

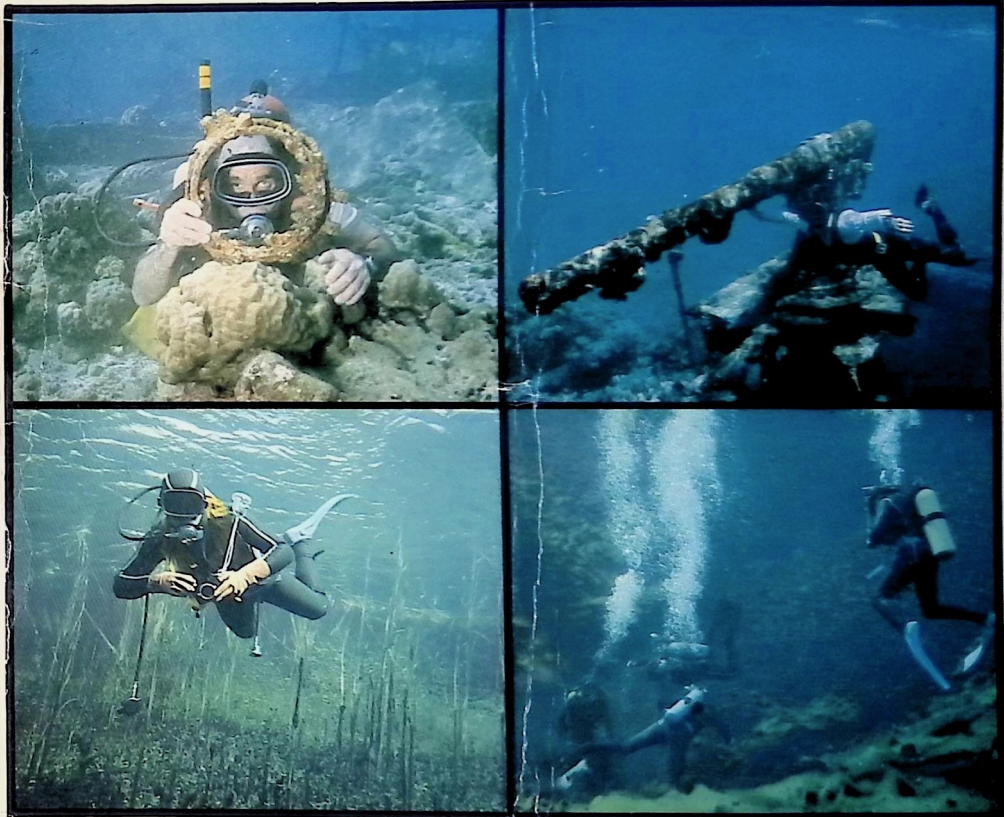
FATHOMS



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 Ser and Justin Liddy at Ewens Ponds Mt. Gambier. (Photo by David Carroll).

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

VSAG

Victorian Sub-Aqua Group. Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne. 3001 Australia

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Pat Reynolds

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Mick Jackiw

Committee Member - 736 1730

Terry Brooks

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 North Melbourne Football Club where bar facilities are available prior to and after the General Meetings. Visitors are very welcome - smart casual wear essential.

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

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APRIL 1984

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Next general meeting:

Wednesday, April 18, 8.00 p.m.
* North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne

Next committee meeting:

Tuesday May 1, 8.00 p.m.
John & Maree Goulding's,
13 Birdwood Street, Box Hill Sth

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

EDITORIAL

I am not sure how our members felt about the last issue of Fathoms, but it seemed pretty good to me. Ten contributors, a diverse and interesting range of topics, good pictorial and much improved production and presentation.

So what's happened to this issue. One contributing writer (aside from the editor and a President's message) and no dive reports! In spite of a major dive weekend at Port Campbell since the last issue. (Thank god for Goulding).

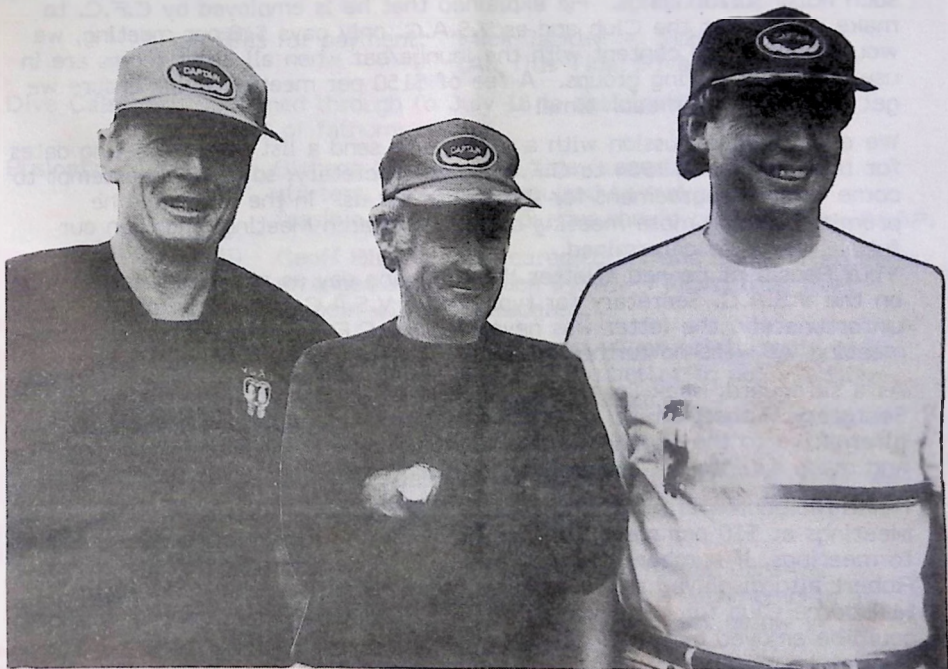


An editor's job is to edit, not write the entire bloody magazine! Right now VSAG is going from strength to strength. We have an infusion of new blood, good boats, overseas and interstate trips and organised well attended local diving. "Fathoms" is the vital intra-club communication link that bonds our membership and keeps the club strong. No other club has anything like it - an important factor in VSAG being the biggest and certainly the best independent diving club in Australia.

Fathoms is not the editor's magazine, it is the Club's magazine and it is for club members to contribute. And not just the same members each month. I clearly accepted the role of editor subject to support from the club. Dive Captains undertook to provide me with a report on every dive - it has not happened. We have some very literate people amongst our membership and it's time they displayed a little more clubmanship. Those not sure of their literary ability, but with something to say, should give it a go anyway. The prose and punctuation will be tidied up in the editorial process.

Since this editorial has kicked off on a hot gosselling note we'll keep the ball rolling in the same direction. Clubmanship! Or lack of it by some members. People join clubs for a variety of self interest reasons. Fellowship, a dive buddy, boats, wrecks, fish, variety, espionage, safety or a combination of all. Inevitably the organisation and administration is undertaken by a very few. This is O.K., not everyone has the drive, capacity, time or degree of interest to get deeply involved. But! This is no good reason for plain selfishness on club trips where a lot of work is involved.

