

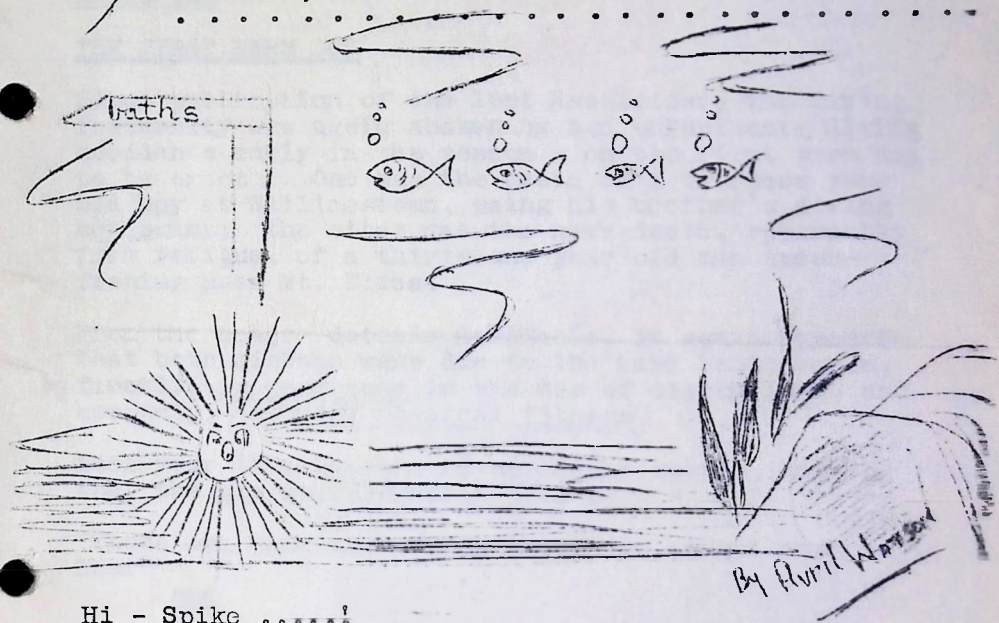
F A T H O M S

Victorian Sub-Aqua Group.

Newsletter.

December, 1965.

Price 3d.



Hi - Spike

Registered at the G.P.O. Melbourne for transmission per post as a periodical.

This is the official organ of the Victorian Cub-Aqua Group.

EDITORIAL

THE FIRST WARM DAY

Since publication of the last Newsletter, the diving fraternity was again shaken by two unfortunate diving accidents early in the season - on the first warm day, to be exact. One was the death of a fourteen year old boy at Williamstown, using his brother's diving equipment; the other was the near death, apparently from fatigue, of a thirty-one year old man spear-fishing near Mt. Eliza.

From the meagre details available, it again appears that both mishaps were due to the same basic cause, firstly, inexperience in the use of diving gear, and secondly, doubtful physical fitness.

Each year this pattern of accidents occurs, showing that the old sayings still hold good -

"There are none so deaf as those who do not wish to hear"

and

"There are none so blind as those who do not want to see",

for each year, in the newspapers, over the air, and at club meetings, warnings and good advice by expert divers, is freely disseminated.

Public opinion, aroused by generally scant and frequently erroneous reporting in the daily papers, which tend to lay the blame on the sport of diving, will possibly seek an end to such mishaps by legislation.

This would probably affect those who train divers, sell diving equipment, and those who participate in the sport. Action of this nature would be abhorrent to all true divers, but must be contemplated, and accepted, if other means fail to stem these accidents.

Therefore, it is in our own interests to foster, and police, the rules and procedures of diving, which, from our experience, we know make diving a safe and pleasant sport. We should also let newcomers to the sport know, by our own words and actions, that we consider training by the numerous reputable diving schools essential before entering the sea.

Only by these means can the new diver learn the full use of diving gear and accessories available to him; and how to prepare for, or avoid emergencies, which sooner or later, all divers are confronted with. If well prepared, the diver can safely, effeciently, and confidently overcome any small mishap, which, to the untrained diver, could easily become the cause of a fatality.

