

FATHOMS

Registered for posting as
a publication category B
Reg. No. VBH 2101

EST. 1954



\$2

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Victorian Sub Aqua Group,
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VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

APR-MAY 90

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

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Next general meetings

Thursday 19th April 8.00 p.m.
Thursday 17th May
North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne.

Next committee meetings

24th April - Doug Catherall's Place.
22nd May - John Lawler's Place.

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 13 BIRDWOOD STREET,
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EDITORIAL



Because of the printing production and distribution deadlines for Fathoms, the magazine must be written up and all articles put together about 3 weeks before you receive. This month because of Easter, Fathoms maybe late, and when that happens it is usually that attendance at the following General Meeting that is down.

So before you read further if you have just received your Fathoms and today is Thursday, April 19th - head straight for the North Melbourne Football Club.

Remember our meetings are always the third Thursday of each month.

Recently there have been two events advertised or talked about through the Club. The S.D.F. Dinner Dance held in early March and the Downlow Dinner to be held in early April. For the S.D.F. function we managed to field only 2 couples - the Luxford's and the Williams'. For the Downlow Dinner indications were that this would also be poorly attended. This begs the question of "Why is this so??".

During the 1970's V.S.A.G. used to have 20-30 people at the S.D.F. Dinners - what has happened since those days. Have you all become old, boring, stay at home drop outs? Are the interest rates crippling you so much that you can't lash out on "diving do"? Have kids put a stop to your stomping? Are your social calendars to full that you can't handle anything under 2 or 3 months notice? Now whilst any of these questions could be answered with a "Yes" perhaps the more accurate reason lies with the following scenario developed by myself in consultation with the world famous psychologist Ivor Nittwit.

In studying divers for 18 years Ivor who is my regular "shrink" and I have found that divers are generally insular, and shy people who tend to shun people and stay away from situations where they are required to communicate. They are at their best, when they are 60 feet underwater, with a "reg" stuck in their mouth and completely remote from all the usual social interactions.

You will notice how quickly our members kit up and go for the plunge. This has nothing to do with the desire to find the crays or the portholes before anyone else, or because the lure of our fabulously clear water is irresistible - it is purely and solely to get away from other people. Divers are such a non social group that they even reject normal customs such as clothing, by wearing ridiculous rubber suits with little regard for fashion or colour co-ordination.

S.D.F. and the Downlow organizers would be better to arrange a Non Event to which divers would stay away in their hundreds. The result would be a huge success.

Of course the exception to this strange phenomenon is when V.S.A.G. organizes a social night. On these occasions our Club usually responds magnificently by congregating together as a token gesture to our partners that we can be human.

Anybody who disagrees with this concept can send a non letter to the Editor who promises not to reply.

This issue contains an article from Don Abell about the Labour Day Weekend trip to Port Campbell. On the same weekend Barry & Marie Truscott, Bob & June Scott and Mick & Annie Jeacle went back to Refuge Cove to represent the Club at the spreading of Reg Truscott's ashes upon the waters of the Cove. Whilst the ladies were not over impressed with the weather conditions and June decided that boating was not for her, it was certainly a great gesture.

In a few weeks time Des Williams will lead his group to Truk Lagoon and Palau. We wish them an excellent and safe trip and look forward to their reports and no doubt some great slides.

As the colder weather approaches don't hang up your diving gear. The months of April, May and June often produce very still weather conditions and some excellent diving. So get the old thermos out and come diving.

Editor

BLUE CATCH BAG

BLUE CATCH BAG

Don Abell has someone's blue catch bag probably left with him at Refuge Cove.

IF IT'S YOURS - SEE DON

LETTER TO THE EDITOR


MELBOURNE DIVING SERVICES PTY. LTD.

 144 BELL STREET, WEST HEIDELBERG. 3081
 3755 NEPEAN HWY., PORTSEA.

 TELEPHONE: 03 459 4111
 FAX: 03 459 9942

20th February 1990

 The Editor,
 "Fathoms"
 13 Birdwood Street
 Box Hill South 3128

Dear John,

Thank you for sending Melbourne Diving Services a copy of the latest issue of "Fathoms". Whilst reading it, I noticed that an article from one of the newspapers, "Diver Drowns In Seaweed Snare", was reprinted, and you may probably be prompted to print another article on the recent death on the wreck of the *Coogee*

However, before you do so, I would like to ensure that the information presented to your readers is entirely factual, not fictitious as a major part of the above mentioned article was (only the name of the diver involved was correct). You might wonder why I am writing to you, and how I know this. On both occasions, the crew and passengers of my vessel *Melbourne Diver* were involved in the search for the missing diver, and the subsequent recovery of the deceased. Having been at the scene, I would like to point out some of the errors in the article:

1. The location given in the article is Point Nepean - in fact it was Petrlana Reef;

2. The article refers to "The Melbourne Dive Club" - NOT "a Melbourne dive club" or, "members of a charter dive", which is more accurate. If I was an office bearer for "The Melbourne Dive Club", which I think is still in operation, I would be extremely upset. Also, this name is very similar to the club operated by my organisation.

Another article referring to both accidents which is also incorrect, is by David King and appears in the latest issue of "Dive Log Australia". Again information on the first accident was incorrect. This time the location was given as Nepean Bay, and again "The Melbourne Dive Club" was mentioned.

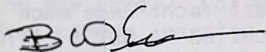
The second accident on the *Coogee* in January was also reported incorrectly in the article. Again the wrong club was mentioned, and this time the diver was brought back by the same club members (Melbourne Dive Club)?

