

FATHOMS

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SAFETY IN DIVING

NOV '81 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

PRESIDENT

Max Synon
8 Pine Street
Thomastown 3074
465 2812

SECRETARY & SAFETY/MEDICAL OFFICER

John Goulding
13 Birdwood Street
Box Hill South 3128
89 6634

TREASURER:

David Carroll
5/29 Dover Road
Williamstown 3016
397 2317

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Des Williams
29 Valerie Street
Boronla 3155
762 1623

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 18th November, at 8 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lullie 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!

EDITORIAL

Our "new look" format for Fathoms will, I am sure, be appreciated by all members, and especially to the ladies who have till now given so much time to producing stencils. Our thanks to Sally Roberts and Margaret Liccone for the past 12 month's issues.

This issue should, as usual, be good reading, as Andy Redwood has presented two excellent articles. One about his recent trip to Vanuatu in the Pacific, and the other on the latest in computer technology for the diver. Flotsam & Jetsam returns this month in top form and the Editor humbly apologises to our intrepid scribe for the omission of last month's F. & J.

All those interested in next year's V.S.A.G. trip to Vanuatu should peruse the itinerary in this issue and be prepared to pay \$100 deposit at the next general meeting in November. Our trip co-ordinator Andy Redwood is renowned for his discerning taste when it comes to dive sites and he has just returned from Vanuatu and plans to go again at Christmas on his honeymoon (congratulations Andy!) and return yet again in April with V.S.A.G. So, it must be one hell of a diving spot, read his article further on in Fathoms.

It is with regret that I must tell you that Max Synon's pen is "out of ink" and our advertised report on his Solomons Trip has not been included in this edition. On a happier note, Paul King has volunteered a full report of his recent trip to Fiji to be published in the December "Fathoms" - thanks Kingie!

Well, the P.A.D.I. crossover course has been run, very professionally I might add, by Warwick McDonald and all V.S.A.G. members who attended found it most enlightening; there is always room to learn more and brush up on diving skills. Thanks for the push Geoff!

The best news of the month is that Tony Tipping has once again ventured underwater with V.S.A.G. to around 30 feet on scuba. A great effort Tony and good to see you back in the water again, our best wishes for future diving.

The good weather is back again and plenty of good diving awaits us in the coming summer months, so be sure to check in with the dive captain before scheduled dives.

Editor

PLASTICS TECHNOLOGY COURSE

Correspondence has been received from the Sandringham Technical School, advising that those wishing to learn the skills of making underwater lights and camera housings etc. may do so in a new course commencing in February 1982. Details are set out below.

UNDERWATER PLASTICS FABRICATION

A course in Plastics Fabrication to give divers the necessary skills to fabricate underwater housings and guideline reels from acrylic plastic.

COMMENCEMENT DATE February 10 - 1982 for one term

LENGTH OF SESSION 3 hours 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

COST \$40 (cost does not include materials)
to be paid at the school by commencement date.

VENUE Sandringham Technical School,
Holloway Road, Sandringham, 3191.

Students will be working with acrylic plastic and the skills covered in the course will include,

- design, heat forming, plastic coating and zinc plating of metals, turning, cutting, grinding, glueing, Oring, sealing and buffing.
- For photographers we also have the equipment to pressure mould dome lenses.

For further details contact Greg McMillan at the school PHONE: 593778 - Ext. 4.

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COMMITTEE NEWS

Meeting held at Geoff and Isobel Birtles' home on October 28th.

- (i) V.S.A.G. now have a Club sextant recently purchased on the Clubs' behalf by Geoff Birtles.
- (ii) Discussion on Dive Calendar - It was decided to open bookings for the Australia Day Trip aboard the "Mirrabooka" now and first in first served.
- (iii) A re-examination will be made of the current method employed to vote for the article of the month in "Fathoms". Sub-Committee will be D. Williams, D. Carroll and T. Brooks, to report to next Committee meeting.
- (iv) Point scoring system for the Clubman of the Year Award to be printed in the November issue of "Fathoms" for the interest of members.
- (v) T. Tipping's report on recent S.D.F.V. meeting.
- (vi) V.S.A.G. resumé in the Divers Directory to be revised before the next reprint.
- (vii) All future issues of "Fathoms" to be produced on stencils prepared by a professional Secretarial Service.
- (viii) Andy Redwood gave a report to the Committee on the 1982 trip to Vila and Santo and requested deposits of \$100 per person intending to take the trip, by November general meeting.

VISITORS: Andy Redwood and Mick Jeacle.

** NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING will be held on November 25th at Bob and June Scotts' home at 3 Elba Place, Kellor Downs at 8 p.m.

