MUSS JOURNAL 8

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MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Journal No.8 December 1976

CONTENTS

PRICE:

Editorial

This journal, the clubs eighth, is the latest in an eleven year line of irregular publications. The articles include accounts of two Sports Council aided expeditions, in which club members were involved this year.

In Spain, over 5km of new passages were discovered and it now seems almost certain that 1977 will see the final grand connections being made. This would make the system the second longest in Spain.

In Italy, the strenuous Abissio Emilio Comici thwarted the efforts of a strong British team to increase the depth.

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Some people have questioned the wisdom of clubs producing their own journals, and say it would be easier to have BCRA publish the material. Certainly the printing quality of their Bulletins and Transactions is high and the price is kept low. These 'professional' standards are often lacking in club journals.....so why bother?

It seems to us that comparisons can be made with the newspaper world; it would be a pity if we could only read The Times. What about the lovers of Page 3, the Rossendale Free Press, and other worthy bastions of the graphic arts?

So long as there are still people in the clubs prepared and interested enough to make the effort, and cavers willing to pay the price, then let them continue.

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Editor: Juan Corrin

Contributors: John Cope (JC), Nigel Dibben (DCC), Paul Gelling, Dave Linton, Lank Mills, Keith Plumb.

Photographs: Lank Mills

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Further copies of this journal may be obtained by writing to:

M.U. Speleological Society Editor,
The Athletic Union,
The Students Union,
Manchester University,
Oxford Road,
MANCHESTER.

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THE 1976 EXPEDITION TO MATIENZO, NORTHERN SPAIN

Introduction

The Matienzo area in Santander Province has been visited by the club for most years since 1969. Recently in collaboration with other northern caving clubs, over 50km of cave passage has been explored and surveyed. Up to the end of 1974, efforts were concentrated on the known caves of the area which had been previously explored by the Spaniards.(1). The majoritory of these caves were considerably extended beyond previous limits. (2). Two completely new systems were also discovered and partially investigated - Cueva Uzueka and Cueva Riano.

In 1975 these systems were further explored. Probably the most exciting but tiring explorations occured with the pushing of Cueva Uzueka to a length of 13km (3). At the furthest point reached (Armageddon) the huge boulders had finally beaten the explorers and the only way on was thought to be a ladder climb down between them to the stream. The water here was thought to drain to Secadura. A glance at the area map shows that the water from Matienzo depression, seen in Carcavueso, drains to this resurgence. (This had been dye tested by J.C. Fernandez(1); the sink to resurgence time being 9 hours over a distance of 3½km.) The Uzueka-Carcavueso-Secadura link up was the main aim of this years expedition. However, like most aims this one was thwarted. A major find in a 4th valley was made which, at the time, promised to be the key to the whole system.....

Cueva Llueva (El Biggo)

Llueva Valley - wrongly called San Miguel in the Matienzo 1975 Report - held some promise with a couple of draughting holes near to a superb cliff-faced depression which itself had 3 small entrances. These caves were cursorily looked at in '75.

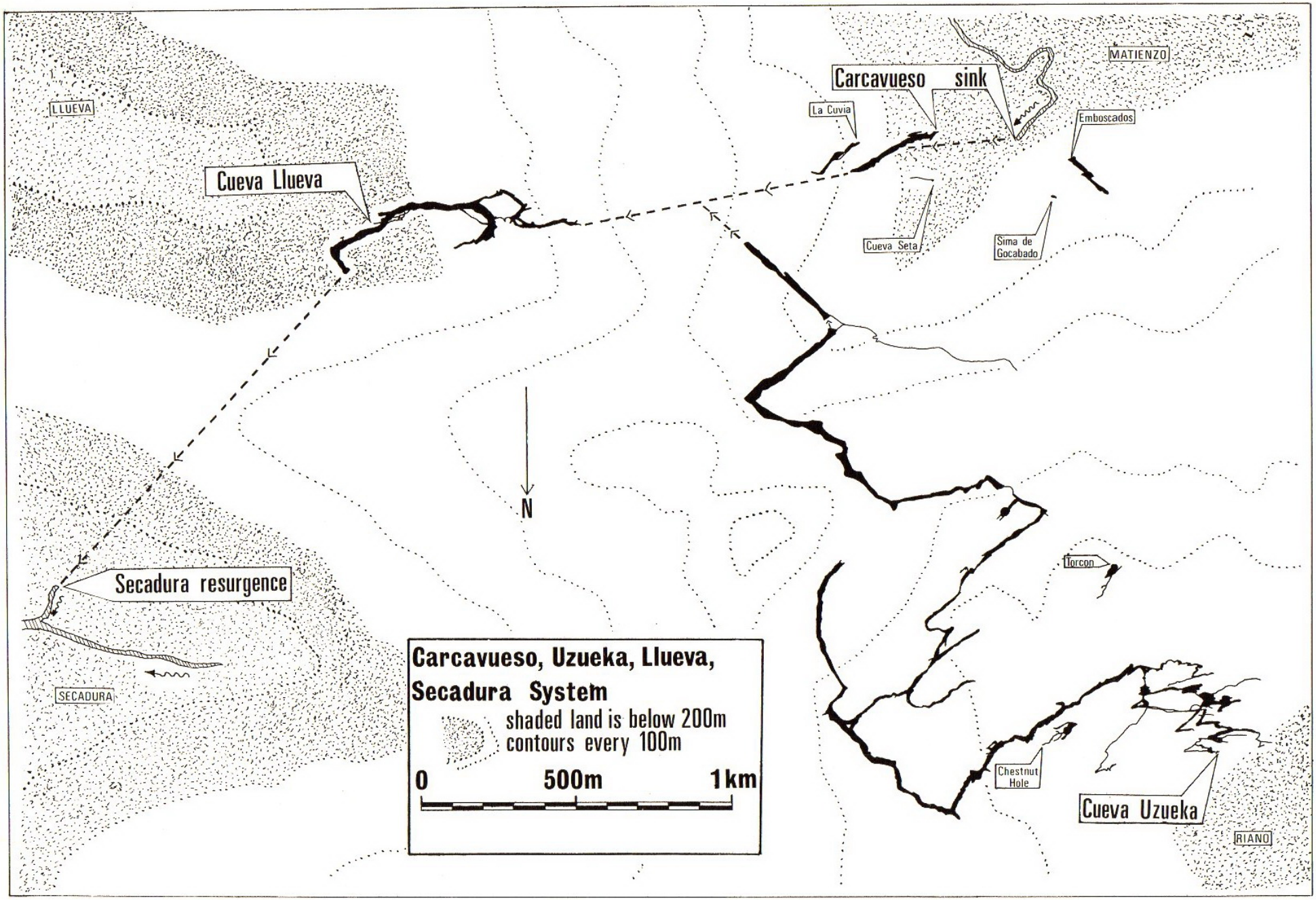
This year before the bulk of the expeditionaries had arrived, Ian, Lank and Juan drove over to Llueva to check out the area around this depression. The draughting holes were looked and prodded at and then the 30m deep, boulder and liana strewn depression was entered. The air was noticably cooler down here and a very faint

draught was noticed at one of the entrances a couple of metres above the floor. (No draught had been felt here in '75, probably due to different weather conditions). Not having been into this hole before, the team clambered over 2 drystone walls just inside the entrance and pursued a walking sized but lowering passage for about 70m until a drop into a lower bed was necessary. Flat out crawling was now the order of the day, and progress ended at a flake that had partially peeled from the roof. All of the passages so far had been dry and dusty - nothing apart from the draught, that could be called encouraging. A low chamber could be seen beyond this flake and so the offending rock was dropped completely, allowing a tight crawl over it into the 3ft high 'chamber'.

Where was the draught? No passages lead off and the floor was completely covered with dry shale. A careful search with cigarette and palm of the hand forced us to the conclusion that the draught was issuing from the floor. Digging was started and after 30 minutes a small hole between stones was revealed. The draught increased noticably. After another 10 minutes digging the draught was strong enough to blow out carbide lights and to blow back into our eyes any shale falling into the hole.

