

# FATHOMS

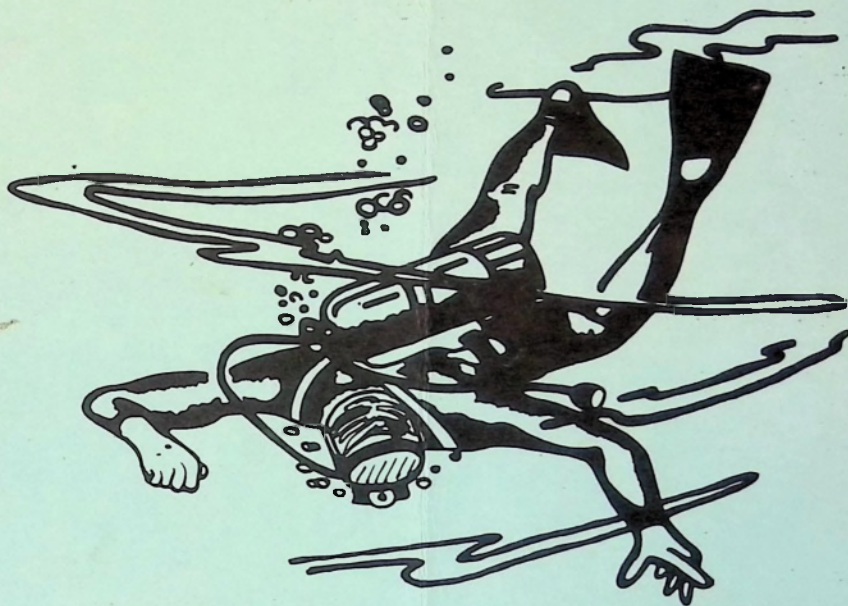
MARCH '81



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## SAFETY IN DIVING

50c



# VSAAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

MARCH, 1981

FATHOMS

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

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MAX SYNON	-	Committee Member
GEOFF BIRTLES	-	Committee Member

CLUB MEETING:

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 18th March, 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!

EDITORIAL:

The news this month is not good. Tony Tipping is out of hospital with permanent ear damage which has robbed the Club of probably its keenest diver. Tony is no longer able to dive and from my personal point of view that is a real loss to the Club.

The enthusiasm Tony used to generate on dives will also be missed as I know there have been times when I have felt a little disheartened on a dive day because of either conditions in weather or dive site; but Tony would always be looking for a way around the problem and would soon be in the water, and yes, we'd all have a dive and enjoy it! I wonder how many of you have felt the same way? I have also seen several other members put on a second tank for another dive and summon the energy for two dives in the one day, because of Tony's enthusiasm. We have divers who have been diving for longer than Tony, but I certainly don't know of anyone else who has done as much diving as consistently as Tip, and always got a real charge from each dive. To me, Tony summed it up when I visited him in hospital and he said "Each dive is a trip, who needs drugs."

At our general meeting in February it was necessary for Club members to cast a vote for another Committee member as a vacancy had arisen due to the departure of Karl Kironc for Nauru. Nominated at the meeting were Mick Jackiw, Russell Olerenshaw & Geoff Birtles. The position was keenly contested and we now welcome Geoff Birtles to the VSAG Committee.

Your last two copies of "FATHOMS" (and hopefully this one) have been possible due to the time Marg Ziccone made available to type the stencils necessary for printing. It was certainly a very busy Christmas and with the newsletter to get out in early December, Margaret's help was welcomed. I hope your boss doesn't read this Marg, but thanks from all of us.

Which leads me to the subject of future typing of newsletter stencils. We now have a typewriter in the Club property thanks to the generosity of Gordon Ryan who has donated a suitable long carriage typewriter. All we need now is a willing helping hand from a member or friend to type stencils for us once a month. So if you are just waiting out there to do your bit for VSAG please be in contact with the editor and find out just how little work is

involved once a month and just how much of a help it would be. We had several visitors at February's general meeting and I would like to extend an invitation on behalf of the Committee to join us on a few Club dives as soon as possible. VSAG is an active Club and we trust that if you like diving as much as we all do then you should find our Club a lot of fun. There is a list of our proposed dive sites over the next two months in this issue and all we ask is that you contact the Dive Captain the evening before the scheduled dive. We can therefore arrange boat accommodation.

