

# FATHOMS

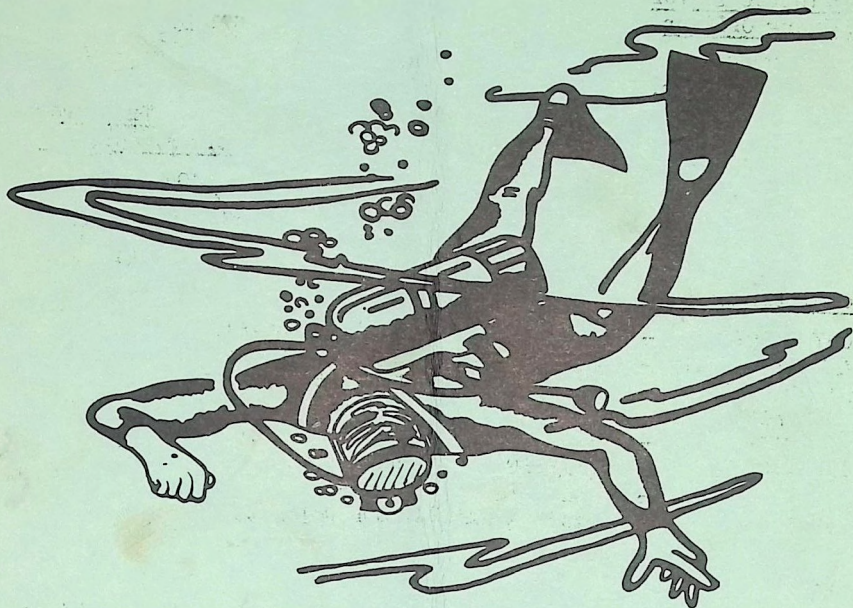
Registered for posting as a publication category B  
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## SAFETY IN DIVING

Nov 79

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# V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS  
 (Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)  
 Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne, 3001

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CLUB MEETING -

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 21ST NOVEMBER, 1979 at 8pm at the Collingwood Football Club, Lulie 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

Well another month has passed us by and the weather took a merciless toll on our diving activities. Not one of our scheduled dives eventuated, this could be seen as a good or bad omen to members within our club

- Good omen, it enabled members to get their equipment into good shape and also to obtain the much needed medical - CZ18
- Bad omen, to many members it cut their diving time down to one month because as of December 1st any person wishing to dive on club dives must have a current medical CZ18.  
"This is a club policy."

With the long list of un-medicated divers the V.S.A.G. may soon hold a different meaning - "Victorian Social Activities Group." This should give our Social Secretary a headache trying to think up different functions to stimulate our hyperactive landlubbers. Tony has scheduled several social epics that would put Cecil B. De-Mille to shame, such as the coming tennis party, (a map in the centre of this newsletter will show you the way), the Hungi, and in late February a "mid sixties era Rockers and Jazzers Party".

Poor Jon McKenzie, who will he take to the tennis party, a long distance runner or a tennis pro or maybe both.

I would also like to welcome a new member to our flock - Ron Shepherd. Welcome Ron and safe diving.

ED.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
NOV. 11	TENNIS PARTY Somers/Balnarring		T.Tipping	BYO Barbie Adults \$1 Semi-Adults 50c
NOV. 18	WALL OR KELP Farm	11 AM	J.Goulding 819-1739	Sorrento Boat Ramp

DIVE CALENDAR (Cont'd.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
NOV. 21	COLLINGWOOD Football Club	8 PM <u>Start</u>		General Meeting
NOV. 25	SIR BAZZA'S COUNTRY ESTATE Lot 4 Hastings/Dandenong Rd Langwarrin		All Sunday	Working Bee for Hungi
DEC. 1	HUNGI	Earlier the better	Bob Scott 328-3036(B.H.)	Book Now Adults \$6.00 U/15 \$4.00
DEC. 9	GRAVEYARD Dive	TBA	T.Tipping 80-4956	Barwon Heads Jetty
DEC. 16	WRECK DIVE (Outside Heads) (Shallow dive)	9.30AM	N.Garland 529-5484	Sorrento
DEC. 19	COLLINGWOOD Football Club	8 PM		General Meeting
DEC. 23	CHRISTMAS TRIP Narooma		P.Tipping 80-4956	

