



NEWSLETTER

Cave Exploration Group

South Australia

C/O SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM NORTH TERRACE
ADELAIDE

APRIL – JUNE 1969

EDITORIAL

The time has come to bring the Newsletter back into line with our financial year. As before, it will be published quarterly, but will now cover the periods

April - June,
July - September,
October - December,
and January - March,

thus giving the incoming committee a month in which to get its affairs straightened out before bursting into print.

Even though it appears but once a quarter, the preparation of the Newsletter is a continuous business, and contributions for it are welcome at any time. So what if you cannot write. Many of our members don't read the thing anyway, especially the program.

One job with high priority is the production of an up-to-date Constitution. In the good old days, nobody got anything done because meetings were a mass of politics. These days nobody knows what is going on, and we can get away with anything. There is a happy medium. Something related is the failure of "Grouch Nights". One would imagine that everything was perfect when listening to the deafening silence of a Grouch Night, but experience tells us that this is not the case. No grouches of consequence are aired because the same few people that attend meetings, etc., get tired of hearing their own voices after a while, especially on such abstract things as poor trip attendances, and such perpetual things as a dormant library. There is one other course of action which has not been used much of late, but which is open to you all, whether you can attend meetings or not, and that is "Letters to the Editor". Coincidentally, we have one of these rare things in this issue. Good on you "Hairy Harry", keep it up.

Finally, better still than just talk about it, get on and do something yourself. It's the best way to get anything done around here,

Good caving G.G.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

As you know it is common practice among safety conscious cavers to carry three independent sources of light while underground. A number of recent trips have shown that most of our numbers couldn't care less about this sort of safety. A recent trip to the Big Cave at Naracoorte has suggested a painless remedy for the situation. Each caver should equip himself with a red light, a blue light, and a yellow light, and so turn each cave he goes to into a Technicolor treat, just like the Big Cave. He would find the results so tremendous that he would be sure to take all his lights with him every time. Alternatively he might break down and cry and give up caving altogether. Either course would improve his cave safety rating.

(signed) ..Horrible Hairy Harry.

(Ed.'s note: This must be a nom de plume, as we don't have anyone by that name, and Harry Dolan hasn't been to see the coloured lights (have you Harry?) so it must be someone else, if you see what I mean.)

A good roll-up to the Annual General Meeting elected:

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

President:	Bart Dasborough
Vice-Pres:	John Bishop
Secretary:	Barbara Dicker
Treasurer:	Ron Galbreath (he just can't duck quick enough)
Library & Records:	Rod Wells
Membership, Search & Rescue:	Wayne Goedecke
Quartermaster:	Pete Hawkes
Newsletter Ed:	Grant Gartrell

In addition it is expected that Hans Mincham will once again be our Museum Representative although this has yet to be confirmed (when we write).

As mentioned in the recent Annual Report, some of our members feel that through the close association of the Group with the Tourist Bureau in regard to work in established and potential Tourist Bureau cave reserves, it would be advisable to have the Bureau appoint a representative to our Committee, on similar lines to the appointment by the Museum. To do this, an amendment to the Constitution is necessary, as well as, of course, approval for the move by the Bureau. The following notice of motion is the result.

NOTICE OF MOTION - FOR ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION:

This motion will be put at the General Meeting on 23rd April, 1969. (For location and time of meeting, see program)

Moved: Grant Gartrell
Seconded: John Bishop

"That, subject to the approval of the Director of the-S.A. Government Tourist Bureau, section 4 sub-section A of the Constitution be altered to the following:

4. Committee

- (a) Shall consist of President, Vice-president, Secretary, five Committee members, one Museum Representative, appointed by the Director of the South Australian Museum, and one Tourist Bureau Representative, appointed by the Director of the South Australian Government Tourist Bureau, and who shall both be ex-officio members.

MEMBERSHIP: We would like to extend a muddy hand to welcome the following new members to the Group.

Richard Ancell, Gregory Boulton, Robert Henzell, and Roger Morgan have become Associate Members, and Rod Wells, our new Librarian, etc. was discovered to be a full member at a special paper sorting ceremony held at the Annual General Meeting.

