

FATHOMS


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

EST. 1954



\$2

If undeliverable, return to
Victorian Sub Aqua Group,
Box 2526W,
GPO Melbourne 3001



1990

VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

SUN - SUN 90

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

In this issue:

JUNE / JULY 1990

Editorial	J. Goulding	2
V.S.A.G. Committee News		5
Truk Lagoon	J. Goulding	6
Death Notice		9
Easter 1990	D. Abell	10
Sorrento Dive 27/5,90	D. Catherall	12
Notice - Black Prince Hotel		13
Truk Trivia	C. Llewellyn	14
Notice - V.S.A.G. Jackets		15
Tip's Tit-Bits	T. Tipping	16
The Truscott Legend Lives On		
At Refuge Cove	J. Goulding	18
The Pinnacles - 25th March	D. Abell	20
I Lost My Knee Pad In Palau	D. Abell	22
Notice - June General Meeting		25
S.D.F.-V. Dinner Dance	D. Williams	26
Notice - V.S.A.G. Social Night		27
Deal Island Trip		28
Notice - New Member		28
Tide Tables		29
Dive Calendar		32

Next general meetings

Thursday 21st June 8.00 p.m.
Thursday 19th July 8.00 p.m.
North Melbourne Football Club,
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne.

Next committee meetings

26th June - Bob Scott's Place.
24th July - To be decided.

Editorial submissions to: "The Editor" Fathoms C/- 13 BIRDWOOD STREET,
BOX HILL SOUTH, VIC., 3128
TELEPHONE: 890 6634 (H)
829 2213 (W)
FACSIMILE: 829 2120

EDITORIAL

V.S.A.G. has completed another very successful overseas diving trip.

After a year of planning Des Williams escorted 13 members and a member of the Bottom Scratchers Club to Truk Lagoon and Palau.

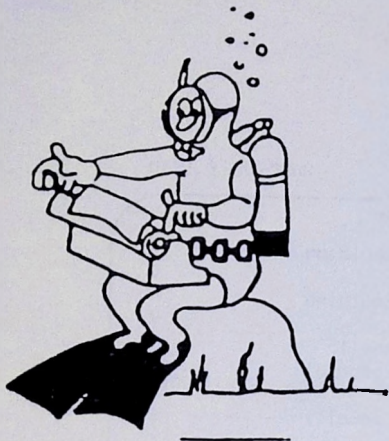
Members will recall the many articles submitted to Fathoms by Des extolling the fabulous diving of Truk which he and several other members first visited back in 1980. This time the trip was planned to provide a huge contrast in diving scenery. After 21 dives on the

ghostly wrecks of Truk the group departed for the brilliant clear water coral diving of Palau.

From my own experiences on the trip and the raving reports from all who attended it was a huge success.

Not only was the diving great, but there was excellent camaraderie amongst those who attended. There were times when I never thought I would stop laughing, to the quieter moments of relaxation after a days diving.

Not only was the diving great . . . it was so easy. No cumbersome wetsuits or heavy weight belts, generally very calm seas and no currents. Its very easy to take it all for granted when you have those sorts of conditions and thats when divers can make mistakes. However, in keeping with V.S.A.G.'s "Safety in Diving" motto, all dives were conducted in a safe and careful manner. Buddies paired up at the beginning of the trip and stayed together for the duration. Careful adherence was given to the decompression tables and dive computers, to the point where we were probably somewhat over cautious. But in that part of the world with no recompression chamber facilities readily available an over cautious approach is undoubtedly the best rule to follow.



It takes a lot to put together a big trip such as this one and I'm sure the Club is indebted to Des for the work and planning he put into it . . . I know those who attended are.

With the wander lust hardly out of our veins Alex is talking about the next trip to the Solomons and Ross Luxford has his Deal Island/Bass Strait trip coming up in February (see details this issue).

On the home front, well almost home, BIG BROTHER BUREAUCRACY is raising its ugly head again in the diving world. In Queensland the Workplace Health and Safety Act came into effect last October. This Act has effect upon commercial and charter diving operations in that State with the objective of legislating for safe diving practices for the recreational industry. The legislation impacts directly upon all underwater diving WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PRIVATE SPORT DIVERS MAKING USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT. Whilst Queensland is the first State in Australia to introduce such legislation, we understand that the Victorian Coroner's Office has given the legislation its agreement, so it may not be long before similar legislation creeps into Victoria. Full effect of the legislation is not completely known by the writer, it does appear that in Queensland it will be impossible to hire dive equipment or obtain air fills without showing proof of having completed an approved and recognized diving course. Whilst this may not present a problem for most members, there are some amongst us who learned diving many years ago when the only certificate was the famous 'C' card. Even V.S.A.G. used to train divers and we had our own 'C' card. I wonder how this would stack up against a CMAS 3 Star or a PADI, NAUI or FAUI card?

