

FATHOMS

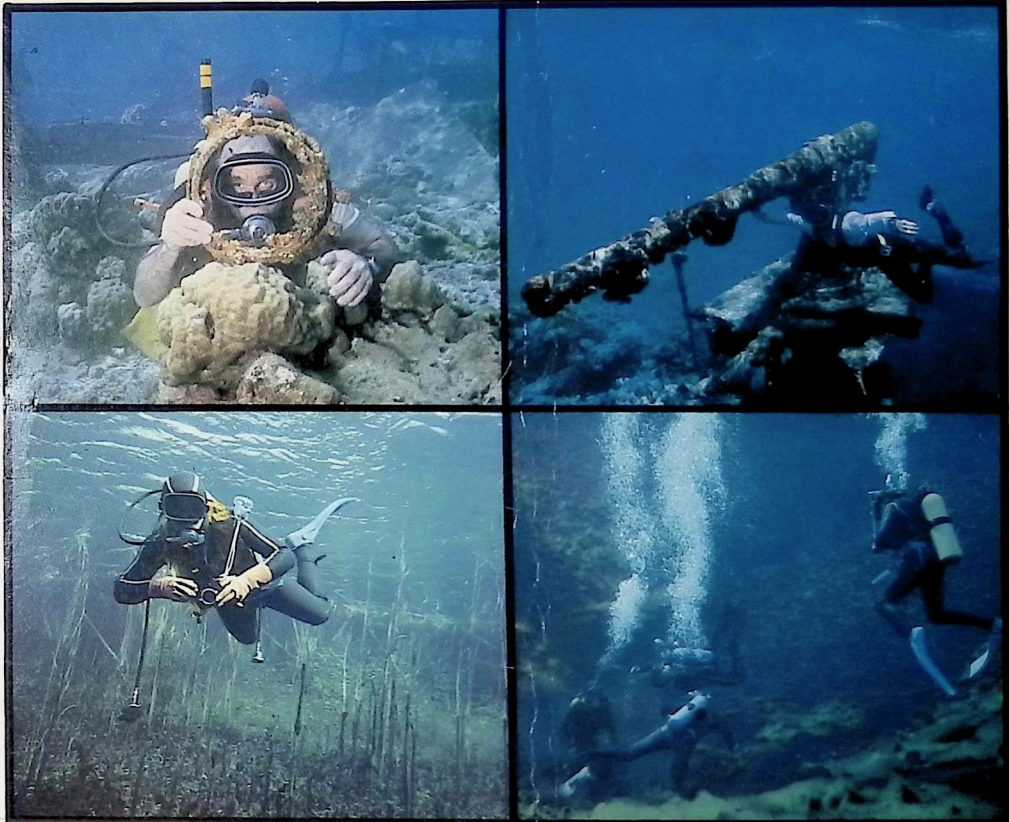
Nov 83



SAFETY IN DIVING

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VSAG

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

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

VSAG

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Committee Member - 435 7794

The Victorian Sub-Aqua Group was founded in 1954 and has continued as a strong and active diving club since that time. It is incorporated as a non profit company and has no commercial affiliation with any organisation.

VSAG is committed to the preservation of independant diving freedom. It believes that divers must take a responsible attitude toward the protection and preservation of the marine environment but as a general rule is opposed to legislative measures that place prohibitive limitations and restrictions on diving activities.

Local diving is organised on a bi-monthly basis, generally out of participating member's boats. This is supported by weekend camps, charters to more remote locations and annual overseas trips. The club has a considerable investment in diving equipment.

Regular functions provide an opportunity for members, friends and families to socialise. Each month VSAG meets at the Collingwood Football Club where bar facilities are available prior to and after the General Meeting. Visitors are very welcome - smart casual wear essential.

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

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NOVEMBER 1983

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Next general meeting:

November 16 8.00 p.m.
Collingwood Football Club
Lulie Street, Abbotsford

Next committee meeting:

November 22 8.00 p.m.
Geoff & Isabel Birtles,
8 Newlyn Close, Templestowe

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 8 Newlyn Close, Templestowe. 3106

EDITORIAL

It is with some apprehension that I write this my very first editorial. Des Williams has set a high standard. A very high standard of selfless devotion to a sensitive and personally demanding role.

Fortunately it's a "no lose" situation for the club. I am sure that we all look forward to Des applying his very own stamp of "quiet achiever" to the prestigious role of President of the largest independent, non commercial diving club in Victoria. We look forward to his leadership and new initiatives.

Production of Fathoms is time consuming and costly. Is it worth it? It seems that most of us think so. Certainly your committee are dedicated to its continuation. Barry Truscott has volunteered for the arduous and thankless task of "Assistant to the Editor". Folding, stapling, enveloping and postage. A typical gesture from a very deserving "Club Man of '83". "Big Mick" Jeacle our new social secretary and Alex Talay - Treasurer, have committed themselves to raising \$1,400 specifically to be set aside for the cost of Fathoms. Other committee members have agreed, as Dive Captains, to produce a "dive report" for every club dive.

Fathoms is an important intra-club communication medium that welds our club together and keeps it strong. It seems to me (as a brash new editor) that it should have clearly defined editorial objectives; we may not achieve them (after all this is a hobby) but . . . if we try, we will at least achieve a reasonably professional product that can develop its sphere of influence within the diving community. And let's not under-estimate the importance of this emerging role as we see commercialism and minority self interest groups press for further regulation of this already over regulated sport that we all love.

1. Communication

Fathoms is the vital communication link between 65 VSAG divers. This must remain its primary and most important role. Dive itineraries, social plans, committee news, people and happenings.

