

FATHOMS

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VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

Cover and background photos courtesy of Mary Malloy.
Background photo of Heads Area. Cover photos taken at Wilsons Prom during 2000

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Forthcoming General Meetings

Bells Hotel
157 Moray Street
(cnr Coventry Street)
Sth Melbourne 8:00 pm
Thursday 18 January
Thursday 15 February
Thursday 15 March
Thursday 19 April
Thursday 17 May

Forthcoming Committee Meetings

Leighoak Hotel
1555 Dandenong Road
Oakleigh
Thursday 8 February
Thursday 8 March
Thursday 5 April

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Editorial



It's an historic time for VSAG: we now have four female members on the Committee, our first female Club Member of the Year, a female recipient of the annual "Literary Award" and more women divers showing an interest in joining the club. I

hope, as a club, we can step forward into the new century with pride and enthusiasm and an attitude of equality which will not only attract new members but retain them for many years to come. We must ALL be part of the VSAG team that will maintain the club in such a way that will allow it to grow and prosper and whilst change is not always easy or welcome, it must be embraced if VSAG is to survive as a diving club.

As the new editor, I am acutely aware of the responsibility of producing Fathoms on time and making it interesting to all our members, their partners and potential new members. However, as with all club magazines, Fathoms is only as good as it's contributions. If we don't write about our diving and club experiences, the magazine will cease to have any relevance. Please send your articles, letters, comments, suggestions or other material you feel should be in Fathoms to me. Don't be too concerned if your grammar and spelling aren't up to scratch - as editor, I need something to do.

I'll include my "wish list" for articles and how I like them to be sent, further on in the mag.


We've certainly been a busy club over the past two months. Since our last Fathoms, we've had our annual Christmas dinner, our final "meeting" for the year and summer is upon us so more divers are dusting off the neoprene and making plans to get wet.

In this edition of Fathoms, we have some dive reports that should get everyone excited about diving again and an interesting article by John Ashley about the Prince of Wales (the frigate, not the two-timing louse, heir to the throne).


The annual Christmas exodus left the Melbourne dive contingent sadly depleted but none the less eager to dive. However, December saw some wild weather so not much diving and January has been fabulous so lots of diving but everyone is too busy to bother with the dive reports.

To all VSAGers, their families and friends, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a safe and prosperous new year with the best diving ever!

Josie
Editor



Give It To Me Baby !!!



just the way I like it ...

If I tell you what I want, and exactly how I want it will you give it to me like that?

Let's start with my software.



I use MICROSOFT WORD for text, PHOTOSHOP for pictures and PAGEMAKER for putting Fathoms together. If you understand all that, then read no further. If not, read on

If you're still reading, let's start with the easy bits - the words. My preferences for text (in order) are as follows:

- ✿ Word documents on disk (PC)
- ✿ Typed documents on paper (1.5 spacing)
- ✿ Handwritten documents (neatly written please)



Please don't add word art, clip art or fancy stuff to your documents if you're sending them on disk. If you're producing a hard copy, you can do what you like - providing it's all removed before making the disk copy. If you have a preference for a particular font, just write it somewhere - otherwise, I'll take care of all the flash bits for you.

Please ensure the disk copy is actually on the disk and that the document content is correct from the disk copy.

Photos add interest to a story and should be as clear as possible - not too many shadows, background stuff etc etc. I prefer photos to slides (no slide scanner). If you can scan the photos yourself, please save them as .JPEG files and send them to me via email. Remember to check the size of the files you send. If they're too big, they get stuck in the email system somewhere - never to be seen again.



And of course, the DEADLINES - 2 weeks before each meeting !!

For Feb/Mar, the deadline for articles is Thursday 1 March

For Apr/May, the deadline is Thursday Thursday 3 May

For Jun/Jul, Thursday 5 July,

For Aug/Sep, Thursday 6 September,

For Oct/Nov, Thursday 1 November,

For Dec/Jan 2002, Thursday 3 January 2002



Because I have great faith in you all - I'll thank you now for "giving it to me - just the way I like it"

Mysteries of the Sea

John Ashley

It was one of those bitterly cold days in May. Even when the sun is out, you still find yourself chilled to the bone and no matter how many clothes you wear, there is no escaping the bitter cold.

The sailing ship "Prince of Wales", was busy loading cargo and securely stowing away three hundred ounces of gold to be shipped to Sydney before the passengers boarded the ship later in the day.

It was 25 May, 1853, and the Port of Melbourne must have been a sight to see. You see, Melbourne was in the midst of the gold rush and many of the ships had been lying at anchor for months because the crews had simply left them for the gold fields of Ballarat and the like. In fact, Melbourne was one of the busiest ports of the Empire.

The Prince of Wales was a small coastal trader sailing mainly between Sydney and Melbourne, stopping at smaller ports like Twofold Bay and Port Albert. She was a mere 73 feet long brigantine weighing only 112 tons, but had successfully made 22 trips to Sydney over a three year period.

In the afternoon of the 25th, she slipped anchor and slowly sailed down the West Channel passing some of the many smelters bay traders who were plying their various trades on the bay.

She sailed out through Port Philip Heads, into oblivion. The passengers and crew were never seen alive again.

