

FATHOMS

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-- APR 1989

VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

VSAG

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COVER STORY: This photo of VSAG diver Ross Luxford was taken by Des Williams on the club Christmas trip to Sreaky Bay, South Australia, 1988. It shows Ross holding a leather-jacket which he has caught in a most unusual manner, using a snare, which of course are legal in S.A.

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

In this issue:

APRIL/MAY 1989

Editorial		2
Committee News		4
Disaster Strikes V.S.A.G. Fleet	J. Goulding	5
Historic Shipwrecks Listing		7
Port Campbell	P. Tipping	9
Notice - Wreckers & Smugglers		11
Downlow 1988	D. Abell	12
Downlow Medal - Dive Criteria		14
Media Watch		15
Flotsam & Jetsam	I.M. Fondlinger	16
Notice - Vale Fred Tidnam		19
Notice - 1989 Christmas Trip		19
Dive The Red Sea		20
Points Scoring System		21
An Alternative Weekend	J. Dempsey	22
Notice - Guest Speaker April Meeting		25
Air Fills Refuge Cove		25
V.S.A.G. Safety Procedures		26
Tide Tables		27
Dive/Social Calendar		30
Membership Listing Update		31

Next general meetings

Thursday 20th April 8.00 p.m.

Thursday 18th May

North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne

Next committee meetings

27th April - D. Catherall's Place,
22C Station Street, Ferntree Gully.

23rd May - J. Lawler's Place.

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EDITORIAL

1989 marks the 35th year of V.S.A.G. - quite a milestone in the diving world and obviously in that time the Club has built up quite a tradition and indeed a reputation.

The tradition of the Club is built on comraderie, a common bond in diving and a responsible and safety conscious attitude to our sport.

Our reputation is as a very active group that offers its members a wide variety of diving both in Australia and overseas. However the reputation of any club or group of people is

dependent upon the behaviour of its members. Our President, Don Abell reminded us of this at the March General Meeting when he pointed out that the Club would not tolerate any behaviour of members that brought disrepute to the name of the Club.

In recent months divers - and not V.S.A.G. divers have been charged with the looting of artifacts from historic shipwrecks and for illegal abalone poaching activities. The unfortunate thing about this is that such activities give all divers a bad name and our recent dealings with the authorities at Port Campbell may well have been prompted by their awareness of such illegalities which has caused an attitude that all divers are irresponsible rat bags.

By the very nature of our sport we must deal with and have contact with people in authority; be they boat ramp marshalls, Fisheries and Wildlife Officers, police or whoever.

To a degree these people can control where we dive, when we dive and on what we dive. So given that these authorities exist, and have a job to do, and rules to enforce, our job is to know the rules and obey them.



I wholeheartedly endorse Don's comments, not that they were directed at any individual but more as a reminder that diving is a sensitive sport that can easily arouse the attention and suspicion of those responsible for the supervision of the facilities and areas that we use.

Paul Tipping's article in this issue about the difficulties we experienced at Port Campbell is an account of how a number of obstacles were put in our way. The action and the attitude of the perpetrators of these obstacles were in no way provoked by our members who to their credit complied with the formal requirements and used considerable restraint in dealing with the most unreasonable treatment handed out to them.

You might think that this Editorial is a little over the top, but recently The Age reported that raids on 100 restaurants, shops and wholesalers in Melbourne resulted in the seizure of nearly 2 tonnes of undersized abalone with a value of \$100,000.00. You can be sure that the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands will be as diligent as the Police are with illegal drugs in stamping out this activity.

At our May meeting on May 18th the Club will be addressed by famous Australian maritime historian Jack Loney.

We originally sought to have Mr. Loney address us last year only to find out that this man is so much in demand that we would have to wait a year.

For anyone who ever dived a wreck around Australia there is a 99.9% chance that Jack Loney has written about, so don't miss this excellent opportunity to hear first hand from a recognized expert about Wreckers and Smugglers.

Editor

COMMITTEE NEWS

The following is an extract from recent Committee Meetings.

- * Boat diving fees to be increased from \$14.00 to \$16.00.
- * Following the problems encountered at Flinders boat ramp on 2nd January the Club will investigate availability of the Western Port Angling Club tractor.
- * Those members wishing to undertake a Coxswains Certificate should make contact with Mr. Neil McKenzie, 651 1845 (Business).
- * Cash reserves of the Club at the March General Meeting were \$8,453.58.
- * The Club has V.S.A.G. T-Shirts for sale at \$5.00 each and hats at \$4.00.
- * It was reported that problems had been experienced with scuba tanks manufactured by C.I.G. Apparently tanks have been found to have cracks in the necks, and serious injuries have been sustained during filling operations.

Hydrostatic testing on aluminium tanks is now reported to be compulsory every year.
- * The Committee discussed a possible 3 day trip to Bicheno in Tasmania during Winter 1990.
- * Pat Reynolds reported that some tanks after testing are being stamped with the letter "F" to indicate a flaw in the tank. Members are asked to check their tanks.

