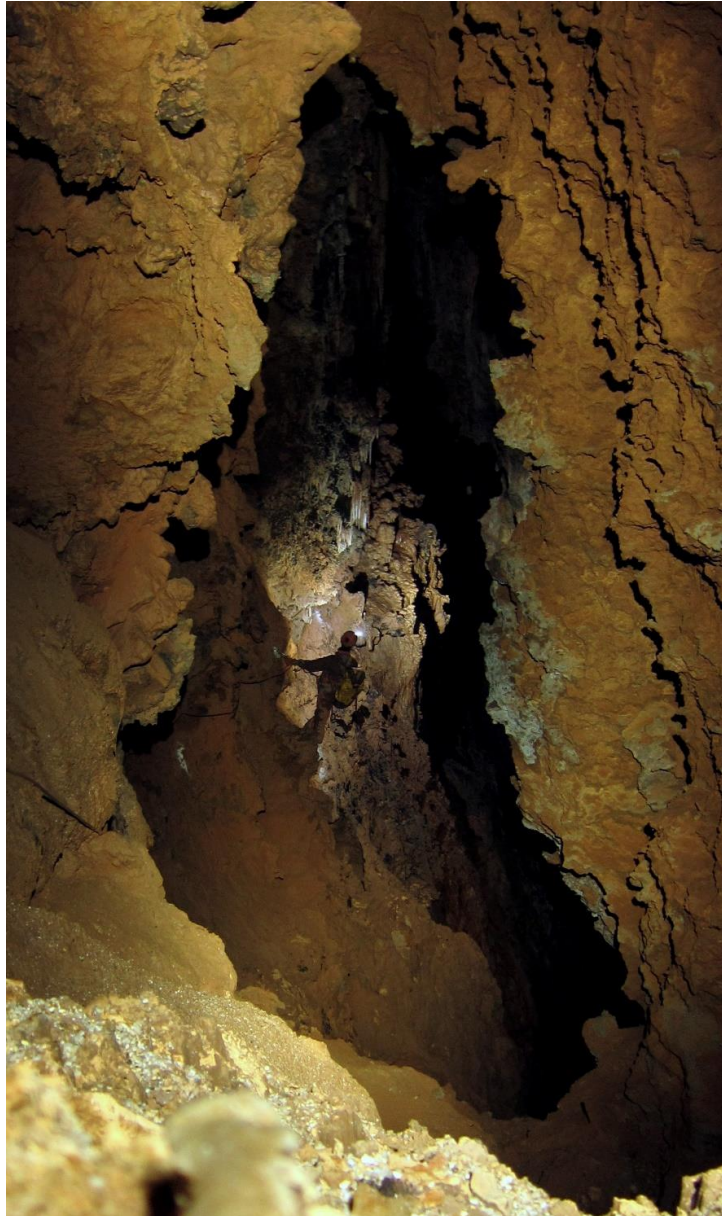


Tresviso Caving Expeditions

Tresviso 2015

REPORT OF THE CAVING EXPEDITION TO TRESVISO AREA, EASTERN
MASSIF OF THE PICOS DE EUROPA, SPAIN
July 2015



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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
EXPEDITION AIMS	7
CUEVA DEL NACIMIENTO	8
SISTEMA RAMAZOSA	21
T91 LOWER WHITE HOUSE MINE	22
T105 ITALIANOS	24
T91A TORCA BOULDEROSA.....	27
T144 ROSARIO.....	29
R.C.A.6.....	29
FT39 POZO DEL COMPROMISO	31
FT40.....	31
OTHER CAVES.....	34
SUMMARY	38
APPENDIX A: EXPEDITION MEMBERS.....	40
APPENDIX B: PERMISSION & PERMITS	40
APPENDIX C: FINANCE.....	41
APPENDIX D: CAVE LOCATIONS.....	42
APPENDIX E: SURVEYING	43
APPENDIX F: SPONSORS.....	44
APPENDIX G: EXPEDITION LOG.....	45
APPENDIX H: CUEVA DEL NACIMIENTO SURVEY (PLAN)	64
APPENDIX I: CUEVA DEL NACIMIENTO SURVEY (EXTENDED ELEVATION)	65

Cover Picture: Death Race 2000 Traverse, Cueva del Nacimiento (Rob Middleton)

Abstract

This report provides an account of the 2015 caving expedition to the Tresviso area of the Eastern Massif in the Picos de Europa of Northern Spain.

The 2015 expedition was undertaken with collaboration between a number of UK based caving clubs and the Spanish AD KAMI club.

As per previous years the majority of work was concentrated on the resurgence cave of Cueva del Nacimiento, a 12 km cave system with a height gain of over 495m from the entrance. The catchment of this cave totals 37 km² and, if linked with known entrances high in the Eastern Massif, would create a potential 1500m+ deep underground traverse.

The main effort in 2015 was to continue work in the furthest reaches of the cave, around the areas known as the *Teeth of Satan* and *Death Race 2000*. A series of steep ramps lead to the highest known points in the cave and a number of leads were investigated.



Introduction

The Picos de Europa is a range of mountains 20km inland from the northern coast of Spain, forming a Westerly extension of the Cantabrian Mountains. It consists of three main areas, the Western, Central and Eastern Massifs. It was the Eastern Massif that drew the attention of Lancaster University Speleological Society (LUSS) in the early 1970s.

The early years of LUSS exploration were spent pushing Cueva del Nacimiento (*Cueva del Agua*)¹ located at the foot of the mountain range. Over the years this was pushed to around the 11km and +300m mark, but after several years the cave was abandoned as all the major routes sumped and no continuation could be found.



Picture: An Evening Stroll, Cueva del Nacimiento (Rob Middleton)

LUSS turned their attention to the Andara region higher up the mountain range and sought caves that would drop into the Nacimiento system and create a record-breaking 1500m traverse, from the top of the mountain to out via the resurgence. They found a number of deep caves around this 'top camp' area. Sara, Tere, Flowerpot and Sima 56 were all pushed to respectable depths but the connection remained elusive.

¹ *Cueva del Nacimiento is the official Spanish name for the cave known to UK cavers as Cueva del Agua. All UK publications pre-1996 refer to the cave as Cueva del Agua.*

In 1986 / 87 the South Wales Caving Club (SWCC) and LUSS briefly turned their attention back to Nacimiento and investigated a number of sumps and pushed a bold steeply ascending ramp gaining over 200m of height, at the back end of the Nacimiento system with a number of leads left unexplored.

In 2011, following a number of successful lightweight trips around the Andara region, SWCC returned to Nacimiento to re-investigate the possibilities of mounting remote trips to the furthest regions of the cave, in particular to re-climb the steep ramps discovered in the 80's. The ramps proved to be quite demanding undertakings but the limit of previous exploration was reached and the cave set up ready for a combined diving and climbing objective in 2012.

In 2012 a large SWCC expedition mounted a successful dive of the far upstream sump in Nacimiento, not dived since 1986, extending the sump by another 80m and down to a depth of -46m, a serious technical achievement at such a remote site. Additionally, the *Death Race 2000* chamber was explored discovering a way down past the previous limit of exploration to find over 700m of new passage.

In 2014 another SWCC expedition continued work around the *Teeth of Satan* and *Death Race 2000* chamber, including initial climbing of the *Wet Aven* and discovering more leads in the *Hellsmouth* region.



Picture: The Ramp, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Phil Walker)

Expedition Aims

The main objectives of the 2015 expedition were:

1. Climb the main aven in the *Death Race 2000* chamber in **Cueva del Nacimiento**. First climbed in 2012 the aven continues upwards with a number of potential leads.
2. Climb the *Wet Aven* on the *Teeth of Satan* ramps in **Cueva del Nacimiento**. First spotted on the 1986 SWCC expedition, this is an obvious aven that is possibly the last pitch in a vertical system coming into the cave from the Sierra del a Corta region.
3. Continue with the *Pitch Series* in the *Death Race 2000* area of **Cueva del Nacimiento**. The 2012 team turned back at the top of a 20m undescended pitch and although very close to the level of the upstream sump, a stream in this area flows in the opposite direction to the rest of the cave.



Picture: Brian Baru's Place Cueva del Nacimiento. (Jason Gotel)

Cueva del Nacimiento

A full description of Cueva del Nacimiento is not provided here, but comprehensive descriptions and surveys can be found in previous reports² and the expedition website³.

The following sections summarise the main discoveries made on the expedition. Full details of exploration and discovery are described in Appendix G: Expedition Log.

Dirty Pretty Liars, Death Race 2000

The main *Death Race 2000* aven was climbed in 2012 to approx. 60m from the floor of the chamber. Although the main aven continues up, an obvious side passage was entered with a number of further climbs left unexplored. The 2015 expedition continued with one of these climbs (*starting station 2203*), called *Dirty Pretty Liars*, and discovered another 70m of passage with a further height gain of 50m. This highest point is +486m above the cave entrance. There were no further leads at this point but the main *Death Race 2000* aven still remains unclimbed.

Additionally, another lead in the same area was followed down 10m to a small sump.



Picture: Formations in Death Race 2000, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Rob Middleton)

² "Expeditions to Tresviso and the Picos de Europa in Northern Spain (1974-1977)". LUSS (1978). "An Expedition to the Picos de Europa Northern Spain". LUSS. (1979). "Agua '86 and '87". SWCC. (1987)

³ <http://www.picosandaracaving.info/Describe/Tresviso/aqua.html>

Death Race 2000 - Dirty Pretty Liars

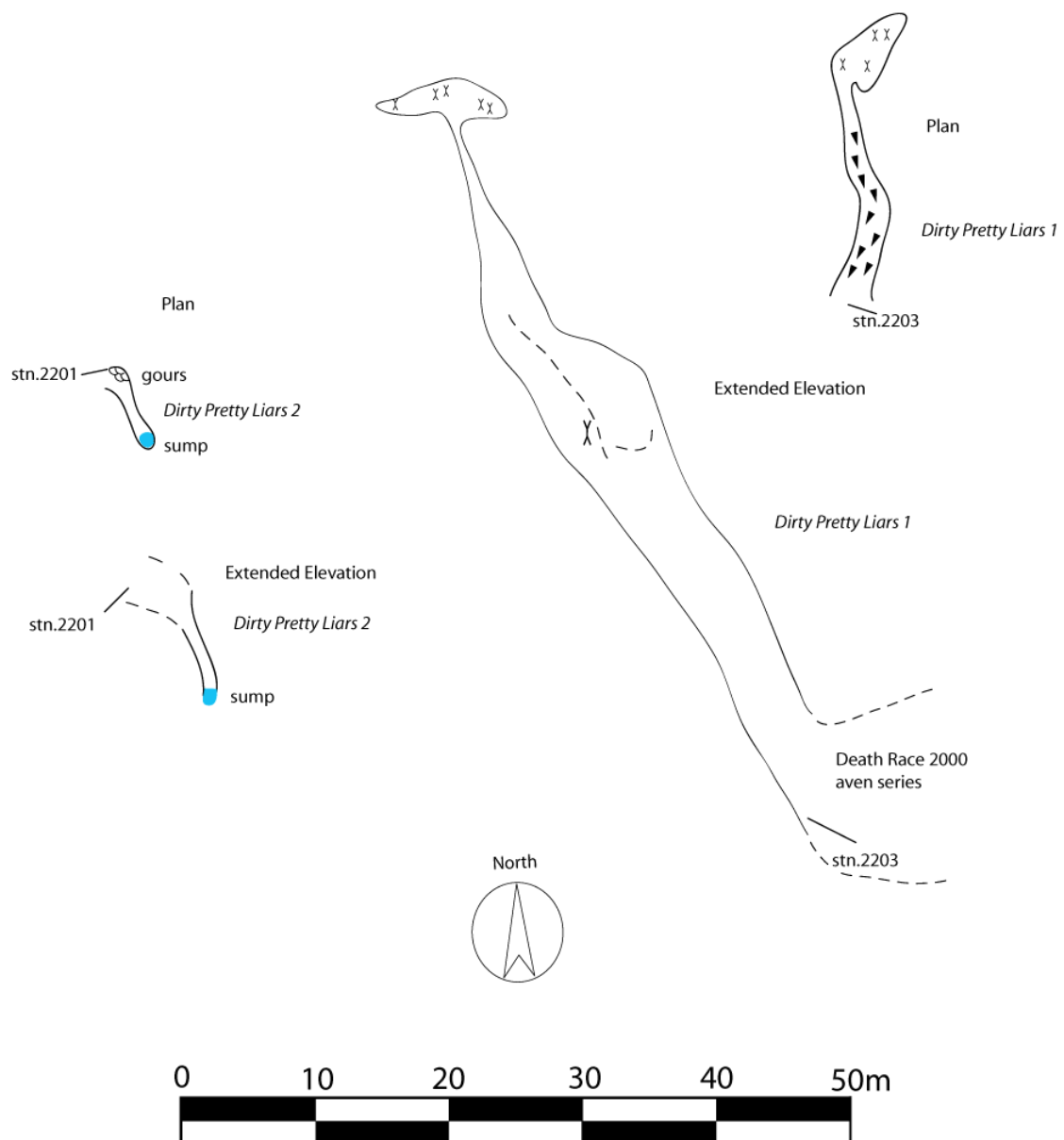
Cueva del Nacimiento
Cantabria, Picos de Europa

Length: 87m

Height (from entrance): +486m

BCRA Grade 5

Matt Jones, Rob Middleton (*Tresviso 2015*)



Death Race 2000 – Pitch Series

The area known as the *Pitch Series* was first identified during the 2012 SWCC expeditions and was left at a 20m undescended pitch. In 2015 the lead was visited on 2 trips and extended by another 155m down to a large sump.

From the bottom of the *Death Race 2000 Pitch Series* a 20m pitch leads to a low wet crawl, alternatively a pendulum across to an obvious eye hole provides an easy route (30m rope) to the other side of the wet crawl. A further 2m climb leads to a pitch / ramp of 20m following the stream. Another 5m pitch lands in a high rift that continues for approx. 30m in a northerly direction, traversing across a deep pool of water to a window and 5m pitch into the sump chamber (*Pina Colada Sump*).

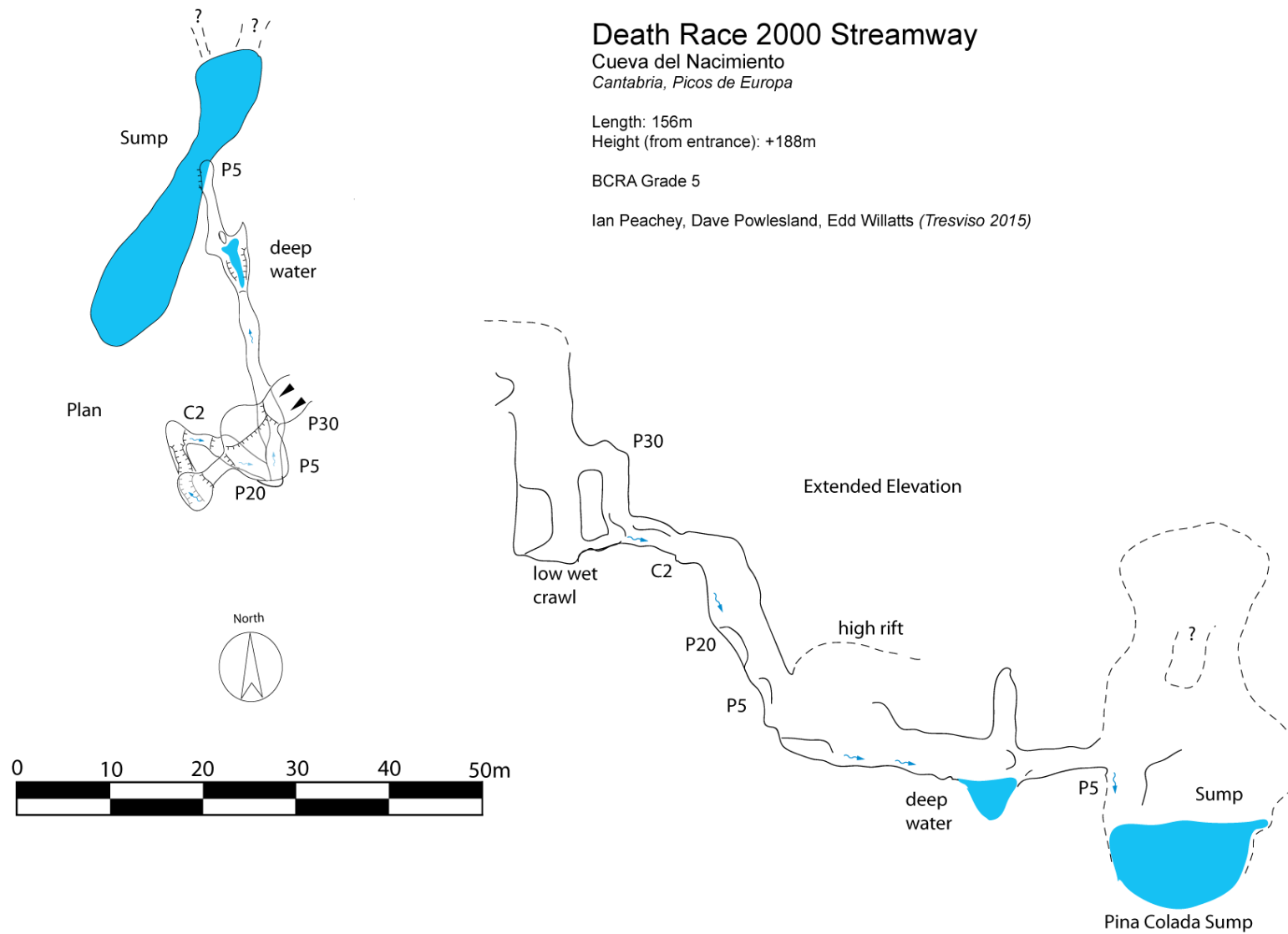
The sump chamber is 35m long by 5m wide by 25m high. The sump itself was not entered and there is no obvious flow of water which suggests it may be a deep phreatic trunk route with water moving slowly, at great depth, past an 'air bell aven'

There is also potential dry lead over the top of the sump that was not explored.

