

# CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

c/o South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide

Volume No: 25, No: 4 March, 1981



## N E W S L E T T E R



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This Newsletter is Registered for Posting as a Periodical, Category B.

# EDITORIAL

Looking back on the year and revising the articles of the Newsletters it becomes increasingly obvious that there are still the few faithful few contributing. Reticence is not a virtue when the editor needs to goad those articles from you. Most members seem to enjoy reading the Newsletter and wouldn't it be nice to see some new names, yours even! **How about a Crossword Contribution?** You don't have to be talented, just put pen to paper and the Editor can assist in making it readable (if you're that unsure!!)

There have been a few grumbles and moans but like everything else, those doing the moaning are just those who sit on their backsides and let everyone else do the work.

For those who have contributed I give a hearty Thank You and a rousing cheer. Some of the articles have been thought provoking, informative and educational. Of course there has been amusing anecdote or two to make things more light-hearted.

We would like to see a larger variety of Articles, Excerpts, Criticisms, Poetry, Cartoons etc. Make the rest of the year more interesting.

**DOT PEISLEY.**

## FINAL NOTICE!

**(Absolutely and irrevocably!!)**

I am 'sick and tired', 'fed-up' and 'thoroughly disgusted' in the manner in which some Newsletter articles are submitted for publication. Last weekend, your President and I had to spend considerable time and effort re-drawing and retracing certain items before they were acceptable for printing, not to mention valuable time wasted in deciphering 'weird and wonderful' handwriting. In future, if diagrams, maps etc. are submitted for this Newsletter, they are to be drawn **IN BLACK INK** on **CLEAN WHITE PAPER** and not lined paper. It took me no less than ½ hour to whiten out the blue lines on a map that was drawn on ordinary lined paper.

If Members can't take the time to submit their articles and drawings in a decent fashion then I will not take the time to print them. The same applies to pre-printed articles.

**KEEP THEM CLEAN AND FLAT AND DO NOT SCRIBBLE MESSAGES ON THEM.** If the article is pre-printed on both sides, I will require 2 (TWO) copies, one of each side, otherwise only 1 (ONE) side will be published in the Newsletter. I have made this threat many times before **BUT THIS TIME I INTEND TO KEEP IT!** If your article is submitted to the Editor but does not appear in the Newsletter, **YOU** will know the reason why!!!

**JAN PETERSON.**

# HENSCHKE FOSSIL CAVE

## ~~again~~ still

After more than seven months recess, excavation of the fossil deposits of this cave resumed on the weekend of November 15-16. For the first time ever in this project, Fred Aslin was absent, laid low by the dreaded 'flu. Nevertheless, we had about 18 workers altogether, but only two of these, Judy Whitehead and myself, were CEGSA members.

The weather was wretched : stinking hot, dusty and with a strong northeast wind which funnelled through the cave from the quarry. We found that, after such a long lapse, the cave fill had dried out to the consistency of well baked adobe. This made excavating difficult and sieving worse, but away from the exposed surfaces it was easier, and fossils were well preserved. Amongst many good specimens were a number of large bird bones, probably of the giant mallee fowl Progora. Another interesting feature, well preserved because of the hard nature of the silt, was the apparent abundance of moulds of tree branches, some of which apparently had been burned in a bushfire, since the holes were lined with a film of charcoal.

On Sunday, we were graced with the visit of Joe Jennings from the ANU, together with a Chinese exchange student, Dr. D. Ingle-Smith ("Dingle") and another student Mark Greenaway. They inspected the cave and excavations, and heard my comments with interest.

The next trip will be January 10-11. It may take only two more trips to complete the excavations in this cave so far as safety allows.

**NEVILLE PLEDGE.**

## NON-CAVING IN EUROPE

I was fortunate enough to be able to spend several months this year on long service leave in Europe. And I must confess that caving was not high on my list of priorities.

