

Chillagoe Caving Club Annual Report 2014



ISSN 07291184



The Chillagoe Caving Club was formed in Chillagoe at an inaugural meeting on 23rd April, 1973 with 16 persons present. The intention of forming the Club was to bring together the active cavers already in the area to enable them to share their knowledge, expertise and equipment, and to foster caving as a sport and a science, particularly in the Chillagoe area.

The Club became an Associate of the Australian Speleological Federation not long after the Club was formed, and voted to become a Corporate Member at the Annual Meeting in 1995. The Club was incorporated under the Queensland Associations Incorporation Act of 1981.

Full Membership of the Club stands at 45 with an additional 15 Novice 'Introductory' Members as at the end of April, 2014. The Club has become well recognised by Australian and overseas cavers and scientists as an invaluable contact in relation to Chillagoe and the surrounding areas.

The Club has an established Clubhouse in Chillagoe for the accommodation of members caving in the area.

Chillagoe Caving Club
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ABN 52 614 187 726

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	Editor: P.Bannink	

MINUTES OF THE 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 27th April 2013.

1. OPENING

The meeting was opened at 19:00hrs by the president, Paul Osborne.

2. PRESENT

Present were:- Peter Bannink, Paul Osborne, Kimberlee Bernays, Horrie Garth, Les & Beth Pearson, Axel Buthmann, Alan Cummins, Catherine Cummins, Steven Morgan, Van Christensen, Keith Offer, Greg & Dorris Gurnier, Tom Gilmore

The President announced a quorum members (16) was present, a quorum being one third of the total number of financial members and life members (45), and that the meeting was duly constituted.

3. APOLOGIES

Peter Lucas, Wendy Landers, Mike Tarburton, Phil Harrison, Daniel & Elwing Mitchell, Judy Nickles, Winfried Weiss, Miriam Robertson, Paco Murray, Wendy Lander.

4. MINUTES

Minutes of 2012 Annual General Meeting held on the 5st of May 2012 were read. Van Christensen moved that the minutes be accepted; this was seconded by Horrie Garth and carried by the meeting. The President, Paul Osborne, then signed a copy of the minutes as a correct record. This was handed to the Acting Secretary, Peter Bannink, to be kept with all minutes of the club as per the club rules.

5. Business arising from the Minutes

Two items of business arising, ie. Accommodation and camping fees & restructuring the financials of the Club, were held over to general business

6. ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2013

President's Report

Paul presented his report and read it out to the members.

Additions to the Treasurer's Report:

- Peter highlighted that this year will be a very difficult one for the club as current finances are very very low (~ \$500) after paying the bulk of the insurance bill. More revenue needs to be raised this year, members need to encourage the use of the clubhouse, invite other groups to use the facilities and use the facilities themselves.
- Peter Bannink advised that he had not yet received the auditor's report of the 2012/2013 financial year and that he hoped it would be processed soon. The 2011-2012 finances only got audited in January this year after a desperate plea to Kevin Ridgeway, as he failed to process the audit after seven months. This year we will classify as a level 3 association so if Kevin is late with his audit it is not critical.

Survey and Records Keeper Report

- Peter thanked those for all the tagging reports, remember to fill in the tagging book if you are tagging a cave. Things got a bit lax after 2003. There are four tags (CH527 – CH531) which are missing, but not written up in the tagging book.

Building and Maintenance Report

- Peter mentioned that the new building checks need to be finalized soon or we will run over the two year period given in the building plan.

Environmental Report:

- Mungana Goldmines Ltd. is moving to reopen Red Done Pit. The cutting will move closer to the National Park boundary.
- There is a large limestone mining application over one of the Wallace Creek limestone outcrops. Paul and Peter have send a letter of concern the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection about the caves and bats that exist within the lease. They have responded mentioning they will investigate the area to ensure their obligations within the legislation have been met. We are not quite sure what that means, but it would be advantageous for the club to do a trip there to investigate the area for further caves.
- Les Pearson and Peter produced a comprehensive report on the Wallace Creek Karst Region and it is available for club members to read (if they want to).
- Peter had made up a folder showing where most of the mining leases are located around Chillagoe.

Tackle Keeper's Report

- Van mentioned that he has removed a lot of rubbish from the tackle room and it is clean a tidy for the start of another year. A reminder to write in the tackle book, if you are using equipment and also remember to pay you fee's for equipment hire.

Publicity Officer's Report

No report was issued, the publicity officer was not present.

ASF Report

- No report was issued, the ASF Liaison Officer was not present.

Librarian's Report

- No report was issued, the club librarian was not present.

Photo Librarian

- No report was issued, the club photo librarian was not present.

6. MOTION

A motion was moved by Paul Osborne that "The reports as tabled at this CCC AGM be accepted as presented and read". Alan Cummins seconded this motion, and the meeting carried the motion unanimously.

7. EINSTEIN AWARD

No Nominations. There was a mention of an incident in NZ but no details were forthcoming!

8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS 2013/2014

Tom Gilmore declared all the Chillagoe Caving Club (Inc.) positions vacant. Tom Gilmore was asked and agreed to chair the meeting.

President: Paul Osborne was nominated by Les Pearson, Paul declined the nomination. No further nominations were forthcoming, after some persuasion Paul reconsidered and accepted the nomination. Paul Osborne was declared President of the Chillagoe Caving Club (Inc.) for 2013-2014.

Secretary: Winfried Weiss was nominated by Paul Osborne Winfried accepted the nomination by phone. Winfried Weiss was declared Secretary of the Club for this year.

Treasurer: Peter Bannink was nominated by Greg Gurnier as treasurer and he accepted the position. Peter was declared Treasurer of the Club for this year.

Other Office Bearers Nominee who accepted the position (nominator, seconded by)

Grants & Promotions Officer – Kimberlee Bernays (Paul Osborne, Van)

Survey and Records Keeper – Peter Bannink (Alan Cummins, Paul Osborne)

Tagging Officer – Peter Bannink (Les Pearson, Greg Gurnier)

Tackle Keeper – Van (Paul Osborne, Greg Gurnier)

Safety Training officer – Greg Gurnier (Keith Offer, Les Pearson)

Building and Maintenance Co-ordinator – Alan Cummins (Les Pearson, Keith Offer)

Clubhouse Warden – Paul Osborne (Axel Buthmann, Horrie Garth).

ASF co-ordinator – Winfried Weiss (Paul Osborne, Keith Offer)

ACKMA representative – Winfried Weiss (Peter Bannink, Alan Cummins)

Photo Librarian – Paco Murray (Van Christensen, Peter Bannink)

Librarian – Miriam (Peter Bannink, Les Pearson)

Environmental Conservation Officer – Peter Bannink (Greg Gurnier, Les Pearson)

Publicity Officer – Wendy Lander (Alan Cummins, Les Pearson)

Webmaster: Winfried Weiss (Peter Bannink, Les Pearson)

Auditor – Kevin Ridgeway – all in favour

Solicitor – Robin Smith – all in favour

9. RFDS (Royal Flying Doctor Service)

A motion to donate \$150 to the RFDS (if funds are available) was moved by Les Pearson and seconded by Alan Cummins. The motion was then carried by the meeting.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS 2012/2013

10.1

- Peter thanked Paul for all his efforts during the year. Paul provided unwavering support for all the issues which arose during the year and renegotiated the lowering of our insurance costs.

10.2 General

- Down Under Caving (managed by Keith Offer) has a new campsite at Mungana, which is now nearly operational. Keith is happy to take school groups caving. Any groups wanting caving trips are to be directed to Keith's operation. The club is not insured to takes groups caving. Any one caving with the club must be a current member (introductory included)
- Members must to fill out the caving book and pay camping fee's.

10.3 New fee structure

- A new membership fees and schedule (put in place by Paul and Peter) was outlined to club members present. The new introductory weekend caver fee of \$55.00 has been applied. Les Pearson commented that it was unconstitutional to have 12 month novice membership, however Peter pointed out that the new (higher fee's) for novice cavers did not state that the new novice fee of (\$15.00) was for 12 months in the fee structure (that could remain – in the paperwork). It resolved the issue of the treasurer keeping tabs on (three month) fee payments and having to hassle people to pay more. It was only an administrative issue being resolved until the constitution (fee structure could be changed). Paul mentioned the old novice fee of (\$15.00) for three months does not reflect the current costs and the effort members make in taking novice cavers caving! Just driving to Chillagoe will costs in excess of \$50 - \$100, depending where you come from.

10.4 Clubhouse Cleaning

- Peter discussed the option of members helping out with clubhouse cleaning after the wet season (in preparation for visitors camping). Alan and Paul mentioned getting local cleaned to do the job. Peter considered it an issue of saving money, as the club cannot afford that at the moment.

