

LOGBOOK

Year: 2017

Season: autumn

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Juan Corrin, January 2018

Autumn Logbook 2017

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VALLINA DOWNSTREAM SUMP PROJECT 2017

OVERVIEW

During the summer a dive to the elbow area of the sump, about 140 metres from base, allowed an estimate of the required air consumption to enable a reasonable push to be made at the end of the known sump. To arrive at the present end of the line would require the majority of the gas in a pair of 7 litre cylinders at 240 bar pressure. A further similar cylinder would be required to progress a reasonable distance, assuming that the sump depth did not drastically change from its value of between 15 and 22 metres. The remaining third of air in the cylinders would be expected to be consumed in the passage of the first 5 sumps.

To carry a full 7 litre to sump 6, and the corresponding empty back out, is a task that takes one person 2 days (to do this in a day would be possible, but not sustainable over several days). Thus, to replace the gas used after the first planned push dive would take 6 full days, or 7 with a day to rest and fill the cylinders. This ratio of carrying air supplies to actual progress in the sump would be difficult to maintain over an extended period, especially when carried out by just one person. It was therefore decided to continue the project using a closed circuit rebreather. This would present considerable challenges to actually transport to the site, but once there, it could remain in place and would require only replacement of easily carried consumables, ie absorbent and oxygen.

OCTOBER TRIP

It was decided to devote my trip in October to the transport of my Kiss rebreather, together with all the necessary components, to a position above the sump 5-6 streamway, where it could remain in a dry condition. It was not assembled to a functional condition because to use the unit for less than 3 or 4 dives would be wasteful.

In addition, several depleted cylinders were replaced by full ones ready for the next push. These are needed as bailout gas, and should need no further replacement unless the rebreather fails.

A window of 10 days perfect weather allowed the aims to be met. The potential disaster scenario was a flash flood when my rebreather was staged somewhere vulnerable, in which case it could have been wrecked. The following is a log of 9 consecutive trips into the cave over 9 days :

Day 1. With Pete Smith. (All other trips were alone.) Carried in wetsuit and SRT kit (Pete as far as the pitch head) and 2 x 3 litre oxygen and diluent cylinders. Picked up a full 7 litre at the pitch base, and carried all 3 cylinders to sump 1. Carried an empty 7 litre from sump 1 back to pitch base.

Day 2. Carried the rebreather main body to sump 1. Brought the empty 7 litre out from the pitch base.

Day 3. Carried in the backplate and harness, breathing hoses, oxygen and diluent add valves and tools. Assembled the unit at sump 1. Dived this through to the sump 5-6 streamway whilst breathing open circuit from 2 x 7 litre cylinders. Had some difficulties at the sump 2 boulder choke as it was a tight fit. Carried the 2 x 3 litres down to sump 6. Brought 2 x 4lb weights back from here to use to dive out. Brought several empty tackle bags out.

Day 4. Carried in soda lime absorbent, sensors, computer and wiring connectors, batteries, spare towel and fleece boots, in 2 x darren drums. Dived these through to sump 5-6 streamway. Carried a full 7 litre down to sump 6 base, and returned with a depleted one to use in the first sumps. Then carried the 2 drums of kit to the base of the climb up to the high levels.

Day 5. Carried in a full 7 litre to the base of the pitch.

Day 6. Carried in a bolt kit and more food. Picked up the full 7 litre at the pitch base and carried it to sump 1. Also carried the empty 7 litre back to pitch base. Moved the brew kit from the Catalan Bypass to an easier to reach spot in the final chamber.

Day 7. Carried the bolt kit through the sumps. Then took this and the rebreather to the base of the climb into the high levels. This climb was split into several awkward ladder sections, and it had been my intention to change the route. A new hang was bolted (3 spits) from a rock bridge over the streamway. This gave a neat Y-hang of 12 metres straight down the centre of the canyon. The rebreather was then pulled up from here, and also the 2 x drums of parts. These were left in a dry area after being checked that there were no leaks.

