

Excursions under the Mountain

Primadona-Monatip through trip

Overview

Cavers undertaking the PRIMADONA-MONATIP through-trip will have the opportunity to complete a spectacular surface abseil, visit one of the largest chambers in the system and finish with a memorable exit panorama. MONATIP offers some challenging free-climbs and constrictions and poses some navigational problems. The trip described here starts from the MIGOVEC PLATEAU and uses the abseil rope to PRIMADONA entrance. Spanning a length of 70 m, the traverse from MONATIP entrance to the surface ropes is very exposed. A through trip all the way to SEJNA SOBA will take 4-6 h with route finding, while the shorter round via ALKATRAZ will take 3-5 h.

Surface abseil

The surface abseil of PRIMADONA begins in a shallow valley at the 'USTART' way point. Several rebelay on a high angle grass and scree slope lead to a lip of rock next to a prominent rock spire, which is crowned by a lightning struck bush of dwarf pine. The spire overhangs the second, more vertical part of the descent: a series of rebelay landing on various rock ledges, which eventually drop by the entrance snow slope of PRIMADONA. A traverse line leading north stops short of the MONATIP entrance, which lies just around the next rocky ridge, 70 m away. Two ways into the gaping entrance of Primadona can be followed: DRUGI VHOD is the high level climb into a black void, while the main route is down the snow slope.

Entrance series to Bear Pitch

At the bottom of the entrance snow slope (carving steps in the snow is essential to prevent a fall), a crawl over sharp cobbles, through a small drip leads to a small draughty chamber with the first pitch rope leading off. The SRT route keeps close to the western wall, a solid fault plane. After the P5, the second pitch is split in the middle by a broad, uneven ledge with many loose cobbles and boulders. It is advised to wait until the pitch is cleared by the person above before proceeding on the way out. This lands in a large 4 × 10m, dry, boulder strewn chamber. At the far end, a way over boulders leads to a tricky

downclimb into an aven (where DRUGI VHOD comes in), while a way through the boulders leads to the top of BEAR PITCH.

Bear Pitch to Spiral Climb

BEAR PITCH is split near the top by a rebelay avoiding rub on a large ledge. The rope drops into a boulder floor chamber where a bear skeleton was discovered in the early 2000's. A carbide mark (+M) notes the place where they were found. A short traverse leads to the next drop (P15). This leads into a larger fault controlled cavern: a traverse on ledges leads to a Y-hang to reach the floor. This is followed by two short downclimbs where calcite encrusted fossils stick out of the black rock. Soon after, a window at the base of the left hand wall reveals a boulder chamber, the SPIRAL CLIMB, but the way is in the rift, and around two massive boulders by keeping to the right hand wall in a corkscrew fashion.

Spiral Climb to Monatip rift - Short Route

This short route leads directly into ALKATRAZ chamber from the SPIRAL CLIMB. After the two boulders, a climb on the right handside leads up several metres into the roof until a wriggle pops out into a small, mud floored chamber. On the far side is a steep, muddy slope descending into the western end of ALKATRAZ chamber. Turning left, and going up the massive, clean-washed boulder collapse leads to a cairned passage, the lower connection with MONATIP rift.

Spiral Climb to Risanke

Below the boulders, and under a small drip, a rift of small dimensions leads to the next pitch, with a rebelay rigged of a nose of rock protruding from the wall. At the bottom, a small downclimb passes next to water collecting bottles, and up to a dryer chamber with paper note, LOST AND FOUND junction.

Risanke to Sejna Soba

At LOST AND FOUND junction, the way on is to the left under a rock overhang, through a constriction showing signs of blasting. A short wriggle feet first, and downclimb using the handline drops in to a boulder strewn chamber. A further pitch with a swing onto a large ledge completes the descent. From the ledge, the cairned way through the chaotic boulder collapse allows access to a larger, boulder strewn aven. Traversing over the left of a pit leads to a narrow rift where progress is made by sideways crawling. After another smaller aven, the constrictions continue until the breakthrough into SEJNA SOBA, an important nexus, recognisable due to its golden chocolate coin.

Sejna Soba to Monatip rift

Ducking under a rocky overhang, one can peer into the loud waterfall chamber, where a single rope leads upwards into MONATIP. SEJNA SOBA is also the departure point for trips down the GALERIJA and TTT branches of the deeper PRIMADONA. By carefully climbing down into the chamber, and ascending the rope, one reaches an exposed traverse. By bridging along towards the NW, heedless of carbide arrows (these lead to the tight POPOVEZNI ROV extensions), a large aven is reached, with rope leading up and to the left. Another follows, and the top is a cramped space, with a further squeeze leading to a cairned antichamber. To the left an down the boulder slope is ALKATRAZ chamber.

