

CEGSA NEWS



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CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) Inc.

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

<http://www.users.on.net/smilner/index.html>

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

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Cover Photograph: Painting of "The Sentinels" in Sentinel Cave, Nullarbor
Photo and Painting: June MacLucas

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QUARTERMASTERS NOTE.

High usage equipment will now be stored at the quartermasters residence at 1 Hall St. Norwood. Please make arrangements with Simon well in advance of required date for equipment. Simon can be contacted at the telephone numbers on the previous page.

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

The deadline for copy or background material for Volume 45 Number 2 (Issue 178) must reach the Editor by Wednesday **10th MAY 2000**. Material not meeting this deadline may be retained for possible use in a following issue. The preferred method is via E-MAIL at atholjax@senet.com.au as an attachment or on 3.5" IBM floppy disk, in Word or ASCII text format. 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., its Committee or the Editor.



PRESIDENTS SPOT

Well, welcome to the New Year and New Century, I hope that everyone had a safe Xmas and Happy New Year. We have just had our AGM and thank you to all those that could make it, numbers were a little down but it was great to see so many of our new members there.

Congratulations to our award winners. They were all very deserving and somewhat surprised. I have included a short article outlining some of the reasons behind the awards. Of course we can't forget that Athol turned 65! the day after the dinner.

The committee has had a few changes with both Gary and Julius standing down, thank you to both of them, but especially Julius who kept us running smoothly with his excellent minutes, we shall miss his humorous personal comments. We must also welcome Tracy to the committee as our secretary.

We are changing the role a little as the minute taking is a big job, so we are splitting the role in 2 and require someone who would be willing to take minutes at the general meetings. Contact me if you are interested.

Finally heres hoping that we have a safe and productive year caving, I hope to see many of you at the caver's dinner on the 4th at Whiskas.

AWARD SUMMARIES

Leather Medal Recipients

Leather Bug: Fred Aslin. As many people know Fred is a very knowledgeable person on many issues and helped Amanda identify a rather large Bug that was about to crawl on her. Amanda doesn't like bugs and Fred proceeded to imitate Rex Hunt by kissing and cuddling the beetle, which just made her squeamish, but he had a ball.

The first time I met Fred was at a Rendelsham clean up, and to say the least he was a little "full on", However over the years I have found him to be a great bloke who is absolutely passionate about caves. He has so much knowledge about a wide range of caving related topics and is eager to pass this on. There are several of us who cave with him on a regular basis and he has taught us so much and helped fuel our passions. We cannot thank him enough for guidance and encouragement. He along with Kevin Mott has spent many hours locating articles on caves of the South east.

Leather Glasses: Kevin Mott. Well, we all know he wears glasses and that he usually has built in radar when it comes to caves, but it let him down at Drik Drik where he totally missed an Entrance that was neatly covered with logs. Maybe new glasses are in order.

I cant remember if I first met Kevin at Rendelsham or in the mount on a Hales / Harper trip. I do remember him putting my brand new \$500 sleeping bag in the fridge, and burying a snoring Julius under everyone else's sleeping bag at the scout hall. Kevin like Fred has been a great teacher and guide to many new members over the years as well as one of our more mischievous members.

Leather Computer Mouse: Steve Milner. I didn't have a lot on Steve other than rumours of the full monty on the Vietnam Expedition. However he also survived teaching me how to design a web page. Not any easy task!

Steve has put a lot of work setting up our Web page and it has been responsible for many of our recent inquiries and contacts. It won an award in a local web page design competition and has received good reviews in international caving magazines.

Mundrabilla Marble: Graham Pilkington What happens when you don't have enough paper for 2 survey teams, what else you use you're plastic dinner plate. I am assured that it worked very well.

Golden Compass Award: Dave (No Hips) Glowacki and Linda Deer. For years many have tried to enter 5L309 near Tantanoola but no one had succeeded. Well it was finally achieved at Easter 1999 and over 500 metres of virgin walking cave passage was discovered, a rarity in the South East
Marie Choi.

TRIP REPORTS

***Wolf Hole* with a difference: recent discoveries with CEGSA**

Cavers: Arthur Clarke (STC); Linda Deer, David Glowacki and Simon Kendrick (all CEGSA). **Onlookers:** Marie Choi (CEGSA); Robyn Claire (STC); Tracy Colhoun (CEGSA).

Wednesday, January 19th – *Wolf Hole* with a difference. While Robyn Claire and Arthur Clarke were checking out the new access track to *King George V Cave* (at Hastings) and the new entrance gate, our visiting CEGSA visitors had branched off along the taped track, heading uphill to *Wolf Hole*. After giving the CEGSA cavers a fifteen minute start to check out the entrance collapse, take photographs and rig the entrance pitch, we followed – ascending *Caves Hill* to *Wolf Hole* from the recently cleared and widened access track to *King George V Cave*. Robyn and I arrived at *Wolf Hole* to find no CEGSA cavers present – they had become lost in the bush, further up the hill. Now that was different!



Figure 1: "Tensionless Hitch" rigged by Simon Kendrick

En route to *Wolf Hole*, the CEGSA cavers had branched off along another old taped track – probably a route put in by members of the former SCS (Southern Caving Society) to one or other of several caves, maybe to *Flag Locker* (H-203) or perhaps *Lyons Den* (H-205). Eventually, gathered at *Wolf Hole*, the cameras began clicking. Robyn, Marie and Tracy had opted not to go down; so the four of us who were caving looked at the various entrance pitch options. The tree that used to be used for rigging the free-hanging 40metre drop on the far side of *Wolf Hole* had fallen over, so we opted for the traditional near side 30-35m pitch, against the fern and moss covered mudstone face. Simon Kendrick rigged the entrance pitch using a "tensionless hitch", - a different method of rigging pitches, where the SRT rope itself is used as the primary anchor. Rather than using a sling or trace with rope knotted into a karabiner, the SRT rope is wound tightly round the around the base of the tree, for 4-5 turns and knotted in a manner such that the strain is taken by the tree and rope loops, rather than by the knot (see Figure 1). That was the second difference for the day!

From the base of the entrance, I used my new digital camera to take photographs, including views of Linda Deer abseiling and a "beetle's eye" view of the more or less square to oblong skyline entrance perimeter to *Wolf Hole* (Figure 2). After removing our harnesses and SRT gear, we ventured underground into the cave. I always seem to have a problem finding the entrance crawlway that leads into the main passage maze in *Wolf Hole*. The four of us descended the steep log-littered rubble, mulch and soft mud slope from near the base of our nearside entrance drop and entered the first main chamber, where our eyes slowly accustomed to the darkness now illuminated by electric lamplight. We followed the "main drag" route with survey markers direct to *Lake Pluto*, ignoring side passages in the various maze chambers en route.

Lake Pluto is reputed to be the largest known underground lake in any Tasmanian cave. There are a few other cave lake sites in Tasmania, including a large unexplored lake below a 5-6m drop, off from *Route 66*, a side passage in *Wargata Mina* (a cave in the Cracroft karst, formerly known as *Judds Cavern*). *Lake Pluto* is surrounded by steep banks of fine to coarse broken mudstone gravels, which appear like periglacial deposits, very similar to the deposits under flowstone in *Beattie Cave* at Hastings. The near lakeshore and lake bottom is floored with a deep fine silty mud deposit that also forms the flat lying lakeside banks on the far RHS of the lake; this water-saturated mud tends to swallow gumboots if you are not careful!



Figure 2: *Wolf Hole* Entrance – a Beetles eye view
Digital Photo by Arthur Clarke (19/01/2000)



Figure 3. Simon Kendrick viewing straw and stalactite display near Lake Pluto. Digital Photo by Arthur Clarke (19/01/2000)

many of the specimens found in southern Tasmanian caves have an unusual spination (pattern of spines) of unknown function on the outer rear edge of their telson (the tail-like paddle at rear of their abdomen). The arrangement of the telson spines in cave-forms of *Anaspides* is often different from karst area to karst area, or cave-to-cave, perhaps representing an adaptation to different hydrological (streamflow) regimes or the different substrate bottoms of these cave streams (or lakes). Apart from the difference in pattern of spination for the *Anaspides* from *Lake Pluto*, these specimens are considered to be "stygbionts" – cave adapted species from an aquatic environment in caves (as against troglobites found in the terrestrial environment of caves). Although all known surface-dwelling and cave forms of *Anaspides* have eye-stalks, those specimens from *Lake Pluto* have no eye pigmentation in the tips of their eye stalks and also lack the eye lens facets, so are considered to be a "blind" cave-type with functionless eyes.

While sitting beside *Lake Pluto*, the three of us observed numerous specimens of *Anaspides*. Some of these 3-4 centimetre long specimens of *Anaspides* were behaving quite strangely: they appeared to be floating upside down (legs up) under the surface tension of the lake surface, almost motionless, in such a manner to appear like floating leatherwood leaves. These *Anaspides* only



Figure 5. Calcified Mud Platelets under Stalactites. Digital photo by Arthur Clarke. (19/01/2000)

Lake Pluto is quite an attractive site with straw stalactites and other speleothems on lakeside walls and ceiling and in small alcove chambers near the lake (see Figure 3). David Glowacki was quite impressed and set up his camera and tripod at various lakeside sites with the three of us (Simon, Linda and myself) using various flashguns and slave units to fire off multiple flashes. While the three of us were positioned with our flash units at different lakeshore locations, we all independently observed a very strange and different phenomenon.

Lake Pluto is renown for another attribute: the presence of an abundance of a particular cave ecotype or species variety of the anaspidean syncarid: *Anaspides tasmaniae*, (a type of aquatic crustacean sometimes erroneously referred to as a "shrimp"). The subterranean forms of *Anaspides* vary from cave to cave. In addition to loss of pigmentation,



Figure 4. Cluster of splayed straw stalactites. Digital photo by Arthur Clarke. (19/01/2000)

performed their upside down floating feat for brief intervals, possibly 15-30 seconds at a time, and then dive-bombed into the silty substrate of the lake-bottom, as if "playing" some sort of game. This strange phenomenon was indeed another difference for *Wolf Hole*.

During our exit from *Lake Pluto*, we stopped off at the straw stalactite chamber for a photo-stop; David set up his tripod again to take photographs – especially shots of the cluster of splayed straws (see Figure 4). Continuing out of the cave, I was keen to look for the usual crawlway entry point and wandered off into a RHS side chamber, where we explored a side passage with more straw chambers and two vertical pitches: another different aspect to *Wolf Hole* that I had not previously seen. These vertical drops of unknown depth would require a rope to descend; interestingly, these pitches are relatively close to the main entrance collapse. Continuing along the chamber that circles around the *Wolf Hole* entrance collapse, we passed an area of stalactites above a bank of impressive 4-5 cm thick calcified mud platelets (see Figure 5): yet another very different aspect to *Wolf Hole*. The four of us then followed the main RHS passage into more maze chambers, where David partially explored an extension into the hill through a rockfall zone, possibly a previously explored route that was reported by STC member: Andrew Briggs.

Retracing our steps, we eventually located the crawlway entry/exit point that emerges in the main entrance collapse near the base of the far side, where the 40m free-hang pitch drops into the cave. Exiting from *Wolf Hole*, I was conscious that this is yet another Tasmanian cave that still has a lot to offer cavers and STC members and is probably long overdue for a systematic exploration and cave survey.

