

M.C.G. EXPEDITION SOUTHERN SPAIN 2011

By Miguel Tome



Villaluenga del Rosario here we go again. Of course this year we all know that the village will be on Fiestas, last year was a surprise and both years it's our welcome to Andalucia. Our accommodation will be the same than last year with the difference that this year we won't have the whole place just for us, there will be caving instructor courses going on, so we'll have the largest room for us. I will arrange menus for everybody, I need to know who is vegetarian if any.

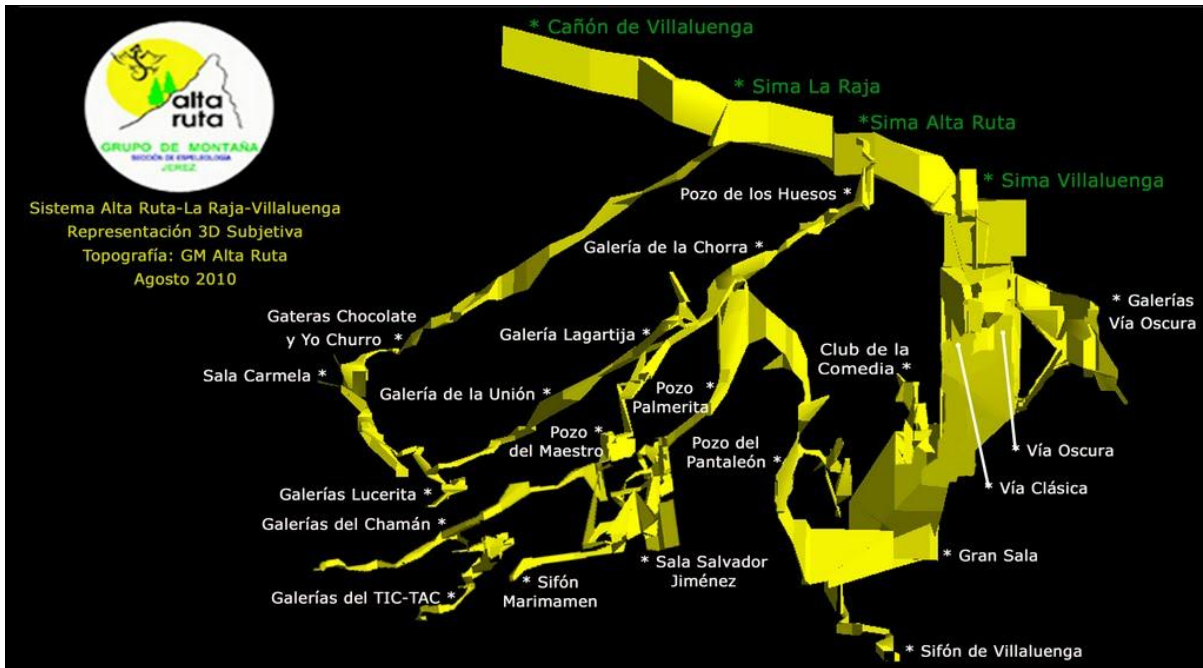
Like last year our caving trips are going to be split in two or more groups as this year we will be 50% more people taking part in the expedition. We will make the groups up as we go. As the people flying are doing so on Sunday the 4th morning and the expedition's Bus will arrive at Villaluenga del Rosario at 8 AM, there will be a permit to cave in Sima de Villaluenga for those that can't wait. Bear in mind that the village will be in "Fiestas" again this year, while last year was a surprise for all of us, this year some of us know what it is like. There will be a permit, for those who can't wait to explore, to do so wherever and whenever you want within Grazalema's National Park in partnership with the Andalusian Caving Federation. So the real caving program will start on Monday the 5th and will be as follow:

Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th we will have permits to Sima de Villaluenga and Sima del Republicano.

