

# FATHOMS

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## SAFETY IN DIVING

50¢

*Dec 1981*



# V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

## FATHOMS

(Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)

Box 25261, G.P.O. Melbourne, 3001

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465 2812

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### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

TONY TIPPING	- Vice Pres. & S.D.F. Delg.	- 80 4956
BOB SCOTT	- Social Secretary	- 367 2261
PAT REYNOLDS	- Property Officer	- 789 1092
TERRY BROOKS	- Points Scorer & Asst. Ed.	- 439 3749
PAUL TIPPING	- Public Relations Officer	- 387 2027
MICK JACKIW	- S.D.F. Delegate	- 736 1730
GEOFF BIRTLES	- S.D.F. Delegate	- 846 1983
BARRY TRUSCOTT	- Committee Member	- 783 9095

### CLUB MEETING

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 16th December, at 8 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lurie Street, Abbotsford. Bar facilities are available to VSAG members prior to and after the General Meeting and meals are served from 6 p.m. until about 9 p.m. 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.

\*\* NOTE: There is no club newsletter or general meeting in January. The first meeting in 1982 will be Wednesday 17th February.

### SECRETARY & SAFETY/MEDICAL OFFICER

John Goulding  
13 Birdwood Street  
Box Hill South 3128  
89 6634

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Des Williams  
29 Valerie Street  
Boronia 3155  
762 1623

## EDITORIAL

Already it is Christmas and we have planned dives to the end of March 1982, the year just slips away!

Undoubtedly, a lot of you will be off for summer holidays very soon, so be sure to return to the V.S.A.G. club scene in one piece! It is always a bad time to be on the highways, so try and maintain a cool head on the road, so what if it takes half an hour to arrive as long as it is safely.

The good weather can now be expected and already V.S.A.G has put a terrific dive on the intact submarine in November. I wasn't at the dive because of an injury, and I don't have a dive report to publish, but believe the visibility was exceptional.

For those of you are resident in the St. Kilda area a new dive shop has opened at 300 St. Kilda Road near INKERMAN St and is run by an old friendsof V.S.A.G., John Gibson. John has worked as right-hand man for Ern Ireland for many years and always "pushed" V.S.A.G. to new divers. So if you want to do business with an experienced diver, see John at John's Dive Shop.

The V.S.A.G. tennis party, mile run, barbeque was a lot of fun in November and if you didn't attend, you missed a terrific day. Thanks must go to Tony and Paul Tipping for the hospitality at their Somers beach house, and to Tony for organising the Tennis Courts.

Remember, there is no V.S.A.G. General Meeting in January and no newsletter (thank God!), so enjoy that summer diving and I will be expecting a flood of dive reports for the February newsletter.

I am sure you will all enjoy the article in this edition by Paul King on his recent trip to Fiji, and don't forget to contact Andy Redwood if you want to join in on the V.S.A.G. trip to VANUATU in April, bookings have been rapid, so hurry.

If I dont see you before Christmas, which is highly likely, because of an interstate business trip during the next General Meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each one of you a very Merry and Safe Christmas. My special thanks to all who have contributed to our Club newsletter over the past twelve months.

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Meeting held at Bob and June Scott's home on Wednesday 25th November 1981.

- (i) Dive calendar discussion to March 21st, 1982.
- (ii) V.S.A.G. Literary award to be discontinued until a permanent sponsor and suitable scoring system is obtained.
- (iii) P. Reynolds reported the Club compressor requires a light sand blast and paint to remove rust and salt.
- (iv) Diving movies to be arranged for every second General Meeting commencing in March, 1982.
- (v) T. Tipping advised Doctor/Diver Dr. Broomhall has offered to talk at a General Meeting on aspects of diving medicine. To be arranged and advertised.
- (vi) Application for membership by Alan Wood of Donald Victoria approved by Committee.
- (vii) The 1982 Wilson's Promontory Trip abroad the "Mirrabooka" was planned. A decision was made to dispense with all cooking and to make good use of salads and sandwiches. This trip should, as a result, be a lot less work for everyone.

\* NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING to be held at Barry and Marie Truscott's home at 8 Netherbrae Road, East Frankston, on Wednesday, January 27th, 1982 at 8.00 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

FOR SALE

SCUBAPRO BUOYANCY COMPENSATOR, Jacket Model. Medium size, hardly used, as new condition.

\$200.00

WETSUIT, Ladies. Abalone Professional 1/4". Long-johns and hooded jacket - blue with red insert on jacket. Excellent condition. Suit size 12, 5'6" lady.

\$150.00

REGULATOR, US Divers Aquarius, good condition complete with brand new Farallon 4000 psi PRESSURE GAUGE.

\$100.00

All items Telephone Fred/Wendy Ferrante, A.H. 578 4406.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt</u>	<u>Meet at</u>
Dec. 6	Heads Area	8.00am	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Dec. 13	Flinders (Family Day)	9.00am	Mick Jeacle 772 6820	Flinders Pier
Diving will be done early and a barbeque for all the family will follow, to get into the Xmas spirit.				
Dec. 16	General Meeting	8.00pm	Collingwood F/Club	
Dec. 26	Ulladulla Xmas Trip.			
to	Co-Ordinators:	Max Synon	and	Des Williams
Jan. 8		456 4812		762 1623

NOTE: You must book with above Co-Ordinators if you wish to attend. There are limited number of camp sites and no assurance of a site will be given to those who arrive without pre-booking.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt.</u>	<u>Meet At</u>
Jan 24.	Sorrento/P.P. Heads	9.00am	Terry Brooks 439 3749	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Jan 30-31 & 1st Feb. Australia Day Long Weekend at Wilson's Promontory aboard the "Mirrahooka". Meet at Foster Pub before 10p.m. on 29th or at Port Franklin Jetty Before 7am on 30th.				
Feb. 14	Flinders Area	9.00am	John Goulding 89 6634	Flinders Jetty
Plan is to dive wreck "George Kermode" & reef for crays.				
Feb. 21	Port Phillip Heads area	9.00am	Paul Tipping 387 2027	Sorrento Boat Ramp
March 6,7 & 8th	Port Campbell - Long Weekend		Max Synon 465 2812	
March 21	Pinnacles Dive		Bob Scott 367 2261	San Remo Jetty

\* Meeting time to be advised - for this charter boat dive.

NOTE: *Those wishing to dive on above dates must confirm with the Dive Captain the evening before the dive to arrange boat accommodation.*

## FLOTSAM & JETSAM

DEC. 1981

With the coming of November there was plenty of eagerness amongst certain members to launch boats at Flinders and have a crack at a few crayfish now that the closed season was over.

The site that greeted us what not too inviting. A site that I had seen too many times at Flinders, and I knew exactly what the diving conditions would be.

Needless to say, the crayfish won the day as we headed away from Flinders for a more hopeful attempt at Sorrento. On arrival we

still had plenty of time to do a slack water dive and the South West wind conditions gave good shelter in the area of the rip "Drop Off".

The more often I dive these magnificent "drop offs" around Port Phillip Heads, the more impressed I am with Victor[a]'s superb diving spots.

My buddy and I drifted along the wall at between 60 and 70 feet, peering at the busy colonies of life which inhabit this area. What a contrast this area was to our next dive that afternoon on the scallop beds off Rye. Plenty of scallops but nothing else. The bottom is absolutely bare. Even the lone flathead I saw looked somewhat puzzled at the emptiness of it all.

The following week it was back to the rip area and over to our wall. The crays were stacked up like toys on a sideshow "Knock 'em Down." - and were just as hard to get as their make believe counter parts. Whilst on this dive some of the lads came across a large ship's anchor embedded in the rock and now richly overgrown with coral and sponges. With Dave Carroll, the dive Captain, it was only natural that we should do a channel run for the second dive. As is his usual ferret like manner to seek out items from wrecks, Dave soon reappeared with a China plate. Max recovered a torpedo bottle and I bumped head first into the "Eliza Ramsden" whilst belting along in the current.

