

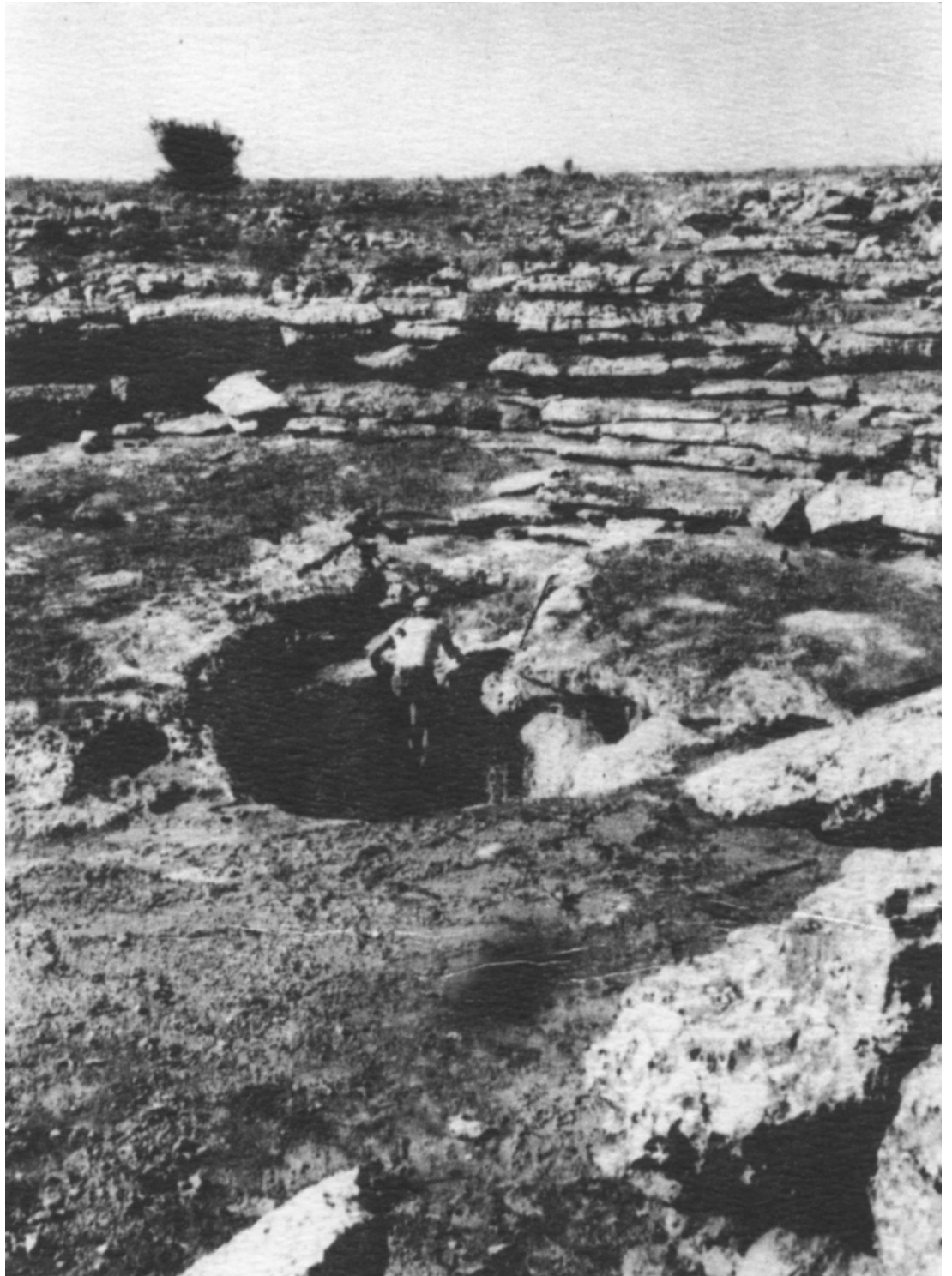
CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

c/o South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide



VOLUME NO: 26 NO 2 AUGUST, 1981

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Thampana Cave Entrance Nullarbor

CONTENTS

VOLUME NO: 26 NO 2 AUGUST, 1981

	Page
EDITOR'S TRITE COMMENT	1
CLUB ROOMS	1
TRIP REPORTS	
Henschke Fossil Cave	2
Neville Pledge	
Nullarbor	3
Kevin Mott	
Nullarbor #2	8
John McCormack	
Camooweel	9
Meredith Reardon	
Niggle Pot	9
Meredith Reardon	
Katherine Caves	12
Meredith Reardon	
CEGSA / VSA Dinner	14
Bernie Maegraith	
Blackberry	14
Bernie Maegraith	
Cable Cave	15
Bernie Maegraith	
Sand Funnel Cave	15
Meredith Reardon	
Mount Compass	16
Kevin Mott	
Punyelroo Cave	17
Ed. Bailey	
TECHNICAL ARTICLES AND OTHERS	
Climbing Enquiry	19
Meredith Reardon	
Friends of the S.A. Museum - Programme	19
Letter	20
S.A. Museum	
Ladders	20
S.A. Museum Information Leaflet	
on Australian Snakes	21
PROGRAMME	23

EDITOR'S TRITE COMMENT

Algernon Smythe, Esmerelda Bannington, Wilson J. Adams.

Do these names sound familiar? Probably not. These are just three of thousands of names that do not appear as authors of articles in this magazine. Among our members there are many people, other than our regulars, who have something to contribute.

Our next Newsletter deadline is the October General Meeting. Start now and put your pen to paper.

When you start work please write it neatly - typed is even better - and use only one side of the paper. This enables our Editor to assess how much material he has got and just what it is you want to say. Also, please include all pertinent dates, names and cave numbers as these articles are used in compiling cave records.

Thank you for your co-operation and contributions.

"NIMBLE"

CLUB ROOMS

The venue announced in the last Newsletter as New Clubrooms has been found to be unsuitable for storage of records. Accordingly, the Committee has decided not to use the facility.

In future all Committee meetings will be held at 10 Chapman Street, Torrensville. The Group's records will be stored there. Anyone wanting access to the records should contact the Records Officer.

General Meetings will revert back to the Museum Lecture Room. Meetings commence at 7.45 p.m. The Library is also housed there.

KEVIN MOTT

TRIP REPORTS

HENSCHKE FOSSIL CAVE EXCAVATIONS AND OTHERS:

Weekend trips to the Henschke Fossil Cave took place on January 10-11th, January 31-1st February, February 28-1st March, and March 14-15th, with varying numbers of participants (24,23, about 30, and 10 respectively). As always, only a few of these were members of CEGSA. Also as always, the cave kept getting larger so that our estimate of time to completion were continually wrong. Consequently, some of our volunteers, I think, got a little fed up when the much publicized final trip (Feb. 28-1st March) proved not to be so.

Finds continued to be exciting right to the end (well, as far as we have gone : Fred Aslin feels that it can be finished - so far as is safe - in one day with 6 people. We'll see later). On January 10th, a large number of bird bones found in close proximity turned out to be probably from the one individual of Progura, the giant mallee fowl. The next day, a skull of Macropus and jaws of Sthenurus gilli were found together, and elsewhere teeth of Zygomaturus, and another skull of the giant echidna Zaglossus. More Zygomaturus teeth and a jaw of Sthenurus atlas were found on the next trip, while the third one yielded much the same, with the addition of a large number of large bird bones from one small area at the far end of the deposit -- apparently of a large new waterfowl bigger than a swan that had been washed to or died at the end of the cave. The last trip was much in the way of a tidy-up, but produced some good specimens and did not clear all the deposit.

