CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

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N E T E R



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

Meetings held on the 4th Wednesday of each month, except December, at 7.30pm in the Royal Society meeting room, South Australian Museum.

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FRONT COVER: The entrance to Corra Lynn Cave 5Y1, drawn by June MacLucas.

CONTENTS

Volume 37 Number 2 May 1992

		page
EDITORIAL		17
TRIP REPORTS		
Some Underwater Tips about underwater Pits!	Peter Horne	18
Yorke Peninsula	Paul Harper	21
Wet Caving in the Lower South-East	Mark Thiselton	22
Murray Plains, Punyerloo Cave	Mark Thiselton	23
Yorke Peninsula, Corra Lynn Cave	Paul Harper	23
Yorke Peninsula, Corra Lynn Cave	Mark Thiselton	23
Murray Plains, Western Flat and Overland Corner	George MacLucas	24
Wet Caving on the Nullarbor Plains	Mark Thiselton	24
TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES		
Membership		26
South Australian Speleological Council		26
Index to Volume 36		27
PROGRAMME May 1992 to August 1992		29

Deadline for articles for Volume 37 Number 3 is Wednesday 22nd July, 1992.

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.

EDITORIAL

This year appears to be culminating in a number of major changes to the way go about caving, or at least the way in which we will go caving in the future. What with the cave and caver classification and the need to train cavers to recognised levels of competence, allowing us to continue caving.

The question of liability insurance has also been raised recently by a few property owners/managers regarding access to caves on their property. This will no doubt have an effect on our caving activities in the future.

Along with the normal range of CEGSA business this means that the current Committee will have their work cut out for them this year, so if you have any great ideas, pass them on, or if you can offer any valuable assistance, how about offering it.

Don't just sit back on your laurels, take a positive role in this change process, so you can continue caving as you used to.

There has been a good supply of articles for this Newsletter, thank you. To continue to assist in publishing the CEGSA Newsletter, I would appreciate receiving any articles for future editions. Please don't be shy, send them to me.

Sunday the 26th of April saw a good representation of cavers from different clubs gathered together to celebrate the Annual General Meeting of the South Australian Speleological Council, along with the World Premiere of the Australian Nullarbor Expedition Video. It is good to see members of the different clubs getting together, particularly when our future interests in speleology are at stake. We all benefit from the work that the few dedicated people put in, have you ever thought of putting in some time and effort to assist in the future of speleology? Thanks to those who have.

TRIP REPORTS

SOME UNDERWATER TIPS ABOUT UNDERWATER PITS!

Date: 9th August 1983.

Setting: The initial exploration of an exiting and complex cave system near Tantanoola,

South Australia.

"I'll never get into this sort of situation ever again!", I vowed silently to myself as I groped around in the pitch-black water with my right arm, searching for an area - ANY area - which I could squeeze through to get the hell out of there!

This was the first time that I had ever been seriously worried about getting out of a water-filled cave: not without good reason, actually since I was stuck, plastered spread-eagled and face-down against a boulder which I couldn't see, and had rock apparently ahead, behind and on both sides of me at a depth of only a few metres!

My mistake, I now knew, was to be diving with another person in such a tight area: had I been alone, I surely could have easily slipped up the narrow rockfall restriction and surfaced without too much trouble. But, as a consequence of following "standard safe diving practice", here I was, stuck in the bowels of the earth in some God-forsaken cave (which nobody knew we were diving), with my exit blocked on all sides and my guidelines running up between the legs of my buddy, who was stuck in front of me!

For what seemed like ten minutes, I reached up through the cold, lonely blackness and felt that his motionless fins were still there ... but just as I'd begun to suspect that he might have drowned while blocking my exit (causing me to callously think about where I should stick my tiny divers' knife to begin dismembering the corpse). his fins disappeared, and a couple of anxious minutes later, I had also managed to slide back into body-sized "passage" which lead to safety.

"Never again!", I swore to Mark ... "Never Again!".

Date: 22nd July 1984.

Setting: A hundred metres or so from the entrance of a large joint-controlled cave

which we were exploring for the first time, in a small lake at the bottom of a

15m deep narrow fissure.

"Well, at least this time I'm stuck on the SURFACE", I joked with my companion who was nestled relatively comfortably way up above. I had only recently discovered this shallow lake and had decided to investigate its apparent underwater passage using a small hip-mounted cylinder, octopus regulators, small helmet lights, weight belt and fins (no buoyancy vest), but once again, my eagerness to dive caused me to forget to worry too much about getting out of the water!

