

FATHOMS

Aug 82



SAFETY IN DIVING

50c

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VSAG

VSAG divers at Truk Lagoon. Geoff Birtles, John Gouling, Andy Redwood, Yves Corbett, Cynthia. Photo by Des Williams

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

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

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|
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| BOB SCOTT | - Social Secretary | - 367 2261 |
| PAT REYNOLDS | - Property Officer | - 789 1092 |
| TERRY BROOKS | - Points Scorer & Assist. 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 the Wednesday 18th August, at 8.00 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 6.00 p.m. until about 9.00 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 ARE VERY WELCOME!

EDITORIAL

This month we welcome two more new members - MAARTEN KOSTER & GEOFF WILLIAMS, to V.S.A.G. Looking forward to seeing you both on plenty of Club dives and meetings. Your newsletter editor is particularly pleased to Geoff Williams (my brother) at last joining V.S.A.G., not that the good diving weather is ahead of us.

Our front cover photograph competition has now closed and we are all waiting eagerly to see the results of Alex Talay's judgement. I heard a whisper that this time Alex plans to really snap your mind with his printing expertise! We still have a few month's supply of the present covers, so will just pop the new one on you when it arrives.

A good turn up at our July meeting saw some excellent slides provided by Jane and Peter Stone and Keith Jensen on diving overseas. New Caledonia, Philippines and Bougainville were the places we "visited" and they all looked very inviting indeed.

This issue contains a very important Nomination Form, so you may suggest who you would like to see on the V.S.A.G. Committee for 1982-83. Only financial Club members may make a nomination and it must be countersigned by another financial member. The closing date for your nomination is September the 1st, and all forms must be lodged at G.P.O. Box 2526W by then or a better idea is to bring it with you to the August 18th General Meeting. Committee members who have served a three year term and are now up for re-election are MAX SYNON, BOB SCOTT, TONY TIPPING and DAVID CARROLL. Of course any other member may also be nominated for the committee, it is up to you.

If you are looking for some entertainment one bleak, Sunday afternoon when it is too rough to go diving, then why not visit H.M.A.S. CASTLEMAINE moored at Gem Pier at Williamstown. It is nice and close to home and contains many items of interest to those with a love of our seafaring history.

The whole family will enjoy the day because "Castlemaine" was one of 60 Australian Minesweepers built during World War 2. She is now a floating museum and you may inspect her in detail. Aboard, there are relics of Australia's maritime history, both merchant and naval and I am sure you won't be disappointed with the display.

This month we have another article/letter from Chris and Kaye in the U.S.A. and it seems like V.S.A.G. and our Victorian diving exploits are unique!

Tony Tipping has also submitted an article from "Signature" magazine about an unusual life of a crayfish. Those of you who still like to catch crayfish, despite the difficulty involved now that snares have been outlawed, should enjoy the article.

Des Williams

V.S.A.G. DINNER DANCE

VENUE: MANHATTAN ROOM
BENDIGO HOTEL
125 JOHNSON STREET, COLLINGWOOD

DATE: FRIDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER

COST: \$30.00 PER DOUBLE WITH INCLUDES MEAL,
DRINKS AND BAND (GREAT VALUE)

* THERE WILL BE TICKET PRIZES AND RAFFLE ORGANIZED BY OUR MINISTER FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES BOB SCOTT. TELEPHONE 367 2261.

COMMITTEE NEWS: (Held at Tony Tipping's home on 28th July, 1982)

- (i) Membership applications from MAARTEN KOSTER & GEOFF WILLIAMS were accepted.

- (ii) Geoff Birtles showed a simplified oxygen therapy unit. The Club is to rent a C.I.G. oxygen bottle and Bob Scott is to arrange manufacture of an adaptor to suit, thus enabling use of conventional diving regulator for treatment. This effectively does a similar job to the KOMESAROFF unit we viewed last committee meeting and is by far less expensive.
- (iii) Dive Calendar discussion.
- (iv) Tony tipping made it perfectly clear that taking of crayfish by use of snares is now illegal and asked for this advice to be minuted. All present agreed that snares have been outlawed by the Government.

* Next Committee Meeting to be held at Des & Julie William's home at 29 Valerie Street, Boronia on August 25th at 8.00 p.m.

