

FATHOMS

FEBRUARY—MARCH 2009

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

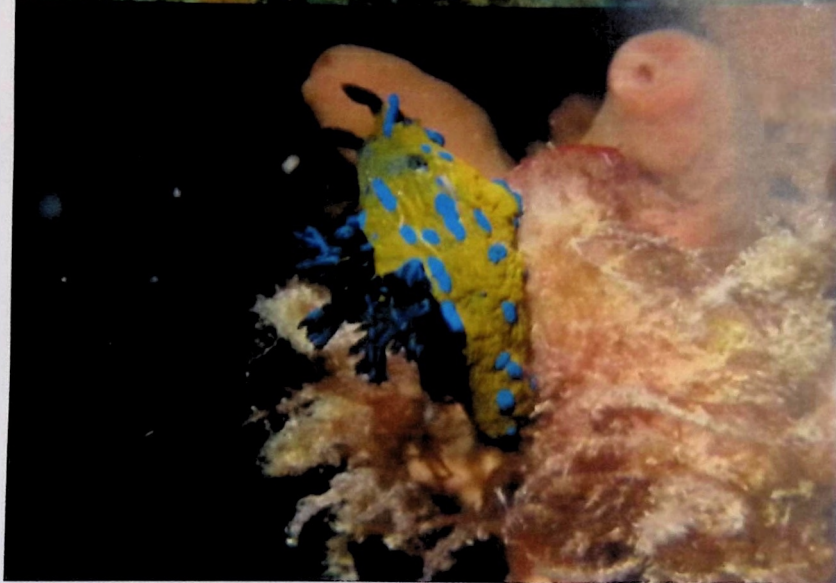


Vsag's Daniel Hompas and John Lawler lunching on hot dogs after a dive. Mustard or tomato sauce sir?

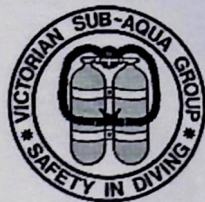
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FATHOMS



Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

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VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

Editorial Submissions to:

Bell's Hotel
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Editorial



Another year started, and 10% gone or should that be 90% left?? I hope that you all had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year and looking forward to an even better 2009. Those club members that ventured to Eden had a good time and I have written a report for this edition. Some great local diving as well and I managed seven one week. The viz was great on most dives and the company excellent as we told many tall but true stories of our exploits over the break. With some venturing further afield soon – eg to NZ, I expect to have more reports next edition.

The committee has many excellent speakers booked for the next few club meetings – come along and enjoy and share your tales of diving. The numbers were down in January but many were still enjoying a break. We had the first of our Dive Raffles (one to be held every two months) and the winner was JL – congratulations.

The new format dive calendar is on page 58 and the system is:

- a. book in early with the dive captain [email or phone]*
- b. dive could be Saturday or Sunday depending on weather/ bay conditions and could shift to a different location as well (Sorrento to Flinders etc)*
- c. confirm the night before the dive that you are still a starter and the dive is going ahead as planned. [Before 6pm for boat owners and 7pm for divers.]*
- d. meet at the boat ramp as planned and enjoy the diving*
- e. send pictures and report to the editor!!!!!!*

Social events are being planned – any ideas/ suggestions to Bridey Leggatt please.

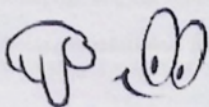
The photo competition has closed and the winner will be announced at the February meeting. Let's just say I was not overwhelmed with entries! Where are all the camera owners?

The Sulawesi trip is in its final planning stage and I believe we could fit a couple more on the live aboard so contact Mick Jeacle if interested. The Cape Jaffa trip is all systems go and the Easter trip to Wilson's Promontory should be finalised by the time you read this. Alan Beckhurst, a member of VSAG and president of Getunder has organised a joint trip to the GBR/ Bunker Group and details are on Page 7. Get in early if interested as I am sure places will go fast.

We have had many local dives in January and it would appear that some Dive Captains are too busy diving to write a report. Outside we have dived the Coogee, J4 submarine, J1 submarine the reef just outside the Heads – lost reef, castle rock, J4 reef (see JL's report), Ocean Grove reef, etc. Inside we have completed some spectacular dives on the Lonsdale Wall, Specky and Awesome reef as well as some very good drift dives. We also visited Pope's Eye and the Lonsdale marine park. I have included some of the photos taken by JL, Ken Methven and Benita McDonough on the back and inside back covers and a photo of JL and new member Daniel Hompas on the front cover enjoying an, almost traditional on some boats, hot dog with mustard and/or tomato sauce. I must give Alan Beckhurst credit for this fantastic idea! I have also heard rumours of scones, jam and cream; muffins and other tasty treats – makes my tin of tuna and snakes sound inadequate! Come along and sample – but pick the right boat!

We have a great article from Alex Ivanov, a new club member, on page 29. a great read and thanks to Alex for his contribution. Make sure you do not miss the member profiles either, all great reads and reveals the 'other than diving' talents of our members.

