

# FATHOMS

JUNE 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

TYPIST'S NOTE: Please dont blame Des Williams for this article appearing at the front of the magazine instead of the back, but I misjudged the length of the magazine, and was two pages short. The content of this month's magazine, in my opinion, is excellent.

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## PRESERVATION OF MARINE ARTIFACTS

These days, a diver's best defence against the attack from Conservationists, is to be sure to preserve and treat items recovered from the sea, so they will not deteriorate and be lost for ever.

Whether it be metal, glass, wood or fabric, it is important to apply a good method of restoration to be sure the item will be worthy of display in a museum when you leave it to the world in your Will!! The satisfaction of seeing the item well preserved in your own home should also be an incentive for the diver.

Our "bottle-run" of May 22nd yielded some good finds, so they are worth looking after, here are a few tips:

### Glass & Ceramics:

It is important to reduce the salinity in the item as slowly as possible to avoid osmotic pressures being set up if you simply drop the item into fresh water. So putting it into fresh water immediately is a no! no!

Also, it is no good letting the item dry out without first removing the salinity. Salt crystals within the item will cause damage over time. The best course of action is to place the item into salt water initially and over a period of two months slowly reduce the salt content by tipping out some water and adding fresh water. Until eventually, you have the item soaking in fresh water. Now, a further month in de-ionised water or distilled water will complete your treatment.

"But, the bottle has marine growth on it", I hear you say. Not to worry, as long as it is kept damp and not allowed to harden, by drying out, the growth can be removed by using a wooden scraper, toothbrush and detergent. Definately NO acids or steel wool should be used.

If you have to piece together recovered bits of glass or ceramic use UHU glue which will enable you to dismantle your work if you put a piece of your "jigsaw" in the wrong place!

Cast Iron:

Treatment of this depends on the state of decay and time it has been under the sea. As some V.S.A.G. members recently recovered some cast iron from the "George Kennode", I will deal with those items ONLY. They are in good condition and only been under the sea about 10 years within the dark recesses of the ship.

A mixture of fresh water and Sodium Hydroxide (Caustic Soda) will suffice. The mixture is to be a 3% solution of Sodium Hydroxide and that should be renewed periodically over a period of 2 - 3 months. Then change to distilled water with a 3% solution of Sodium Hydroxide for another month. This should prevent the re-appearance of degradation caused by salt.

\* These notes should at least get you under way, until I can obtain more detailed information for you. Anyone reading "Fathoms" who can shed more light on the preservation art, is asked to contact the writer.

Des Williams

\* \* \* \* \*

FATHOMS

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

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	& S.D.F. Delegate	
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Paul Tipping	- Public Relations Officer	- 387 2027
Mick Jackiw	- Points Scorer (Res.S.D.F. Deleg.)	
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 15th June at 8.00 p.m. at the Collingwood Football Club, Lullie 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!

EDITORIAL

Mid year already and very mild weather has let us dive very consistently so far. We still have some interesting dive spots to visit, so let's hope the rain we so badly need will fall on week days only!

Our May meeting proved to be most interesting as Mark Staniforth of the Shipwrecks Unit of the Victorian Archaeological Survey, gave us a most interesting lecture on Marine Archaeology. Mark made particular reference to some of the local Victorian wrecks and I am sure most V.S.A.G.ers now understand more clearly how the V.A.S. fit into our local dive scene. Mark also made mention of some Western Australian wrecks and showed us some outstanding slides of work done on restoration of both bulky and delicate relics. Our thanks go again to Mark for an excellent lecture.

Lately V.S.A.G. members have been meeting at Whigleys Hotel, 66 Victoria Street, Richmond for a meal prior to moving on to the meeting at the Collingwood Football Club. The meals are ghastly at Collingwood F/Club these days and Bob Scott has been introducing members to Whigleys Hotel over a period of time. So, if you are wanting a meal prior to our monthly meetings, you have a choice of Collingwood Football Club or Whigleys Hotel - see ya there!!

We have some more very interesting dive reports and articles this month and my special thanks go to those who have taken the time to put pen to paper for "Fathoms". Geoff Birles has outdone himself in this issue, in his "Portholing" article. I think his ninth paragraph is the best, it paints a very vivid comical picture, I am sure you will all enjoy it. We are bound to receive heaps more free publicity as a result.

The Club compressor has been fully overhauled and mounted on a professionally built shock-proof stand. Total cost has been around \$550 for all work carried out, so if you ever wondered where your annual subscription fees went to, you now know.

This year's Christmas Club Trip to Jervis Bay should be fantastic. There are so many great diving spots we should have a ball. Stony Creek Reef, the Arch, Smugglers Cave and Tunnel, Point Perpendicular, The Nursery, The Docks, Bowen Island etc., etc. to mention some. Make sure you pay your \$20 deposit to reserve your campsite at Huskisson at the next general meeting.