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10.5 Fire and Safety

- The Assembly Area in case of fire is in an open area of the camp ground, just beyond the new amenities block.
- Peter mentioned that the clubhouse needed the new fire hose reels, but that the club currently did not have the finances to purchase the reels. Alan was still planning to install them when funds became available.
- Due to changes in legislation the bunk bend are now not suitable for accommodating children. Any members staying with children in the old school must please ensure they use a lower bunk.

10.6 Motion to Ratify Decisions

- A motion was moved by Les Pearson that “The actions and decisions of the Management Committee over the past 2012 – 2013 year be ratified and approved”. Alan Cummins seconded this motion, and the meeting carried the motion unanimously.

Next AGM to be held at Chillagoe Caving Club Clubhouse, Chillagoe on Saturday 3rd May 2014 commencing at 19:00 hrs (7.000pm).

Paul Osborne declared the meeting closed at 21:15hrs

PRESIDENT’S REPORT 2014

Peter has requested my report to be a bit briefer than previous years so I’ll see how I go. For me the year has been mixed. For some time I was feeling that there were only three members left in the club and a lot was expected of us. The job in the executive easily becomes more work than play. Finding trip leaders was difficult and without them there can be little new membership activity.

Play I did with expeditions to Bullita and NZ but on the home front spent more time looking after aging family than concentrating on local caving. Ray Deasy joined the club during the year and provided much needed inspiration and shunted me into action to work on a five year plan. Although the plan may not be complete by the time of the AGM, I would expect to lay out the bones of it and have the membership input towards it.

A lot of great observations came out of the membership canvas for ideas. One of the most valid comments that came from a number of people is that we have become so bogged down in chasing funds and maintaining the clubhouse that we have lost sight of what we are in the club for.

Peter reports that we are more financially comfortable than we were when I stepped into the presidency. This takes a huge load off the executive and will let us concentrate on implementing a plan that will see the club gain membership, up skill members to trip leaders, encourage more caving activity and generally become more organised.

Ideally it would be great to have a significant investment that pays some or most of the expenses of the club. The question is how do we do that?

I know every year I try to hand over the job to someone else and end up agreeing to one more year, this year I’m finding a lot of unfinished work and hope to be in a position to be a greater benefit to the club. Whether you chose to elect another president this year or not I am prepared to continue working on the plan and implementation of training and promotion strategies to further the development of the club.

Paul Osborne (President) (April 2014)

TREASURERS REPORT 2014

This year the finances have ticked along quite well with an increase in camping revenue due to a large number of groups using the facilities for caving activities. This resulted in about \$3000 being carried forward in the account after the club had paid insurance for the year. Winfried took three local sporting groups caving, this added the extra funds to get us through the year. Some of the \$3000 carried forward into 2014 is allocated (by the building fund) to improved infrastructure, (\$600 for the shower mixer and \$800 for the new fire hose reels), this money will be spent when volunteers are able to install the new equipment.

The executive did not put in any grant applications this year, but some additional generous donations were received to significantly improve the clubs rescue equipment.

P. Bannink (Treasurer) (April 2014)

CAMPING FEES 2013/2014

Full Members	\$ 6.00 per person per night
Novice/ Introductory Members	\$ 8.00 per person per night
Member Students (under18 school age) :	\$ 3.00 per person per night
Other ASF Member Clubs or Group Bookings:	\$ 8.00 per person per night
Non Members	\$ 12.00 per person per night
Non Member Students (under18 school age)	\$ 5.00 per person per night

Membership Fees for 2013/2014

27th April 2013 - 3rd May 2014

Our Constitution indicates that fees become due on 1st May each year and must be paid by June 30th of that year to ensure that insurance cover available through the ASF Insurance Policy continues after June 31st of that year.

To enable the Club to function, early payment of fees is necessary and the Management Committee would appreciate your prompt payment.

Fee Structure is as follows:

• Single Members (including full year ASF Fee)	\$98.00
• Family (including full year ASF Fees)	\$182.50
• Student Members (12 months - including full year ASF Fee of \$61)	\$78.50*
• Novice Members (6 months - including 3 months of ASF Fees)	\$35.00**
• Student Novice (6 months - including 3 months of ASF Fees)	\$30.00 ^^
• Inactive Life Members (ASF Fees only)	\$23.00
• Active Life Members (ASF Fees only)	\$68.00
• Single Members (without ASF Fees)	\$30.00#

* - Students including those attending Primary or Secondary Schools who cannot be included in a family membership.

** - The novice fee of \$12.50 is for 6 months, but ASF Component of \$20 is only for trial period of 3 months and beyond this a club fee of \$14.50 and ASF fee of \$48 will have to be paid to make up to full single membership.

^^ - The student novice fee of \$6.00 is for 6 months, but ASF Component of \$20 is only for trial period of 3 months and beyond this a club fee of \$6.50 and ASF fee of \$41 will have to be paid to make up to full student membership

- While it is intended that all active members join ASF some existing members, who are no longer active cavers, are continuing as Club Members only.

Please note: a major component of the ASF fees is insurance which needs to be paid by all active members of the club, especially those intending to cave in National Park area's and Reserves.

Membership Fees can be paid either by cash or cheque to the Treasurer, or direct to the Club's bank account. Should the latter method be chosen you must advise the Treasurer where the money was deposited, the date of deposit, the amount deposited, whom the deposit is for and what it was for? In the absence of this information it is not possible to give the member concerned any credit for the payment until the information is received. It is possible for this information to be made by your bank if you make a miscellaneous deposit and request that the above detail of payee and purpose of payment be included for listing on the Club's account statement. If paying by internet Banking or by direct deposit please email the details to the Treasurer, Peter Bannink, preferably by *email*: peter.bannink@dnrm.qld.gov.au or by phone (4092 6036).

For direct banking please deposit funds into the Club's Commonwealth Bank account at any local branch. The account number is BSB 064804 A/C No 00912281.

SURVEY & RECORD KEEPER'S REPORT

It's been a fantastic year on the exploration and survey front with quite a few new cave discoveries and many new and old caves surveyed. This has largely been due to the efforts of Alan Pryke from SUSS who is mapping many unmapped caves in Chillagoe. Paul and other CCC cavers working in Broken River are also mapping new cave discoveries as they explore the area, fortunately not leaving a backlog of unmapped caves. Everyone else in CCC (that included me), has been rather slow in doing any sort of mapping and all the new caves explored on Piano Tower (and elsewhere) still remain untagged and unmapped. I welcome more documentation, exploration and surveying in 2014.

P. Bannink

BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

There has little done in terms of building and maintenance in the past year. The disabled toilet was installed but I do not know who achieved this difficult task, many thanks. It is important to note that the council has not yet completed a final inspection of the building and the club has needed to apply for an extension to the building permit. There is still the need to complete the amenities block and install the fire hoses I hope we can achieve this in the next twelve months.

P. Bannink

ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION REPORT

The development of a limestone mine in the Wallace Creek Limestone Region, northeast of Lakeland has been an ongoing issue in 2013. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DHP) did not explore the area for caves, bats or important sites of aboriginal heritage as they mentioned in the letter the club received in early 2013. In late September the local station covering part of the mining lease was bought by the South Endeavour River Trust. Peter Bannink was asked to visit the area as soon as possible to confirm the existence of the caves the club had documented in 1982 and explore the area for more. In late December a group of scientists explored the area to document the local flora and to identify any bats in the area, the presences of many bat species and an aboriginal habitation site was located.

Winfried and Peter were able to visit the karst area in January 2014 (after a late start in the wet season) and have written a report on their findings (TR431). The report has been provided to a number of Government Departments so a full assessment of the site can be made before the lease is granted. Currently the club is still waiting so see if DHP will investigate the area and if any restrictions will be placed on the proponents of the project. As the mine is considered very small, conditions are largely (self regulated) and there is no requirement for a full Environmental Impact Statement. We still have to wait and see what the future holds for this area.

In an interesting note, one of the caves at Wallace Creek contains an unusual and uncommon type of carabid beetle from the Genus *Mystropomus*. Scientists from the Queensland museum are currently working on the genetics of the genus and have requested the opportunity to collect a few specimens. This interesting biological find, shows how important caves are in harbouring unique animals.

