

FATHOMS

AUGUST — SEPT 2011



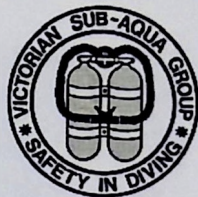
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FATHOMS

Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group



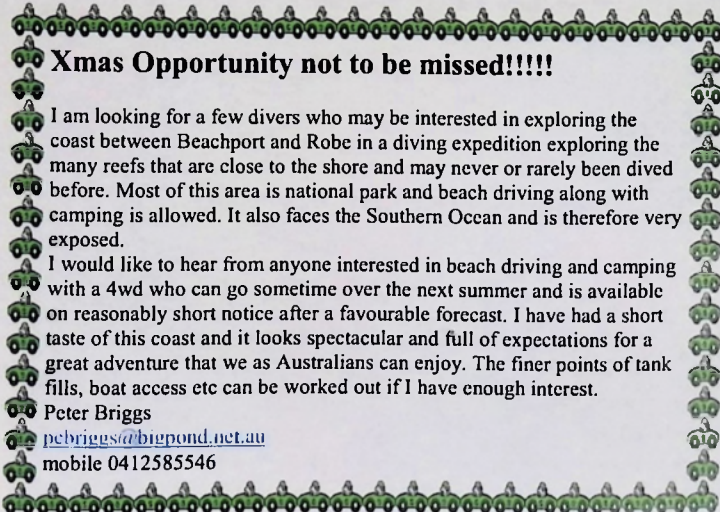
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VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

Maori Chief Hotel
117 Moray Street
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm
[join at 7pm for a meal!]
Alan Storen
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storens@bigpond.net.au

Editorial Submissions to:



Xmas Opportunity not to be missed!!!!

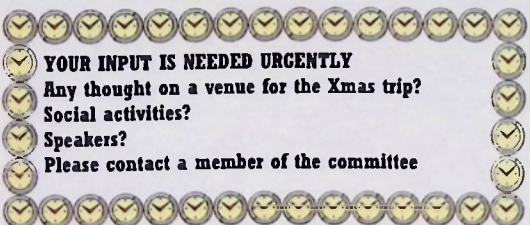
I am looking for a few divers who may be interested in exploring the coast between Beachport and Robe in a diving expedition exploring the many reefs that are close to the shore and may never or rarely been dived before. Most of this area is national park and beach driving along with camping is allowed. It also faces the Southern Ocean and is therefore very exposed.

I would like to hear from anyone interested in beach driving and camping with a 4wd who can go sometime over the next summer and is available on reasonably short notice after a favourable forecast. I have had a short taste of this coast and it looks spectacular and full of expectations for a great adventure that we as Australians can enjoy. The finer points of tank fills, boat access etc can be worked out if I have enough interest.

Peter Briggs

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mobile 0412585546



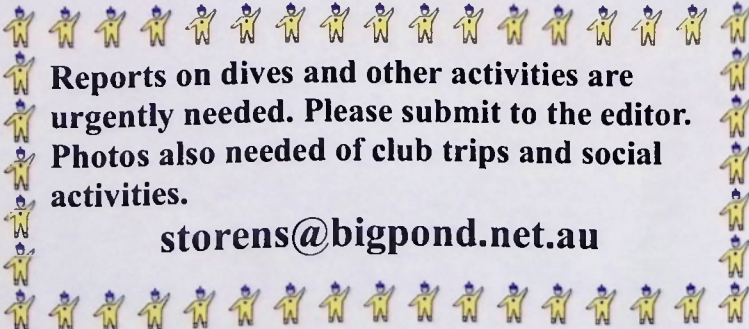
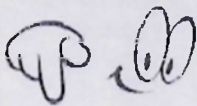
YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED URGENTLY

Any thought on a venue for the Xmas trip?

Social activities?

Speakers?

Please contact a member of the committee



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

EDITORIAL



One edition closer to retirement! Lloyd has been promising to take over for a long time and I think it is getting closer. Watch this space!

This has been a busy two months with some local diving (but not much) and a fantastic club trip to Sipadan. There are many reports and I hope you enjoy the read. Many thanks also to the photographers – Llewey, Gareth, Hilary and the rest are mine.

The AGM is fast approaching and the committee is looking for some new blood to take on responsibilities. I have enclosed a nomination form with this edition so please approach any member you think will do a good job representing you. If you would like to volunteer please approach one of the committee and I am sure it can be arranged. Completed forms need to be returned to the Secretary before the AGM (1 Sept) so that a ballot can be arranged if needed. Greg Breese and I are automatically retired this year but can be renominated.

