

FATHOMS

DECEMBER 06-JANUARY 07

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

**HMAS Canberra - FFG 02
Decommissioning
Year
2005**



SUNK VICTORIA 2007

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~vsag/>
OR

www.vsag.org.au
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And they have not aged a



GERRY DEVRIS

FATHOMS



Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

In this December-January issue...

Committee are listed on Page 6

Article	Author	Page
Editorial	Alan Storen	4
www,vsag.org.au		
Secret Mens Business	Alan Storen	8
DAN article	DAN staff	9
Dive Report 15th October	Greg Richards	10
Dive Report Nov	Lloyd Borrett	12
The Troubadour	Trevor Williams	14
Prom Cup Weekend	Greg Richards	16
A Fish(y) story	John Lawler	20
Vale: Dick Anderson	John Lawler	21
Frigate Drawings	Alan Beckhurst	22
Booking in for dives	Rob Kirk	25
Dive Reports	Lloyd Borrett	26
Lessons to be Learnt	Lloyd Borrett	28
Palau details	Pat Reynolds	32
Gallipoli Submarine		34
Recipe : Seafood and spinach soup		35
The Eliza Ramsden	Greg Richards	36
Emergency contacts		38
Tidal Stream Tables		39-41
VSAG Dive Calendar		42

VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

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Editorial

Well 2006 gone, almost, and 2007 just about upon us it is time for a few thanks to those that have supported VSAG over the past year: to our boat owners who have made their boats available during the year a big thank you because without them we would have very limited diving; to the hard working committee for their efforts during the year; to Mick Jeacle who organised the Nimrod/ Coral

Sea trip in July and to Pat Reynolds for all his help and assistance throughout the year - including the xmas trip, Easter and November weekends . I think that it has been an excellent year but if you have any other input for improvement next year please contact me or one of the committee.

As you will be aware Victoria has been gifted the ex HMAS Canberra for sinking as an artificial reef. Details are still being finalised but the sinking is planned for April 2007 and we should be planning dives on it soon. Watch this space! Congratulations must go to John Lawler and the committee of VARS (Victorian Artificial Reef Society) for all their hard work and negotiations over the past many months. Without their many hours and efforts I am sure that Victoria would not have been gifted the wreck and we would be planning trips to NSW to dive the wreck. As it is NSW have been promised the next ship – ex HMAS Adelaide and that should be ready to dive in 2008.

We have also started revamping the web site and many thanks to Darren Pearce for his input and work on our current site. Lloyd Borrett, a new VSAG member, has come on board with many new ideas and extensive experience in web design and you should visit www.vsag.org.au in the near future to see how the site is coming together. Any suggestions would be most welcome and there is a mechanism for that through the web site itself or contact directly either Lloyd or myself.

Our Christmas trip to Eden is fully booked but if you still wish to go to Eden you can make arrangements with Eden Caravan Park directly to book your own place. Departs boxing day and returns two weeks later. Contact Pat.

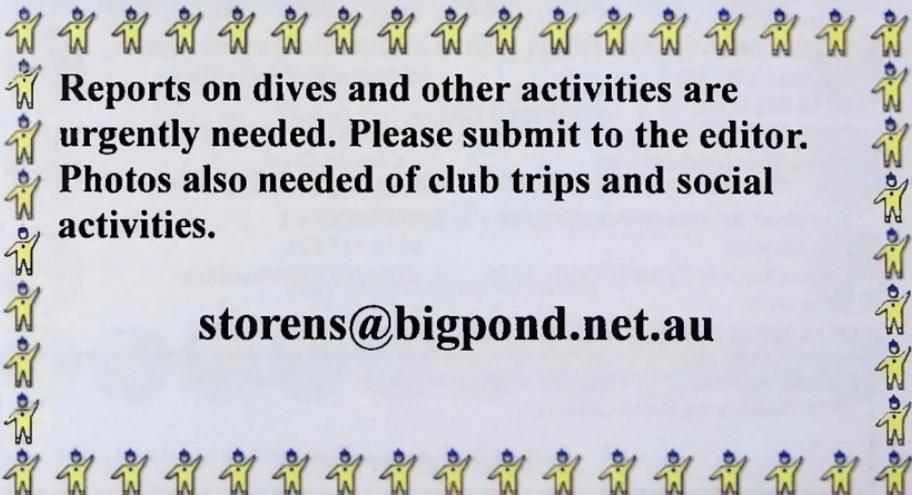
As I write this we have not had our Christmas function but I must thank in advance the social committee – Priya Cardinaletti and Michael Kakafidas – for their work on our behalf. Thanks also to those that have donated prizes for the raffle especially Sonar via Pat Reynolds for the wetsuit, Gabriel Sekias/ Pacific Dunlop for the clothing and Chris Llewellyn for his donation. I am sure a good time will be had by all – report and photos in the next edition.

Support your committee with your input which is always most welcome. Support your magazine by inputting articles, photos, cartoons, recipes, anything really!

On behalf of myself and the rest of the committee I wish you and you families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope santa is kind to you and brings you lots of new diving gear so that you can join us on our dives in 2007. Don't forget the Palau trip (see Pat asap) and the other normal activities – Cape Jaffa, Easter, Xmas trip, etc.

Everything else is surface interval
Alan

PLEASE NOTE WEB SITE DETAILS:
www.vsag.org.au (under construction)
AND
members.iinet.net.au/~vsag/



Reports on dives and other activities are urgently needed. Please submit to the editor. Photos also needed of club trips and social activities.

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ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

www.vsag.org.au

By Lloyd Borrett (www.borrett.id.au)

We are in the process of building a new web site for VSAG. Alan Storen has registered the [vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au) domain name, plus signed us up for a hosting account. I have begun work on setting up the actual web site

How To Register

In order to use the full features of the VSAG web site, you will need to log in as a user. So first you must register a username/nickname and be given access.

To register to use the VSAG web site, please go to <http://www.vsag.org.au>.

At the top of the right side column, you should find a "User Info" box.

Click on the "Register" option. This will take you to the "Registration Agreement Terms", which you must agree to in order to register. Click on "[I Agree to these terms and am over or exactly 13 years of age](#)".

You will then be taken to the "User Account Registration" form. Please provide the details that are asked for. The "Username" is the handle or nickname you will be known as on the VSAG web site. Some people, like me, use their real name as their handle, e.g. "lloyd_borrett". Others prefer to use a nickname, e.g. "diverdave". You can use upper and lower case letters, numbers, plus the dash "-" and underscore "_" characters in your username. The username is case sensitive.

Your password uses the same character set as the username, but must be at least 5 characters long. The password is also case sensitive. Once you have filled in the User Account Registration form, click on the "Submit" button.

[Ed: As the instructions run to 6 pages I will print as a separate booklet.



Many thanks to Lloyd for setting up the new website



Please log on and contribute



You will find it very easy and a new way to communicate
and see what is going on.



Any suggestions welcome



Prom Story shifted to page 16

SECRET MENS' BUSINESS

"Sorry, if you had done something earlier then we could have been assured of a more positive outcome!" These words were given recently to a colleague who, like most males, had put off the 'annual medical' for over 15 years. The 'it couldn't happen to me' philosophy had failed and he became the 'someone else'!

I recently found out the recommended intervals for a medical check-up were as follows: below 40 – every 5 years; 40 to 60 - every other year and over 60 – every year. If you have family history you should go more often.

How long is it since your last health check? This is **not** the last time you went to the doctor for some minor ailment but a full medical – blood test, urine test, lumps and bumps check, moles, the works! Does your blood pressure rival the air pressure in your diving tank? If the terms HDL, LDL, psa, etc are not familiar to you then it is well past your 'go for a medical' date. Why should women have all the fun with mammograms and paps?

Do you have your doctor's phone number in amongst the 100s recorded in your mobile phone contacts – if not, is that telling you something? If you can't remember when your last medical was then it is probably time. Ring today!

Some of our members have not updated their RESCUE and resus/CPR skills for some time and might be a bit rusty – do them a favour by not needing their assistance, would you want mouth-to-mouth from ????????? (you add the name).

Do your buddy a favour by asking when their last medical was – they might be more receptive to your suggestion/encouragement than their wife/ partners nagging. Do not give up on first response.

When I did suggest having a medical to a member, who shall remain nameless, the following conversation took place. Me: "What are you, a man or a mouse? Him: "Shut up and pass the cheese!" This was followed by something about manhood, virility, sperm counts and samples. I will keep trying!

VSAG needs you alive and well to maintain our current membership numbers, apart from the fact we would also like to see you on the occasional dive or at a social function or meeting.

Become DIVE FIT for Christmas, even if you are past your 'DIVE BY:' date. At the latest a New Year Resolution!

PS. Upcoming article(s) on Dental checks, Hearing checks and Have you got a legal will? Watch this space!

Buddy Tips for a Safe Summer Diving Season

With the summer diving season having just commenced right now is a great time to reinforce strategies on "how to" dive safely with your dive buddy. To ensure an incident-free season follow the below tips and refer to the DAN website - www.danaslapacific.org - for more information.

Tips for Diving with a Buddy

- **Choose a compatible buddy.** Someone with similar underwater interests that moves at the same speed as you is more likely to remain close by.
- **Plan the dive together, and agree on what you will do once underwater.** E.g. Where you will go? Who will lead? What will be your bottom time?
- Agree on the **safety stops** you will perform.
- **Confirm your underwater signals** before diving with a new buddy.
- **Agree on lost buddy procedure:** If a diver goes missing, the other diver searches for no more than one minute, after which time he/she surfaces.
- **Begin the descent together, facing each other.** Match your descent speed to that of the slower diver.
- **Be equal partners underwater.** Avoid dependant diving, where one diver constantly leads and the other follows.
- **Share the lead** by using pre-arranged signals, or swim side by side.
- **Signal frequently** while underwater.
- **Agree that it's "one-out all-out"**.

The DAN Asla-Pacific Team wish you a great summer diving season!

