

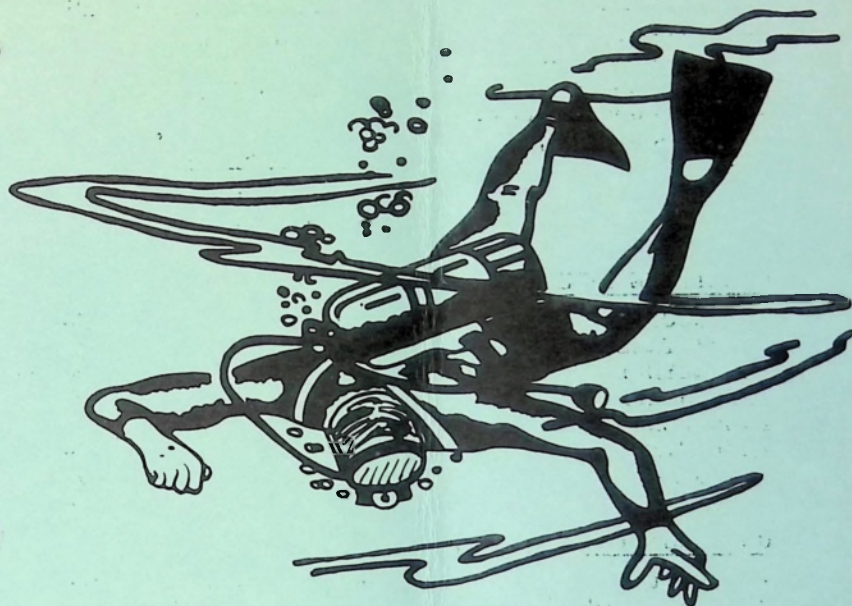
# FATHOMS

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## SAFETY IN DIVING

JUNE 1950 50c



# V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

## FATHOMS

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

PresidentAssistant Editor

TONY TIPPING

21 Abercrombie Street, Deepdene, 80-4956

Vice PresidentSecretaryS.D.F. Delegate

JOHN GOULDING  
13 Birdwood Street,  
South Box Hill,  
89-6634

Newsletter Editor

DES WILLIAMS  
29 Valerie Street,  
Boronia,  
762-1623

Treasurer

DAVE CARROLL  
5/29 Dover Road,  
Williamstown,  
39-1221 (Bus.)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

BOB SCOTT	- Social Secretary	- 367-2261
BARRY TRUSCOTT	- Safety/Medical Officer	- 783-9095
PAT REYNOLDS	- Property Officer	- 789-1092
NEIL GARLAND	- Points Scorer	- 529-5484
FRED FERLANTE	- Librarian	- 578-4406
PAUL TIPPING	- PR Officer & SDF Del.	- 387-2027
MAX SYNON	- Committee Member	- 465-2812
GEOFF BIRTLES	- Committee member	- 846-1983

CLUB MEETING

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 17th June, at 8pm 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 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!

EDITORIAL

It is mid year already and those winter wetsuits are appearing and the summer divers are disappearing. It seems a good time for the club to do some exploration and locate new dive sites in time for the summer season, and with this aim the Club Committee at their May meeting has arranged a trial dive. On 12th July an exploration dive in the vicinity of the Point Nepean "Wall" will be attempted. This will, of course, require slack water conditions and strict control of divers under the experienced eye of Dive Captain, Pat Reynolds. Only experienced club divers will be involved in this very deep area and therefore a second dive at a wreck site elsewhere will follow for all divers not involved in the exploratory dive. There is little known of this area off Point Nepean and marine charts show it to be a similar "Wall" drop off down to 290ft similar to the Lonsdale "Wall" site.

If you arrived at the Collingwood Football Club early last May meeting, expecting to have the usual meal, then you were undoubtedly disappointed to find the restaurant closed! Discussion with Sue Fordham, the new club manageress, ensured us of a meal at future meetings and we hope that once again our meetings will begin with a tasty meal.

Also at our May meeting Terry Brooks' eagerly awaited first screening was presented in the form of a very interesting film by Cousteau. The men of "Calypso" explored the beautiful ecosystem of the coral reef. Thanks Terry, we all enjoyed the film. This is probably a good time to say "thank you" on behalf of club members to Sally Roberts for the time she put into typing our May issue of Fathoms. The job was made even more difficult this time by your editor who based all word calculations on the previously used typewriter.

But, with the club's own typewriter, the characters are larger and my calculations created some problems for Sally. We will at least be more prepared for the June issue and hopefully it will be plain sailing. Thanks also to Terry and Sally for assistance with the printing of the May issue of Fathoms.

