



# CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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## JUNE 2013

### NEWSLETTER

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

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#### Broken River

Paco Murray



The gorge at sunset

© S. Brewer

With the enthusiasm that only strong coffee can bring, our group Michael and Sarah Brewer, Lex Baker and Paco set off early to explore a section of karst between Bee Hive and Millennium (an area that according to our records had not been explored before). We split into 2 separate groups crossing the tower to cover the most ground. By lunch time each group had found a cave system within 50m of each other.

Lex and Paco found a cave that they preliminary named Shotgun, as they had only explored approximately 300m - 400m of passage with more exploration and surveying required. Michael and Sarah found a slightly smaller system nearby with large chambers and some possible leads. Due to the unfortunate after effects from some beans we ate the night before, we then thought of the name "Bean Cave" with the two additional entrances being called "Has Beans" and "Bean There".

After Saturday's full day exploring the tower and surveying the new caves, we decided to take it a little easier. We drove out to the tower past the old airstrip, and with a couple of reference points in the GPS, headed out to look for some already explored caves. First up we headed to BR81 to find a short cave with some interesting climbs and squeezes. We then headed across the tower to another co-ordinate "Bat" to find a large chamber that had once housed a reasonable sized bat colony. Upon exiting the cave we found an old TCC tag calling the cave Flowstone Fortress BR65.

On Monday, realizing that our weekend was coming to a close we opted to head to a known cave for a tikki tour. We stayed near to camp and headed through the Three Avenues system.



New Member Lex Baker exploring some phreatic passages  
© S. Brewer

### **SRT Weekend**

A few members gathered at Chillagoe last week for SRT training. Steven and Kerry Morgan and family travelled all the way from Mackay for the occasion. Steven was also being assessed for a Trip Leadership certificate.



The group moving through Linkup © P.Bannink

Peter arrived very late on Saturday. The caving trip only got started at 2.30pm, with eight eager cavers entering Linkup CH358. Progress was slow and Peter took the opportunity to draw some of the cave passage near the entrance, as the large group negotiated the first 4m climb. Once near the Bat Chamber (there were no bats present), the group split into two with Steven continuing his Trip

Leader assessment, under the watchful eye of Alan. Greg Gurnier, Tim and Peter went on to look for a lead Greg had not seen for about twelve years. Would this be the lead that connected Awesome Big Chamber CH524 (also known as 'ABC' or 'The Gas Chamber') to Linkup?

Greg's unexplored upper vertical pits were reported to link into small passages high above the Bat Chamber. The first narrow rift we explored lead directly up to an entrance 12m above. A second steep slot inspired Greg into action, this lead up the side of a massive boulder with a crumbling slope. Half an hour later (while Peter examined bat guano for cave fauna), we heard calls of confirmation that 'this was it'. Tim and Peter followed up the crumbling slope, and it was a bit discerning being 8m above the large chamber crossing over a massive boulder in the roof. The area leads into a small maze of passage with false floors, formation walls and deep drops into the large passages below. Extra care was a priority and we continued up and up until we arrived at the base of a small doline pit (7m x 4m).



Greg Gurnier rigging a pitch © P.Bannink

We found ourselves nestled in the tower karst with 6m high vertical sides, and the sky above. Two side branches lead to two deep pits on either side.

With the sun now fading, Greg rigged a ladder and descended one pit to reveal it was too deep for the ladder but had some good prospects. We exited via the steep climb up some sharply weathered limestone rock to a grand vista over the tower complex. The doline is near the very top of the tower so it took about 15 min to find a safe route down. Steve's group had not got back, so we drove around to the entrance CH522 and called. By now it was pitch black and we got a little worried. Fearing the worst, we then organised to climb up to the



entrance and explore the system find them. With Tim staying by the cars, Greg and Peter climbed up to CH522 to find everyone at the top dealing with Joanne, who had got a small beetle stuck in her ear, it took some time to finally get the pesky insect out. All happy everyone was safe; we all caught up with Tim and headed back the Chillagoe.



An interesting cave spider (~5mm) © P.Bannink

Sunday morning saw some SRT practice, changing from climbing to descending vertical gear (on rope), and Steven even demonstrated a rope rescue. With no one else turning up for SRT caving, one group went to Greg's new dolines (viewed the evening before), while Peter and Kerry planed to continue to survey the links between CH523 and CH405 (Macropodidae Waterhole Cave).



© P.Bannink

Steven Morgan demonstrating an on-rope rescue

It was slow tedious work but most of this area is now covered in detail, with one loop going back into the Chamber of 1000 Faces. Kerry was very patient as Peter included a drawing of the large CH-406 entrance. The survey team exited by 4:00pm to find the SRT team had descended the pits, to find themselves back in the large passage near the Bat Chamber. The link to CH524 still has to be found (if it exists at all).