No one can truly imagine the sheer

horror that these people would have gone through in their last moments of life. Did they all die on the ship? Perhaps a life boat was launched only to be washed up on shore in hostile country or perhaps washed out to sea where the occupants would slowly succumb to dehydration or starvation.

The crew of the Sarah Hooper next saw the Prince of Wales floating upside down, 5 kilometres off Cape Howe but with no survivors. The name Prince of Wales could clearly be seen on the stern of the ship. It would appear that the cargo had shifted in big seas, causing the ship to turn turtle. The Prince was sighted again four days later, in a similar position by the Henrietta. This was the last time the vessel was ever seen.

In 1993, two fishing boats snagged an unidentified wreck, 35 miles SE of Green Cape in 700 feet of water. A close inspection of the fishing nets revealed timber from a wreck, tobacco snuff jars, mustard jars, willow plates and human bone. It would appear from the size of the wreck, the type of timber that was brought up which matches that of the Prince of Wales, and the position of the wreck, that this is indeed, the final resting place of the Prince of Wales and her passengers and crew.

The Sarah Hooper and the Henrietta were also lost at sea, the latter having recently been discovered at the top end of the Bay by members of the MAAV

Cape Schank

Scheduled Dive Site

19 November 2000

This appears to be a site of "too far away" with the associated rising fuel costs, logistical problems in launching at Flinders, enthusiasm of divers and boat owners. These hiccups need to be ironed out before Cape Schank is seriously considered a dive site again.

To correspond with the opening of the cray season, the new dive site selected was the back beaches.

Saturday night, the calls started to come in and it was quickly evident that the divers out-numbered the boats available. Mick's was the only boat available with flat calm seas predicted and rising water temperatures. After numerous invasions into the other boat owners lives, I was able to convince Leo to borrow Leo Senior's boat. Some divers unfortunately missed out this time - first in, best dressed rules apply! Only a very late cancellation saw yours truly joining in the dive.

We arranged to meet at 9:30 am at Sorrento which turned out fine apart from Leo being waylaid for an hour due to his brother having removed the boat battery and forgetting to return it. I said good-bye to Mick and his trusted crew of Ted, Bruce, Darren and John, as we didn't know how long a delay we were looking at. Leo made good time considering his heavy workload, late notice and his brother's errant ways.

We zipped out through the heads to be confronted with a dead flat sea and no

swell (you bloody beauty). We turned towards Sorrento back beach and motored down past the end of the reserve and on a bit when the outboard hiccupped and died. The shore was 500m away, the two protruding suck rocks 50m away and the motor won't start. I said, "this might be a good spot to put the anchor in hey Leo?" "Yeah, throw it in" says Leo. "Gee the water's clear. I can see the bottom" I mention with rising excitement at the diving prospects. Lauren buddied up with me and while she was getting kitted up, I zapped down and grabbed a few good size abalone for Leo's dinner. When Lauren joined me, we swam off exploring picture postcard terrain, with large rising bommies riddled with undercuts, holes and ledges. We came across sandy gullies with limestone outcrops and bubble kelp reaching to the sky in well spread out clusters. Under some of these ledges, we found a few Hurst sharks lazing in the shadows. The fish life we encountered was as numerous as it was diverse. We sighted schools of bay trout, a couple of large bastard trumpeters, schools of horse shoe leather jackets (the blue and yellow ones), large zebra fish, sweep, magpie perch, blue-throated wrasses - to name just a few. I grabbed a rusty cat shark as payback for all the sharks grabbing people at the moment, which quickly wrapped around my arm and started belting me with its tail. Feisty little rascal.

It then dawned on me that "Hey, isn't it cray season?" Our attention and minds then focused on finding those red critters. We found a few but they were out of reach. I looked up from checking out the possibility of getting a small one when Lauren pointed into a narrow ledge above me. "Okay, I'll have a look". I poked my head into the dark hole to have a geek and then tore it out of there as fast as I could realising that I had nearly fed my head to the biggest crayfish I've seen in 15 years. Lauren's eyes met mine and she shook her head. Oh well, I guess I'll have to have a go at him. After I gave him a quick poke in the eye, he backed out of reach - thank goodness for that! Sorry Lauren, he got away!!

Then, two minutes later, I found a couple of others which had to go. My reputation as a bloodied VSAGer was on the line. With Lauren holding the bag, I tackled the crays - one at a time of course. After a titanic struggle, one was in the bag. It's amazing what a body slam and choker hold can achieve!

The other must have witnessed the treatment and surrendered with only enough of a fight to preserve his dignity (although, not his life).

Upon surfacing, we stowed the decapods and Leo did his dive. Much to our relief, the motor had decided to work again. The sun had come out by now and it was absolutely glorious.

A quick bite to eat and a laze in the sun then in for a second dive. It was much like the first with 20+ crays encountered but no others taken. Leo had his second dive enjoying the country and getting his quota of good size abs.

We then set sail for home. Mick caught up to us just as we were approaching the heads to go back inside which was good, as our motor was chugging and spitting with what was clearly a dirty load of petrol. A quick hello and they followed us in till we crossed the rip then our motor mysteriously cleared with a whoosh and we motored back.

