

FATHOMS

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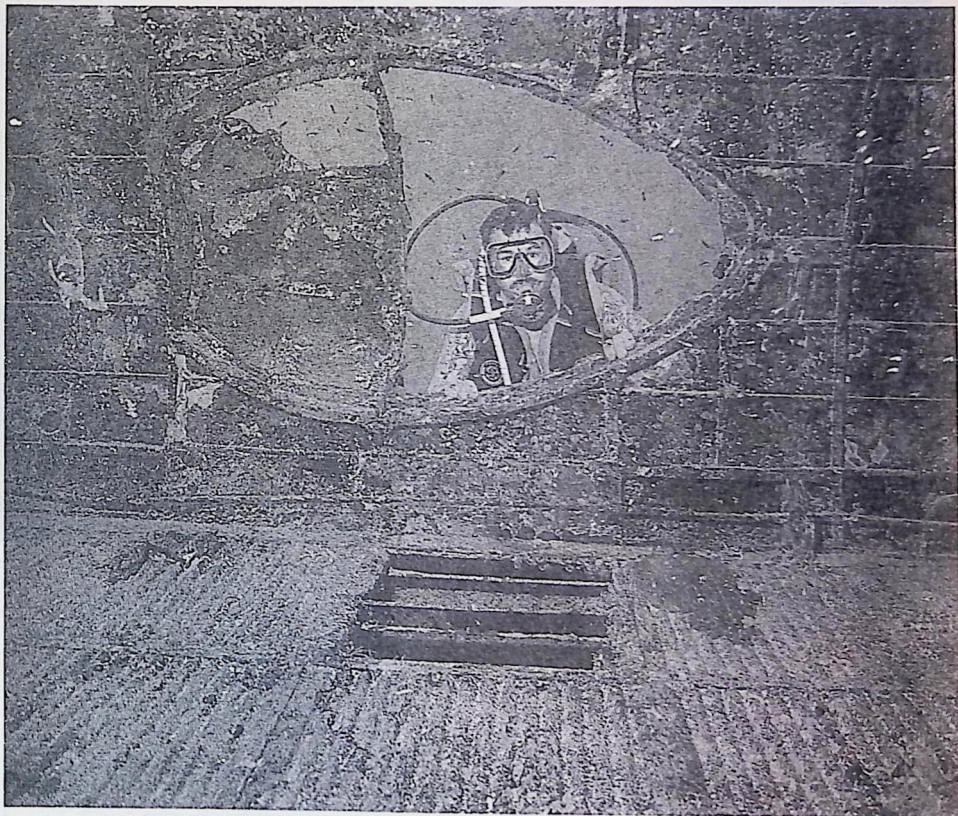
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VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

JUN-JUL 94

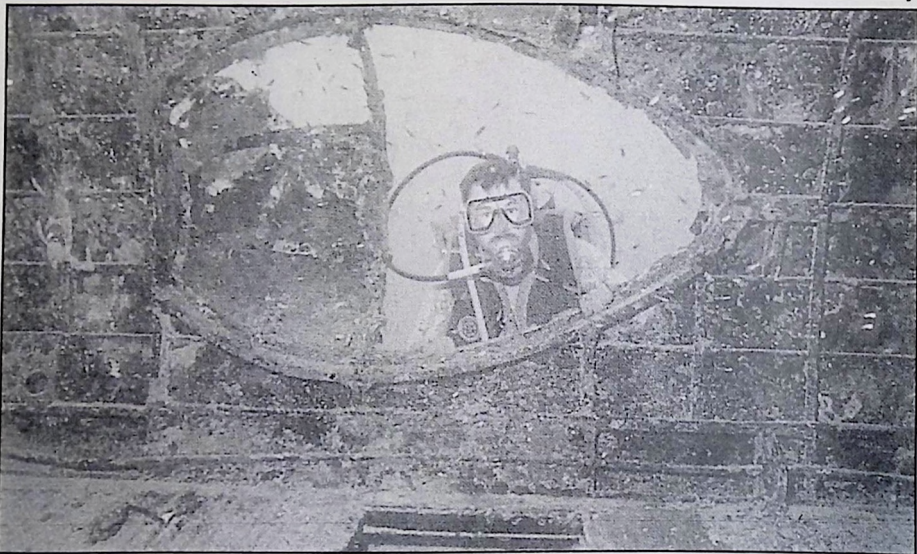
VSAG

Victorian Sub-Aqua Group. Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne. 3001 Australia

These magnificent photographs are all examples of Des Williams' work taken on the VSAG trip to Truk Lagoon 1990.

I am sure you will agree that they are all outstanding, so good in fact that I couldn't decide what to keep or reject, so I've used the back cover as well and reproduced them all.

*Yours in Diving,
Alex Talay*



Front Cover:

Chris Llewellyn at Port-Side Gun Port. Betty Bomber Wreck. Truk Lagoon.

Back Cover:

1. Alex Talay with Ships Telegraph inside bridge of "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.
2. Chris Llewellyn with lamp on "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.

3. Chris Llewellyn on bridge of "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.
4. Stern of "Gosei Maru" Truk Lagoon, divers from left to right: Neil Medhurst, Justin Liddy, Pat Reynolds & Bob Scott (standing), Ross Luxford, Andy Mastrowicz (back)
5. Alex Talay inside fuselage of Betty Bomber Truk Lagoon.
6. Stern mast of "Gosei Maru". Truk Lagoon divers left to right Chris Llewellyn, Alex Talay, Justin Liddy, Pat Reynolds and Neil Medhurst.

