

CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

PO Box 144 Rundle Mall, Adelaide, 5000



Volume 37 Number 4

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UGLY BUT HARMLESS

THE SMALL BLACK MANY-LEGGED CREATURES FOUND IN &
AROUND THIS BUILDING ARE **FERAL CAVERS**
WHILE THEY ARE DIFFICULT TO ERADICATE, MESSY & UGLY
THEY ARE HARMLESS, SO PLEASE TRY TO IGNORE THEM WHILE
WE ATTEMPT THEIR CONTROL.



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

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

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FRONT COVER: These four "Ugly But Harmless" feral cavers were recently seen in the Naracoorte Cave Conservation Park.

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Deadline for articles for Volume 38 Number 1 is Wednesday 27th January, 1993.

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

Recently Paul Harper arranged the purchase of a number of caving ladders for both CEGSA and some of its individual members. Paul managed to negotiate quite a good deal. Well done Paul!

The Amenities above Corra Lynn cave 5Y1 were discussed during the September meeting. A new Toilet is to be erected near the entrance to replace the collapsed retired one. Users of the new facility will be asked to pay for this privilege in the future.

After the September General Meeting, we were given a presentation on "The Bats of South Australia", by Terry Reardon and Stan Flavel. During this presentation they used slides and overhead projection to convey information. Fortunately they were able to bring along a few live bats for exhibition and a few preserved bats for the audience to identify as a practical exercise. This was a very useful presentation, Well done Terry and Stan.

Yes that time of the year is soon approaching when you will be asked to consider being nominated as either a committee member or a office bearer (or even both). So if you have any views or ideas that could improve the running of the clubs day to day activities or speleology in general, you should consider being involved in 1993.

To those committee members and office bearers for 1992 congratulations on yet another great year and a job well done.

I would like to thank all those members and authors who have contributed in whatever way to making Volume Thirty Seven of the CEGSA Newsletter such a success. Without your efforts my job would be much easier! But seriously, it is good that the efforts of CEGSA can be displayed for others to see, albeit if it is to our own members, other club members (local, interstate and overseas), National Parks and Wildlife Service staff or more importantly visitors and future members. Lets all continue to advance our interests in Speleology and maintain our clubs image for the future.

As the festive season approaches, I would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Mark THISELTON

TRIP REPORTS

MOUNT ECCLES, VICTORIA

11th - 13th July 1992

Party; Athol and Jan Jackson, June, George and Aaron McLacus, Paul Harper, David and Debra McIntyre, Ian and Suzanne Charlesworth, Ken and Janeen Grimes, Alan and Bruce Mansfield (VSA), David, Kay, Angela, Kelly, Felicity and Simone White (VSA), Armando Arcidiarco, Chris, Sandy, Mac and Ryan Hales, Rob and Chris Munn and Andy Carmichael (Park Ranger).

Features; 3H8, 3H33.

Friday night saw all except Athol and Jan getting lost on their way, with three groups making temporary camp on the side of the road.

Saturday morning saw Ken and a small group head to the Byaduk cave area to begin rigging the pitch into unnamed cave 3H33, while the rest of the party waited for the others to remake their camp before following. Eventually everyone arrived at the Byaduk cave area. We visited unnamed cave 3H33, Turk cave, Natural Arch cave and Church cave. Mean while, the weather turned foul!! We returned to the campsite at dusk to find no dry wood, no hot water as the LPG cylinder was empty. We soon rigged a tarp for communal shelter, prepared dinner, opened Port and soon felt much better.

Sunday saw a group visit a small volcano 3H8 where they either abseiled or climbed into its shaft (approximately 25m deep). The entrance area and ledges are covered in moss and small ferns. The entrance shaft leads down into a twin chamber. Well worth the effort. The rest of the group visited some small caves at the end of the lava canal. This night was much nicer, with no rain, hot showers and dry wood found.

Early Monday morning some of the party visited a feature named "The Natural Bridge" to practise abseiling. Later that day they moved back to the volcano shaft and abseiled into, and jumared out of the entrance shaft.

Mt. Eccles National Park is a beautiful area, having good campsites, open fireplaces, shower and toilet facilities and an almost complete visitor interpretative centre. Koalas, Sugar Gliders and a large variety of birds abound the area. The ranger there was always very obliging and even put a slide show on for us, Sunday night.

It was a great weekend, looking forward to more like it.

Chris HALES

LOWER SOUTH EAST

4/5th July 1992

Party; Peter Horne (Trip Leader), Graham and Roger Pilkington, Chris Hales, Paul "Cold Showers" Harper, Eddie Rubessa and honorary Mount Gambier speleologist; Kevin Mott.

Features; 5L220, 5L304, Ian Lewis' house!

Early in the evening of Friday the 3rd of July, travellers along the South-Eastern Freeway observed five and a half caving-type persons (namely myself, Chris, Eddie, Paul, Graham and his young son, Roger) hurtling through the darkness in Graham's yellow bus so that we could put a fence around 5L220, near Glencoe. The land owner had recently expressed his desire to possibly fill in the natural entrance and leave just a small access passage to one area of the feature, because foxes were using it as a den and he had also lost a large bovine-like beast down the slope, but he was very cooperative and supportive of my suggestion that we put up a fairly sturdy fence so that the cave was protected a-la-natural.

