

FATHOMS

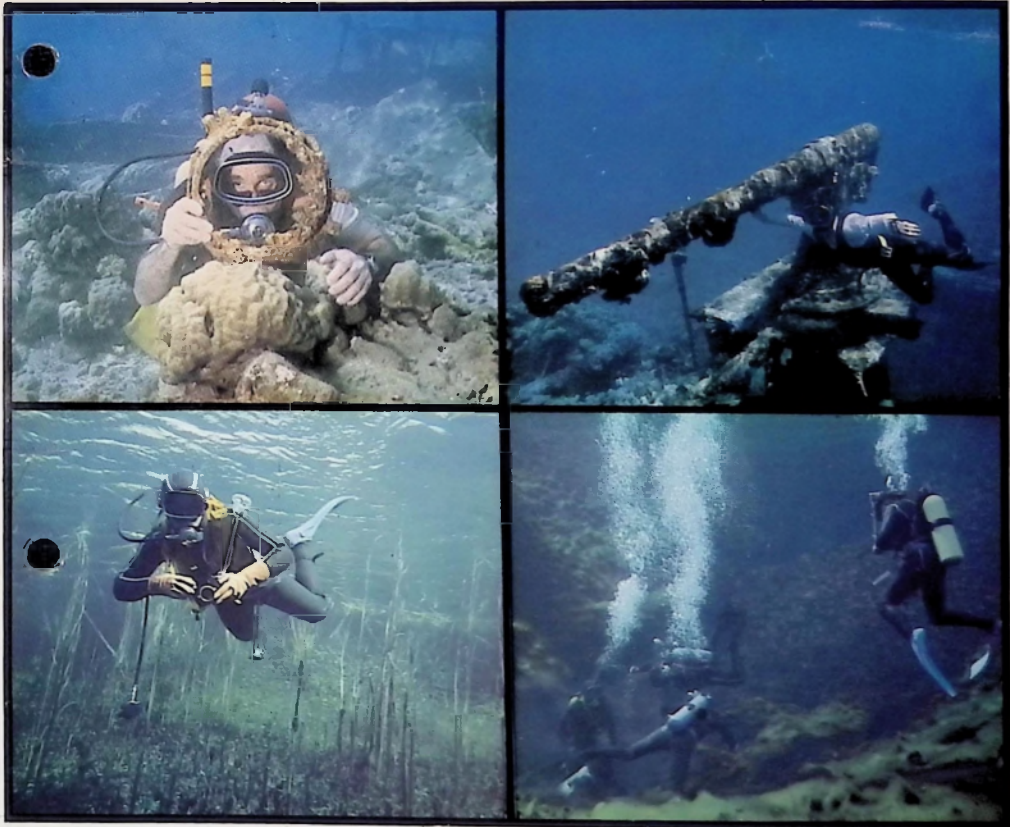
JULY 83



SAFETY IN DIVING

50c

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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)

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CLUB MEETING:

The next meeting of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group will be held on Wednesday 20th July at 8.00 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, 150 Victoria Street, Abbotsford. Bar facilities are available to 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 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 the Kingsley Hotel, 66 Victoria Street, Richmond North. VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME - neat casual wear is essential - no shorts or thongs!

EDITORIAL

Our trip to Port Fairy may have been a "wash out" on the dive scene, but we still enjoyed ourselves. Thanks must go to Terry Brooks, who took care of accomodation arrangements. Maybe we can visit the area again in the not too disianc future, to attempt to dive this, new to V.S.A.G., coastline. Our thanks must also go to the optimistic boat owners Max, Andy and David who towed their craft 600 kilometers to be left on their trailers all weekend.

This issue of Fathoms comes very early this month, because Julie and I are taking 10 days in Tasmania before the July meeting.

Thanks are due also to those members who took the time to write for Fathoms this month.

I made my first visit to Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum last month and found it very interesting indeed. It has been on my list of places to visit for a long time now and I was pleased to be in the area and avoid a special trip to see the complex. Although, I think it is probably worthy of a special trip from Melbourne to see it.

If you haven't already paid your annual V.S.A.G. subscription fees, I must remind you that you have until July 29th General Meeting to do so.

At our June meeting, Keith Jensen gave a terrific presentation of colour slides of his recent adventures in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. We thoroughly enjoyed them Keith, thank you for your efforts. As John Goulding was unable to make our June meeting, maybe we will be able to view Stan Waterman's movie at the July meeting.