A decade ago in the United States, government authorities became very anxious about the increasing numbers of diving fatalities that they introduced legislation similar to the Queensland Act. The result was that diving deaths became illegal!

Whilst no one would dispute the need for proper training and deplore the practice of dive shops hiring gear to unsupervised novices, the big issue in diving safety is getting the confidence and experience and knowing your limitations. This is where a body like V.S.A.G. works so well. Regular diving with

experienced V.S.A.G. members does more to teach new divers about what they're doing, than completing course after course in pursuit of diving proficiency. Generally diving is a fairly easy and relaxed activity and in my opinion there can be no substitution for experience if anything should go wrong. We can only hope that should the legislators of this country turn their attention more towards our recreation they recognize the role of amateur clubs and also recognize that diving, like many other sports and recreational activities does have some inherent dangers from which no legislation can protect all the players all the time.

Our recent trip to Truk was not without its share of equipment problems. Several cameras died in action, torches failed and some regulators played havoc. It seems that in regard to the latter all of the regulators that gave trouble had been recently serviced by "reputable dive shops". Upon inspection of the faulty equipment it appears that hoses that were supposed to have been replaced had not. O rings that should have been replaced during a cleaning service were not, nor was there fresh lubricant in the regulators. To my mind this is just a little bit lax. I know one member who will not have his gear serviced again by the shop that did the job last time. Given that the regulator had to go back again after servicing because it was still not right, and when it was returned, none of the hoses or port plugs were even tightened - and that was before he went to Truk. Needless to say that on the first dive at Truk - which was the first dive after the regulator was returned from its after service-service, it was found to be damaged around the O ring seal seat - caused most likely by the repairer.

I therefore suggest to all members that if you have your equipment serviced, check it thoroughly and before leaving the shop, ask the repairer to open up some of the ports for tell tale signs of cleaning, new O rings, new lubricant etc.

John Goulding

V.S.A.G. COMMITTEE NEWS

The following is an extract of major topics raised at the April and May Committee Meetings.

- * Suggestions were sought for the V.S.A.G. Christmas Trip.

At this stage we are looking at 2 locations on the N.S.W. central coast: South West Rocks.
Forster Tuncurry.

More details in June.

- * The Club will proceed to purchase 15 red V.S.A.G. jackets at a price of \$60.00 each.

These jackets have been ordered for specific members who have requested them. More can be ordered at a later date if required.

The jackets will be available in July.

- * Cash reserves of the Club as at 29th May were:

\$ 469.52	Cash at Bank
\$9,066.74	Term Deposit

\$9,536.26

- * The joining fee for V.S.A.G. will increase from the present \$5.00 to \$15.00.

The joining fee has not been increased since at least 1959 - i.e. 31 years ago when it was £2/10/-.

- * The Committee expressed sympathy at the recent accidental death of ex-S.D.F. President, Michael Vize.

Don Abell will forward a letter to Mike's dive club - the Marine Diving Group (see separate notice this issue).*

TRUK LAGOON - 1990

by John Goulding

One of the most frustrating aspects about going on holidays is the seemingly endless time between when you plan your holiday to when you actually go. For me this was not a problem. Just 4 days before V.S.A.G. departed for Truk, I decided to join the group, so rather than a feeling of frustration, I experienced more a frantic rush as I had only a short time to make all my arrangements.

So there we were at Melbourne Airport dressed for the tropics, yet also appropriate for Melbourne's most beautiful Autumn day.

Continental Airlines' staff at Sydney were most helpful with our check-in and we were soon having a few pre-flight drinks at the bar before departing for Guam.

Continental's in-flight pub service is certainly different by air travel standards and V.S.A.G. got down to the serious business of experiencing everything Continental could throw at us.

Guam transit lounge can only be described as a pain in the arse, unless of course you were lucky enough to be able to sleep on the floor. Eventually we were called to board our Air Micronesia flight to Truk and 90 minutes later we circled low over the famous lagoon which had once been the base for the Japanese First, Second, Third and Fourth Fleets and their Sixth Submarine Fleet.

To the Japanese, Truk Lagoon seemed like an impenetrable fortress. Rugged and mountainous islands offered both shelter and high advantage defence positions. The calm waters of the 45 mile wide lagoon provided an absolute safe anchorage for ships. The Japanese who had control of the Truk Islands since the end of World War I had established a massive infrastructure to service their Pacific war time activities. That is until February 1944 when American carrier based aircraft let loose a massive attack on Truk in what was known as Operation Hailstorm.