Currently the problem with C.I.G. tanks has resulted in C.I.G. replacing a number of tanks without charge.*

DISASTER STRIKES V.S.A.G. FLEET

by John Goulding

In 3 quite separate and unrelated incidents, boats belonging to 3 V.S.A.G. members were involved in mishaps causing their owners some anxious moments and considerable cost to rectify.

The first incident occurred to Barry Truscott's Haines Hunter off the coast of Wilsons Promontory on the first day of the January long weekend.

After diving at West Moncoeur Island, Barry and his crewman Ross Luxford waited a while before following Alex, Andy and Bob Scott back to Refuge Cove. Upon setting off, Barry's engine began to cough and splutter and finally die, never to go again. Unfortunately they were positioned on the far side of the island and could not raise the other boats on radio.

Ross always the optimist began to start thinking about their food and water rations and figured they had enough for 4 days (providing Barry didn't eat or drink anything).

Eventually radio contact was made with Alex who returned to Moncoeur to take Barry in tow.

The technical cause of the problem was a massive seizing up of the engine power head. Replacement cost - close to \$4,000.00.

We're happy to report that the work on Barry's boat has been completed and a trial run on Western Port Bay on February 26th saw the Haines powering through the water.

We understand that salvage and tow charges are still to be levied on poor old Bazza.

The next incident while as unfortunate as Barry's could best be described as unusual, unbelievable and spectacular!

In the quiet streets in the suburb of Murrumbena on February 12th whilst on route to a club dive at Sorrento, John Lawler's boat and trailer parted company from the towing vehicle and slammed into another vehicle. With the result that the trailer, boat and vehicle were extensively damaged.

An on-the-spot eye witness stated, "I was out for my morning stroll with my Lady Nell guide dog when all of a sudden this huge blue dart headed straight for me. The dog took off and I stood helpless as what someone later told me was a boat smashed into my good as new Morris Minor causing it to disintegrate. If it hadn't been for the Morris being in the way I might have become a figure head".

John obviously has a major repair job in front of him, but even in the anxiety of the moment he had the Club spirit in mind by phoning ahead to Sorrento to say that he would be "late for the dive".

The third incident occurred to the newest and one of the biggest boats in the Club.

Tony Rossi's newly acquired 23 foot cruiser complete with brand spanking new Chevrolet turbo charged triple head double bogey guzzler red engine coupled to a Volvo Penta duo prop leg hit a submerged object whilst heading down the San Remo channel on route to the Pinnacles of February 26. Immediately the engine began to shudder violently. Upon inspection the \$1,000 propeller was found to have one blade twisted back like a sardine can lid. Whilst this was bad enough on its own the real bad news was that the propeller set was the wrong size and the supplier had promised Tony to replace it the next day providing he "didn't put a scratch on it".

All 3 incidents are a real pain in the arse and the hip pocket for these boat owners and whilst the extent of the repairs involved are much greater than the usual maintenance problems, these incidents do clearly indicate that owning a boat is not all fun. Perhaps the decision by the Committee in January to lift the boat fees to \$16.00 will provide some small compensation.*

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS LISTING



Commonwealth
of Australia

Gazette

No. S 21, Tuesday, 17 January 1989

Published by the Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra

SPECIAL

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS ACT 1976
DECLARATION OF HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 6

WHEREAS it appears to me, ALLAN CLYDE HOLDING, Minister of State for the Arts and Territories, that the wrecks, or articles associated with the wrecks, described in the Schedule, appearing to be the remains of the ships described in the Schedule, being wrecks, or articles associated with the wrecks, that is (or are) situated in (or have been removed from) Australian waters (or waters above the continental shelf of Australia), may be of historic significance:

NOW THEREFORE I, the Minister of State for the Arts and Territories in pursuance of sub-section 6(1) and 6(2) of the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976, by this notice, declare those wrecks to be historic shipwrecks and any articles associated with those wrecks to be historic relics.

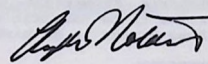
SCHEDULE

Name by which remains of ship commonly known	Present location of remains	Description of ship	Date wrecked
New Zealander	Lat 38 ⁰ 20.40'S Lon 141 ⁰ 36.55'E	Wooden sailing ship	1853
Edinburgh Castle	Lat 38 ⁰ 24.25'S Lon 142 ⁰ 30.00'E	Iron sailing barque	1888
SS Casino	Lat 38 ⁰ 44.60'S Lon 143 ⁰ 40.75'E	Three masted schooner	1932
Falls of Halladale	Lat 38 ⁰ 36.50'S Lon 142 ⁰ 51.50'E	Iron sailing barque	1908
Newfield	Lat 38 ⁰ 37.50'S Lon 142 ⁰ 54.75'E	Iron sailing barque	1892
Antares	Lat 38 ⁰ 33.50'S Lon 142 ⁰ 45.75'E	Iron sailing clipper	1914
Fiji	Lat 38 ⁰ 45.75'S Lon 143 ⁰ 13.50'E	Iron sailing Barque	1891
Victoria Towers	Lat 38 ⁰ 19.00'S Lon 144 ⁰ 21.75'E	Iron sailing barque	1869
Sierra Nevada	Lat 38 ⁰ 19 95'S1 Lon 144 ⁰ 41.30'E	Iron sailing ship	1900

