

FATHOMS

JUNE 82



SAFETY IN DIVING

50c

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

VSAG

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 the Wednesday 16th June, 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 issue includes another attempt to get photographs into Fathoms. I apologize for the quality, but we are getting closer to a much better result. Alex Talay has offered to produce screen bromides for me in future, which will result in a clearer stencil, so please be patient with us folks.

The photos of the scuttling of the "George Kermodé" were tracked down by Brian Lynch and I am most grateful to him for his efforts. Therefore, it seems fitting that this month's "Last from the Past" article, should be one "Lynchie" wrote back in August of 1976. Hope you enjoy it, as it will certainly bring back some memories for those who were on the dive.

We have two more new members to welcome this month, namely HILARY BREW & CHRISTINE RATHGEBER. Good to have you with us ladies. It may be a little while before we see Chris again though, as she recently left for the U.S.A. on holidays with Kay Poyner.

V.S.A.G. has seen a very active year already on the dive scene and our monthly meetings have been very informative too, with lectures on diving physiology and resuscitation together with movies on diving in general. This trend looks like continuing at future meetings. June meeting will see the screening of Peter Kamen's movie made at Wilson's Prom. at Easter, together with one made in the Phillipines.

At July meeting, Jan & Peter Stone will present a lecture and slides on overseas diving holidays, which should prove interesting.

You may recall the report in last month's Fathoms called "Wombats in Paradise", about the V.S.A.G. Vanuatu trip. In it mentioned was made of Doug, who obviously enjoyed himself in Vanuatu. On May 25, Doug was missing in the sea off Flinders after becoming separated from diving buddy, GARY THORN.

Therefore, we were all most relieved to learn that Doug was picked up by a Pilot boat, safe and well, after three hours in the water. But, what we want to know Doug, is how do you manage to go diving on a Tuesday? We are all keen to learn your secret, as the weekends are not long enough for most of us who love diving.

I called at John's Dive Shop in St. Kilda, the other day, and found one of V.S.A.G.'s supporters from way back, John GIBSON. John is now in business for himself after working for Ern IRELAND for some years. John receives Fathoms each month and has been responsible for referring many members to V.S.A.G. over the years. So, if you are looking for a friendly, experienced diving shop proprietor, have a word with John at 300 St. Kilda Road, near INKERMAN ST. intersection.

Annual fees are now due and you will find an advice slip in this issue to that effect. Please forward your cheque to Treasurer David Carroll at P.O. Box 2526W, G.P.O. Melb. or pay at the next General Meeting.

I see we have received some more free publicity in the April issue of "Skindiving", let us hope this is the last of it, because it may be necessary to close off our membership acceptances for a while. The attendances at General meetings and dives have been terrific over the last nine months. As you all know, one has to be quick to book for a dive these days, as we never seem to have enough room to accommodate the divers wishing to go out.

In April "Skindiving" we see another little man kicking through the coals of the long dead five of 14 months ago!. This brave little scribe, is so brave that he has the guts to remind V.S.A.G. that the "Loch Ard" is an "Historic Shipwreck", as declared by the government. He is of course correct, but the Act was only "given teeth" in Victoria three months ago, long after the incident to which he refers. In fact, several members of V.S.A.G. were supporters of a group calling for protection of certain wrecks via Government, and were rewarded in March 1982 for their efforts when the Act was made Law.

And for those new members of V.S.A.G., who may be interested, V.S.A.G. played a part in the recovery of the LOCH ARD'S anchor some years ago and the result of their efforts is now on view at the Port Campbell Ranger's office for all to see.

We haven't bothered to reply to the latest "knocker", because the last guy to give V.S.A.G. a "blast", sent his jottings to us on a letterhead from the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education. A further copy of "Fathoms" was sent to the man C/- the above Institute and it was returned to us unopened and marked "not know at this address"!! That sort of thing is really rugged on the author's credibility. My mum always said, "Empty drums make the most noise!"

