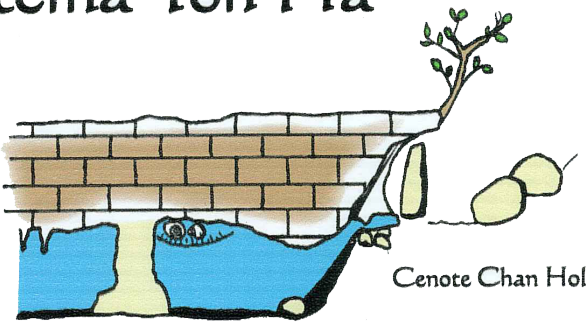


Cenote Chan Hol

Sistema Toh Ha



Total passage mapped and surveyed : 15,760 ft

Exploration History

Chan Hol's cave-diving potential was discovered in 2003 beside the federal highway 307, a tiny silted-in collapse that was ignored for a year until May 2004, when Kim Davidsson cleared enough of the sediment blocking the entrance to push beyond, into the large entrance room, and begin exploring the immensity of the cave within. The first dive undertaken lead to discovery of the downstream: smallish tunnels, highly decorated, thick sedimentation; consequently the huge upstream section was discovered and explored. Over the following three years, more than 17,000 ft were laid, establishing the vast fantastic Forza Line, parallel tunnels, occasional loops, split-level sections of cave. Chan Hol expanded, and several other explorers joined the search for cave, and by the end of 2006, at 17000 ft, it was one of the largest single-entrance cave systems in Quintana Roo. The direction of water flow, interestingly, tends to parallel the coast, flowing from S-W to N-E, rather than towards the sea, as had proven to be the case with the neighbouring systems. In March 2007 it was connected to the larger system of Toh Ha in a collaboration between the teams of David Sieff and Nadia Berni, and Alex and Thorsten Kampe. Kim Davidsson finally unravelled the data of the neighbouring Ba'ab Zooz, and connected it into Chan Hol's Cherry line in March 2009

Explorers :

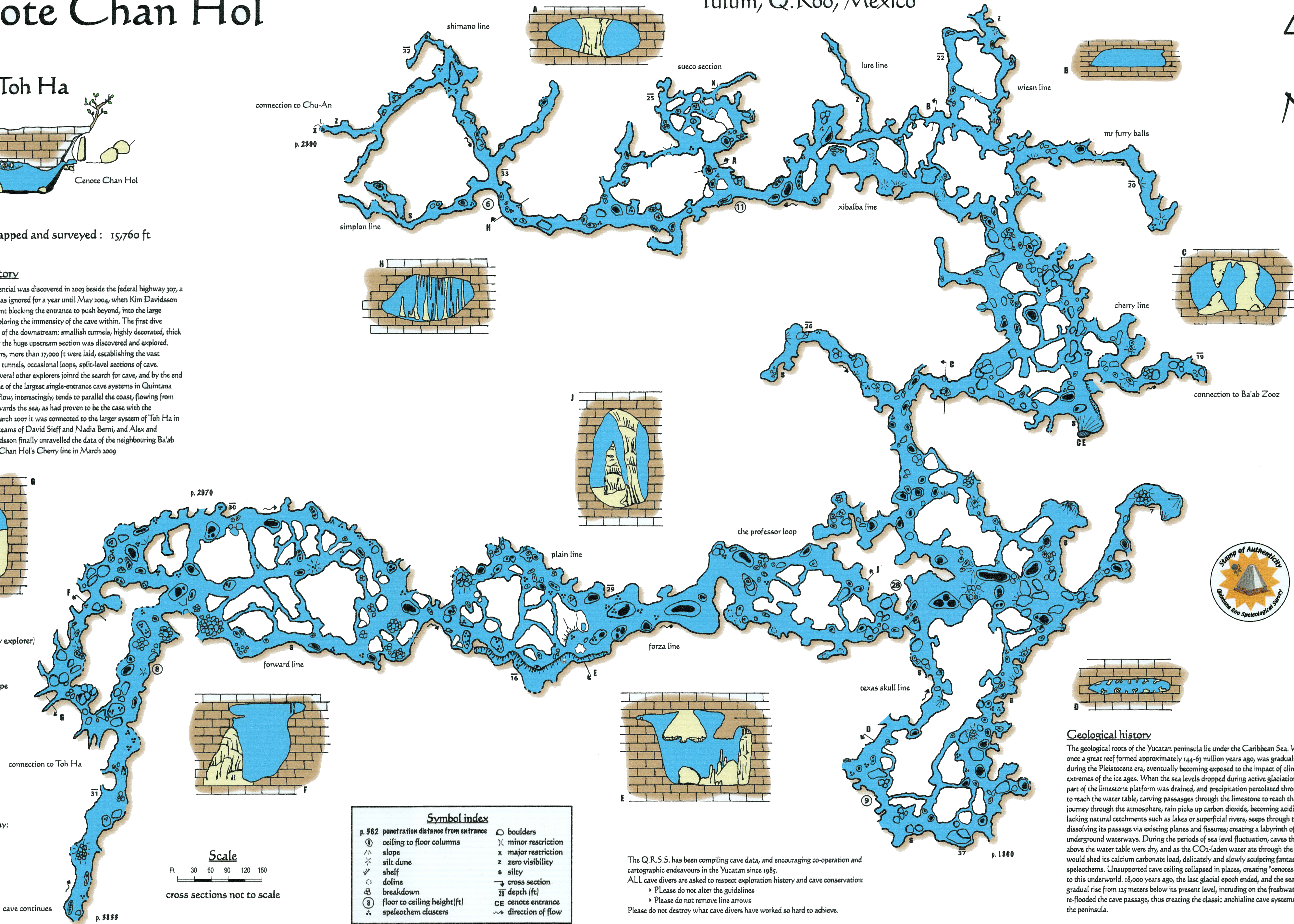
Kim Davidsson (primary explorer)
Nadia Berni
David Sieff
Brian Kakuk
Alex and Thorsten Kampe
Robbie Schmittner
Charles Read

Mapping and cartography:

Nadia Berni

2009

Tulum, Q.Roo, Mexico



Geological history

The geological roots of the Yucatan peninsula lie under the Caribbean Sea. What was once a great reef formed approximately 144-63 million years ago, was gradually uplifted during the Pleistocene era, eventually becoming exposed to the impact of climatic extremes of the ice ages. When the sea levels dropped during active glaciations, the upper part of the limestone platform was drained, and precipitation percolated through the rock to reach the water table, carving passages through the limestone to reach the sea. On its journey through the atmosphere, rain picks up carbon dioxide, becoming acidic, and lacking natural catchments such as lakes or superficial rivers, seeps through the stone, dissolving its passage via existing planes and fissures; creating a labyrinth of underground waterways. During the periods of sea level fluctuation, caves that were above the water table were dry, and as the CO₂-laden water ate through the stone it would shed its calcium carbonate load, delicately and slowly sculpting fantastic speleothems. Unsupported cave ceiling collapsed in places, creating "cenotes", entrances to this underworld. 18,000 years ago, the last glacial epoch ended, and the sea began a gradual rise from 125 meters below its present level, intruding on the freshwater table, and re-flooded the cave passage, thus creating the classic anchialine cave systems throughout the peninsula.