*Enough from me, must go diving
Remember ALL dives are good dives, just some are better than others,
Keeps blowing bubbles
Alan*



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

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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month (except in January)

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Leighoah Hotel 1555 Dandenong Rd Oakleigh.

GREAT BARRIER REEF / BUNKER GROUP TRIP SEPTEMBER '09



Board MV Venus 2 at Bundaberg on 10th September 2009 for 5 days of diving on Hoskyn, Fairfax, Lady Musgrave, and Lady Elliot islands. Mary and I did this trip in Sept '04 and saw pristine reefs, Mantas, and Humpback Whales (surface). Lady Musgrave Island and Lagoon is the perfect coral cay with a large millpond lagoon and spectacular fringing reefs.

MV Venus 2 is a 22 metre vessel which takes 14 divers in 4 cabins with both double and single options. Each cabin has its own ensuite and air conditioning. Tanks and weights are provided and hire gear is available.

The Package

Virgin return airfare from Melbourne to Hervey Bay is \$374 (incl taxes, charges, and baggage to 28 kg)

MV Venus 2 for 5 days, incl diving, meals, and accommodation (not incl alcohol & soft drinks) is \$881 (subject to filling the boat)

Accommodation at the Matilda Hotel (one night shared) for the 17th Sept is \$40 pp.

Bus transfers Hervey Bay Return \$40 pp

Package = \$1335 (subject to change prior to booking)

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF INTEREST IN THIS TRIP SO FIRST IN WILL GET THE SPOTS! REGISTER YOUR NAME WITH **ALAN BECKHURST**, email alanbeck@alphalink.com.au, Or mobile 0403536508.

CAKE OR BED

A HUSBAND IS AT HOME WATCHING A FOOTBALL GAME WHEN HIS WIFE INTERRUPTS. HONEY, COULD YOU FIX THE LIGHT IN THE HALLWAY? IT'S BEEN FLICKERING FOR WEEKS NOW.

HE LOOKS AT HER AND SAYS ANGRILY, FIX THE LIGHTS NOW? DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE PHILLIPS WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO.

FINE, THEN THE WIFE ASKS, WELL THEN, COULD YOU FIX THE FRIDGE DOOR? IT WON'T CLOSE RIGHT!

TO WHICH HE REPLIED, FIX THE FRIDGE DOOR? DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE WESTINGHOUSE WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO FINE, SHE SAYS THEN YOU COULD AT LEAST FIX THE STEPS TO THE FRONT DOOR? THEY ARE ABOUT TO BREAK

I'M NOT A CARPENTER AND I DON'T WANT TO FIX STEPS. HE SAYS, DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE BUNNINGS WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU. I'M GOING TO THE PUB!!!!

SO HE GOES TO THE PUB AND DRINKS FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS.

HE STARTS TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT HOW HE TREATED HIS WIFE, AND DECIDES TO GO HOME

AS HE WALKS INTO THE HOUSE HE NOTICES THAT THE STEPS ARE ALREADY FIXED.

AS HE ENTERS THE HOUSE, HE SEES THE HALL LIGHT IS WORKING AS HE GOES TO GET A BEER, HE NOTICES THE FRIDGE DOOR IS FIXED.

HONEY, HE ASKS, HOW'D ALL THIS GET FIXED?

SHE SAID, WELL, WHEN YOU LEFT I SAT OUTSIDE AND CRIED.

JUST THEN A NICE YOUNG MAN ASKED ME WHAT WAS WRONG, AND I TOLD HIM.

HE OFFERED TO DO ALL THE REPAIRS, AND ALL I HAD TO DO WAS EITHER GO TO BED WITH HIM OR BAKE A CAKE.

HE SAID, SO WHAT KIND OF CAKE DID YOU BAKE?

SHE REPLIED, HELLOOOOOO..

DO YOU SEE SARA LEE WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD?



Member Profile: John Mills

Year joined VSAG:

1993

How long have you been diving?

Since 1988

First diving experience:

In a neighbors pool as a kid in the mid 1970's.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne:

Wilson's Prom, Ships Graveyard.

Most memorable diving experience:

*Wreck diving in Truk Lagoon.

*Easter trips to the Prom with VSAG.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience:

*First experience with Nitrogen Narcosis at 50m on the San Francisco Maru.

*Hovering just off the bottom during Deco at the Coolidge and watching the bottom heavy VSAGer's trying to do the same.

* Learning how to blow bubble rings.

* Watching Leo (Love Weapon) Maybus leveraging a great chunk of Limestone of the wall in the one tree sinkhole during the sinkhole course only to get busted by Ian the instructor.

* Catching puffer fish and presenting the expanded spiky creatures to Priya during dives.

* Being assured by Andy that there would be no problems with bushfires on the Jervis Bay trip only to arrive and find that Huskisson was almost consumed by fire. Poor visibility on the water due to smoke and had to pay 20c for three minutes in the showers.

