PATHOMS

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INDEPENDENT DIVING FREEDOM

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VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROU

VSAG

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COVER

This photo taken by Kieth Jensen depicts VSAG member Igor Chernishov inside the wreck of the Japanese freighter Yamazuki Maru.

This ship known locally as the "Bonegi I" was wrecked near Tassafaronga Point, Quadalcanal, Solomon Islands during fierce fighting in World War 2. It is one of the wrecks that can be dived from the shore near the Bonegi River and Copra Plantation.

The Yamazuki Maru is always a great dive with part of the wreck above the surface and the stern 100' to the sand.

TECHNICAL DETAILS: Kieth used a Nikonos III 15m/m lens, Fujichrome 100 film with lighting by a Melbourne made Seastrobe 160.

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 leglislative 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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SEPTEMBER 1985

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Next general meeting:

Wednesday September 18th, 8.00 p.m. North Melbourne Football Club Fogarty Street, North Melbourne

Next committee meeting:

Tuesday September 24th, 1985 8.00 p.m. Unit 2/13 Melrose Street,

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Mordialloc

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

EDITORIAL



This month your "Fathoms" has been compiled by Des Williams, as Keith Jensen has been away diving through the Pacific, poor chap. Keith's tour departed Melbourne on 21st August and returned on the 5th September after two weeks diving through Madang, Hansa Bay and Rabaul. So, be sure to attend our October General Meeting, as Keith is bound to show a bunch of slides taken during the tour. Those Japanese war relics and ships are always the focus of Keith's roving underwater camera.

September is always a very important month for V.S.A.G., as we hold our Annual General Meeting, where all members are required to vote for candidates to the V.S.A.G. Committee. This year, five positions on the Committee are vacant and you are required to cast your vote by mail if you cannot attend the meeting personally. It is essential that you be a financial member to make your vote count. The future of V.S.A.G. is up to you, so be at the September 18th meeting.

A full report of the recent S.D.F.-V meeting with Ports and Harbours, Port Phillip Pilots and Victorian Water Police is in this issue of Fathoms. The meeting certainly was not able to reach any concrete decision on the night, but the ground work has been done and at least all parties are at last talking together - full marks to the S.D.F.-V management.

On the 26th (Saturday) of October, S.D.F.-V will be holding a seminar on shipwrecks. Full details of the venue and the programme will be available for the next issue of Fathoms. All members are requested to support the seminar, which will be spread over a full day.

\$ 2,424,04

COMMITTEE REPORT

Meeting held at Paul and Lesley Tipping's home on Tuesday 23rd July. Apologies for non attendance were received from Andy Mastrowicz, John Goulding and Barry Truscott.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the Club had the following funds:

Cash at bank	\$	429.57
Cash on hand		438.00
Cash at building society		1,556.47
	Village Programme	

There were no bills for payment.

General Business

- Keith Jensen suggested the Fathoms magazine be produced every two months in light of present production costs. This suggestion has been considered before and was again rejected as it was felt the magazine was very important to the Club and the cost was worth it to members.
- 2. Keith Jensen suggested V.S.A.G. consider Kangaroo Island as a Xmas trip venue for 1986 this will be investigated.
- Discussion held on a recent letter received from the V.A.S. A suitable reply was drafted.
- 4. Mick Jeacle advised North Melbourne Football Club had again endeavoured to raise the monthly fee for our meeting room to \$30.00 Mick to talk with the North Melbourne Football Club and have the fee returned to \$20.00 as only recently agreed upon.
- Don Abell produced the draft financial statements of V.S.A.G. for the year ended 30th June, 1985 and Director's Report and Statement. The documents were approved and signed on behalf of the Director's by A. Talay and M. Jeacle.

There being no further business the meeting was closed and a very delicious supper provided by Lesley Tipping.

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S.S CASINO - APOLLO BAYS HISTORICAL WRECK

by Keith Jensen

The beauty of Apollo Bay belies its treachery. On calm days the sea laps its shores in a perfect crescent of beaches. But, the sea remains part of Bass Strait a waterway of sudden squalls and mountainous waves. Fifty-three years ago these seas, raging within the confines of the bay, claimed 10 lives and ended the career of the coastal trader S.S. Casino.

On that tragic last voyage, the Casino had left Melbourne about 2.00 p.m. on Saturday July 9th 1932, carrying 240 tonnes of cargo. Most of it was sugar, although more often than not she carried large cargoes of timber for use in constructing piers and wharves for the Melbourne Harbour Trust.

