

FATHOMS

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VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

JUN-JUL 98

FATHOMS

Official journal of the *Victorian Sub - Aqua Group*

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Next General Meetings:

Bells Hotel
157 Moray Street (cnr. Coventry Street)
South Melbourne - 8pm sharp!
Thursday 18th June 1998
Thursday 16th July 1998

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Tuesday 23rd June- Des William's home
Tuesday 21st July - Peter Vleugels's home

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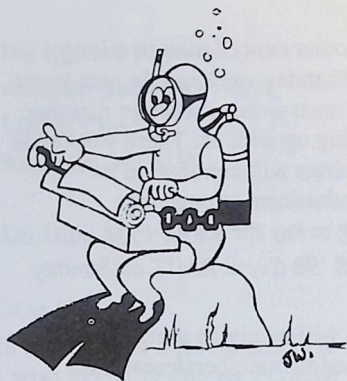
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S.D.F. DELEGATES:

Andy Mastrowicz, Des Williams & John Lawler

EDITORIAL



Accompanying this issue you will find your 1998/99 subscription notice reminding you that the new year commences on 1 July, 1998 and the fee of \$55.00 is now due. (See separate notice herein concerning the slight increase). To my knowledge there are always at least a dozen stragglers who, for some reason or other (which I am yet to identify) don't pay by 31 July. Additionally, many members are repeat offenders which is both annoying and time consuming for committee members to follow through. So come on folks, please assist by paying by the July general meeting to avoid time wastage and unnecessary paperwork.

In this issue you will find a letter to the editor from member Josie Mare. What a great idea. I can see this as a regular forum for members to have their say on matters such as club activities, dive sites, club issues, opinions, matters of concern etc. etc. So, if any member has anything to say please feel free to write, and your letter will be printed in its entirety in the next available issue of FATHOMS.

There have not been too many dives lately due to poor weather, hence not many dive reports in this issue. Thanks to Peter Vleugel for submitting his account of the recent dive trip to the Philippines. No doubt other participants will submit their stories in time for the next edition. Don Abell has submitted an article on the Easter trip to The Prom, and John Ashley has entered some more wreck stories for your enjoyment. Thanks folks, and thanks also to regular contributor Des Williams, his article on hard hat diving is most interesting indeed; congratulations Graeme Blanchard for helping Des fulfil his dream without a hitch, and Des, I am sure members would be interested in witnessing your next foray if given sufficient notice.

Welcome to our new members, Josie Mare, Philip Dunn and John Peach. I have sent requests to all three to provide information and New Member Profiles will be printed in the next issue.

It was somewhat disappointing to witness yet another cancellation of a long weekend away at Ocean Grove for the Queen's Birthday weekend. In past years these long weekends were always filled and one must wonder whether member interest is waning, or whether age is really catching up with us. These weekends take a bit of organisation and naturally the committee will continue in its endeavours, but please show your support and enthusiasm to engender confidence, which at the moment is sadly lacking to say the least.

Finally, please all support the SUNKEN ASSETS '98 day at RMIT on Sunday 16th August next.

(See notice in this issue). Our own Des Williams will be giving a presentation on the Coramba, and VSAG will have a stand manned by members/committee during the tea and lunch breaks. I hope to see you there. *Editor - Mick Jeacle*

BOAT FEES TO RISE

As from July 1, 1998 boat fees will increase to \$25.00 for a day's outing. To my knowledge, this represents the first increase since the Gulf War in 1991, causing substantial increases to the price of petrol.

This is an opportune time to remind members that this fee applies only to local day dives such as Sorrento, Flinders and Phillip Island. Weekend and Christmas trips may require some adjustment and this is usually discussed at committee level prior to the event.

In addition, boat ramp fees such as the \$7.00 fee charged at Sorrento or Rye are to be shared amongst boat participants. In the past, divers frequently arrive at Sorrento with no change in their pocket to contribute towards this cost. This can cause delays as boat owners endeavour to source sufficient coins from the kiosk or indeed other members, and has become very annoying for all concerned.

Accordingly, would everyone please ensure that you carry the correct money when visiting these dive sites viz: \$25.00 for the boat fee and \$2.00 at least for the ramp fee ticket. Further more, pay this money to the boat owner up front to save him the embarrassment of chasing you at the end of the day.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Josie Mare
PO Box 1026
Elwood Vic 3184

The Editor/Fathoms
Victorian Sub Aqua Group
5 Donn Close
Frankston Vic 3199

Attention Mick Jeacle

Dear Sir

In reference to a recent article in your magazine entitled "A Night to Remember", I wish to clarify one very crucial point about the story.

As the author, I am flattered that you believe the "raven haired beauty" to be me, but alas and alack, the story is a work of fiction.

You may be aware that many a novel has its basis in fact. Similarly, my story about night diving from the Mornington Pier was based on a dive conducted by VSAG and some of the activities I witnessed on that evening. However, there is no truth whatsoever in your assumption that the story, in any way, shape or form, is autobiographical. I merely embellished a few facts to write a good story.

Should I submit any further STORIES to your magazine, I shall ensure they are noted as such: **Stories, works of fiction.**

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to "set the record straight."

Regards *Josie*

Ed Note - Josie, I know I speak for everyone when I say I hope you

continue to submit many more articles in FATHOMS. You obviously have a great flair for writing and with an imagination like yours you should aspire to winning the VSAG Literary Award. To fool all and sundry in the way you did spells Talent - keep up the good work.

P.S. I'm flattered that you refer to FATHOMS as my magazine. But alas and alack, I am simply the Editor.



VSAG MEMBER PROFILE

Bob Scott AGE: 58

Occupation: Company Director

Family: Wife June, dog Gem

HOW, WHY & WHEN DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN DIVING?

I applied for a job in a wetsuit factory and after all the interviews and negotiations and I had started, I was told if I'm going to learn to make wetsuits, I'd better learn to use them.

I got involved with V.S.A.G. when I met Pat Reynolds at Australian Divers when he came in to fill his tanks one day and he invited me to a meeting and I've been coming ever since.

WILL YOU CONTEMPLATE ANOTHER BOAT & IF SO WHAT TYPE?

If I bought another boat I would probably buy a Hydrofeld. It's a tri-hull boat, fairly ugly to look at but it's a boat you could take almost anywhere. Stable work platform, good work area.

DOES THE VSAG DIVE CALENDAR MEET YOUR NEEDS IN TIMING & DIVERSITY?

V.S.A.G. meets most of my requirements for diving and socially. After all we are only a mature group and I think we do alright.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE DIVE SITES?

My under water interests are cruising reefs around our local Rip area which I might add is some of the best diving in Australia.

WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR MORE MEMORABLE UNDERWATER EXPERIENCES?