2 *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976**Commonwealth of Australia Gazette
No. S 21, 17 January 1989*

Name by which remains of ship commonly known	Present location of remains	Description of ship	date wrecked
Holyhead	Lat 38 ⁰ 17.75'S Lon 144 ⁰ 36.70'E	Iron sailing barque	1890
George Roper	Lat 38 ⁰ 17.80'S Lon 144 ⁰ 36.85'E	Iron sailing ship	1883
Gange	Lat 38 ⁰ 17.90'S Lon 144 ⁰ 36.90'E	Iron sailing barque	1887
Glaneuse	Lat 38 ⁰ 17.07'S Lon 144 ⁰ 36.03'E	Iron sailing barque	1886
Light of the Age	Lat 38 ⁰ 17.45'S Lon 144 ⁰ 35.65'E	Wooden sailing ship	1868
South Milton	Lat 38 ⁰ 18.13'S Lon 144 ⁰ 29.06'E	Wooden sailing barque	1885

Dated this tenth day of January 1989.



Minister of State for
the Arts and Territories

PORT CAMPBELL - LABOUR DAY WEEKEND 1989

by Paul Tipping

Do not read this contribution to your journal if you seek only joy and laughter from its normally delightfully earthy content.

Let me explain that is if you have decided to stay with me after my warning.

16 adults and 5 children of the V.S.A.G. descended at various times between late Friday afternoon and the small hours of Saturday on picturesque Port Campbell village. Knowing as I did the likely problem without firm caravan park bookings when our numbers are unclear, I had taken the precaution of ringing the park rangers on Friday afternoon from my Melbourne office. A comfortable ride down with Mike Jeacle and Ross Luxford was to follow upon my being reassured that a notice explaining the location of V.S.A.G.'s sites would be displayed prominently in the park office window for the benefit of some late arrivals.

Alas, this was not done. The inevitable result was the needless and unhappy spectacle of seeing a family having to move camp next day. Surely it ought to be a simple task for the office staff to keep to their arrangement with the group spokesperson. Apparently not.

While Saturday was spent doing some sightseeing owing to heavy seas, awoke on Sunday full on anticipation now that the swells had diminished. The object of our excitement was the chance for some of us to revisit a favourite wreck, the 'Loch Ard'. For others, the prospect was one of being able to dive for the first time on this legacy of what is perhaps the most extraordinary and best known chapter in Australia's long history of maritime disasters.

Our early hopes were realized at around midday when the first wave of divers from each of two boats were able to pinpoint the wreck for a leisurely and memorable experience, combing through the large sections of this iron clipper nestling at the base of Mutton Bird Island. On asking those who dived first if they'd managed to find the large section of the hull, I was initially

bemused with their response - "how could you miss it!" They were right, of course. But in earlier years with steeper swells and the understandable caution of boat owners, divers were not ferried in right up to within 10-15 metres of the rock face. Entry close in makes the wreck's location so much more certain than when faced with a long swim from further out.

Enough of the diving. On being asked to write this, my brief was to chronicle our experiences at the hands of bureaucrats. I am afraid I lost a lot of faith in some representatives of our civil service on this weekend. Indeed, it is true I think to say we dived not because of them but in spite of them. Attempts to gain access to the launch facilities on the wharf were totally dashed. The town's new policeman had a key but would have no part in helping us. Likewise, the rangers were unable to come up with anything more suitable than referring us on to the town policeman. In desperation, we were able to get the boats in by other means after much needless energy was expended by a group of divers, intent only on pursuing their hobby, who were reduced to a beach manoeuvre reminiscent of the withdrawal of the First A.I.F. from Anzac Cove. After this effort, with boats in the water, we then had the pathetic spectacle of a park ranger delivering a lecture about misuse of the beach. This was the most amusing to us not only because we had had a beach launch forced upon us by bureaucratic mindlessness but in view of the virtual disappearance of the beach anyway at the hands of nature.

Not to be outdone at the end of the day by his morning colleague, we get another civil servant in khaki and no doubt exercising sweeping authorities, bail us up on our return. (Actually the dive was able to go on only because we finally had managed to interest a friendly citizen in meeting us late in the day with his key to uplift the boats by winch onto the wharf). This time we were greeted with a rigorous search of boats and members' personal belongings on board. Despite reassurances from us that all regulations had been observed, and the few abalone measured, this zealot clearly would not be deterred from his invasions of our privacy. Though this person obviously acted within the strict range of his statutory powers, we were left to wonder at the harm done to relations between citizens and State when we were reduced to the status of suspected criminals in the eyes of a number of tourists who expressed privately to your contributor their disgust at our treatment.

