

# FATHOMS

Registered for posting as a publication category B  
If undeliverable, return to Victorian Sub Aqua Group, Box 2526W, GPO Melbourne 3001



## SAFETY IN DIVING

FEB 1982 50c



# V S A G

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHO :

(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

TREASURER:

David Carroll  
5/29 Dover Road  
Williamstown 3016  
397 2317

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 17th February at 8 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lurie 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!

SECRETARY &  
SAFETY/MEDICAL OFFICER

John Goulding  
13 Birdwood Street  
Box Hill South 3128  
89 6634

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Des Williams  
29 Valerie Street  
Boronia 3155  
762 1623

## EDITORIAL

It is 1982 and our diving gear is another year older; that snappy new compensator vest is now last year's model!! After all that Christmas good cheer I guess there will also be a few very snug fitting wetsuits around too!

We are now well into the top diving weather and those members and visitors who were at Ulladulla over the Christmas period already have about twelve dives under their weight belts.

What a great place to dive!! Ulladulla must be the most diveable place V.S.A.G. has been in a long time. Hand feeding huge blue groper, chasing Wobbygongs (Tony), 100 ft. visibility at Brush Is. with a flat sea, beautiful caves big enough to hold four divers, vertical drop-offs visible from the boat, and a dive at the legendary Stony Creek Deep Reef out of Jervis Bay! What more can I say? I had a great holiday and thanks to all those who travelled the 700 kms and I know that no one was disappointed after the wrap-up we gave it last year. But more about the trip later.

On behalf of the V.S.A.G. Committee I would like to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year and lots of safe dives.

New Year's Eve saw a double celebration for TERRY BROOKS and SALLY ROBERTS who were married only hours before the new year began. Our very best wishes Mr. & Mrs. Brooks!

As we move deeper into the 80's, we almost certainly face further petrol price rises. I guess V.S.A.G. members used to that flat out sprint up the Bay in member owned boats will now have to get used to a more economical water speed and arrive at dive sites a couple of minutes later. Oh well, inflation hits us all in many ways, so let's be thankful we have the opportunity to share such valuable equipment which gives us all so much freedom.

The Annual trip to Wilsons Promontory on Australia Day weekend was this year arranged by John Goulding. A spectacular job was done by John including a completely new approach to menus.

*This time cold meats with hot potatoes and plenty of tomatoes, and fruit. And all disposable cutlery & crockery. An excellent idea John and a total success. Thank you for the many hours of hard work involved in setting up such a well organised week-end. Thanks must also go to Mick JACKIW who brought his 7.5 cu. ft. compressor which saved many long hours refilling tanks. All those who went on the trip are reminded that air fills are still to be paid for and you will soon be notified.*

*Des Williams*

### COMMITTEE NEWS

Meeting held at Barry and Marie Truscott's home on 27th January, 1982.

- (1) Visitors Mick Jeacle and Alex Talay.
- (2) Discussion held and decision agreed upon that all new members should attend at least one Club meeting and one dive before being eligible for Club membership.
- (3) Geoff Birtles suggested a new dive site be tried by the Club called "Spectacular Reef" just inside Port Phillip Heads. Geoff recently dived this site and said it lived up to its name.
- (4) March meeting to include a talk by Owen Wright on resuscitation methods. To be arranged by G. Birtles.
- (5) April meeting will include a talk by diving doctor David Broomhall on diving physiology. To be arranged by T. Tipping.
- (6) Venue of next Christmas diving holiday to be decided upon at February general meeting.
- (7) G. Birtles reported the Club sextant is proving its worth and should be most beneficial on future dives.

- (8) A fund raising campaign will soon be embarked upon in the form of social functions to raise moneys to cover newsletter publication.
- (9) D. Williams reported covers for newsletter will have to be printed again and Alex Talay has offered to print for the Club free of charge.
- \*\* Next Committee meeting to be held at Pat Reynolds home on Wednesday 24th February at 8.00 p.m.

February 17th General Meeting will include a showing of members' slides taken during recent Christmas Club trip to Ulladulla. All members with slides are requested to bring them along.

