



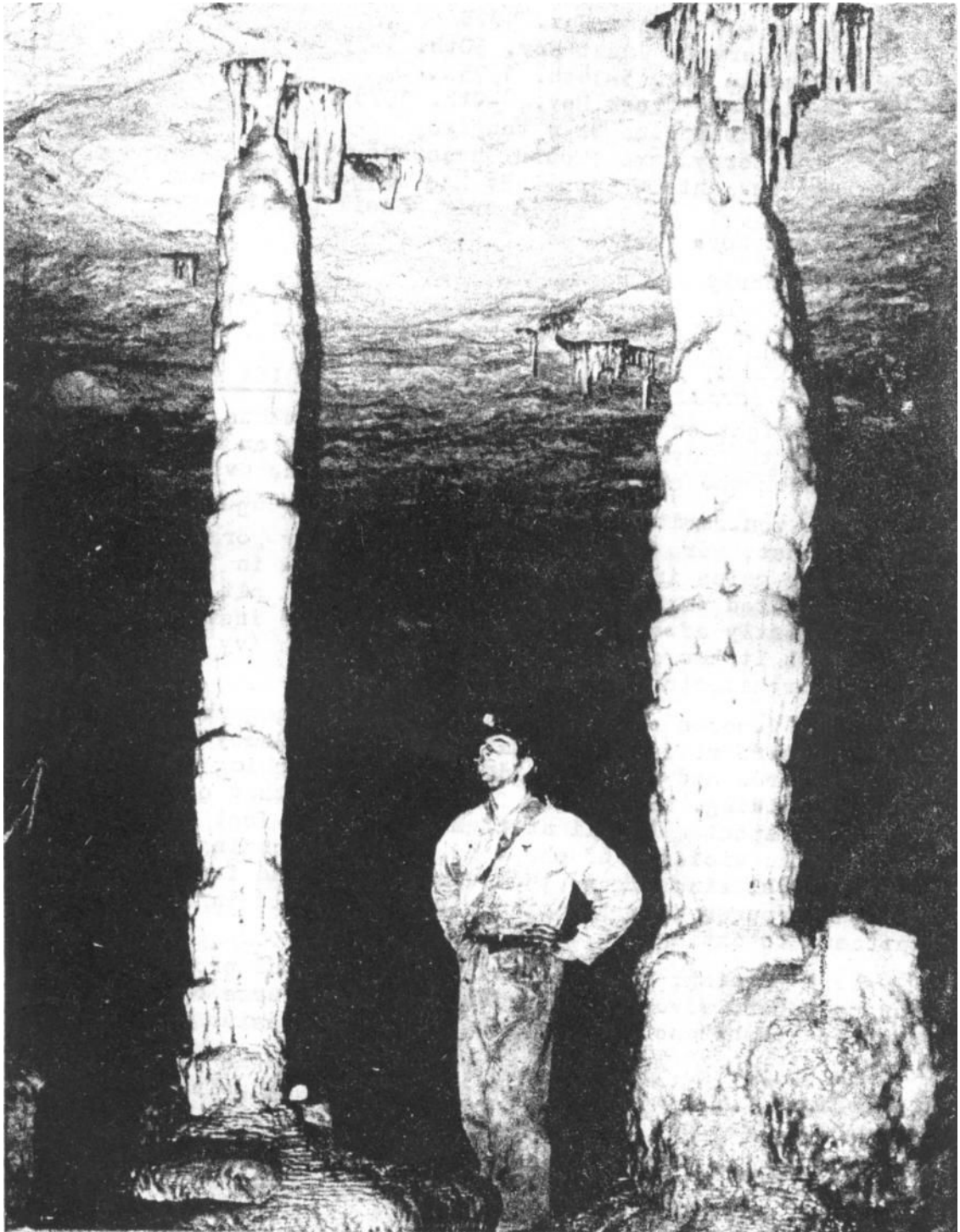
NEWSLETTER

Cave Exploration Group

South Australia Incorporated

C/O SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM NORTH TERRACE ADELAIDE

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“ THE COLUMNS ”

SAND CAVE, NARACOORTE. S.A.

C.E.G.S.A. NEWSLETTER
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LATE CONTRIBUTION

U.F.O. VISITS PAYNEHAM OVAL LADIES LAVS.

At midnight on the 2nd January (which makes it the 3rd eh?) residents of the Payneham area were alarmed by an eerie, intermittent light emanating from the area of the old Lavatories on the Oval.

Those venerable old buildings, awarded a "B" classification by the National Trust, were commissioned by the Water Works in 1925, connected to the water mains in 1955 and were modernised in 1958 by a special gravity operated chain-pull system. Structural alterations by the Dept. of Works shortly after the war resulted in the installation of seats. In latter years it has gracefully decayed into an ivy clad edifice of post Victorian architecture.

Early reports of the strange lights were garbled and indistinct. However, a more reliable account by Mrs. Ima Gumby attributed the said lights to three and a half shadowy figures lurking in the grounds of the historic building. Mrs. Gumby further stated that one of the figures appeared to spout a brilliant flame about one foot wide and four feet long from the vicinity of the head, before becoming totally engulfed in flames. The blazing figure then darted back and forth across the oval, frantically pursued by the other two and a half in what appeared to be an attempt to extinguish it.

Next morning, the only indications of the previous night's bizarre occurrences were several mysterious circular burns on the ground and trace's of a substance closely resembling magnesium powder on the grass.

To date, the light can only be described as similar to that emitted by Captain J.M. Thomson's Giant Diprotodon Magnesium Flare, which disappeared from his residence on the day before.

