

FATHOMS

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DIVING
FREEDOM**

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Victorian Sub Aqua Group,
Box 2526W,
GPO Melbourne 3001*

A vertical underwater photograph showing two divers in blue water. The diver in the foreground is closer to the camera, wearing a dark wetsuit and a mask, and is holding onto a thick, light-colored rope. The second diver is further up the rope in the background. The water is clear with some bubbles visible.

VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

VSAG

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COVER STORY



*This brilliant photograph was taken by Kieth 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: Kieth 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 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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MARCH 1985

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DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR

30

Next general meeting:

Wednesday March 20, 1985 8.00 p.m.
North Melbourne Football Club
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne

Next committee meeting:

Tuesday March 26, 1985 8.00 p.m.
Mick Jeacles' home,
5 Donn Close, Frankston

EDITORIAL



Divers certainly have been in the news of late. While I was watching television late Sunday evening on 28th February I was shocked to see that a diver had lost his life while diving the newly found J1 submarine. The newspapers next day reported the incident in their own disjointed manner. V.S.A.G. members were at the scene of this tragedy ready to assist in whatever way they could, but unfortunately there was little they could do. V.S.A.G. sympathise with the Dandenong Dive Club on the loss of their dive buddy.

Nearer to home, our club member Geoff Birtles was unfortunate to have his boat capsize close to the rip along with passengers Mike Webber and Doug Catherell and Geoff's son Reece. They were carrying out what one would assume to be a routine task in retrieving a shot line. It just goes to show how close danger is when we are out on a day's dive. In this case no loss of life but monetary costs to Geoff's boat and companions' gear will be several thousand dollars.

While talking about how much your dive gear is worth, have you recently added up what it would cost you to replace it if it happened to be stolen or lost. Carry out this exercise and check out current costs with your local dive shop, and these costs are sure to skyrocket with the depreciation of the Australian dollar. Perhaps you may need to update your insurance a little. In any event, if your gear is positively marked with your name etc. a thief will have difficulty in disposing of it, or should you lose it, you stand a better chance of getting it back should it be found by another diver.

Another diver in the news is Geoff Naylor who has found the wreck "Coogee" (see Media Watch this issue of *Fathorns*). Geoff seems to be able to sniff out these wrecks. I wonder how many more there are that he knows about? Hope that we may soon be out with him diving this wreck.

How long before another tragedy occurs? Not long if dive boats continue to be manoeuvred amongst surfacing divers out on the submarines. Saturdays and Sundays are becoming a real bun fight and a couple of the commercial operators are the worst offenders. Perhaps P.A.D.I. and F.A.U.I. would do well to include a course in DIVE COURTESY in their programmes. The area around these wrecks is available to us all, it is not the exclusive domain of commercial dive boats.

Keith Jensen

TIDE TABLE, PORT PHILLIP.

Month Day		PORT PHILLIP HEADS. APRIL, 1985.												Week Day		Month Day					
		High Water				Stack Water Flood (Stream Turns)				Low Water								Stack Water Ebb (Stream Turns)			
		h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M					h.m.	Hi M	h.m.	Hi M
1	M	06 05	1.2	19 48	1.2	09 13	0.7	22 19	1.0	00 04	0.6	12 22	0.1	01 04	0.9	16 05	0.8	M	1		
2	Tu	07 06	1.3	20 47	1.2	10 11	0.8	23 21	1.0	00 50	0.7	13 17	0.3	03 58	0.9	17 02	0.8	Tu	2		
3	W	08 26	1.2	21 53	1.2	11 27	0.8			01 55	0.7	14 29	0.4	05 10	0.9	18 11	0.8	W	3		
4	Th	09 56	1.2	23 04	1.3	00 35	1.0	12 52	0.8	03 17	0.7	15 49	0.5	06 36	0.9	19 26	0.9	Th	4		
5	F	11 26	1.3			01 48	0.9	14 15	0.9	04 31	0.6	17 05	0.5	07 59	0.9	20 35	0.9	F	5		
6	Sa	00 05	1.4	12 38	1.4	02 52	0.9	15 26	1.0	05 39	0.5	18 14	0.5	09 08	1.0	21 35	0.9	Sa	6		
7	Su	00 57	1.4	13 14	1.6	01 46	0.9	16 25	1.0	06 36	0.3	19 17	0.4	10 05	1.0	22 29	1.0	Su	7		
8	M	01 42	1.5	14 25	1.7	04 36	0.8	17 19	1.1	07 31	0.2	20 11	0.4	10 58	0.9	23 19	1.0	M	8		
9	Tu	02 26	1.5	15 14	1.7	05 24	0.8	18 08	1.1	08 22	0.1	21 03	0.4	11 48	0.9			Tu	9		
10	W	03 07	1.5	16 02	1.7	06 09	0.8	18 55	1.1	09 11	0.0	21 48	0.5	00 05	1.0	12 36	0.9	W	10		
11	Th	03 49	1.5	16 51	1.7	06 52	0.8	19 40	1.1	09 56	0.0	22 30	0.5	00 48	1.0	13 23	0.9	Th	11		
12	F	04 31	1.4	17 40	1.6	07 34	0.8	20 25	1.1	10 38	0.1	23 11	0.6	01 30	1.0	14 09	0.8	F	12		
13	Sa	05 16	1.4	18 31	1.5	08 18	0.8	21 11	1.1	11 20	0.2	23 51	0.6	02 13	1.0	14 55	0.8	Sa	13		
14	Su	06 05	1.3	19 23	1.4	09 04	0.8	21 59	1.1	12 03	0.3	02 58	1.0	15 41	0.9	15 41	0.9	Su	14		
15	M	07 04	1.2	20 18	1.3	09 56	0.8	22 52	1.0	00 35	0.7	12 49	0.4	03 49	1.0	16 31	0.9	M	15		
16	Tu	08 11	1.2	21 18	1.3	10 50	0.9	23 57	1.0	01 27	0.7	13 44	0.6	04 50	1.0	17 31	0.9	Tu	16		
17	W	09 18	1.2	22 23	1.3	12 18	0.9	02 37	0.7	14 58	0.7	06 07	1.0	06 07	1.0	18 40	1.0	W	17		
18	Th	11 01	1.2	23 23	1.3	01 14	1.0	13 43	0.9	04 06	0.7	16 26	0.7	07 33	1.0	19 54	1.0	Th	18		
19	F			12 04	1.3	02 19	0.9	14 51	1.0	05 16	0.6	17 39	0.7	08 43	0.9	20 55	1.0	F	19		
20	Sa	00 12	1.3	12 52	1.4	03 09	0.9	15 43	1.0	06 07	0.5	18 34	0.6	09 29	0.9	21 43	0.9	Sa	20		
21	Su	00 52	1.3	13 30	1.4	03 50	0.9	16 24	1.0	06 49	0.4	19 19	0.6	10 09	0.9	22 21	1.0	Su	21		
22	M	01 24	1.3	14 03	1.5	04 25	0.8	17 02	1.0	07 26	0.3	19 59	0.5	10 45	0.9	22 56	0.9	M	22		
23	Tu	01 54	1.3	14 37	1.5	04 56	0.8	17 36	1.0	07 59	0.3	20 36	0.5	11 18	0.9	23 29	0.9	Tu	23		
24	W	02 22	1.3	15 10	1.5	05 26	0.8	18 10	1.0	08 30	0.2	21 10	0.5	11 50	0.9			W	24		
25	Th	02 50	1.3	15 45	1.5	05 56	0.7	18 43	1.0	09 03	0.2	21 42	0.5	00 00	0.9	12 24	0.8	Th	25		
26	F	03 19	1.3	16 23	1.5	06 26	0.7	19 17	1.0	09 34	0.1	22 13	0.5	00 30	0.9	13 58	0.8	F	26		
27	Sa	03 50	1.3	17 02	1.4	06 57	0.7	19 52	1.0	10 04	0.1	22 42	0.6	01 01	0.9	15 33	0.8	Sa	27		
28	Su	04 27	1.2	17 46	1.4	07 33	0.7	20 29	1.0	10 40	0.2	23 13	0.6	01 34	0.9	16 13	0.8	Su	28		
29	M	05 11	1.2	18 31	1.4	08 14	0.7	21 11	1.0	11 18	0.2	23 51	0.6	02 12	0.9	16 54	0.8	M	29		
30	Tu	06 07	1.2	19 20	1.3	09 03	0.8	21 57	1.0			24 00	0.1	02 59	0.9	17 40	0.8	Tu	30		