As you will see we have some articles in this issue of "Fathoms" by new scribes. They are very welcome, always good to see a new style. Thanks to Jim Turner and Frank Herbert who writes all the way from Orbost. Anyone else care to entertain us? The closing date for articles to be published in "Fathoms" is the Committee Meeting date of each month.

Those expertly made Club diving flags we now see proudly displayed on boat dives were very generously donated to the Club by Max & Pam Synon. I would like to extend a thank you to you both on behalf of all members of VSAG. The rumour is that Pam is now taking orders for Club jockettes in diving flag colours to be produced by the "House of Synon"! But, having seen Max with dressmaking scissors in hand I think this will be one order I will avoid!

There are still six vacancies for the Bass Strait trip aboard "POLPERRO" in September, so an appeal is made to all members to advise your diving friends that they would be most welcome. They should contact John Goulding on 89-6634 as soon as possible, as other Clubs will now be invited.

Finally, as a result of the current Cave Divers Course currently being undertaken by some Club members our next general meeting will include slides of the Mt. Gambier region. So members who have some slides taken at Gambier please bring them along to March meeting. See you there.

This edition of Fathoms has something for everyone thanks to the help of new donors of articles. We have a report on far aware Beware Reef, and poem for you nature lovers, some mathematic calculations by "Prof. Julius-Sommer Ferret",

and a continued dive report on the beautiful Barrier Reef.  
 Hope you enjoy it, see you at March meeting.

EDITOR:

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DIVE CALENDAR:

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>LOCATION:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT:</u>	<u>NOTED:</u>
March 22	INVERLOCH	10.00 AM	BOB SCOTT 367-2261	MEET AT BOAT RAMP
March 29	FLINDERS	10.00 AM	B. TRUSCOTT 783-9095	-WRECK- "GEORGE KERMODE"
April 5	SORRENTO	10.00 AM	G. BIRTLES 346-1983	SUBMARINE WRECKS
April 11	3 ELBA PLACE KEILOR DOWNS - BARBEQUE - BOB SCOTT - 367-2261			
April 16-20	TIDAL RIVER		J. GOULDING 89-6634	EASTER LONG WEEKEND
May 3	SORRENTO	TO BE ADVISED	F. FERRANTE 578-4406	SLACK WATER DIVE

COMMITTEE NEWS:

Meeting held at Pat & Jenny Reynolds home at Frankston.

1. A welcome was extended to our new "low profile" committee member Geoff Birtles by President T. Tipping.
2. Campsites for Port Campbell, Tidal River and Ulladulla for Xmas were discussed and have been booked.
3. All members agreed that they would like Tony Tipping to see out at least his current term as President.
4. Long discussion was held on Club insurance of members gear, and it was decided more details were to be obtained.

5. Max & Pam Synon have donated to the Club the batch of divers flags which Pam made such a professional job of.

6. A review of the current operating costs of boats made by the Committee led to a vote that members now pay boat owners \$5 for local dives and \$6 for country trip dives. Non members will pay \$2 extra.

The next committee meeting will be held at Fred & Wendy Ferrante's home at 4/239 Grange Road, Ormond on Wednesday 25th March, at 8.00 p.m.

===== CLUB BARBEQUE =====

A club barbeque will be held at the home of Bob & June Scott and an inclusive charge of \$5 per head will cover food for the evening. So lets all get together again, our first chance since the Greek Inn evening at Christmas.

VENUE: 3 ELBA PLACE, KEILOR DOWNS

TIME: 5.00 P.M. ONWARDS

DATE: SATURDAY 11TH APRIL, 1981

CCST:.. \$5 PER HEAD (CHILDREN FREE) PAY BOB SCOTT

DRINKS: B.Y.O.

If you wish to attend please pay Bob Scott at March general Meeting or notify Bob Scott on 367-2261 by no later than Wednesday 8th April as catering arrangements must be calculated by that time.

