

CEGSA NEWS

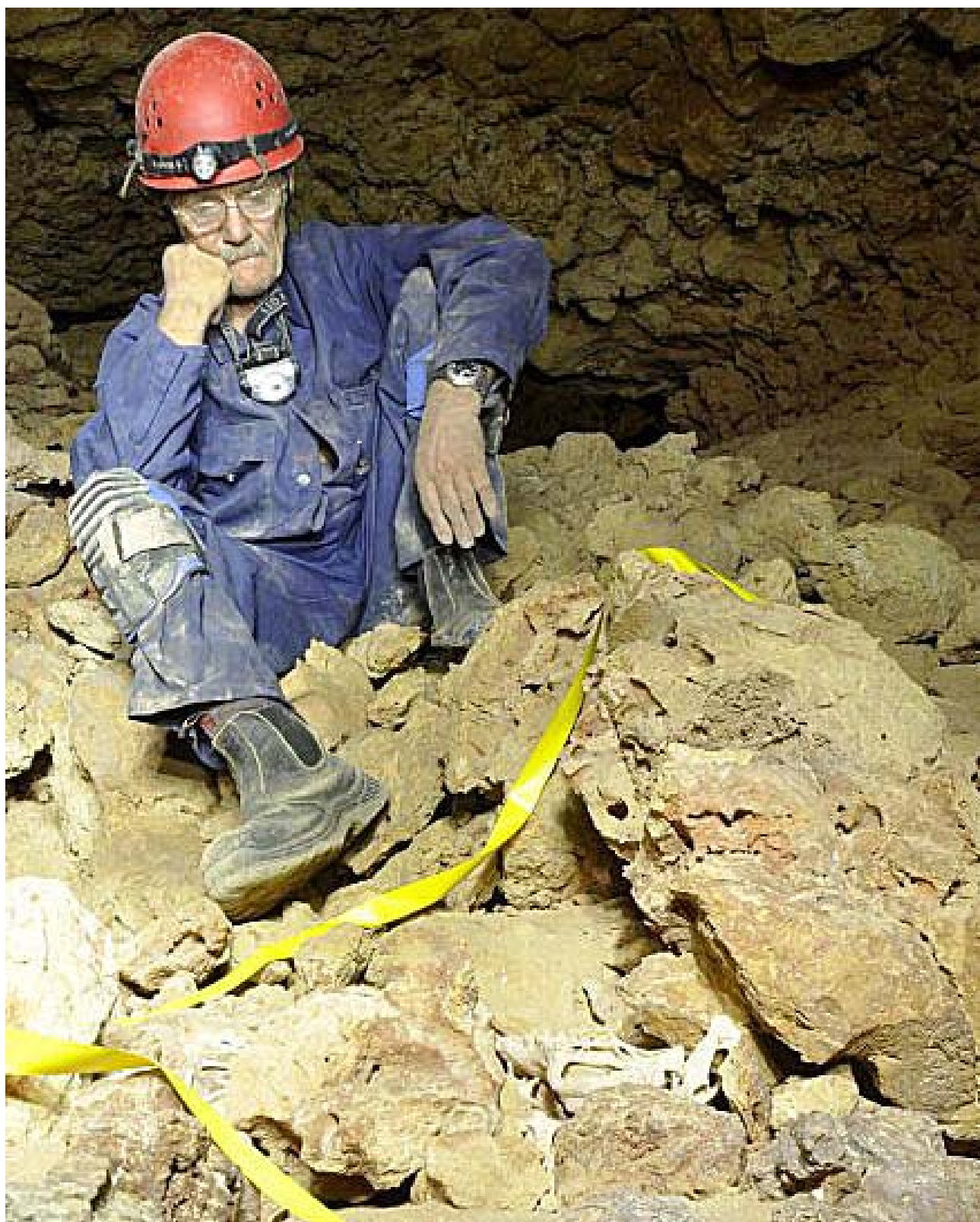


Newsletter of the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) Inc.

Volume 57 Number 3

Issue 227

AUGUST 2012



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) Inc.

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

<http://www.cegsa.org.au>

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: Dr. Roger Howlett studies Thylacine bones at site 3 in Thylacine Cave.

(see
p54)

Photo: Cristie Allen.

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QUARTERMASTERS NOTE.

High usage equipment will now be stored at the quartermaster's residence. Please make arrangements with the QM well in advance of required date for equipment. The QM can be contacted at the telephone numbers on the previous page.

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

The deadline for copy or background material for Volume 57 Number 4 (Issue 228) must reach the Editor by Wednesday **14th NOVEMBER 2012**. Material not meeting this deadline may be retained for possible use in a following issue. The preferred method is via E-MAIL to atholjax@adam.com.au as an attachment or on a memory stick or CD, in Word *.doc(x) or *.rtf files. Of course other forms of communication will still be gratefully accepted. Photographs are preferred to be in colour as separate files and not in the article where to be inserted. (*.jpg format under 500Kb unless for the cover).

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

The President is overseas.

SA & VIC Caving Weekend @ Naracoorte

September 8th & 9th

Enjoy a weekend of caving and conservation work.

Wirreanda Accommodation @ Naracoorte Caves:

Share Bunk style beds \$13 p.p

Unpowered campsites \$ 8 p.p.

Limited number of bunks available so be quick

Saturday Night Dinner in town at Billy Macs,
Naracoorte Hotel -- meals start from \$ 9.50

If you are coming book through Marie Choi email @
mariechoi@adam.com.au

Please state if you plan to arrive Friday night, how many nights you are staying and if you are attending the dinner.

For those that want to book their own separate accommodation there are several places in Naracoorte including

Naracoorte Holiday Park, 81 Park Terrace, Freecall: 1800 999 899 Tel: 08 8762 2128

Cave Park Cabins Caves Edwards Road, 08 87620696 (Phone)

TRIP REPORTS

NULLARBOR EXPEDITION 2012

Participants on trip.

VSA members: Nicholas and Susan White, Ken Boland, Daryl Carr,
Margaret James, Greg Leeder and Gerhard Noss.
Orange Members: Denis Marsh, Ian Curtis.
Tasmanian Member: Henry Shannon.
CEGSA Members: George and June MacLucas.
District Ranger: Brett Dalzell who came out for 3 days.

Report of George and June's activities.

The duration of our trip, we travelled Wednesday April 11th until Tuesday May 8th 2012 (28 days).

While at Border Village waiting for members, those that had arrived took a visit to an old cherts mine on Nullarbor Cliff that we last sited 18 years ago and while there we also viewed Wilson's Bluff.

This year was a little different than other years as the area decided upon in the South Australian National Park had a paucity of karst features. Hence, we had to travel further from our base camp as most importantly the camp has to have a safe accessible landing field for the ultralight plane.

