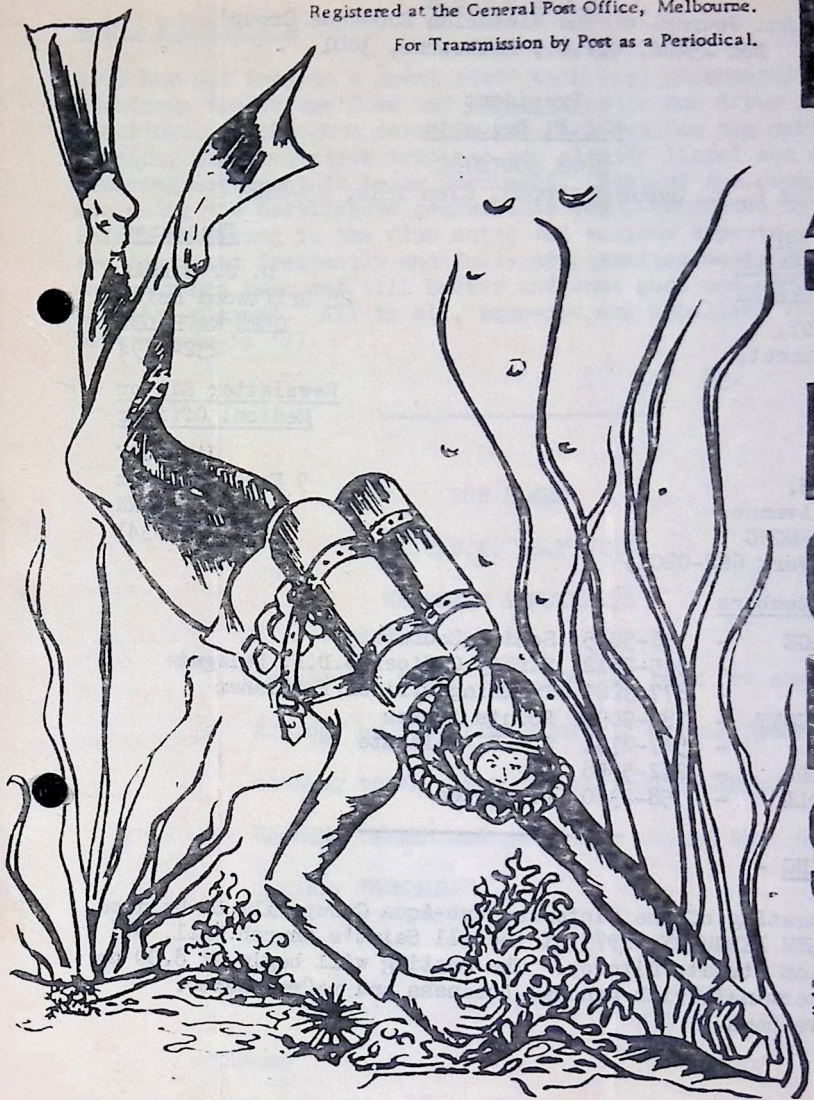


FEB 77 3c.

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne.
For Transmission by Post as a Periodical.

FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

F A T H O M S
 (Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
 Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne, 3001

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DAVE CARROLL	-	58-2310	Librarian

CLUB MEETING -

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on TUESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY, 1977 at the All Saint's Church Hall, 97 King William Street, Fitzroy. The meeting will begin at 8.00 pm and will terminate with general business and refreshments. Visitors welcome.

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E D I T O R I A L

1977 has got away to a great start with very successful trips to Huskisson and Refuge Cove and large turnouts for dives and social functions. Although a date has not been set for the next training session, many tentative trainees are already listed and more training equipment is being purchased. Most of the committee members are doing a B Certificate course this year, conducted by Alan Cutts. Safety in diving is the Club motto and various aspects of safety are discussed frequently and fully at committee meetings. The dive calendar has been set till Easter and some good and varied diving has been planned. All in all, prospects are excellent for an even better year in '77.

ED.