After the February attack over 50 ships lay on the bottom of the lagoon. Scores of Japanese planes had been downed whilst trying to repel the attackers and virtually the whole Japanese military operation at Truk was destroyed. The Americans didn't bother to invade Truk - there was no need to, for to use that great military phrase - "The target had been neutralized".

Today, very little remains of the Japanese presence on land at Truk, except for a few old buildings most of them bomb ruined and some massive gun emplacements. Yet under the sea one glides into a living museum of one of the most torturous times man has ever known, and this is what we were going to do for the next 10 days.

The Fujikawa, Susuki Heian, Shinkoku, Dai Na Hino, Hoyo, Nippo, Gosei, Amagisan, Sankisan, Fumitsuki, Kansho, Unkai 6, Rio de Janeiro, Momokawa and Kiyosumi each revealed the fate that befell them in their final moments.

Ships with massive holes in their sides and top structures crumpled like a pack of fallen cards would not have been happy places in 1944 - but to explore them as we did fulfills a divers dreams of wreck diving.

On every wreck we visited there was always something different to see, and with the most helpful assistance of our head dive guide; - Stingray who briefed us about each wreck before we dived we knew what to look for.

And talking about Stingray - he's one of the nicest guys you're likely to meet anywhere and a great diver also.

On each ship we were able to explore the decks, holds and internal sections including engine rooms, bridges, crews quarters etc.

Rather than go into great detail about the wrecks I suggest you attend the next few Club Meetings when I'm sure there will be plenty of slides and Andy's underwater video.

Apart from the ships we also dived on a large Japanese bomber and snorkelled a zero fighter.

On return from each day's diving security officials made the mandatory, but somewhat cursory inspection of our dive gear except when it was raining and then they wouldn't bother.

On three days we used our surface interval to visit the islands of Dublon and Etan. The latter is most interesting as it was here that the Japanese altered the whole shape and terrain of the island to make a massive air strip and support base. The ruins here were well worth the visit and the payment of \$1.00 a person to the "head man".

After ten days diving and 21 dives it was time to leave.

In the ten years since my first visit to Truk, very little had changed. The hotel was still using the menu printed in 1975. Pigs still wander the roadway as do happy smiling children. Yet many adults seem to have an emptiness in their faces, caught between the 20th Century western ways and the disappearing traditional life of the Trukese. The main island of Moen is littered everywhere with rubbish and rusting hulks of wrecked cars. The Trukese have a great and world wide attraction on their doorstep which will probably be marketed more vigorously in the years ahead. Their big challenge will be how they handle the influence of tourism and whether they can develop and improve their own life style by cultivating the good spin-offs of tourism without getting caught up in its not so desirable aspects.

I'm sure that all those on the tour would agree on the excellent job of organization and planning undertaken by Des Williams who put the whole trip together.

Our sincere thanks go to Des, along with our Trukese diving friends and boat crew:- Stingray, Captain Ziari, Lawrence, Harry, Kimfino (Barracouta) and Mimi.

To Clark Graham and his wife Chineina who operate Micronesia Aquatics it was good to renew old acquaintances and our thanks to their organization and hospitality.

So . . . whilst for me it was not to be the frustration of waiting to go to Truk it was the frustration of not being able to get off Truk when bad weather cancelled my flight and overbooking left Andy and I stranded for a few extra days whilst the others went to Palau - diving for a change!*

DEATH NOTICE

EX-PRESIDENT OF S.D.F.-V. KILLED IN PARACHUTE ACCIDENT

Michael Vize, immediate past President of S.D.F.-V. and member of the Marine Diving Group was killed in a parachuting accident on 26th May.

Mike became President of S.D.F. when no one else either wanted to do it or was prepared to put in the time. This rather thankless task he performed for, I think 3 years, during which time he held S.D.F. together amidst waining interest from member clubs.

Mike was a very dedicated diver and like most of us preferred to be actively enjoying diving rather than being caught up in its politics and administration.

I personally worked with Mike on two important issues: the Tidal River boat launching access issue, and the matters raised by the Port of Melbourne Authority to restrict diving activity in the Port Phillip Heads area.

On both these issues, Mike as President of S.D.F. contributed significantly to the arguments protecting divers rights and he clearly gave S.D.F.-V. a respected role in these matters.

His sudden and tragic death comes as a great shock to those who knew him and on behalf of V.S.A.G. I extend our sympathy to his family and his club.