The rules with the parks is, all cars must not travel off any recognise tracks, unless for an emergency, or needed as an anchor for rigging. This has caused the need for some motor bikes to be used, sometimes travelling 50 to 70km in a round trip from base. In the mornings when distribution of known sights to visit were handed out, walkers would pick the closest features to the main track. Bikies then would pick the further away features from main tracks. Variance to this could be who is surveying or who is carrying equipment for light rigging or a full scale rig where a vehicle had to be used.



George and June MacLucas on their motor bike.
Photo: Ken Boland.



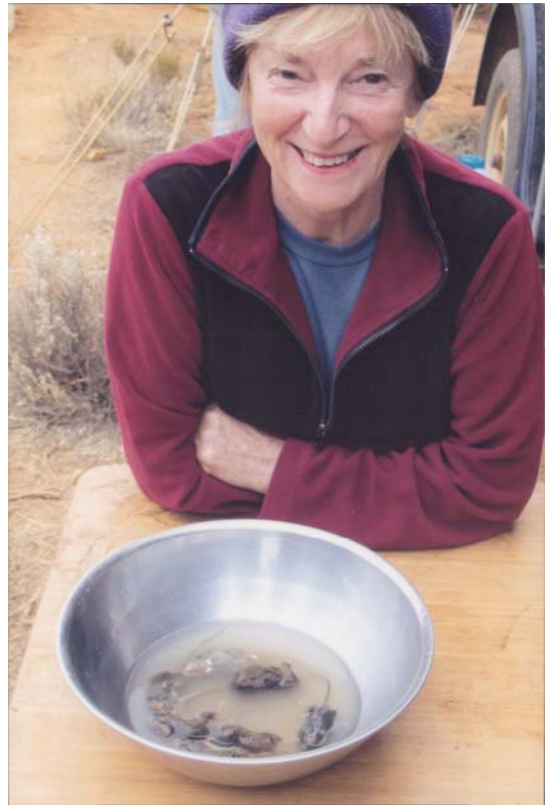
Ken Boland's Ultra Lite at Border Village.
Photo: June MacLucas.

This time there were five motor bikes on the trip. Our bike was a Zongshen 200cc which served us well with June as a pillion passenger. Although she decided to join the walking group one day after we hit a new unseen rabbit burrow when she landed on the back pillion rest hurting her Coccyx Area. We did have some walking days, mainly rechecking GPS locations for old CEGSA numbers near tracks. All in all, I needed to travel 500km on my bike in the three weeks we worked in the field, besides 450km using our 4WD.

Our first day at camp site the temperature was 41 degrees C and we were in the middle of a mice plague. On the third night our tent was invaded and the great white hunter June caught seven mice in a mixing bowl of water with a bait of breakfast food floating in it. The mice jumped in and eventually drowned. Luckily the weather cooled down and the next few days the mice were still giving bother but not as bad, instead of tent problems they were mainly in peoples trailers or in their vehicles.



Gerhard Noss in 5N5301.
Photo: Denis Marsh.



Great white hunter June MacLucas with
catch of 7 mice.
Photo: George MacLucas.

The highlight of the trip was finding five new caves besides our usual blow holes, dolines, rock holes (water holes). Three of the caves were entered by 12m ladder pitch. One other was a 25m abseil pitch and the last was just a short spreadeagled climb down. One of these caves had a graveyard of bones and also had two Thylacine skulls (under park requirements no bones were allowed to be removed).

Most of the big cave surveys are not yet completed but all other data when collected from photos and update surveys will be handed to CEGSA Records Officer through Daryl Carr of VSA. A highlight for Ken Boland our ultralight pilot, was he logged up his 3,000 "K" number sightings. These have not all been new sightings over the years, some have been double ups, some rabbit holes or wombat holes but most blow holes, rock holes and caves.

Karst features visited.

5N1Warbla Cave, 5N349, 5N352, 5N353, 5N991 Bunburra Rock hole. N5203 Devine Cave, N5204, N5205, N5206, N5207, N5208, N5209, N5237, N5249, N5250, N5252, N5253, N5254, N5255, N5256, N5274, N5276, N5277, N5300, N5301. This adds up to 25 sites visited by us and others in our individual working groups.

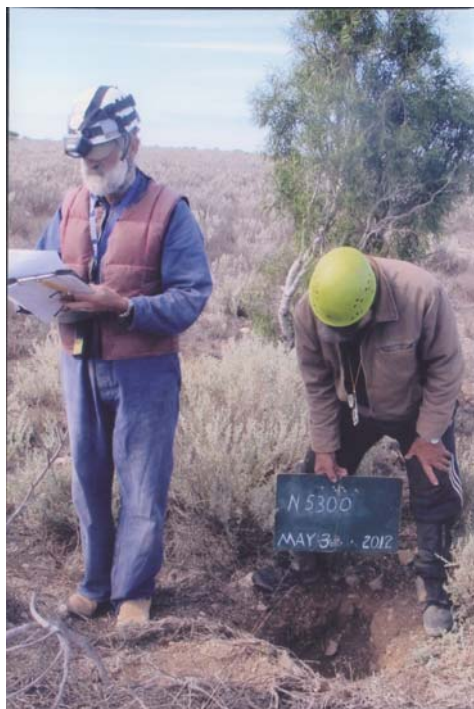
The total sites visited for the whole working groups was 76 features.

Note:

5N353 this was the northern most feature we checked GPS location on this old CEGSA number on an old track to Deakin. So with Ian Curtis, June and myself we took the opportunity to drive there, a now deserted railway township.



June and George MacLucas at Deakin railway
station.
Photo: Ian Curtis.



Ian Curtis recording, George MacLucas holding clacker board at N5300.
Photo: June MacLucas.



June MacLucas ascending 12 metre pitch 5N5237.
Photo: Margaret James.



George MacLucas coming out of 5N349.
Photo: June MacLucas.

5N991 Bunburra Rock Hole I calculated had 900 litres of water at time of our visit and if it was full would hold 2,250 litres.



June MacLucas and Nick White in 5N5249.
Photo: Daryl Carr.

N5203 Devine Cave. This cave was named in honour of Paul Devine a member of CEGSA aged 42 who recently died early in 2012. Paul had previously taken part at the beginning to these ultralight trips and all but one of the members on this trip had caved with Paul.



The First descent into 'Devine' cave. Denis Marsh starting descent, George MacLucas sitting on edge, Ian Curtis (orange overalls) sitting and Greg Leeder sitting.
Photo: June MacLucas.

The native animals on this trip were scarce besides the mice, dingoes were the most seen animals, no kangaroos and no camels. The bird life consisted of a few kestrels, an owl flying out from a cave, a few swift swallows but one windy day an exhausted Hoary-headed Grebe bird landed in camp but after resting moved on.
Another wonderful exploration, recording and adventurous trip.

George MacLucas.