Carried a spare ladder, the bolt kit, spare maillons, a Darren drum with my mouldy undersuit, a tackle bag with rubbish, an old towel, 25 metres of polyprop back through the sumps and most of it out of the cave.

Day 8. Carried in food and a tackle bag. At sump 1, packed up all 3 regulators and other dive kit to be brought out. Packed up and tied off brew kit. Brought dive kit back to pitch base as well as spare ladder. Carried empty 7 litre from pitch out of cave.

Day 9. Carried full 7 litre to base of pitch. Bagged up wetsuit, long john, vest, bootees, etc. Pulled both this and the dive kit bag up the pitch. Coiled the rope at the pitch head. Added SRT kit to the loads, and carried 2 x heavy bags from the cave. Knackered.

I anticipate the next trip to be in January. If the weather is favourable, it will now be possible to begin diving operations at sump 6 after just 2 days of setting up.

Rupert Skorupka

MATIENZO REPORT – 17th to 29th October 2017

17th October Hornedo Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Investigated source of water which sinks at **Site 3010**. Stream splits into diffuse inlets, but small resurgence found at:-

17A Site 4605 0449636,4801815 Alt. 138m Small resurgence next to water tank.

Further look at **Site 4584**. 1m square entrance drops 2m in to cross rift. Bedding plane & squeeze leads to hading ascending, standing, rift followed by low crawl which blocks. Total length 12m. Not easy to dig. Draughting inwards.

Site 4583. Flat out 4m crawl. Not worth returning.

Site 3915. Very strong draught. Tight continuation needs further work.

Water Testing info

	Conductivity	pH	Temp (centigrade)
Site 3010	127	7.9	26.7 (hot day)
At 17A 4605	114	7.4	15.3
From 4584	295	6.1	13.6
Main valley flow	173	6.3	15.6
Confluence of above	274	6.7	14.1

18th October Barrio de Arriba Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

18A Site 4606 0445583,4799357 Alt 172m En-route to **site 4587** discovered walk-in rift cave. Explored approx 60m, with some pitches, but stopped by awkward traverse. Return planned.

19th October Hornedo Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Dye put into sink at **site 3010** and detector placed at resurgence **site 3282** – still negative after 5 hours (photo Phil Goodwin)

Site 3915 – began digging in strongly draughting sections. After trying various directions explored approx 15m of new passage – return planned.

Site 3261. Main cave visited, and low crawl found off base of entrance slope. Needs more work.

20th October Garzón Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

20A Site 4607 0450211,4803368 Alt 249m

Small, draughting, hole on side of depression. Would need a lot of work to open up. (photo PG)

20B Site 4608 0449950,4803466 Alt 287m

Narrow rift with stones falling 9m and good echo. Significant work needed to open up (photo PG)

20C Site 4609 0450148,4803298 Alt 263m

Small hole in shallow depression. 2m drop to boulder floor. No draught

20D Site 4610 0450115,4803456 Alt 289m

Good sized shaft, approx 10m deep. Undescended. (photo DM)

20E Site 4611 0449942,4803443 Alt 275m

Entrance adjacent to open pasture. Small, crawl-in cave, which open up into 40degree hading passage, 20m in length. End boulder filled, but good formations in lower part. (photo PG)

20F Site 4612 0450066,4803288 Alt 246m

2m, narrow, choked rift. (photo JS)

21st October 2017 Barrio de Arriba John Southworth & Dave Milner

Site 4587 enlarged for 2m to area of collapsed sandstone blocks. Not worth continuing (photo JS)

Navajeda John Southworth & Dave Milner

21A Site 4613 04453231,4801314 Alt 107m

7m through trip in old abandoned cave. (photo DM)

21B Site 4614 0445287,4801347 Alt 92m

Hole in side of depression, with draught. Might be worth a dig.