* * * * *

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt.</u>	<u>Meet At</u>
Nov. 8	Mushroom Rock	9.00am	D. Carroll 397 2317	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Nov. 18	General Meeting	8.00pm	Collingwood F/Ball Club	
Nov. 22	Wall Dive	9.30am	Mich Jackiw 736 1730	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Nov. 28	Tennis Party/Barbeque/VSAG mile at Somers. T. Tipping is Co-Ordinator. Meet at <u>Balnarring Beach Courts</u> at 11.30am			
Dec. 6	Heads Area	8.00am	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Dec. 13	Flinders (Family Day)	9.00am	Mich 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. 26	Ulladulla Xmas Trip.			
to	Co-Ordinators:	Max Synon	and	Des Williams
Jan. 8		465 2812		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.

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"

Since April 1973 Fathoms has featured a "Flotsam and Jetsam" column in all but 3 issues. Once when I was overseas, once when I missed the deadline, and October 1981 when the editor informed me that he had too much material for one issue and "F. & J." would have to miss out.

Now I don't mind not having my revelations published about the diving world, and I don't mind missing out on the points that would normally be awarded to me for the "Clubman" competition, nor do I really get vexed about loss of publication fee, mind you I'm still waiting for my first. But Mr. Editor, I have a following who wait eagerly each month for Fathoms to arrive. Yes sir, long before Tips Tit Bits (member that one?) and Periscope generally referred to as Horrorscope. Way back when Captain Enid Blighton was blowing bubbles in his bath, (we hear he still is) Flotsam and Jetsam was wooing them each month, so Mr. Editor next time when you're short of space just remember the avid followers - Murgatroyd and Mum.

September and October were quite active for V.S.A.G.

The Bass Strait Trip aboard the 'Polperro', brought to light a few interesting sidelines about our members.

*Bazza ("Wouldn't be seen dead doin' bloody womens work!") Truscott volunteered more often than anyone else to wash the dishes!

*Terry Brooks favourite song is: "A greener shade of pale".

*Dave Carroll and Dave Moore, who had been on the "Polperro" before, knew exactly what bunks to grab, and where to sit five minutes before lunch and dinner.

*Mick Jacklin went to sleep every time it got rough, and never felt a thing!

The story of the Bass Strait trip was in the October Issue, but there was one incident that was only slightly hinted at.

On a clear moonlit night, whilst "Polperro" lay at anchor in West Cove at Erith Island a story is told about a visit from two young ladies who came by row boat from the shack on the Island.

From time to time intellectual types take over the squatters hut to get away from the hustle and bustle of the University campus for some deep thinking. Well, it seems that two damsels realising that they had only themselves for company took advantage of "Polperro's" arrival to seek some high brow stimulation.

On seeing the lights in the forward bunkroom being doused, and with only two lads still sitting up in the wheelhouse, the two girls rowed out from the island to our boat.

Upon arrival they excused their presence by asking for a cup of sugar. From what we hear it wasn't sugar that the girls were served! and two of our lads walked around for the next 3 days with great smiles on their faces muttering, "How sweet it was".

Back home in Melbourne meanwhile, the Club General Election was held and 4 members who were in Bass Strait were voted on to the Committee. Which only goes to prove that "absence makes the heart grow fonder".

Also during September we had a big night at Abbeyes Inn.

October 11th we were out there diving the "Wall", saw some good crabs but had to leave them. Maybe they'll wait. However there's always scallops, so a quick trip down the bay and it was into the scallop beds for a feed.

Amongst the stirred up silt on the scallop dive. something hit Pay Reynolds underwater.

Would someone please own up to bumping Pat, so that he and I can stop worrying about sharks.

October 18th. We dived from Lance Stephens' boat on the wreck of the "Rotomahana". This was a superb day. Flat seas, great visibility and 2 great dives. Joining us on this dive were members of the Bass Strait Diving Club, but no matter how hard they tried, they were soundly beaten by our group who outnumbered them two to one!!

Whilst all this has been going on, a number of members have been doing a P.A.D.I. certification course.

In the past we've had U.I.A.V. and F.A.U.I. and now P.A.D.I. It seems that everytime a new course comes along, it is only divers from the hardiest and keenest group who enlist. Whilst that's O.K. that the good get better, what happens to you divers who only do your six or less dives a year and haven't practiced a buddy-breathe in 5 years? The answer is simple, dive with a F.A.U.I. or a P.A.D.I. If you get into trouble, he's supposed to look after you. If he gets into trouble, look out!

In all seriousness we are unfortunately reminded from time to time that diving can be a deadly business. It can also be a very simple and most enjoyable activity if you follow the rules and know what to do in an emergency. If you're not too sure about buddy breathing, or helping a cramped or narced diver, speak to the Club Safety Officer who will arrange special practice at no cost. For this you will be certified B.A.D.I. i.e. Below Average Diving Instruction.