The S.D.F.-V, is at the present experiencing a very hard time and is in great danger of failing altogether. As V.S.A.G. played a part in the actual establishment of S.D.F.V, some years ago, it is with some concern that we now look at the present state of affairs. It is vitally important that you, as a private diver realise the situation and make every effort when called upon to support the S.D.F.-V. The S.D.F.-V is your voice in the diving world of Victoria and the quickest way to lose your say in what happens in the dive scene in our state, is to turn your back on the S.D.F.-V now.

Very shortly, a supreme effort will be made by some very concerned divers to lift the S.D.F.-V out of the doldrums - so if you are asked to buy a Dinner Dance Ticket or participate in S.D.F.-V organised activities, make sure you look after the Association that looks after YOU - support them.

Our next issue of "Fathoms" will contain an account of Alex Talay's diving experiences in the Solomon Islands, so how about joining Alex in his support of "Fathoms" - what about YOU writing for our magazine, all articles will be accepted.

As Julie and I will be taking a short holiday in early July, I have changed my mind, again, on the closing date for "Fathoms" articles receivable for July "Fathoms". Please note I will need your contributions **NO LATER THAN JUNE 17th, 1983**. I had thought the June Committee meeting date would suffice, but a second look at our itinerary and time available for printing etc. I ask that you make it Friday June 17th. Your co-operation is sought. Hope you enjoy this issue of "Fathoms".

Des Williams

COMMITTEE NEWS

\* Meeting held at Paul and Leslie Tippings' home on Tuesday 24/5/83. Visitors Marg and Tony Tipping.

- (i) G. Birtles suggested V.S.A.G. send a letter to Ports and Harbours to point out that Commercial interest dive Clubs don't necessarily mean experienced divers and that long term divers in private Clubs should also be considered in any future rule alterations on Port Phillip management.
- (ii) Pat Reynolds reported only shield mesh is now needed to complete the Club compressor framework.
- (iii) G. Birtles advised the members present of the work being done by the Whale Rescue Centre and suggested V.S.A.G. make a \$25 donation to be put onto their mailing list - this motion was carried.
- (iv) Dive calendar discussion - Snow Trip coming up.
- (v) J. Goulding pointed out that the S.D.F.-V is in danger of collapse, without a Secretary or Vice President and a demotivated Committee as a result of overwork. Discussion followed on ways V.S.A.G. could prevent S.D.F.-V. decline and rally support before it is too late, and private individuals lose a forum for expression of views on vital diving legislations etc.
- (vi) The Committee agreed to increase Club fees from June 1983. They will be \$27.00 per member and \$15.00 Country members. The last increase was back in 1979.

\* Committee members wish to thank Marg and Tony for their assistance on the night as Leslie could not be present to feed us all. Next Committee meeting will be held at John and Maree Goulding's home, 13 Birdwood Street, Box Hill South, Spm Tuesday 21st June, 1983.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dive Capt.</u>	<u>meet at</u>
June 11/13	Long weekend at Port Fairy		Terry Brooks 439 3749	
June 15	<u>General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club</u>			
June 26	Kelp Beds	8.00am	Terry Brooks 439 3749	Sorrento Bt Plan
July 10	Heads Area	9.30am	Max Synon 465 2812	Sorrento Bt Plan
July 20	<u>General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club</u>			
July 24	"Geo. Kermode" Wreck	9.30am	G. Birtles 846 1983	Flinders Pier
July 31	Secret Wreck -		G. Birtles 846 1983	
	Definately experienced divers only. Restriction on numbers applies.			
Aug 7	Nepean Wall	10.00am	Alex Taley 772 3085	Sorrento Bt Plan
Aug 13 & 14	Falls Creek Snow Trip - Toowonga Book now.		Mick Jackiw 736 1730	
Aug 17	<u>General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club</u>			

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

\* \* \* \* \*

NOTE: At June General Meeting we will be screening a diving movie - hopefully Stan Waterman's latest. So be there!!!!



FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Once again another month has come around and yet again I must confess to remaining a land-lubber, the whole time. As the past four Sundays have passed me by, my feelings have been rather mixed. There was that Sunday in May, when the thought of my comrades kitting up for a dive sent shudders down my spine, as I struggled to hang on to the ladder in a 30 knot southerly, whilst attempting to paint the guttering. Muratroyd was most sympathetic, as she stirred another tin of foul smelling paint and advised me, that if I fell off the ladder I was to try not to spill the paint over the driveway. Then there was Sunday last, when the air was as still as a 3 day old pot of beer. How clearly I could see Bazza and Birtles and the big M ripping down to the Lonsdale Wall on a silky blue sea. But, for me it was slosh, slosh, slosh with the Taubmans all weather hi-gloss!

Alas, I have now almost finished and my return to the sea will be heralded with great pageantry, as I put the boat, complete after major refit and overhaul, through its paces.