Members are reminded that this year's fees are now due, and should be paid before the end of April at the latest. Fees are:

Full members	\$3.00 per annum
Associates	\$2.00 per annum
Country members	\$2.00 per annum

Associates who wish to receive the Australian Speleological Federation Newsletter should pay an extra 35c to the Treasurer when renewing their subs.

TOM WIGLEY'S SPOT:

Tom's been writing again; and, although there's a bit too much to put in here unexpurgated it is certainly too good not to put in a few bits. (He went caving in Mexico for Christmas).

"The area we went to is near a town called Huautla which is about 150 miles SE of Mexico City. This makes it approx. 2700 miles from here (Canada). We drove down in two hired vans; brand new 1969 model Dodges, V8, auto transmission, radio etc and capable of cruising at 80; seven bods per van. The route we took was via Austin, Texas to meet up with a few AMCS people, including John Fish who has done more caving in Mexico than any other person (he also discovered the Huautla area). The only other stop was at a place called Tehuacan where Mike Shawcross had a brush with the local gendarmes — he took pity on a drunk some cops were hustling off and ended up being shot at and dragged off to clink. Funny lot the Mexicans, no respect for the great white gods. The final 50 miles to Huautla is an incredible drive. Narrow dirt and rubble road starts at about 2000 feet elevation and zigzags up the side of a mountain to 5000 making an abrupt transition from rain-shadow desert to tropical cloud-forest jungle at 4000 feet. Takes four hours. This road has only been in for less than 10 years so the inhabitants are a little primitive; not uncivilised, just un-westernised. Up top is a plateau ranging from 5000 to 7000 feet, maybe 15 miles by 30 miles, very rough country, all upendicular and very karsty. Our 'spot' covers 1 mile by 5 miles and contains many caves. Five of these are good, but even in this little section there are plenty of things people haven't got around to looking at. (e.g. 'there's a hole down there which sounds interesting, 5 seconds free drop and then five seconds bouncing must look at it one day' end of quote). The 5 good ones are Rio Iglesia, which the bods did last year and got to a silted up end at -1755 : Carlata, which some of the bods did this trip mapping about 2000 feet and down to -600 or so without getting to the end : a dry pit which goes straight down via 5 or 4 pitches to -600, keeps going after this but no-one has had time to go back to push it : Cueva San Agustin, another one still bombing down at -600 feet and possibly connected to Iglesia (if the connection is made it would make Iglesia the deepest again at 2150 and the chances look good that this will happen) : and Sotana San Agustin which was the object of the exercise (Sotano means pit or deep hole, as opposed to Cueva, pronounced quaver, which (you'd never believe it) means cave). To prevent confusion the Sotana S.,A. is referred to as San Agustin, and the Cueva S.A. as the Cueva.

San Agustin is some cave. The entrance is about 200 by 100 and 280 feet deep set in a doline which is a mile or so long, 1000 to 2000 feet wide and 700 foot deep. It is so big that these dimensions don't mean very much since it looks like a common or garden valley until you-realise that it is totally enclosed. We roped and laddered the entrance pitch, the ladder making gear hauling out easier and the rope for rappelling in — ladder climbing is easier than prusiking except for people who have done no ladder work-before. The entrance pitch, like most of the ones below, is not free, which gives one some sense of security. Immediately below it is a 30 degree handline slope of another 150 vertical feet into a large N37 sized chamber. (We think Tom mean that the chamber is say 100 or so feet wide and up to 100 feet high rather than that it is as long as N37 - lets hope.) Then a few dry pitches order 30 to 70 feet until the water appears. From about -600 feet on, all the pitches are varying degrees of wetness; some sort of protection is essential: most of-us having wet suits although these got bloody hot. We set up camp at -850 just at the start of 'the fissure'. At this point the cave intersects a fault and follows it down for 1000 feet. Fortunately the development has meandered from side to side down the fissure so that, although at the bottom one is directly below the top, the descent is broken up into a series of smaller drops, mostly around 70 footers with one 300 footer. Beyond the fissure (this point is almost directly below the entrance to the cave) the thing becomes more horizontal, going about 3000 feet before finally sumping at -2006 (actually the sump is in a side passage which the water takes and the main horizontal passage continues on, ending in a penetrable rockpile. The cave is developed in really beautiful marble-like banded limestone. In many places the walls are polished smooth and superbly textured. ...

