

INDEPENDENT DIVING

FREEDOM

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Safety in Diving

EST, 1954







VSAG

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VSAG

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 take... 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 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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Next committee meetings	26th April, 1988, John Lav 1 Katrina Avenue, Murrum 24th May, 1988 Don Abell	nbeena.

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 13 BIRDWOOD STREET, BOX HILL SOUTH, VIC., 3128 TELEPHONE: 890 6634

EDITORIAL

In this issue of Fathoms there is a variety of articles ranging from details on Club activities, "Blasts from the Past" and guite a range of news items from various publications. For the first time in a long while we have a "Letter to the Editor", whilst the contents of the letter and the reply may be more in the style of what one could expect from the Heart Balm column of the "Truth" Newspaper, I am pleased that at least someone has taken up my offer in an earlier editorial to send a letter to the Editor on some issue. I only encourage more of you to do likewise - but please do not try and emulate the fantasies of our

anonymous contributor. May I also thank all those who sent in articles or newspaper clippings. Please keep it up!

Now that Summer is well and truly passed don't hang up the diving gear, for some of the best diving weather (smooth seas and good visibility) will be had during the Autumn months. The Dive Calendar has plenty of dives planned over the next few months and with 2 long weekends (Anzac and Queen's Birthday) should provide many opportunities for good diving.

You will notice throughout this issue that I have listed the telephone number of the <u>Diver Emergency Service (008 088 200)</u>. Following the most informative talk by Dr. David Tuxen at the February General Meeting we should all be more aware of the very real presence of potential risk of decompression sickness whilst diving. Fortunately our Club has never experienced such an occurrence but Dr. Tuxen estimates that this year the chamber will be required to treat 60 patients, and he estimates that this figure will grow by at least 10 per year over the next 3 years. As at February when the chamber had been operating just a short time 12 divers had been treated of whom 11 were amateurs.

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Amongst the major risks Dr. Tuxen identified as contributing to decompression sickness are:-

- 1. Divers exceeding the decompression tables with inadequate ascent time and deco stops.
- 2. More than 1 dive within 12 hours.
- 3. Multiple ascents and rapid ascents.
- 4. Old age, obesity, lack of fitness.
- 5. Illness, injury or fatigue.
- 6. Heavy exercise underwater.
- 7. Coldness.
- 8. Effect of alcohol or drugs.
- 9. Bad luck.

In fact a diver sticking to a "safe table" limit was still at risk of decompression sickness with an average chance of 1 in 200 of being effected with some symptom.

Dr. Tuxen stressed that any symptom – no matter how small should be directed to immediate medical attention as even minor symptoms of decompression sickness could lead to more serious complications and brain damage.

So in case of emergency the primary medical contact is the Diver Emergency Service (008 088 200) anywhere in Australia.

Also the Alfred Hospital and the National Safety Council could be contacted if for some reason D.E.S. was not answering.

Getting "bent" maybe a little like winning tattslotto - you go week after week and never get a tickle but at the rate of 60 treatments a year somebody is getting caught on an average of <u>one every six days</u>.

So should we ever have to face the situation will you know what to do and who to call?

008 088 200 DIVER EMERGENCY SERVICE

An observation that I have made is that ever since Fathoms changed from a monthly publication to a bi-monthly publication attendances at General Meetings in the non-Fathoms months have been down.

So why not make a note now of all the years General Meetings.

The 3rd Thursday of each month falls on:-

April 21 May 19 June 16 - Jack Loney Guest Speaker. July 21 August 18 September 15 - Annual General Meeting. October 20 November 17 December 15

Editor

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V.S.A.G. COMMITTEE NEWS

Highlights from the February and March Committee Meetings were as follows:-

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

The Committee agreed that the presence of a guest speaker at several General Meetings a year would be a good thing, following the overwhelming reaction to Dr. David Tuxen's talk at the February Meeting.

Des Williams volunteered to try and get noted historian and shipwreck expert Jack Loney to talk at our June Meeting. (See notice).

The Committee was notified by various members who had been appointed as dive captains over the Summer months that some members were phoning several days before a dive to reserve their spot. The Committee stressed that members are required to phone the dive captain the <u>day</u> <u>or night before</u> the dive to indicate their wish to be included. Members who phone earlier than the day before the dive may not be guaranteed a place on the dive. They still must phone the day or night before the dive.

As a courteousy to the dive captain it would be appreciated if boat owners intending to bring their boats on a dive would phone the dive captain 2 or 3 days prior to indicate the availability of their boats. Boat owners are still asked to reconfirm with the dive captain on the evening before the dive.

Note: Dive captains may on occasions make other arrangements to these to suit particular circumstances.

A special filming of the Clubs Solomon Islands Safari Trip will be held at the April General Meeting.

Des Williams tabled a copy of the Accident Insurance Plan being promoted by the Australian Federation of Sport.

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MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Ross Luxford reported on his follow up investigations re: the Australian Federation of Sport Insurance Plan. Not enough detail is yet known in order to allow the Committee to make a recommendation.

Cash reserves of the Club were \$3,364.86 (compared with March 1987 of \$2,647.99).

In consideration of the improved financial position of the Club over the past 12 months the Committee decided not to increase annual subscriptions this year. However, the Committee noted that it had been 2 years since the subscriptions were increased and in waving an increase this year, acknowledged that when an increase is required (sometime in the future) it may be necessary to go for a larger increase than would have been the case if an increase was levied in 1988.

The Dive Calendar was progressed.

Proposal was put forward for the 1988/89 Christmas/New Year Trip to Streaky Bay, South Australia.

A proposal to raise funds by a wine promotion was agreed to. (See notice). \bigstar

V.S.A.G. SOLOMON ISLAND SAFARI FILM APRIL GENERAL MEETING (APRIL 21ST)

In memory of Keith Jensen a film of the V.S.A.G. Solomon Island Safari will be shown at the April General Meeting on Thursday, April 21st.

