

# FATHOMS

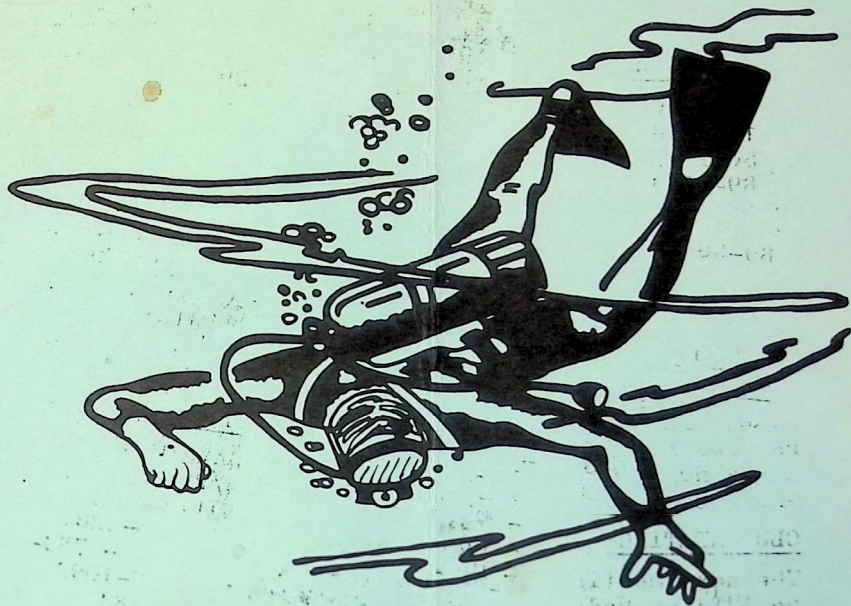
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## SAFETY IN DIVING

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# V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

## F A T H O M S

(Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group)

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CLUB MEETING

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 20th May, 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 Victorian Sub-Aqua Group is certainly becoming a very popular club around Melbourne. Last meeting in April, saw seven new members join us, they are Rod and Lola Hicks, Penny Wilson, Rick Robertson, Peter Galvin, Charles Huberts and Michael Jeacle. A warm welcome is extended to each of you and we hope you enjoy future club dives and activities. Also at the meeting were a further eight visitors which certainly swelled attendance, so maybe future meetings will have to be conducted at the Music Bowl.

The club's planned Bass Strait trip aboard the "Polperro" in September is now fully booked and we wish all those taking the cruise, good weather and safe diving.

There are a few plans in hand to make club meetings just as interesting as dives, so keep an eye on "Fathoms" for further details, which include films by courtesy of Terry Brooks and at July 15th meeting we have arranged a talk by leading Marine Biologist Reg Lipson; his subject will be "Local Fishes of Port Phillip" and we will have the chance to see some of Reg's excellent slides. I had the good fortune to attend a marine biology class conducted by Reg at the Hawthorn State College last year, which was extremely interesting and unfortunately ended all too quickly. I personally guarantee you will enjoy this presentation, and ask that everyone attend as we are indeed very lucky to have such a fine speaker spare us some of his valuable time and knowledge; more in June issue of "Fathoms".

Our May copy of "Fathoms" has been made possible by the typing talents of Sally Roberts who has very kindly offered to type stencils for us. Whilst on this subject, I must make mention that

Marg Ziccone (typist retired) will soon be flying to Europe after more postponements than the space-shuttle! Our wishes for a safe and enjoyable trip go with you, Marg.

In this issue we have attempted something a little different with a sketch diagram to add some variety, for a change; let's hope it is a success. The artist will personally sign copies at next meeting for those who wish to have an investment for the future.

We have reprinted a letter written by our secretary John Goulding which was sent to the Minister for Conservation on the subject of a proposed marine reserve at Wilsons Promontory. The view of V.S.A.G. as a club is clearly expressed, so I leave it for you to read.

EDITOR

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8th April, 1981

The Minister for Conservation,  
240 Victoria Parade,  
EAST MELBOURNE. Vic. 3002

Dear Sir,

It has come to the notice of the Victorian Sub Aqua Group that a Marine Reserve is being proposed for an ocean area from Cape Liptrap to Townsend Point. This area includes the Wilsons Promontory coastal region and off-shore islands.

