

FATHOMS

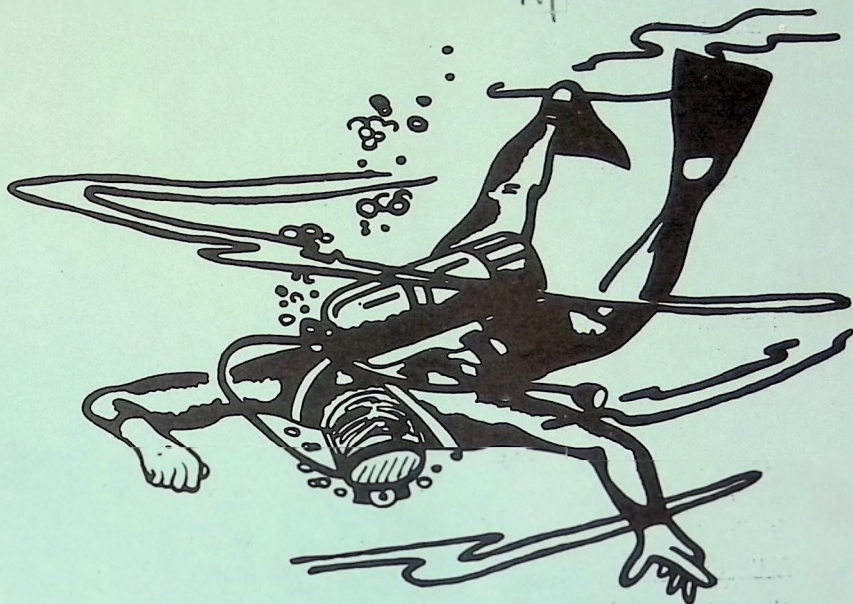
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SAFETY IN DIVING

50c

April 81



V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

APRIL 1981

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 15th April, at 8pm at 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!

At our recent March meeting, letters received from Carol Croxford in Western Australia and Karl Jironec in Mauru were read to those present. Diving seems to be good in both areas and it is good to know members of VSAG don't let distance interfere with friendships here in Melbourne. And whilst on the subject of diving distant areas our President advised of his inability to co-ordinate our next overseas trips and the "ball" was picked up by Geoff Birtles who I am sure will make a first class job of trip details.

For those who missed the recent Cave Diving Course another will be organized in approximately two months; so give some thought to bettering your diving skills by means of the course. I can assure you attention to detailed safety measures can be quite refreshing to those who undertake the challenge. A point of interest arose recently when I had my "HORNET" brand 92 c.f. cylinder hydro-tested by Air-Dive Pty. Ltd., and it would be in your interest if you have a "HORNET" tank to follow up. Air-Dive found the valve in the top of the tank to be undersize and therefore not to Australian standards and consequently the valve was condemned. I was really impressed as the cylinder is only 12 months old. After discussion with the supplier of the cylinder a new valve was fitted at no charge. So have your valve gauged for size to avoid possible serious damage to life or property, before the 3000 PSI + pressure decides to launch your tank valve with the coming Space Shuttle Project!!

The good diving weather certainly continued into March with superb flat seas at Port Campbell "Loch Ard" dive and you will find a dive report by Geoff Birtles further on in this issue.

ED

BASS STRAIT CHARTER TRIP - Open to all clubs

VSAG has booked the luxury charter boat "Polperro" from 12th to 20th September for some superb diving in Bass Strait.

There are still 6 vacancies and divers are keenly required to contact John Goulding (Private 89-6634). Book now and don't miss out.

DIVE CALENDAR:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>LOCATION:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT:</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
April 5th	SORRENTO	10AM	G. BIRTLES 846-1983	SUBMARINE WRECKS
April 16-20	TIDAL RIVER		J. Goulding 89-6634	EASTER LONG WEEKEND
April 26th	FUN RUN	8.30AM	T. TIPPING	CONTACT 80-4956
May 3rd	SORRENTO	11AM	F. FERRANTE 578-4406	SLACK WATER DIVE
May 17th	FLINDERS	10AM	G. BIRTLES 846-1983	
July 4&5th	GOLF DAYS FULL WEEKEND OF ACTIVITIES AT YARRAWONGA - CONTACT N. GARLAND TEL: 529-5484			

COMMITTEE NEWS:

Meeting held at Wendy & Fred Ferrante's home on March 25th.