COMMITTEE REPORT

Meeting held at Pat Reynolds' home in February, 1985.

Apologies were received from Des Williams, Geoff Birtles and Keith Jensen.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the Club had the following funds -

Cash on hand	\$ 6.00
Cash at bank	\$ 660.23
Building Society	\$1,445.08
	\$2,111.31

Bills for payment:

Copiquet - printing Fathoms	\$ 105.00
D. Abell - postage	\$ 6.00
M. Synon - gas fills	\$ 7.30
	\$ 118.30

Calendar of Events

List of dives and social events drawn up until Queen's Birthday weekend in June.

General Business

1. John Goulding was still following up insurance cover for V.S.A.G. equipment but had been advised that other insurers may be reluctant to offer such cover.
2. John Goulding advised that he had sent letters to dive shops thanking them for their contributions to the Christmas function.
3. Alex Talay read a letter from Aquarius Dive Travel asking that they be given a chance to input on club overseas dive trips. It referred to the current trip to Papua New Guinea. The Secretary was asked by the Committee to write to Aquarius advising that Papua New Guinea was not a club trip. A letter to Allways Travel giving similar advice is also to be sent. Alex Talay to ring Geoff Birtles advising of the Committee's action.

Letter to Aquarius to assure that Aquarius would be approached for the 1986 V.S.A.G. overseas trip.

4. Receipt for Port Campbell trip was tabled. Alex advised that this trip is now to be cancelled and the cheque will be stopped. Alex will contact the Port Campbell National Park.
5. Alex Talay submitted an application for membership from Rick Garnetson. The application was in order and was approved. The Secretary was asked to advise Rick and request his payment of \$32.00.
6. Alex read a draft of membership rules for V.S.A.G. which had been drafted by Des Williams. Some minor wording changes were suggested and made. It was suggested that the check-out dives were important and should be minuted when completed. Des Williams is to have the final typed and copied for prospective members.
7. Pat Reynolds requested that boat owners advise a dive captain on Friday night of the availability of boats for a Sunday dive. The Committee agreed that this would assist a dive captain.
8. Max Synon advised that Aquarius had taken advertising on the back cover of Fathoms for twelve months.

The meeting was closed at 11.30 p.m. Thanks from all the committee to Jenny for the supper. *

SDF-V MEETING REPORT

Des Williams

Meeting held at North Melbourne Football Club on Tuesday, 5th February, 1985.

Clubs present: Marine Diving Group
LaTrobe University Diving Club
Melbourne Bottom Scratchers
Australia Post Institute Divers
Box Hill Skin Diving Club
V.S.A.G.
Black Rock Underwater Diving Group
Bendigo Scuba Club
Geelong Sub-Aqua
West Coast Diving

- i) The SDF-V recently hosted the annual general meeting of SDF-A over the Australia Day weekend. The business part of the A.G.M. went for some eight hours, and many topics were discussed in detail. A **full** resume of the meeting will appear in the next Scuba Scene magazine. Two important subjects at the meeting were a unanimous decision **not** to affiliate with the A.U.F. as this would leave S.D.F. subservient to A.U.F. in an amalgamation. S.D.F. will continue as a separate voice.

Also, the S.D.F. of N.S.W. is ailing (as was SDF-V some 18 months ago) and it has been decided to call an extraordinary meeting and apply the "V.S.A.G. treatment" to the N.S.W. branch. This would mean the establishment of a management "cell" of four people instead of some 20 as is currently the case.

