

## MATIENZO 2025

### The DCC contribution to the expedition

#### INTRODUCTION

Here we were again, the same four at the same time doing much the same sort of things! The DCC was represented by nine members in total. The four members travelling to Matienzo for three weeks were Nigel, Liz, Bill and Pete (Clewes) and we stayed at the apartments in the centre of Matienzo, a short distance from Bar La Panaderia (The Bakers). Pete O'Neill stayed in another apartment and Allan and Helen came for some time as well. Badger was our next-door neighbour and Steve M was at his home-from-home in saucepan alley.

We arrived on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July and left on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August.

#### CAVE WORK AND DIGGING

Apart from just spot-holing or having a caving trip, we worked on three sites during the expedition.

- a) We started with a return to our dig at 2101 on the side of the road out of the valley. Last year, we dug into a micro-chamber and then dropped down a pitch into an enlarged rift. This year, PO came down with us (he'd had a look during the Easter expedition) and we chipped away at rock blocking an obvious extension at floor level but even when he could get through, we could see that it would take more capping and digging to follow the draught (which was very small this year). After a while, PO started out and managed to pull the whole belay out of the wall (actually, the belay stayed in the wall – it turned out the wall was just a large rock) and we started to plan what we would say when we were rescued. Fortunately, PC was able to get up the pitch and squeeze past the rock and after securing it, we were all able to climb up and out. That pretty well put a stop to 2101!
- b) Next, we looked at a site PO had visited some years before: 0593 in the Bosmartin area. After a reasonably short walk we dropped into the shakehole and PO capped a blockage at the top of the pitch. This gave access to a 10m climb down into an enlarged chamber with a boulder floor but no draught (it wasn't good draughting weather anyway). PO climbed out and Nigel slid in then got thoroughly stuck trying to get out but with a bit of pulling from PO, managed to escape (with bruises). Next PC went down with a similar experience on exiting. A few photos were taken and the pitch depth was Disto'd so that a rough survey could be provided to the expedition but prospects do not look good. We might return and enlarge the pitch head.
- c) A couple of days later, we went to look at an old DCC dig in Cubija valley: 0813. This had been dug recently by John S and others. There was a bucket and some rope in the dig but we recovered these as the krab and other kit were suffering from the damp. In the dig, there was a boulder which hovered threateningly over a potential way on so we capped and removed this but although draughts entered from the floor and the side, both ways look like major digs. We might return if we have a team of at least four.
- d) On the same day, we looked at cave 0200 (Cueva Superfosfato) in La Secada recommended for us by Steve M. Although we could feel the draught coming down a tube in the roof, both the obvious way on ahead and the draughty tube would need considerable amounts of capping – we felt it was more of a mining trip than a caving trip.
- e) Allan was keen to revisit an old dig he had opened up with Simon D some years ago (2753 at the end of the Vega valley) so we all tramped up to it. Allan and PO went in and worked for a couple of hours at the end while the rest of us enlarged the entrance and Helen started to enlarge a squeeze further in. PO and Allan managed to extend the cave by about 4m to a turn in the passage and another micro-chamber with more digging needed to progress further.

Helen and Nigel looked at a hole further down the hill which is not a recorded site but is about 4m deep – but no draught. We also stomped around the hillside but found no new holes.

- f) We also visited another old dig of Allan's: 2740 with a pitch at the end. Allan and PO went down the pitch and proved it to be difficult to extend down. We all also went to check out 2741 (Callejón de Seldesuto 2) where Allan and Simon D found skulls when they visited about 17 years ago. Again, no draught was detected.
- g) PO went with Allan to Mostajo in Cubija Valley and started a bolt climb up an aven at the end of the top level. They didn't manage to complete the climb but the job was later finished by some other members of the expedition although it did not lead to any significant new passage.
- h) Nigel, Allan Helen and Bill had a trip into Cueva Las Cosas (0084) (Bill went in twice) and took photos. Nigel also completed detail for a survey started 10 years before and never completed. For Helen, it was a trip designed to show her large Spanish caves to contrast with the digs we had visited up till then.

