



Cave Exploration Group

South Australia

C/O SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM NORTH TERRACE ADELAIDE

ANNUAL REPORT

1972-73

**SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT to be presented to
the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday,
28th of February 1973 at the
Museum Lecture Rooms - North Terrace,
Adelaide at 8:00 p.m.**

Seventeenth Annual Report of the Cave Exploration Group of South Australia

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the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia)



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP of SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Committee has pleasure in submitting the following report covering the activities and finances of the Group for the year ending 28th February 1973.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past year has been a healthy one for the Group. At first glance we may appear to have achieved little of note. Certainly one cannot hope for a discovery of the magnitude of the Victoria Cave extensions every year. Nevertheless the Group has been working harder than ever before, and has under way projects which could keep us all fully employed well into next century.

Surveying and exploration of the Victoria Cave consumes a large amount of members' time, and should continue to do so for years to come. The exciting discovery by Ron Galbreath of yet another excellent bone chamber this year has thrown no light on the mystery of why the Victoria Cave bone fields are so rich.

The death of Alan Hill through illness last year has been a great loss to the Group, both in terms of its work strength, and in personal friendships. A fund has been created to establish "The Alan Hill Memorial Library" and donations are invited. So far we have been heartened to receive several hundred dollars towards this memorial which will be of benefit to every member of the Group.

Fred Aslin continues to work in the Lower South-east at a phenomenal rate, and has groomed quite a sturdy band of Adelaide-based surveyors, but he could still do with more help. The Lower South-east remains our most urgent and perhaps most overwhelming conservation/pollution problem area. The Group's interest in the Glenelg River area has intensified somewhat this year. Cordial contact has been established with the new Victorian Forestry Commission Ranger at Princess Margaret Rose Cave, Mr. Frank Buchanan, and several promising digs are under way.

The convening of a joint Victorian Speleological Association - CEGSA dinner in the Naracoorte Hotel last June was the social success of the year. Over 80 people were present and a return dinner on Victorian Territory, probably at Nelson, has been promised.

It is gladdening to see an increasing proportion of our newer members coming to grips with the art of surveying. To keep pace with the expected increase in mapping the time has come to completely reorganize and re-vitalize our archaic record-keeping system. It is apparent that total breakdown has already occurred. While it is currently still possible to get information into the Group's records, it is virtually impossible to ever get it out again. Ed Sangster has spent a great deal of time investigating the matter and has

devised what appears to be a much more workable and useful recording system. With money raised from the sale of slides at Naracoorte we hope to implement this system at least in part in the coming year.

I should like to emphasize once again that a cave which is well known may not be as well known as we think. Such was the case with the new discoveries several years ago in the Victoria Cave. If one was asked to name the Naracoorte cave least likely to yield a significant extension, I think most people would have instantly said: "Cathedral Cave". Within walking distance of our hut it has been usually dismissed as "just a big chamber with a few low crawls", and mainly used by CEGSA as a Search & Rescue practice site, and by the public at large as a hole in which to heave their beer cans and bottles (which generally shatter into a thousand pieces on hitting the bottom).

No doubt due to Harry Baker's stirring efforts repairing the permanent ladder, Cathedral Cave has received several enthusiastic visits in 1973, culminating in the excavation of low tunnels following a breeze and the final breakthrough by Graham Pilkington on February 11th into a major new extension with several large chambers and 400 feet or more of passage so far.

Our submission to the Department of Environment and Conservation on the usefulness of an electric jackhammer has been favorably received and we hope to give the jackhammer, 1500 feet of cable and an earth-leakage safety circuit-breaker their baptism in Victoria Cave in the near future. The equipment will remain the property of the Department, but we are expected to be the major and possibly even the only users of it in the foreseeable future. It will help in the removal of obstacles and construction of bypass tunnels in the Victoria Cave and make our work in that cave vastly easier in the long run. While the primary justification for the equipment is this one cave, in which it will certainly pay for itself many times over, we hope to be able to run it in remote locations as well from a portable 1000 watt generator. This could make it useful in other projects at Naracoorte and even as far away as Kangaroo Island. It should also prove invaluable as a search and rescue aid. Where the removal of protrusions in narrow tunnel walls is necessary to aid the progress of a stretcher, we cannot afford to waste time with archaic hammer and chisel techniques.

While on the subject of Search & Rescue, Bernie Dunn has been checking out the suitability of various types of stretchers for our cave rescue team, and has found the 'ideal' cave rescue stretcher. It can be ours for only \$200 approximately, which may seem a lot while it is just sitting there, but is not too much if it saves your life or mine. If anyone can spare an old digger near \$200 for a cuppa tea, guv. we'd be pleased to meet him.

It has been an exciting year, and the stage is set for perhaps one of the most exciting years next year that CEGSA may ever experience. I would like to thank the Committee for their efforts and support over the past year. I know some cannot continue. I hope the others will consider doing so, and I recommend to everyone an active involvement in the workings of our Group. It can be extremely stimulating and enjoyable.