The level of the sump is consistent with the level at the main upstream sump near *Colin's Climax*.



Picture: Pina Colada Sump, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Ian Peachey)



Death Race 2000 – Die Hard

From station 2208 in the *Death Race 2000 Aven Series* a passage descends down an 8m pitch, followed by a ramp of 10m, and another 6m pitch before a final 10m ramp leads to a bold traverse of 30m around the *Death Race 2000* chamber. At the far side of the traverse an ascending ramp of 10m in an impressive sized passage leads to a further 5m pitch.



Picture: Die Hard, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Rob Middleton)

A large passage continues for 40m, passing under 1 **unclimbed** aven, before narrowing, where the main draft is encountered. The passage widens once more into a large chamber, with 2 more **unclimbed** avens. The passage narrows again and swings south for another 50m before climbs of 5m and 3m enters a large rift / chamber with 3 **unclimbed** avens



Picture: Die Hard, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Rob Middleton)

Death Race 2000 - Die Hard

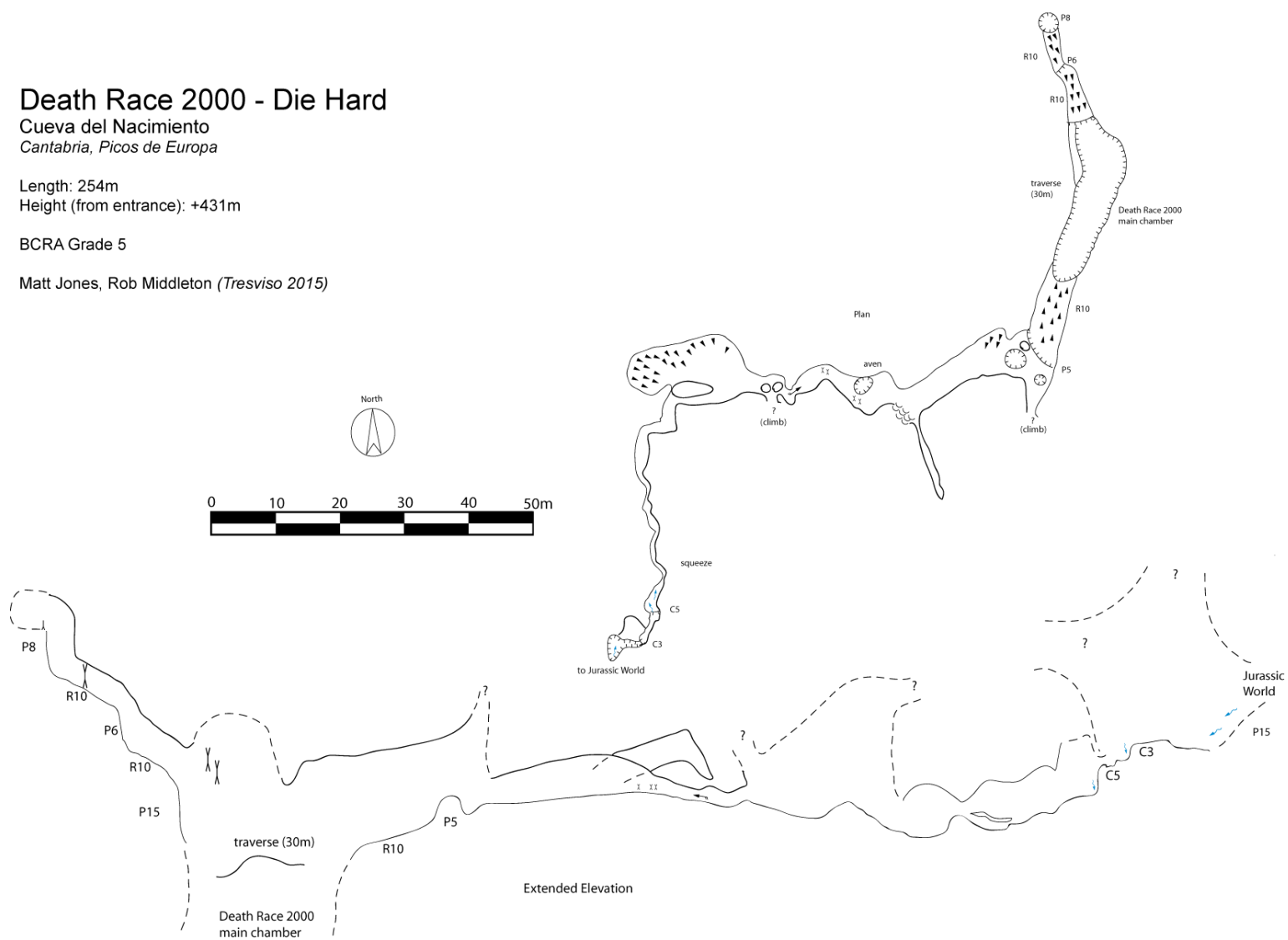
Cueva del Nacimiento
Cantabria, Picos de Europa

Length: 254m

Height (from entrance): +431m

BCRA Grade 5

Matt Jones, Rob Middleton (*Tresviso 2015*)



Death Race 2000 – Jurassic World

In the final rift / chamber of *Die Hard* a short muddy ascending traverse for ~8m leads to base of a large aven (20m+) in the rift. A window 5m higher, beyond the aven, is **unexplored** but the way on is down a small opening at the base of the aven accessed via single bolt rebelay landing on a small false floor. A short 4m climb is followed by a stoop into a 2nd larger aven (*The Dinosaur Aven* ~30m+) with an active inlet and a 'lake' floor. The unexplored window in the previous rift chamber probably links into this aven.

Crossing the pool an 8m climb up (hand line) is reached. The top of this climb enters a large passage *Jurassic World*, similar in characteristics of the passage approaching the *Death Race 2000* chamber. Trending upwards two muddy calcite/moon milk ramps are rigged as pitches, followed by a climb up towards a well decorated chamber. A stal boss is passed on the right into a small well decorated rift. A hand line climb up a stal at the far side is followed immediately by a climb down back into the main passage.

A steep calcite ramp can be bypassed by an obscure tube at the base. A further 50m of passage is followed under 4 **unclimbed** avens / inlets. The passage ends in a small sandy dig with a fist sized hole with the sound of air / water beyond. A draft is evident throughout *Jurassic World*.

Jurassic World appears to be the main way on towards the higher caves of the Andara region and currently has reached a height of +494m above the entrance to the cave.



Picture: Die Hard, Cueva del Nacimiento. (Rob Middleton)

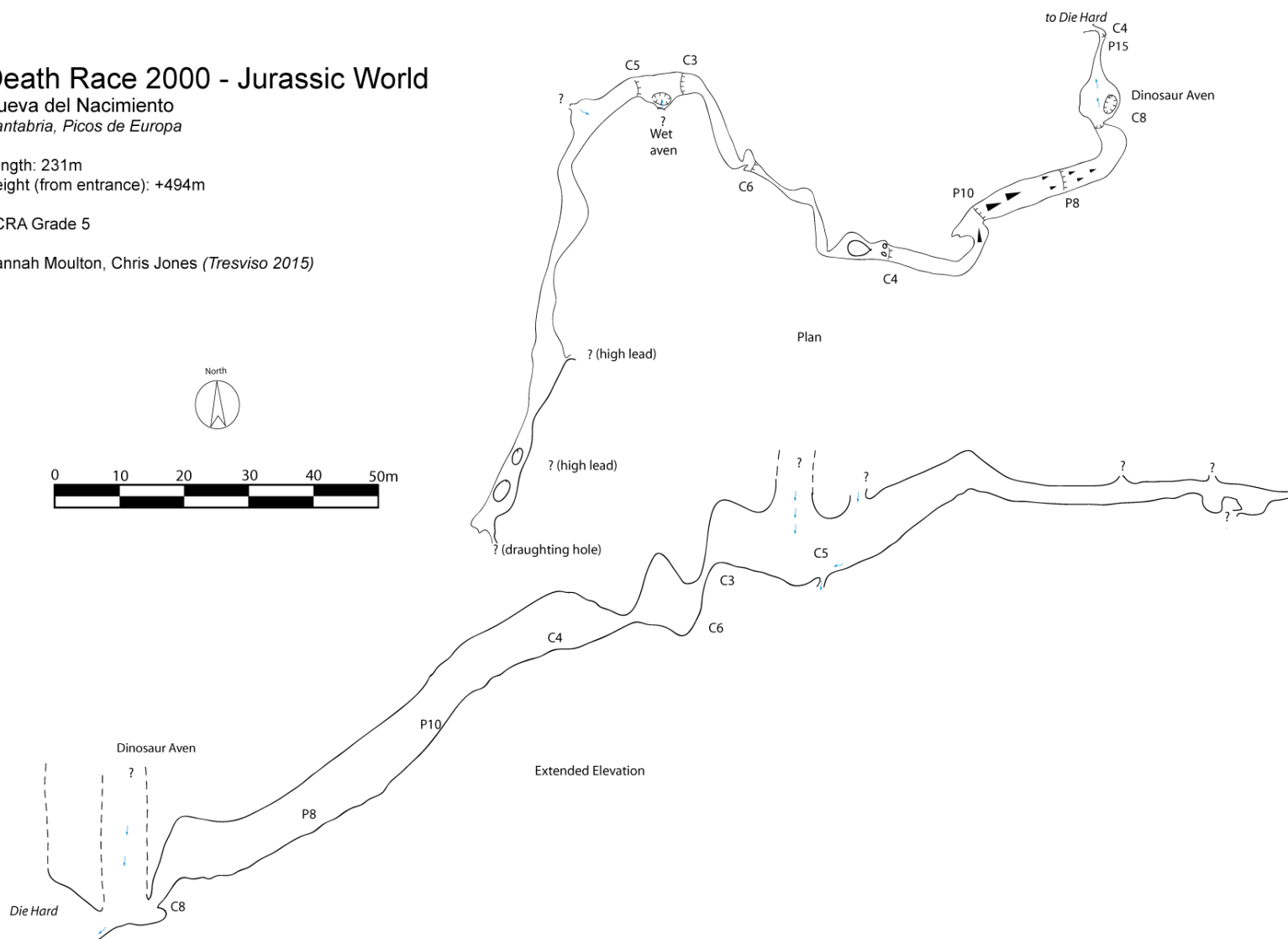
Death Race 2000 - Jurassic World

Cueva del Nacimiento
Cantabria, Picos de Europa

Length: 231m
Height (from entrance): +494m

BCRA Grade 5

Hannah Moulton, Chris Jones (*Tresviso 2015*)



Death Race 2000 – An Evening Stroll

An Evening Stroll is accessed direct from the *Death Race 2000* chamber (station 1201) and is a series of climbs (C4, C5, and C3) that overlook the main chamber. The passage extends for 66m, reaching a height of +406m above the main entrance. The top of the passage is choked with stal but lies only 5m directly below the main passage in *Die Hard*. There is a small lead heading down near the start of the passage.

Death Race 2000 - An Evening Stroll

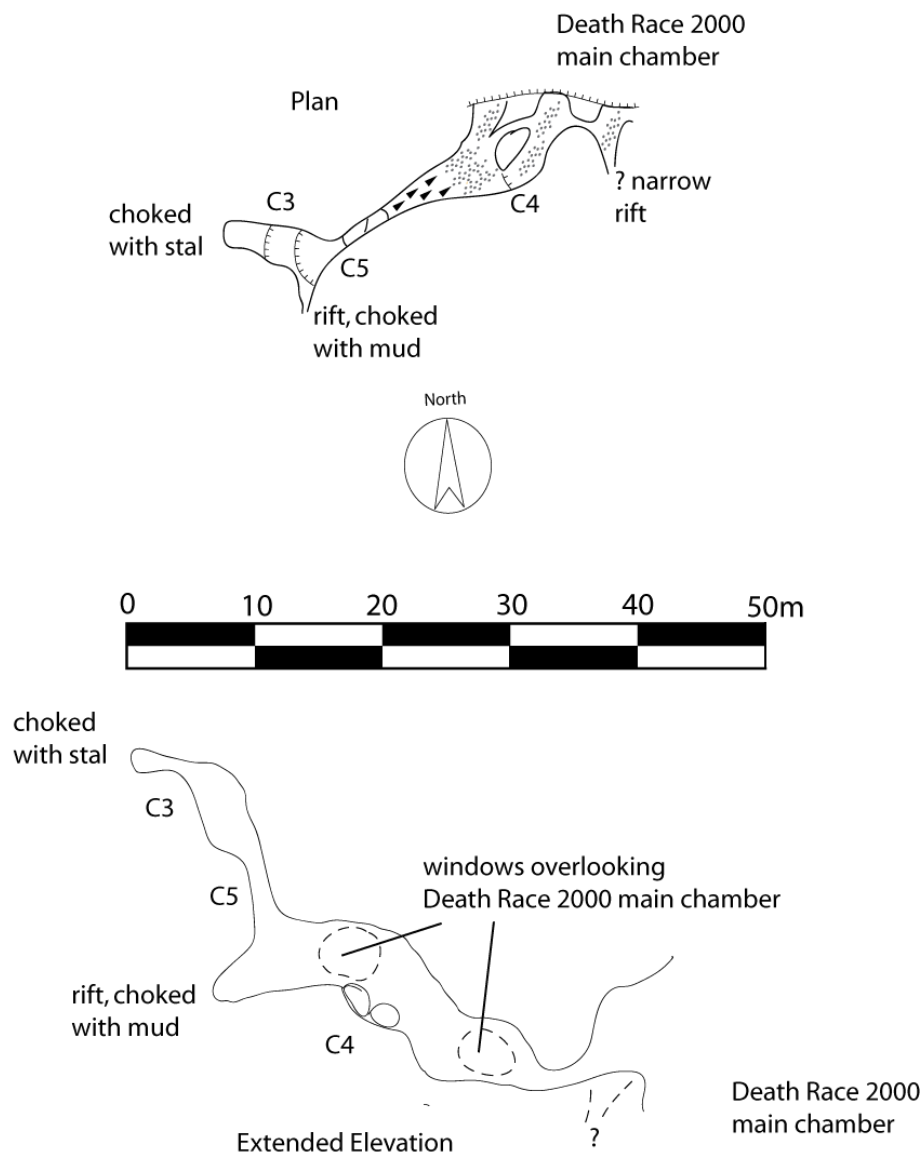
Cueva del Nacimiento
Cantabria, Picos de Europa

Length: 66m

Height (from entrance): +406m

BCRA Grade 5

Matt Jones, Rob Middleton (*Tresviso 2015*)



Consort Hall – Ramp

Opposite the pitch into camp a 20m climb up the ramp leads to 30m of large muddy phreatic passage. Ends in a 'mud sump'. There is no draft in the area.

