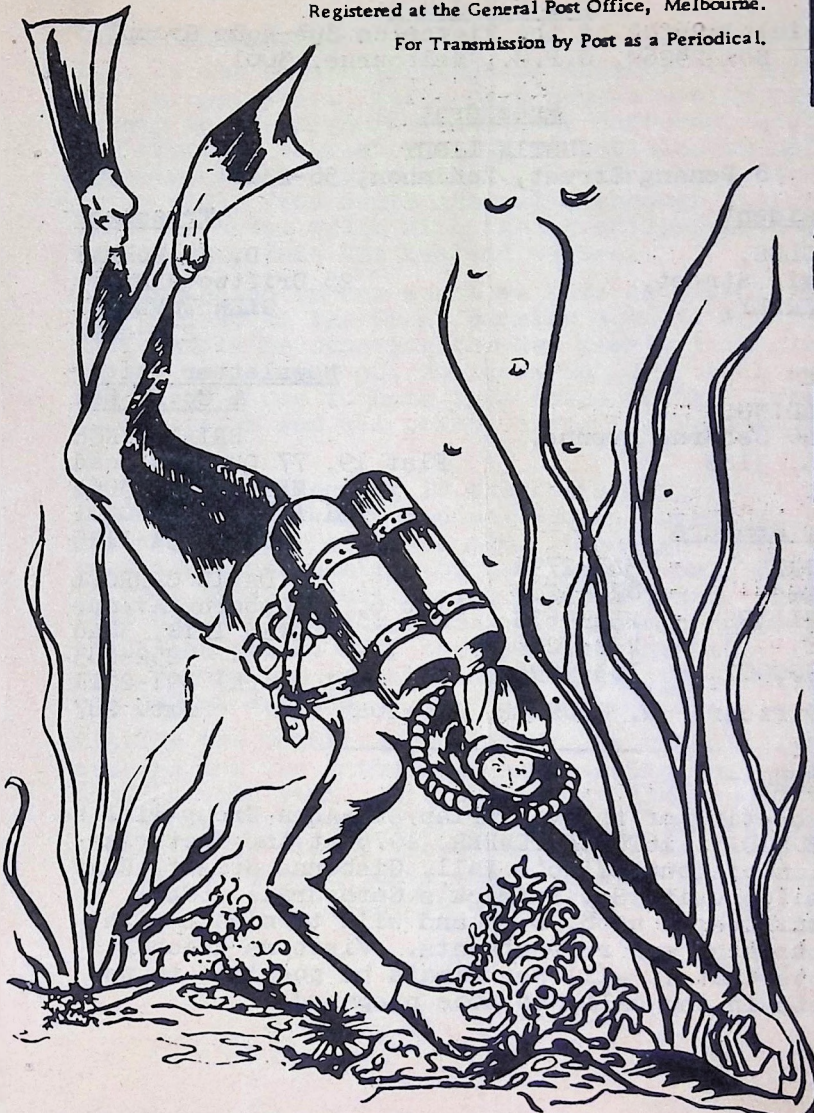


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FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

(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, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1975 at the Victorian Association of Youth Club's Hall, Gisborne Street, East Melbourne (opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral). The meeting will begin at 8.00 pm and will terminate with general business and refreshments. Visitors welcome. Please note that it will not always be possible to use the toilets in the hall, so come prepared.

EDITORIAL

This is the September issue of Fathoms the last one for the current year. These past twelve months have seen a growth in the magazine with many different club members contributing a great variety of articles on different aspects of our diving world. Looking back over the year we've dived from South Australia through Victoria and up into New South Wales with one adventuresome character diving deep into New Zealand waters.

Looking ahead by one month we have an expedition heading off and out to the Great Barrier Reef in October which will really be starting the New Year off in fine style. We are broadening out horizons but are still able to enjoy our close to home type dives on the Cerberus, Williamstown and all points along the Peninsula beaches to Portsea.

Our September Meeting in the Youth Clubs Hall on Tuesday 16th is of course our Annual General Meeting, so all who can get there please make it, along. This is our most important meeting of the year, being election night to fill vacant positions on the Committee. Remember that your nominations for candidates for the committee must have been placed with the Secretary at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting as requested at the August Meeting.

