# FATHOMS

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2002

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If undelivered, return to VSAG, Box 2526W GPO, Melh Vic 3001

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VSAG

Victorian Sub-Aqua Group



# VSAG Committee Members

### President

Peter Vleugel\*

PO Box 304 Mornington 3931

9787 1298 (home)

9787 1284 (work)

9787 1285 (fax)

0418 315 484 (mobile)

crest.bco@satlink.com.au

### Vice President

Andy Mastrowicz\*

224 Wattle Valley Road Camberwell 3124

9809 0984 (home) 9201 7117 (work)

0402 060 711 (mobile)

amastrow@agl.com.au

### Secretary

John Mills

10 Wells Avenue Boronia 3155

9761 0960 (home)

9369 2377 (work)

## **Assistant Secretary**

Leo Maybus

2 Olsen Court Mooroolbark 3138

9727 1568 (home)

0418 375 102 (mobile)

### Treasurer

Priya Cardinaletti

PO Box 864 Boronia 3155

9761 0960 (home)

0414 310 727 (mobile)

pcardina@vicnet.net.au

# Newsletter Editor. **Assistant Social Secretary**

John Lawler\*

7 Cloris Avenue Beaumaris 3193

9589 4020 (home)

0414 922 916 (mobile)

ivlawler@togi.com.au

# **Assistant Newsletter Editor**

Bruce Dart\*

12 Alicudi Avenue Frankston

3199

9787 6318 (home)

0407 331 544 (mobile)

maritek@peninsula.hotkey.net.au

### **Assistant Newsletter Editor**

Steve Jacoby

529 Station St Carrum 3197

9772 2635 (home)

0412 352 617(mobile)

steve.jacoby@nre.vic.gov.au

# Points Scorer,

Social Secretary

Gerry DeVries 16 Vitner Avenue Croydon 3136

9725 2381 (home)

0417 324 608 (mobile)

# Property Officer,

Safety Officer Pat Revnolds

14 Nurla Court Frankston 3199

9789 1092 (home)

0497 334 276 (mobile)

Committee meets the Second Monday in the Month at the Leighoak Hotel (8PM)

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Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

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**VSAG General Meetings** 

Bell's Hotel

157 Moray Street (cnr Coventry Street)

South Melbourne, 8.00 pm The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month

**Committee Meetings** 

Leighoak Hotel

1555 Dandenong Road Oakleigh,

8.00 pm - The 2nd Monday in the month

**Editorial Submissions to:** 

John Lawler

7 Cloris Avenue, Beaumaris 3193

Jylawler@tpgi.com.au

Front cover: Wilsons Promontory from space (Landsat TM7 - 700km orbit)

# **EDITORIAL**

# - JOHN LAWLER.

Hard as it to believe, this is your MARCH issue of Fathoms and Easter is not too far away! The Prom... here we come again. Let's all send our weather prayers to the weather gods for good weather over Easter!

The December/January issue of the mag was another bumper issue and thanks to all who submitted articles and photos. Thanks to Steve Jacoby for putting it together and Bruce Dart for getting it out right on time.

Over the past few weeks, the subject of sunken wrecks Internationally has been in the press, and at the risk of gross plagiarism, the stories will be edited down for inclusion in the next issue. Very exciting reading..Very big bucks involved!

Whilst on the subject of wrecks, the presentation at the February general meeting on the "Ships Graveyard" by Rowan Stevens from the Red October Group was just sensational. The meeting was filled to capacity and overflowing out the door. Without doubt VSAG,ers were treated to a very professional, detailed presentation in great and exacting detail, on the Graveyard wrecks and other wrecks sites. The comments after the presentation were very complimentary, and I have since been informed that Rowan was very impressed with our club members

Rowan still has a lot more additional photos and details to show and the club has invited him back again in the next twelve months to do "part two". I am also working with Rowan in my search for a wreck, which started two years ago. On Rowan's agenda is a new search for the "Coramba" which was lost in November 1934,off Phillip Island.

And still on wrecks, I have had an update on the sunken former HMAS Perth, which was sunk in Albany last November. Ron Moore advises me that the "big old girl" is showing amazing growth and already has fish life in and around the wreck...all after just four months. Response to the dive site has been very good with divers from Perth (naturally) and the Eastern states doing the Perth. As I mentioned last issue, I will be arranging a VSAG trip to Albany in 2003.

The dive scene was up and down weather wise in February, with two dive events cancelled due to poor conditions and two going ahead. Dive reports will give all the news on the two great dives.

Congratulations to VSAG boat owners Neville Viapree and Robert Swoffer who have upgraded the motors on their boats with new units.

Finally, on the way home from our dive on Sunday Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, my crew and I affected a rescue of some divers South of the Portsea Pier. This rescue avoided the involvement of the Water Police and Peninsula Rescue who had been contacted by Dive Victoria and were about to swing into action. The unbelievable story of stupidity, ignorance and potential danger will appear in the next issue of Fathoms!

