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### Editorial.

#### Midnight Hole - Australia's Second-Deepest Cave.

Since the last Spiel things have been happening at Ida Bay. On June 2 Brian and Jeanette discovered two promising looking holes just below the limestone boundary on the north side of Marble Hill and some 600 ft. vertically above the end of Mystery Ck. Cave (Entrance Cave). See report in Spiel No.25.

On July 27, a party of six carried up a load of equipment to do some preliminary exploration. The first hole stopped at a depth of 40 ft. but the second one was explored to a depth of 245 ft. and was still going strong. (See report in this Spiel.) At the same time as Allan Keller reached the limit of exploration and hurled rocks down the next shaft a party of university mountaineers was scaling the talus slope at the far end of Mystery Ck. Cave. They beat a hasty retreat when they heard a rumble of rocks somewhere up above.

On Sunday August 11, a party of ten carrying all the club's worldly possessions of rope and ladder staggered up Marble Hill once again determined to "finish" the hole. An underground party of six rigged pitch after pitch - then unriggered the upper pitches to provide ladders for the lower ones. Allan Keller was the only one to reach the bottom of the last shaft at - 580 feet. A horizontal passage narrowed into a very tight squeeze before opening out into the unknown. Allan was soaking wet and had to call it a day. The party did not emerge until midnight, hence the name suggested for the hole.

With exploration not yet complete the depth of 580 ft. makes it the second deepest cave in Australia. It required 550 feet of laddering and has three pitches over one hundred feet. They are 120, 110 and 180 feet. Fifteen hours were spent underground. (The following day the president received ten resignations!)

#### Changes of Address.

Allan Keller - 1 Sloane St., Battery Point.

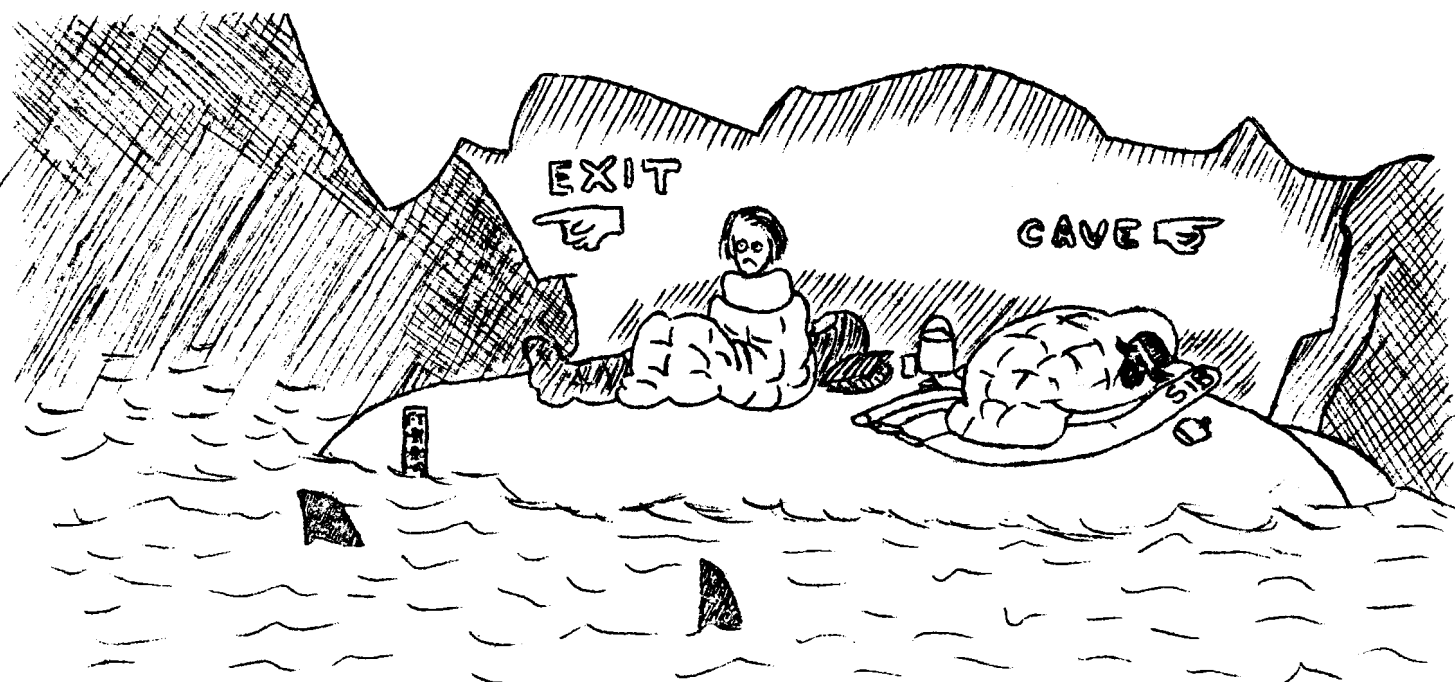
Ray Alsop, - 59 Colville St., Battery Point.

