



Introduction

This report covers the expedition's speleological work in the permit area 13 shown in figure 1 below, from October 2020 to October 2021. 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 hydraulically 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. Joint explorations with these Spanish groups have proved difficult, if not impossible with Covid-19 and the rules and regulations across Europe making travel difficult. Collaboration has been

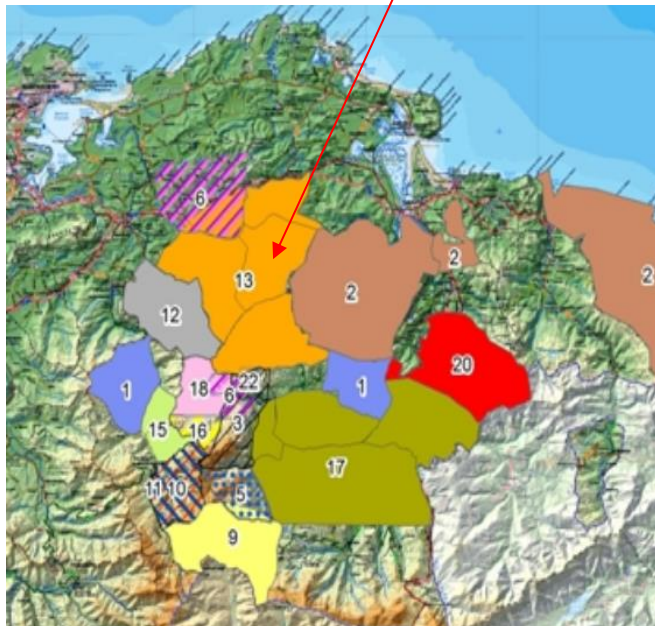


Fig 1 Expedición Británica área de permiso para el 2021

through emails and reports, being somewhat one-sided as the Spanish groups can move around more-or-less freely. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic's quarantine requirements for travel from Spain to the UK and UK Government advice, travel to Matienzo prior to the summer was not possible.

This meant all expedition trips in 2021 prior to July had to be cancelled. As the UK's restrictions were not lifted until late July it meant most people had to postpone their summer bookings until 2022. This included two of our divers who had cancel their trips to push, Fuente Aguanaz (0713) and Fridge Door Cave (1800) among others. Some of those with houses to stay in and so did not have date limits for cancellation of accommodation bookings, did travel to Matienzo. As a result, there was a smaller number of cavers in Matienzo resulting in limited cave exploration. A lot of the time was spent digging some key sites, where more work is still needed in 2022. It was noted that Covid-19 cases in the Matienzo area were very low and much less than in the UK and no illness or other Covid-19 related problems occurred. It is expected the expedition will get back to normal in 2022 with the main activity being at Easter and in the

Matienzo Caves Project - Summer expedition 2021					
Cave	Name	Area	Previous Length (m)	New Length (m)	Extra Length (m)
0071	Torca del Mostajo	Cubija	22625	22888	263
3234	Cueva-Cubío del Llanío (Four Valleys System)	Riaño	67226	67420	194
4732	Torca la Decepción	La Secada	82	216	134
2889	Torca la Vaca	Hornedo	23783	23914	131
0780	Torca de Corcada	Seldesuto	307	397	90
2694	Shaft	S Vega	0	89	89
2593	Shaft	S Vega	15	75	60
1265	cave	Carrales	31	80	49
1949	Cave	Muela	0	21	21
2575	Dingle view Cave	El Naso	0	20	20
5081	Cueva del Gusano	S Vega	0	17	17
4853	dig	S Vega	0	11	11
5082	cave	S Vega	0	4	4
5079	dig/cave	La Gatuna	0	4	4
0100	Torca de los Canes	Riaño	100	102	2
Total New Cave Surveyed					1089

summer. In October nine cavers visited the area and worked on a number of sites.

The main finds were in Torca la Decepción (4732) which is the dug entrance to 0252; nearly 200m of new passage in Cueva-Cubio del Llanio (3224) and two shafts on South Vega (2694 & 2593) that were recorded as only digs prior to being opened up this year. In addition, passages were surveyed in Torca del Mostajo (0071), Torca de Corcada (0780) and Torca la Vaca (2889). These along with a number of smaller finds added in October (not on table below) up to well over 1km of new surveyed passages. In addition, nearly half a kilometre of passages was resurveyed mainly in Cueva-Cubío de la Reñada (0048) and Torca de los Canes (100) where previously we only had old paper surveys from the 1970s. A further fifty nine new caves and sites have been added to our website since our last report in October 2020. Eighteen were found and located during the summer the rest being either identified last Autumn or by the Club de Espeleología la Cambera who we agreed with to share the Ribamontán al Monte area south of the A-8 autopista. 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.

Southern Sector Cueva Vallina (0733)

Diving work to push the main downstream sumps started but was hindered by the stealing of SRT gear left at Double Dutch pitch and serious issues with the diver's rebreather electronics. The theft of caving gear from a site a long way into a cave is a great concern and must have been done by experienced cavers. It seems there have been other similar cases in the area and so all should be aware of the risk if gear is left in caves. It was fortunate that diving gear and ropes were not affected.

In the Spring we agreed to share our permit with Espeleo Club Tortosa who had the permit for this cave in the 1990s when they collaborated with us to explore the system. They organised an expedition to push passages in Vallina II. All the finds will be shared with us and will be uploaded to our website in the next month or so. It is hoped this agreement will open up the prospect of some joint working in future years assuming the Covid-19 issues have been sufficiently resolved to allow a normal expedition to proceed.

There were a couple of trips into Cueva Vallina (0733) in October. A team pinned down (and re-surveyed) the passages in the *Zona Blanca / Birdsworld* area. It is hoped that a trip at Easter 2022 will finally complete the survey of this complex area, including an elusive route in from the north. Another team investigated a drop in the *Galería Jesús Lecue* (GJL) south



of *Swirl Chamber*. About 25m of surveying were carried out at the base of the 20m pitch, but the high, narrow rift closed in, both up- and downstream. There are other nearby possibilities.



Local Spanish cavers had been exploring a new cave (Cueva de la Rasa, 5135) that appeared to currently end 40m above the passage to the west of *Breakthrough Chamber* in Vallina, after dropping about 190m in 1200m of passages.

South Vega

In Cueva-Cubío de la Reñada (0048) the resurvey work of the last few years was continued with the resurvey of Blood Alley from the ramp up from the duck area to the junction leading to Anastamosis Hall. The first part of this route to the drop down from Blood Alley has probably not been traversed since the original exploration in 1974. It is hopped over the next few years to complete the resurvey of the Cueva-Cubío de la Reñada (0048) so a comprehensive survey of the whole South



Vega

System can then be produced. A number of choked shafts were found to the west of Cueva-Cubío de la Reñada (0048): 5040 - 11m deep; 5049 - 16m deep and 5050 - 14m deep. Three possible digs were also identified, (5051, 5052 and 5053).