We arrived in the Mount around midnight (I think), and broke in to Ian Lewis' new home near Engelbrechts cave where we spent a cool night sleeping off the 6-hour journey. With the breaking of dawn (and a lot of wind - constantly! - by various disgusting members of our party), we jumped into the car and arrived at the scheduled rendezvous point ... the general store at Glencoe ... a couple of minutes late, where we encountered a rare woolly Mott (*Southeastcavus trenchdiggerhim*) armed to the teeth with the digging tools! We grabbed some essential vittles (I drank a micro-waved pie with tomato sauce) and then went out to the property where we met the farmer (who had patiently waited more than an hour for us because I had told him the wrong time) and headed out to the cave.

5L220 is a very rare and locally significant feature; its 8-metre or so diameter rectangular-like entrance collapsed suddenly in an otherwise flat and featureless grassy paddock after a heavy night of rain back on 2nd July 1983, and some of us were in the Mount that weekend when we heard about it. When we checked it out in wetsuits and diving gear the next afternoon (the small main lake did not continue to any extent), it was a fabulous sight in the cold air, because it was billowing a huge cloud of vapour, making it look something like a volcanic gas vent!

Subsequent trips over the next few months (and years) by various people under the leadership of myself, Andrew Cox and Tony Hambling revealed the existence of several hundred metres of quite large passage and many other grovelly bits which could only be entered after I had dug past collapse-cones or very tight flatteners, and most of this was often submerged because of the 1.5m seasonal fluctuation in the regional water-table. Our trip to do the fencing was also intended to provide an opportunity for other cavers to see the feature, and it was therefore a pleasant surprise to find that the water table was at the lowest level ever seen by myself. This meant that, with luck, we could explore virtually the entire complex by hopping from rock to mud-covered rock to visit an area called the Marsbar Extension, which was normally completely flooded!

The property owner came out and spent an hour or so laying out the posts (which he had kindly picked up from Mount Gambier for us and which CEGSA paid for) and helped with the removal of the old fence system which he had installed back in 1983 before leaving us to drill the post-holes in the clayish soil (what good fun!!).

After several hours of this "in-augural, boring" work, with everyone (including young Roger) putting in some muscle while Kevin tagged and partially surveyed in the entrance, we stood back and proudly saw our 16 posts surrounding the hole in a fairly neat circular pattern. We then had a brief break before gearing-up to spend a couple of hours underground.

Apart from a bit of slumping and widening of the entrance itself over the past 9 years, the cave was pretty much the way I remembered it - dead foxes, loose rocks, hanging slabs in the ceiling and dirty crawly bits (especially one which leads to Marsbar Extension, which is now almost big enough to run through, thanks to Graham's "Mott-Access" digging efforts!) - and the boys had a good time rummaging around while I tried to take some video in the damp and gritty environment. After Chris broke a wire in his battery-pack and Dr Pilkington was seen crawling about on his belly with his back up pencil-light sticking out of his mouth, we figured it was time to leave and returned to a near-setting sun and quite chilly air. It was then that I remembered that we were supposed to dig some trenches from post to post so that the fencing mesh could be laid to prevent animals from digging under it .. so, nearly exhausted, gouging and shovelling before finally getting back into our vehicles, saying goodbye to the land owner's wife and heading back to the Mount.

That night, Janine Tamblyn dropped in to visit us for a few happy hours (and two pizza orders!) and Kevin returned to show the others a copy of my map of the cave so they knew what it actually looked like. Soon after this, Eddie disappeared into his sleeping bag around a ridiculous 9pm or so, thereby missing several more hours of socialising when Ian returned home with Portland cave diver Steve Arnel around midnight on their way to the Nullarbor (but Eddie felt MORE than energetic when he leapt out of bed and made enough noise to wake the dead - us! - at some obscenely early hour the next morning, the rotten swine!).

The beers and pizzas of the previous night had a lasting and rather unpleasant effect on my poor old body, and after briefly visiting the landowner again to check on what he thought of our city-slicker's efforts at fence-erecting (not too bad, thank goodness - thanks especially to Kevin and Graham!) - I spent the rest of the day moping about in the car while Eddie, Chris, Paul and Roger had a quick run through the recently-discovered 5L304, near Wandilo. We then all got aboard the vehicle around 1pm and began the long journey home.

It was good to see some of our more dedicated members of our caving fraternity are willing to put in a bit of personal effort to try to protect some of our more important cave features, and I really want to express my heartfelt thanks to all of the above-named for their efforts on Saturday. Now, we should be able to observe how the cave and its entrance evolve during the next twenty years or so!

Peter HORNE

YORKE PENINSULA

26th July 1992

Party; Chris and Mac Hales, Mark Kean, Andrew Slater, Darren, Steward, Nigel, and Paul Harper.

Features; 5Y1.

The aim of this trip was to show the property owner and three of his friends a part of the cave they had not been to before known as Dreamland.