John Goulding

EASTER 1990

by Don Abell

Given that Easter this year was mid April, which is about as late as it ever gets, we had relatively good weather, certainly better than I expected. It was also probably better than was expected by the 60 plus people who attended.

I have a habit of arriving on Friday morning and fitting in to the timetable if we go diving. The Friday was so good this year (probably why its called Good Friday) that there was pressure on me as soon as I arrived.

I only survived the rush of diving fervour thanks to Mick Jeacle who was showing no fervour at all, thanks to his love of good living and cigars.

5 boats and 15 divers decided to take a dive. We launched over a ripple on the beach and headed for the Glennies and the caves discovered in 1988. We found them in 60 feet + visibility. And Mick, Neville and I had a great dive through long and twisting caves up to 50 foot long.

Our boat thought that the dive was so good we would not bother with a second dive - especially since the boats were heading to Norman Island which had previously been ordinary. That was our mistake as everyone assured us that the second dive was better than the first.

Saturday was a new dive day as the wind blew up white caps and kept us on shore.

Sunday looked bad to start with but improved and the boats launched - a few reluctantly and the Bill Boat not at all.

The dive report was another top dive in conditions that kept improving. Visibility was reported to be 80 feet.

A weekend of diving on two days. Can't complain about that and the dive conditions were great. It was certainly another successful Easter.

Just a few notes on which to finish:

- I must go to print to say that Tony's kids were quiet and well behaved this year. It was Tony that woke me, not the kids. Marg's influence is taking effect.
- Lesley Tipping had the cheek to interrupt our night of tall stories to order a coffee in bed for breakfast.
- It was duly noted that Pat Reynolds did not even bring his dive gear. Responsibility or old age?
- Cheryl did not want to dive but still came down just to play pictionary.
- Mick Large has worked out that he can comfortably fit two cans (at least) in the back of Nyssa's pusher.
- Bazza played a late April fools joke on Tony by pretending that his boat wouldn't start and making Tony swim ashore for jumper leads.
- Sleeping Jack had a potentially dangerous accident when the boat he was hanging on to was pushed too fast by the other divers and caused Jack to fall on the beach.
- An interesting Friday night with Judy trying very hard to appear sober while narrating the great river journey's of the world.
- Murray Black turned up with a new tent bought for half price.
He found out that it was only half waterproof.
- Neville turned up with his pie van but not even one sausage roll could be found. What good is an empty pie van to V.S.A.G.
- Once again the Lawler's tent was filled with gastronomic delights. It is definitely the place to be seen at Tidal River.

- Fiona really put us in our place by arriving late, diving and then leaving early. Maybe this engagement is having an effect.

- And finally my thanks to Tony Tipping who gave me a full report on Saturday morning about boat launching conditions, sea swells, wind direction, situation at the outer islands, temperature humidity penetrometer reading, etc. - And then confessed he hadn't even been down to the beach to look at the water.

Tall tales but true and no doubt they will be repeated in 1991.*

SORRENTO DIVE 27/5/90

by Doug Catherall

Three boats with 12½ divers left the boat ramp a little late due to 2 potential members arrival times. (Lost points).

An extremely low tide meant all hands in the water to push the craft into a respectable depth. Then it was off on calm waters to "The Heads" where our hopes of diving Diamond Bay were laid to rest. A "Heads" plunge was the alternative, but by the time the first divers had a dive the current was raging and so we ventured off Queenscliff and later off Lonsdale where a number of large "Green Lips" were secured and the only cray for the day went to the only Iruk veteran to show up, Bazza.

Big M and crew came across 8 lonely divers drifting off Queenscliff and when we went to advise their boat skipper all we got was abuse.

The weather was great and a lovely day was had, even the Dromana Hotel had a special charm.*

NEWS FLASH

V.S.A.G. TO TRY NEW PUB
FOR
PRE-MEETING
DINNERS

Black Prince Hotel



6.30 - 8.00 pm

**99 Curzon St.
North Melbourne**

329 0904

CNR BAILLIEST.

TRUK TRIVIA

by Chris Llewellyn

No doubt there will be some elaborate reports on the recent V.S.A.G. trip to Truk Lagoon so I felt a few ready reference snippets may be in order, a bit of Truk trivia . . .

1. Justin "Jack" Liddy got off to a flying start in the bar of our D.C. 10. However soon encountered undercarriage problems when hitting the Guam transit lounge.

"Jack" was promptly appointed official V.S.A.G. cultural attache.

2. John Goulding's 2.00 a.m. karate demonstration had a rather splintering effect on Pat Reynolds and Neil Medhurst.

3. Alex Talay had our native "boaties" in an uproar when returning from his dive with the total loss of his bathers.

Alex explained, "shark"!