Ted Todd - 1 Shoobridge St., Glebe.

Tim Walkden-Brown - Flat 4, 24 Fulton St., East St.Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria.

+ Latest news is that Tim is coming back to "Tasmania". He is going to Macquarie Island which happens to be in the same municipality in which he did all his caving! (Both Macquarie Is. and Exit Cave are in the Municipality of Esperance.)

+ The club has found a cartoonist in its midst. We hope that Sib will keep it up and provide us with some more cartoons - so far we have three.



+ Elery Hamilton-Smith, who is president of the Victorian Speleological Association, will be visiting Hobart next month. Elery hopes to show his slides of Australian and New Caledonian caves at Albert's place on Thursday night, 12th September. All Hobart cavers are welcome! Please let Albert know if you are coming. Elery organised the first A.S.F. expedition to the Nullarbor Plains and also an expedition to New Caledonia in 1965 - 66. He is particularly interested in cave fauna.

### TRIP REPORTS.

Hastings. - 21-7-68 - Wolf Hole.

Party: Peter Brabon(leader), J.Brabon, R.Booth, B.Howe and Tony (Barrington?)

Weather was fine but overcast. Gear used - four 30 ft. ladders, one 120 ft. rope, two 30 ft. ropes, 1 header and 3 krabs.

A day trip to investigate Wolf Hole which hasn't been visited by the club for many years, Albert said about eight.

After meeting at the Chalet at Hastings, Roy Skinner kindly took us up to the hole, about a five minute drive and a twenty minute walk, through reasonable scrub. We arrived to be confronted with a hole about 40 ft. in diameter and 80 ft. deep. Roy left us at this stage. With the four ladders rigged about 20 ft. of this is on a 45 degree slope, the rest vertical. Bernard was first down followed by Tony and Robin. I abseiled down, very interesting abseil too. Some nice formation was found also the odd fossil, a very interesting cave with very little water(except for the lake) and not too muddy. We managed to find the underground lake which Albert told me about, even to find this was well worth the trip. Its size is approx. 50 yards at its longest and about 20 - 30 yards at its widest. After about three to four hours caving we decided to return to the ladder. "Quite a climb" someone said. We arrived at the cars at about 4.30 p.m. and after a meal and a talk to Pam and Roy we returned to Hobart. Well worth the trip to this cave.

P.Brabon.

Entrance Cave Area - 27-7-68.

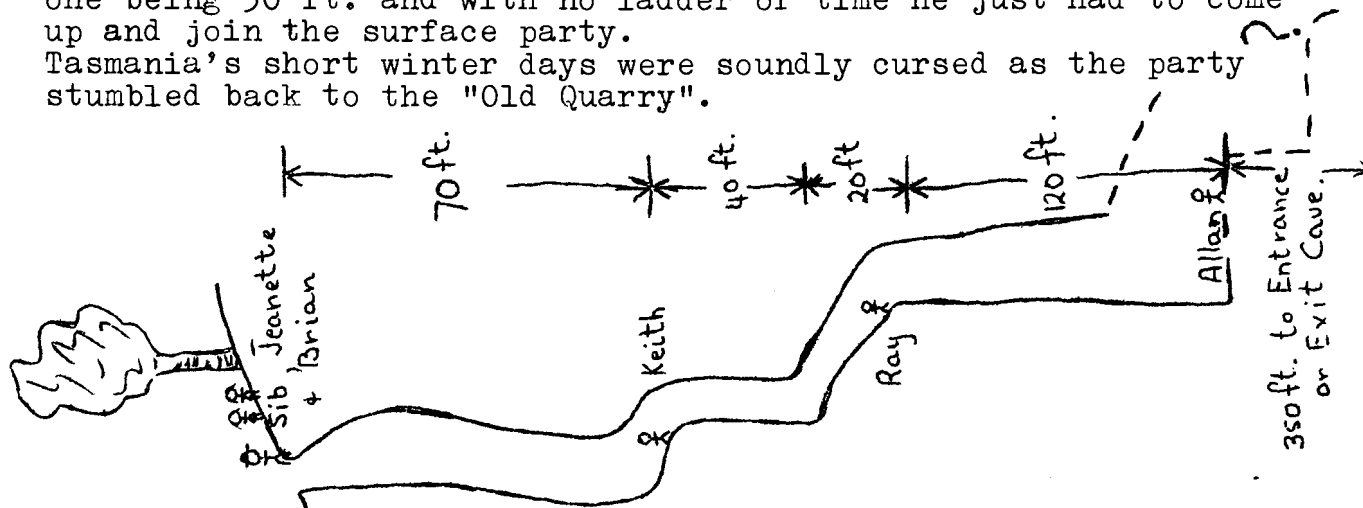
Party: Brian and Jeanette Collin, Keith and Sib Corbett, Allan Keller and Ray Alsop.

