

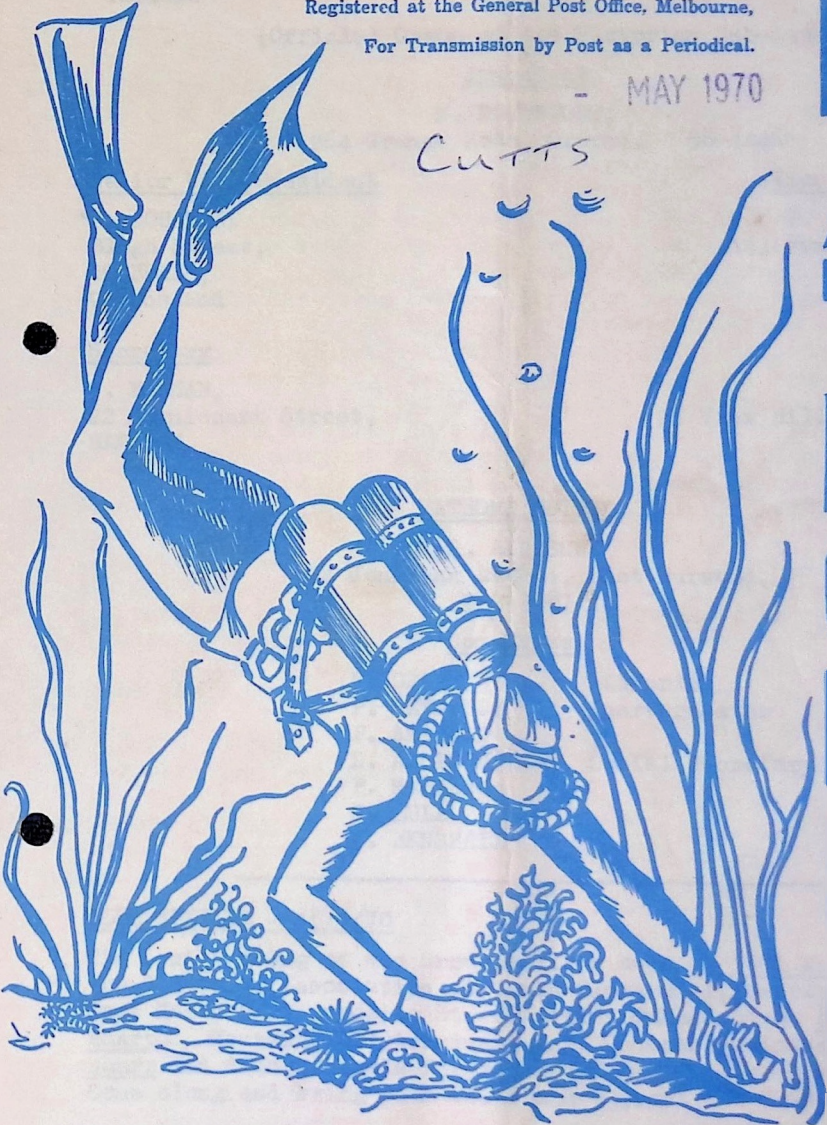
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MAY 1970

CUTTS



# FATHOMS



## VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

## (Official Organ of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)

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CLUB MEETING - 15/5/70

The next Meeting of the Group will be held on 15th May, 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 p.m. sharp and final details for the Bar-B-Que will be hashed out. Come along and bring your \$1.50 and support the Club.

MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT

Diving equipment must always be maintained in perfect condition, for an equipment failure even at a shallow depth can be very serious despite all the training a diver may have had.

Almost all metals corrode and most materials will rot after contact with water. Sea water can set up an electrolytic action between dis-similar metals, chlorine found in swimming pools rapidly attacks rubber and most fabrics, even fresh water may have chemicals dissolved in it that will attack almost anything. After a dive the best thing is to wash everything in fresh water and allow it to dry naturally in a shaded place.

