

VSAG member Jeanette Lange enjoying the fish life at the President Coolidge "deco stop" - Santo, Vanuatu
Taken during our VSAG trip in 1998.
Photo by Das Williams. Nikonos V Camera. 17mm lens

FATHOMS

AUGUST -
SEPTEMBER 2000

Registered for posting as
a publication Category B
Print post Approved
Pp332873-0033

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

\$5



VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

August /
September
2000

in this issue ...

ARTICLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
VSAG Committee Members		
Editorial	John Lawler	3
South West Rocks	Alan Storen	4
Dive Report - 25 June 2000	John Lawler	6
The Curse of The House of Hotham	Josie Maré	7
VSAG Songbook	Don Abell	9
Comedy Corner		10
A Night With The Dolphins	Josie Maré	11
A Little Mensa Madness	Josie Maré	12
The Eye of the Wind	John Lawler	14
Safety and Boat Etiquette	John Lawler	18
Social Scene		19
Dive Report - 20 August 2000	John Lawler	20
Wathara	John Goulding	22
Media Watch		24
Dive Calendar		29
Tide Tables		30
Emergency Contact Information		32

Forthcoming General Meetings

Please note: AGM

Bells Hotel
157 Moray Street
(cnr Coventry Street)
Sth Melbourne 8:00 pm
Thursday 21 September
Thursday 19 October
Thursday 16 November

Forthcoming Committee Meetings

Leighoak Hotel
1555 Dandenong Road
Oakleigh
Thursday 14 September
Thursday 12 October
Thursday 9 November

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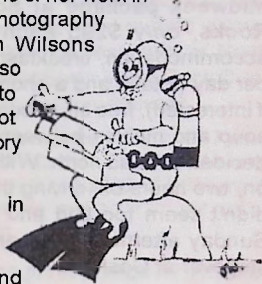
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Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of our new look Fathoms.

What a bumper issue June/July Fathoms was! As editor, I received many phone calls from members with thanks for finally getting the magazine back on track. Thanks to Josie, Andy, Mary Beckhurst and all the contributors who helped put the issue together. The cover photo of Margot Johnston on the "Henry Bonneau" was provided by Des Williams. Mary Beckhurst scanned the cover photo and will assist us with future covers. We are fortunate to have her present some of her work in Fathoms. Congratulations to Mary for having her photography featured in the centerfold of "The Age" article on Wilsons Promontory on Sunday 5 August. We still need articles so please send in your contributions. Perhaps you wish to comment on some issue or you may have a story not related directly to diving... don't hesitate... send in your story please.



We continue to keep the issue of safety in sight again in this issue. The Emergency Contact Information on page 32 has been completely updated and is now 100% accurate. Under the heading "Boat Etiquette" we remind our divers of preparation and conduct on our boats. Also, as Safety Officer, I have sourced the latest Search and Rescue grid of Port Phillip, a boat and equipment preparation check list, and all the locations and contact details of the Coast Guard around the Port Phillip and Westernport. These will be forwarded to our boat owners.

By the time this reaches our members we will be shaking off the cold winter and summer will be just around the corner. Time to check out the gear if it's been hibernating through winter.

On the political front, the Environment Conservation Council has submitted it's final report to the Government, proposing the establishment of no less than 23 reserves along the Victorian coastline. It is highly probable that a backlash could erupt from both the sport fishing and commercial fishers interests if the report is totally accepted. Beaumaris, a very big sport fishing area, is on the hit list! The article in "media watch" contains another view on this issue.

In February 1998, I had the opportunity to sail down the notorious West Coast of Tasmania. It was a thrilling, yet at times frightening "journey of a lifetime". I hope you will enjoy the story as much as I did writing it for you.

Finally, if your annual subscription has not been sent to Peter Vleugel, please forward payment now. Also please complete your personal details on the subscription form. The AGM is on Thursday 21 September.

Please make an effort to attend this very important meeting.

See you there.

John Lawler
Editor

South West Rocks - Northern NSW

Alan Storen

Not yet a member and already submitting articles for Fathoms.

Anyone feeling guilty yet???

With a week of holidays spare, my son and I escaped from Melbourne's winter. We found an ad in Diverlog for a midweek package at South West Rocks, *only* \$295 each including accommodation, breakfast, two dives per day (total 8 and a shore night dive if interested), free air, second tank, and soup and nibbles between dives. We decided to head north. With two hours on, two hours off, driving the 1300 km didn't seem too bad and we arrived Sunday afternoon after an overnight stopover at Gosford.