Verdict: Port Campbell is a nice place to visit: the diving obviously is an added bonus. If we are to go back obviously we'll have to get the necessary licences, public liability insurance, keys, slings for boats and whatever else is needed now the dice for boat users have become so severely loaded against visitors to the area. That's reality. But what I do resent is the fact that more than any single factor 16 members of this Club 11 years earlier (almost to the day) dived the "Loch Ard" and recovered one of the several anchors from the wreck. There is an irony in the fact that the anchor is now displayed on the Port Campbell National Park Office, in effect the identification symbol of the very civil servants in whose power it was to provide the much needed help on our recent visit we were denied.*



WRECKERS & SMUGGLERS by Jack Loney

DATE: Thursday 18th May, 1989.

TIME: 8.00 p.m.

VENUE: North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne.

Prolific writer and historian Jack Loney will address our meeting for your entertainment. Jack has produced over 90 books on shipwrecks and is the ultimate raconteur.

Don't miss this interesting evening - visitors are most welcome.

DOWNLOW 1988

by Don Abell

At the March General Meeting I made some comments about the Downlow Medal for 1988 and the presentation held in February. Our illustrious Editor thought it was worth putting them to print and since few people ever ask me to crystallize my views in writing I jumped at this opportunity.

Firstly, congratulations to Alex Talay and Mick Jeacle who came third and forth in the competition respectively. Both dived over 60 dives in 1988 and I consider that a big effort. Both are former Clubmen of the Year and most members would have heard me acknowledge their contributions to V.S.A.G. on many occasions.

This is one more achievement they have had with V.S.A.G. and those of us who attended the dinner were pleased to have them on the list of prize winners.

Secondly, V.S.A.G. as a Club dived well over 700 dives by Club members in 1988. That is an outstanding achievement. It was about 50% more than the next club.

That is an indication of the strength of diving numbers in our Club and the participation by members in Club activities. We should all be congratulated. Let's keep it up. The statistics serve to confirm my opinion that V.S.A.G. is the strongest non commercial diving Club in Victoria and probably Australia.

Congratulations are also well deserved by the winner, Mick Wright of Marine Divers and Brian Counce who was the runner-up. Mick dived over 80 dives and that is a big effort by any measurement.

I met Mick Wright at the presentation and have talked with him since. He is a good representative for the diving world. He not only notched up 80+ dives with his Club but he also dives as part of his occupation with Search and Rescue. If that's not enough he likes to spend his holidays away diving. The Downlow count is only a part of his dives in 1988. Congratulations Mick Wright on a great effort.

Finally a word about the competition. V.S.A.G., Marine Divers and Bottom Scratchers are the biggest and most active clubs in Melbourne. I have always said that our close ties with these clubs, and maybe others in the future, will be perhaps the most important factor in promoting the place of the non commercial diver in Victoria.

We should have no doubt that the commercial dive charter operators would like to see diving of the good areas closed to everyone other than themselves. We have seen it for years and the push gets stronger.

They will grab every opportunity to promote their case. The fact is that if diving accidents were noted by the authorities some of these operators would be forced back to selling used cars where they belong.

I couldn't count (even with my shoes and socks off) the number of times we see charter boats looking for divers who are drifting off to Tasmania. Some of these guys haven't got the skills to raffle a chook in a famine and yet they hold themselves out as an example to others.

The problem for non commercial divers is that we like to dive and we are not interested in being involved in politics. It will, however be a real fact in the future and our ability to stand united with other clubs will be our strength.

Thanks to John Lawler who puts in a big personal effort to represent V.S.A.G. and chase up our members for Downlow sheets. Thanks also to those outside V.S.A.G. including sponsors. I have no doubt that we will all see the benefits of the Downlow develop in future years.

Editors Note:

Don, thanks for providing this comment on the Downlow Award.

I've enclosed the dive criteria used for the Downlow Competition and ask all Dive Captains to ensure that the appropriate forms are completed and returned to John Lawler as soon as possible after the dive.*

DOWNLOW MEDAL - DIVE CRITERIA

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

1. made using SCUBA, hookah or any other compressed gas apparatus.
(Snorkelling and decompression chamber dives are not acceptable).
2. 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).
3. 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.
4. 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.*

MEDIA WATCH

Super submersibles will explore the depths

Super submersibles, capable of working at a depth of 6000 metres, are being developed in Japan and Britain.

The Shinkai 6500, a three-man research vessel which can dive to 6500 metres in about two and a half hours, was handed over to the Japan Marine Science and Technology Centre (JAMSTEC) on January 19.

Built in Kobe by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd at a cost of 12.5-billion yen (\$118-million) it has a 9.5-metre spherical pressure hull largely made of titanium, reducing its weight to 25 tonnes.

Powered by a silver-zinc battery, it has a speed of 2.5 knots.

It is equipped with two manipulators, which can lift an undersea object and calculate its weight.

Operating at a depth of 6500 metres, the Shinkai has the capability of exploring 98 per cent of the world's marine environment, while its predecessor, the Shinkai 2000, has a 30 per cent capability at 2000 metres.

The submersible's support ship, the 4500-ton 'Yokosuka', was launched last July by Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd.

Meanwhile, a new unmanned submersible, ARUS (Autonomous Robot for Underwater Survey), is being developed by Ferranti ORE in Great Yarmouth as a joint venture between the United Kingdom and Italy under the Eureka programme.

