

PICOS DE L'EUROPA

AND SURROUNDING AREA



The 'Picos' are the highest and finest peaks of N.W. Spain; over a hundred exceed 2,000m. altitude. Several deep gorges with imposing cliff scenery split the massif. These are limestone hills, containing many caves, up to half a mile deep, and with few easy routes to the hilltops. It is best to stick to well used paths in all but clear settled weather. With many large depressions in the ground, map reading could be confusing—these depressions are represented by contours with ticks . In Britain they would be lakes, but here water falls through holes to the caves.

Being exposed to the Atlantic, weather in these hills is often wet and misty, but warm and humid in the gorges in summer. Late August to mid September is reckoned to bring the best chance of reasonable weather. Water is not easy to find, it is best to carry a supply always. Cafés and accommodation too are scarce outside the larger villages. For rough stuff in the Picos themselves, the 1:100,000 Ejercito map no. 8-3 (Potes) covers the area, and is stocked by the Map Shop, 15 High St, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcs., WR 8 0HJ (£1.95 in 1991). This has contours at 40m. intervals.

Sketch maps are given for all routes, and are probably sufficient for the easy ones. All but one are marked on the key map. The odd one, Ucieda to Las Fraguas, lies about 20 miles East of Potes. Symbols are hopefully obvious; continuous single lines represent rough stuff routes which are jeep or cart tracks. Difficulty and star ratings are 'questimates'.

ROUGH ROUTES

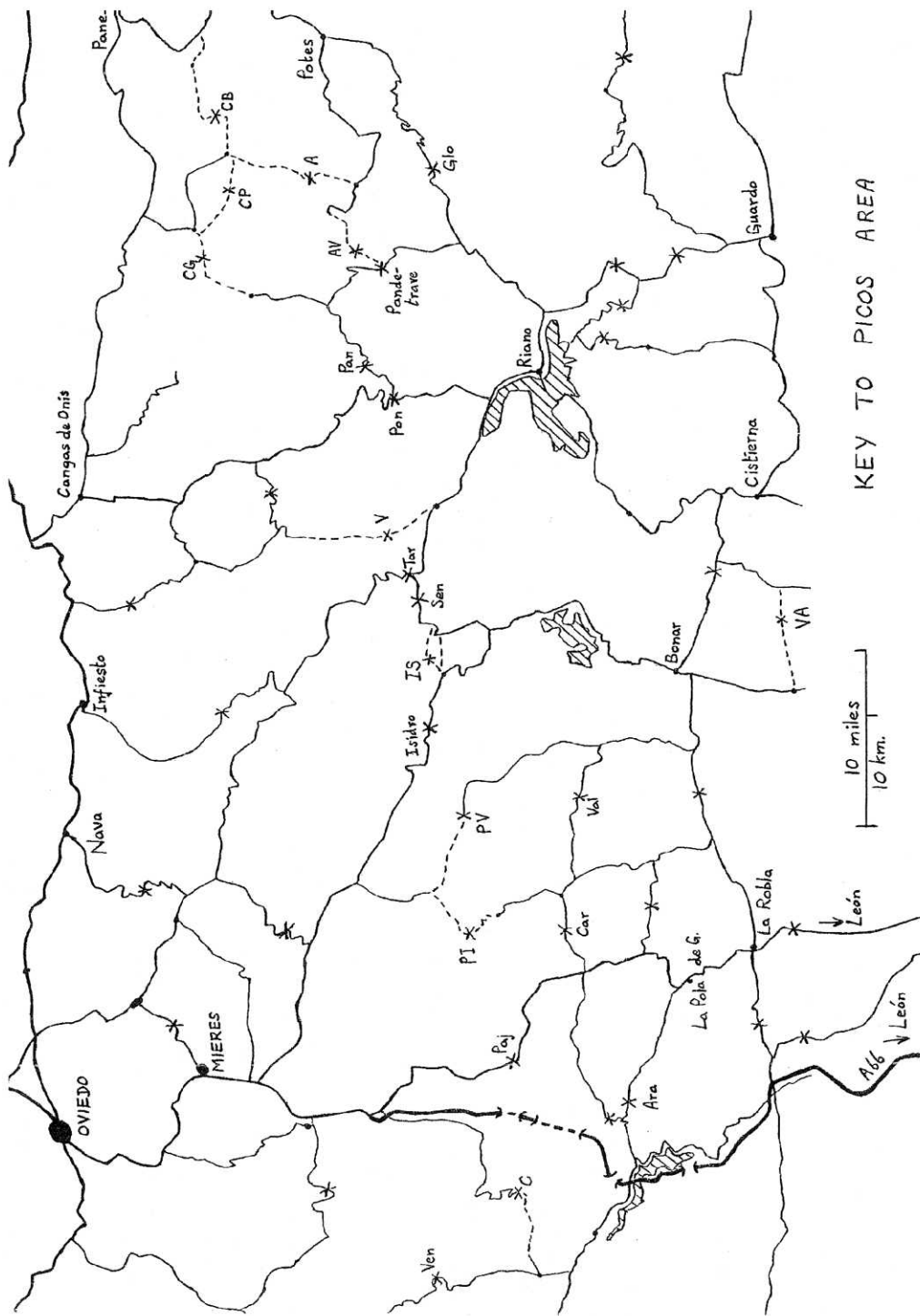
Code		VAD.	*	Page
C	Puerto (P.) de la Cubilla	E	3	1
VA	Valdetablas	E	2	1
UF	Ucieda to Las Fraguas	E	2	1
IS	Isoba to P. de las Senales	E	2	1
PI	P. de Piedrafita	E	3	3
PV	P. de Vegarada	E	3	3
V	P. de Ventaniella	M	4	3
A	P. de Aliva	E	4	3
CG	Cares Gorge closed	M	5	4
CP	Collado Pandevano	D	4	4
AV	Alto de Valcavao	E	4	4
CB	Collado Barrada	E, some D	4	4

