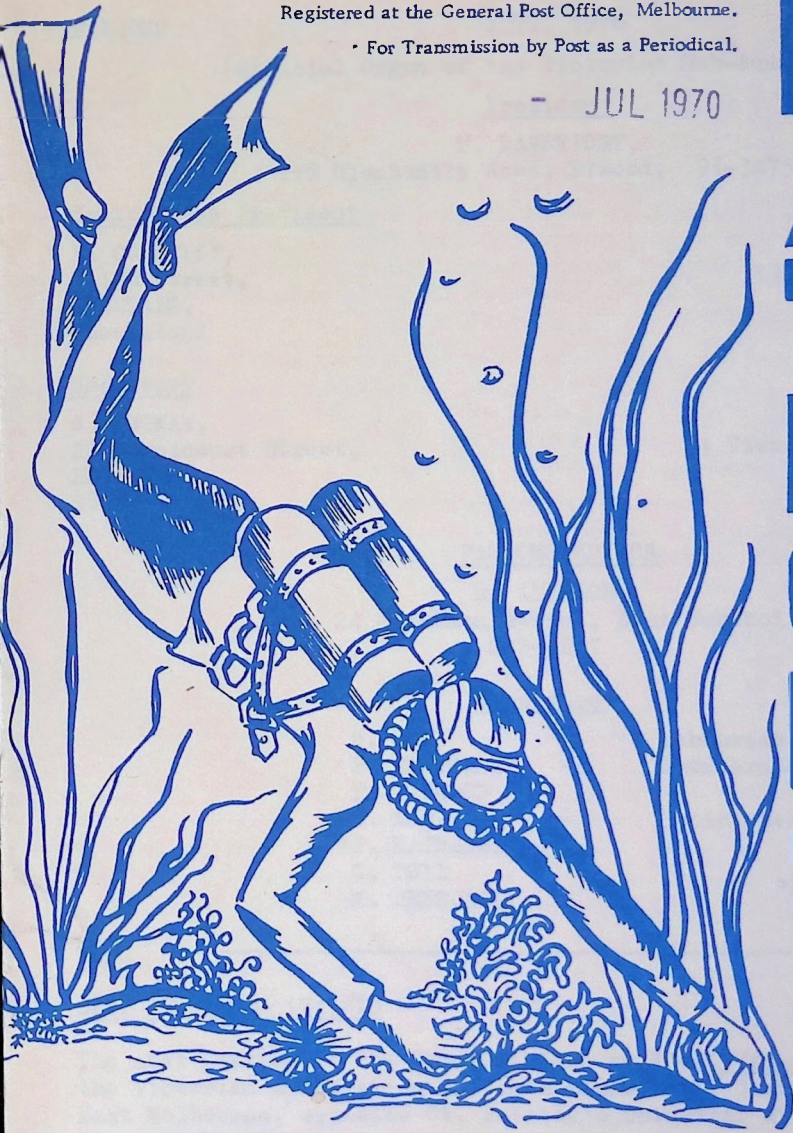


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FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

(Official Organ of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)

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CLUB MEETING - 17/7/70

The next meeting of the Group will be held on 17th July, 1970 at the Victorian Association of Youth Clubs Hall, Gisborne Street, East Melbourne, opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral at 8.00 p.m. sharp. Meeting will terminate with General Business at 9.00 a.m. sharp.

UNDERWATER UTILITYR. ADDISON,
V.S.A.G.

I was at home painting the concrete railing around the patio getting white paint over me and the steps, when the phone rang. I answered it and Pat Reynolds asked me if I was too busy to do a diving job. With a bit of a guilty start I said "No, where is it?". He then gave me the number of the Ringwood Towing Service and mumbled something about "a car in the Yarra at Lilydale and, see you later, Ron. I've got to get ready to go out".

So I gave the Ringwood Towing Service a ring and they said they would have a tow truck meet me on the highway half way between Ringwood and Lilydale. I tossed my gear into the Falcon ute and headed out at a great rate of knots, the day was drawing to a close more or less, it getting on towards 5.00 p.m.

I met the tow truck and we proceeded down many miles of bumpy roads until we came to a large churned up paddock alongside the Yarra. There were quite a few people standing around, two tow trucks, two other cars and another diver. I can just imagine what this other chap was saying to himself. "I wonder what this chap can do that I Can't do".