Sima de Villaluenga:

Sima de Villaluenga is the cave nearest to our accommodation, situated just three yards from the main road in the village of our accommodation. A 50 m entrance head to the first pitch, the depth to reach in the cave is going to depend of the state of the sumps, if cavers are working this summer there all sumps will be dry and our trip will go down to -200 m. if not the first sump will stop us at -130 m., first pitch -54 m. all the rest short ones. New discoveries have been happening since we left last year. If anybody wants we can collaborate in the digging campaign with the local cavers developing it. MCG has so far been down Sima Villaluenga and only Tim and I have done a through trip

Villaluenga-Alta Ruta. There is still a lot of the cave to see for everybody including myself. So far the cave system is even more than the last survey:



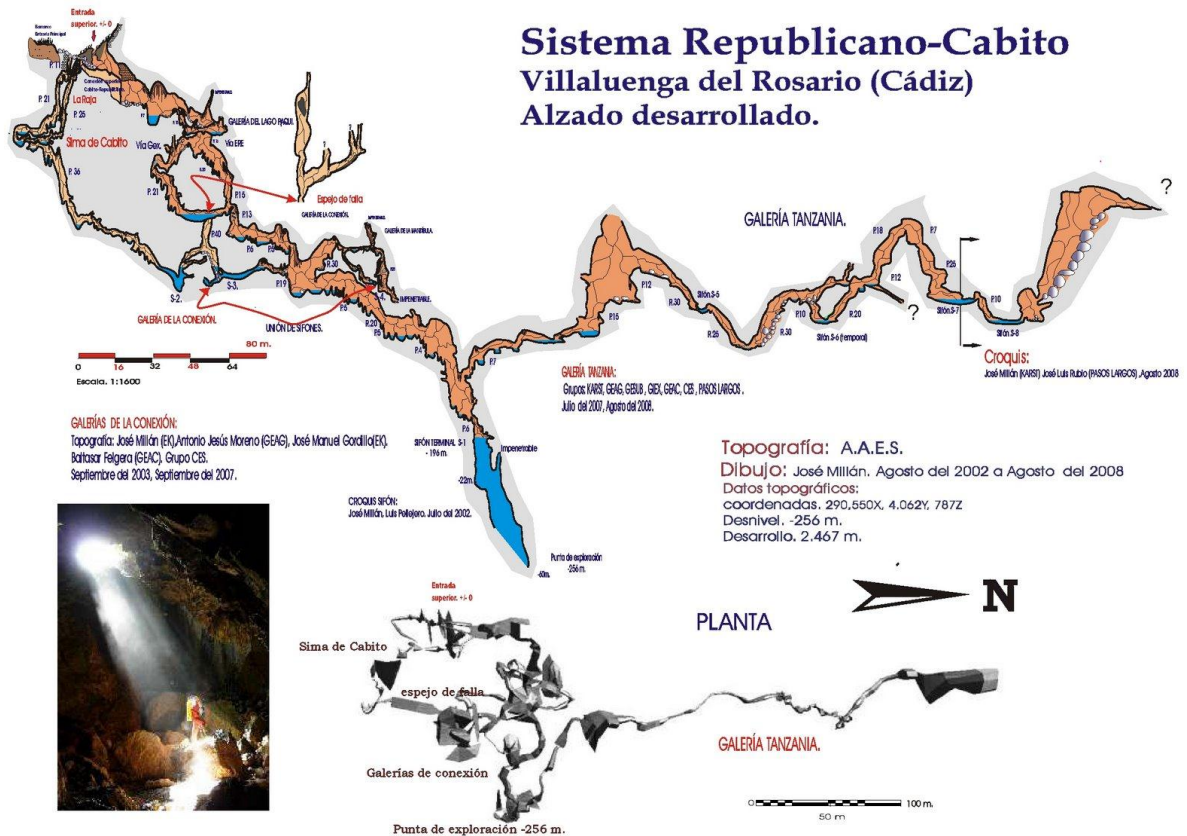
Survey by Alta Ruta from Jerez



Pics by Ed

Sima de Republicano:

