

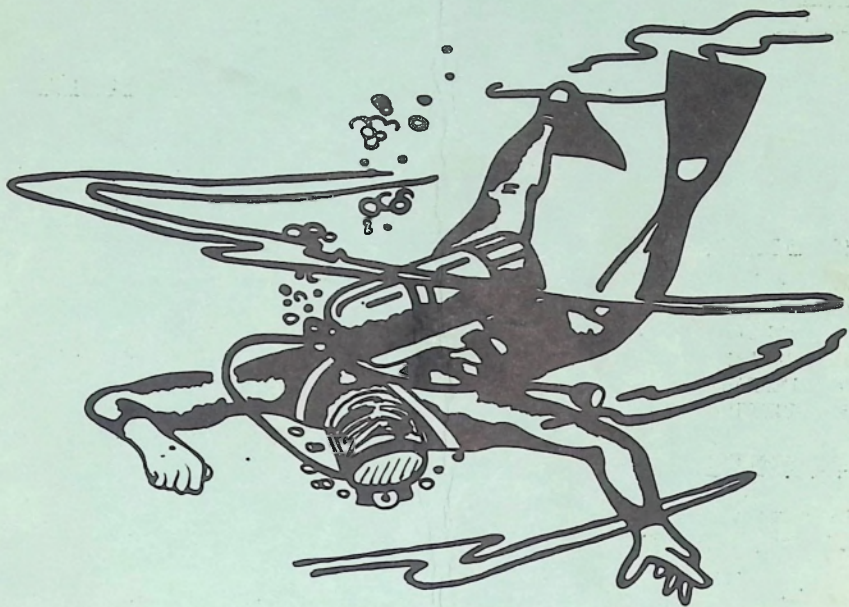
FEB 79
FATHOMS

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SAFETY IN DIVING

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VSAAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

F A T H O M S
 (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 21ST FEBRUARY, 1979 at 8pm at the Collingwood Football Club, Lullie Street, Abbotsford in the 2nd floor Function Room. Bar facilities are available to VSAG members prior to, and after the General Meeting and meals are served from 6pm until about 9pm. A list of VSAG members will be provided to the Football Club thereby eliminating the requirement to sign the visitors book at the entrance. Visitors welcome!

FOREWORD

Welcome to 1979. Its back to work for most of us, and back into our Victorian diving scene. As you will see from the articles, the club had an enjoyable Christmas at Jervis Bay with some good dives logged, and apparently some good golf shots played too. You will see too from the dive calendar that the dreaded run for fun is upon us again with Tony determined once again to reach the finishing line ahead of the rest of us, will he be successful this time? As Bazza was saying to me only the other day "No".

Before Christmas we had our Pinnacles dive in conjunction with the Torquay Club. As it turned out it was a successful day, although a couple of our stars were a little late in arriving due to the Westernport wind. We can't complain I suppose, the Cowes ferry sank in the same area, but then they didn't have the brothers Tipping to tow them to safety.

Also this year we hope to have our belated Deal Island trip, which we have scheduled for the March long weekend, let us hope this time the weather is kind to us. Finally I would like to thank all our contributors in 1978 and look forward to receiving more interesting copy this year. Remember that the Jay Cody prize for literature could be yours for the asking, or rather writing this year, so like the slogan says - Be in it.

ED.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
FEB. 24/25	SPORTS EXPO - EXHIBITION BLDGS.		F.Ferrante 211-0708	
FEB. 25	SORRENTO	10 AM	B.Truscott 783-9095	Channel Run Fort Area
MAR.10/11 12	DEAL ISLAND		J.Goulding 25-2883	
MAR. 18	FUN RUN		T.Tipping 24-7133	

DIVE CALENDAR (Cont'd.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
MAR. 21	COLLINGWOOD Football Club	8 PM		General Meeting
MAR. 24	EILDON TRIP		P.Reynolds 232-5358	Water Skiing

This will be a weekend trip. For those wishing to spend the whole weekend, the camp site will be Frazer National Park.

MAR. 25 On Sunday March 25, the weekend will culminate with our tube trip. Dive Capt. Dave Moore 547-2791

The meeting place for the tube trip will be the Thornton Pub at around 9.30am.

Will all those people interested in the Tasmanian Christmas trip, please indicate numbers at the February Meeting please.