Getting IN was interesting; we had to drag gear through quite a few low bits and a couple of minor restrictions for half an hour before I could fully gear up in the fissure and tie the cylinder to my waist; then I carefully used my knees (with pads, thank goodness), hands and bum to wiggle down the wall to where it opened out, about a metre above the water. Entry was easy enough; spit in the mask, turn on your air and pull in your hands at the same time ... a short free fall and you were in crystal clear water and gazing into the mouth of a 2 x 3m water-filled passage! (This was a cute 20m swim which surfaced in a small fissure-like air chamber, with seemingly very little chance of going anywhere significant, unfortunately).

After a few quick underwater compass readings and an ensuring fallout of silt from ledges around the ceiling of the passage, it was time to get out, and back on the surface (and thankful that my small cylinder didn't spring an O-ring or burst a hose yet again), I spent a few frantic minutes destroying my wetsuit and scraping skin off various parts of my body as I stretched, scraped and contorted my way up the fissure like a giant hairy (and slippery) black slug ... not a pretty sight! (It was during this interesting gesticulating procedure that I learnt how one's little toes tend to push right through the booties if one is pushing too hard against a solid surface...)

It was hard work, but hardly as perilous as the first incident ... I had learnt my lesson, I thought!

Date: 31st March 1986.

Setting: A horrible little water-filled fissure-cave near Piccaninnie Ponds.

"Awe, C'mon, not again!" I bubbled loudly to myself ... "Not here, not this way!"

As I struggled to contain my anxiety and the unwieldy bundle of loose hoses (as well as a half-full 15 cubic foot scuba cylinder) in my right hand, I vainly tried to follow back along my left-hand wrist-tethered "guideline" (a 30m fibreglass tape) which was being fed out by my now-panicking friends through a 0.3m wide gap in an otherwise inaccessible fissure, and a possible morning newspaper headline flashed before my eyes ... "Ex-president of Cave Divers Association and Author of safety book drowns 2m underwater in horrible little cave while using non-standard gear!" This made me regret that I had gotten out of bed that morning, and I felt so sorry that I couldn't put my own viewpoint to people (especially my parents and my girlfriend, Lee).

With only about three minutes of air remaining, and on my third (and probably last possible) attempt, I began to become quite "excited", but this time I got to thinking about how a fatal accident would really cheer up some of my cave-diving enemies (we were having a few "problems" with cave diving politics around that period) and I found a renewed inner strength which enabled me to drag and scrape my body through the fissure to within eye-balling distance of my friends - whose lights I could see shimmering on the murky lake surface overhead. This position placed me in line with the entrance slot, so I wormed through the restriction (nearly ripping my mask off my head when my hood got snagged on some nasty little chert projections) and headed straight up to the surface, where I was greeted by my very relieved companions.

Any normal diver would probably never even contemplate trying to explore something as nasty as this, requiring the removal of his helmet and lights, vest, weight belt, fins and a standard-sized scuba cylinder (or two) and using just a single small hand-held torch so he could squeeze through the narrow gap in the fissure 2m under the surface to check out a possible deeper cavity (this one didn't go, as far as I could see), but then, it wasn't a normal situation ...it was the last dive of a three-day trip; all of my other batteries were flat; the fissure was too narrow for a diver-controlled guideline reel or normal equipment (I really meant it when I said that I couldn't get my helmet and attached lights to fit through the fissure ... only a 15 cubic foot cylinder would fit!); but I have to admit to being somewhat intoxicated with the exploration bug after a recent trip to Florida (and besides, it was under similar circumstances - although perhaps not quite so extreme - that I had discovered several "fairly" significant water filled caves in the past)!

A special situation, indeed ... "Never again", I swore ... "Never Again!"

Date: 12 February, 1989.

Setting: stuck in a bloody horrible little silty SEA cave (GASP!) near Aldinga, right

behind a very INexperienced diving friend who had rushed in without thinking

and without a line, backup air, a light etc ...

"OMIGOD!" I thought (along with a few other things) ... "NOT AGAIN!!....."

But since this event STILL gives me nightmares, I'll leave it for another day! ...

The moral of all of the above? NEVER let your guard down in caving or cave diving activities; after a few hundred cave dives, it is so easy to treat caves as being just "normal" places to visit without needing to plan for emergencies ... but like driving a car, it seems to require an occasional "close call" to shake your confidence so that you can better understand how very real the danger can be (and how your mistakes can result in terrible consequences for yourself, your family and loved ones, and those cave diving bastards out there who will criticise your "stupidity")!