We understand that the Conservation Council of Victoria claims that the marine life in this area is threatened by spearfishing activities. However we would recommend extreme caution by the Government before contemplating any blanket prohibitions on fishing activities in these waters.

The Victorian Sub Aqua Group members have dived with underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) in these waters for many years, and any suggestion that sea life is dwindling is most difficult to believe.

These coastal waters particularly along the off-shore islands and reefs abound with fish, crayfish and abalone, and perhaps the thing that best protects the balance is the relative difficult access to get to these places - this is a result of lack of proper boat ramps in the area, and usually unsuitable boating conditions for amateur fishermen and divers.

As it is now there are heavy penalties for divers who take crayfish with spearguns or who take more than the legal bag limit of crayfish and abalone. There are also size limitations that prohibit the taking of immature fish, (including crayfish, abalone and scallops).

Sir, this area has provided many amateur fishermen the joys of bringing home a catch for many years, and providing the existing restrictions on bag limits and size are made known, adhered to and policed, there should be no need for further restrictions.

We do acknowledge however the possible dangers to the marine population caused by competitive fishing or spearfishing as these activities could lead to the indiscriminate taking of fish for the objective of gaining competition points. As such we do oppose these activities as a general policy.

We seek your consideration of the amateur fisherman and divers point of view to be able to continue to enjoy these activities in these waters and we hope that you and your department will oppose the implementation of amateur fishing restrictions.

Yours faithfully,

John F. Goulding  
Secretary

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COMMITTEE NEWS:

April meeting held at Paul and Leslie Tipping's home.

- (i) V.S.A.G. delegates to S.D.F. to voice disapproval at current scallop dredging in the Bay at next S.D.F. meeting.
- (ii) Re-registration of "Fathoms" magazine will be necessary with advice being recently received from Aust. Post.
- (iii) New members voted into the club were Rod and Lola Hicks, Penny Wilson, Rick Robertson, Charles Huberts, Peter Galvin and Michael Jeacle.
- (iv) F. Ferrante will hold office of Club Treasurer during Dave Carroll's forthcoming overseas trip.
- (v) Discussion held on Club members attending dives without checking in with Dive Captain before hand.

- (vi) Discussion on members being more considerate when requiring tank fills via Pat Reynolds and allowing him at least 24 hours prior notice.

Next Committee Meeting will be held at Dave Carroll's home at 5/29 Dover Road, Williamstown on Wednesday 27th May at 8 pm.

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----- FOR SALE -----

Decor Octopus outfit complete with hose. This unit has had little use.

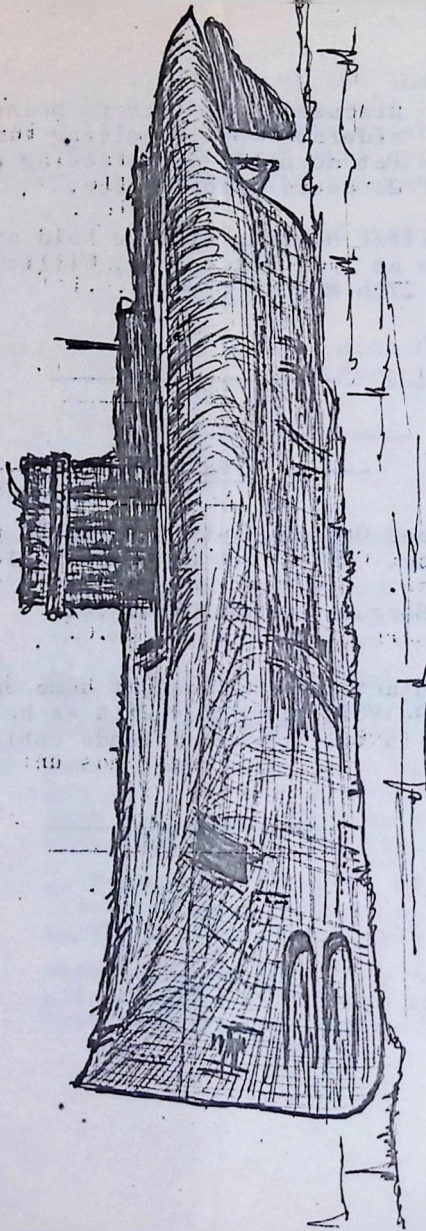
A Bargain at \$45.00 O.N.O.

