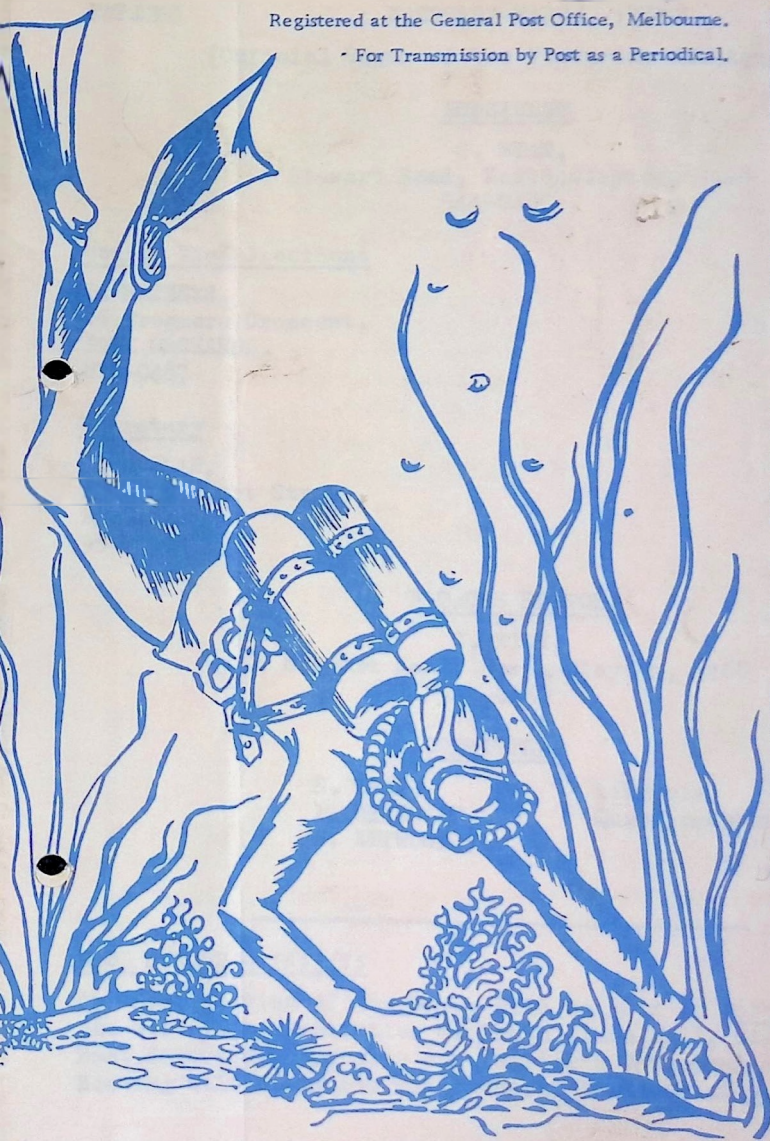


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FATHOMS



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(Official Organ of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)

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*Life Member

CLUB MEMBER - 16/3/71

The next meeting of the Group will be held on 16th MARCH, 1971, 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.

EDITOR'S REPORT

This month's newsletter is for February and March as a result of my lack of liaison with the publishers as to when they were going on holidays, so my apologies for any delays in postings.

The meeting date for MARCH is scheduled for Tuesday the 16th. Take note a TUESDAY as the club was unable to secure the Conference room for the usual 3rd Wednesday in each month, so now they are being held on the 3rd Tuesday in every month.

At the February club meeting we accepted Ron Addison's resignation as President as studies are now taking up most of his time. On behalf of all club members I think we should say 'thank you' for everything you have done for the club and hope that we still see you on dives in the future.

Also at the February meeting a new President was elected, namely myself, so thank you for putting your trust in me - I shall try my best.

The club has for a long while been in the "doldrums" so to speak; by our ever dwindling attendances at every new meeting, it is plain to see that there is only one end, so this is the year for everyone to do his or her "thing" and get this club on the move.

EX-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope that we can make this year of diving for the club one of the most successful that we have had for some time. A diving committee has been formed for the express purpose of making up a time-table of dives for 1971 that should prove to be most interesting.

I would like this year to be a year where all members pull their weight, a year when we say to ourselves not "what can the club do for us", but "what can we do for the club".

One way of helping the club run more efficiently is for all members to turn up to meetings on time. This will help form a more favourable image in the eyes of any visitors who should happen to be along. It also helps to get general business over in time for more social relaxation at meetings in the form of lectures, movies and slide shows.

It would be pleasant for all members to make an effort to attend meetings through the year. Remember, its your club and

only by your efforts can the club succeed. It's only one night a month; only eleven nights out of the year of 365 nights that I would like to see you come along and take an interest in the management of your club.

