

# FATHOMS

**FEBRUARY — MARCH 2008**

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP



[www.vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au)

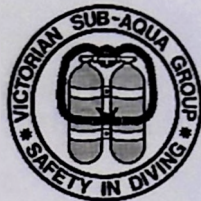
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PORTLAND TRIP 2007—2008  
VSAG at XMAS

# FATHOMS



*Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group*

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**VSAG General Meetings**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month

**Editorial Submissions to:**

Bell's Hotel  
157 Moray Street (cnr Coventry Street)  
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm  
Alan Storen  
15 Regal Court Vermont South Vic 3133  
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## Editorial



*I hope you all had an enjoyable and festive xmas and New Year and that you have not broken too many resolutions that you set yourself for 2008. I hope one of your resolutions was to come out diving more often with VSAG. We have many activities on the calendar this year and I hope they are in your diaries. As well as our normal divedays we have the Cape Jaffa cray bash on the Labour Day weekend, the Easter 'Prom' trip, the Jervis Bay liveboard on the Anzac weekend, the Bali trip in May and the Queen's Birthday weekend at Queenscliff. As well as that we have social activities planned to keep you busy when not diving. Watch this space for the paintball competition!*

*Our 2007 Christmas trip to Portland was a great success and the weather gods were kind most of the time. No rain was recorded and the wind(s) were well down on predictions. When it was blowing we ventured to Mount Gambier to try out the fresh water diving. Several reports on the trip are included in this edition. Local diving also seems to have been successful with great viz and many dives – see reports.*

*From Feb 2008 articles and photos sent to our webmaster (Lloyd Borrett) for inclusion on the web site will count towards the 'Clubperson of the Year' award. They can also be sent to me for inclusion in Fathoms but can't be counted twice.*

*Your committee have also started a 'Photo Competition' which is to be held in March 2008' – photos must be VSAG or diving related, taken in March and can be above or below the water. Dave Bryant – photographer extraordinaire is to be the Judge. Photos can be sent to me in any format (but I would prefer digital images) and I will forward to Dave anonymously for judging. One photo per entrant. Great prizes available. See flyer for more details. Photos remain the property of the committee and can be used in Fathoms if appropriate.*

*The dreaded dredging is going ahead and we will soon find out the impact on our diving. We will need to be particularly careful with the site selection and we expect more 'outside the bay' dives to be on the calendar. Phillip Island and Westernport dives out of Flinders could also feature.*

*Many new members have joined VSAG already this year and welcome*

to David Geekie, Pam Delgety, Alun and Alwin and Tony. We also have a number of others in the pipeline. David also has a boat which will ease the pressure on our other boat owners.

### **South Channel Fort**

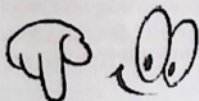
The South Channel Fort is a reminder of Port Phillip Bay's early history as part of the defence lines for Melbourne. The artificial island was constructed in the 1880s to illuminate the channel at night and electronically explode mines under attacking ships coming through the Heads. A system of antiquated gun emplacements and tunnels are a feature of the island which is now a significant refuge for seabirds. The Popes Eye was initially proposed for defence purposed, however the partially constructed artificial island was never completed.

I am still keep to do an overnight on South Chanel Fort and looking for other 'xxxxx' (you can add the description – brave, adventurous, stupid, etc) persons, and a boat owner! to accompany. Email me if you are interested.



**NOTE: We have changed the March meeting to the 27th due to Easter**

Keep blowing bubbles!  
Alan Storen



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

**[storens@bigpond.net.au](mailto:storens@bigpond.net.au)**

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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month ...ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Latest fashion in  
Sorrento  
High fashion  
HIGH  
TIDE HEELS



## A CLUB PHOTO COMPETITION.

WHEN: 1<sup>ST</sup> – 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2008

WHERE: ON ANY RECOGNISED VSAG CLUB ORGANISED DIVE

WHAT: MUST BE SCUBA RELATED...UNDER OR ON THE WATER

WINNER'S PRIZE: A GIFT VOUCHER TO THE VALUE OF \$30

VSAG has some excellent photographers in our club so here is your chance to put your photography skills together during the whole month of March 2008. All photos will be eligible and should be Scuba Diving related...preferably under-water pics...above water pics will however be considered.

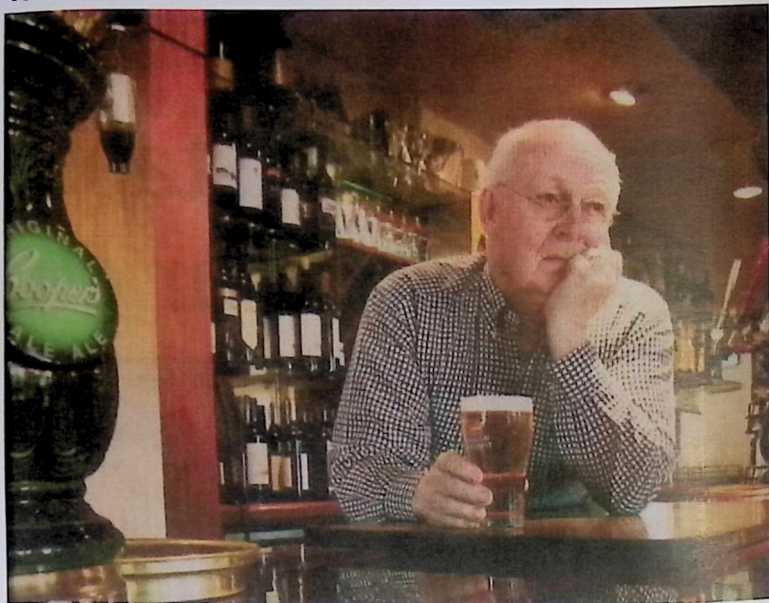
**Dates and places will need to accompany each submission...SUBMIT ONLY ONE PIC PER PERSON**

Pictures will be judged by that master marine photographer Dave Bryant.



# LAST DRINKS FOR BILLY

Alan Storen



After many years faithfully serving the VSAG throngs Billy Bell has finally called it quits. Mr Bell, or Billy as he was known to most of Melbourne was born in the Hotel, his mother gave birth above the bar due to Billy's early arrival. Now, aged 67, and with no family members wanting to take over the business, he has sold to a 'mate' and hopes to do a bit of travelling.

VSAG relocated to Bells in the mid 1990s after many years at North Melbourne Football Club Rooms and has met there ever since.

Billy has always been a good host and provided a meeting room for VSAG and many other dive groups. SDFV met there until recently and many other clubs and committees have also used it as a watering hole.







Billy has a dry sense of humor and in 2004 when a number of VSAGers went up to the nearby 'Curry' restaurant for a meal instead of eating at Bells, Billy retaliated with a menu item of his own (above). I do not know if anyone tried his curry but I am sure it would have been HOT!

Billy will be missed by all his friends at VSAG but I am sure that we all wish him a very happy, healthy and long retirement.

WELL DONE and THANKS!

Alan.



## Computers and wine

Last night my wife and I were sitting in the den and I said to her, "I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle to keep me alive. That would be no quality of life at all, If that ever happens, just pull the plug."

So she got up, unplugged the computer, and threw out my wine.  
She's such a bitch.



**Did you know that an  
Emergency Evacuation can  
cost in excess of US\$100,000?**

**Not many of us do, and not many of us would  
be in a position to cover such an expense.**



**Let DAN, the experts in diver  
accident management, take care  
of the unexpected so you can focus  
on what's most important ...  
enjoying your diving!**

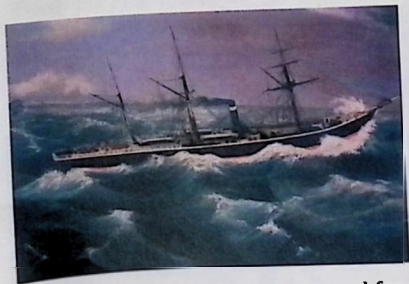
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worldwide who support dive  
safety through DAN.**

# The Demise of the Steamer Screw ship *SS Admella* on August 6, 1859, with the loss of 89 lives.

## **Introduction.**

*SS Admella* was an iron hulled, three masted steam ship of 209 tons, that also carried sails. Built in Glasgow in 1857, she was 55.6 metres long, named after the route she followed, Adelaide, Melbourne and Launceston, taking the letter Ad, Mel and La to combine to form her name.



*SS Admella* with her three masts, and funnel in view. She carried sails on the 3 masts.

## **Last Sailing.**

This vessel sailed from Port Adelaide at 1730 ( 5. 30 P M ) for Melbourne, on Friday August 5, 1859. She was commanded by Captain Hugh McEwen, her crew and passengers numbered 113.

## **Cargo.**

She was loaded with copper, flour for the Victorian Goldfields, general merchandice, and 7 horses including 4 racehorses. If one thinks about it, sea transport was really the only way to transfer horses between States, other than the horses walking the total distance to be covered.

## **Rough weather.**

About 1300 ( 1 PM ) when the ship was level with the Cape Willoughby light, heavy seas caused the racehorse *Jupiter* to fall on its back in his box.

**The Cape Willoughby Lighthouse on Kangaroo Island.** Cape Willoughby was the first lighthouse to be erected in South Australia, and lights the Backstairs Passage between Kangaroo Island and the mainland.

To assist in righting this horse, Captain Mc Ewen turned the ship's bows into the swell, and reduced speed, After about an hour, *Admella* returned to her normal course, parallel with the shore. Some 75 miles had been covered by midnight in rather foggy conditions.



Just after 0500 ( 5 A M ) the ship shuddered, striking a sunken reef, the heavy seas running at the time threw the ship another 20/30 feet further onto the rocks, and she listed heavily so that the starboard side was high and dry out of the water. The ship's boats were ordered to be swung out, but *Admella* quickly broke into three pieces within 15



minutes of grounding. She was stranded, the only means of summoning help was for someone to swim ashore and raise the alarm. The Second Mate put up his hand to take on this onerous task, but soon disappeared to be lost in the raging waters. A raft was built and launched, after a three hour struggle it made the shore, and survivors walked some 15 miles to the Cape Northumberland light which is close to the South Australia/Victorian border.

**The old MacDonnell Lighthouse, circa 1870**  
Photograph courtesy:  
Port MacDonnell & District Maritime Museum.



### History

The original MacDonnell Lighthouse was built in 1858 and commenced operation in early 1859. The original light had three faces - white, red and green - which it exhibited in succession.

The site was narrow and quite exposed with the buildings being built too close to the cliff edge. Therefore, this light survived only 23 years, due to the danger of its collapse from the cliff on which it stood being undermined by wind and sea. After the new Cape Northumberland Lighthouse was built in 1882 on a hill 400 metres to the east, the MacDonnell Lighthouse was demolished. Here the head keeper B. Germein was informed and he took off on horseback for the Post Office at Mount Gambier, but fell off en route, and John Black a station owner took his place to alert authorities of the disaster and the plight of any survivors.

Portland, some 200 miles away had the nearest lifeboat available, now Germein organised a small boat to be transported by dray to the wreck site.

On the 11th. of August he attempted to launch the boat but failed as it was soon swamped by the high seas.

***The Corio arrives.***

Captain Quinn in the *Corio* arrived on the scene, and launched the Pilot Boat she carried onboard, after battling the wild weather for an hour its 7 crew were forced to land on the beach.

Back aboard *Admella*, the 50 survivors built another raft in an attempt to leave the wreck, only to see it drift off into the distance. Now *Corio* running short on coal was forced to depart for Robe, nothing was going right and the survivors must have been close to despair.

#### ***SS Lady Bird arrives at the wreck site.***

*SS Lady Bird* towing the Portland lifeboat and a whaler appeared on the scene.

*SS Ant* ex Robe now also turned up to assist in any rescue operations.

#### ***Friday the 11th. of August.***

It was now one week on since *Admella* had sailed from Port Adelaide, as the life boat came close to the wreck site, but all attempts at getting a line across and secured to the wreck failed, and it returned to the *Lady Bird*.

Now in calmer conditions on the following day, both Germein in his small boat and the lifeboat returned to *Admella*, and at long last a line was secured.

Captain McEwen, Thomas Davey, and Andrew Fuller all managed to board Germein's boat, and they were transferred to the Pilot Boat and successfully taken ashore. The Portland lifeboat came alongside *Admella*, a line fastened to the wreck and 18 men and one woman were finally rescued.

But out of the original complement of 113 on board, but 24 who sailed had survived, 13 crew members and 11 passengers.

#### ***Commission of Inquiry as to the loss.***

A Commission appointed to decide on the loss of *SS Admella*, found the principal cause was a strong inshore current, her Captain was cleared of any blame but criticised for not taking soundings when unsure of his true position.

#### ***Salvage.***

In August 1859 an auction was held to dispose of goods salvaged or washed ashore, it realised 850 Pounds.

In 1860 the wreck was sold to R. Anderson of Mount Gambier, and H. Chant, who recovered more material from the wreck site.

