



# Fathoms

*FEBRUARY - MARCH 2014*

*Point Lonsdale Pier  
Photo by Phil Watson*

***Rescue Skills Refresher Course***  
***Photo Competition winners***  
***Dive Reports***

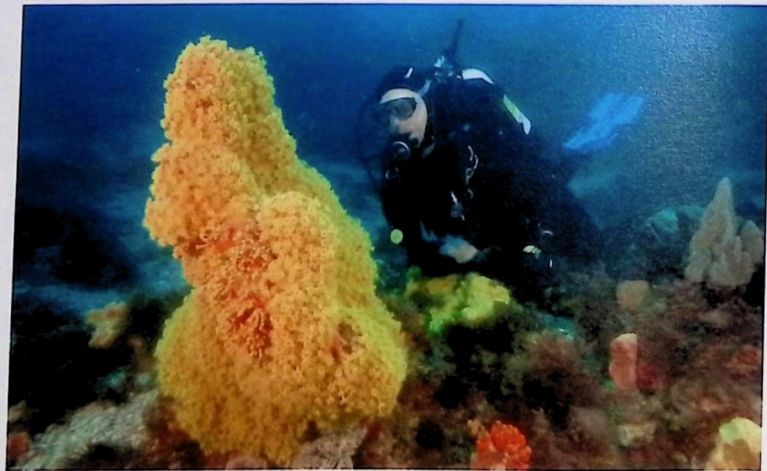
Postal Address:  
VSAG, 139 Overport Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199

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



*Cuttlefish Near Batemans Bay—Broulee*

*Photo by Phil Watson*



*Greg Richards at Rob's Reef with VSAG & GetUnder divers*

*Photo courtesy of Mary Malloy—GetUnder Club*



# Fathoms

Est. 1954 Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group, Inc.

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**VSAG Monthly meetings are at 8pm on the 3rd TUESDAY of each month at**

**BELL'S HOTEL — 157 MORAY ST, SOUTH MELBOURNE**

All are welcome to join us for a meal at 7pm before the meeting.

**Tuesday Night Special—all meals \$14**



## Editorial Submissions:

Email to [editor@vsag.org.au](mailto:editor@vsag.org.au)  
[cheryl\\_marj@hotmail.com](mailto:cheryl_marj@hotmail.com)

Cheryl Lees M: 0448 863 455  
14 Sheoak Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199

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# NOTICES

## VSAG Dive Equipment Box

VSAG now has a private transient equipment box located at The Scuba Doctor dive shop, 1/49 Peninsula Avenue, Rye VIC 3941. Equipment that is not in-use by VSAG divers and boat owners can now be held in our black storage box. Currently: 2 x Oxygen kits, 1 x DAN first aid kit, plus 1 x Boat Ramp Permit. Please use this facility responsibly. ❖

VSAG Committee meets at 8.00 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month  
(except in January)

**All Members Welcome**

Bell's Hotel, 157 Moray St, South Melbourne VIC 3205

## VSAG on Facebook

Did you know VSAG now has a Facebook page? Check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/vsag.divers> and 'Like' us.



## Editor's Apology

On page 30 of the December 2013-January 2014 edition of Fathoms I wrongly called Peter Campisano "Tony" in the caption below the photo. Sorry Peter, I was having a "Sopranos" moment. (Would still like to know what you & Steve Vadja were up to).



# VSAG Committee 2013-2014



*Back row : John Lawler, Ian Scholey, Lloyd Borrett, Graham Ellis, Trevor Williams*

*Front row : David Flew, David Geekie, Peter Galvin, Benita McDonough.*

*Absent: Christine Reynolds*

*To email all VSAG committee members: [committee@vsag.org.au](mailto:committee@vsag.org.au)*



## **President / SDFV Representative**

**David Geekie** 145 Johnston St, Newport VIC 3015  
0419 300 686

[president@vsag.org.au](mailto:president@vsag.org.au)  
[dgeekie@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dgeekie@bigpond.net.au)

## **Vice President / SDFV Representative**

**John Lawler** 7 Cloris Ave, Beaumaris VIC 3193  
03 9589 4020 (H) 0414 922 916

[membership@vsag.org.au](mailto:membership@vsag.org.au)  
[jlawler@aapt.net.au](mailto:jlawler@aapt.net.au)

## **Secretary**

**Ian Scholey** 139 Overport Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199  
0439 310 646

[secretary@vsag.org.au](mailto:secretary@vsag.org.au)  
[ischoley@inet.net.au](mailto:ischoley@inet.net.au)

## **Treasurer / Equipment Officer**

**Peter Galvin** 6 Dawson Glen, Heathmont VIC 3135  
0417 061 564

[treasurer@vsag.org.au](mailto:treasurer@vsag.org.au)  
[pgalvin@a1.ibm.com](mailto:pgalvin@a1.ibm.com)

## **New Member Coordinator**

**John Lawler** 7 Cloris Ave, Beaumaris VIC 3193  
03 9589 4020 (H) 0414 922 916

[membership@vsag.org.au](mailto:membership@vsag.org.au)  
[jlawler@aapt.net.au](mailto:jlawler@aapt.net.au)

## **Webmaster / Assistant Newsletter Editor**

**Lloyd Borrett** 14 Sheoak Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199  
03 5904 9005 (H) 0418 170 044

[editor@vsag.org.au](mailto:editor@vsag.org.au)  
[lloyd@borrett.id.au](mailto:lloyd@borrett.id.au)

## **Dive Calendar Coordinator**

**Graham Ellis** 2A View Rd, Glen Waverley VIC 3150  
03 9803 0069 (H) 0412 100 067

[divecoordinator@vsag.org.au](mailto:divecoordinator@vsag.org.au)  
[graham\\_ellis@optusnet.com.au](mailto:graham_ellis@optusnet.com.au)

## **Safety Coordinator**

**David Flew** 18 King Sound Close, Waterways VIC 3195  
0418 446 530

[safetycoordinator@vsag.org.au](mailto:safetycoordinator@vsag.org.au)  
[dgf1946@gmail.com](mailto:dgf1946@gmail.com)

## **Point Scorer**

**Trevor Williams** 168 Newman St, Kensington VIC 3031  
03 9372 6189 (H) 0404 069 572

[pontscorer@vsag.org.au](mailto:pontscorer@vsag.org.au)  
[trevorjwilliams@westnet.com.au](mailto:trevorjwilliams@westnet.com.au)