But I had decided that it would be **THE LAST TRIP** TO Henschke's, at least for a while, because another project was in urgent need of attention.

About a year ago, quarry operations near Penola intersected a fossil deposit. Fred Aslin was called in and made a salvage collection, during my absence overseas, and decided that the cave, for such it is, could extend some distance and was worth serious excavation. At the moment it was stuffed full of sand and silt and fossil bones. On the weekend of April 4-5th, we made our first serious attack on it, with the help of many local volunteers from Penola, Naracoorte, and further afield, as well as such CEGSA people as the Molletts, Meredith Reardon, Kerry Ninnes, and of course Fred Aslin.

Working conditions are much different to what they were at the Henschke Fossil Cave, being virtually out in the open. We have so far excavated about 2 metres into the cave, to the full width (6-7m) and a depth to rock pile of a bit over 1m. The fossil fauna is also different, with notably different proportions of the more common animals, and some striking absences or new records. There is a koala that seems to be an extinct species, which was not present at Henschke's. Hence I suspect the new cave has an older fauna.

Excavations will resume there in the Spring.

NEVILLE PLEDGE

NULLARBOR - 17th APRIL to 1st MAY, 1981

PARTY: K. Mott, G. Pilkington and C. Jackson.

The trip started quite uneventfully with a 7.30 a.m. departure from Adelaide. Camp was pitched near Madura Cave at 1.30 a.m. on Saturday morning. On the track to Madura Cave an omen (and or sign) was delivered unto us foretelling of great happenings. Half a tree decided to deacease itself upon the track necessitating an unscheduled deviation from the normally straight track. The quote of the trip came from Colin who during the journey out there was heard to remark: **"Sheep Station!! I thought you meant railway station."** I gather the English education system is sadly lacking re Australian nomenclature.

During Saturday, Colin opted to walk south to the sand dunes; something about "mad dogs and". Graham and I commenced a survey on the surface to tie in all the entrances. Later that morning we visited the Manager of Madura Station to introduce ourselves and arrange permission to visit the various caves. On the way there we collected 3 garbage bags of beer cans and bottles. It is a pity that the National Australian Sport must be to throw out beer containers from a moving vehicle. The dump there is easily accessible and should be used. It would seem people have been tidying up the dump by spreading their rubbish themselves. We tried to deduce what they aim at when projecting their missiles from the car. From a detailed, scientific analysis of scatter patterns, impact marks etc., we have concluded they were aimed at the air, but missed.

In the afternoon Colin rejoined us, so we continued the underground survey of Madura Cave. On exiting the cave no-one could find the car keys, despite a most diligent search. Damned gremlins. Of course guess where battery chargers, substantial food and cooking gear, and spare lights were stored. Next morning I had to walk into Madura to phone Adelaide for a spare key to be despatched. Monday morning saw the continuation of the continuation of the cave survey. Gets boring doesn't it. After lunch we walked the five kms to Nurina Cave to photograph and explore same. This cave must be one of the gems of the Nullarbor. But; beware. There are still some highly mobile goolies lurking about in the depths of the cave. One beauty, a prominent foothold the size of a large rucksack now occupies a spatial position varying in coordinates from 0-0-0 (original) to -2-4-5 +2+3-5 (values in metres). Figure that out you survey types. *

During the exploration Colin and Graham ran low on lighting power. Our keys arrived that afternoon so after all had exited from the cave, a quick meal was devoured and a dash to the pub for refreshments; after a shower of course.

Graham charged his lamp overnight for the next day's epic : The Ezam in Mullamullang. On the way out there I was "charging" my lamp. Being typically obstreperous I refused to venture beyond White Lake. It being a well known fact that I am unselfish to the highest order I offered my carbide to Graham and Colin as an extra light source for their Ezam push. Wouldn't you know it; the damned lead acid gave out just as the others disappeared from view. By waiting some time then making a dash I was only able to proceed a couple of hundred metres. Each time the duration of light output was less. If I were to repeat these antics I would not have been near the entrance even in the 8-9 hours the others would take to return. Now being an extremely safety conscious type I usually like to have a second light source.

The only thing I have forgotten to say in the past was that the second light source was my helmet. You've guessed it. One standard trog helmet used in a controlled burn will get you from E2 to the entrance with the brim intact in 35 minutes. It is good to see that the surface around Mullamullang has not suffered greatly from the numerous camps there in the past few years. Other Nullarbor camp sites are visibly worse. That night the front bar was probably the most welcome place in the area.

Cocklebidy Cave was visited on Wednesday morning. I have never seen that particular area looking so green and being so dust free. The mouth of the cave below the climb was literally a sea of grasshoppers. The water level in the lake was lower than normal which meant that Colin had about 2m less to swim to reach the sump.

Also visited was Murra-El-Elevyn where Graham and Colin explored the maze beyond the lake. I took some photographs and defined the approach track to the cave. Previously it was possible to mistakenly take the old track in. The new track has now been defined by white rock markers. There were about 20 wetas in the lake chamber and a cave adapted spider was just below the second roof constriction. The web was close to the floor and consisted of vertical threads. People visiting the cave should take care and watch their steps as they appear to hang their webs in the same places we tend to walk. The floor of the lake chamber was littered with a large number of moth wings. The moths are obviously being eaten but whether by bats, wetas or something else I don't know.

On the way to the pub we called in to look at Offset Blowhole. Graham in his usual style couldn't resist the enigmas of where was the breeze going .and why was the one spot behind the slab near the entrance the only dry place in the cave. This is one of the rare occasions that Graham has been overly excited. So what if the candle flame was burning downwards around his hand instead of the usual up. After much hand excavation it was concluded the cave obviously extends down there and it was too big a job at that time. Just another job to add to the list. While we were wetting our whistles at the bar, the barmaid kept sniffing the air and complaining about something being dusty or off. The place smelt alright to us.

Thursday we bid farewell to Rod Cunningham the Motel Manager and thanked him for his great help and generosity during our "lost" key episode. It is a pity that due to his being flat out with tourists we weren't able to take him caving. Maybe next time. Anyway, thanks for **all your help Rod**. At Mundrabilla we met up with Joe Jennings, Adrian Davey, Norm Poulter and Albert Goede. As we arrived they were coming out of Webbs Cave. Who would bother caving on a Nullarbor caving trip. The afternoon was spent photographing the entri of Webbs and Snake Pit and generally relaxing. Next we went into the Mundrabilla Motel to see if John McCormack and Dave Williams had arrived. They had not. They had not arrived that night so we left a message for them. When we arrived back in Adelaide we found that instructions had been confused and the telephone system out there was not functioning properly, so we kept missing each other by a day right across the Nullarbor.

Friday we decided to investigate several dolines marked on the geological sheet. The first feature was a doline 45m long by 48m wide. The southern end had a com. long ramp running into the doline which was 3m deep at the northern end. After investigating and photographing this feature we intended looking at some more further north. We had to drive past Thampana R.H. Here we missed the track we were supposed to take. It was very faint so barely discernable from a moving vehicle.

As we were driving along the wrong track lo and behold there appeared unto us a cave.

The entrance was a vertical tube 3m in diameter contained in a rock amphitheatre about 14m radius. Colin and Graham laddered down and were "mind blown" about the cave. The entrance pitch is 11.5m the last 6 of which are free. There must be such a volume of water pouring down the entrance the torrent has gouged a pit in the rock pile 2m deep and 10m in diameter. The first chamber is 120m long x 20m wide and oriented S-SW. With the entrance at the north eastern end. At the southwest the cave appears to head south for about 50m. The main streamway is to the northwest however. You drop over a ledge and through a low crawlway for about 35m then enter a vadose pressure tube for 50m before emerging into another break down chamber.