Designed for work in the offshore oil industry, there will be two versions of ARUS: one for seabed survey and the collection of scientific data; the other for maintenance tasks, like the inspection and cleaning of underwater structures.

It will operate at depths up to 6000 metres, as against the 4000-metre maximum at present, and, because it is unmanned, will have an operational endurance of 250 hours.

Manned submersibles can operate for no longer than 12 hours, which is as long as life-support equipment can function.

A 6-metre cigar-shaped vehicle, about 1.5 metres in diameter, it will operate in something like ten-day missions from shore bases, taking three days to reach the target area under its own power, three days on the dive, and three days returning to harbour.

A navigational accuracy of better than one per cent is necessary for the operation.

The cost of the five-year developmental project, an estimated \$72.1-million, will be split between Italy and the UK.

Britain's Department of Trade and Industry has promised to advance more than \$1.5-million towards the first phase. The principal Italian partner in the venture is the engineering research company, Technmare. **TED MADDEN**

Divers search Sydney Harbor floor for Japanese submarine

After two years' planning, with a budget of \$11,000 and the use of a magnetometer and side-scan sonar equipment, they were disappointed. "We have been on the sea bottom for 40 years but we expect it will be virtually intact."

The company has found two underwater shipwrecks near the old sea inlet, and another about 100 yards off.

A survivor of the attack, Mr. Charlie Brown, 65, was taken to his hammock in the Elizabethan harbor on the night of the attack and left him "in the dark", but he said he had met the parents of the two Japanese submersibles. "The Japanese submersibles were in the harbor, and for their sake he hoped it would be found."

The submarine slipped away.

Mr. Curran said there was a first crack peeling the harbor's magnetic top. Naval authorities thought it was the submarine escaping to sea, but it was not. A submarine is Taylor Bay but the was not investigated.

Mr. Curran, who wrote a book on the attack, said he believed the submarine lay in the harbor or not far outside Sydney Harbor. He said the Japanese submersibles were in the harbor, and for their sake he hoped it would be found.

Divers took tracing equipment to the bottom of Sydney Harbor yesterday to look for a World War II Japanese midair submarine.

Operation Eco-Mark, with four divers and a support team, has begun a geographical survey to map the harbor floor.

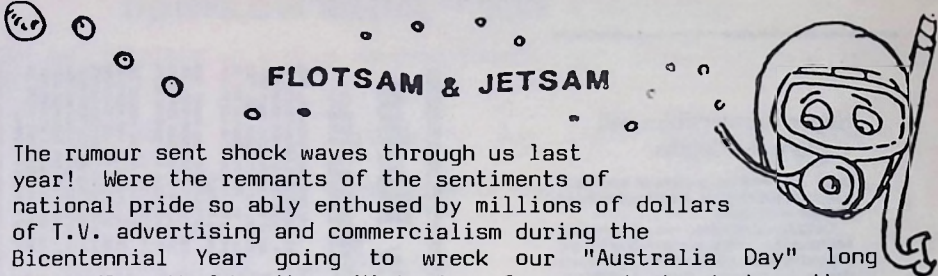
The project coordinator, Mr. Steven Curran, a naval lieutenant, said the divers hoped to find out what happened to one of three midair submersibles that attacked the harbor before they reached their targets, but the one torpedo missed the Ansett plane.

One heavy cruiser Chicago hit the Kaituma, a ferry in BAN area. Twenty-one sailors were

THE AGE, Thursday | December 1988



One of the three midair submersibles that attacked Sydney Harbor in 1942 being lowered on to blocks a few weeks after the raid. The bow was blown off by depth-charges.



FLOTSAM & JETSAM

The rumour sent shock waves through us last year! Were the remnants of the sentiments of national pride so ably enthused by millions of dollars of T.V. advertising and commercialism during the Bicentennial Year going to wreck our "Australia Day" long weekend? Would the Victorian Government bend to those nationalistic spirited lobbyists who demanded that the Australia Day holiday be observed on the 26th January or would they instead take the more popular option of maintaining the closest Monday as the holiday. After all probably most of the population doesn't even know what Australia Day commemorates, so why pressure the sacredness of that particular date? If they had declared the holiday on Thursday 26th they knew full well that commerce and industry would be about as active as Collingwood on a Grand Final on the following day as people found "sickies" and "rostered days off" to take advantage of a 4 day extended long weekend.

So the outcome of all this was that V.S.A.G.'s trip to Refuge Cove went ahead as planned.

Aboard the good ship Mirrabooka 15 of the bravest and finest examples of Australia's youth put to sea under the command of Captain Reg Truscott.

The good Captain who has been sailing these seas longer than anyone (himself included) can remember met us bright and early at Port Franklin. The Mirrabooka, brilliant in her green, white and grey colour scheme is a testimony to this grand old man of Bass Strait who almost 30 years ago moulded her fine and sleek lines on the beach at Erith Island.

On board went diving gear, food, tanks, ice, sleeping gear, tents and for the first time ever - a barrel of beer . . . not your ordinary barrel of froth and bubble from Carlton, but a rare and delightful brew called Lightning Ridge from Peter Jones' boutique brewery.