Having been involved in both rescue/recovery operations as the skipper of *Melbourne Diver*, I cannot let this go by unchallenged. I am annoyed that most publications don't care if the facts aren't correct, just as long as it sells more copies. It doesn't matter that those divers involved

were stuck at Queenscliff for four hours afterwards, unable to contact relatives to let them know of their safety, whilst TV news crews did their best to sensationalize the event during afternoon news highlights and the evening news. This sort of action causes unnecessary stress for relatives and friends, and now I find that this same fiction is "reported" (and I use the term lightly) in a publication written for divers by divers ("Dive Log Australia"). Such reporting can only cause harm, in this case it harms the sportdiving public and therefore the industry, not just the members of "The Melbourne Dive Club".

My comment on this matter is "Don't believe what you have read". I would appreciate it if you would either print this letter in your next issue, or print an article on these events which gives your readers an accurate account of what happened.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Williamson
Melbourne Diving Services
(Or should it be: Melbourne Dive Club ?)

Enc: Copies of the relevant articles.

Editor's Comment:

Thanks Brian for your letter.

The article that you referred to which appeared in Fathoms was a copy of a newspaper article reporting the incident.

Unfortunately we have no way to check the validity of such articles that appear in "Media Watch". Moreover our objective is to pass on information to Fathoms readers which they may have missed in the daily news.

Thank you for pointing out the inaccuracies of the media report.

Editor

REFUGE COVE - JANUARY 1990

by John Goulding

For 14 years V.S.A.G. has been going to Refuge Cove. For 13 of those years we went with Captain Reg Truscott aboard his good ship Mirrabooka. So this year it was going to be different. Gone was our old mate Reg, and Refuge Cove without the Mirrabooka would take some getting used to.

However the trip was once again a sell out and despite some last minute cancellations and some competitive sailing alternatives offered by Dave Moore, 11 of us assembled at the Foster Pub on the Friday of the January Long Weekend.

Down at Hobart after the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race each year there is a tradition amongst the sailors called "A QUIET LITTLE DRINK". Well its the same with V.S.A.G. except we have our quiet little drink before our trip south.

Joining us at Foster were Barry and Bill together with Tony and Jenny and Mick, Pat and Neil who decided to forgo the trip to Refuge that evening in favour of the hospitality of the pub.

Next morning it was off to Port Franklin to meet up with Captain Dave Mulchay and the Rosalia.

Originally built as a professional fishing boat, Rosalia's beamy proportions soon accommodated all the essentials and around 7.00 a.m. we slipped our moorings and glided down the Franklin.

Glistening in the mornings rays the Mirrabooka lay at her mooring peacefully at rest and as we went past her a silence fell over Rosalia.

It was clear that this was going to be a very different sort of trip from our earlier experiences.

For a start we could understand what Captain Dave was talking about. You could even hear yourself speak without having to resort to a throat scorching roar. Then there was the luxury of

a proper flush dunny, no longer would we suffer the indignity of a bucket of water down our backs each time we visited the "head".

And what of old Reg's shortcut to Refuge. You know the criss-cross course he always took that certainly avoided all the icebergs and ex World War shipping mines, but seemed to take forever to get there. Dave took Rosalia straight down the coast where for most of the trip the beam-on swell caused much clashing together of bodies.

Once again Peter Jones was made Victualling Officer and he made sure that not only was our grog disposed of . . . but the Captain's as well.

On arrival at Refuge Cove all hands were put to the arduous task of erecting the camp. For myself I chose a sheltered spot under the ti-tree canopy overlooking the Cove, only to discover that my resting place was right in the middle of the main walking track to Sealers Cove. With the help of Resident Ranger, Steve Voros my tent and all worldly belongings were bundled up and moved to the other end of the terraces much to the delight of all who watched.

Saturday afternoon was a non diving event. Some of the group took a walk to Sealers Cove whilst the others partook of some hospitality aboard Tony Rossi's Huntsman.

Sunday we headed south towards the lighthouse and had a couple of good dives in fair conditions, before returning to Refuge for the Compressor Party.

Like all trips to Refuge, Sunday night is joke night, and this year was no exception. Master story teller Bill Hayes was in his element and had us all in fits, not to mention one big bloke who was rolling in the isles . . . eh Mick!

Captain Dave and Tony the Decky came ashore for dinner and joined in. If anything was going to give them an understanding about V.S.A.G. - this night would, and they certainly got a good insight into the workings of the V.S.A.G. culture or more appropriate lack of . . . culture.

Monday morning we cleared camp with the usual enthusiasm and headed off for a dive at Seal Island before returning to Port Franklin.

In all it was a great weekend made possible by all who attended. Even the food passed without adverse comment - probably due to Charlie Brincat's fine culinary skills on the pork spare ribs.

This year we had a mixture of new and past venturers to Refuge and I think all will agree that Rosalia and her crew passed the test extremely well.

