



NEWSLETTER

Cave Exploration Group

South Australia

C/O SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM NORTH TERRACE ADELAIDE

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FEBRUARY - APRIL 1973



LOOKING ACROSS THE FIRST LAKE TO THE ISLAND,
KOONALDA CAVE, NULLARBOR PLAIN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CEGSA NEWSLETTER - February -to April 1973

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Explanatory explanation. The above table of contents is not given in the presumption that you, the reader, will actually open your Newsletter this far, with tongue hanging out in anticipation of the rest of the good gen. contained herein. It is well known that that is too much to expect in most cases, and those foolhardy enough to venture this far are likely to plough on to the bitter end whether there is a contents page to guide them or not.

The reason we need a table of contents is because the hard working Greg Middleton, of SSS, who cranks out those incredible Speleo-Abstracts, cannot sleep at night if we don't have one. He also has difficulty in understanding that the name of our newsletter is "Newsletter". The forest does sometimes seem to obscure the trees, doesn't it Greg!

The NIBICON Speleo-publications seminar, a rather turbulent and frothy meeting of the waters (all flowing upstream) in which your Editor bobbed around as Chairman, occasionally repelling boarders with his paddle, did eventually produce a small list of guidelines for the publication of society newsletters. The above table of contents is one small concession to that list. Others may follow later, maybe. Never let us forget that a camel is believed to have been a horse that was designed by a committee.

Medical authorities warn that the reading of this publication may constitute a health hazard, but say that it's O.K. to look at the pictures.

EDITORIAL I

NIBICON has been and gone. Most who attended seemed to be having a good time. A shame the "Lady Scott" burned to the water-line since the substitute good ship "Radar" was not really geared to the provision of food for well over 100 people and others. In fact those with more scientific minds were rather surprised the old tub didn't just settle gracefully under the waves as the hordes kept pouring on. I understand those single males who wore caving overalls and stood shoulder to shoulder in the front line at the trough might have seen some food. The finely dressed ladies and gents seated demurely amongst prawn shells waiting for the smorgasbord to reach them might as well have been on a hunger strike. Still, what can you expect for six smackeros? The finale was sailing around in circles (look there goes the Harbour Bridge again) to use up the allotted tune while the inmates starved. We won't mention the visit by the licensing police or whoever they were. If you read of the "Radar" being burned to the water-line, suspect arson and start checking the caving guest-list. Moral: Never trust a fancy-looking ticket.

Don't remember much about the talks. When you've heard one you've heard 'em all. Generally they seem to be good if adequately prepared and a waste of time or worse if not. The South Australian contingent apparently to a man shrunk from the dreaded needle and dipped out on the histoplasmosis blood sampling and skin testing. Don't think we've got fungus lungs and at least no-one ran the risk of serum hepatitis. We did enjoy the highlight of the Convention activities, which was, of course, the Obstacle Race. Teams representing various societies pitted their caving skills against the clock and each other through a gaggle of diabolical tyre squeezes (who put the thirteen inch tyre in the middle of all the fifteen inch ones?), wading pool sumps, concrete drainpipes, and so on. Maybe it is a sign of things to come that beer cans or something similar were used to represent delicate formations in some of the crawlways.

Thence to the field trips, in which many got a taste of NSW caving and during which well over 1000 feet of cave was added to the NSW repertoire in a number of major and minor discoveries.

Was the Convention a success? Of course it was. Undoubtedly the most important feature of the whole convention was the making and renewing of friendships over State borders (and this time overseas to New Zealand) and the impression that nobody had to feel her pulse to see whether or not the old ASF was alive. It's obvious the Australian Speleological Federation is still a goer, and like the practical side of caving, with the application of a bit more spadework will certainly lead on to bigger and better things.

