

FATHOMS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2009

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP



Charges go off to send the exHMAS Canberra to her future home as a dive site.

PHOTO: Ken Hoppen

www.vsag.org.au
Postal Address: VSAG
145 Johnston St
Newport VIC 3015



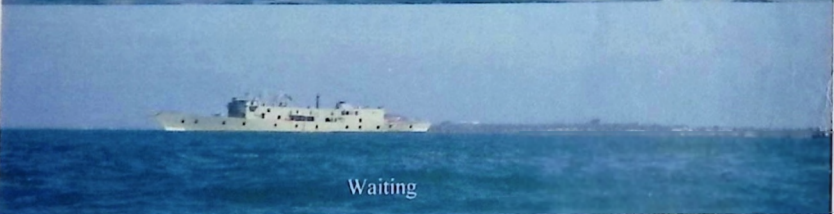
The ex HMAS Canberra goes to her watery grave



Waiting



Waiting



Waiting

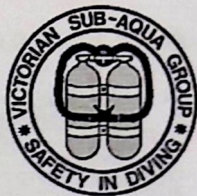


At Last, ~1400 hrs the charges go off!



Down she goes!

FATHOMS



Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

In this October-November 2009 issue...

Article	Author	Page
Editorial	Alan Storen	4
Committee		6
Annual Report	Alan Storen	7
Special Awards		10
The Joys Of Seasickness		12
The Art of Winning the Literary Award	Greg Richards	16
Member Profile: Christine Reynolds		18
14 Prime Ministers I have known	Mac Gregory	20
VSAG Dive Trip 2010	David Geekie	29
A New Life in the Deep	Reprint The Age	31
Canberra sinks to a new home	Reprint The Age	33
Diving into the Page	Jl	36
Ex HMAS Canberra finally sinks	Mac Gregory	47
Skill Review Report	Peter Briggs	51
Victoria's favourite shipwreck		52
Safety Alert on Tanks	[LB]	53
Emergency contacts		584
Tidal Stream Tables		55- 57
VSAG Dive Calendar		58
ABALONE DAYS 2009/2010		59

VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

Bell's Hotel
157 Moray Street (cnr Coventry Street)
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm
Alan Storen
15 Regal Court Vermont South Vic 3133
storens@bigpond.net.au

Editorial Submissions to:



Editorial

Well it's happened. On Sunday 4 October at 2pm the ex HMAS Canberra went to its final resting place off Ocean Grove. After 3 years and 8 months hard work by VARS the great ship sank with minimum fuss, gracefully dropping below the surface and down to 30m - now a magnificent dive site for all divers to appreciate. Congratulations to John Lawler and VARS committee.

The next VSAG committee has been selected and their positions portfolios are listed on page 6. Congratulations to Greg Richards who has been elected President and I hope that you give him the support that you have given to me over my 3 years as President. I must also add that I am very honoured by the Life Membership given to me at the AGM. The full report

of the AGM is included in the Magazine and the financials attached for all members.

We have a number of events coming up the next couple of months and if interested, and who isn't, then you must book in early for some of them.

The SDFV BBQ at Wilson's Promontory over the Cup weekend is on and if you are interested see me asap. We do have a shared spot but need to confirm soon.

The EVENT OF THE YEAR, the VSAG xmas party is on the 29th November at Mount Martha and we must have numbers so that we can let the caterers know. Please let JJ know by the October meeting (and also pay!) or email him and bank transfer the money to the vsag account. This is an event not to be missed!! BYO chairs and drinks the rest catered. BYO hathers if hot.

Diving: Not sure when we will be able to get on the Canberra but hopefully we will be able to book through Parks soon. we will need to adjust the calendar to suit - possibly at short notice so watch the web for last minute changes.

At the AGM we honoured four of our members with a 50 year plaque. It was great to hear their 'stories of old' and we should invite them as guest speakers at some future meeting so that the history of the club is not lost. We must record such details and we might need to appoint a Club Historian to write the club history - anyone interested?

The new committee will be planning for 2010 and if you have any suggestions for guest speakers or social events please let one of the committee know and they will be considered.

NOW is the time to check the 'TEST Date' on your tanks and have them serviced for the coming year. When was your reg and BC last serviced? When did you have your last medical - remember the old show 'This is your Life'.

Alan Storen

VSAG Christmas Party

The date for this years Christmas party is Sunday 29th of November.

This will be a catered event with roast meat, salads, potatoes and desserts, featuring the annual VSAG raffle among some new additions to the entertainment. It will be a BYO affair at the home of one of our esteemed members.

Put the date in your diary!

Any suggestions or questions? Let John Lawler know as soon as possible.

This will be the event of the year.

Don't miss it!



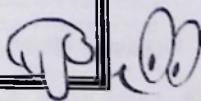
Clothes for sale

VSAG still have the following club garments for sale

Caps ; T-shirts — 2 size xL

Polos - 2 size L; 2 size xL; and 2 size xxL

Peter Briggs



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

Committee 2009 - 2010

President, New Member Coordinator, SDFV delegate, web/email responder

Greg Richards 5 Oakhurst Crt, Frankston VIC 3199
783 4249 0408 287 754 greg.richards@albint.com

Vice President, Newsletter Editor, SDFV delegate

Alan Storen 15 Regal Court, Vermont South VIC 3133
9803 3573(H) 0417 017 446 storens@bigpond.net.au

Secretary, Safety Coordinator,

David Geekie 145 Johnston St, Newport VIC 3015
0419 300 686 dgeekie@bigpond.net.au

Treasurer Peter Briggs 37 Blue Ridge Drive, Mooroolbark VIC 3138
9727 3947 0412 585 546 pbriggs@bigpond.net.au

Asst Treasurer Andy Mastrowicz 224 Wattle Valley Road, Camberwell VIC 3124
9809 0984(H) 0402 060 711 gails@bigpond.net.au

Social Secretary refer all matters to John Lawler

Dive Co-ordinator, New Member Coordinator,

John Lawler 7 Cloris Avenue, Beaumaris VIC 3193
9589 4020(H) 0414 922 916 jlawler@aapt.net.au

Points socrer Greg Breese 161 Hudsons Rd, Spotswood VIC
0431 832 344 gregfabreese@optusnet.com.au

Equipment officer Michael Kakafikas 16 Goodwood Cres, Gladstone Park VIC 3043
93381996 0439 044 122 didgipus@hotmail.com

Webmaster, Assistant Newsletter Editor

Lloyd Borrett 35 Courtenay Ave, Cranbourne North VIC 3977
5996 0033 0418 170 044 lloyd@borrett.id.au

General

David Ujimoto 79 Raglan St, South Melbourne Vic 3205
0416 316 450 ujimotod@yahoo.ca

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

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Leighoah Hotel 1555 Dandenong Rd Oakleigh.

Annual Report

Alan Storen

Before I start on the detail I would like to thank the club and the committee for their support and hard work over the past three years during my period as President. We have achieved many of the things we set out to do especially in this past year and we have an excellent base on which to build the future.

Financial Matters

The treasurer will report separately on club finances but the club is in a sound financial position as it goes forward. We, the committee, made a deliberate decision this year to return some of the money that we made on the sale of the compressor back to members, and to that end we have part funded several activities such as subsidising the Christmas Party, club dive prizes, AGM nibbles, etc. We have also purchased club medical kits (approx \$1000).

Our major expense is again Fathoms and soon we will be offering an electronic copy for interested members. Another significant expense is the auditing of the club accounts and Peter Briggs is looking into alternatives.

They say behind every good man is a good woman and in Peter Briggs case this is no exception. I would like to thank Carol on behalf of the club for the support and efforts she has put in to keep the bookwork correct and accounts in order.

Diving

We conducted many local dives during the year with some shore dives and night dives included for those interested. We had some cancellations due to poor weather but most dives went ahead. The last few weeks have been particularly bad! Our overseas trip to Sulawesi was a great success and so were our regular trips to Wilsons Promontory at Easter and the Melbourne Cup (SDFV) weekend, Cape Jaffa during Labour weekend, Queenscliff for Queen's Birthday weekend, and Eden at Christmas. All were well supported and enjoyed. Next year's plan would see Fiji on the agenda so book in early if interested.

I would particularly like to thank the dive captains for all the effort they put in to make the dives or trips a success.

Meetings

We had many interesting guest speakers at our general club meetings during the year including Leo Maybus on his Bay Crossing, David Lemon on Reef Balls, the Water Police, John Lipmann from DAN, Alan Beckhurst(x2), John Corby on the submarine conservation project, Steve Taylor on historical diving equipment. We also had Chris Llewellyn's DVD on the Sulawesi Trip. All were great and we also had a member's night where 'memorabilia' from years gone by were displayed. Another 'Show and Tell' night is essential in the not too distant future. If you do have any articles that you are prepared to display please see one of the committee so you will be included on the list.

Social

We held a number of social events this year including the Christmas Party – thanks to Bridey and JL for their organisation, an IMAX night, a Christmas in July dinner, a Comedy Night and the usual December social night at Bells. All were excellent and if you have any ideas for future activities please see one of the committee. The AGM is also taking on a 'social event' status and we hope you like the new format. David Geekie is about to arrange a 4WD day so book in if interested.

New Members

We have had many new members join this year and I hope they felt welcome. I have had the pleasure of meeting them on our dives and know they will make a good contribution to our club.

Committee

The committee as usual have again put in another excellent year and I congratulate them on the behalf of members. I would especially like to mention Bridey Leggatt who has resigned from the committee but has made a significant contribution over the 2 years as social secretary. Priya also resigned from the committee after many years and I thank her for this contribution.