The Victorian Sub-Aqua Group was founded in 1954 and has continued as a strong and active diving club since that time. It is incorporated as a non profit company and has no commercial affiliation with any organisation. VSAG is committed to the preservation of independent diving freedom. It believes that divers must take a responsible attitude toward the protection and preservation of the marine environment but as a general rule is opposed to legislative measures that place prohibitive limitations and restrictions in diving activities.

Local diving is organised on a bi-monthly basis, generally out of participating member's boats. This is supported by weekend camps, charters to more remote locations and annual overseas trips. The club has a considerable investment in diving equipment. Regular functions provide an opportunity for members, friends and families to socialise. Each month VSAG meets at North Melbourne Football Club where bar facilities are available prior to and after the General Meetings. Visitors are very welcome - smart casual wear essential.

FATHOMS

Official journal of the *Victorian Sub - Aqua Group*

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Next General Meetings:

Thursday 16th June 1994, 8.00pm sharp!
Thursday 21st July 1994, 8.00pm sharp!
North Melbourne Football Club
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne
Meet beforehand at club for dinner

Next Committee Meetings:

Tuesday 21st June - Des William's home
Tuesday 26th July - Doug Catherall's home

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EDITORIAL



This is probably one of the most important opportunities for a V.S.A.G. Editor, to reflect on the last four decades of our Club's history. No small task in a few paragraphs!

As you read this issue, it is exactly 40 years since the first meeting of V.S.A.G. was convened in the Railway Building in the city back in June 1954.

V.S.A.G. was formed to cater for the growing interest of spear fishermen in the "new" Aqualung gear appearing on the market in Australia.

Since that time the club has been involved in the evolution of scuba diving in Victoria and played a major part in the formation of the

Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria and the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria. Both of these bodies continue to serve actively the interests of non commercial divers and liaise with the governments of the day in matters of diving politics.

V.S.A.G. seems to have always attracted capable and talented members, who have been as active in the diving community and politics as they have been underwater.

Friends, it is a 40 year history of which we can be proud, the club has stood the test of time and made a major contribution to diving in Victoria for the sheer love of the sport and for no other reason. Enjoyment and friendship have always been the driving force of the Club and we have always had a strong Committee to steer the Club.

Since 1954 V.S.A.G. members have dived in weird and wonderful places such as caves, mineshafts, rivers, dams, quarries and most of the Victorian coast. Interstate trips have taken the club to many parts of Queensland, New South

EDITORIAL cont.

Wales and South Australia as well as overseas to Truk Lagoon (twice), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, New Zealand and Palau. Our overseas group trips have been especially enjoyable in recent years.

And so we enter our 41st year, congratulations V.S.A.Gers and let's take this opportunity to say thanks to all of the members and Committees before our time, for building such a strong foundation on which this Club stands.

My thanks to all who prepared articles for this edition of FATHOMS, especially Justin Liddy, Murray Black, Bob Scott and Chris Llewellyn (Big Rosie) who we do not hear from often enough.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our 40th Year celebration on the 25th of June.

DES WILLIAMS Editor

**1994 VSAG
40 YEARS**

EASTER - DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU

BOB SCOTT

Easter this year started earlier than most Easters because of two reasons and they are:

1. Easter fell on the 1st of April which is as early as you would get any Easter, &
2. the Big "M" said "SCOTTY when and what time will you be going down to the Prom?" and my answer was "early", so the Big "M" says, I'm going down early early, just to beat you little Lloyd," so the ante was set at the cold stubby to be supplied by the loser (and it was bloody blubby too Mick). Thursday morning dawn, the Scott house-hold was up with chooks, the boat was packed Wednesday night , and we were on the road by 7am! Mick, I could taste the cold sweet nectar already!. We arrived at the Prom at about 10am, set up camp and by the time we had finished it was rather warm, so it was on with swimming gear down to the beach for a well deserved swim and cool off, back to camp and twist the top off Mick's stubby. Friday is upon us now; Donald our illustrious leader has arrived, gate keys have been obtained, boats fuelled up and it is out to Glennies, a bit choppy on the way out but once out there in the lee of the island it was really calm and crystal clear, probably 100ft. vis. Alex and i dived on some unknown bommie which on a good day we'd not bother with, but on this day it was quite a good dive with lots of various reef fish and a small patch of green lips. The crew on our boat elected to have only one dive because it was a wee bit chilly, after consulting the dive captain we decided to head back to Tidal. Saturday was a day of rest as the wind had got up over night and it was a little rough to go diving, so we were left to own devices and that was to pull down and clean flooded battery houses and like. Saturday night was entertainment time and it was Eden revisited, the ladies of the group comandeered Andy's tent and banished us men to Mick's tent for the usual partaking of the amber liquid and the like. Now when I say Eden revisited, there were no dinner cooked for any of us men folk, like I wouldn't say that they were not capable, but that's another story, we had to resort to \$2.00 worth of wedges each. I don't know what this world is coming to when a man can not rely on his woman to give her man, her lord and

master, sustenance. Now comes the tale to end all tales. Sunday is upon us, weather is looking promising, boats are launched and we were heading for Norman Island to try to catch a crustacean. 1st dive 16 metres for 44 mins, well within times, good territory, no catch, back in the boat for lunch hot coffee and some surface interval 1.5 hrs. 2nd dive checked the depth sounder 10 mtrs. meet Charlie at the pick, swim all over the reef for about 20 or so mins. and at last a quarry is found hiding in a tight ledge I think to myself I can reach him if I wriggle in, it's a narrow ledge and short in width, so I've got to go in arms in front of me, push with my legs and pull with my arms. Charlies pushing from behind, a couple of more inches and I'll have PRFF PRFF, what's that? Wriggle some more, PRFF PRFF, I know what that is now I'm lying on my buoyancy vest inflater valve there's no room to move my arms back to shift it or deflate it, bummer it he's nearly mine, for probably 20 mins I said to myself he's nearly mine, but I was getting nowhere, I can feel that my vest is fully inflated and I think to myself if I back out of this hole carefully I can grab hold of the rock, grab hold of my dumper & all will be well HA HA! As soon as I was a little way out of the ledge the buoyancy took over. Hell, now I'm in trouble, blow like hell can't find the dump valve, all I can see is white water racing pass my mask. 10 metres to the surface in I reckon less than 3 seconds flat. On the surface empty my vest out, go to the bottom again and spend a little time sorting my mind out. Over to the anchor line & slowly up to 10 ft. empty out my tank on deco about 5 mins, not near enough, but that's all the air I had.