BOB BAKER

S.C.U.B.A. BOAT DIVES

WEEKENDS & WEEKDAYS

If you are going to N.S.W. to look for some good diving, or just find yourself around Sydney with nothing to do, then contact BOB BAKER of PORT HACKING DIVERS and go diving aboard the 30 foot cruiser "WOMBINA"

Write to -

BOB BAKER
10 ALFRED AVE.,
CRONULLA
N.S.W. 2230

or Phone

02 5237406

DIVE CALENDAR

FEB.	15	GENERAL MEETING
FEB.	20	TORQUAY - Dive Capt. Justin Liddy 58-2310
FEB.	27	THE WALL (RIP) - Dive Capt. - Barry Truscott 783-9095. Experienced divers only.
MARCH	12-13-14	PORT CAMPBELL - Organiser - John Goulding 25-2883
MARCH	15	GENERAL MEETING
MARCH	27	FLINDERS - 10 am. - Dive Capt. - Dave Moore 547-2791
APRIL	7	TIDAL RIVER (EASTER)
APRIL	19	GENERAL MEETING

HEINZ WIZARD DRINK COMPETITION

On November 27, the V.S.A.G. drinking team met at Southland shopping centre at 11.00 am to partake in the Heinz Wizard Drink Competition.

The V.S.A.G. was one of 30 teams competing that morning. Hopes for winning the heat and then the grand final were not as high as the hopes the club had for winning the novelty prize for the morning.

All members of the team arrived fully equipped with Wetsuit, Flippers, Mask and Snorkel. By the time the club was ready to compete each member looked like he really needed a drink. That possibly accounts for the terrific time the club produced giving them second place in the heat.

John Goulding provided entertainment to all present as he stood playing a trumpet, fully clad in wetsuit etc. while the club marched to the competitors ring.

It was obvious by the expressions on the club members faces that Heinz Wizard drink is as delicious as they had expected it to be.

It was announced that the V.S.A.G. had won the novelty prize and we were awarded a cheque for \$50. Perhaps this money could be used to buy a year's supply of Wizard Drink for our Social functions and after meeting refreshments? (Just a thought!)

I would like to thank all club members who participated and I would also like to thank Ron Coomber who brought the event to our attention.

CAREY RAMAGE

RIP AREA

Left Sorrento midday, 3 boats, 6 divers, 1 fisherboy cum line tender, Warren. As slack water was at 2.17pm we decided on some water skiing for Tony, Cindy and Max, fishing for Warren and freeing a fouled anchor for Peter and Paul? in the Quarantine Station area. Max discovered large shells, bang bang type, in shallow water while snorkelling. Left for the other side at 1.20pm and Marie proved to be just as fast as the Tipping toy boat in slight seas. Using the depth sounder and marks found drop off after much motoring around. A ship passed very close as we were kitting up with another close behind, 6 divers into the water with Warren tending line, again much motoring around but then there it was dropping away in steps as far as you would care to go and then soon we ran out of line at 80' with Cindy and Peter stopping there. Max and I going down to 130' and Paul and Tony to 170'. Fish were everywhere. Sponges, coral, caves, crays, the works. A truly great dive. P.S. Where are all the Divers?

BARRY TRUSCOTT

V.S.A.G. AT JERVIS BAY

In an old copy of "Skindiving in Australia", noted underwater photographer, Steve Parish, describes Jervis Bay as a mecca for divers.

Our two weeks at Jervis Bay managed to capture some of the magic of this area by providing us with excellent and varied diving. Yet we really only dived a small proportion of the highly recommended spots.

With most of the party arriving on Boxing Day or the next day, these first 2 days provided time for a little skiing and exploratory dives on the inshore reefs. We soon found out that the better diving was to be found closer to the entrance of the bay around the areas of the "Dock", Pt. Perpendicular and Bowen Island, and further out along the coastline north and south of the entrance.

In all places we found good visibility which enabled excellent viewing of the myriads of fish species and exploration of the caverns and grottoes which abound in boulder strewn bottom.

There were two dives that we missed locating,

1. The Underwater Arch
2. The Fault

Although we were given the marks of the Arch, the rather severe conditions along the coastline prompted a lot of sea-sickness and this together with the absence of the depth sounder nullified our attempts to locate these highly recommended spots.

