

LOGBOOK

Year: 2023

Season: autumn

Autumn 2023 Logbook

①

RE: Volcano Cave

1391

From: Simon Cornhill (simoncornhill@dsl.pipex.com)

To: uzueka@aol.com; diza_cutart@hotmail.com

Date: Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 22:55 WEST

Hi Juan,

The facts and a bit of speculation (as I see it!):

On the last recorded trip 3/4/2007, photos C3 & C4 show Mad Phil emerging from the top of the climb down to where we were videoing. We did loads of shoring on this climb before going down to make it safe as possible as it was well dodgy, however with careful climbing and a brass neck it could have been descended without. In your excellent video edit at 1:50 you can see where it looks like someone has been digging/lying down and squashing the mud, this wasn't us! Confusingly the 3/4/2007 logbook account <https://www.matiencocaves.org.uk/logbook/2007e-04.jpg> &

<https://www.matiencocaves.org.uk/logbook/2007e-05.jpg> suggest that Mad Phil didn't climb down though.

On our arrival we found the corner where Mad Phil was squeezing round in the photos had been snapped off, with the large piece blown off still lying where it fell and temporarily blocking the way on. The snapper has made a worryingly large crack in the block threatening to split it.

When we returned after our trip this summer and debriefed Phil Pappard, upon later reflection he said that they snapped that boulder as the last thing when they left after their last visit, he also did seem to think that the final chamber had been entered.

So, I wonder if there was an undocumented trip? As in the 5x15m chamber there was a pile of big heavy hardwood timber for shoring along with a large crowbar, and what looks like evidence of a bit of digging in the final chamber.

I hope this doesn't confuse things any further!

I'll try and process the survey this weekend.

Cheers

Simon.

18/10/23 Giant Panda 2691 - Phil Juan
Finished off the tube installation. More foam at base.
Foam, concrete block, rocks down the back. Rocks, foam +
soil packed in behind tube off-cuts on the left to
protect the opening. Pins and scaffold tube on top
resined. Photos.

~~17~~ 17/10/23 Peter E, Tarben, Santi, Dave B
1800 Fridge door via book tube 5000

Trip to breakdown area with
crawl - "Northern side that seems
to diverge" (see previous entry 30d)

On the way to chamber some
extra traverse line was put in place
to make the waddy traverse easier.

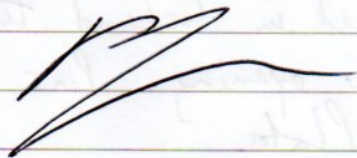
A hole in the floor was dug out
on RHS this had water dripping into
a slopping area which appears to choke

Tarben + Santi ~~dropped~~^{locked down} pitch at
the end of main way on ~~but it~~^(not descended)
~~looks~~ blind. A strong draft over the
pitch head would need some work
to enter.

Before exiting the cave we
had a brief look into breakdown
chamber which had some survey
markers but no survey (It later
turned out that fish had failed)

This area looks very interesting
and would be checked out the
following day before the forecast
rain comes.

Ant's TR



18/10/23 Peter E, Santi, Dave B
1800 Fridge Door via 5000

Went to the 'breakdown chamber' to resurvey the
previously surveyed (but data lost) known passage

Batch 1800-23-07

and then find (and survey) the previously noted, but not known, unsurveyed, passage. ~~23-08~~

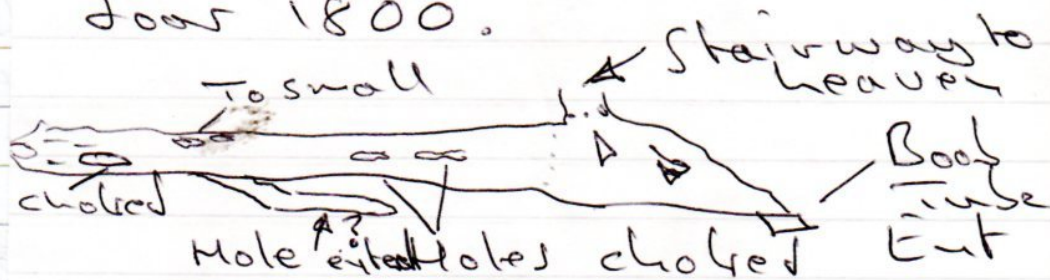
The high level (previously known and lost-surveyed) passage is a mix of hands-and-knees and walking which heads west (as we went) back towards known cave. We reached a traverse / climb that we couldn't attempt from above. We dropped a paper marker, which we eventually retrieved from the passage before the 'dodgy traverse' - where you can look up to The Diamonds In the Sky. This can be climbed from below to bypass the traverse - needs a handline.

At STN 8 we located a crawl which headed North. Unsurveyed, known, but unexplored. This was 'hands-and-knees' for about 50m, then higher until we met an old streamway. Followed this for about 100m until it was intersected by a 2m deep 2m wide canyon. The stream continues beyond the canyon - not yet explored. The canyon is formed by a high level wind run-in from very high up, which continues down below - followed for about 20m but not concludes.

STN 32 marked cave with a note.

18/10 ? Torken + Louise - over pit @ east end to dig out and push decorated small passage. Batch 23-08. Still going.

20/10/23 Peter E, Dave B, Surti
Boob tube 5000 to Fridge
door 1800.



