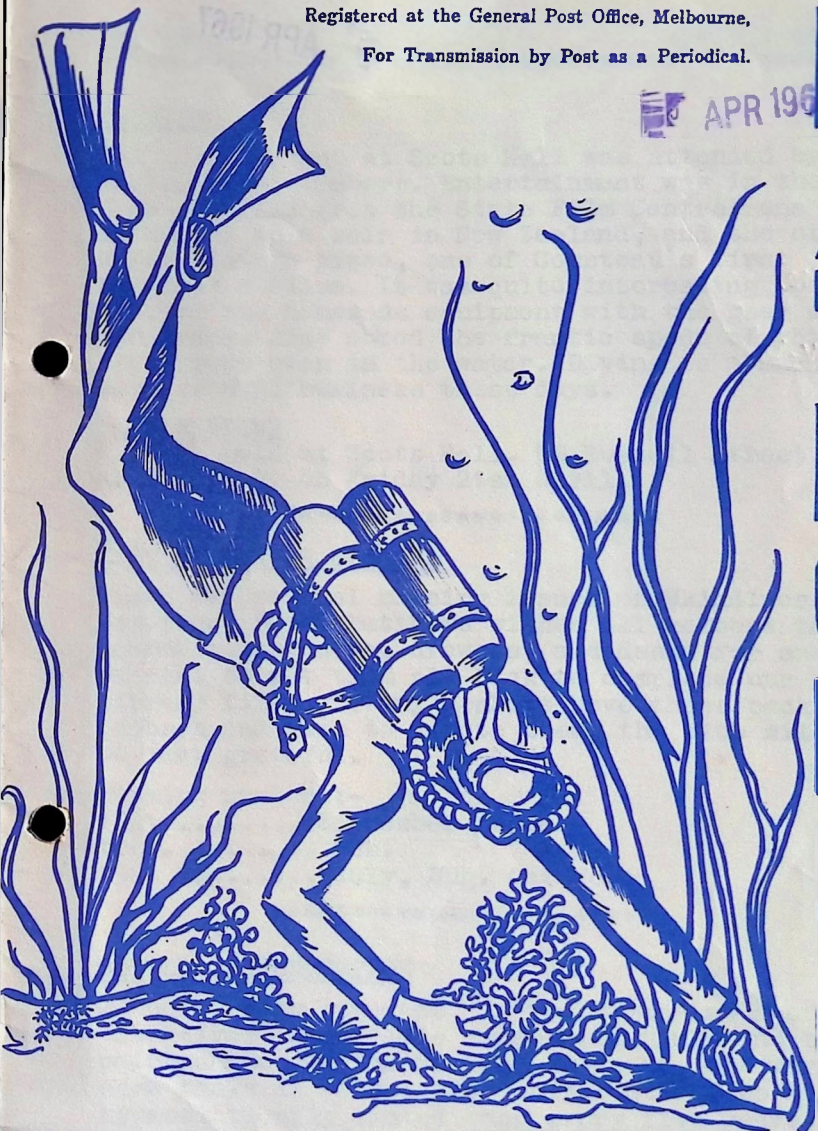


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APR 196

# FATHOMS



## VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

MEETINGS.

The last meeting at Scots Hall was attended by twenty eight members. Entertainment was in the form of films from the State Film Centre; one on diving in a weir in New Zealand, and the other, a now vintage piece, one of Cousteau's first underwater films. It was quite interesting to compare the homemade equipment with the gear we use today. Also noted the frantic speed at which the divers swam in the water. Diving is a much more relaxed business these days.

NEXT MEETING

Will be held at Scots Hall, 99 Russell Street, at 8.30 P.M. on Friday 21st April.

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LOST STOLEN OR STRAYED

There are several missing issues of Skindiver Magazine. Peter Matthews wishes all members to search consciences, drawers, and desks for same. We want to get them all back to complete our library files. If any members have these back numbers and wish to donate them, the club will be very grateful.

Missing numbers:-

1961 .....September issue

1964..... Feb.

1965 ..... July, Aug. Oct Nov.

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BOTTLE OF CONTENTION

We note, with interest, in the March issue of 'Skindiver' an article concerning tanks and their maintenance. In the 'States' it seems, the very same tanks as we use are only required to be hydrostatically tested once every five years. We may pose the question - why do ours need so much expensive testing? Surely usage is comparable

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 on both sides of the ocean. It leaves us with the  
 suspicion we are being got at with some sort of  
 vested interest in making a bit of money from the  
 locals.

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## TRAINING

### CITY BATHS . SATURDAY EVENINGS

The Training Committee reports that the current  
 course of four lessons has successfully con-  
 cluded, and the trainees will soon do their first  
 sea dive.

