

## 6. SNIPPETS FROM SINGAPORE

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate you on the fine progress of the Society since its inception. (I know you are used to flattering by now). Much has certainly been achieved in spite of the highly over-pressured number of selected officers in the society. The newsletter reflects an appealing style of informality, and is highly informative and academic. This is one effort that really cannot be judged by its cover (won't hurt to be a perfectionist though).

I hope our silence thus far has not been misconstrued as lacking in enthusiasm and interest. The inscrutable oriental is merely showing respect to the old hands by allowing them the due honour of getting it out of chests first.

And now to business and this is what I hope to sell at every publication from now on.

### IT'S HAPPENING IN SINGAPORE

#### 1. CASE REPORT

The Singapore Straits Times on 7 December 1971 printed the following report:

"Seconds after a skin diving enthusiast shot a two foot long fish near a broken-down kelong, he was found senseless on the seabed a coroner heard today.

"When Jimmy Foo Seck Dong, 29, a restaurant manager, was hauled out of the 40 feet deep water near Palau Sulu of Jurong, he failed to regain consciousness and died at Outram Road General Hospital on November 28. A member of the skin diving party, Bernard Chan, 25, told a coroner court he was diving near Foo when he heard a speargun shot.

"When Foo did not surface half a minute later Chan dived down to see if he needed help to haul in whatever he had caught.

"'I found a fish speared. I untangled the fish and took the spear and gun with me to the surface', Chan said. 'Three of my friends were in a nearby boat. I then realised that Foo was missing and called out to another diver.' Soh, a marketing executive, said he found Foo after a brief search.

"'Foo was on the seabed, face upwards with his diving gear still intact. I brought him up to the surface and applied mouth to mouth resuscitation' Soh said.

"He added that Foo was unconscious all the while and was bleeding

at the mouth.

"The court was told that Foo had been skin diving for the past six years and had gone spear fishing almost every week. Inspector Syed Kadir Alsree, the investigating officer, said the diving equipment Foo used was in good working condition.

"Verdict: Misadventure"

DIAGNOSIS (As CE used to say, if you haven't got it by now, give up diving).

Hyperventilation leading to drowning. SPUMS Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 1 published a write-up on this subject by Dr R Thomas.

I do not believe this is the first case happening in Singapore; certainly it will not be the last unless the public could be educated. In this respect I call on SPUMS to make a joint press release with me for publication in Singapore to herald a word of warning to the unheeding. I am awaiting your statements.

## 2. DEEP DIVE

A Deep Sea Diving Company in Singapore last week made an on-the-job dive off Sabah to 585 feet using pre-mixed Oxygen/Helium. I have not a clue what decompression tables they used. Don't ask them either, because they wouldn't tell you.

## 3. RECOMPRESSION FACILITIES

We are compiling a list of Companies possessing RCC facilities in and around Singapore. Suffice it to know that both the Singapore Maritime Command and the Royal Malaysian Navy stationed in Singapore do have decompression chambers capable of recompression therapy.

Attached is information volunteered by companies and institutions with RCC facilities [not published]. While obtaining this information it became very obvious to me that there are many ways we could help these companies and institutions while there are just as many ways they could help us with information and statistics.

A problem which you might have overcome but is now under consideration by us, is the mobilising of chambers for emergency use. One can clearly see the reluctance on the part of companies to avail their facilities for emergency use on the point that deaths might be attributed to them. Their argument is that one can never be too sure of chamber fires, defective compressors and scores of other things which can go wrong while treatment is in progress. What then?