COMMITTEE NEWS IN BRIEF

1. Secretary to notify S.D.F.V. of new office bearers & SDF delegates
2. Report on progress of Club Annual Function "The Hungi"
3. Election of N.Garland as Assistant Newsletter Editor
4. Safety Officer and Training Officer to liase in relationship to diver restrictions and qualifications
5. Advertising program to promote V.S.A.G.
6. Tank testing re club equipment
7. Sub-Committee to review Constitution
8. Medicals in respect to VSAG policy

Location for Committee Meetings for 1979/80

Nov. 28th	-	Fred Ferrante
Jan. 23rd	-	Tony Tipping
Feb. 27th	-	Pat Reynolds

Mar. 26th - Barry Truscott  
April 30th - Dave Carroll  
May 28th - Paul Tipping  
June 25th - John Goulding  
July 23rd - Neil Garland  
Aug. 27th - Max Synon  
Sept. 24th - Dave Moore

All Club members are welcomed to Committee meetings. If you wish to go, please contact the member to notify him of your intentions.

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

On Melbourne Cup Day members of the Maritime Archaeological Association of Victoria will conduct an exploratory dive on the wreck of the "City of Melbourne", located in Corio Bay near Geelong.

The MAAV is keen to have participating divers interested in the scientific evaluation of Victoria's shipwrecks and already several of your members belong to our group.

Meetings are conducted on the first Monday of each month at Ocean Divers - East Boundary Road, Bentleigh commencing at 8pm.

We extend an invitation to VSAG members to join this Association so that they can further their appreciation of Victoria's rich maritime history,

Yours faithfully,

Maritime Archaeological Association of Victoria

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THE LONG ROAD BACK - by Ron Johnson (Cont'd.)

The next day I was asked to go back in for another five hours on oxygen. I agreed, but apparently I was susceptible to oxygen poisoning, because toward the end of the five hours I had difficulty in breathing and the next thing I remembered I was being revived by a very anxious Dr. Slack. I do not remember the next day or so.

After a week at the Naval Hospital I was transferred to the Middlemore Hospital to the Orthopedic Department, where a gentleman introduced



himself as a senior member on the staff of the hospital saying he had come to read my notes. After 20 minutes or so he stood up and announced that they were pretty sure they would get my arms working, but that I would never walk again. It is at this stage that the press loses interest and you soon fade into obscurity. It is also at this stage that the real story begins. Let anyone who thinks getting bent is rather romantic read carefully from here.

Doctors came around and poked and prodded to assess how much sensation and motive powers I had left in my limbs. This let everyone know at what level the spinal damage had occurred. In my case, a massive nitrogen bubble probably formed in my spinal cord at about the lower ribs. The expanding nitrogen bubble acted like a tourniquet in reverse by expanding within the spine and starving the nerves to the lower body of blood thus killing them (the damage being similar to a broken back with the exception that nothing was actually cut through).

My condition at this stage was that of a quadraplegic. I could use my left arm a little and, if someone put a fork in my hand, I could get the odd morsel of food into my mouth. Most of it would miss the mouth and end up anywhere in the general vicinity of my head.

Now eating and drinking were essential to life - but what went in had to come out. This was the most humiliating part because the paralysis also affected all the muscles that controlled the bladder and bowels and there was nothing I could do to control these functions.

The bladder was a relatively simple inconvenience as they inserted a tube into the bladder and it drained away continuously. This meant I was very susceptible to infections of the urinary tract, so I had to consume large quantities of liquid to continually flush through my system. In my case it meant drinking 10 quarts of fluid a day. After a while, I was prescribed three quarts of beer per day and that was a pleasant change. As for the control of the bowels, there was nothing to be done about it. Accidents happened and I had to live with it.

Remember, too, that I was completely paralyzed - I could not sit up, roll over, adjust my pillow or anything without asking for assistance. Quite often one of the other patients would tell me that one of my legs was hanging off the bed. Because I was unable to move myself, I had to be rolled into a new position every two hours both day and night.

After two weeks of lying in bed, blood clots had formed in my legs

due to poor circulation. One night I woke up with severe chest pains, gasping for breath because the clots had shifted and clogged my lungs. I was rushed into critical care and was put on a blood thinning intravenous drip and oxygen for two weeks. It is true, you can't recall pain, but I know I would never want to go through that stage again.

After returning to the regular hospital ward, I met Pat Davis, a physiotherapist to whom I owe very much. She immediately dismissed the verdict about my not walking again and got me working. She would spend a couple of hours a day just exercising my legs and arms.