Who is DAN Asia-Pacific?

For scuba divers worldwide, DAN means safety, health and peace of mind. Committed to improving the safety of diving for all divers DAN is a not-for-profit member-based organisation. Wherever members live or dive around the world they have peace of mind knowing that DAN is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week to assist in the event of an accident. DAN strives to improve the safety of diving, via activities that include providing **Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage and Insurance Services for Members**, funding and/or manning **24-hour diving emergency hotlines** throughout the region, offering **non-emergency diving medical advice**, **accident management training**, **undertaking data collection and research** to enhance dive safety, and more. **Become a DAN Member and join more than 200,000 divers worldwide who support dive safety through DAN. Visit www.danaslapacific.org.**

**Queenscliff Drift Diving:
Sun 15th Oct 06 It's Madness Alan!!!!
Dive Platform: SS Jeacle**

Crew: M Jeacle, A Storen, D Pearce & G Richards and Mick Kakafikas

I went for a drive on Saturday down to Rye and back along the coast Road. The weather was very ordinary and the wind was 30-35 knots South to South westerly. It was miserable and very uninviting- rough seas, big swells, and forecast to stay that way for Sunday. I started to make alternate plans for my Sunday dive day and settled into my armchair with a good book.

At 6.30 pm as I quaffed a fine Red, my mobile went off. The caller I.D. said it was Alan Storen and I realized that he was ringing me with the bad news that the dive was off. But No!

It's ON says Alan in his best deadpan voice. You can't be serious I spluttered. He tells me he has checked with Mick Jeacle and it's all systems GO. At this point I wasn't sure if this was a set up or not, so I rang the man himself -Michael Jeacle.

"IT'S Madness" he growled." I told him, I said Alan, its straight out madness.!" He ranted on like this for a short while and when he finally drew breath, I quietly asked if he was really going out. He bellowed back " I told 'Im, it's just plain Madness, Alan!!!" He then confirmed that the weather report was worse than originally thought and that yes, he had agreed to take us all diving. It was truly madness indeed.

I met Mick at the agreed time the next morning and we drove down to Sorrento muttering under our breath about the thousands of Around the Bay bike riders, most of whom seemed to have a death wish and Mick was in the mood to accommodate them. Absolute madness.

The group assembled at Sorrento Ramp and amidst much banter managed to launch the good ship and by 9.30 am we were off. It was decided to have a look at the rip area to checkout conditions to see how unsuitable they were. Upon inspection the considered opinion of the group was to aim for the reef off Queenscliff, in an attempt to get out of the wind and hopefully find calmer water. At some point in time Alan Storen managed to land heavily on a tank with his knee and did some considerable damage to himself. He decided to not dive due to his injury. We suspected that he knew he had led us up the garden path, and was looking for an easy way out, but we kept this dark thought to ourselves.

As the next squall hit us with driving rain and increased wind and wave actions, the skipper quietly decided to keep Alan company, and stay topside. The first 2 divers were selected and told to ready themselves for action. With that they proceeded to gear up at a pace that would make most snails green with envy. Enthusiasm was evaporating quickly. I then decided to play a wait and see game in case it was as bad as it looked. It was indeed sheer utter madness.

Finally we managed to get the 2 volunteers into a state of near readiness and with the skipper roaring his version of encouragement(a mixture of sarcasm and hearty laughter), the 2 lads were finally ready. The buoy was turfed overboard and after some gentle pushing so were the 2 guinea pigs.

After some 35 minutes they reappeared refreshed and quite exuberant. It appeared despite the lousy conditions that the viz was 15m (45 ft) and the terrain very impressive. Good fish life with excellent ledges plus the usual good sponge/soft corals. I was flabbergasted. Surely not I thought. The group now turned to me and suggested that short of producing a sperm sample the only way I was going to prove I was a man was to gear up and get in the soup. Although neither thought held genuine appeal I decided to humour them by assembling my gear.

Well I have to say this dive was a very pleasant surprise. The viz and the bottom was all it had been rumoured to be, plus a bit more. A very relaxing half hour was spent with numerous fish and quite large sting rays exploring ledge after ledge down to 30m (100 ft) . No crays seen, nor for that matter any abalone, but then again I wasn't really looking.

Afterwards we had lunch in the calm still waters of the Queenscliff wharves and then decided to explore a patch of shallower reef we had noticed earlier. To save time we decided that the 3 participants would go together tethered and check out the spot.

By now the weather had abated somewhat, the sky was clearing slightly and the sea was only a tad sloppy, but the water looked decidedly greener.

The bottom for this spot was only average, with several barren patches interspersed with good sections of reef albeit only small in area. The water was reasonably warm at 14.5 C, but the viz had dropped to only 9m (25 ft) and we spent most of it at 15m-18m (work it out your selves). Mick K indicated after 30 minutes that boredom was getting the better of him, but I conned him into another 5 mins in case we stumbled across something of interest. Darren was wandering off on the line looking for gold bars and playing with one of his pony bottles when I suddenly saw a shadow in front of me. On looking up I

was a few feet from the biggest dolphin I've ever had the pleasure of sharing the ocean with.

The dolphin was checking me out and slowly swam past me and then turned side on and passed me on my left side. By now Mick K had noticed it and was wide eyed in amazement and gave me a look that indicated that my 5 more minutes idea had had merit after all. As the dolphin swam slowly off to our rear Mick took chase and finning like a madman into the current he kept up with our friend and promptly disappeared into the gloom. After a short interval he re-appeared and we exchanged high fives and tried to let Darren in on our sighting. It seems he neither saw the dolphin nor did he find those damn elusive gold bars.

Back on board the boat we doffed our gear and spread it evenly around the boat in a manner resembling a teenagers bedroom. The verdict was that a great days diving had been done and that any one who would dare suggest that diving in these conditions is not on, is suffering from some form of madness. Yep... madness.

GR

Dive report nov2006

Boat: John Lawler's 6.5m 175HP

Benita and I met up with John and Rob at the Sorrento boat ramp at 9 a.m. Suited up and loaded our kit onto the boat.

Conditions were not great. Strong Easterly blowing, seas a bit rough. So we decided to head up to the Rosebud Reef. It was a rather rough but enjoyable passage, with everyone getting thoroughly wet.

Once we located the Rosebud Reef, we put in a shot line at the Eastern end. Benita and John paired up for the first dive.

Neither Rob or myself made note of when they went in. Rob eventually asked, "How long do you think they've been in?"

"About 10 minutes", I replied. "So they'll probably be up sometime after 11."

About 20 minutes later Rob said, "They're doing very well for a 28m dive."

"No, it's not supposed to be that deep," I responded. "John said it was about 8 to 9 meters. Maybe that depth sounder is reading feet." Sure enough, it was.

John and Benita eventually came back up and were retrieved.

Then Rob and I kitted up and went in.

What a great little reef this turned out to be. Very pretty with lots of sea life. Visibility was about 10 metres. We just gently proceeded along the reef checking it all out. Towards the end of the dive I was watching two fish doing some sort of dance. It was possibly some sort of mating thing. I don't know. But it was interesting to watch.

We surfaced and got back onto the boat. Rob said to Benita, "I though you said Lloyd was an air pig. I thought he was never going to want to come up."

"I told you he's getting better," Benita replied.

I reminded them both that Rob had a 12L tank, whereas I had a 15L tank.

A beautiful reef site, a long bottom time and great diving companions. It couldn't have been better for my 50th dive.

We had lunch and then decided what to do for our second dive.

Because of the poor surface conditions, we decided to head to Point Nepean for a drift dive.

Boat: John Lawler's 6.5m 175HP

After a rather rough and wet passage from Rosebud Reef, we arrived on site at the Quarantine Station and prepared for a drift dive.

Rob decided to sit this dive out. Benita and John decided to just go with the air left in their first dive tanks. I switched to my new 12L Faber steel tank.

John had problems with a free flowing regulator when he went in, which resulted in him not having a lot of air left by the time that was sorted and we made it to the bottom.

I couldn't understand why I was having trouble getting down. I know I'd switched from a 15L to 12L tank and should maybe have added some weight to compensate. But then again, I'd been thinking I might be able to drop a bit of weight anyway and this would be a test to see if I could. Maybe I was wrong about that.

Once down, we started to gently drift along and check out the bottom. John spotted a small stingray settled in the sand. After a short time, John handed me the dive buoy line and ascended. Benita and I continued on.

We saw a few crabs, but not a lot else. I came across a very thick wire cable submerged in the sand. Then Benita started waving to me and pointing around us. We were surrounded by a large school of silver fish about 30 cm in length. There must have been hundreds of them just circling us at about a 2m distance from us for a few minutes. It was simply delightful.

Then they quickly disappeared.

We drifted up to what seemed to be the remains of a pylon standing up about 2m high in the sand. I took a look and didn't notice anything much and moved on. Then Benita beckoned me back and pointed out a nice sea horse.

Eventually we were both low on air and ascended for a 5m safety stop and then surfaced.

As I went to hand my BC weight pockets up into the boat, and was surprised to find them both missing. On no, not more gear loss, were my first thoughts. Then, I started to think back. Did I put them back onto the BC after the first dive? Sure enough, I hadn't. So I ended up doing this dive with just 10 kg instead of my usual 16 kg, with a lighter 12L tank instead of my heavier 15L tank. Okay, so I did have problems getting down, but I was reasonably okay after that, so maybe I can drop some weight.

Lloyd Borrett



The Troubadour



Thoughts and experiences of a VSAG member and diver.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Would you dive to 35 m in 1.5 to 2 m waves with the wind slowly backing off 25 knots overnight and a diver who had completed only NINE dives? I know at least one dive operator up north prepared to do this. Fortunately the diver was only seasick and exhausted by the experience. He also had the nous to not repeat the experience on a second dive. And the operators sympathetic response! "You know I can't give you any money back, don't you?"