Everyone is beginning to accumulate a tidy sum of money in the V.S.A.G. Overseas Savings Fund now and it is only eleven months until it matures. Good to see Igor Chernichov join the fund

with a very large contribution to catch up to others already in the fund.

As this copy of "Fathoms" had to go to be typed prior to our June Committee meeting, there is no Committee News section for which I apologise. There will be two reports in the next issue.

Des Williams

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt</u>	<u>Meet at</u>
June 26	Kelp Beds	8.00am	Terry Brooks 439 3749	Sorrento Boat Ramp
July 10	Heads Area	9.30am	Max Synon 455 2612	Sorrento Boat Ramp
July 20	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club			
July 24	"Geo. Kenmode" Wreck	9.30am	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	Flinders Pier
July 31	Secret Wreck - Definitely experienced divers only. Restriction on numbers applies.		Geoff Birtles 846 1983	
Aug 7	Hopean Hall	10.00am	Alex Talay 772 3085	Sorrento Boat Ramp
Aug 13 & 14	Falls Creek Snow Trip - Toowonga. Book now.		Mick Jackiw 736 1730	
Aug 17	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club			

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

V.S.A.G. SNOW TRIP 13TH and 14TH AUGUST

Mick Jackiw is co-ordinating this year's trip and advises all interested members and friends that a deposit of \$10.00 per head must be paid at July General meeting or there will be no guarantee of accommodation being available. For further details contact Mick on 736 1730.

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"Hitting The Bottle"

The dive scheduled for Sunday 22 May captained by Pat Reynolds certainly did as the title indicates. Those of us who braved the cold foggy morning & felt our way down to Sorrento had a good time.

Actually it didn't start out that way. Seven of us, with only one boat. Pat and Igor drove over to London Bridge to find the surf breaking high over their heads which indicated to Pat that perhaps we might be better inside the Bay.

We cut our gear to the barest essentials, got aboard Barry's boat and gingerly headed out through the fog. We eased our way along, until just after Portsea Pier we emerged into sunshine, clear skies and flat seas. We motored across the Bay to the Wall where we were able to watch the very large swells undulating in from Bass Strait. Igor and Robert went down to search for marine life, emerging after only five minutes with a bent anchor. They went down again, this time staying down for about forty five minutes, but still no luck.

We decided then, that we would proceed to the Queenscliff area and do some drift diving for bottles. Pat promised us that this was the best spot for bottle hunting. We kitted up and five of us dropped over the side, we split into two parties.

Pat and Barry, and myself with the Williams brothers, who are a good double act. Down we went on the end of the line to forty five feet. The visibility wasn't too good around ten to fifteen feet, but good enough for bottle searching.

We had come down into an area dominated by sponges, with whiting grass and small weed covered rocks.

It was fascinating flying over this sea scape. Not much chance of bottles here thought I, when there before me was an intact torpedo bottle, beautiful with hardly a mark or growth on it. I placed it carefully in my bag and went on.

After a while I left the line in order to search out an outlying area, unable to relocate it and the Williams, I surfaced and handed over my finds to Igor.

Descending again, and again, I finally rejoined the lads. The bottom was changing, more sand & now rock ledges. I picked up a black port bottle and on we went. Des indicated to me that they were going up. They passed up the line. Just a couple more minutes I thought, then I was careering past more rock ledges, and in front of me thick brown kelp. I passed over a drop off, with walls dropping away beneath me, I assumed that I was probably over the commencement of Spectacular Reef. It certainly made a fitting climax to the end of a very satisfying dive.

Once in the boat I discovered that we had all found some excellent specimens of the early settlers rubbish dumpings. Des and Geoff had bottles and one bread and butter plate from the early pilot service.

Pat and Barry had a bagfull of bottles, the prize being an early Irish whisky acquired by Bazza. By this time the sun was warming up, so we had a leisurely lunch, a shame that all the bottles we found were empty (of their original contents).

Then it was time to head back to Sorrento and the fog. We had all had a good day and our thanks to Barry, without whom, we would have been up the creek without a bottle so to speak.

Speaking of bottles which we were, most of those we find have or have had marine growths on them. I find that the best way to remove this without marking the glass, is to use a weak solution of hydrochloric acid, making sure of course that this is kept well away from inquisitive tiny fingers.