We had a quick stop at Portsea so missed catching up with Mick at Tony's as the day had gotten away. We took a photo of the crays at Tony's just for the records and upon weigh-in, the crays were 9.2 lbs and 8.7 lbs. The crays were a bonus on what was a great diving day with 35-40' viz.



I'm sorry for those who missed out. Thanks to the boat owners who so generously share their boats and diving with us.

DC for a day !
Shane

EX

DIVE REPORT

SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER

As is usual when one is the dive captain, the weather is the determining factor for the scheduled location. Flinders has to be a Northerly wind and this is also true of the back beaches. It also is the better wind direction for diving the great wreck "George Kermodé" off the south side of Phillip Island. The wind was in fact North as the boats of Mick Jeacle and my Haines Signature arrived at the new boat ramp at Newhaven (no charge to launch and taps to wash the boats) and set off for this great wreck dive

A very quick and easy ride to the site had us in the area in record time. Locating the wreck took some time as it was not programmed into the GPS and was found by Mick from land marks with input from Pat Reynolds. Once over the wreck it was into the gear and over the side. The vis was stunning and the wreck could be appreciated as every bit was so clear to see, especially the inner sections. The fish life was abundant, full of colour and varied, however there were not as many sweep on the wreck as in the past. My dive buddy was Bruce Dart and this dive was very significant for him as he was involved in the sinking of the wreck.

Bruce will no doubt apply his literary skills one day to tell us about his part in the sinking and I also believe Bruce may have a picture or two to add to his story.

We covered the wreck from bow to stern, top to bottom and in and out where possible and safe.

A great dive under perfect conditions. Everybody was excited and full of praise for the conditions and the experience of diving on this great wreck.

After lunch we headed south to the area around Pyramid Rock and dived around the south west area along the gullies and drop offs. This area was also a great dive in perfect conditions, fish life aplenty and lots of ledges, holes and one or two small caves

Time to call it a day and we headed back to Newhaven. As usual we decided to have some refreshments at a pub in San Remo and happy hour was under way when we arrived. The pub had a stand up comedian who had us all in fits of laughter, a larger than life Col when he was on the stand doing his thing but a very different man off the stage according to Mick who had a chat with him.

VSAG dive days don't come any better than this!!!

John Lawler



Eat This

It's not often that the back beaches are flat enough to dive but every so often, we get one of those days this is just one out of the box. We had just such a day on 19th December. The club managed only two boats - those belonging to Mick and Leo but had a full crew of nine divers. With everyone on board, it was off towards London Bridge. It was decided that crayfish would be on the menu that night and we needed to get outside the marine reserve park.

The diving was sensational. The viz was 40-50' with plenty of crayfish to be seen by some, anyway. It was so flat, we could actually dive right under the rock platforms - a rare feat for this part of the coast. Mini drops, gutters and a large number of Port Jackson sharks were woken to amuse the divers who weren't busy mustering crayfish.

It was a great way to spend a Sunday morning.

Lunch was a lazy affair with stories told and embellished then it was off to blow a second tank further down the coast. We decided to dive an offshore reef where there was a heap of cray pots but even though crays were seen, none were able to be taken. It was at this site that Ted had his shortest dive on record - 30 seconds. A shark attack maybe? No! Someone forgot to fill his tank. He actually tried to blame the big carrot but Mick was having none of that!!!

The club should look at diving some of these offshore reefs because there is no surge that you get closer to shore and they are able to be dived even when there is a swell and the inshore reefs are out of bounds. They're easy to find too - just look for the pots!

After the dive, we headed to Tony's Bar and Grill for beers and photos. You see, I thought I had a good size cray until Shane showed his. As the photos show, all I could do was laugh and pay homage to an even greater cray catcher.



Good on you Shane.

Thanks to Shane - our DC for the day and to Mick and Leo for their boats. It was a great dive day and everyone who made the effort had a really enjoyable day.

John Astley

A Perfect Beginning

DIVE REPORT - 1 JANUARY 2001

Many of the VSAGers were away at Batemans Bay over the Christmas/New Year festive season but there were still some at home in Melbourne and local diving was arranged. Mick Jeacle and I arranged a dive on January 1st and with Chris Llewellyn and Bruce Dart we decided on the 90ft Submarine as the first dive. The conditions on the bay were simply perfect, calm seas, blue sky and all the ingredients for perfect diving.

Thanks to the Clinton government, the GPS marks are now very, very accurate and we watched the distance to sub shorten and as nil metres hit the screen the wreck came on as well... a perfect hit! Chris was my dive buddy for the dive and we went over the side first, followed shortly by Mick and Bruce. The anchor was positioned away from the wreck to ensure no damage was caused, and upon arriving at the bottom it was only a very short swim to the wreck. The vis was exceptional and we started at the bow with a look at the torpedo tubes then turned and swam inside the sub and all along to the hatch exit. A magnificent dive! We dropped down to the sea bed and swam the full length to the bow, then with still some time left moved up onto the top of the wreck for a final few minutes to take in the full effect of the sub before heading back to the anchor for ascent.