Unfortunately, it is necessary once again to ask for the support of members, with articles for Fathoms. The only way to avoid long "padded" boring editorials is to submit a dive report or item of interest for publication. If it wasn't for the ever reliable assistance of John Goulding this edition would have been single-handed, which is not a good position as we are a club of many people. The views of each individual are very important, so please help with the following issues, my address is inside the front cover and the closing date for the July issue is 24th June. Just for interest the "Flotsam and Jetsam" article in May issue of "Fathoms" received a record number of votes which seems to indicate to me that many members enjoy the magazine, so lets have your help!

A reminder that at our July general meeting Reg Lipson will be presenting a talk on the marine life we most commonly see in Port Phillip, so be sure you don't miss his presentation and magnificent colour slides.

Our ex Club President David Moore and his lovely wife Pat are once again proud parents, a little boy Simon Andrew on the 25th May. Congratulations Pat and Dave, we'll be around to obtain wetsuit measurements very soon.

The last item to mention is that with the arrival of the mid year, club subscriptions are once again due by the 30th June. So, please send your payment to our Club Treasurer, c/o Post Office Box 2526W, G.P.O. Melbourne or pay at the June General Meeting.

Fees are \$20 per member although there are a few exceptions where members live in country areas and only \$10 is required.

- EDITOR -

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Don't miss our July General Meeting on the 17th when marine biologist Reg Lipson will present a discussion of Victorian fishes most commonly encountered in our diving area. A great opportunity for everyone to learn a little about creatures with whom we share our underwater time. Reg and his wife Kay will also be screening some slides taken diving in Victoria's underwater environment.

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COMMITTEE NEWS

Last meeting held at David Carroll's home on the 25th May.

- (i) Report on recent S.D.F. meeting by John Goulding where V.S.A.G. asked for S.D.F. support to lodge protest at damage being done by scallop dredges. There seemed very little interest from other S.D.F. delegates.
- (ii) Dive calendar discussed with attempts being made to involve more club members in dive location choices.
- (iii) The Committee decided that a subsidy of \$3 per member would be granted to all interested in joining CASICO insurance this year. The remaining \$3 of the total \$6 cost to be paid by each member.
- (iv) Re-registration of the newsletter was discussed and the appropriate forms completed for Australia Post.

Next meeting of the Committee will be held at John and Marie Goulding's retreat at 13 Birdswood Street, Box Hill South on Wednesday, 24th June.

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S.D.F. - V - REPORT

(Meeting 4th May, 1981)

The following are the main points that were raised at the last S.D.F. - V meeting.

(i) Public Liability Insurance

The public liability insurance proposal for diving clubs has been altered since last reported. The premium has been increased to \$6 per head (all club members must belong) and the maximum cover

Public Liability Insurance

has been reduced from \$500,000 to \$250,000. A new deal is being sought by S.D.F.-V.

(ii) Equipment Insurance

The proposal to provide diving equipment insurance (excluding cameras) has been withdrawn by the underwriter.

(iii) New Applications From:

Frankston Sub-Mariner Dive Club and Goulburn Valley Sub-Aqua Club.

(iv) Cave Diving Seminar

A cave diving seminar will be held at North Melbourne Football Club on 7th November, 1981.

(v) Dinner Dance

S.D.F.-V dinner dance will be held on the 11th September at Mooney Valley Racecourse. Cost - \$22 per head.

(vi) Publications

A new print of S.D.F. Logbooks are available.

(vii) Technical Committee

The technical committee has completed a review of 12 buoyancy vests. A report will be published soon.

(viii) Maritime Archaeology Association of Vic.

The M.A.A.V. spokesman spoke about the activities and objectives of this group. The M.A.A.V. moved that the S.D.F.-V support the proclamation of the Historic Shipwrecks Act in Victoria - carried. The M.A.A.V. also moved that a member of the S.D.F. committee be appointed to the Maritime Archaeology Advisory Com. - carried.

(ix) CASICO - Insurance

Premiums are now \$6 per head and are being underwritten by A.M.P. Society. Acceptances due 31st May, 1981.

(x) Wilson's Prom. - Marine Reserve

It was moved that S.D.F.-V will endorse plans of the Conservation Council for a Marine Reserve.

(xi) Crayfish Licence

The Fisheries Amendment Act has been passed and an amateur fishing licence is now required to take crayfish.

(xii) Port Rule 62a - (Prohibited Anchorages)

The area 100 metres around Popes Eye has been exempted from the anchoring ban.