Signed P.O. Kew

VANUATU (NEW HEBRIDES) DIVING

Well the Diving Swaggle's been off again, humping his swag up to the Islands of Vanuatu ("Wan People, Wan Neson"), formerly known as the New Hebrides. We dived around Port Vila and then went up to the island of Santo, for the "President Coolidge". (This time the swag went diving too.)

What a trip! Vila and Santo together offer something for everyone even those "Puss" diver friends of Periscope's. The "Coolidge" is a fantastic wreck - better than any wreck we dived at Truk, in my book. After my 6 dives on it, I had only just begun to find my way around. At over 600 feet long and 32,000 ton she is the largest accessible wreck in the world. You just drive for 10 mins. from the Hotel, walk out 100 feet across the flat coral reef, swim down a steep sandy slope to 60 feet and there's the bow. Mindblowing in 100 feet viz. water.

Part of the attraction of the ship is Alan Power, the local dive guide and "Curator" of the "Coolidge". He provides the tanks, of

course, but also escorts you around the ship showing you all the sights. And since he's been there 11 years, he certainly knows where they are! This makes it a considerable improvement over Truk, for instance, where I'm sure we missed out on some of the notable sights. As well, two Deco Dives to the 120 - 150 foot mark are standard, per day, so again you spend a helluva lot more time underwater than on the dives we did at Truk. (How about a 25 minute dive with maximum depth 140 feet.)

Alan uses Royal Navy decompression tables, by the way, which can be quite lengthy compared to the U.S. Navy tables (5 mins. and 20 mins. versus 2 mins. and 14 mins. for a 140ft/25 min. dive.) Decompression is no problem, though, as you just lie at the top of the sand slope watching the coral fish play in the adjacent coral reef. As the water is warm up there, the 25 minutes is certainly not a chore. Make sure you don't commit the cardinal sin of running out of air while decompressing though! (Although Alan carries a "pony bottle" and keeps spare tanks tied at the 20 foot stop, he may refuse to let you dive again.)

The "Coolidge" lies on its side with the bow at about 60 feet and the stern in 230 feet of water. The ship was a luxury liner, commandeered as a troop carrier, which sank after hitting a mine in October 1942. She was carrying 5,000 U.S. troops to the Guadalcanal fighting - and, so the story goes, all but one got off safely. The troops were sleeping on the decks as well as in the cabins but apart from a stateroom converted to a 1000 (?) seater loo (strain from the right - one ... two ... three ... !) they didn't alter the interior much.

In the silt on the promenade decks you can find G.I.'s personal kit - rifles, boots, helmets, shaving kits, gas masks ... The forward holds are full of jeeps, trucks, field guns, shells - even a tank - while the rear holds have more ammunition, spare propellor blades, etc.

Inside the ship itself you can swim into one of the staterooms - a ballroom, perhaps - which has the most incredible 8 foot brass and painted glass lights on the ceiling (now on the side). You can then swim, horizontally, through what was a magnificent circular staircase linking all the decks - though now the wood has gone. Up a 15 feet wide shaft to doors in the side of the

ship where provisions were probably loaded. And all that is just a fraction of the ship!

Another spot worth a dive or two in a trip is "Million Dollar Point", so called because the Yanks pushed all their war supplies into the sea when they left Santo. (So the story goes, the Brits and the Frogs couldn't agree as to who would get the spoils, so the Yanks just said "Up yours" and tipped it all!) There is this incredible array of junk down the sandy slope to beyond 100 feet. Jeeps, trucks, a bulldozer or three, a rotary plane engine and a small ship at 20 feet. If you're lucky you might see one or two huge Maori Wrasse who'll come and rub noses with you - even a large Dugong has been seen there.

We weren't so lucky to see these - but then again, maybe we were on a lucky streak: Just before we dived the local constabulary slaughtered a bullock at the water's edge and dismembered it. Just after we got out an enormous tiger shark was sighted cruising around. (Eat your heart out Birtles, you puss crayfish basher!)

Now back to Vila itself, where the basic difference is that it is recreational, fun, reef diving - whereas Santo and the "Coolidge" is serious business. In Santo you dive at about 8.30 am and 3.30 pm with, as I've said, 20-25 min. deco; in Vila, the boat leaves at 9.00 am and 2.00 pm for a 3 hour round trip, and the dives are no-deco reef dives on a variety of sites. Mele Reef in particular has some of the most incredible coral life I've seen anywhere, with 100 foot plus viz.

Nautilus dive shop was the crew we dived with - a beautiful, laid-back outfit who go to a lot of trouble to make sure you enjoy yourself. We did 13 dives with them, at 9 different sites, of which most were really excellent dives. Viz. was generally over 80 feet and Mele Reef, as I've mentioned, is a beautiful reef.