We saw it at Refuge and again at Port Campbell. Club members, who do not hold any executive position and make no contribution to the organisation or running of the club refusing to participate in air fill duties or worse, stating that they would only fill their own tanks. Such people are not clubmen, they are "takers" who selfishly "use" the club. This occurrence was only eclipsed by the vocalising of two establishment members of the club who spent the entire Port Campbell weekend bitching about boat fees. Certainly it soured a great weekend for many hard working committee members who selflessly devote a lot of time and effort to make VSAG work and others who make considerable financial sacrifice for the benefit of VSAG diving. Let's lift our game fellows, and start making it a team effort! **



THE CAPTAINS! Regular divers will recognise boat owners Geoff Birtles, Barry Truscott & Mick Jeacle under their "official" captains hats presented by Alex Talay.
Photo Des Williams.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

NEW VENUE FOR CLUB MEETINGS FROM APRIL 18, 1984

Over the past twelve months or so, our Club meetings at Collingwood Football Club have been the source of some concern for the V.S.A.G. Committee. On too many occasions we have been obliged to hold our meetings in the main lounge and bar room, where the noise level has been most distracting.

Gone are the days when we used to have a whole room to ourselves. Our February meeting was "the last straw" when Anthony Newly attempted to give a talk and slide presentation for us, in the midst of shouts and laughter from the bar. That evening we complained bitterly to the Collingwood Club's Social Secretary about having to hold our meetings in such noisy surroundings. He explained that he is employed by C.F.C. to make money for the Club and as V.S.A.G. only pays \$10 per meeting, we would have to be content with the lounge/bar when all other rooms are in use by higher paying groups. A fee of \$150 per meeting would ensure we get a private room each time!

We ended our discussion with a promise to send a list of our meeting dates for the balance of 1984 to C.F.C. Social Secretary, so he could attempt to come to some agreement for the future for us. In the meantime he promised us one more meeting at C.F.C. (March Meeting) and then our future would be determined.

Your President penned a letter the following day as requested, and sent it on the V.S.A.G. Secretary for typing onto V.S.A.G. letterhead paper. Unfortunately, the letter was never sent to C.F.C. and so at March meeting we were no further advanced at Collingwood Football Club.

As a safeguard, Mick Jeacle and I have been in contact with the Social Secretary, Robert Smith, at North Melbourne Football Club seeking an alternative to the Collingwood venue. Mick had lunch with Robert Smith and made a tentative booking for V.S.A.G. after lengthy discussions.

North Melbourne are offering us a private room for all our General Meetings at \$10 per night, full bar facilities and meals for members prior to meetings, if numbers of 10-12 can be arranged, to put the chef on duty. Robert also displayed some imagination by offering V.S.A.G. the North Melbourne Club for social functions. A full meal and two hour floor show could be enjoyed by members for no more than we paid per head at Hunters Lodge at Christmas.

Therefore, a vote was put to members at our March meeting resulting in a unanimous decision to move our meetings to North Melbourne Football Club, as from the next meeting on 18th April.

Des Williams
President - V.S.A.G.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Meeting held at Alex Talay's home, Tuesday March 27, 1984.

Apologies: Jensen, Goulding, Scott

Business Arising: Cheque and proof of certification/medical eligibility not received from Peter Boyd.

Treasurer's Report:

Cash at Bank	\$1,094.35
Cash on Hand	32.00
Building Society	<u>779.64</u>
	\$1,905.99

Bills for payment: Mick Jackiw - \$128
(Air fills Tidal River, Refuge)

Dive Calendar: Planned through to July 18 in anticipation of no June issue of fathoms.

- Business:
- i) Bicheno Xmas: Alex Talay reported 4 definite starters. Six more required to make the trip feasible. Interested parties should contact Alex ASAP.
 - ii) Geoff Birtles volunteered to try and make alternative arrangements for Eden (NSW). Failing this, Port Lincoln will be considered.
 - iii) Letter from Valley Divers: Appropriate reply to be sent (when we have nothing better to do). Action GRB and JG (parenthesis mine, Ed.)
 - iv) Fathoms "freebies" list reduced.
 - v) Geoff Birtles advised new T-shirt graphics under way. Committee authorised approximate expenditure of \$500 for 100 shirts.
 - vi) Committee reviewed and re-affirmed dive fee procedure following confusion by two members at Port Campbell. This is fully set out below in the interests of clarity.
 1. Local dive fees are \$10.00 per head per day. This is paid directly to the boat owner immediately following the day's diving. (Please have correct change). Sorrento, Flinders and Queenscliff are classified as local dives.

- Country dives are subject to a special levy to reimburse boat owners for extra out of pocket expenses associated with long trips and to ensure that they are not unfairly penalised for cancelled dives.

This levy is determined in advance by the committee on a boat basis and pro-rated amongst all participating divers. It is paid to the Dive Captain immediately preceding the weekend's diving. Those who refuse to pay the country levy in advance do not participate in any club diving. (The DC will now pay the pre-determined boat levy to each boat owner).

Each day's diving is \$10 per head (additional to the levy) paid directly to the boat owner immediately following the day's diving.

- Example: The country dive levy for Tidal River is set at \$30.00 per boat. We contemplate 4 days diving.

Assume four boats and 14 divers, excluding boat owners. Each diver's share of the levy is \$9.00 (4 boats x \$30 = \$120 ÷ by 14 divers). Each diver will pay this to the DC on Thursday night. It is not refundable even if the dives are cancelled or you choose not to dive. (The DC will now pay each boat owner \$30 for out of pocket expenses associated with the long trip and extra wear and tear).

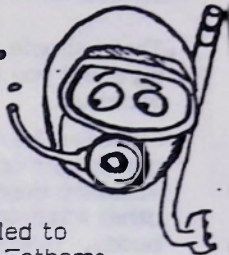
Day one is a full day's diving - you pay \$10.00.
Day 2 is a wash out - you pay nothing.
Day 3 is a half day's diving - you pay \$10.00.
Day 4 is a full day's diving - you pay \$10.00.

Total cost to a diver participating in all dives
3 x \$10.00 plus \$9.00 share of levy = \$39.00
(for 3 days diving).

This formula correctly applied to the Port Campbell dive would have worked out at \$27 per diver, for two full day's diving.



FLOTŞAM & JETSAM



It is not the usual custom of this article to engage in written opposition to the views expressed in Fathoms or to criticise other esteemed Fathoms journalists who are more talented than this humble scribe. However I do feel compelled to put an alternate point of view to the article in last month's Fathoms about "Buddy Diving" written by Dick Anderson.

After reading his views on Buddy Diving, one can only ask the question - "Is Dick's middle name, Head?"

