

# FATHOMS

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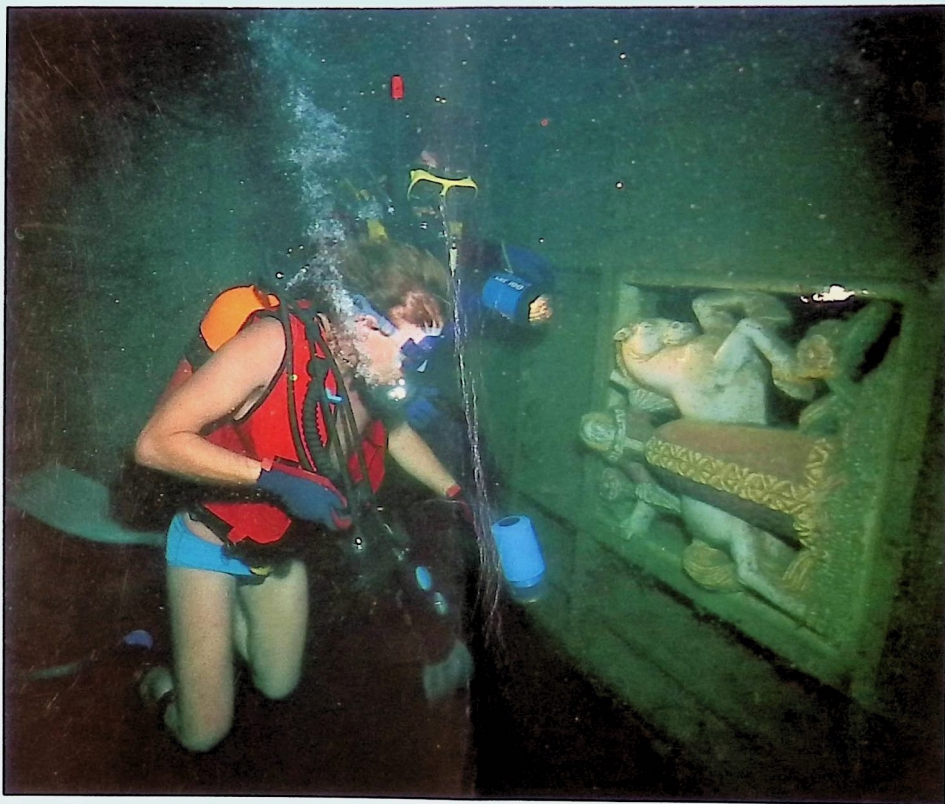


**INDEPENDENT  
DIVING  
FREEDOM**

Safety in Diving

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# VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

DEC 1987

# VSAG

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## FATHOMS



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G.P.O. Melbourne 3001



## VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

**COVER STORY:** VSAG diver Alex Talay along with proprietor of Melbourne Dive Services, Dick Whittaker, seen diving the famous Lady on the Wreck of the President Coolidge. This photo was taken by Keith Jensen whilst visiting the Island of Espirito Santo, Vanuatu 1983.

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 independent 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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### Next general meeting:

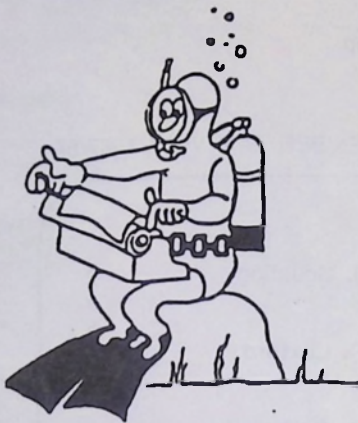
Tuesday 15th December, 1987 8.00 p.m.  
Thursday 18th February, 1988 8.00 p.m.  
North Melbourne Football Club,  
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne, 329 0266

### Next committee meeting:

28th January, 1988, Barry Truscott,  
8 Netherbrae Road, East Frankston.  
23rd February, 1988, Pat Reynolds

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 13 Birdwood Street,  
Box Hill South, 3128.





## EDITORIAL

Having taken on the job of Editor of Fathoms, I am faced with the task of adopting a different style of contribution to this magazine from the one that I have regularly used over the past 14 years as author of Flotsam & Jetsam.

Perhaps I have taken too hard a line as Editor in this my first issue, because having spent 3 hours writing Flotsam & Jetsam, I then put on my Editor's hat and censored the article to such a degree that there was virtually nothing left.

Seriously though, there has been some comment to me regarding the subject of editorial censorship. My view is that there will be no censorship, however should I believe that the content of any article is not in the best interests of the Club or contains material that is likely to foster an adverse reputation for the Club, then I will discuss the matter with the particular contributor.

There are many articles submitted which describe activities in a jocular and light hearted fashion. The editorial policy will certainly not interfere with such articles, and in fact the Editor will indulge in his own slapstick where appropriate to endorse such humour.

Fathoms has been the prime public relations tool for V.S.A.G. for many years, and the circulation of the magazine to non members, dive shops and various other organisations as well as to the members themselves reflects the overall image of the Club. I believe Fathoms to be the best dive club magazine in Victoria (if not Australia) and this reflects the very high quality and standard that previous editors have set. I will be aiming to maintain that standard, and in so doing seek the co-operation of every member to contribute articles, offer suggestions and use the magazine as the focal point of the Club.

I encourage letters to the Editor. If you have a point of view on a diving related matter let's hear about it.

If you have any items (diving or non diving) you want to sell or exchange use the magazine to advertise.

In this issue I would like to pay tribute to Des Williams who jumped back into the breach to take over the Editor's job after Keith Jensen's untimely death in April. Des has had many years experience as Editor prior to Keith taking on the job and his generosity in coming to the rescue of Fathoms is an example of his great club spirit.