© P.Bannink

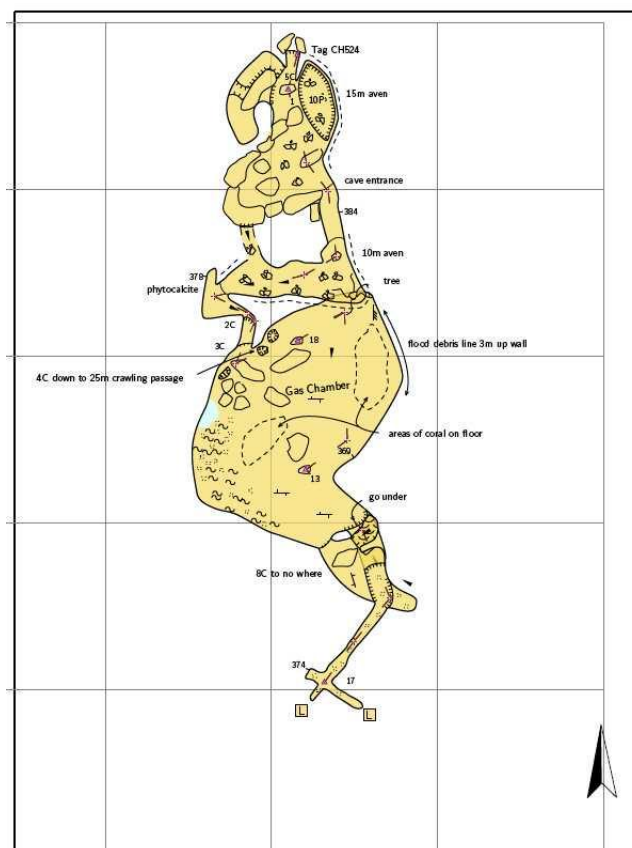
Tim Gurnier on top of the Markam Tower Complex at sunset

## **More Cave Mapping**

New CCC members Michael and Sarah Brewer with Martin Grinsted (visiting cavers from New Zealand), wanted a surveying project out at Chillagoe on the last weekend of May. Paul suggested they map CH524 Awsome Big Chamber (also known as 'ABC' or 'The Gas Chamber').

Being expert vertical cavers with lots of mapping experience, this was a worthwhile project to add to the clubs other cave surveys in the Markham Outcrop. Peter was surprised to get the survey the next Monday morning, high-lighting the efficiency of these chaps in getting the job done.

Please find the survey attached. Now it's Peter Bannink's job to produce a map of all the caves relative to each other on the outcrop.



## Awesome Big Chamber - CH524 Plan View Markham Tower, Chillagoe

1:500  
20 m

Length: 138 m

Depth: 20 m

Explored by: Paul Osborne (138 m) 2011

Surveyed by: Michael Brewer (138 m), Sarah Brewer (138 m), Martin Grinstead (138 m) 2013

Drawn by: M Brewer 2013

Compiled: Therion 5.3.11 on 28 May 2013

### Legend

	temporary survey station		rock border
	fixed survey station		bedrock
	survey lines		debris
	survey station name		sand
	wall		clay
	unsurveyed wall		border
	altitude		temporary border
	clay choke		presumed border
	floor step		water
	chimney		flowstone
	passage gradient		root

© M Brewer

## Membership Fee's

Wow this is the first year nearly everyone has paid there fees on time. Expect a personal reminder every week for those few who have still forgotten (Winfried, Kimberlee ....). Many thanks for those members who have paid via direct deposit; it makes life very easy for the Treasurer.

## Trip Leaders wanted!

The University of Queensland Mountaineering and Climbing Club (UQMCC) are travelling north for some exiting vertical thrills. They want to go caving as well but need cave trip leaders to be at the clubhouse. It's a chance to go caving so try to catch up with them when they are around. They have not confirmed their dates yet. Trip Leaders please contact Peter Bannink. via e-mail if you are available.

## Mailing Error

Members may note the last issue of *Caves Australia* Magazine had the **wrong surname** on the front. This was a database mailing error and the magazine was intended for the persons first name. For example Robert Ham's magazine was sent to "Robert Wright" but to Robert's correct address. So don't stress, just keep the magazine you received.

## Up and Coming Events

### June

- 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> June Long Weekend
- SRT training day 9<sup>th</sup> June (Chillagoe)
- BR expedition (contact Paul Osborne)
- 22<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>th</sup> -Atherton Swimming Club Camping
- 24<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> UQMCC (Uni Qld Mountain Climbing Club) may visit.
- 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> Tablelands Scouts Camping

### July

- 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> UQMCC at Clubhouse?
- CCC NT Bullita Trip (positions filled)
- July Long Weekend.

### August

- For any activities planned please contact Peter Bannink

Go Caving!

Peter Bannink & Winfried Weiss (Secretary)