Stay well - happy and safe diving.

John Lawler EDITOR.

# EASTER - Wilsons Promontory

Easter is nearly here (Good Friday is the 29<sup>th</sup> March), so there is only one VSAG meeting left to book AND PAY for the Prom. The club has 25 sites booked from the 28<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) through to the 1<sup>st</sup> April (Monday). The cost is \$35 per adult, and kids are free. Further details from Priya on 9761 0960.

# ARTICLES FOR FATHOMS

Please don't be shy – we need your article, story or any item you think may be of interest to other club members!

REMEMBER – NO ARTICLES – NO FATHOMS!

# THE " J CLASS" SUBMARINES OF MELBOURNE. History and stories from the past. BY JOHN LAWLER.

It goes without saying that Victorian divers have some of the best wreck diving available and right on our doorstep. Only around 90 minutes from Melbourne and a quick 45 minutes from the Sorrento boat ramp, has divers on any one of a number of great wrecks out through the heads and west of Point Lonsdale. Of course the Southern end of Port Phillip Bay has several wrecks inside on offer to divers as well as outside.

Phillip Island and Port Campbell also offer good wrecks as well.

Whilst the SS Coogee, Courier, Milora, Rotamahana etc, located in the "Graveyard" are all great wreck dives, the four "J Class" submarines are always favourite wreck dives for many divers. These four wrecks offer diving to differing depths and wreck structure penetration conditions.

Many of our wrecks are laying in what is known as the "Ships Graveyard" (foul grounds). The four submarines are an exception as they didn't make it to this dedicated area, possibly due to time, weather or even costs.

The history of these Submarines is very interesting as to just how Australia and in particular Melbourne, become the last resting place of the six Submarines, four of which were scuttled off the Victorian coast.

The J Subs were given to the Australian Government by Great Britain, and arrived in Sydney in July 1919, 83 years ago! All had numbers designated by the Navy at the time they were commissioned. Refitting was carried out several times by the Defence Dept as the submarines were in very poor condition. The ongoing refit costs were very expensive and the decision was taken to dispose of them.

In 1926, J1/J2/J4/J5 were towed out through the heads and used forbombing practices by the Defence Department. The J4 (shallow Sub) was hit and is broken at the bow. The J2 (broken sub) was hit also and is broken behind the conning tower. The other two are resting intact. The J3 was located off Swan Island and after some years generating power to the Military base, she was sunk there as a breakwater. The J7 was sunk at Sandringham and also used as a breakwater. This sub is now enclosed inside the Sandringham Yacht Club.

All the J's have been given many names by various dive groups, most notably the "Scratchers Sub" which was located by the Melbourne Bottom Scratchers dive club, who didn't let go of their find and mounted a plaque on the conning tower to that effect! his memento of the famous "Scratchers" is still easy to read.

Some other names are the Deep Sub, New Deep Sub, 90 Footer, New New Sub, Shallow Sub, Winged Sub, Intact Sub, Broken Sub...very confusing!

### **VSAG STORIES.**

All the subs were stripped, however, I have two vivid memories of my very early days with VSAG, as divers were really into the search and win of portholes from these wrecks. On one expedition, a porthole was found on the 130 ft, sub and the effort to remove this beauty was huge. After many attempts and many dives, with chisel and hammer, this thing just would not move from the brass pins. The challenging job of loosening this porthole fell to yours truly and Dougie Catherall...with a crow bar! We both held on to the rod and descended to the side of the wreck under buoyancy and levelled at the porthole. The crow bar was positioned between the porthole and the body of the wreck. We then both positioned our feet against the wreck and pulled and pulled and then managed one mighty jerk!! The porthole started to come away! This exercise took about twenty minutes but it was exhausting and we were near to running out of air but the job was done.

A second group of divers then went down, collected the bar from the sea bed and with a couple of well positioned belts the porthole came away and the prize was lifted to the surface. The proud owner of this piece of history has the polished porthole mounted for all visitors to see.

There are other stories of retrieving the portholes from inside the wrecks.

My second expedition was much closer to home for me. I was diving on a submarine with a Canadian visitor, and near the end of the dive we looking over one side and noticed a big square brass ballast window swinging gently in the water. On closer inspection all that was holding this thing was two brass bolts with pins at the base. I managed to get the top pin out (I still have the pin) easily, but the second was more difficult and we were well overdue to return to the surface.

Being very naive in those early days of diving with VSAG I made mention of this exercise to a couple of people. As I was diving off Mick's boat, he assured me we would return next Sunday to finish the job. We arrived on the site only to find another VSAG member's dive boat there and on the floor was my brass window. What a cad of an act!

However I felt all was fair in diving and war and so had to put the adventure down to experience. From time to time I have visited the home where my brass window rests and looked very longingly at it. (Name withheld to protect the innocent!!)