#### FOR SALE

V.S.A.G. car stickers only 50¢ each. Available at our next Gen.Meeting

### DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPTAIN</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
Feb.14	Flinders Area	9.00am	John Guilding 89 6634	Flinders Jetty
	Plan is to dive wreck "George Kermode" & reef for crays.			
Feb.21	Port Phillip Heads area	10.00am	Paul Tipping 387 2027	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Mar 6, 7 & 8	Port Campbell - long weekend		Max Synon 465 2812	
Mar 17	General Meeting	(Lecture by Owen Wright)		
Mar 21	Pinnacles Dive	9.30am	Bob Scott 367 2261	San Remo Jetty
Mar 28	Port Phillip Heads	9.00am	G. Birtles 846 1983	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Apr 2-17	Vanuatu Tour		Andy Redwood	699 3906
Apr 4	Slack Water Dive	8.30am	Max Synon 465 2812	Sorrento Boat Ramp

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Captain</u>	<u>Meet at</u>
Apr 9-12	Wilson's Prom.		Tony Tipping	80 4956
	8 sites for camping will be booked at Tidal River			
Apr 21	General Meeting		Lecture by Dr. Broomhal	

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

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

CO-ORDINATOR: Andy Redwood, Telephone 699 3906 April 2nd-17th

Time is running out if you wish to go to the warm tropical waters of Vanuatu in April 1982, with V.S.A.G. you can still ring Andy for details of this brilliant diving spot and make a booking.

<u>TOUR COSTS:</u>	(From Melbourne)	Scuba Diver	\$1,130
		Snorkeller	\$ 870
		Non-diver	\$ 770

## PERISCOPE

It's not often that one gets the chance to include a real live octopus attack into one's repertoire of "bank lies". And as expected, your low profile correspondent fully intends to exploit the opportunity.

On our last "cray bash" (if you can call a bag limit of four a "bash") I was gently extracting "a good eater" from the kelp by its feelers when what (at the time) appeared to be an octopus or squid moved with incredible speed toward my cray and arrested any further movement. After one heart stopping moment I figured "no hassles, they don't get very big, he's not having my cray".

On parting the rather dense kelp I immediately understood the velvety feeling around my hand and arm - and why the cray and my arm wasn't moving. Firmly planted on top of the cray was a big orange octopus with mean eyes set in a rather large head with white suckered tentacles all of 4-5 foot long! One of these was snugly wrapped around my wrist and forearm - another hanging onto a rock. The rest were busy stripping and storing cray legs for later eating.

At this stage the octopus thought he had it won and whilst trying to re-swallow my regurgitated heart, so did I. The brain department had moved into overload and started flashing stupid messages like "Octopus don't get this big!" "Why don't the suckers hurt?" ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " of neoprene helps - although the bare legs had goose bumps) "What if it bites?" "Let go" and finally - "No one is going to believe this if I don't bring the octopus back to the boat". Ego and the macho desire to prove to myself that I wasn't really scared (not much) won. We landed both the octopus and the cray. Neither the octopus or I would let go of the cray.

So next time you see a cray outside its ledge ask yourself why. It's probably been flushed out by a marauding octopus just waiting to land on your arm. Meanwhile I might give deep ledge penetrations a rest.

Actually, the day had plenty of excitement to follow. Whilst cruising into Flinders beach we received a "red alert" on the C.B. "Brown shirts on the beach"! One club boat (which will remain anonymous for obvious reasons) was seen to peel off at 40+ mph and disappear around the point - hotly pursued by a police helicopter! After a cursory glance into the boat's interior our guardians of the sky flew off to bigger fish - no doubt looking for abalone poachers. After "checking" bag limits and sizes (all legal) we returned to find a couple of Black Rock boys being booked for using a cray hook. Naturally all VSAG boats checked out O.K.

For some months Tony Tipping has been circulating a strong rumour that his old column "Tits Tip Bits" is about to be resurrected.

For the benefit of our newer members we should explain that its a kind of Flotsam and Jetsam - but more basic! Tony assures us that he has been persuaded back to the fold only by editorial assurance that he can use plenty of 3 and 4 letter words.

"Periscpe" is purchasing a Thesaurus for Tony because we suggest that if our rather cultured editor uses the same sneaky censorship techniques on Tips slanderous scratchings as it does on "Periscope's" cray stories we will once again see the demise of Tits & Bits by Tips.