P. Bannink

FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28TH FEBRUARY, 2014

2013		2014	2014	2014
		<i>Membership</i>	<i>Buildings</i>	<i>Sales</i>
<u>Receipts</u>				
3,646.05	Membership Fees	5,609.50		
20.00	Tackle Hire	00.00		
<u>Bank Interest</u>				
2.45	Commonwealth	0.71		
4.96	Bendigo Bank	0.33		
<u>Chillagoe Property</u>				
2,880.00	Rent Received		2880.00	
4,356.00	All Camping Fees		4548.00	
500.00	Donations Building Fund		750.00	
134.00	Donations - Other		1129.00	
1,000.00	Grants		0.00	
0.00	Solar Power Credit		293.20	
<u>Fund Raising</u>				
0.00	AGM Auctions		0.00	
0.00	Club BBQ		0.00	
<u>Trading</u>				
55.00	Publications			
0.00	Bunk Beds sold on			0.00
25.00	Conference Sales			664.00
12,623.91		5,610.54	9,600.20	664.00
12,623.91	<u>Total Receipts</u>			15,874.74

2013		2014	2014	2014
		<i>Membership</i>	<i>Buildings</i>	<i>Sales</i>
<u>Less Expenses</u>				
2,202.50	ASF Fees	2,719.00		
45.00	Incorporation Fees	0.00		
13.05	Stationery & Postages	0.00		
93.00	PO Box Rental	99.00		
410.00	Website Expenses	350.00		
0.00	Audit Fees	0.00		

150.00	RFDS Donation	150.00	
500.00	Gift to Casey	0.00	
	<u>Subscription</u>		
65.00	ACKMA& Helictite	0.00	
	<u>Chillagoe Property</u>		
	Council Rates		
1,279.10	& Water Charges	489.15	
4,666.87	Property Insurance	5,589.25	
247.75	Electricity	0.00	
290.00	Workcover	290.00	
0.00	Old School Building Refit	0.00	
155.08	Gas Cooker Upgrade Supply	0.00	
0.00	Amenities Block	0.00	
1,920.00	Caretaker's Costs	1,920.00	
621.00	Maintenance	744.00	
0.00	Sundry Expenses	0.00	
14,148.00	Solar power	0.00	
0.00	Grant Expenditure	1,906.48	
	<u>Trading</u>		
109.20	Purchase Book Resale	0.00	
0.00	Annual Report Printing	185.00	
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	<u>Sub Totals</u>	3,318.00	10,938.88
		-----	-----
	<u>Receipts less Expenses</u>	2,292.54	(1,338.68)
		-----	-----

\$26,915.75	<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$ 14,441.88
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<u>(\$14,291.84)</u>	<u>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>\$ 1,432.86</u>

CASH BOOK BALANCE

18,959.75	Opening Balance as at 1 st March 2013	4,667.91
(14,291.84)	Less: Excess of Receipts over Expenditure	1,432.86)
-----		-----
<u>\$ 4,667.91</u>	<u>TOTAL FUNDS – 28TH FEBRUARY, 2014</u>	<u>\$6,100.77</u>

BANK RECONCILIATION

4,616.24	28 th February, 2014 Commonwealth Bank Balance	5,702.27
6.00	Add: Outstanding Deposits	2.50
-----		-----
4,622.24		5,702.77
500.00	Less: Outstanding Cheques	150.00
-----		-----
4,122.24		5,554.77
545.67	Add: Bendigo Bank Account	546.00
-----		-----
<u>\$ 4,667.91</u>	<u>TOTAL FUNDS AS ABOVE</u>	<u>\$ 6,100.77</u>

TRIP REPORTS

Another New Cave - Piano Tower!

The December Christmas gathering was rather small, with only five cavers making the journey out to Chillagoe. With so many experienced cavers, there was an opportunity to explore something new. Peter's suggestion of exploring a new entrance on Piano Tower was taken up after much discussion the night before.

The walk to the cave was very hot due to a later than expected start. Axel had forgotten his gear and motivation is hard in 30°C at 9.00am in the morning. Peter was a bit concerned that the prospective new entrance rift would lead to nothing, with all the effort it took to get there it would be difficult to engage an alternative plan.

It did not take long to locate the new entrance and Alan set to work rigging a ladder around some spindly looking shrubs. Winfried volunteered to descend first, the entrance was rather narrow and sharp. First report where disappointing and after checking another lead he confirmed it was worth us all coming down to explore the rest.



Catherine helping Alan to rig the slot © P.Bannink

It was a slow process getting everyone down, while fighting off some angry ants, who were disturbed near the top. The main rift opened slightly upon descent to a flat floor, then descending slightly into the outcrop as the rift

enlarged. A slight dogleg to the left entered another narrow rift. Passing some nice formation, the second rift opened into a small chamber with smooth sculptured walls. Multiple leads were evident as other phreatic rifts and slots intersected the chamber. A wide flattener (60cm high) extended up to 15m to the left, with the occasional roof slot. Winfried bolted down to this area and grovelled around looking for ways on but many of the leads he jammed himself into just tapered off.

At the far end of the chamber the faint glow of daylight was evident. Climbing up over a boulder pile revealed an easy walk in entrance, just on the other side of the outcrop. While Peter explored a parallel rift which did not go far, Alan found a small solution pit (3m deep) with a lead at the bottom. Entering this was difficult without some rigging (to assist self-extraction), as there were no handholds.



Winfried starts his decent © P.Bannink

Peter meanwhile returned to the wide flattener and noticing some faint airflow, followed a small passage at the far end. This reached a junction, ahead Axel appeared indicating his branch did not go and that Catherine was exploring the other branch. A few calls later and Peter slithered through to find a small round chamber with a 6m aven, which seemed to lead towards the surface.

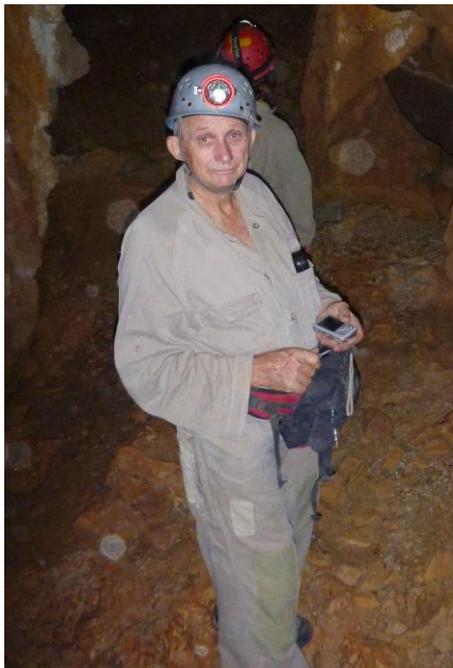
Catherine reported that the cave did not continue in this section and that a nasty narrow crawl (continuing from the base of the aven) continued another 10m to a small slot in the floor. No

water was reported, although it was evident from the stony floor that water may flow in this part of the cave at times of flooding rain.



Winfried pushing a few crawls © P.Bannink

While Peter completed a basic sketch of the cave, Alan continued to explore his lead, eventually Catherine (the smallest member of the team) joined him and was able to negotiate the difficult squeeze at the bottom. She reported it go too much further and was too small to negotiate.



Veteran caver Alan Cummins © P.Bannink

With all obvious leads explored, the team exited the cave via the walk in entrance. The walk back was pretty tiring and Alan suggested driving to the area from the north. Winfried took on this challenge, so we tried to drive to Piano Tower from the North but Red Dome mine has placed a locked gate on the road from the northwest. Thanks to the cavers who participated on the trip,

it was a worthwhile little cave to explore and hopefully more will be discovered in the area.

Devil's Pot/Anastomosis - Tasmania

Paul Osborne

2.March 2013

Cath Stark and I rigged the Devil's Pot side while Deb Hunter, Paco Murray and Jess Bertels rigged the Anastomosis side. Rigging notes we consulted showed we needed 2 X 40m ropes plus a lead-in tape for the first pitch.

We rigged a lead-in safety down to the special rigging trees near the edge of the pot and rigged the 40m rope from there. Over the edge I went and first thoughts were "surely that's not the bottom just there". About that time I looked up and saw the crack Deb had told me about to rig a tape and re-belay. It was a lot smaller than I imagined seeing I had a 6m tape for it but an excellent rigging aid. The drop from there seemed to be only about 15m with plenty of the 40m rope on the bottom.

We climbed down past the most excellent waterfall dropping away into the Misty Void with awesome visuals created by the mist and sunlight.



Looking down the entrance influx © D.Hunter

Go left into the dark was the instruction and we soon found the next pitch which was said to be 24m. I was probably too liberal in rigging the rope this time as I had so much left over on pitch 1. Over the edge I went again and rigged a lovely re-belay from a little slot a metre or two below the lip. Looking down and applying full light there was no rope touching the ground this time.

The only way to tell how far off it was, was to descend and have a look. It was probably just far enough off the ground that the stretch would prevent the other party from reaching it.

Conscious of my uncanny ability to earn awards for this kind of error, I re-climbed the rope and took out the re-belay. The edge wasn't that hard anyway and Cath made some adjustments and put some protection in place before descending. NB. The second pitch requires more rope than the first. I suspect our rope was a little less than 40m but we could've made it fit with the re-belay if we were more economical in the top rigging.



