

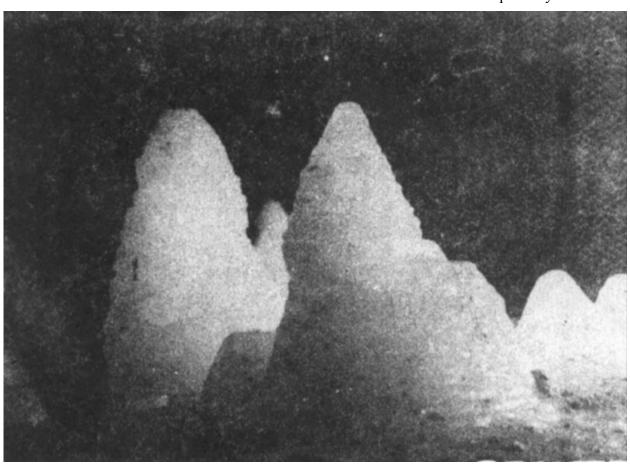
NEWSLETTER

Cave Exploration Group

South Australia

C/O SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM NORTH TERRACE ADELAIDE

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THE "SEVERN DWARFS", SAND CAVE, NARACOORTE, S.A.

$C \ E \ G \ S \ A \qquad N \ E \ W \ S \ L \ E \ T \ T \ E \ R$

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EDITORIAL

He's done it again! Last year, our not-so-retiring, retiring President, in his President's Report for 1973-74, prophesied that the proposed and long-awaited Research Centre at Naracoorte may have to take second place to the provision of a vanilla-flavoured water supply in the toilet block at the Oodnagalaby Camping Reserve. Well, he's almost done it again, as I hear that the Research Centre has once again been postponed; but the Caves Reserve looks like getting a new toilet block for the benefit of campers and visitors! It could, of course, be argued that if CEGSA had not been so enthusiastic in discovering the extensive fossil deposits in Victoria Cave, the existing toilet facilities would have been more than adequate for the number of visitors and campers — so, in a way, we have only ourselves to blame. Anyone in their right mind would agree that the existing facilities are not adequate for the flood of visitors arriving these days to visit the caves and to enjoy the wooded surroundings: over one thousand of them per day, during the summer holidays. Bear in mind, however, that they, at an average cave-entry fee of fifty cents each, say, would bring in \$500, or \$3,500 per week; which, after deducting an assumed amount of \$1,000 for total running expenses, represents a profit of \$2,5000 per week. This estimate does not include camping fees, etc. Admittedly, this only applies in the summer months; but even in winter, up to three hundred tourists per day visit the caves. So the Government has a healthy little business here, which is still growing.

With the scene set, here comes the gripe! Since October 1969, when CEGSA started on its discovery bonanza of spectacular extensions and three separate fossil deposits in Victoria Cave (the length of which has already been increased more than five-fold and is today still being pushed and extended), we have worked hard and consistently at exploring, digging, surveying and mapping — certainly for our own enjoyment, satisfaction and sense of achievement; but also, we hoped, eventually for the benefit of interested visitors. All this work has been done voluntarily, and we really wouldn't want it otherwise. But — I am beginning to wonder how long the willing horse will continue, for we have now reached the ridiculous stage where not only is this bunch of over-qualified labourers working for nothing, but they are also paying for the privilege of doing so! In addition to paying for petrol and meeting other expenses in travelling from Adelaide to Naracoorte (370 km), individuals are now hiring digging equipment at their own expense to assist in opening up squeezes for the eventual benefit of tourists and, undoubtedly, Government coffers. How much more altruistic can we get?

A recent letter to the Editor strongly advocated the cessation of digging activities by jackhammer that make every squeeze a walkthrough, and a return to caving as a sport for those who wish to pit their wits and strength against nature. Perhaps this suggestion should be seriously considered. I was surprised that the publication of this letter evoked no response from the members: surely there are some who still like a little squeeze now and then!