Our exit from the cave was later than originally planned, so we opted for a quiet evening at Francistown, rather than driving up to Hobart to attend the STC social night at the Shipwright Arms Hotel. Our apologies are offered to the two attending STC members: Albert Goede and Pete Hollings who had waited patiently till 9.35pm for the appearance of the visiting CEGSA cavers.

Arthur Clarke

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Nullarbor Trip Report, 24 September to 4 October 1999

Party: Graham Pilkington, Ray Gibbons, Ken Smith, and Paul Devine

Cave & karst visited: 6N83, 6N1620, 6N1621.

Friday 24: Ken, Graham and Ray set off for Ceduna. Ken had to get off work and we were travelling in his vehicle hence after packing each of our gear it was a late afternoon start. We had opted to NOT take a trailer and had no roof-rack. Ray thought he would not be able to come with us as by the time Ken and I had loaded what we wanted we arrived at Ray's with a "full" vehicle. Luckily all the food and water was already loaded. It's surprising how many nooks can be found amongst boxes and crates. We stopped for the night 150 km short of Ceduna.

Saturday 25: Starting at daybreak we made it to Old Homestead Cave half an hour before dark, even after the regulation bit of cliff site seeing. Paul had already arrived. However he had gone drive-about looking for caves. On the way we collected firewood. With no roof rack and no internal storage space left, we had to use the tow-bar and under our feet – good practice for small tunnels. Ray and Graham were very cramped up by the time we arrived having had to endure a bouncy track with their knees in their faces.

Sunday 26: The first day of caving. A prime aim of the trip was to create a photographic "trip" to the end of the Dregs – and beyond if our luck held out. The idea was to have a photo to show every bit of cave passed on the way, not just the "best bits" as usually happens. Since some of the traverse was through a rockpile, we had to skip a few metres here and there rather than take a photo of every single rock singularly. Ken was the photographer with Ray as his aid for most of the traverse. Paul and Graham helped from camp to the "door" into the Officers Mess and later from the "Lunch Room" to Violent Crumble. During part of the time, Paul and Graham explored the lead due north of the Lunch Room that Jacques had surveyed to in 1996. A way was found around the rockpile blockage by going back a few metres and down the eastern side. This lead into passage running along the side of the rockpile for about 50m before another blockage was encountered. Off the sidewall we found tubes/fissures entering a small network of passages. I explored maybe 50m. A way on was not obvious.

Ken and Ray continued the photo trip into the start of the tubes past the Dirt Filled Chamber. Graham and Paul continued the survey of the DFC that was abandoned last April.

Monday 27: Graham and Paul completed the DFC survey; only adding 22m during yesterday and today since nearly all the survey was defining internal DFC detail and where the outer walls were actually located. Then off to the south end of the Dregs to add 98m of traverse. Just past the entrance chamber to the Froth was a low 2m wide tunnel. Paul and Graham spent a lazy hour or so getting to find out what was down there.

Meanwhile, Ray took Ken to survey the upper-level chambers (the Mar Bars) just south of the DFC. The chambers were more complex and extensive than first thought. At least a lot of it was walking height, some up to 4m high.

Tuesday 28: Ray and Paul went back to survey the Mar Bars. Ken and I had a quick look at the chambers and then investigated the main going lead. This crawl crossed over sharp calcite box-work then entered a dirt-floored chamber with scattered sheets of calcite on top. We contorted around a rock pillar to avoid damaging the floor and pushed into another chamber that I recognised as part of the Froth that I had entered in April via Pic Niche, a chamber near the end of the Dregs. We decided to continue the photo survey of the Dregs then return via a photo survey of the Froth back through the Mar Bars.

Wednesday 29: To show the others that Old Homestead Cave was more than just the Officers Mess, I led a trip to the north-west arm about 2 km north of the entrance. Ray and I added 48m to a lower-level passage

survey to complete the lower level tunnels between RDFNF and RDFNG. Meanwhile, Ken and Paul did a photo shoot of items that took their fancy. We met up again a km back and returned to the surface together.

Thursday 30: It was time for a day off. We were all feeling the effects of lots of crawling. Ken, Paul and Graham went on separate surface walks to enjoy moving around without lights. Later on Paul and Graham drove 22 km east to see what was out there. We found two features. The first was a shallow doline (6N1620) and the second a blowhole (6N1621) about 4m deep. Paul collected the details and tagged them.

Friday 1: Ray and Paul continued their survey of the Mar Bars, getting into more and more complex "passages". Ken and Graham surveyed first the Dregs tunnels just south of Pic Niche that had been opened up four days ago then the Froth above Pic Niche. Ken found the Froth very hard going, not that I was comfortable. The tunnels were about 1m wide and 0.4m high – quite spacious really – the problem was that the tunnels were completely calcified with "coral" projections randomly sticking up off the floor a centimetre or so. Crawling was out of the question – not enough height – but bellying was slow and painful. The pain was proportional to how strong your arms were in lifting your body clear and holding yourself up during the move. It was easy for the first few hours.

Saturday 2: Ken had a rest day. Ray and Paul doggedly kept going on the Froth survey. Graham just hung around helping occasionally but mostly examining the area for cave potential.

One area looked at was the hole that Peter Ackroyd had gone up back in April close to Pic Niche chamber. I managed to enter the 0.3m high flattener and traversed for 20m. One way led to a short tunnel where the floor was down along a rift giving a passage height of over a metre. The opposite direction looked enticing as I could not see the end but it needs someone with less age (less girth to be more honest).

I also followed the main trend of the Froth, which Ray and Peter were now surveying. It was no longer a north-south complex lying over the Dregs but simpler better defined tunnels that could be walked along and now heading east to north east as predicted from the surface topography. I went out about 250m east from the Mar Bars.

We surveyed a total of 164m in the Dregs and 725m in the Froth added to the 48m under RDF NG takes the total for the trip to 937m and the surveyed length of Old Homestead Cave to 27.65 km.

Sunday 3: Ken, Paul, and Graham went into the South cave for an hour or two as far as the start of Whale Way. Ken took photos. Camp was packed and the two-day trip home begins.

Graham Pilkington

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Murray Plains Trip Report, 20 November 1999

CEGSA: Graham Pilkington, Ray Gibbons and Jules Gheude
with help from: Andrew & Steve



M38 Photo by Graham Pilkington

Karst features visited: M38, M39, M40

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we did not set off as soon as I had planned. But we did load Ray's planking and hauling equipment that he had made specifically for tackling M38.

A few km from M38 we stopped to investigate a hole that Ray had seen from the vehicle on the previous trip. We easily located M40 as it was only 20m off the road. We took the opportunity to get GPS locations for all features visited this trip as Jules had his GPS with him. M40 is 12x8.5x1.6m deep @ 030. It has a dirt ramp on the south and a calcrete rim on the other sides with a dirt floor sloping to the deepest area at the north.

On arriving at M38 we met up with Andrew and Steve. Ray set up planking over part of the dug hole and then the new tripod with wheel as a hauling system. The M38 dig was restarted by first clearing out the debris that had accumulated during the 10 week break. This included about a metre of dirt down the

bottom of the hole apparently caused by sheep trampling the doline. Over the day only another metre was sunk to take the total depth to 7m. Time was lost due to rain as well as learning how to use the hauling system. At the end of the day we left the planking in place; it was getting too wet to dismantle safely.

Over the hill to the south we found M39. It is 380m @ 174 from M38. The feature has a rock surround of about 3x2m with two holes. The west hole is filled and only 0.2m deep but the east hole goes down about 1m into a 0.4m diameter tunnel sloping to the east.

During the day each of us went walkabout to look for new karst features such as the one noted above. However, one party member had not returned by dusk and we had to call up the Police to initiate a possible search and rescue. The cave site borders on a large scrub nature park, it was raining heavily at times, and the night was a very dark one. The property owner who was living off-site at the time gave us permission to use his farmhouse as a coordination centre. We had already obtained permission to use his phone as the area is outside mobile-phone range. The Police arrived and set up SES and helicopter coverage for first light (it was considered useless to attempt a night search under those weather conditions and our lost person was bush trained). Just as we all settled down for some sleep we got a call from Adelaide to say that the missing person had hitched a ride back and was back home and OK. It was an interesting and informative exercise in what to do when someone goes missing. But it was miserable weather to do it in; we had to drive back to Adelaide "in the wee hours"; and it was a misuse of valuable Police, SES and other people's time and resources.

Let's hope that the next dig trip spends more time descending. The most exciting thing about the dig is not knowing how far down we need to go with no other reference caves to guide us. The breakthrough could be with the next shovel load.

Graham Pilkington

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Torrens Trip Report, 5-7 November 1999

CEGSA: Graham Pilkington, Ray Gibbons

Visitors: Brian Freer, Chris Blok

Karst features visited: 5T1-5

Over a year ago, Brian rang me to tell me of a possible cave that he knew of to the north of Andamooka. He was interested to know if we knew of it and if not, then if CEGSA could help him to investigate its potential. Since he lives in Adelaide but spends some time of the year at his house in Andamooka, we had to arrange a mutually acceptable date to visit the cave. No trip was organised for over a year. Meanwhile, Brian and Chris (an Andamooka resident) had been excavating the main depression in a set for four. They had reached about 5m in depth and two ways to go. Brian rang up again to get our help.

To investigate the area, I decided that at least one full day was required. This meant a three-day trip. The dates that were possible did not include a long weekend hence a day off work was needed. The short notice to get time off eliminated most potential CEGSA participants. A four-wheel drive vehicle would also be needed. Luckily, Ray and myself were able to arrange a Friday off work and Ray has a 4WD.

On Friday we set out in the pouring rain of a thunderstorm but the forecast was fine for late in the day and Andamooka is known to miss out on most rain. With the new sealed road to Andamooka it only takes six hours to get there – about the same time as to Mt Gambier. This makes the area a feasible caving target for a normal weekend by travelling up there Friday evening after work. Or it would be except for the roos. For any night trip you need sturdy bull bars. At least it keeps the eagles fed with the decline in rabbit numbers. We arrived about 3 pm and welcomed by Brian and Pat to their home. It had been the intention to sleep there but Brian's brother and family were unexpectedly making a visit for the weekend. Instead, we were accommodated by Chris in "The White House" (this is a giant house that he has almost finished building on the opposite side of the "creek" to Brian's place). For tea a BBQ was laid on. We were treated to all meals during our trip, including cooked breakfasts and a cut-sandwich lunch on Saturday. Ray and I had prepared for a weekend eating out of tins and sleeping in tents. Our caving weekend became more like a luxury holiday.

Saturday we got to see some of the country. Around Andamooka its like living over a massive termite colony. Mounds everywhere. But 10 km north the opal field ends and the red east-west sand dunes begin. These dunes are held in place by trees and other vegetation but the sand is so loose that the dunes are slowly creeping north. It is just south of one of these dunes that our target cave lies. In fact, dune sand butts up to the east and north edges of the largest of the four depressions, which is also the main cave. Brian says that the sand has been moving away from the cave since he first located it about 20 years ago. The cave was sealed

by rock debris when Brian and Chris started excavating about a year ago; this seems to have prevented sand from filling the void found below the rocks.

The main doline was 3x1.5x3m deep. It had a 6m long connecting tunnel to the next doline west at a depth of 1.5m sloping up to 1m. The cave was about 5m deep and 12m long.