All the requirements of a good caving trip were fulfilled, the weather was fine and only time and lack of equipment forced a halt to further exploration.

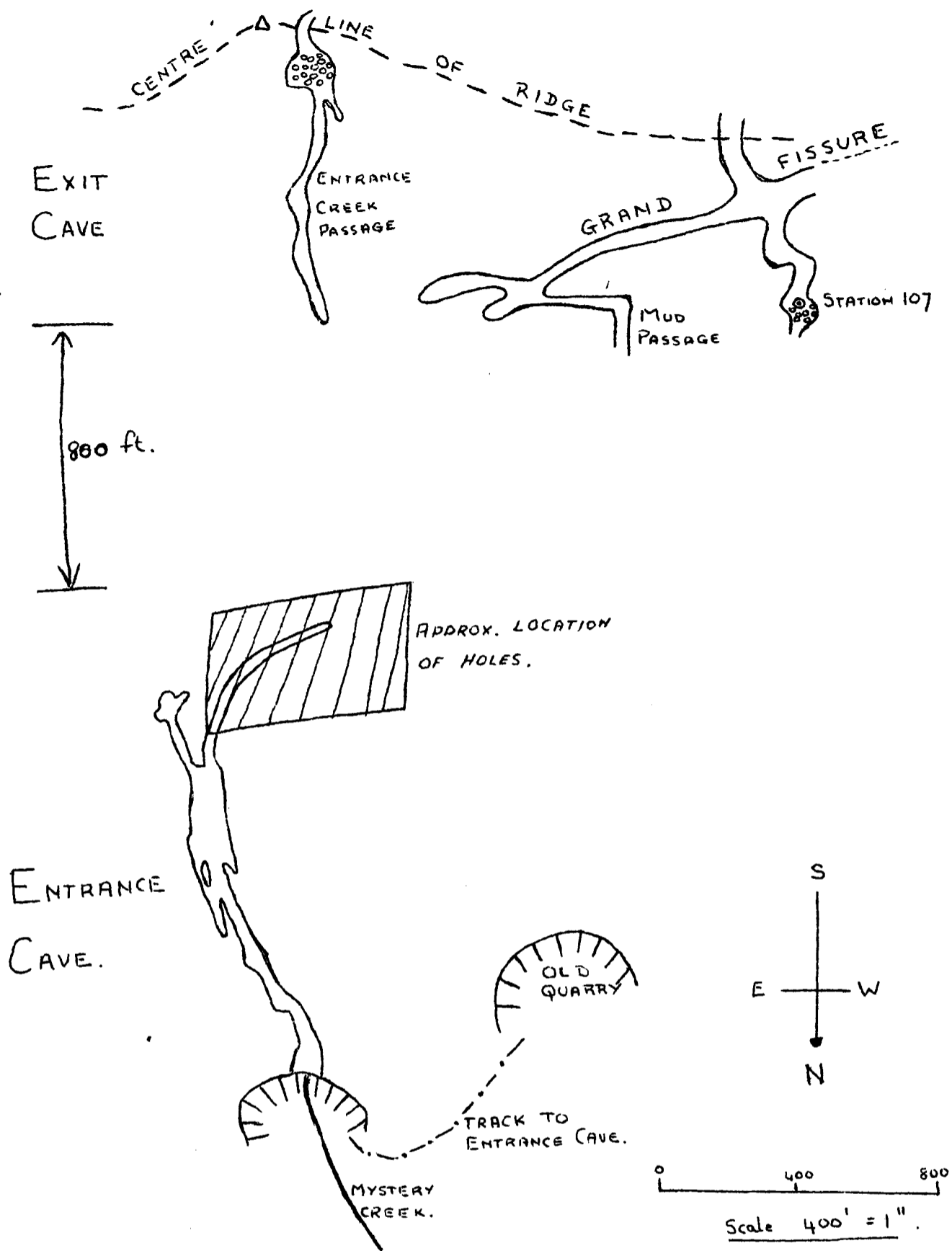
The party left Hobart at 6 a.m. with 180 ft. of ladder and over 500 ft. of rope all clean, and returned to Hobart at 11 p.m. ropes and ladders dirty but enthusiasm undiminished.