1. Fred Ferrante showed samples of printed T..Shirts and outlined costs of arranging some for VSAG Club Members. Fred to organize more details for shirts to be released at Annual General Meeting.
 2. Terry Brooks attended the meeting and explained his lady Sally Roberts has offered to type future editions of "Fathoms". Terry pointed out that a projector and some diving films can be made available for Club meetings in future. Terry has many contacts with various film libraries and it is expected the first film will be shown at May Meeting.
 3. Max Synon suggested VSAG make an official protest through SDF ABOUT damage being done to Port Phillip Bay by the huge influx of scallop boats.
- Bob Scott reluctantly advised Committee that the fourth annual damage to his home would have to be

4. Bob Scott very reluctantly advised Committee that the forthcoming B.B.Q. at his home would have to be cancelled due to recent family commitments. It is totally unavoidable and Bob was not apologetic.

5. D. Carroll moved the Club, arrange permanent meeting room with Collingwood Football Club Management to avoid the current uncertainty which exists and sometimes noisy competition from other people holding meetings.

 CANCELLED -----CANCELLED -----CANCELLED -----CANCELLED -----

All members and friends of VSAG please be advised that our scheduled B.B.Q. which was to be held on 11th April has had to be postponed indefinitely.

It was to be held at Bob Scott's home at Keilor. Bob extends apologies to all as the decision was brought upon because of recent family commitments which leave his home unavailable.

*****CANCELLED*****CANCELLED*****CANCELLED*****

PORT CAMPBELL -"LOCH ARD"

On the night of May 31, 1878, the Loch Ard (an iron ship of 1624 tons) piloted by Captain Gibb was found to be closing on the rugged coastline of Port Campbell. A desperate manoeuvre to sail her through "the eye" of the wind failed and still she headed toward shore. Both anchors were let go and although they had the desired effect of bringing her head to the wind, they dragged over the sea bed. Sails were set and cables slipped but by then she was trapped. Early on the morning of June 1, 1873 she foundered on the coastline with huge waves battering her against sheer cliffs. Only two survived this unfortunate, but not uncommon (for the times) disaster. 103 years later a small group of brave VSAG divers together with wives, kiddies and friends met in an annual pilgrimage to once again explore this fascinating piece of history.

(There being no truth in the rumour that some were more interested in attacking new cray territory.)

After nervous inspections and dark mutterings about "pretty rough seas" on the Friday evening we awoke early on the Saturday morning to (you've guessed it) no wind and dead flat seas. A sprint for the launching pier and we found ourselves queued behind 3 or 10 other diving boats including old friends from the Torquay Club.

For those that haven't launched at Port Campbell I can assure you its an experience. (A very nervous experience for the boat owner and a lot of fun for the helpers.) Boats are lifted off trailers by crane and lowered 20 ft. to the water. Fortunately Pete Rodgers (Torquay) lent us his sling and crane key and the task was accomplished with little drama.

Locating the site was not a problem - the big problem was finding parking space. We made the 10th and 11th diving boats anchored over the Loch Ard. Conditions were perfect 30 - 40 ft. visibility flat seas and no swell (eat your heart out Paul!)

Our first dive was an incredible experience. In excess of 30 divers were hammering, chiselling, levering, scraping, crawling and swimming wherever the eye could see. "Parachutes" were "flying" anything that moved to the surface. With the desperate sounds of chiselling and silt flying everywhere, one could be forgiven for thinking this was an underwater quarry with workers on piece rates.

Forty minutes (30 ft.) bottom time soon elapsed and we headed to an adjacent bay for a cray bash (deco dive). A race then ensued between Bazza and Geoff to see who could hit the reef first (80 ft. visibility - perfect territory). Geoff was seen pouring detergent down wet suit sleeves to speed things up but Bazza still beat him by a half head! What an experience - one had to push the small ones aside to get "size" crays! An hour later we had enough crays to feed the entire group - plus overs!

By this time it's around 2.00 p.m. and seas are still flat. A man has to do what he has to do - we decided to dive the Loch Ard again. But this is not quite as easy as it sounds. Carting 8 tanks up and down the gorge for filling is no fun. (Somehow or other the boat crews seemed to miss this task). Anyway we persevered and dived again in even flatter seas and improved visibility. (Do I hear you crying John?)