(Report collated by Jim Cundy, Ian Lewis, Kevin Mott and Dale Arnott.).

*U.F.O. - - - Unidentified Flaming Object.

EDITORIAL

"To foster caving, speleology and the preservation of natural caves •••"

The above is an extract from the group's Constitution, the underlining however, is mine. It is a great pity that the preservation of natural caves is not practised more widely. In its 21 years of existence, I doubt whether the group has encountered a more mindless orgy of destruction than that which prompted Dot Peisley to visit Clara St. Dora so soon after her June trip. What prompts people to break off and carry away pieces of cave decoration? It cannot be for financial gain, as lumps of calcite have no real value. Even their beauty is lost, as once removed from their environment, they quickly become dull and life-less looking. Their greatest beauty is in their natural setting in the cave and there they should remain for all to see. Thousands of years must now elapse before the cave can hope to regain some of its attractive appearance. Even this could be a forlorn hope, as the particular climatic circumstances which produced the decoration in Clara St. Dora may never return. There will never be another painter quite like Leonardo da Vinci, so if someone took a fancy to say the right eye of the Mona Lisa and excised it from the remaining canvas, would the eye have any value? Would the remainder be as valuable and attractive as before? Would the world remain passive and calmly resign itself to a wait of a few thousand years in the hope that another Leonardo would be born so that he could paint in another eye? I am not trying to equate the financial value of a cave with a painting, but to equate their rarity. There are thousands of man made works of art, just as there are thousands of natural works of art, each in its own field is unique. Just as there are no two works of art, alike, there are no two caves alike. All works of art, from whichever source, deserve protection by man from man, their main desecrator.

Closer to home, even CEGSA members do not always uphold the concept of cave preservation. Recently, my work took me to Mt. Gambier and having some time off from my duties one day, I took the Penola road up to Naracoorte with 3 companions, who wished to do some easy caving. I took them into the Victoria Fossil Cave, going through to the Great Hall and on into the Straw Haven. Before entering this chamber, I explained to my companions that true cavers always respected the beauty to be found in caves and as this chamber had a clean flowstone floor containing small pools of water, we always removed our muddy boots before entering. They all accepted this rule without question and we quickly removed our boots and entered to admire the straw covered ceiling, the areas of flowstone and to take photography. To my utter disgust, as well as embarrassment, someone previously had left their boots on and had deposited lumps of mud on the flowstone. Subsequent water action had streaked the mud down the flowstone, washing some into the pools. I reported this to Jim Lesley-Smith, who said he had also seen the mud and that it had been deposited there within the last 3 months. This thought-less or careless act must have been done by a CEGSA member or members, as to get into the V.F. Cave one has to have the keys to two doors from the curator. I hope that trip leaders will in future keep a tighter control over their party to stop such things happening again. Although each caver on a trip must exercise some responsibility and restraint, they should be guided and controlled by the trip leader who, whether he likes it or not, must take ultimate responsibility for all that happens on a trip.

Group members are sometimes asked, why they go to the trouble of gating caves, well, from the above two examples it seems we could be wasting our time. Damage to caves still occurs even when they are gated. Whether negotiating locked gates is done legally or illegally, does not really matter, if damage still, results. Regrettably, even tighter control on cave entry appears to be the only solution. Visiting a cave would then perhaps be regarded as a privilege!

Ed. Bailey.

MOUNT HAMILTON LAVA CAVE, WESTERN VICTORIA.

The following article is contributed as a supplement to the immediate program of coming trips, as I understand that Mount Hamilton trips are planned for the near future, on the January and Easter long weekends. In any event, it is pleasing to see CEGSA members looking a little beyond the Naracoorte Reserve, at caves of a different origin and this article gives a concise yet simplified description of the Mount Hamilton System.

I would like to be able to give credit to the author of the article but do not know who this person is. It formed part of a small booklet issued by the Boy Scouts Association to Senior Scouts attending the Caving Activity at Mount Hamilton during the National Venture in Melbourne in January 1970, which I attended. Be warned - - we were there in midsummer and the weather was atrocious --- more mud than in Town Cave!!!

Ian Lewis.

The Mount Hamilton Lava Caves are among the most interesting in Victoria, if not the World: they are the longest complete tunnel system, the most elaborate in plan, and they contain a wealth of well preserved volcanic formations and mineral deposits.

The caves are situated on the southern flank of the extinct volcano Mount Hamilton, at Nerrin Nerrin, about 40km west south west of Skipton.

The entrance is a tight squeeze and involves a 4m drop into the main chamber. Because of the lack of footholds near the bottom, a short length of rope is advisable, especially for the climb out. The entrance leads into a large collapsed chamber floored with rockfall. This is in the middle of the system and a number of passages lead from the chamber both uphill and down. The passages repeatedly branch, an unusual feature of lava caves that is far more common in the Mt. Hamilton cave than in any other lava cave.

The aggregate length of all known passages in the system (up to 1970) is 1000m and the total distance from the northernmost, to the southernmost extremity is 300m. The volume of air inside the cave is so large that a considerable draught blows out of the cave during the day and into it during the night.

The passages are typically tunnel shaped, and many are quite perfect in form with arched roofs up to 5m high and smooth even floors up to 5m across. The shape is generally semi-circular in cross-section, but becomes horseshoe shaped in one of the western passages. Some are remarkably straight in plan and the best follow straight courses with uniform cross-section for about 50m. Others are more irregular and the passages are often linked by larger chambers. Branching and anastomosing are encountered and a very fine example of a bifurcation, with a column left between two tunnels is seen in the small passage east of the entrance.