- ii) At the National A.G.M. it was decided that SDF would recommend to dive clubs that in the case of an emergency or diving accident, contact be made **directly** with the National Safety Council facility at Morwell in Victoria, as opposed to the new Diver Emergency Service (D.E.S.) set up in Sydney by the R.A.N. Apparently the N.S.C. advises D.E.S. of all accidents anyway, and rather than make contact with D.E.S. to find they put you onto the N.S.C., it is best to contact N.S.C. in the first instance by dialing 000 and asking for the N.S.C.
- iii) SDF-V management recently ran a diving seminar in the Albury/Wodonga area with the aim of bringing scuba diving to the

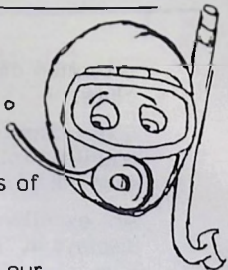
attention of interested people and promoting non-commercial diving clubs.

Some 51 students paid \$5 each to participate in some basic pool training, followed by the SDF-V display stand, a wreck display and shop display by local diver Des Walters.

An excellent P.R. exercise for SDF-V, soon to be followed by displays at Shepparton in May and Bendigo in August.

- iv) At last, various amendments to the revised SDF-V Constitution were dealt with by Club delegates. Changes had been necessary to the Constitution since the S.D.F.- moved to a "management cell" structure as opposed to the old structure of some 15 office bearers.
 - v) Within the next few weeks SDF-V will discuss the future of Port Phillip Heads area with representatives of the Ports & Harbours, Port Phillip Pilots and the Water Police. Object of the meeting is to show the various departments that there is room for divers and the departments to exist together and use this magnificent part of our coastline, without getting in one another's way. The concern shown by the SDF-V has already been acknowledged by Ports & Harbours as a welcome and responsible attitude and they are looking forward to the meeting.
 - vi) The latest edition of "Scuba Scene" will soon be released containing more detail of the recent national meeting.
- * Next meeting of SDF-V will be Tuesday April 2nd, 1985. *

FLOTSAM & JETSAM



As promised last month, we bring you the rip-roaring yarns of the Australia Day Refuge Cove trip.

This annual event has become a tradition in V.S.A.G. Its origins go back about ten years when Jay Cody introduced our Club to Captain Reg Truscott and his good ship "Mirrabooka". From that first trip where I suppose we were all rather subdued, we have come a long way with Reg, and this trip was no exception.

As the trip became more and more popular, some of the club's boat owners began taking their own boats down to Refuge, so the 1985 trip consisted of 15 on the Mirrabooka and about 16 on the private boats.

Like all good V.S.A.G. trips the spirit and excitement of the adventure was kindled on the Friday evening as we rendezvoused at the Foster Hotel. Now being a man of mature years, I had taken the precaution of booking a motel room for myself and travelling companions. On inspecting the room I discovered only one bed - a double one. Now I don't mind travelling down to Foster with a couple of blokes, I don't even mind sharing a room, a tent or by gosh, even buddy breathing with a bloke - but be damned if I'm going to sleep with one. Especially when one of those blokes is Paul Sier.

We finally got ourselves organised and finished up taking in a couple of private boaties, who otherwise would have had a miserable night sleeping on the Haines.

As usual Mirrabooka pulled away from Port Franklin about 8.00 a.m. and we breakfasted on board as Mirrabooka made it's way to the entrance of Corner Inlet and dreaded Bass Strait.

The small boats meanwhile had launched from Port Welshpool and were well on their way to Refuge before we reached the entrance.

By the time we passed through the entrance the sea was running with a considerable force, backed up by a strengthening wind and an adverse tide.

Reg set a course to take us away from the coast into deep water, but such was the fury of the sea that he brought the Mirrabooka and headed back to the sheltered waters of Corner Inlet.

We made another attempt a couple of hours later, after lunch and this time were successful in negotiating the shallows and passing into the calmer waters south of Rabbit Island.

However, the sea took its toll on the Mirrabooka team. Tony Tipping and Terry Brooks were the first casualties, and despite protests about never getting seasick, Tip did a great job of getting rid of his breakfast and lunch.

We finally arrived at Refuge about 6.00 p.m. It had been a long day and we were glad to tuck into a tinnie or two and some chicken at the camp at Refuge.

The next morning the weather had moderated and we headed south in the Mirrabooka to dive down near the lighthouse.

The Wilsons Promontory has some magnificent diving, but this trip we missed out on some of the best spots. The faster private boats were able to get out to Rodondo Island and reported fabulous conditions, but for those of us on the Mirrabooka, we had to be content with staying around the Prom.

Sunday night was the usual joke night, and the old favourites of Archie, Dave & Mabel and others were aired again, much to the amusement of the two people who had not heard them before.

As befitting the motly crew that we were, we had hoisted a Jolly Roger (skeleton crossbones) flag as we had entered Refuge Cove on the Saturday. All weekend this symbol of evil flew from Reg's mast and caused a mass exodus of fishing boats when Reg decided to shoot a few beer cans. The site of the Mirrabooka with 15 cut-throat sailors on board beneath the Jolly Roger would be enough to scare off most hardened seamen. But once Reg let fly with his cannon the neighbouring fishing boats fled for cover.

The weekend had its usual share of frivolity, including a re-decoration of Reg's wheelhouse with Zinc cream, various dunkings, and a lifelike performance of the hunchback of Notre Dame - Quisimodo. Whilst the diving was not the greatest we've had, the laughs were plentiful and we'll be backing up again next year for another action packed adventure beneath the Jolly Roger.

Signed
Eva Brick

CAPE SCHANK - SATURDAY 13/1/85

Des Williams

By early January I was beginning to dry-out, my last dive had been in November and I had missed the V.S.A.G. Christmas dive for the first time in five years.

So when Barry Truscott rang me on Friday evening 12/1/85, to see if I would dive the next day, I jumped at the chance.

We made an early start from Flinders on a superbly flat sea, in bright morning sunshine. We were aboard Mick Jeacle's boat with Keith Jensen's boat in hot pursuit.

Mick's eyes were out on stalks at the prospect of doing battle with king crayfish at the Schank. The perfect conditions meant we could round Cape Schank and penetrate along the coastline, westwards, which is usually difficult to dive.