We checked out the collapsed
false floor and the first
two were choked. The
third was dug a little and
led straight to a pit.

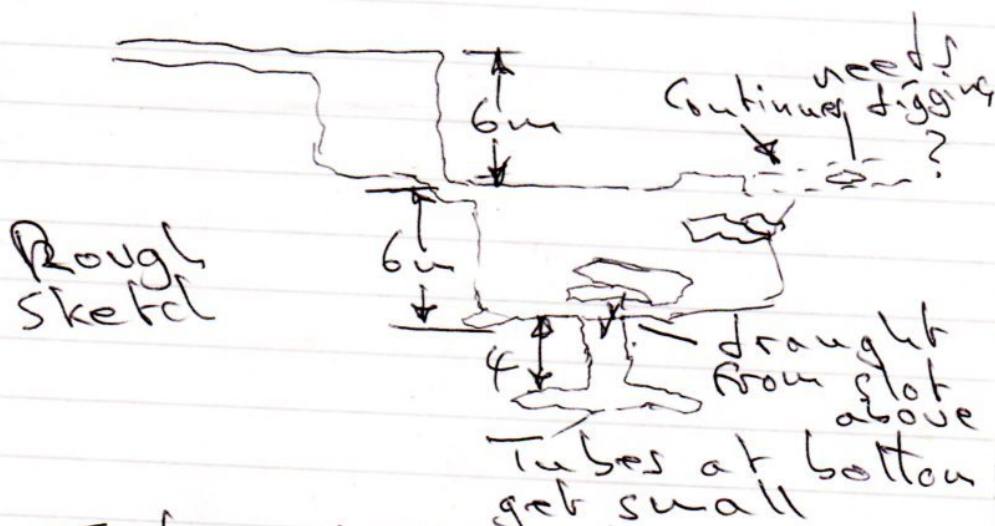
This was dropped on ladder
length to a short squeeze
and then more rift. A
further drop could be seen
but we had no more tackle.
The final hole is exit passage
was dug/chiseled but also
closed down quickly

[Signature]

22/10/23 Peter E, Samh! + Turben
~~Boob~~ tube 5000 to
bridge door 1800

we returned to the rift
seen 20/10/23 to push on
with two ladders.

Once again we ran out of
talkie as the rift carried
on down -



Turben bolted down + used
SRT to bottom final drop.
Surveyed all we saw.

Bath 1800-23-09

[Signature]

25/10/23 Photos + survey of Andred 1 0008. from Pete.

18 oct 2023, #1800/5000, Logbook

From: Torben Redder (torbenredder@hotmail.com)

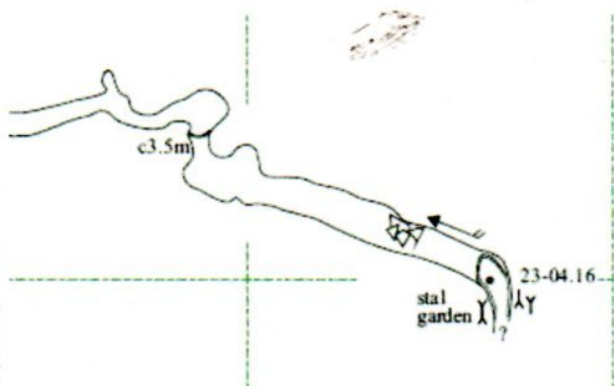
To: juancorrin@matienzo.org.uk

Date: Saturday, 28 October 2023 at 19:13 WEST

Hi Juan

Logbook

#1800/5000, 18 october 2023, Louise K, Torben R



Batrl 23-08

On the former trip, a rope was fixed at the c3.5, which makes it safe.

Just before the p6/stall garden, it is a quite low crawl, but it was possible to remove a couple of boulders.

However at that place it is possible to see up between boulders to about 2m space, so care should be taken not to loosen the boulders.

The p6 just before the stall garden has not been dropped, but it seems blind. A bolt was put on each side of the shaft to make safe passage, but the calcite bridge in the side seems stable enough. Stalls were hammered away to get into the very draughting passage behind. Several flat out crawls and a bit of digging led to several side passages, which have not been pushed to a conclusion.

Best Regards
Torben

Re: Matienzo

From: Alfred Latham (chimpaa09@gmail.com)

To: uzueka@aol.com

Date: Friday, 27 October 2023 at 18:02 WEST

Yer other man found an hole but he couldn,t get down it. Only 8 m long though.

Har har
Alf.

1800, 22oct2023

From: Torben Redder (torbenredder@hotmail.com)

To: juancorin@matienzo.org.uk

Cc: peagan@hotmail.co.uk

Date: Saturday, 28 October 2023 at 18:55 WEST

Hi Juan

22 october 2023, #1800/5000, Peter E, Santi, Torben R

Description:

A crawl leads into top of rift 1. A p6 on ladder leads to a crawl into rift 2. It was possible to get along the top of rift 2 secured with rope from 2 bolts. The rift gets narrow, but crawl size at the top and may be passable by removing a couple of loose boulders. Possible to see 12m along. This was not pushed. We had an idea that we were below and along the passage where we started, but that now seems not to be the case.

The second P6 leads from 2 bolts to the bottom of rift 2, where the third p6 through a tube leads to the bottom. All passages seem to end in Ø 20cm holes with some mud.