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I have never been shy about aborting a dive when I feel uncomfortable, and I expect this attitude from my buddies too. Recently my buddy had an uncomfortable experience on the 39m sub. Together we ascended a little, assessed the situation, decided to abort and commenced the full ascent with safety stops. These ascents can be quite disturbing and require a conscious effort to calmly consider options and choose the correct actions. Often the uncomfortable diver is prone to use air quickly, compounding any other problems. We surfaced safely and my buddy was in the water later for a confidence building dive on the Eliza Ramsden. I was full of admiration for the way he and we handled this stressful situation.



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We had wonderful weather and a calm sea when we dived the 39 m sub and the Eliza Ramsden. And how exciting to have 3 boats and eleven divers out together, including recently joined club members Benita, Lloyd Borrett, John Merlo and Peter Briggs with his boat. The following week we had more new members, Tom and James Hill, out and under. Welcome newbies to the vagaries of VSAG diving.

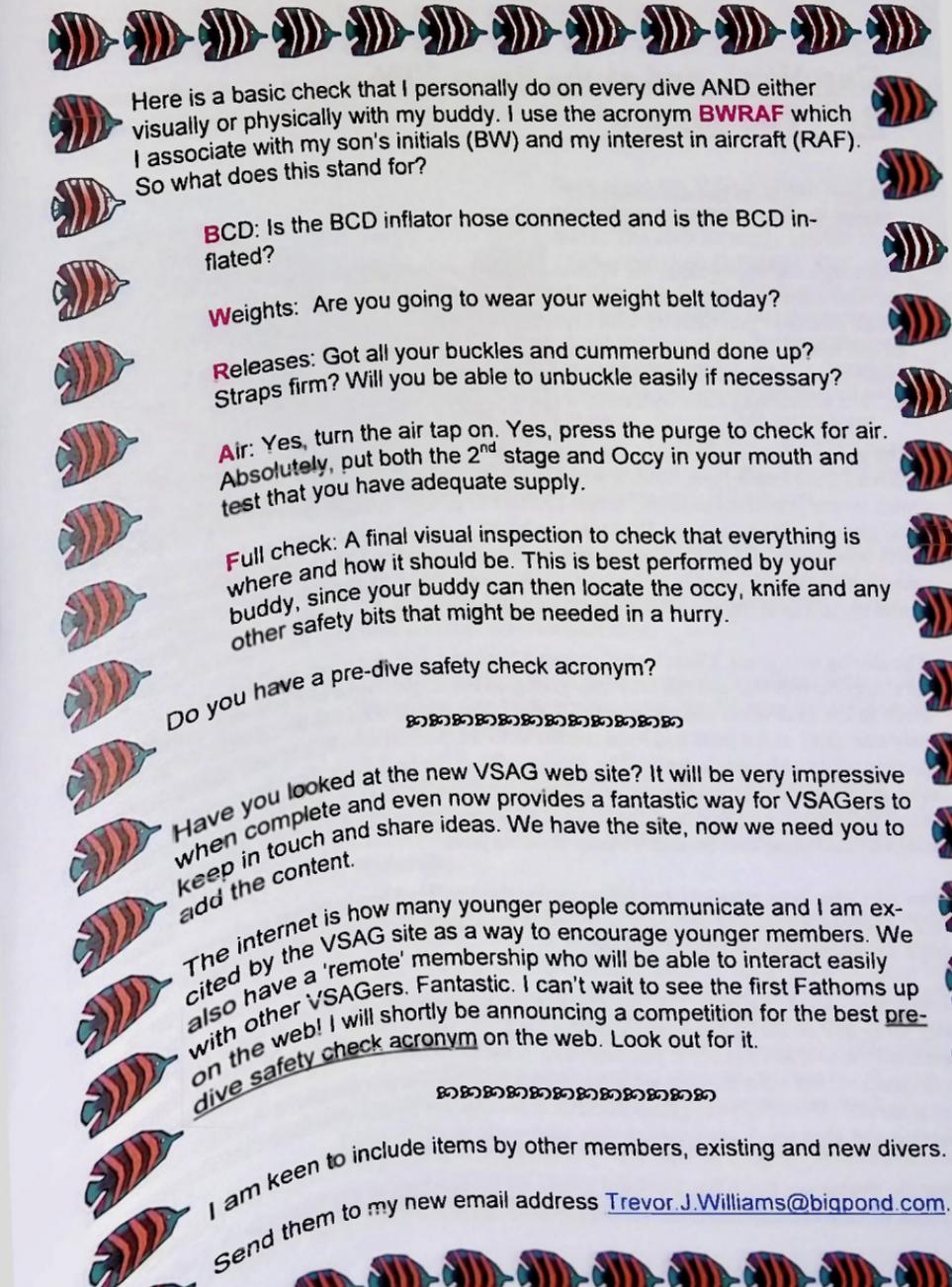


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Occasionally we have issues with basic pre-dive preparations. In almost all cases the problems are identified before divers are in the water. But not always. We have a number of divers in the club now, including myself, who are either relatively inexperienced or who are diving a site for the first time. Sometimes things get overlooked.





Here is a basic check that I personally do on every dive AND either visually or physically with my buddy. I use the acronym **BWRAF** which I associate with my son's initials (BW) and my interest in aircraft (RAF). So what does this stand for?

BCD: Is the BCD inflator hose connected and is the BCD inflated?

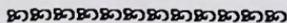
Weights: Are you going to wear your weight belt today?

Releases: Got all your buckles and cummerbund done up? Straps firm? Will you be able to unbuckle easily if necessary?

Air: Yes, turn the air tap on. Yes, press the purge to check for air. Absolutely, put both the 2nd stage and Occy in your mouth and test that you have adequate supply.

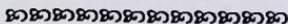
Full check: A final visual inspection to check that everything is where and how it should be. This is best performed by your buddy, since your buddy can then locate the occy, knife and any other safety bits that might be needed in a hurry.

Do you have a pre-dive safety check acronym?



Have you looked at the new VSAG web site? It will be very impressive when complete and even now provides a fantastic way for VSAGers to keep in touch and share ideas. We have the site, now we need you to add the content.

The internet is how many younger people communicate and I am excited by the VSAG site as a way to encourage younger members. We also have a 'remote' membership who will be able to interact easily with other VSAGers. Fantastic. I can't wait to see the first Fathoms up on the web! I will shortly be announcing a competition for the best pre-dive safety check acronym on the web. Look out for it.



I am keen to include items by other members, existing and new divers.

Send them to my new email address Trevor.J.Williams@bigpond.com.

Cup Week-end at the Prom 2006.

By "The Shadow"

Theme: Boatless but not diveless!!

Motto: Resourceful, relentless and resilient.

Although the eponymous Mr Wilson is no longer with us, his rugged Promontory is. And once again it provided us with a weekend to long remember. This is the place that God practices on with his lousy weather, before unleashing it on the rest of the world. He gave us wind, some rain, rough seas and the prospect of even more wind- an Easterly with a bit of Westerly in it no less. But what he also gave us, that which was most welcome, was clear water. Very clear water.

The group began to take shape by Saturday morning as the last of the stragglers arrived from home base. With a weather forecast that looked dodgy at best, and with worse predicted to come, it was decided to plough through the crashing surf and give the Glennies a go. By 11am the beach looked like the Normandy invasion, with boats from 5-6 dive clubs spread out across the entire launch area. Different members scabbed lifts off different clubs although due to the weather we all finished up in much the same location- South Glennie in the lee.

The diving was great. Clear water, massive boulders with the usual endless swim-thru's, good fish life and the odd cray giving us the finger. Most had two enjoyable dives in the 14C water enjoying the 45ft + vis. The Shadow had to be content with only one dive, as his boat had been misled as to the plan of attack, and had subsequently taken only single tanks. The Shadow drove the boat back thru the raging slop and as it approached the surf line the motor literally blew up and was later found to be terminal. Exit one dive boat. The owner has since offered me the remains of said dead dive boat at a vastly reduced price.

That nite after boat retrieval and filling tanks, the small but hardy group gathered in 2nd Avenue and began some serious Red Wine appraisals over an impressively large Tupperware container of cashews.

I only mention the cashews because due a small technical oversight they were the only thing that could be eaten or drunk that I actually took with me for the whole weekend. Now I don't know if you have ever tried to go to the toilet after eating only cashews, but I am reliably informed that it requires a crank handle, a spoon and a nurse!! Mercifully the group decided to indulge my pitiful efforts at self catering and after much consultation they sent me to the SDF BBQ.

After the Barbie we had a few civilized drinks whilst listening to the raucous drunken screams emanating from 1st avenue until the early hours. Finally they

were subdued by the Rangers' persistence (hopefully using clubs or stun guns) as well as the approaching dawn. This was bad enough, but I was meant to be diving with them!



Once again the VSAG group split up as needed and scabbed lifts of Black Rock, The club formerly known as Marlin and even Getunder. The weather was decidedly suspect and much consternation was expressed about the size of the surf and the general weather report. As usual common sense did not prevail and we all went anyway. The sensible boats went back to the Glennies whilst the more insane went to Wattle Island off the Southern end of the Prom.

It was a miserable day. Grey skies, sleet, big sloppy seas, constant drizzle and the ever present biting cold wind. We bashed our way to the dive spots through gritted teeth with the waves crashing into the boats and sending a constant soaking spray into our eyes. Our backs and legs took a savage merciless beating.

Needless to say, we had a ball. The divers all reported great viz, excellent bottom life and even more fish than yesterday. My buddy came across an 8lb cray out for a walk seemingly aware of the Marine Park regulations.

Getting the boats out in such conditions requires skill, timing, experience and a well drilled team. Suffice to say a fair degree of learning took place that day and a few of the assorted crews decided that they would take a little rest after retrieving the boats, until Tuesday or even Wednesday.