As most members would know very few divers knew the Solomons as well as Keith Jensen who led many expiditions there.

The showing of this film is in memory of Keith who died on April 12th last year.

NOTES FROM THE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES NEWSLETTER, VOL. 1, NO. 3

by Des Williams

(a) Fourteen new Fisheries and Wildlife Officers have just completed a six-week (December '87) law enforcement training course. They will continue to receive on-the-job training.

Their employment results from a special Government initiative to increase the number of staff available for Fisheries and Wildlife enforcement duties.

The live in course covered such topics as:-

- Boat operating and safety.
- Firearm use and safety.
- Legislation administered by C.F.L.
- Detection and interviewing techniques.
- Courtroom practice and proceedure.

Lecturers included members of the Victorian Police, barristers and magistrates and senior fisheries officers.

The recruits also had to complete a survival swim, fully clothed, over 600 metres in the Yarra River, as well as an intensive course of physical training.

(b) C.F.L.'s main enforcement effort in the past year has been directed towards activities by unlicensed fishermen operating commercially in the yabbie, abalone and crayfish fisheries.

Yabbies: 14 people prosecuted in 1987. Three convicted and fined \$3,500.00. The remaining 11 fined a total of \$2,800.00.

Abalone: 88 were aprehended in 1987, 55 of whom were prosecuted -10 months imprisonment for one, two fined \$2,200.00 each and six others fined more than \$1,000.00. The total of fines for abalone offences in 1987 was \$32,750.00.

Crayfish: 21 people prosecuted, the highest penalty for undersized and using snares being \$950.00. Total penalties for 1987 was \$6,910.00. *****

SORRENTO DIVE REPORT - 21ST FEBRUARY

by Jeanette Large

This is the first article I've written for Fathoms, having been a member of V.S.A.G. for seven or so years now. Yes, I am ashamed of myself, but have never thought of myself as much of a writer or story teller. My brother Don was always the writer in the family - and continues to be so!

Anyway, like most members of V.S.A.G. I enjoy getting my Fathoms every couple of months and reading the variety of articles which range from humorous (although sometimes of dubious content) stories to very interesting factual reports and articles. I can't guarantee that this article will be up to the usual standard of Fathoms, but here goes!

The scheduled dive for this weekend was for Tidal River for the whole weekend, but this was not to be, so a few of us - petrol strike and all, headed down to Sorrento on Sunday.

There were 8 divers, being John L., Igor, Doug, Fiona, Jim, Pat, Russell and myself. Alex came with his boat even though he wasn't feeling well, just so members like me, who rely heavily on the boat owners, could have a dive. The other boat was Russell's and I think it was the first time it had been out on a Club dive. John's friend Jan also decided to come out for the day.

The boats were launched quickly and we made our way towards "The Heads". As suspected it was too rough to get through. However, the large swells did not seem to deter the many fisherman bobbing around in their boats just inside "The Heads". The fish certainly must have been biting and those fisherman must have taken their kwells! Not my idea of fun!

We headed back to find a reef in the rip and waited for slack water for our first dive. I was on Alex's boat along with Doug, Igor, Pat and John. As Alex was not diving the four of us dived together. Although the visibility could have been better, the scenery was good, with colourful sponges, some old bottles, and a variety of fish etc. The crayfish were few, but Doug managed to find one right at the end of his dive.

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We surfaced to find Jan not at all well, but naturally everyone was particularly caring, sympathetic and even managed to withhold their laughter from time to time. We started off for calmer water straight away and waited there for the divers from the other boat to complete their dives and then join us.

John Lawler managed to get himself a monster of a crayfish which he proudly displayed as their boat pulled up.

After story swapping, crayfish comparing, lunch and a decent surface interval it was time for the second dive. A drift dive was decided upon back in the approximate area of the first dive. I decided against the second dive, as did Pat, so only Doug and Igor went in from Alex's boat. As we watched the buoy ripping across the surface of the water I felt certain I'd made the right decision to forego the second dive. This was confirmed by Igor and Doug as they were climbing back in the boat only 15 minutes after they had entered the water.

A quick tour around the Portsea pier and then back to Sorrento. All in all a very pleasant day. \clubsuit

Editor's Note

Thanks Jeanette for your article. I can assure you that you have nothing to worry about in being able to keep up to the usual Fathoms standard.

Some years ago Jay Cody (ex-member) introduced a Literary Award for original articles submitted by members. Jay was in the printing business which made him think he was entitled to judge other people's literary skills.

Well, the standard was so bad that he awarded the prize to the typesetter for creative initiative in setting out the index page at the front of the Fathoms

Things have certainly improved since those days and we would be pleased to accept more articles from you at any time.

Thanks.

Editor

PORT CAMPBELL - LABOUR DAY WEEKEND

by Paul Tipping

It came as no surprise to find late Friday afternoon (11th March) that the elements were displaying their might with full force on our arrival at the Port Campbell National Park. Yes, the greeting I got from friendly service station proprietor, Alan Jarrett was the one that has that altogether too familiar ring about it - "You should have been here yesterday!" In fact, I was told by Alan, who also doubles as the local air filling operator for our tanks, that the seas had been virtually flat for nigh on a full 2 weeks previously. This news was also verified by the local publican whose hospitality we managed to gratefully accept on and off over the weekend.

Condemned to 31 days of stiff south westerlies that never really let up, the camp Kommandant soon realised that a programme of non-diving activities is called for - least 40 V.S.A.G. 'tourists' fall prey to the ever present temptation to moral decline, i.e. the Port Campbell pub is only a mere drop-kick from the camp and motels and opening hours these days tend to be on the generous side.