Over the past twenty years of my diving with VSAG, we have dived these great wrecks many, many times in

conditions that were mind blowing to simply bloody dreadful. But always we had good stories to relate about the experiences of the J Sub dives.

J.L.

# "J" Class Submarine Technical Details.

Records show that the J7 was apparently a modified K class submarine as the conning tower is positioned further towards the stern. It also has less displacement when it is submerged than the origional submarines. The J7 was a replacement for the J6, which was lost in the North Sea.

Length: 87. 3m.

Displacement: 1204 tons/Surface... 1820 tons/Submerged.

Engines: 3600 Triple Screws. Speed: 19knots/Surface

# Study of whales embraces a new stool of thought

A breakthrough by Australian scientists could further erode Japan's long-disputed claim that it has to kill whales to study them.

They have developed a method to determine whale stomach contents by DNA testing after sifting through the giant mammals' bodily waste for their evidence.

The DNA shows what prey the whales have eaten, gives an individual signature for each animal and even shows what:

intestinal parasites they carry.

"We will be telling the International Whaling Commission that this is a robust, non-lethal method for studying whales," said Dr Nick Gales, a principal research scientist at the Federal Environment Department's Antarctic Division.

Despite repeated votes against Japan's whaling program at the commission, it kills more than 500 minke whales each year under a self-awarded scientific permit.

# **Dive Report - Australia Day Weekend**

Alan Beckhurst & Mary Malloy

Hi Gang!

Mary had to work on Sat. 26th, so only fit we could in some snorkelling at Pope's and a visit to the seals. The wind came up to over 25 Knots which made the trip back a bit rough though. It was great to have Frances back on the boat, and see her get in at Pope's. Sunday 27th. The forecast was for strong northerlies, going southerly at similar strength, but there was no wind and flat seas when we launched. John and Trevor were looking to dive the J1 sub ( Trev hoping to find his lost catch bag ), so we crossed the Rip at 25 knots, and dropped the shot on the wreck.

After Trevor swam back to the boat to collect his weightbelt, he and descended, and returned John with stories of good vis, few fish, but no catch bag! Mary wanted lots of fish, so we opted to dive the Courier wreck, Spinner dolphins interrupted our travel to the Courier they surrounded us. Mary as jumped in, but her trusty Nikonos jammed, so she had to come back to the boat and grab the digital camera before the pod moved on. We shotted the stern of the Courier, and, as usual, it was alive with fish swimming through the framework. I swam down to the boilers, following a number of very pale beardies. The video light brought up all the colours of the jewe! anemone and sponges, and Mary's strobes were flashing every few seconds. One pretty dive!

For our next dives we looked for some lumpy bottom nearer the and had lunch at west coast. anchor. Trev and John planned to catch crays, but returned to the boat with empty bags and stories of bottomless ledges (and similar excuses. The reef they described was spectacular, so Mary and I dropped in to find their claims to be true. Bommie after bommie rising from the kelp, with swim thrus, caves. deep ledges, and everywhere. A monster smooth ray cruised through to top of a great



dive on an excellent site which now on our G.P.S. called "The Bommies".

We wound up another top day back at Boarfish with a cuppa and video review as the gear drip dried. The oily smooth seas were only ruffled during our last dive, so it was not quite a perfect day! Monday 28th (Thanks Bracksy!!) The strong wind warning didn't worry us as it was westerly, and the sea off Queenscliff was flat. We dropped Mary, Santosh, and Jeff in deep water off Shortlands for a slow drift, Clear water, lots of fish kept entertained, them and Marv suggested I put this spot in the G.P.S. too. Trudi, and I were hoping to get a similar experience, but not long after we hit the bottom we heard the diver recall signal. (Bloody Ships!) completed our dive closer Shortlands over very pretty country with ledges, kelp, and lots of fish. Trudi spotted a reef anchor as we started our ascent, and it was added to our collection. We did lunch at the Pilot Station, and Trudi tried out Mary's freediving fins, finding her third catshark for the day! I grabbed the other pair of Picassos, and jumped in with the digital camera, but all I found were toadies! The wind was swinging to the south, and it was getting lumpy



by the time we dropped the shot on Lonsdale Wall. The flood slack was late, but Mary, Jeff, and Santosh enjoyed a typically spectacular dive on the wall, and found some really nice reef on top of the wall. They all made their way back to the shot, unlike the dozens of other divers popping up everywhere.

Trudi and I dropped in on Bell reef for an ebb drift over kelp and ledges. There were plenty of fish and a lot of dusky morwong. Trudi played with a large Banjo shark, and soon we dropped into an ampitheatre of ledges with a large admiralty anchor as its centrepiece. We tied off on the anchor, and investigated the ledges finding 2 large crays 1 1/2 arm lengths in. We are truly blessed with some awesome dives on our doorstep!