The highlight of this second dive was observing a group from Gippsland doing their fourth tank dive of the day in 30 ft. of water - and using two consecutive tanks on the second dive. We later asked to borrow their tables because there was certainly something wrong with ours! Their reply is censored in the interests of safety.

On Sunday the seas were once again dead flat. What a bore having to dive the Loch Ard for three consecutive dives! (How do you feel Des?) We arrived to find everyone had gone to the Schonberg (great pickings) leaving the Loch Ard to VSAC's tender mercies. Max, following a hunch, suggested a different spot. We dived to find 50 ft. visibility and goodies everywhere. You've got to see Uncle Max underwater, amongst a wreck, to believe it. He's like a big tom-cat over spilt cream. I swear you can hear him purring! The official version of course is that we got nothing - but Max, Don McBean and I nearly got hernias from our efforts (dreamy contemplations of marble bench tops and coffee tables!)

Following lunch and tank fills, we decided on a second bug hunt, this time in the gorge as seas were coming up and boats taken back to camp. Highlight of the dive was the "bleeding" of Chris Truscott. Chris in true Truscott fashion caught a 5 lb. (genuine) cray single handed - he's got 20 photos to prove it! At the other end of the scale Paul King (whose wife will "kill" for a cray) was seen emerging with a juvenile in nappies. After much ragging he offered it to an admiring (we thought) spectator crowd - immediately spurned it as too small!

Actually it wasn't Paul's day. As most know he's the current VSAG miler. Later that day young Reece Birtles (3) thrashed him in a 5 km. bush run!

APRIL, 1981

Special mention must be made of Mick Jackiw's unselfish manning of the compressor. After Refuge and Port Campbell its got to be someone elses turn at the Prom. Thanks to Pat and Max for the boats. It was a lot of fun (profitable fun!)

GEOFF (CRAY BIRTLES:

DOXA FUN RUN:

Sunday 26th April, 1981 - meet Albert Park Lake outside South Melbourne Football Ground 8.30 a.m.

12.73 km run to Elwood Beach followed by B.B.Q on the Yarra Bank near Anderson Street, Bridge.

Entry forms available Sun or Herald or from DOXA and must be completed by 15TH APRIL, i.e. before EASTER!!!

Further details contact non-dive captain Tony Tipping
Tel: 80-4956.

RANDY ALAN'S RAM'S VIEW OF EUROPE:

"Many of you who are now reading this magazine will know me by the name Alan Curre (i.e. Pat Renolds brother-in-law). Others will only know me as that crazy guy that disobeyed one of the fundamental rules in Diving, "stick to your buddy", in which the dive captain, Pat Renolds took great pains in reminding me of that fact. Still others won't even know me at all, and to those people I say, don't worry you have'nt missed much.

Well, much to my misfortune, I'm not going for those regular backward plunges into the great ocean depths, but going for even greater plunges down white covered mountains, luckily not backwards, thanks to a few well earned ski trips in our own snow fields.

Tony mentioned in the May, 1980 issue of Fathoms that I was going to try my luck in the Austrian ski resorts. I actually ended up in Davos, Switzerland after finding out that Austria's economy is not 100%, due to the old trouble of unemployment. Swiss pay better money anyhow!

I have no idea whether anyone in the club know's anything about the Schwiez, so I will start from the top. I just remembered, ther'es one guy who's skied in Switzerland, Romeo, who likes wearing French knickers, I wonder how many can gues who I mean?

Before I give you all the stuff on life here in a Swiss ski resort, I will give you an idea what I've been doing after leaving rainy Melbourne on 29th June, 1980.

To start with, I finally arrived in London after an agaonizing 27 hour trip. I travelled around Britian with my parents, and then left them in London after a few sobs and the usual photographs to my great new adventure in Europe, by myself. I was'nt alone long because at Victoria Station I met 3 girls from Brussels, and they insisted that I stay with them in Brussels, so naturally I could'nt refuse.

Then by train I travelled to Norway to catch the midnight sun, unfortunately the midnight sun is around May and August was a little late, so I had to be contented with long sunny days. After seeing a few of the tourist spots I decided to do a brake away trip up into the mountains of Stauager.

