

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS

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16th May, 1983

Just a note to let you know what is going on and an item which may be of interest to a few of you.

Coming Dives and Social Activities

- 29.5.83 Palm Beach - Back to Newport Arms after dive. Choice of dive locations - Birchgrove, Avalon, Hole-in-the wall. Meet 8.30 a.m.
- 4.6.83 Social night at the Bewicke's. There will be a lamb on a spit and salads provided for \$3.00 per head. Please pay Mark or Richard so that the numbers can be catered for. Good night to get together.

Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year

Posters are out to most dive shops around Australia and we have been getting quite a few enquiries so we are well on the way to our 1983 Competition.

Tickets for the Presentation Evening and Entry Forms are now available. Just see any of the Committee.

As you all know our A.V.'s have been shown a few times so we cannot put them all on again in fairness to the people who attend the Presentation Evening. So this year we will only be showing the entries in audio visual format. New movies from overseas will take the A.V. places. One especially, I think, will be quite interesting.

Aquatique Associates (Penny) has again donated 1st Prize of a trip for two for nine days to Raratonga, Cook Islands with diving and photographic gear for 2nd and 3rd and Cinematography prizes. Engraved trophies will also be presented with these prizes.

Entries close 20.6.83 so get moving with your cameras. Remember.

Be in it you oughta
So get into the water

(I definitely missed my calling. Should have been a poet.)

Don't forget the Barbecue at Richard and Annette's. \$3.00 a head will get you your share of the lamb and accompanying salad. Should be a good social get together which we haven't had much of lately. Can't say our social secretaries haven't tried; there just doesn't seem to be any enthusiasm amongst the members to either get together for dives or social outings. I think we had all better go and take a shower and use palmolive gold.

George Robert's Trophy

The George Robert's Trophy Competition I feel was a big success in as much as all the entrants I spoke to said that they certainly learned something from entering and the comments made. I was there whilst they were being judged and I can assure you that Bob and Pat were very professional and serious about their job as judges and were very competent for the positions. I think they did an excellent job and wish to thank them once again on behalf of the club for giving their time to this competition. I am sure that they, and Terry, would be happy to discuss with the entrants anything regarding their slides. Congratulations to Kim Kohen who took out the shield for 1st Prize with his selection of six slides. A well deserved win and certainly shows promise. Also congratulations to Jim Smith who took out the Highly Commended Trophy and Richard Bewicke the Honourable Mention. The George Robert's Trophy was originally intended to encourage our underwater photographers who are just beginning, to enable them to see if they are on the right track or where they are going wrong. So all criticism made is intended to do just that.

Audrey

CAPRICORNIA SURF ABOUT

There would not be too many of our members who have not heard about the amazing performance of **Sue Dockar** of Sydney who survived for 46 hours in the open sea around the **Capricorn Group of Islands** about 40 miles off shore from **Gladstone, Queensland**. She spent 2 full nights and just 2 hours short of 2 full days in the sea without food or water. The magnitude of her physical and mental performance is absolutely amazing. Amazing also was the performance of her fellow divers who searched the sea in open fibreglass runabouts for 2 full days and part of the nights. They were forced against their wishes to return to **Gladstone** at this stage the **Water Police** had taken local command of the search. Our divers were disappointed when boat fuel was denied them on **Police orders**.

In fairness to the **Police** the weather had suddenly changed for the worse with a 8' — 10' swell from the South East, and I feel sure the **Police** decision was made on the basis of not wishing to loose any more people. This decision was made on the morning that **Sue** was washed ashore on **Erskine Island** from where she commenced nearly 48 hours earlier. Anyone who has experience of the sea, and that was every one participating with sea search, felt that if **Sue** was still alive then it would be nothing short of a miracle. This no doubt was the basis for the **Police** direction to **Heron Island** to only supply sufficient fuel to the safety boats to allow them to return to the mainland.