A view in 5T1

Photo By Graham Pilkington

The south-west passage was not very promising so I looked at the south-east passage. First we cleared out excess rocks; with four of us it made it easy. Down at 5m it looked like I would have to remove rocks from under my feet in the hope of getting under a rock ledge that had a small tunnel leading off. However, I could see past a boulder that was blocking a passage at my level and would lead to void under the entrance doline. Since the cave appeared to have the maximum development at the entrance this was the direction of choice. The 1x0.8x0.5m boulder turned out to be a chunk of cave wall that had not dissolved away. After an hour or so the part of the boulder still left in the cave was small enough to drop into a floor hole. Beyond the cave continued to corkscrew down to a 2m deep fissure that entered a 10m long tunnel that was aligned with the surface depressions but heading under the dune away from the other dolines.

I did the surface survey with help from Ray. Ray did the underground survey with help from Chris. A few photos were taken of the dolines and inside the cave. "T1" was chiselled on the south wall of the main entrance and used as the survey control point.

While the underground survey was being made, Brian and I went for a walk to look for more caves. We covered a km square to the northeast. There was plenty of limestone outcrops with karren but only minor holes and shallow dips.



Andamooka Limestone – North Shore of Lake Torrens
Photo by Graham Pilkington.

The next day we drove out to the north shore of Lake Torrens. This is marked on the Geological map as an area of Andamooka Limestone and Chris reported that he had seen karst features in the area. The site is several square km in size and consists of residual ridges and hills up to 30m high. Intermittent creeks have washed through the area and into Lake Torrens. Most of the outcrops are weathered into blocks reminiscent of granite weathering. They have vertical fissures up to 10 metres deep (but usually only 1-3m deep) in a rectangular pattern with horizontal voids joining the fissures. The numbering of karst features was abandoned as inappropriate with the resources on hand. It will need detailed surface maps and photographs to make sense of the complexity of "entrances". We might have to number the hills as is done in tower karst terrain.

An exception to the pattern was 5T2. It was a 20x5x2m deep doline along the top of a shallow hill. It was also full of trees indicating deep soil.

Another area mentioned as having caves was in the Roxby Downs mining zone. However the area is off-limits without special permit. The caves mentioned were found by drilling into them. We are attempting to get the locations of the drill sites.

Graham Pilkington

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Don't wait for the light to appear at the end of the tunnel, stride down and light the bloody thing yourself.

NULLARBOR – APRIL 1999

Duration: 6th April 1999 – 29th April 1999

Participants: (VSA) Full trip: Ken Boland and Peter Ackroyd
 (CEGSA) Full trip: George MacLucas, June MacLucas.
 (CEGSA) For 2 weeks: Graham Pilkington, Ray Gibbons, Chris Gibbons & Aaron MacLucas.
 Joined the group for two days: Hank Coppus from Mt. Isa, Queensland

Features Visited: 5N7, 5N8, 5N9, 5N22, 5N20, 5N1637, 5N1638, 5N1639, 5N1640, 5N1641, 6N83, 6N383, 6N206, 6N14, 6N758, 6N1411, 6N483, 6N1414, 6N3, 6N44, & 6N45 .

On Monday 5th April. Ken Boland and Peter Ackroyd arrived from Melbourne at about 6.00pm. Later Ray and Chris Gibbons came over for a few hours to finalise the plans for the trip and to welcome Ken and Peter, as it had been 3 years since our last trip together out to the Nullarbor. Within that time Ken had been on a sabbatical journey to Israel.

George made a suggestion that we start our caving in South Australia's side of the Nullarbor and that perhaps as none of us had ever seen the Catacombs 5N20, made famous by Captain J Maitland Thomson, that we make this the objective of the SA side of the border. This was agreed upon by all, with a few suggestions that we visit a few other caves in the area, including Knowles cave 5N22

Tuesday 6th April. We all set off, Ken and Peter together, Graham went with Ray and Chris and George and I went to Balaklava, a little country town on the way to pick up our grandson Aaron MacLucas, 13 years old and his first trip to the Nullarbor.

Late that evening as planned, we all met at Max Meth's home at Ceduna. Not quite the same without Max but as all of you know by now, Max has been, and still is, in the Philippines enjoying married life. We all wish you well, Max.

Wednesday 7th April. After leaving the checkpoint at Ceduna we headed towards the border and turned off at Nullarbor Roadhouse and made our way towards Knowles cave 5N22. On the way we stopped first at the three Murrawijinie caves 5N7, 5N8 and 5N9. Three rather nice entrances, all shallow, yet totally different and all within walking distance from each other. In Murrawijinie 5N7 we carefully scouted around looking for the famous "blood hands" photographed by Cpt. J Maitland Thompson, but sadly they have completely faded away.



Aaron MacLucas exploring new cave on Nullarbor.
 Photo by Peter Ackroyd 8th April 1999

We continued on, stopping at an interesting group of rocks. Here we found a small gap with a shallow hole that only Aaron could squeeze into. After removing a few rocks, Aaron could squeeze through the entrance and YES with a little help it could go. We decided at this stage we had better move onto Knowles Cave and make camp and return tomorrow to investigate this latest find.

Knowles Cave 5N22 has two large dolines with a saddle in the middle. We camped down on the saddle out of the wind. This proved to be quite a good camp spot, plenty of wood, out of the wind, and the cave had quite a nice entrance, good enough for me to set up my easel and draw. Ray and Chris had brought their comfortable living away from home camper trailer we nicknamed "The Palace". Quite a large set-up with a small fridge, running water and a shady veranda.

Later after a great meal prepared and cooked by Peter, Chris brought out a birthday cake for Ken with sparklers on top. On this trip it was Ken's turn to celebrate. The night ended with a serve of Chocolate Port bought for the occasion by Chris and Ray.

Thursday 8th April. Ken, Peter, Graham, Ray, George and Aaron went back to the squeeze to continue with our new find. Chris stayed at the camp and I went down to Knowles Cave and finished two charcoal

drawings of the entrance. One looking in, then climbed down for one looking out. Towards evening the others returned and stated that the squeeze certainly did go and that at the end of the day all could fit into the cave and comfortably move around in about 20 metres of passage that showed promise. This is now 5N1638 and mentioned in more detail with other dolines found in the area 5N1637, and 5N1639-41 in Graham Pilkington's "Nullarbor 6-19 April 1999" Trip Reports, CEGSA NEWS Vol. 44 No. 4, November 1999.

Friday morning 9th April. We left Knowles Cave and headed off to the Catacombs 5N20. This was harder to find than we thought, after several starts Graham concluded that the grid reference was wrong, the cave was in fact on the other side of the track. Eventually we found it and George, Aaron, Ken and myself went in. The entrance was not very impressive; the cave is multi-levelled with very dusty passages. This was the cave that Captain J Maitland Thomson first saw on his map while on board ship in the Great Australian Bight. This was his inspiration to check out the Nullarbor Caves, the incentive to conquer and explore the Nullarbor caving area. It was the birth of cave exploration, as we know it on the Nullarbor Plains. We were now here and although it is typical of many of the caves, it was not quite what we expected.

While at the Catacombs Ray, Chris, Peter and Graham checked out another find up on the hill amongst the trees. This also proved interesting and has been tagged for another day. Also mentioned in Graham's article.

Saturday 10th April. After a few stops here and there we headed off to Mundrabilla Road House to meet Bob Kershaw, team leader of a large group from Illawarra Speleological Society, from New South Wales. After the usual greetings and a bit of lunch we headed off to Mundrabilla Station to pick up fresh vegetables from Lucy and Bob Eglinton as previously arranged. After a friendly chat and a look around the station we headed up the escarpment along the Forrest Road to Old Homestead Cave 6N83. On the way, Ken and Peter called into Thampanna campsite to deliver some of the fresh fruit and vegetables that Ken had arranged for the CSS group. Ray, Chris, Graham, George, Aaron and I set out in the remaining two vehicles towards Old Homestead Cave. On the way we stopped to collect the usual supply of firewood. Further down the track Ray had a blow out and had to change the front left tyre.

We arrived at Old Homestead about 10.00pm with Ken and Peter coming in last as they had several stops to boil the billy. This became a way of life out there, with Peter giving many demonstrations of flinging the billy up high over the shoulder at full arms length, circling the air 3 times with a billy full of hot scalding tea. This amazed Aaron, who would watch every demonstration with much interest. Later we were amazed again when Ray brought out ice creams from his tent. They had a small fridge tucked away with all sorts of goodies and surprises. ICE CREAMS ON A STICK SERVED AT OLD HOMESTEAD, now that is different.



The Nullarbor "TOILET" complete with Inhabitant.
Photo by June MacLucas

Sunday 11th April. This is the real Nullarbor, no trees in site for miles and miles. This was our day of rest but Ray set up a portable toilet arrangement by placing a toilet seat with chair over a hole inside a shower tent. The tent also housed a bag of lime. This was really wonderful; such comfort and we were all grateful, except for Peter who preferred the old way of long walks with a shovel. Well, each to their own.

While we had a day off, Ken packed his backpack, took his red and white umbrella, his sleeping bag, food and water and headed off into the distance. He intended to drive a certain distance, walk for a day or two on his own and just scout about looking for whatever, enjoying the open space and his own company. This is not unusual and in the past has always been fruitful, with Ken coming home excited with his "finds". Later in the day, Peter took Aaron for his first real bush walk looking for any features worth noting and found several small items. I went down to the doline and started a drawing in the south entrance. The others potted around the fire and conversed. Later in the day Aaron braved it and undertook several games of chess with Graham that kept them both out of mischief for a few hours.

Monday 12th April. With Ken off in the desert, Graham, Ray and Peter set off towards the cave ready for a full day surveying just past the Officers Mess. I went down to the entrance and completed my pastel drawing, while George, Aaron and Chris stayed in the camp. Later Chris and George prepared tea and eventually we gave up waiting for the others to return and went to bed. They eventually turned up around 10.00pm, starving and tired but very happy with their day. They had gone through the Officers Mess into the Gentlemen's Mess.

They had tidied up a survey of one of the passages from a 1991 survey. This time they completed about 84 metres, found a couple of higher level chambers with possible passages, to be completed some other trip in the future.

Tuesday 13th April. George and I took Chris and Aaron down to Old Homestead cave entrance. This was Chris's first experience of a true Nullarbor cave and although she was willing and accomplished a reasonable distance, it was not for her and after a few hours she asked to return to the surface. Aaron loved it, what 13 year old boy wouldn't. George took Chris back out to the entrance, while Aaron and I took photographs. When George returned we continued on trying to find the Lizard Link entrance to the Spring Series. By now it was mid afternoon, we had no map and it had been a few years since we were last in this cave. Could we find the small entrance to the Lizard Link? No, not this time but we were happy, maybe tomorrow. Graham, Ray and Peter returned to the Gentlemen's Mess and picked up another loose end from the 1991 survey. This time they surveyed a couple of narrow tubes, one leading to an upper level chamber, the other came back to the 1991 survey, making a loop. They continued to the end of the 1991 survey into a large flat sandy chamber. They surveyed about 50 metres.

Later, just as we were preparing the evening meal, Ken returned from his lone adventure, refreshed and all smiles, he had found a few small features with a few possibilities to look into at some later date.

