

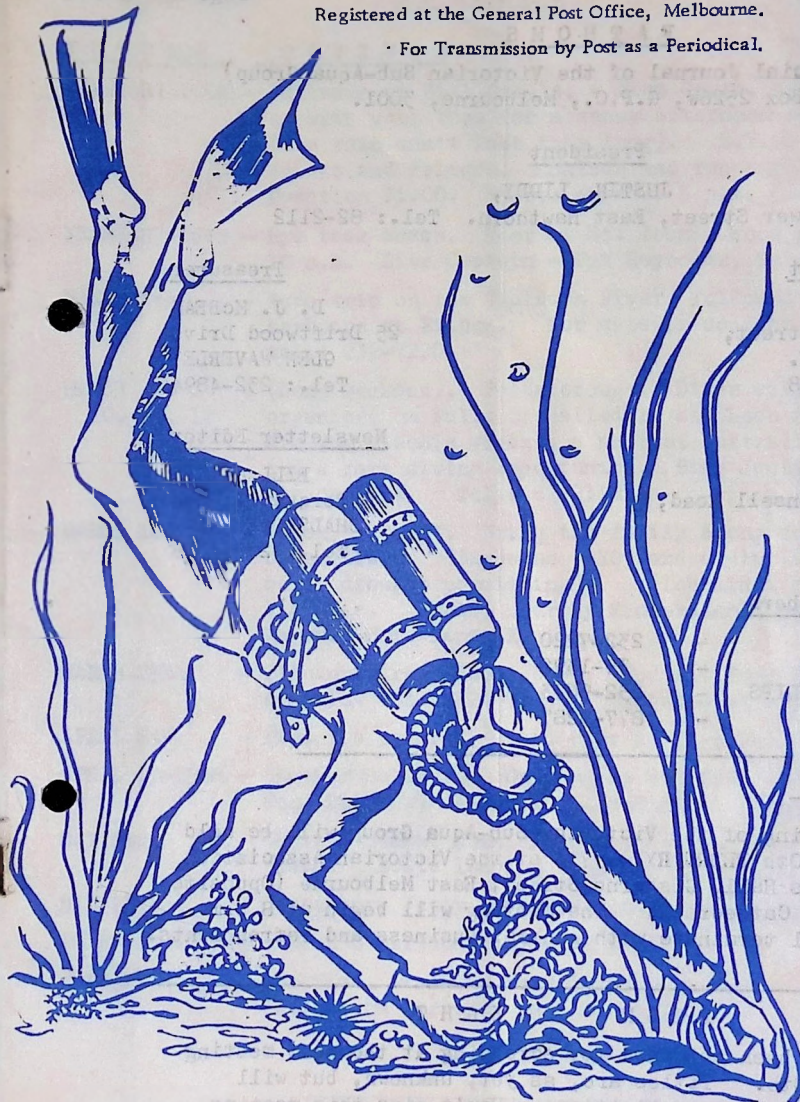
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FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

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(Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
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CLUB MEETING -

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on TUESDAY, 20th FEBRUARY, 1973, at the Victorian Association of Youth Clubs Hall, Gisborne Street, East Melbourne (Opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral). The meeting will begin at 8 p.m. sharp and will terminate with general business and refreshments.

F I L M N I G H T

Films have been obtained for screening at the next meeting February 20th. Titles are, as yet, unknown, but will concern underwater activities. Don't miss this meeting for an interesting evening.