The trip to Refuge passed quickly as Mirrabooka glided across the smooth coastal waters of Wilsons Prom.

After setting up camp and lunch we headed down to Waterloo Bay for a dive and finished the day with steaks sizzling on the Bar-B-Que.

Sunday was another boomer of a day and great dives at Forty Foot Rocks and West Moncoeur Island rank this trip as one of the best for diving.

Whilst all this activity was going on I did detect that the Barrel of Lightning Ridge was indeed becoming lighter.

Despite the evil intentions of Igor who was sighted sitting on the moon lit beach with a nubile young wench from a 40 foot Bertram, and the mysterious cavortings of a well known member in a rubber duck who insisted on taking said wench out to sea in her boat, there was not a great deal of unusual behaviour. In other words - everything was as per usual:-

Finnegan and Llewellyn flopped in my motel room and wouldn't go to sleep.

Alex had parties on his boat each night.

Steve's hospitality was up to its usual friendly standing.

Goulding got lost returning to camp from the Rangers quarters (50 yards).

Jack Namiota complained about the food and always seemed to be missing when there was work to be done.

Mick Jackiw came along just to listen to his compressor.

Reg lost his clothes.

Charlie Brincat is still trying to perfect his aboriginal act.

Doug Catherall remained a gentleman as usual and was very protective of his traveling companions.

Editors Note

Doug brought along Maxine and his daughter Sarah.

Peter Jones gets the job of stacking the beer because he always hides a few for Goulding for the trip home.

Don Abell will probably book his own motel room next year.

So will Terry Brooks . . . who by the way seems to have cured his sea sickness. - It must have been the beard Terry!

Neil Medhurst wants to book the Mirrabooka for next years Sydney/Hobart yacht race.

Goulding wants to book Michelle for next years Refuge Cove Trip . . . as a chef's assistant of course!!

Sarah Catherall is welcome anytime . . . even if her old man can't come.

Maxine Whittaker is great at demonstrating emergency drill . . . the only trouble is . . . by the time she got my crutch strap (of the life jacket) done up, the boat would have sunk!?

Michelle cuts a fine figure on the beach . . . I didn't even recognize her!

Along with the group on the Mirrabooka were Alex, Mick, Pat, Barry, Bob, Ross and Andy.

Refuge Cove trips on the Mirrabooka will always remain and hopefully be great times for me.

Thanks Reg for making it possible and we look forward to seeing you next year.

On February 26th we again dived the Pinnacles off Phillip Island. With plenty of boats and about 22 divers it seemed as if it would be a great day. Except Mick's boat decided not to go and Tony Rossi's new 23 foot Huntsman cruiser struck a submerged object causing damage to its propeller. Nevertheless we all managed to dive the Pinnacles and relax afterwards on picturesque Island Beach.

In next issue we will bring you all of the intriguing aspects of Easter at Wilsons Promontory.

Signed I.'M. Fondlinger

P.S.

What do crayfish and Chinese people who have been run over by a steamroller have in common?

. . . Come to the April meeting to find out the answer.

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VALE FRED TIDNAM

On 6th February, 1989 one of the original dive shop proprietors of Melbourne passed away. Fred Tidnam's dive shop in Spencer Street was the focal point of dive instruction in the 1950's and 60's. There will be many of our members who began their diving via Fred's shop.

Ex R.N. & R.A.N. Fred was a character, a good and gentle man. There will be many V.S.A.G. divers who will be sorry to hear of his passing.

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1989 CHRISTMAS TRIP

Suggestions are invited from the members for the next Christmas/New Year trip away.

Suggestions to date are:

Port Lincoln:
Cape York:
or somewhere in between.

DIVE THE RED SEA

OUT OF A FAIRYTALE DESSERT, INTO A RED SEA GARDEN

Think of all the magazine spreads you've seen on the Red Sea ... and what have you done, day dreamed? Well, here's your chance to experience it all - sapphire blue, gin clear water; bottomless drop-offs; giant gorgonia corals; myriads of exotic fish; basking turtles; reef sharks; moray eels; a spellbinding array of hard and soft corals, anenomes, plant life; and shipwrecks.

BASE Either budget, shore based at lovely Naama Bay, OR slightly more special aboard the sailing yacht Colona 2.

COST Dependent on airline increases, exchange rates and NUMBERS.

NAAMA BAY \$2440 or COLONA 2 \$3300

NAAMA BAY is a tiny crescent shaped bay where the golden desert meets a jewelled blue sea, backed by the pink granite mountains of the Sinai. It is only a short boat trip from the fabled Ras Mohammed dive site. (The Sinai is the place where Moses invented trekking and the Bedouin people invented belly-dancers). This is the ideal spot for your tented camp or bungalow accommodation - 10 nights with breakfast included. There are 7 days of shore and boat diving (2 dives a day). Tanks and weights included. A free day and a half is available for more diving, or an opportunity to see the local sights - Mt. Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, the Bedouin village of Dahab, camel trek to explore the desert. Then to Cairo for 2 unforgettable days, inc. bed and breakfast and fully escorted sightseeing. Yes, you'll visit the pyramids, sphinx and lots more. For a grand finale, the return flight stops at Athens and allows the afternoon to look around and overnight for the local revellery and Retsina - if you can still manage it.