Wednesday 14th April. George, Aaron and myself set off once more to look for the Spring Series, this time we were successful. Aaron and I went ahead through the Lizard Link but George decided it was a bit snug for him and waited for us to return. Chris stayed back at camp to study for her H & R Block Taxation Course exams, due 2 days after their expected return to Adelaide, in a week's time. Aaron and I continued on into the Spring Series taking a few photographs. This is such a wonderful section of the cave; the colours, textures and shapes cannot be fully appreciated in a photograph. Pity the Lizard Link is narrow; next time with a little help from my friends, I will take in some art gear and try to capture some of that rich colour on paper or canvas.

With two teams to survey Graham was in his element. Ken and Ray according to Graham "crumbled the Crumble" they tidied up and secured a rock pile to make it safer to go under/through. Graham and Peter returned to the same area as the day before to the dirt filled passage. Later they went through the "now secured rock pile" to start surveying the opposite side of the chamber in phreatic tubing. Tubing continued on through into a large flat area. The rest of the first chamber was surveyed as far as they could go, as it was getting too low and difficult to move. They returned late to camp to a hot meal, quick wash and into bed.



Aaron MacLucas with string retrieved from Old Homestead Cave.
Photo by June MacLucas.

Thursday 15th April. The last day to be spent at Old Homestead and the working teams have decided to really make a day of it. They set off as early as possible making the rest of us feel inadequate. Still we are a team and we do our bit and make sure that they have a ready fire and a hot meal when they return. During breakfast Graham suggested to Aaron if he could retrieve the large amount of string that stretches throughout the main chamber, probably left there by some previous adventure tourist group. Not long after Aaron returned with a huge clump of string held high over his head with a grin from ear to ear. He had entered and retrieved the string by himself. This string took hours to unravel and roll into a large ball for Aaron to save as a souvenir of Old Homestead. Later I returned to the north side to draw while Chris, George and Aaron took a long walk along the far ridge.

During the last day in this area the workers continued to survey. The 1st team continued to survey the cross connecting passages while the 2nd team surveyed the 2nd chamber finding more upper level chambers with passages. This new area is now known as "The Dregs". Ken and Ray returned reasonably late but Graham and Peter did not leave the cave until nearly midnight. Some story about Graham's watch stopping, we all thought this a bit debatable but gave him the benefit of the doubt, as Graham was determined to get the most out of the last day. In total, between them,

the teams surveyed a total of 634 metres and the surveyed length of Old Homestead Cave is now 26.7 km. For further details on Old Homestead survey, see Graham's Trip Report mentioned earlier.

Friday 16th April. Time to leave this area. We leisurely packed up; Ray took down the toilet, filled in the hole and packed the seat and shower tent into his trailer. We then headed off towards Thampanna, which is about 83 km away. Ken and Peter stopped on the way to check out Kestrel Blowhole N383. Unfortunately there appears to be signs of crows taking over the nest area. Later at Thampanna the toilet is reinstated at a reasonable distance with a wonderful view of trees on the horizon. Meanwhile George and Aaron have set up the climbing gear and Ken then took Aaron down for about a two hour trip through the drain and beyond.

Saturday 17th April. Ken, Peter and Graham went down into Thampanna going beyond the U Tube to the western end of the Enigma Chamber to explore what had been surveyed and where the survey stations had been left incomplete. This proved to be a bit confusing. Later they checked out an area called the Lilies passage that loops back into the Enigma. Apparently according to Ken the Lilies area is known by several names, the "Mudmen" and the "Jail House". It also contains unusual decoration Ken has called "Whatthellarewes".

While the others were caving, Ray, Chris, George, Aaron and I decide to take a look at Sentinel Cave 6N1411, as Max Meth had highly recommended I go there to draw. Graham said it was a bit difficult to locate the smaller track leading off the main track to this cave, and he was right. We had one false start but eventually located it. The track disappeared in places so Aaron and I walked in front of the vehicle trying to pick up the track where needed as it twisted and turned it's way along, disappearing completely in places. Eventually we found the cave and to our surprise it had markers placed throughout the length of the cave. (Norm's been here?) The entrance is easily accessible and opens into a large chamber with a large passage running off the right hand side. The cave is very smelly, obviously has bats, as the guano is quite thick in places. The main chamber leads off down the centre to the Sentinel, which is a large column/stalagmite reaching almost to the roof and would be about 15 metres high. Here we noticed a colony of bats on the ceiling. The large passage off to the right is interesting in that it appeared to have what looked like a few black stalagmites/stalactites? It also contained a pitch that Max Hall said drops down to 40 metres. As our ladders and ropes were tied up at Thampanna, no one investigated. There are some very nice gypsum flowers at the end of the cave, if you can stand the smell of the guano (photograph by Hank Coppus, appears in *Nargun* Vol 32, No. 5 November 1999 page 31.) Later back at camp, as this was the last day for half the group, Ken broke open his supplies and brought out a large fruit cake (a birthday present made for him by one of his parishioners) served with generous helpings of custard.

Sunday 18th April. Most of us slept in a bit, but Ray and Chris were both up packing their gear ready to travel back to Adelaide. Aaron tried his best to talk us into letting him stay longer but to no avail. We all helped them pack up and Chris gave us quite a few supplies that included items of pickled onions, gherkins, boiled eggs, dry biscuits, custards and tin fruit. We had been fortunate, Chris had cooked some wonderful meals and we would surely miss her presence.

Ray, Chris, Graham and Aaron said their goodbyes and headed off. Ken and Peter went surveying in Thampanna while George and I tidied up our gear and did some washing before we eventually went down Thampanna for a few hours, so I could start a new pastel painting. Ken and Peter returned to the Lilies Chamber with Peter engaging in some difficult and thankless gardening but Peter did find the "Marshmallows". They returned with Peter feeling really "done in".

Monday 19th April. George and I decided to return to Sentinel Cave to start some art work as this cave has so much visual to offer that I could be kept busy for quite a while, in fact, as I often said to Lloyd Robinson, there is enough here to fill a gallery. Ken and Peter returned to their survey trying to link it up with the survey of 96, which was a bit difficult and at first went badly as it wouldn't connect. After much sorting out of old survey stations, they found a hole in the northern side of the ridge through the middle of the floor of the Lilies Chamber, this drops down into the rock fall below and then into a passage and almost back to the Enigma Chamber. It connects to a higher part of Mark's survey at survey station no. 244 in early 1991.

Meanwhile George and I on our way to Sentinel, ran into the Illawarra Group of cavers from NSW, they were standing around a small opening not far off the main track. Apparently this cave 6N758 was found by Norm Poulter's son Robert in pre GPS days and has not been entered since. The entrance is not noticeable until you are right on top of it. It has a pothole type entrance pitch and has several small Whip snakes keeping guard close to the entrance. This group decided to spend the day surveying and photographing this cave and therefore named it "Snakes and Ladders" Cave. We continued onto Sentinel spending the day photographing. Later on the way back along the track we once again came upon the Illawarra Group and their 7 cars all with trailers to find that Max Hall had a flat tyre on his trailer and was in the process of changing it. They set up camp amongst the trees away from Sentinel Cave. As we intended to spend some time in Sentinel they invited us to come and camp with them. We thanked them but declined, as we were set up at Thampanna and were quite comfortable. We arrived back at camp around 6.30pm just in time to see the others return from their survey.



Looking out of Sentinel Cave.
Painting and photo by June MacLucas.

Tuesday 20th April. We returned to Sentinel and set up my easel etc., ready for artwork. It was like Grand Central Station, people everywhere stopping to chat and take photos but with all this happening I managed to make some headway. We returned to camp at 6.15pm, this time with Hank Coppus from Mt Isa Queensland. He wished to take photographs of Thampanna Cave, as he had to leave soon for home. Hank had quite a set-up in his vehicle; with lift-up, hinged flaps each side for easy access to all his food, water, fuel and caving gear, plus bedroll, table and chair. Ken and Peter had already returned from surveying and had started preparing tea. They had spent the day sorting out the data they had to work from.

Wednesday 21st April. Once again we returned to Sentinel but this time with Ken and Peter, as they felt

like a day off from surveying. We stopped at the Illawarra Camp and chatted awhile, giving them a large box of vegetables that we could not possibly get through. Ken and Peter explored the cave while I continued with my artwork. Once again a lot of visitors and plenty of friendly chatting. This is most unusual as every time I have worked from a cave on the Nullarbor I am left to it and I stay all day usually by myself with only my own thoughts for company. When we returned to camp Hank was making a wonderful sweet smelling damper. Hank had taken some photographs of Thampanna and would be leaving the Nullarbor in the morning on his way home to Mt Isa, via Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Thursday 22nd April. Hank was up early and left at 8.20am just as we were all falling out of our tents. We waved goodbye and wished him a safe journey. Ken and Peter returned to their survey taking photographs and finished a full detailed examination of the wall on the north western most corner of the Enigma Chamber following up and completing the survey by Max and/or Mark. Peter apparently worked for some time in a very difficult and confined area shifting quite a bit of rock with his toes and hammer, a bit at a time along the length of his body, slow tedious work. George and I went down Thampanna as I hoped to work for a while at the bottom of the entrance. George decided to return to the top and read in the warmth of the sun but then abseiled down to have lunch with me. Ken, Peter and I returned to the surface to a working man's hardy tea cooked by George.

Friday 23rd April. George and I returned to Thampanna to finish my artwork. This time I used the carbide lamp as it was very difficult to focus in the gloomy areas and at times I found I had to get up and take the lamp into the areas I was drawing to see exactly what was there. The carbide was a lot brighter and I could see that I had used too much purple and yellow the day before and I had to rework it in most areas. This was ok, as there is no such thing as "wrong colours" you just rework leaving the old colours coming through, it gives it life. Eventually it proved too much, the cave was breathing out and I was freezing, I had lost my concentration, it was time to leave. On this day Ken and Peter went to the drain and beyond, surveying from A62 going west a modest distance into phreatic passage for about 100 metres, thereby extending considerably the western most limit of the double O gauge of the Railway Tunnel.



Peter Ackroid laddering down Thampanna Cave.
Painting and Photo by June MacLucas.

Saturday 24th April. Today we decided to all have a day off and go for a walk to Hurricane Hole 6N483. I decided to make pancakes, big mistake, every time I make pancakes for breakfast and we decide to walk to Hurricane Hole, it rains and rains. Therefore as usual I brought the rain, but this time we managed to eat the pancakes first. We walked off to Hurricane Hole and checked it out, on the way back we all chatted so much we lost the campsite, we had walked too far to the right and away from camp. By this time it was really pouring down and we were really wet. Eventually after much embarrassment we relocated ourselves and noticed that the toilet that Ken and George had relocated in the morning out of necessity, had a nasty lean to it. When this was corrected we all retired to our tents for the rest of the day. Later we found that our tent had leaked from the bottom and our bedding was very wet, in fact it was soaked. Ken came to our rescue with a couple of blankets, we then

wrapped the wet sleeping bags with plastic and put a blanket over the top. Although we fought all night over the ownership of the blankets, we were reasonably dry and warm and had a better night than we thought.

