
LONG WEEKEND WELLINGTON, 5-7 OCTOBER 2013

BY IAN COOPER & PHIL MAYNARD

Participants: Tabitha Blair, Harrison Burkitt, Ian Cooper, Deborah Johnston, Phil Maynard, Rob Obrien, Alan Pyrke, Greg Ryan, Keir Vaughan-Taylor

A long weekend is the ideal time to venture west to Wellington for cave diving and some exploration. Following are some notes on the areas looked at.

Cathedral Cave

Rod dived the sump at the end of Cathedral on Sunday night. In the past this dive has been considered difficult due to a squeeze at the base of the visible lake. When the cave was surveyed during drought Kier was able to remove some rocks from out of the squeeze. Rod sailed through the squeeze and surveyed all of the sump that he could see. The first chamber past the squeeze contains numerous old bottles and waste timber on the floor. Rod also reported an air bell towards the end of the dive but his gauge showed a depth of 6m. No other leads were spotted.

WE5 Mitchell Cave

Keir and Phil concentrated placing two bolts over the second pitch to produce a free hanging rig that is free of the loose dirt above the pitch. The bolts are on the opposite wall of the second shaft as you approach the pit – the only available bedrock. The alternative bolt placements were all bone breccia! More slope stabilisation was carried out below the second pitch. Combined with the new pitch rigging, this slope should have less soil movement from now on. The north trending rift at the base of the cave was dug out until Deborah struck water and created a new mud puddle sump.

WE7

This is a small cave between Mitchell and Cathedral. Ian had another look at this low wide cave which appears to be a large earth filled room with a 0.5m gap to the roof. We probably need to survey this cave to see how closely it approaches the upper parts of Cathedral.

W14 Limekiln

Rod, Deborah, Phil, Keir and Greg all dived the sump in Limekiln. The water level was higher than average and this stopped dry access to Bondi Beach. Rod pushed at the south end and found an extra 8m of passage.

WE20

Ian and Alan had close and dusty look at the rift at the bottom of this cave. The bottom of the cave is a 0.5m wide rift full to the roof with soft dusty soil and some old wire.

WE22

Alan and Harry found the drafting rift lead in the base of this cave. Alan noticed a wider part below some jammed rocks but did not get past the bedrock restriction.

WE24

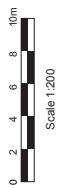
Ian and Harry cleared rocks and logs away from the top of WE24 and descended the shaft. This shaft, (just behind the kiosk), has been dug as an exploration shaft at the time of the phosphate mine. The shaft is about 7m deep with an earth wall to the west and solid rock to the east. The shaft has been back filled by at least 2m with broken rock as evidenced by the visible gap down the east wall. There is negligible chance of cave being found off this shaft.

WE25 Bottlo Cave

There was another look at Bottlo Cave. This cave is just behind the kiosk and is a shaft that was back filled. A couple of large boulders had been brought down previously to make the area safe. Ian, Greg and Deborah removed a rock and opened out the rift at the base. The dig remains prospective with fill still present at the deepest visible point.

Cathedral Cave WE1/WE8 Wellington Caves, NSW

Plan View



Surveyed by SUSS 2006 – 2013 to ASF 65/55AC

Surveyors: Ian Cooper Phil Maynard
Kevin Moore Greg Ryan
Keir Vaughan-Taylor
Rod Obrien

P Maynard A1 draft, October 2013

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