

Glorious Kangaroo Island

Kevin Mott

In the 1930s a publication titled *Glorious Kangaroo Island* was produced to promote the values of Kangaroo Island and to encourage visitors. Locals felt they were being ignored and felt the best way to promote the Island was to do it themselves. The publication contains numerous photos and the text describes local industries and tourist spots.

Of the 80 pages, 59 are devoted to the caves of Kelly Hill. This indicates the caves were highly valued by the locals. Harold Bell tells the story of the discovery and exploration of the caves, particularly Midnight Cave, at Kelly's Hill [sic] by himself, Miss Olive Burgess, Misses Edith and Ida May as well as Mr and Mrs Burgess. These names are commemorated in the names of walking tracks at Kelly Hill.

There are many interesting tales of exploration, people being lost and 'olde' world descriptions of decoration. A particularly interesting story relates to a major bushfire not too dissimilar to the 2020 bushfire which devastated the area.

Harold Bell certainly expresses his passion for the caves and their value as a tourism drawcard – a passion that seems to be missing from modern management.

Within the section on the caves is a series of 12 photos depicting various chambers within the caves. These mysterious chambers always intrigued me as no one seemed to know where they actually were. During the 1980s, CEGSA ran a series of trips to Kangaroo Island to document and locate the caves around Kelly Hill. It was difficult work due to the density and nature of the scrub. As a break from this work time was spent in Kelly Hill Cave relocating old survey marks and determining where these photos and mysterious chambers were.

The chambers named by those early explorers are tabled in the following list. Only seven of the chambers appear in the photographs in the book. Those included in the photographs are identified.

1. The Hanging Lamps
2. The Flying Foxes (*photographed*)
3. The Dentist's room (*photographed*)
4. Nature's Masterpiece
5. The Salt Lake City (*photographed*)
6. The Waxworks Chamber (*photographed*)
7. The Washbowl Chamber (may be the Christening Font)
8. The Frozen mountains (*photographed*)
9. The Cascades
10. The Egyptian Mummies
11. Shower of Rain on the Sea
12. Noah's Ark (*photographed*)
13. The Tombstone Chamber (*photographed*)

As not all were photographed in the early publication, we can only work out the locations for those we have identified. Elery Hamilton Smith identified K3 as the entrance used by the early explorers with K1 (Animal Cave) being found later. A 1949 map by Elery indicated "Salt Lake City" being just beyond the window at the east end of the tourist route in "Midnight Cave". It is reasonable to assume that all the chambers, photographed or not, were located in Midnight Cave, now known as Kelly Hill Cave.

Initially we were able to locate eight of the 12 photos. Coloured photos were taken for comparison. The photos could not be replicated exactly due to differences in lenses. It is assumed the original photography equipment was a large format camera using magnesium flash. It was also found that different chambers were either the result of looking at decoration from a different perspective or simply rotating the camera at a point and photographing a different portion of the same chamber. Often it was found that there was a convenient place to sit comfortably at the camera points!

A follow up visit tried to emulate the original photos more closely and used black and white film. Digital cameras now make the composing and lighting much easier and you don't have to wait for the film to be developed to check the quality. A ninth photo site (page 43) was located on the second visit. Only three more sites need to be located. One wag on the second trip was heard to say "we should come back here in the daytime, we will be able to see more"!

A pleasant surprise when comparing old and new photographs is that there appears to be minimal damage at each site in the intervening years, despite development of the tourist facilities in the cave. The later photos did not include the obligatory youth for scale.

There are still three sites to be confirmed and photographed and with the renewed interest in Kangaroo Island and Kelly Hill it is a worthy project for a photographer to follow up. These early names for locations are worth preserving as they capture the excitement and wonderment of the original explorers.

A summary of the photographs is contained in Table 1. The title for each photo is that used in the original publication. All the photos are in Kelly Hill Cave. The original explorers called it Midnight Cave.