I'm not saying that I wont take calculated risks again in the future, but believe me, the long-term anxiety and the occasional nightmares which recur after a few "exciting" moments underground really make you think about things a lot harder!

Wait for the best time and arm yourself with all of the right equipment, knowledge and support before embarking on any underground adventure with unknown risks ... it really just isn't worth it!

Peter HORNE

YORKE PENINSULA

3rd and 4th August 1991

Party; Lance Hoey, Gary Woodcock, Ganasan Nadason, David, Debra and Jason McIntyre, Ian and Suzanne Charlesworth, George and June MacLucas, Jay Robinson, Sue McCormick, Mac, Christopher and Tristan McDonald, Paul Harper.

Caves visited: Corra Lynn (5Y1)

This was general familiarisation trip to introduce people to the cave and the joy of endless crawling. We were joined on this trip by Ganasan, a caver from Malaysia who found our cave systems quite different to the larger caves back home.

The story starts with Lance, Gary, Ganasan and I arriving at 9.30 Saturday morning where we met George and June, leaving June on the surface we headed off to Skeleton Crevasse via the Wombat Runs, we went to Limestone Bridge then out via Bandicoots Bypass. While having lunch the McIntyres, Mcdonalds and Charlesworths arrived. So after lunch we split into two groups and visited Bushwalkers, Crystal Maze, Woodside and The Drum etc. while June and Suzanne stayed on the surface.

After exiting the cave Mac, Christopher and Tristan left to spend the night at Port Turton, and David, Debra, Jason, George and June stayed at the campsite by the cave to cook their dinner, while the rest of us headed to the Pub where we arranged to meet Sue and Jay for a counter meal and booze up.

Some of the older decrepit types stayed at the Hotel that night while the rest of us tuffed it out at the cave.

Next morning George and June decided to leave, those who were ready for the 9 a.m. start headed into the Cave (those who were left would form the second group) leaving Suzanne on the surface.

We were all heading for "Dreamland", the first group included, Lance, Ganasan, Jay, Sue, Gary and I, we went through Alberta and fixed a ladder in the Portal (and people still had difficulty getting up the hole). We then headed off to the far reaches of Dreamland. On the way back to The Portal we came across David, Mac, Debra, Christopher, Tristan and Jason and decided to exit together.

After we got out of the cave Mac, Christopher, Tristan, Ian and Suzanne decided to go home.

While David, Debra, Jason, Gary, Lance and I went to Skeleton Crevasse via the Wombat Runs; then to Limestone Bridge then out via Bandicoot Bypass.

All up it was an enjoyable weekend.

Paul HARPER

WET CAVING IN THE LOWER SOUTH-EAST

13th/14th July, 21st/22nd September, 4th-6th October, 2nd/3rd November, 22nd-24th November 1991, 17th-19th January, 8th/9th February, 13th-15th March 1992.

Party: John Henkel, John Gleeson, Ian Williams and Mark Thiselton.

Features visited: 5L7, 5L8, 5L9, 5L11, 5L14, 5L19, 5L40, 5L42, 5L43, 5L44, 5L47,

5L61, 5L72, 5L81, 5L159-161 and 5L163.

Have you ever thought about what hidden treasure lies beneath the water surface in a cenote? So did I, that is until last July when I completed a Cavern Divers course, which has led my buddies and I to experience the many delights of the underwater world of the South-East.

From Cavern Diver level we progressed onto Sinkhole Diver level and more recently onto Cave Diver level. These are three of the four levels of diver training within the Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDAA), the fourth being that of Penetration Diver level.

You might ask why go cave diving? There's nothing down there! That might be true for the casual glance, but in reality the under-water environment of a cenote is quite alive in it's own unique way.

Some of the dive sites such as Ewens Ponds (5L159-161) and Piccaninnie Ponds (5L72), are like under-water gardens, where many plants and algae live. These provide shelter and food for many of the animals that habitat these marvellous areas. We have been lucky enough to have seen examples of the Common Yabby, the Spiny Crayfish (Euastacus bispinosus), the River Black Fish (Gadapsis marmoratus), the Short-finned Eel (Anguilla australis) and the Fresh-water Crab (Amarinus lacustris), just to name a few. On a bright sunny day, it is possible to watch green plants photosynthesis by fizzing off oxygen into the water.