Cylinders should be washed in fresh water, care being taken that water does not enter the air outlet. In any case, it is advisable to crack (open and shut quickly) a cylinder before fitting it to a demand valve, so that any dirt or moisture is blown out. The paint should always be kept touched up to avoid corrosion, and if it is necessary to remove rust this should be done by hand and not with a mechanical device or with a paint stripper which may react chemically with the cylinder metal. Care must obviously be taken that excessive metal is not rubbed off and the cylinder weakened.

Cylinders must be handled with care: a dent or a scratch can seriously damage a cylinder to the point of failure. If the cylinder is to be stored for some time, it is a good precaution to return the cylinder to a competent organisation so that any accumulated moisture or oil can be removed and the cylinder checked for internal corrosion.

Cylinder valves occasionally become still or bent and the complete cylinder should be returned to a competent organisation for repair. The valves are designed to operate without any lubricants and none should be applied; certain lubricants can cause a spontaneous explosion when in contact with high pressure gases or contaminate the air and make it dangerous to breathe. Cylinder valves should only be closed finger tight to avoid damage to the internal seal. In the same way, demand valves should not be excessively tightened on to the cylinder or the washer may be badly cut and leak.

Demand valves should always be washed in fresh water after a dive, again taking care that no water enters the hp inlet. Occasionally the diaphragm should be removed so that the interior of the valve can be cleaned and the seal between the demand valve casing and the diaphragm checked. The diaphragm should be inspected periodically for holes or signs of rotting.

Breathing tubes should be washed in fresh water and a periodic check made that there are no signs of weakness or rotting and that the non-return valves, if fitted, seal properly. With twin hose valves a check should always be made that the elbow washers are in place before the tubes are fitted to the demand valve. Tubes should be washed in antiseptic if being used by a number of people.

Maintenance of the mechanical parts of a demand valve is not for the amateur and they should be returned to the makers for overhaul every two years at least. A similar overhaul should be made on pressure gauges and their tubes to ensure the accuracy and the strength of both.

The porous filter on the up inlet of the demand valve should be inspected and renewed when necessary. A glance at it may show rust or oil; in either case this means that something unpleasant is occurring inside the cylinder and it should be checked internally as soon as possible.

Harnesses must not be allowed to fray, and any repairs should be done with waxed thread. The quick release device must always be kept in perfect condition, for faulty releases on weight belts have already contributed to a number of fatal accidents. The weights themselves should be kept in good condition, particularly those with narrow slots; there is nothing more annoying, when in full equipment, to have to fit or remove a weight which is damaged and to find one cannot.

All rubber items, i.e. masks, fins, dry suits and even neoprene wet suits, are attacked by chemicals in salt or polluted water. Sunlight, grease or oils will also cause rapid deterioration. Such items should be well washed in fresh water and allowed to dry naturally in a shaded place. For long term storage, a coating of french chalk will avoid the rubber sticking. With suits it is worth making a simple frame so that air can circulate both inside and outside. Dirt, oil or grease can be removed with warm, soapy water, rinsed then dried; solvents should never be used.

In the case of dry suits these should be periodically looked at for holes, and patched when necessary as recommended by the makers. Whilst holes in wet suits are not so critical, it is advisable to scan the seams occasionally. This avoids a possible large rip when putting on or removing the suit.

Diving instruments such as watches, depth gauges and knives should all be washed in fresh water after use. Particular care is needed with depth gauges to ensure that the little hole through which the water passes does not become blocked with salt crystals. The blades of knives should be kept reasonably sharp and a light coating of oil or grease helps to avoid rust on non-stainless steel blades.

Every aqualung owner should have a simple set of tools, carried in some form of bag or container. The bare necessities are spanners to enable the demand valve to be separated from the cylinder and/or manifold, the cylinders to be removed from the clamping bands if used and twin hoses and single hoses from their associated parts. Added to this should be a screwdriver; this may not be required to separate parts but it can be useful in removing washers from cylinder valves when they are badly damaged. A knife is more effective. A supply of cylinder washers and demand valve elbow washers should also be included. This set of tools allows a diver to strip his aqualung into individual items and, if necessary, make minor repairs to his equipment.