Finally the Committee would like to thank all club members for the enthusiasm and backing they have provided through this year. Attendances at dives and other functions have been high both summer and winter and reflects the club's growth in active members. As I said earlier we already have some exciting dives planned and so with your aid 1975/76 should be a good diving year.

Safe diving.

Ed.

DIVE CALENDAR

- SEPT. 14 PORTSEA HOLE
Dive Capt. B. Truscott 783-9095
- SEPT 16 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- SEPT. 28 CAPE SCHANK AREA
Dive Capt. D. Moore 547-2791
Flinders Pier 9.30 am
- OCT. 12 MYSTERY DIVE
Dive Capt, Carey Ramage 56-5085
- OCT. 21 GENERAL MEETING
- OCT. 26 HURRICANE WRECK
Dive Capt. Pat Reynolds 874-8204
- NOV. 4 CUP DAY REGATTA ON THE YARRA
9 am North Rd. ramp
B.B.Q. and Race broadcast
Tour organiser Max Synon 465-2812
Entry fee....at least ONE bottle of
Champagne.
- NOV. 9 SAN REMO 9 am Fisherman's Cc-cp.
Dive Capt. Brian Lynch 51-3195
- NOV. 29/30 XMAS GET TOGETHER Don & Irene McBean's
Rye Hideaway. If you're coming, get in
touch with D.J. for directions. Bring
your own food & booze, and tent or sleeping
bag if you aren't capable of going home Sat.
nite. Could be a dive on the Sunday as well.

OZONE

It was raining when we woke up, raining when we got to Barry's and looked set for the day but by the time we arrived at Sorrento to launch the boat the weather had cleared considerably. We got the boat into the water, aided by the Hawthorn Scuba Club and set off for Indented Head, Bazza, Di and I, navigating our way by compass across the vastness of Port Phillip Bay.

We arrived at the wreck site which proved to be almost in the Caravan Park, in fact we nearly parked the boat ashore. Once we arrived there was "frenzied" activity ashore and Dave Carroll led the way into the water, pausing at the boat to equip himself. Surprisingly enough once we actually got down into the wreckage there was plenty to be seen with sand brunished brass glistening amongst the darkness of the wood and iron. Visibility was poor and not improved by the overcast day. We spent about an hour down on the bottom before coming ashore for lunch. Here we encountered Father Goulding casting a beneyolent eye over the scene from the comrort of his car, becoming rather a back seat diver these days.

After lunch we set off in company with Max's boat to survey the Swan Point submarine. We made the journey around the point ably directed by the 'Cat', who was seeing wrecked hulks beneath every wave until we were alongside the submarine. We inspected it from stem to stern even under the water where Max and I being the only two in wet suits were enveigled into the water. It is a large vessel sitting proudly up from the sand. There the visibility was a little better and we swam beneath the stabilisers and back up onto the boats stern before joining the others on deck.

Then it was all aboard for home and we took off for Sorrento for an uneventful trip home except for nearly ramming a large container ship that is. We hoisted the boat onto the trailer and motored back to Frankston where Di and I were nobly entertained by Bazza and Marie and what had started off as a rotten wet day had turned into a very good days outing.

Those present were -

Fete and Clara
Ken and Bernadette
Tony Sunshall
Frank and the two Gecffs

Dive Captain - Dave Carroll
Max and Warren
Bazza
Diane and myself

latecomers -

Johnny and Maree
Brian Baldock

BRIAN LYNCH

SHARK ATTACK

San Francisco

A skin diver who was mauled and tossed out of the water by a great white shark is in a satisfactory condition after a night of surgery to repair severe arm lacerations.

Gilbert Brown, 34, was hit while diving for abalone in muddy water 45 metres offshore at Bear Harbour, 322 km north of San Francisco.

The shark grabbed Brown by the left arm with his hand inside the mouth. Brown was shaken and thrown into the air before he was rescued.

Reuter

DIAMOND BAY

On Sunday 10 August, just missing the bus to the kelp farm, Feter, John Marshall and I trotted over to the back beaches to dive in Diamond Bay. En route we encountered Trevor and a horde of new divers, so we shot off to be first in. When we arrived it didn't look too bad and so out we went. Once out there we did find it a bit surgy and very poor visibility close in.