Slowly, after weeks of bed exercising I could move my legs and arms a little. The left arm in particular had regained quite a lot of strength. The sensation of sharp or blunt, hot or cold, was still nonexistent in my lower body, but my arms were improving slowly. Then, with Pat's help, I was able to sit on the edge of the bed and with her support I learned to stay upright by watching things that were upright (door frames etc.) as I had no sensation of falling until past the point of no return. Slowly, over a period of days and weeks, my muscles began to respond.

Finally came the day when I could sit upright, unaided. It was now time to start work in the gym. Pat and another therapist decided they would teach me to crawl. They put down two mats with a mirror at the far end. Between them, they propped me up on my hands and knees and while one took my body weight, the other would move one hand forward, then move the opposite leg. This way we covered the length of the mat-at least 12 feet. When we finished, I was exhausted and had to go back to bed to sleep it off. After two to three weeks I could cover the distance by myself. By watching myself in the mirror, I could tell if I was falling and make corrections. I would tire and fall often, but Pat was always there to bully me on.

Next, they made for me heavy plaster casts that covered the backs of my legs from the heels to upper thighs. These would be strapped tightly to my legs and I would be wheeled up to a set of parallel bars, once again with the mirror at the far end. Eventually I could walk the length of the parallel bars both ways unaided.

Then we had to start the same exercises again, only this time without the casts holding my legs. It was like trying to stand on two pieces of soggy spaghetti. From here we went to crutches and I could soon shuffle the length of the ward corridors. Interestingly enough, I later met the same doctor who claimed I would never walk again. He



said he would have still given the same diagnosis.

I soon started going to a rehabilitation centre every day. There, with occupational therapy, mat weaving and pottery, I regained all my arm strength. But I was plagued with a very sore back, which only grew worse as I tried to improve it with physical exercise.

After 114 days in the hospital I was released. I bought an automatic car and managed to pass my driving examination. I returned to my old job as the manager of a pro dive store where I managed to shuffle around holding onto counters for support, occasionally collapsing out of sight while talking to a customer. It was very embarrassing having to ask one of them to come around and help you up. The work left me completely exhausted at the end of the day and by the end of the week the back pain made me feel like I was looking through a red haze.

I always had a change of clothes with me because I still had a little problem with my bladder control. Several times while at the work bench or even waiting on a customer, the sound of running water could be heard and I would have to go off and change clothes. Most people were understanding.

Uppermost in the minds of most divers I meet, be they old friends or new chums to the sport, is: if you are paralyzed from the mid-body down, how does it affect your sex life? I try to relate as much to them as I feel is necessary. I think it is something that hits home harder to a lot of divers just what they may be losing if they continue to ignore the warnings about deep diving.

Every bends victim's sex life if affected and the amount of recovery is just as varied as the recovery of his other affected areas. At first my sex life was completely nil. Then with the increased return of motor power and sensation, one's interest in sex begins to take on more importance. It is an interrelated matter of trying to coordinate the body and the mind. Every paralyzed person who suffers the loss of the important bodily functions finds their sex life is one of the slowest functions to return to normal.

My time out of the hospital lasted about 14 months, when because of stiffness in my legs, I caught my heel coming down the stairs at work and fell head over heels down about 20 stairs. Panic! I could not move my legs and my back was on fire. The first fear was that I had broken my back this time. After X-rays and examinations by neurologists, it was decided I had done massive damage to my spinal



nerves again. One thing was sure-it was a lot worse this time.

The decision was made to try a new pain clinic at Auckland Hospital. In any case they injected local anaesthetics and steroid drugs into the sore areas of my spine. Though these eased the pain, the treatment was temporary. The follow-up decision was to cut the nerves that were transmitting the pain. So far I have had three operations and had 14 nerves cut. This is my final attempt at alleviating my pain. I will just have to learn to live with whatever problems I am left with.

So, intrepid diver, if you want to join the ranks of the bent ones, ignore all advice and continue to go deeper and deeper. But take it from me it is not worth it. I have been diving since 1958-sport diving, commercial diving, a qualified N.Z.U.A. Instructor and about 12 years in the selling of diving gear. I always thought it could never happen to me. Remember: no one is immune to nitrogen narcosis and everyone is "bendable." I am 32 years old and get around as though I am 82. Oh, how I would like to turn the clock back.