EDITOR

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt.</u>	<u>Meet at:</u>
June 12/13/14	Apollo Bay Long Weekend		Terry Brooks 439 3749	
June 16	General Meeting - Movie by Peter Kamen			
June 20	Heads Area	11am	D. Williams 762 1623	Sorrento B/Ramp
July 4	Submarines	10am	Mick Jackiw 736 1730	Sorrento B/Ramp
July 18	Spectacular Reef	9.30am	Alex Talay 772 3085	Sorrento B/Ramp
July 21	General Meeting - Lecture on Diving Overseas			
August 7	Snow Trip	Book with Pat Reynolds	789 1092	Sat. 31/7/82

DIVE CALENDAR (CONT.)

August 15	Sorrento/Heads	8.30am	Paul Tipping 387 2027	Sorrento B/Ramp
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August 18	General Meeting			
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August 29	Port Phillip Heads	8.30am	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	Sorrento B/Ramp
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NOTE: *Those wishing to dive on above dates must confirm with the Dive Captain the evening before the dive, to arrange boat accommodation.*

* * * * *

S.D.F. DINNER DANCE AUGUST 13TH

At May General Meeting, all available tickets Tony Tipping had with him were snapped up. Tony will have some more tickets at the June General Meeting, so if you missed out in May, you will have a chance to buy your tickets on the 16th.

Only \$23.00 per head which includes dinner, dancing, and all your drinks. Good Value! There will be a bunch of V.S.A.G. divers there, so join in the fun!

SEE TONY TIPPING!!

C.A.S.I.C.O. DIVER INSURANCE:

June General Meeting will definitely be your last chance to obtain Diver Insurance for \$11.00. See Tony Tipping for further details.

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CLUB DIVING MEDICALS:

The Committee wishes to remind all members that it is a Club requirement that all divers possess a current CZ18 Diving Medical to dive with the Club. Medicals have been allowed to lapse and our records are incomplete, therefore, if your name is not on the list below, it is time you either updated your medical or presented a photocopy of your present medical to John Goulding, our Safety/Medical Officer.

G. Belanszky	P. Tipping	T. Tipping
D. Carroll	A. Talay	M. Synon
L. Cole	M. Jeacle	A. Stewart
G. Coppelstone	M. Jacklw	B. Truscott
D. Williams	C. Truscott	D. Smith
B. Soulsby	K. Joyce	K. Poyner
V. Ollvera	A. Wood	

If your name is not on the above list, we either don't have a photocopy of your current medical, or it has lapsed recently or sometime ago. It is your responsibility to rectify the situation as quickly as possible.

CONTACT: JOHN GOULDING TEL: 89 6634.

Medicals are valid for 3 years only.

AIR FILLS PAYMENT - OUTSTANDING:

The following people still owe the Club for air fills received on the Wilson's Prom. weekend:

T. Brooks	J. Large	A. Currie
H. Brew	P. Kamen	

I am sure you all enjoyed the weekend so please do the right thing and pay David Carroll by June meeting.

COMMITTEE NEWS:

Meeting held on May 25th at Dave Carroll's home.

- (i) Two new members were accepted into the Club, namely HILARY BREW & CHRISTINE RATHGEBER.
- (ii) Discussion held on Club pullovers with V.S.A.G. monogram. They will be V-necked, black, long sleeved and have V.S.A.G. emblem in gold.
- (iii) Plans were discussed for future Snow Trip and also a Golf Weekend at Yarrowonga.
- (iv) Medicals to be enforced and a drive will be made to bring all members medicals up to date.
- (v) It was decided that more exploratory dives will be made in future. Preferably as a second dive of the day.
- (vi) Annual subscriptions will be due in June. There is no intention to increase fees this year.
- (vii) Terry Brooks gave final details of Apollo Bay long weekend.
- (viii) Keith Jensen displayed sophisticated "KOMESAROFF" Oxygen Resusc. equipment and discussion on its merits were tossed around.
- (ix) D. Williams to maintain V.S.A.G.'s collection of back issues of newsletters.

Next meeting to be held at John & Maree Goulding's home at 13 Birdwood Street, Box Hill South, on Tuesday 22nd June.

MOVIE NIGHT - JUNE MEETING

Peter KAMEN will screen his movie, made over the Easter Weekend at Wilson's Promontory, at our next general meeting in June.

Peter will also have a movie he made during a visit to the Phillipines which should prove interesting.

See you there!!!

