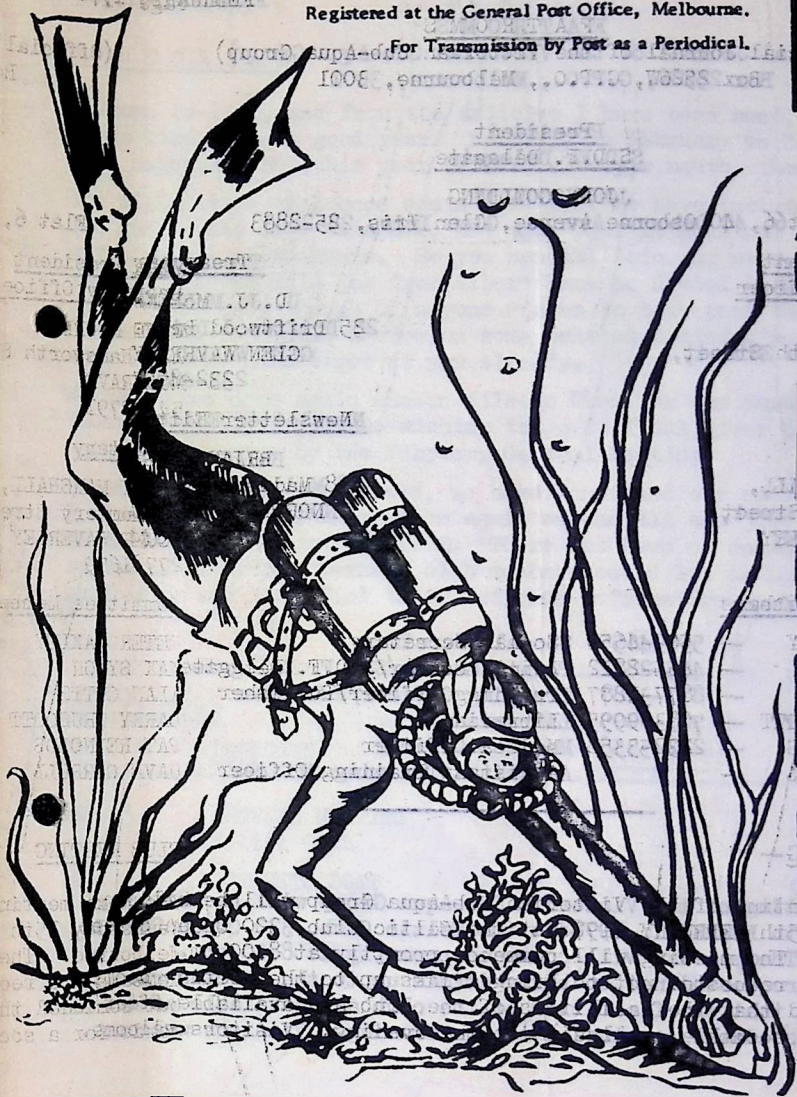


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FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS
(Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
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DAVE CARROLL	-		Assistant Training Officer

CLUB MEETING -

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 15th FEBRUARY, 1978 at the Celtic Club, 320 Queen Street, Melbourne. The meeting will commence promptly at 8.00 pm. 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.

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CLUB MEETING -

EDITORIAL

Welcome to 1978, and from the articles I have been sent, it looks like being a good year. Normally in February we have a lean magazine, but this year we have a bumper month, thank you.

You will notice that once again this year we have included the Fun Run on the dive calendar, and this year it does not clash with any of our long weekends. So you can all join our star athlete Tony on a seven mile jog from Albert Park to Elwood Lifesaving Club. Seriously though if anyone wishes to take part they can contact Tony who will advise on some belated training methods, that is if he hasn't got at you already.

We have also once again chosen Wilsons Prom for our Easter Vacation spot. All those wishing to go to Tidal River please let us have your name by the February General Meeting.

To end on a more sombre note, we have continued our excerpts from Project Stickybeak, where once again we can all see just how simple it is to drown yourself. There has been no comment on these series of articles, perhaps club members could let us know as to whether or not they find these articles informative or not.