Sima del Republicano was last year connected to Sima del Cabito, and during this year the exploration made by local clubs have left an imminent connection to Republicano from a cave on the other side of the valley called Sima del Tajo Colorao. This is a very sporty trip and count with steel wire traverse and a steel wire guide abseil, all to avoid some pools and conservation, the cave has a depth of -200 m. all in short pitches and the access is by car to near the cave. Only a few of us have been beyond the upper series just above the chamber of the Big Sump, a bit wet but well worth a visit. My last survey is this

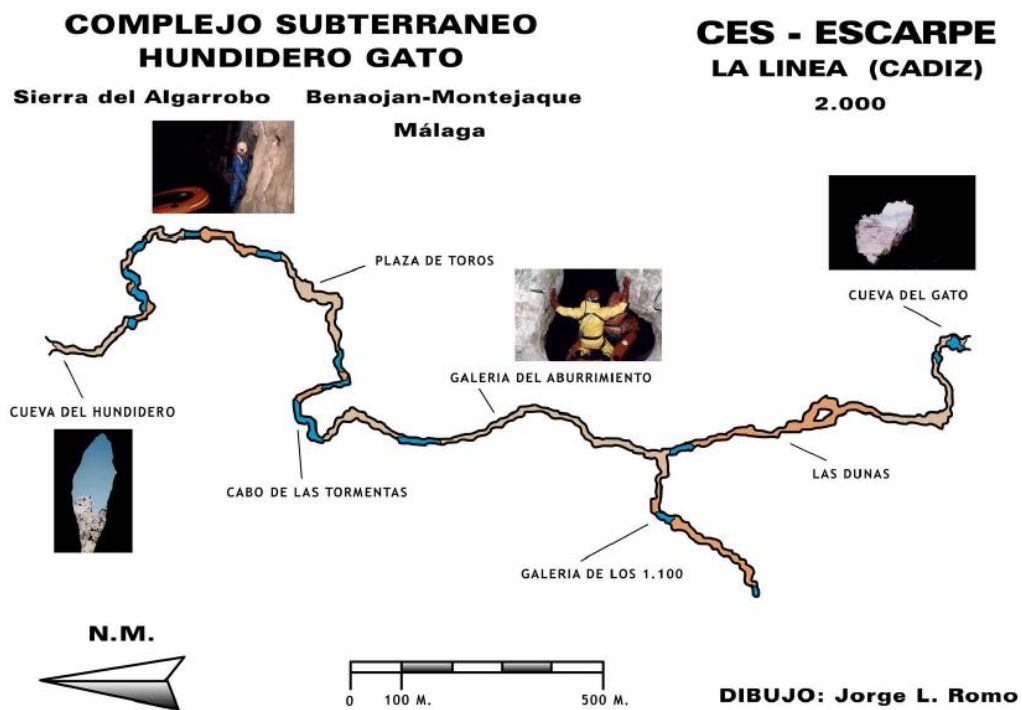


And a couple of pics from Ed last years' albums.



Wednesday 7th is our day for the through trip Hundidero-Gato.

Our way in is into Cueva de Hundidero based on the verge of a dam. This trip will be great, through trip very wet, many lakes the longest is 1100 m. which we will swim for 600, massive chambers and mayor formations as The Great Stalagmite and Gour's Camber (below). We will see the remains of engineering jobs developed in the cave by the electric supplier company back in the 20's trying to stop the water filtering into the cave, they tried to concrete all the leaks from inside the cave and all was for nothing, nature is nature. Well fun trip but compulsory for everybody Wet Suit, Socks, gloves, etc.



Survey by Ces-escarpe from La Linea



Pics by Ed Waters

And after our trip of course there will be the Paella waiting for us at Venta Cueva del Gato in the sunshine.



