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Nov 71

FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

F A T H O M S
(Official Organ of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
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CLUB MEETING - 16/11/71

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Tuesday, 16th November, 1971 at the Victorian Association of Youth Clubs Hall, Gisborne Street, East Melbourne (opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral). The meeting will begin at 8.00 p.m. sharp and will terminate with general business and refreshments.

ATTENTION ALL READERS

An invitation is extended to all readers, club members and visitors, to attend our November meeting. A special program has been arranged which will be of great interest to all of us who are concerned with the underwater environment.

The very well-known Jan Watson, of the Underwater Research Group, will give a talk on MARINE BIOLOGY, ARTIFICIAL REEFS and CONSERVATION OF MARINE LIFE. The talk will be illustrated with color slides and is backed up by a great deal of research by Jan and associates into Australian conditions. Don't miss this opportunity for a most interesting session with one of the foremost authorities in this field.

The start is at 8.00 p.m. sharp, so be sure to be on time. Bring your friends along. We repeat, all members of other clubs and fellow divers are cordially invited to attend.

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AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS

By Frank Maguire, President, Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

Once again a new committee has been elected, a committee dedicated to work to build and mould the club into one that all members can be proud to belong to. More activities are being arranged than ever before - Dives, socials, barbeques after dives, where all members of the family and friends can join in and enjoy themselves. Our social secretary has arranged a dinner dance and a barbeque to be held before Christmas, with more to come in the new year. Dives have been programmed and boats hired well in advance to ensure their availability. Slide shows and talks on all phases of diving and of general interest to all are being planned and carried out. Our monthly meetings will be too interesting to miss.

All this is being done to make V.S.A.G. membership really worth while. Members stand to gain all the way. To really make it succeed though, there must be enthusiastic participation and meeting attendance by all club members. You can help the club to help you. Remember, it is your club, and only you and your ACTIVE support can make it succeed.

FUTURE OUTINGS :

- NOVEMBER 12 - Club Annual dinner at "Baron of Beef", located in Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke (up in the Dandenongs). Guests to arrive at 7 p.m. Tickets still available through Margaret Phillips (Social Sec.) at 232-9633
Frank Maguire - 90-3030, or John Noonan, 98-8650.
- DCN'T MISS OUT
- NOVEMBER 14 - Port Campbell, dive on the 'Loch Ard'. Dive captain - Frank Maguire, Tel. 90-3030 (see article)
- NOVEMBER 28 - The Pinnacles, Phillip Island (boat dive)
Dive captain - Frank Maguire.
- DECEMBER 5 - Frankston - Survey of bay floor in Frankston area conducted by V.S.A.G. for the S.D.F.
Dive captain - Bill Gray.
- DECEMBER 11 - Barbecue at Bill Gray's, 4 Pimms Court, Syndal. Price of \$2.00 per head includes evening meal. Be there at 3.00 p.m. Bring your swim togs. Good time guaranteed.
- DECEMBER 19 - Wreck Dive on 'The Hurricane' (Boat dive).
Dive captain - Bill Jansen.

PORT CAMPBELL - POSTSCRIPT

One of the most famous of the many wrecks along Australia's coastline, the 'Loch Ard', will be visited on November 14th by Sub-Aqua divers. This ship has held a fascination for divers because of its historical associations. We expect a full turn up of club members, but for those not familiar with the details, I'd like to recall the last dive we made there, last summer.

It was a long weekend in February. The weather had turned out to be just perfect and most divers had arrived on the Saturday for their first trip to the wreck. This is located about 3 miles east along the coast from Port Campbell, a quiet pleasant town with a well sheltered harbour. After pitching tents and getting settled down in the caravan park, the 15 or so divers so far present faced the next task of launching the boats. These were two 13ft aluminium boats with 30 h.p. outboards, a 15 ft. fibreglass speedboat with an 80 horse Merc. and later, a 16 ft. fibreglass inboard. The problem? No launching ramp. The solution? Pick 'em up and carry 'em in. You'd have to see it to believe it - a ton or more of boat moving across the sand with about 30 legs under it!

This little operation completed, everyone rushed to load up for the trip to the wreck. The boats had to make a wide sweep out of the harbour to avoid a rather nasty reef. Seas were a bit choppy, but the scenery along the rugged coastal cliffs was breathtaking. Finally, the destination, Mutton Bird Island, a rugged chunk of rock just a few yards offshore from 'Loch Ard Gorge'. It was here that the ill-fated ship went aground, and the two survivors stumbled ashore in the gorge.

Anchors were dropped and divers were soon down to confirm the position. Half of the wreck lies on the seaward side of the island, another good sized chunk is on the east side, closer to the gorge.

Bits of wreckage were soon appearing. Old cow bells, brass cannons, fancy bronze gaslight holders and a piece of a compass were some of the interesting items observed. Divers noted that there seemed to have been great quantities of lead shot on board; also a consignment of iron rails.

Port Campbell - Postscript (Cont'd.)

As the depth was about 70 ft. one dive per person exhausted air supplies. With all accounted for, we turned and headed back to port.

The boats were moored off the beach for the night and all hands gathered to swap stories about what they'd seen.