The disaster happened whilst attempting to berth at the jetty; the crew had battled wild seas for half an hour. The captain decided to draw off and wait in the bay until the seas were calmed by the tide. During this manoeuvre Casino was forced onto her own anchor. Once it was realised that she was damaged, the crew attempted to beach her, but she sank quickly, throwing all into the sea. Two passengers and six of the crew reached safety, but 10 others including the master were drowned.

At a formal investigation held in Melbourne, the judgement of the Court of Marine Inquiry pronounced the vessel to be in a seaworthy condition, fully equipped with life saving appliances and navigated on her last day at sea with proper seaman-like care.

The Casino was a major means of transportation and communication for nearly 50 years, with a total of 25,000 voyages between Warrnambool, Portland and other Western District Ports. She was to have been totally refurbished in celebration of her half century of trading, and for the longest service of any of the Victorian coastal traders, the pioneer steamer in the trade between Melbourne and Apollo Bay.

Since first arriving in Australia from Dundee, Scotland in 1882, she had survived many accidents and continued to receive such patronage that in January 1932, "The Argus" predicted that "her future seemed assured - with many years ahead".

The "Victorian Historical Magazine" recounts how, in 1924, the infrequented countryside was stirred by the news that their old friend S.S. Casino was aground on the Hawdon Reef at the mouth of the Kennett River. She was heavily laden with Christmas season orders for Portland and Warrnambool, and in order to refloat her, which was achieved two days later, 150 tonnes of good cheer, of bottled and kegged beer,

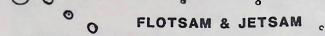


Christmas puddings, tobacco and drapery had to be jettisoned. A gang of 50 to 60 men working on the construction of the Great Ocean Road made glorious wassail on the secluded beach for a week or so.

In 1929 whe was again holed while making a night approach to Warrnambool and was beached in a leaking condition. Repaired and refloated the steel steamship of 425 tonnes continued to ply the competitive coastal trade until her sinking.

Originally rigged as a topsail schooner, the Casino carried a large spread of canvas, which helped economise coal consumption, when the winds were favourable. She had been built for the N.S.W. trade until bought on her maiden voyage by the newly formed Belfast & Koroit Steam Navigation Company, most of whose shares were owned by the prosperous farmers and influential business men in Port Fairy and the flourishing surrounding district.

Today, outside the Apollo Bay Post Office is a commemorative plaque, beside it is the ship's anchor. The ship's wheel is displayed at the Apollo Bay Hotel. S.S. Casino is remembered as part of Apollo Bay's historical past. *



Some years ago when your scribe, and many of my fellow members were bachelors gay; in days when gay stood for "Great Aussie Yobo" and not "Got Aids Yet" as it does today, this column advertised great rewards to any member who introducted attractive young unattached females to the club. I unselfishly agreed to perform all the initiation ceremonies on said attractive young unattached females, however despite offers of huge propositions no member succeeded in introducing a maiden to meet my criteria.

I wish it to be made known to all and sundry that the offer is now closed! The withdrawal of this incentive is absolutely necessary due to the photo publication in last months "Fathoms" of the mystery V.S.A.G. member identified only as "Angel".

Angel, whoever you are, stop taking the ugly pills, pop along to the clinic for removal of the double chin, see Paul Sier for a teeth job and get in touch with "Lethal" Leigh Matthews to see if he needs a body guard! Yucckk!!

Whilst on the subject of last month's "Fathoms", how about that guy John Lawler! I always thought his mum cooked those curries; - but there it was as large as life Johnny Lawler's original recipe for curry and diarrhoea delights.

During August V.S.A.G. had their annual ski trip to Mt. Buller. Dave Moore, Jenny Large, Doug Catherall, Alex Talay, Pat Reynolds, Tony Tipping, John Goulding and I ventured onto the slopes on the 11th August for several days of some fabulous skiing. Once again we stayed at Merrijig Ski Club which set the mood for some great apres ski discussions and laughs. The laughs only being surpassed by the antics and spills on the slopes. Still we all survived and no doubt we'll be lining up next year for some more.

With the Melbourne weather being rather inclement for diving during July and August, Murgatroyd took me away for some high adventure of wine tasting and hot air ballooning in the Hunter Valley. It seemed like a good idea at the time but when that hig balloon lifted off the

ground I really wished I was with the club diving. However, when the balloon pilot informed us he was the current world ballooning champion I began to relax a little and would certainly recommend it.

