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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 Wednesday 19th APRIL, 1978 at the Celtic Club, 320 Queen Street, Melbourne. The meeting will commence promptly at 8.00pm. Members are requested not to bring drinks up to the meeting room, but reminded that the facilities of the club are available afterwards for a sociable conclusion to the evening. Visitors welcome.

FORWARD

During the past few weeks the club has been very active in areas outside our normal diving routines. The long weekend at Port Campbell did produce some reasonable seas, and the members of the VSAG in conjunction with Peter Stone and the Torquay Diving Group assisted in the raising of one of the Loch Ard anchors. A very worthwhile achievement, and one in which we as a club should feel very proud to have been a part of. The anchor has lain with the Loch Ard for almost one hundred years, the ship sinking at about 3am on the morning of the first June 1878.

For more than eighty years the Loch Ard had remained undisturbed in her last resting place at the foot of Mutton Bird Island. It was not until 1967 that Stan McPhee from Warrnambool finally re-located her. At that time the hull had been relatively intact, but since that time divers have blasted the ship apart to get at the lead and copper inside, and to quote Paul Sier there are bits and pieces lying around all over the bottom, but not much ship left. What man started, by blasting, the sea in its relentless fashion is finishing off.

Back to the present. The club was well represented in the annual Fun Run, first man home was Tiger Tipping. well done Tony. It seems the only way we are going to get past him is to break his leg. A special mention too, for all those who ran, especially those who do not normally exercise in this manner, well done because everyone who started, completed the course.

We are pleased to welcome Neil Garland to the committee. Neil has been diving regularly with the club since last year. He has just completed the dreaded F.A.U.I. course, gaining a provisional pass. He is a keen enthusiastic diver who should bring a fresh new approach to committee meetings.

With the coming of the cooler weather it is not expected that diving numbers will fall since nearly everyone now has the new super warm suit look, so remember to phone the dive captain early.

ED.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
APR. 19	GENERAL MEETING Celtic Club	8 PM		
APR. 23	SORRENTO	10 AM	B. Lynch 795-2834	Snapper Reef Goorangi
APR. 30	SORRENTO	8 AM	J. Goulding 25-2883	George Roper Holyhead
MAY 7	YARRA RIVER RUN		T. Tipping 24-7133 20-6948	
MAY 13	GOLF DAY	8 AM	J. Cody 846-1313	See Advert.
MAY 17	GENERAL MEETING Celtic Club	8 PM		
MAY 21	S&N REMO OR SORRENTO	To be advised 11 AM	B. Lynch 795-2834	Pinnacles Wall
JUNE 2,3,4 (Queen's B'day)		To Be Advised		

GOLF SPECTACULAR!

The 1st VSAG Annual Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, 13th May at Ivanhoe Public Golf Links. Beginners and Mug Golfers welcome! Prizes to be awarded. Clubs and buggies available for hire. All contestants to meet at the course at 8.00AM. Entry Fee (\$4.00) required by next meeting (19th April). Presentations will be made at the 19th Hole (Jay Cody's, 15 Dellas Ave., Templestowe). B.Y.O. drinks and meat for BBQ lunch. Forward entry fees to the above address. Enquires - Ring Jay 544 7088(Bus.) or 846 1313 (Home).

THE WALL & THE HOLYHEAD - 5TH MARCH, 1978

With an extra hours sleep due to the change over from Daylight Saving back to Eastern Standard Time most of us were down at Sorrento Ramp at the advertised time of 8.30am i.e. except for Wendy, Fred and Neil who just scraped in as we headed off.

Luckily our friends from the Marine Studies Group always bright and early (but earlier than brighter) had marked the spot and were waiting for slack water at 9.41. Sure enough it was pretty well right on slack as we hooked our picks in and kitted up; Pat Reynolds the Dive Captain (and running coach extraordinaire) decided to stay topside and look after "Lil Ab", Pete's "Green Monster" and Davo's "Italian Job" as well as his own empty scuba tank!