At Torca del Dron (4669) the traverse over the two adjacent pitches below the entrance

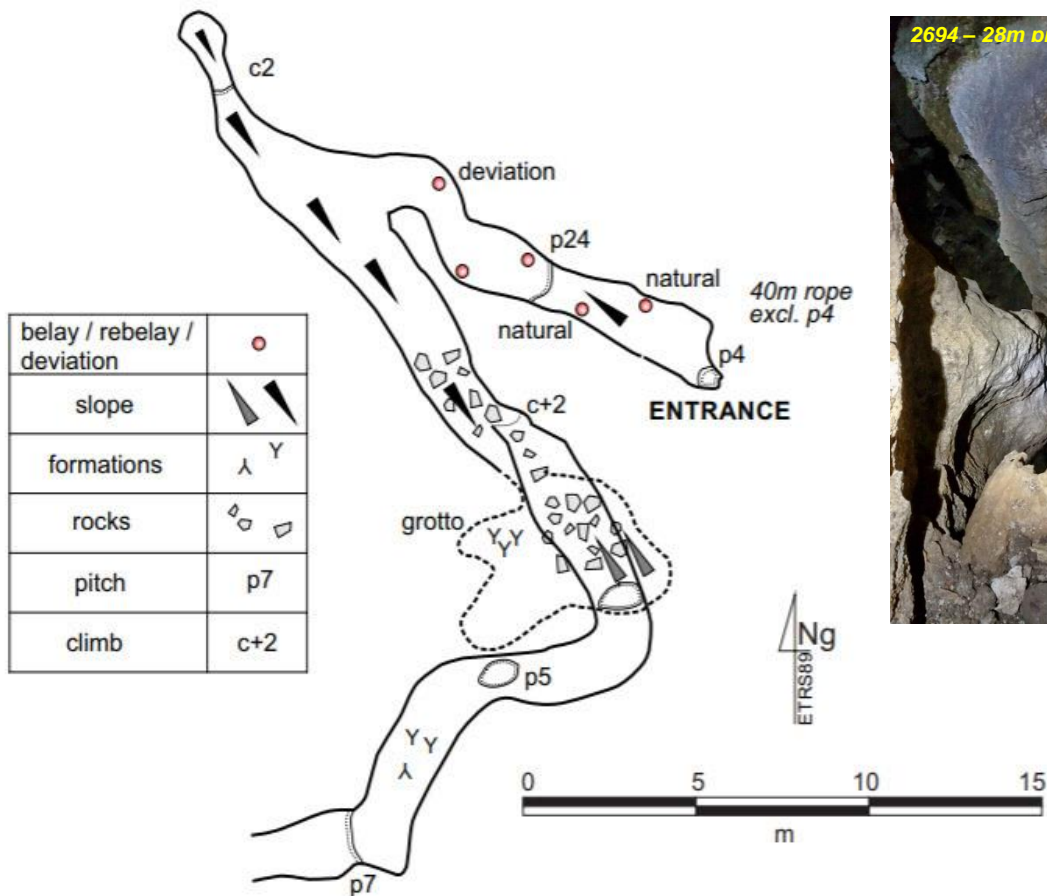


pitch was completed. A passage seen previously was choked, and one seen above closed down to a passage that needed bolting to gain entry, however it looks like it may be too small to access. The passage seen off the side of the main pitch was looked at with a good light and it seemed to be an alcove. The main prospects left are the second parallel pitch and leads near the bottom.

A number of digs were worked on with various success. The dig at 2694 was opened to gain access to a 4m ladder pitch to a slope down to the top of a 24m pitch. At the bottom is a climb of 2m to a grotto. To the south a climb led to a small passage and two blind pitches of 5m and 7m. To the north a passage 4m above the bottom of the p24 pitch was entered by a pendulum but ended after 3m. Plan shown above the elevation is in preparation.



To the bottom is a climb of 2m to a grotto. To the south a climb led to a small passage and two blind pitches of 5m and 7m. To the north a passage 4m above the bottom of the p24 pitch was entered by a pendulum but ended after 3m. Plan shown above the elevation is in preparation.



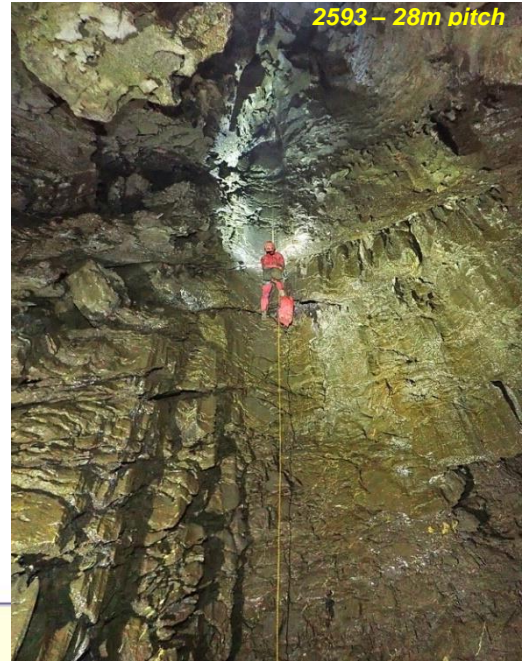
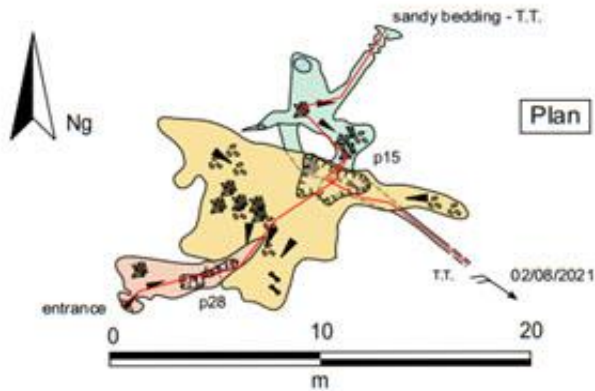
This cave survey is aligned to the ETRS89 grid which is 0.4 degrees to the west of True North.

Site 2694: shaft Plan

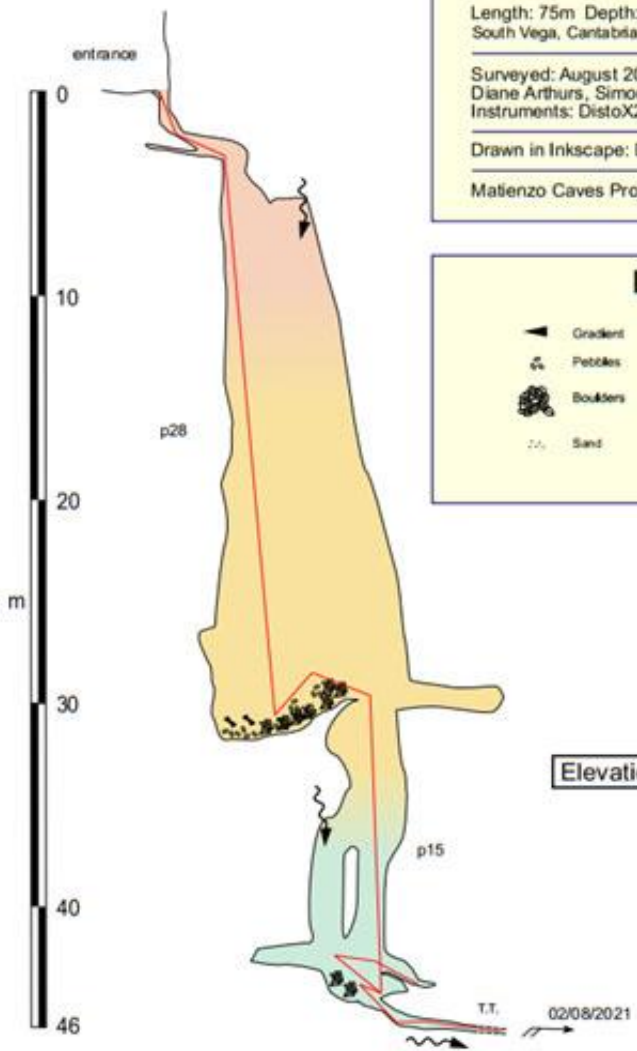
South Vega 30T 0450708 4795218 (ETRS89) Altitude 308m
 Surveyed summer 2021 to UISv1 6-4-B (DistoX)
 by Torben Redder and Louise Korsgaard (PocketTopo)

