

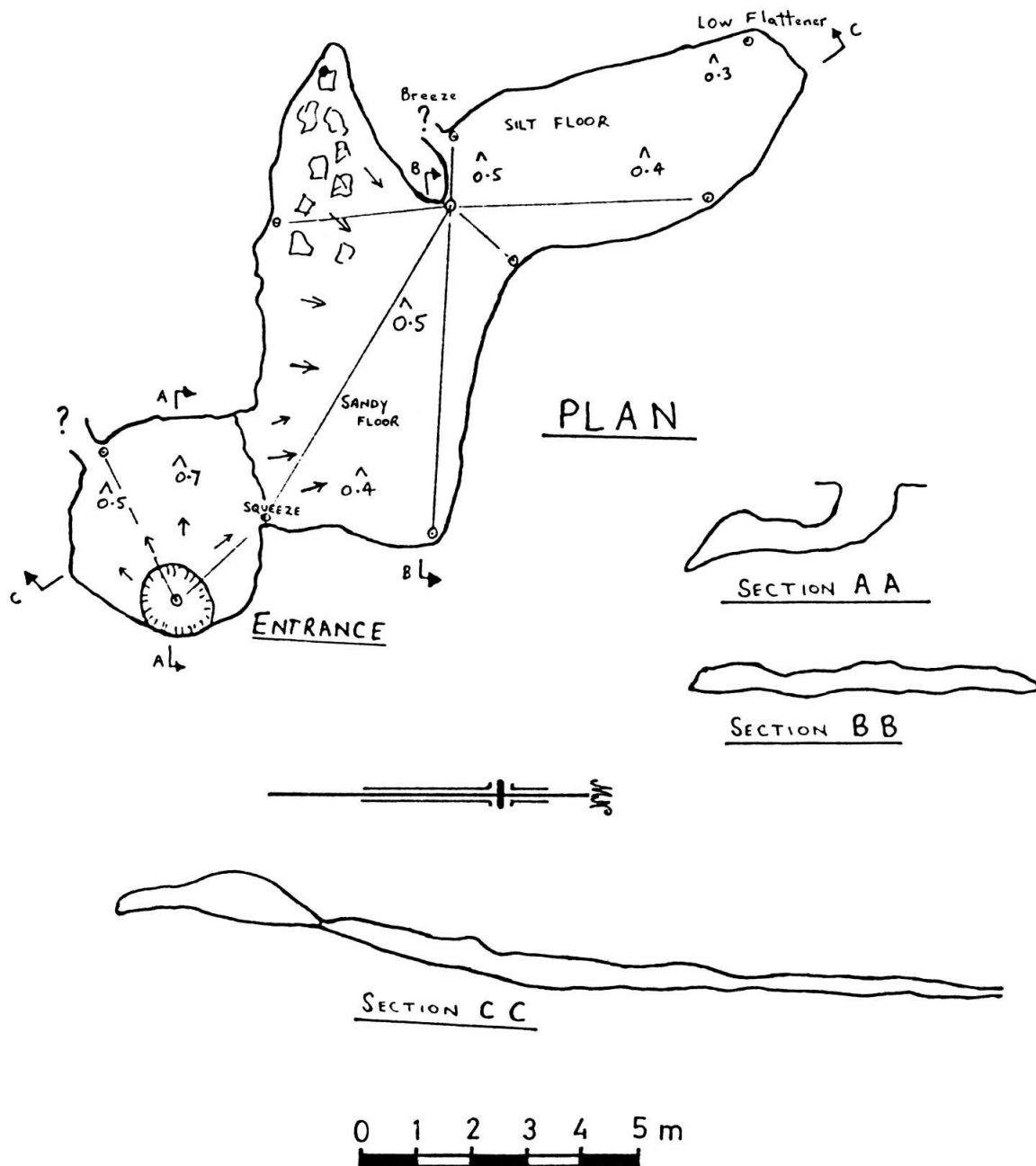
CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

c/o South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Volume 30 Number 4 APRIL 1986



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MARION LAKE CAVE
5Y25

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

MEETING PLACE: 4th Wednesday of each month at 7.45 p.m. at the
South Australian Museum

