MATIENZO CAVES PROJECT

LOGBOOK

Year: 2025

Season: autumn

Logbook pages converted from an online *Google Doc*

Juan Corrin, November 2025

Autumn 2025 Logbook

LOGBOOK HELP

STARTED September 2025

3rd September 2025 NEW SITE

Yesterday at about 7.15 I (Pete Smith) was called to help with a calf rescue by the woman in Riaño that we've helped in the past. It's possibly a new shaft in the La Gatuna/Collada area, somewhere between 2887 and 4906. But I won't be rushing back to GPS it. A ladder depth, quite a nice partly fluted shaft. We wrapped a couple of ropes around the largish calf, you've never seen such dodgy knots, but lots of them and they held up as the strong team on the surface pulled it out. It was after 10.00 when I got back.

NEW SITE #5498 @ 30T 0449900 4798550 Alt 310m (Very approximate)

22nd September #4480

From Alf Latham

Several visits by Chris Camm, Steve Woods, and Alf Latham in Aug-Sept 2025, lengthened the outward drafting Pistruelos dig by 2 metres in a gently down-sloping, tight passage. This resulted in the creation of a deepening pool that has to be slopped out on each daily visit. The passage is now known, by smoke tests, to be connected to an old sink 5 m up-valley and probably another about 20-30 m down-valley.

Back at Easter.

23rd September #0729

From Pete Smith

Last Saturday we went to check out 0729, cueva de Domingo Lopez, etc. The entrance wasn't immediately apparent it has changed so much. Tree trunks nearly filled the shakehole but it was still possible to get into the cave.

Also the grid ref. took us to it, but somehow the entrance coordinates seem to be linked to a point half way along the cave.

The entrance coordinates are fine. But on the Orux and QGIS maps, a point along the passage seems to be fixed as the entrance. Looking at the Survex file, the entrance is Station 24.

24th September Fixings in Caves

Simon Cornhill's thoughts as the MCP were purchasing thrubolts.

I find fixings in caves is always an interesting topic, with folk having many different view points and preferences, depending on the usage and situation.

I've been taking out to Matienzo on the last few trips 75x8mm KDK-E A4 stainless steel, so around 55mm (maximum) in the rock. I got these mainly because it's what my local engineering supplier 'Nuts of Chorley' stocks. These are what are at the top of all the climbs in the Shrimpbone Inlet/Mongoose area and seem reasonably good. For me, they are about the right length for primary 'expedition' anchors.

https://www.kalm.de/English/Products/Mechanical-fixings/

For climbing I have used 50x8mm Fischer thrubolts. However, with a standard Petzl hanger this gives a maximum of 30mm in the rock, which needs to be of good quality and well dressed so the hanger sits properly flush. These do feel rather short, especially when climbing and the next placement ends up being marginal! NB: When climbing on these, every 3rd or 4th one I do place a longer bolt.

For context, in case you haven't seen one of the reusable 8mm Petzl Coeur Pulse bolts up close, these have 45mm which will go down a hole. So, for an equivalent thrubolt with 20mm needed for a hanger/nut/washer/striking stem, would be 65mm in total length, which seems to me about optimum for general use.

Of course, if the rock isn't really hard an 8mm thrubolt can pull out a reasonable amount when setting them, which is another reason why I don't like them too short, especially for rigging pitches.

Regarding the material; as Phil says corrosion resistance is of paramount importance, the original bolts in Deception are a constant reminder of this!

Regarding 're-bolting' or placing anchors on a pitch which could end up being frequently used; It may be worth checking the stock of 10mm stainless steel thrubolts and hangers that the expedition has, and maybe encouraging these to be used in these situations? The availability of some resin bolts and relevant fixing equipment are another thought, but additional skills and time to place them properly would be necessary though.