Probably one of my best dives was only just recently and in the Rip too. I might add I

had said to Peter Vleugel one club dive that I might go for a dip the following Wednesday as the weather forecast looked promising and that I would go with one of the charter operators, D.I.S. He invited himself along. We dived a site that they call the links, named funnily enough after a huge chain laying on the bottom at about 20 odd metres.

The departure time was at 7am. to catch 8am slack and slack it was. Oily smooth, gin clear, fish swim-throughs, drop-offs, ledges, you name it it was all there. It all came together and it was a real leisurely dive. We were back drinking coffee at Peter's place before 10 am.

HAS YOUR HEALTH BEEN AFFECTED BY DIVING?

Has my health been affected by diving? In general no, a little hard of hearing maybe, but that may not be because of diving. That may have been caused by listening to Tony Tipping too long. I did have a bend some time ago, but no, I think diving has been good for me.

WHY ARE SONAR WETSUITS BETTER THAN IMPORTED MODELS?

You have asked me why are Sonar wetsuits the best? Christ, I make them. Is there any need to ask more?

REMEMBER!

V.S.A.G GENERAL MEETINGS

are on the

THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH!

AT BELLS HOTEL

CNR. MORAY & COVENTRY STREETS, SOUTH MELBOURNE

Make a note of these dates in your diary or calendar now.

Thursday 16 July

Thursday 20 August

Come and enjoy a delicious meal before the meeting
which commences at 8pm.



EASTER

BY DON ABELL

Easter at Tidal River proceeded in 1998 with notable exceptions such as the Jeacles and the Scotts and the lesser known Cornish family. But in the tradition of VSAG at Easter we still managed to rally 90 members, family and friends to fill a record 24 camp sites. While 90 people is probably not a record, we still needed to squeeze in with members upgrading to larger tents and vans.

The Blacks (Murray and Gary) take the prize for assisting with my planning of sites. They booked for two people and turned up with eight. The real surprise was not that the numbers weren't planned but the realisation that the boys have six friends.

I left Melbourne on Friday morning with Marg. Tipping and we drove through rain for the first half of the trip. As we arrived at Tidal River it was overcast but not cold and the water was calm enough for good diving. So where were the committed VSAG divers - following the Jeacle precedent of waking up on Friday and recovering. Some keen starters tried to drum up activity but all in vain.

If you're not diving, Tidal River is a nice place to be. Sitting outside and reading the paper is not hard to take. This drifted into dinner and some good red wines and then to a few drinks into the late hours.

Only the hard souls of Alex, Dale and Tatiana (our French visitor) sat up past midnight. I remember when all the other campers used to complain about VSAG. It was ironic to hear that one member abused a neighbouring group and threatened to call the ranger if they were not quiet. Are we all getting old or what?

Saturday was a perfect day for diving. Sun was shining and there was no wind. It was easy to get some starters. Every person who wanted to dive was allocated to a boat and boats were launched and on their way just after 9.30. Gavan Wheelahan showed it was his first time of launching from the beach by pulling the boat up too close to the water. Too hard for all the divers to move so again we thank the four wheel drives for getting us out of trouble.

The first dive was Skull Rock. Josie Mare had put in a special request for this dive and we do try to please our new members. Visibility was 50 feet plus and water temperature ideal for diving. Everyone enjoyed the dive. No sharks were seen despite Terry Brooks insisting on burlying the water.

The second dive around the islands found some good caves and swim-throughs and plenty of interesting fish life. Easy diving in comfortable conditions and the boats were back to camp by 3.00pm.

The big activity for the night was the movie Titanic. It seemed that nearly half the club went to see the blockbuster movie and everyone agreed it was a good movie. It was nearly midnight when the moviegoers returned and the Catherall family had kept the bar open for late drinks. Doug had brought down his two daughters in an attempt to marry them off to some lucky and highly eligible boys. It was like bees to the honeypot as the lads gathered to strut their stuff and of course all of them married.

It was interesting when one of the statistical buffs asked what were the numbers of members broken down by age and sex. Doug's daughters jointly offered the suggestion that it is "all of them."

Rubbish bins are no longer provided at the sites. You have to carry everything to a central bin area. That required a lot of trips to dispose of the soft drink cans and bottles on the next morning. It seems that there is scope for the lesser known Cornish family to bring down a bin and put it in the middle of the camp preferably not next to my tent.

A tragedy was narrowly averted on the Saturday night when Gary Black was playing with a wombat and was bitten by the little chap. In typical fashion VSAG put our emergency training into practice immediately. Luckily Jim Greenwood (Club Vet) was on hand. We located the wombat and gave it prompt treatment, no doubt saving its life just in time.

Sunday was a morning drizzling with rain but still no wind. The water was flat but the rain killed any enthusiasm and a diving crew couldn't be put together. Gavan Wheelahan gave up on the apathy and took his boat out fishing. Others went on walks and a few packed up camp.

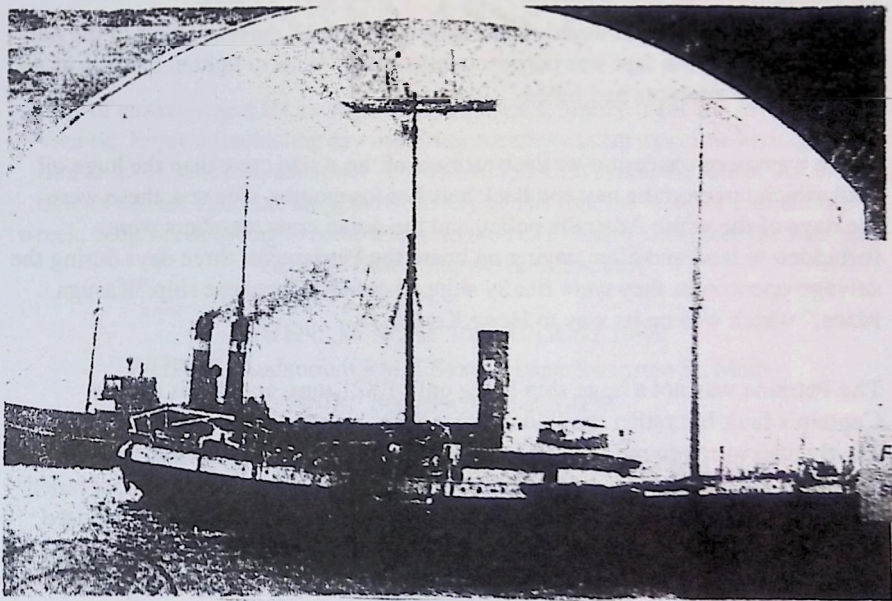
I left at 2pm and thought that I would have been happy to stay if I wasn't committed on the Monday. Sunday night apparently blew a gale and provided interest for those who stayed under canvas.

