

MCG NEWS

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Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group



SAN MIGUEL ANYONE?

Neil Hutchinson

As you may, or may not know, last Christmas five MCG members spent two weeks caving in the Island of Majorca.

Reaction within the club before our departure varied from curious scepticism, to sheer disbelief that there were any caves on Majorca at all. In the event, however, this proved to be probably the most successful MCG foreign trip for many years, with a huge amount of information gathered and many useful contacts made.

The team consisted of Adrian Duckett, Ian Parry, Andy Bear, Martin Rowe and Neil Hutchinson. All travel arrangements were made through Thomas Cook. This included flight to Majorca, a rather plush and well situated villa for two weeks in the village of Cala San Vicente (just down the coast from Puerto Pollenca) and a free hire car for the duration of our stay.

The two main caving regions we were concerned with were the Pollenca area, and the Plateau of Escorca, each containing some of the biggest and deepest caves on the island. Both these areas are very rugged and mountainous, and a combination of treacherous fractured limestone and thick gorse-like vegetation, coupled with a total lack of relation between cave entrances and surface features, made locating the caves themselves both difficult and tiring.

These difficulties led to life following a routine of one day spent finding an entrance and the next day spent caving. We descended eight caves during our stay,

and these form a fairly typical cross-section of Majorcan caves in general. None are particularly long, though many are quite deep, (with 120m pitches by no means uncommon!) and virtually all are dry and very warm. Here is a brief description of the caves we visited.

Avenc de la Pla de Bassas

A predominantly vertical cave, with a series of six relatively roomy pitches forming a total descent of 148m down to a final sump. The cave has a large water catchment area and judging by the amount of vegetation wedged in the roof would respond very quickly to heavy rain.

Cava Campana

A huge and very impressive cave consisting primarily of a number of enormous and well decorated chambers linked by steep, inclined sections. The cave ends in a very large chamber with beautiful pools of crystal clear water, and a number of ways on down a smaller but unstabled lower series of collapsed passage.

Cava Cornavaques

This cave took two days to find but was well worth the effort. It is situated high up on the mountainside and again almost entirely horizontal in nature. A couple of steep slippery climbs lead to walking-sized passages and chambers, containing some spectacular straws.

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Avenc D'Escorla

Situated on the Escorca plateau. An inconspicuous vegetated gully forms the top of the 116m free-hanging entrance pitch. The second pitch of 30m lands in a boulder-strewn chamber with no obvious way on. A spectacular shaft which, like many other vertical caves on the Island looks as though it has the potential to go much deeper.

shafts like this on the Island. This particular one is situated right on the path up to puis de Masenella, the second highest point on the island. This one is quite entertaining for anyone at the bottom of the shaft as they have to play 'dodge the falling boulder' both those falling out of the roof and those chucked down the hole by passing German tourists. As such a cave best avoided !.

Cava Cal Peso

Another horizontal system, not too long, but again with a lower series of passages largely blocked with loose fill + mud.

Cava Coma Freda

A small cave, having a 30m entrance pitch and short slope down into a small chamber containing some superb formations, including hundreds of cave pearls.

Cava des Rhodes

A low-level entrance, situated very close to the coast and one of the few 'wet' caves on the island. (Wet in Majorca usually means very muddy rather than clean-washed passage.) Again this is a predominantly horizontal cave, with a few short drops.

There are over 900 known entrances on the island and with new caves being discovered every month there is no shortage of things to do. We are therefore planning a return trip to Majorca this Christmas, with provisional dates of 15th to 29th of December. So if the idea of good caving in a warm climate with spectacular scenery and lots of San Miguel appeals to you, contact Adrian Duckett or Neil Hutchinson for further information.

Avenc Comi

A blind shaft blocked by boulders 50m down. There are many surface