2. Entertainment

Obviously there is interaction between the communication and entertainment roles. Dive reports are a typical example. People like

to read about people! Any article that uses lots of names and is topical is guaranteed an appreciative audience. Overseas trips, literary "roasts", gossip columns and social reports are all great entertainment. Whatever happened to "Tips Tit Bits"?

3. Education

Bit trendy - but why not? Confidence is a product of applied knowledge and preparedness. We should devote at least one page to sharing relevant knowledge. Typical examples are CPR techniques, Coastal Navigation, First Aid, Diver Lifesaver, Dive Calculations, Knot tying, Historical contributions, Marine science and equipment reviews.

Keith Jensen (fire fighter extraordinaire) has volunteered to get things going with an article on Fire prevention, preparedness and management in small boats. Good stuff! Who's next?

4. Political

The rights of independent sport divers are eroded almost daily. Much of the regulation is discriminatory, unfair and unrealistic and is simply the product of well organised pressure from minority self interest groups (both private and commercial interests).

Marine Parks that deny fishing rights to divers and particularly those that positively discriminate in favour of commercial fishing interests and line fishermen are a very hot issue. Denial of diving access in the Port Phillip Heads area again with positive discrimination for commercial interests is another one.

A professionally presented Fathoms with a good editorial mix and broad distribution base can play a vitally influential role in the fight for preservation of independent diving freedom.

5. Presentation

To command outside respect for our product we must "dress it right". Our October issue with a four colour cover and litho printing (thanks to Des & Alex) heralded a new era of professionalism for Fathoms. Further changes have been effected to this issue and your new editor

will continue to strive for improvement and a truly professional product.

Editorial objectives can only be achieved if members make editorial contributions. If Fathoms is to continue to entertain, to communicate, to educate and to influence it needs fresh input. Contributions are invited both from VSAG members and non VSAG members alike. e.g. Ginge on diving in Honiara, Alan on the Coolidge and Geoff N. on the Graveyard. Its called putting it on you fellows!

My thanks to the regular scribes, Keith Jensen, Des Williams, Brian Lynch and John Goulding for their continued support and a very warm welcome to Mick Jeacle who makes his debut in this issue.

GEOFF BIRTLES

Tennis Party/V.S.A.G. Mile

A day of frolicking good fun for the entire family - hosted by the Tipping brothers. Doubles and Singles tennis tournament followed by the gruelling V.S.A.G. handicap mile. And then down to the serious business of a convivial ale over a steak or sausage. Always a great day!

- DATE: Sunday November 20 - 10.00 a.m.
- VENUE: Meet at Balnarring Beach Tennis Courts; just over the bridge on the Balnarring Beach Road toward the foreshore.
- BOOKINGS: Phone Paulie 387 2027 after 7.30 p.m.
Thursday November 17.
Note: Not Friday or Saturday.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Meeting held at Julie and Des Williams' home Wednesday October 26. Attended by Des Williams, Max Synon, Mick Jeacle, Geoff Birtles, Barry Truscott, Paul Tipping, Alex Talay, Mick Jackiw, John Goulding. Absent with apologies - Bob Scott, Pat Reynolds, Terry Brooks.

Business:

- (i) Paul Sier still owing fees for Refuge (Jan. 83) air fills.
- (ii) Repairs to depth sounder \$28.
- (iii) Dive calendar - see back page this issue.
J.G. emphasised the need for 16 divers on the Mirabooka, advised some vacancies still available for Jervis Bay, 3 spots left for Wilsons Prom.
- (iv) Social
 - (a) M.J. provided information on exciting plans for Hunters Lodge. Committee to request prize donations from Russell Kitt, Dick Whittaker, Bob Cumberland, Warrick McDonald and John Gibson. Fathoms will provide editorial support to those who support our function.
 - (b) Pat Reynolds to convene 30th birthday anniversary celebrations - sub committee: Jeacle, Goulding and Reynolds.
- (v) It was agreed that regular dive visitors (generally seen only on our better dives and trips) be "invited" to join the club or ...! Doug Catherill and Gary Thorne to be "heavied" on the Gambier trip.
- (vi) Discussion on incorporation. Paul Tipping to investigate pros/cons of Sports Federation's Incorporation Kit and present a written submission to committee.
- (vii) Robert Swaffers' membership application accepted subject to proof of CZ18 within previous 3 years.

Meeting closed at 10.35 p.m. over a convivial drink and excellent supper highlighted by a superb carrot cake! Our appreciation to Julie.

S.D.F. MEETING - Oct. 25/83

A report by Des Williams

Only 15 of the 26 member Clubs were represented at the meeting, thus not a quorum, but voting was made anyway.

A report on recent Dinner Dance was given revealing attendance of 135 people, whilst the original booking had been for 300. This means the S.D.F.V. incurred a loss of \$629 on the night.

S.D.F.V. are in receipt of an acknowledgement from the State Government to their recent submission on a Marine Reserve at Wilsons Promontory.

Neil McKenzie moved that the V.S.A.G. restructure proposal be accepted by S.D.F.V. This was voted on and carried unanimously.

Nominations were then called for the positions in the management cell:

- Vice President Statutory Matters
- Vice President Commercial
- Vice President Communications
- Vice President Public Relations

After a brief outline of job description of each portfolio, volunteers Stuart Boden, Robert Watson, Neil McKenzie and Sheryl Hambling offered their services on the management cell.

These members are to meet very shortly to select the portfolio best suited to themselves and elect a President.