Some of the passages shown on the map are very low and can be negotiated only by slim people. The entrance to the Beehive Chamber is a good example, and incidentally, has a particularly rough lava floor to add to the discomfort. Sometimes the passages expand upwards into domes or cupolas, which are frequently found at the end of passages, but can also occur along their length. The Beehive is a very fine example, being about 3m high, completely lined with an unbroken lava skin and almost circular in plan. The big chamber at the entrance is evidently due to roof collapse, as the rockpile interrupts a series of otherwise continuous tunnels on several levels.

Small tributary tunnels join the main tunnel occasionally. These usually have a horizontal lenticular cross-section and appear to have been squashed flat when they lost their lava, having been more circular when full.

They usually extend for only a metre or two and sometimes there are vertical strands of lava joining the top and bottom surfaces.

Many of the tunnels have a lining of lava, which was left behind when most of the lava drained away. It was evidently still somewhat liquid and dripped down to form lava stalactites. These are fairly abundant in many of the passages and are of different sorts depending on the viscosity of the lava from which they were formed. Some are broad and stumpy, others are frothy and irregular, but none are very long. The biggest so far reported from Mt. Hamilton Lava Cave is 18cm. In one spot a large gas pocket was formed behind the lining and then burst, and the frothy flanges of the broken bubble are still perfectly preserved.

The mode of formation of the caves is very complex, but in brief they originated by something like the following mechanism:-

The caves were formed after the surface of a large lava flow from the crater cooled into solid rock. Beneath the surface crust the lava was slower to cool and so remained liquid longer. When most of this lava had reached a viscous or plastic stage, the remaining liquid lava became segregated in domes and cylinders. Then there was a break in the lava crust and the still liquid lava ran out leaving voids or gas filled chambers behind. For some reason they were not completely drained, but remained partially filled with lava at the end, so they have semi-circular cross sections. Since their formation there have been some rockfalls, especially in the larger chambers and there is an accumulation of rockfall debris on some of the floors.

Other interesting features of the lava cave are of non-volcanic origin. Gypsum crystals occasionally line the roofs and walls of some of the more remote passages. A few rather poor specimens of calcite stalactites are also found, mostly in the northern passages. Rock salt is encrusted on the roofs of at least one passage, but the exact location of this mineral in the cave has been lost.

Many of the floors have a covering of clay and in some parts the floor sounds hollow, as in the Drum Chamber, which is named from the noise made by kicking the floor. Possibly the shrinking clay causes hollow spaces below the floor. In other places the clay takes the form of clay balls, which range from marble to cricket ball size, and may completely cover the floor.

In a few localities, there are irregular deposits of white earthy material within the clay consisting of magnesite, a mineral resulting from the weathering of basalt.

The cave has evidently been a death trap for many animals and bones are quite common in some passages, especially south of the entrance. These include the remains of several species no longer surviving in Victoria.

North of the main cave is a smaller separate one, called the Upper Mount Hamilton Cave, or Sausage cave (because of its shape). Apart from a short broad branch near the entrance, it consists of a single straight cave running uphill. It is constricted both laterally and vertically in several places, so that there are narrow squeezes between several easy sections. At the top end of the cave it finishes in a chamber about 3m high with a small but impressive lava fountain where lava formally entered the tunnel. The roof here is irregular and gives the impression of being very close to the surface, and gypsum is fairly abundant.

Another interesting feature is the Mount Hamilton crater itself, one of the best in Victoria. The whole system is one of the most notable features of this third largest lava plain in the world.

PUBLIC OFFICER'S REPORT

After 20 years of existence, the group has been Incorporated (registered on 19th Nov. 1975). It was felt that the unwritten understanding (plus indemnity form) that no-one would sue members of CEGSA if any accident occurred, might be severely tested if a bad accident DID take place, especially if it was the relatives who were considering whether to sue. This risk to the livelihood of those members who volunteer to do the work of the group has been increased beyond tolerable limits since the recent upsurge of requests for (and dutiful execution of) 'expert' guidance from CEGSA on behalf of various community interests.

Official correspondence should now include the letters 'Inc' or 'Incorporated' after the group's name, viz Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) Incorporated.

I must-also point out that the Company Registrar's Office has a complete up-to-date copy of the Constitution and Rules and that NO ALTERATION TO THESE DOCUMENTS HAVE LEGAL STANDING UNTIL A COPY IS LODGED AND ACCEPTED AT THAT OFFICE. Hence amendments to either the Constitution or Rules cannot be acted upon immediately they are passed at a group meeting.

The cost of Incorporated was \$46.25 which included the purchase of a Common Seal.

Graham Pilkington

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Annual Slide Competition

Winner for the best slide this year was Athol Jackson with a beautifully balanced photograph having a distinctive apparent depth. The scene was of the fossil dig (tourist view, 1975) in Victoria Fossil Cave.

Best 'trog' slide went to Kevin Mott for his picture of Ian Lewis abseiling. An action shot taken from what looks like Ian's next spring point on the cliff face. An excellent illustration of gear and technique.

Occasional Paper Number 5

Due to the applicability of this paper to the dissemination of CEGSA knowledge to all members, it has been decided that the Slide Account will underwrite the production costs. The contents of the book will include up-to-date cave descriptions and a complete map list of all maps and sketches held in Records.

The sub-committee thanks Ian for creating this reference work and recognises all the time and effort spent (including taking three months leave without pay!).

Graham Pilkington

RECORDS REPORT

New maps at 1:250 and 1:500 continue to enter Records at the pleasing rate of one or more a week. However, all these maps are of recent surveys with no re-drafting of old maps being done.