Other dive sites such as Hells Hole (5L40), the Black Hole (5L47) and the Bullock Hole (5L163) provide a challenge to the diver in entering and exiting the water, particularly Hells Hole with its 30 metre abseil.

During the dive one is constantly reminded of how the cave developed, with its narrow fissures or large rock filled chambers, often having over-hanging roofs, suggesting that the process is not yet complete.

The dive sites that we have visited may have areas of poor visibility, but these usually occur in limited sections of the system, such as thermoclines as seen in Little Blue Lake (5L9), Ten Eighty Sinkhole (5L42), Ela Elap Sinkhole (5L14) or the Black Hole (5L47). Other areas of poor visibility may be those areas where ground water run-off can combine with the water table such as the entrance lake at Engelbrecht Cave (East) (5L19-20), Allendale Sinkhole (5L11) and Fossil Cave (5L81). In the majority of cases we are presented with crystal clear water, giving the diver the sensation of floating in space.

Modern diving equipment, along with the current high levels of training allow divers to explore these underwater havens with a high level of safety.

MURRAY PLAINS, PUNYELROO CAVE

28th March 1992

Party; Lynne Allan, Oriana Davis, Narelle Parker, Ian Williams, Andrew Wilmot and Mark Thiselton.

With some of my cave diving friends becoming interested in caving I planned a trip to Punyelroo Cave 5M1, after all I had not been there since September 1987 according to my log and I thought it was about time that had a look at the bore casing for myself. We found our way to Randell's Rock and on the way back looked along one of the side passages which contained water at it's extremity. Back along the main passage we decided to have a look along the largest side passage near the entrance. We were impressed by the examples of fossils found in the roof and walls of the cave, including various shells, star fish and lace coral, just to name a few. In all a good introduction to caving followed by a great picnic along the River Murray near Swan Reach before heading home.

Mark THISELTON

YORKE PENINSULA, CORRA LYNN CAVE

17th to 20th April 1992

Party; David and Debra McIntyre and Paul Harper

We spent the whole weekend digging the "Goes Off North" passage in Skeleton Crevasse section of Corra Lynn Cave 5Y1. We extended the passage another 4m and have now entered an intersection and are in the process of digging upwards. The "Goes Off North" passage in now about 30m long.

Paul HARPER

YORKE PENINSULA, CORRA LYNN CAVE

Party; Lynne Allan, Oriana Davis, Narelle Parker, Ian Williams, John Henkel and Mark Thiselton.

While planning a weekend of scuba diving at Edithburgh, Yorke Peninsula, I suggested to that my friends may like to try some thing different, so I arranged to visit Corra Lynn Cave, 5Y1. The visit was planned as an introduction to the cave and partly as a refresher for me. We entered via the middle level, making our way to Rope Crevasse and down to the lower level of Bushwalkers' Run. From here we made our way to Bushwalkers' Chamber, and after a little exploration found our way through the Gun Barrel leading to Octopus Chamber, before running out of time and having to head back to the surface for lunch. The fun didn't stop there; as we drove home we stopped at Ardrossan and enjoyed another great dive along the jetty in perfect conditions.

MURRAY PLAINS, WESTERN FLAT AND OVERLAND CORNER

19th April 1992

Party; George, June and Aaron MacLucas, Rosemary and Marion Builder.

The main endeavour of our trip was to visit a supposed sinkhole heard of on a property near Morgan, South Australia. We met the manager, Mr. Rob Langley of Nikalopko Station. The property is quite large, covering over 3000 hectares, one side of which stretches over 50 kilometres in length. Apparently, in twelve years, Rob has only sited this sinkhole once, while on a motorbike. After further discussions, Rob was willing to identify the location for further investigation.

Another project on the back burner, a request from Lance Hoey, was to try and find the caves 5M20 and 5M21 near Overland Corner. 5M20 was found after an enjoyable bush walk, including areas of fossilised shells and many thunder egg rocks. We also waded through a small plague of grasshoppers. The cave itself had around 100 swallow nests attached to the roof, being in various states from dereliction to full usage. I took a bearing from the rock marker described in previous text and found it to lead to the cave.

The search for 5M21 proved unsuccessful. Previous records state that access can be achieved by scrambling over the edge of the cliff or by boat along the river. I swam along the cliff water line for some distance, but unfortunately didn't locate the entrance. After a short rest stop, I became tempted to go further, however other members waiting on the bank were concerned about the approaching dusk.