Also looking for high adventure is Paul Sier, who is building an ultra light aircraft. Paul, who has often been known to be away in the clouds is feverishly putting together about 2,000 bits and pieces which when completed will make James Bond envious. Paul's wife Rosemary has some concerns as Paul was never quite able to put together maccano sets and failed plasticine at school.

One person who is not failing is Dave Carroll whose wife Deborah has just presented him with a baby daughter. Congratulations to you both.

Des Titute (No relation to Pross!)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

As from the 30th August, 1985 Des Williams wishes to advise his new address and telephone number:

3 Anita Avenue, Dingley, 3172 Telephone: 551 3201

Please alter your address book now as our cover of Fathoms will not be changed immediately.

See you at September 18th Annual General Meeting - Don't forget your responsibility to vote for Director's poisitions.

S.D.F-V MEETING 6TH AUGUST, 1985

by Des Williams

Present: Various Commercial and Non-Commercial diving Clubs were very well represented, as well as various members of Government Authorities, namely:

Capt. Karl Khadiwala
Capt. Roy Western
Capt. Neville Daniel Snr. Sqt. Andy Russell
Ports & Harbours Department
Port Phillip Sea Pilots
Victorian Water Police

The Chairman, Stuart Boden, opened the meeting and introduced Neil McKenzie (S.D.F.-V) who delivered a short address. Neil pointed out that this meeting had been called at a time when the increasing number of boats and divers are causing concern to the various authorities using the southern end of the Bay. The aim of the meeting was to promote a better relationship between all groups and authorities and work towards a happy co-existance for the future. Neil pointed out that this very beautiful part of our coastline is indeed respected by divers and that divers are also concerned at the increasing congestion at the Port Phillip Heads.

A short slide presentation was then given to the meeting by Des Williams, to convey the beauty of the Heads area of Port Phillip to the non-divers at the meeting.

Stuart Boden then introduced the representatives from Ports and Harbours, Police and Sea Pilots to give their view of the current congestion at Port Phillip Heads.

Captain Western: Pointed out that his Department is concerned with public safety and safety in navigation through the area in question. He cited a few incidents of total negligence by divers to prove his point that scuba divers are indeed causing the Ports & Harbours Department great concern for the safety of divers and in turn shipping movements. He said they have given the Commercial Schools a fair go by regulating their movements and approving dives via Lonsdale Lighthouse. But, private divers are indeed causing them the greatest concern.

Captain Western advised that as from 1st July, 1985 Port Rules 62A and 62B have a new title - they are now known as Marine Regulations 503 (was 62A) and 301 (was 62B).

Captain Daniel: Expressed the great concern the Sea Pilots have for the safety of divers in the Port Phillip Heads area. He explained that the Pilots are responsible to the Government and the Ship Owners. Everyday, he said, presents different conditions making it very difficult for Pilots to see small boats and especially divers in the water. When a Pilot is in charge of ships under Flags of Convenience, he has many chores to attend to all by himself, such as, keeping a close eye on the "Heads", monitoring engines, V.H.F. Radio, radar and giving helm orders. Looking out for small boats (including fishermen) is a constant worry and occupational hazard. Captain Daniel concluded with a wish that all users of the water should be able to enjoy and use the Bay in safety.

Snr. Sgt. Russell: Is a diver himself and understands why divers use the Heads area so much. Unfortunately he has to see the results of diving accidents and has been personally involved with many of the most recent diver fatalities. He explained that divers do not seem to be taking enough care and do not fully maintain their gear and in many cases do not fully understand it!

He asked that we as divers take our activity much more seriously and advised that the problem with diver accidents is growing and is the same in other states.

Police duties include reporting and collating information on diver accidents and acting as agents of the Coroner, as well as enforcing the motor boat act and search and rescue co-ordination.

He cited several incidents of diver negligence to aid his case also, and advised that the future looks bad if divers do not act in a more responsible way. Recently the Police discovered that some diving tanks are not the capacity that dive shops claim they are. Bad gear maintenance and divers not leaving enough room for error all mean a bad future if divers do not become more responsible.

Questions were then taken from the floor:

Russell Kitt (Sth. Cross Divers) asked if Ports and Harbours have any recorded infringements by Commercial operators as compared with private individual divers. Ports and Harbours replied that the Commercial operators were indeed causing problems but did not know what the ratio was to private divers infringements. Capt. Khadiwala said that Commercial operators were putting profits before diver safety in some cases and gave an instance of very large groups being very hard to get back to the boat when requested by marine authorities.