I'll end this tirade against everyone in general, and no-one in particular, by making a suggestion. If lack of money is preventing the building of a Research Centre, and we have been told repeatedly that this is the only reason, why not appeal to the public?

On numerous occasions while working on the fossil deposits, I have heard visitors express dissatisfaction at the apparent lack of support that this unique example of Australia's past receives from the Government. Therefore, a collecting box placed near the fossil deposit viewing point would enable tourists to express their dissatisfaction in a more tangible form. If lack of money prevents the provision of even a collecting box, I suggest that Specimen Cave be visited — there is sure to be a recently-discarded oil drum there that could be used, as it is over two years since CEGSA last cleaned out the entrance. A firm arrangement would have to be made that the monies so collected would go into, say, a Research Centre Building Fund and not disappear without trace in the Government labyrinth of General Revenue.

These days, money presents a more powerful argument than knowledge. This is why, in our attempts to persuade the Government to provide a Research Centre at Naracoorte, we use the tourist angle. (Apparently the keepers of the Government purse are more likely to release funds if they can see an eventual profit.) However, our true feelings are more inclined towards the research angle, where man's knowledge of the past can be extended, an exciting study, to both the scientist and the layman. I hope that, in the near future, the interested layman, whether tourist or not, will be able to see and eventually read about a fascinating period of this country's past, without concern for financial gain, but just for entertainment, and perhaps for captivation. This difference in outlook is akin to the age-old conflict between amateurism and professionalism, or gentlemen versus players. We in CEGSA prefer to be regarded as gentlemen, but force of circumstances appears to be slowly converting us into reluctant players.

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<u>Footnote:</u> Since the above was written, word has been received from the National Parks and Wildlife Service that some funds for the Research Centre may become available in the near future. A working party of four has been assembled, representing interested groups, and given the task of preparing a submission by the end of the year. The outlook at the moment appears promising — let's hope it stays that way.

—000—

The country edition of the "Advertiser" dated 17th September, 1974, contained an article entitled "New Cave Opened At Naracoorte", referring to the chamber in Victoria Cave to which access has just been provided by CEGSA's digging efforts.

The article states that this new chamber has been named "Grant Hall" in recognition of the efforts made by Mr. Grant Gartrell in leading the first digging party. No mention is made of the person who decided on the name, but whoever he or she is, I hope that, before they organise a full-scale, power-operated christening ceremony, they reconsider their decision for I would like to enter a plea that others have taken part in this digging marathon, and should therefore also be recognised. One participant, who was present on every dig, was Jacques Hammer (note, Denis, that his handle is missing!); and I suggest that this chamber be named Jacques Joint, or Hungry Jacques Joint, or, even, as a compromise, Grant's Hammer Haul.

The end of the "Advertiser" article raised once again that hoary old myth "the marsupial horse". I suppose if ever we find a larger specimen of <u>Palorchestes</u> in the Fossil Chamber, we will have great difficulty, in view of the above, in preventing it being christened "the marsupial Clydesdale"!

C E G S A C E G S A

ANNUAL DINNER, 30th NOVEMBER, 1974

This year, for a change, the Annual Dinner will be held in the city, and specifically, at the Golden Door Restaurant, 125 Hindley Street, (For the benefit of Trip Leaders, look for the Royal Admiral Hotel opposite the "My Fair Lady" Theatre - the Golden Door is moored alongside the Admiral.)

Diners are requested to be on their blocks at 7.00 p.m., when the starting pistol will be fired.

The cost will be \$3.50 per mouth, which should be paid to the Treasurer no later than 27th November (the monthly-meeting date).

For the benefit of those who require it, free parking is available for recalcitrant kids.

<u>Photographic Competition:</u> To enter, hand your slides or prints to a committee member no later than Wednesday, 13th November. The judges' choice will receive his/her just reward at the dinner.