First there was a month long Sundowners camping tour of Scandinavia. This successfully avoided any caves that might be visited. One small undistinguished cave about halfway up Norway near the town of Mo-I-Rena, was missed because, being early in June, it was still not open for tourists. (I had seen it previously, in any case). It appears to be joint controlled : a more-or-less single passage through which a small stream runs, washing away debris left from the ice age glaciers that covered Scandinavia. The only feature of note is a large granitic-erratic dumped by the glacier into a pothole entrance, blocking it securely. There is virtually no decoration.

In Sweden, I came across a tourist brochure advertising caves in an area southwest of Stockholm. They seemed to have some good decoration, but we did not have the opportunity to visit them. A visit to the offshore island of Öland disclosed an area, that, while not having any obvious karst features (having been planed flat by glaciers only 10,000 years ago), could contain caves. A large part of the island is Ordovician limestone, and the locals seem to be dependent on groundwater supplies.

July saw me in Paris for 11 days attending the 26th International Geological Congress. I did not notice any papers relating to speleology, but with the number being presented this is not surprising. However, on a day trip to look at the geology in the Champagne district east of Paris, I was intrigued by numerous signs saying "To the Caves". Only after a visit to the Moët & Chandon champagne cellars did I realise that "Cave" is French for "cellar", and these hand-hewn tunnels, cut into virgin chalk, are quite extensive. The decoration, of course, is of two types : huge wine vats, and millions of green bottles.

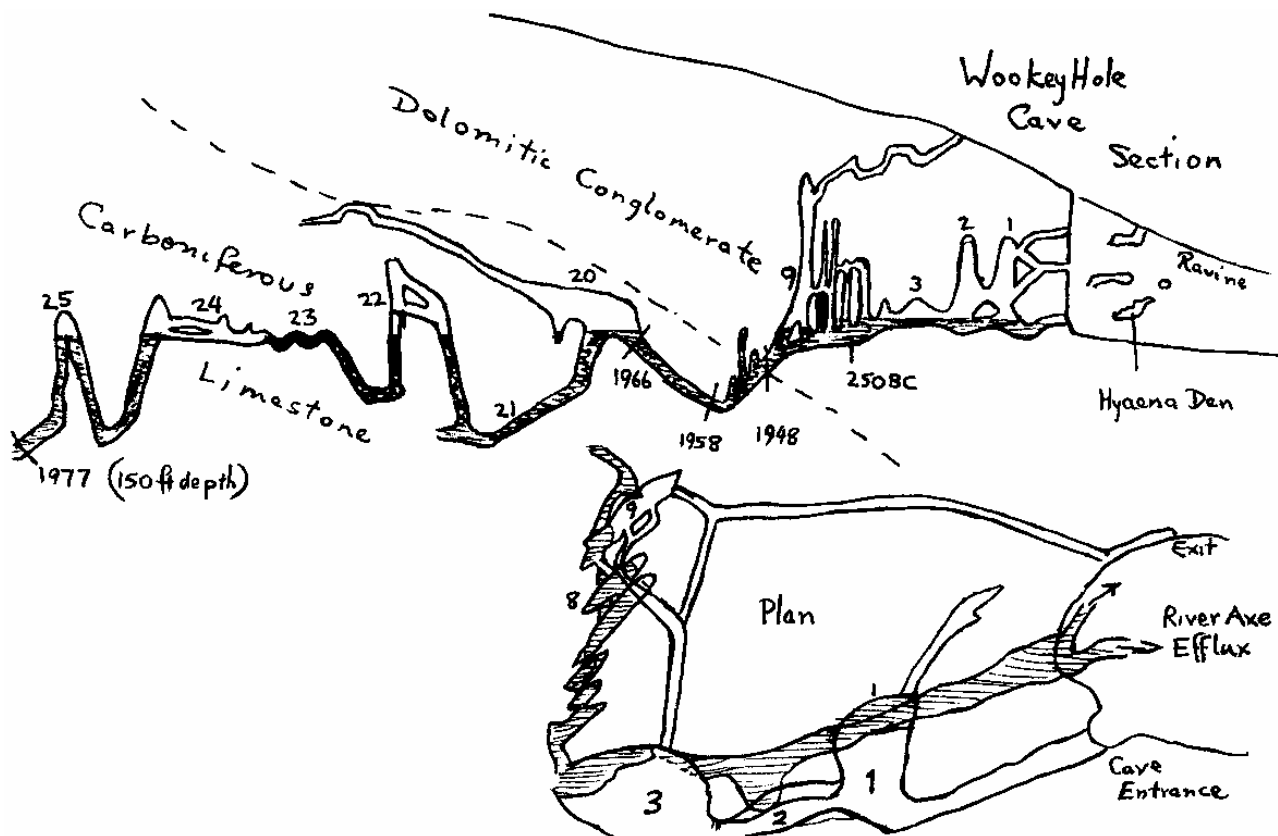
After several weeks travelling through Germany, Austria and Northern Italy, through fantastic alpine scenery, I reached Southern France, to spend a few days in Montpellier. The purpose was professional, but I noticed with frustration (since one really needs a car to visit most tourist sites) that there were several caving areas within a few hours drive. To judge from the tourist blurb, these caves are pretty good. Maybe one of our readers can comment.