One final slightly related thing we have been pondering on;

What with our recent distractions of Deception & Uzueka and all, Di and I always talk about getting back to Mistletoe Pot (#2081) and the logistics of it. We were contemplating leaving at least the botanical highway permanently rigged, however I feel that it's an awful lot of Matienzo gear to 'disappear' from the tackle store for a reasonable length of time. Specifically for the Botanical highway; I was trying to come up with a plan for rigging the thrubolt studs with some sort of 'low cost hanger' instead of a Petzl or Raumer + maillon. A friend suggested industrial 10mm steel Petzl Coeur hangers and an appropriate washer, which can be bought for less than £1 each. I would definitely have to thoroughly test this idea though, but a 9mm rope may tie directly into them without the need for a maillon. For the actual pitches the correct hanger & million would be needed, or place a 10mm thrubolt.

Anyway, as always, I'm thinking about looking after the Matienzo tackle as best we can when using it, promptly returning as much as possible without being too frivolous with it!

5th October 2025 Rasa #5135 and Vallina 0733

Guy Simonnot's Visual Topo (.trox) data for Rasa has been changed into Survex data (which seems to agree precisely with his Visual Topo data. (The LRUD had missing data so should not be relied on). As expected when the connection points were equated ("close to" 1994s.1018 in Vallina) the horizontal error was >80m - but the vertical error was almost 0.
The Rasa entrance is 80m higher than top entrance Vallina and, with a Rasa surveyed length of 1342m (apparently ~1400m with unsurveyed bits), the length of Vallina is now 38859 + 1342 = 40201m.

Looks like a sporting trip, Rasa to bottom entrance.

Juan

10th October 2025 #0525

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan and Phil Papard checked out #0525 entrance to see if it would be possible to dig down from the surface to reach the 11m pitch previously seen (summer 2025) which has become unstable. It was decided that it would be easier to shore up the pitch head from inside and remove the collapse. We then made a short visit to Cuvia Campo #0076 to look at a climb seen in summer 2025. It was decided a short length of aluminium ladder would make it easy to access. A proper trip will be made to check out a draughting dig and possible leads in the connecting cave #1403. On the way back to the car a hole at the side of the road was noted. **(A ????)**

Peter

11th October 2025 #0801 Cueva Arturo and various sites on the hillside

Dave Bell and Peter T Eagan

Arturo was located and uncovered easily. The slope down into the cave is still littered with bags of dead animals, but can be avoided with care. The entrance chamber is very well decorated. We took a few photos and a brief look around and located the graffiti left many years ago below which a hole could be seen which was described as an easy dig. We spent over an hour opening it out to a squeeze. This disappointingly closed down after just a few meters. We exited and recovered the cave entrance. PHOTOS

We then opened to the hole found by the road but this also closed down after about 4 metres with no prospect of more. **(A ????)**

#1706 entrance was located and found to be covered with old lamp posts. These were easily removed.A short scramble down below a wedged slab gains the bouldery floor with no way on.

A further hole was found (possibly new) further up the valley with only ferns hiding the entrance. A 3m climb down into a small chamber surrounded by large stals was entered but no way on could be seen, other than under the entrance climb. From the surface it would be possible to dig down into another very small area and dig down. A further visit in summer to check for a draught would be worthwhile. **(B ????)**

A few other locations were looked at and will be checked with known grid references.

Peter

12th October 2025 #0733 Vallina

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan and Torben Redder

We visited Vallina to check out areas around the Dragon, Who Knows Chamber and Shatter Passage to see if we could spot any evidence of the bottom of the pitches found in the higher level.

Nothing significant was found near the Dragon, but the area above the Who Knows Chamber (Where Who Knows Goes) is worth another visit, which is planned to take place.

This is because the top of this passage, which climbs steeply above the chamber, is at the same elevation as “The Big Chamber” in the higher level, and only 55m from it.

We will probably try and re-survey Who Knows Chamber and Where Who Knows Goes as there seems to be something wrong with the older data.