KANGAROO ISLAND, DECEMBER 1974 - JANUARY 1975

Arrangements are under way for a small trip to Kangaroo Island, departing on Saturday, 28th December, and returning Thursday, 9th January. Vacancies on the Troubridge are now virtually all filled, but there may be a possibility of getting one or two more people over by plane. The cost of transport on the trip, including a share in the expenses of getting cars to the Island and back, should be roughly \$35-\$40, which is still pretty good value.

Caves like those on Kangaroo Island just don't occur on mainland South Australia, and the caving potential of the Island is still almost untapped. If you would like to spend some time discovering new caves (the breezes guarantee it!!), in between surfing and sunbaking on glorious beaches and bushwalking in glorious surroundings, produce your money without delay. Most other people have to book twelve months ahead for this time of the year, so if you haven't paid me your money (\$35) by the end of October, you had better plan on swimming over.

For further information, please contact:

Grant Gartrell

-oOo-

"Are the terms 'to prussick' and 'Don't come the old acid' synonymous?"

SAFETY AND CEGSA

It is encouraging to see the increasing interest shown by some members of CEGSA in safety and climbing techniques.

All recent field days have been well attended, despite wind and rain, and participants are rapidly improving in their ability to climb ladders, tie bowlines, and in single-rope techniques such as abseiling: but it would be even more encouraging if the rest of CEGSA would get off its fat •• ... and also come along; for safety, as an individual responsibility, should be the concern of every member of a trip, for both his own and the party's sake. I direct this even at "experienced" members, who must not forget that, although most caves in S.A. require the application of simple vertical techniques, some require techniques more advanced, and thus less well known. Let's keep our so-far-good safety record!

In spite of this increasing interest, a number of worrying aspects have been observed. The first is the lack of any good, healthy, old-fashioned RESPECT shown by many members for long pitches. It is worth remembering that gravitational acceleration on a falling body is 9.8 m/sec²; i.e. a 30m vertical pitch would take 2.5 seconds to cover, and terminal velocity would be 25 m/sec, or almost 70 km/hour. It may take a little longer, and your terminal velocity may be a little lower, if you bounce off the sides on the way down, but the end result is the same — a shattering deceleration when you hit bottom!

More importantly, there is little or no communication between belayer and climber. The blame for this must rest on the instructors, myself included, as well as on the pupils. In an endeavour to correct this serious situation, I propose below a code of signals for use at all times on pitches. One point to note is that on pitches greater than about 15 m (less if there is falling water nearby), voice communication is difficult, so we should incorporate and use a whistle code.

VOICE SIGNAL Climber	WHISTLE	SITUATION
"Below"		When anything is falling.
"Stop" "Resting" "Falling"	1 Blast 1 Blast 1 Blast	When resting on a pitch; When lowered equipment reaches the bottom of a pitch; And in an emergency.
"Take In"	2 Blasts	When climber wants slack taken in and tension placed on the rope.
"Down Rope"	3 Blasts	When climber needs slack in rope.
"Climbing"	4 Blasts	

Standardized Communication Code for Climber/Belayer continued:

VOICE SIGNAL	<u>WHISTLE</u>	SITUATION
<u>Belayer</u>		
"Stop"	1 Blast	When belayer is in difficulties and requires the climber to secure himself to the rope.
"O.K."	2 Blasts	

The only additional call is for .use when free voice is possible and the climber uses "That's me" for "Stop" after tying on.

To illustrate the sequence for a climber from the bottom of a pitch:

CALL	WHISTLE	STAGE OF SEQUENCE
"Down" or "O.K."	1 Blast	When he receives the rope.
"Take In"	2 Blasts	When the rope is firmly attached.
"That's Me"	1 Blast	When sufficient tension on rope.
"O.K."	2 Blasts (from belayer)	When ready to belay.
"Climbing"	4 Blasts	

It is worth noting that nowhere, in any context, are the terms "slack" or "slack rope" used. This is because their usage would introduce ambiguity into a situation and therefore increase the possibility of accidents.