There I ended up sitting on flat rock talking to another Australian, who had been working on the oil rigs in North Sea for 4 years. He was making more I think than our favourate man - Mal. Incidentally, out of all the people I met travelling, the majority were Australians. It is absolutely amazing how many Australians are travelling and they all seem to be travelling for not less than a year, if not 2-3 or 4-5. The Americans I met, once they found out I was Australian, the first question they would ask is, "and how long are you travelling for".

The Americans could'nt believe how many Australians they met, and how long they had been travelling. One of the reasons, is that many Australians would do overland trips starting from Bankok or Singapore, and finishing somewhere in Europe, with many stops inbetween.

Well getting back to my little rock in Norway, while I was talking to my fellow Australian, I was hanging my feet over the edge, and wondering what would happen if I fell down to the water below, a drop of over 2000 ft. It was a sunny day so you could see all the way down the fjond approx 8 km.

Then I thought, now it's time to go and see all the big night spots in Europe, that I had seen on T.V. and heard everyone talk about, since I was a kid. I got bored looking at the mermaid in Kobenhaun (i.e. spelt in Dutch) and could'nt stop laughing at all the bus tourists trying to make sexy passes with her ,for all the budding photographers. The statue was very well polished in the usual places where people put their hands. Then, I thought, I would tantalize my fantasy by taking a stroll down the famous red light district in Amsterdam.

I had visions of seeing hundreds of beautiful girls offering their services: for what ever you could imagine. All I saw, was a few very average girls, sitting half clothed in front of windows, taking no interest in who was making an effort to look.

O.K., I thought the places I had seen were small time, so now I thought I would hit the big time and see what the famous Paris could offer. I was even correct, Paris was the big time, the biggest city I had ever seen. Although I enjoyed Paris to an extent, with all its expensive cafe's and night clubs you can only really enjoy Paris if you have plenty of money. Paris has no real parks or gardens like Melbourne has and when I went looking for some, I found myself in the bush being propositioned by ladies.

One I got to Switzerland I found myself really enjoying things, and not just putting it down to experience. Switzerland would have to be one of the most picturesque place in the world in Summer With its extraordinary clean and manicured surrounding you almost think its a painting and not for real.

Valleys like Grindelwald and Murren, are straight out of the fairy tale world, which of course I know all about!

If you could close your eyes and just imagine a neat little Swiss village with rolling hills, and the greenest grass you have ever seen. The wood chalet's with bright coloured flowers on the veranda and towering white peaks above, you would have an idea what this valley is like.

This is where "Clint Eastwood", made it into the box office again, with "The Eiger Saction".

From the Swiss Style Youth Hostel where I stayed (note: all the buildings in Grindelwald and Murren, are made in the original Swiss Chalet Style). I would stand on our veranda and look straight up to the Eiger Northward where the climbers made their treacherous ascent. The Eiger Northward is famous for sending over 100 climbers to their deaths in the last 60 years. The changability of the weather is well known for being the most unpredictable of any mountain in the world. At midday climbers may start the ascent with perfect conditions and within a matter of $\frac{1}{2}$ hour the temperature could drop to -100°C and the wind increase to over 200 km an hour. You wouldn't believe that such things could happen, on a calm sunny day in Grindelwald.

Even though the Eiger looks the most inaccessible place on Earth the enterprising Swiss have built a railway right through the middle in order to reach a place called the Yungrau. Here at a height of 4,100 metres you can ski all year round.

After 4 days here, I had to drag myself away with a promise to return sometime in the future.

After seeing the rest of Switzerland, and securing a job in Davos for the Winter, I decided to hit the beaches of Greece.

I heard from other travellers that Greece was the scene for all young people in Europe. So I flaked out on the Pelekas beach in Corfu at the end of September, absolutely fed up with travelling and ready just to doze around. Who ever told me about Greece was right he didn't get any facts wrong, there were plenty of girls around most from Sweden and California. These girls are by far the most liberal females I've ever met, I apologise to any Australian girls who are reading this article. All I can say is go to California. And to the Aussie guys I say definitely go to California. Although it only lasted for a short time in a week everyone had left it 'as the end of the 1960 summer in Greece.

