

# FATHOMS

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# VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FEBRUARY

# FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub—Aqua Group

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### Next general meetings

Thursday 21st February 8.00 p.m.  
Thursday 21st March 8.00 p.m.  
North Melbourne Football Club,  
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne.

### Next committee meetings

26th February - Pat Reynold's Place.  
26th March - Alex Talay's Place.

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## EDITORIAL



Welcome to the first edition of Fathoms for 1991. In this edition we include several articles about the Clubs great trip to Port Lincoln over the Christmas/New Year break. We are also fortunate to have two new contributors to Fathoms, Samantha and Jessica Jeacle. It's great to see the children of members wanting to write articles for Fathoms, and I think Sam and Jessica's are a first.

Whilst speaking of Fathoms, I might dwell for a moment on its role and what it attempts to achieve.

Fathoms is the communications life line of V.S.A.G. It aims to keep members informed of Club activities and other matters relevant to diving interests. It provides a forum by which members can express their views, report on Club activities and attempt to be humorous . . . (WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FLOTSAM & JEISAM?). It also provides a statement to non members of what V.S.A.G. is all about, through its distribution to dive shops, other dive clubs and various other people and institutions, including the State Library, and lastly it records the history of the Club.

John Lawler recently went through some of the very early issues of Fathoms, which were nothing more than a typed and photocopied sheet of paper. Fathoms has certainly come a long way since then, particularly under the editorship of Des Williams, who significantly upgraded the style of publication with much assistance from Alex Ialay, who through his involvement in the printing industry, facilitated the excellent production standards we now enjoy.

However, at the January Committee Meeting we were reminded that the cost of having such a fine publication does not come cheap. Recent issues of Fathoms have cost over \$450.00 for the typesetting and printing. On this basis, one might expect the cost of Fathoms this year to be around \$2,700.00. This is more than the Club's income from members subscriptions. Obviously this is not a desirable long term situation. We can get away with it for the time being because the Club has quite substantial funds and is earning interest on those funds. However, as a basic business philosophy it is not good practice to have operating expenses greater than operating income. Some suggestions to alleviate this situation are:-

- Increase members subscriptions.
- Increase Club membership.
- Reduce costs of producing Fathoms.
- Sell advertising space in Fathoms.
- Reduce frequency of Fathoms to quarterly.

Perhaps some members would like to comment on this issue, either at the next General Meeting or by writing to the Editor - Fathoms.

The months of February, March and April should produce some good diving weather and we have some good dives coming up over the next three months, including Wilsons Promontory at Easter and Portland over the March long weekend, and of course our regular spots out from Sorrento and Flinders.

As we send this copy to print final preparations are under way for the Australia Day Weekend at Refuge Cove. This promises to be bigger and better than ever before, with about 25 divers intending to go down.

The Club recently has had quite a large number of new member applications, so we can look forward to seeing some new faces in the coming months. In the past there has been a problem with the processing of new member applications. There has been almost an over eager approach to sign people up before the proper procedures have been completed.

Members are advised that a new member cannot be accepted until he/she has provided evidence of training qualification and medical certification, and has successfully completed a check-out dive. Members who propose new members, should see to it that these steps are taken before the application is lodged. V.S.A.G.'s safety record cannot be compromised and as more and more divers look for clubs to join, we must maintain our high standard of acceptance.

John Goulding  
Editor

## **BE SEEN AT SEA ...**

### THE SAFETY SAUSAGE

### IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!!

The inflatable marine rescue tube for increased above water diver visibility should be carried by all safety conscious divers. V.S.A.G. has purchased further supplies of the device, and can be purchased at the Club's subsidized rate of only \$ 5.00 each.

CONTACT: JOHN LAWLER - 569 9850

## V.S.A.G. COMMITTEE NEWS

The following are the main points from the January Committee Meeting.

- John Lawler will draw up revised safety procedures for diving and boat handling.

