



# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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## NOVEMBER 2013

## NEWSLETTER

[WWW.CHILLAGOECAVINGCLUB.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CHILLAGOECAVINGCLUB.ORG.AU)

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This will be the last newsletter for the year, with trip reports from Steven Morgan's October caving at Mt Etna. There may be a few private caving trips to Chillagoe and beyond. For those involved enjoy a safe and thrilling caving experience! Enjoy a great summer break and see you early next year around March.

### Mt Etna Caving (5-7 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

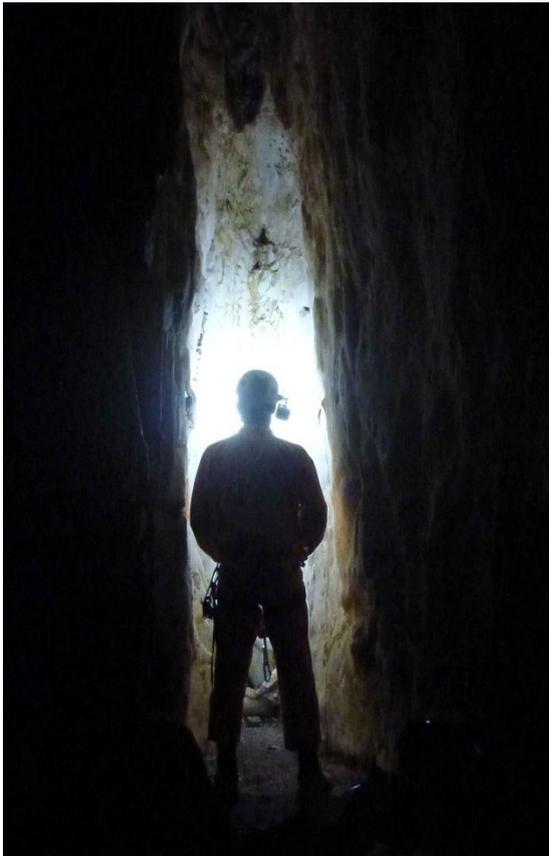
On our exit from the cave, through some loose material in the entrance series, Paco's helmet did good duty absorbing a football sized headplant. Our final exit from the cave was just after dark.

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.

## Mt Etna Caving (19-20 October)

Photo's and Text – Steven Morgan

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 Cammoo 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.

This was meant to be a week end with some of the SES vertical rescue people 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.

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 chose between further exploration of the cave and a rescue practice.



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

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.



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

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 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)

## **Five Year Plan**

Hi Everyone,

I have been the President for a number of years now and it is my intention to step down next year and let some new blood inject a fresh view on the future direction of the club.

With the fulfilment of the previous development plan, it's time to ask you as the membership for your input into where you would like to see the club develop over the next five years from the AGM 2014.

As each year of the plan progresses the club would assess the progress to date and strategically improve the plan.

It has been suggested that the drivers of the plan would be the elected committee and two other members.

We are few in number and spread far and wide with limited resources. Please take this seriously as it's your responsibility as members to make a meaningful contribution.

I have attached a questionnaire (at the end of this newsletter) to start the process and I am expecting that you will have additional ideas that will all be considered and included in some way in the 5 year plan. It is my hope that your collective input will provide a clear focus on the outcome and importantly a method for getting there.

## **Background**

I have looked at my proposed development plan from May 2009. It's a major achievement for the club to have not only embraced the plan but to have fulfilled almost all of the points in the plan.

In addition we have also upgraded the insurance and been able to revisit the income structure to pay for the general upkeep of the facility. Thanks to the fantastic efforts of many club members we now have a sizable asset in the clubhouse and property.

We have relied heavily on donations to achieve the improvements and a downside is appearing that we now have additional maintenance and general costing to cover the necessary expenses.

The original plan was to improve the facilities to attract more use and enhance income. Well we are getting groups through but this is only just covering expenses.

There will always be a natural attrition of the membership due to many reasons and it's a necessity to plan to be in constant regeneration of the membership. It's a given that we need new enthusiastic members to move up through the experience level to become trip leaders and take on various positions to share the workload.

Please have a think about the questions and the direction you would like to see the Club going and provide realistic input and process for achievement of your suggestions.

Regards,

*Paul Osborne*

President.

## **December Breakup!**

Any interested cavers are encouraged to gather in Chillagoe for the final caving expedition of the year. It will be a low key affair, except for the caving!

## **Up and Coming Events**

### **December**

- 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> December - End of year gathering, Note this is the last club caving activity at Chillagoe till March 2014.
- 10<sup>th</sup> December – March 2014 Club caving activities at Chillagoe 'closed' for the 'Wet Season'

### **January**

- **New Zealand Caving Expedition** – Contact Steven Morgan for updates on the event. Steven's e-mail address is [steven.morgan61@gmail.com](mailto:steven.morgan61@gmail.com).

Go Caving!

