

# SAFETY IN DIVING

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**VSAG** 

Top left: VSAG President Max Synon, diving Solomon Islands. (Photo by Keith Jensen). Top right: VSAG diver Paul Tipping on the bow area and gun of the "Dai Na Hino Maru" in Truk Lagoon. (Photo by Tony Tipping). Bottom left: VSAG diver Justin Liddy at Ewens Ponds. Mt. Gambier. (Photo by David Carroll). Bottom right: VSAG divers Barry Truscott, Tony Tipping, Paul Sier and Justin Liddy at Ewens Ponds, Mt. Gambier (Photo by David Carroll)

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP



### FATI OMS

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

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### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Vice President, Assist Secretary - 846 1983 Geoff Birtles & S.D.F. Delegate - Social Secretary Bob Scott - 367 2261 Pat Reynolds - Property Officer - 789 1092 - Public Relations Officer Paul Tipping - 387 2027 Mick Jackiw - Points Scorer (Res.S.D.F.Deleg.) - 736 1730 Barry Truscott - Safety Officer - 789 6395 David Carroll - S.D.F. Delegate - 397 2317 Terry Brooks - Assistant Editor - 439 3749

### CLUB MEETING:

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 20th April at 8.00 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lulie Street, Abbotsford. Bar facilities are available to V.S.A.G. 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 V.S.A.G. members will be provided at the Football Club thereby eliminating the requirement to sign the visitors book at the entrance. VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME.

# EDITORIAL

This month we have a terrific "Flotsam & Jetsam" column for F. & J. fans, as our ever reliable scribe has really outdone hinself this time, thanks TANYA;

My thanks also go to Don Abell and Keith Jensen for contributions this month and to those who have promised to write for the May issue.

Once again, my apologies to readers for the blank pages in the centre of March Fathons. The photographs for our centre-spread vanished in the mail and there simply was not enough time to re-process a new batch.

In fact, the March issue was a real disaster on the production side, as everything that could go wrong did go wrong, when I could least afford the time.

Therefore, as a result of increased workload and job promotion on the career side, it is now time for this Editor to hang up his pencil sharpener and put away the crayons.

The past two and a half years have been very fulfilling for me as Editor of "Fathoms" and I have enjoyed almost every minute. The not so enjoyable moments have been when I have had to nag for support from more members in the form of news items for "Fathoms". They have become increasingly more scarce and it is now quite a chore to produce a newsletter of good standard. The only exception of course, has been John Gowlding who has missed only one issue of "Fathoms" since my time as Editor, an outstanding effort. There have been many others to whom I am grateful for their contributions over the last 24 years, but the bulk of work has been left to a few in the main

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a special thanks to Alex Talay for his very special efforts for "Fathoms" which has dramatically upgraded the quality and provided me

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with fresh incentives to proceed with future issues.

So, what we want now is some fresh blood to run "Fathoms", how about you? I am prepared to spend a few months working with you to show you just how much pleasure can be obtained from putting it all together.

After discussion at our March Committee meeting, it was decided that the members should be requested to contribute suggestions to how "Fathoms" should be managed in future. For example, maybe the magazine should be managed by two or more peo; "e, each doing a specific chore, such as writing, printing or collating and mailing. Maube members should be picked out to write an article twice a year or whatever!! Think about it

Therefore, the decision is yours, you are requested to int down your ideas for production of "Fathoms" and mail to Des Williams, before the next Committee meeting on 27th April.

By that time your thoughts will have been summarized and Committee will discuss it further.

The alternative is a volunteer to produce "Fathoms" in its entirety as is presently done. So, it is over to you members, be sure to act quickly, so as to have your ideas in by 27th April.

As usual, moneu is the root of all evil, and divers will soon have nowhere to dive at all, without paving commercial dive shops for the privilege, if the current trend gets out of hand. Very soon it will be easier to be resonn than dive on the popular spots around Port Phillip Heads. A very cunning move by a couple of commercial diving schools in Melbourne has converted "The Heads" area into their own private playfound, which you can share in it you pay them money. The alternative is to meet the "rules" of the game, which would cost a non-profit Club a small fortune. So we have banned in effect.