We were there on a non draughting day, and there was not a clear draught.

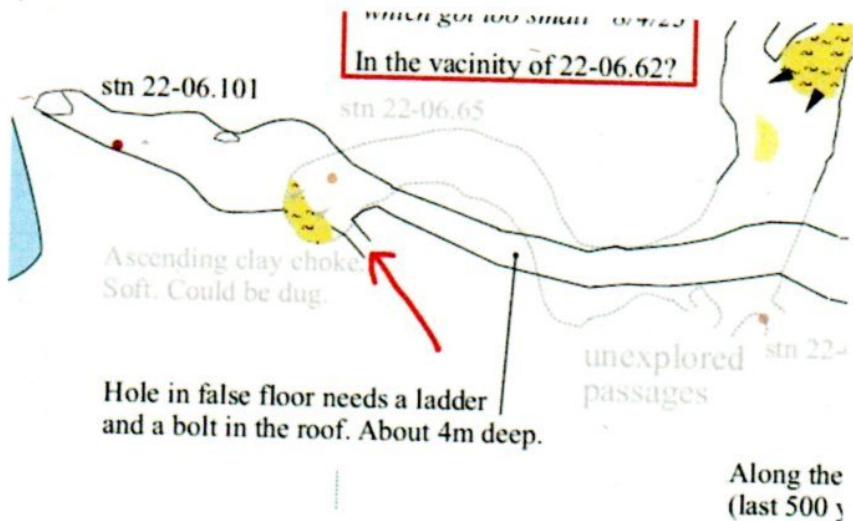
Survey:

Stn 1.16 is equal to 1800.1800-22-06.100

Batch 23-0809

Top and bottom level is drawn in black and middle level in blue.

65 meters, but that includes 7 meters, leg 1.16-1.17



Best Regards
Torben

Further Exploration of the Fridge Door via the Boob Tube (In Santi's club blog)

October 16-23-2023 Santi (ADES), Peter Eagan, Dave Bell, (England) Torben and Louise Redder (Denmark)

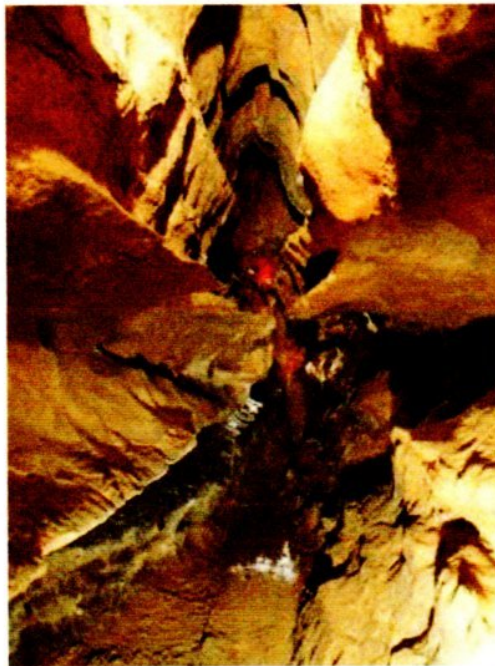
After our successful caving trip in October 2022, we decided to see what was hidden behind the Fridge Door. We had managed to dig almost past the divers' sumps, then at Easter 2023 we successfully completed the dig, giving a dry entrance to the further unexplored reaches of the Fridge Door cave. This had been found many years earlier, but never pushed due to the difficulties of getting past the bottom of the entrance pitch. It is tight, muddy and usually submerged under water.

Once the dry section of the cave had been opened, the expedition was able to pinpoint a location very close to the surface and dig into the cave giving a way in for anyone. This was lined with a plastic tube, now known as the Boob Tube due to its chest hugging nature, and it would be the entrance we would use to push on further in October 2023.

Firstly, we visited the Champions dig from the inside (which had enabled the finding of the Boob Tube), then with a bag of rope, hangers and surveying kit we crossed sump two, climbed up into a higher level and began bolting some very tricky traverses to reach our goal. The first was to push on following a good draft, which we did until we ran out of tackle. We also dropped a pitch to the side of the passage, which ended up going nowhere. We had noted a breakdown area above us but wanted more information before climbing up into it. There were signs that it had previously been entered and there were even a few survey stations. We were also out of time. Danish children were waiting back at base to be fed.

With the cave now rigged safely, we planned to return to the breakdown area armed with information from the caving logbook. It turned out that it had not been fully examined and the survey had been aborted at a short section of passage, reputedly looking back into the known cave at "Stars in the Sky."

Diamonds



David Bell in a passage of Boob Tube. Photo: Peter Eagan

Once we got back to the breakdown area, we split into two groups: the Danes to finish pushing in a low muddy bedding and the rest of us to explore the breakdown. At the end of that day, we had surveyed nearly 250m of new passage with more seen. The Danes' passage was left still going, as they ran out of time. The rest of us reluctantly turned back at a junction, where our new

passage broke into the side of a sloping chamber and continued beyond the opposite side. We had managed to enter this new section through a small, unpromising hole, but the sandy-floored tube just kept going, gaining in size all the time. Various side branches were passed but not entered (these will be explored Easter 2024). It was quite a long trip, mixed with pushing new cave passage, surveying and taking photos of what we saw, ensuring we made the most of our time beyond the Fridge Door. We even managed to bypass the muddy traverse, but it would require a hand line before it could be used safely.