Ralph Whalley continued searching till 2 p.m. on that day. He had just refuelled before the stop order came through. The search was separated into 3 groups - fast fibreglass runabouts, The **Reef Seeker**, which is a steel Catamaran about 70' — 80' in length. She had been hired for use during the **Skindiving Convention** which was based at **Gladstone** and which we were all a part of, and lastly 50 or so divers who had been put ashore on **Masthead Island** at about midnight on the first night of the search. This was done so as to make the crews task of searching easier & less distracting as 50 people require a fair amount of attention & service under search conditions. They were instructed not to go into the water and to make sure that no further accidents occurred whilst we were away searching. To this end no spearguns were allowed ashore. Now to the events.

The '**Reefseeker**' arrived at about 6.30 a.m. on the 2nd January 1983 at **Erskine Island**. This was the venue for the 1st day of **The Open Australian Spearfishing Titles for 1983** and was being hosted by **The Queensland Branch of The Australian Underwater Federation**. Fifty or so divers and some officials were on board having left **Gladstone** the previous night about midnight. The remaining 25 or so competitors were to come out to **Erskine Island** aboard the 6 safety boats which were allocated to the Competition. They were to leave **Gladstone** about 5 a.m. and join us at **Erskine Island** about 7.30 a.m. however owing to launching problems associated with a very low tide they did not arrive until about 8.30 a.m. This meant that the competition did not commence till about 9.20 a.m. The starting time of 8 a.m. allowed for the competition to finish before the full run of the tide which was to be the largest for the previous 6 months or so. The forecast also allowed for about one hour of slack tide. In fact, this did not happen. There was no slack tide. Unbeknown to us there was a low pressure centre inland and to the north and locals say when this happens at high tide it brings the tide up another 10" — 12".

This would account for not having a slack tide. The Competition got underway and everything seemed normal. We had started to weigh the fish on the '**Reef Seeker**' and found it impossible owing to the movement of the ship so we transferred ashore. This also was unfortunate as I am sure that had we still been aboard the '**Reef Seeker**' we would have noticed the possible danger earlier.

Shark activity increased but this was expected and owing to the amount of divers in the area did not seem to be a problem. A **Hammerhead Shark** about 10' became very aggressive and was finally killed in self defense. A 10' **Tiger** was swimming around but was no trouble and was left alone. Many white tipped sharks up to about 5' to 6' were around and grazing but were no trouble. Fish started to arrive at the weigh in minus their tails and bodies, then divers started to complain about the current although everything looked alright from the shore. It was to the westward behind the '**Reef Seeker**' where all the trouble was occurring. The Comp was nearly over and the safety boats started picking up divers from astern of the '**Reef Seeker**' as it was impossible

to swim against the current back to the ship. Thirty three divers were picked up by the safety boats. Back on the beach everything seemed o.k. We had collected all gear which had been left on the beach and made sure the place was tidy and were awaiting transport back to the '**Reef Seeker**'. As we were fishing in **A Marine Park** we were using a restricted score sheet which eliminated quite a few of the usual species. **Rangers from The Marine National Park Services** were present patrolling the area and watching the weigh-in to see we were observing the rules. They seemed happy with the way the competition was being controlled and conducted. We naturally expected to be last back on board and were awaiting transport from the beach. The beach crew comprised, **Mike McDade** weightmaster **Greg Dockar** (Sue's Husband) assist weightmaster a young lady who's name I forget and myself as weighing referee for now present divers. I noticed **Ralph Whalley's Shark Cat** coming to get us.

Ralph told us 2 divers were missing. **Sue** and a young **South Australian Diver** named **Bob Morrison**. I couldn't believe my eyes when we returned to the '**Reef Seeker**'. The current was running so fast we had trouble boarding. The twin hulls increased the speed of the current as it went between the hulls. The current register on board showed the current to be a constant 2½ knots, nearly walking speed. A thorough check of the ship revealed the 2 divers missing. I suppose the worst thing that can happen during a comp is to loose a junior, the next worse is to loose a lady and here we were missing a junior and a lady. The safety boats all departed at speed to search the down current area. Radio contact with **Gladstone** could not be made so a general radio call for assistance was made. **Radio Brisbane** answered and were advised of the urgency of the problem. They contacted **Gladstone** and direct radio contact was made with **Gladstone** after checking radio crystals. The frequency 2212 which is VHF was used. We requested urgent air assistance for the search. The time was about 2.10 p.m. We had to guarantee payment of air charter fees at \$450 per hour for helicopters and \$120 per hour for fixed wing aircraft before aircraft could be allocated. This guarantee was given and we were told an aircraft would arrive 1½ hours later. This sounded incredible and a revue of this waiting time was requested but refused. In fact the aircraft arrived 2½ hours after being requested. I considered this time lapse to be critical and in fact the main reason we didn't find **Sue** on the first day. They were doing nearly 4 m.p.h. and we weren't sure what time the current caught them or in which final direction they went, but assessed it as around 11 a.m. Thank God it was only a 4 hour comp and not the usual 6 hours.