Maximum allowable depth was 150' for a bounce dive only before stopping at the 80-100' level on the return. At 150' there's no colour without additional lights anyhow, and only a few odd sponges to see despite the excellent 35-40 ft. visibility. The caves lined with sponges and housing plenty of blue devils still impress me as much as any other nearby local spot.

After sorting out and untangling anchor ropes and picking up one or two drifting divers we headed over to Lonsdale Pier and waited for an hour or so in order to dive the Holyhead outside on low tide. This proved to be quite a rewarding way of "decompressing" the remaining 1000 psi in our tanks as there still seems to be so much junk lying in only 15 ft. of water!

Unfortunately the wind decided to spring up and the tide began to turn sending in a few big rollers which soon had us scampering back inside the bay via the fisherman's channel close in on the Lonsdale side.

Back at the ramp at 1.30 Justin, Cindy, Smibes and "Bill" were all set to hit the water and dive out Popes Eye or somewhere - good to see VSAG treats the 12 hour alcohol rule conscientiously, eh Jack!

TONY TIPPING

TIP'S TIT-BITS

The quote of last month must go to Neil Garland the day we dived the Wall and the Holyhead. We were heading off and sure enough Wendy turned up with Neil and Fred 30 minutes late and did they cop it! Said Neil "I was relying entirely on someone else for a lift - the fact that I was fast asleep when they picked me up is totally irrelevant!"

Before we leave Neil, congratulations on being chosen for the Committee - looks like the club finally recognises the true value of a FAUI Instructor.

It's understandable to see why the WBC had stripped Leon Spinks of his World Crown - they obviously heard about the rugged bout that took place out off the Portsea Pier recently where two divers slogged it out over a 1920 Marchants alley-topped lemonade bottle - for further details contact Johnny Goulding's manager!

Anyone not quite sure of the how, when, where, why, what for, etc., relating to the raising of an anchor from the Loch Ard on the Labor Day weekend despite what's already been said and written please contact Paul Sier!

Well the Fun Run has been run and won once again (thank God!) but the VSAG big three have still got quite a job ahead of them next year - did you know that they were 12 minutes and 48 seconds behind the overall winner - just slap that up at them next time someone reckons how fit they are! And for those who hate bad winners you'll get your own back this year on the ski trip!

LOCH ARD WRECK

Following requests from the Victorian Premiers Department and the History Advisory Council to raise the anchor from the Loch Ard the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria sought assistance from the V.S.A.G., Torquay Scuba Club and a Mr. Ien Brennan - a salvage diver from Melbourne.

On Sunday 12th March after a disappointing dive at the wreck site the previous day, a dive was planned with the specific objective of raising one of several anchors located in the bow section of the wreck which lay approx. 20 metres off the most southern tip of

the island.

The swell pattern of the water varied but did allow boats to enter through the gorge to pick up divers who had travelled by car from Port Campbell.

Members of the Torquay Scuba Club located the anchor at approximately 10.30am and fixed a line with a floating buoy. V.S.A.G. members assisted in placing the large rubber lifting bag in position and affixing it to the anchor with steel cables.

Scuba tanks and other cylinders of air were then ferried by divers from the surface to the anchor and used for inflating the bag.

After a short time it was discovered that the steel cables were actually wrapped around 2 anchors and a fresh start had to be made. The task seemed rather hopeless, for as the afternoon drew on, the anchor refused to budge.

A crow bar was then taken down and after some levering, force was applied, the air bag lifted the anchor from the ocean floor and raced to the surface. This was a particularly dangerous part of the operation, for had a diver been hit by the bag or anchor or entangled in the cable or debris, the result could have easily been fatal. However Max Synon who prized the anchor free, was able to keep well clear when the anchor began to move.

The anchor slung beneath its lifting bag was then towed to Port Campbell jetty, by a local fishing boat, where it was then raised for public viewing before being lowered back into the water until the official anchor raising ceremony on Easter Saturday 25th March.

This was an excellent venture to experience and all divers from all groups present worked well as a team.