For a start the whole concept of buddy diving relies on the fact that the sea is full of angry serpents, giant octopus, deadly eels and man-eating sharks. Not many people know this. Jules Verne was one of the first to draw attention to it 100 years ago in his book "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea". So great was the carnage under the sea at that time that of the 20,000 leagues in existence then, only one still remains - and that is the Victorian Football league!

Further attention has been focused on these terrible sea monsters in more recent times by such documentary films as "Jaws", "The Deep", "Orca", "Jaws II", "Son of Jaws" and "E.T."

So having established this undisputable fact that there are thousands upon thousands of man hungry - oops, person hungry creatures waiting to grab you, how does the diver keep out of their clutches?

The most effective way is to confine your diving to Council swimming pools, but if you must go into the sea, then it's important to have the odds on your side and thereby reduce your chances of being eaten. The buddy system reduces your chances by 50% when diving with one other, but really smart divers will usually dive with 3 or 4 companions, thereby reducing the risk of attack by 75% or 80%.

Further precautions can then be taken by accidently cutting your buddy with your diving knife so as to draw a small amount of blood. Sharks love blood and will be immediately attracted to your diving companion. Make sure your camera is loaded when the action starts.

If the knife is a bit blunt, from excessive use, another good way to reduce your attack chances is to pour some sheep's entrails inside your buddy's wet suit. Snappy Tom cat food is also good, if a sheep is not available.

These simple precautions will ensure you have a trouble free and enjoyable dive and you can look forward to diving with new buddies on almost every occasion.

However, be warned - don't get too close to your buddy or else you may get caught up in the frenzy. The author recommends that in good visibility conditions, buddies can be as close as 30 - 50 feet from each other - but in poor visibility conditions stay at least 100 yards from your buddy. (Metric conversions can be obtained by contacting the Weights & Measures Department).

Choice of buddy is also important. Pick someone who you think looks good to eat and preferably a person who's a "bit on the nose".

Buddies are also useful for helping you kit up, by lifting tanks and weight belts etc.

Essential to the buddy system is the buddy breathing facility. Having descended down the anchor line, immediately start buddy breathing. This works best with an octopus regulator on a very long air hose. This not only conserves your air, ensuring a longer dive for you - but saves money as well.

So Mr. Anderson - there is a lot of sense in the Buddy System and I am surprised that you and our editor do not understand this first rule of diving.

Signed: Howard Doyoudo

PORT CAMPBELL HIT LIST

Would the following members please slip a cheque in the mail or pay our Treasurer at the next General Meeting (North Melbourne Football Club - not Collingwood) for air fills at Port Campbell. Cost of fills is \$2.00 - number of fills listed beside each name.

Geoff Birtles	2	Reece Birtles	1
Robert Birtles	3	Pat Reynolds	1
Alan Birtles	1	Tom Avery	1
Mick Jeacle	2 (less \$3 petrol)	Peter Boyd	1
Jenny Large	1	Igor Chernikov	4
Max Synon	2	Alex Talay	1
Keith Jensen	2 (less \$3.40 petrol)		

VSAG DIVES FIJI

OVERSEAS TRIP SAVING SCHEME NEWS

by Geoff Birtles

The idea was conceived in Nov. 82 & launched the next month. I.E. Put \$49 aside each month for 18 months (accrue the interest) & then dive overseas on a group concession basis. 18 months seemed a long time to plan ahead but as predicted time passes very quickly & our departure date is now only weeks away!!

On Tues. June 5, 22 VSAG divers, wives & even children depart for Fiji. We stop overnight in Nadi and depart the next morning by light plane (special charter) to Taveuni (North East of main island).

Taveuni is steep drop-off current diving with very large pelagic fish and warm clear water. Arguably it is the best diving territory in Fiji. We will stay at a small picturesque resort which has good access to offshore and onshore tourist activities (including scudding down waterfalls). We plan 9 tank dives in 4½ days including a night dive. All dives are by boat & we have arranged 2 x 35 footers to handle our large party.

On Monday 11, we depart Taveuni & arrive Suva (capital) at midday. Free afternoon & night for shopping & night life. We stay at the International Tradewinds Hotel, meeting place for international yachtsmen.

Next morning our 8 day trippers depart for home. The remainder head off for an early morning 2 tank dive on the famous 2000 ft. Suva drop off. (Oxygen partial pressures should cure a few hangovers).

Midday we depart by bus for "The Regent", Fiji's most fabulous (and expensive) resort. Afternoon will be spent floating beside the "in pool" bar sipping Fosters. The next day has optional diving or tourist type activities with the following two days to be spent cruising & diving the Mamanuca Islands (2 tanks each day).

A fabulous holiday with good balance between a "diving holiday" & a "holiday". Even Mum will be happy. Tony Newly of Allways is to be congratulated for an imaginative, flexible and reasonably priced package. (In spite of the Regent).

The following fund subscribers have elected to go. Fortunately the vote on venue was by unanimous choice: Barry, Maree & Samantha Truscott; Bob & June Scott; Des & Julie Williams; Bill & Gloria Hayes; Alisdair Stewart & lady; Geoff, Isabel, Reece & Melena Birtles; Igor Chernichov; Dave Henty-Wilson; Alex Talay; Bruce Soulsby. Andy & Gail Mastrowicz & Russel Olorenshaw have also joined the trip as non-subscribers.

TYRE PRESSURES UP - BLOOD PRESSURE DOWN!

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF TRAILER TYRES

by John Goulding
(ex Dunlop Olympic Pty. Ltd.)

About the two most common problems with boat trailers are:

- (1) Seized wheel bearings - caused by
 - (a) lack of grease
 - (b) dirt
 - (c) rust
 - (d) over tightness
- (2) Tyre failure - caused by
 - (a) under inflation
 - (b) over loading
 - (c) incorrect fitment
 - (d) excessive wear

In protecting yourself against the misfortune of tyre failure on your boat trailer it is important to know what is the basic function of the tyre. The tyre's primary purpose is to hold air under pressure which carries the weight of the load. All tyres are manufactured to withstand a normal "road use" maximum pressure and thus a maximum load. Tyres built to conform with the Australian Standards now carry the maximum load carrying capacity embossed on the side wall of the tyre.

So in order to know the correct size and type of tyre and the correct pressures to run, you need to know the weight of boat and trailer plus diving gear normally carried when the boat is being towed. Under inflation will cause increased flexing of the tyre and this, together with the excess heat build up will cause the tread to separate or the side walls to blow.

Correct inflation pressure is probably the most important aspect of tyre care, for it is the air in the tyre and not the tyre itself that carries the weight. Incorrect pressures whether over inflation or under inflation has a marked effect upon the rate of tread wear and on the life of the tyre casing.

In service a tyre will gradually lose air, thus regular checks are a must.

Tyre inflation pressures in relation to the load to be carried have been set for Australian tyres in accordance with Australian Standards.

Load and inflation data for the more common tyres used on trailers are

provided in the following table.

If your tyre size is not included, please contact the writer and I'll advise you on additional technical details.