New passage seemed imminent so Lank went out to fetch carbide and water with the promise that when he returned the way on would be waiting. Half an hour later he returned - and it was . A funnel down through the shale into a very low, solid-roofed bedding had been revealed and Juan was forcing himself into it. Lank followed and the pair squirmed down the low passage. As the noisy draught was left behind, the roof rose to permit hands and knees crawling. Superb stalactites were seen guarding a large black hole and then, just where it was possible to stand, the rumbling of a distant river was heard far below. Could it be the water from Matienzo on its way to Secadura?

The explorers gingerly made their way down a sandy slope to the edge of a vertical drop. Blackness in all directions. Their lights failed to penetrate the gloom in what was obviously a huge chamber. No ladders had been brought so the two explorers had to content themselves with contemplating their good fortune before emerging from the windy hole and bathing their shale blasted eyes


LLUEVA
Cueva Llueva
Carcavueso sink
MATIENZO
La Cuvia
Emboscados
Cueva Seta
Sima de Gocabado
N
Secadura resurgence
SECADURA
Torcon
Chestnut Hole
Cueva Uzueka
RIANO
Carcavueso, Uzueka, Llueva, Secadura System
shaded land is below 200m
contours every 100m
0
500m
1km

in Optrex.

Next day at noon, a team of seven entered the hole and while 4 surveyed the entrance passages, the others carried on to the head of the pitch and knocked in a couple of bolts. Boulders thrown down indicated that the pitch could be about 25m and so 3 ladders were lowered down. The first person to descend found that the pitch was only 10m, and that the stones lobbed down had disappeared into the open pile of boulders at which the pitch ended. This rocky pile reared up to the right, but to the left the sound of the river lured us down. A climb down of 20m and there was the stream rushing between large boulders in a chamber 30m high. Another boulder pile reared up ahead however, and this route was taken. At the top a superb tunnel stretched off into the distance. (The photograph on the Llueva survey involved 6 people - the flash furthest from the camera is at a distance of 200m!) At the end of this tunnel, the passage turned to the right and a steep descent down over boulders lead to a lake. (Photograph on the survey). A passage could be seen high up on the left hand wall above the lake but a swim across to the other side was judged the best prospect and another pile of boulders was scaled to two lowering but draughting crawls on the right and a boulder chamber with sloping wall holding 5m high stalagmites on the left. After surveying for several hours, the lure of the sun was too much and the team resurfaced. The cave had much more to offer yet but it was to take another 6 trips before 'all' was revealed.

The hole above the lake seemed to offer the best possibility of an extension. On the next trip, Ians tidal waves threatened to swamp the shore party as he traversed around sending boulders into the water. He belayed the ladder to a convenient rock and lowered the end down towards the lake. The ladder was too short and so the rest of the team had to swim 10m and then do a 'dolphin' to get onto the ladder 4ft above the water surface. At the top of the ladder a short length of wide walking passage brought the explorers out onto gigantic boulders underneath which the stream could be seen. After climbing down to stream level, Salford

Phil pressed on upstream, swimming for most of the passage's 200m length. At the final sump his light went out and he had to swim back alone through the inky blackness. A short way upstream into this phreatic region, a high level dry passage went back to the chamber.

It now seemed that the junction with Uzueka was not to be had at stream level.

Hunting around at the top of the boulder chamber, lead to finding another passage which went around the lake and popped up in the floor of the large main passage just before the latter angled down to the lake. This passage provided a convenient by-pass around the lake to the upstream and so it is now described going in from where it joins this main high level passage.....

"A small cairn marks the position of the start of the Left Hand By-Pass and a 2m slither down a rift deposits you in a boulder strewn bedding plane. Rapid progress is made by use of the stooping amble perfected over 1km lengths in Uzueka. The passage continues in this vein, becoming more sandy and less bouldery until twin drops lead into a roomy inlet. Upstream, the inlet is remarkable only for its sliminess, while downstream the inlet immediately disappears into a low muddy arch. The route forward follows a dry tube of comfortable dimensions. Ninety metres forward a further inlet appears much as the last disappeared, from a low mud-filled arch.

The roof now rises to a high sandy rift chamber and keeping to the right, the passage enters the large chamber that was first reached by traversing around the lake."

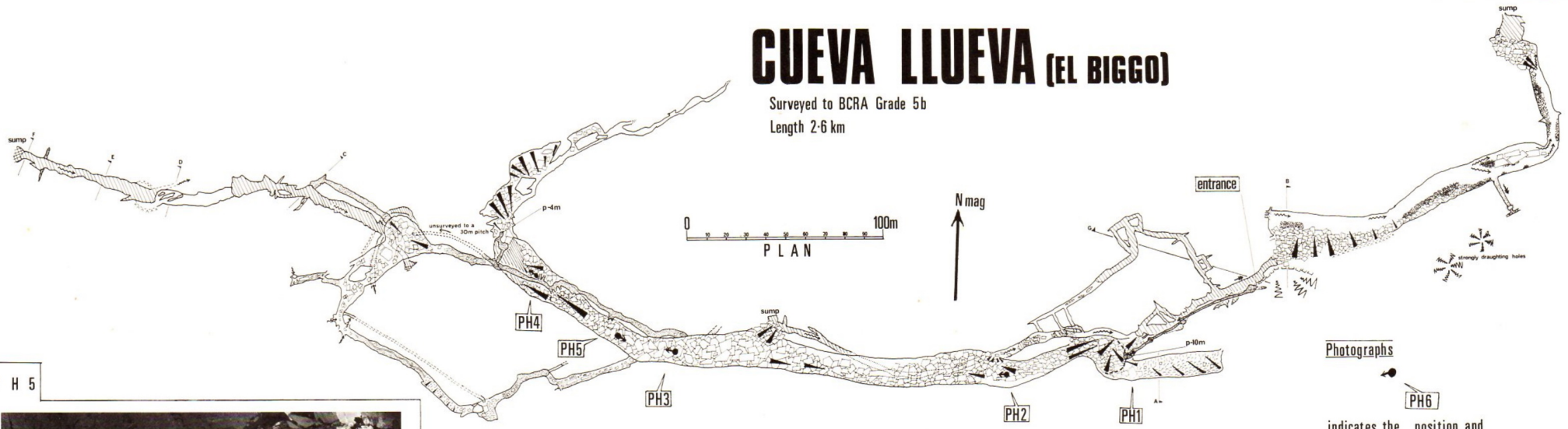
It was noticed on the earlier trips that there were a number of holes in the right hand wall of the main passage opposite to where the Left Hand By-Pass dropped down. An excerpt from the log book describes the difficulties of getting into these.....

"Lank mentioned a couple of possible 20ft climbs on the right of the big stuff in Biggo, the boulders at the top of which could be lassooed - so we gave it a try. The first boulder proved difficult; its neck could not be caught and when it was, it snapped off with a mild tug - no go! The second boulder was successfully lassooed after many attempts and the ladder was rigged up. Attempting a

CUEVA LLUEVA (EL BIGGO)

Surveyed to BCRA Grade 5b

Length 2·6 km

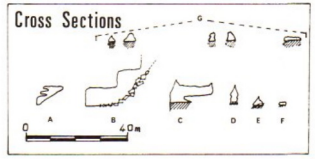


Photographs

PH6

indicates the position and direction in which the photos were taken.

