

# MEMBER OF THE MONTH AWARD

At the November Club Meeting, the Committee announced that this Award was being presented to Graham Ellis "for providing assistance to his buddy who got into difficulty during a wreck penetration dive on Ex HMAS Canberra and thus preventing a potentially serious situation from escalating further". Unfortunately, Graham was not present at the meeting so he was presented with his award at the Christmas Party on 29th November. Club President, Ian Scholey, made particular mention of the calm way

that Graham handled the situation. He had also spoken to the other diver after the event who was very grateful to Graham for his assistance on the day. ❖



*Ian Scholey presenting Graham Ellis with his Member of the Month Award.*

## THERE'S ALWAYS THE SEA

*A story by Lloyd Borrett*

I was supposed to write a story about the man, not to kill him in cold blood. But somehow I couldn't make him believe – it was one of those rare times that I had met a person so frightened he was like an alien, and I stood helpless to talk with him as though I spoke ancient Urdu. It was disconcerting, to find that words

sometimes have no meaning, and no effect at all.

The man, who was to have been the central figure of the story, advised clearly that he was on to me. He knew I was a puppet, a boor, an ingrate, and a mob of other unsavoury characters all wrapped in a faded wetsuit.

A few years earlier, I might have experimented with violence to communicate with him, but this time I chose to leave the room. I walked out into the night air, and in the dim moonlight by the shore of the sea – for this was to be the story of the man and his dive resort paradise.

The breakers boomed along the dark beach, flickering blue-green-phosphorous like gentle peaceful howitzers firing in the dark, and I watched the salt ocean rush in swift and steady, slow and back, hissing softly. I walked half an hour perhaps, trying to understand the man and his fear, and finally gave it up as a bad job. It was only then, turning away from the ground that I happened to look out. And there, out from the elegant resort lands and under the sky, away from the oblivious guests at the indoor bar and ignoring me and all my little problems, was the sea.

I slowed, there on the sand, and at last stopped and looked way out into the sea. From past-horizon north to past-horizon south, from beyond land's end to beyond the heights of the night sky, lived the sea. It was very calm, very still.

Some high cirrus drifted along under a slice of the moon, borne ever so carefully on a faint, faint wind. And I noticed something that night that I had never noticed before.

That the sea is always moving, but it's never gone.

That no matter what, the sea is always with us.

And that the sea cannot be bothered.

My problems, to the sea, did not exist, never had existed, never would exist.

The sea does not misunderstand.

The sea does not judge.

The sea, very simply, is.

It is, whether we wish to see that fact or to bury ourselves under a thousand miles of earth, or even deeper still, under the impenetrable roof of unthinking routine.

It happened a year later that for some reason I was in the city at Docklands, and everything was going wrong. The very last place I wanted to be was in the prison streets of sundown Melbourne, with iron-barred windows and quintuple-lock doors. But it happened that I looked out, which is something one never does in the city, of course, and again, as it had been on the beach of the resort – way out there, way out from the canyons of Docklands – was the sea. It was there. Unhurried. Unchanged. Warm and welcoming as home.

“What do you know,” I thought, “What do you know about that?” No matter how tangled and twisted and distressful goes the life of a diver, he always has a home, waiting. For him always waits the joy of being back under the water, of looking down into the depths and up to the surface. For him always waits that inner cry, “I'm home again!”

“Bunch of water, bunch of salty water,” the people of the land will say. “Get your head out from underwater, get your feet on the ground.” Yet in times as far sepa-

rated as that lonely beach and the crowded Docklands street, I was lifted from black despair into joyous freedom. From annoyance and anger and fear to a thought. "Hey! I don't care! I'm happy!" Just by looking into the sea.

This kind of thing happens, perhaps, because divers aren't far-travelling wanderers after all. It may be that divers are happy only when they are at home. And it may be that they are at home only when they can somehow touch the sea. ❖