The Victorian Government has yet again jumped on the marine reserve bandwagon, this time announcing that it plans to declare a 17 km. stretch of coastline from Coal Point to Inverlock as its latest reserve area. According to the Conservation Forests and Lands Minister, Joan Kirner, the area contains marine plants and animals of national and even international importance? The proposals can be obtained from that Department and public comment is invited before February 1st.

Now whilst this stretch of coastline may not greatly interest us as a diving location, (although I'm sure there are probably great spots along that coast) I am concerned whenever the word marine park hits the news. I think we have well observed how the heavy hand of bureaucracy can restrict or try to restrict recreational activities which under existing regulations are already controlled to stop wilfull plunder.

Through the increase in the popularity of SCUBA diving which has been partly due to the development and expansion of commercially based dive clubs and the widespread use of charter boats, I believe the general mood of diving has become more sophisticated. No longer do you see the hillbilly gung-ho divers with purely plunder on their mind. Nowadays divers and dive clubs know the rules, obey them and generally have a healthy respect for their environment. Let us hope that any further marine reserve legislation recognises this and maintains diver freedom to take a feed from the sea as part of the overall enjoyment of being there.

The Club welcomes another new member to our ranks; Fiona Bruce who joined up in October. Fiona is a doctor at the Alfred Hospital and her membership boosts the number of new members who have joined in the past few months to 5, 3 of whom are ladies.





## COMMITTEE NEWS

Major points from the October and November Committee Meetings were as follows:-

### OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETING

- \* Fiona Bruce accepted for membership.
- \* Des Williams reported on S.D.F.-V. activities and advised that despite hard work of S.D.F.-V. Committee, poor attendance from clubs and lack of support for S.D.F.-V. were now taking their toll on the effectiveness of this body.
- \* Des Williams will seek to borrow a magnetometer for wreck hunting.
- \* P. Tipping will consider what action can be taken to save the Eliza Ramsden from being blown up by Ports & Harbours.
- \* Dr. David Tuxen will be guest speaker at the February General Meeting and will talk on the new recompression chamber at the Alfred Hospital.
- \* Towing levies in future will be a matter to be decided on an individual trip by trip basis between the boat owners in attendance and the dive captain.

### NOVEMBER COMMITTEE MEETING

- \* D. Williams still persuing access to a magnetometer.
- \* Cash reserves of the Club stand at \$2,769.35.
- \* Dive Calendar pushed forward to Easter '88.✱





**IMPORTANT DATES****DECEMBER/JANUARY/FEBRUARY**

- DECEMBER 15TH      General Meeting.
- DECEMBER 18TH      V.S.A.G. Dinner at The Lonsdale Street Bar & Grill. Contact J. Lawler.
- DECEMBER 30TH/  
31ST              The Tall Ships in the first fleet re-enactment voyage will visit Port Phillip Bay.
- JANUARY 23RD/  
26TH              Refuge Cove. Contact J. Goulding.
- FEBRUARY 18TH      General Meeting.  
Dr. David Tuxen, Director of Intensive Care at the Alfred Hospital will give a presentation on the recompression chamber installed there.
- FEBRUARY 20TH/  
21ST              Tidal River Weekend Dive.
- FEBRUARY 27TH      Scuba Downunder '88.  
National Aquatic Festival Event at Deakin University, Geelong. Details - Southern Cross Divers, Telephone: (052) 22 4899.

**NEW ZEALAND TRIP CANCELLED**

Due to a lack of support for the proposed diving trip to New Zealand in March, the trip has been cancelled.

Our thanks to Mick Jeacle who spent a great deal of time in undertaking the organisation of this project which unfortunately was beset with some late problems.

## LIFE WITHOUT A REGULATOR

by Doug Catherall

Yes, for 13 months visiting 35 countries and not even a sniff from a tank; furthermore - with a few exceptions, I didn't really miss it. What I did miss was family, friends (including the "eccentrics" from V.S.A.G.), Aussie tucker, and even WORK at times, but when this occurred, I'd lie down till it passed.

The most enjoyable part of travelling was meeting people, be they locals or fellow vagabonds. A few times I'd go for up to 5 days without seeing another pair of "round eyes", and would always be pleased and relieved to spot another pair - sometimes running across the road to catch them and have a chance to swap lies and information. For the most part, vagabonds in Asia were super-friendly and only too pleased of company for a few days if travelling in the same direction. Local knowledge, conditions and costs was always the main information sought and given. I've met many good friends from these parts, and hope to see many of them again over the next few years, when, and if, they drift far enough south.

Take Old Bill - 82 years ago he was born in Tasmania, and after his 2nd wife walked out on him he decided to head overseas last year. I met Bill in the mid-south of China, where we stuck together for 2 weeks before heading in different directions. Each day a hand full of pills and check his special discs stuck to his chest for his heart condition, and then he'd be right for the day. "I'm a bastard by birth, not by nature Dougie" he'd say. Good luck old timer!

Hong Kong is a big centre for bugged, broke, sick, sore, happy and horny travellers. I found it absolutely fascinating (probably for the wrong reasons), and learnt more in 2 months than in a five year Uni course. Mind you, I don't think you can learn that stuff in Uni in any case. Mainly to do with packaging and carrying of many consumer items along with a specialised knowledge of Customs and Excise habits.

Naturally, if it's illegal the stakes are high, which attracts the broke travellers. Hong Kong is also the main stepping off point for China, which accounts for 100's passing through per month in that direction alone. After a varied and interesting short career in and around Hong Kong, I too headed north.