Length 89m Depth 40m
 Drawing in Corel Draw by Juan Corrin

The dig 4853 was opened up but was found to drop into a further dig, but with no draught and the need to pull any spoil up to the surface, no further work was conducted.



Site: 2593
 Length: 75m Depth: 46m Altitude: 654m
 South Vega, Cantabria, Spain 30T 451019 - 4794081 (ETRS89)
 Surveyed: August 2021 to BCRA 5c
 Diane Arthurs, Simon Cornhill
 Instruments: DistoX2 & Note4
 Drawn in Inkscape: Diane Arthurs & Simon Cornhill
 Matienzo Caves Project 2021



Elevation Projected On: 270 - 90

Whilst up at this site sites 2592 and 2593 were looked at, the former had too many brambles to see if there was any cave, but 2593 was opened up to a tight section to the top of a 28m pitch. This dropped into a hading rift (fault?) and chamber. A further 15m pitch reached a floor with a draughting dig that was pushed for 4m but was then too small for at least 5m - no straightforward way on.

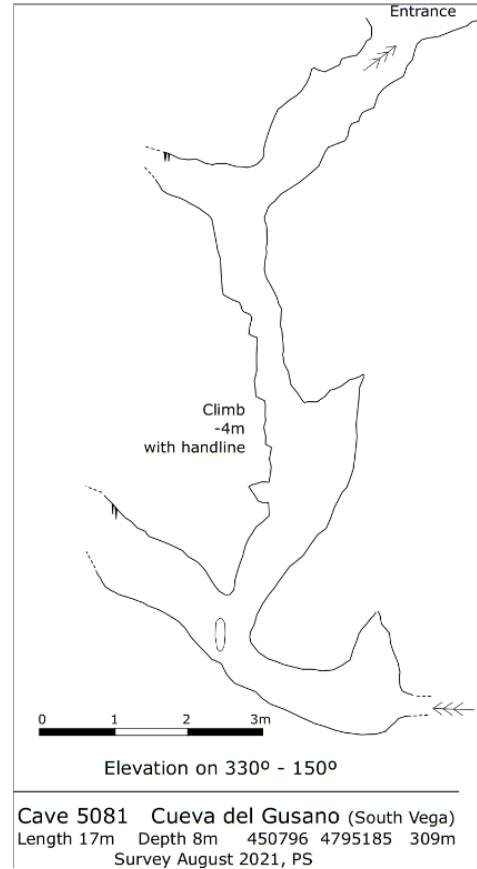
At cave 2353 a slot halfway down the shake hole north end was opened up for 2m to a 2x2m

chamber that then closes up.

Five new sites were found, 5084 was a 4m drop with no way on, 5089 a cave behind two planks that then goes over a small drop needing more work, 5082 consisted of two adjacent holes that close down, the first was a 2m slope and the second a 3.5m rift. 5091 which is situated to the right of Coquisera entrance and is a roomy hands-and-knees crawl for 5m to a constriction where a passage is seen continuing for at least 4m, this site is still to be surveyed.

High on Piluca two further sites were found, a sink hole (5092) 1m deep and 3m long and an undescended shaft about 4m deep (5093).

Cueva del Gusano (5081), (named after Andrew Jones aka "Worm" who died of a heart attack in June 2021) a strongly draughting 17m long cave was found and dug on four occasions to reach a 4m drop to a continuing dig. This site has very good prospect and work will continue on this site.



