost seemed to be developing into a high rift passage, so it will probably bottom out soon, but the continuation will be difficult going.

An uneventful decompression followed with an enormous amount of spare gas. A possible outlet for the water was seen at the top of the shaft, this is probably the route taken to the normal resurgence.

Dive time was 82 mins, followed by 20 mins on surface oxygen, 4 hours were then spent in the Llueva Bar as an added precaution.

17-5-96

Dived on air, to collect my remaining dumped stage from -25 metres. All gear was cleared from the cave.

Further progress is possible at this site, but the awkward nature of the passage at depth will make this quite hazardous. The present point reached is some 20m below sea level.

Resurgence below CUEVA DE COLUMBRES (also known as CUBIO DEL HOSE),
Ramales, Cantabria

18-5-96

This major resurgence doesn't seem to have a name, but is probably associated with the sump dived in the above site (Ref, CDG NL 37 ; 27, 1975), This was also looked at, and is a superb site, but requires a short, awkward carry,

Anyway, the resurgence had been looked at by a Spanish diver last year, but he had only laid 30m of line, I assumed, because of its big outflow, that the sump would go deep quickly, hence the short distance explored, So, I used 2 x 9l tanks and a drysuit,

The Spaniards line was still in place, but the sump was quite small, A junction was reached after 10m, His line went left, down a lovely clean-washed pothole to -8m, and a tight slot into an extensive bedding, where the line ended, Right (no line) was a 1m diameter tube which became smaller after 20m, Both branches were delightfully clean and could easily be extended with less bulky kit,

The cave is a water supply for Ramales, and has a big suction pipe as the line belay, As usual in Spain, diving in their water supply seems quite acceptable,

19-5-96

A day looking at resurgences,

1, Solorzano, the stream that runs through the Equestrian centre, This was followed up to the resurgence, an arch 3m wide by 1m high, A clear stream emerges, but the entrance is full of blocks, These could be shifted in a few hours, but it seems that they hold a pipe in place, as this is also a water supply, In flood, a major amount of water emerges here,

2, Fuente Truchiro, The resurgence for the archaeological site, El Monte de la Garma, near Omono, A small stream issues from behind a natural bridge, The site is small (as expected, the cave is formed in a little limestone hill), and the vis looked very murky, The locals around here are all barking mad, Well worth a visit for entertainment value,