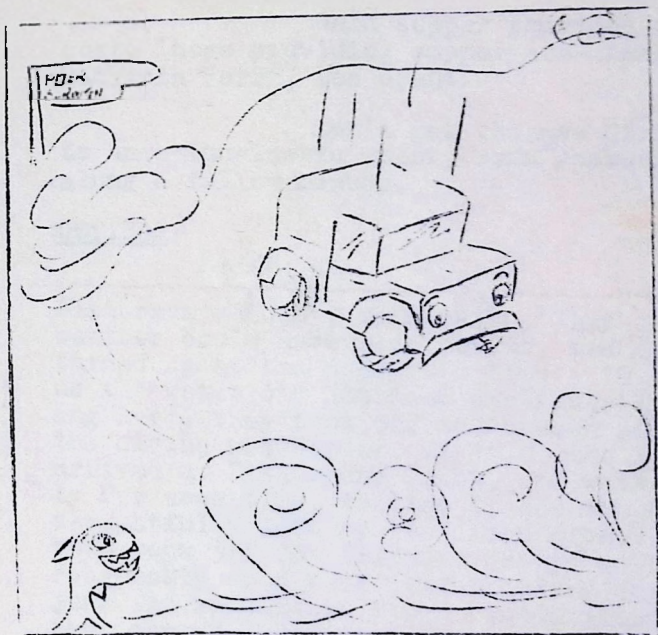


FATHOMS

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OCTOBER - 1965.



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MONTHLY MEETING:

The next meeting will be at Scots Hall, 22nd. October 1965, 8.0PM.

Note carefully fellow divers, that the next general meeting of the club is on the above date, not on the usual third Friday, due to the unavailability of the hall on that date.

Good supper provided at nominal cost. Those providing supper are- Annette Reynolds Patricia Perry, Les Grant.

Let's get the new diving year off to an enthusiastic start, come yourself, and drag along a fellow member.

OUTINGS:PART:

Fisherman's Point, Norrington: Although the weather could have been better, six divers turned up at the appointed time - 10.30 A.M. As the water did not look particularly inviting here, they took off to Portsea pier, where the diving was better. At 11.00 the latecomers arrived at Fisherman's Point, and waited patiently for some time, failing to see the message so thoughtfully left by the first group. Group two then took off for Flinders jetty and had a reasonably good time pier-crawling for assortment and specimens. It's a pretty active club that can support two different diving venues in one day!

FUTURE:

Weekend trip to Peterborough, Bay of Islands, 16th, 17th, October. Prospective participants contact Peter Matthews. There is a camping ground at Peterborough. Good diving assured if the weather holds. Access to the water either by ropes or by falling. We will try to find an easier way in the meantime.

Saturday arrivals will find someone at local P.C. until 11.A.M.

S.D.F. CAMP.

The projected weekend camp at Somers for 9th and 10th October has been temporarily cancelled owing to staffing difficulties. It is proposed to hold it in the new year. Further announcements later, but start planning now to attend, it's well worth it.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS., 1965-66

At the Annual General Meeting on 17th September ten directors were appointed. As the nominations did not exceed the number of vacancies, there was no election.

The new committee met on Friday 1st October to elect Office-Bearers, with the following results.

President: Rob. Bricker.
Senior Vice President. Frank Coustley

Vice President .	Jan Watson.
Secretary.	Brian Heather.
Treasurer.	Ron Addison.
Librarian.	Bill Grey.
Training Division.	Pat Reynolds, assisted by Frank Coustley, Rob Bricker. Jan Watson. Lorraine Newman.
Property officer.	Peter Robertson.
Newsletter Editors	Jan Watson, John Noonan.
Social Secretary.	Max Davenport.
S.D.F. Delegates.	Frank Coustley, Peter Matthews.

Congratulations to Rob on his election to President. Rob is one of our older club members, having been in the VSAG for over eight years and looks like being an active diver for many years yet! This is mainly because he has an understanding wife who doesn't nag when he goes off diving!

