

FATHOMS

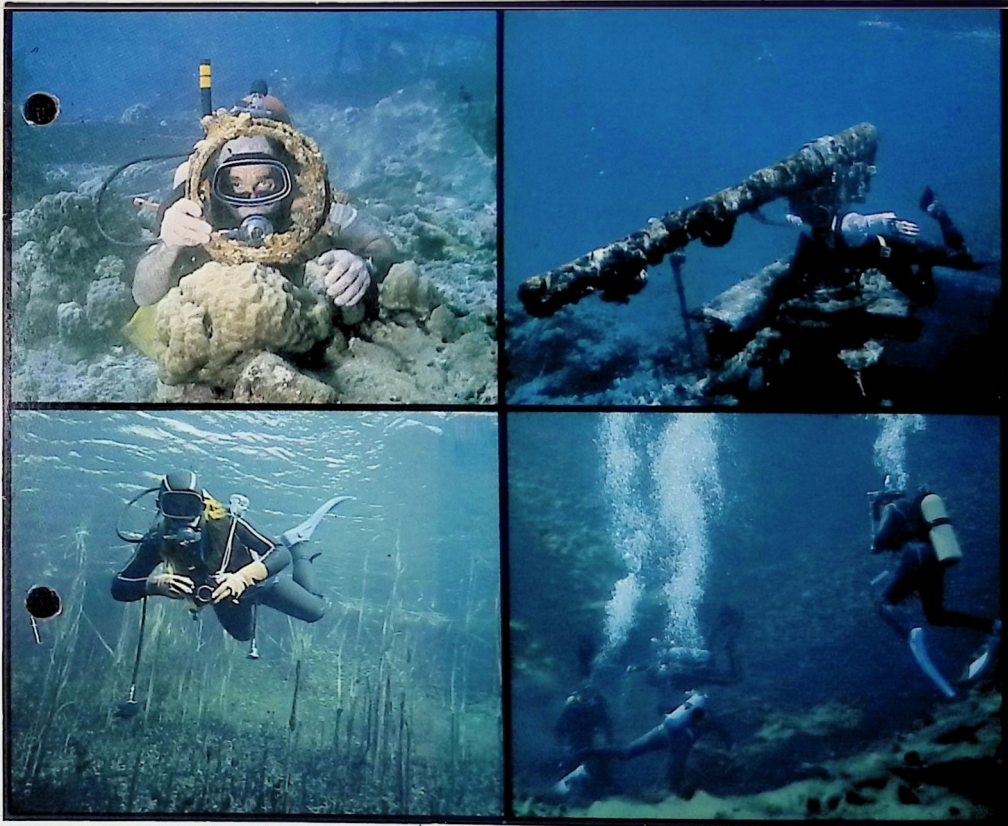
Aug 83



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

FATHOMS

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

PRESIDENT:

Max Synon,
8 Pine Street
Thomastown 3074
465 2812

TREASURER:

Alex Talay,
3/7 Cross Road,
Chelsea 3105
772 3085

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Geoff Birtles	- Vice President, Assist. Secretary	- 846 1983
	& S.D.F. Delegate	
Bob Scott	- Social Secretary	- 367 2261
Pat Reynolds	- Property Officer	- 789 1092
Paul Tipping	- Public Relations Officer	- 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 17th August at 8.00 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lurie 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. An alternative eating house prior to the meeting is Wrigleys Hotel, 66 Victoria Street, Richmond North.

VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME - neat casual wear is essential - no shorts or thongs!

SECRETARY:

John Goulding,
13 Birdwood Street,
Box Hill South 3128
890 6634

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Des Williams,
29 Valerie Street,
Boronia 3155
762 1623

EDITORIAL

Everyone enjoyed Alex Talay's excellent story of his trip to the Solomon Islands last issue, and the adventure is continued in this month's Fathoms, so read on.

Three new members to V.S.A.G. are, Lyndall King, Warren Cannon and Peter West and we welcome them to our Club. The recent Committee meeting ratified their membership applications pending payment of the necessary fees plus we need to have Peter accompany us on a Club dive. Looking forward to seeing you all on many V.S.A.G. dives.