The approx. location of the holes explored is shown on the sketch map, the holes are close to the limestone-sandstone contact zone and approx. 600 ft. above Entrance Cave. The main interest is to determine which cave, Entrance or Exit, do the holes lead into, possibly both. The first hole was disappointing, it blocked off at 40 ft. Exploration of the second hole started at 1.30 p.m. and is not finished. Allan descended the first 76 ft. pitch followed by Ray and Keith. Allan and Ray continued on down the next 40 ft. pitch, then down a short steep slope to the top of a rather impressive drop. The 60 ft. of ladder left being obviously not enough the surface party lowered the top 60 ft. down on a rope and Allan proceeded down the 120 ft. pitch, twice, as he soon found out 90 ft. of ladder won't stretch to 120 ft. At the bottom he found a small creek which appeared to continue in a series of steps, the first one being 30 ft. and with no ladder or time he just had to come up and join the surface party.

Tasmania's short winter days were soundly cursed as the party stumbled back to the "Old Quarry".



MAP SHOWING THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF HOLES.



Brian also had an interesting theory that the shaft might lead into a high level stream passage which would join up with the shafts in the roof at the far end of Exit Cave.

Famous last words:-

The bottom (really) fell out of this theory!!

Wolf Hole - Sat. 10-8-68.

Party:- Albert Goede(leader), Brian Collin, Ray Alsop and Allan Dartnell.

The purpose of this trip was to have a quick look at the cave and to give Allan and Albert the opportunity to do some fauna collecting. Roy came along to show us the route followed by the new track. First man was down at 11.30 a.m. and last man came up at 3.30 p.m. Less than four hours were spent in the cave. We had lunch on the

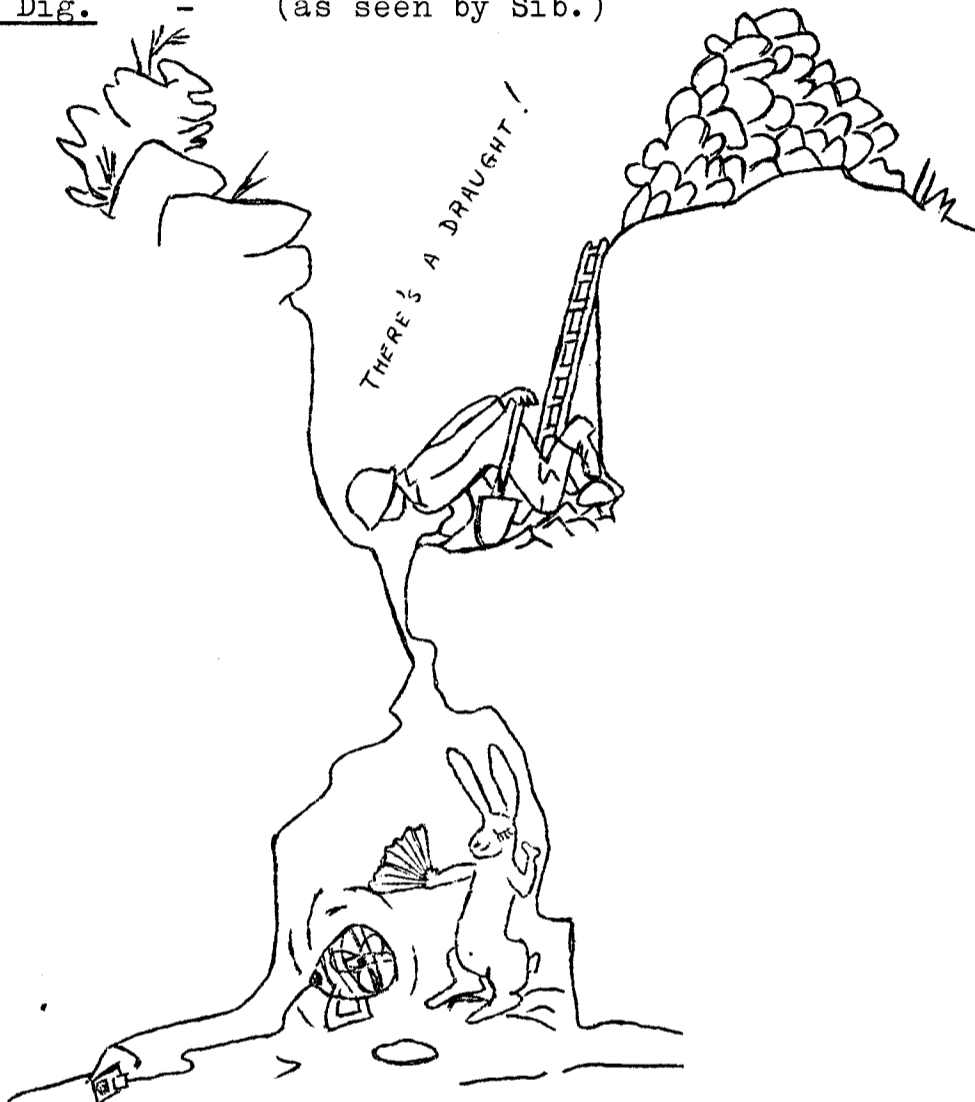
shores of underground Lake Pluto. Brian discovered the first Anaspides in a small creek flowing out of the lake. Allan who had brought a net for just such an occasion discovered he had lost it along the way. He and Brian disappeared for a quick search, while Albert made unsuccessful efforts to catch the beasts by hand. Allan returned with the net and half a dozen specimens were collected. They are of particular interest because they are the first blind specimens to be found in caves.

