

CEGSA NEWS



Newsletter of the Cave Exploration Group of South Australia Inc.

Volume 42 Number 2

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MAY 1997



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

PO Box 144, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, South Australia, 5000.

Meetings held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December, at 7.30 PM in the Royal Society of South Australia meeting room, Natural Science Building, South Australian Museum.

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Cover Photograph: Scene in Easter Cave, Margaret River, WA: By Marie Choi

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The deadline for copy or background material for Volume 42 Number 3 (Issue 167) must reach the Editor by Wednesday 23rd July 1997. Material not meeting this deadline may be retained for possible use in a following issue. The preferred method is on 3.5" IBM floppy disk in Word or ASCII text format or via EMAIL at atholjax@cobweb.com.au as an attachment. Of course other forms of communication will still be gratefully accepted.

The views expressed in this publication are those of individual authors and not necessarily those of the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) Inc. or its Committee.

EDITORIAL

A paragraph in a recent book – CAVES: Processes, Development and Management. By David Gillieson (p130) led me to make further inquiries about the condition of the “Coffee and Cream” deposits in Mullamullang Cave (N37) on the Nullarbor. The paragraph follows:

Exsudation or salt weathering is responsible for the production of the famous 'coffee and cream' which is perhaps the most dramatic and unusual of the Nullarbor cave sediments. The best and most extensive deposits were to be found in Mullamullang Cave but they are also known from a number of other sites. 'Coffee and cream' is an airfall deposit produced by crystal weathering. It is made up of a fine crystalline powder and a more granular material with small fragments of halite and gypsum cave flowers. Both the light- and the dark-coloured materials are made up of a high magnesium calcite. The 'cream' is a cream, occasionally pink, colour containing about 2 per cent of iron minerals. The strikingly contrasting 'coffee' is of similar chemical composition but with about 8 per cent iron compounds plus some manganese dioxide (caldwell et al. 1982). The two forms appear to flow over one another. The whole forms an unusual entity of puzzling appearance, especially as the roofs above appear to be evenly coloured and textured, at least at a scale far smaller than the 'coffee and cream' facies. They probably deserve further investigation, but unfortunately the Mullamullang Cave deposits have been very much disturbed by visitors. It is believed that 'coffee and cream' is only found in caves beneath the Nullarbor Plain.

“The best and most extensive deposits were (my accent) to be found in Mullamullang Cave...” and “...but unfortunately the Mullamullang Cave deposits have been very much disturbed by visitors.” statements have been confirmed by other people who have visited the cave in recent times.

What must the rest of the World's caving and scientific fraternity think of the Australian caving population for such a unique deposit to be so badly damaged. The damage is not repairable or renewable in the foreseeable future. Whoever was the culprits must either be downright vandals or incredibly stupid. No wonder more and more land and cave managers are refusing access to the caves that they have control of. We must be more conservation minded in the way we travel through our caves. We must ask ourselves is there a suitable existing path, and if there isn't, do we need to go there anyway? We should not make tracks all over the place just so we can say we have seen every inch(cm) of the cave. We have to prove to the managers that we are responsible cavers. We must preserve every bit of cave that we have because “what there is, is all there ever will be”.

Now on to some less serious items.

The meetings over the past three months saw a presentation of some very good underwater videos by Ken Smith and a showing of a large (80) set of slides of Lechuguilla Cave in New Mexico which were supplied by Grant Gartrell and projected by myself. Both items were very good and received by the members with enthusiasm.

The ASF Conference has come and gone, and went very well. I hope to have some articles on it in the next CEGSA NEWS if anyone would like to write something (hint, hint).

I would like to thank Fred Aslin for supplying a copy of the missing Newsletter. I can now complete the binding of all the past Newsletters and Annual Reports as soon as I can find time to get to the Army and use their binding machine.

Well, that's about all for this time except for a plea to all you budding photographers for some suitable black and white or colour prints for the cover of the CEGSA NEWS. Thanks to Marie Choi for coming to the rescue of this edition.

Athol.

LETTERS

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31-May-09

Dear CEGSA Members,

In my new position on the CEGSA committee as Research Coordinator I am trying to get a full picture of all the research activities of the club, what people are doing, where they are doing it and why. To answer these questions, I would like CEGSA members who are involved in such activities to give me some feedback on their research.

By the way, I think that the term 'research activity' needs some explanation. I see it as any caving related activity that will further increase our knowledge of any aspect of caves. Such activities may include surveying, developing knowledge of an area, exploration, art, studies of biota, history, photography, heritage ... or anything to do with caving. One is not restricted by geographical or any other boundaries.

After I have compiled this data, I will prepare a report for the CEGSA News so that members can see what research activities are being carried out. Hopefully, a person who wishes to contribute can see at a glance who is doing what and contact the individual who champions the project (the 'project champion').

Here is a random list of on-going research activities that I am aware of (I haven't included positions / jobs held by the CEGSA committee members):

Research Activity

Survey of Victoria Fossil Cave (Naracoorte)
Exploration in Victoria Fossil Cave
Bats (anywhere)
Blackberry Cave (Naracoorte)
Cave Crickets (anywhere)
Lower South East Karst Index
Creation of Upper South East Karst Index
Creation of Kangaroo Island Karst Index
Cave Diving (general)
Flinders Karst Index
Nullarbor Karst Index
Sellicks Hill Quarry Protest
Cave Exploration on the Fleurieu Peninsula
Cave Exploration at Kelly Hill (Kangaroo Island)
Art
Survey of SOS, S102 (Naracoorte)
RDF Construction Project
Bones (any sort)

Sub-committees:

Records Access
Artificial Caves
Peer Review

Project Champion

Gary Woodcock
Graham Pilkington
Terry Reardon
Steve Milner
Ron Simms
Peter Horne
Ruth Lawrence
Steve Milner
Peter Horne
Peter Kraehenbuehl
Max Meth
Grant Gartrell
Grant Gartrell
Grant Gartrell
June MacLucas
Mark Sefton
Nigel Dobson-Keefe
Neville Pledge

(Chair) George MacLucas
(Chair) George MacLucas
(Chair) Graham Pilkington

I'm sorry if I have missed anyone off the list, it was purely off the top of my head (as far as I know this is the only list!). As you can see the research activities are varied. So, if you have any research projects in progress, or have something that has been finished but not written up then please let me know. All information will be most welcome.

Ultimately I hope to get information together so that we (the club) have a better idea of where we are going and if anyone asks for a worthwhile project or wants to develop their own, we can at least point them in the right direction.

Hopefully, in my role as research coordinator I will be able to raise the profile of the research efforts of individuals and thereby raise the profile of the club.

Many thanks,

Steve.

TRIP REPORTS

Margaret River - Western Australia

December 26th 1996 – January 6th 1997

Trip Members : Marie Choi, Frank Hankinson, Damien Grindley and Angelique Egtberts.

We departed Adelaide in the early hours of Boxing Day with the intention of driving straight through. However due to the lack of licensed drivers and car trouble this was not to be. The first car problem occurred at Cocklebidy service station, fortunately the manager was still up and came to our rescue by supplying and fitting a new coil although this didn't solve all our problems. We camped on the Nullarbor for the night puttering into Norsman the next day. Here we discovered we required a new distributor. The local mechanic went out of his way to help us but in the end we had to stay overnight until a new one arrived the next morning from Perth. We were on a way by 9.30 am and arrived in Margaret River on the evening of December 28th.

December 29th.

An invitation was extended by W A S G A members to go to Arumvale cave. Damian took up the offer whilst the rest of us decided to relax for the day. He describes the cave as follows - steep unstable 70 degree entrance slope to a nicely decorated stream chamber, continuing to a large choke, the stream way then continued becoming lower and flatter disappearing to a maze of solution tubes. The rest of us spent the time touring the new "Cave Works" interpretative centre. It is a beautiful building made from local limestone with Jarrah timber floors.

The centre contains some excellent photos of caves from around the world including a wall sized poster of Piccaninnie Ponds with Janine and Crunchy diving it. You then proceed past a video screen showing footage of a Nullarbor cave diving expedition (in several languages) through a man made cave to a computer touch screen displaying information on various cave formations.

The rest of the centre contains numerous displays of fossils, caving lights, local history, postcards and conservation issues. You then proceed through double glass doors on to a beautiful Jarrah walkway and lookout that overlooks Lake cave. Returning to the building you then enter a 50-seat surround sound theatre to watch a short film on local caves and conservation. We then went on a tour of the local area with its magnificent beaches and bushland.

December 30th.

Frank, Angelique and myself started the day with a tour of mammoth cave WI 38 and then proceeded on a self-guided tour of Calgardup cave WI 49. The tour involves purchasing a 2-dollar ticket from a machine which has a combination on it for the electronic lock. There are no lights in the cave and it is a matter of following the track marking. The cave has a large gated entrance that connects to a stream passage. It contains large quantities of decoration although vandals have damaged much of it. We then visited Giants cave WI 21 this has a large cave entrance and leads to a large rockfall chamber this followed by a climb through a rockpile to another large chamber and exit.

Meanwhile Damian (our little social butterfly) had received an invite from WASGA into Strangs cave WI 65. This is a gated cave at the bottom of a doline. A climb through boulders leads to a large impressive sand floor streamway passage, which contains the formation they use on their logo. It also contains 15 - 20 meter high tree roots and what was for a long time the longest straw in the world. Access to this cave is restricted with a limit on trips and group sizes per year. A great birthday present for Damian. We met back at Robyn's for dinner and to celebrate Damians 32nd birthday.

December 31st.