Another unique dive is the "Tasman" - a flying boat sunk in 130 ft of water. Viz is pretty bad here (i.e. Victorian standards) as the wreck is in the harbour, but it was a fascinating experience to sit in the cockpit, looking at all the dials, then swim back into the passenger area. Two levels here, with a connecting staircase, and you could certainly imagine champagne and canapes being served on the upper deck!

As far as out-of-water experiences are concerned, again Vila has it all over most other dive spots. If you want to go for a restful holiday - not necessarily all diving - stay at "Le Lagon". Here you have breakfast on a terrace overlooking a palm-fringed lagoon, while you stay in thatched, cottages set in acres of gardens at the waters edge. Otherwise, there's the "Rossi" in town, just opposite the dive shop for convenience.

The French influence (although they're all independent now) means that eating is a delight, with French wines abounding. Flying fox in red wine and coconut crab - a large land hermit crab - are the delicacies. Up in Santo the accommodation is a bit more basic, but totally adequate, and the Hotel Santo provides some good cooking too. Swarfish, wild pig - and crayfish for \$5.

So, in summary, as far as I'm concerned, Vanuatu is the place. Good reef diving, 100 feet plus viz., the best individual wreck in the world, French food, great wines, friendly natives, cheap ..., what more can you want! - yes, puss, even crayfish.

I'll certainly be going back just as soon as I can.

I. Tinerent
(The Diving Swaggie)

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

CO-ORDINATOR: Andy Redwood, Telephone 699 3906

DAY AND DATE PLUS ITINERARY DETAILS

FRIDAY APRIL 2nd 9.15 pm. Depart Sydney on flight Air Vanuatu NF2 2.40 am. Arrive in Port Vila. On arrival you are met and transferred to your accommodation.

Accommodation reserved at the KAIVITI HOTEL, Port Vila. Your accommodation will be in 2 bedroom apartments, with a large living room and kitchenette. (2 persons per bedroom.)

During your stay in Port Vila, a six day diving package is included with Nautilus Dive Shop, (located opposite the wharf). The following is a typical programme (subject to alteration without notice and the state of tides and weather);

SATURDAY (day of arrival): You are collected from the hotel lobby at 12.00 noon. Lunch on board en route to your dive site for an orientation dive.

SUNDAY. Full day out on the boat for a two tank dive with lunch included.

MONDAY. Full day out on the boat for a two tank dive with lunch included.

TUESDAY. This day has been left free for optional diving or sight-seeing - perhaps you would like to fly to Tanna and see the active volcano (book with the tours desk at the hotel).

WEDNESDAY. Morning wreck dive (Star of Russia or the Seaplane). Afternoon free. Night Dive (take your underwater torch with you).

THURSDAY. Full day out on the boat for a two tank dive with lunch included.

FRIDAY. Full day out on an excellent shore dive (one tank), followed by a beach barbeque.

NOTE: On one of your full day excursions, you will be motoring out on the super deluxe "Rendezvous" for superb diving at Hat Island and Paul's Rock.

SATURDAY APRIL 10th. You are transferred to the Airport in time for your onward flight.

7.00 am. Depart Port Vila on flight Air Melanesia HB10.

8.00 am. Arrive In Santo. On arrival you are met and transferred to your accommodation.

During your stay, you will dive on the President Coolidge, U.S.S. Coker and the Million Dollar Point. Dive guide, Alan Power, will transfer you to the diving.

10 tank dives have been arranged.

FRIDAY APRIL 16th. You are transferred to the Airport in time for your onward flight.

3.15 pm. Depart Santo on flight Air Melanesia HB13.

5.05 pm. Arrive In Port Vila. On arrival you are met and transferred to your accommodation.

Accommodation reserved once again at the KAIVITI HOTEL, Port Vila - right up until departure time.

SATURDAY APRIL 17th. You are transferred to the Airport in time for your onward flight.

2.50 am. Depart Port Vila on flight Air Vanuatu NF1.

7.30 am. Arrive in Sydney. Clear Customs.

END OF TOUR ARRANGEMENTS.

TOUR COST: (From Melbourne) SCUBA DIVER: \$1130,
SNORKELLER: \$870, NON DIVER \$770.

COST INCLUDES:

- * Economy class airfares for flights shown in itinerary.
- * Accommodation in Twin rooms. Two room apartment in Vila, Twin rooms in Santo.
- * Transfers where depicted in the itinerary.
- * 20 Kilo baggage allowance per person.

SCUBA DIVERS PROGRAMME INCLUDES:

- * Scuba Diving as detailed in the itinerary.
- * Services of experienced Dive Guides.
- * Use of tanks, backpacks, weights, weightbelts, boats, bus transportation on shore diving days.
- * Lunches on full day excursions.
- * Snorkel divers price includes all items listed above with the exception of tanks in Port Vila. A snorkel package is not available for pre-purchase to Santo.