* * * * *

YARRAWONGA WEEKEND TRIP: (October 9th & 10th)

Remember last year's trip, golfing, relaxing, eating out, poker machines, wineries and a lot of fun. It is on again this year, so ring BRUCE SOULSBY on (057) 26 8241 so he can organize accommodation for you in advance.

* * * * *

DIVE CALENDAR

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>DIVE CAPT.</u> | <u>MEET AT</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Aug. 15 | Sorrento/Heads | 8.30am | Paul Tipping 387 2027 | Sorrento B/Ramp |

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>DIVE.CAPT.</u> | <u>MEET AT</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Aug.21 & 22 | Snow Weekend | | Pat Reynolds 789 1092 | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Aug.18 General Meeting | | | | |
| Aug.29 | Port Phillip H Heads | 8.30am | Geoff Birtles 846 1983 | Sorrento B/Ramp |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Sept.5 | Western Port Dive | | Paul Tipping 387 2027 | Details to to come |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Sept.15 Annual General Meeting | | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Sept.17 | V.S.A.G. Dinner Dance | | - Bob Scott 367 2261 | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Sept.19 | Sorrento | 8.30am | Bob Scott 367 2261 | Sorrento B/Ramp |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Oct.3 | "George Kermode" Wreck | 10am | G. Birtles 846 1983 | Flinders Pier |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Oct.9 & 10 | Yarrawonga Weekend | | Bruce Soulsby (057) 26 8241 | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Oct.20 General Meeting | | | | |

NOTE: *Those wishing to dive on above dates must confirm with the Dive Captain the evening before the dive, to arrange boat accommodation.*

CHRISTMAS DIVE TRIP TO PORT LINCOLN S. AUST:

If you wish to join V.S.A.G. this summer at fabulous Port Lincoln, then don't delay, ring BARRY TRUSCOTT now on 783 9095 and reserve your campsite.

! ! ! ! ! ! !

((((FLOTSAM AND JETSOM)))

Last month you may recall us telling you about Bazza dunking his wet suit in a bucket of hot water before diving, which we thought was a great idea for winter diving. Well, here are two other ways.

Go diving in the tropics on one of those fantastic dive tours that Jan and Peter Stone from Aquarius Travel talked about at our July General Meeting. Or alternatively, do what I did and give diving a big miss during July and most of August.

Now, I don't recommend this latter action for all members, but Mur atroyd, who is now well endowed with child within, tells me that I should get used to staying home on Sundays. What ever could she be aiming at!?

With all the fuss lately about tax avoidance schemes did you hear that Federal Treasurer John Howard was presented with mask, snorkel and flippers as a birthday present to aid his search for "bottom of the harbour companies".

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Being of commercial background myself and knowing something of the problems involved in underwater searches may I offer some suggestions to Johnny Howard:

"Look for companies that have a lot of "LIQUID" assets which may have occurred through a "FLOOD" of orders during a very "BOUVANT" period.

Oh well - if you don't dive you might as well be topical.

On Saturday 24th July we farewelled Kerry Joyce who is going north to Queensland.

Amongst the most disappointed fellas was Captain Reg Truscott who happened to phone a couple of days before Kerry's departure. You see, Reg is concerned that we may not be able to provide any maidens for the annual "Mirrabooka" trip. Who would pull the splinters out of his feet, and rub oil on his back. So if Kaye and Chris remain overseas and Kerry stays in the sunny north, it will be all up to Hilary to placate our good captain.

Anyway Kerry, all the best in Joh's country with American Express.

Signed Nester Tabews

"H.M.S. CAPTAIN" (British Battleship 1870)

Designed by Capt. Cowper Coles for the British Admiralty, this was an oceangoing turret ship. Its armament consisted of two double 12 inch gun turrets. It was built of iron and had extra armour plate at the waterline, but it proved unstable due to its low freeboard deck. During a storm off Cape FINISTERRE, Spain, on September 6 1870, it turned over and sank with its designer aboard. All but 18

of the crew of 500 went down with the ship.