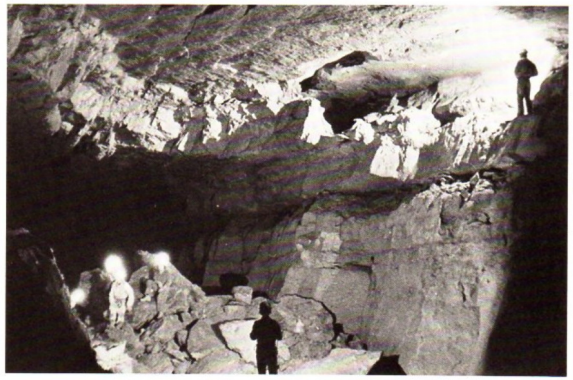
Cross Sections



PH 5

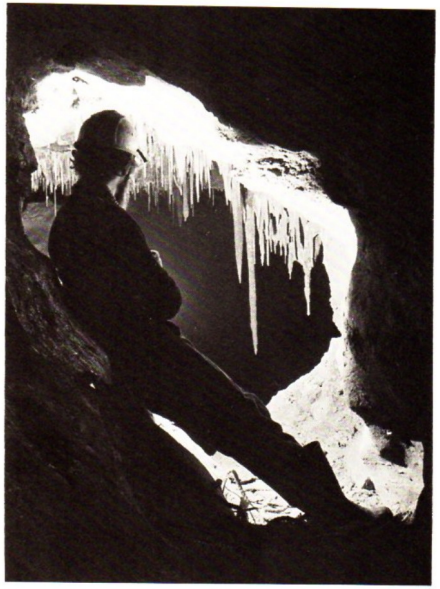
PH 4

PH 3



PH 2

PH 1



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traverse to a third hole only succeeded in sending down a large boulder that split the rope cleanly in two. A useful high level passage was entered however; about 200m leading to a 15ft pitch onto the boulder slope at the far right hand side of the lake and another passage leading to a 100ft pitch into the boulder chamber beyond the lake."

But still no Uzueka link up. It appeared that a fault had cut through the large passage and obliterated any high level continuation above the upstream sump.

Attention was now turned downstream to the river that appeared at the base of the boulder slope at the bottom of the entrance pitch. A cursory look in earlier explorations showed that the river soon flowed into a phreatic region with out-of-depth water. Two inner tubes had been brought out to Spain and they were now to to prove their worth. A party of 4 dragged both into the cave along with a car tyre pump, descended to the earlier downstream limit and inflated both tyres. John D. swam off into the gloom but was soon caught up with, treading water at a 4 ways junction. Carbide arrows were quickly burnt onto the wall and gentile progress was made sitting in the tyres to another junction. At this point a stream could be heard rumbling in the distance - the continuation?. Pulling the tubes out onto dry land and walking in vast passage for 10m lead to ..... the tyre pump! Off we go again.

The sailors this time found themselves floating slowly down a passage 4m wide with 1m air space and a fair old draught whistling down their necks.

> Log Book:"Surveyed wet bit without feet touching the ground. Have you seen pictures of tourists sitting in the Dead Sea reading newspapers? Well the survey pose was similar. Brian did what somebody had to do and dropped his carbide lamp into a bottomless bit of canal. After searching for a glow from the deep, he gave it up as lost."

Hopes had now risen again and after about 40 minutes total in the water, the end was reached - a 2m climb to a loose and open boulder choke. Squirming up through

this - and there was the down stream continuation. The explorers had popped out half way up a boulder slope. The far wall was only just visible and the river had changed from the sluggish and eerie phreatic zone to the free running river over cobbles.

Progress was idyllic for 100m - easy walking with a boulder pile to the right, the stream running along the left hand wall, the roof 10m up and the passage 15m wide. However, after passing a low passage on the right with outward draught, the stream turned to the left under boulders and once more it was time to climb. Only for a short distance though - then a descent through the boulders to the lip of a waterfall and then immediately the final sump chamber (10m x 10m x 3m high).

This only left us with 'filling in the gaps', and the tyres were again used in the upstream direction from the bottom of the pitch. About 200m of out-of-depth boating passage was surveyed ending at a boulder choke through which it was possible to climb up to the main high level passage. The river sumped upstream of this point - probably right up to the lake. The other loose end was up the boulder pile at the bottom of the entrance pitch, and this was climbed to a treacherously greasy calcite floored chamber which closed down after 60m.

Cueva Llueva's place and importance in the (now 4 valley) system was confirmed when dye was placed in Uzueka beyond Armageddon (see below) and being positively detected in Cueva Llueva and Secadura.

J.S.Corrin
L.D.J.Mills
J.Cope

References

(1) J.C.Fernandez. Caudernos de Espeleologia No. 2 "La depresion cerrada de Matienzo" S.E.S.S.

(2) "Matienzo North Spain - The 1974 British Expedition Report"

(3) "Matienzo 1975".

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"Spent considerable time looking for survey notes of the day before. Found Spaniards using them as a score card for dominoes."

Nothing more could be done in Llueva at that time, so attention was now turned to Cueva Uzueka and the pushing downstream beyond Armageddon to the long hoped for connection with Carcaveuso water and also now the connection with Cueva Llueva.....

Cueva Uzueka beyond Armageddon

> Only three of our number had been there in '75. These three are now withdrawn, sadly changed men. Suddenly aged. Unseeing eyes stare beyond their pints as they mutter incoherently. It seems that the experience of Armageddon had fused the few remaining brain cells which had survived the onslaught of the vino tinto.

So it was that the '76 attempt to push beyond this notorious boulder land had a substantial psychological as well as physical barrier to overcome. Nevertheless Baz, Paul, Tony, Nigel and JC eventually set out with high hopes but sinking stomachs - whether through alcoholic excess or for more sinister reasons, 4 hours of caving saw some of the party in a state of collapse at the boulder choke which guards the access to Armageddon. The party poked about more or less unenthusiastically in the jumble of piano sized blocks. Eventually Paul found a route through to the ill-concealed disgust of certain of the party. From now on the cave was new to us all and even the most jaded of us started to take an interest. The route through the choke is somewhat complex; but if you follow the Golden Rule: "Don't get lost", you'll be alright. It also helps to keep one metre above the river and generally bear left towards the solid wall.

The huge boulder chamber of Armageddon is entered by climbing up through the chaos which is its western end. Then for the first hundred metres you cower under the left hand wall, teetering along the edge of a boulder pile, an indeterminate distance between floor and roof. A long descent leads to a brief encounter with the stream, followed by a climb up to the right hand wall. At the lower levels the house sized blocks are treacherously greasy; higher up the sandy-clay coating is dry and a clear trail is soon blazed.