### CAVING TRIPS

Apart from digging, we had a couple of other trips purely for pleasure. These were to Cueva de Tiva (0026) to show the cave to some first-timers from SUSS and to Coventosa in the Asón valley with its impressive stalagmite formations.

### OTHER TRIPS

For various reasons, we did not spend as much time outside the valley except for Nigel and Liz staying in Vitoria (provincial capital of the Basque country) for a couple of nights and Allan and Helen staying in Potes in the Picos de Europa from where they went for walks in the mountains. On one day, Liz, Bill and Nigel went to visit the Roman remains and reconstructed villa at Julióbriga, on the Meseta south of Santander.

### AND ALSO

Pete C went on a few bike rides with some of the other English residents in the valley.

### ON THE EXPEDITION FROM DCC

Bill Booth, Pete Clewes, Nigel Dibben, Liz Taylor, Pete O'Neill, Allan Berry, Helen Perkins, Steve Martin, Badger

### PHOTOGRAPHS



Pete O looking into site 0593.



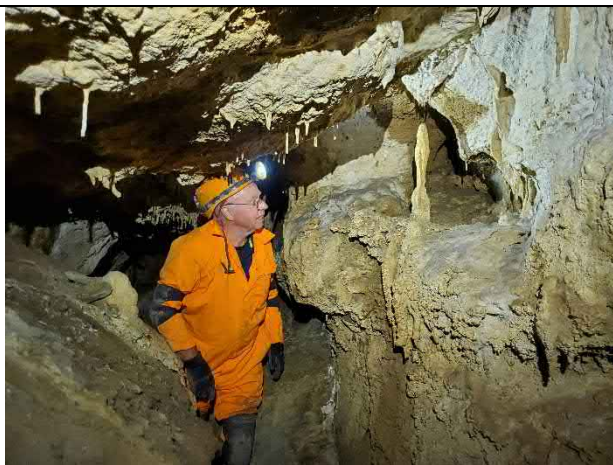
Pete C emerging from the squeeze in 0593. Pete O lifelining.



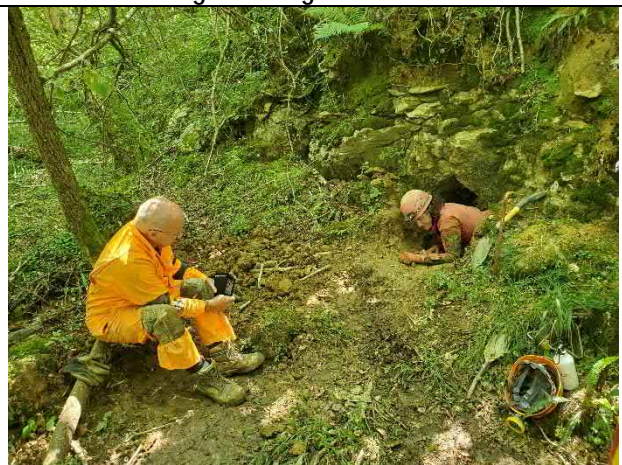
Pete C descending into dig 0813.



Bill in the end of 0200 pointing up at the hole where the draught emerges.



Bill in the first part of 2753.



Helen emerging from 2753



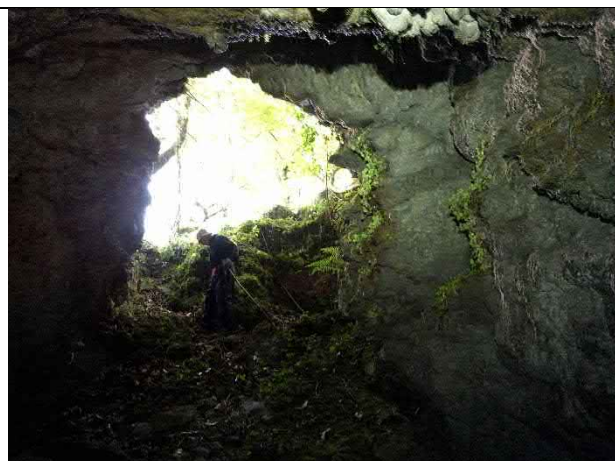
Pete O and Allan after digging in 2753. Apologies for the fuzzy picture!