ED.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
FEB.15	GENERAL MEETING Celtic Club	8 PM		
FEB.19	SORRENTO BOAT RAMP	9.30AM	B.Truscott 783-9095	Snapper Reef
FEB.26	SORRENTO BOAT RAMP	10 AM	D.Moore 547-2791	Sierra Nevada
MAR. 5	SORRENTO BOAT RAMP	8.30AM	P.Reynolds 232-5358	The Wall

DIVE CALENDAR (Cont'd.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
MAR.11,12 13	PORT CAMPBELL <u>OR WILSONS PROM</u>		J.Goulding 25-2883	
MAR.19	THE FUN RUN - Followed by a dive or ski at Half Moon Bay		T.Tipping 20-6848(Wk) 20-7133	Details for this in the Age
EASTER	WILSONS PROM			Names for this trip to be in by February General Meeting

REMEMBER

That you must ring the dive captain the night before a dive, so that the dive can be planned beforehand, and to make you aware of any change of arrangements. You could miss out on the dive by not following this simple procedure.

BLUE WATER DIVING VICTORIAN STYLE

If you can cast your minds back about three months, I will unfold a tale for you about a dive undertaken in late November which was really something. Around eleven o'clock on Sunday 27th November, six boats left Flinders, bound for the wreck of the George Kermodé, aboard were sixteen divers. The day itself was uninspiring, except for the one crucial element missing, the wind. We motored straight out heading for the gap between the Knobbies and Seal Island, the sea was a little choppy there; but once through, we ploughed on towards Pyramid Rock. Stopping only to wait for Dave, Barry and John who checked out the Speke, so that we could drop in on the way back, we arrived at the wreck site.

After some considerable hesitation, with Tony doing a lot of reconnaissance work, we finally discovered that Paul and Rob were actually anchored right over the spot, some half mile away from us.

For once the old sea dogs Max & Bazza had landed in the wrong wave trough. Once we arrived at the right location, it only took us about five minutes to gear up and fall over the side, into the sort of clear water Neptune usually reserves for Jacques Cousteau to make his films in.

Diving with Pete Smith I just simply fell down the anchor line, placing the anchor securely under a convenient steel plate, I reclined on the sea bed 75 ft. down about 30 ft. above me Pete was slowly descending, whilst above him I could see the anchor line stretching up to the dark hull of the boat. Pete joined me on the sand and we swam slowly over to the huge mass of the Kermode, which was now acquiring a gently undulating mantle of sea vegetation. There were several small schools of fish on what was the seaward side. Swimming through an aperture we squeezed between the big buckets, and moved slowly along the bottom with the ships decking now poised above us. We investigated the boiler, and looked into the forward compartments, with our torches lighting up the rusting steel.

I had dived on the hulk, some five weeks after she had been sunk for the Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife 18 months ago. At that time she had seemed like an intruder somehow out of her element. Now as we swam around her I found that she was slowly blending with her new environment as I dived down to follow the ships side which lays alongside a ledge I disturbed several large Parrotfish, inside, safe behind "caves" of twisted pipes blue faces peered solemnly back along the beam of my torch. The weed too was now softening the straight man made lines of the vessels keel and sides and viewed from above, the old dredge looked just like the reef she was simulating.

Pete and I had been early into the water and now there were divers everywhere, and anyway it was time to head surfacewards. As we began our ascent we could watch other divers taking photographs 80 ft. away. We arrived on the surface about 50 feet from the boat, as we swam leisurely towards it, I looked back, along the length of the ship now 75 ft. below and about 45-50 ft. away columns of expelled air were slowly rising upwards through the dark blue of the water they looked like silver Christmas trees, and if I close my eyes now I can still see them etched firmly on my memory, beautiful! Then it was back into the boats, anchors up and off to the site of the Speke's last resting place.

The Speke's grave, has a headstone of metal which is all that remains of the bow. This sits firmly on the beach so it is easy to work out just where the rest of the bits are. For once there was no swell, and again visibility was excellent, and for those of us snorkelling, since the depth was only between 4 to 10 ft., we could watch everything going on below. We could see Bazza wrestling with another of his crayfish, much to Robs disgust, and certainly we were all able to swim along the lines of the wreck, and also see just how widely the sea had strewn the remains. The water was warm, and inviting but soon it was time to climb aboard the boats ready to head home.