Barrio de Arriba Phil Goodwin & Bob Catley

18A Site 4606 Further work done. Initial rift surveyed, also side passages and pitches. The cave is not easy, with difficult traversing (at times) at roof level. Ten pitches have been descended, but all are blind. The initial rift ends at a cross rift where work is ongoing.

22nd October 2017 Navajeda Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Site 4489. Descended by BC. Negotiated bags of bones and debris, to cross passage, descending 3m with slight draught. Needs digging.

Hornedo Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Removed detector from **3282**. Some patches of colour under UV light. Result – inconclusive. *From 3010*

23rd October 2017 Hornedo Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Further work in **3915** which ended in collapsed zone. Line survey done back to entrance, giving a total length of some 40m. No draught other than at entrance.

Site 3261. Low crawl at bottom of entrance chamber enlarged, giving approx 15m of passage. Line survey done and also between entrances for **3915** and **3261**. New passage in **3261** quickly draughted out of entrance to **3915**.

San Antonio Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Partially explored newly cleared woodland above **site 3494**, with the following sites noted:-

23A Site 4615 0445596,4801022 Alt 108m

Rift in side of logging track. Blocked 2.5m down. (photo PG)

23B Site 4616 0445527,4801100 Alt 99m

2m deep rift, 4m long. Hole on North, with boulders down slope - may be known (photo PG)

23C Site 4617 0445584,4801077 Alt 106m

Shaft, approx 5m deep – undescended (photo PG)

23D Site 4618 0445588,4800858 Alt 105m ???

4m deep hole in shallow depression – undescended (photo DM)

23E Site 4619 0445620,4800936 Alt 97m

2m deep rift on edge of woodland cover in brash – may be known. (photo DM)

23F Site 4620 0445538,4800886 Alt 129m

Walk-in, 30m long, well developed cave. Choked at end. (photo JS)

23G Site 4621 0445618,4800930 Alt 113m

Narrow, draughting 3m shaft. Undescended.

23H Site 4622 0445631,4800876 Alt 106m

Narrow bedding in cliff. 2m.

23I Site 4623 0445651,4800917 Alt 93m

3m small shaft. Undescended

23J Site 3239 0445670,4800943 Alt 90m

Descending, walk-in cave. 4m+ (may be known)

24th October 2017 Navajeda Bob Catley & John Southworth

Revisited site **21B site 4614**. Excavated down slope to bend. Left hand down, under roof, requires chemical modification.

25th October 2017 Las Calzadillas John Southworth & Dave Milner

25A Site 4624 0447331,4795028 Alt 514m

Large open shaft, 13m deep, on side of one of many limestone edged depressions. Undescended. (photo JS)

25B Site 4625 0447439,4795039 Alt 507m

8m shaft on edge of limestone sided depression. Undescended

25C Site 4626 0447442,4794961 Alt 526m

6m shaft blocked at top by two large boulders.

Barrio de Arriba Phil Goodwin & Bob Catley

18A Site 4606. Further work on right-hand side of T junction. Over second pitch with difficulty and quickly came to tight section. Further will only be possible by a thinny who likes traversing at the very top of a rift. Left-hand arm is similar. Right arm draughts well. Investigated line of rift on surface, but no obvious leads.

26th October 2017 Garzón Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Visited **Site 4069**. Excellent cave, well worth a trip. Dug at base of initial entrance slope (above pitch/climb) into 3m of passage, with no way on. Also search surface above estimated end of cave but found nothing.

20D Site 4610 . Phil Goodwin & Bob Catley Descended 8.5m pitch into chamber with 5 ways on. All appear to meet in the middle. Can see on 3m to 4m descending at about 30 degrees. Stones suggest 10m to next floor. Narrow, needs more work. Draughting.

26A Site 4627 0450149,4803681 Alt 328m

Large shakehole on edge of area. Shaft 5m diam., used as a rubbish tip. Explored to end of 52m rope. Descending passage in rift, 4m wide at entrance, 1m wide at bottom of rubbish heap. 3 pitches, about 10m long, leads to narrow canyon climb down to next short pitch.