103 days in China was unusual, interesting, tiring, and for the most part - enjoyable. I'd estimate China to be 40 years behind "the West" in many ways, and 152 behind in the rest. Not much chance of getting into the 20th Century for a long time yet, especially in general hygiene and sanitation. Few travellers can get used to the hawking and spitting, which goes on continually, even in a 'classy' restaurant! Custom started this habit "to drive the evil spirit from the throat". What custom then for a professor sleeping in my train compartment who continually farted in my direction without even blinking an eye (well maybe his 3rd eye). Personally I still find it difficult to clear both nostrils in one snort without getting quite stained in the process.

Their custom of eating anything that grows, i.e. grass, dogs, cats, monkeys, snakes, birds, etc., is a bit off at times - particularly when checking at a local market and coming face to face with a furless dog hanging in front of you, complete with ears and tail. Never mind, for an estimated 1.2 billion population, they survive quite well and are generally a happy and inquisitive race who may become "westernised", but you can't help asking "why bother" when one sees the doom and gloom of European faces.

Sex and travel are often hard to get together, especially when budget travelling, as accommodation is often dormitory type rooms with poor to no showers, and the shithouse is a 8" x 15" slot in a concrete floor with near misses all around. Not exactly conducive to the romance which sexual relations often require. Mind you, there is always the exception to the rule, and I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking the doctors and nurses at Fairfield for doing such a thorough job.

After looking East-West for so long, Russia was a pleasant change. Moscow and Leningrad were very scenic and a pleasant surprise after the propaganda we get fed here. Many beautiful young ladies, but get them before their mid-twenties as it would seem that the potatoes and fatty food catch up with them at this time.



My Motherland (England) was the biggest disappointment of the year. What a pack of dull, lazy, "give us a hand" morons. Not all by any means, but particularly as a general observation around London. The place is history in more than one way.

Europe I'll visit again before comment, but there are a number of people who made it memorable.

In closing, let me briefly mention the highlights and lowlights:-

- Lowlights:
- 9,500 bike trip to Darwin.
  - Meeting the King of Kupang (who?).
  - Missing our ship in Indonesia.
  - Swimming lessons to a young Indonesian.
  - Magic Mushrooms.
  - A fantasy come true on an overnight bus trip in Thailand.
  - A fantasy revisited in Bangkok (where else?)
  - Courier work ex Hong Kong.
  - Korean prostitutes (no touchie).
  - Ripped off in China.
  - Altitude sickness in Tibet.
  - Knife attack in China.
  - Maxi visits China.
  - The art of diplomacy with chinese salespeople.
  - Missing the long-distance bus by 10 seconds.
  - Emergency stopping of the Trans-Siberian (for me).
  - The Russian Black market.
  - Alone in Germany with 1 Deusmark.
  - Knife attack in Denmark.
  - A night in a Swedish goal.
  - "Mr. Whippy" comes to Harrods.

- Two weeks of Jersey bliss.
- Jet skiing in Spain.
- Twice wrecked on Koh Samui (Thailand).
- Meeting Sarah & Liz in Kuta (Bali).
- Getting a thorough shake down at Tulla.

Actually I'd better get back into the water really soon and get back to reality. I'm just waiting for my brain to return, then maybe it'll be easier.

It's great to be back.

Regards,

DUK, DUCK, DOOGIE, DOUGIE, DOUG C.

#### Editor's Note

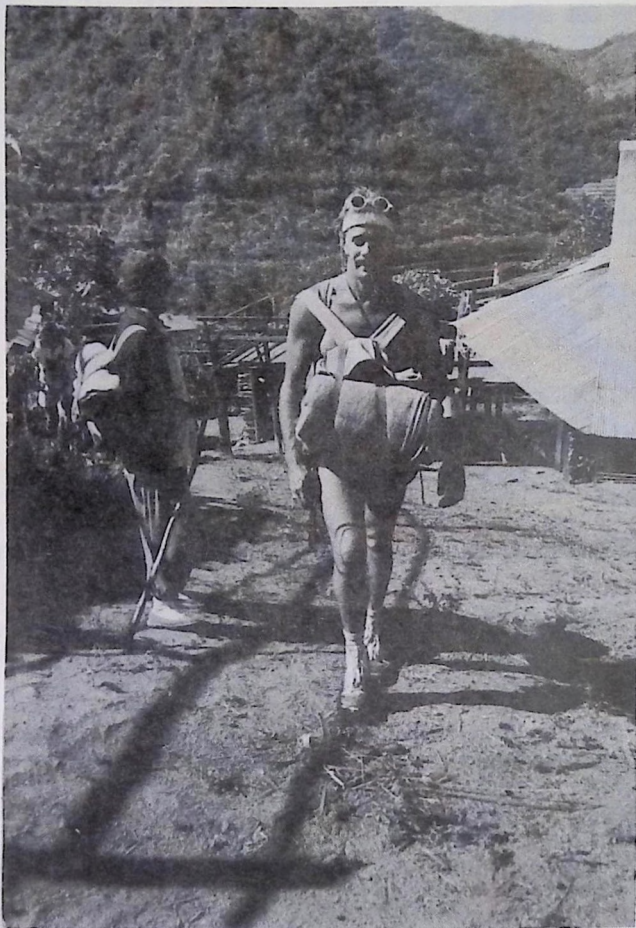
Great to see you back again Doug, and thanks for the most interesting article.

As V.S.A.G. Ambassador-at-large for the past 13 months, you have obviously excelled yourself in showing the world just how a V.S.A.G.er copes with the rigors of every day life on the road!