HIND SIGHT SYMPTOMS

Back onboard the boat, check myself for any tell-tale signs of blood in the usual places, none that I can see, whew! Got away with that this time. Sunday night back at the camp, dinner, a couple of stubbys, felt very tired, my thought was that's normal launching, retrieving boats couple of dives a little chilly thats OK. Monday woke up feeling fine had some brekky, broke camp, drove home unloaded all the camping gear, put it all away washed the car washed the boat couple of stubbys had a light dinner felt tired again but dismissed it as a tiring day.

Tuesday woke from a good nights sleep went to work and I felt fine, but very restless could not settle to a job, roamed all over the factory Tuesday. Wednesday ditto, but with a humungus head ache, getting the flu go home take some aspirin go to bed. Thursday whoopee feeling great. Friday Tis a great day till mid afternoon head aches, sight disorientation can't sign my name can't dial a correct number. Saturday morning feeling terrible ring the Alfred relay my problems, they say come on down we need to see you.

In casualty see Dr. John, chest X-ray stand on left leg with eyes closed fall all over the cubicle ditto for the right leg, put one foot behind the other cross my arms in front of my chest felt drunk as a skunk, failed the skin prick test, felt like the blunt end of a pencil, little feeling below the knees if any at all. Dr. John reckons that I need a spell in the chamber, 5 hours Sat. to 18 mtrs. 3 hours Sunday, 3 hrs Monday, 2 hrs tuesday, 1.5 hrs Wednesday, a total of 14.5 hours. Possible scenario is maybe that I had had a bubble in the system for a while and not known about it and this rapid ascent triggered the bend, but this is only conjecture now as there is no way of really knowing. So members, please take it from someone who has been there done that and got 2 t-shirts to prove it PLEASE PLEASE be careful, slow your ascent rates up and if you are not sure do as much deco as possible conditions applying of course.

NOW I CAN NOT THANK ALL THE DRS. NURSES AND ALL THE HYERBARIC TECHS. LOOKED AFTER ME IN MY HOUR OF GREAT NEED. I WON'T MENTION NAMES AS THEY ARE MANY AND BESIDES I'M BENT AND CANNOT BE ASKED TO RECALL SO MANY BUT THEY ALL KNOW WHO THEY ARE, SO ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU HEAPS AND HEAPS.

You have all heard of Mercedes Bends now you have Bobby Bends Scott

ANNUAL CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS SMALL RISE

From June 1994, when V.S.A.G. annual subscription are due, the 12 months subscription fee will be \$50. This represents a \$5 rise since the last increase back in 1991 and is necessary to ensure the production of our magazine continues. The one-off joining fee for new members will also be lifted to \$40.

V.S.A.G. 40th YEAR CELEBRATION

Not long now! See you at the BRUCE COUNTY MOTOR INN, Blackburn on Saturday 25th June.

This promises to be a fantastic evening and our thanks must go to Mick Jeacle for his great effort in arranging the celebration and a special thanks to Alex Talay who provided printed tickets for the occasion.

Hope you all have a memorable night.

TIDAL RIVER EASTER - 1994

DON ABELL

1994 not a year to claim any records. We had 73 people spread comfortably on our 20 camp sites. We had four boats available thanks to J.L., Big Mick, the garden Gnome and Andy Mastrowicz. The weather decided to be less than perfect, so we dived Friday and Sunday leaving Saturday to blow through its gusty winds and intermittent showers. However, the weekend was not without its highlights.

HIGHLIGHT 1:

Tony Tipping had Laryngitis which managed to tone him down a few decibels. The loss of Essendon to Fitzroy had a compounding effect. I must point out that a number of members could not notice any difference. This is the first year I can remember Tony not diving at Easter.

HIGHLIGHT 2:

On both days we dived, the visibility must have been 70 feet plus. The weeks leading up to the holiday had been gloriously still weather. The water was warm and clear. The diving was good.

HIGHLIGHT 3:

On each of the days we dived the boats returned on a high tide and we walked the boats up the river to the cars by the gate!

We have to do some planning in the future years. This makes boat retrieval so simple it must be worth watching our watch (so to speak)

HIGHLIGHT 4:

I had my first hot date for years when Kerrie-Lea Luxford took me off to see the "Pelican Brief" in cinema I at the Tidal River Cinema Centre.

Luckily Ross and Chris also joined us to protect us against the cinema's phantom wombat.

HIGHLIGHT 5:

Annie Jeacle always being game to try something new, tested a new brew of red wine flavoured tea on Sunday morning. Some thoughtless member emptied their dregs into the kettle on Saturday night.

Apparently the brew will not make it onto Annie's list of top ten breakfast favourites.

HIGHLIGHT 6:

Our own Bobby Scott tried to imitate a polaris missile on his Sunday dive. While jammed in a ledge he accidentally depressed the inflator button on his vest. When he came out of the ledge - BLAST OFF!!