* * * *

((((**FLOTSAM AND JETSAM**))))

Like the crack British troops of the Special Air Services Regiment whose motto is "Those who dare - win", a hardy contingent of V.S.A.G. divers dared to brave the Autumn gales at Sorrento on April 25th and won themselves some of Sandy's and big Marty's scenes at the Aquarium coffee shop. Those who attended welcomed Terry's swift and decisive action to cancel the dive. For all you (if I may borrow a phrase) "puss divers", its just as well that Geoff Birtles was marching with the pobruk veterans in the Anzac Parade, otherwise you would have been punching through the waves in the worst possible conditions to find a scallop or crayfish.

Still, it was not to be long before V.S.A.G. was out again in full force. Under direction of stand in Dive Captain Mick Jeacle, we headed for the "George Kermodé".

We dive this wreck quite regularly, the previous time being only 3 months earlier. Yet, it presents a fairly unique experience in wreck diving:- The opportunity to glide effortlessly through an old workhorse of the sea. Imagine if Malcolm Fraser enjoyed diving, as did Harold Holt - he might be influenced to sink the "Melbourne" rather than sell it for scrap!!

Two weeks later, Dave Carroll led a major assault on Petriana Rock. Knowing Dave's intense dislike for poor diving conditions and graat love of wrecks, I felt that this would be one of the great dives of the year.

Five V.S.A.G. boats left Sorrento on schedule and headed for the "Heads". On rounding Corsair Rock, Dave set the course for Petriana Rock and the fabulous wreck of the "Petriana". Well!

my buddies, what followed was a Dave Carroll "Process of elimination dive plan". Says Dave who had not even bothered to change into a wetsuit, "Who's going to be the first in?" - Silence! After several repeats of the question Dave ordered two divers overboard. After 20 minutes they surfaced to report "nothing here"!!! Thereupon, Dave replied, "O.K. we've eliminated that area, try closer in", and pointed to where 2 metre waves were breaking onto the rocks. Needless to say, the "Petriana" remained undisturbed.

The old wreck master needed a new site to save the day, and after much discussion and coin flipping, we dived the intact submarine, followed by a search of the "Light of the Age" site.

Whilst on the subject of wrecks, it is curious to see another article in "Skindiving" about V.S.A.G. and the wreck of the "Loch Ard". This time Peter Ronald has a "go" at V.S.A.G. and this stems from an article in "Fathoms" of April 1981 which attracted a fair amount of attention from other Warnambool divers. V.S.A.G. replied last year in "Skindiving" to various accusations made, but yet it appears that some misguided individuals continue to try and denigrate this club. Well, Mr. Ronald and others, your comments to date have been grossly inaccurate, but the publicity about V.S.A.G. and "Fathoms" has been great. Membership applications in the past year have boomed with many applications coming from divers who hear that "V.S.A.G. does some pretty good wreck diving".

Home from 12 months holiday is MARG ZICCONI, who is well remembered for the tight control she had on Tipping the younger. When Marg left to go overseas in May 1981, Tony was in the process of drawing up plans for his house extensions. Now just one week after she returns the first pour of concrete has been completed and work will commence in earnest - no doubt under the watchful eye of Marg!

SIGNED

ARFER MO.

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This month, an article written by Brian Lynch is reprinted from Fathoms issue of August 1976, below:

- "BLAST FROM THE PAST" -

THE GEORGE KERMODE

The phone rang at about six o'clock - "care for a dive tomorrow" said Bazza, and so after a great deal of arm-twisting by Di I said yes - and that dear readers is how I got to be drifting out to sea on Sunday 15th August, clutching a flare in one hand and waving Paul's jacket with the other.

Starting at the beginning, we arranged to meet at Flinders at around ten, which we duly did, our objective being to motor across to seal rocks and then on to the George Kermode which has been sunk by the Fisheries and Wildlife people to act as an inshore artificial reef. The George Kermode was a Melbourne dredger which after living out its useful life was fittingly buried at sea.

