

# FATHOMS

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**VSAG**

**VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP**

# VSAG

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

## President & S.D.F. Delegate

Alex Talay,  
3/7 Cross Road,  
Chelsea. 3196  
Ph. 772 3085

## Treasurer

Mick Jeacle  
5 Donn Close  
Frankston. 3199  
Ph. (059) 71 2786

## Secretary

Don Abell,  
80 Liston St.,  
Burwood. 3125  
Ph. 29 4415

## Newsletter Editor

Keith Jensen  
99 The Fairway,  
Kingsbury. 3083  
Ph. 460 3672

## Vice Pres. & S.D.F. Delegate

Des Williams - 762 1623  
Asst. Newsletter Editor  
Barry Truscott - 789 6395  
Points Scorer  
Andy Mastrowicz - 318 3986  
Social Secretary  
John Goulding - 890 6634  
Property & Safety Officer  
Pat Reynolds - 789 1092  
Public Relations  
Max Synon - 465 2812  
Committee Member  
Geoff Birtles - 846 1983  
Committee Member  
Paul Tipping - 387 2027

## COVER STORY



*This brilliant photograph was taken by Keith Jensen in May 1983 when diving the U.S. Destroyer Y.P.284 off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. The divers from bottom to top are Alex Talay, Geoff Birtles and Steve Gardiner (dive guide). Reg Thomas' dive boat can be seen on the surface. The ship lies in 120 ft. of water and was sunk on Sunday 25th October 1942 when attacked by 3 Japanese Destroyers (Akatsuki, Ikazuchi and Shiratsuyu). TECHNICAL DETAILS: Keith used a Nikonos 3 with a 15 m/m lens. The photo was taken using natural light and Fujichrome 100 A.S.A. film.*

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 legislaive 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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FEBRUARY 1985

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### DIVE & SOCIAL CALENDAR

23

### Next general meeting:

Wednesday February 20, 1985 8.00pm  
North Melbourne Football Club  
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne

### Next committee meeting:

Tuesday February 26, 1985 8.00pm  
Pat Reynolds Home,  
14 Nurla Court, Frankston

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 99 The Fairway, KINGSBURY 3083

## EDITORIAL



Two month's rest from Fathoms sure makes it hard to pick up the pen again and to put the magazine together. I have left it till the last moment, and am now paying the penalty as it is a great diving Sunday and I am committed to compile Fathoms to reach our deadline.

Our Christmas function at Hunters Lodge was a great night thanks to the hard work of the organisers, especially John Goulding. Thanks John. Special thanks must go to those dive shops that provided prizes for our raffles and V.S.A.G. members can show their appreciation by patronising those doners listed in the magazine.

The last meeting of the year got off to a very late start, and it was raining. Our sojourn to the Yarra bank cancelled we imbibed at the North Melbourne footy club and once again Brian Lynch provided refreshments for the evening. A vote of thanks from all present Lynchie.

Big turn up at Eden, even mediocre weather failed to dampen V.S.A.G. spirits as we all pitched in and made the best of it and finally enjoyed some excellent dives before returning home.

Refuge Cove Trip: Mirrabooka with 16 divers, 5 small boats with 12 more divers made our camp at Refuge swell at the seams. The weather was excellent but seas a little rough, but a full report next issue will no doubt be forthcoming in "Flotsam and Jetsam" and perhaps caustic comments in "Tips Tit Bits".

Our membership is still growing with three new members being accepted into our ranks, these being Jane Thompson, Anthony Finnigan and Chris Llewellyn. Fathoms bids you welcome and hopes that you may soon be contributors to our newsletter.

Chris has advised me that he will be showing a movie at our next meeting, footage includes Refuge Cove trip - do not miss it as it may be the one and only screening if the censor Terry Brookes sees it.

As our membership grows it becomes increasingly important to adhere to procedures for booking on a dive, the Dive Captain's job is an onerous one as it is. If you decide that you are unable to attend, please let the Dive Captain know as soon as possible as he may be able to fill your place on the boat with someone that has had to stand down.

Our boat owners are generous souls who make their boats available to us all, unfortunately some of our divers treat them like charter boats and think that the small fee entitles them to walk on and off, leaving their lunch wrappings, bottles etc. in the boat. It is important that the right thing is done and this includes launching and returning the boat, fitting and removing the bungs, tie downs and trailer lights etc.

Better weather is on the way (hopefully) and some excellent dives planned, social events also are being organised, so we should all be able to get together and "go down".