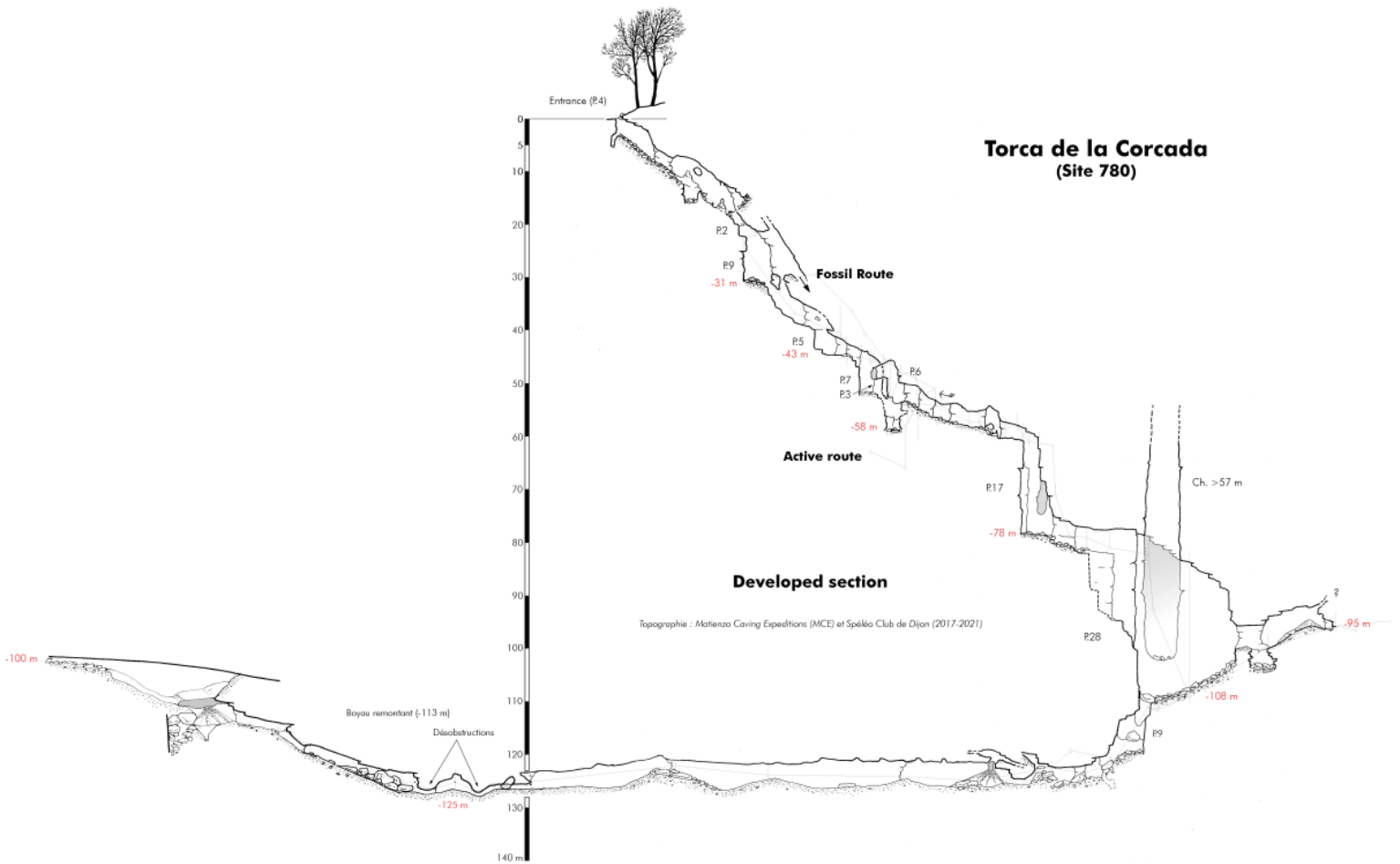
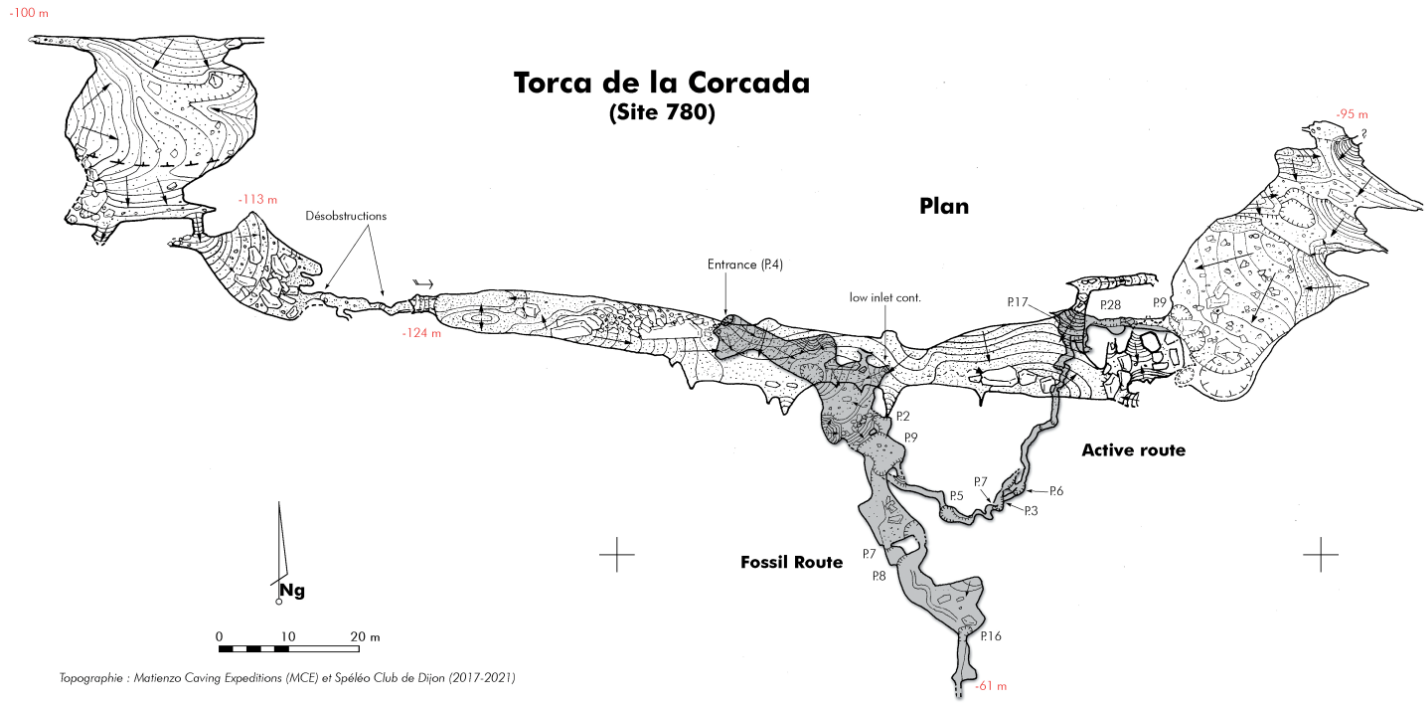
At **Seldesuto**, the Active Route in Torca de Corcada



(0780) was pushed through the western end of the 2021 summer finds to gain a 30m extension. In the Summer the survey was completed (90m added), no good leads were left, and this route was



tackled. The Fossil route now needs pushing at the end. This route goes away from the Active Route so is unlikely to just connect with it.



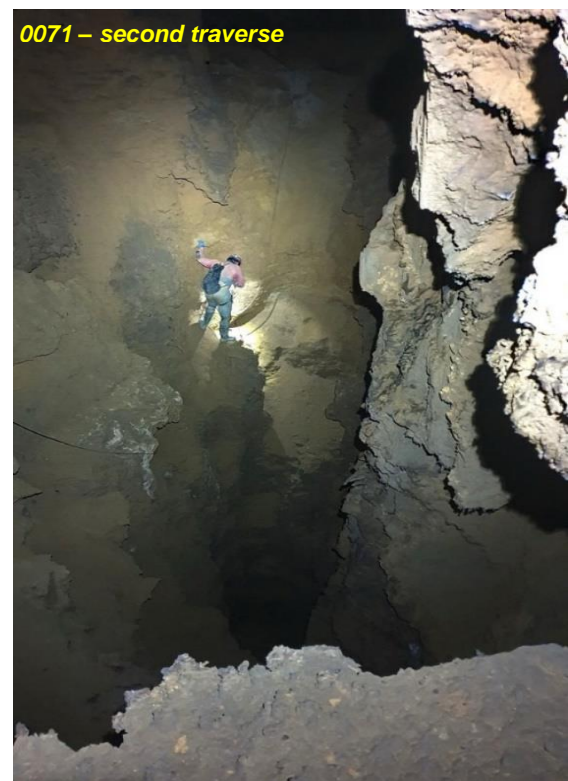
Work in

The boulder choke at the bottom of the very strongly draughting cave 1298 was pushed over three trips and a big boulder moved so that it was possible to move carefully over suspended rocks to see down a gap for about 2m - more work and stabilisation needed in 2022



At **Alisas** area previously undescended shafts and sites were checked out: 5072 was descended 5m to a floor. To the east it was too small and a rift dropping down needs widening to make any progress. To the west is a 2m drop to 4m of passage ending in a boulder choke. Shaft 1078 needs tools to remove vegetation and brambles before a decent can be made.