The signals outlined above should be the only ones used — standardization reduces the risk of misunderstandings, and consequently the accident risk. Insistence of their usage really rests with the belayer, as he cannot fulfil his job as manipulator of a safety rope, the function of which is to cover each type of movement of a climber, unless he receives clearly-signalled, unambiguous indication of these movements.

Learn the appropriate signals and help to keep CEGSA accident-free!

If you have any criticism of the above suggestions, constructive comment <u>in print</u> would be appreciated, so that CEGSA as a whole can arrive at a commonly-acceptable standard of signals.

David Hawke

"RECORDS" REPORT

Standard Map Sheets

An initial run of these sheets was made in July, of sufficient quantity to satisfy the group's needs for the next ten years, including the redrafting of previously-produced maps.

286 plastic drawing sheets and 388 sheets of paper were purchased. Distribution of these sheets was delayed until September while a Standard Legend of mapping symbols was finalised. This legend is available from the Records' Keeper, firstly to surveyors and draftsmen and later to all members. As far as they are applicable to S.A., the "Cave Research Group" mapping symbols have been used, with extra symbols drawn from numerous sources. Since CEGSA's original symbols (by R. Sexton) came from this source, the "new" <u>Standard Legend</u> symbols are identical with the old in most cases.

Map-Sheet Holders

are approaching realization. They will be used for all originals (and copies not destined for underground work) that have to be transported.

Map Index

A map-index system closely and compatibly following the A.S.F. system has simultaneously come into being. The only difference of note is the method of allocating sheet numbers

Trip Cards

have been in existence since September. The basic design appears satisfactory, but details may alter as the idea evolves.

All future trips are expected to culminate in the return of a completed card to "Records".

Cave Report Sheets

are nearly ready for trial field-operation. Two paper types are envisaged: one on cheap paper for trips; and one on quality paper for typed and revised submissions.

After a brief attempt to obtain the use of a "micro-type" typewriter, we have decided to try using italics for the "Suggested Headings" paragraph.

Re-drafting of Old Maps

Would anyone interested in the above please contact me. You don't have to be an expert to copy a C.R.G. Grade-1 map!

Record-Keepers' Manual

Whilst going through the long-drawn-out process of putting the Group's records straight, I have realised that, in order to keep them straight, future record-keepers will need some help and guidance. The best way of-doing this appears to be the provision of a manual. Therefore, as I complete the re-organisation of each section of the records, I propose to write a guide for that section. In this way, the completion of the manual will shortly follow the completion of the re-organisation.

TRIP REPORT: FLINDERS RANGES, 15th-17th JUNE, 1974

A. Wilson (L.); I. Lewis; G. Pilkington; A. Pilkington; R. Hutchings; J. Wilson; P. Lake; T. Lake; I. Kiripolski; G. Sare; G. Farrell; A. Green; D. Arnott; S. Roberts

Friday, 14th

Ian and I arrived in Carrieton after dark on the Friday evening, and from there proceeded to hunt for Buckalowie Station.

The Manager, Cyril Blackwell, made us very welcome, and explained the state of affairs at Mairs (F-3) and Clara St. Dora (F-4) caves — not very promising, due to the heavy rainfall in the previous months.

Back at Carrieton again, we settled down for the night to await the arrival of the rest of the party.

Saturday, 15th

We woke next morning at the reasonable hour of 8.00 a.m. to an extremely unreasonable cold, but managed to clamber out after breaking a seal of ice over the cars.

Only the Lakes were not by then at the campsite; so the rest of the party drove into town to fill up and wait until they cheerfully arrived at 10.00 a.m. From there we continued to Buckalowie Creek, setting up camp at the base of Mairs.

The gate, you will be pleased to know, is in good condition and holding well! There was approximately 3m of water in the bottom of the shaft — crystal clear and warm, so we found. Ian abseiled down to water level to swing around and look, then jumared up. Graham F. also climbed down to look around a ledge just above the water level.