Anderson used some recovered materials to construct a cottage at Port MacDonnell.

In 1957, almost a hundred years later, skin divers did salvage some of the copper in the ship's hold, and they formed a syndicate to recover more of this precious metal, iron plates ex *Admella*, were used to reinforce crumbling walls at the Robe prison.

A small signal cannon was recovered and restored, and is displayed at the Maritime Museum at Port MacDonnell.

A cairn at Cape Banks commemorates the wreck, and at Cape Northumberland, close to the early light house site is a memorial recalling the deeds of the Head Light keeper B. Germein, who played a big role in the rescue bid.

The lifeboat used in rescue operations is still on display at Portland. Finally, the Maritime Museum at Port Adelaide carries a small collection of *Admella* relics.



**Signal cannon ex *Admella*.**



*Admella*  
50 cent stamp.

*Lock Ard*  
\$1 stamp.

*Dunbar*  
\$2 stamp.

**List of Armella Passengers and Crew and those who survived.**

Twentyfour individuals - 11 passengers and 13 crew members survived.

**Crew that survived**

|                                         |                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Hugh McEwan, master                     | James Hutcheson, first mate age 33      |
| GB McNair, purser                       | George Hills, fore cabin steward age 23 |
| George Ward, cabin boy                  | John McDermott, second cook             |
| David Peters, fireman age 24            | Robert Wright, trimmer                  |
| Robinson Duchering, lamp trimmer age 23 | Charles Locke, able seaman              |
| John Welch, able seaman                 | Robert Knapman, able seaman             |
|                                         | John Leach, able seaman                 |

**Passengers that survived**

**Cabin**

|                             |                                |                        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Hurtle Fisher, Adelaide     | Miss Bridget Ledwith, Adelaide | James Miller, Victoria |
| Benjamin Rochfort, Adelaide |                                |                        |

**Fore-cabin**

|                                |                   |                   |               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Patrick Carrick                | Thomas Davey      | Michael Forrester | Patrick Glynn |
| Hugh McInnes                   | Thomas O'Halloran | Thomas Richardson | James Webb    |
| Andrew, servant to Mr Rochfort |                   |                   |               |

Eighty-one\* people perished - 66 passengers and 15 crew.

(\* This figure varies between reports from 81 to 89 but at this stage we have only 81 names. The 150 anniversary celebrations web site claim 89 died.)

**Crew that perished**

- |                                           |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Walter Brown, second engineer age 24   | 2. Miss Clendinning, stewardess            |
| 3. James Hare / Hur, cabin steward age 33 | 4. Soren Holm, able seaman                 |
| 5. John Johnson, second mate              | 6. Margaret Meagher, fore cabin stewardess |
| 7. Simon Munro, first engineer age 33     | 8. J Orr, first cook                       |
| 9. Unnamed aassistant steward             | 10. Unnamed aassistant steward             |
| 11. A seaman                              | 12. A seaman                               |
| 13. A seaman                              | 14. A fireman                              |
|                                           | 15. A fireman                              |

## Passengers that perished

### Cabin

1. George Fisher, Adelaide
2. Mrs Glynn
3. Cpt Harris, master mariner, Adelaide
4. Henry Holbrook, Adelaide (Death certificate issued in Adelaide)
5. James Magarey, Geelong
6. Miss Nugent, Adelaide
7. Dr Vaux, Ship Norfolk
8. James Whittaker, ex-convict and proprietor of Sir John Franklin Hotel, Kapunda

### Fore-cabin

9. Patrick Arthur
10. Fernando Bade
11. Benjamin Baker
12. John Battrick
13. Mrs Catherine Beith nee Weir age 31
14. Catherine Beith age 10
15. Jane Beith b. 1857 Norwood SA
16. John Beith b. 1855 Norwood SA
17. Robert Beith age 8
18. Mrs Madeline Bowie nee Beith age 39 w/o James
19. John Carmichael, unm
20. Edwin Chambers
21. Mrs Coxell
22. child Coxell
23. James Davidson
24. John Davis
25. George Forrester
26. Mrs Forrester
27. Wilhelm Alfred French.
28. Mrs Gold
29. Mrs Goode
30. Henry Grosse
31. Edward Haynes
32. Wilhelm Hermann
33. Edwin Jackson
34. Mrs Kerwin
35. Kerwin child
36. Kerwin child
37. Kerwin child
38. Richard King
39. Patrick Lennan
40. Mrs Lennan
41. Thomas R Mensforth
42. Mr Murray
43. Mrs Murray
44. John O'Brien, age 19
45. Eliza Paul
46. Mrs Ramsay
47. William Rosewell
48. Wilhelm Schultz
49. Charlotte Short
50. Charlotte Short b. 1857
51. Henry J Short b. 1854
52. John Short, child
53. Thomas Short b. 1856
54. William Taylor
55. John Tregeagle
56. Walter Underwood, a youth
57. George Watkins
58. Hester Watkins
59. John Watson
60. Mrs Watson
61. Watson child
62. Watson child
63. Mrs Weatherall
64. Allan Sebastian Webb (Death certificate issued in Adelaide)
65. Mr Williamson
66. Mr Wood

The Biographical Index of South Australians lists an Aldborough R Davies whose name was not on any lists. I am beholden to this URL: <http://www.jaunay.com/admella.html> for facts relating to this disaster back in 1859.

### Conclusion.

The wreck of SS *Admella* still remains the greatest loss of life at sea in the history of European settlement in South Australia.

The sea is a hard taskmaster, and some 7,303 shipwrecks lay on the ocean floor of the Australian coastline, many of them around both South Australia and Victoria. It is the Scuba Diving fraternity that often locates and reports the position of wrecks that litter our coastline, thus adding to our rich Maritime Heritage.

So, a big thank you is due to all intrepid Divers who assist in this way.

Mac.

Mackenzie J. Gregory

email: [macden@melbpc.org.au](mailto:macden@melbpc.org.au)

Mac's Web Log

URL: [ahoy.tk-jk.net](http://ahoy.tk-jk.net)



SAVE OUR BAY PROTEST





# THE DIVING DIVAS

By Kathy Pedlow

The weather started off cool and overcast but as we headed down to Blairgowrie the sun broke through and we knew it was going to be a lovely day. Jackie Storen and I both wanted a casual dive as neither of us had dived for many months so Blairgowrie Pier was our chosen destination. There was a quick stop in Rye to fill the tanks and then onto our final destination. We parked in the sailing club and wandered down along the pier to check out our dive site. The Young Endeavour was docked and we had a bit of a look at it. The vis looked great, the sea was calm and there was nothing to interfere with our proposed dive.

As we trooped back to the car, we decided to change the car-park so we wouldn't be lugging all our gear through the sailing club.

Car moved, dive site checked out, we started to kit up. I attached my reg and turned on the air. I could hear and feel it move through the hoses. I breathed through my mouthpiece and yes the air was flowing.

The dive computer wasn't showing anything. I wet it and wet it and wet it again. Jackie had a go too. We emptied our drinking water into a tub and dunked it and still it didn't register.

Let's go visit Reubens and see if he can fix it. So piling all the gear into the car again (thank goodness the wetties weren't on yet!) we headed down to Portsea and had a lovely chat with Reubens & co at IDC and got a replacement for the dive computer.

Back to Blairgowrie Pier to kit up again and a hike down the stairs to commence our dive. After a struggle with my fins, we were finally in the water and diving.

Kind of.

The water was very shallow (hey I know it's Blairgowrie) and we descended to the sandy bottom under the pier. We spied a sea-snake of about 30cm long, pale with spots and stripes and the thickness of a fat worm.

As we continued along, Jackie was having trouble with her weights so we ascended to the steps and Jackie went and got some more weights. After correcting the weight problem we continued our dive without any further mishaps.

A very relaxed dive it was. The plant-life attached to the pier was very colourful with oranges, purples and greens. There were sea anemones, a number of various crabs, schools of fish and another couple of divers. On the other side of a diver a dark shadowey form glided by. It was a large bull-ray. Jackie and I spotted him at the end of the pier. About the same time that I recalled Jackie's dream about me diving and a spotted crocodile-type creature with arms. That tired of me chasing it, suddenly turned around and grabbed me, rolled me around a couple of times and took me to the depths of the ocean. Never to be seen again.

Well I wasn't chasing that bull-ray, in fact I just wanted to keep well out of it's way. It glided on by with a mere glance at me mere mortals in it's world.

Jackie and I returned to the beach and onto Portsea to return the gauge. Okay then the Portsea pub called us in for a late lunch. As we relaxed and reflected on our lovely dive. I realized some things just don't go to plan. We had planned to be diving by 10.30am. Actual start time 12.15pm. Lunch planned to be around 1.00pm. Actual time 3.30pm.

Dive plan – to enjoy.

Dive actual – fantastic relaxed dive.

Thanks dive buddy.



## DIVE REPORTS

### DECEMBER 2007-JANUARY 2008.

*With many VSAG'ers away at Portland for the Christmas break, those in Melbourne had some fantastic and very memorable diving experiences....why? On most dives the visibility was up around the 30 mtr level...read on please.*

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

*Divers: Rob Kirk-Peter Briggs-Ken Methven-Takae Yokoyama-JL*

*Dive sites: Lost Reef/Coogee*

*This reef is located around 2.5kms due South of the Coogee Wreck and can reach depths of 35mtrs in places. It forms part of a reef which I am informed runs all the way ( broken, not continual) to Barwon Heads.*

*Brilliant sunshine and a soft Northerly wind, crisp blue water and we are away. Rob, Ken and Takae were first in and as they descended into the rich blue we could see them all the way to bottom!!!*

*Their dive was a little off the main reef part yet there was enough reef for fish life and coral growth to be enjoyed.*

*Ken, a brilliant underwater photographer, was busy capturing the sea scenes*



*Peter and I in next and the excitement on the drift down to the ocean floor at 33mtrs was hard to contain, it was just a magnificent sight...drop offs...ledges, fish life and crystal clear water so we could see for ever beyond the place we were in. It was very hard having to leave this magnificent underwater world and head back up to the boat.*

*After a break for lunch and a good basking in the brilliant sunshine we put down a shot line on the Coogee wreck.*

*Again we could see this wreck from the surface at around 27mtrs....fish life was sensational!*

*We were all very blessed to have had such a wonderful dive experience on this day... probably one the best diving conditions we have had in many years of diving in Bass Strait.*

## Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2008

*Divers: Agnes Aboulin-Ken Methven-Takae Yokoyama-JL*

*Dive Sites: Boarfish Reef/J4/ Lonsdale Reefs*

*VSAG went a bit international on this dive day. A French lady diver travelling around Australia with her husband and two children found VSAG on the web and called to see if we could get her a dive..took some time for the right day,right divers etc and we finally got all that together.*

*Agnes and Ken did the first of three dives and it was a slack water flood dive on Boarfish Reef for the first dive..clear water again with vis right down to the bottom at around 20 metres!...smiles on both faces..excited French chatter from Agnes ... and for Ken a nice table sized southern rock lobster!!!!*



*Takae and me in next...wow...wow...wow...unbelievably clear water... fish life everywhere... old wives in numbers... a cray or two well back into the ledges... this dive was perfect. 45 minutes and we are back on the boat.*

*A gentle Northerly wind carried us out on a calm journey over the rip as we had our lunch break..doesn't get any better than this folks!!!!*

*Lunch over it was onto the J4. Ken and Agnes again in after the safety briefing and dive planning. Ken working the camera (See Fathoms Pics) to capture pics of the full length of the sub. One inside pic shows absolute pure clear water for the full length on the inside.*

*An exciting dive for Takae as this was to be her first visit to this iconic Bass Straight wreck. Down to the broken bow,take in the torpedo tubes and a nice slow easy ride through the first part below the conning tower...brilliant!*

*Noting around 7 divers from a charter boat under the coning tower we chose to exit the forward hatch and look at the plaque commemorating the Melbourne Bottom Scratchers who discovered the sub.Excellent viz.we move to the stern and back around to the bow again....too many divers here... time to go home..exit and back on board.*

*Had enough? Not yet! We saw the swells were down closer to shore and so a reef dive was put into action.*

*Ken,Agnes and Takae got the nod for this dive and I did the boat bit....30 minutes after using up the very last bit of air they surfaced with legal catch of abalone but the crays were elusive... the sun was not over yet! En route to see the summer fun at Portsea we came upon a few active dolphins. ( dodging ignorant boats and jet skis)..Agnes was ecstatic at all this... Boat out at Sorrento..farewells to our new French friends..off to the Doc's for a coldie and air fills and home via BMYS for the boat and motor wash down.*

*If a rating was to be applied to this magic day it would be 11 out of 10!!!! Great safe diving.great vis.great divers..*

*A day diving in heaven!!*

### 6<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Divers: Rob Kirk-Ken Methven-Takae Yokoyama-JL

Dive Sites: Blairgowrie Pier

The BOM forecast was not favourable for today, however being optimistic that we might get out we arrived at Sorrento at 9AM...could have stayed home! 25 knots easterly...one major Sorrento boating event also cancelled!!