The water was like a pond as we dropped anchor at Mick's command. John Lawler and Mick were soon over the side after a dressing frenzy. Bazza and I kitted up amongst the debris left by the other two and were soon in the water enjoying the 40 ft. depth and 30 ft. viz. My log shows we were in the water for just over an hour diving which time we covered some terrific cray territory in close to shore. We swam through chasms and grottos and into big caves and ledges. I could hear Bazza panting!! We managed to bag three crays.

Back at the boat we were confronted with a large grin from Mick as he pointed to his large hesian cray bag. It looked well padded out with crays, so Barry tipped out the contents. Out came the biggest cray I have ever seen, even Bazza gasped in awe! What a beaut! Now Barry, Mick, Dave Henty-Wilson and Geoff Birtles have all caught some monster crayfish in their time, but this one was a beauty. Barry and I returned two of ours to Mother Nature, whilst Mick wasn't looking.

After some lunch we decided to try in close to the cliffs on the east side of the Schank. This proved to be a very successful dive for the Williams-Truscott team as Barry displayed his fine style, reminiscent of our Port Lincoln adventure two years ago.

The reef, caves and ledges right up against the cliff were nothing short of spectacular. We had to hang on as even the slight swell made working in this spot hazardous. I haven't enjoyed a cray dive as much as this one for a long time. The scenery was fantastic.

The weather, the company and the diving was perfect, thanks Mick and Keith for the boats. Back at Flinders we dragged the boats out amongst a melee of fishing boats from the Western Port Angling Club.

Sunburnt, tired and salty, the guys made straight for the beer garden at Flinders to slake their thirsts before the drive home. *



Mick Jeacle with his monster crayfish. If you're not impressed, remember Mick is 6'6" tall and built like a brick toilet!

This is a big cray, it was over 10 lbs.

DEAR EDITOR

In response to my article about our Eden Christmas camp, I have received a letter from one of those wild, wild women who writes under the pen name of the "Ferret's Friend" and lest I be reported to the Equal Opportunities Board, have included it for publication.

Jacko's Erection Party

Jump Suit Jack's Erection of a Tent and the wild, wild women of Eden. Well it started like this, Jump Suit Jack decided to have a Cocktail Party for the erection and christening of his tent so he asked us women would we like to help him. He said it would only last one and a half hours, so being good women and (loving wives?) we helped.

Well, did it go off with a bang and a very loud noise six and a half hours later the wild women of Eden had taken over party, tent, drinks and I mean **drinks**, food and men. Talk about equal rights. We showed the men a thing or two.

Next day I myself for one, was a total wreck, ha ha. Well we won't learn will we - till next time.

P.S.: If you want to learn the Limbo classes from Gail, Anne, Marie and June - Very Reasonable Rates.

Ferret's Wife
Slosh, Slosh

Dear Editor,

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FELT THAT KIND OF COLD!

The cold of trickling water between the small of my back and my all too fragile wet suit.

The cold and chill of a watery horizon - only small fragments of land.

The icy cold of Dad's boat sinking, six foot below us in a ten knot Rip Tide. And Dad. He wasn't looking good. And I felt worse!

Ten seconds - from fouling our shot-line to being "pushed" underwater. Unbelievable, but it actually happened.

I clearly recall Dad calling "May Day" on channel 88. Half way through the second "May Day" water covered the mike. Radios do not work well underwater!

Fortunately we are water people. Stranded in the water 2.5 nautical miles from the nearest land wasn't nearly as bad as contemplating the damage to our dearly beloved boat.

Four heart-breaking hours later we beached, and up-ended our badly damaged boat with help from fellow divers and a large beach crowd at Queenscliffe.

The boat is ruined, we lost a lot of gear and we are heart broken. Never before have I felt **this** kind of cold.

We will be back and very soon.

Reece Birtles

P.S. from Dad:

Thank you to the many VSAG divers who did everything they could. In particular, Andy and Gail who did the towing (with considerable risk to their boat at time of beaching), Martin Italiano (worth a dozen men at the "beaching"), John Lawler (who displayed considerable energy and sympathy), Doug Catherill and Mike Weber (our crew) who both stayed with the boat, did not panic, provided moral support to the owner and did not put "shit" on the captain, Charlie Brincat (worked his "ass" off alongside Martin), Des Williams (at considerable risk to himself beaching over 2 tonne in a short break), Pat Reynolds (Superman), the "winning edge" who nearly single handedly righted the boat, the Big M, Mick Jeacle who worked hard on the beach and transported in excess of a dozen divers back to Sorrento courtesy of only 85 hp, and Bazza Truscott who displayed great daring to brave the very shallow surf (with **his** beloved Haines) and tow us off the beach and back to Sorrento (very shattered). Last but far from least - Reece - author of the foregoing, my son (12 years of age) and fellow diver. He was **cool**, very cool and made the whole tragic episode seem so much easier. Like! Who needs to be floating on top of a sunken boat, in the rip, alongside one's 12 year old son. Reece made it easy!

A COMMENT ON CLUB SPIRIT

Des Williams

On Sunday 10th February, we enjoyed a spectacular dive on the newest submarine outside the Heads. In the afternoon, we had just finished a second dive drifting on the flood tide off Queenscliff when shouts for help were heard.

Mick Jeacle, Warren Cannan, Alex Talay and myself were in Mick's boat. To our utter amazement, we could see Geoff Birtles' boat upside-down with Geoff, Doug Catherall and Mike Weber clinging to the hull. Andy Mastrowicz had a tow rope onto the distressed boat and young Reece Birtles safely aboard by the time we drew alongside.

Without commenting on the whys and hows of the accident, I would simply like to make an observation on the teamwork which our Club members displayed to help Geoff cope with this nightmare.

Firstly, and most importantly, no one was injured, which was surely a God-send and the sea was flat calm.

I have often wondered how our Club would cope with an unexpected difficulty during a diving day out. The answer must surely be with calm, concern and teamwork after the incident on February 10th.

As Andy and Gayle's boat was closest to Geoff at the time of the accident, they acted very quickly to get Reece on board and a towline to the upturned boat. The tow across to the beach at Queenscliff on the S.W. side of Shortlands Bluff was completed with a minimum of fuss, whilst Mick Jeacle followed collecting sundry items of gear which were floating about.