Maybe a rise in the capitation fee is justified, maybe not. At least the membership sees something glossy for its money these days. But if TCC will excuse me for saying so, I would rather read their crummy looking 'Speleo-Spiel' with its generally rather exciting trip reports, than the undoubtedly excellent ASF Newsletter. Of course I wouldn't object if Speleo-Spiel was in six-track stereo and super-colour, but primarily I'm a caver, not a librarian, and it's the news I'm after. It's pretty easy to spend money gathered from other people, and pretty easy to get floated away on clouds of grandeur. On the other hand, as usual, only one or two people end up doing all the work, and those who don't pitch in and help are in no position to complain. If a little more money from those who cannot help in any other way can ease the burden on the workers, then it's not too much to ask - but as they say, stick a gun in my ribs as you wring me dry - it'll make me feel better.

G.Gartrell

EDITORIAL II

Enough of prawn-shells, drain-pipes and politics. On with the caving. Once again, in a spirit of friendly co-operation, CEGSA has shown interstate cavers how to find caves. Maybe it's because you have to dig to get anywhere at all in South Australia (unless your name is Fred Aslin) that we went on the recent ASF field trips to Jenolan and Yarrangobilly prepared to dig. The earliest dig, the excavation of 9 feet of pressure tube off the Oolite Cavern in Mammoth Cave (Buy your; Mammoth Book if you don't know where that is) led only to the reward of 2/3d dropped by some previous digger. Nevertheless a worthwhile dig and certain to break through into the Woolly Rhinoceros after either few or thousands more feet. Digs through incredibly tight wombat holes in the side of the Y10 doline at Yarrangobilly were marginally more successful. Both broke independently into the same new cave, containing an impressive chamber. Curses. A footprint in the floor of the chamber showed the existence of an easier way out. We had found new entrances into the little known upper levels of the main Y10 cave. If you feel at home in Sellicks Hill then you'll just loooove Yarrangobilly. The rock-piles are equally awe-inspiring in both.

Ian Lewis's efforts past Great North Cavern in Mammoth are perhaps the most exciting of CEGSA's contributions to New South Wales speleo history. The map opposite shows his first discovery, immediately dubbed "Twiddly-Om-Pom" in CEGSA's honour. Gee thanks, chaps. A subsequent trip managed to dig out the impassable hole at "Last-Ditch Dig" following a strong breeze. They did not have time to follow up all the leads in the new section entered, though, but if CEGSA diggers were looking at them most would be guaranteed to go.

