



# *Sea Braggin'*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

***- AUGUST 2011 - Edited by Ray Moulang -***

***Included in this issue are Dive Reports from :..***

**Natasha Naude, Digby Naude, Ian Roffey, Nancy Scoleri, Gary Perkins,  
Fiona Hall, James Matthews and Sarah Lockley; Ken Ridley & Team  
and Mike Scotland**

**A BIG THANK YOU GOES TO THEM.**

From Shore Dive  
Monthly Wrap



Whites Sea Horse, Ron W  
© Ron Walsh





# **What's On - AUGUST - 2011 -**

WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT
<b><u>Saturday</u></b> <b><u>7 th</u></b>	<b><u>Deep Dive</u></b> <b><u>SS Tuggerah/</u></b> <b><u>SS Undola</u></b>	<b><u>Michael</u></b> <b><u>McFadyen</u></b> <b><u>9545 5596</u></b>	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting Rowers Club 8pm	Jason Coombs 9345 4599
<b><u>Saturday</u></b> <b><u>7 th</u></b>	<b><u>SHORE DIVE</u></b> <b><u>THE LEAP 1pm</u></b>	<b><u>PAUL PACEY</u></b> <b><u>9527 2501</u></b>	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Rowers Club TANK TESTING PICK UP	HEINZ BENDINGER 0427 068 267
<b><u>Friday</u></b> <b><u>12th to</u></b> <b><u>14th</u></b>	<b><u>WEEKEND TRIP</u></b> <b><u>JERVIS BAY</u></b>	<b><u>Natasha</u></b> <b><u>Naude</u></b> <b><u>0410 074 677</u></b>	Sunday 20th	Boat Dive MINMI TRENCH	NANCY SCOLERI 6533 6869
<b><u>Sunday</u></b> <b><u>14th</u></b>	<b><u>SHORE DIVE</u></b> <b><u>SHIPROCK</u></b>	<b><u>Michael</u></b> <b><u>McFadyen</u></b> <b><u>9545 5596</u></b>	TUESDAY 23RD	RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER DIVE POW Hospital	Jason Coombs 9345 4599
			Sunday 28th	DEEP DIVE LONG REEF	GARY PERKINS 9533 6869

# *What's On - SEPTEMBER - 2011 -*

WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT
<b>SATURDAY</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Deep Dive</i> <i>SS Tuggerah/ SS</i> <i>Undola</i>	<i>Michael McFadyen</i> 9545 5596	<b><u>SUNDAY</u></b> <b><u>11<sup>TH</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Boat Dive</u></b> <b><u>The Colours</u></b> <b><u>Rose Bay</u></b>	<b><u>Ida DeCamillo</u></b> <b><u>9560 6082</u></b>
<b>SUNDAY</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 16th	<i>Overseas Trip</i> <i>Rabaul</i>	<b>PAUL PACEY</b> 9527 2501	<b><u>SUNDAY</u></b> <b><u>18<sup>TH</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Boat Dive</u></b> <b><u>Henry Head</u></b> <b><u>and BBQ</u></b>	<b><u>Mark Ridsdale</u></b> <b><u>9558 5196</u></b>
<b>SUNDAY</b> 4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Shore Dive</i> <i>The Leap</i>	TO BE ADVISED	<b><u>WEDNESDAY</u></b> <b><u>21<sup>st</sup></u></b>	<b><u>CLUB MEETING</u></b> <b><u>8 PM</u></b> <b><u>ROWERS CLUB</u></b>	<b><u>Jason Coombs</u></b> <b><u>9345 4599</u></b>
<b>SATURDAY</b> 10 <sup>TH</sup>	<i>Special Night Dive</i> <i>Inscription Point</i> <i>Kurnell 6pm</i>	<i>Gary Dunnett</i> 9542 6481	<b><u>SATURDAY</u></b> <b><u>24<sup>TH</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Boat Dive</u></b> <b><u>Middle Ground</u></b> <b><u>Ramp To be Advised</u></b>	<b><u>GARY</u></b> <b><u>PERKINS</u></b> <b><u>9533 6869</u></b>
			<b><u>FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup></u></b> <b><u>TO 3<sup>RD</sup> OCT</u></b> <b><u>LONG WIEND</u></b>	<b><u>TERRIGAL</u></b> <b><u>EX HMAS</u></b> <b><u>ADELAIDE</u></b>	<b><u>NANCY</u></b> <b><u>SCOLERI</u></b> <b><u>6533 6869</u></b>

## **Diving the HMAS Adelaide**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, the Ex HMAS Adelaide was scuttled at last! So let's go and dive this newest NSW dive site.

**WHEN:** October long Week-end, from Friday 30<sup>th</sup> of September to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of October.

**DIVING:** Double boat dives Saturday, Sunday and Monday (two days on the HMAS Adelaide and one day on Froggy Cave and surrounding reefs). An additional dive per day can be organised if enough interest.



