

FATHOMS

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VSAG
VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

DEC 1989

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 Streaky 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 independant diving freedom. It believes that divers must take a responsible attitude toward the protection and preservation of the marine environment but as a general rule is opposed to legislative measures that place prohibitive limitations and restrictions on diving activities.

Local diving is organised on a bi-monthly basis, generally out of participating member's boats. This is supported by weekend camps, charters to more remote locations and annual overseas trips. The club has a considerable investment in diving equipment.

Regular functions provide an opportunity for members, friends and families to socialise. Each month VSAG meets at North Melbourne Football Club where bar facilities are available prior to and after the General Meetings. Visitors are very welcome - smart casual wear essential.

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

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Next general meetings

Thursday, 21st December 8.00 p.m.
Thursday, 15th February 8.00 p.m.
North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne.

Next committee meetings

23rd January - Mick Jeacle's Place.
20th February - Pat Reynolds Place.

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



To finish off 1989 we have a bumper edition of Fathoms. There's plenty of stories, humour, memories and an interesting collection of press clippings.

The dive trips for Bermagui, Australia Day Weekend and Truk Lagoon have all been organized and we look forward to some great diving over the summer months, which no doubt should fill the pages of Fathoms over the next few issues.

Bermagui promises to be a great holiday. Not only is the diving reported to be very good, but the camping facilities with some sites connected to power for the softies, and the many other attractions of the area should make for a most pleasant change from the relative starkness of Streaky Bay last year.

To add to our water sport enjoyment the Club will also be taking along a parasail - so not only will you be able to go down, you'll be able to get up as well!

Like in any other year the subject of safety has been a regular topic of discussion during this year's Committee Meetings. The Committee places a very high priority on safe diving practices and as it is generally only Committee Members who are appointed Dive Captains, the safety aspect is carried through from the "committee room" to the "playing field". However it is very much the individual diver's responsibility to uphold the safety standards and I stress this to all members as we go into our peak diving months.

Related very much to the subject of safe diving is the subject of diver treatment in the case of accidents. As you would be all aware, the future of the National Safety Council recompression

chamber appears to be in doubt owing to the Victorian Governments stand of not supporting the continuation of this facility at the Alfred Hospital. Our information is that the Victorian Government is the only State Government not to back the on-going operation of the N.S.C. recompression chambers following the financial collapse of that organisation. We are hopeful that further lobbying to which V.S.A.G. will support will convince the Government to change their view on this matter.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members who have contributed articles for Fathoms during the year and particular thanks to Alex Talay and Mick and Annie Jeacle for their great help in production and distribution of our magazine.

In closing may I wish all members and their families a happy Christmas and an excellent year ahead in 1990.

John Goulding
Editor

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING & SUPPER

21ST DECEMBER
NORTH MELBOURNE FOOTBALL CLUB

Please make an effort to get along to the last General Meeting of the year.

Following the meeting a supper will be provided to members and guests at either the Football Club or at a suitable outdoor location depending on the weather.

A number of members generally meet for dinner before the meeting at the POT BELLY RESTAURANT, HOMEBUSH HOTEL, 415 ABBOTSFORD STREET, NTH. MELBOURNE, AROUND 6.30/7.00 p.m.

Note: THERE IS NO GENERAL MEETING IN JANUARY, THE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING WILL BE ON 15TH FEBRUARY.

V.S.A.G. COMMITTEE NEWS

The following is a summary of main topics raised at the October and November Committee Meetings.