It is proposed that a special meeting of Dive Captains (Committee) and boat owners, be called to discuss these procedures when ready.

- Cash reserves of the Club as at 23rd January, 1991 were \$10,852.19.
- Air fill charges for Refuge Cove were set at \$5.00 (normal Club price).
- 18 camp sites at Tidal River for Easter have been booked.
- Suggestions for June long weekend to be canvassed from members at February General Meeting.
- Members who propose new members, will now be responsible to ensure that the new applicants provide evidence of appropriate qualification and medical certificate. The proposing member should also ensure arrangements are made that applicants undertake check-out dive.
- Dive Captains to try and ensure that advertised times for dive trips are adhered to.

Members on arrival at the boat ramp should check with the Dive Captain, and then promptly commence to get ready for departure.

- Bob Scott was appointed Assistant Treasurer and Sally Staddon was appointed Assistant Secretary. Their job will be to stand in during the absence of Treasurer/Secretary and assist at times of work overload.

- Operating costs of the Club were discussed, particularly the high cost of Fathoms, which has been recently costing over \$450.00 an issue plus postage.
- Arrangements for handling the wine sales were discussed.\*

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**V.S.A.G. EASTER TRIP**

TIDAL RIVER

WILSONS PROMONTORY

28TH MARCH - 1ST APRIL, 1991

V.S.A.G. has booked 18 flat grassy(?) camp sites at Tidal River over Easter, for what promises to be the biggest and best Easter trip yet.

It seems that each year we need to book more and more sites, and this year we are lucky enough to get 18 sites.

Don Abell will once again be the organizer. SO BOOK EARLY.

Deposits of \$20.00 to be paid at February General Meeting.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT DON ON 889 4415.

\*\*\*\*\*



## FOR THE V.S.A.G. OENOPHILE

by Don Abell

The Club is trying to identify any V.S.A.G. oenophiles. Any member may feel free to confess, as the result is not automatic expulsion from the Club. On first enquiry I would expect the following reactions.

Des Williams - Head in the newspaper and does not look sideways.

Paul Sier - Immediately admits to it, hoping to boost his reputation.

Graeme Blanchard - Only indulges on overseas trips.

Tony Tipping - Used to be, but gave it up after touring Africa.

etc. etc.

Now to put a damper on the discussion, I have to tell you that an oenophile is a person who loves wine. In the words of Basil Fawlty - a person who would know the difference between a Bordeaux and a Claret.

The reason for the search, is that V.S.A.G. has arranged a follow up of the wine offer, which was first announced in Fathoms in April/May 1988. In that magazine we announced the objective of promoting 200 dozen of Hickinbotham Wines to our members, this raising \$2,400.00 for Club funds. As most members now know we promoted almost 400 dozen, and the result is now evident in our very healthy bank balance and the ability of the Club to provide more benefits to members.

This offer is a little different from 1988. We only have one wine on offer and we have a strict limit on the quantity.

The wine is the Hickinbotham Anakie Cabernet-Shiraz 1983. The quantity is about 60 dozen. After that is sold there is no more left, to the best of our knowledge, anywhere in the country.

A few background notes for those who are interested.

Vines are not indigenous to Australia. The first ones were planted near Sydney in 1788. For anyone wanting to go back further than this, I recommend the State Library.

Today, Victoria and South Australia both cultivate vines more extensively than New South Wales. Anakie is in the Geelong area and toward Bacchus Marsh.

Victoria suffered badly in the late 1890's, when the disease "Phylloxera" almost wiped out the vines of the State. The destruction in the Geelong area was total.

The State Viticulturist assisted to rebuild the industry. The cure was replanting with vines grafted on to American root stocks.

However, it was a long time before the Geelong area was to recover. As recently as 1970 there were only 160 acres under vine, only a quarter of which were bearing grapes.

By the late 1970's the situation had changed and Geelong was becoming a recognized wine area again. It was around this time that a young wine maker, Stephen Hickenbotham, began making wines at Anakie on his leased vineyard.