We look forward to making the passage south again next year.*

GUIDE TO COAST GUARD SKIPPER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

PERFORMANCE	Far exceeds requirements	Exceeds requirements	Meets requirements	Needs some improvement	Does not meet min. requirements
SEAMANSHIP	Leaps 10 metres from his boat to an abandoned vessel in rough seas	Must take a running start to leap one metre from his boat to an abandoned vessel in choppy seas	Can leap one centimetre to another vessel in calm seas	Falls into the sea when attempting to step across	Cannot find his own vessel let alone board another one
S.A.R.	Is faster than a speeding bullet in locating a lost vessel	Is as fast as a speeding bullet in locating a lost vessel	Not quite as fast as a speeding bullet	Would you believe a slow bullet?	Wounds himself with a bullet when attempting to load the gun
NAVIGATION	Can locate a drifting table tennis ball from 50 miles off in dense fog	Can locate an unlit north cardinal mark from 10 miles off at night	Can locate the Bass Strait	Has difficulty knowing north from south	Thinks his clock is the compass
PHYSICAL CAPACITY	Is stronger than a locomotive	Is stronger than a bull seal	Is stronger than a bull	Looks like a bull	Smells like a bull
FIRST AID	Can resuscitate 3 people at the one time	Can resuscitate one person and bandage another at the one time	Can apply CPR most times - but a patient would be useful	Compresses the victim's mouth and breathes on his chest	Asphyxiates the victim with his bad breath
RADIO WORK	Knows all frequencies and channels, uses A1 radio procedures and talks with Neptune	Handles ship-shore-ship communications OK - even when ships are on the water!	Rings JAW talk-back radio occasionally	Can't remember how to turn his radio on	Speaks into the depth sounder and wonders why no one replies
ADAPTABILITY	Walks on water consistently	Walks on water in emergencies	Washes with water	Drinks water	Passes water in emergencies
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Talks with God	Talks with the angels	Talks to himself	Argues with himself	Looses those arguments

Reproduced from Coast Guard News - January 1990.

ENGAGEMENTS & BIRTHS

by John Goulding

FIONA BRUCE & MICHAEL SOLLY

As had been pointed out to me in February, the last issue of Fathoms had given such a wrap to Alex's engagement to Kerrie that we completely overlooked the other engagement of Fiona and Michael.

My apologies Fiona, however as you probably realize, like the rest of us, I was somewhat dumbfounded by Alex's announcement as I was of the firm belief that he and Pat Reynolds were an inseparable couple.

So rather belatedly, may I make it quite clear to one and all that Fiona is now off limits guys. She and Michael whom we've seen on a few social occasions have found that they share more in common than just medicine and are planning to tie the knot. Fiona is following the Tony Tipping rule for happy wedlock by having the "leave with pay" condition written into the marriage contract to enable her to get away on Refuge Cove trips. Hope you're more successful Fiona than poor old Tip who failed to renew his option after about 4 years.

P.S. What ever happened to David?

IGOR CHERNISHOV & ROSALYN

After an absence from the Club for many months, who should turn up at the March General Meeting but the ironman himself, Igor.

Fresh from a holiday in New Zealand where he threw himself off a 150 foot high bridge in an attempt to emulate his high flying soon-to-be-bride, Igor announced that not only is he engaged, but he and Rosalyn have planned to start a family.

Congratulations to you both.

P.S. Igor, that's what I call taking the plunge.

NEIL & TERRI MEDHURST

On March 10th, Terri's birthday, Bree Hayley Medhurst was born to a most elated mother and weak stomached father. According to Neil the anxiety of 14 hours labour was all too much for our fearless father who on sighting the emerging infant needed to seek the comfort of a chicko roll and coke.

Don't worry Neil we men have got to keep our strength up for those sleepless nights and dirty nappies.

Best wishes to you, Terri and young Bree.

P.S I hear she looks just like her old "cheese".*

MEDIA WATCH

Marine trail built through port wrecks

A trail of underwater plaques has been installed on historic wreck sites in Port Phillip.

The Victoria Archaeological Survey built the trail as part of an education program for novice divers.

Ceramic plaques outlining the history of each wreck have been attached to 1.5 metre cement pillars near *Hurricane*, *Empress of the Seas* and *Mountain Maid*.

All three ships are located near Queenscliff.

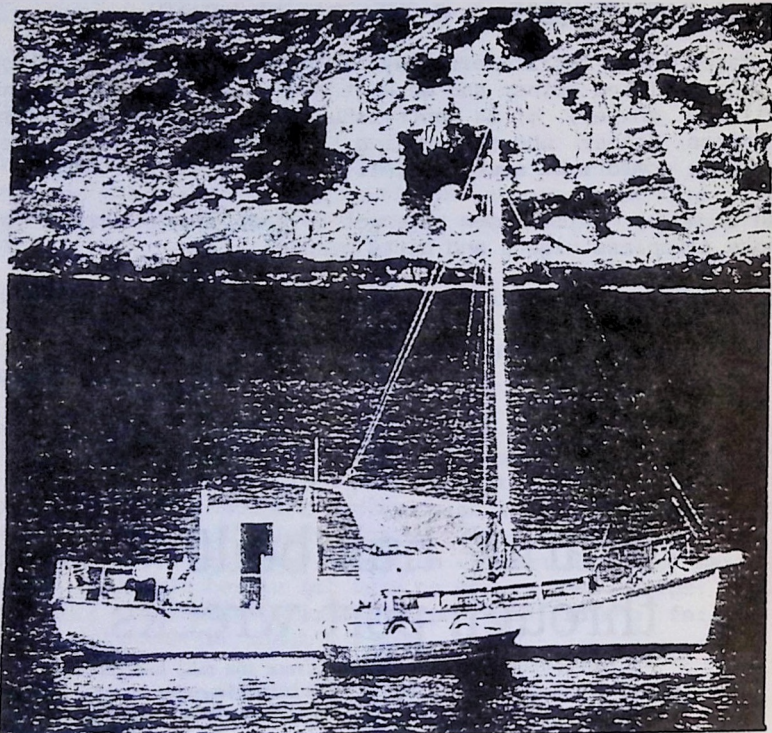
The *Hurricane* was recently listed for protection for its sig-

nificance and relic hunters are now barred from the wreck.

A 1198-ton three-masted iron sailing vessel, the *Hurricane* was built in Glasgow in 1853 and sank in 1869 after striking rocks near Point Lonsdale.

