



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 453 Hurstville South 2221 NSW

February 2007

Shore Dive The Leap (Kurnell)

7th January 2007

by Roxanne Fea

Jase organised the first dive of the year on the calendar at the Leap to Steps on 7th January 2007. We hadn't dived Kurnell for many months and it was good to be back.

For me the Leap is a smorgasbord of everything; an exciting entry, peaceful sponge gardens full of diverse macro life, the occasional big thing like a grey nurse or kingfish out on the sand and a view over the CBD upon exiting. Very nice.

However we felt a little uneasy after our walk out to the cliff's edge. A broody sea in the morning first seen from Malabar had grown into a bad-tempered 3m+ swell but I'm pleased to say Phil Rose, John Pryor, Kelly, Michael, Heinz, Jase & I decided to go for it anyway as this was one of those rare days during this uneven summer where Kurnell was a viable option.

Given the seas we decided that exiting at the Steps wasn't going to happen (no-one wanted to end the dive in a washing machine Ed.) so we agreed on Monument as the exit. This was the longest dive I would have done to date at Kurnell.

When we reached the bottom the waves breaking head-high over the Leap platform were a little too much so we headed north to the slightly more sheltered fishing point where annihilation by the sea seemed less likely (and the walk back uphill was not going to be an option for me!!!). I am never one for pondering my own demise so I hit the water as soon as I can, forgetting in the process of advising my poor buddy who was left last man standing.

The photo I include here is the best of the bunch taken in the choppy seas, it's out of focus but even from my vantage point here you can see the typically tightly huddled behaviour of threatened divers...



Preparing to take the big leap!

By Roxanne Fea

John Pryor's entry was the most complex; I'll give him a 9.8 for doing a 2m drop and losing – and recovering – his fin in the process.

The water was 14 degrees, continuing the recent cold snap. The visibility wasn't too bad considering the surge; we saw up to 4 sea dragons – all males carrying eggs – and 5 cuttlefish including one that I reckoned was over 1m long. Good thing it was sound asleep.

I also spotted a school of eastern garfish, three flutemouth and a White's seahorse out on the sand-line at 18-21m.

This is my favourite part of the Leap dive; just cruising along the reef profile looking out into the murky green gloom waiting for something big to come by. We've seen grey nurse, huge king fish and have heard reports of turtles here. But not today...

We all managed to stick together until Jase and I found a beautiful purple lined nembrotha (*Nembrotha rutilans*) which can be sometimes seen in Sydney; this is as far south as this little critter usually gets.



A rare visit to Sydney by a tropical Nudibranch – By Roxanne Fea

50 minutes later we all surfaced near the beach at Monument and trudged up the park towards our cars. Nothing like a bit of extreme diving to start the year off...

Jervis Bay Boys Week Away “Winter in January”

By John Beddie, Ray Moulang, Mike Scotland, Paul Pacey and Eddie Ivers hereafter called the “The Revolting Crew”.

On Friday Jan 5th we arrived at our homey 3 bedroom house in Sanctuary Point with one tiny overworked dunny. We opened the bar at 2pm. We have been in training for weeks at various bars around Sydney.

Saturday. Woken up at the ungentle manly hour of 5.45am.

Put boat in at Murray’s Beach just after 7. Went to Point Perpendicular to find 2 metre swells and 20 to 30km NE wind howling down at us. It was not looking good! Dived little pyramid, viz was about 2-4 mt of brown goop down to 14 metres then a brilliant 30mt viz of crystal clear but freezing cold water. This lead to a hot debate, was it 10, 11 or 13 degrees C. We decided it was 11degrees as Johns Darth Vader mask fogged up so much he could not see his gauges as the dew point of water vapour at 11 degrees had been passed.

We heard the news headlines, 18 degrees at Bondi beach. We would have gladly swapped the 18 degrees of luxury, bloody luxury compared to our 11 degrees Celsius. Our five wet suit divers are now in the market for five heated dry suits. John’s head was frozen due to not wearing his hood, no brain no pain say’s Ray.