Bob spent a few hours in the chamber as a result, so we fortunately learn a little bit more without any serious results.

HIGHLIGHT 7:

Another brilliant curry night at J.L.'s tent. John had his family down for the weekend.

When half way to the Prom, John realised Yvonne had left the curry at home. John rang Yvonne's son who drove from Berwick to Hampton to collect the curry. Seems John has picked his in-laws well!

HIGHLIGHT 8:

It had to happen. As we sheltered from a rain shower on Saturday, Mick reluctantly advised me that I had bugged up the weekend and it was time to change the organiser.

When glorious sunshine overwhelmed us on both Sunday and Monday Mick did confess that perhaps it hadn't been all that bad - all things considered.

HIGHLIGHT 9:

This is the first trip I can remember for *awhile* that Andy didn't have an accident or break something on his boat or car.

Given Andy's record things had *improved*.

HIGHLIGHT 10:

Greg Boyces has discovered that God also created women. Greg previously would never miss a dive for anything.

Sunday was the best day of the weekend so what does greg do - takes his new friend snorkelling.

All times going to schedule he should be back to full time diving before next Easter.

Well that will do it for another year. There just isn't room to mention Sophia Tipping's great T-shirt selling skills, Jessie Jeacles Easter Bonnet, Tony Tipping's Chook cooking skills, Joanna Kahn throwing up all over her mother in the middle of the night, Alex's magazine (he doesn't buy it for the articles because it doesn't have any), Leo having to put to bed again, Baz worrying all weekend about the upcoming loss of Collingwood to Essendon three weeks later.

I'll keep all these stories and others for the sequel.

MONIES OUTSTANDING AS AT 26/4/94

DAVID MOORE	Polo Top balance	\$15
	& 3 x \$15 T-shirts	\$45
	Total	\$60
TONY TIPPING	2 x \$15 T-shirts	\$30
NEVILLE VIAPREE	1 x \$15 T-shirts	\$15
MURRAY BLACK	2 x \$15 T-shirts	\$30
ROSS LUXFORD	1 x \$15 T-shirts	\$15

Please pay at next meeting or post to
 "The Treasurer", 33 Patterson Ave, Burwood 3125.
 Cheques payable to V.S.A.G.

TO ALL V.S.A.G. MEMBERS

Our president wishes to commence all General Meetings at 8.00 pm sharp in future - Please be on time as we often have a guest speaker and/or a full schedule, so time often runs short.

You can expect meetings to start at 8.00 pm sharp!

FORTHCOMING PRESENTATIONS AT V.S.A.G. GENERAL MEETINGS

- 16th June -** Screening the spectacular "Wolves of the Sea"
- 18th August -** Dr Geoff Broomhall will tell us of case histories of decompression sickness treated at the Alfred Hospital 1193-94
- 20th October -** Ray Campbell, Staff Captain of Victorian Squadron of the Australian Volunteer Coastguard will speak to us about their work.

V.S.A.G. 40TH YEAR COMMEMORATIVE VIDEO

The committee asks all members, past and present, to join into help the Club produce its 40th year souvenir video which will be available to all members as a record of the club and its history.

Andy Mastrowicz is co-ordinating and producing the video, but he cannot do it without your help in the form of old super 8 or slides of the good times this great club has seen over the years.

So come on and have a look around the house for those old memories and share them with your fellow members.

You can contact Andy on 318 3986 (H) and discuss any material you may have, don't leave it to someone else to provide all the old photographs when you know you have some material which will make this project souvenir a source of fun for everyone.

S.S. "COOGEE"

DES WILLIAMS

After the awe-inspiring dive V.S.A.G. made on the old steamer "S.S. Coogee" on 27th March last, I was moved to find out a little more of the vessel's history.

She was built in Sunderland, England in 1887 and was of 762 tons sailing under the flag of Huddart Parker. "Coogee" provided an overnight service from Melbourne to Launceston from 1890 until when she was transferred to the Geelong trade.

She sailed from Launceston on Christmas Eve 1903 for Melbourne with cargo and thirty-two passengers. Her Captain Carrington was a veteran of 1000 Bass Strait crossings so when she entered dense fog off Cape Schanck at 3am next morning he had "Coogee" coasting along sounding her fog horn every few minutes with a bow lookout staring vainly into the murk ahead.

Suddenly, the Bowsprit of the Italian baroque "Fortunate Figari" towered over the "Coogee" and raked her deck from stem to stern, flatterer her bridge, funnel & masts. The Captain and Helmsman were both killed in this collision.

The huge baroque then took the "Coogee" in tow to Port Phillip where it was found she could still steam despite her funnel being flat on the decks. So the "Coogee" sailed her own way up the bay to Melbourne.

After being repaired she continued in the Bass Strait trade until 1910. In 1918 she was requisitioned by the R.A.N. and joined the tug "James Paterson" off Cape Everard as a mine sweeper working the mine field laid by the infamous German raider "Wolf".

It was during one of the mine sweeps it is believed the wreck of the large steamer "Federal" was located off Gabo Island, but no diving was done to confirm the find.

"Coogee" was returned to her owners in 1919, but remained laid up until dismantled in Melbourne in 1927. The stripped hull of the "Coogee" was scuttled outside the heads on 27th February 1928 and lies there still. She was first relocated by Geoff naylor a few years ago, and is now a popular dive with charter operations.

V.S.A.G.s dive on the "Coogee" in March last, was one of those magic days with oil smooth sea and visibility around 90ft after 10 days of fine windless weather. At one stage I looked up from the wreck and watched divers ascending the shot line and could vaguely see the outline of the boat above & I was at 115 ft.!!



NEW DEADLINE FOR FATHOMS ARTICLES

To allow more time for the physical production of FATHOMS in future, the closing date for the submission of articles will be brought forward by one week.