Discovery and Exploration of Thylacine Cave, Nullarbor WA

by Dr Roger M Howlett, CEGWA

I first visited the Nullarbor and some of its caves in 1956 and it was with a great sense of excitement that I recently returned during Easter 2012 with my colleagues of the Cave Exploration Group Western Australia (CEGWA). The expedition comprised of ten CEGWA members lead by Paul Hosie and the aim was to document and explore karst features in the Mardabilla Plains area of the far Western Nullarbor. All of the discoveries in the area are wholly attributable to the incredible research work done by Paul Devine, who we learned had tragically passed away just before our trip. On this expedition alone, 153 new karst features were fully documented and of them, 21 were true caves.

Discovery

It was mid afternoon on the 11th April 2012 and we had already documented 15 karst features that day, three of which were caves. Most of the features are soil depressions, many of them having blowholes or solution pipes at the drain point. Many of the solution pipes are large enough to climb down, so our method was to take it in turns descending them to evaluate the prospects. The last hole I checked had been a dud, so my travel companion and caving buddy Wesley Lamont (Wez) suggested I check the next one also. This turned out to be a reasonable sized cave. Within a few minutes I saw what I was sure was a Thylacine skull.



Roger Howlett and Wesley Lamont at Thylacine Cave entrance. Photo: Christie Allen.



Roger Howlett entering Thylacine Cave.
Photo: Wesley Lamont.

solution pipe is about 1.2m in diameter, 6m deep and vertical. The flat and level ground surface around the pipe would seem to indicate that there was never an animal accessible walk-in entrance.

The cave was digitally surveyed by Christie Allen and Paul Hosie using Paul's Laser DistoX equipment. The map shows a sinuous 'Vee'

Electrified by this discovery, my 'five minute' check of the cave had stretched out to over twenty minutes - enough for Paul to come down and check that I was OK. We agreed that the cave was significant enough that we would return early the following day to thoroughly explore, survey and document it.

Description of the Cave

The following day we found that there were four Thylacine-like skulls and skeletons in the cave so we tentatively named it Thylacine Cave. The use of the name was later confirmed with Graham Pilkington as being acceptable for the Karst Index. The surface entrance to the



Paul Hosie surveying Thylacine Cave.
Photo: Christie Allen.

shaped cave. The roughly level, mainly rocky floor and rubble inclines have a total length of approximately 140m. There are some small calcite formations and troglobitic *Tartarus* spiders (we have observed the spiders in all of the caves we have explored in this area so far).

Skeletal Remains

The floor of Thylacine Cave near the entrance showed a kangaroo skull, a few possum sized skulls, jaws and other bones. Other vertical solution pipe entrance caves explored during this Easter trip showed numbers of kangaroo skeletons and other possum-sized remains, quite often including some with dried out skin.

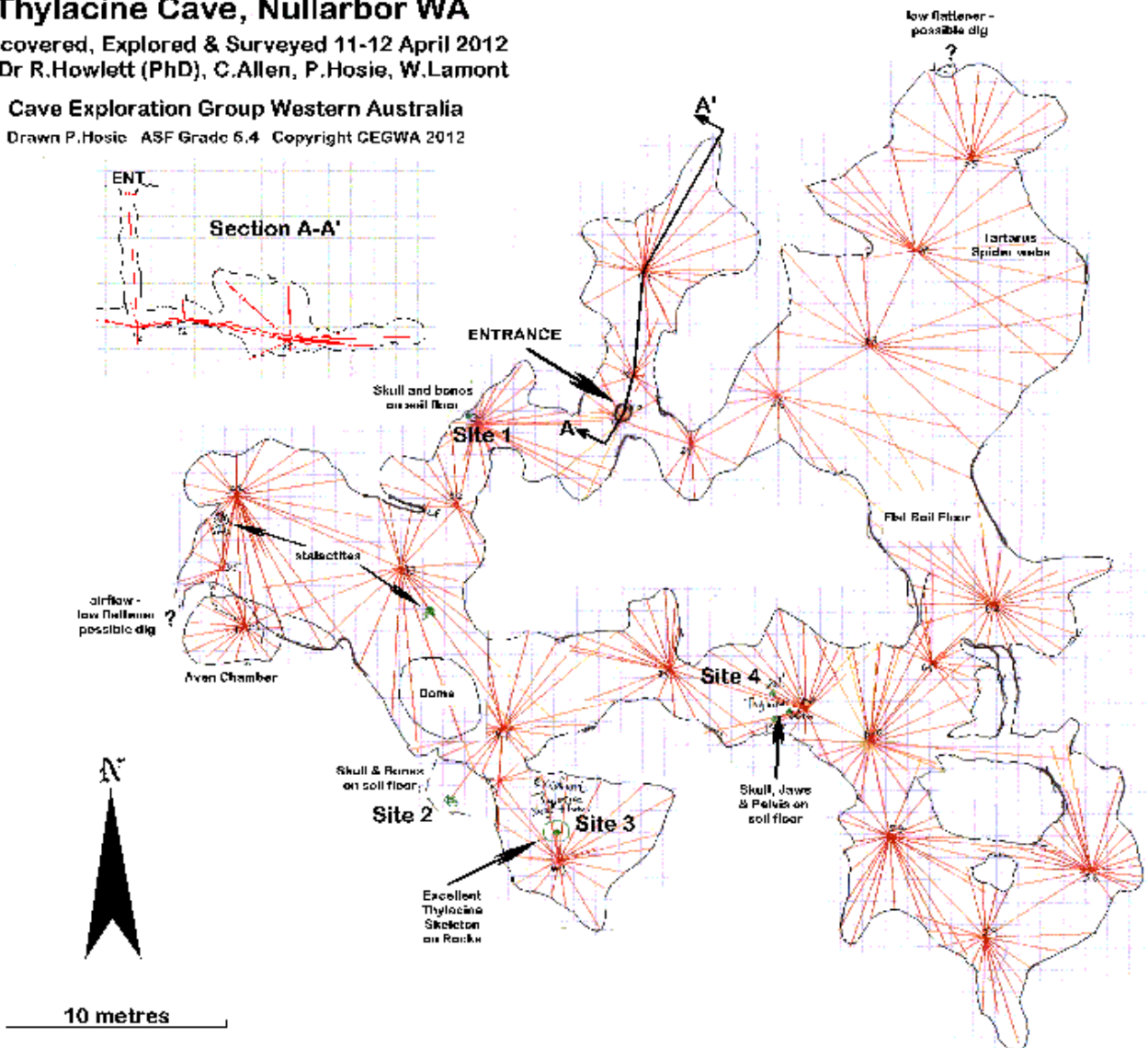
At locations marked Site 1 to Site 4 on the map were skulls that looked like dog/dingo or Thylacine. These sites were cordoned off with yellow flagging tape, photographed by Wez and nothing was removed. The WA Museum vertebrate palaeontologist Dr Alex Baynes hopes to be able to join us on our return to the cave and bring collecting material. Whether any funds can be found to conduct radiocarbon dating of the remains is a doubtful question as the WA Museum is appallingly under-funded.