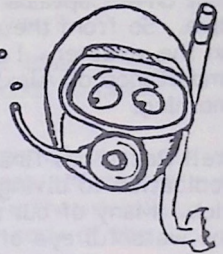
Neil McKenzie then advised that Management Cell members will be seeking support of other S.D.F.V. members to make the new structure operate as efficiently as possible.

J. Goulding expressed a vote of thanks to Neil McKenzie for his work so far with S.D.F.V. and advised that V.S.A.G. would offer their full support to S.D.F.V.

Neil will now rewrite S.D.F.V. Constitution to suit the new management structure and mail to member Clubs shortly.

HELP

FLOTSAM & JETSAM



Avid readers of this column will recall a couple of months back when we reported how the skinny dippers had succeeded in convincing the Victorian Government to grant them a number of nude beaches. We suggested that divers might take a leaf out of their book as we have not been winning so many favours from the Government in recent times. This coming summer the nude beaches will come into operation, and one of them happens to be down at Somers not far from the Tipping holiday house.

As is usual at this time of the year, we have the V.S.A.G. Tennis Party and Somers mile race. Our hosts are Tony and Paul Tipping, who go to great lengths to secure exclusive use of the tennis courts and provide their house for the bar-b-que and party that follows. One of the highlights of the day is the famed Somers Mile - a gruelling race over 5,280 feet. Over the past couple of years the number of member starters for this race has dwindled, and last year members' "Connections" made a threatening challenge to the sporting prowess of V.S.A.G. members. If my memory is correct Nicky Abell and Samantha Truscott took on the field of blokes and fared pretty well.

This year we understand that the race will be run over a new route. In order to gain greater support for the day's events I have it on good authority from the brothers Tipping that the race will be down to the nude beach and back again. Any runner who finishes under 25 minutes will be sent back for another look. . . . so don't miss out on November 20th. Be at the Balnarring Beach Tennis Courts at 10.00 a.m. and then later back at Somers (3 Sandy Court) for the Somers Mile.

Couldn't help notice John Goulding limping around at the October General meeting. Is there any truth in the story that John had been following Geoff Birtles' Multi Level Dive Procedure? Or maybe its John's bluff to win a higher handicap for the Somers mile.

Did you hear how Alex endeared himself to Marty down at Sorrento Boat Ramp? As any self respecting dive captain knows, it's important

that Dive Captains have the correct weather for conducting their dive. So from the comfort of his bed Alex phoned up Marty to check on the weather. I can't understand why Marty failed to realise the importance of Alex's call - after all, it was at least 6.30 in the morning!

Well Bazza has finally pulled it off! For years Barry Truscott's dedication to diving and to V.S.A.G. has been a great asset to this club. Many of our present members took their initial club dives under the watchful eye of Barry, and there is much that this man has taught newer members by sharing his experience with them.

Week after week he has hauled his boat to Flinders and Sorrento and also to most of the interstate trips without a grumble, and through his completely unselfish efforts we have all been able to enjoy the best of diving.

Now after many years Barry has finally won the "Clubman of the Year" award. The various authors of this diabolical column have often made comments which may not have been the most respectful about Barry - but in all seriousness, Bazza - we now congratulate you for your fine achievement, not only over the last year, but for the many years in which you have contributed so much to the Club.

With plenty of great summer diving coming up over the next few months, don't miss out.

Signed MAHATMA KOTE
(The Indian Cloakroom
Attendant)

EMERGENCY

HYPERBARIC UNIT PHONE

(051) 34 4666

ANYTIME

BIG M FLAVOURS

Did you notice that members' subscriptions were raised to \$27 this year? Are you content to sit back and cop another increase next year?

Unfortunately this may be necessary if we don't revarrp our ideas in the area of social activities, in an effort to raise these extra funds to cover administration and other costs.

During the past 12 months the club compressor received a complete overhaul costing some \$600, a large drain on membership fees. "Fathoms" will cost in the vicinity of \$1,400 for the next 11 issues. Further details regarding expenditure can be gained from referring to your copy of the annual report received during September.

So, what can we do to alleviate the problem? As your newly elected Social Secretary I have a few ideas of my own. However I would appreciate a few suggestions from members also, and these can be conveyed to me either verbally or in writing, care of the club post office box number.

The first organised function will be a Xmas outing, details are as follow:

DATE: Friday 16th December, 1983

TIME: 7.30 p.m.

VENUE: Hunters Lodge, 438 Dorset Road, Croydon

COST: \$22 per head, which includes excellent 4 course meal, beer, red and white wine, AND champagne.

EXTRAS: A full bar service is available & any drinks other than those mentioned can be purchased at your expense. We have booked our own separate room and the emphasis is on numbers; please invite your friends and make this a bumper night.

DEPOSIT: \$10 per head, payable at November meeting, and/or through the mail, care of Treasurer, Alex Talay.

R.S.V.P.: 1/12/83 for catering purposes.

It is hoped that more functions will be held this year for your enjoyment, but this can only happen if they are well attended. Help us to help you and we will all have fun doing it! More social news next issue.

MICK JEACLE

Who ever included beer in the very reasonable inclusive cost of \$22 obviously had no idea of the Big M's capacity for an ale (or two, or three!)

TIDE TABLES

A book review by Keith Jensen

A short period of chaos inevitably reigns during committee discussion of the dive calendar. The more senior and knowledgeable (??) members huddle together and toss about phrases like: "slack water flood", "low water", "slack water ebb" and "high water"! Mouths agape, the new less aware divers sit back in awe of this mystic mumbo jumbo. Somehow a time and date emerges out of this secret ritual which enables us to penetrate the treacherous waters of the Port Phillip Rip.