F U T U R E O U T I N G S

- FEBRUARY 17th - Barbecue at Bill Gray's, 4 Pimm Court, Syndal. Roll up with your togs for a sunny afternoon in the pool. (The rain can't last that long). B.Y.O. chops, drinks and friends. Salads and fun supplied. Donation \$1.00. Start: approx. 3 p.m. (Saturday).
- FEBRUARY 25th - Rye back beach. Meet at St. John's Wood Road at 10 a.m. Dive Captain - Pat Reynolds, Tel.: 232-5358.
- MARCH 4th - Tube trip on the Goulburn River, followed by barbecue at Eildon. For details contact Bill Gray, tel.: 232-7220
- MARCH 10, 11, 12 - (Long weekend). Peterborough. Dives will be organized on Falls of Halladale and Loch Ard. These are the classic wrecks; a part of Australian history, and a rare diving opportunity. Ring Justin Liddy for details. Tel.: 82-2112.
- MARCH 18th - "Cocky's Turn". Bring the family along for a fun day on the farm. Barbecue (BYO) and a dive in the water hole (drought permitting). Friendliest cows in Victoria. Host: Murray Richardson; place: Harvest Home Lane, Epping.
- MARCH 25th - Flinders Area - boat dive. Contact Tony Tipping for details. Tel.: 24-7133. Barbecue at Somers after dive.
- APRIL 8th - Victoria Towers - wreck dive at Torquay.
- APRIL 20-25th - (Easter holiday). Camping at Wilson's Prom. Contact Tony Tipping, 24-7133. 4 campsites booked.
- MAY 6th - Cheviot Beach, Mornington Peninsula. London Bridge wreck. Boats leaving from Sorrento ramp at 10 a.m.
- MAY 20th - Canterbury Jetty Road, Rye back beach area.
- JUNE 2,3,4th - (Queen's Birthday). Mount Gambier.
- JUNE 17th - The Time, wreck in Port Phillip Heads. Boats leave from Sorrento ramp at 10 a.m.
-

V.S.A.G. DINNER

Plenty to eat and drink, a low-key atmosphere and everybody join in the fun. That seems to be the formula for the several Bavarian style restaurants that flourish around Melbourne. A success formula it is for "the Cuckoo", up in the Dandenongs.

Built in log cabin style, the outside impression is of modest size. On passing through the tunnel-like entrance, one is led through a maze of crowded tables and down several floors to arrive finally at his own group. Bandstands are scattered here and there and attractive waitresses scurry everywhere in their alpine outfits.

While a head count was not possible, it was obvious the group was there in force, as 4 large tables were filled by V.S.A.G. Dinner was well under way when we arrived, but we soon caught up with the rest at the Smorgasbord counter. Crowned by a horn of plenty, it carried every conceivable food, from cheeses to exotic sea foods. Some more venturesome tried the French snails but most stayed with trusty cold cuts, chickens or casseroles, all in abundance.

Main entertainment was supplied by a Bavarian quartet in shorts and split knee socks, supported occasionally by an attractive vocalist. Music was varied with good dance numbers, old and new favorites, but comedy was the strong point. Many will remember the hilarious "Ahab the Arab" routine. The bandleader then called for a volunteer from the audience. "A good fellow with a good capacity" to take part in a contest. Any man who could down a jug of beer faster than him to receive a huge magnum of champagne. Oh! Bring up the secret weapon. Our reigning club champion, Chubby, modestly took to the floor. A close contest, but technique triumphed by half a swallow. In view of his sterling performance however, Chubby was awarded the champagne anyway.

Between sessions with the band, an accordionist wandered among the tables playing all requests and starting some good sing-alongs. Other highlights were the Conga line that wound all through the building and an energetic 'knees up Mother Brown'. Aren't you glad you were there?

BILL JANSEN.

DIVE REPORT - "THE SPYAKE"; PHILLIP ISLAND

This outing, scheduled for mid-December, was meant to be easy diving in glorious sunshine. Memories linger of our last dive there in those conditions. However, the weather decreed otherwise and on arrival the divers found high seas and wintry wind. As these conditions were unsafe in this spot, a move to Cowes was agreed on.

The water was next best to pea soup, but our intrepid divers plunged in anyway. The usual time was spent looking for bottles and anything of interest. Not being there myself I cannot say what treasure was recovered, but apparently all made the most of a poor day and enjoyed themselves.