This meant that by 2 p.m. when we started, if they hadn't tied themselves to the sea floor with their 100' rig lines, then they would have been about 12 — 15 miles away. With The '**Reef Seekers**' speed of about 6 — 7 knots they would have already been out of our range. It was the fast safety boats and the aircraft that they needed. '**The Reef Seeker**' sailed due east at top speed for 1 hour then started a box search south back to north extending in an easterly and seaward direction. We could get no local information as to the direction the current would take after leaving **Erskine Island** although the map showed an easterly current at 1¼ kn. Some 8 — 9 miles south of **Erskine Island**. At about 4 p.m. we received a radio message saying young **Bob Morrison** had been rescued from **Erskine Island**. He had managed to tie himself to the sea floor and waited for the current to stop then went ashore on **Erskine Island** at the SOUTH EAST corner. We altered our search area to the Southern side of **Wistari Reef** thinking **Sue** may have gone the same way as **Bob**. We kept a box search going in this area till dark. The safety boats had spread for and wide.

1st Day

Don Norman's 18' Shark Cat and **Rod Ashton's 19' Seafarer** both searched south toward **Masthead Island** turning westward round the southern side of **Masthead** thence back to the eastward side and back to **Erskine Island**. They kept searching this area till dark and then returned to **Masthead** to help unload '**Reef Seeker**' passengers at 12 midnight.

Ralph Whalley 18' Shark Cat. Searched south checked aircraft sightings which turned out to be empty cartons then returned north along **RHUMB** line to Western end of **Wistari Reef** thence on a slight north west bearing to the North West Reef about 14 miles away, turned south thence to **Erskine Island** where **Bob Morrison** was rescued from

South East Corner. **Bob** stayed on the safety boats for the whole of the remainder of the search. The sixth safety boat had run out of fuel and was washed up on a reef at **Erskine Island**. **Ralph's** boat pulled this boat off after several attempts. This reduced the safety boats to five for the remainder of the search. **Ralph** returned to **Masthead Island** after dark to assist unloading of **Reef Seeker** and for conference.

John Powell 27' Hydrofield. **John** searched north east towards **Wistari Reef** thence southward past **Polmaise Reef**, but to the eastward thence north back to **Erskine Island** about 10 miles, continued this north south pattern but moving eastwards to sea. Occasional east west traverses of this area. Returned to **Masthead** at 9 p.m. to help unload "**Reef Seeker**".

Gerry Hall 23' Haines Hunter 180 mercruiser motor **Gerry** searched down to the South East about 15 miles doing box searches with occasional east west runs across search area. He also returned and searched around **Masthead Island** and towards **Wistari**. All safety boats were in radio contact with each other, **Heron Island** and the aircraft. **Gerry** and crew returned to join "**Reef Seeker**" and other safety boats at **Masthead Island** for conferences and to share available fresh water and food with other boats. **Gerry's** boat was running low on fuel so he refuelled at **Heron Island** between 2 p.m. — 3 p.m. on the 1st Day.

All safety boats helped unload "**Reef Seeker**" at midnight full tide. Total area searched by sea approx. 350 square miles. **Reef Seeker** only made about 3 aircraft sightings that afternoon. During this period of the search **Sue** had seen several helicopters close and the fixed wing aircraft once. No boats or land had been sighted by her.