Monatip rift to Planika Chamber

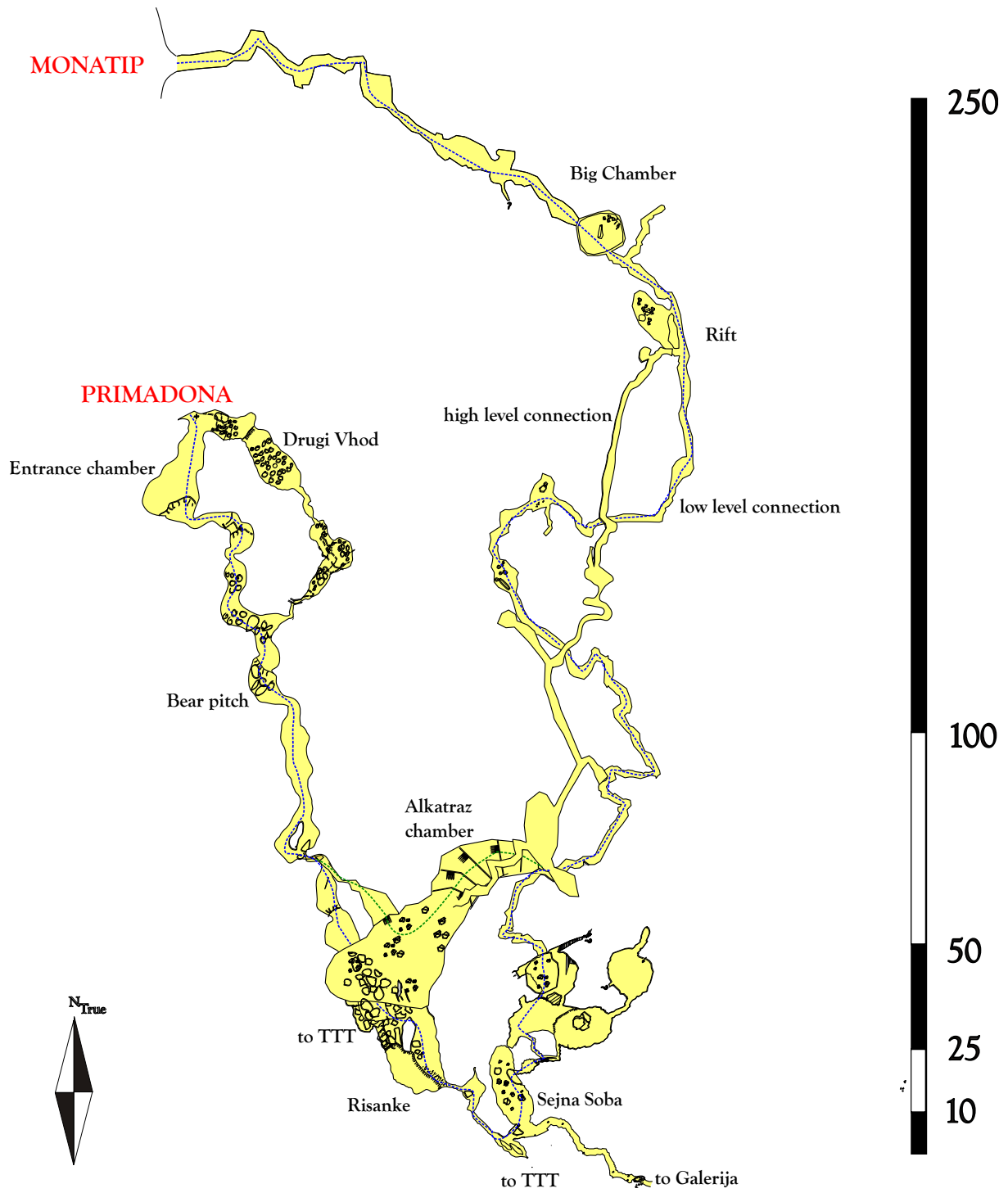
Further up, the passage becomes a well traveled sinuous phreatic tube of stooping dimensions, occasionally broken by a free climb. Eventually, the passage levels out, with a wide trench in the floor leading back down. This is bypassed by a climb high into the rift which regains the original phreatic level. Further along trodden mud banks is a clean washed aven. The way on is following the source of the water, up a large pitch and into the final series of small pitches before a junction. Up to the left leads to CLOACA MAXIMA, a 250 m long descending crawl/stoop to the top of Alkatraz Chamber. Up to the right, through a series of squeezes follows a strong draught until the break through at the bottom of the MONATIP PLANIKA CHAMBER.