All four of us headed for Golgotha cave WI 113 which is currently being restored by WASGA members. It has a large entrance at the bottom of a doline, which is gated, with a combination of wood and steel mesh. You cross a natural bridge into the first chamber and follow the track markers on a combination of natural and man made paths. The cave contains a large quantity of decoration that has been damaged.

Next stop was Arumvale pipe WI 56 this is a pot hole entrance with a pitch of 25 metres. Landing on a sand covered rockpile in the first entrance. We discovered a small green and yellow frog. The first chamber leads to a stream passage with some good decoration. The stream way leads to another rockpile and entrance. Stream flow tests are occurring in the cave. A permit is required from CALM for entry. New Year's Eve was spent watching Frank bake a chocolate mud cake after much coaxing from the female members of the group.

January 1st.

A slow start to the morning, but then out to Terry's cave WI 42 with its 30 metre pitch which we abseiled. You then climb down a large rock pile and follow a shallow streamway to the next rock pile. Whilst Damian looked for the way on Frank and Angelique posed for photos as most of the caves here contain very nice decoration. After Damians return (he found the next entrance) we exited the way we came in avoiding the frog that took a

liking to a rope. We spent the afternoon at one of the beautiful local beaches cooling off as the temperature was in the high Thirties.

January 2nd.

An early start to the day as we were on our way to Easter cave. This is a restricted access cave with only six trips of 6 allowed per year. Robyn joined us on this trip and Peter Bell who hadn't been in the cave since the early Eighties acted as a guide. The entrance is a gated solution tube to a large rockpile/sandcone chamber with the lower level being of phreatic passage. This is an extremely well decorated cave with numerous long straws over two metres in length. The water table in this cave has fluctuated greatly as many of the straws were discoloured on the ends having been immersed in lakes that have since dried up. Peter recalls wading through these lakes on his last visit. The cave also contains some of the most amazing helictites. We also visited a section called Tiffanys which contains some excellent Dog tooth Spa crystals. The majority of the decoration is pure white with the colour occurring in areas where water levels have been much higher. Peter took us through areas which once contained chest deep water and were now dry. We spent six hours being dazzled and only really saw a small portion of the cave. This has to be one of the best decorated caves in Australia. After exiting we did a quick trip through Jewel cave and even though the lakes are currently dry this is a magnificent show cave containing some 5 meter plus straws, large masses of golden flowstone, shawls and pendulites. The evening was spent at Peter and Anne Woods for a barbecue and meeting some more of the local cavers.

January 3rd.

A quiet day, Frank and Angelique did a quick tourist trip through Lake Cave and then took Damian to meet up with an old friend at a local winery, as this was his last day in Margaret River. He had been lucky enough to obtain a place on Rauliegh Webbs 2 week Nullarbor trip to measure the size of water scallops. Damian had been wondering what to do with the rest of his holidays from Uni. The evening was spent collecting water samples from Jewel cave. This cave was discovered in 1952 and is 43 metres deep. It has two kilometres of phreatic maze and has a large collapsed chamber at the entrance. It shows evidence of a fluctuating water table and is currently dry.

January 4th.

We received an invite from Neil Taylor for a day's caving at Yallingup. The trip started with a tour of Neil's beautiful property where he grows and breeds Marron. We then did a quick visit into Nigilgi show cave where they are experimenting with various types of walkways and railings. This is a semi self guiding tour, it is a large collapsed chamber, its depth reaches approx 50 metres it contains some excellent shawls and old fashioned lighting. After this it was back to Neil's for and then onto Lost Pearl cave YA 51. Access required a four-wheel drive along a rough sandy track. It has a large solution tube entrance with a 15 meter pitch onto a rockpile it is then about 80 metres to a small silt floor, where we discovered a ring tail possum a little worse for wear. We rescued the possum and continued our way through the cave, which contains some very deep drip holes in the floor and through the rocks. We exited the cave with the possum, which is recuperating at Neil's with plans to release it when and if it recovers.

January 5th.

A busy day; first we went on a tour of Moondyne cave led by Peter Bell, this is a former tourist cave that has had hundreds of hours of restoration work done by Peter and a friend for which an award was received. Like most of the caves in the area it is well decorated with large quantities of flowstone, columns and helictites. It also has a chamber containing a nice quantity of calcite flakes. There are of course some of the large twisting Karri tree roots that contrast nicely against the flowstone. Our next stop was Deepdeene cave however we gave it up for lost after a couple of hours of bush bashing. Robyn and Peter think someone is playing a joke on them and moved the entrance. Seriously this is one of the reasons to have local knowledge, as the caves can be very difficult to find. Peter and Robyn headed back to work whilst the rest of us had a look at Museum cave WI 31. This cave is located near Lake cave and has a short ladder pitch; it has a little damaged decoration and fossils have been found in the cave. We finished the day and trip off with a night visit into Lake cave WI 30 to assist Robyn in collecting some water samples and some quick photography. This is a beautifully decorated show cave with a large lake although the water levels are low at the moment. It is also the only cave with a strong health risk warning due to the more than five hundred steps that you have to take to get to the bottom. It is not recommended for people with heart conditions. Our last night was spent having a relaxing dinner with Robyn and packing for the long trip home.

January 6th.

We left early and headed along the coast for the trip home, filling the car at Norsman just before we planned to stop for the night. We were warned about a herd of camels that were on the highway - apparently a truck had run through them killing 16 of them. We camped 50 kilometres out of Norsman so we could check out Cocklebiddy the next day.

January 7th.

We made it to Cocklebiddy cave even with a header pipe snapped from the exhaust. We made a quick visit into the cave to do some photography. We were quite disgusted with what we found. The cave seems to have

become the local toilet and as we made our way to the waters edge we had to step around piles of toilet paper and you know what, it was a sad sight to see. We made it to the Cocklebidy Road house with the pipe taped up and the manager came to our rescue again welding it back together in return for Frank sending him some info on welding. We headed off as soon as it was complete. We spent the night camped not far from

January 8th.

We paid a visit to Max Meth's home but he was out on the Nullarbor (where else). We were treated to his cousins hospitality and left for Adelaide the next morning.

Anyone contemplating a trip to Margaret River should first make contact with the local caving groups, as many of the caves are difficult to find and locations are generally not given out for the protection of the caves. Also avoid the warmer months if you don't like the heat and also because then and Easter are the busiest times of the year and some of the local cavers are also tourist guides. The cost of food and petrol is higher so make sure you plan for that. A stop at the Cave Works interpretative centre is a must and you'll get to meet some of the local cavers. If you intend driving over then allow plenty of time for some rest stops or as in our case a breakdown. There are various types of accommodation available, ranging from hostel rooms, camp grounds or even the cavers hut (if it is available). All in all Margaret River is an excellent place for caving with some really beautiful caves and we highly recommend people try and make a trip over there.

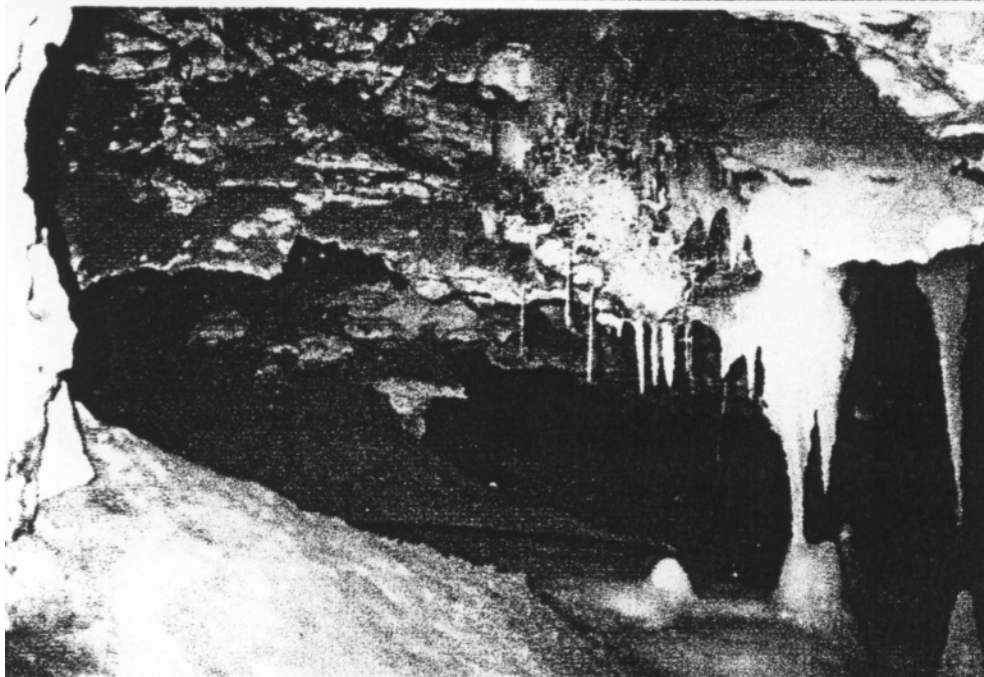
Robyn, Peter Bell, Neil Taylor and all the rest of the cavers in WA made it an excellent trip and I for one look forward to my next trip out there (I'll be flying).

Marie Choi.



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Cave Prospecting on Kangaroo Island

While on a family holiday to Kangaroo Island in December 1996 - January 1997, I managed to concoct some great excuses to go searching for new karst features:

- ... I reckon there's a colony of Glossy Black Cockatoos down this track, or
- ... I'll just check this point out, it looks good for fishing, or
- ... there might be some yabbies down this creek, or
- ... caves are places to find Fairy Penguins, or
- ... I'll be back before you wake up, or
- ... there's lots to do if we stay near Kelly Hill Caves.

I'm sure that neither Fran or Siân sussed out my ulterior motives.