Have you paid your subs for this year 2011/2012. Invoices were sent with the last edition and are now overdue if you have not paid. Please forward to the Treasurer asap to ensure you get the next edition of Fathoms and can still enjoy diving with VSAG. The xmas party is now almost locked in – venue to be advised. It will be a catered function either at a park or at a private house – any volunteers? Please contact Greg Richards if interested.

The 'Prom' Melbourne Cup Weekend trip is in doubt and we could take up the offer of going to Inverlock instead. Watch for emails if interested.

We have had a couple of great speakers at our recent general meetings and if you missed them please come along to the Maori Chief Hotel, 3rd Thursday of the month to avoid disappointment in the future. The AGM is in September – please put this date in your diary and support your club.

Enough from me – I need to go diving!
Alan Storen

EX-HMAS CANBERRA DIVE SITE CLOSED

Parks Victoria, the site manager for the Ex-HMAS Canberra dive site has advised the site is now closed until further notice. The port side helicopter hanger has suffered massive damage which started earlier this year and progressive wave motion has seen much of the roof and side panels collapse rendering it unsafe for diving. The site will now be evaluated by engineers as to the best way to bring the site back to safe diving levels.

Committee 2009 - 2010



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

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Maori Chief 117 Moray St. South Melbourne

President's Page



Well we are over half way through winter and although water temps are down the diving just keeps on coming! Well maybe last year, but this year it's been very spasmodic and more often downright ugly!

Most weekends lately have been blown out or so filthy we have all retired to our bean bags in front of the open fire with a good Red.

A large group of VSAGers have just returned from diving in Sipadan. By all accounts a fabulous trip with great diving and even better food and accommodation. Chris Llewellyn gave a riveting and well-received presentation on it at our last meeting and didn't even get a bottle of Red for his troubles.

The recent Life Members Dinner was well attended and it was good to see the guys who made this club what it is today still getting together and having a ball.

The Melbourne Cup weekend is fast approaching and as I write this the Prom is still closed after the Pre Easter Storms. We are planning an alternate weekend at Inverloch using a private Holiday home as our base and numbers will be strictly limited and **will not** be on a first in first served basis. If Parks Vic can get the Tidal River campground and boat launch facilities up and running we will still try and get a crew organised for there as well. Keep an eye on emails to be in touch on this situation.

Good to see some newer members helping us out with their boats over the last few months. Now if only the weather would play ball.

Brrrrr... gotta love this winter don't ya!!

Greg Richards.

Photo (right): VSAG 2007

Quote: If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.



Valé June Scott

There was a huge representation of VSAG divers and their families at June Scott's funeral on Thurs 7th July, to pay their respects to a very special member of our VSAG family. The chapel was absolutely bursting, standing room only, which was an indication of the love and respect June had from her family and many, many friends.

What we do remember most at the good old VSAG, is the laughter we all shared wherever we went and we DID go to a lot of places interstate and overseas together as a group, still do!

During Bob and June's time with us at VSAG, we did a lot of camping as a group, shared meals as a group and dressed up for New Year's Eve and told the same old yarns each year. VSAG diving trips were all just one big family party. And June was there in the thick of it with Marie, Gail, Leslie and Annie and many others. There were many funny incidents, which have been a talking point for many years. Des Williams recounted a few of those which particularly involved June, during his Eulogy presentation on behalf of the VSAG.

At VSAG we often referred to Bob as the garden gnome can't image why! Probably the most memorable moment for many VSAGers was the evening Bob and June turned up a Ross & Chris Luxford's fancy dress birthday party, outfitted superbly as two garden gnomes. Mr and Mrs. Gnome won the best dressed contest, hands down. June and Bob possessed a brilliant joint-sense of humour and were a devoted couple.

June will always be affectionately remembered for her legendary, annual Wilson's Prom Easter Egg Hunts and family races for our children. It was not unusual for our group to be 80 or 90 in strength, including our children.

In the Easter issue of our FATHOMS magazine, this year, June wrote an open letter of thanks to all VSAG members. Alan Storen decorated it appropriately, with colourful Easter eggs. June thanked us for the 30 odd years of fun and friendship she had shared with us and our children. She doubted she would be able to attend another VSAG Easter trip and enjoy hiding chocolate eggs for the kids.

Included with that letter were a few images of June's Easter children's races, which she organized/sponsored every year for three decades. The children followed her around like the Pied-Piper with her pockets full of Easter eggs and to this day they have never forgotten those happy, chocolate days. None of us

have. All of the children depicted have now grown up and June was very proud of each of them. Some of them were at June's funeral, notably Samantha Jeacle and the two Brincat girls, what a delight it was to see these lovely young ladies remembering June, she would have be very proud indeed.