Mind you, I think you went overboard a bit with all that fantasy crap in Thailand - I never thought the buses were all that good!

You must have been shaken up by all those knife attacks, maybe it was a case of mistaken identity . . . what would a nice shy quiet, well mannered and retiring type of chap like you be doing around areas where there were hooligans with knives?

ED\*



Doug Catherall - a young proud Australian setting out on his great adventure.

This shot was taken by Doug's Mum as he was leaving home to go for a walk around the world.



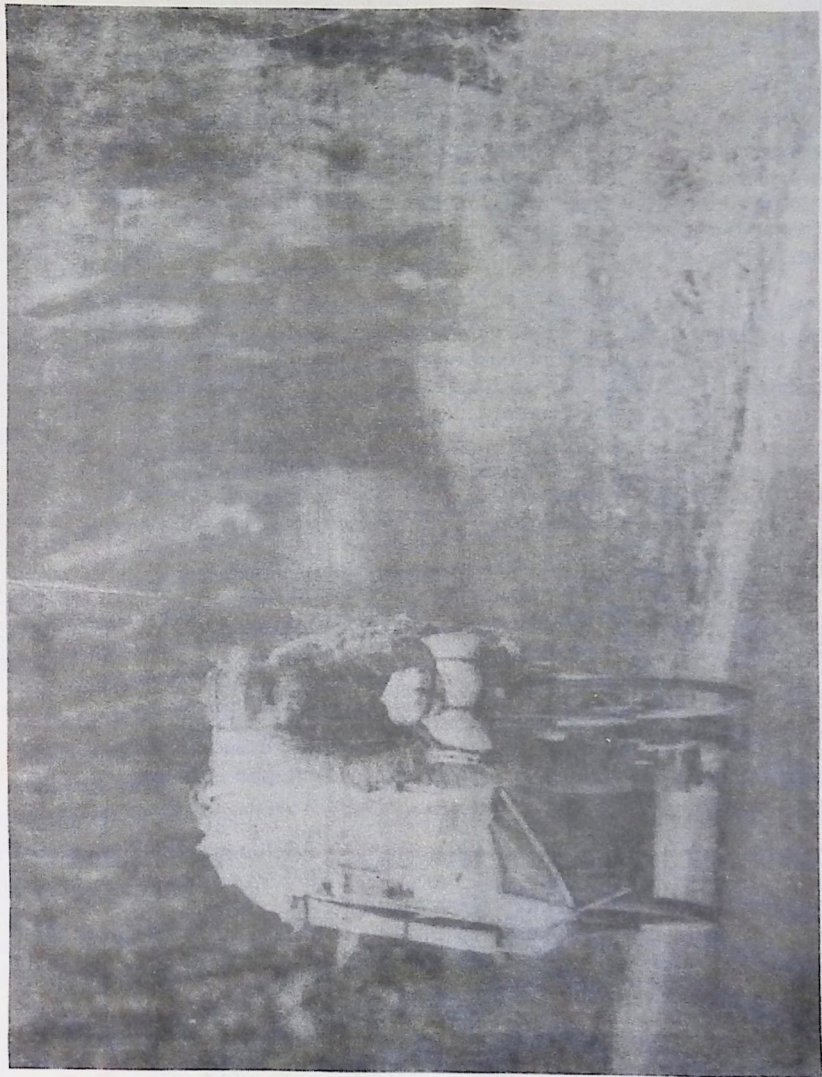


Doug Catherall - a fine example of an industrious and ever helpful Australian youth. Here we see Doug working as a train conductor on the Siberian Salt Mine Railway. Judging from the passengers it looks as if this was the first class cabin, further indication that Doug's style and finesse won him all the top jobs - A great Ambassador.



"My, what lovely eyes you've got lad" - "Have you ever seen a white man naked?".

Children played a special part in Doug's adventure, and here he is chatting up a dear little fellow in Lower Slobovia.



Doug Catherall - homeward bound. Wize to the ways of the world, Doug rides up the driveway of his Mum's place. His hair a little thinner, his beard grey and bushy, his eyes wrinkled from too many hours in smokey seedy bordillos. Tonight he will sleep well in his own little bed again where the dreams of his wild and wondrous trip will flood back as he relives his great adventure.



