

MATIENZO 2023

The DCC contribution to the expedition

INTRODUCTION

Here we were again, the same four at the same time doing much the same sort of things! The DCC was represented by twelve members. The four members travelling to Matienzo for three weeks were Nigel, Liz, Bill and Pete (Clewes) and we stayed at the apartments in the centre of Matienzo, a short distance from Bar La Panaderia (The Bakers). Tom, Charlotte and James stayed in the "Green House" on the hill near the Llueva road and the others either stayed with them or elsewhere in the valley.

We arrived on Wednesday 27th July and left on Wednesday 17th August.

Over the three weeks, we moved around a fair bit but spent three days working on digs close to the Matienzo-Solórzano road.

SPOT-HOLING

We did not spend as much time as in former years searching for new sites. We went to the south end of the valley and visited site 3884 then explored up through jungle to the top of the hill (near site 0001) but found very little of interest. We checked out the area near Apprentice Cave (2108) but the undergrowth has increased massively.

CAVE WORK AND DIGGING

Apart from just spot-holing or having a caving trip, we worked on three sites during the expedition and James and Tom worked on another near their accommodation.

- a) At site 3112, a dig near Solórzano which we have worked on before, we started to dig in a new direction following the draught nearer the surface. After a day, however, we realised that substantial shoring would be required so we left as unsuitable for the time we could afford on it.
- b) At Apprentice Cave (2108), Pete O pushed a bit further than had been explored before – by a few metres! The survey has never been drawn up so a sketch was made based on the Survex file originally prepared in 2004. The entrance now needs enlarging a bit as 20 years after Tony B and others explored it, it has become too tight and both Nigel and Pete O needed some help to get out!
- c) We moved on from there to a dig right next to the road (2101) which was also dug in 2004. Three sessions meant we got another couple of metres deeper following a strong draught. The dig is over the end of Cueva de Bollon (0098) and if we get through, it will be a useful place to continue exploration but it could include connections to systems further up the hill (the draught was outwards).

CAVING TRIPS

Apart from digging and spot-holing, we had trips to Cueva de Tiva (0026) briefly to check the draughts at the end of the first passage, La Cuvia (0086) to the end via the pitch, and Cueva Las Cosas (0084) for photography.

MINING TRIPS

To coincide with Pete Johnson's visit, a trip to the zinc mine at Udías was arranged. During this trip, we followed the usual route down the inclines but then branched off following a series of green arrows (with descending numbers). This led us to an area where there had been extensive mineral sampling and finally to the top of an artificial incline down to a lower level. The incline emitted a strong draught. At this point, we were well into natural cave and decided to call it the end of the trip, especially as there was a most

unexpected health and safety sign installed by the mineral explorers: Variscan! Tom, James and others made a return trip to Udías later.

OTHER TRIPS

Because of Nigel's car problems (required a new clutch), we did not get out of the valley as much as in the last couple of years but we did manage a day in Rasines where there is a "Palaeolithic Park". The site, run by the local council, includes a short mine level (Mina Constante) worked for calamine and the resurgence end of a massive system (La Cueva del Valle) which has over 60km of passage and a very healthy cold draught.

AND ALSO

Pete C went on a few bike rides with some of the other English residents in the valley. His last excursion however ended with a visit to Laredo hospital – but that's another story. Nigel and Liz had a couple of days out at a Parador in Santiana del Mar.

ON EXPEDITION FROM DCC

Badger, Bill Booth, Pete Clewes, Nigel Dibben, Tom Howard, James Johnson, Pete Johnson, Steve Martin, Charlotte Meakin, Pete O'Neill, Kieran Rooney, Liz Taylor

	
In cave 3884	Dig site 3112
	
In Apprentice Cave	The tight entrance tube into Apprentice Cave



Dig 2101 at start of work



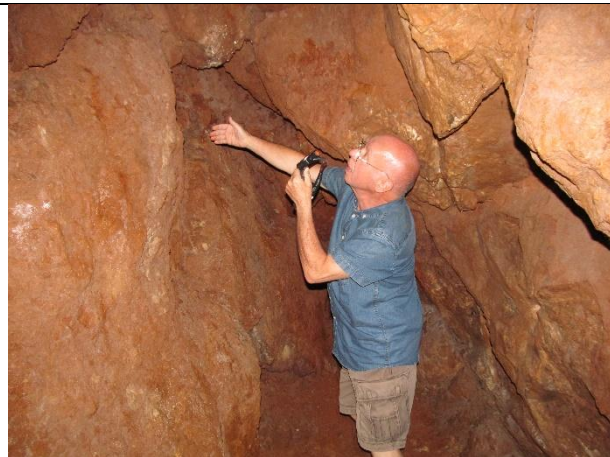
Dig 2101 towards the end



The main incline in Udias mine



In the natural cave below Udias mine



Mina Constante near Rasines



Cueva del Valle near Rasines