## **Equipment Officer**

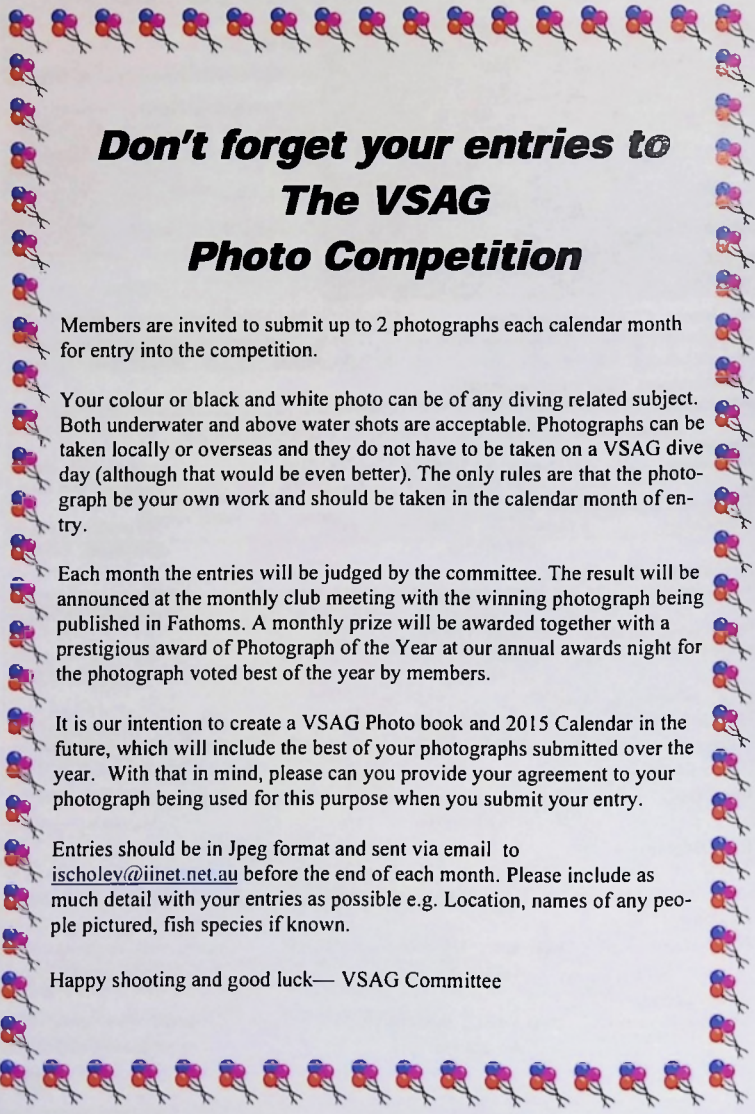
**Benita McDonough** 3 Tintem Crt, Frankston South VIC 3199  
0419 399 000

[equipmentofficer@vsag.org.au](mailto:equipmentofficer@vsag.org.au)  
[benita@mcdonough.name](mailto:benita@mcdonough.name)

## **Social Secretary**

**Christine Reynolds** PO Box 596, Cranbourne VIC 3977  
0402 214 136

[socialsecretary@vsag.org.au](mailto:socialsecretary@vsag.org.au)  
[nt08002001@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nt08002001@yahoo.com.au)



## ***Don't forget your entries to The VSAG Photo Competition***

Members are invited to submit up to 2 photographs each calendar month for entry into the competition.

Your colour or black and white photo can be of any diving related subject. Both underwater and above water shots are acceptable. Photographs can be taken locally or overseas and they do not have to be taken on a VSAG dive day (although that would be even better). The only rules are that the photograph be your own work and should be taken in the calendar month of entry.

Each month the entries will be judged by the committee. The result will be announced at the monthly club meeting with the winning photograph being published in Fathoms. A monthly prize will be awarded together with a prestigious award of Photograph of the Year at our annual awards night for the photograph voted best of the year by members.

It is our intention to create a VSAG Photo book and 2015 Calendar in the future, which will include the best of your photographs submitted over the year. With that in mind, please can you provide your agreement to your photograph being used for this purpose when you submit your entry.

Entries should be in Jpeg format and sent via email to [ischolev@iinet.net.au](mailto:ischolev@iinet.net.au) before the end of each month. Please include as much detail with your entries as possible e.g. Location, names of any people pictured, fish species if known.

Happy shooting and good luck— VSAG Committee

# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST TWO PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

November 2013



December 2013



# A Diving Helmet from a Water Heater



Air for the diver is supplied from twin bellows.

**THEY** go down to the sea in old water heaters along the Atlantic coast these days, now that some young man with a leaning toward aquatic sports has proved how easy it is to make an excellent diving helmet from a metal water heater which will enable its wearer to walk comfortably on the sea floor 35 feet and more below the surface. A few feet of garden hose, two pairs of bellows, a couple of valve boxes and a cylindrical metal boiler of the type used in most homes for heating water, are the essentials for building one of these helmets.

Perhaps the most important part of the whole apparatus is the bellows arrangement which furnishes air to the diver. Two bellows are required, operated alternately to furnish a steady stream of air. This air goes through two valve boxes which prevent its return, and it is forced down into the diving helmet and out around the diver's shoulders. A pressure of fifteen pounds per square foot is all that is required at ordinary depths, and this the bellows will amply supply.

Four boards 12 by 21 inches are required for making the two bellows. Cut these to the pattern as shown, and in two of the



Completed water-heater diving helmet.

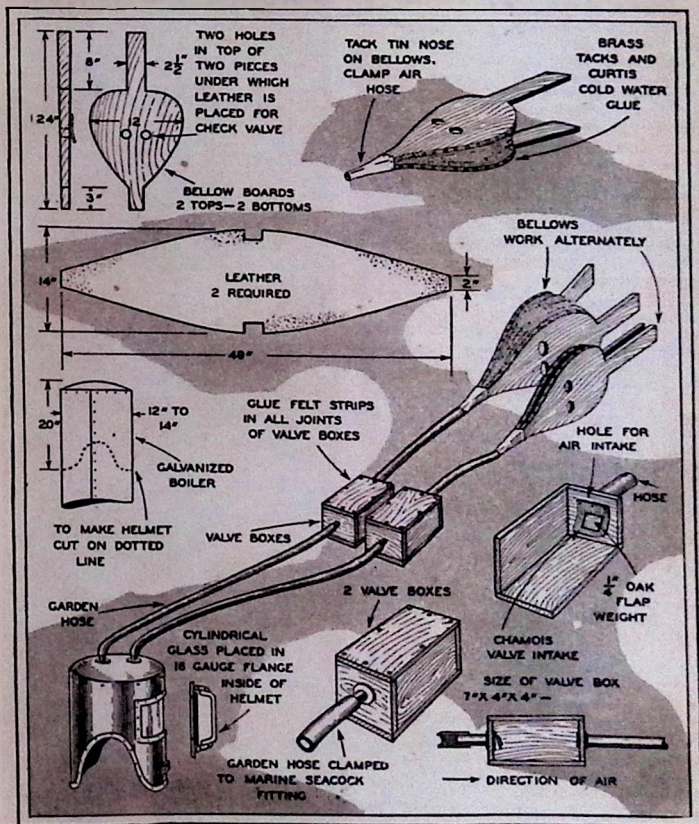
boards drill a pair of one-inch holes to admit air. On the inside of the board, covering the holes, tack a piece of chamouis by its four corners to act as a valve.

Gores for the bellows are cut out of leather in accordance with the printed pattern. Moderately thin and very flexible leather should be used, of the type which is usually found in shoe uppers and which your local shoemaker can supply. Prolonged soaking in soapy water will increase the pliability of the leather. Apply a generous amount of cold water glue to the edges of the bellows boards and tack the leather in place with brass headed upholstery tacks.

A tin snout is used at the end of the bellows to make a connection with the garden hose which is used as an airline in this diving apparatus. The hose is, of course, tightly secured at the connecting points with clamps or wire wound tightly around the outside. Construction of the valve boxes is



## Construction of Diving Helmet, Bellows, Valve Boxes Shown in Drawing



simple and is clearly shown in the drawing.

Two are used, one for each line for the twin bellows. They are merely check valves to make sure that the air flows in one direction only, towards the helmet. White pine is used in their construction and the boxes are well varnished when completed. The

valve used is of light chamois with a small oak counterweight tacked or glued to it to assure rapid closing of the valve.