A FEW HIGH ROAD ROUTES

	Rd.No.	Ht.
Las Senales }	LE 331	1625
P. de Tarna }	C635	1490
P. de San Glorio	N621	1609
P. Ventana	O/LE 481	1587
P. de Pandetrave	LE 243	1562
Collada (c.) de Aralla	LE 473	1536
P. de San Isidro	O/LE 332	1520
P. de Panderruedas	LE 244	1450
C. de Valdetaja	LE 313	1382
P. de Pajares	N630	1379
C. de Carmenes	LE 312	1339
P. del Ponton	N625	1290

This guide was written in about 1991 by E D Clements with minor updates in 1996.

Any comments, amendments or additional useful routes will be welcomed by the RSF librarians, Jill & Chris Bolton (rsf@jillbolton.co.uk).



KEY TO PICOS AREA

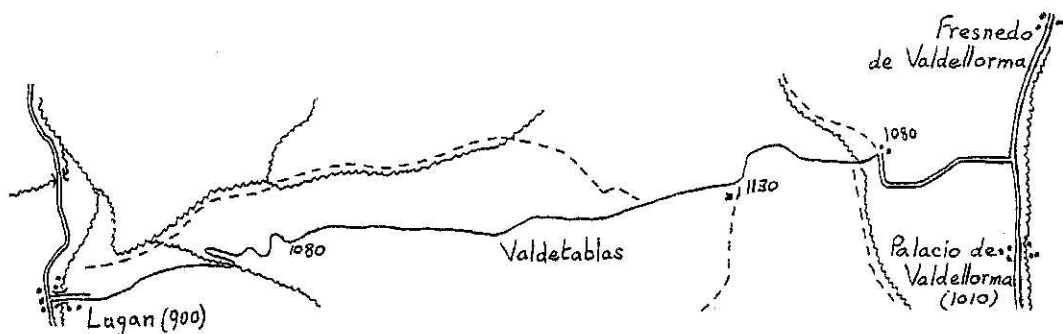
C PUERTO DE LA CUBILLA 1683m. San Emiliano to Telledo 5 miles R.S.
M441 or 442 12c/d Ejercito 6-4 N.E. corner V.A.D. E.