Big Chamber to Monatip entrance

Climbing up the boulder slope leads to a well cairned PSS and the start of a rope. This aven was scaled and leads into the high level MONATIP extensions which eventually connect back into the east end of NCB passage. On the far side of the chamber, the entrance rift of MONATIP commences. From this point, the entrance is barely 6 m higher in elevation, but a selection of traverses, abseils and climbs finally lead into the low, pebbly descending crawl which heralds the entrance. By keeping to the right hand passages, a small patch of grass (sometimes) dappled in sunlight heralds the end of the cave.

Monatip entrance to Primadona entrance

From the entrance to MONATIP, a careful descent down the left hand side of the scree slope reaches a roped climb. This leads to a small platform overlooking PRIMADONA entrance over to the south, which is the start of a traverse towards the surface abseil ropes.



Survey 52: Plan view of the PRIMADONA-MONATIP connection passages

Lower reaches of Primadona

Overview

The trip proposed here explores the complexity of the southern extensions in PRIMADONA, with its intricate network of horizontal galleries, impressive pitches and chambers. A trip to the HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING and out will take 4-6hrs, while a round trip to AJDOVŠČINA via the WHAT A COINCIDENCE connection will take 5-6hours. The TTT branch is quite strenuous and cavers attempting the round should plan accordingly.

Sejna Soba to Knot Very Good

The route is described in *A PRIMADONA-MONATIP round trip*: follow instructions to reach SEJNA SOBA from the PRIMADONA entrance. At SEJNA SOBA, the way on is to the right when facing the water chamber. A climb down into a dry, stooping height gallery is followed by a couple of minutes of easy caving to the top of a small 2m drop. This is rigged and a larger 5 m drop swings into a short stooping height, scalloped passage. The take-off of KNOT VERY GOOD is at the far end of the passage. The pitch starts as an elongate rift and bells out where the drips come in. The 20 m hang lands on a bouldery floor of a 10 × 10 m chamber with many ways off. Water disappears in between boulders to CATTLEGRID, while a muddy tube near the landing leads to THE STILE. A larger passage reached by scrambling on a muddy shelf marks the start of the SMERO gallery.

Knot Very Good to Rokovo Brezno

Opposite SMERO, a large, draughty gallery leads off, via several dry chambers with muddy floors to a traverse over a drop. On the right hand wall, water comes in noisily from an aven above, cascading down QUANTUM STATE pitch. Traversing over the pitch head using the in-situ rope leads into an abandoned streamway rift. The draughty passage continues past a 1^{1/2} m drop onto a mud floor and develops as a sinuous dry rift which is best traversed near the bottom. At the next climb down, it is possible to climb to the roof of the passage and continue a traverse over the top of ROKOVO BREZNO. The way on is down a small climb to find the pitch head.

Rokovo Brezno to the Hall of the Mountain King

At the bottom of the clean 30 m hang in a 9 × 9 m circular shaft the start of KARSTAWAY passage drops down several times to reach a small 4 m drop into the LUNCH SPOT, where a small stream is joined. Upstream is a small 15 m clean-washed aven with interesting mud sediments. Following the water downstream, walls come in to form a straight, tight rift, beyond which a waterfall joins the stream. At a larger water chamber, the passage is above the water in a small

phreatic tube with clear scallops. Staying high and leaving the streamway leads to a series of scrambles over boulders along a white rift. The passage abruptly ends at the head of the MIGHTY FINE INDEED series of pitches (P20, P15, P43). The third pitch drops into the large HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING chamber, a high, boulder strewn passage.

Hall of the Mountain King to Upside Down Chamber

A scramble up a boulder slope on the far side of the chamber leads to a climb up into COLONY, a horizontal passage, where a chilling draught is found again. In the passage, to the left and upwind is the start of WHAT A COINCIDENCE! passage while the way down through boulders, downwind, leads quickly to the head of the impressive BLUE DANUBE pitch (P46). The pitch starts against the fault wall, and bells out 15 m below, where a hanging rebelay provides a clean 30 m hang down the 6x6m elegant shaft. Half-way through the descent, a swing lands on a steep mud-and-boulders slope reaching the centre of the impressive UPSIDE DOWN CHAMBER (20 × 30 × 40 m).

Hall of the Mountain King to Ajdovščina

This begins as the upwind route labelled WHAT A COINCIDENCE! where, past a series of crawl connected muddy chambers, another constriction leads to a pitch head on the right-hand side. A traverse on the left gains the start of a spacious phreatic passage with a vadose trench in the floor. This passage bends to the left, with an aven taking a trickle of water on the left. Further along, a Y-hang pitch drops into a larger chamber on top a very prominent large boulder in the centre. On the far side of the chamber another set of ropes allow the return journey via AJDOVŠČINA and the TTT route.