Certainly a very tragic story, so you can imagine the terror in the hearts of the sailors who brought H.M.S. Captain's sister-ship to Melbourne a short time later. The sister ship was of course H.M.V.S. CERBERUS, and the journey from England was a nightmare to say the least. No wonder she spent the rest of her life cruising around Port Phillip Bay thus avoiding the huge ocean swells which build up around our coastline.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW OVERDUE:

If you have not as yet paid your 1982-83 Annual Sub., then you are holding your last copy of "Fathoms". The following members for 1981-82 have yet to pay for the new year and we publish their names in the hope it will serve as a reminder:

| | | |
|------------|-------------|----------------|
| R. Adamson | F. Herbert | G. Copplestone |
| B. Lynch | F. Ferrante | T. Arnott |
| D. Moore | N. Garland | R. Hicks |
| P. Smith | J. Turner | G. Belanszky |
| A. Whitley | L. Cole | P. Wilson |
| B. Hayes | P. King | |

Please mail your cheque today!

SUNNY SAN DIEGO 26/6/82

Kaye and I are presently sunbaking on the sandy shores of La Jolla, C.A.

Since our last tell-tale, we've headed down the West Coast and propped in San Diego with two

divers we met in Hawaii.

The club "Sea Awareness" has kindly taken us into the palms of their hands (literally) and escorted us to many good diving spots.

The club officially has 300 members, but only an average of 'ten' dive each organized outing. This is not an indication of the club, but more an indication of the very many diving spots and they are all beach entries.

We now realize (of course we did before) how spoilt we are by having the boats in V.S.A.G.

We're now becoming quite used to rock climbing and swimming a mile or two through a garden of kelp to the actual diving spot!!

Renting, (not hiring in U.S. slang) of gear has been amusing as they term things differently and we have had the use of every type of B.C. available.

Our most favourite 'sea' adventure to date, and very appropriate for Robinson and Crusoe, has been a sailing trip to Catalina Island.

Kaye and I were lucky enough to be asked to crew a 46 foot Peterson Yacht. We had had no previous experience, but it didn't take long to learn.

It took four days; no hot water, plenty of wind, all sails up, but not a lot of sun.

We arrived at Catalina very tired as you sail through the night, taking it in turn to keep watch.

Catalina is an island that is a haven for the wealthy yacht and motorboat owners.

It is a superb diving spot, so of course we indulged in all aspects of the word.

Again a beach entry, we teamed up with four guys that we met the night before; excellent divers and terrific fun!

We were in search of a wreck at 90ft. The visibility was good - 40 ft - and the thermocline was noticeable. At 90ft. it was cold, at 50ft just right.

Apparently it was suppose to be a difficult find only going on hearsay directions, but we were lucky enough to find it. You could penetrate it completely and Kaye discovered an old boot and a weathered wet-suit - we didn't venture further!!!!

The other dives have been 50ft - 70ft and resemble garden type settings. The marine and plant life is varied, but not as colourful as 'ours'. The most common fish is Geribaldi, a bright orange protected species. Everyone is into collecting abalone, we enjoy the sightseeing.

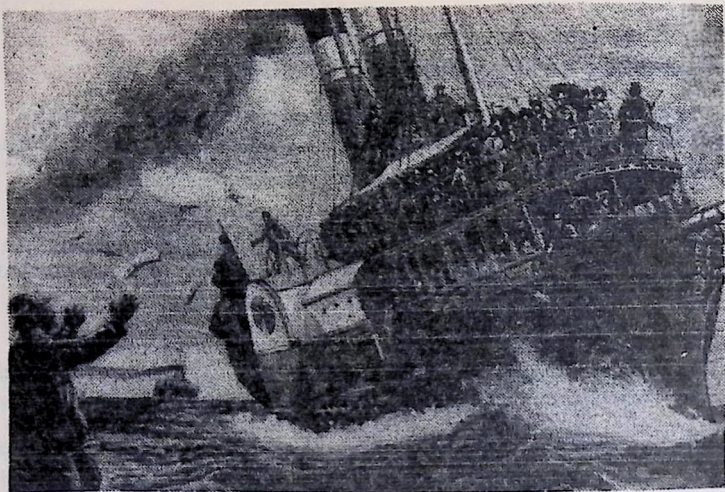
The return trip to San Diego was better as 'we knew what we were doing, sort of!!!'

Much to our excitement we saw a school of dolphins. By the time we had anchored we felt like weathered "French Lieutenant's women" wrapped in blankets and wind swept - but it was worth every agonizing changing of sail and direction to keep our 7 knot speed.

