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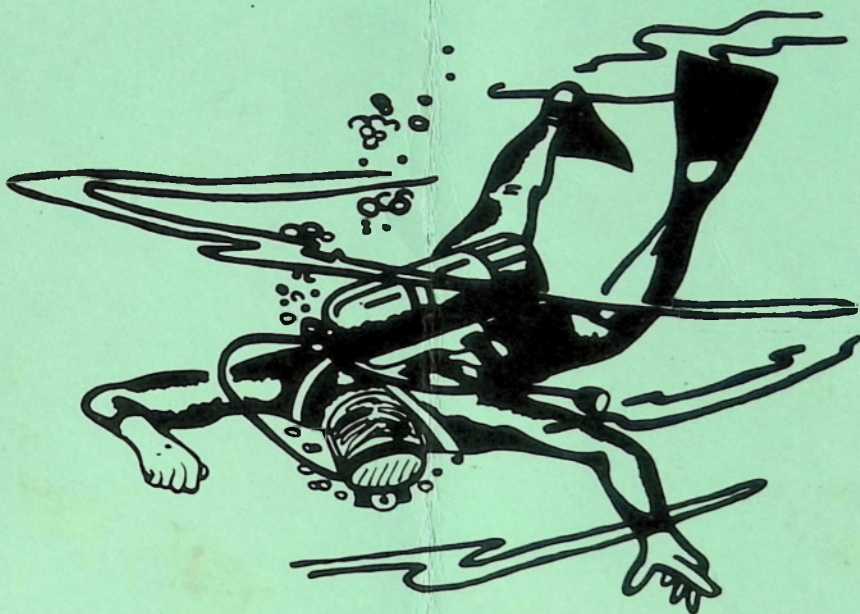
FATHOMS

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SAFETY IN DIVING

50c



V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

F A T H O M S
(Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)
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| CARL JIRONC | - 347-4110 | Committee Member |

CLUB MEETING -

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 15th October, 1980 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

I must commence my first editorial with sincere thanks to Fred Ferrante for an excellent term as editor of "Fathoms" in the year just past.

Fred together with a determined bunch of Club members and of course Glenys and Alan Cutts, managed to bring us our monthly communication without fail. It is my hope that more and more members will contribute to our monthly journal in the future and help to keep the V.S.A.G. the best diving club in Victoria!

Fred also took off the 1980 Literary Award at our Annual General Meeting on 17th September for a terrific article called "The Long Road Back".

Once again Tony Tipping was awarded our annual Clubman of The Year trophy and will be in fine form again in '81, so lets get at it and knock him off next year. It may be necessary to use a crow-bar to remove the trophy from Tip's lounge room wall, where it is embedded!

It is my wish that Fathoms should take on a new image this year, and I have made an attempt to include photographs in this issue. The result has only been moderately successful, but the Committee is currently looking into a whole new print style which will include photographs. So please pardon my feeble attempt, but maybe it is a step in the right direction; I would be pleased to know of your reaction when next we meet.

The last 12 months have been quite good for V.S.A.G. on the dive scene and saw the Club venturing as far afield as Truk Lagoon. There have also been some stormy times to speak of, and because of this I have decided that any articles submitted to me for publication in Fathoms must be signed and no names will be withheld from publication. If you have any criticisms to make and they are reasonable ones, then the adult approach is to sign one's name. By withholding names we are only inviting trite, unreasonable criticism of a damaging nature. During our "stormy" period, the only constructive criticism we received was the letter signed by the original author who didn't want to remain anonymous because the criticisms were good ones and the letter was even followed up by attendance at a Committee meeting by the author, to expand on the ideas. And the Club will be better for it!

So please don't send me any letters and ask for anonymity as this

journal is for articles which will entertain and further the common interest we all share which is SAFETY & FUN IN DIVING.

I am very pleased to be your new editor and promise to do my very best to help keep this Club great, so let's get down to what we are here for - DIVING ENJOYMENT.