The fittings used to connect the valves and the helmet with the hose line are ordinary marine water intakes which you can

(Continued on page 133)

How-to-Build-It

DIVING EQUIPMENT 19

## Diving Helmet From Water Heater

(Continued from page 19)

obtain at any hardware store, at a cost of about eighty cents apiece. Use white lead in the holes and apply rubber gaskets under the fittings. Three feet is the proper distance between the valve boxes and bellows; the distance between valve boxes and helmet can be varied to suit.

Next comes the helmet itself. Mark off the openings to be cut for the diver's shoulders, being sure to leave ample space for the head. Suggested proportions are shown in the drawing. Cutting is done with a cold chisel or a welding flame. For padding around the edges where the helmet fits over the shoulders three or four layers of an old inner tube are used, folded and riveted into place.

A piece of cylindrical glass of the same curvature as the boiler is inserted in the front of the helmet for a window. This glass can be purchased for about two dollars from the nearest wholesale glass jobber, who can be reached through your local hardware merchant. A flange of 16-gauge cold-rolled sheet steel is used to back up the glass. Smooth-on iron cement which, when set, is watertight and strong, is used to hold the glass in place. In operation the helmet will prove buoyant, and to counteract this a set of lead weights should be attached. Twelve pounds will be sufficient in most cases.

Two men are necessary in using the diving apparatus—one as the diver, the other to operate the bellows, which are pumped alternately. The idea is to keep a steady pulsation of bubbles coming to the surface from the diver. He absorbs some of the air in the helmet when he breathes, which is replaced with fresh air, and when he exhales the surplus is forced out under the helmet and finds its way to the surface.

Should a break occur in the air line the diver is in no danger, for he can readily slip off the helmet over his head and swim to the surface unhampered. The depth at which this apparatus is workable is determined as the point where the pressure of the air supplied by the bellows is equal to that of the water. Depths of 20 feet are easily attained, and for making repairs on boat hulls, recovering sunken parts or for studying lake bottoms this is usually quite as far as one cares to descend.

*Modern Mechanics'*

Home: Covered   
Car: Covered

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\*DAN Membership provides up to US\$100,000 Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage. DAN Dive Injury Insurance is additional.

<http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/>

Information supplied by John Lawler



Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) is cautioning boaters to slow down and follow the rules when heading out.

This warning comes as TSV incident data reveals that there have been four boating collisions since 1 December 2013, which have resulted in two serious injuries and a fatality. A 12-year-old girl died in hospital after a boat she was travelling in was struck by another vessel at Lake Eppalock in northern Victoria on 10 January 2014. TSV spokesperson Paul Corkill said that all boaters have a responsibility to make safety a high priority for the benefit of all waterway users.

"The recent fatality on Lake Eppalock is a sombre reminder to all boaters that tragedy can happen on the water and that they must take care around other waterway users.

"Speed and distance are often key contributing factors in boating collisions, many of which result in serious injuries and, in some circumstances, death.

"It is the obligation of every boat operator to reduce the risk of collision by follow-

ing the speed and distance rules at all times.

"Regardless of where you are boating, you must stick to the speed limit of five knots when within 50 metres of a swimmer or another vessel.

"If you are boating on inland waters, you must observe a five knot limit within 50 metres of the water's edge.

"On coastal and enclosed waters, like Port Phillip Bay and the Gippsland Lakes, a five knot speed limit applies to all vessels within 200 metres of the water's edge.

"You must also keep a proper lookout for other waterway users," Mr Corkill said.

Over the coming weeks TSV will continue to have a strong compliance presence on the water.

"There is a zero tolerance approach with boaters who flout speed and distance rules. TSV Maritime Safety Officers will



be enforcing the rules and cracking down on boaters who do the wrong thing," Mr Corkill said.

Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) has created a suite of boating fire safety videos as part of its summer safety campaign 'Don't let your boat go up in smoke'. Boat fires can be devastating, resulting in damage to property and, more importantly, serious injury to those on board.

The first video in the series, "Boating fire safety", provides boaters with practical

advice about how they can reduce their fire risk. It outlines fire safety tips relating to refuelling, maintaining your boat, and being fire aware when on the water.

Watch the video on the [Fire safety page](#) of our website. ❖

## HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED!

*By John Lawler*

Do you remember the diving equipment you had when you first started diving way back when?

Older divers will remember

- The horse collar Fenzy vest with air bottle
- Stem gauges
- The simple Orange Scuba Pro BCD
- Depth sounder with paper tracker on the boats or ...
- Dive sites found by the experts with land marks sightings
- Wet suits with long johns and complete hood overlay.

Newer divers could wonder what this all means!

How things have changed.

Now of course we are very “modern” and advanced thanks to the rapid pace of technology in all areas of diving equipment and boats.

Most “modern” divers today have any number of pieces of equipment that goes diving with them. The summer season brings out the “semi-dry” 7ml or 5/7ml

wet suit. Winter when the whole dive scene changes and the “dry suit” appears. Competition has been good as prices have now put many brands and designs in the reach of most divers, but there are low priced brands and super expensive brands!

The brilliant technology in dive torches has seen the race to the best over only a few years and most notably the last couple of years, and even today this market is changing almost monthly. Just this week a small product arrived—3000 lumens! Smaller, brighter, expensive and not so expensive units but most with amazing lighting power. Thank you LEDs.

Surface Marker Buoys (“safety sausage”) or “SMBs” for short have added to the safety of divers—a big march forward from the coloured roll of plastic which surfaced (ahem!) around 25 + years ago or so. Watch the array of SMB’s after 20 divers shoot them from a charter boat dive...amazing site.

And wait, there’s more—the Nautilus Life Line! A brilliant piece of communication technology. Rated to a depth of around 70mtrs and when activated on the surface it is a VHF radio/GPS that allows for calls to the set channel on a boat, emergency channels, and a registered MMSI number recorded with Marine Safety.

Fins now come in all sorts of configurations. Solid, slot, V8’s and one model that looks like it came from Kmart (small and super good for photographic works).

Walk into any dive shop and the array of

face masks is astonishing. Shapes, colours, styles and prices—cheap models to very expensive models.

How things have changed.

Of course divers have a wide range of buoyancy vests to choose from, but that is changing rapidly it seems. Bladder styles seemingly giving way to “wing” and “backplate” systems, or none at all if a diver goes in with “side mounts”.

And what about the new world of the “technical diver”? It would probably be very few recreational divers (if any) who, not that many years ago, would go beyond 40+ meters. Today it is common for a “tech” diver to do around 68 metres and deco for 59 minutes....twin tanks and sling tanks...mixed gasses also!

The very early days of the “rebreather” have returned with enthusiasm. It is the “now” piece of dive equipment for many enthusiasts (but have a good bank account to buy a unit!)

Computers - oh let's not go there. In my early dive days we dived from time/depth tables. But really we have been made so much safer thanks to the sophistication of the vast array of dive computers. ( who remembers the stem gauge?)

The days of spending a lot of time searching for a wreck or dive site has long gone thanks to the introduction of the Global Positioning System. (GPS for short). From a basic model of a few hundred dollars to a full blown system with chart plotters and much more running into the thousands, dive sites are found to within metres...instantly!

For boat owners on a budget, a system called *MY-MAP* can be downloaded into an Ipad. This is as close to a chart plotter as you can get. All your GPS marks are downloaded and the system has many windows for various configurations. The system is driven by a small portable (Dual) GPS.

In my case the Ipad is held onto the fascia above the steering wheel and locks into a “Ram Tab-Tite” spring tray—easy to lock in and retrieve. I pads, salt water and salt water spray etc do not mix. The Ipad is encased in a water proof/shock proof casing, “Life Proof” system (good to 1 mtr if dropped into water).

