FATHOMS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2004

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VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AOUA GROUP

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FATHOMS

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 3rd Thursday in the month

Editorial Submissions to:

Alan Storen

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Editorial

Alan Storen

VSAG's 50th has been and gone and what an event is was! The committee did a spectacular job with the organisation, Jonesy with the venue and meal and the members that were able to make it were treated to a night to remember. I have included a report elsewhere in the mag and so will not expand on the details here but well done and congratulations to the committee of Mick Jeacle, Don Abell, John Goulding and Des Williams for their



superb efforts on our behalf. Des Williams has also written an article for DIVELOG and it will appear in the next issue. If you do not have access to a

copy come along to our next meeting and get one.

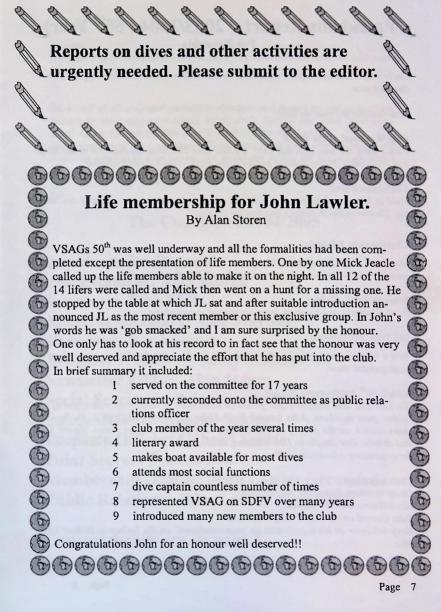
The weather is getting better and the water is getting warmer. There is now no legitimate excuse for not dusting off the diving gear, getting it serviced and booking into a dive or two in the next few months. The dive calendar has plenty to offer – so keep some dates free! If you are too old to dive or not medically fit then come along to some of the social functions and enjoy the company. We promise not to bore you with all the dive talk.

Mick has booked a liveaboard trip to Majuro next May and is now looking to fill the places. Get in quick to secure a spot. The Xmas trip to South Australia is almost fully booked but you might be in luck if you book in with Mick by the end of October. The end of year function is almost locked in and if you can help with a raffle prize or two please contact Gerry Devries asap. As always a great night is guaranteed. A number of other events are planned and listed in the calendar. An IMAX night is planned and my advice is to book early. If you miss out do not complain.

Do not forget the Prom Cup Weekend. There will be the combined BBQ with other scuba clubs on the Saturday night and if you cannot dive there are plenty of walks and talks. It is also time to book in for the Labour Day (Weekend) trip to Cape Jaffa.—contact Mick Jeacle.

Congratulations to John Lawler for being clubmember of the year and Mick Jeacle and John Mills for receiving the Literary Award for 2004.

Alan



Presidents Report - 2003/2004 (50th Year) Pat Reynolds

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all members for their support over the past year.

Activities for the year include:

Cup Weekend at the Prom

VSAG were the host club this year. We had over 100 divers to cook for at the Saturday night BBQ. Every club got out for a few dives – Good viz and weather.

Christmas Party

Held at Milanos, Brighton. A good night out with fine food, good company and dancing. Thanks to Peter Jones - our host for the night.

Christmas in Adelaide

Members dived the Hobart, Kangaroo Island and Rapid Bay Jetty. We had fine weather and a nice five star caravan park with 14 adults attending.

Wilsons Prom, Easter

In all 97 divers and campers-good diving and camaraderie.

Ski Trip, Mt Hotham

Had a fantastic time with 26 skiers and their families. Ate drank, got merry. Skied on fresh powder snow.

VSAG 50th Anniversary Dinner

We had 152 club members and guests in attendance. I caught up with a few of the 'older' past members. John Lawler received his life membership. Don Abel gave a short speech on the history of VSAG. Milanos proved a perfect venue- superb food and drinks. Our thanks to Des Williams, Mick Jeacle, Don Abel and John Goulding for organising a fantastic night.

Club meetings

Guest speakers during the year include:

Mark Harris on Truk Lagoon,

John Carroll on the Port Phillip Pilots and

Gary Schipper on his experiences as 'man overboard' on the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race.

Finance

The club had a reasonable year, membership was down a little on last year. Finances are satisfactory.

On behalf of all club and committee members our thanks go out to the boat owners for their support – Gerry, Mick, Andy, Neville and John. Well done Guys! Also not forgetting Don Abel for auditing the club books.

To all members of the committee – Thanks for a great effort over the past year. A special mention to Alan Storen, our newsletter editor, for his conscientious dedication in putting Fathoms together.

Pat

The Committee 2004/2005

President: Pat Reynolds

Vice President: Alan Storen

Secretary: John Mills

Assistant Secretary: Leo Maybus

Treasurer: Nev Viapree

Assistant Treasurer: Andy Mastrowicz

Newsletter Editor: Alan Storen

Social Secretary: Priya Cardinaletti

Safety Officer: Gabriel Sekias Property Officer: Gabriel Sekias

Point Scorer: Darren Pearce

Membership Officer: John Lawler (seconded)

Public Relations: John Lawler (seconded)

Contact details are on page 2



Adelaide Shores Caravan Resort.

We will be diving the ex-HMAS Hobart, Deep Creek Conservation Park and hopefully Kangaroo Island.