By following the streamway and climbing through breakdown you follow the cave north, north west, west then south west in the higher and lower galleries of the Vadose extension. (** Norm Poulter has made the effort to mark with cairns a path through the Coffee and Cream Section. All future parties should stick to this pathway). These were not fully explored and abounded with some of the most spectacular decoration on the Nullarbor and in some cases elsewhere. The breeze blowing out of the entrance was strong enough to blow helmets off, prevent ropes being thrown down and keep a rubber car mat airborne. The cave was eventually identified as Thampana Cave previously discovered by Rawleigh Webb and numbered N206.

The rest of Friday's efforts to locate other dolines were thwarted by the lack of tracks and an east-west fence which contained only 2 improvised gates. One of these gates was the end of a major north south track. The area north of the fence has obviously been abandoned. When asked about the existence of any tracks north of the fence, the Manager could only keep repeating "don't cut the fence". He didn't seem to be fully aware of the gates. Although friendly he seemed in some ways to be wary of us city types. He seemed as if he mistakenly thought we expected him to jump when we spoke.

Saturday, both parties spent all day photographing and examining Thampana Cave. On Sunday we located and photographed Thylacine Cave and Kelly Cave, then looked for another doline marked on the geology sheet. This feature now numbered N205, has an entrance 3.5m x 1.5m dropping 2.5m to a small cave 6m x 7m. To the north-east of this cave 30m distant was a small depression 10m x 12m x 1m deep. Whilst returning from this cave to Witches Cave we saw large numbers of swallows. We couldn't find any entrance though. Throughout the trip we always found swallows above and around the cave entrance and found them useful aids in locating entrances. An interesting field of study would be to observe their habits and territorial range. While relaxing above Snake Pit it was observed that some swallows buzzed the ground to stir up insects which the rest of the group caught.

We joined up with Joe's group at Witches Cave where they were photographing. In exploring the cave we followed a small breeze and found a considerable amount of virgin cave. The floor was silt and salt exudation material and decoration abounded. The only other intruder having been a now deceased doggy type animal. Because time and care needed to traverse this section of cave, it was not fully explored. What we did explore, however, is twice the extent of the known cave. If any cave is screaming for a survey this is it!

Monday was spent photographing and chasing breezes in Webbs and Snake Pit. One excellent lead in Snake Pit proved too hairy to push.

On the Tuesday we left Mundrabilla Station and travelled along the highway to Kuthala Pass on our way to Abrakurrie. Along the way we looked at Tookana R.H. which is probably the most impressive rock hole I have ever seen. This must surely have been a major campsite for the Merning Tribe.

We then had a look at Abrakurrie Cave and Chowilla Landslip. If this hole looks impressive from atop it is even more so from below. A detailed location and map was made for N167, photographs of N166 and N19 taken and several minor dolines noted prior to setting up camp at Weebubbie.

Graham and myself have seen Weebubbie many times, we did not accompany Colin down. On Wednesday morning I made use of the time to have a shower at the cavers shower a-la-improvis. Quite a deal of the rest of the day was spent exploring the Eucla townsite and jetty. The dunes seem to have moved quite dramatically in the last year or so. It is quite fascinating to be there with a map and try to deduce where you are on the map.

N146 was located relative to N145. It is 200m north of N145 and a large doline 110m x 6m deep. The walls are generally degraded except to the north east segment which has 4m vertical walls. A small cave off the northern wall was not investigated due to the presence of a large brown snake.

Part of the South Australian section of the Nullarbor region is now covered by 1:100 000 maps. These have quite a few caves plotted on them. One of these near Diamond Bore tower we failed to find. It must exist as Neil Smith was once shown it although he then had trouble locating it. A Highways Department road patrol was camped at the Tower and although they couldn't help with this cave, they told us about a couple of others. Their offer of hospitality for the night was too good to pass up.

On Friday we called in to photograph Albala Karoo Bore Shaft and Koomoolooooka Cave, and the surveyed new cave, N210. This cave is marked on both the 1:100 000 and 1:250 000 maps and I am amazed it has not been looked at previously. The entrance is 30m x 22m and oriented NS. There is a small cave at the northern end. The entrance talus slopes down to the south with the cave being 17m below the plain level and extending 45m. The cave ended in breakdown that looks relatively recent in comparison to the age of the cave. It was highly metastable. This cave also contained aboriginal hand paintings.

N211 is a degraded doline 25m x 22m x 2m deep. No cave development. A brief visit was made to Koonalda where the water level was down a couple of feet. The water appears to be much more highly polluted and if this degradation continues the water will be useless even for stock purposes before long. This cave urgently needs to be placed under effective management control. Also visited and located were N27, N16, N178, N212, N150 and N207. Thursday night we camped near Gilgarabbie Bore. Friday left us very confused. We checked out a feature at the G.R. for N125. This is a doline 67m x 43m x 8m deep at the northern end. There was some cave development at the northern end.

Where N122 and N123 are supposedly located we found three features. From east to west they are:-

- 1) Degraded doline 75m diameter x 3m deep - no cave.
- 2) Degraded doline 110m x 66m x 4m deep. Clay floor with large wombat colony - no cave.
- 3) Doline 105m x 85m x 2m deep. No cave.

From previous descriptions:-

N122 - doline with small cave

N123 - deep blowhole 200m S.E. N122

N125 - doline with no cave.

From the above I claim that:-

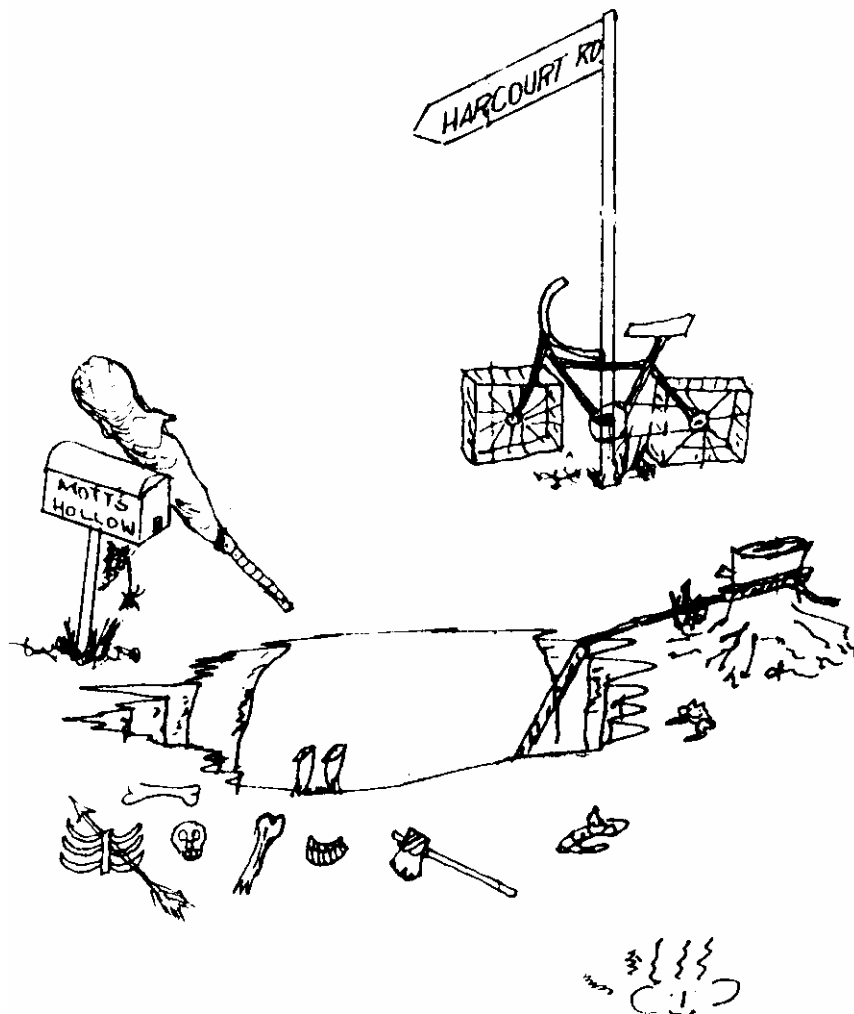
- 1) N122 - fits the description of N125
- 2) N125 - fits the description of feature 3
- 3) N123 - may be SE of "N125". We didn't have time to check. We circumnavigated the three features at the N122 location for 300m and found no blowhole. This conundrum needs to be checked out next time someone visits the area or perhaps somebody may be able to enlighten me.