DES WILLIAMS

DIVE CALENDAR

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>DIVE CAPT.</u> | <u>NOTES</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| OCT. | 5 WRECK DIVE | 9 AM | B.Truscott 783-9095 | Sorrento B/R |
| OCT. | 15 GENERAL MEETING | 8 PM | | Collingwood F/C |
| OCT. | 19 "LIGHT OF THE AGE" | 10 AM | J.Goulding 819-1739 | Sorrento B/R |
| NOV. | 2 REEF DIVE | 10 AM | T.Tipping 80-4956 | Flinders B/R |
| NOV. | 16 TENNIS PARTY | 10 AM onwards | T.Tipping 80-4956 | Location - Somers |
| NOV. | 19 GENERAL MEETING | 8 PM | | Collingwood F/C |
| NOV. | 23 TORQUAY AREA | 10 AM | B.Scott 367-2261 | Torquay B/R |
| NOV. | 30 SORRENTO AREA | 8 AM | P. Reynolds 789-1092 | Sorrento B/R |

TO DAVE MOORE -

Our thanks, Dave, for your term as President and sincere best wishes for the future to you and your family. We hope your business will not keep you from too many dives.

Signed - V.S.A.G. Members

COMMITTEE NEWS

If you study inside the front cover you will see the outcome of 1980/81 elections for Club office bearers as determined at the Committee Meeting held at Dave Moore's house on Wednesday 23rd September. Nominations for the various positions were:-

President - Tony Tipping, Max Synon & John Goulding
Senior Vice President - David Moore
Secretary - John Goulding
Treasurer - David Carroll & Fred Ferrante
Editor - Des Williams
Social Secretary - Bob Scott
Safety/Medical Officer - Barry Truscott & Max Synon
Property Officer - Pat Reynolds
Points Scorer - Neil Garland & Fred Ferrante
Librarian - Fred Ferrante & Carl Jirone
Assistant Editor - Tony Tipping
Public Relations Officer - Paul Tipping
S.D.F. Delegates - Max Synon, Carl Jirone, John Goulding & Paul Tipping

General Business Discussed -

1. Fred Ferrante to bring Club library to next General Meeting to rejuvenate interest
2. New Social Secretary will arrange a bar-b-que early in the New Year
3. Special thanks were given to Dave Moore for an excellent job as President over the last year and Fred Ferrante for the hard work put into the Club newsletter
4. Discussion on future ways of having newsletter printed when Glenys & Alan Cutts retire as producers of same after 6 years of devotion to our newsletter
5. Discussion of possible venues for our annual dinner dance
6. Permission was granted for all Club regulators to be fully serviced prior to Xmas. Also the decision was made to sell the two steel 72 c.f. cylinders in Club property and purchase a new aluminium cylinder, as the steels are receiving little use these days.
7. A new intake air hose is required for the club compressor and B. Truscott and P. Reynolds will arrange for the purchase of same.
8. Next Committee meeting to be held at Carl Jirone's home 3/104 The Avenue, Parkville 8PM, Wednesday 22nd October.

V.S.A.G. GOLF DAY

Venue - Mornington Country Golf Club, Beleura Hill Road, Mornington
Date - December 7
Time - Tee off at 8.30am Meet by 8.15am

We have a booking for 16 players at the moment, which can be increased if I have enough notice. The approximate cost of the day will be \$8/person (\$5 green fees + \$3 for prizes). Clubs and buggies are available for hire at unknown cost, but not many sets are available. Prizes will be awarded for best score (both gross and handicap), nearest the pin, longest drive and a consolation prize for worst score. I would appreciate it if those interested in playing would let me know at the October meeting or by ringing me on 529-5484 after business hours.

A BYO barbeque will be held at Ballam Park, Cranbourne Road, approx. 3km from Wells Road turn off after the game.

NEIL GARLAND 529-5484

V.S.A.G. DINNER DANCE

This year we have a booking at the

"GREEK INN"
18 Market Lane
Melbourne - City

for a minimum of 50 people to enjoy the Christmas spirit in the usual manner.

For \$15.00 per head you can enjoy a fine meal, a good dance band and a floor show. The reserved evening is FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER, it is a B.Y.O. restaurant.

Please be ready to present a deposit at our October Meeting, and the balance will fall due by November General Meeting.

* PLEASE BOOK EARLY ! *

FOR SALE

Two steel 72 cubic foot cylinders only, for \$60 each including full 12 months test. Contact Pat Reynolds on 789-1092.

A great chance to buy a spare cylinder at a bargain price! Ring NOW!

UNDERWATER SEARCH AND RECOVERY - SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT (Part 3)

Some thoughts about Safety (in no particular order)

Always wear a knife, and a sharp one at that. The ability to cut yourself loose can be a life saver. Remember just about everything seems to be waiting in the darkness to jump out and entangle you - weed, fishing line, netting, string, rope etc. It's a good idea to reach down every now and then and confirm that it's still in it's scabbard, as they do seem to get pulled out in the dark.