* Wrestling with Murray Black on the edge of the Creek at the Prom as he tried to throw me in with an unzipped dry suit and winning.



- * Lifting Mick's boat back onto the trailer at the Prom.
- * Being privileged to be invited to ride with the Old Hogs who were on the Portland Trip.
- * Driving to Narooma for the weekend to dive the Lady Darling in raging current.

Most valued piece of diving equipment:

Dive Computer (Much easier than tables).

Do you have a dive boat?

No

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?

Back to Truk (Septembers looking good).

Any diving words of wisdom:

- Know your limits and dive within them.
- Learn to be self sufficient under the water.
- Do a sinkhole course to improve your skills and techniques.
- There needs to be a reason (e.g. a wreck) to dive deep. Generally you see the same or more at 30 meters than at 55 meters.

Any other comments:

Private clubs such as VSAG provide opportunities to draw on a wide variety of members experience to improve your diving in a non-commercial environment.

The membership is generally quite stable with a lot of long standing members to form friendships with.

Club trips are a great way to share experiences and form long standing friendships.



Sunday 21st Dec

My original plan to dive Flinders was really only wishful thinking to maybe catch a cray and some abs for Christmas, as the weeks preceding weather was typical early Melbourne summer, windy, rainy and cool.

The days weather was pretty close to perfect for this time of year, warm, sunny with a moderate easterly wind, 3 boats and 13 divers took advantage of this to post some excellent early summer diving.

Slack water at 9.30am meant an 8.00am start at the ramp, very early for some, impossible for others.



Geekie and Lawler were on the water by 8.30am with their crews of Adam, Greg, Alan and Leo with a couple of new and prospective members in Daniel, Brett and Alex. Mick Jeacle arrived a little later to launch at 9.30am with Benita, Peter and new member Stephen.

Lawler and Geekie had their first dive inside the heads around Boarfish Reef/ Lonsdale wall area with Mick's crew diving Knawesome reef. Visibility was pretty good around 15 mtrs, infact that good even The Spirit of Tasmania bearing down on VSAG divers has no hope of making them return topside in such conditions.

Outside the heads looked pretty good so the second dive on Lawler / Geekies boats was along the strip between Point Lonsdale and Barwon Heads, Adam managed to pull up an old boat's pick (anchor). I would have preferred a cray myself.

Mick's boat decided on The Coogie, I have never dived this before, and never dived with Mick, great dive with good visibility, Benita and Stephen dived it also for their second dive and came up pretty happy.

An early start means a reasonably early finish, warm day 5 days before Christmas, had to have a drink at the Sorrento pub. Couple of quick beers would see the end to a pretty good day out with VSAG.

ps It's still your shout Greg.

“WHO SAID THAT!!”

Sometimes, when I look at my children, I say to myself, 'Lillian, you should have remained a virgin.'

Lillian Carter (mother of Jimmy Carter)

My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe.

Jimmy Durante

Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was SHUT UP.

Joe Namath

Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you.

Winston Churchill

By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere.

Billy Crystal

I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap.

Bob Hope

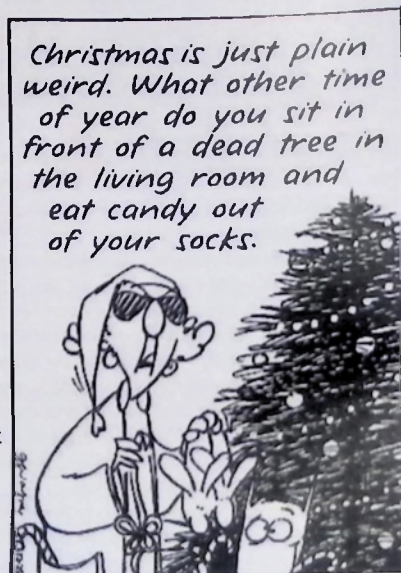
I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalog: - 'No good in a bed, but fine against a wall.'

Eleanor Roosevelt

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.

Victor Borge

JL



“Life And A Glass Of Champagne”

When things in your life seem too much to handle, remember this example given by a philosopher professor to his students.

A professor stood before his philosophy class with some items in front of him. He then filled an empty jam jar with golf balls and asked the students if the jar was full. They said it was so he then took some pebbles and put them into the spaces between the golf balls. He asked the students again if the jar was full and they said it was. Next he picked up a container of sand and poured it in around the pebbles and the golf balls. He asked the students once more if it was full and again they said it was. The professor then poured a glass of champagne into the jar which filled it.

The professor told them that what he just done represented their lives. The golf balls were the important things like family, health, friends and the things you had passion for...If everything else was lost then your life would still be full.

The pebbles were the other things that mattered like your job, house, and the car, then the sand represented everything else that you fit into your life.

