



CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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NEWSLETTER

WWW.CHILLAGOECAVINGCLUB.ORG.AU

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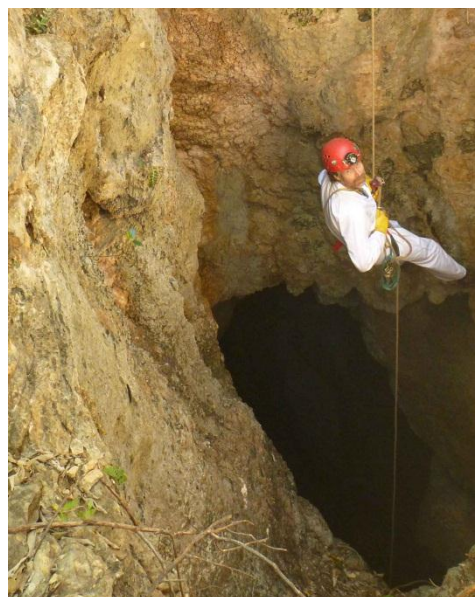
AGM

Attendance for the 2014 AGM was a very big disappointment but probably due to a lack of advertising. A quorum was not present so the current executive will ask members what the next preferred option will be. Hold another date later in the year (July/August) or keep the current office bearers in their positions until next year.

Extensions to Rescue Cave (P Bannink)

Two trips were organised for Saturday, Paul took a quick trip to Carpentaria for a few introductory cavers in attendance. Max Sue and Steven on the other hand had decided to explore a deep shaft located by Keith Offer on Currajong Tower near Rescue Cave (CH69). Having never been there, Ray and Peter also decided to take a look, and arrived just when the rigging was complete.

The free hanging line required a safety line alongside the doline before you could clip on. Steve and then Ray descended first to report the cave was quite extensive below. Good reports got Max and Sue gearing up and by the time I got down only Sue was at the bottom with early reports to get more gear.



Steven starting the 20m entrance pitch

© P.Bannink

The base of the doline is quite a large chamber 14x10m with three main leads in different directions. A sloping rock pile fracture lead back under the abseil to another daylight doline with a large fig tree. Max and Ray climbed back out at this location to get the extra gear. Peter started a sketch of the cave while Steven continued to explore.

Rigging a small ladder, Steve and Max then explored a small upper fissure, (the first major

lead), by crawling through a tiny tunnel into a lower rift. A ladder was required as the rift descended 6m into a large junction passage with humid air. I explored this later with Max and found quite a bit of cave, with one branch ascending into a large daylight chamber with sheer 15m sides. This was coined Broken Boulder Chamber due to a massive boulder being wedged in the roof, waiting to collapse in one day.



Max climbing out the first lead © P.Bannink

The second major lead continued on the LHS of an old formation wall in the entrance doline. Cave passage again opened up, descending steeply to another big chamber. Large boulders filled most of the space but the walls were well decorated with pristine formation. A narrow phreatic fissure intersected at the lowest point. The fissure quickly closed down to a crawl but then popped out into another large doline, 6m above the floor.



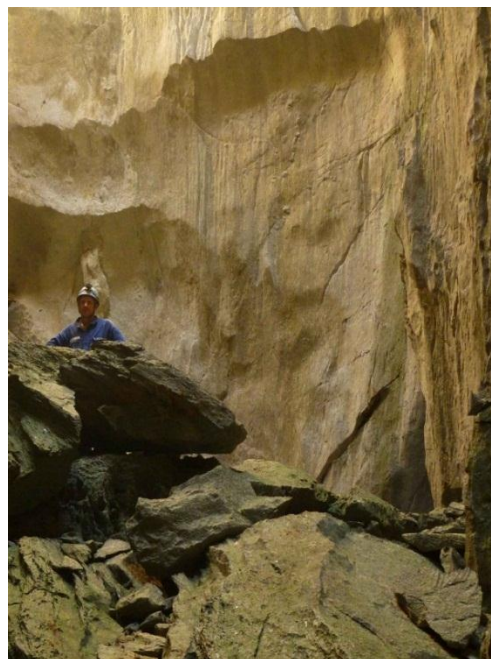
Unusual formations © P.Bannink

By this time Paul had arrived, and the keen explorers descended the small pitch to continue on. I descended later with Sue to find a small maze of intersecting rifts. Most of the branches did not go far. One branch lead down into a deeper rift which stopped at a junction, sheer 8m high sides prevented further exploration. Another branch lead up into a boulder pile, here Max, Steve and Paul got through into another upper rift.



Paul returning after looking at the 5m pitch, second lead. © P.Bannink

After sketching most of the passages, I decided to return to the entrance chamber to start de-rigging and prusik out. Steve, Paul and Max had climbed into Rescue Cave CH69, connecting the new cave into that system.



Max in Broken Boulder Chamber © P.Bannink

What a fantastic extension to Rescue Cave and a great day of caving for those who participated.

Rescue Rigging Exercise (P Bannink)

Sunday was assigned to set up the clubs current full complement of rescue equipment. Paul set up some additional bolts at the top of the 'Big Hole' leading into the large chamber of Blue Sky (CH416).

Paul debriefed the team and sorted out the required equipment early in the morning, we all got to the location by 10.00am.



Ray (above) with Paul and Max setting up.

