

# Caves & Caving

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# Matienzo

## Northern Spain

Our 11th annual visit to Matienzo during August produced 60 new holes comprising over 3km of cave passage and many shafts, some of which there was no time to descend.

### The 4 Valley System

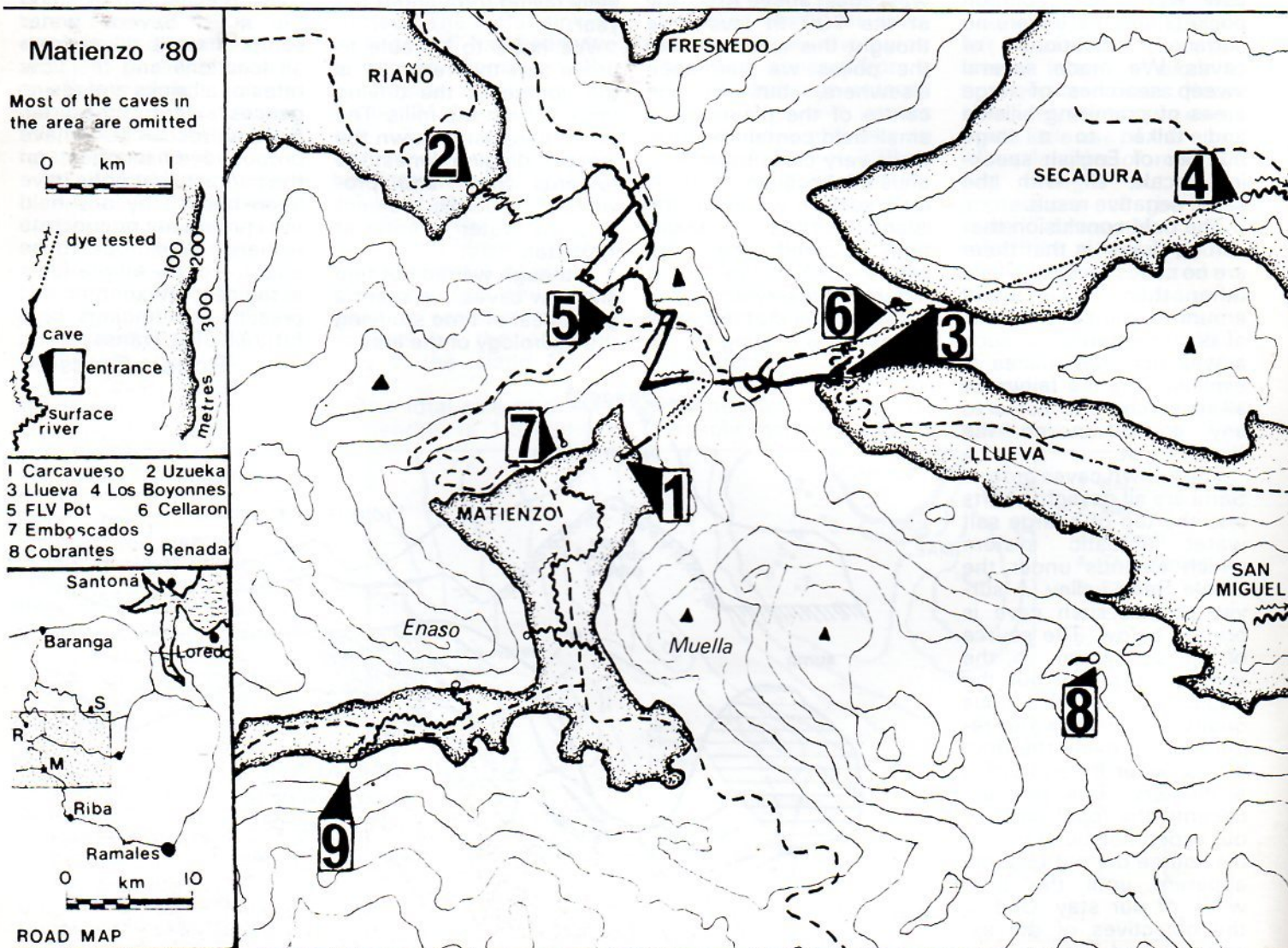
Cueva Llueva was extended by diving in the upstream sump. A boulder filled chamber was partly pushed, though the divers had great difficulty finding their way back through the chaos. On one occasion, 4 people were on the other side of the 100ft long dive, trying to find a way back through. In attempting to bypass the sump, a 50m high free climb and bolt up the western wall of the fault chamber was tackled. Unfortunately, no passage was found.