However Rob and I had not dived the Blairgowrie Pier which seems to be the favourite dive site of many Melbourne divers and notably Alan Storen.. "OK so we're down here let's do the pier" was the cry..



We dropped the boat off at the Scuba Doctor shop for safe keeping while we had the dive.

A slight current and some mild silt didn't deter from an exceptional 70 minutes all the way out, around and back under and along the pier (see pics in Fathoms)... Spotted a few seahorses, star fish, hermit crabs and also lots of crabs hiding under the pieces of wood, pygmy leatherjackets and black banded sea pearch, pipe fish and heaps of other varieties of fish life...

A very interesting dive, good fun and no boat to wash down!!

### 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

Divers: Michael-Peter Fear-Val Fear-Ken Methven-Takae Yokoyama-JL

Dive Sites: J4/Boarfis Reef

Michael (?) is a diving friend of the Fears and after the Sunday dives we were sitting around getting tanks filled. Michael advised he had not dived the J4 Sub.

A dive day and plan was discussed and we agreed to dive on Tuesday next..from Michaels boat...not your average dive boat...a 45 foot Mustang. ( Chris Llewellyn this one is your boat's bigger brother!)

After arriving at the Marina we loaded the gear onto the boat from the Blairgowrie Marina wharf where the boat was enjoying a "visitor's mooring" and set off for the J4 into a stiff southerly wind.

Very impressed with Peter's finding the J4 from land markings, but then again remembering he owned Dive Victoria for many years he probably did this every week back then..we did have the GPS marks but Pete wanted to test his skills again and he was, well.. "spot on". 5 minutes of sounding around and the site was set with the 30meter shot line

I opted to be the boat skipper and two sets of divers set off for the dive...Ken and

*Takae first and Pete and Michael soon after...Michael was using a rebreather..beautifully set up as a diver!*

*The swells were really up and whilst the divers enjoyed the dive the conditions on the wreck were testy and he viz was down to just a few meters...penetration of the wreck was considered not safe.*

*Back on board and gear stowed it was back into the bay and onto the Popes Eye for lunch. Takae had prepared a feast of great food for us...sumptuous is the best way to describe Takae's feast.*



*Next dive was back to Boarfish Reef on the slack flood. Peter was to handle the boat and the 4 of us did the dive.*

*Clear blue water, 20meter vis and no current..wow!!!*

*I have not seen so many "old wives" in one place at the same time here..must have been 20/30 of these brilliant fish...the slack water had 'em just hovering.*

*Thanks to Peter and Val Fear and Michael for the invite to have some great fun in style... thanks to all for your company and great diving!*

*And finally...an unusual day for two VSAG members.....on the Alert!*

19<sup>th</sup> December 2007

*Mark Ryan who heads up Southern Ocean Exploration was supported by Mick Jeacle and I to take 4 Tech divers to the recently discovered SS Alert wreck.*

*On each boat we had two Tech divers, one deckie and, of course, the boat handlers/skippers*

*At Sorrento around 8.30AM, we loaded the gear onto the two boats and then we assembled for the briefing from Mark.*

*Departing around 9.15we passed through the rip and headed East towards Cape Schanck. Conditions were a little swelly, however with the heavy loads on the boats we more or less ploughed our way onto the dive site.*

*It took around 10 minutes to actually get the vessel on the scanner, and once absolutely sure we had the wreck located the shot line was lowered..into 75 metres.*

*The preparation for this type of very deep*



*diving is absolutely meticulous...these divers are descending into deep and dark waters and there is no room for the slightest error.*

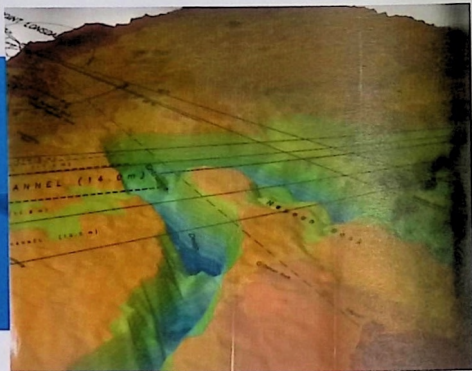
*Each diver carries two twin 120cu ft tanks on their back and three sling tanks....on the ascent as each oxygen tank is exhausted it is unclipped from the diver and attached to the shot line and finds it's way to the surface to be unhooked by the boat crew.*

*The descent time is around 4 minutes,27 minutes on the wreck and ascent 90 minutes... all up the run time is around two hours underwater.*

*With all divers safely back on the boats back to Sorrento and a few debriefing ales at the Sorrento pub.*

*BTW this journey was the longest I have done in my boat....all up 75kms round trip.*

JL.



Now that food has replaced sex in my life, I can't even get into my own pants.

Marriage changes passion. Suddenly you're in bed with a relative.

I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it. So I said "implants?" She hit me.

I don't do drugs. I get the same effect just standing up fast.

I live in my own little world. But it's OK. They know me here.

I don't approve of political jokes. I've seen too many of them get elected.

**Don't argue with an idiot; people watching may not be able to tell the difference.**

## Portland XMAS 07-08: By Greg Richards

*After an enforced layoff from diving due to the Bends the thought of returning to Portland to renew acquaintances with the Great Southern Ocean was like an unleashing of my dreams from bondage.*

*Christmas 2007 in Melbourne was one of those never to be forgotten special weather events. In the days leading up to Christmas we had some of the most impressive storms in living memory, torrential downpours and fierce thunder and lightning. Many a good drought has been ruined by rain.*

*Such was the scenario facing us as we set off to the Dutton Way Caravan Park on Boxing Day. Mercifully, fine weather was the order of the day. We had been warned to bring thongs for the showers as Tinea was rife and due to the low prices we all suspected it may be a little on the basic side. Basic didn't even go halfway to summing up everybody's initial reaction. The place was a throwback in time, it was the original 1940's park and nothing had been updated since.*

*The Jeacles had arrived before Xmas and would only reveal that the on-site vans were old and the camp sites very well grassed. My wives' initial gasp of shock at seeing the ramshackle, rundown, rudimentary and rustic park was to suggest that this 2 week holiday might be cut short by about 15 days! Sadly, I wasn't in the car with Ted Cornish when he and the "Lucky One" arrived, as I believe her reaction would have been worth seeing.*

*Gradually the VSAG dive commandos were all assembled and ready for action. We had Trevor and Kathy Williams guarding the front gate to stop any other weary travelers from entering the park. Bazza and Marie Truscott along with Jan and I took up defensive positions near the toilets. The Storens (Big Al, Jude and Chris), commandeered the center and used this as Central HQ command center as well as the 6.00pm drinks and nibbles venue. Prya and John Mills along with the Tippings (sadly the Deepdene versions not the Nth Carlton crew) formed a defensive line along our western flank, which left Ted and Lucky on point. The Jeacles acted as our rearguard defensive unit and back up drinks and nibbles venue.*

*After some consideration the decision was finally made to put the boat into the water and dive the Lawrence Rocks area. After sending down a team of crack precision divers to locate the wreck of the "Emily S", it was decided that the GPS marks we had been given were faulty and a cray bash was undertaken. Any crays taken were too small to keep and returned to their ledges.*

*Whilst filling our tanks at Professional Diving Services later that day, we enquired about the accuracy of the GPS marks and one of the staff suggested that the wreck may have moved. Moved! A 32m long 400 tonne trawler had just up and moved. I decided to stay*

ashore the next day and talk to some-one who could give me accurate bearings.

Whilst the boat was out diving on the next day I received a phone call from the same staff member who suggested that the wreck had moved. She gave me the number of an expert who knew everything, and would know for sure the correct bearings. Triumphant, I rang Mick Jeacle in the boat to give him the phone number of the expert. He put the phone on loud-speaker so the whole boat could hear me as I recited the number I'd been given. I read out the number for Alan Storen to transcribe and as I said 0408 287 7.. the penny dropped, she'd given me my own phone number, and I hadn't even noticed. Apparently, I was the expert! The gales of laughter from the boat made me feel like I'd just won "Moron of the Day"

As it turned out it didn't matter as another boat was anchored on the wreck at this point and they simply ran over the top of it and hit the GPS. Turns out we were only 20m off it the first time. The guys all said it was a great dive and we made plans to give it another go the next day. Seems it hadn't moved very far at all. Four Hundred tonne wrecks are like that.

The next day Trevor Williams, Tony Tipping and myself had an absolutely magic dive on the "Emily". The water was a deep cobalt blue, and although the bottom near the wreck where the anchor lay was stirred up, on the wreck itself and nearby reef the visibility was awesome. At one stage Trevor and I ventured to some wreckage lying 10m or so from the wreck. When we turned to look at the wreck we could see the entire 32m long wreck as well as the anchored boat, which was at least 40m away. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> crew went down they said that the stirred up water had moved onto the wreck and viz was only average- maybe the viz stayed put and the wreck moved again?





*Alan and Chris Storen had a quiet little dive under the wooden jetty in the harbour one evening and Alan tried to convince all and sundry that it was extremely interesting. It must have been good, as when Alan suggested they do it again, Chris promptly left town and didn't even bother to pack up his tent!*

*After New Years Eve came and went so did the Williams pair, to be replaced by my daughter Jasmine & her boyfriend Nick. Ted and Jan Cornish had cut short their stay in paradise some days earlier and moved to Echuca.*



*At some point in time an old past member Dave Carroll appeared and regaled the evening drinks sessions with sordid tales of the extra-curricula activities of certain Past Presidents, Life members and other VSAG identities. Due to the family oriented nature of Fathoms as well as space limitations, I will refrain from elaborating. For those amongst you that do not know of this Dave Carroll character, let me just say*

*that he is all class. I didn't even know that you could heat a can of baked beans on the exhaust pipe of your car before I met him. Nor that you could (or would), stab a faulty air bed to death on completion of a dive weekend to the Prom. His 3 days with us passed all too quickly.*

*John and Prya were more interested in diving at Mt Gambier than in the briny. They managed to knock up a few dives in Piccannie Ponds, Ewans Ponds, Kilsbys Cave and Little Blue. Apparently they didn't get around to diving in Hells Hole as they didn't have a long enough rope ladder and abseiling 30m to the waters edge is not their scene!*

*Alan Storen and myself along with No1 daughter & boyfriend also gave the fresh-water ponds a workout when the wind blew out the sea diving and this made for an interesting diversion from the norm.*

*When the wind dropped off we returned the boat to Lawrence Rocks and after everybody got their rocks off penetrating, probing and circumnavigating the "Emily" we decided to explore more adventurous territory North of the rocks. Some nice bottom showed up on the sounder and the skipper and myself geared up and Alan Storen placed us smack on some brilliant reef. Massive gullies and swim throughs with good fish life intermingled with ledges packed with the smallest crays imagin-*

able. One ledge had maybe 50 baby crayfish packed right side up, upside down, sideways and even on top of each other.

Working as a close knit team we bagged a 1.5 kg cray for entrée. This, was enjoyed by the whole group that evening over a fine wine. After we surfaced Alan decided to try somewhere else and had a magic shallow splash off the headland in front of the Smelter. He claims to have been surrounded by thousands of fish for the whole dive. I think he was on drugs.

Tony Tipping was as keen as mustard to get in some diving, but as the cricket wasn't washed out he rarely ventured far from his annex. Maaarg wanted to watch the TV after the Test Match ended, so Tony packed it away. He is a little treasure, isn't he!

Barry Truscott rode his bike over most of the Western Districts and set several "Personal Bests"- longest ever bike ride, fastest ever speed and fastest ever heart rate. He left his big mate; "He who must be obeyed", in his wake on several occasions and if he would stop calling me fat, I might have joined them! John Mills outdid them all by riding his bike to and from Nelson in under a day and he could still walk that night.

Bit by bit the numbers started to drop off as people left and by the final day of diving there were only 3 starters. As the boat rounded the breakwater we could see white water smashing over the top of the smaller island on the Northern Lawrence Rock. As this was 10 kms away and the rock is probably 60ft high I took this to be a bad omen.