This was the first time Bruce had dived the sub and he was in very good

company with Mick Jeacle to show him the best of it. When Bruce came up from the dive he was bubbling with excitement from the dive experience, as were all of us as it was really one out of the box. We had difficulty pulling up the anchor which refused to budge and Mick had to kit up and go back to conduct the retrieval. This dive was to cost him later in the day when sighting some crays. After lunch we were right on slack water, and so decided to dive inside the bay off the Queenscliff area. Bruce and I dropped into some reasonably good rocky areas, and 10 minutes into our dive I detected the very promising sight of two long feelers protruding out from under a ledge. This crustacean was showing as much interest in me as I was in it, making the task of getting my hand onto it all the easier.And so it was that a nice 8lb cray was in the bag, which Bruce had kindly opened and ready. The rest of the dive was calm and pretty and done on the slack water. It was really easy with no stress. Mick's dive was around the same area and he was into the very final minutes of his dive when he came onto several crays but with bottom time running out, he just managed to bag one reasonable cray. Better one than none Mick!

The day was fun, we all were pleased with diving and in that mode headed for the Sorrento ramp and home.

John Lawler



Comedy Corner Comedy Corner

The Good Shepherd

Once upon a time there was a shepherd looking after the sheep on the edge of a deserted road. Suddenly a brand new Jeep Cherokee screeches to a halt next to him. The driver, a young man dressed in a Brioni suit, Cerutti shoes, Rayban sun-glasses, Jovial Swiss wristwatch, and a Pierre Cardin tie gets out and asks the shepherd, "If I guess how many sheep you have will you give me one of them?"

The shepherd looks at the young man, then looks at the grazing sheep and replies, "Okay"

The young man parks the car, connects the notebook and the mobile-fax, enters a NASA website, scans the ground using his GPS, opens a database and 60 excel tables filled with logarithms, then prints out a 150 page report on his high-tech mini-printer. He turns to the shepherd and says "Exactly 1586 sheep here"

The shepherd answers, "That's correct, you can have your sheep". The young man picks out what he thinks is the best looking specimen and puts it in his jeep.

The shepherd looks at him and asks, "If I guess your profession, will you return my animal to me?"

The young man answers, "Yes, why not?"

The shepherd says, "You're a consultant"

How did you know?" asks the young man. "Very simple", answers the shepherd. "First, you came here without being called. Second, you charged me a fee to tell me something I already knew. Third, you don't understand anything about my business. Now can I have my dog back?"

CLAG !!

Dorothy is very upset as her husband Albert had just passed away. She went to the mortuary to look at her dearly departed & the instant she saw him she starts crying. One of the attendants rushes up to comfort her.

Through her tears she explains that she was upset because Albert was wearing a black suit and that it was his dying wish to be buried in a blue suit. The attendant apologises and explains that they always put the bodies in a black suit as a matter of course but he'd see what he could do.

The next day Dorothy returns to the mortuary to have one last moment with Albert before his funeral the following day. When the attendant pulls back the curtain, Dorothy manages to smile through her tears as Albert is now wearing a smart blue suit. "How did you manage to get hold of that beautiful blue suit?"

"Well, yesterday afternoon after you left, a man about your husband's size was brought in & he was wearing a blue suit. His wife explained that she was very upset as he had always wanted to be buried in a black suit," the attendant replied.

He continued, "After that it was simply a matter of swapping the heads"

*INSPIRING WORDS FROM THE NEW
LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD !!!*

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure."

"Republicans understand the importance of bondage between a mother and child."

"Welcome to Mrs. Bush, and my fellow astronauts."

"The future will be better tomorrow."

"We're going to have the best educated American people in the world."

Brain Teaser

if you told everyone you worked this one out last time - you lied!!! I omitted 3 clues. Ed.

WHO KEEPS FISH?

FACTS:

- 1 There are five houses in five different colours.
- 2 In each house there lives a person of a different nationality.
- 3 These 5 owners drink a certain beverage, smoke a certain brand of cigarette and keep a certain pet.
- 4 No owners have the same pet, smoke the same brand of cigarette or drink the same beverage.

HINTS: - 3 MORE THAN IN THE LAST ISSUE!!!

- 1 The Brit lives in a red house.
- 2 The Swede keeps dogs as pets.
- 3 The Dane drinks tea.
- 4 The green house is on the left of the white house.
- 5 The green house owner drinks coffee.
- 6 The person who smokes Pall Mall rears birds.
- 7 The owner of the yellow house smokes Dunhill.
- 8 The man living right in the center drinks milk.
- 9 The Norwegian lives in the first house.
- 10 The man who smokes Rothmans lives next to the man that keeps cats.
- 11 The man who keeps horses lives next to the man who smokes Dunhill.
- 12 The owner who smokes Marlboro drinks beer.
- 13 The German smokes Raffles
- 14 The Norwegian lives next to the blue house
- 15 The man who smokes Rothmans has a neighbour who drinks water.

QUESTION: **Who keeps fish?**

Comedy Quickie



Marine Incidents Annual Report 1999

Sea Safety

"When anyone asks me how I can best describe my experience of nearly forty years at sea, I merely say, uneventful.

Of course there have been winter gales and storms and fog and the like, but in all my experience, I have never been in an accident of any sort worth speaking about. I have seen but one vessel in distress in all my years at sea..