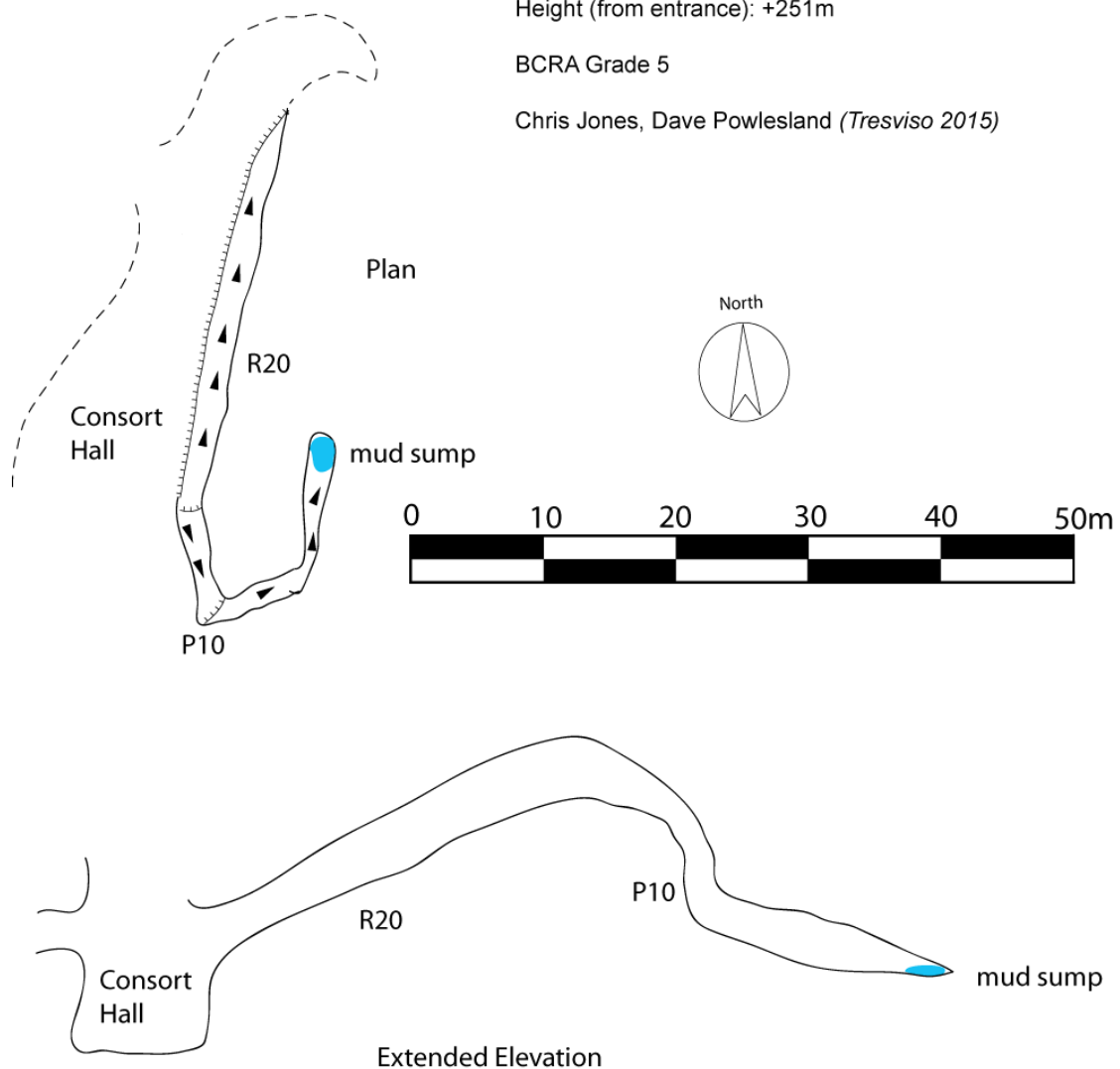
Consort Hall - Ramp

Cueva del Nacimiento
Cantabria, Picos de Europa

Length: 65m
Height (from entrance): +251m

BCRA Grade 5

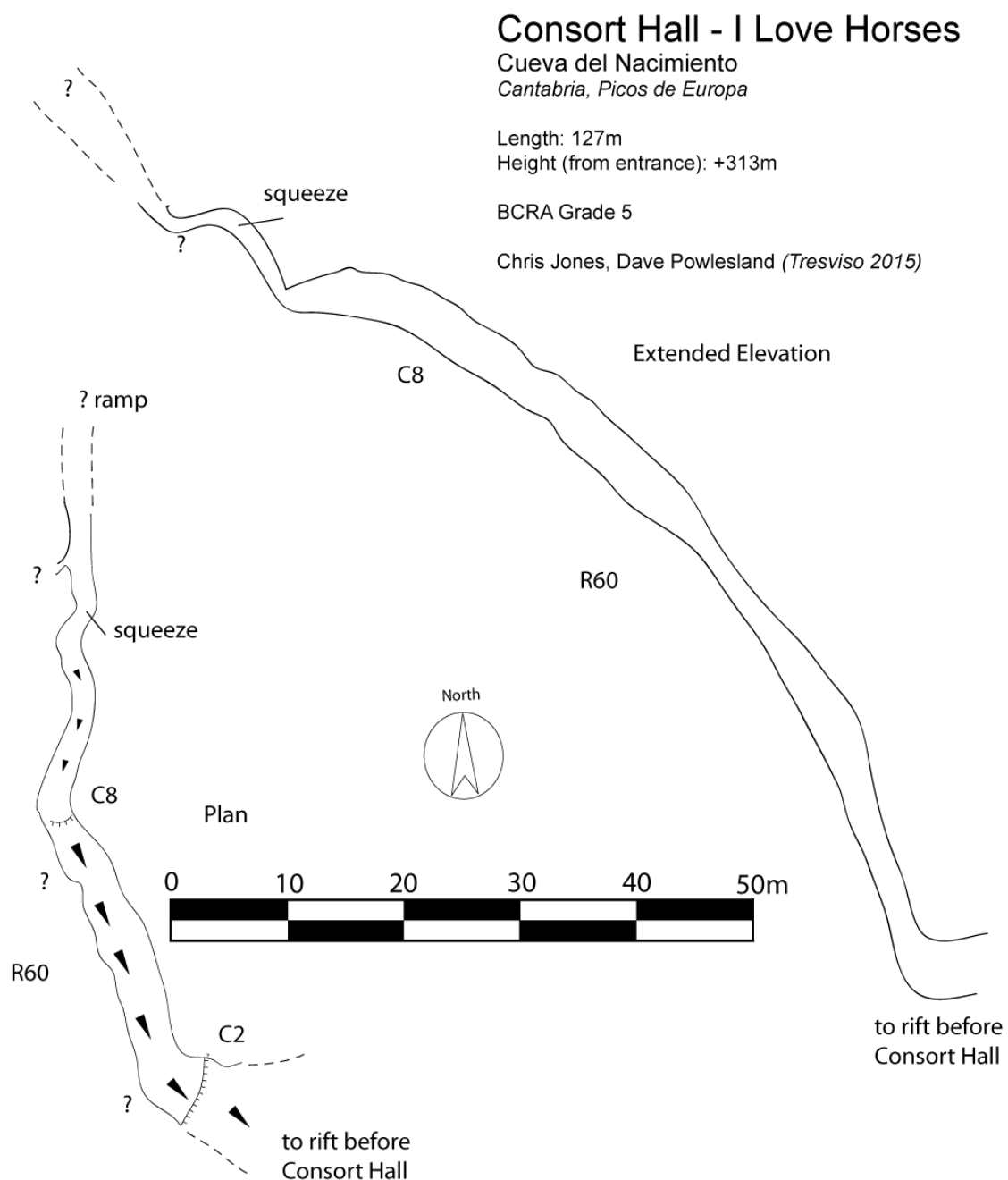
Chris Jones, Dave Powlesland (*Tresviso 2015*)



Consort Hall – I Love Horses

In the rift 20m before the 12m pitch down to *Consort Hall* is reached is the start of the *I Love Horses* ramp. This begins as a climb out of the rift for 10m before the ascending passageway can be seen.

60m of rope is rigged on stal naturals and secured at the top of a slippery calcite ramp with a natural and bolt. An obvious continuation is followed up a short calcite climb, best taken on the left. This needs 8m hand line which can be rigged from a stal. Beyond the climb, the passage opens out into a 4x20m chamber with impressive formations. At the far end another ramp leads up to a calcite choke. This can be passed by a very tight squeeze *Morning Sickness* on the right. Beyond the squeeze is an **unclimbed** calcite ramp, ~10m and a small continuation blocked by delicate fine stal. There is no draft in the area.



Sistema Ramazosa

During the 2015 expedition the team re-explored T91A Torca Boulderrosa, a -313m deep system in the Andara region. This cave was originally explored in the late 1970's but with no exploration since that time a revisit was deemed worthwhile in order to investigate possible high level routes that may bypass the current known end of the cave.

Sistema Ramazosa is the Spanish name given to a collection of caves that link together underneath the Mazarassa Mine area of Andara, including Torca Boulderrosa. Historically, these caves have been identified as distinct caves as and when they were discovered and have been treated largely as separate cave systems.

The linking of the caves into the wider cave complex has never been comprehensively documented and this section of the report attempts to put the major caves⁴ into a more systematic and comprehensive format.

Sistema Ramazosa – main entrances

Cave	Location	Zone	Altitude	Easting	Northing
T91 Lower White House Mine	Caseton Andara	30T	1717	0360872	4786012
T91A Torca Boulderrosa ⁵	Caseton Andara	30T	1711	0360720	4785808
T105 Italianos	Lake Depression	30T	1777	0360674	4785822
T144 Rosario	Lake Depression	30T	1758	0360617	4785688
R.C.A.6 ⁶	Lake Depression	30T	1708	0360534	4785659
FT39 Pozo del Compromisso	Mazarrasa Mines	30T	1820	0360652	4785718
FT40	Mazarrasa Mines	30T	1800	0360617	4785688

Table: Sistema Ramazosa main entrances, WGS-84 datum.

⁴ The Mazarassa mine area is riddled with other entrances of which a large number will connect to Sistema Ramazosa.

⁵ Torca Boulderrosa can only be accessed from within this mine complex. GPS location is an approximation based on Survex data

⁶ RCA6 GPS location is approximation of where RCA6 cave meets the Lower White House Mine not the actual entrance.

T91 Lower White House Mine

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360872 y: 4786012 z: 1717m

Location

The Lower White House mine is the obvious mined entrance 30m to the west of Caseton Andara.



Picture: T91 Lower White House Mine. (Phil Walker)

Description

This is the lower entrance to the extensive mine system collectively called *Sistema Ramazosa* which includes a lot of natural development. The mines *RCA6*, *T105 Italianos*, *T144 Rosario* and *FT39 Pozo del Compromisso* link through to this level of the mine, all coming down from the Lake Depression and the Mazarassa mine area.

From the T91 level a number of natural and mined workings continue down and these include the *Spiral Staircase*, the *RCA6* lower level, *T91A Torca Boulderosa* and the area beyond the *Aerial Walkway*.

For descriptions of *RCA6* and *T91A Torca Boulderosa* see the respective sections in this report.

Beyond the Aerial Walkway.

From the T91 entrance by continue straight along the mine level. (20m inside the mine the way is now blocked by a metal door, beyond which cheese is stored by the Caseton Andara staff. This can be opened with agreement). The passage continues to a dam and forks. The right hand fork continues across a wooden floor, dangerous walkways and numerous collapses. Traversing over the wooden beams reaches a

third collapse. Here it is possible to descend a 10m pitch to a lower, large ledge and then climb back up to the other side of the collapse. Soon afterwards on the left is a natural shaft (best descended through an eyehole round to the right). A 17m pitch leads to a traverse over a wooden platform and a 25m pitch in a mined rift. The rift continues to a choke.

T105 Italianos

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360674 y: 4785822 z: 1777m

Location

The entrance to T105 Italianos is an obvious triangular mine working and can be found by following the path from the Whitehouse up and around to the right, along the main pathway toward the Lake Depression. Just before entering the Lake Depression, on the left of the path is a smaller depression, Italianos is to be found on the furthest right hand side of the depression and is marked with 'Italianos' in red letters.



Picture: T105 Italianos. (Phil Walker)

Description

It is worth noting that Italianos is in a decaying state and care should be taken at all times, with loose rock above, rock strewn rotten gallery's and decaying woodwork throughout.

Once inside the entrance the passage continues to a slight left bend and then splits, right leads to a deep flooded shaft while left leads to the first pitch head (30m) split with two re-belays to reach the floor.

The continuation from here follows some natural passage around a few bends and onto another rotten gallery with a fixed line across, passing over an unstable gallery and across another chamber towards the next pitch (4m). From here a pitch drops back under the travelled route, the way on continues opposite, along the obvious

path down and along the edge of a steep chamber, passing a rock bridge and back underneath a ramp (30m) leading to the level below. Back under the ramp is a dead end.

Away from the ramp leads towards the pitch (30m) down to *RCA6*. It is possible to continue over the top of the pitch, however it is unstable. The pitch is broken by 2 re-belays over a couple of loose ledges.

On the ground an old working continues off to more loose and rotting galleries, while the impressive tube leads down into *RCA6* and *T91 the Lower White House Mine*. An obvious eyehole on the left in the mined passage is the start of the first pitch of *T91A Torca Boulderosa*.

Sistema Ramazosa - T105 Italianos

Andara, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain

WGS84 UTM 30T 0360771 4786022

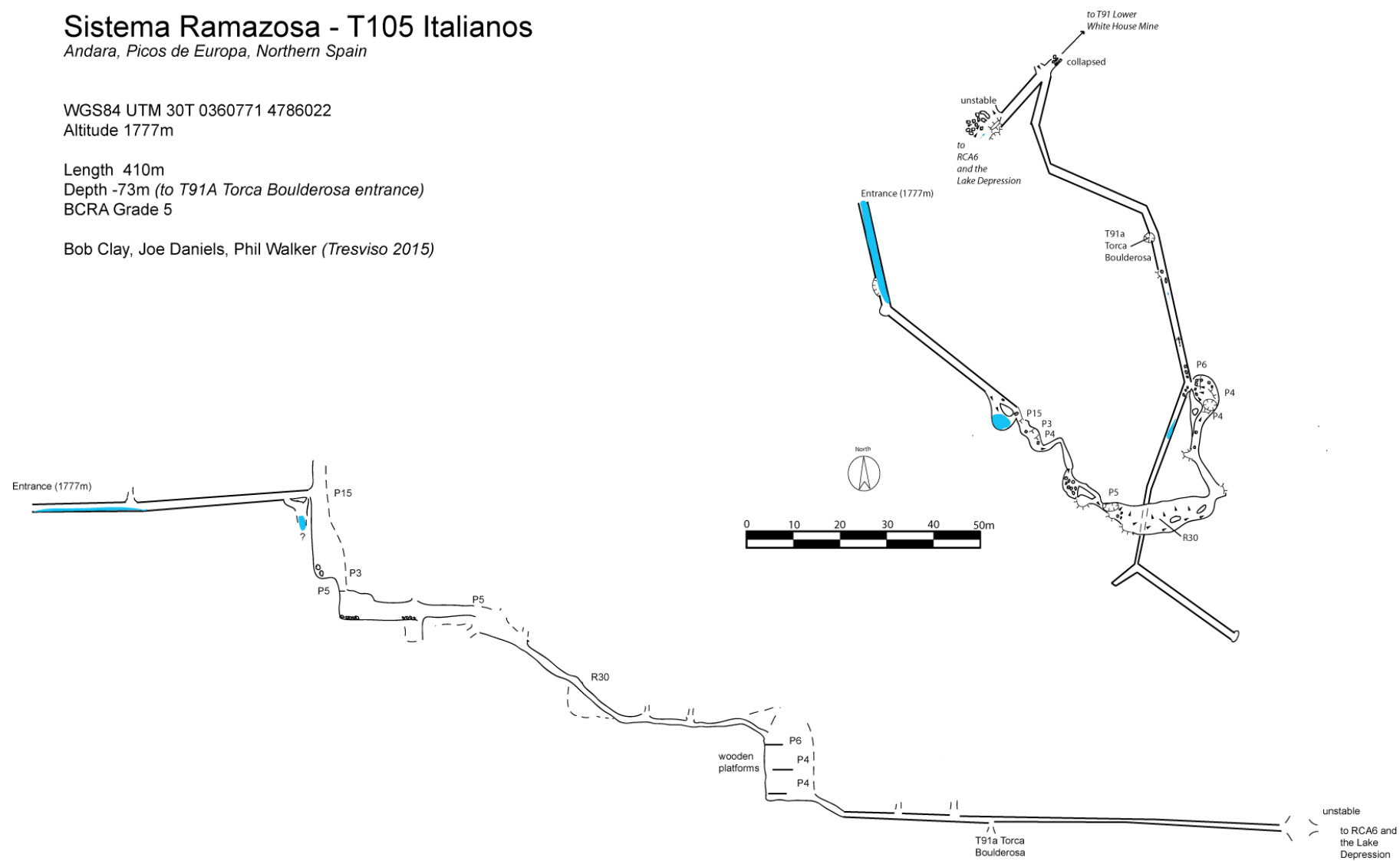
Altitude 1777m

Length 410m

Depth -73m (to T91A Torca Boulderosa entrance)

BCRA Grade 5

Bob Clay, Joe Daniels, Phil Walker (Tresviso 2015)



T91A Torca Boulderosa

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360720 y: 4785808 z: 1711m (*only accessible via other entrances*)

Location

Obvious hole in side of mined passage between last pitch in *T105 Italianos* and the mine level between *T91A Lower White House Mine* and *RCA6*. *T105 Italianos* is the only currently known accessible and safe entrance into the system

Description

The 30m entrance pitch is free hanging for 18m to a 2m wide ledge from which a Y-hang gives another 12m free hang to the bottom of the pitch. The chamber is about 3m wide with two narrow rifts in opposite corners, and is littered with rubble (*We didn't see any wood*).