As one person who has spent the Past 15 years enjoying the

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spectacular diving available in the lower Port Phillip Bay region, I can assure you I am hopping mad about the situation. The commercial organizations involved, probably think we don't know who they are. Well, we know all right and with our members assistance, I suggest we see that not one more cent is spent in their dive shops in future. There are plenty of dive shops in Melbourne, when it comes to buying diving gear and if that isn't satisfactory, we can always organise a bulk purchase from a Sydney dive shop at competitive prices.

The Club also has a 3-5 cfm compressor from which you may get a tank fill and of course Mich Jackiw's 7-5 cfm compressor is always available at fow rate. So see me personally it you want to know which dive shops not to support and buy elsewhere.

The Editor also welcomes correspondence from any of the other 22 diving clubs, who receive our Newsletter, as I believe that this is one matter on which we should all stick together.

EDITOR

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Meeting held at Alex Talay's home on Tuesday 22/3/83.

- (i) Discussions on dive calendar.
- (ii) Much discussion on the recently proclaimed "Port Phillip Heads Private Paradise" organised by a few commercial diving schools in Melbourne
- (iii) D Williams submitted his resignation as editor of "Fathoms" giving the Committee a few months to find a replacement and leave time for in-service training
- (iv) J. Goulding to make more enquiries about next V.S.A.G.
  Christmas trip to either Mossy Point, N.S.W. or the hot favourite, Jervis Bay.

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(v) G. Birtles reported a lump sum of money from the V.S.A.G. overseas investment fund had now been safely deposited with Hill Samuel Cash Management Fund.

- (vi) D. Williams advised Geoff Nayler will soon be cperating a dive charter service and suggested V.S.A.G. nay like to support Geoff once his operation commences.
- \* Special thanks to Mrs. Talay (Alex's mum) for putting up with rowdy Committee members and for feeding us.

Next V.S.A.G. Committee meeting is to be held at Terry and Sally Brook's home at 190 Rattray Road East, Montmorency on Tuesday 27th April at 8.00 p.m.

# FOR SALE:

IMMACULATE HAINES HUNTER 17R WITH 110H.P. OUTBOARD. LOTS OF EXTRAS. ALMOST BRAND NEW. Contact the Editor (Des Williams) on 762 1623 for further details.

# DIVE CALENDAR

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	DIVE CAPT	MEET AT		
April 9	Saturday evening Bar-B-Q at Bob Scott's home - 3 Elba Place, Keilor Downs - 7.30 p.m.					
April 17	"George Kermode" Wreck	10.00 a.m.	Mick Jackiw 736 1730	Flinders Pier		
April 20	General Meeting - C	Collingwood F	ootball Club			

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### DIVE CALENDAR (Contd.)

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	DIVE CAPT	MEET AT			
April 23-25 Long Weekend at Wilson's Promontory - Max Synon - 465 2812 - *Book with Max if you want to go - RING NOW							
May 8	Heads Area	8.30 a.m.	Barry Truscott 789 6395	Sorrento B/Ramp			
May 18	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club						
May 22	Heads Area	8.30 a.m.	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento B/Ramp			
May 29	Recf Dive Flinders	9 a.m.	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	Flinders Pier			
June 11-13 Long weekend at Port Fairy							

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

# #####( FLOTSAM & JETSAM )#####

News from the Goulding camp is that John's very distinctive boat, once the flagship of the V.S.A.G. fleet, is undergoing a major refit. John is being very tight-lipped about the nature of the work, however, we understand that when the boat reappears on the dive scene again, in late April, it will feature a pram-rack, clothes line for hanging nappies, and will have stereo nursery-rhymes.

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Whilst talking about nursery rhymes . . .

"As they lined up for the start
Tipping gave his usual fart,
Bazza looked fit and supreme
Whilst, Lynchy was hungry and lean
And then there was Geoff - the dark horse
Accompanied by Reece - the colt of the course

Away they went for the 13k run
Sure is a helluva way to have fun,
At the half way mark were Alex and Pat
With drinks and oxygen and stuff like that.
Lynchy flashed past and threw a wave
Some of the others were not so brave,
Ba: za held his stride and looked strong as an ox
Whilst Tip looked for a shorter route - the cunning old fox,
Recce ran well and kept up the pace,
But his poor old man was red in the face.

And so to the end they came
Some running some walking and one almost lame.,
Lynchy was first, Bazza quick to follow
Tip bounded in third with the grace of a swallow,
Then came Reece - the colt from old Regret
Whilst Geoff not only lost the race, he also lost the bet".