© P.Bannink

Having never set this type of rigging up before (and missed the briefing), it took me a while to work out how it was going to work. Paul, Max and Steven were instrumental in working it all out, additional pieces of equipment were borrowed from everyone's kit. With a bit of adjustment of the pulley's over the doline, it was ready to go in about 45 minutes.

The safety of so many cavers working on one rig was paramount and a safety spotter was important in making sure anyone working near the edge and hauling on the karst were always connected to a

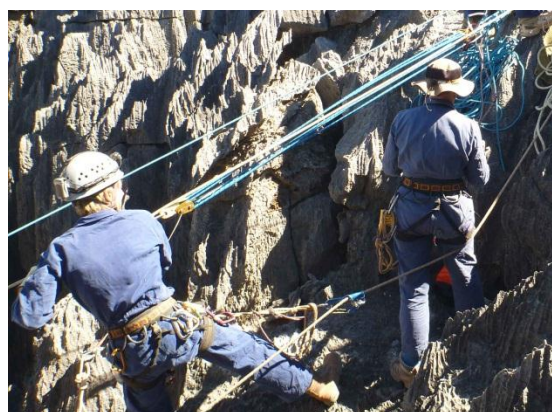
safety line. This was particularly important on steeply inclined rillenkarren where the cavers hauling and resetting the pulley were working with their backs to the pitch. The depth of the doline is about 25m, an ideal location to set up the rigging and the most likely location to extract anyone out of this extensive cave system.



Max ready to descend, Paul as controller

© S. Jenkins

A bag of about 15kg rocks (the test dummy) took about 10 min to pull up. Next Max clipped on and everyone swapped positions to lower and then ascend the new load. The hauling team has to work in sequence to 'set' (lock off the line), 'haul' (pull in the 6-1 pulley) and 'reset' the pulley till Max got to the top (15 min).



Max and Sue – resetting the (6-1) pulley

© P.Bannink

Lastly Paul clipped on to enjoy the ride. Paul's ascent was a little slower (about 20 min), by this time the hauling team were tired and Paul did weight a little more than Max. It got very hot on the karst and the (6-1) pulley rope had to be handled very carefully as it snagged on the sharp karst often.

Rubber lined gloves would also help as leather gloves slipped on the hauling rope.

What members took away from the exercise was familiarity with the equipment, working as a team and experience in the operational process. What is clear is the large number of cavers required to get the system operational. Not only in setting up the rigging but also in guiding the process and physically managing it. The club must do this again, hopefully at Broken River in June.

Club Photo Archive

The clubs photo archive has been stored in the tackle room over the wet season (Paco has moved to WA). Members in May were surprised to find it had largely been eaten by white ants.



Remains of photo index from 1980's

Excessive moisture (from the termites) has damaged about 50 photo's, but most have survived (with a few nibbles at the edges). The index has been totally destroyed (see photo), so when the library has been restored the photo librarian will be seeking help to identify some of the photos and who took them. Thank goodness it's all digital now.

Swiftlet Study

Professor Mike Tarburton is again spending about 5 weeks counting the Swiftlet colonies at Chillagoe. Members are welcome to help Mike out but note, it requires an early morning start (4am), to count the birds as they leave the caves for the day. Contact Carol if you want to get a message to him. Mike insists he will not be caving on this occasion.

Membership Renewal

Current financial members are advised their membership fees are (overdue), payment was at the AGM. Please make your direct payment to the club account before the end of June.

CCC Vietnam Trip 2015

The club is seeking expressions of interest from club members for a trip to the massive Son Doong Cave in Vietnam, in the early months of 2015. The cost of the trip is about \$3000 (excluding airfares). The club coordinator is Winfried Weiss and for more information on the guided adventure trip, see the Oxalis Adventure Website: www.oxalis.com.vn/son-doong-cave.

Broken River Expedition – June/July

The club currently has 15 expedition cavers participating in the June/July Broken River Caving Expedition. Expect lots of exploration and surveying, participants must be self-reliant and ready for bush camping, as there are no facilities. If you are interested please contact Paul Osborne ASAP as he is finalising the numbers before the end of May. Remember you must have your ASF fees paid for the 2014/15 year.

Up and Coming Events

May

- 23rd – 30th May – Mike Tarburton counting Swiftlets at Chillagoe

June

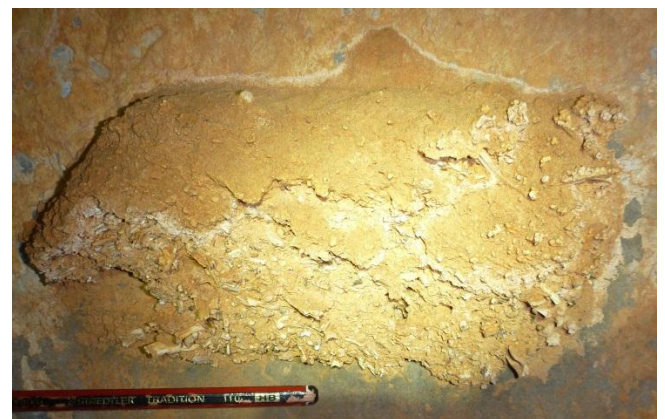
- 7th - 9th June - Club Weekend at Chillagoe
- 28th June - 6th July - Broken River Expedition
- 1st – 25th June – Mike Tarburton counting Swiftlets at Chillagoe

July

- 6th – 13th July – SSS caving at Chillagoe
- 12th July - Club Weekend at Chillagoe

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)



Tiny bone filled breccia in sediment deposits