Thylacine Cave, Nullarbor WA

Discovered, Explored & Surveyed 11-12 April 2012
by Dr R.Howlett (PhD), C.Allen, P.Hosie, W.Lamont

Cave Exploration Group Western Australia

Drawn P.Hosie ASF Grade 5.4 Copyright CEGWA 2012



The skull nearest the entrance (Site 1) was about 8m from the base of the solution pipe. The approximate distances of the other sites from the entrance are: Site 2 = 28m, Site 3 = 36m and Site 4 = 45m. Site 1 has an intermittently damp soil floor containing an average dog-sized skull, much weathered and fretted away. The left side of the skull, upper jaws and palate were mostly missing. No lower jaws or other bones were visible. Due to the bones' fragility, a detailed examination was not possible. I could only say the skull is dog-like and certainly not that of a kangaroo. Site 2 is a dry soil floored alcove off the side of a large chamber which contains a single skull, ventral side up, clearly

showing the two hindmost teeth in the right upper jaw. Fortunately the two hindmost teeth are so clearly very different in a dog/dingo compared to a Thylacine that there is no doubt that this is a Thylacine skull.



Site3 Thylacine bones.
Photo: Christie Allen.



Site3 Thylacine bones 2.
Photo: Christie Allen.

Site 3 is the pearl in the cave's palaeontological inventory. It is in a six metre diameter chamber with a three metre high ceiling and an inclined boulder floor. Strewn on and amongst the boulders in the centre of this chamber are a skull and many other bones from a single animal. The skull had the teeth facing upwards, showing five of the full complement of eight molars. Their shape and alignment are indisputably those of a Thylacine. Both lower jaws were present, one adjacent to the skull and one upright amongst the rubble. Also next to the skull was the pelvis and other bones partially buried in the rubble. The skeleton has obviously shifted from the animal's original position at death.



Site3 Thylacine skull scale.
Photo: Welsey Lamont.



Site3 Thylacine bones.
Photo: Wesley Lamont.

Site 4 is in the floor of a low passage connecting two chambers. A skull top about 15cm long lies partly submerged in a fluffy, dry earth floor. About one metre away from the skull lies an obviously carnivorous set of lower jaws and other bones. These were carefully and slightly moved to be photographed in the hope of enabling later identification, but we're still not sure as the photos were not conclusive.

Thylacines on the Mainland

Thylacines survived until modern times in Tasmania until the death of the last one in a Tasmanian zoo in 1937. There is uncertainty over when the species became extinct on mainland Australia and New Guinea due to the paucity of radio-carbon dated specimens discovered. Some of the radio carbon dating evidence collected to date from various locations are provided in the following table:

Location	Thylacine (yBP*)	Dingo (yBP*)	Authors
Devon Downs Shelter, SA	2,980 (+/-90)		Smith, M (1982)
Venus Bay, SA	3,030 (+/-60)		Medlin, GC (1996)
Wombah, NSW		3,230 (+/-100)	Mulvaney, DJ (1975)
Murra-el-elevyn Cave, Nullarbor WA	3,280 (+/-90)		Partridge, J (1967)
Madura Cave, WA		3,450 (+/-95)	Milham, P & Thompson, P (1976)
Fromm's Landing, SA	3,881 (+/-85)	3,170 (+/-94)	Macintosh, NWG & Mahoney, JA (1964)
New Guinea	4,000		Bulmer, S (1964)
Tunnel Creek, Kimberley WA	4,100 (+/-67)		Gale, SJ (2009)
Thylacine Hole, Nullarbor WA	4,650 (+/-104)	2,200 (+/-96)	Lowry, JWJ & Merrilees, D (1969)
Horseshoe Cave, Nullarbor WA	5,630 (+/-120)		Archer, M (1974)
New Guinea	10,000		Van Deusen, HM (1964)
Skull Cave, Augusta WA	17,500 (+/-??)		Howlett, RM (1960)
Mammoth Cave, Witchcliffe WA	37,000		Landelius, EL (1960) & Merrilees, D (1968)

* yBP = years Before Present

(Note: For full reference list, please contact the author via secretary@cegwa.org.au)

This data suggests that the most modern Australian mainland Thylacines were living until approximately 3,000 years ago in South Australia. On the Nullarbor, the skeleton found on the cave floor of Murra-el-elevyn Cave had attached tissues and was dated to 3,280 (+/-90) yBP. This is currently the youngest Thylacine remains found on the Nullarbor. It is possible that Thylacines survived later than this, so any further remains found by cavers or palaeontologists are certainly precious.

Earlier Work

The last discovery I personally made of Thylacine remains was back in 1960. At 2.925 metres deep into a trench dug in the floor of Skull Cave, near Augusta in Western Australia, I recovered a maxillary (upper jaw) fragment. At the time, this was an excellent discovery that I was very pleased with, although having the bone dated was problematic and could only be estimated from work done much later on the soil strata. The WA Museum conducted an excellent palaeontological study by digging a trench in the floor of Skull Cave conducted by JK Porter in 1979 – just a few metres from my own. Charcoal samples from two different strata in the WA Museum trench were radiocarbon dated and this data was extrapolated to provide an approximate age for my Thylacine fragment of 17,500 years.

Other Discoveries

Of the 21 new caves discovered and explored during our April 2012 expedition, we identified an additional two with obvious palaeontological significance. The first was Streamway Cave where we positively identified a Thylacine left mandible (lower jaw), fully populated with teeth (see photo). Several days later, Wez and I explored a large cave with numerous mummified animals including a stick-nest rat, bilby and bandicoots – all of which have been extinct from the Nullarbor region for a long time. We named this cave Crypt Cave and once again, the WA Museum is keen to visit the site and properly document the contents.

Advice for Cavers

Cavers finding dog-like skulls should mark their positions in the cave, photograph them and inform the state museum (of the state where the cave is located). If teeth in the skulls and jaws can be seen, close-up photos of these may allow a clear species identification to be made. If you find remains with attached skin, hair or other tissues, you shouldn't assume they are recent and therefore unimportant. The Thylacine carcass discovered on the cave floor of Thylacine Hole (N63) in 1966 had the skin and hair largely intact on the body's upper, exposed surfaces. The characteristic dark bars or 'tiger

stripes' were clearly visible, even the tongue and one eyeball were still present and recognizable. This specimen was thought to be quite recent by the discoverers due to its remarkable preservation, but when radio-carbon dated, they were amazed to find it was in fact over 4,600 years old. Those of you interested in learning more about Thylacine morphology and how to tell the difference between a dog (wolf) and Thylacine skulls, I commend to you the excellent website: <http://www.naturalworlds.org/thylacine>. This website also has the photos of the mummified Thylacine as described above.