The delayed slack, and some difficulty retrieving the boat in the

wind made us an hour late finishing up, so we abstained from the usual afternoon tea at Boarfish, but everyone went home knowing we had pinched another good days diving despite a strong wind. We intend to run dives on Freediver on the 3rd and 10th of February before we head north for a couple of weeks. The water is around 18

deg, and pretty clean, so we are in the premium period for diving. Mary and I will miss the next A.P.I. & VSAG meetings due to our trips, but we have quite a bit of video and some great stills to show when next we catch up with everyone.

Regards Mary and Alan

### JACK THE FLASHER.

We all know that in this very modern world, "Big Brother" is always watching and waiting to "get ya". None is more evident than on a trip to or from Geelong. This piece of road is now housing no less that seven (7) speed cameras that are <u>fixed!</u>
The location of these are as follows:

- 1... Top of Westgate Bridge
- 2... The first Werribee exit
- 3... The exit at Little River
- 4... At Point Cook
- 5... At Point Wilson
- 6... At Corio
- 7...Just before the Waterslide in Geelong.

So...as the cameras are located in both the in-bound and out-bound lanes, hey are very tricky to detect. Each camera is capable of detecting speeds as low as 5kms over the limit!

If a vehicle did 10kms over the speed limit all the way from Melbourne to Geelong, expect up to \$125 fine on each one, a total of \$875, and a loss of 1 point on each fine. Ouch!!!!!!!

This information was kindly supplied by Des Williams. Thanks from all at VSAG Desie.

# DIVE REPORT - 27th JANUARY 2002 BY PETER VLEUGEL

This day was predicted to be hot and windy and there was a strong wind warning for both bays. Saturday night, the phones ran hot. Chrissy and I had to go out for a meal so I left a recorded message to call my mobile. The only late call was Jose and I had no boats left with spaces for divers. As we were out, I suggested that she phone around to muster another boat. She was successful and Neville Viapree offered his boat and his services.

There were 4 boats and 18 divers. I also made an executive decision to leave from Rye boat ramp in lieu of Sorrento owing to the acute shortage of parking and launching facilities at this pathetic facility. After launching the boats, we headed towards the heads for our scheduled dive on Nepean Wall. Once at the heads, we all noticed how very little swell there was. As dive captain, I conferred with all the divers on all the boats and it was a unanimous decision to head down the coast and dive some reef which is normally inaccessible, due to large swells.

We dropped anchor just before Rye back beach on some reasonably shallow reef directly under the cliffs. It was the most fabulous country that held an abundance of crustaceans. We had a ball! A total of 9 big crays were taken between 18 divers (That only works out to half a cray each!!!) After lunch, a few of us had another dive but there was a change looming so after extracting the last diver (Gerry), out of the water, we all did a runner back to the heads. The wind looked like it was going to have a big blow, but it just didn't happen. So all of the participants decided to do the next item on the scallop beds. Two of the boats bagged out big time and in just 16 mins (Ted), all the others did 30 to 40 mins and only took about 30 scallops, but they were still fantastic, full and juicy WOW.

After retrieving the boats, everyone headed to the pub in lieu of washing boats it was really busy at the boat ramp, taking about half an hour to queue up for our turn. We all had a great day in true VSAG fashion, thanks to all the divers who participated on the day and thanks to the boat owners for making their boats available for our club to use.

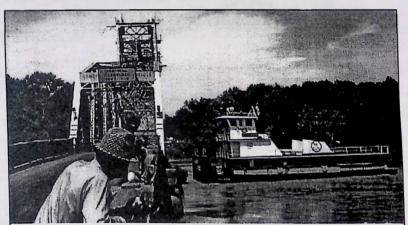
If you missed out, try to come along and enjoy it next time.

Thanks - Peter.

# **WEBSITE WITH A TUG!**

For those with access to the Internet, the following link contains a really interesting event to watch...quite amazing really!

Hope you enjoy this:



Oh CRAPIII The bridge didn't open and the boat can't stop. Notice that the tug has released the barges.

He is backing as hard as possible to try and avoid a collision with the bridge.

# http://koti.mbnet.fi/~soldier/towboat.htm

Information courtesy of Des Williams (who likes to see things crash!).

# Research takes a bite out



A great white traveller, Bours A

By ANDREW DARBY

The movements of one of the world's most feared predators are being unravelled, with confirmation that great white sharks not only have coastal "ranges" but make the open ocean their home, too.

A study published yesterday in the journal Nature records for the first time long ocean journeys by great whites, who leave ranges off the west coast of the United States in unexplained migrations.

Until this research using satellite-linked tags, the University of California scientists had expected their whites to be coastal animals that migrated only a few hundred kilometres.

Their work follows the sat tracking of great whites by a ralian scientists, most recently year. A four-year-old male named Neale was tracked by G scientists around eastern Strait, down to Tasmania, the the east coast to northern South Wales before he was lo

According to CSIRO sch Barry Bruce, the American in confirmed how little was known about great white endangered species protect Australia despite being blams three fatal stacks on peop 2000.