Equipment

The club does not hold a lot of equipment but Mike Kakafikas has compiled a list and this includes retrieval ropes(used mainly at the Prom), First Aid Kits(x3), Oxygen kits(x3) as major items.

Peter Briggs has some items of clothing available for sale and I thank Peter for his efforts in this endeavour.

Boats

Where would the club be without boats – this year we need to thank John Lawler, Mick Jeacle, David Geekie, John Gladding and Andy Mastrowicz for their support of the club this year. A special mention should also go to the GetUnder Club who have helped us out with spaces on their boats on several occasions.

Fathoms

Many great articles this year and the standard is getting better all the time. We would not have a magazine without the contribution by members and many have made the effort this year and I thank them as editor and also on behalf of the club.

AGM AWARDS

Club Member of the Year:

John Lawler

And

Fathoms Award:

John Lawler



Literary Award:

Greg Richards



Also Awarded:

Life Membership:

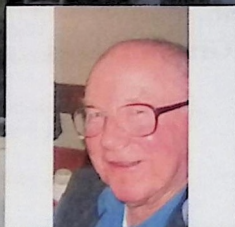
Alan Storen



Special AGM Awards

50 Year Membership Awards

Peter Matthews
Frank Coustley
John Noonan
Pat



Peter Matthews - Refuge Cove Xmas 1958 P. Matthews



Peter Matthews' oxygen rebreather - early 1960's
P. Matthews



Frank Coustley and air compressor - King Island 1960's - P. Matthews

Congratulations to all concerned!

THE JOYS OF SEA SICKNESS

(Or *why I dive from piers. . .*)

Seasickness is a vile complaint, taking a variety of forms, but always characterised by afflicting people who never deserve to get it. Yet get it they do.

Everybody gets sick at sea sooner or later and if you haven't been sick yet it's because you haven't been at sea long enough. That means you still have your first attack of seasickness to look forward to. To prepare for the evil day you'd better read this, along with the rest of us mortals who already know what it's like to suffer a fate worse than death.

Seasickness basically involves confusion of the brain, confusion caused by the unaccustomed motion of a boat.

Your brain is confused by the sight and feel of the world heaving around it. In response it orders your stomach to feel a little upset, mildly upset, upset, very upset, uncontrollably upset. . . This finally leaves you heaving right along there with the rest of the world. Seizing your stomach in such a mess often makes your brain feel better and it will order your stomach to stop. On the other hand, sometimes your brain will say: "Who cares — suffer!" In that case you will continue to feel rotten so long as you stay on the boat.

Seasickness can happen to anyone. No-one is immune. Old sailors get it, experienced fishermen get it, and there's even a suspicion some species of fish get it, though not very often.

But people who aren't used to the sea are much more likely to get it than those who go to sea regularly. Among occasional sailors some seem more likely to get seasick than others.

Remedies for seasickness are sold in chemist shops and in good faith, but they don't come with guarantees. Most seasick remedies don't stop you getting seasick, they just let you sleep through it. Drowsiness from seasick tablets can be a serious problem, particularly if you are steering the boat when you fall asleep.

A side effect from some other types is an extreme thirst and dryness of the mouth.

Most readily available remedies are probably equally as effective as each other. But before you take one off the shelf, look your pharmacist straight in the eye and ask him what he takes to ward off seasickness. The same trick can be tried with your doctor, who may give you a script for something you could take off the shelf anyway. Always try this on your pharmacist first — he doesn't charge a consultation fee.

There are secret remedies. Uncle Bert swears by red rum, preferably over-proof. He still gets seasick, but he doesn't care about it. A friend who regularly gets seasick — he's just made that way — believes in Debbendox, a preparation prescribed for pregnant women to stop morning sickness. His wife tells little white lies to various doctors and obtains a prescription which is then filled before putting to sea. He claims anything they'd give pregnant women can't be too harmful, although recently he was complaining of a squeaky voice and loss of unsightly hair.

Living a clean, wholesome life helps prevent seasickness. Late nights, an excess of alcohol, and eating greasy break-fasts in shabby motel rooms wondering if your wife and her lawyer will burst in at any moment don't set you up for a day at sea.

Once on board, if you begin to feel a little squeamish, stay up on deck and get plenty of fresh air. Stare fixedly at the horizon, this gives your eyes a level steady subject to look at and will calm your confused brain. Do not in any circumstances go below decks, bend over, sniff diesel fumes, or speak to anyone eating pork chops.

What do you do with seasickness once you've got it? You reach a point when you know, in the back of your mind and the pit of your stomach, that you're going to be sick. It's the point of no return. Don't fight it. It's going to happen; be dignified about it.

Sometimes the sea gods will be appeased once you have actually thrown up. Sometimes, after one attack the gods will allow you to enjoy the rest of the day in comparative peace. But usually they won't!

Usually the rest of your day is ruined as well. You will enjoy brief periods of release, when you feel almost rational and might be deceived into illusions of returning to good health. They will be suddenly snatched away by more violent heaving, which will leave you feeling suicidal: you will be saved from self-destruction by another stomach-twisting attack, during which you are too weak to harm anyone, even yourself.

When your stomach is finally emptied, you should eat something quickly. There is no worse feeling in the world than throwing up when there's nothing to throw. Suggested food is dry brown bread or dry biscuits, swilled down with flat lemonade. As an added advantage, if any of this mixture stays in your stomach long enough to be absorbed it will stop you dying of dehydration or starvation.

If, during the day you feel strong enough to leave the gunwale, lie down somewhere and stay warm.

What is the etiquette of seasickness? The first rule is, get out of the way. No-one likes a nuisance, so if you are sick try not to bother people.

When you feel seasickness coming on, tell the blokes beside you. That allows them to move to positions upwind, out of the line of fire. If able to move, you should go to the corner of the stern on the lee side, where you will be out of the way and cause least trouble.

On no account go inside - The skipper does not want to have to clean up after you when he gets back to port. Stay up on the deck. Also make sure you hang your head well over the side during attacks.

It is extremely poor etiquette to ask to be returned to port. You wanted to go out, now enjoy it! Do not beg either the skipper or your companions, as that also is considered a faux pas. And do not threaten to 'die unless put ashore'. You will find that usually drives the subject of your wild threats to deliver invective such as "Die, you die", kick his ankles free of your fingers, and stomp to another part of the vessel.

Be reassured by the knowledge that you will eventually recover from seasickness should your companions not slip you over the side - Very few cases of seasickness can't be cured by two feet planted firmly on the ground and two fingers of whisky shot straight into the stomach.

There are varying opinions on how to recover from seasickness. Uncle Bert swears by more red rum. Some learned authorities recommend a warm shower, a light meal and a sound night's sleep. A few people have been known to fall to their knees in the sand and give thanks to God. It depends on your religion.

Once "over the hump" — that is, suffering and surviving your first attack — you mightn't be afflicted again. You might feel a little queasy for the next few days, but without experiencing the onset of terminal symptoms.

It's been proved that the more time you spend at sea without getting an attack the less likely you are to suffer seasickness ever again. You can build up a type of immunity, and provided you go to sea regularly, once every few weeks, to give yourself a "booster" shot, the immunity can last indefinitely.

Then again, maybe you're one of the unlucky ones —



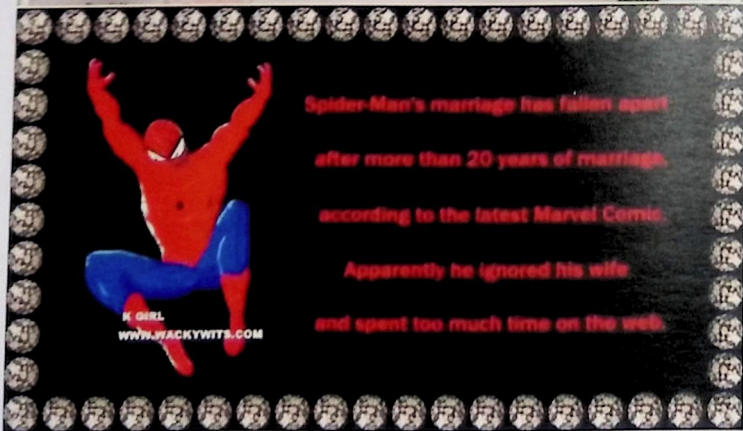
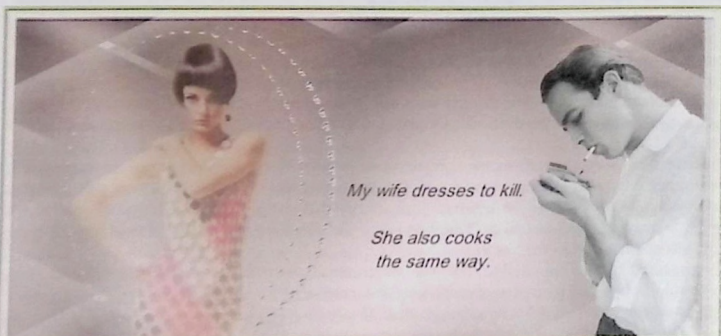
every time out, over the side. It can sometimes be cured by the "hiccups method", which is similar to being given a fright to cure repetitive involuntary burping, which in a way is much like severe seasickness.