TYRE MAXIMUM LOAD LIMITS AT VARIOUS
COLD INFLATION PRESSURES (p.s.i.)

TYRE PRESSURE		25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
		LOAD CARRYING LBS. WT.								
TYRE SIZE	TRAILER TYRE									
		6.00x9 (4 ply)	670	750	820	890	-	-	-	-
	6.00x9 (6 ply)	670	750	820	890	950	1010	1070	1120	-

TYRE PRESSURE		22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
		LOAD CARRYING LBS. WT.							
TYRE SIZE	CAR TYRE BIAS								
		5.95x10 4 ply	590	620	650	670	700	730	-
	5.50x12 4 ply	560	605	635	665	695	720	-	-
	6.50x13 4 ply	930	980	1030	1070	1100	1150	-	-
	6.50x13 6 ply	930	980	1030	1070	1100	1150	1190	1230
	6.95x14 4 ply	1000	1050	1100	1140	1190	1230	-	-
	6.95x14 6 ply	1000	1050	1100	1140	1190	1230	1270	1310
	7.75x14 4 ply	1210	1270	1330	1390	1440	1500	-	-
TYRE	CAR TYRE RADIAL								
	155-12	700	735	770	800	835	865	-	-
	AR78-13	860	900	940	980	1020	1060	-	-
	BR78-13	930	980	1030	1070	1110	1150	1190	1230
	CR78-14	1000	1050	1100	1140	1190	1230	-	-
	ER78-14	1130	1190	1240	1300	1350	1400	1440	1490
	ER70-14	1130	1190	1240	1300	1350	1400	1440	1490

PORT CAMPBELL PICTORIAL

Photos: (following pages)

Igor Chernichov & Isabel Birtles

Text: Geoff Birtles

Labour Day weekend saw V.S.A.G. arrive once again at Port Campbell for it's now annual pilgrimage to dive the Loch Ard. An historical and action packed weekend that always sets the trendy hearts at Flagstaff Hill "a fluttering".

This year the trip was well attended by 30 V.S.A.G. divers, wives, friends and children. This stretch of coast is very rugged and breathtakingly scenic with towering rock formations, deep gorges and thundering seas, but on this particular weekend, deep blue clear skies with mainly placid waters marred only by large swells.

The excitement of diving the Lock Ard is only eclipsed by the nervous anticipation of launching and retrieval of club boats by crane at the Port Campbell pier. Situated in a deep gorge overlooked by the picturesque township it stands some 15 ft. above the water. Local fishermen launch and retrieve their quite heavy boats by this means daily, without incident. On Labour Day weekend there is always much drama.

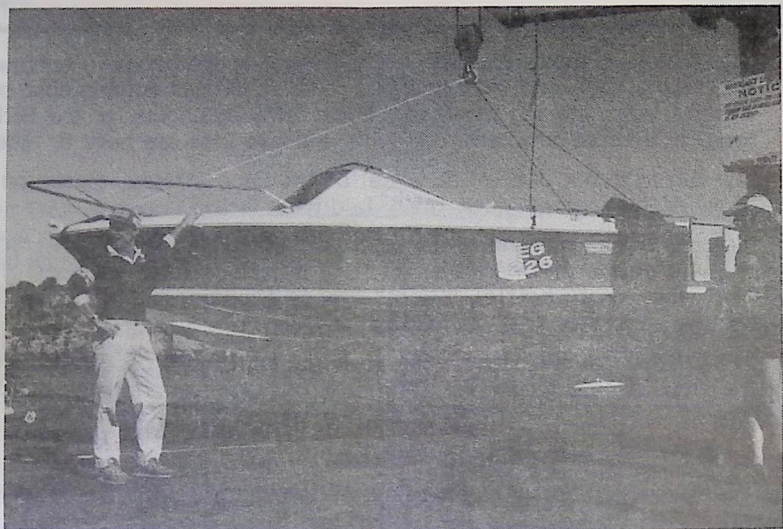
This year it was provided by Bazza who is thinking of renaming his boat "Good Ship Disaster". Regular divers will know that Bazza tipped it off his trailer at speed resulting in extensive repairs some months ago. The repairs were put to the test on this particular weekend when his 3 year old galvanised steel sling snapped dropping the boat some 12 feet, sideways into the water! Fortunately little damage and no injuries. (We all gave up riding boats in and out of the water when the Blue Streak pulled the same trick the previous year - with my only son and heir on board).

Our pictorial spread graphically illustrates the excitement and drama.

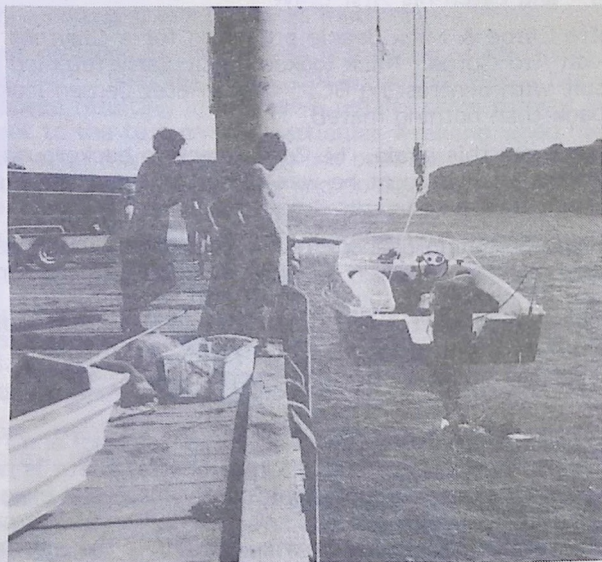
1. A fine posed shot of the Blue Streak ready to be dropped over the side. You can just see Bazza's boat underneath it in the background. The good looking fellow is (of course) me. The bearded scruff, my young brother Alan. (He just looks older!)
2. Bazza's boat over the side and ready to drop!! Mick Jeacle at the crane control, Bazza fending. (The surfer escaped unscathed!)
3. You can tell the boat owner - very tense. Alex Talay very relaxed (situation normal), Alan Birtles at the nose looking after "big" brother's interests, young Reece supervising (also situation normal).