K. Jensen

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Meeting held at Barry Truscott's home on January 22nd, 1985 and all committee members present.

The Treasurer reported that the club had the following funds:

Cash at bank	\$1,087.63
Cash on hand	Nil
Building Society	<u>\$1,445.08</u>
	<u>\$2,532.71</u>

Accounts for payment:

Subscription to SDF of Vic.	\$20.00
Fathoms postage	\$16.35
Trailer registration	<u>\$7.80</u>
	<u><u>\$44.15</u></u>

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

List of dives drawn up until Easter trip at Tidal River, April 5th - 9th.

### GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Geoff Birtles raised a question of the club undertaking check dives with prospective members under the grandfather clause, prior to the provisions of that clause being satisfied. The Committee agreed with Geoff's concern and it was decided that until the provisions of the grandfather clause were met, the club would not accept these potential members diving with them.
2. A further point was raised in regard to the advisability of the club accepting membership and subscription fees from potential members prior to their membership being approved. Geoff Birtles and Alex Talay suggested that this was inappropriate because it may be interpreted as approval of membership by the prospective member. The Committee therefore agreed that no money would be accepted from prospective members until such time as the Committee had approved their membership status.
3. Keith Jensen asked that the club forward a letter to Breathing Apparatus Supplies to thank them for testing tanks of club members at a 20% discount. The secretary was asked to forward this letter.

4. A renewal notice was received for fire and general insurance of the club compressor and other equipment. The premium had increased 30% over the prior year and John Goulding agreed to investigate the possibility of alternate insurance.
5. A renewal notice was received in regard to the registration of the trailer for the compressor. The bill for \$7.80 was given to Mick Jeacle for payment.
6. Membership applications were received from Chris Llewellyn, Anthony Finnegan and Gordon Brown. The applications for Llewellyn and Finnegan were in order and their membership was approved by the Committee. Gordon Brown could not be accepted as he did not have a proper medical certificate. His membership was accepted subject to this medical being completed and Alex Talay is to forward the proper certificate to Gordon.
7. Geoff Birtles noted his concern that the club was not properly adhering to its membership criteria or to the criteria for allowing non-members to dive with the club. The Committee acknowledged the concern and agreed to discuss the matter in length at the next Committee meeting with the aim of ensuring adherence in the future.
8. Don Abell requested that all those persons who have received acknowledgement for the Easter weekend let him know the camp sites to which they have been allocated. The matter will be further dealt with at the next General meeting.
9. Keith Jensen suggested that General meetings should be started on time noting that some had started to an hour late in recent months. The Committee acknowledged the intention to start meetings on time and it was thought that extra-ordinary circumstances had caused recent problems.
10. John Goulding is to write to all dive shops which provided prizes for the recent Christmas function thanking them for their generosity.
11. Barry Truscott asked that someone complete an updated list of members.

The meeting was closed at 10.20 p.m. and an enjoyable supper prepared by Marie was partaken with great gusto.✻

## S.D.F.-V MEETING HELD 4/12/84

1. Members representing the Management Cell of S.D.F.V. will be visiting all affiliated Clubs between now & June 85. The visit is to talk with divers and ask their opinions of matters currently affecting our sport. Thus the S.D.F.V. can act on the wishes of divers. V.S.A.G. has already met with Stuart & Neil from S.D.F.V. at our November meeting.
2. National Safety Council Underwater Training Centre will run orientation weekend seminars for interested groups of no less than 12 people at a time. Cost for meals, accommodation & lectures is \$165 per head. Tours can be arranged by contacting D. Williams - V.S.A.G.
3. The S.D.F.V. "Divers' Directory" is currently being put together & will soon be available.
4. The S.D.F.V. asks members & clubs what sort of seminars would we like them to run in 1985? If you have a subject you think would be interesting advise D. Williams. S.D.F.V. is there to serve you, so ask if you are genuinely interested!
5. A diver's emergency service is being set up here in Australia (similar to "Diver Des" in USA) & will be manned 24 hrs, 7 days a week. Telephone will be (02) 960 0321. This service will co-ordinate diver assistance throughout Australia.
6. S.D.F.V. stand at "Oceans" was very well received & apart from rousing much needed revenue (75 windcheaters were sold, etc) considerable contact was made with interested new divers looking for non-commercial clubs.
7. S.D.F.V. is this New Year 1985 host to the S.D.F.A. national yearly Conference to be held at North Melbourne Football Club on Australia Day weekend 26th-28th January.
8. S.D.F.V. hope to very shortly meeting with Ports & Harbours over Port Rules 62A and B. Preliminary discussions have been held & Ports & Harbours are keen to meet with your divers' representatives.