Thus, the older divers, because of their knowledge and experience, continue to dive, and grow older safely; In contrast, the new chum, full of untried self-confidence, and diving techniques gained from watching the TV set, is well on the way to becoming another of the coroner's statistics.

In conclusion, never succumb to the temptation of lending your gear to anyone whose training background or temperament for diving, you have reason to doubt, no matter how strong the persuasion.

J A N

WANTED

Has anybody got a wet wuit which is too small for them? Size about small mens'. If you have one in reasonable condition, for sale, ring 337-9263.

DINNER DANCE REMINDERS

The Dimer Dance to be held at the Stamford Hotel Rowville on Saturday 11th December, will commence at 7 p.m. Those who wish to continue the festivities afterwards are invited to the Brickers for late supper. So that you won't get lost in the wilds, they live at
17 Selby Street
MT. WAVERLEY. (Phone 27.9068)
which is the continuation of Dickson Street off
Huntingdale Road.

SEE YOU THERE!

MEETINGS

At the last Club meeting Alistair Gilmour of the Fisheries and Wildlife Department gave a most interesting talk on the Benthic Survey of Westernport Bay. This survey has been financed by a grant from B.P. which is building the oil refinery at Crib Point, The idea of the survey is to study the fauna present, with a view to determining whether the activities of industrial concerns will have any detrimental effect on the fauna in future years.

NEXT MEETING

Will be held at Scot's Hall on Friday night 17th December at 8. p.m. This will be a general social

and film evening to wind up the year's activities. So come along and see your mates.

Supper Volunteers. Margot Robertson, Max Davenport, Rob Bricker.

OUTINGS → WILLIAMSTOWN 29th November.

A strong south-easterly made conditions cold and unpleasant at this site, so by mutual consent, a scallop drive was substituted at Dromana. Weather conditions were much better there and four divers spent a pleasant afternoon, even though the haul was not as good as anticipated.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEETING

The main points dealt with in the last committee meeting were as follows:-

How pages for Handbook; printing of new pages for the handbook has been authorized, and will be available as soon as possible. These pages will include office bearers, members names, air filling stations, and general information etc.

Research Work; F. Coustley, our S.D.F. delegate reported that further survey work has been carried out at the artificial shoal off Mordiallic. A further project in Westernport, (reported earlier in the Newsletter,) the Benthic Survey, requires divers for survey work on a long term basis. Two divers from each club have been invited to work on this project.

Moomba; all approaches to find a donor for the major prize have failed. The committee therefore regretfully decided to abandon the project.

Membership; Cards with club numbers will be issued shortly to all new members.

Future outings, and an Easter trip were discussed.

CLUB BADGES AND PENNANTS

Are always for sale. There is a lapel badge which all members should have, price 8/6; and a blue car pennant available. See Ron Addison.

TRAINING

Would anyone requiring training, or knowing prospective members who may wish to be trained, please contact Frank Coustley, Phone 28, 3910 immediately.

C & B Grade certificate tests will be held late January.

Requirements for C Grade are as follows:-

1. Swim 100 yards without stopping, no equipment.
2. Swim 50' with unit and without mask, taking at least three breaths.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of resuscitation as required by examining committee, from Mouth to Mouth, Revised Sylvester, and Holger-Neilson back pressure and life methods of resuscitation.
4. At a depth of 8 ft. remove unit and swim underwater 50 ft without surfacing.
5. Reverse above procedure to recover unit, surface, then swim 50 ft on the back without using unit.
6. Remove mask at 8ft, replace, and clear.
7. Make a free ascent from 10 ft, paying careful attention to breathing.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of emergency hand signals in water.

TRAINING HANDBOOK

Plans are in hand to produce a Handbook on training which will be available to all members. Further announcements later.

KING ISLAND

(see over)

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Is anyone interested in an Easter trip to King Island? If there are sufficient takers, the committee is willing to arrange an excursion. If you don't know what King Island is like, just ask the old hands who have been there before - they'll bore you for hours about those fabulous Crays! Think it over and let Rob Bricker know.

