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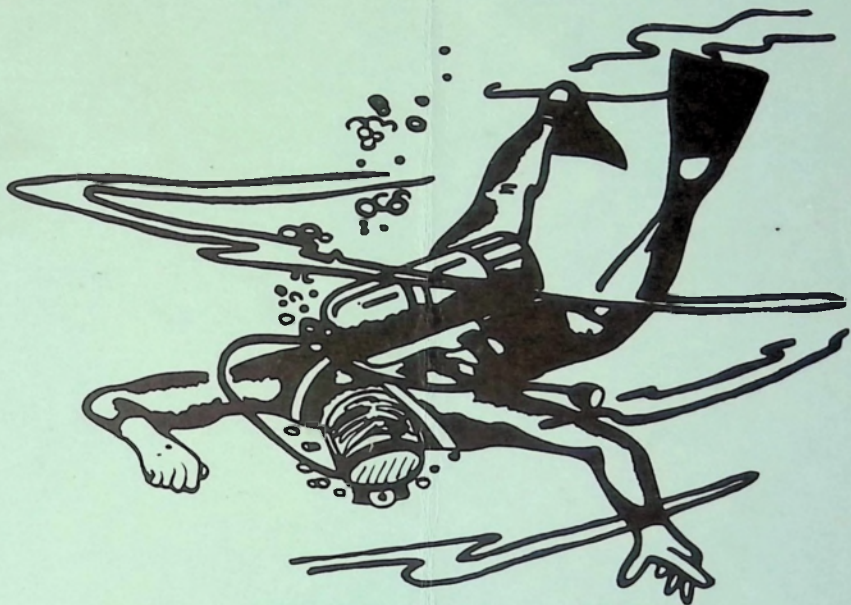
FATHOMS

Registered for posting as a publication category B
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SAFETY IN DIVING

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V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

(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 16th September, at 8 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lulie 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

Been feeling like a dried out fish lately, because the particularly bad weather conditions have not inspired me to pull on a wet suit and plunge into that murky water. And I know I haven't been on my own either, as I read today Victoria has had the wettest Winter for 20 years. The Barwon River seems to be the main offender, causing very poor visibility for many miles East and West of its mouth. But undaunted, there have still been a few VSAG members shivering, tossing, chundering, groping and feeling their way about our local waters! Do we have a "head-shrinker" in the Club membership who can tell us what drives these divers to leave a warm bed on bleak mornings and battle high winds and waves in search of dive thrills? Perhaps I am getting older, although the Flinders dive on 26th July in near gale conditions did have me thinking of a warm bed, open fires and hot scones!! That certainly was a miserable day to be at sea.

This is the month of our Annual General Meeting and all members are asked to attend to cast their votes for four committee members or send a postal vote to the Secretary. At the same meeting you will be asked to vote for this year's winner of the VSAG Literary Award. The winning articles over the past eleven issues will be on display, but if you keep your back issues of Fathoms the following list will enable you to select your favorite article - monthly winners were:

- Oct. 1980 Underwater Search & Recovery (Part 3)
Fred Ferrante
- Nov. 1980 Quarantine Station - Point Nepean
Des Williams
- Dec. 1980 Feathered Navigators
Des Williams

- Feb. 1981 Ulladulla Christmas Trip for VSAG
Des Williams
- March 1981 Ode to a Magical Voyage
Jim Turner
- April 1981 Flotsam and Jetsam
Miss Da Chean
- May 1981 Flotsam and Jetsam
Mal Practice
- June 1981 Port Phillip - Early Defences
Des Williams
- July 1981 The Super Seven (Plus 2) at Somers
Capt. E. Blighton
- Aug. 1981 Periscope
Geoff Birtles

Don't forget our evening out on the town on the 25th September at Abbeys Inn in St. Kilda Road. If you are attending, payment of money to the Club is required at the September Meeting.

The first days of Spring have shown some improvement in weather conditions so let us hope the run up to Christmas is blessed with many sunny diving days. Activities planned for the coming months include a re-scheduled dive on the "Rotomahana" in Bass Strait, Geoff Birtles is co-ordinating a P.A.D.L. certification cross-over course for all those who have decided it won't be possible to "beat the system" in future. In November plans are in hand for a tennis party, barbeque and VSAG Annual Mile Run all in one day!! Should be fun.