Readers, I am now going to enlighten you by telling you how to obtain this much sought after information. For the price of about \$6.00 and a trip to John Donne & Son, 372 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne (dealer in charts, maps and marine books) you can obtain a small red booklet of "Tide Tables", compiled by the Ports & Harbours of Victoria.

A variety of information and tables useful to diving and boating people is packed into its 90 pages. These include Tide Tables for Port Phillip Heads, Williamstown, Portland and Stony Point, tidal differences for other ports and tables for sunrise and sunset, moonrise and moonset.

The predictions for high and low water in this publication have been supplied by the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, Bidston Observatory, Birkenhead, United Kingdom. They result from harmonic analyses of the tides recorded at permanent tidal stations within the Standard Ports of Port Phillip, Portland, Stony Point (Westernport) and Williamstown.

A section headed "Effect of the wind on the level of Port Phillip" explains why differences can occur between the "calculated time" and "actual time" of tide change.

West to south-west winds cause a rise in sea level outside Port Phillip and a consequent increase both in rate and duration of the ingoing stream and a corresponding decrease in the outgoing stream. The increased ingoing stream causes a gradual rise of the waters of Port Phillip. As these winds continue, increased ingoing stream will continue till sea levels inside and outside have reached equality, when increased ingoing stream will cease and the streams become normal. On the winds ceasing, sea level outside falls to normal, causing the outgoing stream to increase both in duration and rate till sea level in Port

OPEN SEA BATHING

Melbournian History: by Des Williams

In these liberated days, beach bathing receives very little publicity in contrast to the early 1920's when various municipal councils had varying regulations which caused many problems for beach-goers. In the 80's, we are now confronted with technical aspects of setting aside nude bathing beaches which is only one type of problem and doesn't involve the problem of deciding if one's "outfit" is within the regulations.

Back in the 1920's the technicalities of deciding whether a costume was decent or not were hotly debated within each Shire Council.

The "Melbourne Argus" of January 2nd, 1923, contained an interesting (today, anyway) report on the bathing problem:

"When one remembers how large a proportion of the people of Melbourne avail themselves of the natural facilities for open-sea bathing, it is remarkable that so little has been done for the comfort and safety of bathers. Open-sea bathing in Melbourne is controlled by the municipalities in whose territory the beaches lie, and each municipality makes its own regulations for the control of bathing. Thus, two adjacent municipalities may, and do, make conflicting regulations. Hence, it behoves the person who bathes in "sufficient and decent" bathing costume, which is not a "two-piece Canadian bathing costume" on the St. Kilda beaches (and by the regulations of that municipality he is permitted to do so) to be extremely cautious as he approaches South Melbourne, for if he oversteps the St. Kilda/South Melbourne boundary he may be pounced on by an inspector of the South Melbourne Council for a breach of the South Melbourne bathing regulations."

A conference was therefore convened by the Royal Lifesaving Society to frame uniform regulations for the control of open-sea bathing on Melbourne beaches. But unfortunately not all of the municipalities were invited and only Port Melbourne and St. Kilda Councils turned up, leaving Brighton, Williamstown and Sandringham out on their own. A recommendation was made at the conference to agree on the "two piece Canadian costume" as a standard uniform, but this wasn't agreed upon. In fact, all they agreed upon was to alter the age at which boys would be permitted to enter womens' dressing shelters from 10 years to 8 years!

It was considered that adequate dressing shelters and accomodation for bathers was an urgent necessity, as South Melbourne Council had been spending money on repairing old public baths, which were threatened with annihilation by every by every storm. The people would have preferred the money to be spent on public bathing shelters on the beaches and lockers for bathers' clothes. It was expected that cost of rental of lockers (4/ ea) would yield more revenue than the baths ever would.

And so the trend away from public baths continued. At St. Kilda the old and little used sea baths continued to absorb much of the money available for sea front improvements. At Brighton and Sandringham public dressing shelters were even more urgently required and Brighton Council received great praise when they abolished all private boxes and began erecting public shelters. This was necessary because most of the bathers who were using Brighton beach would dress and undress in thick belts of tea-tree which fringes the beach.

The combination kiosk and large changing shelters then began to emerge and still exist to this day. They were modelled on similar establishments in England and proved to be very popular.

Lifesaving Clubs then began to emerge, although obtaining permission from some Councils to erect a Clubhouse and store for lifesaving equipment was often difficult, as these were required right on the beachfront.

Soon, Councils were constructing stone walls out into the water to encourage the build up of sand on the beaches.

Nowadays, the Ports & Harbours Department of Public Works Dept. assist in building our beaches with sand dredged from shipping channels and eventually pumped onto the foreshore.

Melbourne's beaches are certainly a vast improvement on years gone by and still as popular as ever.

NOT ANOTHER TIPPING !!!

That well known peddler of a certain brand of womens' contraceptive tablets; Tony Tipping recently proved that even the products that he pushes will not always work.

On October 22nd Tony's wife Mmmmmaaaargggg gave birth to a healthy bonny wee lad. Weighing in at 6 lb. 5 oz. he was a size that any cray hunter would be proud to catch.

Now the name was a bit of a problem, Margaret fancied Giovanni and Tony wanted George, so they compromised and blended the romanticism of Rome with the reality of Australia, and called him Marcus Bill - oops sorry - William! Both names have close family connections, Marcus after Marg's late great great great and so on grandfather - the famous Marcus Apollo the Roman astronaut and Bill after Tony's father E.W. (Bill) Tipping of Herald fame.