Anyway thats all for this week. The divers in order of appearance were Barry, Pat, Des and Geoff, Robert, Igor and myself - Brian Lynch.

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

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

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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"WILLIAM SALTHOUSE" - BARQUE

She was bound from Quebec, Canada, with a general cargo valued at \$24,000, when she struck Point Nepean while entering the Heads during the afternoon of the 27th November 1841. Heavy seas were running at the time and she unfortunately got too close to the reefs and struck. She very soon had 18 inches of water in the hold and she was run aground on the beach around from the point. By 29th, she had six feet water in the hold and her rudder had been unshipped.

Two lighters and the revenue cutter "Ranger" went to her assistance, but when she was refloated she went down for good this time between the Western and Symonds Channels with only her masts being visible above the water. Capt. Cain, a prominent Melbourne merchant, purchased the wreck and cargo at auction for \$550.

But, I guess you could say he bought a "pig in a poke" because the barque contained mainly barrels of salt pork and beef, all of which would have been useless after having been submerged in the Bay. Just how much of his \$550 Cain managed to recoup is not known.

Recently the hull was surveyed by members of the Victorian Archeological Survey Unit and was found to be in particularly good shape, despite considerable damage done by some divers after its discovery in late 1982.

by Des Williams

GOING DOWN : SOLOMON ISLANDS

by Alex Talay

* Our group led by Keith Jensen consisted of myself, Geoff Birtles, Dick Whittaker, Lyndall King, Warren Cannan, Len Williams and Alex Masszaur.

The trip to Guadalcanal via Brisbane was very pleasant indeed as the troops imbibed copious quantities of the amber, no doubt to fortify themselves against the rigours they knew lay ahead.

On arrival in Honiara we were met by Reg Thomas, the local dive operator, and were shown to our 8 seater Solair aircraft that was to take us to Gizo in the Western Solomons. This was a terrific flight as we passed over literally hundreds of small islands and the pilot was very accomodating as he did a couple of 360° turns over a wreck that we were going to dive in Bairoko Harbour.

The approach to Gizo was a frightening sight as all I could make out to land on was a strip of coral surrounded on all sides by water. It looked remarkably like an Aircraft Carrier and I thought it must be some sort of joke especially when I glanced at the Co-Pilot (Geoff Birtles) who had turned a whitish colour and was actually peeping through his fingers like some kid watching a scary movie.

Now this bloke I've normally got a lot of confidence in, but when he turned round and told me to rig the diving gear and fix up a parachute the only reply I could think of was "Bugger off Geoff, if you want a Deckie ring up Mick Jackiw".

The Aircraft Carrier's name was Nusatape and as we alighted from the plane we were met by Steve Gardiner who was to be our dive guide in Gizo. We transferred to a launch and crossed over to Gizo. The water was crystal clear and glassy and this excited us no end with the promise of things to come.

On arrival at the wharf in Gizo we were met by Charlie Panakera, mine host at the Gizo Hotel which by the way is quite comfortable and just as well as it's the only one in town.

The next day we set off on our first dive with a great sense of expectation and excitement. We were not to be disappointed as we boarded the 60 ft. Copra boat Rarumanga owned and skippered by Ian Crayford, the other half of Reg Thomas' dive operation. This guy has to be seen to be believed, tall skinny and brown as a berry, he struck me as being a sort of hybrid James. A. Michener super hero and Sir Les Patterson, all rolled up in one.

We travelled about 5 miles over dead calm seas and anchored about 300 yards offshore over a wreck called the Toz Maru. The ship is about 400 ft. long and lies on its starboard side and was a Jap freighter sunk by U.S. air attack. Geoff and I jumped in and swam down about 30 ft. to the bow area. The water was unbelievably warm as we swam along the deck the length of the ship to give her a really good look over. The stern lies at about 110 ft. and we turned around and penetrated the hull here and there on the way back. We entered the engine room and counted the seven boilers then continued on and into the forward hold where two mini tanks lie on their sides, the whole area strewn with ammunition. We dived the ship twice that day and everyone thought it was a great dive.