Grant Gartrell

COMMITTEE

Your Committee this year has been

Grant Gartrell	President/Publications
Bernie Dunn	Vice-President/Search & Rescue
John Foulds	Secretary
Pat Lake	Treasurer
Tony Lake	Membership
David Hawke	Quartermaster
Brian Rivett	Librarian
Jim Hopkins	Records
Neville Pledge	Museum Representative
Peter Warren	Tourist Bureau Representative*

* On 1st July 1972, due to reorganization within the framework of the Department of Environment and Conservation, the administration of the Naracoorte Caves Reserve by the S.A. Govt. Tourist Bureau ceased. Control of the Reserve is now vested in the National Parks and Wildlife Service, under the Directorship of Mr. R.G. Lyons. Day to day running of the Reserve has not been affected as yet (at least from CEGSA's point of view) since the transfer has mainly been one of responsibility. We have continued to liase with Peter Warren, and Frank Harrison continues as the Curator of the Naracoorte Caves Reserve. Our relationship with the Tourist Bureau in the past has been most cordial, and their development of the Naracoorte Reserve has been in harmony with its natural charm. Nevertheless we are pleased that at last in South Australia a reserve primarily concerned with caves has gained a place under the wing of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. From here it should be a short step to recognising the general importance of the caves of the area besides their undoubted worth as money-spinners. It has always amused me to wonder what we would be doing and thinking today had the Victoria Cave bone field turned up not in its present ideal location, but in the far end of Sand-funnel Cave, or for that matter, virtually anywhere else. The present arrangement could not be improved upon, which is an unusual state of affairs at any time. However, we are working on it.

Grant Gartrell

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Eleven successful General Meetings, including an Annual General Meeting, do not lie as 1972-73 proved a solid year for the Group. Each of the General Meetings was well attended (35-40 members on average), and each was followed by either a speaker or a film, the majority being well received.

Among the more important of the Group's non-caving activities were the following:

(1) establishment of a tourist slide enterprise

(2) an amendment to Section 3, subsection (a), subsection (i) of the Constitution to read:

(i) who are over 18 years of age and complete 50 hours as a member of an active caving party in not less than three months of Associate Membership, and satisfy such other requirements as shall be determined by the Committee.

(3) The establishment of a fund for the setting up of the Alan Hill Memorial Library, to commemorate one of the earliest and most active of our members.

(4) Submission of a report to the Director of Environment and Conservation with respect to the replacement and improvement of the Naracoorte Research Centre building, since the poor state of repair and inadequate facilities of the present structure, while better than none, are affecting the efficiency of our heavy work program in the area.

Last year saw the Ninth Biennial Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation (NIBICON) successfully held at the University of New South Wales with good representation from CEGSA.

The Annual Dinner was again held at Crafers Hotel with the following awards being presented:

Spirit of Caving	Ian Lewis	(To tow him through the Nullarbor lakes)
Leather Medal	Max Meth	(For not smashing all our caves with his G-pick)
Leather Medal	Ed Bailey	(Super-salesman)

A successful combined CEGSA-VSA dinner was held at Naracoorte and was well attended. This dinner and the overlapping of activities in the Glenelg River area has led to a closer relationship with VSA which can only contribute to a more viable attitude to caving in both states.

The Group, at present, appears to be going through a period of consolidation, with all the appropriate symptoms;

- (a) large turnover of associate members
- (b) less overall interest in doing useful work; this being reflected by the large number of trips that merely became tourist jaunts.
- (c) less interest in the running of the Group which seems more and more to be left in the hands of a few.

These factors combine to form a vicious circle which must be broken at all costs if CEGSA is to retain its position as one of the leading groups in Australia. We have the numbers, we have the potential, we need a new approach.

Concluding, I would like to thank all in the Group for their support of the Committee and myself throughout the past year.

John G. Foulds

SEARCH & RESCUE REPORT

This year in South Australia we have seen the worst ever accident in an Australian cave when three divers were drowned in Sl26 in the Lower South-east. Although none of those involved were members of a recognised caving group the fact still remains that accidents in caves happen all too easily when safety procedures are forgotten or ignored.

CEGSA once again has had no accidents this year but support and interest in Search & Rescue has been marked by its absence. The new callout list has only just been published because I was not prepared to issue a list with only eight people on it. It was unfortunate that the major S & R practice for the year had to be called off when the trip leader developed a bad case of flu just before the trip. The field day at Reynella was very well attended and the unexpected rescue from the cave was quite well carried out (the body that is). The second field day was rained out and only two people attended (the president and myself) with most of the day taken up consuming hot tomato soup.

More information from overseas has been received regarding stretchers and communications systems. A final choice of these items should be made soon in the new year.

This year has seen the setting up of a small team at Mount Gambier under the direction of Fred Aslin. This group, in conjunction with members at Naracoorte should be able to assess any situation that may arise in the Lower South-east and handle anything except a major rescue without additional help from Adelaide, which of necessity must involve several hours delay due to the Adelaide - South-east travel time.

It should be remembered that caving is unique and should you have an accident it is likely that the only people who will be competent to help are cavers who have been trained for such a situation. Participation in S & R practices will soon make this point crystal clear to you, if it is not already.

I ask all members to support S & R next year and thank all those who helped this year.

Bernie Dunn

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

In June this year the Group suffered a heavy blow with the death of Alan Hill. Many of the present Associate Members have not known Alan or have only met him on one or two occasions. Alan has been a very strong influence on the Group since its inception and was active in its affairs right up until his death. Much of the Group's success is a result of his hard work and urging. I feel that it would be an appropriate time to include an extract from the Obituary for him written by the President of the Australian Speleological Federation (and foundation President of CEGSA), Elery Hamilton-Smith, and published in the Australian Speleological Federation Newsletter:

"Alan Hill was one of the founders of CEGSA, its first Secretary, later its President, and was recognised by the conferring of Honorary Life Membership. However, his influence on Australian speleology was much wider. He first conceived the numbering system, now adopted throughout the country, he worked closely with Bob Sexton in refining and developing techniques for cave surveying, he led the 1966 Mullamullang expedition, the report of which proved to be a landmark in standards of publication, then also had a major part in preparing "Caves of the Nullarbor". And by no means least, he invented the notorious Diprotodon hillii."

