

YRC IN SARDINIA Extended Meet Report

The meet was based at Cala Gonone with the first arrivals on 26 April and the rear guard departing on 15 May, a 21 day meet? Not so. Most members stayed for 10 days within this period.

Those in the advanced party enjoyed the location and would certainly return for another meet but in a more central location near the mountains, Oliena was suggested as suitable.

It was disappointing that the two halves of the meet did not meet up and there was, in essence, two meets at different times using different accommodation, not that this is a problem but we should endeavour to be there at the same time.

As a guide the self catering accommodation was less expensive than the half board at the POP Hotel. Not that either were expensive and with the excellent Ryanair service another visit is worth considering.

We were clearly very early in the tourist season and many facilities were not open, the result - few people on the hills and empty roads except when the police closed the steep main road with many hairpins, between Dalgari to Cala Gonone for speed trials. Super cars and bikes, air thick with testosterone and we had to find another tortuous route back to base.

According to the locals we experienced the wettest spring in Sardinia since 1957, 2 days of torrential rain and those annoying showers when it rained for 3 minutes every 2 hours.

Spring is the right time to go all excursions were delayed by flower gazing, Rory and Sue (who as you might expect covered the most ground) reckoned on 200+ flowers and plants, many amazing and beautiful. Purple Orchid and dense patches of Cyclaman and all manner of colour. Gecko lizard and tree snakes seemed to be just out of hibernation, the gecko's posing for close up shots and a pair of snakes (1 metre plus)

kindly moved out of the path and gave us a steady and beady eye from the safety of a nearby branch.

Birding was very varied, some saw numerous birds including Barbary Partridge and a nesting lesser Kestrel while others encountered large quantities of discharged 12 bore cartridges. Perhaps the free range goats, pigs and piglets, horses, hares, and mouflon spotted actually belonged to someone and had survived.

Gorge walking was popular, the Gola su Goruppu being the most spectacular with limitless rock climbing on 200m sheer walls. Limestone and colourful.



The boulder hopping and dodging in and out of Oleander trees up the river bed of Codula di Luna needed concentration and was very tiring but with splendid cliffs if you stopped to look. Spectacular pinnacles at Punta Goloritze.

The group at some time or another visited various antiquities, Il Golgo 'the Big Hole' 270m deep and claimed to be the deepest unimpeded shaft in Europe. If you do not agree write to the Tourist Agency not the Author. This hole is remarkable because the base rock is basalt, the same material used to construct the prehistoric Nuraghe village Sierra Orrios (1800 BC) and claimed to be the largest and most technically perfect megalithic buildings in Europe.

I wonder if Pat Stonehouse ever visited this and other site in Sardinia.

The climb up to the big doline of Monte Tiscali was well worth the effort, not much left of the structures but how did the inhabitants feed and water themselves in such a difficult Environment?

Rory and Sue climbed Punta Caterina (1127m), the highest top on the Monte Alba range, very impressive, Punta Carabbida (1321m) in the Supramonte in poor weather but worth a return visit on a better day, Bruncu Spina (1828m) in the Gennargentu range (granite) but with thick snow and no gear did not go onto the highest peak so they settled for Monte Spada (1595m) to complete the week.

Apart from the rain and snow a tedious end to the trip, for Rory visiting more antiquities on the way to the airport, car was broken into and a rucksack full of laundry stolen! The famous tee shirt and baggy track suit may not be seen again.

Dennis and Joan Armstrong.
Mike and Marcia Godden
Alan and Angie Linford
Rory Newman
Jim Rusher
John Schofield
Sue Thomason

Alan Linford

**Diary of our visit to Sardinia.
May 2004**

**Jim Rusher.
John Schofield.**

Sunday 2nd .

The flight was rescheduled one hour later than booked and we cleared our baggage almost immediately, picked up the car without difficulty, and set off for Cala Gonone at about 18.15.

We had a superb run across the island and arrived at 20.45. We were immediately picked up by Alan and Angie Linford and escorted to our digs. We could not have had a better trip. The apartments were of a good standard and we

shared with Rory and Sue, who also had their own private toilet and shower.

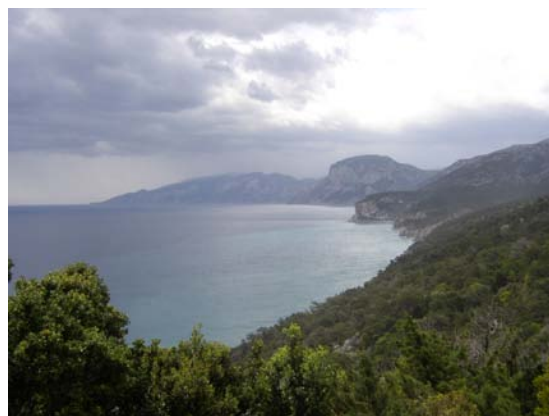


Monday 3rd .

We took the car to Caletta Fuili and walked up the gorge almost to the end, came back and looked at the beach, then met with the rest for a pizza and a carafe of wine that night. Sardinian gorges are very impressive and gorge walking is very interesting and attractive.

Tuesday 4th .

This time we started at Caletta Fuili and walked towards Cala di Luna along a well-defined path through woods and along a high-level coastal route with spectacular cliff views. The coast at this point is both dramatic and beautiful and the



wild flowers profuse and colourful.

Wednesday 5th .

Today we had a rest(!) day. We rang home, did our washing, shopped and drove up an interesting and challenging road to Cala Cortoe - a delightful and deserted beach to the North of Cala Gonone. Again there was a natural meadow full of wild flowers - a feature of this part of Sardinia

and a delight for the whole of the holiday. After this beach we looked out the hotel Su Gologone where Jim had stayed previously, and very up-market it is too, then we went and had a look at the second biggest stalagmite in the world, 38 metres. The biggest is in New Mexico and is 40 metres and is not worth making the trip to see it. The Grotto di Ispinigoli has it all! So ended an agreeable and appealing day.