Next day we set sail for Kennedy island where the future President of the U.S.' P.T. boat was cut in half by a Jap destroyer. Only a few acres in size it is very picturesque and has some of the best reef and drop-offs that I have seen. Huge Gorgonian Fans, some of them 10 ft. across, were everywhere as were countless fish the names of which I wouldn't have a clue. It was here that I saw my first Moray eel and Lion fish. I was

hugging the reef at about 80 ft. when Geoff swam up and pointed out to sea and started swimming off. Screwing up my courage I followed out into the deep blue. Naturally my peepers were scratching the old facemask as I scanned the depths for a Noah or two. I thought Geoff was mad until I spied a rather large Bommie. Many large Pelagic's were swimming about and it was a great sight to swim among a very large school of Mackerel. A beautiful Leopard Ray about 6 ft. across swam leisurely below us and right about then I spotted a couple of reef sharks, my first for the trip.

By this time my air was running out, so I headed for the surface to find myself about 150 yards from the reef over deep water. I've got to confess the old scone did a few 360's on the trip back to the reef and Geoff told me later that as soon as I left him, the sharks started to take more of an interest in him so it wasn't long before he joined me.

I won't say much about the next day's diving as Geoff covered it pretty well in the last issue. What he didn't tell you was that we liberated not one but two of the little devils on the one tank, but we threw the second one back because it was steel. No doubt one of our boffin colleagues in the M.A.A.V. will pick it up in years to come and tell everyone he got it in 5 minutes flat to upstage all his wreckbasher mates.

We dived for two more days in Gizo. The first was supposed to be a rest day so we dived in the harbour on a Jap Zero and a Float Plane. This was an interesting dive as the Zero was full of Lion fish. It was particularly interesting when Geoff took his tank off and sat in the Cockpit only to find our friendly Lion fish everywhere. Next day we revisited the Toa Maru and Kennedy to round off a great start to the trip.

Charlie's open air bar was of course well patronised after we got back from our dives and we had a lot of fun during our

stay there. Ian Crayford and Steve Gardiner took it upon themselves to make sure that we were well topped up. The food at the pub is definately not A la Carte but the grog was O.K. so I didn't mind at all. Keith Jensen who at various times on the trip answered to many different names such as Fearless Leader, Oscar and in Crayford's case his nicknames are too hot to print, picked up another one the night when we spied him lurching around the bar wearing a Jap helmet and brandishing a rifle. It was Seargent Shultz in all his glory.

Next day we took off for Honiara and were well settled into the Mendana Hotel by 2.00 p.m. We settled into a bit of Duty Free slops and wandered around the place as it was too late to dive that day. The Mendana is a very nicely set up hotel but I found it lacked the atmosphere of the Gizo pub, but the food is certainly better.

We had one scheduled dive the next day and this was to be on the Bonegi 2. We headed off about 9.00 a.m. on Reg Thomas' boat and arrived about 1 hour later. We found it to be a very large ship with lots of military equipment scattered throughout.

As on all our dives in the Solomons there were thousands of colourful fish both small and large. We went to 120 ft. with visibility around 60 ft. and kept our eyes open for the elusive Porthole. Geoff and I had decided that we would help each other in this enterprise and as he already had his I was a little toey about liberating one for myself. We spotted one at about 90 ft. but decided it was impractical. About half a mile from the Bonegi 2 lies the Bonegi 1. These ships are so named because they sank near the Bonegi River. Their real names are Kinugawa Maru and Yamazuki Maru.

As we had an afternoon off Geoff and I decided we would hire a tank each and travel out of town by taxi and investigate the Bonegi I. We assumed an air of innocence and hid our tools of trade as we explained to Reg's wife that we were going reef diving. Such was the flak that we had to endure that we even hid our purpose from the taxi driver for fear that he may have been in the employ of the local version of the K.G.B.

We arrived on the beach and looked at the wreck who's bow is nearly out of the water, the stern being about 80 ft. to the sand. We figured the stern would be the best bet and swam down to have a look, hardly glancing at the myriads of beautiful fish. We kept to our task with a vengeance and were soon rewarded. Right near the stern in about 35 ft. of water was every wreckbasher's dream; my very own porthole courtesy of the Japanese Navy and the U.S. Airforce.

We attacked it with gusto with Geoff doing most of the work. He toiled like a maniac and I thought God help Telecom if he ever does take to telephone boxes. After 55 minutes and air running low, we had managed to take 5 bolts out and we left vowing to return.

