



# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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## SEPTEMBER 2012

## NEWSLETTER

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

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Thanks to all members who have renewed their membership. There are still a few members outstanding who have yet to pay membership fees. Membership cards will be mailed soon.

### More new caves discovered!

Prof. Mike Tarburton and his wife Shirley extended their stay in Chillagoe to late July.

Mike did some extensive exploration in the last two weeks, documenting additional sightings of swiftlets around Chillagoe. All his work has resulted in 10 new cave entrances being added to the inventory. Some still have to be explored. Anyone wanting to explore or map the new entrances (experienced vertical cavers only) please contact Peter Bannink, CCC Record Keeper for details of the localities.



CH543 Vertical Entrance M. Tarburton

Above is a view of one of the new entrance shafts on the Queenslander Tower complex, recently explored by Winfried and Bruce in August.

### CH523 Markham Tower

Peter and Van were asked to assist in a planned outdoor Sport and Recreation training event for students completing Cert II from students of St Andrews College (Cairns).



CH523 Interesting Formations P.Bannink

About twelve students took up the challenge of abseiling in to the main daylight chamber of CH523. Van took one group through CH358 (Link Up Cave) into CH416 (Blue Sky Cave) and then into the main chamber.



CH523 Main daylight chamber P.Bannink

The photos of the abseiling participants did not turn out due to bright light streaming into the doline but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves on the day. Everyone was very careful not to disturb the bats roosting at the base of the CH532 entrance and in this endeavour the group succeeded.

### **Fossil finds**

Members might have recently received some e-mail links to newspaper articles about recent fossil finds in North Queensland. This work was the result of recent trips conducted by Paul, Douglas and Paco in late May.

Dr Gilbert Price and Dr Julien Louys from the University of Queensland collected a large amount of material from several caves in the Broken River region.

From the report quite a large amount of fossil brechia has been collected in which the oldest specimen is recorded to be about 500,000 years old.



Dr Julien Louys from UQ collecting D.Irvin

That would suggest that these caves have been around for quite some time. While most of the fossil deposits are from the prey of predators (such an owl), the bone deposits of small mammals and reptiles, larger fossils have also been collected.



Typical fossil brechia deposit D.Irvin

No doubt further work in the area will reveal more caves and hopefully more fossils. This hopefully will build an inventory of the vertebrate fauna in the region over the past 500,000 years.

Special thanks have to go to those CCC members who have supported and continue to support this work.

## CH77

Peter recently took a group of introductory cavers to Carpentaria Cave. The small group of young cavers really enjoyed the complexity of the maze cave system moving from section to section via different routes.



Cavers enjoy a natural light display P.Bannink



CH77 The Flag Pole P.Bannink

Everyone was enthralled with some of the daylight displays in the larger chambers as the sun approached its zenith. A great introductory cave for budding caving enthusiasts.

## Chillagoe Cave fauna

Peter has been continuing to document some of the interesting invertebrates found in the Chillagoe caves. Three additional insect groups are shown below which are also common but less frequently seen in the caves.

Two species of cave cockroaches have been described from Chillagoe in 1990 by Louis Roth. *Paratemnopteryx stonei* from Royal Arch Cave and *Paratemnopteryx howarthi* from Christmas Pot and Tea Tree Cave. The juvenile specimen shown below cannot be identified but it may belong to one of these two species.



Cave Cockroach (Juvenile)

P.Bannink

A second group are the Psocids or Booklice. These tiny insects can be seen where guano is scattered on the floor or over rocks in the cave. The picture below shows two specimens each about 1mm in size.



Slaters or pill bugs are also commonly found in caves. Slaters are not insects, spiders or centipedes but are a group of animals called crustaceans, more commonly found in ocean or freshwater environments.



Large Cave Isopod (slater) P.Bannink

The largest isopod (slater) so far seen at Chillagoe (12mm), is shown above. I am not sure if this species have been formally described, but it is very conspicuous in the caves and is largely immobile during the dry season, hiding in wall or mud cracks as the passages dry out. They are another two types of slaters I have observed in the caves. A medium sized slater 8-6m, cannot be identified, while the smallest one, about (2mm) is most likely *Armadillo cavernae* described from the Chillagoe caves by Ragnar Wahrberg in 1922.

The third insect shown is a Gryllid cricket commonly seen near cave entrances, though sometimes found well into the cave systems.

The specimen shown is a juvenile (body: 12mm) but its antenna are about 65mm long.

Adult specimens have a pair of small wings just behind the thorax (body segment behind the head).



Chillagoe Cave Cricket (Juvenile) P.Bannink

### Visiting Geologist

During three weeks of October the clubhouse will be host to the geology student Gašper Cerar, from Slovenia (east of Italy/Austria).

If you are caving and visit the clubhouse please make him feel welcome and offer to give him lifts to the study sites he is researching! He is studying tropical karst landform and looking at the effect of climate on karst development.

### Up and Coming Events:

#### September

Caving Club weekend 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September  
 - Peter will be exploring Piano Tower for new caves

#### October

Caving Club weekend 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> October  
 - continued exploration of Piano Tower Complex (Peter Bannink)

#### November

Caving Club weekend 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> November

#### December

Caving Club Christmas Party 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of December

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink (Acting Secretary)