BILL JANSEN

MCOUNT GAMBIER AGAIN !!!

Editor's Note: Over recent months we've carried 2 reports on Mount Gambier dives. Always enthusiastic, always awed by the spectacular underwater scenery. In spite of the distance from Melbourne and in spite of several tragedies caused by a lack of respect for cave diving hazards, divers return repeatedly. The area is just over the border into South Australia, and consists of a maze of natural limestone caverns, some extending several hundred feet under water. Water is crystal clear and breathtaking views are abundant. Following is a report on the most recent and best trip so far.

The crew: Justin, Bill and Bonnie, Chubby, David, Paul, Bob, Frank and Family, Barry and Family, Murray and Family, Colin and Chris, Johnny and Chris, Les, Fred and Tony.

Between Christmas and New Year various divers straggled into Willow Vale for the long awaited end of year dive - Les being the first casualty with a fan through his radiator on his way in from Ewans where he'd spent Christmas Day waiting for a diving buddy. He met Justin, David, and Chubby at the Mt. Gambier Post Office at about 7 a.m. Boxing Day and it was decided to have a quick snorkel through Ewans to clear away the Christmas cobwebs. After that they headed back to Willow Vale picking up the broken down land rover en route. Just after they arrived they were met by Tony and Paul who were proud of their 4 1/2 hour trip over. So, after settling in they sat around and waited for more arrivals. By 3 p.m. with no sign of the others amidst Chubby's thunderous snores, it was agreed to

run out to 1080 for a dive. After obtaining permission from Reg Watson, Justin, David and Les, Paul and Tony leapt in for the first of many great dives. On their return to camp they found that Frank and family, Bob and Colin and Chris had fronted. It was this dive hungry crew along with Chubby that went for a night dive at One Tree as soon as camp was set up. Bob had to try out his space hat, complete with flood light, which worked O.K. except when he moved his head his mask would fall off. Everyone else went along for encouragement, and when they got back to camp they found Bill Reeves had made it down "with a little bit of help from his thumb."

Wednesday, 27th December

This day started fairly early with a few scedy heads and once again 1080 proved a good place for a "recovery dive". Chubby was elected dive captain, despite the fact that neither he or David Carroll dived. Visibility was reasonable despite the thick weed growth in the water and the divers levelled out at 100 maximum. After the dive Tony and Les thrilled the awestruck crowd with their death defying leaps from the overhanging cliffs. On the way back to the cars Paul "Hercules Unchained" Sier hurled a 200 lb. boulder (the size of a tennis ball) at a poor sexy little innocent brown snake at least 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, and then ran like hell. P.S. The snake died. R.I.P.

Late that afternoon, those capable decided to dive One Tree where Chris and Craig Truscott took great delight in watching the puzzling behaviour of divers disappearing into the murk. That night Paul and Tony pulled two local beauty queens at the Park Hotel - but to little avail. Tony blamed Paul's after shave lotion; maybe he got it mixed up with something from the saloon.

Thursday, 28th December

Everyone agreed on Piccaninny Ponds this particular morning and Tony Tipping handled the dive captaincy with regimental organization. The dive leaders were Les, Frank and Bob who each took three other divers one by one for their familiarization dives. Everyone was very impressed so much so that Justin, Barry, Bill and Tony went back for seconds. That afternoon after a well earned liquid lunch, David, Bill, Paul, Les, Justin and Tony headed off to Ewans for a bath. On arrival Paul was so overcome by the clarity of the water that he was knocked straight into the drink, hairdryer and all, but no wet suit! By Thursday night Fred (Les' dog) was stoned - he just couldn't handle the pace.