Grateful assistance was given by Ian Marshall and Bob Baker from the Port Hacking Dive Club and Bob kindly chartered his boat to us for an all-together dive off Bowen Island.

Whilst diving was the reason we went to Jervis Bay it was not our only interest. The town of Huskisson provided tennis courts, squash courts and a nearby golf course, not to mention the pokies.

Without doubt it was a very "full" 2 weeks with plenty of action going on each day.

I would like to express special thanks to the boat owners who provided the means of ensuring exciting and changing dive venues, and to Bob Scott for managing the compressor.

I would rate this area as one of the best dive spots I have visited and hope your appreciation is likewise.

JOHN GOULDING

DIVING WITH CONTACT LENSES

Poor sighted divers are strongly advised to wear some form of corrective lenses underwater, as lack of light at depth causes the pupils to dilate. In this condition the vision of the poor sighted diver is very much reduced. Another problem is relocating the boat

on the surface. What is the best type of corrective lens for the diver? Contact lens wearers often experience discomfort at depths in excess of 120' even with the narcotic effect of nitrogen. It may be reckoned that this is due to the effect of increased pressure, but the eye is filled with fluid and is virtually incompressible. The discomfort is more likely to be caused by the increased partial pressure of carbon dioxide. Another problem with contact lenses is the risk of them being washed out and lost if the face mask is dislodged. The use of flexible contact lenses is condemned completely for all water sports. If someone diving in fresh water wearing these lenses filled his mask, they would stick very tightly to the eye. Incorrect removal procedures could then possibly cause damage to the outermost layers of the cornea. Contact between these lenses and polluted, chlorinated or even sea water could bring about unfortunate consequences. Haptic lenses (the large lenses covering the whole of the eye) are the only contact lenses which can be regarded as satisfactory as they are not likely to wash out, but there is still the problem of discomfort due to increased partial pressure of carbon dioxide at depth. The alternatives are a prescription ground mask glass or lenses bonded onto the mask glass. The latter method is superior because it allows the use of the original heat toughened glass. It also means that the thickness of the glass is not reduced, and complicated prescriptions can be dispensed more accurately.

JAY CODY

DIVE MANA ISLAND FIJI

A few notes taken on dive sites around Mana, not all were dived on by us, but make tempting reading nevertheless.

Sand Cay N.W. Reef - $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Mana, a boat trip to the reef around the cay. The coral gently shelves to a depth of 5' to 8' then drops off sheer to 85' to a sloping sandy bottom. Small medium caves and a few large enough to permit diver entry. Several large Gorgonia fans and some black coral, small fish, schools of surgem, large pelagics, bat fish and small reef sharks. Visibility 80'-150', much affected by wind conditions.

Sand Cay S.E. Reef - $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles from Mana, in fact reads almost as above, shelving coral from cay to 80'-90' to sloping sand, most caves with reef fish inside, sea whips, crinoids. Visibility 80'-100'.

North Reef S.W. Face - $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north Mana. Shelving coral with crevices sloping gradually with small drops 20'-30' to sandy bottom 80'. Small fish, large Angel fish, coral, crinoids sea whips, small reef sharks. Visibility 100' plus - our dive approx. 75'-80'.

Opposite side of same reef - Coral 4' to 15' on top of reef shelving with 15'-30' drop offs to sandy bottom 70', sand ledges to 80' drops to 100'.

South Reef - $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile across lagoon extends around southern and western island. Reef 4' with sheer drop to 90' to a sharply sloping sandy bottom. Several ramparts extend out from coral face about 50' at western end of lagoon. Visibility 100'-80' but drops after extended N.E. winds to 40'-50', also tidal current.

North Beach - 100 metres off beach small coral reef first drops to 20'-30' to clean sand sloping to deep water, coral outcrops small and large to 80' small fish, lobster, small spiral tube worms, very few large fish as local villages spear here. It was here Clara and I dived our second dive each day in the late afternoon. I cannot vouch to the 80' depth as we were content to stay at the reef edge, quite difficult to enter and exit at low tide, water depth for some way out only 2'. Edge of reef is marked by a buoy. Prices as house guests only per day rates -

Tank and harness	F\$ 4.00
Reg.	3.50
Weightbelt	1.00
Refills	1.25

Boat with attendant \$3.00 each as \$15.00 per trip. Must produce certificate to hire equipment. A deposit of \$30.00 on the gear is listed but not taken from us.