Despite the wet weather the cave was remarkably dry. Several promising leads were seen but not yet explored due to lack of time. This cave is well worth another trip.

Albert Goede.

### Dick's Dig.

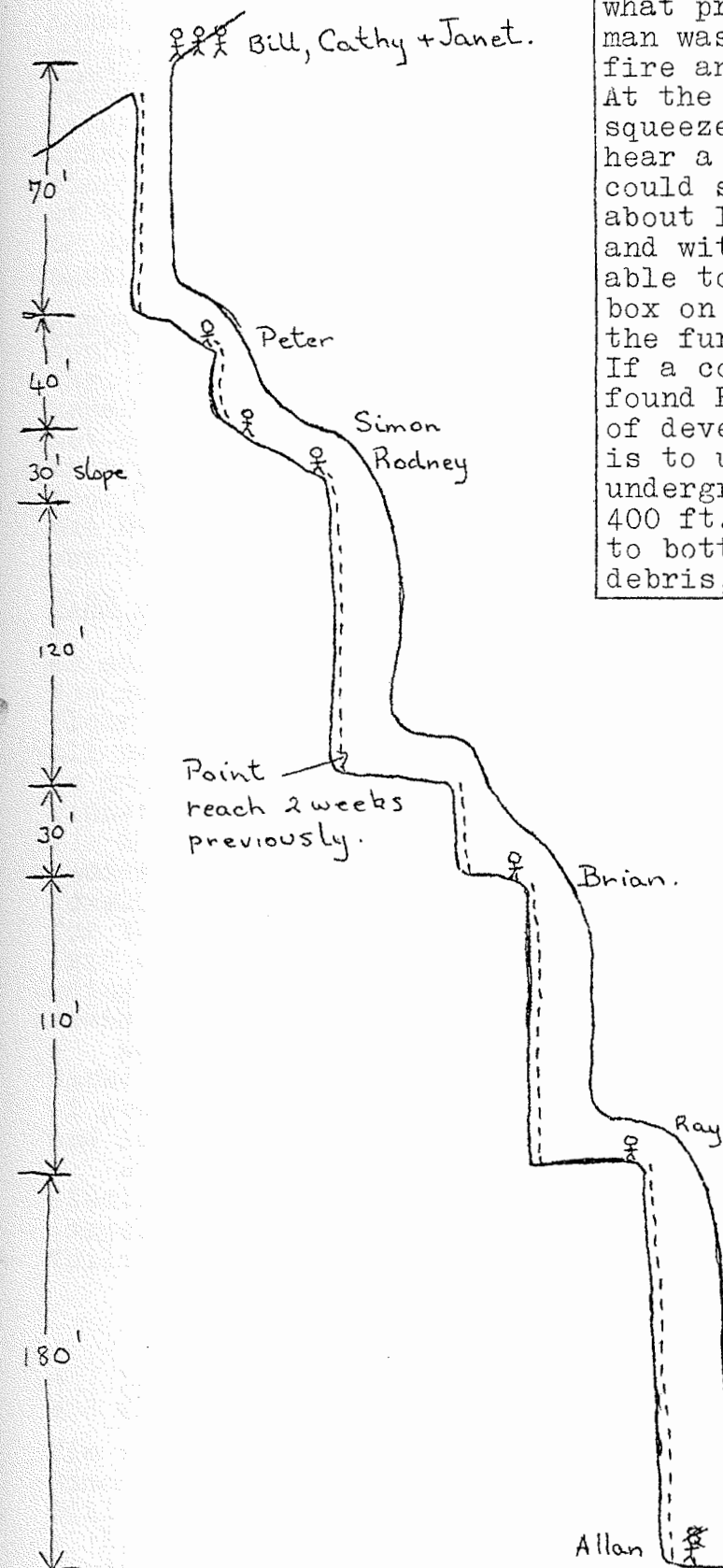
(as seen by Sib.)