The Sunday evening social event was a fully catered event (although the cashews were noticeably absent) and the highlight was the attempt to make the worlds biggest spaghetti Bolognese using half a side of beef and several kilos of pasta. After helping the chef devour half the massive dish I was informed I would be eating it again for lunch until it was all gone. I had further visions of the sadistic nurse with the large spoon and spent a restless night covered in a panic induced sweat dreading my next toilet visit. The noise from 1st Avenue was nearing Rock Concert proportions , but we all slept soundly through the drunken revelry until they were either comatose or dead.

During the night an aggressive wombat tore its way into my neighbours tent and much to her disgust only lived up to 2/3rds of their reputation.

Monday arose with (slightly lighter) winds blowing offshore and a flat surf launch beckoned. Due to the previous days experiences, be they dive related or alcohol related, the vast majority of boat owners elected to lay down and have a little nap. Most of the crews had similar thoughts and wandered off into the middle distance to contemplate their respective navels.



Not so our intrepid leader, our own version of the lame duck President was not so easily put off. A few boats put to sea in small surf and bounced their way to Ramsbotham Rocks and he was once again huddled in amongst them. If there is a boat putting to sea when he is around he is sure to find a way to smuggle himself on board. Good thing he wasn't on the dock when they boarded the Titanic!

By all reports the viz was up around 100 ft and the diving was staggeringly good. A pox on those weak pussies who wimped out was declared- I am still having penicillin shots to get rid of it. The non diving VSAG few rode bikes, read the Age, drove to Yanakie for supplies, played guitars and in one case simply went home. The Shadow got powerful bored and decided to get one last dive in on Tuesday before packing

That night a select few were invited by the Commando team from Getunder to view a video of the days dive at Ramsbotham. It wasn't quite up to Andys' standard of a

complete surround sound 3D giant screen Gold Class outdoor cinema experience but it was very much appreciated and led to 2 of us joining the Commando team for a precision planned expedition the next morning.

The plan was load gear at 8am sharp, launch at speed and then dash to the Glenies ,have one dive, and be back on the beach finished at 12 noon sharp. Leaving plenty of time to pack and get home at a civilized time. I was ever so disappointed when we didn't get back to the beach until 10 past 12. Talk about slack.

If ever the SDF wants to invade IRAQ I want to go with these guys. it would be a blast. Oh, did I mention that the diving was sensational to boot. Viz was down to 60 ft and sadly we didn't see any mating Whales but we did see just about everything else imaginable.

By mid afternoon the VSAG ranks had thinned to just one member. I can't place his name as I didn't see him out diving. Must be those silk sheets in his van that cause that contented inscrutable smile on his face even though not venturing into the beckoning ocean. Or, maybe it was the constant sound of lascivious seagulls mounting each other on his roof that causes him to want to stay after we all go . Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts and minds of men.....The Shadow does!

Expedition Summary:

The Cast :

Lame Duck President: played by himself

The Troubadour(s) played by Trevor (where's the Band??) Williams

Darren Pearce

The Shadow

John Mills

Priya

Andys daughter and Son in-law complete with dual ankle biters.(non speaking cameo roles)

Special Guest appearances by Pat " I'll drive the cars back" Reynolds and the gay Marsupial himself, Wimpy the wonder Wombat.

Assisting clubs- With grateful thanks to Marlin, Brudg, Getunder, and Latrobe Valley.

For those concerned members who fret over such matters it should be noted that No Animals were harmed in the making of this dive trip.

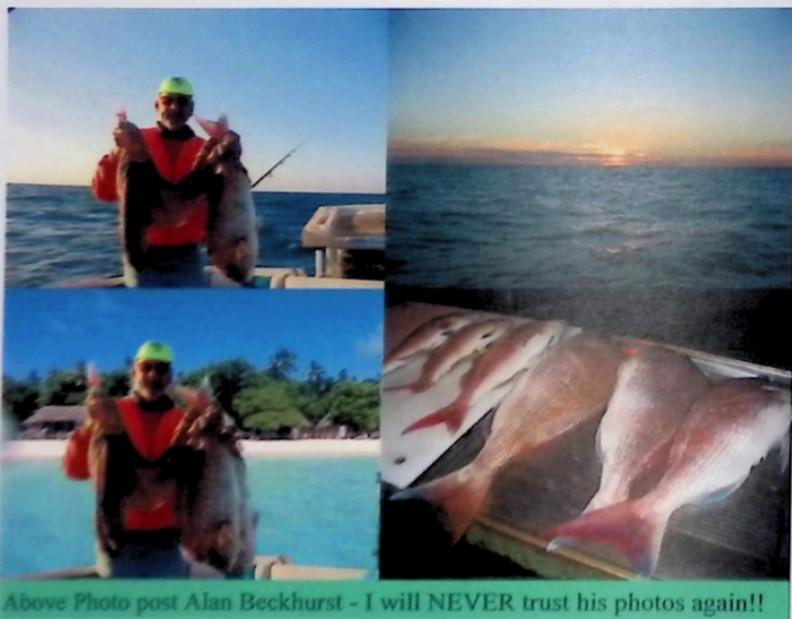
Footnote: The dive boat owner from Black Rock has asked if we know anywhere he can dump a dead 70 HP Johnson outboard without getting caught. I have suggested a particular Church in South Frankston.

A fishy story of ego and self indulgence!!!

A rough 10kms boat trip south of Beaumaris last evening (wind south east to(20- 25knts) to a favourite snapper site of mine that has been very productive over the past few snapper seasons...the three big fish were just under 5kgs and the little ones were 1.5kgs to 2kgs...Third Pic is the total days catch.

The sunset was brilliant but note the swells! The small fish came on first and the larger ones hit over two hours..there is a theory that in a school of fish there are generally larger ones ..this seems to be the case.

Cheers,
JL



Where is the baby??



Vale: Dick Anderson. 1932-2006.

Dick Anderson, a diver who lent his expertise to many Hollywood films, and saved a life of the Californian coast passed away on September 26th 2006 aged 73.

Dick Anderson was a scuba diving adventurer, innovator, equipment designer, treasure hunter and underwater film maker whose skills were sought out by Hollywood for movies such as 20,000 Leagues under The Sea, Jaws; The Revenge sequel and the TV series Baywatch. A very talented man!

Anderson's 1960 design for the scuba regulator, which controls the flow of air depending on the water pressure, is the most common used by scuba gear manufacturers today. Dick Anderson is also remembered for his heroism during a depth diving record attempt in the Pacific on December 3 1962 during which two British divers perished!

Richard Eisner Anderson was born in Portland, Oregon in 1932 and was raised by a foster family until he ran away from home and school at the young age of 15.

Fascinated by the ocean, he headed west and settled in Santa Monica California. He said he started 'skin diving' mainly to feed himself by spearing fish for his meals. During these food gathering dives he became enchanted by all the sea life he saw.

Anderson graduated from the Sparling school of deep diving in Wilmington, California in 1954. He found work immediately as a diving technician on the Walt Disney film 20,000 Leagues under the Sea. The film starred Kirk Douglas and James Mason.

When work was slow Anderson worked in a Los Angeles sports shop and became an expert in aqualung equipment at a time when sports diving was beginning to take off. Hired by the Healthways company, he designed an helped to develop his revolutionary scuba regulator, using the medical O-ring technique as the basis.

In the 60's he was editor of Dive magazine.

Anderson's own films were usually humorous documentaries such as "Gold from the Winfield Scott and "Mack the Diving Dog", the latter about a spaniel who dives for abalone shells.

He also took part in several treasure diving expeditions which included the 1975 attempt to recover gold from the Spanish galleon Nuestra Senora de la Maravillas which sank off Nassau in the Bahamas in 1656.

In 1994 Anderson wrote a book on his treasure quests called Diving and Dredging for Gold.

Dick Anderson is survived by his wife Bridget and their three daughters.

Water World

What would happen to the world's coastlines if the West Antarctic Ice Sheet melted, raising global sea levels by as much as 20 feet? Some scientists say a collapse is inevitable, possibly even imminent. An iceberg the size of Phillip Island broke off recently and floated up past NZ—you might have seen part of it on Channel 9. About 20,000 years ago when the height of the Ice Age was at its peak, sea levels were 400 feet lower than today, and there was a lot more land to go around.

If the East Antarctic Ice Sheet were to melt (No one believes this monstrous dome will disintegrate anytime soon) but if it did, it would raise seas around the world by as much as 200 feet.

IDEAL DEPTHS FOR S

26 - 28m
deep

18 - 20m
to main deck

12 - 14 m to
superstructure



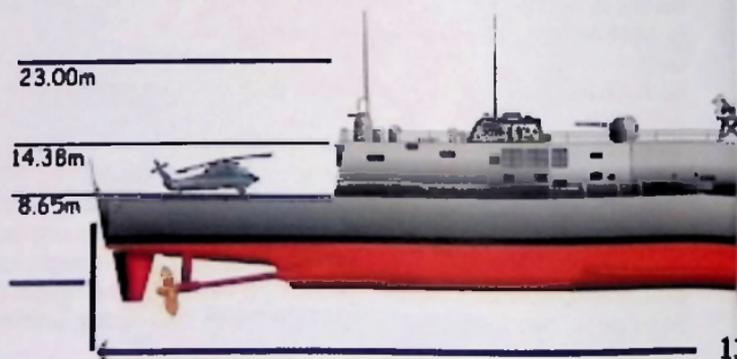
The ex HMAS Carromat

36.25m

23.00m

14.38m

8.65m



CUTTLED FRIGATE

3 - 5m
to nav tower



berra is coming

Relative Heights From Keel (not to scale)



A zen story... it has a lovely message for us all!

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole, which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water, at the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After 2 years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?" "That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

So, to all of my crackpot friends, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path!

FUNERAL PROCESSION

A woman was leaving a convenience store with her morning coffee when she noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery. A long black hearse was followed by a second long black hearse about 50 feet behind the first one. Behind the second hearse was a solitary woman walking a pit bull on a leash. Behind her, a short distance back, were about 200 women walking single file.

The woman couldn't stand her curiosity. She respectfully approached the woman walking the dog and said, "I am so sorry for your loss, and I know this is a bad time to disturb you, but I've never seen a funeral like this.