Anyway, it was nice to finish the trip by not finishing it.

KEVIN MOTT

* P.S. The rock fell down and shattered.

*** On the way back to camp from Witches Cave we tried to locate a blowhole reported by A. Spate and J. Rodet but couldn't find any trace of it. I reckon the heat got to Andy.



ADRIAN BEALE

NULLARBOR TRIP #2 - 23rd APRIL to 1st MAY, 1981

PARTY: John McCormack and David Williams

The air was electric with anticipation as the two above-mentioned intrepid cavers and thrill-seekers began the long, l.o.n.g ... long journey to those most impressive results of karst topography - the Nullarbor Caves.

Our intention was to meet Kevin Mott and Party over there "**somewhere**", however, finding the Holy Grail would have been an easier task. We arrived at Madura Roadhouse late Friday afternoon, and decided to make it our centre until a message was received from or got through to our man Mott.

Directions to Mullamullang Cave were obtained from the Roadhouse, Caravan Park (and most importantly) the Pub Manager, Rod Cunningham. Dave and I ventured there before teatime on Friday for a quick trip. After almost reaching the 1-mile Cairn, and have our minds suitably blown out by the seemingly endless cavern, we decided to get back to Madura for refreshments. Rod, most generously, allowed us the use of a small on-site van and the showers - that's the pioneering I can endure.

Saturday was spent exploring the interesting little caves of Madura and Nurina. Dave brought back some fossils from Madura Cave, one being a forearm bone of an extinct Kangaroo, no new species though.

Sunday saw us back at Mullamullang joined by two keen locals, Rod and Phil (a Jackaroo from Madura Station). Objective: To push the cave to the Dome Chamber. We made Camp One in good time (about 3/4 along the 3½ mile main passage). Unfortunately, one of our number felt his old football injury start playing up, while the rest of us realized we weren't as psychologically prepared for the cave as we thought. The decision was made to turn back - and it was a long, hard trip back. The cave requires a high level of fitness, plus a strong will, particularly if any further exploration is intended past the Dome.

Merry-making was enjoyed with the locals on Sunday night at the weekly social club gathering. Arthur Nash, Manager of Madura Station (and ex-Manager of Mundrabilla Station) told us of many interesting stories about caves in the area, particularly at Mundrabilla.

On Monday we looked for Cocklebidy Cave. Poor directions from Cocklebidy Roadhouse led us astray. Tuesday, we went to Arubiddy Station and saw the Manager, Peter Brown. He was most interested to hear of exploration and diving in Cocklebidy. With correct directions from Peter we were able to find Cocklebidy and Murra-El-Elevyn Caves.

Wednesday morning we bid farewell to Madura and made our way to Mundrabilla. We had found out where Kevin was camping and hoped to catch up with him. Again our elusive leprechaun had given us the slip. Webb's Cave was visited and Snake Pit looked at while we were there, finding the dolines by climbing tall trees in the area.

Eucla was our next port of call. Thursday was spent visiting Weebubbie Cave, exploring further north and coming across two blowholes. After lunch we walked across the very beautiful, white Eucla sandhills to the jetty. Then it was home-time, arriving in Adelaide on Friday.

David and I enjoyed the trip very much, vowing to get back one day and beat the big cave to submission. Finally, on behalf of Dave and myself, I would like to thank Rod Cunningham for the hospitality he showed towards us.

JOHN McCORMACK

CAMOOWEAL, NORTH QUEENSLAND - 23rd - 24th MAY, 1981

PARTY: Mt. Isa Caving Club - Ken Maclean, Stu (Stewart) Wilson, Mark, Gavin Trease.

C.E.G.S.A. - Meredith Reardon, Terry Reardon.

Person in Charge of the Troops! - Sue Maclean.

We set up camp near the dry creek-bed passing by "4-Mile East Cave" after a long drawn out trip from Mt Isa - like a pub crawl only there are no pubs - just vehicle stops for another 'coldie'! (It is very important not to get dehydrated out here!)

After a hearty breakfast over the campfire, we were treated to an introductory trip to Camooweal Caves - "4 Mile Cave". It certainly proved to be a beautiful cave - phreatic development with small circular tunnels leading off everywhere but main joint development with crevasses to chimney through. The water table was higher because of the recent rain so the pools waded through were hip deep. On the way out, I found a bluetongue type lizard with a very long pointed tail quite deep in the cave. Its total length was 16". It was quite docile but since the local cavers said they would eat it if I brought it out, I left it there. I saw later that these caves support a lot of little creatures and they have a very healthy existence - well, plenty of food anyway. I don't know how reptiles can survive without sunlight - I guess these caves are warm and they regulate their temperature with just the ambient temperature instead of the sun's warmth.

And why is the cave called "4 Mile East"? Because it is 4 miles east of the pub, eh!

NIGGLE POT

The same day we entered Niggle Pot, all of us coming out rather more niggly than we were going in - hence the name of the cave perhaps. Starting the cave is the entrance pitch - a vertical squeeze confronts you at the top of the abseil - you daren't think about you're going to manoeuvre your body out whilst jumaring - a 90ft pitch which is down to the side wall; its a further 30ft to the lowest point below.

The new 'bluewater' rope was fast! The Scouts had given this rope to the Club after they had damaged the Mt. Isa Group's rope.

The water table was higher than usual (we waded through water waist deep) because of the recent rain and the mud in the cave was soft and plentiful! At one point we bemused the difficulty of getting up onto a slippery, muddy platform unaided and unbeknownst to us, Ken had hidden the jughardee used to gain access to the higher level under the thick mud! (Just wait till the S.A. Conference, guys!)

The cave was alive with cave dwellers! There were hundreds of frogs of the pointy nosed variety, big cockroaches, white crabs in the water, their bodies up to 2" across and a snake. Yes, deep in the cave, guarding access to the best part of the cave where the Mt. Isarians are exploring at present (or were before the snake was sighted) was a snake, not your common python type snake which is expected in caves, but a 4 ½ft long silver-bellied, smooth and sleek scaled (fish-like scales in fact) snake, greenish in colour. Later in Katherine, the Ranger said it was possibly a "fierce snake", common on the Barkley Tableland, which is more venomous than a taipan. Someone will need to take this snake out carefully, if any more exploration is to be done with safety in this area of the cave.

The exit from the cave was not easy; it was interesting going over the rope protection, particularly inside the squeeze! Say no more. Altogether a great cave.