A rough track, rideable where not too steep. See Cycloclimbing 44. p.2.

VF VALDETABLAS 1130m. Luga to Palacio de Valdellorma 6 miles R.R.

M442 14d Ejercito 7-4 East side V.A.D. E

No details, but shown as a 'Camino' or jeep track on Ejercito.



UF UCIEDA TO LAS FRAGUAS 6 miles R.R. a 910m.

M442 17c Ejercito 9-3 middle V.A.D. E

No details, but shown as
a 'Camino' on Ejercito.

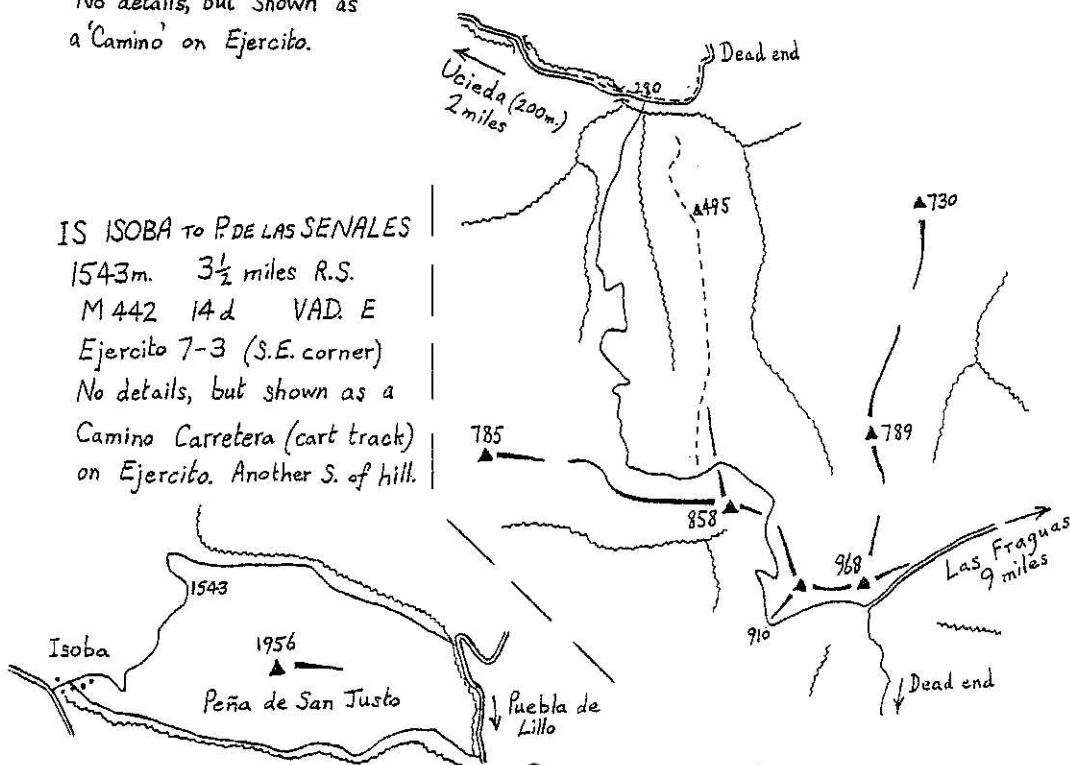
IS ISOBA TO P. DE LAS SENALES

1543m. 3½ miles R.S.

M442 14d VAD. E

Ejercito 7-3 (S.E. corner)

No details, but shown as a
Camino Carretera (cart track)
on Ejercito. Another S. of hill.



PI PUERTO DE PIEDRAFITA 1683m.