The day starts at 7:00 am with breakfast, 7:30 load the boat(s), 8:00 depart for the wharf and soon after out into the Pacific ocean heading towards Fish Rock. This is a small island about 2 to 3 km offshore with a 120m tunnel running approx east-west below the surface. The deep end is about 24m and the shallow end about 14m. The island and surrounds are the main dive site although there are two other islands closer to shore - Green Island and Black Rocks (they were green and black - creative!!), and there is a wreck - Agnes Irving, if the weather is bad.

First dive was near the deep end of the tunnel at a site called Fish and Chips - depth 25m. Our dive guide was Robbo and he gave us a detailed briefing of the dive. There were lots of fish varieties, many wobbegongs and several grey nurse sharks. The chips are the long rocks that lay on the bottom

of the gutter. The sharks were more interested in going about their own business than us, thankfully, and having recently done the Melbourne Aquarium dive, it was good to see them in their natural environment. After about 40 minutes we surfaced for soup and an hour telling stories of what we had seen.

Our second dive was through the tunnel, from the deep to shallow end. After avoiding the wobbys guarding the entrance we navigated a horizontal section of about 20m, went up a vertical narrow chimney then along another horizontal section of the tunnel to the shallow end (about 10m). Saw several crays (protected!) and spectacular corals. After reaching the end of the tunnel we then worked our way back to the mooring line past several more grey nurse sharks and ended a very memorable dive. On the way back to the launch site we saw several humpback whales and we were very tempted to jump into the water with them - however this is not allowed.

The next day we repeated the early start and out to the site for a slow drift dive on the north side of the island. Saw many sharks and other fish including loggerhead turtles and moray eels. The dive was a mix of three sites called Colorado Pass, the Pinacles and Land of the Giants. A great dive! The second dive was along the shark gutter and a chance to just sit and watch the sharks at close quarters.

Diving day 3 saw us venture to a site called the Black Forest. Apart from the loggerhead turtles, the sharks, a huge ray and the many varieties of fish we also saw the black coral and other sponges. Great diving and photographers dream. The second dive of the day was to a site called the aquarium, the name says it all!! Again on the way back in we saw several humpback whales.

Day 4 saw all the divers looking for shark teeth as one of the divers had found two teeth on the previous day. Unfortunately none were so lucky! The sites for the day were the Black Forest West and Fish Rock Cave- this time we spent more time looking at the fish, sponges and corals. Inside the tunnel we went into one of the bubble caves. These are air pockets left at the roof of the cave from the many divers that pass through. You can take out the reg and breath fresh air (well, recycled air!). No whales on the way back in but several porpoises were seen.

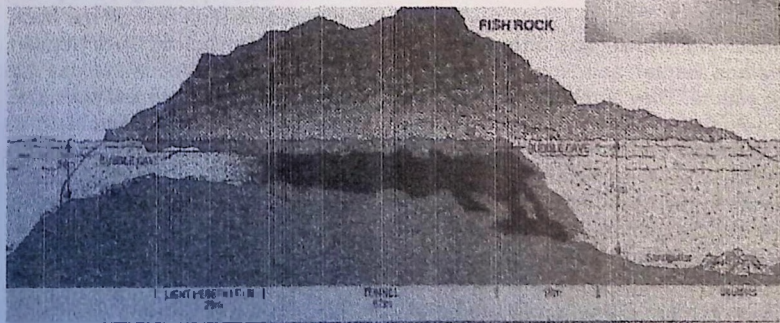
Day 5 was again an early start but this time it was to start our long trek home. Left just before 8am and arrived in Melbourne just after 10pm. This day was a reserve diving day in case the weather was bad earlier in the week but in our case it was not needed as the weather (and the dives) could only be described as fantastic.

In summary, a great escape from the Melbourne winter and superb diving thanks to the fine hospitality of Noel and Belinda at South West Rock Dive Centre. Highly recommended.

(PS – The above price was pre GST and before a price increase – I believe the mid week package is now \$350 – It is still great value for money and no, I do not get a commission)

I have some great photos for anyone interested in seeing them. Please feel free to contact me.