In the case of a leak around a threaded connection or washer, never just tighten it up even more but undo it first and check for dirt or damage, then replace. Very often a polythene washer will seal properly if it is wetted before inserting in the cylinder valve.

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### P A S T                      O U T I N G S

#### QUEENSLIFFE 12.4.70

It was a really fine day on the Bellarine Peninsula and the venue chosen to dive at was the Indented Heads wrecks. Most of the divers arrived at the diving spot by 11.30 a.m. and all divers were in the water by 12.00 noon. The water was crisp and clear as it usually is at this point, and there must have been some big storms recently as a lot of the wrecks that are usually covered by sand, were clear.

Two items were tried out on the wrecks; one, a pneumatic neck-saw that would have worked if more pressure could have been brought to bear on the cutting blade, but as it was it was useless; and the other one was a floating water pump designed for underwater use to move sand from interesting things on the bottom. Both of the articles in their present form are not very efficient so it looks like back to the old drawing board for Big Al.

The corporation managed to make expenses on the day and it was a joy to see Paul and Peter bringing in large lumps of negotiable artifacts. Paul has turned out to be a willing pupil and is rapidly "picking up" the underwater game as played by the pro's.

#### PAST MEETING 17.4.70

Approximately fifteen members turned up for this meeting and items discussed ranged from the special S.D.F. meeting (a full

report is elsewhere in this newsletter) to the club Bar-B-Que. This function looks like being a goer so come along and have a ball. Three new members were read into the club and a member of Box Hill Club, who was present, was made welcome. The Club car sticker was selling well and looks like being a roaring success.

### CRAWFISH ROCK 26.4.70

The two small boats owned by Joan Noonan and Bill Gray turned up at Hastings slip-way at 10.15 a.m. to find a dead flat tide with not enough water in the channel to enable the boats to be launched. Awaiting Joan and Bill were five more members of the Club who braved the rotten conditions in the hope that at the rock things would be a bit better.

We eventually set out from Hastings at 11 a.m. and headed down channel to deep water, then up past Long Island Oil Refinery towards the rock. Fifteen knot winds made conditions on Westernport Bay very choppy and the spray soon had the divers grabbing hoods and zipping up wet suits.

It was a rolling sort of voyage and we headed our way north with salt spray, slop and chop and wind conditions making it extremely unpleasant for some who soon showed their displeasure by calling out for "Herbie" over the side of the boat.

On arriving at Crawfish Rock we earned the displeasure of the owner of all of Western Port Bay (at least from the way he was talking one would assume that he owned it all), and after a verbal battle across the wind ripped waters, he decided to allow us the use of just a little bit of his bay. I must say this, while we were setting up, he was bringing in some nice fish with his stick and string.

After diving for half a hour it was discovered that the verbal battle had been a waste of time as conditions under water were worse than those above water with visibility being down to five feet in the good bits around the rock and getting down to about two feet around the rough side.

It was then decided by all concerned that the spot was a washout for the day so we left the owner to his sport and battled out way back to Hastings and a hot late lunch. On the way back the Corporation had a passing crack at the old wreck and lifted a couple of relics from it.

To sum up, a rotten day with rotten conditions, but would not have missed it for quids for the boat ride was exhilarating, the diving exciting and the company mighty.

FUTURE OUTINGSMAY 24th - POPE'S EYE

Members will need to come to the meeting on the 15.5.70 to book for this trip as it is a boat trip and it is desired to know whether to hire a large boat or if the two boats owned by members will be sufficient.

JUNE 13-15th - CAPE LIPTRAP - LONG WEEKEND.

This is a terrific spot to dive. Come to the meeting on 15.5.70 and find out where everyone is camping.

FUTURE OUTINGS TO END OF YEAR

JUNE 21st	-	CAPE SCHANK	
JULY 5th	-	VICTORIA TOWERS - Boat	
" 19th	-	FRANKSTON WRECK - Boat	
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	

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M O N S T E R                      B A R - B - Q U EAND            WHITE            ELEPHANTS A L E

at 4 PIMM COURT, SYNDAL  
on 16th MAY, 1970, at 8.00 P.M.