Please remember not to make spectacular entrances into dark water, its definitely a no-no.

Think about buddy breathing in black water. Consider the implications of sharing your air with one you can't see, who is not only fighting panic due to his lack of air, but also because he's effectively blind. Feel keen to go dashing to his rescue? Some basic considerations:

- (a) A trained team, used to working together, with a well planned, well rehearsed emergency procedure, as compared to two comparative strangers, fighting in the dark for air.
- (b) An octopus rig for the stand-by diver, with all divers practised in it's employment.
- (c) A bail-out bottle with its own reg and DV, perhaps. How long will the reserve on your hookah last at the depth that you're operating in?
- (d) Be aware that an octopus 1st. stage may freeze up in very cold water due to the increased velocity of the gas flow with two DVs operating from it.
- (e) Whatever system you use, make sure that you have it as a drill and practice it in blacked-out conditions.

BE VERY AWARE OF THE HAZARDS OF INVOLUNTARY HYPERVENTILATION.

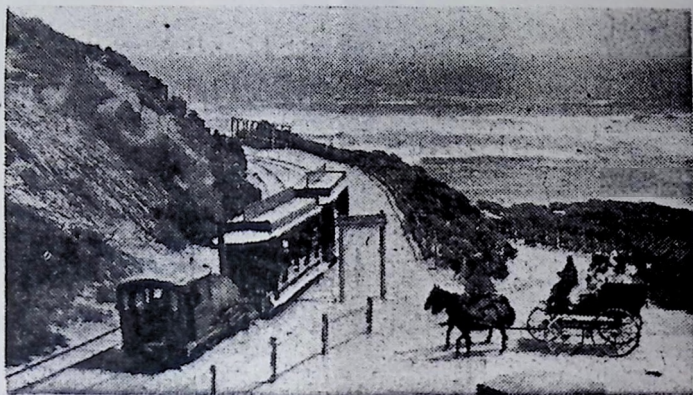
This very real hazard can occur as a result of a number of causes but in S & R operations, primarily because of nervousness, inexperience or over-exertion, or a combination of all or any. The main danger with inexperienced divers is that they may not be aware of its onset until it is too late. Even a proficient diver, who is deeply immersed (joke) in his task, may not realise he is in trouble until he has reached the stage where he cannot control his breathing rate. He is then in a state of extreme "air hunger" which he feels he cannot satisfy. An experienced, mature diver with good control, may still be able to settle himself even at this stage, by an intense effort of will and complete concentration on fighting his incipient panic. An experienced, or unlucky diver will be forced to bail out and head for the surface, normally like a Polaris missile.

The obvious danger with a panic ascent of this nature, is the possibility of a lung rupture, but in a work situation, with the possibility of cables and ropes causing a hang-up, and bulkheads or other obstructions lurking in the gloom, the diver may be brought undone and not even reach the surface. Any diver engaged in hard physical work at depth, especially if conditions cause apprehension, or if the diver is inexperienced, should remain very alert for the onset of "air hunger". As soon as the condition is noticed, the diver should consciously relax and concentrate upon lowering his breathing rate and volume.

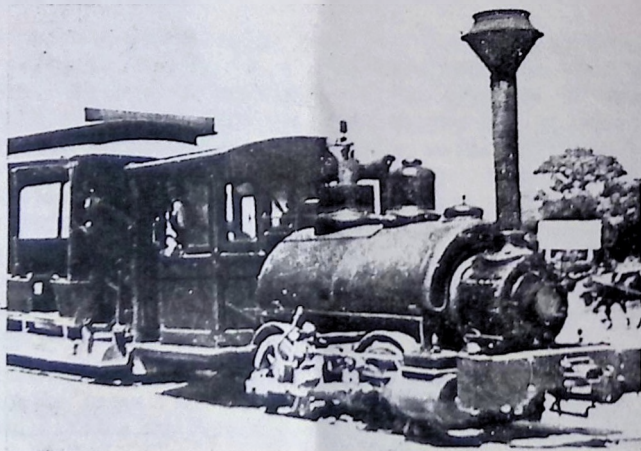
Think about using a neckstrap on your DV. Consider swimming in dark water in a current. You won't see the tree branches etc. until you run into them. Without a neckstrap, if you lose the DV from your mouth it won't be easy to find dangling on the end of the low pressure hose in the darkness. If nothing else, it'll be a panicky few seconds until it's back in your mouth, or a free ascent to the surface. Neither is acceptable. At the worst, you'll be another statistic - definitely unacceptable. As another safety margin, ensure that your neckstrap will pull off the mouth piece of the DV in an emergency ditching, without being so loose that it falls off at the slightest provocation. This will prevent problems in freeing the neckstrap in an emergency.