Honorary Associate membership has remained constant at 5 and Full Membership is still 37. This year a number of previously active Full Members have retired temporarily due to study or overseas travel, and their places have been taken by elevated Associates. Associate membership, however, has fallen considerably. There have been five new members this year, but fifteen associates from last year have not become financial again this year although several have attended meetings and field trips. It is pleasing to note that there are a number of people interested in joining the group who are too young to do so at present. We look forward to the day when they can become active members of the Group.

For the Group to work at its best and build up its membership it needs to change its structure. As has been said so many times before it is the small minority which is doing all the work, with the rest just tagging along, attending the occasional meeting and trip and calling themselves members of CEGSA. To anyone outside the Group this lack of enthusiasm rubs off on them, and as happens so often potential members appear at one meeting or trip and then do not come again unless exceptionally keen.

It is impossible for the small group of workers or for the membership officer to meet or spend as much time as is necessary with all visitors at Group functions, so please hop off your bots (the chairs aren't overly comfortable anyway) and be friendly and helpful to them, or the Group can be expected to diminish further.

	1970	1971	1972	1973
Honorary Life Members	6	6	7	6
Full Members	41	48	37	37
Honorary Associates	4	4	5	5
Associate Members	39	50	53	40
	<u>90</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>88</u>

Tony Lake

PUBLICATIONS

Contributions have been received without too much coercion, and the Newsletter regularly published on time. A set of standard cover photographs was produced at the beginning of the year on the duplicator. Print quality in these is as good as can be expected. It may be worth producing a more elaborate cover by offset printing when the supply of "News-letterheads" runs out, if we wish to persevere with photographs. Not only does this involve more expensive (slightly) printing, but a continuing supply of good photographs. There is no doubt, however, that our present photos are better than none.

Reports in past years of people getting shocks from the duplicator were verified when it suddenly started printing all by itself one night. After due consideration discounted the possibility that it was Alan Hill still trying to produce caving publications. I stripped the machine down and found it to have its neutral and active leads in the plug reversed, and one of these not only therefore bypassing the switch, but broken and arcing onto the chassis at an internal terminal block. The whole caboodle is now nice and clean and much more sanitary from an electrical point of view. It's not certain what we were actually getting for our annual service contract with Roneo, which we have now cancelled, but it certainly wasn't an electrical check, nor did the cleaning rag appear to have much effect. Anyway, the machine is at last being properly maintained and giving appropriately better results. The Group incidentally also saves \$16 per year.

No new major publications have been begun this year. Several are on the drawing board still. The projected Naracoorte publication must wait at least until some more major maps are completed, and a little more of the Victoria Cave paleontological work has been written up. It will also benefit from the projected re-organization of the Group's records system. Work will, however, no doubt go on at Naracoorte for ever, and we must really try to publish something before then.

The publication of a report on Nullarbor cave diving activities has been suspended so that the results of the follow-up trip, also to be led by Ian Lewis, at the end of 1973, can be included.

It should be noted that we still have over \$400 outlaid in stocks of "Mullamullang Cave Expeditions, 1966" on hand. A concerted effort must be made to sell most of these in the near future to help finance future publications. They are still well worth reading, and probably after seven years few of the active cavers in Australia today would own their own copy. No bookshelf is complete without one.

Grant Gartrell

BAT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

During the year February 1972 to January 1973, over three hundred bats of five species were banded in South Australia and south-western Victoria. Three of these species were banded in caves or mines while the others were found in surface localities. The bent-winged bat Miniopterus schreibersii, the common cave-dwelling bat in the south-east of the state, accounted for about half the total of bats banded. The other species banded in caves or mines were the large-footed Myotis, Myotis adversus, and the little brown bat Eptesicus pumilus . The lesser long-eared bat Nyctophilus geoffroyi and Gould's wattled bat Chalinolobus gouldii were also banded.

An important event during the year was the discovery of a probable maternity site of Myotis adversus in Amphitheatre Cave on the Glenelg River. About three hundred or so bats, including juveniles and adults of both sexes, were present in the cave on the weekend of 27th January, 1973.

Due to other commitments little work has been done on cave-dwelling bats during this year and it is hoped that more investigations will be made during the coming year. It is pleasing to note that two banders will be operating within South Australia during the coming year. Alex McLeod has recently been granted a CSIRO permit and hopes to spend much of his time in the Flinders Ranges.

Trevor Maddock

TREASURER'S REPORT

The fall in the number of members' subscriptions, and trip fees, together with increases in postage and the purchase of publications were the main reason for the fall in the 1973 bank total. Included in the publications total is the amount of \$51.00 capitation fee to the Australian Speleological Federation which provides our Full Members and some Associates with the ASF Newsletter. The ASF annual budget for the ASF Newsletter amounts to something like \$700, and to meet rising printing costs, the capitation fee has been raised to \$1.50 per head, thus reducing our projected funds by \$20 approx. if this increase is absorbed by our last Full Membership fee rise to \$5.00

The amount received from trip fees matches that spent on carbide and ropes, but should have been higher. Trip leaders often miss a number of people at fee collection time on trips, or are so busy until last thing before returning home that everybody else has already left. It is suggested that the trip leader appoint a fee collector to help out on each trip, and that fees be gleaned from the masses early, say on the Saturday morning of a normal weekend trip. Please sign the Visitor's book in the Naracoorte Hut so that we can catch up with you.