Ajdovščina to TTT

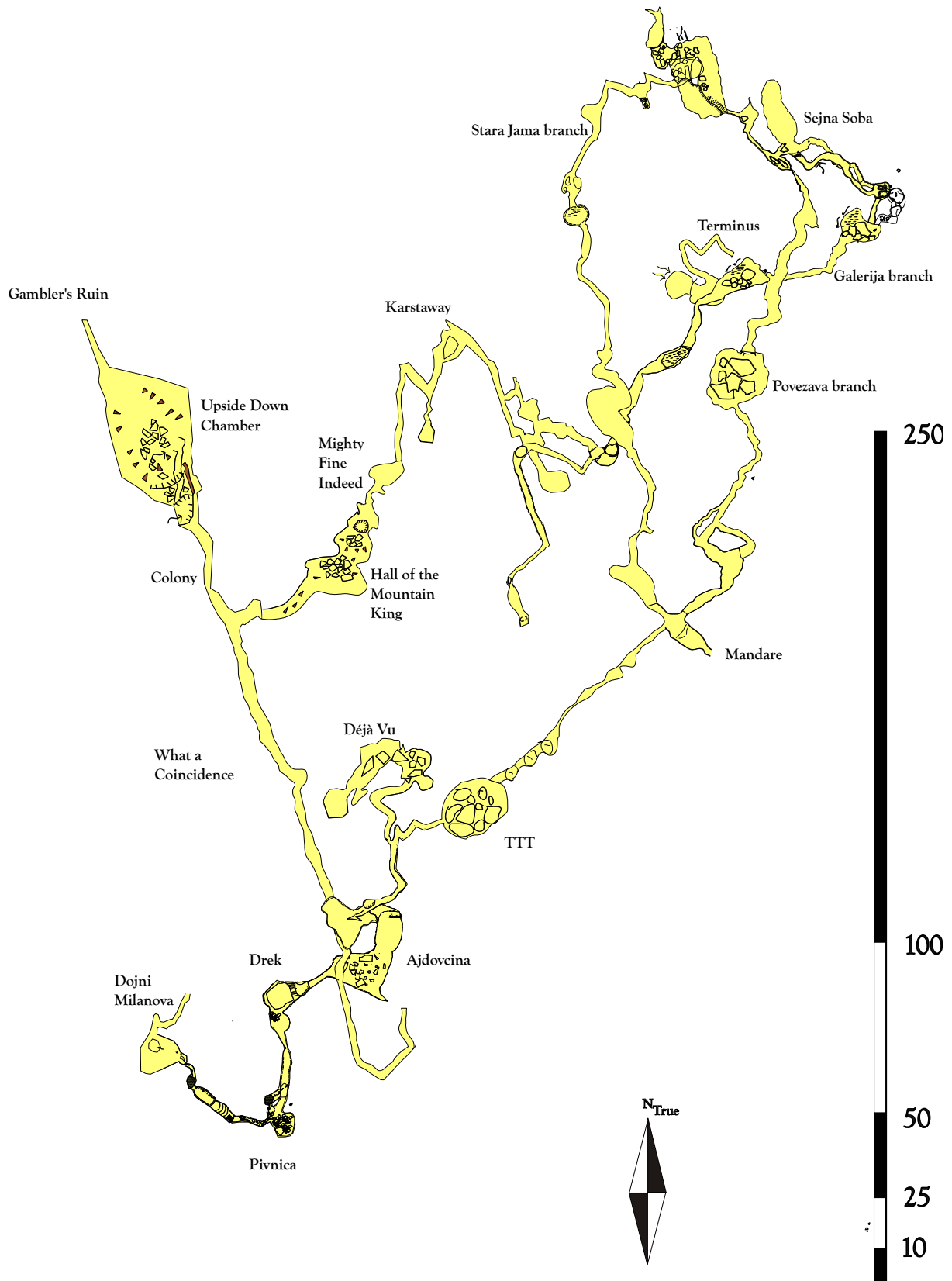
The ropes lead up the AJDOVŠČINA pitch along a traverse going round 270° around the shaft wall up into a window, and up a further 25 m single drop shaft. A short section of low passage leads to an exposed (but rigged) traverse over the original way down, into a draughty rift passage with muddy ledges. The passage enlarges to a junction where the way on to TTT is to the right. A climb up the classic keyhole shaped passage to the left is covered in characteristic spotted mud. This leads to DÉJÀ VU chamber and a further pitch head. At the junction the way to TTT is up a 3m roped climb, past a further 4 m roped climb in the small rift which breaks out in the far wall of the TTT pitch.