The crawl along Alberta was the usual bundle of fun, as was the climb up the Portal. Once up in Dreamland we went for a quick look around to find out where the water and earth had moved when there was a land slump above the cave. We found the area was roughly between the north-east end of the Freeway and the Gluck. The area around the Gluck Pit is now very muddy, but you have to pass this area to see the rest of Dreamland.

We went along the main drag to the northeast corner where we left the mapped section to enter the unknown area beyond (Darkest Dreamland). The theory being we would do a clockwise circuit to get back to the mapped area. After crisscrossing our tracks several times, I realised that the Gods and the compass were against us, and we did not get far before the seeds of doubt and discontent were sown. After trying to convince the group that we were not lost but only geographically embarrassed, I realised that the smell of mutiny and methane was in the air and that the lynching of yours truly was imminent. So fear took over from valour and I capitulated my dictatorial command for a group discussion (panic session).

It was decided to head back to the mapped area the way we had come, while keeping an eye on the compass, which seemed to have a mind of its own (a schizophrenic mind). Several of our gallant troops had their dummies firmly in spit position as we made our way back to civilisation.

Once we were back on the map it was an easy process to find our way back to the Portal. At the Portal everyone found going down a lot less strenuous and nerve racking as trying to climb it. On recent trips this climb has caused a lot of problems. The crawl along Alberta, after spending six hours in Dreamland, is a Masochists dream come true. Our buckled knees are a testimony to the charms of this crawl. We then exited this cave, making it a strenuous and interesting six and a half hours.

Paul HARPER

LOWER SOUTH EAST

24th - 26th July 1992

Party; Gary Woodcock, Stan Flavel and Eddie Rubessa.

Features; 5L74, 5L291-298, 5L304.

The purpose of this extended weekend trip was to further the dig which Gary and I commenced last June long weekend. Since we didn't break through last time, we proceeded with diligent verve.

The breeze was ever present during our labours and gave a slight chill when one was inactive. When we finally broke through, we found it to be bloody horrible. The extension is a roof collapse approximately thirty metres long. This is also evident by the depression on the surface. The actual passage is only a metre wide, or less in places, five to six metres in height and follows the contours of the rock collapse. Pine tree roots exist throughout the passage, covering sections of dry decoration. Precariously wedged rocks were also to be found in the passage, which we had to crawl under until we later stabilised those concerns.

The passage ceases to be trafficable due to it's low height and narrowness. We left contented knowing that air was still emanating from that section.

The next day we carried out some surface survey work on karst features 5L291-298, for Kevin Mott, whom expended some time the previous night with us. We also surface surveyed the two dolines near 5L304, one thirty metres and the other five metres in diameter. These deservedly require some work to open them up for the potential they could offer.

Later that afternoon we tackled the constriction in 5L74 and spent considerable time breaking and removing rock. Exhausted Gary and I decided to call it quits after five hours. Stan was still chipping away at the second squeeze, after enlarging the first (taking away some of the fun). Unbeknown to him that there are a further two restrictions. Upon exiting around 9.30 pm, who should we encounter on the way in? None other than Mr. Mount Gambier himself, Peter "Puddles" "Porne" Horne, and two associates. With an exchange of pleasantries we left.

Sunday morning started lackadaisically (like most mornings when you cave with public servants), but we finally made it to Kevin Mott's place to return the surveying equipment, only to find out that Kevin's wife Julie was seven months pregnant. Best wishes to Julie, Kevin and family for the future Mott.

We stopped at Naracoorte to investigate a disused stone quarry reserve, being a possible site for a *FUTURE* CEGSA hut. Situated on a ridge, above the tree lined Naracoorte creek, it presents an idyllic view. Also being a karst region it contains a couple of small caves and further, it is only a few kilometres north of the town. CEGSA members should give it some proper consideration.

Our thanks to Ian Lewis, for the use of his house.

Eddie RUBESSA

NARACOOORTE

8th - 9th August 1992

Party: Paul Harper, David McIntyre, Gary Woodcock and Kevin Mott.

Features: 5U1, 5U22

This trip was organised to give current members of the group, who had not previously seen the caves, an opportunity to become familiar with two of the caves considered to be of outstanding natural value. The areas visited in each cave were limited to those used for the adventure component of the show caves. During the trip features of significance, items of historical interest and RDF survey stations were highlighted.

The trip started in a fairly laid back fashion with everyone meeting at the kiosk for lunch. Wouldn't you know it; just when you've driven for an hour along a flat, straight highway, are tired and lusting after one of their famous hot dogs, the kiosk is closed for maintenance.

Hunger aside, we arranged access for Victoria Fossil Cave through Jo. We entered the cave via the new exit, came out to effect repairs to Gary's light then re-entered to get on with the business of looking at the cave. Survey points along the tourist path were pointed out and it would seem that the Dept of Mines utilised some of our survey points in their roof survey. I have since learned that they removed some of ours and replaced them with their own. It would be nice to have a copy of their survey data to compare as we were kind enough to GIVE them our data as a service. Perhaps we should be charging similar fees.