We have 12 sites booked and we need to have a list of those who require a site, plus \$30 deposit.

Those interested to contact Mick Jeacle to book in.

VSAG Labour Day 2005 Long Weekend Trip to Cape Jaffa

Cape Jaffa Caravan Park (in cabins)
Essentially a cray bash weekend
Cabins are booked but you must confirm your
attendance with Mick Jeacle asap.

Boat launching fees.

Starting Nov 2004, the club will no longer be paying the boat launch fees for boat owners and divers are required to make a contribution to the fees on each dive.

Calculation: Launch fee / (number of divers)

Dive Report 29th August 2004

Nev Viapree

Boats: John Lawler

Divers: John Lawler, Leo Maybus, Darren Pearce, Nev Viapree

Dive locations: Courier, Queenscliff reef.

Soldier Freddy was always ready and steady, Soldier Neddy stayed at home, wrapped up nice and warm in bed. By Spike Milligan, from his book 'Hitler, my part in his downfall'

Sunday 29th August 2004 – Your little soldier Freddys were ready and steady. Raring to go, John Lawler had his boat nicely warmed up at 9:30am and we were off. With a nice friendly 10 knot northerly wind blowing we decided a deeper dive on the Courier might be the go.

"Can you find it on the GPS?" Leo dared to ask. "I do my best", replied Long John Lawler.

After a very relaxing cruise through the heads John seemed to casually drive straight up to the Courier without even having to look for it! All of a sudden it was there on the depth sounder! "Could that be it", asked John. "Blood oath", says Leo - "Blood Oath". We found it so fast we didn't even have the shot line out!

Having pulled out the shot line and weight I decided to let John know just what we expected of him. "Right John", I said, "I want this weight dead centre on the wreck – not 10 or 12 inches from the centre like Mick Jeacle does it, but dead set centre!"

"I'll see what I can do", he says.

Half an hour later I did my usual trick and didn't wait for my buddies – Darren and Leo, and commenced my dive alone. As I descended down the line the 14° temp didn't seem too bad and I was feeling confident this would be another great dive. As I reached the bottom I was on cloud nine, enjoying the dive and had completely forgotten the swearing and cursing I had done when the alarm clock/radio had gone off at 6:30 this morning. Already I had forgotten about selling the boat and dumping my dive gear at the local tip! The viz wasn't brilliant but it was good enough – about 30-40 ft

As first diver down I thought I had better check the shot line and weight. As I

checked its location it was dead centre-right in the middle of the wreck. I almost couldn't believe it!

As my two dive buddies swam into sight, with Leo flashing away with his camera, I decided to do a circuit of the bow and then check out the rest of the wreck. It suddenly occurred to me it was probably time that I had a look at my computer, and much to my disappointment I had used up all the ten minute bars and was starting to use up the twenty minute bars as I had had about twenty minutes bottom time already. Reluctantly I began my ascent, wishing that I could have stayed down there a little longer. Fifteen minutes later Darren and Leo surfaced with the normal cheesy grins on their faces. With everyone safely back on the boat I asked, "Did you see where the lead weight landed- it was dead set centre". "Yeah" says Leo "and what about the two crays - one on each side of the weight". I hope the editor has received the photographic evidence before this goes to print!

Slack water was at 2:00 pm leaving us plenty of time for lunch and a relaxing break. John called up airport control and a couple of passing UFO's to get the shipping movements.

The boys had a clear run from shipping right on slack water, By now JL was giggling hysterically and frothing at the mouth – not a pretty sight (sorry John).

With a remarkable demonstration of boat handling skills I dropped John, Leo and Darren in about 80 ft, just on the edge of the shipping channel just out from Queenscliff – this location is without doubt one of the most superb diving spots anywhere in the world. For some reason Darren decided to spend the first five minutes swimming around with the zip on his dry suit partially open. After much shouting, swearing, crying and 'carryon' he decided to join the other two divers. Twenty minutes later all returned safely to the boat with happy cheesy grins – Darren's wet, dry suit provided much entertainment and laugher! Everyone had a near perfect dive.

After such a top day it is easy to see why some of us keep on diving:

- 1. Much better than getting drunk
- 2. Better than a smoke of dope,
- 3. Don's know about sex because I've still never had any (must be too busy diving)

Thanks John for the boat!

Thanks Darren and Leo for being there!

DID YOU KNOW?

(a bit of trivia!)

BY JOHN LAWLER. 25/09/2004

Several members from VSAG were some of the first non commercial scuba divers to dive on the Russian cruise liner the Mikhail Lermontov which sank in New Zealand.

The Lermontov was 176 metres in length, weighed 20,000 tonnes and was built in the East Germany port of Wismar and launched in 1963 at a cost of (then) \$45 million. He (Russian ships are always named after males) was one of the last five "writer ships", so called as they were named after famous Russian writers.

The ship was chartered for a trip around Marlborough Sound (NZ) and was under

the command of the Harbour Master from Picton, one Don Jamieson.

Jamieson, believing the passage through Cape Jackson was twice as wide as it actually was and no rocks or reefs in the passage, headed for Cape Jackson! Without any maps Jamieson unwisely decided to take the ship through the passage, hugging the shoreline to give the passengers a good view of the land..