Others went on to Clara St. Dora, 1 km. down the creek. Here the water level came to the top of the steps in the tunnel, and again so clear that one (unmentioned) mis-sighted person walked straight in!

It was obvious that no caving was to be achieved this time in this region.

Sunday, 16th

While Tony, Richard, Jane and Pat went for a walk, the rest of us went 6 Km. south, successfully to relocate F.2? and F.28.

After lunch we moved to Arcoota Creek for a tourist run, arriving back in camp only after dark.

Monday, 17th

We travelled south, down to Mt. Remarkable 5 km outside Melrose, to find Mt. Remarkable Blowhole (F-1).

After visiting a couple of locals (Pubs, presumably!—Ed.), we had our main bearings and walked off over the hill in search. Ric found the hole quite quickly; and Ian set up to abseil down the 41m pitch, while we waited patiently, basking in the sunshine until he jumared up some time later, his only reward for all that effort a crumbly pitch, a skeleton, a few side tunnels, frogs and blow-flies.

Next, to Telowie Gorge to look for Gorge Cave; but as it was getting dark. Pat and I raced madly into the bushes before heading for Crystal Brook and a scrumptious meal to end the day.

TRIP REPORT; NARACOORTE, MONDAY 26th - FRIDAY 30th AUGUST, 1974

Rod McDougal (L.); Sandy Wells; Tim Burke; also some F.U.E.S.A. Members (Flinders University Earth Science Association) doing their own work at the Victoria Cave.

The long-overdue possum-proofing carried out by Denis Burke during the previous weekend turned out to have one minor shortcoming — the stove fume hood, which enters the ceiling. At about 2 a.m. we were rudely awoken by a possum slithering down the chimney and landing on the still red-hot plate. Somewhat startled, it leapt on to the sink area, causing an effect on the stacked plates, cups, cans etc. that could be likened to a grenade. Unable to beat the usual retreat, it was chased around the hut with brooms, over the recumbent carcasses of the F.U.E.S.A. blokes, and expelled. Some degree of confusion. The following night a mother carrying its baby got in and began to eat its way through our stores. We caught it in the act of demolishing crumpets and bread rolls, whereupon it proceeded at full pace under the mapping-room door (clearance about 6 cm) leaving a concussed baby on our side. The mother was later caught in a sack. Exit two possums.

While we were in the renovating/reconditioning spirit, the hut was thoroughly cleaned and tidied, and the cobwebs brushed down. The floor was even mopped, during which operation we relocated an old extension called "floor board".

Donated: One real, live, bona fide, brand new element to replace the prehistoric specimen originally exhibited in the electric jug.

-oOo-

Middle-of-the-Road Hole was revisited, and about half a ton of silt was excavated by helmet-fulls via the tiny entrance (seriously!). This monstrous cavern has three complex extensions, about 2 m long; beautifully-diggable soft fill; one residing iridescent-green frog; and is one of the few caves boasting a rock lid. Mid-afternoon saw these unique characteristics unaltered, so we replaced the lid and made a late appearance at VDC Cave, which still warrants closer inspection. A new hole has collapsed in the nearby paddock. It was apparently open before, and may possibly be an artificial shaft; it also probably contains rubbish. The cattle danger means that it should be examined soon, owner allowing, if it is not already too late.

Bone and Wire caves on the Hynam Ridge were re-explored, and a gale found in the latter that blew out matches without fail, and almost, trog-lamp flames. This came roughly from the direction of Bone Cave, 150 m away, through a hole around the side of the entrance pile. Needless to say, it underwent enthusiastic, but unsuccessful, surgery; and the future holds some horrible rock chipping through the resultant crevices.

After some transport and location troubles, <u>Robertson's Cave</u> was visited. (If in doubt, and you have to ask locally, "Joanna Caves" is the name.) Two digs were begun under the north wall of the deep chamber, but both were abandoned.