Anchor:	Total Height	84"
	Width Fluke to Fluke	60"

JOHN GOULDING

THE TRAGIC LOCH LINE

The Loch Ard which sank off Mutton Bird Island one hundred years ago, was one of a fleet of twentythree bearing the Loch name. The Line came into being in the 1870's, with the intrcduction of iron sailing ships, when metal replaced wood and rope in hull, mast and rigging construction.

The Loch Line soon established itself, because the iron ships were more comfortable, more stable and had a larger cargo capacity. Unfortunately the name also became synonomous with disaster, sixteen ships of the fleet were lost at sea.

1. The Loch Leven outward bound from Geelong wrecked on King Island.
2. The Loch Long lost with all hands out from New Caledonia.
3. Loch Sloy lost on Kangaroo Island.
4. Loch Vennacher, rammed and sank in the Thames, was raised and was lost on Kangaroo Island the first trip out.
5. Loch Lomond, out from Newcastle, lost with all hands.
6. Loch Maree out from Geelong lost without trace.
7. The Loch Earn, sank after running down the French steamer Ville de Havre in mid ocean.
8. The Loch Ryan, renamed the John Murray wrecked on Malden Island.
9. Loch Fyne out from Lyttleton, sank without trace.
10. Loch Sunart wrecked on Skulmartin Rock.
11. Loch Shiel wrecked off the Welsh Coast.
12. Loch Moidait driven ashore on the Dutch Coast.
13. The Loch Carron, rammed and sank the barque Inverkip, a disaster which cost the company £30,800 in damages, before herself being sunk by enemy action during World War I, as were also the Loch Broom and the Loch Torridon, which brings us to the sixteenth and for us certainly the most notorious the Loch Ard. From her launching in Clagow in 1873 there was some talk of her being a voodoo ship, although there doesn't seem to be any evidence to show that seamen didn't want to sail in her, however her subsequent record shows that at the very least she was an unlucky vessel.

She was dismasted off Tory Island on the North West coast of Ireland during her maiden voyage in December 1873, and forced to return to the shipyards of the Clyde for refitting.

While there, reloading her cargo which had been off loaded during the refit, she was driven from her moorings during a heavy gale,

and stranded.

She set out for Australia in January 1874. On April 2nd, near the island of St. Pauls in the South Indian Ocean she was dismasted and took a lot of water into her holds from the huge cross seas, almost sinking. She was saved when the rigging and cordage was cut away. She arrived under Jury rig off Port Phillip Heads 49 days later, the whole voyage lasting 114 days nearly four months. It is interesting to note that eight iron vessels were dismasted on the Australian run that year.

During the next two years all went well, after extensive repairs she left Melbourne for London loaded with wool and the second trip also to London again with wool.

The Loch Ard left Gravesend on March 1st 1878 with fiftyone passengers and crew and with a general cargo on board, then valued at more than £53,000. The voyage out was uneventful, the weather apart from one gale being moderate. Captain Gibb was a very competent seaman although this was his first trip as captain in the Loch Ard. In retrospect the one ominous sign was that the ship experienced trouble with the compasses, probably due to the iron in the ship. A major problem occurred on May 28th, and then because of foggy cloudy weather, observations made just after this now most certainly appear unreliable.

So on the evening of May 30th the ship was driving before a freshening wind straight at one of the most fearsome coastlines in the whole world. Captain Gibb obviously worried, did not attend a farewell party given by the passengers but remained on deck. Because of the freshening wind sail was taken in during the night and then at 3am with the Loch Ard heading due north through a thick haze, breakers were heard and high rugged cliffs appeared, spearing out of the mist.

The captain attempted to hoist more sail, to enable the ship to change course, but was by this time into the white water. They attempted to swing onto the port tack, that is turn left, which they did. Once they slipped the anchor cables they gathered way and were in fact about to sail out of trouble, and had the ship been carrying more sail at the time of crisis they would have probably made it. Unfortunately just when it seemed that Capt. Gibb had saved his ship, she struck a ledge on her starboard side

and was immediately doomed. She was so close to the perpendicular cliffs of the Island that as she rolled her masts gouged rocks from the cliff face and passengers and crew on deck were showered with rocks, spars and pieces of rigging.