Paul, Paco, Jess, Deb and Cath © P. Murray

I was surprised at how close the descending parties were to each other at the bottom. We all had lunch together and split up again for the ascent. Before ascending Cath and I had a brief look at a large free-climbable hole at the end of the rift with a stream way at the bottom. We didn't explore it but it looked inviting and from what I gather has only shown since the "Great Flood of 2011".

We ascended the 54m pitch without any drama except a bit of indecision as to how to ascend through the squeeze bit, de-rigged and moved on collecting more and more gear as we went. I had it in my mind that this was going to be a fairly obvious route to the top. It was far from that with lots of well trogged diversions. With my memory of instructions being akin to that of a goldfish it wasn't long before we were exploring lots more of the cave than we were meant to. I wish I had've asked for a tape marker to be left to indicate direction at all the intersections and hidden pathways.

I'd thoughtfully pushed all the steel krabs into the other groups pile in the car park but now realised that all that stuff including the steel krabs that 3 people carried in had to be got out by just two of us.

At the top of the last pitch I thought salvation might be at hand by the way of our concerned and caring mates as we could hear them through the exit crawl. As it turned out they weren't as concerned and caring as we thought and we eventually were able to pack pass all the gear up the entrance, up the steep muddy slope out of the doline and over to our not so concerned and caring mates who were very comfortably chatting away oblivious to our hardship.

So what did we learn?

1. Make sure the rope for the second Devil's pitch is a full 40m and be economical with it at the top.
2. Have three cavers in the Anastomosis de-rig party or have another group member come a certain way in to assist with the haul out.
3. Leave route markers (to be picked up) for the ascending party to minimise unnecessary trogging.

All in all a very good trip and a nice question mark over that stream way at the bottom.

New Cave Located by SUSS

P.Bannink

Peter took the opportunity in the first week of April to catch up with the SUSS team who have been caving at Chillagoe over the last few weeks. Alan Pryke, Thomas Cunningham and Michael Casteleyn have been doing an enormous amount of surveying, which will eventually lead to some welcome additions to the club's mapping archive.



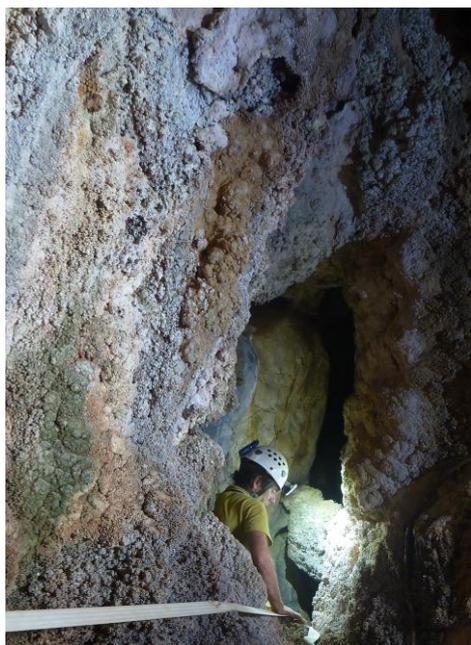
Thomas and Peter in daylight © P. Bannink

On the Monday morning we all headed out to Ryan Imperial Tower to explore a doline Peter had spotted last year. With a bit of careful ladder rigging (beside some massive dodgy looking boulders), Peter and Alan descended and pushed every considerable lead.

The sun filled oval arching passage was about 10 x 8m and turned out to go nowhere. Alan pushed a drafting lower lead to reveal an impassable squeeze, though it was heading in the wrong direction, towards the edge of the tower.

While rigging the doline Thomas walked over to a nearby side rift and reported three vertical holes drafting air. After exiting the doline we headed over and began rigging the most accessible hole, a good 40cm rift that descended 8m to a larger section below. Thomas descended first and reported that the cave continued on and was worth more exploration.

The lower section doubled back into the tower and opened onto a small chamber 5 x 6 m. The area contained a side rift, a few upper phreatic leads and two deep pits, one containing water. One side wall contained an amazing flowstone curtain. Thomas volunteered to go back to the car for another ladder to descend the pits, while Peter and Alan pushed a few of the phreatic leads.

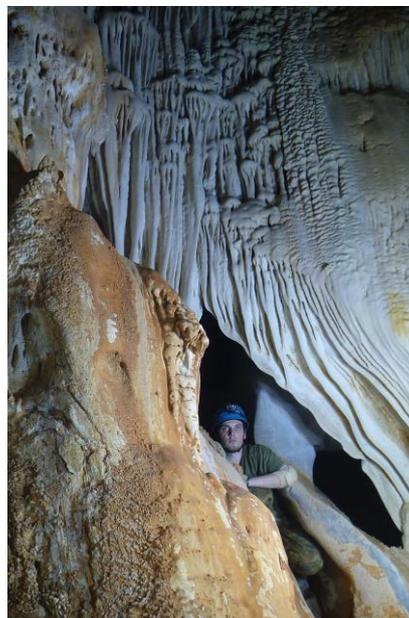


Michael above the 8m rift climb © P. Bannink

With Alan quoting veteran caver Lloyd Robinson “Get in there man, what are you waiting for”, Peter pushed himself into an upper slot that lead to a narrow phreatic rift above the water filled pit (8 m deep). This lead on to a 30cm hole, which opened up beyond the constriction, a small amount of air could be detected. The hole was a bit too small to get through.

Another phreatic tunnel lead to another 5m deep pit, but this did not go on either. Thomas returned and he rigged the ladder for the water filled pit. Peter reluctantly descended to explore the lower

section. The small pool was only 0.5 m deep but a side branch half filled with water went on 4m in the direction of the upper rift explored above. The branch ended in a small lower room (4m x 4m) with a few strange dark brown stalactites.



Thomas below the formation wall
© P. Bannink

Returning to the small pool, a small side passage 40cm wide was detected leading off underwater. The water was too murky to examine the passage further and goggles would be needed to determine how deep and long it was. Stygobiont amphipods were common, which indicates that there is likely to be a subterranean link with water bodies in the other caves of Ryan Imperial Tower notably Keefs Cavern (CH24) and Marachoo Cave (CH33), which also contain amphipods.

Peter ascended and the team then rigged the second doline, which was not as deep. Thomas descended to reveal it did not continue but shouted to come on down and see some amazing ‘testicle shaped’ formations. The rest of the team descended to a small room 7m x 5m with some very strange stals hanging from the ceiling. There was consensus on naming the pit with the amazing formation “Ball Pit”.

Alan spend about 40min photographing various features in the area while Peter spotted some stygobiont adult plant hoppers mating on the wall near a fig root cluster.

This might be a new species, or *Solonaima irvini* (Hoch & Howarth 1989) which is described from the Markham Tower complex. No specimens

were collected, but the small population is interesting to note.



Solonaima sp. mating in 'Ball Pit' © P. Bannink

With time running out, Alan completed his photography and everyone began to exit the cave. Alan pushed a few more phreatic crawls highlighting that there may be more to find in this small cave. The name of the new cave is still to be decided.

Thanks to SUSS for a fantastic day of caving, one small cave just packed full of fun things to find and explore.

SUSS Trip Summary - 2013

A.Pryke

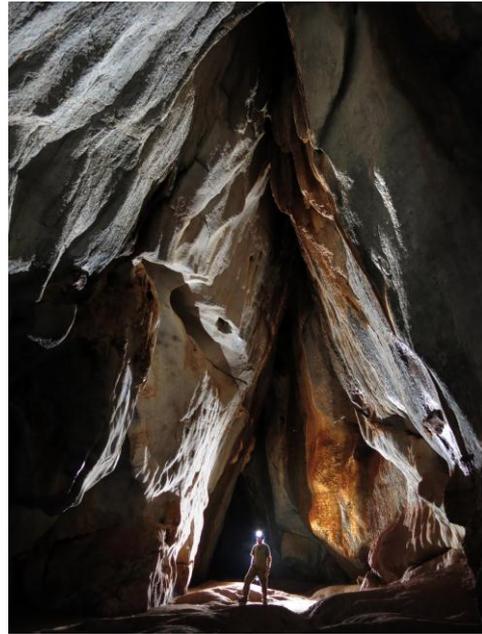
SUSS members Alan Pryke, Michael Casteleyn and Thomas Cunningham were caving in Chillagoe for two weeks in early April.

We were able to spend four days surveying a large area of the Disney/High/ Cavern/ Kirkies/ Richards system (not complete) including additions to Tall Tree Cave, Blindside (complete), Wallaroo (complete) and Rescue Cave (not complete).