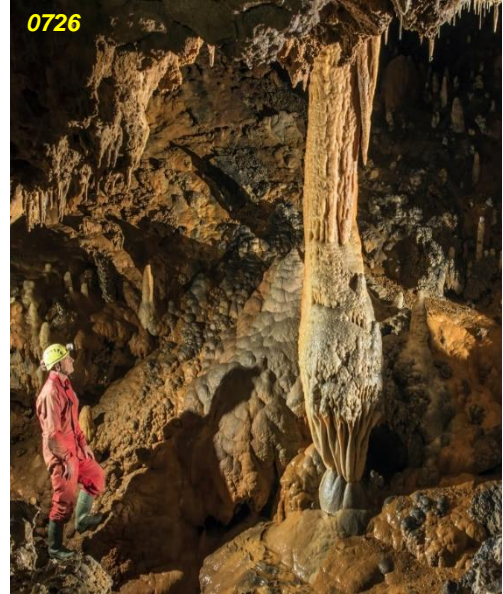
In **Cubija**, at Torca del Mostajo (0071) the MUSS extension area was targeted first from the Golden Void but when no connection was found, the team switched to the "Shunt Pitch" route at the far end of the main gallery. The trip down Golden Void surveyed passages missing off the survey including some of which were new. But a link to the MUSS extensions could not be found but is very close. On the second trip via Shunt Pitch the possible leads were checked. Most were found to close down. One by station 1-8-2012 went through a squeeze to a rift and gully but was too loose and dangerous to proceed. A rift passage was found at the end of the trip to go into bigger passage going east. On a further trip this lead called "Travelling Donkey Series", was descended and the area pushed including a 3m wide stream passage that closed down.



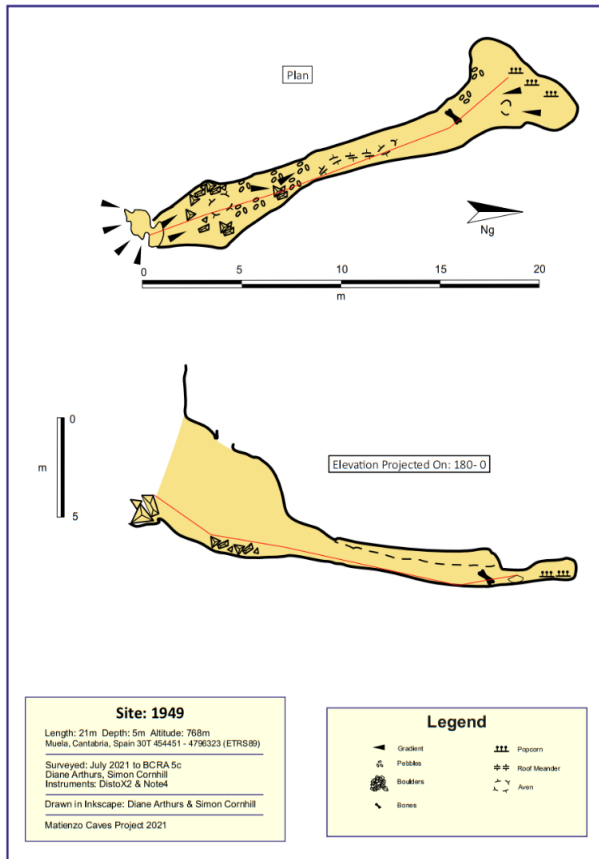
The series went under the main passage and then connected to it on the other side.

At **El Naso**, a number of sites were visited to take photographs and GPS so the website can be updated. Two new sites were noted: a small new cave (5077) at base of a 2m cliff was found to be about 2m deep to a dig and a dig (5086). A few sites could not be found, however in 2017 it was noted a logging track had been dug across this area, so maybe it has covered/destroyed these sites? At Dingle View Cave (2575) two small

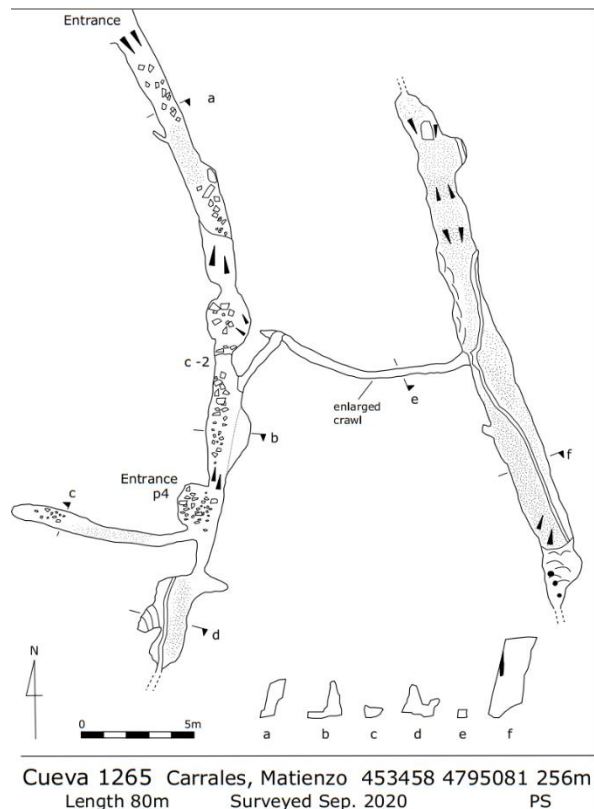
passages going off each side of the visible entrance hole were found. West hole is 5m long, east is 10m to where it gets too narrow but is seen to continue. Cueva de las Charcas (0726) and cave 0354, the centre line was surveyed so we have digital information for area maps.



At **el Sedo** in Sima-Cueva del Risco (0025) a trip was made to push leads marked with a question mark at end of Tali Series (marked 3 on survey). Both sites looked good, but more gear is needed in 2022 to fully descend. The first lead was dug and would be best descended with a ladder due to a tight crawl prior to pitch. Water in Pinto Gallery was found to be heavily polluted with cow excrement!



On **Muela** a number of drone flights to photograph the area were made and three new sites were found: a shaft 5085 was 12m with no way on at the bottom; a rock shelter (5087) was spotted, and a cave



5088 was found to be 5m deep and 3m long but with no sign of any continuation.

The cave (1949) was pushed to end in a chamber with no way on.

At **Barrio de Crarales** the cave 1265 survey was completed and drawn up.

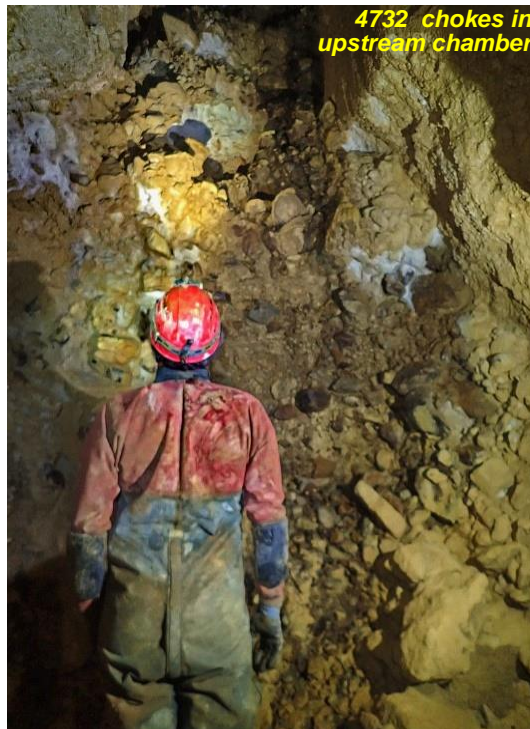
On **La Colina**, site 2286 was the site of a quick and efficient dog rescue from the base of the 12m deep shaft.