* THOSE WISHING TO GO ON THIS TRIP SHOULD PAY \$100 DEPOSIT AT OUR NOVEMBER MEETING - SEE ANDY REDWOOD.

V.S.A.G. MILE 1931 & TENNIS TOURNAMENT - Saturday Nov. 28th

HANDICAPS:

- 120 Seconds - All Ladies.
- 90 Seconds - D. Carroll, D. Moore, M. Synon, M. Jeacle and B. Scott.
- 60 Seconds - P. Reynolds, M. Jackiw, P. Tipping, T. Brooks, D. Williams, P. King (Title Holder) & P. Sier.
- 50 Seconds - G. Birtles.
- 40 Seconds - J. Goulding.
- 20 Seconds - B. Truscott and T. Tipping.
- Scratch - B. Lynch.

Others please submit names to the handicapper (T. Tipping). This race will follow the Grand Final of the V.S.A.G. Tennis Tournament currently held by Paul & Julie King.

Tennis starts at 12 noon SHARP so meet at the Bannarring Beach Tennis courts at 11.30 am.

A barbeque will follow the V.S.A.G. Mile at approx. 5 p.m. and will kick on at 1 Sandy Court, Somers. Contact Tony Tipping on 80 4956. BYO everything. Cost \$1.50 adults, kids free of charge. Plenty of prizes and raffles. Remember this will be our last organised get-together for 1981. If you want to stay and have a cray dive at Flinders on the Sunday bring your sleeping bags!

*ED. NOTE: Our current V.S.A.G. Mile title Holder, Paul King, has been doing some very heavy training and assures me he will retain the title this year! So I guess there will be plenty of sweat and burning sandshoe leather in the Templestowe, Deepdene and Frankston areas for days before this annual event.

WHERE DO V.S.A.G. DIVERS GO IN WINTER?

This has always been a question which has intrigued me and this year I believe I have a clue to the answer. I have certainly established what they do in winter, as we are to hear the patter of tiny flippers twice early in 1982. Yes, Fred and Wendy Ferrante are soon to have a baby and Fred has already ordered a small wet suit and miniature clipboard! The other lucky couple are Julie and Paul King, their baby is due in April/May '82 and believe me "Kingie" was very excited when I spoke to him by 'phone recently.

Congratulations to both couples and my thanks for the clue to where divers go in the winter!

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 November or ring John Goulding NOW!

Definitely 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.

ULLADULLA CHRISTMAS TRIP - December 26th-January 8th

Campsites are also limited at Ulladulla this year, so I urge you to book now to avoid disappointment.

You have all doubtlessly heard enough about last years' fantastic two weeks in this ideal location, and already we have many names down for campsites.

It is imperative that you advise either of the co-ordinators Max Synon on 465 2812 or Des Williams on 762 1623 before setting off for Ulladulla as no guarantee of a campsite will be made to anyone who arrives without first notifying the co-ordinators. We don't want you to be disappointed!

NEW "FATHOMS" FORMAT

From the October edition of Fathoms all future monthly magazines will be produced from stencils prepared by a Secretarial Service. This offers us more flexibility in several ways, the main one being the removal of stencil typing burden from wives and girlfriends, and I am sure you will agree a more agreeable format.

It is therefore necessary that articles required for publication be submitted typewritten or in blockletters where possible. This will cut down on typing time and ultimately cost to the Club.

So, I seek your assistance now, as re-writing someones article is not exactly a lot of fun particularly when it extends into several pages. Time is also short when there is a deadline to meet and your assistance will certainly be appreciated, particularly as it will mean dollars and cents to the Club.

Thank you!

Des Williams (Editor)

"ROTOMAHANA" DIVE - OCTOBER

A beautiful sunny morning greeted us at Barwon Heads Pier on Sunday October 18th. We were joined by four divers from the Bass Strait Club and soon had all of our gear stowed on Lance Stevens' boat and slipped out of the Barwon River into a beautiful blue Bass Strait for the site of the scuttled "Rotomahana". In her prime, the "Rotomahana" (affectionately known as the "Rotten Banana") was a real flier, employed on the Trans Tasman run to New Zealand then the Bass Strait link with Tasmania. She also made a few speedy trips to Sydney from Melbourne and on one trip took an amazing 36 hours from wharf to wharf on this run.

The secret of her amazing speed was in her four huge boilers which supplied enormous power to her exceptionally large propeller.

Lance soon located the boilers on the depth sounder and a shot line was set with a spare scuba set at 10 feet for safety. John Goulding was dive captain and the divers entered the water in two separate dives in buddy pairs. The water looked beautifully clear to me as I watched the first group drop over the side, that was until Geoff Birtles clouded the water during a few anxious moments, when he lost his face mask diving a very impressive depth charge type entry from the mast head! Terry Brooks proved his worth as Geoff's buddy and retrieved the mask as it dropped into 20 fathoms.