Whilst you are reading this issue, several of our intrepid members are exploring Bass Strait around Flinders Island aboard the luxury charter boat "Polperro", so the 10 day trip should leave us some interesting articles in the next "Fathoms" issue.

Capt. E. Blighton again returns to "Fathoms" this month with another story for the children at heart. And what would an issue be without the presence of that controversial "popping" Periscope!! And our very own Diving Swaggie, Andy Redwood has been busy exploring possible sites overseas for our next VSAG trip. So hope you enjoy this month's issue of Fathoms and see you at the Annual General Meeting on the 16th.

EDITOR

COMMITTEE NEWS:

Committee meeting held at Des Williams' home on August 26th.

- (i) Further discussion on purchase of Club sextant and Geoff Birtles is to trial various brands before making a recommendation to purchase same.
 - (ii) Club library books are to be auctioned at the General Meeting in October - Fred Ferrante to arrange.
 - (iii) Final details of Abbeys Inn night out were discussed and all moneys to be paid at September Annual General Meeting.
 - (iv) Cross certification to PADI qualifications being arranged by Geoff Birtles. Class size restricted to 12.
 - (v) Dive Calendar for coming months prepared.
 - (vi) Club trailer to be cared for by Mick Jackiw in future.
- * Next Committee Meeting to be held at Tony Tipping's home on September 23rd at 21 Abercrombie Street, Deepdene.

CAPT. E. BLIGHTON'S SALTY SEA STUFF

Kiddies, like me you have probably been confused by the many technical terms used in different games and sports. In fact with many sporting terms one just doesn't know what is being talked about. "Getting a birdie with a three iron" sounds like downright cruelty, while "bowling a maiden over", well, the mind boggles!

After saying this, I must confess that diving has its fair share of technical terms and so I have compiled a short glossary so that you might have a better grasp of what is being talked about at dive meetings.

- B.C.: As in "I've got a B.C." means bloody cramp.
- Fins/Flippers: Footwear scientifically designed to cause B.C.
- Regulator: Wife or girlfriend who limits the number of dive trips per annum.
- Keel (Verb): To be seasick. Watch G. Birtles on a rough day, or for that matter a calm day.
- Cray-hook: Getting caught by Fisheries and Wildlife with undersize crayfish.
- Boat-hook: Getting caught by a boat owner after his petrol money.
- Graveyard: Flinders Golf Course.
- Burrell Down: To get drunk.
- Salvage: Getting up the morning after barrelling down.
- Bends: Getting in or out of wetsuit.
- Inboard: Where you ride if you pay petrol money.

Capt. E. Blighton continued.

- Outboard: Where you ride if you don't pay petrol money.
- Anchor: Car brakes.
- Brakes: Boat anchor.
- Abalone: Untruth or lie as in, "What a lot abalone".
- Crab: Nasty infection.
- Shark: Avaricious boat owners, Neil Garland playing cards.
- Swell: Exclamation of joy.
- Windy Result of bad diet.
- Conditions;

Of course this list is far from complete but it will start you off in the world of diving. More next month kiddies!

CAPT. E. BLIGHTON

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

The dive scene has been so woeful over the last month with windy rough seas and very murky conditions. Still such adversities have not daunted some members, and interesting locations have been dived.

Over the past two months this Club has dived two new locations which show a great potential for further exploration. This is just what we need for as we head into Spring and hopefully better weather.

The excellent skiing conditions this winter have provided plenty of opportunity for the skiers of the club to get away from diving for a while.

The official Club ski day during August saw seven of the Club's ski bums up at Buller chasing Maree Goulding around the mountain.

Dave Carroll, just back from a season in Europe, (actually an extended course in Ireland learning the secrets of the Maze Prison diet) was much sought after by ski bunnies as he showed great skill and courage in going over the "West Wall" of Buller's summit!!