\*

Bring along that old diving gear, or any other gear, and flog it for the benefit of the Club.

D I V E R S

Bring your wet suits for the Aquatic Games, Underwater Treasure Hunt and V.S.A.G. versus The Rest in Underwater Polo.

ADMISSION - \$1.50 PER HEAD

entitles you to a plate of well done steak and chops and what have you.

LIQUID REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE.

ROLL UP MEMBERS, AND SUPPORT THE CLUB.

REMEMBER!

4 PIMM COURT, SYNDAL -  
AT 8.00 P.M. ON 16.5.1970



SELF-CONTAINED DIVERS FEDERATION REPORT

On the 6th April, 1970 a special meeting of S.D.F. was held at Melbourne University, some 19 Club representatives attended. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the recent formation in N.S.W. of a Group calling itself SCUBA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA. It appears that since January, 1969, four separate pieces of legislation have been passed in that State including no spearing of fish while using scuba gear, no taking of crayfish by any means while using scuba, complete protection of the Blue Groper. This restrictive legislation is directed specifically at Scuba Divers and was submitted to the Government by the Fisheries & Wild Life Department, after discussion supposedly with representatives of interested bodies. The U.S.F.A. has a representative on the Committee which raised no objection on behalf of Scuba Divers. The Scuba Association of Australia was formed basically by divers who were not members of any clubs, who "woke" one morning to the realization they were being discriminated against.

They approached the Fisheries & Wild Life Department to seek to have the legislation to be reviewed and whilst given a good hearing they were directed to contact the U.S.F.A. and make their approaches through him. However, they received no co-operation, in fact they received a complete rebuttal. It was this rejection and obvious disinterest of U.S.F.A. that resulted in the formation of the above group. Whilst this Association registered as a Company in N.S.W. it was desired to have it recognized throughout Australia and with a "copyright" on the name. To do this the Association must have at least two members in each State. This requirement has been met in W.A., S.A., Queensland, so far. Through Howard Nelson, Black Rock Club, an approach was made for Victorian members. Howard felt S.D.F. should be involved and he and Phil Webster, President, S.D.F. got into discussion with Scuba Association of Australia representatives.

At the special meeting, after lengthy discussion, it was agreed that S.D.F. would accept the role of Victorian representative on the Scuba Association of Australia but it would retain autonomy of its own affairs. Before further action or agreement beyond this point it was also agreed that an effort should be made for representatives of the new Association to come to Melbourne for discussions and clarification of a number of factors of vital concern to S.D.F. Although a unified national

voice on behalf of all divers was most ardently to be sougat, it would have to be very carefully considered as to its effect on S.D.F. and its own identity.

It is now possible to report that at the next meeting of S.D.F. in May, two executive members of Scuba Association of Australia will attend for discussions.

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### HOUSE DIVING (Continued)

In the last issue we were playing around a tree, but we knew that a sunken farmhouse was nearby, so we swam down the tree, found the fence and continued on our way, moving along the top of the fence at a great rate of knots. At last we came to a dead mass of wood that could have been a busa at one time growing in a front garden.

We left the fence and separated until we could just see each other and started to swim ahead. At last a dark saape loomed up in front of us, we had arrived. This was it, beauty. We swam around the house first of all to see how big it was. It was a typical type farm-house with a verandaa running around two sides of it, rather large, about ten rooms. We swam under the verandah and tried to see inside through one of the windows but it was toodark inside to see anything.

We found the front door which was open, lucky for us, as I do not think that we would have been able to open it against the water pressure, and swam inside. Man, it was dark inside. It appeared that we were in a long passageway with rooms running off each side, so we gingerly made our way down until we reached the first door off to our right.

It was shut and our fears were groundless that we would not be able to open it as it gave very slowly inwards. It was lighter in this room, which happened to be the kitchen, having a window on two sides which allowed a milky coloured light to leak through. I could see the old fireplace and a table, which appeared to be water-logged as it was not floating against the ceiling, resting on the floor where it should be.