Along the way it was noticed that the tour has been extended into the "Victoria South Extension" adjacent to U44. Some new columns of an unusually square profile appear to have developed in this area in recent times. The cave is very much alive. The "Unnamed Hall" is also being prepared for tourist access.

The area around RDF2 has suffered degradation since the 1976 redevelopment and is worth a joint project with National Parks to rehabilitate the area. Numerous mud sculptures, some quite artistic, adorn the wall ledges here. Some discreet rope barriers here may be useful in defining the track and minimising any further deterioration. The size and beauty of the "Great Hall" and "Stalagmite Flat" greatly impressed the party. Some discreet track marking in these chambers could be useful. Even though I was involved in the mapping project of the cave, and came to know the area quite well it never fails to impress. Those who had not seen the cave before gained a better appreciation of the structure of Naracoorte caves as this caves best demonstrates it.

On the way out of the cave we met Jo. It was disappointing to discover that she had turned on the track lighting and that it was not my awesome presence at all. The new lighting in the cave is quite effective. Movement along the pathway is easier and safer and the feature lighting is more discreet and subtle.

During the day the holdfasts installed at U12 were investigated. Having been tested at 40kN, busloads of tourists can now quite literally safely descend into the caves. They do provide safe access to the caves and National Parks are to be congratulated for their installation. The holdfasts at the southern entrance caused some concern however, and it is felt that the following suggestions would improve their effectiveness.

The western one (by the gate) could have a piece of water pipe attached to the inside lip of the concrete fence foundation to eliminate the unnecessary rub point of the sharp concrete edge created due to the position of the anchor.

The southern anchor is of more concern. If using this anchor the rope and caver must pass over the thinnest portion of the roof; thinner than that which caused concern to Dept of Mines experts in other caves. Placing the anchor on the northern side would alleviate this problem and provide safer access over the lip. Protection from the lip similar to that recommended for the western anchor would need to be provided.

That night we repasted at the showgrounds fish and chipper, which provides excellent fare, prior to a tour of the local hostelrys.

Sunday dawned fine and almost clear and promised to be a great day. We collected, from Jo, the key for Fox Cave and some advice that the northern access should be OK as she had previously driven it and there had not been a lot of rain. I have seen 4WD vehicles bogged there so it was with trepidation that we set off. Jo was right. The ford no longer is a problem but the track looked a little damp underfoot. A quick reconnoitre revealed an alternative route. The Subaru made it but alas, not the HiAce. Oh! for Claude. After almost an hour of de-gluing we abandoned the HiAce and continued almost uneventfully in the Subaru. It only needed manual persuasion once or twice.

Gary in his enthusiasm (or was it ignorance) volunteered to be lockmaster for the trip. The bulk of the party waited above the slot till the gate was unlocked. Unfortunately the cave was not as wet as expected. The route followed was that of the adventure tour to the "Sand Castle Chamber". We then, with Jo's permission took the north eastern bypass to the passage leading to the "Madonna Chamber", then back to the entrance.

In the climb up the ramparts is a large rock known as the "wobbly rock" for obvious reasons. This rock could easily be displaced if weight was on at the wrong point so it was carefully relocated to prevent any future mishap. The climb down at the end of the "Madonna Chamber" is showing signs of increased usage now. It was thought that tours need not use it and they should terminate in the chamber itself.

The party was struck by the contrast between the two caves and certainly appreciated why they are classed as outstanding natural value. Visitation to the caves certainly needs to be controlled but a limited number of trips each year by speleological groups could be sustained. Perhaps the number could be related to the number of permissible adventure tours that can be run as the impact would be the same or even less.

As the party traversed the caves reference was continually made to the maps to compare the caves with the maps. There are certainly some anomalies in the Fox Cave map and some RDF control is needed to eliminate these. The maps used for Victoria Fossil Cave were the original surveys. There were several gaps and areas of minimal information in these. They need to be compiled on to the controlled base to determine what further work is required to complete or adjust them.

Once out of the cave the party returned to the kiosk via the southern access. An access road to the southern part of the reserve would certainly provide an all weather legal access from the south and enhance management of the area. After reporting our exit from the cave we returned to the abandoned vehicle. After about an hour of de-gluing of the vehicle we managed to extricate it.

All were then able to return to their homes after an enjoyable and educational trip. As a result of the trip the party has put forward its suggested enhancements to the tours and caves for consideration by NPWS.

Kevin MOTT

NARACOOORTE

16th - 18th May 1992

Party; Mark, Karen and Murray Sefton, Graham and Roger Pilkington, Ian and Suzanne Charlesworth, Ken Grimes, Grant Gartrell and Merry, Mac and Julie Macdonald and kids, Chris Mac and Ryan Hales and visitors, Maryel and Peter.

Features; 5U15, 5U17-19, 5U47

Saturday saw Mark and Graham visit the entrance tube of SOS cave while the tourist party visited S102 cave 5U47.

Sunday saw Mark, Graham, Roger and Ken surveying in SOS cave while the tourist party visited Bee Keepers cave 5U15.