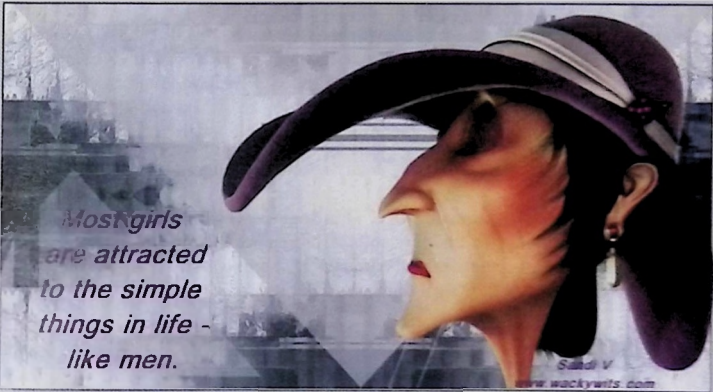
However, you do not get cured by having someone creep up behind and saying "Boo!" while you are hanging on the rail. Refrain from going to sea until the weather turns particularly nasty, then go out in a small boat, against the advice of your friends and insurance salesman. Once out in those seas in that boat you'll be too petrified with fear to even think about seasickness. In every case it will cure or kill you, either way ending your problems with seasickness.

But if you can't pull off a miracle, look on the bright side. You're probably providing your mates with a boatload of laughs.

Everyone always thinks seasickness is a bit of a joke — so long as they haven't got it!

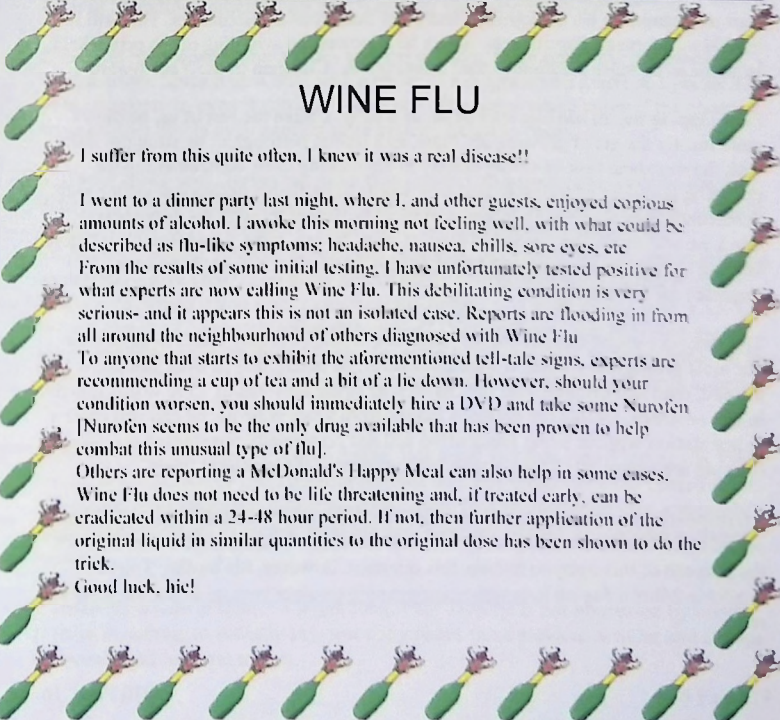
[Reprinted Canadian Dive Magazine]





*Most girls
are attracted
to the simple
things in life -
like men.*

Sally V
www.wackywife.com



WINE FLU

I suffer from this quite often, I knew it was a real disease!!

I went to a dinner party last night, where I, and other guests, enjoyed copious amounts of alcohol. I awoke this morning not feeling well, with what could be described as flu-like symptoms: headache, nausea, chills, sore eyes, etc. From the results of some initial testing, I have unfortunately tested positive for what experts are now calling Wine Flu. This debilitating condition is very serious- and it appears this is not an isolated case. Reports are flooding in from all around the neighbourhood of others diagnosed with Wine Flu.

To anyone that starts to exhibit the aforementioned tell-tale signs, experts are recommending a cup of tea and a bit of a lie down. However, should your condition worsen, you should immediately hire a DVD and take some Nurofen [Nurofen seems to be the only drug available that has been proven to help combat this unusual type of flu].

Others are reporting a McDonald's Happy Meal can also help in some cases. Wine Flu does not need to be life threatening and, if treated early, can be eradicated within a 24-48 hour period. If not, then further application of the original liquid in similar quantities to the original dose has been shown to do the trick.

Good luck, hic!

THE ART OF WINNING THE FATHOMS LITERARY AWARD

A Promulgation by a previous winner.

Every year another article in Fathoms is awarded the prestigious and much sought after "VSAG Fathoms Literary Award". Many articles are submitted each year by very talented authors, but only one is able to scale the heights and beat the others into submission to grab the ultimate glory. This brief dispassionate essay will attempt to offer a guide for the budding authors hiding out there in VSAG land who are stoically tapping away on their keyboards vainly hoping to impress the judging panel to pick their entry as the "Best of the Best"

Firstly, it should be noted that, in recent years, due to a chronic shortage of available judges in VSAG, who can actually read, or write, or in some particularly sad cases even string 3 or 4 coherent words together, we have relied on one Paul Tipping, to do the final adjudicating. Now, for those of you not familiar with "young" Paul, let's start by examining his background and other numerous shortcomings. This will then lead us to the magic formulae by which he allocates the awarding of the prize- held by some to be more prestigious than winning the "Clubman of the Year Award".

Paul Tipping began life like a lot of us, as a baby. Unlike the rest of us, he didn't quite master the art of growing up. Now, as a retired pettifogger, he struggles daily with the mundane task of sitting quietly in his rocking chair contemplating the unending boredom of trying to find new words to baffle his occasional visitor with. Sometimes, when a fleeting moment of lucidity flashes through his now vacuous mind, he will throw the crocheted blanket from his lap, jump to his feet, (and before landing heavily on his soon to be broken hip), bellow out the words to a long forgotten 50's pop song.

This may not sound like the sort of judge one would normally select to adjudicate our most prestigious award. It should however, be noted, that he does still know how to spell, read and dribble!!- all this, as well as string upwards of 3500 words together in one sentence. Unlike the previous judges from years gone by, he can still enter a police station without being handcuffed and has no sexually transmitted diseases (that we are aware of!) Truly, a man without peer in these amoral times.

An inspired choice? Or a reprobate miscreant, hiding beneath the veneer of a prosaic placid senior citizen, whiling away his final hours in obsequious oblivion. It is not the purpose of this essay to answer this question, however, his brother Tony is available 24hrs a day on tony@thesmartertippingbrother.com.au to put the matter to rest.

But I digress! If, as many do, you aspire to one day stand in front of the assembled VSAG AGM and humbly accept the venerated "Literary Award" you dear reader, must follow the following tips to the letter. If not, Judge Tipping will sneer down his proboscis and utter hollow words of encouragement whilst shredding you of any remaining dignity in front of your fellow divers. Before he is finished, he will proceed into a circuitous diatribe of bile about your pathetic uninspiring bilge, that will leave you in no uncertain terms aware of your own shortcomings as an author! Although a master of circumlocution, he is also known to reduce grown men to bed wetting with his still formidable rapier like wit. You have been warned!

Now for the tips:

1: You must mention names: Even if they weren't on the dive. Just throw in names, but never insult or demean fellow divers. There is no place for sexist, racist, ageist, obeseist, heightist or bodyodourist type comments in a VSAG dive report. Just mention names- try throwing in famous names like Michael Jackson to see if anybody actually reads the crap you write. I once submitted a deliberate grammatical error (a 'dangling participle' no less!!) and not one person noticed!!

2: Submit photos with your article- and lots of them. Even better use diagrams or even a graph. Spice it up a little with a photo of a diagram or a graph of a photo! Use your imagination, even if you don't have one. The judge won't know if the photo is from another day or even another solar system. Learn to cheat.

3: Avoid tautologies. Never use more than one or two adjective to describe the days activities. Avoid sentences like the following... "I went diving with VSAG because I thought they were a reputable, respectable, honourable, well thought of, trustworthy, honest, reliable, dependable, virtuous, principled, worthy, estimable and an esteemed dive club". Too many adjectives!!! Try the following simple plain language example if you want to impress the Judge.....I went diving with VSAG, What a bunch of odious objectionable cretins" (You will note that in typing the above example my gaze shifted from synonyms of "Reputable" to "Repulsive" in the Thesaurus and thus altered the complete meaning of the example sentences to better reflect the days activities)

4: Never insult the Literary Award Judge. It is a sad fact that Paul Tipping has lost whatever semblance of good humour he once had. His funny bone has ceased to be. His face bereft of humour, nowadays looks more like an un-ironed shirt and rarely does a smile manage to escape from his lips. Keep all articles serious and without mirth.

5: Make the article at least 3-4 pages long. Paul Tipping is not impressed by brevity. If there is nothing to actually say, just copy pages from previous articles and change the names and location to suit.

6: Bribery is always an option. If you can't raise the cash, don't write articles- simple really.

7: Finally, the main point. Even if you don't go on the annual overseas trip, write an article about it! The last 8 winners have been about the O/S trip, so get on it now and write as much insightful, inspired rhetoric you can muster. You don't even need to know where the trip went to. Just make it up... its what I did!

Editor: Please note Greg was the winner of the prestigious award again this year(2009) and wrote this article before he had won!!

Editor2: Don Abel was also asked to judge the articles this year.

Member Profile: Christine Reynolds

Year joined VSAG: 2009

How long have you been diving?: I first became hooked on diving in 1995 with a Reef Explorer dive on the Great Barrier Reef and it has been a passion and addiction ever since.

I jumped at the opportunity of qualifying as a PADI Open Water diver and have since moved on to Advanced, Rescue and now Deep Specialty.

I love the freedom and weightlessness underwater and I love interacting with the wildlife. A holiday is not a holiday unless I'm scuba diving.

First diving experience: My first Reef Explorer Dive experience on the Great Barrier Reef was a near disaster, no one told me how heavy all this gear would be, I could barely stand up let alone walk.