Although the day only resulted in the familiarisation of one cave, the thought of searching a bit further may mean finding 5M21 again. With the anticipation of finding and exploring the sinkhole mentioned above, we left feeling happy that a future trip would follow soon.

George MacLUCAS

WET CAVING ON THE NULLARBOR PLAINS

16th - 25th April 1992 (Easter)

Party; Steven Crowhurst (SCG), Chris Kennedy (SCG), Martin Lineage (SCG), Simon Yard (SCG), Mark Vincent, Amanda Henery, Andrew Wilmot, Scott Sando, Phillip Harnas, Craig McLachlan and Mark Thiselton (SCG)

Features Visited; 6N2, 6N3, 6N17, 6N37, 6N62, 6N63, 6N132, 6N165, 6N193, 6N206

No unfortunately it wasn't a cave diving trip, but a very wet dry caving trip to the Nullarbor Plains. I was asked to lead this trip on behalf of my old Rover Crew, Maltarra Rovers (previously Glenroy), a number of which are involved within the Scout Caving Group (SCG).

Most of the group left Adelaide early on the Thursday morning, arriving at Eucla that night and camped near Weebubbie Cave 6N2. The remaining members of the group, leaving Adelaide after work on Thursday, arrived at Weebubbie around 7:30am Friday morning after driving all night. Once we were all together we visited Weebubbie Cave, where we enjoyed a swim and snorkel in the larger lake.

While heading west we experienced our first rain for the trip. Checking with the station owner, we drove out to Mullamullang Cave 6N37 over a very wet slippery track. We set up camp near the entrance to Mullamullang Cave, that night only just beating a large down-pour, which we later found had turned the track into a number of shallow lakes. This down-pour caused a number of waterfalls to run into the entrance doline of Mullamullang Cave. Our group split up into two smaller groups to visit Mullamullang cave over a two day period, with each group reaching the Dome Area, without actually entering it. We were happy to visit part of the Ezam section of the cave and leave the inhabitants of the cave alone, namely *Tartartus mullamullangenis* (spider), and *Trogloblattella nullarborensis* (coachroach). We also visited the Easter Extension section of the cave by entering through the second entrance along the main passage near Frank's Station, finding the feature known as the clam. At Mullamullang we met a group from WASG, including Rauleigh Webb and "Sacky" from FUSS. Luckily we were there for a couple of days allowing the track to dry out enough to return to the highway.

We then visited Madura Cave 6N62, before heading east and checked with the station owner before heading out to Kelly Cave 6N165, nearby to which we set up our camp. The next day we visited Witches Cave 6N193, Webbs Cave 6N132 and Kelly Cave. All of which have good examples of decoration. We again experienced more rain.

The next day was our first without any cloud cover and the threat of rain, so we decided to visit Thampanna Cave 6N206, where we again split into two smaller groups to explore the various sections of the cave, only to be prevented from going any further by water sumps at the Drain and the Tube, no doubt a result of the recent rains. There was also other evidence of water activity with a pool of water at the entrance and several rock pools within the first collapse series leading to the duckunder sections of the cave.

On our way back to camp we located Thylacine Cave 6N63 only to find it being guarded by a brown snake at the bottom of the entrance pitch, we were happy to leave it there undisturbed.

The next day we headed to Chowilla Landslip 6N17 and Abrakurrie Cave 6N3. After lunch we headed back to Weebubbie Cave for another swim and to camp for the night. The next day we visited the Old Telegraph Station buried in the sand-dunes near Eucla before heading home.

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to a new Associate Member:

Jay ROBINSON 9206 18/3 Stirling St. MARLESTON SA 5033 (h) 293 6469

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL COUNCIL

CEGSA attended the inaugural AGM of the Council and became one of the founding members. The others groups involved are CAVEX, Cave Divers Association of Aust, Flinders University Speleological Society, and Scout Caving Group (SA).

At the last Australian Speleological Federation meeting in January, this now official Council was granted "State Liaison Council" status of the ASF. This means the Council now speaks on behalf of the ASF in SA. And to reminisce, it was only few years ago that CEGSA was the one and only caving group of status in SA - we had it all. Yes we had all the paperwork, the management discussions, the replies to cave & park management plans, negotiations with everyone for access, ... But now we are FREE! We can share in the caving that the others have been doing.

Of course, many of our members are heavily involved with the new Council that has taken over or at least distributed the tasks and we are still the Records keeper for SA. Oh well! You can not win them all.