Tipping, suffering from bent knee - says that "although he doesn't dive any more he still gets the bends", followed Maree down a black diamond (most difficult) slope, thinking that he must not let a woman destroy his chauvinistic "win at all costs" philosophy.

Reynolds and Adamson couldn't wait to get down the infamous Federation run. Pat was in such a hurry he nearly didn't stop to pick up his skis.

The September General Meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting and will include the Club elections for new Committee members. The 1980/81 year has been good to VSAG and has continued to be one of Victoria's most active clubs under the capable leadership of Tony Tipping. Even though Tony has not been able to dive since incurring an ear injury in January his interest and conscientious approach to Club duties has been a major factor in keeping the activities up. Good on you Tip on a job well done.

By the time this issue reaches the members so me of the group will be enjoying the diving in Bass Strait aboard the luxury charter boat "Polperro". Next issue we will bring you a bubble by bubble description.

Flotsam and Jetsam continued

The dive tour business appears to be hotting up! Over the past few years the undisputed master of dive tours has been Anthony Newley of Allways Travel. It was Allways that organized our trip last year to Truk Lagoon.

Well it appears that Anthony has been torpedoed by one of his ex-employees Janis Stone. Janis is now being promoted as the head of a new travel company called Aquarius that will also specialise in dive tours.

So as VSAG is preparing a 1982 overseas dive tour, maybe the two dive tour operators will provide some attractive deals to lure our business - or maybe we just might do it all ourselves.

Well don't forget the election, all votes to be in by 8 .30 p.m. on the night of the General Meeting.

JERRY MANDERP.A.D.I. CROSSOVER & ADVANCED DIVER CERTIFICATION

October 12	Mon.	7.00 p.m. - Theory
13	Tues.	7.00 p.m. - Theory & Pool Swim
17	Sat.	Two Tank Dives (All Day)
19	Mon.	7.00 p.m. - Theory
20	Tues.	7.00 p.m. - Night Dive
25	Sun.	Two Tank Dives (All Day)

This course will be run by Warwick McDonald of Melbourne Marine, 10 Hosken Street, Springvale and co-ordinated by Geoff Birtles, Tel: 846 1983.

Intending participants must confirm with Geoff Birtles and pay a fee of \$70 prior to commencement date. Limited to 12 members per class.

Confirmed Participants are: G. Birtles, B. Scott, R. Jeacle, D. Moore, M. Jackie, B. Truscott, D. Williams and G. Coplestone.

Tentative Bookings are: J. Goulding, D. Carroll and K. Jensen.

1982 VSAG TRIP

After a few months of investigations we now have a couple of concrete alternatives for the trip, with one that sounds most exciting. It's now time to get an idea of the numbers who wish to go - the current number one choice of venue will accommodate a maximum of 12 divers : so first in best dressed!!

Those who want to go, please give their names to John Goulding or directly to me, Andy Redwood, on 699 3906 (best time to catch me is 7.30 - 8.30 a.m.). Cost will be in the \$1300 to \$1800 range, depending on the venue, and April (Easter) is the likely time.

Alternatives are as follows:

1. NORTH OF MADANG, P.N.G.

about 80 miles north of Madang is a bay with 40 or so Japanese wrecks which are charted but not marked. The dive shop in Madang is looking for an enthusiastic club to go there and mount an expedition to find the wrecks.

They will provide boats, echo sounders, compressor etc. and charge half price for the diving, and we'll all stay in a Hotel on the bay. Nothing flash but not expensive either.

In summary, the trip offers the chance to do our own thing, dive absolutely as much as possible, find virgin Japanese wrecks and have even more fun than we did at Truk - as we can drink!

Unless we can get some specific guarantees from the Madang dive shop, regarding the equipment they will supply, the organisation of the trip etc. there is a danger that the holiday could be a disaster. We could also find a lot of the dives are worthless, if the bay is too big or too deep.

Investigations are proceeding!

2. PORT VILA/SANTO

A fairly inexpensive trip can be made by combining a week's diving around Vila with a week on the island of Santo, another island in the Vanuatu (New Hebrides) Group.