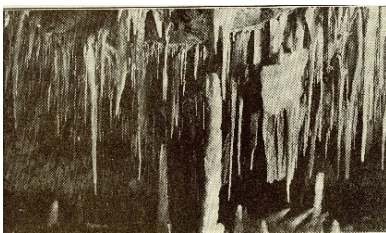
Page	Title	Retake
39	Hanging wonders in the Midnight Cave, Kelly's Hill	3
41	Magnificent Curtains of Fibrous Roots and Stalactites in Midnight Cave, Kelly's Hill	
43	A Maze of Statuary and Countless Stalactites in the Dentist's Hall, Midnight Cave, Kelly's Hill	9
47	A View of Flying Fox Chamber, Cave at Kelly's Hill	7
49	Another View in flying Fox Chamber, Kelly's Hill	8
51	Marble Forest, in Mystery Chamber, Midnight Cave, Kelly's Hill	6
53	Fantastic Hanging Curtains and Glacier in Freezing Chamber, Kelly's Hill	1
55	Looking into Recesses of Salt Lake City, Cave at Kelly's Hill	
59	Looking into the Recesses of the Dentist's Hall, Midnight Cave. (note the magnificent dome)	
61	Weird Ghostlike Shapes in the Tombstone Chamber, Kelly's Hill	4
63	Honeycomb Pillars, at Entrance to Noah's Ark, Cave at Kelly's Hill	5
65	Waxworks Chamber, with Sloping Waxlike Floor, in Midnight Cave	2

Table 1: Summary of photographs

Glorious Kangaroo Island photo comparison

The photos on the following pages are arranged as follows:

- Column 1 is the original photo from *Glorious Kangaroo Island*.
- Column 2 is a colour photo taken in 1989.
- Column 3 is a black and white photo from 1990 attempting to better recreate the composition.



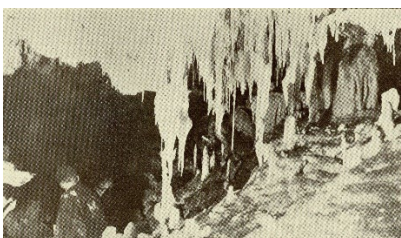
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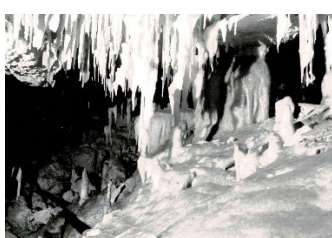
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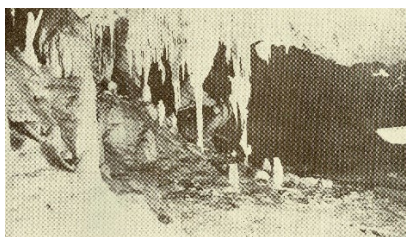


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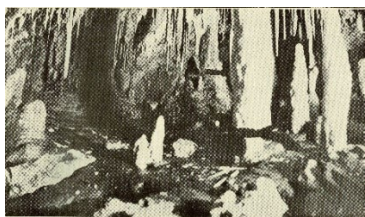
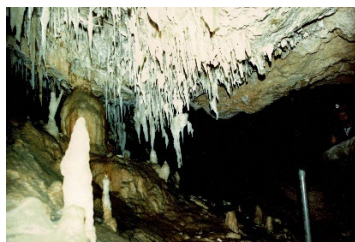