We motored across a calm sea, and paused for a while, so that Tony could renew old friendships with some of the seals, and then moved along parallel to the Phillip Island coastline until we rounded Pyramid rock. It was in this vicinity that the ship had been sunk. We had been led to believe that there would be a wreck buoy marking the spot, but no such luck. However, there was a very helpful fisherman laying lobster pots in the area and he obligingly gave us the general location. We set up the Depth Sounder and prepared to locate our wreck. It was at this point that our troubles began. Once set up, we could not start the motor but we were not too worried as the fisherman was still only about 200 metres away and laying pots. After about 20 mins. we still had not started the motor and now the "Sea Rambler" was fast

approaching Pyramid Rock and looked to be heading for Flinders. Bazza came up with the distress flares: ' carried them for years and now a chance to use them ' and when it was well alight he handed it up to me on the cabin roof. There we were with a blooming cloud of orangy-brown smoke pouring from the flare. Suddenly half the flare came out and Bazza, the boat and Frank's flippers were on fire. Luckily we put them all out quickly, and then saw that the fishing boat had turned and was heading straight towards us and our smoke screen.

When the boat arrived the fisherman, Mr. Don Hutchinson was tremendous and stayed with us until Bazza had the engine going again. To further add to our confidence he also mentioned that he would be in the area for another hour and a half. We now proceeded with our dive, setting up the depth sounder we ran towards our marks and picked up the wreck straight away.

We dropped a marker buoy and sent down two pairs of divers. Tony and Jenny, Paul and Frank, whilst Barry and I remained in the boat, whilst we slowly circled the area. We finally anchored and awaited the reports from the earlier divers. Yes, we were on it and it was big.

Then it was our turn to dive. Down we went right onto the side of the ship, there was a ramp of wooden decking laying on the bottom and leading us into the wreck. We bottomed at 75 feet, swam across the decking and in through the side, entering one of the holds. Looking upwards the explosive holes seemed like large skylights in a big room. We swam up and out, and then turned and swam towards the dredger's large scoops, once used for tearing up the sea floor,

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now lying uselessly on their old enemy.

Swimming over the vessels upturned bottom we had encountered some weed and sponge growth, and Bazza noticed some mussels on the buckets but overall there was not much marine growth on the ship, and naturally not much fish life. Some parrot fish, leather jackets and a few sweep, but more fish will come when the marine growth blossoms.

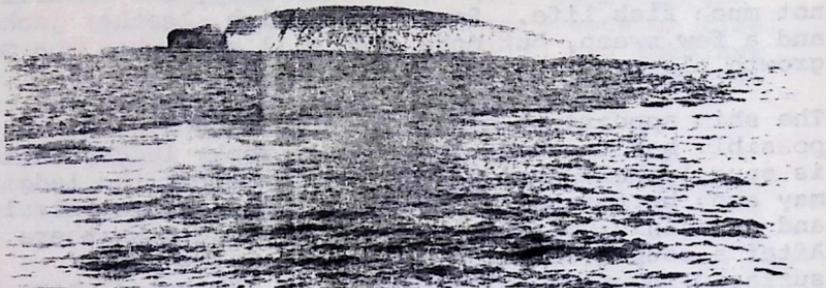
The ship appears to have come down sideways, and then possibly has toppled over a small rocky ledge, so that it is snugly held upside down tight against the ledge, it may even be twisted slightly. It is a large vessel, and certainly you are aware of its size down there. After a couple of turns around it, Bazza and I surfaced, no port holes left, just the holes where they had been, but a very good dive, which all of us were agreed upon.

We returned highly elated to Flinders impressive boat ramp, where ably assisted by local comment, we managed to get the boat ashore.

Our thanks for the day go to Bazza for the boat, to Jenny, Tony, Paul and Frank for crewing so well, and our special thanks to Don Hutchinson, without whose help, we may still have been out there!