A general comment. Water is warm enough for T-shirt and shorts - if you are cool after a time rise to the very warm surface water, beautiful. The coral types are not bunched up or banked as some part of the Barrier Reef - more variegated and interesting. Last year two large Golden Cowries were found by divers and taken away!! No restriction on spearfishing with SCUBA, so if you feel the need go satisfy your ego. Really its a camera's world and we could not find a Nikonus in Nadi.

PETER & CLARA OAKLEY

THE LAST LAP - GABO, MALLACOUTA

By now everyone knows what happened at Huskisson and around Jervis Bay Christmas/New Year 1976/77 and I guess the brother has even had his say about Coff's Harbour and those fabulous Solitary Islands, but I'd just like to mention a fine place for diving - Gabo Island about 8 miles outside Mallacouta Inlet.

Paul and I had decided to spend 3 days or so on the way back from Coff's Harbour around the inlet and hopefully get in some good diving as well as visit the relatives. Yeah, same old story, once across the Victorian border the weather was R.S. for two days in fact, so all we managed to do was get "Lil Ab" up the Genoa River for a couple of days skiing around Gipsy Point.

By the third day however, the swell had dropped enough to risk heading outside and across the famous "Bar" where many an ill fated ab boat had met its demise. We were lucky enough to meet a local ab diver, heading out named Paul Munro so the coast was clear to have a crack at Gabo and he showed us a spot which is first class for sport diving on the western tip of the island near the light-house.

Over the side and down the anchor rope we went leaving our 50 year old Uncle David in the boat anxiously waiting for a snorkel. On first impression at 40 feet where the pick dug in I guessed it to be a typical rocky kelp covered cray bottom like Flinders, but no! Slightly to the S.W. we noticed these huge boulders forming steep chasms and an almost sheer drop to 80 feet. It was down there we spent most of our 40 minutes in the water where several schools of small fish hovered around us and I managed to photograph a couple of really unusual sponges. With 35 feet visibility, a colourful garden of sponges and gorgonias, and an abundance of fish - drummer and luderick and trumpeter to mention a few. I would consider Gabo Island one of Victoria's prima dive sites.

We could have guessed it, after another 40 minute snorkel with Uncle David inside the islands more sheltered area, the wind had whipped up and sure enough it was a no planing trip back to the inlet surrounded by white caps. An hour later thanks to Paul's guesswork and a bit of luck on our side we gunned it across the "bar" and through the white water to the safety of the inlet.

O.K. so Gabo doesn't have the consistent weather at Christmas time to warrant a two week stay - we were probably lucky cracking it for one day in three - but it's a worthwhile risk for a long weekend trip and according to the local ab divers May and June provide the calmest seas of the year. I wonder where the VSAG committee plan on spending Queen's Birthday long weekend?

TONY TIPPING

REFUGE COVE

Due to the fact that this edition is now due to go to press we are unable to write the full article, we feel would do justice to so great a story. So this really is just a trailer designed to titillate the appetites of those of you who were not there. There is too, the legal aspect, which we hope to have got over by the March edition, providing Paul Tipping can remember where he hid the micro film.

Seriously though folks, all we can say for now is that our Australia Day weekend at Refuge was enjoyed by all, particularly our trusty skipper Reg Truscott, who probably will never be the same again, and even the Ranger said that he'd never had a group quite like us there before. The weather was kind to us with only Sunday blowing up a bit, but thanks to Peter Oakley being up the sharp end of the boat, not much reached us at the back.

As always on trips such as these, we have a host of stories to tell and memories to look back on, but for those of you who stayed at home you will have to buy next months copy of the magazine to find out just what you missed. The blow by blow descriptions will astound you, only the names have to be changed to protect the innocent. (Guilty? Ed.) Luckily for us I don't think that our snooping reporter Argus Tuft was among the divers present so most reputations will be safe, well until March anyway. At least I don't think Argus was there, but now and again over the rustling in the bushes I'm sure I heard a typewriter faintly in the distance, never mind back to the plot.

