



P.O. Box 453 Murrumbidgee South 2221 NSW

Visit our web page at

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~diving/stgeorge/stgeorge.htm>

January 2005

COMING UP

JANUARY

Sunday 9th.

Boat Dive The Gap Caves

Contact David Vandervelden on 9662 8115

Saturday 22nd.- Sunday 23rd.

SWANSEA/STOCKTON BEACH

After the success of last year's Four Wheel Dive weekend, the consensus was that another one was needed, although everyone wanted warmer weather, hence January. We will meet at the Swansea Bridge on Saturday about 9 am for a 9:15 to 9:30 dive (depends on strength of tide). You will need to leave Sydney about 7 am to make this. After a dive under the bridge, we will have morning tea before heading off to Stockton Beach for some 4WD driving and swimming before finding a camp site. On Sunday we will do some more exploring before returning back home.

There will be some spare spots in members' 4WDs, so even if you do not have one, it is likely that we can accommodate you. Even if you do not have camping gear, this can also probably be arranged. You can even come up just for the dive (many people did this last year). If you are interested in coming, please contact Michael McFadyen on 9558 8181 or email (see member's list). Vehicle owners should indicate how many spare spots that may have for non-4WD owners.

Wednesday 26th Australia Day

Kurnell dive and bbq

As the boat ramps are normally too busy on Australia Day, the club's dive event is a shore dive

and bbq. Why not come along to the birthplace of modern Australia for a dive and bbq. We will meet at about 9 am on the grassed area in front of the monument at Botany Bay NP. The tides are suitable for an incoming drift dive, so if the conditions are right, we can do the leap to the steps or even the monument or from the steps to the monument.

If you are interested, contact Michael McFadyen on 9585 6434 or email (see member's list) so that he can cater for the bbq (the club will provide a simple steak and sausage sizzle - byo drinks).

SOCIAL AFTERNOON AT THE CATERSONS.

Saturday 5th. February 2005.

25 Rosebery Street Heathcote.

Starting time 4.00 p.m.

Bring along your swimmers and something to throw on the barbie later in the evening.

We will supply salads, plates, cutlery, ice and glasses. Bring your own drinks.

The more the merrier. See you there.

For bookings contact Elly Caterson on 9520 9421 or e/mail lescat@dot.net.au.

Sunday 13th. February 2005.

This is a boat dive to Xanadu, a reef on the north side of Bate Bay in approx. 38 metres of water.

For bookings contact Les Caterson on 9520 9421 or e/mail lescat@dot.net.au

Sunday 20th

Boat Dive to Wollongong contact Philip Rose on 9543 0748

Saturday 26th

Social event The Anniversary Dinner to TBA contact Carol Mapstone 9531 1467

SHELLHARBOUR WEEKEND

Friday 20 to Sunday 22 May 2005

After an absence of a year, we have scheduled a weekend of diving at Wollongong and Shellharbour. As in previous years, we will stay at the Warilla Bowling Club which provides very cheap and excellent accommodation and facilities. We will use members boats for the diving. The plan is to arrive at Warilla on Friday evening and dive Saturday at Wollongong and Sunday at Shellharbour. Some members are also planning to dive Friday, so if you can, come down in the morning for a couple of dives. Hopefully we can dive the SS *Bombo*, the Five Islands, The Arch, The Pinnacles as well as Bass Point Island.

If you are interested in this weekend, please contact Michael McFadyen as soon as possible as the accommodation at the Club is always at a premium. He can be contacted via email as per the membership list or 9558 8181 [home]. Cost for the weekend will be about \$50 for accommodation and diving as normal.

Details for John Conolly's proposed Moreton Bay 'Esperence Star' Liveaboard Dive Trip July 2005

July Mon11th - Fri15th 2005

Cost. \$420 /diver. Includes everything - meals, accommodation, tanks, tank fills, etc.

We do three dives on each of the first two days, at least two on the third day, and if the tides are right, two night dives on Curtin Reef.