A complete list of all CEGSA maps in Records has been recently collated (Ian Lewis doing most of the work with help from an industrious few). This list will be published as part of a South Australian Cave List publication being assembled and written by Ian Lewis, which will be known as CEGSA Occasional Paper No 5.

Following A.S.F. recommendations, map numbering will be sequential for all our maps instead of sequential per cave as I had initially. The main reasons for converting are:-

- (i) ease of cross referencing multi-cave sheets,
- (ii) ease of map number allocations, and
- (iii) simple storage/retrieval ordering in Records for multi-cave sheets.

Maps on non-standard sheets will have an 'X' after the number, whereas the A2 sheet map will be numbered using the stamped A2 sheet number.

Further karst numbers have been allocated to most caving areas recently, but of special mention are Coobowie Cave (5Y) on Yorke Peninsula, for the following reasons:-

- (i) a good example of an active phreatic cave,
- (ii) a cockroach adapting to cave living? (colouring is usually patchy, varying from deep brown to a pale yellow),
- (iii) an underwater section.

NO SPECIMENS are to be killed or removed from this cave without prior permission from the Committee. SO WATCH WHERE YOU PUT YOUR FEET! And also Erosion Sink-hole (5E18) on Eyre Peninsula which has both a large doline and a sea cliff entrance (5E19E). Maps for some of the newly recorded features have been produced.

A notable new map is the composite of the four caves 5U91, 92, 93 and 97, all in Henschke's Quarry, Naracoorte. These caves could soon be quarried out of existence; but let us remember that only U91/97 had a surface expression (0.3m deep by 3m diameter) and hence we never would have known of the existence of these caves without the quarrying. The group has much to be grateful for from the quarry owner who has done everything possible to preserve the fossils in U91 by allowing us at all times to have access to the cave so that fossil excavation could be done under the control of Neville Pledge, our S.A. Museum member. Mr. Henschke even shifted quarrying operations for five years until now, when it has become economically impractical not to mine the cave. His assistance and interest have been very welcome. I know that the group will second me in thanking him and encourage continued liaison with a man who has shown himself to have most of our objectives at heart.

Graham Pilkington

TRIP REPORT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA NOVEMBER 1975

During Nov. 1975, I was fortunate in being able to join the British Speleological Expedition to the Star Mountains of Papua New Guinea. In the course of their exploration and mapping of the large Selminum Tem Cave, members of the expedition discovered some vertebrae and ribs embedded in the wall of a phreatic stream passage. I visited the site in the hope of collecting the fossils. The following is an extract of a letter I wrote home on my return to the mining camp at Tabubil.

I have arrived back in Tabubil with the fossils and my life. In retrospect, it was an exciting experience, but at the time it was quite frightening. I flew out of here in the helicopter on Thursday morning (13th November) up the valley of the Ok Tedi (Ok means river) to the North. We then flew along the face of the Hindenburg Wall, a massive limestone escarpment between 1500 and 5000ft. In one part of the wall there is a cave, actually the efflux of a river system that I was to enter from the other side. The river no longer flows out of this hole which is about 400ft from the top of the cliff. The pilot flew the helicopter within about 20 to 30ft of the cliff face so I could see right down into the cave. We then swept up over the top of the wall, the trees looked about 6-10ft high, later I found they were at least 100ft and down into the valley of the Ok Finem. The caver's camp was in a clearing in the forest above the river on the main walking track between Tabubil and Tifalmin. It consisted of two native huts with plastic sheeting for a roof and a lean-to for cooking. The ground was very swampy and we sloshed around in mud and slush up to our ankles. The beds were all on wooden platforms above the ground and the floor consisted of lots of logs laid side by side. I stayed overnight here and set off next morning to walk to the cave. The camp was at 8500ft and I found the climb up another 1000ft very tiring, particularly as one is walking either in mud and slush or balancing on moss covered logs 8 or 10ft above the jungle floor. It took me two hours to get to the cave, which is twice the time taken by the cavers and the native porters. The forest is very dark and wet and all the trees are covered in moss. The dominant trees are Araucaria (King Billy) pines and Nothofagus (Southern Beech) with an understorey of tree ferns, bromeliads, podocarps, still rooted pendans and epiphytic mosses and orchids. I have tried to photograph it but it is difficult without a tripod as it is so dark. I could hear birds of paradise calling, but they are difficult to see. We finally reached the helicopter pad on the edge of the doline. The pad was built to rescue a badly injured caver, but he eventually was well enough to walk out. 400ft below us in this immense doline was the entrance to the cave. The trip down was extremely wet and muddy and we climbed up 100ft on to a ledge where we camped the night. We entered the cave about 2.00 pm, passing under a small waterfall and climbed down a big boulder pile into a cave the size of Mullamullang. It differed in that there was a large underground river and several waterfalls which we had to cross and pass under respectively. The passage was 70-80ft wide with ceiling heights of 80-90ft. After travelling through this for about 2 km, we came to a muddy slope and down against the wall were two small holes that lead to an 80ft shaft about 5ft in diameter. The walls of the shaft consisted of a sharp cherty limestone and towards the base the walls were covered with masses of mud. I had asked that the cavers bring a safety line as I was not all that experienced with jumars. The safety line reached only half way down the shaft to a point where the main climbing rope had cut a groove in the limestone. This aspect did not please me, but when I got to the bottom of the shaft, not only could I hear water, but to my horror I noticed bubbles on the ceiling, indicating this area had recently been completely flooded! I had another 100ft to go along a narrow rift and through an empty sump to the fossil site. I felt somewhat uneasy and decided to forget the photography and concentrate on the removal of the fossils and while I was working, I thought I heard the note of the stream below me change slightly. I stopped working and the caver who was with me also stopped and listened. He assured me it was O.K. as he had caved a lot in the wetter areas of England. Then a sudden roar started like an express train coming through a tunnel. I jumped up and started running and crawling towards the rope. Still the other caver said it was alright, but I asked him to bring the cameras and the first bag of fossils, he ran past me, placing the camera bag on a ledge and dropping the fossils. He jumped for the rope and disappeared up the shaft. I had tied my harness on the bottom of the rope as another caver had wanted to pull it up later to use it. It seemed to take an eternity to undo it and get it on. By this time the roar was deafening. I reached for the cameras but these had dropped into a slot in the floor. I jumped down, grabbed them, clipped them to my harness and grabbed the climbing rope just as the first rush of water hit the tunnel.