I can hear some people saying, "what about the diving" and to those people I say stick to Australia, or better still, Truk Lagoon. Even though there are plenty of fish a mile off shore, there is virtually nothing close to the shore line. I know Bazza would get terribly upset if he couldn't find any crays. There is some good diving at certain places around the Greek Isles, but there is much more variety and area to diving in Australia.

I can't say too much about diving in Greece but I know that diving in Israel is fantastic. An Australian told me in Athens, that diving in the Red Sea, off the coast of Tel Aviv is unbelievable. He had dived The Great Barrier Reef and he said this was far superior.

From Greece, I decided to jump straight into a Military Coup in Istanbul, Turkey. I had some funny times walking the streets of Istanbul sometimes talking to the soldiers who stood at every street corner with machine guns. I was surprised to find the Turkish people very friendly and extremely helpful.

Plus it would have been the cheapest place I've been in up till now we lived very well on \$5 Aust. a day. The only trouble was you had to remember the toilet paper, when going to the toilet, or you had to use the Turkish method of water and fingers. Incidentally, there was no seat, so it was the old squat method, but after a few days, you get the hang of it.

After spending a very cheap week in Istanbul, we decided (i.e. my Brazilian friend and I) to travel up through Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy i.e. Venice and then Switzerland. I was lucky to come across a friend I met in Switzerland, in Athens, whom I travelled with for the rest of the trip. I was happy to travel with someone permanently for once, plus he proved very handy, because he knew how to speak 6 different languages. He also was working in Davos for the Winter.

So now I come to my impressions of life and work in Switzerland. I won't tell you all the things I've seen, heard, experienced and learnt in Davos, I think you would go to sleep, if you have'nt already!

But I will give you just enough to keep you interested for another few thousand pages.

Well, to jump right into it, I managed to get a job with the ski lifts i.e. Bahn in German, and that's what I'm doing right now, I'm sitting in a little cabin at a height of 2,500 metres, which is the start of the Grat ski run. Thus from such a height you can see such a panarama, that could only exist in one's imagination of the Swiss Alps.

I have all the facilities I need, T.V., telephone, cooking facilities, coffee, sterio, Racasan (and a few beautiful girls, unfortunately I just woke up.

To be serious, I would'nt be very popular, if I went to sleep. I must be continually watching skiers get off the T-bar and that becomes a little boring sometimes. Although I'm not working very hard today, I have plenty of time to write. There are very few people ski-ing today, because after 2 weeks of sunshine its now decided to snow and quite heavenly. It's been a very good year for snow in Davos, we have an average of 300mm more in some places, less in others, but with the amount there is, the season will last until late April started 1st December.

As for the quality and amount of Ski-ing in Switzerland I will say what everyone expects me to say, its excellent. Its true that Switzerland is a skiers paradise, with one hour ski runs, powder snow, and a variety of activities, in the villages that would keep most people occupied. One distinctive aspect about a Swiss ski resort is that not everybody comes to ski.

About 20-30% of the people in Davos have never skied in their life, and don't intend to start. The other 70% odd are skiers, but only ski 50% of the time. The non skiers will spend their time perhaps ice skating, swimming, sun bathing (when its sunny which is quite often) or just walking along the mountains on tracks. In summer walking through the mountains is the most popular pastimes for the Swiss and tourist alike.

For the skier, he can ski on prepared pist's or he can try his style in powder snow, which in January is sometimes up to 3 - 4 feet deep. If one day you get a little tired of riding 15 min. ski lifts you can test your fitness and try landlauf i.e. cross country ski-ing. But make sure you don't fall into the inevitable trap of spending one hour looking at nature while ski-ing and the rest of the day, drinking beer, in the conveniently situated restaurant that appears along the way. I myself have been caught a few times in one of these restaurants while ski on a ski run from Parsenn to Kabis. The ski run is famous in Switz. for being one of the longest, its starts from a mountain called Weissfluh (2,844 metres) and is approximately 18 km long. This run normally takes one hour, but it invarably takes me at least three because I always get caught half way at the Schwendi Restaurant.

If you eventually get sick of ski-ing down hill you can always, put your skins on, (i.e. on your ski) and go walking uphill. This is very popular in Switzerland. The Swiss will go out of their way to find an abandoned mountain, where nobody has skied yet.