Don't dive without a buoyancy vest but be careful in its use. You won't be able to judge your rate of ascent if you're adjusting your buoyancy when lifting an object from the bottom in dark water.

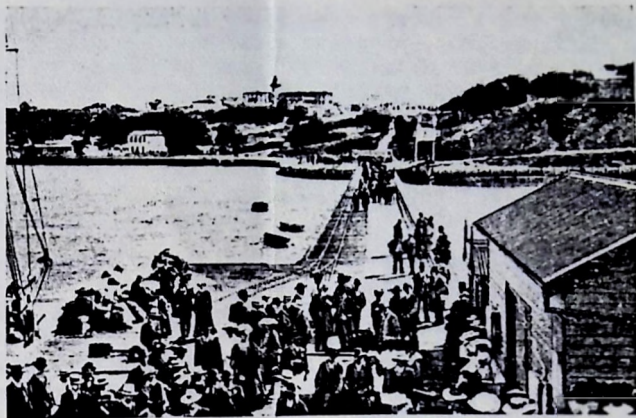
A word about reserve valves. I'm wary of using rod actuated J-valves in snaggy dark water, because of the reserve being accidentally



SORRENTO STEAM TRAMWAY AT THE OCEAN
AMPHITHEATRE - "BACK BEACH" - 1890'S



The Old Steam Engine.



Sorrento from the Pier showing the Continental Hotel, the Mornington Hotel; nestling beside it is the old cottage. Also showing is the bridge from the pier to the Headland. circa 1900.



A group of waggonettes waiting the arrival of the paddle steamers at the pier.

actuated. Very distracting to check your reserve every 30 seconds. Definitely a place for sonic audible reserves. Better still, a twin cylinder set-up and decant cylinder to cylinder, giving you an accurate estimation of air remaining. Safety margin is preserved by surfacing at the third decant. Better even still, a twin cylinder set with an audible reserve. However, whichever system you use, don't plan your dive to include time on reserve. In this type of operation reserves are meant as a safety feature only - get out as soon as you go onto reserve.

Speaking about duration, don't forget that a dial gauge will be useless in black water. A stem gauge with calibrations that can be deciphered with cold fingers? Ultimate in safety provided by a twin set with audible reserve and a stem gauge. All those hoses hanging around are dangerous though. At least tie them down somehow. It's sometimes necessary and advisable to overweight eg. to stay on the bottom in current, to work on the bottom etc. If you have compensated with your ABCV without changing your weight belt, be extra careful if you have to ditch your belt in an emergency - Polaris ascents are not advised.

SEARCH PRINCIPLES

Very briefly, most of the search methods work around the diver swimming at the end of his taut life line, swimming at right angles to the line, and to him, in a straight line. In practice, the diver will be swimming in an arc and at the conclusion of the required sweep, the attendant either takes in or lets out a length of line, the amount of which depends upon the size of the required object and the visibility. This process continues until the whole area is covered.

Other more complicated methods involve laying a grid on the bottom, either with rope or trench mesh etc. and then searching each square in the grid, and using a line joining these two sides as a moveable search line. The diver then swims up one side, down the other and then moves the end along whatever the decided distance. The process may be speeded up by using two divers on one line, or two lines, one from either end.

Deciding factors in the selection of a method will include such things as visibility, bottom detail eg. snags, irregularity, channels etc. currents, size of object, time available, experience of team.

In many instances, the search team will be unable to guarantee that

the area searched did not, in fact contain the required object. This will be due to the amount of debris on the bottom and the size of the object. The only course in this event is to re-search the area again and again until satisfied or fed up. Persistence pays off, they tell me.

CONCLUSION

Please remember that S & R diving, although an extension of sports diving, requires quite specialised skills and training, and to become involved in serious black water diving without these is dangerous. Remember also that such operations demand team work to succeed and the team must be trained together, confident in each other's skill and reliability and disciplined to accept the necessary restrictions of this type of diving.

