

Matienzo Caves Project Planning Meeting 2015
Clapham Reading Room Café – 6:30pm 7 March 2015

Minutes of Meeting

1. **Welcome** - Phil welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Steve and Suzie for organising the food and to Sue Latimer for the venue. Some 25 members of the expedition were present.
2. **Approval of agenda and points for AOB** – Approved and no points added.
3. **Brief review of activity in 2014** - Phil explained the change of allocated area for the expedition resulting in some shift of resources to the new area and the resurvey/exploration of the known caves, the most significant being at Cueva Riocueva which stood at just over 3k previous to this and is now a little under 5k with more work to do in 2015. A lot of work went into BigMat Calf Hole (the new entrance to Torca la Vaca) which had fallen in over the winter and had to be dug out again during the Easter and Summer expeditions, and was connected to Vaca towards the end of the summer expeditions. Using this new entrance some 3k of new passage was pushed and surveyed with open leads to be pushed in 2015. The total of sites was again increased to well over 4000 with many just noted and needing exploring and surveying. In September the expedition presented a paper at a major Spanish Conference organised by SEDEC on the systems in the Alto Asón area. At the same time other members of the Expedition were presenting a report to the BSAC Conference in the UK. One outcome of the Spanish event was that we agreed to a major exercise of water tracing both in our area and also in adjacent areas in order that the hydrology of this major area of speleological importance can be better understood. The first part of this programme will be in the south of our area when the water in Cueva Vallina will be tested – a major objective for the Easter expedition.
4. **Matienzo Cave Project report including its structure and changes in web site and IT provision** - Juan could not be present at the meeting but submitted the following report which was circulated at the meeting.

Matienzo Caves Project Structure

The Project's administration structure has evolved over 2014. The Management & Policy Steering Group guides the work of the MCP and now consists of 4 main specialist roles: Expedition organiser, Expedition tackle master, Spanish liaison, Web site and archive. These are currently carried out by Phil Papard, Steve Martin, Peter Smith and Juan Corrin. Additionally, Sue Martin administers the Current Account and Juan Corrin the Reserve Account. Further details are found on the web site.

Juan, Phil, Steve and Sue held an end-of-year meeting in December where the activities over 2014 were reviewed along with the finances. Finance roles and responsibilities were also agreed including authorising expenditure.

Web site and Archive Report for the year 2014

New areas and datum

The new areas meant new maps were obtained and, as a consequence of that, a change in the coordinate's datum (ETRS89) for all the caves' positions. As well as updating entrance coordinates (and checking altitudes for all entrances on the new map), all the Surverx

surveys have been updated and all site descriptions. The Orux Maps files were altered, a new digital map for use in the Matienzo Office prepared, and both Google Maps and Google Earth have the new boundaries on - all available from the [documents page](#) of the web site.

The "simple map" pdf has also been updated to include the new area

IT Provision

In September, the complete disc failure of the main Matienzo Caves computer provided the opportunity to upgrade the IT provision, including facilities for the Office in Bar Germán.

The following items were bought at a cost of £950 to the Matienzo Caves Project:

- desktop computer (16Gb with twin 4Tb drives)
- replacement 4Tb backup drive for Matienzo

For the Matienzo Office:

- memory upgrades for the two laptops
- a network server (2 x 1Tb drives)
- uninterruptable power supply

An updated sub-set of the MCP information is installed on the server for use by cavers in the Matienzo Office during each main expedition. Uses include inputting survey data and drawing up surveys; downloading photos and videos; positioning new cave entrances; searching online logbooks, etc.

Web site

The web site now has information for more than 4100 sites.

Due to a number of issues with the Lancaster University server, the web site was moved to one.com with the new address of matienzocaves.org.uk. (Thanks are due to Nigel Dibben for funding the old address for a number of years.) The move required altering a number of the on-line facilities but, after a few months, everything now appears to be working and visible. Moving the Logbook Search facility requires users to re-register.

The "complete upheaval" of the IT provision and web site also provided the opportunity to completely rewrite the documentation for producing the on-line facilities and administering the web site.

A major addition to the web site was providing links to all the expedition logbooks.

5. **Expedition Equipment officer's report – Big Steve** – A list of the tackle available was circulated and will be uploaded to the Google Group. The main points were that new bags and rope have been obtained (thanks to Starless River) and new bolts and hangers have been added to bring stocks up to target. There are sufficient ladders, but more will be needed to be made to replace old stock in the coming year. Equipment for the water tracing exercise is being obtained by Peter Smith, Terry and Phil and it will be available for Easter. The state of the campsite block was discussed and it was suggested that this needs to be improved including: a path from the block to avoid some of the mud; better cleaning facilities and some improvement to the showers etc. These will be discussed with Pablo. It was noted that some extra hooks in the showers and a table were added at the end of the Summer Expedition. If you have any ideas about improvements to the camping facilities can you let Suzie, Steve or Phil know.
6. **Expedition Treasurer's report** – Suzie circulated some joint accounts that will be uploaded to the Google Site. The main points were that the money is mainly in UK Pounds as this is where the spend mainly is. Currently prior to most people making payments of fees for 2015 we have £200 in the current account and some £2199 in the reserve account.