We went to Boat Harbour for lunch and back to Point Perp. for more ice diving. John joked about

diving “The Docks” but the crew threatened mutiny.

Sunday. Back to Point Prep again, dive site was 50 m east. We found a female Loggerhead turtle at 30m frozen to the rocks. The rest of the dive was spent admiring the brilliant sponge gardens and going through swim throughs under the spectacular giant boulders.

Monday. Up at sparrows fart 5.45am. The southerly had hit. We decided to dive rather than fish. Big improvement. No Northerly wind at the ramp.

Decided to dive the Wall at 33mt at East Bowen. Guaranteed to be clean blue water, we thought. A nasty Southerly swell had picked up. The sea eagles hanging motionless in the wind above the cliffs looking like two kites. The viz was expected to be dirty on top and 30mt below. However, all of us head butted the anchor at 33mt because it was disguised by brown “goop” all the way to the bottom. Some one had forgotten to turn on the light. Viz was 1mt to 1 arm length, take your pick. Morning tea was at Murray’s beach.

Second dive was on sea grass beds covered in white daisies. (white anemones). The sea grass was alive with crabs, rays and clams, a whole new ecosystem. Nice warm water at 13 degrees C. We went hiking for an hour up through the bush to the cliffs above the docks. We made it back safely even though we did not have any NPWS employee leading the way. John cannot understand how nice the coast patrol is down here at J. B. “Lovely to talk to you, John” and “Have a lovely evening!”, “Pleasure to help you”.



More Nudibranch action from JB! By Paul Pacey

Tuesday was a no dive day due to the horrible weather. We went to the Cape St. George

Lighthouse, which we think was named after our Dive Club, then on to Stoney Creek light house to see the angry sea and the green water churning up like bile stew. Later in the day Paul, Eddie and Mike went for a walk from Summercloud Bay to St Georges Head which is an excellent walk.



Checking out the dark places By Paul Pacey

Wednesday. The weather had improved with only a light breeze. Unfortunately a 3m swell was still rolling in. The fearless Captain Beddie headed Sea John north as we were hoping to dive Cathedral Cave but this was found to be impossible due to the swell creating a washing machine effect within 15 metres of the cliffs. We pressed on to The Drum and Drum Sticks and proceeded to dive the Wandra which is the wreck of a steamer which had sunk right behind The Drum in 25 metres of very dirty bile green water – well, it sure was dirty when we went down there.

We had no problem locating the wreck which made for a really interesting dive. The hull is not visible although you can see parts of it protruding from the sand however the boiler, twin two cylinder steam engines, shafts and both propellers are above the sand and are fascinating to study.

The wreckage is covered in marine life (we even found a Mosaic Moray eel) and we all ran to the deco limit before ascending. After a coffee break we headed back down to the safety of Jervis Bay where we decided to dive the Middle Grounds. At Middle Grounds the water looked clear on the top – but it was 3 metres viz on the bottom - why is the sea so cruel? We saw some stuff down there but don't ask me what it was. Hey Dave, this place is rotten with anchor's!

Thursday saw a depressing weather forecast however it didn't seem too bad after we made it across to Point Perpendicular so we headed north to attack The Arch. The swell had other ideas and a unanimous vote had us heading back down to the shelter of the Bay again from the north easterly. We decided to dive the eastern edge Point Perp. This dive was guided by Mike who must be related to Captain Cook as we went in circles, squares, triangles and some other shapes which I don't know the names of. We had been hoping to find the same good viz we remembered from Sunday but it remained a memory as the viz was 6 metres of very dark brown goop in the good spots.

We're not sure how narked Mike was but at one stage he was seen without a reg and kissing a hot pink sponge – weird, really weird. Also large Bull Ray was encountered at 30 m resting in a hole. Only found one anchor and later Eddie was heard to say that he could have raised it with his sausage – LOL.