4. Neil Medhurst won "tourney" of the trip by hitting every shack, shed, duty free and dive shop in Micronesia with his fearsome catchcry "hook in mate"! Hook in!

5. After hearing stories of the terrible conditions on board a local dive boat the M.S. Thorfinn, V.S.A.G. members showed sincere comradeship by cheering up dive guests aboard with a fine all hands on deck "mooning".

(Later enquiries from the M.S. Thorfinn were received as to whether one of our members was a mutant).

6. Alistair "Silver" Stewart proved his true worth as our entourage lawyer by promptly finding a loophole in the diving disclaimer we had to sign. He advised "we could in fact sue if we died".

7. International friendship was fostered when V.S.A.G. members came to the aid of a stranded Pommy diver wrongly refused a free bed. Under protest, sofa bases and cushions were promptly commandeered from the lobby to form a comfortable haven in a V.S.A.G. room.
8. Andy won the Evil Knievel Award while out on his moped with a perfectly performed 360, on his elbow!
9. Alistair's total obsession with decompression reached new heights when he decided sleeping on the floor may help with residual nitrogen levels.
10. Dive computers are the buzz words! More time was spent discussing dive computers on this trip than why reef fish were off the menu at the Truk Continental. General opinion reached was "a number of tinnies to be consumed between dives" display would be most helpful.
11. The boys showed a true viking resolve when a popular Guam tourist spot turned out to be just a real dollar snatch.

Members were firmly upstanding in voicing their disapproval.
12. Bobby Scott had some trouble clearing customs upon his return, all was quickly resolved when he stripped off to prove he was not an illegal battery operated garden gnome.

The above morsels are just a few of the lighter moments in what was a fantastic trip, packed with great diving and memories to last a life time.*

V.S.A.G. JACKETS

The new V.S.A.G. jackets will be available to those members who ordered them in July.

The price is \$60.00.

TIP'S TIT-BITS

by Tony Tipping

It must sound a bit monotonous by now, reporting on the Easter trip to Wilsons Prom - I guess I should go back and check the paragraphs I've written every year since we started going there in 1973 just so it doesn't look like I've copied the same article each time. Don Abell must've been satisfied with the record number he got last year because he was refusing extra numbers this year - not only that, he made no attempt to gain a boost by bringing his wife's relatives out from England! Perhaps he's upset by Ross Luxford's all time high at Christmas - 75 camped together at Bermagui and a few even got on well together (the kids I think!).

As usual, we arrived at the Prom first - a few minutes before Andy and his tribe. Now we all know Andy is a highly qualified electronics engineer with the S.E.C. - in fact to his credit he got through the hard way, part-time so we should assume he's pretty good at maths. Now Andy had a brand new tent (identical to Mick & Alex's with a brand new tarp to act as storm cover and shelter). Well, he got the length right when he made up the tarp, but I suggest you don't consult Andy if encountered by a mathematical problem because the width of his tarp was about 40 cm. short - I reckon Andy forgot that twice the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle was greater than twice the adjacent side of the same triangle. In other words, he measured the width of the tent not the actual distance over the apex, right Andy. Apart from that, regarding electrical problems on camping trips there is no one more helpful than Andy.

The diving at Easter has probably been well documented elsewhere in this issue of Fathoms, so all I'll say is that amongst all others, I thoroughly enjoyed the three dives, the weather allowed us those caves behind Danevig Island are great although it would be nice to have the fish population of Montague Island transplanted there somehow - didn't appear to see as much this time. I will take most of the credit for motivating everyone (especially the boat owners) to get out on the Sunday - they were trying awfully hard to talk themselves out of going - but once Big Mick said "Go" we went!

For the first time in five years Don admitted that my kids didn't wake him up every night - the problem was he couldn't get to sleep in the first place due to all the noise of the alleged horizontal refreshment sounds from nearby tents. No, it wasn't coming from my tent either, I've always believed that old saying, "How do you stop a woman from making love? Why, marry her of course!".

Other things we did at the Prom over Easter when the weather put the diving on hold, was a day trip to Port Albert - a pretty spot about 100 km. from Tidal River with an interesting maritime museum (the pub looked OK too) and a walk with the kiddies to Little Oberon Bay for a picnic lunch. Tony John, Paully, Pat and myself all carted little kids on our shoulders most of the way. Marcus and Holly probably covered twice the distance of anyone else because they insisted streaking off in front only to run back and hurry the rest of us.

