

FATHOMS

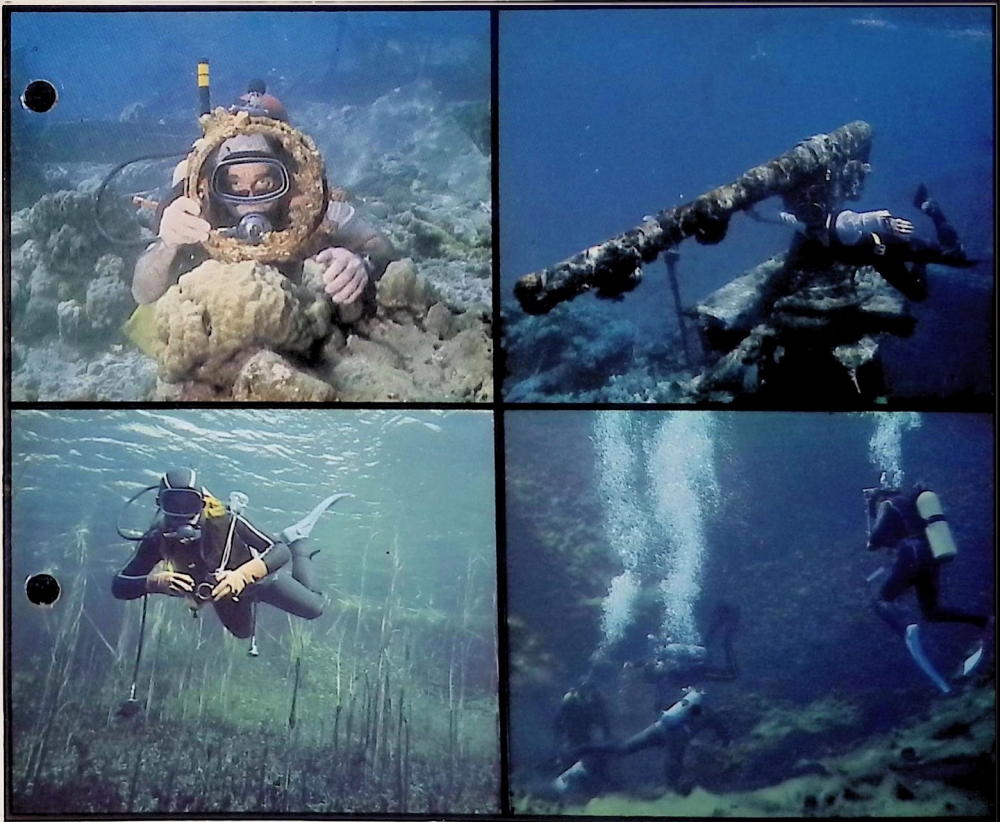
MARCH 83



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 "Dar 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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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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	& S.D.F. Delegate	
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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 16th March 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.
VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME!!

EDITORIAL

Our centre-fold this issue features V.S.A.G.'s own lifetime seafarer, Capt. Reginald Truscott of the good ship "MIRRABOOKA". We had another great trip with Reg in January and your editor managed to obtain an exclusive interview with Reg. The trip is also reported on in Flotsam & Jetsam this month.

All of us who have enrolled in the V.S.A.G. Overseas Trip Savings Scheme, owe Geoff Birtles, Paul Tipping and Terry Brooks sincere thanks for an excellent concept.

Geoff conceived the idea originally and had many thoughts on how it should operate. These thoughts were kicked around by Paul and Terry together with Geoff and brought to a meaningful order in a very short space of time, to have the scheme launched before Christmas 1982. Paul Tipping then put together a set of rules with his vast legal knowledge and has, to my way of thinking, done V.S.A.G. proud. It is an excellent job Paul and I for one am very pleased to be a part of this excellent scheme.

So, those members who haven't as yet joined this scheme, don't forget plenty of Aussie flags so you can wave us all goodbye at Tullamarine in about 15 months time. The scheme has employed the professional skills of an entrepreneur, a lawyer, a solicitor, a banker and a printer and if these people can't help you dive overseas, then you're never going to make it. Give it some thought, it isn't too late to join.

We should have a permanent listing of thanks in each Fathoms reserved just for Alex Talay. Because he has done it again folks! Alex produced the small savings booklets for the V.S.A.G. scheme and they look great Alex, the final touch to a very professional travel idea.

Mick Jeacle is now handling receipt of monthly payments for the Savings Scheme and we are very grateful to Mick for his assistance too!

Apart from about 4 or 5 regular contributors to "Fathoms", we have very few other members interested in writing news for our monthly communication. So how about someone else putting pen to paper for a change. We have so many members, it is difficult to understand why more people won't help us build up "Fathoms". Articles from new members are especially welcome, so have a go, we are doing plenty of diving and have plenty to write about. Closing date for receiving articles is the fourth Tuesday on each month. The article if received by the Editor by that time will appear in the following month's "Fathoms" - Please help!!