4. Bazza looking intensely relieved with boat supported by a borrowed "S/S" sling following the accident. Robert Birtles guiding boat onto trailer. Alex looking fairly laid back. (My apologies for the Birtles feature - three brothers, one wife and two kids are hard to hide).
5. The Big M (Mick Jeacle) at wheel of the Blue Streak. Reece on the deck, Alan fending. Alex fairly laid back (still).
6. Tips didn't pay me enough to suppress publication of this shot! Kay ready to relive old memories as Tony adjusts various antiques: F enzy (still with empty bottle), "Giant" orange flippers, out of test bottle and Posiden regulator - all collectors items!
7. Jenny Reynolds in repose. Her striking good looks captured more than one heart at the weekend. (And cost one admirer a couple of rolls of film!)
8. A rare shot - Alex actually working.
9. A picturesque shot of Alex Talay, Tony Tipping, Jeanette Large and Pat Reynolds with Gorge in the background.
10. Reece Birtles (who now has 12 dives to his credit) ready to brave the depths - and catch his first cray!
11. Jeanette Large & Mick Jeacle preparing for a Claytons - shore diving the Loch Ard Gorge. Mick looked particularly fetching in his Ming Blue suit with contrasting BC. Young Peter Jensen looking on (better your back than nothing mate!)
12. You won't see this again. M. & I (Reece in background) shore diving the Gorge. Mick thought he was going to have a heart attack on the climb back to the car park. I had one.
13. A valuable porcelain peacock retrieved from the beaches shortly after the Loch Ard foundered on 31st May, 1878 with only two survivors. It is now on display at the Flagstaff Hill Museum. It is approx. 4 ft. in height in brilliant hues of green, red and blue with gold trimming. It was one of a pair shipped to Australia for exhibition. It is rumoured that a private collector has the second. * * *

A note on photo quality. Alex (who organises printing) and I realise that reproduction will not be very good. Unfortunately there is not a great deal we can do about it without significantly increased expenditure on metal printing plates which are just not justified on a club magazine. In spite of this we are inclined to the view that it is the interest that counts. Hope you agree. Thanks to Igor & Isabel for the pics - any more contributors?



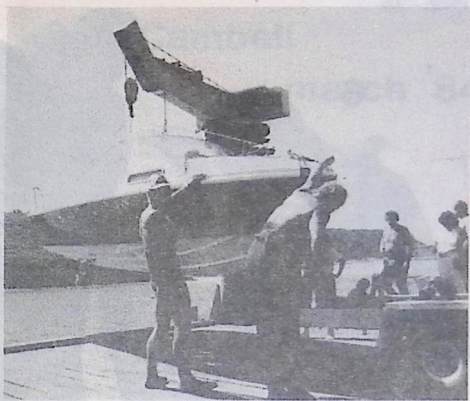
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Port Cambell

march '84



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BADGE BANDITS

MEGA BUCKS TO DIVE SHOPS

by Geoff Birtles

The days of bearded, gnarled, pot bellied, veteran divers eking out an existence from SCUBA instruction and one dollar airfills are long gone, along with water toughened ex spearos.

In fact the only remaining resemblance between yesteryears instructors and the current new breed is the beard - its now a trendy shade of green!

Today's dive shop proprietor is more probably leaner and commercially meaner; very political, prone to dogmatism, hungry for your leisure dollar and, if the current proliferation of large (and expensive) dive charter boats is any guide, increasingly affluent. And with good reason.

There's mega bucks in badge bandits! Instructor organisations prefer to call it, "Ongoing Education". PADI, the world's largest dive instructional agency offer twenty certification levels. A veritable paradise for badge bandits.

It's sophisticated marketing and superior cloning. Basic human motivators underpin the selling philosophy. "Recognition; Achievement; Respect; Leadership opportunity; Exclusiveness; Fellowship." Or just plain "one-upmanship". Very few can resist it.

PADI (USA) are past masters at it. I quote, "MASTER SCUBA DIVER, ... expert diver classification, denoting superior achievement ... the most highly coveted sport diver rating in existence!" Or, "DIVEMASTER, ... if you would rather be a leader than a follower ...".

FAUI, our local product, finally saw the light back in '82 and re-organised along similar hierarchical lines to PADI. Even the bitter rivalry between these two organisations (in Australia) is no longer quite so evident (albeit still on) now that FAUI are finally dialled into what it's all about - extracting mega bucks from a naively lucrative market. The opposition is yachting, windsurfing and water skiing. The enemy are those who would question "THE SYSTEM" (much genuflecting) and its ability to produce "DIVERS" (as distinct from "underwater clones").

It all starts with a basic SCUBA certification. No-one could argue that it makes good sense to avail oneself of a professional introduction to SCUBA - although, contrary to what diver instructional businesses and "graduate" divers would have you believe, there is no statutory requirement to do so (Cave Diving excluded). The problem is that the brainwashing starts here

P.A.D.I.

Open Water Diver (\$250)

\$380 combined

Advanced Open Water Diver (\$160)

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STREAM

* Rescue Diver/First Aid	(\$ 90)
Night Diver	(\$ 95)
Cavern Diver - Cat. II	(\$200)
Deep Diver	(\$ 95)
Research Diver	(\$150)
Wreck Diver	(\$250)
U/W Photographer	(\$200)
Equipment Specialist	(\$ 95)
Search and Recovery	(\$130)
U/W Hunter	(\$ 95)
Distinctive Speciality	
→ Any five core units (including *)	
= MASTER SCUBA DIVER	
(Total cost - typically \$1,200)	
Total cost of all units \$1,800	

INSTRUCTIONAL STREAM

Rescue/First Aid	
Dive Leadership	
Site Management	
Assignment	
→ DIVEMASTER (\$300)	
↓	
ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR (N/C)	
↓	
OPEN WATER INSTRUCTOR (\$650)	
Total cost of DIVEMASTER rating.	
Typically \$710.	
Total cost for Instructor rating.	
Typically \$1,360	

Total cost for all speciality and instructor ratings - \$2,750.

F.A.U.I.

SCUBA Diver (\$280)

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST COURSES

- U/W Naturalist	(\$110)
- U/W Photographer	(\$135)
- Wreck Diver	(\$150)
- Hookah Diver	(\$150)
- Cave Diver, Cat. II	(\$200)

NOTE: No collective certification for non instructional specialist diver, e.g. PADI's Master SCUBA diver.

Total cost, all specialities	\$1,605
Total cost for DIVEMASTER	\$ 960
Total cost for INSTRUCTOR	\$1,960

INSTRUCTIONAL STREAM

• Mandatory Specialist Courses:	
Equipment Specialist	(\$ 90)
Recovery Diver	(\$100)
Diver Lifesaver	(\$110)
Boat Handling	(\$150)
Deep Diver	(\$130)
→ ADVANCED DIVER (Collective price \$500)	
↓	
ADVANCED DIVEMASTER	(\$100)
↓	
ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR	(\$200)
↓	
INSTRUCTOR	(\$800)

Total cost all speciality & instructor ratings - \$2,705.

(Savings are possible by doing combination courses. All prices approximate with variations from store to store.)

and it's such a heavy scene that it is difficult to keep your perspective. Having done a basic course one finishes feeling almost socially obliged to do an Advanced course and so on - many get sucked in. Take the process to its silly extreme and you could end up paying \$2,700 - for a patchwork quilt of pretty badges - many of which will do nothing for your diving, but dependant on your personality, a heap for your ego.

POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES: Postives first. The system provides a handsome living to dive shop proprietors. This keeps them in business and means a high standard of SCUBA instruction and equipment is available to all. (I think that's a positive!) Safety awareness and procedures practised by today's divers are very high. Fatalities very rare. It is now possible for a non athletic, mildly adventurous, not very brave individual to take up diving and keep diving in a safe, enjoyable, controlled situation (clone charters).