This poem is dedicated to those mentioned, who, on the 20th March competed in the DOXA Fun Run and we congratulate our gallant lads all of whom completed the gruelling course under 59 minutes.

On the March long weekend V.S.A.G. again visited Port Campbell, but this year it was as if two V.S.A.G's hit town. There were the first-class citizens who chose to forgo the luxuries offered by the local camping ground and stayed at the local motel - imaginatively nemed the Loch Ard. The common folk or "low people" slept under canvas at the caravan and camping park, and endeared themselves to all and sundry by doing things that the rabble do

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until all hours of the night.

Nevertheless, it seemed that the "low people" had to majority of boats, so casting aside all social barriers the moteliers jumped into the campers boats, and the campers jumped into the moteliers boats and as all this jumping went on, one member who should remain nameless as he referred to the moteliers as "poofters" lost his campervan.

One thing is for sure that V.S.A.G. trips produce some interesting situations - We are well used to the antics of the "odd couple" - Max and Keith, now it seems a new duet is forming! - Barry and Pat, whom we've code named the "PRICKLY PAIR".

The diving at Port Campbell was up to its usual standard with some fine crays being taken – (by the octopus!) and one or two nudibranchs being seen. The weather was not the greatest for diving with some large swells and strong underwater surges, however, all members were able to dive on the Saturday and a few went back for more on the Sunday For those who didn't do the Sunday dive, a trip down to Flagstaff Hill Meritime Museum at Warrnambool, provided the opportunity to handle and fondle portholes, bells, and other items salvaged from local wrecks. – Somehow it's just not quite the same down there any more!!

In a few more days Dave Carroll will be marrying Deborah McPherson, thus linking the Celtics and the Scots in what we hope will be a long and happy union.

TANYA HYDE

# V.S.A.G. FATHOMS LIBRARY:

V.S.A.G. Committee recently recovered a collection of back issues of "Fathoms" magazines and newsletters, which extend back to July of 1959. In those days, the newsletter was just that, a letter. It was one foolscap sheet, but contained the necessary

information to allow Club members to meet at dives and social functions.

The Editor therefore asks any long term V.S.A.G. members who may hold a more intact collection, to make contact, so as a photocopy of missing issues can be made.

Anything prior to July 1959

February 1960

1962 July to December inclusive

1963 January to June inclusive and August

1966 April

1968 May, September, November and December

1969 February and July

1970 November

1971 May and December

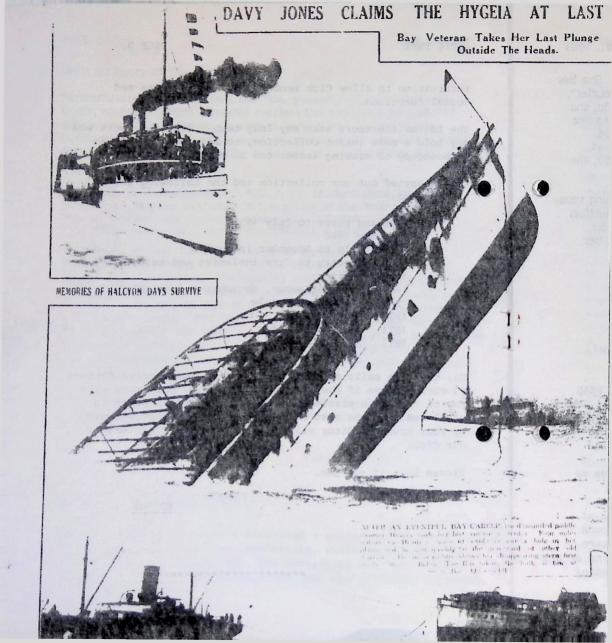
1975 March

So, the Club calls on those Life Members who receive Fathoms to check to see if they can assist V.S.A.G. once more with any of the above missing issues. Once our collection is completed, (to the best of our ability) a serious attempt by your present Editor will be made to write a history of our Club.

please help if you can.

EDITOR

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# BURIAL AT SEA (From Melbourne "ARGUS" June 10th, 1932)

In the quiet of a grey, winter afternoon the old paddle-steamer "HYGEIA" ended her days yesterday at the "ship's graveyard", which lies about four miles outside the Heads. Stripped to a bare hulk, she was taken in tow by the Ports & Harbours steamer "Rip" at her anchorage at Swan bay, near Queenscliff, and towed through the Heads. When the "graveyard" was reached the hulk was cast off, a small charge of gelignite was fired in the stern, and she settled slowly down. After more than half an hour the head of the hulk was flung upwards, and with a rush of escaping air, she plunged tail first and disappeared.