So, I set off on foot with compass, topo maps, any CEGSA cave records, GPS and stacks of water to check out the local environs. Here is a brief report on my activities:

Hanson Bay.

- I visited Hanson Bay Sea Cave (5K31) - inhabited by Fairy Penguins and Striated Pardalotes.

Kelly Hill.

- Over a couple of days, and with Michael Wigg's help, I located 29 major karst features on the Conservation Park. Even though I had a few problems identifying what was what, I managed to sort out the identity of most of the features found. However, 3 of the 29 remained unidentified. One of these looks really interesting and is worth revisiting with some exploration aids. Thank goodness for the GPS so that I can get back to it!

Ravine de Casoars.

- I visited 5K5 and noted that caves and cave-remnants in the vicinity of 5K5 need thorough investigation and entry into the records.
- A walker reported to me a cave north of 5K5 that was 2m high and had a small stream issuing from it. Well worth following up if it isn't already known.

Remarkable Rocks.

- I went to the large sea cave near Remarkable Rocks to get its GPS location.
- Like the caves in Ravine de Casoars, the caves and cave-remnants in the vicinity of Weirs Cove need thorough investigation.

Vannachar Point, West Bay.

- I found a spectacular blowhole. It is known to walkers but doesn't appear to be in the CEGSA records. Approximately 60m from the edge of the cliff north of Vannachar Point is an enclosed depression. At the bottom of the 30m diameter depression, 10m below the top of the limestone is a 20m deep pit. The entrance is approx. 4m by 3m and not far beneath the lip, the granite that underlies the limestone is visible. At the bottom of the pit water worn boulders can be seen in a medium-sized chamber and the sea can be heard. This is well worth descending to check out its development and to survey it. I recorded its GPS location.

West Bay.

- After much searching I found West Bay Sink Hole (5K18) and recorded its location.
- In the process of searching I found a feature much larger than 5K18, the entrance is about the same size (0.4m diameter) but it is a lobster trap about 2.5m deep and full of bones. As I was on my own I did not wish to add to them. I could not see the full extent of the cave.
- I recorded three other minor karst features in the area.

West Bay Hollow.

- I visited West Bay Hollow to record the location of the Cave (5K17).
- With the aid of binoculars on an extended coastal walk I located a potential resurgence of West Bay Hollow Cave. A visit with ropes to descend the cliffs at low tide is planned.

I had a great time wandering around the limestone of Kangaroo Island. While doing so I came to realise that there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done, and that the CEGSA cave records are somewhat incomplete. To follow this up I am happy to embrace a project to continue the development of the karst index for the island for my satisfaction and to update the CEGSA records. So, if anyone is sitting on data or knowledge of caves on the island, can they please get in touch with me and I will amend the records accordingly.

NB All the GPS data will be lodged in the CEGSA records. One last comment: GPS is an excellent aid / tool for cave prospecting, especially when one has to do a grid search.

Steve Milner.

LOWER SOUTH EAST- yet again 2&3/3/97

Party Damian Grindley, Marie Choi, Pam Alvaro, Dave Glowacki.
Features L13, L18, L39, L73, L74, L75, L309, L314, L365, L374

The major plan for the weekend was to inspect L374 a large doline some 30m in diameter and 11m deep that appeared to have an intriguing 0.3m x 0.8m hole at its base. Apparently the doline was spotted by Fred Aslin on 5/1/97 whilst firefighting. The fire clearing sufficient vegetation and rubbish to reveal the hole.

Our assault was on Sunday 3/3/97. Unfortunately water appears some way into the doline and dribbles profusely into the aforementioned hole. Attempts were made to temporarily divert this flow using bits of old roofing material however this didn't make the hole any more inviting. Yep it was squalid. Now as a Pom I know I am supposed to have an affinity for mud but this stuff was impregnated with ash, algal slime, broken glass, rusty metal, moo bones and even the odd water tank!. uck uck uck. All my effort gained was the sure knowledge that a 2.5m wide 2m deep 0.4m high undercut had been discovered in which the water disappeared in a gravel choke on the left. A gap, which was not easy or safe to enlarge, was visible between the rubble and the right hand wall this descended lower than the left hand side. I think Marie and Pam (an avid bottle collector you know) had the right idea spectating from their portable armchairs. Even Dave only made a cursory inspection.

Our big project for the day having proved a no goer meant we were at a bit of a loss. Consequently L39d (Tantanoola sinkhole) was inspected, but considered unsuitable for future abseiling training due to the number of blackberries in the drop zone. Ouch! Whilst locating the entrances of both L13 (Three Sisters) and L309 a new hole was observed forming some 10m up slope of L309 this may warrant our further inspection. Note the pines around L18 (Tindales cave) have now been felled and the area completely unrecognisable.

The weekend was not completely wasted as on Sat 2/3/97 we had poked around the holes of Wandillo forest to determine their relative relationship. We started by expending all our energy at L74 trying to follow elusive draughts however little progress was made. L314 was entered, found to be small, draught free with little prospect of a continuation. Both L73 and L75 were also inspected. The rubbish in the entrance doline of L73 is really saddening, fortunately none of it seems new although it won't go away by itself and will involve a big clean up. A wire brush is needed at L75 to remove some graffiti in a particularly gaudy shade of blue paint. Additionally prospecting for caves was carried out both here and near Penola. Nice walk, no new caves. In all a good Weekend.

Damian Grindley.

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LOWER SOUTH EAST, 8-9 MARCH 1997

Party - Cave divers Peter Horne (big-boss leader), Mark Thiselton (big-boss trip coordinator), Darren Crawford, Ian Williams, Alistair Gifford-Moore (all of Adelaide) and Warrnambool wet-drysuiter Gary Barclay, Darren's car-watching friend Tammy, Alistair's snorkelling friend Melanie (?), and David Kellett with his sons Chris and Sam (all snorkelling also).

Features Visited - 5L9 (Little Blue Lake), 5L40 (Hells Hole), 5L43/44 (The Sisters), 5L72 (Piccaninnie Ponds), 5L144 (Sheather's 'Airport' Cave), 5L158 (The Shaft) and 5L159/160/161 (Ewens Ponds).

This brief trip was your "standard" Shaft Guided Dive trip for cave divers, but this time utilizing the opportunity to allow some non-divers to see this spectacular feature via snorkelling as well as "enjoy" some "normal" caving.

I travelled up to David's home in the afternoon of Friday 7 March and soon we were heading south in David's little van, passing the infamous Woakwine Cutting just after sunset where the western glow along the cutting made for a strangely serene but eerie sight. Continuing towards Mount Gambier we arrived at around 9pm and set up our sleeping quarters in excellent accommodation at the always-friendly Pine Country Caravan Park and hit the hay early.

Saturday morning greeted us cool and cloudy, and I was not looking forward to climbing into my pre-wetted wetsuit (a necessary procedure these days, due to its shrinking from lack of regular use - plus my body's even LESS used muscles and abdomen areas, which keep EXPANDING!!). A knock on the van door heralded the

welcome sight of Alistair (who in my post-sleep coma I didn't recognize at first) and Gary, and we then headed on down to Allendale East where we waited for the others to arrive around the scheduled time of 9.a.m.

We were still one person short at 9.15, and we decided to head across to the property and met up with Mr Ashby where we chatted for a short time before heading out to the gate near the cave. Gear was changed to enable just two vehicles to cross the paddock. It wasn't long before people were rigging up their twin scuba systems and lowering all of the heavy gear the 8 metres or so down the small roof window into the lake chamber, with the aid of the large tripod and ropes, pulleys and Mark's krabs (who said the freshwater sinkholes don't have krabs?).

Hobbling into the last of my gear, I descended the wire ladder into the lake to join the others and discovered that my trusted corrective-lens facemask had slipped from the low ledge and disappeared into the depths, about 40 metres below! The diver who I had so trusted to look after my lowered gear then (I think, quite gallantly) elected to climb back up to the cars to get my old spare mask for me. When Alistair returned to the lake we all prepared for our descents while the snorkellers floated quietly in the background.

A final safety check and exchanges of OK signals between the divers, and we were drifting down into the black void - no direct sunlight on the water at that time of the day, unfortunately! A minute or so later saw our bright blue spotlights illuminating the huge rubble-pile at 35 metres. The first thing I did while the others got their bearings towards the Sawtooth Rock some 30m away was to drift down the sides of the rockpile to search for my yellow mask.

After a brief search I resigned myself to the fact that it had disappeared, so we moved across to the fixed line and swam through the crystal-clear, blue-beam-illuminated void to the far wall where the "Big Tunnel" commences at about 40-45 metres. Nobody went anywhere near 40m - the limit in this place - to my surprise and satisfaction (except yours truly in searching for the mask), and the party then dispersed so we could all see each other and the way the beams lit everything up as seen from 50-100 metres away. (I tapped Alistair on the shoulder at one stage to signal for him to turn off his lights and look up at the black silhouetted divers floating on the ripply-surfaced water some 70 metres away, and I swear I heard his groan of astonished "Awww!!" even from 3 metres away!)

On the way back to the rockpile Gary saw me scrounging around looking for my mask again and he swam across to a decompression line and untied the mask from where he had placed it earlier, thinking I would see it. But without my mask, I couldn't see much! It was a great relief to see his dark form bearing down on me with bright yellow mask in hand, let me tell you!! After the dive we all discussed how beautiful it was etc etc, and we then headed to the infamous Allendale Tearooms for the usual excellent hot pasty/pie etc meals. About this time David decided to take the kids to snorkel in Pics. I returned to The Shaft later that day to complete our diving activities there, this time with a little bit of brilliant blue sunbeam shining on the rocks at about 50 metres below for a few minutes. This was also a really enjoyable dive for the others and later, Gary dropped past the Little Blue Lake quickly to show me the sign he had recovered using lift-bags some time before. I said I'd follow up why it was still not reinstalled to warn people about the requirements for diving there. I also noticed that the water in the lake, like the Shaft, was about a metre lower than I had ever seen it for this time of the year. The "stromatolite" features were very clearly exposed around the sides. As this was normally the time of "high tide" regarding the regional water table (up in summer, lower in winter), I really wondered whether the incredible amount of water being drawn from the ground by those monstrous centre-pivot sprinkler systems which are infesting the region will create a disaster during the next couple of seasons. Maybe in the near future people will need to abseil the 40 metres or so to the top of the rockpile in The Shaft ... if indeed it doesn't collapse and form a new sinkhole like the Little Blue Lake!