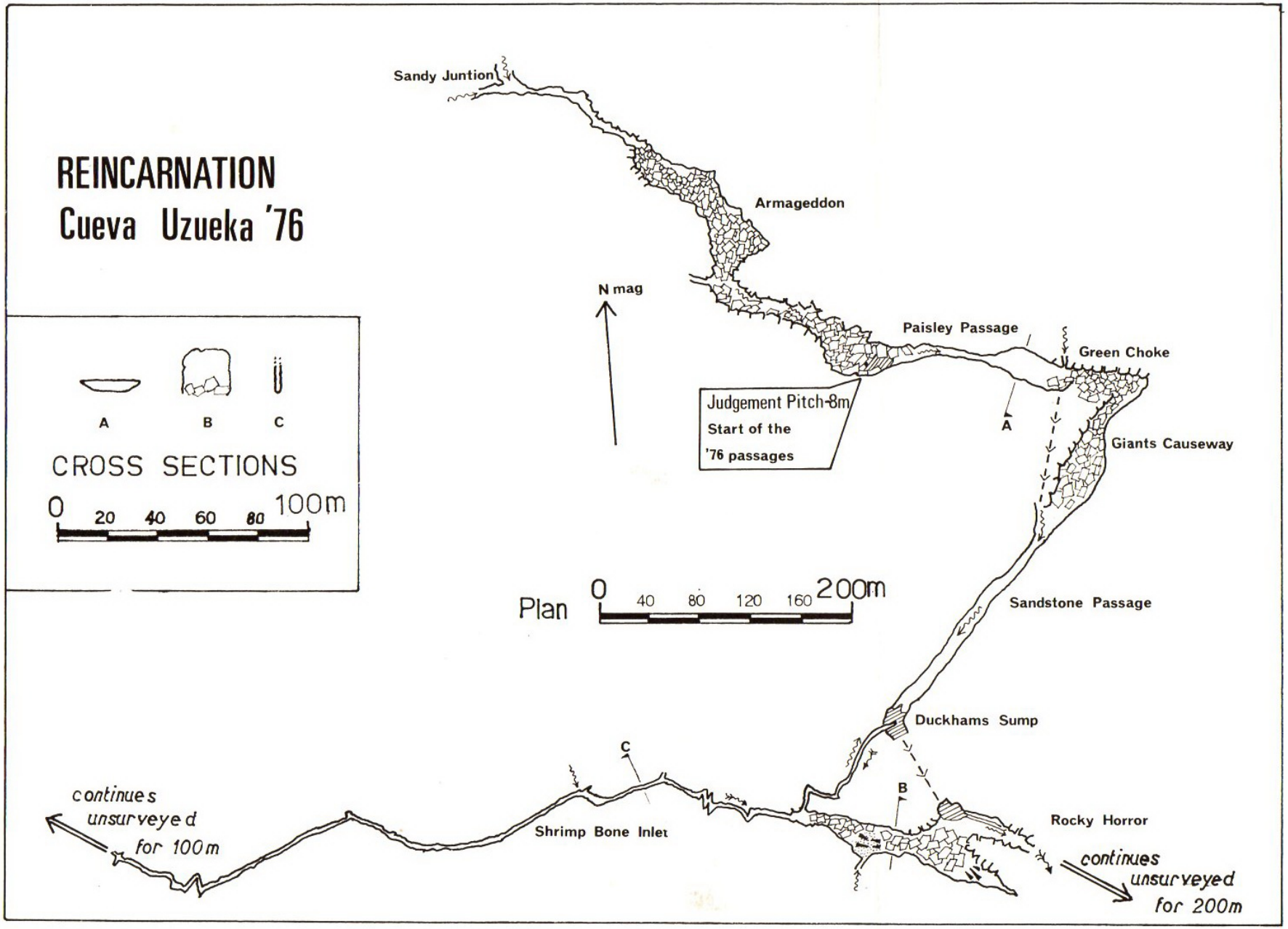
After 200m of Armageddon the stream vanishes into a series of low impossible arches. The only way on is to negotiate a boulder pile having a likeness to a concertina'd goods train. The route up to the right ends in a 'fine situation'- a shelf of jammed boulders leaning against a tremendous block. This is the take off for judgement Pitch and marks the start of the '76 extension.

An eight metre climb down beneath a selection of hanging death drops into a flooded rift, The open streamway of Reincarnation is then reached via a short duck or a hair-raising crawl through an arrangement of boulders 1½ metres above the water.

Reincarnation starts as a succession of pools separated by flakes in the floor. The way opens up into a fine bedding cave 20m wide and 4m high. The stream runs along a sandstone bed between sand banks which fade into the flat roof. This section was named Paisley Passage after the intricate mud swirls which decorate the roof.

Green Choke terminates Paisley Passage. The water sinks some way back from this large collapse and follows an immature phreatic passage which has not been passed. An unexplored inlet also enters at this point. After some time proddling about up and under Green Choke, it began to look like a further trip would be required to crack the problem. To this end a kilo of fluoroscein was put into the stream (hence Green Choke) and we packed for the return journey. Meanwhile Baz had undertaken a solo trip on a spluttering carbide and was now calling for reinforcements. And there it was, the way on - Uzueka had let us off the hook again.

Where the fallen slabs merge into the left hand wall of Green Choke, a steep scree slope is reached via a narrow slot. In this constriction an inward draught is felt. A short scramble up the debris breaks into the roomy bedding cave of Giants Causeway.The next hundred metres is a series of leaps and bounds down fallen roof slabs reclining at a constant 10°, lining up with the south-west dip of the roof. Finally the floor tumbles down to a pool which marks the re-appearence of the river downstream from Green Choke. The streamway continues down-dip, cutting down through the thick sandstone bed which forms the floor. The roof of Sandstone Passage lowers steadily and ominously. The evil prospect of a sump is temporarily averted as the water finally drops 1m through the sandstone. But almost imm-


REINCARNATION
Cueva Uzueka '76
A
B
C
CROSS SECTIONS
0 20 40 60 80 100m
Sandy Juntion
Armageddon
N mag
Paisley Passage
Green Choke
Judgement Pitch-8m
Start of the
'76 passages
A
Giants Causeway
Plan 0 40 80 120 160 200m
Sandstone Passage
Duckhams Sump
C
B
Rocky Horror
continues
unsurveyed
for 100m
Shrimp Bone Inlet
continues
unsurveyed
for 200m

ediately the water deepens.

Characteristically, Uzueka kept us guessing until the last moment and it was not until we were chest-deep in water that we heard the splashing of an inlet and felt the draught.

In a cave where there is always a way round, over, under or through any obstacle, the way round Duckham's Sump must be the perfect 'get-out'. There is a pull up out of chest-deep water into a body sized oval in the roof, 2 metres from where a small stream (Shrimp Bone Inlet) empties through a drain pipe into Duckham's Sump. You emerge in a narrow rift conducting a howling draught. Shrimp Bone Inlet twists and winds and then breaks into a sizeable sloping rift where the draught reverses. An active inlet passage, obviously the continuation of SBI emits a smaller 'new' draught , and has been followed for 700m without ending.

The augmented draught was followed across fallen slabs forming the floor of a sloping bedding cave. A broad trench marks the entry of an active inlet which falls 10m to sink in the mud floor. The inlet was ignored as the hint of greater things was detected. The left wall of the passage dropped away into blackness and the throbbing of the main river slowly became a reality.

A 30m descent over chaotic breakdown and you land back in Uzueka water. Of stream passage however there is no sign, instead only a clearing in a massive boulder fall allows access to the river at Rocky Horror. The weary team threaded its way over 100m into Rocky Horror without serious opposition. The river continued and so did the draught!

J.Cope

Conclusions and future possibilities for the '4 valley system'

At the moment, downstream Uzueka 'ends' only 200m from the straight line joining Carcavueso and Cueva Llueva. The connection should be achieved in '77 although Rocky Horror marks the entry to a fault zone running parallel to - and perhaps as big as - that responsible for Armageddon.

The sump at the end of Carcavueso has yet to be pushed, as has the sump in upstream Llueva. Another look in the large passages before this sump in the latter

cave is also necessary, as the tremendous draught in the entrance cannot be accounted for by the small breezes met elsewhere in the cave.

The large sump downstream in Llueva should be an easy dive, if the large and clear-watered passages in the phreatic regions are anything to go by.

Secadura resurgence has only been looked at with mask and snorkel, although it was said that boulders blocked the way on.(Matienzo 1975 p.35)

Pushing trips in Uzueka in '77 will involve 15 hours hard caving at a time and it is becoming desirable to either camp or find another way in. The latter might be achieved from Matienzo by digging in the draughting chokes of Emboscados or Vecina (see area map and Matienzo 1975 p.25), or by finding the entrance to Shrimp Bone Inlet.

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Notes on the dye test from Uzueka to Secadura

12th August 1kg of flourescein put in Green Choke, Uzueka.
14th August Detectors in Cueva Llueva and Secadura both negative.
17th August Dye visible in Duckhams Sump (5 days to travel 200m)
19th August Dye visible in Secadura.(Detector also positive!)
20th August Detectors in Cueva Llueva positive.

The detectors were activated charcoal in the toe end of a pair of tights. The used charcoal was then boiled up with methanolic KOH to dissolve the flourescein - the results being brilliantly visible within half a minute.

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Other passages were found in Uzueka and they will be described later on, as they are of no direct significance to the 4 valley link-up.