The rain on Sunday was disappointing as a little glimmer of sunshine would almost certainly have encouraged diving on the Sunday. The water was calm and even the old VSAG would have dived on a second day.

I haven't had any complaints so I suppose we have done it again. A group of 90 seem to be voting with their feet. A suggestion has been offered that we may dive more if we had a good launching ramp at a different location. Whilst it does not worry me if the club wants a change it will be a formidable tradition to change. I am still convinced that Tidal River is a beautiful piece of this country.

WRECK OF THE PETRIANA

BY JOHN ASHLEY



There is a growing concern today about the growing world fleets of petrol and bulk oil tankers, and rightly so, as some of these ships are over 30 years old and still have single skin designs, in other words a single hull.

When these ships either ran aground, foundered at sea or just break in half as one did in Western Australia a few years ago, they cause huge environmental pollution, especially if they run aground close to built up areas because the thick, sticky crude oil coats everything from rocks to wildlife and can take months or even years to clean up.

We might say to ourselves thank God we who live in Victoria have never had such a disaster. "Wrong!" In fact, on the 28th November, 1903 the Shell operated bulk oil carrier the "Petriana" ran aground on the back beach just east of Pt. Nepean.

The crude oil which she stored in her belly did not leak out as a result of the hull being pierced but in fact was purposely released in order to lighten the ship as all other salvage attempts had failed.

There was more concern over the treatment of the Asian crew than the huge oil spill which covered the bay and back beaches for months. You see, these were the days of the white Australia policy and the Asian crew members were forbidden to land and after staying on board the Petriana for three days during the salvage operations, they were finally shipped onto the Japanese ship "Kasuga Maru," which was on its way to Hong Kong.

The Petriana was not a huge ship being only 1,821 tons, and it was not the Captain's fault but rather the Pilot's. Pilot Press boarded the ship at 6.00 am and shortly afterwards found himself in breakers. Full astern was ordered but she remained fast on the reef and is still there to this day. All salvage attempts failed. The tugboats James Patterson, Eagle and the schooner Enterprise were all used during salvage operations and met with no success.

I have visited Petriana on a few occasions and it would be a great second dive on a VSAG dive day. Hew bow stands up to 12 feet off the bottom and is surrounded by anchors and other assorted wreckage, but being in the Marine Reserve you will find lots of crayfish which will be laughing at you.

THE SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION of VICTORIA &
THE MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY ASSOCIATION of VICTORIA present

SUNKEN ASSETS '98

A day of entertainment for all shipwreck enthusiasts, history buffs and divers around Victoria. Enjoy a fascinating day exploring our magnificent maritime heritage and hear from 11 speakers, about our very own Ship's Graveyard, the fate of our once state-of-the-art Victorian navy, the treachery of The Rip, the "City of Launceston" wreck, deep wreck diving to name a few, as well as a chance to explore the Maritime Heritage Unit's Shipwreck Showcase

WHEN: SUNDAY 16th AUGUST 1998

WHERE: Auditorium RMIT Storey House Swanston St, Melb.

TIME: Between 9AM and 4PM

A DATE NOT TO BE MISSED!! MARK YOUR DIARY!!

At this function you will also see the presentation of the inaugural
JACK LONEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Seats and catering facilities are strictly limited. Entry is to be by

PRIOR REGISTRATION ONLY

(no tickets will be available at the door)

COST: \$15 per head or \$25 per family

which includes morning and afternoon refreshments, light lunch, lectures and entry to the Shipwrecks Showcase

For further information contact: John Hawkins (SDFV) on 9752 7091 A/H

Priya Cardinaletti (SDFV/MAAV) on 9761 0960 A/H

Malcolm Venturoni (MAAV) on 9772 4727 A/H

bottle age

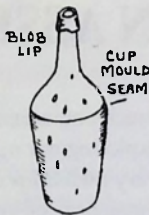
A GUIDE TO BOTTLE AGE



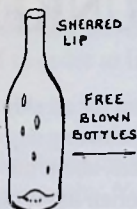
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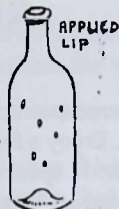
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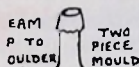
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BEFORE 1860



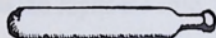
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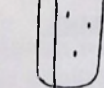
CO D D
PATENT
EARLY 1870'S



GINGER BEERS
1840 - 1930'S



RO U N D
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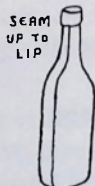
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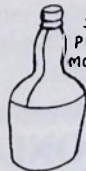
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1870



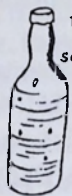
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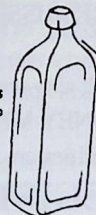
1870 - 1890



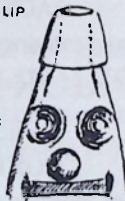
P R I O R
1885



1890 - 1910
T U R N
M O U L D



1890 TO EARLY 1900'S



D O B S O N S
PATENT
4 - W A Y
CO D D I
(M A R B L E)



H A N D
M A D E
C R O W N
S E A L
U . S . A .
1891



I N T E R N A L
S C R E W
1898 ->



S E A M
O V E R
L I P
M A C H I N E
M A D E
1910 ->

M A R B L E
B O T T L E S
1890 - 1930

V A R I O U S
P A T E N T S
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U S E -
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4
W A Y
M O R E
1920'S

OLD DEEP SEA DIVING HELMET RESTORED

BY DES WILLIAMS



Ever since assisting in the organising of the underwater line-dancing stunt, held by the Diving Historical Society at the Harold Holt Memorial Pool last October, I have been bitten by the standard dress diving bug. Gazing over at my old diving helmet, which has been a household ornament for some 15 years, I wondered if it could ever get back into the water again.

It wasn't until my neighbor and fellow member of the V.S.A.G, Graeme Blanchard, offered to help restore the helmet, that any thought of it returning to an active life was considered possible. Graeme's enthusiasm for a project and

brilliant skill and talent as a machine-shop engineer, really brought this old denizen of the deep back to life. When parts were needed, Graeme made detailed measurements, referred to old dive manuals and then machined them himself. All of the skilled soldering, fitting and turning, polishing and silver soldering together, was done in his own workshop. Graeme even faithfully handcrafted the grilles over each of the four ports in the helmet. The only parts purchased from DESCO in the USA (the original manufacturer), were some of the wing nuts and the four breastplate straps for the corselet. Yes, DESCO in the U.S.A are still making spare parts, but they are very expensive, when currency exchange rates, import sales tax, freight and the item cost are taken into account.

Some details of the restored helmet are:

Type: DESCO U.S Navy Mark V modified, No: 229 manufactured in Milwaukee USA on 25th March 1943, which makes it 55 years old.

