



CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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NOVEMBER 2015

NEWSLETTER

WWW.CHILLAGOECAVINGCLUB.ORG.AU

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Cave Rope Testing

P Bannink

Ray Deasy has highlighted an article written by Bob Mehew on rope testing, published in the Craven Pothole Club Record Journal, in October 2012 (108). In the article, Bob got the job of testing several of their club caving ropes and has highlighted what factors may be important in considering when to retire your caving rope.



Rolling loop Good or Bad – left hand loop acceptable, right hand loop showing discontinuity

In the samples he tested, he used about 2m of wet rope (10.5mm) with 100kg mass falling 2m with figure 8 knots. Most samples only survived one or two drops. While many factors may contribute to this result (related to the life of the rope tested), Bob points out that rope users must be made aware that ropes do have a limited life span and it may be

shorter than we think. Cavers must look after their ropes, cleaning and checking them after use and storing them appropriately (away from sunlight).

Some ropes purchased from retailers are already quite old, despite the fact that they may have not been used. Different manufacturers provide different advice as to the life span of their ropes and when to retire them.

So cavers beware of these factors when considering when to retire a personal caving rope, especially one that is between 8.5 – 9mm in thickness. The club will be looking into retiring all it's current rope sections (in the kit room) this year. One or two are practice ropes for the 'training tree', but they should be labelled accordingly, so they are not used for any vertical caving.

Many thanks to Bob Mehew for the use of his photo, his article and others will be printed and made available at the clubhouse for anyone to read. Additional rope testing articles can be found on the British Caving Association website http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=rope_testing:start

For other interesting articles on caving and safety, search out the **Nylon Highway**, a Journal published by the **NSS Vertical Section**, located at the website <http://caves.org/section/vertical/nh/index.html>. You can also read some of their vertical training course manuals (and examine the test) at the website <http://caves.org/section/vertical/train.html>.

Technicolour Pot

Peter Bannink

In October a great team of seven cavers turned up for the weekend highlights. The misadventure from the previous trip ensured Peter B. was well prepared to find Technicolour Pot, and knew where to look.



© P. Bannink

Ray sorting out the rigging point

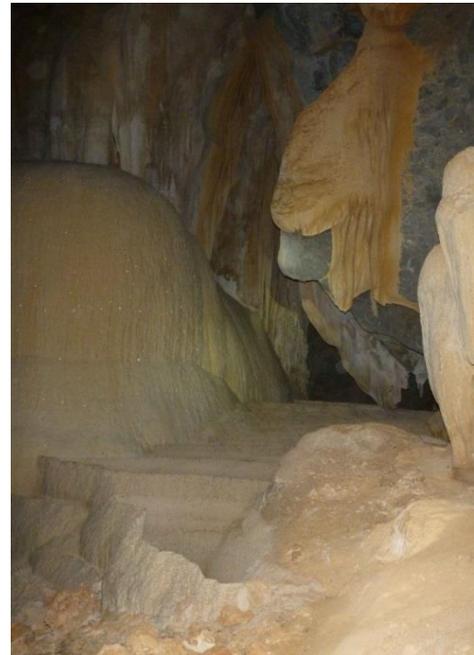
We all headed out quite late on the Saturday after waiting for the last two members to arrive, but we did find the cave in record time. The doline is quite large, dropping about 28 meters into a spacious chamber below. Peter and Ray took so much time setting up the rope that the rest of the team climbed into the nearby entrance to Good Black Friday, to escape the heat. From there they rigged a ladder through to the same chamber.



© P. Bannink

Climbing up to the formation chamber

Ray and Mark headed down the pitch while Peter went into GBF to check the ladder and rig the 6m belay. The phreatic connection to Technicolour Pot is an amazing place, and quite unique in Chillagoe. You can climb up, down and around, never quite knowing if you are heading in the right direction. The passages are like a massive sponge-work of holes confusing anyone who enters.



© P. Bannink

Some great formation at the 'Bathtubs'

By the time we got everyone down, Laura had a raging headache (probably due to the heat). The Pot is not that large but it lives up to the name, as daylight dazzles the side formations in a range of different colours. There are spectacular formations in different sections of the cave. The 'Bathtubs' can be accessed via a steep climb, and have to be just about the largest rim pools to be seen in Chillagoe.

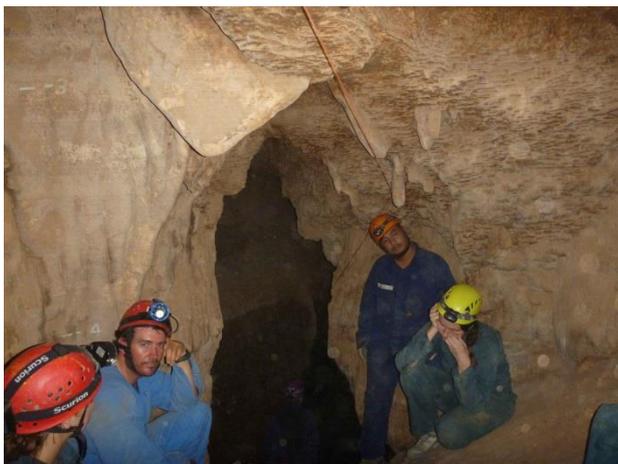


© R. Deasy

Grabbing some shade after the exiting the cave

After lots of photo's were taken, we all headed out, climbing up the ladder to exit via the small fissure entrance into Good Black Friday. It was about 2.00pm and temperatures were reaching about 38 °C, so we planned to head back into another cave to cool off.