Alan Storen



DIVE REPORT

25 JUNE 2000

John Lawler - *Dive Captain*

The weather blew and rained most days leading up to Sunday 25 June. The good old weather man remained positive that the only good day was to be the 25th. All others were wet, and windy. My final check with the weather bureau confirmed the gale warning was cancelled, as was the wind warning of 20 to 25 knots. The phone was very quiet on call in night, with two boat owners, Mick Jeacle and Gavan Latimer booking in. As I was keen to give my new Signature it's test run, Gavan was happy to leave his boat home. Steve Jacoby and Robert Birtles made up the team for the day.

On arrival at Sorrento, it looked as if the wind was still up and the water was quite rough - being pushed up by the strong Northley. We decided to dive and launched into this weather. The plan was to dive around Queenscliff on the slack and in the lee. The trip over was very rough but these boats handled the conditions well. We were well ahead of the slack water time, and did some sight seeing and eventually, the wind did start to abate...at last!

Mick had Gavan and Steve on his Haines Hunter and Rob was on my Signature. They agreed to do their dive together and Mick and I would dive. Robert and I were well up the bay and by the time we joined Mick he had the divers in on some good territory. Rob went down the buoy line, but just as he reached bottom lost the divers and had to surface. Gavan and Steve surfaced. Steve was on Gavan's ocky reg and

Gavan with a big grin on his face as they had done a big battle with a seven pounder that was now in the bag! The effort in pulling this big cray out had exhausted Steve's air but he was not going to give up the fight, nor did he.

Mick, Rob and I kitted up and fell into some fantastic territory, and I mean fantastic. Bommies, ledges and at one point, we dropped down into a huge hole at around 87 feet. As the vis was not good it made the descent a bit scary until our eyes adjusted to the surround. There should have been crays in the ledges but not today. The dive continued in rocky territory but was starting to flatten out a bit. This was my cue to leave as the cold was getting to me. I surfaced and the other two were not far behind. It was a bunch of very chatty, excited divers on the boats comparing stories of our dives. We tried to convince Gavan and Steve that their cray should be divided five ways over a pig out but these guys we having none of that...all theirs!

The wind had dropped right off by now, so the weatherman was off the hook. We had a late lunch off Point Nepean, and it was just a perfect winter day with little wind, clear blue sky and warm sun. A great way to end another great VSAG dive.



Quote taken from actual work performance evaluation:

"His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity."

THE CURSE OF THE HOUSE OF HOTHAM

The weather had been exceptionally fine - more like spring than mid winter but the reports from the ski fields were still good. Excellent in fact. Great snow base, more falls expected, the best season for years. No one could have foreseen the events that were to unfold on the dark and stormy nights that were to come..

Leo had been dutifully organising a five day ski trip to the "HOUSE OF HOTHAM" for his VSAG friends but there had been an eerie feeling about the trip since it was first proposed. This was quite evident by the low numbers of willing participants. However, a few brave souls ignored that "someone just walked over my grave" feeling and booked anyway. However, as the due date drew nearer, the numbers dropped away like a ~~where's knickers~~ flies. Soon, there were only two VSAG members - Leo and myself, so Lauren and new beau Nathan, Andrew and his mates Shane, Tony and Craig were all made an offer they couldn't refuse and made up the group for the week.

The feeling about the trip was still very low key. No great hullabaloo as usually accompanies VSAG events. What was wrong here? Did everyone else know something Leo and I didn't? Was anyone actually aware of the forces building against us? Could we have altered the course of fate even if we had known what the forces of evil had planned for us?

In complete oblivion, Leo and I made our plans for the trip and things were looking good - or so we thought. My

leave had been approved. I was to have dinner with a good friend on Friday night after work, pack on Saturday, and stay over at Leo's on Saturday night. We would leave early Sunday morning in my car, share the fuel and park entry costs and if we arrived early enough, start skiing on Sunday afternoon.

A PERFECT PLAN

Just before the ski trip, my car started making some rather awful noises. Front end - \$700. That will just have to wait. Slight alteration to plans - take Leo's car instead of mine. Should I have taken this as an omen and stayed home?

As the weekend drew nearer, the option of staying at Leo's ceased to exist. Another omen? No! This was too much part of what Leo knows as normal to even think twice about it - so I didn't.