As a matter of principle, the subscriptions should pay for hire of rooms, cost of Newsletter production, library acquisitions and office equipment and stationery. These things are expensive but necessary in the running of the Group. To get best value for your money you should come to the meetings, make use of the library, and maybe even generate correspondence. Country members should pay less since they cannot often get to meetings, and for all practical purposes the library is inaccessible to them, even though they are still welcome to use it.

As a matter of principle also, trip fees should cover the cost of replacement of depreciating equipment, and of maintaining the Search & Rescue material. They should also slowly accumulate funds from which we can improve the gear which we use.

Pat Lake & Grant Gartrell

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

This year the two jobs of maintaining the Library and the Records, now too large to be handled comfortably by one person, were separated, with benefits already obvious.

Most of the incoming papers and periodicals have been filed, and the remainder will follow as soon as the new files, now on order, arrive.

In the coming year the Librarian will have the task of preparing books for the Alan L. Hill Memorial Library.

Our Museum bookcase is already well filled but some of the space is taken up by stockpiles of publications which were bought on the recommendation of various general meetings. As we have over \$400 invested in stocks of Mullamullang Cave Expeditions 1966, not to mention other books, please buy up. It would be best if active cavers got them, but at only \$1.50 they make remarkably cheap and interesting Christmas presents.

You are requested to return all outstanding books by the next meeting so that a thorough stock-take can be made. Donations of good books will never be refused, and please keep your eyes open for newspaper cuttings, magazine articles and other items of interest for "Speleoddities" the incredible and unbelievable CEGSA scrap book. Photographic prints of CEGSA odd-bods are also welcome, not to mention entrance photographs for the cave entrance record-book. These magnificent volumes should be repaired and dusted off in the coming year, and although not for loan, are well worth looking at at CEGSA meetings.

I thank you all for the interest you have shown in the Library this year, and ask you to keep your eyes peeled. We would welcome suggestions for new additions to the library.

Brian J. Rivett

RECORDS

The division of work in the Library/Records portfolio between two Committee members, has been very successful, resulting in a far more equitable work-load for Brian Rivett and myself.

Early in the year the Group purchased a four-drawer vertical filing cabinet and 100 suspension files; this means that our large collection of maps (both Lands Dept. and Geological), aerial photographs, scientific papers and newspaper and magazine clippings of relevant topics, has a permanent house, even though it hasn't a permanent home yet.

The Trip Report Books were often out on loan to CEGSA Members, indicating a healthy attitude towards previous work. However, the inefficiency of documenting all caves in one book is painfully obvious; each cave should have a separate file, in which all records of that cave would be kept, as proposed at the ASF Conference.

I would like to make the following recommendations for the coming year:-

- (1) that the division of work between Records and Library be continued;
- (2) that the system of record keeping proposed at the ASF Conference be implemented as soon as possible
- (3) that a sub-committee be created for up-dating our records to this system.

Jim Hopkins

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT

The Group's equipment store is looking a little more healthy despite a cluttered appearance. After much agitation we have now acquired a good supply of No.4 Nylon rope for use as lifelines. This has been a necessary move as ropes have been increasingly abused by use for abseiling and also as gear ropes. We also now have a supply of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " manila rope for the latter purposes. This should enable trip leaders to see that the safety code of the Group is observed.

Much of the Group's gear is now in a deplorable state as members are often not taking as much care with equipment as they should. I have found over the past 12 months that a considerable amount of my time has been occupied in attempting to restore the equipment to a useful state. Much of the Group's other gear is now becoming close to useless as well. The Group's ladders - as a perennial cry - have now reached the stage where the Group should replace most of them, purely from the point of age rather than physical appearance and condition. Thought should be given similarly in the coming financial year to making or acquiring new ladder, helmets and lighting equipment.

Survey equipment is being well used now, but needs urgent attention. Tapes and jiggers need particular care, and the Group's tapes have almost all had their ends wrenched off at some time or another. It is hoped that these past problems are behind us, since the equipment, such as it is, has generally been adequately maintained this year. Our most immediate problem is the acquisition of suitable tripods to act as bases for the miners dials. I feel that it is within the scope of Group members to develop and manufacture much of the equipment for our specialized needs. The problem extends to Search & Rescue equipment as well.

In summation, generally a successful year as regards gear. The only comment which remains to be made is MORE CARE WITH GEAR PLEASE.

David Hawke

CAVING ACTIVITIES

The usual comments apply to trips this year equally as well as any other year. A few members seem to spend just about every weekend underground while others keep saying that they'll find more time to go on trips next year. Out of it all, however, a pretty good bunch of competent cavers is emerging, and even some enthusiasm for surveying can be noticed. The social side of things varies according to the locale. In the Flinders Ranges most underground trips are relatively short and civilized evening meals around friendly campfires are still common, bushfire seasons permitting. At Naracoorte, with the usual late starts, and trip under duration limited only by the endurance of the human bladder, the tendency has been for people to emerge from caves late at night, grunt down a quick can of baked beans and slink off to bed. Maybe in addition to the projected improvement in facilities at Naracoorte we could invest in an alarm clock permanent-set on 7a.m. Glenelg River is quite glorious provided that you peg yourself to the ground at night to stop the mosquitoes carrying you off.

Yorke Peninsula and Adelaide.