June was extremely generous and loved her family and friends and their children. And VSAGers loved her. It might have been a neighbour's child calling in to see Bob to help him count stubby holders he was making, or kids calling in at Halloween, it didn't matter, June fed 'em all. She loved children.



So to our mate Bob and to June and Bob's immediate families, the VSAG family extends deepest sympathy and thanks you for sharing June with us. We all have many, many happy memories of her to treasure.



Imagine what a better world it would be if all folks had such a kind and giving heart as our June had. We already miss her.



DIVE THE CANBERRA - May 29

Pics by JL



War does not determine who is right - only who is left.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

DIVE REPORT

SUNDAY 29TH MAY 2011

EX-HMAS CANBERRA—J4 SUBMARINE

CREWS:

BRENDAN HOCKING'S BOAT:

TREVOR WILLIAMS/DAVID FLEW/CHRISTINE REYNOLDS/JOHN LAWLER.

LLOYD BORRETT'S BOAT: CHERYL LEES/JOHN MILLS/PRIYA CARDINALETTI

From the 11 divers originally booking for this dive day we ended up with 9. New member Brendan Hocking joined in with his 6.8mtr Haines Hunter "Patriot" powered by a 225HP 4 stroke Mercury outboard...with five divers on board it was still very roomy and comfortable with wrap around clears keeping out the chilly winds.

Lloyd is gaining more experience with his recently acquired Haines Hunter 17L (ex Peter Galvin ex Dave Kelly) and four divers on board enjoyed the ride and onboard conditions were also very good..typical of the great war horse HH 17L's

After some difficulty testing for radio contact just out from the ramp both VHF and 27MGh were not responding all that well but finally on one working channel made contact was made.

The trip out through the heads was a very calm, almost flat journey to the Canberra site and Bass Straight was amazingly calm with slow, low rolling swells and on arrival at the site we had the place all to ourselves..not a charter boat in sight...

Boats tied off and the first teams kitted up and the dive line was tethered to the Canberra rail just down from the bridge.

First teams up reported the viability was down to around 6 mtrs and the swell was noticeable but not uncomfortable or unsafe.

There dive was excellent and they covered a lot of the wreck both inside and outside.

Brendan Hocking was my dive buddy for his first dive here and after our dive plan was set we made our way down the line and then to the portside helicopter hanger. The gap between the hanger structure and the deck was noticeable and the wall was moving gently back and forth, even in slight swells. A slow dive along

Northbourne Avenue and then down into the mess area to witness the slow and sad deterioration of the famous Kade Roger's "Mac's Mural". Out side again and along the starboard side and up to the bridge to check out the VARS plaque proudly bolted to the gyro stand and in really good condition. Time was up and a slow ascent to the 5 minute deco stop and onto boat...two very happy divers!

Priya and John set their dive plan and were the second group off Lloyd's boat. At the mast the viz was well down and the pair became separated. Priya decided to ascend but in the process the dump valve on the dry suit malfunctioned, causing an unusually rapid ascent to the surface. Experience came into play here and she managed to surface without internal injury...John explains:

"The biggest problem she had was that there was so much air in the suit that she couldn't get to the dump valve or the neck seal quickly enough. Plus full fingered gloves made it difficult to feel the valves or the edge of the Latex seal. The main problem she had was that the suit pushed her head up and strained her neck muscle"

John advised on Monday that Priya was ok with just some sore neck muscles which is a credit the application of safe diving practices and experience by Priya in what could have a much different outcome!

In the best interest of safety and comfort, Lloyd's crew headed back to Sorrento.

Next dive for our team was the iconic J4. submarine in 27 mtrs..I opted to stay on the boat and the rest of the team kitted up and fell into flat calm conditions and found the sub right at the end of the shot line. The usual checkout of the foreword torpedo tubes followed by the dive through the sub and an exit at the stern area. After passing by the plaque at the base of the conning tower which recognizes the team who found J4 sub the dive was over....all very happy.

Conditions in Bass Straight were some of the best we have seen for a while...to make the day almost perfect would have been some sun but not today...as these things go the following Monday through to Friday, each day was almost cloudless blue skies....a fine end to Autumn!

JL

Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

Evening news is where they begin with 'Good evening', and then proceed to tell you why it isn't

Men who lack supervision !!!



Spodgingtons Reef : the legend lives on.!

In late 2007 at a committee meeting for the V.S.A.G. a member suggested a new and exciting dive spot to add variety to the calendar.Spodgingtons Reef!!