Our final explorations were not far into the Boob Tube entrance along an easy, sandy crawl. A pitch was dropped but with only small ways on it doesn't look too promising.

Exiting via the Boob Tube is not an easy feat, as it requires both arms above your head. It's a good idea to have someone outside to pull you out, so the smallest must exit first.

P. Egan

Eldon Pothole Club team logbook

Joe Buck, Luke Cafferty, Rob Eavis, Chris Hibberts, Dylan Kocher, Jon Pemberton, Jim Thompson
+ Sam Pemberton

5/11/23 - Encaramada #3380

Rob Eavis, Joe Buck, Sam Pemberton, Dylan Kocher

Route finding trip to the end.
Calibrated all our distoX's in the entrance
passages. Used survey successfully to get
to I Want It All choke. Detail needs
adding here. Once through we left some
gear and headed to the end. A few
leads off need returning to.

Once at Absolutian Aven the survey
drastically changed, almost unrecognisable
to the cave. This is 11-01 and 11-03
and needs totally redoing!

Also there are signs another team has
been in after, with a pitch descended on a
spit, some rope left in, and more leads
with footprints on. Pirating bastards.

From the end to I Want It All was
35 minutes. All the way out 1 H 50 M.

* Jim, Chris, Jon & Luke.

See pages 26-27

WRITTEN UP ON ELDON PC WEBSITE

6.11.23 Frank's / Picon
Jim + Chris

#2167

Post-shopping trip, Drove up the valley + had a helpful interaction with a local who pointed out cuevas.

Franks: go up the hill opposite the road where electric fence is operable @ 2 large, light coloured wooden posts

Right of dead tree in between 2 distinctive lumps of limestone - follow faint path. Came easily spotted. Awkward feet first descent + take RH option. NO DRAUGHT then onto

#0075

Picon: large open shaft + spit @ pitch head, belayed to Hazel

Rigged 2 x rebelay's on descent. Gigantic sloping

chamber descends on flowstone following slight water flow to bottom.

+ b/c ref Stations

6/11/23

TOM / LUKE / SAM

ENCARAMADA - "SLITHERIN"

From "I WANT IT ALL CHOKED", checked out passage heading NE @ High level (survey not great). Undescended pitch - uninspiring - 10m and tight - still not dropped. End of passage, ^(leg) Splay South ends @ terminal choke (tight packed).

@ Previous station, draughting crawl heads North (draught in - strongly) but too tight (above road to ruin).

Bolted traverse opposite high level passage to walking passage. passing 8m blind pot. traversed around 15-20m wide pit (possibly deeper) needs rope. Awkward step across pit/ripr. Calcified passage heading NW 10m to drippy calcite squeeze (maybe passable with hammer/skinny person). At Junction continued in passage heading SW (draught towards us) climb over boulder, passing avents + pits to tight section @ head level for 5m followed by crawl SE to larger section with avert and blind mud filled pot. From here complicated area in choke heads NW with lots of leads to look at.

23-04

L = 212.7m

MON 6th Nov 23
ENCARA MAOA - JOE, ROB AND DYLAN

23-01 Set out from 'I want it all' to resurvey beyond Absolution Aven whilst checking out some leads along the way. First was a ~~tellt~~ ~~hollow~~ passage on the left hand side. Marked 'very promising' on the 2014 survey. This was a comfortable crawling passage for 10-20m before hitting a tall muddy rift. To the right the passage ended with a small hole in the rock. This was entered but no way on and around 4m high. ~~To~~ The left hand end was ^{free} climbed to around 4m but was too slippery. Has one solid wall which could be bolted.

Next was from the bottom of Absolution Aven. Entered a rift through hole beyond the bottom. Right is a small passage which joins a junction further along the main passage. Left led to an ~~aven~~ ^{aven} which was climbed to ~~the~~ ~~the~~ a ledge. Survey shots from here connected with those taken in Absolution Aven. Needs belt climbing from the ledge. →

23-02

21

Surveyed across the main passage
~~opposite~~ to crawl opposite Absolution
Aven. along small crawls. A right hand
was taken into a low crawl with
Arens left and right which connect
above and lead through a few bold
steps to Absolution. This complete,
surveying along the main passage below
continued through the dry muddy passage
beyond the aven. An unmarked passage
on the left after ~30m was taken
which was crawling tube until dropping 23-03
into chamber with crazy paving floor.
Far right end under foot had a
squeeze into another small chamber
with nice helictites. No further way on
from there. Way on was on ~~the~~ higher
passage which continued ~~below~~ to
a cross-rift. This had a left hand
quite tight passage which continued
but we ~~could~~ ran out of battery.

Batiles 23-01 37.4m // 23-02 117.8m // 23-03 59.5m

Tue 7th Nov - Surface bashing Mullin-East
Rob, Joe, Dylan, Sam

Retracing steps of the drone flight R.
Hire car didn't get far along the
pylon track so had to hike 5.5 km to
the area. Rained on and off all day.