Grant and Mac Macdonald's group worked both Saturday and Sunday in Robertson cave 5U17-19.

Monday saw the entire party visiting Bee Keepers cave.

Chris HALES

FLINDERS RANGES

15/16th August 1992

Party; John Callison (FUSS), Chris Hales, David and Debra McIntyre, Peter Rasheed and Paul Harper.

Features; 5F1, 5F3, 5F4.

We originally planned to visit Mount Remarkable Blowhole 5F1, but a few days before the trip, Stan Flavel asked us if we would travel "just a little bit" further north, to help him show the new owner of the property containing Mairs cave 5F3 and Clara St. Dora cave 5F4, these caves.

We arrived late on the Friday night and set up camp near by to the caves. On the Saturday morning David Wright arrived with a group from Westcare. We visited Clara St. Dora first and upon exiting the cave met Stan and the new owner, Peter Rasheed. Chris and I then returned to the cave along with Stan and Peter, while David, Debra and John went over to set up the entrance pitch of Mairs cave.

After visiting Clara St. Dora cave we headed off to Mairs cave where the Westcare group had already set up the pitch. Peter and Stan only spent a short time in Mairs cave while we remained for several hours.

Upon exiting the cave, we found that Stan and Peter had already left the area and the Westcare group were about to leave also, so we decided to pack up and drive to Melrose, hire a cabin for the night and be closer to Mt. Remarkable Blowhole 5F1. David and Debra stayed in the cabin and cooked their evening meal, while Chris, John and I went to the pub for our meal, returning to the cabin for a few ports.

The next day we went to Mt. Remarkable Blowhole where Debra decided to remain on the surface while Chris and John went down to rig the pitch. By using rock climbing hardware, they were able to rig a well located re-belay point above the first ledge and a re-direction some 8 m lower down. About 10 m below this re-direction point, the wall is convex, causing the rope to touch the wall for approximately 8 m, it then hangs free for a further 10 m to the bottom of the pitch.

After the four of us had reached the bottom, we had a quick look around when we found a small snake in the crawl which leads to the lake, so we did not go any further than that. While I was off exploring a side passage, there was a lot of commotion by the crawl leading to the lake as David and John had found a very large frog and they were busy discussing the merits of their discovery. They had moved as close as they dared to it and were excitedly calling to Chris and I to come and have a look. As Chris and I approached John was telling us what colour its eyes and mouth were, etc. We arrived just in time to see John, who had plucked up enough courage, dive down and grab the frog - it is times like these you need a camera - as John stood up, eyes bulging and mouth open as he realised that it was in fact a rubber frog. The same frog that I had placed there some ten minutes earlier - sucked in John.

I now know what FUSSI stands for - "Frogs from Unknown Sources Studied Intently" (not "Flinders University Speleology Society Inc." as we were led to believe).

As there is virtually no horizontal passage in Mt. Remarkable Blowhole, it was not long before we were prussicking out. The pitch has become a lot cleaner, now that a few rocks have been dislodged.

Paul HARPER

YORKE PENINSULA

22nd August 1992

Party; Jay Robinson, Suzanne and Ian Charlesworth, Denny, Neil Trotter, John Meikle, Chris Hales, Peter (Krunchy) Kraehenbuehl and Paul Harper.

Features; 5Y1.

We arrived Saturday morning to find the cave entrance swarming with grommets (Scouts) (you are not the only person to visit this cave - Ed.). Luckily I had brought my grommet repellent otherwise known as a jimmy bar.

With visions of bumping into bug eyed grommets all day we parked the cars and with great trepidation we approached the swarm thinking that things could not possibly get any worse.....

.....But it was worse - Krunchy was in charge of the grommets!

After feigning pleasantries the grommets went off caving and we split into two groups. Krunchy having had enough of the grommets and wanting to go caving with some "Real Cavers" decided to join us, so we let him, only to find out that he had left all his gear at home so he had to run around and borrow a helmet, light and overalls from us.

We spent a lazy morning cruising around Bushwalkers and Crystal Maze. After lunch, Peter was worn out and decided to rejoin the grommets, while Neil and Denny stayed on the surface the rest of us visited the central part of the old cave.

Paul HARPER

McKAYS SHAFT

28th/29th August 1992

Party; Peter Kraehenbuehl, Ian Williams, John Gleeson, Janine Tamblyn, Michael Sard and Mark Thiselton.

Feature; 5L125

Imagine a near perfect solution tube 2-3 metres in diameter, 25 metres deep in soft Mt. Gambier limestone. Located amongst a number of pine trees, which make ideal belay points to set up your gear, even a ladder if you so desire it. You abseil down the solution tube to a central mud cone, formed on top of a large rock pile within a single chamber approximately 25 x 21 metres. You are particularly careful not to disturb this damp mud cone and propagate it throughout the cave.

Once all the party have descended safely you remove your abseiling gear and descend down the rock pile in a northerly direction to the cave wall. From here you follow the cave wall in a clockwise direction until you reach a large patch of stalactites and shawls or bacon rashers. Apart from a little damage, these speleothems are almost in a pristine condition.