I rang my friend Peter to confirm our dinner date for Friday. He had picked up a nasty tummy bug - and needed to take a rain check?

This holiday was not starting on the right note !

When I called Leo on Friday night to finalise our altered plans, he told me that a friend of his had died and the funeral was on Tuesday so he wouldn't get to Hotham until Wednesday. I would have to drive myself there - dodgy car, alone, country roads

I finally got away early Sunday morning. It was a beautiful day - or

should I just say that at least the weather was fine

After a lengthy but thankfully uneventful trip, I finally settled into my room at the House of Hotham for a nice relaxing evening.

Lauren and Nathan were already there and Lauren had an awful bruise and ice slash on one knee with the other knee looking mean and swollen from a very bad fall on the very hard ice.

Andrew and the boys arrived in the early evening. If enough things hadn't already gone awry with this trip, I now felt OLD!!!! Me with a group of kids young enough to have been my own offspring. How completely depressing.

I was introduced to all and sundry. Tony, one of Andrew's mates, had been involved in a motorbike accident and broke his foot - no skiing or boarding for him this trip. The bad luck was all-encompassing !!

On Monday morning, the boys all headed down the mountain to Bright - to check bank balances and get cash for alcohol, lift tickets and more alcohol.

I decided to spend the day resting and reading as I wasn't keen to ski alone, and on Tuesday, I would buy a 3-day lift ticket. If the snow was good, I would also buy a half day ticket on Friday and head down the mountain for home on Friday evening.

Good plan - or at least I thought so until I got out of bed of Tuesday morning and walked into the dining room. It was pouring rain outside and pouring rain inside. The dining room was completely flooded. Water was pouring in through

the roof. It had rained all night and done immeasurable damage to the snow and only slightly less damage to the dining room.

There was no chance of skiing today. Oh well, plans were made to be altered. I spent another day reading and resting and getting ready for the big day of skiing on Wednesday. Leo was due by about 8:00 am and I planned to be up at 7:00, showered, shaved and fed, ready to roll by the time Leo arrived.

I decided to get all my ski stuff in order on Tuesday evening so getting ready on Wednesday morning could be a rapid fire event. As I pottered about in my room, I turned my mobile phone on for messages and soon found that some people just can't live without me - can you Andy!

Aside from Andy's call, my sister and one of my neighbours from Aspendale had phoned. There had been a report on the news earlier that night about a mini-tornado going through parts of Melbourne and I hoped and hoped that my message from Anne was just going to be that the roof had been ripped off my house. Unfortunately, a dear friend of mine had died suddenly and the funeral was 10:00 am Thursday.

I packed my ski gear away and eventually went downstairs to tell the boys I would be leaving the next day. I must have looked rather forlorn because Craig offered to stay home from the pub if I wanted him to.

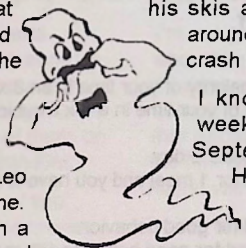
It snowed all night and was still snowing when I drove down the mountain on Wednesday morning. I would have to keep a watchful eye out for cops.

Nathan had been booked for speeding on the drive home on Monday night and when I met Leo at a chain fitting bay, he told me he'd been booked on the trip up.

I didn't believe anything else could possibly have gone wrong until I spoke to Leo after his return to Melbourne. Andrew has whiplash from a nasty board fall and Leo needs

a complete knee reconstruction after the snow snakes leapt from beneath his skis and wrapped themselves around his ankles causing him to crash heavily on the snow.

I know there is another ski weekend organised for 9-10 September at the House of Hotham but unless the place can be exorcised between now and then, I think I'll stay home.



Josie



Don't Forget !!

THE VSAG Songbook

SEND THE WORDS TO YOUR FAVOURITE SONGS TO DON ABELL WHO WILL COLLATE THEM INTO A USER FRIENDLY FORMAT

MUST BE GOOD OLD FAVOURITES

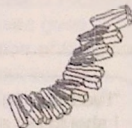
NO MUSIC NEEDED

SO START GATHERING
THOSE CATCHY LITTLE TUNES
AND SEND THEM IN
(ON DISK IF POSSIBLE)