At the November General Meeting, I couldn't help overhearing Geoff Birtles putting in some heavy work on Mick Jackiw to change the next dive to the submarine. Geoff was saying, "Mick we should do the sub and show those non-P.A.D.I. types a thing or two about deep diving, and then afterwards we could take a spin along the coast to Barwon Heads." We know lately that the Big B has been keen to race Barry in the Haines Handicap, but a spin along the coastal waters sounded a bit off, even for Geoff. Not so, my friends! You see Geoff had received some advance news which the rest of us common folk did not hear about until two days later. - I speak of course of the new nudist beach between Pt. Lonsdale and Ocean Grove announced by the Bellarine Shire.

I suppose when you get to Geoff's age the announcement of a nudist beach is pretty important. The big "M" thinks so too! And almost

ran out of fuel whilst doing a 5 mile detour to see if there were any topless torsos to be seen at Popes' Eye . . .

Well, Geoff got his wish. We dived the Intact J class submarine on November 22nd. We had perfect weather and good visibility.

Lying in 120 feet on about a 50 degree tilt to Port, this old world war 1 warrior is peaceful again after recently coming into the public light when a diver disappeared during a dive at the spot.

Having completed the sub dive we went across the heads to the back of Sorrento for a cray dive. Along the way, a large shark surfaced near the boat, its dorsal fin cutting swiftly through the water. Unlike their ferocious manners of the movie "Jaws" this fellow turned and fled into the deep when we turned and headed for a confrontation.

When relating the incident to other divers back at Sorrento I was suprised to hear that divers had spotted many sharks over recent weeks, including some white pointers at Wilsons Prom. and the Sub!!

It hardly seems 12 months since last Christmas and yet here we are again into the silly season. Over recent weeks we are reminded how many summer boaties and divers there are. Since mid October the boat ramps have been full of characters we never see during the year, and the dive schools are churning out fresh students who will invade the piers and sheltered coastal areas until they join a club.

We are very fortunate in V.S.A.G. Our boatsowners in the main have many years boating experience. They are keen to dive on nearly all club dives, bringing with them their boats and providing members with a wide variety of dive locations and extreme flexibility.

So folks! Count your blessings. You're in a better Club than most divers, and to all of you F. & J. says, "Have a safe and happy Xmas holiday and a great new year."

Signed

EVE O'LUSHION

(The ever changing woman)



## ULLADULLA CHRISTMAS TRIP - DEC 26TH - JAN 3TH

We have eight campsites booked this year at Ulladulla in the Shoalhaven City Council Caravan & Camping Reserve, South Street, Ulladulla. The Manager is Stan Horwood and the telephone is (044) 55 2457. The sites are booked for Victorian Sub-Aqua Group, and from memory Stan closes his office at 5.00 p.m. each day.

The following people have confirmed their attendance and with only eight sites, anyone wishing to go on this Club trip is urged to contact Des Williams or Max Synon by December 17th General Meeting and advise arrival and departure dates.

Confirmed sites: Truscott Family, Synon Family, Des Williams, Mick Jackiw, Tony Tipping, John Goulding, Mick Jeacle, Peter Jeacle & family and Alex Talay.

\* \* \* \* \*

## AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND - 1982

The good ship "Mirrabooka" is once again available for that monstourous trip to Wilsons' Promontory in January. Last year we had a full ship and private boats as well, so if you want to be in on this next trip get your name on the list at our next meeting in December or ring John Goulding NOW!

Definately a limited number of divers can go on the "Mirrabooka" so don't be disappointed, as some were last year, when we had three magic days. This is your one and only warning, so be quick.