The second day of the search started at about 12.30 a.m. as soon as "**Reef Seeker**" had discharged the divers **Lennie** and **Doug** the owner and captain respectively of the **Reef Seeker** had decided to take the **Reef Seeker** out at anchor on the southern side of **Wistari Reef** about 8 miles from **Erskine Island** in case the current brought **Sue** back. We arrived at **Wistari Reef** about 1.45 a.m. and anchored with all lights burning. **Ray Johnson** kept the first watch whilst **The Blabster** and myself took over at 2.45 a.m. Conditions were ideal. The sea was nearly flat and visibility was good. Some sea birds could be heard calling and I feel we could have heard a call at up to a mile. First light came at 4.20 a.m. with dawn about ½ hour later. Conditions were perfect cloudy skies with a promise of rain. We commenced searching just after dawn heading due east towards **One Tree Island** about 10 miles away. At about 7 a.m. we noticed a helicopter searching the beaches and small reefs between **Heron Island** **Sykes Reef** which forms the outer barrier of the **Barrier Reef** in this area. We turned north just before **One Tree Island** also checking the exposed sections of **One Tree Island** and the shallow reefs all round **Heron Island** on the southern side. We encountered heavy tropical rain and were relieved because we felt **Sue** would at least get a drink. We continued westward after passing **Sykes Reef** checking the northern side of the reefs associated with **Heron Island**. All morning I could see our safety boats away to the northwards about 12 — 15 miles. Just small specks of flying water.

They were certainly giving the northern section which included **Wreck Island**, **Wilson Island**, **Broomfield Reef** and to the west **Tryon Island** and **North West Island** a good checking over. This area covered about 20 miles wide by about 12 miles north south. A total of 240 square miles. This gives some idea of the size of the area. We continued our search back past **Heron Island**, **Wistari Reef** and arrived back at **Erskine Island** about 1 p.m. **Lennie** and **Doug** had decided to put a dummy in the water, with a makeshift Radar Reflector attached, at about the same tide movement of the previous day to try to get an idea of the current directions. We received a radio message that the **Police Boat** would arrive at 4 p.m. and they were spot on arriving at exactly 4 p.m. They came aboard "**Reef Seeker**" and were brought up to date with what had happened. Apparently a lot of other people had been in trouble as the **Police Sgt.** had not been home for 3 days. The **Police** then assumed control, 26 hours after we had commenced our search. The passengers had now been ashore at **Masthead** for 16 hours.

Arrangements had been made for food and water to be taken too then from **Gladstone** by boat to be delivered sometime before lunch on that day. At about 2 p.m. **Ralph Whalley** came alongside for water and food and mentioned that the food had not arrived at **Masthead Island** and the divers were starting to get hungry and thirsty. A radio check with **Gladstone** revealed one of the mob decided to speed things up and sent the food etc to **Heron Island** by helicopter but failed to notify us. **Ralph** returned to **Heron Island** immediately and found the food and drink in a nice heap beside the chopper pad. He took it straight to **Masthead Island** where the divers had a party. Sorry fellas. It was by now about 4.30 p.m. and we were itching to follow the dummy we had placed in the water earlier. The safety boats had returned south to us and were searching

the surrounding area. We proceeded due east and after about 20 — 30 mins started receiving a Radar Echo from our dummy. When we reached it, it was 5 miles due east of **Erskine Island** where we had dropped it in the current 2hrs 20 mins previous. The view back to **Erskine Island** was absolutely frightening. To think it had come so far in such a short time. Of course, land would not have been visible from water level.

We continued to the south east passing **Lamont** and **Fitzroy Reefs**. The **Police Shark Cat** was off in front of us and slightly to seaward. I had noticed 2 strange boats to seaward and after watching them for sometime I realized they had to be searching they were between 5 to 10 miles to seaward and to the south. I found out later they were 2 aluminium boats from the **Research Station** one **One Tree Island** run by **Macquarie University Sydney**. They started searching on the 2nd day and must have had a very rough ride on the 3rd day when the seas became very rough. I also believe **Heron Island** had a boat assisting the search although I hadn't recognised one. We continued our search down south until dusk and returned to **Masthead Island** in darkness to re-embark the divers left ashore there. The 2nd day for the safety boats started at 3 a.m. when **Ralph** awoke they left **Masthead Island** at first light and searched around **Masthead** and **Erskine Islands**.