Having whetted your appetite, you retrace your steps around the rock pile to the mud cone, gear up and exit the cave.

Sounds Great, except for one small omission - You forgot your SCUBA gear! The mud cone is the only relatively dry part of the cave floor, the remainder being submerged by the water table.

McKays Shaft had not been visited for approximately four years, when it suddenly appeared in the recent CDAA newsletter "Guidelines", No: 44 July 1992, as being available to cave divers as a Sinkhole site.

Being involved in a small group of keen cave divers, we approached Ian Lewis (CDAA National Director) for access to McKays Shaft. We negotiated with Ian to dive on the Saturday morning, but after some last minute confusion we found ourselves high and dry. Ian then spent considerable time and effort with the landowner to rearrange our dive for the Sunday morning. This turned out to be in our favour as the weather was less than ideal on the Saturday and considering the amount of time required to set up the entrance to safely enter and exit the cave along with lowering and raising the dive gear.

We met the land owner at the pre-arranged time of 9 am sharp on the Sunday morning, where we signed the usual access deeds, looked at his photograph collection and discussed the actual event that we were about to participate. The landowner joined us at the cave entrance initially as we set up and discussed many issues with us. He was so interested in our progress that he called by at various times throughout the day to check how things were going.

Before we entered the cave we decided to remove a rather large pine tree branch that had fallen into and partly blocked the entrance solution tube. This slowed our progress slightly but made access easier later.

The entrance to McKays Shaft is a 25 metre deep solution tube, which leads to a large single chamber whose size is some 25 x 21 metres. This chamber is water filled having a central mud cone covered rock pile from which the dive was staged. This mud cone being only some 1-2 metres in diameter does not provide copious amount of space to get kitted up. We over came this problem by gearing up in the water. The lake itself provided us with our objective - a dive site.

McKays Shaft is a very unique Sinkhole as it contains under water decoration. Yes, Stalactites and Shawls or Bacon Rashers. This entrance chamber must have been dry at some stage to allow the formation of this decoration, after which the water table has risen.

As the recent copy of Guidelines suggests, McKays Shaft requires one member of the group to have considerable laddering and rope skills to provide access to the dive site from the surface. Our group was lucky to have two experienced dry cavers amongst them and it still was quite an effort. I also believe that considerable dry caving experience is also desirable with regard to the caves speleothems and their conservation for the future.

The lake is riddled with a fair amount of rubbish in the form of bottles, wood and the skeletons of a few animals such as cows and birds.

The lake also has a large amount of Calcite Flakes floating over its surface, which when disturbed by our expired air bubbles, sink to the dark silt covered rock floor.

The entrance chamber is also home to a couple of Pine tree roots, which conveniently reach down to the water level.

We decided to dive in two groups of three divers in order to reduce the amount of dive gear to be lowered into the cave. Our dives were restricted to around 15-20 minutes each to reduce any silting problems and to maximise air supplies for the second group.

To reduce the possibility of silting out and reducing the visibility within the lake, we entered the water away from where the decoration is located and swam clockwise around the rock pile to observe the beauty of this underwater treasure. The decoration itself lies in about 3 to 5 metres of water, with the deepest part of the lake reaching some 15 metres, but in doing so becomes very low and silty.

Thanks to the efforts of our first group of divers, the second group found the water visibility to be excellent, allowing us to navigate our way around the rock pile.