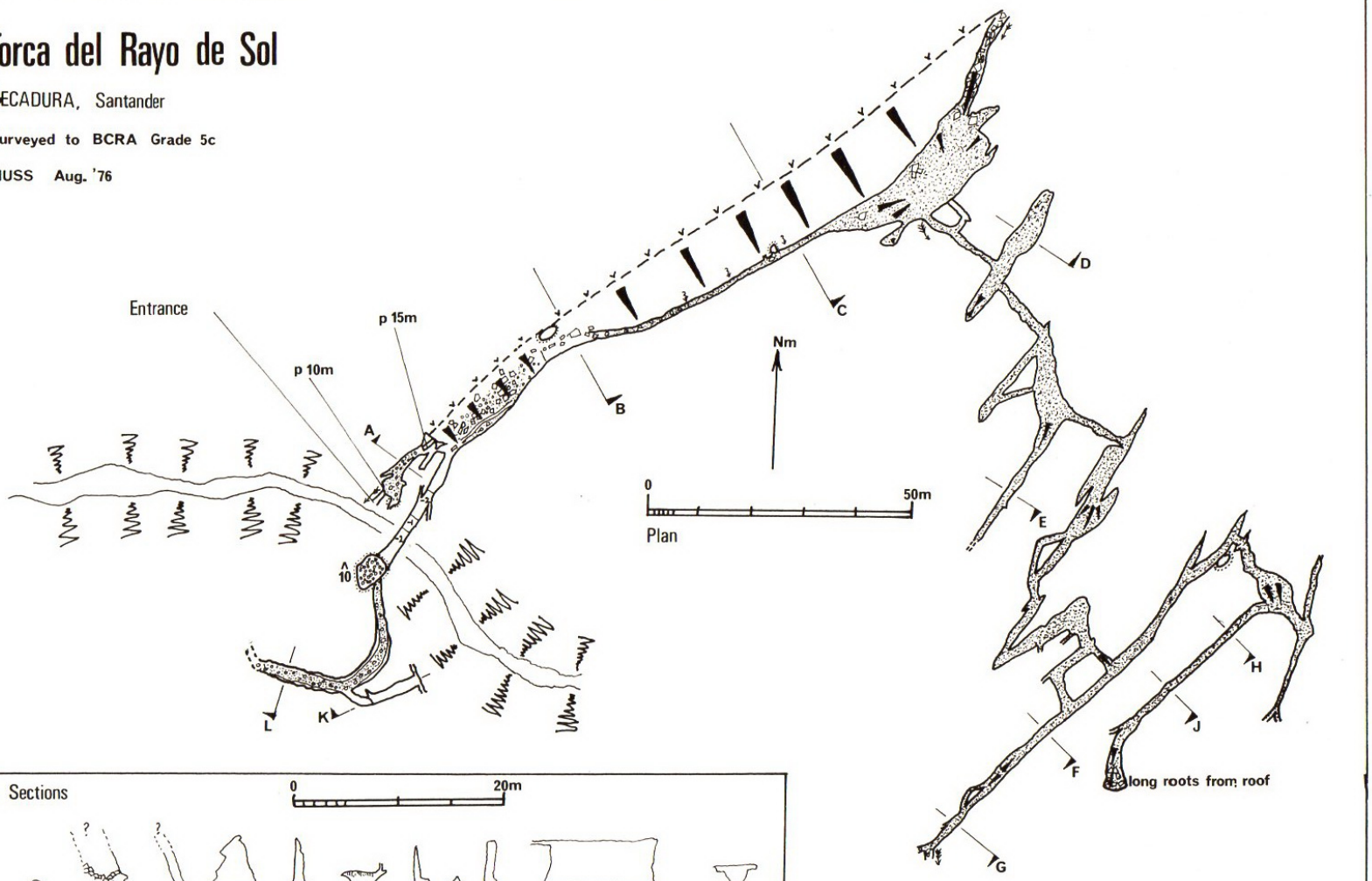
Uzueka and Llueva were not the only pebbles on the expeditions beach, and a number of other minor holes were done.....

Torca del Rayo de Sol

SECADURA, Santander

Surveyed to BCRA Grade 5c

MUSS Aug. '76



TORCA DEL RAYO DE SOL

It can be noticed from the Matienzo area map that there is a large expense of limestone between Uzueka and Cueva Llueva that has no known passage in it. Deciding to do something about this, Lank, Worm, Ian Hopley, wife and child jungle-bashed their way from the entrance of Cueva Llueva around the side of the hill into Secadura. About halfway towards the head of the valley, they came across a dry stream bed and noticed the temperature falling. Sure enough, a hole was found on the right which was draughting out strongly. They dug out a couple of boulders, leaving a rather tight, awkward squeeze for John Naish and Lank to descend the following day. After this tight section, the head of a 7m pitch was reached which dropped into a reasonably sized chamber - big enough to swing a tiger in, if you were so inclined. A beam of sunlight, coming in through another hole in the roof, played over the floor of the chamber and gave the cave its name. Off to the left there was a flat out crawl and then easier going until after 10m the explorers reached a 15m drop. The ladderless pair had to retreat with the draught blowing strongly past them.

A strong(?) MUSS team tackled the pitch on the next day, finding the walls of it covered in mucky calcite. At the bottom of the pitch, a 4m climb dropped down to the floor of a rift. Paul wandered off 'downstream' while the rest surveyed into the hillside. To start with the cave appeared to be a breakdown chamber, but as further progress was made, the true character of the cave revealed itself - a fine example of a passage developed along a fault hading at 20°. The left hand wall was shattered muddy rock with numerous boulders bridging the fault and littering the floor. The roof of the passage was gradually lost to view as the explorers climbed down the boulders which sloped into the lower reaches of the fault. After 70m the left hand wall had become more solid and a couple of very immature inlets were noticed on this wall, 6cm wide and 7m high, presumably having been cut into the wall by water dripping from the roof high above. Just beyond this point, sideways

shuffling brought the surveyors to the top a a mud bank which dropped into the largest chamber of the cave. At the far end of the chamber, the fault continued and Juan climbed up the jammed boulders for 30m only to find the draughting way on blocked.

This was a disappointment that couldn't be allowed, so prowling around the chamber with a draught-testing cigarette was necessary. Another draught was soon detected under the right hand wall and a quick exploration on dimming carbides, showed that it was worth returning for another trip.

The following day this occured, and a series of phreatic chambers developed along joints parallel to the fault were explored. These chambers, 7m high in places, were connected by low sandy crawls. Then after a complicated maze section, the cave became less well developed in rifts with long white roots poking through cracks in the roof. This area of the cave was quickly surveyed and the team zoomed back up to the bottom of the 4m climb to survey the other end of the fault that Paul had been into two days previously. Climbing down a total of 5m brought the four cavers into a fine 15m high aven with clean washed cobbles on the floor. The lowest part of the floor was examined to find where the winter-time stream might go. This failed and so a low crawl 3m up the left hand wall of the aven was pushed.

After flat out crawling the passage divided, the left hand branch developing into a 10ft climb down into a passage which stopped almost immediately at a blank wall and a 6inch wide rift in the floor. The main passage continued as sideways crawling to a part that was too low (although this will be dug out in the future).