26B Site 4628 0450174,4803668 Alt 313m

Double shakehole, descended 6m to 8m to draughting possible dig

26C Site 4629 0449959,4803701 Alt 335m

Spring with cattle trough, obviously used by farmer – not investigated further.

27th October 2017 San Antonio Phil Goodwin, Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

27A Site 4630 0445547,4801042 Alt 111m

Low bedding under rock face with drop to left. Slight draught. Needs digging. (photo DM)

27B Site 4631 0445430,4801050 Alt 102m

At back of depression near logging track. Holes under boulder draught well. Major dig. (photoPG)

27C Site 4632 0445606,4801105 Alt 93m

Steeply descending low cave at base of cliff. 15m low passage to small chamber, way on choked with blocks.

27D Site 4633 0445613,4801191 Alt 89

Small cave at foot of cliff.

27E Site 4634 0445539,4800951 Alt 139m

Short shaft, 4m deep. Draughting. Undescended.

27F Site 4635 0445437,4800776 Alt 154m

Site 3896

4635 is near
3281

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Large depression, brush filled, with hole under rock face and rift feature part way down slope. No draught, and access over brush difficult.

Site 4386 0445457 4800939 Alt 153m. Known archaeological cave. (photos PG & DM)

28th October 2017 Camposdelante John Southworth & Dave Milner

Site 4574. Began dig. More work needed. No draught

Garzón Phil Goodwin & Bob Catley

26A Site 4627 Rift/shaft descended to chamber 2.5m diam and 8m high. Cave continues in very small, tight, crawl. Water in crawl and chamber. Draughting. Site surveyed. (photo PG)

28A Site 4636 0450123,4803682 Alt 328m.

Slanting bedding cave descends at about 45 degrees for 25m. Next is small chamber full of debris, with passage continuing for at least 10m, but too small to enter. Draughting. (photo PG)

29th October 2017 San Antonio Bob Catley, John Southworth & Dave Milner

Site 3281. Explored all surveyed passage and dug low bedding (marked on survey as "dig"), gaining 2m, to where more digging needed. No draught.

29A Site 4637 0445313,4800604 Alt 161m

Hole in field, 2m deep, mud floored. May be recent collapse.

29B Site 4638 0445289,4800608 Alt 170m

Small resurgence cave, 2m to choke.

17/11/2017

Re: OCTOBER REPORT >

From: john southworth <direct.station.limited@hotmail.co.uk>

To: Juan Corrin <uzueka@aol.com>

Subject: Re: OCTOBER REPORT >

Date: Fri, Nov 17, 2017 10:34 am

OCTOBER REPORT

Hi Juan

Hope this clears up our blunders .

Site 21A should be 0445231 4801314 (4613)

Site 23D you have that correct

23J is 3239 ✓

27F is 3896

Will explain the reason for the rediscovery of known sites when we meet on Sunday .

Cheers

John.

Email Received 21/12/2017

Juan, Phil

Eventually I've managed it. Locations and photos for the new entrances once I manage to find the entrance location data which has gone for a walk! *Phil Parker*

Matienzo Autumn 2017 Chris Camm, Nigel Easton. Alf Latham, Phil Parker

Sept 26 to 28th Travel, house occupation and gear/information sort-out.

Friday 29th #4474 Chris went to look and push decorated passage near the bottom of entrance ladder pitch. Nige, Alf and Phil went to the end of the big passage entered at Easter to battle with the tight way on. Three hours capping allowed entrance into a small, low, open area with a howling draught coming down a very narrow rift/slot in the roof, which would require considerable work for further progress up its sloping end wall. The draughting sand filled bedding plane, located at the right hand corner of the big section of passage, was re-examined and put on the menu for the next visit.