The North-East Sector and The Four Valleys System

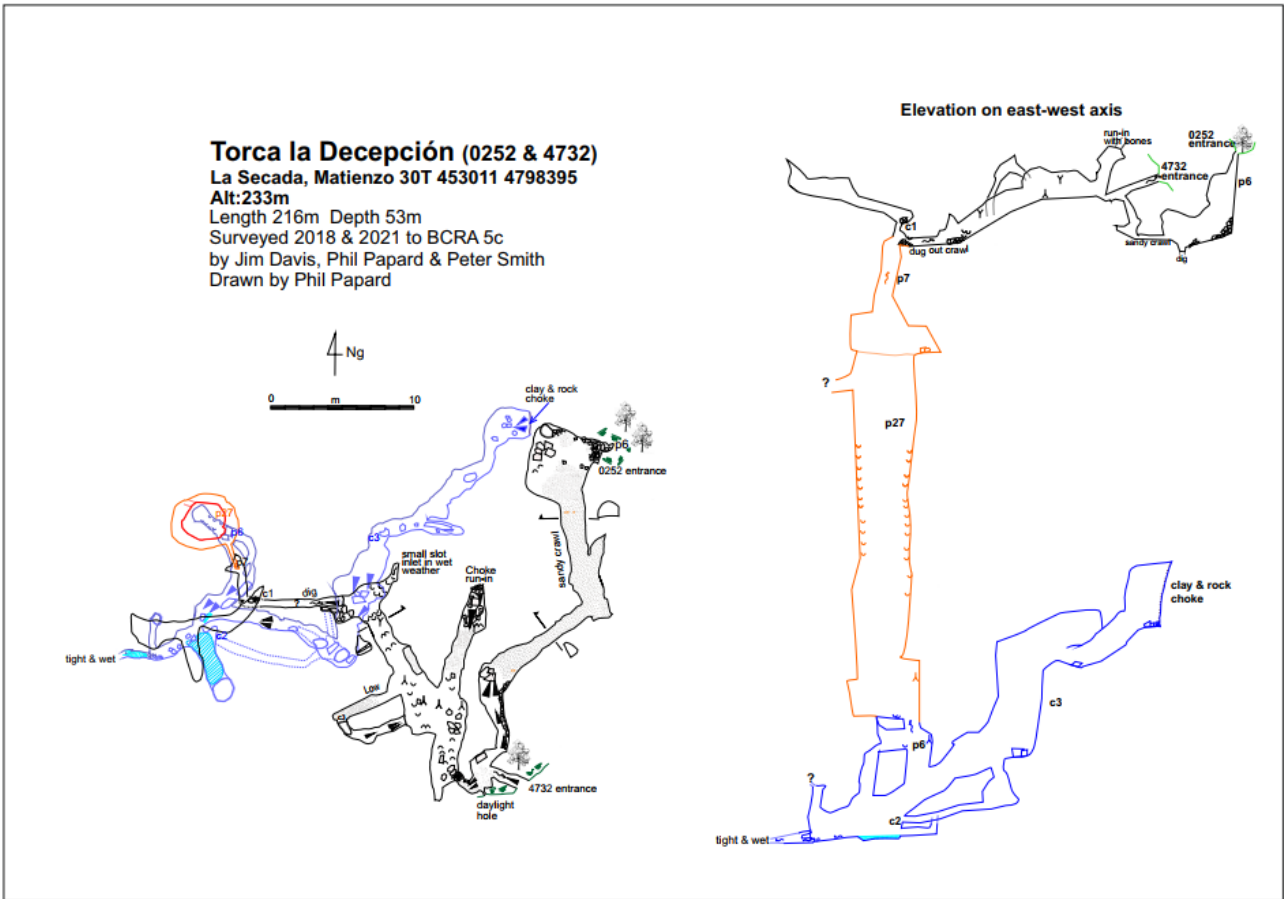
In **La Secada**, Torca la Decepción (4732) which is the dug entrance found from site 0252 was a target for the summer. In February 2020, the dig at the end



went to a small extension and a tight rift where rocks dropped some significant distance. This rift was opened up over a few trips later in 2020 to allow a descent of 7m to a ledge and a large diameter pitch. This was estimated to be at least 30m deep, with a strong draught



coming up. This summer the pitch was descended for 27m to a ledge and a further 6m to a rift passage that met a “T” junction with a very small stream in this year’s dry summer. Downstream the team were excited as they were sure it would continue, only to find a few metres further that the passage closed down to a rift with a tight crawl in water at its bottom. This “disappointment” is the reason for the name given to the cave. This wet crawl was pushed for a few metres, but it needs a full wet suit and work to progress. This crawl is draughting, it is likely the draught will also be coming out of the rift above. The rift is heavily calcited and may be able to be enlarged to give a little easier access. Upstream at the bottom a rising passage was explored to a chamber with a rock and mud choke occupying one wall. This is directly below



the 0252 entrance chamber some 30m above and it seems likely to be related. At the far side of the 27m pitch top is a hole going off, it could not be seen if this is a passage or a link to a further pitch, a traverse is needed to check this out. The tight crawl at the bottom is 60 - 70m above Shrimp Bone Inlet / Rocky Horror junction in Cueva Hoyuca (0107) which is likely to be the source of the draught coming out of the crawl.



A draughting dig (5045) was dug on a lot of



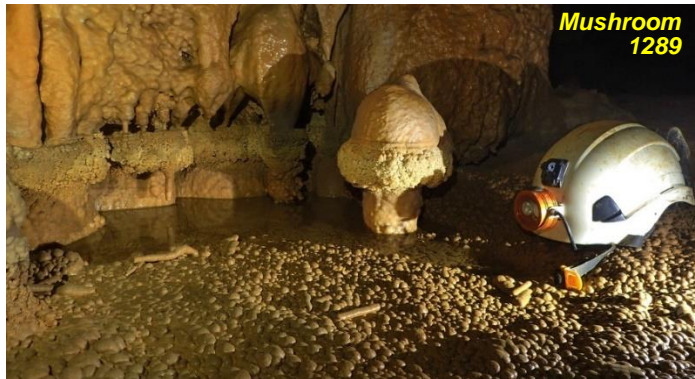
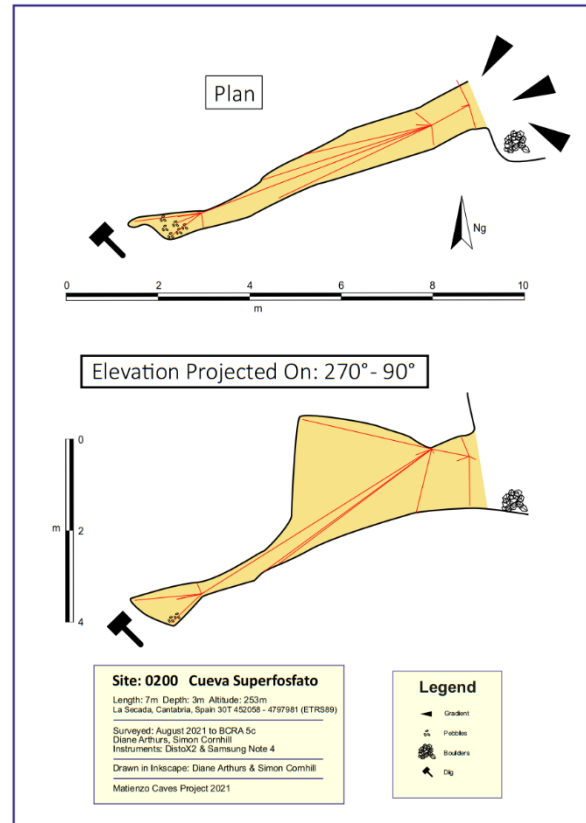
occasions, but progress was slow due to the nature of the rock. The limestone here has been hydrothermally altered and has many small voids and soft areas with other parts quite hard. This makes digging problematic. Plug and feathers were found to work but they only take of a small section of rock with no cracking that can be exploited further. Despite this, satisfactory progress was made to the point of getting to the