Julie and I recently went to Tasmania for a short holiday. Travelling on the "Empress of Australia". It was with some concern that I observed a diver's boat drifting in the Rip as we passed by. The diver's boat, with Diver Below Flag flying, was between us and an outgoing oil tanker just inside the Rip. This was 8.45 a.m. on a Monday morning in mid July!! It made me wonder just how crowded that part of the bay must be at noon on a summer Sunday. No wonder the Harbour people are looking at restricting divers in the area.

The emergency "think tank" meeting of the S.D.F.V. called by V.S.A.G. on 5th July, was indeed a very fruitful meeting. All V.S.A.G. members should be very proud of the objective attitude and professionalism exhibited by John Goulding and Geoff Birtles at this vital meeting. We are all now very hopeful that S.D.F.V. member-Clubs will now follow the genuine lead shown by V.S.A.G. and rebuild a strong private divers voice in a renewed S.D.F.V. A report of the S.D.F.V. meeting to be held on 3rd August will appear in September "Fathoms".

Enclosed in this month's magazine are Nomination Forms for the rapidly approaching Committee elections to be held on Wednesday, 21 September at the Annual General Meeting. You are requested to give considerable thought to which members you believe will do the best job on V.S.A.G. Committee in 1983-84. These Nomination Forms must be to the Secretary, V.S.A.G., P.O. Box 2525W, G.P.O. Melbourne no later than 7th September, and only financial members may make a valid nomination. Of course it must be countersigned by another financial member. Ideally, you should deliver your forms to the Secretary at our August meeting.

Committee members whose term of office will expire are: Des Williams, Pat Reynolds, Paul Tipping and Barry Truscott. David Carroll has also indicated he will resign from the Committee in September and is thus not seeking re-election. You may choose to nominate any V.S.A.G. financial member, including any or all of the above four outgoing Committee members.

Des Williams

COMMITTEE NEWS

Committee meeting held at John and Maree Goulding's home on 21st June.

- (a) G. Birtles gave a very comprehensive report on the powers of the Fisheries & Wildlife wardens, who patrol our beaches. Geoff plans to summarize his findings in "Fathoms".
- (b) D. Williams advised of his preparedness to continue to edit "Fathoms" in future, once printing and mailing duties are off loaded to other V.S.A.G. members.
- (c) A. Talay to look into possibility of having "Fathoms" printed by professional printer.
- (d) T. Brooks raised the suggestion that a concession membership fee be introduced for V.S.A.G. married couples who are members. This proposal was discussed and rejected by Committee.
- (e) More discussion on future of diving in lower Port Phillip and what V.S.A.G. can do to lobby against further restrictions.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Meeting held at David and Debbie Carroll's home on Tuesday, 26th July.

- (a) Membership applications were tabled from Warren Cannon, Lyndall King and Peter West. All members were accepted by the Committee pending receipt of fees from Warren and Lyndall and pending appearance on a V.S.A.G. dive of Peter - congratulations folks.
- (b) A full list of Club property was assembled by P. Reynolds and others.
- (c) Discussion on dive calendar.

- (d) Committee members who have to stand down this year are D. Williams, P. Reynolds, P. Tipping and B. Truscott. David Carroll advised he will be resigning from V.S.A.G. Committee in September also.
 - (e) Committee advised D. Williams that August "Fathoms" must contain Committee Member Nomination Forms. Also details of voting slips and mailing times were discussed.
- *** Next Committee meeting to be held at Des. & Julie William's home on 23rd August at 8.00 p.m.

* * * * *

OUTSTANDING AIR FILL FEES

Our Treasurer advises that two members still owe money to V.S.A.G. for airfills during the Australia Day Long Weekend. Would Paul Sier (2 fills at \$2.00 each) and David Henty-Wilson (4 fills at \$2.00 each) please contact Alex Talay to clear the debt.