The Swiss elderly generation are far more active than the old age people in Australia. In Summer the 70-80 year old's are walking up in the mountain and in Winter they hit the white slopes with as much enthusiasm and energy as the 20 year old.

There are many swimming pools in Davos, so if its bad weather many people go swimming, with the occasional spell in the sauna. Be sure to go on the days when the sauna is mixed, but don't wear anything or you will feel the odd one out.

One thing you notice in Switzerland is the pre-occupation with Military defence.

I wonder what the Australian male would say if he was told he had to spend part of his life in the army until 65 years old. I dare say, there would be a minor revolution inside Australia, But that is exactly what the Swiss male must do every year. The Swiss Government boast that they could have 2.5 million troupes mobilized in 24 hours of a declaration of War.

If you think the Swiss Alps are only used for ski-ing you could'nt be further from the truth. The Swiss Air Force installations are something out of the 21st Century.

In certain secret places in the Alps, the Swiss Air Force have huge airports, built straight into the mountain, complete with automatic doors to open and close the mountain. All over Davos there are military installtions inside the mountain.

Many years ago, the Swiss Government passed an act of Parliament that every new house built in Switzerland must be built with a completely equipped nuclear bomb shelter. One thing I've realized from travelling is how well off Australians are. Apart from Australia being a beautiful country, it is also in a unique position, in comparison to other major powers. It suffers no really great problems, and people are free to do as they like. There are many other people in this world less privileged than an Australian. The season will be finished here on the 26th April. I will then head towards London I plan to be home around July after travelling a little as I came home. So I look forward to seeing everyone again, I'm really looking forward to getting back to diving!.

ALAN CURRIE - "In Davos"

STOP PRESS!JOHN GOULDING WRESTS CRAY CROWN OFF BIRTLES & TRUSCOTT

Regular VSAG divers will know that Bazza and Geoff hotly contest the honour of "Cray King". Spurious reporting by one writer in the last issue of Fathoms suggested that Bazza had got the edge as the result of a rather good day at Flinders. Geoff who also had a good day, hotly responded to this by reminding the reporter that he had got both the biggest cray of the season (10 lb.) and biggest numbers. ("All lies", responds Barry!)

Needless to say Geoff and Barry (good mates who share a mutual respect for each others abilities) wish to keep this a strictly private affair. (Let's rephrase that - contest.) On Sunday March 23 in abysmal diving conditions our dedicated secretary quietly set about shattering this dream. On a "reco" dive he plucked a good size male in 3 minutes flat - the only cray of the day!

Birtles and Truscott, whipped into a frenzy by this usurper then set about trying 6 different locations including a suicidal dive in white water. All to no avail. They were last seen viciously eyeing John's cray and accusing it of Kamikaze tactics.

Anonymous (in the interests of a quiet life)

FOOTNOTE: Any future dives to Inverloch will be without Barry or Geoff's boats - they've sworn never to go near the place again.

USELESS INFORMATION:

On 18th May, 1942, an 18 ft. shark was caught by Rowley Wilson off the Lord Howe Island jetty. The line used was the anchor line of the small craft "Venture". The shark was a tiger variety and its stomach contents were a turtle, a cat, a small goat, two large beef bones, a 5 ft.

shark thrown off the jetty the day before, a number of mutton birds and king fish heads, and an albatross.

DES WILLIAMS

USELESS INFORMATION:

The British sailor was christened JACK TAR not because of his association with tar and tarred objects, but because in the old days of seafaring he wore tarpaulin hats & trousers.

DES WILLIAMS

V.S.A.G. CAVE DIVING COURSE:

After 2 scheduled practical sessions, 2 theory sessions, plus an extra un-scheduled practical session, 14 intrepid VSAG divers met at the Doncaster diving pool for examination.

Now you should understand that VSAG approached Russell Kitt (President CDAA) on the basis that we were "Gung Ho" divers of considerable experience who were only undertaking this training on the basis of "familiarization" with current examining techniques rather than any need for practical experience!

Our first session realized our very worst fears - the course was "puss", Fun, but hell, you shouldn't be in the water if you couldn't handle this.

