

VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP

NEWSLETTER.

Price 3d.

Feb/March 1966

P.O.Box 2526W.G.P.O.
MELBOURNE.

FATHOMS

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EDITORIAL

Your Editors have had a terrific holiday over the Xmas break, mostly at that diver's paradise, Green Cape. Therefore, they feel at peace with the world, and just don't seem to want to shake up the dusts of controversial issues. So, instead, we will give those who haven't been there a few anecdotes, and a desire to join the party next trip. For accessibility, this area is reasonably good, with a 400 mile trip from Melb., unfortunately, the worst part of the trip is the last few miles, when your feeling a bit fed up with travelling. Once on the cape itself there is a selection of tracks (and we mean tracks) to various waterside hideouts, mostly without water of the drinking variety.

To make up for these small inconveniences, water of the diving sort is plentiful, deep off the rocks, and as there are no beaches, very little sand to spoil visibility. However there are sudden & so far unexplained reversals of currents in this region, and water, crystal clear & cold one day, will be rather warmer, and murky with plankton, the next.

Your Editor's anecdotes are many & varied, here are some amusing-

 Sight of John N. followed line ahead by Ken C, followed by an 8 ft. Wobby, showing a distinct interest in the composition of Ken's flipper. Divers both blissfully unaware of being followed (other Editor convulsed with silent laughter on the bottom).

 Jan W. on bottom at 35', beside Brian H. whose rear end only is protruding from a hole containing fish. Jan's reducer packs up without warning necessitating swift decision about whether to pull Brian out to get some air, or shoot through. Lack of air wins and free ascent to the surface. Brian saunters up later, and comments that Jan will get her B grade. So much for the buddy system.

 Air was available from an abalone boat, when it was about. One fill was enough, it was so thick with oil you

could just about chew it. We precipitated a change of ~~fi~~ filter, by adding crushed garlic to the works. Never were there so many free ascents, and divers with headaches as on that day.

Calculations revealed that the Watsons, with 4 fish eaters in the family, consumed about 100 lbs of fish in 3 weeks—we still cant figure out how we could have been so greedy.

Your editor also became an abalone apprentice diver for a day on an Ab. boat. The work is not too hard, in fact rather pleasant in the summer, but probably not a good winter occupation. The money is excellent, and the cannery at Eden takes all shelled meat at 2/6 a lb. The most memorable experience of a memorable holiday was working in 20 ft. right under the cliffs, in flat calm crystal water, and watching the dozens of fish that come up to your hand to beg for the delicacy of abalone. Shell one & hold it (and your breath) and six to eight ~~px~~ pounds appear from the rocks to delicately take a ~~px~~ piece, thank you silently with their eyes, then shoot back to enjoy it at leisure.

Another interesting dive was on the wreck of the New Guinea close in under the cliffs, near the Cape. Salvage divers blew it recently, and there isnt much more than junk left. The day was not good for diving, and the sea very rough. We managed to have a look around and shoot a fish before seasickness claimed us.

So much for Green Cape till next year. See you there?

MEMBERS MEETING.

The next members meeting will be held at Scots Church Hall 99 Russell Street Melbourne on Friday 18th March 1966 at 8 pm.

SUPPER VOLUNTEERS.

As there was no volunteers for supper asked for at the last meeting could some good folks bring some with them. If the club has to buy sandwiches as we did last month then the Club loses money on the supper and meeting room charge.

Our thanks to Phillip Crankshaw for his film on Heron island and to Peter Robertson for his talk and slides

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on his trip to the Islands.

OUTINGS PAST.

January 29-31st.

This trip was to Bairnsdale to dive as guests of the Gippsland Lakes Aquanauts. Five divers attended, and went further afield than Bairnsdale, diving at Cape Conron & Cape Everard. Reports of this latter area were enthusiastic, even though the divers were chased out of the water by a change in weather, almost as soon as they got in.

February 13th Flinders. The venue was the Blowhole.

Although the ocean was relatively calm, there was a heavy ground swell due to the very low tide; the few who turned up decided against getting their heads knocked on the rocks, and went round to the Flinders Jetty. One diver entered the water, and found visibility nil.

February 12th-14th Anglesea. As the boat owner could not be contacted members decided to go to Phillip Island. The Secretary went to Anglesea in case other members turned up. The water was good and if anyone is interested in diving on the wreck and is not afraid of a small swim then a dive is possible.

FUTURE OUTINGS.

March 6th 1966. SPECIAL OUTING.

A night dive has been arranged before the weather gets too cold. This will be at the Rye Back Beach. Low water 7am Sunday. (That is not a misprint.) Meet at Bus Stop 43 at Lym. There will be an overnight camp naturally. The camp is on Fred Titman's property Flinders Street, between Rye & Blairgowrie. (Bus stop 43) or enquire at Caltex Garage opposite Rye pier.

March 12th-14th Bay of Islands Peterborough.

Dive Captain J. Watson.

Go along road from Peterborough towards Warrnambool to a sign about 5 miles out which says "Bay of Islands". Follow track in 2½ miles to private camping park. Camping facilities are available. For further details contact Jan Watson 337-9263.

March 27th 1966. Cape Woolamai Boat Trip.

More about this outing at the next meeting.

