

MCGG NEWS

January 1987 No. 100

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

SUBS ARE NOW OVERDUE...

£15 for members

£7.50 for associate members

SPAIN '86

As you are probably aware, this years summer expedition took place in the Malaga region of Spain from 13th to 27th September. This region, whilst not as extensive as other areas of Spain, does have a number of large systems, the most notable being the SIMA G.E.S.M. @ - 1078 metres deep - but more significantly has great scope for further discoveries.

Eighteen members were present at the main caving base in the village of Benaolan just SW of Ronda, with a further five members on the coast. We were lucky enough to have the help of Victoria and Genaro - a local caver - for most of our stay and this proved an invaluable asset.

Accommodation was in the form of a small farm house and was ideal as a caving hut, having a large dining area, showers and a spacious upstairs room with a very comfortable floor suitable for between 1 and 20 people - depending on how friendly everyone was feeling.

The scenery was as you would expect, very dramatic, with peaks reaching heights of 1600 metres and over separated by deep vallies or large high-level plateaus. In all seven different caves were descended during our stay and many more surface exploration trips undertaken resulting in the discovery of at least two new entrances. The highlight of the trip however, was the descent of the SIMA GESM by three separate parties reaching depths of 200M, 500M and 950M respectively.

A full report of the SIMA GESM and all the other trips undertaken will be forthcoming in time, but for now a brief reume of the expeditions main events can be provided by condensed extracts from the logbook.

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Andy Beare | 10) Yvonne Ward |
| 2) Lesley Robbins | 11) Linda Gates |
| 3) Ian Parry | 12) Jonathen Roberts |
| 4) Martin Rowe | 13) Adrian Duckett |
| 5) Neil Hutchinson | 14) Grant Shephard |
| 6) Victoria Arbizu | 15) Mike Hazelden |
| 7) Genaro | 16) Sue Hazelden |
| 8) Alan Mellon | 17) Garry Pairaudeau |
| 9) Louise Curley | 18) Wendy |

STAYING AT THE COAST:

- 1) John Miriam
- 2) Helen Miriam
- 3) The Kempstons
- 4) The Bartons
- 5) The McKechnies

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From p1

LOG:

- SAT 13th - Arrive at Malaga after a truly grim flight at 5.00am to be met by Victoria and Genaro with a Landrover - a useful asset owing to the mountain of gear that needed transporting to the caving base. Arrive in Benaolan about 8.00am - stock fridge with local brew and retire to bed for rest of day.
- SUN 14th - NH, IP, AB, PN, MR - Cave hunting on plateau at foot of SIERRA DE MONTALATE Rest - various shopping activities and visits to Cueva de la Pileta show cave.
- MON 15th - AB, LR, PN, MR, NH - SIMA DE VILLALUENGA. A 200M deep vertical system mercifully close to the road in the village of Villaluenga del Rosario.
JR, AM, LC, GS, IP, YW, LG - CUEVA DEL GATTO. A brief trip around the entrance series, failing to find the less than obvious way on into the main stream passage.
- TUE 16th - IP, AB, LG, NH, GS, LC, AM, MR, MH, VA, GENARO - CUEVA DEL GATTO. All to about 1.5M in, then AB, IP, NH, MH to about 2.5M and start of wet section - make leisurely exit taking photos on the way.
MH, JR - investigate small entrances on hillside above Benaolan station, mostly small rock shelters but a couple being worth a second look.
- WED 17th - MH, AM, LC, GS, VA, GENARO - HUNDIDERO - GATTO THROUGH TRIP - a distance of about 4KM through the mountain, the first 1KM consisting of a series of deep pools passed with the aid of rubber dingies.
MR, IP, AB, LR, JR, GP, PN, NH - Locate CABO DE RONDA and spend afternoon prospecting surrounding area - plateau between SIERRA DE LIBAR and SIERRA PERALTO. IP and NH spend 1/2hr clearing vegetation from a small rift, but fail to find anything of any interest. After several hours everyone is about to give up when AB and NH nearly fall into a large vertical rift between boulders at CORTIJO DE LOS NUNEZ - a 10M drop leads to a series of mud filled passages with much scope for further extension.
- THU 18th - MH, SH, MR, PN, AM, LC - visit LA PILETA show cave.
GB, IM, RK, JM - visit entrance series of DEL GATTO.
NH, IP, AB, LR - Prospecting trip to SIERRA DEL PALO - find one possible site - explored to a depth of 15M by IP.
- FRI 19th - GB, IM, RK, JM, YW, LG - CUEVA DEL CHAPI - a fairly short but well decorated horizontal system.
JR - solo trip to Gibraltar.
- SAT 20th/SUN 21st - SIMA GESM - Almost everyone to cave entrance where two parties assemble for main trip of the expedition. MH, PEPE, IP, NH enter cave at 5.15pm Sat. followed 1/2hr later by MR, PN, GP, AB. PN and MR forced to turn back at 200M when PN injures arm - surface at about 11.00pm.
AB and GP get to 500M - exit at 3.30am Sun and promptly get lost whilst trying to locate GP's van!
MH, PEPE, IP and NH get to 950M before running out of rope and getting co-opted into the derigging party! Surface at 5.30pm Sun.
- MON 22nd - JM, GS, VA, GENARO - CUEVA LIBAR located at the end of the long valley between SIERRA DEL PALO and SIERRA DE LIBAR - a predominantly vertical cave.
MH, LR, MR, YW, PN, LG - DEL GATTO through trip.
AB, GP - DEL GATTO - photographic trip.
- TUE 23rd - GS, VA, GENARO - SIMA DE LA VENTANA - again a predominantly vertical system consisting of a series of parallel shafts.
MH, NH, AB - LR, JM, IP - MR, PN, GP - CABO DE RONDA - A large stream cave descending to a depth of 240M by a series of short pitches and traverses around deep pools.

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From p3 The cave was descended in three separate groups with a fourth of JR, SH and Wendy staying on surface to warn of any approaching rain clouds as the cave is known to fill to almost half its depth in less than 40 minutes heavy rain!

WED 24th - VA, GS, GENARO - prospecting trip to SIERRA DE MONTALATE.
MR, NH, IP, AB, GP, JR - final HUNDIDERO - GATTO through trip.

THU 25th - Various tourist trips.

FRI 26th - depart for Malaga airport and UK.

I think all concerned would agree that the expedition was a resounding success. Caving of a serious nature in systems such as SIMA GESM as well as more straightforward - although no less dramatic - trips such as the HUNDIDERO - GATTO system, together with the dramatic terrain giving abundant walking / scrambling possibilities, not forgetting the serious sunbathing potential make this area of Spain well worth a return visit.

The greatest attraction of the area however must be its potential for further discoveries, as many mountain areas over 1200M remain for the most part unexplored, a further 1000M plus, deep system is by no means impossible.

Neil Hutchinson.