NEGATIVES: The process is self regulatory. And, as so often happens in this situation, training, controls, procedures and regulations are an "overkill". The gurus of each certification body hear their own rhetoric so often that they grow to believe it. Their way is the right way. There is no other way. This is taken to a silly extreme by both instructor organisations e.g. "Flippers" are "Fins" and it's a 20 cent fine if you say otherwise. Masks are not worn on the forehead (the most natural and comfortable place, when not in use). This is a 60 cent fine at best or (god forbid) a "fail" during practical examination. (This statement alone is enough to stir some self important instructors to a white hot frenzy - it's positively dangerous to risk losing one's mask by placing it on your forehead!)

Unfortunately, today's diving scene sees a new era of Badge Bandits. And it's not good for diving. Typically these clones move from one speciality rating to another, one certification level to the next, with very little "hard" experience. With glazed eyes they put up their mega bucks and reach for that most coveted badge of all "Instructor". Anxious to please (for fear of falling out of favour) they hang on every utterance, every piece of dogma - a process with no room for individual expression and even less for independant opinion. Finally, they have arrived. Proof positive (a badge!) that they are a better diver than their peers. Others would simply suggest, "A superior clone". * * *

Footnote: I hope those dive shop proprietors whom I value as friends and respect as divers will not have severe bouts of paranoia. It's all good fun chaps. And mega bucks!

G.R.B.

A CAPTAIN'S DIVE

OR, "LAUNCHING OF THE YELLOW PERIL"

by Geoff Birtles

Mick had lost a cylinder, I still wouldn't put a tow bar on the new Benz and Bazza was a bit tired from Saturday's run with Tips. No boats and smooth seas! A very grim state of affairs.

Once again our fireman came to the rescue. Much excitement, a maiden voyage for Keith's new Haines. ("Hunter Three" - not "one", that's Bazza - not "two" that's Geoff). Would it go faster than the "Blue Streak"? Or, as Reece said, "I wonder what kind of driver Keith is, Dad. Will he lay back like Barry or get stuck into it and give us a decent race?"

The drama started very early - a flat tyre at 7.30 a.m. Situation normal for 6.00 x 9's.

On arriving (and awakening) at Sorrento, it was boat inspection time. A very racy number! Yellow with blue "go-fast" stripes and a big Blax Max with 150 angry horses ready to take on Birtles. Even the deck had been lightened with a myriad of 3/8 holes, all in the interests of more speed. Tank racks (one suspects a patent infringement here), grab rail, bilge pump, depth sounder, secret cray compartment and boarding ladder - looking good! But - immediate despair to CB freaks, no radio. (Wouldn't suit Lynchie at all). Worse was to follow. A detailed inspection found no thermos holders!

A professional launching found Jensen, Avery, Jeacle and myself mesmerised by a very attractive blonde lady in pink shorts. Tom figured she was too old ("... would have to be drunk"), Keith was more interested in his boat which left Mick and I to wander across and offer her a hand (or check her out). Tom was right! (Alex was busy playing Trendies cruising French Island in a Ranger's Shark Cat - last seen wearing a life jacket - would you mind!)

Half an hour later the Merc finally fired up. No problem, once we accidentally discovered it would only start on full tilt. (Situation normal for a Black Max, right Barry? Up the mighty "Rudes").

Now it is necessary you understand that the entire crew consisted of boat owners - four captains. On arriving at the broken sub each had his own idea of (1) how to locate it, and (2) how and where to anchor. Mick being the largest managed to end up in possession of the steering wheel, Keith played coxswain fretting under Mick's armpit, Tom was struck dumb by the entire scenario and I prepared the shot line while heaping much opprobrium on Mick's navigation.

Finally, a big blip, shot over the side and Mick decides he's a racing driver. Now laying a 180 ft. shot at 45° in 130 ft. of water does very little for accuracy but I quote "M", "She'll be right - stop whinging." (We reminded him of this as we later spent 5 minutes swimming from the shot to our entry point.)

Once again M seizes the initiative by jumping onto the bow. (He figures if he drops the anchor he won't have to pull it up), anchor secured at a steep 25° we have more heated debate over position and length. This time Mick cracks his "obstinate M" act. "The more anchor rope you let out, the more we have to pull up."

On finally reaching the bottom we find a "dancing" anchor but no sub. Into the boat and up anchor. Mick (the deckie) cracks it and refuses to pull the last 20 ft. of rope into the boat ("She's right - move it"). Half an hour later we have freed 15 ft. of anchor chain from a very tired looking propellor. (Keith is fairly tense at this stage, Mick's looking petulant, Tom amazed and I have commandeered the steering wheel. Couldn't help myself!

A further ½ hour later we finally manage to kick 150 rather tired old horses into action, re-anchor and complete the dive. But things do get worse!

After 15 minutes deco (shop club clones do not take note, it was a deco dive) we surface to find the boarding platform missing (fell off) and the boat very low on fuel in rising seas. The anchor is stuck and Keith's backward manoeuvring into the short steep chop results in about 50 gallons of unwanted ballast. At this time we found the bilge pump was only for show - it hadn't been wired in!

Anchors away; we figure to empty the boat whilst underway by pulling out a bung. Theory's fine, in practise we couldn't get on the plane - too much seawater. Panic is setting in. Outside the heads, rising sea, sick motor, boat full of sea water, can't get on the plane and only 4 gals. of fuel to make it back. (It took 6 gals, to anchor on the sub.). Keith is rather tense (still), Mick has cracked his "quiet M" act, Tom's still amazed and I'm on my hands and knees baling. (It was at this stage I found my lunch floating in the bilge).

Weight forward, boat only ½ full of sea water, we finally manage to get sufficient speed to pull a bung and head for home. Further debate. Queenscliff (my choice) Portsea (Mick's choice) or suck it and see (Keith's choice). Tom's keeping his trap shut - still in amazement.

MARINE RADIO

The following information has been extracted from "A Guide to Safe Boating on Port Phillip Bay" published by the Port Phillip Authority. Good communication is vital to organised club diving and essential to safe diving where long small boat trips are involved. Ed.

INTRODUCTION

Marine radio communications have always played an important role in protection of lives and property on our coastal and inland waterways. Over the years communication systems have been constantly undergoing changes and expansion in order to better serve the boating public. At the present time marine radio communications are again in a period of pronounced change which has greatly affected the approach to distress communications. This article describes the present communications systems available to the boating public and is intended to assist the boatman in selecting the proper system for the area in which he will be operating.

A radio system that is properly installed and used correctly is one of the best forms of life insurance a boatman can buy.

From the brief descriptions of the three bands in the following pages, you will see that the 2, 4 and 6 MHz (Megahertz) H.F. (High Frequency) Band and the Very High Frequency-Frequency Modulated (VHF-FM) Maritime Mobile Band are the only voice systems that provide a 24 hour distress frequency coverage. For this reason, it is strongly recommended not to use 27 MHz equipment as the sole means of communications on your boat. NEVER buy C.B. Radio (Citizens Band) for marine use.