### Midnight Hole. - 11-8-68.

Party:- Brian Collin(leader), Allan Keller, Ray Alsop, Bill Hodge, Rodney Hughes, Simon Stephens, Peter Helman, Janet Hansen & Cathy. The trip was successful in that one person reached the bottom at a depth of 580 ft. of which 550 ft. of laddering was involved. The cave is consequently the second deepest in Australia but a connection to either Exit or Entrance Caves still eludes us. The story of this trip is not so much one of caving technique but one of personal feelings and personal hardships during the 15 hours underground between 9 a.m. and midnight. Only Allan knows his thoughts as wet through he reached the end of 120 ft. of ladder on the last pitch and had to climb up again and call for another 60 ft. to complete the pitch. Only Rodney knows his thoughts as he leaned over the top of the 120 ft. pitch clutching onto a large, loose rock as Allan climbed unaware of the little drama on top. What of Bill's, Simon's and Peter's thoughts as they manned their solitary posts for over 12 hours, Ray on his second trip involving ladders with 340 ft. of ladders to be climbed out, Cathy and Janet on the surface, possibly debating the purpose of a caving trip and not going underground. My thoughts were centred on whether or not I would ever be allowed to lead another trip. All at some stage must have(I did) secretly sworn to give up caving for ever, that this pitting of human against nature was senseless

# MIDNIGHT HOLE.



especially in our affluent society where far more physically pleasant pastimes are readily available. But what price the feeling when the last man was up to stand around a blazing fire and to realize it was all over. At the bottom Allan found a narrow squeeze with a draught of air, could hear a small trickle of water and could see that the squeeze opened up about 10' further on. With more time and with support he may have been able to continue on. He left a matchbox on a small cairn of mud to mark the furthest point reached. If a connection to Entrance Cave is found Ray has suggested a unique way of developing the pot. His suggestion is to use it as a form of "canyoning" underground, one simply takes along 400 ft. of rope and abseils from top to bottom. The pitches are free of debris, the scenery is spectacular and the acoustics in the lower parts rather odd. It would be a trip to remember. The equipment used comprised 13 thirty foot ladders, six 120 ft. ropes together with short ropes, headers and eye-bolts. The ladders used for the 70', 40' and half the 120' pitches had to be transferred for use on the lower pitches. Hauling the gear up proved to be the most heart-breaking task and it is essential that suitable gear hauling packs be used when next a similar trip is proposed.

Brian Collin.

Small squeeze; with time and manpower might be pushed, matchbox on cairn of mud left here.

Possibly Entrance Cave.

## Forward Programme.

- August 17, 18 - Flowery Gully. Exploration of caves. Leader: A. Goede.
- August 25 - Sunday. Climbing practice at Rocky Tom or Sphinx Rock. Leader: B. Collin.
- Sept. 3 - Tuesday. General meeting at Judy's flat at 8 p.m. Address: Fl. 3, 34 Forest Road.
- Sept. 7, 8 - Weekend trip to Exit or Mystery Ck. Cave. B. Collin.
- Sept. 12 - Thursday. Slide evening at Albert's place, 8 Bath Street, Battery Point. Elery Hamilton-Smith will be showing slides of caves in far away places.
- Sept. 21, 22 - Mole Creek. Leader: P. Brabon.
- October 19 - SATURDAY. ANNUAL DINNER to celebrate the club's 22nd Birthday. Waratah Hotel, 272 Murray Street. Cost 2 dollars 50 per head. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are coming.