#5389 30T 0456261 4795074 Alt. 531m

Cave 1 = 43.3072252, -3.5393139

On south side of depression hidden behind
trees. Rift controlled, dropping at 45°. Boulders
coming up to the roof at the bottom with
some old stal and bosses. Freeclimbable.

#5390 30T 0456229 4795100 Alt. 540m

Cave 2 = 43.3074591, -3.5397132

Small entrance in 2m deep depression. 12m deep
freeclimbable pit. Diggable hole at bottom, no draught.

#5391 30T 0456101 4795182 Alt. 555m

Cave 3 = 43.3081867, -3.5412911

Very small entrance on north side of
depression. Rugged to a small tree and rebelayed
to a throughbolt just inside. 16m deep freeclimb
to flat stone filled floor, with big bowl.

Also dropped 0418 before realising it was.
Completed the drone sweep then ran back
in the rain.

I think we covered that one drone area pretty well, especially
as there were 4 of us and we spread out quite well. However
it's tricky ground to cover and as the weather was pretty
awful I'm sure we could have missed something. (RE)

Wed 8th November: VISIT SITE 5162
Chris Hibberts, Jim Thompson

Plan to cap oscillating Boulder blocking the way on. Route finding was fairly straight forward 1st pitch was belted at the head, after 4m addition belay added to avoid sub. At the bottom of mud slope Boulder in floor but no movement way on can be seen but too tight. Expected once Boulder capped still too tight. no draught.

Wed 8th November: VISIT SITE 4998
Chris Hibberts, Jim Thompson

Site found easily covered with 2 logs. 2.5m ~~rock~~ entrance blocked with sizeable rock entrance hole needs opening up to make removal of rocks/soil/branches easier. could not make a small rock fall for 5 seconds as described. Entrance photographed and slight outward draught. could see small bat at bottom of entrance hole moving on a spider's web.

TUESDAY 7th NOV - PICON 0075

CHRIS HIBBERTS

TEAM:- JIM THOMPSON, JOHN DEMBERTON,
LUKE CAFFERTY, CHRIS HIBBERTS

Came left rigged from previous trip,
descent of main entrance was quick.
Group head to Photograph Bats previously
seen in Chamber near entrance at
top of boulder pile before scree slope of
Doom. Next Group heads to SAA G.C.S
to take Photographs then on to
'Sala De los Bloques' SRT Gear
was left so no opportunity to
traverse French aven. so passages
explored near grotto. then made
a swift exit.

Tuesday 7th Nov:- Franks Cave. CHRIS H.
JIM T, JOHN P, LUKE C, CHRIS H.

LUKE + JOHN WENT TO CHAMBER AT
BOTTOM OF ROPE HAND LINE. FOUND RIFT
REQUIRING CHIPPING AND RETURNED TO
SURFACE AS BETTER PROSPECTS ELSEWHERE

ENCARAMADA 8th Nov 23 - JOEB, ROB E, DYLAN

Continued surveying lead beyond absolute which was left on 6/11/23.

After a few more metres the passage curved to the left and entered a small ~~cross~~-rift/chamber with only one obvious continuation. This was followed via further tight passage to another, much larger ~~At~~ cross-rift. At the far end of here was a chamber with impressive helictites! Unfortunately the only way on was another tight tube. This meandering crawl led to a sloping chamber ~~with a~~ boulder strewn chamber. The bottom had a squeeze through boulders into a canyon which lead after a short distance to a flat muddy chamber. ~~The~~ Back in the initial chamber & a climb up the NW side was taken by chimney ~~up~~ above a precarious drop. ~~The roof could be seen from here with~~ The roof could be seen from here with no way on. Predictably, the way on was another (!) small tube heading SE at head height from the ~~to~~ top of the slope. After ~15m, this

entered another chamber with a large (~4m) straw above.

The bottom of the ~~straw~~ muddy slope was a canyon with perched block a chamber beyond with impressive stalactites. Above the perched block was followed for ~50m of tight, sticky passage ~~which was too tight to continue~~ which ultimately was too tight to continue. ✱ →

ENCARAMADA — "NOSFERATU" 8/11/23

JOE PEMBERTON, SAM PEMBERTON, LUKE CAFFERTY

RETURNED TO HIGH LEVEL SLITHERIN EXTENSION.

Dropped pitch -15m to muddy floor with no way on, no draught. Noticed higher level tube above hang on pitch (roof - for end) needs 3 bolts. looks approx. 1m in diameter.

Surveyed on from choke at the end of SLITHERIN Through heavily stal'd section "OLIVANDERS WAND ROOM" passing passage heading W for 15m to mud climb. Could be climbed into - black space beyond. heading SW on the main drag passing a few avents. leads to a calcite squeeze passed at Roop level. This led to a large fault

Passage heading SW. A blind aven heads SSE and the passage terminates at a sandstone choke; Aven in the roof.

Due to disto malfunction we stopped surveying here, we checked out another lead at the choke (end of SLITHERIN) ~~the~~ A window in the choke lead through to a draughting, calcited passage reached by squeezing around 2x large calcite stals (FANGS - hence NosFERATU) This led for 70-80m to 2x Sandstone chokes, the first one looks open but looks super dodgy! The second one needs climbing. In between the two a 4m pit ~~leads~~ heads W which is blind but opens up above with a promising climb.