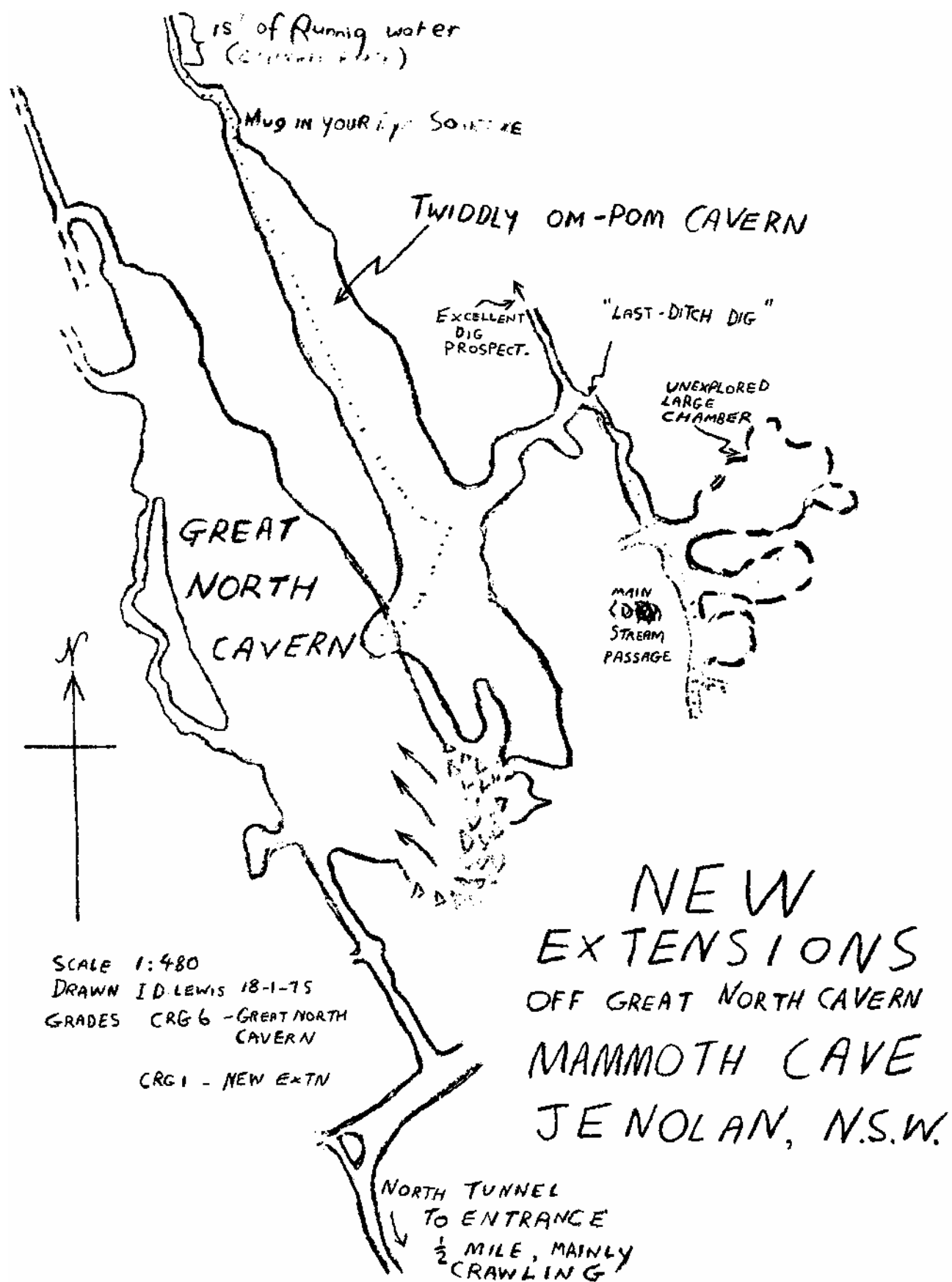
Anyway, to the point of this monologue. If CEGSA is so good at digging in other peoples' caves, why don't we see a bit more action in our own holes, which are in general a darn sight easier to dig in than anything New South Wales can provide? The Fox Cave still has half a dozen good digs (do you remember the old days with ladies and gents sand boat races - a hundredweight of sand at a time and a tunnel 50 feet by 3 feet by 4 feet dug in one afternoon) and there are at least half a dozen strong breezes in Naracoorte that need following by mini-trogs. Or how about going to Curramulka with your little shovel. Corra-Lynn Cave is famous for its digs. Virtually every dig started in that cave has broken into negotiable tunnel. Admittedly half of them have broken into known tunnel, to make it even more of a maze than it was before, but the other half of the digs have substantially extended the cave. The Curramulka Bone Cave deserves a few more digging trips this year, too. Good fresh air excavation of a 100 foot shaft (we are down 40 feet so far) and absolutely no reason why it should not lead to something at least as good as the Town Cave, which in turn also contains several digs. Then there are digs in the Glenelg River area, digs near Mount Gambler and even digs in the Flinders Ranges.

And once you've dug into it, ••• Survey it.

Motto for 1973: Take this little shovel in your hot little fist and repeat after me ••••••••

P.S. There are even digs on Kangaroo Island. Whinkey's Cave on Robert Smith's place was the result of a thirty foot dig from a minute surface depression. Why don't you link K11 and Kelly Hill Cave. Shouldn't be too hard.

G. Gartrell



TRIP REPORT Buckalowie Creek 28th – 29th October 1972.

Party: J. Foulds (L), P. Cairney, M. Meth, B. Rivett, G. and A. Pilkington (and Waldo),
D. Murray, R. Galbreath, G. Bowley (plus 2) and 5 scouts.

