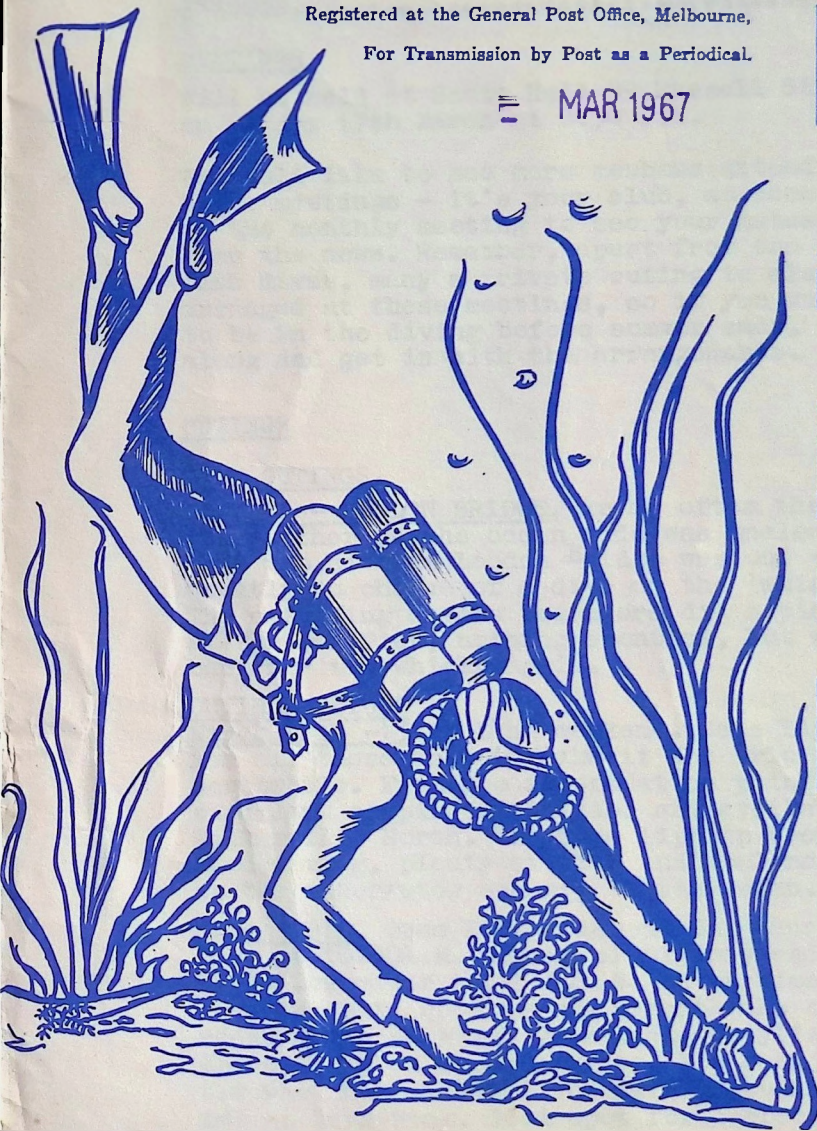


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FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

MEETINGS

Will be held at Scots Hall 99 Russell Street on Friday 17th March at 8.30 P.M.

We would like to see more members attending these meetings - it's your club, so come along to the monthly meeting to see your mates, and hear the news. Remember, apart from the official club dives, many a private outing is also arranged at these meetings, so if you want to be in the diving before summer ends, come along and get in with the arrangements.

OUTINGS

PAST OUTINGS.

PORTSEA - LONDON BRIDGE. As is often the case, the weather on the ocean side was unclement, so that the dive at London Bridge was out - consequently no chance of a dive on the 'whisky wreck'. The attending divers therefore did a pier crawl at Portsea Pier, nothing eventful, but we'll be back for the whisky again.

OUTINGS FUTURE

March 11th -13th. Long weekend. Cape Liptrap. For all those able to make it the trip will be worthwhile. From the accomodation point of view excellent camping facilities are available at Walkerville North. The Cape Liptrap area provides good diving, plenty of fish and abalone, as well as the underwater scenery of the ocean.

March 19th. Drum Rock- Diamond Bay -Sorrento Meet at 10.00A.M. corner of Highway and St Pauls Road. Low water 10.15 A.M. so be on time. This area presents good diving beneath the shelving rocks which surround Drum Rock. Crayfish are there and good spearing, too. You can join the few who have survived the swim through the tunnel at Drum Rock. Good spot for barbecue tea if weather right.