The wreck was relatively intact until 1960 when it was blasted by the Ports and Harbour Authority because it was considered a hazard to shipping.

The vessel now stands three metres above the seabed and its main features are easy to identify. □



(516-3-1) 36' x 12' x 4'8" 4 cyl Perkins, timber Gaff rigged main/jib. A little piece of history. 'Mirrabooka' owned by the late Reg Truscott. Arguably the first dive charter boat operator in Victoria. Price- \$30,000 neg.

Spotted in Trade A Boat Magazine - March.

This rare picture of Mirrabooka probably taken at Deal Island shows the unfurled mainsail that was used as a steadying aid when crossing Bass Strait.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ABALONE BLACK-MARKET

By TED MADDEN

A study commissioned by the United Abalone Divers' Association of New South Wales highlights the alarming extent of abalone poaching in that State. The illicit commercial fishery lands nearly twice the catch of the legal industry, and represents a major threat to abalone stocks in NSW waters.

The study, carried out by fisheries consultant Jeremy Prince, covered both amateur divers and the illegal commercial fishery.

Amateur divers were surveyed in dive shops, and the illegal industry was studied by interviewing licensed commercial abalone divers and fisheries inspectors, and using the information obtained to identify the principal illicit operators.

The study estimates that there are between 2000 and 3000 amateur divers active in the sport, each taking, on average, 30 abalone a year. This works out at a total annual catch of 90,000, which is equivalent to no more than six per cent of the commercial fishery.

Most of the amateur catch (63%) is taken by the spearfishing fraternity, who make up only 21% of all divers. A relatively small number of amateurs tend to be extremely active and take the bulk of the catch, while the majority are largely inactive and unsuccessful.

In contrast, illegal commercial operators land at least 143 tonnes of meat, or 245 million abalone annually. Prince considers this an under-estimate, and believes that the actual catch could be at least 50 per cent higher, making the illicit operation between 1.5 and two times the size of the legal commercial industry.

"What is particularly damaging," he reports notes, "is the fact that the illicit industry does not respect size limits and tends to concentrate its efforts in particular areas."

His conclusion is that "unless the illegal fishery for abalone in NSW can be controlled there is little likelihood that decline in the commercial fishery can be arrested."

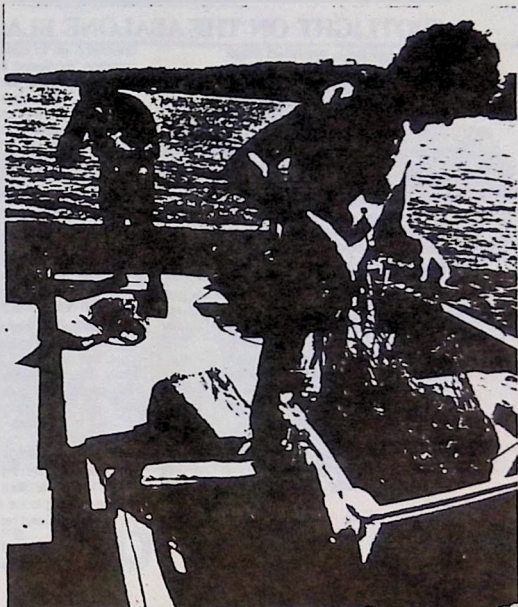
Prince found that much of the illicit industry operates out of small country towns, where people tend to be aware of each others' activities.

He identified more than 15 individuals actively involved in illegal commercial operations, the most active being "more or less full-time" and diving in a relatively professional manner.

He adds: "Many of them are officially unemployed, and apparently collect unemployment benefits. Others have a considerable degree of flexibility in their own time through being shift workers or transient workers, and pursue abalone diving as if it were a second job."

Most illegal operators, he found, are shore-based, using inexpensive snorkel equipment. They have no regard for bag limits or size limits, catches being "limited only by their physical capacity to collect, abalone and conceal their operation on a regular basis."

Many illegal operators are "extremely skilled, and employ a considerable level of organisation. Several divers may dive at the same time, and non-divers are often used to keep look-out and



A fully licensed abalone diver in action. The problem in New South Wales is that 'legitimate' divers are at least doubling the catch of the 'legitimate' ones. There are similar problems in other States.

to retrieve, shuck and hide the catch."

Prince was given "a consistent estimate" of the daily catch of an illegal operation by both legal abalone divers and fisheries inspectors as between 20 and 30 kilograms of meat for each diver.

He believes this errs on the conservative side: one illegal operator boasted of catches up to 100kg, and claimed to average around 50kg of meat per day. However, this man was an expert, and could be expected to do better than the average diver.

As a result of his interviews, Prince formed the opinion that a full-time poacher can earn between \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year from a catch of between two and four tonnes of meat.

Part-time poachers, he discovered, generally remain employed full-time, but regularly collect abalone at week-ends, on holidays and during sick leave. They tend to make smaller catches than the full-timers, and family members and even school children are often involved in their operations.

"A considerable number" of part-time poachers, he discovered, "have commercial licences for other fisheries; others live in close proximity to abalone beds, or have holiday houses close to abalone beds. Those operators apparently use

abalone diving as an income supplement."

Information about part-time commercial poachers was harder to gather because it was difficult to distinguish them from legitimate recreational divers. A catch rate of two to ten kilograms per week seemed to be the best estimate.

Prince found that the major markets for illicit abalone taken in NSW waters are Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

"In Sydney and Canberra," he reports, "the buyers are apparently Asian restaurants or fish suppliers. In Melbourne it is possible that more recognised processing establishments may be involved in buying black-market abalone."