Underwater cameras....now here there are some real changes. If you are a passionate underwater photographer it seems it is a must to have top quality, mostly quite expensive cameras—stills and/or video. But for some who are just interested in a basic camera that does an amazing job, GoPro or Intova are two that do that task so well.

All these comments came into my head after the idea of working up the MY-MAP project was suggested and implemented by Graham Ellis. When it was all done, I sat in front of the new system and thought..” How things have Changed”. ❖



# Dive Reports

## "IN & OUT...IN & OUT"

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER 2013

By John Lawler

The role of our Dive Masters (Graham Ellis today) seems always to be increasingly challenging. On some occasions over recent times, just filling one boat is a challenge in itself! On this day the lead up to the Sunday dive differed as 5 divers had booked in. Saturday afternoon...Oh Oh...."Sorry I can't make the dive tomorrow so I'm out".....now down to 4. Late Saturday a new booking..."I'm in for the dive" back to 5. Sunday morning..."Sorry I'm out for the dive today"....so we finally ended up with 4 so that was OK.

VSAG dive plans are generally worked out on the day at the ramp. That's not to say however that any diver can propose a site beforehand for consideration. The dive plan today was for the J4 and then a slack water flood dive inside the bay. I proposed to stay with the boat and the other three dive the sub. Graham agreed to handle the boat as we three dived the reef. A winning working scheme.

Of course most dives on the iconic J4 rate highly and today was consistent with that - viz was around 10- 15 mtrs, no swell and the usual masses of resident fish life - a fine dive.

As we had met early at Sorrento we were well ahead of the 12.30 slack so a good time to sit inside the bay, eat lunch, have chats and watch the ever changing activity on the nearby shore and on the bay.

Kitting up, I was full of excitement as the dive site for our bay dive was "Awesome Reef" in the shipping channel. The best news from Lonsdale traffic management...no ships! Graham dropped us right on the mark at slack water and into diver's heaven. Bommies at 30 mtrs, swim throughs, fish and lobsters and great visibility....can't beat this place!

The dive over too soon but quality over quantity here. At 14 mtrs, sending up my smb, the line caught around the handle and, combined with the air expanding in the BCD, a quicker than normal ascent was experienced. A mouthful of salt water not too easy to handle. Oxygen was a caution and applied.

The day was beautiful and warm, sunny, light winds.....a good place to be!

(It was noted that the zipper on the oxygen bag had corroded. On checking the other kits, the same problem existed. These will be replaced with either Velcro or plastic zippers)

To the crew for today - Trevor Williams, Peter Altis & Graham Ellis, thanks for a great day diving. ❖

# MORDIALLOC & MENTONE

SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2013

*By David Flew*

Boat - "Karingal" out of Mordialloc

The predictions for vis were pretty dire, but as DC I felt it behoved me to be diving. Recent rain had brought lots of rubbish down Mordialloc Creek, and wind would have stirred up the top end of the bay.

Nevertheless we had 3 divers – Benita McDonough, Sandy Webb and me. My son Michael ( MJ ) had offered to drive the boat so we could all dive together. The idea was to have a quick look at a "hole" about 1 mile out from Mordi, then go to Phil's Reef off Mentone. We loaded up the boat, then a basic briefing and introductions.... and away we went at 5.5 kts. 10 minutes to the dive site ladies!

About 5 minutes out from Mordi we had ample proof of the level of rubbish which had been coming down the creek – rising engine temperature, no coolant out the exhaust ..... not going any further until this is sorted. Joys of boating! Michael and I got to work – pulled up some floor boards, removed a few hoses, blew out the rubbish with the wash-down pump – and we didn't even knock my coffee over. All in a day's outing for a 50 year old boat ( but it helps to have a skipper who knows his stuff ).

The ladies didn't seem too concerned, calm seas, no wind, and a nice sunny morning for a chat.

So we got to the first site, dropped a shot on the change in level ..... and having discussed how bad the vis might be found we were spot on. I think Benita lasted under the water for 5 minutes. Sandy and I were determined to find something of interest - we did see one flathead, a few flat worms, plenty of dead shells, two scallops, and lots of sand. Sandy might have a longer list – but then she just loves algae.

OK, let's go to the second site. We know there is plenty of "stuff" there – and it's not far away. The ladies seemed nearly as interested in chatting as in diving and we hardly need an extended surface interval for this stuff. We decided, given the depth, the vis, and the very small size of the reef, we would not worry if we could not maintain visual contact - and we didn't. Again the vis was at least as bad as predicted - worst I've seen here.

Nevertheless I saw a nice nudi, and the normal mix of sponges, urchins, algae, and enough rays, puffers, old wives and other fish I can't identify to justify there being plenty of "stuff" to see. (Even if you had to be within arm's length to see it.)

Summary:

- Nice morning out, good company.
- Crossed one site off the diving list - permanently.
- Photos? – you have to be joking!! ❖

# DRIFT DIVE & ROB'S REEF

SUNDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2013

*Report & photos by Ian Scholey*

**Sea Eagle Crew:** Ian Scholey & John Lawler.

**Signature 2 Crew:** David Geekie, Pam Dagley, Greg Richards & Alan Balmer.

**Freediver Crew:** Denys Smerchanskyi and Bei Smerchanskyi.

With forecast conditions looking favorable we teamed up with Alan Beckhurst and Get Under who kindly gave us some space on "Freediver" to accommodate all of our divers. JL and I headed out from Sorrento in my RIB "Sea Eagle" to rendezvous with "Signature 2" and "Freediver" who launched at Queenscliff.

While waiting, we took the opportunity to chat with Tom Wende who had divers in for a drift. Sadly Tom advised that conditions outside were poor so after a quick chat with the other boats on the radio we decided to stay inside and do a drift dive before timing our second dive for slack water.

With two on board Sea Eagle we arranged buddies across boats. John took first dive and I dropped him in as David dropped Alan Balmer. With the current running, John uncharacteristically ditched his catch bag. A more optimistic Alan kept the

faith. Alan returned with a good sized Cray while John was left to regret his decision after finding the Cray, which Alan dually seized. There is always next time John!!

No Cray hunting for me, just the camera. I am much better at catching the shot than I am the elusive Crayfish. I teamed up with David and Pam for a very enjoyable drift. I honestly believe that you could drift a hundred times and see something different each time. This one was an absolute beauty with stunning colourful growth and loads of fish life.

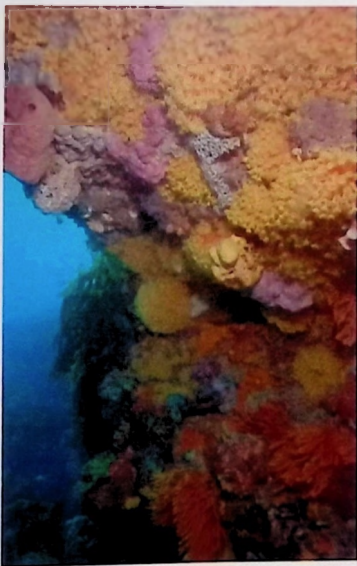


The highlight was hooking on at the top of a small gully where, safely out of the current, we were able to enjoy an aquarium like experience with a school of barber perch and other species ducking and



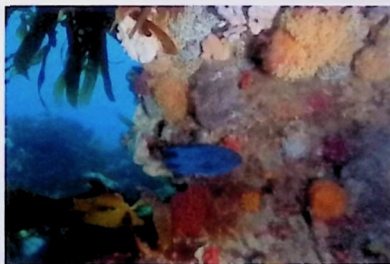
weaving in the current. The shelter also enabled a few decent shots with the camera before we headed off for a bit more of the superman experience. As you can imagine it really isn't easy taking photographs in flowing water. However, I kept on trying, as the terrain really was spectacular. Before long, with no deco time running out, we had to head back to the surface where we were quickly back on the boats.