Submitted by FRED FERRANTE

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#### MEDICAL CERTIFICATES - Instigated by the Committee in general

At the last committee meeting, there was an extended discussion on the subject of club medicals. It was decided that the following rules shall apply -

1. The acceptable medical standard is ASCZ18
2. Medical certificates will be current for 2 years from the date of issue with the following proviso: If the medical falls due in the 6 months before June 30th, a period of grace till June 30 will be extended; and if it falls due in the 6 months to December 31st, the member will have until December 31st to renew their medical certificate
3. Due to the increased risk of diving after the age of 40, divers over this age should ask their doctor whether they should have a yearly medical, and be guided by his advice.
4. Members of the club who do not have current medical certificates will not be permitted to dive on scheduled club dives

These are not new rules, but it was felt that they should be restated so that everyone knows exactly what the position of the club is. It was further decided that since those members without medical certificates have had 3 months warning in the club newsletter, from 1st

December no one without a medical will be allowed to dive with the Club. Below is a list of those without current medicals. Anyone who has a current medical or obtains one and whose name appears here should present a photocopy to the medical officer or the editor.

Dave Moore	Ian Cockerell	Gordon Ryan
Paul Tipping	Leo Canteri	Peter Smith (Ace)
Barry Truscott	Alan Cutts	M. Richardson
Max Synon	Ken Callec	Jim Turner
Neil Garland	Frank Herbert	Roma Waldron
Pat Reynolds	Dave Hurle	Amanda Wookey
Carl Jironc	B. Kelly	Paul King
Andrew Bensen	Mick Jackieu	John Marshall
Brian Baldock	N. Knight	M. Matthews
Jay Cody	Carey Marshall	D.J. McBean
Max Dawson	P. Matthews	Milton Robinson
Frank Coustley	John Noonan	Peter Saunders
Phil Jefferson	Jenni Reynolds	Paul Sier
Lesley Gillies	R. Koper	Peter Oakley
Bill Jansen	Peter Smith	Clara Oakley
Rob Adamson	John Smibert	Bruce Soulsby
Trevor West	Graeme Hamilton	Alan Whiteley
Lindsay Cole		

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#### MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT

With the onset of the warmer diving weather, many of our summer divers are redeeming their diving gear from their local pawnbroker, with the evil desire to explore the under water world they will don their equipment and plunge into the merky depths of obscurity only to find that their regulator refuses to supply air at 60 feet, their buoyancy vest has a leak in it or their mask falls off due to perished rubber straps. The sea is a healthier medium for people, but not for equipment. Wetsuits, rubber and also metal will deteriorate quickly if neglected for any length of time. The sun also can take its toll on equipment, thus the point is to check your equipment regularly even if you just dive occasionally, this will help prolong its useful life and more importantly lower the risk of failure while being used. Equipment which is looked after is less expensive.

When you store your equipment for any long period of time, make sure that it has been washed thoroughly in fresh water, dried carefully

To Flinders

B. Beach  
Courts



X

Store

1 1/2 miles

BALNARRING BEACH

DIRECTIONS FOR TENNIS PARTY

Melbo

LORD SOMERS ROAD

COOLART ROAD

"SOMERS MILE"

CAMP HILL ROAD

X  
Sandy  
Court

Tasman Rd

CPOL SECRETITE-NO.



DIRECTIONS FOR WORKING BEE AND HUNGI

McKAYS ROAD

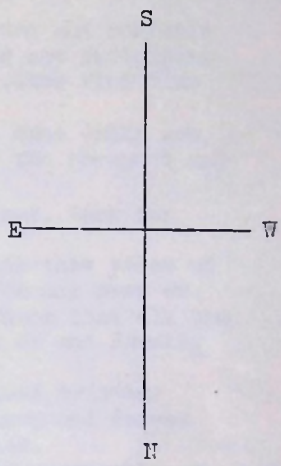
LOT 4

CARR BOYD ROAD

DANDENONG HASTINGS ROAD

$\frac{1}{2}$  Mile

CRANBOURNE ROAD



me

FRANKIE

and dusted with french chalk. Never place stored equipment in polythene bags but wrap them in brown paper or newspaper. Give each item individual attention, this will result in your equipment being in top condition and also gives you confidence in your equipment when you use it and know that you have minimised the possibility of failure due to poor maintenance.

Let's talk about individual equipment and some of the ways to keep it in the best of condition.

Mask: Inspect the strap and mask for deterioration and possible points of weakness, make sure that the sealing edges are performing their designated job and clean and polish the face plate from time to time.