The trickle of water, reported at the base of Emily Pitch, that was subsequently followed, may be the trickle that re-appears above the 12m pitch from the Shatter Passage area down to the Haymarket Series stream below. The trickle here comes out of a 5cm wide rift. There isn’t very much visible flowing water in this part of the cave …

Further climbing and traversing in the rift above may have possibilities for extending via a sandy dig - the passages shown on the survey do continue for nearly twice the length shown (i.e. Pater entered the rift from the main Shatter Passage area and was effectively “over” the 12m pitch connection point).

The viability of some of these leads will perhaps become more evident once the pitch below Emily Pitch is surveyed.

Edward Scissor-hands Aven was also visited, which has a wet small outlet, but the climb down would be best done with a rope, or even a ladder.

On exiting the start of the passage to Shatter Passage area a short climb up then down through a hole entered a short section of sandy passage with the possibility of extending via a sandy dig. This was surveyed. **Batch 25-06 L= 14m . Total length Vallina = 40215m**

There are other sections of the passages in this area (between Windy Corner and Road to Nowhere) that would probably benefit from some re-survey effort too.

Peter

13th October 2025 #0103 Espada via #5474

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan and Santi

Visited Espada to take photos and check out possible ways-on near the new top entrance. The entrance was found quite easily with minimum jungle bashing and the wooden cross tied up a tree was still there marking the entrance. This now has a piece of red and white tape for future location.

Lots of photos were taken in the old top section, easily entered via the dug out top entrance. Not much progress was made in finding ways on, however, a possible pitch and a possible climb have been found not far from the wild boar bones.

The whole area of this “chamber” - where it says “complex area, drawing needs checking” on the survey - needs to be re-surveyed and thoroughly “checked” - like it says!

Peter

14th October 2025 #0733 Vallina

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan, Santi, Torben, Louise, Karen

Trip to examine some passages in The Maze just beyond Windy Corner, and to look at Where Who Knows Goes.

We looked at The Maze, and found the route into Shopping Trip, with the intention to check if the end of it really was “low” - this was of interest as the passage end is only 55m from the passages in Tits Up (the exploration of which was never really properly finished). At the start of Shopping Trip we did note a climb that was 4m up on rubble, which then descends to a choke - but above the rubble was a 15m high fluted rift, about 5m long and 2m to 3m wide. This will need to be checked out.

We moved on to Shopping Trip, which we found to have been investigated by “some pretty determined people”, and thus concluded that if they said the end was “too low” then it almost certainly was “too low”. Peter got to the final right-hand corner, and looked along it.

We moved on to Who Knows Chamber and the passages above. We decided to re-survey this, as there are two “original” conflicting centerlines, and we needed to check our ability to use a SAP6 and SexyTopo.

The original drawn survey is accurate, but ours now has some specific detail of the 25m high avens etc.

The tops of these avens are at a similar elevation to the “middle level” big chamber in the Top Level Continuation, and are separated by less than 50m horizontally.

It would be possible to bolt up these avens, but it might be worth trying to come down them first, as that would be less effort!

Unfortunately we really needed a short rope and some bolts to finish the climb, and hence the survey - we may return to do this later in the week. *(Batch 25-07, not included in the centre line survey - yet)*

We looked at a few other short possibilities in the area, and then went out.

Dave

15th October 2025 #0525 Cave of the Wildcat (Cueva del Gato Montés)

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan, Santi

We started by looking in #0076 Cuvia del Campo and #1403 Cueva del Portón.

We had taken a 4m aluminium ladder to look up into a hole near the entrance (on the left). It was just an alcove. We looked at the draughting slot noted by Peter and John in the summer, but you really need to be able to follow the draught to extend this, and there was none today. Juan brought his GoProMax in to shove along the hole - didn’t look very promising. Finally we looked at “Lead 1” in Porton, which was described as a promising fist-sized hole.

The hole may have been “fist-sized”, but it must have been a small child’s fist, and probably quite a long way away too! We did not find the lead promising at all and went to look across the road.