I did not have time to rig the jumars properly and somehow I managed to climb fairly fast hand over hand up the rope to a small ledge where the other caver was hanging, then my light went out! He continued his ascent showering me with great lumps of mud as he scrambled up the hole. Once he reached the top, I could readjust my jumars and in the dark, climbed to the point where the end of the safety line hung and clipped on to it. Finally I reached the top of the hole exhausted. The noise in the main cave had reached a crescendo and we hastened to make the 2 km trek back to the entrance. We had one light between us and a rucksack each. The first waterfall was a raging torrent and we had to pass under it and avoid being swept off the rocks into the river. Just as I was under the waterfall, Tony's light went out. He passed me his rucksack and I sat clinging to the rocks with one hand. In total darkness he managed to climb down the ledge beside the river and relight. I then edged towards the light and passed him one of the rucksacks, we then continued towards the entrance with Tony moving forward and shining his light back so I could move up. The second waterfall was O.K. but the river had risen considerably. We found the narrowest point and by linking hands we could reach the other bank while still hanging on to the other side. The current was very swift and it was difficult to maintain footing but we crossed it and made our way out into the pouring rain and climbed 100ft up greasy poles to our perch on the cliff. The ordeal had taken five hours. I had lost my equipment except the camera and worst still, there were three other people down in another part of the cave called the Phreatic Maze. We were sure they would be drowned, as fate would have it they had gone a different way and avoided most of the flood and finally emerged two hours after us. The next day I did not feel like going back, particularly as it had poured with rain most of the night. However, two of the more intrepid cavers said they were willing to investigate. They recovered a lot of gear and a considerable portion of the accessible fossil material. They found the passages we had been in had flooded to the ceiling.

The fossil is in the limestone, i.e., it is of Miocene age. It looks mammal like and I think it is a marine creature, perhaps a primitive dugong!

Rod Wells.

TRIP REPORT: CAPE JERVOIS JAUNT, NOVEMBER 30th 1975

D. PEISLEY, L. DALLOW

After our lovely feasting and general carousing at the Annual Dinner, several more eager people decided to work off the extra load by going on an exploratory trip down to Cape Jervois on the following day.

Because of our late start and vague meeting place and time, we crossed paths with the Lewis Party without seeing each other. However it was a pity not to continue with the investigation and search and visit an area with good potential. Through a kind friend who has lived in that area most of his life I was able to follow up the report of several caves, some not known to the Club. One of the main reasons for those caves not being known to the Club was the inaccessibility, not to mention the ruggedness of the coastline at this particular spot. The best area visited was the beach area and access best gained through permission of the property owner, Mr. A. Bennett on the Victor Harbor - Yankalilla Road. After obtaining permission we drove approximately 2 kilometres and turned off the main road to a dirt track on the right. This quickly branched off again to the right and through a paddock following the fence line for some further 2 kilometres to a gate. We continued through the gate past a shed and on to another gate near a stockyard. Through this gate and on past a trig point and approximately another kilometre further on the track branched off to the left into an open paddock on the top of Salt Creek Hill.

We followed the track as far as possible and parked in the middle of the paddock. It seems unlikely the farmer will allow too much traffic through this area in the summer because of the high grass and the fire danger. It is possible to take a four-wheel drive vehicle as far as the beach down a very rough track but not recommended for an ordinary vehicle at any time. The track is quite steep and we had to make this by foot watching very carefully for snakes. With a spectacular view of the rocky coastline and sparkling sea we scrambled, slid and climbed our way approximately another 2 kilometres along a very rough cliff area to the caves. It is not recommended that it be tried on a very high tide or you may not make it. After thinking we'd never get there, as we had walked as far as possible along this beach, we came to the caves.

About 20 metres up from the beach are two openings only 3-4 metres apart. We looked at the higher one first. After being startled by the swallows that make their nests around the entrance we plunged into the cool interior. The entrance itself looks as if it has collapsed at some time as pieces of cave decoration and lumps of calcite were to be found among the beach stones around the entrance.

Inside it was amazing to see large stalagmites and stalactites many of them smashed by thoughtless vandals and though many of them were dry there were many others that were still active. There were small straws, large pieces of flowstone some still intact, against the wall and everywhere on the roof there was aragonite and calcite. The cave itself goes back only approximately 40 metres but at the back of this chamber the floor was soft silt and leads down to a small opening. It looks a very promising dig without requiring too much strong-arm effort. Unfortunately I came unprepared or I would have begun right there and then. Definitely worth another trip for a dig!

Back near the entrance I could see a couple of very large spiders had made their homes. It was also interesting to note that some very large decoration had been formed in this cave and the rock-fall at the entrance could be skirted for a short distance, almost under it, on both sides.

The other cave was quite a different story. Almost entirely devoid of any features, it seemed to be just a large hole going in about 20 metres. The rock was very dark and absorbed the torch light making it very difficult to adjust and to see any distance. There was no decoration but many thousands of very small insects buzzing around the entrance made breathing difficult. This cave did not seem to have much possibility in the area of digging but was worth a look.