Terrigal Dive centre has 2 boats that can accommodate up to 7 divers each, so a maximum of 14 divers. Check <http://www.terrigaldive.com.au/index.html> for more details.

Their retail rates for double dives are \$130 for the HMAS Adelaide (includes a Government fee) and \$110 for reef diving. These prices do not include any discount and will be a bit less depending on how many divers we got.

**ACCOMODATION:** Work in progress, I am looking at cabins in various holiday parks. Will get more details when I know how many people are coming.

If you are interested, please contact Nancy at [nancyscoleri@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nancyscoleri@yahoo.com.au).

## **Unfinancial Members - St George Scuba Club**

Under the rules of the Club, members who do not renew their membership by today are no longer members of the Club. We are aware that some people are not going to renew their membership due to moving away from Sydney etc, but there are many who may have just forgotten to renew.

Please email [membership@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au](mailto:membership@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au) with details so we can chase it up.

If you have not paid and but intend to renew, please complete the attached form and email to the membership email address and pay your fee by EFT to St George Scuba Club Inc, BSB 062 028 A/c No. 0080 0455. Make sure that you put in the comments field Your Name.

Members who have not renewed by COB Tuesday 2 August will be removed from the email lists and have access to the Club's web site and Facebook page removed.

If you have any questions, please email the membership address.

Michael McFadyen  
Webmaster  
St George Scuba Club  
[www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au](http://www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au)

# ***- Recent Club Happenings -***

## **DIVING EX-HMAS BRISBANE Wed 6 – Sun 10 July 2011**

**Natasha Naude, Digby Naude, Ian Roffey, Nancy Scoleri, Gary Perkins, Fiona Hall, James Matthews and Sarah Lockley**

It was a slightly rocky start to the trip for some, with both Ian and the Sarah experiencing flight cancellations courtesy of Jetstar – both were booked to fly direct to Maroochydore but ended up having to pay considerably extra for Qantas flights into Brisbane.

Ian managed to get the same flight as Digby and jumped in the chauffeured van we had arranged, while Sarah missed the Friday morning reef dives and joined us for Friday afternoon and Saturday morning.

Despite these logistical bugs, once everyone arrived things ran a little more smoothly!

Our accommodation consisted of two very pleasant apartments on Alexander Headland, Mooloolaba, with 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms 4 and a lovely balcony with water views.

After a late night getting there, we all hit the sack as soon as we could ready for diving on Thursday.

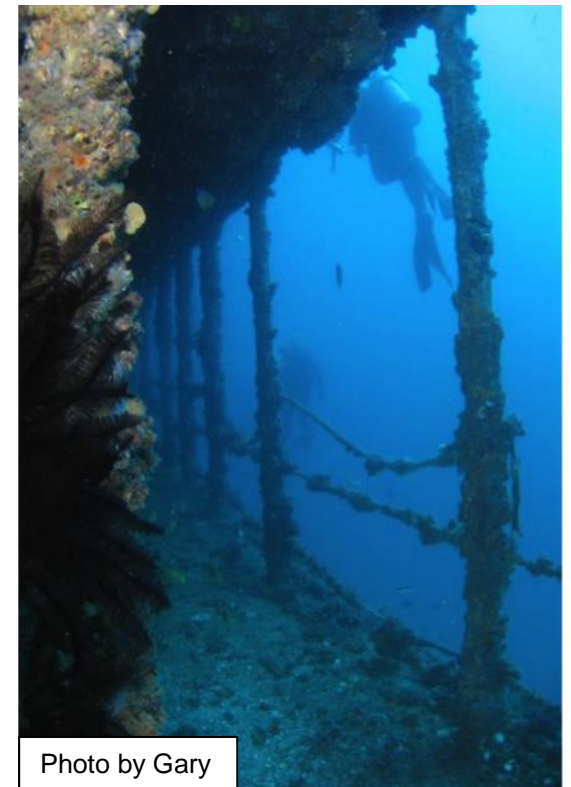


Photo by Gary



## Day 1 (Ian)

The Sunreef guys run a courtesy shuttle service and picked us up at 7:45am and took us to the dive shop. It is a very professional operation. We all had our Nitrox checked and then it was off on the bus to our boat, 2Ezy. We loaded up multiple scuba tanks and then got into our wet or dry suits before heading out to the wreck.

Ex HMAS Brisbane lies 5 Nautical Miles north from the Mooloolaba river mouth and about 2nm off shore. The seas were dead flat so it was a relatively fast boat trip out. 2Ezy moors at the side of the wreck and then drifts over the mast which is just 5m below the surface. So we literally jump off the dive boat and the wreck is right there. Nice and Easy.