A letter was written to the Minister of Environment and Conservation, Mr. Broomhill, expressing concern at the encroachment of housing development on the Reynella quarry area, and seeking the Government's help in retaining this region in its present form. We have been pleased to receive a reply from the Minister's Department giving assurances that the Field River valley region would be protected by Rural zoning under zoning plans presently being framed.

Several training trips for Search & Rescue and Survey practice have been held to Reynella Cave this year and the area is indeed most valuable to us.

Further south, Sellicks Hill Cave has received several visits, and been surveyed with compass and tape. Depth has been measured at 210 feet, and it appears most unlikely that a connection with the road level cave will be effected, even though this appears to be an upper level development of the same joint. Further possibilities for exploration exist if rocks can be moved, however there is little room to stack them, and the vertical nature of the cave makes hoisting of rocks to higher levels a dangerous and therefore impractical means of disposal. The cave may still extend deeper for several hundred feet, but intending visitors cannot be warned too strongly to keep their wits about them and work as a team. The cave is well worth a considerable amount of work, and the road-side connection should still not be dismissed out of hand. Although it could be a great deal of work, it could yet remain the safest way to the depths below.

Surveying of Corra-Lynn Cave at Curramulka is continuing and a dig from the Skeleton Extension surprised everyone by finding a series of low passages which emerged at the top of the Grand Central Crevasse. Further digs in this promising area are under way.

No excavation in Bone Cave at Curramulka has been carried out this year, and an attempt must be made to continue this most impressive project early in the new year. Quick visits have been made to Curramulka Town Cave to try to induce some newer members to continue work there. This will probably always remain one of our most exciting little caves for all time, and although the rock is very solid and the passages often tight, could yet yield much more than presently known.

Eyre Peninsula

No trips have been reported to this area this year, although several reports have been received of caves that we may not know about. Distance still remains our main obstacle.

Nullarbor Plain

No trips have been reported this year, due probably to NIBICON luring people to Sydney instead. With a large trip planned for the end of 1973 to continue the diving and dry caving, many have probably been conserving their limited resources.

Flinders Ranges

Visits have been made to Woodendinna Cave, Mt. Simms Cave, Arcoota Creek Cave, and Mairs and Clara St. Dora. A small extension was made in Clara St. Dora and further digging is recommended.

Mr. John Warwick of Mattawarrangala has specifically requested that small parties only visit and camp at Mt. Simms Cave, and would like us to limit future trips to about two carloads. It is normal Group policy to stay away from this area during the high fire risk summer season. It is also usual for Flinders trips to have four or five carloads or more. Trip leaders are requested to respect Mr. Warwick's wishes in this matter and camp off the property if they have larger parties. Fortunately there are pleasant campsites not far away and neighbouring leaseholders have not placed similar restrictions on our presence.

Little work has been done by the Group in the limestone to the north of Wilpena Pound. Bunyerroo Gorge Cave has been known for a long time, but is of limited extent and not often visited. Its reason for being is a mystery of sorts. Perhaps it has further possibilities. In nearby Brachina Gorge a party several years ago found and surveyed an interesting wet weather inflow cave, now called Thunderdrum, and not far from this a party has recently found a similar style of cave, with some possibilities of further extension. The Flinders Ranges still hold many surprises for us if we are prepared to go looking for them.

Mention should be made here of the magnificent job of gating done by PACE (Port Augusta Cave Explorers) across the huge span of the Mairs Cave entrance shaft. Although well over a year old now, this grille never fails to amaze those who see it. It was all lugged into place by hand over the last few yards at least, but looks as though a large helicopter would have been essential to get it into place. We have undertaken to exchange keys for the Bagalowie Group Caves and the Mt. Simms and Woodendinna Caves with PACE, who obviously also have the best interests of the region at heart.

Kangaroo Island

No trips have been organised to the Island this year. Many people want to go, however, and had schedules for the Troubridge been a little better over Easter 1973, a trip would be certain early in the new year. A few days is barely sufficient time to get to know one area, let alone the Island, and the post Goolwa-Conference trip of a fortnight's duration was still far too short. Anyway, even one day on K.I. is better than none, so we'll get there soon.

Lower South-east

In last year's Annual Report under this heading there was a paragraph concerning the death of a young Victorian diver at Picanninny Ponds. This year, as already mentioned in the S & R report, the number of drownings in the region was raised in one fell swoop by three.

Page 4 of the morning paper "The Advertiser" on 22nd February 1973, makes interesting reading. It shows a diagrammatic vertical section of S126 and a photograph of the SA Police Underwater Recovery Squad members preparing to enter this cave.

The report suggests that a seven man team of divers from this group "is preparing a master plan of all known sink-holes in the Lower South-east".

"They dived in about 30 different sinkholes many of which have never been explored before.

Diagrams of each hole will be prepared, detailing depth, cave structure and water temperature.

The underground freshwater caves will also be classified as safe or dangerous and marked on army survey maps."

"Senior Constable Harnath said none of the sink holes he had explored were safe for inexperienced divers."

"That's a bad hole, that one," Senior Constable Harnath said as he pulled himself from the water. It is dangerous even for an experienced diver."

The report continues to say that the three men agreed the hole should be closed.

Several points arise from this report, taken at face value.