Mick Jacklin and I dived together descending the shot line to arrive at the four huge boilers amidships at 120 feet. We swam aft for a short distance where the hull ended, I suspect the stern is some distance further west, as she was blown in two when scuttled in 1926.

We then turned and swam along the portside towards the bow, back past the boilers and on into the old bridge area, where we saw some of the floor tiles still in place. 'Rotten Banana' sure suits this ship now, as she is laid open as well as being in two halves, a sorry sight. At the bow, Mick and I observed a huge bollard and the fine rackish line of the bow was still discernable. 130 feet here and how time to leave. The visibility was a good 80 feet and I am sure everyone enjoyed the dive.

Not a dive I personally would rush back to, but an interesting one just the same. She was a very famous liner in her day and it was kind of nice to make her acquaintance anyway.

A second dive followed a surface interval at "Chimney Rock" and all divers reported a very spectacular reef formation with tunnels and caves.

The dive also saw the first use of our club sextant, but we believe Geoff's eyeballs will have to be re-adjusted to the same position as October 18th if we are to dive the "Rotomahana" again soon.

Good to see the Bass Strait boys out with V.S.A.G., I am sure they enjoyed the day as much as the rest of us. We certainly enjoyed watching Leo, who is best described as a diving museum, adorned in all sorts of diving memorabilia, which prompted some interesting comments such as: "Hell, haven't seen a twin hose reg. for years!" "Look at those Donald Duck flippers, will you", "How long do those cardboard weights last, mate?" "I think your wetsuit has a bad case of 'torpedo worm, Leo" and "Doesn't that ping pong ball rust?"

One day Leo, you will make a dive shop proprietor a very happy man. Hope to see out with us again soon.

by Des Williams

CYBERDIVER

or

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BENDS

Cyberdive is the only micro-computer for diving purposes on the market today, as the Dacor one seems to be having difficulties.

It is a pretty amazing piece of gear, about the size of a carton of cigarettes, running off a 9 volt battery. It gives you a digital readout of the following functions:

- * Current depth and Maximum depth
- * Elapsed time
- * Tank Pressure
- * Rate of Ascent
- * No Deco time remaining, or alternatively the Deco stop times and depths (Based on the U.S. Navy Tables)

On a typical dive you switch it on at the surface and feed in the repetitive group you're in, if it's not your first dive. As you descend it continues to give you a readout of depth and elapsed time, while counting down the minutes you have left for a no-deco dive to your deepest depth (Taking into account any residual nitrogen times). The depth display also flashes the deepest you've been, which I found particularly useful. No cheating here - as soon as you go to 131', it takes the 140' deco table so it's super safe.

Once you have 3 mins or less of no-deco time left, the time display flashes and the unit buzzes you. Likewise if you have less than 600 PSI of air remaining. Really helpful for most divers - you just ignore everything until you hear the buzzer, which can be heard 50ft. away.

If you ignore the no-deco warning, after the unit has counted down to zero, it shows you the deco stop you have to make - e.g. 3 min at 10ft. and buzzes you to ascend. If you go beyond the first deco time for your depth then it gives the next one - which might be 2 min at 20ft. for instance. Then when you've done those 2 minutes, it buzzes you to ascend to 10 ft. and counts down the appropriate stop. When you get to the surface it gives you the repetitive group you're in.

I must admit the first one I had stopped working on its first dive. In ascending from 111ft. I suddenly didn't know how much air I had, or how deep I was (Must have been the Victorian Cold!). The second one I got has worked perfectly and certainly Moray Industries, the Importers, were fully responsive in solving the problem - they just sent me a new one.

I would now not dive without it - if only for two simple reasons:

1. The unit uses a crystal transducer to measure pressure, not a mechanical gauge, so it is a super accurate depth gauge with a max. depth memory.
2. When you are doing repetitive dives, by feeding in your repetitive group before a dive, you don't have to worry about residual times for the various depths you might go to - the machine works it all out and buzzes you when it's time to ascend.

Like all computer companies, the manufacturers are working on a couple of upgrades for the unit (the current one is Cyberdiver II). The first enhancement connects the buoyancy vest so that when its

time to come up, the jacket inflates to bring the diver to his first deco stop. The second enhancement connects a video camera - so the diver can stay back at home with a cold tinny, watching it all on T.V. Beudy Geoff!

Scuba Pro

(The Happy Hookah)

PERISCOPE

October 11. An historic date - we shook Tips out of mothballs and appointed him Dive Captain for the Wall dive. This was the first mistake - as most of you know only Tony can turn a routine dive into a moment of high drama. (Would you believe 200 ft. of anchor rope tossed over the side in the excitement of retrieving a diver some 20 feet away!) The second was putting Tips in my boat - within minutes he had the steering wheel in one hand and microphone in the other! And my left ear is still aching.