The first dig, in a subsidence against the foot of the wall, was continually swamped by a back-flow of sand, despite our strategically-placed, preventative metal sheets gleaned from the gargantuan garbage pile. After some progress under the wall, we found innumerable bones in the second dig, and left that too.

Back on the Reserve, we began digging under the rockpile at the far west end of the Tomato Stick Cave. The rock here is very weak and ridiculously light, making the extraction of huge pieces a simple matter. Some progress was made, so, if you have. an hour to spare and want somewhere close at hand.

The following evening, the north section of Alexandra came under inspection, and the right hand passages were explored. These proved bigger than expected, and some did not appear to have been entered for some time. On Thursday we ran a quick survey of the area, showing a large, almost entirely silt-filled chamber, where two large teeth were found by Tim Burke.

On Friday, John Young and Bob Van Den Berg arrived, and we found ourselves in Butterfly extension, Blackberry Cave. Much to our amusement, the major portion of the party retired in disgust after being subtly persuaded to crawl unnecessarily back and forth several times through a rugged squeeze. John and Rod went on to the next, final chamber, and made an unprofitable search about the sides of the rockpile, despite the breeze.

This successful and enjoyable vacation-week's caving came to an abrupt halt with the arrival of the CEGSA hordes on Friday night, ready for a weekends caving,

Rod McDougal

TRIP REPORT; SELLICK'S HILL

A short report is tendered re the Shallow Singue at Sellick's Hill.

In December 1973, digging here as an organised CEGSA trip was frustrated by a large stone lying more or less across the shaft, and weighing about 200 kg. Shaped like a large tooth.

To study the stone, this hole was again visited late January 1974; and on 9th February, a small party took a generator (42 v., 200 cycle, 3-phase) and matching jackhammer and pounded off, after an hour and a half's work, one third thereof.

Yet another trip on a rainy Sunday, 14th July, took on the rock again - and there comes a time in the life of all rocks, when all is lost. The pieces were picked out, and the hole was ready for digging beyond. (It was waterlogged and may be better dug later.)

As the hole is now about 6 m deep, and the floor area is about a square metre, the digging will represent about one tonne per metre-depth gained. Under these considerations, a tripod will soon be needed for lifting in comfort and at reasonable speed. There's only room for one person to work at the bottom, which may still be worked in daylight.

And that's the hole report.

Denis T. Burke

TRIP REPORT: MT. REMARKABLE BLOWHOLE (VARIOUS DATES)

I.D. Lewis (L.); D. Hawke; J. Young; R. Van Den Berg; J. Lewis; and Joy...?

This little pot-holing gem was visited for the first time in many-years on the June-long-weekend Flinders trip. The cave has been in CEGSA's records for almost the entire nineteen years of the Group's existence, and the map may well be the Group'1s first (1956). As far as can be ascertained from our records, entry to the hole (which is not a blowhole at all, but a deep shaft in near-vertical strata dolomite) was restricted to rope-lowering. It is pretty obvious when you descend the pitch where the rope rubbed on several strategic rock ledges!

On the June trip, I made a very cautious solo descent, abseiling down the pitch with all lights blazing! The top 10 m of the cave is simply a small chamber with a severely sloping loose-rock floor, all vanishing down a narrow vertical tube about 15 m deep, with sheer sides and little room in which to manoeuvre. At the 25 m mark, the tube shoots out into the roof of quite a large chamber, with a small ledge about 12 m above the floor and the sudden sight of this great pit underneath you is extremely awesome. It is at this stage, when you can't jam yourself against the sides of the tube any more, that you suddenly realise how thin and stretched your abseiling rope is. At the bottom of the chamber is a flat landing space which slopes off down to a mud-and-rubble choke at a depth of 42 metres.