BUT ANY WHICH WAY YOU CAN

TO
DON ABELL
80 LISTON ST GLEN IRIS 3146

fax 9889 9412
email dkabell@kpmg.com.au



Comedy Corner

Prison Vs Work

- IN PRISON You spend the majority of your time in an 8 x 10 cell.
 AT WORK You spend most of your time in a 6 x 8 cubicle.
- IN PRISON You get three meals a day.
 AT WORK You get a break for 1 meal and you have to pay for it.
- IN PRISON You get time off for good behavior.
 AT WORK You get rewarded for good behavior with more work.
- IN PRISON A guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.
 AT WORK You must carry around a security card, unlock and open all the doors yourself.
- IN PRISON You can watch TV and play games.
 AT WORK You get fired for watching TV and playing games.
- IN PRISON You get your own toilet.
 AT WORK You have to share.
- IN PRISON They allow your family and friends to visit.
 AT WORK You cannot even speak to your family and friends.
- IN PRISON All expenses are paid by taxpayers with no work required.
 AT WORK You get to pay all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct taxes from you salary to pay for prisoners.
- IN PRISON You spend most of your life looking through bars from inside wanting to get out.
 AT WORK You spend most of your time wanting to get out and go inside bars.
- IN PRISON There are wardens who are often sadistic.
 AT WORK They are called supervisors.
- IN PRISON You have unlimited time to read e-mail jokes.
 AT WORK You get fired if you get caught.

SO GET BACK TO WORK!!!

"I've been on so many blind dates,
 I should get a free dog."

Wendy Liebman

**Quote taken from actual work
 performance evaluation:**

"I would not allow this employee to breed"

IMAX Theatre

A Night With The Dolphins

There are a few hazards associated with living about 3 metres away from me and my poor suffering neighbour Wayne was about to experience some of them on the night of the IMAX Dolphin film.

The numbers were down so I told Wayne he was coming to the movies with me. I did eventually remember to ask him if he had other plans for the night but by that stage, he'd rearranged his social life to suit me. Nice guy - and my apologies to his girlfriend.

The last time VSAG organised a night at IMAX, we had dinner prior to the movie which was a good thing as some of the shots during the film made me feel quite ill. Having already had dinner though, I just caught the tram home and went to bed (alone - I think). I thought a film about dolphins couldn't possibly cause motion sickness. Dolphins are such gentle, calm critters that I decided to give the Kwell a miss. Any VSAGer who has ever been on a boat with me is probably thinking at this point that I'm some kind of idiotic masochist (some of you probably think that even though I've never been anywhere near a boat with you). However,

A dedicated group met at the theatre and headed in to watch the movie. I sat all the way at the back which for me is still about 8 miles too close. At least from that point, I could keep an eye on the other VSAGers to ensure they behaved themselves.

I'm not going to write too much about the movie because just thinking about it makes me feel quite ill. Aside from those horrible (but apparently typical) IMAX shots, the film was quite good. I'm sure Helen will give you a full report later.

By the time we left the theatre, I was not a well unit. We headed off to Carlton for dinner and all I could manage was a glass of soda water. I stayed at the table while everyone ordered but when Richard started talking about his dinner in great detail, I had to excuse myself (rather quickly). I spent the next half hour sitting on the floor in the ladies room while everyone else enjoyed dinner. I left poor Wayne with a table full of people he'd never met before, made him take me home, almost threw up on the tram (and him) then made him drive to the 7-11 for some aspirin because neither of us had any in our flats.

I believe a good night was had by all - with one obvious exception and the next time VSAG organises a night at IMAX, I'm just going to join the group for dinner and give the movie a big miss.

Thanks for organising the night Helen but could you please teach Richard a little compassion. He was quite sadistic in his description of the poor cow he was about to devour and somehow I think the little bastard enjoyed watching me turn green.

Josie

A LITTLE MENSA M^od e s s

Lets start with an easy one !! **Level 1**

**Can you solve the following anagrams
to find ten vegetables?**

COOL CRIB

AWFUL RECOIL

CULT TEE

VEINED

PASTE TOO

SORT CAR

HIPS CAN

CRY EEL

SNOG IN PRISON

REACH IT OK

A SUGAR SAP

BOSS SPURS RESULT

This one's **Level 2**
but still easy

Which day is two days
before the day after the
day three days after the
day before Tuesday?