The pressure of responsibility! It all proved too much for one new dive captain (who will remain unnamed for fear of retribution). Suited up and ready to go on a recent wall drift he found his regulator back to front. No problems (apart from the inconvenience to a crowded, pitching boat) but on regearing he found his air off. Upon turning his air on we found the O ring missing! (At this stage another diver volunteered that he was trained to deal with this kind of incompetence - and ducked a mighty blow!) Then, as if this was not enough our unfortunate Dive Captain dropped his tank in 300 ft. of water whilst re-entering the boat! (Expertly retrieved at 80 ft. by speed diver Mick Jackiw).

On reflection, it might have been the boat trip that shook his usual cool. At one stage his transportation was seen spearing to the sky with new member Alex Talay executing a brilliant Marsh type ankle catch on young Reece who seemed determined to leap over the windscreen. We believe that our unfortunate Dive Captain has now given Dive Captaincy and passengering the flick!

Incidentally, if you think this was "animal driving" ask Johnny G. about his current popularity rating with the Offshore Game Fishing Club. We believe it took some hours to cut sundry fishing lines from the Bill Boat's prop after he cruised across their trawling lines during a fishing competition.

A "Periscope" spy recently returned from diving the Loch Ard, reports that it is currently being raped by local lobbyists on the basis that if they can't get their pet pile of rubble protected, they'll make sure no one else gets any. Oh well, double standards are not new to diving activists!



Gary Copplestone and your correspondent have just completed the Royal Life Saving Society's Sub Aqua Bronze (Underwater Lifesaving and First Aid) and Senior Resuscitation (Treatment of Respiratory and Circulatory failure) examinations. We were both so impressed with the course content and its practical application we hope to make it a special "Periscope" topic next month.

Teaching was expertly and professionally handled by Owen Wright and Steve Sinclair (proprietor) of "In Depth" in North Melbourne. Steve, a cave diving fanatic, who holds a B.Sc. and is the current Australian Scuba Champion is probably the most professionally competent tutor on the Melbourne scene. He has just published, together with Hugh Morrison (of W.A.) a new book on the essentials of SCUBA theory - "Australian SCUBA Diver". His book is the first serious attempt to standardise theory at the Australian NQS level. More importantly it is clearly and logically presented without any of the Gung Ho crap and is a valuable reference for both the novice diver trying to pass exams and the expert seeking to update on current first aid and emergency procedures.

"Periscope" has tentatively arranged for Owen Wright to demonstrate and explain Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation at our March General Meeting. Owen is currently doing a Ph.D. in Zoology, is a qualified Resuscitation Instructor with the RLS and currently completing a FAUI Dive Director course. He also runs his own business hanging curtains (phone 479 2279). He is an excellent communicator with a friendly laid back style of teaching and I'm sure it will be a pleasantly informative night for all of us.

Sighted on the beach at Sorrento, a well known and popular Black Rock diver smugly cleaning a friend's beautifully intact dead-eye taken of the "Eliza Ramsden"! How many divers have missed that one?

- Geoff -

## TIP'S TIT-BITS

Once again the V.S.A.G. Christmas trip was a roaring success i.e. after the heads of state sorted out the problems of having had too many sites booked, not enough members turning up (who had said they would) and trying to screw that little Hitler of Ranger down on the loss of our deposits for site he immediately let! The club lost about \$24 net which isn't huge, but perhaps in future we'll have to put our money where our mouths are, rather than deciding to go elsewhere on Boxing Day!

Despite all of this Ulladulla still turned on a pretty good sort of a fortnight - maybe the weather wasn't as good as last year, but the club still dived every single day, apart from New Year's Day, when they were too busy rescuing some fat gutted New South Wales bastard's trailer-sailer on Lake Burull. We had about three days when the sky emptied itself out making diving conditions rather uncomfortable and giving Des some pretty stiff competition.

As usual the pace leading up to New Year's Eve was red hot with the Jeacle brothers and Alex making it difficult to hang in there - not to mention Keith Jensen's dry humour and the two young boys fighting ten rounds every day before breakfast. It was dive in the morning, golf or tennis in the afternoon, followed by a quiet tin or three over dinner, then the single blokes (the ones with all the money) would be off to the Blythmook Golf Club womanising and raging until the wee small hours! (Not necessarily in that order). One poor old bloke of 3 found it was easier to pull poker machines than women, but unfortunately looked a bit of a short-arse at the end of the night when he stood on his wallet!