The moral to the story is that you must have them in the correct order because if you put the sand in first, then there wouldn't be any room for the golf balls or the pebbles.

It is important that you pay attention to the things that are critical and most important in your life such as spending quality time with your partner and playing with your children, taking care of your health and having regular medical checks and having time for special leisure activities. In other words, you need to set your major priorities first, then all the rest will fit comfortably around them, just like the sand.

A student then put up his hand and said he understood all of that, but was wondering where the glass of champagne came into it.

The professor smiled and said,;
“ It just goes to show that no matter how full your life is there's always room for a glass of champagne!”

JL.



Member Profile: Cathy Pedlow

Year joined VSAG: 2005

How long have you been diving?: 4 years

First diving experience: In the pool at Wesley - it was awesome to think I was breathing under water even if it was only 1 metre deep. I felt like a mermaid.....well maybe not but it was pretty cool.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne: Pope's Eye - it is so relaxed and easy to get in & lots of beautiful fish to see.



Most memorable diving experience: Diving with a seal. He was sniffing (ready to bite???) my fin and so close. Incredible.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: Outside of Pope's Eye - I had just surfaced and those on board were telling me to hurry up and get into the boat as the boat was being pushed onto the rocks so I took a flying leap and very elegantly (inelegantly more likely!!) onto the boat. I was very much the landed seal flopping around. Well the rest of the boat thought it was very funny at the time and we didn't end up on the rocks.

Most valued piece of diving equipment: The reg. I can be found diving just holding onto it over my mouth.

Do you have a dive boat?: No.

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?: Anywhere the water is warm and clear and there is lots to see.

Any diving words of wisdom: Number 1 Stay safe. Number 2 Have fun.

Any other comments: Bring on the summer and warmer weather for us fair weather divers.



Christmas in Eden

Alan Storen

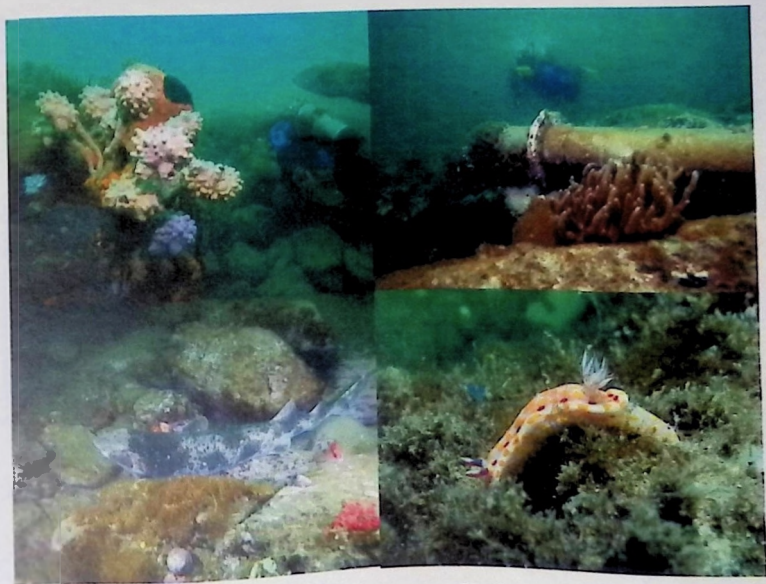
The annual VSAG xmas trip was to Eden this year and there were 13 starters – Andy and Gail Mastrowicz, Andy's daughter and son in law - Nicole and Joe and their two children, Pat Reynolds, Barry and Marie Truscott, John Mills and Priya and the Storens.

We arrived Boxing day and set up camp in the Fountain Gate Caravan Park. Pat had already set up in his favourite location and Joe and Nicole arrived at about the same time as we did. There was a terrible accident just South of Eden - 5 cars and several fatalities. We just missed the police diversion but Pat was diverted and ended up doing another 150k and had 3 hours added to his trip. On arrival we were told of another accident that morning involving a scuba diver – apparently fell asleep at the wheel early hours of the morning and rolled his 4WD and van between Cann River and Eden. Tanks, dive gear, canoes, etc all over the road. Not seriously hurt but ended his holiday. A quick ring around confirmed that it was not one of the VSAG crew. After the 'setup' we had a quiet night over a red or two and early to bed. The others arrived on the 27th and set up their camp while we had a lazy day.

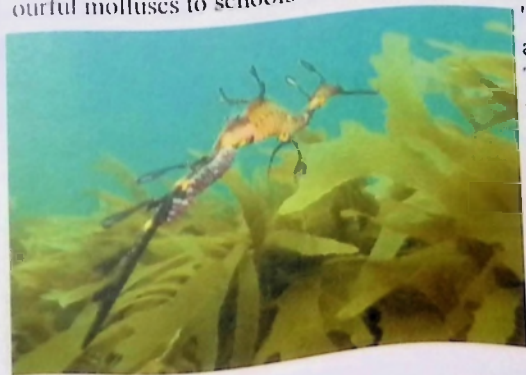
On the 28th and desperate for a dive Jude and I went to Merimbula



for a dive around the Wharf. A couple of wobblygongs, many groper, several nudibranches, many sightings of octopus, moray eels, a couple of Port Jacksons, sea tulips, and the usual smaller fish were in abundance. A very good dive.