Brian Lynch

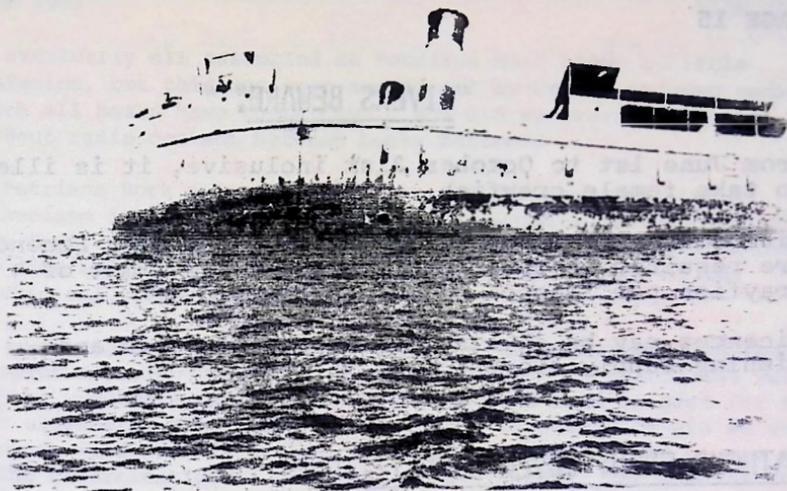
GEO. KERMODE



NO:3 NOW ALMOST UPSIDE-DOWN SHE DISAPPEARS
LIKE AN OLD WHALE.



NO:4 THE GRAVE SEALS UP FOREVER.



NO: 2 HERE THE OLD DREDGE ROLLS OVER TO HER STARBOARD SIDE.



NO:1 THE EXPLOSIVE IS FIRED.

"DIVERS BEWARE" "

From June 1st to October 31st inclusive, it is illegal to take female crayfish.

Divers should also note that Amateur Fishing Licences are required to take crayfish and a bag limit of 4 crayfish per licence holder applies.

Licences may be obtained from Sports Stores and fishing supply stores.

FATHOMS FRONT COVER COMPETITION:

To date only one member has presented slides to the editor for consideration, as front cover material. So, if you are interested in submitting a favourite underwater shot, please present them to Des Williams by JULY General Meeting. Good care will be taken of your photos if presented in a protective wallet or box and they will be returned. Alex Talay will select the winning photo, without knowing who actually took the shot; just to be fair.

We must have more than one member interested in having his photography on the front of our magazine!

"PETRIANA ROCK" DIVE - MAY 16th *by Des Williams*

A beautiful sunny morning and 19 divers met at Sorrento boat ramp. Diving conditions were excellent and our Dive Captain, Dave Carroll soon had us organised in boats.

We eventually all assembled at Petriana Rock after a little confusion, but this was soon sorted out by use of two-way radio which all boats have these days. How did we ever get along without radio contact between boats before??

At Petriana Rock a large swell soon extinguished the fire of enthusiasm inside most of us (myself included), but our determined Dive Capt. complete in summer weight short wetsuit was soon over the side exploring the reef in search of the remains of the wrecked oil tanker "PETRIANA".

Of course there were grumbles by divers not impressed with the prospect of using up air, time, and body heat to search the reef for the wrecksite; whilst the sea conditions were so good for a dive elsewhere. But, when I think about it, how else are we ever going to find new dive sites, if we don't explore, and we owe much to the determination of divers like Dave Carroll for some of the exciting diving we have done over the years.

Because it was nearing noon and the sea was becoming flatter and these sort of conditions are scarce outside the Heads, it was decided to move to the grave of the intact submarine off Point Lonsdale.

Geoff Birtles had put his anchor right on the submarine and soon there were divers everywhere! There were probably another 20 divers from other Clubs, also on site, speedily gearing up when I arrived in Mick Jeacle's boat.

After some initial difficulty clearing my ears, Mick Jeacle and I arrived at the stern of the submarine at 100 ft. Mick couldn't wait to get inside the submarine, so we entered through the rear hatch and this is where Mick really had to twist my arm! The viz. inside wasn't good and I wasn't too happy about cruising through this old derelict in such conditions. But, Mick is a persuasive guy and has been through the submarine before, and a flash of his torch showed the next bulkhead and daylight beyond, so we proceeded through. Me thinks the sub had just previously to our tour, seen those two underwater silt makers Birtles and Jackiw! But, you have to be quick to beat those two!

Once Mick had reached the conning-tower section, the water was looking non-too inviting for me and my request to abandon ship was met with a good natured smile from Mick and we exited through a hatchway in the deck. We then swam on to the bow outside, where we closely examined the torpedo tubes and the weird shape of this now silent hull. We were now at 120 ft. as we cruised along the starboard side towards the stern.