The first dive is always guided by a Divemaster and on this dive Matt took Fiona, James and I to the wreck. Tash & Digs, Nancy & Gary went with the other group. We descended down the side of the rear stack and headed towards the stern. The rear gun is in place and dominates the aft deck. We soon lost Matt as I guess he figured we were OK. Vis was about 20m and temp about 18degrees.

Past the rear gun we passed over a large circular area that goes down a few levels with a large circular cog in the base. I guessed that was the mount for the missile launcher.

Beyond that is the stern with compartments open from the deck to the stern. Fiona and James go over the stern rail but I drop through the compartment below the decks and then swim out through the stern. We dropped to the sand and the stern is sitting above the sand on her rudders. So we decide to go under the stern and have a look. There is probably only about a meter of space under the hull and the sand, but it is wide and there is plenty of light from either side. As we proceed we can see all these large fish congregating just ahead of us. I shone my torch ahead and the gloom it revealed schools of large Bat fish and Banner fish and Snapper. We found a space where all the large fish hang out in the day time. We went as far as we could and then came out below the port side. Depth was 27m.

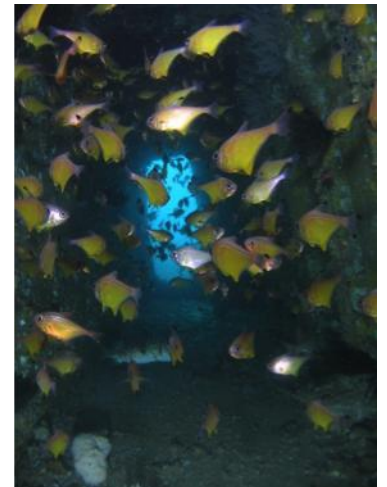


We swam along the port side to see what we could find. We poked our heads into one of the many cut outs in the side and saw a fairly large internal area. So we went inside and swam back down to the stern.

As we reached the stern we went into the same compartment I had gone in earlier. We swam up a level and then back into the ship and swam forward basically above the compartments we'd just swum down.

The compartments were quite open and light with not a lot of machinery in them. You had to shine your torch into the shadows to see most of the fish.

We swam to the end of the compartments till we reached a bulkhead and then exited the wreck. We then swam up to the gunwales and headed to the bow. I think James and Fiona went on ahead and were more interested in the deck and the forward gun area. I spotted a diver down on the sand near the bow, so went down to see what was there. The diver was Matt, he was just waiting to see who would turn up and then he pointed out to the sand perpendicular to the wreck. The wreck sits East – West with bow pointing East. Matt was pointing north over the sand. I gave the OK sign and we headed away from the wreck over the sand. As the wreck disappeared behind us, I kept a compass bearing and eventually we came to the base of another mooring buoy just ahead of us. Matt indicated for us to stop and just kneel on the sand and so I did, kept still and peered into the gloom. On the edge of our vision some shapes came towards us and they resolved into two massive Queensland Groupers. These were the biggest fish I had ever seen.



Easily 2m long and almost a metre tall. Very impressive. Afterwards Matt told me there are probably 200-300 lbs. each. That's a lot of fish! We then headed back to the wreck and I left Matt at the bow and found Fiona and James again. We went around the starboard side and then saw just off on the sand a huge bull ray, just sitting there. We came up to it quite close and it just didn't move. By now I was running low on Nitrox so we headed back amidships to the stack. James and Fiona had more Nitrox left so I left them to swim around for another 10mins and headed to the top of the stack for a safety stop in 5 m and then back to the boat.

Back on board there were lots of discussion of what we had seen and where to go next. Nancy had a leaky dry suite so had to get out of her wet gear and try and see to it. Looks like Gary hadn't tightened up a valve enough, as it was fine from then on. My dry suit was fine the whole trip and afterwards I think it was a good call to take it. I was warm and toasty the whole time under water and on the surface.

For the second dive James, Fiona and I decided to find the boiler and engine room. The directions were to dive down the front stack, go forward to a hole in the deck and then down again. By now our boat had swung around and was sitting above the forward stack.

But we missed this little detail and headed forward looking for it once in the water. We came across the forward gun before realised what was going on. The good thing about the wreck is that it is almost impossible to get lost. So we swam back up to the top of the stack and peered over the edge. All I could see was a long circular drop into blackness and a school of bullseyes' just above the darkness. Having a dry suit on I decided to descend feet first.

James and Fiona followed. Halfway down my torch lit up the deck below the stack. The exhaust ducts were at the rear. We hit the deck and could see a large square hole cut in the deck just ahead. So we swam forward and floated down into the boiler room. It was huge; fully three levels tall and filled with machinery. Like a huge underwater cavern with lots of interesting stuff to explore.