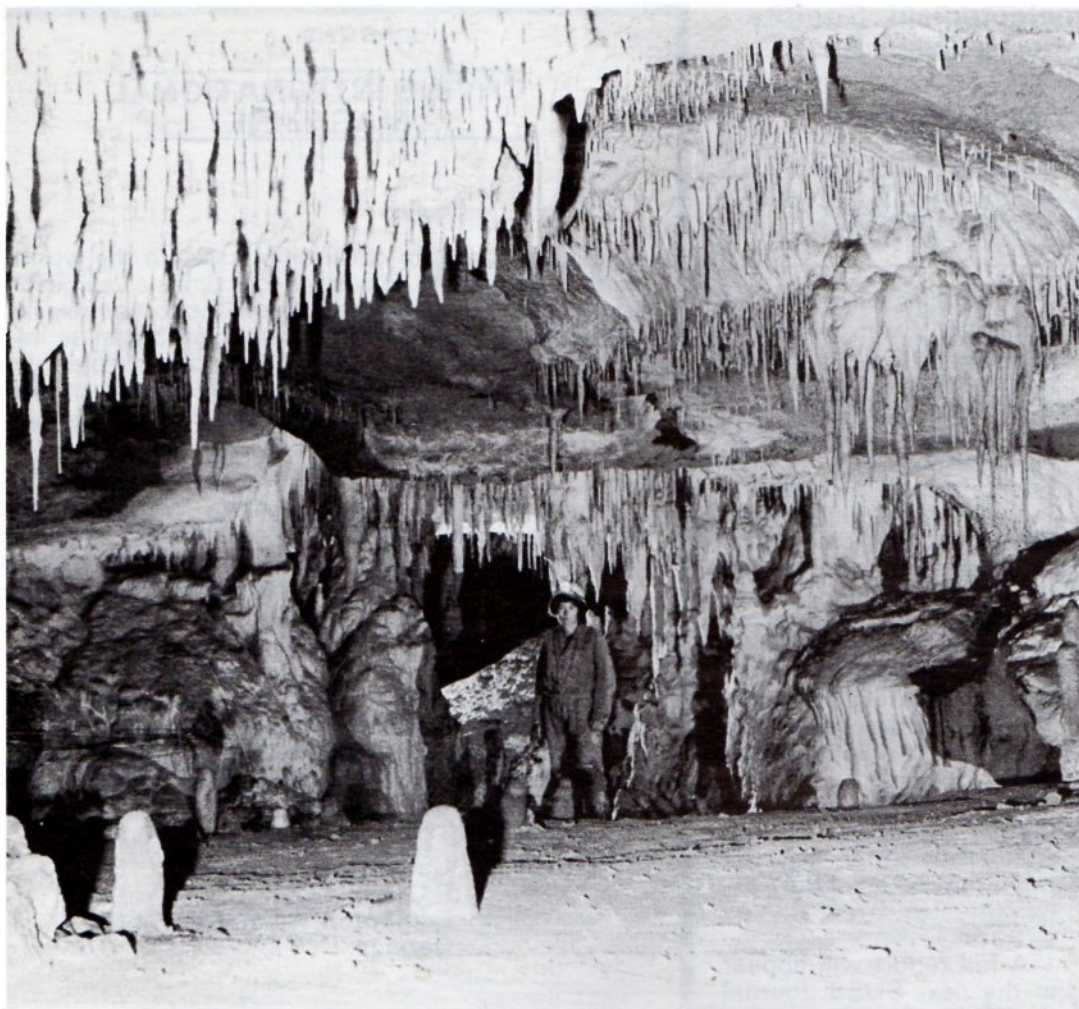
In Cueva Uzueka, the Third River Inlet was extended by 0.8km. The passage now ends about 50m from the base of Torcon de Riano - a 93m deep pot. Above this sump, a passage heads back over the inlet, ending at draughting avens. The end of the cave was extended by pushing through boulders to a chamber with a further boulder choke. This downstream section of Uzueka now ends 170m from the upstream end of Cueva Llueva. (It is hoped that in 1981, a 3-way Molephone link will be established between the neds of Uzueka and Llueva and a party on the surface in order to co-ordinate shouting, whistling, letting off smoke pellets, removing boulders, etc.)