top of a small rift, but the top needs more work to remove bedrock so we can see down and judge the prospect. Several options to make digging easier are being considered including the use of the large breaker and generator!

On the west side of la Secada is Socks (1017) a strongly draughting dig that was dug on two occasions to open up a slot below loose rock. The way on is down a small hole to a drop of about 1.5m where a mud/stone floor can be seen. This lead will be dug in 2022.

Cueva Superfosfato (0200) is another strongly draughting dig. The site was checked out with a camera on a stick and more digging was conducted. More work is required at this site that has good prospects.

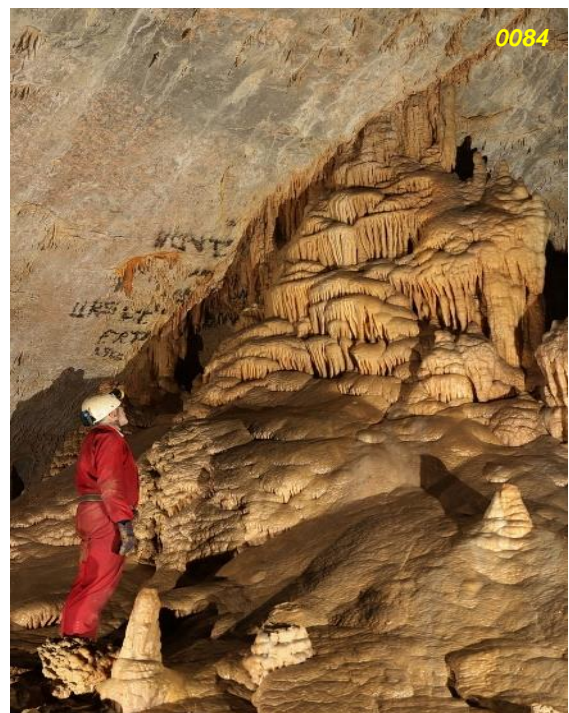
A cave (1289) just above the road into Matienzo has some interesting “mushroom” shaped stalagmites as well as a talus cone of “domestic waste” of archaeological significance. To get to the stalagmites is a tight



types in the area currently being prepared.

Cave 3536 was explored and found to be 3.5m long to small chamber with too small tubes leading off. A new shaft (5080) was descended 5m to an 8cm rift with no other prospects. The photogenic Cueva las Cosas (0084) was the site of two photographic trips.

squeeze they were able to pass and take the needed photographs for a document on different formation



In **Fresnedo**, Cueva Fresnedo 2 (0841) a trip to look at Knotted Rope series was diverted when it was found the old rope to gain access was in very poor condition and it needs bolting and the rope replacing to allow safe access. The team then diverted to look and push passages in



the area on the survey with no passage detail. Some possible new passages were entered



but the whole of this area now needs a full resurvey.

Near the road down from the Riaño junction to Solorzano the cave 2414 was targeted given its location and reported sound of running water in wet weather. The team found the route to the cave difficult due to vegetation growth, but then found easy access by a new logging track. The pitch in the cave entrance was opened up to make access easier and then the team worked on the inward draughting hole in chamber below. No sound of water below was heard when the water was dammed up and released. Work continued to open up a strongly inward draughting crawl at the bottom where it is not possible to see round a bend. The site needs about two days

more work at Christmas or in 2022 to gain access and see round the next corner.

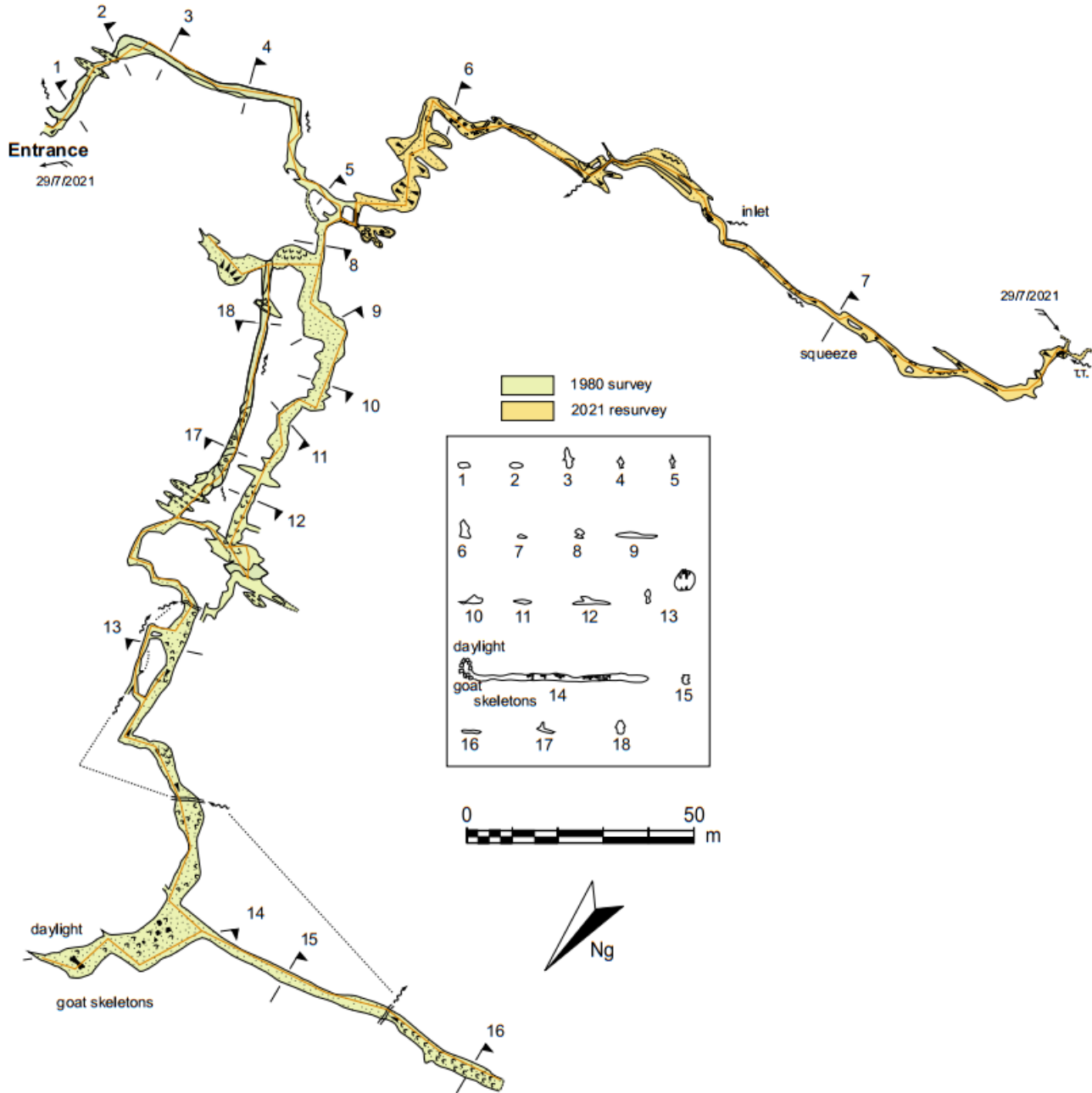
In **Riaño** two teams were in Cueva-Cubío del Llanío (3234). The first explored a 4m pitch near the entrance to a small chamber then excavated a crawl to bypass the drop. The second had three trips into the *South Passage* area above Cueva de Riaño (0105). Some pushing above *B Chamber* was carried out on the first trip along with a quick view into a "very nice passage with great potential". The remaining two trips extended and enlarged the descending *Canny Passage*, currently ending at the top of high streamway, Torno Inlet, in Cueva de Riaño. A second Llanío - Riaño connection was almost completed, and a white mark has been left so that explorers in the water can confirm the connection by looking up. There is also a higher level dig which may repay