Meanwhile, at time of writing, the story of the sunken German U-Boat in Port Phillip Bay remains a mystery. According to a local war "expert", a diver had reported to him that 8 years ago he found a complete and sealed up U-Boat, not far from where the old Gellibrand lighthouse is. The "expert" claims that the U-Boat would have carried mercury worth about \$3 million dollars for use as ballast ... Now this, I find most interesting.

You will recall some years ago, when there was a scare about flake having too high a content of mercury. Obviously those hungry old sharks (or flake as is the term preferred by the gentle folk) have been cruising around the old sub for the last 40 years feeding on the odd bit of German sausage and a big slice of mercury. Of course, another school of thought although quite plausible, but nowhere near as well researched as my own thoughts about this find, would have us believe that the remains found by the diver are not those of a U-Boat, but rather parts of the S.S. Kakariki, which sank in 1937. Or perhaps even an old torpedo boat that was used for Target Practice.

Signed BOSUN ARROWS (The Nautical Archer)

THE WHALE RESCUE CENTRE:

The W.R.C. is presently endeavouring to put together a comprehensive plan of action with which to approach whale strandings. This involves problems of political reform necessary, the procuring of vital equipment, the raising of public awareness and the day to day running of the Centre. If you would like to become a member/sponsor and receive periodic updates of the Centre's activities you can do so by sending your name and address to :

THE WHALE RESCUE CENTRE,  
672B GLENFERRIE ROAD,  
HAWTHORN VIC. 3122

Fees are: \$5 retired/student/low income  
\$15 regular  
\$20 family

\* The Centre is presently arranging:

- i) A brief course in rescue techniques and whale physiology
- ii) Funding activities e.g. raffles and an exhibit at the City Square in Melbourne.
- iii) Advertising for public interest via media.

\* At present the Centre can provide:

- i) Information for use by teachers in schools.
- ii) A booklet prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, containing guidelines for dealing with actual whale strandings.
- iii) Articles and information relating to previous whale strandings.
- iv) A strategy for effecting successful rescues.
- v) Posters, T-shirts, sweatshirts and car stickers.

If you wish to become part of the Whale Rescue Centre and assist them to get established you can also telephone them for more information on 819 2888. In emergency ONLY the whale stranding HOTLINE is 240 9715 to report whales ashore.

\* \* \* \* \*

GEORGE KERMODE

On Sunday 24th April we drove down through the rain to Flinders. There was a suggestion that the weather might improve but once there, it was still overcast and wet. There were only six of us, Bazza and Mick with their boats, the two good looking Birtles Brothers, Pat and myself. A bit of a challenge diving with all these macho blokes. We set out eventually in different directions, Mick and the Birtles to search for crayfish, and us to the "George Kermode" to find the elusive porthole.

The sea was calm, but we motored into the driving rain, in fact we seemed to be heading into bad weather and leaving the coming fine spell behind us, to Mick. We only just made out Pyramid Rock on our port bow through the rain and mist. We altered course and swept around the rocky outcrop into the calmer waters of the bay. It was very hard to pick up the marks because of the mist, but Bazza had our anchor snugly into the wreck in about five minutes.

We decided to make the first dive an exploratory one just to see if all the tales we had heard were correct, and to pinpoint the legend if they were. We geared up, and full over the side together, with Bazza holding our life-line to the surface. Down we glided, onto the wreck, there were a lot of fish around including a big shoal of yellowtail. Under the upturned ship we went and into the inverted door of the engine room. It was hard to get in due to the surge of water at the doorway. In we went, Bazza one side and I the other, with Pat on sentry duty outside. I moved up through a tangle of pipes towards the metal catwalk I could see above me. As I was about to thread my way through, my torch went out. Blackness descended quite quickly. Luckily, I could see light below me when I looked down and gradually extracted myself back, to the door. Then I followed Bazza's line up past the catwalk, with my torch faintly glimmering off the rope some three inches away. Joining Bazza in an enormous cavern of a space, I proceeded to assist him in the search by almost tearing his mouthpiece out with my left flipper. Recovering from this we both looked around, plenty of holes, but no port variety. Back down the line and another effort this time to get out of the doorway.

We proceeded to another portion of the ship, whereby which time my air was beginning to get low, and so I left the other two and made my way back to the anchor line and thence up to the boat. Imagine my surprise when upon arriving on the surface I could hear voices. Pat and Bazza were already back and the buoyed line stretched down to El Dorado:

The mathematicians amongst us decided that we would have to wait an hour 'surface interval' before descending for the hard work. We took up the time by eating hot soup and sandwiches, and I repaired my torch. Most of our time and conversation seemed to be taken up with the subject of body heat, and how cold the water would be upon our re-entry. The hour soon passed and then it was time to get ready again.

Over we went, and except for an initial inflow of cold water over my chest from a small hole (since filled in) at the top of the zip, the water wasn't too bad. Down the line and up into the wreck. We passed the end of the line to Pat again alone outside, by way of an already empty porthole. We had previously warned him that we would come back and haunt him if he didn't secure it and we couldn't find our way out afterwards.