Whilst talking of traditions, young Marcus' arrival broke a tradition of the Tipping brothers - they usually have daughters!!! However, Tip was sure to break the tradition, even if it did mean promising Marg not to dive more than about 3 times a year if she bore him a son.

Well anyway - one thing is certain, it blew the theory that Marg's dad had the shotgun out last December - or did it???? Maybe young Marcus was just a little slow coming (we hear his old man is quite the opposite!!!)

However, we must give Tippo the last compliment - he's not stupid - the contraceptive pill may not have worked but the other product he sells will certainly come in handy - baby food!

Finally, Marg and Tony, congratulations on the arrival of your little man - may he grow strong and healthy and not be a quiche eater!

BOTTLE - OH!

A dive story: by Brian Lynch

Sunday October the second. I was awoken by the dulcet tones of the dive captain, with the words "It's on"! Lucky Alex thought I. So two hours later there we all were, gathered at Sorrento under the leadership of the aforementioned early morning caller. As you all know however, when Alex is the dive captain the wind seems to want to come to the party too and today was no exception. Despite this and the strong wind warnings over the radio, the Bay didn't look too bad. After an extended meeting in the Caff, in order to placate Marty who had also been the recipient of another early morning call, a democratic showing of hands had us changing into wetsuits ready to head out. A fashion note here: M's bright blue job of last week had given way to the old faded blue of yesteryear, and Geoff's racing striped job seemed to be getting smaller. Enough of that, we launched four boats and headed down towards Portsea; the dive was to be a bottle search over the floor of the Bay. (A win for the oldies! Ed.)

Our first stop was off the Quarantine Station, where in the past we have unearthed, or rather unwatered several good finds. We put five divers over the side into fifty feet of water. At this point I must add two items to the list of underwater dangers. Number one is a lurking fireman who pounces on you in dimly lit waters fifty feet down, tears broken bottles from you and then proceeds to laugh, underwater! The second is a little less demonstrative and in fact just lays there. Happening across what I thought was a large torpedo bottle I stripped away the weed around the neck to find a set of fins! My "torpedo" bottle had muscles, almost the real thing in fact. Replacing it gently back on the bottom I swam quietly on, and up. We did manage a few finds. Some black beer bottles, a couple of sauce bottles, some wine and one small medicine bottle.

We decided to move elsewhere for the next plunge. The Big M however, decided on a deepie. He and his intrepid crew dived into the black depths of the dreaded Portsea hole, one hundred and ten feet straight down, and down, and down! Meanwhile back at the serious stuff, we were all set to go overboard in a different location.

The next group over consisted of, amongst others - Tony and Geoff in the incredible shrinking suit. They were back, some fifteen minutes

later with bottles, and a couple of anchors. They didn't stop long, but once again headed towards the bottom. They were alright down-under, but up on the surface, the wind shifted, the white caps advanced and things got a bit sloppy. Another twenty-five minutes and all our divers were up with some very fine examples of early glassware, including another very old Fosters for Barry. If he keeps going on this way, he'll soon have the dozen!

Our next stop was back at the Quarantine, where Pat and I were once more going to try our luck. This time however, it deserted us, we never so much as sighted an old bottle. I mislaid my knife, but it was still quite pleasant skimming over the sandy bottom and it certainly is an effortless way to dive. During our excursions we had sighted a few sting-rays with one particularly large one which seemed to have designs on poor old Tony, who probably underwent a quick stress test at the time.

All too soon it was time to head back to Sorrento and the Bathurst result; this we did across a calm sea, under a very welcome and warming sun, with Bazza taking line honours, yet again. We were first back but all the boats got out very quickly. It seemed no one wanted to be anywhere near the ramp when the Big M finally arrived!

So despite a very unpromising start, the day turned out well. We had fourteen divers and young Reece Birtles along, so our Winter or early Spring turnouts are quite good but we now have plenty of members with boats so some of you lay-a-bed divers should start getting out and joining us.

I could not end this article without congratulating Barry Truscott on winning the "Clubman of the Year" award. Well done! If anyone ever deserved the title it's Barry; we have all been diving from Barry's boats since the early seventies, and his participation in club activities has given all of us much enjoyment over the years. Well done Bazza!

EDS. NOTE: A super article. Lots of gossip, innuendos, white lies, names and even a sprinkling of fact! V.S.A.G. prose in the old tradition. Good reading Lynchie. Any other starters?

DIVERS & THE FISHERIES ACT

An exposition: by Geoff Birtles

The provisions of the Fisheries Act 1968 (7780, with amendments to 9518) represent an attempt by the Victorian legislature to destroy a cardinal principle of our criminal law - "That a man is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty."

Heady stuff? Well the introduction is not mine. It was suggested by a solicitor friend after his reading of Part VIII of the Act "Enforcement and Legal proceedings". Consider paragraph 74.

"where any person is charged with taking fish for sale contrary to . . . the burden of proving that the fish were not intended for sale shall be upon the person charged."

Now picture yourself on the boat ramp after a hard but successful day's cray hunting. Four divers each with a legal limit of four crays. Sixteen in total. (Doesn't happen often, but it has been known). "Tourist" in T shirt and thongs sidles up with a "How'd you go mate?" We tell him to bugger off, at which stage he flashes a Fisheries Badge, takes umbrage and charges us with the taking of crays for resale on the basis that 16 crays is a "commercial quantity". (The "locals" have been in his ear yet again).