All the safety boats gathered at **Heron Island** to refuel taking 4¼ x 44 gallon drums to complete the task.

Heron Island provided breakfast for the safety crews and even brought it down to the boats on the beach. At this stage **Don Norman's** boat was having carbie trouble and **Heron** provided a mechanic to strip the motor and clean the carbies this took 2 hours and meant that **Don** didn't leave **Heron** till about 11 a.m. The other four boats left at 9 a.m. and assumed searching formation line abreast heading northwards towards **Wreck Island** about 6-7 miles northward. They then searched across to **Wilson Island** about 3-4 miles thence over to **Broomfield Reef** north east about 4 miles. They then turned westward on a compass course for **Tryon Island** about 10 miles. This was the furthestmost northerly point being nearly 15 miles North of **Erskine Island**. By this time **Don Norman** had rejoined them making 5 boats. After checking all the islands and reefs in the area they divided into 2 groups of 2 boats. **Rod Ashton** & **Ralph Whalley** headed south to **Erskine Island**, searching open water on the way. **Gerry Hill** checked around **Tryon Island** and **North West Island** for footprints on beaches result negative. **Don Norman's Shark Cat** and **John Powell's Hydrofield** did a compass search pattern South, North, but moving Westwards finally returning to **Reef Seeker** at **Erskine Island** about 2 p.m. **John** then organised divers and boats to do a bottom search completely around **Erskine Island**.

The divers swam the complete area, results negative. Although **Sue** thought she saw **Don's** boat at about 2 p.m. on this day this did not help to positively place her as at this stage **Don** was overlapping the north of **Erskine Island** and the south of **Erskine Island**. She could have been either way. Our boats kept searching the general area till dusk.

John Powell stayed that night at **Heron**. At this stage the safety boats had said they would stop another 2 days searching and as a result their crews were cut from 5 down to 3 per boat. **Jerry Hill** stayed overnight at **Heron**. The remaining boats to **Masthead Island** to help load **Reef Seeker**. **Reef Seeker** left **Masthead** about 1 a.m. and returned to **Gladstone** arriving about 7 a.m.

The safety boats had been instructed by the **Police** to stay where they were and not to move.

The wind had started to blow about 1 a.m. and by morning had reached about 25 knots. Waves had risen to about 8' to 10' coming heavily from the south east.

Conditions now became very rough and uncomfortable for the safety boats.

The third day **Ralph Whalley** left **Masthead** about 6.30 a.m. and checked the beach around **Erskine Island** for footprints Result negative.

Sue actually landed on **Erskine Island** sometime around 8 a.m. thereby missing **Ralph** by about 1 hour. This cost her nearly another 24 hours on **Erskine Island** before she was rescued. **Ralph** had refuelled the afternoon before, this allowed him to continue the search of **Wistari Reef**, **South Side of Heron Island** thence **Sykes Reef** and finally the **North Side of Heron Island** where he returned just before lunch. All the other boats were short on fuel and could not resume the search. At about 2 p.m. they were all told they were no longer needed and were to return to **Gladstone**. Only sufficient fuel was issued to reach the mainland. They had now been going for 2½ days and would have stayed another 24 hours.

During this period, they would not have had more than 8 to 10 hours sleep each.

Meanwhile back at the **Hungry Horse Ranch** on **Masthead** this is what was happening:—

Well you no doubt heard of the continuing Sue Docker saga.

They tell me Chuck Connors has been riding his trail bike around Menai trying to do a Sue Docker thrillseeker special.

I can only tell you of a "Reef Seeker" special and of fifty divers stranded on Masthead Island, where the sand flies are 4" between the eyes, and dunny rolls that feel like sand paper.

After a fruitless six hour search we returned to the island all very worried with the thought that Sue was still out there bobby corking around while we were safe and warm. Come midnight we were off loaded onto the island with our sleeping gear and a small amount of water and a few supplies.