Well have to stop now, but just to say we had a good time, arrived back in one piece, and we have provisionally booked the boat for the same weekend next year, which says a lot I think. The full story will be in our March copy next to the centre fold I'm told!

THE BEACH MASTER

COFF'S HARBOUR - JANUARY 1977

With heavy hearts, sore heads, the odd 'moo' call and a few final bars of the now familiar distortion of THAT Roger Whittaker number, Tony and your correspondent left Huskisson on Monday 10th January after farwelling the Codys and pointed themselves in the direction of Coff's Harbour. Having survived an 800 kilometre trip, temperatures up to 41 degrees and Sydney's traffic we made it late the same night to Coff's with trailer and boat still intact.

As things happened, Coff's Harbour turned out to be a rather exciting sequel to Jervis Bay. The first day was spent setting up camp and getting the joint wired by checking out such vital holiday jaunts as pubs, clubs, golf courses, laundromat and Chinese restaurants. We looked in on local diving identities Max and Val Marsh at Coff's Harbour Jetty and promptly received a welcome invitation from this friendly couple to follow Max's boat out next morning to South Solitary Island.

Brimming with excitement Tony and I got to the excellent boat ramp at the appointed time of 8 o'clock and found Max and his group. A 12 mile run saw us near the gantry on the north-west corner of the island some few hundred metres north of the light-house. It was soon obvious that our best hopes were to materialize when we could see the bottom looming up at us - and this in spite of the misty and overcast conditions! We quickly threw the gear on and us into the drink where we became totally absorbed in our dive which was to a maximum depth of 50 feet and which lasted 70 minutes with visibility ranging from 80 to 100 feet. Tony, armed with Nikonus camera, light meter and flash snapped merrily away at the large variety of mainly temperate fish but also at the several varieties of tropicals, including some rather beautiful guarded anemone fish (also known locally as 'Clownfish') which we watched Max net for the Coff's Harbour Porpoise Pool aquarium. As the name suggests these fish harbour amongst the poison tentacles of anemone from which they are immune. Other interesting little chaps were the white-spot pullers.

The next 4 mornings were spent off 'Split' Solitary Island which is about 5 miles out. Our first dive there was off the south eastern extremity where the reef contained a number of chasms and a bottom full of various corals and species of small fish. The visibility was to 40 feet and the highlight of the dive was the appearance of

a 20 kilogram kingfish which, on sizing up the 2 strangely clad intruders, actually seemed to pose only 10 or so feet away from the camera. The ensuing 3 dives were shared with others and allowed us to enjoy studying the white gorgonia, black coral and to observe and snap 2 beautiful Moorish idols. For our 2 final outings we had Brisbane diver Belinda Walker as our fellow traveller.

In case any readers are interested, the golf and other sporting and club facilities provide excellent diversions from the diving at Coff's which I have no hesitation in nominating as a future venue for a VSAG holiday. The Ocean Beach Caravan Park is superior to most others with excellent amenities blocks, bitumen roads and the sites are mainly flat and grassed. Not to be overlooked is the fine surf beach. In short this place has something for everyone.

PAUL TIPPING

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

The caption in the October '76 issue of Fathoms read something like a travel agent's lavatory door -

"Come to sunny little Huskisson on the shores of beautiful Jervis Bay, just a short hop step and jump away from Melbourne for the dive holiday of a life time".

Knowing that the writer of that caption had never been further from Melbourne than McGooleys Hotel in Bacchus Marsh I immediately realised that the information must have been given to him by the friend of a friend's cousin, and therefore was of a completely reliable and informed source.

So with great things in mind I began to pack the car in early November, and on Xmas Day in the company of faithful companion Murgatroyd we set off at a great pace, down Toorak Road turning right into Swanston Street and up through Carlton, did a left turn somewhere then a right until we found a sign which said Sydney 860 km. - Not bad for a start - on the second day with Murgatroyd still sleeping - she'd been that way since the Ford Factory at Broadmeadows except on one occasion where she wanted to have a "wee break" - as Jimmy would say, we arrived at Husky, to be greeted by the Tippings, and Frank, and a few others who obviously had started to pack earlier than November.