"We're starting to realise primitive is this basic view whites have a territory in they are seen repeatedly," Mr

# Life ur

Penny Fannin Science Reporter

The first compre of Victoria's m revealed about 1 animal species li kilometres of the

For 25 years, tists have searched platforms and ma as the canyons, muddy plains of

# TOURISM

# Dive companies failing on checks

An audit of Queensland diving companies has found many are still failing to do head counts, despite the disappearance of two American tourists four years ago, Queensland's parliament was told vesterday.

Industrial Relations Minister Gordon Nuttall said the first audit since a code of practice for the Queensland diving industry was introduced had found there were still problems. The code was introduced after the disappearance of Thomas and Eileen Lonergan off the Great Barrier Reef In January, 1998.

"In the last two years there has still been 10 deaths in the Industry both in the diving and snorkelling areas," Mr Nuttall told parliament.

Opposition Leader Mike Horan sald it was hard to believe some dive companies were not doing head counts. "Head checks is the most important thing they (dive companies) can do and should do, and they should be standard and mandatory," he said.

# Tourist



Bite marks: Andrew Ronnlund shows the damage.

A MAN
swallower
diving or
Reef has
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"In the fun," he the first ordeal. " buddy h a big fish

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# of great white knowledge lite ıstant

said. "In fact, they may have moved enormous distances and come back to the point where they are seen

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"What's really interesting is that a common pattern is emerging that whites of all different sizes are perhaps a lot more mobile than beople give them credit for. When they're not there, they can be a wloody long way away.

The world's largest predatory fish, the great white can grow up to seven metres in length and weigh two tonnes.

The scientists attached the tags to the backs of six adult sharks as they fed near seal rookeries in coastal California, and tracked them as they initially stayed inshore, near the surface in temperate waters.

Then, in winter, four of the tagged sharks headed away from the coast. One migrated from islands near San Francisco to near the Hawalian Island of Maul, a 3800-kilometre journey. It stayed there in warmer waters until spring then swam back.

Three others migrated to subtropical waters in the eastern Pacific open ocean, hundreds of kilometres west of Bala California. "What they were doing out there is a mystery," said University of California scientist Burney Le Boeuf. The trips could have been part of a mating process, or a search for prey, he said.

Unlike the near real-time satellite tracking tags used by the CSIRO, the American scientists used "pop-up" archival tags, designed to break away from the tagged fish after a period and download data through a satellite.

The CSIRO plans to persist with its tracking methods, and revealed yesterday that it wants to try putt-ing tags on mature great white yesterday that it wants to try putting tags on mature great white sharks, much bigger than the control of the c

# der the ocean waves

catalogued the distribution and abundance of marine creatures.

Museum Victoria's senior curator of marine invertebrates Tim O'Hara spent five years collating the information so that future marine parks may protect as many species as possible.

Most species are invertebrates, but about 1000 plant and 700 fish species make up the count. If deep-sea creatures "rocket up", Dr O'Hara said. He said the surveys revealed

animals and plants known only from a small area. They included ghost-shrimps from Port Phillip Bay and Western Port, a small spider crab near the Ninety Mile Beach, and tiny sea-cucumbers.
One remarkable find was a sea star only five millimetres, no Mi Dr O'Hara will speak at the 6.30. bourne Museum tonight at 6.30. Bookings: 1300 130 152.

# ounts and lives to tell fishy Rea as they

vas partially fish while ceat Barrier how he was Creature that meat of him. heal or number of the was the his head in the stant grouper Mant grouper Yongala, ou month.

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month. speaking for of his bizarre old my diving

# By FRANK THORNE

"It came right up to within inches of our faces and followed us everywhere we went. I felt it was a little bit threatening and didn't like it.

Running short of air, Mr Ronnlund decided to signal his diving mate that he was going to surface.

That's when the 100kg rouper, a local legend called Grumpy estimated to be 80 years old, made his move.

"I was hit from underneath and everything suddenly went black. My breathing gear was shredded. I was inside the bulked out its big fish and I backed out its said.

"At first I thought to ming. I thank I didn't see it coming. I didn't know what hit me.

"I was as helpless as helpless as helpless as helpless as be and it hought, This is and I would end my days as find the head of the helpless as a second and the head of the h

msh food.

"I was stuck in its mouth
and it was squeezid running
hard. I felt the blood granting
down my leaker blood granting
move. I was in great pain, just
waiting to die.

"Me Brandwid was should Mr Ronnlund was about

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**VSAG** Newsletter

# The Seven Fathom Tragedy

from www.scubadiving.com

# The Night Before

A group of American divers had been diving the clear, warm waters of the tropical island for an entire week. Weather was great, and the group had jelled into a cohesive, funloving bunch. In fact, by the next-to-last night of the trip, camaraderie was especially high, enhanced by illegal drugs and abundant alcohol.