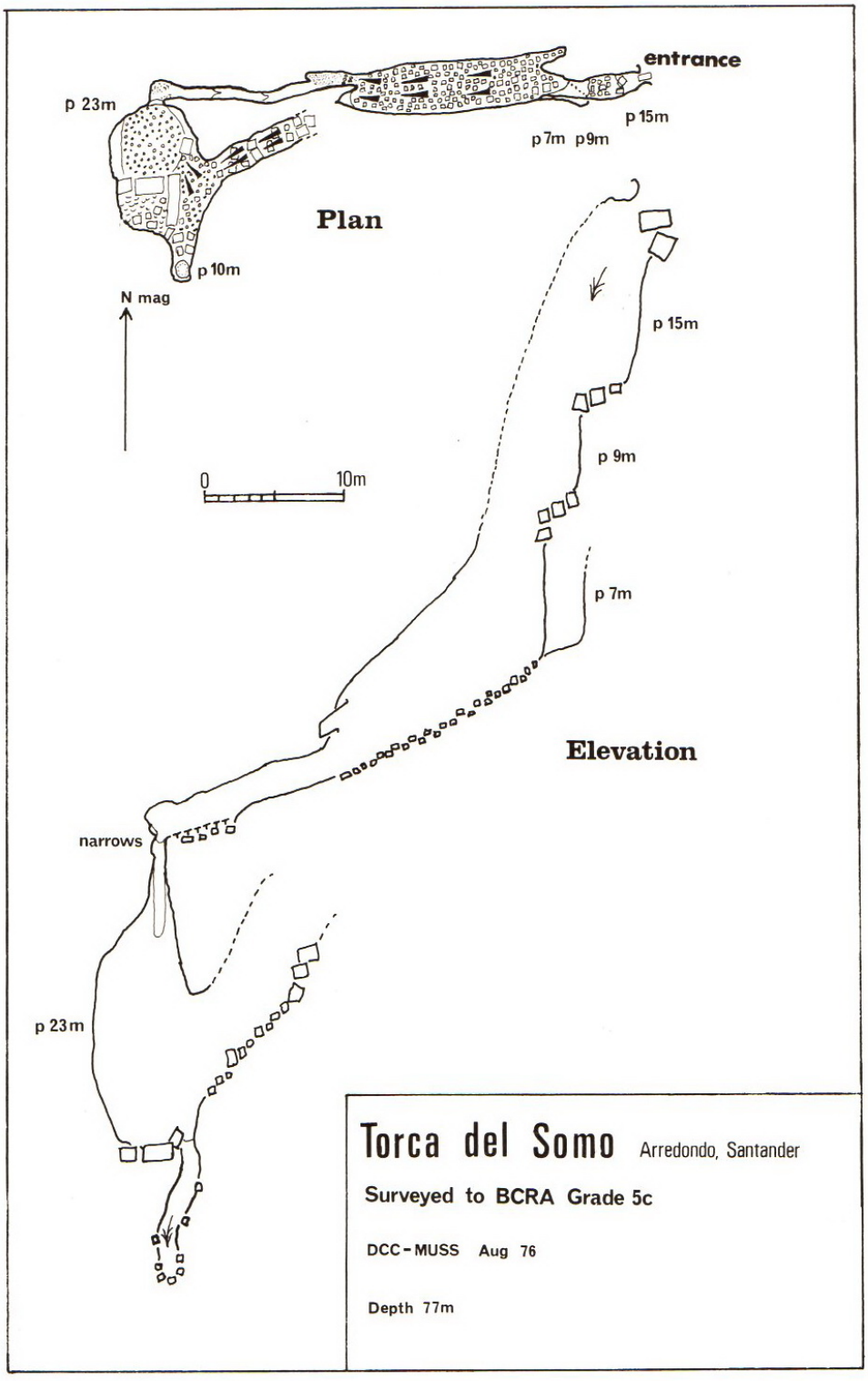
Total length of this geologically interesting cave is 730m and the total depth 52m. A small resurgence 0·75km down valley, which might be associated with the cave, means that further pushing is necessary.

J.S.Corrin

Gems from the Log Book

"This girl frightens me - she's trying to chat me up and my legs are shaking" (A certain BSC member at Riva fiesta!)

"It comes to something when you put your hand in your hair and pull out two copulating ants" (An unkempt MUSS man)


entrance
p 23m
p 15m
p 7m p9m
Plan
p 10m
N mag
0
10m
p 15m
p 9m
p 7m
Elevation
narrows
p 23m
Torca del Somo Arredondo, Santander
Surveyed to BCRA Grade 5c
DCC - MUSS Aug 76
Depth 77m

TORCA DEL SOMO

At the top of the hill overlooking La Vega and the entrance to Cueva del Aqua*, Torca del Somo is a large depression containing an open shaft that was spotted in 1975. This year, small parties explored the cave over two days as it required the enlarging and desce ding of a pitch in the cave.

The entrance shaft drops straight over some precariously poised boulders to a ledge at -15m. This was followed by another at -24m and the bottom is reached at -31m. The shaft is an enlarged rift and the bottom, as may be expected, is a scree slope down a chamber about 4m wide. At the bottom there is no continuation in the floor, but a narrow passage to the right leads (after some short climbs) to the head of a 23m pitch. The top of this is narrow and sharply fretted - the rock bing very crystalline and friable. However after about 8m one emerges in a fine chamber and lands on a level gravel patch. The c amber contains a floor of boulders that are stal'ed over and there is no way down through except in one corner where a natural shaft through the fill (looking very much like a cave dig!) drops a further 10m and blocks. To the left at the bottom of the pitch is a massive boulder slope that almost certainly is a continuation of the entrance rift.

No further passages were found but the potential of the area demands attention - the cave is over Renada but 400m higher. The only problem is its distance from the nearest road which makes walking very difficult in hot weather.

N.Dibben (DCC)

* References

The 1974 and '75 British Expedito n Reports to Mati

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CUEVA DE BASURA (Rubbish Dump Cave)

This cave was partially explored in 1975 (Matienzo '75 p28,34 ref:17) and in 1976 we explored to the same point and then pushed on down two further crawls. These blocked or became too low for further progress.

The entrance is on a bend in the Riano road opposite the house that uses it as a rubbish dump. The entrance slope is a revolting pile of festering rubbish entering a fairly large chamber where the floor is mostly massive boulders with gaps and holes between. Behind the chamber, the passages leads to a circular hall with a depression in the floor containing a 7m blind pitch. Alongside this is another circular chamber with domed roof and floor, impressively decorated by stalactites and stalagmites. Leading off from the first round chamber is a low crawl to an area of roof collapse and from here on the passage is flat roofed and about 2.5m wide. The floor is collapsed roofing material of the same crystalline type as the entrance to Uzueka, the Crossover Crawl and the chossy slabs beyond Green Choke.

At the end, a short dig broke upwards into a continuation of the crawls on 2 parallel headings, although both ended after only 15m. A way on could possibly be engineered, but the nature of the passage and the proximity of the surface are neither encouraging to further exploration. (But one never knows!)

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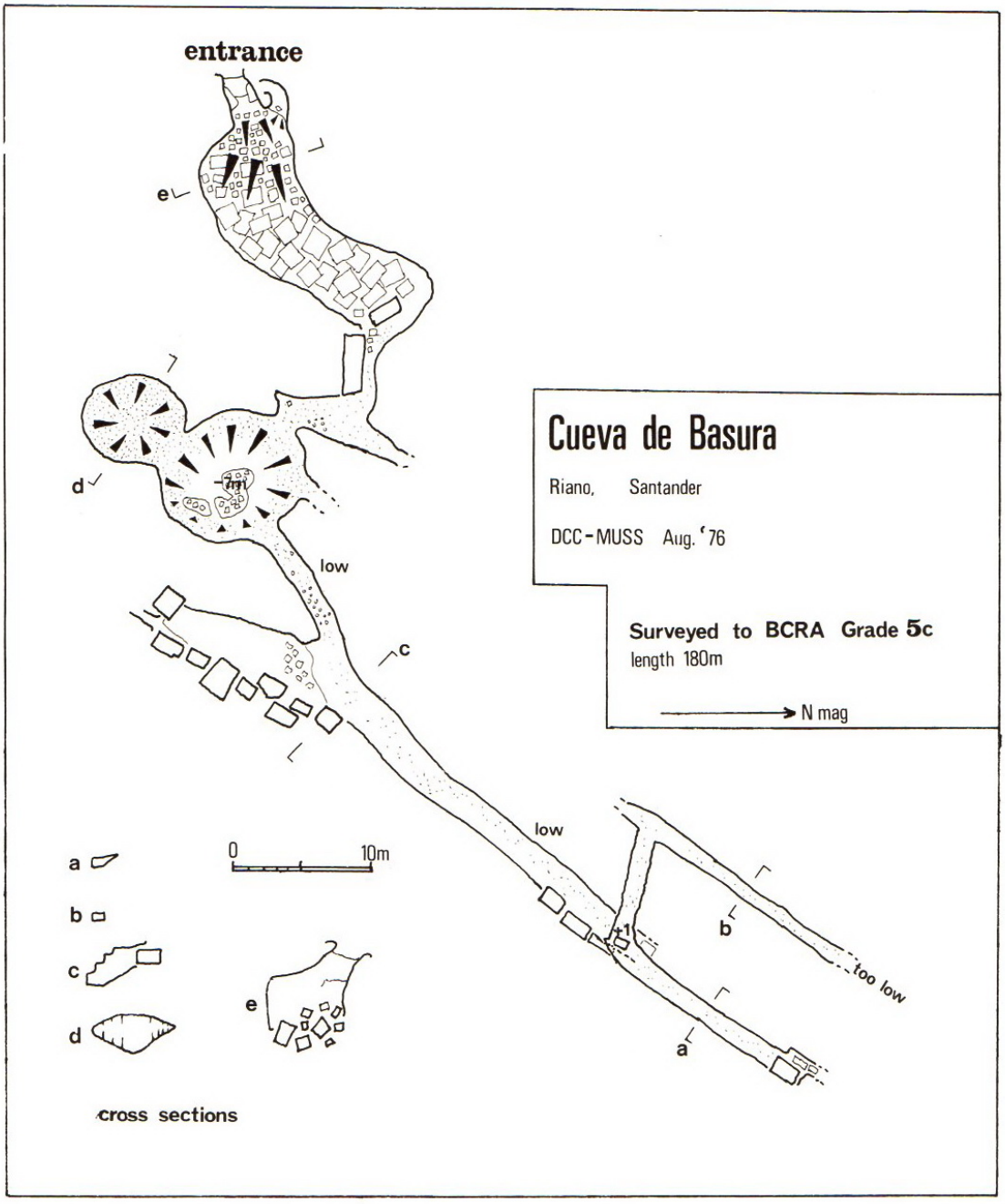
CUEVA ELEGANTE (Cueva de Churro)