I was sat down on a step wearing all my gear for my first introductory dive session and a 12 inch wave toppled me over backwards where I floundered like a beached whale on my back, much to the amusement of my instructor who thought if he left me there long enough I would work out how to sit up again. Well, that never happened. I was man handled back into a sitting position where the very next wave sent me sprawling over backwards again.

My first dive was down a shot line, don't worry about buoyancy I was told, just equalise to the bottom and I will adjust it when you get there. No worries, so here I am doing push ups on the bottom 30 feet down thinking there has got to be more to this diving business. Then, along comes Mr Nice Guy instructor to my rescue to adjust my buoyancy. WOW!!! WHAT A BLAST!!! The most fun I have ever had in the water.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne:

Nothing less than 25 metres. Cathedral Caves, Spot G and the North Wall, Eliza Ramsden & the J Class subs all offer fabulous diversity of dive sites. Deep walls, swim throughs and exploring wrecks are all fantastic fun.

Most memorable diving experience:

Vanuatu rates very high with wrecks, caves, swim throughs and underwater hot vents.

It's difficult to pick just one but getting up close and personal with a sleeping leopard shark in Vanuatu, a Manta Ray on the Muiron Islands off WA, a Queensland Groper under Navy Pier WA, swimming with grey nurse sharks at Broughton Island NSW and being buzzed by local seals at Port Phillip heads are all excitingly vibrant memories.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: Being menaced by an aggressive reef shark. I managed to get the shark and my buddy in prize winning photo and thinking the camera was strapped to my wrist let go of it while I pushed myself hard against the rocks, only to watch my camera float topside never to be seen again. So much for holiday pics!

Lucky for me my generous dive buddy saved the day with a DVD of his own photos.

Most valued piece of diving equipment: My camera of course.... And now that I have a new one it's going to stay firmly strapped to my wrist!

Do you have a dive boat?: Only in my dreams!

Which is why John Lawler, David Geekie, Alan Beckhurst and Dive Victoria are all very high in the popularity stakes and very much appreciated!

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?: Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji.

Truck lagoon is big on my to do list, as is The President Coolidge and I'm hoping to complete a Wreck course overseas.

Any diving words of wisdom?: Make sure you check the seals on your BCD before you jump in the water. Buddies tend to think you are meant to sink at the start of a dive.

Steer away from greasy hot dogs and powdered soup, although the fish seemed to appreciate it.

Try to remember you are on a dive course and not a pleasure dive.

It's important to complete the practical exercises.

Any other comments: Live for today, tomorrow will take care of itself.

Happy diving!



Fourteen Australian Prime Ministers I have known

Introduction

During my years as Aide-de-Camp at Government House Canberra, and later, I have met fourteen men who have served as Prime Minister of my country.

They have been drawn from both sides of the political spectrum, and were varied by their backgrounds, their politics, and the length of time they individually spent in the Prime Minister's Lodge at Canberra.

I will deal briefly with each of them in alphabetical order.



Prime Ministers

1. Stanley Melbourne Bruce, 12th. Prime Minister

9 February 1923- 12th.October 1929. In Office: 6 years, 8 months, 14 days.

Bruce followed Billy Hughes, but two greater contrasts could not be imagined. Bruce came from a wealthy Melbourne family who lived in the upper crust suburb of Toorak, whilst Hughes hailed from being a manual labourer immersed in a Trade Union environment.

Bruce served in WW1 in the British Royal Fusiliers as a Captain, he was wounded at Gallipoli, and earned a Military Cross. It was in 1918 he won a seat in the Commonwealth Parliament as a Nationalist, and was a Cabinet Minister within three years, and the next year was elected by his party as Prime Minister, a rather meteoric rise for the ex Army Officer and businessman.

He was responsible for having the Duke of York (the future King George VI) open the new Commonwealth Parliament House in Canberra in 1927.

Stanley Bruce held the dubious distinction of being the only serving Prime Minister in Australia to lose his seat at a general election in 1929.

In 1947, Bruce was created a Viscount. I met him later, in 1952, when he was installed as the Chancellor of the new Australian National University situated in Canberra. He retained this post until he died on the 25th, of August 1967. Bruce had remained a London resident, only venturing back to Australia to visit his University for a major ceremony.

He was probably more English than he was an Australian, he had been a leader in good times, but when by the 1929 election, things were not so rosy, his electorate found him wanting and threw him out of office.

2. Joseph Benedict Chifley, 20th. Prime Minister

12 July 1945- 10 December 1949. In Office: 4 years, 5 months, 7 days.

Known as Ben Chifley, rose from being an engine driver on the New South Wales railways based on Bathurst, through the Union movement to enter Federal politics as the Labour member for Macquarie in 1928.

He held Ministerial office in Defence, and was the Minister assisting the Treasurer. When the conservatives gained control of the Federal Parliament, Chifley spent 9 years in the political wilderness. In 1940, he once more won Macquarie for Labour, and Prime Minister Curtin made him his Treasurer. Curtin died on the 5th, of July 1945, Frank Forde took over for but 7 days, when Chifley prevailed.

He nominated William McKell, then serving as the Labour Premier of the State of New South Wales as Governor General.

This brought an uproar from the conservatives, with a cry of " Jobs for the boys!" and we will get rid of McKell when we regain office, which of course they never did.

King George VI was not at all enamoured at the thought of his Vice Regal Representative in Government House Canberra, coming from the ranks of a serving Labour politician, but Chifley dug his toes in, and insisted that the King was bound to accept his Australian Prime Minister's advice in this appointment, and so it happened.

I got to know Ben Chifley very well, he often called upon his long time friend, now His Excellency, and I enjoyed many a chat with him, then leader of the Opposition, whilst we waited for the GG to be ready to receive Mr Chifley.

He had a very gravelly voice, on meeting him, I would enquire as to his health, his response was always the same: "Well, if my racing form is as good as my track form, I'll be alright."

Ben Chifley died on the evening of the 13th. of July 1951, when the Commonwealth Jubilee celebrations, at the most lavish party ever staged at Parliament House Canberra were in full cry. All the State Governors and Chief Ministers of the Territories were in attendance, and an invitation to this night was the most sought after ever in Canberra's social history! Robert Menzies as Prime Minister, with the greatest regret, and dignity, announced Chifley's death, and suggested to the glittering audience, that the party should end at once, and we all go home. The assembly did just that. The sumptuous dinner was left untouched, and was transported to the Capital's Hospital.

30,000 people turned out for Chifley's funeral in Bathurst, I marched with the Military Secretary, immediately behind the Governor General, who in turn marched behind the gun carriage carrying the body of his old friend Ben.

3. Arthur William Fadden, 17th. Prime Minister

28th. August 1941- 7th. October 1941. In Office: 1 month, 9 days.

Country Party leader from the Queensland sugar town of Ingham, he joined Robert Menzies in the coalition formed between the United Australia Party and the Country Party. Menzies when PM, lost a vote of confidence within his UAP, and therefore resigned as Prime Minister. The junior member of the coalition grabbed their chance and Fadden was briefly installed as Prime Minister, but in October of 1941, two Independents who had kept the Government in office voted with the Labour Party to defeat Fadden's budget, it was all over for him, he could only resign.

I knew Artie Fadden when he was Treasurer in the new Liberal Party (this was the old UAP rejuvenated by Robert Menzies) in concert with the Country Party and they won government in 1949. Fadden was Treasurer until he retired from politics in 1958.

He enjoyed himself at Government House dinners for the Prime Minister and his Ministers of State, and loved a good story about some of the pranks he and his Country Party mate Larry Anthony, got up to, when new members joined the House of Representatives, and were to make their maiden speeches



Sir William McKell Governor General of Australia leads Mourners at the funeral of Mr J.B. Chifley, a former Prime Minister. Immediately behind His Excellency: Lt Colonel W.G.N.Orr, Military Secretary, and Lieutenant M.J.Gregory, RAN, Aide-de-Camp. Then, General Sir John Northcott, Governor Of New South Wales.

4. Francis Michael Forde. 19th. Prime Minister

5th. July 1945 - 12th. July 1945. In Office: 7 days.

No one in the history of the Commonwealth of Australia has served a shorter term as Prime Minister than Frank Forde.

He strode this stage as PM. for but 7 days in July of 1945, on the 2nd. of July when Curtin became so ill, Forde was made Caretaker Prime Minister. in three days more Curtin had died. The Governor General, the Duke of Gloucester had appointed Forde to hold the fort as a Caretaker on the 5th. of July, but Chifley soon won the party's approval and he took over as PM a week later on the 12th. of July.

In the 1946 elections Forde lost his seat. I had met him on several occasions when he had called on the Governor General at Government House. Forde was appointed High Commissioner to Canada by the Liberal government in 1953, after his return from Canada, he lived for many years in his native Queensland, until his death in 1983.

One of my tasks as ADC . was to meet all of the Governor General's visitors, as he was not always ready to receive them on their arrival, and they would often arrive very early for their appointment. I had to engage them in conversation, and generally fill the gap between their arrival at Government House and their audience with His Excellency. In one of the reception rooms was a beautiful model of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric scheme (it was one of the Governor General's pet projects, and he had been involved in its start up.)

It had small lights that could be switched on to denote the various tunnels, generators etc. it was a wonderful back up whenever I struck a sticky patch with a particular visitor.

Two special VIP's stand out in my memory. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, and John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of State, the latter was as dry as a stick, and very hard going. I was only saved by the Snowy Scheme, when The Secretary showed some interest in my explanation.

Monty, forever the firebrand, impatient at being kept waiting, also calmed down when the Snowy Scheme lights were switched on.