The southern-most exit was not descended as the 1970's reports claimed it was choked, however in 2015 dropped rocks fell for at least 2 seconds suggesting it was not!

2015 extension

The passage from the other side of the chamber drops down a 5m very loose ramp to the top of the 1970's 58m pitch. With a tight take off this pitch is split by four bolts to give abrasion free hangs past numerous ledges and boulders in the rift. In 2015, a 50m traverse (*Gung Ho!*) was made above the 1970's pitch, *the Pele Rocco Pitch's* begin where the passage widens this is a series of 10-20m pitch's landing in an active inlet. Part way down *The Pele Rocco Pitch's* a large, blind shaft reached via a traverse and marks the northern limit of the rift and is the source of the below inlet.

Following the inlet downstream leads to a 5m upwards ramp leaving the water below. A short 8m pitch leads to a tight take off and an 18m pitch in the rift, gradually increasing in size to land in a sizable chamber with a very loose, sloping floor. Two short pitch's on equally loose footing lead to a grand 30m+ free hang, re-joining the 1970's route in a large 10x20m chamber. An active inlet enters to the North and the obvious rift continues south.

Original route re-joined.

Traversing along the rift over the boulder leads to a 5m climb down into a small chamber where the first meander is reached. This is best tackled by leaving the chamber at the same level it was entered. The route is well marked with unfathomable carbide symbols. A small pitch is traversed over (*the original report states this is 20m and blind, unconfirmed in 2015, although a spit was seen*) however, if high in the meander this may pass un-noticed. 10m after the blind pit the rift opens out, the 1970's route drops immediately into a 15m and 35m pitch. The 2015 route traversed until the rift could be seen to end. Here the grand 50m pitch is split by a Y hang after 8m into a second large boulder chamber. Directly below the

ropes a steeply descending chute quickly becomes too narrow. As before the main rift continues from the southern end of the chamber. A large window above the rift enters an aven of similar dimensions to the previous pitch.

Like the previous chamber, the meander quickly narrows to a winding awkward passage and is best traversed at a 'mid-level' for 50m to a small chamber, following more unfathomable carbide symbols. The chamber has an active inlet and the water continues along the rift floor. Climbing out of the chamber leads to more of the same (35m) until a 2nd small chamber is reached. A final 15m of meander ends in an awkward take off for a 10m pitch to a large ledge.

At this level the main rift continues over an inlet and can be reached by a traverse – this showed no sign of previous passage and was not entered in 2015 due to a lack of bolts, but is assumed to re-join the 1970's route below *Donald Duck*. The 1970's route is followed down a descending 10m ramp to a large aven with an active inlet flowing into a constricted meander. Following the water over *Donald Duck* leads to a tight wet take off into immediately larger surroundings.

There is a potential passage accessed by climbing over the Donald Duck approach crawl while still on the ledge at the bottom of the pitch before entering the crawl itself. On the far side of the duck, there is appears to be a large passage opening heading back to the other side and a vocal connection was established on the 2015 de-rigging trip.

A damp 65m pitch is broken by a large ledge after 10m followed by a huge 55m free hang. This was broken 15m off the floor by a ledge on the right hand wall to escape the waterfall (*if re-rigging it would be better to traverse out left higher up to escape water*).

The next chamber is very drafty and boulder strewn, it contains an impressive calcite collapse and a further stream inlet and downstream meander. Heading upstream, the wide meander of this inlet is followed for an estimated 75m which then breaks out to a larger chamber with a 15m waterfall, where the stream way can be seen to continue (unclimbed – require aid). Downstream, the draft is followed into a cherty, meandering rift (for about 75m) to the head of the next 50m pitch. (*There are a series of side chambers off the stream way before the 50m pitch but these do not appear to lead anywhere*). The pitch is broken by two rebelayes and lands in the *Terminal Chamber*.

There is also a third unexplored potential way from the drafty chamber, marked on the survey near the centre of the chamber.

Terminal Chamber is a large boulder strewn hall, the floor is a mix of large boulders and smaller cobblestone rocks. There are two large dry and one wet aven (**unclimbed**). Also what looks to be a higher level chamber, via a short aided climb towards the top of the obvious scree slope (**unclimbed**). There was no obvious route to be found through the boulders. The water entering the chamber disperses through the cobbled floor.

T144 Rosario

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360648 y: 4785919 z: 1758m

Location

On the South side of the Lake Depression and just above the lake. It lies between *Italianos* and *RCA6* mines and is a 2m x 2m walk in mine entrance.

Description

The mine entrance leads after 20m to a split in the passage. Right leads to an 8m pitch and a further scree descents leads to a 28m pitch and ending in the *T91 Lower White House* mine level.

The **original left fork was not explored**. Another mine gallery takes the water from Andara and falls down a 20m pitch - **not descended** (but bolted)

R.C.A.6⁷

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360534 y: 478569 z: 1708m

Location

The lake is flanked to the south by a steep, flat-topped slope of spoil. From the top of the spoil slope, a steep, snow-blocked gully leads straight up the side of the impending ridge. From the northern side of the valley this gully can be seen to be a major fault line continuing beyond the mine workings on the ridge-top, and over the next ridge. Where the fault-gully meets the spoil slope lies an elongate, steep sided doline blocked by a snow—plug (even in mid-July). A traverse around the north-eastern wall of the snow-plug ends at a mine entrance 1.5 metres square and part-blocked by rock falls from the gulley above.

Description

Inside, 15 metres of horizontal mine passage leads to a hole in the timber and rubble false floor. Two bolt belays allow descent of this first 6 metre pitch. A short passage leads to a second pitch impressively decorated with a rickety snow slope suspended from the snow plug of the entrance doline. Pitch 2 begins with a 2 metre drop onto a flat ice flow supported on gravel and boulders, and bisected by a water channel. The ice flow bends into a curtain leading, after a further 2 metre drop, to a rotten snow platform. The pitch continues for 12 metres past a very loose boulder slope, and ends in a snow pit. The mined rift passage continues across a frozen pool to the head of a pitch. Across the pitch is an impressive eroded ice formation, the *Ice Palace*. Pitch 3 begins with a loose boulder-slope which soon gives way to a fine 20m free hang which can be climbed for the first 6 metres. Below, a short boulder slope leads to a 2 metre drop into a draughty mine passage.

To the south-east, a series of progressively more interesting ‘aerial walkways’ lead to a collapsed section which may be crossed on a dubious timber ‘tightrope’ above an

⁷ Reproduced in part from Tresviso 1974-1977 (LUSS 1977)

unpleasantly large drop (approx. 40m). This passage follows the fault line, passing an impressive 18 metre natural shaft (**undescended**) and terminates in a partially explored vertical maze of ladders, walkways and passages. ***The maze would well repay careful exploration, as several small natural passages are intersected.***

Moving north—west from the bottom of pitch 3, a short traverse around a 13 metre pitch leads to a downward sloping passage filled with the roar of water. 2 short climbs, followed by a duck under a waterfall lands back into the fault rift. A short fourth pitch (4m) leads to a wet, tight rift pitch. Fortunately a traverse can be made to a rickety miner's platform from which a pleasantly dry free—hanging 22 metre pitch is descended. A rush back through the spray leads into another mine passage which, by following the water and/or draught leads to the impressive *natural Spiral Staircase* aven. This aven is about 38 metres high and developed largely in white-veined black marble. The floor is littered with miner's debris – rusting rail trucks, pipes, timbers and spoil. The Spiral Staircase connects at the top to the *T91 Lower White House Mine* level.

To the north the aven closes down to a narrow rift widened by mining, which eventually becomes too tight. Halfway along the rift, a short climb on the east side leads to a second impressive natural aven. Unfortunately, this too is choked with spoil.

FT39 Pozo del Compromisso

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360652 y: 4785718 z: 1820m

Location

From Caseton de Andara, follow the markings for the Lake Depression (Pozo de Andara). At the obvious junction (before reaching the lake area) take the left hand path that zig zags up the side of the mountain, until the obvious mine area is reached. 40m after the track takes a hairpin bend a big shaft (5m in diameter 15m entrance pitch) should be visible on the left of the track next to a ruin

Description

The 1st pitch, from the surface, is 15m deep leading to a short passage. A 16m pitch is reached, which in order to achieve a free hang it is necessary to rebelay just below a huge block held up by 2 rotten beams.

At the base of the pitch is a large cone of mine debris in a passage of 2m x 3m which descends rapidly. In two places there are rotten wooden ladders which should be handled with precaution. On the right is a large passage, which leads to a network of mine levels connecting back to *FT40*.

For roughly 30m the passage is horizontal before climbing back to top of an 18m pitch, the base of which is choked. Just before the passage rises, on the left, is scramble to a small 6m pitch (split into 2 sections) which is followed by a 12m pitch, *Adrenalin Pitch* which has a loose take-off and is hard to rig.

Two small pitches of 5m and 4m follow in a rift, from which a 30m long passage (70cm wide) leads down steeply to a pitch of 12m, 4m in diameter. At the base of this pitch is a squeeze that has been dug out, followed by a small chamber with an aven. A second dug out squeeze follows, to a 4m climb, followed by the last 17m pitch. At the bottom the passage quickly becomes too tight.

FT40

WGS84 UTM – x: 0360534 y: 4785659 z: 1800m

Location

Unknown

Description

Junction with *FT39 Pozo del Compromisso* at -40m.

Sistema Ramazosa - FT39 Pozo del Compromiso

Andara, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain

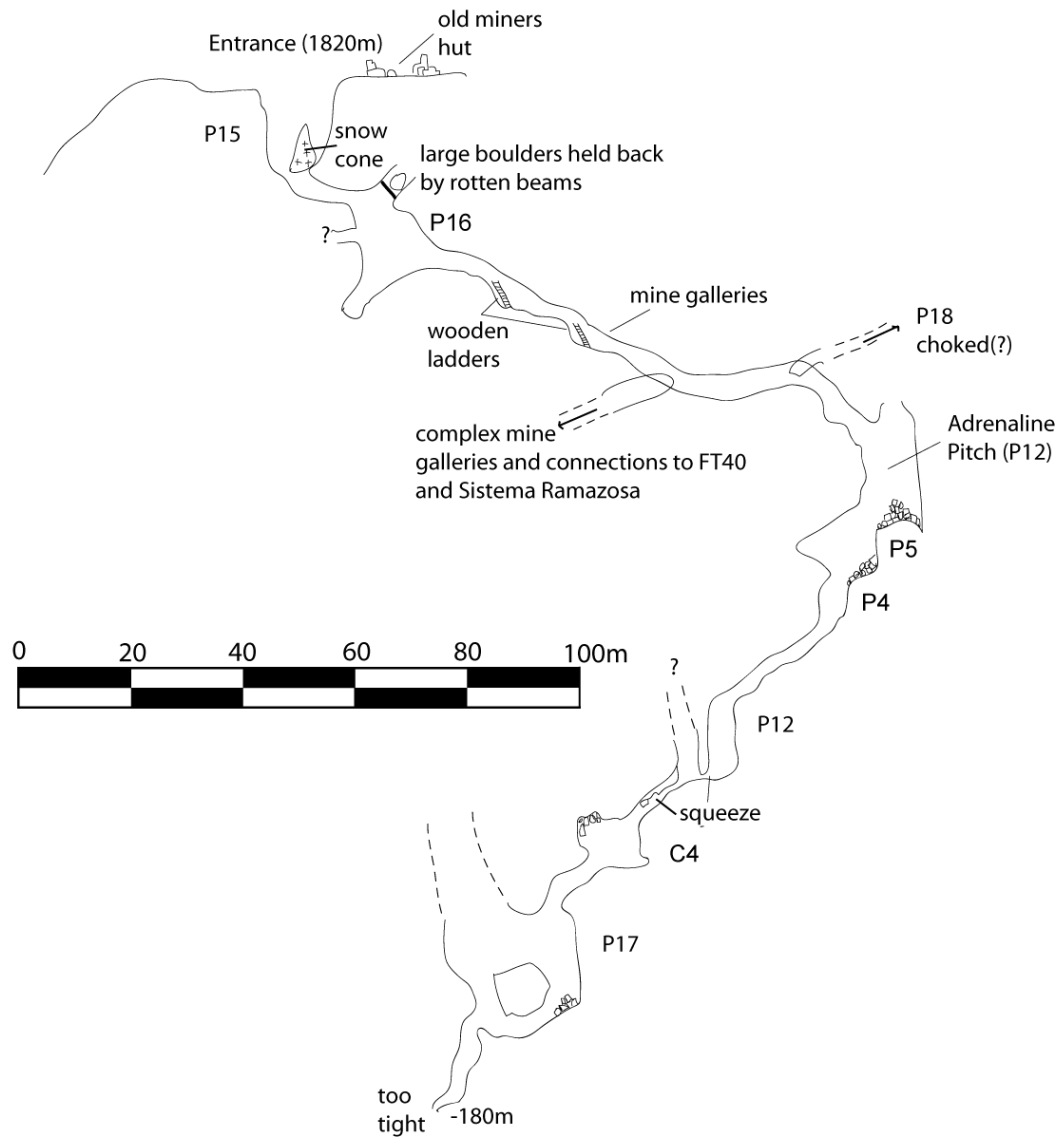
WGS84 UTM 30T 0360652 4785718

Altitude 1820m

Length: ??m

Depth: -180m (-421m including T91A Torca Boulderosa)

Caroline Guilhemant, Thierry Krattinger, Roland Theron (LSD 1981)



Sistema Ramazosa

Andara, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain

WGS84 UTM 30T 0360872 4786012

Altitude 1711m

Length approx. 1500m

Depth -421m (from *Compromiso Entrance*)

BCRA Grade 4

T91 - Lower White House Mine, including T91A Torca Boulderrosa

0360872 4786012 1711m

T105 Italianos 0360771 4786022 1777m

T144 Rosario 0360648 4785919 1758m

FT39 Pozo del Compromiso 0360652 4785718 1820m

FT40

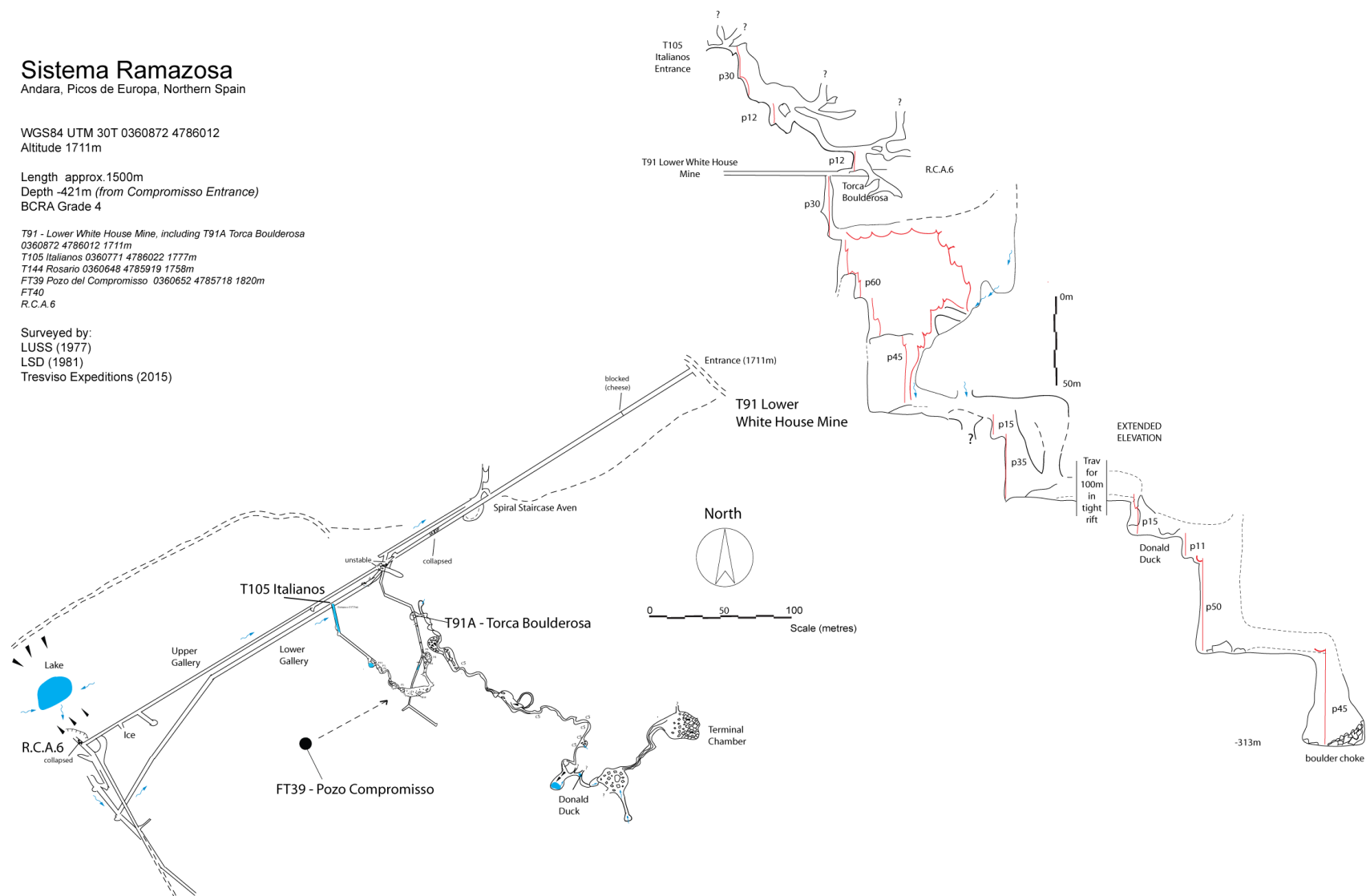
R.C.A.6

Surveyed by:

LUSS (1977)

LSD (1981)

Tresviso Expeditions (2015)



Other Caves

T591 Town Drain (La Ciudad del Drenaje)⁸

WGS84 UTM – x: 0359088 y: 4790232 z: 1151m

Location

From the head of the Sobra Valley (park in layby) head west of the col and then approx. 350m in a southerly direction to obvious depression. Sink is on left following the obvious line of the valley, surrounded by trees.