The area now has a number of good wineries such as Idyll, Prince Albert, Bannockburn, etc.

Stephen was killed in the mid 1980's when a light plane on which he was a passenger, flew into the slopes of Mount William, west of Cairns. Stephen left behind him a reputation for making great wines and also a reputation for challenging the conservatism of the wine industry.

During his relatively short time in wine making, he was probably the most qualified wine maker in the land, having studied in France and holding a double degree. Despite his paper qualifications, he once challenged other wine makers by claiming "You can tell a real wine maker by the cuts on his hands".

The wines of Stephen Hickinbotham are now highly sought after, there are few available. I have not seen any in wine shops. Some available at restaurants command a high price. In late 1990 a small quantity of his "Ultima Thule" was located and sold at auction by Christies on November 21.

Stephen's most significant contribution to Australia was the introduction of the Cab Mac style wine (Carbonic Maceration). A style previously used mainly in Beaujolais.

THE WINE: ANAKIE CABERNET-SHIRAZ 1983.

A strong flavoured wine. It is balanced with good fruit. It may be consumed now or left for another year or two (but probably no more).

The blend of this wine is an example of Hickinbotham's experimentation from varietal wines.

In 1991 it is difficult to find any wines from 1983. Purchasing any current Vintage Red, worth drinking would cost \$8.00-\$10.00 for starters. The V.S.A.G. special offer for a top quality 1983 wine of reputation will not last long.

Any member wanting some of this wine should contact any Committee Member. As with our last offer this is a CASH ON ORDER deal.

Note: Bob Scott will be in charge of wine sales distribution. Telephone: 706 3766 (Work) or 763 6872 (Home).\*

## S.D.F.-V. MEETING - 4TH DECEMBER 1990

by Des Williams

- (i) Historic Shipwreck Advisory Committee report from D. Williams - T.S.S. CORAMBA wreck has been provisionally declared historic to protect against looters.  
  
A shipwreck trail has been opened on Victoria's West Coast, with wreck sites marked and interpretative material for use of tourists.
- (ii) Adrian Panow tabled a report by S.P.U.M.S. on 1988 diving accidents and causes.
- (iii) Warrnambool Sub-Aqua Club is considering joining S.D.F.-V.
- (iv) S.D.F.-V. now have a listing in "Melbourne BIG" and Yellow Pages.
- (v) S.D.F.-V. submission to Natural Resources & Environment Committee has been sent. The excellent submission was produced by a Sub-committee headed by John Goulding. Brilliant work.
- (vi) Victorian Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee has okayed S.D.F.-V.'s new delegate in Rod King from A.P.I. Club. Great for S.D.F.-V. to at last have a representative on this Committee.
- (vii) There are 13 dive clubs now officially financial in S.D.F.-V.
- (viii) Conservation, Forests & Lands plan to establish two 300 hectare aquaculture sites in Capel Sound (off Rye).
- (ix) S.D.F.-V. to plan a dinner dance for August 1991.
- (x) S.D.F.-V. to become Incorporated as soon as possible.

\* Next meeting, first Tuesday in February 1991.

The S.D.F.-V. is back in action again and the good work of the Committee led by Darren Salter should be recognized.\*

## MEDIA WATCH

# Scallop 'myths' fight

THE scallop industry last month released a paper it claims explodes "myths" about the environmental impact of scallop fishing in Port Phillip Bay.

The president of the Victorian Scallop Fishing Association, Mrs Meita Probstl, said the paper had been prepared because the industry had been "annoyed and frustrated" by "ill-founded" comments on scallop fishing.

"It is time to correct some commonly held misconceptions about scallop fishing," she said.

"I can understand

some amateurs thinking that better snapper catches are due to us not fishing for scallops but the fact is marine biology is a set of relationships of much greater complexity.

"There is no simple relationship between scallop fishing and snapper catches."