In 1975, Stuart Davey explored this cave at the end of a days activity and found a stream passage leading to a sump and an overhead dry series. A return was made the next day but some locals forbade any caving because of pollution to the water supply taken from the entrance.

So this year Baz raised a small team (Geoff Standing, Len Gee, Nigel Dibben) and went over to try again. But it was not to be. Again we were told not to foul the supply and so we retreated up the hill to try and find Davey's draughting hole. There are various depressions and one or two minor caves up the hill and one particularly large onee where the valley has cut into the roof of an old streamway. This cave has not so far been explored but it will need a 10m ladder for entry.

Returning to the car at the entrance of Elegante we found another local who seemed a lot keener to explore the


entrance
e
d
low
c
low
too low
b
a
+1
0
10m
a
b
c
d
e
cross sections
Cueva de Basura
Riano, Santander
DCC-MUSS Aug. '76
Surveyed to BCRA Grade 5c
length 180m
N mag

cave and not only agreed that we could go in but joined us for the first few metres, complete with lamp and a pair of Baz's trousers.

Exploration showed a stream cave running for about 200m into the hill but ending in a low section (20-30cm) with a couple of ducks (10cm and 5cm) before a deep blue final sump where we stopped. Geoff explored an upper passage that cut across the meandering streamway and ended in another sump, but at a higher level. As Geoff and Len had explored as far as the first sump (referred to as such by Stuart the further reaches were entered by way of the dry overhead series.

When we got out of the cave, our local friend had gone but soon returned with another who lived just up (sic) the road and took a water supply from the cave. Thinking that we had fouled up his water supply (which we had) we tried to hide behind ignorance of the language. What transpired though was that the water supply only reached to the lower floor of his house (the cattle shed) and not to his living quarters. We were asked how much head we could put on the supply and were told to return the next day at 12.30 to shift the water pipe. We were promised a fine feed in return.

So next day we duly arrived at 1.30 to find no people around but a length of black pipe snaking across the field below the cave entrance. The plumber had arrived! We soon changed and got into the cave to find the plumber and pipe 50m in the cave at the first cascade. The pipe was already secured but only 1m of head had been added so Nigel went forward and found another 2m and more of cascade after a deep canal and eventually the explorers footsteps of the day before. Where was the first sump?. Fortunately it turned out that there was no such sump and the pipe was soon pulled in and secured in another pool giving a good 3m more head to the supply. The 100m we had pulled in no longer reached the entrance so plumbing was left for another day but the meal was confirmed for the following Saturday.

Come Saturday, Pete Smith (who had taken Baz's place on the second visit) and the DCC went back over to get the paynent promised. We seemed to be a bit early, for

our host turned out when we arrived but disappeared for another half hour to emerge later in clean clothes and beret. We took him down to his local bar and after a couple of strong white wines, found that we were going to eat there when the plumber and our friend of the first day arrived. It turned out that the plumber was the local squire as he not only drove a LWB Landrover but also owned the bar we were in. Ramone, the other guest, was clearly the local piss-head - he had a knack for sneaking down drinks while no-one was looking!

A superb five course meal folloeed with plenty of booze, after which we returned our host to his house and,as the rain had begun, we were looking forward to getting back to Matienzo. No chance - the plumber arrived in his old grots and it turned out that the water supply was not yet working. Nigel changed and joined the plumber in the cave to get the water running through the new pipe and to see the new and old pipes joined. After quite some time and no few worries water did get through and we were allowed to see the results in the well laid out kitchen in our hosts house where he now had water. The plumbing had been in a year or so withour any water!

We finished the day with another coffee and cognac and as the time was now about 7pm we departed, leaving we hope some satisfied locals.

N.Dibben (DCC)

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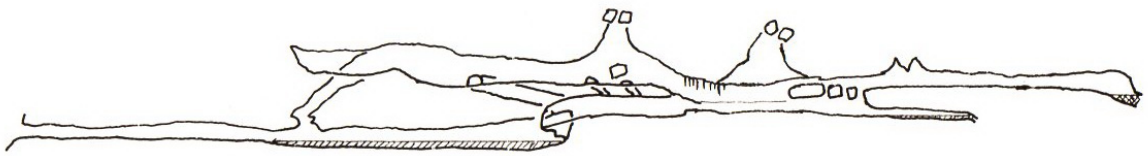
LA CAVADA

One of the main aims of this years expedition was to investigate areas near to Matienzo which had not been looked at before. One of the areas visited was La Cavada. Near to the village of the same name was found a large river bed continuing past the sink to end 30ft on at an open 8ft x 4ft high cave entrance.

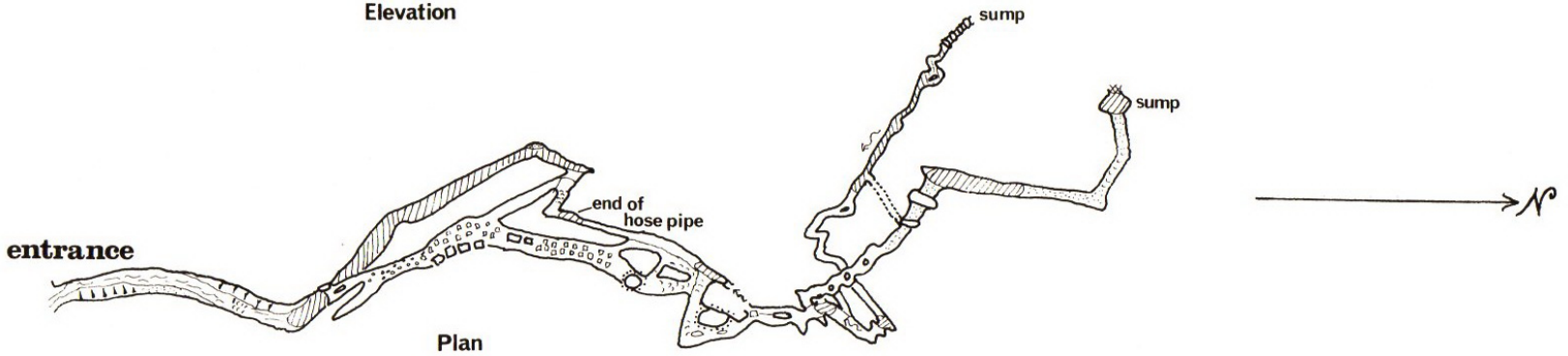
The team of five zoomed in on a solitary electric, but where three passages branched off, Pete was elected chief explorer and the rest came out using a cigarette lighter. Pete returned half an hour later commenting: "Six hundred feet of passage and still going." The presumed resurgence

Cueva Elegante (Cueva de Churro)

Secadura
length 459m
Surveyed Aug '76



Elevation



Plan

at the head of a steep valley was then looked at and appeared to be open. Nearby at the head of a tributary valley were several walking sized entrances.