The sea was a little choppy as we crossed towards Seal Rocks. Leaving the other boats visiting the seals, Pete and I headed into the sea mist which was blanketing Flinders. It was raining now, and the sea was flat, oily flat, we could have skiied home. Flinders finally materialised out of the mist and we were soon running up the beach. We pulled the boats out with no trouble except Dave Moore who got just a little bogged in the sand. It just remains for Paul and I to thank Diane and Pat for looking after three children and nearly a fourth in the car for over four hours with the rain beating down, whilst we were enjoying ourselves, thanks ladies.

Summing up, it was a tremendous days diving. Calm seas, excellent visibility, two wrecks visited and last but not least plenty of boats six in all. There follows a list of the boat owners and their respective crews.

J. Liddy & J. Goulding - C. Tillbrook, L. Canteri
 D. Henty-Wilson - T. Tipping, C. Jironc
 D. Moore - B. Truscott, J. Smibert
 R. Adamson - P. Tipping
 M. Synon - J. McKenzie
 P. Smith - B. Lynch

BEACHMASTER

JERVIS BAY 1978

When 16th January rolled around it was time to say "Happy Birthday Li Pully" and "Bye Bye Coffs Harbour", and then off to Sydney for a wild night with big Ray and on to good old Husky town on the white sandy shores of Jervis Bay. Just a few changes from last year; a new shower block

sealed roads for half the camp, the extensions to the Razzle Club completed (what a night, mate) and a few divots replaced at the Vincentia Golf Club!

The first dive was out to the northern tip off Bowen Island and was great - 80 foot visibility small fish everywhere and we even managed to hand feed a couple of moray eels by cracking open a sea urchin. I was quite happy just to swim around and look but Paul continued on the photography trail this time minus the useless Apollo Strobe (I hear its up for grabs and going pretty cheap - probably only needs a spray of CRC!)

Apart from North Solitary Island and the Wall to Wall Kingies dives, the next day out off the eastern side of Bowen Island must be as memorable a dive as we had this trip - Jay will remember the spot - 80 foot plus visibility and plenty of everything. On this occasion we took out Ian, a barrister who Paul knew in Melbourne; he'd talked his way into Lesley's diving gear then my boat for his first open water dive - how would you be in those conditions first up, even had him clearing his mask at 50 ft. with Kingies swimming around! Reckon I could have crunched him then and there but one bloody lawyer per club is enough!

The highlight of the dive was to get lost in a school of several thousand Trevally gently meandering their way down the coast followed by about 30 Snapper then three big Kingies, and I mean BIG! Apart from these there were the usual Silver Drummer, Red Marwong, Wrasse and Blue Groper just to mention a few.

By 21st January we decided it would be the last day out so first stop would be just outside Pt. Perpendicular - had the usual clear water and got sick of seeing the Kingies, Wobbies, Mowies and Bulls-eyes. On the way back to Husky Paul and I saved 1000 p.s.i. for the Docks to try and find those beautiful sponge and coral lined tunnels. Unfortunately there was another group of eight divers all ready to hit the water just going through their final F.A.U.I. briefing. Down went the pick and on went the gear - never seen Paully kit up so fast in his life! Over the side and down the rope where Paul went for his second breath (still on snorkel) at 40 feet - I've told him before you need that ping-pong ball for the second breath!

Anyhow we gunned it along the bottom and passed our friends just outside the opening of the tunnel at 60' and it was give way to

the right or else - besides they were still double checking each others gear! Into the tunnel and onto reserve, fish everywhere and over 100 foot visibility inside, maybe Paul even captured it all on high speed Ektachrome?

So that was Chapter 2 Holidays 77/78 - certainly my best yet with VSAG. Chapter 3 will be on the Night Diving but that will keep for some other time!

TONY TIPPING

WALL TO WALL AND FLOOR TO CEILING KINGIES

It wouldn't be too difficult to sit down and write 10 pages plus on a 32 day diving holiday, especially after chewing through over 20 tanks of compressed air, covering eight islands out off Coff's Harbour and Jervis Bay, having had visibility from 15 to in excess of 80 feet and having seen or photographed over 100 species of tropical and temperate fish. NO! Not me - I'll leave that to the experts. I'd rather attempt to describe the sheer exhilaration of being eclipsed by large schools of fish.