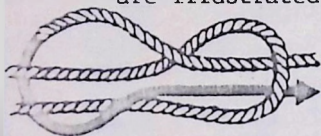
Then it was down to work. Now, I had never seen a porthole underwater, let alone assisted in one's recovery, so it was exciting stuff and I was about to watch an artist at work. In fact we became so engrossed that we forgot where we were. Oblivious to the fact that we were inside a dead ship on the ocean floor. Blackness all around us. The only light from our two torches, silt and rust rising from the floor each time we moved, our only contact with the outside world was the line and my occasional view of Pat if I moved to the hole. Fifteen minutes passed, it was getting colder. I began to wonder how hypothermia felt, anyway I reasoned that I would only be in trouble once my fingers refused to hold the two torches I was playing on the stubborn rusted nuts that Bazza was hammering away at. Thirty minutes and my gauges showed that I was about to enter the red (time to go up) zone. I showed Barry the time and my gauge, we were both almost out of time and still a couple of nuts to go. I turned to go - Impenetrable, solid nothingness greeted me, my hand circled the line. Off I went with the life line between my fingers, it descended, so did I, then gradually

# Knots to Know.

Practically anyone who uses rope will have occasion to use knots for such purposes as hauling, hoisting and towing, and for tying two ropes together. They are indispensable as a means of making your rope a valuable tool capable of performing a wide variety of jobs.

However, when two ropes are to be joined permanently, a splice is superior to knots which generally have only about 50% of the full strength of the rope. This is due to the sharp bends in a knot which put extra stress on the fibres, thus impairing the rope's efficiency.

The majority of knots are classified as either binding knots, loops, hitches or bends. Some of those most commonly used are illustrated here.

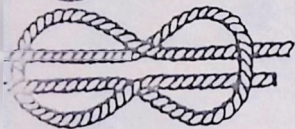


## SQUARE OR REEF KNOT

Used aboard ship to secure rope ends. It unties easily if either end is jerked.

TO TIE: Loop the left end under and over the right end, loop the right end under the left standing part and end. Draw back through right loop and tighten.

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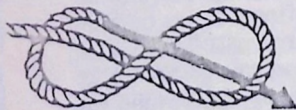


## BOWLINE

Often used to secure a mooring line to a post; it never jams or slips.

TO TIE: Make an overhand loop. Bring end under and up through loop, then under and around standing part. Draw end back through loop and tighten.

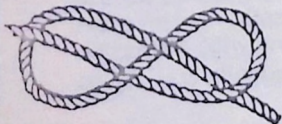
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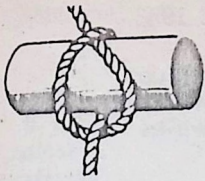


## FIGURE EIGHT KNOT

Easier to untie and stronger than the common overhand knot, it is the best knot for stopping a fall that would otherwise run out of a davit or tackle.

TO TIE: Make an overhand loop. Bring the end around and under the standing part. Draw end through loop and tighten.





## HALF HITCH

Fastens an object quickly for a right angle pull.  
TO TIE: Pass the end around the object and tie an overhand knot loosely. Slip the end under the rope turn.

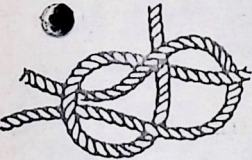
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## SHEET BEND

For light or medium ropes, it is a popular knot aboard ship. Resembling a bowline, its end is tied to the bight of another rope, instead of its own bight.  
TO TIE: Make an overhand loop. Draw the end of the second rope through the loop, under and around the first rope's standing part and back through the loop.

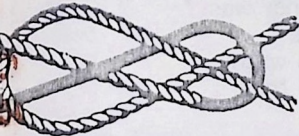
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## CARRICK BEND

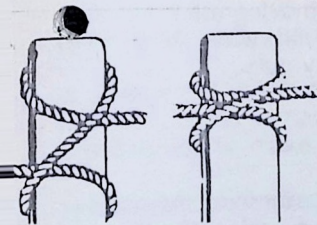
Used for tying heavy ropes or hawsers together, it is one of the strongest knots. Under load, it tightens – an important feature because large ropes cannot be tightened by hand.  
TO TIE: Make an underhand loop with end and standing part facing the same direction. Draw second rope end down through loop, under the first end and over the first standing part. Bring the second end up through first loop, over its own standing part and down through loop.

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## CLOVE HITCH

For lashing a line around a post or spar.  
TO TIE: Wrap end around the object. Make a second loop around the object and draw the end under the standing part.



by ROBERT BIRTLES

through the soup I could see the sea bed. What a nice sight, then up the line, where I could see Pat slowly ascending above me. It was pleasant moving slowly up the line and watching the ceiling of waves coming closer.

Barry and I both agreed afterwards, that it was good to see the outside world again.

We surfaced, Pat and I to find that Stan Watts had arrived with a boatload of divers whilst we had been hard at work below. They had dived and were coming up with us. We had been down for thirty five minutes. Seconds later, up popped Barry, no joy though, his prize had eluded him, well for the moment anyway, but that's another story.