History of Helmet: Built during World War Two and most likely used in the Pacific Theatre, before finding its way to Australia, where it was used in the pearling industry at Thursday Island, as an "open helmet", that means without a suit. Many pearl divers dived in open helmets, as the hot climate made the use of a suit very uncomfortable work. At the end of its working life, this helmet was retired and parts of it were scavenged, before I acquired it and it has spent the last fifteen years as a fireside ornament. When I became a member of the Diving Historical Society of Australia & S.E Asia back in October last year, the helmet was seen in a new light.

So, for many weekends, Graeme machined parts from scratch and I made sure we had enough reference material. I also called upon expert advice from fellow V.S.A.G member Gerry Dammer, who has been commercial hard hat diving all of his life.

On Saturday 28th March, just three days after the helmets 55th birthday, it was back in the water again at Flinders Pier. Fellow Diving Historical Society member and "hard hat" enthusiast John Allen, loaned me a suit and boots to fit my helmet, as he also has a working Mark V outfit. John also brought along

champagne for the launch and a birthday cake for the hard hat! We had a great morning, as the weather was beautiful, the tide was full and the water clear.

The whole event was recorded on underwater video by Carol Bathie and still photos by award winning marine photographer Paul Baumann. After suiting up, John pronounced the helmet seaworthy and fired fizzing champagne all over me. My wife Julie took the topside photos and daughter, Hannah, donned her snorkelling outfit and prepared to buzz around me like a little mermaid.

The descent down the ladder, for the first time, was very exciting indeed. The water sloshed around the windows of the helmet, before closing over me altogether, just the hissing of air now and the view of the two scuba divers filming my movements. After adjusting the exhaust valve, as I stood upright on the bottom in four meters of water, I ventured off on a short walk, which kicked up some sand and left a trail of broken seagrass, as my 10kgs boots bulldozed along.

My thoughts were of Graeme's hard work and great generosity on this project, as he was unable to attend this launch. I will have him down in the suit, as soon as his weekend responsibilities are relieved though, as I want him to have the fun I had that day. Up above, John Allen was monitoring my air supply from one of my dive cylinders on the pier and tending my air supply hose. I kept wandering around aimlessly, just enjoying the experience, I even yelled to Carol (in scuba gear) to check around the helmet for air leaks and she understood me perfectly.

As an indication of the precision of the restoration, the helmet functioned perfectly, which was its first dive in at least 25-30 years! The Yanks certainly made dive helmets to last, all those years ago and I'll bet even they would have to lift their "hard hats" to Graeme Blanchard's work.

All too soon I was back on the ladder of the landing and being helped out by John and Julie. I had not adjusted my air flow rate efficiently and as a result I had all but emptied my 90 cubic foot cylinder in 10 minutes! The cylinder was frosted over! Next time, I will have more faith in the 55 year old helmet and not blast it with air fearing possible leaks as there weren't any.

Next, it was John Allen's turn to take a dip. I tendered for him, as he wandered about under the pier in his magnificent Mark V outfit, whilst the photographers buzzed around him like so many flies and he gave me a commentary from the seabed, as his helmet has a telephone. We have some great video of John's little jaunt too.

After the dives, we opened another bottle of champagne to toast our success and cut the cake. A very relaxing picnic then followed on the lawns, at the car park, once we had packed up all of the gear. There is something very relaxing about diving on a Saturday, as the usual crowds of people just aren't around.

My most sincere thanks go to both Graeme and John for their wonderful help in this restoration and successful test run. All I need now is a pair of boots and a suit to complete my outfit and I can see myself branching off in yet another direction in my enjoyment of the underwater world. Maybe some V.S.A.G members would also like to join John, Graeme and myself for a dip one day.

VSAG MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Accompanying this issue is your renewal subscription notice for the ensuing fiscal year. You will no doubt notice a small increase this year to \$55.00. This represents the first rise in several years and has become necessary due to increasing costs relating to the production of FATHOMS, the lifeblood of VSAG.

Your committee is always reluctant to consider raising costs to members and careful consideration is given prior to a decision being unanimously agreed upon to do so. This rise was agreed to at the April Committee meeting as it was considered to be of paramount importance that the standard of FATHOMS not be compromised for the sake of a minor increase. Additionally, it is believed that subscriptions are extremely good value when compared to other diving and indeed sporting clubs in Melbourne.

It has been stated in FATHOMS many times before the subscriptions barely cover the cost of production and delivery of our great club magazine, so please ensure prompt payment by July 31.



PHILIPPINES ADVENTURE DIVE HOLIDAY

BY PETER VLEUHEL

It's April 28 and our dive adventure begins with eleven adventurers leaving Melbourne airport bound for the Philippines.

Upon arrival, we were driven to the other departure port to catch a light aircraft bound for the Palawan Island group. After meeting up with Doug & Maxine Catherall and Curly Hibbert who had been in Manila awaiting our arrival, we loaded our gear into two planes, one a 10 seater and the other a single engine Cessna. The flight took 1 3/4 hours and was quite good with lots to see. I was fortunate enough to handle the controls of the Cessna for most of the flight and it was quite an experience.

Upon landing Coron, we loaded our bags onto the roof of one of those typical Filipino buses and clambered in for the trip into town. The El Nino phenomenon has had a devastating effect on this part of the world. Forget the lush tropical growth and hundreds of bright flowers, it was bloody dry and dusty.

We were dropped at our luxury resort called KOKOSNUS (we will never forget this place!) It wasn't too flash believe me - but we all chipped in and made the most of it. After finding where the dive operation was located, we were ready to hit the water.

Discovery Divers is a very professional and well organised dive operation. Our dive guide's name was Chris, a 25 year old pommy guy who really looked after us. They took us on a complementary look around on the first afternoon and the following morning we started the first of our 16 dive package. The dive operation is situated in the middle of the shanty town over the water.

Dive 1. Olympic Maru - a 120m freighter on its side. Terrific dive, 25m maximum depth with good penetration dive.

Dive 2. Mamiya Maru - this is a 160m freighter, maximum depth 34m.

Dive 3. Akitsushima - A Japanese flying-boat tender. 200m long, maximum depth 38m, lots of fish.

Dive 4. Tae Maru - Tanker, 200m long. Maximum depth 26m, a nice dive with strong current.

Dive 5. Irako - Refrigeration ship 200m. Maximum depth 40m. This was probably the favourite of all the wrecks, sitting upright, terrific penetration wreck and lots to see inside the ship with a lot of bits still intact. You could get right inside this one under the bombed out bridge.

Dive 6. Dimalanta wreck. A Japanese freighter 180m long - a good dive.

Dive 7. The volcanic lake. Our group had to climb a hill to enter the lake. It was brackish water and very warm. Curly and I swam into the middle of the lake and dropped into 40m of water. The last 6m were totally dark - couldn't see half a metre. The water temperature on my gauge read 42 degrees C. We headed due North and ran into clear water and a wall of limestone sediment and thermoclines of shimmering water as the temperature changed in the water. It wasn't a long dive, not much to see, but the experience was worth it. Unbelievably hot.