It was suggested that the Sth. Peninsula Safety Service receive shipping information and pass it on to divers who check in, thus reducing the work load on Point Lonsdale Light Operator - Ports and Harbours rejected this on the grounds that their staff at Lonsdale are too busy to keep updating the information.

Another suggestion was to have shipping information put on a Telecom recording, so divers could avoid ships at the Heads - Ports and Harbours rejected this too on the basis that it would require constant updating.

Captain Western asked the blunt question of why can't divers dive somewhere else where they won't be in the way. His question was answered by referring him back to the slide presentation and advising that most other areas are barren desserts in comparison.

A member of the Coast Guard present, suggested that divers log in and out with his organisation and avail themselves of weather reports and shipping advice.

Sea Pilots explained accurate shipping movements are difficult to keep on target, as vessels can easily be delayed with possibly tragic results if divers take the reports as being accurate to the minute.

David Wailes suggested private divers check with the Commercial operators re: shipping movements, because they have the information via Point Longdale.

At this stage it became evident that the Ports and Harbours would prefer not to be obliged to give shipping details to anyone at all. Captain Western asked the meeting why divers couldn't dive somewhere else (earlier in the meeting) and it is obvious divers are simply a nuisance to his Department.

Russell Kitt advised the Ports and Harbours delegation, that the shipping information from Point Lonsdale to the Commercial divers is quite often incorrect and suggested that the Lonsdale guys are now very tired of 10 independent operators all ringing in asking the same question. Russell suggested an easier system be devised and Ports and Harbours agreed to look into the matter.

Conclusion: The Chairman suggested that now all interest groups have at last sat down together to discuss problems, a working body of representatives should now be put together to liase with the Government bodies in future. It was most encouraging to see a large representation of diver interest groups at last sitting in the one room together discussing the future and safety. **

SEPTEMBER 1985

TIDE TABLES - PORT PHILLIP

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MYSTERY DIVER

Our mystery diver, dressed as a little angel, in the last issue of Fathoms is till just that - a mystery. And, Oh! so ugly!! We will have to keep guessing for another few weeks yet, until Keith Jensen gets back from overseas. It seems he is the only one who knows the true identity of "Little Angel" - sorry folks!!

SHIPBREAKING ANTS AT GADANI

by Des Williams

Only recently we saw the late flagship of our Navy, H.M.A.S. "Melbourne", towed away to Asia to be broken up.

Shipbreaking is a very lucrative business these days, as scrap metal yields huge profits on world markets. In Taiwan, where they have been breaking ships since World War Two, the operation is highly mechanised with work being done in berths and dry docks. There a giant tanker can be eliminated from the face of the earth in 30 - 40 days.

In stark contrast, the world's third largest shipbreaking nation is Pakistan at the now famous Gadani Beach. No modern cranes or dry docks are employed there; cheap labour is the commodity they have in huge reserves.

On the night of the monthly high tide the chief beaching master Mohammed Siddique, awaits the peak of the high water before calling for "full ahead" and turns his doomed charge towards Gadani Beach. At full speed the vessel grounds, slowly sliding to a stop in the huge gash the vessel has ploughed into the sand 100 ft. from dry land. Now another vessel is ready to receive the swarm of men armed with the most basic tools, who immediately commence work on the vessel. With clanging and hollow booming sounding small on the beach, the men nibble the ship to death.

They have no equipment heavier than a 140 H.P. Bedford truck engine working a winch on the shore and they take the ship apart by hand armed only with sledge hammers, wrenches, crowbars, and portable oxy-acetylene cutting torches worn back-pack fashion.

Carrying, unbolting, stripping, ripping and draining anything that can be sold anywhere in the world. The men work like an army of so many ants devouring their catch. Engines, lifeboats, chairs, compasses, toilets, bottles of whisky, portholes, railings, pipe and the oil in the crank cases. The largest pieces of the ships super-structure – weighing up to 20 tonnes – are slid off on wires from the deck to the beach, the way children come down a playground slide.

After a week, the men are ready to attack the skeleton of the ship, cutting the vessel up into pieces like a salami, some weighing 10 - 20 tonnes each. And so the work continues until the great ship is no more. A fleet of trucks carry the chunks of ship away as they bounce across the rough desert tracks behind the beach.