Whose funeral is it?"

My husband's."

"What happened to him?" The woman replied, "My dog attacked and killed him."

She inquired further, "Well, who is in the second hearse?" The woman answered, "My mother-in-law. She was trying to help my husband when the dog turned on her."

A poignant and thoughtful moment of silence passed between the two women.

"Can I borrow the dog?"

"Get in line."

A WOMAN'S PRAYER

Dear Lord, I pray for Wisdom to understand a man, Love to forgive him, and Patience for his moods. Because, Lord, if I pray for Strength, I'll just beat him to death.

Booking in for Dives

Have you ever tried to book in for a dive on a Saturday night to find that the dive captain's phone is constantly engaged?? We've all been through it. You dial and you dial and you dial. It can certainly be quite frustrating.

Dial...engaged / Dial...engaged / Dial...engaged / go to fridge, get tinny / Dial...engaged / Dial...engaged / go to fridge, get tinny / Dial...engaged / Dial...engaged / mutter "How many people are calling in for this dive?" / Dial...engaged / go to fridge, get tinny / Dial...engaged / visit lemon tree / go to fridge, get tinny / Dial...AT LAST IT RINGS !!! / Slur drunkenly "Shpose a dive's out of the question!!!" / Apologise to old lady / Check number / Question memory / Dial...engaged / etc etc

So, I put some thought to the problem in search of an outcomes-driven solution that was both fair and efficient and which saves time for all involved in this process of booking onto dives. But I ran out of tinnies and forgot all about it. I visited the lemon tree again and went back inside....back to dialling.

Surely, surely, he couldn't possibly still be on the bloody-phone????

Start to pacc room like caged animal / Crush empty can / pick up phone / Dial... engaged / Crush empty can / Pick up empty can / Try to crush phone...

Finally, in desperation, and contrary to the specific instructions printed in the Dive Calendar in Fathoms I went to Plan-B and rang him on his mobile.

"Yeah?" he sez. "Really?" he sez. "I'd better check" he sez.

And then he comes back and he sez - "Oh, I'm sorry, I'd left the fax machine on "Transmit"..."

Laugh / Make arrangements for dive / Crush empty can against forehead....

And the moral of the story? Prior experience is not necessarily an indicator of current performance. If the number's "always engaged" when you ring the Dive Captain don't worry. It doesn't necessarily mean that the dive's booked out. You just might still be able to get on!!

Rob Kirk

Dive report 22nd Oct 2006

Lloyd Borrett

Boat Name: Peter Brigg's boat

Set out from Sorrento Boat Ramp.

We tied up to the pier at the South Channel Fort. There was a strong current running under the boat and pier.

Peter and I prepared to go in. Rolled back into the water only to find the current had swept me under the boat! Got to the surface and made my way to the bow of the boat. Then my left fin came off! I found it stuck by the current to a pier pylon, grabbed and drifted under the pier. Made my way to the other arm of the pier where I propped and put my fin back on, Checked both fins were okay and then joined Peter on the bottom.

In the lee of the Fort there was little current and there was a lot to see.

After looking around for a while I decided to head back into the current, under the pier, towards the boat. It was a case of grabbing onto anything you could in order to claw your way against the current.

Out on the otherside of the Fort, again there was little current. So spent the rest of the dive there.

Came up to 5m for a while as a safety stop. Then surfaced and went from pylon to pylon along the pier and out to the boat.

Took off my BC and weight harness and handed them up to Alan.

Went around to the back of the boat to exit. Just as I got to the back of the boat my right fin came off and was swept away in the current.

After getting out, we had a hunt around for my fin from the boat, but no luck. We tied up to the jetty again, had a look around the fort and had our lunch.

Quite a few lessons learnt on this short dive.

While having lunch at the South Channel Fort, for our second dive of the day we decided to try a drift dive over the reef off of the old Quarrantine Station.

I had lost a fin on the previous dive, but thankfully Alan Storen wasn't diving and his Oceanic Vortex V12 fins fitted me. I had arranged for Alan to bring along a second air cylinder, so I was good to go. However, Peter didn't have much air left, so that was going to limit the dive.

Peter and I entered the water and descended. There was very little current, and all we saw was a sandy bottom. Obviously we'd missed the reef.

After a short time looking at not very much, Peter was low on air and we ascended.

Dive Report 19th Nov 2006

Lloyd Borrett

Boats: John Lawler, Mick Jeacle, Peter Brigg

Benita and I met up with John and Alan at Sorrento Boat Ramp. Soon after, Mick Jeacles and Peter Briggs arrived with their boats. Rob, Trevor Williams et al all arrived. Benita and I were teamed up with John and Rob in John's boat, so we started to load the gear.

Conditions were marvelous. The three boats motored out of the heads to the dive site together.

Benita and Rob buddied up for the first dive. Then John and I buddied up for the second dive.

Conditions were great. We followed the shot line down onto the J2 Submarine. John showed me inside a rear entrance. Then we proceeded towards the bow, checking out the break in the submarine along the way. Once at the bow we headed back towards the conning tower.

The amount and variety of fish about was great. Visibility was about 7m to 10m, so I got a good look at the colours of the growth everywhere on the submarine structure.

By the time we reached the conning tower I was down to 100 bar and signalled to John that it was time for me to start the ascent. I stopped at 5m and hung around for the required deco time.

It was a most delightful dive.

Once everyone was back up and aboard the three boats, we headed back inside the head and stopped at Point Nepean to have out lunch. Then we headed off for the second dive on the Eliza Ramsden

John decided to sit this dive out. So Rob, Benita and I buddied up for the dive. The shot line was towards the stern of the wreck on the starboard side. There was still a bit of a current running as we had started down just a bit before slack water. So we headed off into the current, along the base of the starboard side towards the bow.

Certainly plenty to see on this wreck. And the view of the bow from the sand in front of the wreck is simply magnificent.

We started down the base of the port side from the bow, but then popped up on deck and down into the bow. We then moved slowly towards the stern exploring as we went.

By the time we reached the shot line it was time to start our ascent.

Lessons To Learnt

By Lloyd Borrett (www.borrett.id.au)

On the 19th of November 2006, three VSAG boats with some eleven divers headed out for a days diving from the Sorrento Boat Ramp. Based on conditions, it was decided to make the J2, or Broken, submarine the first dive.

Background of the J2

The J class submarines were built in 1917 and were given to the Royal Australian Navy by the British Government in 1919. Due to high operating costs and post WWI cuts in the defence budget, they saw little service. This soon resulted in a decision to scrap the submarines. Two became breakwaters, the J7 at Sandringham and J3 at Swan Island. In 1926 the J1, J2, J4 and J5 were towed outside the Port Phillip Bay heads and sunk in the ships graveyard.

The 84 metre long J2 settled in water 3 kilometres South of Point Lonsdale. The wreck is often referred to as the 38m Sub, but its exact depth varies according to the tide with the stern at approximately 34 metres and the bow at approximately 42 metres.

In the process of sinking the J2, the hull was blown apart just in front of the conning tower. For this reason the J2 is also known as the "Broken Sub". The break gives divers easy access to the inside of the submarine. Thus it has become popular with divers since it was rediscovered in 1974.

On The Day

Rob and Benita were the first pair to descend to the J2 from John Lawler's boat. John Lawler and I buddied up as the second pair. While having dived and penetrated the J4 submarine on a Wreck Dive as a part of my Advanced Open Water Course some months earlier, this was to be my first dive on the J2 submarine. I was treating this as a deep dive, with no intention of penetrating away from the light zone. I knew I would be quite safe with John as my buddy and the conditions were excellent.

Benita and Rob had a great dive and reported that visibility was about 7 to 10 metres. John and I entered the water, journeyed down the shot line, and started to explore the J2.

John showed me inside a rear entrance looking into the stern of the J2. Then we proceeded on the outside of the submarine towards the bow, checking out the break just forward of the conning tower along the way. Once at the bow we headed back towards the conning tower.

The amount and variety of fish about was brilliant. Visibility was about 7m to 10m. I was expecting there to be much less light at this depth and that the range of colours to be seen would be very limited. Yet I was surprised at the vibrant colours of the marine life that was all about us.

By the time we were back at the conning tower we had been underwater for 13 minutes, with a max depth of 38.4 metres and I was down to 100 bar. I signalled this to John, and we started our ascent together up the shot line. After some pauses

on the way, we stopped at 5m and hung around for the required deco time. It was a most delightful dive. (See <http://www.borrett.id.au/divelog/index.php?nr=52> for my dive log and profile.)

Once everyone was back up and aboard the three dive boats, we all motored back inside the heads and stopped at Point Nepean to have our lunch. Then we headed off for a second dive on the Eliza Ramsden.

How good is this for a day out diving! Great company, great enthusiasm, great conditions and great dive locations.

At Days End

Back onshore after the days diving, Benita and I headed off to The Scuba Doctor in Rye, to get our cylinders filled and catch up with Peter Fear and some of the other divers we know who frequent Peter's dive shop.

Peter knows my diving history and is doing his bit to educate me in the ways of this fabulous sport. When I told Peter that we had dived the J2 he said, "You do realise that three people have died diving on the J2?"

Well of course, I didn't know this. Peter loaned me his folder of Coroners Reports and Incident Reports to read and learn from. What follows is my distillation of what I have now read about the last fatal dive on the J2 submarine in the Coroner's Report and an article written by the Victoria Police divers involved.

Deaths On The J2

It turns out that for many years divers untrained in penetration diving have been taken by commercial dive charter boats, plus ventured out in private boats, to dive on the J2 and other subs outside Port Phillip Heads. Many of these divers have successfully completed penetration dives. However, the anecdotal evidence is that many of them have also got into trouble.

Records reveal that in 1981 there was a fatality at the J2 sub when a diver "went missing". Some years ago another diver "disappeared" while diving at 38 metres on the "New Deep Sub". Then in January 1997, a women diver became the third fatality.