Obviously such an erroneous charge may never make the courts. But, the officer can under this charge, make a bloody nuisance of himself and cause innocent divers a good deal of grief.

A charge of taking fish for sale is an offence against Section III - "Commercial Fishing Licences". And this gives the inspector wide powers of "seizure". Bingo! Boat's gone - you will get it back but it could take 28 days and you will have endured a great deal of anguish and frustration.

Fisheries & Wildlife Officers (FWO's) are taking a higher and higher profile. They portray themselves in TV commercials (God save taxpayers from bureaucratic ego tripping) as friendly uniformed guardians of our natural resources. And certainly this is true of many. But as any regular diver will know, there is an uglier side to the picture. Interrogation and inspection is now a common occurrence and can be

expected on any single day's diving; by plain clothes/tourist types at boat ramps and/or "grimly uniformed heavies" operating out of a wide variety of powerful "luxury" launches.

FWOs have frighteningly wide powers of search, entry, seizure and just plain nuisance value. Sport divers need to be well informed on the Fisheries Act:

- (a) to avoid an unwitting breach of the Act; and
- (b) to be prepared to intelligently deal with unreasonable or antagonistic bureaucracy.

In this regard I recommend a thorough reading of the Act and its General Regulations. Meanwhile, I have attempted to summarise those sections which vitally affect sports divers fond of hunting crays. (Space has not permitted a critique of the incredibly positive discrimination in favour of commercial fishermen. Perhaps another time). "Tack on observations" following each paragraph are the personal opinions of the writer. For a definitive interpretation see your lawyer!

Incidentally, the regulations equally apply to the taking of undersize or commercial quantities of abalone.

EXTRACTS FROM FISHERIES ACT 1968, 7780
(with amendments to current time)

PART I PRELIMINARY. Members of the Police Force are required to assist any inspector carry out their duties.

PART III COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENCES

17(1) "Any person who takes (cray) fish for sale . . . without being the holder of an appropriate licence . . . shall be guilty of an offence . . . penalty \$1,000 or 6 months imprisonment".

17(5) "For preventing the commission, repetition or continuation of any offence against this section, any inspector or any member of the police force may seize any boat which any person found offending against this section may be using".

17(6) A court recording a conviction under (5) may order forfeiture of the boat.

17(7) "Where a boat is seized . . . but proceedings not taken . . . within 28 days . . . the Director shall order the return of such boat . . .".

COMMENT: 17(5) Clearly spells out the right of an FWO to seize a boat where crays are (allegedly) being taken for sale. This right is not "spelt out" or, as far as this writer is concerned "implied" in any other section of the Act, insofar as it affects amateur fishermen. e.g. use of snares, taking of undersize crays etc.

PART IV AMATEUR LICENCES

21(3) ". . . an amateur fishing licence shall entitle the holder to take for his own consumption, crayfish in marine waters . . . without the use of any fishing equipment . . .".

23(1) "Any person who . . . takes crayfish . . . without a current amateur licence shall be guilty of an offence against this part". Penalty \$100.

23(4 & 5) The holder of an amateur licence must produce it on demand (by FWO or Police) or failing possession post it, as directed, within 7 days after he first returns to his place of residence e.g. following return from holidays. Penalty \$100.

23(6) "The provisions of 23(1) shall not apply to any person under the age of 16 years . . .".

PART VIII ENFORCEMENT & LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

48(1) ". . . any officer of the Division . . . may . . . enter upon any lands, or Victorian waters, or into any tent, or into any building, or structure other than a dwelling house for . . . inspecting or searching for any fishing equipment or fish".

48(2) "Any inspector . . . may at any time, without warrant, search any parcel, basket, bag, box, receptacle,

boat or vehicle . . . and for any such purposes may require the operator of any boat or the driver of any vehicle to stop the boat or vehicle . . .".

COMMENT: Re-read 48(1) and 48(2). Bureaucracy gone mad! An FWO has more "discretionary" power to "police" the Fisheries Regulations (even when no offence is reasonably suspected) than a policeman has to investigate or deal with drug trafficking, murder or burglary offences.

49(1) "For preventing the commission, repetition or continuation of an offence . . . any inspector, or any member of the police force shall seize any fishing equipment, the use of which is prohibited . . . or may at any time, with or without warrant, seize any fish he finds taken . . . contrary to this Act . . . or any fishing equipment which he finds being used contrary to the provisions . . . or in committing an offence against any of the provisions . . .".

COMMENT: Are boats "fishing equipment" in the context of SCUBA diving for crays. Note that unlike 17(5) - which deals with breaches of the Commercial Fishing Licence regulation, boats are not mentioned. Obviously they are not fishing equipment; boats are "transportation" for divers and it seems that the Act clearly contemplates this.

A similar view can be held in regard to SCUBA gear. SCUBA is a life support system, not fishing equipment. A wet suit is clothing, fins a means of propulsion and so on. Your writer suggests that this is the "official" view of the Department as divers are permitted to take crays by hand. Therefore, the oft repeated stories of seizure of SCUBA gear (where crays have been speared) are either false or the acts of seizure are illegal.

(Picture if you can, an out of season duck hunter having his shotgun, clothing and car confiscated for shooting one lousy duck!!!)

N.B.: Your correspondent vigorously opposes the spearing of crays. He also vigorously opposes the illegal and unrealistic seizure of boats and SCUBA gear.

49(2) "The provisions of sub-section (1) extend to any case where a person is found behaving . . . in such a manner . . . that the inspector . . . finding him believes on reasonable grounds, without having observed the commission of an offence . . . that the person found has committed such an offence".