Dive 8. The DDD dive. A reef dive mostly with Dead, Damaged and Diseased coral and we even saw a fish!

Dive 9. Tangat - 140m freighter, you could enter this wreck through the prop. Shaft and penetrate the wreck with ease. It was a nice dive and lots of lion fish.

We did a total of 16 dives and dived on quite a few wrecks more than once. They just let us decide what we liked. Our group did a night dive on the oil tanker and took some small crays. We had dinner on board the boat and on the trip home, a few bottles of 80% proof rum came out to make the trip easier. Most of the boat trips to the wrecks took 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

The next part of the trip, we flew to Manila, then a commercial jet to Cebu, then a two hour fast catamaran trip to Bohol for a six dive package. The accommodation was at a well maintained resort with a beach and a pool!

The diving at Bohol was all reef diving and we did some nice dives. One in particular was a shark dive in search of Hammerheads at 7am, gin clear water and a drop-off to 85/90 metres. The only sharks that were seen were three Hammerheads which were on the bottom. It was unfortunate that the sharks

weren't feeding at the time of our dive which was probably due to the fact that there wasn't any fish. The Filipinos seem to kill anything that has a heart beat. They either blow it away with dynamite or spear it, long line it, net it - any method they can think of, to f--- the environment.

After our trip back to Cebu, we purchased two more dives. It seemed that we weren't dived out yet and needed to see if the reefs were any better here. Believe me - they weren't. We did our two dives and couldn't wait to get home as we had seen enough destruction of the ecology in this area. It is a shame that these people don't wake up to themselves and grow rice instead of going destroying (fishing). It is a pretty place but most of the land is just one big rubbish dump. The people however are very friendly. It seems that most of the places we visited are safe with little crime, in particular in Coron Palawan Islands. You could safely walk the streets any time without fear of getting mugged. But then we went to Manila.....

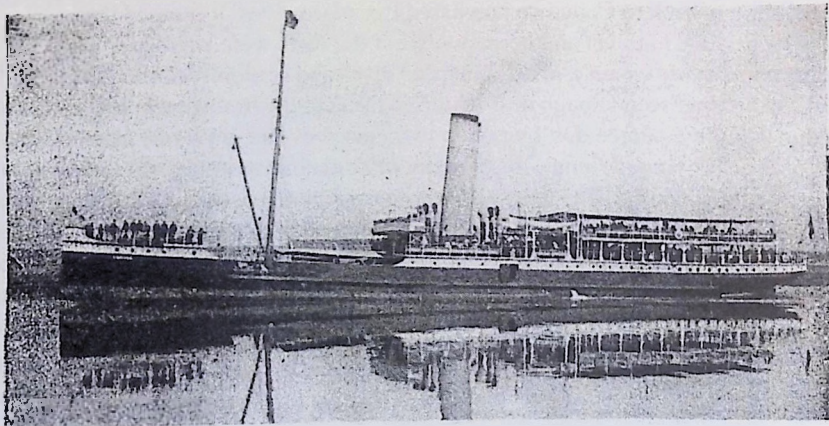
Our group spent the last night in Manila and it was quite an eye opener with a huge amount of poverty. There are only a few rich and lots of poor but there doesn't seem to be much middle class. We all went to the Singing Cooks and Waiters restaurant and stretched our vocal chords. They said we Aussies have a good time. It does help if you are silly. A few of us took our ladies to a girlie bar to see a show. All the dancing girls look about 12 years old. The following day called for a look at the markets and shopping plazas with about three million others, but it was fun. We flew home that evening and it is now just a memory, but a nice one.

I would like to say thanks to all who participated on the trip. You are all terrific to go away with AND a big thanks to Pat for organising the excursion - 'WELL DONE'.