The labourers are Pathans, the tribesmen from the north-west frontier province on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pathans, as many as 25,000 at a time, travel 1,000 miles south to the Arabian Sea to work along the five miles of Gadani Beach where, at one time, 150 ships are beached and broken.

The shipbreakers are day labourers paid about 24 rupees (\$2,40) for an eight hour day that officially begins at 8.30 a.m., though many start earlier and finish later to earn more money.

When workers are killed at Gadani, their families are supposed to receive 15,000 rupees (\$1,500). This is a requirement laid down in Pakistan labour law, though none of the Gadani workers have health insurance, welfare cards or anything resembling western work benefits. Protective clothing is unheard of and the men work in shorts, a flapping cotton shirt and sandals. The sandals double as hand protectors when lifting steel pieces cut off by the oxy - cutters.

Shinbreaking at Gadani costs about \$100 tonne and investors buy the ships for about \$180 tonne. The scrap metal is sold for around \$460 tonne - a tidy profit indeed.

There is no electric power at Gadani and the men live in shanties salvaged from the ships, and assembled behind the beach. The industry is lucrative even when compared with the mechanised shipbreakers, in places like Taiwan and Korea simply because machinery required fuel and maintenance, but at Gadani men are cheaper! *

S.D.F-V DIVERS DIRECTORY

IT'S FREE! Members of V.S.A.G. who have not received their copy of the new S.D.F.-V Divers Directory should contact Des Williams now.

Also if you are interested in an S.D.F.-V Windcheater or car sticker please see Des Williams. S.D.F-V DIVERS DIRECTORY

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SEPTEMBER 1985

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR - SEPTEMBER 1985 Dive Captain Meet At Event/Location Date Andy Mastrowicz Sorrento Boat Dive in the Ships Graveyard Sept 8 Ramp - 9.30 a.m. 318 3986 Annual General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club Sept 18 8.00 p.m. John Goulding Sorrento Boat "Hollyhead"/"George Roper" Sept 22 Ramp - 9.30 a.m. 890 6634 Mick Jeacle Sorrento Boat Oct 6 "Wyralla" 059 71 2786 Ramp - 9.00 a.m. General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club Oct. 16 8.00 p.m. Alex Talay Flinders Oct 20 "George Kermode" MONASH, JAMEUX 772 3085 9.30 a.m. 1126 Mick Jeacle for details Long Weekend at Mario Nov. 059 71 2786 2-5 Nov 17 Max Synon Flinders Reef Dive 465 2812 9.30 a.m. General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club Nov 20 8.00 p.m. Tennis Party/V.S.A.G. Mile Paul Tipping Balnarring Tennis Nov 24 Courts - 9.30 a.m. 387 2027 Keith Jensen Sorrento Boat "Coogee" Wreck Dec 1 460 3672 Ramp - 9.30 a.m. Dec 6 V.S.A.G. Christmas Night Out John Goulding (Venue yet to 890 6634 be arranged) Heads Area Dive & Marty's Mick Jeacle Sorrento Boat Dec 15 059 71 2786 Ramp - 9.30 a.m. Party Dec 18 General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club 8.00 p.m. Dec 26 V.S.A.G. Annual Christmas Tony Tipping Byron Bay Trip 80 4956 N.S.W.

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.

Looking for diving adventure



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

ISLE OF PINES

SOLOMON ISLANDS

PHILIPPINES

MALDIVE ISLANDS

FIII

VANUATU

GREAT BARRIER REEF, MADANG, TRUK LAGOON, PHILIPPINES. ISLE OF PINES, RABAUL, SOLOMON ISLANDS, BALI, COOK ISLANDS, WESTERN SAMOA, ABROLHOS ISLANDS, LORD HOWE ISLAND, BYRON BAY, HERON ISLAND, HAYMAN ISLAND, POOR KNIGHTS, TAVEUNI, FIJI, MALDIVES, SRI LANKA, PULAU TIOMAN, PUERTO GALERA, CEBU, VANUATU, AITUTAKI, SPILSBY ISLAND, LADY ELLIOT ISLAND.

Talk to the divers who have been there. One phone call could open up your world . . .

For personal and professional service, discuss your holiday plans with Janis, Diana, Phil or Pete.

AQUARIUS/Dive Travel Australia 40-42 Taylor Street, Ashburton, Vic., 3147. Phone: (03) 25 8863 Telex: AA35411

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