Party met and camped at Carrieton on the Friday night. Having rung through to the Ampol garage and promising him a sale of 50 gallons provided he opened at 7.00 a.m., we all collected to fill vehicles to capacity for a total of 20 gallons - moral is don't ring ahead, just go to the house behind the garage and wake them up. The trip to the caves was uneventful except for a game of roundabout around the Belton signpost.

The party was then split into three groups to visit Mairs, Clara St. Dora, and a dig about 4 miles back towards Carrieton. After lunch one group visited Mairs, while the others entered Clara St. Dora. Seems to be getting more and more difficult to whip up any enthusiasm for digs.

The centre of attention was Clara St. Dora where one member of a party was nearly locked in, two parties were locked out, and about twenty five feet of cave was added. The case of the "scout that went missing" in Clara St. Dora is a good illustration of optimum party size and the need for close surveillance of novices. When he realized he was lost, the scout concerned was sensible to stop and wait. However the whole affair could have been averted if the preceding member of the party had waited for him to come out of the squeeze and shown him the way. Probably the best way not to get separated is to stay in contact with the man in front and the man behind, wherever possible. This can only work provided the leader slows his pace to that of the slowest member of the party. It is a basic principle but breaks down too often and usually where a cave offers more than one alternative for proceeding.

Prior to the above event a dig was completed in the end of the section after the decorated chamber. Ending in a small undecorated chamber about 25 ft long and 13 ft wide, it offers possibilities of further extension if more enthusiasm for digging can be attained.

Saturday night saw the usual (speak for yourself - Ed.) wine tasting ceremony with two new labels being added to the list an excess of hypothetical argument and several new versions of the "Twelve Days of Ericmas". Sunday morning loomed bright, very bright, and the party split into four with the extra party making an unsuccessful attempt to find Nappa Nappa Mine (old guano mine shown on geological maps). A grasshopper plague, a navigation error of 7½ miles and losing the track, doomed the Nappa Nappa Expedition and left it half in and half out of a creek bed. After the back wheels didn't work we pleaded for guidance to the Great White Caver (only done in the direst of circumstances). The answer came – "Let the barstard roll in" - did so - "back the barstard up the other side" - The Great White Caver is truly a benevolent Thing. (Even if he can't spell bastard : Ed)

Left Buckalowie around 4.00 p.m. Sunday afternoon to run the gauntlet of grasshoppers, stumpy tails and crows back to Adelaide. Has been reported that the Chamber of Commerce is most concerned that Rub-A-Dub had to rewash several cars several times before their true colour re-appeared. Car manufacturers are now looking to Grasshopper Green as the new-look, cheap, durable finish.

J.G. Foulds

EAGLES NEST - Yarrangobilly

We were six as -we sauntered down the brambly track, boots laced, suits buttoned high, faces a-shine with the latest famous fly repellent.

At the bottom lay Y1 - West Eagles Nest, wedging in the shade. But we, alas, were to slog up to another, Y3 known as 'The Eyrie', which shone, nettled in the sun.

Scratched, we scrambled across, then slid into the massive rock pile. The limestone felt cold as we disappeared from the daylight. Great grey boulders hung gauntly above, while below they balanced like massive building blocks. Then through a squeeze on the left to a cavern shot with silver.

The air was still, humid and icy, and the heavy dew clung to the rock.

We slid through a post box slit doubling back beneath us to a precarious liquorice drop. The agile glided down like long legged bats, the slightly round groped, while the female variety lolloped on a succession of heads and knees.

We found ourselves in a mangy streambed where Ron of the six cylinders led us to a series of uninviting rock pile squeezes. None seemed to be the way on.

Trogs punted and grunted in black holes, dreaming of glorious victory and slowly freezing with the cold.

Two acrobatic SA males pushed a (likely or unlikely) crack, then Ron found the way on a little higher up from whence we had come. Again through a rock pile squeeze to a narrow winding river passage.

Dizzy we followed till we again became misplaced. But not for long, the two Canberra diehards knew where they where and led us back and on into Y2.