FAVOURITE VSAG WRECK DIVES

BY JOHN ASHLEY

1. Coogee 1887 - 1928 South of Port Phillip Heads



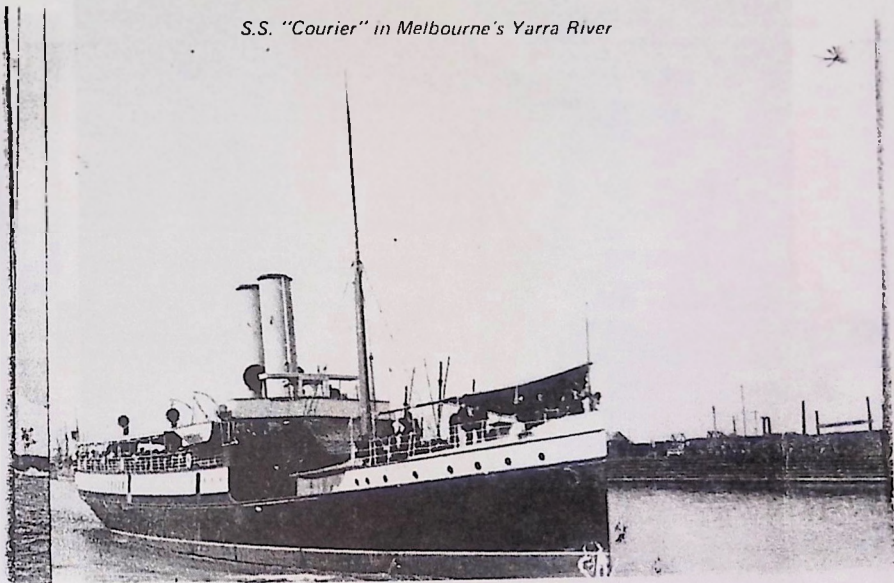
2. Coogee being scuttled



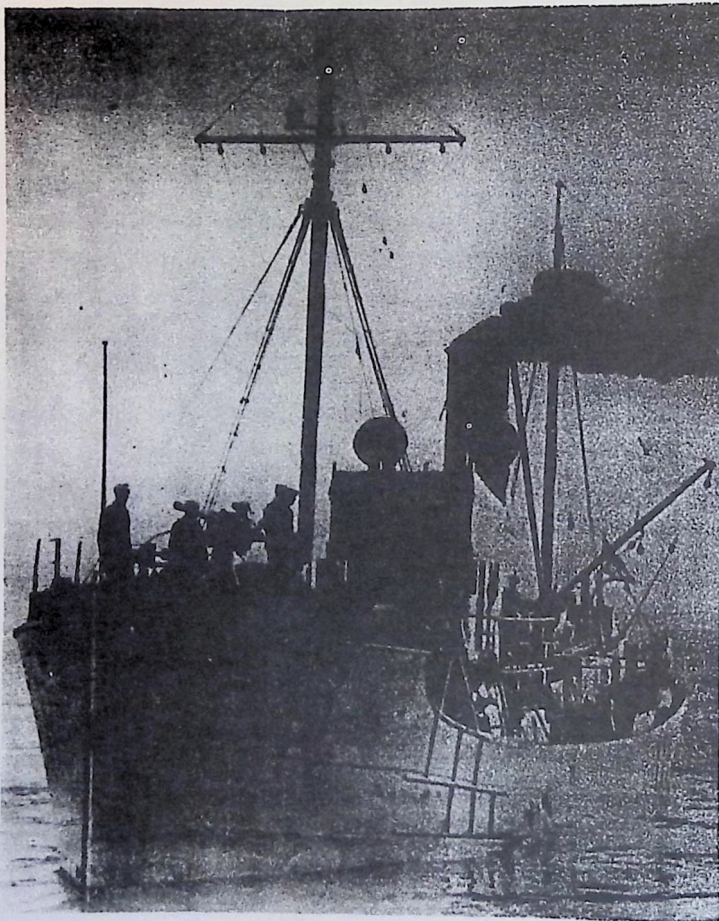
The "Coogee" slips beneath the surface in 1928

3. Courier 1887 - 1928 on the Yarra River

S.S. "Courier" in Melbourne's Yarra River

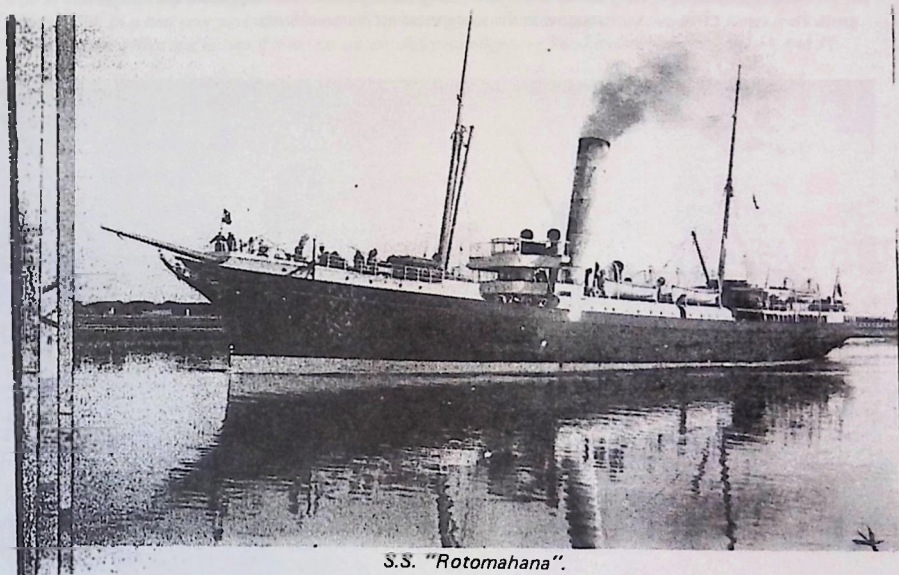


4. Goorangai - 1941 - Sank after collision in South Channel.



Minesweeper H.M.A.S. GOORANGAI.
(Photo courtesy Dept. of the Navy, Historical Section).

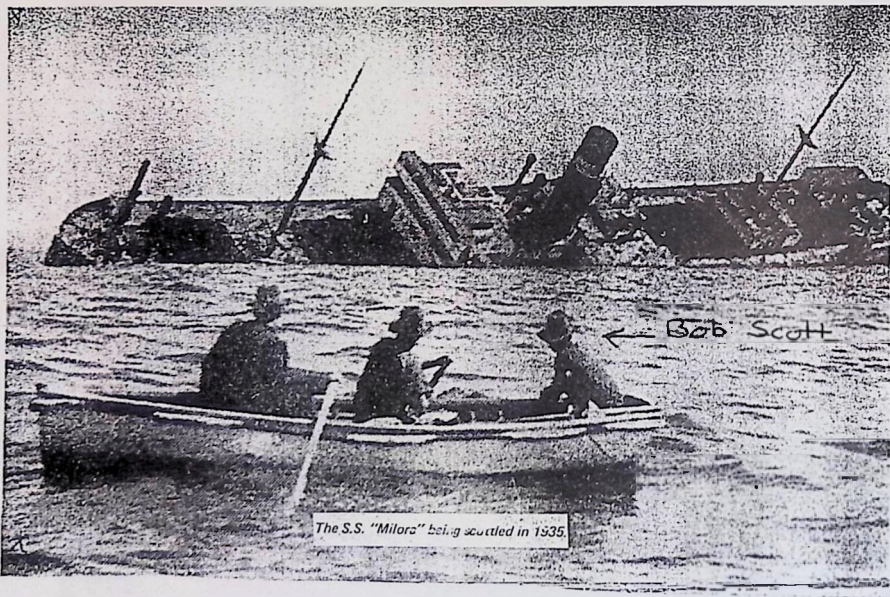
5. Rotomohana - Scuttled 1928



S.S. "Rotomahana".

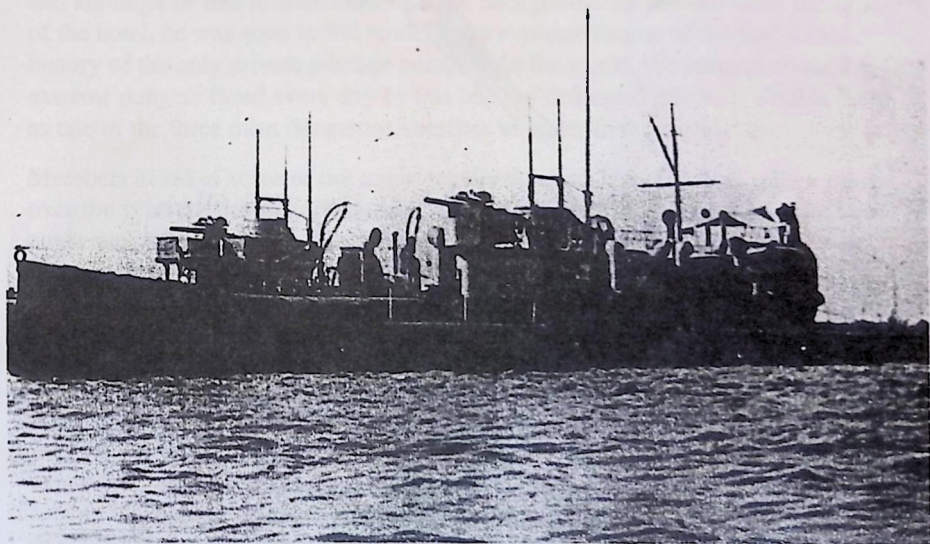
6. Milora - 3,347 tons.