Meeting up with David and his sons back at the van later in the evening, we had a simple dinner while the others all pigged-out elsewhere (at Charlie's or somewhere, so I was told). David had taken his boys to see Hells Hole on the way back to the Mount, and we hit the beds early again. We awoke on Sunday in anticipation of a trip through Ewens Ponds before a scheduled meeting with Dene and Lorna Kilsby to discuss their ideas about gating 5L238 - Glendene Park Cave. I didn't want to get back into my cold wet wetsuit at Ewens but David and his kids had a good time and saw eels and fish, which was interesting. While they were diving I chatted with a number of old-folk tourists who were visiting the area, and they expressed their great disappointment that one of Mount Gambier's premier caving attractions, Engelbrechts (run on a voluntary basis, unfortunately) was in fact closed that day - a Sunday during a long-weekend for Victorians, of all things!! Ah well, the Mount's still got a little bit of a way to go when it comes to tourists!...

Running about half an hour late because of the Ewens dive, we shot across to the Kilsby's place and were relieved to find only a hat-wrenching Kevin la Mott waiting for us, along with Mr and Mrs Kilsby. Dene and Mrs K were as great and friendly as they have always been in the 15 or so years that I've known them. While David

utilized the opportunity to take his lads to see The Sisters nearby, we chatted about a range of things until the basic shape of the proposed gate was finally agreed upon. After all this, Mark Thiselton dropped in quickly with profuse apologies because certain anonymous female members of his party had "gotten lost" in Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park! (What, without a permit to get lost??!). At about 3pm David, kids and I said our farewells and went back into the Mount to pick up our permit before heading out to the forest in which 5L144 awaited us.

David took our lives in his hands as he drove his van into the actual forest, climbing over nasty little stumps and things, but the kids thought it was all part of the adventure. Soon afterwards we were all in our wetsuits, holding our Dolphins (gently, of course!) and clambering down into the first section of this beautiful little cave. The first thing I saw though, wedged between two rocks, was a bloody beer can (Vic Bitter ... certainly made me feel bitter towards the bastards!!); and just a few metres further in were several more bloody beer cans (this time Melbourne Bitter - terrific advertising for the company, I don't think). Wonder where the mongrel litterbugs came from? Anyway, along with the cigarette packet, which I found in the root curtain around the corner from the hole in the wall, the cans (along with half a dozen others I stumbled across during the next half-hour) were all crushed flat and brought out of the cave. More seriously, I was especially annoyed to find that somebody had not only detached and destabilised the safety line I'd left through the "sump" section for a time in the future when the tide comes back in, but had actually smashed the only significant roof pendant in the entire feature. Of well, it always has to happen I guess...

Some sections of the sump region were still low air pockets which could only be entered by ducking beneath the surface for half a metre or so. Young Chris wanted to try his hand at doing a very simple sump-duck which was executed successfully with the aid of Dave's and my hands to protect delicate heads from sharp cave ceilings! Sam also wanted to have a go, so he followed Chris before we recalled them both. A real adventure for those guys, and they were really gutsy, I thought!

We never made it to Glock Passage or even out of the muddy walkway to the north-western end of the cave; everyone was totally exhausted grovelling through the extremely tacky mud, and we called it a day after about 40 minutes or so. We returned by wandering through the various side-passages and exited the cave at around 5pm or so and headed back to Adelaide via Naracoorte. Passing the road to S102, I entertained everyone with tales of my recent "cow-extraction exploits" there and from that point on, our trip home was a near-constant stream of terrible jokes (yet again!).

Really good to see the "ole" place again - as well as Zee Mott!

Peter Horne.

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NORTHERN FLINDERS - 27/3/97 to 5/4/97

Areas visited - Burr Well, Angepena, Mt Serle, Italowie Gorge, Moro Gorge, Wirrealpa, Wilkawillina Gorge.
People on trip - Eddie Rubessa, Kerry Nannes, Bill Binks, Ray Gibbons.

27/3/97 Thursday

We left Adelaide on Thursday night and reached Hawker at 1.15am.

28/3/97 Good Friday

Left Hawker at 9am after breakfast and refueling, arrived at 11am at the Quondong Bakery, Copley. There was a busload of foreign young people partaking of the delicious fair from the Bakery. After they left and a long talk with the Proprietor and some locals about native foods (pears, tomatoes, quondongs, wattle seeds), we left Copley heading towards Burr Well Homestead. We stopped briefly to make contact with the owners of the property and then continued on our journey along the property access tracks heading towards Burr Well Homestead. After only a short distance we had mechanical problems with the vehicle, on which we were able to make minor repairs and so our trip continued making it to Burr Well Homestead without anymore problems. On our way we passed through two very nice gorges and passed by Mundy Springs, which had lots of small grey green frogs and large black tadpoles.

After looking around the ruins we proceeded towards Burr Well Cave F26. Bill and I entered the dusty cave and had a good look around. Inside the cave we discovered two small blackish in colour bats in the higher chambers, which was very humid. After tagging and photographing the entrance Eddie took us over to Memorial Cave F106 not far away. This cave has lots of inscriptions on river rocks placed inside it. With a quick survey, tagging and photo session we moved on to look for more caves in this area to no avail.

The day was getting on so we headed back towards the main road and while going through one of the gorges we noticed some small holes in the cliff face, so we stopped to investigate. Nothing significant, but a good area to look at in the future. About one hour later we were at Angepena Homestead talking to the owner about a good place to camp for a couple of nights. He suggested a place so we took him up on his offer.

29/3/97 Easter Saturday

Visited Boulder Bore Cave F105. The purpose for the trip to this cave was to remove a number of rocks and debris from the cave which the landowner and family had thrown in because they thought it was a risk to the younger members of their family, which is not a problem now. With their permission the rocks and dirt started to be less of a problem to the dedicated cavers who started to remove them. While the excavation work was being done two Leaf-tail Geckos were removed and placed near the entrance under a bush, so they could survive the days heat, and six to eight crickets were also spotted, (both male and female), in the cool of the cave.

During the day a large pile of dirt and rocks appeared near the entrance, (three of these rocks had to be specially roped from the cave) when towards the end of the days dig the dreaded call came from below "Snake! F----- hell a three hundred metre long snake!" and one frantic caver trying to climb sheer vertical walls without foot or hand holds. The snake turned out to be a 30cm King brown or Mulga snake, which could have been in the cave from the beginning or had fallen in during our lunch break, going undetected until we started digging again on the other side. Needless to say the cave is starting to widen out and it is looking very promising for future digs.

30/3/97 Easter Sunday

The day started with masses of small sugar coated chocolate eggs scattered throughout our provisions and gear, so we must have been good little boys and girl during the year to have a visit from the Easter Bilby. After finding these little surprises everywhere we set off towards Mt Serle Homestead, spoke to the Manager, this is Aboriginal owned land, to confirm permission to relocate Mt Serle Cave F88. We had no problem so we proceeded to the old bore. Upon arrival we split into two groups and made plans to walk in opposite directions and then come around on the next set of hills to meet. This worked OK, but we didn't locate the cave. We still had another set of hills to look at. The decision was made to bring the vehicle around to the next hills, while the other group continued to walk that set of hills and come back on the next set to meet up again. The group walking found the cave or what they thought was the cave, and then set off to rejoin the vehicle and the other group by walking back along the last set of hills. When rejoined there was nothing else found so we assume we had found the cave on the previous set of hills. This cave is now Mt Serle, tagged, mapped, photographed and located F88, MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

The second part of the day found us in Mudlapena Gap where there is plenty of permanent water. In the water was found a number of fish (Spotted Gudgeons), northern rock pools only and southern rock pools only tadpoles and frogs. We had a look at Angepena Cave F87, tagged, mapped and photographed.

Third part of the day was taken up with driving south to the goldfields, which was hard to find as we didn't locate them but found out later that we were only a few hundred metres from them. Back at camp that night we had five visitors drop in on us. They were overseas students from The University of South Australia on their Easter break who decided to go on a quick trip around the Flinders Rangers. These students, one from Germany, three from Netherlands and one from Mauritius, had rolled, a number of times their hired four wheel drive which was nearly brand new (66,000km) and written it off. The next day they were going to drive it into Leigh Creek with no windscreen, the hood pushed to one side and no spare tyre. Luckily for them no one was hurt during the accident.

31/3/97 Easter Monday

The day started with a visit to the mines north of Mulka Gap and a walk around the area revealed several holes in the rockfaces on the next mountain side. Having little water and gear with us we decided not to investigate. Mulka Gap was the next place we walked, revealed nothing as far as caves were concerned, but a few sheep had eaten most of the grass and plants and had fouled the water in the gorge.

Leaving that area we headed east towards the Gammon National Park. After we had passed the Nepabunna Mission entrances to caves were spotted from the vehicle. These were investigated but none extended more than two metres in depth. Upon reaching Italowie Gorge we donned our backpacks and proceeded to the co-ordinates of F50 and F51. Passing a number of rock shelters on the way, one of these proved quite large (Unnumbered), at least eight to nine metres deep heading off into the hillside. A small amount of exploration was done in the area with little success.