I never saw a wreck and have never been wrecked, nor was I ever in any predicament that threatened to end in disaster of any sort."

from a presentation by EJ Smith 1907

On 14 April 1912, the RMS Titanic sank with the loss of 1500 lives.. one of whom was its master Captain EJ Smith.

Site of the day: Cave Diving
www.cavediving.com



Like your sports extreme? Cave diving is for the diver who wants to go that extra step. Explore underwater caves and caverns.

Safety of Aging Tanks Questioned Cylinders Made From 6351-T6 Aluminum Alloy Could Pose Increased Risk of Explosion

by Lee Nessel

(article supplied by Robin Woods)

The safety of some aluminum scuba cylinders is being questioned by Florida dive operators after a tragic accident dismembered a Key Largo man earlier this year. The concern is with tanks made of 6351-T6 alloy, once a popular material for cylinder manufacturers.

Bill Gordon, a life-long scuba diver, was filling a tank on St Patrick's Day 2000 just as he had most days for the last 15 years when something went horribly wrong. "It threw me across the area. I was unconscious for a minute, came to and saw i was missing a leg," said Gordon. The tank had exploded.

With his wife, Susan, currently running their Admiral Dive Centre in Key largo, Gordon is optimistic that he will regain his hand functions - despite losing half a pinky and having metal plates in both wrists - and return to diving. "I think I'll be the only one-legged scuba instructor in Key Largo" he said laughing.

But the laughter stops when talk turns to the 6351-T6 alloy. "In retrospect, the failure was really a product failure of 6351 alloy used by (Walter) Kidde and Luxfer." said Gordon, referring to two manufacturers of scuba cylinders.

Analyzing the Problem

According to the Department of Transportation - whose Division of Hazardous Materials has jurisdiction over pressurized cylinders - there have been 12 aluminum alloy 6351-T6 cylinder ruptures reported in the United

States as of April 2000. Eleven of the failures occurred during filling, four of which were scuba tanks. The others were SCBA, medical O₂ and CO₂ tanks.

Analysis has confirmed that most of the failures of 6351 can be attributed to sustained load cracking (SLC) in the neck and shoulder area of the cylinder. SLC develops over time following repeated overfilling or after tanks are left filled for sustained periods of time.

Mark Toughiry a mechanical engineer for DOT's Office of Hazardous Materials Technology, performs a metallurgical analysis of tank fragments after an explosion.

"Based on our research and in-depth research by Luxfer, they found these sustained load cracks basically were embedded into the neck and shoulder during manufacturing, based on the alloy that they used."

Toughiry said he participated in a 1995 study that concluded less than one percent of tanks ruptured. Seven ruptures were recorded and studied out of 7 million cylinders in service. And of those that did develop cracks, 99 percent of the time, if the cracks grew at all, they grew slowly and would show up at the surface as a leak.

It has been about 10 years since the production of tanks was switched from the 6351 alloy to 6061, a metallurgical mixture believed not to be susceptible

to SLC, according to the DOT and Luxfer. The 6351 alloy was used in tanks manufactured by Walter Kidde Co, Luxfer USA and Cliff Impact Division of Aluminum Precision Products Inc. Luxfer tanks were made with 6351 from 1972 until mid-1988, when the company switched to 6061. All Walter Kidde cylinders, of which production ceased in 1989, were made with 6351, and Cliff Impact used 6351 in its cylinders prior to 1990. Catalina Cylinders did not produce any cylinders using the 6351 alloy.

Inspection Shortfalls

Bill High, a former NAUI president and research scientist founded PSI Inc to train those who work with filling and testing scuba tanks. He said that there have been about 100 cylinder explosions in the dive and fire industries in the last 40 years, and although the most recent explosions can be attributed to SLC, it does not mean all 6351 cylinders are at risk, only that there is an increased potential for a failure. "The final responsibility for cylinder safety lies with the cylinder owners," says High.

PSI contends that if everyone knows what to look for, tank defects will be noticed and explosions avoided. But some think it's not that simple.

"A lot of scuba tanks out there, steel or aluminum, are abused by scuba divers who don't understand the importance

of proper maintenance," said Luxfer spokesman Dan Stracner. "It isn't a question of age of the cylinder, but of maintenance, and the key is to have

them inspected by a properly trained inspector. There are no consistent guidelines anywhere in the world as to what is a qualified inspector."

Some have proposed an age limit be established for aluminum cylinders.

Stracner says that, in Luxfer's opinion, inspectors trained by PSI are properly qualified.

In his studies, High notes that one ruptured scuba cylinder revealed that the crack would have been visible for at least six years to an inspector using the proper assessment techniques.

As far as Bill Gordon is concerned, he said the tank that took off his leg appeared safe upon his visual inspection. It had its regular yearly check less than six months prior and passed a hydrostatic test two years prior.

High, however, emphasises that part of the problem lies with individuals who have been in the dive industry for many years, and who believe experience is all that is needed in order to know how to inspect dive tanks.