*The nearer we got the bigger the swells. When they got to 4m we backed off and headed for calm sheltered waters. Alan Storen and I managed 3 x 30 minute shallow dives and found a great little patch of reef close to town that was smothered with green lip Abalone. It appears the abalone virus, which is decimating this section of the coast, has no effect on greenlips. Rest assured, I will be back.*

*The initial reactions to the caravan park were by now a distant memory. The sites were luxuriant and although the amenities were old they were clean and you never, ever, had to wait, ever. The owners provided a BBQ and stuck it in our midst and most nights 1 or 2 of us used it after partaking in pre dinner drinks. The park was quiet and we made the most noise and we didn't annoy anyone. The rumour started by Mick and Annie that the store only had a can of Spam and a can of Nestles Quik was a gross exaggeration as there was at least 20 items when I went in to pay for my site.*

*As the trip drew to close the giant oil rig we had been expecting all week finally turned up. It was quite impressive as it lay at anchor directly in front of our camp sites. It was about 20 stories high and about 70m square. The two ocean going tugs that brought her in were both the size of a small ship, and at night they were all lit up like Christmas trees. All very impressive.*

*The amount of things to do in and around Portland meant that we were never short on extra-curricula activities and the diving got better as we learnt more about the area. With Mt Gambier, Pt Fairy and Warrnambool, all no more than an hour away, we never ran out of things to do or see. For the cave divers the nearest cave was only a 40 minute drive. Late in the trip we even had a seal come and set up camp at the boat ramp, thus saving us from having to walk 2 hours to the seal colony.*

*Finally the last of us packed up in the 16<sup>th</sup> day of straight sunshine. Not a drop of rain was had. The site-seeing and diving was over, but the memories of the great times for the 20 VSAGers will linger long after the can of Spam has passed its used by date.*



## Pieces of Eight and all that

### Alan Storen

The day started as many other diving days do with a brilliant dive on a brilliant day out on Port Phillip Bay. Jackie Storen, Kathy Pedlow and I dropped in at Lonsdale Wall and had a great dive at the start of the ebb slack. JL and his crew - Lloyd, Benita, Mike Kakafikas and David Geekie also did the Wall. Mick Jeacle was saving himself for a dive on Magic reef.

We dropped Mick on his reef according to the GPS and awaited his return. He had promised his 'poolman' a cray and I think Annie was also on the 'must bring home a cray' list. Some 40 minutes later Mick burst to the surface with the cry "I've found a treasure chest and I've left the line attached" - he also had his two crays in the bag!



After much huffing and puffing we could not raise it to the surface. Our thoughts ranged from "It probably contains body parts- probably a head!" or "Drugs" to "It is full of gold bullion, jewels and other goodies". Jackie could already see herself decked in 'the necklace'. I think she wanted first pick. Little chance!

With JL shaking his head and I think saying "You will turn the boat over!" we almost got to the stage of giving up - but not

Mick! We attached the rope to the back of the boat and dragged it to shallow water. The air of excitement rose as Andy Mastrowicz and his crew joined us for the final lift.

The treasure chest was about 2ft long, and about 15" by 12" width, height. It had a handle at each end. It was slowly raised to the surface. As it came into view all the crew moved to one side of the boat to get a look - would JL's prediction come true and the boat flip over?

The treasure chest was very heavy and we finally got a really good look at the prize. The two terminals, one at each end and the several paired screw caps were the giveaway - it was a huge battery, probably off one of the squid boats. We were deflated and disappointed - still needed to go to work on Monday!

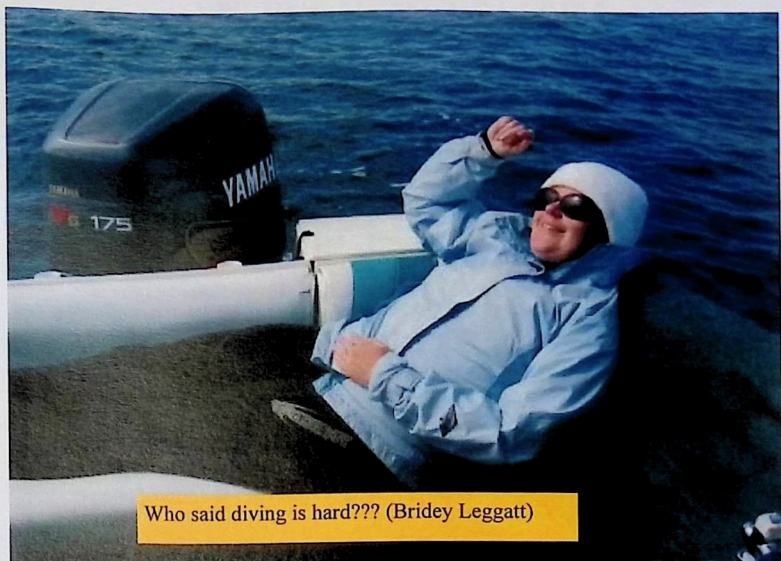
We set off for lunch at Popes Eye and memories of what might have been!

Jackie and Kathy had a dive at Popes and so did many of JL's crew. Mick dropped me at the Blairgowrie Pier for an hour while he went to Rye for some scallops. JL and his crew did a drift off Queenscliff. Some met at the Sorrento Pub for the usual debrief.

Another great day on the water but the only treasures were our memories, Mick's two crays and a feed scallops. Next time!

Alan Storen





Who said diving is hard??? (Bridey Leggatt)



## XMAS TRIP PORTLAND 2007

### John Mills.

We actually started planning for the Christmas trip early this year. Priya indicated that we should try and book into the Kilsby's sinkhole as access had been recently increased. After checking the CDAA website we found that we had the necessary experience (i.e. twin tanks) to dive it. We booked in on Boxing Day and signed all the indemnities etc. We just needed to work out how to check e-mails whilst in Portland as this was how the confirmation process worked.

Back to Christmas day and the SMS on the phone went off. It was from Big Mick. I thought how nice of him to send a Christmas greeting. I was disappointed find that the message was "Make sure you bring some things to Dutton Park or you will get tinea from the showers". I said to Priya "What have we booked into this year?"

We decided to go to Portland the day after boxing day as we got back from the Christmas rounds late, this gave us some more time to pack as we had extra dive gear to take for the sinkholes and I had my usual fleet of Bicycles. We managed to get away before lunch the day after Boxing Day. I checked the computer for directions and was assured that going through Geelong was the quickest route. The traffic was good until we hit Geelong then we just crawled along. It did however provide us with a good opportunity to go to Anacanda and get some camping gear that was sold out at the Melbourne store.

The rest of the drive was pretty uneventful and we arrived at Dutton way late afternoon. We pulled into the grounds of the Caravan Park and as described by others it looked like a throwback to the 1950's. Priya knocked on the door of the store. I noticed that Trevor was set up under the trees with his Marquee and Hammock. Alan came around and explained the lie of the land. We eventually selected a spot behind the Storens under the trees and set up the tent. Alan explained that the site would be quite until the next afternoon as Tony Tipping was due to arrive then and become our neighbor.

Teddy and Jan were opposite us. They had taken the five star option and had a Van. The set up of the Van was great. You could walk in one of the doors straight onto the bed. Then all you had to do was roll over, open the cupboard and you were in a shower. However the shower was about the size of a closet, it looked like someone had started to do some work on it twenty years ago and never got around to finishing it. Teddy was in his usual form, managing to stir everyone up at a moments notice. His stories about the Lucky One were particularly entertaining. An intrepid crew went out the next day consisting of Mick, Teddy, Trevor, Greg and Alan to find the dive sites. They went armed with a leaflet from the local store, which contained the GPS coordinates for all the top sites. Of particular interest was the wreck of an old trawler that was sunk by the local diving community. We took off to Mt. Gambier to arrange some permits to dive in Picanninnie Ponds. When we returned someone had draped a wetsuit over the trailer to dry. I told Priya that this would rust the trailer and She was quite flummoxed. Even better the wetsuit belonged to Teddy. We will now be monitoring the trailer for signs of rust and the finger of blame will be firmly pointed at Teddy if the tell tale brown Stains Appear. Teddy and Jan decided to pull up stumps and journey on to Echuca. They slipped out of camp just as dawn was breaking.

Apparently the divers could not find any of the hot sites including the wreck when using the shop marks. We suspected that they were slightly out as different systems may have been used to generate them. Mick enquired at the dive site if this could be the case and was informed by the assistant that they were right. It was most likely that the wreck had moved, as there had been some heavy seas recently. This appeared to be one of the few wrecks in the world that could move??

I went out with Mick, Alan and Trevor to check out some of the diving. We headed out to Lawrence a rock, which is completely covered with a Gannet colony and all the guano that goes with it. Trevor and Alan had a dive around the Island and had some fun in the whirlpools and currents. Mick Decided to check out some offshore reef and we explored it for about 30 minutes. Upon surfacing the big bloke said, "Lets have another crack at finding the wreck" so off we went. Whilst we were looking Greg rang and said he had spoken to the shop and the charter they used was happy to help us with marks to find it. He started to read out the number than said "Hang on that's my number; She's given me my number". Eventually he rang back and we got the right number. We eventually found the wreck using a tried and true search method. We saw boats anchored with dive flags near the spot. We had found it. After the other divers had just about finished we dropped Alan and Trevor in and started motoring off the boats when Alan called out "Hey I forgot my Fins". Back we went whilst we were getting him organised we were drifting closer to the anchored boat. He got his fins just before the imminent collision. The Big Lloyd called out to the other guys "He's logged over 8000 dives and he forgets his fins Aw Haw Haw". After lunch we got them back in the boat and Mick and Myself descended to the wreck. It was a nice little wreck with plenty of opportunity to penetrate. Big Mick was cold and surfaced. I looked around for a little more and popped up soon after. As I stripped my Gear for loading the dry suit inflater hose was stuck open and started flaying around and smacking me in the head. Trevor got the hose under control and the air was turned off. The sticky valve was fixed with my tube of trusty bike chain lube. We filled the tanks and were back in camp by 3.00pm for beer and the traditional 5.00pm drinks. This was a particularly important part of the dive for Al as this was when the bottles of red were opened.

By this stage the Tippings had arrived and the Caravan was set up with the usual Military precision. The Boxing Day test was still in progress so it was important for Tony to have the television tuned to pick up the action. After a number of comparisons with our reception he was satisfied that he had it optimised. Another part of this trip is that there was a strong representation from the Peninsula Peddlers (Mick, Baz and Tony). However when asked if he had brought his bike Tony replied that he was not interested in cycling for this trip as there was the diving and cricket to watch. Mick just shrugged and said, "He has his rules". I was informed by the unofficial leader of the peddlers that I wasn't allowed on their rides, as they would not be able to keep up. I offered to keep it in the "Granny Gear" (Lowest gear) and spin along with them. I did some adjustments on Annie's Bike and got it running smoothly. The competitive juices started flowing for Tony and he decided that he would borrow Annie's Bike and do some of the riding.

I was unsure how to keep up with the cricket television or radio commentary. I decided that the campground broadcast would be adequate. This consisted of keeping within a 50 metre radius of Tony's van and listening out for the following type of comments "Got Him". "Hey Marg he's out", "Marg it's all over". This was more than adequate in keeping abreast with the progress of the test. I was eventually invited by Baz to join the peddlers on one of their so-

journs. I clipped into the trusty Mountainbike and away we went. We wandered around some of the country roads, even got onto some dirt. Tony had an earpiece in for his beloved cricket commentary. We managed to clock up about 30 Km. This was Mick's longest ride and he managed to do all the uphill stuff. It's good to see the peddlers are improving their fitness and stretching themselves. The last hill became a benchmark for setting speed records. Mick and Baz were trying to crack the 60Km/Hour mark. Both will tell you they were the fastest. Tony could not post a value, as he doesn't believe in bike computers as he can accurately estimate distance without one. He seemed to be pretty close to the mark when he was next to Baz or Mick and he could see their numbers.

Some of the groups took to exploring the fire trails in the State Forests in their four wheel drives.



Priya and myself did a couple of dives in Picanninnie ponds, this is always an enjoyable dive. We finalised the bookings for our Kilsby sinkhole adventure by using the mobile phone to do the e mailing and took off to Mt Gambier. This was a good dive involving a climb down to the water down stairs and ladders. The visibility was exceptional, a lot like Pics used to be before the extra weed growth.

Tony Tipping last days involved him breaking into his wine hoard and cutting loose. He was nobbled vocally as he had come down with a case of laryngitis. He packed all that he was allowed to the night before and turned in for an early night after swatting the flies and zipping himself into the van. The Tippings were up early and commenced the pack up frenzy. Tony's incentive for hitting the road early was to get home in time to watch the last session of the cricket.

I embarked on a cycling adventure to ride to Nelson and back. When I arrived back there was a heightened level of excitement in the town as an oilrig had arrived for refitting. Watching the anchoring procedure seemed to occupy most people's days. Greg and Jan spent the day checking out Mt Gambier with the family. The holiday was now drawing to a close a few more sorties were taken to Lawrence rocks. The Peddlers did their last rides. Priya and myself dived pics once more to use the air we had left from the Kilsbys dive. Big Mick packed up the boat and left.

The final activity for the trip was to undertake a tour of the aluminium smelter. This was quite interesting as I gained an understanding of the smelting process. The final day had everyone in pack up mode Baz and Marie were the 1<sup>st</sup> to hit the road followed by Alan and Jude, then Greg and Jan. We finished packing the remains of our disheveled tent and returned home through Hamilton and Ballarat and had the trailer in the shed by 4.30.

All up the trip was very enjoyable. The caravan park was acceptable once you got used to the retro 1950's ambience. Hey we pretty much had the run of the whole place. No cases of tinca were reported. Everyone's diving needs were accommodated. Some new personal bests were achieved by the peninsula peddlers in terms of distances covered and speeds. Australia won the cricket. Oilrigs are exciting. Kilsbys sink hole was dived. There was pre dinner drinks and/or post dinner drinks most nights.

