



# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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## MAY 2014 NEWSLETTER

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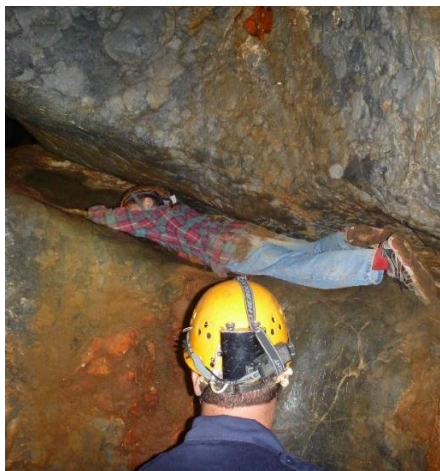
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### Introductory Caving

(P Bannink)

Quite a few introductory members attended the first planned caving trip for 2014. A through trip from Blue Sky to Macropodidae, saw about eight cavers taking up the challenge.

Winfried has traversed this cave enough times to know exactly where to take new members for an adventurous introduction to caving. Progress was slow but steady, starting with a steep climb into the main rift passage leading towards the Bat Chamber.



The first major challenge near the Bat Chamber

© P.Bannink

With no bats present, the group undertook several challenging climbs and loops through some of the

phreatic branches. One major challenge requires climbing a smooth 4m wall up to an upper branch.

The youngest members of the group were the most challenged, as they did not have the height to grip and reach the few handholds available. They were however small enough to fit in a side slot and slowly inch their way up. Calls for assistance were frequent, and the promise of a jelly-snake got everyone up on the end.



Winfried applies first aid © P.Bannink

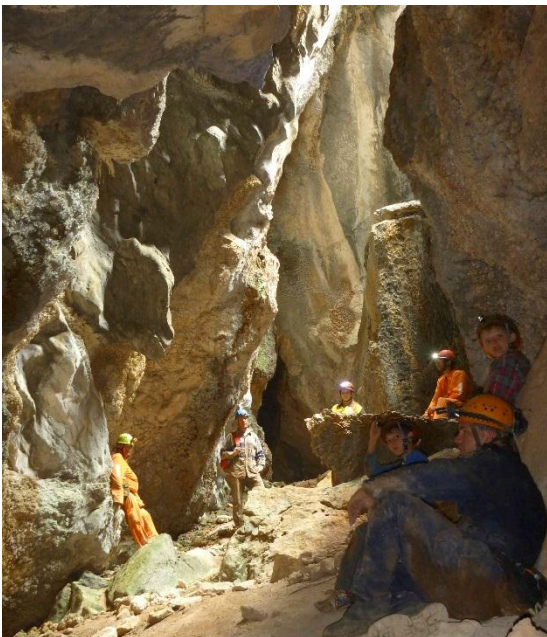
The squeezes were not small enough but just as much fun for the introductory cavers. Despite the challengers, one member managed to twisted an ankle (walking over flat ground!) giving Winfried the chance to use his First Aid Kit for the first time

ever. After patching up the slightly injured caver and resting his foot, we decided to cut the trip short and exit the cave through CH523.



Descending into the main rift © P.Bannink

The route out is still not easy and everyone tried a different path to get around the rock pile near the Key Hole' with crawls, climbs and squeezes. It did not take much time to reach the Chamber of 10000 Faces, where everyone had a good rest before heading out to the surface.#



Resting in the Chamber of 1000 Faces © P.Bannink

That evening Winfried planned another adventure and by 7.00pm (after an early feed) it was time to get underway again. This time about eight cavers attended a night trip into Crocodile Pot. By 7:30 Winfried had guided us to the entrance under a perfectly still clear star filled sky. It had been about 10 years since I was last in this cave so I was keen to see if I remembered much. A small climb leads down to a large chamber with a small daylight hole (the original entrance pitch) which was now dark on this occasion. The cave soon branched into a narrow a rift with a small squeeze to a difficult 12 metre climb up, to connect to the rest of the cave.



Thumbs up! Greg enjoying the climb down  
© P.Bannink

Swiftlets were clicking about as they settled in for the night (flying into an inner chamber). Another hand line descent gets you into the deeper chambers and passage beyond.

The group moved carefully on, to minimise any major disturbance to the birds. Beyond the bird chamber, the group walked and climbed through a series of large passages. Peter spotted some adult plant hoppers, a specialised cave fauna unique to the area

The next morning two trips were offered. Peter took a small group to Piano Tower to complete exploration of the cave located by Ray & Peter in September last year.





Chillagoe plant hopper © P.Bannink

Exploration began with finding a navigable route up the southern face. Our group only just reached the base of the cliff line when Peter spotted a lower entrance only partially explored in September. This was thought to be the lower entrance to the new cave, but brief exploration revealed it did not connect. Evan explored further along the base of the outcrop and soon discovered another small entrance. This lead into a small rock pile with some well decorated spaces. Half an hour of exploration revealed the cave only contained about 50m of rock pile passage.



Evan's new entrance © P.Bannink

Climbing further up the southern face, Winfried spotted another entrance. This was more promising with the boulders leading into a sizable rock pile. A lower section fell away into a 6m rift with some great decoration. Careful exploration revealed another route down. Peter was able to climb down to this area, removing his boots to carefully climb over some delicate floor decoration. The lower section did not go far and a deeper crawl into more rock pile did not seem appealing. No air movement indicated it may not go far. Having exhausted all

the major leads we left to continue to Pete & Ray's cave. After climbing up the southern face the group ran into major difficulties trying to negotiate the thick scrub. Peter could not locate the entrance despite being only 50m from the area.



Winfried and Evan at the second entrance

The top of the outcrop is not very big so it was a bit bewildering not to find it. As midday approached, the heat and green ants sapped every ones enthusiasm, so we headed back down leaving the last cave for another day. The amount of breakdown may be an indication that this eastern section of the Piano tower complex does not have any substantial caves to offer. All the caves found so far have been less than 200m, however they contain interesting features and some fantastic decoration.

## CCC AGM

The AGM is just around the corner (**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**), Please make the effort to attend, to have your say on the future directions of the club .

## Up and Coming Events

### May

- **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May** Club AGM (7.00pm start)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> May - Mike Tarburton at Chillagoe - Swiftlet Study

### June

- 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June - Club Weekend at Chillagoe
- 28<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> July - Broken River Expedition

### July

- 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> July - SSS caving at Chillagoe
- 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> July - Club Weekend at Chillagoe

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)