The Fishbook refers to "Kingies" as Yellowtail Kingfish or for marine biologists and Latin freaks simply Carangidae. They are a schoolfish, up to eight feet long and are generally found in open water and estuaries between the surface and 50 feet deep. They are an edible fish predominately silver in colour with blueish top and a yellow stripe and tail.

The first and most memorable of the two Kingies dives was on 4th January at South Solitary Island. (For the benefit of Max and Val Marsh and other locals I'll refer to South Solitary Island as "The Lighthouse".) This particular day Johnny, Paul and the rest of the gang were quite happy just to dive out from the gantry among coral and small tropical fish with visibility 40 feet (way below average). Unfortunately there was one hell of a current sweeping the North East tip of the island but nevertheless Bazza and myself (both renowned fitness fanatics) decided to swim the 400 metres into it anyhow digging in knives and hanging on to the rocks all the way. Besides they wouldn't know what a current was in N.S.W.!

As we approached the corner the visibility dropped to 15 feet we first saw one then two Kingies until further on in 40 feet of water

they suddenly appeared EVERYWHERE! There must have been hundreds - some within an arms length of us; so for what seemed like hours it was HANG IN THERE and be blown out of our heads by such an ecstatic sight - no matter which way you turned below or above there was nothing to see but Kingies, varying from 5 to 40 lbs. or from 18 to 48 inches in length.

While swimming back to the boat two things hit me - firstly Max Marsh had been right all along and secondly what a fool I was - no camera! Just as well old Bazza was with me - he doesn't have the reputation I have for distorting the truth!

The next time I hit a school of Kingies at the Lighthouse was 15th January after a rough trip out following Max's new Seafarer. Similar conditions around the point but this time I took the old Nikonos and a new buddy, Lindy Bremner, a young local dolly who combines being a sweet smiling face at the Tourist Centre with Marine biology at New England Uni plus the odd can or two of KB; she also scrubs up better than Bazza in a wet suit. Now Lindy is one of those dive study types who prop and watch a sea urchin for 30 minutes so you can imagine how sore she was at the idea of storming off into a current to see a couple of big fish.

Once again it was worth it - we hit a school of 40 Kingies and I even managed to snap off a few shots close in!

(Title copyright B. Truscott 1978 - used with permission)

T. TIPPING

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

Case SC 4/76 The victim was a 20 year old diver with two years experience his buddy one year. Both had taken courses and obtained C-card certification, in different States, about a year previous to this dive. As the buddy had only dived 4-5 times in total he accepted that his friend had more experience and would be likely to use less air on the dive. For this reason the friend exchanged his hired tank for his buddy's equipment. There were no contents gauges on the tanks but both had been recently filled. The buddy diver alone had a buoyancy vest, this being purchased the day before the fatal outing. At the dive site, an off-shore reef connected to the beach by a jetty, they debated the suitability of the sea conditions but the victim thought that despite the cold windy conditions and a choppy sea it was possible to dive successfully.

He was not experienced in the local conditions and obtained no local advice, and being motivated to some degree by the \$13 he had outlaid to hire the tank and regulator was unwilling to accept a no-dive decision.

They swam out underwater after a short delay to correct the buddy's weighting, keeping close together. After a period at the reef they decided to return to the jetty steps, again underwater. However the buddy soon became low on air, pulled his reserve, surfacing after signalling his intention. The two then decided to surface swim the remaining distance together, the victim to be the leader. The buddy inflated his vest and as a natural matter of convenience swam on his back as he followed, thus inevitably losing sight of the other. He became aware of shouts from people on the jetty but could not discern what was being said, being distracted in part by stomach and leg cramps, exhaustion and increasing waves.

Witnesses on the jetty saw the victim wave as if for help and a diving instructor, who was just concluding a lesson with two pupils at the jetty steps, responded by dropping his tank (to increase his surface swimming speed) and going to offer assistance. However the victim was no longer visible on the surface when he reached the spot so he returned to don his scuba tank and then started an underwater search. The victim was found lying on the seabed in about 5m of water. The weight belt and tank were easily released and the body recovered. The period of submergence was over 15 minutes so resuscitation attempts failed. The equipment was later recovered and tested. Apart from being empty of air, there was no adverse comment on the equipment.