Erecting the tent so that we had a fine view of the next door neighbour's annexe, I felt the stimulating effect of knowing that for the next 2 weeks we would be living primitive again. Thereupon I stripped off and ran naked around the town singing Brahms Lullabye in B Flat.

Having regained my composure and my freedom from jail I was content to listen to the sound of the bush noises:- The M00000 of the mechanical cow and the whistling sound of the ice-man. Together with the thump thump thump of the compressor and the groans and grunts from various tents, this was indeed the "get-away-from-it-all" atmosphere which we had worked and waited a year for.

There was much to do around camp. Each morning the representative from BENDEM BEDWARDS Health and Beauty Shoppe put on a display of physical jerks and sightseeing around the town. Those who thought they were going to receive a prize followed intently like the mice after the Pied Piper.

Then of course there was the diving which I'm sure others will talk about. The after dive discussions and mass-debates. "It was a shark.... It was a dolphin..... It was a sun fish...." The queueing for the boats:-

The tin boat - 2 persons

"Lil Ab" boat - 1 person - everyone but the owner being ordered overboard.

"Bill" boat - 18 persons

Cody's rubber dinghy - 3 half-people

The night life - pull pull pull of the poker machine

The radio talk back programs:-

"VSAG to Base do you hear me?" repeated 40 times on the hour between 10 mins to and 10 mins past.

Well if you missed it, bad luck, it was worthwhile and who knows, it may be repeated again some time.

BILL DUBBOAT

Sincerest congratulations and best wishes are extended to Pat and Jenni Reynolds who were married early in January and held their reception on February 2nd. Jenni has been a member for about a year and has brightened the diving and social scene with her presence. Pat has been one of our most popular members for fourteen years and was recently awarded life membership. May the future bring you both every happiness.

PLEASE NOTE -

Would members making contributions to the magazine please note that the deadline for acceptance of articles is the Committee meeting of each month. Articles received after this time will be held over for next month's issue. Also please note that all hand written articles must be written clearly and be easy to read, if not the article will not, repeat, not be published.

Your co-operation in the above would be greatly appreciated.

AIR FILLS AT BLACKBURN SOUTH -

Anyone wishing to purchase air, or reduce their credit of pre paid air can now get it from -

Alan Cutts,
97 Orchard Grove,
Blackburn South 3130 Ph. 877-3287

Conditions -

1. No fills after 8 pm (E.P.A. Regulation)
2. Tanks left early in the week will be filled by Friday night.
3. Tanks left late in the week will be filled by Saturday night.
4. Anyone wanting a same day fill before 8 pm must ring first (phone number above) and make arrangements.
5. Tanks not in test will definately NOT be filled.

Maximum filling pressure - 2600 P.S.I.

When two or more boats are used on a dive, and the Captain of one decides to abort the dive, and cannot establish voice communication, he is to wave the dive flag from side to side until one of the other

Boat Captains acknowledges by doing the same. (Passed by Committee on 19/1/77.)

THE PHANTOM DOBBERS

Since the Jervis Bay trip at Christmas, several reports of diving club rules or regulation breaches have been brought to my attention, and also to other committee members notice.

The main reason people talk about these incidents is to avoid injury or accident in the future. The Club's motto is "Safety in Diving". In my nine year association with the Club, the rules and regulations have been adhered to pretty stringently. In the last 9 years there has not been a death or even an accident among the club members.

I personally appreciate the work that "The Phantom Dobbers" are doing, because although you may not appreciate them, they may save your life one day by opening your eyes to something that you may do in the future that could kill you or your buddy.

Every time an incident of one sort or another is mentioned at a Club gathering, a small group of people form (those that were at that outing) and much discussion takes place. Could these people be the ones who are guilty of breaches in diving safety, and if so, are they sorting out their stories in case there is an inquiry of some sort?

N.B. The Dive Captain is legally responsible for every one on the dive he is controlling.

SAFETY IN DIVING

by the Phantom Dobber's Mate.