This year catering conditions have been altered to eliminate cooking and washing up. A special menu is being prepared to make best use of salads, sandwiches and cold meats with disposable cutlery and crockery, leaving more time for diving.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 1982 V.S.A.G. TRIP TO VANUATU

CO-ORDINATOR: Andy Redwood, Telephone 699 3906 April 2nd - 17th

Time is running out if you wish to go to the warm tropical waters of Vanuatu in April 1982, with V.S.A.G. you can still ring Andy for details of this brilliant diving spot and make a booking.

TOUR COSTS:

(From Melbourne) Scuba Diver	\$1,130
Snorkeller	\$ 870
Non-diver	\$ 770

### DIVING FIJI

Several years ago I had the pleasure of visiting Fiji and was delighted to have the opportunity of revisiting this Pacific Paradise. The island we chose to spend our holiday was Mana Island, often described as a diving supermarket.

Mana is situated some 2½ hours boat time from Latouka. Having arrived on Tuesday evening in Nadi we spend a great night at the Travelodge, before a terrifying half hour bus trip to Latouka; the bus being in hands of a mad man Indian, who knew only one speed.

Unfortunately, the launch to Mana was not driven by the Indian, but by a laid back Fijian who certainly was not intent on burning up the waves. A few drinks on the boat had us in fine tune for our arrival at Mana. The arrival and departures are certainly an event, with flowers and singing and lots of "bula bula".

After settling into our hut, well appointed too, it was down to the water's edge. Sheer paradise was before my eyes, for only 10 feet from the shore line, tropical fish could be seen darting among the coral ledges. As I was on the sheltered or southern side of the island, a quick snorkel was decided upon, so armed with trusty old camera, I settled for an afternoon of photography and fish puzzles (what was the name).

The following morning saw us with two of the newest V.S.A.G. members, the honorable Mr. Allister Stewart, a fine gentleman from the region of Wangarratta, where he is a solicitor, with his lovely wife Marg. More about these two later, the other new member is the Dive Guide Mr. Api San Batl. Api or "Happy" to his friends, certainly proved to be a wealth of information, and a fantastic guy to go diving with. To both these new members a welcome on behalf of the club, hope you enjoy the club as much as we have.

Anyway, our first dive saw us some  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the northern side of the resort. The dive spot was named "The Supermarket" and was aptly labelled. Upon descending the anchor line, the group consisting of Allister, Api, Rusty (American) and myself, found ourselves on a reef drop off, we edged over to the drop off, and looking down could easily see the sea bed, so without any further ado, we barrelled down only to find ourselves in water 120 ft. deep. The visibility was unbelievable at least 150 ft, and the waters was so warm. Api lead us up current and gradually evened ourselves out at 60 ft. Fans and coral, in shapes to behold, were in full bloom, the colours extreme, the sand was crystal white, these aspects of the dive were enough to satisfy any Victorian diver for a life time.

We were treated to many visits by inquisitive fish, from Walu (Spanish Mackerel), Barracouda, coral trout and trevally, all as interested in us as we were in them. The school of cuta some 4 - 5 ft. long were certainly a highlight, they are attracted by the glint of the sun on the blade of a knife, and they flashed by with horrific rows of teeth clearly visible.

Later that day we dived on the same outside reef of another location, and experienced the same ideal conditions.

Our third dive proved to be a navigational delight, for without sextants, charts, depth sounders, or even marks, we arrived at Barrel Head. This location was as remarkable as the name - why it was called Barrel Head still escapes me - the beauty of the dive site, couldn't escape a blind man. It was undoubtedly an underwater Eden, huge masses of coral, bommies and canyons, caves and gullies all covered in growth one sees is a Ben Crops movie. And in each

little crevice a local colony of coral and marine life conducted themselves as though they enjoyed entertaining us. Reef sharks were plentiful and they slid gracefully by, I was fascinated at their casual approach, in fact I followed one for a few yards oblivious that another was directly above my head - until he decided I was going too slow, and bumped me on my way. Shark activity around the island is heavy with the main types being reef, nurse, whalers and white pointers.