I've only made one promise after Easter 1990 - never play cards with Sheila John again! Now on the Monday night - most had left by now - Sheila organized Mick and Jenny Large, Paully and Lesley, Pat, Tony, herself and Marg and me into teams for a game of 500. Anyhow, as Sheila changed the rules as she went along, even made up a new way how to deal, the arguments got louder and louder to the point the ranger turned up and you know how Paully loves the challenge of authority - did he rip into the poor bastard! Despite all this, Les and I still gave them all a bath on the card table, rule changes and all. Just as well we weren't playing for money - you know what the Scott's are like!

As I write, the Truk Lagoon divers are about half way back over the Pacific. We can look forward to learning about the diving (I believe it's equal to anywhere in the world) and seeing slides and videos etc. at the next meeting. But most important - what mischief did they get up to on land - I'll see what I can sniff out! Although those of us who went back in 1980 made a pact never to release the hidden truth of their antics and have remained silent to this very day. Did the 1990 mob upstage us?*

THE TRUSCOTT LEGEND LIVES ON AT REFUGE COVE

by John Goulding

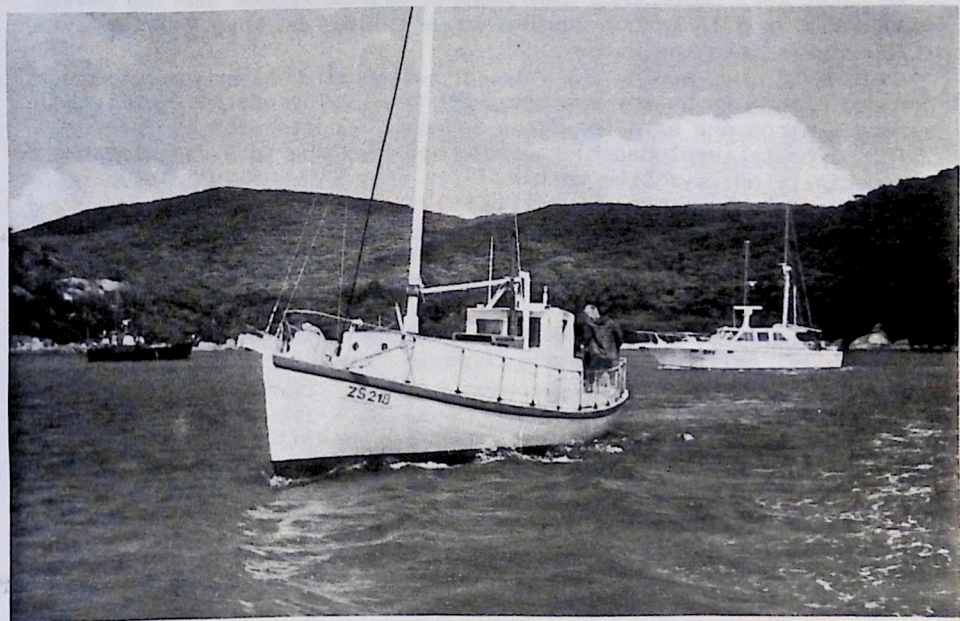
In what was a most fitting and final tribute to Reg Truscott, members of V.S.A.G. and other diving clubs, together with friends, relatives and family of Reg, gathered at Refuge Cove on the March Labour Day Weekend, to spread Reg's ashes upon the waters of the Cove.

National Parks Ranger and unofficial custodian of Refuge Cove, skipped the Mirrabooka down from Port Franklin. The Mirrabooka had been given a major clean up and repaint by Reg's friends after he died and it probably never looked so good as it did on that weekend.

We now hear that Steve has purchased the Mirrabooka so hopefully we'll be seeing more of her in the future.*



STEVE VOROS, JAN TRUSCOTT, DARRYL BROSCHÉ PREPARE TO CAST REG'S ASHES ONTO REFUGE COVE.



MIRRABOOKA AT REFUGE COVE 1990.

THE PINNACLES - 25TH MARCH

by Don Abell

We are well aware that good weather brings divers out of the woodwork and it is not unusual to have V.S.A.G. put 5 boats and 20 divers into the water.

March 25th was by any measure a big day. The weather promised good things and as a result we launched 7 boats with 28 divers. Those boats excluded Mick Jeacle and Alex who are regulars - especially on days like we had.

I don't know Alex's excuse but Mick had to take Annie to lunch for her birthday. Rumour has it that the weather conditions for diving was the main topic of conversation at Annie's lunch.

As I normally anticipate Russell was late on the scene, but he is generally reliable and made it as we were all about to leave Stony Point.

