

Our "Cover Girl" this month is (we think), Ross Luxford, doing his best "Search for a Super Model" impersonation

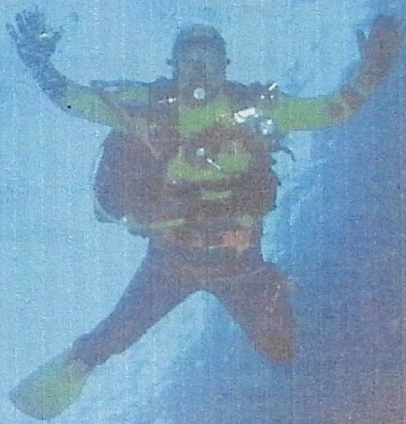
FATHOMS

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2000

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VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

October /
November
2000

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Forthcoming General Meetings

Bells Hotel
157 Moray Street
(cnr Coventry Street)
Sth Melbourne 8:00 pm
Thursday 16 November
Thursday 21 December
Thursday 18 January

Forthcoming Committee Meetings

Leighoak Hotel
1555 Dandenong Road
Oakleigh
Thursday 9 November
Thursday 14 December

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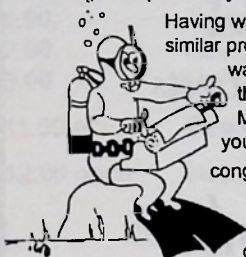
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Editorial

Having spearheaded Fathoms to the new color format, this is sadly my last editorial so it will be a little longer than usual. Josie Maré will assume the role of editor, having been elected to the position at the last committee meeting. Peter Vleugel is our new President and the committee and members congratulate him and wish him well in this important role. The new committee positions will be detailed in this edition. A special thanks must go to our outgoing President, Andy Mastrowicz for an outstanding job over the past two years.



Having watched the Sydney Olympics, there was another event of similar proportions, or so it seemed, at the AGM. Our meeting room was full to capacity. Thanks to all members who responded to the importance of this meeting by attending. The Club Member of the Year award was won by Josie Maré, with yours truly only a few points away in second place. Our congratulations to Josie on her win.

The Literary Award was delayed; however, thanks to Terry Brooks and Paul Tipping, the award was presented at our general meeting. Congratulations to Margot Johnson. Her great contribution on Vanuatu won her the Literary Award for 2000. It would be most remiss of me not to mention that Paul Tipping has been quite ill, and off work for some weeks. Despite this, Paul still managed his valuable input into the award. Well done Paul and thanks. We hope you are repairing and will soon be back to normal.

On the political front, the ECC is calling for 13 Marine parks and 11 smaller sanctuaries off the Coast of Victoria. At the Melbourne session into Marine Parks, which I personally attended with Dr John. Hawkins, President of SDFV, there was little and, in my view guarded, mention made of the area around the Southern area of Port Phillip Bay. The response to a question in regard to this area was greeted with a comment that this area was to be the subject of a special assessment. (Having been involved in similar meetings of this nature, the statement, "special assessment", or words similar, always causes concern!). So it turned out to be right! I was flabbergasted when the report appeared in the Age on 24 October, that Port Phillip Heads was recommended as a Marine National Park. I can't for the life of me even begin to understand why such an important area to recreational fishers was not tabled as a proposed park! Considering that there are many areas in and around the southern end of the bay already designated as Marine Parks! The full article on the Marine Parks appears in Media Watch.

It is on issues such as this, which affect the Sport Diver in general, that prompts the possibility of all sections of the diving joining together as one body, to ensure that sport diving freedom and full legal right is not overtaken by irrational, ill informed bureaucracy! There is a very important system in place to watch over the concerns of the environment and it is fully recognised in its importance. Never-the-less, unless bodies such as the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria, continue to watch, assess and challenge the questionable decisions of government, we might end up diving in a swimming pool!

