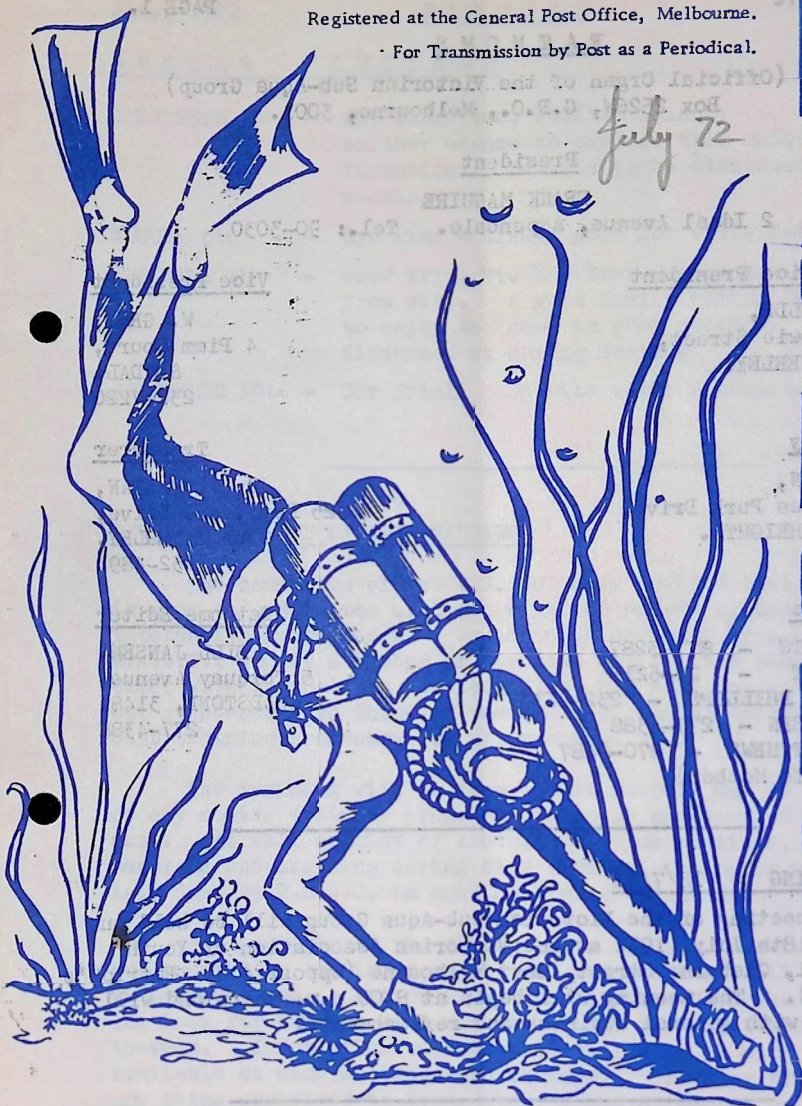


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July 72



FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

(Official Organ of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
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CLUB MEETING - 18/7/72

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Tuesday, 18th July, 1972 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.

FUTURE OUTINGS

- JULY 23rd - The Pinnacles, Phillip Island.
Another chance to explore this unique undersea formation. Details to be discussed at meeting.
- AUGUST 6th - Rye Pier - always good for a few bottles.
- AUGUST 27th - Snow Trip, Mt. Baw Baw. Approx. 100 miles from city. A good family outing and a chance to enjoy the snow in good company. Details discussed at coming meeting.
- SEPTEMBER 10th - Car Trial. Details to be announced.
-

REVISION OF CLUB DIVING STANDARDS

The committee of the V.S.A.G. have decided that the time is ripe to update the club's diving and safety procedures to international standards. Squadron Leader Mick Ryan of the R.A.A.F., who is a member of our club and a rated second class diver with the British Sub-Aqua Club, has been appointed to align our standards with those of the B.S.A.C. and to supervise a new club training programme for all members.

The training will be free to all members and is independent of any novice training programme the club has carried out in the past. It will consist of lectures at club meetings, instruction sessions and training during club outings, following procedures laid down by B.S.A.C. in grading diving standards.