Saturday 30th Alf decided on a rest, Chris went surface bashing whilst Nige and Phil went back to #4474 to push the rift left at Easter, at the top of a pitch to lower levels. With difficulty, the top of the drop was reached, bolting gear was sent through and bolts were placed. A 25' ladder reached a large ledge at a point where the rift had become a 4m wide passage but two large blocks blocked the way forward into the continuation of the rift. However, a further 4m free climb reached the floor which was followed back under the entrance rift for 18m to a conglomerate wall, with a non-draughting slot continuing for a further metre. In the passage bottom below the climb down there was a small hole, heading in the opposite direction, which may repay attention once some rocks are removed.

Back on the ledge the narrow gap between the blocks did not look enticing, however some way up the ladder it was possible to step onto the blocks and see that it would be possible to alter the ladder hang so the floor of the continuing narrow rift could be reached and followed. There was no sign of the source of the draught that can be felt coming out of the rift entrance.

Sunday October 1st. Chris continued his surface bashing whilst Nige, Alf and Phil headed back to the end of #4474. Work commenced on the bedding plane where it became apparent that there was a few inches of sand overlying harder material so no quick break-through was on the cards. Thus work also was continued on the main draughting hole, capping to make easier access to the narrow rift slot, then trying to open up the hole at the top of the rift. Meanwhile progress of some metres in the bedding plane allowed the team to see a fairly open space to the right, guarded by formations but with access possible after another metre or so of excavation. The team exited looking forward to the next visit.

Monday 2nd. Recreational day but in the afternoon Chris and Alf headed over to the Riaño area to look at an area that appeared to have been cleared relatively recently.

Tuesday 3rd. Dull and overcast day so no enthusiasm until the sun appeared, then the decision was made for a gentle digging trip in Maze (#3268). At the architect's house there was a clearance operation on the opposite side of the valley so Chris went to search whilst the other three headed underground. All went well till arrival at the pitch where the lack of a bolt meant some gerry rigging was required. Descent made, it was onto the dig location for more angst. The ladder was rigged for Nigel to ascend but once he was up he uttered the cry "It's partly filled in?". There had been a big slurry like slump at the end of the dug passage. However there was a draught to encourage clearance operations, so two and a half hours later the digger could stand up within a small, partly empty chamber with the draught coming in between spoil and the far wall. The team bailed out deciding yet another return trip would have to be made. Chris had found a couple of possibilities that required further investigation.

Wednesday 4th. A semi rest day, eventually with movement back to yesterday's parking spot at the architect's house to look at Chris' finds plus anything else that appeared. Unfortunately nothing was worth recording. However what is probably #3239 was investigated and found to have a draught and appeared to be fairly easy to dig.

Thursday 5th. Another dull and overcast day but Nigel, Alf and Phil headed to #4474 where continued digging in the bedding plane. We eventually gained access to the open space to the right. This turned out to be a reasonable size

passage heading almost at right angles to the main passage but with both directions obstructed by boulders that required capping.

Friday 6th. Overcast, dull and some rain so the day turned into a R & R exercise.

Saturday 7th. Nice day so Chris, Alf and Phil headed to **#3901** to continue work on this (very) long term project. More capping progress downward but no sign of any enlargement to provide encouragement.

Sunday 8th. Another R & R day although, in the afternoon, Chris and Alf went to look at an open, grassy area in the wooded hillside, south of the motorway, that we could see from the house. Unfortunately, it turned out to be an area of sandstone cap so nothing found.

Monday 9th. Two objectives with Alf and Phil going to **#4525** to push the two shafts from the last visit at Easter (?), whilst Chris and Nige went back to **#3901**. They made some more progress but the continuing small rift continued to be not much larger than boot width. Meanwhile, in **#4525**, Alf's shaft was a free climb into a reasonable passage which ran under Phil's shaft, giving maybe a further 30m length, in total. The passage got to a split with the left hand branch effectively ending at an outward draughting small downward tube. The right hand branch dropped steeply to a large calcited ?plug? in the floor with a draught forcing its way up between wall and calcite. This probably deserves a visit with the usual digging paraphernalia.