Nullarbor Pit-Traps

There were five Thylacine skulls found in Thylacine Hole (N63) in addition to the mummified carcass, some of which had fairly complete post cranial bones. They were located between 14 and 53 metres from the cave entrance with the complete mummified carcass approximately 140 metres from the entrance. Both Thylacine Hole and Thylacine Cave have vertical solution pipe entrances which are 11m and 6m deep respectively. The cave structure and the surrounding geomorphology indicates there never was access to the caves that an animal like a Thylacine or Kangaroo could readily climb or walk into. Sharp clawed rodents and similar shaped marsupials could probably ascend the solution pipes, but certainly no larger animals.

Noting the considerable distances of the Thylacine remains from the cave entrances, it is obvious that the animals survived the drop into the caves and moved themselves to their final resting places. The question then arises: Did all these Thylacines accidentally fall down the entrance holes which are both about one metre in diameter? I suppose this is not impossible given the untold millennia of time these solution pipes were open to the surface. Lowry & Lowry (1967) speculate that the smell of putrefying bodies already in the cave would have wafted out in the up-drafts and Thylacines were lured into these extremely hazardous descents.

I suspect nearly all vertical solution pipe entrance caves on the Nullarbor show animal skeletons on their floors and this applies even when the surface hole is relatively small, such as one metre in diameter. If such caves should have wash in earth floors of only a few metres depth, bones below the current cave floor could be extremely ancient. I would certainly like to find such a cave!

The Future

Given the vast number of unexplored karst features we are aware of on the Nullarbor, there is no doubt that we will be kept busy for many years (probably decades) exploring and documenting them. I am particularly encouraged that some young people are taking an interest in learning about the palaeontological aspects of caving and I'm sure there will be many more remarkable discoveries to be made. As far as the Nullarbor and the Mardabilla Plains sub-region is concerned, the CEGWA crew based in Perth, Margaret River and Esperance are well placed, equipped and motivated to document many of them over the coming years. It will give me great pleasure to not only continue exploring caves and documenting their contents, but to transfer some of my knowledge of palaeontology onto the next generation of enthusiastic speleologists.

Dr. Roger Howlett.

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Naracoorte – SOS and S102.

Saturday march 17th.

Mark Sefton, trip leader.

We arrived the night before with Rory, Isiah and Rory's friend Curtis who signed up on Saturday as an associate member. We awoke around 7:15 and was greeted by Graham Pilkington eating a pear. We had breakfast and prepared to leave. We drove to the farm house of Jim who's land the cave was on and Mark arranged to get some blocks from an old ruin on his property to build a wall around the new work shoring up the entrance to SOS cave. After loading Marks trailer twice I drove my bus up to the entrance of SOS. We then proceeded to arrange the tripod above the entrance before building a wall around the outside (Mark took photos).

It took nearly 2 hours to rig the safety gear and for Mark to enter the cave at which time he discovered that the entrance needed cleaning so Graham and I proceeded to set up to gain entry to the other cave on the site (I think it is S102).

I learnt about how to set up a ladder and a belay for entry into the cave, then after a quick lunch we proceeded to the cave entrance. It took a while for all of us to get into the cave; us being myself, Rory, Isiah, Curtis, Elli (also a new CEGSA member) and Heikko from FUSSII. I was the last one down just before 1:00pm. Who would have thought that on a caving trip which is predominantly an underground exercise I would get sun burnt.

It was sooooo nice to get underground again in the peace and quiet, except for the stupid blowflies. After everyone gathered we went further into the cave. This was my first trip into this cave and whilst I had been descending into the cave the boys had gone off exploring. They had determined that I was too fat to get into a certain part of the cave and they also wanted to show us some bones they had found. Taking the challenge I proceeded to the small restriction and after Graham went through I also went through. In front of us in the passage was a rock fall. Someone had dug to the right of the fall so I went left and found some soft limestone which I asked if it was worth digging further. Graham and I dug nearly 6 linear feet of this, before after examination, Graham looked to see that the rock fall was vertical and it was unsafe to proceed.

We then followed after the children and found them sleeping in a large chamber with a very high ceiling. It was quite difficult for me and took a lot of energy to get in to this chamber which left me exhausted. I learnt from this that I need more practice and energy for caving in the future. The others continued to explore the chamber but I had a sleep. One of my favourite parts of being underground it taking a nap in the dark, I feel so at peace within myself and the rest is enjoyable.

After every one had finished exploring we proceeded to the surface where I learnt about correctly packing the equipment. As a new caver I appreciate those more experienced taking the time to show me how to do the activities surrounding the actual exploration of the cave.

All in all it was around 5 hours underground.

Next time I will sleep the night and drive home the next morning as the drive home was hard and required a lot of sleep stops.

Damien Pilkington.

%%%%%%%%%

Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 12th May 2012

Participants: Graham Pilkington, Michael Woodward, Chris & Ray Gibbons, David Jukinen, Travis Stevens, and 3-month introductory members Michael Starkey, Michael (Goldy) Goldfinch, Jos Keelan, Steve Minuzzo, and Teeshie Ferraro.

We all tramped off to the Rope Crevasse with Chris escorting us for the first part of the trip before returning to get some reading done. Ray looped around to keep Chris company back to the entrance then rejoined us via Ramshorns. While I waited for Ray, the others took a detour into Crystal Chamber before heading off to the Bushwalkers Chamber where Ray and I caught up with them. From there we went out to the Octopus Chamber, most via the Twin Pits, but Ray and I via the false-floor route. Lots of fun was had exploring in the first half of the chamber down the floor hole and side tunnels before returning to the bottom of the Rope Crevasse. Half then ascended the Rope to exit the cave by the same route that was used to get there (mainly the energetic and skinnier members), while the rest used the Ramshorns route back to the surface.

I don't normally get out for lunch, but today was a good day to be outside in the sun because it's been overcast for most of the last few weeks. However, a bit of rain had made for a cold wind from the south so facing north behind shelter was the prized position. Ray and Chris had had enough caving for the day and returned home. David and Travis had used up their energy for the day and stayed out for the afternoon – something about caving is more strenuous than their usual activity of playing computer games.

The plan was to take a ladder to Skeleton Crevasse via the Wombat Runs and return via Bandicoot Bypass. The first hurdle was getting up into the Wombat Runs. Teeshie, being on her first caving trip, found the task too difficult via the direct climb so she and I got into the Wombat Runs via the climb outside Ramshorns then across the Pigeon Loft. We caught up to the others just past the old gate where standing is possible. After ten minutes of discussing the pros and cons of continuing, we retreated to the Pigeon Loft. Some then climbed down there, trying a spanning technique that works best for tall people, while others took the opportunity to try the alternate climb down. Even though Teeshie had managed the challenging climb up the rift on the way in, she needed a team effort to get down again. In many cases, it's more difficult to descend than to climb.