The second pool session proved somewhat more difficult. In fact some started to have serious doubts as to whether they would get through at all. The writer (a diver of considerable talent - and modesty) was seen doing an explosive free ascent from 10 ft. after two very wet sucks of Des William's Sea Bee rig during a blacked out buddy breathing exercise. (Who needs mouthwash!) He is now seeking legal advice to recover damages for possible pneumonia.

Dive shops experienced record business in the following week as Fonzy stalwarts purchased scuba feed accessories in an attempt to update hopelessly obsolete equipment. (Cop that Tony!)

If you don't believe it, try controlling your buoyancy to ± 1 ft., with stops as and when required by the examiner up and down within a 10 ft. range. (Easy? Then try it - without flippers, no hand or feet movements) .

Touch the bottom (body or tank) or break the surface and you fail!

Sceptics should check with our illustrious secretary John Goulding. His Fenzy was seen to run out of air after 5 minutes of frantic tap turning during which John was observed imitating a Yo/yo.

But then buoyancy control was the easy part. Russell soon convinced everyone that they needed more training by indiscriminate stealing of masks and air supplies in pitch darkness during which trainees were supposed to be laying and following lines. (Some how or other the course, was becoming less Puss!)

On the night of the 14th everyone was very confident. Des and I (both divers of considerable ability) undertook to be first off in the blacked out line and buddy breathing examination. Five frantic minutes later we found we had failed! I can assure you this is somewhat damaging to the ego. Fortunately our examiner, (lovely chap) permitted a second attempt in recognition of our completing the course although under difficulties.

And so on. We were not alone - no names no pack drill! Nine out of fourteen finally passed and look forward to the theory examination. We all benefited from the experience and recommend it to other VSAG divers as a valuable and fun "update". If it does nothing else it will highlight any gear inadequacies and this may save a life!

Just as soon as Cat. 2 cards are issued regular trips to Gambier will once again be on the VSAG itinerary. Right now I am negotiating a second CDAA training session with Russell and I am looking for a course leader to follow through. I would also like to hear from interested participants. Cost around \$20 a head inclusive.

GEOFF (CRAY) BIRTLES

EASTER TRIP - WILSONS PROMONTORY:

3 Campsites have been booked at TIDAL RIVER camping ground Wilsons Prom from Thursday evening 15th April and departing on Monday 20th April. As in previous years the sites have been booked in the names of 3 members who will hold the camp permit tickets. Other members who will be attending are allocated to these sites. You must know whose site you are on when stopped at the entry gate. In some cases you may have to pay extra when entering. Total costs will be worked out when we are all down there. Please remember whose site you are on so that the ranger will know that you have been booked in. Once at the site there is no need to erect your camp on the site actually allocated to you, so long as you are on one of our 3 sites.

<u>NAME:</u>	<u>SITE NO:</u>	<u>AVENUE:</u>	<u>ALLOCATED MEMBERS:</u>
J. GOULDING	1	FIRST	R. ADAMSON
B. TRUSCOTT	2	FIRST	M. JACKIW
D. WILLIAMS	3	FIRST	G. BIRTLES, J. TURNER
M. SYNON	4	FIRST	D. ABELL
P. TIPPING	5	FIRST	D. McBEAN
T. TIPPING	6	FIRST	J. LIDDY
P. REYNOLDS	18	FIRST	F. FERRANTE
B. SCOTT	19	FIRST	P. KING

Any further queries contact JOHN GOULDING: TEL: 89-6634 NOW:

FLOTSAM & JETSAM:

Well, the Cave Diving Course is all over for me bar the hard part sitting for the theory exam I remember doing Fred Tidman's diving course about 10 years ago and being quite relieved when doing the theory course to find the questions very simple. You know the sort of thing Why don't you eat a big feed of baked beans before diving? Why do you hold your face mask close to your face when spitting into it. - Gosh, diving was a simple and straight forward business in those days. - But now its different. Sitting in those cave diving lectures listening to instructor Russell Kitt, I could hardly believe that I was so brave to be risking my neck by diving. Suddenly diving became a nightmare of decompressions sicknesses, embolisms, hypothermia and barotraumas - not to mention, silt outs, black outs, pass outs, malfunctions and narcosis and so on So I sit back and read on about the symptoms, preventions and treatments for all these terrible things, and hope that my buddy whether he's a cave diver or not will know all the answers if I get into a tight spot

The first rays of the new Autumn sun glistened brilliantly on the peaceful Sorrento Waters as we made our way towards the Rip "drop off". - The dive that followed was one of those rare and magnificent experiences that we sometimes find in Victorian waters. The early morning dive kept quite a few away but for those who sighted Sorrento at 7.30 am it was very worthwhile. Afterwards we dived the wreck of the "Light of the Age", and recovered the usual array of junk.