Back on the beach and looking further around, it was possible to see other openings which were not accessible without going for a swim or using a boat. One opening could be seen to go in for about 5-6 metres possibly more - it was difficult to tell at a distance. However they are worth investigating as they seem to follow the same line as the previously mentioned caves. It is apparent that this area has not really been properly looked at and cannot be written off as not having good potential.

The walk back was just as rough, even more so, as it was back up the steep track. A very fruitful day.

Dot Peisley

TRIP REPORT: TASMANIA 3 – 14th NOVEMBER, 1975

Having been tempted by the Tasmanian Tourist Bureau advertisements offering cheap, off season, fly-drive holidays in the apple isle, Sylvia and I, together with young Jonathan, flew to Launceston, where we picked up our hire car. The significance of the term "off season" soon became apparent, as heavy and continuous rain forced us to modify the start of our travels in the N.E. of the State. Floods and washaways had cut off Scamander, our first overnight stop, so we headed for Bichino instead. Even so, short stretches of this road were under water. Hanging from the rear vision mirror of the car was a card informing us that the vehicle had been fully serviced and had been cleaned inside and out. Certainly the car was clean, but at Bichino, curiosity got the better of me and I lifted the bonnet, just to see what the engine of a Kays Galant looked like, you understand? The first thing that caught my eye was the battery, not it's condition as it looked quite reasonable, but it's position, hanging there rather precariously by the battery leads as half the clamp was missing. A convenient length of rusty wire found nearby fixed that. The screen washer bottle was empty, but as we were not really short of water, it was soon filled. My curiosity by now was fully aroused by that seemingly quaint statement "fully serviced", I pulled out the dip stick, it was as dry as the throat of the last shearer in the queue outside the pub with no beer! Not wishing to have the engine seize up on me, I had 4 pints of oil put in at the nearest service station. After that, the car ran faultlessly throughout the whole trip, but I had a few things to say when I returned the car, and made sure my expenses were met.

After staying one night in Eagle Hawk Neck and visiting Port Arthur, we headed for Hobart, where we stayed for 3 nights. Whilst there we had a one day trip down to Hastings and visited Newdegate Cave and took some pictures of the decoration. We also called on Albert Goede and Roy Skinner of T.C.C. in Hobart and for most of one morning exchanged news and views on caving. A pity our time was so short, as I would have liked also to have met Laurie Moody, Editor of the A.S.F. Newsletter, who also lives in Hobart. Our journey to Queenstown, the longest daily run, came next and it was made in rain and/or low cloud practically the whole way. Next came one night stays in Burnie and Davenport, where the weather improved to the extent that the rain stopped and we saw the sun! After Davenport we drove to Launceston, diverting at Deloraine to visit the Mole Creek area and naturally, Marakoopa and King Solomon Caves, where more slides were taken.

By now the weather had turned warm and sunny and we spent a pleasant last day in Launceston before flying back to Adelaide in the evening. Next trip will be better organized as far as caving trips are concerned (family permitting!) as one place I'd like to visit is Exit Cave at Ida Bay.

Before leaving on this trip, I promised Peter Macrow, National Parks and Wildlife Service representative on the CEGSA committee, to look at the tourist caves I intended visiting, with the view to seeing if there were any features which could usefully be employed in S.A. tourist caves. The 3 caves I visited were all on 110V power, switches were the old knife type and little attempt had been made to conceal wiring. In vulnerable areas use was made of metal tubing and chicken wire barriers, which sometimes seriously detracted from the decoration. Generally I thought, nothing could be learnt from the cave interiors in fact, S.A. cave standards are generally higher and are still being improved on. However, the approaches to the caves was a different story. Admittedly, the naturally heavily wooded areas containing the caves made approach paths much more attractive, but the sensible use of local materials for path and other constructions was in keeping with the surroundings, and did not detract from them. Of the three tourist caves at Naracoorte, the one that could benefit most from this philosophy is the Victoria Fossil Cave. The present bare surroundings to the cave entrance, together with a car park as roughly surfaced as a demolition site presents a stark and rather unattractive appearance. Some native shrub plantings and a general cleanup would do much to make the area more attractive and natural looking at very little cost.

TRIP REPORT: BUCKALOWIE CREEK 8-9th NOVEMBER, 1975

D. PEISLEY (L), K. DALLOW, L. DALLOW, R. JOSEPHS.

Having a 'rock hound' in the family has made me increasingly aware of the widespread nature of these clubs and their activities in and around caves. Even the more remote caves come to their notice on field trips and many of the collectors do not give thought to the range and extent of damage they cause. It was for this reason a flying trip was made to Buckalowie Creek on the weekend of November 8-9th.

I contacted Mr. Blackwell, the manager, and it seems he is concerned over the large numbers turning up to visit these caves, many without permission, sometimes even without his knowledge.

We made our way down to the creek, parked and went to inspect the gate on Mairs Cave. It was still as solid as ever and looking down, there seemed no evidence of water and should make an interesting trip. Back to the car and trogged up we tackled Clara St. Dora.

We started with the un-gated section first, being the most susceptible to damage. Here too there was much less evidence of water. I was very disappointed to find the 'rock hounds' had left their mark only too obviously. On the girls' previous trip in June, there appeared less damage than we now could see. There were fresh breakages everywhere, with the more delicate decoration suffering the most. Much of the more fragile pieces and 'shawls' were gone and more accumulated rubbish left behind.