We were pretty tired after 2 strenuous dives when a night dive was proposed. I nearly pulled out but am I glad I didn't. It was one of the best dives of the trip. Reg and Steve took us about 5 miles from Honiara and anchored over a Jap fishing trawler lying in 70 ft. of water. Keith, Geoff and I were first in and we pulled ourselves down the anchor line and landed right on top of the wreck. The visibility was superb as our torchbeams picked out the many creatures of the sea that you don't see in daylight. The wreck was alive with Lion fish and Moray eels seems to be in every nook and cranny. Morays were even free swimming and it was possible to touch them without any worries. Many different types of shrimp were crawling everywhere you looked. All too soon it was time to go. Geoff and I had to do some deco and I'll never forget the sight of looking down the anchor line and seeing the other divers' torchbeams on the wreck below.

A couple of days later we became the first group of sports divers to dive the YP284 which was a U.S. destroyer sunk off the Lunga River. It lies in 130 ft. of water and is upside down. There was quite a current running but the visibility was superb, upwards of 100 ft. I landed on the bottom right beside a huge Potato Cod and crawled across the bottom until I made out the ship. Black Coral grows everywhere on the hull and Potato Cod and many other fish have made it their home. The forward Gun Turret lies about 30 yards in front of

the bow and sits in the sand upright. Geoff, Keith and I swam towards the bow and were surprised to see a gap of about 5 ft. between the sand and bow as we had been told it was not possible to penetrate. Geoff and I went in and looked around. It was pitch black inside and our torchbeams picked out hatchways and damaged decking as we swam along. We checked out everything we could and swam out of a shell hole about one third of the way along the ship. It was a fantastic dive and one I would recommend to anyone contemplating a trip up there.

To Be Continued . . .

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY LONG WEEKEND - PORT FAIRY

While H.R.M. Elizabeth I took the salute having handed out the usual gongs for various services rendered, and the Old Country lunged headlong into another five years of 19th Century government, various members of this intrepid Club toured to Port Fairy, to sample the delights of a new diving area.

The signs were there, however, ignored as it happened, which wiser people would have heeded. A gale warning for all Victorian waters, two cold fronts approaching from the west and our failure to hold a religious service for fine weather meant that we got well acquainted with the Gumtree Caravan Park, Tower Hill, Flagstaff Hill Museum etc.

Rob Birtles, a worthy new member of V.S.A.G. reported to your correspondent that any horizontal refreshment to be found was at the risk of an extended prison sentence, so he drank beer and read about diving, which pretty much summed up the expense of energy for three days.

Perhaps a few highlights to summarize the weekend; the Caledonia (Stump) won an extra star for quick service, the Thistle was almost dived as was the La Bella and the New Zealander (almost!) and Andy Mastrowicz performed the quickest launch and retrieve in history.

P.S.: The camp commandant was last seen being led away by men in white coats, mumbling about keeping all of the people happy all of the time and talking about hang-gliding.

Let's look at it this way, at least you don't have to wash out the dive gear.

Anon.

A SONNET FOR PORT FAIRY

Port Fairy's pasture is lush and green,
The mighty seas do foam,
And divers there must sure be keen,
Or else they'd stay at home.

For those brave souls who came to dive,
To plumb the depths without fear,
Soon found the urge translated to
Consume heaps of beer.

Can I describe the pleasures real
Of rain and Wind and Spray,
Of muddy brats in vans and flats
The V.S.A.G. spirit stood all that
This year of Queen's Birthday.

Anon

* * * * *

"H.M.V.S. NELSON"

A huge wooden ship used by Victoria's Colonial Navy last century, as a training ship. She looked like Admiral Nelson's "Victory" and played a part in the defence system of our rapidly expanding State after the Goldrushes.

Today, we are reminded of her service to Victoria by two of her very large anchors, which have been preserved and are on display on the foreshore at Williamstown - they were in fact discovered quite by accident, long after "H.M.V.S. Nelson" went

to the ship-breakers. The following article is from the "Melbourne Argus" of 21/Feb., 1922.

"During dredging operations in Hobsons Bay, two anchors and a quantity of cable, which formerly belonged to the wooden warship "Nelson", were discovered.

The anchors, compared with others of modern construction, are of enormous dimensions, the estimated weight of each being 5 tons at least. As was the custom at the time, the stocks are of oak. The anchors are 15 ft. long and are in a wonderful state of preservation. How long these relics were embedded in the Bay is uncertain, but they were doubtless "slipped" by the "Nelson" as an easy solution of the difficult if not impossible feat of raising them, when the vessel left her moorings to take up berth beside the Williamstown breakwater pier, some time before she left for Sydney in tow of the tug "Eagle", nearly 30 years ago."

by Des Williams

DIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Alex Talay advises Southern Cross Divers of Geelong are looking for two people to complete a team taking a trip to dive the magnificent Eyre Peninsula.