COMMENT: Seizure on suspicion!

49(3) Seized fishing equipment which is prohibited is forfeited to the crown.

49(4) "Where any fishing equipment seized is equipment the use of which is not prohibited . . . a court convicting any person for any offence in respect of which the seizure was made may order the forfeiture of the equipment, or authorize the return thereof to the defendant or the owner (as the case requires)".

COMMENT: This implies that an FWO may seize what he likes! And the court can confiscate what it chooses.

49(5) Where equipment is seized but proceedings are not taken within 28 days the Director will order the return of such equipment forthwith.

50(1) "Any person found offending against any provisions of the Act or the regulations shall on demand by an inspector or by a member of the police force give his name and place of residence". .

50(2) "Found offending" extends to reasonable suspicion - refer 49(2).

50(3) "Any person who refuses to give his name and place of residence upon demand . . . or who gives a false name or place of residence shall be guilty of an offence against this Act. Penalty: \$200".

COMMENT: (3) is clearly applicable to "an offence" taking place. But you would have to be game to refuse - see 50(2).

50(4) An FWO has the power to arrest, without warrant, any person who refuses to give his name and address or where the FWO, reasonably suspects the given information to be false.

51. Penalty for obstruction, assault, abuse or threats to an FWO - \$500 or 3 months imprisonment.

52. "Any person who . . . uses prohibited equipment . . . shall be guilty of an offence". Penalty \$1,000 or 6 months.

COMMENT: Obviously a more serious offence than belting an FWO on the nose!!!

58(1) "Any person who . . . takes soft shelled crayfish, or female crayfish in berry . . . or removes the eggs or spawn . . . from any female crayfish . . . shall be guilty of an offence . . ." Penalty \$500.

58(2) FWOs may seize any crayfish taken in contravention of 58(1).

61(5) ". . . any person who takes, or has in his possession or under his control . . . any undersize crayfish shall be guilty of an offence . . ." Penalty \$200.

61(A) "Any person who in any waters stores . . . undersize crayfish or any crayfish during the close season . . . shall be guilty of an offence . . ." Penalty \$1,000.

COMMENT: It seems that commercial interests are not subject to the same scrutiny as sports fishermen. They have been getting away with it for years!

62(1) "Any person who during the close season . . . takes . . . or who sells, or exposes for sale, or consigns, or has in his possession, house or shop . . . any crayfish (whether taken in Victoria or elsewhere) shall be guilty of an offence . . ." Penalty \$250.

COMMENT: ... Another regulation flagrantly broken by commercial interests every year.

... Bringing females to the boat (for a "head count") in close season is not smart.

73(4) A person having prohibited fishing equipment in proximity to crayfish in his possession shall be deemed, until the contrary is proved, to have used that equipment to take those crayfish.

73(5) "Where the use in any Victorian waters of any particular class or kind of fishing equipment is prohibited by the regulations any person proved to have any of such equipment in his possession in proximity to those waters shall be deemed, until the contrary is proved, to have use that equipment in those waters".

COMMENT: Picture this. Lunch at Popes Eye (Marine Reserve). Spearguns in the boat (not used on the day, no fish or crayfish on board). FWO arrives, searches boat - you're dead! (If he so chooses). Penalty \$1,000 or 6 months.

74. Where any person is charged with taking fish for sale contrary to the provisions . . . the burden of proving that the fish were not intended for sale shall be upon the person charged.

COMMENT: A travesty of justice!

79. MARINE RESERVES. "Any person who uses any waters . . . for any purpose not a purpose for which the Marine Reserve is set aside . . . shall be guilty of an offence". Penalty \$1,000.

FISHING REGULATIONS

These deal with sizes, bag limits, closed season and so on and are generally well known to divers. The amendment to regulation 128 (1983) which prohibited the use of a spear gun, spear or similar implement for the taking of cray is of current interest to divers.

This is now amended to prohibit: spear guns, spears, gaffs, hooks, snares (what's a snare?), probe, device or any contrivance whatsoever other than hoop or drop nets.

Interestingly this regulation does not apply to the holder of a Master Fishermans Licence!

The penalty (under section 52) for breach of this regulation is \$1,000 or 6 months gaol!

I would like to close with a small illustration of how commercial interests obviously shaped this act to the detriment of amateur fishing rights.

It is illegal, for other than a licenced fisherman to use or have on board, commercial fishing equipment. Any device which can locate fish is classed as commercial equipment.

The popular Royal 160RE chart type bottom recorder has a "grey line" control capable of picturing schools or even individual fish under the boat. There are literally thousands of these currently in use by divers and amateur fishermen. This is a breach of 17(1) which attracts a penalty of \$1,000 or 6 months gaol. It also permits an FWO to seize the boat under 17(5) and possible forfeiture of the recorder under 49(1).

Cont. from p.10

Phillip has also fallen to normal and the levels outside and inside are again equal. Very hot weather, and a consequent unusual evaporation in Port Phillip, tends to cause excess ingoing stream.

Other sections include a "Classification of Clouds" (10 types, from Cirrus to Cumulo Nimbus), "The Power of the Wind" (Beaufort scale 0-12 with descriptions e.g. calm sea, mirror smooth to hurricane waves so high that ships within sight are hidden in the troughs), a "Fog & Visibility Scale", a "Sea Disturbance Scale" and details on the day/night Tide Signals shown at the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse, with reference to direction of stream through the heads.

Digest all of this information and you too may join Birtles, Goulding, Williams and Tipping in tossing about the required phrases and terminology of the *cabalistic ritual of selecting a dive venue.