# 7:30 a.m. / At the Docks

The morning's dives, the last of the trip, got off to a slow start with misplaced gear, hungover people arriving late, transportation to the boat thrown off schedule, and one divernaster sent to the dive store to sort out problems. After several hours of confusion, another divernaster said, "Let's just go, with whoever and whatever gear we have, or we'll never get these dives done. It's an easy, shallow drift dive on Seven Fathom Reef." So off they went, with missing gear and some divers still hurting from the night before.

# 10:00 a.m. / Gearing Up

Weather and sea conditions continued to be fine, but a light surface chop combined with hangovers to make some of the divers ill as the crew brought the boat into position over the reef. An excessively long gearing-up process began, as divers fumbled to assemble their equipment. A few divers who opted to sit out the first dive allowed others to borrow missing gear. During this time, the boat continued to drift over the reef, since boats are not allowed to anchor in this area.

# 10:45 a.m. / The Dive

Finally, a ragged procession of eight divers entered the water: the group's leader and local divemaster, plus three buddy pairs of two women, two men, and a father and son. Each diver began a normal feet-first controlled descent to the reef supposedly only 40 to 50 feet below them. Suddenly, the group leader and divemaster realized there was no reef, just the deep blue of the abyss. Worse, in the current the three buddy pairs had drifted apart and were descending fast, oblivious to the lack of a bottom. The group leader swam at full speed for the nearest buddy pair, the father and son, and frantically signaled them to surface, staying long enough to ensure they were buoyant and ascending. When he looked for the others, the male buddy pair was well below him. In a race against death, the group leader plunged down to the pair. Getting their attention, he started them on their way to the surface. After the dive, the group leader's computer would read a max depth of nearly 250 feet.

In the meantime, the divernaster had gone after the two female divers. Apparently at some point they made contact, attempted to share air without an alternate air source, and began

ascending. But it will never be known exactly what occurred since neither woman's body was ever recovered and the diversater arrived at the surface with most of his gear missing, signs of a struggle, and dead from a massive air embolism. Of the other divers, two suffered decompression sickness and were successfully treated.

# Outcome

Three dead and two injured

Submitted to Fathoms by Niall Somers

### **Xmas Dinner 2001 Prize Donations**

On behalf of the VSAG Committee and members I would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and companies for their generous support of VSAG's Annual Raffle, which was held during the 2001 VSAG Xmas Party at Milano's on December 2001.

The evening was a huge success and enjoyed by a total of 52 attendees.

A big thank you to all who came along and joined in the festivities and celebrations. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves as much as John and I did.

Contributions generously donated by:

Sonar Wetsuits Chris Llewellyn Steve Jacoby Peter Jones Lawler Food Brokers / VSAG Committee Robin Woods (Allwoods) Josie Mare Wetsuit
Dryzabone and Leather Goods
3 Melways Street Directorys
Port for each table at the dinner
3 Food Hampers
Tank Hydro Tests
Electric Toothbrush

Also of course, VSAG generously donated an overnight accommodation package including breakfast for two and valet parking at Le Meridian at Rialto.

A big thank you to Peter Jones for a wonderful venue and for looking after VSAG on the night. I'm sure it was a challenge, juggling eating a meal with your mates and managing all other activities at the venue!

Thankyou. Have a very safe and Happy New Year.

Priya Cardinaletti Treasurer

# DAS BOOT!

A story by Filthy Mac Nasty - an Irish Diving legend (RIP)

I can never forget that sunken Morris Minor, or the secret of its boot. I was living inland when I became a diver, and the nearest bit of coast worth diving was 100 miles away. This did not deter the members of our club, however. We were so keen I swear we used to pray for rain so that we could stand in the puddles!

Sea dives were financially rationed to one or two a month but we still managed to get in a lot of open-

water diving.

Every Sunday morning and late some summer evenings, groups of rubber-clad fanatics could be seen sliding down the muddy banks into the swirling eddies of the nearby river and its associated gravel pits and lakes.

It was gloomy down there but you never knew what you might find. One member became so hooked on digging up bits and pieces that the threw in his job and went back to college. Today he is a leading mar-ine archaeologist.

Several of our group were nembers of the local Garda
Police) so we were often asked to assist with underwater searches, or all manner of items. One day we learned that the police were

anxious to locate a Morris Minor they believed had been dumped in the gravel pit near the river. As usual we were not privy to any information about the car's significance: we were just asked to find and mark it. This time, however, the chubby, red-faced sergeant who was briefing us imparted one further instruction. "If you should be lucky enough to find it," he said, glaring from one face to another, "on no account open the boot. Is that clear? On no account whatsoever open the boot." He treated us to a last stern look before dispatching us to our task. I paired off with Geoff as usual. The pit was large and no one had any idea where the car had entered the water. The sides plunged almost sheer to 6m or so, and a car could have been shoved in just about anywhere. Clearly the place to start looking was around the edge. Even the stalwart Morris Minor was surely incapable of driving on for any distance underwaterl

A few rough tracks ran up to the edge but they had already been claimed by other divers. Geoff and I settled on a spot between two of the tracks and slid in. The viz was not bad, as I recall - 2 or 3m.