Refer to www.espaerancestar.com.au for a top informative website.

'Esperence Star' is skippered by legendary diver Trevor Jackson.

Transport to Brisbane - drive or fly. If flying, arrival by late Monday afternoon permits plenty of time for boarding. Several in a group can arrange an inexpensive minibus transfer to Scarborough (about 30 minutes drive North of the Airport). Car lockup (free security compound) facilities are at the marina. Those flying can sleep on board overnight (Thursday) at no extra cost and get their flight back on the Friday.

Would interested divers contact me on 95454553 or 0424248266 or email me on 'wjconolly@aol.com'

I will be needing to get a \$100 deposit asap as this boat is very popular. In November when I made the reservation it was the last week available in 2005. we need 12 divers.

LAST MONTH**Ulladulla SCAN Weekend**

by Michael McFadyen

On the weekend of 12 to 14 November 2004, the Scuba Clubs' Association of NSW (SCAN) held its annual dive weekend. For the first time the weekend was held at Ulladulla, just over 200 kilometres south of Sydney.

SCAN is composed of independent scuba diving clubs and membership is open to all such clubs in NSW and the ACT. Most of the independent clubs in NSW and ACT are members.



The weekend normally starts with divers arriving at the location on Friday evening but this weekend saw large numbers of St George Scuba Club and Ryde Underwater Club members together with a couple of South Pacific Divers' Club and Port Hacking Divers arriving on Wednesday and Thursday for some early diving. Thursday morning saw me taking my boat *Le Scat* with a full load of St George members and Kelly Jandik driving the Ryde club boat (with Ryde and St George members) out to Burrill Rocks. This is a fantastic dive location, with many different dives sites around the rocks. We had good conditions, with 15 metre visibility and lots of fishlife. A raging north-easterly that blew up while out at sea meant that a second dive was out of the question.



The next day saw four boats from St George as well as the Ryde boat out diving Burrill Rocks again. This time we dived Burrill Rocks Caves, an excellent dive site. A second dive was done by most at Burrill Rocks East Wall. Visibility this day was even better, 20 metres with very good fishlife again.

Friday night saw all the rest of the divers arrive. Members from Wollongong University Dive Club, Australian National University Dive Club, the Dive Organisation of the University of Technology Sydney (DOUTS), the Underwater Research Group as well as additional members of the four clubs already in attendance.



Saturday morning dawned with a big crowd of divers at the two Ulladulla Harbour boat ramps setting out for various dive sites. Burrill Rocks was again popular for the first dive but a very strong south-westerly change meant that this was not an option for later dives. During the day, divers dived Home Bommie, various parts of

Lighthouse Wall as well as North Bommie. The ANU divers went south to dive around Brush Island, including the wreck of the SS *Northern Firth*.

Saturday night was again the big SCAN barbecue. This started early with members supplying a great range of nibblies to go with pre-dinner drinks. Members of all the attending clubs mixed while sharing dive stories. As normal, SCAN supplied the food for the barbecue which was soon underway, with Dave Burns the Chef in charge. All members and their families enjoyed the barbecue, with everything consumed before the night was out.

For the first time in many years, the night did not end with members of St George Scuba Club being the last ones standing. This time, the younger members of the Wollongong and ANU unis were still up when all the members of the other clubs were well asleep in bed.



Sunday morning was perfect weather, flat seas and sunny skies. A little later start for most clubs saw all but one boat head south to Burrill Rocks to dive The Hole. Local diver, Ken Kates, had used his boat to take some of the DOUTS members diving over the weekend and this day he showed us this great site. While none of us actually found the feature after which the site was named, we all agreed that this deeper (33 metres or so) site was as good as any location in NSW.

By mid-afternoon, everyone had packed up and headed for home. This was a very successful weekend, with an attendance of over 80 from eight clubs. The nine boats used on the weekend did numerous trips out to the dive sites and everyone was happy with the range of dive sites

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

visited. Once again, St George Scuba Club took the prize for most members attending, with a total of 25 members and family.