UNOFFICIAL DIVES - MILDURA

Last month, four divers of the Group set out for Mildura on a special diving assignment. Two car loads complete with gear, arrived at 9 p.m. Friday night, and the other at 4 a.m. Saturday morning. All were accommodated at a luxurious Motel, air conditioned, and with swimming pool, plus Bikini clad beauties (in daylight).

All arose at 7.30 a.m. Saturday and notwithstanding the firm initial objections of the Weir Master, diving commenced at 11 a.m.

Whilst Melbourne temperatures rose to 98°, in Mildura it reached 104° with a scorching north wind to boot. The "diving assistants" sweltered, but the divers were blissfully unaware of the heat - they had problems of their own, for they were groping, worming, thrashing, sliding, crawling, and sneaking their way along a 250 ft length of the Mildura Weir under a twenty foot wall of water thundering down onto a concrete apron. They dived under it, through it, and behind it. Water depth below the weir was six feet of bucking seething, swirling yellow-green liquid, with a visibility about two feet through a labyrinth of steel girders pipes and bars. Pressure from the falling water was anticipated, and we learnt to cope with being tossed around like free floating astronauts in orbit.

However, we were rudely shaken when we found in our exploration of the bowls of this monster, that at irregular intervals, panels in the base of the

weir were open, so that underwater jets, about four feet in diameter, with miles of pressure behind them, tended to strip off the diver's gear. If, they tried to force their way across, they soon got the message to desist, as they would be either thinly smeared over the girders, or alternatively, be transported at a great rate of knots down river to Wentworth, 10 miles away.

This activity took up something like three hours of patient and tiring diving. Although the object of the search was not achieved, from a diving aspect the effort was completely successful, as evidenced by the recovery of many small but valuable chunks of copper and brass.

By way of relaxation, we spent the latter part of Saturday afternoon luxuriating in the clear blue waters of our Motel pool, watching, and being watched by the same barely clad young ladies - who could also swim! Later, we were entertained at dinner in the restaurant, Dead beat, we retired at 10.30 p m.

Sunday morning found us diving again, this time below the weir, in warm claret coloured water twenty feet deep, searching and probing every snag and tree stump in the river for a quarter mile down-stream. Again, three hours of diving proved negative.

Whilst our search proved unsuccessful, those participating experienced something completely new, exciting, but nevertheless, humbling, in the use of the aqualung, but not to be recommended for the inexperienced or faint hearted.

NUMBERING DIVING GEAR.

For the ready identification of divers and their gear, the Group some two years ago issued numbers to each member. It was desired that the number be printed on, or attached to each piece of diving gear, including clothing used on outings. The wisdom of this action, had it been applied by all members, would have been

proven by the return of any gear lost or left behind on outings. That all members did not apply the Committee's suggestion is manifest by the growing collection of diving apparatus which one member is accruing in his garage; weight belts, life-jackets, swim trunks, the owners of which cannot be identified.

Anybody missing such gear should contact the Secretary and if some of it is yours, you can claim it after paying the usual fine of 5/- per article, as provided in the by-laws.

WORKING BEE

We wish to bring to the notice of Group members that it is proposed to organize a WORKING BEE in late January 1966 to carry out any odd jobs which Mrs. Dot Drury may wish to have done around her house at Frankston KEEP IT IN MIND, and be in it. Let Frank Coustbey know. All help will be sincerely appreciated. More details later.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Those of you who have forgotten that late gift will get a reprieve at the next meeting. John Noonan will have a further selection of natural stone jewellery on display and for sale.

REMEMBER - AUSTRALIAN GEMSTONES - NEXT MEETING
FINE SELECTION -- PRICES REASONABLE.

UNDERWATER RESEARCH WORK. The S.D.F. is at present considering a suggestion from the Group that a research organization be formed from all the member clubs of the S.D.F., so that any diver from these clubs may become a member, and take part in research projects, attend lectures on technical subjects in the underwater sciences, and generally be in contact with other divers of similar interests. There will be further announcements about this at meetings and in the Newsletter, but begin to give it some thought now.