No one slept much that night come morning many of us just stared out to sea with blank looks and deep inside praying for maybe just a glimpse of a float or some sort of sign, it was not to be.

Lenny Goldsmith, for some unknown reason had brought a tennis ball and someone suggested we pass the time with a game of cricket, to take our minds off the events that were happening.

The rules were not exactly british and the pitch was not exactly the turf at the Gabba..

N.S.W. won the match by a narrow margin of 749 runs over the other states. I knew we would win after all we have female divers that do two day dives without getting out of the water.

Merv Sheehan had asked me to oversee the N.S.W. Team and at 11 a.m. and still no news I called a team meeting for 12 noon.

Upon addressing the team and informing them Sue's chances of survival were becoming less by the hour and suggest N.S.W. should withdraw from the titles until some news was heard.

Each diver was asked individually and although no vote was taken at that time, N.S.W. had withdrawn. The tide was begging to go down and this vegemite kid was starting to get hungry so the team was asked to gather anything edible for the infamous **Inskip gun powder chowder** guaranteed to have you wiping your bum with ice cubes for the next three days.

The recipe is as follows:—

Twenty-five crabs

Ten clams

1 500 gram wire netted cod

4 gallons water

4 eggs

1 drift oyster

3 beef cubes two in the pot and 1 in the fire

2 teaspoons pepper

1 teaspoon salt bludged from holiday makers.

This soup is a natural health food and must be cooked after dark.

Making sure no one shines a torch in the pot as this can sometimes make the soup taste like dishwater, then bringing on the aztec two step commonly called THE TROTS.

While the night dragged on for us with no news, time must have seemed to have stood still for Sue who by this time was seeing little cars and talking to imaginary people I don't know what she was smoking out there, but we could have used some on the island.

We got word we were going home at full tide around 1.30 a.m. and still no word of Sue.

None of us were wanting to face the facts that her chances were almost nil and it was a very sad lot that came ashore at 7 a.m. next morning in Gladstone.

Well everyone knows what happened after that, the Wonder girl of Menai not only proved the odds wrong but proved the Richard Craniums in charge of search wrong in calling off a search that should have started with an air search, **minutes, not hours**, after the final roll call.

The trip home was rough and uncomfortable for the safety boats taking 4 hours instead of the usual 2. John Powell's motor stopped just before entering Gladstone and he had to be towed in.

At discussions after the search it was accepted that Sue must have been yo-yoing through a 5 mile gap between Erskine Island and Wistari Reef going in a North/South direction possibly as far north as North West Island, with the run out tide bringing her south somewhere past Masthead Island. This is borne out by the fact that when the strong South East swell came up during the 2nd night, she was actually washed ashore on Erskine Island the next morning, the waves had been coming from behind her from the south during the night.

And what had Sue been doing whilst all this activity was going on. Most importantly she had been using her head whilst she was bobbing up and down. The frustration at seeing the aircraft so close and the oc-

casional boat sighting must have been immense but it also kept her spirits up as she knew we were looking for her. The 1st day she saw the helicopters 4 times some with floats some without floats. On the 2nd day she saw them 5 or 6 times but a long way off. She saw what she thought was Don Norman's boat about 2 or 3 p.m. on the 2nd day. She saw lights at night but these could have been stars low down on the horizon. She saw the Reef Seeker on the 1st night. She must have been near Wistari Reef or Masthead Island for this. She saw the fixed wing aircraft once on the 1st afternoon. It says a lot for her willpower and physical strength for her to have survived and also a lot for the training she has received whilst in the sport.

The physical effort put into the search had to be seen to be believed. Physical endurance performances were amazing and so was the old Aussie habit of going flat out to help a mate who needed all the help possible, although in the end, she came ashore under her won power or that of the strong south east swell.

To all those people and organisers who did their best to help both Bob Morrison and Sue Docker when they needed it most, the very best of wishes and the greatest admiration possible for a tremendous effort.

I don't think that those waters have seen a more capable or efficient search carried out at such short notice and are not likely to see it repeated. Remember we were looking for one small head and one orange float about the size of a 3 gallon drum mixed in with about 600 square miles of ocean, about 12 small islands and about 8 - 10 reefs. A similar size area in Sydney would extend from Broken Bay in the north to Port Hacking (Cronulla) in the south and extending a distance about 23 miles to seaward.