We had a few guests with us and it took a little time to assess their capabilities and pair them with appropriate V.S.A.G. divers. The guests I refer to were Ruth, Marita, Greg, Graham, Murray, Steve, Paul and Dave Moore. In fact most of these people were experienced divers (and I do not include Dave Moore in that category), however Club policy is that they must dive with experienced V.S.A.G. divers and I for one think that is a good policy.

Ruth and Marita were allocated to the Bill Boat. John approached me before launching to find out what instructions I had given to these ladies after assessing their capability. I confirmed to John that I had requested that they do not leave the boat except in an absolute emergency.

I was on Barry's boat and noted that we headed from Stony Point in a different direction to the other 6 boats. Barry, always one step ahead of the other boat owners, assured me that the others had misread the horizon and were off course. I assured our visitors that we were in fact extremely lucky to be with someone

of Barry's vast experience and cunning. Five minutes later Barry saw the San Remo bridge in the direction of 3 o'clock, turned 90 degrees, and headed to join the other 6 boats.

We arrived at the dive site and our old sea dog John Goulding pulled out his reliable book of marks (we all remember the George Kermodé) and the hunt began.

Murray Black and Graham Boyles looked a bit surprised and asked Bazza what we were doing $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometer off the Pinnacles and proceeded to put our boat straight on to our dive site. Before the dive John was noted scribbling industriously in his reliable book of marks.

To cap off a day of glorious sunshine and calm seas we had 60 foot visibility. The diving was first class. It was a big achievement for me being my first dive on the Pinnacles.

All the boats headed to the shore for lunch and a second dive. Conditions were a bit surgy but it was so good on the surface it didn't seem to matter. 4 crays were caught, 3 by Doug Catherall and 1 by yours truly. We shared honour with a 5 pounder each, but in true V.S.A.G. tradition we'll call them 8 pounders - close enough. I know mine fed 5 people in style.

A great trip back with most boats on full throttle. Bazza was beaten for the first time. Graeme Blanchard had a couple of knots on him. In fairness, Bazza told me that Graeme's boat would be that bit faster before we took off. We hoped that the wind resistance in Tony's cheeks (as he talked all the way back) would slow Graeme down, but it was not enough.

What else can we say. The day was close to perfect.

Thanks to John Lawler who sat at my place to take bookings on the Saturday. His help got me out of a problem situation.

Thanks also to the boat owners:-

Graeme Blanchard, Ross Luxford, John Goulding, John Lawler, Barry Truscott, Bob Scott and Russell Olerenshaw.*

I LOST MY KNEE PAD IN PALAU

by Don Abell

I have no doubt that much will be written and spoken about our overseas trip to Truk Lagoon (Chuuk) and Palau. However as my title suggests, there was another side to the trip. This is made even more nefarious when I note that all suspects for the missing knee pad were from our own group (Liddy, Scott, Reynolds, Medhurst, Goulding and Mastrowicz are assumed innocent as they were not present at the time). I am on public record in stating that the knee pad may be returned in a plain brown paper parcel and no questions will be asked.

Other articles will tell of diving Japanese wrecks from the Amagisan Maru to the Unkai Maru No. 6, from brilliant corals to 6 metre sharks (or was that 6 foot). I thought I just might mention a few personal notes about those who attended (plus others).

Priya - The only female and only non V.S.A.G. member, two severe handicaps for any V.S.A.G. trip. Priya was a good diver whose dive watch is rusting up and causing her to be perpetually late for everything. She also received an award for her dress sense (no details to be given). Des apparently insisted that she leave her running shoes behind when they went to dinner in Guam, but report has it that they followed her to the restaurant of their own accord.

Mick Jackiw - Low key but it was great to have Mick along. He is to be awarded a purple heart for spending most of the time sharing his room with Priya, and still behaving like a gentleman (or whatever).

Graeme Blanchard - A fish story for every occasion. According to Graeme we didn't see a fish under 12 inches long - anything over 1 foot substitute the word metre for foot. No wonder fishermen always consider themselves well endowed in the area of the "loins". Full points for being able to keep Des under control.

Ross Luxford - He tried to pick a fight with the local heavy at Yumi's. Luckily Alex chipped in to save the natives. That was the watershed night that Ross started to relax. Until then he had been thinking of the family back home (i.e. J.R. and Misty). Ross also made the point that he does not consider the chewing of beetle nuts very lady like - red spit is not becoming.

Andy Mastrowicz - Finished off with his impersonation of Kevin Magee, luckily after diving had finished. After telling us that he was the only one in the group that paid tax, he then proceeded to tell us that he would take an extra week off as sick leave for his bruised arm.