The 2005 SCAN Dive Weekend will be held on the weekend of 11 to 13 March 2005 to better enable the university dive clubs to attend in greater numbers. This weekend will be held at Nelson Bay.

Many thanks to SCAN President, John Olsen and SCAN Treasurer, Les Caterson, who organised the weekend, the many members who assisted with the barbecue and catering. Thanks also to the members who brought their own boats or crewed the club boats. Thanks also to Ulladulla Headland Caravan Park where most divers stayed as well as Ulladulla Divers Supplies who provided air fills at a very good price.

Undersea Explorer Trip 2005

Carol & Rob Mapstone

With much excitement – (this holiday had been a long time coming!!), we set off on our journey north to dive from the Undersea Explorer at Osprey reef.

We flew to Cairns where we met up with some of the other members of DOUTS (University of Technology Dive Club), then on the shuttle bus for the hour road trip to Port Douglas. We then went straight to the office/shop which is based at the Marina and had our first glimpse of the ship that was to be our home for the next 7 days. We got all our gear on board then went into town to make a few last minute purchases, have our evening meal, then back on board to meet the staff. We had our final briefing including safety procedures, then headed off for the overnight trip to the outer barrier reef.

1st day was spent at the Ribbon Reefs doing some easy dives, getting used to the boat layout and diving procedure. Flat seas, blue warm water with usual array of tropical fish and coral gardens. Viz was varied between 10-20 metres on all the dives that day. We then had another overnight trip, this time out to Osprey reef, which lies approx 250 nautical miles off the coast, north of Cooktown. This is what we were waiting for! Very blue, almost navy water, flat seas, blue sky and 27 degree water temperature! The viz was 30 mt + and an amazing variety of fish life, including big schools of pelagics and

white tips and grey whaler sharks were encountered on every dive.

For the next few days, we quickly adopted the habits of live-aboard diving!

The routine involved an early morning light breakfast then first dive of the day at about 7am, then back on board for hot breakfast followed by 2nd morning dive then lunch which was usually followed by a siesta on the upper-deck. The afternoon dive was followed by afternoon tea then a night dive, evening meal, video (if able) before crashing out from the strain of diving and eating!! The diving at Osprey is excellent. Most of the sites are moored with amazing drop offs and walls going down to about 5000 mtrs right up to 5 metres, so wonderful, multi –level diving with full range of marine life to see at all the different depths. We were also able to participate in the research they perform on a regular basis such as nautilus observation and shark tagging/identification. Nearly all the dives were drift dives with an easy drop off and pick up system which included a height adjustable back platform which was lowered as you approached then it was just a case of swimming straight onto it where the crew helped you with fins etc.

Because the seas were so flat, we were also able to dive at a site known as shark reef which is just south of Osprey and rarely visited as it has no cay or shallow reef protection. The reef itself is pristine but subject to some quite strong currents which made the dives interesting!! The viz here was the most I have ever experienced with estimates of 60+ metres. Schooling hammerheads were seen off in the blue with lots of whalers and white tips cruising by. We were also lucky to encounter 2 large scalloped hammerheads, which came and investigate what all the noise was. (The divemasters would take down an ordinary plastic drink bottle and “crack” it underwater which did actually attract the sharks!). We were only able to spend the day at shark reef before heading back to Osprey for the night dive and then reluctantly left Osprey for the overnight trip back to the Ribbon and Agincourt Reefs. We then spent the next morning diving here (2 dives) before heading back to Port Douglas. All up, you are able to do 22-24 dives (usually 3 day, 1 night dive) on this trip.