John Lawler - Editor (out-going)

Social Scene

VSAG Christmas Party

Central Hotel

Cnr Swan & Coppin Streets
Richmond

Friday 1 December

\$35.00 pp

includes 3 bar coupons
your choice of beer, wine or soft drink

3-course dinner

choose from

2 entree's

3 main courses

3 desserts

(vegetarian menu available)

Full payment due by November meeting

For further details, contact Andy on 9809 0984

“Dive Festival 2000”

Portsea Pier

Saturday 25 November 2000

followed by an evening *DINNER/PARTY* at the Rye Hotel

The Portsea Pier Events commence at 12:00 noon

12.00 Junior Treasure Hunt

1.00 Treasure Hunt

2.00 Navigation Swim

3.00 Hero Swim

11.00 am Beach Volleyball registration commences

12:00 noon Helicopter Rescue Demonstration Extravaganza

SCUBA & REBREATHER “TRY DIVES” available **ALL DAY**
along with spectator entertainment

At 7:00 pm there is a party at the Rye Hotel in the
Main Sails Bar Function Room

The cost is \$5 per event, per person for daytime activities and \$35 for the evening dinner/party. The \$35 includes a 3 course meal and live entertainment. Drinks are available at the bar - but the cost is additional to the \$35 paid for dinner. There will also be prizes, including a trip to Hideaway Island Vanuatu.

The event is put on by a committee of people from various local dive shops, charter boats & accommodation suppliers. It is sponsored by Sonar, Oceanic, International Dive Centres, Apollo, 7 Dive & Boat Charter, Bayplay Lodge, MDS, Dive Adventures, Sherwood, Peninsula Surf, Dive Rite and A.B. Ocean Divers.

Bookings for the Events and Dinner are on a first come, first served basis. There is a limit to the number that can be accommodated for the evening dinner & party. To book tickets for the dinner or register for the events - call (03) 5985 9365. They also have a web site at -
www.divefestival@peninsula.aucomp.com.au

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANDY MASTROWICZ



Another great year for VSAG. The club continues to maintain its strength thanks to the many dedicated and committed members. With

around 75 members on the books we regularly see 30-40 members at the monthly General Meeting, although I think its mainly to keep Billy Bell happy behind the bar rather than the meetings upstairs. A note for all those members who thought the meeting were supposed to start at 8:00 pm the truth of the matter is that I was under strict instruction to from Billy not to start before 8:30 pm.

Apart from the scheduled fortnightly diving a number of other major events took place.

To recap

- 1 Cup Weekend at Tidal river had about 15 club members join a large contingent of divers from various diving clubs around Victoria.
- 2 A very successful Christmas party was held at The Ivy in Russell Street and attended by 70 members, partners and friends. A record number of prizes were raffled with many VSAGers taking home a prize as well as the ever successful Kris Kringle gift bag.
- 3 Christmas saw a return to Robe SA and although there were only 10
- 4 The Labour day weekend in March saw 17 VSAGers and five boats head down to Refuge for unbeatable Saturday's diving only to be greeted by a stormy albeit leisurely Sunday and wild two hour trip home through very rough seas.
- 5 Easter at the Prom was again the big highlight of the VSAG calendar with a record 123 members, families and friends coming together on 26 sites for 5 days and nights. It was a truly great VSAG holiday. Although no diving was available until the Monday nobody seemed to mind as the relaxation and party atmosphere offered by VSAG was all that mattered.
- 6 In May 28 divers and partners headed off overseas to again enjoy the splendid diving on the President Coolidge and hospitality of Vanuatu.
- 7 A winery Trip to Beechworth in the middle of winter again had a number of VSAGers enjoying the delights of the Rutherglen Wine Festival.
- 8 We saw Don Abel, Mick Jeacle and now Alex Talay bestowed with membership into the VSAG Hall of Honour and made life members.

The club coffers are still looking healthy and are up on last year as can be seen in the accountants and auditors report and last but not least we saw a revamped Fathoms hit the post thanks to the efforts of a number of committee and other members

A VSAG Life Membership does not come easy and if we look at some of the other life members, Pat Reynolds, Bob Scott, John Goulding, Barry Truscot, Tony Tipping, Des Williams Don Abel, Mick Jeacle, to mention some of the current active ones. All these life members have put in countless hours and shown a tireless commitment to the continuous existence of VSAG.

