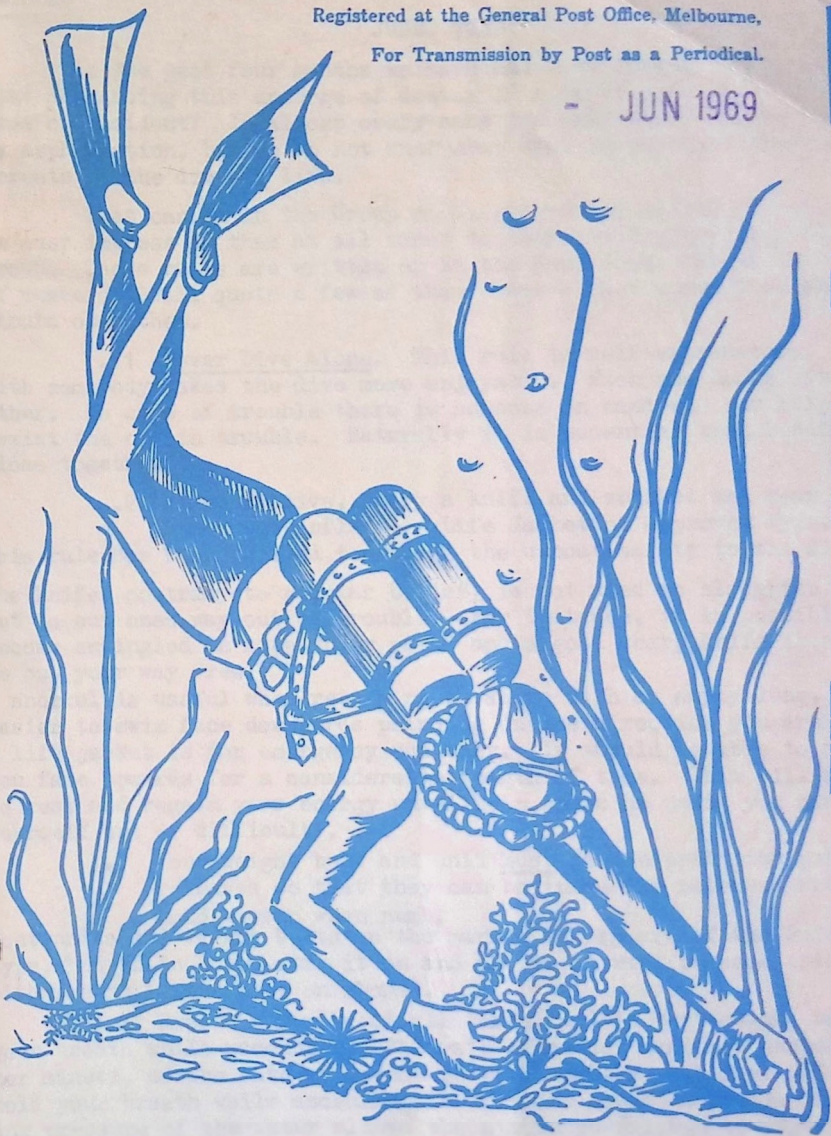


3c.

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne,  
For Transmission by Post as a Periodical.

- JUN 1969

# FATHOMS



## VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

JUNE, 1969

In the past four months we have had four diving fatalities. What is causing this upsurge of deaths in a sport that is relatively free of incident? In almost every case the only report we get is death by asphyxiation, but we do not know what went on in those last few moments of the diver's life.

What can we in the Group do to ensure the safety of our members? We must impress on them at all times to obey the diving rules of the Group. These rules are written up in the Hand Book, but in the interest of members I will quote a few of them here with a comment on why you should obey them.

..1 Never Dive Alone. This rule is self explanatory. Diving with somebody makes the dive more enjoyable. Each one looks after the other. In case of trouble there is someone on hand who can help and assist the one in trouble. Naturally it is essential that buddies stay close together.

..2 On every dive, carry a knife and snorkel and wear an Automatic inflatable Life Jacket of approved type.

This rule has been devised to ensure the utmost safety to the diver.

The knife, contrary to popular belief, is not used to slaughter sharks, but to cut ones way out of trouble. For instance, it is possible to become entangled in rope under water and a good sharp knife is essential to cut your way free.