The paper, prepared by the (V&IA), claimed:

"Scallop fishermen, in the interests of conservation and resources, proposed that there be no scallop fishing from 1988 to 1990.

"There are massive rises and falls in annual catches of snapper and these are unrelated to

scallop fishing. There have been a series of years when excellent catches of snapper have coincided with scallop fishing such as in the 1960s and '70s.

"Scallop harvesting takes place in 20 per cent of the bay. All non-target fish are released unharmed back into the bay.

"Scallop fishing has been banned in waters of less than 10 metres since 1984 but the seagrass beds are still declining. Seagrass beds are declining in Western Port Bay but there has never been any scallop fishing in the bay.

But amateur fisherman Mr Ern Trembath

said he could see a "clear relationship" between scallop fishing and snapper catches.

"There hasn't been any scallop fishing for a while and the amount of snapper being caught in Port Phillip Bay this year is just unbelievable. It's the best season in years," he said.

"There is snapper being caught off Seaford and Frankston pier. One bloke caught three in a night.

"If the next snapper season is really good, then I believe that will prove scallop fishing does have an effect on snapper catches."

- MATT DEIGHTON

Herald-Sun

# POACHER MOB KNIFE THREAT

THREE Fisheries and Wildlife officers were surrounded and threatened at knife-point by an angry mob which was protesting shellfish poachers, according to a senior fisheries officer.

The incident happened at Shelley Beach in Williamstown during a departmental crackdown over the past three weeks on shellfish and abalone poachers, the senior fisheries officer in the Melbourne area, Michael Houghton, said yesterday.

Mr Houghton, who received a bruised arm during the incident, said the officers were forced to leave the scene without arresting the poachers because of the risk of assault.

## By SUELETTE DREYFUS

The officers later returned to the scene with police and arrested one of the mob members who had threatened the officers.

A poacher turned himself in at the police station later that day, he said.

"It was a very violent confrontation, we were threatened with knives which were being concealed under their shirts."

Mr Houghton said he and the mob had surrounded the officers' car and was shouting at them.

Mr Houghton described the incident as "a regular occurrence", which typically happened at low tide on the afternoon of a hot day.

He warned bystanders

who suspected someone of poaching not to approach the suspect because of the threat of violence.

Witnesses should take the suspect's car number instead and report the matter to Fisheries and Wildlife officers, he said.

Mr Houghton said the majority of offenders were Asian, and that abalone was considered a delicacy in countries such as Japan, Singapore and Vietnam.

Abalone sold for up to \$100 a kg in some Asian countries, and was in short supply as Australia was one of the few places left in the world with a commercially viable population.

Mr Houghton warned that many poached abalone had found their way into Melbourne restaurants, although some restaurants sold abalone

which had been caught legally.

"I believe that a large amount of the abalone which is available in the local restaurants, Asian groceries and markets is from illegal sources," he said.

Mr Houghton said poachers were so keen to avoid arrest that they would use their children as scapegoats, loading them down with bags of poached abalone.

He said the poachers knew the children would not go to jail for the offences, while an adult could face up to \$10,000 in fines and even jail.

He said that once an abalone population had been poached out of existence in a certain area, it could take 20 years for a viable population to re-establish itself — if at all.

Herald-Sun



Master instructor Jane Bowman (right) in the waters of Port Phillip Bay with instructor Chris Edwards

# Scuba divers at fault — coroner

Despite four deaths in diving accidents in Victoria in the past year, the Deputy State Coroner's court remains convinced about the safety of the sport.

Completing her inquiry into the deaths last week, the Deputy Coroner, Anne Williams, last month found that the divers were solely responsible for their own deaths but called for a voluntary code of diving practice.

Failure to abide by existing industry regulations had led to the deaths of four divers scattered around Port Phillip Bay.

Ms Williams shied away from blaming the sport, but warned that serious lessons must be learned from the deaths.