ENCARAMADA - 8th Nov - Joe Buck, Rob Cawis and Dylan Lecher

Report continued from previous page
(Went to the pub half way through...)

Having exhausted the first lead we decided to check out a lead just after the drippy bit ~~at~~ beyond 'I want it all'. This was initially stooping passage

with a small stream which progressively got smaller, lower and wetter. Dylan refused to surrender and crawled through a low and wet squeeze with a water bottle left just before (we obviously weren't the first in here but lack of footprints would suggest they stopped here). This continued only a little further past two small inlets on either side of the passage and ended at a muddy bank with no way on.

9/11/23?

BIG MAT CALF HOLE →
end of VALVA (SUTINLECKEN
INLET)

Big team minus Chris.
Delightful Stamping came,
red hot as it be so
dry. Great selection of
climbs kept it sporting
& some impressive formations
to admire
Nearly Dan chamber

fantastic. All in all a
Speleo-rump par
excellence.

Climb out of Scaffolding
a right PITA, please
re-engineer to be
twice the diameter,
more vertical and include
plenty of additional
horizontal tubes.

Also please re-align
entrance tubes to be
fully horizontal.

If this proves impractical
please extend heartfelt
thanks to the diggers
for providing a convenient
entrance to such a
wonderful cave!

All 7 of us got to the start of Suitwrecker, mostly just as a tourist trip but also to help remind Jon of the route finding and to get some photos. A trip to the end would have been a much more serious undertaking, a lot less inclusive! (RE)

ENCARNADA - 10th Nov 23 - Joe Burk
- Dylan Keeler

We went to check out a lead on the left, after the choke, ~~the~~ just ~~before~~ after the canyon section at the end of 'Boulevard of Broken Dreams'. This ~~had~~ was not marked on the survey. ~~But~~ A gap under a boulder opened into an aven ~~at~~ ~ 10m high. A climb up behind a flake led into a small parallel rift high up in the aven. This was choked above with no obvious way on.

Next went to climb the aven ~~for~~ just further along the main passage. This was climbed to around 3m below a ledge which ~~could~~ has potential but I couldn't see further in. Batteries ran low, ~~and~~ ran out of bolts and Dylan was getting hypothermic so Rope was left rigged. Enough rope to continue climb was left coiled.

Encarnada

10/11/23 Pub E, San P

It rained all night and morning so we were expecting high water levels. Particular consideration was given to the small wet passage at the bottom of the 10m entrance pitch, but this was surprisingly normal. Beyond observations matched the notes from July 2011, with a large stream emerging from the choke at Boulevard of Broken Dreams. Upstream of the previously mentioned river / bolt climb of Joe's the stream got less and less and by the time the Pug Trap choke was reached there was thankfully no stream, meaning the squeeze was totally dry.

Me and Sam went straight to Nosferatu (using cows tails or belts) and began surveying. 72m was surveyed. I had a poke up the sandstone choke near the end and a black space could be seen but it was very wet and dangerous looking so this was not attempted. We headed back, denigrating the

traverse, although no spanner meant
 4 hangers were left in place. The
 Pug Tap was still dry but water was
 just starting to flow into it, suggesting this
 may have been wetter soon.
 We got back to see a VERY
 old Dylan belaying. He then helped
 them carry gear out. The entrance
 pitches were all designed.

Notes on Encarnada

The main southerly trending passages are
 predominantly phreatic and a good size. Beyond
 I want it all the main (lower) level
 reduces in size quite dramatically. Beyond
 main ones are met (especially Absolution
 Area) and beyond each of these the
 passage gets possibly smaller, as does
 the draught. This area of the cave
 is under some very large depressions which
 may feed these ones. A theory therefore
 is that the cave may not continue much
 further south to the other valley, unlike
 Torca la Vaca. But, who knows...

On 6th Nov the team had issues with the survey gear just as they started to explore Nosferatu. As the glory grabbing
 wankers that they are they stopped surveying and just explored it all to the choke at the end. Me and Sam went back on
 10th and surveyed it for them. I actually really enjoyed my only trip up there. (RE)

From the Eldon Pothole Club website (photos included on the original):

<https://www.eldonpotholeclub.org.uk/homepage/trip-reports/617-la-trampa-del-pug-05-11-2023>

Jim, Chris, Jon, Rob, Sam, Joe, Luke, Dylan

La Trampa Del Pug- 05/11/2023

Written by Jim Thompson

Published: 08 November 2023

Following an eventful journey to Matienzo, via almost-Bilbao and ultimately Santander, that being the wrong airport in terms of intended destination but the right one in terms of the pilot actually being able to get the plane on the ground in one piece due to falling-out-of-the-sky levels of turbulence due to wind, rapid action from Joe and Chris who hired fresh cars before we'd even discovered if we'd be able to get off the plane, an excited Team Awesome headed to do a recce of the route and drop some kit at the end of the exploration objective for the week, Torca De Pena Encaramada

After a fun time changing in glorious sunshine surrounded by eucalyptus trees and some kind of giant hornet that we preferred to not inspect too closely, the team dropped the 30m entrance pitch and assembled in a chamber seemingly made for calibration of Distos. After the usual interminable sequence of turning and pressing we pressed on.

Bits of stomping interspersed with the odd squeeze led us to a 300m crabwalk in and above water more akin to a Derbyshire cave and not what I came to Spain for, but the whole time was joyous, I felt fully switched on and we were all bubbling away having loads of fun.