\*\*\*\*\* ALL WELCOME \*\*\*\*\*

FOR SALE:

LOTS OF DIVING GEAR, NIKONOS II CAMERA, STACER ALUMINIUM SEAMASTER BOAT AND ALL ACCESSORIES. CONTACT TONY TIPPING 80-4956.

B/ S STRAIT CHARTER TRIP: - Open To All Clubs

VS G 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.

SDFV REPORT 3.2.81

1. Minutes of October meeting carried.
2. Treasurer reported a total of \$1818.54 reserves.
3. New Clubs admitted:-
  - Marine Research
  - Ballarat College of Advanced Education Scuba Club
  - Mutineers Scuba Club
4. Notice of application from Victorian Police Sub Aqua Group. (Vote Required).
5. SDF-A Report:-
  - New Administration
  - Previous Administration Manager P. Stone is replaced by:-  
President SDF-A - TOBY STEWART VIC.  
Secretary/Treasurer - CATHY DEANE S.A.  
Public Relations Manager - PETER STONE VIC.

It was stressed by SDF-A that all clubs should use the proper channels if wanting to dive the Mt. Gambier Sink holes.

These channels are:-

- be a member of CDAA
- hold a National Parks Permit for Piccaninnie Ponds
- write to land owners beforehand

A new log book is available to clubs at \$2.50 cost each.

6. Marine Reserves:

Discussion about the proposed Wilsons Prom Marine Reserve.

One club has already written opposing it - as it will place further restrictions on divers.

Other Clubs asked to comment - What is VSAG'S view?

7. Underwater Photographic Seminar to be conducted at Queenscliff

May 1st - 3rd. Application forms from VSAG Secretary.

DIVER INSURANCE:

SDF-V has been able to arrange a public liability insurance cover at a Premium of \$5.00 per head per year to cover damages laid against a diver for death or injury of others to the value of \$500,000/claim.

There can be only one policy per club and it must involve ALL members.

DIVING EQUIPMENT INSURANCE:

SDF has arranged a policy for members to cover loss by fire or theft (or other) of diving equipment. Again there can be only one policy per club and must include all members. Premium for club would be \$25.00 and is subject to a \$50.00 excess. Individuals equipment to be itemised.

Underwater camera equipment is excluded but is available under another policy.

BOATING RESTRICTIONS:

Rule 65A, prohibits small boats anchoring in approaches to and parts of southern end of Port Phillip Bay. The restricted areas include:- Eliza Ramsden, Goorangi, Gambier and Popes Eye.

SDF has contacted Port Officer and will put in a submission to have the rule altered.

CRAYFISH LICENCE:

It looks as if a General Sea Fishing Licence maybe introduced which will involve a \$7.00 year fee.  
SDF WILL OPPOSE.

SDF - V BI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The February meeting was also the Bi annual meeting of SDF-V and the retiring president thanked members for their participation and assistance. He recalled that the last 2 years had seen some significant achievements including CASICO SCUBA SCENE, and a Government Grant of \$1500 -



SDF - V has grown to represent 45 clubs.

It was moved and accepted that SDF - V affiliation fees be increased from \$10.00 per year to \$20.00 per year.

The new committee was elected as follows:-

- President: - ANDREW COX
- Vice President: - PAUL LANCASTER
- Secretary - DAMIEN BOURKE - Assistant RAY CONNOR
- Treasurer - RON BROWN

SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:

- Scuba Scene - RAY CONNOR
- Technical Review - KEN GUTHRIE
- Publicity - left open
- Publications Chairman - left open
- Marine Reserves - TOBY STEWART
- Sports Federation - JOHN DAVIS
- Conservation Council - BILL BERNHARDT
- Auditor - JOHN DAVIS

ODE TO A MAGICAL VOYAGE: ===== by JIM TURNER

With Bass Straits' water unusually calm,  
Sea birds in flight showed nature's charm.  
The hot sun warmed cliffs of orange and gray,  
As men sailed forth from "Franklin's" Bay.

The old wooden vessell creaked as it lunged  
At the playground of Mutton Birds who scurried and plunged.  
For their quarry beneath the crystal blue;  
They performed in their thousands for the awe-struck crew.