New Year's Eve could be classified as a well organized disaster. Sure we had the flash meal at the Golf Club, speeches by anyone and everyone, a blast at the pokies upstairs with the bad but on the stroke of midnight all I could find was a dog called "Spot". Went back to the camp where she piddled on all four tyres of the Sigma before attacking Max's brother-in-law, so I then led her back to the kennels only to be tossed out

by her mistress with out even cracking it for a dog biscuit! Not only that, but I picked up fleas and hydatids to boot! Incidentally about ten days later it finally twigged why they call one of the dives up there the Stoney Creek Drop-Off! Or was it the Spotted Dog Drop-Off!

The following night it was party time at the Jeacle's and the NSW beer drinking voices were in excellent shape. We all expected the Guildings to arrive - better late than never - to a well billed chorus of Hey Jack, you're late, eh Jack yer late! They didn't make it until next day after propping at a hotel; not only that but the chorus was right too!

In brief: Keith dreams about his Honiara lady every night; the President was the noisiest and last to retire on New Year's Eve (important example to new members); those young blokes - Truscott Lars etc. - failed dismally, there were women everywhere! Mick Jackiw needs a 25 hour day - he sleeps 24 and needs the other hour for a dive and a swaggy's breakfast! And if there was a Superman Award at Christmas Des would have won it pants down!

On a more serious note, I've just heard that the Historical Shipwrecks Act was passed in State Parliament just before Christmas and will be gazetted by the time you read this, therefore making it illegal to take anything off any of the several hundred wrecks in Victorian waters. Anyone found guilty of an offence relating to this matter faces pretty stiff penalties. For example, a diver who uses explosives to help make gains from an historical shipwreck, faces a term of five years gaol or a \$5,000 fine or both - that sure is mean, but I'd hate to think what the poor bugger would cop if he blasted one apart on a day of Total Fire Ban!

- - - - -

## FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

What better way to finish a great 1981 but to get married, and that's just what Terry Brooks and Sally Roberts did on New Year's eve. Whilst many of V.S.A.G. were at Ulladulla enjoying the diving, Terry and Sally were tying the knot.

And speaking of Knots, it seems that one low profile but very conspicuous member is enrolling for a course in knot tying after losing his cray bag with its contents of 3 crays!

Absent from Ulladulla was the sighting of crayfish, although local did say that they were about, and big ones too! - up to 1 kg. - wow - however even though there were no crays there was some magnificent diving, some terrible golf and in between some fun times.

Had to take my hat off to the odd couple: President Max Synon and Keith Jensen from the Melbourne Fire Brigade Club. Max and Keith took it in turns for cooking cleaning and even bathing their little horrors - er - kids. Talk about being prepared! When my Murgatroyd split her jeans whilst chopping wood for the barbie, not only did Max offer her a needle and thread to mend it, but also provided a range of coloured cottons and a thimble.

Who needed a woman with these two around? Tony obviously didn't, for even though he kept telling us that there were "Women everywhere", the only friend he made in the two weeks, was a little number from the nearby kennels. Apparently she was an affectionate and playful little bitch, but when Tony offered her a bone, she took one bit and ran off with it.

From then on Tony and the bachelor boys Alex and Mick were content to play the gambling variety of poker!

The diving at Ulladulla provided plenty of variety, and although the reefs were quite close to the harbour, each location was quite different from the others. In my mind one of the highlights was

hand feeding the huge blue groper who were very tame and trusted us completely.

The Blue Marlin Marine shop run by Peter Smith looked after our diving needs extremely well, and offered discounted air fills to divers who purchased air cards, which provided 10 fills for the price of eight. Perhaps a questionable practice when you have the only commercial compressor within forty five miles, but I'm sure it would be considered a worthy service if offered by one of Melbourne's dive shops.

One of the big events of the trip was the long awaited dive at Stoney Creek Drop Off - South of Jervis Bay. A sheer wall rising from 200 feet to 120 feet describes the famed Drop Off, which at the top supports a plateau richly covered with slender sea whips which sway gently in the surge. Down the wall, the rock face is covered with brilliant corals and sponges which yield up their true colours only with the split second burst of the flash light or the underwater glow of the torch.