It was not until the Llueva craze had died down that these caves were looked at again, Juan and Eddy being charged with the task..The main cave beyond the sink was looked at first.

The 10ft wide passage sloped down from the entrance so that an upright stance was soon obtained. At 2 places near the 1st junction, the stream was seen flowing down thin, 10ft deep joints in the floor - progress at stream level would not be possible. The main way on continued as a succession of chambers and stoops - the floor being sand and mud with the odd boulder. Eighty metres from the entrance a 15ft climb up boulders and then down again lead to another chamber. The only way out was down a 3ft high, inward draughting bedding plane with, in places, a calcite floor and columns. Two hundred feet later, a junction was met but both sideways shuffle sized ways joined at a Yorkshire type passage about 6ft high, 1ft wide and a boot-trapping trench in the floor. Three foot deep water at the end was avoided by crawling around to the left and then a short walk brought the pair to the head of a 17ft climb. This was made easy by there being a sloping crack down one side. The way out was under a rock arch and from then on the passage became boulder floored and eventually choked, although the draught continued up a rift in the roof. Eddy slithered and slipped up here, but again the way on choked. The river had not been seen since just inside the entrance.

The pair then exited and surface surveyed their way over to the resurgence. The main water issued from a 6ft high cave perched on shales 10ft above the valley bottom. The 10 minutes spent priming carbides was not worth the effort as the cave sumped after 20ft. The small concrete dam at the entrance did'nt help of course, but even if this was demolished the way on would still probably be touch-and-go.

The large entrances at the head of the tributary valley were then looked at. All were connected together and various crawls were pursued until they closed down.

Throughout the whole 600ft or so of passage there were the remains of bonfires and, scrawled over the decaying calcite floor was the Spanish equivalent of 'Kilroy was here'.

La Cavada had proved itself rather a disappointment. However a large rift type resurgence with a goodly sized river is about 2km away and this, when looked at in '77 should be pursued into the hill beyond the out of-depth limit reached this year.

J.S.Corrin

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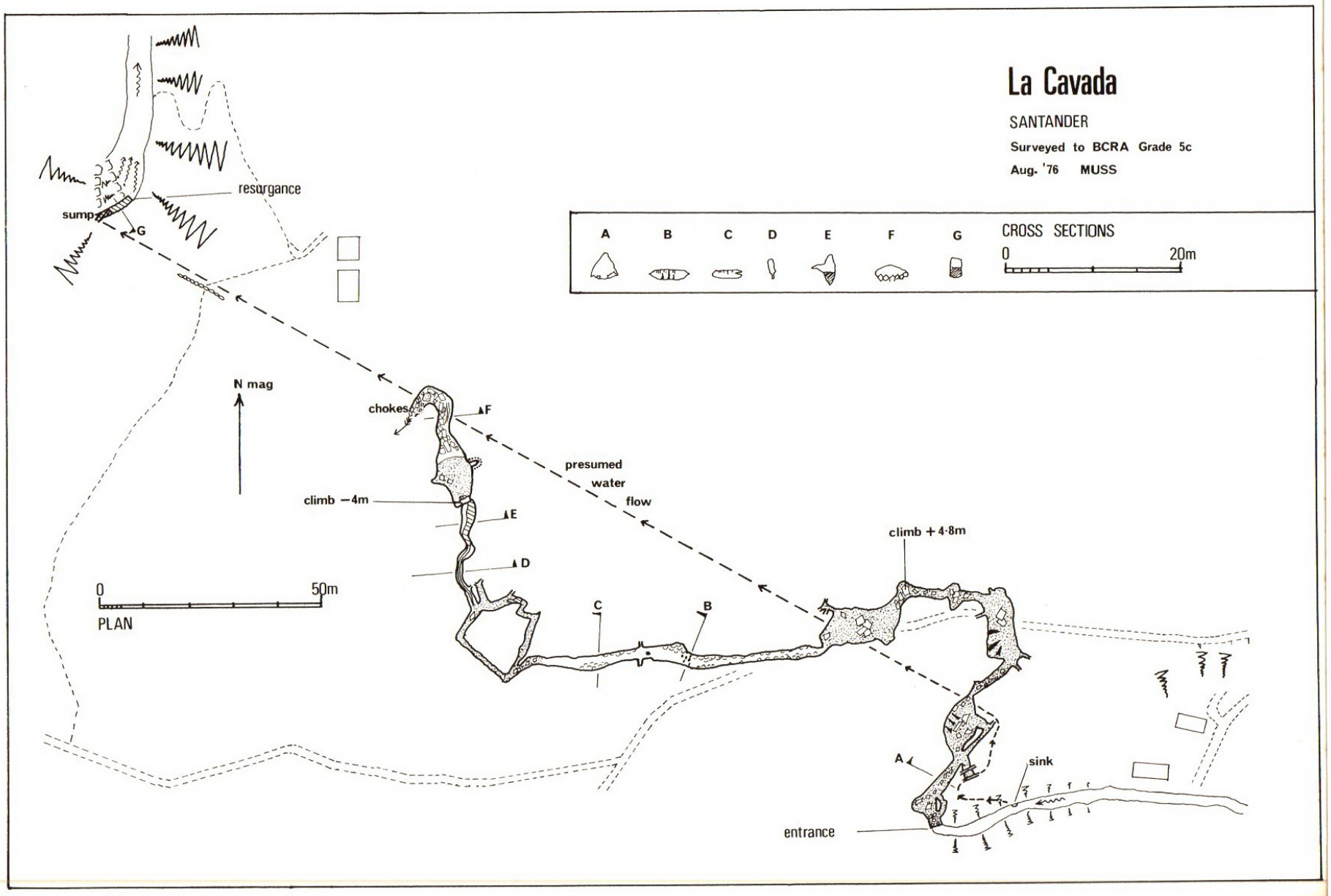
Matienzo '76 Expedition - Conclusion and thanks

A good deal more original exploration was done than has been detailed above. Notably about five hundred metres of maze was found in Riano 1 (see the Matienzo 1974 Report p.19). One tape was left in this region of the cave and when the surveyors came back to look for it, they were unable to find it! Also a number of inlets were surveyed in Uzueka although none went for any great length. The prosects for 1977 look good with the main aim being the superb possibility of the Uzueka - Llueva - Carcavueso - Secadura systems being linked together and perhaps entrances being found in all four valleys.

This years expedition was helped by a grant towards travelling expenses of £120 from the Sports Council to whom we are grateful.

For the last few years, Rabone-Chesterman have supplied us with tapes which have been used to destruction. On this occasion were given three 30m open reel tapes and one 100m open reel tape. This type proved to be good for muddy surveying as they could easily be washed. A useful design feature was the hole where the free end of the handle slipped in. A karabiner slipped in here and onto the belt provided a convenient means of carrying the tape. Our thanks to Rabone-Chesterman.

Copies of the 1974 and 1975 Matienzo Expedition Reports are available from; E.Acland, Sprint Mill, Burneside, Kendal, Westmorland.


La Cavada
SANTANDER
Surveyed to BCRA Grade 5c
Aug. '76 MUSS
A B C D E F G
CROSS SECTIONS
0 20m
resurgance
sump
G
N mag
chokes
F
presumed
water
flow
climb −4m
E
D
climb +4·8m
C
B
0 50m
PLAN
A
sink
entrance

BLANK

BLANK