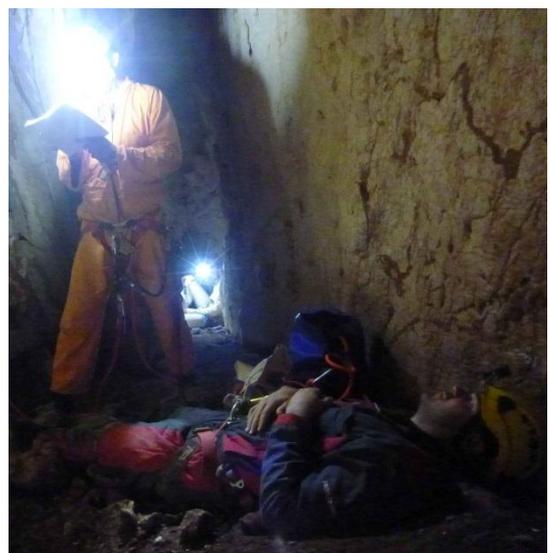
Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)



Formation in Beehive Cave (J18)



Three Scurions ablaze - Damien, Philip and Steven in Beehive Cave (J18)

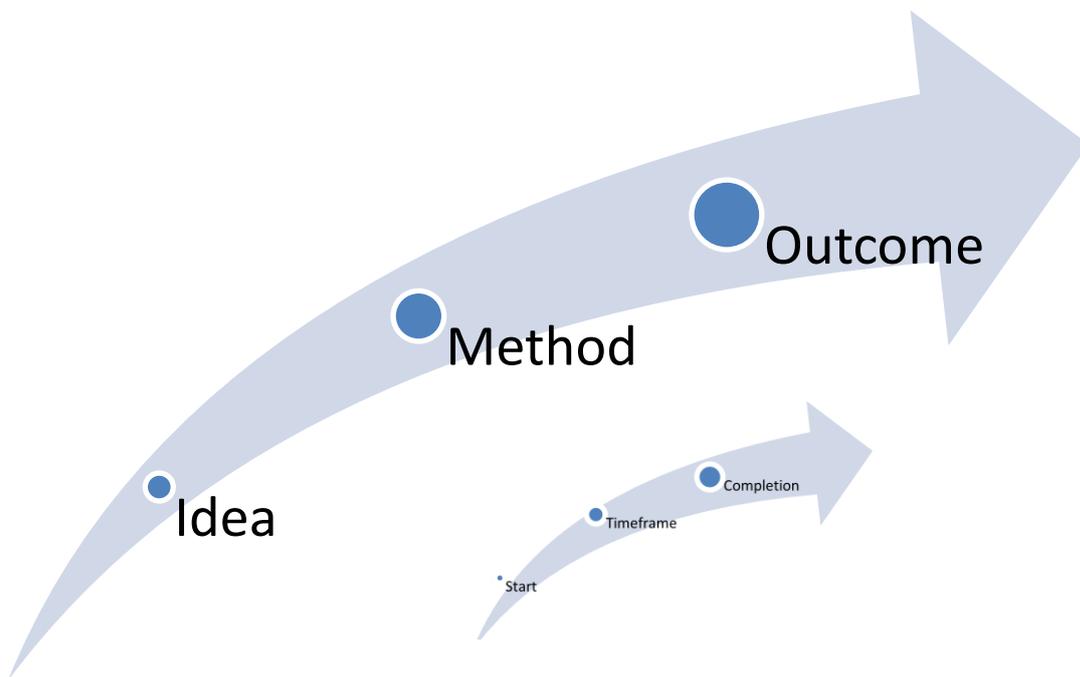


Middle chamber of Tardis - Paco resting, Damien taking notes and Steven in the distance exhausted from failed attempt at squeeze.

# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB FIVE YEAR PLAN MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2013.

For Starters, if you have an idea with an outcome and method of achieving it, put it down now before becoming distracted by the following questions

Your idea;



1. The club has recently upgraded its rescue equipment to greatly enhance the ability to self-rescue in an emergency (i.e. without calling outside assistance). How important is it to conduct regular rescue exercises and reviewing the call-out procedure.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. How many times a year should rescue exercises be held?

1	2	3	4
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3. What would you suggest as the most practical and up to date method of intra-club member communication?

4. Do you consider the current Club website adequate?

Yes	No
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5. What additions or improvements would you like to see on the website?
  
6. What specific club activities would you like to see added to the clubs calendar of events to generate interest for new and existing members?
  
7. What improvements to the Clubhouse facilities would you like to see added to enhance presentation and enjoyment?
  
8. Please add items to the wish list to apply for grants for?
  
9. Assuming a grant or funding is available, would you support a move to appoint a part time administrator to be responsible for grant applications, group clubhouse bookings, invoicing and book keeping, arranging the annual audit, insurances and permits, agendas and minute keeping, implementing the development plan, website and social media communication, budget monitoring and reporting?

No	Not sure	Maybe	Good idea	Yes
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10. Please list any other important tasks that would be better managed by an administrator.

11. What percentage of membership growth per year do you think is desirable and achievable?

None	1 > 5%	5 > 7%	7 > 10%	More
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12. What activities would you suggest that we as a club engage to enhance awareness of the club and generate potential new members?

The Club is critically short of active trip leaders. Would you support a proposal to waive camping fees for those TLs that actively lead trips during a particular stay to encourage more TLs.

No	Maybe	Yes
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