It is interesting to note that even before a decision to meet with Ports & Harbours Dept. had been requested, the Dept., Water Police & Sea Pilots had agreed to note all infringements made in the lower Bay area between December 1st, 1984 to Easter 1985. The statistics will then be presented at a meeting to be called by all the above groups to determine a course of action. It is the S.D.F.V.'s intention to meet with the Ports & Harbours Dept. before the post Easter meeting.

\* Any further details required on the above report should be directed to Des Williams. \*





## FLOTSAM & JETSAM

V.S.A.G.'s summer season got off to a great start with the end of year Christmas dinner held at Hunters Lodge on December 14th.

Once again there were some great prizes (nearly \$2000 worth) and because only 50 people attended, a high proportion managed to win prizes.

Gail Mastrowicz's ticket was the first number called so she had the pick of all the prizes. Poor Gail, she dearly wanted to take the trip for 2 to Sydney or Hobart. But Andy quickly pointed out to her the error of her thinking and convinced Gail to take the Poseidon regulator donated by Warrick McDonald's Dive Centre in Moorabbin.

Paul Sier, who fancies himself as a connoisseur of antiques and art tried to make off with one of the Hunters Lodge paintings after finding that his selection of remaining prizes were not to his liking.

Raffle ticket sellers Paul Tipping, John Goulding, Des Williams and Max Synon did a great job ensuring that over \$500 of tickets were sold. In simple arithmetic this worked out nicely at an average of \$10 per head. However, we feel that some of the guests were a little deep in the pockets and short in the arms because there were some BIG spenders who sought deals for bulk purchases.

Still, it was a great night whether you won or lost and I'm sure VSAG appreciates and thanks those who attended and those who brought along guests.

Over the past 13-14 months our social activities have raised nearly \$2000 for the club, so let's hope it keeps going this year.

Two days after the end of year dinner, a few of us enjoyed what has become another regular event over the past few years, and that is: "A Pleasant Little Drink" courtesy of Big Marty and Sandy who run the Sorrento aquarium. As regular customers through the year to the

aquarium's hot pies and devonshire teas, we somehow manage to ensure that the last dive before Christmas is at Sorrento and on the day on which Marty has his barrel and barbeque. This year I cheated by giving the dive a miss and bringing Murgatroyd and the "gang of 2" down to the festivities - Thought I should do the right thing by the little lady, seeing that 2 weeks later I was going to pack up and head to Eden for some real summer diving.

Seems I arrived in Eden just in time! Someone had to bring common sense and decorum back into the camp. Why even the V.S.A.G. ladies had turned to drink at no less than a cocktail party, hosted by well known man about town John Lawler and his aide-de-camp Charles!

Lawler and Charles became the talk of Eden with their succulent roasts and throat strangling curries. Why even their magnificent tent was reminiscent of a bygone era when ladies in parasols would stroll by the huge marquees of the rich and famous on the lawns of Ascot.

Instead of ladies strolling, John and Charles had Gail, Annie, June, Marie, Maureen, Josie, Isabel and Marjorie rolling.

The Flotsam and Jetsam prizes are usually awarded each Easter, however had they been held over Christmas there would have been a few likely starters for the "Odd Couple" award.

John Lawler and Charles would have been at one extreme with Doug Catherall and Mick Jackiw at the other. Somewhere between (but I rather think near the lower end) would have been Bruce Soulsby and Alisdair Stewart, Pat Reynolds and Alex Talay, John Goulding and anyone who would talk to him.

After the east coast gales which brought havoc to the Sydney-Hobart yachts had dispersed we managed to get in some great diving, including one superb dive on the wreck of the Empire Gladstone. It was too bad for those who had to leave early because the weather after New Year's day just got better and better.

Next month we will bring you a full report on the Australia Day weekend Refuge Cove trip. Once again this is a sell-out trip and the old Murrabooka will be bulging at the seams when it departs Port Franklin on 26th January.

Wishing you great diving during 1985.

Signed: SARAH NADE ✱

## A VOTE OF THANKS

Despite the attendance of only 50 people at V.S.A.G.'s 1984 Christmas/End of Year Dinner at Hunters Lodge (less than half of the previous year's attendance) the night was a financial success for V.S.A.G. thanks to the generosity of a number of dive shops and other organisations and people who donated prizes for the Club raffle.