Despite being discouraged by a Russian Officer the ship continued on and at 5.37pm he struck rocks and began to fill from a gap 5.5m below the water line on the port side. The ship's captain had gone to his cabin and was not made aware of the direction Jamieson was taking the cruise ship.

The Captain returned to the bridge and headed the ship back to Port Gore and beached the stricken vessel but for reasons that were never explained did not drop anchor to keep it there and the ship drifted out. Twenty minutes after the last passenger was taken off the ship, it sank.

The Lermontov sank in Port Gore in the Marlborough Sounds on 16th February 1986 and the liner now rests on his side totally intact in 36 meters of water. She is still regularly dived from charter operations based in Picton. Three scuba divers have died whilst diving on this wreck.

Some of those who went on that historic dive adventure were: Alex Talay, Des Williams, Bob Scott, Don Abell, Doug Catherall, Geoff Wiliams, Max Synon.

The exploits of that dive were well documented in Fathoms and more interestingly on video. Many artefacts were retrieved from the wreck.

The Mikhail Lermontov dive that those VSAG members went on WAS 18 YEARS AGO!

Dive Report 19th September 2004

Alan Storen

Boats: John Lawler, Nev Viapree

Divers: John Lawler, Nev Viapree, Alan Storen, Chris Storen, Jackie

Storen & Shane, Trevor Williams, Rob Birtles.

Dive locations: Rye Scallop beds, South Channel Fort.

Divers met at 9am on Sunday 19th at Rye boat ramp to do a couple of the more straight forward dives in the bay - for divers that were new to diving or had not dived for a while. A few of the more experienced came along to assist. Unfortunately we only had two boats, which were quickly filled.

The first dive was on the Rye scallop beds. JL found the perfect spot according to Rob Birtles, and the catch bags were quickly filled. Not the catch of the day but Rob Birtles came up with a single 'lost' fin – no diver leg or other bits attached?? When we got it back on the boat we noticed that it was home for a small female octopus and she was guarding 100s of eggs. We recovered the strap and sent the rest of the fin back to the depths and some peace and quite for the probably startled mother-to-be.

The next dive was on the South Channel Fort and most had not dived this location for many years, if at all. We dropped in near the jetty and spent most of the time around this general area. Plenty of small fish life and other aquatic creatures – crabs, rays, octopus, etc. The viz was about 5m (about 15 ft for the metrically challenged!) and would have been a good muck dive for the photographers. The temperature proved a challenge for some but I recorded it at 15°C and this was an improvement on two weeks ago. I must add that when I checked my dive logbook my last 50+ dives were in water temperatures over 27°C – Bali and Vanuatu, and the bay was noticeably colder! But it is getting warmer so dust off the dive gear, get it tested and come on down!!. The fort is open for inspection and tours can be arranged through Parks Vic. We did not set foot on land this time but the fort could be a future site for a VSAG family BBQ lunch if there is interest. Parks has opened up the area and many of the old broken sections have been repaired.

Il had a 50th to go to back in Melbourne - not his own (sorry John!) and

the rest headed to the Rye Pier for a BBQ lunch. Unfortunately the supermarket was out of sausages and we had to settle for a pig-out on fish and chips, and a tinny or two!

In all a very pleasant day – good diving, good weather, good companywhat else could one want.

PS. The club intends to run several of these types of dives in the near future so if you have not dived for some time and need to check the gear out or just want a social day out on the bay please ring into the dive captain and book in! The family can join in or just meet at Rye for a BBQ. If you do not have any serviceable gear ring me and, with a few days notice, I can arrange.

American spends 5 days underwater

From correspondents in Hampton, Tennessee., September 5, 2004

vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv

AN American has beaten his own record for staying underwater with scuba gear after five days in a lake - complete with recliner, a checkerboard, music and good friends to keep him company.

Jerry Hall then cheerfully signed a pledge to his wife never to do it again.

"I had the easy job," Mr Hall said. "It was my dive team that did all the work. I kept them hopping all the time, and they never once complained. Whatever I wanted or needed, they were there for me." Mr Hall, 39, of Bluff City, Tennessee, is already in the current edition of the Guinness World Book of Records for staying underwater with scuba gear for 71 hours, 39 minutes and 40 seconds.

Having surpassed that time, he didn't leave eastern Tennessec's Watauga Lake until reaching 120 hours. 1 minute and 25 seconds.

"That knot in the pit of my stomach is gone and I'm glad he's all right," said his wife, Vicky Hall. Mr Hall and his team of 10 divers trained for the record attempt for a year. They used a platform lowered to four metres below the surface. A recliner was harnessed to the dive deck, and Mr Hall napped there for up to four hours at a time. An underwater speaker broadcast music, and Mr Hall passed the hours with a checkerboard made out of an aluminum plate. "Everybody that came down there to play checkers beat me," Mr Hall said. "I'm giving them up." During the dive, Hall nibbled on food that was sent down to him, such as apples and candy bars, by temporarily removing his breathing gear. But he relied mostly on water from a pouch-like drinking system used by cyclists and hikers.

IS THIS LEOS NEXT CHALLENGE??

PUBLIC RELATIONS.

By JOHN LAWLER.

An opportunity came up recently with the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron fishing and boating club, to present the world of Scuba Diving to the club's members, families and friends. This club has a fisho's night once a month but it seems it is a bit of a struggle to provide something different on these nights every month.