Back in England, I eventually got into a cave. This was after visiting a colleague, Andy Currant, who is engaged in a big project of excavating the remnants of a giant talus dome disclosed in a limestone quarry at Westbury-sub-Mendip, near Wells, Somerset. The deposit is quite rich in fossils including the cave bear *Ursus spelaeus*. Nearby is the village of Wookey Hole, whose economy was based on the efflux of the River Axe, and now centres on tourism, especially the Wookey Hole Cave.

Wookey Hole was known in pre-history, sheltering men at least 50,000 years ago. It was first mentioned about 1,800 years ago, and later became associated with King Arthur who allegedly slew a black witch who lived in the cave. Its connection with the black arts and the underworld continued into the Middle Ages, when a priest claimed to have exorcised the witch and turned her to stone : the evidence is a large mis-shapen stalagmite. Possible stone age sacrifices may have been the origin of the witch stories.

The River Axe was harnessed to power a rag paper mill early in the 17th century, and this mill, much enlarged, still operates on a limited basis, since rag paper still has specialist uses. In constructing the water-works, excavators broke into an old chamber called the Hyena Den in 1857 because of the vast amount of hyena bones found there. The mill closed in 1972 and was bought by Madame Tussand's Wax Museum, who developed the caves and mill as a tourist attraction, incorporating their store of our of favour wax heads, a collection of old fairground decorations and fantasia, and a small museum depicting and explaining the cave. A single ticket allows you to see the lot, but you have to start through the cave, on a one-way route. The length of the tourist route through the cave, through the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th and 9th chambers, is 0.2 miles, bypassing the 4th, 5th and 6th chambers and returning from the 9th chamber by means of man-made tunnels. The total length of known passages is 2.3 miles.

The cave follows joints and fissures in the 200 million year old Dolomitic Conglomerate, and the older Carboniferous Limestone. The chambers are high and narrow, about half filled with water. This water enters the system about 2 miles away via Swildon's Hole near the village of Priddy. Until 1935 nothing past the 6th chamber was accessible because of the water. In that year, the 7th chamber was reached, using Royal Navy diving dress, and "three years later, England's first cave diving group was formed at Wookey Hole". The 9th chamber was reached in 1948, and the 20th in 1966. The first cave diving fatality occurred in 1949 when a diver returning from chamber 8, ran out of air.