5. John Malcolm Fraser. 27th. Prime Minister

11th. November 1975-5th. March 1983. In Office: 7 years, 4 months.

Entered Parliament at the relatively young age of 25, but had to wait 11 years before making it as a Junior Minister, taking the Army portfolio under Prime Minister Holt. After Holt's untoward drowning, Gorton became PM, at that time backed by Fraser, who became a Cabinet member with Education and Science. A year later he was moved to Defence, but fell out with his Prime Minister and resigned his ministry. After Whitlam was dismissed by the Governor General Sir John Kerr, Fraser who at that time was lurking in the wings at Government House, was commissioned as a Caretaker Prime Minister. At the subsequent elections he won a massive victory and spent almost 8 years as PM.

I met the Prime Minister, and his wife Tammie, at a ground breaking ceremony for a new block at the Austin Hospital. I had the task of organising this event when an executive of the hospital, Research brought to light that Fraser's Grandfather had been a Board Member of the hospital many years previously, so I was able to establish a connection with the Fraser clan and Austin Hospital, and we invited the Prime Minister and his wife to participate.

6. John Grey Gorton. 24th. Prime Minister

9th. January 1968-22nd. March 1971. In Office: 3 years, 2 months.

A fighter pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force in WW2, shot down during the defence of Singapore, escaping from his burning aircraft badly burned. The vessel in which he was

evacuated, was torpedoed by the Japanese, and Gorton was picked up by the Australian corvette HMAS Ballarat. He returned to duty in New Guinea, having to crash land his Kittyhawk there. He was now discharged in 1944.

Gorton was elected to the Senate in 1950, but had a 10 year wait before gaining the Navy Ministry, as a junior minister under a senior Defence Minister.

Harold Holt had taken over from Menzies in 1966, but in December of the next year, he went missing whilst swimming off Portsea in Victoria, his body was never found.

With enmity within the Government coalition between John McEwen the Country Party leader who had been appointed Caretaker PM, and the Deputy of the Liberal Party, William McMahon, Gorton was elected the first Prime Minister in Australian History to be sworn in as a Senator. He later resigned as a Senator, to be elected to the lower house, whereby a long held convention that the Prime Minister always came from the House of Representatives was again established.

Gorton served for over three years, but upset many of the conservatives with his layback style, more in the Presidential mould, and his perceived centalist tendencies.

In a ballot to test his leadership, the vote went 33 - 33, he used a casting vote (which was subsequently established that he did not possess.) to put himself out of office. In 1974, he resigned from Parliament to live a long life, he knighted, and he has only just recently died in 2002, aged 90.

7. Harold Edward Holt, 22nd. Prime Minister

20th. January 1966 - 17th. January 1967. In Office: 1 year, 10 months, 23 days.

Inherited the crown of Prime Minister when Robert Menzies retired in January 1966. When he visited the United States in June of that year, he made the somewhat infamous public statement: " Australia would go all the way with LBJ."

He was repaid by the very first visit of any US President to Australia, and Johnson received a tumultuous welcome in Sydney. After this visit, on going to the country for an election,

Holt received a landslide victory in November 1966, his coalition government receiving 82 seats to Labours' 41.

As already reported Holt went missing on the 17th. of December 1967, and was never found, at the Memorial Service held in Melbourne on the 22nd. of December, Prince Charles represented Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the 2nd. and President Johnson attended, as did the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

Many will recall Holt's short reign at the top of Australian politics, as a time when Australia gave up its independence to the United States, by going overboard in pledging unconditional support to them.

8. John Winston Howard, 30th. Prime Minister

11th. March 1996 - Still serving in June 2002.

John Howard trained as a lawyer, and has been a member of the Commonwealth Parliament for 28 years, he is probably the best and most effective debater in Canberra.

Served as Treasurer in Liberal Governments for a number of years, and finally won the leadership of the Liberal/National coalition, and has led them to three election victories including his first win in 1996.

Has been described as the most conservative PM in Australia's history, but is an uncompromising leader who supports President George Bush and his anti-terrorist leadership to the hilt, he is a staunch friend of the United States.

Howard has just returned to Australia in June 2002 from a week's visit to the US, and became only the third serving Australian Prime Minister after Menzies and Hawke to address a joint sitting of the US Congress.

He believes that: "Occasion. constituted one of my finest hours in my whole political life." On September the 10th. 2001, my wife Denise and I were in Washington DC. as guests of our Australian Embassy there. for the presentation of the USS Canberra's ship's Bell from President George W. Bush to our Prime Minister John Howard.

In November 2001, we both met John Howard again at a pre election function. I said: "Prime Minister, I believe Denise and I have you to thank for the fact we were not on board American Airlines Flight No 77 on September 11 when it crashed into the Pentagon. (We had been resheduled on another flight at the last moment so we could join the PM's party going to Arlington Cemetery) The PM's response was " Yes our Embassy told me about that. He had just returned from China where he had met President Bush again. He now said to me: " In China, President Bush indicated how much he had enjoyed the Bell ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard on the 10th. of September. What a lovely day that was." The President then added " You know, that was the last day of the free world as we knew it! "

He is still in office, and may pass the baton of leadership to his Deputy Peter Costello, the current Treasurer, on reaching his 64th. birthday next July.

Prime Minister Howard has indicated that is the time he will review his position and he has never wavered from that stance.

As I write these words on Sunday the 16th. June 2002, I consider there is a but here, and it is a very big BUT, he just may not give up his job, he obviously enjoys his position and its power, he can strut the World Stage, and I think he may well keep Costello waiting , none too patiently in the wings a bit longer.

Time alone will solve this position.

9. William Morris Hughes. 11th. Prime Minister

27th. October 1915 - 9th. February 1923. In Office: 7 years, 3 months, 14 days.

Born in London in 1862, trained as a teacher, emigrating to Queensland, Australia when 22, he never returned to the teaching profession. Hughes was fond of relating stories about all the different jobs he tried his hand at, he moved to Sydney, married, and lived in the harbourside suburb of Balmain.

By 1890 he was immersed in the Wharf Labourer's Union, and became its Secretary, then moved on to the Shearer's Union, by 1894 he had entered State politics, winning the seat of Lang in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

Although he had opposed Federation, when the Commonwealth of Australia became fact in 1901, Hughes stood for, and won the seat of West Sydney, to become one of the founding members of the Australian Labour Party. He now studied law, and was admitted to the bar. In 1904, John Watson led the Labour Party to victory, the first Labour Government in the world, but he only lasted for 3 months and 21 days before Fisher took over as Prime Minister.

In all, Fisher held the PM's job on three separate occasions, before he finally abdicated to pressure from Hughes, who, in October 1915 became Australia's 11th. Prime Minister. He was at the helm over WW1, and tried to bring in conscription, but was defeated.

On the 14th. of November 1916, a no confidence motion was moved against him, he then defected from the Labour Party taking 23 supporters out of the 65 members of the Labour caucus. Hughes formed the National Party, and with the support of Joseph Cook's conservative Liberals clung to his office.

In 1917, he gave up the West Sydney seat, moved to the electorate of Bendigo, a country town in the centre of Victoria, won this seat, and retained the Prime Ministership.

At the end of WW1, he attended the Peace Conference at Versailles, and played a leading role in framing the Charter of the League of Nations.

He hung on as PM, until 1923, when he was finally ousted by Stanley Bruce. By 1951, he had served 50 years in the Commonwealth Parliament. I met Billy Hughes on a number of occasions, and if he did not want to listen to you, he merely turned off his hearing aid, which by this time in his life, he needed if he was to hear at all. He died in 1952, aged 90, forever the opportunist right to the end.

10. John McEwen, 23rd. Prime Minister

18th. December 1967 - 9th. January 1968. In Office: 23 days. Had but a brief tenure as Prime Minister, when Harold Holt disappeared, as Leader of the Country Party he was commissioned as Caretaker Prime Minister. In 1934 he had won the Federal seat of Echuca, and became a member of the Lyons Government in 1937. In the Menzies Government of 1949, McEwen took the Deputy Prime Minister's post, and was Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, he was a past master at political blackmail, and gained far more for his minority Country Party than he should have been allowed to achieve. As Caretaker PM, he dictated to his senior coalition partner who they could nominate for Prime Minister, indicating he would not serve with William McMahon, and would walk out of the coalition, taking his Country Party members with him, if Mc Mahon was elected by his party. The Liberals caved in, they should have called his bluff, no party likes to lose office, and I believe the minority Country Party members, if the crunch had come, would have elected to stay in the coalition with McMahon as PM, rather than be hustled out of office onto the cold opposition Parliamentary benches. McEwen was the typical school yard bully! He retired in 1971, at the age of 70, I am sure the Liberal Party were glad to be rid of " Big Black Jack McEwen."