Our first meeting of the year is on the 16th March, 1971, a Tuesday night, at 8.00 p.m. It is hoped that after general business there will be a slide show, but as yet arrangements are a bit vague. Come along anyway and chew the fat over what you did during the holiday season.

R. ADDISON.

REPORT ON DIVES -

I'm afraid I cannot report on diving for the latter part of 1970 and at Xmas as no reports have come to my notice, so for 1971 I shall try and attract, or rather inject, some interest into the club's diving activities by introducing dives that are, perhaps, further afield, but are at least enjoyable. These dive venues are open to discussion at the next meeting on the 16th MARCH - A TUESDAY!

MAIN PROPOSED DIVES FOR FIRST HALF OF 1971 -

Intermediate Dives to be discussed.

MARCH 6-8 "LOCH ARD" 135 miles west of Melbourne. An adequate camping area available at 75c per day. Showers, toilets, etc. LIFE JACKET DIVE.

APRIL 9-12th - EASTER - "WILSON'S PROM" 145 miles east of Melbourne and if you haven't camped and dived here before, have no doubts, one of the best diving areas for fish and photography. LIFE JACKET DIVE

APRIL 24-26th Long weekend MT. GAMBER - 276 miles west of Melbourne. Divers mecca. LIFE JACKET DIVE.

JUNE 12-14th -"GREEN CAPE" N.S.W.-VIC. border. More on this dive in a later issue.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CLUB DINNER - "CHATEAU WYUNA"

Thirtytwo people purchased tickets and 29 turned up. On this particular evening everyone seemed to enjoy the food and the entertainment to the usual end of the night, whereupon most members returned once more to the home of Bill and Patsy Gray, to continue into the small hours with more dancing, partaking of the grape and a dash of swimming for a reviver. I would like to thank all those people who patronized the club dinner, and on behalf of the people who went back to Bill's house, I would like to thank Bill and Patsy for the offering of their house, once more. -Ed.

S.D.F. REPORT - MEETING, 4th FEBRUARY, 1971

There was quite a deal of talk in regards to a motion for the change of the 51% majority ruling to 75% majority ruling needed for all voting at S.D.F. meetings.

Basically the meeting proceeded:-

1. Voting at S.D.F. discussed but not changed due to a lack of unanimous vote.
2. Election of Office Bearers

| | | |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| President | - | Phil Webster |
| Secretary | - | John Noonan |
| Vice President | - | Bill Gray |
| Treasurer | - | John Davis |
| Minute Secretary | - | Diane Maloney |

3. Correspondence

- Out:
- A. Report on "Polly Woodside".
 - B. National Fitness Council declining to give "crash" course in diving but offering teaching in snorkel diving.
 - C. Port Phillip Conservation Council advising acceptance of job as underwater consultants.
- IN:
- A. National Trust thanking S.D.F. for report on the "Polly Woodside".
 - B. National Fitness Council accepting snorkel diving training, then another regretting that something had fizzled out at their end and course could not be accepted.

4. General Business

- A. A fair amount of time was taken up with discussions on the age requirements for starting of diving training.
- B. Discussion on whether all editors of various clubs should get together for the purpose of producing an annual magazine.

REPORT ON POLLY WOODSIDE

By

SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF VICTORIA 13.11.70

Location

Polly Woodside (Rona) lies in the Maribyrrong River at the King Island wharf.

Diving Conditions

A three knot current and poor visibility coupled with the fact that the vessel is almost touching the bottom at low water, were complications with which the divers had to contend.

Report

In difficult conditions five divers made a thorough examination of the hull, moving from stern to bow just under the water line, then back along the keel, and finally with some difficulty because of bad light, along the hull as it lay against the wharf. The divers were told to examine the steel to determine the amount of deterioration which had taken place. They were to look particularly for evidence of corrosion, rust scale and pitting, dents and other underwater damage.

Below water line

Divers examined the outside of the hull below the water line down to the level at which the hull entered the mud and several

independently operating teams all reported that it was in good condition, showing little signs of rust and no real pitting. As a number of plates have been replaced it is likely that most of this section is not original metal which would account for its good condition. Visible inspection showed no sign of paint remaining on the hull and a fine alge covered most of the plates. Some rust scale could be removed with a scraper and although not severe this scale was more pronounced near the water line.

Conclusion

As far as can be ascertained by this method the underwater inspection showed no sign of advanced deterioration of the plate work of the hull of Polly Woodside.

Above water line

In this area the condition is not nearly so good as it was below the water. There is very bad rusting in some areas where the steel has either rusted right through or remains only as a tissue thin layer and in a number of places the hull has been physically holed or bent particularly along the relatively straight sides of the ship. However, even here there are far more good areas than bad ones and the more difficult curved areas around the stem and the stern have obviously been repaired in comparatively recent times and are quite sound.