Moro Gorge was the days destination, we finally made camp at dusk after a 1 1/2 hour drive to go 16kms from the main road. The track was so rough in places, the four wheel drive sustained more damage

with a bent rear bumper bar, which meant we couldn't open the back doors without pulling on the rear mounted spare tyre. Road repairs was also the order for the day.

1/4/97 Tuesday

Set out to locate F46,47,48. F47 was high in the cliff and back in a vertical fissure. Attempts were made to climb up from the bottom with only Bill reaching the entrance. With some encouragement from the rest of us we persuaded him to enter the cave. He disappeared for a few seconds when he came running out and crouched down at the entrance. We didn't understand what he was doing. After some laughter from the rest of us because it did look so funny, he explained that there were animals inside making a lot of noise. With some more encouragement and advice from us down at the bottom (in total safety) he reentered the cave. This time he came out in a hurry and ducked down again with a Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby chasing him. It bounded past him onto a ledge and around the cliff face. It was decided to climb around the cliff and enter the cave via this ledge, which proved to be the way into the cave. Two more wallabies fled from the entrance. This cave proved quite interesting as it went higher into the hill, with a chamber that was quite humid.

F48 was further along the Gorge. It proved to be low and dusty, phreatic tubing with some small vertical shafts where a small colony of bats were found (approx. 10 blackish brown bats about 150mm across wing span). This cave is fairly extensive.

F46 we didn't locate, but did notice a large amount of water running from the bottom of the cliff face straight from the rocks. This outflow is approximately 20 metres from the entrance of F48 and a survey would enable us to determine if it is feasible to connect the two together. An underground stream cave perhaps???

The day was still early so we decided to walk some hills looking for new caves, locating F108, F109 and F116, which had some of that black tar type substance in it (Stick Nest Rat Middens), F117 and F118. There were still lots more of the hills in this area to be looked at but as the area was fairly rough and we were getting tired, camp was the best option. That afternoon we rested and swam in one of the waterholes. Plenty of frogs and tadpoles in the creek were noticed. Bill, who was not sure if it was safe to swim with his eyes open, tried using his sunglasses as goggles and promptly lost them. They were found and fished out with his toes. We really enjoyed the rest.

2/4/97 Wednesday

Wednesday was the day to leave Moro Gorge, but before we left we walked the lower part of the gorge. Locating a number of caves F119 is a large single chamber which has collapsed at the rear leaving the front part as a stone bridge, the area left standing is quite large. Here we found inscribed in the rock very faintly the name "F Bartlett 1866". F120 is a small low flat cave with a snake skin found inside.

Another cave in the gorge has masses of old formations on walls and ceiling while the floor is totally covered with rimpoles up to 100mm deep. This cave is totally dry now, and determined it to be F46.

Leaving Moro Gorge and on the track heading back to the main road we visited Balcannoona Cave F83 which turned out to be another collapsed cave in soft rock with a harder cap rock. Once on the main road, with only one stop to look at a distant shadow and a Sturt Desert Pea in brilliant display, we managed to reach our next destination Eregunda Creek on the Narrina Road. After making camp, "town" was the outcry. Blinman Pub was the destination, where showers and a sit-down meal the orders for the day. A most enjoyable evening was had by all.

3/4/97 Thursday

On this day we followed up a lead from a landowner about a cave on his property which he wanted us to investigate for him, as he had spotted it from the air. We had rough directions how to get there, which proved to be very accurate. After climbing this mountain and walking around a bit the entrance was located. The cave entrance consists of a small chamber with loose rocks at its edge and a much larger one blocking the way into the passages below. With some tight squeezing past this rock and a small drop, the cave was entered for the first time by Eddie. On investigation we decided to make a new entrance to by-pass this rock (Dead Kangaroo Bypass). The cave has a number of phreatic passages leading from the main chamber which has two soft earth filled sumps, the upper passages have small tree roots dangling from its ceiling. This cave was called Real Cave? F121. The rest of the day was spent walking the remainder of the hill, but we found nothing.

4/4/97 Friday

A small feature was found near our campsite while walking the hills. As we had to be at Wilkawillina Gorge by midday, there wasn't much time to look around. On the way into the Gorge F122 was located and when we arrived there was no one there from the Conference. After waiting for sometime, a walk of the cliffs overlooking the Gorge was undertaken revealing nothing except a few small holes and crevices which had wallabies hiding in them. Afterwards we guys went for a fantastic swim in the waterhole we could see high up from the range

5/4/97 Saturday

No one showed up so a second walk into the Gorge was done where Kerry found F123 Echo Groto, worm-like tubes in the cliff-face. Nothing else was found so the trip was terminated at that point.

The trip back home to Adelaide proved to be different. You would expect to have a straight uneventful easy trip home, after all the hard four wheel driving we had done. But no, we pulled into Hucks Lookout to look at Wilpena Pound's northern side and as we were getting out of the vehicle a hissing sound was coming from the rear tyre. A flat tyre wasn't the entire problem, two small bolts holding the hub cover on had been sheared off, and it was leaking oil. Fixed those problems, started the trip home again, and pulled into Wilpena Pound behind Athol and Clare.

Found out about the Conference and what had happened there, had lunch and discussed our trip and discoveries. Pressed on towards home when we had more problems with the vehicle. Rectified those problems and made it back to Adelaide safe and sound.

Ray Gibbons

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PUNYELROO CAVE (5M1), SWAN REACH, RIVER MURRAY

DATE: Easter Saturday, 29 March 1997

PARTY: International student group comprising Peter 'Puddles' HORNE (Aussie Trip Leader); Koreans Joo-Chul (Justin) SON (Peter's flatmate), Dong-Hyun KIM, Haeng-Seok OH, In-Hwa (Winny) KIM and Yong Chun LEE; Shimpei ADACHI (Japan), Ita Juwita Radjasa BOEDIONO (Indonesia), Sarinee (Pui) KITISATTHATHIK (Thailand) and Tom SZABO (Para Hills, South Australia!).

HERTZ RENT-A-CAR was very busy that morning, what with a heap of enthusiastic Koreans plus myself crowding their small Adelaide office while we arranged to pick up our two beaut and quite cheap hire cars for the day (\$63). A Nissan Pulsar (for me, being a manual) and an automatic Ford Mondeo - to accommodate the nine members of this recreational caving party for our day trip to Swan Reach (Punyelroo) Cave. Finalising the paperwork, we took the vehicles off in different directions to pick up the other members of the group and regrouped near Victoria Square at about 10.20 a.m. before commencing our journey to the Murray, about 130 kilometres away.

Because some of the team did not have adequate lighting systems, we stopped for a short time at a petrol station and purchased almost their entire stock of smaller torches (around the \$8 mark or so) as well as some batteries for the two bigger Dolphins I had in my car. When we were sure everyone would have at least one light apiece, we headed on out via the quite slow Barossa Valley run through Gawler.

Arriving at the ferry about an hour later than I had tentatively planned to meet Tom at Swan Reach with a number of quite car-sick passengers (I really wasn't driving all THAT fast!), we were stuck behind four boatloads of cars. We finally got a berth and drove up to the shop. No sign of Tom, and after another search around the hotel we decided to go on to the cave in case he was already there. As we arrived at the paddock, I saw that there were no other cars there and Pui surprised me by undoing her seatbelt in preparation for getting out and opening the gate ... without a word from me! Other overseas passengers usually don't expect to be asked to do that task, for some reason, and Pui's actions were a pleasant surprise! We then were through and after Pui had shut the gate behind us, I drove to the cliff edge and parked so the vehicle couldn't roll on down the cliff, if the brakes failed or whatever.

I got the torches out of the car, but our descent down the cliff was further delayed for about 15 minutes. "The Koreans" - supported by all of the other hungry Asians in the party - called for an "emergency meal-break", despite my advice to the contrary before they undertook a lot of walking! I entertained myself with a little newspaper reading until they were all full, and we then left the vehicles and carefully began the walk down ... with "some" members of the party taking things VERY slowly and carefully at first!

Some of the taller members of the party encountered problems even at this point in the trip, occasionally walking right into the rocky projections and overhangs which jut out in various places around the top of the pathway, around the corner where the steel pipe handrail is located, down the final "stairway" section and even at various areas along the edge of the lagoon! The bending also began to take its toll on one young lady who complained that her food was likely to fall out if she kept on bending forward, and I could only diplomatically refrain from saying "told ya so!"). We walked briskly through the undergrowth for about 15 minutes until we finally reached the awesome, cathedral-like overhang at the entrance and after a few happy-snaps of the party as seen from the thorns near the water's edge, our group entered the cave with me staying more or less in the

middle of the party, continually yelling out to everyone to watch their heads (obviously, I should have learnt Japanese because the first, second, third, fourth and fifth "low roof victim" inside the cave was Shimpei!).

The gentle cooing of some pigeons in the roof near the entrance welcomed us, and we soon reached the main junction at "the second log", about 150 metres in. Scrambling under the low ceiling into the larger main passage to our left, we wandered along, trying to avoid the loose rocks and low bits. Seeing Ita's great bravery at entering her very first cave ever (let alone a "wild" one), I congratulated her and told everyone how impressed I was with their keenness! The cave was remarkably free of rubbish and the only sound consisted of shuffling, grunting and miscellaneous international cries such as (thump) "ER-ARK!!" (Korean for "ouch"), "Hey, look at that!", (boomp) "Ee-TIE!" (Japanese for "ouch!"), (crunch) "ISSSSshhhh!" (more Korean), (crack) "AGH! Bloody HELL!" (Australian!) and so on, as people discovered the fascinating features and low ceilings in the cave first-hand. I was using a version of the latest CEGSA survey to show people where they were, and while it might have been good at showing the widths, cross-sections and direction of the cave, it CERTAINLY didn't provide ANY tips about where the especially low-and-nasty head-thumping areas lay hidden in the darkness! "Must make this a little project in the future", I mumbled to myself as I, too, became a victim of the head-and-back-smashers!