On the Easter Weekend Paul Osborne located 2 caves to the west of Wallaroo, and Thomas discovered a deep rift further west, Alan found a small hole to the north. A cave found in 2006, named Seesaw was relocated, SW of Cauldron Pot.

Caves visited on trip:

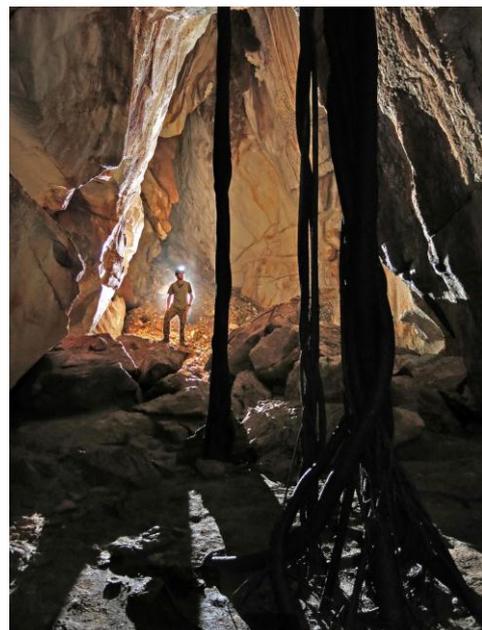
Kirkies Cavern, Critic Tower, The Real Eclipse, Blindside, Wallaroo, Queenslander/ Cathedral Cave, Giants Causeway, Castle Cave, Royal Archways, Carpentaria, Rescue Cave, Second Choice, Tall Tree Cave/ and a new cave Thomas located with 'Ball Pit', in addition to Rescue Cave.



Thomas in High cavern © A.Pryke

We ended up surveying for more days than expected, but are happy to have mapped the extensive Disney/High Cavern/Kirkies/Richards system. There is still more work to do here.

One of the surprises of the trip was the extensive cave system on Critic Tower, with good decoration. Two days at Wallaroo Tower helped us sort of finish the Wallaroo Cave CH300 survey, finding an upper level entrance previously missed, as well as several other new smaller caves on the tower.



Thomas in High Cavern © A. Pryke

Paul Osborne was keen to get survey work done on Currajong Tower. A good go at Rescue cave was made surveying through to one of the new entrances, then leaving via a prussik up to the 'Second Chance' entrance.

The upper entrance to Blindsight was located and the survey completed through to the lower entrance. Water levels were not suspected low enough to access the possible conduit at the base of the system.

Thanks to all those who helped us along, from Paul to Winfried (taxi service!), Alan Cummins for showing us Disney and giving us a lift. Carol for her great dinners, fritters, etc, and the use of her fabulous car on one occasion.

Broken River

Paco Murray



The gorge at sunset © S. Brewer

With the enthusiasm that only strong coffee can bring, our group Michael and Sarah Brewer, Lex Baker and Paco set off early to explore a section of karst between Bee Hive and Millennium (an area that according to our records had not been explored before). We split into 2 separate groups crossing the tower to cover the most ground. By lunch time each group had found a cave system within 50m of each other.

Lex and Paco found a cave that they preliminary named Shotgun, as they had only explored approximately 300m - 400m of passage with more exploration and surveying required. Michael and Sarah found a slightly smaller system nearby with large chambers and some possible leads. Due to the unfortunate after

effects from some beans we ate the night before, we then thought of the name "Bean Cave" with the two additional entrances being called "Has Beans" and "Bean There".



New Member Lex Baker exploring a phreatic passages © S. Brewer

After Saturday's full day exploring the tower and surveying the new caves, we decided to take it a little easier. We drove out to the tower past the old airstrip, and with a couple of reference points in the GPS, headed out to look for some already explored caves. First up we headed to BR81 to find a short cave with some interesting climbs and squeezes. We then headed across the tower to another co-ordinate "Bat" to find a large chamber that had once housed a reasonable sized bat colony. Upon exiting the cave we found an old TCC tag calling the cave Flowstone Fortress BR65.

On Monday, realizing that our weekend was coming to a close we opted to head to a known cave for a tikki tour. We stayed near to camp and headed through the Three Avenues system.

SRT Weekend

A few members gathered at Chillagoe last week for SRT training. Steven and Kerry Morgan and family travelled all the way from Mackay for the occasion. Steven was also being assessed for a Trip Leadership certificate.

Peter arrived very late on Saturday. The caving trip only got started at 2.30pm, with eight eager cavers entering Linkup CH358. Progress was slow and Peter took the opportunity to draw some of the cave passage near the entrance, as the large group negotiated the first 4m climb. Once near the Bat Chamber (there were no bats

present), the group split into two with Steven continuing his Trip Leader assessment, under the watchful eye of Alan. Greg Gurnier, Tim and Peter went on to look for a lead Greg had not seen for about twelve years. Would this be the lead that connected Awsome Big Chamber CH524 (also known as 'ABC' or 'The Gas Chamber') to Linkup?



The group moving through Linkup © P.Bannink

Greg's unexplored upper vertical pits were reported to link into small passages high above the Bat Chamber. The first narrow rift we explored lead directly up to an entrance 12m above. A second steep slot inspired Greg into action, this lead up the side of a massive boulder with a crumbling slope. Half an hour later (while Peter examined bat guano for cave fauna), we heard calls of confirmation that 'this was it'.

Tim and Peter followed up the crumbling slope, and it was a bit discerning being 8m above the large chamber crossing over a massive boulder in the roof. The area leads into a small maze of passage with false floors, formation walls and deep drops into the large passages below. Extra care was a priority and we continued up and up until we arrived at the base of a small doline pit (7m x 4m). We found ourselves nestled in the tower karst with 6m high vertical sides, and the sky above. Two side branches lead to two deep pits on either side.



Greg Gurnier rigging a pitch © P.Bannink

With the sun now fading, Greg rigged a ladder and descended one pit to reveal it was too deep for the ladder but had some good prospects. We exited via the steep climb up some sharply weathered limestone rock to a grand vista over the tower complex. The doline is near the very top of the tower so it took about 15 min to find a safe route down. Steve's group had not got back, so we drove around to the entrance CH522 and called. By now it was pitch black and we got a little worried. Fearing the worst, we then organised to climb up to the entrance and explore the system find them.



An interesting cave spider (~5mm) © P.Bannink

With Tim staying by the cars, Greg and Peter climbed up to CH522 to find everyone at the top dealing with Joanne, who had got a small beetle stuck in her ear, it took some time to finally get the pesky insect out. All happy everyone was safe; we all caught up with Tim and headed back the Chillagoe.

Sunday morning saw some SRT practice, changing from climbing to descending vertical gear (on rope), and Steven even demonstrated a rope rescue. With no one else turning up for SRT caving, one group went to Greg's new dolines (viewed the evening before), while Peter and Kerry planned to continue to survey the links between CH523 and CH405 (Macropodidae Waterhole Cave).



Steven Morgan demonstrating an on-rope rescue

© P.Bannink

It was slow tedious work but most of this area is now covered in detail, with one loop going back into the Chamber of 1000 Faces. Kerry was very patient as Peter included a drawing of the large CH-406 entrance. The survey team exited by 4:00pm to find the SRT team had descended the pits, to find themselves back in the large passage near the Bat Chamber. The link to CH524 still has to be found (if it exists at all).

TRIPOT

D. Irvin

In early June Paul Osborne, Paco, new member Scotte Harte and Douglas Irvin assisted palaeontologists Dr Gilbert Price and Dr Julian Louys in investigating more fossil deposits at Broken River.

The aim was to specifically collect material from Robert Broome Cave, which could not be accessed last year due to the late rains. By 9.30am on the first day the hand line and ladder were rigged. The cave was dry on this occasion

and everyone examined three fossil sites in the cave.

The main sites were called the "Bottom of Ladder", "Fossil Junction" and "Dick Chamber." There is a wealth of material there, and some very good finds were made. Gilbert estimated the age of the breccia deposit as 2 - 4 million years old (myo), while Julien thought it to be about 1 - 2 myo.

Paul made the observation that near the entrance pit there are a few similar holes. As it seems a natural crossing point across the Tower, many animals could easily fall in over time. This makes it a unique deposit for a North Queensland cave.



Dr Louys at the Three Ways Site © D. Irvin

After lunch the group went to the Pink Entrance of Dusty Drain Cave (BR185), there is an owl roost site nearby called "Three Ways". This deposit has flowstone above and below it, so it may be possible to date it. Samples were taken and nearby part of a wallaby jaw was extracted from the underside of a false floor.

The next day everyone headed out to Tower 211 to examine Dodgy's Cave, located by the University of Queensland fossil group back in 1995. The cave is at the top of the scree slope. A ladder was put down the right hand side as a precaution. The passage had a false floor about 5 metres in height that had many fossils in it.