Love to all, we think of you often and hope that all is well on the western front.

Lot of love,
Chris & Kaye

P.S. Apparently nothing quite like the "Mirrabooka"!!!!



The above sketch of the paddle steamer "WILLIAMS" and has been taken from the "Australasian Sketcher" of 17th January 1880. And here is the short story which accompanied it; for your enjoyment:

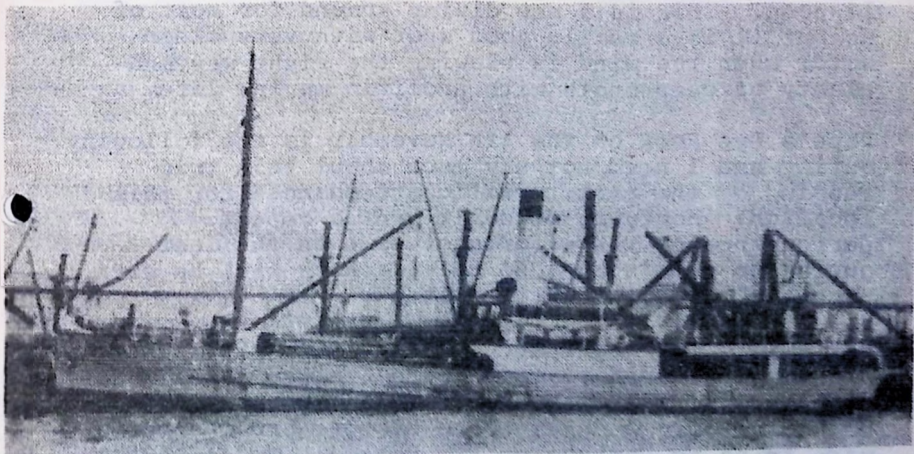
"THE STEAMER 'WILLIAMS': PASSENGERS THROWING PAPERS FOR THE PILE LIGHT" -

"Anyone who has taken the trip down the Bay by the steamer "Williams", has either watched or assisted at the incident here depicted. The occupants of the Pile Light near the Heads appear to be animated by a very keen interest in newspaper literature, and always have a boat out to meet the steamer, for the purpose of getting papers. Passengers are aware of this tendency, and having by this time read their journals, roll them up and pitch them into the water, whence they are deftly rescued by the boatman, and doubtless dried ready for perusal. What is it in the papers - whether the politics, the Parliamentary debates, the stock

and share markets, the English-telegrams, theatrical critiques, or notices of births, deaths and marriages - which excites the strong interest in those dwellers of the ocean we can only speculate upon, but cannot solve."

STEAMER "WAUCHOPE" (Photo below)

WELL KNOWN ON THE MELBOURNE TO KING ISLAND RUN. SHE CAUGHT FIRE OFF PORTSEA QUARANTINE STATION IN AUGUST 1919 AND BEING FULL OF BENZINE FOR THE KING ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE WAS HASTILY ABANDONED. SHE EVENTUALLY EXPLODED THEN DRIFTED INTO THE SHALLOWS OFF SORRENTO AND SETTLED. HER BOILER CAN BE SEEN TODAY, OFF SORRENTO PIER AS WE PASS BY -----



"BLAST FROM THE PAST" (From "Fathoms" dated October 1961.

"OUTINGS" - I am sure none of us regretted the changing of the outing to Canadian Bay. As usual the weather was perfect and a really good crowd turned out.

Dr. Ian Hiscock was seen enthusiastically scrounging through the various specimens brought ashore by the members of the group. I think we were all surprised to see how many different species of worms, starfish, sponges, seaweed etc. existed in the shallows.

The boat trip to Mt. Martha will be reported at the next meeting.

The next outing is a weekend at Pt. Lonsdale on the 21-22 October. The meeting place will be decided at the next General meeting. For those who cannot make it for the weekend, you will have to be down there by 10.30 a.m. to catch the slack water at 12 noon. This is a new diving ground for most of us but it is a really good spot with very clear water when the wind is blowing the right way and plenty of deep spots with prolific marine life.

Pope's Eye Rock on the 5th November is the following outing and I need not say much about this trip judging by the past terrific attendances for this location. However, we don't want a repeat performance of the efforts of some on the last outing to Pope's Eye, so Life Jackets will be worn by everybody entering the water".