Thursday 8th and Friday 9th we'll have permits for caving at Sima CES 1 and Sumidero del Tajo Colorao.

Sima CES 1 :

The access to Sima CES 1 is done by climbing a very steep mountain for about 1.5 hours and then getting into a big closed valley. It's a good SRT trip with some Mendip caving type in the new extensions discovered in the last years.



Survey by Ces-escarpe from La Linea

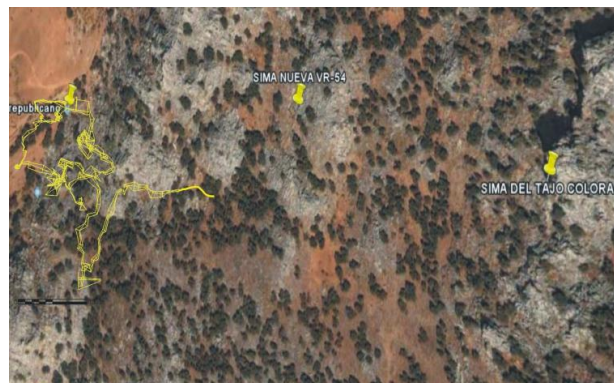
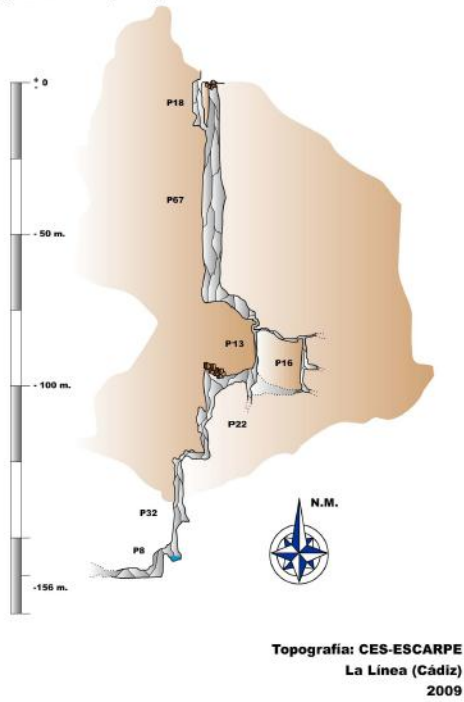


Pic by Ces-escarpe from La Linea

Sima del Tajo Colorao:

This cave is located in the same valley that Sistema del Republicano, a connection between both is due soon, there are groups exploring and trying to make that happen, who knows may be they connect them before we go and we can have another through trip there.

SIMA DEL TAJO COLORAO (VR-25)
 Llanos del Republicano
 Villaluenga del Rosario (Cádiz)



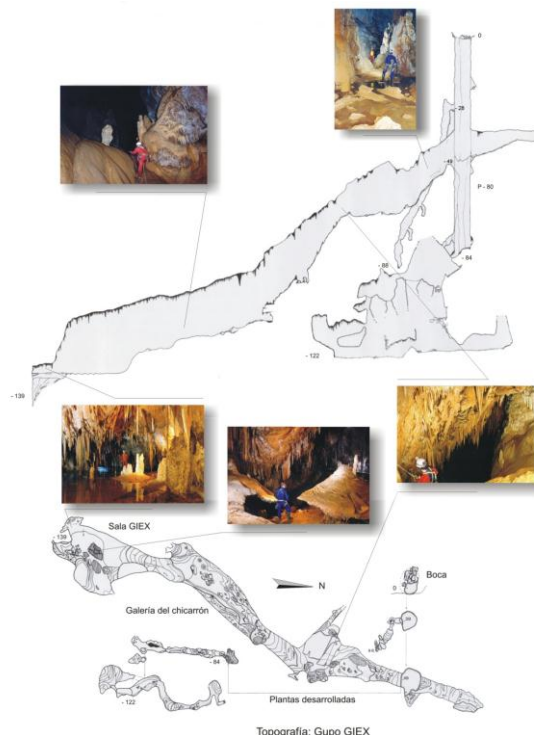
Survey and map by Ces-escarpe



Pic by Ces-escarpe from La Linea.