Instead of the closing time being the last Committee meeting before the next issue, it will now be the General Meeting before the next issue. Thus:

Closing dates for articles to the Editor will be the General Meetings of:

March, May, July, September, November and Mid January.

Your assistance with this new arrangement will be much appreciated by all concerned with the production of your magazine. It is the intention of your current Editor to have the magazine in members hands **BEFORE** the General Meetings of April, June, August, October, December and February.

EDITOR

V.S.A.G. EASTER TRIP 1994 - WILSON'S PROM

MURRAY BLACK

Each tent peg made an almost mournful cry as it hit the bottom of the peg bag, God how I hated packing up. It was Monday morning and the Easter break was all but over, the weather had been good and some diving had been had.

Memories of the party we had ran through my head as the tent gently fell to the ground, I reflected on how we were just having a few quite night we were invaded by the notorious VSAG party crasher lead by Captain Don and ably followed by first mate Leo (Mr. half cut by 8pm.) Others followed and my tent was somewhat full, and so were most of the occupants!! Jokes were told like (how do you know when your wife is dead?)

and fun and merriment was had by all in the tent. This unfortunately was not the case outside the confines of green canvas where punch lines where lost to the cold night air and complaints where made of an outrageous nature to the funny men in green the next day, and naturally denied in the cold hard light of day. Back to the party, which by this stage had seen a certain young Lady do a double twisting somersault from a half standing position, landing on air bed without spilling a drop of volka, which captain Don said was instant membership to the club. (This vodka was later seen in a green bucket and in a long trail to the toilet block!). Not to be out done, first mate leo did a lovely impression of Mutton bird landing with too much fish on board onto the air bed and then got up and left, (he was later rescued from becoming an ice-cream on a stick when found outside on a camp stool in the freezing cold he later said, that "a wombat had asked him to wait there?"

One day after that nights, I was ready for the homeward journey, then when first mate Leo (Mr. half cut by 8pm) approached me and altered something about diving in a nearby river. Well "what the hell" and in a few minutes Leo, Greg and I were at our secret location putting on our dive gear.

From the surface the dive looked a bit plain and the water a bit brown in colour. We descended down through the deep brown water my torch beam penetrating a

full two feet into the porridge. At 25 ft the water went crystal clear and a small hole on the river bed appeared below us. With some hesitation we entered the burrow which was about 4 x 3 ft. The hole went down about 10 ft. then did a dog leg which was a bit tight but I got my pukū (maori for fat belly) through, I looked behind me to see my buddy navigating the little squeeze and Leo's dry suit casting an orange glow on the white limestone walls of the opening which by now was really a cave.

At about 40ft the cave opened up to a large room the size of a rugby field. We all got very excited as we weaved our way through the stalactites which hung from the cave ceiling. At the end of the chamber we saw a very strange stalactite which was infact a bridge support which had broken through the top of the cave and carried on down to the cave floor. This had caused a small collapse and a vertical passage. We followed the passage up, keeping hold of the bridge support as a guide as it was quite silty and visibility was down. When the water turned brown we new that we had found a second entrance which brought us to the surface under the bridge. We swam back to our exit point on a real high. We have been back twice since Easter and plan to go back one more time before we show the cave (which we have called PAT'S HOLE) to the Cave Divers Association of Australia when no doubt it will be out of bounds until they sort out its category and all the other bullshit. This dive will be on Saturday the 7th May so don't miss out on a dive you may never get another chance to dive. See leo for other information.

FLINDERS - SUNDAY 17th APRIL 1994

ROSS LUXFORD

Fine weather greeted us on our arrival at Flinders. Three boats - Bazza's, Frank Natoli's and my own. We launched and headed out to West Head where in true V.S.A.G. style all three boats went in different directions in search of the big crays and abs.


After our first dive and lunch, somehow all the boats converged on the point once again for a second dive. Thirteen divers in all, each boat catching some crays and abs. The main highlight of the day came when I tried to change my boat into a plane going over a "BIG" wave on the Flinders Reef whilst attempting to pick up our divers.

We dropped some 10 to 15 feet with an almighty crash at the bottom losing Peter V's best hat and T-shirt and shaking everything and everybody onboard.

A lesson learned from this little experience is that the boat should not have gone into this breaking sea and divers should either go down and swim through or inflate their vest and drift through to safe water for pick up.

Apart from this incident, and enjoyable and successful day's diving, no problems retrieving the boats and a couple of light ales at Flinders Hotel and we all headed home.

Diving the *President* Coolidge

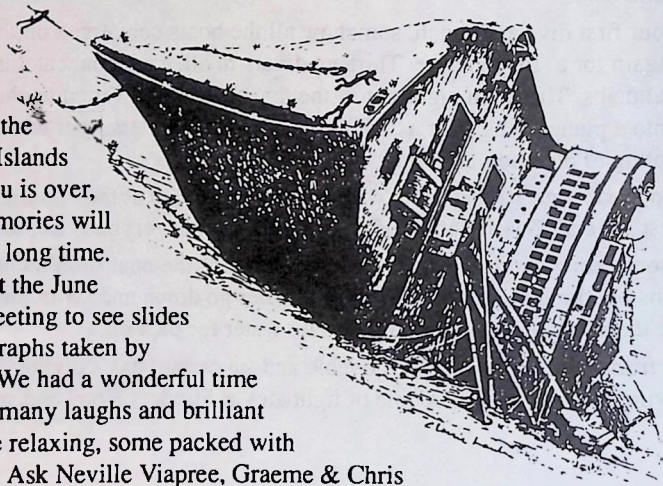


Santo

Our trip to the Solomons Islands and Vanuatu is over, but the memories will linger for a long time. Please be at the June General Meeting to see slides and photographs taken by members. We had a wonderful time and shared many laughs and brilliant dives, some relaxing, some packed with excitement. Ask Neville Viapree, Graeme & Chris about their dive to the Doctor's room deep in the "President Coolidge" or Peter, Don, Sant, Des & Ross about their 60m + dive to the stern of the "Coolidge".