**NEVILLE PLEDGE**

## HOW TO KILL AN ORGANISATION

- 1) Don't come to meetings.
- 2) If you do, come late.
- 3) Find fault with officers and members.
- 4) Never accept an office; it is easier to criticise than to do things.
- 5) Nevertheless, get annoyed if you aren't appointed to the Committee.
- 6) If appointed to a Committee, don't attend meetings.
- 7) If asked by the Chainman to give your opinion say nothing, afterwards tell everyone how you think things should be done.
- 8) Do no more than necessary.  
When others roll up their sleeves to help things along, say the club is run by a clique.
- 9) Hold back your dues as long as possible or don't pay at all.
- 10) Don't bother about getting members, but if you do, be sure they are moaners like yourself.

**NOVEMBER 1963**

**ANON.**

# THE JENOLAN CAVES

" For discovery means not only zealous hard work of a most unhealthy kind - lying for hours on one's face in a damp tunnel only large enough to admit the explorer's body, while the hands are constantly chiselling away the limestone from around a narrow crack ahead; not only the intrepid spirit that consents to be lowered into wells sometimes 300 feet deep, running all manner of risks from falling stone and fraying rope and jagged rock-edges, for the delight of discovering some new store of gems - but also a kind of special genius for divining caves, a talent that leads its possessor to break a way through what was apparently solid formation, and to emerge at last into great open chambers full of fantastic shapes and glittering images. Such patience, such courage, such genius, have been displayed again and again by those who opened up these caves for our enjoyment; and, while we enjoy the fruit of their labours, it is at least befitting that we should pay tribute to their perseverance."

" Miserably inappropriate are many of the names that man has plastered on these treasure chambers, more defacing even than this; for at least there was once a reason for it - it recalls the old days of early discovery. But with what disgust must we be filled when some corner of shimmering loveliness, some fretted roof covered with crystal pendants, some spreading lake of tiny flashing jewel-waves, has to be connected in our minds with respectable but prosaic names - not by any right of discovery, but in order that influential men may be cheaply complimented by the curator."

" For the trip, one adopts the oldest and most compact clothes possible; no ribbons or trimmings must be left hanging to catch on a point of rock. The guide takes his magnesium wire-lamp and a supply of candles, the visitor must provide themselves with candlesticks (a peculiar form is in vogue with a saucer attached to catch the sperm drippings) and matches, and the procession starts.

## **The Jenolan Caves**

**Cassell's Picturesque Australasia - Ed. by E.E. Morris. M.A. Oxon. Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1889.**

These excerpts come from a chapter in a book that was first printed in the last century - 1889. It is interesting to note the comments on desecration of caves by unthinking or uncaring visitors and the caretakers of such caves.

There are also some comments on appropriate clothing of the time and equipment that by our standards is most primitive and unsafe. When one stops to ponder the discoveries made with these conditions, it shows that our forebears were brave indeed.

This is a most interesting book and this particular chapter is embellished with early prints of the Jenolan Caves which show just how much man has changed them. It's well worthwhile adding this to your collection of "caver abillia".

**ANON.**

# THE TROG

Trogging thru the chambers, down Grand-Central way,  
We came upon some other men who'd been there all day.  
They were weary from trogging and surveying all along  
And were wanting to come and join the surface throng.

The day was long, the hours dark, and  
'Twas past midnight when the weary band came out,  
They hailed the camp to cook up a brew,  
And loud about they did shout.

For down in the cauldron was squeeze-hole nice and small,  
Through which they gaily crawled one and all,  
But scarce had ten short seconds been struck,  
When some dumb clod his boot got stuck.

Onward ever onwards, pressing through the gloom,  
Perhaps along this tunnel is a really great big room,  
Where one can sit and gaze around in awe,  
At nature's marvels on ceiling and on floor

For 8 long hours we onwards pressed  
With little more than 10 minutes rest,  
The tunnel low, they grazed our backs  
And stalactites tore our muddy slacks.

Then out we came into nature's vault  
Hidden in there where no man had been  
'Twas in here that the leader called a halt,  
For here was beauty ne'er before seen.

Stalactites long, and helectites airy,  
Thank God we'd been able to get up early,  
Or this would ne'er have been found by us,  
And no man could ever have seen beauty Thus!