The members fell silent as this previously unheard of dive spot was suggested. What was Spodgingtons Reef and where was it?. How did it come to be named? And who or what was Spodgington?

The committee member then went on to explain that after exhaustive research he had ascertained that in the formative years of VSAG there was a member called Colin W Spodgington, who had a secret dive spot that only he and he alone had the marks for.

Sometime around 1957 when most diving was carried out from shore with rudimentary and often home made gear "The Spodge", as was affectionately referred to, would take people out in his boat and dive this most magnificent dive spot. Stories from this era have taken on an almost mythical aura and due to the passage of time the dive spot became the stuff of legend.

It was rumoured that Colin Spodgington had the transit marks tattooed in reverse on his buttocks, and as he steered the boat in the general direction of the dive spot he would drop his trousers and using a mirror, steer the boat to the desired position and drop anchor. As most divers of this era were offended by such behaviour they looked away and nobody ever knew the marks but Spodgie.

Legend has it that after his incarceration in Pentridge prison for serial Philandering, the marks became somewhat smudged and indistinct. As a result several attempts to find the reef after his release were met with failure. Dive club members at the time tried in vain to find the dive spot but due to Colin Spodgingtons' new found career as a Professional Heavy weight wrestler (wrestling under the ring name of "The Great Spazzalino") he was often away from Melbourne for lengthy spells and his interest in diving waned.

As luck would have it he was persuaded to attend a VSAG Christmas BBQ and during the drunken revelry that ensued he was photographed with 4 of the members' wives with his pants around his ankles. The January 1959 copy of the club Magazine "Fathoms" with a blurry, out of focus view of his buttocks, buried on page 19, was printed and circulated amongst the members and a copy sent to the State Library of Victoria for posterity.

Sadly, in 1960 he choked to death on a meat pie whilst in bed with 2 hookers after his only ever victory as a professional wrestler. The great Spazzalino had wrestled his last match and women all over Melbourne secretly mourned the loss of the great man.

His untimely death also meant that the Victorian Sub Aqua Group had lost its best and most experienced diver. It seemed, that with his demise, went the secret of Spodgingtons Reef.

So it remained for many years until the year 2006. During a 5 hour de-brief at a local pub after a day out diving one of the older members made a passing comment about the legend of Colin Spodgington. The new members' ears picked up and after extensive research and hundreds of hours of interviews he was ready to announce to the club that he had found the fabled reef.

And so it was that at that 2007 Committee meeting the idea was hatched to add "Spodgingtons Reef" to the dive calendar and advertise it to gauge both interest, and member gullibility.

Four members of the committee made themselves available with 2 boats and waited for members of the club to book in for the dive. After all who could resist! Imagine being the first diver in nearly 50 years to dive the fabled "Spodgingtons Reef".

When the first calls came they enquired as to which boat ramp the boats would leave from. When told it could be any where from Inverloch to Appollo Bay, depending on the weather they spluttered indignantly and struggled with the vagueness of the answer. They accepted it as part of the mystery, and the legend of diving a secret and long lost spot.

On the chosen day the crews assembled at the boat ramp (location withheld by request) at 9.00am. By 9.30 the 2 boats set a course for the great unknown. As the boats approached the dive site excitement mounted and the 2 boat skippers were besides themselves with panic. After all, they had no actual destination in mind just a vague intention to dive somewhere new and unexplored. The dive crew sat all smiles and bushy tailed awaiting the dive brief.

Enter the smooth talking Dive Captain. He explained that although legend had it that this dive spot had extensive reef, massive drop-offs and at least one ship wreck, it was highly possible that with the passage of time, erosion, calcification, desertification, oil prices, introduced pest species and even socio-economic macro biotics- all may have contributed to the lessening of the dive spot as a true world class dive destination. Expect less; and be happy with anything, was the message. The divers sat stunned and somewhat stupefied. With that they gleefully entered the water and began exploring.

As the divers explored the random reef that had been selected, the Dive Captain and the 2 skippers sat and waited for the outcome. Plans for having the Dive Captain lynched or eviscerated were considered and finally they waited in silent contemplation.

The divers all surfaced grinning and saying what a great spot it was. They didn't find the fabled wreck or the legendary drop off, but wow , what a great dive. Sensational reef, masses of fish life-big and small, plus crays, clear water and the most colourful reef imaginable! The top side crew scratched their heads in amazement and then announced. "What did you expect... Welcome To Spodgingtons Reef"

The legend was reborn!

The Life Members Dinner 2011

Again held at the Olive Tree in South Melbourne and another great night of social intercourse. Many 'lifers' could make it with a few apologies. The current President is also an invitee.