The Point Nepean reef area has also been exempted from the anchoring ban.

(xiii) Hydrostatic Testing

A change is likely in the frequency of hydrostatic testing of aluminium cylinders. More details later.

(xiv) A.U.F. National Spearfishing Convention (January 1982)

S.D.F.-V will voice strong opposition to the next A.U.F. national spearfishing competition to be held in western Victoria.

(xv) Scallop Fishing

Clubs were asked to supply information on the effects of scallop dredging in Port Phillip Bay. V.S.A.G. to co-ordinate steps to investigate damage and advise S.D.F.-V.



DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>LOCATION:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT:</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
June 21	San Remo Pinnacles	9pm	Bob Scott 367-2261	San Remo Pier Car Park
June 28	Chimney Rock	9-30pm	Paul King 741-3049	Barwon Hds. Boat ramp
July 4&5	Golf Days. Full Weekend of Activities at Yarrawonga - Contact N. Garland - 529-5484			
July 12	Nepean Wall	8.30am	P. Reynolds 789-1092	Sorrento Ramp
	This dive will be an exploratory dive by experienced club members only. A second dive will follow for all divers.			
July 26	Wreck Dive Rotomahana	10am	Bob Scott 367-2261	Sorrento Boat Ramp
	Divers wishing to leave from Queenscliff advise Bob Scott.			
August 15	Ski Trip to Mt. Buller - P. Reynolds is Snow Captain - 789-1092			

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

In the May edition of Fathoms we brought you up to date as far as Easter at the Prom.

Well, having survived that ordeal the next V.S.A.G. function was the "Fun Run" held on Sunday 26th April. Being held the day after Anzac Day we thought may have slowed down some of the older members but not even Geoff B. bothered to use that

excuse as he struggled in amongst the tail enders. Lynchy, Bazza, Tony and Paul, John G., Geoff and Terry Brooks carried the clubs honours, but alas there were a few casualties along the way:- Terry Brooks who had been training hard the day before the big race realized that 12.7 kilometres was a lot further than his usual jogging route (down to the pub and back - 200 metres) and decided that there was no point in running on a Sunday when all the pubs along the way would be shut!

Tony Tipping:- "El Presidente Supremo" was found to be suffering from a severe case of lost energy, due to a number of causes:

- Forthcoming departure of Mmamarg!
- Dribbling nose
- Babbling mouth
- Uncontrollable bed wetting

So poor old Tip, whom I remember as a bloke who used to dive, take out women and run in marathons stood alone at the start yelling encouragement to all his loyal subjects.

It is a fact that we are all getting older and probably slower, but Brian Lynch and Barry Truscott put up a good dual with Lynchy being the first V.S.A.G. man to finish. It was indeed a Fun Fun run, along the way as the beads of perspiration dripped into my eyes causing continual stinging, and my tongue feeling like a parched football clogged my mouth, a St Johns ambulance woman, held out her hand with what I thought was cold cream. As I flew past, my outstretched arm clasped hers to exchange some cooling relief. Fifty metres further on I realized to my even worse discomfort that I had just smeared my face with vaseline! Now vaseline, might be good for those delicate working parts hidden in my stubby shorts, but over my face it was messy and sticky and did nothing to relieve my anguish.

On Sunday 3rd May it was back to diving again. Our new member Mick (Archie) Jeacle was along

with his boat, and showed great style as he reversed down the boat ramp and flooded his trailer lights G.B. by comparison looked like an old hand. Mick's troubles were not to end there. The steering on his boat seized and reluctantly Mick had to leave his boat back at Sorrento. We eventually had a great dive on the "Wall" followed by a scallop dive off Nye. The one problem with scallops; they take so damned long to shell and clean.

Two weeks later on 17th May another dive was organised for Flinders. A howling southerly wind had blown up overnight and the site that greeted our divers was not encouraging. The dive was switched to Sorrento and again we had a scallop dive followed by a "Wall" dive. As we mentioned in last month's column some of the prettier new members were along and a few of the boys were eager for some close-up work underwater. We haven't got the full story yet but it seems that Penny and Lola were a little reluctant to dive with our band of cut-throats.

What a surprise greeted us at the May General Meeting - "No Dinner" - now I'm not a great football fan, but I do know that Collingwood is a great football club with a very large following of avid supporters. It seems however that not too many have been supporting the social club rooms of late, and dinner takings have been down. So its up to us to support poor old Collingwood.

To this end we have written to the club with a suggested menu that is easy to prepare and cheap to serve.