Periscope took the opportunity to record two little gems from Tony's dive captaincy which we are sure will be greatly treasured by those who knew him in the good old days.

On getting rubbished about his very official clipboard. "We've got to do this right fellas - its a deep dive". Periscope checked the board following the dive - You've guessed it! Then of course there was the pre-dive briefing. "Stick together for Chrissake - you fellas know how I always used to stick to my buddy." And he meant it!

Anyway it was good to see him back - he later made his first post operative dive to 12 ft. This has since been followed by a very tentative 35 ft. feet first slide down the anchor rope and (predictably) soon followed by a backward roll entry into 60 ft. of water (minus buddy) on a cray hunt. Got one too!

There is little doubt that VSAG membership would have more ocean dive hours under their collective weight belts than most other Victorian Clubs put together. Most are exceptionally capable divers who have graduated from snorkelling before the days of formal Scuba training and therefore do not have an internationally recognise certification (or even see the need for one). This precludes them from any kind of resort diving and could have possible repercussions when our government inevitably succumbs to lobbying and gets around to some

kind of formal certification.

With this in mind eleven of us (which included a couple of real old skeletons - Gordon Ryan and Zoltan Okalyi - sporting matching new wetsuits for the occasion) recently completed a specially arranged experienced diver cross certification course conducted by PADI instructor, Warwick McDonald. Most approached the course on the basis of "it's a pain in the neck" but let's get it out of the way anyhow.

Well, it certainly was a pain in the neck for many - because most found that their theory knowledge (with important practical application) was abysmally poor. Fortunately, Warwick brought this home to everyone on the first night with a basic knowledge test - so everyone stopped whinging and started learning.

Warwick put it rather diplomatically when he said the club displayed a typical "Experienced Diver Syndrome". Above average water ability with a complacent attitude to current dive safety procedures; particularly in regard to knowledge and application of repetitive dive tables and decompression procedures.

As it turned out even the practical aspects of the course turned out to be quite fun - particularly the night compass navigation test (which took some 10 minutes to complete - others, one and a half hours) and the deep dive on the wall (where just about everyone plucked a cray at 120 ft.). Highlight of the course would have been the underwater passing of Scotty, hand to hand, along the bottom of the training pool during our free swimming tests! This closely followed by the fact that everyone got the definition of "Dysbaric Osteonecrosis" correct during the exam. (No problem to V.S.A.G. divers who have been exposed to tip earbashing on the subject at any and every opportunity.)

Everyone graduated as a PADI "Open Water" or "Advanced Diver" and figured the course to be a really worthwhile experience. Our thanks to Warwick for his tactful and competent handling of a difficult bunch of "old lags".

Our Committee recently appointed a sub-committee to review deep diving procedures. Those who completed the PADI advanced course are inclined to the view that training and qualification to a similar "current" industry standard should probably be a prerequisite for club deep diving participation - both for the diver and his buddy's personal safety and to protect the Dive Captain's

position in the unhappy eventuality of a serious accident. So how about it you other old lags? I will be happy to arrange a further course at a similarly preferential price. (And I'm not on commission - just interested in keeping you around).

An interesting aside to our blown out sub dive last month was Des Williams plaintiff cry for a Portsea pier bash (supposedly to test his new rig). Someone suggested, rather unkindly we thought, that he'd rather dive in the bath than be seen under Portsea pier with this weeks crop of "new breed" diver. Periscope is inclined to the view that this rather foiled Uncle Des's plan to impress his new lady friend with macho passes up and down the pylons!

Ross Winstanley of the Fisheries and Wildlife on the subject of bag limits (such as 10 abalone) at a recent SDF-V meeting - "These have nothing to do with conservation - its to stop amateur fisherman turning their sport into a commercial enterprise". On the question of off-season for crays (October) and scallops (Jan) - "It's more to do with giving our commercial fishermen a break than conservation - they will not take a holiday for themselves." Enough said! In the next breath he suggested that we consider the total prohibition of using Scuba to take any fish at all (even by hand) - scallops, lobster or abalone! But then Ross is a pretty exceptional kind of guy - he gets his with a snorkel. Periscope invites him to demonstrate his prowess on crays (stuck up the back of a narrow ledge) in 50 - 60 ft. of dirty, surgy water out of Flinders; or on scallops in 50 ft. of 10 ft. visibility choppy water, in the middle of the bay. Periscope made the appropriate reaction on your behalf. In all fairness to Ross he did suggest that we ought to make out attitude on this matter clear to VERFAC (Victorian Recreation Fish Advisory Committee) to protect what little latitude is left to us. Let's cover this at the next general meeting.