some work as it is heading north. *Canny Passage* extended the Four Valleys System by 194m to 67420m. At the resurgence cave of Fuente de la Cuvia (0207), the small draughting tube at the south end was worked on over three trips at this promising site. A

0207: Fuente de la Cuvia

Riano, Santander ETRS89 30T 451386 4799619 Altitude 190m

BCRA 5c Length: 796m Vertical range: 18m
Matienzo Caves Project 1980, 2021



lot more work is needed to pass this tube.

Torca de los Canes (0100) had not been looked at since the 1970s. A Trip was made by a team on the way to ferry to check out and put a centre line through the cave as the only survey is from 1976 with no digital data and so is not shown on the MCP's area maps. All leads checked out - no significant prospect found.



Some digging was carried out at site 4177, north of the entrance to Torcón de Riaño (0106). Cave 5112 was extended to 5m+ in an inverted T-shape passage and, on the Riaño-La Gatuna ridge, site 5111 was excavated to reveal a 6m choked shaft.

Northwest Sector

At **Hornedo**, a trip into Torca la Vaca (2889) via BigMat Calf Hole (3916) was made in order to survey the area in the lower streamway near Satterthwaite Tarn Camber that had not been found in 2019 but not surveyed. Some new cross link passages were found during the survey.

The Río Santa Juliana resurgence (3282) was dug for 4 hours to remove rocks from below water level. The sump looks to now be open to dive, although it will be tight.

At La Gatuna a new cave (5079) was dug for 4m, it now needs more digging with a team (one person on this trip).

At Hazas de Cesto on the hill to the east, a short digging session was carried out in site 4919 but given up as hopeless.

Ribamontáin al Monte area

At **Garzón**, a cave (5078) was found. The cave slopes down to a dig in a bedding cave. Also, Torca Cópica Escarlata (LC 193) was pushed and surveyed by the Club de Espeleología la Cambera, with which we have a joint agreement to explore the south of the Ribamontáin al Monte area south of the A-8. Espeleología la Cambera, with which we have a joint agreement to explore the south of the Ribamontáin al Monte area south of the A-8.

At **Cierrolinos** a number of shafts that were seen prior to getting our permit extended to the west side of the Monte Lulsa area were examined. All needed extensive clearing of vegetation, and all had extensive fences backed up by old dry gorse.



Shaft 5013 was rigged with two ladders but were not found to be long enough. The shaft was measured at 15.7m using a



laser Disto. Shaft 5014 was only partly cleared but allowed a view of a pitch of at least one ladder length. Shaft 5015 descended one ladder to reach a choke with no further prospects. The pitch is in a 3x1m rift with stal at each side. Shaft 5016 was descended for two ladders on a 9.5m pitch to a choke and bones - no prospect.

Three shafts were found among trees just to the east of the end of the road skirting the west side of Cierrolinos: 5101, a roomy 6m shaft to a chamber and lots of goat skeletons; 5102, a 30 - 40m shaft, still to be explored and 5103, a 3m choked shaft. To the west, site 5095, a 6m climbable shaft, was found while nearby shake holes were found to be all choked. To the north of Cierrolinos, where the jungle bashing is "hard going", a small cave (site 5098, length 2m) was found as scant reward at the base of a large depression. Trying to reach a previously found cave (5029) was abandoned due to the thick jungle.

In the trees to the east of Cierrolinos, site 5116 was recorded (entrance noted some 2 years previously) with a length of 60m and depth 35m.

At Villanueva, a draughting dig at the end of site 5036 was started, gaining about 2m.

Western Sector

At Ideopuerta, site 4258 was found to have been completely filled in and trees planted. In shaft 5113, a slightly draughting narrow rift at the bottom of a p4 would need extensive capping to continue.

At Moncobe site 5001 was checked out but digging prospect was written off and 3024 / 3033 which could not be definitely found despite extensive searching. Site 3755 was also not reached "after several hours of bushwhacking in head height brambles and ferns".

At Barrio la Mina, site 5096 was found as a non-starter, 5m deep with earth sides with a recent collapse (5104) nearby. Site 5097 was explored down a p4 to a small, choked chamber.

At Barrio de Arriba, site 4265 was explored down a p6 to a rock blocking the way. There are no plans to remove the rock. Site 5099 is a sink taking a small stream in a shake hole. A couple of sites were identified from aerial photos: 5114 turned out to be a 12m deep, choked shaft and 5115 was another 12m deep drop into a high, fluted chamber but no draught.

Information on the Matienzo Caves Project

All details of the caves including surveys photos and videos are available on the web at <http://matienzocaves.org.uk>.

This year the book Matienzo Caves Project 2010-2019, by Juan Corrin, has been published. It is a bilingual edition (translated by Carolina Smith de la Fuente), of 510 pages, containing all the information of the last 10 years of explorations, with photos and surveys.

This year the Matienzo Caves Project has provided information about the cavities affected by the Garma Blanca wind farms project and the need access roads. This was a contribution to the concerns made by the Cantabrian Federation of Speleology. The project also collaborated with the recording of the TVE Cantabria report on wind farms building as it affects karst areas, recorded in Cueva Molino (0059)