Maybe Sant can explain why six of us didn't embolise in a raging current at Kennedy Island at Gizo, as we watched our exhaust bubbles being sucked down past our fins!

There was plenty of sunshine and good meals everywhere. We took a tour of the battlefield sites on Guadalcanal one morning whilst clocking up interval time before flying.



At all of our dive sites we were attended by professional, courteous, good humoured divemasters.

Don Abell did a brilliant job as tour leader for which every member of our group must be very grateful. At the airport check-ins, baggage control, hotel check-ins, initial dive briefs and especially when our baggage was left behind at Gizo & Santo, Don was there to personally see that the situation was saved. A true professional!

Following are articles about the trip from Chris Llewellyn, Justin Liddy & Peter Vleugel, thanks guys - more to come in the next issue of fathoms. Personally i can't see many of our travel group diving in Melbourne over winter after this trip!!

EDITOR Des Williams

RUSTIC REFLECTIONS OF THE TRIP
(SOLOMONS/VANUATU)
JUSTIN LIDDY "Cultural Attache"

I have just re-read our illustrious President's article in the last "Fathoms" while sitting on a sandy beach watching the water go past and stocking up on vitamin B. It seems to me that his list of Commissions for the overseas trip is somewhat off the mark, so, at the risk of having another sheep joke hurled at me, here are the "facts". (You will need the April/May issue of Fathoms to vaguely understand this.)

BLACK. M

Or should we say bulldozer man. Murrays knowledge of the By-laws does not include "Give way to the right" or "Watch out for the chap in front". Most disconcerting when 40m down in a cramped space to have Murray loom up out of the gloom. He must know when everybody's birthday is, as he has looked closely at everybody's date!

BLANCHARD. G

graeme took the job of entertainment director very seriously and was entertained very well by the exploits of the rest of the crew. His rendition of pizza eating in Honiara is still spoken of with awe by the locals. Almost as awesome as his "True" fish stories.

CARDINALETTI. P

Priya's position as fashion co-ordinator has been wrestled from her by Dave Moore and she took on the job of making sure everyone was on time and in the right place by always being late and in the wrong place! She never complained once at the use of the phrase "Book it up to Room 3", if she wore very high heels, she might have even got some of the jokes.

KAHN. S

As medical officer, his bedside manager and patience was something to be seen. His extensive medical knowledge can best be summed up by the phrase "Rack off and take a Sudafed" or "rack off, I'm going diving" or in the later stages of the trip simply "Rack off".

LAWLER. J

Poor John, arrived at Bokissa to be told we'd all had great diving and he had to go and to a checkout dive with a really ugly dive master called randy or Sandy or something. Really unlucky man, we were all sick of watching her get into and out of her wetsuit. And he forgot the tomato sauce.

LLEWELLYN. C

Has taken the job of Apprentice Cultural Attaché very seriously and put in a huge amount of heavy training under the capable hand of the Master. His, shy quiet nature helped in his task as did his little mate Roger who liked nothing better than to stand up in the morning and say "rack off" to anyone who dared try to wake Chris before 10am.

LIDDY. J

As Senior Cultural Attaché, I must say my job was made easier by the understanding and good manners of the rest of the crew. As all in the party retired early every evening, I didn't get a chance to do any public relationing or private either for that matter. But please remember, I have the negatives.

LUXFORD. R

Ross took one look at the motor of the luxurious Gizo dive boat "Pride of the Solomons" said, "Oh! Shit!" several times and promptly claimed the whole trip as a tax deduction.

MASTEOWICZ. A

Andy must go down in history as the most prolific gatherer of coconuts and free grub the world and indeed the universe has ever seen. He even out-natived the natives!

MOORE. D

It is not unusual for V.S.A.G. to take a collection of relics on these trips, but this time Dave came! It was a constant source of amazement to all we met when Dave donned his gear and the look on their faces were a sight to see. His space age helmet was a big hit in the Solomons (one hit and it was stuffed!). Same for his flippers - one flip and they were stuffed too! As for his pure cotton wetsuit, words fail me.

REYNOLDS. P

Pat was his usual placid self. He got up, he went down (diving) he came up, he ate, drank and got merry (she was nice too he said). Then on Bokissa he spoilt it all by fixing the plumbing, the hot water and all the other things that were broken. And he really didn't get lost on the first "Coolidge" dive, he just wanted to see sandy get upset.

SCOTT. B

Unfortunately Bobbie bent over backwards to get out of this trip, something about being scared of Vikings

VIAPREE. N

Nev's commando style diving suit certainly worked. We didn't get molested once, although why he had to carry such a big stick in his shorts is beyond all our comprehension.

VLEGAL. P

Peter did try for a few erections but his habit of laughing at all the words of wisdom coming from the group meant they mostly fell down.

WILLIAMS. D

See last issue. Des was always on time, always organised, always happy, always stress free, always diving and always hungry!!

Then of course there was our revered Tour Leader, Donny Abell. He very cunningly didn't give himself a job but was content to act as father confessor and comforter to all us little lost souls. His coolness in crisis was a lesson to us all, especially on Gizo as we waved goodbye to our luggage. His coolness and authority when stepping aboard a dive boat "I'm here, we go now, bugger the rest". His constant gifts to the locals (used V.S.A.G. shirts & hats) were typical tricks of his profession to bribe his way to the best position in boats, bars, ~~brothels~~ sorry hotels.