After a quick lunch break the conversation turned quickly to the next dive spot. The Lady Shelly was proposed and quickly discounted for a slack water dive on Rob's Reef. With JL deciding to stay top-side I teamed up with Alan Balmer for dive number two. Being on separate boats we once again dropped in separately and met on the surface before descending.



With the current now gone and excellent visibility we were able to enjoy a leisurely dive. Alan happily went from ledge to ledge in hunt of Cray's while I snapped away with the camera.

The colour on Rob's Reef is fantastic with seemingly every colour, shape and size of sponge in the one small area. At one point a large Roughtail Stingray glided past, unconcerned by our presence and happy to pose for a photo or two. I tend to get a bit distracted with the camera and time seems to go past very quickly. Once again, with no deco time almost gone. I signaled to Alan that I was heading up. I deployed my SMB and began the ascent as the current began to pick up. Back on the surface I was quite surprised by the distance I had covered but found JL waiting in Sea Eagle. With our diving done we hung around as extra surface cover until all divers were safely back on the boats before heading back to Sorrento.



All in all another very enjoyable days VSAG diving - next weekend can't come soon enough. ❖

*\*The winning photograph for our December photo competition was taken on this dive day—see page 7*

## HUNTER GATHERER DIVE DAY

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER  
2013

By Jim Turner

*Boat: Signature One*

*Divers: John Lawler, Ian Scholey, Andrew Qusted, Christine Reynolds & myself*

In recent years I have been doing most of my diving at Inverloch, but, as opportunities there had dried up close to Xmas – mainly due to the bar silting up – I was up for a club dive. The thought of putting Seafood on the table for Xmas Day was my main motivation and, enticed by the title “Hunter Gatherer” I was racing down to Sorrento, only slightly seedy, early on Sunday morning. No I didn’t – I gratefully accepted Michelle’s offer to chauffeur me and left at an unreasonably early hour, mindful of the mishaps on previous journeys to Sorrento.



L-R: Andrew Qusted, John Lawler, Ian Scholey, Jim Turner & Christine Reynolds

Uneventful as it was, we arrived early and had plenty of time to buy coffee and lunch and, in doing so, we ran into former Lord Mayor, Ron Walker, at the supermarket where we enquired into his recent health problems. Ron was affable as ever and was happy to discuss his treatment and positive outlook for the future of his health.

But I have digressed enough. Down at the boat-ramp area we learnt that the expected two boat-loads of divers had dwindled to one load, due mainly to a poor weather report.

It was drizzling a little and looked dismal so Ian Scholey left to park his boat at The Scuba Doctor for the day, as the five divers could all be accommodated on Signature 1.

The aim of the day, as the title suggested, was to hunt down marine creatures and, to this end we headed, through a very fine mist, to the Heads. Much time has passed since the dive and I cannot remember the wind direction on the day – but who cares? It was a fairly smooth ride until we met the fury of the rip as we attempted an easterly exit into Bass Strait, which was quickly aborted.

The Western side, we found, was much more friendly, and we were soon out and heading, through a lumpy sea to John’s “Pot Reef”. Now, I mention the ‘lumpy’ sea because Christine forgot her Quells and was feeling ‘poorly’ – as those of us who’ve experienced the ‘Mal de Mer’ understand.



*A very happy Ian Scholey with his first ever cray—1st dive in 7 years without a camera!*

“Pot Reef” had been so-named by John as he had seen a number of Cray pots there when he previously marked the spot. Ian Scholey, apparently a ‘camera-only’ diver, had finally given in to the lure of hunter-gatherer and was over the side first, with Andrew Qusted, in search of Cray. However, the only remaining Crayfish in the area, since all of the pots had gone, was out of his hole, searching for his mates, and easily grabbed by Ian – his first Cray on his first Cray dive.

Christine was still ‘crook’ when the first two were back up, so John and I went in for the second dive and, like Ian’s cap-

tive, wondered where all his mates had gone.

The aim for the second part of the day was to “gather” scallops, so back through the Heads and, after the usually pleasant trip up the Bay, we pulled up “somewhere off Rye” for the usual ‘Scallop drift’.

J.L. elected to sit it out topside, along with Christine, so Andrew, Ian and myself went in for the ‘harvest’. Andrew and Ian had never been on a Scallop dive before so I offered the benefit of my ‘years of experience’. Now, the first mistake I made was to purge a little too much air into the lift-bag. The second mistake was to let one of the blokes swim in front of us, creating murky invisibility for quite a while. No. The first mistake was the choice of dive site. I know that Scallop numbers have declined in recent years, but this was ridiculous. The few we found were sparse, and quite small.

The weather, I should have mentioned, had turned warm, calm and very pleasant by the second dive. It was great to get into the water, as it always is and, despite the meagre returns, a pleasant day was had by all – except Christine. ❖

**To go to sleep  
I count  sharks  
not sheep**

# Shore Diving at Batemans Bay

**JANUARY 2014**

*Report & photos by Phil Watson*

In January I drove to Canberra to take my daughter back to ANU. So I figured I could take a small detour east and check out the diving in Batemans Bay. I called the local dive shop (Pure Scuba) who initially offered me a place on a boat on the day of my arrival. But the timings didn't fit with my travel schedule so I organized to join some shore dives with them instead.

On my first day they took me to Broulee. This is a headland with a rocky reef which gradually slopes down to the sand at 10m. I had two delightful guided shore dives along the reef. There were lots of blue groppers, morays, wobbegongs and exotic nudis (at least exotic to my southern eyes). The visibility was around 20m and the water temperature was 20 degrees.



On the second day of my trip the shop was closed, being a Tuesday. So they put me in contact with a local diver (Rob Ryan) who was looking for a buddy. Rob and I met in the car park & first headed back to Broulee to explore the sea caves which run underneath the headland. We found a number of wobbegongs, one of which was the biggest specimen I have seen. He was well over 3m and was hanging out on the sand in the middle of the largest cave. I didn't think it was prudent to disturb him so I didn't take a photo of him.

For our second dive we dived Guerilla Bay which is a few km north of Broulee. This is a very rugged area which is also a marine park. We had a spectacular dive through a complex system of canyons and gullies. Once again there was plenty of fish life, including groppers and a large ray.



*Canyon at Guerilla Bay*

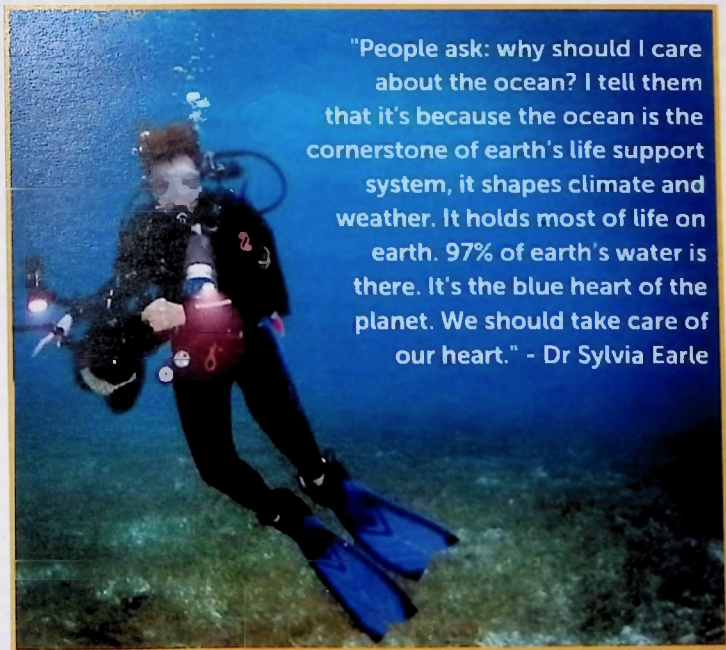


*An inquisitive fish*



*Kelp in Guerilla Bay*

In summary it was a very rewarding trip and I am looking forward to a return visit next time I am in Canberra.