We were blessed by great weather and wonderful conditions the whole time we were out at Osprey and experienced some of the best diving I have done both in Australia and overseas. The accommodation on board is basic but very comfortable with a mixture of queen-sized cabins and twin bunk bedded rooms. Other facilities are all shared. There is a large dining/meeting area inside and an open but covered eating/sleeping/lounging area upstairs, which was well utilised during the day. There is also a “dry” room where all the microscopes (for all that research) and electronic equipment such as videos, television and computers are kept. This is where they have the biology talks/education videos, which you can go to if desired or just hang out and wait for the evening movie. The staff are nearly all marine biologists with dive master and instructor going out on every dive (usually the cook and assistant would also jump in with the first group but made sure they were back in time to tend to our needs!!). If the dive reports were good, the rest of the staff would jump in once we were all back – this was often the best time to go diving as with less divers in the water, more “things” would come in to investigate what was happening!!

DOUTS have an annual trip on the Undersea Explorer, usually at the same time (November). The trip includes 6 days/nights on-board with all diving and meals, transfers from Cairns to Port Douglas and one night’s accommodation in Port Douglas on the return journey. They are also able to organise this trip at a discount price (\$1650 this year) and try if able to secure the whole boat (20 divers). The trip is open initially to DOUTS members, then opened further to other SCAN club members.

This is a fantastic, affordable live-aboard experience and so enjoyable that we have put our names down for the trip for next year. I will keep everyone informed via the newsletter of the trip for 2005 for those who may be interested in joining us.

Middle Ground- Sunday 19 December

By Natasha Barnett

We got off to a very hot and sticky start. Two boats went out, Ian Gowen’s Boat and Les with Le Scat. On Ian’s boat were Ian, Peter Flockhart, Eddie Ivers and Phil Rose. On Le

Scat were Les, Rob & Carol Mapstone, Sheila Baldock, Paul Barnett and myself. We headed off out of Port Hacking and it was not long before we had anchored up and were heading down the anchor line, much to everyone’s relief as it was very hot. The vis was poor, about 5-6 meters. We spent most of the dive exploring the sponges and re-acquainting ourselves with the smaller creatures of the ocean, everyone seemed to have an enjoyable dive. Once we upped anchor (some having more difficulties than others!) we headed off to Dark Bay for morning tea. A few of us jumped back into the water to cool off and have a bit of a swim around. Les was true to his word and brought along a Chrissy cake which was enjoyed by all. After a much enjoyed natter we headed back down Port Hacking for home. Another enjoyable dive and morning.

Merry Christmas to all.

Chuuk Lagoon Trip - Sept 2004 by Michael McFadyen

On the evening of 2 September 2004, Eddy Labour, Louise Crowell, Ida diCamillo, Dick Fish, Daryl Gibbs, Heinz Bendinger, Phil Rose, Peter Trayhurn, Bruce Graham, Kelly Jandik and I as well as Ryde Underwater Club member Martin Clarke, assembled at Cairns International Airport to await the flight early the next morning (12:10 am). Most of us had arrived earlier that day and had dinner and a few drinks in Cairns before returning to the airport.

The plane was on time and we had a four and a bit hour flight to Guam where we had to wait another four hours for the connecting flight to Chuuk. The Guam airport is now a very modern affair, hundreds of times better than when I last transited through it in 1991. We did not get much sleep, either on the flight or at the airport, but most managed a couple of hours.

We arrived in Chuuk to a warm day and were met by the owner of the Truk Stop Hotel, Bill, and his dive organiser, Warren. We settled into our rooms bought some supplies (breakfast, beers etc). After lunch, headed out for the first dive of the trip.

The Truk Lagoon Dive Centre has a couple of boats, one a large 40 plus foot twin diesel and a smaller twin outboard powered boat. We were on the larger boat but there was only one problem. One motor was missing, away getting repaired.

This severely limited the speed of the boat. As well, there were problems starting the engines which meant that once started, the engine was left running the whole day (a little noisy when having surface intervals).

Anyway, off we went to the *Heian Maru*. This ship was a submarine tender and has fantastic things like periscopes and torpedoes in hulls and passageways. What an introduction to Chuuk for everyone. The water was 29 degrees or so every dive and visibility varied from 30 metres to five to seven for a couple of the wrecks. The *Heian* was about 15 metres or so.