Details are: Only two vacancies left. Trip to be on the first week of August.

3 days on a cruising ocean going yacht including all meals and as much diving as you can fit in.

Plus 2 days at Port Lincoln in motel accomodation including bed and breakfast plus all transport in Port Lincoln. Only five people going.

Price: \$550 each. Tanks and weight belts supplied. If you are interested, contact Alex now on 772 3085 (Home) and he will see that you are put on to the correct Southern Cross personnel.

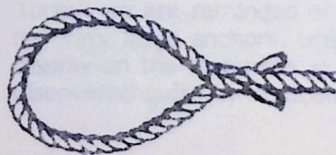
A splice is stronger than a knot.

THREE IMPORTANT SPLICES FOR 3 STRAND ROPES.

For joining rope ends permanently, a splice is much stronger than a knot. A short splice, having up to 95% the strength of the rope itself, gives the strongest coupling. However, it doubles the rope size and is not suitable where rope must run through pulleys or sheaves in a block. For such purposes, a long splice, with up to 90% strength efficiency, is used. For special purposes, other splices are used such as the eye splice and several transmission-of-power splices.

HOW TO MAKE AN EYE SPLICE

The eye splice is made in the same way as the short splice except that after the end is unlaid, it is brought around to form an eye and spliced into its own standing part.



HOW TO MAKE A SHORT SPLICE

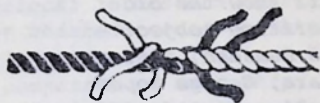
1. Untwist the strands from the rope ends to a distance about 10 times rope diameter. Bring unravelled strands of each rope together and place them in alternate positions.



2. Tie down rope A's strands temporarily. With any free strand, tuck it over and under one strand of rope B.
3. Splice against the lay of the rope. The free strand will go over one rope strand, under the second and out between the second and third.



4. The same operation is repeated with the other two free strands.
5. Free the tied down strands and repeat steps 2, 3 and 4 with them on rope A. Three tucks are made by each of the six strands.

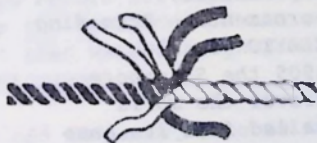


6. Roll splice vigorously on hard surface for finished appearance. Don't cut loose ends too short.

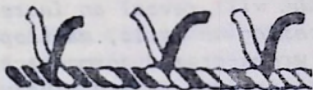


HOW TO MAKE A LONG SPLICE

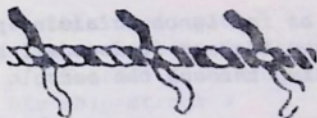
1. Unlay the rope ends about 15 turns and alternate the strands together as in the short splice.



2. Untwist a strand from rope A and replace it with the opposite strand from rope B. Repeat with another pair but in the opposite direction.



3. Tie each opposing pair together with an over-hand knot. Tuck each strand twice as in the short splice. Remove $\frac{1}{4}$ of the yarn from each strand and tuck once. Remove $\frac{1}{2}$ of each strand and make the last tuck.



4. Roll and pound splice and cut loose strands close to rope.



by ROBERT BIRTLES

ODE TO AN ORGANISER

There was a young lad named Terry,
Who took us all down to Port Fairy,
The weather was rough
The steaks, they were tough,
But the crew were all cheery and merry.

The lads, they got bored,
And Terry, they implored,
To plan them a game for their leisure,
Terry set to it with a pounce,
And was soon to announce,
"It's musical vans for your pleasure".

On the sabbath night,
'Twas an enviable sight,
As we all played games in the shed.
The fire, it was hot,
The snooker it was not,
But the table tennis warmed us instead.

Whence suddenly came a wonderous sound,
And all the young lads gathered 'round,
'Twas a rock and roll tape,
At which I can still but gape,
And wonder at the words that were found.

Yes, there was a young lad named Terry,
Who once took us all down to Port Fairy,
He worked hard for us all,
And his efforts were applaud,
Though I doubt he'll return in a hurry.

by Kasia