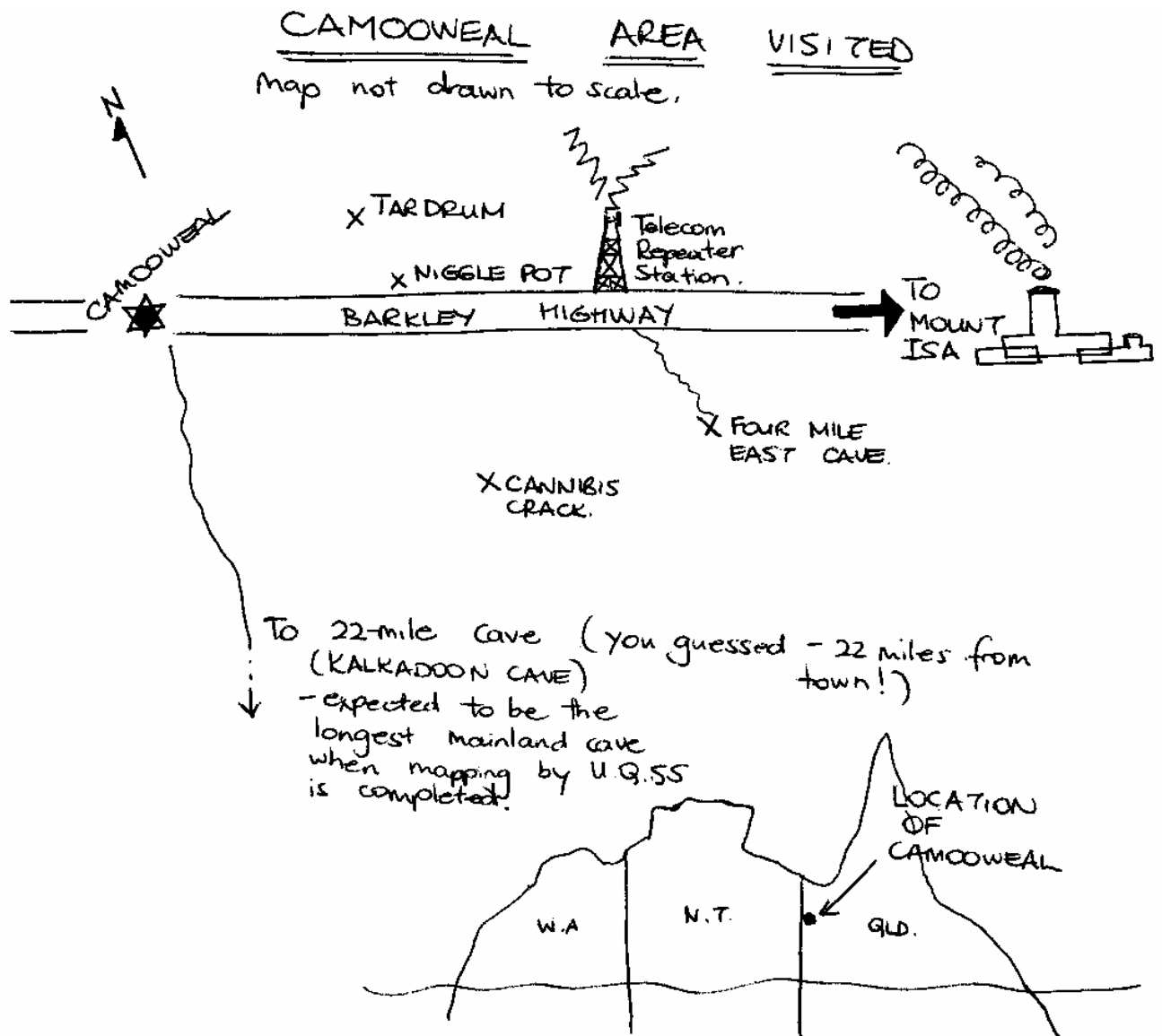
On Sunday we looked at "Tar Drum" dolines. The cave is supposed to have been sealed off because a diver was killed there. It is called "Tar Drum" because the Americans in their road building spree during the war had dumped hundreds of tar drums in the dolines along the roadside. This cave feature is a living memory to how people can destroy their environment.

Gavin and Ken were keen to show us another cave they had found - a tight entrance and tight tunnel. They didn't convince us to have a good crack at it after this description. Terry tried but the tightness prevailed over his long legs and feet! The cave's name? "Canabis Crack". Terry asked was that because there was joint development. Actually it is vadose development. Ken still managed to get out even though we placed a rock in the entrance to it even tighter to get out.

A great caving trip.

MEREDITH REARDON

Map of this area appears on the following page.



Terry and I were most impressed with the educational value of the tour to the Cutta Cutta Caves near Katherine, N.T. The tour starts with a self-guided nature walk from the car park to the cave. Along this walk the tourist is shown various geological features such as karst towers and dolines. When you reach the cave the guide takes you on an instructional tour of the cave.

The cave was originally called Smith's Cave after the stockman who found the entrance about 1900. During the second world war many servicemen were stationed in the Territory and visited the cave when it was known as the 16 Mile Cave. Cutta Cutta was the name given to the cave by the local Djauan tribe of aborigines who, although they used nearby rock shelters, did not appear to regularly use the cave. The known extent of the cave is 700 metres consisting of chambers connected by narrow passages.

Tours of the cave were commenced in 1967 by a private operator. Previous to this no organised tours were conducted and the cave suffered from vandalism and rubbish dumping.

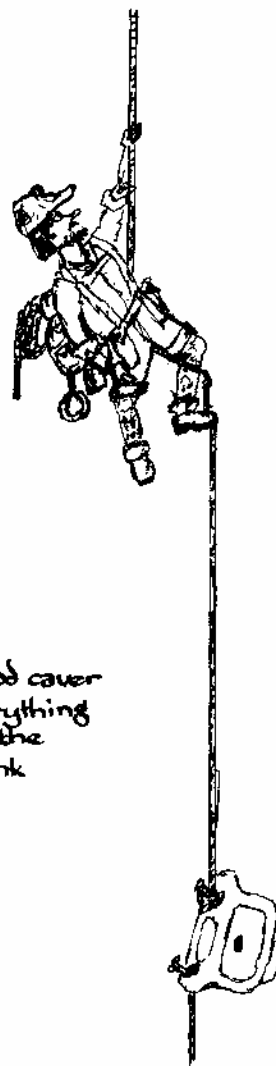
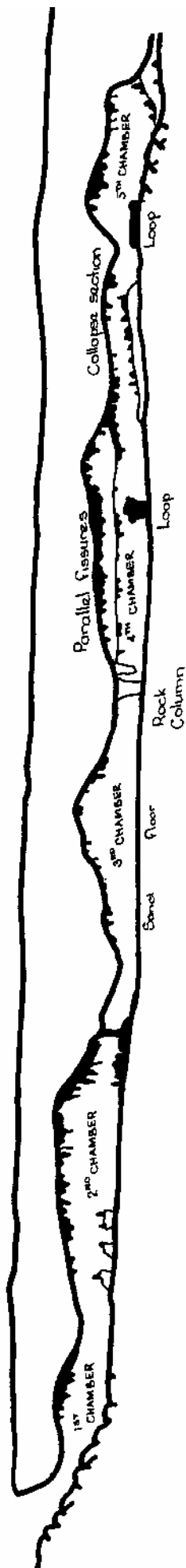
MEREDITH REARDON

EDITORS COMMENT

The Northern Territory Conservation Commission has hit on an award winning idea of making the admission ticket part of the information brochure. This gives the tourist a worthwhile and instructive memento of the cave.