A new course has been scheduled to start on Sat  
 8th April 1967 from 7p.m. to 9.P.M., and the de-  
 mand for enrôlment is very keen. This course  
 could well be overfilled by opening night.  
 However, if you have any friends who are interested  
 in learning how to use the aqualung under the  
 guidance of fully experienced divers, contact  
 Pat Reynolds phone 232.5358, or Bill Gray,  
 at 232.7220. Fee for the course is \$8.00,  
 all gear provided.

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## SHARK GUNS

From the Fisheries and Wildlife Department it  
 has been ascertained that legislation for the use  
 of underwater powerheads for the killing of  
 specific types of sharks only, has been pre-  
 pared and will be submitted for approval by the  
 Executive Council in the near future. However,  
 those interested, should not be too exuberant  
 A check with the firearms section of the Police  
 Department indicatez that although shark guns  
 can be approved for underwater use by Fisheries  
 and Wildlife Department, one must have a cert-  
 ificate from the Police Department. On current  
 information this may not be easy to get, as the  
 Police have a large file on powerheads, and acc-

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clients with them.- this in Victoria, already.  
Therefore they are not favourably regarded in that department. Anyway all we can do is await approval of powerheads by the Fisheries, then will be time enough\* to seek official views of the Polide Dept.

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OUTINGS PAST.

Feb. 19th - London Bridge- Portsea Back Beach.  
It was reported that six divers plus families turned up. A few hours were spent in the surf, and snorkelling in the rock pools as conditions were unfavourable for diving or spearfishing off-shore. The usual Portsea Pier salvage crawl eventuated without success - salvage-wise.

March 5th - Anglesea ' Ingoldsby wreck.

An early Sunday morning check indicated that wind and weather conditions in this area would be unfavourable for small boats, so the two 13 footers were left behind in Melbourne. As often happens the expected poor conditions did not eventuate, the area being perfect for boats and diving. The divers present who did not know the excellent diving conditions available off Point Roadnight - in scenery, fish, and crays, dejectedly moved round the coast to Lorne, but found no suitable diving spots. Finally a picnic lunch was made under ideal sunny conditions.

March 11th - 13th L.W.E. Cape Liptrap.

Due to absence of starters - no trip  
(Stop Press - we hear there was one very irate starter).

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Easter 14th to 27th April

Venue for the club dive had lain dormant until the meeting of 17th April, when the matter was discussed. For some weeks previously, rumour had it that a small fortune was made by a lone diver in oneday at Port Albert. It seemed that he made \$1000 - or was it pounds? Anyway at the meeting a confirming rumour set the figure at \$2000. That was enough. As one man the group decided on Port Albert. Dissenters, and there weren't many, settled for Newhaven. The Port Albert group with families and friends trickled in on Friday and Saturday. The drive is very pleasant and scenic, and well worth doing from this point alone. Weather over the period was generally sunny with slight cold offshore breeze. Port Albert itself is a flourishing commercial fishing port and also attracts large numbers of small boat owners who are well catered for with good launching ramp, and parking facilities.

The camping area is well grassed, and facilities are almost adequate, and extensive additions are under construction.

Diving-wise, the trip was a write-off. The approaches to the wharves are over extensive shallow mud flats, outlets to the sea being narrow winding channels. The divers took to their boats on Saturday afternoon to explore one set of channels to the sea - some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles away - on a falling tide. The return trip was a nightmare of idling the boats in inches of water over mud, even in the channels. More than half the trip back saw weary divers rope hauling the boats back over oozing mud, one moment straining against the weight of the boat, and the next, disappearing into a nice deep hole. We returned to port in the dark.

On Sunday the boats were sailed through the other channels to the open sea, which anyway, was too high for small boats. Attempts to dive in the channels near the light beacons failed due to strong currents. A pier crawl was equally negative because of pea-soup consistency of water.

One foolish youngster asked a diver to return his rod

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 and surfing reel lost off the end of the jetty a month earlier. Diver searched for 15 minutes and reported nothing to be found. Funny thing though, diver went home sporting new rod and reel (how low can you get? - Ed)

Oh, yes. And all that salvage. Well, some \$4000 was made by three divers left for a week on Deal Island by the Lighthouse boat, which collected them a good week later.

In future, verification of such reports, and suitability of diving sites will be ascertained before committing members to travel such distances for absolutely nil diving opportunities.

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NEWHAVEN GROUP Consisted of three divers, one of whom flaked out with a cold, and thus couldn't indulge in customary spearfishing. This select group did at least get a couple of dives!

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### LABOUR DAY WEEKEND - March 11th - 13th

- Long time ago, now.