For us now only remained the climb aboard the boat and the trip back to Flinders. The day had brightened, whilst we had been below, and we passed other boats out now that the weather was kinder. We motored past Seal Rocks and then spotted the "Mickmobile", we altered course to find that Mick's radio wasn't working too good, and that they had been a "bit" lucky in their efforts for the day.

Back to Flinders, a quick haul out of the boats and then into my nice warm car for the trip home, stopping only at Mornington for a tank refill in case my assistance was to be needed on the following day. Then my good-byes to the lads and off to Dandenong.

The moral of the story is that if you don't succeed in removing all your nuts on Sunday, you try again on Monday, which he did, with the assistance of the redoubtable Des, with Igor on sentry duty, Bazza succeeded in adding to his under sea collection.

Congratulations!!

by Erian Lynch

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ANNUAL FEES DUE JUNE 30TH

V.S.A.G. Annual subscription fees are due as from the 30th June and members are requested to pay promptly by mailing a cheque to:

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

pay at the June General meeting on the 15th.

Fees are:           \$27.00 PER MEMBER  
                      \$15.00 PER COUNTRY MEMBER

Fees have been increased this year to cover expected extra costs in "Fathoms" magazine in future. The last fees increase was made in 1979.

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BOOK REVIEW

Title: "SKIN DIVER"

For over 10 years, I have subscribed to this magazine and still eagerly await its arrival each month and avidly devour its contents.

Each month, its 100 pages plus are jam packed with reviews on the latest gear, diving techniques, photography and travel etc. etc.

It gives a list, when reviewing dive gear, of all items such as masks, fins, B.C.'s and compiles all the makers and relevant information thus enabling one to make up one's own mind on the most suitable item.

Underwater photography seems to be exceptionally popular in the U.S.A. and this magazine, each month, has at least one article on the subject.



Regular photographic sections by Tim and Cathy Church have increased my knowledge, with their views on the subject.

All diving magazines seem to have a section written by a diving doctor, this one is no exception and even answers correspondence from divers.

Well illustrated with lots of colour and black and white pictures, even the advertising is interesting and the prices of regulators, suits, etc. never cease to amaze me, I wish that we could buy as cheaply in Australia.

Although the travel section is oriented to the U.S.A., they often include overseas locations, such as Truk Lagoon, Phillipines and Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The editorial is always interesting and highlights the problems divers have the world over.

Published by Petersen Publishing Co., 8490, Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Cost posted to your home is \$17.95 U.S. or about \$3.00 at your Dive Shop or Newsagent. Definitely a magazine for your coffee table.

by OSCAR

V.S.A.G. DIVE SUNDAY 22ND MAY, 1983

Our dive captain was Pat Reynolds and my brother and I motored down to Sorrento through very thick fog to meet at the boat ramp at 8.30am.

Our total assemblage consisted of Barry Truscott, Robert Birtles, Igor Chernichov, Brian Lynch, Pat Reynolds, Geoff and Des Williams. Our transport consisted of one boat - Barry's!!

Now, Barry being the very considerate guy he is soon had us all aboard and we motored out through a dense fog towards the Heads, dodging marker bouys and small boats as we went. Naturally, it was a slow trip, and as a result of the fog we were unable to dive the "Eliza Ramsden" because of lack of visible marks. So, with the gruff

sound of fog horns coming from Pt. Lonsdale in the background, our crowded boat moved to the Wall area.

Robert and Igor decided on a drift dive along the top of the Pt. Lonsdale shelf to look for crays. The rest of us waited patiently for 40 minutes and watched their float cruise down towards Pt. Lonsdale.

They returned empty-handed, but seemed to enjoy their dive. The fog, by this time, had crept back up the Bay and we were bathed in warm sunshine.

We then moved up near Pope's Eye with the plan to have a "bottle-run" past Queenscliff. Bazza and Pat made up one group, whilst Geoff, Brian & myself formed another; Igor and Robert kept us in sight from their boat.

This was a terrific dive, as it is ages since we looked for bottles, a change from crayfish! Very soon crays will be restricted anyway, so we had better get used to the idea of a few more "bottle runs" in the future.

We motored along at a very good pace, three abreast on one line and float cruising down to swoop up those glass relics of the past. My brother, Geoff, had not done a bottle run before and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. He also picked up a complete china saucer with the Port Phillip Pilots ensignia and some interesting smelly bottles, the beginning of a collection.

My luck was in the form of a torpedo bottle by "E. ROWLINGS" and included plenty of sightings of the latest model from the home of C.U.B. Lynchy had great luck and scored a very old torpedo bottle plus a short black stout bottle of very early vintage. He was last seen back onboard with the bottles snugly wrapped in a towel cradling them with all the affection of a new mother.

Pat and Barry surfaced with heavy bags too and we were soon examining their finds and washing out the decades accumulation of sand. The bottles included a very old Irish Whisky, torpedo, stout champagne and a long narrow green one with a rounded bottom, as well as an "alley" bottle.