La Paraya to Piedrafita 6miles R.S. 2miles R.R.

M442 13c Ejercito 7-3 South edge V.A.D. E

No details: Shown as a cart track over col to Casa del Puerto, then a jeep road (Camino) to Piedrafita.

Casomera

La Paraya
(690)

1 mile

2043

P. de Piedrafita

1755

1683

1967

Casa del Puerto

1909

PV PUERTO DE VEGARADA 1585m.

La Paraya to Luqueros 6miles R.S.

M442 13c Ejercito 7-3 South edge V.A.D. M.

No details. Shown as a cart track to Rio Aller and from near Caniella, with a steep footpath in between.

Piedrafita

Piornedo

La Paraya
690

Rio Aller
820

Hocaja
1000

1724

Caniella
1520

1400

1615

Goxal
1300

Nogales
2077

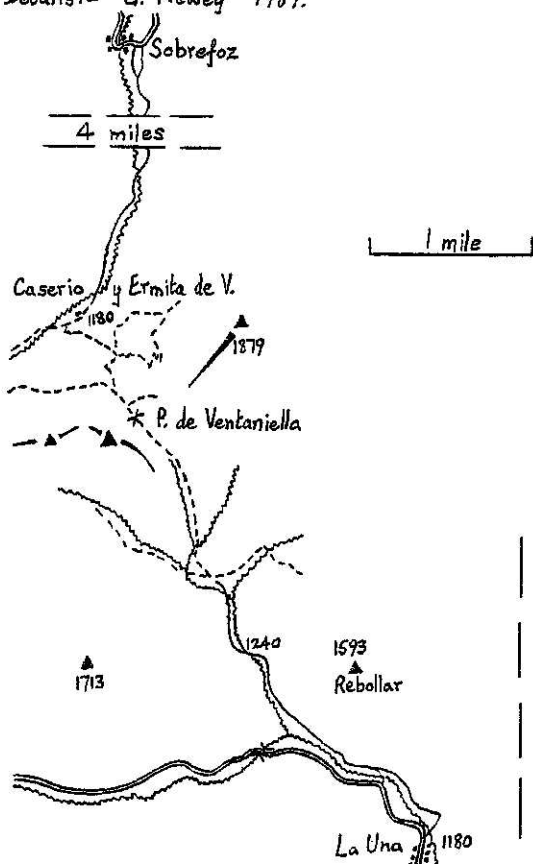
Las Vegas
1560

Puerto de Vegarada
1585

2018

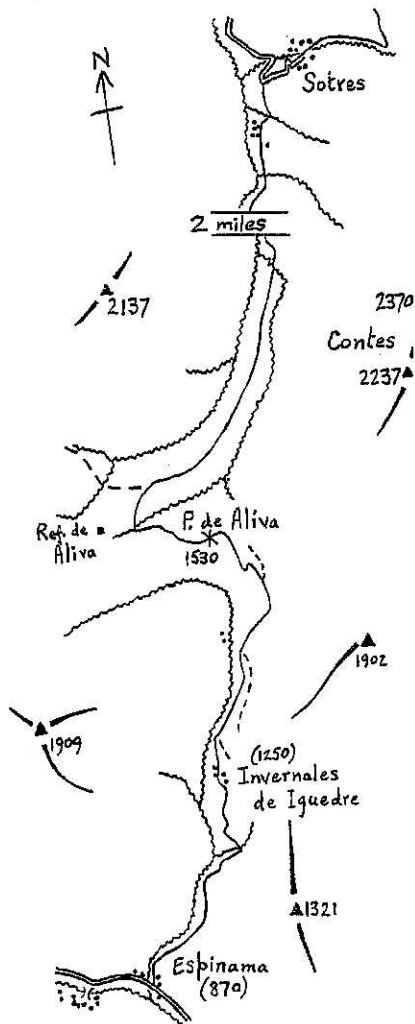
V PUERTO DE VENTANIELLA 1460m.
 La Una to Sobrefoz 3 miles R.S. 7 miles R.R.
 M442 14c Ejercito 8-3 left edge V.A.D. M