The committee has a very full year ahead and requests the co-operation of all members in projects planned for the future.

As an experiment, the minutes of the committee meetings will be published as a supplement to the newsletter, so that members will be able to see what business (if any) goes on at these meetings.

Your directors, in return, will do their utmost to further the interests of the Group, and of diving in general, in the coming year.

EDITORIAL.

The VSAG is now launched on its twelfth year as a diving club. Over the years, we have had many members come and go; a few foundation members are with us still. Friendships have been made which will stand the test of years, even after interest in active diving has long since passed.

This is what membership in our club is primarily for - to provide interest and companionship in diving. Therefore it is up to every one of us to support club activities, and attend as many dives and meetings as possible - even if only to get your money's worth.

With the appointment of Brian Heather to Secretary, the editorship of the Newsletter has been taken over jointly by John Noonan and Jan Watson. (This is going to be handy - we can sign ourselves JAN equally, and the readers won't know who to throw the brickbats at!)

To make the Newsletter a lively thing, we will need information on topics such as social activities, outings official and unofficial, anecdotes, innocuous or otherwise, articles, information on wrecks (marine of course!) and so on. In fact any sort of old seaweed to make the Newsletter fuller and brighter.

In fact, if members don't pass us information, we will just go ahead and make it all up!

J.A.N.

SCIENCE SECTION:MARINE ALGAE.

The seaweeds are the plant life of the sea. The typical land plant is complex, consisting of roots, stem, leaves, etc, the cells of each part adapted to differing functions. For example, the leaves extract CO_2 from the air; the roots absorb minerals in dilute solution from the soil, as well as serving to anchor the plant.

In contrast, the marine algae are extremely lowly plants (Thallophyta) with no differentiation of cell function. The larger seaweeds appear to have roots- these in fact are not true roots at all, but simply holdfasts, which anchor the plant to a conveniently firm base. The whole plant above the holdfast is simply a cluster of fronds, the cells of which are all equally able to absorb nutrients from the sea water, but have no other functions.

The lack of a root system prevents the growth of seaweeds in areas of sandy or muddy bottom, thus we find them flourishing mainly along rocky shores, where the holdfast can find an anchorage, even in the heaviest surf.

Two interesting and exceptional plants may be found flourishing on silty bottoms, such as Corio Bay, and Westernport. These are the seagrasses *Posidonia*, and *Zostera*, both of which are not algae at all, but land grasses which have returned to the habitat of the sea.

Seaweeds need light for photosynthesis, and this is why they are much more prolific in shallower water. You will have noticed the effect of less light under piers, where the seaweeds grow only on the outer lighter side of the piles, leaving the dimmer inner sides of the piles to the invertebrates, which prefer

less light. Greens and browns are the predominant colours in shallower waters, with reds increasing with depth.

One group of coralline algae are able to secrete Calcium Carbonate from the water and build it into a rigid framework. These are the common pink and white encrustations seen on rocks and shells on an ocean dive.

The most prolific growths are to be found just below low tide level on the ocean coast. This is the zone of the kelps, which are among the world's largest plants, and have a nuisance value to the diver when getting into the water (Some divers we know get seasick just watching kelp!) The kelp found in Vic. is the giant Durvillea, the bull kelp with thick leathery fronds designed to withstand the heaviest surf. Closely related is Macrocystis, which favours deeper waters and is harvested off the Tasmanian coast for the production of agar agar, used in many preserved foodstuffs. Another kelp familiar to the diver is Phyllospora which keeps out of the surf, and has long balloon like floats to support the fronds.

Collecting algae can be an interesting study. There are hundreds of local species. Even if you never get around to classifying them they can be quite pretty to look at. All you need to collect is plastic bags; a 10% solution of formalin at home to pickle the fronds in. After some time (days to weeks) arrange the specimens between layers of newspapers and press. When dry the specimens can be stuck in folders.

Reference books available are-
Seaweeds of South Australia - S.A. Govt. Printer.
Seashores of Australia - Dakin.