A snorkel is useful when returning to shore with an empty lung, as it is easier to swim face downwards pointing in the direction you are going. A life jacket is for emergency use only. It should be able to support you face upwards for a considerable length of time. This will allow you to rest and regain your energy until help comes or until you can get yourself out of difficulty.

..3 Your weight belt and unit Must be equipped with quick releases so that they can be instantly released with one hand - even when numb.

Most units and weight belts on the market to-day are of the Quick Release type, but if in doubt, try it on and see if it will release quickly with either hand (preferably on shore).

..4 Breathe normally at all times, and in particular, never hold your breath while ascending. The rate of ascent must not exceed 60ft per minute, or the rate of ascent of your smallest bubbles. If you do hold your breath while ascending the results could be fatal. The lessening pressure of the water allows the air in your lungs to expand until the lungs rupture, unless the diver exhales all the way to the surface. For further rules for safe diving consult your Hand Book. **ED.**

PAST OUTINGS. MORNINGTON PIER 11-5-69.

The day was cloudy and windy but that did not stop 8 divers from braving the weather. Two of the divers did not enter the water because of colds but six donned the suits and gear and splashed into the depths.

It was dirty and rough in and visibility was limited to approximately one foot but the divers relied on the old buddy system and moved out. After about an hour they started emerging from the depths with their haul of salvage. With the dirty water to contend with, pickings were few but a fine example of a "Hamilton" type bottle was found. After lunch and a chin-wag everyone moved off to their respective duties, such as attending christenings, Mothers lay gatherings and the like.

TORQUAY WRECK 25-5-69.

On a day that must have been ordered in advance, 9 divers in two boats pulled out from the torquay boat launching ramp on a sea that had only a slight swell running, and headed for the site of the wreck of the Victoria Towers. Led by experts, the two boats sped un-eeringly to the site; anchors were dropped and a pair of divers from each boat hit the water. Ten minutes later, with all divers safely aboard, the two boats sped un-eeringly to the site again and a pair of divers from each boat hit the water again, etc., for two hours. It was with disappointment that we returned to shore empty-handed with the sad knowledge that our cherished bearings were wrong. After lunch most of the divers went body surfing and the rest pulled out for home.

PORTLAND.. 14/16-6-69.

As the newsletter will go to press before this dive a report of this trip will appear in the July Issue.

SOME UNUSUAL UNDERWATER FAUNA. Feather-duster Worm. This belongs to the same phylum as the common earth worm and is a beautiful creature with brilliantly colored flower-like gills. These gills are coated with a sticky substance which traps tiny food particles floating in the water, Microscopic hairs (cilia) move the entrapped food into the mouth. The body of the worm is protected by a rigid tube, and at the slightest sign of danger the gills are snapped back into the tube. This species lives in the cold waters of Northern Europe.

"Oikopleura" - The possession of a primitive "backbone" known as a 'notochord' shows that this little animal belongs to the phylum chordata, which also includes all the higher animals. Oikopleura makes for itself a little jelly like house with a coarse filter in the roof and then sets itself under this and stirs up a current by lash its tail.

This draws sea water through the coarse filter and then through a fine filter where very tiny food particles are concentrated. The used water is then jetted out through a hole in the underside of the house which moves the lot forward to new feeding grounds. When the filter gets clogged, the animal leaves by an escape hatch and makes a new house. The size of the house is about one inch and the size of the animal about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long. There are several species of oikopleura, found in most seas.

.....

It has been brought to the attention of your Editor that a Bill may shortly be introduced to Parliament for the preservation of historic relics. Some of the points of this Bill are of vital interest to divers and they are noted here for your information.

'CROWN LAND' Includes land lying below low water mark in the territorial waters of Victoria. This is limited of course by the three mile limit and consequently will cover any wrecks in this limit.

'RELIC' To mean any trace or remains of the discovery and exploration of Australia, the early settlement of its lands and the development of trade, commerce and industry down to the year 1900! If this portion of the Bill is approved it would mean the end of the destruction of such Historical Wrecks as the "Lochard" and others that could still be found.

Of course it will hit harder home than this. It will mean the end of the private keeping of any worthwhile items found on ship wrecks sunk prior to 1900.

Come to the next Meeting of the Group to be held on 20-6-69 at Youths Hostels Hall, Gisborne Street, Eastern Hill, at 8.00 P.M., and find out more about this. This club will be represented on discussions about this Bill and it is only be coming along to the Meeting and making your views known can your representatives and Board of Directors arrive at any decision which may have any bearing on this matter.