Then Mick stopped and pointed his torch under the hull just forward of the conning-tower, and in his light, I too, saw the biggest cuttlefish you could imagine; it was a beauty! Although, cuttlefish are quite timid, I couldn't help but think of the JULES VERNE novel 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, which involved a gigantic squid and Captain Nemo's submarine "Nautilus".

I believe everyone enjoyed the submarine dive and our group then split up; three boats spending some time on the wreck "Light of the Age" whilst two boats went into Pt. Nepean and the Lonsdale wall area for crays.

A good day, thanks to Dave Carroll and the five boat owners, Keith, John, Mick, Barry and Geoff who towed their boats to Sorrento.

FOR SALE:

One pair of snow-chains to suit most sizes of 13 inch tyres and narrow width 14 inch tyres.

Used 3 times only.

Bargain at \$35.00

Contact: John Goulding

Phone: 89 6634

V.S.A.G. MONOGRAMMED PULLOVERS:

Alex Taley is the guy to contact if you would like a special V.S.A.G. pullover for Winter. They will be in black with a small gold V.S.A.G. monogram located strategically in the left boob region; they will be long sleeved and have a V-neck. Price is \$27.00

each and Alex is waiting to hear from you now, on telephone 772 3085.

Alex assures me he will gladly make a no obligation free measurement, whatever that means, if you ladies aren't sure what size pullover to buy.

Please contact Alex now, if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

JAPAN'S SUPER BATTLESHIPS: *by Des Williams*

Since our V.S.A.G. visit to Truk Lagoon, my interest in the naval history of World War II has heightened. To be in such close proximity to all that war machinery and hardware now lying on the bottom of the lagoon, made me realise how terrifying the Pacific conflict must have been.

It was on a dive we made to the 6440 tons cargo ship "YAMAGIRI MARU" now resting on her port side in 110 ft. of water. My dive partner was John Goulding and my diary shows that we descended to her bridge level, swam forward penetrating both No. 1 hold (empty) and No. 2 hold with its gigantic torpedo hole allowing light into the gloom. We then went back past the bridge and down into No. 3 hold, where to my amazement lay a huge pile of 18" shells that were intended for the battleships "YAMATO" and "MUSASHI". These were the largest shells made during World War II and they are believed to be stable, well, they were while we swam over them. Even to this day the sight of those gigantic sleeping shells remains firmly imprinted on my mind, even more than the human remains we found aboard "SMINKOKU MARU" on another dive a few days later.

So, I thought a few words about the immense battleships for which these horrific projectiles were destined, may prove interesting to V.S.A.G. readers.

The Japanese had never really been able to accept the fact that

international treaties had placed severe restrictions on the expansion of their fleet during the period after World War I, and even considered them humiliating. Hence the voices of those who demanded an unconditional expansion of the Navy grew even louder and eventually this lobby prevailed.

What Japan had not been able to produce in the early 1920's was made up for fifteen years later with the construction of "super battleships" which would put all others in the shade!

In 1934 preparations were made for the resumption of battleship building, and in 1937 the first ship "YAMOTO" was laid down; "MUSASHI", the second followed in 1938. "YAMOTO" was commissioned on 16th December, 1941 one week after the attack on Pearl Harbour, and "MUSASHI" followed the next summer, a few weeks after MIDWAY, a battle which ironically had provided very obvious indications that the final arbiter at sea was no longer the battleship, but the aircraft carrier.

Statistics of these super battleships are almost unbelievable even today, but let me make a comparison which should enable everyone to imagine their bulk. The "TITANIC" was 46,329 tons, but both "MUSASHI" and "YAMOTO" weighed in at an incredible 73,000 tons each! They were fitted with 9 - 18" main guns and 12 - 6" guns along with belt machine guns and a host of other death devices.

They actually saw very little action and spent most of their time anchored inside TRUK LAGOON, where Admiral Yamamoto lived on board, controlling the next move to be made by the Japanese, as the Americans had them on the run after the Battle of Midway. In September 1942, Tsuji Masanobu a staff officer of the Imperial Headquarters, visited Admiral Yamamoto on board the "YAMOTO" anchored in Truk. He wrote later: "Going through the hatch into the interior of the ship was like entering a large hotel. The only difference was the innumerable pipes that ran here, there and everywhere, presumably working together as an organic whole in keeping the 70,000 tons bulk of this great monster alive. I had the feeling that if you cut one of them it would bleed just

like the innumerable blood vessels that keep the human body going. So this is why they call it the YAMOTO HOTEL I thought. If you got lost in its interior it would be no easy matter to find your way out again."