Picture: T591 (Phil Walker)

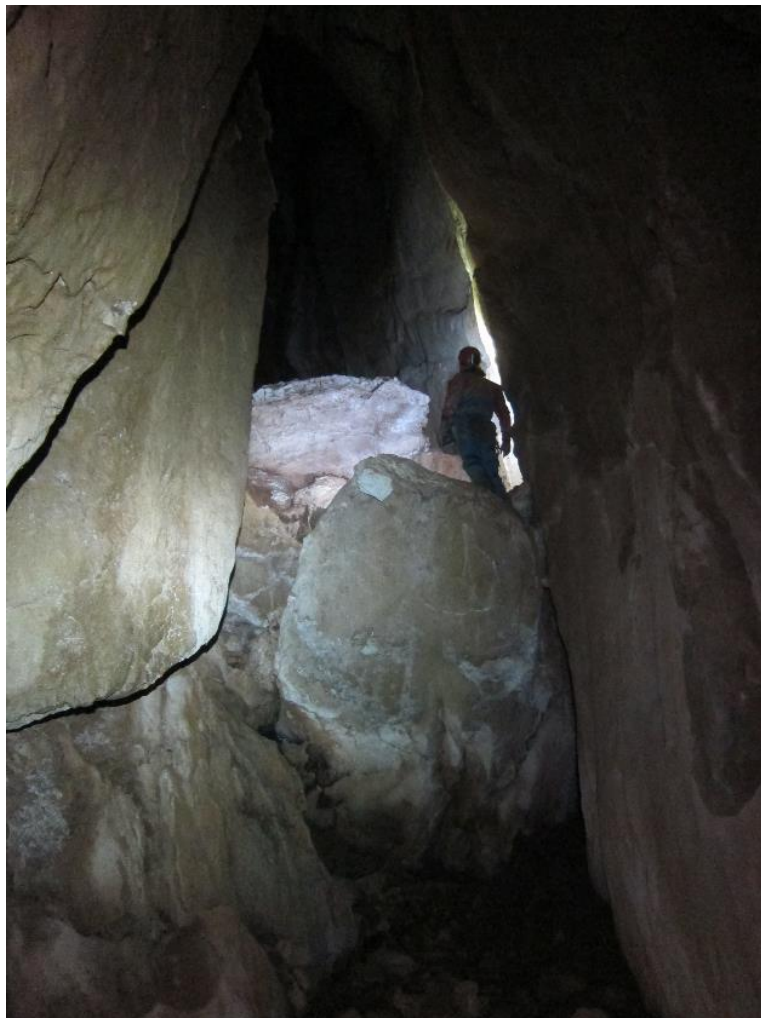
⁸ This cave is possibly T24 but no comprehensive description or survey exists.

Description

A large open depression surrounded by trees. The shake hole is split by numerous rock bridges with two obvious descents, right as you look south is a 50m pitch, left is a 20-30m scramble, aided with a hand line to floor of the open shake hole. Continuing down leads to a 25m pitch (split into 10m, 10m and 5m sections) to the floor of the main chamber (15m x 25m x 25m).

From the main chamber a number of passages lead off in various directions. Heading east an easy scramble down leads to a smaller anti-chamber that must take the majority of water in wet conditions. At the north end of this chamber is small climb down into a water worn passage which after 5m drops into a small mud and boulder choked chamber. A small u-bend squeeze is the current limit of exploration. A 4m climb above here leads through a small passage.

Heading south from the main chamber leads, after 20m to an obvious junction. Straight on is an unclimbed (3m) calcite climb. Turning left leads up a 4m climb to another chamber. An aven at the eastern end is approx. 20m high and unclimbed. Turning north in the chamber heads through some sandy crawls to a window overlooking the previous small anti-chamber.



Picture: T591 climb (Phil Walker)

Heading west from the main chamber is a 10m pitch that can be free climbed through a small opening on the left. This leads directly into another obvious water sink with mud and flood debris evident. A small crawl to the left leads to a mud chamber with no apparent way on.

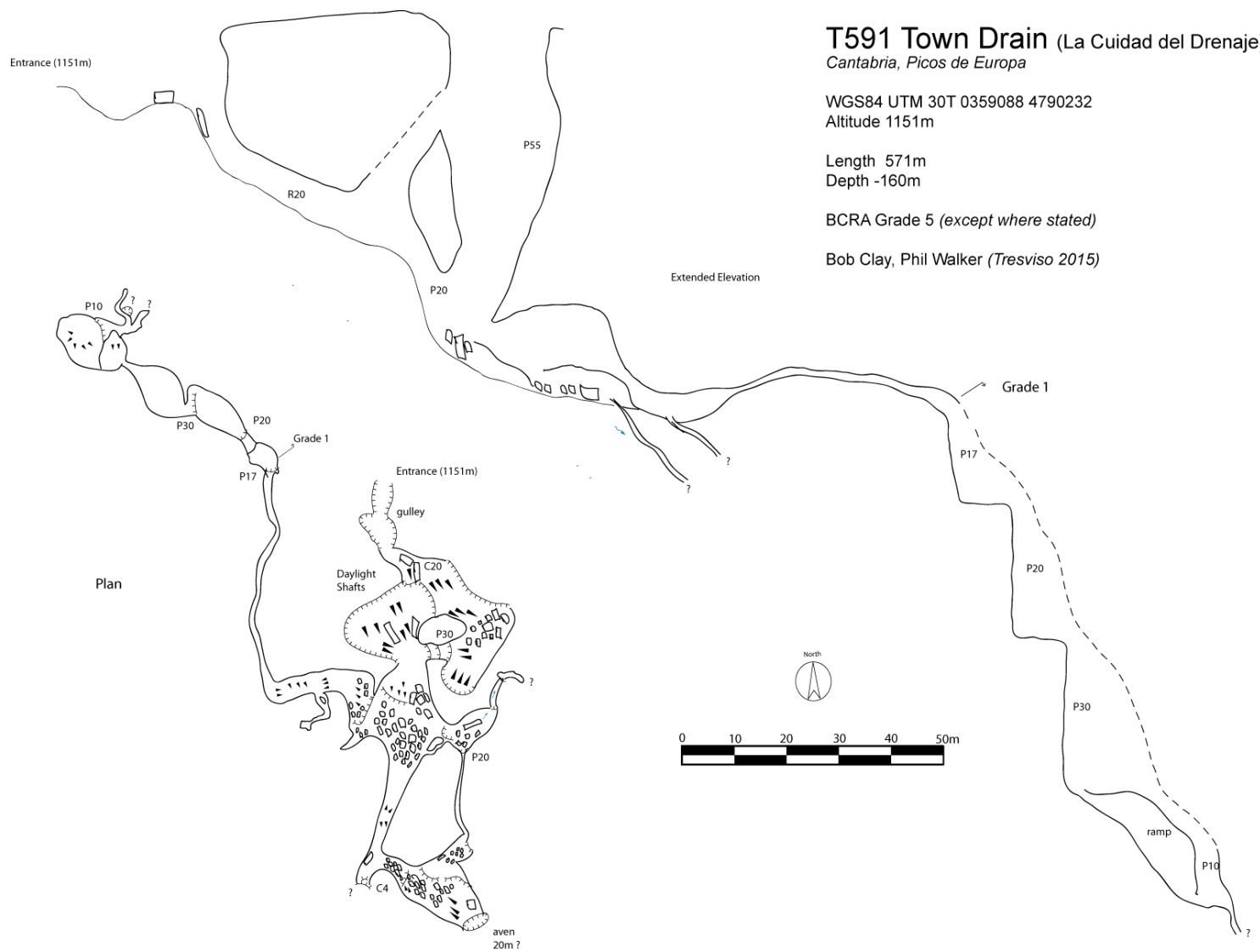
A small climb above here leads through a small passage to 10-20m of old stream passage. This leads out into a larger fossil rift and the head of a 17m pitch. From the base of the pitch a short climb leads to the head of a 20m immediately on to a short fossil ramp and a balcony over a broad smooth sided circular shaft. From the flat base a short phreatic stream way quickly leads to the head of a 30m pitch.

The far side of the bottom of this larger shaft leads immediately on to a soft fossil ramp and a balcony over a broad chamber. The base of the chamber is dominated by a mound of mud and debris washed in from above.

Circling either side of the mound leads down though to a mud filled chamber cut though by floodwater. This leads to a low cobbled crawl at the far left hand side of the chamber which can be followed for 20m to a small chamber. Above the crawl to the right can be found a small 3m shaft with a cobbled floor (this was not explored due to lack of rope).

The far right hand side of the chamber leads to a wide inclined rift which can be climbed for 5-10m before ending in an aven (not climbed due to lack of equipment).

A single set of old rusty spits were in evidence on the pitches.



Summary

The 2015 expedition has continued to build on the successes of previous trips advancing exploration in line with the expedition objectives and discovering a number of new leads and 2km of cave was surveyed.

Cueva del Nacimiento

Nearly 1km of new passage was discovered and surveyed in *Cueva del Nacimiento* and a number of new leads identified.

The continued exploration of *Cueva del Nacimiento* has been very successful, with the discovery of the main way on deeper into the mountain, via the *Die Hard – Jurassic World* extensions above *Death Race 2000*. The strong draught in the cave has been rediscovered in these extensions and continued exploration in this area will be the main focus of future expeditions.

The highest point in Cueva del Nacimiento is now 177m higher than the lowest point in Sima 56, albeit nearly 4km away horizontally. This would suggest that the new extensions in the Death Race 2000 area are heading towards a possible 'middle entrance' between the two systems.

The following provides a list of the main leads outstanding in *Cueva del Nacimiento*:

Die Hard – 5 unclimbed avens / climbs.

Jurassic World – 4 unclimbed avens / climbs and sandy passage dig.

Death Race Pina Colada Sump – possible dive and high level rift.

Death Race 2000 – main aven climb remains unfinished.

Teeth of Satan – Wet Aven – climb remains unfinished.

Teeth of Satan – Hellsmouth – further passages unexplored

Consort Hall – I Love Horses – ramp continues up.

Parting Friends Sump

Far Upstream Sump

Andara Region

Work in the higher caves of Andara remains a challenge due to manpower and equipment committed to *Cueva del Nacimiento* and the necessity to repeat a lot of exploration and rigging from the early LUSS expeditions. *T105 Italianos* and *T91A Torca Boulderosa* were successfully revisited and re-rigged and despite not producing any new cave the work has been invaluable in updating and clarifying the 'picture' of the higher cave systems and their relation to *Cueva del Nacimiento*.

Future expeditions will continue to revisit the higher caves in conjunction with the work at the foot of the mountain in an effort to produce a more comprehensive view of the Eastern Massif cave systems.



Picture: Andara, looking North West (Phil Walker)

Appendix A: Expedition Members

In total 13 people from 6 clubs were involved in the 2015 expedition:

Bradford Pothole Club (BPC)

Phil Walker

Sheffield University Speleological Society (SUSS)

Rob Middleton

Hannah Moulton

Edd Willatts

University of Leeds Speleological Society (ULSA)

Ian Peachey

South Bristol Speleological Society (SBSS)

Bob Clay

Chelsea Speleological Society (CSS)

Matt Dunn

Unattached

Joseph Daniels

Chris Jones

Matt Jones

Greg Kemp

Dave Powlesland

AD KAMI

Fernando de la Fuente Moreno

Thanks also due to Derek Cousins, Howard Jones, Colin Boothroyd, Dave Checkley, Carolyn Ginnevar and the people of Tresviso.

Appendix B: Permission & Permits

The 2015 expedition was run via the Agrupacion Deportiva KAMI club of Madrid, using their exploration permits, granted from the Asturian Caving Federation, the National Park and the Cantabrian Government.

Appendix C: Finance

INCOME	TOTAL COST	PER PERSON	COMMENTS
Balance C/F	1255.77	104.65	
Deposit	600.00	50.00	
Member Contribution	5093.23	398.94	

TOTALS	6949.00	553.58	
EXPENDITURE	TOTAL COST	PER PERSON	COMMENTS
Transport			
Ferries	2400.00	200.00	<i>4 people per car x £800 per car</i>
Fuel	450.00	37.50	<i>4 people per car x £150 per car</i>
Breakdown cover	450.00	12.00	<i>based on 3 cars</i>
Accommodation			
Youth Hostel	705.60	58.80	<i>6 EUROS per night</i>
YH Membership	36.00	3.00	<i>£3 membership</i>
Catering			
Day Fee	840.00	70.00	<i>£5 per day fee</i>
Group Equipment			
Beal 9mm rope 200m	360.00	30.00	
30x 7mm Maillons	72.40	6.03	
30x Petzl Coudee	80.00	6.67	
Tackle Bags	155.00	12.92	
Misc.			
Insurance	1200.00	100.00	<i>approx. £100 per person (dependent on insurer)</i>
Post Trip Report	200.00	16.67	<i>printing & binding</i>
TOTALS	6949.00	553.58	

Appendix D: Cave Locations

The original locations from the 1970's and 1980's expeditions are largely inaccurate when plotted into modern GPS devices. The following are either new sites or older entrances re-logged.

This information is being collated and published on the expedition website.

<http://www.picosandaracaving.info/>

Cave	Area	Zone	Altitude	Easting	Northing
Sima 56	Cueto Senderos	30T	1971m	0359768	4785492
CS-6	Cueto Senderos	30T	2061m	0359260	4785472
CS-9 Torca Jou Sin Tierre	Cueto Senderos	30T	2067m	0359161	4785460
PB-01 - Torca de las Grajas	Pico Boro	30T	1927m	0359356	4786049
T202	Pico Boro	30T	902m	0359378	4786255
T203	Pico Boro	30T	906m	0359355	4786259
T590	Cuesta Las Arrianas	30T	1141m	0359001	4790275
T591	Cuesta Las Arrianas	30T	1151m	0359088	4790232

Table: 2015 grid locations, WGS-84 datum.

Additionally, the large collection of old and new survey data is being updated, modernised and stored with the UK national cave registry archive (<http://cave-registry.org.uk/>) under the *Andara* dataset.