Tom goes on to-describe some of the incidents that make any trip memorable:

“ We had to station four bods on ledges to free things as they were lowered (down a certain pitch), and the operation took a couple of hours. The water came down the previous pitch into a plunge pool about 3 foot deep and spurted out of a small hole at the bottom of the pool. Very convenient this because it meant that the water went down one side and people below could ferry gear without getting too wet. I was perched on the top of the pitch clipped on to the rope with a jumar and transferring gear over the edge. It was a bit hairy so I decided to stand in the pool. I did this and feeling some loose rocks on the bottom kicked them around with my feet — trouble is they were blocking a good-sized hole. The water suddenly had an easier route out of the plunge pool and huge volumes suddenly took the direct route down the pitch almost drowning the four heroes on ledges below. Great screams and curses floated up through the spray. Didn't tell anyone what I'd done until later; the four had to spend the next 1½ hours under a waterfall and were fairly cheesed off at the end, not to mention wet.” (Inserted by the censor ?%}

“..... We had a couple of incidents on the trip which made it a little exciting. Fish's wife was prusiking up a 150 foot local pit when a local nit decided to see how sharp his machete was and chopped the rope in two. She was about fifty feet up from the bottom when suddenly - no rope. By pure chance she had just-passed a ledge and so only fell 5 feet – incredibly lucky.

The natives were a very unfriendly lot; this one knew someone was on the rope when he cut it although he may not have realised that a fall could be fatal.”

"The only other thing of note about Huantla is the MAGIC MUSHROOMS. This local primary industry contains a hallucinogen (psilocybin) and mushroom munching attracted multitudes of U.S. hippies until the Mexican army came around and deported them en masse back to the States. All the local kids are out to make a few pesos selling the turista some hongos. A couple of the bods tried them out and turned themselves on very nicely. Same as L.S.D. ...”

.... and on that note we leave Tom for a while, but he is making secret hints that he may have something better still to tell us in the (we hope) not too distant future.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR COPY YET?

The Group has fresh supplies of that extremely good limited edition publication:

CAVES OF THE NULLARBOR (SUSS and CEGSA; John Dunkley and Tom Wigley eds for sale at \$1-00 a pop plus postage. When this pile runs out, there aren't any more, and that will be tough luck. - So, buy early and avoid disappointment.

The same applies to the A.S.F. HANDBOOK. This is available to members at \$3-50 a shot. Pay your money and give your name to the Treasurer or his deputies. This is really good value at less than 1c per page.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AUSTRALIAN CAVE RESEARCH?

Why not take out an annual subscription to HELICITITE and improve your mind.

It is top value at \$2-40 per annum post paid and it comes out quarterly. Some back issues may still be available if you order smartly.

Write to Helictite, P.O. Box 185, Broadway, NSW 2007

IF YOU WEREN'T AT THE ASF CONFERENCE:

Then we aren't going to tell you what went on. The Group's interests were looked after. Fees remain the same. The A.S.F. looks a pretty real and healthy body when you consider its geographical problems. South Australia's conservation problems are different and less obvious than the problems confronting the Easterners.

Peter and Margot Matthews, of V.S.A., assisted by Alan Hill will be producing a Transcript of the Conference papers, which will eventually be available to those who attended, and will also be held in the Group's library. You will be able to read all about it there.

MULLAMULLANG EXPEDITIONS *1966* is completely sold out.

Before considering a reprinting of this publication, we would like to hear from anyone that still wants one. It will only be economic to do this if we can sell large quantities once again.

CLOTH BADGES - HELP HELP ?