Ran aground in Victory Shoal and was so badly damaged she was stripped of her fittings and scuttled in the foulground off Barwon Heads.



7. J4 Submarine - 1916 - 1927

The J4 sub is possibly one of the best dives in Victoria and was found by the Geelong Skindivers Club on 4th May 1974. In a two year period the members of the Mutineer Scuba Club dived the J4 11 times indicating how good a dive she is. See if you can see the difference between these two submarines the J4 and J1.



The J4 at Geelong in 1920 (Kendall)

MT. HOTHAM SKI WEEKEND



WHERE: Swindlers Valley Ski Club

COST: \$65.00 per person

Bookings will be accepted only upon receipt of payment in full. Be early, as Swindlers Lodge only accommodates 25 people.

Swindlers is situated in the Resort of Mt. Hotham only 100 metres from the car parking area. No over snow transport is needed. Ski down to Lifts in the morning or ride on Zoo Cart to hire facilities free.

Communal cooking - all condiments supplied.

So, come ski The Giant. For bookings contact Leo Maybus.

9727 1568
0418 375102

PORT PHILLIP SEA PILOTS TALK TO VSAG

BY DES WILLIAMS

At our May 21st General meeting, V.S.A.G members were treated to an excellent talk, given on behalf of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots by Capt. John Carroll.

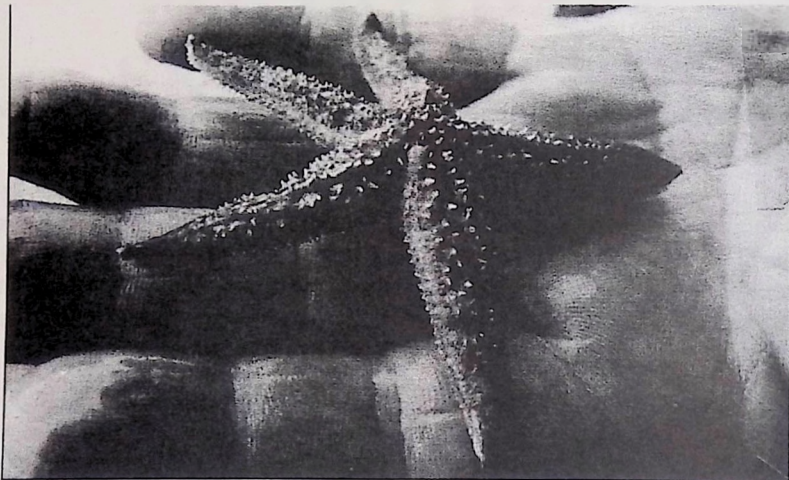
John made the journey to Melbourne from Queenscliff, to address the meeting and although he had to contend with some background noise from other patrons of the hotel, he was soon in full stride, as he explained some of the fascinating history of the only private pilotage company in the world. We learned about the extreme dangers faced every day by this band of dedicated pilots, at what is rated as one of the three most dangerous stretches of water in the world.

Members heard of some of the tragic accidents which have befallen fellow pilots over the years and as recently as 1992, when pilot Jack Nance and his pilot boat coxswain, were tragically killed when their boat was hit by an enormous freak wave in the Rip. John told us of the old days, when pilots were rowed out to ships outside the Heads in small wooden boats. Whilst in comparison to the touch and go methods employed these days, where the pilot cutter embarks the pilot as both ship and pilot boat travel at 12 knots!

It was a most informative delivery and members were able to ask John some of the burning questions which proved to be very interesting when answered by an expert, such as Capt. Carroll. The V.S.A.G is very grateful to John for making the time in his busy schedule to address us and we hope we may have the opportunity to hear more in the future. There was a good turn out of members and visitors, but if you missed this lecture, you missed a good evening.

MEDIA WATCH

Herald-Sun May 1998



SEA MENACE: A Northern Pacific Seastar recently collected at the Dromana mussel farm.

Native hope for sea menace

STATE Liberal MP for Dromana, Martin Dixon, has raised in Parliament with the Minister for Agriculture and Resources, a matter concerning the Northern Pacific Seastar which has been found in the waters off Dromana as reported in *The Flier*, issue March 10.

"The seastar is a prolific breeder that spawns rapidly, with eggs carried over a wide area by currents and tide. It is a voracious predator of shellfish. It is a threat to scallops which are recovering on the seabeds of Port Phillip Bay and

also to mussel farms, especially in Dromana Bay, which are important to my electorate," Mr Dixon said.

Mr Dixon said that scientists at the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute at Queenscliff have observed that native 11 armed seastar devouring juvenile introduced seastars.

"This ties in with observations that the introduced seastar has rarely been found on the seabed of the bay - they may be being devoured by the native variety when they drop from fixtures at mussel farms," he said.

MEDIA WATCH

1998 Recreational Fishing Regulations

To help protect Victorian fisheries' resources and ensure there are fish for the future, the Victorian Recreational Fishing Regulations 1998 come into effect from 1 April 1998, and include a number of changes. Recreational fishers should become familiar with these changes to avoid heavy penalties.

Key changes to be aware of include:

- Minimum age for requiring a fishing licence is now 18 years of age
- Ban on collection of all invertebrates (e.g. abalone, mussels, crabs, pipis and sea urchins) from the inter-tidal zone (less than two metres in depth) in Port Phillip Bay (bass yabbies and sandworms can be taken with a bait pump)
- New bag limits for elephant fish, eels and freshwater yabbies and mussels (Gippsland Lakes only)
- Snapper, King George whiting, Murray cod, sharks, elephant fish, Macquarie perch, brown trout, rainbow trout, chinook salmon, bream and short-finned and long-finned eels must be landed in carcass form
- Legal minimum length for bluetooth wrasse is 28cm.

The 1998 Victorian Recreational Fishing Regulations Guide will be available from early April. The 1998 Guide contains full details on all recreational fishing regulations. All fishers are advised to obtain a copy of the free Guide.

The 1998 Guide can be obtained wherever Recreational Fishing Licences are sold at most bait and tackle shops, and NRE Offices.

Find information about NRE on the Internet at <http://www.nre.gov.au/>



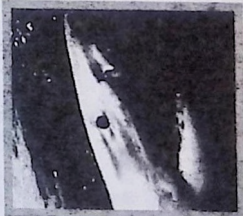
Natural Resources and Environment

AGRICULTURE • RESOURCES • CONSERVATION • LAND MANAGEMENT

Victoria *ON THE MOVE*

The Age - 1.4.98

ENDANGERED. The Great White Shark should be protected from international trade in body parts and new controls imposed on fishing of the Southern Bluefin Tuna and Patagonian Toothfish according to the Humane Society International. The society has launched a new campaign to have the Great White Shark listed on Appendix I of the CITES list under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. In a submission to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the society says the total Australian population of the sharks is thought to be less than 10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline of 10 per cent while shark numbers are also declining elsewhere.