ED. NOTE: Save us from educated firemen! *"CABAL" - the secret schemes of a small group of plotters; an intrigue. CABALISTIC - mysterious. Where did you pull this from Keith?!

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE TO READERS OF
V.S.A.G.'S OCTOBER '83 FATHOMS

Is my face red! In an attempt to simplify Multi-Level procedure for sports divers I have completely stuffed up my introductory example with two small but important errors in step (iv), page 9.

Step (iv) p.9 should have read:

"We then simply subtract a ML bottom time Safety factor of 5 minutes (applicable to all ML dives) which provides us with a permissible no decompression time at 60 ft. of 35 minutes. Our dive duration has now been extended by a full 20 minutes without the need for decompression and without pushing the tables!! (i.e. 10 mins/100 ft. and 35 mins/60 ft)"
Underlining indicates errors in previous copy. If you haven't already received a replacement page, please amend your copy.

Also, please note that a type setting error occurs at the foot of page 10 which completely alters the correct solution to the example.

"Divers surface as Group 1 divers with a decompression requirement" should read "without a decompression requirement".

Please amend this error now before you forget!

GEOFF BIRTLES

IT'S ON AGAIN

The VSAG Australia Day Weekend trip to Refuge Cove - 28-30th January, 1984. Sail aboard the good ship Mirabooka under command of Captain Reg Truscott for 3 fantastic days of diving Wilsons Promontory.

This year accomodation and food will be better than ever before, and the cost of \$70 per head includes all catering, camping fees and boat charges (liquid refreshments not included in cost).

As numbers are limited, please confirm to John Goulding by November General Meeting. Deposits of \$20/head will be required. FULL PAYMENT BY DECEMBER MEETING WILL ENTITLE YOU TO 2 FREE FILLS ON CLUB COMPRESSOR.

NOTE: Those who book and then cancel may be charged a cancellation fee in addition to their deposit.

UNLIMITED AIR One Year - \$130 ONO

- FROM SOUTHERN CROSS DIVERS, BURWOOD -

Guess who won one year's air fills just after spending \$2,500 on a compressor! Robyn Kitt (beautiful lady!), proprietor of Southern Cross has kindly permitted sale of the voucher - so this is a great opportunity for real savings and super quick fills.

If you have either a 63 cu. ft. current model aluminium tank, a small Stabilizer Jacket or Combo gauge and hose in good condition, lets do a swap - with cash adjustment if necessary.

Geoff Birtles - 846 1983

V.S.A.G. & XMAS

it's a happening!

The Big M launches into his new role of Social Secretary with a Splash. Terrific venue, good food and all the booze you can handle for \$22.00 a head! Plus, plenty of free goodies including dive equipment, free air fills and a giant Christmas hamper.

A great chance to "air the wife" (or find a new one!), swap lies and have a good time - at an affordable price!

When? Friday December 16, 7.30 p.m.
Where? Hunters Lodge, 438 Dorset Road, Croydon
RSVP December 1 - Mick Jeacle with a \$10.00 deposit.
More See Big M flavours this issue.
Detail?

XMAS TRIP JERVIS BAY

There is still limited space available at the VSAG Summer Camp at Huskisson - Jervis Bay.

Why not join us at this magnificent diving spot and enjoy the fabulous dives of the "Arch", Stoney Creek, Wreck of the "Merimbula", Pt. Perpendicular, the "Docks" and many more.

Huskisson has an excellent caravan park, good hotels, clubs and a variety of sporting facilities including golf, tennis, squash, horse riding, as well as all the water sports.

CONTACT JOHN GOULDING (890 6634) BY THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING TO SECURE YOUR SPOT.

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR

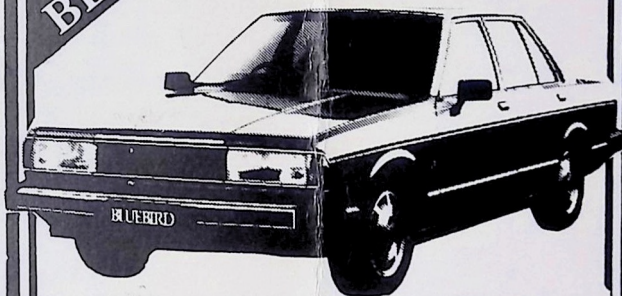
<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT/LOCATION</u>	<u>DIVE CAPTAIN</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
Nov 16	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club		8.00 p.m.
Nov 20	Tennis Party & VSAG Mile Balnarring	Paul Tipping 387 2027 Tony Tipping 80 4956	10.00 a.m. Tennis Courts
Nov 22	Committee Meeting		The Birtles
Nov 26	Dive Wilson's Prom Weekend	John Goulding 890 6634	Fri. evening (25/11/83) Camp site
Dec 12	Dive Flinders Area	Mick Jeacle 772 6820	Pier 9.00 a.m.
Dec 16	Christmas Function Hunters Lodge	Mick Jeacle 772 6820	7.30 p.m.
Dec 18	Dive Sorrento	Not finalised at time of print	
Dec 21	General Meeting - Collingwood Football Club Followed by refreshments on the Yarra B.Y.O.		8.00 p.m.
Dec 26 - Jan 9/84	Dive Jervis Bay Trip	John Goulding 890 6634	Details this issue
Jan 24	Committee Meeting		The Truscotts
Jan 28 - 30/1984	Dive Refuge Cove Trip	John Goulding 890 6634	Details this issue

NOTE: It is important that attending divers confirm with the Dive Captain on the evening prior to the dive.



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