



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
Secretary: **Winfried Weiss** Phone: 40966 028 Email: wmweiss@westnet.com.au
Treasurer: **Peter Bannink** Phone: 4092 6036 Email: peter.bannink@derm.qld.gov.au
Caretaker: **Carol Davis** Phone: 4094 7036 Clubhouse, Cathedral St, Chillagoe 4871

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NEWSLETTER

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New Zealand - 2014

Ray Deasy

We were two cavers from Australia using the Nelson Speleo HQ at Takaka Hill near Motueka, South Island New Zealand. The map shows the locations of the places we visited from the 7th to 11th January 2014. We met a number of speleo's who were working on other projects. We caved separately except for the visit to Pease Resurgence and the lower exit to Nettlebed Cave.

Location 1 Harwoods Hole

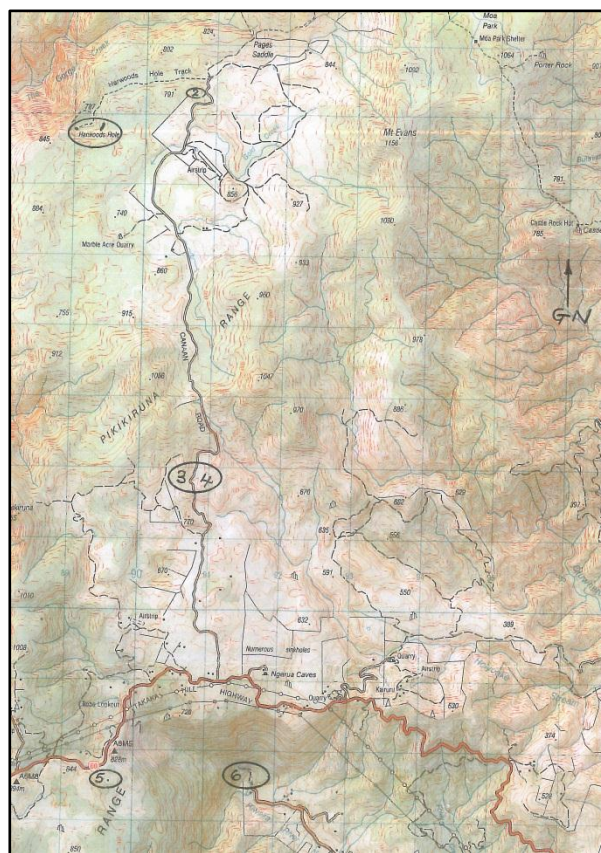
A well visited tourist place. A two km track from the car park leads to the side of the doline crater, at this point 150m deep. Below but out of direct view is the 176m pitch into the cave. Descend 30m to a hanging rebelay then abseil 146m to the bottom. This is a through trip, (but not a pull through) to the Starlight Exit in Gorge Creek. The big pitch can be ascended (expect 2-3 hours), otherwise an overland climb from Gorge Creek is required to recover the rope and return to base camp.

Location 2 Legless (Pot)

A wild cave 360m deep with 16 pitches of which only the first four were descended, this was an extreme trip. There is enough moisture down below without the need for an entrance stream. A squeeze in the entrance rift is a feet first horizontal slot and portends the serious nature of the pot.

Location 3 Greenlink (part exploration)

A long stream system with several short pitches and lots of water. This would be character building stuff if the creek floods. This entrance provides a link into the Middle Earth System. How did the huge tree trunk get hammered into the stream passage? The connection to Middle Earth is through a series of sumps.



Topographic map showing locations

Location 4 Hobbit Hole

This cave is a recent discovery and links into the Middle earth System. We explored it for about 500m but could not find the 'Environ Pitch' into Middle Earth. The Greenlink, Middle Earth and Hobbit Hole circuits are now 30km long and growing. The surface entrance to Middle Earth was descended to gain a view down a 40m pitch to a beautiful river.

Location 5 Nelson Speleo Hut

A well constructed hut with a gas cooking stove heating and 12v lighting. Sleeps 6 comfortably extra's sleep on the floor or veranda. It can get crowded but there are six level spots for tents. The site is located in a karst valley with a very stony access track 500 to a locked gate. A great opportunity to meet NZ cavers, read Tomo Times and cave atlas.

Location 6 Riwaka Resurgence (surface visit)

Outflow from the Takaka Hill caved known and unknown magnificent river. The cave entrance sump is shallow but long. A dry entrance enters the system upstream. It is strenuous work to get upstream against the current to the upper reaches of the sump. A fluorescein dye trace established the link to Hill Cave long ago.

Location 7 The Pearse Resurgence

This is not on the map but it is about 25km south of Takaka Hill. An isolated car park next to the Pearse River gives access to an upstream track which crosses the river eleven times. After about 2.5 – 3 hours you get to the resurgence. A further 20min gets you to the Nettlebed exit. This exit, after many (km), now links to Stormy and Blizzard Pot 1197m higher.

Prior to the January break-through into Stormy Pot, the team of Australian caver divers (called the Wet Mules) descended 220m into the Pearse Resurgence. It's a long way down and a very long time to ascend. Decompression habitats were tethered at -40m, -18m and -6m,. One wonders what happens of the passage ever ascends to open cave in the other side.