Submitted by F. FERRANTE

(written from notes and lectures by P.L. Butler, Police Search and Rescue)

REMINDER NOTICE - OVERDUE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The following people have not paid their 1980/81 subscriptions by the deadline date of the third Wednesday in September.

Neil Knight
Paul Sier
John Marshall
Peter Oakley
Jay Cody
Wendy Mason
Robert Koper
Wayne Hatch
Ron Shepherd

Frank Herbert
Leo Canteri
Craig Dunster
Roma Waldron
Paul King
Rob Woolley
Amanda Bedison
Joe Greasby
Alan Currie

Subscriptions that are not paid by the end of October may incur another joining fee of \$5.00 to retain membership. Payment to Box 2526W, G.P.O. Melbourne.

Get your deposits in for Ulladulla \$20.00 - half the sites already booked.

EARLY DAYS AT SORRENTO

In our diving excursions from the Sorrento district we pass by many interesting buildings which have been part of Sorrento history during the early roaring days.

The often referred to "Father of Sorrento" was one Hon. George Selth Coppin who had the ability to quickly grasp the possibilities of the unique marine attractions of the Peninsula. He used his talents for organisation and promotion, together with his power to inject enthusiasm into others to convert a fishing village into a bustling seaside resort. In 1871 a Government census showed that Sorrento including Portsea, had 22 occupied houses with 98 inhabitants and Rye had 14 occupied houses with 69 inhabitants, a far cry from the townships of 1980.

At Sorrento backbeach Coppin named the beautiful little bay the Ocean Amphitheatre and established a large rotunda which commanded a magnificent view of the glorious coastal scenery. Picnicers enjoyed the well laid out parks of the Ocean Amphitheatre and the magnificent Continental Hotel was built at Sorrento to accommodate holiday makers.

The Sorrento Pier was built in 1870 and with the regular steamer service from Melbourne more and more professional people came to select land for their seaside homes.

To celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1899, Coppin at his own expense, constructed cliff paths, benches and shelter sheds situated at vantage points at Jubilee Point, Diamond Bay and Mt. St. Paul. Today, these paths together with others can be followed in parts, and a keen eye can trace their existence through sand drifts at Diamond Bay.

Coppin was also instrumental in having a strip of land some 500 yards wide running from London Bridge to Cape Schank, set aside as a nature reserve. Thank God for George Coppin or there might be hotels on the beaches today!

In 1875 the Sorrento swimming baths were built and described in an early brochure as "having clean sandy bottom, strong briny water, transparent as crystal, secured by a fence to exclude large fish; convenient dressing rooms and thorough cleanliness. A red flag denotes gentlemens hours; white flag for ladies; single bath with towels sixpence; tickets four shillings per dozen; monthly ticket

five shillings".

To the west of the baths the land up to the pier was donated by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and was developed as Sorrento Park. At the time it was described as "A government reserve planted with English trees. A bowling green and croquet lawn has been formed, beds and walks have been laid out with great taste, and the garden facing the bay is a most charming promenade upon a summer's evening and a delightful spot for picnic parties." Even today those massive English trees make a beautiful picnic spot.

In 1877 Coppin formed the Sorrento/Queenscliff Navigation Co. Ltd. which purchased the pioneer excursion paddle steamer "Golden Crown". The regular Sunday excursions from Sandridge Pier (Pt. Melb.) to Queenscliff and Sorrento became so well patronised that the return fare from Melbourne was reduced from one pound to seven and sixpence - the journey incidentally taking two and a half hours each way.

Horse cabs were at the Sorrento Pier to meet the steamer during the summer period, to take people on to the Ocean Amphitheatre.

Another paddle steamer the "Williams" plied the run Queenscliff-Portsea-Sorrento Dromana and Schnapper Point (Morrington). Refreshments and a band for special occasions were available. These schemes were so successful that Coppin established Bay Excursion Co. Ltd. and Bay Steamers Pty. Ltd., which introduced the paddle steamers Ozone (1897) and Hygeia (1890). Later in 1910 the enormous Weeroona with a capacity of 2000 passengers was introduced by Bay Steamers Co.

In 1890 Coppin introduced the Sorrento Tramway Co. Passengers leaving the boat at the pier approached the steam tram by means of an overhead bridge from the pier to the headland and if you look today you will see the path still exists even though the bridge has been removed. The steam tram then took the passengers to the Ocean Amphitheatre. It is of interest to note that the tram was pulled by horses in the evenings and mornings and by steam locomotive during the busy time of the day.