The port lifeboat was launched, but before anything could be done the Loch Ard sank capsizing it. Tom Pearce one of two survivors was trapped beneath the boat for a while, and stayed with it until it drifted into the Gorge opposite the spot where the ship had struck. He also rescued Eva Carmichael from the Gorge. These two were the only survivors, all that was left of the unlucky fifty-one that had boarded her at Gravesend. Eva Carmichael herself lost six of her family when the ship went down. Wreckage piled eight feet high covered the sandy beach of the Gorge to mark the last resting place of the unlucky Loch Ard.

BRIAN LYNCH

DOLPHINS USED TO 'NULLIFY VIET FROGMEN'

WASHINGTON, December 4 - The American Navy has been training dolphins as an underwater commando and reconnaissance force, according to a marine scientist who has "defected" from the Navy's ocean laboratory programme Sealab.

Michael Greenwood, former director of Sealab III, recently told a closed meeting of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities that navy-trained dolphins, used to protect Cam Ranh Bay during the Vietnam war, had "nullified" 60 Vietnamese frogmen and also accidentally killed two Americans.

Housed in a pontoon boat at the entrance of Cam Ranh, the dolphins used their built-in sonar to detect and intercept Vietnamese frogmen deployed to blow up American ships.

They impaled detected enemy demolition divers on hypodermic needles connected to powerful CO2 cartridges - exploding the frogmen from within.

During the period the dolphin patrol was on active service there were no successful enemy demolition attacks on American ships in the bay.

But two Americans, one a merchant seaman who fell overboard, and the other an experienced underwater swimmer who strayed into protected

water were also impaled and killed,

According to Greenwood's testimony, the dolphins were also used to retrieve advanced mines from the Chinese coast and to locate a nuclear warhead accidentally dropped from a B-52 bomber off Puerto Rico.

Greenwood claims that dolphin teams are held in readiness at bases in Florida and California and at Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii, where much of the Pentagon's sea mammal training programme is conducted.

Greenwood, who describes himself as a scientist dissident, says he defected from the programme after an admiral had ordered the Hawaiian training team to "immediately produce a system capable of delivering dolphins and deep-diving killer whales to open ocean sites inside submarines, surface ships and aircraft to locate and tag Russian submarines".

He has petitioned President Carter to end what he claims is the military abuse of sea mammals.

He claims the Defence Department and the American intelligence community have a near-monopoly on scientific research into mammal behaviour which could be used to "revolutionise much current thinking in learning and behavioral theory".

Submitted by - A. WHITELEY

FUN RUN 78

Sunday 19th March began coolly enough, not a bad day to run nine miles, that is if you are mad enough to want to run nine miles any day. When we met at the start to the run in Albert Road, just behind the Badminton Centre at Albert Park, there were ten of us, well to be truthful nine and a half, John Smibert was sleep-running which is one step above sleep walking, which is what he had been doing when we found him wandering in North Road. Our runners assembled therefore at the start were as follows - Barry Truscott, Tony Tipping, John Goulding, Jay Cody, John Marshall, Paul Tipping, Jimmy Elliot, Norm Elliot, John Smibert and myself. Ten in all, which was an excellent turn out and most certainly shows that at least our club divers are fit. We were also ably assisted by our trainers and coaching teams, headed as always by Justin Liddy and this year in his own right and his own car Pat Reynolds. There were of course our cheer squads assembled at the finish in Elwood

Park, which just goes to show how organised we were.