Fins: Check for signs of splitting. If the fin does split get rid of it and buy a new set. In the long run it is the cheapest and safest way.

Snorkel: Check that the mouthpiece is firmly attached, look for splits in the rubber and worn teeth grips.

Wet suits: Very special attention should be taken with this piece of equipment. Always wash it after a dive and check for any wear or tear which it may have incurred during the dive. Check that all the seams are still intact if there is a split, glue it up and finally hang the suit up to dry inside out.

Weightbelt: Check for web fraying and twisting, because twisting could interfere with the quick release in an emergency and frayed web can get caught in various parts of your equipment.

Cylinder: Have it checked every year, never drain it completely of air because this can cause internal deterioration of the tank. Always handle your cylinder carefully and try not to knock the valve about. Before you fit the demand valve check that the 'O' ring is in good condition, if there is any sign of wear replace it immediately.

Regulator: Have your reg. checked every year. Wash it thoroughly each time you use it, check the hoses and mouth piece for wear and for splitting. Hoses should be replaced if there is any sign of wear, make sure that after washing, hang to dry and store it in a safe place where it wont get knocked around.

Pressure gauges: Check them frequently against a fellow diver's. If any discrepancy have it seen to. If the glass face is misty or badly scratched have it replaced.

Compasses & Depth Gauges: Again check for accuracy, wear and splitting, also check the straps for deterioration.

Vests: Check firing mechanism on CO<sup>2</sup> units making sure that it is not rusty. With bottle feed units and scuba feed units check that 'O' rings are in good condition, quick release units operate properly (hose feed units) and have bottles tested every year when you have your tank tested, because the rapid filling and emptying causes more condensation than usual. Occasionally totally inflate your unit and immerse it in the bath to check for any air leaks. If you find any have them fixed. "Remember you're the one who'll be wearing it."

Good luck and safe diving this summer.

FRED FERRANTE

### SOME USEFUL HINTS FOR DIVERS

The second edition of the SDF Log Book is available and contains information on emergency procedures, decompression tables, expired air resuscitation, national standard hand signals and metric conversions.

The divers directory contains information on filling stations, medical practitioners, and recompression chambers.

Orders for log books @ \$2.50 each will be taken at the November meeting.

The minimum lengths of Abalone that can be taken in Victorian waters are -

Port Phillip Bay	10cm
Outside ocean between Cape Otway & Tarwin Meadows	11.5cm
Elsewhere	12cm

If you want a feed of abalone, make sure they are of legal size, and remember there is a bag limit of 10 per day.

The minimum lengths of Southern Rock Lobster (Crayfish) are -

Male	110mm	along	the	carapace
Female	105mm	"	"	"

If you're not sure whether its male or female then make sure its at least 110mm in length from a point in front of the eyes to the start of the tail (carapace).

There are a number of locations where we dive that are located in a marine national park or where there is an unwritten law that divers do not take flora or fauna. Usually your dive captain will advise



you if sanctuary conditions apply - however if in doubt, ask!

Boat owners wishing to use boats in New South Wales are reminded that boating licences are required in that state. Enquiries should be made to the N.S.W. Government Tourist Bureau in the city regarding licence requirements. The N.S.W. Maritime Services Board requires that boats carry certain safety equipment not required by law in Victoria. One such piece of equipment is the International V - distress sheet.

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### UP THE YARRA '79

As the sun streamed in through the window, waking me from my peaceful slumber, I realised that the dawning of a new day was upon us. As all the prefunction preparations were completed and stowed away, on our merry way we went, thinking of what great adventure would be bestowed on the VSAG members today.

On arriving at the rendezvous point, there waiting was the man with "a different woman for all seasons" plus his entourage also the illustrious Pete Smith and his lovely lady. We all milled around, waiting for others to arrive with the occasional drool at the launches and a bit of piracy on the high seas. Suddenly in a blaze of glorified dust arrived the Liddy's plus one. When all the excitement had settled we commenced the "Up the Yarra Trip" for '79 in a different way "by car", due to the lack of boats. How ironical, at the Marina and us with a shortage of boats.

Upon reaching our destination and losing Pete Smith somewhere along the way (later I was informed that he had decided to take his boat home) we all pounced on the first available table and barbeque site which was only a drunken roll down a hill across the road, over an embankment and finally the Yarra.