Committee Meeting.

The following business was dealt with at the last committee meeting.

Letter from Ansett-ANA regarding a weekend at Flinders Island. (See details later in newsletter.)

A number of new books were added to the library list.

Librarian is Bill Gray.

A list of financial members was drawn up. Persons two years in arrears in subscriptions will be automatically cut off the circulation list of the Newsletter.

New pages for handbook are being prepared. This is proving a slower job than anticipated due to unforeseen circumstances.

A film night at a city theatre is proposed in the near future. Notices will appear when arrangements are made.

ANSETT ANA. OPERATION UNDERWATER. FLINDERS ISLAND.

LABOUR DAY WEEKEND MARCH 12TH- 14TH.

The club has just received a letter from the above airline advertising a trip to Flinders Island. Total cost incl. of air fares, hotel accommodation, transport on the island, and boat fares on trips is £25. or \$50.00. The itinerary is comprehensive and interesting. Air will be available at 60 cents per fill. Unfortunately, the notice is very short. Anyone wanting details contact Brian Heather 45-5505 for literature or Mr. Doug Bachli at Ansett-ANA for bookings.

DIVING CERTIFICATES.

Tests for B & C grade certificates will be held at Mornington Pier, March 19th 1966 at 1-30 pm.

Intending candidates please contact Rob Bricker 27-9068.

Requirements for C grade certificate were published in a recent newsletter.

It is desirable for all club members to have the basic C grade, as only holders of this certificate are allowed to make deep dives on club outings. There is a possible deep dive coming up on March 27th, so if you want to be in it, make sure about that C grade.

Divers' Diseases. The Buying Diver.

Must have underwater watch, depth gauge, goodie bag, camera, flash etc. He is usually accompanied by shoeless children pleading for icecream, and wife in a cheap cotton frock. While getting measured for latest model wet suit, eloquently explains to wife that winter coats are for cissies. Condescendingly allows children to carry camera, but patiently tells them that bread and milk is not healthy, as it makes people fat. Spartan-like, he ignores complaints of hunger pangs, and reminds family of food shortages during 2nd world war. Always reminding wife to stop dragging tank on the ground.

The Departing Diver.

Wakens noisily on Sunday morning at 5am. Can't find flippers or snorkel, and the whole family gets a verbal thrashing until the missing articles are finally located in the boot of his car. Wife is castigated for not removing and washing down gear after his last dive. Demands wife prepare him a snack for the trip, his term for a meal that would see the local football team through a weekend in the hills. Finally departs at nine for boat trip due to start at 9-15, forty miles away. Wife sinks into nervous exhaustion.

SEA SCIENCE SECTION.

Following are excerpts from a letter in the latest Australian Marine Sciences Journal, from Mr. Reg. Sprigg, of Adelaide. Mr. Sprigg is a well known geologist, and diver, and runs the ownly privately owned marine research vessel on the Australian coastline—the "Saori", in which he does a great deal of useful work. We print the excerpts without comment.

OPERATION DEMERSAL.

A group of Adelaide scientists, engineers, and divers are presently engaged in building a mobile under

water research laboratory at Woodville. Named Operation Demersal, the project is the outcome of the recognition by a number of South Australian enthusiasts of the need for serious marine biological research of a nature which can only be carried out at the sea bottom. Most of those interested are also competent scuba divers, their concern being to extend the frontiers in man's conquest of the sea.

The sea lab. 'Demersal' is 27' by 6'6" in diam. a steel structure which is presently being fitted out with lateral floats, entry port, heavy duty windows, self contained decompression chamber, general living quarters, and lab. space. When in place on the sea floor, the only connection to the surface will be via compressed air and power conduits to a raft carrying electrical plant and compressor. As the lab. will be open to the sea at all times, there will be no restriction in the potential depth of operation. It is intended to descend by stages to depths of 100-200', this limit could ultimately be extended to 600'.

The 'Demersal' group is directly in touch with officers under Commander Cousteau, and with underwater research organisations in the U.S.A. The first phase will be to perfect the undersea lab. operation. This will be carried out in the vicinity of outer harbour. When these preliminary studies are completed the 'Demersal' is scheduled to be moved to a place near the coast east of Yorke Peninsula on the outer slope of the Crontes Banks.

This will be a serious investigation into marine life and ecology, with experiments carefully selected. Two projects have been selected. Crontes Sea Farm. - planned for 70 ft. of water, being optimum depth for fish, with reasonable penetration of sunlight. The bottom is rocky, and colonised by sponge and ascidians. The object of this survey will be to establish what type of material in artificial reefs is favoured by fish. Scarification of the sea bottom and use of fertilisers will be investigated.

Lobster Nursery. In Investigator Strait it has been found that in this predominately desert region, wherever rock ledges are to be found, crayfish abound. The same is true where sheet iron, & wrecks have provided a measure of cover on the sea floor. In a suitable place

controlled colonisation experiments will be set up.

WANTED TO SELL.

Nikonos Underwater Camera.18 months old.Perfect condition.\$100.00.Phone Clive Champion 26-2983.

~~WANTED~~

WANTED TO BUY.

Aqualung preferably See Bee.Will pay reasonable price.Contact Tony Sierak.36 Powley Pde.Watsonia.