It is possible that “Lead 2” is a better prospect, but we left this for another day.

We crossed the road.

As we approached #0525 we saw a Wild Cat (Felis Silvestris) at the entrance (large pointed ears and a ringed tail) which vanished under the scaffolding beam and presumably up the slope into the trees.

After all the excitement we descended to the bottom of the short entrance pitch and looked around for evidence of the cat. There were cat droppings on the floor and a few small bones which were not there on my last visit.

The small draughting connection, once uncovered, looks too long to cap out without a lot of work. We surveyed the cave and looked at dig/capping the upper section/sloping climb down to 11m pitch, which had not fallen in anymore. **Batch 0525 with svg files L=19.2 d=4 surveyed +11 =15m**

We removed two large blocks in the roof, which were going to fall out anyway, and prevented them from blocking the way on, and capped off the last tight section. It is now possible to climb down to the pitch head (still covered) fairly easily and start work improving it. The roof at the far end will probably require shoring.

Dave

16th October 2025 #0733 Vallina

Torben Redder, Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan and Santi

The plan was to bolt the climb in the maze area seen on the 14th Oct and then check out some leads in the Canyon sump passage.

After placing three bolts in the climb a line of rust spits was seen. These must have been placed a long time ago, possibly by the Spanish, so the climb was abandoned until further research is made.

We then headed for the corkscrew climb which was found quickly. A second passage next to the entry to the corkscrew climb was checked out and leads to a white cone of calcite and stal. Whilst checking out the sides of the passage to CSC we found a route to the back of the white stal. This needs surveying. Other short sections of passage in this area also need checking out. At the top of the CSC it was quickly established that it was more than a straight forward climb down. By traversing across the top of the climb a section of passage was found and surveyed (approx 60m) When we traversed back we could also see a continuation of the traverse, which may be the start of the climb, but will need protection. The original survey suggests that corkscrew climb is “6m approx”, but also shows a vertical depth of over 18m, which we confirmed. **Batch 25-08 L=44m Total Vallina length = 40215+44 = 40259m**

On the way out of the cave we took photos of two fossil specimens Santi found whilst climbing in the maze area. These have now been hidden for future inspection, but could be retrieved if anyone wants to see them.

Peter

*Vallina note: Use **batches 25-06** and **25-08** but not **25-07** as further resurveying and additional survey will be carried out at another date.*

17th October 2025 Vallina #0733 and Rasa #5135.

Juan & Penny

Parked up in the 1-car spot at the start of the short walk down to top entrance Cueva Vallina (#0733). A mixture of photos taken - entrance and inside the 1st chamber, including 360°.

Drove further up the track and found the Rasa (#5135) entrance almost exactly where Orux Maps said it was. Latest, slightly amended GPS of the entrance (to be used in all scenarios) is 30T 0.450.327 4.793.059 Altitude 500m. 360° photos taken of the entrance.

Using the surveyed length of Rasa (1342m) and not the estimated ~1400m, the current length of the Vallina System (with 4 entrances) is 40201m. (Doesn’t include any Autumn surveying).

With the autumn surveying (batches -25-06 and -08, not -07; see previous note) the **total length of the Cueva Vallina system is 40259m**

Just before the final drop down into Solores, an improved track - at a bend past a posh house - keeps north of the river and meets the main Riva-Matienzo route just down the road from the stoney track off to the Mortiro / Torca CEZ area.

18th October 2025 #0103 Espada

Dave Bell, Peter T Eagan and Santi Urrutia

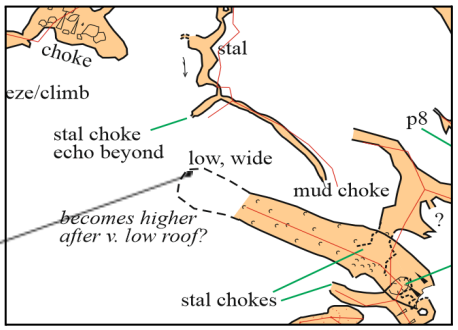
A return visit to Espada to check out an area where it says “complex area, drawing needs checking” on the survey - which needs to be re-surveyed and thoroughly.

