JAN-FEB 65

NEWSLETTER

FATHOMS

VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP

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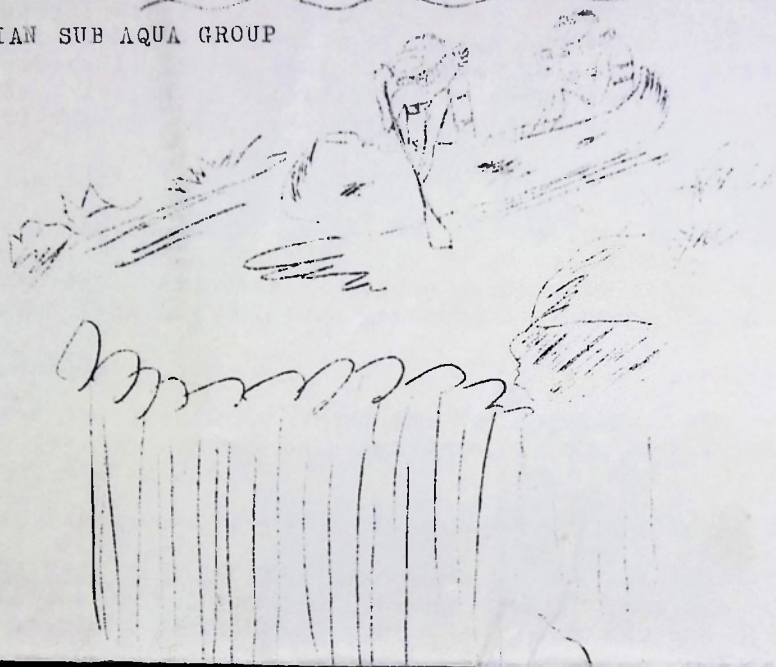

VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP

GENERAL MEETING:

The next General Meeting will be held at Scots Church Hall, Russell Street, Melbourne on Friday 19th February, 1965 at 8.p.m. There will be a showing of slides by members who visited Western Australia over the Christmas period. Those who saw the last lot of slides taken by these members on their trip to the "Heart" will certainly enjoy this showing.

TRAINING:

Training commenced at the Tryboys Pool on February 6th and will be on again on Saturday 27th February and then every second Saturday thereafter. Anyone wishing to attend must contact Frank Coustley and book beforehand. Phone 28.3910.

OUTINGS:

Over the Christmas period the outings lapsed but with weather on the improve and holidays over, we can look forward to some good trips.

The last three dives on the current outings list are as follows:-

FEBRUARY 21st - Pearces Beach - Meeting time 10 a.m. at Pearces Beach. Turn off Nepean Highway past Rye onto the Canterbury Jetty Road, then turn right onto the old Melbourne Road then turn left either 2 or 3 streets on the left where a sign post points to Pearces Beach.

MARCH 6 - 8th: - Wilson's Promontory - The outings list stated this trip to Lake Tali Karng but this has now been altered to Tidal River at Wilson's Promontory. The meeting place is in the camping area. V.S.A.G. signs will show the way. Time of meeting depends when you get there.

MARCH 21st: - Cape Schank - Meeting place is car park near light house. Time of meeting 10 a.m. This is a good area for diving so be in it.

PLEASE NOTE: The Easter trip will be to Green Cape approximately 35 miles south of Eden in New South Wales. According to reports this is a beautiful area for diving and the bottom can be seen from the surface to a depth of 80 feet. Fish are plentiful, so spearfishermen will have a ball. A compressor will be available. More information at the next General Meeting.

CAR TRIAL: A mystery car trial will be held on ANZAC DAY, Sunday 25th April. Charge per car is 10/- and a prize for the winner. This is also a social outing so anyone can attend. Your attendance as well as your friends will help make this outing a success.

DO YOU KNOW: A natural secretion of the Cachalot or Sperm Whale is a valuable substance known as Ambergris, which forms in the intestines when the animal is in bad health. The Ambergris is found floating on the surface of the water in large masses, and when fresh has a most unpleasant odour. Occasionally whales are found with their intestines completely logged with this substance, which brings £4 to £6 an ounce from perfume and cosmetic manufacturers.