Sunday 25th April, Anzac Day. At breakfast the weather looked very bleak but turned out a reasonably nice day. George took charge of all the wet gear and had sleeping bags, swag, blankets, pillows and clothes draped over the trees and bushes drying off in the sun. I found a big pool of water under the tent trapped between the tent floor and ground sheet that had seeped through a pinhole of the tent floor. While George looked after the wet gear, Ken, Peter and I went down Thampanna. Ken wished to check some old leads to bring things to a close and Peter offered to model on the ladder for me. I never say no and we set up the ladder so it would not spin him around by tying it down each side. To stay on the ladder suspended half way for a length of time is no easy task, as Peter soon found out. Even with rest periods it's very trying on the arm muscles. Peter was marvellous, I only hope I did it justice. During a break, it was my turn to model and Peter took a black and white photograph of me working. This can be seen on the cover of the current "*Australian Caver*" No. 149. By the end of the day Peter could hardly climb back up the ladder and felt the effects for several days. The glories of being a cave model are not easy. During this time Ken went to both "Seeing Red" and "Railway Tunnel" to tidy up loose ends. He also said he found 6 distinct tubes interconnected one above the other. The eastern end of "Seeing Red" abounds in notable crawling passages of phreatic tubes. Many remain unvisited.



Ken Boland and Peter Ackroyd (where's the cave?) at Anzac Cave.
Photo by June MacLucas.

Monday 26th April. Another wet day, hence the gear is once again a bit wet but not as bad. When the weather cleared we all took off to Sentinel Cave, parked the car and walked to Anzac Cave 6N1414 about 1.5km away. At first it just looked like a small shelter type cave but then we could see a small opening travelling down on one side. This opened into a long chamber with a low, long narrow passage crawl off to one side, which led to a rock pile at the end. Once over the rock pile you are in a large chamber with quite a lot of old decoration. We took a few photographs and left. On the walk back to Sentinel Cave the weather was changing, we could see heavy rain in the distance in the direction of our camp. As we walked back to Sentinel and the car we found another cave but had time for only a quick look. The weather was closing in quickly; it was time to return to our camp. The drive back along the track was tricky, a bit muddy and very sticky, with many large pools of water causing us to slide a couple of times. Once again our gear was wet, even though we packed it all in the middle of the tent wrapped up in plastic.

Tuesday 27th April. Time to pack up and leave and just in time, as the weather does not look very promising. We were ready by 12.10pm and on the way stopped at Thylacine Hole 6N63 as Peter wanted to take photographs. We set up the ladder and while we waited for Peter we had lunch of left over damper served with billy tea. Two and a half hours later we left for Mundrabilla Station to pay our fees to Lucy and Bob Eglinton. We looked at their pet wombat "Horace" who apparently just wandered in one day looking very

sick with skin torn off and decided to stay. We then headed off to Mundrabilla Road House and travelled back up along the escarpment past the quarry and off onto a track to Kutawalla Doline 6N44. By this time it was getting very dark, we passed Abrakurrie 6N3 and Kutawalla Doline which looked very impressive even in the dark, then onto Winbirra Doline 6N45. We pulled up a few metres away from Winbirra and made camp in amongst the trees.

Wednesday 28th April. Before breakfast we went to look at Winbirra Doline. What a wonderful surprise awaited us, both George and I had never seen this doline before and it was huge and really impressive. Although we were anxious to take a closer look, Ken talked us into waiting; he said when the light hits the far wall at the end of the cave, that's when it is really something to see. He was right. It was a steep, unstable walk down but quite an impressive doline from outside looking in, as well as from inside looking out.

After lunch we went to look at Kutawalla Doline 6N44. This was also very impressive with very steep unstable walls. We then travelled on to Abrakurrie 6N3 and stayed awhile taking many photographs of the great cave. Later we returned to our camp at Winbirra Doline.

Thursday 29th April. We packed up and headed off to Border Village where we took a track through Eucla National Park to the cliffs. Here Ken found a spot to go down to the rocks below. I joined Ken, while Peter and George went off looking for a flint mine. George had collected some notes that mentioned this mine; the notes originally were by Daisy Bates. They found it reasonably quickly and called us to come and have a look as the entrance was down the cliff face. In the excitement we overshot the mark a bit and it took time to relocate the find. Eventually we did and climbed down and went inside. It was a small cave-like opening going back several feet with junks of chert protruding from the walls. This must be it; both Peter and George were quite excited. When we returned to the car we found an opening of about 3 feet in diameter to a blowhole that had been missed in the excitement and there it was just by the back left wheel. Peter climbed down about 6 metres and yes it goes. No time now, we will have to leave it for another time. By now it was getting late, time to move on and look for a campsite. We eventually found a likely spot amongst the scrub and set up camp for the night.

Friday 30th April. Over breakfast we had a discussion as to where we would spend our next and last night. We decided not to stop over at Max's at Ceduna but to drive on possibly to the next town. We packed up and left stopping only to buy fish and chips in Ceduna, eating them by moonlight down by the jetty. We stopped for the night just outside the little town of Poochera, made a small fire and slept in our sleeping bags by the vehicles.

Saturday 1st May. Packed up for the last time this trip and headed off to Port Augusta. As usual George called in to see his sister who has lived there for many years. Then of course Ken and Peter arrived in Adelaide before us. When we arrived home they had prepared a surprise, as it was my birthday they had bought a cake. Later Chris and Ray Gibbons came over and join us to help celebrate by devouring the birthday cake washed down with a little wine.

Sunday 2nd May. Time to say our goodbyes and let them head off on their way back to Melbourne. It was a marvellous trip, surveys went well, we have new finds to investigate further and I am happy with the drawings I had completed.

Aaron still talks about his adventures on the Nullarbor, he made pleasant memories on this trip, and some I hope will always remain.

June MacLucas

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WHALE OF A TIME

In June 1999 I received a call from Neville Pledge asking if I would check out a report of the discovery of a whale bone in a limestone face near Mount Gambier. A rock hound had found it while searching for fossils and reported it to the SA Museum.



Neville Pledge inspecting the embedded Whale Bone.
Photo by Kevin Mott.

I duly checked it out with Fred Aslin and sent Neville the details and copies of photos of the bone and the site. Neville confirmed it appeared to be a whale bone and he would arrange a follow up trip to retrieve it. The owner of the site agreed to keep the area intact.

Neville arranged a trip down on 13 & 14 September 1999 to excavate and retrieve the bone. This proved more difficult than anticipated. Part of the bone is overlain with what appears to be skull plates. Much of the bone has been exposed, but the easiest method of extraction appears to be to cut the surrounding limestone out in a block. This could then be worked on more easily at the Museum. A further trip is required to do this.

This whale specimen is located at a similar elevation to the specimens retrieved from L412. After the specimens

collected by CEGSA from L412 were lodged in the Museum it was discovered that a previous specimen from L412 was lodged in the Museum in the early 1900's by an earlier landowner.

The secrets of our past are slowly being revealed and if we actually go caving and carefully look at the environment we can have a whale of time.

Kevin Mott

BEEN THERE – DONE THAT

It would seem the old adage of speleo collectors “Been there – done that “ is still alive and kicking. Unfortunately the accompanying attitude of why should I go there? I heard its not worth it, is also still around. Where would we be if the founders of CEGSA had that attitude. Caves are what you are prepared to let them show you.

I am amazed when speaking to cavers to hear them say, “I didn’t know that was there”. How many members have visited more than one caving region, let alone sub regions. There are nine, sorry ten caving regions now and many of those regions can be subdivided into several sub regions; each with their own style of cave.

If we really want to understand caves we should be prepared to look at each area and note the subtle differences between the caves. It is far more profitable than blindly following the leader in half a dozen or so overtropped caves. There are over a thousand recorded caves in the state and twice that number of undiscovered caves. How can we meet the aims of the constitution if we act like dumb sheep?

Let’s get off our bums and broaden our horizons not our rear ends. Many of our caves are not the longest, deepest, prettiest or sportiest, but they can tell us a lot about our environment. They can be just as challenging speleologically.

Rather than haggling over who wants to lead a trip because we must have a token program why not plan trips so members have the opportunity to visit all regions and sub regions. This could be done by planning trips to cover all areas over a two or three year period, with a set number of trips per program. Once all regions have been visited the cycle recommences. Every member would then have a chance to visit all areas, not just the one or two favorites. We may even learn something. This would not preclude other trips for specific purposes.

This would have many benefits for CEGSA. We would maintain contact with local landowners and not be faceless cavers who turn up once a century. Maintaining contact generally leads to more caves and features being reported. Duplication of records could be avoided because members would be more aware of what’s in each area and what work needs to be done. More members would be aware of what is in each area so a pool of experience is created.

Go to it. There is a whole underworld out there waiting for you.

What about new members? Every club needs finances. Subs and advertising are methods already used. When trips are run for other groups or we take visitors perhaps we should be making a charge. In many cases the group or visitor may not have the appropriate gear so a fee can be charged for hire of equipment. If the visitor joins the group (which they are encouraged to do) the fees paid as a visitor could be reduced from their subs.

Equipment hire fees should be paid by members. If the group wants to have gear, which I suspect most members agree to, then provision needs to be made for its replacement. This can be either by hire charges or a surcharge against all members. If no gear hire fees are coming in it suggests; Members all have their own gear (then why have group gear, and forget about new members trying out the activity)

There are no trips (this also seems plausible given the number of trips that seem to be occurring)

The group is being slack and not bothering to charge any fees (crying wolf)

To be successful the group needs to be active. Members need to get out there and go caving, visit an area/cave you have not seen, lead trips that are suitable for new members. Not all trips have to be go go go all the time. Check out the surface karst, talk to landowners, and look at what lives in the cave or uses the cave. Caving is more than meetings and politics; it is the real experience.

Grumpy

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ANOTHER SIX MONTHS OF CAVING WITH SIMON

MONDAY 5 & Tuesday 6 JULY 1999

Bat Ridge karst area - see separate report

SUNDAY 18 JULY 1999

Publicised as a “come and try day” for new CEGSA members and friends, visiting Punyelroo Cave 5M1 and River Road Cave 5M18. In attendance were Paul Fejer, Shelley Fejer (M1 only), Daniel Fletcher, Bekki Bulger, Steve Wasilewski (M1 only), Kathy Binks, George, Gavin, Pam Inverarity (Snowgum staff member), Zoe Grigg

(Snowgum staff member and Scout Caving Group member), Diana Michaels, Anne, Andrew Disney and Simon. A fun day, with an interesting contrast between a “dry cave” and a “muddy cave” culminating in a brisk swim in the Murray River.

MONDAY 2 AUGUST 1999

Melinda Mulley (Snowgum staff member and Scout Caving Group member) and Simon ran a one day trip to Mairs Cave 5F3 for 17 students and 2 teachers from Port Augusta High School. This was a chance for the students to put class room theory, gym work and outdoor climbing (Warren gorge) experience into practice in a very different environment. In addition to abseiling into the cave, using Michael Caruana's new belay point, students were introduced to “Minimum Impact Caving” and other caving skills.

SATURDAY 28 and SUNDAY 29 AUGUST 1999

Saw Simon at the Well Cave 5L412, along with Marie Choi, Linda Deer, David Glowacki and Tracy Colhoun. See separate report in an earlier newsletter.

SUNDAY 29 AUGUST 1999

On the way home from Mount Gambier Simon entered 5L151 at the request of Kevin and Fred. I believe Eddie Rubessa previously located this cave.