* * * * *

V.S.A.G. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES

We now point out that if you have not paid your V.S.A.G. Subs by now then you are reading your last "Fathoms" magazine. Fees were due by 30th June and many members have still to pay. Remember, you must be a financial member to vote at the Annual General Meeting in September. So please mail to Treasurer, Alex Talay now.

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o FLOTSAM AND JETSAM o
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Victorian divers have not been winning too many favours from the Government recently. What with prohibitive restrictions on diving in the southern end of Port Phillip Bay, and the proposed Marine Reserves at Wilson Promontory, it's a damn shame they didn't build the dam in Tassie. At least we may have been able to dive down there! Well, it seems that divers aren't the only ones getting the cold shoulder. Apparently our fearless Premier, John Cain took up the cause of the nude swimmers and back in March he wrote to Victoria's 300 Councils to seek their views and to request

them to set aside suitable areas for the skinny dippers. The response was not too good. Only 170 Councils replied and of these, 162 flatly refused to consider the idea of nude bathing. It's a good thing we have some clean living straight-as-a-die council aldermen to protect our morals. But what of the eight councils who said yes? We're not too sure just what councils they are but some of the suggested locations for flashing and splashing are:- a rugged little bay down near Cape Otway; a mosquito-ridden backwater on the Murray River; a dam in a cow paddock near Bendigo and Point Impossible near Torquay - so called because it's bloody well impossible to get there! Small beginnings, perhaps, but the nudies have captured a number of beach heads without hardly putting a point forward! Maybe the diving fraternity could take a leaf out of their book in our political struggles with the Empire. We could call upon the great sun-seeker and divers friend, Captain Reg Truscott to lead us into battle aboard the good ship "Mirrabooka". Our movement could be called the "Right to Dive" and our motto could be: - a 100,000 tonne tanker taking evasive action to avoid a crayfish being held by a NUDDY BUDDY!!!!

Not only are divers getting a bad name in Victoria, how about those Canadians who tried to photograph the secret keel of the Australian 12 metre yacht "Australia II". over at Newport. Seems the Canadian's underwater camera was smashed to pieces by the yacht's fold-away propellor! No wonder it's winning all the races!

Talking of races, the whips were really out last Sunday when V.S.A.G. had a dive "somewhere off the Australian Coast" in search of more portholes. Gentleman Geoff Birtles with brother Robert and Alex Talay worked at breakneck speed to get their hookah and sand dredge operating before departing the surface for some more portholes. Having shifted about half a ton of sand their prize shone before them. However time was against the trio and much to Geoff's disappointment they had to abandon their intended trophy. I observed all this from the flybridge (so called because of all the flies eating the rotting fish bait) on my recently modernized cruiser, and knowing Geoff's determination to get what he's going after, I was most

surprised to see him back on the surface within a few minutes of the non decompression time limit. Had the hookah hose broken? Surely it must have, for Geoff spent about half an hour before the dive trying to convince his hookah buddy that because they were breathing surface supplied air they were immune from the bends! Seems his buddy was not so sure about Geoff's new physiology laws of diving. The day was not a complete waste however, Tony Tipping succeeded in nearly getting a crayfish. Jeanette Large qualified as depth sounder transducer holder, thus filling a role so capably filled by Nicki Abel in the past.

Long time friend of V.S.A.G., Warrick McDonald, has severed his association with Melbourne Marine and has launched out on his own at Warricks Dive Centre, 34 Station Street, Moorabbin, phone 555 9. Warrick is stocking a very comprehensive range of equipment as well as moulding air fills, repairs and servicing. We don't often give free plugs in this article, but Warrick has always done the right thing by V.S.A.G. members and so if you're after diving gear, give him a call. - Good luck to you Macka!!!

Don't forget your Jervis Bay Bookings for Christmas/New year. See John Goulding to reserve your spot.