11. William McMahon, 25th. Prime Minister

22nd. March 1971 - 2nd. December 1972. In Office: 1 year, 8 months, 25 days. Born into a wealthy family in 1908, at 16, when his father died he inherited a huge estate. He qualified as a lawyer, and later took out an economics degree. McMahon joined the Liberal Party and stood for the New South Wales seat of Lowe in 1949, and entered the Commonwealth Parliament. He soon joined the ranks of the Ministry, and did not not marry until he was 55. He was known as a plotter within his party, but finally gained his cherished ambition of becoming Prime Minister after Gorton voted himself out of office in 1971. McMahon and his Government were ousted by Gough Whitlam the Labour leader in 1972, when he swept into power with the slogan " Its time." McMahon was a small man in many ways, and was unfortunate to have very prominent ears. When the Governor General was proclaiming the accession of Queen Elizabeth the 2nd from the steps of Parliament House Canberra on the 8th. of February 1952, I stood next to William McMahon. Even at this distance in time, I recall wondering what this little man with the bat ears was doing, to be amongst these Ministers of Her Majesty's Australian Government. McMahon achieved the distinction of being the Liberal PM who lost Government after 23 years of non Labour rule. He continued to hold onto the seat of Lowe for another 10 years, but as soon as he left Parliament his old seat fell to Labour in 1982. Sir Paul Hasluck, a former colleague, and subsequent Governor General in his book: The

Chance of Politics edited by his Son Nicholas Hasluck. Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1997, wrote:

"I confess to a deep dislike of McMahon. The longer one is associated with him the deeper the contempt for him grows and I find it hard to allow him any merit. Disloyal, devious, dishonest, untrustworthy, petty, cowardly - all these adjectives have been weighed by me and I could not in truth modify or reduce any one of them in its application to McMahon. I find him a contemptible creature and this contempt and the adjectives I have chosen to apply to him sum up all defects that, in my estimation of other people, cannot be balanced by better qualities."

Strong words indeed, and I must admit, Billy McMahon was certainly not among my favourites of all the Prime Ministers that I met and knew.

12. Robert Gordon Menzies

16th. Prime Minister. 26th. April 1939 - 28th. August 1941. In Office: 2 years, 4 months, 4 days.

21st. Prime Minister. 10th. December 1949 - 20th. January 1966. In Office: 16 years, 1 month, 8 days.

Robert Menzies served two terms as PM, and was the absolute doyen of all of Australia's Prime Ministers. His record 16 years in power, in his second term, is unlikely ever to be overtaken. He stood head and shoulders above any other who has achieved this high office. A brilliant lawyer, and debater, a wonderful speaker, I had more to do with him as Prime Minister, than any other politician in my time as ADC.

He used to call me "young man" and on the occasion in 1951, when he sought a Double Dissolution of both Houses of Parliament from the Governor General, I met him on his arrival at the front of Government House, and he asked me "How do you think I will go with His Excellency with my request for a Double Dissolution?"

My rather brash response was "Well Sir! I have had a look at the Constitution, and unlike you, I am not a lawyer, but I don't see how His Excellency can refuse you."

I ushered the PM into the Governor General's study, and waited in my office for this audience to be completed. After some 20 minutes or so the GG buzzed me, meaning he had finished his time with the PM, and I should immediately go to his study, collect the PM, and see him to his waiting car.

Mr Menzies was all smiles, once clear of the GG's study, he turned to me and said "Young man, that was good advice you gave me, His Excellency has granted my request for a Double Dissolution."

So, in fact, I was the first to know outside of my boss, and the Prime Minister, that, Australia was about to go to the polls, for an election.

The press were waiting on the steps of Government House to learn the outcome of this visit by the Prime Minister to the Governor General, the Melbourne Age took a photograph of Robert Menzies about to enter his car, with me holding the car door open for him. It made the front page of the next morning's Age.

On a much later visit to the Governor General, Mr Menzies got out of his car with something tucked under his arm, I greeted him as usual, he handed me his package, saying: "It's not a bad photograph of both of us, I thought you might like a copy."

He had inscribed this photograph: "With my warm regards, Robert Menzies 1951."

It remains amongst my treasured possessions.

Lord Gowrie, a former Governor General, had lost his son Patrick Hore - Ruthven in WW2, he had been killed in action in the Western Desert. Patrick had written a book: The Joy of Youth, and in the gardens at Government House was a fountain dedicated to him and

inscribed around its edge were the words: To Pat, and his many happy hours."

I took the Prime Minister one day to view this fountain, he had been unaware of its existence, and then loaned him my copy of Patrick's book. A long time later he returned it with a very nice letter saying thank you, and how much he had enjoyed it. Robert Menzies excelled as an after dinner speaker, I recall dinners at Government House for his Ministry, or for a visiting dignitary, and he was a guest, after the ladies had withdrawn, he would hold everyone spellbound talking about his beloved cricket. On one occasion, he had just returned from a visit to the US, he recalled a dinner in New York, for the distinguished Chinese, Doctor Wellington Koo, after the soup course, his next door neighbour asked him: "Likee soupee?" this was answered with a quick nod by Dr. Koo. He was now called upon as guest speaker for the evening, and he promptly delivered a most erudite speech in impeccable English.

Resuming his seat, he leaned across to his neighbour saying: "You likee speechee!" Menzies was knighted by the Queen in 1963 when she created him a Knight of the Thistle, the first person outside of Britain to be so honoured, and in 1966 he resigned from Parliament, and Holt took over this position.

For many years after I had left Government House, we received a Christmas Card from Sir Robert and Lady Menzies, it was nice to be remembered.

Sir Robert died on the 15th. of May 1978, and the funeral procession was one of the largest ever seen in Melbourne.

I remember Sir Robert Menzies with affection, he was always ready to stop and talk with me, just a Naval Officer, who was merely trying to do his job as Aide - de - Camp well.

13. Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page, 15th. Prime Minister

7th. April 1939 - 26th. April 1939, In Office: 20 days.

Earle Page, one of only three Caretaker Prime Ministers in the political history of Australia. He was a qualified medical practitioner, and had served in France in WW1, and entered politics in 1919, by 1921 he was leading the Country Party.

After Joseph Lyons died on the 7th. of April 1939, his United Australia Party had no deputy, and the Governor General called on Page to take over as Caretaker Prime Minister. Menzies then was elected to the PM's position, and in 1949, with the coalition filling the Government benches in Parliament, Sir Earle Page held the Health Portfolio, the position he filled when I was serving at Government House.

I remember him as a quiet, hardworking Minister, whom one would place in the category of gentleman.

He stood for election again in 1961, but died before the votes were finalised, in fact, this was the first time he had been defeated in his own electorate.



Prime Minister Robert Menzies 1951 at the time of GG granting him a Double Dissolution of Parliament

14. Edward Gough Whitlam. 26th. Prime Minister

3rd, December 1971 - 11th, November 1975. In Office: 2 years, 11 months, 7 days.

Swept into power in the 1971 elections, the first Labour Government since 1949.

He was born on the 11th. of July 1916, his father had been Crown Solicitor when the Australian Parliament first moved to Canberra in 1927.

Whitlam obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree, and followed up with a law degree.

During WW2, he was a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Joined the Labour Party in 1945, and took the seat of Werriwa for the party in 1952.

For a long time he was frustrated in his leadership ambitions, the tough and doughty Arthur Callwell holding him at bay as leader, until Whitlam finally prevailed on the 8th. of February to seize the reins as Leader of the Opposition.

It was the ascension of William McMahon to the Prime Ministership that gave Whitlam his chance, on the floor of the house, he was devastating against the PM in the day to day hurly burly of the Parliamentary sittings, McMahon had no chance.

In the subsequent elections of 1972, Whitlam and his party swept to power, and he became Prime Minister.

He visited China in 1973, and his, was one of the first world Governments to recognise Chairman Mao.

Whitlam had appointed his long time friend and fellow lawyer, Sir John Kerr to the high office of Governor General, no doubt believing he had ensured he had a friend at court. (the Labour Party had already made this mistake when Chifley had put William McKell into Government House, many in the party believed that the GG would never grant a Double Dissolution to their enemies, the Government of Robert Menzies. How wrong they were then.)

Thus, in November 1975, Whitlam was most suprised (after Supply had been withheld by the Conservative Opposition) to find he was dismissed as Prime Minister by the GG, and had his commission withdrawn, he could not believe it.

It was the first time in Australian History, that a Governor General who had been appointed, had dismissed a Government that had been elected by the Australian people.

The whole nation was in an uproar, in general, people taking sides in line with their political beliefs.

Malcolm Fraser waiting, hidden in the wings at Government House was immediately sworn in as a Caretaker Prime Minister, with a mandate to call an early election.

When the Official Secretary to the Governor General, David Smith, using the steps of Parliament House as his platform, read the proclamation dissolving both Houses of

Parliament, and installing Fraser as PM, he finished with the phrase "God save the Queen."

A very stern and bitter Whitlam forced his way to the front steps, he was a tall and imposing figure, he announced:

"May well, God save the Queen, but nothing will save the Governor General!"

Labour promptly lost the elections, and Fraser became Prime Minister in his own right with a huge majority.

Whitlam was seen by many as an arrogant and lolly leader with a huge ego, he has continued today, on one hand, be a much adored figure of the Labour Party faithful, a National treasure, on the other side of politics, he remains much disliked, and by some, the hated ex Labour PM. It depends so much upon the political beliefs of the individual. Gough Whitlam in 2002, remains as one of the most controversial PM's in my country's history.

Regards,

Mac.

Mackenzie Gregory.

EMail: macden@melbpc.org.au

URL: Mac's Web Log:

ahoy.tk-jk.net

VSAG Dive trip for Winter 2010

At our August meeting there was a majority of members who were in favour of Fiji as our island based getaway for winter next year.

We are looking at late June to early July, 2010.

An initial costing for a 10 day holiday has been estimated at \$2,850 for divers with twin share deluxe bure accommodation, 3 meals per day and 7 days of diving (2 tanks / day). Non diver costs are \$2,650. This is based on Qantas return economy air fares and transfers from Nadi to Pacific Harbour and boat transfers to the island.

If you are interested then please contact me (dgoekie@bigpond.net.au) ASAP so we can lock in the accommodation. This is quite a popular site for Americans and accommodation is already limited.

There are over 50 reviews on the web site below with a range of views if you would like to investigate further.

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g316045-d613266-Reviews-Beqa_Lagoon_Resort-Beqa_Island.html

Some more details.....