OFFICE BEARERS

PRESIDENT	John Ellis	P.O. Box 216 STIRLING 5152
VICE PRESIDENT & PUBLIC OFFICER & MEMBERSHIP & ASF REPRESENTATIVE	Graham Pilkington	66 Eyre Crescent VALLEY VIEW 5093 (H) 264 2598 (W) 274 7630
SECRETARY	Peter Horne	3/9 Muriel Avenue SOMERTON PARK 5044 (H) 295 6031 (W) 225 7025
RECORDS & TREASURER	Stan Flavel	Murray Road INGLEWOOD 5133 (H) 380 5404
PUBLICATIONS & EQUIPMENT OFFICER	Kevin Mott	3 Harcourt Road PAYNEHAM 5070 (H) 42 2441 (W) 227 3644
LIBRARIAN	Bill Parker	1 Anderson Street FULLARTON 5063 (H) 79 1013
SOCIAL SECRETARY	Kerry Ninnes	96 Hutt St ADELAIDE 5000 (W) 223 1318
SAFETY & TRAINING	Peter Kraehenbuehl	8 Ravensthorpe Avenue MILLSWOOD 5034 (H) 272 9015

POSTAL ADDRESS: Cave Exploration Group (S.A.)
C/- S.A. Museum
North Terrace
ADELAIDE South Australia 5000

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COVER Diagram

Map of Marion Lake Cave - 5Y25

DEADLINE for articles for Vol 31 No 1 is Wednesday 28 May 1986

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of individual authors and not necessarily those of the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) Inc. nor its' Committee.

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EDITORIAL

Legislation is shortly to be introduced into parliament transferring control of cave reserves to the Cave Exploration Group of South Australia. This will enable its' members to enjoy exclusive caving rights whenever and however they seem fit.

Wishful thinking you say! Well apparently some members seem to think that the above situation exists because they are members of CEGSA. If you are one of those grab your parachute and pillow and prepare for a crash landing.

CEGSA members enjoy no more privileges than the average run of the mill citizen. Associate members generally are those who join the group to find out what caving is about. It is during the period of associate membership that people discover whether they enjoy caving and learn the techniques of caving by caving with full members.

Full members are approved by the committee and generally comply with the following guidelines:

- have completed a minimum of 50 hours caving with CEGSA full members.
- have demonstrated an ability for leading trips.
- can safely rig a pitch and belay.
- abide by the principles of safe caving conduct.
- have demonstrated a responsible attitude to cave conservation.

Thus full members are the only ones recognised as being capable of leading trips into caves. They are expected to conform with rules of common courtesy by notifying management authorities and landholders, prior to the trip, of their plans. Sometimes access may be denied to a cave because of a variety of reasons. There are many other caves that a competent leader can utilise if this is the case. If they can't then perhaps the leader has insufficient expertise to lead the trip anyway. Because of their fragility, some caves are only accessible to experienced cavers, while others are only accessible with an appropriate research permit.

When caving at Naracoorte, CEGSA members are liable for camping fees as are all campers at the reserve. If using the facilities at the Reserve we are expected to leave them in as good a condition as we found them.

Kevin MOTT

TRIP REPORTS

Nullarbor 14-30th Sept 1985
 Party: Graham PILKINGTON, Max METH, George PARKER
 Caves: Old Homestead Cave (6N83), N127, N128, N131, N316

During the last 20 years, only 12km long **Mullamullang Cave** has been the target of dry-caver expeditions - which still continue as "tidy-up" surveying takes place. The discovery of vast new caves or extensions had eluded all but divers. It was only after divers pushed **Cocklebiddy Cave** out past 6km that any other Nullarbor cave exceeded 1.4km.

Now all that is changed with a rejuvenated **Old Homestead Cave**.

At the time the Old Homestead was established, circa 1912?, south N83 cave was 250m long, 65m deep & the north cave 50m long, 35m deep with an extra 30m of doline loop passage. The Homesteaders dug a shaft in the north cave where the water used to pond after heavy rain - presumably on the assumption that a lake was somewhere below like in the large caves nearer the coast. They excavated through 5m of solid rock then 3m of cemented rockpile rubble. This exposed a hidden chamber along the hanging wall that extended the north cave to 70m long, 50m deep.