A duck under to the right led to a large chamber with daylight. The cave generally went on in a southerly direction and ended at a bat chamber.

Another owl roost site called 'Dirt Slope' was located and further samples were taken.



Breccia in Tripot Cave BR38 © D. Irvin

After lunch Gilbert and Douglas went left at the entrance and found another owl roost deposit, which they called 'Left Wing'. Paul, Paco and the others went onto the top of the Tower and found the daylight hole seen from inside the cave. Surprisingly the entrance had been tagged, BR38, Tripot Cave.

Records show that the Tripot entrance (a 30m pitch) was discovered in 1988, but at the time of discovery the cave was not explored. This link proved that Dodgy's Cave entrance was just another entrance to Tripot Cave. While Paul and others abseiled the 30 metre entrance pitch, Julien joined the fossil hunts inside the cave, looking at a lower level. There they found rat jaws and the vertebrae of a 'Komodo Dragon' sized lizard amongst the lumps of breccia.



Tasmanian Tiger Incisor © D. Irvin

On the last day there was just enough time for a quick trip to Beehive Cave via the Bee Sting entrance, through to the Rock on a Rock in the Corella Room. There were a lot of bats flying around but they soon went away. The passage that leads south has good breccia deposit low down on the walls and on the floor as fallen

blocks. Sadly by lunch time, everyone had to pack up and leave.

In all it was an extremely successful trip with more than 160kg of breccia collected and sent to Brisbane. This will take more than six months to process in acid baths to free the embedded bones and teeth.

First reports from Dr Price is that the samples are extremely diverse with some interesting finds which include bones or teeth from a Marsupial Lion, a Tasmanian Tiger, Long faces Kangaroos, Tasmanian Devils, and possibly a *Diprotodon* (a giant wombat-like marsupial).



Gilbert, Douglas, Julian and Paul © D. Irvin

Detailed mapping of the fossil caves is still required to correctly interpret the caves history.

Kids Caving Weekends W. Weiss

In the last couple of months the Club has seen quite a bit of activity from groups using its facilities and experiencing caving for the first time. A training squad of 18 kids and 4 adults from the Atherton Swimming Club spent 3 days at Chillagoe caving and working on team building.

They loved our facilities and had a great time in Carpentaria, ramping it up with a trip through Link Up/Macropodidae on the second day. The trip finished with a bonfire and camp oven cook up down by Chillagoe Creek.

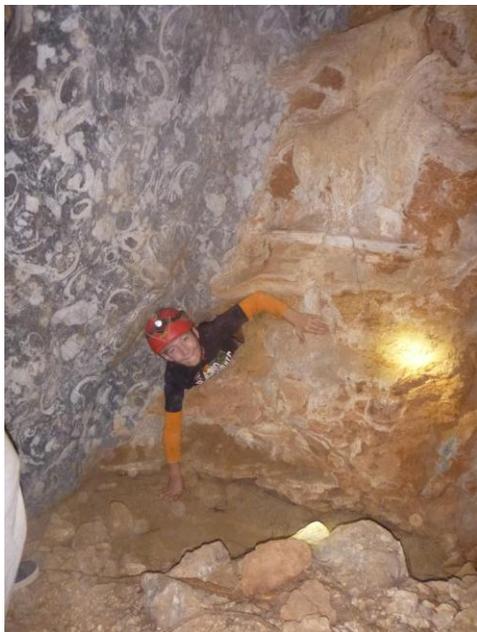
The Club also hosted a troop of Venturer Scouts as part of a State Wide expedition based out of Cairns. Venturers from all over the State participated in activities such as backpacking, kayaking, bushwalking Hinchinbrook Island, and of course caving.

The group spent 4 days at Chillagoe, tackling a challenging trip through the Queenslander on their last day.



Back into the light – exiting CH502 © W.Weiss

Finally on the Cairns Show long weekend we had three separate groups caving and utilising our facilities. Everyone had a great time with lots of families experiencing caving for the first time.



Budding caver testing out a squeeze – any guesses where it is?

© W.Weiss

Caves visited included Carpentaria, Markham, Crocodile Pot, and Link Up. Thank you to everyone who helped guide and support the Club.

In conclusion I would like to note that as a result of the above groups using our facilities the Club has made almost \$1500 in camping fees and donations. Thank you everyone who takes new people and groups caving – this is a great way to fund our superb facilities and get new people interested.

Editor’s Note: The kids caving trips were a separately organised non-club caving events and as such carried insurance separate to the ASF.

SUSS/CEGWA Camooweal Trip

D. Johnston

Between June and July, a group of eight intrepid cave explorers travelled to Camooweal Caves for 14 straight days of intensive exploration and mapping. This included 7 members of the Sydney University Speleological Society (SUSS) who drove from Sydney in three cars, and one member of the Cave Exploration Group of Western Australia (CEGWA) who made the 50hr+ journey by car from Perth.

Three of the trip participants are also active cave divers who explored the underwater sections of the caves using both side mount steel dive cylinders and a prototype side mount re-breather.

Each day the group split into teams to achieve the trip objectives; exploring surface features for new caves, exploring difficult leads in known caves, exploring extending and mapping underwater sections of cave, removing tar drums from one cave doline, and documenting cave fauna.



Doline leading to Kooairlabah Cave C27

© D. Johnston

This trip was conducted with the support of the Traditional Owners and local land managers and would not have been possible without the countless hours of research, coordination and

preparation completed by the dedicated trip leaders Paul Hosie (CEGWA) and Rod Obrien (SUSS).



Deborah prepares for a dive in thick mud © R. Obrien

Camooweal Caves are very physically demanding and very vertical with many involving complex rigging. On an average trip the group helped each other carry seven bags of dive gear weighing 7-27kg each.



Rod Obrien rigging in Common Cave © D. Johnston

The temperature recorded within the caves ranged from 25 to 34 degrees, with up to 100% humidity. The water temperature recorded during this trip ranged from 26 to 30 degrees also.

Highlights of the trip were the additional underwater passages explored and surveyed in several of the caves, documenting the cave fauna and locating the surface positions of underground cave passage using pingers. Extensive exploration of known dolines in the region proved rather disappointing with many features proving to be nothing more than mud filled depressions in the landscape.



Rod Obrien, first ever dive in Little Nowranie Cave © D. Johnston

SUSS and CEGWA would like to thank the Chillagoe Caving Club who provided assistance with the planning stages of the trip, in the form of maps and feature locations.



Denis and Natalie at doline leading to Jurutu Cave © Paul Hosie

Detailed trip reports are being published in the SUSS BULL (available online) and Caves Australia next month.

Centenary Cave P.Bannink

Last weekend four club members explored Centenary Cave, located in the south eastern end of the Markam Tower complex. I had personally not visited this cave for over 10 years, and had all but forgotten what this cave looked like.



Ray descending the steep entrance © PBannink

Ray and Bryn Deasy are new members keen to explore all that the Chillagoe caves have to offer. Conditions were dry and hot when we entered an untagged entrance to the south east of the complex. The start was a near vertical climb down for about 20m, before heading into a high phreatic rift.

The exit from the rift was narrow horizontal squeeze under some old flowstone. This required breathing out for broader chested cavers, fortunately it was not shoulder jamming as well. Past this physical obstruction the cave opened up into a large chamber. There is some impressive formation in sections. Van could not remember the way on so Peter explored a sump passage, which lead to another large rift (8m high). This turned out to be a dead end.

After consulting the map, our group moved in the right direction and arrived at a large junction

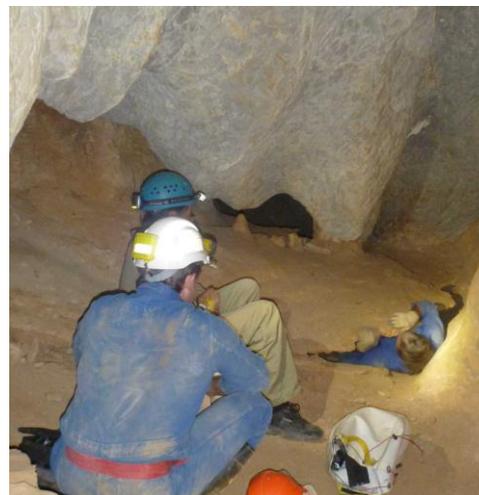
with multiple daylight links in the upper sections of the karst.



Bryn Deasy negotiating a phreatic rift © P.Bannink

Moving north into another large rift we climbed through to another daylight junction with massive boulders. This lead to the 'Lake' area which turned out to be absolutely dry. It seems after extensive rainfall in 2011 and a failed wet season this year, the water table is back to a very low level.