In Port Phillip and Westernport Bays many Government Stations as well as Volunteer Organisations are now operating on VHF-FM as their primary means of short range voice communications. Melbourne Radio (Call Sign VIM.) is now operating a 24 hour service on Channel 16 (VHF-FM) and has a Radiotelephone Service called Seaphone.

HOW TO USE YOUR RADIO

With the ever increasing number of radio equipped boats, it is important that each of us observe a few basic rules pertaining to the operational use of your radio:

1. Prior to sailing, make sure your equipment is operating properly. This can be done by calling another vessel or a shore station on a WORKING FREQUENCY, but make sure you listen to see if the frequency is clear before transmitting. This will help eliminate the possibility of interfering with someone who is already using the frequency.
2. Always identify your station by using your vessel's name and call sign.
3. If you require a Weather Report, wait for a few minutes and you will probably overhear a report. Too many people are calling for Weather Reports and are blocking the airways. If after 5 or 10 minutes no report is heard, then call the shore station and request one. Melbourne Radio VIM put out small ships forecasts at 0748, 1333 and 1733 hours E.S.T. (Eastern Standard Time) each day. VIM make the initial call on either 2182, 4125 kHz and Channel 16 and then change to 2201, 4426.7 kHz and Channel 67 and give the Weather details.
4. If you are calling Melbourne Radio VIM do so on 2182, 4125 kHz and Channel 16 and state what frequency you are calling on, e.g., "Melbourne Radio . . . Melbourne Radio . . . Melbourne Radio . . . This is Craft X calling on 2182". Upon contact with VIM or any other shore station, you must shift to a working frequency unless you are in distress or have knowledge of a distress.
5. All conversations should be completed as soon as practicable. By observing this common courtesy, you will allow others to use the frequency and avoid interference by other operators who may be impatient.

DISTRESS COMMUNICATIONS

A continuous guard is maintained by all Coast Stations operated by Overseas Telecommunications Commission (O.T.C.) e.g. Melbourne Radio VIM on 2182, 4125 and 6215.5 kHz as well as Channel 16 VHF-FM. Many other Government Stations also keep watch on Channel 16.

2524 kHz is used by many boating people on Port Phillip and Westernport Bays, however, there is no official Government station operating on this frequency.

Distress calls have absolute priority over all other transmissions. All stations which hear the call shall immediately cease any transmission capable of interfering with the distress traffic and shall continue to listen on the frequency used for the transmission of the distress call. This call shall not be addressed to a particular station and acknowledgement of receipt shall not be given before the distress message which follows it is sent.

1. DISTRESS CALL

The Distress Call comprises of—

- (a) The Distress Signal "MAYDAY" spoken three times.
- (b) The words "THIS IS" followed by the call sign or other identification of the vessel in distress. The call is sent three times.
- (c) Particulars of the position of the vessel, the nature of the distress, the kind of assistance required, the number of persons aboard and any other information that will help facilitate rescue.

2. URGENCY SIGNAL

The Urgency Signal "PAN PAN" repeated three times should be used when a distress call is not fully justified, that is when a vessel has a very urgent message to transmit concerning the safety of the vessel or the safety of a person. The procedure for transmitting the Urgent Signal shall be the same as the Distress Call.

3. If, after a distress call has been sent, the emergency ceases to exist, a cancellation must be broadcast.

FREQUENCY BANDS

At the present time there are three frequency bands generally used by pleasure craft in Australia. These are:—

- (a) 2, 4, 6 MHz Radiotelephone Band
- (b) VHF-FM Maritime Mobile Radiotelephone Band
- (c) 27 MHz Harbour Mobile Band

27 MHz HARBOUR MOBILE SERVICE

Type of Transmission: Amplitude Modulation (AM)

Power Limited on In-Put: 5 Watts

Transmitting Distance: This Band is for short range transmission with a reliable transmitting range of only 10 to 15 Nautical Miles line-of-sight operation. Before buying make sure the equipment is type approved by the Postal and Telecommunications Department.

Approximate Cost: \$60 to \$250 including Antenna.

Marine Information: There is NO official marine information or weather available from Government Stations on this Band. All information available is from Volunteer Organisations, such as Elwood Life Saving Club, Sandringham Life Saving Club, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and the Southern Peninsula Rescue Squad on Port Phillip Bay.

Interference Factors: This Band is subject to interference from C.B. Radio, ignition static, sky wave interference from distant stations, atmospheric noise (such as rain and lightning) and man-made noises.

Frequencies: 27,880 MHz — Safety, Calling, Limited Working, Weather, Tidal and Position reporting.

27,890 MHz — Club's own activities frequencies

VHF-FM MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE

Type of Transmission: Very High Frequency (VHF) — Frequency Modulation (FM). A method of translating speech into a form suitable for radio transmission by varying the frequency of the radio carrier.

Power Outlet: The equipment is available in a hand held unit (1 watt) or in a 25 watt power output with a 1 watt reduction switch.

Transmitting Distance: The VHF-FM Transceiver offers reliable ranges of 15 to 20 N/Miles from ship to ship and up to 60 N/Miles from Melbourne Radio VIM. Other stations are limited to 20 to 30 N/Miles depending upon transmitter power antenna height and terrain.

Approximate Cost: \$585 — \$1400 including Antenna.

Marine Information: Both Sydney Radio VIS and Melbourne Radio VIM are now operating on VHF-FM. Weather and Navigation Warnings are broadcast at 0748, 1333 and 1733 hours EST each day on Channel 67. The initial call is made on Channel 16 and then change to Channel 67. Melbourne Radio is able to take Radiotelephone calls (called Seaphone) on a 24 hour basis. Channel 16 is the International Distress Channel and is guarded 24 hours a day by Melbourne Radio. Other Government Stations also guard Channel 16 on Port Phillip and Westernport Bays.

Interference Factors: This band has minimal interference from atmospheric conditions. Channel congestion is greatly reduced, resulting in quick and efficient communications. Normally, it is far better to use the transceiver on 1 watt, for local use, so 2 or more other boats can use the same frequency without any interference to each other at different locations around the bay. Once the transceivers 'mute' is set, no motor interference can be heard. VHF-FM is by far the best band for use on Port Phillip or Westernport Bay.

Frequencies:

(Pleasure Craft) Channel 16 —	Exchange of Messages relating to Distress, including search and rescue operations. Initial calling of another vessel or Coast Station prior to going to a working frequency.
Channel 67 —	Messages relating to safety of vessels or persons including search and rescue operations, weather information, position reports and tidal information.
Channel 70 —	Intership communications only.
Channel 73 —	Essential messages relating to the activities of organisations and those concerning the operational handling and movement of vessels.