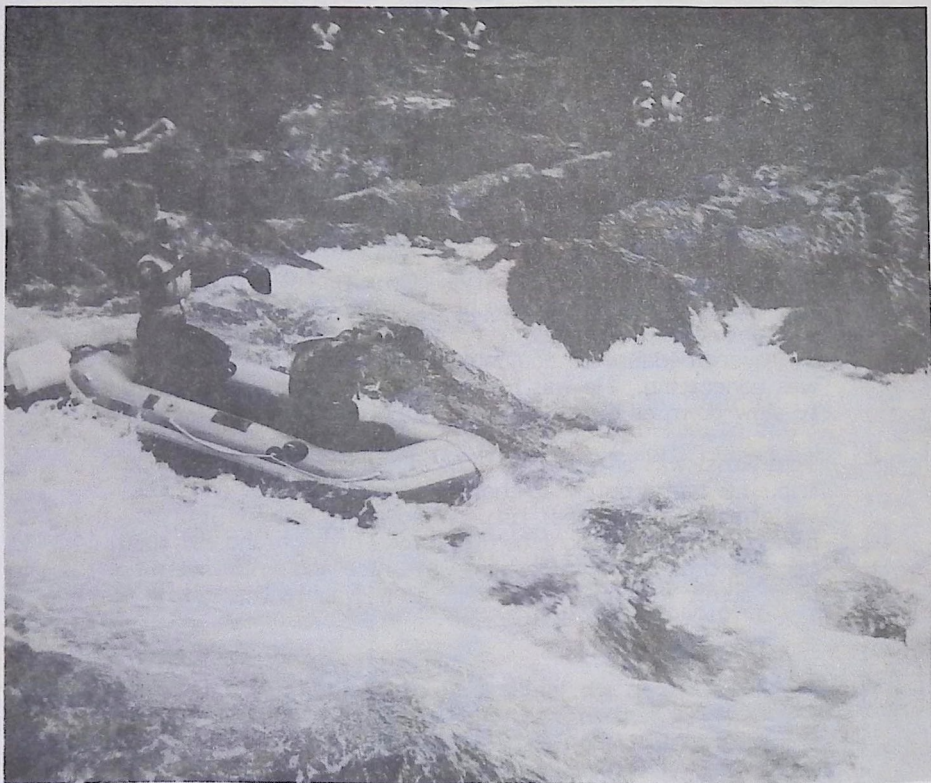
## DECO STOPS

by Alex Talay

- \* Igor's cat is now known as the "Little Drummer". Seems Pat Reynolds stayed at his place one night and the musical cat kept jumping on his bed. Pat let fly, and one booted Pussy sailed through the air and landed on Igor's drum set. It played quite a nice tune from all reports as it bounced around. Needless to say he didn't return for an encore.
- \* It's lucky Mick Jeacle is a giant. If he was a five foot weed he wouldn't have lasted a minute at the Swift's Creek Pub on the way to our rafting weekend. He absolutely terrorised the local's with his Tarzan impressions. "The Carrot" in his cups is indeed a sight to behold. (See pictures).
- \* Rae Lawson must have learned Karate in reverse. During the rafting trip whilst travelling through a pretty rough rapid she kicked Alex in the head and screamed afterwards.
- \* We know who wears the pants in Gavin and Toni Latimer's household. During the rafting trip Gavin told Toni to bail out (meaning water out of raft) and she promptly jumped over the side.
- \* Bill Hayes attempted his famous Tap Dance routine at the Golden Age Hotel in Omeo. There wasn't a decent pair of Tap shoes in the whole joint. We know because we checked every foot in the place. Bill perservered and wasn't bad even in bare feet.
- \* One of our members let the cat out of the bag whilst slightly inebriated on our rafting trip. He told us that when he and Gloria go to bed she always turns the lights out because she can't stand to see him enjoying himself. This is the same guy who always takes his wife everywhere with him so that he doesn't have to kiss her goodbye. Good one Billy.
- \* Yet another new member for V.S.A.G. Fiona Bruce joined last month. Welcome Fiona, I hope you enjoy many happy times with us.

- \* Comical to see Mick and Bazza on a recent Scallop dive. The sequence of events was as follows:-
1. Mick sees Flounder.
  2. Bazza stabs Flounder.
  3. Mick surfaces with Flounder.
  4. Bazza claims Flounder.
  5. Mick claims Flounder.
  6. Altercation over who owns Flounder.
  7. Bazza reclaims Flounder.
  8. Whilst Bazza in pub Mick steals Flounder.
  9. Bazza goes home and tells Marie dinner is Flounder.
  10. Bazza checks gear and can't find Flounder.
  11. Marie crook on Bazza because she loves Flounder.
  12. Mick and Annie eat Flounder.
- \* Is Tony Tipping losing his nerve. On a recent dive he claims he fell out of Tony Rossi's new boat. How you could fall out of such a luxurious craft is over my head. I suspect he jumped overboard because he couldn't handle the awesome speed Rossi was generating. He was heard to remonstrate with the crew to slow down as his bedraggled self was hauled aboard.
- \* Toni Rossi was an amusing sight at our recent Warrnambool trip. He had a catchbag that contained about 10 different varieties of mostly reef fish. When asked "Why is it so?" he explained he thought he'd take one of each and eat them because then he'd know which were nice and which were not. Must admit we couldn't think of an answer to that one.\*

# WHITE WATER RAFTING TRIP MITTA MITTA RIVER 1987



RAE & ALEX PREPARE FOR A SWIM





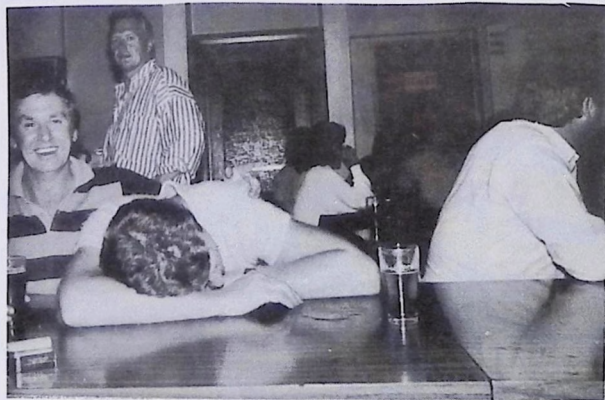
TONI AND GAVIN LATIMER SWEAT IT OUT



RAE & ALEX ENJOY THE SCENERY



TWO VIEWS OF THE SAD DEMISE OF PRESIDENT MICK.  
AFTER WORKING TIRELESSLY MAKING SURE ALL WAS  
WELL WITH HIS MATES HE WAS JUST TOO EXHAUSTED  
TO CONTINUE.







IGOR & STAN READY FOR BED



PARTY TIME AT THE LODGE!!



# **A GIRLS GUIDE TO V.S.A.G. MEMBERSHIP OR THERE'S MORE TO DIVING THAN GOING DOWN!**

by Rae Lawson

As honourable new members of V.S.A.G., Amanda & I would like to thank you for welcoming us to the group, even though it feels like we've been one of the 'guys' for a while now.