Taken from Project Stickybeak by Dr. D. Walker

NORTH SOLITARY ISLAND

North Solitary Island is the largest of the Solitary Group and the most distant from Coff's Harbour. It also has the reputation for being the best location to view the beautiful types of tropical fish.

Our first trip to the North Island was planned for the 3rd January and with the aid of Ian's alarm clock (very wise move Ian), a 5.00 am start was made. By 6 o'clock we had breakfasted, hitched up boats and were on our way north to Arrawarra some 30km along the Pacific Highway. A wide and hard packed sand beach facilitated

an easy beach launching, and we were on our way 30km out into the Pacific to North Solitary Island, then just barely visible in the early morning mist.

On arrival at North we were delighted at the clarity of the water. It was certainly cleaner than the inner islands and we wasted no time in finding a safe anchorage on the Eastern side of the island and getting into it.

The buddies were Barry and John Smibert, Tony Tipping and Pete Smith and Paul Tipping with myself. Paul had hurt his hand the previous evening and was hoping mad that he was unable to use his camera.

The first part of our dive was around the anenome beds and we were intrigued by the guarded anenome fish (clown fish) who swim in and around the anenome somehow quite immune to the deadly tentacles of the anenome. These little fish and their companions the white spot pullars are only found in tropical waters, and so assured us that this was really a tropical paradise. Moving on to view the underwater topography we came across, canyons, caves, drop offs, cliffs - the lot. And all the while many coloured fish came inquisitively to view the visitors from the South.

One of the highlights was to see what we thought was the deadly stone fish; however after discussion with the local dive shop proprietor, Max Marsh, this fish may have been a red rock cod. Either way however, it was an ugly little character and blended in extremely well with its surroundings. After seeing this fish, we were careful where we put our hands.

Our return to land was full of chatter about the dive and on the way we stopped at North West Solitary Island for a snorkel. This island is only 8km from Arrawarra and the absence of fish around the island would suggest of over fishing. Lets hope people use their head and not their guns when they go to the outer islands.

The visibility at North Solitary was around 60-70 feet and so 2 days later we returned. Unfortunately this time a light head cold caused a painful ear squeeze and after 5 minutes I had to return to the boat, leaving my buddy Barry and the others to enjoy another great dive at North Solitary Island.

JOHN GOULDING

RUMOURS TO BE QUASSED ON COMINGS & GOINGS AT COFFS

- * That Tony Tipping didn't get to see eye to eye with the local lasses.
- * That John & Carey Marshall only went along for the ride.
- * That Dave Moore, after constantly complaining of poor visibility is planning to visit an optician.
- * That Paul lost a lot of weight, and he wasn't on a diet.
- * That Dave Henty-Wilson can't remember where he puts things.
- * That Maree's allergy was diagnosed as someone rather than something.
- * That Bazza has decided to give up walking and start running.

J. ELLIOT

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Welcome to 1978 with more lies per line, slang per sentence and paradoxes per paragraph than perhaps any other regular feature in a monthly newsletter, either above water or below.

Having had a break over January we are again afresh to commence the 1978 season with some newsy bits of information to convince you that the art of story telling still survives.

Undoubtedly one of the diving highlights of the 1977 diving year were the magnificent conditions on the 27th November for our dives on the wrecks of the "George Kermode" and "Speke". Both these wrecks lie on the south coast of Phillip Island. The George Kermode being quite new in that it was laid to rest there in 1976 and the "Speke" being a victim of Victoria's treacherous coastline during the turn of the century.

I'm blown if I know why it took Paul Tipping so long to find the Kermode because the visibility was just so good you could view it clearly from the surface. The 100 foot visibility was excellent for this part of the coastline and provided us with a good opportunity to explore inside and out of this old dredge.

The last water weekend activity scheduled for the year was a water skiing weekend at Eildon. After a slow start on the Saturday

things got well under way for the Sunday visitors. Some new styles were demonstrated and a fun time was had by all. Especially the cocky who ate someone's tent pole.

Christmas at the Celtic Club was a quiet affair, with most preferring to return to the previous years venue at the Yarra Bank. Congratulations to Trevor West on winning the much sought after Poseidon Regulator. Trev, recently joined the Police Force and doesn't get a great deal of time to dive these days, nevertheless though, he's going to look the part.