Consumer Hassles

Following Gordons St Patrick's Day accident, a number of dive operators are losing confidence in tanks made

of 6351 alloy. Bob Willis, a recreational diver since 1982 and South Florida resident, said he took two 6351 tanks to be hydrostatically tested and visually inspected at a Fort Lauderdale dive shop, and the owner said "There's no way I'll do either, because these tanks blow up."

Willis was alarmed and confused. "The last thing I want is for my tanks to blow up in someone's face," he said. "Something weird is going on. It just burns me that the facts should be out there, either that you should have your aluminum tanks inspected or do away with aluminum tanks altogether."

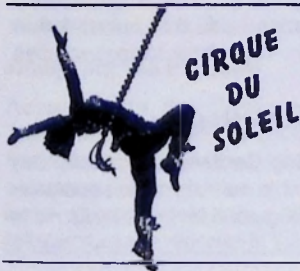
Some have proposed an age limit be established for aluminum cylinders. Stracner says there is no designated life span for his company's scuba tanks. "There is no equipment that lasts forever," he said. "DOT cites a 15-year service life for all hoop-wrapped SCBA cylinders, but the idea of a scuba tank life span is not a black and white issue."

Luxfer's current policy states "Luxfer requires that every Luxfer scuba cylinder 15 years old or older be visually inspected annually by a properly trained inspector as well as inspected with Visual Plus or Visual Eddy non-destructive testing equipment."

Stracner said that a new policy will be released distinguishing between tanks made of 6351 and those made of 6061, a difference not discussed in the current phraseology.

If a properly inspected scuba cylinder is found to have either a manufacturing defect or sustained load cracking, Luxfer will replace the cylinder at no charge if it is less than 10 years old. If the cylinder is more than 10 years old, the customer may purchase an equivalent replacement cylinder for \$50 for cylinders manufactured in the United States.

Aside from manufacturers' recommendations, little else has been done to educate consumers regarding possible problems with aging aluminum cylinders. The DOT issued a safety advisory notice in July 1994 and another in October 1999 following reports of tank explosions. The advisories have only recently been more widely read as more and more divers start to research the 6351 failures on their own and seek out this type of information. DOT recommendations for cylinder safety include adhering to marked service pressure and retest dates and further examining any evidence of a crack or crack-like cylinder defect.

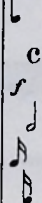


Judy Brincatt has a group booking, with a limited number of seats available for
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

on

Friday 16th March at 8.00 pm
First in, first served !!!!

Anyone interested should contact Judy
ASAP on **9876 6258**



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



Some Mensa
Madness

These are anagrams of
animals. What are they?

SOMEDAY
DOING
CORONA

ORCHESTRA
TREES
ALPINES

Which is the odd word
out?

KNOWLEDGE
TWOFOLD
LESSEE

SCENERY
AEON
DEBTOR

Can you find the next number
in the sequence?

2 3 6 10 17 28 46 ?

75 - Each number is obtained by adding the two
previous numbers plus 1.

Lessee - All the others contain a silent letter.

Samoyed
Carthagen
Dingo
State
Racoon
Spanel



Shadow Minister for Ports Phil Davis



Friday 24th November 2000

YACHT OWNERS HIT BY LICENCE LAW

Shadow Minister for Ports, Philip Davis, has warned that proposals by the Bracks Labor government requiring operators of recreational boats to be licensed will hit tens of thousands of Victorian yacht and small vessel owners.

"Many sailing craft are fitted with a small motor to facilitate manoeuvring, and for safety reasons, but they are really in a different category than 'powered' craft which the legislation is intended to cover," Mr Davis said.

"However, under the Government proposal now before the Parliament, the operator of any recreational boat fitted with a motor that is used or could be used for propulsion must be licensed.

"Although the general principle of licensing boat operators is supported by the Liberal Party, several aspects of the Government's legislation need attention.

"These matters could be dealt with in the regulations under which the licensing provisions will be enforced," he said.

Mr Davis called on the Government to make provision for:

- Exemption for the operators of sailing craft operating under sail alone;
- Test and licence fee concessions for pensioners;
- Learner boat operators; and
- Volunteers operating search and rescue craft.

"Under the Labor government proposal, operators of yachts fitted with a small motor for manoeuvring and safety reasons will have to be licensed, even if their craft are operating only under sail.

"Many pensioners own small fishing boats that will come within the ambit of this proposed legislation, and it is unfair that there is no concession fee for them.

"The lack of any provision for learner boat operators will deny young people, in particular, the opportunity to gain experience, under supervision, before they sit for a licence test," Mr Davis said.

"It is extraordinary, also, that boat owners must comply with the licensing provisions, but the proposed legislation does not apply to the operators of hire-drive craft," he said.

Mr Davis said there was also a need to exempt operators of boats for organisations such as the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, State Emergency Service, and Life Saving Clubs from payment of the licence fees.