**** Section Map of this Cave appears on the following page.**

Section through CUTTA CUTTA tourist cave



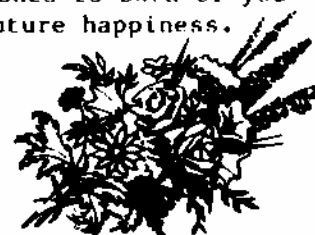
A good caver
takes everything
including the
kitchen sink



FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE

The Members of C.E.G.S.A. send
their very best wishes to
ANNETTE BATES and FRANK JOHNSON
on the occasion of their
forthcoming Marriage on September 6th

Our sincere wishes to both of you
for your future happiness.



CEGSA / VSA DINNER - 20th JUNE, 1981

The CEGSA/VSA Dinner saw the tables turned on our lesser brothers (and sisters, sorry girls) across the border.

We outnumbered the Vics three to one - perhaps the first time ever.

But full credit is to the foreigners, because the hard day of caving didn't break their spirits. They lived up to their usual level of degeneracy, making bad examples of themselves and plunging our hard earned reputation further down the drain.

One South Aussie commented: "We'll be running out of hotels which will have us!" Another replied: "That's alright, next time we'll masquerade as a visiting football team".

Though the turn-out (30) was small by comparison with other years, the atmosphere and revelry possibly reached an all time high. Even a menu was offered, giving a reasonable selection of food - better than previous efforts where it was either eat up or shut-up. Oysters, prawn entrées, croissant, pâté, marinated veal, goulash need I go on merely for the benefit of those who didn't attend. And there was plenty of it too - no need to guard it with life and limb.

But pig trough of the year award must surely go to the Vics who left no glass or jug full, no food scraps on plates - and no sugar in the bowls.

Man of the mouth award goes to the South Australian who said: "There was something in that spinach, but I ate it anyway". Piss pot of the night goes to the Victorian who stammered: "Ish mever too late to shop, thas why I kept shringing. "

BERNIE MAEGRAITH

BLACKBERRY CAVE - NARACORTE

Two trips were run the day of the CEGSA/VSA Dinner. They were through Cathedral and into Blackberry. Ed. Bailey, determined to show the Vics a thing or two took a party of two foreigners and a South Australian into the bowels of Cathedral. A standard tourist jaunt, through a well-trodden cave, it proved both interesting and informative, as Ed had been involved in its opening-up.

Its true extent surprised me, because I'd only ever been into the entrance chamber and early passages. Over two hours were spent, with some impressive caving towards the end of the cave. Worth many repeat trips. Thanks Ed.

Graham Pilkington led a tour of eight people into Blackberry that afternoon. This really showed the visitors what remarkable caves exist in the south-east. Four hours were spent in it and proved a strenuous day for myself and the two Vics who had toured Cathedral. A remarkable effort was put in by a very young Charni Pilkington, aged 5 years, who followed her Dad through thick and thin. Comment of the trip must also go to Charni who said: "I'm too big for the tight bits!" It was Charni's first major caving experience.

No need to elaborate on the pretty bits, but as most know they were quite remarkable. All cavers, both big and small earned their after-dinner sleep.

In other caving news, the weekend also saw John Ellis make some notable progress of his gate study of Fox Cave. The location and method of gate construction have been decided. It was considered that the whole entrance be gated, after the fashion of Mair's Cave in the Flinders Ranges. It was rejected. Among the reasons was that it would restrict the entry of animals into the cave, including some homo sapiens!

BERNIE MAEGRAITH

CABLE CAVE - NARACOORTE

The rediscovered Cable Cave, had its main chamber surveyed during the morning after the CEGSA/VSA Dinner. Graham Pilkington led the surveying, assisted by four able bodied, bleary-eyed revellers.

Digging in the cave is believed to have been done by Redden's Group around 1908 after which it was sealed with a concrete plug. Telecom Workers uncovered the entrance earlier this year while laying cable (hence the name)

The entrance is on farm land about one metre from the Naracoorte Cave Reserve boundary. However, the cave has a south-east/north-west orientation which places it beneath the cave reserve.

The entrance is a two metre high tube which descends to the top of a five to six metre sand and rock cone. At its maximum, the oval shaped chamber is six metres high. Length is 23 metres and width 11 metres. Three large columns dominate the lighter decorations, which have stopped growing. A second entrance, now blocked with talus, is evident from a tube in the ceiling.

One small passage exists in the north wall, at about the half-way point to the west of this are two alcoves, associated with some digging. Redden's main dig is at the south-eastern end of the chamber and follows a small earth space. It has yet to be surveyed and measured. This opens into a small, lightly decorated chamber. Two more digs have been driven off from this but terminate after a short way.

It is proposed to survey this uncharted section of cave during the October long week-end.

Australasian Post published an article on this cave in the issue of August 13th, 1981.

BERNIE MAEGRAITH

SAND FUNNEL CAVE - NARACOORTE

SUNDAY, JUNE 21st, 1981

Some of the Victorians were eager to do some caving on the Sunday, so 8 of us went to Sand Funnel Cave. V.S.A. = Brian Carter, John Webb and Phil Hutchisson and C.E.G.S.A. = Kerry, Anna, John, Nicki and Me.

The furrels of silt in the cave and the nests of surface vegetation are examples of the beauty in this cave. The single ladder pitch is interesting - after negotiating a tight section, you land on one of the silt piles.

MEREDITH REARDON

MOUNT COMPASS - 26th JULY, 1981

PARTY: Kevin Mott, Ken Johns & Family, Greg Segnit & Family.

The start of this trip was thrown into complete chaos by a petrol strike and participants failing to turn up. After a few frantic phone calls we finally organised the trip and departed at 10.30 a.m.; an hour and a half behind schedule.

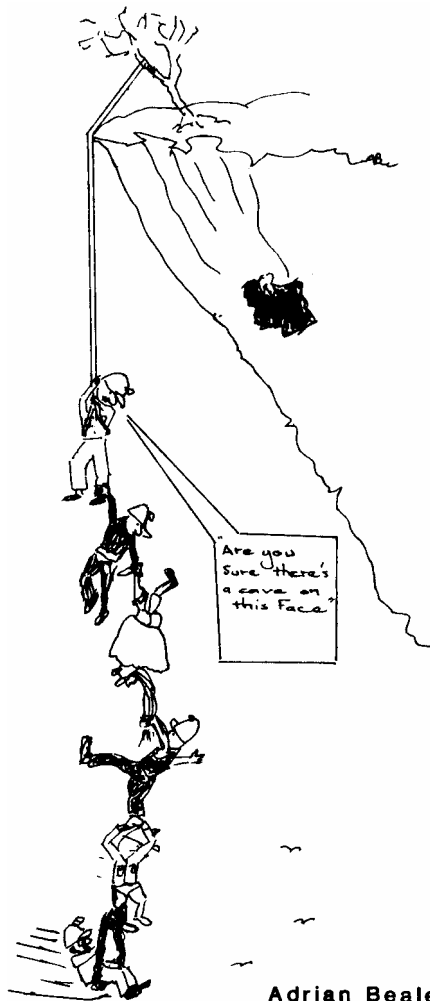
When we arrived we had a look at the area whilst waiting for Greg and Family. With the arrival of Greg we proceeded to have lunch. The lunch site is in a truly idyllic setting with pine trees, willows, creek and play area; an ideal refuge in summer.

During the afternoon we explored and surveyed the cave while the kids played with the rubber dinghy and looked at some of the smaller holes.

The cave is located in a sandstone ridge overlain by sand dune. Along the ridge top is a drain fed by nearby springs. At the south end of the ridge the drain has cut out a large basin exposing several springs at a lower level. The drain has also cut a ravine 10m deep x 30m long along its course. The base of the ravine is 3.0m above the lower spring level. The main spring was pushed for 15m before it pinched down too small for even a trained rat to negotiate.