Contact Andy Redwood at home on 699-3906, after May 25th as he will be in the Solomon Islands until then!

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# J-CLASS SUBMARINE

OFF-POINT LONSDALE



BUILT 1916. SPEED 19.5 KNOTS ~ SCUTTLED 1926



DIVING GLUTTONY

Five boats and sixteen diver's left Sorrento Boat Ramp in perfect conditions on April 5th and headed through the Rip for the sunken hull of a J-Class submarine ("intact submarine"). There was fog on the mainland and aligning of the site marks was extremely difficult but in true style John Goulding soon put the shot line on the wreck in 120 ft of water. I think we should all be mindful of the skill required to accurately use "site marks" at sea, as we always seem to rely very much on John's accuracy to provide us such good dives as indeed the submarine is.

Once all anchors were down, divers kitted up and descended to the submarine in water visibility of about 40 ft. Entrance to the hull was gained through a very large open hatch aft of the conning tower and most divers inspected this internal section only, while Geoff and Nick penetrated further through the old derelict with caution.

My dive buddy Michael Jeacle and I swam the full length of the hull which is remarkably intact; firstly the bow section and along the hull to the conning tower which is brilliantly decorated in yellow anemone. On past the large hatchway where several divers had by now congregated, Andy Redwood was there with Truk Lagoon all over his face! Along the deck aft and finally to the sleek stern. This I found most interesting, as the rakish lines of the stern were certainly designed for speed. The huge rudder is still intact and only the drive shafts and propellers are missing. Swimming further astern I stood on the sandy bottom at 120 ft to contemplate the shape of this now sleeping hull. She is still in reasonably good condition in my view, although an engineer may have other ideas, but as she rests on the sand with a list of some 30 degrees it certainly seems possible that she could,

without much trouble, surface and again return to "Mother-Ship" Cerberus in Half Moon Bay.

After this dive we returned to the Point Nepean area on glassy seas and after several unsuccessful attempts to locate a suitably sheltered spot we motored inside the Bay to the "Eliza Ramsden" wreck site. This site was buoyed again by John and some diver's descended on slack water while boat owners drifted around, as anchoring is prohibited in this spot. Another excellent dive and we were soon joined by a school of divers from a popular Melbourne club who arrived in style. Their dive boat (local fisherman I guess) cruised over the wrecksite to drop its load of divers.

Whilst we appreciate the "Ramsden" is a popular dive and really there is plenty of room for everyone on this wreck, the presence of a large boat motoring over the site whilst divers were in the water all around was definitely very dangerous. Certainly no offence is intended by the writer toward the diving group, but I feel the boat owner should have shown a little more care and respect for our divers flags.

So, at 4 pm we returned to Sorrento very tired and contented with ourselves.

At the risk of being unpopular, I would like to point out to the divers who did not check in with the Dive Captain the night before, that if you wish to dive with V.S.A.G. then please follow our guidelines, which are for everyone's benefit. If our club continues to grow at its present rate it will become even more important that Club rules be adhered to, or dives are just going to be uncontrollable and remember our motto is "Safety in Diving". So be sure to check in with the Dive Captain's before the dive or try to find wrecksites without the expertise which exists in V.S.A.G.

by DES WILLIAMS

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>LOCATION:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
May 3rd	Sorrento	11 am	F. Ferrante 578-4406	Slack Water Dive
May 17th	Flinders	10 am	G. Birtles 846-1983	Reef Dive
May 31st	Sorrento	9.30am	P. Tipping 387-2027	Slack Water

June 6-7 & 8th Flinders Area. T. Tipping Tel: 804956  
 Accomodation at Tony's home at Somer's will be  
 available if you make contact with him early. Diving  
 on the weekend will include a night dive and other  
 dives at various locations. Weather permitting.