The final verdict was that all who attended had an enjoyable break.



# Diving Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Alan Storen

*Location: Lonsdale Wall and Ocean Grove/Lonsdale Reef*

*Divers:*

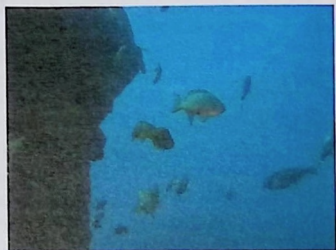
*David Geekie, Pam Dalgety, Alan Storen, Peter Briggs*

*John Lawler, Ken Methven, Takae Yokoyama, John Merlo*

*Mick Jeacle, Greg Richards, Lloyd Borrett, Benita McDonough*

*Andy Mastrowicz and family/friends (not with us but out on the water)*

*With an overcast sky and some light rain as we left Sorrento I was beginning to doubt that we had made the right decision to change the dive from Sunday to Saturday. The slack was at 9.45am and the 8.30 start was a challenge for some but we were all geared up and left the ramp at about 9.20am. We had 12 divers on board and Andy to call when he was on the water from Queenscliff.*



*We arrived at Bonsdale Wall/ Reef and it was obviously a popular spot. As we waited for slack I counted 16 dive boats along the wall between the Plateau (Tom Wende on DiveOz) and the North end of the Wall (Dive Vic, AB Ocean, QDC, and 2 other charters). Getunder also had several boats, rubber duckies out on the spot. Slack water came and on David's boat 3 divers went in the check out the reef. They went West not East and did not get the best view of the wall but found some interesting reef. The other VSAGers dropped in on the wall and reported some great diving and fantastic viz (25+m). John Merlo came up with a cray and re-*

*ported to Mick something about cooking Mick's cray up in a Tuna tin!! Mick was not impressed!*

*I dropped in just at the end of the slack and while I had a great dive going through the cave and caverns as soon as I put my head above the reef the current was obviously on the increase. I completed my dive a few hundred metres from my entry point due to the strong ebb tide. All reported a good dive.*

*We ate lunch near Lonsdale beach and the call was outside the Heads – any site but Castle Rock. (I like Castle Rock!) so off we headed for a cray bash in the area between the Lighthouse and Ocean Grove. I think every boat has a different name for this area but it is a continuous reef running parallel to the coast and each boat each dropped in at a different spot. I think the count was 3 crays in the bag with many others being sighted but the arms were too short! The reef was good but the viz not as good as inside the bay. A huge bull ray was sighted by many as it checked the divers out. Peter and I almost had a cray in the bag but ... (you know how it goes!)*

*A great day out on the water, great company (on the boat I was on at least – can't speak for the others) and great diving as always.*

*Must put this reef on the must-do-soon list, before the dredging starts and we are not permitted in this area for a while. I have not seen the restricted area nor dates but I am assuming that this area will be a no-go area while they are dredging the Plateau area.*

## Diving At Piccaninnie Ponds—Darren Pearce

*In my view this site is one of Australia's a most popular sinkhole dive sites, located in the lower south east corner of south Australia.. When I dive this site I always take my camera as I enjoy taking photos of this site Its like visiting a underwater garden not many people get to see as it has a lot of attractive aquatic weed growth. I have also came across various fresh water native fish and have seen the odd fresh water eel and yabbie.*

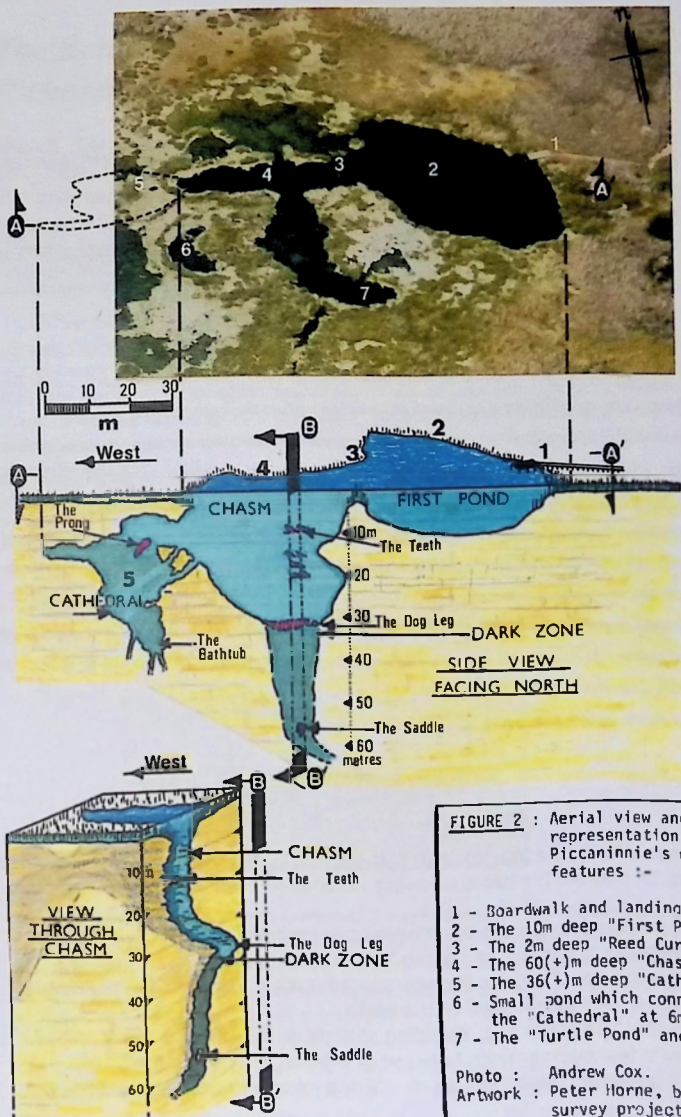
*At the site there is a shelter shed that has been set up for divers where you can kit up. Not far from the shelter shed there is a small access track that takes you down to the first pond.. At the first pond there is a small jetty where you enter and exit the dive site. The first pond is a quite shallow and only drops down to 15metres Most divers normally swim across the surface and enter the second pond. Care should be taken when entering the second pond as it gets quite shallow at the entrance and silt can easily be stirred up. The second pond is known as the chasm and drops all the way down to 75meters. However this site is limited as there is a mandatory diving depth restriction of 36meters 120 feet set out by the Department of environment heritage (DEH)..... On the start of the dive slowly descend down the chasm and then into the dog leg where you reach a sign that reads 36.5 meters do not pass this point... From the last time I dive this site I noted the sign had gone missing from here the tunnel keeps dropping down with no bottom in site and I have noted just the bubbles hitting the limestone wall seem to stir up a fair bit of silt. The deeper you go down the dog leg tunnel becomes more narrow and can silt out to zero visibility easily if the diver is not careful ... From the dogleg you can swim back up into the chasm and along and can enter the cathedral Inside the cathedral is like being inside a giant Limestone cave chamber, it's a beautiful cave chamber and goes a fair way in and is shaped like a giant dogs head the penetration distance of the chamber is only 35meters and the deepest point is around 40meters 140 feet The shallowest point of the cathedral is around 6meters according to the map*

*Through the entrance you can descended deep down into the cathedral chamber into a small spot known as the bathtub at a depth of 36meters 120feet Looking up you can see small beams of daylight coming through the entrance the light looks so eerie.. There are some small passage like swim through I have found that can get a bit tight.. When I was swimming through this small tunnel I swear I could hear someone playing a digerdo it then occurred to me it was my bubbles hitting the limestone ceiling that were making the digerdo like sound it gave me a errie feeling going through this small passage.. There is also another entrance into the cathedral from the turtle pond known as the slot however this swim through silts out to zero visibility and is for those divers that like swimming through a silt out....*

*To dive this site requires a Special diving permit which is obtain through the DEH Office in Mt Gambier, Once permit and dive slot time has been allocated there is normally a fee to be paid for the dive*

*For people who don't dive but can snorkel you can also gain Laccess to this site through a snorkeling permits*

*More information on Snorkeling and diving permits can be found on the parks south Australia web link below*



**FIGURE 2 :** Aerial view and representation of Piccaninnie's main features :-

- 1 - Boardwalk and landing.
- 2 - The 10m deep "First Pond".
- 3 - The 2m deep "Reed Curtain".
- 4 - The 60(+)m deep "Chasm".
- 5 - The 36(+)m deep "Cathedral".
- 6 - Small pond which connects to the "Cathedral" at 6m.
- 7 - The "Turtle Pond" and cave.

Photo : Andrew Cox.  
 Artwork : Peter Horne, based on survey project data.

Piccaninnie Ponds or 'pics' as it is affectionately known!

## ***North Wall Caves: Saturday 19th Jan 2008***

*It rained, it drizzled and the sun never made an appearance, but, 4 boatloads of VSAG divers and friends made whoopee on the North Wall Caves.*

*With recent reports of 35m visibility in the Bay and on the graveyard shipwrecks, it was always going to take more than a little topside rain to deter the keen VSAG frogmen (and frogwomen). A forecast of slight winds and flat seas saw us plan an 8.30 am Saturday meet at Sorrento ramp, to catch a high water slack at 9.45am.*

*After meeting up with Alan Beckhurst and another boat from Getunder dive club at the heads area we decided on diving "The Caves". So did several other charter boats and although there was at least 45 divers in the area as we all geared up it was not so crowded on the bottom.*

*Visibility was down on expectations, but at 12m, it was still better than average. The dive spot is simply magic, with large ledges and overhangs as well as the caves themselves. Large Dusky Morwong lazily hung in your way as you cruised through the maze of the reef itself. Like all Lonsdale Wall dive spots the sponge and invertebrate life is simply stunning, with the added bonus of masses of small to medium sized fish milling around- this is one seriously good dive spot.*

*After a lunch and de-gas interval we ventured outside and did a little exploration dive between Lonsdale and Ocean Grove. Large black rays, one cave with 4 weedy sea dragons in it and a few crays were sighted (some liberated). All this as well as wobbegongs, epalurette and cat sharks made this a very enjoyable 2nd dive.*

*A must to do again before the dredging starts up in earnest.*

### *The Shadow (Grrr)*

An Irishman who had a little too much to drink is driving home from the city one night and, Of course, his car is weaving violently all over the road. A cop pulls him over.

"So," says the cop to the driver, "Where have ya been?"

"Why, I've been to the pub of course," Sturs the drunk.

"Well," says the cop, "it looks like you've had quite A few to drink this evening."

"I did all right," the drunk says with a smile.

"Did you know," says the cop, standing straight and folding his arms across his chest, "that a few intersections back, your wife fell out of your car?"

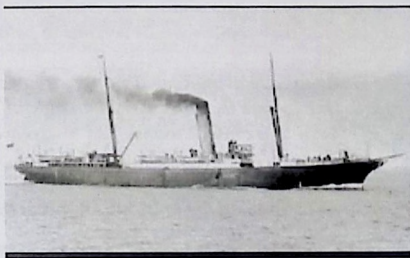
"Oh, thank heavens," sighs the drunk. "For a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf."

