

LOGBOOK

Year: 2017

Season: Christmas : New Year

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Juan Corrin, January 2018

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR

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From: Terry Whitaker <t.whitaker1@btinternet.com>

To: Juan Corrin <Uzueka@aol.com>

Subject: Quimper Snail

Date: Thu, Dec 28, 2017 10:07 am

Hi Juan,

Seasonal greetings. A bit of information to add to the website re: 603.

I encountered a large specimen of the Quimper Snail, *Elona quimperiana* (Férussac, 1821) in the twilight zone halfway down the entrance shaft at site 603. Identification was suggested by Pete Smith and I have confirmed that it was that species.

It is on the IUCN red list but in the LC (Least Concern) category. It occurs in damp woodland but has been recorded from caves.

Happy New Year

Terry

From: simon Cornhill <simoncornhill@dsl.pipex.com>

To: Juan Corrin <uzueka@aol.com>

Subject: Happy hols

Date: Tue, Dec 26, 2017 11:21 pm

Nothing much to report yet;

Surveyed Fuente de Escobar, the end is too tight but the roof appears to rise after 3m so could be worth pursuing.

Had a look in Rascavieja to around the end, we will probably be back to try and unravel this.

Torca del Bosque is now over 150m deep (via a 75m pitch) and still going....

Feliz Navidad!

From: simon Cornhill <simoncornhill@dsl.pipex.com>

To: Juan Corrin <uzueka@aol.com>; Phil Papard <papard@easynet.co.uk>

Subject: RE: Happy hols

Date: Sat, Dec 30, 2017 1:05 am

Torca del Bosque is now 203m deep, a further 10m and a very fine 50m pitch were dropped today, this lead to a walking streamway. We surveyed down stream which quickly degenerated to hands and knees for around 250m, eventually ending in a sump. This is heading NE for Aquatic Passage in Regaton.

A quick check upstream on the way back confirms this is where the strong draft is headed and it continues in walking proportions for a distance. This is tomorrow's (today's objective). A total of 526m new passage.

¡Feliz año nuevo!

Diane Arthurs, Simon Cornhill, Neil McCallum with Pete Smith.

24th December 2017

0383: Fuente de La Escobar - Di & Si

On arrival we met one of the locals, Roberto <?> who showed us improvements to the water troughs that the electricity company had funded.

We surveyed 42m and started work on the moon-milk dam lowering the water level by around 20cm. The continuing passage is far too tight to get into, however 3m ahead the roof appears to rise. Hopefully digging will be moderately swift as the floor is soft moon milk and the roof hard limestone, which should cap.

25th December 2017

0077: Cueva de Rascavieja – Di & Si

A quick trip to this grand cave. We followed the green string Pete O'Neil laid through the boulder choke to where it ended at the start of the squeeze. The other side of this the cave enlarges considerably being complex with a very strong inwards draught throughout the whole section. An interesting bit of cave which will be well worth unravelling.

A hasty retreat due to a dinner date.

26th December 2017

0373: Cueva Del Bosque – Di, Si, Slim, Pete S.

The team descended to the slot at the end of Slim Pickings which was discovered last summer to open it up and have a look. Whilst Si and Slim set about this Pete and Di began the survey from the top of the New Forest. Loose boulders were removed and 1 round of caps opened up the slot which carried a noticeable draught. Simon and Slim were soon down the 4m pitch into a slowly enlarging passage (Boxing Day Surprise) which soon entered a nice inlet chamber. We turned around here to get the others and help with the survey. Once the survey was down to the inlet chamber Slim took a look around the corner to see what lay ahead. He managed to keep a dead pan expression as he called the others to take a look at the rather impressive view of a massive shaft. A rock was duly launched into the abyss which whistled down the shaft to a booming crescendo after a freefall of around 5 or 6 seconds. At this point Si rushed out to the car for tackle, Pete made a tactical retreat for the comforts of the valley, Di continued drawing the survey and Slim, vibrating with excitement, rigged a traverse and hang and the first rebelay with the tackle we had. Once Simon returned with the tackle, this monster pitch (Squirrel's Pitch) of 75m x 10m diameter in a beautiful glistening widening shaft, was dropped with Slim rigging and Si and Di surveying behind. A 4m traverse along a shale bed on the left of the shaft leads to a short drop over the lip to a Y hang rebelay. After 40m another rebelay, leads to a fine final free hanging descent to the base of the pitch. The outlet is a tall tortuous rift which was followed for about 15m to a squeeze and another pitch of 10m. Explorations were left here due to lack of tackle and the late hour and also the forecast of heavy rain had us all on edge.

27th December

0077: Cueva de Rascavieja – Nez, Di & Si

Due to prolonged heavy rain we decided on a dryer alternative. Simon dispatched the super tight squeeze in the right hand choke, which was guarding the Easter 85 extensions, this is now a mere wriggle. 104m was surveyed in the larger passages beyond, however the draught was very weak today and it was difficult to follow it.

28th December 2017

0373: Cueva Del Bosque – Si

A quick run down to see how 2 days heavy rain had affected the system. Although there was more water around, all the passages were still perfectly accessible. It is curious what conditions sends this pothole into flood, of which there is plenty of evidence.