July 4&5th Golf Days Full Weekend of Activities  
 at Yarrawonga - Contact N. Garland  
 Tel: 529-5484

FILM NIGHT

General Meeting on 20th May will in-  
 clude two movies in connection with  
 the sea, although at this stage we  
 do not know the titles they are sure  
 to be of interest and add some variety  
 to our meeting. Films will be supp-  
 lied by courtesy of Terry Brooks. So  
 SEE YOU THERE!

## "BLASTING AT THE RIP"

Blasting at the Rip began in 1902. The depth in some sections was only nine metres. For many years navy depth charges were used to blast the rock, but these rocked the foundations of houses on Point Lonsdale.

In 1972, the Ports and Harbours division began using divers to place explosives which were detonated from the surface. Within minutes of the divers climbing from the water the crew of the boat "Dallas Brooks" detonated the 75 kilos of Tovex 800 explosive.

The blast shockwaves are so great that they could kill a diver a kilometre away under water. Several years ago Queenscliff fisherman complained that similar blasts were killing yellowtail Kingfish which feed in the Rip. But ports and harbours experts argue that the fish are never there at slack tide, when blasting is carried out.

Much of the water turbulence in the Rip is caused by sudden depth changes of up to 100 metres. A deep gorge, which once was the course of the Yarra river, meanders across the area.

The shipping channel is only 244 metres wide and 14.6 metres deep in some places. Modern ships need much more water.

One of the biggest dangers during blasting is when boat owners ignore the international warning flag which flies from the "Dallas Brooks". Two Port's and Harbours vessels - one a fast twin - engined hydrocat - patrol the blast area to warn off approaching boats and to inform them the entrance is closed to shipping during blasting.

Dallas Brook's" captain Buck Taylor says "the lasting operation requires extreme care. I have learnt over 32 years on these waters that you have to keep a healthy respect for the rig. It can change from being relatively calm to huge swells in a couple of minutes."

\* A precise of recent "Age" article -

BY CHARLES HUBERTS

### CRAYFISH LICENCE

The Fisheries Amendment Act 1980 No. 9501 was passed by both Houses of the Victorian Parliament in December 1980 and now has become effective, whereby it is an offence (maximum penalty \$100) for a person to take a crayfish without first obtaining an amateur fishing licence.

The licence that is currently available from sports stores or Fisheries and Wildlife is the Inland Angling Licence which costs \$7.00 per annum.

The maximum bag limit for crayfish is 4 per day per licence holder.

Over recent months Fisheries and Wildlife inspectors have been at boat ramps, so if you want to take crayfish and stay within the law - get a licence.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Having already established himself as a low profile committee man, and one of the best little cray catchers on the dive scene Geoff Birtles has now notched up another milestone. This time as dive captain on the submarine dive on April 5th. On this day the weather was perfect, the divers were eager and the dive captain anxious that his first leadership role should go without incident. As we lined up on the shore for the pre-dive briefing Geoff confirmed with resounding confidence that we would be diving the submarine. Not a bad effort for a bloke who has no idea where it is! - but then part of the story of success is, that even if you don't know what you're doing, you should at least look as if you do.

After a great dive on the sub and a check of the reefs around Point Nepean we vent over to the "Eliza Ramsden" and in company of about 30 others from Ocean Divers had a good look at this fine old lady of the sea bottom.

And so on to the great Easter trip to Wilsons Promontory. With only 8 camp sites booked and about 50 people booked to go, a few hardy ones made the trip down there early on Thursday. When Murgatroyd and I arrived there was hardly room to swing a wombat. Amongst the rambling tent city, the Reynold's caravan stood out like a mansion. With the Mercedes parked out front, the owners of BMW's, Sigma's, Toyota's and Falcon's looked a little ashamed. So much so that the BMW owner was forced to throw a cover over it, so that people might think it also was a classy sort of car. Max Synon seemed to be having all sorts of trouble erecting his tent. It seems that Pam usually does all the tent erecting for Max, and when she decided not to come, Max was in real trouble. After a quick phone call he managed to convince daughter Vicki to come down and help him.