With Andy still recovering from his pre-Christmas medical problems I booked two charter dives on the 29th. The first was meant to be 'The Cave' but due to weather conditions it was changed to the Pestles – also called the Mortar and Pestles. Through thousands of years of wave action, three large bowl shaped formations have been hollowed out of the sea bed south of Eden. These 'Mortars' offer protection to a wide variety of marine life, ranging from small colourful molluscs to schools of sleepy Port Jackson Sharks. The third



'Mortar' also boasting a small bubble cave. The second dive was to the Chipmill - a divesite that entralls the weedy sea dragon lover. Located near the chipmill wharf in Twofold Bay, this is



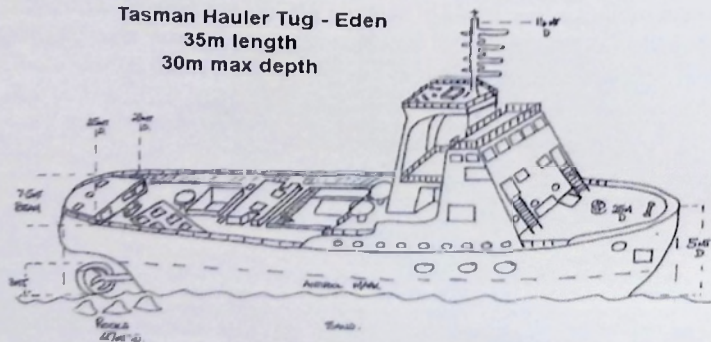
home to many of these beautiful creatures of the sea. Hovering in depths ranging from 8m to a maximum depth of 15m it is a very pleasant dive. My dive buddy had a camera and I have included some of his pics. (must get my camera soon – have been saying that for about 5 years

now!!). Bazza and John had decided to do a long ride to the Boyd tower – approx 37km– even the thought of this ride is exhausting. The girls took lunch out to the riders (by car) and the riders returned by bike – doubly exhausting!

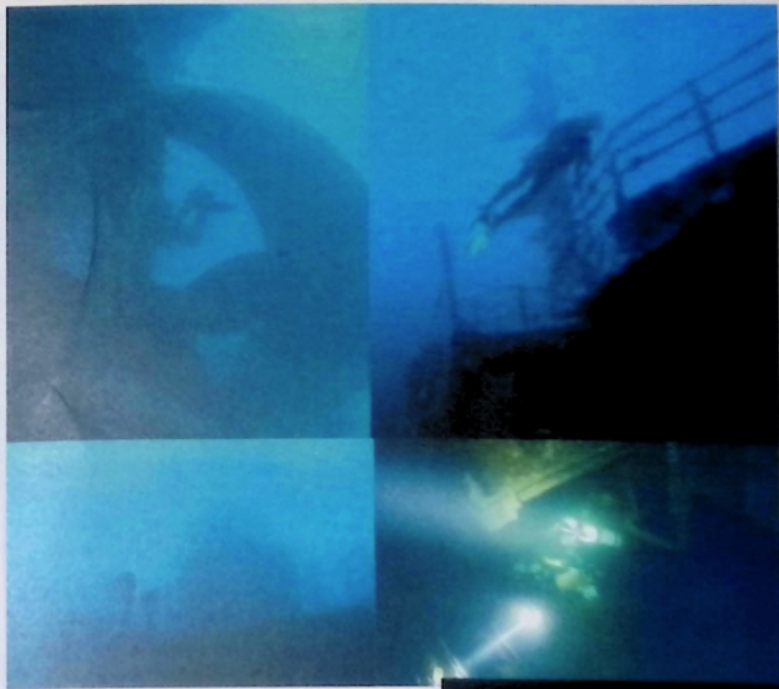
On the 30th Jude and I, and Barry and Marie headed north to Kianiny Bay to do a possible shore dive. Not to be – too windy/swelly and so off to Tathra wharf – not any better, so after a picnic for lunch we returned to camp to relax.

On the night of the 30th Andy indicated he was ready to go next morning so we packed his boat and planned an early start. Most were ready on time and with some prompting we soon headed off to Quarantine Bay to launch the boat. Our first dive was on the Tasman Hauler Tug and Joe, Nicole and I dropped in first.