PINNACLES 2/12/78

Our first Saturday dive for a very long while, was to be our reciprocal dive for the Torquay Club's super submarine day. If you can cast your minds back to before Christmas, in 1978 even, you may recall, those of you who went along that I as dive captain failed to appear on time. Due to a chain of events which I will not dwell on now, except to say that if you ever try walking across the mud somewhere between French Island and Phillip Island, make sure that you have a boat to hang on to, and also make sure that Dave Moore gets up half an hour earlier.

Due to the fact that Tony, Paully and I ran aground a couple of times coming across from Stony Point, we did miss the departure of Stan Watts, however due to the good fortune of having Johnny drive to San Remo, he took charge of the large vessel, whilst we when finally arriving at the dive site, went in from our small boats. Actually when we did begin our dives, Stan assisted us by retrieving his buoy which had come adrift from the Pinnacles, took us aboard

and dropped us over the Pinnacle for which Pete, Carol and I were very thankful. Visibility wasn't bad, we levelled off at 100 feet, swimming around the base of the rock formation, then we gradually ascended through shoals of small fish finally to swim up our own anchor line to the surface.

Upon regaining the boats we followed Stan into the inshore waters where we snorkelled in clear clean water, but not much fish life apparent here. Then it was time to head back to San Remo. Here we had lunch and bade farewell to the Torquay Club, before attempting our return trip across Westernport. This time we needn't have worried, despite Tony's earlier predictions about the sea getting up, and vague rumblings about new wrecks to dive on, the sea was flat and a swift trip home was enjoyed by all, even Paully stopped grumbling.

B. LYNCH

UNDERWATER SURVEY PLAN

An underwater survey at Williamstown is the first specific project of the Maritime Archeology Association of Victoria.

The recently formed association, whose members include scuba divers, plan to study the sea bed in waters out from land, roughly between the Timeball Tower and Williamstown Oval.

A member, Mr. John McKenzie, said this week that settlers were known to have come ashore in this area from the very early days, wading to the water's edge from boats.

"One piece of crockery found in the area dates back to the 1830's," he said. It is believed that old-style clay pipes and crockery were dropped as people made for the shore.

"The Agnes is something else we will be checking - a 60ft. schooner which used to run from Geelong to the glass works at Spotswood. She went down in the early 1920's and lies somewhere off Williamstown."

The association welcomed interested divers and non-divers. It adopted a draft constitution in North Melbourne Football Club Social Club on October 30.

Submitted by - JOHN MCKENZIE

TIP'S TIT-BITS

It wasn't until Sunday 21st January that we all realised we were back in Victoria, dive-wise, anyhow. The weather was great all week - it always is the week you get back to work isn't it - then sure enough it poured all day Saturday so the Sunday dive was in doubt. Out to the Heads where the swells were big and the sea was choppy so back to Quarantine for the usual boring old channel run: luckily a few of us managed to score a few old bottles - big deal!

Jervis Bay - the sportsman's paradise: VSAG lead the way at cards, pool, fishing, golf, squash, tennis, snorkelling, scuba diving, water skiing, elbow bending, love making, running (not necessarily in that order), poker machines, tent erecting.....

The most colourful event had to be the golf tournament at Vincentia - eighteen players teed off for eighteen holes and it was a toss off, I mean a toss up as to which was the most colourful highlight - was it Minnie's panties or Paully's lingo!!

Mr. Popularity on the tennis court Andy Benson along with his honey of a partner Marie Truscott carved up the asphalt under lights at Husky - in fact Andy went on to prove amidst the New Year's Eve revelling that not all his punches are packed on the centre court!

Old Bazza proved he can still pull it off at the right time - 'twas 11.58 on New Year's Eve and up came a \$50 jackpot on Bazza's One Armed Bandit - in fact between them Marie and Bazza pulled half a dozen jackpots! Unfortunately, he was sucked into shouting the club for Tequila Sunrises and came out \$20 down!

The love-making episodes have had to be censored, I don't know why no one had anything to brag about! For example Paully and Lesley were rowing from Christmas Eve, Johnny was at Husky whilst Minnie was in Sydney, Fred and Wendy took a caravan but by day 2 up went the annex, Ace got sprung so he announced his engagement (sorry Jack), Davo and Dave actually had a cold shower (between them?) and TTB's sub junior apprentice copy boy finished with a dismal 5 out of 15!