Appendix E: Surveying

The following table details the passage explored and surveyed during the 2015 expedition:

Cave	Survex Name	Date	Surveyors	Length
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_DirtyPrettyLiar	16/07/2015	RM, MJ	10.40
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_DirtyPrettyLiar2	16/07/2015	RM, MJ	76.64
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_DieHard	20/07/2015	RM, MJ	253.73
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_AnEveningStroll	19/07/2015	RM, MJ	66.17
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_Streamway2	16/07/2015	IP, DP, EW	155.96
Cueva del Nacimiento	DR2000_JurassicWorld	21/07/2015	CJ, HM	230.49
Cueva del Nacimiento	ConsortHall_Ramp	24/07/2015	DP, CJ	65.40
Cueva del Nacimiento	ConsortHall_ILoveHorses	24/07/2015	DP, CJ	127.15
T591 Ciudad de Drenaje ⁹	T591_TownDrain	17/07/2015	PW, BC, MD, FM	571.51
Sistema Ramazosa ¹⁰	T105 Italianos	15/07/2015	PW, BC, JD	409.41
Sistema Ramazosa	T91A Torca Boulderrosa	22/07/2015	JD, DP	171.65
TOTALS				2138.51

Table: 2015 surveying data.

⁹ Previously explored circa 1978-1979 but no details of survey.

¹⁰ Previously explored circa 1978-1979 but original data unavailable.

Appendix F: Sponsors

The 2015 expedition was sponsored by the following:

Mark Wright Training Ltd: discounted gear order



Appendix G: Expedition Log

Phil Walker (PW), Bob Clay (BC), Chris Jones (CJ), Dave Powlesland (DP), Hannah Moulton (HM), Rob Middleton (RM), Matt Jones (MJ), Edd Willatts (EW), Joe Daniels (JD), Ian Peachey (IP), Matt Dunn (MD), Greg Kemp (GK), Fernando de la Fuente Moreno (FM)

Friday 10th July – In transit

Saturday 11th July – In transit

Sunday 12th July

Cueva Del Nacimiento - rigging entrance series (PW, RM)

Late start, down to Agua to rig the initial entrance series. At cave entrance for 3pm. Dinghy inflated and set up across canal. Stream way traverse rigged. Installed garden hose in puddle of water at the top of New Bypass. Good pace to Clapham Junction and left rescue kit. Up the ramp and onto Boulder Hall and the 22m pitch. RH rigged pitch and we exited cave. Back to entrance by 6pm, uphill in about 1 hour 10 min.

Felt pretty dodgy for most of the trip due to antibiotics and lack of fluids.

Torca Boulderrosa – rigging Italianos entrance. (BC, HM, CJ, JD)

Lunch in the pub, with a late start to find Italianos. A hot walk to the white house, and an easy find of the entrance due to crystal clear conditions. HM rigged the first few pitches down onto a rotten platform, with a traverse line over a false floor and blind pot. Another short drop of maybe 3 meters is descended and followed by a downhill ramp we roped. A short series of tunnels lead to a maze like area where we spent some time exploring here before JD rigged the pitch (30m) down that leads into RCA 6. BC decided to put his foot through the floor falling to his waist above the last pitch, Causing a bit of a scare. Once in RCA 6 the left leads to an open steel door, beyond is presumed to be the old bang store, due to waste inside. To the right leads straight along to Boulderrosa which is a very blowy hole on the left ~50m. A little further along brings you to a junction, the collapse that restricts access from the RCA 6 white house entrance being to the right, straight is a passage almost filled with spoil. It is possible to pass but we did not do so. Back to the left of the junction RCA 6 continues in the direction of the lakes. ~50m from the collapse there is an opening of natural passage followed by another stack off mine waste, this looks ready to fall in. It looked as though it may be possible to pass this over the top on the right hand side of the passage, although we did not attempt this. Further exploration revealed that the lake entrance is also collapsed and not a very nice place to be due to the rotten supports and semi collapsed stacks. JD got wet trying to find a way out without having to climb back through Italianos. We all then climbed back out of Italianos and descended the mountain with amazing views and a cloud inversion. Failed to find any tackle bags left in a cheese cave, BC did find lots of flies though.

Shopping run (DP, MJ, EW, IP)

Monday 13th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento**

(RM, IP, DP, EW, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven, Main aven and the 20m undescended pitch
 Team entered cave with monster bags Inc. 2 sets of climbing gear, 150m static, 2 drills etc. Hard 9hrs to start of the ramps from Green Domino lead to the decision to camp at there for the first night - especially with the prospect of another hard few hours of caving + potential for no water at Death Race & having to rig down the 70m pitch to fetch it...

T517

(PW, BC)

PW and BC initially carried 2 rope bags up to the White House to help the Boulderrosa team. Baking hot day, took about an hour 10 minutes to get to white house. Quick beer and then back down to car park. Passing the Boulderrosa team on the way. Back at car, had lunch and then drove to layby near T517. Lot of bracken and afternoon heat... decided to come back tomorrow when better prepared. Prepared further with some beers at the bar.

Torca Boulderrosa - Vacation to Fawltly Towers.

(HM, CJ, JD)

An efficient start saw us at Italianos entrance by 3.30pm. H had to return to Tresviso in an equally efficient manor to retrieve Chris and H's underground clothes! Chris and Joe headed down. Chris re-rigged *Bobs Hole* (17m with 3 rebelayes) and began on Torca Boulderrosa proper, getting very cold rigging the first Y hang in the arctic gale, a fine 35m pitch landing in a rubble floor with two ways on. Whilst waiting to descend, Joe noticed 'Oh F*ck' written in carbide next to the entrance – what have we let ourselves in for. At the bottom of the 1st pitch are two rifts, contrary to the description both ways 'go' and we spent some time lobbing rocks into Mordor and looking for the wind. We decided on heading North which begins with a loose spit over equally loose rocks and Joe rigged the *Gung Ho* traverse over the top of what we think is the original 1970's pitch. H arrived hid in the kisu with Chris. After 50m the traverse opened out and dropped down the rift, after a ~50-60m we landed in an inlet and headed downstream to be met with an ascending ramp. Climbing this we left the bolting kit and the top of the next pitch for tomorrow. We exited ~1am to a warm starry night and stumbled down towards the White House. Arriving at 2am Manuel let us in and after eating outside we headed up to the 4 foot beds – heaven for Chris.

Tuesday 14th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento**

(RM, IP, DP, EW, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven, Main aven and the 20m undescended pitch
Climbing Team (RM & MJ)

Climbing Team (RM & MJ)

Re-packed bags at camp to have full set of climbing kit and set off before the others up the ramps. Took a steady 3-4hrs to get to Death Race making for a ~13.5hr trip in.

Went up the climbs from Death Race to furthest survey point. Calcite Blockage that was previously on the survey continued as crawl and short pitch to a small static

sump, which was duly surveyed before starting climb up the stal ramp. MJ started climb before switching for more technical & bold climbing. Climb topped out in pretty little chamber, with climb continuing up, though looking less promising. Back to camp for food and bed.

Torca Boulderosa Vacation to Fawltly Towers (cont). (CJ, JD, HM)

Staying up at the White House Manuel offered us breakfast and returned with several types of sugar, including porridge made with honey instead of milk. Being over a 100m drop the *Gung Ho Traverse* had quite rightly eaten a lot of bolts, so Joe headed down to the car park to pick up another 30 from Phil and found a note to survey Italianos. Chris and H headed into the Italianos with Manuel and Boro the mountain dog to fix up a water supply for the hut. Keeping Boro away from the pitch head we showed Manuel where the perched sump was and headed down to continue bolting with the 3 bolts we had left taking another 3 from the traverse on the way down. We began with a short traverse over to a parallel shaft part way down the Pelle Rocco pitches, but this proved to have a solid floor and was simply the source of the inlet. We continued to yesterday's limit and continued heading down. After a lot of gardening, a fairly impressive and straight forward pitch series lead us to in a 5x10m chamber with an obvious rift continuation and a lot of spent carbide. We had arrived at the head of the 100m rift by a different route. Leaving the bolting kit, we all headed into the rift to warm up (cave temp is 2-3°C) and explore the future objectives, we quickly found the old spits of the 4th pitch but also felt the wind coming from the continuation of the rift above this – the objective for tomorrow. On the return a 2nd pitch down was seen between the chamber and original 4th pitch, as no spits could be seen we intend to drop this too.

Arriving at the bottom of the 1st pitch H had brewed up and over some Smash and Minestrone soup we decided to ignore Phil and not survey Italianos having the better idea of getting him to come do it the next day...

We exited around 9pm and headed to White House for a beer in the sun. A good few days, we know where we are in Boulderosa, having rigged away from the majority of loose rocks and have two potential leads for the return trip.

T517 (PW, BC)

Attempt 2. Dropped 30 hangars / bolts and 10m tat for the Boulderosa team before attempting to find T517 again. This time we started from the Crossroads and headed over the hill in the rough direction. GPS stated 2km. Fairly easy going.

Rough area was located as per the 2009 Speleogroup report - *It is located at an obvious limestone outcrop at the bottom of a small valley*

GPS was sending us both all over the place so we headed to bottom of a valley (not that small) but apparently 200m from the actual cave. Nothing obviously matching the description.

Small cave was entered:

T590 (x: 0359001 y: 4790275 z: 1141m)

Location: From the head of the Sobra Valley (park in layby) head west of the col and then approx. 400m in a Southerly direction to obvious depression. Cave is in the middle surrounded by limestone

Description: Small hole with cool draught. 1m squeeze / climb to small chamber. A small hole to the left (East) emits a draught. Floor of hole is filled with cobbles / sand and would require capping and digging (in an awkward position) to progress

On way back up hill further large depression was noted. BC explored initially to a rock bridge over twin shafts. Lot of excitement at size. Left hand shaft was hand line with PW emergency 8m rope and down to floor of shaft. PW kitted up with SRT and bolted down approx. pitch. A lot of loose boulders at the top were kicked down the shaft before comfortable with the take-off. Unfortunately no hammer in the kit so a rock had to suffice. First 10m in a y-hang to start of rub point. Installed new bolt but then realised I didn't have my rock to hammer in the bolt. Tried various options, plastic box of camera case, hammer drill action and corner of a carabineer. None worked so went back up 5 m and got BC to throw a rock down. With rock in place, quickly down next rebelay (currently single one) for 10m to a further y-hang. Bit of poor rigging initially, following the loss of a maillon and some hurried emergency kit in place. Last section is 5m for floor. Had a quick explore and grade 1 survey as Bob was at top of pitch getting cold. Looks a promising lead (see below).

T591 La Ciudad del Drenaje (x: 0359088 y: 4790232 x: 1151m – Geko 201)

Location: From the head of the Sobra Valley (park in layby) head west of the col and then approx. 350m in a Southerly direction to obvious depression. Sink is on left following the obvious line of the valley, surrounded by trees.

Description: Large open depression surrounded by trees. Shake hole is split by numerous rock bridges: 2 obvious descents, right as you look south is a 50m pitch, left is a 20-30m scramble, aided with hand line to floor of open shake hole. Covered with logs / plants and rocks. Continuing down leads to approx. 25m pitch (y hang – 10m to single rebelay, 10m to a y hang, 5 m to floor). Further clamber down leads to large chamber (15m x 25m x 25m) with numerous leads:

1. To North are 2 climbs (10m and 5m), the first one being a scramble up boulders but may require rope for climb down. Trickle of water can be heard above (possibly leads to chamber 30m high 10 across).
2. Second climb is approx. 5m on degraded calcite.
3. To East is obvious 10m pitch down. Passage below at least 20m until difficult to establish
4. West leads down a climb to an obvious area where water must sink, small hole looks water worn and requires 2m climb

This is possible Torca T24 from early LUSS expeditions and notes say “worthwhile to revisit as never fully explored.

Probably heads down valley to Tielve / Arenas so not connected to Agua but promising site will revisit.

Wednesday 15th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento**

(RM, IP, DP, EW, MJ)

*Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven, Main aven and the 20m undescended pitch**Climbing Team (RM & MJ)*

Back up the avens to the calcite aven. Climb continued up, ending in very pretty grotto – choked with stal.

After surveying & stripping the ropes out (5m of dynamic snagged on the pull through so had to be chopped high up – should not be climbed if anyone feels the need to return!), we started to drop a pitch off the phreatic passage found in 2012. A well decorated ramp was dropping off, roughly in the direction of the main shaft. Due to the ease of knocking stal off, and dropping down the shaft we stopped & returned to camp on hearing the other team below.

T105 Torca Italianos – surveying

(PW, BC, JD)

After a predictably late start PW, BC, JD, CJ & HM entered the cave entrance to get changed around 1pm. CJ & HM headed off to start the final rigging leaving PW, BC & JD to survey. Having surveyed the entrance JD & BC surveyed and dropped the first pitches carefully as there are a lot of unstable rocks. PW had an uncharacteristic epic on the first re-belay and decided to return to the surface (discovering on the way his Croll was jammed open). PW had also been suffering from the side effects of his antibiotics and was not feeling well.

JD & BC continued through the upper sections which contain many unstable platforms strewn with rock making it hard to tell what solid ground is and what is decaying timber. While progress along the rigged section is fairly direct the complex mixture of natural cave and mined sections going off in every direction which surround the route followed are almost impossible to represent in 2D sketches.

Soon the ramp to the rock ramp was gained dropping to more solid ground. From the bottom of the ramp the short spur to the east was surveyed cautiously as it is in the drop zone of most of the route above. From the west of the ramp the route progresses to the pitch head. The remaining part of the Italianos cave beyond the pitch head was not surveyed due to the dangerously weak floor that BC had nearly fallen through the day before.

The final pitch of the Italianos section was again cautiously surveyed due to the loose rocks at the pitch head. From the floor of the last pitch there is a draughting mine passage to the south which leads through some decaying props and a fractured ceiling to a continuation ahead blocked by a boulder and to the left a short passage to a climb down from a small weak platform. These sections were not surveyed.

From the floor of the last pitch in Italianos the route into RCA6 is via the 2m round passage dropping away to the west to a T junction. The passage to the left (south) was surveyed to an old explosives store behind a steel door and the remnants of some dynamite tubes can still be found in the floor.

To the right (north) of the T junction the route to Boulderrosa was surveyed. There was a marked drop in temperature in the Boulderrosa side of the RCA6. The passage continues past Boulderrosa to a cross roads.

Directly ahead appear backfilled but it is possible to crawl through a gap at ceiling level to a continuation with a small draft (not surveyed). To the right there is a major collapse which used to lead to the main entrance of the mine. To the left is a short passage which breaks into a natural rift, mostly filled by mine spoil. Beyond this there is a section of dammed passage which is entered under some dangerously failing roof supports which marked the end of the survey.

At this point JD & BC debated dropping into Boulderrosa or returning to the surface, as the time was about 18:30 and they didn't want to risk dropping debris (*ed. Effing big rocks*) onto CJ & HM they decided to return to the surface and check up on PW.

PW, JD & BC left the Refugio around 20:00.

Torca Boulderrosa – to bottom (The night of the long knives) (CJ, HM)

H and I left the others to survey Italianos and yesterday's limit was quickly reached and brew kit stashed. We quickly became lost, hot and sweaty in the meander, re-christened *Jizways II*. Eventually a head popped out above the first pitch and some spits were seen, we decided not to drop this and returned to a higher level of the meander to continue. The next pitch follows shortly, and again we traversed over the top of this which required a couple of falls and some comedy giraffe bolting. No way on was found over the pitch so we derigged and dropped to the floor with a fine 30-40m free hang into a large chamber. Here there is a tight descending passage which quickly becomes too tight, a 'large' rift and an 8m high window. CJ climbed into the window and regained the wind, which was disappointingly coming from the continuation of the obvious rift, no other way on was possible at this higher level so we continued along the floor. The going was very awkward in *Jizways I* and with the kit left in the chamber we returned to the brew kit for some food and headed out, reaching the surface at 9pm. PW, JD and BC had abandoned us on the mountain with no money or food. We headed to Fawltly Towers where Basil took pity on us. Preparing for dinner in the sunset we realised the stove was in *Boulderrosa* so we dined on raw black pudding, par boiled rice and Lidl's finest curry, bliss...

Torca Boulderrosa – not quite to the bottom. (CJ, HM)

A surprisingly efficient start (no beer money!) and we (HM/CJ) were at the start of *Jizways I* by mid-day. *Jizways I* is more complex than its predecessor best being traversed at a mid-level with several bold steps/climbs and some serious meander yoga was needed to reach the next pitch. No way on was possible of the top and the wind draft was coming up. HM began rigging and CJ returned to collect the rest of the kit. An awkward pitch head was passed and HM continued rigging down. Brewing up in the chamber below a cartwheel and impressive light show announced H's swift departure from one ledge and swift arrival at the next 5m below. Fortunately no noodles were spilt.

This chamber has an active inlet aven which flows into the original *Boulderrosa* rift at a low level and a high level continuation of the original rift. CJ traversed out into the rift where a draft was felt and a high level continuation was thought possible, although this would require more bolts and rope than we had so we decided to continue along the 1970's route.

Dropping into the aven, the inlet was dammed with rocks and the flow reduced. Motivation was mysteriously absorbed from the ether and we headed into the water! WTF. Another tight pitch head was passed just as the dam broke. Y hang, single bolt, Y hang into a large void, ~50m. The rope didn't reach the floor. No draft was felt in *Donald Duck*, which is small. Do not pass Donald Duck in dubious weather.