Mirrabooka's captain, with experienced hand,  
Guided his ship toward a beautiful land,  
Far-away from the rat race, commerce and crowds,  
Where tall green mountains pierced the clouds.

Conical islands jutted from the sea,  
Stark and mysterious - but detached and free.  
This air of freedom now engulfed the crew,  
As they drifted from tethers to a weekend anew.

The crewmen where divers, excited and bold,  
Who ventured to discover what the sea could unfold.  
What spectacle! what danger!, delicacy or sport,  
They would experience and relish, and return to report.

From far off Rodondo, huge and forbidden,  
To Refuge cove, tranquil and hidden,  
The magical flag of this green and blue world  
Captured the divers and then unfurled.

The picture was laced with white sandy beaches  
and colourful fish in the deep far reaches.  
Divers plunged and drank and played  
In hot summer breeze as the Ti-Trees swayed.

Then paradise finally closed its doors  
And crewmen busied with clean-up chores.  
The Mirrabooka returned to "Franklin's" creek,  
And men to the drudge of Common Man's week.

\* Nice One Jim! Maybe we could put this to music in the near  
future - THANKS - ED:

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#### EASTER TRIP - WILSONS PROMONTORY:

8 Campsites have been booked at TIDAL RIVER camping ground  
Wilsons Prom from Thursday evening 16th April and departing  
on Monday 20th April. As in previous years the sites have  
been booked in the names of 8 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 correct your camp on the site actually allocated to you, so long as you are on one of our 8 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. KING
P. REYNOLDS	18	FIRST	F. FERRANTE
B. SCOTT	19	FIRST	P. KAMEN

Any further queries contact JOHN GOULDING 89-6634 NOW:

#### TANK CAPACITY:

W.P. (MPA) X 145 = FILLING PRESSURE (F.P.) IN PSI

F.P. ÷ 147 X WC = LITRES ÷ 28.33 = CUBIC FEET

E.G. W.P. 22.4 X 145 = 3262 (3250) ÷ 14.7 = 221.94 X W.C. 11.55 = 2563 LTS  
 ÷ 28.33 = 90.48 C.FT.

#### Tank Duration:

Tank Duration = Total Depth ÷ ATMS. + 1 for ambient pressure.

E.G. Depth of planed dive = 36 MTRS. For 15 mins.

We have established how many litres of air we have, and also what pressure we will be diving at.

Lets see if we have enough air to make our dive.

Its been established (by smarter men than me) that a diver performing light duties will use a minimum of 30 lts. of air per min.

P/ATMS. but we must consider the fact that we will not always dive in warm mill ponds. On a lot of our dives we will be working hard for e.g. swimming against currents and huge ground swells, fighting giant sharks and 15 lb crays! So its probable that we would use considerably more than 30 litres more around 40 litres.

Now let's plan a dive, say 46' mtrs. for 15 mins.

(we should all know that 10 mts = 1 ATMS).

Break the calculations into 4 sections.

1. Bottom time (including decent) = 15 min.
2. Accent time 2.30 min. (call it 3 min.)
3. Deco time 3.00 min. (u.s. navy tables)
4. Totals 21 mins.

$$1. 46 \div 10 = 4.6 + 1 \text{ (for surface pres.)} = 5.6 \text{ ATMS}$$

$$5.6 \times 15 \times 40 = \underline{3360} \text{ litres of air}$$

2. As there is no way that you could accurately measure the air usage for accent average it out.

$$5.6 \times 3 \times 40 \div 1.5 = 448 \text{ litres of air.}$$

$$3. .3 \times 3 \times 40 = 36 \text{ Lts. of air ( For Deco)}$$

$$4. 1 = 3360$$

$$2 = 448$$

$$3 = 36$$

$$4 \quad \underline{\quad} \quad 3844 \text{ lts of air needed to make our planned dive}$$

$$46 \text{ mts for 15 mins.}$$

As we can see our air supply is = 2536 lts

& 3844 lts are needed for  
the dive

1278 lts short

5. So by doing our equation first we now know that we must shorten our bottom time to say 10 mins. to have enough air to come home on, or for us cave divers (if we pass)  $\frac{1}{2}$  in  $\frac{1}{2}$  out  $\frac{1}{2}$  reserve.