Recent exhaustive enquiries have shown that people want ridiculously high prices for making cloth badges for the Group. What we could once sell at a marginal profit for 75c now would cost us about \$1.35. Anyone that knows anyone who can improve on this figure, would be doing us a great service if they could let us know too.

TASMANIA 1970-71 ?

The 8th Biennial Conference of the A.S.F. (Australian Speleological Federation) will probably be held in Tasmania. This depends upon the way in which the various Tasmanian Groups can team together to organize the thing. Singly, T.C.C. doesn't feel too sure that it would like to take the job on, at present. (Actually T.C.C. we recommend it. Find a spot for meetings and sleeping, and send out a few circulars to net some speakers, and the rest will organize itself. With your caves, you couldn't miss.)

IF YOU WANT TO GO TO TASMANIA FOR THE CONFERENCE,

and especially if you want to take your car, at that time of the year, bookings on the boats are extremely heavy, (like two years ahead) so:

1. Make sure you are dinkum about it
2. Think whether you want to take your car, and how many passengers you would carry
3. Give your name to Grant Gartrell before the end of April.

Can't please everyone, but might be able to make some sort of block booking. Cost (from Melbourne) \$30.00 return per person \$50.00 – 60.00 return per car (depending on type of car).

"BLIND WHITE FISH"

A newspaper article in the Adelaide 'Advertiser' 16,11.68 headed "Rare Fish in Desert", and commencing "Tiny blind fish have been discovered by Adelaide 'potholers' in pools in caves under the Nullarbor" sparked off interstate interest in a search for more positive information. Everything so far has been negative - there were no fish collected and C.E.G.S.A. was not involved. The non-caving informant claims he was led to a shallow cave with a lake (and a flow of water) by an aborigine a year or so ago, where he only saw the fish.

The cave was supposed to be between Nundroo and Nullarbor (100 miles apart) and several miles walking north of the Eyre Highway. Cuddys Well (493 107 on the 1:250,000 Nullarbor Sheet) marked "underground" on the old maps seemed a good place to start but this proved to be an old dug well, now over 100 feet deep, and dry, and which is used as a dump.

Discussion with the staff at the Yalata Mission Reserve, which extends to within a mile of Nullarbor Station, and their questioning of the Mission aborigines gave us a totally negative response.

A.L.H.

(Ed's note: We may never be quite sure as to the veracity of the origins of this story. The originator, when confronted with our negative results, confessed that he had been on his honeymoon at the time, and had given the aboriginal a lift. No - on recollection it wasn't between Nullarbor and Nundroo, but between Ivy Tanks and you know how these things end up.)

NULLARBOR SPIDER. To make up for the poor fishing on the Nullarbor, Peter Hawkes and party found an unidentified spider in the Dome chamber of Mullamullang Cave on 10th January, 1969. It was found on an open rocky floor 6 ft from the Dome rock cairn, and it showed no fear as it walked over Hawkes' hand before being captured. The accompanying sketch is drawn full-size with all limbs fully extended. A brief description follows.

Cephalo-thorax

Tan in colour, head detail not clear as covered in dark hair.

Abdomen

Round section, unsegmented but elongated. Off-white in colour covered with many fine white hairs.

Legs

8 clearly segmented, tan colour. Each segment has 4-6 strong dark hairs with other finer white hair much shorter in length. Legs have more hair towards outer ends. Ends of two back legs appear to end in small claw.