With the weather being perfect a most enjoyable day's caving was had by all.

KEVIN MOTT



PARTY: Ed. Bailey (L), Meredith Reardon, Michael Rochler, Kerry Ninnes, Anna Owdienko, Josie Butto, Gavin Smith, Greg Symonds, Lou Varn Amstel and 15 Scouts from Pembroke School.

We had arranged to meet at 0900 hours at Meredith's place, which we all did, apart from the Scouts who were already at Swan Reach and wonder of wonders, we were away by 0920, heading into the Adelaide hills, through low clouds and heavy rain. The weather, and there was a lot of it, was reminiscent of a summer's day in S.W. Tassie. Not having been to Punyelroo before, Meredith acted as my navigator, hence the reason for the sub-title above! By the time we had got through the hills and approaching Sedan, the rain had stopped, the clouds were lifting and the sun was making an appearance. This was fortunate for a reason other than the obvious one of making a more enjoyable day's trip, namely, it would be easier to find the Scouts, who I had been told, would be camping by the river opposite the cliffs in which the cave is located. After spending some time fruitlessly searching for the Scout camp, we decided to cross the river by the ferry, being the easiest way to get to the other side, proceed to the cliff top above the cave and look for the Scouts there. That's where we found them.

After donning our caving gear, we all set off on the 15 minute hike cum scramble diagonally down the 30m high cliff face to the cave entrance.

The limestone in which the cave is located is of Mid Tertiary age and is known as the Mannum Formation, which is about 30 million years old. The River Murray has cut through this limestone in places such as Swan Reach and Mannum, exposing cliffs within which cave entrances can be found. The principle cave in the area is named **Punyelroo**, an aboriginal word meaning "**saltbush**" (The original spelling of this word is '**PANJARU**' and was used about 100 years ago to name a homestead which had been established in the area. The owner no doubt tried his best to produce a phonetic spelling with the resulting corruption of the word).

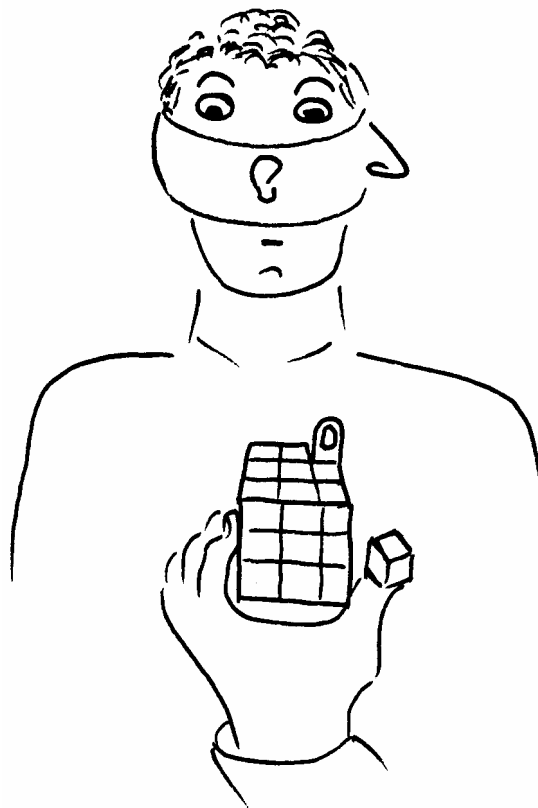
The limestone is a light brown colour because of the sand it contains. It also contains many fossils, principally star fish, sea urchins and sea lilies, which collectively are called 'echinoids'. Many examples of these animals can be seen exposed on the cave walls and roof. The cave has a walk-in entrance and it runs horizontally throughout its length at approximately right angles to the cliff. In extent it totals at least 1000m. The floor is dry and sandy for the first 120m or so, it then becomes slightly damp and firm. A typical cross section is pear shaped, and thus exhibits its joint oriented origin. The cave is totally devoid of decoration and because of the presence of fairly substantial tree trunks well inside the cave, is indicative of previous higher river levels, the river having undoubtedly played an important part in the cave's development.

The party of 24 entered the cave and proceeded as far as a fork, about 120m from the entrance. Here we split, a few taking the right hand branch, the remainder taking the left, it being agreed that each party would have the opportunity to visit both branches. However, on returning to the junction of the two branches, the Scouts voted almost unanimously with their feet to leave the cave forthwith. Scouts were darting hither and thither at such a high rate of knots it was difficult to believe there were only 15 of them.

The high temperature and high humidity in the cave, together with the clouds of dust raised by their impatient feet may have proved too much for them. This left the "true cavers" (?) to enjoy the calm after the storm. As most of the Scouts had not been in a cave before, we should perhaps have split them up into much smaller groups, to make control and supervision easier.

We left the cave about 1500 hours and climbed back up the cliff. The weather had deteriorated meantime and the climb out was enlivened by drizzle and wet rocks. We changed into less damp and cleaner clothing, had some food, said farewell to the Scouts and headed back to the ferry, where to our surprise, considering the weather, there was a queue of cars waiting to cross the river. Not wishing to wait unprofitably, the time was spent in the bakery adjacent to the ferry consuming hot meat pies and tomato sauce. The journey back to Adelaide was uneventful, the hills were still shrouded in mist and rain.

Back at Meredith's, we were provided with cups of coffee and mealy worms, the latter by the way, was for Meredith's tame, young female bat. After the bat had gorged herself on the worms, Greg demonstrated how to burp a baby bat. I'd heard of bat banders before, but not baby bat burpers. With an open mind, one can learn something new every day!



THE ABOVE HASN'T REALLY GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH CAVE EXPLORING, APART FROM THE FRUSTRATION OCCASIONALLY ENCOUNTERED IN BOTH ACTIVITIES!



TECHNICAL & OTHER ARTICLES

ENQUIRY - 18th JUNE, 1981

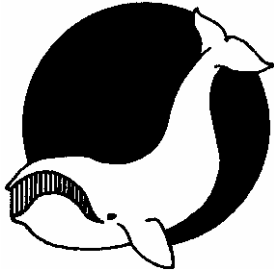
Dale Arnott, Simon Barrow and I went to the Parkes Community Centre, Angle Park, to check out the climbing wall for a possible group booking down there.

The wall is an interesting sculpture and is good for climbing practice, but not really what we are looking for to practice S.R.T. The wall needs to be climbed with the climber taking the rope to the pipe at the top to be used for further climbing or belay.