Saturday 9th will be permit to Sima Cacao:

Again we'll have more than 1 hour walk to access to the cave entrance. The entrance of the cave is a great 80 m pitch that we will abseil 40 m until we get through a big window that heads to the main gorge going down to Giex Chamber. The cave will be rigged as our digging teams would have been there working already, so in this trip you will have to only de-rig. The cave is well decorated and count with the biggest and prettiest formations of all the caves in this national park.

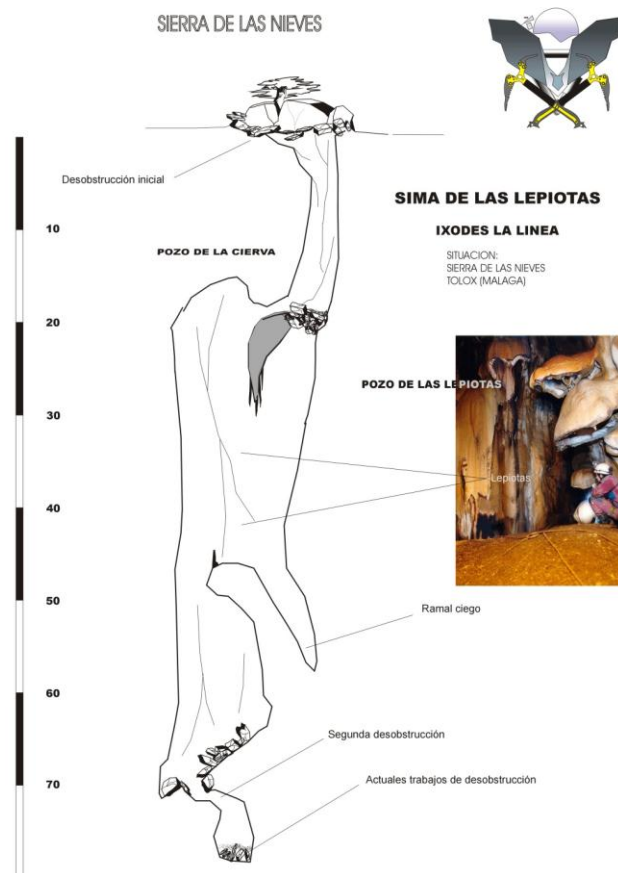


By Ixodes from La Linea

Sunday 10th will be a official day off, day to say “Adios” to the one weekers, time to visit the show cave of La Pileta, day to visit the main town of Ronda and/or day of moving our base camp to our second national park. This is obviously going to depend of our progress in the explorations in Grazalemas National Park. I didn’t mention it in the caving trips but we’ll have an exploration permit to dig and explore in the whole National Park of Grazalema. There are thoughts of digging in Cacao in Giex Chamber, there is Sumidero del Guante in the next valley up from CES 1, Sima de las Tormentas is another option and of course there is loads of potential for new discoveries. So if there is enough work for a team to keep working in Grazalema National Park then we would split in two teams and one would move to Sierra de las Nieves National Park where we’ll have another exploration permit but in a limited area which is the closest to our accommodation and possibility to work with local cavers exploring on the top of the Sierra de las Nieves. Bear in mind than there is The Brother’s Dig with an imminent breakthrough and Javi has thoughts of another new entrance to be opened nearby. There is Sumidero de la Escalera (discovered by Ixodes 1999) with imminent breakthrough too with a few hilti caps.

Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th we will have permits for Sima de las Lepiotas and Sima de Calabaza.

Sima de las Lepiotas, access to the cave entrance is 10 minutes walking from the car park on the top of Sierra de las Nieves. It’s almost 80 m deep, quite an easy trip and count with a well decorated second pitch.