The Battle of LEYTE GULF saw the demise of the super battleship "MUSASHI" on 24th October, 1944. Together with her sister ship "YAMOTO" she tackled the enemy landing fleet; they were accompanied by the battleships "NAGATO", "HARUNA", and "KONGO" and also cruisers and destroyers, but not a single aircraft carrier was on hand. "MUSASHI" was attacked by large numbers of American carrier aircraft, was hit by about thirty bombs and torpedoes and finally sank. The Japanese force carried on and came upon a group of American escort aircraft carriers, with a destroyer escort, to the east of Samar. The carrier aircraft immediately took off and attacked.

Although the Japanese were forced to take evasive action again and again, their cruisers eventually managed to get within range of the escort carriers, and opened fire; the battleships then joined in, and "YAMOTO" fired 104 salvos from her main armament. The Americans lost the escort carrier "GAMBIER BAY" and three of her escorting destroyers.

On 6th April 1945 the Americans landed at Okinawa and brought the war precariously close to the Japanese homeland. The Japanese used large numbers of Kamikaze aircraft in a last ditch attempt to weaken the Americans and force them to abandon the operation, and to this end they sent a naval force consisting of the battleship "YAMOTO", the light cruiser "YAHAGI" and eight destroyers, but no aircraft carriers into action.

However, the group was quickly picked up by American reconnaissance, and on the morning of April 7th, when the group was south west of KYUSHU, a large number of American carrier aircraft attacked, sinking the cruiser and one destroyer, and hitting "YAMOTO" with two bombs and one torpedo. Early in the afternoon US aircraft attacked again and finished off "YAMOTO"

with nine torpedoes and three bombs. She sank taking most of her crew, nearly 2500 men, with her and the Japanese had lost their last super battleship. The Americans for their part had used 386 aircraft against the enemy force.

As a final note of comparison the infamous German battleship "BISMARCK" weighed in at 50,000 tons.

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"VICTORIA TOWERS" DIVE

On the 24th July, 1869 a three-masted iron ship of the White Star Line weighed anchor in England bound for Melbourne. "Victoria Tower" under command of Capt. Kerr, with crew and 76 passengers and a general cargo which included about 500 cases of beer, bottles of stout, crockery, iron water pipes and large quantities of slate.

Problems with the compasses were experienced early in the voyage, due no doubt to the large amounts of iron aboard. On Saturday, 17th October Cape Otway light was sighted, squalls and strong winds set in. Capt. Kerr sailed on towards Port Phillip Heads and at about 11.00 p.m. he ordered rockets to be fired and blue lights burned, as he estimated that he was off the Heads.

Lookouts in the masts and on the bowsprit eyes peering into the darkness, were seeking the landfall. Early in the morning, the ship struck a reef and all anchors were let go, to hold her steady, but strong winds and seas forced her further onto the reef, ripping her plating away.

All those aboard were landed safely on Sunday 18th October. And it is 400 yards offshore near Broam Creek, Torquay, that the ship now rests today.

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It was this wreck that John Goulding had selected as our dive site on 30th May. His telephone rang hot on Saturday night with divers booking in, but no boats; eventually a fleet of three was organized.

John's boat, the "Fancy Sue", Bill Anderson's "Leaping Lena" and Keith Jensen's "Odd Couple II" made their way to the wreck site in strong N.W. offshore winds, with the presence of ominous dark clouds.

John lined his marks up and Pat Reynolds slipped on his mask and peered in the depths; he soon raised his head and gave the OK sign, followed by anchors out and divers geared up.

Calm water, 50 ft. visibility, but COLD, with the wreck scattered over the sea floor below us. My dive buddy and I finned towards the wreck in 6 m. of water, arriving at a large bollard, then on into the wreck.