So we pass away the hours, both daylight and the 'wee small' ones in various ways. Friday night saw supper after a fairly limited session at the local, in the Alex/Pat/Igor room back at the 'Loch Ard' motel. Not sure if Alex was a little 'tired and emotional' after a hectic week but the ever upright Igor was quick to the wheel of the Jag to run this writer back to camp. Come to think of it, Igor was extraordinarily abstemious (note spelling ABSTEMIOUS) the entire weekend. Then again, Alex for reasons that were occasionally evident, was happy to entrust the chauffeuring to our Russian buddy.

On Saturday, one recalls the odd anecdote. The Big 'M' when not attending to paternal duties, flourishing a paintbrush. Who could believe their eyes on seeing this rather formidable member of the male species gentling daubing the canvas with his watercolours. Others took the drive along the coast to territory all too familiar to those of us who'd copped inclement weather in past visits. Others less familiar with the region experienced the breathtaking coast around Peterborough. The ever mounting swells hurtling against the steep cliffs in and near London Bridge and the Arch surely leave an impression on even the world-weary tourist.

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Sunday saw walks along the ridge above the west arm of the Port Campbell Harbour. A few, notably Robert Birtles and a couple of visitors even managed to get wet near the 'Crofts' around from Peterborough. Tall stories if several hundred crays were put around the camp, though when pressed the intrepid younger Birtles brother conceded virtually all were under legal size. Not surprising when you allow for the 10' depth in which these brave sons of V.S.A.G. were practising their art.

Sunday was horse riding for some. With no fewer than 4 V.S.A.G. lads and lassies forfeiting their mounts on this outing, there is no way the borrowed line "they're not a bad mob of riders for a bunch of s.c.u.b.a. freaks" could apply to this lot. At any rate, concussion, lacerations and bruises, both to limb and ego alike, were the legacies of this V.S.A.G. variant of the '1st Tuesday in November'.

Sunday over, leaves Monday. Time beats all, they say. Even a relaxing weekend for divers whose ambitions were totally frustrated by weather. It's happened before. It'll happen again. But the opportunity to dive on our favourite spots, including a return to our much loved wreck 'Loch Ard', will no doubt come our way if we persist. I'm all for going back in '89.

P.S. Those who consider these jottings incomplete without reference to the activities of Saturday night may need a reminder. Combining medication with one's favourite 'house red' is NOT recommended as a means of ridding the old body of a dose of the Port Campbell equivalent of the dreaded 'Delhi Belly' complaint. Thanks, Ross for the escort back to camp, but I'm unable to explain who consumed the second 'pot' found empty between our families' camp sites next morning!

DIVER EMERGENCY SERVICE 008 088 200

10 YEARS AGO . . .

by John Goulding

So Port Campbell over the March long weekend was blown out and almost washed away.

But not so 10 years ago when on the same weekend V.S.A.G. rallied to a call from the Scuba Divers Federation who had been requested by the State Government to try and raise "a substantial relic capable of preservation" from the wreck of the Loch Ard which hit a reef and sank in June 1878.

The following article is the official report prepared by Peter Stone the project co-ordinator.

"The Lift

The anchor was raised on Sunday, 12th March 1978 by the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria.

Twenty-one divers, and six boats were involved in the lift co-ordinated by the Secretary of the S.D.F.V., Mr. Peter Stone, Mr. Len Brennan from South Eastern Marine and Salvage supplied the lifting equipment.

Several major factors had to be overcome in order for the lift to be successful:

- The Weather South-west winds and long ocean swells from the Southern Ocean make the wreck-site off Mutton Bird Island inaccessible on all but 30 days of the year.
- The Depth The anchor lay in over seventy feet of water, making it the deepest anchor lift yet achieved in Victoria. Bottom time for divers working strenuously was less than 25 minutes without the need for decompression staging.
- The Site Mutton Bird Island is ten kilometres east of the nearest boat launching facility, at Port Campbell. Although near to the Loch Ard Gorge, the gorge entrance is extremely dangerous on all but the calmest of days, hence any emergency that may arise could have meant a ten kilometre

sea trip back to shore. Boats could not anchor directly over the wreck-site due to breaking seas at the tip of the island. Once lifted, the anchor had to be slowly towed the long distance back to Port Campbell.

The Sea-Bed The anchor lay heavily encrusted on the sea-bed surrounded by debris from the wreck. The surge deflecting down and off the face of the island made the lift particularly hazardous for the divers. Visibility on the day was less than 6 feet.

A search on Saturday 11th March, failed to find the anchor. Its actual location was not known precisely although a map had been drawn by one of the divers several years previously.

Conditions were not the best for diving on the following day, with six foot seas and a very unpredictable wind.

The divers had first to man-handle five boats across the sand at Port Campbell as no launching facilities are available.

The Torquay Sub-Aqua Club boat was first on the site. Divers located the anchor within ten minutes and placed a buoy on it. The next team down took the lifting bag to the sea-bed, and attached it to the anchor.

The Lifting Bag is a large reinforced rubber "balloon" some 8 feet long by 4 feet diameter, attached to the anchor by wire strops and shackles. Lifting force is applied by the bag being filled with air using compressed air tanks. The displacement of water causes an upward lift, in this case of nearly two tonnes.

Stage one of the bag fill was done by using exhaust air from a divers regulator. This gave the bag sufficient lift to raise it off the sea-bed, attached to the anchor.

Four 72 cubic feet divers tanks of compressed air were used to fill the bag to maximum capacity, but still the anchor refused to break loose from the encrustacean.

At this stage the lifting operation had been in progress for five hours with several divers still waiting their turn to dive. A crowbar was used to break free the encrustacean around the two flukes and the lifting ring, and in one enormous surge the bag rose rapidly to the surface expelling air as it ascended. On the surface divers watched as a foaming circle of sea was penetrated by the huge black balloon, lifting eight feet out of the sea before settling back with neutral buoyancy.