Alex Talay joined the club around the same time as Mick. I think they came as a pair after meeting some of the VSAG crew at Refuge back in 1979. It wasn't long before Alex was on the committee and doing his bit for the club. He had a 2 year stint as treasurer before taking the club helm as president for three years from 1984 to 1987, after which he again took on the job of treasurer. The early eighties saw Alex take on the printing of Fathoms which we have come to know and enjoy these past 18 years. Back then it was a monthly mag so we can see how much work went into it. Alex was the tour organiser and leader on many overseas trips enjoyed by VSAGers in the 80s. I cant remember a Christmas trip or Refuge trip that Alex didn't attend or play some part in. He was the first of the new breed of big boat owners and was always available for club dives and activities. In recent years his diving may have taken second place but his

commitment to the club has never wavered and we know it has only been ill health that has kept him away from meetings recently. It gave me great pleasure on behalf of the committee to welcome Alex into the VSAG Hall of Honour by making him a life member of VSAG.

We can see that Alex fits the hallmark and is truly worthy of the honour.

Two Other Awards have become part of the VSAG tradition and it was again my pleasure to present these awards to members who have only been with the club a short time comparatively although none the less committedly. The VSAG Club Member of the Year was presented to Josie Maré who pipped John Lawler at the post by some 60 points. The second Award being the Literary Award also went to a female member of the club, Margot Johnson for a great article on the May trip to Vanuatu. Congratulations to both ladies on their effort and I am sure we will see a lot more input to the club from both these members.

As outgoing President I'd like to thank all the members, committee and my family for their input and support over the last two years and I have enjoyed playing a part in the continuing club spirit that is VSAG.

I look forward to supporting Peter Vleugel and the rest of the new committee for another great year.

Yours in continuing friendship and comradery

Andy Mastrowicz



Working At Merimbula - September 2000

Alan Storen

Holiday time again and I was *forced* to take about a dozen divers from Wesley College to Merimbula to soak up the sun and spend some serious time underwater. About half were new divers and spent their time doing an open water course with Merimbula Divers Lodge; the qualified divers did their own thing with some shore dives and some boat dives.

Our first dive was the Merimbula Wharf to check out the gear, buoyancy for those that had not dived for a while, and also to see if the conditions had changed much from the last time we were there. We did a club (Wesley College Scuba Club) dive at Merimbula over the Easter holidays earlier this year and the viz was great with plenty of fish, to see. The viz this time was not as good, in fact rather poor, but there were more fish and some different varieties. Unlike Easter, no cuttlefish were seen on this first dive but we did manage to find a small wobbegong shark.

Our next dive was to Short Point reef. A shallow dive (6m) and the stingers in the water made it unpleasant - all the divers ended up with a sting or two! Next we went to Tathra for a dive on the Wharf. The entry here is a bit tricky but well worth

the effort. The 5 knives that we found also added interest. The marine life around the pylon was amazing - why do film manufacturers only have a max of 36 shots per reel?

The next two dives were boat dives out of Eden. We did the two tugs, Tasman Hauler and Henry Bolte. These are two tugs, bought for \$1(each) and sunk by a local operator in 1988 for the pleasure of scuba divers. The Bolte landed on a reef (at 26m) and is partly broken up but the Hauler (at 30m) is almost intact and lies on the sand in an almost vertical position as if she had been gently placed on the sand. A great dive with some penetration possible and never complete without a visit to the 'prop'.

The next dive was a night dive on the Merimbula Wharf. Viz was much better than our earlier dive and a huge cuttlefish was sighted as well as some great photos taken of the coral gardens.

The next day we did a boat dive on the Empire Gladstone. A ship wrecked in 1950, measuring 135m long and lying in 10m of water just off Merimbula (Pt Haycock). The three huge boilers can easily be identified, the hull remains intact in

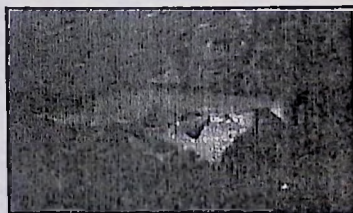
places and most of the ribbing is visible. There is a swim through possible along the drive shaft tunnel and some other penetration is also possible. A great dive for the keen photographer!