The cave then rested in relative peace as the Homestead was abandoned and its location was too far north for inquisitive would-be cavers. In 1955 a log-book was placed in the south cave entrance chamber by WASG? It records the very infrequent visits since then and some of the more permanent residents such as dingos. The mention of elephants needs to be taken with a pinch of halite or the more common gypsum.

On the first of September 1984, an unusual event occurred. A group of youths under the care of Neil Montgomery had not heard that you walk into Nullarbor caves, and then walk out again. They had the audacity to deliberately move a rock! The south cave was extended 370m. However, a third of this is ideal for wombats not people.

Hearing rumours, we three CEGSA members went out to the cave in September 1985 to map and explore it. Only depths of the "dolines" were recorded in CEGSA Records. The south cave was described as "a chamber" and the north cave not at all. The 1984 embellished description had said the south cave went for kilometres in 10 by 10m sized passage but a determined survey could only produce a total of 650m for the south cave, of which only 350m was in 10+ by 4+m passage as per the map in CEGSA Newsletter 30(3). A few unusual features were found:

- it ended in an "impenetrable" rockpile which had a "Southerly Buster" type gale;
- the end had a partially lithified bone deposit containing bandicoot lower jaws (submitted to the SA Museum). All signs were that the end rockpile was the base of a sealed-off doline. The surface is a claypan with minimal depression. Another aspect of the sealing was a spongework that had formed in a previously filled & lithified spongework creating very artistic cross-sections.

- although the cave started as a typical "deep" Nullarbor cave, it levelled off at only 60-65m depth in a mixture of small collapse domes and phreatic tubes. Watertable is estimated at 130m depth from a 150m surface elevation.

Not wishing CEGSA to be seen as followers, we decided that we would find a north cave extension. Not so easy! Using all our Corra Lynn learnt skills and 5 hours digging out a dirt-filled slot produced a re-arrangement of cave contents and three dusty trogs about to execute a strategic withdrawal. A few minutes later a small breeze followed some removed dirt. An hour later and the presence of two **Immoveable** rocks enabled Max & I to bore George into exiting to make dinner for us. We knew that would do the trick. A broken-hearted rock fell in two (a contortionist's manoeuvre, head-down with hammer into face, helped).

We were late for tea. The cave went down a slopping rock and into a low rocky crawl. After some more rock removal and path-finding we popped out into a 3m high, 10m diameter rockpile chamber. At the bottom of this, a low sandy gravel led through another collapse and into a sand-floored walking passage 3m high, 5m wide. We stopped at a major T-junction about 80m from our breakthrough. A north cave had been found.

Most of our time was spent surveying and exploring the south cave because that cave was supposed to "go". After one and a half days mapping the north cave and still having found nothing spectacular, our spirits were sagging. The unaccustomed continuous exercise didn't help! Then it happened. Max & I had just called it quits to have an early day (really it was to avoid having to survey THE MESS - a complex area of multi-level collapses and tubes) and I had a look round the next corner. This led along the bottom edge of a collapse passage which became negotiable as I progressed.

Suddenly the rocks weren't there. I had got into a 10x10m tunnel. Max followed. We raced off following the breeze through low crawls and large chambers. After 500m both of us began to get that healthy feeling that we had gone almost too far. This was a four-level system with no main passage. Lots of side tunnels larger than the one we were travelling along. A cairn was made to show our farthest point. The stop reassured us into going just that bit farther but now we made out-pointers every few hundred metres. We finally called it quits at a major change of direction (we had been travelling NNW) about 1300m into the cave. This time we were really late for tea!

Next trip in we did a rough line traverse along the same path and pushed on to just over 2km from the entrance. We stopped in a "wrong way" when the passage had gone stuffy and was dividing up into 0.4m sized tunnels. A major side tunnel 400m back had had a breeze and Max had wanted to go that way but I had wanted to keep on at the same compass bearing. The side tunnel leads back parallel to the access tunnel but does not appear to connect. Another trip will have to probe that question.