Away from the rocks, visibility was better, but the power of the waves was still evident. However poor visibility was responsible for separating us and we had to surface to regain our formation. This time we dived down onto a large rock formation in about 20 feet of water. There were large abalone which if grabbed quickly could

be lifted from their resting places and rocky ledges complete with young crayfish. We lifted out a small one but returned him to his ledge to grow up a bit for next time and Bazza.

Around this time we'd been out for about an hour, we were joined by Trevor's group, so we headed in. Quite a long swim and believe me abalone can weigh quite a lot after a while. Up onto the beach where we paused for refreshment and watched the others completing their dives.

This particular coastline stretch is now National Trust land and the hike to the sea over the dunes has been made easy by some landscaping of the dune and the addition of a wooden slatted pathway over the sand. Even the drop down the cliff is easier now. So after pausing on the beach for a while we easily made our way back to the cars with much less effort than usual and then it was back to Mrs Moore's for refreshment before heading home.

BRIAN LYNCH

DIVE REPORT (MT. GAMBIER)

Jeff Barker and myself (Bob Scott) decided to take advantage of the last days of our Mt. Gambier old system permits, so we left Melbourne 27th June, which was a Friday night and headed for the Mount, via Ballarat, Hamilton and so on, arriving at the Willow Vale Caravan Park at about 11 pm.

After a good nights sleep we were up bright and early to attack our first dive for the weekend, which was the Pump Hole (or what I call the Pump Hole anyway). We approached the land owner Peter ? asking for permission which we duly got and headed in.

The pre dive preparation which is the probably the most important chore of a diver, always takes the longest to prepare on the first dive on a trip like this. By the time you unload the truck, prepare shotlines, life lines, buddy lines, backup tank and regs., and check your tables for depth and duration, it was all systems go.

We planned a dive for 180 ft. which we duly did, but on entering the coldest water in damnation, it was very

disappointing that the deeper you went, the colder it got and also the dirtier it got. So at about 180 ft. visibility was 10 to 15 ft. in any direction so what was planned for a maximum bottom dive became a bounce dive. But faint heart didn't win fair maiden.

Where to next? To the filling station, fill the tanks, replace a flooded contents gauge, breaky and then down to One Tree where we teamed up then with my old work mate Colin Moreland, Ken, Christine 1 and Christine 2 Thomas.

Prepared and dived One Tree which was a little better than the Pump Hole. Read all the names on the bottom wall. Read the C.D.A.A. instructions about how dangerous cave diving was at the bottom of One Tree.

Back up, out and packed the truck again. Time to eat and de-saturate for a few hours, then down to the ever old faithful, Ewans for a night dive, and as usual it was as clear as if it wasn't there. So we chased fish, watched the moon and the clouds and posed for Ken Thomas' camera for nearly an hour. Then home for supper and bed.

Sunday brought another dull overcast sky, but not daunted, up and away to Piccs. We didn't bother with the first pond, but headed for the main hole through the Cathedral a couple of times, down as far as the drop off for what I call a b----- good dive.

Then it was pack up again, to the filling station and down to the Pines for what I call the dive of the weekend - down to about 100 ft. or so. By this time the sun was over the Pines letting plenty of light into the hole.

There had been in the last 12 months or so, a huge cave-in in this hole, but on a fairly close inspection I couldn't see any dangerous crack this time. This hole would be the clearest in the area now I would think, provided that you stayed away from the floor of the cave. So that being the last dive of the weekend, it was once again pack up the truck, fill our bellies again, and then start the long trek home.

BOB SCOTT

THE ELIZA RAMSDEN

Date 17/8/75

Time 5 AM (YUK!)

June and I woke to a dull overcast bleak morn which was slightly foggy then.

It was a case of eat, pack the truck and on the road by 6.15 am, pick up Ian Hack and friend Margaret, launch the boat and head out across the bay to Sorrento - if we would be able to see it, the fog by this time was nearly pea soup on the bay. Anyway with Ian's expert navigation, we made it a little late, but made it we did.

Then with Dave and Bazza leading the way we headed off to the Eliza. By this time the fog had lifted and the sun was trying to break through for us.

Anyway, Dave put us almost right on top of the wreck, so then it was kit up and over the side for a terrific dive. The marine life was at its best, fish of all sorts, shapes and sizes, and Eliza, she's beautiful. Visibility was good considering the weather we've had for the last week or so.