In my role as VSAG's Public Relations Officer I discussed the opportunity of a Scuba Divers presentation night with the fishing director at BMYS who, like me, felt it was a good idea and asked for it to be programmed with the night being presented by members and associates of the Victorian Sub Aqua Group.

I approached Mary Malloy, Leo Maybus and Mark Harris to be the guest presenters and all three were very keen and enthusiastic supporters of the idea. As it was mentioned at the August VSAG meeting a couple of other VSAG'ers also attended. Alan Storen, Alan Beckhurst and Brian Harris were on hand to help with the precedings and this was appreciated.

All the presenters were guests at our home for some food prior to heading off to the club at 7pm for the 7.30 start. Alan Beckhurst even braved a small serving of my chilli con carne and lived on!

In my role as facilitator for the evening, the members were given a brief history on the great VSAG followed by a demonstration on the equipment used in Scuba Diving. The subject of our club motto "Safety in Diving" was also touched on and some of our safety equipment was demonstrated.

Mary was the first on and her presentation (50 minutes) of the marine life was stunning...her story on her encounter with the white shark which produced a photo that ended up in National Geographic had the audience spell bound. To listen to a presentation by Mary Malloy is to hear one of the best presenters on diving and marine life today. Whilst the underwater photos are stunning in themselves, her knowledge of marine creatures is amazing. This was an exciting presentation!

Leo was up next with his fine presentation of the "Pier to Pier Underwater Challenge" in March 2003. Leo's presentation was preceded by the video clip from the Channel 9 news broadcast aired that Sunday night. This gave the audience the full picture of the route and distance Leo had to cover in this remarkable achievement. Leo had lugged in the submersible scooter and the mighty twin 120 cu.ft. Tanks used in the crossing and these created a lot of interest.

Mark Harris gave his professional presentation of the "Watchdogs of the Deep" which was also presented to VSAG some time ago. The history behind the J4 submarines makes for a superb documentary and there is none better than Mark to put this story out in a way that has people fascinated by the long J4 history during the war years and their final resting place as Marine Artificial Reefs right on our back doorstep.

On behalf of the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron and VSAG, thanks to Mary, Leo and Mark for the great effort and enthuasiam. To Alan Beckhurst, Alan Storen and Brian Harris for their help, thanks also.

The presentation was supported by Dive Log, Sonar Wetsuits and Oceanic Products

The success of this evening can be gauged by the numbers which go like this. When I asked the fishing director what sort of numbers he would expect to attend a presentation of this kind, he replied it was a bit of an unknown as this was a fishing club, but he hoped around 45-50 would be tops.

The number was around 90+ and the room was full to capacity!

J.Lawler Public Relations Officer September 2004.

John Lawler reports:

The Patagonian Toothfish pirate ship South Tomi has successfully been scuttled at Geraldton and went down perfectly in 55 seconds. It has settled upright in something like 30mtrs depth. The divers say it is a great wreck dive.

The following is the schedule for the planned sinkings:

Fishing Boat..Rockinghal WA Feb 2005

PatToothfish Pirate (second one!) ship Viasra Mandurah WA Feb

HMAS Brisbane QLD June (approx) 2005 Tasmanian Freighter Tasmania Nov 2005 Wellington sink New Zealand Nov 2005

FD: Where is one for Victoria!!!!!!!

VSAG 50th Birthday Celebration

Alan Storen

I am not too sure when the arrangements started but I do know it began sometime last year when a committee of Mick Jeacle, Des Williams, John Goulding and Don Abell were asked/volunteered/press ganged/ coerced into organising a spectacular event to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Victorian Sub Aqua Group.

The first few meetings were kept secret, I think that they just met and drank all night, but after suitable deliberations the announcement was made that the venue was to be Milanos and that about 100 guests were

Tickets went on sale during May and the close off date was mid June. Still about 100 were expected to attend. Some nervous moments were had as the numbers were fluctuating but had not reached the predicted number. All went quiet but then suddenly the details were out - 150+ attendees and Peter Jones (Milanos) indicated that no more could be fitted in. The promise was a spectacular evening and it did not disappoint.

The 'happy' hour started at 6.30pm and the room quickly filled- VSAG and free drinks- what else did you expect! The pre-dinner drinks were provided thanks to the generosity of Allways Travel and our thanks go to Ian and Yvonne Lockwood and Geoff and Vanessa Skinner for their support over the past years as well as for their company and support on

the night.

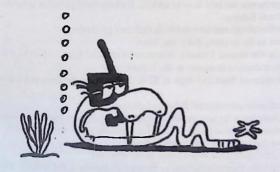
Current and past members and their partners/ friends, ten guests from Black Rock Underwater Group and the four from Allways Travel joined us to celebrate this memorable occasion. Des Williams put on an excellent display of 'early days' diving equipment and most had an opportunity to check this out before we sat down to eat. The meal was superb (as we have come to expect from a Milanos function) and many old friendships were rekindled and some new ones made. It was great to see so many of the older faces of VSAG and share their memories of the past diving. I put together a powerpoint presentation of some of the old photos and footage that I had been given and this also brought back some fond memories for many. Overseas trips and Easter Prom trips were highlighted.