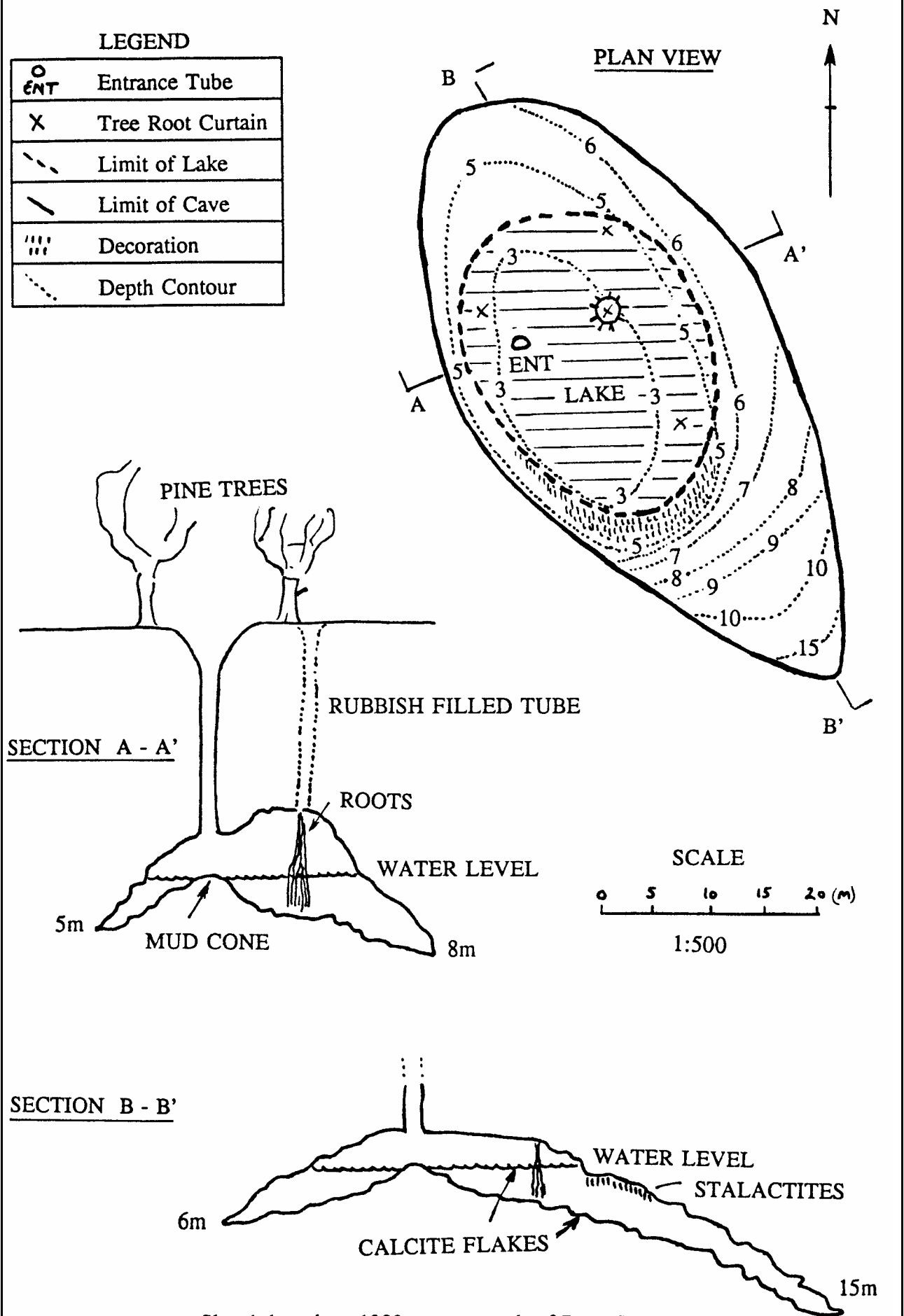
In all it took us some six hours to safely lower and retrieve all the dive gear along with ourselves in order to perform a 15 - 20 minute dive! Quite an enormous effort is required to visit McKays Shaft, so if you are thinking of diving it, just to say you have dived it, think a little more about the conservation of such a unique cave environment. McKays Shaft is not the place to learn how to ladder climb or abseil.

Our thanks go to Ian Lewis for arranging access to McKays Shaft, Peter Horne for providing much useful information about this unique feature and Mr. Murray McKay for allowing us access to this feature known as McKays Shaft on his property.

Mark THISELTON

McKAYS SHAFT 5L125

LEGEND	
	Entrance Tube
	Tree Root Curtain
	Limit of Lake
	Limit of Cave
	Decoration
	Depth Contour



Sketch based on 1982 survey work of Peter Horne

LOWER SOUTH EAST

5-7th September 1992

Party; Chris Hales and Paul Harper.

Features; 5L7, 5L8, 5L9, 5L14, 5L43,44, 5L60, 5L61, 5L67, 5L70, 5L72, 5L79, 5L81, 5L122, 5L144, 5L155, 5L167,168, 5L186, 5L195.

We drove down to Mount Gambier on the Friday night. Kevin Mott met us at Ian Lewis' house and we spent most of the night talking.

On Saturday after much searching we found airport cave in a pine forest. We kitted up in our wet suits and entered the cave. After a short crawl we entered the water within the first chamber and snorkelled to the end where we then crawled through to a passage that headed roughly back toward the entrance. This passage has several parallel passages all of which have water in them. As we snorkelled along the roof started getting lower and just near this point we found a fixed guideline, as the next 20 m or so is fairly narrow and is usually sumped. After this part of the passage the water stops and the mud starts. After walking a short distance we came to a crawl around the side of a sand cone that leads to the final chamber, alas we were too big to get through, so the next time I visit, I will have to bring along some tools to enlarge the crawl. We retraced our route, exploring side passages on the way out.

The next feature we visited was Vines Fissure 5L122. This is a pothole type entrance 1 m x 2 m which opens out into a crevasse 1 m wide. It is a 6 m drop down to the water at one end of the crevasse where it sumps off. At the other end it does a dogs leg then continues for 5 until it also sumps.

The next feature to be visited was Crevice cave 5L79. Again this is a pot hole type entrance 1 m x 1 m which opens out into a crevasse about 0.8 m wide in the middle and tapers off at both ends. The only negotiable part is about 5 m long, although you can see much further along the crevasse, it is too narrow to move in. Again it is about a 6 m drop to the water table.

That evening we went and had a look at the entrances of The Pines 5L61, Fossil cave 5L81 and Stinging Nettle cave 5L186.

The next day saw us visiting Piccaninnie Ponds 5L72 where we snorkelled. We then went for a tour of the larger sinkholes in the area including - Gouldens Hole 5L8, Ela Elap 5L14, One Tree 5L7, Little Blue Lake 5L9, The Two Sisters 5L43, 44, Un-named cave 5L195 and Swim Through cave 5L167,168.

