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# FATHOMS



## VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

How about you members coming along to the meetings! It is most frustrating for the committee to arrange for entertainment and then only a smattering of members turn up. Club meetings are held once monthly, the third Friday in the month, and I don't think it is too much to ask you to turn up and support the organization that you helped to start.

It is at these meetings that you can ask questions and get answers to those questions that can be a bit curly. It is also at the meetings that you meet people with like interests and get to be on dives that take place on our club trip weekends. Remember, also, that for a very small fee, supper is provided and a good chin-wag can be enjoyed by all.

- Ed.

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#### PAST OUTINGS -

Cape Woolamai, 23rd March, 1969. On a glorious day with bright, warm sunshine with a glassy sea, 14 divers headed out from San Remo on Ray Harrison's fishing boat. All divers had 14 minutes of fantastic dive viewing down to 120 ft. on the Pinnacles, off Woolamai. Generally divers privileged to dive in this area hang up their guns for the duration of the dive and only shooting was done with cameras. Whilst visibility was down to about 50 ft., the hundreds of multicoloured fish of many species were clearly visible as was the fantastic array of marine flora - colours and growth were reminiscent of the Tropic Waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

#### FUTURE OUTINGS -

25-27th April, 1969. Mystery Trip. More about this one at the meeting to be held on 18th April, 1969, so turn up and find out where you will be diving. You will be pleasantly surprised and the venue will be within 150 miles of Melbourne.

Mornington Pier, 11th May, 1969 You must attend this dive. This is where the Club equips itself with fishing rods. A scallop or two can usually be found with the odd oyster thrown in for good luck. Meet at 10.00 a.m. at Mornington Pier.

#### HELP! HELP! HELP!

How about that secondhand diving suit that must be lying around the garage. It is really needed. Ring R. Addison, 232-3087.

TRAINING -

A new training course starts on Saturday, 12th April, 1969, so get your mates to learn to dive. Ring Pat Reynolds, 232-5358, or Bill Gray, 232-7220, and book in.

EASTER WEEKEND -

Six members of the club went to Phillip Island, four members in one group, two in another. The four made use of Bill Gray's boat and went out on the Pinnacles, but found the water a bit rough. They had a couple of dives under jetties at Nowhaven and San Remo and found a little, but not much.

The two dived under Cowes and found a fishing rod and other goodies. They also dived under San Remo and gathered about 100 lb of scrap copper which more than amply paid for the trip. (No mention made of the "time piece of sunshine metal" alleged to have been retrieved.)

MEETINGS -

The next meeting of the Group will be held at Youth Hostels Association, Gisborne Street, East Melbourne at 8.00 p.m. on 18th April, 1969, so roll up for a chin-wag and supper and meet the boys and girls.

DIVING FATALITIES -

No doubt all members will have read of the recent fatalities at Mt. Gambier when two young divers lost their lives at Gilsbys Hole. Press reports indicated that although there was air in their tanks (they were found dead at the 140 ft. level), both divers had lost their masks, one a flipper and the other his knife. A member of the search team that located the bodies is alleged to have commented that they may have died from an attack of "Bonds". From basic knowledge of the cause and effect of "Bonds", this statement could be subject to attack and your Editor would put forward at least two other possible and more likely causes of death, assuming both boys were strong and healthy. There are (1) Contaminated air in their tanks. No doubt this will be tested for the Coroner's report. (2) Nitrogen Narcosis or Raptures of the Depths. As regards this latter possibility, the following information is extracted from the British Sub-Aqua Club Manual and its reading and mental absorption by all divers will be a worthwhile exercise.

NITROGEN NARCOSIS

Nitrogen, which forms 79 per cent of the air, is a chemically inert gas. It normally has no effect upon the body but at increased pressure it behaves in a manner which may be likened to alcoholic intoxication or to being anaesthetised with a dentist's gas. The effects are proportional to the partial pressure of the nitrogen and thus increase progressively towards greater depths. The depth of onset and the intensity of the effects will vary from person to person in the same way that the effects of alcohol vary. They are worse if the individual is anxious or tired. The early symptoms, some of which may be noticed at about 100 feet, include a tingling of the lips and gums, overconfidence and a slight feeling of elation.

As the depth increases so judgement becomes more impaired, the control of each action requires greater concentration and there is poor co-ordination of movement. Below 250 feet there may be tingling in the hands and feet and some dizziness, even the simplest actions become slow and clumsy and mental impairment may cause the wrong decisions to be taken. On ascent, the effects of nitrogen narcosis diminish and finally disappear although there may be some amnesia. Thus, should a diver realise that he is being affected by depth narcosis, he should at once ascend to regions of lower pressure.