## ***The Rotomahana: A personal perspective by Greg Richards. Australia Day 2008***

*The S.S. Rotomahana was built by the Union Steamship Company in 1875 and measured 298ft long by 35 ft wide. She was named after Lake Rotomahana which is situated near Rotorua on the Nth Island of New Zealand. Lake Rotomahana has an interesting history. It was the major tourist attraction in New Zealand until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. People came from all corners to see the world famous Pink and White Terraces on the shores of the lake.*

*In 1886 a major volcanic eruption severely altered the geography of the Lake. According to local legend, some days before the eruption a war canoe full of warriors was seen approaching a group of tourists and then suddenly it disappeared into a mist and was never seen again. Local Maori elders took this a portent of impending doom. When the lake erupted 9 days later the elders were convinced the tourists had indeed seen a spirit canoe and the re-appearance of it in the future will signal the next volcanic upheaval.*

*The Maori word Rotomahana is made up two words Roto and Mahana. Roto means lake and mahana means warm, which considering the history and the reputation of the general area of Rotorua and Lake Rotomahana, it isn't surprising that the locals called it by this name.*



*After the S.S. Rotomahana was launched it worked for the Union Steamship Line from 1875 until 1925. The ship was historic in that it was the first to be built from mild steel and the first to fitted with twin bilge keels. The ship was quite different to other ships in the Line and was reportedly purpose built originally as a private yacht for a wealthy Prince, and the deal fell through.*

*She was launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1879 and sailed from London on the 5<sup>th</sup> August. Stopping at Plymouth were they picked up 100 passengers and left for Melbourne via the Cape of Good Hope. Arriving at Melbourne on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, she then sailed onto Pt Chalmers NZ, arriving on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1879. Due to her yacht like lines*

*and the top quality internal fittings she was the subject of much interest wherever she called. It was said that she had accommodation for 140 first class passengers as well as 80 2<sup>nd</sup> class, and 80 3<sup>rd</sup> class passengers. For some years she was fitted with masts to use the wind when favourable, and to cut fuel costs.*

*On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1879 the Rotomahana left Wellington bound for Sydney on her first trans Tasman run that was to be route for the next 15 years. In 1894 she was used for a few months for a ferry service between Melbourne and Launceston. She then returned to doing various coastal runs around New Zealand. In 1901 she had 6 new boilers fitted to replace the original 4, and on returning to her run she was able to average 16knots between Lyttelton and Wellington. In May 1907 after 20 years of inter Island service she again moved back to Melbourne to work as a ferry across Bass Strait.*

*She spent the rest of career on this route until finally after World War 1 she was considered outdated and was replaced by the Nairana in 1920. She was laid up for 4 years until sold to the shipbreaking firm of Power and Davis. The dismantling took place over 3 years, until finally, on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1928 she was towed out to the area we know as the Ships Graveyard and sunk 5 kilometers from Ocean Grove.*

*Today the remains of the former 1777tonne Rotomahana rests in 40m of water, and after 80 years in the ocean she still has plenty to offer the experienced diver. The boilers sit proudly on the bottom along with many other girders, winches and plates. The fish life around the wreckage is usually profuse and varied. Swarms of butterfly perch hang, almost motionless around the bow section whilst schools of pelagics often visit.*

*In the 1970's divers from the Geelong Skindiving club began to explore the various scuttled ships in the Graveyard. One by one they discovered and identified many of the different wrecks. As the 70's drew to a close, I too wanted to explore the scuttled wrecks and at the time technical diving was unheard of and horse collar BC's were the new latest innovation. Deep diver or wreck diver courses were still a figment of someone's imagination. I had several dives on the only Sub known at the time and waited for the right day.*

*Australia Day weekend 1980: Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> was one of those magic calm windless days you dream about as a diver. Blue seas, little swell and the destination was the Rotomahana. The dive boat was Lance Stevens' 34ft cray boat operating from Barwon Heads. The day before had been good and we did 2 first rate dives, firstly the Sub and then a short dive on Chimney rocks off Barwon Heads. The log book entry states that the Sub was "really ace, with really nice reef off to the side....40 ft viz.. A really superb dive"- they were just the warm up dives. We were ready to tackle the 40m challenge.*

*The dive was nothing short of awesome. Visibility was at least 80ft with the water being a deep iridescent blue. As we descended the wreck became visible from about*

20ft down. The divers floated down in groups of 2 and 3 and landed on the boilers. The fish life was dense and one could see the other buddy pairs off in the distance with ease. The wreckage was 53 years old and still reasonably intact ( like the author today) and although one diver got Nitrogen Narcosis and ascended, the rest of us floated around what one diver back on the boat referred to as " the most disgustingly comfortable deep dive I've ever done.." My own comment at the time was this has to be the best dive site in Victoria. The diving tables gave us only 10 minutes on the bottom with 3mins at 10 ft decompression stop. It was a pity about the depth and time factors. This old lady of the sea deserved more than a 10 min quickie. I returned in June of 1980 and although the water was not so clear the Rotomahana was still an extremely interesting dive and this time I planned a 15 minute dive with 6 minutes decompression. I vowed to return. For many years I wondered if I ever would.

So it was that on Australia day weekend of 2007 that along with Mick Jeacle, Alan Storen, and 2 BRUDG members Peter Altis and Eddie Van Mannen, I headed out thru the Rip to renew acquaintances with the once proud inter island ferry. It had been 27 years since my first encounter, and once again conditions were quite calm and the water looked super clear on the way out.

The Barwon River had reduced the viz on the dive site to only 30ft but the sea was calm and we soon had the first team in the water. The boilers are still very impressive and along with a broken section of the bow they are able to be safely swum through. The massing fish are still resident and we had a playful seal follow us around acrobatically and entertain us. My memory of the wreck from 27 years ago is too dim to compare the condition of the wreck as to how it is , or is not, deteriorating . suffice to say, it is still a magnificent dive.

Due to the wonders of modern technology we managed to spend a total of 32mins underwater including deco time, a far cry from the paltry 13 minutes of 1980. This grand old lady deserves to be dived on more often and she is worth spending as much time as possible going down on her. She will make it worth your while.

The once proud S.S. Rotomahana was only 53 years old when she was scuttled in Bass Strait. She has now spent the best part of 80 years underwater and is a must see for any serious deep diver who enjoys the wrecks of the Graveyard. Pick your day and savour the delights of the "most disgustingly comfortable deep dive I know."

Greg Richards. 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2008.

Footnote: Do not go anywhere near Lake Rotomahana if you hear of a strange canoe disappearing.

A woman was having a passionate affair with an inspector from a pest control company. One afternoon they were carrying on in the bedroom together when her husband arrived home unexpectedly.

"Quick," said the woman to the lover, "into the closet!" and she pushed him in the closet, stark naked.

The husband, however, became suspicious and after a search of the bedroom discovered the man in the closet. "Who are you?" he asked him.

"I'm an inspector from Bugs-B-Gone," said the exterminator.

"What are you doing in there?" the husband asked.

"I'm investigating a complaint about an infestation of moths," the man replied.

"And where are your clothes?" asked the husband.

The man looked down at himself and said, "Those little bastards!"





## DIVING INTO THE PAST

### Articles From Past Editions of Fathoms

Continuing our diving back into VSAG history from past Fathoms articles, two articles have been selected for your reading enjoyment.

From the April/May 1993 (pages 10/11/12) edition comes an article from Don Abell. "The Moral Dilemma of Refuge Cove" tells the adventures of VSAG'ers on the Australia Day LWE. As is Don's style and great sense of humour the article has "a go" at those who attended this weekend.

From the August/September of the same year (pages 20/21/22) is a repeat of my "Diving Into The Past" article.

Food supplies around the world are being depleted and we are suffering the ever increasing price at supermarkets today. The article "Aquaculture: Food From The Deep" focuses on the ways many countries are harvesting fish for human consumption...some very ingenious!

Hope you enjoy Diving into the past....

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### *THE MORAL DILEMA OF REFUGE COVE*

DON ABELL

Australia Day 1993 saw the annual VSAG pilgrimage to Refuge Cove. Most people who have been fortunate enough to get Refuge Agree that it is the "Eden" of Wilson's Promontory and perhaps farther afield.

Of course most of those people have been to Refuge during the absence of VSAG.

As we navigated the Old Rosalia out of the Franklin River on Saturday morning our trusty dive captain for this weekend Mr John Goulding who has reluctantly confessed to having a body of the same name, confided in me, a few of his most important concerns about the weekend. John has noticed that over the last few years (about 17 to be accurate) The moral fibre of the group has been gradually recessing.

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John is concerned that some of the VSAG members have been imbibing a little too much, telling bawdy and unsavoury tales to other members, causing a disturbance in the confines of a national park dedicated to the environment and it's natural tranquillity and generally putting the good name of keen divers into disrepute.

This of course is the value of the senior and more experienced and in this case life members of this club. John has been able to sense and identify the subtleties of the situation that no other member of the club has picked up. This is perhaps a good thing as I am sure that, if previously highlighted, this problem could have caused a fall in the number of regular Refuge attendees until the weekend was no longer viable as a club trip.

To try and correct this problem before it was noticed by others. John appointed me as morals monitor for the weekend. I could tell immediately that this was a big task so I sought a deputy. The obvious person was Justin Liddy. Of course, astute as Justin is, he had anticipated his calling. He had left his dive gear at home so that he would be able to concentrate on the issues at hand.

I had hoped that Paul Sier would be available as a second deputy but he had missed the boat. A great shame and an opportunity missed.

Paul has the ability to blend into any group in a low key manner and observe his surroundings without being noticed. Paul's quiet and unobtrusive manner would have been invaluable rounding out the trouble makers in the group.

At the end of the weekend my observations of the group were as follows: -My cover was possibly blown because this was the lowest key trip in years

- I was knocked out on Saturday night and was pleased to hear that Mick Jeacle immediately took over with J Liddy and led the group in Hymn singing to exorcise the bad elements.

- I also appreciate Mick's support by not telling "Archibald" on Sunday night.

Not that I think "Archibald" is in any form of bad taste, however it may incite the evil of others.

- Chris Lewellyn also tried to maintain a higher level in the conversation by discussing the future Prime Ministers of the country. (and other misconceptions)

- Charlie Brincatt was a positive influence as always by sleeping through the whole weekend.

Mary Clancy goes up to Father O'Grady after His Sunday morning service, and she's in tears. He says, "So what's bothering you, Mary my dear?" She says, "Oh, Father, I've got terrible news. My husband passed away last night." The priest says, "Oh, Mary, that's terrible. Tell me, Mary, did he have any last requests?" She says, "That he did, Father." The priest says, "What did he ask, Mary?" She says, "He said, 'Please Mary, put down that gun..."

- Bill Hayes credentials are of course unquestionable. As a Bank Manager and J.P. He is a pillar of the society and could be relied upon to uphold the highest standards.

- I have always known that Mick Jackiw was not a trouble maker. Mick went to bed early. This was noticeable at a similar time to his friend Kate and her friend. What a happy trio.

- I cannot be sure about Paul Tipping. He never seemed to be near when I was about, but as a Legal eagle and a man of repute and standing at the bar ,infact practically any bar in Melbourne I am sure his standards are beyond question.

Which leads to the divers that may be of some concern like:

- Leo Maybus How can I be sure of a man who can not find his tent amongst a group of about a dozen. A man who when he finally leaves the party to go to his tent (only 10 feet away) takes the long way home.

- Murray Black who insisted on telling derogatory jokes about aussies without any provocation whatsoever

- Jackie Paterson who insisted on goading otherwise innocent VSAG members and luring them into making sexist and discriminatory comments which were totally out of character.

- Craig Truscott. Just like his old man is a real stirrer. He stayed awake until the last man dropped. Always pushing the controversial line.

- Mick Large. He's a bikie ,What else do I need to say. We have all seen his type at demonstrations at Parliament house and in the city square. The professional trouble maker.

And perhaps a few final observations:

- The past few Australia Day weekends have been for more debaucherous.

Perhaps all the real trouble makers were absent this year. I won't name names but lets assign them the alias of say;-Ross Luxfold, Graeme Blanchard, Des Williams, Bob Scott.

And I have a basic problem when the Ranger comes to settle down Yogi and his friends at 1.00 in the morning. How can we expect to take this discipline seriously when he turns up with a six pack in one hand.

I am sure that Mr Goulding will continue this moral vigil into future Refuge Phenomenons.

## ***DIVING INTO THE PAST***

JOHN LAWLER

This contribution to *Fathoms* goes back to April 1971. The author of the story was not identified but I think you will find "Aquaculture

Food From The Deep" very interesting.

We also have another story from *Fathoms* 1974. Written by Brian Lynch.

FATHOMS, April 1971, PAGE 8

### AQUACULTURE: FOOD FROM THE DEEP

In the past 100 years, the amount of food taken from the sea has multiplied more than tenfold, a rate in excess of global population growth. But the annual world catch - now about 60 million metric tons cannot continue growing indefinitely. In fact such sea staples as California Sardines, Northwest Pacific Salmon and Barents Sea Cod not to mention the beleaguered whale - are already rapidly dwindling. Contrary to the myth, Fisheries Biologist William Ricker recently warned in a National Academy of Sciences report, the sea is "not a limitless reservoir of food energy."

Urchins to Octopus. Fortunately, there is an alternative to harvesting food directly from the sea. By using artificial ponds, lakes, streams and even cordoned off estuaries and bays to raise fish, man can give nature a helping hand. Fish farming is hardly new: as long ago as 475 B.C., a Chinese scholar-statesman named Fan Li wrote the first how-to-do-it treatise. But as Marine biologists seek to exploit it's full potential - especially as a way of relieving the world's chronic shortage of protein - water farming, or aquaculture, looms as an ever more important source of food.

The island-bound Japanese seem to be the most ingenious aquaculturists. Dependent on the sea for 60% of its protein intake, they have long led the world in growing oysters, shrimp and other aquatic delicacies. But lately, as their fisheries have been over taxed and their world travelling trawlers run into increasing opposition from foreign governments, Japanese researchers have been

Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside with only a pet dog for company. One day the dog died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest and asked, "Father, my dog is dead Could ya' be saying' a mass for the poor creature?" Father Patrick replied, "I'm afraid not; we cannot have services for an animal in the church. But there are some Baptists down the lane, and there's no tellin' what they believe. Maybe they'll do something for the creature." Muldoon said, "I'll go right away Father. Do ya' think \$5,000 is enough to donate to them for the service?"

Father Patrick exclaimed, "Sweet Mary, Mother of Jesus! Why didn't ya tell me the dog was Catholic?"

working overtime on breeding projects, experimenting with everything from sea urchins to octopus. To make fish more accessible to fishermen they have even taken to dumping old street cars, buses and, most recently, concrete pipes into offshore waters in hopes of providing "aparto" (apartments in and around where fish tend to congregate).