Signed STAN DANDYLIVER
(The Highway Robber)

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CLUB PROPERTY LIST

The Committee bring to V.S.A.G. members the following list of Club Property:

4 x 88 cu.ft. dive tanks; 4 x Conshelf Regulators; 2 Decompression Meters; 100 ft. Hookah Hose; 1 Bauer Compressor; 3 x Backpacks; 1 copy of Sailing Directions; 1 x Furuno Depthsounder; 1 trailer; 3 x Oxygen Adapters and 3 Oxy Cylinders; 4 x Bouys; 1 Stainless Steel Crayfish Cook Pot; 12 ft. x 12 ft. Auto Tent; 3 water

Bottles; Gestetner Duplicating Machine; 1 Olivetti Long Carriage Typewriter and one Tarpaulin. Also two walkie-talkies and a sextant.

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MAGAZINE REVIEW

by OSCAR

The newest dive magazine on the Australian scene is "Underwater - The Challenge of Tomorrow". It was born 12 months ago from ideas conceived by Neville Coleman who is the publisher, editor, producer, photographer, designer and is in charge of advertising and subscriptions.

Neville is a really busy lad, so even four issues a year must be a real labour. Just glancing through it's pages, I feel that he has made it a labour of love, adventure, exploration, discovery, education, nature, photography and travel. He has brought the world of inner space into focus for divers and earthlings alike.

The layout of the magazine is superb, interesting and the well researched subjects illustrated with an abundance of color and black and white photos are worth reading. Even the advertising is eye catching design.

Each issue has grown in size, the latest 56 pages transported me to such places as VILA, VANUATU, SANTO, LORD HOWE ISLAND and TASMANIA and on a deep dive with DAVE IRELAND. Information on Kay and Reg Lipson's marine biology courses, South Pacific Dive Club, N.S.W. and their activities and history and the results of South Pacific Divers Australian Underwater Photographer of the Year Competition.

The last segment by Steve Cross, P.A.D.I. Instructor, on "How to wear a weight belt", made me aware of the intricacies of such a simple piece of equipment.

In short, I can recommend this magazine as one to have on the bedside table. How do you get a copy? \$3.00 from your dive shop or \$15.52 subscription annually by sending to "Underwater", Box 419

P.O., CARINGBAH, N.S.W. 2229. This will see it delivered to you in a strong manilla envelope.

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STANDARD OF DRESS AT CLUB MEETINGS

As we meet at the Collingwood Football Club each month, it is necessary that V.S.A.G. members abide by the C.F.C. rules on standard of dress.

A friendly contact at the Club advises that Tracksuits and T-shirt are not acceptable. Jeans must be neat, not the old faded type. Of course no thongs or shorts are permitted.

V.S.A.G. members and their guests are reminded that compliance with C.F.C. rules of dress are most important, especially as the Club is now under new management. Offenders can expect to be refused entry. Your co-operation in this matter is expected.

THE FIREMAN'S DELIGHT

It was a pleasant, cool nought degrees centigrade as I prised open my garage door, the white frost lay all around, deep, crisp and even and my breath hung heavily in the air, like the smoke from Puffing Billy. Going skiing you might have thought. Wrong, because today, Sunday the twenty fourth of July, we were Flinders bound on what promised to be a good day for it, albeit a little cool. Down to Frankston to join Barry and Pat then off through the white frosty fields, with the heater full on, to build up the body heat you know.

Arriving at Flinders we checked in with our illustrious Dive Captain and were introduced to a "new chum", a Mr. Tony Tipping, who looked like a painter rather than a diver, and were also pleased to rediscover Johnny Goulding complete with the all-new superbly fitted out Billboat, complete with out-door dining area. We think

it appropriate at this time, to point out that the Birtles boat seemed to be fitted with the latest in fire-fighting equipment, compressor, yards of hose and even the mighty fireman alongside, to see that it all worked properly. After marvelling at all this, we launched the boats, with Johnny always different, attempting to use the slipway instead of the beach.