The depth gauge showed sixty feet but didn't feel it; it

seemed to be a great comfort to be inside four walls. I cruised over to one of the windows and it opened quite easily. I thought it prudent to have a means of getting out of the place quickly without having to swim down that passage-way.

I swam up near the ceiling and discovered that the lighting fittings were still in place, so I rested by having onto the light cord with my feet pressed against the ceiling. I watched Moe moving around the kitchen and poking into the fires, oven and the cupboards which were dotted around the walls of the kitchen. I think he found a couple of forgotten tins of some unknown substance, the labels having long been gone.

I left the light fitting and spiralled down near the floor and indicated to my partner that I would like to keep on exploring. We moved out into the passage-way again which appeared to be ten times darker after having been in the kitchen and proceeded deeper into the house.

The next door we came to was open and we swam inside and moved straight across to the window and opened this one, having in mind at all times that if an emergency arose we could get out of the house quickly by swimming into a room we had explored and diving through a window. This room could have been a bedroom as it was bare of furniture and there was nothing of interest in it for us. The light fittings were also in place in this room so we had a bit of a swing on them before moving out.

We took about a quarter of an hour to explore the flooded house and each flip (I was going to say step) of the way was frighteningly exciting, but by opening all the windows in the house as we came to each individual room, we were ensured of an escape route no more than twelve feet away.

We swam out via the back door and sort of curled our way to the roof of the building. It was a marvellous experience to be able to get onto the roof without having to get a ladder. We cruised around the roof and then returned to ground level again. I decided that a building of this size just had to have out-buildings, barns and so forth.

We moved across the back yard until we reached the fence again and then moved along the fence until we reached a gate. It was possible to distinguish a path leading away from the house to a barn or milking shed we hoped. We followed the path along

until we reached a massive barn, about a hundred feet along by forty feet wide. The barn was full of rubbish, old wagons, bits of old push bikes, old signs and bits and pieces hanging from the walls.

I took one of the old bikes and dragged it up a tree, and once up the top, sat in the saddle and launched myself off. I was told that it looked rather ghostly to see a cyclist disappearing into the gloom with 30 feet of water both over and under him. I eventually lost momentum and crashed to the bottom so I abandoned the cycle and went back into the barn and saw Moe reclining in the old wagon waiting for me.

On a later trip to this area, John Driscoll and myself found a large 5000 gallon water tank on its side, so we tipped it upside down with ourselves inside it. Man, it was as dark as midnight in a coal mine. The idea, of course, was to use our exhausted air to lift the tank off the bottom and then take a wild ride to the surface as the trapped air expanded. We were a bit too ambitious in this project as after about ten minutes of breating like fury, we discovered that all our air was escaping through rust holes in the top (Bottom). When we left the tank we found two or three other divers crowded around watching the bubbles escaping, wondering what the hell we were doing in there.

Moe and I finished exploring the barn and then went for a ride along one of the fences. Magnificent method of locomotion under water, easy on the legs and no hope at all of getting lost. When you have gone as far as you want to, its just a matter of turning around and coming back along the fence to regain the exact same spot that you started out from.

There are many good spots to dive at in Eildon Weir, for when the water rose there was little chance of moving any of the houses. One good spot to dive in, if one had the nerve, is an operating (or was an operating) gold mine, still easily found by land-marks above the water. There are sunken road and rail bridges, houses, barns, milking sheds and other assorted farm buildings, sunken cars and other wheeled vehicles.

Getting back to the gold mine. I have dived 30 feet down the shaft, and if I thought it was dark inside the 5000 gallon water tank, it was ten times as dark inside the shaft.

One of the sunken cars is a complete 1952 model Austin utility that decided to take to the water one night and headed down a slope into the lake. This was in 1961 and the last time I dived on it in 1964 she was still there in mint condition.

For fresh water diving with the tang of adventure and things to see underwater that are not readily available anywhere else, Eildon Weir is the spot to tickle any diver's palate.