Tasman Hauler Tug - Eden
35m length
30m max depth

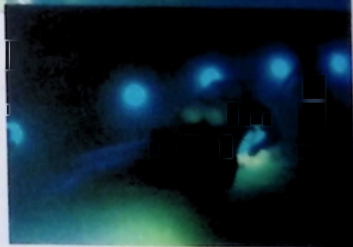


A great dive was had by all as we started at the bow, around the side to the stern, over to look at the prop and back, then a slow investiga-



tion of the internal sections of the tug – storage hold at the stern, engine room, wheel house/ bridge, forward compartments etc. A quick check of the memorial plaque and the gnome then a slow ascent to the surface buoy – the dive was over far too quickly. Lots of fish life – both large and small and great marine growth hiding many small critters.

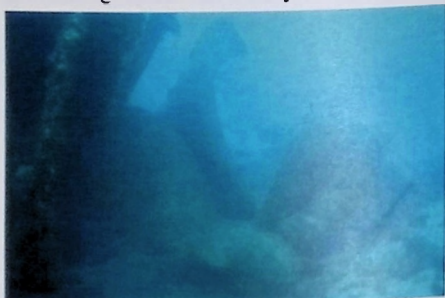
John and Priya were next in and I am sure they enjoyed the dive as



much as we did. On exit Priya discovered she had lost John's 'new' torch and after an interval they dropped back on the Hauler to search for it. We had also seen many large muscles on the wreck and John was given the catch bag with instructions from Andy and Joe not to return unless it was full. They were successful on both counts – Priya found the torch and John came back with a full bag. During our dive time Andy had the line out and he soon had enough fish to feed everyone in camp. Well done Andy!

Joe and I dropped onto the second tug called the Henry Bolte. A much more broken wreck but significantly more fish life than the almost intact Tasman Hauler. We visited the usual highlights including the two toilets, bridge, engine area etc. Another great dive.

Back to camp to prepare for the New Year celebrations. We had decided to stay at the park and have a cook-up. We had salt and pepper squid thanks to Jude, muscles with Andy's secret recipe juices on the BBQ, scallops and prawns thanks to Joe/ Nicole, a salad thanks to Marie, as well as dips, chips and nuts. We were to cook the fish Andy had caught but I think most were too full from the entrees. We ended up bringing ours back to Melbourne and cooking it at home – magnificent! The New Year fireworks were in full swing and some ventured down to get a closer look. Others were in bed at 12:01 or thereabouts. Must be getting older or wiser or both!



New Year's Day: Some were up for a dive to see the New Year in and Andy, Gail, Nicole, Joe and the two boys were soon loaded on Andy's boat and off to the launch ramp. As we drove the few km from the camp to the ramp the wind increased from about 10knot to about 25 knot and the



talk at the ramp was that it was even worse outside the bay. We aborted the dive and went to Eden Pier/ breakwater to do a shore dive. Nicole, Joe and I walked in and headed out to a point just under the lighthouse. A good shore dive with sightings of a large Port Jackson, Moray eels, octopus, abalone, many small fish – a good day to be under the water! We had a wedding back in Melbourne on the 3rd so we packed camp on the night of the 1st and headed back on the Friday the 2nd. A quick 'relo visit' stop at Bairnsdale and back to sunny Melbourne at about 6pm. The end of another memorable VSAG trip for the Storens. Another highlight of the trip was the UFO sighting when all, well almost all were convinced that a UFO paid them a special visit. I was not convinced but....

A low light was the theft of two of Andy's scuba tanks, removed from under Joe and Nicole's van in the middle of the night. Mine were next door but not touched! Just lucky I guess – must have known how desperate I was for a dive. Pat was also lucky – his mega dollar bike that he 'always locked up at night' was in fact unlocked - but fortunately not taken.

Week 2: Well the Storens were at home but I managed a couple of dives on the Sunday, Three on the Wednesday and a couple on the last Sunday (reports of these elsewhere in the magazine). I hope another happy camper will fill in the week 2 gos from Eden.





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at a very
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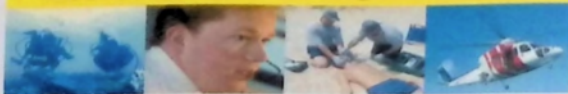
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Member Profile : John Goulding

Year joined VSAG:
1972.

How long have you been diving?:

I had done a lot of snorkeling as a kid but first tried scuba in 1972. For many years I had been a keen freshwater fisherman, water skier and shooter / hunter and was looking for a change.....I decided to either learn to fly or take up diving. My old school mate Tony Tipping was a member of VSAG and invited me along. The first outing was to Point CookI only

snorkeled and the water was so murky you could hardly see anything. The most memorable part of the day was when Paul Sier nearly shot me in the flipper (we used to call them flippers in those days!!!!) with his James Bond style leg strapped high powered compressed air spear gun

First diving experience:

I did my first sea dive at Rye pier as part of my 5 - lesson dive course with the legendary ex hard hat diver Fred Tidman. It was the calmest and clearest day and any mug could have passed Fred's course. This opened up a whole new world for me and very quickly I was going to all the VSAG dives, usually around the wrecks of Port Phillip heads or shore dives on the ocean side. In the beginning of 1973 I went with the club to Mt Gambier and did some incredible fresh water dives.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne:

Would have to be the Port Phillip Heads area. We started diving the wall drop offs back in the 70's and the wrecks around Lonsdale reef. On good days with slack water flood we had probably 100 foot visibility. It was as good if not better than anything up the East coast. Other



John on Wathara

favorites of mine were the submarines, the Eliza Ramsden the kelp beds off Queenscliff and the Pinnacles.