Soon the corks started popping and the snags sizzling. Some of us decided to start working on our hangovers while others worked on losing theirs. Everything was going quite well until we were invaded by, not ants but super runners, first Lynchy on foot, then Tony by car followed closely by Bazza. So everybody decided to settle in for the rest of the day and that we did. We all had what some would say a "bloody good time". I think everyone who attended would agree. I hope we have many more functions like this one and I hope more members in the club will join in the fun.

FEARLESS FRED

TIP'S TIT-BITS

What the hell has happened to VSAG? At this stage, as one puts pen to paper it is noted that there has not been a club dive for about 7 weeks, not only that but only a mere handful of members attended the last general meeting - maybe they all went to the opening night of Madisons, Melbourne's new trendy nightspot to disco away the frustrations of being unable to dive or trying to re live their high school hop-a-go-go days!

A lot of pressure has been put on the Committee recently to do something about enforcing the rules regarding the possession of CZ18 medicals by all members, rather should I say active members (not that we have too many). TTB agrees with the latest proposals set down by the committee but at the same time will publish advertisements for those wishing to arrange private dives!

(Advert) FOR SALE: Tent 9 x 9 with floor, aluminium poles, European design, ideal for 2 persons, good condition. Total price \$65. Tel: 80-4956, but hurry!

21st October saw the running (or walking) of Melbourne's second Big M Marathon from Frankston to the Melbourne Town Hall. Last year this event gave our OLD friend Lynchy plenty to brag about (he did complete it in a little over 4 hours admittedly) and ever since then all we've heard is "what about the marathon". This year the club only had one untrained starter who somehow managed to notch up his second sub five hour marathon in searing 30°C heat. The most difficult part of one's strategy in order to prepare for this particular feat was how to overcome the 15-20 knot northerly head wind. Well our lone runner succeeded here by having a large breakfast of cabbage, onions and baked beans so as no matter what the weather conditions he'd sure have the wind behind him!

Latest prices on the Somers Mile at the Tennis Day 11th November put Jay Cody a firm 5/4 favourite although I must admit the handi-cappers put the lady who arrives with Jon McKenzie 60 seconds BEHIND scratch - before that she was unbackable the odds were so short! Not a bad effort for someone we haven't even met!

Looks like the Truk Lagoon trip at Easter will soon be sold out - the latest from our overseas reporter is that trips to Truk within a year or so will double in cost because of steep rises in fuel and accommodation - the Yanks also realise they're in control of a unique tourist attraction so they'll probably do an "Arab oil

embargo" type rip-off very soon! In other words get your bloody \$200 deposits in quickly!

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The following people did not renew their membership in 1978/79 or the current year 1979/80

1978/79

Peter Attwood  
 Paul Beecher  
 Marg Phillips  
 Ian Cockerall  
 Peter Zonnenberg  
 Ron Coomber  
 Frank Derkson  
 Peter Smith (Ace)  
 Bernadette Kelly  
 Ken James  
 Clara Oakley  
 Mike Bennett  
 Trevor West  
 Jenni Reynolds  
 John Robinson  
 Dave Barker  
 Alan Coy  
 James Elliot

1979/80

Brian Baldock  
 Alan Whiteley  
 Andrew Benson  
 Jon McKenzie  
 Milton Robinson  
 Graham Hamilton  
 Carey Marshall  
 Dave Hurle  
 R. Koper  
 Ken Callec  
 Max Dawson  
 Gordon Ryan

Any member who is unfinancial as from the December General Meeting will not receive any further newsletters until he/she is financial again.

CommitteeUP THE YARRA TRIP

Well off we started, towing rubber duck, Ferrit is improving. Well said Ferrit "we will start half way because we will never keep up," very pleased I was to hear that. Well we tried everywhere to get in the river, but no such luck. So down to Willy we went. Instead of backing the car down to the ramp he decided to take the boat off the car and run it down. Well you know what happened, in the drink we went because I am not very strong.

Never mind, off we went rough as hell, wet as hell, on our way putt,



putt, putting along until I said to Captain Popeye, "Don't you think we are going the wrong way?" "Of course not, leave it to me!" So I left it to him and we ended up in Port Melbourne. "Well," said Captain Popeye, "I know the way ended up a dead end, and I hate smart women!" We found it at last and we headed off. I must say it was a lovely trip up until in front was a great big ship, Captain Popeye said "Stand by to ram!" I was ready to jump in. I know what it was to have lived on the ocean wave but we got there all right.