The illegal catch from north of Sydney to Ulladulla tends to go to Sydney, the area from Balmoran's Bay to Narooma sends its black-market abalone to Canberra, while the illegal catch from south of Narooma goes to Canberra or Melbourne.

Diving for abalone, Prince remarks, is a relatively specialised pursuit, and marketing requires expert knowledge. As a result, "the illicit industry has a certain degree of internal structure."

Continued on next page

NEWS

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ABALONE BLACK-MARKET

Continued from previous page

and "is not a collection of completely independent individuals, though some operators exist and operate on that basis.

"Most semi-professional operators have strong links to other operators; and discrete groups of operators were identified in various areas."

"Organised groups tend to develop around one or two experienced divers; many have "strong internal links mainly through blood relationships and a common interest in football."

"Poachers who work as individuals or in pairs often have commercial licences in other fisheries, or are part of small fishing communities.

Prince notes a "growing level of organisation" in the illegal industry. A number of people have been identified who are apparently involved purely at the organisational level, acting as middle men between the divers and the market.

The result is "increasing links between the operators in different areas, and the development of a stronger, more organised network for collecting, handling, transporting and selling of abalone.

"The information I received," Prince warns, "also indicated that these operators were becoming increasingly involved with the drug industry, particularly in the Narooma-Bermagui area.

"Many of the semi-professional poaching

operations go to considerable lengths to avoid detection, monitoring the activities of inspectors, posting look-outs, fishing in remote locations, shutting and slowing catches underwater, nocturnal retrieval of catches, and so on.

"These types of measures are generally beyond the scope of small part-time operators with full-time jobs and the normal commitments associated with those jobs."

Summing up, the report concludes that the legitimate amateur catch of abalone in NSW is probably only equivalent to six per cent of the commercial catch, while the illegal commercial catch could be double its size.

The scale of the illegal industry is therefore the main concern, and a real threat to the continued existence of the resource.

The inspectors interviewed complained that the system under which they work leaves them largely unable to address the problem of poaching. The threat posed by the illegal industry, therefore, "will only be solved if considerable political will can be focussed on the situation."

The report also recommends that the commercial industry should seek ways of educating amateur divers about the abalone stock, its conservation and the threat it faces. Otherwise, Prince warns, abalone stocks will continue to decline, leading to the effective extinction of both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Abalone fishing under threat from drugs trade

A recent study of the New South Wales' abalone industry has revealed a growing threat from professional poachers, of whom some are linked to the State's drug trade.

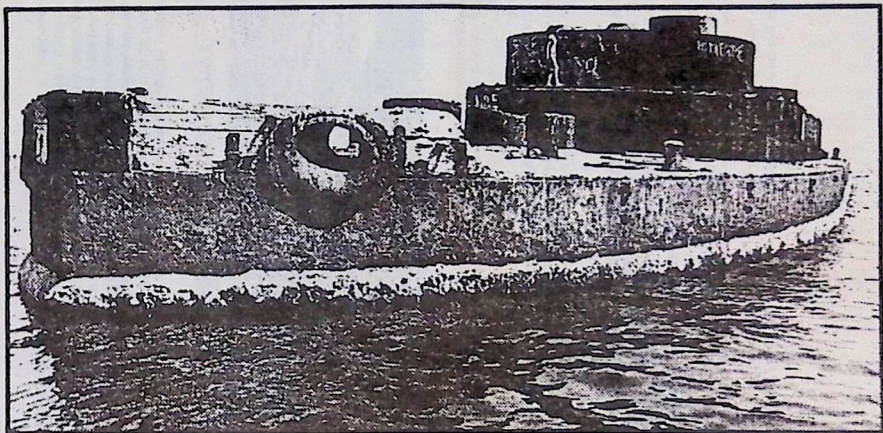
Abalone fishing in NSW is a managed industry of 44 licensed commercial operators, with bag limits set for amateur divers. However, according to the study, there are at least 75 illegal operators catching abalone on a full-time basis, amounting to some 2.5-million abalone annually.

While NSW represents only 10% of the nation's \$128-million abalone export industry, its poaching problem is reportedly worse than other States because of its diverse marketing chain, long coastline and extensive port system.

The report refers to the growing link between the illicit abalone industry and the drug trade. It indicates that the poachers are selling their abalone on the black market at \$30 a kilogram - half the legal market value - primarily to Asian restaurants, which were encouraging the poachers to take payment in heroin and other drugs. The black markets operate out of Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

A spokesman for the NSW Minister for Agriculture, Mr Armstrong, had advised that the matter has been referred to the NSW Minister for Police for investigation. In addition, further increases in fines for illegal catching of fish would be introduced.

THE CERBERUS SAGA



The Cerberus off Black Rock ... an estimated \$7 million to restore and shift.

Cerberus up for grabs

BY MATTHEW PINKNEY

Sandringham Council this week offered the Cerberus wreck off Black Rock beach to 20 interstate and overseas maritime museums.

A letter to the museums said the Cerberus was available for a nominal fee provided the buyer was prepared to spend up to \$7 million restoring and moving the 120-year-old battleship.

Sandringham's acting city engineer, Mr Michael Briggs, said today no-one wanted to see the Cerberus leave Australia, but that may be the only way to save the ship.

"We've been trying for five years to get some sort of sup-

port for a Cerberus restoration," Mr Briggs said.

"But if the State Government ever had any interest in saving the ship, they've certainly been tardy in showing it."

The rusting warship, the prototype of a series of ironclad battleships, has served as a break-water at Black Rock since 1926.

Launched in 1868, the Cerberus is the sole surviving example of its class, and according to various independent and National Trust reports, is of international historic significance.