MONDAY 6 to WEDNESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 1999

While helping Marie Choi run a four day camp for 10 young people, they enjoyed an Alexandra Cave tour; visited 5L23, Morgans Cave 5L34, Mt Burr Cave 5L69/70; inspected the entrance of the Pines Sinkhole 5L61; visited Hells Hole 5L40 and the Blue Lake; plus have lunch in Umpherstons Cave 5L6.

SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 1999

For no apparent reason Simon, along with Julius Gheude, Tom and Zoe Grigg (Snowgum staff member and Scout Caving Group member) were *condemned* to spend a day underground in Sellicks Hill Roadside Cave 5A25 under the watchful eye of Grant Gartrell.

WEDNESDAY 15 + THURSDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 1999

Again outdoor education students took their classroom theory and indoor climbing gym practice out into the “real world”. Simon, with able assistance from David Glowacki, Linda Deer and Melinda Mulley (Snowgum staff member and Scout Caving Group member) took 32 students and 4 teachers from Norwood Morialta High School to Cathedral Cave 5U12/13, Beekeepers Cave 5U15 and S102 Cave 5U47.

WEDNESDAY 1 and THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 1999

Simon and Linda Deer travelled to Kangaroo Island to take 19 students and 2 teachers to Dog Cave 5K9, 5K10 and Hanson Bay Sea Cave 5K31. The aim was to introduce students to caving as a recreation, plus impart knowledge on how caves are formed and minimum impact caving techniques. Assistance from the DEHAA staff at Kelly Hill Cave is gratefully acknowledged.

MONDAY 20 and TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER 1999

Simon coordinated 3 adults from the Dept. Family & Youth Services, Youth Adventure & Recreation Services, plus 6 youths on visits to Blackberry Cave 5U8/9, Cathedral Cave 5U12/13 and Beekeepers Cave 5U15. Here the aim was to take the youths out of their comfortable environments and encourage the development of teamwork and self-awareness.

BAT RIDGE KARST ASSAULT

Participants: David Glowacki, Linda Deer, Bill Binks, Bekki Bulger, Daniel Fletcher, Tracy Colhoun and Simon Kendrick

David, Linda, Bill, Bekki and Daniel arrived at the Portland Scout Hall on Friday night and settled in with members of the Lillydale Caving Team and about 30 Victorian Venturers.

On the Saturday the CEGSA team visited Big Cave 3BR5/12/13/40, sighting a solitary bat and then Nearby Cave 3BR59 before visiting Cape Bridgewater, climbing the cliffs and checking out the Blowhole and Petrified Forest.

On Sunday the CEGSA team visited Remembrance Cave 3BR36 and were entranced by a Koala and baby in one of the trees. Bekki and Daniel left for Adelaide after lunch, while Bill, David and Linda messed around on the cliffs at Cape Nelson. Bill and David left for Naracoorte and Tracy and Simon arrived from Adelaide.

On Monday Tracy, Linda and Simon started off the morning by upsetting a reasonable size Tiger (?) snake before setting off into the scrub. Tracy checked out an un-numbered cave. Our attempts to locate 3BR7/8 proved unsuccessful. Simon was stung by two bees. We used Tracy's 5m x 25mm tube tape (as required by

the ASF's Safety Standard) to enter 3BR65 cave. Tracy had a leech on her boot. We found 3BR61 cave and finished of the day by doing a loop walk on part of the Great South West Track.

On Tuesday we went Op-shopping in Portland before driving out to Bat Ridge and again upsetting the Tiger (?) snake. We visited Hut Cave 3BR2, checking out the 3BR80, 3BR81 and 3BR6 entrances before exiting from the 3BR82 entrance. After a bit of a bush bash we visited 3BR29, 3BR28, 3BR30 and the ruins of an old Lime kiln. To finish our trip, we went to Chimney Cave 3BR1, exited via 3BR57, re-entered via 3BR56 and exited via 3BR1 entrance.

The Bat Ridge Karst area is starting to show signs of use, with distinct tracks leading to the major features while infrequently visited caves are still quite challenging to locate. The entire karst area is worthy of further visits by CEGSA members

Simon Kendrick

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VARIOUS ONE DAY TRIPS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Y1 - Corra Lynn - October 1999

Participants: George, June & Aaron MacLucas

Arrived lunchtime and spoke to Andrew Slater, the owner of Corra Lynn Cave, then went down for only a few hours. It was Aaron's first experience of Bandicoot Bypass; he enjoyed it so much we had to do it again.

A3 - Rapid Bay Cove Cave - January 2000

While on a family fishing trip to Rapid Bay, Aaron MacLucas aged 13 years, spotted a sea cave. He was eager to check it out so took his uncle and an overseas visitor from USA with him. As Aaron was the only one of the group that had entered a cave before, he was drafted to be the guide. A3 is 60 metres long by approximately 10 metres high. It was pleasing to get some feed back on his explanation of the cave, his concerns about the litter in the cave and the need to keep it clean. The message goes down the line.

M1 - Punyelroo Cave - January 2000

Participants: George, June & Aaron MacLucas, Ray & Chris Gibbons, Lance Hoey, Barbara McFadyen & Colin, Steven & Jessica Matthews (June's relatives.)

All went into the cave with Jessica Matthews 8 years surprising everyone with her keenness. Lance and Aaron went on a crawl looking at old digs. Just as we arrived at the entrance we met a large group of Venturers led by Paul Ware coming out, they were thankful to have a look at our map to ascertain where they had been and where one of their members had been misplaced for a short time.

M18 - River Road Cave (Gloop) - January 2000

Participants: George, June & Aaron MacLucas, Lance Hoey, Barbara McFadyen, Steven & Jessica Matthews.

After leaving M1 we made our way to M18. The children were disappointed that the cave looked fairly dry. But as always this was not the case and deeper into the cave it became it's usual muddy, sticky self, much to the delight of the kids, including Lance.

Naturally after such a trip one needs to wash off in the Murray. A memorable day was had by all.

Visit to Wheal Hughes Copper Mine at Moonta - January 2000

School holiday trip with George, June & Aaron MacLucas

An initiative of local council to make a tourist venue of the discontinued copper mine, that operated from 1980 through to its closure in 1993. Tourists are taken by a mini train down through an open cut area to a sea level floor at around 20 metres. Then further underground the stopes (following a vein of ore) continued on with the pumping of water continuously as they went. Tourist can visit 70 metres below ground level.

A point of interest was that at the entrance to the mine a safety clip board was set up with instructions that each person going in must take a clip and return it on their way out. In this way they know exactly how many are still in the mine. Sounds like something that could be set up easily at the entrance to Corra-Lynn, especially when two groups are visiting the cave on the same day.

George MacLucas

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CAMPING PRACTICES & RESTORATION WORK IN LECHUGUILLA

11-19 DEC 99 NEW MEXICO. USA

THOSE MAD YANKS

For some of the practices elucidated below to apply to Australia or the UK (I am writing for both) a lot has got to change. Firstly Oz has to come up with a cave long enough to be worth camping in and it has to stop raining in Wales. Yet you never know, a little global warming perhaps!. Consequently some things might seem a bit alien to those neck deep in freezing mud or those ten minutes caving from the shrimp Barbie!. However read on, its one view of where the cave softly movement could lead us all.



Base Camp, Carlsbad Caverns Research Hut.
Photo by Damian Grindley

FACTS OF LIFE

Over 100 miles long. (160km)
68 deg F, 95% humidity.
Over 1000 feet of vertical range
Entrance at 4640 feet.
Fragile speleothems.
Unique biota.
Minimal impact policy.

Long trips
Dehydration.
Long way out.
Altitude effects.
Extreme care
Contamination issues
Careful planning.

POTTY TRAINING

You produce it, you pack it out, well almost!!.. Unlike Europe there aren't any flowing streams or flood pulses in Lech to wash it all out of sight and besides the microbial balance could easily be affected. Apparently some E-Coli has been detected in at least one pool (now off limits) due to ignorance in the early days. Consequently the park is adamant that all solid waste be removed from the cave. On shorter trips, two days or less, all liquid waste must be carried out. With longer trips this becomes fairly impossible so there are designated dump sites associated with campgrounds. These often became highly pungent. Consequently the current practice of storing the fluid in large freezer weight Ziplock bags was developed. The bags contents being dumped on departure remembering of course to head for the surface with the empty bags and at least 2 quarts (1.9 Ltrs). Plastic Soda bottles prove fairly indestructible for this task and empties can be carried around all week so when you need to go you can just go.

Solid waste is the easy one. A large piece of silver foil can be used as the target area then used to wrap the offending item and associated paper. Some sprinkle bleach or pet tray sanitiser inside to prevent fermentation. The whole creation is then double bagged in those freezer weight Ziplocks and stored in the designated area until ready to pack out, which is something nobody else will do for you. Consequently the importance of bagging cannot be stressed enough, its not the sort of breakthrough most cavers aspire to. Affectionately know as breakfast Burrito's due to their resemblance, in presentation, to a Mexican soft taco dish of the same name. One hopes the down and outs of El Paso don't look too closely in a certain trash can. (Hummmm, too much info I thinks). In fact in one guide for newcomers to Lech it recommends making your deposit directly in a Ziplock bag and those unsure of their aim take time to practice the skill on the surface. If only the inventors of Ziplocks knew!!

FASHION STATEMENTS

Have you ever, like me, stared at some of those classic Lech photos in a calendar or something and wondered why they all look so Cutsie (For want of a better word) in their brightly colored thermal underwear. Hardly the ruffy tuffie image some involved in Lech would have you believe. However the stuff works and you would not want to wear anything else. It all comes back to that 95% and 20 Deg C. You move you sweat, you eat you sweat, you make breakfast Burritos you sweat!!!. Its certainly not furry territory.

Typical kit would consist of silk weight long sleeved polypro top and leggings. Some swear Capaline dries quicker but is a tad more expensive. Either way within an hour of stopping your body heat will have dried them out completely. Its the only way to dry gear in the humidity and means many dispense with a camp set of clothing altogether. I have tried to dry my clothes in this manner in Welsh Caves but after hours of shivering the kit seemed just as damp when donning them the next morning. Storing a set of camp wear underground is just not an option with Lech.

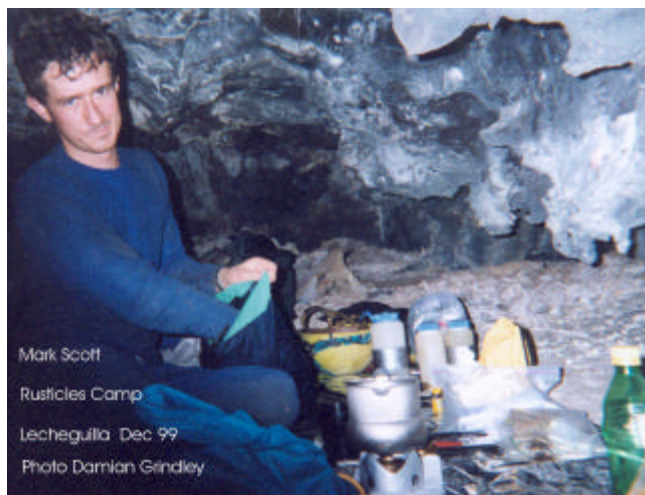
Shorts, held up by permanently wearing a harness, are generally worn to give added protection around heavy wear areas. Some of course just wear the shorts and a short sleeved top, however this appears to give little protection from abrasion caused by the vast amount of aragonite in the system. These calendar models must take in a spare set of thermals as the corrosional residues in the cave mean there is no way to remain that clean.