Other nations are not far behind. On the Chinese mainland, Fen Li's descendants have dotted the countryside with so many fishpond co-operatives that their annual production of carp and related fish (1.5 million tons) nearly equals the total U.S. catch. The Israelis, who have extensive breeding pools, learned that by injecting mullets with pituitary hormones they could cause the fish to spawn in captivity. Ordinarily the mullet - a popular tropical food fish - will spawn only in open water. Similar projects are under way on Taiwan, in India and Hawaii's privately run Oceanic Institute, where scientists have just made an esoteric contribution to mullet cultivation. By stringing out buoyant strips of plastic just below the ocean's surface, they have created artificial sea grass on which diatoms will grow. These single-celled algae constitute the basic ingredient of a young mullet's diet.

At the University of Washington, researchers have succeeded in breeding a so-called "Supertrout", which outstrips its punier kin by gaining as much as two pounds a year and thriving in salt water. By cultivating the supertrout, as well as oysters and algae, Washington State's impoverished Lummi Indians are establishing one of the more promising U.S. aquafarms. The Oceanic Institute's founder, Taylor A. Pryor, whose researchers advise the Lummis, thinks similarly lucrative aquafarms can be set up all along the tidal areas of the U.S. Northwest, British Columbia and southern Alaska.

One of the more ingenious experiments in aquaculture has just begun on the Caribbean island of St. Croix. Conceived by scientists of Columbia University's Lamond-Doherty Geological Observatory, it is based on a natural sea phenomenon. In acres of the world where the right combination of wind, current and slope of the continental shelf occurs, cold water from the ocean depths sometimes churns up to the surface, laden with nutrients from decomposed sea life that has settled to the ocean depths, these rising currents possess

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There once was a religious young woman who went to Confession. Upon entering the confessional, she said, "Forgive me Father, for I have sinned." The priest said, "Confess your sins and be forgiven." The young woman said, "Last night my boyfriend made mad passionate love to me seven times." The priest thought long and hard and then said, "Squeeze seven lemons into a glass and then drink the juice." The young woman asked, "Will this cleanse me of my sins?" The priest said, "No, but it will wipe that smile off of your face."

extraordinary fertilising power. Once they reach the upper level of the ocean, where sunlight penetrates, they turn it into a garden of phytoplankton - the tiny floating plants that are the bottom link in the sea's food chain. Actually the "upwelling" occurs only in a few areas like the extremely rich fishery off Peru. Much of the rest of the ocean is what one scientist recently called a "biological desert".

To make such a desert bloom, the Columbia scientists are creating some upwelling of their own - in miniature. Dropping a 3 1/2 in wide plastic pipe off the northern coast of St. Croix, where the caribbean slopes off very steeply, they are siphoning up nutrient rich, cold (41°F) sea water from a depth of half a mile and feeding it into small pools, each with a capacity of 16,000 gallons. Within 10 days the pools teem with phytoplankton and become ideal breeding grounds for aquatic life. Last week the Columbia scientists "set" their first batch of young Chesapeake bay and Long Island oysters in the ponds, where they should thrive on the bountiful food supply. Eventually the scientists hope to raise snails, shrimps and anchovies in the pools.

Useful Pollution: Some recent aquaculture projects actually make use of pollution. In Southern Germany near Munich, the Bavarian Hydropower Co. is already reaping a profit by using sewage (rich in minerals) as a fertiliser in carp ponds. The idea is not entirely new: natives of West Java have long known that carp raised in streams filled with wastes grow unusually robust. There is only one caveat: the fish must be well cooked before they are eaten.

Thermal pollution can be equally useful. Not only trout but oysters and other shellfish have been grown more rapidly in the hot effluent from power plants. indeed, one new York producer, who raises his oysters in the Long Island Lighting Co.'s cooling ponds, says that they reach full size in less than three years (v. four to five years normally). Even more spectacular results have been reported by the Scots. By placing sole and plaice in water discharged from an atomic generator, they have raised the fish in six to eight months (v. three to four years). The explanation: warm water increases both the metabolism rate and appetite of fish.

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Brenda O'Malley is home making dinner, as usual, When Tim Finnegan arrives at her door. "Brenda, may I come in?" he asks "I've somethin' to tell ya". "Of course you can come in, you're always welcome, Tim. But where's my husband?" "That's what I'm here to be telling ya, Brenda. There was an accident down at the Guinness brewery..." "Oh, God no!" cries Brenda. "Please don't tell me." "I must, Brenda. Your husband Shamus is dead and gone. I'm sorry." Finally, she looked up at Tim. "How did it happen, Tim?" "It was terrible, Brenda. He fell into a vat of Guinness Stout and drowned." "Oh my dear! But you must tell me truth, Tim. Did he at least go quickly?" "Well, Brenda... No. In fact, He got out three times to pee."

## WILSONS PROMONTORY EASTER 2008 BOOKINGS

If you are planning to journey to  
"The Prom" for Easter 2008

**Contact Andy Mastrowicz  
with your details please.**

**0402 060 711**

**These men are installing bollards to stop cars parking on the pavement outside an Irish sports bar. They are cleaning up at the end of the day. How long do you think it will be before they realise?**



## SAFETY AND DIVING FROM BOATS

The motto of VSAG "Safety in Diving" probably relates to the actual actions of Scuba Diving practices...although not necessarily.

Safety in diving requires additional considerations if diving is to be carried out safely, stress free and enjoyable... with boat equipment.

In this article we focus on the boating contribution to safe diving.

Weather, bay and sea conditions play an extremely important role in the safety of scuba diving. Our club has many very experienced boat owner/diver captains who have, over the years, determined weather or not, diving on any particular day is safe to go ahead. Sometimes we have made a bad call which, by it's very doing so, has added to the experience ledger.

Most of scuba diving around Port Phillip Bay and the oceans beyond is done from charter boats and private dive club member's boats..such is the case with this club.

It then becomes the responsibility of the private boat owners to ensure the boats that take our divers out to dive are safe, seaworthy and properly equipped to serve the diving of our members...it is a hidden unseen pressure.

The first investment is of the actual purchase of a vessel, which range from \$35K to \$70K per new vessel. Purchase of second hand vessels come cheaper however.

Servicing of boats, generally done yearly, range from \$350 to \$750, for a standard service... additional problem servicing adds more costs, into the hundreds of dollars!

( Two boats have had fuel tanks replaced...mine \$1800)

For boats to be safe. it is almost imperative that boats be serviced at least yearly.

State Maritime Laws and the VSAG club rules/guidelines require that boats MUST carry a wide range of equipment....some covered from the club funds..most supplied by the boat owners.

Using my boat as a base indicator of the requirements of diving equipment the list is as follows:

Large Dive flag, large orange buoy, three buoy/shot lines/white support float/reef anchor/shot weight/assorted ropes/spare 1ltr oil./twin tank racks/straps (\$1000)

GPS(\$450), depth sounder(\$500)/para flares/hand held flares(replaced every 3 years)/EPIRB (\$350)/2kg fire extinguisher/VHF radio/27mg radio/ 9 PFDs(\$550)

DAN First Aid Kit/oxygen mask/oxygen bottle/mobile phone safety numbers.

Bilge bucket/Dolphin Torch/Boat Licence/radio licence/insurance (\$750)

Rising costs of boat oil and ULP are ever on the increase...diesel \$1.47..ULP \$1.45/\$1.47

Approx....a round dive day trip is now costing up to \$150 approx for local diving.

At the beginning the day and at the end of the day, it is not over yet for boaties. The boats have to get to the dive site and load up for the day...at the other end is the boat clean up...(my round journey is approx 3 hours.. to and from Sorrento 170kms approx)... then to my fishing club where we have a legal boat wash down facility...takes about 30 minutes to wash down, flush the motor, pack up..then home to wash the dive gear!

Would I be without my dive and fishing boat...never! Do I enjoy seeing our VSAG divers come out on boats well set up and making diving safe and fun...definitely!

Boat owners put a lot into the "Safety and Diving from Boats" scenario...boat owners wish is not to take the boat offer for granted and respect the condition of the boats we dive from..they are expensive to buy and safely maintain!

John Lawler.





# BALI 2008

Planning dates are May 17 to 27

Some can go early and meet at  
Denpasar Airport

Some can stay later

Planning cost for dive component is:

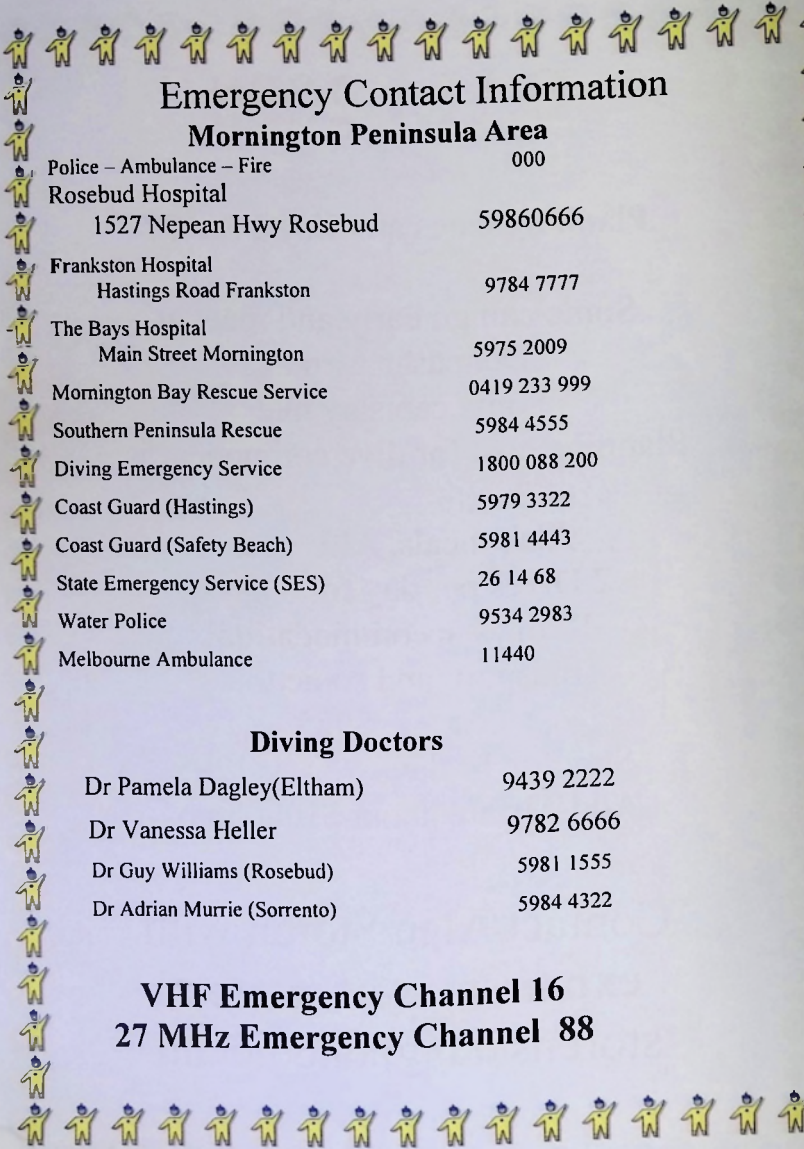
ALL meals, ALL gear,  
2 Dives per day for 8 days,  
10 days accommodation,  
Transport, and some tours

cost: \$985

Stay for 14 days \$1295

Add Airfare about \$1000 max

Contact Alan Storen with  
expressions of interest  
[storens@bigpond.net.au](mailto:storens@bigpond.net.au)



## Emergency Contact Information

### Mornington Peninsula Area

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Police – Ambulance – Fire     | 000          |
| Rosebud Hospital              |              |
| 1527 Nepean Hwy Rosebud       | 59860666     |
| 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 Pamela Dagley(Eltham)    | 9439 2222 |
| Dr Vanessa Heller           | 9782 6666 |
| Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud)   | 5981 1555 |
| Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento) | 5984 4322 |