All in all it was a fun time - see you at Truk April/May 1980 but hurry we've got five out of ten already!

SUMMER AT JERVIS BAY

I recall reading in Fathoms about July 1976 that the Christmas trip for the coming summer would be to "Huskisson - on the shores of beautiful Jervis Bay".

For a long time Jervis Bay had been hailed as a "mecca for divers" but to my knowledge only one of our diving members at that time - Pete Oakley, had dived there.

Suffice to say, the 1976 trip provided the magnificent diving we had heard about, so it was with even greater expectations that the V.S.A.G. again settled into the beach side caravan park at Huskisson on Boxing Day 1978.

It was only this assurance of better things to come that prevented our hopes from being dashed on the evening of Boxing Day when a torrential rain storm hit the camp and swept away almost everything in its path.

Tony, Paul, Fred, John, Alan and Carl valiantly dug ditches in an endeavour to channel away the gushing torrents. However as quick as the rain came, it stopped but left us with a network of canals that were to become difficult and often cursed nighttime hazards during the ensuing evenings spent around camp.

On Wednesday 27th we had our first dive at the area known as the "Docks". Here, the giant boulder strewn bottom and vast number of caves are home for hundreds of species of fish, that swim in huge schools, completely surrounding the divers. The following day we dived the area near the surface torpedo tubes. These tubes are positioned on a rock platform hacked into the cliff face, and were placed there to guard the entrance of the bay. They are of course long since rendered harmless, but the remains of war weapons can be found in the area, and remind one of the ravages of man even in a place with such a peaceful setting as Jervis Bay.

In this area we spotted Kingfish, giant cuttlefish and there were one or two rumours about sharks. This day also saw the first of many rounds of golf at the Vincentia Golf Club, with Tony, Paul, Jay and Alan claiming to qualify for the A team after the first 9 holes.

Friday the 29th December, saw us getting in among the white water with a shore dive on the wreck of the S.S. Merimbula sunk on Whale

Point in 1928. The Merimbula is still a very large wreck and provided us with a most interesting dive.

By this time we had met up with the Port Hacking Divers from Sydney and the Valley divers from Melbourne, the latter of whom joined us on a few boat dives. One of these was to the north of Bowen Island on Saturday 30th December.

The last dive for the year was on Sunday 31st December, at an area known as Stony Creek, south of Jervis Bay. The ocean dives around J.B. offer great prospects for clear blue water diving. The stark nakedness of the rocks and abundant fish like make this area completely different to the underwater environment of the Bass Strait water to which we are more accustomed.

New Year's Eve just wouldn't be the same without the Tequila, and Barry's generosity after winning one of his and Marie's several jackpots ensured that 1979 started on a high note.

Needless to say the only sporting activity undertaken New Year's Day, was a suprisingly keen tennis tournament organised by Andrew and Caroline. It seemed that Barry's luck was still running high, for in partnership with Caroline he won the place as top seed in the tennis. To give credit where it was due, Alan, Andrew and Marie were stiff competition.

We had obtained information from local diver and compressor owner, John Gray about the whereabouts of the wreck of the "Walter James Hood" and a trip to Bendalong Point was planned. After a 3 hour fruitless search we abandoned the attempt, only to find out later that we were no more than 20 metres from a rocky gutter in which the ship remains lie.

A dive on the north side of Point Perpendicular on the 4th January was to be our deepest dive for the trip. Here the famed "Jervis Bay fault line" passes very close to the headland, and in rather a stiff current, we had a tremendous dive in an area similar in some respects to our Pinnacles off Phillip Island. Because of the depth a torch is needed to get the best visibility of the prolific coral and sponges growing on the steep walls and gullies in this area.

The last Jervis Bay dive was again near the "docks" and a combination of brilliant sunshine and clear water gave us a good opportunity to explore the long underwater chasms that penetrate the cliffs on this part of the coastline.

As diving was completed by lunch time on most days, the afternoons saw regular visits by V.S.A.G. members to the local tennis courts and Vincentia Golf Club. The slightly greater rivalry in the golf prompted me to keep a score sheet on some of the players, and so that there can be no doubt as to who hit what, the average nine hole scores are published here:-

	Average	50	After*	6	rounds
Paul Tipping	"	51	"	7	"
Tony Tipping	"	53	"	2	"
Alan Whitely	"	54	"	5	"
Jay Cody	"	55	"	3	"
Barry Truscott	"	56	"	7	"
Maree James	"	57	"	6	"
Fred Ferrante	"	58	"	8	"
John Goulding	"	68	"	2	"
Trish Cody	"		"		

(This list is incomplete both as to total golfers and total numbers of games played.)