Beqa Lagoon is situated off the South Coast of Fiji's Main Island (Viti Levu) at Pacific Harbour, just 150km by road from Nadi International Airport. It is also just 50km from Suva's airport at Nausori, into which international flights now arrive from Australia and New Zealand

Beqa Lagoon Resort, as its name implies, is located on the island of Beqa and was formerly known as the Marlin Bay Resort. It offers 25 deluxe, air-conditioned bures, dining and entertainment and has its own on-site dive operation. The professionally-trained local staff have a wealth of knowledge of the Beqa dive locations

Different types of diving is found here, namely soft coral, wreck diving, or shark feeding, providing a variety of options for visiting scuba divers. The coral dive sites include **Caesar's Rocks**, **Nisiei Rocks**, and **Side Streets**, E.T. There are four wrecks in Beqa Lagoon, all purposely sunk in the last decade and already attracting the development of marine communities of eod, grouper, barracuda and fusiliers. Sites include **Rusi's Pinnacle** and **Carpet Cove**, both popular dive sites and which also include many magnificent soft corals. Shark encounter dives allow divers to get up close to a variety of shark species including white- and black-tip, grey reef, sickle-fin lemon shark, bull shark, tiger shark, tawny nurse shark and silvertip shark. Beqa lagoon is also home to many schools of reef and pelagic fish

A new life in the deep

LORNA EDWARDS

September 21, 2009

[Editor: An article that Lorna wrote for the Age Newspaper 21/9/2009, reproduced with permission]

HMAS Canberra II will find a fresh role as a marine reef when it is scuttled in Bass Strait.

IT WILL be hard for retired Royal Australian Navy lieutenant-commander Mackenzie Gregory to watch the sinking of the navy's second Canberra off Ocean Grove without recalling the horrific final hours of the first Canberra.

The peacetime scuttling of the second Australian Navy ship to bear the Canberra name - which could happen as early as next week, weather permitting - is in stark contrast to the wartime demise of its predecessor.

The chaos and carnage that broke out when the heavy cruiser Canberra I came under a surprise attack from a Japanese naval taskforce in the Solomon Islands, in the early hours of August 9, 1942, is forever etched in "Mac" Gregory's memory.

As World War II battles fade into historical statistics, Mr Gregory believes it is important to share his graphic firsthand account of what he and fellow survivors endured that night 67 years ago.

The first Japanese shells hit at 1.43am, setting ablaze the aircraft and four-inch gun deck, followed by a second deadly rain that mortally wounded the ship's captain and decapitated the gunnery officer.

"Most of the others on the bridge got filled with shrapnel, except the navigator and myself ... I didn't get a scratch," says Mr Gregory.

"It all happened so quickly ... I remember seeing this great Japanese cruiser no more than 3000 yards away banging off its shells at us and saying 'My God, this is bloody awful!'"

While the Japanese continued to attack, a torpedo - which some survivors and historians believe was "friendly fire" from an American destroyer escort, the USS Bagley - took out the Canberra's boiler rooms, leaving it crippled, without power and unable to return fire. In the confusion, the USS Chicago also opened fire for several minutes on the stricken Canberra, mistaking it for an enemy ship.

As the battle raged, the 20-year-old sub-lieutenant spent several hours frantically searching below decks for wounded survivors among the horrifically broken bodies.

He distinctly recalls one man who hadn't realised his arm had been blown off until he recognised his wedding ring on a severed limb.

The burning ship started to list alarmingly. "It gave this lurch and I thought that was it," Mr Gregory says.

The young sailor's mind was also preoccupied with the fear of being taken prisoner by the Japanese. Eventually, he was rescued by the American destroyer USS Blue.

Eighty-four of the Canberra's crew died and another 110 were wounded that night in what is known as the Battle of Savo Island.

"It doesn't seem to ease much with age," says the 87-year-old Mr Gregory. "I always get quite upset about it on Anzac Day."

After the survivors were rescued, the order was given to scuttle the burning Canberra, but

it took some effort. "The Americans fired something like 258 five-inch shells and four or five torpedoes into her before she went down," Mr Gregory says.

It joined so many other sunken warships that the area became known to sailors as Iron Bottom Sound.

Mr Gregory will be a guest of honour at the scuttling of the second Canberra, a 4100-tonne former guided-missile frigate.

After four years of lobbying by the Victorian Artificial Reef Society, a local divers group, the Canberra has been brought to Victoria and meticulously prepared for its deliberate sinking by a series of explosions, two nautical miles off Ocean Grove.

The ship will have a new life as a marine reef and become the star attraction for divers in an area known as the Ships' Graveyard, where at least 46 other vessels have found their final resting place over the course of a century.

Mr Gregory is the patron of the reef society; still, he says the scuttling will stir a mix of emotions after having attended the ship's decommissioning in Perth four years ago.

"It's quite sad to see everybody march off a ship for the last time and there's a great affinity between ships that have borne the same name," he says.

"Many of the past crew would probably like her kept above the waves, but I think it's going to be a great and fitting ending for Canberra II, as she'll be kept alive as a dive ship and it will be quite wonderful."

Lieutenant "Bickies" Webster, a former chief petty officer on the second Canberra, says the crew had a close bond with the survivors of the first Canberra, some of whom were later buried at sea from the flight deck of its namesake over the site of the World War II sinking.

The second Canberra has had its own illustrious career in the navy over 24 years. The ship served in the Persian Gulf after the 1992 invasion of Kuwait, evacuated Australians from Indonesia in 1998, and even chased foreign poachers of the highly sought-after Patagonian toothfish in Australian waters.

The crew of both Canberra ships have often marched alongside each other in Anzac Day parades.

"The new ship inherits the former ship's identity, battle honours, proud naval traditions and history," Mr Webster says.

"Mac Gregory is a wonderful man, a legend in the ex-HMAS Canberra and naval community."

Mr Gregory's story of survival on the Canberra in World War II is matched by an incredible escape from death on September 11, 2001.

He had been invited to Washington to attend a ceremony where former president George Bush handed over the bell of the USS Canberra, an American ship named in honour of the first Canberra, to then prime minister John Howard on September 10, 2001.

Mr Gregory and his wife Denise had been booked to fly out of Washington the next day but their plans were changed after a last-minute invitation from Mr Howard to accompany him to Arlington Cemetery.

The cemetery visit was later cancelled in the chaos that broke out in the September 11 terrorist attacks - but the invitation saved the couple's lives. The embassy later told them they had been booked on the doomed Flight 77, which was crashed into the Pentagon.

"I've had a wonderful life and a great family and I certainly believe in luck, but I think I might have used it up by now," says Mr Gregory.

It took a year before the magnitude of the September 11 terrorist attacks and his narrow escape hit home.

In World War II, there was no time for many survivors to reflect on the trauma as they were back at sea only weeks after the Canberra's sinking, in HMAS Shropshire.

"You took it in your stride at that time," Mr Gregory says.

The Shropshire managed to shoot down 15 Japanese kamikaze pilots and, at the end of the war, was in Tokyo Bay for the historic Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945.

Mr Gregory went on to serve in the navy until 1954 but many of his fondest recollections come from his last years as a lieutenant, when he was appointed aide de camp to the governor-general, Sir William McKell.

Mr Gregory has met 14 Australian prime ministers, mostly during his years at Government House.

Sir Robert Menzies made the greatest impression. When Menzies arrived at Government House seeking a double dissolution for an early election in 1951, he asked Mr Gregory what his chances were before he met Sir William McKell.

"I'd had a look at the constitution and I said, 'I don't think the governor-general can deny you, sir. I think you'll be right.'" Mr Gregory recalls. "He came out half an hour later with a big smile and said: 'Good advice you gave me, young man.'"

"He was easily the best prime minister, as far as I was concerned."

Since his retirement, Mr Gregory has become a keen naval historian and embraced the internet with his own website as a means of sharing his firsthand accounts of naval history and contacting others touched by the Battle of Savo Island.

Like many survivors of war, he has become acutely aware of the pain suffered by the families of those sailors who don't make it home.

He was contacted by the daughter of an engineer who died in the Canberra, who told of the anguish of her childhood without her father.

Her mother never accepted her father's death and would put her daughter in her best dress and head down to the docks whenever a ship was returning - in the hope he was still alive.

Mr Gregory says he has had a fortunate life in the navy, and beyond, due to luck and perseverance.

"You just have to keep looking ahead and don't give up," he says. "My general experience has been that if you keep at something and it's a good cause, it is going to happen in due course."

When the second Canberra slips beneath the waves for its new underwater mission, Mac Gregory will reflect on the loss of the first ship to bear the name, while looking ahead to the arrival of the next HMAS Canberra to carry on the legacy.

Victoria's underwater ships graveyard

THE Canberra will have plenty of company in its final resting place in an area known as the Ships Graveyard, where the wrecks of at least 46 vessels are scattered across the sea floor.

The discarded relics of more than a century of shipping lie in this underwater cemetery in Bass Strait, more than 10 kilometres offshore between Torquay and Port Phillip Heads.

They include submarines, a paddle steamer, steam ships, sailing ships, dredges, steam hopper barges, tugboats and a navy attack-class patrol boat.

Until now, the pride of this underwater fleet, seen only by divers, have been the four British J-class submarines, originally a gift from Britain, which were considered obsolete in the 1920s and scuttled outside the Heads.

Dumping obsolete ships at sea was a common and unregulated practice early last century, but one not without its dramas. Two wooden barques deemed past their use-by date were set ablaze off the Nobbies in 1932, only to wash up on Phillip Island, still burning.

The Federal Government responded by setting up designated areas for scuttling wrecks.