It was 4.00 p.m.

The Loch Ard Anchor was UP.

After several anxious moments as the bag drifted toward Mutton Bird Island, a line was passed around the bag. With the anchor firmly attached six feet below the surface, the bag and anchor were towed slowly back to the Port Campbell jetty by the local crayboat, "Joyleen".

Several trips were made through the Loch Ard Gorge entrance, using the beach as a base for air tanks and lifting equipment.

The total operation took eight hours and involved over thirty people.

The anchor lay in twenty feet of water off the Port Campbell jetty for two weeks and was finally raised on Easter Saturday, 25th March, only two months less than a century when it settled on the sea-bed after the tragedy of the LOCH ARD.

THE PEOPLE involved in the lift.

Peter Stone		and Dive Master, Secretary s Federation of Victoria
Len Brennan	Lift Master, S Salvage	outh Eastern Marine and
Wayne Osborne	Diver, Torqua	y Scuba Club
Graham Stevens	0	u
Peter Rodgers	u	н
Paul Stewart	11	
John Goulding	Diver, Preside	ent Victorian Sub-Aqua Group
Paul Tipping		an Sub-Agua Group
Tony Tipping	ш	
Max Synon	н	"
Robert Adamson	"	н
Peter Smith	н	"

Barry Truscott		orian Sub-Aqua Group
Neil Garland	"	a subscription of the second
Fred Ferrante	н	
Wendy Mason	н	н
Julie Okle	н	
Carl Jironc	H	
Dave Moore	11	
John McKenzie	11	н
Paul Sier	11	
Bill Morris	Skipper, "Jo	yleen", Port Campbell

Appreciation is also shown to John Brown, shore co-ordinator, Loch Ard Centenary Committee: Gary Hayden (Terang) and Terry Hayden (Port Campbell), local divers for their assistance and advice; Mrs. Davies of Port Campbell who provided the all important tape measure; Jan Breavington. Jan Brennan and the many wives who provided their shore support; the V.S.A.G. shore crew who filled tanks and co-ordinated equipment; the crew of the "Joyleen" for their courtesy and assistance; and the members of the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria for their encouragement, co-operation and co-ordination of the project."

The May 1978 edition of Skindiving in Australia ran the following article:

"LOCH ARD GIVES UP A RELIC

Life came back to Victoria's most famous shipwreck recently - after almost 100 years.

A team of scuba divers led by S.I.A. associate editor Peter Stone raised one of the main anchors from the ill-fated Loch Ard, which sank in a storm near this south-west coastal town on June 1, 1878.

The salvage was planned as one of the main events in the Loch Ard centenary commemoration which marks the tragedy and that era of immigration to Victoria by sailing ship.

S.I.A. associate editor Peter Stone, led about 20 divers from the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group and the Torquay Scuba Club in the daylong operation.

"We were extremely lucky to be successful," he said.

"The odds were against us - you could get on that wreck only about 30 days of each year, because the seas can be so wild and the weather so unpredictable".

The anchor is more than 2m long, 1.5m wide, and weighs about threequarters of a tonne.

Mr. Stone said it was heavily imbedded beside the wreck in 21 metres of water along a stretch of coastline regarded as one of the most hostile in the world.

It was dislodged with crowbars, then raised to the surface on a large rubber lifting bag. The divers inflated the bag with compressed air after attaching it to the anchor.

The President of the V.S.A.G, Mr. John Goulding, said it would be the deepest anchor salvage from a shipwreck in Victoria.

"It's in very good condition - it's all intact," he said.

The 1624-ton Loch Ard was the last passenger sailing ship to be wrecked on the approaches to Melbourne.

Mr. Paul Sier, a V.S.A.G. member who took part in the anchor salvage, said the Loch Ard was no longer readily recognisable as a ship.

"Debris is stewn all over the ocean floor," he said.

"The constant pounding of the waves and blasting by underwater vandals have virtually destroyed her."

He said that although the divers had the weather on their side yesterday, they were hampered by underwater visibility of only 2m and a continual surging swell."

So for some of us Port Campbell does have a special significance and whilst opportunities like the one we were given are pretty rare, the Loch Ard still has special appeal . . . even if it does mean just to go back and LOOK at the old girl. \bullet

V.S.A.G. CHRISTMAS TRIP 1988

In the ongoing search to find new and exciting dive locations Alex Talay has proposed that the Club go to Streaky Bay in South Australia for next Christmas.



Streaky is a 2 day drive from Melbourne, situated on the Great Australian Bight, but is really only the same (or very similar) distance as Port Lincoln.

The waters around Streaky are reported to be one of the best diving locations in Southern Australia and the area thrives on its excellent fishing reputation.

The town is noted for its pub - The Community Hotel, because it is actually owned by the townspeople themselves.

Spectacular 50 metre high cliffs and huge granite rock slabs make up the shore line of much of the area and provide the sort of terrain where we can expect great diving.

Alex is going to investigate the camping and diving facilities and will report back at a later date.

For those not wishing to drive, air connections to Streaky Bay are available on Kendell Airlines from Adelaide, and of course Australian Airlines can organise your travel to Adelaide and your transfers onto Kendell. *****

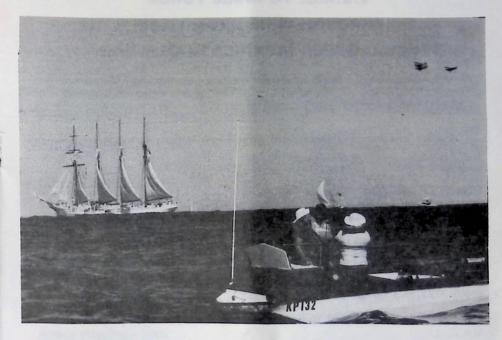


Our esteemed Leader in charge of "The Leader", on the Tall Ships arrival.