We set off heading out to sea, our dive today was to be an exploratory wreck dive. Our goal "The Waltzing Matilda" or in deference to Dave Carroll, it's latin name "Sergius Commodius". The northerly wind created some chop for us, as we headed wreckwards, following the upright riders in Billboat. Arriving at the dive site, we dropped anchor to discover that all the hosepipe and other paraphernalia brought along in the mean-machine wasn't for fire fighting at all. It's main object seemed to be to lay in the water and tangle up everyone else's safety lines. Geoff described it as an air lift and he and Keith spent a lot of time with it in the water, with Reece keeping a filial eye on it from sea-level. We in our boat had decided on a much lower key approach to the problem. We were all seeking that well known denizen of the deep, and again the latin name, the "Fenestra Naufragium", some of whom we had been told tended to congregate in this very area. Our plan was to send out scouts, who would pinpoint this very elusive animal's lair, and then two of us would go down, enter the habitat and attempt to knock it off, so to speak. Sad to say, the only specimen we could find had burrowed its way deep beneath the sand and could not be enticed out this trip.

Despite this setback, we had a good dive. Barry, Pat and Max dived first and reported through chattering teeth, that the visibility was excellent. Then Don and I kitted up and fell overboard, apart from a slight stinging of the face, the water didn't seem too bad, and down the anchor line we went, with Don hanging grimly onto the safety line. Visibility was good around forty feet, and the sunlight was evident even at 75 feet. One good thing about winter diving is that the water is clearer, and we could see well along the hull of the wreck. We swam along attempting to find a way into the lair of the dreaded "Fenestra Naufragium", but it eluded us. We were down for thirty minutes

MINUTES OF MEETING: 1983-84
MINUTEN OTKRYTIYA

to the Sub-Group, hereby consisting of the following members:
for the position of Director, the following members were
Signed: Date: / 1983
Signed: Date: / 1983
I, hereby certify the above
Nomination for Director of the Group, for the year 1983-84
Signed: Date: / 1983

MINUTES OF MEETING: 1983-84
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Signed: Date: / 1983

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: 1983-84

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being full members of the Victorian Sub-aqua Group, hereby nominate:

.....
for the position of Director.

Signed:.....Date / /1983

Signed:.....Date / /1983

I,hereby accept the above nomination for Director of the Group.

Signed:Date / /1983

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: 1983-84

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being full members of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group, hereby nominate:

.....
for the position of Director of the Group.

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.....hereby accept the
above nomination for Director of the Group.

Signed:Date / /1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

RE: [Illegible]

As the attached, being full members of the [Illegible] Subgroup, being [Illegible] [Illegible]

For the position of [Illegible] [Illegible]

Signed: [Illegible] Date: / 1983
Signed: [Illegible] Date: / 1983

..... hereby accept the above nomination for Director of the [Illegible] Subgroup
Signed: [Illegible] Date: / 1983

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..... hereby accept the above nomination for Director of the [Illegible] Subgroup
Signed: [Illegible] Date: / 1983

and then rose to the surface empty-handed, much to the relief of the crew of the mean-machine. After this, we decided to up anchor and try pastures new, leaving the scene to the dive captain and his anxious crew. However, that was easier said than done, and we couldn't shift the anchor, so we heaved over the oldest man present who slid down the anchor chain and rescued our anchor from beneath the anchor chain of the "Sergius Commodius". Pausing only to hoist the dripping veteran aboard, we sped after Billboat, who was searching for the elusive "Johnny Johnstone Rock" somewhere out there in Bass Strait. Unfortunately, this turned out to be as elusive as our former quarry and so we turned inland for a search for "Cancer Masculinus" or as Big Mick likes to call them, our old friends the marine decapods, again we turned up empty handed. Time to go home we thought, and so we headed back to the beach and began to haul the boats out. About this time, we detected a smile on the face of the Fireman. Keith seemed happy about something, could it be that he had managed to catch a "Fenestra Naufagium". He did let some of us see the wee thing peeping out from the corner of his diving bucket; perhaps not the whole fairly, but possibly the beginning of a collection. He was delighted, and I suppose we were all pleased that their huge effort had not been wasted.

Then it was time to pack up, wash out my useless under-water torch, and get into a nice warm car for our journey home. Our thanks to the dive captain for our informative and interesting dive; and now a list of our brave divers who had plunged into the icy waters of Bass Strait, after one of the coldest nights of the year:- Barry, Pat, Don Abell, Jeanette, Max, Geoff, Robert and Reece Birtles, Keith J, Alex, Brian, Johnny, Tony, Igor and last but not least, Des.