COLONA 2 is a superb sailing yacht - the sort of comfort that is luxury in this part of the world. The 1st night is at Cliff Top Hotel, Sharm El Sheikh (7 km. from Naama Bay). Then imagine yourself 6 days and nights aboard this specially equipped yacht with freedom to roam. All meals, tanks and weights are provided.

When you fall overboard on your 1st fabulous dive, don't swallow your regulator with delight - just relax and enjoy it. The all European crews qualifications include instructor, dive master, photography and cooking. They are experts on the local area with a wealth of knowledge - especially the underwater sort. Upon return to Naama Bay, you rejoin the others for 6 further adventurous days.

ALSO INCLUDED Airfares, airport transfers, return bus Cairo/Naama Bay, hotel accommodation on Athens stopover. At additional cost, travel connections to European destinations served by Olympic airlines and 1 - 3 week tours to Egypt/Israel are available.

N.B. There are plenty of activities for a non-diving partner.

DEPARTURE DATE Have your bags packed for 11/11/89. Home in time for work on Monday 27/11/89.

SPECIALLY ORGANIZED by Glenys Nurnane of Melbourne Bottom Scratcher's Dive Club, and Brent McCunn of Passport Travel. Glenys recently returned from a jaunt to Egypt and dived at Naama Bay (and she wants to go back). Brent is a long time diver with experience as a tour leader in Egypt, (regrettably he has just used up his holidays trekking in Nepal).

CALL NOW FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DATE OF VIDEO/SLIDE EVENING.

Glenys Nurnane - Tele: 531 8049

Brent McCunn - Tele: 824 7183*

POINTS SCORING SYSTEM FOR CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR

- Holidays Away - 60
 - Weekend Dives - 30
 - Single Day Dives - 20
 - Introduction of New Member - 15
 - Attendance at General Meetings - 10
 - Social Events - 10
 - Fathoms Contributions - 10
 - Guests at General Meetings - 5
 - Lectures, or Talks or Slides - 5
 - Guests at Fund Raising Social Events - 5
-

AN ALTERNATIVE WEEKEND

by Jenny Dempsey

'Twas a balmy evening approaching the long weekend, Tony and I were looking forward to spending a couple of days away in Port Campbell with the Club.

As usual the phone disturbed our dinner and it was none other than young Charles Brincat. "Forget about that mob" he said "come to Inverloch with me. I have a mate who is a cray fisherman and he knows all the 'hot spots'. Believe me Tony, the crays are jumping out of the water!". After hearing about the boat shortage in Port Campbell, there was a decision to make.

Those of you who know and love Mr. Rossi, can imagine the dilemma he was faced with. After spending several seconds pondering the problem, the decision was made to 'forget that mob' and follow Charles to Inverloch with the 'Wine and Dine' in tow of course.

We set off Friday afternoon, hopes high of returning with the 6 tonne tipper overflowing with crays. Arriving about 9.00 p.m. the rain tumbling down and wind howling, the thought of pitching a tent was daunting. As luck would have it though there was an overnight van available for two nights. We were settling in and preparing a small gourmet dinner when Charles arrived with the lovely Karen, his new lady. It was decided that it was too wet to sleep in a two man tent and after much persuasion Karen and Charles shared our van.

It was obvious the relationship between Charles and Karen was new as at various intervals throughout the night Karen was heard to whisper "Charles, will you please leave me alone and go to sleep". Charles is a persistent man, and this cry was heard on several occasions over the weekend.

After a sleepless night for most of us we set sail in the 'Wine and Dine' with expectations high of a good days diving. It was not to be however, the 'Wine and Dine' spun another prop, we limped back to shore and hauled it out of the water. It really is a good boat, as long as you don't expect more than a 20 minute cruise.

So Saturday was a big disappointment. We placated ourselves with another gourmet dinner and the usual drop of fine red. Tony and Charles organized to dive with others on Sunday so Karen, Kylie (Tony's No. 2 daughter) and myself opted for a quiet day on the beach.

The boys said goodbye about 8.00 a.m. with the usual "Won't be too long love". The weather was not as expected, the rain poured down looking as if it was never going to stop. We had asked the men to erect the tent on Saturday so we could move everything while they were away on Sunday but no! "We'll do it when we get back tomorrow". The owner of the caravan park insisted we be out of the van by 10.30 so we set to moving everything under the awning of the laundry, it was teaming and everything was wet, including us. We sat there for 4 hours awaiting the return of the intrepid hunters of the deep.

Meanwhile though all was not well with the boys. Upon arriving at Charlie's friends house, they had the usual pre-dive discussion while two of the others went to get air fills (organized aren't they!). They arrived back with the news that the dive shop was closed - no air. Tony volunteered two of our spare tanks, so back to the 'Wine and Dine' for the tanks.