If you are sincerely interested in becoming part of such an organization, come to the next Group meeting or let Jan Watson 337-9263 know. This does not in any way mean loss of membership in the VSAG - it will be purely a complementary activity.

FUTURE OUTINGS. A list of future outings will be published early in the new year. Outings over the holiday period will be discussed at the next meeting on December 17th.

The long weekend outing on Foundation Day weekend at the end of January 1966, is projected for Cape Liptrap the camp site area to be Bear Gully, away from the crowds. More information at the club meeting about how to get there.

SEA SCIENCE SECTION. A letter from an oil search subsidiary of the B.H.P. has recently been received by the S.D.F. This letter requests all divers to keep a look out underwater for signs of bituminous matter which may give clues to petroleum deposits. Divers seeing anything suggestive of these are asked to report to the B.H.P. (rewards for so doing are not discussed!)

Petroleum deposits, which may vary in density from near solids, to very volatile gases, are regarded as being just as much a 'rock' by geologists, as the materials of the Earth's crust which we naturally think of under that term. It is thought that petroleum substances are basically formed under marine conditions from the remains of marine animals which have died in great numbers at the same time, and were rapidly buried. A recent example of this occurred in the Indian Ocean when several thousands of square miles of the sea bed were covered by the remains of fish which died in a mass mortality from some cause, possibly parasitic disease.

Organic remains, when rapidly covered by sediment

from the overlying waters, are virtually shut out from oxygen. If oxygen is not present, the process of oxidation cannot occur, and normal decomposition products do not form. Instead, a complex range of hydrocarbons forms, which include hydrogen, and carbon in their composition, but not oxygen. These are the raw materials of petroleum.

Over long periods of time ranging through tens of millions of years these petroleum-forming reactions continue; at the same time the material is buried deeper and deeper in the crust, with the deposition of more sediments above. The pressure of these overlying sediments is also applied on the petroleum deposit, and may cause the whole deposit to migrate over many miles through the pores in the rocks.

It is a common fallacy that the raw oil is found by tapping 'pools' perhaps many thousands of feet down. Occasionally, this is nearly correct, but the oil is under immense hydraulic pressure. More often, it is simply distributed throughout the rocks as described above.

There are a number of rock types, rocks of the right 'age' and certain types of geological structures, which are more likely to contain oil traps than others. This is why so much careful mapping is done, and so many stratigraphic wells are drilled - and so much money spent - even before a trace of oil is found. At the best the oil prospecting process is little more than a highly educated guess.

Obviously, as most of the continental shelf, as well as the continents themselves, have at one time or another, been at the bottom of the sea, the likelihood of finding oil by drilling into the sea bed is just the same as on land. The technical difficulties, though greater, are steadily being overcome.

There are two favourable basin structures of the correct age and rock type in Victoria for the finding of petroleum. One is the Gippsland basin,

the other stretches from Pt. Campbell to Mb. Gambier. The former basin is already yielding petroleum gas from the well off the Gippsland coast. Inland drills at Pt. Campbell have also yielded gas traces. Both these basins extend well out into the continental shelf.

If, through fissures, and faults, the petroleum is able to work its way to the surface, it will be seen on land as an oily area. Under water, the sticky mixture of gas and oil tends to cling together as a bubble which may be as big as a fist, black in color, and will cling to rocks and weed until disturbed. With rough weather this would be dislodged and would float inshore to the beaches. Pieces of petroleum of this nature have been known for years around the S.W. coast of Victoria, but the source, although obviously out to sea, has never been located.

So, good hunting all you underwater prospectors - you never know when or where you'll find oil - but stake your claim first!

As your Editors need a rest as much as anyone, there will be no edition of the Newsletter in January.

Keep your eye open for a good story for us; or let us know of any interesting dives for the February edition.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

SAFE AND PLEASANT DIVING