After a coffee break in Boat Harbour we headed back to dive the eastern corner of Point Perp. We anchored in 7 metres of water which made the viz look good. This was a good dive with quite a variety of marine life being observed. We saw a magnificent Eastern Blue Devilfish, a large Bull ray, Morays, Cuttlefish, a large school of Bonito, a small garden of sea whips covered in brilliant white anemones and all the other usual offenders.



A rough looking turtle! By Paul Pacey

Les would have needed to find a full wetsuit because of the almost single digit water temperature. Shiela would have easily caused Sanctuary Point to be completely drained of travel calm pills with the ridiculous big seas and

strong wind. Every one agreed unanimously that Heinz would have spent lots of time testing and retesting his latest batch of red after one look at the brown goop viz.

During the week, we saw lots of amazing marine life. Two Hurdy Gurdy sea slugs (*Halgerda* sp), a Female Loggerhead turtle, bull rays, eagle rays, kingies, and colourful sponge gardens. There were quite a few imaginary bities lurking metres away on the wrong side of the one to two metre viz but they didn't strike.

Other highlights of the week included Eddie's rendition of "When the saints come marching in" on the piano., everyone in dad's dive army managing to stay up until 9:30 on the good nights, the gourmet delights which came from the kitchen every two nights such as curries, surf and turf and Chinese duck with bamboo shoots.

And for those of you who may have wondered. NO, we did not beat the drinking record of the girl's famous weekend away last year. Not by a long way.

All in all, we had a fantastic trip in spite of the less than perfect weather. Boatloads of thanks to John for making his boat available and to Ray for organising the accommodation.

South West Rocks – Boat diving

22nd January – 26th January 2007

By Brian Byrnes

The main attraction of diving at South West Rocks is the fish-life paradise of Fish Rock, and its well-known tunnel. Swimming through the tunnel involves passing through dense schools of bulls-eyes, watching out for the painted crays, and trying to avoid the big wobbegongs lying on the bottom. Outside the shallow end of the tunnel there's a gutter in which many grey nurses cruise up and down.

And the group of myself, Paul Pacey, Rob Mapstone, John Conolly, Rob Tudgeon and Mike Scotland were there to enjoy it all.

On the first day we did two dives at Fish Rock, and swam through the tunnel in both directions. Outside the tunnel, the viz was less than 5 m, and didn't improve a whole lot during the week. But despite that, there was always lots to see, from sharks to colourful, darting butterfly fish.

Day two started at Fish Rock, where some dwarf lion fish made their appearance. For the second dive we went to Green Rock, where the sights

included an octopus or two, and lots more wobbegongs, banded, spotted and dwarfed.



Grey Nurse Sharks in the cave
By Brian Byrnes

On day three we started again at Fish Rock. On the surface we saw a big loggerhead turtle, and also saw a big one asleep on the bottom at about 30 m.

At one point on this dive I found my face a lot closer to a wobbegong's head than I would I have chosen. I got to meet a very friendly white-eyed moray. And I saw my first trumpet fish, which was being worked on by a cleaner wrasse.



Mike Scotland – By Brian Byrnes

The second dive that day was at Black Rock. I was with Rob Mapstone when I looked over and saw this big tube-like thing on the sea floor. "What's that", I thought. Then, as I followed the large conical tube to the left, I finally saw the saucer section. It was ray, and by golly, didn't it look big. While we were watching, a grey nurse slowly swam up behind the ray, right over its tail.

Just before it reached the tail's base, the shark turned and swam away. Not long after, the ray slowly lifted off, swivelled right, and flew away.



Black tip bullseyes – By Brian Byrnes

For this day's diving we were joined by three researchers from Macquarie University, come to collect some sea urchins. They said that the ones they were after are delicacy in Japan, and sell for \$2,000 a kilo in Tokyo. During a couple of dives they collected hundreds of them, and then headed back to Sydney.