A lovely stroll along the 'Boulevard of Broken Dreams' took us further into the system, past a stunning aven in the Long Road to Ruin that we eyed up as a possible climb, and eventually everyone paused at the I Want it All boulder choke, where the way on appeared to be in a low, squalid crawl under a boulder and into a tight looking squeeze. I preferred to let Rob, Joe and Dylan take the plunge first but once they were through and confirmed the way was on, decided that delaying the inevitable would only make it worse so grovelled my way through the muddy water and to the hole. The water wasn't as bad as it looked, but the squeeze didn't look great. I poked an arm and head in and it didn't feel great, so I popped back out and had a better look at the shape of the hole and pushed in again. Back and forth four times with increasing insertion but ultimately and increasing feeling of getting closer to total stuckness led me to reluctantly back out for what I thought would be the final time and the end to my aspirations of pushing the end of the cave onwards to glory....

Cue the return of a calm and encouraging Joe at the other side of the hole, bringing assurances and kind words that I'd most certainly have no problem reaching the hallowed other side if I only applied the right fortitude.

Reinsertion commenced and immediately I felt better with Joe's soothing tones coaxing me gently ahead. A bit of vigorous pushing and wriggling and through I popped with an elated whoop! I headed forward to meet Rob and Dyl at the bottom of a dark drippy aven full of fallen pillars of rock and the place felt ominous and immediately remote compared to the preceding friendly metres.

I decided to go and check on Chris' progress as I knew he'd be having similar thoughts to mine and found him having a similar experience. Maybe my bedside manner is not what it should be but no amount of coaxing would get him to commit so I called on a no-longer-soulless, but now rather Gentle Joe. Chris is a tad broader than me and unfortunately even Joe's powers couldn't make him achieve the impossible in this case.

In spite of my elation at getting where I was in the first place, I'd had a slightly perturbed feeling that the feat may not be quite so easy in reverse, and not wanting to find out at the end of a grueller, and not wanting to

abandon Chris to cave out on his own, I decided to go back the way I'd come. I decide to go with my preferred right arm forward like I had on the way through and the shape of the hole looked good for it. I got inside and applied some power like I had done on the way through and kept moving right up to the point that my hip bones ground to a halt on the rock. My ribs were a tad pinched too but the immovability of my pelvis was the primary cause for concern. Not a problem, I'll just reverse out a try a slightly different position. At this point I realised that my earlier slight perturbation had a sound base.

Literally nothing I did helped, I couldn't move backwards, nor forwards, up, down, nothing. I felt a panic rise but decided to suppress it as a panicked caver is a bigger and more tired caver. Relaxing didn't really help however so I had a little panic again, and then a bigger one that gave way to shame and sorrow as the realisation dawned that I'd really messed up on day one of the expedition and I'd been having such a great time and I wouldn't be able to go caving again and wondered how long I'd take to starve to death as the cave didn't even seem cold enough for hypothermia to take me away that quickly.

Gentle Joe had clearly sensed something was up, possibly because he'd heard my repeated cries of 'oh fuck I've fucked it this time' or words to that effect. He came and grabbed hold of my legs to try to lift my hips out of the narrowing at the bottom but it didn't do much to relieve matters. Unfortunately for Sam he turned up at my head end and asked if I could move, so feelings turned to rage as I screamed that if I could fucking move I'd not be stuck in this fucking squeeze and if he didn't have anything constructive to say he'd better shut the fuck up. I immediately apologised and asked him to grab my head to take the strain off my tiring neck. His presence did however have a calming effect as I calmed down and took stock the situation. I couldn't bend my torso forward, but reaching my arm behind revealed a massive space behind my arse.... Unusable space due to the fact that my hips were being pressurised into the rock in front but it was space. Maybe I wasn't trapped in the choke forever after all. For now though I wasn't moving. The L shaped boulder above me and the narrowing below me had me held fast.

I managed to get an arm down to reach my belt and thankfully the buckle was right where I needed it so I wiggled it and millimetre by millimetre the buckle came undone and I pulled it off and out of the way. A few mm hip wiggle forward made me feel better until I got more stuck, however at that point Sam realised that my oversuit was rucked up behind my arse. I shifted a shoulder and felt material slip a few mm up my back. 'Sam, grab my collar and fucking pull!' cordura sliding up my back gave me the impetus to push as hard as I could and I shouted 'Sam! Keep fucking pulling and don't stop!' As the fabric slid I went with it and forgot about the fact that it felt like my pelvis was being abraded against the rock. The next moment I shot out of the squeeze like a cork out of a bottle with an even bigger whoop than the entry whoop and dragged myself through the puddle before collapsing at the feet of Luke and Chris with looks of genuine concern on their faces. They rallied round and shoved some food and drink into me and I sat for a moment saying 'fucking hell I really thought I'd fucked it'... Quick hug for Sam before he headed through the newly christened 'Pug Trap' and it was time to get the hell out of there.

The return trip felt great in the circumstances with no lasting trauma evident. 300m of flat out wet crawling felt a lot harder than on the way in and it was only after about 200m that I realised that it hadn't been flat out crawling on the way in and stood up.