THE LAST DIVE ON THE "COOLIDGE"**PETER VLEUGEL**

The previous night sitting around the table at dinner, the "A-Team" decided to plan the following days diving. The team consisted of Sant, Don, Des, Ross & myself. Next day, we boarded the slow boat "Viong" and headed leisurely to the dive site of the "President Coolidge", leaving almost on time.

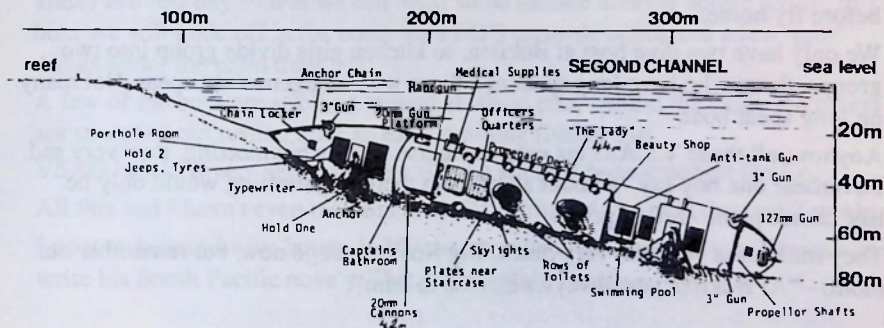
Our dive leader, Brandon, briefed us on our planned descent and subsequent decompression schedule as we tied to the marker buoy. All of us kitted up for what was to be the dive of my career. All in the water, we dropped to 15m and swam along the shadow of the ship below to the deeper water.

Upon reaching our drop off point, we headed down to what was to be a 50m freefall to the stern of the wreck. Just amazing! A ship that has layed there for over 50 years - it looks so majestic, with its sleekness, complete handrails around the decks and stylish curves of the stern. Its rudder sags down towards the sand.

Don and I levelled off at 63m and had a quick look at the rear hold. The cargo appears to be an extensive range of military equipment, but without time to explore it was just a tantalising taste of dives at the stern which could possibly be done at some other time.

A few of the things which caught my attention were the 3" rear gun & turret and the amount of transport trucks and equipment that have spilled out onto the sea floor below. Time to swim to the bow to decompress (the ship is about 200m long!) after passing the swimming pool, beauty salon, "The Lady" and along the promenade deck, we reached the bow.

it was a dive that I have been dreaming of for quite awhile and will remember forever.



***THE FOLLOWING IS A FAX SENT TO
JOHN GOULDING***

(whilst VSAGers were away on latest overseas trip)

This fax blongem to "Big" Johnnie Goulding 17.5.94

Deer, Big Johnnie, mi name Rosie I am cook at Bokissa Island. Your friends staying here ask me send you quick fux, so you takem along to big meeting place and say hello to other members of V.S.A.G. - Virgin Seekers Anonymous Group. Lucky your friends not so fussy and still have plenty good time anyhow!

All your friends having plenty diving and already been down on "Lady" many times. Some of your members here at Bokissa have develop some terrible tropical growths due to change in geography, but tell us girls that it will be better before fly home.

We only have two dive boat at Bokissa, so kitchen girls divide group into two groups, those who have long spear and those who blongem short spear. Not many on long spear boat!

Anyhow, all those V.S.A.G.ers very apologise to miss big meeting, they very sad. I overhear one boy say "without all of them there, big meeting would only be like cactus plant - full of pricks!!

They must miss you club very much. Big Rosie must go now, but remember our motto - "At Bokissa you always welcome to kum".

SOLOMON/VANUATU HIGHLIGHTS

DON ABELL

A brief highlight will help young Desmond put a few snippets into this issue of Fathoms. I am sure that some more lengthy pages will fill future issues and be accompanied by a few glossy snaps as proof of our Adventures

It's hard to spark enthusiasm to write as I sit here in absolute paradise on the beach at Bokissa Island with waves lapping 15 feet away from my toes. The water is 28°C calm and light blue against a sandy bottom. Two old cruisers are moored off the beach. Another island paradise sits 1km across the channel and a smooth grassy slope rises behind me to the individual huts we have relaxed in for a week.

Today is a rest day so that we can build some surface interval before flying. In 1 hour we will glide off in the boats for a BBQ on turtle beach and a few quiet drinks under the palm trees.

A few of the boys are strolling around at island pace behind me while the others are stretched out resting after an early morning fishing trip.

VSAG has 15 divers here and there is not a stressed bone amongst the lot.

All this and I haven't even mentioned the 21 brilliant dives over the past 2 weeks.

I now understand why James A. Mitchener pulled up a hammock in Vanuatu to write his South Pacific novels. This is absolutely Paradise.

MEDIA WATCH

14 MAY 1994 THE AGE — 5

IN BRIEF

Lermontov court win

A Melbourne woman who has been unable to bear taking a bath since she was on a Russian cruise ship that sank was awarded \$41,118 in damages yesterday. Simone Young, aged 18 when the Mikhail Lermontov sank off New Zealand in 1986, was given the most compensation of 23 plaintiffs who said they had suffered as a result of the incident. In the New South Wales Supreme Court, Mr Justice Carruthers awarded a total of \$532,382 in damages for the 23 on board the ship when it sank.



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Poacher fined

An abalone poacher was fined \$25,000 by a court today after almost 300 kilograms of abalone was seized by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in January last year. Paul Christopher Robins, 22, of Portland Court, Portland, pleaded not guilty in the Geelong Magistrate's Court.