Y2, East Eagles Nest was warm and cosy. A few pretties hung white and orange in the void and in the silence a tummy rumbled.

Now the climb out, up another rock pile, muddier but more friendly than its neighbour next door.

Ten minutes later we stood smiling in the sun. The upward hill disappearing above us. The hot slog achieved, the Rovers boarded, we drove up the rest of the mountain, back by Rules Point, to the Kiandra Pub.

One lean and hungry Lewis was first in;

"Give me five pies please."

- "No Pies."

So he, and we, settled for several super, frothy duper, mugs of milk.

NSW - Ron Murray, ACT - Neil Anderson, John Wiley,
SA - Ian Lewis, Grant & Leslye Gartrell.

Leslye Gartrell

A Review of the Biology Symposium, held during NIBICON at the University of N.S.W. on 27th December 1972. by T.H. Maddock

Three papers on biospeleology were presented to the Ninth Biennial Convention at New College. The first, titled 'A comparison of Australian and United States Cave Fauna', was written by Bro. Nicholas and presented by Gleniss Wellings (SSS). The second paper by Glenn Hunt (SUSS) was called 'The First Blind Triaenonychid Harvestman in the World. But is it a Cave Species?' 'The Distribution and Zoo geography of Cave-dwelling Bats in South Australia', presented by Trevor Maddock (CEGSA) was the final paper.

While the papers were wide-ranging and diverse, discussion on them led to certain common and salient points regarding the study of cave life in Australia which makes them worth repeating here.

First point: just not enough work has been done in this field of speleology and the 'patchiness' of knowledge creates as many problems as it solves. The first paper would have better been titled, 'A comparison of the amount of published work on Australian and United States cave fauna' for the lack of described species and published material in Australia was the greatest influence upon this comparison. In the last paper, the clearly defined distribution patterns of South Australia's cave-dwelling bats were more the result of very rudimentary investigations rather than actual distributions.

Second point: related to the first, too much may be assumed from too little data and there seems to be a trend among biologists to over simplify in order to fit 'pre-prepared' categories. As Glenn Hunt put it, "What is the likelihood of the first and only specimen of the only blind triaenonychid in the world being found outside a cave if it is a troglobite?" If this specimen was found inside a cave it would immediately (and possibly erroneously) be regarded as a troglobite. As it stands it cannot yet be assumed to be a troglobite or troglophile. One could put the question here, just how many animals put in this category actually are positively troglobites? This relates back to the first point that a little knowledge may be completely misleading.

After the third paper Ian Lewis (CEGSA) asked the question, could the bat Myotis adversus (commonly found near water: see Dwyer, 1970) occur in lower south-eastern South Australia where large areas of intermittent water are often found, depending on the season? There is no conclusive answer to this question because not enough is known about this species. The distributions of most other species of bats may be substantially altered if a lot more field investigation takes place and more information is made available.

In summary, the symposium on biology was perhaps one of the more successful of the convention in that all of the papers presented contributed towards some very useful guidelines for further research into Australian biospeleology. The papers presented will be published in the Proceedings and will (hopefully) be available in the near future.

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- Dwyer, P.D., 1970. Foraging Behaviour of the Australian Large-footed Myotis (Chiroptera). Mammalia 34. pp 76 - 80.
- Hunt, G.S., 1972 (presented) The First Blind Triaenonychid Harvestman in the World, But is it a Cave Species? In print.
- Maddock, T.H., 1972 (presented) The Distribution and Zoogeography of Cave-dwelling Bats in South Australia. In print.
- Nicholas, Bro, C., 1972 (presented) A Comparison of Aust. and U.S. Cave Fauna. In print.
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Editor's note: While not understanding most of Mr, Maddock's Review, in particular such subtleties as the common use difference between wide-ranging and diverse in the zoospeleobiogeodegradable literature I must own up to changing his Symposia to Symposium. Just one of those little weaknesses of mine and I've been itching to do it ever since the official blurbs for the Convention used Symposia to represent the singular rather than the plural. The rest of Mr. Maddock's Review has been mercifully free from my editorial interference.