Chris and I lost Luke and Jon in the Disto chamber and had a little detour down the wrong direction until the lack of footprints highlighted our folly and we retraced our route and back to the entrance shaft.

As Chris prusiked up I sat in the dark and felt glad to be with such a mega team and pondered whether I felt fast and fit for the ascent. Just as I started to feel the cold Chris boomed out 'rope free!' and I stuck on my jammers and bolted for freedom. I was fast and fit and in short order was inhaling the amazing smell of a eucalyptus scented surface air in the utter darkness of the Cantabrian night.

Chris Camm and Alf Latham – two- week trip based in La Cavada. Chris Camm has the 'pings'. My E-N positions here estimated from Google Maps. The mini-expedition was repeatedly hit by blustery winds and rain. (Grid refs below spotted from Google Maps 26/11/23, to replace original refs off Google Maps.)

Friday. 27/10/23.

Trip to explore depressions in the eucalypt plantations down to the west off the back road above Riaño at about 3/36/30W, 43/20/85N. Farm track through a double gate. Noisy dog.

Two holes found.

NEW SITE 5392 One at about 43.34787247486272, -3.6140801581355007 [equates to 30T 450231 4799630, alt 284m], a rift dug out by Chris and requiring a ladder. Awkward drop of 5m to sloping rift and short climb down, then 8m to body-size low chamber with small hole. No draft.

NEW SITE 5393 Number two. What looks like a collapsed passage with deep clints and crevices in prominent limestone ridge below house at the road fork. Alf uncovered a 1m round hole partly in earth at about 43.346444854604094, -3.614653183875741 at altitude about 286m [equates to 30T 450183 4799471, alt 280m]. Undescended drop of 5m. Might be an inward draft.

Area not fully explored by us. It takes a gorse basher to get through.

Sat 28/10/2023.

Afternoon visit to Sin Sendero #5227, Riaño, and caps into multi-flowstone barrier at end of entrance rift heading toward Ali Chamber and Sandy Chamber in Harry's CS (see previous accounts). Found gaps between flows but no real progress made.

Sunday 29/10/2023.

Parked up on back road Arriba-Alisas toward Riaño

Walked for several hours in fields and woods below. Chris found attractive bench-gulley. A shallow valley in wood to new farm excavation-development is fed by a very tight resurgence

NEW SITE 5394 at 43.356271001798454, -3.6748111142478446. [equates to 30T 445316 4800600, altitude 172m] No real finds.

Monday 30/10/2023

Scouted area above the Alisas road of Avenida Arriba Alisas, attracted by some newly logged ground. The old plantation is very dense. Looked at the cow fields down to limestone outcrops and found one new hole.

NEW SITE 5395 at about 43.34661487742216, -3.67676121114819 207m. [equates to 30T 445149 4799529] This hole in cattle field estimated depth is 10m or more with inward draft. It has been slabbed over and thick slab is anchored by a young ash tree.

Tuesday, 31/10/2023

Alf visit to Phil Parker's #5353 at Hornedo. Several cap holes to widen rift at end of roomy entrance. Good draft in. Chris estimated plan distance to nearest part of Vaca to be around 70m. Goats appear to be using it as a shelter.

Wednesday, 1/11/23.

Alf visit to #5353. More cap holes to allow better access.

Thursday 2/11/2023.

Rain and wind. Up Arroyo Bencano (Moncobe) in the afternoon, with fallen oaks being cleared off the road.

Bank has continued to subside into the stream bed. Investigated the sandstone valley on W side. No real finds, not surprisingly. The sandstone bed is quite thick. Found some shelf-like caves near the old ice house on the limestone (see Orux maps).

Saturday, 4/11/2023.

Arroyo Bencano. Chris dug out shelves of dens etc but to little effect. The 'caves' appear merely to be fallen slabs. The area is now very densely overgrown so we could not reach/find previous prospects. Alf explored main stream bed and realised that a large fault separates the limestones up-valley from the down-thrown sandstone beds. A tributary valley, just up, and on opposite from where the Casa Vieja valley comes in, yielded no new prospects. It might repay further scouting in the fields above.

Sunday, 5/11/2023

Above San Antonio area on S side to 3014 (Clarke and Smith's cave), etc. New logged area and new planting around (The machines have scraped places to bare limestone on a ridge-plateau.

NEW SITE 5396 5319 A shelf cave, now buried in bulldozed brush and earth, on hardwood corridor between plantations ended in dry 'den' floor. Finishes at dead end low chamber.

NEW SITE 5396 3080 Chris (re)found a dig under a low sandstone cliff near a partly collapsed barn.

Monday, 6/11/2023

Chris dug his shelf. **#3080** Three hours of progress unearthed soil, plastic bags and bottles. A suppose draft in a cobweb was later reckoned to be caused by a large spider passing wind!

Alf confirmed holes in this area found earlier by John Southworth. Bits of holes in deep depressions not pinged but would require digging out earth to some depth.

Tuesday 7/11/2023.

Alf third trip to **5353**, Hornedo. Removed a large part of loose seat of rock and sand jammed in the rift, then capped the shelf to see down about 8m to a floor in a hading rift. V tight at the top. More work needed.

Wednesday 8/11/2023

Summoned back a day early by Brit Ferries due to impending storms.

MATIENZO CAVES PROJECT