Anyway it was a damn good dive and always worthy of the effort I think.

FOOTNOTE - My Dad says only divers would be mad enough to get up at 5 am, travel nearly all day to spend 20 minutes at the bottom. But my Dad's not a diver.

Thanks gang.

BOB SCOTT

ELIZA RAMSDEN Wreck Dive 17th August

A veritable flotilla left Sorrento in ideal weather, (for us Victorian divers) to have a look over the E. Ramsden wreck.

To give the novice dive captain time to pander to some divers whims of buddy choice, blackmail of "I'll even dive with you" will not work; and not to miss slack water, we operated 'Moore' time.

Thus we arrived over the site in good time. Cray spotter B. Truscott once again proved the value of good optics, dropping the anchor beside the wreck. Dave Moore made a pass over with the electrical gummings going and said that this is the spot. 'Doubting Thomas' J. Liddy wanted to make sure, so suitably equipped Justin and Bazza went down the anchor line. They re-appeared with Justin's faith in Bazza's navigation restored.

At slack water, though with a surface current which cut out at 10', en masse 20 divers hit the water. To say Bourke Street at 5 pm gives some idea of the divers milling around the wreck.

After 20 minutes bottom time and as the cold set in we surfaced. Alas for Carey Ramage who, unwittingly found her CO₂ cartridge worked - (remember to replace it) and John Marshall who gallantly remained with her, both missed what was described as a "Bloody ripper of a dive" Justin Liddy, or a "a jolly good dive" in the fine English accent of Candy Roberts.

Plenty of fish life, some cray fish, Bazza had a witness for these, and lots of colourful aquatic flora, some of us returned with treasured 'goodies', Ron the POM swears to a 'Beastie'-probably two legged! On the surface Max Synon was noted scrubbing the road grime off his boat before Rod Adamson called up his friend "Ralph". Dave Carroll and John Goulding had the assistance of a ladder into the Shark-Cat brought along by Peter and Jeff Saunders, and 'Trica'; very welcome Peter, some of the older divers need help into the boats. With all the souveniring going on from the wreck it is heartening to see someone put something worthwhile back into the wreck area--Thank you Trevor.

Must say Bob Scott and Ian Hack do themselves well boat-wise'. Special mention must be made of the magnificent showing by the boat owners. Space enough to take the girls along - those that showed up. It should be repeated more often, it makes diving more fun for all. For the technically minded:-

Dive Eliza Ramsden Wreck. Day Sunday 17th August, 1975.
Wind:- Northerly, light. Tide:- High water slack,

10.13 am at Heads. Time of dive commenced 10.20 am finished 10.50 am (11 am Max for boat cleaning) Max. depth 65'. Bottom time 20 mins. Visibility 30'-40'. Divers out 20, returned to shore 20. Phew!

PETER OAKLEY

ELIZA RAMSDEN

Peter Oakley was the chap to blame for it all.....
"What time's the dive, Pete?"
"Be there at 8-8.30 am" he says.

So we made the supreme sacrifice and staggered out of bed at some ungodly hour and trundled down to Sorrento in thick fog. Once there we were surrounded by fifteen other divers and assorted wives, girlfriends and kids. I left Deefa at home because he gets seasick! Then it was time to jump in the boats. Oh, didn't I mention that? For the first time in recorded history V.S.A.G. had more boats than divers with six boats, including a newcomer in the form of Peter Saunders in his Shark Cat. I, of course, was forced once again to get into Bazza's boat, along with the Dive Captain, Candy Roberts, Shirley and at least one of the Truscott kids.

Then it was out to the Ramsden over a fairly calm sea, not calm enough for the old Rob though, and after lining up the marks dropped the anchor right in it. After a brief wait, Bazza and I thought we'd have a sneak look and jumped over and played flags down the anchor rope, just to check!

Then it was time for the Bourke Street divers rally with divers swarming over, under, and in and out and all around the wreck.

Visibility was pretty good at about 30-40 feet and not much current. Fish life was good and even the elusive Bazza cray came out and said hello. Rumour has it that he's still there.

Back on board we counted heads and found that once again everybody had come up again. Points worthy of note must be:-

Bazza complaining of how cold it was, most unusual.

Max our newest boat owner, washing the boat down as he came up.

Rob, naturally, did his thing.