On the Sunday, three divers of the group received a call for help. On the previous Tuesday, a gay speedboater had misfortune to run into a submerged log. Result, one sunken boat 1½ miles offshore in the Bay, from the North Road launching ramp. Using a members boat, divers anticipated the usual long cold search, after usual inaccurate directions from owner. However, such was not the case; visibility was excellent, and the wreck was sighted from the surface.

The boys went to work with a will, sank the usual 6 forty-four gallon drums, tied them to the boat, inflated same and up came the boat. Hit the surface and just as smartly returned to the bottom - drums rolled and air escaped. Not to be deterred, divers returned to the task, and repeat performance -

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- definitely a yo yo team!

Third attempt was successful, and salvaged boat was returned to shallow water.

There, a stout rope was attached to owner and new Hcl-den; with much assistance and advice from bystanders he proceeded to completely burn out clutch and immobilise car. Boat still in shallows and well waterlogged. After being towed home and returning to the fray in yet another vehicle, the boat was finally hauled ashore. When settling time came, the owner offered divers the boat with V8 motor, or handsome cash return. Having inspected the condition of the boat, and knowing the work involved in taking down the motor in the shortest possible time, the divers accepted the folding money and left the bewildered, disheartened owner beholding an uninsured wreck.

Motto - insure before accident

Motto No.2. Jah and John should have had this team with them on the recent motor salvage reported last Oct. At least they would have collected !

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### CASE FOR UNDERWATER NATIONAL PARKS.

Although we are not wholeheartedly in favour of the American idea of underwater parks as described in the latest 'Skindiver' - with underwater "trails" which must be followed, guides, rangers (all presumably wet suited and geared up) and little name plates on the various species of marine growth, many of our local diving organizations are beginning to think seriously on the idea.

We all know of areas which have been shot out in the memory of those who have been diving for only a few years. We, the VSAG, can pride ourselves that we are not part of those organizations that seem to build their club memberships on competition spearfishing.

However, on the other hand we are not wowers who frown at the appearance of a speargun, and perhaps, we can say we manage to strike the happy medium between the

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two extremes.

Thus, it may be the lot of middle of the road clubs such as ours to spearhead a movement to have certain areas declared closed to spearfishing. The S.D.F. is investigating areas at present; the U.R.G. is fully behind such moves, and the Vic. Aqualung Club is very desirous of having the Woolamai area declared.

We will await future moves with interest, as individuals, and as a club; as the latter, we should very soon decide on a cut and dried attitude to what will become a widely discussed question.

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### RUMOUR!!

Rumour hath it that very soon a new aluminium alloy bottle for use in aqualungs will hit the market. No other details are available, except that they will be lighter than the normal steel bottles, are 80c.ft. have stand built on the base, corrosion resistant, and tested to usual standards.

More news as soon as it arrives!

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### VENOMOUS SEA URCHIN

The Sydney Underwater Research Group, on a dive last year, noticed a sea urchin which was new to them. Only a single urchin was seen, but it was taken alive to the Australian Museum. Here it was identified as a type only taken once before in Australia, in Queensland.

The species is capable of inflicting severe stings by introducing venom on its spines. It is believed to have caused the deaths of several divers in Japan. We do not know if the venom of the local specimen is as powerful as the Japanese urchins, but my guess is that it would be much the same. Moral - always wear gloves when diving. It Pays!

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HOUSE WARMING

The Addison's moved into their new house at Easter, and the Grants invited themselves over for a cup of coffee the following Saturday night.

Whilst the Grants kept the Addison's talking in the lounge, a group of the rest of the 'mob' crept onto the front porch and turned off all house lights at the meter box.

Ron called electricians (who had only just finished the job) all sorts of nice names, located the only candle, situated in the little house up the back, but Les persuaded him, finally, to go and check the fuses.

Accompanied by Les and flickering match, Ron opened front door to be greeted with yells of "Surprise". We hear he left floor two feet behind.

All brought their own drinks, supper, and chairs. A Cooks tour of the house was organized with proud owners showing off. We hear the bathroom tap is the greatest luxury. Everyone agreed the house and furnishings are very nice, and the party went with a swing till the early hours of the morning.

Brian Heather

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PICTURE NIGHT

A very successful, and overbooked picture night to see The Weird Mob was held last Friday, 7th April. All who attended voted it a good laugh. Only trouble, though, there are so many Strangers at these turnouts that you hardly even see your diving buddies in the crush. Possible to reserve seats fairly close for all of us, Brian?.

\* \* \* \* \*

FOR SALE

Twin 38's, Sea Bee demand valve. Good order, little use. Brand new reducer fitted. Price \$45. Ph. 337.9263.