Total retail value of the donated prizes amounted to \$1,930.

Revenue from the sale of raffle tickets amounted to \$534.

It is only through the very generous support of the following organisations and people, is V.S.A.G. able to conduct such a successful fund raising activity.

This money will be used for a variety of purposes and of course assists us in maintaining yearly subscriptions at a reasonable level.

As with any sponsorship arrangement our donors are now looking for your custom and business. The Committee urges you to support the following Dive Shop proprietors when you're in the market for diving equipment.

### WE THANK THE FOLLOWING:

#### Warrick McDonald

Warrick's Dive Centre  
34 Station Street, Moorabbin

Tel: 555 9128

Prize: 1 Poseidon Regulator  
5 x 20 airfill cards

Value: \$346

Value: \$400 Total \$746.00

#### Russell & Robyn Kitt

Southern Cross Divers  
1368 Toorak Road, Burwood

Tel: 299 1111

Prize: 1 year's free air supply

Value: \$200

#### Brian Williamson & Dick Whittaker

Melbourne Diving Services  
144 Bell Street, Heidelberg

Tel: 459 4111

Prize: 2 x 12 airfill cards

Value: \$96

John Gibson

John's Dive Shop  
300 St. Kilda Road, St. Kilda                      Tel: 534 1471

Prize: 1 stainless steel diving knife              Value: \$30

Bob Cumberland

Bob Cumberland's Dive Shop (Diver Instructor Services)  
34 East Concourse, Beaumaris                      Tel: 589 2084

Prize: Gift voucher                                      Value: \$30

This year we received assistance from the travel industry as well as the Dive shops, so if you're thinking of a trip, think of the following organizations:

T.A.A. The Friendly Way

50 Franklin Street, Melbourne                      Tel: 345 1333  
(Arranged through John Goulding)

Prize: Return travel for 2 to either  
Sydney or Hobart                                      Value: \$564

Peter & Jan Stone

Aquarius Dive Travel  
42 Taylor Street, Ashburton                      Tel: 25 8863

Prize: Underwater print of diver  
dolphin and fish                                      Value: \$200

Once again our own club members donated prizes:

Des Williams

Prize: Book "The Ship the Sea  
Swallowed" - the story of the Coramba  
by Des Williams                                      Value: \$8

Andy Mastrowicz

Prize: 2 rechargeable oceanic  
battery packs                                      Value: \$40

Don Abell

Prize: 37 metres Anchor Rope                      Value: \$17

To all those who contributed, V.S.A.G. thanks you for your support in helping to make this a very successful fund raising event.

John Goulding \*

**WANTED: 'THISTLE' ... REWARD: \$2,000**

The Commonwealth Government is to reward two Victorian scuba-divers with \$2,000 for their part in locating the wreck of the vessel which carried the first permanent European settlers to Victoria 150 years ago.

Announcing the reward today, the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr. Barry Cohen said, "The divers, Mr. Terry Arnott of Geelong and Mr. Harry Reed of Queenscliffe, located the Henty Brothers' ship "Thistle" on 1st September 1984. As a result of providing me with information on the location of the wreck, the remains and relics of "Thistle" are from today protected under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act".

"This declaration will permit divers and others to inspect the wreck of the "Thistle" at Port Fairy but not to remove any timber or other items from the wrecksite".

The "Thistle" was purchased by the pioneering Henty family, and brought members of that family to Portland on 19th November, 1934.

The Minister added, "A Commonwealth grant of \$10,000 for 1984-85 would enable the Victoria Archaeological Survey to inspect and survey the remains of the 'Thistle' along with other shipwrecks around the Victorian coastline".

Additional Commonwealth funds of \$4,000 would be used by Victoria to undertake site work, recovery and conservation on another Henty vessel, the "Children", which was located near Port Campbell and had been protected under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act for 2 years. These funds would also be used for similar work on other historic shipwrecks in the area including "Loch Ard", "Schomberg" and "La Bella" at Warrnambool. \*



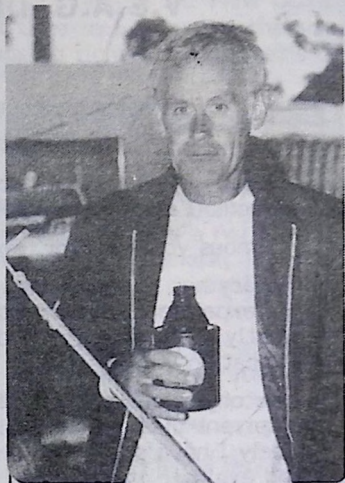
Cocktails at Jumpsuit Jack's erection party.