More important then the spreading of old tasks is the establishment of the new. The SASC has taken on the role of co-ordinating common standards of caving practice acceptable to all caving groups AND management authorities in SA, especially the NPWS. It is very actively involved in promoting cave and karst research by backing individuals and groups in obtaining funds to defray some of the costs of conducting these activities having already obtained one grant for Weta research.

Why did SA have to have a Speleo Council? One of the major reasons was that the NPWS wanted to deal with only one representative caving organisation, and, naturally, CEGSA was the one. The other groups accepted CEGSA as their representative but only up to a point, and they were worried that a change in CEGSA policy over which they had no say might be to their detriment. With the SASC we can work together without fear of favour.

CEGSA thanks the efforts of Alan Jevons for pushing SA into having a Council.

Graham PILKINGTON

INDEX TO VOLUME 36

Volume 36 contained the following issues:

36 (1)	March 1991
36 (2)	May 1991
36 (3)	September 1991
36 (4)	December 1991

The index is divided into the following categories:

Caving Activity by Region Technical and Other Articles

Caving Activity

Caving Activities are listed by Trip Report Title, Newsletter Reference and Author.

Adelaide Hills

No Trips Reported

Flinders Ranges

Flinders Ranges	36 (1) p8	Mark Thiselton
Flinders Ranges	36 (1) p9	Mark Thiselton
Flinders Ranges	36 (2) p15	Stan Flavel
Flinders Ranges	36 (3) p30	Paul Harper
Flinders Ranges	36 (4) p50	Stan Flavel

Kangaroo Island

Glorious Kangaroo Island	36 (3) p31	Paul Harper
Kangaroo Island	36 (3) p32	Paul Harper

Lower South-east

Lower South-east 36 (4) p44 Lance Hoey

Murray Plains

Murray Plains	36 (4) p44	Lance Hoey
Murray Plains	36 (4) p47	Lance Hoey

Nullarbor Plains

Nullarbor Plains	36 (3) p28	Paul Harper
The Australian Caves Expedition 1991	36 (4) p46	Steve Milner

Upper South-east

No Trips Reported

Yorke Peninsula

Yorke Peninsula	36 (3) p29	Paul Harper
Yorke Peninsula	36 (3) p31	Paul Harper

Interstate and Overseas

A Brief Excursion Interstate	36 (4) p42	Steve Milner
Cyclops Pot 7IB57, Ida Bay Tasmania	36 (4) p47	Peter Kraehenbuehl
Giants Hole P12, Derbyshire UK	36 (2) p14	Peter Kraehenbuehl
Merlins' Mine, Derbyshire UK	36 (2) p15	Peter Kraehenbuehl

Technical and Other Articles

Technical and Other Articles are listed by the title of the article, newsletter reference and author.

Additions to Occasional Paper Number 5	36 (4) p53	Kevin Mott
Cave Monitoring	36 (1) p5	Steve Milner
Index to Volume 35	36 (2) p21	Mark Thiselton
Kangaroo Island Accident Report	36 (3) p33	Paul Harper
Safety and Training, Keeping the Group Together	36 (4) p55	Peter Kraehenbuehl
South Australian Speleological Council	36 (4) p52	Alan Jevons
The Bones of Corra Lynn	36 (2) p33	Neville Pledge

PROGRAMME		
May		
2/3 9/10 16-18 LWE	Naracoorte, Weta Research, Cave entrance areas	Ron Simms
23/24 27	Yorke Peninsula, Corra Lynn 5Y1 surface dig GENERAL 7:30pm Presentation on Tasmanian Peter Kraehenbuehl	Graham Pilkington Trips
30/31		
June		
6-8 LWE 13/14	Lower South-East, Mt. Gambier Region	Paul Harper
20/21 24 27/28	Yorke Peninsula, Corra Lynn 5Y1 digging only GENERAL 7:30pm Presentation on Cave Envir	Paul Harper onment Clare Buswell
?	Yorke Peninsula, Corra Lynn 5Y1 surface re-fencing	Graham Pilkington
July		
4/5 11/12 18/19 22 25/26	GENERAL 7:30pm	
August		
1/2 8/9 15/16 22/23 26 29/30	GENERAL 7:30pm	
Sept/Oct		
26/9-12/10	(10 days) Old Homestead Cave, A Survey feast for those who like to go caving	Graham Pilkington
10-12 LWE	Flinders Ranges	Paul Harper
	Check with the Trip Liaison Officer for any additions o	r alterations.