The way on was a difficult vertical climb up a dry mud bank (above a 4m pit). Van put up a hand line to assist, though for most members it was not required. This section of the cave is also quite interesting, leading to a small maze of large rifts with daylight often filtering in from above.



Ray squeezing through! © P.Bannink

The exit climb up to CH501 was not much fun. A reasonably exposed climb 14 metres up some very large boulders. Personally I would have been happy to use a ladder, but everyone managed fine.

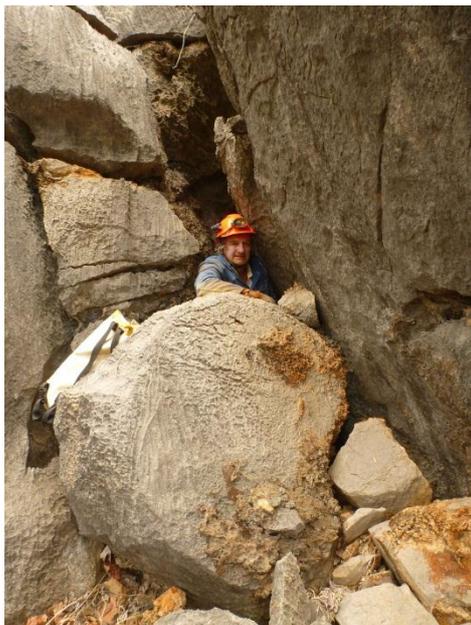
The worst part of the trip was the midday walk out. CH501 is located quite far into a complex section of Markham Tower. The way out was hot and scrubby, with rubble and boulders being very difficult to negotiate. It is going to be a very hot dry summer out there.

Piano Tower Exploration P.Bannink

Ray Deasy and Peter B. took the opportunity to have another brief look around Piano Tower.

On a previous visit Peter had smelled the distinct aroma bat guano among boulders on top of the eastern end of the Piano Tower complex. They set out at 7:30am for a morning scout around. It was quite cool with high level cloud making the walk in quite pleasant.

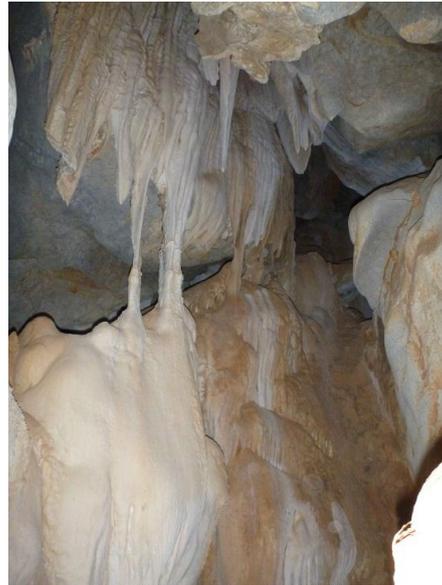
Investigations started on the southern face looking at the base of the main cliff line. Small choked rock shelters were all that was found. Splitting up Peter, continued to move west, locating one small cave (10m deep), this looked to have low prospects. Ray then climbed to the top of the tower and began looking at suitable gaps in the rock piles. Between the rocks they pushed into a small rift near the top of the tower, which looked more cave like. It closed down after a few metres.



Ray at the cave entrance

© P.Bannink

Disappointed Peter moved to where the bats smell had been detected the previous year but nothing was evident in the area this time. A small entrance high in the tower was located leading onto some boulders, a lower 4m climb was also evident but from above looked to be obstructed and there was no air movement. Another hour poking about the surface was met with frustration as the temperatures started to then climb into the low 30's.



The main formation chamber © P.Bannink

Ready to give up Peter then returned to the high entrance to push the final lead. When crammed in the hole, air was detected slowly moving in. Climbing further down, the small rift opened out below, descending another 5 metres among some large boulders.

Now in solid passage, the rock pile then opened out into a small formation chamber with two main leads. The left lead continued down to a small rift with extensive formation. After taking a few photo's, Peter squeezed into a narrow rift to the left and this again opened up. Once through, the faint glow of daylight was detected to the right. Ahead a deep rift appeared choked with rubble. Moving towards the opening, the daylight area looked familiar and appeared to be the small 10m cave found earlier in the morning.

Returning through the slot Ray and Peter then looked at the second lead. Though initially promising, the passage quickly stopped short at a very low (60cm) flat phreatic fissure about 5m wide. Peering in from a far, the passage seemed to be going nowhere.

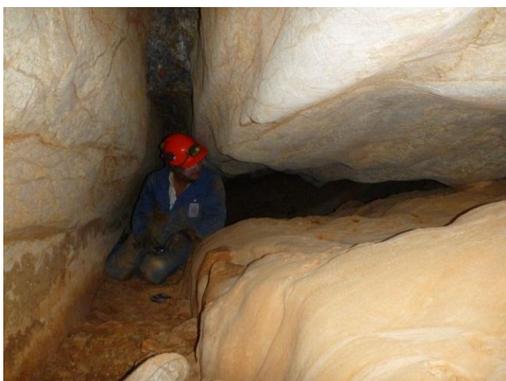
Peter decided to have a closer look and crawled in to find another flat horizontal rift intersecting at about 30 degrees. Following the phreatic junction to the left a small straight phreatic passage was entered which enlarged slightly as it descended gently.

The roof was filled with a breccia of fractured limestone fragments. It had the impression of being some kind of palaeo-fill which might have been deposited in a bedding fracture. The walls also had fracture marks though they were all filled with different mineral deposits.



Micro fractures in the solid walls

Crawling on for another 8m, a vertical 1m wide perpendicular phreatic slot was encountered, which fell away for about 8 metres. Deep and with smooth shear sides, a rope would be required to explore the rift below. Despite the junction, the original passage continued straight. Bridging the rift and crawling on another 6m, revealed another 8m deep rift with intersecting junctions of two other vertical passages.



Ray at the phreatic junction © P.Bannink

Ray threw a few pebbles down and the tinkering echo indicated there might be more passage beyond the rift maze below. With no vertical gear, exploration was halted and we left the cave

excited about how extensive the cave may be at the lower levels and if these passages would lead to a water table.



Piano Tower Complex – Eastern section

Mt Etna Caving (October)

Photo's and Text – Steven Morgan

The closest caving to Mackay is the Mt Etna region just north of Rockhampton. For the long week end in October, a few of the Mackay cavers headed down for the weekend. Damien Tapp, Philip Morgan and myself were joined by one of our Mackay rock climbing buddies Thomas Withers, Ray Deasy from Bundaberg and Paco Murray made the drive up from Brisbane.

On Saturday we visited Jolly Roger (E29) on the western flank of Mt Etna. We got a relatively late start to the day waiting for everyone to arrive from near and far. I have previously been in the entrance series of Jolly Roger but other than that, the cave was new to all of us.

We expected from the literature that there would be a pitch in the order of 30m, and sure enough there was. Two deviations later, our party of six made it to the bottom of the pitch. We continued to explore further passage, descending another short pitch and exploring some lower passage.

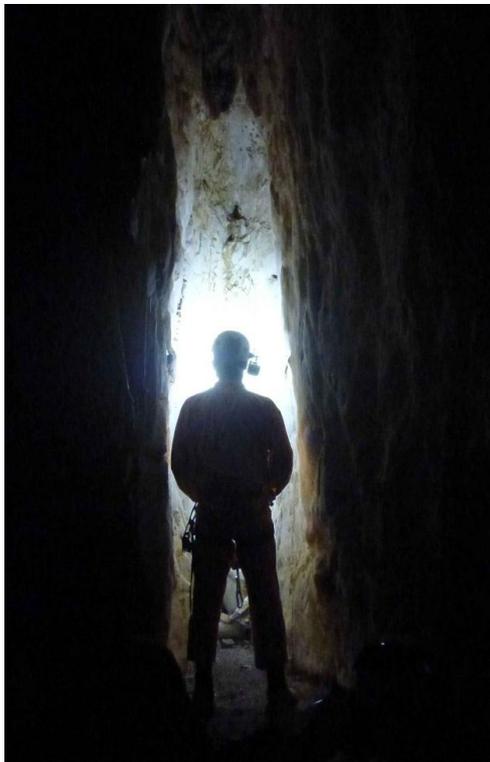


Looking from Mt Etna towards Limestone Ridge

On our exit from the cave, through some loose material in the entrance series, Paco's helmet did good duty absorbing a football sized head-plant. Our final exit from the cave was just after dark.

On Sunday we returned to the west flank of Mt Etna to visit Tardis (a new untagged cave). Despite several visits to this cave over the last six or seven years, we have yet to produce a decent survey and planned to put that to bed. The confined nature of this cave took its toll, with some struggling through the squeeze at the head of the first pitch, and one member resigning themselves that the squeeze was one size too small for them.