Bazza enjoying his 'sweets'

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.



A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

Dive Report 29 June 2011

This dive report was prepared by Michelle Doolan for our Magazine and the photos are by Zoe Rice...a very rare and exciting mid week winter dive with two very fine female divers who really have their dive act together....Zoe has advised she wants to join VSAG!

Winter is hardly appealing when you start the day greeted by a dark and chilly room, throw off your cosy doona to rush to work and then spend the next hour in stand-still peak hour traffic ...only to arrive to work late. BUT, replace work with the promise of diving, and suddenly the morning mist seems less oppressive, the traffic less tedious and the rush is an excitement – not a panic. It's even better when that mist is forecast to give way to a day of sunshine accompanied by only the gentlest of breezes and a calm bay...

Yes, I'm being cruel....

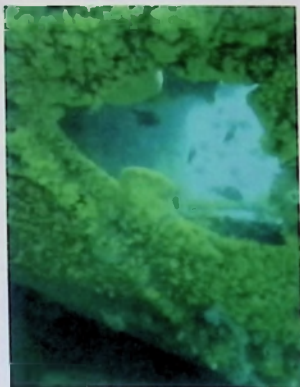
....but whilst everyone else was at work, members from MONUC and VSAG teamed up for a day of epic diving, taking advantage of such anomalous conditions for the season. Zoe Rice, John Lawler, David S and myself were the lucky divers who launched from Sorrento and began the day headed for the Coogee. Following an educative drive through the rip (thanks John!) we arrived spot-on to a perfectly still dive site and eagerly geared up; Zoe and John hopped in the water first.

Dive 1: SS Coogee
Divers: John and Zoe
Max Depth: 32.6m
Dive time: 22m
Vis: 7-8m

Dive 2: SS Coogee
Divers: Dave and I
Max Depth: 32.6m
Dive time: 36 min
Vis: 8m

Site: The Coogee is, quite simply, a beautiful wreck. The bow and the stern are largely intact and so are two large boilers. It is encompassed in growth and abounds with life, teeming with a plethora of fish that call each of its nooks and crannies' home. It was definitely an awesome dive with intense colour fit for Zoe's new s95 which she relished in playing with. Fishes seen included old wives, a small shark, zebra fish, wrasses, schools of yellow-eyed mullet (I think), and plenty of the 'michelle-doesn't-know-what-fish-that-is-but-thinks-it-looks-cool' variety.

In between dives we basked in the (yes, here's that word again even winter didn't chase away) 'sun,' and nibbled on lunch, utterly relaxed and content, and moved onward toward Rob's reef.



Dive 3: Rob's Reef (near Queenscliff) on the slack-tide

Divers: John and Zoe

Max Depth: 18.4m

Dive Time: 22min

Vis: 8m

Site: Lots of swim throughs, ledges, corals and sponges. More life of the UCO (unidentified 'confuzzling'* object) variety. If you recognise that white spongy... thing, in the attached picture (if, indeed, I remember to attach the picture), please do share.

*translation: confusing.

Dive 4: Rob's Reef with a boost (ie a gentle drift)

Divers: Dave et le plongeur petits (me)

Max Depth: 21.6m

Dive Time: 38 min

Vis: 8m



Site: An array of wicked ledges, rock formations in the form of mushrooms, vibrant colours (mmm purple and green), sea stars, sponges, coral, kelp, blue devils, old wives, leatherjackets, wrasses... pretty much the usual life but ultra concentrated and overwhelming (the good type of overwhelming). It was one of those fun 'up and down, across and around' and 'this shelf, that shelf, this ledge, that ledge, this hole, that hole, this swim-through...'. In a word: fan-diddle-dee-tastic variety (fan-diddle-dee-tastic isn't a word so that still satisfies the 'one word' criteria...).

Back on board it was time to return with a quick visit to Portsea beach (by Portsea beach we mean that wee stretch of sand resembling more of a sand bar than a beach) and on to Sorrento. Back on land Zoe and I farewelled our new dive-buddies for the return trip home. Needless to say we took our obligatory coffee stop at The Pier (my coffee verdict: doesn't beat Omars but pretty damn good coffee... certainly beats the stuff at uni... ok so maybe I'll acknowledge I'm addicted to coffee now...) BUT it was still the best way to top off a perfect day of diving!

Hope to see you all out on the water soon!

Mooshelle

***And the thank-you's: Zoe and I would like to give a special thanks to John Lawler for taking us out on his boat! And also to David for being a great dive buddy and enjoying the day with us :)

And of course thanks to Zoe for joining me diving, driving the broom-broom and providing great snaps with the new toy.