So, it was a very pleased group as we zipped along the flat sea back to Sorrento. The air was very cold and white ears, red noses and runny eyes were the result of the return trip. With the boat out, and gear stowed, some hot coffee at Sandy's and we all thanked Bazza for making sure we all dived.

by DES WILLIAMS

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.

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.

FOR SALE - TENT

13 ft. x 9 ft. steel framed deluxe Continental Tent. Complete with separate fully enclosed bedrooms with sewn-in floor and zip on sun awning. This tent is in excellent condition and is offered for sale at \$205.00. Ground sheet to suit \$7.00 or will sacrifice the lot at \$210.00. Contact John Goulding - Private Phone: 890 6634 or Bus. 341 3543

SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF VICTORIA REPORT

The quarterly general meeting of the S.D.F.-V was held on 3rd May and attended by David Carroll, Max Synon and John Goulding. Their report of the meeting's business follows:

1. Applications for membership to S.D.F.-V were received from the Albury/Wodonga Inland Dive Club and the Aqualung Dive Club.
2. The Sports Federation will conduct a meeting on legal liability for sports clubs on May 25th. Representatives from 3 insurance companies will address the meeting.
3. The National Safety Council has established a recompression chamber at Morwell. Should this service be required the Bass Strait Medical Service should be contacted by phoning: (051) 52 3055. The National Safety Council's chamber can be contacted by phoning: (051) 344 666. Another recompression chamber is located at Prince Henry's Hospital, Dept. of Anaesthesia, Phone: (03) 62 0621.
4. Victoria's second Marine Reserve has been gazetted and is now law. It is the Point Cook Marine Reserve and is located around the Point Cook area.
5. Another Marine Reserve around Wilsons Promontory looks like being declared.

6. A new magazine called "BAY WATCH" has been launched on the market, and deals with matters relating to Victorian Coastal areas.
7. The Boat Show will be conducted between July 7th and 13th. S.D.F.-V will have a stand, and is looking for volunteers to man the stand. (J. Tipping, A. Mastrowicz and M. Jeacle have volunteered their services).
8. C.A.S.I.C.O. Insurance will cost \$11.00 per member for 1983/84. The new C.A.S.I.C.O. program will commence from August 1983 to July 1984.
9. The new restrictions effecting diving activities in the southern end of Port Phillip Bay are covered by Port Rules 62A and 63B. S.D.F.-V were not consulted and were not aware that these restrictions were being implemented. S.D.F.-V claims that it has maintained regular contact with Ports and Harbours over many years and will follow up with P. & H. on this matter. It was reported that the owner of one boat has already been booked under the regulations.
10. A motion put forward by Torquay Scuba Club to prohibit S.D.F.-V affiliated clubs to allow members to spear whilst using SCUBA was defeated.
11. Nominations were called to fill a number of vacancies on the S.D.F.-V committee. The nomination for Treasurer was filled by Sheryl Hambling, but nominations for Secretary and Vice-President were again not filled.
12. A volunteer from the member clubs was asked to organise the 1983 S.D.F.-V dinner dance. This matter was not resolved and it is unlikely that the dinner dance will be held this year.

Comment: It is most disappointing to see the sad state in which S.D.F.-V now finds itself. No Secretary, No Vice-President, and a President who I would say is wholeheartedly sick of the job and the frustration of a mainly apathetic diving fraternity. Six years ago, when Toby Stewart took over as President of S.D.F.-V, the Federation went through a tremendous growth. Ably assisted by Peter Stone and Ray Connor, S.D.F.-V became an influential and well respected body. Club support was strong and a number of substantial achievements were made that benefited all divers. When Andrew Cox became President, two years ago, he had a very difficult act to follow, but already the energy of S.D.F.-V and the affiliated clubs was beginning to wane. Many clubs (V.S.A.G. included) had actively involved themselves in assisting and organising S.D.F. activities. Now S.D.F.-V has fallen into an all time low, and unless new blood and new enthusiasm is introduced it is possible the S.D.F.-V will fade altogether. If this happens, the spokesperson of many private Victorian divers will be lost. In recent times, we have witnessed a number of restrictions that have affected diving activities in Victoria. It is now more crucial than ever that we have a strong, well informed and active body to be the state organisation representing diving.

If the present S.D.F.-V cannot perform this function, then it is the duty of affiliated clubs to protect their own interests by selecting and nominating a committee who has the ability and is prepared to do the work, or alternatively consider joining and strengthening the Australian Underwater Federation.

Comments from members, and other clubs are welcomed by contacting the Secretary of V.S.A.G.

JOHN GOULDING

## PORThOLING - (Or Freud & Pacific Island Diving)

By Geoff Birtles

Someone once suggested (rather churlishly, I thought), that I leave the "Loch Ard" alone and concentrate on telephone boxes. Unfortunately, the poor man did not understand that I have little interest in his pet pile of junk, or telephone boxes, because they lack that single vital ingredient for a really satisfying wreck bash - portholes!