I had a bit of a discussion with this other diver and found out a bit of history about him. He had only been driving about four months, a hobby he had progressed to from spear-fishing and as he had never attended classes for the use of scuba, he had only a rudimentary knowledge of the unit and a lack of confidence which walks hand in hand with a lack of knowledge.

He told me that he had been called in at 11.00 a.m. in the morning, and had been, no other word for it, duck diving since then to try and find this vehicle reposing on the bed of the Yarra.

The tow-truck drivers told me the full story behind the sunken car. It appeared that a party of shooters had come down to this paddock very early in the morning, about 3.00 a.m., to try and bag a couple of bunnies and while driving across the paddock to see if they could spotlight any rabbits with their headlights, they became bogged. Their futile attempts to extricate themselves only succeeded in digging themselves in further. Then one of the party had a brilliant idea. Why not, he said, leave the motor in gear just ticking over, choke pulled out a little way to make sure it didn't stall, and then every one get out and push. This marvellous idea was greeted by enthusiasm by all concerned.

UNDERWATER UTILITY (Cont'd.)

So with the back wheels slowly spinning, the three snooters got out of the car and heaved mightily; nobody was expecting anything at all to happen. Much to their surprise the car started to move forward rather rapidly and bumped its way across the paddocks making a bee-line for the Yarra which was waiting quietly to receive this unexpected visit.

The car bounded into the river like a baby rushing to its mother's arms and remained floating, motor roaring like a speed boat, lights ablazing until one of the shooters swam out to it and turned off motor and lights. A sudden dark, silence descended upon the waiting two and swimming one. The chap who was in the water tried to push the car towards the shore, but the car, caught in the grip of the current and slowly turning, had a mind of its own and slowly drifted down-stream and out towards the centre. Up till this time the car was floating fairly rigid, but modern vehicles being what they are, it wasn't long before it slowly started to settle by the bow. (front).

It was all over in about five minutes. The swimmer emerged from the river and the unhappy three then began the long hike back to civilisation and help.

From a vantage point on the river bank, I could make out an oil slick slowly moving down-stream. I traced this back to its source and saw that the car was resting about thirty feet out from the bank and most likely ten feet up river from where the oil was appearing. I got the gear on and swam out until I was in a direct line up river from where the oil was appearing and about thirty feet away. Visibility was about a foot with a torch and I seemed to be diving for ever before I felt the bottom. I made one pass and then surfaced well down-stream having missed the car in the murk.

The next time I got right on top of the slick and powered down to the bottom flat out, swimming a bit upstream to try and follow the slick to its source. This time, success. I landed right on the roof. I had a bit of a feel around and found out the car was pointing down-stream with the back of the car pointing slightly towards shore. I then swam up to the drivers door and reached in and moved it out of gear.

I had a light line with me so I tied this onto the passenger's side door handle and played it out as I surfaced. On top I tied a liquid detergent bottle (empty) to the light line and had the car effectively buoyed.

UNDERWATER UTILITY (Cont'd.)

Now it was time to move the two trucks into position. The boss tow truck driver decided that his truck would have the honour of hauling the car out, so he started up and blasted off in a circuit around the paddock to get himself set up for a straight pull out with his winch. Whammo, straight into the bog. The driver got out of the truck with a disgusted look on his face and called for the other truck to come and pull him out.

This other truck moved up to help and as he was inching past his bogged partner his steering jammed and he rammed his mate in the mud-guard. They sorted themselves out and then as the unbogged one was hauling his mate out of the bog, his radiator hose burst. Talk schmozzle.

He eventually set himself up on the river bank a little bit too close I thought but he wouldn't be told, said he wouldn't have enough cable otherwise. We ran the cable out and I lined myself up with the buoy and then entered the water. I estimated the depth at about thirty feet where the car lay and shortly I ran into the side of it. I moved up to the back of it and then proceeded to tie the cable onto the rear near-side spring shackle. After a few twists around and then a hook back through, I felt that this would be secure enough.

I then surfaced and came ashore and gave the thumbs up sign to start hauling. The truckie started up his engine and began quietly taking up the slack while we all waited patiently to see the buoy begin to move. As the tension developed on the cable and the motor began to labour I could see no signs of the underwater ute beginning to move but the cable was slowly being wound in.

To be continued.