FERRET:

The "Ferret" for those new comers to VSAG is none other than our Minister for Social Activities BOB SCOTT -  
THANKS BOB! - ED.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM:

What a fantastic summer we had. The records show that it was one of the hottest, and most weekends were ideal for diving.

It's good to see attendances up at dives and some of those not too regular members, coming along with renewed enthusiasm.

The Cave Diving Course is well under way with 12 members aiming at their category 2 rating.

Even new memberships are on the increase and at the February General Meeting a further 3 applications forms were given to interested people.

All this must indicate a good year for VSAG - which undoubtedly is one of the most active dive clubs in Victoria.

I had the misfortune recently to seek the services of a chiropractor. Asked about my sporting interests, I mentioned diving and it seems that the man with the healing hands was once a member of the VSAG. He was very interested to hear of such places as THE WALL, ELIZA RAMSDEN etc., that he forgot what he was doing and left me in greater pain than before - maybe this was just a ploy to get me for another visit.

There's a rumor around that Geoff Birtles is looking for a boat to buy. Geoff's requirements are quite simple:-

It must be faster than Barry's, More roomier than "Bill" Boat. Lighter to tow than Pat Reynolds. It should also be so stable that not even Geoff will get squirmy - and just in case he does, should have the captains private quarters where nobody will see him chunder his heart out! Good hunting Geoff. I hear the navy has an old P.T. boat for sale at ¼ million dollars.

Down at Flinders recently Bazza clinched back his reputation as the cray wizard. This column strongly supports the right of divers to catch by lawful means crayfish for the table. There are some members who do this better than others, but I have yet to meet anyone who can find them like Bazza. Tony (what was his name again?) will tell you that he use to catch more big ones. Dave Henty Wilson is 'nt bad, but keeps losing his cray bag, Geoff Birtles has the hunters instinct but at times has had trouble meeting the minimum acceptable size.

Mick Jackiw, is a consistent performer and naturally I consider myself, an old hand. So old in fact that the hand does not seem to work any more!

Easter is coming up soon and already we have 35 booked in. Sure hope ther'es going to be room to pitch a few tents!

Karl Jironc is settled in at Nauru, and has been diving in the beautiful Pacific around the Island. As you will remember Karl never used to wear a hood to his wet suit. He claimed he gets too hot whilst diving. Now he says "the divings beaut, - clear water, fish and sharks but oh! the water, its so warm". Gee Karl, I'd gladly swap water temperatures with you.

As we approach Autumn we come into some of the best months for diving around Victoria. During March, April and May we might expect very still days and clear water. So come on, come diving!

News from another overseas member Wayne Hatch, who is in Europe ski-ing with no planned time for return.

Signed CON SPICUOUS

.....

(The Greek Giant)

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

What a new slant this course has put on our beloved sport, it has really made us think hard about our motto "Safety in Diving".

There we are on the bottom of Doncaster pool in 10 ft. tethered to a guide line wound around everything available. With no masks and buddy breathing at the same time!! I must admit trying to follow that line up and down and around and around was'nt a lot of fun and I was thinking "Who the hell wants to go back to Gambier anyway?"

But, if these safety lines and procedures had been used years ago, all the sink holes would be open to divers today. It is like most interests when safety rules are broken and someone dies, the government puts heavy controls on the sport or interest. We are therefore very fortunate that all sinkholes at Mt. Gambier were not close permanently by the government when the quadruple fatality occurred in the "Shaft" in May 1973. If it had'nt been for a few dedicated divers who formed the C.D.A.A. the holes would be closed and not controlled by a body of divers which now allows us access to most of the dive sites.

So back to the Doncaster Pool. If I can't pass this practical test, then I should'nt be diving at Mt. Gambier, that makes sense. So Geoff Birtles and I battled on along the guide line buddy breathing without masks (wish he would use a mouth wash!!) Then comes the test buddy breathing without masks while one guy tries to use a guide reel winding it up carefully without seeing where he is going trusting his buddy for precious air, and even the lights were out at the pool. But, we completed it OK., so it can be done!