Understandably the Park does insist that all clothing, boots and gear be clean before entering the cave to minimize the introduction of foreign micro-organisms into this unique ecosystem. Convincing my workmates that a full body shave, sanitary shower and colonic irrigation where also required was remarkably easy. They where most disappointed when I didn't return a slaphead but who knows one day eh!

Due to the large areas of flowstone the Park also requires that all boots must have non marking soles. My Australian Rossies didn't quite pass the rubbing on limestone or lino test, however I suspect that even so called "non marking soles" are in fact leaving little bits of white rubber all over the place its just not that noticeable. In fact over particularly sensitive "boots off" areas Aqua socks are donned. These are socks with hard soles that surfie types wear to protect their feet. Again soles are to be nonmarking and beware they seem to be a seasonal item in the shops even in sunny California. I had to borrow a pair from the Park!

Finally pack a spare pair of grundies and socks. One of those little luxuries that can make all the difference. Oh and don't forget the knee pads.

IN AND AROUND CAMP



My experience of camping for more than one night underground has always meant well equipped camps with associated pots, pans, stoves, cutlery and gourmet communal meals, well sometimes gourmet.. In Lech of course there is nowhere to wash up, plus all cooking necessities have to come in and out with you. So it is just as well those backpacker meals have come along way as they form the staples of a Lech diet. Even the ones that you simply rip open the top, add boiling water, stir and wait five minutes are repacked to save volume and weight. Yes those amazing Ziplocks will handle boiling water and of course can be recycled as burrito carriers!. It's still necessary to pack a plastic spoon, hot sauces to make the inedible edible (You don't want to pack out uneaten rehydrated food) and perhaps a few luxuries to

balance the diet.

Water presents its own particular issues; in that you need water to drink and cook and yet cannot feasibly carry enough in to satisfy these requirements. Each pool in Lech is believed to contain its own microflora consequently only certain pools generally associated with camps are designated as water sources, the rest are off limits. Great lengths are taken to avoid contaminating these pools. Each water source will have its own pitcher or siphon system so humans can limit possible contact. Personal water bottles are filled at a safe distance from these pools without physically touching the system. The considerable diversity between pools also impacts on restoration work in that water used in the stal cleaning process should only be sourced from a localized pool thus preventing cross contamination. Pools containing underwater helictites or selanite are also avoided.

On the stove front there are endless possibilities. Some use personal tablet stoves. Our team of three shared a tiny alcohol burner and a single titanium pot in which to heat the water, which boils easily at the high altitude. The fuel was acceptable to the Park who discourages stinky fuels, and limits cooking to designated camp sites due to the large, potentially ignitable, sulphur deposits found elsewhere within the cave. For the same reason Carbide lights are also banned. However communally heating water for individual backpacker meals does not quite have the same bonding experience as a good fry up of curried smash cakes and onion bajis typical of breakfast at the "Hard Rock Cafe" or "Restaurant at the end of the Universe" (Ogo Darren Cilau.). The Plastic Soda bottles used to bring in the ethanol proved handy for holding liquid waste on exiting.

In other caves its easy to spot where people have camped, or just stopped to eat a snack, by the tell tail fluffy gray growths sprinkled around the floor about a week or so later. To avoid this in Lech where moulds grow easily and might compete with the native fauna, people eat over a plastic bag whilst on trail. At camp everything is done on a ground sheet (undress, sleep, cook, eat, etc), which is folded up and packed out at the end of the trip with hopefully all the various droppings including fluff, hair and skin particles inside. I purchased a piece of lightweight ripstop nylon for the purpose, sowing up the edges. Others on my team used the silver survival

blankets, these where about half the weight and surprisingly durable. Luckily they fidgeted little in the night keeping the crinkle to a minimum.

Sleeping wise the norm seems to be the ultra short and light thermorests. However judging by the envious eyes I may have set a trend with my mummy shaped air bed which even with repair kit was as light and way, way, way more comfortable. I opted for a fleece blanket as I already owned one and found this perfect. Others have made their own lightweight bivvy bags with insulation only on the one side so they can adjust their temperature by sleeping on or under the insulation.

As another aside dental floss seems to have replaced toothpaste in the plaque wars as it's easier to pack.

HOW TO GET IN

Most non scientific trips into Lech, (ie Surveying or Restoration) are lead by the Lechuguilla Exploration and Research Network (LEARN) the Park approved, volunteer organization of cavers dedicated to the exploration, research and preservation of Lechuguilla Cave. More details (40 + pages) can be found at <http://www.redshift.com/~mrosbrook/learn/>

Admittedly the amount of paperwork and the sponsor requirements makes things look a tad daunting (I think its meant too!). However, when you get into going its not that bad, particularly if you are a good surveyor.

WHAT WE GOT UP TO

The "official report" below, adequately describes our exploits and the varied work done within the cave plus illustrates the feedback required by the Park. During restoration there is a lot of cleaning kit to carry thus there is little room for anything but a disposable Camera and besides photo's are limited to Guerrilla shots from the trail. That's my excuse anyway.



Black Stal at Rusticles Camp, Lech.
Photo by Damian Grindley.

Lechuguilla Exploration and Research Network (LEARN)

Trip Report Restoration/Conservation Expedition

Submitted by Expedition Coordinator: Joe E. Levinson & Mark Scott

Work performed:

13 cavers spent varying numbers of days in the various Branches of the cave flagging trails, cleaning flowstone and popcorn, and fluffing footsteps as itemized below-All team members were well and strong enough to put in a good day's work each day. The Park had added one of their employees to help/supervise the work we did and became a member of one team, which is why there are 13 people mentioned.

A East

- 1. This team originally had set out to the Far East. One team member became sick at Giant Chicklets, therefore they stayed in the Near East.*
- 2. Flagged the main trail from the Orange Bowl to Lake of the Blue Giants and up to Snowfall Hall.*
- 3. They exited when another team member twisted their ankle and the team member who was sick was not improving.*
- 4. Removed a couple of the microclimate things and the evaporimeter at Lake of the Blue Giants.*
- 5. The trail is fully flagged all the way up to Lake of the Blue Giants and looking at the type of problems in that area I don't think there is much we can do to clean it.*

B. Ghosttown.

- 1. Cleaned Ghost Busters Hall flowstone.*
- 2. Removed a 50 foot rope.*
- 3. Did general cleanup work at camp.*

C. Southwest

- 1. Work on trailside areas in underground Atlanta.*
- 2. Found two bat skeletons, one NW of FLW8 the other on the edge of a white rimstone pool, flagged both.*
- 3. Replaced two maillons near FLJ1.*
- 4. Flagged trail at Mother of Pearl Dome and rerigged ropes.*

5. Cleaned at Ultra Primo.

D. Western Borehole

1. Did some cleaning in Deep Secrets on the trail.
2. Went out past Leaning Tower to narrow and check on trail flagging.
3. Flagged route up to and through Chandelier Graveyard.
4. Replaced pitcher at Lake Louise.

E. Sugarland

1. Removed hand prints from ceiling.
2. Removed flagging for old piss spot.
3. General maintenance on flagging back to entrance from rift to culvert.

Work Remaining:

A. East :

1. Giant Chicklets: Though much flowstone cleaning was done here, much still remains.
2. The Orange Bowl was made a shoes off area last Sep 1998, this has disappeared?
3. Since the team exited early, there is still work to be done in the Far East.
4. The entire trail through Nirvana and the Volcano Rift is an ongoing project that could probably do with update cleans to remove stray marks from all that popcorn.
5. From Lake of the Blue Giants up the rest of the way to where we stopped last year on the way down from the top of the Chicklets is still in need of a trail work and evaluation of what else might be done.
6. The trail around the Lake could do with some work since it might be appropriate to move it away from the lake a bit since at the moment you actually step over a gap that passes over the edge of a pool so stuff continually will drop into it.

B. Southwest

1. Replace a rope by FLJ16 since there is a bad spot in it with a butterfly.

C. Western Borehole

1. There are a lot of foot prints in the Graveyard area, a many expeditions could spend their whole time removing them.
2. Deep Secrets need a lot of work, water/dirt from the trail is getting into pools down slope from the trail. This is a very active area that will grow flowstone over the dirt in a short period of time.

Safety and Conservation Concerns:

- A. Each carried out at least 2 quarts of their urine.
- B. Barry Kennedy got sick at Giant Chicklets and exited the cave on his own.
- C. A nalagene bottle was dropped down a pit in Ghost Busters hall and not retrieved.
- D. The microclimatological studies and the evaporimeters at all the pools are now defunct and any time people come across those little vials markers they should remove them
- E. Stan is now keeping a rope log and people will be asked to measure ropes on future trips.
- F. Damian Grindley twisted his ankle in the near east, but exited the cave without incident.

Additional Information

Mark Scott and Stan Allison made a day trip to the Southwest to take some samples of corrosion residue from the Voids Overlook area.

Trip Leaders: Joe E. Levinson (Expedition Coordinator): Mark Scott (Expedition Coordinator): Curtis Perry: Carl Reuter

Lech Experienced: Scott Christensen: Dennis Worthington: Mark Deelel: Barry Kennedy

Newcomers: Jim Lacascio: Damian Grindley: Scott Smith: Andy Harris

Park Representative: Susan Herpin

Total Volunteer Hours 511.5

Damian "Pom" Grindley

NULLARBOR – Balgair Station

23 & 24 Dec 1999

I travelled to Balgair on Christmas Eve with Dave Thomas and his family stopping at Zanthus for a few hours till daybreak on Christmas morning.

After travelling the remaining couple of hours I spent the rest of Christmas day at Balgair homestead.

25/12

The following day I gave Tony and Pop a hand to muster perishing sheep in Iron Maiden Paddock I traversed the Northern section of the paddock and came across little of interest apart from one area near the east fence just north of the drillers track where I came across 5 or 6 BH's in an area of 200x100m including one which had an opening around 1.5m across. As I was on my bike I have not allocated numbers as I didn't have time to tag the features. I will follow this up another time. At around 3pm I refuelled my bike and headed off to Patsies Paddock to an area NW of the Woolshed, which I have found to have multitudes of BH's and has several features that are visible on aerial photos including one that I had not located. The travelling was a little rough as I had a flat front tyre on my bike! Around 3 or so kilometres out from the Woolshed I came across a feature which I have yet to tag and then around 300m further on I came across a new feature which was blowing strongly, I didn't have a torch on me but I could tell from the sound of rocks falling in the tube that there was more depth than I could see. Further on in the area which I was looking for the aerial photo feature I found two features and then another about a kilometre west. From here I travelled due North back towards the homestead.

26/12

I left the homestead early and headed to Bluebush Hill paddock where I continued a search for the correct location of the Haig Meteorite Site, as I was not confident that the previous location was correct. After a short search just over a kilometre from the previous location I found two pieces of metal stuck upright in the ground as markers, then only 200m further SW I found a cairn of rocks with a pittosporum tree growing out the centre, then 180m to the SSE I found another cairn and an impact pit which has had dirt removed and piled up on the uphill side.

After taking a few photos of the proper Haig Meteorite Site I headed back up to Patsies Paddock.

