



**Melbourne's year-round open water swimming group**

**Lead Article – 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Pier to Perignon Ocean Swim**

The 36th Pier to Perignon ocean swim took place on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Icebergers were well represented in the field of 907 swimmers in the 4km route from Sorrento to Portsea. Lucas Tucker finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place, Phil Harford 21<sup>st</sup> place (without wetsuit) and Romney Jones in 35<sup>th</sup>. Icebergers Ted Baillieu and Robbie Robertson inaugurated this legendary annual swim in 1989. Race Director was Iceberger Sam Paynter. Well done to all!



LtoR: Brigid Cottrill, Betty Ryan, Barb Hille, Tim Hille, Marshall Rushford, John Manning, Stephanie Desira at the starting line.



LtoR: Robbie Robertson, Sam Paynter, Ted Baillieu after their swim.

**The B-Team at RBYC 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024**



LtoR: Keith Badger, Warren Fisher, Tas Kakkos, Russell Parrington, Greg Kemp.

*photo by Ria*

**Letters to the Editor - Newsletter 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024: Shark Attack Middle Brighton Pier 1930**

Ralph O'Shaughnessy - great Newsletter - I am obsessed with sharks and how they live and everything about them and I love a shark attack story (and I love the song Shark Attack by Split Enz). P.S. I've seen Jaws 72 times.

Greg Kemp - a very well written historical article which all RBYC members should be aware of, simply for the historical facts. Few Brighton residents and dare I say Brighton Icebergers are aware of these facts. Reporting them makes it less likely to make the same mistake twice. For example, after the Titanic and Westgate Bridge disasters we engineers didn't make the same mistakes (human errors) again.

Alistair Purvey - there was a shark attack in the 1980s when a swimmer dived off the pier at Kerferd Road, South Melbourne. He survived and we continued swimming in the Brighton Baths with the occasional outside No Brainers at weekends.

Lou Lockwood - my grandmother was a lifeguard at the Brighton Baths and she witnessed that shark attack. She was a great storyteller with many wonderful stories that held young children's attention!! My brother and I would hop onto her bed when she stayed with us down at Sorrento and would be mesmerized by her amazing stories. Later on in life I thought she might have made up the shark attack story only for it to be confirmed by Iceberger John Locco that it actually did happen. I felt awful that I had doubted her.



The annual Trans Derwent swim is part of the schedule of events for the Royal Hobart Regatta which celebrated its 185<sup>th</sup> year in February this year. The swim comprises a 1.5km crossing of the Derwent River from Montagu Bay on the Eastern shore to the Regatta Grounds on the Western shore. The swim provides magnificent views of the Tasman Bridge and Mount Wellington (below left) and is believed to be one of the oldest open water swims in Australia. True to his Iceberger pedigree, John O'Donoghue (below right) was one of a handful of skin swimmers in the event.



*At the starting line.*



*Iceberger John O'Donoghue*

**The Tasman Bridge Collapse 5th January 1975**

*by Ria Bleathman*

The swim was poignant as it provided a close-up view of where the bridge went down on Sunday evening 5<sup>th</sup> January 1975 when the bulk ore carrier *S.S. Lake Illawara* rammed into the bridge and brought down pylons 18 and 19 and 127 metres of bridge concrete and steel. Two cars were left balancing precariously on the edge of the abyss (pictured below). Five motorists and seven seamen lost their lives and Hobart was ripped in two. The *Lake Illawara* still sits in the mud at the bottom of the Derwent River with its cargo intact.



The photo of John (above) is near where the *Lake Illawara* now lies. The photo also shows the new beams when the bridge was re-connected and re-opened on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1977. Pylon 19 was not replaced whilst pylon 18 pierces the bow of *Lake Illawara*. My neighbour Don Stephens took this dramatic photo (left) on the night of the collapse which was telegraphed around the world.



My later work colleague at the Commonwealth Bank, Murray Ling, drove the FB Falcon station wagon (bottom left) and was on the bridge as it went down. He slammed on his brakes to stop his car and was rammed from behind causing his front wheels to lurch over the edge. He climbed out with his family and flagged down other motorists in the blacked-out and still-shaking bridge, two swerving around him to drive over the edge into the black water 45 meters below. None of the drivers or their passengers survived the fall. Frank Manley, the driver of the HQ Monaro in the photo (left), later retrieved his car from the edge and was still driving it years after the collapse.

Having experienced this tragedy and its aftermath nearly five decades ago, I paused mid-swim to remember those affected although, given the relative youth of the 70 or so other swimmers, I was probably one of the few who had such a solemn thought process during an otherwise competitive swim.

*photo: Hobart Mercury*