It was a day of strange sights like the one opposite.

(Could these be the "3 sleaziest boaties" as mentioned in "The Day of the Tall Ships", February/March issue. Names changed to protect the very innocent Pat, Peter & Doug would hope so, or legal action may be pending).

A BOAT WITH NO NAME



Although boat is found with the ancient mariners, it is believed to be of a more recent era. The many angles and unusual shapes are designed for comfort rather than speed. Protection and safety being most important and evidence of possible things to come. So may be said for the boat.

Editor's comment not sought.

Editor's "not sought" Comment:

I'm confused Doug, which boat are you refering to?

V.S.A.G. TO RAISE FUNDS THROUGH WINE PROMOTION SPECIAL OFFER HICKINBOTHAM WINES

The V.S.A.G. can get access to some excellent Hickinbotham Wines at an exceptionally low price and will be offered a promotion commission of \$12.00 per dozen for every dozen lot sold.

The prices are as follows:-

RED WINES	\$96.00 per dozen.
WHITE WINES	\$48.00 per dozen.

Plus \$2.00 per dozen delivery charge.

Order forms will be printed and available at General Meetings.

These prices are well below retail and are available to V.S.A.G. by a special circumstance.

Telephone orders and enquiries can be directed to Mick Jeacle on (059) 712 786 - home.

A report on the quality of these outstanding wines has been prepared for V.S.A.G.

The Area:

The wines are made entirely from grapes grown at Anakie, 70 km. south west of Melbourne. The area is well known for wines which are deep in colour and have good balance.

The Winemaker:

Stephen Hickinbotham built a reputation as a winemaker of supreme skill and his wines are keenly sought after. He was especially admired for his willingness to experiment in wine making and developed the well reputed Cab Mac. He meet an untimely death in a flying accident. The Wines

Anakie Cabernets - 1984

Made from the Cabernet Sadvingnow Grape. The wine has a deep colour, is well balanced and retains good fruit, indicative of an ability to improve with bottle age.

It has a five star rating in Robin Bradley's "Australian Wine Vintages" and it rates with the best wines of the world.

Normal retail for this wine would be at least \$180.00 per dozen. If you could find a distributor with stocks available.

Anakie Cabernet Shiraz - 1983

A strong flavoured wine while being lighter than the Cabernet Varietual. The wine is balanced with good fruit. This wine should continue to develop in the bottle for another 2 years.

The blend of this wine was a more recent example of Hickinbotham's experimentation from Varietual Wines.

Normal retail would be at least \$150.00 per dozen if the wine was available.

Anakie Riesling - 1986

A wine different in style because of a sweeter palate not necessarily associated with the Riesling Grape.

Hickinbotham had a reputation for using Botrytis affected grapes to provide a quality wine with an attractive difference.

The wine is ready for drinking and has a four star rating.

Normal retail would be at least \$150.00 per dozen if the wine was available.

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As a final note, V.S.A.G. has targeted that this promotion can raise \$2,400.00. This means 200 dozen bottles to be sold.

The wines are only available in dozen lots, but at the prices at which they are offered to us it represents extremely good value.

If you are a drinker of wine at all, this offer is too good to refuse.

These prices also apply to your friends, work colleagues, school groups etc.

So don't miss out.

Further details regarding payment will be announced at the April Meeting and follow up notices will appear in Fathoms until the offer closes or until stocks are sold.*

FATHOMS DELETION LIST

The following members have not paid their 1987 V.S.A.G. subscriptions and will be deleted from the Fathoms mailing list unless their payment of \$35.00 is received by the May General Meeting held on May 19th.

Chris Bourier Paul Griffiths Gary Thorn Paul Crellin Stan Medhurst Peter Boyd Terry Brooks Wayne Hatch Dave Henty Wilson Bruce Soulsby Neil Knight

IF YOU DON'T WANT THIS TO BE YOUR LAST FATHOMS, SEND YOU MONEY NOW TO:-

> SECRETARY - V.S.A.G. BOX 2526W, G.P.O. MELBOURNE, 3001

DECO STOPS

by Alex Talay

- * John Lawler gave an excellent dive report at a recent meeting about a dive he did in "The Heads" area at Christmas. Just goes to show how many lies are told about diving. He told everyone he had a great day on my boat. Although he has enjoyed many a good day on my boat I happened to be in Byron Bay at the time.
- * Stranger wandered in at a recent meeting. When President Mick inquired as to where he came from he answered Cape Town. Bloody long way to come for a meeting, God only knows what time he got home.
- * Paul Sier had a bit of bad luck recently. He was recovering his boat at Mornington ramp when he forgot to put the handbrake on in his car. Screams of anguish when boat, trailer and new car disappeared beneath the briny. An oriental gentleman had the suicidal urge to laugh at Paul's misfortune. Paul let fly with a fearful barrage of invective, prompting his young son to beg him to calm down. Murder and mayhem would surely have followed if Paul had been able to catch the bloke who was last seen madly trundling his Rickshaw up Main Street.
- * Was drivingalong recently minding my own business on a beautiful Summers day. Starting to get a bit hot I switched on the air conditioner. A fearful stench permeated the car and I remarked to Amanda who was sitting in the back that a dead rat must be stuck under the bonnet of my pride and joy. Rae Lawson who, as usual, was asleep in the front seat started to stir restlessly. It was then that the awful truth dawned on us. In her beffudled state she had slipped her shoes off and it was her clodhoppers that the air was blowing over and threatening to destroy our hooters for good. Being the gentleman you all know me to be, I quietly nudged her awake and suggested politely she should toss her size 6's out the window. I think she got the message.
- * Eight of our troops went horse riding at Port Campbell recently. I consider horses good for betting on only and declined the offer to go along. Being Safety Officer of the Club I suggested Fiona Bruce should go along in case of accident. Being an adventurous type our friendly Doc readily agreed. The nags were reasonably well behaved until they turned for home, then they bolted. An eyewitness reported Fiona gracefully flying out of the saddle, she was a veritable blur of arms and legs as she flew screaming through the air and landed with

a not so gentle thump beside a tree. She was knocked out for a couple of minutes, but I am reliably informed that the ugly rumours doing the rounds back at the camp about her rescuers were completely untrue, they were only trying to revive her. The only trouble was the medical textbook they were using as a reference at the time was written by a couple of recently released deviates, but how were they to know. Pat, Igor and Tania also fell off their chaff chewers and they were all a sick and sorry bunch that night.