What do you do with exhausted cavers who have just discovered what could be the longest cave in Australia and only have 2 more days left? We left early. Well not quite, we went to N127 to continue a dig that we had started on a "day off" during the Old Homestead Cave survey. I strongly advise that days off are not used for caving. That was the major reason for our lethargy towards the end of the trip - no rest days in two weeks. N127 & N128 dolines had been mapped during the "rest day". A rock patch in N127 was found to blow air and by the end of the trip we had followed the blast for 8m in a cave going around the doline wall. This pair of dolines have great potential for yet another major cave system.

On the way to N83 a side trip was made to N131. Well it would have been if there had been a 131. This feature was added to the list from 1963 air-photo plotting but was never located physically. We did. It's a cattle-yard! At least the ATLAS was accurate - the "cave" definitely has no details available.

Meteor Hole, N316 was visited for a lunchtime travel-break on our way back to Adelaide. It is just off the main Eucla-Border Village Highway. It is not a Meteor crater. Ignoring the effects of DMR borrow-pit activities on the north side, it looks like a large funnel sinkhole typical of chamber infilling below a deep sand cover.

Easter & October '86 trips are planned to Old Homestead Cave to investigate the premise that it is the longest cave in Australia. Mapping during the trip totalled 1km, the traverse 2km and observed side tunnels about 1.5km. 4.5km is a good start - it is the third longest on the Nullarbor already.

Graham PILKINGTON

CAVING AND CAVE DIVING TRIPS OF 1985

The Annual Report for 1985 unfortunately gave the impression that relatively little work had been done in most areas of the State last year, especially the Lower South East. Although it wasn't exactly a 'boomer', 1985 was certainly a busy time for some of us. I was not able to provide any information of my own little spate of activities, however, due to being overseas at Christmas, so I thought that I'd better write up a brief summary of things we did last year so that other budding cavers and divers don't waste their time repeating the same exercises needlessly!

LOWER SOUTH EAST

I personally undertook 12 trips in 1985. Several of these involved more than just caving or exploratory efforts - the walls of the Blue Lake were searched for caves on one trip and several other trips were made specifically to enable a group of C.D.A.A. Research Group members to map the underwater regions of the famous Piccaninnie Ponds for the first time - a successful and rewarding effort, I might add! Several small 'mud-puddles' were pushed for the first time, providing small rewards in the form of shallow underwater penetrations with bulk silt! One site, however, near L61 (The Pines) appears to be a relatively large underwater cavern with good potential for underwater palaeontological discovery and needs to be opened up to enable diving to be done more safely! Another interesting find was made at some considerable depth in L42 (Ten Eighty) where a skeleton of an apparently extinct kangaroo was found under a mass of boulders - indicative of the animal having found its way there when the cave was dry. Unfortunately, recovery work will have to wait as the slightest disturbance could cause the remains to fall into a very narrow fissure which drops to a depth exceeding 60 metres!

Several water-filled 'split-caves' (fissures) were dived for some tens of metres but none broke into anything larger than perhaps a metre wide.

UPPER SOUTH EAST

I actually expanded my horizons this year and drove as far north from Mt. Gambier as NARACORTE! We looked at most of the usual stuff and went through the agonies of hauling scuba gear into "S102" TWICE to explore the small sump which leads to another small air chamber and a small, relatively deep lake which drops to around 3 metres then ends in a tiny, itsy-bitsy tube!! At least we could walk through MOST of S102 (except that nasty crawl-climb which is GREAT fun in a wet, slippery wetsuit!) which is more than I can say about the nearby SOS- "Son of S102"! I barely fitted through the entrance tube and discovered that the 'lake' which lies on the far side of a rather awkward crawl (Aussie Crawl) is just what it looks like from the surface - a rotten, lousy ONE METRE DEEP PUDDLE!! Not the sort of discovery I like to make after spending over an hour getting dive gear to the spot!