The first pitch is around 25m and leads into a larger chamber. The way on from here is through an insane squeeze while on rope into the top of a small bell shaped chamber. I have done this twice before, but today was not my day for it, and the others were happy to leave it go. We did survey this cave to the bottom some years ago and calculated a depth of 57m, but there were some issues with the original survey that we wanted to address before drawing up the cave. This cave is quite difficult with the second squeeze being a serious obstacle to the bottom section of the cave.



"Damonator" in the middle chamber of Tardis Cave

Paco and Ray couldn't stay for caving on Monday. Damien, Thomas, Philip and myself

headed up the track from the Cammo Caves entrance to the National Park in search of Beehive Cave (J18). I have visited this caves several times in the past, but in recent times the entrance has eluded me. A fresh start this time and we found the entrance quickly. A confined entrance leads to a chimney down of about 8m, then an awkward squeeze leads into the main chamber. Whilst this is not an extensive cave, it is quite rewarding to visit.

The weekend of the 19-20 October was meant to include members of the SES vertical rescue group from Mackay, with a rescue exercise thrown in. In the end, the SES people were a no show with Peter Bennett being the only representative. With a very different group the dynamic plans for the week end changed considerably from the original.



Ray in a confined section at the top of Jolly Roger (E29)

For this week end, we had three of the Lambert family (old caving friends but novices to CCC), Thomas Withers, Ray Deasy and my wife Kerry. On Saturday morning we visited Main Cave on Mt Etna. This involves the walk up the civilised track more or less to the top of the mountain and down to Bat Cleft (E6) entrance, and then back down to the foot of the mountain again. Main Cave (E1) is quite extensive for the area. Although there are some vertical entrances, the cave is usually down without any rope work, and a fun and rewarding round trip can be done which involves a healthy mix of crawls, climbs, chimneys and the like.

We hadn't abandoned a rescue practice altogether, and went from Main Cave to Carn Dum (E15). For those who are not familiar with Mt Etna, there are quite a few caves within close distance of each other. We rigged the pitch going in from the middle entrance.

This is a pitch of about 25m. By the time we rigged and got everyone down we realised that time was getting away on us, and we had to choose between further exploration of the cave and a rescue practice.



Philip ruling the roost from a high vantage point in the main chamber of Beehive Cave (J18)

it down the entrance chimney, and enjoyed a leisurely visit to the main chamber of the cave, just relaxing, chatting and taking in the ambience of the chamber.



Philip and Damien in Beehive Cave (J18)

We opted for the rescue practice, and all but the victim and her attendant ascended to the top of the pitch. We were planning to haul them both together using a counterbalance system. I'll spare all the details, but we used an inverted SRT Autostop descender as a holding device, and I attempted to haul using a counterbalance arrangement over the pitch. We eventually raised the victim and attendant about 6 or 7 metres, but progress was too slow and we lowered the victim and attendant back down.

We then went to the top of the pitch and set up a hauling system there and with an additional operator hauled the "victim" with the attendant ascending under their own steam. We learned a lot from the exercise.

Perhaps one of the more important lessons was that efficiency is just as important in a hauling rig as it is in a prusiking rig. That is, looking at where purchase gained is lost before the holding system holds. The exercise chewed up a lot of time, and it was after dark when we exited the cave.

Ray had to head off early, and the rest of us on Sunday headed off for a reprise of Beehive Cave. In the end, only Thomas, Telina and myself made

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2013/2014

Executive		Region	Year joined
Paul Osborne	(President)	El Arish	1996
Winfried Weiss	(Secretary)	Tolga	1993
Peter Bannink	(Treasurer)	Mareeba	2000

Club Members (non caving)

Les Pearson		Brinsmead	1973
Beth Pearson		Brinsmead	1991
Miriam Robertson		Cairns	1975
Tim Porritt		(Vic)	1979

Club Members (caving)

Belinda Bannink & family		Mareeba	2011
Kimberlee Bernays		Kairi	2011
Axil Buthmann		Kuranda	2004
Van Christensen		Tandara	2003
Alan Cummins		Gordonvale	1973
Catherine Cummins		Gordonvale	1995
Peter Cummins		Atherton	1983
David Cummins		Dooadgee (NT)	1983
Ray Deasey		Bunderburg	2013
David Dall ^o Alba & family		Malanda	2012
Max Emney		Silkwood	2002
Horrie Garth		Cairns	1975
Greg Gurnier & family		Gordonvale	1997
Jonathon Ham		Bayview	2011
Robert Ham		Bayview	1988
Phil Harrison		Cairns	2007
Chris Head		Flying Fish Point	2007
Sue Jenkins		Silkwood	1992
Kris Lambert		Sarina	2011
Wendy Lander		Yungaburra	1983
Daniel Mitchell & family		Mareeba	2000
Steven Morgan & family		Mackay	2007
Paco Murray		Townsville	2007
Graham Murray		Herberton	2008
Ebony Murray		Herberton	2008
Barry Neale		Herberton	1994
Judy Nickles		Edge Hill	1991
Grant Polomka		Tully	2001
Alan Pryke		Miranda (NSW)	2013
Damien Tapp		Rural View	2011
Mike Tarburton		Blackburn South (Vic)	2011
Deanne Vale		Tully	2001
Barry Wright		Bayview Heights	1975

Introductory Members (caving)

Lex Baker		Townsville	2013
Bryn Deasy		Bunderberg	2013
Jeannie Dilsaver		El Arish	2013
Greg Elsley		Cairns	2014
Peter English		Redlynch	2014
Jessica English		Redlynch	2014
Scott Harte		Townsville	2013
Bruce Hewett		Mt Sheridan	2013
Julian Louys		St Lucia (Brisbane)	2013
Evan Rohde & family		Atherton	2014
Robert Zmeskal & Watson family		Manunda	2013
Timothy Pelech		Cairns	2014
Gilbert Price		Moorooka	2013

Clubhouse Protocol

1. Members have access to the Club area on the ground floor of Clubhouse building. The upstairs back residence, together with the garage and laundry area on the town side of the Club area and the adjacent yard area, are for the private use of the Caretaker.
2. The Caretaker has a lease on his part of the property and the Club has only the limited access allowed under the Residential Tenancies Act. Therefore, Members should contact the Caretaker upon arrival and before departure, but otherwise, enter the private area only on the invitation of the Caretaker.
3. Members, when intending to stay at the Clubhouse, should have the courtesy to telephone or e-mail the Caretaker to advise her in advance. If the Caretaker is absent, an email message can be sent to the current e-mail address [cavingclubcarol@gmail.com].
4. Members, when in Chillagoe, may use the Clubhouse facilities, even if not staying at the Clubhouse. However, it is courtesy to tell the Caretaker before using the facilities.

5. Mutual courtesy between Members (and their guests) and the Caretaker is to be expected at all times.

6. Responsibilities of Caretaker are to:

- (a) Maintain grounds in tidy and safe condition and do any minor maintenance to buildings etc.
- (b) Keep Clubhouse clean when not in use by Members
- (c) Maintain supply of toilet paper, cleaning supplies and cleaning equipment for use by Members
- (d) Keep refrigerator and freezer ready for use by Members
- (e) Ensure security is maintained for lights, tackle and other Club property
- (f) Ensure trip book is accessible and, as much as practical, monitor trip book, particularly for the safe return of caving parties.
- (g) Collect Camping and Tackle fees on behalf of Treasurer
- (h) Report to Club Executive any problems he encounters with Clubhouse, Members or guests

7. Responsibilities of Members are to:

- (a) Keep Clubhouse and the outdoor toilet and shower block clean and tidy, while in residence. Cleanliness should be checked to be satisfactory before leaving.
- (b) Avoid use of the toilet and shower inside the Clubhouse as we have soakage pit problems which show up after there is much use of these
- (c) Park cars in an orderly fashion at the allocated parking area and keep vehicle speed down to walking pace to minimize hazard and dust.
- (d) Report to Caretaker any deficiencies in cleaning supplies, equipment etc.
- (e) Use trip book if caving
- (f) Dispose of food scraps and rubbish at the Chillagoe tip on a regular basis and when leaving
- (g) Camping inside the Clubhouse should be avoided except in emergencies (i.e. if drenched in heavy storm)

(h) If using Clubhouse at night, keep noise down, particularly after 10pm.

- (i) Behave in the town and at the Clubhouse in such a way that the Club's reputation is enhanced and not diminished.
- (j) Report to Executive any problems encountered in using the Clubhouse and make suggestions where improvements are needed.

Authorized by Committee of Management 27th April 2013.



**Winfried Weiss on a Wallace Creek Karst Tower
Cape York Peninsula**

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