Leave C635 half a mile N.W. of La Una on a good cart track on N. side of river. This ends at a large barn, where take valley to North. There are little more than animal paths from here, but it is fairly easy going to the col. An easy slope down soon leads to a barn; where turn right, round the head of a small valley before dropping steeply through the woods on a fair but sometimes muddy path. A very good farm road goes down the valley from the Caserio, for five miles to Sobrefoz and tarmac. (A long slog in reverse)
 Details:- G. Newey 1987.



A PUERTO DE ALIVA 1530m.
 Espinama to Sotres 9 miles R.R.
 M442 15c E 8-3 middle VAD E

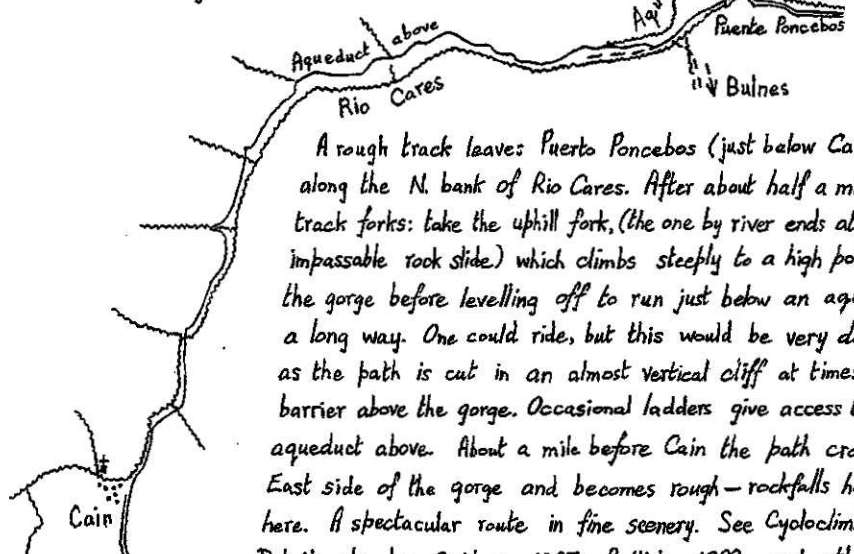
The jeep track from Espinama is too steep and sandy to ride for a while, till the gradient eases after a hamlet. Over the top the surface is better, but becomes very rough on the way down to Sotres. Details:- P. England 1985; see Cycloclimbing 44.



Cycles banned 1997 (2 killed)

CG CARES GORGE Camarmena to Cain 6 miles R.S.

M442 15c Ejercito 8-3 VAD. M.



A rough track leaves Puerto Poncebos (just below Camarmena) along the N. bank of Rio Cares. After about half a mile, the track forks: take the uphill fork, (the one by river ends at an impassable rock slide) which climbs steeply to a high point above the gorge before levelling off to run just below an aqueduct for a long way. One could ride, but this would be very dangerous!, as the path is cut in an almost vertical cliff at times, with no barrier above the gorge. Occasional ladders give access to the aqueduct above. About a mile before Cain the path crosses to the East side of the gorge and becomes rough - rockfalls have occurred here. A spectacular route in fine scenery. See Cycloclimbing 44. Details also by G. Newey 1987, P. Hinton 1989, and others.