Andy is resourceful. He managed to always emerge from a jungle carrying bananas or coconuts.

Alistair Stewart - Gets the award for the number of Reeboks ever packed into 1 suitcase. Plus he wore two pair in the plane.

Pat Reynolds - I woke him up at 2.00 a.m. one morning, he sat bolt upright and grabbed his snorkel ready to take on the world - but not have a friendly little drink with his mates.

Bob Scott - Maybe the old 50 is getting too close. After a quiet night in Guam, Des tells me Bob fell toward the bed, but was snoring before he even reached a 45° angle.

He got on well with the natives in Palau, who wouldn't stop fishing to put Bob back into the group of divers.

Neil Medhurst - Without him the trip may have stopped. Neil had a part or tool or medication or whatever for every problem - except he only brought 1 camera and it was stuffed.

Justin Liddy - Properly denoted as our own cultural attache for the group. Everything else is "censored".

Des Williams (Kermy) - Seemed to cop all the problems of the trip, the main ones being that breakfast was not until 6.30 a.m., when Des was queuing by 6.00 a.m.

All other meals were also late according to Des. At Palau Des was noted eating 7 main courses and 4 deserts on banquet night.

Chris Llewellyn - Will be remembered for his hospitable greeting to the Thorfinn. The polite U.S. term is mooning. Chris desperately chased cameras to try for the Fathoms cover and was not at all impressed with the requirement to attend at least 3 Club functions a year to qualify.

Alex Talay - Consistency as always. Insisted that night dives, coral reef dives and snorkelling in Jellyfish Lake only wastes good drinking time. But Alex dived every dive and can tell the stories first hand.

John Goulding - Sadistically insisted on giving key rings to little girls who may not see 21 to get the key to the door, whose houses usually didn't have doors and if they did would certainly never need a key.

These kids will probably be mystified by this useless gift for decades.

And maybe a few quotes to finish the article.

Neil - "I don't want to see another (substitute - native on the job) as long as I live".

"Yep, thats just the way I am".

Des - "I am sorry, they must put onions in the food".

Postscript - It was enough to set off the smoke detector in the aircraft toilet.

- (About Alex) "If he opens his camera case the camera will blink with the light".

Alex - "Des is dressed up like a pox doctors pimp".

Justin - "It's true, I do have my favourite sheep".

Chris - "How do you say show us your tits in Trukese".

Alistair- "We should all remember Justin like this. Next time we see him he will be in Fairfield".

John - "I was pushed" by agents from the Thorfinn who swam ashore at night.

- To two bare foot native children about 4 years old.
"I want you to grow up to be famous scientists, now don't you disappoint me".

The Boys From

Okinawa - "There are no rules about how fast you wash in the shower".

The Hotel Restaurant

- The most heard of all quotes. "Sorry - no reef fish".

As a final postscript to my recent article on the next decade:-

Neil Medhurst changed his job to become a colour consultant but soon died of starvation.*

JUNE GENERAL MEETING

21ST JUNE

At the June General Meeting, video movies and slides will be shown of the recent trip to Truk Lagoon and Palau.

Come along and see just what V.S.A.G. got down to!

S.D.F.-V. DINNER DANCE

by Des Williams

The first S.D.F.-V. Dinner Dance held for several years was enjoyed by all those who attended on Saturday 3rd March, 1990 at Melbourne University. Des & Julie Williams and Ross & Chris Luxford represented the V.S.A.G. Other clubs present were:-

Aust. Postal Institute Diving Club (A.P.I.)
Melbourne Bottom Scratchers Diving Club.
Dive Experience Dive Club.
Marlin Scuba Club.
Black Rock Dive Club.
Marine Diving Group.
Bass Strait Diving Club.

A lively band by the name of Didjeri kept us all on our feet with their distinctive Australian colonial sound. The evening was M.C.'d by Des Williams and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Photographic Competition winners were:-

MACRO CATEGORY: 1st - Lothar Ploss M.B.S.
2nd - Gerry McManus M.B.S.
3rd - Lothar Ploss M.B.S.

NORMAL TO WIDE

ANGLE CATEGORY: 1st - Nil
2nd - Lothar Ploss M.B.S.
3rd - Jim Bonello A.P.I.

The Photograph Competition was judged by Jonathan White, Adrian Newman and Bob Trainer. Only about 50 slides were submitted.

After some more lively dancing on what was a very warm evening, some 10 door prizes were drawn with a fairly even spread amongst the clubs. Priya Cardinaletti and Darren Salter of S.D.F.-V. did an excellent job of organizing the evening and our thanks go to them for the hard work they put in to make the night the success it was.