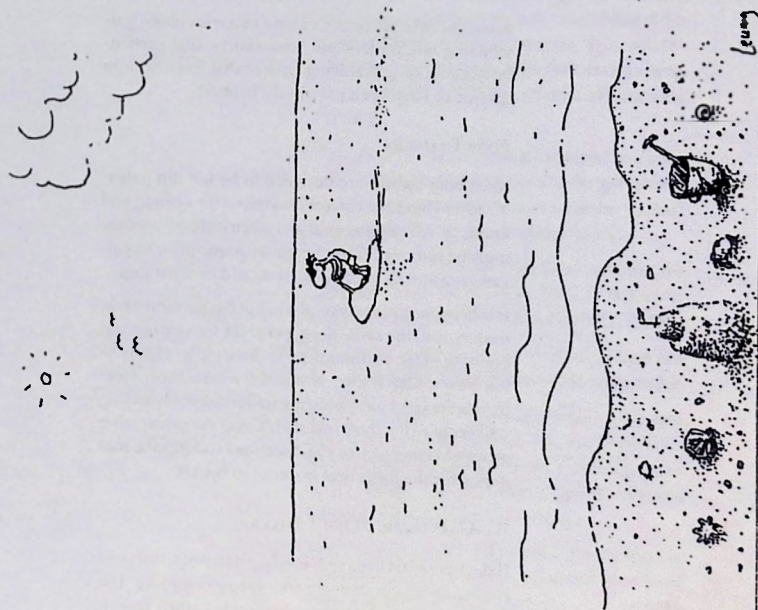
"Everyone agrees on the need for boat operators to be competent, but this attempt to achieve that objective is flawed, and changes should be made," Mr Davis said.

ODE TO A JET-SKI PERSON

Jet-ski person, selfish fink,
 May your silly jet-ski sink.
 May you hit a pile of rocks,
 Oh hoonish, summer coastal pox.

Noisy smoking dickhead fool,
 On your loathsome leisure tool,
 Give us all a jolly lark
 And sink beside a hungry shark.

Scream as in its fangs you go:
 Your last attention-seeking show,
 While on the beach we all join in,
 With, "three cheers for the dorsal fin!"



GALVANIZING A BOX OR BOAT TRAILER

Most galvanizers receive many inquiries about galvanizing box trailers and boat trailers, and particularly about re-galvanizing trailers that have been in service or have been previously painted.

NEW TRAILERS

Most boat trailers are designed to be hot dip galvanized and have the correct provisions for venting and draining. All running gear and electrical components must be removed from the trailer frame prior to galvanizing and all moving parts should be separated.

It is becoming more common to hot dip galvanize box trailers, and the same design criteria for venting and draining of the sections used for boat trailers apply to the box trailer frame. Note that where sheet steel panels are used for lining box trailers, some buckling will occur in the sheet material during the galvanizing process. Using ribbed sheet sections reduces the tendency for the thin sheet material to buckle.

RE-GALVANIZING OLD TRAILERS

If the trailer has been previously galvanized, it should require minimum attention prior to re-galvanizing. The following procedure is recommended when re-galvanizing a trailer:

1. Check for any new hollow sections that have been added to the trailer since the original coating was applied. Ensure that these sections have suitable vent and drain holes at each end and that existing vent and drain holes are clear
2. Any additional welding or repairs should be done prior to delivery for galvanizing
3. Remove all removable parts (roller brackets, pins, mudguards, winch posts, electrical components, coupling and running gear, including springs)
4. If the trailer has been previously painted, the paint must be removed prior to delivery to the galvanizer. Options for paint removal are:
 - a. Abrasive blasting (preferred)
 - b. Flame burn, scrape, wire brush or grind the majority of the paint off. Small remnants of paint will be removed in the galvanizing pre-treatment process.

5. Ensure all nuts, bolts and fittings are free and easily removable from the sub-assemblies if the trailer is towed to the galvanizers. This will facilitate easy disassembly at the galvanizers, who can assist with lifting the chassis off the axle assembly.
6. Place all small items to be galvanized in a container. Supply a list of all parts to the galvanizer on delivery to ensure the parts can be tracked and identified in the galvanizing process.
7. Check that ALL holes in hollow sections are clear. *THIS IS VITAL FOR THE PERSONAL SAFETY OF GALVANIZING PLANT STAFF.*
8. Steel wheels should be galvanized. These are the most frequently immersed part of a boat trailer.
9. If the towing hitch is welded to the drawbar and cannot be removed, disassemble the hitch leaving only the casing. As this is a casting, some areas may not fully galvanize due to inherent surface characteristics of castings.
10. Leaf springs can be galvanized if presented to the galvanizers as separate abrasive blast cleaned leaves. Axles may also be galvanized if the stubs are removable.
11. Bolts may be re-galvanized but may require thread cleaning. Nuts should not be galvanized because of clearance problems. Fully tapped galvanized nuts should be used.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF GALVANIZED TRAILERS

Boat trailers

Always wash down boat trailers after use in salt water. Allowing salt water to remain on the trailer will dramatically decrease the life of the galvanized coating. The salt crystals remaining on the surface will turn to salt water every time the temperature of the steel drops below the dew point, which is almost every evening in the cooler months. Regular rinsing with fresh water inside hollow sections will ensure that salt does not accumulate in these areas.

The recommendations of the Environment Conservation Council's final report on Victoria's Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Area will have a major impact on the three major industries who utilise Port Phillip and Western Port bay. The fishing industry opposes the recommendations for marine parks, (see page 6) the dive tourism industry applauds them and the aquaculture industry accepts the changes as inevitable for sustaining the ecology of the bays. LOUISE MITCHELL reports.