Bottles were re-filled from large decanting cylinders brought for the purpose, then a nice hot shower, dinner and bed. The next day was as successful as the first, with the weather even better, if possible.. After diving the wreck, the boats played Russian Roulette by riding a swell at high speed right into the gorge. Between swells, portions of the passage are high and dry, so timing is quite delicate. Inside there is a beautiful sandy beach and a cave where the survivors took shelter. Above the cliff is a small graveyard for the victims of the shipwreck.

All good things come to an end and it soon was time to pull the boats out and head for home. The aluminium boats were no problem, but we just couldn't see carrying the big boat out again. On looking around a bit we discovered that the jetty was equipped with a hand cranked derrick-winch. Why didn't we notice that before? In no time a sling had been rigged and the whole trailer was lowered into the water to take the boat.

This outing was talked about for months afterwards, and it was firmly agreed another follow-up was a must.

November 14 is the date. Make sure you don't miss out.

DIVE REPORT - TORQUAY - QUEENSCLIFFE

Sunday morning, 17th of October. On meeting four other divers at Flinders Street, we proceeded to Torquay, a seaside town near the start of the famous Ocean Road. Torquay is well known for its heavy surf and several surfing carnivals have been held there. On arrival we found six others impatiently waiting to get on with the dive.

Our original intention was to locate the wreck of the Victoria towers but, on investigating the conditions, we found that with the extremely dirty water conditions and without any of the club members' boats on hand, it would be futile to attempt searching for the wreck.

Under these conditions we then decided to try Point Lonsdale, just a few miles away near the heads, only to find more dirty water and rough conditions. So - the proverbial pier crawl was held, this time at Queenscliffe.

All twelve divers entered the water, employing all their skills in underwater navigation to keep up with their buddy in the turbid water. But not to be deterred, our ardent divers spent at least a half hour in the water before adjourning to the barbecues for a feed and to enjoy the sunshine that made the outing very enjoyable to all who attended.

FRANK MAGUIRE

DON'T FORGET THE NOVEMBER 16th MEETING AT 8 P.M.
AT THE VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS HALL,
GISBORNE STREET, EAST MELBOURNE (Opposite St.
Patrick's Cathedral.)

FAREWELL TO A VISITOR AND A FRIEND.

Five P.M. on Wednesday, the 20th October and Frank, Les, Val and myself were at Station pier to farewell Peter and Margaret on their trip to Margaret's home in Holland.

After boarding the ship (the Patrice) and helping them find their respective cabins, we toasted the occasion with a few glasses of bubbly, and then set off on a tour of the ship guided by Peter.

A debate was held on whether they'd be able to do any swimming in the ship's pool. Peter is hoping to do some diving while he is in Athens, while Margaret is planning to use the time sightseeing. This might take some fitting in.

By 8 P.M. it was time for us to say our last farewell and leave the ship, to watch them sail into the blue that only Melbourne can produce.

LYNNE MAGUIRE

THE SAGA OF ERIC THE RED

Hundreds of years ago the hardy Vikings sailed from their Scandinavian coast. In their graceful and seaworthy boats they traded and raided along the coastal areas of Europe.

Although they are most remembered for their warlike activities, they were also active in exploration and colonization. One of the outstanding names handed down to us from these times was that of 'Eric the Red'. About the year 980 he was banished from his native Norway for manslaughter and settled in Iceland. Outlawed again because of further quarrels, he sailed westward to Greenland. After exploring the

The Saga of Eric the Red (Continued)

coast he returned to Iceland and recruited a group of colonists for the new land. It was his son, Leif Ericson who later became the first discoverer of America.

Many years later, another Eric the Red found its way to the shores of Australia. It was 1880, the year of the international exposition in Melbourne, and ships from all over the world made their way there with goods for display. One of these was the 'Eric the Red', a wooden ship of 1580 tons, loaded with display goods - pianos, sewing machines, tobacco, silver plate and dental instruments. The ship had left New York 85 days before and was almost to her destination. The seas were calm but a heavy haze reduced visibility. The Cape Otway light was sighted and it was thought the vessel was still several miles out to sea, when suddenly the ship crashed onto the sunken reef that surrounds Cape Otway. It immediately broke in two and within 15 minutes was in pieces.

The stern and part of the side of Eric the Red came ashore about 3 miles off Cape Otway and was lifted high onto the rocks. Wreckage and crates of cargo were strewn along the beaches for miles. To local inhabitants the beaches became treasure houses as for years afterwards there was always something of value being washed up.

Today there would be no trace remaining of the ship itself. However, a great many indestructible items must remain in the area, giving the promise of some highly interesting diving. The reef is a mile and a quarter out to sea. Boats would be required, also some research to pinpoint the wreck location.

I hope this story will interest our readers, and prompt them to undertake a search for the 'great Viking navigator' who visited Australia.

WHAT'S THE SCORE ?

In case you've been wondering, the points system has gotten under way, and some members are already building up a formidable score from consistent attendances, dive reports, etc. Don't be outdone - build up your score now! Here is how the score now stands:

Les Walkling ..	20	Margaret Phillips ..	5
Pat Reynolds ..	17	Bill Gray ..	5
Frank Maguire ..	10	John Noonan ..	4
Don McBean ..	10	Alan Cutts ..	4
Bob Scott ..	10	Gary Muddyman ..	2
Bill Jansen ..	9	Martin Richmond ..	2
Peter Matthews ..	5		

(Check your September issue for points allocations.)