- Soup - Black and White soup
- Entree - Curried Ump-pie
- Main - Half Forward Flank (of beef)
- Course Mag-pie  
Rolled Rover
- Sweets - Creme de Coach

All you golfers get set for the big V.S.A.G. golf tournament in July. This year it will be held at Yarrawonga and Neil Garland is sure to organise another great event. I suppose we won't see much of Paul King around the dive scene until after the golf. We hear tell that he has booked the local "pro" at Werribee each weekend during June.

If you haven't seen Dave or Pat Moore around lately, there is a good reason for it. They've been making babies! and on Monday 25th May young Simon Andrew Moore was born. Congratulations to Dave and Pat. The old notion that divers more often have girl babies is certainly not true in the Moore family.

#### CLEAR PATRA

(The diluted orange juice lady)

TWO IMPORTANT DATES

SDF-V DINNER DANCE

11th September

Mooney Valley Racecourse

Cost \$22 per head all inclusive

(VSAG member needed to arrange our tickets etc.)

CAVE DIVING SEMINAR

7th November

North Melbourne Football Club

Cost \$15 per head with dinner

\$10 per head without dinner

Speakers include: Ian Lewis, Peter Stace,  
Reg Lipson, Russell Kitt,  
and Barry Head

(Plus excellent films)

\*See John Goulding for tickets

PORT PHILLIP'S EARLY DEFENCES

Once again I have been in the La Trobe Library archives, looking through some old newspapers, my subject this time, Victoria's Navy and the defences of Port Phillip in the 1880's.

It must be remembered that the young gold rich colony was incredibly concerned with deteriorating relationship between Mother England and Russia, the newspapers of 1885 were full of defence discussions.

The "Australasian Sketcher" of June 1st, 1885 reports "In consequence of the receipt of private telegrams giving warning of a probable visit from the Russian ironclad "General Admiral" last heard of at the Cape, the government took immediate steps to prevent strange vessels from entering Port Phillip at night or navigating the channels in the day time without permission."

With this "war scare" of 1885 work was again taken up on the partly completed South Channel Fort as reports the "Sketcher" .... "Unfortunately it (the Fort) is a port which has been neglected for some years. The stone annulus which is to serve as a foundation for the fort has been in existence for some time, but no beginning has been made with the fort itself. Under the circumstances an essential part of the defence scheme is deficient, and the government acting under the advice of the military authorities has constructed a temporary wooden platform to carry two large guns, so that the channel may not be left quite unprotected.

Two large guns on a wooden platform over the half finished fort must have been an interesting site indeed. The work was finished very quickly as a report the following month discloses .....

"The temporary fort for the protection of the south channel in Port Phillip is almost complete and submarine mine fields have been laid in each of the channels. Every effort is being made to bring the militia force up to the limit of 3,000 fixed by the act .... deemed necessary to man the batteries at Port Phillip Heads."

The "Australasian Sketcher" is an excellent source for studying the life and times of so long ago. In the June 1st, 1885 edition there are some excellent sketches of Port Phillip's mighty defences and I wish it was possible to publish them in "Fathoms," but I guess we'll have to make do with a verbal sketch for now. With reference to "Our Torpedo Defences" the "Sketcher" describes a "contact torpedo .... "with a sinker attached to anchor it in position. The depth underwater that these powerful engines are anchored is generally about 12 to 14 feet. On a ship's keel striking them they immediately explode, generally with very unpleasant consequences." Then follows a description of a "ground mine." "The explosive is contained in a cylinder lying on the bottom of the water. It can be fired either by wire or contact by a vessel with an attached float above."

The sketches are really amazing with an excellent shot of a steam launch and crew laying mines as well as an aerial view of a mine layout across Port Phillip Heads. The maze is so complete that a rowing boat would have had trouble entering the bay! The sketcher goes on .... "Our sketch shows a torpedo field ie. torpedoes in position when an enemy is expected. It will be seen that a hostile ship or ships would have a very difficult task to run the gauntlet on such a formidable array of submarine mines, especially under a raking fire from heavy battery guns."

So, I guess the people of Melbourne were able to rest at ease knowing their security was assured with such an impressive array of fireworks. Especially with such a mighty ironclad as the "Cerberus" at the head of the fleet; when the Victorian Navy was inspected by Admiral Tryon of the Australian Naval Station the "Sketcher" says .... "the admiral reported very favourably to the Governor concerning all the vessels. Admiral Tryon considers the turret-ship "Cerberus" a formidable vessel, and one of our best means of harbour defence."

- DES WILLIAMS -



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