Mick Jeacle was MC for the night and Don Abell gave a brief history of the club over the 50 years. It was then over to Mick to call the 'Lifemembers' to the front to recognise their contribution to the club. 12 of the 13 lifemembers were able to make it on the night and, from my records, they represented over 400 years service to VSAG. Well done, guys! John Lawler was then invited up to join this very exclusive group, as the newest member, for his contributions over the past 17 years. For the record the 14 lifers are: Don Abell, Frank Coustley, Alan Cutts, John Goulding, Mick Jeacle, John Lawler, Peter Matthews, John Noonan, Pat Reynolds, Bob Scott, Alex Talay, Tony Tipping, Barry Truscott and Des Williams.

The 50 year port (not 50 years old but celebrating the 50 years) was then distributed and those so inclined, danced the night away. Needless to say the dive boats were quiet on the Sunday as many took the opportunity to have a 'rest and recovery' day.

The organising committee are to be congratulated for putting on such a fantastic event and one that will set the standard for many years to come.

Alan



I'VE GOT THE BENOS!!!

Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) Fisheries (Recreational Abalone) Regulations 2004 General Briefing Paper –SDFV

Fisheries Victoria (FV) is proposing to change the existing regulations in relation to recreational fishing of abalone in Central Victorian Waters. There are in fact, a suite of proposed changes to the regulations, which are all described in the RIS. The stated primary purpose of the proposed changes is to curb the activities of illegal abalone fishers masquerading as recreational fishers. The issue of a minority of fishers abusing the intent of the recreational regulations for abalone is causally linked to a general and widespread (perceived) claim of depletion of abalone stock on inshore reefs within central Victorian waters.

The RIS argues that the best approach to addressing the 'problem' and the best community outcome is to greatly restrict recreational access to the fish and the fishery (yet these are the community's own fish!)

The RIS document is poor and misleading in that it

*gives no tangible measure of the dimension or the extent of the stated problems.

*There are only general claims of depleted abalone abundance.

*No data of any significance is presented.

*There is only general description of scope and activities of illegal fishers abusing recreational regulations.

*Fails to acknowledge that the (unsubstantiated) low abundance of abalone on inshore reefs may be either natural, or a result of previous over-fishing by commercial fishers, yet proposes the best way to address the perceived problem is by restricting recreational fishing.

The changes are draconian and retrograde in that they prescribe:-

*a 60% reduction in the existing daily bag limit.

*daily bag limit in the central Victoria Waters to be reduced from 10 fish to 4 fish.

* a massive 92% reduction in access to the fishery.

*Access is to be reduced from 365 days to 30 days only, with the days to be nominated by FV.

*NO new restriction on commercial fishers of abalone.

*Commercial fishers have no new access limitations and no new catch restrictions (for blacklip abalone) and can freely (over-) fish the very areas which this RIS states the new regulations are aimed at protecting.

The outcome of the regulations as proposed in the RIS will

*Discourage legitimate recreational fishers from participating in the fishery This is contrary to the intent and requirements of the Fisheries Act 1995.

*Not address the illegal take of abalone in that it does nothing to quell the demand for illegal abalone

Those who choose to go poaching will still do so, and enforcement effort will need to remain the same.

Abalone Regulation Changes – ACTION NEEDED NOW by Alan Storen

The Victorian DPI has released a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) containing a number of proposals to amend recreational abalone fishing regulations in Victoria.

The regulatory changes include:

- Reduction of daily bag and possession limits applying to recreational abalone fishing in marine waters of central Victoria (from Cape Otway to Arch Rock, including Port Phillip Bay) from 10 to 4
 Closure of the same area for all but 30 days per year
- 3. Year round closure of Port Phillip Bay to fishing of greenlip abalone
- 4. Removal of the requirement to cut the meat of recreationally caught
- 5. Removal of the abalone boat/vehicle limit (fishing licence required)

ARE YOU IN AGREEMENT?? Make your voice heard!!
While I support Item 4 above the items 1 to 3 are a huge reduction on current regulations and in my opinion cannot be justified from any scientific

study produced to date.

If you have any comments on the RIS and accompanying Proposed Regulations they can be sent to:

Greg Hayes
Manager Recreational Fisheries
Fisheries Victoria
GPO Box 4440
Melbourne 3001
by no later than 5.00 pm Wednesday 27th October.

PS. If you write to Greg, and please do so, you cannot refer to the item numbers above, as they are mine and not the regulation numbers. Even if you only have time to write a short note indicating, if you agree, that the recreational abalone fishing regulations should not be changed (other that the cutting of the meat) I am sure the abalone fishers in the club would be most appreciative.

WEB SITE: http://home.vicnet.au/~sdfv/ Or http://hoem.vicnet.au/~sdfv/ABSris2004.htm

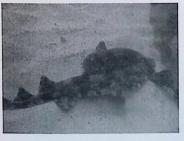
September Travels.

Alan And Mary

Mary and I had to drive to Hervey Bay to clear a house for sale, so of course we had to include a little diving. Inspired by Meg's Xmas trip, we booked dives at Port Macquarrie, Wooli, Rainbow Beach, and a live aboard out of Bundaberg.