DIVE ON THE ARTIFICIAL REEF.

On a calm sunny Sunday morning, 19th of Feb, a group of divers, including one from SubAqua, set sail from Sandringham yacht club jetty in the Fisheries boat 'Caprella'. For once, your reporter wasn't seasick on this boat which has been described as the only spherical boat on the bay. An hour's sailing brought us to the approximate location of the reef, 4 miles South-west of Mordiallic pier. Finding the marker buoy was easy enough, but then we sailed round and round for two hours trying to locate the reef on echo sounder and spot dives. This is because the pipes were laid down 200 yards south of the marker buoy, but the buoy has 150 feet of slack in the chain so that it moves about in a wide radius with wind and tide. A little simple arithmetic will soon convince you that a wide area has to be searched before the reef is finally located!

At last on site, to find the visibility down to a magnificent three feet (depth 62 feet) Divers went down in pairs, photography being 'out' to collect samples of the life which has settled on the pipes since they were put down eighteen months ago. Collection presented problems, as the slightest movement by the diver stirred the lovely yellow mud up into an all enveloping fog of nil visibility. From that point on the diver just hoped the specimens were going into the bag! One diver bectled down to the bottom, missed it and kept on going until the mud came up to his waist.

The amount of life which has colonised the reef is quite surprising, considering the rather inhospitable part of the bay in which the pipes were laid down. The pipes here and there protrude some five feet out of the mud, and these are covered with growths of Bryozoans, algae, large mussells, medium oysters, small scallops and also, plenty of mud. It has been reported that large fish have been taken in this area

which until the laying of the pipes was completely barren of life.

This enterprise has not been considered a roaring success, as most of the original pipes laid down simply disappeared in the mud. Therefore the S.D.F clubs have taken it upon them selves to search for new areas for another reef.

Requirements are - at least 60 feet of water, and a firm bottom - sand to rock, in the area between Frankston and Mt. Martha, away from shipping lanes. This is a fairly tall order, and we want anyone diving in these places to keep a look-out for such a suitable bottom, and if finding one, take a fix for reference.

MORE ON THE SEA WASP

The toxin of this deadly box-jelly has been at last isolated. The average 'wasp' has 800 feet of tentacles which sting and cling. If contact is made with only a few feet of tentacles, the victim may live. If larger areas are contacted, a human dies in 30 seconds. The stinging capsules are filled with fluid toxin which discharges on contact with protein substances i.e. flesh, due to chemical stimulation, and is taken well into the flesh of the victim by the barbed nematocysts.

Mice experimentally injected with the toxin died before the needle could be withdrawn. The toxin is a protein substance, and tissue destroying enzymes are injected around the wounds. The principal effect is muscle contraction, and in walls of the blood vessels.

The problem of developing an antivenine has been given to the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. One wonders whether this is a purely academic exercise, seeing as the victims barely live long enough to get out of the water.....

EASTER TRIPS.

There was no unanimous decision at the last meeting as to where the Easter camp should be, but there will be a meeting before then.

Two areas have been suggested - one, Port Welshpool, where we hear a whisper of salvage being about. Further, this is an area where the club has never dived, and there should be new sights and interests.

There will be boats at Newhaven, Phillip Island, and every effort will be made to get into good open water in the channel, around Cape Woolamai, and if weather is bad, back up Westernport (Not the Rhyll wreck - Ed.,Jah). If you want a dive near home and get together spirit in the evenings, this is the place.

Take precaution of booking camp site - come to the next club meeting, so that we will know how many are likely to attend, or ring Jan Watson who will arrange camp bookings.

DIVERS KINDERGARTEN.

Yet another junior addition to the ranks. The Bretts how have four members in the family, the latest addition being a girl. Last information was that a name had not been decided on. Perhaps Flipperea?...

UNDERWATER RESEARCH GROUP MEETING.

Those members who missed the last URG meeting ought to be kicking themselves - especially if underwater camera owners. A superb collection of coloured u/w transparencés was shown by Alistair Trail of the Underwater Explorers, who is an underwater photographer of the highest order. We will try to get him for another showing one of these days, and if we do, don't miss it. Incidentally, one of his slides is printed as the front cover of this months 'Walkabout' magazine.