EDITOR

V.S.A.G. BAR-B-QUE

Our Social Secretary and his good wife have once again offered to allow V.S.A.G. members and friends to enjoy a fun evening in good company.

Bob and June Scott invite you to their home at 3 ELBA PLACE, KEILOR DOWNS on Saturday 9th April to enjoy a barbeque.

This time we ask that you B.Y.O. grog, meat and support salads to eliminate a lot of work for a small few. The Scott's are supplying the venue and the firewood.

So come one come all and enjoy a social evening commencing at 7.30 p.m.

#

COMMITTEE NEWS

Committee Meeting held at Pat & Jenny Reynold's house on February 22nd - Visitor Keith Jensen.

- (1) V.S.A.G. memberships for John Nottage (pending a dive with V.S.A.G.) and KASIA QUAIL (pending necessary paperwork) were passed by Committee.

- (ii) T. Brooks advised State Film Library Catalogues amounted to \$15 each and to save this cost he would personally inspect at catalogue at the Centre on V.S.A.G.'s behalf.
- (iii) Club dives to Mt. Gambier and Graveyard on a charter boat were cancelled due to booking difficulties - these to be re-booked very soon.
- (iv) Further dives were added to the dive calendar.
- (v) Pat Reynolds said Club compressor is now due for a thorough service - to be arranged.
- (vi) T. Brooks advised the Victorian Archaeological Survey are requesting divers to fill out relic registration forms for relics taken from the Loch Ard over the past years. The V.A.S. simply wish to build up knowledge of what the vessel contained and they will NOT be confiscating divers' souvenirs. This, Terry suggested, is a good opportunity for V.S.A.G. to assist and show the way. Terry will send for Relic Registration forms.
- (vii) Max Synon reported the C.I.G. oxygen bottles V.S.A.G. have hired have a replacement value of \$75 each if lost or stolen. The cost of insurance will be looked at.

* Next V.S.A.G. Committee meeting will be held at Alex TALAY's home at 3/7 Cross Road, CHELSEA, on Tuesday March 29th, 1983 at 8.00 p.m.

* * * * *

NEW AIR FILL STATION

Scuba fills are now available in the Phillip Island area, at Bones Garage at San Remo. Open 7 days a week from 8.00 a.m. The location is in the main street of San Remo, just look for the Mazda sign.

DIVE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DIVE CAPT.</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
March 12-14	Port Campbell - Long Weekend - Pt. Campbell Camping Ground			
March 16	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club			
March 18-20	Mt. Gambler Weekend - CANCELLED - due to accommodation problems and national cave diving testing on that weekend			
March 27	Heads Area	10.00 a.m.	Bob Scott 367 2261	Sorrento Boat Ramp
	(Note: Charter Boat dive cancelled this day)			
April 1-4	Wilson's Prom - EASTER - Camping at Yanakie - TO BE CONFIRMED -			
April 9	Saturday evening Bar-B-Q at Bob Scott's home - 3 Elba Place, Keilor Downs - 7.30 p.m.			
April 17	"George Kermede" Wreck	10.00 a.m.	Mick Jackiw 736 1730	Flinders Pier
April 20	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club			
April 23-25	Long Weekend at Wilson's Promontory			

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

* * * * *

DIVE REPORT - "PINNACLES" - 13.2.1983

A fine hot morning saw 17 divers and 5 boats mustered at San Remo

for a day's diving. Geoff Birtles, the dive captain, had selected the Pinnacles as the venue. Boats were launched at Newhaven boat ramp; a little trouble was encountered due to the low tide.

Barry, having difficulty starting his Black Max Merc - new batteries, jumper leads, swearing and kicking, all failed to prod the beast into life, so after an hour or so, the monster was placed back onto the trailer and his crew placed onto the 2 remaining boats.

As we neared Woolamai Point we sighted the other boats, they apparently had given up searching for the elusive Pinnacles. John Goulding adjusted his battered Polaroids, peered at his book of marks, looked shoreward, lined up his marks and turned on the depth sounder; lo and behold the magic had been performed, the Pinnacles could be seen from the surface.

As I slipped below the surface my thoughts turned to previous dives here, always something memorable had occurred, today was no different, schools of fish, Sweep and small Yellowtail, all milled around the divers, while other individual fish, Butterfish, Leatherjacket, Boarfish, swam out of crevices to investigate us.

I pointed the camera in all directions, taking photos of fish, divers and silhouette shots of divers and fish against the surface. As I turned away from the Pinnacles and looked toward the deep blue, four large Kingfish appeared from the depths, each about 50 to 60lb., and they gave us a quick once over and disappeared.