This area is far more complex than first thought as we had found a pitch/climb which had not been seen until this Autumn. We free climbed down the pitch after removing a few rocks and opening a tight section. A step to one side leads into a 3m wide passage 7/8m long and 3m high sloping down to a possible dig

which may require only a large crow bar, but does not look as big beyond. Opposite the bottom of the ladder pitch entry there is a 3m long tube which splits but then becomes small.

Survey batch 0103-25-02 (with svg files) **L=121m TL=2438+121=2559m**

A point was chosen back above the ladder pitch st10 and various passage sections here followed and surveyed, most leading to climbs and avens, one being 7m high after climbing 3m from st 10. We tied the survey in at the base of the bolted climb, in the main passage, near the bones and stopped for the day, as some people in the party had gone into tech stress.



There is still a similar sized area to check out in the future, when we have an idea of where it's all going.

On the way out we checked out another lead above the capped connection. We dug through quite quickly past the tight section where it then opened out to more nice formations but the way on behind the stal will need digging in soft flow stone. The way on steeply climbs in a solid small passage half filled with small rocks which could be removed.

Peter

22nd October #0025

Pete Smith's latest drawing of the Risco complex received.

25th October #0111

Juan - drone flying over supposed position of 0111. Thick vegetation tall shrubs and trees.

25th October #4732 Torca la Decepción

Di & Si (Diane Arthurs & Simon Cornhill)

After far too long it feels great to be back in the happy valley, such a shame we missed the Easter expedition and the fantastic 65th fiesta.

We took a load of gear up to Decepción, rigged Small Slam and calibrated a Distox2.

26th October #4732 Torca la Decepción

Di & Si

We took more gear up to the entrance and calibrated our backup Distox2. Then installed a deviation at the bottom of Small Slam for the 'wet SRT hang' and placed another bolt to create a traverse line to the final short drop of Small Slam. Interestingly the Super Duck crawl had cobbled up - then onto rigging Grand Slam and dropped off a pile of gear there ready for a big trip tomorrow. The whole cave up to now is very dry.

27th October #4732/0107 Torca la Decepción/Uzueka

Di & Si

Returning to El Gordo discovered above Armageddon last Christmas; we had a thorough look for any leads which could have been missed. Several holes against the Western and Northern walls were descended, some having to be dug, unfortunately they all choked up or were full with dry cracked mud.

CAUTION: Any visiting cavers should be aware that the 23m Ace Alli climb which winds its way up from the main Armageddon passage to El Gordo, has many loose perched rocks/boulders. It is recommended that you climb with care and are NOT positioned below anyone who is moving or climbing above you. Any falling rocks have the potential to fall the whole length of the climb.
Also please be aware that as El Gordo itself is a very large breakdown chamber, it contains some very steep loose slopes and also requires care to navigate and remain oriented.

28th October #0111

Di & Si

Having studied the photos from 1981 we had a bushwack closer to the road trying to find 0111, however the Matienzo jungle here proved to be very dense and fierce. We retreated after a couple of hours and might revisit this search at christmas when hopefully the vegetation may have died down a bit.

29th October #4732/0107 Torca la Decepción/Uzueka

Di & Si

Surveyed: 200m (new)

Down Decepcion to Armageddon and surveyed upstream from the start of Armageddon choke to the first collapsed chamber above the streamway.

There were green reflective markers leading up into this chamber, as the way on is in the streamway they were removed. Interestingly, there were only one set of footprints in the rippled sandy floor of this chamber.

31st October #0111

Di & Si

Another bushwack closer to the road trying to find 0111. It hasn't been re-found yet but it feels close and the location seems to fit with the 1981 photos. The jungle is incredibly dense in this area.