We finned up and down and came across an awful lot of gravel and little else. Getting bored we turned away from the bank to follow the gently sloping bottom towards the middle of the lake. We had gone only yards when I saw a ghostly shape ahead and to the right. I didn't get too excited, aware that eyes that have been searching in half-light can play tricks, but Geoff had obviously seen it too. As we approached it took on the familiar outline of a car and then a Morris Minor.

The grey paintwork and windows were already covered in a fine layer of silt. The driver's window was open; we peered in. At least there were no bodies, but neither was there anything else. We made our way over the famous bull-nose bonnet, down the other side and round to the back.

I let my hand rest lightly on the chrome handle. "On no account open the boot" - the words echoed through my head. "Well," I thought. "whatever the police are looking for must be in there. Surely one peep won't hurt? Quick look, shut the boot again and who'll ever know!" I turned to face Geoff. I could tell he had been thinking along similar lines and as I tapped on the boot handle he nodded vigorously. Without more ado I twisted the

handle. A powerful force from within threw back the boot-lid. wrenching the handle from my grasp. At the same instant, amid a cloud of bubbles, an unidentifiable but solid body hurtled over my shoulder like a Polaris and came close to decapitating Geoff, who had been hovering just behind me. We both sank to the bottom and waited until the trembling had stopped and the pulse and breathing had returned to normal. All we could do now was close the boot, make our way back to the bank, report our find and say nothing!

There was quite a reception committee waiting for us and in the middle was the red-faced sergeant. "Despite all I said," he bawled, "you opened the boot!"

"N-no," we replied as innocently as we could manage.

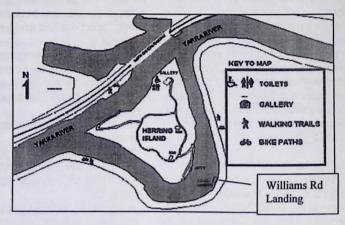
"Yes you bloody did!" he retorted.
"Well, yes, we did," I admitted, "but only a little bit. Anyway, how did you know?"

In answer he pointed to the water and there, bobbing around about 20 yards offshore, was the car's spare wheel and tyre! He could suppress it no longer - for the next few minutes the pit and surrounding fields echoed to his raucous laughter!

# NOTICE

# Herring Island VSAG Family Day

VSAG is having a family day, river cruise and BBQ lunch ending up at Herring Island (Yarra River). It's planned for boats to leave from Newport boat ramp in the morning – meeting at Herring Island around noon for lunch. If you would like to do the cruise you will need to book in with our DC for the day – Gerry. Otherwise meet us at the Island, which is opposite Como Park oval (Melway 2M C2). VSAG boats will (if you've been good) ferry you across to the Island from the Williams Rd landing (nb, there is no foot bridge).



When: from noon Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April
Where: Herring Island (Melway 2M C2)
BYO Everything!

Facilities: Free electric BBQs, water, toilets, seats, tables, shelter
Boat owners please book in with Gerry by Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>
Boat Passengers please book in with Gerry on Friday 5<sup>th</sup>
Gerry – 0417 324 608 / 9725 2381

# Cooks' Corner

Have you got a favorite seafood recipe featuring scallops, cray, mussels or abalone? All of which we are fortunate to find (sometimes!) in the southern reaches of Port Phillip. We know you won't share the catch – but how about sharing your recipes? Send them in and we'll feature them in Fathoms.

# Coquilles St. Jacques

A famous, and delicious, entree dish.

60 g (2 oz) butter

60 g (2 oz) mushrooms, sliced

1/2 cup dry white wine

250 g (8 oz) scallops

1 cup cream

cayenne pepper

salt and pepper

grated tasty cheese

lemon slices

parsley

Melt butter in a saucepan, add mushroomand cook 1 minute. Add wine and boil gently until reduced by about half. Add scallops, simmer for 2 minutes only. Add cream, a dash of cayenne pepper, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well and reheat.

Do not boil.

Pour mixture into scallop shells or ramekins, top with a little grated cheese and place under a hot griller until melted and slightly browned.

Serve immediately, decorated with lemon and parsley.

Serves 4-6

# Thai Lobster Salad

I cooked lobster
juice of 2 limes
I teaspoon sugar
I shallot, sliced very fine
2 red chillies, seeded and sliced
I teaspoon rice flour
250ml/8fl oz/ one cup canned coconut
milk
I tablespoon fish sauce
2 fresh kaffir lime leaves, slivered

Cut through membrane on underside of lobster tail, and remove meat from tail. Cut across into rounds. Reserve claws and legs. Place lobster meat in a bowl. Stir

together lime juice and sugar and pour over lobster. Scatter with a few slices of shallot and half the chillies. Mix gently. Mix rice flour with a tablespoon of coconut milk. Heat remaining coconut milk in a small saucepan. Stir in rice flour mixture and cook until slightly thickened. Pour into a bowl to cool. Drain liquid from lobster and stir liquid into coconut milk. Add fish sauce. Pour coconut milk dressing over base of serving dish. Arrange lobster slices on top. Garnish with remaining shallot and chilli slices and thread fine slivers of kaffir leaf. Lobster claws and legs may b placed around the meat. Serve cold.