Dinner choices were the Truk Stop restaurant (mostly good, fair priced), Blue Lagoon Resort, formerly Truk Intercontinental Hotel (much better than last time, about same price as TS but poor service) and a little restaurant across the road from the Truk Stop (not bad and quite cheap). The beer prices were outrageous so we ended up most nights having nibblies and beers on the wharf watching the sun go down.

The next day we headed off to the *Gosei Maru*. This was an excellent dive, with 25 metre viz. Next dive was the *Fujikawa Maru*. This was a lot dirtier (strange as it is not all that far from the other wreck) and the front holds were filthy. We suspect that some previous divers must have really stirred it up as the viz was only a couple of metres. Still, an excellent dive. At the end of our bottom time, we went to ascend the mooring line but we could not find it. Daryl ascended and I could see him scanning the waters, looking for the boat. I ascended and at first could not see the boat either. Then we saw it miles away. It started back towards us so I descended to do some more safety stop time. It turned out that the boat had broken the mooring line and it had taken the skipper a while to pull all the deco lines etc in.

Sunday 5 September saw us diving the *Nippo Maru*. This is one of the best wrecks in Chuuk, with a mini tank on the deck, trucks on the sand and deck, field guns on the rear deck and large gun barrels and gun bases on the rear deck and holds. The day was very hot and absolutely no wind with mirror seas.

From here we went to the *Kiyosumi Maru*. This is another great wreck, with things as diverse as a room with five or so lanterns, bicycles, spare props and more. After the dive, it was very hot and as we waited for Martin to finish his deco

(he misread his computer and stayed way more than he needed), I started to feel very faint and funny. I was very hot and even though I had been drinking lots of water, I was burning up. For the past couple of days I had a very hard bloated stomach and had not been to the toilet. Finally Martin was back on board and we headed back to shore. I was now a bit dizzy and we had run out of water on the boat.

To be continued

A couple of shots at Kurnell one Sunday with Michael and friends

By Glenn Townsend



COMMITTEE

The committee of the Club for 2004 - 5 is:

PRESIDENT:	Steve Shaw -	9868 4056	srcshaw@au1.ibm.com
VICE PRESIDENT:	Phil Rose -	9543 0748	pvrose@bigpond.com.au
SECRETARY:	Carol Mapstone -	9531 1467	cmartin@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
TREASURER:	Les Caterson	9520 9421	lescat@dot.net.au
ASSISTANT SECRETARY:/TREASURER:			
	David Vandervelden	0414 240 992	davidvan@tpg.com.au
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Russell Stoker -	0412 963 527	rstoker@optusnet.com.au

INFO OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Many members are still enjoying “*Le Scat*” boat dives on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, with Wednesday being the most popular by far. Don’t forget that to book a boat dive aboard “*Le Scat*” it is only a matter of contacting Les by phone on 9520 9421 for Wednesday or Saturday dives or Michael by phone on 9558 8181 for Sunday dives. (Of course St.George Scuba Club members take preference.)

Just a short note to let all members know that our long time member, John McDonald, who know lives in Thailand , is ok and his town was only slightly damaged by the earthquake and is nowhere near the tsunami affected area

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS

1st Prize - Chiaka Hewitt – Ham
2nd Prize - Geoff Sanders – Scotch
3rd Prize - Friend of Peter Flockart - Port Gift Pack
4th Prize - Robyn Hewitt - Mugs & Lead Light
 (Donated by Ray Moulang)

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 19th January 2005 at the St. George Rowing Club, Levy Street Arncliffe at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

NEWSLETTER

Please send items for the Newsletter to me by the 28th of the month rstoker@optusnet.com.au .
 Please note that if you want to send any digital photographs for the newsletter, they be resized to about 150 dpi and a size of about 75 mm wide or high. Change them to black and white and save as a jpg file. This will make the file much smaller and quicker for you to e-mail but still good enough to print.

Xmas Party 2004