This story was co-operatively written by Messrs. Truscott, Reynolds and Lynch, and only the names have been changed to prevent anonymity.

by B. Lynch

* * * * *

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt.</u>	<u>Meet At</u>
Aug 7	Nepean Wall	10.00am	Alex Talay 772 3085	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Aug 13 & 14	Falls Creek Snow Trip Tawonga. Book now		Mick Jackiw 736 1730	
Aug 17	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club			
Aug 21	Flinders	9.30am	Paul Tipping 387 2027	Flinders Pier
Aug 28	Sorrento	9.00am	John Goulding 890 6634	Sorrento Boat Ramp
	* Boats leaving at 9.30am SHARP!!!			
Sept 11	Flinders	9.30am	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Flinders Pier
Sept 21	Annual General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club Voting for new Committee members - 1983/84			

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES

As reported in the last two issues of "Fathoms", annual subs for V.S.A.G. membership were due on the 30th June. If you have not paid your membership fees as yet, this will be your last issue of "Fathoms" unless a cheque is mailed by return mail to

THE TREASURER,
V.S.A.C.,
BOX 2526W G.P.O.,
MELBOURNE VIC. 3001

V.S.A.G. CHRISTMAS TRIP - JERVIS BAY N.S.W.

V.S.A.G. has booked 9 campsites at Huskisson, Jervis Bay from 26th December to 9th January, 1984. Deposits of \$20.00 per site are required now to reserve your place. Only a few sites left.

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NOTICE TO BOAT OWNERS - RE BOAT LICENCES - N.S.W.

The Maritime Services Board of N.S.W. requires Victorian boat owners, who wish to drive a vessel at 10 knots or more in N.S.W. waters, to obtain a N.S.W. Boat Licence.

(NOTE: N.S.W. waters include oceans, bays, estuaries, rivers, lakes).

Licence tests are carried out at the Boating Industry Association Offices 1st Floor, 582 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne.

Appointment for testing and boating regulations can be obtained by phoning: 529 1483 or 51 3777.

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WRECK DIVING TRIP - EASTER 1984

Andy Redwood has surfaced after a year of inactivity, to announce a planned trip to MADANG, HANSA BAY and RABAUL over Easter 1984.

The trip will be for 14 or 15 days, with approximately equal time in each place, and the main attraction will be the Japanese wrecks at all three places.

Total cost should be around \$1,800 each. Any interested wreck divers should contact Andy on 699 3906 (Home) or 602 0744 (Work).

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OLD SEA-DOGS OF WILLIAMSTOWN

The following article appeared in the Melbourne Age on 13th February, 1937.

"Williamstown has ever been a town where "sea-dogs" have made their home. The skipper of many a fine sailing clipper has been fascinated by its surroundings with its double line of waterfront, and when he has ceased sailing his ships into port for wheat cargoes has returned to the old 'fishing village' to settle down quietly and end his days there. Then the time was when the deep-sea pilots were required to make Williamstown their place of residence. And what a fine type of settler they made.

My reflections go back to many fine specimens of Williamstown's old sea-dogs and adventurous incidents in their careers. Take at the moment just a quartet of them - Captains Draper, Dennis, Freyer and Gafford. Old timer's may recall the 'Nelson' gold robbery. It was in the days of the gold fever. Sailing ships then came into port to carry away not wheat, but gold. The 'Nelson' lay out in the Bay between Williamstown and Sandridge. Late one night when most of the members of the crew were ashore, a gang of desperadoes crept aboard the vessel, seized Captain Draper, who at the time was the 'Nelson's' mate, and got away with the boxes of gold. It was believed that they buried the gold on the beach at St. Kilda, but it was never recovered by the authorities, and the bandits were never brought to justice. When he gave up his seafaring life, Captain Draper became a Church Warden at Holy Trinity Church, and regularly "took around the plate".

The pilot service never produced a more picturesque figure than Captain George P. Dennis. He was a persona grata at Government House and not unexpectedly got the much coveted task of going to Colombo to meet the