Alex has a couple of things abreast of him.



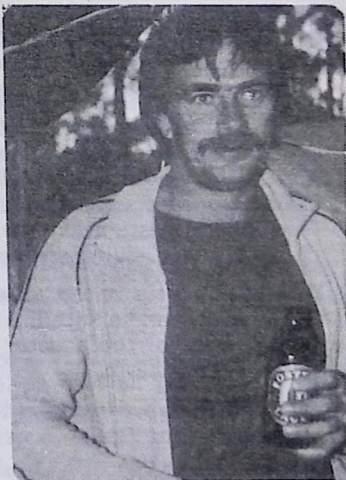
Gail Mastrowicz - "Hope Andy's looking after those kids".



Barry Truscott - "Should be home working on the house".



Alisdair Stewart - Legal Eagles ideas are ballooning.



Doug Catherell - Wondering what the night will bring.

## V.S.A.G. DIVES NEW GUINEA

G.R. Birtles

Departs Melbourne Saturday June 15, 1985

Returns Melbourne Sunday June 30, 1985

Late last year I undertook to organise a VSAG expedition to New Guinea or The Solomons (Fathoms Aug/84) - venue by popular vote.

The unanimous vote was for New Guinea - so here it is.

The itinerary has been especially designed by Anthony Newly of Allways for those experienced divers requiring something a little more exciting and consequently a bit more demanding. With 16 action packed days over 3 diverse locations there's plenty to do, see and dive - only the fit will survive!

Our major objective is penetration wreck diving, supplemented by drop off and rip current diving amongst large pelagics and spectacular reefs. Fortunately I have previously dived New Guinea so I was able to provide input and evaluate the alternatives on the basis of previous experience. Anthony has also had extensive New Guinea experience (he took a large SPUMS group there recently), and as we all know did a superb organisational job on our Fiji expedition; this trip shows the same early promise & value.

Timing of the trip is perfect for two important reasons -

- i) We get away from Melbourne's mid winter and dive tropical New Guinea at an optimum time for ideal conditions.
- ii) We have packed 16 days into two weeks on a weekend to weekend basis! Weekend to weekend is important to those who do not want to chop up a week and by Leaving Melbourne on a Saturday (with arrival at diving destination the same day) and heading for home on a Sunday (direct from diving destination) we have an effective 16 day holiday with 14 clear days for diving and touring.

First leg of the trip is to Rabaul. Rabaul is located on the northern most tip of "New Britain" a satellite island north of Papua New Guinea. It is roughly 4° south of the equator and 3° west of The Solomon Islands. So its warm, warm, warm.

Rabaul is deep water diving with some 134 diveable wrecks to choose from - plus The Submarine Base - a network of tunnels dug into a cliff which is part of a 600 ft. drop off! We have 5 clear days here, departing on the seventh day of our trip to Madang.



Subject to no TANGFU's (commonly known as "Typical Air New Guinea F... Ups") we reach Madang with plenty of time to luxurate in the Madang Resort Hotel's superb outdoor facilities located right on the water's edge. (Good snorkelling for the desperate).

Madang is on the northern coast of PNG facing the Bismarck Sea and is roughly on the same latitude as Bougainville.

We have 3 clear days in Madang which is a mixture of very deep drop off diving and more wrecks. Certainly one of the best dives I can recall is on Madang's "Magic Passage". Aptly named because it is a narrow flood tide channel full of large pelagics including Barracuda, Shark, Tuna, and Kingfish. For those into eyeballing coral and fish, it is probably one of the most colourful clear water dives one could hope to experience.

On the eleventh day of our trip we depart overland (NW coastal trip) for remote (very remote) Hansa Bay. On the way we dive the Waterhole - a seemingly land locked lagoon with a secret underwater tunnel opening out onto a deep and steep drop off. I've done this dive and it's a real experience.

We commence diving Hansa Bay this very afternoon. Hansa Bay is something special. It's a "shallow" harbour with 34 unpicked Japanese wrecks. (Shades of Solomon Island tendinitis!) Cold chisels and hammers would have to be mandatory equipment.

Most wrecks are brilliantly adorned with colourful coral and abundant fish life. (Swimming in and out of brass portholes!) Shades of heaven both for photographers and wreck bashers.