The next dive was to Kianinny Bay, just south of Tathra. This is where the ab fishermen launch their boats and we hugged the coast to avoid their props. A good dive but there was a fair swell and the fish life, while good, was not spectacular. A huge stingray was disturbed by one of our newer divers and I do not know who got the bigger fright.

Back to Eden for the next 2 dives and first we did The Cave and Ledge (Do all dive sites have a cave?). A spectacular dive (50 m long swim through if you are keen) with crays seen (and photographed!) and some brilliant corals and gorgonian fans around the site. While doing a safety stop on top of the ledge we fed the many fish. The second of the sequence was The Pestles – three large bowl shaped formations, hollowed out of the sea bed, just south of Eden. A good final dive.

Other dives that we have done on previous trips include The Chipmill, Short Point Bommie, The Gardens, Wonderland, The Moon, The Canyon, Tura Head, Bar Beach, North Head, The Pinnacle and Big Kangarutha.

While in Merimbula we stayed at the Divers Lodge and thoroughly recommend it to all who wish to have a trouble free, relaxing break from Melbourne. Ross, Louise and Miles made our stay most enjoyable.



If you're interested in any further details or would like to see some photos, please feel free to contact me.



SHARK

by Doug Macleod

from - In The Garden of Bad Things

Of all the creatures from the ark
That dwell beneath the sea,
The saddest is the common shark,
Or so it seems to me.

Because he eats voraciously,
When swimmers venture near
He's hunted down ungraciously
With harpoon, gun or spear.

But when we swallow fish and chips,
It's valuable to mark -
Besides your chips, cut up in strips,
There often sits a shark.

Remember this when next you swim,
For what I say is true --
There's less of you inside of him
Than him inside of you!

My favourite poem - Josie

ComedyCornerComedyCornerComedyCorner

A couple was invited to a Masked Ball. She got a headache and told her husband to go alone. He, being devoted, protested, but she argued and said she would take some aspirin and go to bed, so there was no need to spoil his evening too by not going. So he took his costume and away he went.

The wife, after sleeping soundly for an hour, awakened without pain and decided to go the party. As her husband didn't know what her costume was, she thought she would have some fun by watching how her husband acted when she was not with him.

She joined the party and soon spotted her husband cavorting around on the dance floor, dancing with every nice chick he could, and copping a little grope here and there.

His wife sidled up to him and being a rather seductive babe herself, he left his partner and devoted his time to this new bird. She let him go as far as he wished; naturally, since he was her husband. Finally, he whispered a little proposition in her ear and she agreed, so off they went to one of the cars and had sex.

Just before unmasking at midnight, she slipped away and went home, put the costume away and got into bed, wondering what kind of explanation he would make for his behavior. She was reading when he came in and asked if he had enjoyed his evening.

He said, "Oh, the same old thing ... You know I never have a good time when you're not there."

Then she asked, "Did you dance much?" He replied, "I never even danced one dance. When I got there, I met Pete, Bill Brown and some other guys, so we went into the den and played poker all evening. But you're not going to believe what happened to the guy I loaned my costume to."

Four Catholic mothers were having coffee together discussing how important their children are.

The first one tells her friends, "My son is a priest. When he walks into a room, everyone calls him 'Father'."

The second Catholic woman chirps, "Well, my son is a bishop. Whenever he walks into a room, people say, 'Your Grace'."

The third Catholic woman says smugly, "Well, not to put you down, but my son is a Cardinal. Whenever he walks into a room, people say, 'Your Eminence'."

The fourth Catholic woman sips her coffee in silence. The first three women give her this subtle "Well?"

She replies, "My son is a gorgeous, 6' 3", hard-bodied, tanned, male stripper. Whenever he walks into a room, people say, 'Oh my God ...'"

Trench Humour

After digging to a depth of 100m last year, Russian scientists found traces of copper wiring dating back 1000 years, and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network one thousand years ago.

So as not to be outdone, in the weeks that followed, American scientists dug 200m, and headlines in the US newspapers read: "US scientists have found traces of 2000 year old optical fibres, and have concluded that their ancestors already had advanced high-tech digital telephone 1000 years earlier than the Russians."