* Paul Tipping must have aspirations of greatness on the stage. He was noticed doing a passable impression of Alice in Wonderland when seen drinking Port out of his own shoe at midnight in the Port Campbell pub. Paul looked a bit crook the next morning and I'm not sure whether it was the Port or the Tinnea that did the trick. *

V.S.A.G. SOCIAL NIGHT AND "DOWNLOW" PRESENTATION

The Place:	Stavros Greek Tavern,
	183 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park
	Telephone: 699 5618

The Time: 7.30 p.m.

The Date: Friday

The Cost: \$25.00 per head.

Licence: B.Y.O.

Stavros Tavern has a great reputation for good Greek food and a fabulous atmosphere.

We will be joined by members of Marine Diving Group and Melbourne Bottom Scratchers on the night as these two clubs are our competitors in the Downlow Race.

Don't delay for this great night of good food, music and dancing. BOOK NOW!! RING JOHN LAWLER ON 569 9851



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FLOTSAM & JETSAM

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It's not often that one could have so much to write about in reporting the activities of V.S.A.G. without even describing a dive. But as Paul Tipping related at the March General Meeting:-

"Our trip to Port Campbell was action packed without a moment being wasted on launching boats, washing dive gear or cleaning fish".

If fact if it hadn't been for a few of the plebs - like the previously mentioned Tipping, Dave Moore, Fiona Bruce, Doug Catherall and one or two others, no time would even have been wasted pitching tents . . !

However, Port Campbell is a little unique and does have a special place in V.S.A.G.'s calendar, so it was only fitting that we should return to the spot where 10 years ago on the same weekend we raised the anchor of the Loch Ard.

But, oh how things have changed. The idea of any of us staying in a motel back in 1978 was out of the question. And as for real divers towing bloody great caravans (complete with name) - well that was for whimps, clones, or punces . . !

Not so today by golly. It's convenience plus these days, with electric power, breakfast in bed and a la carte dining at the pub.

However, behind this facade of softness and respectability still lie the real men of V.S.A.G.

To begin with . . . Sunday morning. A dull and grizzly day with a moderate to gusty gale blowing in from the south west, young Alex and Igor were snuggled up in their motel bed (yes, I said bed) watching the cartoons on telly. It wasn't Pay Reynolds who was upset because his old mate "Tom" was double bunking, it was more the Motel Manager who complained that had she known the boys were like "that" (whatever "that" is) - she would have given them the "Rock Hudson Suite".

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Episode 2 occurred later in the day when some of the lads and Fiona went horse riding. It appears that the horses were frisky and so were the lads. So when Fiona had a fall and lay unconscious on the ground the lads immediately knew what to do. Loosen her clothing, - loosen her clothing.

By the time they had fought each other to win the right to untie her shoe-lace - and then drew straws to decide who would have to give her the kiss of life - she had come to, retrieved her horse and had ridden back to camp!

Episode 3. Paul W. Tipping - the great dive captain - so entranced he was with is own appeal - he filled his shoe with beer and drank it himself - twice! The same Paul Tipping who years ago had stood up face to face with the legendary Port Campbell Ranger, Cyril and told him he was a little Hitler.

Yet Port Campbell remains a place that V.S.A.G. should put back on its Dive Calendar more often . . . because when the weathers good, the diving is great, and when the weathers bad there is still plenty to do and see, and there has never been a dull time had.

It seems that Tipping the younger has been over indulging yet again and whilst we were away at Refuge Cove in January Tippo was looking after the family because Marg had a cold. I have it on good authority that Marg had her head shoved in a brown paper bag sniffing eucalyptis when Tony appeared at the back door. Seeing Marg like this and quite helpless he said to her ... Mmmmaaargh. ... You've never looked lovelier and with that made passionate love. At time of printing Tony is getting quotes on yet another extension to the family home, and is still talking about how he is going to have the big SNIP ... one day!

Meanwhile brother Paul has purchased another house in Carlton and is moving from Lemon Tree Cottage in Lygon Street.

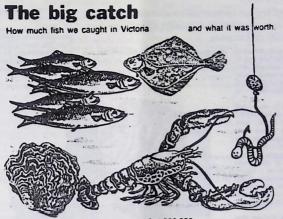
John Lawler has joined the ranks of boat owners, having recently acquired Paul King's Haines Hunter. Since joining our Club Johnny has been one of our keenest members, so it's good to see him making the total commitment. John's very regular involvement in the club diving programme will certainly be a great asset in providing another boat for Club outings.

Signed Anna Bolick

MEDIA WATCH

ARE YOU GETTING YOUR SHARE?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics published the following fish catch information.



Fish: 16,268 tonnes worth \$11,956,000 Crustaceens: 6556 tonnes worth \$638,000 Mollusca (edible): 23,175 tonnes worth \$20,249,000

SOURCE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (1984-85) RESEARCH. DEBBIE BLASHKI

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND ...

The Hobart Mercury reported that . . .

Abalone divers will agree to a 30% cut in their catches or a drop in earnings of about \$100,000.00 per diver!!!?? As part of a plan to save the industry. The 125 professional abalone divers in Tasmania will face individual quota cuts from 23 tonnes to just under 17 tonnes per year.