About 300 metres in, we stopped to allow the more dehydrated members of the party to have a quick drink from the water-bottles I was lugging in my small backpack (the same fibre-bag I had taken to Swan Reach on almost every trip during the past 12 years or so), and we sat in total darkness for a few seconds so everyone could "enjoy the experience" before the lights very quickly started to come back on again!! Refreshed, the group moved on, leaving the taller and hotter stragglers stumbling on behind, and when we caught up to the leaders I was surprised to find that we had gained a new member in the group ... one "properly-equipped" Tom, with overalls and climbing helmet etc, who had arrived more than an hour earlier and had waited patiently for us to find him! After the introductions, Tom explained that he had left his car on the far side of the river because of the traffic waiting to cross, and had walked to the cave to meet up with our party! It was an enjoyable union, sort of like a meeting on Everest between various countries, and we all continued on past the bore-pipe until we reached the infamous Randell's Rock - a distance of some 620 metres from the entrance. And there was no stopping my Asian friends even then ... up through the crawlway they went, leaving just myself and Joo-Chul waiting by the rock!

After everyone had returned to the main passage about 15 minutes later, we took the obligatory group photos around Randell's Rock while I explained the story regarding how Captain Randell had reportedly sighted the cave from his river-boat (paddle-steamer) and had explored it with just candles back in the 1840's; also the amazing story regarding the sinking of the bore, when some locals I had met in the cave back in 1989 explained that they had used a "water-diviner" to trek across the paddock above, and without knowing of the cave below, had said that a very strong underground stream lay exactly where the main passage is also situated - astounding and thought-provoking to us scientific-minded types, to say the least!! I mean, we couldn't have drilled down to exactly halfway through that particular passage with the aid of the maps of that period if we were PAID to do so!!

We had a good look at the map again so that everyone knew where we were and where the "lake" (heh, heh!) was located, and as they were keen to see the pool which Tom had dragged scuba gear in to explore a year or so ago (unaware of my own heart-busting scuba-dragging efforts in May 1985, long before the low wall section in the pool chamber collapsed to its easily-accessible state we see today), we didn't waste any time and returned to the passage at the 510-metre point. Dropping bags and unwanted clothes, we all stumbled up to the lake chamber where Yong Chun clambered down, stepping right into the high-tide level of the crystal-clear water, followed shortly afterwards by myself, Haeng Seok, Dong Hyun, Pui and Winnie (not at the same time!) before we all decided to call it a day and headed out. For some strange reason, Ita decided against going down into the "intimate" little hole at the lake's edge ... wonder whether the fact that I was lurking there, offering to help the ladies out with a gentlemanly shove on their bums if they got stuck, had anything to do with her decision?!

Our total time in the cave was about an hour and a half, and everyone was very happy when the cool evening light appeared at the entrance (well, at least those of us who didn't rush out and clobber the final hard-to-see low roof section just inside the entrance were happy!). Tom and I discussed the mystery of how the two long logs got into the cave ... obviously it would be a miracle for them to have floated INTO a no-flow flooded cave when the river was high, especially since there are several very tight corners and almost-impassable rockpiles along the main passage route. The real question on our minds was ... "Why the hell would people go to the trouble to drag logs into this place???" (Any reader who knows the answer to this Great Mystery is VERY welcome to contact me! PLEASE!!).

Leg muscles cried out in pain as we walked along the edge of the lagoon and then made our ways up the stairway-like path, and by the time we got to the cars we were ready to sleep for a few days! We gave Tom a lift back to the ferry and we then headed back to Adelaide via the Sturt Highway this time, later enjoying dinner together before going our own ways.

It was really a fun trip this time, and I'm sure that everyone will remember the occasion for many years ... especially since I made up a sort of certificate for each and every "visiting caver" later!

And Tom, I really appreciated your help with the group, too!

Peter Horne.

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CHAMBERS GORGE, FLINDERS RANGES 25/4/97 - 27/4/97

People participating:- Ray, Chris and Terry Gibbons; Peter, Janine and Bryce Kraehenbuenli; Luke, Ros, Zack and Mark Netherton (CAVEX); Ruth Lawrence; Bill Binks; Lance Hoey.

Friday 25/4/97 Anzac Day

Three cars converged on Chambers Gorge around midday. After a few minor road repairs to allow conventional vehicles through and after much searching we found a suitable campsite amongst all the 4Wheel drives. After setting up camp we decided to go for a walk up to the old mines and around to the Aboriginal engravings gorge. We walked that gorge and returned to camp via the creek bed, where we settled in for the evening around the campfire.

Saturday 26/4/97

Early risers formed the first group (Ray, Terry, Bill, Ruth & Lance) setting off at 8.30am to the eastern side of the gorge to look at the known caves. The second group (Peter, Janine, Bryce, Luke, Ros, Zack, Mark & Chris) set off half an hour later to look at a couple of caves in the central and western side of the gorge.

The second group located and surveyed Lookout Cave F42 on the north-western side and then continued towards the east to Waterfall Gorge where they proceeded to try and locate Waterfall F115 and D-Complex F38 Caves, noting along the way many openings in the cliff faces. D-Complex was found and surveyed but Waterfall Cave appears to have been washed away with the last flood, a small depression was found where the cave should have been.

The first group started off on their long walk to the other end of the gorge, spotting numerous holes in the gorge walls on route. They located Miners Cave F40, surveyed photographed and tagged, and also located and surveyed two previously unknown caves, Miners Attic Cave and Wedged Rock Cave, the latter of these had a few bats and dragonflies. While the third survey was being completed Ruth and Ray went to the extreme end of the gorge to locate the hot springs, where they met and spoke to the Manager of the Outstation of Wertaloona. He explained that the hot springs had been filled in by the floods of 1986 and also gave a bit of history of the mines and caves in the area. The group was reformed for lunch when Ruth made the first quote of the trip, while finishing off the crumbs from a packet of Anzac biscuits. She put the packet to her lips, tilted her head back, promptly hitting her head on a rock, "Helmet is required while eating lunch." The group proceeded back to camp via Medlins F39 and Watts F41 Caves. Medlins Cave had two brown bats and dragonflies in it and was surveyed photographed and tagged, Watts Cave was tagged and photographed. The group arrived back at camp in the dark at 6.30pm (a round trip of 24kms), after the second group had arrived back around 5.30pm.

After a feed and a bit of a rest, the usual gathering around the campfire took place with a discussion of the days activities, whereupon the second quote of the trip was made by Janine, "I used to be 6 foot tall, two years ago." This quote was made after Janine had carried Bryce around all day in his backpack.

Sunday 27/4/97

Another glorious day dawned, but not so a few tired and footsore cavers. Ruth, with her blistered feet, accompanied by Bill and Ray marched up Mount Chambers, not to the summit but to locate Blue Wren Fissure F45 and The Big Split. On the approach on the western side a cave was located and surveyed, Panorama Cave (Unnumbered). The climb over the top of the bluff continued discovering more small caves on the eastern side on the way to Blue Wren Fissure. The Fissure was found to contain a colony of small brown bats. After tagging and photographing we then went and explored The Big Split. Going down the eastern side of Mount Chambers we came across Peter and Lance, who had been exploring the valley below, where a number of small caves were discovered. We all headed back to camp for lunch and preparations for heading home.

The weekend trip achieved the tagging of 4 caves, surveying 6 caves and the discovering of about a further dozen. The whole Chambers Gorge area is very promising for future exploration.

Ray Gibbons

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

"CAVERS LOST IN PARK"

(from "The Advertiser", Thursday 13 February 1997)

"A group of about half a dozen very well-known local caving identities reluctantly prepared to endure a cold, dark night in the wilderness last night, when they became separated and lost in Belair Conservation Park whilst attempting a dash for their vehicles without adequate lighting or safety equipment.

A spokesman for the caving party identifying himself as Mr Oman Watabludyjoak, said that the group was initially confident about finding their way out by following a safety marking on the track as suggested by the group's leader, but their confidence in this plan quickly collapsed when members of the group became separated. *'It would have to have been the most terrifying feeling of absolute helplessness I've ever encountered in all my years of caving',* Mr Watabludyjoak said. *'Everyone thought that everybody else had some sort of adequate lighting system on them, and because there was no moon we all tried to navigate by following Uranus, but it was too dark to even see that. We were in constant fear of encountering a prowling hoop snake or an incontinent koala or possum as we crept quietly through the undergrowth'.*

One member of the group risked his life by trying to help the others: *'He used his cigarette lighter as a millisecond flashlight to try to light the way, but this totally ruined everyone's night vision completely and if we could have found him in the dark, we would have killed him!'*, Mr Watabludyjoak said. Another caver thought about stripping down to essentials and burning his clothes to light the way (a proven technique known as the Mott Manoeuvre) or by lighting up a handful of dried gum leaves, but the total fire ban in force in the park at that time ruled such innovative ideas out of the question.

The party was eventually rescued and called together by the President of the Group, who finished locking up the conference room and found her way to the dispersed group of terrified committee members and managed to call everyone back together. Mr Watabludyjoak added that under the President's expert guidance, they then made their ways back to the Ranger's house with only minor falling and suffering on the part of near-hysterical expedition members.