TTT to Povezava aven

Climbing around boulders to the other side of the oval shaped shaft leads to the rope up the P40. The passage to POVEZAVA aven is a rift intercepting the shaft midway. Acrobatic traverses over deep holes lead into the narrow passage, where the way is found in low, high and intermediate portions of the rift. The passage relents with a greasy downclimb into a narrow aven chamber with a drip. A rope at the far end indicates the way on, back into the narrow rift; this soon leads to a roped climb, a short traverse (ONE SMALL STEP) and a large junction (MANDARE). Straight on leads to POVEZAVA passage. This is a wide rift with large traversable ledges on either side. To the left at MANDARE junction breaks out pretty quickly into a high chamber with two ways on: this is the STARA JAMA branch. Following POVEZAVA upstream, one arrives at the bottom of the 30 m POVEZAVA aven.

Povezava aven to Sejna Soba

At the far end of the aven a roped climb allows the caver to reach a dry, draughty stooping passage, covered in fine white rock flour: this is MLINOTEST. A short climb down into a junction chamber of modest dimensions is marked by carbide sploges on the wall, the way out is straight ahead, among sculpted and rounded boulders. Further upwind is a series of constrictions, which eventually pop up into the junction at SEJNA SOBA.



Survey 53: Plan view of the lower passages to the south of SEJNA SOBA

A visit to the Southern Reaches via Stuck in Paradise

Overview

Cavers undertaking a trip to ATLANTIS and beyond will visit one of the only locations where abundant and large stalactites/stalagmites are found in SISTEM MIGOVEC. As well as long and arduous horizontal passages, the trip involves a memorable muddy pitch, a large chamber with interesting sediment and the chance to witness biological remains of troglonexes.

Friendship Gallery to Hidden Surprise

From camp X-RAY, it is necessary to go along FRIENDSHIP GALLERY back to the bottom of ZIMMER pitch and ascend the rope to the CHEETAH window, climbing into the cleft several rebelay until the passage levels off and slopes towards a pitch head. A careful descent of the CHEETAH pitch lands on a ledge, 5 m from the boulder strewn floor proper. The way to HIDDEN SURPRISE is on the right hand opening, up into a large trunk passage. A muddy descent leads to a small, roped drop onto a perpendicular, but still large passageway. On the far side, a hidden squeeze through boulders (paper note towards RED BARON) leads to a short crawl over loose blades of rock to the next pitch.

Hidden Surprise to Red Baron traverse

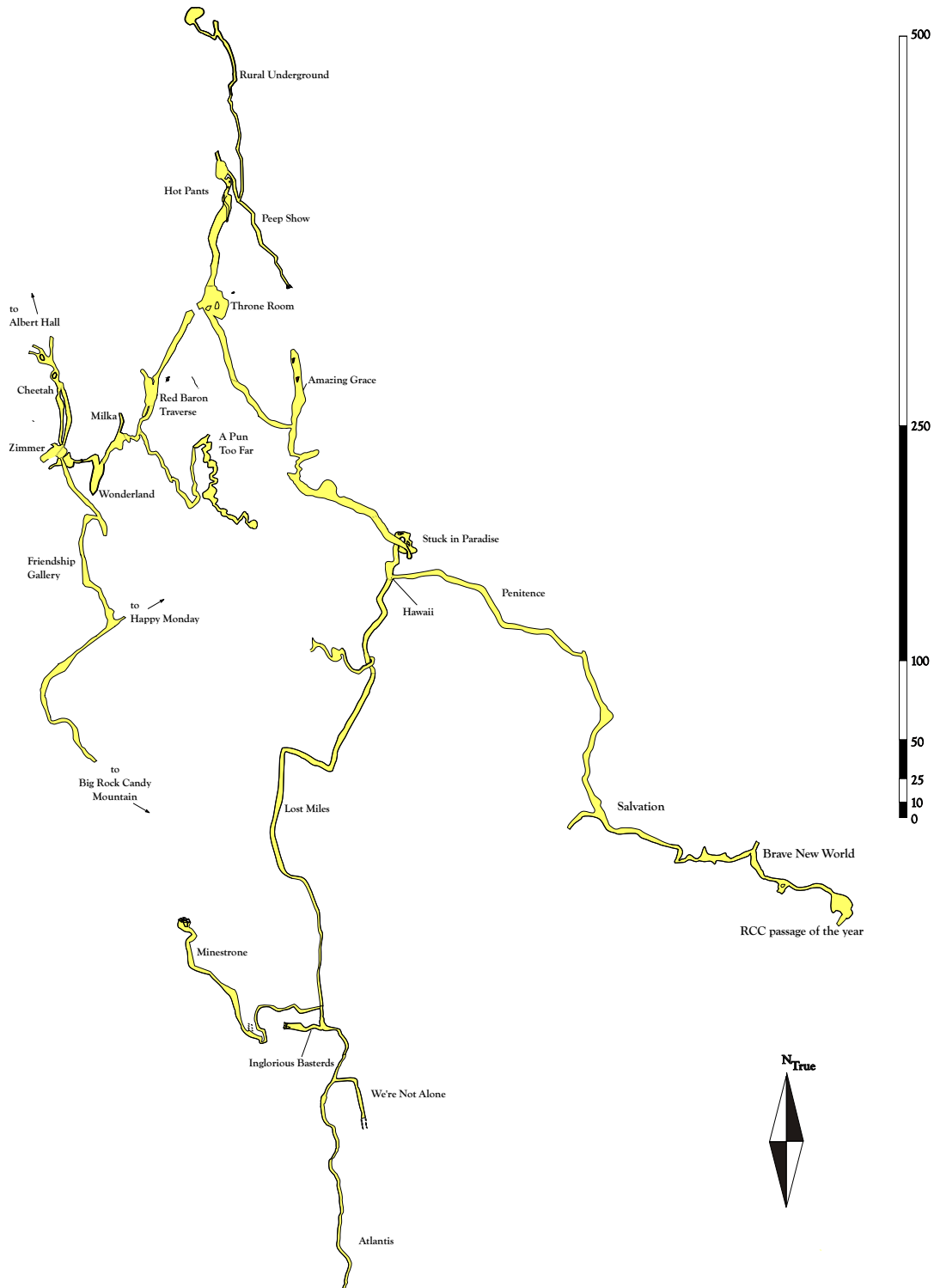
At the bottom, the way on is again through boulders, and slightly up to the MILKA PITCH: a rope on the right-hand side leads to a tight rebelay and a traverse to the right before a final section of descent on the opposite wall, which lands on a pile of boulders. A short, roped drop through boulders and a wriggle leads to the key breakthrough of KAMIKAZE.