After visiting Mary's family along the way, we arrived at Scuba Haven, near Port Maquarrie, during strong easterlies. Although the wind was predicted to drop, the shop owner, Peter Huettner told us the vis would not be good enough for photography, so we cancelled the diving. We were impressed that he was willing to lose a charter so we wouldn't be disappointed with the diving.

Next stop Wooli, and another attempt to dive Pimpernel Rock. The weather was OK., but there was a strong current through the site, so it was off to North Solitary Island. We dived 2 sites on the west side of the Island, Elbow Cave, and Bubble Cave where we enjoyed plate corals, anemones, and lots of fish. The highlights were two wobbies fighting, and watching a lionfish get stung by an anemone. Stan from Wooli Deep Sea Fishing and Diving ar-



ranged cheap accommodation for us in a nearby house, but is planning to convert the old fishing co op into shop and accommodation, right across the street from the wharf.

Underwater World at Maloolaba sidetracked our northward journey as we got in a few "insurance" shots of tropical fish. Actually, this place is worth a visit, the shark tank is good, as were the seal and otter shows, and other exhibits, but we were impressed by the tropical fresh water tank. Those Barramundi and Catfish are huge!



Only slightly interrupted by our house clearing duties, we arrived at Bundy for our trip to the southern Great Barrier Reef aboard Venus 11. Our focus was on Manta photos, and we put the pressure on the dive master and skipper to find us plenty of mantas. We cruised to Hoskyn Island overnight and woke for our checkout dive at a site called Top Dive, which

was nice in an aquarium sort of way, but no mantas! Our mid morning dive at Hoskyn Channel was similar, with nice coral gardens, and a turtle.

Lunch was consumed underway to Fairfax Island, where we dived Jackson Bommie. More of the larger reef fish here among the scattered bommies, and lots of green turtles. Not bad, I reckon the southern section of the GBR has the best hard corals around, and the vis was up to 20 metres. For the whole dive we could here whalesongs in the distance. We cruised on to Lady Musgrave lagoon for our overnight anchorage, and "Night" dive at dusk.

No problems with the meals on board, I could feel the kilos creeping on, and the only exercise is diving which up here is no strain. Overnighting in Musgrave Lagoon is luxury as the water is glassy, with hardly a ripple against the hull. There were around 20 on board, including the crew, but most seemed to disappear between dives. The sunrise and sunsets in the lagoon were stunning with pink hues and glassy, clear water.

Day two, and our morning dive was at Manta Bommie, but despite the hype, we saw only one manta as it flew past. Sure, there were batfish, trout, sweetlip and the other usuals, but we were disappointed. After brekky, our next dive was at Coral canyons, and the arvo dive was at Beck's Bommie, both pretty aquarium dives. The night dive in the lagoon was interesting, with a big turtle asleep in a deep coral cave, and hundreds of tiny shellfish that made a comical swimming attempt to escape.

Our chef served up a multi national dinner, with liberal amounts of chilli, a brave move on a diving livaboard. His apple pie neutralised the burning lips, and everyone was happy. Our schedule for tomorrow was Lady Elliot Island, but the rumours were that strong currents would make manta shots unlikely. Sensing our disappointment we were offered the option of staying at Lady Musgrave, and giving Manta Bommie another shot. We chose to stay put!



Halfway through the morning dive on Manta Bommie, and all we had seen was a cowtail ray, and a big maori wrasse. Then a manta approached a small bommie, but one of the divers tried to pat it and it bolted. A glum pair of photographers headed back towards the boat, but about fifty metres off we spotted three mantas on the surface. We carefully approached to find the mantas feeding on some red substance which dirtied the top metre of water. Still, an opportunity to get some

shots, even though they would not let us get too close.

Not yet happy, we had breakfast, and appealed for another shot at Manta Bommie, to which everyone agreed. Our last chance, and as we approached the bommie, three mantas were circling it. It didn't take long to realize they were being cleaned, and would let us close. Soon they were comfortable with our presence, and luckily the other divers had headed to the nearby reef. We ran out of film and still the mantas danced around us. This time we got back to the boat all smiles.

Venus 11 was good value, especially if you haven't done much coral diving, but we would love to return to Musgrave in our own boat next time. As well as scuba, we snorkelled the pontoon in the lagoon which has lots of fish under and around it, and between dives we moved over to a couple of whales which then came right up to the boat so we could all get a closer look. It was a satisfied drive back to Hervey Bay.

We had a days break before the next dive at Wolf Rock off Rainbow Beach, not much house clearing was getting done! Operators Kevin and Cheryl do it hard. They have to tow their 5.5 metre inflatable 5 klm up a soft sandy beach, lined with fishermen, to get close to the dive site. A short run off the headland to a couple of rock pinnacles just above the surface, with a couple more just below, dropping to 40 metres. In the dirty water, we could hear whales, and dropped down into a chasm lined with black corals full of fish. Emperors, coral trout, fusiliers, angel fish, trumpet fish, yellowtail scad, pomfrets, moorish idols, big flathead, pearl perch, and an estuary cod were encountered on our lap of the bommie. The highlights were the feeding eagle ray, schooling kingfish, and the olive sea snake. Not a bad swim!