Did you know that there is being built an Underwater Sightseeing Bus? It's a fact. An American firm called the Indies Company Limited is to build the Western Hemisphere's first passenger carrying submarine as a part of a program of construction aimed at providing specialized vehicles for science, industry and commerce.

The Submanaut is a twin keeled, 50 ton submarine capable of carrying up to eight scientists or a movie crew, to varying depths while being operated by only two men. A special feature of the submarine is a thirteen foot long plexiglass window in the nose which offers greater observation facilities than any other submarine. The second one of these vehicles to be built will be unique in that it will be a 63 foot long submarine designed to carry up to fourty passengers long distances through the sea. These vehicles will most likely be constructed for a major U.S. transportation company which plans to use them for sightseeing trips from Gulf coast cities.

FOR SALE. Nikinos Camera, completely water-proof, 40 flash bulbs, under-water view-finder, water-proof lightmeter, glass gun, the lot for \$170.00. Contact J. EVANS - phone 812639. These units are as new and cost over \$250 when first purchased.

Club Dinner - "The Barrel" 6th Dec., 1969..Get your money in now and reserve your seats for the Groups Premier Function of the Year. All deposits must be paid by 30th September, 1969. (\$1.00) and the balance of \$4.00 by 31st October, 1969. Don't miss out as accommodation is limited to 40 persons.

Snow Trip "MT. BULLER" 15th August, 1969..The latest reports of this outing indicate that one of the Lodges has been booked out by members of this Group, so come to the next meeting and give some indication of your desire to go and another Lodge can be booked if more people are desirous of going.

#### CAPTAIN COOK'S CANNONS.

A rare experience was afforded your Editor on 15th May, 1969. A call from Phil Webster, President of S.D.F. on the evening before, informed me that for the last time Cook's Cannons would be exhibited at the Defence Standards Laboratories and interested divers were invited to attend. After many phone calls on the morning of the 15th it was found that only two or possibly three from our Club could attend. As the times of viewing were between 9.00a.m. and 2.00 p.m., many people could not make it as the times were inconvenient. I arrived out there at 1.00p.m. with my wife Lorraine and was just in time to see P. Webster leaving. He informed me that the taking of photos was banned as the area was classified. We were met by Dr. Colin Pearson who is the man responsible for the rejuvenation of the cannons and also Geoff Anderson another visitor from the Underwater Explorers who found the cannon at Apollo Bay last year.

Dr. Pearson escorted us to where the work was being done on the cannons and we were greeted by the sight of one of these lying in a cradle in the same state as it was when first found. It was just a mass of coral in the rough classic shape that one associates with muzzle loading cannon. Dr. Pearson informed us that work would commence immediately on cleaning this cannon and we were extremely fortunate in being able to see it in its un-natural state. After examining this cannon we were taken into another room where five cannons were in the last stages of being cleaned and preserved. All coral had been removed and they were in very good condition. We were informed that while the bores on two of these cannons were being cored out, a bonus find was made. It so happens that these pieces had been loaded and primed when they were dumped and the powder, (in solid form now) the ball and the tamping plug were still there.

While we were there, we were also shown two carronades that had been found in Sydney Harbour last year. They looked to be in perfect condition but we were told that oxidation had set in and it would be a long hard job to preserve them.

The Group can gain in knowledge from what D.S.L. is doing and if anyone finds anything of worthwhile interest that should be preserved, I have no doubt that D.S.L. would be only too willing to help.

.... S P E C I A L ....

For the next Meeting, Friday 20th June, 1969 Max Davenport has been fortunate to arrange for members attending the rare opportunity of receiving a lecture and slides on Underwater Medicine by Doctor Gavin Dawson of Prince Henry's Hospital. Doctor Dawson's lecture will include recompression. This is a most topical occurrence particularly as the Coroner's Findings on the recent deaths at Kilsby's Hole, Mt. Gambier have yet to be made known. The Doctor who performed the Autopsy stated that death was due to an embolism. Remember don't be an ostrich with your head in the sand, come to this Meeting and learn more about your sport. Knowledge can mean safe happy diving..... , .....

..\* M \* E \* F \* T \* I \* N \* G \* ..

The next meeting of the Group will be held on the 20th June, 1969, at 8.00 p.M., and all members are reminded that membership fees are now due and it would be appreciated if all dues were paid within two months from this meeting.

.....