Abalone is reported to be the second major Tasmanian export after wool!

... I thought it was the Apple Isle - Editor.

WE ALSO CAME UP WITH ANOTHER

ABALONE ARTICLE ...

ABALONE – BALONEY OR NOT

Australia is the home of the last commercially viable abalone fishing industry in the world. In countries such as Mexico, divers have overfished their industry out of existence.

Abaione have been commercially fished in Australia for only 21 years, and now only in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. The predominant subspecies slong the west coast of Victoria is the blacklip caught commercially by divert.

Legislation has been passed to ensure that future years' catches will not be deploted by the taking of undersized fish. A "tegal" sized greenig in Victoria is at least 13 cm when measured across the widest (longest) part of the shel. For all other species, 12 cm in areas west of Lome and east of Lakes Entrance; 10 cm in Port Philip; and 11 cm for areas botween Lome and Lakes Entrance.

An amateur may take up to ten fish each day without a licence. Professionals entering the industry are required to buy two licences and amalgamets them into one before they can fish commercially.

This decreasing of available licences was introduced to reduce the pressure on faihing grounds, but higher annual licence fees creats an incentive to work harder to pay those fees, and the desired result is not being achieved.

When the Victorian Government Infroduced the fails of elacions iscorptions flow years upon the Fisherles and Wildlife Department passed legislation emabling the annual locance fee to be realised to \$10,000 and then to increase percentage-wine with the price of abalans, over which it also has control.

Divers are not objecting so much to the increased fea, but to the seering lack of value for money. They would like to see some input from the Department of Conservation Foresta and Landa, specifically for the absione industry, and in the form of policing ocachers.

According to acu cas within the Department, the extra funds will be used to provide more costatil aurositance, with more coastal enforcement officers being recruised from within the Department Since the analgamation of the Finherine and Wildlife Department with the Department of Conservation Forests and Landle, this doesn't appear to have taken places, and seems unlikely to in the near future. In fact, due to natural attrition there seems to be fewer officers. By KERRYN HOLLIS

Abelone showing a

and undersized

on the right

"size" shell on the left.

of posching. Their sources suggest that the problem is not so common, but do concede that there has been a higher incidence of shore based posching in the last lew years with the influx of South East Asian poople. To counteract this, the relevant laws have been printed in their



In the Government's endeavours to cut the budget delicit, will further cuts take pleas? No matter how many officians the Department provides, it is impossible to montor all of the coast all of the time. The general public is encouraged to "dob in" poschera.

While it is generally agreed that poschers do exist, the adart to which they have depleted the resource is deballed. Sources within the industry any that place of hundrads of shafts have been found, both in the sea and on the foreshore. They have also seen the occupants of planeurs craft behaving in a suspicious manner. Recently, a poscher was caught near Warmambool with \$6000 worth of fish — more than many professionals would take on a good day.

Divers are paid approximately \$3 per abalons. Some watern zone diven here augented that anateurs caught with more then their limit of ten fish per day be fined at the rais of \$10 per fish in excess of their quote. This existem aready exute in Teamenia. Perhaps accord-time offenders could be deported?

The Department tends to play down the issue

own languages and interpreters have tailed to them about the legislation protecting ALL shellfish.

Some grounds in the Western zone (Wermembool to the South Australian border) have been fished out, and have been completely lost for between five and ten years. This depends mainly upon the habitat, as an initiatore will take from four to seven years to grow to legal size.

Although divera in the Eastern zone are not in favour, divers in the Western and Cantral zones fault that a quote system is the only way of preserving their industry, and the substantial employment in back-up industries.

Quota systems are already in use in Tasmania and parts of South Australia, and divers are pleased with progress. Currently the fourteen divers in the Western zone take in the vicinity of 300 formes of abalons per annum.

Are all these precautions enough to ensure the survival of abaions slocks up to and beyond the burn of the century? Only time will tall, but the responsibility rests on all shoulders, not just a law. BUT THE DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS REPORTED

Lobster bonanza waiting out there

PERTH: The 1987-88 western rock lobster season is likely to show a considerable improvement over last season's catches, according to scientifically-based forecasts.

Last season's catch, based on processors' figures, totalled 8.5 million kilograms.

However, scientists believe that about 10 million kgs of rock rock lobsters may be caught over the 1987-88 season, which would represent a jump of about 18 per cent on last season. The predictions are based on puerulus settlement four years ago and juvenile rock lobster numbers from last season.

The 1986-87 season had its fair share of fluctuating fortunes.

The season got off to a had start with the 'whites' (newiy moulted rock lobsters caught

By MICHAEL MULLANE

while migrating offshore) catch down on previous years.

In fact, it was the worst whites catch for 13 years, a fact correctly predicted by researchers.

One of the major management measures introduced last season was a 'one-off' 10 per cent reduction of pot numbers to reduce the fishing pressure on the whites. However, at the end of the season fishermen regained their full pot entitlements.

As from the start of this season, fishermen will lose two per cent of their pois each year for the next five years.

That is. by 1991-92 the total number of pots in the industry will have been reduced by 10 per cent.

And finally if you think all this Media Watch is a bit fishy . . . there are more fish eaten by people than the other way around . . . but the next story nearly made a dent in that theory . . .

AROUND THE COAST

Large shark terrorises diver

By NEVILLE WANKLYN

In his first confrontation with a white pointer, Port Lincoln abalone diver Garry Black gained the disconcerting impression the big shark was attempting to unnerve him into making a dash for the surface.

The psychological warfare between man and monster, 60 feet underwater, left Garry shaken.

He hill both this physical and mental presence of the shark, the force of the water being displaced by its huge grift and the intensity of its unbinking accessment of him

"I had this leasing if I made for the top if would chase me." Garry said.