Now to the run itself. As we moved down towards the start we saw that numbers across some of the chests were well into the 6000's which is a lot of people to get mixed up with in a narrow street in a mass start. Bazza and I were going to run together and it rather looked as if Tony had shrugged off all his mysterious ailments of a week or two ago and once again intended to tuck himself in behind us, the swine. Promptly at nine o'clock Brian Dixon fired the starting gun and all hell broke loose, how about wall to wall and floor to ceiling runners. We were elbowing our way through people for miles. The course itself was once around Albert Park Lake and then out into Kerford Road. All the way around the Lake there were a lot of runners, however once down Kerford Road they began to thin out. About St. Kilda Marina, Bionic Bazza began to really stretch out literally towing me and my faithful shadow Tony along with him. We began passing all those who had belted past us in the early stages and now I suppose for us the race was on. Around the Elwood Bowling Club Bazza's bionics felt a bit sick, but we were still all together as we entered Head Street, still about half a mile to go and Tony still behind me, now about twenty yards to go and he was still behind and then as so often in the past he slipped by and home by two seconds, with Bazza just six seconds away and I reckon that after almost nine miles that wasn't bad. To sweeten the bitter pill, as I crossed from the timing table to get my certificate a coca-cola representative gave me for my valiant effort a large coco-cola emblazoned sports bag, so I got a prize after all.

Meanwhile back in the run, as we got our breath back in between mouthfuls of Coke, we cheered in the rest of our team, John Smibert who may have taken a "wrong" turning somewhere along the line, little Pully, Jay, Johnny, Jimmy Elliot and Norm, John Marshall. In fact everyone who started, finished the course and no one appeared to be distressed and so congratulations to everyone who had the guts to turn out.

Afterwards we adjourned to Black Rock, where dive captain Tony aborted the dive on the grounds that no one really felt like getting into the water. So we ate our lunches and then went our separate ways.

Congratulations to Tony of course for being our first man home, we really thought we had you this time, never mind back to the drawing board and onwards to next year. Our thanks again to Justin and to

Pat and to our wives and sweethearts for putting up with us.

BRIAN LYNCH

OFFICIAL FUN RUN PLACINGS

Winners time - 42.20

7,236 starters

T. Tipping	349	55.12
B. Lynch	351	55.14
B. Truscott	355	55.20
P. Tipping	777	62.59
J. Elliot	922	65.28
N. Elliot	923	65.29
J. Cody	1069	67.59
J. Goulding	1306	72.31
J. Marshall	1509	76.40
J. Smibert	Not Recorded	

PROVISIONAL REPORT ON 1976 AUSTRALIAN DIVING DEATHS (Cont'd.)

Case SC 6/76 The initiating factor in the sequence of events that led to this fatality was the loss of a facemask, followed shortly by unplanned water entry. The diver, aged 55, had 30 years experience with scuba and was standing on a reef with his buddy after a dive. They both raised their masks while discussing whether to return to shore along a jetty or by swimming. The buddy was tired and getting low on air, underwater visibility was poor, but it was decided to swim. At this time a small wave broke over the reef and tumbled the victim off his feet. He surfaced a short distance away, minus his mask. After helping him back onto the reef the buddy attempted to recover the mask but the turbulent bubbling water off the reef made this impossible. He surfaced from his search to see the victim floundering on the reef so attempted to reach him again, and the next thing he remembers is seeing the other 10 yards away from him in the water. He inflated his own buoyancy vest and managed to rejoin his friend. He told him to drop his weight belt but this was not done and neither did the victim follow advice to inflate his vest, though he was seen to attempt to manipulate the vest's mouthpiece. He was still retaining the regulator in his mouth but seemed to be in some undefinable trouble. The buddy, despite trouble with cold hands,

managed to drop the victim's weight belt but was unable to manipulate the release of his own with one hand. The victim was passive at this time and the buddy started to tow him to shore but had to let go for a short time to use both hands to drop his own weight belt. During this period the victim drifted 10 yards away again and increasing waves prevented contact being re-established. A motor boat chanced by, saw the buddy's wave for help and picked him up. He was exhausted and completely out of air by this time. The boat was then directed to the victim, who was unconscious but retained the demand valve mouthpiece in his mouth: it is not certain whether he was still breathing. Resuscitation was started in the boat and continued on the beach but was unavailing.