For the rest of the day, we occupied ourselves visiting Grand Central via the connection to the Bandicoot Bypass. A few younger members even slid across into Bandicoot to see what it was like from this end. From Grand Central, three hardy souls climbed the Tree Fork and rejoined us through the letterbox. From there it was a simple almost-walk out, much to the surprise of several newcomers to the cave who were under the impression that we were a long way from the entrance.

Graham Pilkington.

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Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 27th May 2012

Participants: Graham Pilkington, Gary Woodcock, Jeanette Chapman, and 3-month introductory members Eloise Fuss, and Emma Dawes.

For the first couple of hours, we visited Grand Central, with Eloise taking photos all the way from the surface to catch the look and feel of caving and Corra Lynn Cave. She's a journalist with the ABC and wanted to expand on what the cave has to offer now that it has been placed on to State Heritage register. The ABC did a piece on the cave a couple of months ago, including an interview with me over the radio. To get a better insight, Eloise and I did some research and, together with extra ideas picked up during the trip, asked me, Jeanette and Gary, many questions about the cave and why we went underground.

After coming out for lunch, Eloise and her friend Emma left us, while the three of us went off to the Portal to extract more gluck. It's possible for three people to excavate and lift out the muck from the bottom of the Portal, but it's hard work! After a three-hour session, we called it quits. The equivalent of twelve full bucket-loads was raised, totalling an estimated 100 litres of wet clay and a few pebbles. I never went to the bottom, but I was informed that the bottom was widened to make it possible for me to work there and that the rift is widening slightly with depth, as expected. I just hope that the rift does have the horizontal "passage" of at least 0.3m width that I've been anticipating for these past few years.

The dig is now in the most exciting phase (again). Digging down the first 6m rift in the floor of the Portal was speculation that paid off, even if all it did was to gain access to the bottom of the Wishing Well. Digging down the 6m rift of the second stage was a chore that just had to be done. We will shortly get to see if it was worth the effort.

Graham Pilkington.

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Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 3rd June 2012

Participants: Graham Pilkington, Michael Woodward, Gary Woodcock, Mark Sefton, Matt Smith, Steve Wasilewski, Carol Thomas, and 3-month introductory members Teeshie Ferraro, Jimmy Grant and 17 students from Mercedes Collage.

The number of participants from Mercedes dropped off drastically as the day approached. I gather that the flu was hitting the school hard. This made for a much better trip for the people who were lucky enough to come along because we only had about nine people per team. One went off to the Octopus Chamber, one to the Crystal Maze, and one to Limestone Bridge. All had a good time. My team to the southwest got to enjoy the Bandicoot Bypass on the way in and the climb up into the Wombat Runs from Skeleton Crevasse on the way out.

For the afternoon, we were left with Gary, Matt, Teeshie and myself to progress the Portal Dig. Only two hours could be spent digging mainly because the CO₂ level down in the dig became uncomfortably high. Over the last few trips, the people at the dig have unwittingly blocked off the vent hole at the lowest point. I tried to poke it open again but about 10cm of debris has accumulated which made it impossible to reopen with a stick that could only just reach the spot. The dig level has been lowered to about 10cm above the lowest point but that vent is 2m along a 15 to 20cm wide fissure – way too small for me! I concentrated on expanding the dig at the junction with the Portal fissure to give more room to tackle digging down. The side fissure has started to increase in width

with depth – now up to 40cm wide – but the wider section also slopes down into the side fissure. What's needed is a skinny person who can be in the side fissure to dig the floor out because people of my size find it very difficult to extract the sticky wet clay from beneath my feet while confined to a standing position.

It took a long time to climb out of the dig because of the high carbon dioxide and low oxygen levels sapping my strength. I had to have a rest after every "step" of the way and found the arm-lift out onto the platform especially difficult. It didn't help when I got a cramp in my leg trying to then stand up! Next trip, I'll have to take in a borer to drill open the vent. At least debris is now unlikely to re-block any vent with the dig now at a similar level.

Graham Pilkington.

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Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 9th June 2012

Participants: Graham Pilkington, Damien Pilkington and children Isiah, Juliet and Charlie.

A family trip but Damien had a goal in mind; he wanted to get through the Alberta Letterbox.

The trip began by Isiah leading us off to Grand Central. He decided to take us via the upper levels starting outside Ramshorns. I took the opportunity to detour along the way to visit places that I'd not seen in several decades. This enabled Damien to learn more about the cave. On passing close to the Bandicoot Bypass, Juliet wanted to see what was down that way, so we all followed. I was sure that Damien couldn't get along the Bandicoot but he wanted to see for himself. Much to my astonishment, he made it through, albeit slowly. He had mentioned that he had lost some weight, and girth. Seeing that he was on the other side of the constriction, I led us down into Skeleton Crevasse and the Skeleton Maze – Limestone Bridge areas. We returned the same way because it would have been too difficult getting the youngsters up into the Wombat Runs. Out for lunch via our original target, Grand Central.

After lunch, it was off to the Letterbox carrying the appropriate hammers and chisels. Actually, Juliet carried them because none were heavier than she is. This should not be classed as child labour but more like muscle-building exercises. Damien had not tackled the Letterbox since I had removed a sizable chunk off the vertical slot. By descending the drop about-face from the usual orientation, he got through without difficulty. This now opens up more than half the cave to him and gets me another helper for the Portal Dig! The youngsters had a great time visiting the first part of the Alberta because a lot of the area is of walking height for Charlie. They even got to gawk at the gypsum stalactites that have populated a small stretch of the main leg to the Portal. These are growing at a few mm per year and are now up to 8cm long. Because they grow from the base and usually from clay-coated rock, not from the tip like calcite stalactites, some have fallen off without help from cavers. When the passage was first entered in 1983, these gypsum stalactites were barely present, now they festoon the passage. I surmise that the unblocking of the sealed passages in the early 1980's and consequent airflow was the trigger.

In the first part of the Alberta, there are hundreds of what appear to be rat scats. These were there when the area was first dug into by CEGSA in June 1983. It's assumed that the rat(s) got in prior to the collapse of the "original" open passage leading off the Cauldron. On this trip, we found what are probably a rat skull (from memory, tooth layout 1 0 0 3; skull length about 9 to 11cm) and a single leg bone lying on top of the floor dirt. The positioning of the bones and lack of any others nearby suggests that they were placed there "out of harms way" when a dig was made into a dirt pile only 1m away. A proper identification and bone search will have to wait until a later trip when I have my camera with me.