MURRAY RIVER

Swan Reach Cave (Punyelroo) was visited two or three times this year by myself and my friends, once for the purpose of diving in a small lake which lies around 800 metres or so in (from memory) at the bottom of a rather tight, vertical clay-coated squeeze in a side passage. The puddle looked a metre deep but appeared to "go", so yours truly, with the much appreciated assistance of fellow cavers Sue and Tony (and others??) trudged up the cliffs, got the gear, trudged back and dived - and, yes, the puddle WAS a metre or so deep but only "went" about 2 metres more to a tiny air pocket! (Sigh!) Tony delighted in taking a photo of one almost irate, grotty cave diver exiting! (Is there any other kind?)

I also embarked on a 'dry' caving trip along the Murray with Mr Mott and crew and doubled the known length of a small cave when I wriggled into fissures which led to a tiny chamber which was 'mapped' with a hand compass and belt - no tape taken in unfortunately! That was funny ...there I was, in total darkness flat on my face with a single, somewhat dilapidated hand-held torch someone had got from the boat in my hand and just within yelling distance of someone back in the entrance, when I thought to myself "What would I do if this torch was to go out"? I moved forward another metre, leant down on my right hand (and torch) and "POINGGGggg..." sudden, total darkness and the sounds of batteries, a spring and torch head rolling down the boulders beside me!! "So, THIS is what I'd do in that situation!" I thought, and struggled to hold down a somewhat irrational outburst of hysterical laughter which was struggling to get past my primeval instinct of screaming like hell! "Oh, darn", I said as I groped about and found ... yes, the torch head, the spring, and one battery ... and stones ... and dirt ... and stones ...and more stones ... and, whew! ... the second muddy but workable battery! After assembling it, I was blinded and surprised when it flashed back on, so I held it together and pushed on for a few metres more before running out of cave. (Who said cave divers learn from their mistakes?!?)

YORKE PENINSULA

Two this year. The first was a combined effort with many people when we explored Town Well Cave - very exciting, what with the 33m deep descent and the dynamite explosion in the nearby quarry! We also checked out the fabled Corra Lynn cave and others, and Kevin Mott succeeded in dropping my G-pick down a still-inaccessible split to the centre of the earth! The second trip was taken up completely with some salt-water diving (don't know what's come over me!) and a survey/diving exploration of Coobowie Corner Cave. Fellow divers, as I've probably mentioned before - don't waste

your time! It only goes a short distance and is potentially nasty, especially in one little underwater squeeze where you have to dive down vertically and twist to pass the restriction.

FLINDERS RANGES

Only one trip this year. Main purpose of the trip was to continue surveying the underwater regions of Narrina Lake Cave. A large extension was found beneath the main lake chamber floor, and was sketched only. Silting is a serious problem here whilst mapping as it takes several weeks to settle! We also got a look at several dry caves, namely "Thunderdrum" and "Yellowfoot Rock Wallaby" cave, plus some small features nearby.

You'll note that I haven't compiled a great list of all caves visited as is the usual custom. This is mainly because it would take several hours for me to compile this information by digging through field notes and maps, as I tend to log only underwater explorations in my diving log book. Funny about that! I would be pleased to provide further information to anyone who needs it. I estimate that I visited some 50 different caves in the Lower South East last year. "Course, I COULD mention the 15 or so VERY spectacular caves we dived in Florida at Christmas,! (Huhh !!! Ed.)

Peter HORNE

NARACOORTE 25 - 27 January 1986

PARTY Tony COLHOUN, Tracy COLHOUN, Sue ASCHE,
Sue KENNEWELL & Chris KENNEWELL

CAVES VISITED U12, U22, U117, U132

Friday night Sue, Tracy and I arrived at a favourite camping spot near Robertson's Cave. The aim of this trip was to push S.O.S. and introduce a couple of friends to the excitement of caving.

We met Sue and Chris Kennewell at the park kiosk on Saturday morning and after they settled into the camp site we set off to track down Little Expectations. After wandering around amongst the sheep and getting sunburnt we finally found the elusive adit to this supposedly, potentially spectacular cave. Chris in his youthful exuberance dived straight in and came straight out again report "this is only a rabbit hole". Further investigation revealed a drop of several metres into some small chambers. After about one and half hours of laborious investigation we were persuaded by our guests to move on to something more spacious. On to Cathedral which our guests found quite exhilarating.