Friday, 29th December

After a reasonably early night, 12 o'clock, Les, Justin, Barry, Bill, Colin, Chris, David and Tony arrived at Piccaninny at 4 a.m. The water was crystal clear and the team watched the sunrise from the rear of the Cathedral. Frank, Chubby and Bob went off later that morning to find a lost paradise - a relatively unknown hole which they dived at 150 feet. The rest of the crew discussed various holes water filled or otherwise, e.g. Tantanoola Caves, while gargling a few quiet tinnies. The proposed shaft dive for the afternoon had to be abandoned due to the fact that the rope ladder didn't quite stretch from Bob's ute in Gambier to the bottom of the rock pile. On their return to camp with tears in their eyes they were met by Murray complete with family, Bill's "Bunny" and Johnny and Chris. No arguments, then off to "Old Faithful", (Ewans Ponds) to give the newcomers a dive.

Saturday, 30th December

A 5 a.m. start heading for Piccaninny saw Paul, Murray, David, Les, Justin and Johnny rearing to do; Bill and Tony being last minute pickers after such an "intellectual" night. It was this very same morning that Frank, Chubby, Barry and Bob set new official VSAG depth records in the Shaft. The remainder followed on to the Shaft after a decent surface interval. Everyone was suitably impressed with this magnificent dive although Murray was a bit wary at first. All the guys had their bottles filled in Mt. Gambier on the way back because the compressor at this stage was starting to tire. Those who were not diving the Shaft spent the afternoon sight-seeing with their families, or nursing their sunburn.

Sunday, New Year's Eve

Again 1080! but this time visibility was very poor as a group of divers had just been through. Not to worry, Les, Tony and "10 metre" Murray showed them how to leap off the cliffs, no casualties, but Murray came out with a noticeably higher pitched voice. Then it was back to camp to farewell Frank and family, Bob and Murray and family later in the afternoon. At 5 p.m. it was time to start thinking seriously about celebrating New Year's Eve, so with the help of a gas barbeque and the use of the swimming pool area, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Cole, most of the crew hopped into the chilled article and bulk food. There were only a few blurred memories about that night - in fact, no-one really knows what happened between Chubby's magna of champagne, blasts of Tony's

W's air horns and Barry's bucket of water episode with Justin. The stayers crashed at about 5.30 a.m.

Monday, New Year's Day

Tubes of the old amber fluid began to be cracked from 7 a.m. onwards. The entire day was spent boozing in the sun and backing horses in the Perth Cup. Justin wouldn't shut up when he backed the winner (he backed every other horse in the race, as well). Barry, Marie, Bill, Bonnie and Tony were good losers. Late in the afternoon Les and Tony dived Evans - some recovery dive, too. Chris and Johnny left and the remainder had an early night.

Tuesday, 2nd January

At first light Justin, David, Bonnie and Bill headed back home, leaving Les, Tony, Fred (barely conscious) and one still broken down Land Rover. It was this morning that Les and Tony once again plunged into the crystal clear depths of Piccaninny Ponds for a really groovy photography session. That last dive there was their best - i.e. until next time.

Great time, great place, great crew, and of course bloody great diving. Cheers.

CREDITS

Co-ordinated by Bill Reeves, Les Walkling, Justin Liddy and Tony Tipping.

Edited by Tony Tipping.

Directed by Justin Liddy.

Produced by Les Walkling.

Musical Arrangement by Bill Reeves.

Censored by Bonnie Reeves.

Make-up and hair styles by Paul Sier.

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DIVE REPORT - "THE HOLYOAKE"

Literally dozens of wrecks dot the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. What seems a safe, wide passage is actually narrow and treacherous, with a reef extending half way across the heads. A millrace current also courses through at rising and falling tides, threatening any sailing ship trying to beat it's way through the narrow opening. Among the wrecks in the area at the "Time" sunk in the 1940's, City of Launceston - victim of a collision within the bay, The Holyoake and George Roper, reputedly lying one atop the other right in the heads.