The change in both the way fees can be paid (into Bank Account) and how they are calculated worked well in 2014 with the expedition breaking even, but this will be kept under review.

The reserve account is needed for major items of expenditure such as the update of IT equipment in 2014 and the likely spend on cave radios when they become available. We did expect to purchase three Nicola III ends when they came into production. However development work has delayed their release and in the meantime Ron Taylor has developed a cave radio that had been tested with the help of Phil and it seems likely that this will be the one of choice for the expedition – a prototype may be available to test during the summer expedition.

The application for a GPF (BCRA) grant has been submitted, but as the closing date was 28 February we are not expecting a decision for some time.

7. **People planning to go at Easter and in Summer and when** – people were asked to either fill in the calendars on the Google Group or let Phil or Juan know the details. If members do not want to put their full names on the calendars then use initials, but let Juan or Phil know what they stand for. It seems likely there will be about 25+ cavers present over the Easter period, it was too early to give numbers for summer but MUSC and other groups are expected to be out to again.
8. **Primary arrangements and objectives for 2015 and who will take on these?**
Suze reminded members to fill in the “personal details” form if this is the first time in Matienzo, but also for all members to check their forms to ensure they are up to date and then to sign and date the form – if any problems please ask Suzie when in Matienzo, but the folder of forms is kept in the expedition office at the back of Pablo’s Restaurant.

The following objectives were discussed and generally agreed:

1st Objectives Easter

- Hydrology (water tracing) – Vallina/ Cubio de la Reñada – Phil and Pedro to lead
- Cueva Vallina II – push (tight section needs work) – Ali to lead
- Torca la Vaca via BigMat Calf Hole – Si, Di and Dan to lead
- Riocueva /Torca de los Caños – Complete survey and push – Juan/Phil to lead
- YoYo Cave – push – John Southworth thought that some of the younger (i.e. below 60!) would like to push this site – Andy agreed to take this on.

2nd Objectives Easter

- Cueva de Carcavuezo re-survey and push – due to the wet weather over the last few months this will be left to summer – Terry and Footleg to lead
- Washing Machine Hole – again due to wet weather this will be left to the summer.
- Cueva Hoyuca via Giant Panda Entrance to push – Si and Di to lead – but work is needed on the entrance to make stable – Phil will look at this and make a plan!
- Cueva Llueva – push new passages found at Easter 2014 – Dan to lead
- Cubio de la Reñada – resurvey also push crawl at side of Sump – Phil and Ali to lead
- Continue to find and explore new caves including in the new area to the north and north west – John Southworth and al

Summer Objectives

- Torca Mostajo – MUSC
- Simas del Picón – MUSC?
- Torca del Regaton – far end check out dive sites and push

- Torca de Lastrilla – open up and push tight slot at bottom of new pitches - Phil
- 415 – resurvey and push – Carolina
- Torca de Peña Encaramada to Wild Mare Cave– try to connect – Pete Egan (may be in October)
- Route into Cueva Hoyuca) via Carcavuezo – look to see if easy route is possible - Terry
- Sumidero de Cobadal – push and blast choke - Phil
- Cueva de Fresnedo 2 – push – James?
- Fuente Aguanaz – push – Dan?
- Cueva de Lolo – dive (likely to be short)
- Continue to find and explore new caves including in the new area to the north and north west - all
- Trident re-survey and push – Foodleg and Paul to lead – Phil remarked that the North side of the passage and choke at the end of Hoyuca needs looking at as it seems possible this may be the area where the passages in Llueva found a few years ago may be heading.

9. **Hydrology work** – Phil gave a brief explanation of what is planned over the next few years to map the hydrology of the Alto Asón area that is now one of the most important speleological regions in Europe with 3 caves over 100km long and several more with this potential, including two in our area. The first objective is to look at the hydrology of the area around South Vega, Vallina and Sistema del Alto del Tejuelo (100km system to the North and West of Bustablado) and at Easter we will be looking for people to help with this including placing dye (Leucophor) in Vallina. Phil explained that detectors have already been placed by Pedro and Ian in a number of sites to check for existing contamination.

We are looking to make a grant application for the water tracing project – this will be a joint grant application for all the teams that will take part (i.e. Spanish, French and Belgium Clubs working in adjacent areas) and is being organised by Terry and Peter Smith.

10. **Surveying** – is training required? The main issues were the need to include plenty of passage detail, to both survey the new finds and critically to draw up after wards. General discussion took place, Carolina said that people wanted to learn, but the perspective needed to be on the practical aspects i.e. working together with experienced people. Some ideas/information that emerged were:
- a. The possibility of a training session was discussed and one possibility is to do this if any are interested between Easter and summer – this would look at the practical aspects (passage detail in particular) and basic methods of recording and drawing up. A request for people interested to be put on website.
 - b. Laminated crib sheets showing recommended symbols for cave passage details etc.
 - c. Ask on website what people are using for both recording in the cave and drawing up (to give us a better overview).
 - d. DistoX can easily go out of calibration, need to check in cave that its ok and know how to re-calibrate – Si or Phil are happy to show how to do this when in Matienzo.
11. **AOB & Questions** – none taken (excellent food and beer were evident and took priority at this point!)