SMORGASBORD

The Ringwood Club will be holding this function at the White Horse Hotel, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading, on FRIDAY, 7th AUGUST, at 7.00 p.m. Tickets are available from J. Noonan at \$2.50 per head and admission will be by ticket only. Dress - good casual. It is expected that quite a few V.S.A.G. members will turn up to represent the club and foster good relations between S.D.F. members.

TIDES FOR WEEKENDS IN JULY, 1970

Date	HIGH WATER AT HEADS		LOW WATER AT HEADS	
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
4	-	12.55	5.27	6.22
5	12.18	1.40	5.15	7.17
11	4.42	4.55	10.30	11.10
12	5.27	5.26	11.02	11.39
18	11.11	10.09	3.35	4.22
19	12.13(p.m.)	11.30	4.40	5.28
25	4.47	4.59	10.26	10.57
26	5.42	5.41	11.09	11.38

At other places High or Low Water can be ascertained approximately by subtracting from or adding to the time of high or low water at Port Phillip Heads as follows:-

SUBTRACT FOR:

APOLLO BAY	-	38 min.
LORNE	-	35 min.
CAPE SCHANCK	-	1 hr. 33 min.
FLINDERS JETTY	-	1 min.
LAKES ENTRANCE	-	3 hr. 25 min.
MARLO	-	3 hr. 22 min.
MALLACOOTA INLET	-	3 hr. 13 min.

ADD FOR:

BARWON HEADS	-	16 min.
POINT NEPEAN JETTY	-	9 min.
QUEENSCLIFF JETTY	-	3 min.
SWAN ISLAND DOCK	-	1 hr. 59 min.
PORTSEA JETTY	-	29 min.
SORRENTO JETTY	-	2 hr. 11 min.
DROMANA JETTY	-	2 hr. 33 min.
MORNINGTON JETTY (Scinapper Point)	-	2 hr. 42 min.
FRANKSTON JETTY	-	3 hr. 7 min.
BLACK ROCK BREAKWATER	-	3 hr. 2 min.
ST. LEONARDS JETTY	-	2 hr. 44 min.
INDENTED HEAD	-	2 hr. 47 min.
PORTARLINGTON JETTY	-	2 hr. 50 min.
GEE LONG WHARVES	-	3 hr. 32 min.
COWES JETTY	-	28 min.
STONY POINT JETTY	-	39 min.
HASTINGS JETTY	-	1 hr. 6 min.
TOORADIN	-	1 hr. 23 min.

ADD FOR:

INVERLOCH	-	20 min.
CORNER INLET ENTRANCE	-	25 min.
WELSHPOOL JETTY	-	1 hr. 28 min.
TOORA JETTY	-	1 hr. 5 min.
FORT ALBERT WHARF	-	1 hr.

FUTURE OUTINGS TO END OF YEAR

AUGUST 2nd	-	SNOW TRIP
" 16th	-	FORTSEA
" 30th	-	TO BE DECIDED
SEPTEMBER 6th	-	DIAMOND BAY
" 20th	-	GEELONG PIER
OCTOBER 4th	-	CHANNEL FORT - Boat
" 18th	-	BLACKWOOD - Gold Dive - WEEKEND TRIP
NOVEMBER 1st	-	PHILLIP ISLAND
" 15th	-	KELP FARM - Boat
" 29th	-	RYE
DECEMBER 12th	-	DINNER - CHATEAU WYUNA

FUTURE OUTINGS - JULY 5th - VICTORIA TOWERS

This will be a boat trip and the same conditions apply as on all boat trips. First in, best dressed. Twelve people have expressed a wish to go on this trip, so a boat will be hired. Every one going to ring J. Noonan Saturday beforehand, before 6.30 p.m. to see what time the boat will be pulling out. So, don't miss out diving on this hundred-year-old wreck.

FUTURE OUTINGS - JULY 19th - FRANKSTON WRECK.

We will be going out to the site of the club's private artificial reef on this trip, so bring along the necessary filling and help to build it up. Meeting time and place for this dive will be thrashed out at the meeting to be held on FRIDAY, 17th JULY, so roll up and get your name down. A good feed of scallops can usually be collected from around this area.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Okay members, fees are now due and payable, so either send them to me, C/- of the box No. or at my home. Remember, you don't get a vote at the Annual General Meeting unless you are financial. I will be in attendance at the next meeting with my receipt book all ready to go, and the pen in hand all warmed up ready to write. I will also have with me lapel badges at \$1.00, car stickers at 40c, pocket badges which adhere migatily to a wet suit and last for years at \$1.40.