Pure white flowstone pours from the walls,  
A ghost-like column in the distance calls '  
'Who is this being who ventures near,  
Who is this mortal who dares enter here?'"

One wonders then when the week is gone,  
However did this beauteous Room  
After a thousand years, be discovered that early morn?  
Forever hidden in the gloom,

And now you see why trogs do trog,  
Through holes almost too small for a dog,  
To see what nature can reveal,  
In these moments, Oh so real.

BY: ANON.      With apologies to all poets.  
September, 1964.

**EDITORS NOTE: I think more than apologies should be forthcoming!**

## FIRST AID

C.E.G.S.A. Members are proud of their awareness of critical issues such as conservation, yet the word "First Aid" is often met by apathy. It is the responsibility of individuals to know what to do and not to have to rely on others in applying First Aid. The motivational factors behind this lack of enthusiasm I will not even attempt to research. However, from my own experience, learning First Aid is not dull or irrelevant and I hope that some of my enthusiasm will rub off onto other members to take more interest in this topic.

In November, Rod and I completed a First Aid course held by the St. John Ambulance Brigade. It took only one night per week for 8 weeks to complete - we found 2 hours a week not to be demanding, it was a small portion of our time. At completion of the course we had an exam, with both theoretical and practical elements. The practical consisted of a simulated accident situation, in which the First Aider has to diagnose and treat the casualty's injuries, and resuscitation (C.P.R.). Although intensive, the course proved both interesting and satisfying. Rod and I thoroughly enjoyed it and we strongly recommend others to participate in such courses - the advantages are all too obvious.

Whilst it may seem that the likelihood of First Aid being required in caving is rare, this does not apply to car accidents, for example. But even despite this, caving accidents ARE POSSIBLE - we cannot be too complacent. Many trips are run where NOBODY has First Aid qualifications. Consider also, your responsibilities to yourself and others, particularly when travelling in outback areas where prompt medical aid is not readily available due to problems of distance.

How do you enrol? Simply apply at your nearest St. John or Red Cross Centre. For a fee of around \$18 (which includes an Instructional Handbook) it is well worth the effort - a small price to pay considering it may save your life, a friend's or someone you don't even know!

**DI McDOUGAL**

# CARE OF EQUIPMENT

## In your car:

- Store in a carton etc., away from lead acid batteries and sharp objects.

## In use:

- Do not tread on ropes as they will abrade.
- Use the rope protectors where sharp rocks are rubbing against the rope.

## After use:

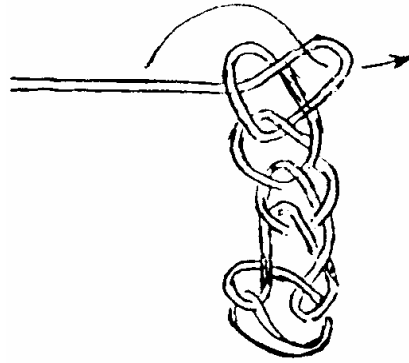
- Check the equipment for damage of wear and tear.

The best time to do this is when rolling ladders or coiling ropes. Report any damage or suspected wear and tear to the Quartermaster.

## Before returning to the Quartermaster:

- Ropes should be washed if they are used in muddy conditions or dirty/dusty conditions as the grit wears the rope.
- Chain the rope so it stays untangled during washing. Chain the rope by placing it end to end, and do this again while it is a manageable thickness.

Make a loop at the end and keep passing the rope through the next loop until the chain is completed.



## To Wash:

- Chain as described, and wash in machine or by hand in detergent to stop the grit settling back on the rope as detergent keeps it in suspension.

Dry flat, out of direct sunlight.

Ropes should be coiled to return to Quartermaster - it should have secured ends so that it does not come undone when being carried. Make the coil a manageable size.

Figure 1:

Keep a long end  
To secure the coil.