Is the wind at the entrance related to the inlet aven or does it come from the dry meander?

Objectives for next trip:

1. Bottom the pitch which is ~10m off floor. There is probably another 50m pitch after this leading to the final boulder choke.
2. Investigate the ceiling of this pitch for the continuation of the rift.
3. Investigate the dry meander above the inlet aven, requires a traverse line.

There is a brew kit, kisu, 22m of rope and 1 bolt above *Donald Duck* and 60m of 8mm before *Jizways I*.

Thursday 16th July

Cueva Del Nacimiento

(RM, IP, DP, EW, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven, Main aven and the 20m undescended pitch

Trip out of the cave and back to Tresviso – split into two teams in the interest of time. RM & MJ out in ~5hrs 45 to glorious sunshine! Very hot walk back up the hill, though (can't please some!).

Matt Dunn arrives (MD)

Friday 17th July

Day off / Shopping trip

(HM, RM, HM, JD, DP, EW, IP, MD, MJ)

T591 Ciudad de Drenaje -surveying a new cave (PW, BC)

A return to this 'unknown cave'. Buoyed by the prospect of virgin passage PW and BC braved an early midday start (or later) to get to T591 to survey and explore this tantalising lead, in totally the wrong catchment area for the previous 40 years of work.... However, a cave is a cave and it all counts. Fairly easy walk to cave, stopping to look at some other sinks in the same valley (no good) we both dropped into the cave and kitted up to avoid horse flies before dropping the first pitch.

We tackled the climbs first (ref.1). The first one being an awkward climb up to an impressive chamber (approx. 20m high). An aven in the far corner looks promising but is obviously going up and in the wrong direction. Passage across chamber leads through some short crawls to a window back over the main chamber just below the first pitch.

The calcite climb (ref.2) proved more of a challenge and remains unclimbed.

Next we tackled the sink (ref.4). This proved to be a rather tortuous small stream passage (potentially taking a lot of water) but degenerated into an apparent u-tube / dry sump which BC dug for a while but without progress.

Finally returned to the pitch lead (ref.3). This turned out not to be a pitch and can be descended via an obvious hole. Area below appears to be another sink for a lot of water, but small climb above leads to 10-20m of old stream passage to a 17m pitch.

Pitch has old and new spits. BC descended pitch and found new 35m pitch. No rope, so undescended.

1. *To North are 2 climbs (10m and 5m), the first one being a scramble up boulders but may require rope for climb down. Trickle of water can be heard above (possibly leads to chamber 30m high 10 across). – Leads to large 20m aven and passage to window above lead 4*
2. *Second climb is approx. 5m on degraded calcite. – STILL UNEXPLORED*
3. *To East is obvious 10m pitch down. Passage below at least 20m until difficult to establish – main way on – see descriptions*
4. *West leads down a climb to an obvious area where water must sink, small hole looks water worn and requires 2m climb – minor stream passage to obvious u-bend / sump area*

Fernando (FM) Arrives

Saturday 18th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento – Parting Friends**

(PW, HM, CJ)

Quick trip to drop of CJ and HM camping equipment at Clapham Junction. Next we went on to try and find the 'Parting Friends' sump. Much squirreling about discovered 3 sumps, highly unlikely that they are the actual sump we were looking for.....

Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000

(RM, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven and Main aven

Entered the cave at 12.30pm after a faffy start to the day, and made quick progress with lighter bags reaching Death Race camp at 8pm. Realising it was still early we had a quick look at a passage on the right of camp looking in which had clearly previously been entered but was not on the survey. "An Evening Stroll" was surveyed to completion, with no on-going leads adding 40m to the survey, and offering a nice chance to dry out before dinner and bed. This was tied in to the central cairn survey station in Death Race (Survey station 101 PR and AB 2011).

T591 Ciudad de Drenaje – surveying a known cave

(BC, FM, MD)

Pitch series was explored down to -160m. A number of old spits in evidence.

Torca Boulderrosa

(DP, EW, JD)

CJ & HM 'Dave you'll love this, it's just what you want to do'

Rigging in a waterfall isn't exactly what DP had in mind for a fun trip. But swinging about in the abyss of water and darkness failing to find a deviation, DP realised that this was truly shit.

With a standard Tresviso 7pm start, ED JD and DP started up the hill towards Italionas full of beans. Dropping the first few pitches with without a hitch, bringing us to the first meander. This lead to what you may describe as navigational issues. After some time we hit the second meander which could be described as slight navigational issues. With this out the way we descended to 'Donald Duck'. After unblocking the dam, hero ED went through first rather fast whilst JD and DP fannied about in the 90° bends. DP decided to back track to find the bypass but failed.

On a high ledge DP unpacked the drill and got ready to descend leaving JD and ED in the kisu cold and damp. 30m down swinging about in the water DP was swinging about in the water on the end of a rope, desperate to reach a wall. After eventually getting a couple rebelay in he hit the floor, and was extremely happy to be wearing his gimp mac. ED and JD followed, setting up camp at the base in the blowy wet chamber. CJ is wrong about losing the draft! After some kisu time and curry we split in search of warmer cave and the way on. JD and ED found the route downstream through the meander to the final pitch in tot terminal chamber. DP wandered upstream through a question mark to warmth, no breeze and a waterfall inlet (about a 15m bolt climb required).

After the initial scope we all headed down stream to the final pitch. JD got drill in hand, and traversed around the mega pitch head with 5 second boulder drop. DP and ED huddled over the stream in kisu, this was a cold position with breeze and

provided what one can only describe as a very gay time. Maybe this is what CJ and HM thought DP would enjoy.

After several hours of shivering sleep JD gave a loud shout from the bottom about 0630 (11:30hrs into the trip).

After JD failed to make the skyhook hold in mud, the final part was rigged in the water.

Terminal chamber is a large boulder strewn chamber, which rises in one corner with another wet inlet. There is a possible high level chamber that meets from the left of the wet inlet, but with the steam I was producing/ distance it was hard to see far.

Down to the opposite corner a couple dry avens enter to more boulders below.

There was no obvious route to follow on from here. Leads from the final chamber are the high avens, hopefully from a bypass by Donald Duck. Also the high level chamber near the other wet inlet, up a boulder slope followed by very bold climb, or a bolt climb (about 15m). The water sinks where it lands with no stream way. There was no obvious route through the boulders. There is still a noticeable draft but this may be due to the waterfall entering, but no specific direction of draft was noticed.

Time to leave, JD ascended and left the rope at the top of the pitch in the dry. Joining DP and Ed for shiver time in the kisu. After about 20 min's of nodding heads time and cuddle coldness it was time to relocate to the warmer part of cave. It was

remarkably warmer out of the draft and active Stream way, so we cooked up some borsch power time in the kisu. ED left the minor comfort of the kisu first to ascend the long wet pitch, passing through Donald Duck. The Donald Duck dam had now been breached and the wet crawl was now proper wet! Hero ED breezed through and was called back to pull DP and JDs bags through as they pussy footed about trying to get through alive. JD had de-rigged the waterfall pitch and forgetting to remove gimp mac tried to drag the rope through. Failing he left it and sent the meander king ED back for it whilst he sulked about the now trashed gimp mac. The escape from here was slow, with the meanders proving to be hard to navigate and with the cold taking toll on our tired and wet bodies. JD was catching a few moments of sleep at the bottom of one pitch, DP instead of calling rope free decided to launch a boulder at him to wake him up. JD got the message as it hit his helmet, making him drop his pantin and start climbing without it. Only to realize a meter off the floor, then return for it. The next few pitches went without hitch, with only minor rock fall. Upon emerging from the hell hole known as bouldertosser into RCA 6 DP made a comment to JD 'erg, Joe, where is your bag? 'Oh for f*cks sake!' JD had left his bag two pitches down. After a bit of laughter DP buggered off whilst JD descended back into shit pit bouldertosser to find it. As we emerged onto the surface it was now 1430 and sunny. Making for an 18.5 hour trip underground. We staggered to the white house for lemonade before trudging down to DPs hot car. In summary it was cold, wet and shit. All are really excited and looking forward to de-rigging.

Sunday 19th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000**

(RM, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Wet Aven and Main aven

A steady start lead to a return to the descending ramp previously visited on Wed 15th. MJ began rigging down and into the top of the Death Race main aven. Although the way on was unclear, the team swapped and we decided to go horizontally high above Death Race in the hope of making it to the largest aven on the far side of the chamber. RM began with some free traversing on stal ledges, before direct aid bolting was required. Approximately 15m across the traverse hopes started to lift as a passage was spotted another 30m across the aven. Eventually a mud ramp was gained, which required a short aid climb in very dubious rock to reach the passage. (Approximately 120m of rope and 25 hangers/ maillons is required to rig from the start of the ramp.) The team re-joined at the top of the pitch, and began surveying into the new find which was 5m dia. phreatic passage! Result! After 40m of big and well decorated passage, the way on appeared to close down, however a draft was felt, and a constriction spotted. (This is the first time this strong draft has been felt since a constriction around the Teeth of Satan!) We continued beyond and into rift passage 20m+ high, before after about 80m, the only possible way on without gear was in a tight stream way in the floor. We followed this for 20m in some awkward meander passing a couple of awkward climbs before stopping below another, with the plan to return with more kit. The passage continues....

Sima 56 / CS-9

(MD, FM, BC, PW)

Long walk up to the Whitehouse and then on to the Sima 56 entrance, followed by CS-9 Jou Sin Tierre and then back down to car

Sima 56 - 0359768 4785492 1971m

CS-6 0359260 4785472 2061m

CS-9 0359161 4785460 2067m

PB-01 - Torca de las Grajas 0359356 4786049 1927m

T202 - 0359378 4786255 902m

T203 - 0359355 4786259 906m

Greg Kemp (GK) arrives

Monday 20th July**Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000**

(RM, MJ)

Team to Death Race to climb Main aven

After waiting for an eternity for the other team to stop faffing, leave camp and clear the down pitches below death race, we returned to the traverse and began surveying along it. This was awkward due to a lack of Disto but we succeeded in a couple of hours then had a quick look at a climb of a side passage to the left of the top of the pitch head. This is a good lead and can be partially free climbed, but may require bolts to protect higher up. We then continued through the cave picking off and surveying side leads until again at our end in the tight stream way. We placed a hand line on a short climb achieved previously, then used combined tactics to pass another small climb which was again rigged with a hand line. This lead to a spacious Aven into the Rift above. We began climbing up this but ran out of gear approximately 12m off the floor having used all rope, hangers and bolts! This is a very good lead heading to spacious rift passage which CJ and HM are heading too tomorrow.... We returned slowly taking a few record photos on the way out, and returned to camp tired but satisfied just in time to hear about Peachey's adventures...

Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000

(CJ, HM, IP)

Team to Death Race to explore 'sump'

H woke us up at 8:30 with hot tea and porridge informing us that it wasn't possible to sleep for 12 hours a fact that Chris and I were quite keen to disprove. However In the hope of discovering a vast beach populated by civilized dinosaurs serving pina-coladas beneath fossilised coconut trees we hauled ourselves out of our sleeping bags and set off into the death race meander. Following a trail marked by shreds of my over suit claimed by the meander on previous visits we made steady progress through the sharp, awkward and snappy passage down to the base of the pitches previously pushed by DP,EW and IP. We set up a kisu spot on a ledge above the canal and brewed up some noodles for lunch. Suitably fortified I set off with bolting to kit and a short to rope to drop the pitch down to the lake that EW had found on the previous trip. Entering the constricted canal passage I traversed carefully towards the window trying not to get my nads wet and found a natural thread back up placing a bolt in the roof to give something that approximated a Y hang. I had to resist the urge to hammer off a large flake in the middle of the window as unfortunately we had used this for our last survey station (Once a new survey station is established, this could usefully be removed). Bolt placed I clambered awkwardly out around the flake. Establishing myself on the other side I was just working out what to do next when I felt a rope slide across my leg thinking this was the tail of the rope dropping free I wasn't immediately concerned until I heard a splash that sounded rather too heavy to be the tail of a rope hitting the water. Checking my kit I realised that the bolting hammer had come unclipped and fallen into the sump. This was a terminal error and after informing myself that I was a retarded f*ckwit I preceded to abseil down to the lake level in the vein hope that the hammer might be snagged on a ledge just below the surface but to no avail. By this point Chris had appeared at the pitch head and I prusiked back up the rope with the drill tucked

inside my over suit to protect it from the waterfall which was harder to avoid on the way up. Bad news delivered Chris swung out onto the pitch head to see what he could see by way of leads with his Scurion lamp whilst I provided a human deviation the pitch head to keep the rope away from the worst of the rubs whilst he pendulumed about below. We spotted a large rift to the right of the meander which looked like it might go but would have required more rope than we had to reach even if we had had a complete bolting kit. Returning to H at the Kisu we collected the camera, Disto and book and shot some more representative splays around the lake and took some photographs of the canal and lake before proceeding to derig back to the meander. Progress back through the meander was steady but slow lumbered down with rope (though at least we didn't have to carry the bulky and rather weighty bolting hammer). Disaster struck however as we neared the end of the meander as whilst pulling my tackle sack through the constricted top of a climb Chris ripped one the shoulder straps clean off. H almost p*ssed herself she was laughing so hard and Chris was equally sympathetic. Inconsolable I dragged what remained of my bag through the last sections of the meander with my tattered over suit adding to a picture of complete speleological dejection. Some falling boulder action added some spice to the journey back up the ropes to camp but we made it in one piece just as the aven team returned.

Cueva Del Nacimiento – Boulder Hall – Pottery Kiln Dig (JD, DP, FM, MD)
Team to Boulder Hall – route marking and look at 'surface' entrance dig near Pottery Kiln passage

We headed down the hill towards Agua about 1330 entering the cave about 1500. Easily navigating the well-marked route, adding new markers for FM along the way. Once in Boulder Hall the passage that leads towards the surface dig is easily found behind a row of stals high on the right. The passage has a single slightly steep down-hill section which comes into a chamber. There are ways on to both left and right via crawls, both ending in small chambers. The way on is back-on yourself to the right; under a pretty moon milked arch of stals. This then trends gently up to the dig area; the passage soon becomes stooped crawling with a wet floor. At the dig a strong wind was noticed coming from a crack between flowstone and solid wall.

The Dig went fast, changing shift at the front and passing spoil back to fill in any space we could. The mud and rock that falls away allowed us to make fast progress; we soon cleared out the crawl into a standing space allowing us to dig up with our hands and any pointy stone we could find. After the first round of digging shifts MD decided we needed a *Ramrod*, so went off to find us a real man's digging tool. This turned out to be a broken stall that was too heavy to lift with one arm and broke on the first attempted use, back to the trusty hands. FM did some amateur archaeology uncovering a small mammal skull and snail shells. MD managed to pull down enough spoil without donkey kicking it out the squeeze into the passage behind to block the way in, being underfed and beanstalk shaped he slipped out easily, DP who isn't underfed didn't find entry to the dig so easy though.

As always with digging up, you get tons of crap in your eyes and mouth and down your suit making it a truly enjoyable experience, as do the big rocks that fall onto your feet. FM soon did the European on us and went on strike, demanding better

working hours and more benefits. It seems there is a difference in how the mainland and the islanders approach caving.

The breeze is strong coming through the spoil and it feels as though a breakthrough is imminent (like every dig). In the few hours we were digging we cleared about two meters forward and about 3 upward.

Although it looks as though this will break through in a fairly in-accessible part of the mountain side, it could prove to be a useful entrance cave side of the impassable entrance in flood. Or a bird watching spot, maybe for stealing eagle eggs.

After falling in to FMs demands we made a hasty retreat for the surface and played the battery game trying to make DPs light work. The way out was easily navigated with the well-marked route. A quick clean off in the river and DP, JD marched up the hill in record time aided by Haribo to meet the rescue party on the top of the hill. We were 20 mins overdue, well in the south wales hour. MD and FM turned up about an hour later.

True to any good dig, beer was then drunk.

For reference, furthest point on survey boulder hall – pottery kiln is 0363553 4789731 (645m), potentially 5m from nearest contour on surface.