At 30 metres the walls of the Pinnacles rises vertically, covered with yellow anenomes and mauve sponges. Only the electronic flash of the underwater camera will reveal the true beauty of the area.

Ascending slowly, bubbles cascading toward the surface, once again the Pinnacles had cast a spell over me.

Lunch and a rest was taken in a small bay near Mt. Woolamai, then off for a drift dive in the San Remo Channel. What a dive, hanging onto the buoy line you are swept along at a great rate of knots past ledges and crevices, all covered with a kaleidoscope of colourful marine growth. At one stage I was swept past a diver trying to extract a cray from a ledge, a futile attempt as the current is too strong to fight against it. All too soon, I realised that my time at this depth, 25 metres, had expired and I must ascend and join the mere mortals on the surface.

The drift dive was not without incident, as John Goulding tangled his buoy line around one of the pylons of the San Remo Bridge and try as we might we were unable to free it, finally cutting the buoy free, losing about 60 metres of rope.

A few cold tinnies at the boat ramp topped off a great day's diving and I for one am looking forward to my next Pinnacles and San Remo channel dives.

"Oscar"

(One of the Odd Couple)

WANTED

WANTED

WANTED

WE NEED YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR A LIKELY VENUE FOR OUR NEXT V.S.A.G. CHRISTMAS DIVE HOLIDAY.

LAST CHRISTMAS IT WAS PORT LINCOLN AND THE TWO BEFORE THAT WERE AT ULLADULLA, SO WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO NEXT DECEMBER/ JANUARY ? ? ? ?

IT IS TIME MEMBERS CAME UP WITH SOME BRIGHT SUGGESTIONS, SO HAVE A GOOD THINK ABOUT IT AND WE'LL ASK YOU AT THE NEXT V.S.A.G. MEETING.

WANTED

WANTED

WANTED

Correct Attire at Meetings:

As I pointed out in February "Fathoms", our venue for monthly meetings - Collingwood Football Club - has had a change of management and with it, the new broom is already sweeping clean. The doorman now has a full list of members' names as requested and the Club manager has now asked V.S.A.G. members for further assistance.

The Collingwood Football Club is a "licenced" club and as a result, duty bound to maintain a standard of dress of those entering the Club. V.S.A.G. members and visitors are therefore reminded, that thongs are definitely not acceptable and indeed shorts without long socks are also not up to standard. Grotty old jeans and a holey T-shirt will not be accepted either. We ask that members and visitors be smartly dressed or in future the doorman will not admit offenders.

C.F.C. is still the best venue for our meetings, so let's do the right thing, when we enjoy the facilities.

"MIRRABOOKA"

Our journey to Refuge Cove this year was, as usual, enjoyed by all, especially as the weather was warm and sitting on deck was most comfortable.

This year, I took the opportunity to interview our intrepid captain, Reg Truscott, as the good ship "MIRRABOOKA" chugged happily between Rodondo Island and the mainland. So, here is the result; all the things you wanted to know about the "Mirrabooka", but were afraid to ask.

Firstly, a little about Reg's life at sea. Reg was born at Port Franklin and first began work at sea when he was 14 years of age. Since then he has spent all of his sea days in Eastern Victorian waters and down as far as Hobart. Reg

did live at St. Helens on Tassy's east coast for a short time and also in the Flinders Island area. Long line fishing was the work which kept Reg busy in those days.

But, in 1960 down on Erith Island in Bass Strait JACK LEIRECH began work constructing the "MIRRABOOKA", he was a professional boat builder. Reg Truscott joined Jack and worked alongside the master builder as a labourer to complete the hull.

In November of 1960, the hull was launched at BULLI Cove on Erith Island and ALAN CRIPPS in his boat "KAMAROOKA" towed the hull minus it's deck home to Port Franklin. The 58HP PERKINS diesel was fitted at the Port and Reg finished the work himself.

The "MIRRABOOKA" is 37ft. long and weighs 13 tons and has provision to accommodate a sail to assist the diesel. Reg tells me the sail has only been used a couple of times.

Over the years since her completion, the "Mirrabooka" has journeyed as far as Bridport and St. Helens in Tasmania, but has mainly sailed in the waters of eastern Bass Strait.

Reg was soon taking fishing parties and social club groups out into the Strait and then along came the La Trobe Valley Divers, followed by Melbourne Scuba Club. I believe Jay Cody was responsible for introducing V.S.A.G. to the "Mirrabooka", but I am unsure how many years ago that was.

Reg has a regular trip each year to the Furneaux Group, Flinders Island, for divers and sometimes he makes two trips if the divers are available. Of course, V.S.A.G. has a permanent booking on the Australia Day long weekend for Refuge Cove, and we always look forward to it.