All of this adds up to a total refresher of diving techniques both practical and theory which is a good thing for each and everyone of us, and I am sure we'll be richer for this experience.

So good luck to all fellow pupils in both practical and theory examination, and let's hope it is'nt too long before we can get together and dive Mt. Gambier again. We can at least relive our past dives at March meeting with slides of Mt. Gambier diving.

DES WILLIAMS:

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S.S. RIDGE PARK WRECKED AT BEWARE REEF: . . . .By FRANK HERBERT

On February 10th 1881, 100 years ago this year the 1000 tons steamer Ridge Park was wrecked on Beware Reef a few miles East of Cape Conran. The vessel was outward bound from Adelaide to Sydney with a cargo of brandy, wine and flour.

The captain, W. Hislop, and all the crew landed safely and a large portion of the cargo was recovered.

Miss Mary Gilberts' grandfather, Mr. John Cameron and his brothers brought the salvage rights of the wreck and recovered some of the cargo.

It's interesting to note that they buried some of the barrels of brandy and wine, near what is now known as Sailors Grave, for safe keeping. But when they came to recover the barrels they discovered that white ants had eaten through the sides and all the contents were lost.

There are some relics from the SS Ridge Park in the Orbost Historical Museum and local homes in the Orbost area.

It is not hard to imagine how Beware Reef got its name as two other ships have also been wrecked there. They are the 533 tons SS Auckland wrecked on the 25th May, 1871 and the 240 tons trawler Brolga which was wrecked on September 1st, 1926.

Today there is not a lot of the wrecks intact at Beware Reef. On the northern side of the reef there is a large area of reef scattered with wreckage in a depth varying from 25 feet to 90 feet. Amongst this wreckage at a depth of about 85 feet, there is a section of bulkheads with a propellor shaft passing through it and a propellor attached to the end of the shaft. This propellor is believed to be that of the S.S. Ridge Park.

On the southwest side of the reef there is a large triangular pile of wreckage in 60-80 feet of water. There is a large propellor and shaft amongst this wreckage. This large four bladed propellor is believed to be from the S.S. AUCKLAND.

The reef area and wrecks at Beware Reef offer some of the best scenic diving to scuba divers in Victoria. There is a magnificent garden of soft corals, sponges, fungi and sea wicks. This area of reef is also the home of many sea urchins, starfish, and many varieties of fish. There are also a number of crayfish to be found peering out from under sections of the wreckage.

The reef is also the home of a colony of seals who often accompany a diver on his trips to the wrecks.



LIZARD ISLAND CRUISE - Part 2.

New Year's day we started diving the Ribbon Reefs. Nothing like a dive before breakfast, so we hit the water at 7.00 a.m. We were still not at the outer edge as the anchorage had been a protected spot in the channel, at the southern end of Ribbon No. 2. Here there was a thickly carpeted slope of staghorn coral, with a sandy bottom at 40 ft. A few giant clams dotted around - about a metre across. Beautiful colouration in their extended mantles but being a coward from way back, I wasn't into how fast they could close!

Up for bacon and eggs breakfast and a surface interval lying in the hot sun on top of the deckhouse, while the boat steamed to the NE end of the No. 2 reef and the first outer edge dive. The flat calm sea and the tropical sun reminded me of why I don't like diving in Victoria! We dropped over the side, swam through gully and out through the coral ramparts. What a thrill. Immediately some small "black tips" arrived to look us over.

We sank down the wall to about 70 ft, where there was a sandy plateau with a second wall going on down. It was an incredible feeling to hang there in space, looking out into the blue and seeing the vertical cliff stretching away either side. Just like Nauru - but more beautiful, with all the corals. A few more small sharks appeared, though there wasn't much other fish life.

We did four dives in all, that day always at the NE end of a reef. The sea was flat calm so we were able to take the boat in close and jump over the side - normally, the crew have to anchor behind the shelter of the reef and use a dinghy to get to the dive spot.