- * Dive shops to be approached to sponsor prizes for the V.S.A.G. Christmas party.
- * The Club's policy relating to visiting divers was reiterated:
 - The Dive Captain needs to assess the qualifications and experience of any visitor or new member.
 - No such person should dive to more than 60 feet (18 metres) on a Club Dive until they have dived with a Committee Member and are considered to be competent/safe.
 - Such a person should dive with the Dive Captain or another experienced person nominated by the Dive Captain.
 - Ultimate responsibility rests with the Dive Captain.
- * The Clubman of the Year Point Scoring System is to be revised at a later date.
- * The Club will hire a parasail to take to Bermagui. It will be used only with Alex's boat, and a Sub-committee of 6 Committee Members will be responsible for its use. Appropriate insurance cover will be acquired.
- * The Club's funds as at 21st November were \$9,322.69.
- * The Club will investigate and obtain costs of a new issue of V.S.A.G. windcheaters and boat jackets.
- * The Club will investigate the purchase of a Club flag or banner.
- * Don Abell will contact Dr. David Tuxen of the Alfred Hospital to advise the Club's support for the Alfred's desire to retain the existing recompression chamber or purchase a new one. Don will also discuss tactics with Dr. Tuxen as to how a lobbying campaign can be activated.*

"NIGHT DIVE" - FLINDERS PIER

SATURDAY 14TH OCTOBER

by Ross Luxford

After most of our last dives have been cancelled due to poor weather. The weather leading up to this night dive, was rough and being a pier dive we should have cancelled it.

With the keen!!! response from nine divers and a fine night, we all arrived at Flinders at 7.00 p.m. Even the Big 'M' was there (maybe not next time).

Everyone slipped into their gear in readiness for the night dive.

First for V.S.A.G. in Melbourne for many years.

Mick was the first in the water from the first landing on the pier but unknown to most, was the first out also. There are not a lot of highlights to talk about.

The visibility was at least 18 inches but no more, it was still quite swelly, and we all experienced a very poor dive.

A few fish, sea dragons, sea weed, lots of rubbish and empty stubbies!!! The occasional squid jigs from fisherman on the pier were seen by most divers.

MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE USED STRONGER CANDLES

Hopefully we will have better visibility on our next night dive??

Maybe we could dive Portsea Pier or the "George Kermodé" next time. Please pass on your comments to the Committee.

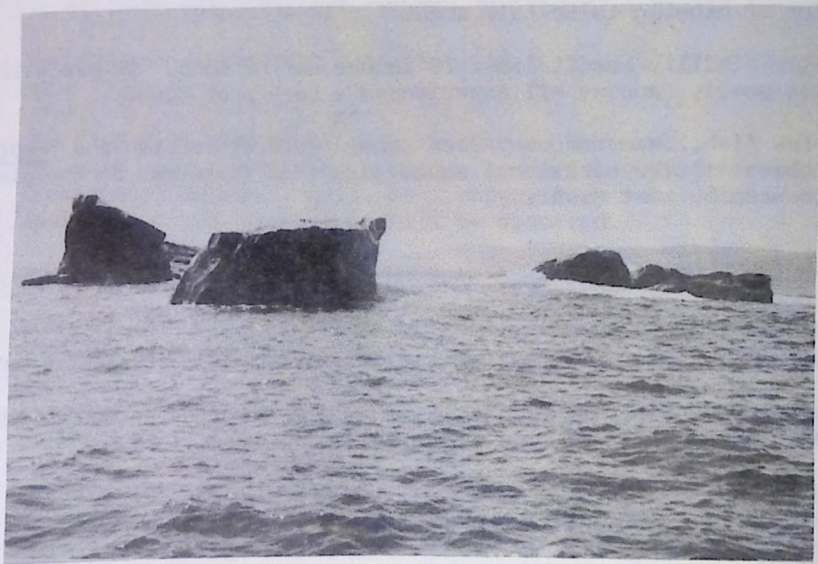
** STILL BURNING CANDLE BOTH ENDS **

VALE CAPTAIN REG TRUSCOTT

by Des Williams

Sadly, our friend Captain Reg Truscott of Port Franklin will no longer be taking us to Refuge Cove on the Australia Day Weekend. The good ship MIRRABOOKA now lies at Port Franklin with no determined future as Reg passed away after a long illness at Traralgon Hospital on October 8th, 1989. The attached photographs will I am sure, bring back some very happy memories for all V.S.A.G. members who knew Reg. I for one am very sad at his passing, but consider myself very fortunate to have known such a wonderful character as Reg. Certainly our next visit to Refuge Cove in January 1990 will be a nostalgic one. Reg's wife Jean and daughter Jan placed the following phrase in "The Sun" on October 10th, and I am sure they will not mind if we reprint it here, as it is most appropriate for Reg:

What'eer the final harbour be
Tis good to sail upon the sea.*



"FORTY FOOT ROCKS" -
ONE OF THE BEST DIVE SITES THAT WE WERE TAKEN TO BY REG.



THE MIRRABOOKA LIES PEACEFULLY AT ANCHOR IN REFUGE COVE.



CAPTAIN REG TRUSCOTT

- CASTING HIS EYES OVER THE
HORIZON FOR ANY TELL TALE
SIGN OF WEATHER CHANGE
. . . OR WAS HE JUST LOST
AGAIN?????

SUBMARINE DIVE

by Fiona Bruce

A fine day dawned on the 22nd October, and 14 V.S.A.G. divers and five boats, met at Sorrento at 9.30 a.m. Centre of attention was Ross Luxford's new boat. Mick Jeacle had thoughtfully elected to leave his craft at home, in order to assist Ross with his boat. In some mysterious way, Pat Reynolds also materialized on the new boat.

After some initial trouble getting the new motor on Bob Scott's boat running, everyone met up outside "The Heads". On the way out there, myself and Doug Catherall experienced some moments of apprehension as Bob's boat appeared to be about to become airborne under the power of this new motor.

It was decided to dive the submarines. These were located without any problems, after spotting another boat dropping divers in on them. Superb diving conditions were present for this dive on the intact sub, with visibility of 60 - 80 feet.

In a manner reminiscent of I. Tipping, Mick was heard to say he had in fact dived there on one other occasion when conditions were better.

After lunch in near Queenscliff, most people had a second dive, either a drift or an abalone dive. Whilst Ross and Mick were under water, Pat Reynolds decided to make the most of this opportunity. After donning Ross's new white jacket with red stripes and sunglasses, he successfully demonstrated the enormous potential of Ross's boat in the sport of hooning.

By about 5.00 p.m. most people were on their way home after a very pleasant day.*

A TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN REG TRUSCOTT

by John Goulding

As reported briefly in the October edition of Fathoms, our old friend, "Captain" Reg Truscott of Port Franklin died on 8th October at Traralgon Hospital.

Reg had entered hospital 10 weeks earlier for a prostate gland operation, however post-operative complications developed to which he finally succumbed.

At Reg's funeral at Foster, virtually the whole township and surrounding area came to a standstill to farewell one of its best known and most liked identities.

Many of Reg's friends and relatives then journeyed to Springvale for the cremation, where to the haunting strains of the bugler's 'LAST POST' the memories of Reg and our wonderful and mad days on the Mirrabooka became locked away forever inside my heart.

In the 13 years of venturing to sea aboard the Mirrabooka, I came to know Reg quite well and was very fond of him.

Despite his sometimes unusual behaviour he was indeed an interesting character, the likes of which we may never see again.

Reg was very well read, intelligent and a compassionate human being whose great love and knowledge of the sea and the Wilsons Promontory area reflected itself in the special relationship he enjoyed with his environment.

To the sea faring people who had met Reg during his almost 60 years of "working his boats" his knowledge of the sea and more particularly, his ability to predict the sea's moods were skills they admired and respected.

To those of us who had sailed with Reg aboard the Mirrabooka and had given him so much cheek over the years, his personality and friendship endeared him to us . . . and I think he used to quite look forward to our visits also.