At the moment the club is very financial having a total of \$177 in the general account and about \$100 in the diving training account. This, at the end of the financial year with members' subs due, show that the club is on a solid financial footing and can only go from strength to strength.

A. CUTTS - Treasurer

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SOCIAL REPORT

Now it can be told. The club made a total of \$58.32 profit from the Bar-B-Que and we still have 28 bottles of beer and 8 bottles of lemonade left. At the last meeting, by a show of hands, it was decided to hold the club dinner at Chateau Wyuna, Swansea Road, Montrose. Tariff will be \$6.50 per head and deposits of \$2.50 per person must be forwarded to the Club Treasurer, A. Cutts, 21 Viewhill Crescent, Eltham, or C/- of Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne by 17/7/70 (next meeting).

PAST MEETING 19/6/70

There were twenty-one members and friends present at this meeting and apologies were received from two directors. Past and future outings were discussed and correspondence was received from an old time bottle collector. It is hoped that we can get one of these experts along to a meeting to give a talk on old bottles as we have quite a lot of bottle collectors in the club. The record of about eighty bottles is held by Pat Reynolds, who can sniff these out in water visibility of about one inch and has ranged far and wide around Port Phillip Bay hunting them out.

Also at this meeting, Max Norton suggested that the club undertake a project to the mutual benefit of a Yacht Club and our group. It will involve underwater cutting with all equipment supplied and quite a lot of arduous underwater work. All club members seemed to be extremely interested in this and Max was detailed to follow up the leads he had.

If this project is successful it could lead to further work of a profit making type by virtue of word of mouth advertising around the yacht clubs. So if we all pull our weight on this project we could do well.

* * * * *

S.D.F. REPORT

It could be that in the near future S.D.F. could have a rep. from the Police Search and Rescue squad. This is the sort of recognition that S.D.F. has for years strived for and this is what member clubs want. S.D.F. is slowly moving to the forefront of diving in Victoria and it won't be long before it will be the premier divers' organisation in Victoria. Already two other lung diving clubs are making enquiries re joining.

* * * * *

PAST OUTING - CAPE OTWAY - 13/14/15th JUNE

Conditions for diving at this venue were not good over the long weekend. Wind was wild and water was rough. The boys managed to get into the rock pools where crays usually abound but visibility was rotten and the pools had a tendency to boil up and drag divers out into open rough water. A couple of the boys moved back to Indented Head to see if they could get a dive on the wrecks there but even in the sheltered confines of the bay, waves four-feet high dampened all enthusiasm for diving. Not a very good holiday weekend for diving.

21st JUNE - CAPE SCHANCK

This venue was changed at the meeting of the 19th to Half Moon Bay and the old dreadnought "Cerebus". Five divers turned up to brave the wintry conditions and we headed out in Joan Noonan's boat at 1.30 p.m. We anchored off the stern of the old wreck and hit the water and it was like ice, I can tell you. After about two hours of diving around and about the under deck of the wreck, it was decided enough was enough, and by mutual agreement we packed it in. Conclusion, a very cold day for diving with the water temperature dropping all the time.

* * * * *

IN ANTICIPATION OF CLIFFY ISLAND

RON DUNLOP
B.R.U.D.G.

I left the March meeting clutching a tiny piece of paper. It was a receipt which announced that I had paid \$3.00 to book my passage on the boat trip to Cliffy Island on Good Friday. This trip would set some kind of a record, for never before had the club ventured so far out to sea.

"Down Under" had advertised that this dive would be held a month earlier, but instead we had been diverted to Rabbit Island. It was just as well, for engine failure and a fire found several members contemplating a swift swim ashore onto the uninhabited coast of the Promontory.

IN ANTICIPATION OF CLIFFY ISLAND (Cont'd.)

This time, however, we would not use the old tub which had let us down. We would sail in the more attractive and faster "Diana" which towed us in after a passing boat had radioed our distress back to Port Welshpool.

I was looking forward to this trip, to compare Cliffy with Rabbit Island, which I had explored fairly closely, from the steep rocky cliffs which almost surrounded it to the pretty, unspoiled little beach on the sheltered Northern side. Incidentally, if anyone knows how this place got its name, I would be very interested to learn it. I saw no sign of rabbits anywhere, not even their droppings, instead, much of the higher soil seems to be honeycombed with mutton bird rookeries. Blundering into these areas can be most disturbing, as the ground tends to cave in under you, and on several occasions I found myself buried up to my knees. To hurry here is to invite a certain broken leg.