Diving around Vila would be medium quality reef diving - nowhere near as good as on the Barrier Reef, say - but Santo has the "President Coolidge" a fantastic wreck.

I am going on a "check out" trip end September, so a full report will follow.

3. TRUK LAGOON

This offers fantastic wreck diving but would be expensive. It is also very hard to get there - you only get 6 days at Truk out of a 14 day trip.

4. BARRIER REEF BOAT TRIP

The best reef diving I have done is on the Reef, but there certainly wouldn't be any wrecks. You can dive 4 times a day if you're keen enough, see more sharks than you'll ever see anywhere else, but if the weather is bad it's really miserable; and after 10 days cramped on a boat you really appreciate getting back to shore.

Obviously, on a club trip, we can't meet everybody's requirements but I would like to know what people think about the 4 alternatives. The first option seems to offer most of everything - if it's organised properly! It would also be one of the cheapest (with Vila/Santo). Option 4 would be in the middle, at about \$1500 for 10 days on the boat including air fare to Cairns, while Truk would be most expensive.

P.S. After reading the article by "Good Luck" in the last news letter, the Phillipines may well be another worthwhile alternative, investigations will proceed!

DIVE CALENDAR

- Sept. 12 to 20 "Polperro" charter trip into Bass Strait
- Sept. 13 Chimney Rock P. King
741 3049
- Boats will leave Sorrento at 9 am & Queens-cliff at 9.30 am, contact P. King for final arrangements.
- Sept. 16 Annual General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club - 8 pm sharp.
- Sept. 20 Flinders 9.30 am P. Reynolds Wreck & Reef Dive
789 1092
- Sept. 25 Social Night at "Abbeys Inn" - All Welcome.
- Oct. 4 Submarines 9.30 am J. Goulding Sorrento Boat Ramp
89 6634
- Oct. 11 Wall Dive 9.30 am T. Tipping Sorrento Boat Ramp
80 4956
- Oct. 18 "Rotomahana" 9.30 am J. Goulding Barwon Heads Pier
89 6634
- Nov. 1 Flinders 10.00 am M. Jackiw Flinders Pier
726 1730
- Nov. 25 Tennis Party/Barbeque/VSAG mile at Somers
T. Tipping is co-ordinator.

PERISCOPE

We popped the Periscope on Melbourne Dive (Heidelberg) recently to have a look at their new Dive Training Tank. It's a Victorian first and reflects Brian Williams' and Dick Whittaker's typically dedicated approach to the business of diving.

Fabricated from an unused 3/8 steel section chimney originally intended for the Adelaide cement works (before the environmental trendies got then) it is 33 feet deep (1 atmosphere to the technically minded) and 8 feet in diameter. 17 feet of this is underground and the rest supported by a steel superstructure. The water is heated, chlorinated and filtered and there are portholes for observing the antics of novice divers!

Dick and Brian conceived the idea and handled the construction work themselves with the design help of Valley Diver, Bob Eales. It is intended as a two atmosphere controlled environment for instructing novice divers on the effect of pressure changes associated with deep diving. It is also used for advanced instruction including Hard Hat and Kirby Morgan use. Dick, a PADI instructor with 2 years commercial dive experience (on oil rigs) is well qualified for the task.

Dick and Brian now have a pretty big kind of investment in the industry. Apart from one of the best equipped AIR workshops in the business they also have extensive training facilities including a 33 ft. "Marine Surveyed" work boat moored at Williamstown (probably the only "legal" boat in the industry). All practical dive training is conducted from the boat, in full gear, including the first water session. Dick reckons this sorts out the real divers and is very critical of the "molly-coddle" approach of many dive schools whose pool training, he believes, is entirely inadequate for the novice diver of today who is no longer a water toughened and fit ex spearo.

Brian (also an instructor) looks after the technical side of the business. A tradesman fitter and turner with 10 years maintenance/service experience in the AIR industry, he is probably the best service mechanic in the business. At least Paul Tipping thinks so - Brian got his antique Calypso working perfectly! And if you still don't believe us take your wet, fluttery Tekna to him - the proof is in the breathing.