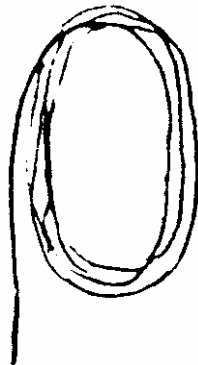


Figure 2:

Make a loop.

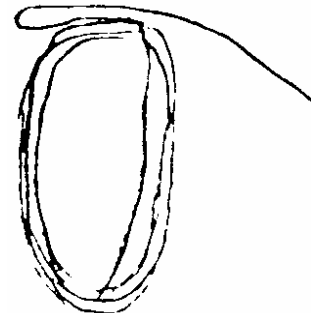


Figure 3:

Wind end around coil towards the loop.



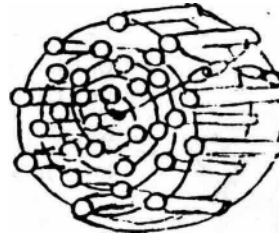
Figure 4:

Put end through loop and pull the other tightly, until it is secure



Ladders:

- Should be rolled thus:
- This way they are portable for carrying to a pitch and compact and manageable for storage.
- Wash them well while rolled with a spirit of water. Dry flat so the water drains out.



Secure G-links to prevent unrolling.

**PLEASE USE THE EQUIPMENT IN THE STORE - IT IS THERE FOR MEMBERS**

**MEREDITH REARDON**  
**Quartermaster.**

## Nostalgia Corner

24th April, 1956.

The C.E.G.S.A. Emblem was adopted as designed by Ian Dunlop.

# SAVE THE REEF IN HALF AN HOUR? WRITE ON!

## TO ALL WHO WON'T LET THE GREAT BARRIER REEF BE SACRIFICED FOR OIL

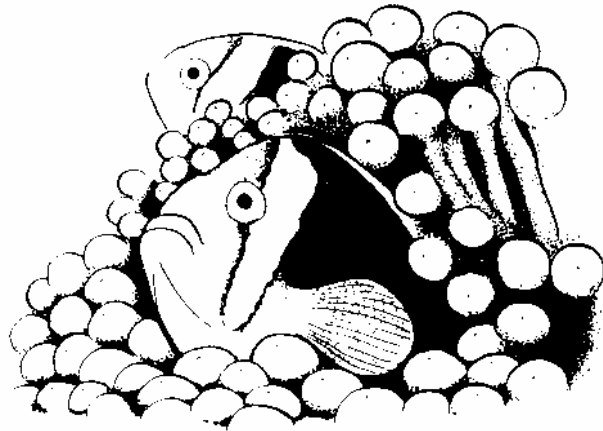
Dear Citizen,

The future of the **GREAT BARRIER REEF** is still hidden in an oily murk of uncertainty. The Federal Government will not forgo the oil drilling option. It continues to offer the public baseless assurances and has taken actions which contribute little to, or act against, the Reefs' safety.

As the 9-month, 140 million gallon oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico recently showed, there is no such thing as "safe" oil drilling of the seabed. It happens today, despite modern technology. Ocean currents will carry oil thousands of kilometres from its point of origin, coating shorelines and killing wildlife.

**The only way that oil drilling around the Reef can be prevented is to have a marine park proclaimed over the ENTIRE Great Barrier Reef Region.** This can be accomplished via the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act, 1975. The Act also defines the GBR Region and in Section 38 prohibits drilling under any marine park within it. Far from curtailing the freedom of ordinary people to enjoy The Reef, such a park would ensure the continuity of their enjoyment, by protecting its natural wonders from careless or unwise usage of all kinds. Tourism and prudent commercial fishing would be amply provided for.