Peter chose Marachoo Cave, as everyone was keen for a cool crawly adventure, after enjoying such spacious cave passage. The entrance to Marachoo cave is quite small and very close to the car park, minimising any time walking around in the sun.



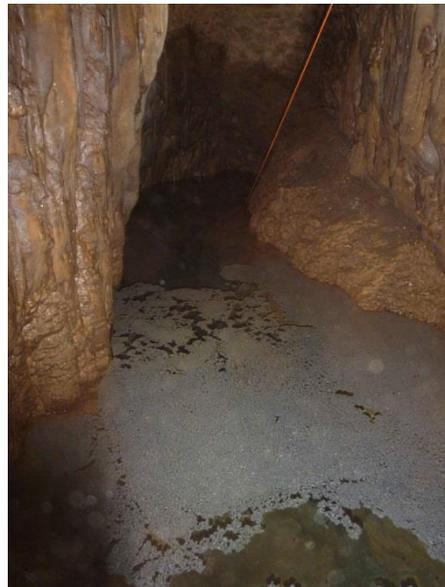
The final little chamber in Marachoo Cave.

© P. Bannink

While being a small cave, passages do extend down to the water table and cavers have occasionally documented the water level over time, since the cave was dived back in the 1980's. The route was cool and spacious in sections with the odd rock-pile to confuse everyone.

It took a while to get everyone down there but we finally made the connection at minus (-) 6m of the set base level. The old dive guide line is still in place and the route on only looked like a 1m duck-under. This was the lowest I have ever seen the water level in Chillagoe, I will refer to club records to see if it has ever got this low. The impact of the drought is reflected in the very low water levels evident in Marachoo Cave at the moment.

Exiting cavers were still keen for more, so a quick trip to Surprise Packet Cave completed a massive day of caving. I was for that matter was totally stuffed!



© P. Bannink

The water table in Marachoo Cave (-6m).

New Cave Explored at the Archways

Peter Bannink

On the Sunday, with Peter suffering a muscle strain and Emily ill due to dehydration (from the day before), the rest of the cavers depended on Tim and Greg Gurnier, with Catherine and Mark Beattie to take them out to something interesting. Greg and Tim had a planned to explore a new doline in the area of the Archways Tower, so we all headed out by 8:30am.



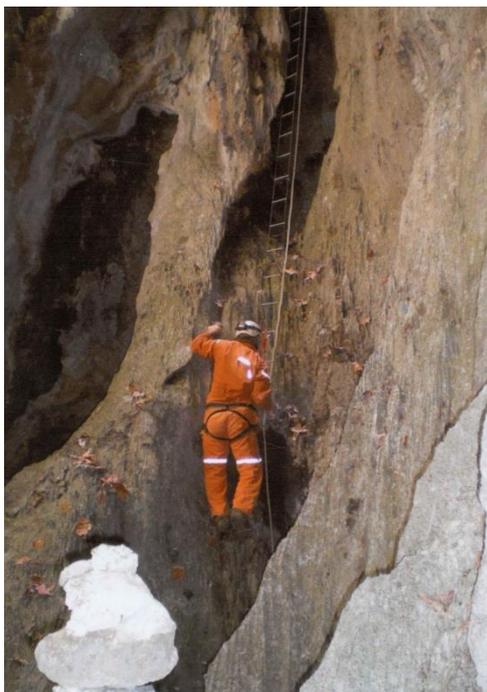
© P. Bannink

Looking into the doline, cavers at the bottom.

It took about half an hour to locate the new entrance via a difficult route over some very large boulders and through some very spiky vegetation. A large

deep doline, nestled between the tower spikes. The hole was least 25m deep with sheer sides, making rigging very difficult. With some exploration of the site, a rigging point was located 5m below the first viewing point, the sharp rock requiring an extended ladder pitch with a belay. At this point I left to catch up with Emily to work around Ryan Imperial Tower.

After about 3 hours I returned to find the last few team members exiting the cave. Catherine reported that a small section of passage was explored, and that they were not the first to enter the cave. Small cairns were found about the place indicating someone had been there before, possibly getting in via another entrance. So we will have to return and try to figure how this cave is related to Royal Archway Cave (CH3) located on the southern side of the Tower.



© R. Deasy

Greg starting the climb out

Thanks to Mark, Catherine, Greg and Tim who did a fantastic job getting everyone up and down the ladder, in very difficult conditions.

Up and Coming Events 2016

A number of trips are in the planning stage for 2016. An expedition to Broken River is being planned for the June/July mid year break.

March

- 25 - 27th - Easter Long Weekend, Club caving with Cairns Walking Club.

April

- 26th – 29th April – TAS school group staying at CCC clubhouse at Chillagoe.

May

- 30th April – 2nd May - Club AGM at Chillagoe
- 29th April – 8th May - Steven Morgan from Mackay, caving in Chillagoe.
- 3 – 6th May – TAS School group staying at CCC clubhouse at Chillagoe.
- Two weeks in May – SUSS caving at Chillagoe, staying at clubhouse.

June

- 25th June - 3rd July - Broken River Caving Expedition. Interested cavers please contact Paul Osborne on 0417713166 or via e-mail using p1953@bigpond.com as numbers are limited.

Peter Bannink & Van Christensen (Secretary).



© P. Bannink

Emily in a daylight section of CH321