At the PSS, the upwind continuation eventually leads to KAMIKAZE and the A PUN TOO FAR streamway.

Downwind ends at a boulder collapse RED BARON chamber, sloping towards the right to a pit. The namesake traverse goes over the pit.

Red Baron traverse to Stuck in Paradise

On the other side of the traverse, an ascending tunnel, the THRONE ROOM enlarges at an up-climb, past one rebelay to AMAZING GRACE, another trunk route. The way goes past some larger collapse chambers before a marked up junction where one climbs down to a boulder choke. Following the draught through the boulders and keeping high and left in the following, sloping chamber, one eventually emerges into the start of PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON, the continuation of the trunk route. Past two handline climbs down, the passage terminates at the start of STUCK IN PARADISE pitch.



Survey 54: Plan view of the lower passages off CHEETAH pitch

Stuck in Paradise to Sic Semper Tyrannis

The abseil route spirals down the shaft, which is broken in several sections. Finally, a constriction through boulders leads to the final deviated rope and a landing at HAWAII junction, where a daren drum full of collected drips offers the only available water between ZIMMER and BREZNO SLAPOV. What follows is a low ceiling, but mainly walking passage heading south, interrupted by a short perpendicular climb where wall crystals are particularly prominent. After a lowering to a hands and knees crawl, a short wriggle through a boulder choke leads to the start of ATLANTIS, which is the continuation of the abandoned phreatic tube. About 600 m of varied crawling to walking passage, hosting many decorations where the way on is always south, past the MINESTRONE and WE'RE NOT ALONE junctions. Towards then end, the passage slopes down to a boulder junction where the sound a waterfall from BREZNO SLAPOV can be heard.