You might think that with all this activity there would not be much time remaining for squash, running, swimming, fishing, horse riding, wining and dining and of course the occasional tinnie.

Such was summer at Jervis Bay.

JOHN GOULDING

EXTRA SENSORY SENSES

This article could well be classified under Marine Bio-Psychology as it deals with the "Love life of the Fiddle Crab" and his share of 'fiddling' is quite appreciable as you will see.

The day of the fiddle crab is also regulated strictly by the clock. In tropical or sub-tropical coast waters, when the silt emerges from the water at ebb tide these little creatures crawl out of their holes by the thousands, and a curious ceremonial takes place on the stretches of silt and sand glimmering in the heat.

As witnessed during research, it begins with the sorting of the freshly deposited silt into its edible and non-edible components. The females with two eating claws shovel the silt, which is permeated with organic sediment, to their outer chewing apparatus where a rinsing process takes place similar to that used by man in

mining operations to separate ores of value from the rock. The organic residues of dirt and decomposition float up and are eaten, while the mass of indigestible material is formed into silt balls and discarded.

The males have a harder time. They have to shovel with a single eating claw, for the other has developed into an enormous fighting and signalling claw, which gives the animal a bellicose appearance but cannot be used for eating.

Ninety minutes after the tide has run out, in the midst of their busy feeding operation they are suddenly overcome by a state of nervous excitement. Practically every two seconds they raise their imposing snow white claw to attract a female. To impress the fair sex, after a mud meal, they polish this claw with their little eating claws until it shines.

When there is a great surplus of males, the females are choosy. The males have to exhaust themselves, raising their claw incessantly for days on end before they manage to arouse enough interest in a female to cause her to interrupt her walk amongst hundreds of appealing males and watch any one of them brandishing his claw for a few seconds.

If a male is disregarded for a few weeks, he carries out a dance in addition to this agitated call sign. He keeps time, turns this way and that way and with his long thin legs he performs definite figures, which vary in many of the different sub-species. The nearer a female approaches the more furious his call sign becomes. If he is accepted, he drops the female a low curtsy, drums on the ground with his giant claw and vanishes into his hole, which is up to a yard deep, hoping she will follow him in with a similar alacrity. But often she just peeps curiously into the hole and crawls on, taking no more notice of the disappointed male, who now comes darting out of the hole and signals to her disappearing form in a manner pitiful to behold. His rivals at once form an eager cordon of signallers all around her.

Every now and then there is bitter strife between two males whose holes be about eight inches apart. When one of them thinks he has scored a success with a female and disappears into his hole, the other promptly intervenes and does everything in his power to divert her into his own desirable residence.

Just about when she is about to follow him into it, however, the

first male pops out and diverts her. Things may go on like this for 10 or 20 times in succession until one of the two males pauses for a breath in his hole rather longer than usual and his rival gets away with a 'bride of the day'.

Suddenly, however, the signalling ceases all over the vast shallows. Each crab quickly eats a little more and makes haste to repair any damage to his hole. Homeless males try quickly to dig themselves an emergency abode or to drive another out of his hole. A short violent pushing and levering with the big claw decides the issue.

But the simplest thing for a homeless male to do is to forget his curtsy to the fair sex and simply eject a female from her hole. In an emergency a female will unhesitatingly enter the nearest male hole, where she is granted asylum without further ado. In these circumstances the male never takes advantage of the situation. Mating without the preliminary ceremonial is unthinkable.

When the final preparations and scuffling are over, the crabs all suddenly vanish into their holes and plug the entrance with mud. A few minutes later the first waves of the rising tide sweep over the area. The crabs cannot see or hear its approach, but their internal clock, which in their case is based on the rhythm of the tides and is not on a 24 hour basis, depending on the change from day to night, tells them within five minutes when it is time to make for safety.

Even when kept in a terrarium, where there are no tides, an impressive demonstration of the closeness of its link with the rhythm of nature is evident.

) ROBERT WOOLLEY

EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO:-

Meeting held at the office of Mr. Phil Webster 24th August. 1961.