Carey was told to test her vest, but she should have done it after the dive!!

Dave Moore was on time but forgot to fill his tanks, something about a happy anniversary.

Max reckons a completely blind crew is something else!

Johnny doesn't normally swear, but he didn't know the handling characteristics of the Shark Cat.

And so, back to Sorrento, boats out and everybody changed by 12.30.

Plaudits must go to the dive captain, Peter Oakley for a terrific job on his first time out. Especially as he had six boats and eighteen divers to look after. As at least one member said after the dive,

Bloody ripper dive, mate!!

JUSTIN LIDDY

PARADISE FOUND (OR, ONE EASY WAY TO THROW THE RAT RACE)
N.Z. Divers Ken, Yonenne, Geoff, Tony in Fiji.

It was 9.15 pm when our motorsailer "Stareta" pointed seawards. After harbour clearances we slipped smoothly out of Suva, exchanging the familiar musty smells of the island for the clean tepid breezes of the outer reef. Our destination was to be a group of islands to the north-east known as the Kandavu Group with a dive at the remote Osborne Pass.

The Pass is now ranked among the world's premium dive locations and, we eagerly looked forward to confirming the stories told to us by divers who had visited this area. This dive was to be unique in that it was so isolated. The destructive tendencies of commercialization had as yet not affected it.

The four of us had 'burned the midnight oil' to a degree before sailing so we left Ken at the helm to prove his ability in following a compass and sacked down for the night. There is no sedative like sailing a smooth swell and Yonenne, Geoff and myself were soon asleep. We stirred at first light to greet a fine day and a flat sea. After

a steady nine hour steam we were on the fringe of the main 'Kandavu Reef'. Our skipper knew the area well and we were soon carefully threading our way thru the coral (bommies) of the Pass so we could drop anchor near the drop-off of the main reef. Gearing up was simple enough. T-shirts to stop the tank harness chaffing and, plenty of zinc oxide ointment on neck and face to prevent sunburn. We spent virtually all our reef diving days geared this way. (Day temp. never below 30°C and water like a tepid bath) Suffer V.S.A.G.

On trying the depth sounder it performed vigorous gymnastics as we edged into our anchorage. The water was crystal clear making the depth deceptive. Pillars of coral appeared to rise within 3 or 4 feet of the surface and, these were of sufficient mass to slash our hull effortlessly if we were not careful. At last anchored. 'Pre dive check' and over the side. The panorama which unfolded is hard to describe without getting to far onto cloud nine. It was magnificent and unspoiled. The masses of coral had peculiar growth patterns. For no apparent reason they appeared to multiply limitlessly in one area and yet only a short distance away leave another area completely untouched.

Geoff had explained that these formations were extremely complex groupings of stationary animals all existing together in a precarious and subtle biological equilibrium and, as remote as this location may be we should not break or damage the marvellous garden. We swam down the edge of the drop-off keeping in a tight group as the pass was noted for its shark activity, along with large barracuda even if this proved later on to be not as bad as anticipated. We levelled off at 60' on a small area of white coral sand. Our wide eyes and vigorous gestulating showed our individual amazement. This continued for some minutes as we took our surroundings in. It was then that the party came to a decisive halt. Sharks were everywhere. We estimated at one stage approx. 8 Black Tip Whalers in one area. We crowded into a coral cleft with the reef behind us, we felt a little more secure. The biggest appeared between 8' and 12' with many smaller followers. The skipper warned us of the sometimes unpredictable behaviour of these

whalers so we took no chances. We moved up over the drop-off onto the shallow crown of the reef thinking all would be well, but shallow water proved no deterrent. Three of the smaller whalers followed us into approx. 4' of water. It was in this shallow water that we ended up fairly badly scratched and became aware of the painful wounds which corals can inflict. The shark scare proved uneventful as they were obviously more curious than aggressive. After several weeks we found we accepted their presence with less concern. The area was evidently a breeding ground and they obviously had better things to do. The only real incident that occurred which might have had serious consequences was when Ken was cornered by a large Barracuda out in an open patch of sand. It circled him quickly moving inwards. These lone swimmers move with their jaws constantly open and when near you their small steely eyes seem to be constantly watching you. This particular fish Ken estimated to be between 5 or 6 ft in length with a body thickness of 20 to 24 inches. He said "he could not see clearly due to the brown stain in the water". After several close passes it left. We suspect that it was attracted by the shiny camera gear which Ken was carrying. It was later found they were attracted by any bright object in the water.