Our biggest thanks has to go to Alex for all his advice and being our underwater prodigy!!

When we began our plight to becoming scuba-divers, I don't think we really realised what an education it was going to be, and I'm not just talking about the diving side of it!

Under Alex's guiding 'advice' we began our dive course in the middle of winter, Alex said it would make us better divers! (Please note the number of actual plunges Alex has taken this winter!).

Nevertheless we braved the gusty winds, pouring rain, weed-in wetsuits and David Wailes to successfully complete and qualify - AND WE LOVE IT!

Our subsequent dives have been loads of fun, experiencing all the wonders of the underworld, and we've been terribly spoilt above the water aboard 'The Leeder'.

Now I know we haven't experienced life as a diver until we've ridden in John Gouldings 'cruiser', but who else is going to keep Alex and Pat company?

I must say the social activities of V.S.A.G. are next to none, and observing the antics of said members has been quite an education.

Take for example our first encounter with V.S.A.G. - Wilsons Prom. at Easter:

Low and behold we bump into our fellow aerobics earlybird - Ross 'Luxford, there's more to Rossco than just his starjumps!

Amanda had a very nauseating experience with Tony Tipping, and Amanda and I made piglets of ourselves, scoffing out on Don Abell's pride catch of the day (good first impression!).

Then there was the recent rafting trip: The 'Big Carrot's' (Mick) drunken war-cry (or was it a mating call?) terrorised the tiny township of Swift Creek and made a bigger impression than the weekly chook raffle. Mick and Alex's not so harmonised duet entertained the cabin of weary rafters, and Amanda's ribs are still mending after Tony Rossi's consistent elbow-jabs at the dinner table.

And now we look forward to our Xmas holiday at Byron Bay with Mum & Dad (Mr. & Mrs. Alex and Pat Talay), where our diving experience should broaden, and Alex's shark stories haven't deterred me. After going down to have a look at that big 7 metre one caught at Phillip Island, any old Bronze Whaler at Byron would be a guppie compared to that! "We're not worried are we Mandy? - Nah no worries!"

But I can see us going through a lot of Champagne & Strawberries at Byron to celebrate every time we return to shore in one piece!

But seriously thanks again to everyone for your encouragement and help, and we look forward to seeing you on the next dive.

#### Editor's Note

Thank you Rae for the article. It's great to have you and Amanda join the ranks of our all to few lady divers.

ED \*

## **WARRNAMBOOL - MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND 1987**

by Mick Jeacle

As I sat eating lunch on Friday overlooking the mirror-like surface of the Bay at Frankston, I must admit that my usual pessimistic outlook was again present. After all Tony Tipping said we had virtually no chance of diving Warrnambool at this time of the year and he has reminded us of this fact constantly over the past few months.

Well Tony, let me tell you that we had 3 excellent days diving in constant 35° heat. There was a bit of wind but it was off shore and we would travel flat out to reach the dive sites every day.

The trip was very well attended and we had 12 divers in all and 4 boats, following the late arrival of Andy who had car troubles, and Paul King (yes, the same one) on Saturday afternoon.

The diving on Saturday was somewhat exploratory following a brief talk with the Proprietor of the dive shop. The first dive was in the Thunder Point/Eagle Rock area but due to a fairly large swell we could not venture too close to the rocks where excellent fish life was said to abound. So we anchored some distance from shore in about 60 feet of water but the fish were non-existent, although the underwater terrain was quite good.

The second dive was on the La Bella wreck situated just out from the Breakwater. This wreck is very broken up and in my opinion it was worth a look but there would be no need to dive it again for some time. To quote Alex: "Fifteen minutes on that heap of junk is enough, mate!"

On Sunday we headed farther afield and dived just past the Basin, about 4 miles from Port Fairy. The reef here was excellent and from all reports crayfish were everywhere. John Lawler counted 10 in one hole and Alex counted 16 for the dive. Personally, I chose not to look into any of the ledges for fear of frustration setting in; however one could not help notice the ones sitting out in the open - sigh! The fish life here was a little better and all managed to bag



a few. Lunch time saw all boats anchored close to shore behind the reef in beautiful turquoise water. The sun was really beating down here and a quick splash minus wetsuits was most refreshing indeed.

After lunch we headed off about 2 miles further along the coast to Rogers Rocks, supposedly one of the best diving areas in Port Fairy. Here the terrain was also very good with good ledges and drop-offs down to about 70 feet to the sand. Ross Luxford and I were successful in bagging quite a few nice fish here for the BBQ that evening. Must purchase a sling to keep permanently in the boat from now on; as a feed of fresh fish is hard to beat.

The next day we again could not believe our luck as the temperature was again forecast in the 30's. We ventured off to Rogers Rocks again rather than go the other way as planned as a southerly change was forecast for the afternoon. Following another good dive, and more fish, the wind really picked up to about 35 knots but fortunately it was still from the north. At this point it was decided we would proceed back to Warrnambool where some dived on the La Bella wreck again, and others chose to consume stubbies instead.

All in all it was an excellent trip and Warrnambool is certainly a venue we will list on our calendar again in future. The Figtree Caravan Village was a very comfortable spot and those en-suite cabins were certainly the way to go! Anyone want to buy a Tenka Chateau III tent in good condition?\*

## RETRO REFLECTIVE TAPE ON LIFE JACKETS

From December 1st all approved life jackets must be fitted with retro reflective tape in accordance with boating regulations.

This tape is available in packs from boating and marine dealers at prices ranging from about \$12.00 - \$14.00 per pack, and is also available to members through the Club at a slightly discounted rate.