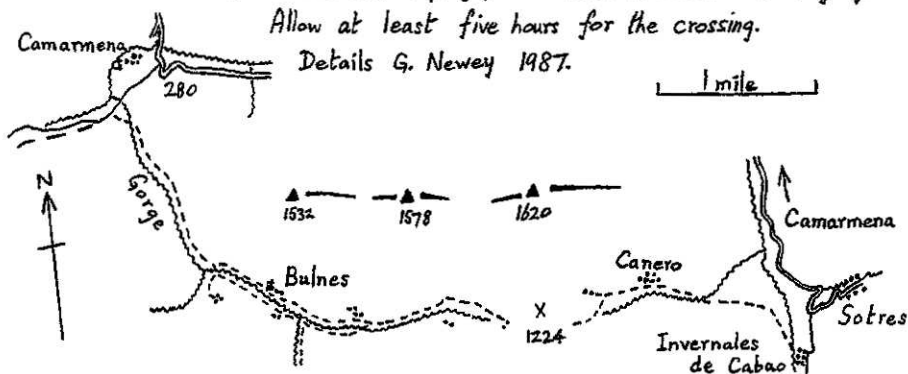
CP COLLADO PANDEVANO 1224m. Sotres to Camarmena 7 miles R.S.

M442 15c Ejercito 8-3 VAD D.

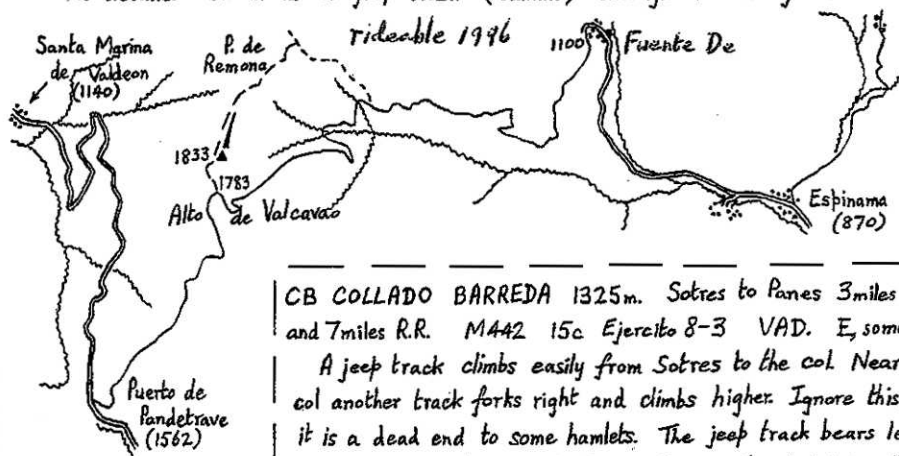
From Invernales de Cabao (just S. of Sotres) take a new jeep road to its first hairpin, where the old mule track to Canero through the trees can be found. Keep along N. side of valley and across meadows to the col. The path appears again, still to N. of the W. flowing stream. Double back near a farm down steep meadows, to meet the main path below (of laid rocks, bumpy) down to Bulnes. A little way on, and the path takes a steep zig-zag drop down the side of the gorge, to emerge eventually near Camarmena. Hotel and restaurant at Camarmena, camping possible between Bulnes and the gorge.

Allow at least five hours for the crossing.

Details G. Newey 1987.



AV ALTO DE VALCAVAO 1783m. P. de Pandetrave to Espinama 7miles R.R.
 M442 15c Ejercito 8-3 Middle V.A.D. E
 No details. Shown as a jeep track (Camino) throughout on Ejercito.



CB COLLADO BARREDA 1325m. Sotres to Panes 3miles R.S.
 and 7miles R.R. M442 15c Ejercito 8-3 VAD. E, some D.

A jeep track climbs easily from Sotres to the col. Near the col another track forks right and climbs higher. Ignore this, it is a dead end to some hamlets. The jeep track bears left and carries on down gradually to Tresviso (small shop in village inn). Here, the steep main street is concreted, and a path

carries straight on, easy going through terraced fields for a short way, but soon steepening, and at one point seeming to disappear over a cliff in a dramatic 1,500 feet descent to the valley floor. The path is very steep and stony, and crosses some screeslopes, but is in good condition and regularly used, hence not difficult, but requires care! Easy going again in the valley. Allow 2hrs. from Sotres to Tresviso, 2hrs. down to road. See Cycloclimbing 44, P. England. Details also from G. Newey 1987.