- (a) There is certainly a problem with inexperienced divers or those lacking common sense entering virtually any of the S.E. sinkholes.
- (b) We are jealous. Looks like we won't be the first full-time professional cave-explorers in this State after all.
- (c) It is doubtful that the team would be concerned with producing accurate surveys of the caves they visit, but if so we would like copies for our records, and for comparison.
- (d) There will be doubtless many sinkholes which are effectively inaccessible to most people, or unknown to most people. There may be some danger in publishing any plan with these features located upon it, assuming their presence is made known to this survey team in the first place.
- (e) The purpose of this exercise is undoubtedly for the protection of the inexperienced and/or incompetent divers from themselves. This is laudable. The team that inspected S126 and suggested its "closure" obviously felt themselves competent to enter as far as they did and return. Undoubtedly there are other divers equally competent who could do likewise. It is our duty as a Group in this and any similar instance to think of the cave as well. "Closure" of a cave can mean many things, and should the people concerned be thinking of any form of permanent or irreversible action, such as filling the caves up with rocks or surplus motor tyre casings, we should try to dissuade them from such a course of action, for several reasons.

One by one, as people decide that others must be protected from themselves, we will see all of these features filled with rocks, should the precedent be set, because people can drown themselves in as little as three inches of water if they are really determined to do so. Conversely, when the team classifies a hole as safe rather than dangerous, and somebody drowns in the safe one, then who is to blame? Our Adelaide beaches are incredibly safe by World standards and people manage to drown there nevertheless.

If one must "close" caves, then it should be done by restricting access through fences, locks keys, signs or similar, and not the other way. There is no reason why the natural denizens of the cave, and even the cave itself, should have their environment destroyed, just to save men becoming victims of their new-fangled underwater breathing gadgets.

And as a last, maybe at present far-fetched reason. People get into grief with the limitations of short time and depth problems with their present breathing equipment. In the future sometime, and work is still going on in this field, technology may come up with vastly superior breathing apparatus which will open up vast new subterranean aquatic worlds, which may be accessible in relative safety. Too bad if by that time they are all plugged up with junk. The experience of this Group in diving in the Nullarbor Caves has shown that the silt-visibility problem is an entrance phenomenon, associated with mud which has washed in to the cave entrance over the years. In many cases one can expect the visibility in the cave to improve further in as the silt region is left behind, and while the silt may be an eternal problem at the entrance to such a system, again what lies beyond (maybe not to be visited before the year 3000) should not be judged on the entrance section alone. Colour TV was pretty far-fetched before Marconi's time, too.

In conclusion, nobody has suggested that the method of "closure" referred to in the article would be at the expense of the cave. We would merely like to point out that there is another side to the case should anybody start agitating along those lines. Maybe the police will be so keen on caving by the end of their exercise that we'll score 7 new members. Funnier things have happened.

After a number of quiet years, during which time the Glenelg River region remained principally the domain of VSA and Fred Aslin, the area was once more invaded by a number of parties from Adelaide CEGSA in 1972-73. Cordial relations have been established with Frank Buchanan, Ranger come Cave Guide Extraordinaire at Princess Margaret Rose Cave, and Frank has assisted us in every possible way to locate caves and establish liason with property owners.

Fred Aslin's records bear good witness to the number and quality of caves in the area. Caves occur at river level and higher. The Princess Margaret Rose Tourist Cave is magnificent in its decoration and holds possibility of further extension. V.S.A. and C.E.G.S.A. on a recent trip made tentative plans to establish the connection with a river-bank cave in the same joint, with the support of the Forestry Commission.

Amphitheatre Cave, in the vicinity of P.M.R. Cave, offers a spectacular 100 ft ladder climb, bats and more possibilities for extension. G14, up river from Princess Margaret, has been cut out by a creek which enters the river just above water level. Besides offering opportunities to budding hydrologists,

sumpists, and the like, it offers possibilities for extension with a dig already well on the way. Surface surveys of depressions in line with this cave put the possibilities of extensions at about 3000 feet.

Currans Creek area has several interesting caves but offers most potential to the few devoted diggers. The area contains many small collapse dolines which would not require a great deal of effort to crack. One dig is under way in this area with already interesting and most promising results. A paddock on the road from the tourist cave to Nelson has several good holes which have been filled with rubbish and offer good possibilities since the same paddock contains no fewer than fifteen surface depressions, most of them in the same line.

Although not offering the spectacular caves of the Naracoorte area, Glenelg River is almost virgin territory with small amounts of work sure to produce results. The magnificence of the tourist cave itself is indicative of the potential which must be in the area.

Naracoorte

Further survey and extension of the Victoria Cave is continuing. Most notable discovery is probably that of a new Ossary by Ron Galbreath, just beyond the previous Ossary chamber. Work in this cave should be able to proceed at a much better rate in future now that we have the use of an electric jackhammer to bypass some delicate formation areas and knock out some tight squeezes. At present work parties use all their energy and time up just getting to where the work should start.

Kevin Moriarty and members of the Flinders University Geology Club have been surveying all over the ridge till blue in the face, and turn up in the most unlikely places with great lengths of tube full of water for measuring relative levels. They are searching for fossil water-tables or evidence of the Great Flood or something similar. Shortly they hope to have a small drilling rig down there, so could find caves by the hit and miss method, maybe. We know a few likely places to go drilling. Kevin has also been working in Bill Platt's Sand Cave, and although the old formwork in the entrance is almost all rotted away, it is pleasing to see that the drymix concrete which we poured around it has hardened up well and makes a good strong collar.

A similar cave entrance may be taking shape on Bill Pavy's place, between Fox and Haystall Caves, where Jim Wesley-Smith and everybody else are digging out a recent sand collapse-cone. The sides have been held back by an old tank, and the latest stage is the mixing of bags of cement with the sand to convert it to rock. A long process, but we should win in the end.