For 12 months we have been earbashed by the Tippings about fantastic Coffs Harbour, so what better way to find out about this incredible place where bananas grow to 6 feet and the people are the friendliest on earth, than to go there.

Murgatroyd and I had travelled to Jervis Bay last year, so were familiar as to where New South Wales was. After a great deal of coaxing Murgy's supercharged Ford rumbled into Coffs in the middle of a power blackout, and not a soul to be seen anywhere. (It appears that they have hotels there too!)

On enquiring from a dark silhouette-like figure lurching up the footpath, as to whereabouts of the caravan park, I was greeted with "Sure thing Nick" in the unmistakable tones of Paul Tipping, who by now along with his brother and Lesley classed themselves as locals, and knew all the in-spots in town.

Over the next few days, Tiger Bolt 3, Charlie Tango and Gutter Rat arrived complete with their C.B.'s. So also did the Henty-Wilsons, the Marshalls and the Moores. Jimmy Elliot and his chauffeur, Ian, were also encamped and once again the V.S.A.G. summer headquarters began to take shape. We had a variety of dive venues to choose from, each offering something different, along this very pretty coast. The Solitary Islands mark the beginning of the tropical waters, and as such the warm water added greatly to our comfort. So much so that one member claimed it reminded him of pea soup. Did you mean the warmth or the visibility Dave? Living up to his reputation for being a late arriver, John Smibert, turned up after a few days, and became a most welcome member with his air conditioned car.

In Victoria we are used to fair visibility only, with some exceptional days of good visibility. On the Solitary Islands, the vis. ranged from great to very poor, but the diving was always good. For

even on the days of poor visibility there were schools of kingfish, big groper and beautiful little tropical fish to admire, and all the time, this beautiful warm water.

When not diving, or talking about diving, or reading about diving there was plenty to do. Golf, squash, horseriding, sightseeing, eating bananas, searching around for Australian beer, visiting the porpoise pool, eating more bananas, surfing, finding Australian beer, washing boats and diving gear, playing the pokies, eating bananas and of course drinking Aussie beer.

This year we were most sophisticated having a radio operations centre manned by Tiger Bolt 3 and ship to shore contact with Pete's C.B. Good old Gutter Rat was checking out all the maidens looking for an "eyeball". Bazza had installed an elaborate set in his car for the three terrors, now known as Tiger Bolt 3, Charlie Tango and Sweet Sam, however it was Dave Moore who got most enjoyment out of this modern day crystal set. Next year Dave we'll teach you how to push the button and speak through it.

Once again the V.S.A.G. Golf Team swung into action, and this year besides the usuals we also had a ladies team. Marie, Leslie and Maree showed some style, not to mention some leg as well. I must say that Bazza is looking quite worried about the whole thing. It seems that Marie cleans him up at squash, so if she shows the same skill at golf, Baz will just have to take up marbles.

Down the coast at Eden Jay Cody, Ken Cellec, Alan Whitely, Rob Adamson and Bruce Soulsby were doing some diving inbetween other forms of pleasant recreation. We hear that one of their exploits was to undertake a submerged beach landing in Ken's boat. Nice try fellows, but the Royal Australian Navy wants you to improve the technique before they use it for future commando like assaults.

Well it looks as if diving has finally hit the big time as a promotional aid. Appearing in the Herald recently has been a half page advertisement showing Cyril the diver, (alias Graham Kennedy in a frogmans suit) giving us all the message to "Take the plunge and dive into a packet of MILLS SUPER WILD fags." Cyril's advice to divers is "Take the Plunge and you'll keep your head above water" - don't know how he does it, but it sure protects his hair do.

NICK A. TEEN

FEBRUARY, 1978

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Club Meeting

of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group at the Celtic Club, 320 Queen Street, 19th FEBRUARY, 1978 at the Celtic Club will commence promptly at 8.00 pm. Visitors are requested not to bring drinks up to the meeting room, are requested not to bring the facilities of the club are available. It is hoped that the facilities of the Celtic Club will be a pleasant and sociable conclusion to the evening. Visitors welcome. A sociable conclusion to the evening.