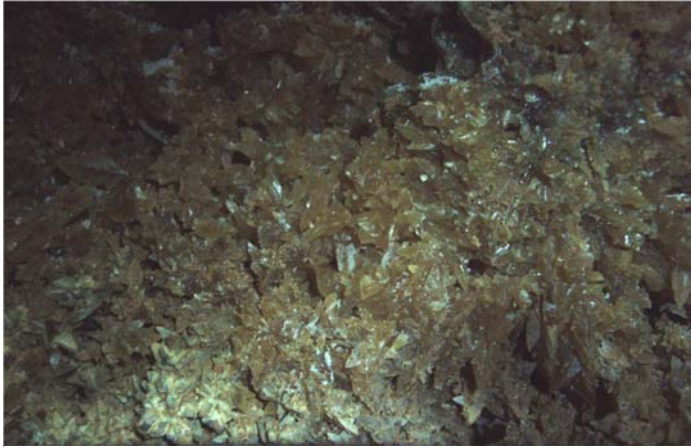
By now, there were calls of "when are we leaving", so we left. On the way out, much to the annoyance of the youngsters, I stopped occasionally to explain or postulate to Damien what we were passing and how much hadn't been investigated scientifically, especially the cave fill. Despite all the clamour to leave the cave, while driving home they all decided that they liked caving and wanted more. Only Charlie – the youngest at 6 years old – fell asleep, which meant that we had taken it too easy on them in the cave. Next time I must travel further and faster!

Graham Pilkington.

Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 11th July 2012

Participants: Graham Pilkington, Lance Hoey, Barbara Wiesner, Damien and Juliet Pilkington.

A rare mid-week trip taking advantage of school holidays for Juliet. A fun trip exploring the Middle levels north of the entrance and a little bit of the Crystal Maze. I was surprised but pleased to discover that someone had dug into an extension that is not on the map. It goes less than 10m but it expands the limit of the cave. Now I have a reason to return to the area NW of the Kitchen to both survey the "new" stuff and see if we can expand it even further.



Y-1 crystals near Crystal Chamber.
Photo: D Pilkington.



Y-1 Damien P NW of Kitchen.
Photo: G Pilkington.



Y-1 Damien P NW of Kitchen.
Photo: G Pilkington



Y-1 Juliet P in Southern X.
Photo: G Pilkington.



Y-1 JulietP and Damian P NW of Kitchen.
Photo: G Pilkington.

Y-1 JulietP in SouthernX©GPilkingtonAfter lunch, Damian and Juliet went home while the three of us remaining headed off towards the Portal with a 2-piece digging pole and trowel to unblock the vent in the dig. Not that we got very far because I got a toothache and the trip was called off.

Graham Pilkington.

Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1, 5th August 2012

Participants: Trip Leaders Graham Pilkington, Michael Woodward, and Gary Woodcock, with Neville Skinner, Peter Ashenden, Steve Wasilewski (teacher), Carol Thomas (teacher), and 3-month introductory members Mark Sellers, Jimmy Grant (teacher), Erina Barker, Morgan Brooks, Carlos Castano, Rachael Coles, Harry Davies, Mitchell Duval, Maddy Francis Pran Gabrynowicz, Lucy Hann, Si Habib, Lucy Keniry, Maddie Massy-Westropp, James Mitchell, Paddy Power, Costas Rizos, Grace Ryan, Ciaran Sambrook, Henry Schutz, Nadine Steiner, Dan Subic, EC Symes, Max Telford, Claudia Watson, Ian Zhang.

We split up into three teams, consisting of a Trip Leader and helper, 6 to 9 students, and one teacher. Each party had its usual highs and lows, both in the cave and in the enthusiasm for caving. But by the end of the trip, I believe all participants were enjoying themselves, some very surprised by this! Many of the students discovered that they were capable of much more than they thought they were. Unfortunately, this might be a reflection on the sheltered life that we enforce on our children instead of letting them explore the world and take risks that might hurt them. I've read that people who were not allowed to take small manageable physical risks when young, do not know how to recognize, evaluate and manage risk when "grown up".



Corra Lynn Cave typical passage.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave Drumstone traverse by torchlight.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave Drumstone traverse.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave Grand Central.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave at start of 25m long flat to Bushwalkers Run.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave at start of Bushwalkers Run.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave debrief.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave looking up
flowstone ramp from Crystal
Chamber. ©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave ramp down
from Crystal Maze.
©NRSkinner



Corra Lynn Cave Ramshorns.
©NRSkinner

After the Mercedes College members had bussed off, we set about fixing the ramp into the cave enclosure. The farmer, Andrew, has built a concrete strip across the base of the gate in preparation for making the gate rabbit-proof. At present, we have a rabbit netted enclosure with an open gate! However, the concrete is too steep for some of the town cars being driven into the cave paddock – they scrape on the concrete. Instead of insisting that all passengers exit the vehicle each time, we have now poured a “cave mix” in front of the concrete to reduce the incline. The mix was obtained from the stairs and ramp outside of the entrance into Ramshorns because the fill at this point was close to the entrance; it was made of an ideal consistency of small rock flakes and sand; and the floor-step up-ramp is collapsing and flowing down over the support steps, burying them, and overflowing down the slope that leads to Grand Central. After many bucket-loads and sack-loads, and the exhaustion of the troops, we decided enough had been done. This was tested by the two cars on their way out and proved a success.

Graham Pilkington.

Murray Bridge Cave

Date: 9 August 2012.

Party: Lance Hoey and Barbara Wiesner.

A visit to M2 was very disappointing. We found the cave had recently been badly graffitied. We spent two hours removing rubbish – spray cans, glow sticks, candles, alcohol drink containers etc. We left the cave looking more respectable but there is still more rubbish and graffiti to be removed. There was no water in the cave but a section of the sloping floor on the northern end was very muddy.

Lance Hoey.

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Past Trips from General Meetings

May 2012

- **Ian Lewis** presented a long section of Wet Cave, U10. This is a compilation of the sections created by students from Latrobe University a few weeks ago. It shows two levels of cave development.
- **June and George MacLucas** have just returned from the VSA Nullarbor trip. Five large caves were found including one with a 25m entrance pitch into a cave proposed to be named after Paul Devine. It's 6km this side of the border and has a large chamber after a 200m low tunnel access. Rabbits are proliferating again and but the mice were overwhelming.
- **Gary Woodcock and Grant Gartrell** visited Kelly Hill on Kangaroo Island with a small party in late April. The focus of the visit was further investigation of small caves and dolines off the "20 minute walking track". A close examination of an area in the bottom of one doline showing evidence of fresh slumping due to drainage revealed a 6m deep breathing hole. An evening barbecue catered for by the local crew was very much appreciated by the visitors from the north island and did much to reinvigorate the friendships and encourage data exchange. They stayed at Rocky River in the Flinders Chase.
- A fun trip was held by **Graham Pilkington** into Corra Lynn Cave on the 12th May.

June 2012

- **Matt Smith** reported on a trip to Corra Lynn Cave on the 6th June that had students from Mercedes College in the morning then in the afternoon a trip to the Portal to continue the dig.

July 2012

- **Ian Lewis** reported on the South East bat-count weekend run by Kevin Mott.
- **Neville Skinner** reported via letter on a 3-week Nullarbor diving trip that included diving in Weebubbie, Murra El Elevyn, Tommy Grahams and Cocklebidy Caves. He went out to Toad Hall in Cocklebidy Cave after being offered the use of scooters.