In a reasonable surf and strong cross current, Geoff's boat was worked into the shallows, where every available V.S.A.G. diver (and beach spectator) put their backs into the lift to turn the boat upright. Pat Reynolds managed to "hot wire" the power tilt which got the motor into the stowed position. We then took turns to bale out the water, whilst others held the boat into the breakers.

John Lawler then swam through the surf and current with a long tow line. Barry Truscott had by this time made up a towing yoke on the stern of his boat whilst anchored offshore and we all watched anxiously as he zoomed in through the surf to take a chance on getting the towline from John Lawler. This was done very smoothly by Bazza and John and he soon had the boat clear of the breakers.

Andy and Gayle, who had launched from Queenscliffe that day, had by this time hauled their boat out and driven around to the beach at Queenscliffe, to pick up several scuba tanks and gear, which we had removed from the distressed boat and stacked on the beach. This saved an almost impossible task of trying to get them back out through the breakers to other waiting V.S.A.G. boats. A very smart and considerate move by Andy and his crew.

With everyone very low on fuel Alex Talay (driving Mick's boat) picked up tired V.S.A.G.ers from the beach and we began the very long tow across to Sorrento.

In retrospect, the whole recovery operation ran like clockwork, with everyone working together. Had the group of V.S.A.G. boats not been close to Geoff at the time of the accident, (as Geoff was not part of our V.S.A.G. dive that day) there is no doubt that the distressed boat would have remained on the western side of the Bay and not got back to the trailer at Sorrento.

Undoubtedly Geoff will have more to say on the subject, but I would like to congratulate all those who showed concern and assisted, especially the other boat owners Mick, Andy and Barry. The Club camaraderie on that day worked perfectly. *

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ANDY MASTROWICZ GETS A LINE TO GEOFF BIRTLES WHILE MIKE WEBER & DOUG CATHERALL STAY WITH THE UPTURNED HAINDS



MICK JEACLE CASTS A CONCERNED EYE OVER SITUATION AS THE FLOOD TIDE CARRIES GEOFF & MIKE ALONG TWO KILOMETERS OF QUEENSCLIFF

PHOTOS BY DES WILLIAMS

MEDIA WATCH **Steamer found off Pt Lonsdale**

THE rusted wreck of one of Victoria's most famous steamships has been found off Point Lonsdale.

Queenscliff diver, Mr Geoff Nayler, unearthed the Coogee a few weeks ago in 37 metres of water after a local fisherman found her with a depth sounder.

Before being sunk by explosive charges and laid to rest in a ship's graveyard, 5 km south-west of Point Lonsdale in 1928, the Coogee was one of Port Phillip Bay's grandest steamers.

Built in 1887, she was first used as a ferry between Liverpool and the Isle of Man.

In 1889 the 762-ton vessel began trips from Melbourne to Geelong via Portarlington.

By JIM NEVEIN

"She is in surprisingly good condition," Mr Nayler said yesterday.

"The stern is intact as is the bow and a section supporting the boiler, but the rest of it is starting to deteriorate."

In 1903 the Coogee's captain and a crewman died when it slammed into the Italian sailing ship Fortunato Figari in dense fog in Bass Strait on a Melbourne to Launceston run.

It later struck a beacon off Geelong and a liner in the Yarra, when the promenade deck came crashing down on passengers.

The railing and seats cushioned the fall and no passengers were injured.

She was a minesweeper off Gabo Island in World War 1.

Mr Nayler hopes to start diving tours to 20 wrecks in the area.



● GEOFF Nayler with a find from the Coogee.

Boat tragedy is averted

The operator of a Waverley health studio said this week that he, his 12-year-old son and two friends were lucky to be alive following a boating accident.

Editor's Note:

I am not sure that the contributor who sent this article, wanted it included in "Fathoms" or in "Riply's Believe It Or Not".

Mr Geoff Birtles, his son, Reece, and the two friends were diving off his \$18,000 boat in the Port Phillip heads when the boat was struck by a 10 knots an hour tidal wave, resulting in them being thrown overboard.

Mr Birtles then went to retrieve the shot line which had become entangled under the bottom of the boat.

The four struggled for more than three quarters of an hour before releasing it.

Mr Birtles said the experience was more frightening than the

shark attack he had experienced in 1965.

"The fact that we are experienced swimmers and the fact that we did not panic stood us in good stead," he added.

Mr Birtles said the accident had occurred last Sunday week, three nautical miles from the shore between the Point Lonsdale and Queenscliffe light-houses.

He said the water was in full flood and he feared he would lose the boat.

"As it is, the damage to the boat is around \$8000 and apart from that, we had gear valued at \$5000 plus boating accessories to the tune of \$1600.

Mr Birtles said this was the second time he was involved in a serious mishap.

In 1965 he went to assist the French diver, Henri Bource from being attacked by a white pointer when diving off Port Fairy.

"Henri unfortunately lost a leg, but we managed to get to safety."



"...continued fair weather, with an especially high tide tonight."

SEVEN POUNDS OF AIR PLEASE

Keith Jensen

If you went into your dive shop and asked for seven pounds of air, you would probably get a funny look, but in actual fact when you take your 88 cu. ft. tank in for a fill, you purchase seven pounds of air.

Air at sea level weighs approximately .08 pounds per cubic foot, so 88 cu. ft. of air weighs 7.04 lbs. It is good to know this so that you can understand that your buoyancy will change by this amount as you use air from your tank during the dive.

If you are not wearing a wetsuit, you will want to weight yourself so that you are neutrally buoyant when low on air, so you will not have to fight to stay down at the end of a dive.

When handling tanks, passing them onto the dive boat, if a cylinder obviously feels lighter than the rest, place it to one side for checking. It may not have been filled, or perhaps leaked it's contents in transit. *

KUNG HEI FAT CHOY

As any self respecting Chinaman would know, KUNG HEI FAT CHOY means Happy New Year, and to mark the beginning of the Year of the Ox, V.S.A.G. announces a super social event for May.

A super Chinese Banquet will be held for members and partners.

Venue and cost details are being worked out now, so be sure not to miss out on this spectacular evening, pay your \$10.00/head deposit to John Goulding or Mick Jeacle at the March General Meeting.