Broken bottles, slate and twisted iron, greeted us and most divers spent about an hour swimming through this old ship. Even Bazza was content to swim about this old bottle heap! Probably just as well too, because Andy and Gail soon tired of the activity and went cray hunting, locating 3 of the beasts and bagging them. Just in time too, because closed season on female crays begins on June 1st.

After surfacing the chill wind forced us to return to the boat camp, where it was observed that a Holden had decided to go for a swim! John, the good samaritan, organised the V.S.A.G. Raiders to extract the vehicle from the depths, whilst Keith Jensen photographed the operation for posterity. But, alas, a local yokel arrived with a tractor and did John out of the salvage rights!

Boats were back on the trailers just as the rain started. Another interesting dive for the log books. Signed "OSCAR" (one of the odd couple)

GOING DOWN

Recently, Bazza, Pat, Tony and I journeyed across to South Australia to check out the proposed site for next Christmas' diving holiday.

We left on the Friday evening after work and the best I can say about the drive was the slops we consumed at one of the watering holes along the way and the Stubbies Pat and I scoffed whilst contemplating the white line. We arrived in Robe about midnight and quickly discounted Bazza's suggestion that we sleep by the roadside as there was a howling gale blowing at the time and Hughie was sending it down in buckets.

After wandering about the town for a bit we stumbled into one of the local camping grounds and were confronted by a rather lonely looking darkened house. Tony in his usual friendly fashion proceeded to pound on the door and some minutes later a rather dishevelled looking customer answered his summons. I suspect he'd been playing "Hide the Soss" judging by his rather tardy efforts in answering the door and his general attitude towards us, but anyway, he finally directed us to a caravan, which the four of us occupied for the rest of the night.

Despite Tony's grunts and other loud reports we managed to wake up fairly fresh on the Saturday and proceeded to check the joint out. The camping ground in daylight looked quite good and the owner previously mentioned turned out to be a good bloke and was most helpful with our enquiries. Unfortunately, the weather was poor and I have an idea that there's not much between the South Pole and this isolated coastline to stop the wind.

After leaving the park we proceeded to inspect the town which is quite pretty with a lot of old buildings that have been restored but is quite small in area.

We talked to a lot of the locals, some of which were very helpful and some not. We discovered that the population explodes to around 15,000 over the holidays which when compared in size would make Ulladulla look like a ghost town.

There is one Pub and a Tavern and quite a few Motels, plus a couple of camping grounds.

We decided to go and check out a few of the dive sites and did a tour up the coast with many stops to peer through the thunderous surf and spray at likely looking reefs of which there are many. The joint looked good in this regard and we decided that it would definitely be worth the effort and some good diving could be had if the opportunity arose.

We booked into one of the Motels for Saturday night and as the weather was against us doing much else we got into the slops. Tony and I decided to take in the local yokels playing the S.A. version of footy and had a few laughs in the process.

That night, we had dinner at the motel which was quite good and we had a pleasant evening retiring about midnight full of ink.

Next day we headed off and Pat decided that he had to show me the Mt. Gambier sinkholes which I'd never seen before. We arrived amid a thunderstorm and plunged in. This was a real experience for me and I thoroughly enjoyed the visibility and dive, but Pat and Tony reckoned it was dirty. If it was, then I'd walk across a mile of broken glass to get there when it was clear!!

After travelling some 1,400 km we arrived home on Sunday night after a trip that was well worthwhile, as a fact finding mission. Although Robe is a nice place, it has many disadvantages, particularly if the weather is bad, as it is quite isolated and there is not much to do in the way of visiting other areas and activities, other than the beach and diving.

Went on a good dive recently to "Petriana Rocks" and there was a good roll up with 20 divers in attendance. Some dived the rocks and afterwards, we went over to the Sub and had a really good dive; well, most of us anyway. Remind me not to go on any car rallies with Don Abel or Paul Tipping, as I have an idea that their navigating isn't up to scratch. There were about 10 boats parked over the Sub when our intrepid twosome decided to go down the anchor line.

I believe they spent a very interesting 15 minutes admiring the sandy contours of Bass Strait and reported, when emerging, that they'd seen the Sub on many occasions, in the past anyway. One of them, and I can't recall which, asked someone if they'd seen any Argentine Salvage Ships in the area, but I'm sure he was joking, or was he.

Signed A.T.