The Labour Day long weekend in March was a huge success, with the weather just right for diving the "Loch Ard" Over the years our association with the "Loch Ard" has provided mixed fortunes, however this trip must rate as one of the best. Even though this scribe was not present on the trip, I did appreciate receiving a certain piece of "treasure"; from one of the "best little cray catchers" around.

Good old Bob Scott, took us on scalopdive last year, when we gathered about a thousand of the little blighters and then spent the next four hours sitting in the boats shelling them. So Bob is dive captain again and its to Inverloch we go. -- What a day !! I had about 7 dives, each one of about 5 minutes duration before bouncing up and telling Bob "Hope this is 'nt the spot". Still things could have been worse The boat might have sunk; and not just conked out ... to be ungloriously towed back to land by Pat Reynolds - and amongst all this strife and confusion I was grabbed by a huge crayfish that dragged me away from its underwater home and wrestled its way into my bag before striking out for the surface, and the safety of the broken down boat.

Then on March 29th we had a great dive on the George Kermode followed by a cray/abalone search off pyramid rock.

So far diving, March was a beauty and brought out a few gems about some of the members.

- * Geoff Birtles - Baratrauma is not really a big barracouta
- * John Goulding - Can find Mick Jackiw's mouth a lot easier after the latter trimmed his beard.
- * Des Williams -- Has been in training to win the Superman Award.
- * Bazza's disappointment was to buy a marine radio for his boat, and then find out, he's too nervous to speak in front of a microphone.
- * Tony (what was his name again) has taken up tennis since losing his hearing recently - we just hope that with this new sport, he does'nt lose his balls!!

Easter is just around the corner and this year Flotsam & Jetsam will be nominating the following awards:-

- Superman Award
- Gannett Award
- Creep Award and many others, so don't miss the next sensational issue of Fathoms which will relive Easter in all its monstrousness.

Hey, we almost forgot, that we know ex water skier, and, more recently one of the "best" "little cray catchers" around, has bought himself a dive boat. Nothing less than a 17 ft. Haines Hunter, complete with, fluff pile carpet, wrought iron lace work, bow rail and a good old Aussie flag fluttering from the rear pole. All he needs now is a real car to tow it. Seems that the BMW, won't be able to handle the pace.

All jokes aside, Geoff's new acquisition will be of great benefit to the club, following the sale of Tony's boat.

Signer MISS DA CHEAN

 The French Polisher

USELESS INFORMATION:

About 12,000 ocean going vessels - an average of 33 per day - travel through the Panama Canal annually, carrying some 131,490,000 short tons of cargo, but the passage through the Manmade Gatun Lake still presents a navigational problem. The violet flowers and green leaves of water hyacinths float on the lake, and their long coarse stems can become entangled in ships' propellers. A special Hyacinth patrol destroys more than 42 million plants a year to keep the channel clear.

Since 1866 the American sailing clipper "GENERAL GRANT" has lain 15 fathoms deep on one of the desolate Auckland Islands which are some 300 miles southwest of New Zealand. She was bound from Melbourne to England carrying as passengers more than a hundred gold miners who had been successful on the Victorian goldfields, but only 15 are known to have survived the wreck. On present day values the gold bullion on the ship is estimated to be worth some \$32 million dollars, and up to 1975 no less than 18 attempts have been made to locate the wreck and salvage

the bullion.

In 1915, when the "MAURITANIA" was a troop ship, a torpedo on the starboard bow missed her by five feet. Only prompt action by the Captain and helmsman saved her from her sister's fate. The "LUSITANIA" was not so fortunate.

The maiden voyage of the "MAURITANIA" might easily have been her last. In the terrible seas she encountered, a spare anchor was torn from the forecastle head. It weighed 10 tons and could have done incalculable damage if it had not been secured promptly, at the risk of a great deal of life and limb.

DES WILLIAMS

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