ED. NOTE: Ah! those were the days when Pt. Lonsdale was virgin territory and Pope's Eye was a real buzz. Back in 1961 the motor vehicle was owned by a few, not like today when everyone has one and the roads made trips to Portsea or Pt. Lonsdale twice as time consuming as today.

"THE LIFE OF BRIAN"

(Reprinted from SIGNATURE Magazine with permission of the Editor - Mr. John Hall).

Once upon a time, a crayfish called Brian lived on a rocky shelf 10 fathoms below the surface of an often rough and dangerous sea called Bass Strait.

Brian's home was six kilometres from a big island called Australia. He had lived thereabouts for the three years since he emerged from the egg held underneath his mother's tail because crayfish never like travelling far from the place they were hatched.

Brian was also terrified about being alone. That is why he shared the shelf with more than 60 other crayfish, many of whom were his brothers and sisters. Hundreds of members of his large family never survived childhood while others were snapped up by the only three real enemies that Brian feared.

These were Big White Shark, Gobble Mouthed Groper (who lay in wait in a large rock hole at the bottom of the shelf and was always pretending to be asleep when he wasn't), and, most dangerous of all, Long Legged Octopus.

Brian did not know that he lived in a sea. The pale green light which regularly came and went far above was called the sky.

Beyond the sky was a mystery, which was called the Promised Great Shelf Flowing with Fish Heads.

Most crayfish believed in the Promised Great Shelf Flowing With Fish Heads. As scavengers, eating what had already died or scraps of meals snapped up by Big White Shark or Gobble Mouthed Groper or Long Legged Octopus, their religion naturally promised an eternity

of fish heads for all true believers.

These beliefs were occasionally reinforced to the odd, doubting crayfish, (who rarely voiced these doubts for fear of being accused of Heresy and forcibly hustled to the entrance of the hole where the Gobble Mouthed Groper was never really asleep) by strange visitations known as Close Encounters Of the Best Kind.

These visitations took the form of strange, round vehicles that drifted down from the pale green sky and lay on the sand just below the shelf.

These strange vehicles of course came from The Promised Great Shelf Flowing With Fish Heads because there was always a fish head inside to sustain the lucky crayfish whose turn it was to make the great journey upwards past the sky.

As crayfish communities have a very definite pecking order, no young cray was ever supposed to go into one of these vehicles. Tradition gave this prerogative to the elders of the crayfish community.

One day just after Brian's third birthday, which established him as the main elder of the rock shelf, a Close Encounter Of The Best Kind occurred.

For three years he had evaded Great White Shark, avoided the hole of Gobble Mouthed Groper and four times had successfully scuttled beyond the reach of Long Legged Octopus.

Brian said goodbye to his brothers and sister. Boldly he left the shelter of the shelf and marched slowly across the sand to where the strange vehicle lay.

It was made of what looked like very hard strands of sea weed, all twined together. There wasn't enough room for Brian to squeeze through, but inside could

be seen a very large fish head.

After marching right around the strange vehicle, Brian found the entrance, a funnel-like tunnel with an opening at the bottom just large enough to squeeze through.

Giving silent thanks to the Great Crayfish who Ruled The Promised Great Shelf Flowing With Fish Heads, Brian settled down to wait, occasionally nibbling at the fish head that would sustain him on his journey.

Night came.

Brian had eaten nearly all of the fish head and the sky had just begun to turn the palest of greyish green again, when he felt a jolt. The strange vehicle was moving.

Up, up he travelled.

Looking down through the open mesh, Brian could see the shelf growing smaller and smaller and darker and darker until it faded from view.

At the same time the Sky grew lighter and lighter.

Suddenly, there was a brilliant light, brighter than anything a crayfish could ever imagine. Brian was blinded.

The strange vehicle rocked and jerked and jolted and then Brian felt his shell gripped by what he had always imagined the fat, bulbous lips of Gobble Mouthed Groper would feel like.

For only a few seconds the light was blinding and then, 'plop' he found himself in deep darkness once again.

He sensed other crayfish around him; strange crayfish that were not from his community.

There were no fish heads anywhere. Briefly, Brian had doubts, but as a crayfish who had lived a long and pure life, he thrust this Heresy from his thoughts.