She was 28 years old and had been doing a penetration dive through the J2 submarine with her husband. She had 83 dives, 8 below 30 metres, and her husband had between 200 and 300 dives. They had both completed their Advanced, Rescue and Deep Diver certifications. Her husband had also completed his Dive Master certification and was also doing his course to qualify as an instructor.

The overall experience and qualifications of the group of 12 divers that dived from the dive charter boat that day was very high and included four Dive Masters and two Instructors. However, of the 12 divers, only three had any training in penetration dives in a closed overhead environment. Those three divers had all independently decided that conditions were so adverse that they wouldn't penetrate the J2 this day.

It was a warm overcast day, not particularly windy and the sea conditions were slightly choppy. The couple were first in at 9:50 am, with the Dive Master and deck hand having checked that their air tank was on, but not recording their air pressures. The couple checked each other's gear. They had decided that they would look at the wreck, but did not set complete parameters to their dive plan. There was no specific decision made as to whether they would or wouldn't penetrate the wreck.

Water visibility several metres below the surface was between 2.5 to 4 metres. At 39 metres, outside the sub, visibility was described as between 1 to 2 metres. One diver said that at the bottom of the shot line he could not see the submarine and after swimming around, found it 3 metres away!

After reaching the bottom they entered the J2 via a hatchway at the top of the submarine. They swam the length of the submarine inside, past the broken section and past the first and second bulkheads in the front broken section. There it started to silt out, further limiting visibility. They became disoriented and the decompression alarm was sounding on his dive computer.

He eventually made it back to the break, but then realised his wife was no longer with him. With just 50 bar of air left he proceeded back into the hull to look for her. Visibility was now nil. After experiencing a number of difficulties and extremely low on air, he was forced to abandon the search. He made it back to the break and outside of the hull. Being so short of air, he had to make a rapid ascent to the surface, missing 27 minutes of decompression time.

Once those of the surface were alerted to the situation, rescue attempts were soon made by two of the more experienced divers on the boat. They knew it was likely that they would run out of air during the second dive and that residual nitrogen in their system from the first dive raised the possibility of decompression illness.

One diver, who started with 100 bar of air left in his tank and a small pony bottle which had already been partly used on the first dive, managed to explore on the outside of the J2 for signs of the missing diver. He ran out of air at 20 metres on his ascent, but made it to a hang tank with regulators, suspended on a line 9 metres below the surface. He remained at the hang tank until his dive computer indicated that he was out of decompression mode, then surfaced. He suffered significant decompression sickness and ended up having 10 treatments over a two week period in the decompression chamber at the Alfred Hospital.

The other diver, who started back down with just 100 bar of air in a 95 cubic foot tank, penetrated about 15 metres into the hull from the break as a part of his search efforts. His pressure gauge indicated he was out of air while still on the bottom. He did a mid water ascent to about 8 metres where breathing became difficult and intermittent. He tried to breathe slowly and ascended to about 3 metres. After about 1 minute at 3 metres he ran out of air, held his breath at that depth for about a minute, and then surfaced. To this day he remains a paradox in hyperbaric medicine, because he didn't exhibit any signs of decompression illness.

It was noted that while these two divers had courageously risked their own safety in an attempt to locate and save the deceased, this attempted rescue exercise had the potential for causing more than one fatality.

Conditions were now worse but a surface and air search was conducted. The Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad decided to adjourn the underwater search until the next day because of the adverse conditions. However the next day, with a 3 metre swell on the surface and with winds gusting to 45 knots, the Police divers set about to retrieve the body. Conditions had become so rough, that the Lorne "Pier to Pub" swim event was cancelled.

Two Police divers descended with surface supplied breathing apparatus. One diver entered the section forward of the break while the other remained outside. The body of the deceased diver was found about 35 metres from the break, lying face down in a position that indicated she was probably swimming away from the entrance point. Her equipment was in place and subsequent testing of her equipment found that its condition was not a contributing factor.

Coroners Report

An Investigation was held and the Coroner, Max Beck, reported, "I find that she died when diving to a depth of at least 40 metres she penetrated 35 metres into the enclosed overhead environment of the bow section of the J2 sub where upon experiencing a complete silt out resulting in zero or near zero visibility she became separated from her dive buddy, disoriented and lost. As a consequence of being unable to escape from the hull of the submarine she ran out of air and drowned."

Max Beck, himself, was an enthusiastic sport diver, having completed many training courses including cave diving. It is reported that he took particular interest investigating this death, driving his clerks to frustration with the volume of evidence and material he had collected for the inquest.

At the end of the inquest, the Coroner found that the responsibility for contributing to the diving fatality was shared by the deceased herself, her dive buddy/husband and the dive master. The Coroner also made some interesting and quite insightful points about the voluntary Victorian code of practice, and suggested some changes to the standards be adopted.

The Coroner's comments about the dive included...

On Penetration Diving the J2

"Entering the enclosed overhead environment of the bow section of the J2 sub is clearly a technical penetration dive and such dives are always potentially risky because the usual direct route back to the surface (up) is not available. Such a dive should only be attempted by an experienced, properly trained and equipped buddy pair. And at this depth the need for extreme caution cannot be overemphasised. Deep diving compounds and increases the risks associated with a penetration dive. To safely attempt a very technical dive such as this, a diver should be certified by an accredited diver training authority, not only for deep diving, but also in skills relating to silt avoidance, silt management, avoiding entanglement, overcoming darkness, air supply management and the techniques in using special equipment such as torches, lines and reels in limited visibility."

On Buddy Pairs

"Broadly, a duty of care is owed by one to another whenever a relationship between them is sufficiently proximate and where it is reasonably foreseeable that a failure to act with reasonable care may cause harm to the other. The very nature of scuba diving, which entails some risk, means that dive buddies owe each other a duty of care. In circumstances where one dive buddy has considerably greater experience than another, the more experienced diver is reasonably expected to make decisions constant with that level of experience."

On Wreck Diving Certification

"Certifications by the Cave Diving Association of Australia are graded in four levels according to the degree of difficulty of the dive. Common sense suggests that wreck diving certifications should be graded in a similar fashion perhaps as follows:

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Wreck Diver (exterior hull only)

Wreck Diver (penetration in light zone only)

Wreck Diver (penetration in non light zone, enclosed overhead environment, for a specified and limited distance).

The present system of certification of “wreck divers” is not consistent among the various diver certification agencies and has the inherent danger that a diver equipped with that ticket together with his natural, and, sometimes overwhelming, curiosity, may be inclined in the belief that he can execute a wreck penetration dive that he is not trained for. If wreck diving certifications were graded in three levels then it would make it clearer to divers (and Dive Masters) the limitation of their training and qualifications.”

On Dive Masters

“I have this advice for Dive Masters on dive charter boats. They are the last thing between the diver and the deep blue. They have no control over the divers after they enter the water. I believe it imperative that they have a tailor made, typed up, (or written), laminated, formatted, detailed dive brief for every special or difficult dive. It can be handed to divers en route to the dive site to read and read aloud at the dive site and then hung on a clip in some convenient location for all to observe. This small piece of house keeping will not only protect Dive Masters, it may also save lives.”

On Reflection

The sport of scuba diving that we love must always be undertaken with appropriate care and consideration for the associated risks.

Having been involved with sailing and gliding over the years, I’m very aware that major incidents like those described above, occur when a combination of things go wrong. After reading the material supplied to me by Peter Fear, I’m now even more aware of some of the things that can go wrong while scuba diving. It’s important for one to learn from these incidents so as to avoid putting yourself in the same situation.

So, what have I learnt so far...

I’ve certainly learnt that I need to take even more responsibility for my diving and not rely as much on those I’m diving with. Just because you’re the least experienced diver in the group, you shouldn’t assume you can rely on anyone else. When you think it through, the buddy system in diving comes with some interesting Catch 22 type considerations. Yes, you’re safer diving with a buddy, but it’s not safe to rely on your buddy being there for you. In some ways, diving with a buddy actually increases your chances of being put in harms way. So the more you’re both able to operate independently and not be reliant on each other, the safer you both are.

I should make sure I know more about any special or potentially difficult dive sites I dive on.

I should set more complete parameters as to the dive plan with my dive buddy.

I should better pre plan my dives. I suspect that I, like most people coming through the training system these days, tend to rely too much on my dive computer. Had mine failed during many of the dives I’ve done recently, I would not have known how much bottom time I was allowed or how long to spend at the various decompression/safety stops. Yes, I would have switched to the “standard” backup measures, but I should have been better prepared.

I should make changes to my dive equipment as appropriate for special dives. For example, even though we were not penetrating the wreck while diving on the J2, we were doing a

deep dive. For such a dive it would have been more prudent to have an independent second air source such as a pony bottle, rather than simply relying on having access to my dive buddy's air supply. Not knowing we were doing the dives we were, I hadn't taken my torches, line and reel, plus SMB onto the dive boat. They were back in the boot of my car where they were of no use to me.

I should learn to better understand my dive computer, its capabilities and limitations. Mine is supposed to be able to help me with the pre dive plan, and I need to learn how to use that feature.

I should be more aware of the emergency measures that can be deployed and the resources available in an emergency. Yes, John made sure everyone on board the boat was aware of where emergency resources such as the emergency oxygen, flares etc. were. But I'm not trained in the use of most of these resources and I need to do something about that. It was suggested that we have a deco bottle 10 metres down the shot line. Now that I better understand the benefits of this on such a dive, I'd certainly ensure it happened next time.

Okay, so I'm a relative newbie to this sport with an awful lot still to learn. But as with any higher risk sporting activity, no matter how much experience you have, one can't afford to become too complacent about what you're doing.

As you can see, it's all about taking more responsibility for ones own diving and making sure you're properly prepared for the task at hand. By doing so, each of us can enjoy their diving more and dive in greater safety.