Two new shafts were descended from the surface beyond the end of Shrimp Bone Inlet (in Uzueka) at Fuente las Varas. Both choked, one at -45m, the other at -27m.

Cueva de Carcaveuso, the sink for the Matienzo de-







*Fuente de la Cuvia*

pression, was thoroughly searched for high level passages – though none were found. A draughting hole above the end of the cave was dug to a descending, boulder-filled, draughting tube.

Situated over the supposed downstream line of Cueva Lluvia, *Cueva de Cellaron* was deepened to –107m. The base of the terminal pit was found to be choked with calcite. A couple of other shafts in the cave of about 30m depth were explored although these were also choked.

*Cueva de los Emboscados* is a high level passage that chokes at a fault. It may have drained the Matienzo depression in the past. The area beyond the end of this cave was thoroughly searched and, although nothing major was discovered, one new 10m shaft was opened up and a draughting stream sink found.

Serious exploration was started on the mountain of

*Muella*. The water that sinks on the tops is presumed to drain down-dip to Nacimiento del Rio Clarin 700m lower in San Miguel. A lot of the work here was carried out by the Portsmouth Polytechnic Caving Club. Fifty new entrances were discovered – twenty-three remain unexplored. Of these descended, the deepest was a straight drop of 152m. In a couple of the other shafts old, abandoned stream passages were entered although all choked. Only one third of the area was looked at quite thoroughly this year and a cursory inspection of some of the remainder has shown that many holes exist.

The ground around the resurgence to this area was revisited and a new diving site discovered which will be tackled in '81.

In *Cubio de la Renada*, one of the feeder caves to the depression, the first sump was redived and prospects for extending the cave upstream now appear

to be good. On the west side of Beralta (at Alisas) four new shafts were bottomed – the deepest being –34m. All were draughting in strongly and might well be back entrances to Renada. A fifth shaft still needs to be explored.

In *Riano*, a 742m long new cave was entered at a small resurgence. Fuente de la Cuvia contains the stream, obviously misfit in some places, and has some fine vadose and phreatic

passage. Parts of the cave are very well decorated.

Half a dozen new caves were descended above the Simon/Solviejo area in *Secadura* although appear to be of any significance. Again in *Secadura*, this time to the east of the Los Boyonnes, Matienzo – water resurgence, a dig produced entry to a boulder chaos above deep water. There are no prospects of extension.

In *Fresnedo*, the cave of the same name was reinvestigated. This is a 3D maze and a rather demoralising place as new passage keeps dropping into known routes. A survey has been started and possibilities for extension still exist. *Cueva de Tejas* – a new resurgence cave – was paced out to 55m where it sumped.

On *Enaso*, six new shafts were descended. All choked, the deepest being –20m.

Finally, an old, large, high-level remnant was entered on the south side of Lluvia Valley. *Coverona* (at 345m) has been thoroughly explored by Spanish cavers although we have produced the first survey.

And for 1981? The prospects are still the same as for 1980! The four valley link is still eluding us but is certain to exist . . . and dozens of virgin shafts are waiting to be descended on *Muella*.

More details can be found in MUSS Journal No. 10 to be published shortly. And in the near future it is hoped that a BCRA Transactions will contain a paper on the last 11 years work, including a description of the 250 caves known.

*Juan Corrin*

*Phil Papard and Fred Winstanley in Sifon Claron, Secadura*





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