Since beginning duty as a break-water, the Cerberus has

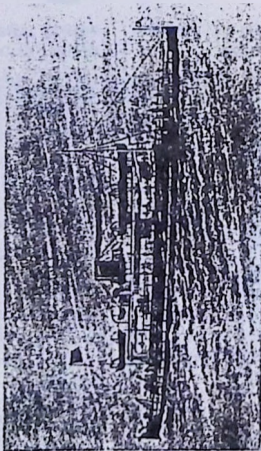
rusted away, and is now in danger of total collapse. During summer, up to 300 swimmers visit the craft each day and police are concerned with the mounting toll of injuries.

Rusting decks and submerged cargo holds have led to fears that a swimmer might become trapped and drown there.

With responses to the letters due later this month, the chances of the Cerberus staying in Australia look slim.

Of the 20 offers made, only four were to museums within Australia. The remaining 16 were sent to the UK, Belgium, Japan, The Netherlands, West Germany and the US.

THE "CERBERUS" BATTLESHIP



The glory days of the "CERBERUS." This unique vessel has the distinction of being the only battleship to have spent its entire career in the United States as a Civil War relic. In 1862, the ship was built for the Union navy. Having been almost planted on her sister works, she walked bodily in open seas and crossed a number of directions by the crew on her way out from the yard. She was better suited to conditions in Port Phillip Bay, for which she was ordered.

The vessel had watertight compartments in the lower deck which she floated. The mainmast is still in the water with only the gun turret superstructure exposed. The mainmast is still in the water with only the gun turret superstructure exposed. The mainmast is still in the water with only the gun turret superstructure exposed. However, the only news damage ever suffered in Melbourne occurred when the ship was damaged during a special gunnery exercise and blew the top off the mainmast. In St. Kilda, after decommissioning, the hull was sold to the Southampton Council in 1926.

southwest (if you're a weak snorkeler) or sailboards on a windy day cutting around and over divers as they head across the channel to the ship.

Whether by day or night, divers should go to the wreck on the surface in a tight cluster formation so that any boat traffic will be able to see them. If there is any boat or sailboard traffic between the petty and the ship, divers may have to descend as a group and stay on the bottom while the vessel passes overhead.

On the return journey be sure to leave some air in your tank, since snorkeling conditions can become sloppy if a weather change occurs while divers are inside the ship. The remaining air may well be needed for inflating your B.C. or returning below the water surface.

If the visibility along the pier is cloudy or really bad, the same conditions will be found inside the "Cerberus" so don't bother to dive. At night, such conditions would make the "Cerberus" dive impossible.



The "CERBERUS" 60 years after scuttling. It is now 120 years old.

Fish life: Living in and around the vessel are various species of fish, while cuttlefish, stingrays and flathead are found on the sand outside around the shelter of the hull. You can do a tour around the outside, peering back underneath the base of the hull to spot them. They're also around the keel covered pylons past the ship's bow. At night, more of them come out and can be spotted by torchlight throughout the wreck, more often in the forward end. In the water outside the wreck and around the jetty there is usually a lot of phosphorescence which lights up as you swim through it. (continued →)

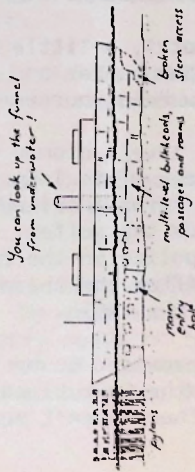
Surface Access Precautions: Entry can be off the end of the pier or below the sea wall by the boat ramp. It's a 200 metre steady snorkel across to the ship. The only hazards are likely to be either rough weather coming in from the

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The "CERBERUS" Battleship (continued)

Wreck Access: Although now stripped of her armaments and looking relatively intact above water, the "Cerberus" has a hull much thinner than her heavy armour plated deck. This thin hull has a great number of quite large holes at the sides just below the water line.

Slightly forward of the midships region is one of the largest holes through which divers can pass, leading straight into the confines of the lower decks. And this is the locality of the "Cerberus" - that although being a bulkhead on site for more than 60 years, divers can still penetrate various deck levels through hatchways, gangways and removed floor sections throughout the entire length of the ship, with only a maximum depth of 7 metres.



Interior: In the forward area approaching the bows there is quite a large space between decks, reached from the large side entry hold described above. The sea level doesn't entirely flood the upper deck so you can snorkel virtually down the whole internal length of the ship. Stopping in the midships area to peer straight up the funnel from beneath! The dry main deck is not really accessible from the water unless you leave the diving gear below.

During a daylight dive you can generally orientate yourselves by the streams of sunlight coming in through chinks in the main deck and the many submerged large and small side holes in the hull. All the same, take some care because the few holes which divers can actually fit through to the outside water may not be nearby but several bulkheads back. There's no small chance of being trapped in here because it's an easy ascent through the lower decks to the nearest airspace above you, although you'll still be inside the ship.

It is exciting exploring the ship like this - wading in and around the decks through various holes. At some points you can see upside-down railway tracks

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on the roof which were the runways for the shell carriages. Once you become a little oriented inside the wreck (because it's relatively gloomy and dark) you can fit in an out through various holes along the hull or work right through to the stern and drop through a large hole (here, virtually at sea floor level) where the stern has rusted right through.

Night diving: When diving at night, the "Cerberus" must be taken rather more seriously than on an easy day dive.

On a night channel crossing to the ship, the wearing of a bright green "Cyalumes" gives the appearance of a navigation beacon to small boats, which then give you all a wide berth. This is a very important night diving safety technique.

Each diver needs a good reliable main light and a spare light, since once torch shared between two divers blundering around in the dark and stirring up the sand and silt is a stupid way of moving between all the bulkheads.

