



# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

P O BOX 92, CAIRNS QLD 4870

ABN 52 614 187 726

President: **Paul Osborne** Phone: 4068 5259 Email: [p1953@bigpond.com](mailto:p1953@bigpond.com)  
Secretary: **Winfried Weiss** Phone: 40966 028 Email: [wmweiss@westnet.com.au](mailto:wmweiss@westnet.com.au)  
Treasurer: **Peter Bannink** Phone: 4092 6036 Email: [peter.bannink@derm.qld.gov.au](mailto:peter.bannink@derm.qld.gov.au)  
Caretaker: **Carol Davis** Phone: 4094 7036 Clubhouse, Cathedral St, Chillagoe 4871

## JULY 2013

## NEWSLETTER

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

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### 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 - Owl Roost © 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.

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.



Tasmanian Tiger Incisor © D. Irvin

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.





Back into the light – exiting CH502 © W.Weiss

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.



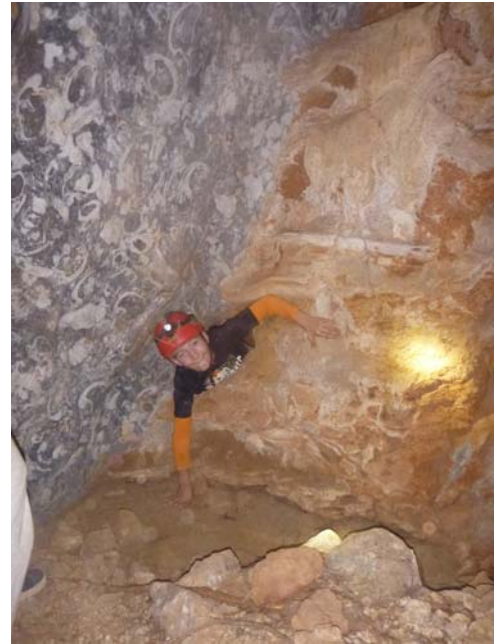
Bonfire by the creek © W.Weiss

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.

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.

Keep it up and happy caving.



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

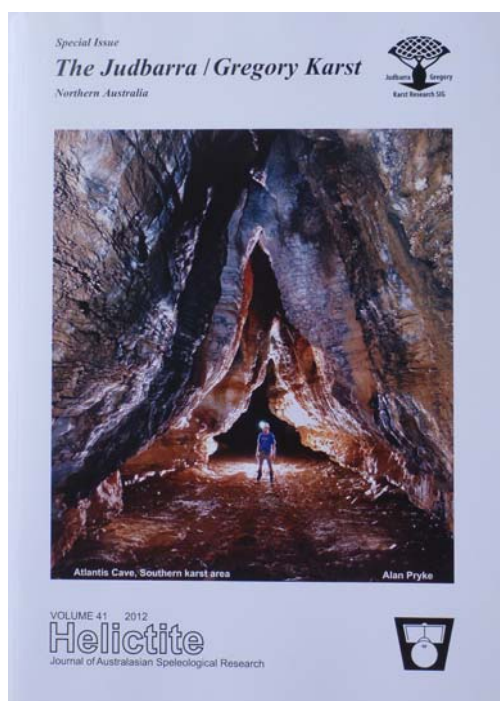
© W.Weiss

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

## **Publications**

Last year six major articles on a major caving project being undertaken in the Northern Territory by the ASF's Judbarra/Gregory Special Interest Group (SIG) were published in the last hard copy publication of the Journal Helictite. The Judbarra/Gregory caves are quite unique in their formation and extensive length. Peter Bannink was lucky enough to be in one of the first teams of cavers to explore this area, documenting and mapping the systems.

In July Paul Osborne and Paco Murray joined the 2013 expedition. They will continue to survey another large cave system, similar to the Bullita Cave System describes in this publication.



## **Up and Coming Events**

### **August**

- 11-16<sup>th</sup> Two new club members ( one - ex SSS and 1960's Chillagoe Caver) from Bunderberg are caving at Chillagoe for a week. Members are needed to show them around Chillagoe.
- 13-14<sup>th</sup> Caving weekend at Chillagoe for members. Highlight will be a slide show of early caving in 1960's. If you can make it please contact Peter Bannink.

### **September**

- For any activities planned, please contact Peter Bannink.

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)

If you are interested on cave development, and cave geomorphology then have a look at this publication. There is a huge amount of information packed into this Journal. Copies of each article can still be downloaded from the ASF Helictite web site <http://helictite.caves.org.au/contents4.html>.

The club has bought a hard copy, which will be available to read with other caving journals at the clubhouse over the dry season. Peter will place them in a sealed plastic box to stop the cockroaches and fish-moths eating them.

## **Donation**

The club has had another wonderful anonymous donation from the Far North Queensland Youth Assistance Fund of \$750. This is to purchase fire hose reels for the clubhouse. Many thanks to the donor's who have contributed to purchasing fire safety equipment for the club house.

## **Clubhouse**

Carol has notified the executive that there was another recent water leak on the property. This was fixed last weekend by a visitor to the clubhouse. (Many thanks to whomever this may have been).

The executive have noted this issue and if water leaks continue, some of the pipes may have to be replaced. A new project for 2014.