We hear that Bazza Truscott is hoping for substantially increased petrol contributions. Figures his petrol bill has doubled now that Birtles has sucked him into racing everywhere. The last "race" from the Wall down to Rye scallop beds was conducted at a very smart 50 mph clip in pretty choppy seas. Bazza won the event when Birtles pulled a "Kinky" by bloodying Nicky's nose on the grab rail. She was very nice about the incident and said what a beaut boat it was. Didn't have much to say about the

the driver - at least in his presence!

The sheer ecstasy of eyeballing more than 10 old bull crays, under the same ledge, side by side and all in excess of 7 - 8 obs! Mere words cannot do justice to the euphoric pleasure of the Big M (who discovered them) and your low profile correspondent, contemplating the battle. The problem was that they were more than 15 feet back in impossibly shallow and dark ledges that did not even permit a head up entry, let alone shoulders and tank.

It took two dives, on two successive days, adrenal in pumping hours and heart stopping moments but we got them (or some of them) and we de-er-ved them! We found that if you took off your tank it could be pushed in about 4 ft. ahead of you. By turning your head sideways and twisting and burrowing you could squeeze your body past the tank to the limit of the regulator hose. It was then possible (with a bit of twisting) to pull the tank in a little deeper again - and so on. Needless to say the bulls (who got that way by being smarter than you average cray) had backed off. We are not about to say exactly how we eventually got a hand on them (repeat, hand) but that's when the hunt stopped and the fight started.

Mud, silt and zero visibility and how to get out grasping a 10 lb. fighting and snapping bull, with hardly any room to twist let alone turn became a fairly urgent problem. We solved it by forming a human chain. The Big M, who was as deep as his 7 ft. frame would permit (and a little more) grabbed my ankle and started pulling - while I twisted! You tell us who most deserves his catch. A not fisherman laying traps indiscriminately or a diver who selects, risks and fights - for cray and life!

Socialism at work - 10% of a state "granted" by freehold right to a minority pressure group. Just to buy votes that were committed anyhow. Colour me black next time round!

Geoff Birtles

CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR

The following points scoring system is used to determine which V.S.A.G. member has been most active during a twelve months period and thus is awarded our coveted trophy. As you will see, if you don't dive very much, then you will quickly fall behind very active divers, as the points are certainly in the diver's favour.

DIVING HOLIDAYS AWAY-	MAXIMUM 40 POINTS
COMPLETE WEEKEND DIVES -	" 20 "
SINGLE DAY DIVE -	" 20 "
INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS -	" 15 "
DIVER TRAINING -	" 10 "
ATTENDANCE AT GENERAL MEETINGS -	" 10 "
WORKING BEES -	" 10 "
SOCIAL EVENT ATTENDANCE -	" 10 "
ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER -	" 10 "
FOR EACH GUEST AT FUND RAISING FUNCTION	" 5 "
LECTURES, TALKS OR FILMS AT GENERAL MEETINGS	" 5 "

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LIFE AWAY

It started when the plane landed at NAURU after the hot thick atmosphere hit me, I noticed, that the women up there were different to what I was used to.

The first thing that I checked out was that, the diving conditions passed with flying colours. I noticed immediately that the drinking conditions (FOSTERS) was also good.

The diving was great, even though I dived many times in the same place it seemed different. It was easy to descend to a deep depth even if you didn't want to. The water was very clear and warm with much fish life, some very large but they were harmless. Of many of the dives I had which were all interesting, some were more intriguing. I spent ages finding a very large triton shell and a large spider shell. The best of my finds, were two Japanese heavy artillery shells, probably from a battleship. But they had to be defused and emptied. I felt safer with them empty and besides they didn't stink as much.

The diving club in Nauru was good, but different working hours for members made club diving awkward. The living conditions in Nauru are different and hard to explain, one must live there to see for oneself; but it helps if you stay on the right side of the fence with the police or otherwise one is stuffed.

But, going back to the better side of life, the drinking conditions are plentiful. The essential possession is an air conditioner running full blast 24 hours per day. The working and living conditions are good for a small island, I must say they are different.

The nature life is very limited because except for a few bushes and coconut trees there isn't much else. There are some World War II relics still to be found also.

But the best part about living up there is returning back to

Australia, to adjust back to a different and varied way.

P.S. I must give John Vissar many thanks for doing many things for the diving club and helping me in many ways.

by Karl Jironc

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Thanks for the article Karl, we are all pleased to see you back. Glad you had those Japanese bombs defused before using them as ashtrays!*

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I trust you will all agree that the professional typing of stencils for our newsletter has presented a pleasing result. This issue, some twenty-four pages in all, would have taken up about thirty pages if done our Club typewriter, because of its larger typeface and would have involved many hours of hard work for a volunteer typist.

I believe our money has been well spent. After all, next to diving our monthly communication must be the next most important aspect of our Club function.

Your thoughts and comments would be appreciated.