**"People ask: why should I care about the ocean? I tell them that it's because the ocean is the cornerstone of earth's life support system, it shapes climate and weather. It holds most of life on earth. 97% of earth's water is there. It's the blue heart of the planet. We should take care of our heart." - Dr Sylvia Earle**

## ROSEBUD REEF, SEALS & SCALLOPS

FRIDAY 3RD JANUARY 2014

By *Leanne Van Der Merwe*

Divers: John Lawler, Tim Forster, Andrew Qusted, Leanne Van Der Merwe (Check-out dive)

We met at the Rye boat ramp at 9.30 am and noted that it seemed every other boat in Melbourne had also launched from there. Good weather to be diving - cool, overcast and calm, with a balmy 18 degree water temperature.

Once loaded we set off for Rosebud Reef, with visibility around 5 metres. Tim and Andrew kicked off with the first dive, while John and I took our time kitting up with some new gear. As a first time visitor, I was thrilled at the colours of vivid orange, iridescent green, purple and yellow on the reef. Other than a large Kingfish, some Old Wives, and a few of the usual suspects, John, who is familiar with the site, felt there was not the usual profusion of fish.



Tim and Andrew decided their second dive would be with the seals at an old shipping channel marker, covered with wildlife. For John and I topside, it gave us time to admire the gannets, from the sleek to the scruffy, fluffy juniors. Gannets ruled the top deck, cormorants the middle deck with a couple of seals sleeping it off on the lower levels.

The weather was now a bit blowy and the seas choppy, with some current, so John and I were glad Tim and Andrew stayed around the marker and didn't drift into the shipping channel which was busy with one very large container ship.

John and I went scalloping nearby for our second dive and managed a fair haul, until my dry suit neck seal succumbed to a sharp clip at 27 minutes and flooded, so decided it was best to head back to the boat (note to self: re-position clip!). Saw quite a few spider crabs feeding, and a large aggregation of starfish. Now quite choppy, it was a bit of hard work climbing aboard the boat.

Then it was back to the boat ramp, where it seemed every boat on the bay was now trying to exit, so it was a long wait (1.5-2 hours in total I think) to finally make it onto dry land and get into some dry clothes (and return the 4 litres of water in my drysuit back into the bay!)

Finished up the day at Scuba Doctor refilling tanks, cleaning up gear and enjoying a cold beer ... along with the magic words 'Leanne, welcome to VSAG!' ❖

*\*Glad you had such a great introduction to VSAG Leanne—Ed.*



By John Mills

*\*Photographs of Ex-HMAS Adelaide by Justin Gillingan from the website <http://www.hmasadelaide.com/home>*

We recently had a chance to stay at a house on Sydney's Northern Beaches. I had some leave up my sleeve as we did not do our normal September school holiday's dive trip. I thought, "Why not take an extra week over the Christmas break and drive to Sydney? We could pack the dive gear in the car and venture up the coast to Terrigal and dive the HMAS Adelaide wreck as it was only an hour and a half away."

The other benefit of taking the car was that I could load up the bikes and do some road and mountain bike riding.

We got up bright and early and started the trek to Sydney. We made good time until we got to Yass and the highway was closed due to an accident. We ended up being diverted through Canberra and lost a couple of hours. We still got through Sydney before the peak hour, the only drama was getting off the harbor bridge as the exits were quite confusing. After a series of turns and U turns we found our way to the Northern beaches and got settled.

The next day we got the bikes sorted and went for a pedal around the Manly area. We took off to Shelley beach as there was apparently a dolphin there that had befriended the locals for the last few months. It was also reportedly a good shore dive. We deftly manoeuvred along the shared paths, dodging pedestrians and dogs.

There were a number of divers at the beach. Priya introduced herself and started discussing the local diving. The shore diving didn't sound too exciting with a 10 metre maximum depth. The Adelaide wreck was also put down as the visibility was deemed to be ordinary.

We ventured back to Manly to check out the dive shops. Priya checked out what would be required to dive the Adelaide from the first shop we came across. We got the usual guff about needing advanced tickets, Nitrox qualifications, etc. Having previous wreck dives logged and Cave Diving Qualifications held no sway as "This was one of the most dangerous dives on the coast". We left thinking "they do not want our business".

On the way back we popped into the Pro Dive shop and Priya explained what we were about and they suggested that we contact Bob at the Pro - Dive Central Coast shop as he had been there quite some time and was a "No Nonsense" operator.

We trundled around on the bike a bit longer and went back to ring Bob about diving the Adelaide. Priya rang and got his wife Tina and explained what we wanted to do. I could tell by the tone of her voice that

we were on the right track as Priya said "Good, you are speaking our language and know what we are about". So it was set -we were booked in for a double dive on the HMAS Adelaide for the Friday.

I took off the next day on the mountain bike and headed down to Manly Dam for an off-road adventure. The tracks were good and challenging though I did walk some as I did not want to wreck the holiday and diving with a broken collarbone. Though I know if I practice I could ride it all.

We did some sight seeing around Sydney on the Thursday.

The night before the dive we checked the gear and I wanted to teach Priya how to pair her air-integrated computer to the cylinder. I get frustrated with it as it has a very non-intuitive set of menus. All started well and we got one of the little tanks out to do the pairing.

This was set up with the regulator yet we couldn't get it to pair. The manual was vague at best. I did a Google search on the ipad and found a You-Tube video that might help (What did we do before the internet and iPad?). The usual battle of wills followed in regard to how to set this up. I then noticed that the tank valve was stuck open. This has happened before, yet all the tricks I'd tried previously did not work. The only solution to get the reg free was to let it free flow to release the pressure (Lord knows what the neighbors thought). Luckily we had decided to hire two bigger tanks for the second dive so we weren't pissing the air up the wall. Priya fastidiously went through the You Tube video and documented the steps.

We had successfully learnt how to pair the regulator before we went to bed (These instructions will now be laminated).

We were up bright and early and negotiated the North Shore traffic until we hit the freeway. We arrived at Terrigal with enough time to find a bakery and get a pie (not unlike hitting Rye and grabbing a breakfast pie before diving). We found the boat ramp and found a ute with a heap of dive tanks on it. This was our operator, so all we needed to do was gear up and wait for the boat to arrive, which was being towed not far behind.

We got set up and Bob arrived with a large inflatable boat on the trailer. We loaded the gear, he asked if I had dived the Adelaide before and I replied "No, but I have dived the Canberra in Melbourne which is a sister ship so it should be OK". He indicated good-naturedly that it is different as "This one sits on an even keel and it still has the Hanger deck. I'll give you a good briefing when we get there".