Finding your way out of the wreck at night is definitely a problem. There are no reference points of outside lights coming through the holes in the hull and one compartment looks very like another, especially at times of murky visibility (and reduced even further by flapping divers).

I always take a line of some kind on night dives and tie it to the hull outside the particular entry hole used. Undoubtedly the best type of line is a "Guideline Reel" of the type used by cave divers over at Mount Gambier in the smoko holes there. These can be tied out and reeled back up as you explore the various decks and bulkheads, returning out through the initial entry point in the hull. A simple reel can be constructed from a modified electric power cord reel and is useful for all enclosed wreck diving. 50 metres of 3mm line would be plenty.

Because the maximum depth is 7 metres, divers have almost unlimited time here, sheltered from the outside sea conditions and with 'hoops of explaining to do. No wonder the place is very popular. And yet, frequent visits by divers, do not contribute to any deterioration of the wreck.

PORT CAMPBELL 1990

by Don Abell

If you want to read about diving exploits, treasures from the sea and the gathering of crustaceans then read no further because we did not end up diving at Port Campbell on the Labour Day Weekend. However a good time was had by all and not much remembered by some.

We met and loaded the boats in Flinders Lane at the back of the Rialto. 6.30 a.m. is obviously the leaving time for some discos as groups of young (very young) women were weaving their way along King Street, probably looking for someone to mug. We locked our doors and drove on.

As we approached Port Campbell our spirits were high. There was absolutely no wind so we hoped for calm seas. One brief stop at Timboon to collect the winch key and we arrived at about 10.00 a.m. But alas the rollers were beating against the shore. Tony Tipping has told us that the wind is not relevant. The rollers start in the Antarctic. Those that miss Tasmania continue until they hit the mainland.

Dinner was at the Timboon Hotel, a little gem discovered in 1989. The food is good country pub tucker and you do well if you can eat it all and if you do you help yourself to more.

We were looked after by a lovely blonde waitress who insisted that we try the Irish Coffee. This lady really knew how to make an Irish Coffee. After the first I called her over to check that she had not forgotten to add the coffee. After the second she told us that there were no police on the road between Timboon and Port Campbell that night. After the third we couldn't think of a question to get her back to the table.

The highlight of the night promised to be "Mick's Disco". While waiting we relaxed watching the Cher video of her straddling the guns of the USS Missouri. There wasn't much on the video machine so we watched Cher 4 times.

Mick turned up to run his disco at 9.00 complete with two stubbies and tats. By 9.30 Mick had finished the first 2 stubbies but hadn't spoken a word. So we left Mr. Personality and headed back to Port Campbell.

We dropped into the Port Campbell Hotel for a nightcap and found Gavin and Neville holding up the bar. Needless to say we were swept out with the butts.

I felt a little ordinary on the Sunday. Can't understand why. Paul explained that it must have been the sleep because he felt okay when he went to bed, but felt lousy in the morning. I wasn't really disappointed that we couldn't dive. The weather for Monday was looking promising.

Headed for Curdievale Hotel for dinner, but it was closed so back to Timboon and another top feed. There was no doubt that we were more subdued.

Russell, J.L., Gavin, Neville, Jack and Martin had left on Sunday so there was only one boat left on Monday. The weather was okay, but perhaps not good enough to launch only one boat. We would have put in with two boats or more but this is no area to be alone if you have trouble.

We settled for a leisurely B.B.Q. breakfast with Charlie and Judy at our motel. Egg and bacon sandwiches, toast and coffee. Not a bad life.

We took the ocean road back to Melbourne so Paul could drink more stubbies. When we wouldn't stop for lunch Paul looked like his throat had been cut.

It was necessary to censor this article to protect the innocent and Paul's reputation. He gets a bit toey when away from home. As we drive along country roads it is not unusual for Paul to render a few strains of his old favourites "Only Ewe" and "It Had To Be Ewe" - but you had to be there.*

"GEORGE KERMODE"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 1990

by Peter Jones

This being a Dive Captain's business certainly puts a few restrictions on the social life. Invited to what promised to be a rip snorter of a party on the night before, I reluctantly declined in order to sit at home next to the phone to receive calls for the next days diving from potential participants (I snuk in a couple of coldies whilst watching a Billy Connolley video anyway).

I was rewarded the next morning at sunny Flinders by the appearance of 15 divers and 4 boats (Roscoe's pride and joy, Goulding's exocet missile, Lawler's road going Amphibian and "The Brick"). Tony Rossi on the "Wine 'n' Dine" was departing from Newhaven with Charlie and was to meet us at the dive site on the far side of Phillip Island. Seas looked relatively smooth, although I did here a little bit of sniggering coming from one of the taller members of the Club who has dived out of Flinders with a 15 knot south westerly blowing on a previous occasion. But this was not going to stop me in my first venture as D.C., so off we set.

The best part of an hour later we arrived, after a very lumpy trip at the dive site, just below the Phillip Island Grand Prix Motorcycle Track (where we could see a couple of blokes arguing about something!!). I then consulted with Mick followed by John Goulding in order to find the marks for the "Kermode" and was confronted by two different answers. There followed almost 2 hours of searching before "The Carrot" finally stumbled across the wreck after abandoning his own craft and moving aboard the "Wine 'n' Dine" to assist in the search. For the record John, it's the brown house on the first bluff past the track, not the white house on the second bluff.