1st November #0111

Di & Si

A late afternoon bushwack trying to find 0111. The jungle seems incredibly more dense following a trip to a goat-less festival in Arredondo which included tapas de morcillo, chorizo y queso especial.

2nd November #0229

Di & Si

A lovely sunny walk around the Mushroom Field area walking above the passages of Rocky Horror. As we were admiring the sunset Di uncovered the top of a shaft just to the right of 5080, which appears to be 'on the only ledge in the area'. As it will require a bit more work to enter and was going dark, we'll return to descend it and see if it is the elusive 0229…

30T 453251 4798446 Alt:286m

3rd November #0229

Di & Si

Surveyed: 13m

Clearing the top of the hole found yesterday, a half in rusty spit was uncovered, confirming 0229 had finally been re-found. A tight wriggle onto the pitch head and a 13m descent to the floor. A 3cm calcited rift is one potential way on and the other is a choked very low muddy slope, both would require a concerted digging effort. No real draught was felt.

As 0249 and 0229 were positioned on the old maps on the same day at about the same altitude, is it likely that 5080 is 0249? The "2nd Nov" shaft is 0229, so it would strongly suggest that 5080 is 0249!

3rd November #0077

Survey received from Chris Scaife for the Lloyd's Grotto, Yahoo Chamber, Maximum Breakdown Chamber and the Endless Bedding Plane areas of Rascavieja.

4th November #0111

Di & Si

Another bushwack trying to locate 0111 with no success.

4th November #2414 Regolfo

Di & Si

Re-surveyed 27m (the webpage says 73m - I guess this includes the nearby 5461)

Moving onto something more productive, we re-surveyed Regolfo and did some digging. As usual there was a very powerful inwards draught.

Old Lengths Depths
2414 33.6m -14.3m (You've now resurveyed this to 27m?) (The "73m" is 2414+5461)
5461 38.5m
5462
2976 d-14
2977 d-18

4th November new site #5499

Torca de Australiano (ADEMCO site, d=146m) given an MCP code #5499 as it's not too far outside our current permit area between San Miguel and Ogarrio.
Averas (#0108) has better grid reference 0457481 4794860 ^482.
(All info taken from the Boletín Cántabro de Espeleología, 18)

5th November #2414, 2976, 2977, 5461

Di & Si

We resurveyed 5461, found, descended and surveyed 2976 & 2977 and tied these all together with an overland survey to 2414.

2977: Is a 14m fluted shaft, contains a cow at its base in a state of advanced decomposition and is gradually making its way down the cave in the watercourse. At the bottom an alcove looks to be too tight with a vertical slot going down at the back of it and is taking the water, with a very low horizontal passage behind this. This was only viewed from a distance as Mr Whiffy was guarding the way on.

2976: A 9m choked shaft; below where the stream in the shallow valley above sinks.

5461: Resurveyed.

6th November #4732 Torca la Decepción

Di & Si

A trip to remove equipment left in Decepción. Small and Grand slam have been left rigged for when we return at Christmas.

Di & Si Autumn 2025 survey totals:

Cave No:	surveyed	previous	new	New length
107	200	78718	200	78853**
229	13	20	-7	13
2414	26	73	-47	26
2976	8	14	-6	8
2977	15	18	-3	15
5461	41	38	3	41
	303		**140**	

** Other adjustments reduce the overall length

15th November #5479

Drawn survey received from Phil Papard

16th November Monte Llusa

La Cambera is still prospecting on Monte Llusa. From their blog -

Today we're off to Monte Llusa in Ribamontán to prospect and try to find any new holes, since we'd seen that two eucalyptus groves had been cut down and we had to take advantage of opportunities like this.

After thoroughly searching the area, we only found one measly hole that isn't even worth cataloging.

We had high expectations, but this time we weren't lucky.

Closed 18th November 2025

MATIENZO CAVES PROJECT