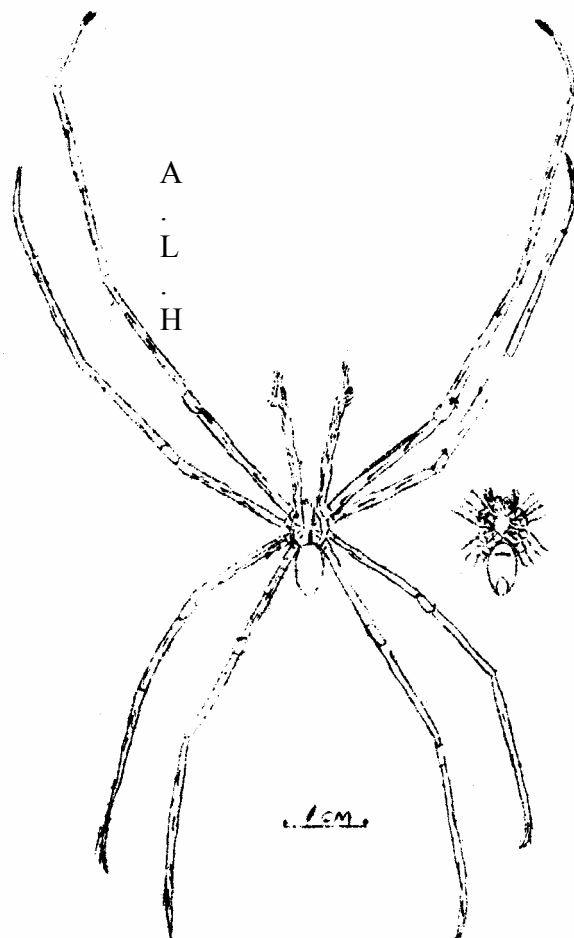
Palps

Darker in colour (brown) and more hair covered than legs. Unusual last joint that appears to be very strong. Last segment bulbous at joint with a small black protuberance on outer side.

Dr. M.J. Mackerras .during examination of dead cockroach (*Troglolattella nullarborensis*) remains from Mullamullang Cave (N37) found fragments of a spider about 2 years, ago. The fragments were sent to Dr. Barbara Main and it was then thought to be a previously undescribed new species. (pers. Comm. E. Hamilton-Smith).

It appears to be eyeless and the palps are unusually long. Whereas the diet of the Nullarbor cockroach has been suggested to include fungus and rotted wood a spider is normally a predator and would have to subsist on young cockroaches. The spider would certainly appear to be troglobitic and no doubt a formal description will follow in due course.

A.L.H.



PROGRAMME APRIL – JUNE 1969

MARCH

Wed 26th.	General Meeting 7.30 pm	Museum Lecture Room Slides from post-A.S.F. trips
-----------	----------------------------	--

APRIL

3rd - 7th	EASTER trip Andamooka Opal Field	Leader: Bill Daw “He-He We’ll all be rich”
3rd - 7th	EASTER trip to Naracoorte	Leader: Bob Davies
Wed 9th	Committee Meeting 8.00 pm	221 Findon Road, Findon
Wed 23rd	General Meeting 7.30 pm	Museum Lecture Room, Speaker: Mr D. King on the Canadian Arctic.
24th - 27th.	Anzac long weekend Cave search for the lost Wilcowie Cave north of Buckalowie Creek and Good Friday Cave	Leader: Alan Hill
24th - 27th.	Tentative trip to Gleneig River area see Bill Daw if interested joining forces with Victorian Spel. Assn	

MAY

Wed 14th	Committee Meeting 8.00 pm	7 Parish Hill Road, Uraidla
16th - 18th	Curamulka	Leader: Grant Gartrell
Wed 28th	General Meeting 7.30 pm	Museum Lecture Room Selected films will be shown.

JUNE

6th - 9th	Queen's Birthday L.W.E. Naracoorte Trip	Leader: Barbara Dicker
Wed 11th	Committee Meeting 8.00 pm	84 Perseverance Road, Vista.
Wed 25th	General Meeting 7.30 pm	Museum Lecture Room A discussion on Search & Rescue will be led by Wayne Goedecke

TRIP CONTACT LIST

Bill Daw	413 Cross Roads, Edwardstown. (H) 53-5732 (W) 62-1432
Bob Davies	53 Cator Street, Glenside. (W) 23-0461 ext. 315
Alan Hill	84 Perseverance Road, Vista. (H) 64-1523 (W) 59-705
Grant Gartrell	47 Folkestone Rd, BRIGHTON. (W) 23-4333 Ext 2029
Barbara Dicker	2 Pentridge Road, Salisbury North. (H) 58-1393 (W) 59-6387