The sinking of the "Hygeia" disposed of the superstition that she would never leave the bay in which she was run for 40 years. When an attempt was made to sink her last August, she broke away from the tud Eagle in a strong following wind and ran ashore off Rye. She remained fast for 10 months, and it seemed unlikely that she would be moved, but after the death of her owner, Mr. H.W. Morris, the Ports and Harbours branch took in hand the moving of the vessel. In less than three weeks she was pumped out and refloated on a flood tide. Three holes which had been blown in the hull by an unknown person, while the hulk was on the sandbank, were repaired, and the vessel was towed to Swan Bav after a night moored at Rye pier. To prepare her for her last voyage the temporary crew had rigged her fore and aft with flags so that she might go down with her calours flying.

The refloating and sinking of the "Hygeia" was a remarkable feat. It was undertaken by Mr. W.G. Williams, an engineer of the Ports and Harbours branch, under the supervision of the engineer-in-chief (Mr. George Kermode). "To save cost" said Mr. Kermode, "Mr. Williams improvised the motors and winches used in shifting the vessel almost single-handed. He achieved an almost impossible task at a cost of less than \$500. It was a remarkable performance. The officers and crew of the "Rin" also did excellent work and gave valuable assistance."

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"Sunk in 35 fathoms" was the official verdict on the "Hygeia". She lies in a deep "hole" which also accommodates the "Buninyong", "Courier", and many other old ships and submarines. Although 42 years old, she was not obsolete as steamers go. The "Rip", which towed her to her grave was once the gunboat "PALUMA", and is now 48 years old. Entering the Heads the "Rip" passed the "Oonah", a veteran of 44 years. Compared with the old "EDINA", which was built in 1854, the "Hygeia" was struck down in the flower of her youth.

Ed. Note:

The steamer "Rip" is still very much alive and running today (1983) and is moored at Williamstown. She is a beautifufl sight to see too. And now you know where one of our favourite dive sites, the dredge "Geo Kermode" got her name from!

DES WILLIAMS

## PORT CAMPBELL - THAT STORY THAT HAD TO BE TOLD

By Don Abell

On arrival at the Port Campbell camping site at 7 30 a.m. Saturday morning, I could be forgiven for thinking that VSAG had decided to change their dive venue at the last minute. There were very few familiar sights to be seen. I expected that someone at least would have had water on the boil for coffee. Alas, the campsight was silent and had it not been for finding the old faithful Hunter I, I may have turned around and gone home. I then found Mick (clear eyes in the morning) Jackiw to guide me to an available camp sight.

Once settled, I managed a quick lap of the main, I still, at this time, could not work out where everyone was. I was soon informed that there were two very good reasons for my concern. Firstly, the VSAG alcohol appreciation committee (consisting of all VSAG members excluding Jackiw) had called an emergency meeting

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on the prior evening to ensure that the town of Port Campbell had adequate supplies to last the long weekend. The first inventory indicated that all would be well, however, numerous inventories taken throughout the evening, showed that not only did a problem exist but that it was becoming progressively worse with each count.

The second reason for the lack of familiar faces was that a number of the hardy lads had decided to pitch their tents inside consecutively numbered rooms of the local motel. Maybe this situation is not all that surprising. We need not even consider Geoff Birtles, who, when it comes to camping has always been rather limp wristed. John (up up and away) Goulding who has always been considered the packbone of the camp-site tea parties is of course flying a little higher since he received his wings. Then there is the Jeacle family Nowhere else could you see a petter example of principle of force bearing an inverse relationship to size. Might is derinitely not right in the Jeacle family. Mick Jeacle who is propably the tallest & biggest overall member of the club (with apologies to the diving fireman) and next to Mick is the beautiful and petite Annie But if Annie says it's a motel holiday, discretion is the better part of valour as far as Mick is concerned. Then there was Paul Tipping. When I first saw the tribe surrounding our solicitor of few words, I thought he might volunteer to check into the men only quarters of tent city.