We then met Kevin Mott and his two children to visit Un-named cave 5L155 (known to the locals as Live Sheep cave), this turned out to be a dry cave, which was disappointing. We spent a fair while in this cave digging and squeezing into a new passage that alas did not go far.

The next day we visited Mt. Burr cave 5L67, 70, where we put on our wet suit bottoms and booties, which turned out to be a wise choice as there is a lot of mud and water in this very interesting sporty cave. It is well worth a visit. We then went to Gran Gran cave 5L60 where we found the water to be at least 10 degrees cooler than the water in the other mount Gambier caves. The water was a dark tannin colour and there was an oily film on the surface that made us wonder whether anything had been dumped in it. I swam along the first passage for 15 m but it then sumped so we headed to the next passage that is called the "Bathroom". This was fairly narrow with just enough room for your head and shoulders to be out of the water, but after 20 m it became too narrow to continue. We will have to wait for a drought to see the chambers beyond.

Paul HARPER

YORKE PENINSULA

28th June 1992

Party; Chris, Mac and Ryan Hales, Ros Ambler, Jason Mold, Ruth Lawrence, Nigel Coe and Paul Harper.

Features; 5Y1.

Only Chris and I had been to Corra Lynn cave 5Y1 before, so we took this opportunity to introduce the others to the joys of endless crawling. We devised the most painful and awkward path through the cave we could find, but Ros spat the dummy after 10 minutes, so we had to slow our pace and incorporate more rest stops. Everyone soon got the hang of climbing up and down to the different levels allowing the day to progress quite smoothly.

Initially we went via the Drum to Rope Crevasse, then along Bushwalkers and up to Crystal Maze, then out via Rams Horn. Leaving Ros and Ruth on the surface we then went back through Rams Horn to Dix chamber where Chris and I only just managed to get through the squeeze - it was one of those breathe all the air out of your lungs jobs, we then went via Southern Cross back to the entrance.

After lunch we all went via the Wombat Runs to Skeleton Crevasse and then on to Limestone Bridge. Chris and Jason decided to go out via the Wombat Runs while the others went out via Bandicoot Bypass, after I had convinced them that it was a short cut.

All up it was an enjoyable trip.

Paul HARPER

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new Full Members:

Ruth Lawrence 9208
20 Olive Street
STEPNEY SA 5069
Ph. 362 0769

Fern Raintree 8708
Ph. 388 6441

Welcome to our new Associate Members;

Mark Kean 9209
8 Burnett Drive
ONE TREE HILL SA 5114
Ph. 378 1220

Ken Smith 9210
13 Samson Ave.
WESTBOURNE PARK SA 5041
Ph. 271 7064

John Gleeson 9212
1 Margaret Ave.
WEST CROYDON SA 5008
Ph. 340 1751

Jaz Packer 9213
688 Lower North East Rd.
PARADISE SA 5075
Ph. 337 5811

Grant Pearce 9211
Ph. 085 24 6287

CAVE SURVEYING

One of the concerns I have heard expressed when people have been asked to do surveying is that of accuracy. Well, in the words of that ex politician from up north - Don't you worry about that! With the equipment we normally use; hand compass and tape, sufficient accuracy can be obtained if care is taken in all the readings and you are used to using the equipment. If greater accuracy is required then more advanced techniques can be used; including RDF.

Some years ago the Dept of Mines utilised CEGSA data (provided as a courtesy) and undertook to resurvey some of the caves at the Naracoorte Reserve at what was probably great expense. Although no feedback was given to us the maps and data have slowly begun to surface. Rest easy all you amateur cave surveyors. They have not done any better for all their expensive equipment. Stations do not correlate with themselves or natural/topographic features. Some of the cave stations are even outside of the caves. Unless all the tapes we have are in excess of 10% in error their surface features are highly fudged. Cheaper CEGSA RDF points have been proven by drilling to be more accurate.

You don't need degrees or to be experts to map a cave. Simply old fashioned care, ethics and knowledge of your equipment and the caves will get you an acceptable result.

Kevin MOTT

PROGRAMME

November

/1		
7/8	Punyelroo	Mark Sefton
14/15	Flinders Ranges	Paul Harper
21/22	Naracoorte	Mark Thiselton
25	GENERAL 7:30pm	
28/29	Naracoorte	Paul Harper

December

5-16	Nullarbor Plains	Max Meth
5/6		
12/13	Mount Gambier	Paul Harper
19/20		
27/28		

January 1993

2/3		
4-8	TAS TROG ASF Conference	Tasmania
9/10		
16/17		
23/24		
27	GENERAL 7:30pm	
30/31		

February

6/7		
12	Annual General Meeting 7pm	MAYLANDS HOTEL 67 Phillis St. Maylands
13/14		
20/21		
24	GENERAL 7:30pm	
27/28		

May

1-22	Nullarbor Plains	Paul Harper
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Check with the Trip Liaison Officer for any additions or alterations.