Guided by clues from other divers and details given in the Victorian sailing directions, the club's aim on Jan. 28 was to locate the last 2 wrecks. The meeting spot was Sorrento boat ramp, where about 16 divers rolled in after ploughing through heavy holiday traffic. They found Bill Gray waiting with his 13 footer already in the water. Barry Truscott soon arrived with his big Merc. powered stern drive cruiser. After counting heads it was agreed that some divers pick another spot for a dive as only 10 could be taken on the boats.

Some headed for the back beach at St. John's Wood Road while Alan and I with families, were happy to spend the day on the beach near the ramp. The boats meanwhile headed out in perfect conditions to the wrecks, where a rendezvous was made with Mick Ryan and members of his Daverton diving group in another boat from Queenscliffe.

After trailing a diver on a line for a few minutes, the wreck was easily sighted and diving got underway. Visibility was marvellous and the wrecks were only in 25 ft. depth. Pieces of ship and cargo were scattered everywhere, with the main decks collapsed atop one another. Masses of broken crockery and roofing slate were found as these must have comprised part of the cargo. A couple of unopened stone bottles were found and Bill Gray was later seen guarding his jealously. (What was in it, Bill?)

The plan was to return for the barbecue at 3 p.m. but the coats didn't show up till past 4.00. Then everybody made their way to Tom and Anita Armstrong's place in Blairgowrie for the barbecue and Chinway. Here postmortems were exchanged over sizzling chops and jugs of Tom's own brew. Tom has been a member for as long as we can remember, but living out there we haven't seen much of him in the past. Pleasant surroundings and a beautiful day; an ideal way to renew acquaintances. A collection was taken up

during the afternoon for expenses but this was firmly refused by our host. At his request it was donated to club funds.

We can only thank Tom and Anita sincerely for their outstanding hospitality. It was the perfect finish to a perfect diving day.

BILL JANSEN

KEEPING UP TO DATE

There is a great deal of pleasure and interest in underwater exploration; and most of us are content to dive the usual accessible locations, with standard aqualung, mask and flippers.

Some, however are constantly seeking new ways to extend the frontiers with equipment and techniques. To keep us up to date, a few of the recent developments are worth describing.

The basic aqualung with 72 cu. ft. tank limits a dive to one or two hours underwater. Depth is restricted by narcosis and bends due to nitrogen in the breathing mixture. The tank is also heavy and cumbersome. There have been several solutions to this problem. The 'cryogenic scuba' extends the duration greatly by employing liquid air in a much smaller space. This requires an extremely low temperature, obtained by the use of 'Dcwar' vacuum flasks for storage. These resemble the well known thermos flasks but are made of steel. They are much smaller and lighter yet they extend dive duration to several hours. A maze of tubing and valves converts the liquid to breathing air.

While offering many advantages this approach does not solve all the problems. The "Electrolung" is the next step forward. This is a closed circuit device using two small tanks, one for oxygen and the other for helium, a clear plastic canister with a chemical for removing carbon dioxide, a pressure regulating bag and various sensors to regulate the mixture. This unit emits no bubbles and extends dive time to 6 or 7 hours. It also minimizes narcosis, bends and hence decompression time by using helium in place of nitrogen. A failproof system of sensors prevent any excess of oxygen as was common on wartime frogman re-breathers.

Keeping Up to Date (Cont'd.)

In a more modest way, aluminium tanks have also contributed to better equipment. While at present they do not offer any weight advantage because of added thickness, they are much more resistant to corrosion and damage than steel ones. These come in 54 and 65 cu.ft. sizes with pressure to 2500 p.s.i. They are non-magnetic (hence compasses are unaffected), have a flat base, have a service life in excess of 300,000 cycles and never fragment even if tested to destruction point. These tanks have been available locally at The Diver's Den, and other shops for several months.

Space limitations prevent the description of all new equipment in use. In following issues of Fathoms we will describe underwater habitats, dry and wet submersibles, towing devices, underwater communications devices and treasure hunting apparatus.

BILL JANSEN.

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