**VHF Emergency Channel 16**  
**27 MHz Emergency Channel 88**

**Tidal Streams at the Heads—February**  
*Italic times start of EBB*  
**Daylight savings—(adjusted)**

| <b>Mon 28</b> | <b>Tue 29</b> | <b>Wed 30</b> | <b>Thu 31</b> | <b>Fri 1</b> | <b>Sat 2</b> | <b>Sun 3</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack        | Slack        | Slack        |
| Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time         | Time         | Time         |
| 100           | 133           | 205           | 237           | 311          | 346          |              |
| 721           | 746           | 811           | 835           | 900          | 925          | 428          |
| 1352          | 1426          | 1459          | 1531          | 1608         | 1648         | 953          |
| 1939          | 2025          | 2110          | 2159          | 2254         | 2359         | 1738         |

| <b>Mon 4</b> | <b>Tue 5</b> | <b>Wed 6</b> | <b>Thu 7</b> | <b>Fri 8</b> | <b>Sat 9</b> | <b>Sun 10</b> |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Slack        | Slack        | Slack        | Slack        | Slack        | Slack        | Slack         |
| Time         | Time         | Time         | Time         | Time         | Time         | Time          |
| 112          | 225          | 328          | 415          | 453          | 524          | 553           |
| 522          | 704          | 920          | 1017         | 1057         | 1130         | 1204          |
| 1029         | 1123         | 1245         | 1415         | 1538         | 1644         | 1739          |
| 1839         | 1951         | 2100         | 2158         | 2246         | 2327         |               |

| <b>Mon 11</b> | <b>Tue 12</b> | <b>Wed 13</b> | <b>Thu 14</b> | <b>Fri 15</b> | <b>Sat 16</b> | <b>Sun 17</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         |
| Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          |
| 4             | 40            | 115           | 151           | 228           | 305           |               |
| 621           | 648           | 715           | 741           | 809           | 842           | 347           |
| 1239          | 1316          | 1357          | 1438          | 1521          | 1608          | 920           |
| 1830          | 1922          | 2015          | 2110          | 2209          | 2312          | 1701          |

| <b>Mon 18</b> | <b>Tue 19</b> | <b>Wed 20</b> | <b>Thu 21</b> | <b>Fri 22</b> | <b>Sat 23</b> | <b>Sun 24</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         |
| Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          |
| 19            | 132           | 247           | 348           | 435           | 514           | 546           |
| 441           | 559           | 814           | 945           | 1045          | 1130          | 1208          |
| 1009          | 1117          | 1255          | 1440          | 1604          | 1707          | 1800          |
| 1807          | 1928          | 2050          | 2157          | 2250          | 2334          |               |

| <b>Mon 25</b> | <b>Tue 26</b> | <b>Wed 27</b> | <b>Thu 28</b> | <b>Fri 29</b> | <b>Sat 1</b> | <b>Sun 2</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack        | Slack        |
| Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time         | Time         |
| 12            | 45            | 115           | 145           | 215           | 244          | 315          |
| 615           | 641           | 705           | 730           | 753           | 817          | 843          |
| 1242          | 1313          | 1343          | 1414          | 1445          | 1519         | 1557         |
| 1845          | 1927          | 2006          | 2045          | 2125          | 2208         | 2259         |

**Tidal Streams at the Heads—March**  
**Italic times start of EBB**  
**Daylight savings—(adjusted)**

| <i>Mon 3</i>  | <i>Tue 4</i>  | <i>Wed 5</i>  | <i>Thu 6</i>  | <i>Fri 7</i>  | <i>Sat 8</i>  | <i>Sun 9</i>            |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time          | Time                    |
|               | <i>2</i>      | <i>115</i>    | <i>223</i>    | <i>315</i>    | <i>357</i>    | <i>431</i>              |
| 351           | 435           | 544           | 807           | 926           | 1012          | 1050                    |
| <i>913</i>    | <i>949</i>    | <i>1046</i>   | <i>1227</i>   | <i>1415</i>   | <i>1539</i>   | <i>1643</i>             |
| 1641          | 1736          | 1855          | 2021          | 2131          | 2226          | 2311                    |
| <i>Mon 10</i> | <i>Tue 11</i> | <i>Wed 12</i> | <i>Thu 13</i> | <i>Fri 14</i> | <i>Sat 15</i> | <i>Sun 16</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| <i>504</i>    | <i>535</i>    | <i>28</i>     | <i>104</i>    | <i>141</i>    | <i>217</i>    | <i>257</i>              |
| 1129          | 1207          | <i>605</i>    | <i>636</i>    | <i>708</i>    | <i>744</i>    | <i>823</i>              |
| <i>1739</i>   | <i>1831</i>   | 1248          | 1330          | 1414          | 1457          | 1542                    |
| 2351          |               | <i>1923</i>   | <i>2015</i>   | <i>2107</i>   | <i>2158</i>   | <i>2248</i>             |
| <i>Mon 17</i> | <i>Tue 18</i> | <i>Wed 19</i> | <i>Thu 20</i> | <i>Fri 21</i> | <i>Sat 22</i> | <i>Sun 23</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 341           |               | <i>45</i>     | <i>154</i>    | <i>256</i>    | <i>346</i>    | <i>426</i>              |
| <i>909</i>    | 438           | 605           | 809           | 925           | 1016          | 1056                    |
| 1632          | <i>1010</i>   | <i>1137</i>   | <i>1325</i>   | <i>1500</i>   | <i>1613</i>   | <i>1708</i>             |
| <i>2344</i>   | 1735          | 1900          | 2030          | 2139          | 2233          | 2317                    |
| <i>Mon 24</i> | <i>Tue 25</i> | <i>Wed 26</i> | <i>Thu 27</i> | <i>Fri 28</i> | <i>Sat 29</i> | <i>Sun 30</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| <i>500</i>    | <i>530</i>    | <i>26</i>     | <i>56</i>     | <i>125</i>    | <i>152</i>    | <i>220</i>              |
| 1130          | 1200          | <i>556</i>    | <i>622</i>    | <i>646</i>    | <i>713</i>    | <i>740</i>              |
| <i>1754</i>   | <i>1834</i>   | 1230          | 1301          | 1333          | 1405          | 1439                    |
| 2354          |               | <i>1912</i>   | <i>1947</i>   | <i>2022</i>   | <i>2057</i>   | <i>2133</i>             |
| <i>Mon 31</i> | <i>Tue 1</i>  | <i>Wed 2</i>  | <i>Thu 3</i>  | <i>Fri 4</i>  | <i>Sat 5</i>  | <i>Sun 6<br/>endDST</i> |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 251           | 325           | 409           | 513           | <i>55</i>     | <i>152</i>    | <i>243</i>              |
| <i>809</i>    | <i>844</i>    | <i>928</i>    | <i>1041</i>   | 700           | 826           | 822                     |
| 1514          | 1552          | 1639          | 1745          | <i>1233</i>   | <i>1418</i>   | <i>1439</i>             |
| <i>2214</i>   | <i>2300</i>   | <i>2355</i>   |               | 1921          | 2054          | 2100                    |

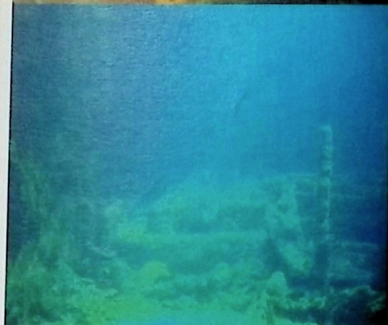
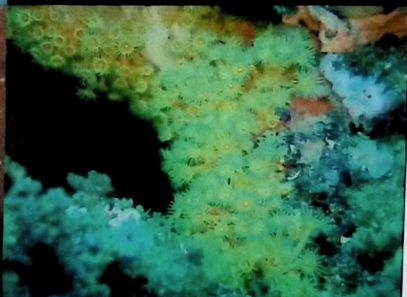
**Tidal Streams at the Heads—April**  
**Italic times start of EBB**  
**Daylight savings—(adjusted—ends 6th April)**

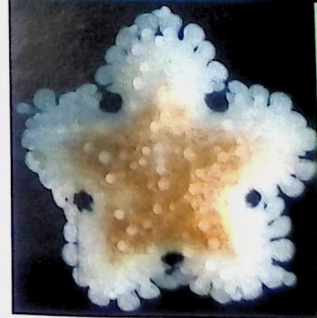
| <i>Mon 31</i> | <i>Tue 1</i>  | <i>Wed 2</i>  | <i>Thu 3</i>  | <i>Fri 4</i>  | <i>Sat 5</i>  | <i>Sun 6<br/>endDST</i> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 251           | 325           | 409           | 513           | 55            | 152           | 143                     |
| 809           | 844           | 928           | 1041          | 700           | 826           | 822                     |
| 1514          | 1552          | 1639          | 1745          | 1233          | 1418          | 1439                    |
| 2214          | 2300          | 2355          |               | 1921          | 2054          | 2100                    |
| <i>Mon 7</i>  | <i>Tue 8</i>  | <i>Wed 9</i>  | <i>Thu 10</i> | <i>Fri 11</i> | <i>Sat 12</i> | <i>Sun 13</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
|               |               |               |               |               | 29            | 108                     |
| 226           | 305           | 343           | 421           | 500           | 543           | 629                     |
| 909           | 952           | 1036          | 1120          | 1204          | 1248          | 1332                    |
| 1544          | 1640          | 1731          | 1821          | 1909          | 1955          | 2039                    |
| 2151          | 2233          | 2313          | 2350          |               |               |                         |
| <i>Mon 14</i> | <i>Tue 15</i> | <i>Wed 16</i> | <i>Thu 17</i> | <i>Fri 18</i> | <i>Sat 19</i> | <i>Sun 20</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 152           | 243           |               |               |               | 52            | 145                     |
| 719           | 818           | 349           | 524           | 649           | 751           | 837                     |
| 1416          | 1503          | 933           | 1108          | 1245          | 1408          | 1511                    |
| 2121          | 2206          | 1600          | 1721          | 1857          | 2012          | 2109                    |
|               |               | 2257          | 2354          |               |               |                         |
| <i>Mon 21</i> | <i>Tue 22</i> | <i>Wed 23</i> | <i>Thu 24</i> | <i>Fri 25</i> | <i>Sat 26</i> | <i>Sun 27</i>           |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 230           | 306           | 339           | 408           | 437           | 6             | 34                      |
| 915           | 947           | 1019          | 1052          | 1125          | 507           | 538                     |
| 1600          | 1642          | 1720          | 1756          | 1830          | 1159          | 1231                    |
| 2155          | 2233          | 2307          | 2337          |               | 1902          | 1934                    |
| <i>Mon 28</i> | <i>Tue 29</i> | <i>Wed 30</i> | <i>Thu 1</i>  | <i>Fri 2</i>  | <i>Sat 3</i>  | <i>Sun 4</i>            |
| Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack         | Slack                   |
| 102           | 134           | 211           | 256           | 357           | 516           | 632                     |
| 611           | 647           | 730           | 830           | 957           | 1139          | 1318                    |
| 1304          | 1337          | 1413          | 1455          | 1550          | 1711          | 1859                    |
| 2006          | 2039          | 2115          | 2156          | 2242          | 2332          |                         |

# VSAG Meeting and Dive Calendar

| Dive Date       | Location                                             | Dive Captain                 | Phone                    | Meeting Point | Time |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------|
| <b>February</b> |                                                      |                              |                          |               |      |
| 14              | Alfred Hosp—hyperbaric                               | Bridey Leggatt               |                          |               |      |
| 17              | Marybryngong River Cruise                            | Bridey Leggatt               | See page 18              |               |      |
| 21              | General Meeting –Wendy Roberts                       |                              |                          | Bells         | 8pm  |
| 24              | Cave Wall/Reef                                       | Alan Storen                  | 0417 017 446             | Sorrento      | 8.30 |
| <b>March</b>    |                                                      |                              |                          |               |      |
| 2               | New (to VSAG) diver day                              | John Lawler<br>Greg Richards | 0414922916<br>0408287754 | Sorrento      | 9am  |
| 6-11            | Cape Jaffa Trip                                      |                              |                          |               |      |
| 12              | Night Dive                                           | Lloyd Borrett                | 0418170044               | tba           | tba  |
| 16              | Shore Dive                                           | Lloyd Borrett                | 0418170044               | tba           | tba  |
| 20              | <b>General Meeting shifted to 27th due to Easter</b> |                              |                          |               |      |
| 21-25           | Easter at the Prom                                   | Andy Mastrowicz              | 0402 060 711             |               |      |
| 27              | <b>General Meeting</b>                               |                              |                          | Bells         | 8pm  |
| 30              | Dive tba                                             | Michael Kakafikas            | 0439044122               | tba           | tba  |
| <b>April</b>    |                                                      |                              |                          |               |      |
| 6               | Subs/reef                                            | Alan Storen                  | 0417017446               | Sorrento      | 9am  |
| 9               | Night Dive                                           | Lloyd Borrett                | 0418170044               | tba           | tba  |
| 12              | Phillip Island                                       | Michael Kakafikas            | 0439044122               | tba           | tba  |
| 17              | <b>General Meeting</b>                               |                              |                          | Bells         | 8pm  |
| 20              | Flinders                                             | Peter Briggs                 | 0412585546               | Flinders      | 9am  |
| 24-29           | ANZAC weekend to Jervis Bay                          | Alan Storen                  | 0417 017 446             |               |      |

NOTE: Queens Birthday long weekend at Queenscliff - Ring John Lawler  
BALI 17th May—27th May - contact Alan Storen ASAP





Above: Darren Pearce's photos taken in SA. Story starts on page 31.  
Left: World's smallest seastar, found recently in Port Phillip Bay. Approx 1mm across.  
Right: Greg Richards (?) in the fresh water caves (SA)