The boat was launched and great care was taken to ensure that the skipper entered without getting wet. We were with a group doing their first dive after their course and another diver Ian. We headed out to the site and were there after an arduous 5 - 10 minute journey.

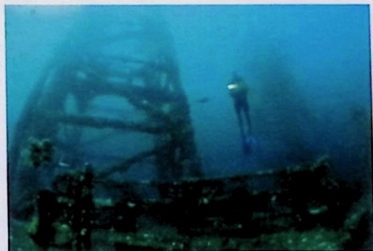




We did the briefing and it was decided that we would dive with Ian and explore the laundry area and make our way back up the decks to the mast then begin a slow ascent. Bob suggested spending a minute or so at the mast, another minute at 9 metres and do a stop at 3 metres for 3 minutes or longer. He also said to not get worried as "He was on the sinking committee and that they designed the cut outs so that someone the size of himself and I could get out side by side" (We are both fairly sizeable specimens).

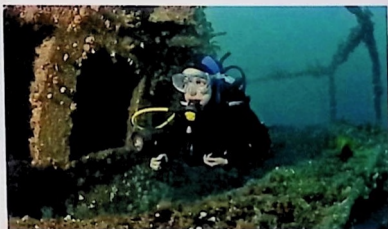


We dropped over the side and descended down the line. I got a little confused, as there were divers on the wreck from another operator. None had Priya's yellow fins. However being a sister ship of the Canberra the mast serves the same function as it is a good meeting and reference point. I just hung on to it and could see Priya's torch. After we had met up we dropped down to the access point for the laundry and entered the wreck.



As with most military ships we went through a room containing rows of porcelain toilets and hit the laundry room at 37 metres. The visibility was OK in the ship and we saw a big Jewfish at the back of the room. We then ascended and made our way back through the wardroom to the mast. We did our stops and surfaced.

We went back to Terrigal, unloaded the tanks and replaced them and did our surface interval. We asked Bob about the process of sinking the ship as I had followed the hurdles they needed to jump on a popular dive forum. He indicated that he had met John Lawler in their Journey. Once we had some cake, juice and lollies



it was time to jump back in the boat and head out to the site. This time we decided to go to the hangar deck, go through the middle deck and spend some time at the bridge before surfacing. We explored the hangar, came back through the wardroom with all the tables like the Canberra. Then went through all the corridors to the communications room. This was like the Canberra with all the frames for the monitors and instruments. We then went to the bridge and Priya took some photos of Ian in the captain's chair.

We then went back to the mast and ascended. There were numerous fish around the line. I did my safety stops and surfaced. Priya and Ian spent more time on

the safety stops as they were watching the kingfish bait balls. Everyone surfaced and we headed back to the ramp and unpacked.

Bob gave us some directions to the shop at Berkeley Vale which involved crossing a causeway and counting the number of roundabouts (I cheated and looked the address up on the iPad (what would we do without them?) and punched it into the GPS). We arrived at the shop, caught up with Tina and she showed us how they could accommodate a dive group. I then jumped in the car and had a drive around the central coast of NSW. This

was my old stomping ground where I had spent my formative years (High School) growing up in this area. We then drove back to Sydney and slept well.

On reflection, if VSAG or anybody from the group was looking to dive the ex HMAS Adelaide or any other sites around Terrigal, please contact Central Coast Pro Dive as they are good operators and will understand the needs of our group. ❖



<http://www.prodivcentralcoast.com.au/>

## DIVING THE WEB

**IF A WHALE BREACHES IN A FOREST ..... DOES IT MAKE A SOUND?**

*This one found by Lloyd Borrett*



To view the video go to: <http://uk.whales.org/blog/karencosta/2014/01/if-whale-breaches-in-forest-does-it-make-sound>

# DIVING THE WEB

## A Dolphin Asks a Human for Help!

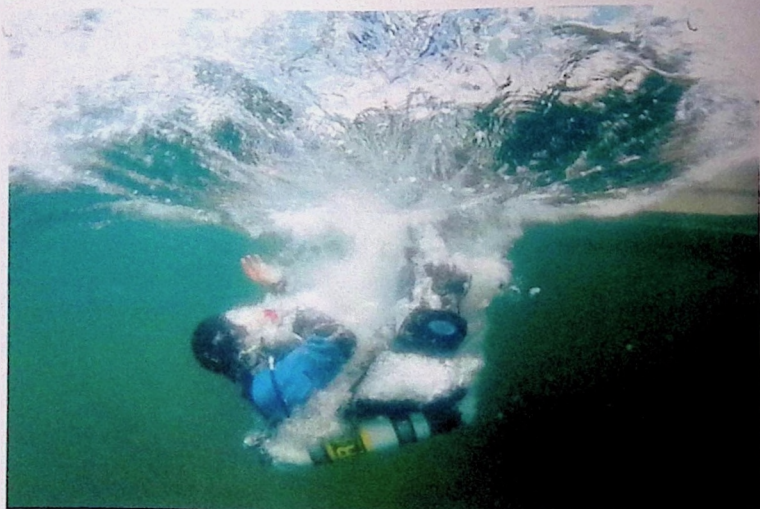
*Tony Hood emailed this around to members in December but in case you missed it, here is the story and the YouTube link—worth a look*

We have seen animal rescue, but rarely have we seen the animal search for humans to save it! On a night-time dive near Hawaii, 2 divers were found by a bottlenose dolphin and it started to swim around them over and over again. When looking closer, one of them discovered the reason for this strange behaviour - the dolphin had a fishing line hooked around it, hindering its ability to swim.



They cut him free, and the dolphin swam away, relieved. The fact that a dolphin would come to humans for help is once again evidence of its amazing intelligence, as most injured animals would never come close to a human and would actually be aggressive or defensive. This is amazing to watch and a life-time experience for those two divers, who got to share a moment of true understanding with a wild animal.

*To view the video go to: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/2gvgkHISyKFE>*



Hannah Smeeton rolling off John Lawler's boat to dive the Uralba  
*Photo by Phil Watson*



Photo taken by David Reinhard on a recent trip to the Tulamben area of Bali

## **VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar**

### Activity Details

Dive Coordinator (DC) nominated below.

**Dive site determined by DC and advised by email based on forecast conditions.**

Boat Captains for the dive will be confirmed by email prior to the weekend.

Dive day can swap between Sat and Sun depending on conditions!

Dive Captain is responsible for organising a dive report after their weekend.

**Dive sites adjusted on the day to suit divers and conditions.**

Feb 15/16	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Feb-20	<b>General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Feb 22/23	DC David Flew 0418 446 530
Mar 1/2	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Mar 8/9	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Mar 15/16	DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Mar 18	<b>General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Mar 22/23	DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Mar 29/30	DC Benita McDonough 0419 399 000
Apr 5/6	DC Christine Reynolds 0402 214 136
Apr 12/13	DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Apr 15	<b>General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Apr 19/20	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Apr 26/27	DC David Flew 0418 446 530
May 3/4	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646

Book in for a dive day ASAP after receiving notification via email. Please provide the Dive Captain with your full name, mobile phone number and e-mail address.

You are required to call the Dive Captain between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. the evening prior to the dive day to confirm that you will still be coming on the dive.

## Tidal Streams at the Heads — Mar 2014

*RED* italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. *BLUE* are Ebb Slack.