Investigation later showed that the victim's tank still contained 1100 psi air but that the inflatable vest had an "expired" CO2 cartridge and the mouthpiece was not functioning. The vest was in poor condition and was described as being useless. The Autopsy showed drowning as the cause of death. The victim showed no real signs of consciousness after being seen to attempt to use his vest. The buddy had two years (45 sea dives) experience but felt remorse that he had not been more physically fit as to do more for his companion. The record shows that in fact his actions were highly commendable despite the unfortunate outcome.

Taken from Project Stickybeak by Dr. D. Walker.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

One of our diving highlights so far this year was the successful raising of the anchor from the wreck of the "Loch Ard". The weather at Port Campbell has rarely been kind to us, and the long weekend in March started with the usual poor diving conditions. However things did improve and for a change we were able to get in some diving.

Raising anchors is by no means a simple task. - For a start you need a lot of divers, a lot of air, someone who knows what they're doing and of course a crew bar.

No single person can take claim for raising the anchor, but by golly we had trouble tearing Max away from it after he had prized it loose with a crew bar.

Whilst we did separate Max from the anchor, he would not be parted from his trusty tool.

You see the crow bar was supplied by the local police, who had delivered it post haste, blue light and all after being radioed from the wreck site.

The next day they came looking for it, but our Max not wanting to let such a historic object go back to its usual use of breaking into locked cars and houses, bargained with the boys in blue and bought it from them. Two smiling policemen drove away.

Then of course there was Paul Sier, who strangely enough found his name appearing in Rosemary William's article on the incident in the Herald. One of those occasions where its handy to have a wife who uses her maiden name in her work.

Members of the V.S.A.G. who maybe feeling the squeeze on their pockets are Pete Oakley and Paul Sier. It seems that both their wives, Clara and Rosemary have just given up their jobs to have babies.

Not so with Dave (Shylock) Moore. Little Pattie is still being sent to work, and we hear that a taxi picks her up and drives her home. After the fares are paid for, Dave reckons he's \$10 ahead each week.

There weren't too many smiling faces at the end of the 13 kilometre Fun Run. According to the official placings Tony ran in at position number 349. Just 2 places and 2 seconds ahead of the veteran Lynchy. As no doubt you all know there was great rivalry between these two and our Tone can always find a new way of saying the same old thing. His latest is "at least I was in the first 350, that's more than Lynchy can say". Just 8 seconds behind Tone was Bazza, who's cheering little daughter was telling everyone that her dad had a bionic leg.

Justin and Pat Reynolds were again in attendance as trainers, drivers and revivers and offered stimulating comments as the runners passed them on their way to Elwood.

As in previous years, this column has awarded certain declarations upon people for their activities at the annual Easter pilgrimage to Wilsons Prom.

The Most Worthwhile Act must go to Karl Jironc who went a long way out of his journey to bring down the compressor before heading off

to Sydney to attend to a family matter.

Well done Karl, that's real Club Spirit.

The Superman Award Not since the great Robbie won this coveted prize some years ago has there been a member who can truly claim to represent such virile tenacity. However a budding prospect is little Freddy who takes out the award for this year. - Keep it up Fred!

The Slowest Moving Creature in Camp Award Undoubtedly this must be given to Tony Tip - it took him 3 days to wash the dishes.

The Fastest Moving Creature in Camp Award For the first time this award is made and it goes to Johnny G. Although he missed the 40 kilometre walk to the lighthouse, he had the RUNS all day.

The Cuddly Couple Award A bit of toss up on this one, but Marie and Bazza win by a short margin. The judges' decision was swayed by Bazza's comment "-at least I've got the scone on the board."

The Charm Award Goes to Cindy, who used great diplomatic restraint to get rid of the rambling Tipping late on Sunday night.

The Preseverence Award Goes to Brian Baldock who spent half the weekend fabricating a cray snare, and then had his dive cut short by sinus trouble.

I. WALKER

(The 7236 Fastest Runner in Melbourne)