Allan and Helen looking suitably awestruck in Cueva Las Cosas during a photographic trip.



Helen emerging from 2741, another one of Allan's great digs.



Looking out of 2740 where Allan and Simon found bones some years ago.



Helen in Coventosa.



Typical chamber size in Coventosa.



About to set off to Bilbao on the narrow gauge line from Santander. Note the traditional Spanish railway architecture.



Historic salt works visited by Nigel and Liz. Started more than 6500 years ago and still producing salt.



Display of Sam Davies' photos in the old school hall.



Tortilla competition – during the judging.



After the football match against the locals during the 65<sup>th</sup> Fiesta. The subject being "tossed" is our goalie. Score: UK 1, ES 7.



The duck race at the Fiesta.

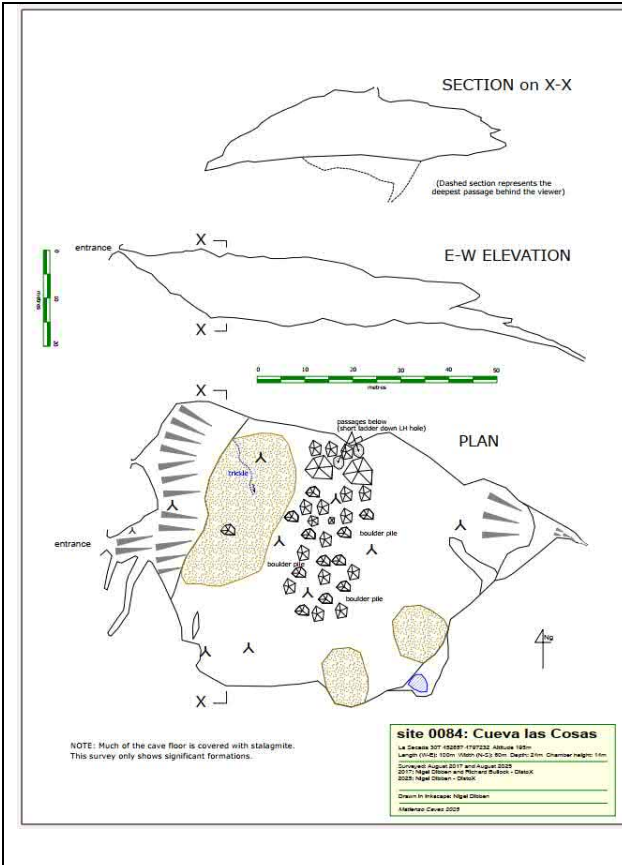


Doing the Conga at the Fiesta.

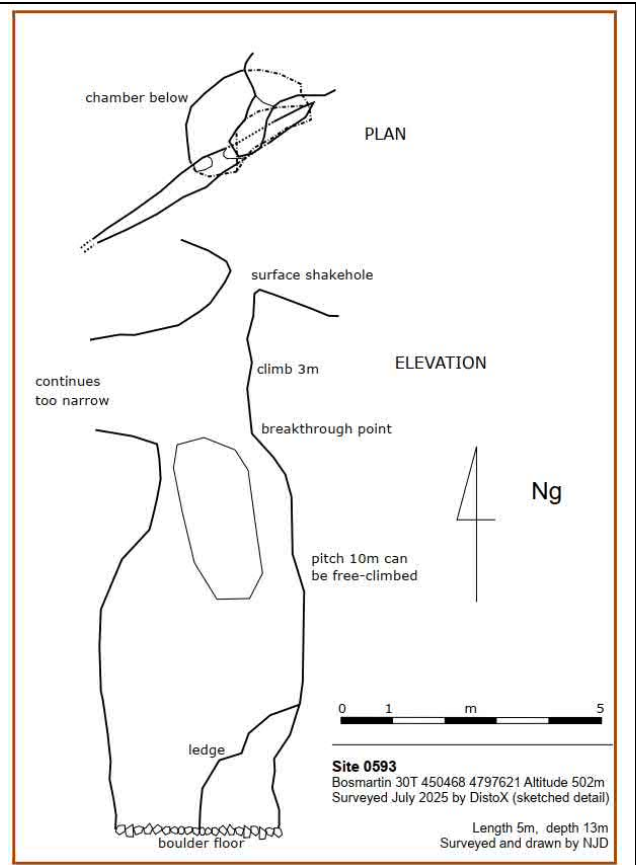


Miguel serving gin and tonics at the Baker's bar.