Further details should be available at March General Meeting.

VSAG DIVES SIR WILLIAM MATHEWS WRECK

K. Jensen

The Sir William Mathews was built in Scotland and launched in 1914. Built on order by the Indian Government, this bucket dredge worked in the Port of Columbo in Ceylon (Now Sri Lanka).

It was purchased by the Australian Government and sent to Albany, Western Australia to dredge the channel at the Ports entrance. It was sent off to Melbourne for refitting then returned to Western Australia to work at Geraldton and Bunbury in 1926.

The Melbourne Harbour Trust purchased her and brought her to Melbourne where she was renamed the George Kermode. She was used around the Port of Melbourne, but by 1973 she was showing her age and was laid up for boiler repairs.

The cost for repairs were deemed to be excessive for a ship of her age and it was decided to scrap her.

On Wednesday 31st March, 1976 she was scuttled off Smiths Beach, Phillip Island in 20 metres of water. She is now regularly visited by divers who poke their way throughout the 235 foot long wreck. Now a haven for myriads of fish - trumpeter, sweep and even occasionally kingfish schools around the wreck.

V.S.A.G. will once again visit this wreck on Sunday 24th March, led by dive captain Des Williams, so set aside this date for a rediscovery of The Sir William Mathews. *

DIVE TRAVEL & THE UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER

Keith Jensen

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to assist the underwater photographer/diver who participates in expeditions, dive travel, etc. to have fewer problems associated with the above activities. I would like to say trouble free, but having been involved with underwater photography for about eight years, I know that 'Murphy's Law' will always prevail! But with advanced planning we should be able to reduce problems to a minimum, thus ensuring that we get value for our hard earned dollars.

VENUE

The site that we choose will govern what type of photography we can partake in, thus, what type of equipment - lenses, film, time of year, are all things that must be taken into consideration.

Find out as much as possible about the location. Sources for information are travel companies, dive shops, magazines, public libraries and even embassies.

Information that is required is electrical power - what voltage? What type of plugs required? Import customs, is a bond required? Some countries now require this formality, sometimes an itemised list of gear complete with serial numbers of the gear. Customs officers are a fickle lot, some will want to inspect all your luggage while others will wave you through without a glance.

Time of year is important as the weather will be the deciding factor regarding the dive visibility or viability.

PLANNING

Once we have decided where and when we are off to, the next thing is to prepare our gear. The dedicated underwater photographer considers this is the most important consideration - clothes, etc. always become a minor matter.

It goes without saying that cameras are in A1 order, if in doubt have them checked out several weeks before departure. Even so, thorough examination of the unit is essential. Check shutter operation, speed control, lens aperture operation, focus operation, O ring seals, flash cords, connectors and operations.

If you require special batteries for any equipment, buy them before you leave, this also goes for film. The type that you prefer may not be available or if it is, it's age may be uncertain. Purchase a lead laminated bag to carry your film in. If you remove the film from the box, you should be able to get 12 to 15 containers in each pouch. On arrival at your destination store them in a cool, dry place. Tropical areas play havoc with film, if you leave them in the sun the results you obtain will not be the best that can be obtained with film that has been looked after.

Power supply, charging strobes, movie lights and dive torches - it is essential that we have the right charging equipment, for example in Truk the voltage is 110 volts, Santo 240 volts but the power plugs are 2 pin and are not compatible. Some dive boats have 240 volt, others 24 volts, so find out beforehand and arrange to have the right equipment.

While on the subject of electric power, a couple of double adaptors will alleviate problems when 2 or 3 diver photographers share the same room, as power points are always limited.

Repair facilities for underwater cameras are few and far between, so minor repairs are generally do-it-yourself operations and a few simple tools are essential - such as small screwdriver set, pliers, side cutters and if you have room, a multimeter and an electric soldering iron. These items can be shared out amongst the group if several are travelling together.

I have seen many temporary repairs effected with good results. One using silver foil and insulation tape on a damaged flash plug lead, enabled a diver to use his camera every day.

Finally, a good carrying case is essential to ensure that your gear is safe and well secure without damage. Aluminium cases are good but the ultimate is the 'Pelican' case. I always carry my gear on the plane and take particular care during change overs as it is not unknown for hard luggage to be stolen at airports.

Nothing is more disappointing to an underwater photographer, who has travelled hundreds or thousands of miles on an airplane to a dive resort then to have his camera or flash etc. flood on his very first dive. Surprisingly, almost all of the problems can be traced to transporting the underwater camera equipment by aeroplane and the reduced atmospheric pressure experienced during high altitude flights on commercial jet aircraft.

The Nikonis camera is designed to be water and pressure tight to a depth of 160 ft. Underwater at any given depth the pressure inside the camera will be less than the outside water pressure. The pressure differential is in effect squeezing the camera and its seals inward. However, when the Nikonis camera is taken aboard an aeroplane (assembled and sealed), the reverse occurs. As the aeroplane gains altitude after take-off, the pressure within the aeroplane cabin will decrease. This in effect causes the pressure to increase within the sealed camera as compared to outside pressure. Sure it is true, aeroplane cabins are pressurized, but not to sea level pressure. For example, most long distance commercial jet flights will fly at an altitude of about 35,000 feet. At 35,000 feet the pressurized plane is flying at an altitude equivalent to an unpressurized plane flying at 6,000 feet.

Therefore, if a Nikonis camera is sealed at sea level it would have 14.7 psia (pounds per square inch absolute) inside the case. On the other hand, an aeroplane cabin with pressure altitude equivalent to 6000 ft. would be at about 11.5 psia. Thus a pressure differential of 3.2 psi would exist.

However, an unpressurized baggage compartment of an aeroplane flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet would be 3.5 psia. This would create an even greater differential pressure of 11.2 psi within the sealed camera. As a result of this differential pressure, the lens of a Nikonis camera could be pushed out of the camera body against the stops of the lens mount. Also the O ring seals would receive an outward thrust (as opposed to the inward thrust when used underwater). The O ring seals around the glass lens port, film counter window, view finder etc. of the camera could be damaged or even pushed out of the camera by the internal pressure. This would happen only if the differential pressure is great enough.