Marine report could boost scuba industry

SCUBA divers predict the Peninsula's dive tourism industry could rival that of the Great Barrier Reef if the Environment Conservation Council's recommendations for marine parks go ahead.

The Dive Industry Victoria Association (DIVA) say that Victoria's most popular dive destination, Pope's Eye in southern Port Phillip Bay, which has been protected from commercial fishing since 1978, is proof that marine park's do become sanctuaries for marine life.

Pope's Eye is an artificial reef which has evolved from the horseshoe-shaped remains of the bluestone foundations of a 19th century fortification.

DIVA spokesman Mr Graeme Bartle-Smith said that Pope's Eye was regularly used by more than 30 dive and snorkel operators because of the reserve's abundant, diverse and friendly marine life.

"You don't see anywhere near the same number of fish on reefs that are available to fishermen nearby," he said.

Mr Bartle-Smith said that dive tourism in the southern end of Port Phillip Bay is estimated to generate \$48 million annually.



Beneath the surface: oldwives swimming over bull-kelp at Pope's Eye in Port Phillip Bay. **Photograph:** Peter Kinchington

"Pope's Eye has a lot to do with this figure," he said

"The (proposed) Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park will further enhance diving opportunities within easy access of Melbourne, Geelong and the Mornington and Bellarine peninsulas," he said.

Mr Bartle-Smith believed that if people could see the beauty in these areas they would have been calling for marine national parks years ago.

"Our sponge gardens, kelp forests and seagrass meadows are magnificent and rival anything on the Great Barrier Reef," he said.

 Happenings / Events / Happenings / Events /

ANNUAL EASTER PILGRIMAGE TO TIDAL RIVER



VSAG has once again booked sites at TIDAL RIVER for this annual, record-breaking event.

Sites are allocated on a "first come - first served" basis so anyone wishing to join the festivities should contact Don Abell as soon as possible to secure a site.

Payment is required **NOW**.

For more details, contact Don

0412 140 767 or 9889 4415



VSAG Overseas Dive Holiday

Another memorable VSAG dive trip is being planned to
Truk Lagoon
departing 12 May 2001

14 dives - over 60 wreck sites available

For details contact

Pat Reynolds

9789 1092

0407 334 276



Comedy Quickies

Man vs Pregnant Lady

From an actual trial in London...

A young woman who was several months pregnant boarded a bus. When she noticed a young man smiling at her she began feeling humiliated on account of her condition. She changed her seat and he seemed more amused. She moved again and then on her fourth move he burst out laughing.

She had him arrested for harassment and when the case came before the court this was the man's reply when asked why he acted in such a manner,

"When the lady boarded the bus I couldn't help noticing she was pregnant. She sat under an advertisement, which read "Coming Soon - The Gold Dust Twins"; then she moved under one that read "Sloan's Liniments remove Swelling". I was even more amused when she sat under a shaving advertisement, which read "William Stick Did The Trick". Then I could not control myself any longer when on the fourth move she sat under an advertisement, which read "Dunlop Rubber would have prevented this accident".

He won the case.

Email

Subject: Irish virus

Greetings, You have just received the "IRISH VIRUS". As we don't have any programming experience, this Virus works on the honour system.

Please delete all the files on your hard drive manually and forward this Virus to everyone on your mailing list.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PINT SIZED

It was a fine summer evening at the local Dublin pub. The bar was nearly full. In one corner two fellows sat drinking pints. One fellow asks the other "Now where are ya from, me lad?"

The second fellow replies "County Cork."

The first fellow is amazed "Why that's were I hail from too! What may be your family name, then?"

The second chap says "It be none other than O'Brien"

"Why that's my clan, too. What a small world. And to what school did you go?"

"I went to St. Brigits."

"My God, So did I!" exclaimed the first fellow loudly. "So then, in what fine year did you graduate?"

"1954" "Incredible, so did I!..."

The local bobby (are they called that in Ireland?) stopped in around then to say hello to the bartender. "Everything OK, Michael?"

"Yes," the bartender replied, "things are pretty normal - the O'Brien twins are drunk again!"

Abalone

The maximum number of abalone that may be taken on any one day or possessed anywhere in Victoria is 10, of which no more than 2 may be greenlip abalone.

You must carry a device for measuring abalone when fishing for abalone. Abalone must be measured prior to removing it from its location and at the widest part of the shell regardless of whether the shell is whole or damaged.

Use a blunt instrument when taking abalone. Knives and screwdrivers and other sharp instruments could cut the abalone, which may then bleed, to death.

You must not fish for abalone in the intertidal zone (that is waters less than 2m deep), between Thompsons Creek at Breamlea and Arch Rock at Venus Bay (including Port Phillip Bay and Westernport), see map on page 39.

You can only take abalone between sunrise and sunset; (this regulation also applies to the commercial sector), during the open season.

All abalone is to be marked within 20m of landing by cutting the meat in half through to the shell.

The boat and vehicle possession limit for abalone is 50, even if there are more than 5 people present.

All abalone are to remain in their shell until reaching the place of consumption.



Abalone size limit zones (all species except greenlip)