Our cameras were in furlous motion at Barrel Head, and I would be pleased to show ever big Paulie some of my efforts (even without the fancy lens). The highlight of Barrel Head was the sighting of six Barramundi cod, each approx. 10lb, all resting under an umbrella of coral ledge protruding out from the drop off - these fish were extremely tame.

Capt. Periscope take note - the author was noticed on this dive to be head first into a small hole, and his tank and back pack were unbuckled - obviously rehearsing ditch and recovery procedures.

It would be futile trying to cover the highlights of each dive - because though it is entirely reef diving - each location that our fearless guide Api lead us to had its own speciality. I are only suggest to you all that if you are looking for a holiday where you can have great diving, sailing, tennis, fishing etc. then Mana is well recommended.

On closing I would warn any V.S.A.G. member who happens to buy Allister Stewart or Marg (not to be confused with the MAAARG from Fawknor) that they only drink Chi-Chi's, and to the extent of creating Mana Island records of consumption, Ask them for the recipe.

The equipment at Mana is in top condition, the fills adequate, and a diving certificate must be carried, otherwise you won't enjoy Mana to its fullest.

If any member is interested in visiting Mana, drop Api a line and I'm sure he'll fill you in on the best times etc, or contact myself.

PAUL KING

## PERISCOPE

I'll go. I'll go. I'll go! Cheap natives, (female I hope), French wine, big wrecks and crayfish. I may even pack a powerhead and dispatch that Tiger Shark rumour. If the Buttercup Kid (alias the Silicone Chip) is only half right about Vanuata its got to be a diving utopia.

Fathoms readers will have noticed that our (bachelor) editor is rather fond of forecasting the patter of little feet. So it is with much pleasure that Periscope takes this opportunity to (settle down Des) scoop him by announcing that Annie Jeacle and the Big M are expecting a Little M. Now most of you know that Annie is a fiery, raven haired, Scottish beauty with deep brown eyes and Olive skin. Mick is your easy going, typical red head - freckled and sunburnt. It should be an interesting union. Any volunteers to keep book? (Periscope is backing a fiery, little red haired girl.)

This month we figured we would pop the periscope on the sensitive issue of members petrol contributions and boat operating costs. After all it is the use of members boats and the type of diving this permits that makes V.S.A.G. a better than average dive club. (Our members make it the best).

How often have you felt sorry for the poor sods on the S.S. Elandera who at \$15.00 per head spend 2 hours chugging from Rye to the Eliza Ramsden for 20 minutes dive time and another 2 hours rocking and rolling back. Meanwhile for \$5.00 and half the time V.S.A.G. has dived the Wall or Sub, checked the topless beaches over lunch and bagged our scallop limit for the day!

Periscope's interest in the subject was initially aroused by Terry Brooks, who murmured something about contemplating a boat purchase and wondering if he could afford it. It was rekindled on our last club dive (Sorrento - Sub - Sorrento Back Beach - Rye scallop beds - Sorrento) when petrol cost most boat owners significantly more than contributions.

Well Terry, after reading this you might prefer to put your money into house refurbishments.

Let's look at the standing (or garaging) costs first. I.E. Expenses, arising out of ownership that you incur, irrespective of whether you use the boat or not. For the sake of the exercise we will assume an all up boat cost of \$10,000 inclusive of Stamp Duty, equipment and accessories with \$6,000 (60%) being realised on sale of the boat after 5 years.

(I)	Loss of earnings on \$10,000	\$2,022 p.a.
(II)	Depreciation	\$ 800 p.a.
(III)	Comprehensive Insurance & Regist.	\$ 270 p.a.
		<hr/>
	Total Standing Expenses	\$3,092 p.a.
		<hr/>

- (I) \$10,000 conservatively invested at a fixed 15%, cumulative over 5 years.
- (II) "Actual" depreciation. I.e. difference between purchase and sales price.
- (III) Insurance \$230. Registration \$20.