Sue and I introduced ourselves to one of the new park rangers, Brian Clarke. A friendly chap who looks forward to organising caving activities in negotiation with CEGSA, VSA and landowners.

On Sunday our party (some shakily) made its way into S.O.S. Being quite familiar with S.O.S., we made our way to the "Sand Cone Chamber" beyond the "Black Stream" (see Newsletter 29(3) p45). At this stage our guests' enthusiasm was rapidly beginning to

wane. After some negotiation a compromise was reached that gave Sue and I an hour to push on. We slithered along the sand flattener until I decided my girth would allow me no further. The intrepid Sue slithered on until breathing space became somewhat constricted and it was apparent that some excavation was required, which time would not allow. The party carefully retreated to the surface with our guests concluding that they were no longer potential cavers. Exhausted we returned to our campsite for a relaxing evening.

On Monday having gained permission from the park ranger the girls led by Sue, made their way into Fox for a tourists eye view. The men spent a relaxing morning with the "Advertiser" and packing up camp.

In conclusion, we would look forward to returning to Naracoorte and particularly S.O.S. which has a great deal of potential (many breezes) accompanied by more experience cavers to allow us to see the many caves which we have as yet been unable to visit.

Tony COLHOVN

CORRA LYNN 25-26th January 1986

Graham PILKINGTON, Max METH and Peter KRAEHENBUEHL

After meeting nearly half an hour late at the cave we set up camp prior to the dreaded contortions leading to **Dreamland**.

Most of Saturday was spent underground in a variety of ways, some digging (a passion of Messrs. Meth and Pilkington) fossil recovery (yet more digging !) and some photography just to record the human wombats on film. First point of call was a promising ?? dig which had the Wombats scurrying to the known end of the cave. After much removal of dirt and rock at two ends of the chamber some more respectable work was undertaken. Graham emptied his lunch box of Mars bars to enable habitation of bone fragments including a partial Thylacine jaw bone which are being collected for the South Australian Museum to gain insights into the paeleontological significance of the deposits.

Travelling back through the maze led to an area known as the **Graveyard**. Some time was spent here recovering more fossil material and packing it with aluminium foil for transport out of the cave.

On route to the **Portal** photographs were taken of large gypsum crystals, followed by more body bending to the surface.

Sunday morning was spent in **Skeleton Crevasse** at yet another dig. After much toil and sweat some tourists arrived including a female member wearing what can only be described as slippers. They were most impressed with our dig tailings (as unknown to them) we heard them cry "**There's been a collapse in here!!**" Peter followed after the party to take photographs in the **Limestone Bridge** area. They were suitably unimpressed with the hard work and mud required to reach the **Walrus**. The dig was continued until lunch was called about 3:00pm.

Unable to scratch up the enthusiasm for a second dig that day we settled for some photography to end the trip.

Peter Krunchy

TECHNICAL & OTHER ARTICLES

MORE BONES FROM CORRA LYNN CAVE (5Y1)

This important fossil site was visited again by Graham Pilkington and Max Meth and collections made on 25 January, 1986.

A trial excavation was made in the "Graveyard" to test the depth of fossiliferous dirt and the nature of the fossil preservation. A considerable amount of bone was collected here, but the dampness and clay content of the soil and the softness of the bone will make serious excavation a slow business. About 9 species have so far been recognised, including more vertebrae of the giant python **Wonambi**, and teeth or jaws of **Palorchestes**, a wombat, **Troposodon**, a smaller wallaby, and a lizard.

A surface collection was made in the False Roofhole area and includes **Palorchestes**, **Troposodon**, the smaller wallaby, **Zygomaturus** and giant ringtail.

A third fossil locality was discovered some distance away in the Upper Freeway area, with numerous **Wonambi** vertebrae, a **Sthenurus** molar and the jaw of a possible new species of Thylacine.

These new discoveries greatly enlarge the known area of the fossil site and increase its importance. Estimates, based on the fossils (even though they are mostly new undescribed species), suggest an early Pliocene or even late Miocene age. Our knowledge of these new species is still tantalisingly incomplete to allow definitive statements to be made.