Feb					Mar	
Mon 24	Tue 25	Wed 26	Thu 27	Fri 28	Sat 1	Sun 2
3:25	4:04	4:52	0:55	2:08	3:15	4:11
9:04	9:43	10:34	6:01	7:36	9:14	10:29
16:15	17:03	18:02	11:43	13:12	14:45	16:08
22:45	23:46		19:14	20:34	21:49	22:53
Mon 3	Tue 4	Wed 5	Thu 6	Fri 7	Sat 8	Sun 9
5:00	5:00	0:36	1:19	1:59	2:37	3:13
11:29	11:29	6:23	7:01	7:39	8:14	8:49
17:18	17:18	13:06	13:49	14:30	15:08	15:46
23:48		19:10	19:59	20:45	21:28	22:11
Mon 10	Tue 11	Wed 12	Thu 13	Fri 14	Sat 15	Sun 16
3:49	4:28	5:13	0:45	1:49	2:50	3:41
9:25	10:02	10:45	6:13	7:38	9:04	10:04
16:24	17:04	17:51	11:41	12:54	14:17	15:34
22:56	23:47		18:48	19:58	21:11	22:11
Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19	Thu 20	Fri 21	Sat 22	Sun 23
4:22	4:56	5:27	0:20	0:56	1:31	2:06
10:50	11:29	12:05	5:58	6:29	7:01	7:33
16:36	17:25	18:09	12:39	13:14	13:50	14:28
23:00	23:42		18:49	19:29	20:09	20:52
Mon 24	Tue 25	Wed 26	Thu 27	Fri 28	Sat 29	Sun 30
2:41	3:19	4:01	4:55	0:18	1:24	2:28
8:08	8:47	9:33	10:32	6:05	7:34	8:59
15:08	15:52	16:40	17:38	11:49	13:21	14:55
21:37	22:25	23:18		18:48	20:10	21:29

## Tidal Streams at the Heads — Apr 2014

**RED** italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

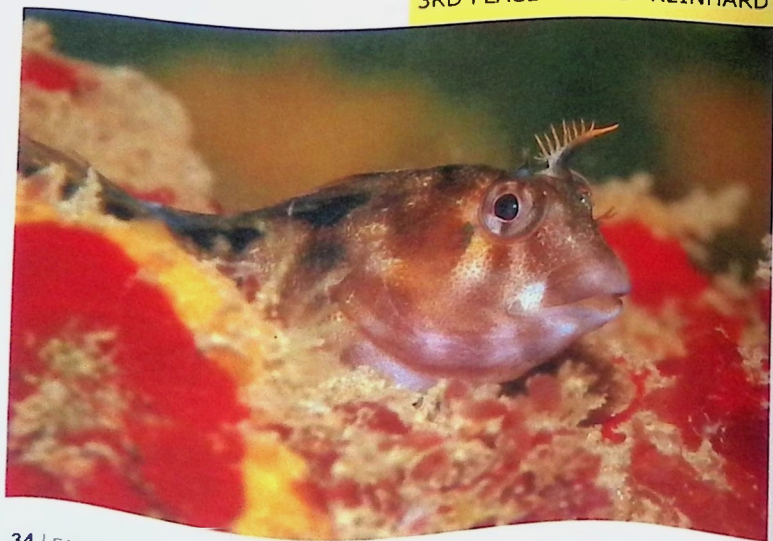
Mar	April					
<b>Mon 31</b>	<b>Tue 1</b>	<b>Wed 2</b>	<b>Thu 3</b>	<b>Fri 4</b>	<b>Sat 5</b>	<b>Sun 6</b>
3:27	4:18	5:04	0:19	1:01	1:41	2:18
10:08	11:04	11:53	5:47	6:27	7:05	6:42
16:13	17:17	18:11	12:37	13:17	13:55	13:31
22:33	23:31		18:58	19:41	20:21	19:59
<b>Mon 7</b>	<b>Tue 8</b>	<b>Wed 9</b>	<b>Thu 10</b>	<b>Fri 11</b>	<b>Sat 12</b>	<b>Sun 13</b>
1:54	2:30	3:08	3:51	4:46	5:56	0:30
7:47	7:54	8:33	9:19	10:17	11:31	7:12
14:08	14:41	15:18	15:58	16:46	17:51	12:57
20:25	21:14	21:55	22:42	23:34		19:13
<b>Mon 14</b>	<b>Tue 15</b>	<b>Wed 16</b>	<b>Thu 17</b>	<b>Fri 18</b>	<b>Sat 19</b>	<b>Sun 20</b>
1:24	2:12	2:55	3:35	4:13	4:51	0:16
8:14	9:03	9:46	10:26	11:05	11:44	5:29
14:17	15:20	16:11	16:55	17:36	18:17	12:24
20:29	21:27	22:15	22:58	23:38		18:57
<b>Mon 21</b>	<b>Tue 22</b>	<b>Wed 23</b>	<b>Thu 24</b>	<b>Fri 25</b>	<b>Sat 26</b>	<b>Sun 27</b>
0:55	1:35	2:18	3:07	4:04	5:13	6:29
6:10	6:53	7:40	8:36	9:43	11:05	12:36
13:06	13:49	14:34	15:22	16:16	17:22	18:42
19:39	20:21	21:05	21:52	22:44	23:41	
<b>May</b>						
<b>Mon 28</b>	<b>Tue 29</b>	<b>Wed 30</b>	<b>Thu 1</b>	<b>Fri 2</b>	<b>Sat 3</b>	<b>Sun 4</b>
0:41	1:40	2:35	3:25	4:10	4:52	0:22
7:41	8:43	9:37	10:23	11:06	11:45	5:32
14:02	15:13	16:11	16:59	17:42	18:20	12:21
20:04	21:14	22:11	22:59	23:42		18:56

**RUNNERS UP IN THE NOVEMBER PHOTO COMPETITION**



**2ND PLACE—IAN SCHOLEY**

**3RD PLACE—DAVID REINHARD**





**RUNNERS UP IN THE DECEMBER PHOTO COMPETITION**



**2ND PLACE  
- TIM  
FORSTER**

**EQUAL 3RD PLACE  
- IAN SCHOLEY**



**EQUAL 3RD PLACE  
- PHIL WATSON**





## **Emergency Contact Information** **Mornington Peninsula Area**

<b>Police – Ambulance – Fire</b>	<b>000</b>
<b>Water Police</b> no longer use the 1800 088 200 number <b>The new 24/7 No is : 03 9399 7500</b>	
<b>Diving Emergency Service</b>	<b>1800 088 200</b>
<b>Rosebud Hospital</b> 1527 Nepean Hwy, Rosebud	<b>03 5986 0666</b>
<b>Frankston Hospital</b> Hastings Road, Frankston	<b>03 9784 7777</b>
<b>The Bays Hospital</b> Main Street, Mornington	<b>03 5975 2009</b>
<b>Southern Peninsula Rescue (Sorrento)</b>	<b>0417 038 944 (new number)</b>
<b>Mornington Bay Rescue Service</b>	<b>0419 233 999</b>
*Coast Guard (Queenscliff)	03 5258 2222
*Coast Guard (Hastings)	03 5979 3322
*Coast Guard (Safety Beach)	03 5981 4443
<b>State Emergency Service (Vic)</b>	<b>132 500 (new number)</b>
<b>Diving Doctors:</b>	
Dr Pamela Dagley (Eltham)	03 9439 2222 (VSAG member)
Dr Vanessa Haller (Carrum Downs)	03 9782 6666
Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento)	03 5984 4322
Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud)	03 5981 1555
<b>VHF Emergency Channel 16</b>	(club channel 73)
<b>27 MHz AM Emergency Channel 88</b>	(club channel 96)
*Coast Guard is not always manned & operates mainly during daylight hrs	