We caved in Nettlebed a short distance to the Honking Holes. Two divers were prospecting the sump beyond. New Zealand is a great place to be, especially in their caves and during the summer. There was relief to find an absence of stupid health and safety rules and the nanny state.

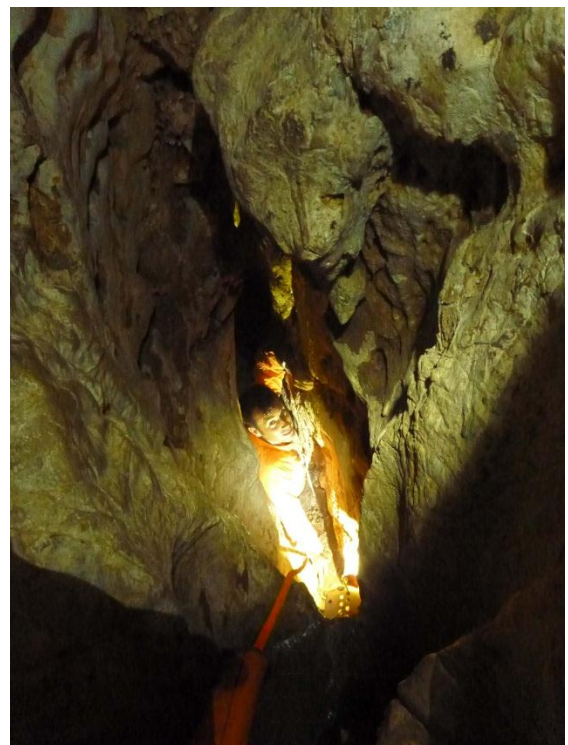
Tardis Cave

Steven Morgan

Team Mackay (Damien Tapp, Kris Lambert, Philip Morgan and Steven Morgan) together with support crew of Kerry Morgan and Joanna Morgan headed down to Rockhampton for a week end of caving on 15 & 16 March. On Saturday we revisited Tardis.

Tardis is a cave on the north west of Mt Etna which was discovered by Team Mackay some six or seven years ago, and which has been revisited about four times since then. The nature of the cave (bigger on the inside) and the interest of some of Team Mackay in Dr Who lead to the name.

The cave begins with a confined small chamber with a hole in the floor descending vertically. The squeeze through this hole has to be done "on rope" making it all the harder. This is Metrix, the measure of the man. Below Metrix, the cave opens into a good sized chamber with the floor some 20m vertically below Metrix.



Damien squeezing through – Middle Tardis © D. Tapp

A downward heading rift from this chamber leads to another really nasty vertical squeeze. We haven't yet come up with an appropriate name for this torturous hole. Once through, the cave again opens into another good sized chamber and once again, about 20m to the floor.



At the bottom of Tardis (Steven, Damien, Philip and Kris)

© D.Tapp

The “going lead” at this point is a small tube at floor level. We could feel a draft though this and a bat flew out of it. But alas, too small. Not much bigger than a dinner plate. We managed to wrestle a GoPro on the end of a length of conduit about three or four metres into this tube and there was no conclusive end, but rather a fleeting glance of further continuation. The size of this tube, and the possibility of what might lay beyond and the impossibility of ever discovering it explain the name, “Pipe Dreams”.

We have enough survey data now to draw Tardis, which has a depth of 53m. It is certainly a buzz for Team Mackay to add a cave of this nature to the Mt Etna catalogue given that the mountain has been so well worked over in the past.

On Sunday we headed to Straw Palace on Limestone Ridge. Finding the cave took an hour or so, but not worthy of the Einstein award (watch this space). This is one of a handful of caves on Limestone Ridge that have gated entrances with access restrictions. Two gates guard this cave. We budged the padlocks on both, but the bolt mechanism on one gate was rusted solid, and the mechanism on the other gate only just moved.



Formation inside Straw Palace

© D.Tapp

The cave descends through some narrow passage to the top of a pitch of about 20m in total. This leads to a terminal chamber, which has a low muddy section off to one side, and a small higher chamber off to another side which has a good display of fine stalactites and short straws. We played around with photography in here a bit before exiting the cave.

The catalogue of caves in the Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge areas is nowhere near that of the Chillagoe area, but for Team Mackay it is the closest caving area and has enough on offer to justify regular visits.



Steven checking out the formations © D.Tapp

Now about the Einstein award. The Ford BA Falcon has to be a contender for a fault with its door locking mechanism. This fault manifests itself in the car automatically locking it-self. This behaviour is not fussy, and can occur when the keys are in the ignition and the engine is running and a bunch of cavers are standing around outside. Thankfully, RACQ only took an hour to arrive and on the upside the air con had well and truly cooled down the cabin by this stage.

Up and Coming Events

April

- 12th - 30th - SUSS caving at Chillagoe, members welcome.
- 23rd - 30th - Paul caving at Chillagoe members welcome

May

- **Saturday 3rd May** Club AGM (7.00pm start)

June

- 28th - 6th July - Broken River Expedition

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)