

Torca La Vaca, Buttermere downstream sump.

18th May 2011

Divers; Jim Lister, Colin Hayward

After placing a bolt on the West wall a couple of meters before the arch leading to the downstream sump JPL dived first and confirmed his suspicion that the sump is a duck under a flake (2.5 m deep) leading to a canal continuation of the Buttermere passage. After 25 m the roof dropped down to the water again. JPL, following the passage at floor level, noted a cross rift to the left (West) at this point. Ahead a mud bank with a boulder blocked the passage. An attempt to belay the line to the boulder was aborted when an eel was disturbed. The diver turned into the cross rift and surfaced in a pool in one corner of a chamber with rifts leading off it. This second dive also turned out to be a short 2.5 m deep duck. The two divers then carried out a very basic survey of the chamber.

The chamber itself appears to be made up of a series of joined rifts. The floor is a mixture of large boulders, sandy flood deposit formed into soft banks and pools of water all at the same level. Several possible rift climbs were identified but were not pursued. A sump under the North East corner wall was briefly inspected without diving kit and thought to offer the best option for future progress. Another potential sump under two large perched boulders further East along the same wall (which may be the same sump?) was not looked at.