- and then I faltered and swum desperately for my faithful old dictionary, 'The Household Dictionary of the English Language' published by William Collins, Sons and Co., Limited, London and Glasgow, at an unknown date but subsequently owned by one Charles Wadey in 1886. Doesn't even have the word 'Symposia' in it, nor for that matter 'Television', nor even (woe of woes) speleo-anything, but at least it has 'Symposium' clearly defined, and it explains a lot of things :

Symposium, n. (L,G sumposion, from sumpinein, to drink together) -
A drinking together; a merry feast.

NARACOORTE HUT NOTICE BOARD - TRIP LEADERS PLEASE NOTE

The Notice Board in the Naracoorte Hut is for trip leaders to fill in the details of trips to be undertaken. I.E. Cave to be visited and part of cave if necessary and a realistic time of return (to which every effort must be made to adhere). We have had a case recently of S & R members at Mount Gambler being put on standby when one party was three hours late leaving a cave. They did at least put it on the board.

The responsibility to fill the board out correctly lies with the Trip Leader. It is also his responsibility to clear the board immediately the trip is over not drive into the Naracoorte pub or back home to Adelaide leaving people staring at a time, long overdue, written on the notice board.

Bernie Dunn

8.

TRIP REPORT Naracoorte 26th and 27th December 1972

A VERY SMALL TRIP TO THE CAVES RESERVE AT NARACOORTE
RESULTED IN MINOR EXTENSIONS TO TWO CAVES.

Entrance to Cathedral Cave was gained by a fixed wooden ladder, forty feet high, built under one of the cave's twin entrances. In its heyday, Cathedral Cave was open to the public at all hours (via the ladder). The large flat floored chambers were quickly relieved of most of their formation (only stalactites greater than about 12 inches in diameter have survived).

For many years the cave has seen little activity as the ladder rotted and rusted away. Some of the metal rungs had rusted through, and a landing area 20 feet up had all but decayed away. It is reported that the top 20 feet of ladder, which are "supported" on this platform, were in fact supported only by a growth of flowstone rock covering part of the ladder near the surface.

However, many civic minded people have used the cave to clean up their camping areas, etc. (They threw their bottles, cans, rocks, sticks, trees, rubbish, pantyhose! etc. into the entrances).

It is at last once again safe to descend. Reconstruction of the permanent ladder was recently completed by the celebrated Harry Baker. This involved (as you might imagine) much hard work, for which we are deeply indebted.

Anyhow, getting back to the point of the trip, a small crawlway in the "Broken Heart" Extension was extended. This involved scraping a channel through a 6 or 7 inch high constriction, and the removal of several rocks. After squeezing through I entered a large round chamber with roof height 12 inches increasing to 13 inches on the right, where finally I was stopped by a rockpile, with insufficient room to continue (I was broken-hearted literally and metaphorically).

A "dig" in Wombat Cave also yielded a similar (but smaller!) chamber.

Max Meth.

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If you see a hoss on the horizon it could be our reluctant Viet-Cong.

Butch has joined the CAVALRY.

4722780
Pte. G.E. Alvero,
A Squadron,
3 CAV Regt.,
MILPO
TOWNSVILLE, QLD 4813

Congratulations to Sylvia and Ed. Bailey on their son Jonathan Richard aged 0 years and weighing 6lb 13ozs. Successfully negotiated his first squeeze in the small hours of Friday 19th Jan. 1973. Mum and bub both well. Gather dad is expected to recover eventually.

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

Programme February - April 1973

February

10th – 11th	Naracoorte (L) G. Gartrell	Exploration of the vast innumerables. Bring your little shovel and pick so you can find them.
Wed 14th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	31 Lutana Cres, Mitchell Park
17th – 18th	Curramulka (L) M. Meth	To push a newly discovered extension in Corra-Lynn and survey it.
Wed 28th	Annual General Meeting 8.00 p.m. Museum Lecture Rooms	Election of the new committee

March

3rd – 4th	Curramulka (L) M. Meth	See 17th- 18th Feb.
Wed 14th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	Venue to be arranged
17th – 18th	Naracoorte (L) G. Gartrell This trip is subject to a few "ifs"	Work in the Vic. of course. See above.
Wed 28th	General Meeting 8.00 p.m. Museum Lecture Rooms	Films and/or slides
31st – 1st	Flinders Ranges (L) D. Hawke	Oraparinna and all points North, by jeepjet.