A dig following a faint breeze in a small hole on Crawford's property was pushed by Graham Pilkington, Max Meth and others into a small chamber, but refused to go further. Better luck off the back of Cathedral Cave has given the same diggers two respectable chambers, 400 feet of passage, and possibly more yet to come. Naracoorte can keep us happy for a long time yet.

John Foulds (on Glenelg River area)
Grant Gartrell (on the rest)

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 8th FEBRUARY 1973

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		<u>INCOME</u>	
Purchase of Equipment		Members' Subscriptions	272.00
Carbide	46.50		
Filing Cabinet	67.25	Sale of Publications	79.81
Ropes	<u>42.00</u>		
	155.75	Trip fees	95.30
Subscriptions to and purchase of publications	173.06	Stickers & Badges	6.30
Postage	77.45	Dinners	403.00
Stationery	86.30	Bank Interest	15.97
Dinners	418.80	Donations	
Hire of Lecture Room	19.50	A.Hill	7.00
Petty Cash	17.74	W.Pavy	10.00
		R.Galbreath	2.00
		A.Jackson (no 3 Ac)	<u>20.00</u>
			39.00
Kodak - slides	90.00	CEGSA No.2 A/c	90.00
Radio licences	34.00	Balance from Nullarbor A/c	4.61
Transferred to CEGSA No 3 A/c	20.00	Sundries	18.05
Sundries	20.83	Balance as at 26/1/72	461.50
Balance as at 8/2/73	<u>372.11</u>		
	<u>\$1485.54</u>		<u>\$1485.54</u>

GEAR LIST

Office Equipment

Dyeline Print Machine
 Duplicator
 2 Typewriters
 1 four-drawer Verticalfile

Survey Equipment

2 Miners Dials
 2 100 ft fibreglass tapes (poor cond)
 1 100 ft steel tape
 2 60 ft cloth tapes
 2 short stadia
 1 tripod
 1 triangular dial baseplate

Search & Rescue Equipment

First Aid Kits
 2 Sets Webbing Bands
 3 Field Telephones
 1 Clarke Stretcher (retired from active service)
 (Note: other stretchers seen on exercises have been borrowed)

General Equipment

275' ladder	700' Manila rope
12 slings	360' BS3104 Nylon (new)
6 helmets	120' " " (old)
3 carbide lamps	Sundry digging gear
2 sets bone sieves	Laddermaking gear.
Carbide sieves.	

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) - MEMBERS IN FEBRUARY 1973

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Aslin Fred	29 Elizabeth St., Mt. Gambier 5290 Ph. 21233
Baker Mrs. W.A.J.	4 Cambridge Ave., West Beach 5024
Hamilton-Smith Elery	P.O. Box 36 Carlton Sth. 3053
Mollet Noel	51 Amber Rd. Highbury 5089 (H) 642221 (W)
Sanders Fred	8 Wattlebury Road, Lower Mitcham 5062 (H) 763839 (W) 513458
Sexton R.T.	c/- Highways Dept., Walkerville 5081 (W) 448161

HONORARY ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Daily Dr. B.	10 Heading Ave., Campbelltown 5074
Jennings J.N.	Research School of Pacific Studies A.N.U. Canberra A.C.T.
Inglis Dr. W.G.	120 Osmond Tce., Norwood 5067
Ludbrook Dr. N.H.	110 Watson Ave., Toorak Gdns. 5065
Tindale Prof. N.B.	53 Waite St. Blackwood 5051

FULL MEMBERS

Allanson Judith	41 Lindsay St., Plympton 5038 534904
Baker Harry	Cloudland Drive-In Theatre Naracoorte (H) 621369
Bailey Edwin	2 Boorman Ave., Pasadena 5042 (H) 768264 (W) 595378
Bakker Miss Joyce	4/40 Chopin Rd., Somerton Pk. 5044 (W) 513041
Bateman Miss Merrilyn	188 Fisher Street, Malvern 5061
Bolland Peter	91 Hunter Cres., Salisbury Nth 5108
Bowen Rick	5 Second Ave., Wingfield 5013
Carter Graham	P.O. Box 10 Lucindale 5272 Ph. Luc. 95
Cohen Dr. Harvey	Maths Dept., Latrobe Uni., Bendoora 3083
Dasborough Bart	242 Pittwater Rd., Manly 2095
Dunn Bernard	4 Parson's Rd., Reynella 5161
Foulds John	500 Fullarton Road, Myrtle Bank 5063 (W) 434162
Galbreath Ron	66 Ashfield Rd., Elizabeth 5112 (W) 596346
Gamble William	8 Myall St., P.O. Box 441 Renmark 5341
Gartrell Dr. Grant	45 Marlborough St., Brighton 5048 (H) 982203 (W) 596298
Gartrell Mrs. Leslye	45 Marlborough St., Brighton 5048 (H) 982203
Goedecke Wayne	225 Findon Rd., Findon 5023
Havens Gary	c/- 6975 Elaine Way Sandiego California 92120 U.S.A.
Hawke David	43 Semaphore Rd., Semaphore 5019 (H) 497070
Hawkes Peter	46 Hardy Ave., Glenelg East 5045 (H) 953658 (P.M.B. Box 369, Panguna, Bougainville TPNG)
Hopkins James	31 California St., Nailsworth 5083 (H) 449562
Hutchings Rick	c/- Subdistrict Office, Oksmadin, West Sepik District N.G.
Lake Dr. Anthony	31 Lutana Cres., Mitchell Pk. 5043 (H) 772152
Lake Pat	" " " " " " "
Lewis Ian	12 McLachlan Ave., Glenelg Nth. 5045 (H) 956582
Linke Victor	3 Napier St., Renown Park 5008 (H) 463105