FRIENDS OF THE S.A. MUSEUM

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER, 1981

SEPTEMBER	Friday 11	SAMINER:	Penny Greenslade -- "How insects help the Mining Industry". 2 30 p.m. Staff Club, University of Adelaide. All welcome.
SEPTEMBER	Friday 11	ACTIVITY:	"Guided Tour of the Entomology Section" 4.00 p.m. 3rd Floor Goldsbrough Building, North Terrace.
SEPTEMBER	Saturday 26	EXCURSION:	"The Constitutional Museum". 2.00 p.m. Constitutional Museum, North Terrace.
SEPTEMBER	Saturday 26	LECTURE:	Dr. Norman Etherington - "The History Trust". 7.45 p.m. Pacific Gallery, S.A. Museum.
OCTOBER	Friday 2	EXHIBITION OPENING:	"Prohibited Imports of Endangered Animals". 5.30 p.m. Mammal Gallery, S.A. Museum. Refreshments.
OCTOBER	Wednesday 7	EXHIBITION OPENING:	"Aboriginal Culture in South Australia" 7.45 p.m., Stirling Gallery, S.A. Museum
OCTOBER	Saturday 17	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:	Films, to be announced later, 8.00 p.m. Pacific Gallery, S.A. Museum
OCTOBER	Friday 23	SAMINAR:	June Scrymgour -- "Australites". 2.30p.m. Staff Club, University of Adel. All welcome.
OCTOBER	Friday 30	ACTIVITY:	Terry Schwaner - "Herpetology Section" 7.45 p.m. Herpetology Section, S.A. Museum
NOVEMBER	Wednesday 4	EXHIBITION OPENING:	"Awareness". 7.45 p.m. Main Gallery, S.A. Museum. Supper



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM INFORMATION LEAFLET

LEAFLET NO. 27: **AUSTRALIAN SNAKES**

Snakes, a comparatively recent evolutionary reptile development, have existed for about 100 million years. Their exact origin is unknown but it is thought that they developed from lizards, possibly a burrowing form. Their link with lizards is reflected in their similar morphology, which has led scientists to place them in the Order SQUAMATA, along with the lizards. This Order is divided into the two Suborders, Lacertilia, lizards, and Ophidia, snakes. There are approximately 3 000 species of snakes in the world today of which about 130 occur in Australia. About 34 species are known from South Australia.

Snakes have undergone many structural (or morphological) modifications to adapt to their limbless way of life. Loss of limbs has made the **limb girdle bones** and muscles superfluous and these have disappeared completely from all but the more primitive snakes, which still retain a vestigial pelvic girdle. To increase locomotive ability snakes have elongated by increasing the number of vertebrae; there are between 160 and 400 vertebrae in snakes compared to the mere 33 of man and a number of other mammals. Most of the vertebrae in snakes have a pair of ribs which help maintain the roughly circular shape of the body. A complicated system of opposing muscles attached to the skeleton and the inside of the scales gives the snake the ability to move without any need of limbs. However, this means of progression cannot compare with legs in speed; a man can easily outrun the fastest snake! The lack of limbs has imposed a feeding problem on snakes. They cannot gain the traction necessary to chew and dismember prey, hence they must swallow all food items whole. To make this process easier, snakes have developed highly mobile jaw bones, the most distinctive of which are the lower jaw bones or mandibles. These are joined at the mouth by only an elastic ligament which allows them to separate so that the snake may swallow an object considerably wider than itself. This is why a snake with a comparatively small head can swallow quite large animals.

The first snakes were almost certainly burrowers living most of their lives underground. To protect their eyes they developed a fused transparent eyelid which acts like a window over the eye. True ears also disappeared; snakes cannot hear at all although they can sense vibration. Hence the Indian snake-charmer makes his cobra sway to and fro by swaying himself, the actual music having no effect on the snake.

Australian snakes are grouped in five families, only 3 of which are found in S.A. The most primitive family is Typhlopidae, the worm-snakes, non-venomous burrowing snakes that are completely harmless, eating only insects and worms, and rarely reaching more than 60 cm in length. Their eyes are reduced and covered by translucent scales; for this reason Typhlopids are also known as Blind Snakes. The 4 species of Worm Snake found in South Australia are rarely seen because of their secretive habits. Of the Pythons, family Boidae, only 3 species are found in South Australia. Pythons are constrictors, lacking fangs and venom glands. They subdue their prey by asphyxiating it with coils of their body. Pythons are therefore not dangerous to man but because they have numerous sharp recurved teeth, large specimens are capable of inflicting painful and damaging bites if provoked. The three S.A. species, the Carpet Snake found along the Murray and wetter parts of the Flinders Ranges, the Woma found only in the sandy interior, and the Children's Python found in rocky areas in the north of the State, are all rare and completely protected by the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Family Elapidae contains the front-fanged venomous snakes. All members of this family are provided with venom glands and fangs. The venom, a modified saliva, is used by the snake to immobilize its prey, and help in its digestion. It is not primarily a defensive weapon, and is used only as such (e.g. against man) under extreme provocation. There are 27 species of Elapidae in South Australia, 10 of which are considered dangerous to man. These are the Death Adder, Common Brown, Western Brown, King Brown (Mulga), Red-Bellied Black, South-eastern Copperhead, Mt Lofty Ranges Copperhead, Fierce Snake, Banded Tiger and Black Tiger Snake. Of the dangerous snakes around metropolitan Adelaide and the adjacent Hills areas, only the Common Brown, Red-bellied Black, Mt Lofty Ranges Copperhead and Banded Tiger Snakes are to be found. All of these should be treated with extreme caution. It should be noted that most snake bites occur when an attempt is made to kill or annoy the snake. If you come across a snake in the bush, the safest course is to leave it well alone. Like all reptiles in South Australia, Elapid snakes are protected by the law and it is a serious offence to kill, maim, or capture them. An exception is made for the dangerous species listed above. If a snake of one of these species is threatening you, or your family, or your property (e.g. cattle), you are permitted to kill it. You do not need a permit or permission.

No discussion of Snakes is complete without mentioning Legless Lizards. These reptiles are lizards, not snakes. They are absolutely harmless to man, having no venom or fangs whatsoever, and are totally protected by law. The table below gives points of comparison between Legless Lizards and snakes, enabling you to tell the difference between them.

Legless Lizards

Tail much longer than body
Tail fragile (easily dropped)
No greatly enlarged belly scales
Tongue broad and not forked
Ear openings sometimes present

Snakes

Body much longer than tail
Tail never fragile (never dropped)
Belly scales often greatly enlarged
Tongue slender and deeply forked
Ear openings never present

Snake Bite Treatment

The best first aid is as follows:

1. Immediately apply a broad firm bandage around the limb to cover the bitten area. It should be as tight as a binding on a strained ankle. As much of the limb as possible should be bound. Crepe bandages are ideal, but any flexible material may be used.
2. The limb must be kept as still as possible. Bind some type of splint to the limb.
3. Bring transport to the victim whenever possible.
4. Leave the bandages and splint on until medical care is reached.
5. Do not cut or excise the bitten area.
6. Arterial tourniquets are no longer recommended for snake bite.

Don't wash the bitten area. The snake involved may be identified by the detection of venom on the skin.

All native reptiles are protected in South Australia. Information about permit requirements is available from -

NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE,
129 GREENHILL ROAD,
UNLEY. 5061 Phone: 272 4400

Revised Nov. 1980

PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER

9	Committee Meeting	7.30 p.m. 10 Chapman St, Torrensville
14-28	Camooweel	Terry Reardon
19-20	Flinders Ranges	Kevin Mott
20	Morialta	S.R.T. Training
23	General Meeting	7.45 p.m. Museum Lecture Room
26-27	Naracoorte	Kevin Mott - Survey and Exploration

OCTOBER

10-11-12	Nullarbor	Kevin Mott
	Naracoorte	Graham Pilkington
	Broken Hill &	Meredith Reardon - Mines and Aboriginal
	Mootwingee area	Paintings
14	Committee Meeting	7.30 p.m. 10 Chapman St, Torrensville
24-25	Corra Lynn	G. Pilkington - Survey & Exploration
28	General Meeting	7.45 p.m. Museum Lecture Room

NOVEMBER

8	Burleeyung Cave	Kevin Mott
11	Committee Meeting	7.30 p.m. 10 Chapman St, Torrensville
25	General Meeting	7.45 p.m. Museum Lecture Room
29	Mount Compass	Kevin Mott - B.B.Q. and Exploration

Q U O T E

MEREDITH REARDON

(outside Eyrie Cave, Flinders Ranges)

" I'm so desperate I'd even go caving to get warm.... "