LORNA EDWARDS

Canberra sinks to new home some might call a dive

LORNA EDWARDS

October 5, 2009



HMAS Canberra is scuttled near Ocean Grove. Photo: Pat Scala

THOUSANDS of onlookers lined the shore while hundreds of spectator boats jostled to watch the former navy frigate Canberra deliberately sunk for a new life as a diving wreck near Ocean Grove yesterday.

After weeks of postponements, the Canberra's final hour came another four hours late yesterday after bad weather hampered the scuttling operation on Saturday night and problems maneuvering the ship into position two nautical miles from Ocean Grove yesterday.

To avoid the Canberra breaking up on the sea floor, it was sunk facing into prevailing waves by 16 explosions that ripped through the ship. And then in what might have been an anti-climax for the crowd but a relief for the contractors, the frigate slipped gracefully below the water in perfect alignment.

Victoria's divers lobbied the Rudd and Howard governments for three years and managed to win the 138-metre, 4100-tonne former guided-missile frigate over other states vying to sink the ship in their waters as an international drawcard for divers. Mornington dive instructor Rob Morley said the coup would translate into millions of dollars for Victoria's dive industry, which had difficulty competing with the warmer waters of northern states.

"We do it hard down here because we've only got four months of suitable water temperatures for most divers but this is going to be a boon," he said.

It has taken more than a year to prepare the Canberra for her final voyage.

Decommissioned in 2005, the ship had to be stripped of all military equipment and engines and all environmentally hazardous materials such as lead, oil and asbestos.

About 25,000 kilometres of wiring was removed and the ship's many compartments had second exits cut into them to reduce the risk of divers becoming trapped.

Now the sailors have moved out, the fish will move in along with sea organisms that will transform the ship into an artificial reef.

After the Canberra has been declared safely settled in coming weeks, divers with a permit will be able to explore the wreck 27 metres below the surface.

The ship's final resting place is an area known as the Ships Graveyard, where 46 other discarded vessels from a century of shipping lie beneath the waves.

LORNA EDWARDS

Signs

Toilet sign in Shanghai:

PLEASE USE PAPER BASKET FOR DISPOSABLE INCOME. THANK YOU
(Did I read this sign right?)

TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW

In a Laundromat:

AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR
CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT

In a London department store:

BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS

In an office:

WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY
PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN

In an office:

AFTER TEA BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND
UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD

Outside a secondhand shop:

WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC.
WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL
BARGAIN?

Notice in health food shop window:

CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS

Spotted in a safari park:

ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR (I sure hope so)

Notice on a board displayed during a conference:

FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE
IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR

Notice in a farmer's field:

THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE,
BUT THE BULL CHARGES.

Message on a leaflet:

IF YOU CANNOT READ, THIS LEAFLET WILL TELL YOU HOW TO
GET LESSONS

On a repair shop door:

WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR -
THE BELL DOESN'T WORK)



A Lot of
Protection
at a very
Small Cost!

 **DAN** 
ASIA • PACIFIC

www.danasiapacific.org

- **24/7 Medical Assistance**
Diving injury focused specialists are only a phone call away
- **Worldwide Emergency Evacuation**
Diving and Non-Diving Accidents
- **Travel Assistance Benefits**
Travel, Personal, Legal, Medical
- **Dive Injury (Treatment) Insurance...** Optional
- **Subscription to Alert Diver**
The Region's only dedicated dive health & safety magazine
- Enter your medical information on our **Emergency Medical Database**, receive DAN **Product Discounts** and access Member-Only Offers with **Bonus +**
- **12-Months Peace of Mind**
Evacuations can cost as much as US\$100,000. 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!

**Emergencies Happen ...
Are You Prepared?**

DIVERS ALERT NETWORK
Head Office - Australia • Ph: 61-3-9886 9166
Fax: 61-3-9886 9155 • Email: info@danasiapacific.org



DIVING INTO THE PAST.

Could you ever imagine not going to Wilsons Prom to dive over the Melbourne Cup and Easter holidays? Well it nearly came to that!

DITP looks firstly at Des Williams lead article on the "Wilson's Promontory Park Management Plan" from the March 1986 issue of Fathoms.

Following that article in the April 1986 editions of Fathoms is the article on a request to the (then) Dept. of Conservation, Forests and Lands for a FOI request as this serious issue was taken up by VSAG in the hands of the Secretary at the time Don Abell.

It required letters to the Minister for Conservation, Freedom of Information Officer, Regional Manager Yarram Region, and a letter of intent to SDFV.

It appeared a small group of selfish, self interested greenies (most from Parks Vic!) instigated the move to have boats banned from Tidal River and as it turned out the number of claims made were so few as to be nothing more than a joke.

However the claims caused the Government to act and so it was VSAG who saved the yearly diving experiences we now continue to have at the Prom.

These are some quotes which were contributed by Don Abell, Des Williams and John Goulding in preparation for this article.

"We wrote to the powers at the time.

I wrote the letter and had Paul Tipping cast his eye over it. He suggested we use FOI and find what problems had been recorded at Tidal River.

We found that there had been no issues of substance recorded as problems and that it was only the greenies in Parks that were pushing the issue.

The letter stopped them from proceeding.

My recollection is that JG attended the meeting at Tidal to push our stance.

This was a very significant issue for divers at that time and for ALL future divers who have enjoyed diving at TR.



"I am sure that Don, JG and Paully, did most of the work on this project. Greenies are good and bad, eh? Des."

"Have read the comments of both Don and Des and concur with their thoughts.

I think I was President of VSAG at the time and also involved (behind the scenes) with SDF

I prepared a number of points to equip myself to argue the divers' case at the Prom Meeting.

The meeting was chaired by the Chief Ranger at the Prom who seemed a most reasonable person and supported "in principle" the view that divers should continue to have access to the beach for boat launching.

A set of guidelines was discussed and agreed to by all parties present consisting of park management ,divers (VSAG SDF and a few others.....mainly from the Latrobe Valley ,) and I think a group called Friends of the Prom.

The meeting was very cordial and I came away with the understanding that Divers would have continued access so long as the guidelines for vehicles on the beach were not breached.....

And so it has been ever since.....

Regards,
John G"

John Lawler.



WILSON'S PROMONTORY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN:

by Des Williams

Part of the W.P.P.M.P. currently being prepared by the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands is an issue which is very near and dear to us as divers, namely the access to boat launching facilities at Tidal River. The following excerpts are from an Issues Statement obtained from the Department in East Melbourne in early February.

"The Problems - At the mouth of Tidal River a conflict is occurring between use of the beach by vehicles and trailers to launch and retrieve boats and use by swimmers and sunbathers.

Concern for the safety of children (particularly small children) has been expressed by beach users when vehicles and trailers are driven on the beach amongst large numbers of people. Visitors launching and retrieving their boats in the surf may not have full control, and swimmers cannot move quickly out of the way."

The paper then goes on to explain that on a very busy day as many as 35 boats have been launched and retrieved in a day and boat launching at Tidal River has increased over recent years, with fishing and diving being the most popular boat interests. In a recent survey taken "only 3% of visitors ranked fishing and diving as their primary interest in the Park".

A comparison between beach users and boat launchers is then made for the busy times of the year, such as summer school vacation, Labour Day Weekend and Easter. Of course, divers and fishermen using boats are out numbered 1,000's to one by "campers, visitors, family groups, clubs and school groups using the beach for surfing, swimming, wading, sunbathing, sand play and ball games". Maximum daily visitation to the Park is expected to peak at 7,000".

As the Draft Zoning Plan for Wilsons Prom Marine Reserve surrounding the Park prohibits all fishing in the "Reef Protection" Zone, including spearfishing and diving for abalone and crayfish, it is therefore expected that if the Draft is adopted "some of the people involved in boat-based activities will go elsewhere".

Thus the following options are now being considered re: boat launching at the Prom (Tidal River).

- (i) Allow boat launching at present to continue. But "conflicts between beach users would not be resolved".
- (ii) Move boat launching to another area of Norman Bay, marked by flags. Again it is thought this will not resolve the conflicts between boat users and beach goers and would also mean heavy involvement by Park staff moving flags as tides change.
- (iii) Prohibit boat launching from Tidal River during peak use periods and maintain present system at other times. This seems a hot favourite, as it would reduce conflicts with beach goers on very crowded beach days, and would also reduce boat usage at other times because they would not be convenient times for a lot of people who currently use the launch "facilities".
- (iv) Prohibit boat launching at all times at Tidal River. This would be ideal for users of the beach, but the Department believes this would be unfair to water skiers who use Norman Bay and divers and fishermen who would otherwise extend beyond the National Park.
- (v) Close the beach to swimmers and allow boat use. This is not regarded as a realistic option, as it ignores the current pattern of use.

So the Department has chosen its "preferred option" to be (iii), thus the beach would be closed to boat launching:

25th December to 31st January inclusive
Labour Day long weekend
Easter (4 days)

The papers thus finishes: "The closure of Tidal River to boat launching at peak periods and the restriction of activities along the proposed Reef Protection Zone of the Marine Reserve will result in some users going elsewhere along the coast. Promotion of these areas would reduce disappointment".

So, there you have it. The S.D.F.-V. is meeting again especially to discuss the matter on March 4th after seeking participation of all affiliated Clubs and hopefully to have a member of the Conservation Department in attendance. S.D.F.-V. is also to involve fishermen through the Boating Industry Association.

As V.S.A.G. are going to Wilsons Prom at Easter this year, it may well be best to savour every minute of boat launching, as it may well be your last opportunity to dive at Tidal River at Easter, as we have for so many years.

If you wish to comment on the above proposal feel free. Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands at 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne.