On the fourteenth day we depart Hansa Bay after an early morning dive. En route to Madang we dive "The Boston" - a large intact American minesweeper resting upright in 120 ft. of water - right on the water's edge. This is a premier dive and if it's anything like last time I was there, it's guarded by territorial "white and black tips" who are guaranteed to get your adrenalin pumping.

Overnight in Madang for an optional day's diving, touring or just resting prior to our departure for home at 10.00 a.m. on the sixteenth day (Sunday June 30).

It's a top trip with top diving. New Guinea is not cheap (lousy exchange rate and everything's expensive) but the all up cost of just over \$2,000 includes full SCUBA package, dive guides (suitably tamed), all breakfasts, many lunches and accommodation.

In Rabaul we are staying at the Hamana Hotel ("middle of the road", large and comfortable) owned by a former Prime Minister of NG. The Madang

Resort Hotel is probably NGs best & this will be a great experience. We have a choice of two standards of accommodation here. Hansa Bay accommodation does not warrant a description - it's all part of the adventure!

Dive itinerary has been planned with 3 optional days so that we can get in some "sneaky private dives" unfettered by dive guides. I well remember meeting up with a Yank last time I was in Madang, hiring a mini-bus, an armful of tanks & hitting the road. A great experience. See a good spot & jump in - the diving's good everywhere. Others will prefer to rest as the pace is hectic. It's my experience that if you pre-pay every day's diving, you end up losing out through tiredness, illness or bad weather. Catch up or optional days provide freedom for individuality, rest &/or "catch up" dives.

The trip is limited to 15 experienced divers & already we have 8 starters. A detailed itinerary is available from Mary at Allways - 25 8818 or you can phone me on 846 1983. The first 15 divers who put up a \$100 deposit will be going.

Experienced non-VSAG divers are welcome and a reduced price applies for non divers accompanying the expedition. \*

\* Activity Code:

Fy. Flying  
D. Dive . No of Tanks  
Op. Optional. eg. Dive, Twiit+

EXPERIENCED DIVER EXPEDITION "PAPUA NEW GUINEA"  
June 15 - 30 1985  
Further info: Geoff 8461983  
ALLWAYS 158818

* Activity	Day No.	Day	Date.
Papua			
Fy.	2D	1.	Sat 15
Fy.	2D	2.	Sun. 16
Fy.	2D	3.	Mon 17
Fy.	2D	4.	Tue. 18
Op.	Op.	5.	Wed. 19
Fy.	2D	6.	Thurs 20
Fy.	2D	7.	Fri. 21
Madang			
Fy.	2D	8.	Sat 22
Fy.	2D	9.	Sun. 23
Op.	Op.	10.	Mon 24
Fy.	2D	11.	Tue. 25
Fy.	2D	12.	Wed. 26
Fy.	2D	13.	Thurs 27
Fy.	2D	14.	Fri. 28
Op.	Op.	15.	Sat. 29
Fy.	Fy.	16.	Sun. 30.

Depart Milne. Arrive Rabaul

Depart Rabaul Arrive Madang

Depart Madang Arrive Hansa Bay

Depart Hansa Bay Arrive Madang

Depart Madang Arrive Milne

## CHRISTMAS CAMP EDEN

K. Jensen

Christmas 1984 is now over and memories of our camp at Eden are many. The weather was not at all kind. In fact the days that we dived could be counted on one hand. Even those intrepid yachtsmen who ventured the Sydney to Hobart race found the weather to be their nemesis as they dropped out of the race, we saw some of those storm-damaged yachts that made it as far as Twofold Bay.

Eden turned out to be a popular venue, those that camped were Truscott, Jensen, Belanszki, Mastrowicz, Jeacle, Tipping, Scott and Italiano families. Swinging singles included Alex Talay, Pat Reynolds, Bruce Soulsby, Alisdair Stewart, John Lawler, John Goulding, Charlie Brincat, Russell Herenshaw, Mick Jackiw and Doug Catherell. Flats high on Lookout Point were occupied by Thackeray, Weber and Birtles families. In all perhaps one of the biggest turn ups for a V.S.A.G. Christmas camp.

The variety of tents and their appointments were a sight to behold from Russell Herenshaw's basic tent to John Lawler's mini Taj Mahal and Alex even bought along a T.V. but it was June Scott that outdid us all. She brought along a vacuum cleaner. To celebrate the erection of his new abode Jumpsuit Jack instigated an "Erection Party". Hors-d'oeuvres were made by June, Marie and Gail and went down well with the champagne provided by John. What John thought was to be a cocktail hour turned into an all night affair with the ladies inbibing plenty of liquid refreshments and putting some of the hardened V.S.A.G. drinkers to shame.