Enquiries to John Goulding.

## REFUGE COVE - WILSONS PROMONTORY

23RD TO 26TH JANUARY

V.S.A.G. will again be visiting Refuge Cove over the 4 DAY HOLIDAY BREAK in January aboard the luxurious 5 star vessel Mirrabooka.

Because of the extra day's holiday spaces are limited to a maximum of 12 people.

Costs are still being finalised but it is envisaged that the all inclusive package price including food and accommodation will be around \$130.00.

Note: This price does not include accommodation cost on the Friday night before departure nor does it include beverages.

A deposit of \$50.00 is required by the December General Meeting on December 15th. This deposit may be forfeited if a cancellation occurs without a replacement being found.

To ensure your position contact John Goulding on 890 6634 (Home) or 666 3543 (Work).

As at time of printing the following members have indicated their availability:

J. Goulding, H. Large, J. Large, D. Catherall, P. Jones, R. Lawson, A. Tutton, F. Bruce?, P. Tipping.\*

### GENERAL MEETING DATES

DECEMBER & FEBRUARY

Please note the December General Meeting will be on TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER at the North Melbourne Football Club.

Refreshments will follow afterwards on the Yarra Bank.

The February General Meeting will be on THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY at the North Melbourne Football Club.

Thereafter the General Meetings will be held on the third THURSDAY of each month.

There is no meeting in January.

## DIVE REPORT - "CROCODILE HUNT" 15/11/87

by Des Williams

The starting time of this dive was delayed due to a change of tide which had sent the crocodiles down deep - according to John Goulding anyway!!

We had plenty of divers in four boats on a beautiful morning, so we didn't waste any time in getting out through the Heads. A fair sized swell greeted us as we checked out the sites of two submarines and "Rotomahana". Mick Jeacle reported very poor visibility on the submarine, so we all returned inside the Bay keeping a close eye on Paul King in his boat. Paul is a conservative boatman and cautiously unloaded 50% of his crew before passing through the Heads.

A drift dive then followed, with Alex, Pat, Des, Igor & Rae all keeping together, as we drifted past Queenscliff over the beautiful reef formations. Visibility was about 40 - 50 feet and a very comfortable tide running. We managed to crawl into some huge ledges - no crays, but some good sized Blue Devils and gigantic sponges. At one stage, Pat Reynolds had his head and upper torso completely inside a cup sponge.

A few bottles were picked up and plenty of coal was seen deep inside ledges and crevices. The coal in this area came from the "Milora" which stranded here in 1934; 8,000 tons of coal was jettisoned to lighten the vessel before two tugs hauled her off. Of course she is now at rest in the Ship's Graveyard due to massive damage as a result of her stranding.

A very pleasant day indeed. We enjoyed paté and drinks at Point Nepean and returned to Sorrento relaxed and sunburnt and not a Croc in the boat!

Excellent day - thanks John Goulding.\*



## TIP'S TIT-BITS

by Tony Tipping

Just a couple of days ago I celebrated, if you could call it that, the 20th anniversary of my 21st birthday in rather somewhat different circumstances. Firstly, the wife was in hospital (nothing serious) and she only just remembered as I was leaving at visiting time; Mum forgot and rang to apologise the next day; the in-laws came good with dinner for the kids and myself although my 4 year old son only realized it was a birthday after he'd demolished two cakes and two serves of ice cream. As for young Laura she didn't care less - not to mention my dear brother Pully, he rang up that night to say: "Happy Birthday, but can't help you organize the Tennis Party this year I'll be in Sydney - Bye!" So far still neither a card nor a present.

Twenty years ago was another story - I'd just broken up with one girlfriend so the week before the big Turn it was off to the local pub dance where I did manage to meet an attractive 19 year old virgin named Pauline. Back in the sixties there was such a thing as a 19 year old virgin for those of you who may have forgotten. The seventies sure changed that with the likes of Pedro the Swift and his famous line: "This won't hurt love, did it!" Now in the late eighties I can see it turning back full circle with diseases like Aids, Herpes and possibly the most serious of all Chlamydia. Back to Pauline, all I did was get her organized to go to a 21st birthday the following week (not letting on whose it was). Now Johnny Goulding and Paul Tipping probably would remember far more about that night than what I do, but the two things that stick in my blurred memory more than most are that Mum got in the way of a chunder during the speeches and that the Old Man and I stayed up to finish the 18 gallon keg at 7.30 a.m. with great success. As for Pauline, she may well remain a virgin to this very day!

Gosh, I keep forgetting Fathoms is a diving magazine. On the last Sunday in October (and I haven't dived since) we had a reasonable sort of a day out of Sorrento and revisited the old Eliza Ramsden (for the 31st time). Then we headed off to Rye for a haul of Scallops - pretty ordinary stuff but I did enjoy the enthusiasm shown by new boy Toni Rossi especially on the wreck. Never mind how much air you gulped Toni you improve with age and experience and besides anyone

who doesn't admit to chewing air like that in their early days is lying. For me the fun started after a beer in the car park when we all went back to our cars to drive home. No doubt about my luck with Fold Telstars (even the new one) - a burnt out coil meant a night in the R.A.C.V. car park at Rye after a meal and a few grogs at the Rye pub. Luckily the lay back seats went down all right but I couldn't get the bloody things back up. I'd hate to think what would have happened had a bloke wanted to play double deckers in that car! But still, it gave the Ford dealer at Mornington two warranty jobs next morning after I was eventually towed there. No doubt the tow-truck driver enjoyed about 100 Scallops, too!