One week later, the Irish press reported the following: "After digging as deep as 500m, Irish scientists have found absolutely nothing. They have concluded that 5000 years ago, their ancestors were already using mobile phones."

Days of Our Lives

Judy Brincall - Reminiscing

The acquisition of our video camera, at the time, was one of our more expensive indulgences, but we've not once regretted it. Believe it or not, Christine gets a great deal of enjoyment hearing familiar voices on the TV. She used to call our earlier family tapes "videos of Jane". Whenever there's a special occasion, out comes the camera. Dinner guests are often greeted at the door "On Air", and many of our family outings and holidays are in some part recorded. Therefore it will not surprise you to know that we have a fair bit of VSAG footage.

Without dragging them all out to look at them, I have to rely on my memory a bit here. Perhaps the earliest we have is Easter at Tidal River many years ago. Jane was just toddling, and there are some shots of her trotting down the road wearing only a nappy. We also have photographic record of Bob and June's wedding anniversary, one or two Easter egg hunts, and at least one limbo. I also recall seeing footage of VSAG launching boats from the beach! Always good for a laugh.

Other notable events recorded include some "milestone" birthdays of VSAG-ers and relatives (names are withheld to protect the *innocent-old*).

Who remembers the day we went to the Werribee Zoo?

Then there was the four-wheel drive trip along the beaches near Robe. Stunning scenery! Christmas lunch at Robe, the New Year's Eve awards, and fancy dress party, complete with two little fairies, Jane using the potty on the side of the road in the middle of no-where on the way to Robe, Maxine and Doug running out of petrol, Christine having her hair done, and Charlie drying the dishes (yes, it's true, I have the tape to prove it!). Martin and Josie can be seen giving a very stylish Tango demonstration.

VSAG's more recent trip to Bermagui, the year the yacht race got into a bit of difficulty, also rates a mention, as well as a delightful winter's lunch that was had at Hickinbotham's Winery on the Momington Peninsula.

Of course, a video collection starring VSAG wouldn't be complete without a tennis day. Not that the Brincats play tennis, but we've been good spectators over the years, back in the days when they used to *run* the VSAG mile!

Tickets for our special VSAG movie nights can be purchased from Charlie for any mutually convenient time. Cost is approximately one bottle of (good) red wine!

Cheers

Brain Teaser

you can blame Judy Brincatt for this one !!

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:

- 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.

Comedy Quickie

Only In Australia

- can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance
- do supermarkets make the sick people walk all the way to the back of the store to get aspirin while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.
- do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and *diet* coke.
- do banks leave both doors open and chain the pens to the counter.
- do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and store our junk in the garage.
- do we use answering machines to screen calls then have call waiting so we wont miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.

ALEX TALLY VSAG's NEWEST LIFE MEMBER

by John Mills

At the September general meeting the honour of life membership was bestowed upon Alex Tally.

Alex joined the club in 1979 and held the post of treasurer from 1981 to 1982.

He was also our illustrious leader (El Presidente) for three years.

Alex printed the club magazine for 18 years and for much of this time it was a monthly magazine.

He also set the standard for boat owners so we have him to thank for the comfort we have become accustomed to on our outings.

Alex has been an active club member, committee member and diver and until recently, attended all Christmas trips.

Alex's reflection on VSAG over the years were interesting and we've taken the liberty of taking some of these reflections completely out of context and printing them here.

Mick Jeacle and himself met the club in 1979.

The major attraction for this pair was the big group of drunk blokes who they had a lot in common with.

At the time Alex was a landlubber and was afraid of anything in the sea. Mick was considered to be a bit of an idiot as he used to jump off his perfectly good boat and dive with all the dangerous creatures.

Eventually Alex decided that if he dived with Mick, he could hide behind him if anything really dangerous approached so had a crack at this diving caper. Then he was hooked and thought it was terrific.



One of his greatest memories was the sighting of the great white shark off Flinders with Mick and Bazza.

Aside from the diving, a real highlight of the club has been the mateship and camaraderie formed over the years with his many friends in VSAG.

Well done Alex and congratulations on achieving this special honour.