The greatly-relieved party then agreed that future meetings of the Committee would take place either inside Janine's house or across the yard in the Conference Room on the condition that GPS units are carried and more visible track-markings are laid earlier in the day to help disoriented Committee members to find their ways around when they are NOT underground!"

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THE MULLAMULLANG MONSTER

- or -

Who (or what) is living in Mullamullang Cave?

On a trip to Mullamullang Cave last year, one expeditioner was startled when an animal raced past him out of the darkness to disappear farther along the passage at the extremity of his torch beam. His companions, of course, did not believe his claim to have seen a furry animal about "the size of a small cat" living in the cave. After all, they were several kilometres in from the entrance, in pitch-blackness.

The next day, however, they began to think about eating their helmets, when someone noticed strange markings on the smooth silt floor of the cave. There were trackways going in every direction. These were apparently made by some sort of arthropod -spider, cricket or beetle; who knows? Then there was a line of larger footprints having distinct toe/claw impressions. These footprints seemed to make a beeline for one particular point, apparently pouncing onto an insect. But apart from the trackways, there was no sign of predator or prey.

June MacLucas was fortunate enough to be in the party. Using a spare standard C-cell helmet light battery as a scale, and a low angle light, June took a series of photographs that clearly show both (or several) types of trackways - the predator and the prey. She brought these photographs to the South Australian Museum in the hope that we might be able to identify the animals involved. This was not an easy task.

The first thing to do was to establish the size of the mammal, or at least its feet. A C-cell is 46 mm long and 25 mm in diameter. Scaling from its photo to one of the footprints in the "pounce", a four-toed front foot, I obtained a width of about 15 mm. In another photo of running prints, an overprinted fore- and hind foot print gave a

length of 12.5 mm. Referring now to Barbara Triggs' "Mammal Tracks and Signs" (Oxford University Press 1984), I found that the best match was with the bush rat, *Rattus fuscipes*, but this species is recorded only from the east and southeast coastal regions and the southwest of Australia. Could our elusive friend be a relict of a period when the Nullarbor was not as arid, or is he just a stray, a long way from home? Or have I misidentified the footprints, are they nothing more than a rather large, ubiquitous housemouse? It is difficult to see this as the cat-sized animal that startled our colleague.

The arthropod trackways have been more difficult to identify. No-one seems to have done any detailed work on this subject, but Rob Morrison's book "Tracks and Traces of Australian Animals" (Rigby 1981), which is also a good, quick reference for mammal skulls, has a few photos of insect and spider tracks. None is exactly like those in June's photos, but they do suggest that both beetles and spiders are present in the cave. One photo (#1), showing where the rat ran across the floor, has a spider wandering away (?) from the camera, and a beetle crossing diagonally at the top of the picture and leaving "tramlines". The other photo (#2) shows where the rat pounced over an earlier ?spider track and put an end to a line of indeterminate footprints.

That there seem to be so many animals, in such relative diversity, living so far into the cave suggests that a delicate ecological network and foodchain has been established. How old this is, and whether the rat is a recent casual visitor cannot be determined. It would be interesting to know whether earlier cavers had noticed these tracks, and how extensive they are within the cave. Have these animals been living in the cave for hundreds or thousands of years, i.e. are they true troglodytes, or have they followed in the footsteps, and dare I suggest, foodscraps, of early cavers?

Neville Pledge.

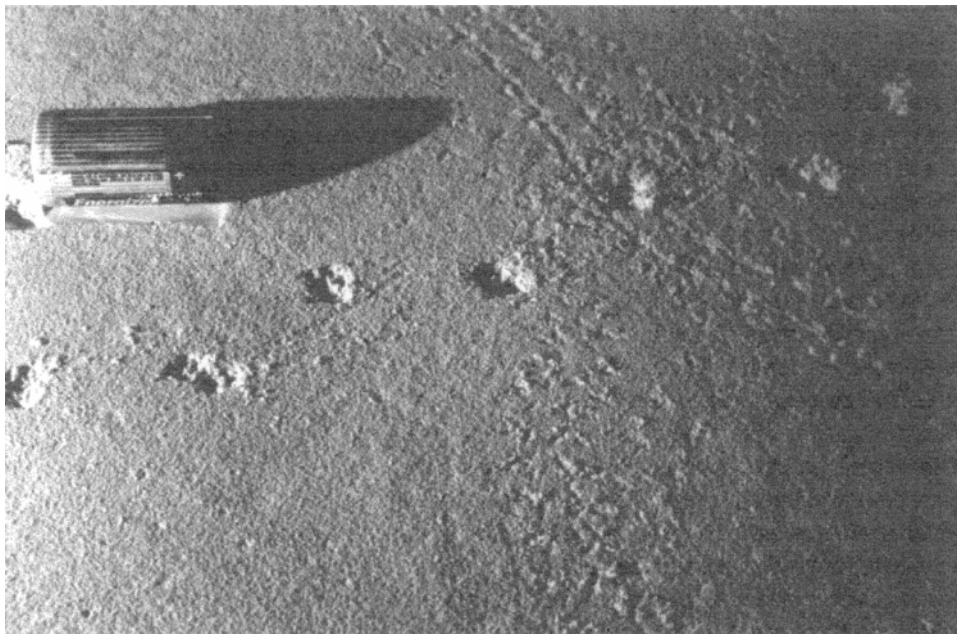


Photo #1



Photo #2

PETER STACE - PROFILE OF A PIONEERING AUSTRALIAN CAVE DIVER

(Adapted from article prepared by Peter Horne for CDAA magazine "Guidelines", 1st January 1997)

Features referred to in the following: 5L7 (Wurwurkooloo or One Tree Sinkhole); 5L19/20 (Engelbrechts Cave); 5L32/33 (Benara Sinkhole; Livingston's Cave); 5L46 (Kilsbys Hole); 5L72 (Piccaninnie Ponds); 5L81 (Fossil Cave); 5L144 (Sheather's Cave); 5L158 (The Shaft); 5L230 (Tank Cave) and 6N48 (Cocklebidy Cave).

Known widely throughout the cave diving community through his committee work for the Cave Divers Association of Australia and as a leader in cave diving exploration and research, Peter Stace is also a former CEGSA member and a dedicated "dry" caver who literally wrote the book with regards to Australian cave diving standards and techniques via his "Cave Diving In Australia" (co-authored by Ian Lewis) in the very early 1980s.

I first met Peter in mid-1979 while I was undertaking research into South Australian diving accidents. As President of the CDAA at the time and an active Examiner in the days before we had cave diving "Instructors", Peter was an instantly-likeable, bearded and bespectacled fellow some two years my senior, with a very pleasant disposition and a great sense of humour. Peter explained that he had undertaken his own basic investigations into the 11 cave diving deaths which plagued the Mount Gambier region during the early 1970s, and because he had personally known some of the victims he had a special interest in the many lessons to be learned ... especially the shocking multiple-fatalities in Alleyns Cave and The Shaft in 1972-73. I was able to utilize a lot of these reports and copies of coroner's investigations to dig deeper, discovering many additional aspects which I felt would help the diving community when I published my first book (SA Diving Fatalities 1950-80), and we soon became quite good friends as Peter held me in awe with his discussions about his many ground-breaking adventures and discoveries - especially the amazing penetrations which he and others had undertaken under the Nullarbor, and which almost nobody else knew about.

Being bored with ocean diving and as an amateur underground-adventurer from more than ten years earlier (drains under the city, various old copper mines near Blyth and in the Adelaide Hills and a number of sea-caves etc), I was hooked ... I just had to see these wonderful places for myself! So, after gaining my CDAA certification in late 1979 and in the company of my dive-buddies Mark Nielsen and long-time CEGSA stalwart Terry Reardon (who was incidentally personally responsible for my getting involved with the Group), I soon experienced these amazing features personally, and it wasn't long before Peter and I were comparing notes and sketches about Mount Gambier's fabulous sinkholes.

Learning soon afterwards of Peter's intention to publish "Cave Diving in Australia", I was quite honoured to be asked to proof-read the first draft and I was even more chuffed to discover, as a relative newcomer to this pastime, some apparent errors in the early maps - in particular, their Grade 2 map of One Tree (Wurwurkooloo), which I reckoned only showed about two thirds of the feature. Peter and the others doubted my observations until as a group of about 12 people, I think, we all went for a "checkup" dive in the sinkhole and subsequently amended that map! This event really made me interested in these mysterious "holes full of rain", as Ron and Valerie Taylor had once called the sinkholes, and it played a major role in my decision to undertake research activities throughout the 1980s.

Peter first became interested in caves generally through his involvement with the Boy Scouts in 1969 and got interested in scuba diving about the same time. His first dive in a karst feature, like my own, was in Ewens Ponds, and the following day he dived One Tree (with two others and with a single torch between them) to about 35 metres, whereupon his single regulator ceased to function ... a very useful introduction to just one of the many hazards which await untrained cave divers! Joining CEGSA sometime around the mid-1970s, Peter met Ian Lewis who subsequently introduced him to Phil Prust and "veteran" diver Dave Warnes ("Mr CDAA 0001"), and through these other extremely experienced cave divers he learned of the existence of the vast waterfilled caves under the Nullarbor.

Around this time Peter also became interested in the political aspects of the CDAA and was first elected onto the Committee in 1976. In the company of Phil, Dave, Hugh Morrison and others, he visited the Nullarbor and was one of the team to discover the major rockpile chamber at the 1,000 metre point in Cocklebidy Cave, and during the next few years Peter and his friends were instrumental in many significant discoveries in South Australia, interstate and in Tasmania. He was also one of the first Aussie divers to visit the caves in the Bahamas and Florida, and judging from comments I heard directly from Sheck Exley and others when I presented a paper in Branford, Florida in 1986, I know that Peter was very highly-regarded by many of our most prominent American cave-diving colleagues.