Most of the costs incurred in the search, and they were extensive, have been paid by the Queensland Govt. and it is to be hoped that they accept responsibility for the outstanding costs which amount to just under \$3000. Sea and air searches are by no means cheap even if you have a large number of honorary searchers.

To the Queensland Branch of The Australian Underwater Federation and to anyone else who helped a very deserved "Well Done."

A Special Thanks to the following:

The "Reef Seeker" Owner Lenn who donated the services of his boat and crew free of charge at the outset of the search in the true tradition of the sea and to the crew Doug (Skipper) his wife and two children, Peter and wife and lady crew member Gail who all helped with the search.

To the manager of Heron Island and employees who without their help and sustenance the safety boats would not have been able to stay at sea. Also to their crew who took part in the search in Heron Island's own runabout.

To the Research Station on One Tree Island who assisted by supplying and manning 2 safety boats.

To the Air Search and Rescue Unit at Gladstone and Radio Brisbane who kept radio communication and who together with The Department of Transport Search and Rescue Canberra planned the search areas.

To the Police Department for their assistance and guidance and also for their expected approval of outstanding search costs.

To GERRY HILL, DON NORMAN, ROD ASHTON, JOHN POWELL AND RALPH WHALLEY THE OWNERS of the Federation Safety Boats who covered a minimum of 200 miles per day at speed in the open sea.

To the crews of the above boats, TIM PAULSON QLD, GRAHAM GORDON VIC, ANDY RUDDOCK N.S.W., GREG DOCKAR N.S.W., BOB MORRISON S.A., PAUL RIORDEN N.S.W., BILL KERSEY QLD, RAY OAKLEY QLD, DAVE DAVIES N.S.W., KEITH BRAMHAM N.S.W., PAUL WELSBY N.S.W., PAUL BRADDOCK QLD, MARK MODINI QLD, GUNTHER PFRENGLE N.S.W., DON MCKINNON QLD, AND RAY INKPEN QLD, RAY JOHNSON N.S.W., AND MERV SHEEHAN N.S.W. ON "REEF SEEKER".

TO THE PATIENT BUT HUNGRY MOB LEFT ON MASTHEAD ISLAND FOR THEIR PATIENCE.

AND TO ANYONE I MAY HAVE INADVERTENTLY MISSED OR PEOPLE WHO HELPED WITHOUT BEING KNOWN.

A VERY DESERVED "WELL DONE"

This report has been condensed owing to restrictions of space and could not reflect all the effort expended by everyone connected with the search.

All The Best
Paddy



LIFE MEMBERS:
H.R.H. THE PRINCE PHILIP
DUKE OF EDINBURGH
ANTHONY A. DE FINA
GEORGE DAVIES B.E.M.

AFFILIATE MEMBER OF:
CONFEDERATION MONDIALE DES ACTIVITES SUBAQUATIQUES
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NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
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REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD UNDERWATER FEDERATION

The Fifteenth General Assembly of the Confederation Mondiale des Activities Subaquatiques (CMAS), World Underwater Federation, was held in Barcelona, Spain in January this year. These Assemblies are held each two years to discuss and agree matters of International diving interest and policy. The CMAS is dedicated to improving the lot of the diver world wide.

Forty nine member nations were in attendance and a further twelve represented by proxy. Australia was represented by Frank Poole, the AUF National Director of Coaching. The business of the Assembly started with a meeting of the College of International Instructors, with the next seven days taken up with some fourteen Commission and Committee meetings and finally the full CMAS General Assembly.

Australia's views and opinions are held in high regard by the member nations of CMAS and it is obvious that our diving standards are among the best structured and highest in the World. It would appear that we in Australia, are about eight years ahead of Europe in the development of diving.

The following short points are only the tip of the iceberg of subjects covered, but have been selected as ones that will be of interest to Australian divers.