DO YOU KNOW: Below 1,000 feet there is no daylight and the water is sepulchral black. But the darkness is penetrated by the lights of the inhabitants - for the fish carry phosphorescent lanterns; white, green, blue, red and yellow. Here lives a fish that has been called the Black Swallower. The Swallower engulfs another fish three times its size and you see the fish actually inside its transparent stomach.

WRECKS AROUND PHILLIP ISLAND:

"VIXEN" - In 1916 the "Vixen", a wooden vessel of 34 tons and commanded by Captain G. Clarke, was travelling from Cowes to Melbourne for repairs, but had not gone far from Cowes Jetty when she nose dived and sank for no apparent reason.

"HERMANLIE" - Another mysterious sinking occurred a few years earlier with a loss of all hands. This was the "Hermanlie", a ketch owned by Captain Henderson. It was used to carry granite from the quarry at Cape Woolamai in 1891 to supply the facing for the Equitable Buildings, Collins Street, Melbourne. In 1892 a new skipper took over and on his second trip he struck bad weather and had to put back to Rhyll. Here the skipper was advised to secure his cargo against shifting, but considered its weight would make it stable. Eventually they put to sea, but were never heard of again. It was believed that the cargo had shifted causing it to capsize and sink. This disaster terminated quarrying of granite at the Cape.

ARTICLE --- NO. 1

RESEARCH DIVISION

The surface of theEarth is covered by 70% water. Other planets nearer to the sun have no water due to high temperatures, whilst those further away, including Mars, only have water in the form of ice crystals. The rings of Saturn are probably finely divided ice particles. The oceans of Earth are thereforeunique due to the accidental factor of a surface temperature which is within the liquid range of water.

Even the properties of water are unusual for a liquid, and set the stage for the existence of life as we know it on Earth. Water is able to store heat, so the oceans are able to regulate the general surface temperature of the planet. The contrast to most liquids, water expands when solid, thus reducing the density, so that ice, instead of sinking, floats in the polar regions, where the heat from the sun melts it, setting up vital circulation currents.

The salinity of sea wateris approximately 3.5% by weight, but salinity varies somewhat from place to place. Landlocked seas are frequently more saline than normal due to evaporation. Over geological time, many such inland seas have formed, giving rise to vast buried salt deposits such as found in Germany, the U.S.A. and Australia.

RESEARCH DIVISION

Most of the known elements are present in detectable quantities in sea water, but due to low concentration have no commercial value. Recent discoveries of deposits of loose nodules of minerals containing Manganese, Cobalt, Nickel, and Phosphates on the deeper parts of the sea floor have begun a new era of underwater prospecting. These nodules, some as big as a fist, form as concretions about organic remains on the bottom.

It is thought that the seas acquired their salt content very early in the history of the planet, and that the salinity has not increased greatly over the past several hundred million years. The water probably was originally condensed from steam clouds in the atmosphere, from volcanic action, and seepage from rocks. This water would accumulate gradually in depressions as the early seas.

The sea floor was thought until recently, to be a flat plain. Oceanographic mapping has proved this to be false; the topography is often more rugged than the land. The continents are constructed of a light granitic material, the sial, which 'floats' on a denser basaltic layer, the sima. This sima is exposed on the floor on the Pacific Ocean. The sub-ariel parts of the continents do not rise abruptly from the ocean depths, but are welded to a rocky foundation, the continental shelf, which slopes gradually from sea shore to 100 fathoms. The continental shelf may be only a few miles in width to several hundred. Off Portland, it is fairly narrow, being about twenty miles. Over the edge of the shelf, there is an abrupt slope, the continental slope, which plunges down to the abyssal ocean depths.

The life of the sea is more abundant on the continental shelf, in the shallower, warmer, and better lit waters. This is the realm of the fixed or sessile marine animals, which have no need to seek their food but allow it to come to them in the nutrient laden waters. This also is the realm of the diver, and it is only in the last decade that man has at last been able to enter this world and observe for the first time the complexity of life there. Studies of marine biology, and ecology await anyone with thepatience, inclination and enthusiasm to carry them out.