In those days we didn't have GPS, and to find the dive spots we used land marks. I still have my well worn note book with the various marks written down. Most of them were pretty accurate but to pinpoint the position, the club had a Furuno depth sounder which used to plot the bottom on a paper chart.

We used to cart it around in a wooden boxhook it up to the boat battery and hold the transducer over the side of the boat. On one occasion I recall we were looking for one of the subs but the depth sounder ran out of paper before we found it....

I positioned the boat according to the land marks in my book.....stuck my head under the water and sure enough there it was below us..... 90 feet downIt doesn't get much better than that.....

Wilson's Prom was another favorite of mine. I forget how many Easter trips I did with the club but it was certainly most of them between 1973 and 1992.



The Glennies, Skull Rock, 40 Foot

Rocks etc. When the weather was good, this was a great area to dive. Then of course there were all those debaucherous Australia Day weekend trips to Refuge Cove on the famous Mirabooka with Captain Reg Truscott and later on the Rosalia. Perhaps the less said about those trips the better, but suffice to say they were great weekends away and sometimes the diving wasn't too bad. Sadly though The Refuge Cove weekend of 1993 was my last diving trip as I ruptured my inner ear and tore the round window, causing complete hearing loss in the left ear.

Most memorable diving experience:

I have had so many great and memorable diving experiences ranging from the wonderful World War 2 wrecks of Truk Lagoon, the great cathedral arch outside Jervis Bay, hand feeding blue grouper whilst sitting on a bommie off Ulladulla, the drop offs around the Rip, the islands and wrecks of Bass strait, the Loch Ard at Port Campbell, riding turtles off Heron Island, finding the wreck of the New Zealander off Portland and of course the wonderful underwater terrain of Wil-

son's prom. Probably too hard to say which one was most memorable but one that does stand out was a dive on the wreck of the Shinkoku Maru at Truk in 1980.

We had entered a room deep inside the ship where there were human remains including 3 skulls. I lined up the Nikonos and click, click.....but bloody hell the flash did not go off !so nothing for it but to pick up the skulls, swim back to the deck, set them up, take a couple of shots in the natural light and then replace them back inside the ship.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience:

I look back on it now and think well that was amusing.....but at the time it wasn't.

About 1974 or 75 my secretary came into work one Monday morning raving about a place that she had visited on the weekend. It was a water filled open cut coal mine somewhere down near Winchlesea. She described crystal clear water and said how great it would be for diving. So it went on our dive calendar.

Arriving at the spot some weeks later we looked out on a vast body of water glimmering in the morning sun. With eagerness we kitted up and moved towards the water only to find that the banks of this tranquil lake were slippery as hell and oozing with thick soggy grey mud.

I dived with Dave Carroll and gradually we ventured out from the shore and submerged.....well I think we submerged.....The water was so dirty that you could not see a damn thing. I remember thinking ..oh its probably clear deeper down. So down I went before bumping into something that turned out to be Dave. I shone my torch onto my depth gauge and in the very faint red glow coming from the beam was able to read that we were at 30



feet.....I grabbed Dave, and then shone the torch on my hand to point upwards.....We abandoned the dive after about 5 minutes along with everyone else and made our way back to shore to crawl through the mud.....

I copped abuse from everyone for weeks after that.....but not as much abuse as I gave my secretary on the next Monday morning. She thought it was huge joke.....

Most valued piece of diving equipment:

I just loved my Scubapro Bouyancy Compensator.

When I started diving, BC's were very basic and I had a little black Scubapro model that you inflated by mouth or in a real emergency it had a small CO2 cylinder!

I then moved upmarket and acquired a Fenzy which at the time was top of the range. The Fenzy had its own small compressed air bottle and some years later I fitted a hose that allowed air to be supplied to the Fenzy from my scuba tank. However the Fenzy was very cumbersome with loose fitting straps going everywhere and did not have a bracket to hold your scuba tank, and I had a most uncomfortable tank harness.

For some years I resisted moving up to the new style BC / tank harness type until one day I tried on another member's and could not believe the comfort and ease of use of this piece of equipment. Fortunately I was off to Singapore the next week and picked up my bright orange Scubapro BC there for about half the price they cost back home.

From then on I had great comfort and so much more control of buoyancy than with the old Fenzy. Perhaps the other favorite piece of equipment that I had were my bright orange Continental Giant Fins. These were very popular in the 70's and the orange ones actually floated and could float to the surface from a depth of over 100 feet as Tippo found out once at Truk when he removed his Giants to penetrate a silt ridden passage way on one of the wrecks. On returning to where he left his fins he found that they had floated away and eventually surfaced about 20 minutes later.