Scientific Commission: This is a very active group headed by Nick Fleming of U.K. They are very much involved in endeavouring to interpose rational diving views into the very bureaucratic Council of Europe, which through the "Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage" is dictating the method and restrictions on archaeological research in the area. The CMAS "Scientific Diver" qualification is rapidly becoming a requirement by many countries for scientists wishing to carry out underwater research. The Commission is actively encouraging scientists to recognise and use recreational divers to assist in underwater scientific activities. Australia has been asked to consider assisting in two projects, one involving data collection of sea grasses and the other the location and sampling of submerged aboriginal middens. An international scientific symposium is planned for Padua, Italy, in October 1983, where a major item of business will be the design of a programme to train divers to support scientific work.

Sporting Committee: Discussions were held on modifications to various games rules, particularly underwater hockey, many suggestions coming from Australia. The U.S.A., supported by Australia, was successful in their bid to hold the World Underwater Hockey Championships in Easter 1984. Notice was given that International Referee Cards were now available under conditions that were decided following the last General Assembly. On the spearfishing side, the next World Championship would be held this year in Chile; the full details to be available in April. A new "offspring" of spearfishing, "underwater target-shooting", is emerging and rules of competition are being drawn up. The Australian national competitions of photo-fishing and underwater photography generated considerable interest among nations. A "White Book" has been produced on spearfishing, but unfortunately at the moment it is in Spanish only.

Technical Committee: The Audio-visual Commission expanded its sections to include Video, and acknowledged that the video camera will soon replace the movie camera, and video cassettes replace expensive film. CMAS are producing a series of video cassettes on subjects of diving interest and these will be available to National bodies shortly. Cuba is conducting the World Cinema Festival in September, 1984 and Australia has been asked to consider conducting the World Photography Championships, also in 1984. The Swiss delegation raised a problem at the Certificates Commission concerning American teaching methods and standards as practised in Switzerland. A discussion was held on the fine paper presented by Yves Normand of Belgium and also the President of the Technical Committee, which proposed that CMAS recognise, through National Bodies, those commercial organisations, such as schools and resorts that adopt CMAS procedures; this will be of considerable assistance to divers in selecting training schools and holiday resorts, it will improve diving safety and assist the "travelling diver". Further work has been done on the review of CMAS standards with the publishing of the new recommendations. A very sensible International "Code of Conduct" for diving was approved by the College of International Instructors and the Technical Committee. (This will be published later.) In the Underwater Speleology Commission, an attempt will be made to identify where emergency equipment and expertise is available in the event of cave diving accidents; there will also be a Cave Diver badge and an International listing of sites. Interest is mounting internationally in underwater vehicles designed, constructed and used by recreational divers. An International Snorkel Diver Certificate and badge is proposed.

Medical Committee: A number of papers were presented on the "State of the Art", which unfortunately were hard to follow due to translation difficulties. It is obvious that there are many very competent medics around the world devoting time to improving diver safety. The availability of the CMAS Diver Medical Check List was noted. The value of reports such as the Australian "Stickybeak" was emphasised and it was requested that this report be summarised and passed to CMAS for publication in the CMAS Journal.

CMAS General Assembly: This Assembly is primarily involved with the overall CMAS management and policy and the ratification of the decisions of the various Commissions and Committees. Matre Jacques Dumas was re-elected President. World inflation has forced CMAS, after a number of years, to increase fees. American standards and activities in other CMAS member nations will be investigated. The new CMAS Yearbook was issued. The next General Assembly of the CMAS will be held in the U.S.A. in about two years time. (Meetings of Committees and Commissions are held regularly, normally in Europe.)

It is unfortunate that this report is so condensed, but it is hoped that it will provide an insight to the activities of the Confederation Mondiale des Activities Subaquatiques (CMAS) and the involvement of your National Body, the Australian Underwater Federation. Minutes and reports of meetings, will be passed to the various AUF Chairmen of Committees. If anyone wishes further information however, they should feel free to write to Frank Poole, AUF National Director of Coaching, 7 Tobin Place, Holder, ACT 2611.

I received my report for your National Body and am pleased that it is distributed as it is. I am sure that your National Body will find it very worthwhile passing it on to your members and to your clubs for their files.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,