SUNDAY
MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY

Comedy Quickies

There was this couple who were married for 20 years, and every time they had sex the husband insisted on turning off the lights

After 20 years the wife felt this was stupid and decided to stop this crazy habit. So one night, while they were in the middle of doing it, she turned on the lights.

She looked down and saw her husband was holding a dildo. She gets completely upset. "You impotent bastard," she screamed at him, "how could you lie to me all these years. You better explain yourself!"

The husband looks her straight in the eyes and says, calmly. "I'll explain the dildo if you can explain our three kids".

Subtitle: What happens to Fathoms when VSAGers don't submit articles !!!

..... LET'S MOVE ON TO LEVEL 3

Which number should replace the question mark?

125

?

150

355

215

330

240

305

THIS ONE SHOULD KEEP YOU BUSY FOR A WHILE !!!

A man is born in 1982
and dies in 1962 - aged 35.

How is this possible?

The Bar Bear

Meg Johnson

A bear walks into a bar in Billings, Montana and sits down, bangs the bar with his paw and demands a beer. The bartender approaches and says, "We don't serve beer to bears in bars in Billings."

The bear, becoming angry, demands again that he be served a beer.

The bartender tells him again, more forcefully, "We don't serve beer to belligerent bears in bars in Billings."

The bear, very angry now, says, "If you don't serve me a beer, I'm going to eat that lady sitting at the end of the bar."

The bartender says, "Sorry, we don't serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in bars in Billings."

The bear goes to the end of the bar, and as promised, eats the woman. He comes back to his seat and again demands a beer.

The bartender states, "Sorry, we don't serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in bars in Billings that are on drugs."

The bear says, "I'm not on drugs."

The bartender says, "You are now. That was a barbitchyuate."

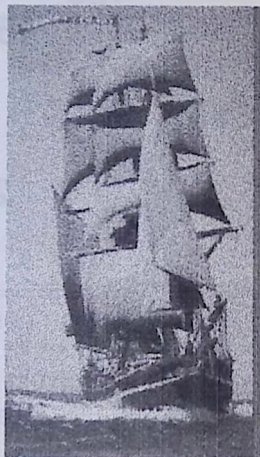
A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME ON "THE EYE OF THE WIND"

The first time I saw the Brigantine tall ship "The Eye Of The Wind", was at Wilsons Prom, Easter 1988. Built by C Luhning at Blake in 1911, the ship is 150 tons gross LOA is 132ft x 23ft x 8ft. Sail area is 8,000ft². The vessel carries 2 air compressors, salt desalinator, and two generators. The power unit is a Gardiner Diesel. The ship has 85 tons of lead ballast and carries 7 tons of fuel = 6,700 ltrs. The skipper of the ship is simply called, "Tiger" He is the true image of the type one would expect to Captain this type of ship. Tall, sun-tanned, bearded, ever watchful and reclusive. He is about around 60 years. VSAG was there for our annual diving adventure and the ship was anchored in Oberon Bay. The ship had

come to Australia as part of the Tall Ships participation in the Australian Bicentennary. Little did I know that ten years later I would journey on this ship down the wild and unforgiving west coast of Tasmania, on what was to be the journey of a lifetime. This is my story.

During February 1998, I was invited to journey down part of the west coast of Tasmania on one of five legs on board "The Eye of The Wind". This ship had come to Tasmania as part of the circumnavigation of Tasmania celebrations, conducted by the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania. The Tassal Aquaculture company had chartered

the ship for five weeks for clients. I left Tullamarine on Sunday 15 February and flew to Burnie for an overnight stop before boarding the ship at Stanley, with 20 other guests. A very strong Nor-westerly had delayed the ship by four hours and prevented the ship from docking at the wharf so it had to drop anchor in the harbour. All new provisions, passengers and luggage were transferred over by a small Avon and most of this arrived quite wet due to the waves braking over the bow. Boarding this beautiful vessel from the past was



an exciting experience. The exterior appearance disguised the interior which was as modern as new technology could allow. We all listened to the rules on safety and seasickness, and when the welcome was finished the fun of meeting new friends began over a brilliant meal of (what else) fresh grilled Atlantic Salmon. The weather eased late Monday night and at 4am on Tuesday we set sail for the Hunter group of Islands in 10-15 knot winds, arriving in a beautiful, pristine bay at around 5pm. Some 15 other yachts had already anchored in the bay, also part of the circumnavigation flotilla. We all