I was keeping my fingers crossed as we went through the gate. As expected, some of the calcite bands had suffered. We continued on through to the 'Birthday Extension' hoping that this part at least might have been spared. Alas, here too, it could be seen that some of the almost unique stalactites, with the 'coraline' growth had been knocked down and carted away without thought to the damage being done.

Disappointment is definitely the wrong word to use, anger would be more appropriate to express my feelings on this vandalism.

We continued down through and I had been hoping for a repeat swim such as we enjoyed in June, but the water was gone except for a small cupful on the northern side of the chamber near the wall. This time however, we were able to get further because it was dry and I made a little progress (mostly through obstinacy) up a silt slide, at first getting my *** in the way (what, all three ***? Ed.) into a slightly elevated chamber which appeared to wander further off into a tight upwards chimney to the upper levels.

A more complete survey of this cave is long overdue to tie these little offshoots in and a more thorough examination of the more promising ones is warranted.

With time against us, we made our way back out, pausing to take photographs and making sure the gate was properly locked.

We definitely need more control and education of these rock hound clubs to prevent further damage in caves.

Dot Peisley

FREE ENTERPRISE CAVE TOURS

As we travelled west along Route 7, New York State, the signs got bigger and bigger. "Visit Howe Caverns - underground boat ride", then "Secret Caverns - see the 100ft waterfall" each jostling for prominence. It was obvious we were getting closer because the signs were getting thicker. Then a final (or penultimate really) sign proclaiming "Howe Caverns tickets sold only at the cave", and a sign pointing to the right. Next to the road just off to the right is a substantial building called "Howes Cave Museum" with a sign up saying "Get your Route A cave tour tickets here". If you were to do so you would discover you had bought tickets for Secret Caverns, not Howe Caverns. You see, Secret Caverns runs the Howes Cave Museum, and they can call it that because it is located in the tiny township of Howes Cave. If you were to go to Secret Caverns you would next find also that the amazing 100ft waterfall is only 43ft high. Not bad nevertheless, but the management has managed to dress nature up a little bit. Local cavers told us that an electrically operated flood gate has been installed outside the cave to dam back the creek. When the guide nears the appropriate place in the cave tour he presses a button, up goes the gate and by the time the party reaches the Waterfall Chamber a most impressive raging torrent is plummeting over the falls. Not only that, when the surface water hits the humid cave atmosphere, the temperature difference causes great clouds of mist which stops one from seeing the top of the falls anyway.

Like most people we had to choose between the caves and chose Howe Caverns to visit. An impressive building, quite picturesque, overlooking a pretty valley. Large carpark, picnic grounds etc. Two lifts descent about 160ft to the cave floor and then a pleasant walk on brick platforms leads through a sparsely decorated but nicely sculptured lofty stream passage to a landing from whence one embarks on a pleasant punt ride to the brink of a low waterfall, with darkness beyond adding to the "mystery". A pleasant trip. Tickets \$3.75 a head. Fourteen guides taking parties of about forty people each on a continuous basis, each guide making about 4-6 trips a day or more. Parties passing each other. With the millions in the U.S. such a place is a goldmine. No wonder the cave was bought by a group of businessmen for \$1,000,000 some years ago. It's worth more than that these days.

G. Gartrell

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE

Since receiving the above contribution from Grant, I by chance came across a copy of the-National Geographic Magazine for June, 1964, which contained an article entitled "Exploring America Underground" pp 803—837.

A quotation from page 827 reads:- "Without the hand of commercial enterprise, there would be no Great Stalacpipe Organ in Virginia's Luray Caverns, an instrument which produces brilliant melody by striking electrically driven hammers against stalactites tuned to true pitch by careful grinding of their tips".

This surely is the ultimate in cave exploitation for the sake of the fast buck, and hardly in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the last two lines of the article, which reads:-

"Take nothing but pictures,
Leave nothing but footprints".

BLACKBERRY CAVE "TOUR", CHRISTMAS 1975

The usual Naracoorte disorganisation struck again shortly after-December 25th, when carloads of cavers arrived for a week of post Xmas party relaxation. This took the form of huge digging projects in Alexandra Cave with the kind permission and tolerance of Russell Bath. These dig trips suitably loosened up our muscles (and deadened our minds !!) to such an extent that one evening a team of 4 foolhardy cavers volunteered to take the RDF (Radio Direction Finder) through Blackberry Cave to tie in the surveys of Max Meth and Grant Gartrell which had turned up by courtesy of Max. He must have heard that we were going to map the whole cave ourselves, since no-one had ever seen these maps since they were done last February!

So off we set at 9.30 pm with promises to transmit the first signals by no later than 10.30 pm and intentions to exit by "around mid-night", leaving the surface detector team waiting in light rain. None of us had even been right in the cave before, so armed with all kinds of advice and directions from those who had been before, we set off on "The Great Rockpile Scramble". We even moved so fast that the first transmission took place at 10.00 pm and the surface team were so stunned at Lewis being ahead of time that they failed to locate the point at all!

The Foolhardy Four continued on their merry way leaving a trail of RDF points marked with aluminium foil through the cave until we came to the Trog Heaven chamber with the 5m straw. After gaping at it for a considerable time, we set up an RDF point not far away and sat back to contemplate what would happen if Athol and Peter Robbie would belt the stake in the surface so vigorously that 5m of record-breaking straw would come crashing to the floor, bringing clusters of matchless helictites to their doom (and ours).