"The safety of recreational scuba diving is not in doubt and the introduction of a diving code of practice by the Minister for Sport and Recreation would be a sensible step," she said.

"The voluntary code will be a small step, but it will encourage divers to follow the rules and to accept responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of others." She said that in the past year, there had been a decline in enthusiasm for the sport.

legislative control over the sport also raised serious industry alarm.

Ms Williams stepped back from recommending such a change, arguing that diver safety could be compromised by forcing the industry to register and control all diving equipment. She said that the industry would be divers to private, unsupervised private boat use.

The proposed industry code would be drafted by the Deputy State Coroner as diving deaths are not always associated with the sport.

Williams said that the code would apply to all divers while diving the statistic adds to the toll of scuba diving deaths. If they have the same number as deaths from motor accidents, it is not added to the road toll.

One famous case listed on the national diving toll involved the death of a woman who was a golf course. The woman was the wife of a golfer who was on the course while another man was illegally on the course.

The shooter saw a black object in the water and fired some shots. It was the diver — who died as a result.

Every Sunday an estimated 1,500 divers are under the water around the beaches.

Williams said that the numbers are even higher and, according to industry estimates, this figure could blow out further when the numbers of recreational divers — who do not have the supervision of diving operators — is taken into account.

Examples of the number of qualified divers in Australia are vague, but according to the Diving Industry and Travel Association, there are about 100,000 divers in Australia, while in the United States, there are 1,000,000 divers.

Williams said that the industry is being trained each year.

Williams also called for changes to the law which now limits the effectiveness of police search and rescue operations.

"The current law prevents police divers from going to depths of 20 metres underwater — a limit the coroner says could compromise proper investigations of diving accidents," she said.

"The industry has a duty of care to the public and it is their responsibility to ensure that the safety of the public is not compromised by their actions." Williams said that in the past year, there had been a decline in enthusiasm for the sport.

Williams said that in the past year, there had been a decline in enthusiasm for the sport.

## Underwater death for four

maintain his diving equipment and going on a deep dive without adequate preparation.

The coroner said that the diver was a commercial diver on the vessel of the Coorong on the day of the accident.

Mr Henderson was diving off the boat, he swam rapidly to the bottom, with his diving partner struggling to keep up.

Suddenly, at a depth of 37 metres, Mr Henderson dropped on his head and neck, with his arms and legs outstretched.

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Mr Henderson had limited swimming skills and was not a diver. He had finished his course in December 1989 and done a further six dives in January 1990 before he was killed.

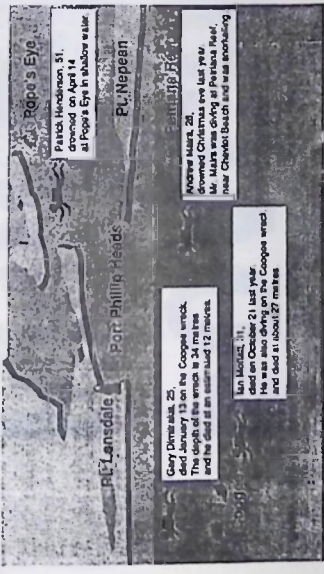
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Patrick Henderson, 51, at Popo's Eye in shallow water

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Mr. Henderson, 51, died on October 21 last year. He was also diving on the Coorong wreck and died at a depth of 12 metres.

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Gary Diverina, 25, died on October 21 last year. He was also diving on the Coorong wreck and died at a depth of 12 metres.

Mr. Henderson, 51, died on October 21 last year. He was also diving on the Coorong wreck and died at a depth of 12 metres.

## MY PORT LINCOLN ADVENTURE

Six Years Old

by Jessica Jeacle

Six Years Old

We went to Port Lincoln for the holidays. On the way we played some tapes. I had a little sleep in the car. It took one and a half days to get there. When we got there we put the tent up. Then we put the new bunks up. It was fun sleeping in them. My Dad caught lots of crayfish and scallops and some abalone.