Now if you are wondering why Periscope has turned this column into a Melbourne Dive benefit it's because they have fully sponsored your correspondent. The boys have fitted both of my tanks with O-ring dust covers - free! (I can be bought).

Regular readers will gather by now that Periscope does not take too kindly to ever mounting legislation placing further controls and restrictions on divers. The Fisheries and Wildlife people have been pretty active lately. Promulgators of further Marine Reserves, licences, new bag limits for crays and abs. and now would you believe a 100 scallop limit per diver. That's about 5 minutes work off Rye Pier! Yet they have seen fit to licence a further 7 scallop boats to decimate the bottom of our bay with dredging! No doubt divers will take as much notice of this impending legislation as it deserves.

The Fishermen's lobby must be pretty powerful. It seems that commercial fishermen are not subject to the same scrutiny as divers who face constant harassment at launching ramps over the taking of crays even a $\frac{1}{2}$ cm. undersize. Many of you will have noticed the current vogue in Chinese shops is to serve live crays from a tank. You might also note the average size. At a recent visit to the Chinese Village in Little Bourke Street, Periscope observed a large tank full of crays - 90% of which were juveniles. They were so small that even "Kingy"

Periscope continued

would have been ashamed to bring them back to the boat. On questioning the proprietor he responded by saying that the crays must be alright because they are obtained from a commercial fisherman! (Periscope has penned a letter of protest to the relevant department).

Further evidence of the powerful fishermen's lobby is the recent State Government decision not to grant further abalone licences - on the grounds that abalone divers suffer great hardship and physical peril and should not be subjected to further competition. The peril would not be quite so great if the divers were not quite so greedy. No doubt our abalone millionaires are chuckling and the very significant abalone poaching industry will now go on. Periscope recently observed in excess of 10 boats working abs. adjacent to a rather good cray spot - of which only two would have been licenced! (We later heard that one poacher had his boat confiscated at the ramp).

With the incredibly bad run of weather lately, dive news has been pretty scarce. However our last Reef dive certainly provided plenty of excitement and some laughs. That is if you weren't in the "Bill" boat which had lost its wavebreaker in a following sea with deep, choppy troughs. The sight of Des Williams sitting in the back of Johnny's boat (trying to keep its nose up), copping every second wave over the top and chucking bits of wavebreaker over the stern caused much mirth in the other boats. You've never seen anyone quite so bloody miserable - unless of course you took a peek at Charles, regularly hanging his head over the side of Mick's boat.

The big M learnt all about securing his anchor in one dramatic lesson. A swinging wind up-anchored his boat which was later observed by Pat Reynolds (who fortunately likes to keep a weather eye on his transportation) to be somewhere near the horizon!

Gary Copplestone (who hasn't been sighted for months) has to be the club's luckiest diver. Not only does the weather take an uncharacteristic turn for the better (flat seas and sun - in spite of a gale warning) he just happens across the Eliza Ramsden on a deep water channel run and later (on the same run) picks up a valuable "Ally" bottle in 80 ft. of water. Bazza and I were not so lucky - our deep water channel run seemed to be all downhill. At 135 ft. we gave it away. Highlight of our dive was a giant stingray - but we did spot some good cray ledges for next time.

Sight of the month - Bazza Truscott doing a "short arm" inspection prior to extracting an uncooperative male cray!

GEOFF

A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

September 25th is a Friday for you and your better half to enjoy an evening dancing and making merry with VSAG.

VENUE: "Abbeys Inn" (next to Casa De)
Manana Hotel

Cnr. Park St. & St. Kilda Rd.
Melbourne.

COST: \$17 per head which includes drinks if they are beer or wine, Food and Dancing.
Spirit mixed drinks are extra.

CONTACT: Bob Scott on 367 2261 for a booking.

We have a limited number booked, so be early and book now for what should be a lot of fun. Why wait till Christmas to rage with VSAG!

All money must be paid at September 16th Annual General Meeting

CAVE DIVING SEMINAR - 7TH NOVEMBER

North Melbourne Football Club

Cost \$15 per head with dinner
\$10 per head without dinner

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

(Plus excellent films)

*See John Goulding for tickets