A rapid, one-day trip was organised recently to show several other members of the Group the location of the hole and to put into practice the SRT (Single Rope Techniques) being taught at Reynella lately. First of all we tossed some rocks down for effect: "3 - 2 - 1 — DROP!" Silence •••••• CRASH! — rattle - rattle — more Silence — more Silence — clatter-clatter—BANG! — Silence — THUD! — rattle-rattle — rumble - rumble - rumble - rumble - rumble — BOOOOM! Four super-enthusiastic trogs took about the same time to throw down the rope and zoom down to the bottom, disappearing in all directions to the utter amazement of the frogs and blowflies.

Dave Hawke was the lucky one. Like a true caver, he headed for the lowest point of the hole and started pulling out rocks. Since he found the job of stacking rocks on unstable near-vertical walls almost impossible (he tried!), he was fortunate to find that the floor he was digging kept falling down a hole beneath his feet. Having excavated a tiny hole in this way, Rabbit-Burrow Lewis was poked down the hole (being the most expendable member of the team) and farewelled.

The afore-mentioned Lewis, with glory-filled dreams of bottomless caverns with matchless long-distance abseiling pitches, managed to detect by looking through the back of his now-jammed head another tiny hole with blackness beyond. By tossing a small rock down the hole, it was discovered to our great surprise that we had hit water level in the form of a small pool about 1-1½ m deep, with a multitude of resident frogs. The frogs were chased down into the water to avoid treading on them, and Dave then came through, followed by John and Rob. Water level was marked with a pencil kindly donated by Dave, after which we beat a disorderly retreat from the advancing line of determined-looking frogs advancing back out of the water towards us.

As water tables in the Flinders are abnormally high this season, it was suggested that instead of trying to push the water section by sloshing around in very muddy conditions, we should go back when the water may have dropped several metres. You see, the frogs made it clear to us that there is another way out!

Ian D. Lewis

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Programme for November, 1974 to January, 1975

NOVEMBER

2nd-3rd Ladder-making weekend Venue to be announced. (L.) David Hawke Sunday Fleurieu Peninsula Cave Search (postponed from October). 10th (L.) Graham Pilkington Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m. Wednesday, 12 McLachlan Street 13th **GLENELG NORTH 5045** Sellick's Hill (L.) Ed. Bailey Further digging in the sinkhole. Sunday 24th Wednesday, GENERAL MEETING 8.00 pm Members are invited to suggest 27th Museum Lecture Room and discuss new projects Saturday, 30th ANNUAL DINNER See separate notice.

DECEMBER

7th-8th Curramulka (L.) I.D. Lewis Town Cave, that Iron Man trip again! Wednesday, Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m. Flat 7, 16-18 Jeffrey Street, 11th **BROOKLYN PARK 5032** 27th - 29th CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE with field trips afterwards. 28th -Kangaroo Island See separate notice. (L.) Grant Gartrell January 9th

Ad hoc trips may be arranged any time this month to Curramulka (L.) I. Lewis.

JANUARY, 1975

Trips this month to all points of the compass.

Wednesday, GENERAL MEETING 8.00 pm Reports and members' slides 22nd Museum Lecture Room of Christmas trips.

TRIP CONTACT LIST

David HAWKE	43 Semaphore Road, SEMAPHORE 5019	(H) 49 7070
Graham PILKINGTON	66 Eyre Crescent, VALLEY VIEW 5093	(W) 223 0461, Ext 136 (H) 264 2598
Ed. BAILEY	2 Boorman Avenue, PASADENA 5042	(W) 25 9378 (H) 276 8264
Ian D. LEWIS	12 McLachlan Street, GLENELG NORTH 5045	(H) 295 6582
Grant GARTRELL	45 Marlborough Street, BRIGHTON 5048	(W) 259 6298 (H) 298 2203

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Wayne GOEDECKE Flat 1, 149 Lipsett Street,

BROOKLYN PARK 5032

David HAWKE 43 Semaphore Road,

SEMAPHORE 5019 (H) 49 7070

Grant GARTRELL 45 Marlborough Street, (W) 259 6298

BRIGHTON 5048 (H) 298 2203