# IMPORTANT NOTICE



# VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP

# SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

# Mr John Noonan

# MARCH GENERAL MEETING Thursday, 21 March, 2002

The committee of VSAG is pleased to advise that John Noonan will be the very special guest speaker at our General meeting on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March at Bells Hotel. John is a Life Member of VSAG and is one of the very first club members. John will tell a lot about the diving adventures in the early days with many of the members who are still diving today. Memorabilia, some rare photos and some rare artefacts will also be provided on the night of this talk. John Noonan's diving history, stories and achievements make this a very rare opportunity to visit the great past of VSAG.

THIS IS A PRESENTATION NOT TO BE MISSED!!!!!!

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# Port Phillip Heads (Pt.Lonsdale)

Times and Heights of High and Low Waters. Add one hour for Official Summer Time \_at 38° 18"

2002 March -

Time Zone 1000 Long 144° 37"

Tidal Streams Time Zone 1000 Port Phillip Heads ong 144" 37" Lat 38" 16"

Times of Start of Flood and Ebb (Slack) Water, Add one hour for Official Summer Time

March - 2002

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O National Tidal Facility - The Filnders University of South Australia

Port Phil	Port Phillip Heads (Pt.Lonsdale)	Pt.Lonsdale	(e)	Port Phillip Lat 38" 18" Lat 38" 18" Lat 38" 18"	Port Phillip Heads - 1 at 38° 18° Long 144° 37°	Tidal Streams Time Zone 1000	ams
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# **Emergency Contact Information Mornington Peninsula Area**

Police – Ambulance – Fire	000
Rosebud Hospital 1527 Nepean hwy Rosebud	5986 0666
Frankston Hospital Hastings Road Frankston	9784 7777
The Bays Hospital Main Street Mornington	5975 2009
Mornington Bay Rescue Service	0419 233 999
Southern Peninsula Rescue	5984 4555
Diving Emergency Service	1800 088 200
Coast Guard (Hastings)	5979 3322
Coast Guard (Safety Beach)	5981 4443
State Emergency Service (SES)	26 14 68
Water Police	9534 2983
Melbourne Ambulance	11440
Diving Doctors	
Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud)	5981 1555
Dr J De BJ Dade (Mornington)	5975 5288

VHF Emergency Channel.....16

# **VSAG DIVE & MEETING CALENDAR**

	Dive		Meeting	
Date Location	Captain	Phone	Point	Time
FEBRUARY				
3 Local Diving	John L	. 9589 4020	Sorrento	. 9.00
10 Family Day	Andy M	. 9809 0984	Rye Jetty	. 10.00
17 Flinders Area	Gerry DV	. 9725 2381	Flinders Jetty	. 9.00
21 General Meeting	Pruso D	0707 6210	Bells Hotel	. <b>8PW</b>
	bluce D	. 9707 0310		. 9.00
MARCH	0 51/	0705 0004	0	0.00
3 Back Beaches	Gerry DV	. 9725 2381	Sorrento	. 9.00
Labour Day Long Weekend		0000 0004		
8-11 Cape Jaffa S.A	Anay W	. 9809 0984	Sorrento	9.00
17 Cape Woolamai	Jonn L	. 9589 4020	Newnaven	. 10.00 8PM
24 Nepean Wall	Bruce D	. 9787 6318	Sorrento	. 9.00
29 March Good Friday	Priya C	. 9761 0960	I luai rtivei	
30 March Salurday				
31 March Easter Sunday				
1 April Easter Monday				
APRIL				
7 Yarra / Herring Is	Gerry DV	. 9725 2381	See Notice	Lunch
14 Nepean Wall	John L	. 9589 4020	Sorrento	9.00
18 General Meeting			Bells Hotel	8PM
28 90' Sub	Peter V	9787 1298	Sorrento	9.00
MAY .				
5 120' Sub				
16 General Meeting			Bells Hotel	8PM
19 130' Sub	Leo M	9727 1568	Sorrento	9.00
JUNE				
9 Ships Graveyard	John L	9589 4020	Sorrento	9.00
20 General Meeting			Bells Hotel	8PM
	Gerry DV	9725 2381	Sorrento	9.30
Treasure Hunt!				

DIVE CHECK IN TIMES

<u>Boat Owners</u> 5.00 to 6.00pm <u>Divers</u> 6.00 to 7.00pm

BOOKINGS CLOSE AT 7.00pm. DO NOT PHONE AFTER THAT TIME. THE DIVE CAPTAIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ALLOCATION OF DIVERS TO BOATS