By Ixodes from La Linea

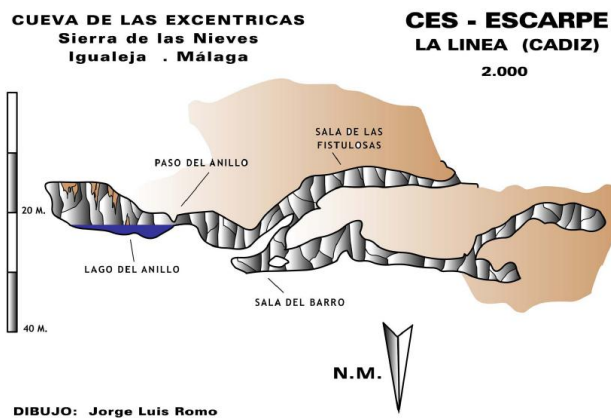
Sima de Calabaza, located on the top of Sierra de las Nieves too and in 2009 was extended from 115 to 140 m deep.



Survey by Ces-escarpe

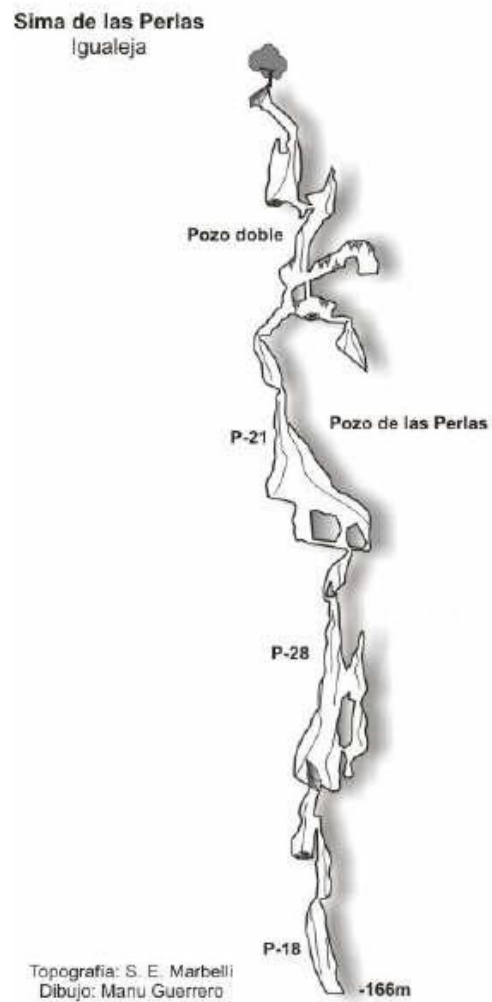
Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th there will be permit for Cueva de las Excentricas (Cave of the Helictites) and Sima de las Perlas

Cueva de las Excentricas this cave is not very big but the formations are incredible, access to the cave entrance is from the village Igualeja and involves climbing a very steep ramp for 15 minutes. Igualeja is a village with a resurgence and the village is within 30 minutes driving from our second accommodation.



By Ces-escarpe from La Linea

Sima de las Perlas, access to the cave is about 1 hour walking from the car parks, the entrance of the cave is very easy to find as there is the only tree for miles around. The cave counts with pearls formations in different banks and be aware that the last pitch can be abseiled and pursued back up just by one person at a time as the rock dissolves like sand and there would be danger if two people are in the pitch.



Friday 15th visit to the resurgence Alfaguara del Cinojal. This is a seasonal resurgence with a underground river that was discovered in 2004, I was personally involved in the original digging, So far has about 1 km long and about 56 m deep



Well this is all that I have planned so far, if anyone has anything to add just let me know, there will be a couple of permits for other caves as spare, I didn't want to include it here as I think that we have enough with this planning.

I hope that everything is to your expectations and you enjoy your trip.