In a low pressure atmosphere such as an aircraft cabin at high altitude, do not open and re seal a Nikonis camera or any other pressure tight housing. This also applies to high altitude mountain climbing from 5,900 to 10,000 feet above sea level. This is very important, for if you do not open your camera or housing and re-seal it, you may not be able to open the camera or housing at a later date when back on the ground or at a lower altitude.

The outside pressure in this case could be 3 to 5 psi greater than within the camera body or housing, making disassembly difficult if not impossible without causing some damage to the camera or housing.

Why take the chance of a flooded camera due to possible damage caused by internal differential pressure?

To prevent this potentially damaging situation when travelling by aeroplane, it is a simple matter to just remove the lens from the camera body and leave it off for the trip.

With the lens removed the camera body and lens must be protected from dirt and damage. The camera body can be placed in a plastic bag or small box. The lens can be protected by a Nikonis front and rear lens cap, with a small hole drilled in the rear cap to allow the inside to breathe. A 1/6" hole is simple. If the camera is to be used during the flight for aerial photos etc. just remove the O ring on the lens and reassemble the camera. (Be sure to replace the O ring on the lens and reassemble the camera before using it underwater).

At last we have arrived at our destination, our guide diver or local dive shop operator should be able to advise what the best local areas are for photography. I always set up my camera in my room, attach all accessories, load film, etc. and carry it onto the boat.

Dive boats range from the luxury cruiser to the outboard driven canoe, I have used them all. Select the best place to stow your camera gear, preferably out of the sun. The boat may have a high freeboard thus making it necessary to use a ladder to enter the water or leave. If this is the case, I use a long length of light rope with a snap coupling to raise and lower the camera to the water.

Should it be necessary to change the film while on board, a couple of towels always come in handy, firstly, dry yourself thoroughly, it's amazing how much water can drip off your body and hair onto your camera. Dry the camera and lay out onto a dry towel when changing the film, take care that the lenses or camera body are placed in a clean dry place, a hair or a grain of sand can cause a leak and ruin your entire trip.

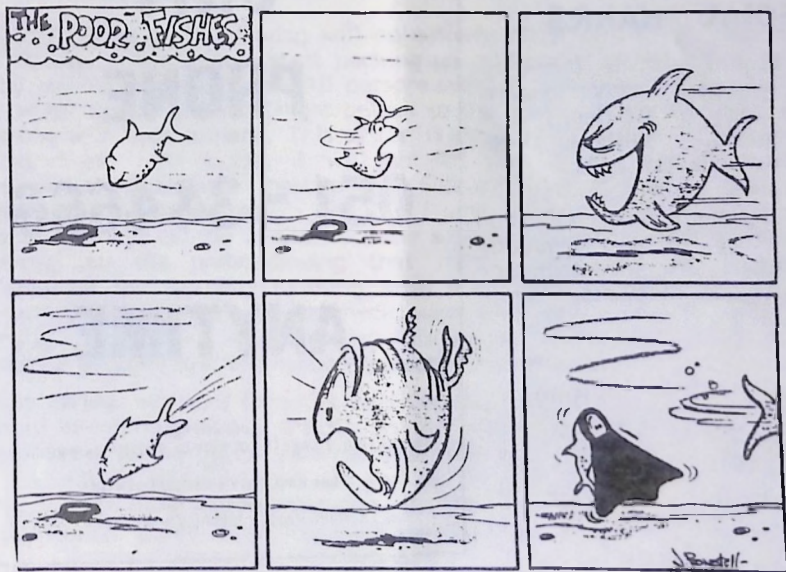
At the end of the day the camera gear should be rinsed in fresh water and dried and checked over. O rings should be checked and lubricated, film changed, batteries charged in readiness for the next day. Used film can be marked and notes written up with details of the day's events. This helps with preparation for slide shows or correcting any errors.

If your trip is of extended duration or to several venues, you may consider mailing your exposed film to the laboratories. I am of two minds about this - firstly the advantages, it gets the film away and you

have less to carry, and the finished results will be seen by you sooner, in fact they may even be ready by the time you return. The disadvantages - they may get lost in the mail thus being difficult if not impossible to trace on your return. The mail bags may be left in hot conditions on airport tarmacs, etc. thus negating the care you have taken in looking after your film.

Finally, on your return, choosing a processor to develop your film, remember you only get what you pay for, cheaper rates often produce less than satisfactory results. I now send my film to Fuji or Kodak for processing and generally in two or three batches over several days, reasons for this is they are reliable and responsible companies, but should they have a problem with processing, all my film will not be in the same batch that has been damaged. This happens very rarely but remember, 'Murphy's Law' if it can happen, it will happen to you.

Finally, good photos do not just happen, they are the product of good planning, good preparation, taking care of equipment and sometimes good luck. It is always a good feeling when you look through your slides or photos and see the good ones and the few outstanding shots that should be cover shots on your favourite dive magazine. *



HIT LIST - AIR FILLS - REFUGE COVE

The following owe the club for air used on Refuge Cove trip. Payment may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, V.S.A.G., P.O. Box 2526W, Melbourne, 3001 - or direct to Mick Jeacle at the next meeting.

Reece Birtles	1 fill
Terry Brookes	3 fills
Paul Crellin	2 fills
Rick Garretson	3 fills
Bill Hayes	1 fill
Jeanette Large	3 fills
Mick Large	2 fills
Bob Scott	3 fills
Bruce Soulsby	2 fills
Alisdair Stewart	1 fill

\$3.00 per fill *

SPECIAL THANKS

As Editor I wish to thank all those who sent in contributions in the form of articles, photos and letters. Without these Fathoms would not exist.

We still require more material. I know that we have a wealth of untapped contributors amongst our members. How about it!

Keith

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EASTER 1985

Don Abell

I thought that, for a change, I would write an article on the plans and arrangements for a dive trip, rather than a subsequent report.

The Club has been spending Easter at Tidal River for a number of years and it has become a highlight of the annual dive calendar. It promises the possibility of 3 days excellent diving in Bass Strait. There is, however, also the possibility that we may not be able to dive on some days and toward that end I shall give details, in this article, of the contingency plans in the event of poor weather.