Neville PLEDGE

CEGSA / VSA DINNER

Venue: Naracoorte Hotel, Naracoorte
Date: 31 May 1986
Time: 7.00 p.m.
Make sure you keep this date FREE

This event is without doubt the social highlight of the **Australian** caving calendar. Ask any-one who has been to one - if he can remember.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD

In the Australia Day Awards for 1986 IAN DUNLOP was awarded the O.A.M. for services to the film industry.

For those who cannot remember, Ian was the first Secretary of CEGSA till business commitments saw his transfer to Sydney.

FEES – 1986

Membership fees were **DUE** on the 1st January 1986.

Fees are: Full Member : \$22-00 (includes ASF levy)
 Associate : \$9-00
 : \$14-50 (after 2 years membership.)
 Non-member Newsletter subscription : \$7-00

Fees **should have been paid prior** to the first of March for continuous membership.

This is **LAST** newsletter under your 1985 subscription so if you have overlooked paying your subs **do so NOW** or you will miss out.

15 LONGEST CAVES – NULLARBOR

1	6N-37	MULLAMULLANG CAVE	11200 m
2	6N-48	COCKLEBIDDY CAVE	6800
3	6N-83	OLD HOMESTEAD CAVE	4500
4	5N-4	KOONALDA CAVE	1640
5	6N-47	MURRA-EL-ELEVYN CAVE	1100
6	6N-49	PANNIKIN PLAIN CAVE	930
7	6N-206	THAMPANNA CAVE	900
8	6N-2	WEEBUBBIE CAVE	850
9	6N-56	TOMMY GRAHAMS CAVE	560
10	5N-1	WARBLA CAVE	500
11	6N-132	WEBBS CAVE	500
12	6N-193	WITCHES CAVE	500
13	6N-3	ABRAKURRIE CAVE	470
14	6N-62	MADURA CAVE	450
15	6N-46	NURINA CAVE	400

MEMBERSHIP NOTICES

New Full Members

Andrew PETERSON
 53 English Street
 HAHNDORF 5245
 (H) 388 7536

Tony COLHOUN

 (H) 297 9409

Sue ASCHE (was JONES)
 9/2 Kyle Street
 GLENSIDE 5065
 (H) 79 2276

Full Membership changes

Neil SMITH
 (H) 269 7286

Neville PLEDGE
 (W) 223 8896

New Associates

David TREHEARNE
 10 La Jolla Ave
 FULHAM 5024
 (H) 356 3992

Grant FULLER
 12 Ayers Ave
 DAW PARK 5041
 (H) 277 9261

Alan JEVONS
 17 Sherwood Ave
 REDWOOD PARK 5097
 (H) 263 7610 (W) 260 8723

John SURREY
 69 Alawoona Ave
 MITCHELL PARK 5043
 (H) 277 2659

Brent Golledge
 P. O. Box 252
 MURRAY BRIDGE 5253
 (H) (085) 69 7279

PROGRAMME

APRIL

5 - 6

9 Committee Meeting **7:30 pm** 43 George St. Hawthorn

12 - 13 Corra-Lynn (Photography) Peter Kraehenbuehl

19 - 20

23 General Meeting **7:45 pm**

25 -27

MAY

3 - 4

10 - 11 River Murray (Explore new caves) Kerry Ninnes

14 Committee Meeting **7:30 pm** 3 Harcourt Rd. Payneham

17 - 19 Naracoorte Kevin Mott

24 - 25

28 General Meeting **7:45 pm**

31/5-1/6 CEGSA / VSA Diner Naracoorte

JUNE

7 - 9 Flinders Ranges Stan Flavel

11 Committee Meeting **7:30 pm** 66 Eyre Cres Valley View

14 - 15

21 - 22 Corra-Lynn Max Meth

25 General Meeting **7:45 pm**

28 – 29

Please inform the Social Secretary of

- any trips you are planning
- any type of trip you would like to see run
- any cave or area you would particularly like to visit

Remember - we can only satisfy your desires if we know what they are.