TIDE TABLES

TIMES OF FLOOD AND EBB - The tables of Times of Flood and Ebb give the times when the rate of change in the sea level at Point Lonsdale (Port Phillip Heads) is a maximum, each time approximates time when the tidal flow at the entrance to port Phillip bay changes direction, this time is given in the column marked "Time". The direction of this flow is indicated by the words "flood" and "ebb" in the column "start". Thus the word "flood" indicates that the tide starts to flow into the bay, at the given time in the "Time" column. The word "ebb" indicates that the tide starts to flow out of the bay at that time.

PORT PHILLIP HEADS (PT. LONSDALE) PORT PHILLIP HEADS (PT. LONSDALE)

LAT 38° 18' LONG 144° 37' TIME ZONE -1000

LAT 38° 18' LONG 144° 37' TIME ZONE -1000

TIMES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS

TIMES OF SLACK WATER

JULY - 1998

JULY - 1998

Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	Time Start	Time Start	Time Start	Time Start
1 0432 1.34	0440 0.40	17 0507 1.42	0015 1.36	1 0126 flood	9 0003 ebb	17 0143 flood	0143 flood	25 0230 ebb	
1 1021 0.42	1147 1.39	1045 0.43	0617 0.28	0658 ebb	9 0742 flood	17 0740 ebb	0740 ebb	25 0919 flood	
WE 1711 1.53	TH 1715 0.83	FR 1728 1.55	SA 1327 1.56	WE 1253 flood	TH 1514 ebb	FR 1319 flood	1319 flood	SA 1624 ebb	
WE 2300 0.50	2318 1.25	2323 1.35	2323 1.54	1942 ebb	2050 flood	1952 ebb	1952 ebb	2214 flood	
2 0518 1.30	0532 0.35	0604 1.40	0109 1.38	0206 flood	10 0106 ebb	18 0232 flood	0232 flood	26 0331 ebb	
2 1059 0.49	1237 1.46	18 1131 0.52	0709 0.26	0745 ebb	10 0830 flood	18 0844 ebb	0844 ebb	26 1003 flood	
TH 1743 1.47	FR 1811 0.77	SA 1810 1.50	SU 1415 1.58	TH 1327 flood	FR 1555 ebb	SA 1400 flood	1400 flood	SU 1703 ebb	
3 2338 0.49	0 0111 1.29	0011 0.33	0200 1.39	0245 flood	FR 2145 flood	2025 ebb	2025 ebb	27 0426 ebb	
3 0608 1.26	0618 0.30	0712 1.39	0757 0.28	0838 ebb	11 0914 flood	19 0957 flood	0957 flood	27 1044 flood	
3 1137 0.57	SA 1324 1.52	SU 1221 0.82	MO 1455 1.58	FR 1400 flood	SA 1632 ebb	SU 2103 ebb	1446 flood	MO 1739 ebb	
FR 1815 1.41	SA 1859 0.70	SU 1858 1.45	MO 2034 0.51	2037 ebb	2225 flood	2225 flood	2103 ebb	MO 2339 ebb	
4 0017 0.49	12 0108 1.33	20 0102 0.33	0245 1.38	0326 flood	12 0307 ebb	20 0423 flood	0423 flood	28 0514 ebb	
4 0701 1.24	0701 0.26	0822 1.39	0840 0.31	0942 ebb	12 0955 flood	20 1114 ebb	1114 ebb	28 1122 flood	
SA 1216 0.65	SU 1407 1.57	MO 1315 0.71	TU 1530 1.56	SA 1437 flood	SU 1708 ebb	MO 1942 flood	1942 flood	TU 1811 ebb	
SA 1851 1.36	SU 1943 0.63	MO 1953 1.40	2116 0.46	2106 ebb	2259 flood	MO 2150 ebb	2150 ebb	TU 2150 ebb	
5 0059 0.49	13 0157 1.37	21 0200 0.33	0329 1.47	0410 flood	13 0402 ebb	21 0527 flood	0527 flood	29 0017 flood	
5 0759 1.23	0744 0.25	0930 1.40	0918 0.36	1057 ebb	13 1035 flood	21 1232 ebb	1232 ebb	29 0558 ebb	
SA 1301 0.73	MO 1450 1.60	TU 1418 0.76	WE 1602 1.53	SU 1520 flood	MO 1743 ebb	TU 1657 flood	1657 flood	WE 1157 flood	
SU 1933 1.31	MO 2026 0.55	TU 2057 1.38	WE 2155 0.43	2138 ebb	MO 2334 flood	TU 2248 ebb	2248 ebb	WE 1838 ebb	
6 0145 0.48	14 0244 1.40	22 0307 0.33	0410 1.35	0500 flood	14 0456 ebb	22 0632 flood	0632 flood	30 0054 flood	
6 0857 1.24	0828 0.26	1034 1.44	0956 0.41	1213 ebb	14 1115 flood	22 1345 ebb	1345 ebb	30 0641 flood	
MO 1354 0.80	TU 1530 1.61	WE 1531 0.60	TH 1632 1.49	MO 1617 flood	TU 1815 ebb	WE 1840 flood	1840 flood	TH 1230 flood	
MO 2021 1.27	TU 2109 0.49	WE 2206 1.34	TH 2231 0.41	2216 ebb	TU 1815 ebb	WE 2359 ebb	2359 ebb	TH 1903 ebb	
7 0240 0.47	15 0330 1.42	23 1136 1.48	0450 1.32	0555 flood	15 0013 flood	23 0735 flood	0735 flood	31 0130 flood	
7 0956 1.27	0912 0.29	1308 1.48	1031 0.47	1325 ebb	15 0548 ebb	23 1447 ebb	1447 ebb	31 0724 ebb	
TU 1457 0.85	WE 1609 1.60	TH 1645 1.78	FR 1702 1.45	TU 1743 flood	WE 1157 flood	TH 2015 flood	2015 flood	FR 1301 flood	
TU 2116 1.24	WE 2153 0.43	● 2314 1.34	● 2306 0.40	2304 ebb	WE 1849 ebb	FR 1849 ebb	1849 ebb	FR 1928 ebb	
8 0341 0.44	16 0416 1.43	24 0519 0.28	0650 1.43	0650 flood	16 0057 flood	24 0810 ebb	0810 ebb		
8 1053 1.32	1053 0.35	1234 1.53	1234 1.53	1425 ebb	16 0643 ebb	24 0830 flood	0830 flood		
WE 1608 0.86	TH 1647 1.58	FR 1754 1.52	WE 1932 flood	1932 ebb	TH 1238 flood	FR 1539 ebb	1539 ebb		
WE 2217 1.24	TH 2237 0.38				FR 1921 ebb				