Firstly, I thought that the trip should have a theme. This cast me back to my Sunday School days with ideas such as "Fun, Fellowship and Freedom" or the feeling of a Broadway show such as "The Pleasure of our Company". I finally decided on a theme with a nautical flavour (and perhaps more topical). So the theme for the trip is to be:

"ESCAPING THE 10 KNOT TIDAL WAVE OF LIFE"

Now the diving plans. Diving will potentially occur on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Most people start packing up on Monday and any dives will be by private arrangement. All persons wishing to dive on the following day **MUST** report to me the night before so that proper planning is able to be made with boat owners. This system is essential to the smooth running of all dives. Of course, it will not be able to be applied on the Thursday night because most people will not have arrived. Saturday night will also be a problem because I plan to see a film at the local theatre and will not be available. The system will work well on Friday, however, on the understanding that most divers feel considerably different on the Saturday morning after a convivial Friday night, I will not record names and will re-check with everyone again on Saturday morning. Anyone not understanding this should read it again, because it is most important that the system operate smoothly.

Before diving, we need to get a feel for the water. Barry Truscott has insisted on making hourly checks on the water beginning at 5.00 a.m. Barry's tent will be fairly hectic at that time each morning (details later) and he will be pleased to be out and about. The hourly checks will be primarily to hang a thermometer in the water and determine the temperature. Barry does not mind swells or even white water, but he refuses to dive if the water is below 68°F.

Barry will confer with all the boat owners. Meetings are to determine the viability of diving, locations, boat crews, starting time, etc. Should the worst situation occur and we decide to dive, then I should be wakened gently but definitely not before 8.45 a.m.

All dives are to start punctually at 9.45 a.m. This starting time is fixed and cannot and will not be varied, unless, of course, someone sleeps in when the dive can be delayed until 11.00 a.m. but not later. That is except on Sunday when Tony Tipping desperately pleads for the cleansing of previous sins at the religious service. Someone should tell Tony that for all the forgiveness he requires, he should be on his knees 7 days a week and twice on Grand Final day. The once a year effort, just because he has witnesses, won't even get him up to the ozone layer.

Now the major problem in prior years has been the delays of people getting through breakfast. To overcome this, Maria and Samantha Truscott are running a breakfast bar each morning from 7.00 to 9.00 a.m. It will be the normal cereal, toast, coffee and a choice of five cooked breakfasts. Since the menu changes monthly only, you will be able to order in advance. Marie has requested that the delivery of breakfasts to tents be dispensed with because Sam does not bring her bicycle anymore. For those requiring crumpet for breakfast, we will meet you at the boats.

Now the extra curricular activities. John Lawler, fresh from the success of similar events, has insisted that pre-dinner drinks be held at his tent each evening. It is intended that the function will commence at 6.30 and finish between 7.30 and 11.00. Saturday night is recognized as the main evening of the holiday and John requests that gentleman wear black tie (which leaves it fairly flexible for VSAG members). The other evenings, in recognition of the generally informal nature of the trip, will be lounge suit affairs. (RSVP each evening by 6.25).

Should the diving be aborted for any reason, there are a number of alternative activities. Pat Reynolds has volunteered to run a morning creche for the kiddies. This will allow the mothers flexibility in their day. We do feel that we should warn mothers that Pat has planned on taking a number of paper bags filled with boiled sweets to Tidal River for unknown purposes.

Paul Tipping and Geoff Birtles have been elected to guide morning nature walks through the many paths laid out by the National Parks. Both Paul and Geoff have been selected for this because of their abilities to quietly blend in with their surroundings and remain unnoticed by those

around them. Paul will of course be issuing a full disclaimer from liability for all advice and notes provided.

Unfortunately, Keith Jensen is not likely to attend the trip and we have had to cancel his practical session on how to fight a major forest fire in a National Park.

We are not sure about Geoff Birtles' attendance, however, if he is available, Keith's session will be substituted by Geoff's lecture on boat handling.

The Sunday morning will be taken over by Tony Tipping who has been told by Marg that she was told by the priest who knows the Pope who was told by Kevin Sheedy that Tony has a mission in this life. The message may not be exact because Marg told Tony into his bad ear. Nevertheless, should diving be out, Tony will take Chapel. Everyone should gather in Tony's new tent at 8.00 a.m. To avoid the crude necessity of passing a collection plate, Marcus will be selling entry tickets at \$2.50 per adult, \$1.00 per child or \$5.00 for a family. As an added incentive, all tickets will be numbered and a raffle run at the end of the service. First prize is a pasta dinner at an exclusive cafe in Deepdene. Second prize is 6 months free supply of anti sea sickness tablets. Tony is not able to vouch for the quality as he never gets sea sick ("it must be the grog"). Third prize is a free ticket to next year's service at Tidal River.

To finish the days we will have a story read to us by our fearless leader Alex. This is by public demand following Queenscliffe. Alex will read a classic over the three nights - "The Fall of Troy". This is a very topical story about a young diver - Troy, who gets kidnapped by the contestants in a Miss Beach Girl contest and is held captive on a Whitsunday island and used solely for the pleasures of his captors.

So, once again, we should have a good trip to Tidal River. As dive captain, I would like to thank all those members who unselfishly offered their time and talents. *

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR MARCH 1985

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event/Location</u>	<u>Dive Captain</u>	<u>Meet at</u>
March 20	General Meeting	North Melbourne	Football Club 8.00 p.m.
March 24	Wreck Dive "George Kermodé"	Des Williams 762 1623	Flinders 9.30 a.m.
April 5 - 9	Easter Camp "Tidal River"	Don Abell 29 4415	Tidal River Camp
April 17	General Meeting	North Melbourne	Football Club 8.00 p.m.
April 21	Treasure Hunt	Mick Jeacle 059 71 2786	Flinders Pier 9.30 a.m.
May 5	Heads Area	Alex Talay 772 3085	Sorrento 9.30 a.m.
May	Chinese Banquet - Details to be finalised		
May 15	General Meeting	North Melbourne	Football Club 8.00 p.m.
June 8 - 10	Queens Birthday Weekend at Sorrento - Details to be finalised		

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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.