Andy Mastrowicz was one of the loudest opponents of the break away group "Who wants to go for a holiday just to be stuck in a motel", Andy s words rang out. Let he who casts the first stone. Those who have seen Andy's tent (you may have attended one of the 20 minute guided tours) would be forgiven for calling it the "Claytons" tent. The tent you stay in when you wish you were staying in a motel. There is very little the tent does not have, and Andy is hoping to have added an ensuite before the

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next weekend away. Andy also brings an au-pair called Gayle.

We did manage to get a dive on the Saturday. The water was very much a rise and fall affair and there were a few divers doing Terry Brooks imitations, hanging over the side of the boat. checking the water clarity. Terry of course was conspicuous by his absence. Rumour has it that since Terry has been appointed president of the MAAV his conscience will not allow him to attend any wreck dives with V.S.A.G.

Saturday night most people went to the hotel for dinner. Full credit goes to the hotel kitchen staff who managed to have all meals served before closing time, but only just. Paul Tipping was so impressed that he wandered off to the kitchen to give a brief, but thoroughly prepared speech thanking them for the high quality of the food.

The night had its scholastic side also. At great expenses, the club had brought down a guest speaker, Mr. John Goulding (better known as the father of Ben). John gave a rivetting talk on the principles of flight illustrated with examples of the basics of gravitational force using the hotel cutlery and the peas off his plate.

It would be greatly amiss to discuss Saturday night without mentioning No. 18 - Mr. Alex Talay. Alex was so named No. 18 because of the immediate way he reacted every time the number was called and it was called a few times. At one time Alex reacted so quickly (in desperation to eat) that those talking to him at the time, suffered severe whiplash

At closing time a delegation from tent city decided to visit the motel to give assurance to the motel machos that there were no hard feelings. It was at this time that I found out that Geoff Birtles, always considered to be one of a kind, is really a clone. There were two other clones from the same mould drinking on the motel lawns. All three sat discussing their respective prowess at scuba diving, skydiving and gliding and generally flexing

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their respective muscles. I must admit to being enthralled and as the night progressed, their stories of daring sounded more and more like something out of a Wilbur Smith novel.

The weather was not kind for the rest of the weekend, and little diving was done. There was much sitting around talking and generally covering items of topical interest. At one of these sessions, news was received by courier that Geoff's crays had been sucked off. there was of course much concern among the group with comments of "what a shame", "a great tragedy", "worse than the flathead disaster of 16", "it couldn't have happened to a nicer bloke" etc. etc.

There was also the voting for odd couple of the weekend award. There were two groups competing being Max and Keith (current champions) and Bazza and Pat (the challengers). The competition was tight and voting promised to be close until Pat let go a blockbuster. Pat revealed to all that Bazza was actually bringing him breakfast in bed each morning. At that time the result was unanimous and the new champions were crowned.

I could hardly complete this article without covering the campervan saga of Sunday night. No 18 has progressed from his tent to a campervan. There was apparently a problem with the noise coming from the van in the late hours of the night. In defence, the defendent claimed that he was a printer required to work weekends for VSAG magazines and that what we could hear late at night was the hammering of his portable machinery. In fact, no-one really disputed his claim.

Nevertheless, the vote was passed, to move the van, while No. 18 was enjoying the company of the motel set. This was done with the minimum of fuss while Pat and Bazza compiled a list, for blackmail purposes, of those involved in the dirty deed. The whole joke was taken in the best PAGE 16. APRIL 1983

of spirits. Alex made many observations in his return but few could be understood as Alex was face down on the ground talking into a wee. and generally surrounded by a 100 per cent proof haze. It was accepted that Alex was observing what a fun group V.S.A.G. were and how he always enjoyed the humorous antics of the lads.

Generally speaking, it was a normal and uneventful V.S.A.G. weekend seige.

### DIVING MAGAZINE & BOOK REVIEW

The sport of SCUBA diving is rapidly expanding, facets of the sport are many and varied, as is the equipment used and the locations dived.

A new diver, having just completed a dive course has generally been advised by dive instructors as to what brands and what type of gear should be used, where to dive and when, although the information given is usually good, it is generally orientated toward the Dive Shop Club and thus extracting a few more dollars from the neophyte diver.

Another way to learn about all the latest gear, techniques, dive locations, medical aspects etc. is from diving magazines and books. In the last year or so, two new Australian magazines have come on to the newsagents shelves, whilst in the U.S.A. the Sport Diver magazine ceased publication.

These magazines vary in their philosophies regarding diving generally, some are very technical, others more down to earth, subjects are many and varied; with these facts in mind I shall attempt to review a magazine each month.