The "Mirrabooka" often chugs down to Refuge Cove with a group called "Friends of the Prcm", who spend a weekend removing graffiti from the rocks at Refuge, these days.

With this article goes the photo I took of the "Mirrabooka"

anchored in the placid waters of Refuge Cove on Sunday 30th January, 1983.

Thanks for your company again this year Reg, see you next year.

DES WILLIAMS

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FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

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MARCH 1983

Friday the 28th January saw the usual great exodus from Melbourne, as V.S.A.G. members headed off for the sleepy little hollow of Foster on route to the even sleepier Port Franklin. Once again it was time for men, women and boys to battle the ferocities of Bass Strait and camp under the stars at beautiful Refuge Cove.

The Foster Pub, now bigger and better than ever, served many a weary V.S.A.G. traveller on that Friday night, with a chilled glass of ale and provided the congenial atmosphere so well noted when V.S.A.G. members get together.

But, oh how times have changed! No more the mad scramble to Port Franklin after the happy hour at the Pub. Gone are the days of manoeuvring your sleeping bag onto the good ship "Mirrabooka" to get a bunk, whilst fellow members observed the usual pre-trip party. No sir, these days its motel accommodation at Foster - (Breakfast at 6.00 a.m. please and eggs sunny side up!). Those not staying at the motel found comfortable accommodation aboard the Haines Hunter and assorted panel vans and cars.

Dawn on the Saturday blossomed into a magnificent sunny day heralding the start of a great weekend.

Now, the "Mirraboka" is not one of the fastest boats around, but under the command of the Inimitable Captain Reg Truscott, who firmly believes that the shortest distance between two points is a ZIG-ZAG series of manoeuvres, the four and a bit hours to reach Refuge Cove seemed to fly (. . . like a lame emu in a headwind).

Upon arrival and the usual confusion about how to erect the tents, it was off to Waterloo Bay. Already Geoff, Barry, Mick and Andy and their crews in the smaller boats had dived and in the tradition of earlier swaggles, had filled their tucker-bags.

Back at camp on Saturday night, we had to contend with the always present menace to the diver, "The Aussie Bush-Walker", who after traking the best part of 10 miles in a single day, is not content to rest in the woods and leave us weary divers in peace, but insist on walking right into our tranquil little camp with their great fludding boots and disturb our poor lads from the time honoured ritual of "sucking slops" - Worst of all, these invaders from the mountains with their full bosomed shirts and baggy ex-army issue khaki shorts drank our bloody grog and delighted in eating our crays!!

Sunday we departed for the mysterious Carpentaria Rock, so called after the ship "Gulf of Carpentaria" hit it and sank.

The rock rises out of 180-200 feet of water to about 25-30 feet below the surface. For those who dived the rock it was one they won't forget in a hurry. The long slow surface swell caused the most amazing underwater surge and divers were tumbled and bowled around as if in a huge washing machine. Needless to say, the dive was soon aborted and a more sheltered spot was found.

On Sunday afternoon we detoured from the usual second dive and headed out for Rodondo Island and Forty Foot Rocks. Both locations look interesting and inviting and should be investigated on another trip.

On the way back the good captain engaged in some more manoeuvres

and stretching a point a little (figuratively speaking) managed to avoid hitting a 40,000 tonne container ship which failed to give way to our "Old Man of the Sea".

Sunday night on the beach was a night of nostalgia, as the old jokes echoed into the night. Back again were Alex's wood s'riffer, Mick's Archie - - Johnny's Dave and Mable and many more. However, it was too much for some of the clan, and young Reece Birtles was seen taking dad off to bed about 10.00 p.m.

After clean up on Monday, more diving followed before the long trek back to Port Franklin.

It was another great weekend with special thanks to Mick Jackiw for providing his compressor, Des and Wayne who organised most of the air filling and of course to Captain Reg and the good ship "Mirrabooka".

On February 13th, we dived the Pinnacles off Phillip Island. Now, I've dived this spot maybe a dozen times and whereas it used to rate as one of the top drop-off dives around Victoria it is not as spectacular as the Rip drop-offs - So I was keen to opt for an alternative spot, and when Barry's boat would not start - my cries for sinking it and having a wreck dive were not well received to say the least!!

Never mind Barry, I'm sure that John will play down the fact that he towed you half way around Western Port Bay whilst you tried to jump start the Mercury! Not even my Murgatroyd's Austin 7 will push start these days - Better luck next time.

Signed MALCOLM HOO!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Yes, there are some photographs missing in this issue. Julie spent several hours developing them and Alex made bromides in record time, but to no avail as they went missing in the mail. We are as disappointed as you. Sorry to let you down.



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