Our dive at Stoney Creek was all too short, because of the depth, but I would rate it as an excellent dive for further exploration when we get the chance.

As we headed back to Ulladulla from Jervis Bay, we decided that Stoney Creek would be the last dive of the trip. The group had been there for two weeks and it was now time to head for home. However, the next morning the sun shone brilliantly over Ulladulla harbour, and the sea glistened as it only does when it is calm and the water clear. Now where were all these keen divers?

Bazza was packing up the tent and tribe. Des was running around mumbling things like "first clean out tent, second pull out pegs" etc.

Mick Jackiw was asleep. Tony was explaining that he could only do 4 or was it 5 dives for the trip - and John was putting his wet suit on calling out "Free dive at Lighthouse Reef", "Coffee and Sandwiches provided", "Come on Aussie, come diving".

Eventually Tip and Mick agreed to help Johnny empty the boat's fuel tanks by a run out to Lighthouse reef and the last dive at Ulladulla.

With one trip out of the way we are just about to embark on another: - the Annual pilgrimage to Refuge Cove aboard the good ship "Mirrabooka" - read all about it next month!

Tim Burr  
(The Woodchopper)

### MEMORIES OF ULLADULLA - 1982 by Des Williams

The more I dive with V.S.A.G. as a Club, the more I am glad I had the opportunity to become a Club member.

Mick Jeacles brother Peter, Barry Truscott, Max Synon, and John Goulding all towed boats to Ulladulla, and made this trip a total success, thanks fellas!

My diving diary is packed with some great memories of the trip, and I even got a reasonable number of slides to look back on, and I will have them at the February meeting for all to see.

We were fortunate indeed to have Mick Jackiw with us too, because two days before Christmas Mick's car was written-off by a motor bike and he joined Julie and I in our car to Ulladulla. Glad you're still in one piece Mick!

So we dived every day except New Year's Day, and that was only because of a New Year's Eve sickness which we all seemed to develop.

From my diary so selected notes:

28/12: Hand fed the big blue gcrper on Front Bommie. He has an enormous appetite for sea urchins and I am sure he could eat them all day. This fish must weigh around 50 lbs.

29/12: With Barry and Mick we swam into a huge school of yellowtail which restricted visibility, while a couple of large kingies circled around for a look at us.

2/1: Thousands of fish on the Front Bommie today, and a blue current produced very clear water with visibility of 85 ft. Keith Janson presented Alex Talay with a Port Jackson shark. Alex's bulging eyes scratched his mask, and we could hear Keith laughing in his regulator.

3/1: 80 ft. vis. again today on the Golf Course Bommie drop off, which was visible from the boat, who needs an echo sounder? Dived with Tony Tippling and took plenty of fish photos.

4/1: While exploring a large cave on the Front Bommie with Barry we encountered a huge cuttlefish who allowed us to touch him. Got some good photos. The cave has a small chimney at the end and a large school of Bullseyes filed through it like smoke. Some really vivid red gorgonian coral fans in here.

5/1: Tiny jellyfish in the water today and on ascent, the last 10 ft. layer was a solid mass of jelly as we returned to the boat.

6/1: Brush Island Bommie today and the visibility was reminiscent of Mt. Gambier diving, at least 100 ft. vis. ! Plenty of small Wobbygongs to photograph.

7/1: Burril Reef and Barry and I dived along the drop off where we discovered a huge double cave and soon swam its full length. Plenty of fish to keep us company. A great dive.

8/1: Jervis Bay - Stony Creek Deep Reef. I owe this dive to the patience and competent boat-handling of Barry Truscott and John Goulding. John always seems to get those marks right, and we anchored in 200 ft. of water against the legendary Stony Creek Deep Reef vertical wall. This dive goes into my "top dive list". The reef begins at 110-120 ft. and the marine growth is really special here, first time I have ever seen so many sea whips which looked like a field of wheat. We

were circled by a few big kingies and many other fish, too many to list here. This was an all electric dive!! Thanks Mick, Tony, Bazza and John.

The night life was fun too, as we dined en masse at the local Bowling Club and Golf Club, swapped yarns around a few drinks in the evenings and generally enjoyed the surf beaches and walks.

Some empty promises of attendance by a couple of members left the Club with a deficit on the trip, but we still had a great time.

- - - - -