On the pitching deck of the Aphrodite, Jim The Big Fisherman, whose real name was Dimitrios Kapsanis, threw the last of his lobster pots in the scuppers and yelled to his brother Georgio in the wheelhouse to head for home.

It had not been a brilliant catch for the long, hard effort, but the last one had been a giant of a cray, about three kilos, Jim thought, and at more than \$5 a kilo at the co-operative a few more like that would help make the week worthwhile.

It was a 26 kilometre run through increasingly short, choppy seas to the port.

Deep inside the dark fish tank, Brian retained his dignity, ignored the other strange crayfish who were not from his community and concluded that he was in a place called Purgatory, which some crayfish believed had to be passed through before one could reach The Promised Great Shelf Flowing With Fish Heads.

Purgatory was not always dark. There were several more periods of blinding light, several more times when he felt his shell gripped by what felt like the lips of Gobble Mouthed Groper.

He found himself turned upwards, downwards, sideways and backwards.

All of this occurred, of course, while Jim The Big Fisherman was removing Brian from the holding tank, showing him proudly to other fishermen who sold

their catches to the Co-operative; while he was being weighed (2.8 kilos!); while Gus the Co-operative manager was phoning Pierre at the French Restaurant in Melbourne; and finally, the long, bumpy journey crammed, along with other new and strange crayfish, in a big bag in the back of a utility.

It was night when Brian felt his shell gripped again and he could dimly see strange shapes and strange things.

Suddenly, 'plop', he found himself on sandy bottom, not unlike the sand beyond his own rocky shelf.

He looked around for other crayfish. There was only a large flathead floating lazily close by and Brian, who was very confused about Purgatory by this time, thought it best to ignore it.

A few yards away from the glass fish tank which was a prominent part of the outstanding decor of Pierre's French Restaurant, Pierre himself (whose real name was Piertro because he was born in a small village on the banks of the River Po in Italy), was showing Fred and Angela to their candle-lit table.

Fred, a rising young executive in a computer company was deeply in love with Angela who was the boss' secretary.

He had brought her to Pierre's French Restaurant to propose, which Angela already secretly knew about because Fred had told George in programming and George had confided this to his girlfriend Gwenda in the accounts department and Gwenda was a good friend of Angela.

Knowing that Angela adored crayfish, Fred had asked Pierre to have a large one reserved when he made the

booking for dinner a couple of days before.

That is why, a few minutes later, Brian felt his shell gripped again by something that felt like the big lips of Gobble Mouthed Groper.

He saw moving light and moving shape, but he felt not a thing when Syd the Chef turned him over on the big board and finally, painlessly and instantly transported him from Purgatory to the Promised Great Shelf Flowing With Fish Heads.

Brian now cared nought for the fate of his earthly shell. So it didn't matter that Angela preferred Lobster Newburg and Fred like his Thermidor.

Brian had been so big that Syd the Chef used half of him for each of them.

Now, if all this seems too sad a finish for a Fairy Cray Tale, the story ends with Fred proposing to Angela and Angela saying 'Yes'.

She was an April Bride and all went well until Fred was promoted to Sales Manager and began to take Gwenda from accounts out for a drink instead of going home to Angela, which was discovered by George who was insanelly jealous of Gwenda, which is why he told Angela, who went to the Family Court, received two-thirds of a joint property settlement, developed a psychsomatic revulsion for Lobster Newburg and finally fell in love and married her analyst.

Fred moved in with Gwenda while George got a sales manager's job for an American company in Saudi Arabia.

And They All Lived Happily Ever After.

* * * * *

H.M.S FURIOUS :(British light battle cruiser 1916)

Known to the British public as the "H.M.S Curious" this vessel carried two 18 inch guns, which proved to be shattering weapons on this lightly built ship. When the guns were fired, rivets would fly about in the turrets due to the force of the weapons. Needless to say, the Furious found it next to impossible to hit an enemy ship with its two gun battery. Moreover its armour was pitifully weak. In fact, during a gale at sea, several of its outer plates were dented so badly they had to be replaced. The addition of the Furicus to the British fleet served only to lower morale, since it was obvious even to common seamen that it was a floating mistake. After World War 1 it was converted into an aircraft carrier.

WANTED

More articles of news
for Fathoms Magazine.