Tuesday 10th. Another lazy day with the only action being a search of a logged area just south of Riaño. It became clear why little has so far been found in this area. What appeared to be **#1318** was spotted within the bounds of the wide muddy logging ?motorway? with another similar unrecorded shaft some metres to the north, still within the bounds of the muddy track. ✓

Wednesday 11th A return to **#4474** for Nige, Alf and Phil. The obstructing boulder in the passage entered on Thursday was modified and progress was made to a shaft and a small well decorated continuation beyond it. Both shaft and passage were draughting but no ladder available so further exploration left for the next visit. Photographs were taken. Back at the exploration at the end of the main passage, Nige used Phil's body (!!) to get high enough in the rift/slot to see that there is the possibility of progress if the slot is opened up, i.e. capping upwards above the capper's head. The cave was cleared of equipment.

Thursday 12th R & R. Chris went back to the cleared area near Riaño to check on one possibility but no joy. Alf went for a walk in the neighbourhood of the house but found nothing of interest.

Friday 13th. Time for a trip to **#4473** with the intention of detailed surveying, looking at the unpushed open leads and digging the choke in the passage with a draught. Once down to the bottom Phil took some photos, then headed for the draughting boulder choke whilst Alf and Nige pushed the leads.

All the ways closed down in mud choked ends although two of the passages were connected to give a small round trip. They then re-joined Phil for the choke blockage dig in calcited mud and stone. Eventually it was possible for Nige and Phil to get partway into the continuation which turned out to be the bottom of a large space, with some large hanging death visible up in the roof. A return with capping gear is required. In view of the cold and mud covered state of the team, surveying was left for another trip.

Saturday 14th. It was a hot day so the team relaxed, carried out some tackle cleaning and eventually ended up in the village restaurant for dinner.

Sunday 15th. Plan was for Nige and Phil to take a look at the logging trails on the west side of the Bencano valley *en route* to the entrances higher up the hillside, whilst Chris and Alf returned to 3901. However at the starting point for the walk - Washing Machine (3420) parking spot ? a cleared area was seen down in the valley to the east of the road so that, plus a retirement to the bar, took precedence over 3901.

Meanwhile Nige and Phil headed down the logging trails to the bottom of Bencano, taking a look at **#4483** on the way and agreeing with the description ? does not warrant further work. Up the west side logging tracks, carefully examining all the side trails, till eventually, near their upper limit, bingo(!), over the course of 50m there were three possibilities. First **#4639** (originally #4675) (10 Camms), a decent size hole in the uphill bank looking down some 6m or so into a large chamber with no draught but possible ways off. Second **#4640** (originally #4676) (The Fridge), a pair of strongly draughting slots looking into a narrow rift that might be passable with some effort. Finally **#4641**

(originally #4677) (Nige's Horror), another pair of holes yielding some draught, that would be worth an hour prodding. Above the logging trails two more possibilities were spotted, **#4642** (originally #4678) being a hole down through boulders located in a small shakehole, **#4643** (originally #4679) being a collapse at one end of a depression, with signs that the collapse takes water in wet weather.

After this there was time to look at **#2545**, pull out some turf and stones from the narrow rift and see that about 4m down it appears to widen, before returning to the rendezvous. Chris and Alf had found a couple of possibilities, **#4644** (originally #4680) and **#4645** (originally #4681).

Monday 16th /Tuesday 17th. Pack up and take the ferry home.

Hello Juan

Had a brain wave whilst looking for some non-caving stuff, found it and with it was a sheet of GPS/survey data.

4639 (old 4675) (10 Camms) 0445923 4795750 385m

4640 (old 4676) (The Fridge) 0445954 4795778 388m

4641 (old 4677) (Nige's Horror) 0445961 4795785 389m

4642 (old 4678) 0445901 4795931 433m

4643 (old 4679) 0445858 4795883 435m


No info as yet for Chris' two holes.

Here's to a Happy New Year!

--

Phil

If it's wet get a diver!



MATIENZO CAVES PROJECT