Thursday 6th .

We took the water taxi to Cala Sicine, South of Cala Gonone, with a view to walking back to Cala di Luna. The ferry was 45 minutes late setting off and we had to jump into the sea at Cala Sicine to get ashore. It wasn't deep but the writer fell flat on his face getting off the boat. Still, we dried out fairly quickly. The book (undoubtedly one of the more notable works of fiction) said 3¼ hours for the walk, but it took us 4¼ hours and so we were late for the return taxi. The ferryman waited for us so we told him that had he dropped us off on time we would have been early. But he still seemed miffed!



The walk climbed 650 metres through woodland and then joined an astonishingly wide road for the last half of the walk after we saw a shepherds hut. We also saw a rock window.

Friday 7th .

Today we walked up to Tiscali (no not the internet provider, but we think he came from here), a huge master cave that the roof collapsed in prehistoric times.

The entry is through a dramatic cleft and under a cliff that defies detection. A rough village has been built as a refuge, but there is no pasture and no water so it couldn't have been anything but a bolt-hole. A very interesting trip and one which should not be missed. We walked through woods full of semi wild pigs with lots of piglets,



but they seemed sociable enough, and did not get aggressive when we approached them. We also looked at the Grotta sa Oche, a not very interesting

cave, but a school party was roasting one of the pigs in front of an open fire in a clearing.

Saturday 8th .

Another 'rest' day. We had a look at a Nuragic settlement 'Serra e Orrios' to the North of Dorgali.

The Nuragic peoples lived in Sardinia from 1700 BC to 500 BC and left behind ruins of villages together with relics and artefacts which are giving an emerging picture of their life and times. Very interesting.

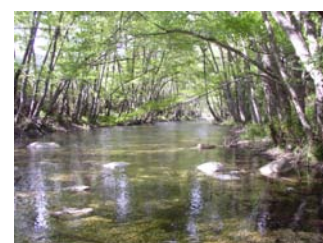
Also looked at the 'Tombe di Gigantic Thomes'- a type of communal grave of which there are several examples in Sardinia.

We then went on a motoring tour from Lula to Sinisicola through some beautiful country and so back home along the coast



Sunday 9th .

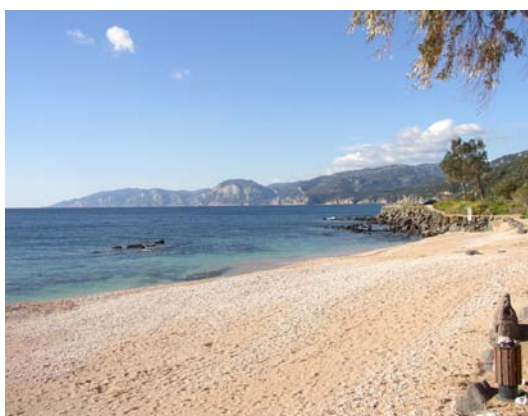
Today we walked for 4½ hours to the gorge of Gola di Gorropu and back along the side of the river and peeped into the gorge which was impressive indeed.



Again, unspoiled, natural country with such an abundance of wild flowers.

Monday 10th .

The last day! On the way back to Alghero airport we visited the Necropoli di S. Andrea Priu. This was hollowed out of solid rock using only stone



tools. Again, very impressive and really interesting and astonishingly large. Well worth a visit.

And so back to the airport and farewell to Sardinia and Cala Gonone. The overall impression being of an unspoiled island rich in history and ancient culture

John Schofield.

Sardinia Meet, Second Group

These notes refer to a mainly male party of 10 attending during the second week. Cala Gonone is approximately 175km from Alghero, the airport, on the eastern coast of Sardinia.

This long-awaited meet experienced unseasonal weather; spring had arrived but certainly not summer. Prudent members had arrived with appropriate gear for the ever-changing conditions.

The island has charming, undulating coastal walks, dramatic gorges, high limestone plateaus and rugged peaks all of which were experienced by some or other of the team.

Climbers from all over Europe and beyond were much in evidence enjoying the endless limestone walls and coastal cliffs that were accessed by boat.

Walks included Cala Gonone-Cala Luna, Sistine-Cala Luna, Tiscali 518m, Punta sos Nidos 1348m, Carabidda 1321m, Scala e Pradu Plateau, Caminu 1331m, and Monte Corrasì 1468m. The latter was ascended by 3 past Presidents and the newly 75 year old. They were serenaded by a large group of Sardinians on the summit. The Gorrupu Gorge was also explored. Four members enjoyed a full 5 days activities and the 75th and 77th birthdays of two members were celebrated in style on the same day!

Other points of note. The wild flowers were profuse and in their glory! Astonishing caves were visited by boat and one great hole was descended to witness fantastic formations.

Prehistoric sites were also visited. To the north of Cala is a quarry the likes of which few had seen before. Huge pieces of marble were being sawn out at various levels and was reminiscent of Carrara in Northern Italy.

Discussions took place comparing Sardinia with Corsica. Corsica seemed on balance to be preferred though the islands differ enormously. Oddest moment; seeing a young English GP walking barefoot on the rough Cala Luna track and talking to him in the hotel later about this eccentricity. Not to him it wasn't!!

Cheap access to Sardinia via Ryanair and the bargain hotel at 45 euros half board made the trip economic. Thank you John Middleton for your strong recommendation of this venue in a previous Bulletin.

Attending. Albert Chapman, Derek English, Derek Bush, George Burfitt, David Smith,