Present were two delegates from the following Clubs:-

- The Victorian Sub Aqua Group
- The Scuba Diving Club Melbourne
- The Underwater Explorers Club of Victoria

Proposed name of federation was, Self Contained Diving Federation

of Victoria. The aims of the federation to be as follows:-

1. To promote and protect the interests of self contained divers in Victoria
 2. To seek both inside and outside Australia for information of interest to self contained divers and to channel that information back to interested bodies
 3. To establish and maintain contact between self contained diving bodies in Victoria
 4. To increase man's knowledge of the sea and to assist other interested bodies in increasing man's knowledge of the sea
 5. To assist in the formation of similar federations in other States
-

JERVIS BAY '79

Pete and I decided to motor up to Jervis Bay on Tuesday January 2nd to spend a few days, diving in company with those of the club encamped there since Christmas. We set off at around 9, drove up the coast road, and arrived to be greeted by Fred and Wendy at 7pm. From there via the RSL Club we managed to enveigle ourselves into Dave Moore's tent which for that night we shared with Dave, Dave Carroll and believe it or not Pete Smith and his new fiancée, "Zapristi"! Who will be next I ask myself?

Upon awakening on Wednesday we found after a brisk morning beach run and a dip, that VSAG now seemed to stand for Victorian Silly Argumentative Golfers, even down to Dave Carroll who really swings a mean club. So we all had a game of golf, some of them even decided to go round again. Meanwhile back at camp, the two Daves decided to take us to the wreck of the "S.S. Merimbula" a former steamer. This had already been dived by the club and the conditions were described as fearsome. The wreck lays straight down the side of a reef, with the bow section, sitting on the reef, well away from the rest of the ship testifying to the power of the sea. On the last occasion, divers had to swim through swells along the side of the jutting out section at the end of which sit the remains of the ill fated Merimbula. On this day however the sea was calm, and we were able to walk out along the reef and merely step in and swim down to the wreck, however the one problem we did have was

about a half mile walk with full gear over the rocks to get to where we just "stepped off".

There were five of us Dave Moore, Carl, Pete (Oakley) and myself laden with everything including air tanks, and Dave Carroll idle as ever with no tank, which he subsequently regretted. Dave and I dived first, since Carl and Pete were sitting down apparently sunbathing way, way in the distance. Timing our entrance, with an ebbing swell we were pushed out from the rocks, heads down and there it was, stretching out like a map beneath us. Visibility was good around 40-50 ft. and we moved down the wreck away from the surface. The bulk of the ship lays straight down the reef face ending on the sand which at low tide was 45 ft. At either side, standing like two huge sentinels are the boilers, seeming to keep watch over the ships remains.

Off to one side Dave and I found the flattened debris of the funnel, Dave was about to move under, when we spotted a moray eel who had already taken up residence, having a very good look at Dave's arm. We searched around hoping to make another find similar to the fork found by Paul on the preceeding dive, but to no avail. Probably any relics now lie under the all encompassing sand. Subsequently we spoke to a boat builder in Huskisson who had been out to the Merimbula just 2 days after she went aground. Not too much was taken from her and she seems relatively undisturbed even now. Other divers spoken to by Dave previously had mentioned getting a porthole quite recently. So we could have been close this time. We swam back around the corner to facilitate our exit, and then I decided to swim back to the cars having had enough of rock walking for the day. I passed over several interesting rock formations on what was quite a long swim back, a fact I dutifully passed on to Dave Carroll, who seemed very interested in rocks of varying shapes, sizes and colour.

On Thursday we dived at Point Perpendicular, apart from waiting in the heaving boat and heaving most, if not all of my breakfast back to nature, we, that is Pete and I finally got in. Swimming against the current, I motioned to Pete and then headed down until I was standing in 110 ft. of twilight water, no Pete. I was just about to set off to look for him, when he arrived. We set off along the rocks coming up to 80 ft., passing small schools of fish. It was soon time to come up arriving on the surface, I swam straight to Tony's boat since I was under instructions to get the anchor.

Down once again this time to 125 ft., the best thing about this deep diving is that I can recommend it as a cure for sea-sickness.