29th December 2017

0373: Cueva Del Bosque – Di, Si, Slim

An early start saw the explorers down the pot before 11am. A rapid descent of Squirrel's Pitch armed with rope and rigging gear quickly had us pushing into the depths. Si went ahead rigging and Slim and Di followed surveying. The next pitch, Helmet Trapper (10m), has a fairly tight squeeze to access but the actual take off is fine and soon opens out into a fine 3m diameter pot. This section of cave is in beautiful waterworn limestone and very reminiscent of Dales potholes. A comfortable descending streamway soon ends at a steep rift leading down to the take off, of Double Six Pitch (50m), another stunning descent in a large beautiful shaft with the stream falling at the far side. Si started the rigging, rather optimistically, with 40m of rope and unsurprisingly came up about 17m short! So Slim returned to Squirrel to cut as much off the end of that rope as possible and reduce the rigging of Helmet Trapper to the bare minimum and managed to free up 20m of rope. Si was duly dispatched down Double Six and was soon shouting "rope free". Di and Slim surveyed behind and the team gained what at first glance seemed like a blind shaft. The base of the pitch is 15m by 8m with a flat boulder floor, the water sinks into the boulders and the only outlet is a small flat out crawl directly opposite the landing. Simon disappeared and returned almost immediately with the news that we should have all worn wet suit socks as the crawl broke out into a sizeable streamway and we were all going to get wet feet! With this great news, the team quickly ditched SRT kits and grovelled through the short Roll Again crawl to emerge into the Rio Dado. After a quick glance upstream at the beautiful walking size streamway continuing into the hill, the team started the survey downstream from Roll Again Junction. Unfortunately this rapidly deteriorated into wet hands and knees crawling over pebbles and very quickly got tedious as it was obviously going to sump, it was just a question of when. After around 200m the monotony was broken with a beautiful aven coated in slippery white calcite/moonmilk. Downstream from Slithery Turtle Aven, so named because of a peculiar shaped flake, Si and Di surveyed the final 60m or so of grovelling crawl to the sump. At this point Slim made an exit to go and pick Luce up from the airport, with a short detour upstream to have a look and turning round after about 60m leaving the passage continuing in fine style. Si and Di decided not to continue the survey upstream and made their way out after a superb days exploration.

30th December 2017

0373: Cueva Del Bosque – Di, Si, Slim

Back down the pitches to explore the Rio Dado upstream from Roll Again Junction. The team rapidly surveyed around 100m to be very abruptly halted at a sump! Bugger! A large passage continues to the right of the sump but almost immediately ends at a very steeply ascending, draughting, boulder choke. Simon forced this for 10 to 15m but to no avail. Simon also tried to lower the sump by digging out the shingle floor, but without tools this was a non-starter really. The sump is a good excuse for Simon to bring his diving gear back to Matienzo. An obvious tube continues only 6 inches or so below the surface in crystal clear water. The cave was de-rigged on the way out to conclude a fantastic 3 days of exploring a superb pothole. 640m surveyed.

2nd January 2018

1815: Di & Si

We decided to check out this cave on the drive round to Cueva Collada for the draughting hole at the base of the calcite slope. Nothing was evident.

0394: Cueva Collada - Di & Si

We made our way to Sex-On-The-Beach and surveyed 71m up the sandy crawl which ends in an aven. All passages in this area either choke up or are too tight.

On the inside corner of White Russian, a hole was excavated leading to very brief walking passage 5m long which went round an acute right hand bend becoming too tight and appears to lead back towards the choke in White Russian.

We then checked the quality of James Carlisle & Alex Richie's dig at the bottom of the run in, surprisingly it didn't seem totally hopeless! The boulder that is marked as needs capping, is a thin slab of soft rock and should yield to a few stout blows with a lump hammer. To help the lads on their way with their dig we cleared quite a bit of debris from around the slab and enlarged the passage which approaches it. There was a weak inwards draught going in to the dig. Di also squeezed herself into the hole in the floor following the flow of water. It opened up briefly into a small sandy enlargement which had a couple of narrow metre deep sandy pits.

3rd January 2018

0383: Fuente de La Escobar - Di & Si

As our ferry was delayed due to bad weather we managed to get a bonus caving trip in. What better than a taste of home, flat out hammering and capping in fast flowing cold water! Going is tougher than anticipated, we will have to return to continue capping and hammering to make progress.

On New Year's Eve 2017, we were informed that a hunting dog had fallen down a shaft, together with a wild boar. That afternoon we went to the site with a couple of ladders only to find that the shaft was too deep and would need rigging safely with rope. On comparing with the website, it was found that this shaft must be 0545. We talked about arranging a descent of the shaft in the next couple of days while British cavers were still here but in the end it didn't happen. We were later told that someone from Ramales had descended the shaft and brought out the body of the dog in a process that took about 4 hours.

Pete Smith

603 Near the Bar Pot

Steve Martin, Pete Smith, Terry Whittaker

4 trips over Christmas and New Year with PS and TW, entrance climb down now stabilised and bolt left in surface boulder for handline down useful also for lowering bags.

Low crawl at base of shaft, the floor boulders were removed and taken to surface, walls capped out to a more comfortable size this leads to low arch into draughting chamber with pool in the floor.

The arch needs enlarging to make it a more comfortable size but this was stopped by 3 days heavy rain making water run down the walls and a number of failed capping holes.

603 Draughts strongly both in and out depending on outside temperatures. I recommend a fleece hood when working this site.

Still an excellent project. Anyone fancy going before Easter - go for it.

No gear left on site.

Steve Martin

MATIENZO CAVES PROJECT