This is a story about portholes or portholing. The Freudian connotations of portholing to sex are an obvious and realistic association. (Albeit characteristically chauvinistic). Certainly the sequence of events are very similar.

Preparation, tools of trade (after-shave & deodorant for the ladies - cole chisel & sledge hammer for the portholes); the hunt, quarry sighted and challenge & planning, a quickening of the pulse; the delicate, but hard work of seduction (actually getting her clothes off is generally a good deal easier than freeing rusted nuts - no Freudian pun intended!); finally the kill & almost orgasmic pleasure of seeing your very own solid brass porthole fall free of the hull. (Sigh!)

It all started with Uncle Max purring like a contented cat over spilt cream, as he displayed the spoils of a previous Pacific island sortie. Gleaming solid brass, 16" diameter, complete with hinged glass ring & wing nuts. I had to have one!

After satisfying myself that brass portholes were about as common as pebbles on the beach, I put up the money and booked immediate passage along with Alex Talay. The planning had commenced. Essential tools of trade first. Heavy sledge hammer, boiler makers hardened cole chisel, self adjusting wrench, drift, tool pouch with line and clip, torch and diving gear. Already I was 3 kilos over my baggage limit and no clothes or after shave! Not to worry - baggage limits are only set to intimidate the weak hearted. (At 44 kilos I had to believe it - and this proved to be so).

It was when we first set foot on our dive boat that the problems started. A lecture from our dive guide - eyes on, hands off! (Shades of our local scene - it seems that the double standards of wreck diving politics are just the same everywhere - "do as I say, not as I do!"). Rather intimidated by grossly exaggerated stories of \$2000+ fines, gaol terms and a lot of other emotive horse-shit, I ground my teeth with each sighting on our first dive. Christ! There was even one "complete with glass" at 20 ft., right beside the shot line tie off.

But something didn't ring true. She was full of blasting holes below the waterline but she hadn't been torpedoed (?!) Subsequently, I found that our dive guides had used explosives to free sundry items for salvage and profit. (L... just about every other ship we later dived!) I also found that certain souvenir shops were full of so called artifacts recovered from World War 2 wrecks. As far as I was concerned the rules were off and portholing was on.

Enthusiastically assisted by our illustrious Treasurer, I planned a full scale attack on a small Japanese trader lying in 70-80 ft. of water. Conditions were ideal; smooth protected shallow water, remote location (very remote) and a planned repet dive, but were there any portholes?

A quick look around the ship, 3 or 4 promising sightings, a surge of adrenalin and it was on: Speed and stealth were essential. But, unlike sex we had to penetrate first, before the hard work could commence. Fortunately, at this particular time, Alex & I were the only divers in the water. Just as well. Any observer would have choked to death, in paroxysms of water-laughter as we scurried from porthole to porthole, opening to opening, like two starving mice trying to penetrate a box full of juicy cheese!

Thru a jagged hole in the bridge, a 20ft. swim thru twisted girders and trailing cables, a drop to a lower level, a left, a right and our quarry was at hand. The eerie gloom of green semi darkness was penetrated by shafts of light from at least 4 different portholes. Smorgasbord! A cursory inspection of the platter and we selected a fine specimen complete with hinged glass ring, ornate wing nuts and storm cover. (Eat your heart out Truscott).

A quick clipping of tool pouch to wing nut, a moistening of tongues dry from anticipation and we commenced to clean the thick coral encrustation. It was at this early stage, that we caught onto the fact that things might not be quite as straight forward as planned. The porthole was overhead. It was impossible to either stand or lie as you worked. The passage way floor was 3-4 ft. deep in mud. No doubt from the adjacent river. Any finning, any movement at all resulted in an immediate and profuse dispersion of fine silt and a reduction of visibility.

This problem was further exacerbated by 2 other divers discovering an alternate entrance and commencing to swim up and down the passage. (And cave divers they were not!) After less than 10 minutes we were down to a 2-3 ft. visibility situation and the problem of exiting, with or without a porthole was a very real one. (At least it stopped the tourists).

It was now obvious that we would never get out with a heavy porthole by the same means that we got in. (Too far, too complicated and too bloody dark). If we left it any longer to plan our exit we might not get out at all. Fortunately, we had observed our silt kicking tourists enter the passageway from a hazy light source almost directly behind our work area. Time for caving tactics!

Work suspended, I clipped a spare line to a wing nut, left Alex to guard the bootie and swam toward what I hoped was an alternate simplified exit. Fortunately the relatively short line was sufficient to confirm some kind of large light source directly ahead and above, but not quite long enough to reach it. "Bit between the teeth" at this stage I yanked a trailing electrical cable from the roof, joined it to our line and confirmed that we did in fact have a perfect exit (thru an engine room hatch leading to the bridge roof), some 20 ft. directly behind our work area. Exit guideline secured and confident that we could get out in zero visibility it was back to work.