The tramway was closed down in 1920 and the two steam engines went to a sawmill in Noojee, the sleepers to a Geelong Cement Works and the rails to New Zealand.

And so ended an era of bustling boarding houses such as the Back Beach Palace, Orphir, the Oriental, the Astoria and many others.

The guests arriving by boat were met by be-capped porters to attend to their luggage, while waggonettes and horse-cabs awaited the convenience of the tourists.

The modern age had arrived when in 1919 the Melb. "Herald" inaugurated the first regular airmail delivery of their newspaper and Sorrento was on the route. The papers were dropped from the plane wrapped in bundles in hessian and were provided with a special hand grip in order to make it possible to lean further out of the plane and thus drop the bundles more accurately!

Today, an Army Hercules aircraft would be required to drop enough evening papers to cater for the summer holiday makers at Sorrento, such is progress since 1870!

(Photographs by courtesy Nepean Historical Society.)

DES WILLIAMS

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Apart from the usual excellence of the Pinnacles dive on September 7th the diving calendar during September has been nothing to write home about. Hell! Forget about writing home, how about just writing a few lines for F & J.

To begin with the Pinnacles dive is always an interesting spot to dive, and the few newer members, who hadn't dived it before sure got a buzz out of falling down the sheer drop off's. Plenty of fish, the odd small shark and visibility that was fair, made it a welcome change from the diving we have recently been doing.

After the main dive, the usual second dive was held closer in to the cliffs of Phillip Island. Geoff and Tony managed a cray each, but their cray madness and rivalry was only surpassed by their fair play by throwing the little shrimps back.

Bazza Truscott, whom I've always considered to be the father of cray hunters had better look to his side as Geoff Birtles, one time water ski champ is showing some impressive style in finding the elusive cray.

Now don't be mistaken about all this talk about crays. As an educated estimate the number of crays actually taken by V:S.A.G. members over the past year would not even fill a cray pot, but like all fishermen the bragging and the tales about the one that was caught

do tend to make the whole subject somewhat prolific. As for me I just wish I could get one now and again. Having tried panty hose with abalone stuffed inside, rabbit traps, underwater laser beams, and plastic sexy looking female crays as decoys, I've just about given up.

The newly appointed member to the committee is Des Williams. Des has been a member for just over a year and has been a very keen participator in that time. Prior to joining V.S.A.G. Des was a member of the Box Hill Skin Diving Club for many years and dived extensively in Victorian and Bass Strait waters as well as interstate. Currently Des is undertaking a marine biology course and with his other underwater interests of wrecks and photography he is sure to be a valuable asset to the committee.

There was bitter disappointment at Barwon Heads and soon after at Queenscliff when we assembled at those places on 14th September. Firstly at Barwon Heads, absolutely filthy water greeted us as the Barwon River spewed its muddy waters into the ocean. Then at Queenscliff the wind was lashing the wave tops as we looked towards the heads, and although the ocean side was protected by the lee of the Point Lonsdale sand dunes, we decided to give the rough riding away.

A week later a 6.30am summit meeting between dive captain Dave Carroll, a half asleep Goulding, and the local milkman decided unanimously to pay heed to the coastal weather forecast of a gale warning. So for two weeks in a row diving was unsuitable. So much free time at the beginning of spring should enable you to finish off those winter jobs and be free for diving during the better months to come.

Have you caught sight of Russell Olorenshaw diving. Russell who's quite a well built boy (will be a big help to his mum when he grows up) doesn't wear a wet suit top. Right through winter Russ has been diving in "long johns" and a jumper. On one occasion he even wore a light ski suit. Hell, they sure make 'em tough these days!

Recent prize winners in the club have been Fred Ferrante (Literary Award) and Tony Tipping (Clubman of the Year).

Little Freddy has been working very diligently with his job as newsletter editor and his efforts in keeping alive the J. Cody inspired literary award has paid off.

On the big prize one could say that "Tipping pulled it off again".

Says Tipping modestly "I didn't try to win it." "Its just that everything I do with the club i.e. diving, writing, introducing new members, working bees, showing films etc. are points scoring activities."

By the time you get to read this, October will be well and truly here. The new committee will have been decided and we should be winding up towards the summer diving season.

For those of you who don't dive regularly during the winter, now is the time to check your gear, and make sure your medical tests are not overdue.

MATT A DOOR
(Its just all Bull)