#### "DIVER"

"Diver" incorporating Underwater World. Published monthly by

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Eaton Publications, 40 Grays Inn Road, London.

The magazine is dedicated to the U.K. diver with articles on local dive locations, and occasionally an overseas dive venue. Wrecks are plentiful around the coast and it is not surprising to find two or three stories about them.

British divers seem to have a desire to make, adapt or alter various items of dive gear, advice is usually given in a special column called: "Let's get it Straight", by Jenny Webb; she does not profess to be a know-it-all, but seeks experts to iron out problems.

Another section called "Diving Doc" deals with medical aspects of diving, also a Beach-Combers' Diary in which local and overseas news items appear.

The covers and center pages have the only colour content, the rest are black and white pictures. It is heavy with advertising, as all dive mags tend to be. Some of the equipment advertised is locally made and as yet it is not available in Australia.

Its price in newsagents varies from \$1.80 to \$2.00; an annual subscription of £10.50 on an Imperial postal order will see it in your letter box each month.

In short, an interesting little magazine giving the pommy view on diving.

"Oscar"

# OCEANS '83 CONGRESS - March 25th-26th

This was, as usual, a very interesting coggress and although the guest speaker HANS HASS was unable to attend because of a recent operation, it ran very smoothly. Peter Stone and Barry Andrewartha between them organised the lot, and made a splendid job of it. PAGE 18. APRIL 1983

Movies seen were excellent and included a few by Stan Waterman, one of which was only finished four weeks ago, called "Roughing it in the Coral Sea", it was an excellent film.

There were three very well prepared wreck displays on the upper balcony. One containing the "ADMELLA" cannon, and another on the history of "Cerberus" and the Victorian Navy. The winning stand was one by the "TIMBOON Lads" containing many magnificent pieces from the "LOCH ARD", all magnificently preserved, and for their efforts they won a BAUER Compressor.

The usual array of commercial dive shop stands were there in the fover and the standard of speakers on Saturday was particularly impressive. First up was Reg Lipson with his very distinctive style and approach to marine biology, we all enjoyed it immensely. Further talks that day were on the raising of the "Mary Rose", Nudibrancs, Antartic diving and diving around Victoria. Ralph Ousterou, founder and president of TEKNA in the U.S.A. spoke at 200 miles per hour about the future of diving and what changes will be seen in our underwater world within the next 24-36 months. His predictions are computerised instrumentation for the diver to include all calculations pertaining to decompression as well as time depth tank contents etc. etc. etc. as well as what your dive buddy had for breakfast!! And it will be cheap. Probably only \$400 to \$500, says Ralph! His other predictions are diver communication underwater and motorised units for divers to scoot along behind. Ralph didn't point out if the motor scooters would go faster than some of the underwater currents divers' come up against, but I quess it doesn't really matter as long as someone makes money out of all this.

In all, if you missed Ocean '83 you missed a good show. Let's hope Peter and Barry aren't too exhausted to do it again next year.

An interesting unit on display was a gigantic, 8-man

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recompression chamber which the National Safety Council of Australia have recently obtained. Keith Jensen and I looked the fully mobile unit over and both agreed it was probably worth 3 to \$400,000. It is brand new and fully mobile on an articulated tray powered by a M.A.N. Diesel. It is fully self-contained with its own power plants for electric power and compressed air. There is closed circuit T.V. to monitor divers' progress and an air-lock to allow non-patients to enter during recompression. It was a remarkable unit to see and is available to any diver in Australia by telephoning (051) 34 4666. It is based at Morwell. There is no doubt it will save many lives in the future.



## "MY FAVOURITE DIVE"

On odd occasions, when tensions build with work, home, and money problems, blood pressure rises and arguments develop with workmates on the good women; or even in traffic-jams, as drivers growd and home their horns with indignation and impatience, I will often lapse into a dreamlike trance and dive my favourite wreck.

The visibility is always excellent; depth not deep, sufficient to get a good 40 mins, she sits upright on the reef, almost intact apart from the portholes I have removed on other dives. Plates & bottles etc., litter the cabin areas,. The bridge still has the ship's wheel and engine telegraph intact. Schools of large fish make this wreck home, and crayfish abound in every nook and cranny, suprisingly they are all in excess of 42b!

Along the companionway on the portside, the ship's beli is still abbixed to the butkhead, outside the saloon; the