Divers to explore historic Gallipoli submarine

Australians may soon know more about one of Gallipoli's untold stories - the Australian submarine HMAS *AE2*. It is referred to as the Silent Anzac and is the first allied submarine to be lost after entering the Dardanelles, off the Gallipoli coast, in 1915. Thirty-five people survived when it sank and it now lies about 75 metres under water. The Federal Government and the Submarine Institute of Australia are contributing about \$800,000 for an archaeological assessment of the area. The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Billson, says Australian divers will carry out the survey sometime next year. "To see how we can best preserve it, how we can best bring to life the story of the *AE2* and then to consider options for its long-term management and care," he said. Mr Billson says it is too early to know if parts of the submarine can be brought to the surface and restored. "At this stage it's a little too early to know," he said.

"That's the key goal of the maritime archaeological survey, to understand exactly the condition that it's in and to consider what options are available for its long term protection and preservation."

SEAFOOD AND SPINACH SOUP

This is a lovely light soup with a fresh flavour. If you're vegetarian, use vegetable or fish stock instead of chicken. To make it a more substantial lunch-type soup, add some diced potato with the stock, or some cooked risene, and some extra seafood nearer to the end.

Serves 8

1 finely chopped Spanish onion
2 cloves garlic, crushed
6 finely chopped spring onions
24 mussels
16 green prawns
washed spinach, finely sliced
3 cups homemade chicken stock
4 cups mussel stock (see below)
3 tomatoes de-seeded and finely diced
¼ teaspn. Harissa
chopped flat leaf parsley
squeeze of lemon juice

Fry onion and garlic in a little oil till softened.

Add the tomato and toss with the spring onions.

Pour in the stocks, and simmer for 15-20 mins.

Stir in the harissa and season with salt and pepper.

Cut each prawn into 2 or 3 pieces and toss in a bit of oil to cook.

Re-heat the mussels.

Place some spinach in each bowl then divide the prawns and mussels between each.

Spoon the boiling stock over and sprinkle extra chopped parsley on top.

Serve with lemon pepper crispies or crusty bread.

To prepare mussels

Scrub mussels and remove the beard. Discard any that remain open.

Place them in a stock pot and cover with water. Throw in the odd parsley stalk if available. Bring to the boil and cook for a few mins till shells have opened. Discard any that remain closed.

If you are using large soup bowls, leave the mussels in the shells. I leave one per person in the shell, and removed the others. Refrigerate till ready to serve.

THE ELIZA RAMSDEN: A Personal Journey.

Built May 1874

Sank July 24th 1875

The Eliza Ramsden, a three masted Iron Barque of 395 tons hit Corsair Rock at Port Phillip Heads and then sank after drifting 2.5 kms into the Bay. She came to rest in 60ft of water on the edge of the shipping channel North East of Pt Nepean. She was then dynamited to give a clear 40 ft depth for shipping. She was barely a year old.

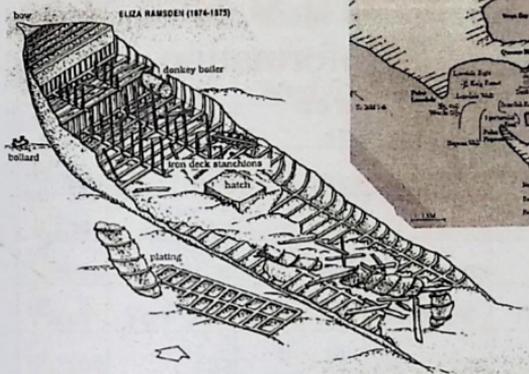
When I took up Scuba diving in 1975 the 100-year-old wreck was well known and the challenge of diving her was irresistible to me. In October 1977 I finally managed to get onto the wreck and I was disappointed. My dive log from the time says that on my first attempt due to ear problems I only spent 5 minutes on the wreck, and apparently I took Black and White photos. It hints that the fish life was prolific and that the site would be good for close up work. Luckily for all of us no record of these photos has survived. I vividly remember watching the Grand Final Replay from my hospital bed 2 weeks earlier, but my earliest memory of the Eliza Ramsden is not so clear.

90 dives later in December 1978 I had a second dive on the Ramsden and fared a little better. On this occasion the visibility was pushing 30 ft and along with my buddy (now my wife) I had an extremely pleasant dive. We were surrounded by fish including trumpeter, blue devils, old wives, magpie perch, Dusky Morwong and masses of one spot pullers. The bow section was very impressive and the wreck lived up to its reputation as a top dive spot. At the time a few of my dive buddies were plundering the old girl (the wreck, not the future wife) and many reports of sightings of crockery, cutlery and deadeyes were noted. In the March of 1979 the wreck had only 10 ft visibility, but the logbook reveals that it was still a beautiful dive. A trend was emerging, as it seems I lost my first dive buddy on entering the water and subsequently lost the next 2 as well. The dive was wonderful and I think I was falling in love with the old girl.

November 1980 again saw 30 ft visibility and several dive buddies had sightings of dead-eyes and one observant individual saw even a china bowl. The dive was beginning to become much like a trip to museum (or a strip show) – look, but don't touch! The fish life as usual was prolific and profuse. I was entranced by the still intact bow and the obvious ship shape of the wreck, with its decking struts still mostly intact. Most shipwrecks of its era sank closer to shore, or on the rocks they hit. They were virtually smashed into underwater junkyards. She must have been some sight before they dynamited the top off of her. During the Labour Day weekend of 1981 I again dived the wreck and with vis of 30 ft the dive was recorded as very good and a cray was given a severe scare on the reef next to the wreck. The odd dead eye was still to be seen for the keen eyed observer. I was still in love with her and vowed to dive her more often.

The following year 2 attempts were made to dive the Grand Old Lady but due to a combination of ineptitude and stupidity the dives were conducted on nearby Spectacular Reef. Without a depth sounder and having only "marks" to go by it was considered easier to locate a massive reef than find a small target like the Ramsden.

In June 1982 a job promotion saw me off to the warm waters of Brisbane and Moreton



Bay and I vowed to return one day to resume my affair with Eliza. On returning to Melbourne in the 90's it seemed the wreck was considered passé and, due to shipping, often put into the too hard basket. I never gave up hope and waited for an obliging boat skipper. In early November 2006 after a very relaxing and enjoyable dive on the Broken Sub, I was asked by the skipper where I would

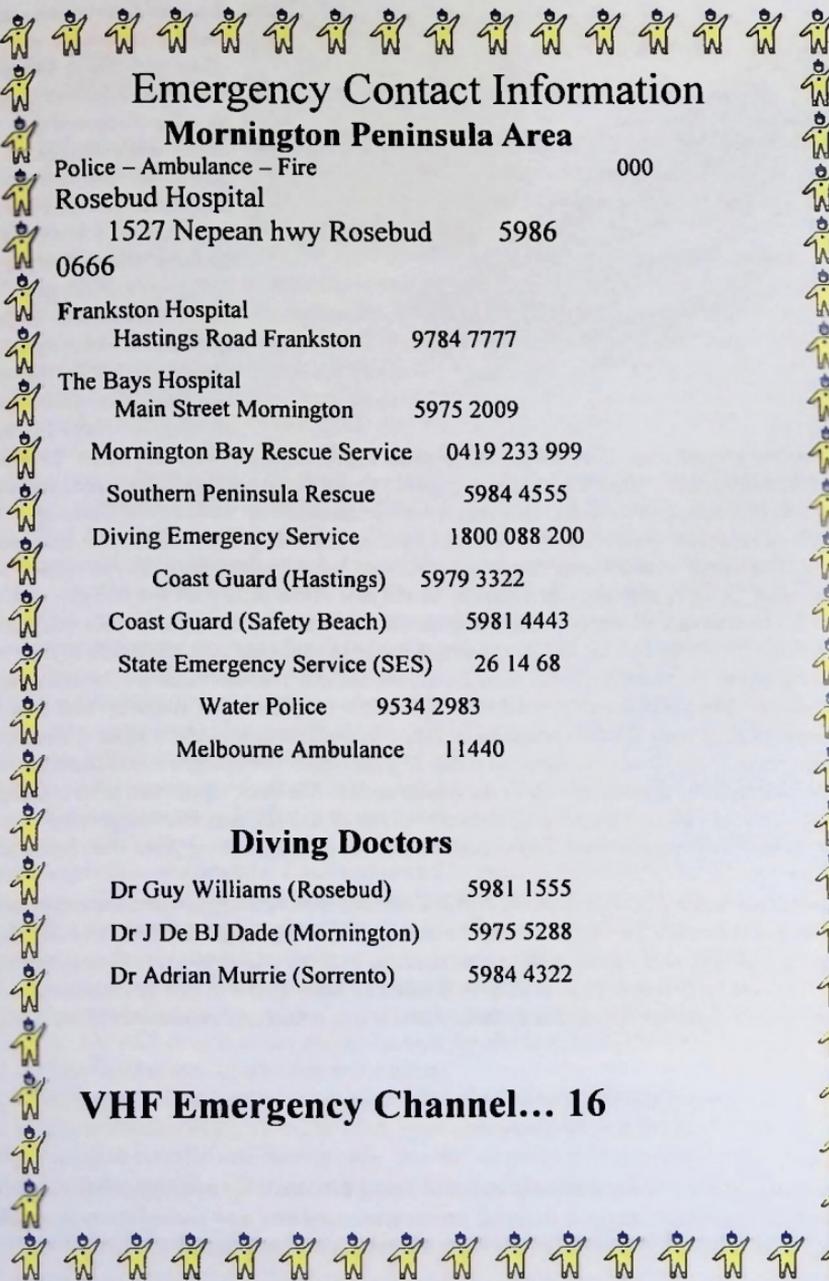
like to do my second dive. With a high water slack approaching I didn't hesitate- "take me to the Eliza Ramsden". After 25 years I was going to see her again and I was quite looking forward to it. I was a bit nervous, as it was a bit like catching up with an old flame at a high school re-union. Would she still look the same? Had time played tricks with the memory and even worse would she no longer be a beauty, but a broken down old harridan? I learnt many years ago that it often pays to be the first down before all the fish get spooked. The system still works. On leaving the surface I could just make out the nearby reef and on following the shot line to the wreck I was surrounded by a multitude of fish. Swimming along the starboard side first, I was amazed that the hull retains so much of its shape and the bow stills stands proudly 20-25 ft off the sea floor. As I swam up and over into the front deck area, still surrounded by fish, I was gobsmacked at the sight of the former deck area. It still looks the same as it did 25 years ago. The upright struts are still there, with a healthy growth of kelp in the higher areas. The deck support structure is still covered in soft corals and supporting a diverse array of fish life and more sedentary critters. With visibility approaching 50 ft I could make out divers entering from the rear of the wreckage.