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

MEMBERSHIP

Nil changes reported.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES became due on January 1st.

Joining fee applies after March 31st. If you prefer to direct debit your fees, the CEGSA Bank Account details are: **BSB 105-900, Account No 950661040**, reference with your name and CEGSA fees.

Please email treasurer on your action. Renewal form is required for database information purposes.

CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2012 YEAR

Full Membership	\$ 53.00
Full Country Membership	47.00
Associate Membership	45.00
Long Term Associate	53.00
3 Month Introductory	5.00
Joining Fee (N/A to 3mth Intro)	12.00
Discount for e-mail CEGSA News	15.00
Discount for Country Membership	6.00

ASF LEVY FEE FOR 2012 YEAR

Single	\$ 68.00
Family	121.50
3 Month Introductory	20.00
Student	61.00
Journal Subscription	25.00

2012 YEAR FEES

	CEGSA	+ASF	TOTAL
Full Membership	\$53.00	\$ 68.00	\$121.00
Full Country Membership	47.00	68.00	115.00
Associate Membership	45.00	68.00	113.00
3 Month Introductory	5.00	20.00	25.00

Variation for Family Membership

1 st Full Member + 2 nd Full Member			
Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA News	\$90.00	\$121.50	\$211.50
1 st Full Member + 2 nd Associate Member			
Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA News	\$82.00	\$121.50	\$203.50
1 st Associate Member + 2 nd Assoc Member			
Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA News	\$74.00	\$121.50	\$195.50

Discount for Country Membership applies for Family Memberships.

Please make sure your payment of fees includes CEGSA and ASF, if applicable.

Chris Gibbons.

Treasurer/Membership Officer.

Approved CEGSA Trip Leaders

Name	Caving Leader level
Marie Choi	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Stan Flavel	Horizontal and Laddering
Grant Gartrell	Coordinator Only
Chris Gibbons	Coordinator Only
Damian Grindley	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Paul Harper	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Richard Harris	Horizontal
Lance Hoey	Horizontal and Laddering
Peter Horne	Horizontal and Laddering
Paul Hosie	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Peter Kraehenbuehl	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Ian Lewis	Horizontal and Laddering
George MacLucas	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
June MacLucas	Horizontal
Tim Payne	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Graham Pilkington	Horizontal and Laddering
Phil Prust	Horizontal and Laddering
Eddie Rubessa	Horizontal and Laddering
Mark Sefton	Horizontal and Laddering
Matt Smith	Horizontal and Laddering
Gary Woodcock	Horizontal and Laddering
Michael Woodward	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical

All the above named are also CEGSA Trip Coordinators.

Members may query the classification of any Trip Leader at any time with the committee.

It is a requirement that each trip be organised by an approved Trip Coordinator to be classed as an official CEGSA trip. It is also a requirement that dependent party trips be led by an approved Trip Leader at the appropriate skill level for the cave being entered.

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29th Biennial Conference

Of The Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

**6th – 11th January 2013 - Galong. NSW.
Australia**

**Hosted by the New South Wales
Speleological Council**



If you have an interest in caves and caving the 29th Biennial Speleology Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) is an event not to be missed. The organising committee invites you to **get along** to **TROGALONG**, at the St Clements Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong, NSW from Sunday 6th to Friday 11th January 2013.

This national conference provides an ideal forum for anyone with an interest in the science or exploration of caves to share in the knowledge, research and exploration experiences of Australia's caves and karst landforms. International presenters will also be most welcome.

Presentations will be variable and nominally 20 minutes duration although longer presentations may be negotiated. Absentee presentations may also be accommodated. Posters are encouraged and will be displayed throughout the duration of the conference.

Artists are also welcome to present cave related artwork (commission applies to any sales).

Be sure to enter the cave photography competition, speleo sports and prusik events.

Experience some of NSW tourist or wild caves on the pre and post conference field trips.

All accommodation, meals and conference events will be on site so there will be lots of opportunity for socialising and relaxing. The venue has comfortable motel style accommodation with some limited camping option, an in-ground swimming pool and extensive gardens set on the peaceful 800 acre rural property with a rich pastoral history dating back to the 1820's. The venue was also a former Monastery and Minor Seminary.

Further details on costs, closing date for abstracts, program and events will be advised shortly. Please visit www.asfconference.org.au/2013

Students, researchers and speleological club members are strongly encouraged to submit presentations or workshops on any cave-related topic. The ASF administers a small grants scheme to encourage attendance at and active participation in ASF conferences by new ASF members who have not attended any previous ASF conference. The grant provides for whole or part remission of conference registration fees and travel costs etc., and personal attendance and an appropriate presentation is required. Enquiries to the conference organising committee are invited. Please contact the conference convenor, Bob Kershaw in the first instance (rkershaw@ozemail.com.au).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Type of Event	Description	Contact
22/08/12	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. DVD, Cave Safe 1	Graham Pilkington
25/08/12	Working Bee	Library and records(depending on Portal dig)	Graham Pilkington
08-09/ 09/12	Dinner	CEGSA / VSA dinner and cave cleanup Naracoorte	Marie Choi
10/09/12	Committee Meeting	At Sue McCormick's home	Mark Sefton
26/09/12	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. Mexico, part2	Neville Skinner
Late Sep	Caving	Nullarbor 1.5 weeks	Grant Gartrell
29/09/12	Working Bee	Library and Records	Graham Pilkington
08/10/12	Committee Meeting	At Sue McCormick's home	Mark Sefton
24/10/12	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. Spain	Mark Sefton
27/10/12	Working Bee	Library and records	Graham Pilkington
05/11/12	Committee Meeting	At Sue McCormick's home	Mark Sefton
14/11/12	CEGSA NEWS	Articles due	Athol Jackson
28/11/12	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. End of year BBQ	Graham Pilkington
01/12/12	Working Bee	Library and Records	Graham Pilkington
10/12/12	Committee Meeting	At Sue McCormick's home	Mark Sefton
26/12/12	No General Meeting		
06-11/ 01/13	Conference and Caving Trips	29 th Biennial ASF Conference Galong, NSW	See article on p67
	Training	Ad Hoc training	Tim Payne
	Caving	Ongoing Vic Fossil survey	Gary Woodcock
	Caving	Continuing Fleurieu Peninsula Exploration	Grant Gartrell

****Extra trips will be notified through CEGSA e-News via email****

It is desirable that caving trips involving club members should, where possible, be registered as CEGSA Trips. To do this, the nature and timing of the trip must be nominated to the Trip Liaison Officer and/or minuted at a General Meeting of Members. The member registering such a trip must be an accredited CEGSA Trip Coordinator and must agree to act in this capacity for the trip. There must also be an accredited trip leader with the appropriate skill endorsement to take a dependent party caving. Also, please ensure that a report of the trip is submitted in a timely manner.

Notes