The last day began as usual at fish rock. We descended through a small school of batfish to the area near the deep end of the tunnel. After swimming through the tunnel, I swam out along the left side of the gutter, past the grey nurses swimming up and down the middle, just like before.

I saw a shark swimming towards me. I didn't worry about this, since I just expected it to swim around me while I stayed near the wall, just like before. But instead it stopped right in front of me, and then it just hung there. After a few long seconds it suddenly whipped itself away from the wall, cracking its tail as it went.

What am I supposed to do when a shark gives me a dominance challenge anyway? Roll over and offer a fin?

The last dive of the trip was a drift dive at Green Island. The current picked up soon after we started, and it wasn't so much a relaxing drift as the underwater version of white-water rafting. The only things we got to see during the dive were big - including a big ray, and a guitar shark. What a rush.

REGULAR EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 21st February 2007 at the St. George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street Woolli Creek at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

Thursday Night Dives

A record 15 divers attended a recent dive, these are proving very popular. Details for all upcoming dives are on the calendar on the right side of the Club's web site. From February, the email advising about night dives will not contain the location of the dive but will refer members to the calendar. Full details will be available from this location about the proposed dive.

Other Dives

Many other dives are advised in the news section of the Club's web site. If you are interested in a dive, have a look at the news section a few days before a weekend and you may find others already planning a dive. You can also place your own news item there (but remember it may take a day or two to appear as it needs to be authorised by a web site administrator).

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Girls Weekend - Shore Diving 16th – 18th February 2007

The trip is planned for Nelson Bay. Please contact Kelly Jandik if you are interested Ph 9558 8181.

Ship Rock - Shore Dive 17th February 2007

High tide at Fort Denison is 8:50am (adjusted for daylight savings). If you are interested please contact Paul Pacey on Ph. 9527 2501.

Coral Sea - Liveaboard 22nd Feb – 1st Mar 2007

Please contact Peter Trayhurn if you interested in this trip Ph. 9546 5112.

Anniversary Dinner – Social Evening 24th February 2007

Please see the flyer at the end of this newsletter.

SS Hilda – Wreck Dive 25th February 2007

This wreck is located off Cape Baily lighthouse at Kurnell. The depth is from 20 to 25 metres. The wreck is well broken up but the major parts are still generally lying in the shape of a vessel. In addition, the engine is fully intact.

We have two boats available for this dive. One will be leaving from Port Botany and the other from Yowie Bay.

If you are interested, please contact Michael McFadyen on michael@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info and also nominate your preferred departure location.

Minmi Trench – FREE Boat Diving! 4th March 2007

This event replaces last years SCAN day boat diving (cancelled due to weather) so members will dive FREE!

The dives will go out from Frenchmans Bay (La Perouse) using two club boats. We are likely to try and dive the new wall that John Beddie found off Kurnell.

Bring your bangers, beers and bar stools for a BBQ afterwards. Please contact Jason Coombs Ph. 9345 4599 or J.Coombs@unsw.edu.au.

SCAN Weekend Port Stephens 9th – 11th March 2007

Just a reminder to all members to get your bookings in for the annual SCAN weekend. This year it will be held from Friday 9th. March to Sunday 11th. March up at Nelson Bay.

Bookings for cabins, contact Les on 9520 9421 or e/mail lescat2@bigpond.net.au

For camping or caravan sites contact Soldiers Point Holiday Park
Ridgeway Avenue
Soldiers Point 2317
Phone 1800 600 204 or 4982 7237

Undersea Explorer – Liveboard October 2007

See flyer at the end of the newsletter for this very popular trip.

OTHER NEWS

Recent Web Site Updates

Some changes to existing documents have been made on the web site. As well, some documents not previously available on the web have been placed there. These include Boat Diving Etiquette, Club Diving Guidelines, the Club's Constitution and a new Membership List. These are all accessible once you have logged in as a member. The link is on the left menu.