After spending an hour repairing flat tyres, I headed off the West Boundary fence. Coming across an old rabbiters camp on the way to the most western feature that I had located the previous day, this is 6N1650. After logging and tagging it, I then found 6N1651 a further 200m away. From there I travelled to a feature that I had found early in the year. I logged and tagged it 6N1652.

Then travelling toward the features I had found the previous day I stumbled across the aerial photo feature that I had been looking for, 6N1653. After a brief explore (made more brief due to the snake in the BH!), And as time was running short, I logged and tagged the BH before leaving yet more features for another trip and headed to the feature which I had found first on the previous day. I explored this feature, which is 6N1654. The cat, which was feeling a bit unsure in the side alcove the previous day, had departed, not surprisingly. None of the features that I found on this trip appear to be anything substantial, cave wise that is, but there is some potential. I then travelled back to the homestead to repair one of my spares before heading back to civilization.

Paul Devine - Jan 2000

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Nullarbor Report

(From a roving reporter)

(This report was missed being included in the November CEGSA NEWS. Ed)

The latest feature numbered is 6N1647. A couple of noteworthy recent finds are:

A new cave 6N1602 found by Max Hall and Bob Kershaw in April. It has a 1m diam blowhole entrance that drops 45m into a cave. Essentially, this is another deep cave. As far as blowholes that actually enter caves (and are not mere blind shafts), this blowhole eclipses the next deepest (Lindsay Hall Cave 5N700 with 28m) by a whopping 17m.

Also found by Max Hall in April was Sarib Cave 6N1603 which is about 150m long. This is a "Jennings Doline" located north of Chowilla Landslip more or less in the same north south line as Winbirra, Kutawala and Abrukurrie Caves.

I dare say there are still more new caves silently waiting discovery.

Max G Meth

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS – WELCOME TO

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

CA	BLOK Chris	0002	08 8672-7122			
	PO Box 180		ANDAMOOKA	SA	5722	
A	FREER Brian	0003	08 8344-8135			
	66 Beatrice Street		PROSPECT	SA	5082	
A	MACKENZIE Daniel	0001	8383-6135 (M)0413-566-616			
	PO Box 73		KANGARILLA	SA	5157	

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

CF	HALL Max	9308	08-9039-3426 (F) 08-9039-3217			
	PO Box 496		ESPERANCE	WA	6450	
CF	LAWRENCE Ruth	9208	03-5442-1425			
	23 Horace Street		BENDIGO	Vic	3550	
CF	TREHEARNE David	8604	08-8762-1026			
	18 Panorama Crescent or PO Box 1019		NARACOOORTE	SA	5271	

CHANGE OF PHONE NUMBER

CF	BINKS Bill	9412	08-8762-2897 (W) 08-8762-9177
			(M) 0427-852-628

UPDATE TO E-MAIL

CF	DEVINE Paul	9906	pddevine.kal@bigpond.com
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June MacLucas
Membership Officer

E-Mail to the Editor.

If you have not heard we are heading back to Australia. A little sooner than perhaps imagined but exciting. Opportunity knocks eh!

Small but Great little winery. Will be the winemaker. See their brand new site .. <http://www.happs.com.au/>

Consequently packing this computer up to ship in the next day or so. One of a billion things to do.

Have set up a hot mail type account so I can still keep in touch. Well Amanda set it up you can probably tell by the name.

You can always contact the Happs winery (See web site) if you need to get hold of us quickly. We are flying out on the 22nd of Feb, arriving on 25th!

New address for the foreseeable future is.. cavin_pom@yahoo.com

A special thanks to everybody who has made us so welcome in the States. Some ways it is hard to leave...

See ya when we see ya next

Damian, Amanda & De Liddle Bloke

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NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Motion to alter the Rules Clause 1(g) to be put at the General Meeting on 22 March 2000.

"Replace the current 1(g) with the following:

1(g) Family membership may be taken out by any adult member. Family membership is a collective membership that has the following conditions:

- (i) a Family membership covers the member, one other adult and persons under 18 years old that may be in the care of the member. All persons must be listed in an application to the Committee. The Committee has the right to reject one or more persons but would be expected to accept the member's children and those of their partner plus possibly grandchildren, nephews, nieces and other children in their regular care.
- (ii) payment in addition to their own Annual Subscription of a fee equal to that of Associate membership. If the second adult is a Full Member then a fee equal to Full Membership.
- (iii) the member and second adult if present obtain no more rights than that of Full or Associate member as applicable.
- (iv) the member and second adult if present retain all rights and privileges of Full or Associate member as applicable.
- (v) the collective is treated as two memberships except that all are listed as Group members.
- (vi) Rule 4(c) must be obeyed.

Motions to alter the Annual Subscription to CEGSA to be put at the General Meeting on 22 March 2000.

"That the CEGSA Annual Subscription for 2000 be:

Full Membership	\$37.00
Associate membership	\$30.00
Long Term Associate membership	\$37.00
Country Full Membership discount	\$6.00
Family membership receiving only one copy of NEWS discount	\$16.00

NOTE that the ASF fees need to be added to the CEGSA fees.

"That all CEGSA Annual Fees be increased by \$1 per year every year from 2001 inclusive until rescinded."

"That any Government fees or charges, including any Goods & Services Tax, be added to the Annual Subscription."

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IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE YEAR 2000 CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE EXPECTED TO BE

FULL MEMBERSHIP	\$37
COUNTRY MEMBERSHIP	\$31
ASSOCIATE MEMBER	\$30
COUNTRY ASSOCIATE MEMBER	\$25
LONG TERM ASSOCIATE	\$37

VARIATION FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

- 1) 1ST FULL MEMBER \$37+2ND FULL MEMBER \$37
= \$74 LESS \$16 FOR ONLY ONE NEWSLETTER = \$58
- 2) 1ST FULL MEMBER \$37+2ND ASSOC MEMBER
\$30 = \$67 LESS \$16 FOR ONLY ONE NEWSLETTER = \$51

CEGSA MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT INCLUDE ASF FEES. YOU MUST PAY THE APPROPRIATE AMOUNT LISTED BELOW AS WELL AS CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES.

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION (ASF) FEES FOR YEAR 2000 (INCLUDES INSURANCE)

INDIVIDUAL = FULL/ASSOCIATE/LIFE MEMBERSHIP	\$24.50
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP	\$42.00
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	\$17.50
FIRST YEAR MEMBERS (Includes "Australian Caver")	\$24.50
FIRST YEAR MEMBERS (without "Australian Caver")	\$ 5.00

June MacLucas (Treasurer)

LIBRARY AND RECORDS

At the end of last year two new videos were purchased for the library. We now have a collection of 14 videos on CEGSA shelves. New purchases 1) *"Down Deep, Down Deep Under"* a journey through the best known fresh water caves of the South East with diver Alex Wyschnja by Project Digital. (If this sounds familiar, this video was shown at a CEGSA meeting during the year 1999.) 2) *"Flinders Ranges from Melrose to Arkaroola"* A tourist look with an appreciation of the area by Cine News Productions.

Apologies must go to Steve Milner. Early in 1998 Steve took home a large box of William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust Ltd Journals to enter into a database. Unfortunately his box was return mid year 1998 at the same time as a number of boxes from SAUSS, the now defunct South Australian Underwater Seleological Society. On the weekend while filing some of this material, his box was relocated and with egg on my face I wish to thank Steve for his efforts. A bit late – shows that if we had more willing hands this may not have happened. (Have to try and shift some of the blame.) Sorry Steve and many thanks.

Monographs handed in by Simon Kendrick: 1) ***"Scenes from the Stone Age"*** shows photographs of preserved 20,000 year old cave paintings discovered 1995 in a French Cave, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc. Also drawings of rhinoceros, lions and horses article from Time Magazine February 13th 1995. 2) ***"Environment & Planning"*** Magazine No 5, which has an article on *"Bats of South Australia"* by ex CEGSA Member Stan Flavel. Included in the same magazine articles appear on *"Sticknest Rats on Franklin Island"* by Viv Read, and *"Tiger Snakes of South Australia on Off Shore Island"* by Terry Schwaner. 3) ***"Group of Australians return to Southern Mexico to Explore the Caves of Zonglica"***. In this article the caves surveyed so far is of "Dead Dog" that is 747 metres vertical. They are trying to push for the 1,000 metre mark. They had previously made 946 metres in an almost vertical cave "Klub" cave but it finished in a pool of water. Article from Inside Sports Magazine, December 1995 with photographs by well known Sydney solo caver Alan Warild, author of *"Vertical – Technical manual for Cavers"*. (CEGSA Library No. 77 – Blue spot for Manuals.) 4) ***Cave Exploration in Mexico of Cave "Huautla"*** which has 9 sumps with deepest depth recorded this particular trip at 1,475 metres, article from National Geographic, Sept 1995. 5) ***"Canyons of the Blue Mountains"*** from Geo Magazine May-June 1998.

The last working bee for the year 1999 was two-fold, afternoon sorting, evening Xmas party with attendance by most who came throughout the year.

Working bees will continue on a monthly basis on Saturday following General Meetings from 2.00pm until late. ALL WELCOME – PLEASE CONTACT GEORGE OR JUNE 8261 4180.

George MacLucas
Library And Records Officer

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CAVE FAUNA REPORT – BALGAIR STATION AREA

Here is a report on cave fauna that I've either gathered from observations or have read up on for the Nullarbor.

These caves are on Balgair Station.

6N1536 Troglotic Isopods
spiders, Janusia ?murri noted population - 6+ Tartarus ?sp. - 50+
Troglotillic Isopods:?
House centipede (Not sure of correct name) - 1
Harvestmen spiders - 10+
cave crickets Pallidotettix nullarbourensis - 10+
6N1556 Troglotic Isopods: spiders, Tartarus ?sp. - 10+
6N1586 cave crickets, Pallidotettix nullarbourensis - 30+
6N1593 Troglotic Isopods: spiders, Tartarus ?sp. - 5
6N1612 Troglotic Isopods: spiders, Tartarus ?sp. - 1
Troglotillic Isopods: Unknown sp of spider - 3
Harvestmen spiders - 30+

Paul Devine - Jan 2000

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Type of Event	Description	Contact
23/02/00	General Meeting	Royal Society Room	Marie Choi
26/02/00	Working Bee	Library and records	George MacLucas
04-05 /03/00	Dinner and Caving	SA / VIC Dinner at Whiskas Woolshed Penola	Marie Choi
08/03/00	Committee Meeting	Simons Place	Marie Choi
22/03/00	General Meeting	Royal Society Room	Marie Choi
25/03/00	Working Bee	Library and Records	George MacLucas
12/04/00	Committee Meeting	Simons Place	Marie Choi
21-30 /04/00	Caving	Nullarbor	Graham Pilkington
26/04/00	General Meeting	Royal Society Room	Marie Choi
29/04/00	Working Bee	Library and Records	George MacLucas
10/05/00	Committee Meeting	Simons Place	Marie Choi
13-21 /05/00	Caving	Kangaroo Island	Grant Gartrell
24/05/00	General Meeting	Old Queens Arms Hotel, 88 Wright St. Adel.	Marie Choi
27/05/00	Working Bee	Library and Records	George MacLucas
	Caving	Regular trips to 5A25 contact	Grant Gartrell

Don't forget to register your trip with the Trip Liaison Officer so that the trip becomes official and is covered by insurance. If it is not registered then it is not covered and you may be liable.
Also, please make sure that a report of the trip is submitted .