Back on ship that evening, anchored in the lee of one of the many islands within the main reef we exchanged the days impressions over a meal of kodoka (raw fish marinated in lemon juice and coconut milk) paw paw and cray fish washed down with Fiji bitter, while our portable Bauer made short work of recharging tanks for the following days diving. Days like this contributed to our reluctant return to civilization.

Footnote Attention Johnny! Our unexplained hassle with the whalers all comes clear. 3 pair of orange fins 2 orange T-shirts (1 bikini) were the obvious cause.

TONY SNUS

FLOTSAM & JETSOM

At last we have our lovely Newsletter back again and thanks to Glenys Cutts its a "bewdy" and well worthy to surround the pages of the longest running topical affairs

feature the Diving World or otherwise known as the Under World has ever known. I speak of course of "Flotsom & What's it?". There's been such a lot of comings and what nots going on that its hard to know where to start. For beginners hows this?

The quote of the month goes to Bazza - Refering to Murray Richardson's recent airplane forced landing, crash, nose dive, call it what you like.... "Some bloke's will do anything to get their names in the paper".

Even Dave Carroll who usually just looks at the pictures in the paper commented - "Aw Gee he could have at least ditched in the sea".

Seriously though, we were all relieved that Murray was OK, and hope he's back up there again soon.

The Skiing weekend at Mt. Buller was a great success and all those attending showed incredible skill, bravery or stupidity. I'm not sure which, but it was really a fun weekend and converted most to this rather genteel sport. So much so that a one day trip was held some weeks later and now we hear a few keen divers are trying to work out if skis will fit ontc neoprene boots.

A familiar face from 2 years back; Tony Tipping has returned from afar with amazing tales of his adventures. If he'd stop talking for a minute, we might be able to ask him, 'Where he didn't go'.

And speaking of trips, who missed out on going to Eden on the Queens birthday weekend. Well if you did then ycu missed;

- some good diving,
- winning stacks of money on the pokies,
- eating oysters off the rocks,
- drinking Bacardi on the rocks,
- scenic tours etc. etc.

Don't be left at home next time. Contact John Goulding or Dave Moore for Xmas bookings.

The recent dive at the Kelp beds highlights the advantages of boat dives, and hopefully makes people realise how fortunate the VSAG is in having people who will bring their boats along. With springtime approaching and some warmer weather around the corner probably more members

will be turning up. So, don't forget to contact your dive captain before the dive, and if you find you can't get on the boats then don't be too upset. There'll always be another day. So those who do enjoy a boat dive see if you can give the boat owner a hand to clean up afterwards.

We had a surprising treat on the recent ELIZA RAMSDEN dive when Peter Saunders who runs the dive shop in Spencer St., turned up with his 16 ft. "Shark Cat". Peter tells us that these boats were especially designed to break through the sandbar at a particular fishing port in Queensland. Shark Cat boats have earned a reputation of being ideal rough water boats, so no doubt we would like to see more of Peter and his boat.

Recent attempts by a certain member to obtain a permit for a powerhead resulted in the friendly policeman telling our man not to read books like "JAWS". Anybody wishing to obtain powerheads must get a police permit and a character clearance. Word has it that several of the members going to Queensland are thinking of obtaining Bang sticks. Well let me warn you. To all those who as kids were told off by the cops, for riding on the footpath throwing flour bombs, streaking at Port Campbell, or any other harmless frivolities, then you'd better invest in a Goulding-style hook instead.

Well as they say in "JAWS" - "CRUNCHEM AND MUNCHEM".
Till next time.

LETZ GRABBEM

PIRELLI INFLATABLE BOATS

It is not often that we get the opportunity to test drive a new boat, and it is even a lesser occasion when I attempt to write a performance report on a subject in which I have little knowledge. Therefore my apologies to all rubber boat enthusiasts who have been living in a misguided and unenlightened world unless of course they have tried the Pirelli Inflatable Boat.

Our colleague Peter Oakley arranged for the club to test out 2 of these boats recently and what we saw was very impressive. The boats were Pirelli 14 footer with 25 hp Volvo; Pirelli 10-12 footer with 9 hp Volvo