Full details of the diving tests are too long for publication in one issue of Tathoms but sections will be included with each issue. Action is in hand to provide a new diving log book for members with details of all the new tests shown therein. Information on the tests will also be made readily available at club meetings and outings. Training officers are now being organized to bring every V.S.A.G. member up to an international recognized standard of diving.

REVISION OF CLUB DIVING STANDARDS (Cont'd.)

If you are interested in becoming a better diver, or if you would like to see the V.S.A.G. in the forefront, then re-light your attendance record, let your face be seen and your opinions heard.

.. ..

Following are the first of tests to be instituted:

After introduction to the aqualung,

- a. Fit harness, assemble aqualung; test and show correct fitment.
- b. Sink all equipment in 8-12 ft. of water, dive and re-fit without surfacing.
- c. Remove mouthpiece underwater, replace and clear 3 times. Do likewise with mask.
- d. Demonstrate control of mobility by performing 3 backward and 3 forward somersaults underwater.
- e. Demonstrate buoyancy control underwater by controlled inspiration. Lie on bottom, lift off and return 3 times.
- f. Remove aqualung, fit snorkel and fin fifty yards towing aqualung.
- g. Demonstrate how to dismantle, clean and stow an aqualung after use.

There are two more tests for the intermediate or novice diver, but this is the first one. Details of other tests will follow in later issues.

MICK RYAN.

DIVE REPORT -- MT. GAMBIER -- QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND.

Frank picked me up at 3 p.m. outside the main gate at work and we then headed for Laverton where Justin, Les and Val were waiting at the Shell Service Station. The next stop after passing Geelong was Colac, where we met David Carroll at the Post office. We picked up his diving gear at the school, then took off for Warrnambool where we stopped for a feed. Here Bob Scott and Pat Reynolds finally caught up with us. After fuelling the cars we then proceeded to Mt. Gambier, arriving at about 9.30 p.m.

We erected all the tents and soon after started filling bottles preparatory to our first dive the next morning. While doing this it was decided that someone should be sent for liquid refreshments. Bob was the elected person.

While Bob was away Tony Tipping and his mate Paul turned up, bringing out total number of divers to 9, including Val the old snorkeler. Mick Ryan and his son turned up the next day raising our numbers further. The liquid refreshments having arrived at camp, it was decided over the next hour and a half that the first dive would be at the Pines with a follow-up dive snorkeling through Ewen's Ponds. We finally went to bed with 5 in Frank's tent, 2 two-man tents and myself in the back of the van.

Saturday morning began with heavy rain, which fortunately cleared after breakfast. We packed out gear in the cars and headed for the Pines for the first dive of the weekend, and my first fresh water dive. I went over to the top of the hole but it was covered with growth. Then Frank came up and said not to worry about it because the water underneath was crystal clear and he then demonstrated what he meant by brushing the surface muck away. I was in the second batch of divers so I had a very good view of what the visibility was like. After the divers had been in about 5 mins. the air bubbles coming to the surface cleared the surface muck away, so that you could see everything that the divers did 70-80 feet down. Absolutely phenomenal, but the best was yet to come. My turn in, WOW, I have never experienced such visibility 70 ft. down and you can see divers

Mt. Gambier - Queen's Birthday Weekend (Continued)

spreadeagled on the surface and the air bubbles ascending and getting trapped under the ledges giving them a mirror-like appearance. I then proceeded to put my initials on the wall which seems to be a popular pastime. My buddy then signalled that it was time to go up, so up we went but, oh boy, what a fantastic dive to be initiated into fresh water. After dropping Frank back at camp to fill all of our bottles, and to wait for Mick Ryan and his son we all ventured down to Eren's Ponds which was a very disappointing dive because there was a party just in front of us which made it even dirtier because just before we jumped in a bunch of divers came past us and said that about 300 divers had been through the ponds before us.

That night it was decided to dive 1080 with a night dive at the Pines; after another session and more jokes, it was bed at 2.30 a.m.

Sunday morning, after breakfast we packed all our gear into the cars and proceeded to 1080 where we all waited while Frank, Les and Bob went to ask permission to dive. En route, they found another two holes they didn't know existed, but we got permission and I think everybody enjoyed the dive except that it was inclined to silt up if you swam to near the bottom. Also, I think that we have some budding high diving hopes for the Olympics, namely Pat and Tony, who jumped off the top ledge very stylishly.