In all, 10 RDF points were put in, of which 9 were detected. As a result, we discovered that the cave extends even further than was predicted, with its furthest end heading past the middle of the stand of eucalypts on the eastern side of the Reserve fence opposite Alexandra Cave. The arm that extends towards Blanche Cave does not quite come under the fence where the camping area is. Another new extension was found after the last RDF point was put in, and this runs off the "Blanche Arm" about halfway along it, and heads south-west directly towards the hut for 35m through a clay-floored phreatic tunnel with a-dig at the end. DO YOU REALISE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS??? THIS MEANS THAT WE ARE ULTRA-CLOSE TO THE FABLED CAVE ENTRANCE THROUGH THE DOOR OF THE HUT STOVE, MATE!!! Keen cavers are urged to dig about 30m west horizontally and 20m up (through solid rock !) to effect this most historic connection, which will undoubtedly soon be followed by a breakthrough to Victoria Cave via the digs in Alexandra, so we can all go caving through the stove, which will have two locks on it of course, on rainy afternoons. Isn't that nice?

Seriously folks, Blackberry is a ripper of a cave with a most impressive climax in the Big Straw chamber, and it is a fitting reward to Grant for his incredible dogged persistence in excavating those endless rockpile passages. It's not worth taking a dial survey through all of this now as the RDF points are scattered throughout the cave in sufficient numbers to allow hand compass surveys to be connected to them. The risks to the decoration are not worth the effort of taking dial teams in.

FOOT NOTE: We eventually emerged at 3.30 am, wrecked, to be greeted by the surface team who just managed to avoid being carried off by the clouds of mosquitos that lurk in the forest of Murkwood, that dim unexplored area above Blackberry Cave "over the fence!"

Ian Lewis.

SO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO VICTORIA FOSSIL CAVE?

Early in the year (1975) I announced that we would re-survey Victoria Fossil Cave in a series of long week-ends, using several dial teams and that good old cavers helper, RDF. This incidentally is a first class way to achieve instant high grade accuracy and a reputation as a hot shot surveyor even if you can't hold a cardboard compass properly. So far, about 30 people have been involved in a massive survey programme which lasted about as long as the football season, and the Fearless Trip Leader has still not yet drawn up the final sheets. The cave has been mapped all the way down to the Inner Ossuary and up to the Northwest Passage past Strawhaven, that chamber past the Great Hall which is which is particularly richly decorated and reached by series of low flatteners.

Over the last few weeks, some of us have poked around the Northwestern end past Strawhaven and found all the chambers discovered by Grant and several others a long time ago. These were so extensive that we later put in several RDF points to see just where the cave went, and found that it ends (approximate description only) in the top of the hill on Carter's property, **WITHIN SIGHT OF APPLIEDORE CAVE!** There are about 200m of passage to be dug into to connect the two, which now appears to be quite feasible.

At the other end, large scale excavations in Cave Park Cave are heading towards the southeastern end of Victoria Fossil Cave through flatteners that resemble the extensive ones beyond the Inner Ossuary entrance in the Victoria where the surveys end. Temporarily, Victoria surveys have stopped while we consolidate the data already obtained. I estimate that the cave is now about 4km long and this should be extended when surveying is resumed later on.

Footnote: will someone please submit in writing an explanation of one of the most obscure names in this cave?? The chamber just past the Great Hall is known to some CEGSA people as "The Sunburst Chamber". Before I draw up the final maps, could I have some reason for this, as none of us on the surveys have been able to fathom the subtlety of it. What happened? Did the sun burst in just as a team of surveyors were admiring the Rongalbreathagmites? Or did it slowly leak in for 12 hours a day?

Ian Lewis

A BIT MORE EDITORIAL

The reason why you are being reward with another burst from your brilliant but overworked Editor is as a result of a week's stay at Naracoorte at the beginning of January.

Among the many cavers who visited the Reserve over the Christmas holiday was Peter Robertson, VSA and Bar, who incidentally, thought Blackberry Cave was a ripper. Peter came to me with a big beef and it was all bad! Seriously though folks, with the warm weather some of Peter's food was decidedly off and he wanted to know if CEGSA had ever considered installing a refrigerator in the hut. I told him this had been suggested many times and had always been agreed to but without any action being taken. Peter pointed out that a .second hand one could be obtained cheaply and why couldn't the users of the hut each chip in with a small contribution? He started the Hut Refrigerator Fund with a donation of \$2.00 in hope that other hut users would also contribute. So what about it? I'll be handing Peter's gift over to the Treasurer for safe keeping and in the hope that CEGSA members will be as generous. All contributions to be forwarded to the Treasurer please.

Ed. Bailey

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATEDProgramme for February to April, 1976FEBRUARY

Wednesday 11th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	22 Quick Road, Mitchell Park
Sunday 15th	66 Eyre Cres, Valley View	Ladder making and/or mapping
Wednesday 25th	Annual General Meeting 8.00 p.m.	Election of new Committee

MARCH

Sunday 7th	Rapid Bay Field Day (L) M. Meth	Sun Caving!
Wednesday 10th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	66 Eyre Cres, Valley View
Wednesday 24th	General Meeting 8.00 p.m.	Rod Wells; talk on Papua New Guinea.

APRIL

Tuesday 13th	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m.	2 Boorman Avenue, Pasadena
Wednesday 28th	General Meeting 8.00 p.m.	Ian Lewis; talk on Koonalda Cave. (to be confirmed)

NOTE Trips will be arranged at the A.G.M. to complete this programme.

TRIP CONTACT LIST

Max Meth	12 Cleve St, Mansfield Park	(H) 45 6744 (W) 87 7459
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SEARCH AND RESCUE

Max Meth as above	Ian Lewis, 12 McLachlin Avenue, Glenelg North. (H) 295-6582	Bernie Dunn, 4 Parsons Road, Reynella. (W) 382-2722
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