Finally they got down to the boat ramp only to find the boat Tony was on had a broken hydraulic hose. The local mechanic promised it would be fixed within half an hour, so they decided to wait. Two hours later they were still waiting on the beach in the rain.

At 11.00 a.m. they launched their craft - what now! The boat owner's wife was also out of air. Once again they tapped the resources of the 'Wine and Dine' of two more tanks.

Charlie's boat had taken off and after some skillful negotiation of the sand bar by young Tone they all met in an area off The Caves. Everyone geared up and went down to find a barren area with no crays in sight. They surfaced to find Tony's boat had dragged the pick some half a kilometre away and after much yelling and screaming were eventually picked up.

Charlie had ventured closer in to shore this time and had surfaced with a nice cray weighing about 3 lb. He told the others there was dozens down there so down they went again. Tony found two good size crays almost immediately and managed to catch the feeler of one and the leg of another. Eventually though he managed to get the entire beast. Quite a sizable crustacean of approximately 1 lb. Pleased with this effort he continued the search for its parents. While deep in concentration under a ledge he felt a tug on his leg, with heart pounding in terror he backed from the ledge to find his buddy (the boat owner's wife) in front of him holding a large rock covered with some very large abalone. It appears she was unable to dislodge the little devils herself and she took the rock to Tony for him to do so. They all went into her catch bag too!

This event signalled the end of the dive as all air was used. They surfaced and managed to get back to shore without further ado. After all this Tony and Charles returned to the van park to find us waiting and just a little testy!

Upon their return at 2.30 p.m. they began erecting the tent. This is a new tent and the first time it has been used. This is where the fun began! It would seem we may have been given the wrong poles and after enlisting the aid of several other campers in the area it was up and looking reasonably stable however there were four poles still on the ground to be used. Charles and Karen gave up during the event and went in search of a motel for the night. Karen hadn't had a good nights sleep since arriving owing to Charles' amorous advances. At long last after many freyed tempers (mainly mine) all was well and once again we settled in for the night. Charles and Karen were unable to find alternative lodgings and their two man tent was washed out so they joined us for another fun filled evening. At least we were able to have two nice crays boiled up for dinner.

The weather was bad for the rest of the time, allowing for a couple of shore dives which deemed not worth it for the effort getting in and out.

All in all though, Inverloch is a beaut place for all. The beach is beautiful, the diving is good (providing you have a boat, not necessarily the 'Wine and Dine') and the general area is very scenic.*

APRIL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 20TH APRIL

GUEST SPEAKER

Gary Smith a member of the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria will give a talk and slide presentation on the history of Australia's J class submarines.

Six of the seven of these original World War I submarines were scuttled; two in Port Phillip Bay and four more off Point Lonsdale.

This promises to be a most interesting presentation and Gary will show the plans of these ships built over 70 years ago and take us through their history right up to the present day.

Don't miss this meeting.

AIR FILLS REFUGE COVE

Following the March General Meeting the following members still owe money for air fills at Refuge Cove.

T. Brooks	\$10.00
C. Llewellyn	\$10.00
J. Namiota	\$15.00
A. Finnegan	\$10.00

All monies are due to the Treasurer by the April General Meeting on April 20th.

V.S.A.G. SAFETY PROCEDURES NOTICE

The Committee of the V.S.A.G. has determined the following safety procedures which are to be adhered to by all members on Club dives.

1. The Dive Captain is to take all responsibility for arrangements and safety for the days diving activities. The Club Safety Officer is to act only in the role of an observer and advisor to the Dive Captain.
2. For each Club dive the plan is to be announced and adhered to unless alteration is cleared by the Dive Captain.
3. When diving as a group of boats under anchor, one or more boats should be manned to aid any calls of distress from divers and ensure the safety of the other boats.
4. The Club advocates that divers use the "buddy" system whenever possible.
5. When diving in and around the Rip, shipping movements should be checked out. No divers to submerge if any ship is within sight.
6. When problems arise on the surface and divers are on a buoy line they should be pulled up by the surface craft. The person holding on the buoy is to control the diving of his buddies and they should therefore surface on his instruction.
7. At least one boat diving each day should carry a Club oxygen cylinder with adapter.
8. New members should always be paired with experienced divers in the Club. This procedure should be carried out for a considerable period after membership to ensure that the Club is satisfied with their capabilities and that they are given every confidence in their own ability and the ability of other members.
9. The boat captain is to take responsibility in his boat to brief the divers on procedures to be adopted for the days diving.*

MEMBERSHIP LISTING UPDATE

To assist in updating our records would all members please complete the following details and return to the Secretary either in person or by posting to:-

The Secretary,
V.S.A.G.,
Box 2526W,
G.P.O. Melbourne, 3001.

NAME:
Surname First Name

HOME ADDRESS:
.....
.....

HOME TELEPHONE NO.:

BUSINESS TELEPHONE NO.:

MEMBERS PLEASE HELP US TO UPDATE OUR RECORDS. THE LAST TIME WE INSERTED THIS REQUEST WE RECEIVED 6 REPLIES.

- DO IT NOW PLEASE -