Timbering

Although there are good areas of timbering, particularly around the remaining cabins, for the most part the timber of the decks and the hull lining is either missing or needs replacing. A great deal of damage has been done to these areas of the ship when it was fitted out to use as a coal carrying barge.

List to Starboard

This list which gives the impression that the ship has some fault or is resting completely in the mud, may be caused by the fact that a large steam boiler has been fitted on the

starboard side to operate winch equipment and as there is now no load in the empty hull to act as a counterbalance it naturally leans. Movement of the ship whenever some other vessel passes by shows that it is actually substantially floating.

Ribs

Because of the existance of rust scale, the ribs in some places seem much worse than they really are. By scraping away the scale it was obvious that there was no substantial weakening for the worst loss of metal did not amount to more than about 5%.

Beams

Generally the beams are in fair condition, although in some sections the thin web on the underside has rusted through in the middle deck area.

Nogging

Because the water level inside the ship rises to slightly different levels on the ribs near the keel, there is a possibility that there is a rise of perhaps six inches at midship, but as the shape of the hull is not known to me there is no certainty that this is actually the case.

T. G. RYAN

A.R.M.T.C., A.M.I.E.(Aust.), A.M.I.R.E.E.
(Aust.)

ADVERTISEMENT:

Room to Let at Peter Robs. Close to trains, trams and shops, contact Daryl Carr, 134 Fordham Avenue, Camberwell.
Phone: 29-2647.

OYSTERS - TO THE LOCAL TASTE.

Sacks of Sydney oysters which are flown to Noumea each week from Sydney are being tossed into the sea. New Caledonians used to the taste of their native mangrove oysters, believe the Australian ones are tasteless. Two weeks in their waters, they say, allows them to take on the tangy flavour they prefer.

A New Caledonian resident, Georges Guerlain, however, has started the first local scientific production of oysters. A retired public servant, he owns a sea-shore property 50 miles from Noumea. In October his first oyster crop was harvested... 7,000 dozen oysters which sold out in a couple of months.

Guerlain started experimenting with cultivation on various types of support. He studied tidal patterns, and the degree of salinity in the river estuary waters.

From a "mica schist" stone 2ft. by 1ft. he claims he can now collect 25 dozen young oysters and have them ready in three years.

Guerlain has since been joined by his two sons and is now developing a farm in the north of the island.

New Caledonia imported an estimated 17 tons of oysters last Christmas from New Zealand and Australia and at \$1 a dozen on the local market, Guerlain is confident the local product is worth developing.

- Pacific Islands Monthly.

TREASURE DOWN BELOW

By Derek Ballantine

"Does it hurt to drown?" cried the little boy in the leaking life-boat as the 2500-ton Auckland-bound Elingamite was smashed by storm-tossed waves on the rocks nearby.

All round were people struggling in the water, clutching wreckage, clinging desperately to pitching rafts.

There were survivors clambering up the rugged outcrop that had doomed their ship, mothers screaming for lost children, dying men sinking below the black ocean.

Even before the old steamer struck and there was a chance of avoiding the little island of rock as the engine-room was ordered "full astern", there was silent terror aboard on that foggy morning.

A sailor who saw the dark face of land approaching handed back to its mother the baby he was nursing, and in fright leapt in to the sea forever.

As it was, the engines failed to respond and the Elingamite ploughed on, first over submerged rocks that warned of the final impact, and then into a cliff that rose sharply from the sea.

It was the end of her.

And it was the end of 45 of the 136 passengers who were making the routine five-day crossing from Sydney to New Zealand.

It was also, it seemed, the end of a fortune in gold and silver coins that had been stored near her stern, a consignment by the Bank of N.S.W. to its branches in Lyttleton and Dunedin.

Cont'd. -12-

But a man named Wade Doak had other ideas, and with a team of divers he set out 66 years later to find the wreckage of the Elingamite in the unpredictable seas off Three Kings Islands, at the northern tip of New Zealand.

Two divers had died on the same mission over the years since the tall-masted, single funnel ship had gone down in 1902, but whereas they had failed, Doak succeeded.

The young diver tells of the success, and the difficult manner in which it was won, in a new book, "The Elingamite and its Treasure."

It is a story of modern adventure by a group of young men who embarked on a dangerous diving task in the worst underwater conditions.

Doak and his team located a ton and a half of pure silver and about 6000 gold coins buried under a mountain of corroding iron plates and girders.

In two years and 150 dives to frightening depths, they dragged from that cold world three hundredweight of the silver and 21 of the coins.

"The rest," says Doak, "can stay there for a while - it is just too deep and too dangerous to get at and already two divers have died in the attempt."

CLUB MEETING - 16th MARCH, 1971

3rd TUESDAY

at the Victorian Association of Youth
Club's Hall, Gisborne Street, East
Melbourne, opposite St. Patrick's
Cathedral, at 8.00 p.m. sharp.