While Bob, Justin and myself went back to fill bottles, the rest went to Ewen's Ponds for another try but from all reports it was like the day before. After tea, we went back to the Pines for a night dive. This dive being my first night dive ever, was an experience that I shall never forget. It left me totally speechless and it would take me a full page to write about the dive, suffice to say 'utterly fantastic'. I will always endeavour to get a night dive at the Pines whenever I dive in South Australia.

It was decided while having supper and a grog that the final dive would be at the shaft after which we would pack up and come home. After filling all the bottles to capacity and finishing all the grog, we finally got to bed at about 3.30 a.m.

Everybody was late getting up and after a late breakfast at 9.45, we proceeded to the shaft. Frank, Justin and myself long last just to make sure everybody got in the ladder O.K. I was last one down and last one up just to play safe I was last down but I snuck in and got up first, much to the consternation of Frank and Justin who thought the ladder was going to break a big updraft of air seeming to blow me up through the hole once I reached the top of the ladder without breaking any rungs. Any way back to the dive. Frank went down first followed by me, then came Justin, all at 20 ft. intervals. Frank waited at 50 ft., all O.K. so we all went down to 100 ft. I looked up and saw Justin about 20 feet above but I also saw Bob on the surface and also counted five rungs of the ladder before air bubbles disturbed the surface. Incredible visibility, so we all packed up and went back to camp. Broke camp, while having coffee and toast to use up the last of the supplies and save taking same home again. Left just after dark, 6.30 Vic. time. Arrived home 3.05 a.m. after breaking another winscreen just out of Heywood. Two in two long weekends (pretty good average). Also dropped David Carroll off at home. Struck fog after getting screen fixed and continuous patches all the way home.

But, all told, a glorious weekend's diving had by ALL!

IAN COCKERELL

SAVE THE REEF

From reports coming to hand, preparations are well under way for the first attack on Crown of Thorns starfish at Bowen in August. Air supplies and camping details have been worked out, transport arranged and certification or testing of participating divers agreed on.

The Victorian committee has received a quantity of car stickers which will soon be made available for sale through Bill and Margaret. Do your bit and buy a sticker; better still, see that all your friends have them too.

WHAT'S THE SCORE ?

Following is a list of points earned by members in our competition. Remember it's only a couple of months to go before final scores are marked up, so get busy. Attendances, guests, new member introductions and newsletter items earn points. Be sure to sign the book or notify Alan Cutts on what you're doing.

Frank McGuire	132	Mick Ryan.....	15
Don McBeam	116	Paul Beecher	14
Bill Gray	95	L. Addison	13
Alan Cutts	94	Justin Liddy	10
Les Walkling	33	F. Lot'ner	9
Wm. Jansen	80	D. Swallow	9
M. Phillips	59	P. Lustig	8
Bob Scott	57	B. Hercules	7
Pat Reynolds	52	Dave Carroll	6
Ian Cockrell	43	P. Atwood	6
Ron Addison	35	P. Davey	6
Bob Truscott	24	N. Knight	3
Peter Matthews	23	M. Richmond	2
J. Noonan	23	G. Muddyman	2

THE FLOATING FLATIRON

On Easter Sunday, 1871, the most modern - and ugliest - man of war Australian had ever seen, H.M. Victorian Ship 'Cerberus', sailed into Port Phillip Bay. She was destined never to pass the heads again, for the fears that prompted her construction and dispatch to Victoria proved groundless. Many likened her to a seagoing gasometer hastily fitted with masts and funnel; others to a huge, floating flatiron.

The Cerberus was a radical departure from shipbuilding practice of the day. She was a 3400 ton vessel built entirely of iron, 225 ft. long with a beam of 45 ft. Built on the lines of the Monitor, of American Civil War fame, most of her bulk was below water level with decks nearly awash. The main armament was two pairs of 10 inch muzzle loading rifled cannon in armored turrets, firing 400 lb. projectiles.

The Floating Flatiron (Cont'd.)

During the 1860's Britain was at war with Russia in the Crimea and America was expected to break off relations with Britain. It was feared that foreign ships could rush past the guns at the heads and menace the communities within Port Phillip Bay.