Now that slack water had kicked in the fish life became a more sluggish and the next half hour was particularly relaxing as I watched the other divers slowly amble around the ship. Finally they all left, and I spent a few minutes alone with my old girlfriend reminiscing and not really wanting to leave. I guess deep in my heart I knew that it might be another 25 years before I rejoin her for my final journey and it was with some reluctance that I bade her farewell.

Grrr

Footnote:

I'm sure that all the crockery, cutlery and interesting bits are long gone, possibly taken by Maritime Archeologists, tagged, indexed, cross referenced and now tucked away in small dark boxes at the back of some obscure Museum never to be seen again.



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

Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento) 5984 4322

VHF Emergency Channel... 16

Tidal Streams at the Heads
Times adjusted for DST
Italic times start of EBB

DEC 4	Tue 5	Wed 6	Thu 7	Fri 8	Sat 9	Sun 10
<i>228</i>	<i>340</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>528</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>653</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>754</i>	<i>918</i>	<i>1018</i>	<i>1108</i>	<i>1151</i>	<i>1233</i>	<i>729</i>
<i>1244</i>	<i>1344</i>	<i>1444</i>	<i>1541</i>	<i>1638</i>	<i>1732</i>	<i>1315</i>
<i>2030</i>	<i>2126</i>	<i>2216</i>	<i>2302</i>	<i>2345</i>	<i>1732</i>	<i>1824</i>
Mon	Tue 12	Wed 13	Thu 14	Fri 15	Sat 16	Sun 17
<i>102</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>322</i>		<i>32</i>
<i>800</i>	<i>828</i>	<i>855</i>	<i>923</i>	<i>951</i>	<i>406</i>	<i>504</i>
<i>1356</i>	<i>1439</i>	<i>1521</i>	<i>1606</i>	<i>1655</i>	<i>1021</i>	<i>1054</i>
<i>1914</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2054</i>	<i>2151</i>	<i>2302</i>	<i>1745</i>	<i>1839</i>
Mon	Tue 19	Wed 20	Thu 21	Fri 22	Sat 23	Sun 24
<i>154</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>359</i>				
<i>642</i>	<i>837</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>445</i>	<i>528</i>	<i>605</i>	<i>641</i>
<i>1132</i>	<i>1221</i>	<i>1319</i>	<i>1041</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1154</i>	<i>1227</i>
<i>1931</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2114</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>1515</i>	<i>1611</i>	<i>1707</i>
			<i>2202</i>	<i>2247</i>	<i>2330</i>	
Mon	Tue 26	Wed 27	Thu 28	Fri 29	Sat 30	Sun 31
<i>10</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>330</i>	
<i>714</i>	<i>745</i>	<i>814</i>	<i>842</i>	<i>909</i>	<i>940</i>	<i>421</i>
<i>1302</i>	<i>1341</i>	<i>1424</i>	<i>1511</i>	<i>1601</i>	<i>1658</i>	<i>1016</i>
<i>1804</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2101</i>	<i>2209</i>	<i>2329</i>	<i>1758</i>

ABOUT THIS TABLE

This table has been adjusted for daylight savings (from 29th Oct) - **do not add an hour**. Times in italics are the start of EBB times.

For Queenscliff(pier) add 30 mins
 Popes Eye add 50 mins
 Portsea add 1hr 20 mins
 Rye add 2hr 50 mins
 Mornington add 3hr 10 mins

Tidal Streams at the Heads
Times adjusted for DST
Italic times start of EBB

JANUARY - slack water times [Port Phillip Heads]

<i>Mon 1</i>	<i>Tue 2</i>	<i>Wed 3</i>	<i>Thu 4</i>	<i>Fri 5</i>	<i>Sat 6</i>	<i>Sun 7</i>
	212	323	422	512	555	631
526	657	845	1000	1059	1146	1230
1100	1153	1258	1411	1526	1633	1731
1859	2002	2104	2200	2250	2333	

<i>Mon 8</i>	<i>Tue 9</i>	<i>Wed 10</i>	<i>Thu 11</i>	<i>Fri 12</i>	<i>Sat 13</i>	<i>Sun 14</i>
13	47	120	151	222	255	330
702	730	753	816	840	903	928
1309	1345	1419	1452	1527	1603	1645
1822	1909	1954	2040	2130	2226	2338

<i>Mon 15</i>	<i>Tue 16</i>	<i>Wed 17</i>	<i>Thu 18</i>	<i>Fri 19</i>	<i>Sat 20</i>	<i>Sun 21</i>
	100	218	326	419	502	539
412	504	626	859	1010	1055	1130
954	1025	1109	1215	1335	1452	1606
1732	1830	1933	2039	2139	2230	2317

<i>Mon 22</i>	<i>Tue 23</i>	<i>Wed 24</i>	<i>Thu 25</i>	<i>Fri 26</i>	<i>Sat 27</i>	<i>Sun 28</i>
	0	40	119	158	236	316
611	642	712	741	808	837	908
1206	1245	1326	1410	1455	1542	1631
1714	1815	1912	2009	2107	2210	2317

<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tue 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
	28	141	255	358	447	528
401	455	610	811	945	1047	1134
943	1026	1119	1232	1404	1532	1640
1725	1825	1933	2045	2147	2240	2324

ABOUT THIS TABLE

This table has been adjusted for daylight savings (from 29th Oct) - **do not add an hour**. Times in italics are the start of EBB times.

Tidal Streams at the Heads
Times adjusted for DST
Italic times start of EBB

FEBUARY - slack water times [Port Phillip Heads]

<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tue 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
	28	141	255	358	447	528
401	455	610	811	945	1047	1134
943	1026	1119	1232	1404	1532	1640
1725	1825	1933	2045	2147	2240	2324

<i>Mon 5</i>	<i>Tue 6</i>	<i>Wed 7</i>	<i>Thu 8</i>	<i>Fri 9</i>	<i>Sat 10</i>	<i>Sun 11</i>
	2	35	105	134	202	231
600	628	652	715	737	759	820
1213	1245	1315	1344	1414	1445	1518
1733	1819	1901	1943	2023	2105	2151

<i>Mon 12</i>	<i>Tue 13</i>	<i>Wed 14</i>	<i>Thu 15</i>	<i>Fri 16</i>	<i>Sat 17</i>	<i>Sun 18</i>
303	339	420	118	236	337	421
844	910	941	515	650	917	1015
1555	1636	1729	1023	1133	1315	1453
2246	2356		1838	2000	2115	2215

<i>Mon 19</i>	<i>Tue 20</i>	<i>Wed 21</i>	<i>Thu 22</i>	<i>Fri 23</i>	<i>Sat 24</i>	<i>Sun 25</i>
457	530	601	632	108	145	224
1057	1137	1218	1301	702	733	805
1615	1720	1819	1915	1345	1430	1514
2304	2348	2429		2010	2104	2200

<i>Mon 26</i>	<i>Tue 27</i>	<i>Wed 28</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
302	345	435	59	211	317	408
840	918	1003	545	751	928	1025
1559	1647	1745	1104	1234	1420	1542
2255	2354		1857	2020	2130	2225

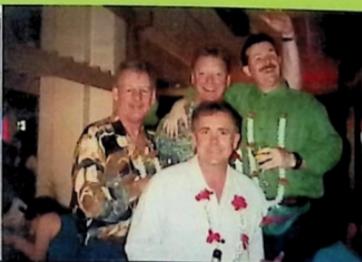
VSAG Meeting and Dive Calendar

Dive Date	Location	Dive Captain	Phone	Meeting Point	Time
December					
2	Xmas Party—@ Storens , Spit roast, Raffle, etc!!				
3	Local dive	Alan S	9803 3573	Sorrento	9am
10	Cray dive	John Lawler	0414 922 916	Sorrento	9am
17	Xmas dive	Alan S	9803 3573	Sorrento	9am
21	XMAS Meeting— social meeting at Bells—no formal meeting Possible morning cray dive—ring Alan Storen if interested				
26	VSAG Xmas trip to Eden (book with Pat Reynolds)				
26+	Check with boat owners for local diving.				
January					
14	Flinders	John Lawler	0414 922 916	Flinders	9am
18	General Meeting - Bells - 8pm				
21	Wreck tba and Rosebud Reef	Alan Storen	0417 017446	Sorrento	9am
26/28	Long weekend—Australia Day Barwon Heads Book early (pre xmas)				
February					
4	New wreck dive	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Sorrento	9am
11	Catch and Cook Family day at Rye	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Rye	9am
15	General Meeting Bells - 8pm				
18	Hero's Cave / Wall dive	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Sorrento	9am
25	Phillip Island	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Sorrento	9am

ANY TIME Interested in a shore dive (Saturday, etc) or a night dive (shore or boat). Ring Alan Storen on 9803 3573 (H). Free gear hire is available—wetsuits depending on size!



Any resemblance to a SEAL at Tidal River is purely coincidental!
Story on page 7.



MORE:
Blast from the past!!





Photos from a recent dive.
Top Left: Rob Kirk, Lloyd Borrett.

Top Right: Benita McDonough.

Left: Alan Storen, Trevor Williams, Peter Briggs



Copies of photos used by Jan Watson in a recent talk to the club (Nov Mtg)
Above: Ted Eldred