Tank Testing

A tank test run will be done in February. See the web site for more information. Tanks must be given to Michael McFadyen or Kelly Jandik before 11 February. Cost will be \$20 each.

Dive Gear Order

Another order for dive gear from Dive Imports will be placed after the February meeting. See the Club web site for more details as well as pricing of main items. Note that steel tanks are said to be about to be dropped from their range.

Dry Suit for sale - Suit woman size 10 – 12



If anyone is interested they can contact Peter Mason on Ph (02) 9531 1531 or e-mail pjmason@speednet.com.au

Undersea Explorer & Yongala Trip Saturday 13th October 2007 to Sunday 21st October 2007

Undersea Explorer is so popular that our scheduled trip in early October was booked out! So too were the other expeditions around October. Undersea have come to the party and re-scheduled a Ribbon Reef Expedition and Maintenance period to provide us with a 5 day Osprey Reef Expedition. It's the same expedition itinerary as last year, with one less day on the Ribbon Reefs. Due to popular demand, we have added an optional Yongala diving extension.

Undersea has a maximum capacity of 20 divers and Yongala Dive has a maximum of 12 divers. Undersea will hold as many spots as we have deposits for. So be quick!

ITINERY

Saturday 13th	Own transport arrangements ready for boarding, 5pm Port Douglas
Sunday 14th	Cod Hole and Ribbon Reefs – 4 dives, steam overnight to Osprey
Monday 15th	Osprey Reef – 4 dives
Tuesday 16th	Osprey Reef – 4 dives, steam overnight to Ribbon Reefs
Wednesday 17th	Ribbon Reefs – 4 dives
Thursday 18th	Ribbon Reefs – 2 dives, Return to Port Douglas 5pm
Friday 19th	Own transport arrangements to Cairns and Sydney Yongala extension (approx details)
Thursday 18th	Travel to Ayr, Accommodation Yongala Dive
Friday 19th	Morning Dive Yongala – 2 dives, Accommodation Yongala Dive Ayr
Saturday 20th	Morning Dive Yongala – 2 dives, Accommodation Yongala Dive Ayr
Sunday 21st	Own Transport arrangements home.

Cost

Transport to Cairns	Own Cost
Transport from Cairns Airport to Port Douglas	\$25 approx
Undersea Explorer, 5 Day Osprey Reef Trip	\$1735 (less, with more than 10 divers), plus Fuel Levy and Reef Tax \$90
Accommodation Port Douglas	\$80 approx
Transport to Ayr and Ayr to Townsville Airport	\$110 approx
Yongala Dive	\$370 approx
Transport to Sydney Own Cost	

Payment Deposit required now, for Undersea \$250
 Deposit required now, for Yongala Dive \$50
 Further Deposit required by 2nd April, Undersea \$300
 Balance Due by 2nd August \$TBC due to volume discounts
 EFT Details Saint George Scuba Club Inc
 Commonwealth Bank
 BSB: 062 028
 Acc: 00800455

For more information on diving Osprey Reef and the SS Yongala have a look at www.undersea.com.au and www.yongaladive.com.au or talk to some of the members that went last year.

To book, pay your deposit and contact Kelly Jandik at kelly@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info or 9558 8181

Come along and celebrate the
St. George Scuba Club's

34th. Anniversary
 24th. February at 7pm.
 at the

Thai Rose Restaurant

Shop 1, 10-14 Boyle Street, Sutherland.

Thai banquet \$25 per person
 (wine supplied)

**Ring Elly on 9520 9421 or
 e/mail lescat2@bigpond.net.au**

The Committee for 2006 – 2007 is:

PRESIDENT:	Kelly Jandik	9558 8181	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Phil Rose	9543 0748	pvrose5@bigpond.net.au
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Please send items for the Newsletter to me by the 28th of the month

Newsletter@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au