However, neither the Federal nor the Queensland Government has so far been willing to see the **whole Region** dedicated, as this would close off the oil option. It is therefore once again up to the **people**. Several public opinion polls have indicated that 70% of Australians are against oil drilling in or near the Reef area. Experience, such as that of the recent decision by the Tasmanian Government to save the Franklin River, shows that **nearly all environmental concessions are won by a significant demonstration of public opinion.**



## WE ARE NOT HELPLESS: TOGETHER WE ARE ALL-POWERFUL

Whatever you do, don't keep your convictions to yourself. Let the politicians know what you are thinking. Give Democracy a chance to work!

To succeed, **all** concerned people need to do two things:

1. WRITE A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER,  
The Rt Hon. Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister,  
c/-Parliament House, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.
2. Persuade your friends, relatives, and associates to do the same.

It need be only a short simple letter, expressing your concern that oil drilling would endanger the World's greatest assemblage of coral reefs and organisms, and asking for a marine park covering the whole of the Great Barrier Reef Region.

**Half an hour of your time to save The Reef for all time!**

By all means present useful arguments based on fact (see back of this sheet; further information on request) **but** remember it is **numbers** of letters (and other forms of communication) which counts most. One letter is taken to **indicate** the concern of hundreds. If you wish to go further, you can help as follows:

\* **DONATIONS:** Give or solicit donations to the AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION'S SAVE THE REEF APPEAL. Amounts of \$2 and over are tax-deductible. If you want the money to go to any of the other groups listed below, add a note **expressing a preference** that it be used this way -- or send direct and waive the deduction.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT**

**Australian Conservation Foundation,**  
672B Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn, Vic 3122  
(03) 819.2888

**Reef Action,**  
c /- NSW Office, Australian Conservation Foundation,  
3rd floor, 18 Argyle St, Sydney, NSW 2000 (02) 27.1497

**Australian Littoral Society,** (07) 378.6077  
P.O. Box 498, Toowong, Qld 4066

**Save the Barrier Reef Campaign,**  
118 Errol St, North Melbourne, Vic 3051 (03) 329.5519

**Queensland Conservation Council,**  
P.O. Box 238, North Quay, Brisbane,  
Qld 4000 (07) 221.0188

**Townsville Regional Conservation Council,**  
G.P.O. Box 364, Townsville Qld 4810 (077) 71.6226

**By courtesy: MEREDITH REARDON.**

## **C.E.G.S.A. HUT - Naracoorte**

The C.E.G.S.A. Hut at Naracoorte was demolished by National Parks just prior to Christmas.

During the last month there has been publicity in the press and on the radio about the demolition. These articles have inferred that C.E.G.S.A. lost valuable items of equipment and furniture.

This is not the case. Prior to the Hut being demolished I went through the Hut with the Ranger, Fred Carberry, and removed or earmarked for removal, items the Group wanted salvaged. At the time of demolition, Fred removed extra equipment that had been overlooked.

Any furniture destroyed was unserviceable and ready for dumping.

Although the Group regrets the loss of its facility at Naracoorte, it is indebted to the Park Staff at Naracoorte for arranging the safe removal and storage of our equipment.

**KEVIN MOTT.**  
**President.**

# PROGRAMME

## MARCH

|            |                                                            |             |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 28/2 - 1/3 | Henschkes Quarry                                           |             |
| 11         | Committee Meeting                                          |             |
| 14, 15     | Henschkes Quarry                                           |             |
| 25         | General Meeting<br>Local Mines                             | Royce Wells |
| 28         | Burnside Mines - 11.30 a.m.<br>Burnside Town Hall car park |             |

## APRIL

|            |                   |                          |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 4, 5       | Henschkes Quarry  |                          |
| 8          | Committee Meeting |                          |
| 17-20      | Mt Gambier        | (See K Mott)<br>P Clarke |
| 17/4 - 3/5 | Nullarbor         | K Mott                   |
| 22         | General Meeting   |                          |

## MAY

|       |                                   |         |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 3     | Mt Compass                        | K Mott  |
| 13    | Committee Meeting                 |         |
| 16-24 | Nullarbor (dates may be extended) | N Smith |
| 27    | General Meeting                   |         |