Maddock Trevor	14 Arcoona Ave., Rostrevor 5073 (H) 373067
Meth Max	12 Cleve St., Mansfield Pk 5012 (W) 877741 (H) 456744
McLeay Toby	337 Payneham Rd, Marden 5070 (H) 635150
Minnes Gordon	25 Third Ave, Forestville 5035 (H) 937528
Pledge Neville	C/- S.A. Museum, Nth. Tce. Adelaide 5000
Robertson Peter	134 Fordham Ave. Camberwell Vic. 3124
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Warren Peter	9 Athalie Ave., Parafield Gdns 5107 (H) 584443 (W) 284168
Wells Rod	7 Parish Hill Rd., Uraidla 5142 (H) 303150 (W) 234333
Williams David	67 Jenkins Tce, Naracoorte (P.O. Box 88) (H) 087 - 621494

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Asmussen Phillip	11 Pudney St., Seaton 5023
Bailey Trevor	15 Bolitho St, Pt. Augusta
Bayly David	36 Penno Pde, Blackwood 5051 (H) 782310
Beresny John	4 Alison Ave, Ascot Pk 5043 (W) 971866
Boulton Greg	1/1 McMahon Pl., Seaton 5023
Bowley Geoff	16 Sprod Ave, Toorak Gdns 5065 (H) 33036 (W) 471611
Cairney Peter	Kathleen Lumley College, 51 Finnis St, Nth Adelaide.
Copping, Miss Lorraine	218 Glen Osmond Rd, Fullarton 5063
Da Costa Dean	59 Ballarat St, Fisher ACT 2611
DeGraff Jerry	32 Wilson St., Plympton 5038 (H) 933516
Dixon Paul	7 Diagonal Road, Glenelg 5045 (W) 230230
Fieldhouse Lyn	18 Repton Rd, Somerton Pk. 5044
George Chris	267 Beulah Rd., Kensington Pk. 5058 (H) 321838
Hughes Steven	44 Sussex Tce, Westbourne Pk (W) 237272 (H) 723615
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Jackson Athol	6 Hudson Ave., Rostrevor 5073 (H) 378759
Jarrad Terry	16 Grandview Gve, Magill 5072 (H) 319425
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Murray David	P.O. Box 71 Yankalilla 5203
Norwood Leonard	4 Harold St., Seaton 5023
Oxley Neil	17 Anselm St., Christies Downs 5164 (Ph.c/-E.Bailey)
Pilkington Graham	63 Redward Ave, Greenacres 5086 (W) 517400 (H) 616631
Pilkington Mrs. Ann	" " " " " "
Pruis Herman	8 Union St., Mt Gambier 5290 (W) 21131
Prust Phillip	65 Victoria Tce, Kingswood 5062
Restall William	12 Little Rundle St., Kent Town
Sharp David	3 Blanche Ave, Magill 5072 (W) SAIT ext. 387
Sherriff Alex	P.O. Box 420 Naracoorte 5271
Sjoberg Gary	9 Fourth Ave, Woodville Gdns 5012
Smith Robert	PMB 232 Rocky River Service, Kingscote 5223 (H)Karratta 211
Sprigg Glenn	47 Torrens Ave., Lockleys 5032 (H) 576381
Squire Graham	17 Thorngate Drive, Belair (W) 877473
Kristof Larry	6 Union St., Mt. Gambier 5290 (W) 22369
Wilson Ann	22 Quick Rd Mitchell Pk 5043
Wright Barry	20 Hynam Ave, Edwardstown 5039
Haska Julia	Monash University, Clayton, Vic. 3168
Thompson Miss Gillian	29 Gower St., Glenelg East (H) 952661 (W) 515355

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Canberra Speleo. Soc., PO Box 530 Canberra 2600
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C.R.G., 'Lindum', The Homend, Ledbury, Herefordshire, England
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'Helictite', Box 183 Broadway NSW 2007
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Monash Bushwalking Club, Monash University, Clayton Vic 3168
National S.S., 609 Meadow Lane, Vienna, Va. 22180 U.S.A.
Nature Conservation Soc. of S.A., 7 Stewart Ave, Salisbury 5108
Natural History Soc. of S.A., 23 Sunset Strip, Athelstone 5076
Newcastle Spel. Assn, PO Box 86 Broadmeadow NSW
Newcastle Uni. S.S., PO Box 4 Tighes Hill, Newcastle NSW
Northern Caving Club, 62 Cross Flats Cres., Beeston, Leeds 11, England
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Peninsular Speleo Gp., PO Box 250 Mona Vale 2103
Planning S.A. Editor, Box 1137 GPO Adelaide 5001
S.A. Dept. of Mines, 169 Rundle St, Adelaide 5000
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Uni. Queensland S.S., Student Union, Uni.Qld.St. Lucia, Qld 4067
Victorian Spel. Assn., Box 5425CC, G.P.O. Melbourne Vic 3001
Western Australian Spel. Grp, Box S1349 G.P.O. Perth W.A.
Wm Pengelly Cave Studies Trust Ltd, 24 Sydney Rd, Bexley Heath, Kent Eng. D.A.6849