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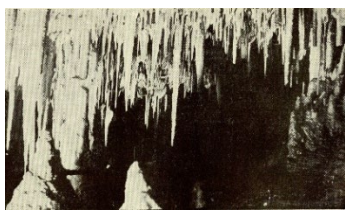
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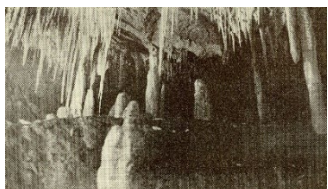
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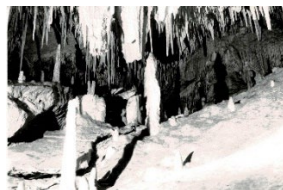
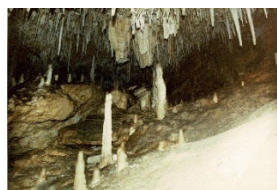
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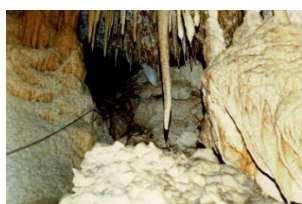
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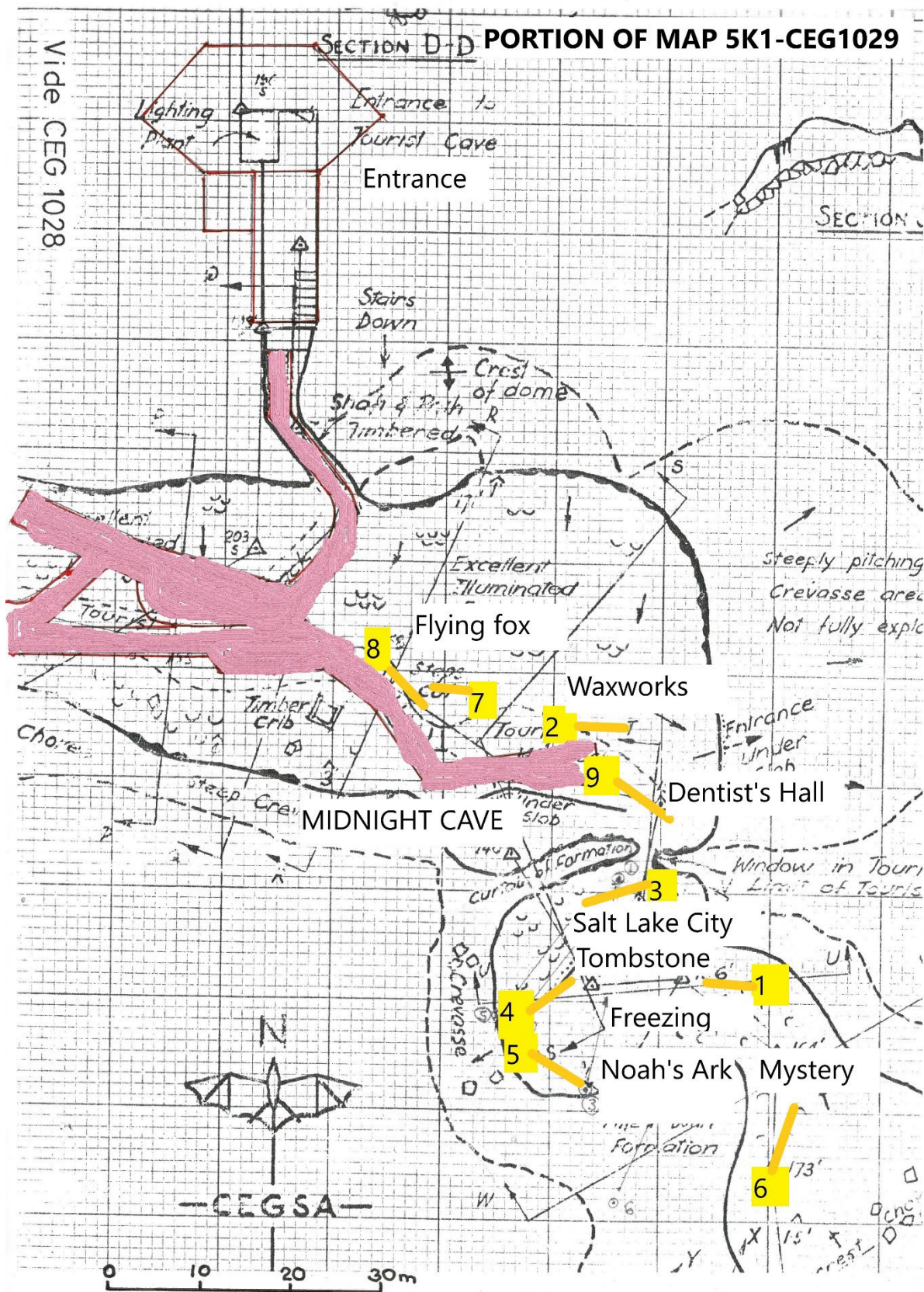


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The location of the photos taken during the re-examination are shown plotted on a portion of CEGSA map 1029 with the camera location indicated by the yellow square. The orange line indicates the direction of the photo. The current tourist path is shown in purple.