The last day of the year saw all the boats on the water, surely there must have been some place to dive. Huge swells rolling in, the only place to dive seemed to be around Edrom but Peter and I found only 2 to 3 ft. visibility, a complete wipeout diving-wise. New Year's Eve saw us all at a "Hungri" organized by some of "Big M's" local friends. Moses a Fijian was the cook and did the job par excellence. All the food was cooked right through and was enjoyed by all present.

We adjourned about 10.30 to the camp to see the New Year in. Some of those eligible bachelors set off to the Fishermens' Club to play the pokies and such like. Midnight at the camp was a raucous affair as all New Years tend to be.

Big M organised a family picnic day at Wonboyne Lake. The road to the lake would have shaken the fillings from your teeth and the boat ramp at the lake was something to behold. We soon had the boats launched and

set off. The channels were poorly marked and after running onto a few sand bars, we made it to a quite secluded spot. Barbeque lunch, then around the point to gather some mussels. We were treated to a spectacular sight as a group of divers went out over the bar into Disaster Bay. They seemed to have timed it just right when a huge wave loomed up in front of them. We held our breath and were relieved to see them emerge from the other side of the wave.

About 30 minutes later they returned - their boat rather the worse for wear, windscreen badly damaged, depth sounder missing and rather pale and tense divers.

The weather improved enough for us to manage a dive on the wreck of the Empire Gladstone at the Haycock. It was impossible to anchor over the wreck and was necessary to drop the divers and motor out, and wait for them. Mick Jackiw and Russell Herenshaw cut their hands rather badly on the wreck. Russell had to have his hand stitched, which put an end to his diving.

Leonard Island was a better dive on the way back, but poor visibility still prevailed. Bazza at this stage decided that he had had enough and decided to return home. Bob Scott also pulled the pin but as they left the weather took a turn for the better, and the next 3 days saw us get in some really good diving.

We dived south of Mowarry Rock on the next two days. Visibility 70 to 80 ft. and fish life prolific. Between dives we went into Bitangabee Bay for lunch, and dined on fresh oysters gathered from the rocks.

Our last dive was back on the Empire Gladstone and really differed from our previous attempt, dead smooth seas and 90 ft. visibility. This dive left Alex and Tony ecstatic. Another quick dive at Leonard Island and back to the camp for lunch. Then off to a Bush Race Meeting and to view a wet "T Shirt" competition. It was the opinion of the VSAG voyeurs that the best pair did not win and Alex and Pat discussed throughout the night the finer points of the various contestants.

Departure day, the weather was excellent, wouldn't you know it! Tents packed, Tony pleading "Stay another day" but to no avail and as we left Eden smooth sapphire blue seas showed us how fickle the weather on this coastline can be. ❀

## THE FUTURE OF PORT PHILLIP HEADS

Des Williams

This area of Port Phillip undoubtedly produces the best opportunities for diving. VSAG has, over the years, had countless dives in the area producing some of our favourite memories.

With congestion now being created in this popular area, particularly weekends, where fishermen, divers and overseas vessels all converge, it was inevitable that regulations would be made to protect lives. The large ships entering Port Phillip make the most of the slack water flood tides and this is why divers see so many vessels these days, as this is also a favourite time for diving the Heads.

But, like it or not, divers are going to have to learn to live with the Port Rules 62A and 62B which forbids obstruction of ships entering or leaving Port Phillip; they are here to stay. Every time someone infringes the Port Rules, it is another nail in the coffin for the recreational future of the area. If the infringements by fishermen, commercial diving schools and private divers continue at the current rate, there is no doubt Port Phillip Heads diving is in jeopardy.

At the moment the Port Phillip Pilots, Water Police and Ports & Harbours Dept. are conducting a blitz in the area and noting every infringement of the Port Rules until Easter 1985. After that time notes will be compared by the above authorities at a meeting to discuss the future of our favourite diving spot.

Now, don't think this is just a case of authorities persuing divers to punish them. The average sport fisherman in his small boat is the cause of just as much "heart-burn" to the Sea Pilots as diving groups. Only recently a group of fishing boats were anchored across the Rip making the most of the passing schools of fish.

I have seen a list of noted infringements of Port Rules 62A and 62B during 1983 and can assure you that the authorities have been well and truly tested for patience.