In the 1980's a report written by some "shark expert" claimed that bright colours attract sharks.....so I painted my fins black and lived to tell the tale. I think the paint lasted about 3 dives.....I mistakenly used water based acrylic !!!

I stuck with these very heavy fins all through my diving days and now carry them on my boat for the odd snorkeling that I still do and for under boat cleaning.

Do you have a dive boat?:

I have a beautiful 41 year old 30 foot diesel powered classic timber motor sailer "Wathara" that was originally built as a commercial Bass Strait Cray boat. I bought this boat about 10 years ago as I missed the sea so much, and although I suppose I could have gone back to diving I was given medical advice by my ear surgeon not to in case I damaged my good ear.

I keep the boat at the Yaringa Marina in Westernport Bay and with a top speed of about 8 knots, it's not really practical as a club dive boat unless someone wants to dive Crawfish Rock which I remember doing years ago off Barry's first boat...the good ship "Marie".



In 1975 together with fellow members Justin Liddy and Dave Moore we made two 16 foot cathedral hull fiberglass dive boats... (with help from Bazza and Max Synon and Dave Carroll).

Justin and I shared ownership of one of the boats before I bought his share when he moved to the country and my dear old Bill

boat travelled all over the coast. The cathedral hull gave it excellent stability and anyone who ever went in it will remember the rope that I used to tie onto it so people could hold onto something as we bashed through the waves.



On the first time I took it away, we were up at Jervis Bay and slowly approaching Point Perpendicular when a large wave crashed over the bow and took away the Perspex forward racking windscreen and filled the boat with water. Barry Truscott yelled "where's the pump".....I said..... "We don't have a pump"... to which he replied with these words that I have never forgotten..... *"There's no better pump than a desperate man with a bucket"*. Bazza soon had the water out of the boat and the first thing that I did when I got back to Melbourne was to install a bilge pump.....and replace the perspex windscreen with

a solid timber "wave deflector".

When I stopped diving the old boat sat idle in my garage for some years before fellow member Rob Kirk in a fit of madness handed over some money and bought it to restore.....see his articles in Fathoms from time to time... good luck Rob with project Edsell !!!!!!!

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?:

I love the PacificI organized a VSAG trip to the Great Barrier Reef in 1975 and went to Truk in 1980 and again in 1990.

There is much to be said for warm water diving and in my travels I have seen many places in the Pacific that just look so inviting.....Palau, the Marshalls,but to be honest I'd be happy just to be able to dive again.....so I have kept all my gear and one day I might just give Rye Pier another go.....(Haven't dived it since my first check out sea dive all those years ago)

Any diving words of wisdom:

Diving is a great recreational activity that combines nature, the environment, wildlife and great comradeship. There is nothing competitive about diving..... You don't have to prove anything to anyone....you just need to be comfortable with it and enjoy it.

To get the most out of it you need to have sufficient experience to have confidence in your own ability and that means going on a lot of dives some of which will be crappyLook and learn from others, prepare well and make sure that your equipment is well maintained and in good working order.

Any other comments:

VSAG was a huge part of my life for 20+ years.

I have had the most amazing experiences that I will never forget and have met wonderful people.

I was a member of the committee for many years and president for 3; and being involved in the running of the club gave me great pleasure and a sense of belonging that remains with me today.

To VSAG and all who belong

THANK YOU FOR BEING.



Diving with VSAG -27 December

Alex Ivanov

On a beautiful Saturday morning 27th December I joined VSAG for my second dive with the club.

We meet at the top level of Sorrento boat ramp car parking. John just grabbed the last trailer parking spot. Christmas is the busiest time for the boat ramp and the parking fills up quickly.

There were 5 divers on the boat: John, Adam, Benita and myself were diving, while Herbert joined us as a non-diver, recovering from the injury. We brought all gear to the boat and John launched it. It was pretty calm day and we moved through the Heads.

We went out with no particular spot in mind. Club members usually decide where they want to dive on the go. This time John, Adam and Benita choose Coogee wreck. My deepest dive so far has been J4 submarine at 27 meters, and I felt a bit reluctant for diving Coogee at 34 meters. I wanted a smooth dive to demonstrate I'm a confident diver and a reliable buddy but I have several reasons to be worried. For the first time this season I was wearing wetsuit instead of my cozy dry suit, and on the top of that I had rented regulator instead of my own.

Comforted by diving with John who has enormous diving experience, I jumped to the water only to find out I don't have enough weight! With fully deflated BC and could only submerge if I swam downwards. I have a steel tank, which does not gain much buoyancy, but last thing I wanted was to miss my safety stop on a deeper dive!



I was embarrassed by not being fully prepared but I decided to stay on surface and ask buddies on the boat to give me one more weight. John returned