Nitrogen narcosis is a very real hazard to divers on deeper dives. It has been responsible for deaths of many divers attempting depth records. Club members should never undertake deep dives for their own sake. COMPRESSED AIR DIVING SHOULD BE LIMITED TO 150 FEET AT the discretion of the Branch Diving Officer, being far less for novices and only greater under planned conditions for the experienced.

When 250 feet needs to be exceeded, the nitrogen of the air should be replaced by a less narcotic gas such as helium but decompression times are long and helium bends become another hazard.

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One of the Group members, Bill (of the Beard) Jansen, and his family, are currently visiting in the Philippines and for the interest of members he has written of his first dive with the Philippine Skindiving Club and for the benefit of all, his letter is printed below.

12 Oxford Road, Cubao,  
Quezon City, Phils.

Mar.12. 1969

Dear John,

Here I am at last with a letter. About 3 weeks have gone by and I've been so caught up in the day-to-day affairs that I haven't gotten around to writing you and the club. It feels hot here; though the temperature isn't really higher than in Australia. The humidity is higher though, making it "muggy" and one is constantly perspiring. As for swimming and diving though, the water temperature is always tolerable without a suit, any time of the year.

I've been in touch with the local diving enthusiasts, though I haven't been on a dive yet. That is scheduled for this coming Sunday. They go out every Sunday regularly, usually to the same place. The club has some sort of lease on a beach house there, in Batangoa, about 60 miles south of Manila. They rent a boat on their outings and dive to about 100 ft. depth, I understand mostly after fish. They say the native fishermen have ruined the fish population nearer the surface by dynamite fishing, hence the depth.

The Philippine Sports Divers' Association is organized close to and around a commercial enterprise, K.E.S. Divemaster, Inc. which sells mostly U.S. Divers Co. ("Aqualung") equipment, supplies air, and conducts a private salvage business in the area. K.E.S. has a 24' boat with Mercedes-Berg Marine diesel (now in drydock) for their commercial operations. As mentioned in their newsletter, the club has discussed owning a boat, but they have a familiar problem - non payment of dues.

I'm sending their newsletter along as you may find it interesting and amusing in comparison with ours. I had an issue of ours (last October) which I gave them for similar interest. I also had my members' manual along which they've been interested in, as they are now trying to compile their own divers' handbook. They also operate a diving school (K.E.S.) which is a source of revenue as well as training.

The manager of K.E.S., Alan Staley, expressed interest in Australian manufactured diving gear as a possible business line. He mentioned that some people here had tried 'Porpoise' regulators but had not found them entirely satisfactory. He wasn't specific but just said things often didn't work right. They'd like to get in touch with Sea-Bec and other lines, though, so here might be some business opportunities. Export Action!

Last Sunday I was invited out on a swimming picnic with some friends. We went to a place called Pagsanjan Falls, where one can picnic, swim, view the scenery or shoot the rapids in a hired native dugout canoe. My friends consisted of a logging

company executive, a lawyer and an assistant to the President (of the P.I.). They brought, of course, cases of cokes, barbecue, heaps of food and about 4 servants to do all the work. We had a good time, needless to say.

I've been able to borrow a car for the time I'll be here, but its unfortunately a real crock. I can't say what will fall off first. Its a Plymouth V-8 with hydramatic. Still its better than a kick in the pants and invaluable for getting around a bit.

Traffic is really cut-throat and congested, sanitation is primitive, but they do have a lot of nice new buildings and showy super-highways. There's a big gap between rich and poor. The rich live really well. Living costs are about the same on the average as Australia. If one had the income one can live well, but this usually involves political influence. Many cars are air-conditioned. Also most big buildings and many houses.

March 16, 1969

I went along with the club on a dive yesterday, Sunday. The distance travelled from Manila was 170 kms., or about 100 miles, each way. This is about a 4 hour trip as there are pigs and dogs and cats and chickens and people all along, and one is often stuck behind a slow moving vehicle on the narrow highways. They have selected this site as the best considering distance, access and features; and regularly use the same site. Their clubhouse is accessible only by boat, is under coconut trees, on the beach. Its a napa house (native grass) rented for 100 pesos (P25) per year. The beach is stony. Underwater there are big rocks and coral formations on a grey sand bottom sloping at about 30° to considerable depth. I only went to about 65 ft. so only saw small brightly colored fish, but others went to 100-130 and came up with some about 1 ft. long, broad and flat, which they called "spotted porgy". We took one home for dinner and they're good eating. Also one cray, about a foot plus feelers, no pincers and variegated yellow, black, green and pink colored. I would personally tire of this spot after a few dives but they seem to like it. They hire a boat for P20 (P5) a day, bring cokes, ice, etc. and split total cost.

Must sign off now. Best regards to all. Will report on any news events.

BILL JANSEN.