Cueva de Entre Cuetos (The Cheese Cave) (PW, GK, BC, EW)
0360869 4788181 (1305m)

Plan was to try and get EW into the furthest limit of the cave. A small immature Stream way with two right angle bends before a low crawl. Very late start, post lunch, saw the team at the carpark for around 1.30pm. Quick change and over the hill to the Cheese Cave. PW and EW in first to rig the first pitches. Straight away hit problems with the “Constriction of Doom”, despite capping it in 2010 it seemed rather snug. PW had to reverse and strip SRT kit before getting through. Down to first pitch and EW rigged without issue. Sword pitch was up next, a notorious faff laden pitch with rope protectors and deviations all over. EW down to the first rebelay and then unable to find the correct deviation. EW back up and PW went down. Changed the deviation slightly and then abseiled a bit further. Unfortunately, the deviation was not working correctly and the rope was rubbing on the ‘sword’ (a calcite flake). A lot of faffing ensued and unable to find a safe and convenient way to rig. PW back up and BC down. More problems and still not able to safely rig. Decision made to come back with a drill! Team exit, with constriction a lot easier on the return.

A bit disappointing, potentially the best rock for the deviation had been kicked off during the 2010 trip, alternatively we have just got old and afraid of our own shadows.

Tuesday 21st July**Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000 - Exit**

(RM, MJ, IP)

Team exit of Agua

RM, MJ, and IP exit the cave in 7.5 hours improving some rigging on route. More rigging could do with updating/improving ASAP. This is suggested for beginning of 2016 expedition. Beer was greatly appreciated!

Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000

(HM, CJ)

Team to continue climb up Main Aven

RM and MJ seemed very excited about this climb as they had re-discovered the draft that disappears at Death Race 2000. Now it was our turn to continue. First I had to de-rig 30m of Rob's epic traverse (*Die Hard*) in order to retrieve the dynamic rope. This took ages as Rob is a lanky giraffe and I am not.

Reaching the top y hang that marked the limits of the boys efforts from the previous day, Chris kitted up and started to climb. (I dropped the drill battery in a puddle. Nice to know Peachey was with us in spirit.) After about 8m, Chris could see into a window into what looked like a meander so we decided to return to the kisu for lunch to prepare ourselves for some meander yoga surveying. I swung into the window and was looking down onto a lake. Oh well, at least we don't have to do much surveying.

The lake was at the bottom of a wet aven with a cosy kisu hole and against the odds there was a climb (8m) up into a continuation passage. Amazing! Stunningly pretty passage lead to a series of mini moon milk ramps which we climbed using a combination of virtual rock boots, bolt foot holds and slings round thumb size stals. We ran out of ropes and bolts but somehow managed to find a way up the little climbs that kept appearing, feeling guilty that we covered the extensive formations in brown slop. In this section of passage there are a series of high level leads that will require climbing.

Eventually the passage levels out, marked by a wet aven inlet. This could be used as a water source for a camp at the end of this passage, approx. 3hours from Death Race 2000. The phreatic passage ends in a sandy 'mud sump' with a draughting fist-sized hole. A roaring noise can be heard beyond, and easy digging will get through this blockage.

Many thanks to Rob and Milky for setting this lead up for us. This is the continuation of the passage that is split by the massive breakdown chamber Death Race 2000.

Tired but happy that we had finally got some meters under our belt, we made the slow journey back to Death Race, spurred on by the thought of the massive feast that was waiting for us now that Peachey had gone home early. However, disaster struck when setting up Bob's stove. Gas sprayed everywhere, condemning us to cold rations before bed. Only one moment of misery in a two week expedition is not too bad!

Wednesday 22nd July**Cueva Del Nacimiento – Death Race 2000 - Exit**

(CJ, HM)

Still no stove so a cold breakfast set us up for the journey home. Slow-going as covered in poo so jammers did not want to play the game. Still following shreds of Peachey's over suit, ha ha!

The new reflective markers worked a treat. Nearing the entrance we heard a lonely cry. Peachey! He was waiting for us at the entrance as penance for losing the bolting hammer days ago. Beer in the river as we washed. Beer and crisps at the smelly shepherds hut at half way back up the hill. Happy days!

More cold rations for breakfast (a tortilla and tin of beans, each) and no tea! We had a bit of a lie in after our 15 hour trip the day before but still managed to leave camp at a surprisingly early 12.30. The new rigging was appreciated and we had a steady but mostly enjoyable trip out (apart from two very slippy crolls...) where we were met by Peachey at the entrance and washed in the Urdon with a beer each.

Torca Boulderosa Survey – De-rig

(DP, EW, JD, GK)

With an early start once again, we all headed up the bastard hill once again to Bouldertosser. Many weeks later at the entrance, GK and ED kitted up whilst JD and DP went for a poo. ED and GK headed off to start the de-rig whilst JD and DP played a few games of stones on one of the snow plugs, Giving the other two time to get out of the drop zone before we surveyed above them. DP was a good looser throughout.

With DP on notes and JD on Disto we hit the gusty arsehole entrance off the infamous Torca Boulderosa... Starting from a previous leg of Italianos we tied in and continued down the first pitch to the boulder strewn floor below. Aware of the other two hero's below undertaking the first part of the de-rigging, through the meanders URGH...We continued through the top of the first traverse and over the hanging death. Following along and down then back along and down again, it was fairly uneventful, just a bit cold really. Once we hit the first meander we decided to have a bite to eat and expertly cut the fratato potato omelette thing into four pieces, one for each of us. Which DP and JD readily ate, hiding the evidence? After warming up we decided to continue the survey into the next meander, so SRT kits were dumped and we prepared for the next leg of our journey to hell. This is precisely when we heard ED and GK approaching. PHEW.... SRT kit back on, we waited and had another game of stones. Then we waited, and waited and waited. All the time the noise of the approaching de-rig team grew louder. When they arrived and ED announced he wanted us to take the two small bags they had brought through, allowing him to continue the de-rig we gladly accepted being bloody cold. JD and DP swapped pantin's for some idiotic reason. DP couldn't get to grips with the lefty stealth pantin, and JD couldn't get his head around the clunky righty. So they soon swapped back again. Pretty uneventful up to RCA 6, and through to the entrance pitch in Italianos (apart from some tangfastic) where DP left the two bags, and we descended to Boulderosa again. Here we met GK who gave JD another bag, and said 'It's all under

control, take this bag up and enjoy the sun'. So JD and DP headed back to the surface, DP volunteered to take the two heavy bags up the entrance pitch and out to the sun, leaving the younger and fitter JD to manage one small light bag alone. On the surface both changed played stones in the evening sun. GK arrived with a dead light looking all hot and bothered. GK 'err could we have another two bags for rope and somebody to help carry them' DP 'I thought you said it was all under control' GK 'yeah, err well I got that wrong' we emptied a couple bags and gave them to GK along with some new batteries. GK 'can you come and help'? JD & DP 'No, p*ss off were changed and playing stones' GK 'ohhh, okay then, bye'. JD and DP carried everything down to the white-house and negotiated a transfer for them to be driven down. JD went back up to the entrance to meet GK and ED and carried more down to the white house. When it was all packed properly, there were seven tackle bags full of rope and kit. We walked down the mountain and went back to the house, where I think we might have got drunk, but I don't remember.

Thursday 23rd July

Cueva del Nacimiento - Parting Friends

(RM, MJ)

Trip round the entrance series of Agua to find the bypass to "Road to Wigan Pier" sump, and locate the stream way leading to "Parting Friends" sump. Attempt to find the long bypass resulted in a long descending body sized tube with roaring water unnerving us from below. A retreat was made before a tour of various other passages and sumps and a few loops resulted eventually in access to the stream way, which was quite high. Precise description below:

Cave in to Black Hole Chamber. Go up short step out of end of chamber in the normal way, then take first right in large black passage. Pass two pots on the left (which both head back to the main stream, the first to an outflowing sump?), before a lake is encountered. Traverse round the lake then climb up on the opposite side to continuing large passage. Follow this until it becomes smaller and splits with various drips coming in. (two small passages left here lead to static sumps). Turn around and retrace your steps a few meters around a corner until a 1m diameter tube heads up just left of the main way in. A big step is needed to enter the tube, and it is currently identified with a KitKat wrapper. Follow the tube to a hand line over slippery moon milk and then follow another hand line above (various passages link to provide annoying circles in this area). Continue on the main passage past a few other small moon milk climbs until a larger passage is met at a T junction with a small mud cairn on the right. Left goes via some crawls to re-join above the first hand line, but the way on is right past another moon milk climb to a lake with a tensioned rope going through this at roof height. Unfortunately this is the way on (but is perched and could be syphoned from the far side!), and leads to the head of a descending climb in a tube. Follow this, then the roar of the water to hit an impressive 2m diameter stream way, with as much water in it as the entrance series! GULP!

Cueva del Nacimiento – New entrance – Pottery Kiln Dig

(BC, JD, EW)

Another cool early morning start in Tresviso, Not. As Joe, Ed and Bob clanked down the side of the mountain on the easy stomping path to Agua. After pausing to dry off by the river, the mad diggers entered the cave about 1400hrs. Whilst Joe struggled

with the excessively heavy bag, Bob commented on how fun it is with no bag. The entrance series was easily navigated with the new reflective markers and slug trail of mud. After a quick drink at Clapham junction, the ramps the ramps were quickly dispatched, and a slight diversion in boulder chamber the dig was quickly located. The signs of spoil from the previous days dig were obvious in the approaching passageway. In true bulldozer style Gung-Ho Joe took the lead with burrowing Bob rabbiting the spoil back to Ed who tried to hide it discreetly. After an hour and a half and a couple meters of good progress, Ed was struggling to hide the spoil having filled any nooks and crannies. About this time, Joe discovered a couple alarmingly large boulders in the ceiling. In an attempt to find a way around the boulders Joe headed sideways and found a tantalizing hole draughting, with the only issue being it headed back downwards. Not in the direction we were wanting, back to the surface. After a quick inspection of Joes blowing hole, bob decided he would have a go... at the boulders in the ceiling. With some good jiggery pokery and bashing one boulder decided to break but stayed tight. A line and rope were passed forward, and installed. We then retreated to a safe distance. Three muddy diggers then pulled like buggery. However the boulder stayed firm. Ed went in for a look, and decided to dig around the problem, only to be confronted by a third boulder overhead. With only six minutes remaining on the schedule and a growing number of boulders with no avoidance a decision was made to return with a longer poking stick or some chemical persuasion.

After a record speedy exit and another sweaty march up the hill, it was agreed we should try and pinpoint the site of the emergence before trying too much harder.

Friday 24th July

Cueva Del Nacimiento

(DP, CJ)

Morning Sickness

An incredible effort of faffing was displayed by Greg and Dave on the previous day (23rd July) which resulted in two fully packed bags but no caving trip. The next day was the last day of the expedition, Dave and I convinced ourselves it was a sensible idea to use these two bags for a no-faff day of caving and return to the surface in time for the expedition meal in Sotres. This would require an early start!

4am, alarm goes off; 5am leave Tresviso; 5.40am entered Agua, 6am Dave vomits in the entrance series, 6.02am realise we haven't packed any water.

With his vomiting over we continued on, arriving at Consort Hall ~9am. Our lead for the day the continuation of the passage into Consort Hall. Instead of bolt climbing the steepest part of the climb, we reached a ledge with some Indiana Jones pendulums over the top of camp. From here an exposed but easy free climb lead some 20m to the window. We stepped into a large (4x4m) phreatic passage, Dave rigged a short pitch and reached the end of the passage after only 30m. Bollocks, we had been aiming for 110m to push the exped over 2km. We surveyed back over Consort Hall to tie the legs in, with Dave performing a Red Cross drop of digestive biscuits, Soreen and 10 bolts into camp as we pendulumed back into the passage above.

It was 11.00am, we were going to make the exped meal!

Firing the Disto up to get passage dimensions gave an unexpected read out of ~30m. It looked climbable. Seeing we had plenty of time we had a crack, three pitches were free climbed using slings and etriers as protection and Dave did an excellent job belaying under the popcorn hailstorm. From the amount of stal present on the climb, it was obvious we were going someplace pretty, but the chamber we popped into '*I Love Horses*' was another level. Two short calcite ramps lead up through more formations to a tight squeeze '*Morning Sickness*' which required hammering to allow me through. Beyond this was a small muddy chamber and a 3rd calcite ramp which **remains unclimbed** - we had run out of rope and I was now on my own. After several attempts in *Morning Sickness* I finally re-joined Dave and we surveyed back down to the rift passage, leaving 60m of rope in place.

5.40pm, we headed for the surface and didn't stop until we reached Sotres at 9.30pm starving and dehydrated, where we meet the rest of the expedition as they left the meal and they handed over 3 bags of tortilla and some cabrales. A long, but memorable day of exploration.

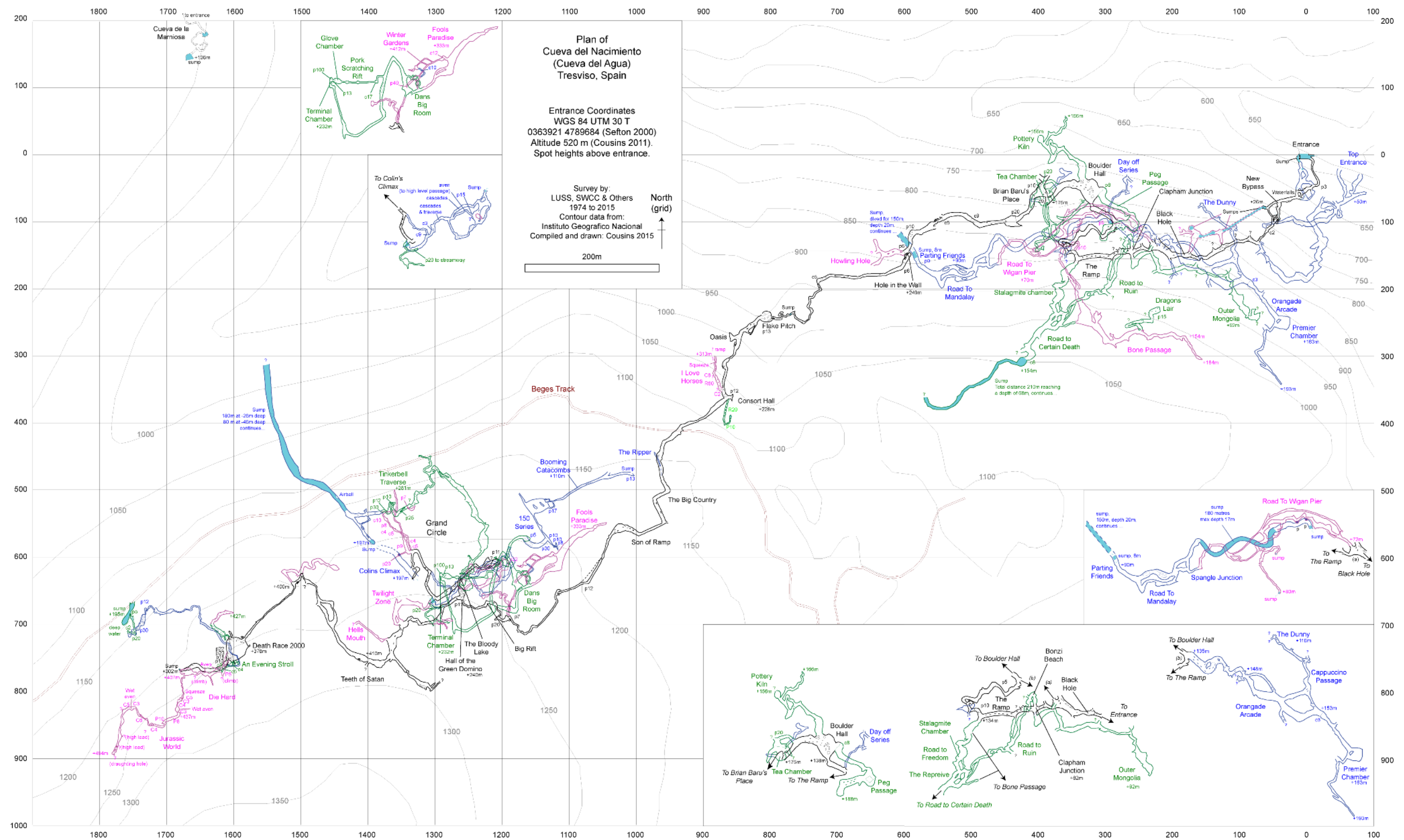
Unfortunately there is no draft. But we left the rift, entering clear phreatic passage and climbed 70m to reach a similar elevation as the *Howling Hole* and the calcite ramp out of *flake pitch* (not on survex, *A steep, very large, partially decayed calcite flow ascends out of Flake Pitch Chamber. 100m of difficult climbing leads to a rift with a small stream, but this becomes too tight to follow*). Is there a high level passage?

Morning Sickness has a left hand wall calcite boss, but a soft rock right hand wall which would respond well to capping.

NB – not sure if mentioned in previous Agua report. Ropes down to water in Death Race in place but the ropes down to the Pina Colada Sump have been removed and re-used in *Jurassic World*.

Saturday 25th July

Expedition Ends



Appendix I: Cueva del Nacimiento Survey (Extended Elevation)