Sic Semper Tyrannis to First Draft

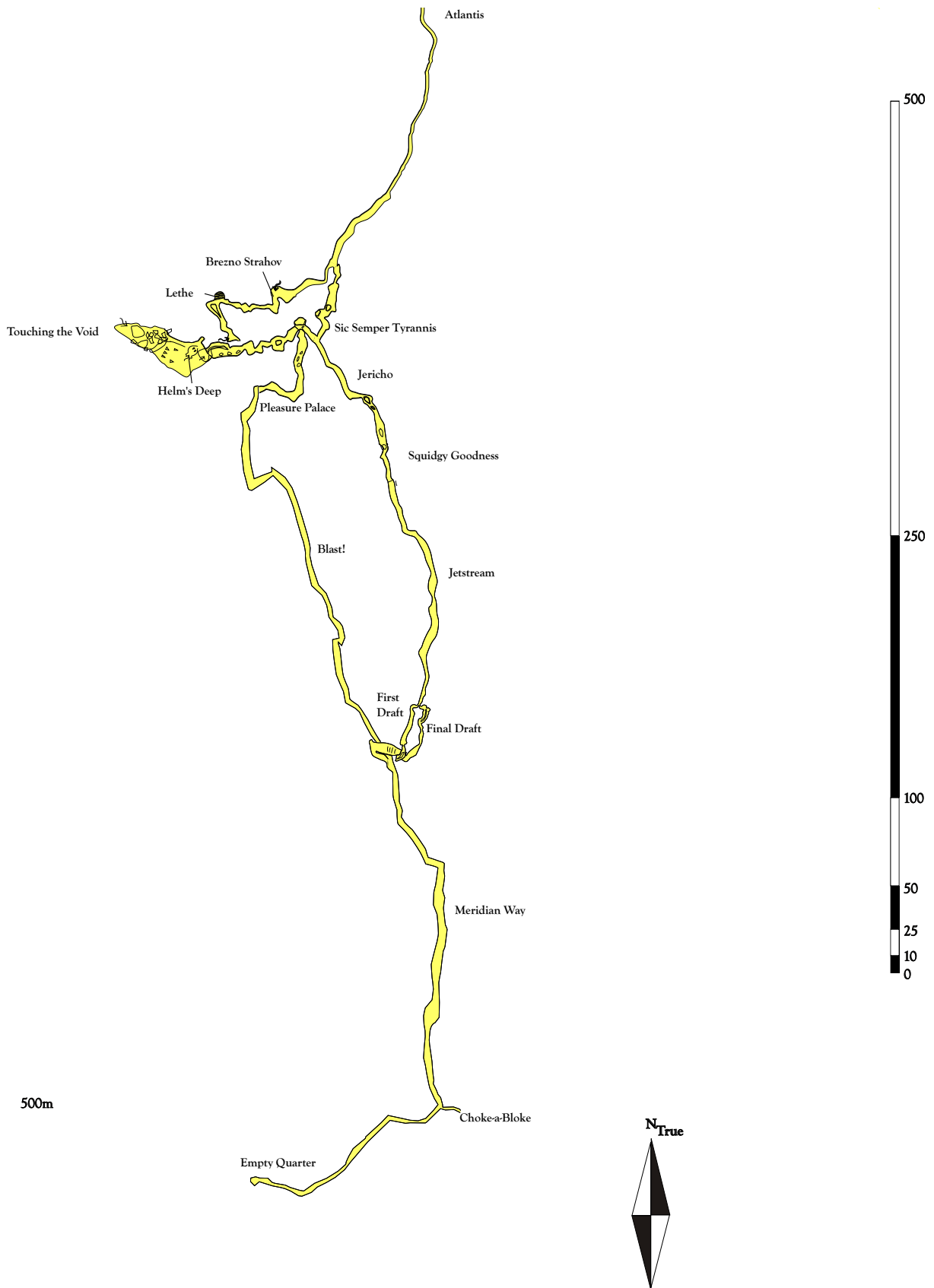
A the junction, the start of SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS is a squeeze over a flat boulder to a cobble-floored alcove and the start of a multilevel rift. Bearing left, a couple of traverses over pits leads to a T junction.

Right leads to the start of PLEASURE PALACE, via a 10m pitch, which eventually reconnects to the MERIDIAN WAY via a 300 m crawl. Beyond the pitch lies a boulder chamber with several ways on, including a climb to HELM'S DEEP chamber or down to the streamway and DAVY JONES' LOCKER. The water eventually cascades down to the LETHE streamway.

Left is the way on, up into a multilevel rift heading south, JERICHO. A short climb can be bypassed by a narrow squeeze, which lead on to a further ascent and descent into SQUIDGY GOODNESS. The remnants of a dormouse can be found at the bottom of small 2 m climb down. Further on, JETSTREAM, so named because of the chilling strong draught takes the shape of rift with wide ledges where it is necessary to climb up to a muddy squeeze and slope down to a boulder choke. Past the boulders is the start of FINAL DRAFT.

Final Draft to Choke-a-Blake

At the next junction, turning left past some decorated alcoves and crawling through white sand pools quickly leads to the start of a slanting pitch. 25 m below, the pitch enlarges as it meets an abandoned phreatic passage. North connects to the PLEASURE PALACE. South is the MERIDIAN WAY, 150 m of easy walking passage past some dormouse excrement, hair and bones to a boulder choke. The passage continues beyond to a junction. The obvious continuation drops down to the south west, ending after 100 m at a boulder choke and an unclimbed aven (EMPTY QUARTER). Back at the junction, a too tight squeeze marks the end of CHOKE-A-BLOKE and the end of this trip. This passage lies about 350 m away from mountain side.