The last two dive spots that day had much more life - plate corals and Gorgonians adorning the reef wall, beautiful coral gardens at the top in about 30 ft. of water, schools of surgeon fish, trevally, spanish mackerel. Someone even glimpsed a 6ft. blue marlin - very rare sight as it flashed in for a quick look.

Sharks were ever present - considerably more inquisitive than those experienced in Nauru last year. Most common were 3ft. - 4ft. black tip and white tip (reef) sharks, though occasionally we saw 5ft. and 6ft. silver tip (ocean) sharks which can be considerably more aggressive. I still don't know whether my yellow wetsuit is a good idea or not - at one stage my buddy reported that a 6ft. silver tip was definitely heading straight for me, until I turned around.

Conspicuously absent were sea snakes. Having seen them on every dive on a trip to Swains Reef a few years ago, I expected to see more of them this far north. Presumably they need the shallower inner reef areas for breeding and feeding, and so don't live on the outer fringing reefs.

So the days went by. We steamed north, past Lizard Island to the top of Ribbon No. 10 and then turned round for home, stopping the night at Lizard. For a few days we had even steamed up the outside of the reefs, as the ocean swell was almost non-existent. We dived some places where the crew had not been able to anchor before, as usually the ocean swells crash against the reef wall, driven by the SE trades. All the dives were sheer pleasure, but a couple were particularly memorable. At one place on Ribbon No. 5 I sat on the bottom at 130ft. out on the sand about 100ft. from the bottom of the reef wall. Viz was about 150 ft. and it was an incredible sight to see the coral ramparts stretching away into infinity on either side. My buddy and I just got on the bottom for about 10 minutes looking at the scene (hanging on in the strong current) before heading back up to 50 ft. near the top of the wall.

There was not much life down deep but masses at 50ft. A school of about 100 barracuda circled us continuously - at one stage they passed by 10ft. above my head. Saw a large tuna (5ft. - 6ft.) disappearing off into the blue. Then along came a school of trevally and my buddy swam up to the "ball" of fish - and disappeared inside! You could hardly see him for the circling mass of fish as he drifted off along the cliff in the current.

Another fabulous dive was on a bommie at 50 ft. in the channel between two reefs, where the crew from "Going Places" have been feeding fish for a number of trips. We went down with some buckets of fish pieces (barrocuda trolled the day before) and at once they appeared - about 10 brown and white "potato Cod", some nearly 5ft. long! Incredibly tame, they would let you tickle them under the gills or along their flanks.

At times they almost got aggressive, nipping at clothing and fins to see if they were good to eat. You could really feel the suction as they opened their mouths to gulp the food down. (Would have reminded you of Nauru lip!)

Also in the bommie lived a 5ft. moray eel. He was quite shy but you could make him extend about 18" from his hole by gradually withdrawing the piece of fish. Unlike the cod, he took the food very delicately from your fingers - though he would'nt let me stroke him with my other hand.

After the 5 days of perfect weather and flat seas, alas along came the rain. By this time we were on our way back from Lizard, but even in the warm rain, to me, diving suddenly became too hard! We were also back in amongst the inner reefs - with their dirty water - so in fact we cut one day off the trip to steam straight back to Cairns.

All in all, though, it was some incredible diving and I'm already trying to find the time and money to get back on another cruise with "Going Places" - although this time on the "Reef Explorer", to the Coral Sea reefs. If anybody in the club is also interested then the address to write to is: Peter Fisher,

"Going Places"  
26 Abbott Street,  
Cairns, 4870

They have departures scheduled on the "Auriga Bay", diving most months in 1981, and two in September on the "Reef Explorer". Also planned next January is a chance in a lifetime to dive Middleton and Elizabeth reefs, out in the middle of the ocean north of Lord Howe Island. This trip is very much at initial planning stage but the idea would be to combine a diving holiday on Lord Howe (highly recommended!) with the chance to take a week on board the "Reef Explorer" to dive Middleton - a spot where only a handful of people have ever dived! If anyone is interested then please contact me, Andy Redwood, at 39 Bridport Street, South Melbourne and I'll let you know what is happening.