The whale we could hear surfaced fifteen metres from the boat, while I had my back turned! Kev then escorted us around Round Rock, closer to the headland, and in dirtier water. He offered to take us back to Wolf Rock, but Mary and I persisted, finding heaps of rays. A large bull ray was surrounded by cowtail and whip rays, a large turtle cruised through, and I was circled by a school of metre plus kingies. Mary found a spanish dancer, which refused to swim, and we remained entertained for fifty minutes. We realised these sites could be awesome in clean water (which is best around Xmas).

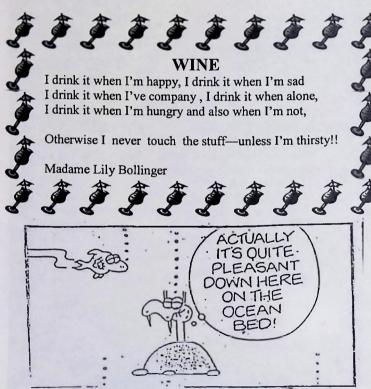
By now, house clearing time was running out, and all we had done was add dive and camera gear to the mess! Only one thing to do, go to Fraser Island for a couple of days touring the wilderness, then whale watching for a couple of days. Add to that a couple of sessions photographing ospreys and brahminy



kites, and an afternoon fishing on Urangan pier. We managed to fill St Vinnies charity truck with furniture, a rubbish skip, and the Landcruiser 13 hours before settlement, leaving the place spic 'n span for the new owners.

Moree was our overnight stop on the way back down the Newell Highway, at a caravan park with thermal pools. There aren't many better ways to shake off the aches of travelling than simmering in 39 degree bore water, but the wildlife in the cabin wasn't so welcomed. Having achieved all of our targets except seeing a dingo, we had to call this trip a great success.

Alan & Mary



Dive Report 26th September 2004

Alan Storen

Boats: Mick Jeacle

Divers: John Lawler, Nev Viapree, Alan Storen, Mick Jeacle

Dive locations: Rye Scallop beds, Channel Marker

Divers met at 9:30am at Rye boat ramp to catch a fill of scallops. The dive was down for a 9 start but Grand Final hangovers and all that—you know how it is! The weather was ok but not spectacular and looked like it could turn at any minute. We launched Mick's boat and headed for the scallop beds. John and I were soon in the water and the bag was quickly filled. Mick and Nev replaced us while JL and I swapped recipes. Being closer to 60 than 30 I instantly committed his recipe to memory and thought that I would try his that night. Mick was going to pickle his but at some stage we forgot to exchange methods involved-next time maybe!

The weather was almost getting better – the sun was out at least although the wind was on the rise! We decided to complement the scallops with a few muscles and headed for Mick's secret spot –the channel marker. The secret was obviously out as neither JL or I could find a single muscle. There was evidence that they once existed but apart from a few huge crabs and a nice leather jacket there was nothing to eat unless one had a taste for periwinkles.

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.....continued on page 28



We returned to the boat with empty catch bags and then headed back to Rye. The air fills at the Aquatic Adventures store was to take about 30 mins and what else could one do but sink a couple of pots at the Rye pub. We had previously decided to have fish and chips for lunch but the weather had turned and a meal in the rain did not appeal. The \$4.50 rissoles, salad and chips at the pub tempted us and it was superb (for the price!). Not up to a Jonesy 50th special but what could compare with that! After the meal we collected our tanks and headed home - me via Dromana and a visit to my father and Mick, Nev and JL in Mick's car back to Melbourne.

I am not sure if I remembered JL's recipe accurately and even if I did we only had some of the correct ingredients but even so the scallops tasted fantastic and I will try to include JL's recipe and also Mick's if he will part with it in the next edition. I am still partial to my simple – onto the hot plate with

some butter, garlic and/or ginger but !!!

A good day on the water, the temperature was up on last week and the company was great as usual. Come and join us next time for a most enjoyable day-satisfaction guaranteed.

Alan

Dive Report 10th October

By Alan Storen

Boats: Mick Jeacle

Divers: Mick Jeacle, Nev Viapree, Alan Storen,, Trevor Williams,

Dive locations: 90ft sub, Coogee

A beautiful day was promised by the weather bureau and it did not disappoint. We met at Sorrento at 9am and we were on the water soon after. We started with a dive on the 26m or 90ft sub and although the viz left a bit to be desired it was clearer at the bottom than the surface and inside was more than reasonable. We had a good look around and all came to the surface with a smile on their face.

After a suitable surface interval we were off to the Coogee for the second dive. Trevor and I went down but Trevor was not 100% and the viz was not good so we aborted the dive, surfaced and adjourned to the Rye pub for an

ale while the tanks were filled.

A great day on the water, again, and there is almost no excuse for other divers not joining us over the next few weeks.

If, or should that be when, the dredging goes ahead many of these dives will not be possible until the sediment settles - in two to three years!

Alan



Majuro & Ronjelap

loin ...

V.S.A.G.

On a fantastic dive trip to... Majuro & Ronjelap in the Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Marshall Islands consists of 29 atolls and 5 islands within 700,000 square miles of ocean. Although the Marshall Islands covers such a vast area, the total land area is a mere 70 square miles.

Stay absard the MV Oleanda a 40 metre liveaboard accommodating up to 16 guests in 8 twin or double berth cabins. The Oleanda is fully airconditioned and all diving is included in the package. Meals are prepared by the on board chet. The trip will depart from Majuro and travel to the Ronjelap Atoll diving along the way. Fly from Ronjelap back to Majuro & finish at the Marshall Island Resort for the last two nights of the holiday.