### 16th Annual Tennis Party and V.S.A.G. Mile

After early rain and cool conditions the sky cleared and enabled us to get the tennis underway just before midday on Saturday 21st November. Notable apologies were accepted from Bob & June Scott who had previously attended and competed in all previous tournaments and also the Gouldings who have rarely competed in any. Having checked the records Dave Moore has competed in all except the first and Marie Truscott has only missed competing in last years title although she did arrive late in the evening - something about a fortieth birthday party. Bazza also is a regular spectator and to be quite honest if I had arthritis, ulcers and your heart condition Bazz, I wouldn't have competed either!

By about mid afternoon Big Mick had kept his Singles Title (after Annie cost him a first round thrashing in the doubles) in a repeat of several other previous finals when he just held off a challenge from Alex 6-4. Marie Truscott and Dave Moore got up to win the Doubles 6-4 against Doug Catherall and Melinda (Sam's friend). Then it was Birthday Boy Don Abell's turn to drag himself away from his wife Nick and dishlicker Tiber not to mention the pile of cans and red wine bottles because Don was the official starter and timer of the coveted V.S.A.G. Mile. This was a truly spectacular event - half a dozen pint sized juniors off at three minutes handicap, a couple of attractive bottomed teenagers at 90 seconds, Doug and "conman extraordinaire" Ross of 60, myself and Tony John about 20 and the scratchman last year's winner Danny John. Apologies to anyone I missed. Now Don's only blemishes were that he finished us 60 yards short (the wrong pole) and then he buggered up the times!

The winners were:-

Outright: Ross Luxford (actual time 4.58).

Junior Male: Morgan Williams.

Junior Female: Awenna Williams.

Veteran: Yours truly (undefeated in this class!).

Youngest Even Finisher: Marcus Tipping.

Special thanks to other officials Pat, Susie, John and Dave for making sure the kids especially had a safe passage. The picnics, barbeques and bullshit continued on well into the evening and Johnny Lawler handled the presentation as only he can. Funnily enough Pauly and Cathy turned up just as most of us were about to go home having come via Sydney, still he paid his \$2.00 so I won't rubbish him. Although there was no house at Somers to go back to all who came thoroughly enjoyed the day and just let us hope this day can survive in future years on the V.S.A.G. social calendar.

As far as that hustler Luxford goes with his big tummy and his 60 second handicap I can't wait until we dive the Pinnacle at Byron Bay with those ten footers! We'll line his wetsuit with blood, guts, semen and garbage plus anything else that turns on hungry sharks and see how quick he can surface from 140 feet!

Have a happy and safe Christmas and see you at Byron Bay. Incidentally our old mate Greg Blackburn has kicked in a trip for two divers to Byron Bay for the Christmas Party raffle.\*



## DOWNLOW MEDAL UPDATE

V.S.A.G. did not participate in the Downlow Medal Competition this year due to the reformulation of the judging criteria. However, the competition starts again in earnest on January 1st with new dive criteria and with the following clubs competing:

V.S.A.G., Marine Diving Group, Melbourne Bottom Scratchers.

### DOWNLOW MEDAL - DIVE CRITERIA

To be eligible as a dive counted towards the Downlow Medal, a dive shall be:

- i. made using SCUBA, hookah or any other compressed gas apparatus.

(Snorkelling and decompression chamber dives are not acceptable).

- ii. gazetted in the Club itinerary.

(If a dive is cancelled and transferred (either in location or time) or added to the itinerary, the change must be recorded in the following club magazine, and accepted by the Downlow Committee if it is to be counted as a dive).

- iii. a duration of a minimum 20 minutes bottom time.

(If decompression would be involved then a shorter bottom time will be accepted).

(Retrieval dives will not be counted).

- iv. There must be an interval of at least 20 minutes between dives.

### RECORD-KEEPING

Club representatives on the Downlow Committee are responsible for collecting record sheets from the Dive Captains. Dive Captains should make a note of any aborted or contentious dive claims, and make a statement on the form provided on the day giving as much detail as possible.

NOTE: THE DOWNLOW COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER AND DECIDE ON ANY CLAIMS TO COUNT A DIVE WHICH DOES NOT FIT THE ABOVE GUIDELINES.



**DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR DEC./JAN. 1987/88**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event/Location</u>	<u>Dive Captain</u>	<u>Meet At</u>
Dec 13	B.B.Q./Family Day	Alex Talay 772 3085	8.30 a.m. Sorrento
Dec 15	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club Followed by Refreshment - Yarra Bank		8.00 p.m.
Dec 18	Christmas Party Lonsdale Street Bar & Grill (See notice this issue).	John Lawler 569 9851	7.00 p.m.
Xmas Trip	Byron Bay	Tony Tipping 817 4956	
Dec 27	Heads Area Dive	M. Jeacle (059) 71 2786	8.30 a.m. Sorrento Ramp
Jan 3	Flinders/Cape Schanck	D. Abell	8.30 a.m. Flinders Jetty
Jan 17	Flinders	J. Lawler 569 9851	8.30 a.m. Flinders Jetty
Jan 23-26	Refuge Cove, Wilsons Prom. Charter Trip	J. Goulding 890 6634	Foster Friday Night
Feb 7	Wreck Dive	A. Talay 772 3085	8.30 a.m. Sorrento
Feb 18	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club		8.00 p.m.
Feb 20-21	Tidal River, Wilsons Prom. Overnight Camp	P. Reynolds	9.30 a.m. Tidal River 20/2
Mar 12-14	Port Campbell	P. Tipping	
Mar 17	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club		8.00 p.m.
Mar 31 - April 4	Tidal River, Wilsons Prom. Easter Trip.	D. Abell	

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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.