After 4 nuts (of eight) it was zero visibility. A white out at the porthole and a black out behind us. Rig torches were useless. Light scatter made accurate chiselling hopeless. A Super-Q held about 2 inches from the chiselling area provided a concentrated and workable beam.

It took 35 minutes bottom time and a severe case of tendonitis in the right elbow to finally free the last nut. And that's quick! We had worked like men possessed. Time for a breather and time to check our exit! It was black! Our make-shift exit line intact, our exit secure and re-entry assured, it was back for the hammer and outside for the kill. We would push our prize thru from the outside, no chisel marks you see!

At this stage I was so hyped up, I couldn't find the bloody thing from the outside. In the sheer anticipatory excitement of extracting one's very own Jap P/H I was looking for it along the keel!!! Fortunately Alex had kept his head and beckoned me upwards to the fruits of our labour (and love).

A few heavy blows and it was loose. Not wanting to lose it in the silt and fearing a broken guide line (electrical cable, remember) I left Alex to finish the hammering and re-entered the ship to position myself and catch our prize from the inside.

And then it was free (orgasm!) And I was face deep in 3 feet of mud clutching a very negatively buoyant (heavy) 16" porthole complete with storm cover. Thank God for the line. Porthole in one hand, line in the other (and a quick prayer that the electrical cable wouldn't break) I leap frogged across the muddy passage. At last, black out replaced by white out and we were nearly home free.

Re-attaching our line to the bootie, I swam upwards thru the hatch where Alex excitedly joined me in pulling it clear. Sheer ecstasy! Hand shaking, back patting, underwater jigs - heady stuff. Future dives can only be an anti-climax.

A furtive trip back to our boat, a tense trip back to base, partial cleaning, dismantling and packing and it was time to relax and relive a very exciting adventure over duty free booze and much discussion comparing the relative merits of portholing and sex!

\* Acknowledgement:

I must express my gratitude to Alex Talay for his superb assistance in very taxing conditions and in particular for his pragmatic moral support, without which I might have succumbed to the flak!

\* Note to intending Pacific Island portholers:

In many locations accessible portholes are as scarce as hen's teeth and most are too deep for realistic recovery. It would be foolish to plan a trip around such an intention (as I did) as you may be very disappointed.

BOATING & BAY REPORT SERVICE BY TELECOM

As you may already know Telecom have an excellent boating report service for your information simply by dialling 11541.

The following letter was sent by G. Birtles with the suggestion that the service be extended to include Western Port.

Perhaps other V. S.A.G. members and other Dive Clubs would also like to follow Geoff's example, by writing to Telecom with suggestions and congratulations on this excellent service.



May 16, 1985.

The Manager,  
Telecom,  
35 Collins Street,  
MELBOURNE. Vic 3000

Dear Sir,

I would like to congratulate you on your new Boating & Bay Report Service (Ph. 11541).

As a keen SCUBA diver I find this up to date information invaluable. May I suggest that you will significantly broaden the appeal of this service by including Western-Port Bay & Cape Schanck wind reports.

Most SCUBA divers tend to dive leeward of the prevailing wind. Eg. Dive Flinders/Schanck area in a Northerly (on shore wind) and Port Phillip Heads area in South to SW winds.

As SCUBA diving is an extremely popular sport in Melbourne (52 weeks yearly) such a service would be appreciated by thousands of divers.

Yours sincerely,

GEOFFREY R. BIRTLES

Vice President, Victorian Sub Aqua Group  
P.O. Box 23269, Melbourne 3001

## C.A.S.I.C.O. INSURANCE

C.A.S.I.C.O. Divers Insurance Premium of \$11.00 per head is due by the V.S.A.G. General Meeting in July. Members of V.S.A.G. wishing to renew or join the C.A.S.I.C.O. insurance scheme must pay the premium by this date.

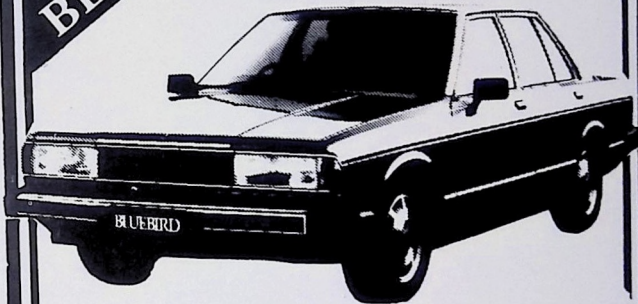
C.A.S.I.C.O. Insurance provides a diver accident insurance scheme whereby death or injury payments up to \$20,000 will be paid for participating divers. In addition, income subsidies are available to convalescent divers in the event of extended absence from work. At time of writing, we are awaiting the updated 1983/84 policy. Enquiries should be made to either the Secretary or the S.D.F. delegates of V.S.A.G.

REMEMBER - \$11.00 IS DUE IN JULY.....



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