Anchors aweigh, and as the seas were quiet rough divers descended in two lots with someone remaining in each boat for safety precautions. After arriving on the wreck and almost running

headlong into the side of the barge, as the viz was down to about ten feet, Jenny Large, Ross, Dougie and myself dropped inside one of the holds to be greeted by a surge that was buffeting us from one side to the other about twenty feet at a time. Dougie promptly lost his tank out of his backpack and there ensued a marvellous wrestling match between Ross, myself and the tank, trying to get it back in. The dive was aborted soon after and up we went. Divers were surfacing very soon after, all with obviously similar success. Back into the boats to be greeted by some very green faces that resulted in a final tally of 4 barks - top effort that.

Two elderly veterans of the Club (Billy Hayes and Max Synon) who had joined us for the dive after a quite noticeable absence from diving activity, were heard to comment - "Gee, I've missed all this fun" and "I'm glad I came".

A leisurely trip back to Flinders with a viewing stop at Seal Rocks, where there were literally thousands of the little smelly buggers basking in the sun followed by a couple of quiet ones at the Flinders Pub completed a fairly disappointing days diving.

N.B. For any future D.C.'s, please note the weather forecasts for Flinders and if south westerly's are predicted, I suggest you go to Sorrento.*

Editor's Comment:

Pete, the brown house used to be white, and as for the diving conditions - I could have told you it would be R.S. half way across the bay entrance. You see there was a foot of water in the bottom of the boat and it was filthy!

Editor

IRON - MADNESS

by Brian Lynch

This article comes to you as a response to Don's very funny rundown of my present leisure activity. In 1984 Tony asked Barry and myself to assist him in making up a team for the then new sport of Triathlon racing. My qualifications at that time was that I was the only club member with a bike. This means I suppose, that I must give Tony the credit for this story.

Last year I went to New Zealand to compete in the N.Z. Ironman Triathlon. This is a race which consists of a 3.8 km. swim, a 180 km. bike ride, followed by a full marathon of 42 km. In '89, we had a perfect day, good diving weather, flat sea, no wind, it was a bit hot though - 30 degrees celsius, however, by the time I got to the run section, it was cooling down. It was my first full distance event and I gratefully completed the course in 13 hours & nine & a half minutes.

This year I went again, for two main reasons. I was now a year older and in the 55-59 age group, and since this was a qualifying race for the famous Hawaiian Ironman, I hoped to qualify to go to Kona in October. I arrived in Auckland on Thursday, 8th March, and the wind was blowing. I stayed with a New Zealand family who looked after me extremely well.

On Friday it poured with rain all day, and on the Saturday when I registered myself and my bike, the rain held off briefly, but the wind was up. In fact I went for a swim on the Friday and encountered two metre waves - looking good for a surf carnival.

The race started at 7.00 a.m., it was still dark, so they put it back five minutes. The water was choppy, with some swell further out. The course is triangular, marked by buoys every 100 metres. The klaxon blew and then we were off. I swam quite well, but my goggles developed a leak, which meant stopping to empty them and taking down a mouthful of salt water about every couple of hundred metres. The swim back to the beach was easier going with the wind and the tide. Finishing the swim, I ran up the beach through the showers and into the change tent. Here we changed

into our bike riding gear, once that was over, a quick visit to the toilet and then piling bananas and biscuits into my back pockets it was off to the bike compound and my constant companion for the next six and a half hours. I had trained for this part by riding to Portsea, once a week since Christmas.

The bike course here is one of the most demanding of any Ironman, because it goes up into the mountains and hills around Auckland, so its 180 km. of constant hill work, right up until about 300 metres from the finish. The climb to the half way point is very exhausting, a bit like climbing over our great dividing range. During the course of this section I was stung by something, either a bee or a wasp, it swelled up somewhat, but didn't seem to impede my progress. Finally after just over six hours I was within striking distance of the finish, because the start of the run covers the first eight miles of the bike section and I could see the first swimmers. I half fell off the bike, and hobbled into the change tent once again.

I changed into my running gear and had a quick leg rubdown by a masseur. At this point I really didn't want to move, just wanted to sit in the tent, however I did manage to get out, walked to the edge of the grass, and then began to run. The first part of the run is an 8 mile hilly section out, and then the same 8 back again - very demanding. I managed to run the first hill, but after that I found that I had to walk the hills and run on the flat. One of the main rules about this sort of endurance racing is that you must eat and drink all the time. I had eaten well on the bike, bananas, chocolate bars, biscuits and protein drinks, plus a few litres of water. It is a bit difficult though trying to eat whilst running, nevertheless you must, so I ate orange segments and one biscuit. After completing the first 16 miles, the last 10 miles are flat, the only flat bit, because even the swim had been up and down. On this section, beside the sea, I drank de-fizzed pepsy which got me home. The last two and a half kms. were hard, I really just wanted to lay down, but gradually as I neared the end, I could hear the announcer's voice and then I could see the finish. Then I heard "Here comes No. 296, Brian Lynch from North Dandenong, Australia, 55 year old - Ironman".

My time this year was 12 hours 19 and a half minutes and I placed second in my age group and qualified to go to Hawaii, now all we have to do is save enough money. Anyone want their products shown on American television?

Anyway that's my big event and the reason I haven't been diving recently. In fact I have a tank of 1985 air in my garage, it must be purer than this year's stuff. I finish with a plea - When you are driving down the Peninsula to your next dive, particularly boat owners, give that poor cyclist in front plenty of room - it might be me.*

Editor's Note:

Brian, great to hear from you again and the story about your Triathlon experience. It's hard to imagine how anyone could stand up to such an endurance. When you are cured of this madness, we would love to see you back diving . . . however, in view of your advanced years, you would need to satisfy the Committee of your fitness!!

Best wishes and good luck for Hawaii.

Editor