To recall our times with Reg over the 13 Mirrabooka trips, I have put together a diary made up of extracts from Fathoms over the years. To Reg's wife and his daughter Jan, we have expressed the Club's sympathy already, and they in turn had expressed their own sorry with words that Reg would certainly have approved:

- "WHAT'EER THE FINAL HARBOUR BE
'TIS GOOD TO SAIL UPON THE SEA".

Post Script

Arrangements for Reg's ashes to be scattered at Refuge Cove were being organized.*

THE MIRRABOOKA LOG

1977 The First Trip

A fairly quiet weekend by comparison to later years. This was the year that Snushall performed unnatural acts on the starboard quarter deck and Max Synon got the name REX . . . The first indication we had of Reg's hearing problems and unique manner of speech.

1978 The only year we never made it to Refuge. Atrocious weather kept us confined to Corner Inlet all weekend, camped at a place called Chinaman's Beach.

1979 This was the year that the real atmosphere of the Mirrabooka trips was born and our relationship with Reg grew to mutual respect as noted from the following extract from Fathoms March '79.

. . . Seventeen V.S.A.G. members pitched their way aboard the good ship Mirrabooka south bound from Port Franklin to any place that offered shelter.

Our intrepid skipper, Reginald Osgard Truscott - code named ROT seeing the dismal condition of most of his passengers, insisted on going twice as far as originally planned before making a stop at Anser Island after an 8 hour boat trip!!

On this trip, Reg abandoned us at Tidal River owing to the strong easterly winds - however, the diving was superb.

1980 The Fathoms article about Refuge Cove describes it all in the title - Australia Day Weekend (Annual Weekend).

1981 Some more tributes to Reg are noted in this year's report of the Australia Day trip.

. . . "Once again, we booked the good ship Mirrabooka under Command of Captain Reg (Red Bum) Truscott . . . Reg - the old man of the sea, looks as young and fit as ever, especially from the knees down".

1982 "There was movement at the meeting
 for the secret was let slip.
 That Johnny had found some birds
 for the Mirrabooka trip,
 And all the macho divers whom
 unashamedly showed their best
 Were no match for old Reg Truscott
 when it came to the final test".

In March '82 article we referred to Reg's habit of never adjusting his watch for daylight saving. - According to the locals at Port Franklin, it was so he could celebrate midnight on New Years Eve twice - by kissing all the girls at the Port Franklin ball.

1983 In the March '83 article, Des Williams reporting his in-depth interview with Reg.

Born at Port Franklin 1917, went to sea at 14 and been there ever since.

Reg worked Bass Strait and the east coast of Tasmania as a fisherman before commencing building the Mirrabooka at Erith Island in 1960 with professional boat builder, Jack Leirech.

In November of 1960, Mirrabooka's hull was launched at Bulli Cove, Erith Island and Alan Cripps towed it back to Port Franklin for final fit-out.

The Mirrabooka is 37 feet long and weighs 13 tons. Mirrabooka is equipped with sail as an emergency and also as a steadying device in rough seas.

Reg soon developed a loyal following of friends and customers who chartered his services around Bass Strait and as far south as St. Helens on the east coast of Tasmania.

Another article in Fathoms describes travel on the Mirrabooka - thus - . . . "Now the Mirrabooka is not the fastest boat around, but under the command of the inimitable Reg Truscott who firmly believes that the shortest distance between two points is a zig-zag series of maneuvers, the four and a bit hours to reach Refuge Cove seemed to fly . . . (like a lame emu in a headwind!)"

We also describe in this article how Reg just managed to avoid hitting a 40,000 tonne container ship that failed to give way to our old man of the sea.

1984 This year we see another name being given to Reg . . . "Reginald Algernon Truscott, code name RAT who in the previous year, it was finally revealed, had narrowly missed the container ship because he was showing Hilary the finer points of his cockpit!"

"Captain Reg with the help of a Collins school boy atlas of the world found Refuge Cove after a trip which seemed like four hours 45 minutes".