The diver related infringements on the list revealed the most common cause for complaint to be the lack of use of our "Diver Below" flag A in the Heads area whilst divers are in the water. These would have accounted for about one third of the infringement list. How simple is it to observe this rule? It is not an unfair rule and is there for our safety.✿

The list went on to include (and name) several well known commercial diving schools, so the private diver is not the only one working towards the closure of lower Port Phillip.

Some of the most amazing infringements have been recorded and witnessed by the people who have the most clout when it comes to making rules to control the area. At Geelong, a tug attempting to berth a freighter had to heave-to until two divers returned to their unattended, anchored boat in a Geelong shipping fairway.

In one other case, four divers eventually surfaced and returned to their unattended boat as it drifted in a shipping lane. A Ports & Harbours boat had been alongside the unattended boat for some time trying to warn the divers of an incoming ship? Almost impossible to believe anyone could be so totally oblivious of their own safety.

But, the most recent incident observed and documented by a member of the Port Phillip Pilots, just about turns my stomach. A diver was seen to surface in the path of an approaching ship, then dive down again to avoid the vessel and let it pass. Ever wondered how the driver of a train feels when a non attentive pedestrian walks in front of his train as he goes through a rail crossing? Well, this report will be amongst the items discussed at the April meeting, you can be sure.

Believe me, the authorities are in no mood to entertain the suggestion by one of our members that we put everything into an attempt to have Rules 62A and 62B removed altogether. Sheer folly! The damage is done.

Thus, at a recent SDFV meeting called especially to discuss the future of Port Phillip Heads for divers, it was a VSAG proposal which was adopted to talk with the Ports & Harbours Dept. and express our concern that the careless are ruining the future for responsible divers. The SDFV will be representing concerned affiliated diving clubs at these talks, to be held prior to the authorities get-together in April.

SDFV will suggest that those found blatantly breaking the rules be fined, as opposed to a total ban on divers in the area.

The SDFV will also look for "middle ground" where the authorities will tolerate responsible divers who:

- (i) fly flag A
- (ii) never anchor in shipping lanes
- (iii) always have a competent boat driver/observer in the boat and never leave it unattended
- (iv) desist from diving in front of approaching ships.

There are many points to discuss and reach mutual agreement on and once this is done the SDFV is to advise affiliated dive Clubs of the guidelines so as members don't run foul of the authorities.

Already, the Ports & Harbours Dept. have been most impressed with the responsible attitude of SDFV and have welcomed the idea of talking with a body representing concerned divers.

Now, more than ever, we face the possibility of losing this beautiful area altogether. This is not pessimism but realism; the writing is on the wall! It is only common sense that we now endeavour to reach an agreement with the authorities and at least maintain opportunities for responsible divers whilst the cretins who continue to flaunt themselves pay the price and not penalise the lot of us. \*

PORT PHILLIP HEADS

**BOAT HANDLING COURSES**

THEORY AND PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION

in

Tideway boat handling

Safe water areas

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Local knowledge concerning weather, tides, channels,  
small boat routes, eddies

For further details contact:

GEOFF NAYLER

(052) 48 1772

**"CONGRATULATIONS"**

From all V.S.A.G. members to  
BOB CUMBERLAND on winning the Silver Medal  
in the Rapid Fire Pistol Event  
at the Australia Games.  
"WELL DONE BOB"

**CLUB CAPS**

A limited amount of club caps are still available.

Colours: Black, White, Red, Blue, Gold

Only \$6.00 each

Available from Mick Jeacle at General Meetings



## DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR FEBRUARY '85

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT/LOCATION</u>	<u>DIVE CAPTAIN</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
Feb 10	Wreck dive Heads area	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento Ramp 9.30 a.m.
Feb 20	General Meeting	North Melbourne	Football Club 8.00 p.m.
Feb 24	Flinders Reef Dive	Paul Tipping 387 2027	Flinders Pier 9.30 a.m.
Mar 8th - 11th	Port Campbell Weekend	Alex Talay 772 3085	National Parks Camping Ground Port Campbell
Mar 20	General Meeting	North Melbourne	Football Club 8.00 p.m.
Mar 24	George Kermodie Wreck	Des Williams 762 1623	Flinders Pier 9.30 a.m.
April 5 - 9	Easter - Tidal River	Don Abell 29 4415	Tidal River Camping Ground
June 15 - 30	New Guinea	Geoff Birtles 846 1983	

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Intending divers must 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.