Finally on the Friday we had made plans to dive on "The Arch" which was situated along the coast from Point Perpendicular. This is an underwater arch at about 140 ft. However conditions were against us, with a big sea outside we returned inside the bay and decided to dive the Docks area. This as it turned out was a good decision as the water was clear, plenty of fish life, caves, chasms and a rather large squid to see. We were in for about an hour and a very pleasant easy dive it was. The only hardish part was swimming to the boat which was dragging its anchor and heading off across the bay. We also got a bit damp on the way home, but it had turned out to be a good day after all. In the afternoon some of us joined the Truscott water babes for a snorkel around the rocks, Dave Moore suprising a couple of Wobblers quite close to the beach, or should that be the other way around!

Friday night we had a break-up dinner at the RSL, where I went as Fred, and Fred went as himself. Now he's suffering from a split personality and a pair of split trousers. Saturday morning Pete, Dave and I said goodbye to the assembled camp and headed back to Melbourne. We had a good time, three dives, an inevitable game of golf, and we left Dave Moore with an empty tent and his "maturing" red wine.

BRIAN LYNCH & PETE OAKLEY

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Huskisson is not a hard place to find, it just takes a damn long time to get there..... Just ask Andrew Benson who left home at 3 AM Boxing Day and drove almost non stop via the Princes Highway towing a caravan. When Andrew arrived he was singing "Seventeen hours on the road, and I think I left the tap running".....

Its a good thing that Dave and Pat Moore didn't decide to share motel accommodation at Nowra, Huskisson or somewhere else in the vicinity with the Siers - otherwise they too may have finished up in Morningson. As it turned out Dave M seemed well set up. Little Patti had packed his clothes, eating utensils and stable diet of crunchy munchies, in a neat little box and sent him off by himself. With these necessities of life I can't understand why he kept

calling out for "Carol" each night!

We called Dave's tent, the single men's quarters - ably manned by Dave M, Dave C, Peter Oakley and Brian Lynch. However Pete Smith put a stop to this sex discrimination by bringing his fiancée!! with him.

John Grey at Vincentia has the best air compressor we've seen. A 40 cubic foot monster, that in its previous career was used for starting jet engines. At \$1.00 and 90 seconds a fill we reckon its the best value on the dive scene anywhere!!

Christmas on the Yarra Bank must be now almost considered part of the VSAG annual ritual. Who should turn up there that evening in December, without even attending the preceding meeting or for that matter most meetings during the year, but Dave and Jenny Henty-Wilson with little sister Jane.

Cody's vertical top shelf wins the prize for the most ingenious camping device yet seen. Obviously it is designed for today's modern convenience living, with minimum time required for erection and maintenance. Its ease of storage and compatible colour scheme will blend in to most modern tones used in yachts, cruisers, caravans, tents, campervans, panel vans, Volkswagens, humpies, igloos and caves. Who else but a drink ravaged curly haired third rate poker player would think of such a miserable scheme to stop confounded ants sniffing at the corks of his rotten booze.

Quote of the trip goes to Tony Tipping. After completing a dive near Pt. Perpendicular the sea conditions were deteriorating into about a force 5 gale, however some hardy divers wished to use up their air at a sheltered spot nearby. Said Tip, face fixed white in terror and mumbling in his speech - "Save your air for the trip home".

Carl Jironc must be having second thoughts about owning a Combi Van. He seems to be the fall guy everytime we want the compressor taken on a trip. Although we didn't need it this time at Jervis Bay you never know when the commercial compressors will break down. As it turned out John Grey's compressor broke down just before New Years Eve but by luck, and his hard work he was able to have it going again after just one day out of service.

There were a few worried looks on some of the men when Maree James won a place in the A Golf Team after shooting a 54 to be equal second on the day. Seems she preferred to keep playing with John

giving him a help along the way.

Fred Ferrante seemed a bit confused one day on the golf course - couldn't make up his mind whether he was playing golf or cricket. On the 5th hole he hit a birdie and on the seventh he went for a duck!!

Someone should report him to the bird lovers society.

A standing rule should be introduced into the V.S.A.G. "When considering or planning a shore dive make sure Alan Whitely and Range Rover are present".

Getting right into the water skiing this year were the two Truscott boys, with Samantha not far behind. However Marie's a bit of a problem Baz! I guess you'll just have to get two big outboards to get her going!!

Dave Moore's new grab bars on his boat were a huge success - his passengers had to grab hold of them to stop falling overboard!

'MANDA BOTES

(The Sinking Skipper)