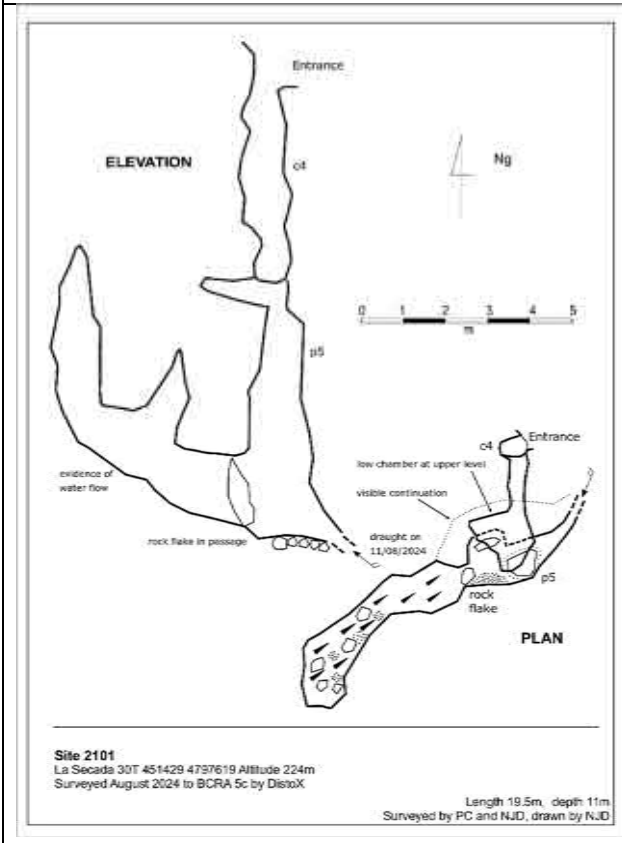
SURVEYS



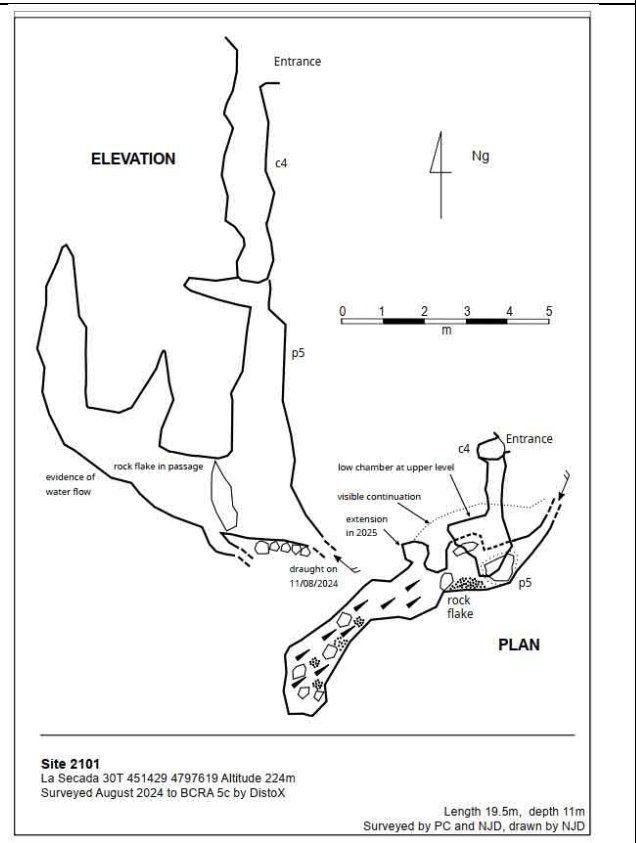
Cueva las Cosas (completion of survey)



Cave 0593



Cave 2101 at end of 2024



Cave 2101 after 2025 extension