Peter organised the first CDAA conference on cave diving and the Association's first Occasional Paper, and he served as President in 1978, being a key player in many important negotiations and activities. One important discovery was Engelbrechts Cave; in February 1979, he, Ron Allum and Phil Prust were the first to explore it since a well-publicized dive in 1964, an event that Peter had found through an old newspaper report he had

located. The cave was completely blocked by rubbish and took a lot of effort to worm through, but their first dive on the Eastern Side resulted in the discovery of the air-chamber, and they soon found the first 100m passage in the Western Side (Terry Reardon or Peter Rogers found the big airchamber some months later). Peter was also constantly checking out a large number of other features all through those years, as time and opportunity permitted.

During the 1981-82 Christmas holidays, I worked with Peter exploring, rediscovering and mapping some of the lesser-known caves around Mount Gambier. Our efforts resulted in (for that time) the significant discovery of almost a kilometre of mostly-flooded passage in Sheathers Cave (affectionately known as simply "One Forty-Four" after its CEGSA reference number and nothing to do with our Rundle Mall Post Office box number of 144!), and we also explored and mapped a number of other little-known sites, including obtaining the first detailed map of Benara Sinkhole (Livingston's Cave). Through our mutual interest in documenting the environmental and morphological aspects of such sites, we both felt that a formal Research Group arm of the CDAA would be very worthwhile and Peter worked hard to get this up and running ... it was accepted by the Committee in March 1983, when I presented the case to them on Peter's behalf. Peter was appointed Research Coordinator and Peter then set about organising the first detailed study - the mapping of Kilsbys Hole, thus opening the door for the first time since its closure in 1969. The success of this mapping effort speaks for itself; the project report was an invaluable tool in my own successful negotiations with the Ashby family in relation to their allowing CDAA members access to the 20-year-closed The Shaft to undertake a mammoth mapping project there, and through renewed contact with more responsible cave divers the Ashby family gradually agreed to open this fantastic site so that members can enjoy it the way we do today.

Peter also assisted on a number of research projects which were run by other divers, including the Piccaninnie Ponds mapping study and the mid-1985 Blue Lake studies I personally coordinated at the time, and even in an indirect sort of way, Peter was also responsible for the discovery by Mark Nielsen and myself in August 1983 of the true nature of Tank Cave. We had been driving past Fossil Cave one day when Peter casually waved his hand towards the paddock and said something like "Oh, there's a cave under that windmill" - a frequent comment between us whenever a windmill came into view in those days! - and while Peter believed that it possibly had a divable component (from rumour via Dave Warnes years before), I didn't know and Mark and I were desperate enough to stumble upon this spectacular place one cold night while we were in our "exploration prime"!

Peter remained an avid supporter of the concepts of responsible cave exploration and research despite moving to work in Berri in 1987, and he served on the new Tank Cave exploration team as well as a Shaft Guide in the early 1990s. It was therefore a real tragedy to learn that he had recently undergone a life-threatening operation to remove a large brain tumour - a major procedure which, through the necessary removal of tissue and major auditory organs, has left him with considerable physical problems which have forced him to look at taking an entirely new path through life.

Although Peter Stace's caving and diving days are largely over, the legacy of his dedicated efforts to benefit the caving, diving and scientific communities remains for newer members of the speleological fraternity to appreciate and enjoy, even if they can't know exactly who took those chances in the first place. Peter's ground-breaking efforts and the pioneering seeds of research which he helped to plant will always be remembered and valued by people who, like myself, were so inspired by his ideas and encouraged by his attitude.

Peter Horne.

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NOTICE OF MOTION TO ALTER RULE

Members are hereby advised that a motion to alter the Group's Rules, namely recently-created Rule 10a (TRIPS), was proposed at the March General Meeting and accepted in principle by the majority of members at that meeting. This proposal was drafted to allow for authorised exceptions to Rule 10a which currently states that "All caving trips attended by CEGSA members shall be under the control of a leader appointed by the organisation conducting the trip and shall be entered into the CEGSA Log Book of Trips and Activities prior to the activity".

This well-intended but poorly-worded Rule is particularly restrictive for many CEGSA members if applied literally - especially for those members who regularly, and often at a moment's notice, undertake a wide range of caving activities in a private and non-CEGSA capacity (e.g. in the company of friends or other groups such as whilst undertaking cave diving activities in the lower south east or whilst visiting the area for other reasons). Its basic purpose, to provide an avenue for monitoring the usage of sites and trips as well as for insurance purposes, is a valid one but clearly, recreational cave diving trips do not come under CEGSA's umbrella in this regard, and neither do a number of other caving activities.

Because the Committee has already approved several exceptions to this ruling to enable important ongoing projects to continue with minimal bureaucratic interference, it is proposed that the words "Except where otherwise authorised by the Committee" be inserted at the beginning of Clause 10a. This simple but important change will then enable the Committee to provide for such exceptions in the future.

Proposed: Peter Horne. Seconded: Graham Pilkington.

This motion will be voted upon at the General Meeting to be held in the Royal Society of S.A. meeting room on Wednesday June 25th at 7.30pm.

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MEMBERSHIP

Transfer to Full Membership

Damian GRINDLEY 9610

Re-joining Full Members

Jeanette	CHAPMAN	9305	section 5530, Lower Hermitage Road, HOUGHTON SA 5131	8380-5154
Terry	REARDON	7605	c/o PO CUDLEE CREEK SA 5232	8389-2358 (W)8207-7460

Change of contact numbers

Alan	JEVONS	8602	(F)8224-7602
Steve	MILNER	9004	(W)8303-8904 (F)8232-3381 (E)steve.milner@dhnsiro.au
Athol	JACKSON	5701	(E)atholjax@cobweb.com.au

Change of address

David	McINTYRE	8804	25 Glyde St, ALBERT PARK SA 5014	
Anne-Marie	HUBYCZ	9419	55 Nicolle Drive, MORPHETT VALE SA 5162	
Simon	KENDRICK	8611	1 Hall St, NORWOOD SA 5067	
Paul	HARPER	8802	17 Campus Drive, ABERFOYLE PARK SA 5159	8270-2359
Pam	ALVARO	9503	1 Hall St, NORWOOD SA 5067	8331-3750

New Associates

Kylie	WICKHAM	9707	2 / 495 Cross Rd, PLYMPTON SOUTH SA 5038	8293-6504
Damian	MAY	9708	2 / 495 Cross Rd, PLYMPTON SOUTH SA 5038	8293-6504
Jenny	GERDES	9709	14 Olive Grove, HAZELWOOD PARK SA 5066	8332-1730
Tim	CASTLE	9710	13 Leonard St, PAYNEHAM SA 5070	8337-2278

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NOSTALGIA CORNER

NEWS FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

10 YEARS AGO

- 22 Apr 1987, West Bay, Kangaroo Island: Grant Gartrell located a cave at base of sea cliffs that is probably the efflux cave associated with West Bay Hollow Cave 5K17.

20 YEARS AGO

- May 1977, The book "Discover Naracoorte Caves" by Ian Lewis is newly released and on sale.

30 YEARS AGO

- May 1967, The CEGSA Library and Records are now housed in the Museum Lecture Room. (Must have been a large room?)

40 YEARS AGO

- Jun 1957, A form for recording trip report information was included with the newsletter. (Wishful thinking? Things haven't changed much in 40 years?)

Max G Meth

TRIP REPORT WRITING.

[The following article has been reproduced from an article in one of the very early NEWSLETTERS but I think it is still quite appropriate for today's caving activities. (Athol.)]

A trip report is an official account of the Group's field activities, recording the discoveries made and work carried out, and placing on permanent record the various observations or investigations of scientific interest made during the trip. It should not be merely a catalogue of anecdotes or menus, which may however have a place in "Speleodites", the informal caving record.

The following points are a guide to what should be looked for and recorded in the report. To assist in preparing the trip report, Field Sheets are issued and may be given to each caving party by the trip leader to secure "on the spot" information for his/her final report. This Field Sheet incorporates some of the points listed below as a reminder of what to look for.

1. Title of the trip.

2. Date.

3. Party.

4. General notes on the trip.

- (a) Brief outline of the trip, areas and caves visited, special investigations carried out, maps produced.
- (b) Cave numbers allocated and names of new caves.
- (c) Campsites suitable for future trips, and availability of firewood, water and shelter in the area.
- (d) Attitude of locals to cavers or any special information about the area generally that may be of use on later trips.

5. Detailed Cave reports.

- (a) Name, area and number of the cave.
- (b) Description of the location of the cave; the section number or grid reference; the owner's name and address.
- (c) History of the cave or traces found of earlier visits to the cave, new discoveries made during the trip.
- (d) Description of the entrance, giving details of size shape and relationship to the surrounding country
- (e) Description of the cave. This may be largely accomplished by a map supplemented by notes drawing attention to particular points of interest; or by a written description giving precise details where possible of the size, shape and direction of passages and chambers, and an estimate of the depth and extent of the cave.
- (f) General notes; description of features of interest in the cave or its contents, e.g. decoration, bones, insects or animals present, aboriginal remains, geology, hydrology, air currents and floor deposits.
- (g) Gear required both to reach and explore the cave.
- (h) Notes on surveys, e.g. accuracy, completeness etc.
- (i) Details of specimens obtained, giving description, location etc.
- (j) Possibilities for further exploration or investigation.

6. Appendices to report.

- (a) Sketch or detailed cave map.
- (b) Special reports, i.e. botanical, excavations, history of the area and fossil, mineral or fauna identifications.
- (c) Bibliographical references to the cave; geological and surface maps available.
- (d) Surface maps prepared of the area.
- (e) Author of the report and the date of writing.