One day we went to Whalers Way. We saw the swimming hole and a few other things. While we were there we had a picnic lunch. We saw some whales. Dad took a photo of them. Then we went back to our tent.

On Monday we went to Tumby Bay we had lunch there. There was a raft far out. We swam to it. I could not touch the bottom. A big girl helped me to the part where I could. Tony had to help Samantha and Marcus off the raft. My Dad could not come in the water because his bathers were in the boot and Mum had the keys and she had gone to the shops with Marg. Mum bought me and Samantha a Tumby Bay T-Shirt.

We went to the Leisure Centre with our friend Tanya. The water slide was fun. We all went on it. Then we went back to the caravan park to have lunch.

After lunch we went to play with our new friends Judith, Katherine and Robyn. Then we all went to play with Emma and Laura on the trampoline. Then we went to the park and played on the swings and the boat. After that we went to the wheel house and played there. We went in the Crows Nest. Then we went back to the caravan park. I played Baby Animal Lotto with Laura, while Samantha played cricket with Marcus. Then Samantha went back up to our tent, a few minutes later Mum and Samantha came down in the car, I hopped in the car and asked Mum where we were going. Mum said we were going to the shell shop. I bought seven presents. I gave four to my friends and I kept three for myself. A few minutes later we went back to our tent, me and Samantha played Trouble. Then me and Samantha read our books that we got

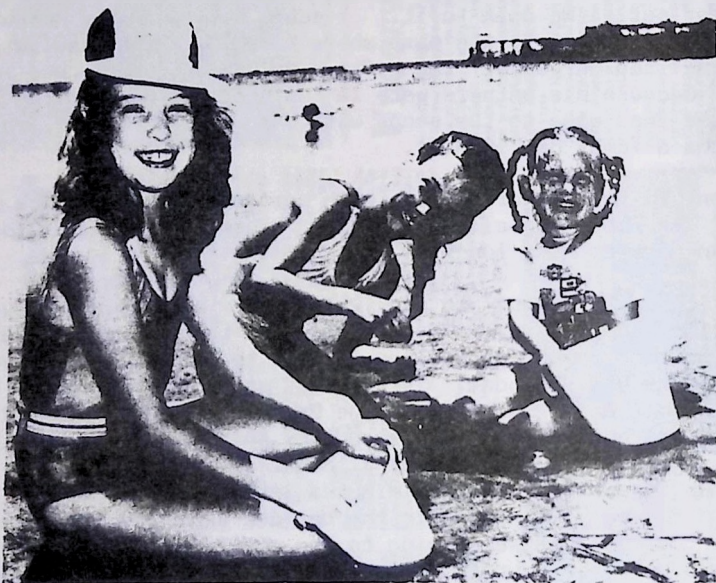


from Santa. The next few days we played together and went out too.

A few days later we went home. We all helped to pack up, then we got in the car and Dad started driving. At lunch time we went to the pub. We had salad and chips. Then we went back in the car and started driving. We played some tapes in the car. We stayed in the Adelaide motel. We had fish and chips for tea then we went to bed.

In the morning Dad started driving home when we got home I had my dinner, played for a little while and then I went to bed.

THE END



• Among the hundreds of tourists who flooded Port Lincoln for the festive season were this merry trio from Melbourne. Samantha Jeacle, 8, her sister Jessica, 7, and Laura Tipping, 4, spent yesterday at the beach with their mothers while their fathers went diving with the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group.

## PORT LINCOLN

by Samantha Jeacle

While we were at Port Lincoln we went to lots of different places. Dad caught lots of crayfish and we ate lots of crayfish too. One of the days Dad brought home some scallops.

One day we went to Whalers Way. Mum packed a picnic lunch. While we were at Whalers Way we saw some whales. Dad took a photo of them.

Another day we went to Tumbly Bay with the Tipping's. There was a raft thing floating on the water. Mum went for a walk in town with Marg.