April

7th – 8th	How about a trip to Curramulka for a change	Enough surveying to last a lifetime.
Wed 11th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	Venue to be decided
Wed 18th	Barbecue 7.00 p.m. onwards. 31 Lutana, Cres, Mitchell Park	In lieu of normal G.M. which clashes with ANZAC day holiday. Bring your own snags, slops, etc
20th – 25th	Kangaroo Island (L) J. Foulds	Details later when a little more is known
	Naracoorte (L) G. Gartrell	Details later when a little more is known.

It is also vaguely rumoured that Ian Lewis would like to spread the Easter jam even thinner by heading for the Great North Cavern once again, but this would depend upon his enthusiasm closer to the time, the availability of N.S.W. hosts to organise the permit, and in any event would be strictly a limited trip.

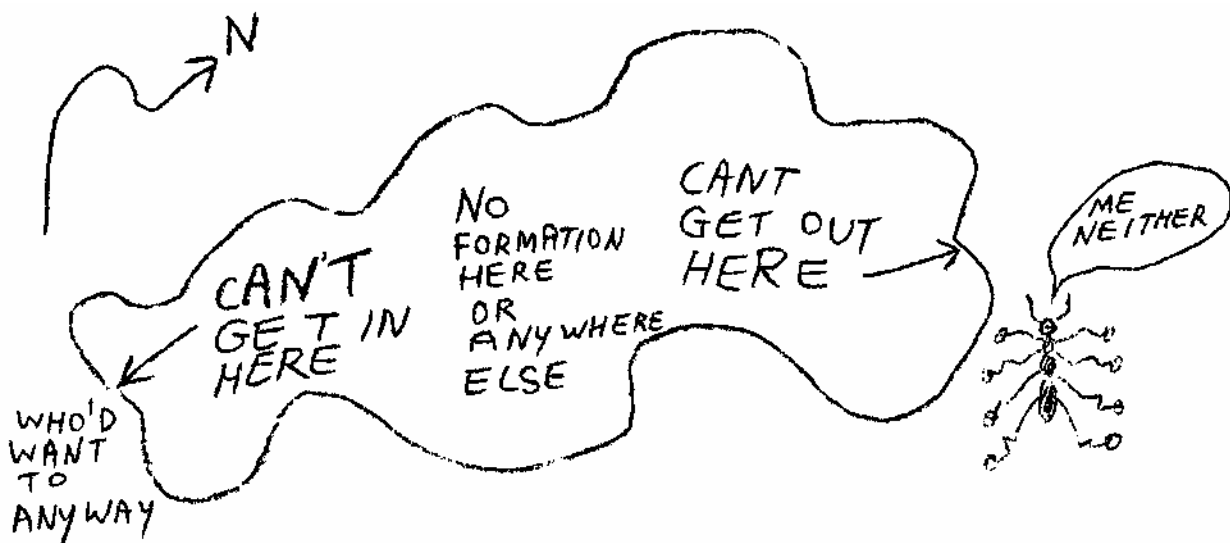
Conversely it seems likely that a small sturdy band of trogs from UNSWSS hopes to get to Naracoorte for Easier.

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J. Foulds	500 Fullarton Road, Myrtle Bank	(W) 434162

Search & Rescue

B.W. Dunn	4 Parsons Rd, Reynella	(W) 822722
G. Gartrell	see above.	



Max Meth's New Extension in Wombat Cave, CRG Grade 1, scale approx. 1 inch equals 1.3 inches.

Understand Max is designing a special mini-compass so that he can survey it.