By ... ANDY REDWOOD

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PAINTING OBJECTS TO BE CONSPICUOUS UNDERWATER:

To begin with a distinction must be drawn between objects which can be seen at a distance underwater and those which are conspicuous when seen at close range lying amongst weed or stone on the bottom. In the former case it is the brightness contrast which is much the most important, and in the latter case it is more usually a combination of colour and brightness contrast which renders an object conspicuous.

Safety considerations usually require divers to go down in pairs and it is important for one diver to see the other at the farthest possible distance. It has already been explained why an object presenting the highest brightness contrast with the water background will be visible at the greatest distance. In practice it is white objects which present the greatest contrast with the water background in all directions except directly upwards when black will be best. This leads to the suggestion that large areas of equipment should be painted white whilst the suit should be black. On the other hand, parts which break the surface whilst swimming should be painted the colour which shows up best against the sea. Fluorescent orange might be the best choice here.

In all except peaty water fluorescent oranges and reds show up with great brilliances at close range. This is because fluorescent pigments have the ability to absorb the short wavelength light at the blue end of the spectrum and re-emit longer wavelength light at the red end.

The colours for test were:

Fluorescent: Yellow-Green (a pure yellow is not possible in fluorescent colours).

Orange, Red, Normal: Yellow, Orange, Red, Black, BS 630 Grey, White.

The results indicated that yellow is always poor; and the present cylinder grey is also always poor. Fluorescent orange is good for horizontal paths of sight in shallow dirty water (vis about 1.5 metres), but poor in deep water and probably clear water too.

It is difficult to ascertain the circumstances where maximum visibility is vital. The most likely is looking downwards or sideways trying to find a lost diver.

Current indications for coloration for all circumstances would be as follows.

Hood - Fluorescent orange

Suit - Black

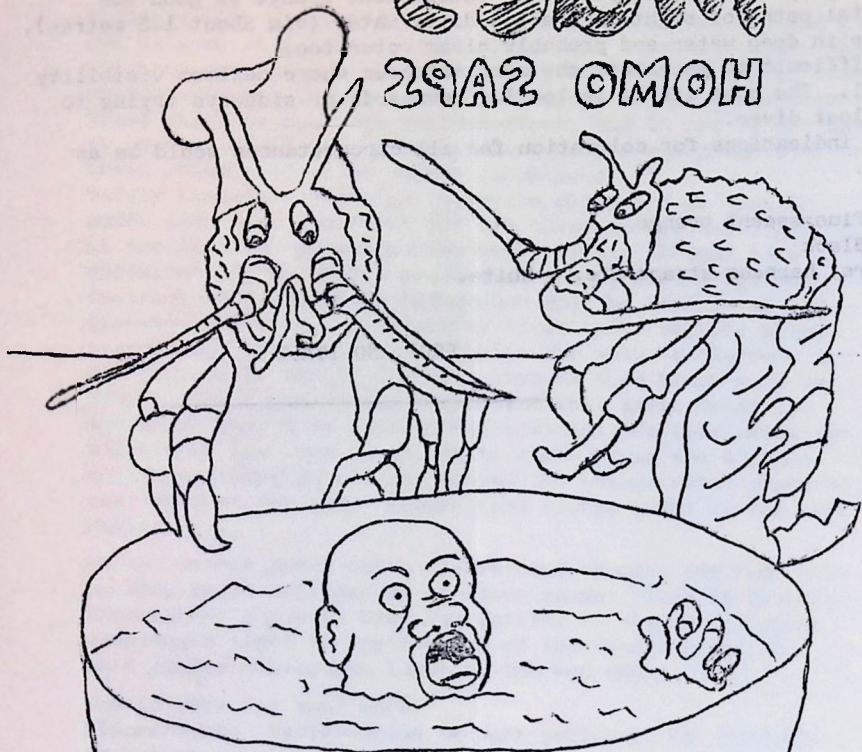
Cylinders, harness straps etc. - White.

PROF. NO ITALL

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WACZ

29A2 OMOH



"Of course it's quick! That high-pitched wailing is just the air escaping! "

D.Carroll.