An agreement was reached with the British admiralty on sharing of costs and the naval architect, E.J. Reed, was commissioned to design a warship. When she was nearly completed the Victorian-Government sent Captain Norman to bring her back. By this time the war scares had subsided so a great many objections and obstacles arose because of the costs involved. Captain Norman died before she was ready to sail, so Lt. W.H. Panter was sent to take over. He faced many problems as officials were reluctant to listen to a junior officer, but with obstinacy and perseverance he succeeded in readying the ship for departure. Doubts were held as to the ship's seaworthiness, and it was difficult to muster a crew. At one stage a sea-cock was left open and the ship nearly sank at her moorings.

On October, 1870, the Cerberus finally set off. She ran straight into a violent storm and on putting in at Plymouth, most of her crew promptly disappeared. The determined Lt. Panter rushed back to London by train where he recruited 65 new hands. Many were recently freed criminals. Setting off again the unwieldy monitor rolled 45 degrees each way through storms in the Bay of Biscay, smashing everything breakable. Many crewmen wished they were back in gaol.

The terrified crew were kept under military guard during re-fuelling at Gibraltar and after a stop at Valetta, Malta, the Cerberus pushed on for the Suez Canal. With only 3 ft. clearance on each side, the thermometer at 120 degrees and the ship too hot to touch, she sailed safely through the recently completed Suez Canal.

At Aden, Lt. Panter filled up every available space including the turrets, with coal. He headed across the Indian Ocean at the usual 4 knots and reached Fremantle on March 4, 1871; 126 days out of Chatham, her starting point. A month was spent having the ship painted and readied for the grand entrance to Port Phillip Bay. She was white with yellow funnels. This was later changed to black and red, and finally to a dismal grey.

If needed, the Cerberus could have given a good account of

The Floating Fla...on (Cont'd.)

herself. She was powerfully armed and well suited for her intended role of defending the bay. However, she spent the rest of her 51 year life swinging at anchor, with an occasional practice cruise in the bay. In 1921 she was removed from the navy listings and in 1926 was sunk as a breakwater on a sandbank in Black Rock where she sits today.

BILL JANSEN

DIVE REPORT -- H.M.A.S. CERBERUS --

Justin picked me up from my place about 9.30. We headed for dive captain Frank Maguire's place where we met Mick Ryan. In due course we got down to the dive site to meet Bill Gray, Margaret Phillips, Les Walkling and Val Jones. Tony Tipping (dirty shirt), Don (new fatten McBean), Pat (sore back) Reynolds and kids and Ian Cockerell also turned up.

We then tried to convince ourselves that it was not going to be cold, climb into our gear and just as we were about to take the big plunge for the swim across to H.M.A.S. rust bucket, Barry Truscott landed with his boat and by doing so saved us a long swim.

We climbed aboard and got there in style, unloaded onto the wreck and paired off with our buddies. Frank/Mick, Justin/Chubby, Les/Tony, Don/myself. The others did not take the plunge because of lack of gear, cold, and various reasons. Don and myself elected to break the ice. In we went, sank, came up shouting obscenities, found a hole and headed inside. Visibility was not bad but the water was b.... cold. I think Don and myself covered most of the ship inside and out, this being my first dive on the old girl. It was a new experience and a good one at that; I would love to go back again.

There was one noticeable thing about that dive - I did not see one fish, not even a Toady, and no souvenirs were taken! By the time we covered the complete hulk we were getting low on air, so we headed back onto Barry's boat. A quick look over the top deck and then off. We headed for the cars, got changed and rolled down to Mordialloc marina to pull out Barry's boat. Then down to Frank's place for a B.B.Q. and one or two drinks and a little chat about this and that. We then headed home after a darned good day.

BCB SCOTT

Our September meeting is the Annual General Meeting and elections will be held for vacancies on the Club Committee. Nominations must be in by the next meeting.

NOMINATION FORM

I hereby nominate _____ for

Director of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group.

Member Nominating (Block Letters) _____

(Signature) _____

Member nominated:

(Signature) _____

Date: _____

NOMINATION FORM

I hereby nominate _____ for

Director of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group.

Member nominating (Block letters) _____

(Signature) _____

Member nominated:

(Signature) _____

Date: _____

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