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION	DIVE CAPTAIN	MEET AT
11-12-13	Longweekend	Charles Brincat	Bookings
June	Echuca	876 3395	Essential
16 June	General Meeting Nth. Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club) Showing movie "Wolves of the sea"		8.00pm
25 June	V.S.A.G 40th Celebration at Bruce County Motor Inn - Blackburn - Don't miss this monster celebration - see Mick Jeacle (059) 71 2786		
3 July	"Pigott" Wreck Ship graveyard experienced divers only	Bob Scott 763 6872	9.30am Barwon Heads
17 July	120ft Submarine	John Lawler 598 9874	Sorrento 10am
21 July	General Meeting Nth. Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club)		8.00pm Sharp!!
31 July	Spectacular Reef	Sant Kahn 817 3214	Sorrento 10am
14 Aug	"George Kermodé" Wreck	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Flinders 10am
18 Aug	General Meeting Nth. Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club)		8.00pm Sharp!!
28 Aug	Nepean Wall Limestone Caves	Leo Maybus 727 1568	Sorrento 10am
11 Sept	"Rotomahana" Wreck	Andy Mastrowicz 318 3986	Sorrento 9.30am

DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR cont.

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION	DIVE CAPTAIN	MEET AT
15 Sept	Annual General Meeting Nth. Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club) Lecture by Dr. Geoff Broomhall - Deco Sickness		8.00pm Sharp!
25 Sept	Heroes Cave Abyss Charter Boat Dive-Book early	John Lawler 598 9874	Portsea 10am
20 Oct	General Meeting Nth. Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club) Lecture by Ray Campbell Aust. Volunteer Coastguard		8.00pm Sharp!!
29, 30, 31 Oct & 1 Nov	Cup Longweekend Venus Bay	Andy Mastrowicz 318 3986	

TIDE TABLES

PORT PHILLIP HEADS

LAT 38° 18' S LONG 144° 37' E TIME ZONE -1000
TIMES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS

JUNE - 1994

Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m
1 0447 1.40	0515 0.40	17 0456 1.35	0003 1.42	
1037 0.39	1231 0.42	1030 0.43	25 0605 0.20	
WE 1738 1.57	TH 1750 0.82	FR 1722 1.52	SA 1324 1.64	
2313 0.51	2345 1.26	2313 0.44	1842 0.69	
2 0545 1.35	0603 0.36	18 0547 1.35	0103 1.45	
1118 0.49	10 1322 1.47	1117 0.52	26 0702 0.20	
TH 1816 1.50	FR 1838 0.77	SA 1802 1.48	SU 1415 1.57	
2358 0.51		2359 0.40	1941 0.61	
3 0645 1.31	11 0034 1.29	19 0648 1.35	0200 1.47	
1200 0.59	SA 1342 1.51	1208 0.61	0757 0.24	
FR 1854 1.43	SA 1921 0.71	SU 1848 1.45	MO 1565 1.67	
4 0944 0.52	0120 1.31	20 0050 1.37	2036 0.55	
0745 1.28	12 0725 0.30	0801 0.37	0252 1.46	
SA 1244 0.69	SU 1419 1.54	MO 1303 0.71	28 0847 0.29	
1932 1.37	2001 0.65	1940 1.41	TU 1549 1.65	
5 0131 0.52	0203 1.33	21 0147 0.34	2127 0.50	
0843 1.27	13 0801 0.29	0915 1.41	0344 1.44	
SU 1333 0.77	MO 1457 1.56	TU 1406 0.79	29 0633 0.36	
2016 1.31	2016 1.31	2040 0.60	WE 1629 1.62	
6 0926 0.51	14 0246 1.35	22 0252 1.30	2212 0.46	
0641 1.29	14 0636 0.30	22 1023 1.47	0434 1.41	
MO 1432 0.84	TU 1533 1.57	WE 1518 0.83	30 1014 0.44	
2105 1.27	2117 0.56	2147 1.38	TH 1703 1.57	
7 0325 0.49	0328 1.35	0400 0.26	2253 0.45	
1038 1.32	15 0910 0.33	1127 1.53		
TU 1542 0.87	WE 1609 1.56	TH 1630 0.81		
2159 1.25	2154 0.52	2258 1.39		
8 0423 0.45	0410 1.35	0504 0.22		
1132 1.37	0948 0.37	1227 1.59		
WE 1651 0.86	TH 1645 1.54	FR 1739 0.76		
2253 1.25	2232 0.48			

PORT PHILLIP HEADS TIDAL STREAM CHANGE JUNE 1994

	START OF FLOOD		START OF EBB		
	FLOOD	EBB	FLOOD	EBB	
1 WE	0137	0742	0230	0632	
	1408	2026	1440	2101	
2 TH	0259	0832	0324	0928	
	1447	2107	1528	2149	
3 FR	0322	0923	1527	1032	
	0415	2149	1622	2244	
4 SA	0507	1108	1723	2346	
	0604	1207	1833	1251	
5 MO	0702	0015	1944	0054	
	1749	0846	2051	1529	
6 TU	0758	0111	0945	0304	
	1852	1412	2153	1603	
7 WE	0848	0204	1039	0403	
	2048	1506	2251	1659	
8 TH	0833	0254	1131	0459	
	2135	1550	2344	1751	
9 FR	1014	0340	1218	0550	
	2221	1632	28 TU	0639	
10 SA	1052	0423	0036	1921	
	2302	1710	1301	1921	
11 SU	1129	0502	0123	0724	
	2340	1749	0123	1956	
12 MO	1205	0541	1339		
	0023	0619			
13 TU	1240	1902			
	0102	0659			
14 WE	1317	1939			
	0144	0743			
15 TH	1356	2018			
16 FR					