Diving in the Marshall islands is like playing in an underwater thrill park. 250 different species of coral set in crystal clear waters choreographed with over a thousand species of fish give visitors more photographic opportunities than many places in the world.

For the wreck diving enthusiast there are a number of boat wreck dives including WW2 plane wrecks.

Year-round warm water and the ability to always find a calm place to explore something new makes the Marshall Islands a great choice for a diving

DEPARTS 22 May 2005

Only... \$3849.00 Per Diver \$3584.00 Per Non Diver Plus taxes Ex Australia \$100 per person

- Tour price includes:
 Return airfares Melbourne to Majuro, flying Air Nauru
- One way airfare Ronjelap-Majuro flying Air Marshall Islands
- · 9 night MV Oleanda-twinberth
- All meals Oleanda
- Unlimited diving Oleanda
- Tanks/weights/air fills
- 2 nights Marshall Island Resort twin share
- Airport transfers

The itinerary and costs are subject to change, currency fluctuations & subject to 2005 price



WANT TO KNOW MORE? CONTACT:

Mick Jeacle

PH: 0438712786 Email: mpjeacle@bigpond.net.au

ALLWAYS DIVE EXPEDITIONS

168 HIGH ST, ASHBURTON, 3117, AUSTRALIA PH: 10 9895 8863 FAN: 13 988 5079 TOLL FREE: 180 338 239 Lic No 32311 We'll Allways Know.... About Where You want To Go allways diventallways travelservice.com Hi everyone.

I am pleased to advise that the Marshall Islands trip has been booked for May next year. Please refer to the attached flier for details.

The cost is a little higher than anticipated due to the fact that we will be staying on the "cruise ship" Oleanda for an additional 2 nights as there is no accommodation available on Rongelap Atoll. However our dive guides have generously included one extra night (all meals included) for free, and the other at a reduced rate.

I should point out that the cost compares favourably when compared to diving out of Majuro only, as it includes all meals and unlimited diving. I spent a couple of pleasurable hours on this boat during a lagoon dinner cruise a couple of weeks ago, and the space has to be seen to be believed. The food was excellent also, and there is a fully stocked bar for our use. I will be contacting Yokwe Divers (our guides) in due course to discuss the bar prices etc in the near future.

We will be virtually stepping of the plane and straight on to the Oleanda on 23 May, 2005. The boat will depart and travel overnight to our first destination, which I believe to be Erikup Atoll. Here we will probably spend a day diving and then on to Likiep Atoll where we will spend a further day or two. Then it's off to Rongelap Atoll where we will dive the pristine waters until 31 May, experiencing visibility in excess of 150 feet in most locations. I am told the marine life there has to be seen to be believed and now is the perfect time to go before the area becomes populated again by Marshall Islanders, who have not yet returned following the American nuclear tests on nearby Bikini Atoll some 50 years ago. In 1989 I experienced live aboard diving with 5 other VSAG members in the Solomon Islands for 12 days. Without doubt, this was my greatest ever dive trip and one that I shall never forget. To stay on a live aboard with friends, enjoying our mutual passions of diving, eating, drinking, is something else indeed. Sure beats a morning and then an afternoon dive whilst land based, with nothing to do in between. You will be able to dive until your heart's content, including night dives.

On the Oleanda we will be spoilt for sure. Great meals, guides to look after our dive gear, deck shower to rinse after each dive, air-conditioned cabins with full en-suites, great bar and unbelievable space to lounge around when not diving. Camera buffs will be catered for; wash facilities and recharging facilities all provided.

I suggest you visit www.rongelapexpeditions.com to view the Oleanda and the photo gallery etc on Rongelap Atoll.

Finally, if we reach 12 divers/non divers, we will receive a rebate of some \$2,600 to be divided equally among participants which will bring the overall cost down for everybody. If we achieve more than 12 (13 plus) we will receive a second rebate of the same amount, also to be evenly distributed.

On 1st June, we will fly from Rongelap to Majuro, where we will stay for 2 nights at the Marshall Islands Resort (formerly the Outrigger). Here we will amuse ourselves visiting places of interest etc., until boarding our Air Nauru flight on Friday 3 June for the trip home. I am excited by this upcoming dive trip and I'll tell you why. When I visited there earlier this month I was extremely impressed by the proprietors of Yokwe Divers, Darryl & Julie Hodson. These folks couldn't do enough for us and gave the impression that they were prepared to consider any request to ensure that the customer receives what he/she wants. They have a great knowledge of the area, and Darryl states that Rongelap is his favourite spot. I will be conversing with them by email on a regular basis between now and our departure date to ensure that our trip will be a memorable experience for all attendees. Now, in order for us to receive the abovementioned rebates, we must have deposits of \$500 for each person paid by 30 November, 2004. Finally, let's not forget our old mate John Goulding at Air Nauru. On my recent trip John went to great lengths above and beyond the call of duty, to ensure everything went well for our touring party. I know he will be rapt that we are doing this trip, and that he will ensure we are looked after by Air Nauru. Should you require further information, please ring me on 03 5971 2786/Home or 0438 712 786/Mobile, Mick

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

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