He was working at the Hot Spot, discovered by his father, diver Don Black, north-work of * Flinders Island, in the early years of the industry

"You see shadows passing overhoad all day, the brad, singrays and scale, then I koled up and naw this block groat Lai, two feet above my head, "he and

Flornendoning his father is a Necel, Garry quickly began to surround himself with costs of air hose and emitted hoddless in a twill to create a confused impression to this returning alwink.

An live predator passed over him, Gany interprivel in striker its big foliad fail with his allo has but adhese baing to do no with strength or convictors, incoding from loaching the marister.

The shark, prisiday 14 or 15 keet key, began to circle passary within the list of the drive and reven saying bit indiviting the standard volume of the increased volume of an Gary was using packly alterter his particle polar Higgins that something was worsy, and he prisidented the ball above the divisi.



After the shark had made so learned protok Gany was confident he cald enclope he integrated, and rose several feet from the sea frain the shark passed around him twice more and then, with the boar row voible directly above. Gany made his move. As soon as the shaks out passed time, his shat bit the surface, confident the shark could not turn back last enough to pursue him.

Gany fell into the boat and immediately signalised for abalone diver Geolf Garnaul, working nearby, to leave the water.

He said the sheer size of the shark and its menacing appearance made if hard to adhere to his lather's advice and remain cool and stay on the bottom.

"The shark played a call and mouse game with me, il only had to open its jaws and turn two or three text to have taken me, il don't know why it don't."

He said it now seems significant that when he went into the water immediately before seeing the while, he noticed the area was deviced of what had previously been abundant lish life.

Gany forced himself to return to the water after the nodent, but says he is constantly looking over his shoulder and has organised with his sheller to send down an explosive power head in case of future trouble.

But Gany, a former drilling worker who has been abalone dwing only ten months, admits he is re-adversing whether to continue dwing as a career. If he does he will consider purchasing an underwater mobile cage.

The first while pointer Garry saw swam past and gnored him

Of the second he said, "I never want to go through that again

APRIL/MAY 1988

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Recently my boyfriend and I went for a night dive at Portsea Pier. After a short time my torch failed and we lost contact. I surfaced only to find that I was a long way from the pier and the shore and was drifting further away in a strong current. I took my bearings and submerged thinking that if I got down to the bottom (25 feet) I could pull myself along the bottom towards the shore. After a few minutes I came across another diver. The moment our eyes met there was some amazing feeling that here we were the only two people in the sea, and we both reached out towards each other and held each other close. Within moments I could feel his BC inflating and the ping pong ball in his snorkel burst from its cut. There on the sea-bed we made love.

Now I think I am pregnant and I'm worried that an encounter like this could:-

- (1) Give me a bad name.
- (2) Give me a good name.
- (3) Give me Aids, V.D., a leaky wetsuit.
- (4) Give me more reason to go night diving.

Can you help. Please I'm desperate!

(Name Withheld) (Aged 23)

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Thank you for your letter. In studying your case I would say this.

Your story sounds a bit far fetched, however if you would care to demonstrate how it happened I will gladly send one of my assistant editors to check out the facts.

Pulling yourself - whether it be along the bottom (or anywhere else for that matter) will make you go blind - still if you like night diving without a torch - I guess that doesn't matter.

Becoming pregnant whilst underwater is possible - particularly if your partner was a sperm whale. Can you be sure it was a diver?

As you have withheld your name it can be neither bad nor good - but curious I am.

As far as Aids or V.D. is concerned the risk is significantly reduced with the wearing of rubber. Your wetsuit should provide adequate protection.

If you have a hole in your wetsuit ignore the previous paragraph - and yes you could have Aids or V.D. Time will tell!! -ha-ha!!

Night diving is an exhilarating experience whereby we can observe the nocturnal habits of fish. It's not supposed to be the other way around! If your kicks come from this sort of underwater debauchery I would suggest you use the Yarra River so that any fish present cannot observe your antics.

As a final comment, I can give you the names of all members who go night diving at Portsea Pier. But none of them are good <u>SEMEN</u> - so I wouldn't worry about being pregnant.

Signed Editor

****** PAUL TIPPING IS MOVING . From the 1st week in June, Paul Tipping and family will reside at:-3 87-207 122 GARTON STREET, NORTH CARLTON

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DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR

Date	Event/Location	Dive Captain	Meet At
April 10	Flinders	Mick Jeacle	9.30 a.m.
April 21	General Meeting - North Melb	ourne Football Clu	ıb 8.00 p.m.
April 23-25	Sorrento Long Weekend Rose Caravan Park Old Melbourne Road	Alex Talay 772 3085	Friday Night
May 1	"George Kermode"	John Lawler 569 9851	Flinders 9.30 a.m.
May 6	Social Night Stavros Tavern, 183 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park, Telephone: 699 5618	John Lawler 569 9851	7.30 p.m.
May 15	Eliza Ramsden It is planned to have a B.B.Q. at 9.30 a.m. whilst waiting fo		Sorrento 9.30 a.m. ento commencing
May 19	General Meeting - North Melt	oourne Football Cl	ub 8.00 p.m.
May 29	Nepean Wall (Slack water approx. 11.55 a.r	Igor Chernichov m.)	Sorrento 9.30 a.m.
June 11-13	Apollo Bay Queen's Birthday	Jeanette Large 354 9820	Details April Meeting
June 16	General Meeting – North Mell Guest Speaker – Jack Loney	oourne Football Cl	ub 8.00 p.m.
June 26	Lonsdale Wall	Ross Luxford (059) 711 318	<u>8.30 a.m.</u>
	(Note early start to this dive approximately 10.07 a.m.).		iter at
July 10	Pinnacles	John Goulding 890 6634	Newhaven Boat Ramp, Phillip Island, 10.00 a.m.