We went to the Leisure Centre with Tanya. It was great fun on the water slide. I went down with Dad. We went really fast. I went on my back, it was fun. When I got to the bottom I held my nose. When I was tired of the slide I went for a swim.

Another one of the days we went to the beach with Marg, Emma, Laura and Marcus. While we were at the beach Laura, Jessica and I got our photo put in the paper. Dad was very pleased.

There was a little beach at the caravan park. We went there lots of times. It was very shallow till you got out to the weeds.

We met some other girls too. Their names were Robyn, Katherine and Judith.

There was a little shop that sold shells. I bought some earrings and some little shell animals.\*

## TIP'S TIT-BITS

by Tony Tipping

The best way to start this year is to give the results of last years Tennis Day, it missed the cut for the previous Fathoms by a few days.

Nine families enjoyed a pleasant day of activities at Cranbourne South, slightly down on other years because it clashed with another function.

Special thanks must be extended to Marie Truscott and Don Abell for organizing the courts, Mick for arranging the clown and June Scott for providing prizes for the kids races. The results were:-

Tennis: Mixed Doubles - Tony & Marg Tipping.  
Singles - Paul King.

The Mile: Overall Winner - Marcus Tipping.  
First Female - Rowena John.  
First Veteran - Tony Tipping.

As you can see my family had a very successful day. I guess I won't mind if someone's wedding clashes with this event every year! However, in true Club spirit Tony John received the prize for the Veteran's Mile because both Paul King and I, who decisively whipped him, had already received prizes for the tennis. The Moore's still hold the record for attendance, eighteen consecutive Tennis Day's out of a possible nineteen!

### Christmas Trip To Port Lincoln

As usual this year my mob set off early on the 21st December, towing the new Jayco Camper (which is not paid for yet) and we arrived at Port Pirie, South Australia, 996 km.'s from Deepdene for the first night. It was stinking hot all day until a violent electric storm overnight. The beauty of the Jayco is that for

overnight stops it only takes 10-15 minutes to put up, and it tows exceptionally well, no more free plugs. On our arrival at Kirton Point Caravan Park at Port Lincoln we were put on the V.S.A.G. tent sites, so I put the van, annex and fly sheets up that night, and repeated the entire process the next morning when we transferred to a caravan site, which was much flatter and the advantage being we'd be away from the V.S.A.G. riff-raff!

Port Lincoln is a pleasant enough town, large enough to be able to get anything you'd ever need on a three week holiday, and situated on the Eyre Peninsula, which meant lots of variation in coastline and scenery. The nearby beaches were not as good for kids as what you get in N.S.W., but the caravan park with its panoramic views of the bay and islands, lush grassy sites, no dust and exceptionally clean toilet/shower blocks, made it an ideal spot to live.

Some of the highlights, apart from diving around the area, were day trips to Whalers Way, Coffin Bay, Cape Donnington, Tumbly Bay, the Fauna Park, Greenpatch Farm and Fishery Bay, a surf beach which reminded me of Cape Bridgewater down past Portland. We went there twice, both very hot days and each time there would not have been more than 15 people on the beach, that just doesn't happen over Christmas in crowded N.S.W.

I won't say too much about the diving, Des was probably right when he told me, "It's a long way to go for a two or three week cray bash"! The scenery and the islands down through the Thorny Passage were nothing short of startling, but underwater I thought the visibility and scenery were pretty ordinary, the exception being one day when we dived the exposed tip of Thistle Island. In four days/eight dives, I saw enough rocks, kelp, crays, greenlip abs and at Coffin Bay scallops to last me all year. Mind you I had my share of success and enjoyed many feeds of the above crustaceans, plus Jack's sweep and leatherjackets.

My only disappointment was that the diving trip was far too cray bash orientated. Rob, the charter boat owner, would be laughing if we went out and found drop offs, pinnacles of fish colonies and a few ship wrecks, there must be heaps around there.