2, 4, 6 MHz RADIOTELEPHONE SERVICE (AM/SSB)

Type of Transmission: Amplitude Modulation (AM) is a method of translating speech into a form suitable for radio transmission by varying the amplitude of the radio carrier frequency. This AM carrier is now replacing the old Double Side Band (DSB) until all transceivers of the old type have changed to the new equipment. All new transceivers in this Band are now AM/SSB. Single Side Band (SSB) has two advantages over the old DSB: (1) It increases the available power output; (2) It increases the number of channels available within the Band.

Power Output: 50 to 400 Watt Peak Envelope Power (P.E.P.) on SSB.

Transmitting Distance: Reliable maximum daytime range in most areas is 50 to 150 N/Miles when using a 2 MHz frequency, such as 2182 or 2524. 4 and 6 MHz vary between 200 to 1000 N/Miles. However, the range is largely dependent upon radiated power, atmospheric noises and interference. At night, communications will be affected by skywave propagation and on 2 MHz distances to 600 to 2000 N/Miles is not uncommon.

Approximate Cost: Between \$1100 to \$6000 not including Antenna and installation. ❀ ❀

'EDEN' — XMAS '84

Organisation is now underway for an alternative Xmas trip to Eden. (Bicheno is still on subject to numbers.)

Initial enquiries indicate that plenty of tent sites and motel accommodation are still available and hopefully flat accommodation. Keith Jensen and I intend to visit Eden early May to investigate alternatives and costs (along with some heavy diving).

Those who are interested should urgently indicate their interest to Keith at the April General Meeting (or phone me on 8461983) along with preference for tent, motel or flat accommodation and intended duration.

To eliminate the cost inequities that arose at Jervis Bay it is intended that sites or units will be booked in the names of individuals who will be required to pay a deposit in May. (Last minute starters will be responsible for their own lodgings.) In this way each will pay for what they book. I.E. type of accommodation and duration of stay.

Eden is a perfect dive holiday location

- 6 hours from Melbourne
- Warm clear water diving, plenty of alternatives
- Water Skiing
- Good restaurants/Fishermens Club/Pokies
- Good boat ramp
- Good access to on shore tourist facilities & other dive locations
- Oysters, cray, big fish

Organiser: Geoff Birtles 8461983

Jeanette - overheard at Port Campbell:

Q: "How many men does it take to wallpaper a room?"

A: "Depends on how thinly you slice them!"

It's taken a long time for her coloursto show. But VSAG, the last bastion of male chauvinism can handle a little bit of female chauvinism - and more!

Committee report (Cont. from p.6)

- vii) Bazza Truscott pointed out that boat owners went away for a holiday too and didn't need hassling over boat fees by members who failed to understand or chose not to understand the system. This sentiment was heartily endorsed by everyone present.
- viii) Membership application received from Charles Brincat. Accepted subject to proof of certification and medical eligibility.
- ix) Next Committee meetings:

Tuesday May 1 J. Goulding's place

Tuesday May 22 P. Tipping's place

Meeting closed at 11.10 p.m. Thanks to Mrs. T for nice supper. **

V.S.A.G. Dives Fiji (Contd. from p.9)

This gives us a total party of 22. Which should be a handful for the Tour Leader. Fortunately, Newly is an old hand at organising large parties and if things work as well for us as they did at Truk it should be a hassle free, great holiday.

Planning is already underway for a second saving fund. A wreck bashing objective this time. More on this after Fiji. **

A Captain's Dive (Cont. from p.22)

Meanwhile the boat is handling like the Big M on heat! Much humping, bumping & flinging about of bodies. Water out, the boat continued to pig root its way in the Port Phillip tidal race.

To cut a long story short, we finally made it back by keeping the RMP under 4,000, holding the two fuel cans aloft to extract every last drop, copious reminders to Keith on the benefits of straight line driving and much prayer. On this we agreed - there was no way this proud (or once proud) "crew of captains" was going to be towed by Badge Bandits (i.e. Coastguard Brownies).

On arriving at Sorrento we found the inner hull holed and full of water - hence the pig rooting. Enough! We finally had an unanimous decision. Stuff diving, time for a Fosters. For Keith its back to the drawing board (you can relax Reece). Meanwhile Annie's applying cream to M's rather hot ears. **

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR - APRIL 84

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT/LOCATION</u>	<u>DIVE CAPTAIN</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
April 13	Social Night Victoria Hotel Carvery (\$16)	Mick Jeacle (059)71 2786	Vic. Hotel 7.30pm Albert Park
April 18	General Meeting - <u>North Melbourne</u> Football Club		8.00 p.m.
April 20-23	Dive Trip Tidal River	Bob Scott 367 2261	Camp Site
May 6	Dive George Kermodie	Bob Scott 367 2261	Flinders Pier 9.30 a.m.
May 16	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club		8.00 p.m.
May 20	Dive "Wyrallah" (Guide: Des Williams)	Barry Truscott 789 6395	Sorrento Ramp 9.30 a.m.
June 5	Dive Trip Fiji - 12 days	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	Airport !!!
June 9/10/ 11	Possible Mt. Gambier Trip To be discussed next General Meeting		
June 20	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club (Note: There will not be a June issue of Fathoms)		8.00 p.m.
June 24	Dive Slack Water - Heads Area	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	Sorrento Ramp 8.30 <u>launching</u>
July 8	Dive Slack Water - Heads Area	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento Ramp 8.30 <u>launching</u>
July 18	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club		8.00 p.m.

It is important that intending divers confirm with the Dive Captain on the evening prior to the dive, irrespective of prior booking. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of reservation.

3.13.14.23.25.28. (34)

TASMANIAN DEVIL FOR XMAS

THE VENUE	BICHENO - EAST COAST TASMANIA		
THE PLAN	VSAG XMAS SORTIE - 10 DAYS		
THE COST	APEX AIR FARE	\$124 ADULT	(return)
		\$95 CHILD	(return)
	ACCOMMODATION	\$15 PER DAY	(approx)
	EXCESS BAGGAGE	FREE	
	DIVING	\$8 PER DIVE	

BICHENO OFFERS FABULOUS DIVING VARIETY AND IS A CRAY BASHERS PARADISE (sorry trendies).

ALL THIS PLUS EASY ACCESS TO TWO CASINOS AND SOME OF AUSTRALIAS MOST HISTORIC AND SCENIC COASTLINE.

WE NEED 10 DIVERS TO MAKE THE TRIP A GOER.

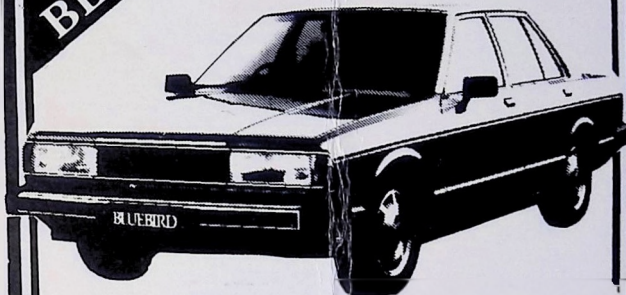
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