Survey 55: Plan view of the lower passages below and south of STUCK IN PARADISE

M2-M16 roundtrip with excursion to Bikini Carwash

Overview

Cavers undertaking the classic M2-M16 roundtrip will encounter challenging traverses over awesome black space, the sheer implausibility of the TRADESMAN ENTRANCE and a jaw dropping swing over the largest pitch in the system. The roundtrip takes 3-4 hrs, adding 1hr for the trip to BIKINI CARWASH from LEVEL 2.

M2 entrance to Silos pitch

The small, SRT free entrance to M2 is found 20m north of a large shakehole with snowplug, from which an abseil drops into a large, well lit, boulder cavern. The traditional route is a tight, descending rift soon breaking into the opposite side of the cavern. At the bottom of the boulder slope (care), an unrelenting tight rift leads off into the mountain. Several climbs interrupt the passage until a 3m ladder pitch is met. At the bottom, the continuing tight rift leads to a pitch head. The modest pitch drops onto the next pitch head: a window through boulders to a drippy fluted shaft, KLETNIK'S SHOWER, split by several rebelay. At the bottom, a short rift section leads to the next small pitch, which is split in half by a rebelay. This lands in high chamber with significant draught. At the far end of the left hand wall, a line of bolts secure the approach to the magnificent SILOS pitch.

Silos pitch to Tradesman entrance

A first hang over a smooth rock slab leads to a rebelay. The next drop lands on a ledge 80m above the base of the pitch. The rope up GODZILLA comes down from the opposite wall of the shaft and is tied at the rebelay. Ascending this rope (large swing) leads to a rebelay high above, and a further ascent through boulders breaks out into NCB passage with its boulder floor covered in a notorious black deposit. From the GODZILLA alcove, TRADESMAN ENTRANCE is found almost directly opposite, a small tube 2m off the passage floor.

Continuing along NCB to the left (south) quickly leads to a boulder choke and the connection with MONATIP. In the other direction (north) cavers first find the old CLUB MIG camp, and further on the unstable DODGE CITY extensions.

Tradesman entrance to Level 2

The short freeclimb into TRADESMAN ENTRANCE can be accomplished with the aid of the in-situ handline. A 5 min mixture of stooping to crawling ends at a small pitch head best attempted feet first. The ropes swings to the far side of the pitch into the continuing keyhole passage to another larger pitch. A couple of drops later leads to a rebelay underneath large boulders where a dark void opens up underfoot. The rope then drops into the much larger (about 10m wide)

LEVEL 2 passage.

Level 2 to Bikini Carwash

From the bottom of the FAWLTY TOWERS ropes a scramble on boulders towards the right leads to a muddy traverse with a large drop to the left. The ledges diminish in size and end at the 'SPIRIT OF ELVIS' traverse, a short tyrolean abseil followed by a 5 m prussick above the 40 m drop. On the other side, the large boulder strewn passage of Exhibition road commences. Several boulder downclimbs and precarious traverses over the various shafts finally lead to a steep cone of debris where the passage enlarges. BIKINI CARWASH is a much smaller, immature rift passage found towards the right hand side of the terminal boulder hall which quickly leads to a pitch head. Further down are the fault controlled, deep ramifications of the old system, among which WATERLOO chamber was connected to GARDENERS' WORLD in 2012.

Level 2 to Hotline

From FAWLTY TOWERS turning left and scrambling up the boulders quickly leads to an exposed traverse on the lefthand wall over TITANIC pitch. Past the traverse the ceiling lowers down slightly until a roped climb up through boulders is found. The large passage is regained, with walls disappearing to the right into the vastness of MIG COUNTRY (P70). A pitch head and a swing lead to another traverse on the left hand wall. Further up the passage, more ropes are found at the start of GLADIATOR'S TRAVERSE, a two-sided tyrolean landing on a rock ledge halfway across. The other side is the start of the windy 'HOTLINE' passage, the connection to M16.

Hotline to Brezno Strahov

At the top of the passage, one final small traverse is negotiated over a smaller pitch. HOTLINE resumes for around 100 m, draughty, with black deposits on the fallen boulders. Eventually, a roped abseil provides a connection with the main pitch series of M16. The abseil is immediately followed by a small pitch with constricted pitchhead which marks the landing of the larger BREZNO STRAHOV.

Brezno Strahov to M16 Entrance

After the ascent of BREZNO STRAHOV, a couple of small climbs over boulders lead to a small rabbit warren of chambers with carbide splodges over the walls. The way on is up the ropes into a small rift which eventually breaks into the bottom chamber of the entrance series some 5 m above the floor. Following this short abseil, the ropes to the surface are found at the far end of the chamber. Then end of this series of pitches is heralded by a roped constriction at the last pitch head. The last cobbled crawl emerges at the bottom of the M16 shakehole, 5 minutes walk away from the BIVI.