This provides us with a weekly "garaging cost" of \$59.00. The true cost is in fact much higher - boats are not used every week. An enthusiast's boat would be lucky to see the water on 40 occasions per year. Our fixed costs should be more realistically considered in terms of \$77 per outing! (\$3094 ÷ 40)

Now in regard to fixed costs Periscope is inclined to the view that this is an ownership "privilege" and not really a club consideration. The foregoing figures are for interest only and should not be interpreted as axe grinding.

Running cost are probably a different ball game altogether - particularly for those owners who use their boats almost exclusively for club diving or non club dives by club divers.

Let's first of all look at some of the hidden running costs one could expect to incur over the five year life of the boat - o.g. Wheel bearings (2 sets), Spark plugs (2 sets), Trailer tyres (one set), anchor rope replacement (one) plus sundry repairs to fibreglass hull, propeller and trailer. It is Periscope's view that an average figure of \$150 p.a. is not unreasonable. To this we must add an annual motor service at \$150 (assuming no major repairs or replacements). On this basis our "general" running costs are in the order of \$7.50 per outing (assumes 40 dives per year). No big deal, but to be considered in the total picture.

Finally we move on to "petrol!". Zoom retails at up to \$0.48 litre. That's \$2.18 a gallon! Some saving is possible by mixing your own but this still works out at about \$0.40 litre or \$1.82 gallon. It's no secret that the heavier one loads a boat the more petrol it uses. An 80 hp motor on a loaded 16 foot boat will use much the same fuel (perhaps even more) than a 150 hp motor on a 17 foot boat. Either combination would be lucky to do much better than 6 gallons per hour and its probably nearer seven. (Figures verified by Forest Hill Marine).

Now V.S.A.G. divers (and boat owners) are pretty fond of travelling. An average ex Flinders dive is about a one and a half hour round trip (\$18.00). A sub orwall dive and Rye scallop hunt is about 2 hours (\$24.00) and possibly more if its rough. By way of substantiating this I'm sure that Mick Jeacle will not mind me mentioning that on our last club dive (for which he carried 10 gallons) he actually ran out of petrol - and never did make it to the scallop beds. (We believe it happened whilst cruising up and down the topless display on the Portsea front beach). For my own part it actually cost me \$25.00 to refill with discount petrol plus \$2.50 in oil.

But that's not all. Towing boats is murder on car petrol consumption. You can actually see the needle moving left on the fuel gauge! Another hidden cost to consider in the total picture.

So let's summarise; what does it actually cost our boat owners on an average days outing - assuming 40 trips per year?

Standing or garaging costs		\$77.00 trip
Running Expenses		\$38.00 trip
General	\$ 7.50	
Extra car petrol	\$ 9.50	
Boat Petrol (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours)	\$21.00	
		<hr/>
Total cost per trip (fixed & variable)		\$115.00!
		<hr/> <hr/>

What conclusions can we draw from this (other than boat owners should sell their boats and hitch a ride elsewhere)?

The most obvious is that V.S.A.G. divers are onto a pretty good deal both in terms of dive opportunity and financial considerations. The boat owners, in certain circumstances, are not getting a very fair shake.

Under the present system a boat owners petrol compensation is related to passengers - Irrespective of cost. Two divers - \$10.00, Three divers \$15.00 and so on. It doesn't stack up too well against \$38.00 - or even \$21.00!

No one is particularly growling (boat owners like being boat owners and they do need dive buddies). Some are just starting to think about "the system." It seems to this writer that thought ought to be given to a formula which provides the boat owner with an appropriate sum per trip (not divers) - this to be then broken amongst the dive passengers. Fewer passengers



more per head (it's more equitable to all). e.g. \$25.00 - \$30.00 (total) would not have been an unreasonable sum to cover our last club outing (or marathon). At \$8.00 - \$9.00 per head for 3 divers its not bad value - for seven hours on the water with 3 different dive locations! Food for thought?

Your economist,

GEOFF

*PS. Merry Christmas to all. Remember - Divers do it deeper!*