To our surprise we and Pat Reynolds were the only ones that turned up. We had a lovely barbeque, then started the long journey home with no mishaps, except that I was soaking wet. I did enjoy my cuppa when I dried out.

P.S. Brian, Bazza and Tony - did you see that little spot in the Yarra, that was Ferrit and I.

#### FERRITS FRIEND & CAPTAIN POPEYE

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#### FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Its a disappointing time for your dedicated scribe when a month goes past without a dive or other event about which to write. More importantly its a disappointing time for V.S.A.G. to experience a barren month. Sure we tried!

The "Up the River" trip turned out to be "Beside the River Tumble", when at the last moment most of the boats became unavailable. Sounds like there might have been a good dive on somewhere - alas no! But just one of those things that do happen from time to time.

Just as we were making final preparations for the Graveyard dive, early in October, Melbourne's weather turned nasty and wisely the dive was called off.

Inverloch is a site we have not dived for many years and Bob Scott was appointed dive captain for October 14th for a dive in that area.

Once again unsuitable weather plus the fact that October is the one month of the year where it is illegal to take both male and female crayfish meant that this dive was also cancelled.

This lack of diving has several bad aspects for the club. Some members who seem to retire from diving during winter, will now have to make their seasonal emergence at a later date, thus lengthening

the time gap between their last dive and the next dive. For regular divers not used to such "dry spells" the results could be disastrous.

Already one old salt has gone back to England, where he reports that even the Thames Estuary looks good in the warm autumn sun of England.

On a more serious side. Safe diving practices tend to become a matter of routine over time. That's fine so long as nothing upsets that routine. The little "something" that we could face in the next few weeks, is the "first dive for a while" syndrome. So be careful, cautious and think about what you're doing.

Its not often that Flotsam and Jetsam takes on a serious subject and tries to handle it seriously, but we feel very strongly about the motto of this club and the excellent safety record during the 1970's.

During October the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria held a one day seminar on Scuba Diving at the Collingwood Football Club. There was an excellent forum of speakers, and the agenda included dive locations, specialty diving, training, medical aspects of diving, equipment. There was also an excellent film display with new Jacques Cousteau releases previously not seen in Australia.

V.S.A.G. was represented by a few and we're pleased to say that they generally behaved themselves!

By the time you lucky people get to read this we will be on daylight saving time and hopefully there maybe greater interest in a few after work dives.

It's amazing what you can find around Williamstown - or perhaps a look in the Maribyrnong River near Sheppards Bridge will be more your bag.

In the world of underwater salvage, a British conglomerate is seeking a few million dollars to search for and raise the Titanic. The Titanic was the worlds largest liner when she was built and sank on her maiden voyage in the North Atlantic Ocean in 1912. It is believed that the ship could lie at a depth of 6000 feet and would require breaking up before it could be raised. The over \$100m in art and in jewellery would want to still be in good condition for the money and effort required. Meanwhile on the local scene a salvage company is still having problems trying to lift the old Cowes ferry off the sand down in Westernport Bay.

Don't forget some of the coming events. The V.S.A.G. Hungi Party - at Bazza's block on December 1st. Somebody must tell me "Where is Bazza's block?"

Narooma. The V.S.A.G. will again invade New South Wales to stay at the very picturesque town of Narooma. Narooma has one of the best looking golf courses I've seen since going to Coff's Harbour, and the offshore island of Montague Island should provide plenty of scope for good diving in this area.

Recently there's been quite a lot of controversy about the Japanese long liners being allowed to fish in the Marlin breeding grounds off the Great Barrier Reef. It seems that the Australian Government sold off the fishing rights to the Japanese for a paltry \$1.4m. Actor Lee Marvin who likes to fish for Marlin at Cairns was quoted as saying "Hell we won the goddam war didn't we?" Lee wants to continue his fishing and charter boat skippers like Peter Bristow want to keep charging up to \$1,000 a day, but what of the Marlin and what of the reef?

Marlin meat is not suitable for human consumption in anything but small quantities, as it is high in mercury, yet the Marlin like the shark has a very important part in the ecological balance of the ocean. Take away the marlin and you create a problem which could take many years to overcome. A little more research on marlin breeding habits and their role in the oceans eco system would be wise at this stage of the argument. The Japanese spend millions of dollars researching fish populations before exploiting an area. The poor old marlin is an unfortunate and non planned addition to the fishermens basket!

MA LINDA FISH