The only man made structure on Rabbit was the ruins of a triangulation tower at the very top, and from appearances this has been laying on its side for a long while.

In contrast to this, aerial photos of Cliffy published in the daily papers revealed a number of quite substantial buildings, and presumably there would be a small permanent population.

Although Cliffy was just a dot on the distant horizon to us, it is geographically quite close to Rabbit Island, and thus it would seem fair to anticipate that her waters should prove equally as interesting.

There had certainly been no lack of spectacle on the earlier dive. We had scarcely submerged before Bob Hurst swooped on a pair of Port Jackson sharks and commenced wrestling with one, while its mate lay placidly on the bottom beside them. The display ended abruptly when, without warning, Bob thrust the beast's nose against my navel. I must have offended it somehow, for it took off at great speed. Perhaps it just wasn't used to being puched in the face. We must have seen well over half a dozen of these creatures. One hovered further up the cliff among the weed, just on the limits of visibility, and seemed to be watching us. It didn't come any closer, and for my peace of mind, I hope it was just a Port Jackson.

IN ANTICIPATION OF CLIFFY ISLAND (Continued)

The eeriest encounter was just after I was separated from Bob, by a current which swirled the kelp around us, completely blotting out visibility. On parting the weed to look for him, I found myself face to face with one of the monsters. I know they are supposed to be harmless, but it still gave me a creepy feeling to encounter a fish nearly as big as myself, especially when I knew that it was a shark.

However, it seemed as disinterested in me as all its fellows had. We glided over several sandy coloured rays on the bottom, and fish were both large and plentiful. At one stage, we entered a gorge on the island where the waves had battered out a cave in the solid rock. It quickly narrowed down and turned dirty, so we retreated to the deeper water, with Bob always searching for bigger fish. I honestly believe that this lad is in danger of degenerating from a respectable SCUBA diver into a full blooded spearo.

Back on the boat, someone had landed a nice looking cray, the only one caught all day. Still, if Cliffy turned out to be as well stocked in this respect, I might bring one home myself.

To help follow our route, I visited the R.A.C.V. Travel Department, and obtained a map of Wilsons Promontory and all the surrounding islands. No more would the passing landmarks be anonymous sights which slid past and were forgotten.

I also received a series of strip maps which promised me an exceptionally attractive scenic route home up the Grand Ridge Road. All things considered, this was to be a day to look forward to.

But with a week to go, the five seemed threatened. High winds and rough seas had set in across the state, with no sign of abatement. Would we run into the 14 foot killer waves which had so tragically ended Alf Altemann's attempt to row his canoe across Bass Strait when he was within sight of his destination? Anxiously I scanned the weather maps. By Thursday, all seemed well again, the rain had eased, and two high pressure areas covered the continent from Perth to Melbourne, promising fine weather for Easter. (Yes, I do know what eventuated, but that's how it looked on paper.)

Mechanical trouble had almost caused me to miss the boat last time, so to play safe I determined to drive down to Port Welshpool on Thursday night and sleep there. This would also give me a chance to look at the town while waiting for the others. My earlier impressions as I sprinted down the wharf on arrival had not been

IN ANTICIPATION OF CLIFFY ISLAND (Continued)

overly detailed, and as we were towed back in after dark, I didn't see much on the return journey, either.

I topped up the car at my local XL garage, and filled a spare drum so that I could do the whole trip without paying the exorbitant country price for petrol.

The back seat and front passenger seat were turned out and replaced by a thick inner spring mattress. All my gear was stowed aboard, and I was ready to go.

But then a series of non-diving problems arose, and by the time they were sorted out, it was 12.30 a.m. Reasoning that if I stuck to my original plan, I might reach Dandenong before going to sleep at the wheel, I set the alarm for 3.00 a.m. and climbed into bed.

That should still give me a fair safety margin for the drive. Sunlight filtered through the curtains and stirred me uneasily. Sunlight? Before 3.00 o'clock? I squinted at my watch in disbelief.

6.20 a.m. I had $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to make a four hour dash through the middle of the Easter Road blitz.

Swearing quietly to myself, I rolled over and went back to sleep.