On this dive we descended to the bottom of the room and started exploring around the bottom of the room. There was lots of machinery all over the place. The gears were all exposed and encrusted with a layer of growth. What looked like the boilers were huge and took up two levels on their own. There was a large opening ahead of us on the starboard side so we slowly made our way towards it shining our torches in all the dark nocks and crannies we found a large puffer fish and other schools of fish. Clearly there was a lot more to see of this space, so we only explored the bottom on this dive. We were to come back here a few more times over the next few days. For me this was the most interesting part of the wreck. Too soon I had to go back and once again left James and Fiona to finish off their Nitrox, whilst we waited for them on the surface.

That night we were all exhausted. We bought some meat and salad and beers and made use of the BBQ facilities and all ate together in one of the apartments. After dinner, we all spent time watching underwater videos and comparing photos and experiences for the day. Sarah was due to join us that evening, but unfortunately her Jetstar flight was also cancelled and she wasn't able to meet us for the Friday morning dives. The guys at Sunreef were due to pick us up at 6:45 am in the morning, so we all crashed out around 9:30, pretty tired from a great day.



Bordered roboastra

### Day 2 morning (Nancy)

On Friday morning, we were up bright and early to start a second day of diving. We had four dives planned: two on the reef in the morning, one afternoon dive on the HMAS Brisbane and one night dive also on the wreck.



Ocellate Phyllidia



After the usual pre-dive organisation, we were off on the boat on a very flat sea and bright blue sky. We arrived at our dive site, called Hanging Rock, after a 20 minutes ride. This dive site was a ledge made of a large array of hard and soft corals with an average depth of 17 metres. We all followed the mooring line down to the bottom and then each group decided to go in different directions. Gary and I decided to go right on the first dive but we did not make it very far! Within few meters, we found three different types of nudibranchs amongst the coral.

The first one was pink with black lines called *Pustulose Phyllidiella* (P331 Coleman's nudi encyclopaedia), the second one was an orange nudibranch with black and white circles, *Ocellate Phyllidia* (P324) and the last one had a black colour body with blue longitudinal lines and an orange border, *Kuiter's Chromodoris* (P151). After making sure that we both had a good photo of them, we swam a little further and discovered more nudibranchs.



Varicose Phyllidia

We found a tiny bright yellow one with black rhinophores, it was probably less than half the size of a grain of rice, too small for the camera to focus even with two micro lenses on! Another one had a nice blue tint with yellow lumps all over its body called a *Varicose Phyllidia* (P329).

Various species of sea stars were also on the reef as well as different coloured Christmas tree worms which kept closing as we got closer.





On the sand, there were black sea cucumbers, small shrimps that were hidden in their holes and more nudibranchs. One in particular was clearly in a hurry, moving along the sand very quickly. It had a black body with yellow lines and green rhinophores (*Bordered roboastra*, P362). A turtle was also spotted by the other divers.

Tash and Digs had swum to the left and found a huge bull ray and a smallish turtle.



After a nice surface interval, we dived the same site again. Once at the bottom, everyone swam in the opposite direction from their first dive. Gary and I decided that we should stop our “micro” search and look for “bigger” critters. Well, we got rewarded as we bumped into a HUGE bull ray; it was probably two metres across! The ray seemed a bit jittery so we decided to take few photos from a safe distance! Further along the reef, we also found a wobbegong shark and the other divers saw one that was very big. From their description, this shark was filling the entire big overhang and had a massive mouth and body. Clearly the animals on this reef are well fed! (Tash: we saw a very cute baby wobbie and then the biggest we have ever seen. It was lying under a nice arch which I intended to swim through when I came face to face with it – HUGE!)

Of course, more nudibranchs were found on that dive and every single one of them was a different species. The nicest ones were a black body one with bright blue spots (*Morose Tambja* P364) and a bright purple one with white cerata (*Much-Desired Flabellina* P287). From both dives, we found a total of 13 different species of nudibranchs! To finish the dive, we looked around the bommie where the mooring line was attached and Gary found a black spotted eel. Tash believes it was a figment of his imagination, because she couldn't find it no matter how hard she tried...

## **Day 2 afternoon (Gary)**

After two great dives on the local reef we headed back out to the Brisbane for an afternoon dive and a night dive. Sarah had arrived and could finally join us on these dives. The afternoon dive saw the same flat calm seas that we had come to expect. As we descended into the water we broke off into the usual groups to explore the wreck. Nancy and I decided to head towards to stern and head inside to see what we could find. We easily navigated the inside of the wreck finding a row of toilets and hand basins along with other pieces of equipments even one that looked like an industrial ironing board. After working our way through the wreck we head out onto the main deck where large Snapper were circling and even a

friendly Lion fish. Along the way we found plenty of Nudi's sliding along the wreck before we headed back up the stack to complete our safety stop among the smaller fish that continued to circle the stack.

After finishing dive three on the Brisbane we sat down on the boat and enjoyed some drinks and biscuits as we waited for the blue ocean to an (compulsory once again as we all



all descended the to the wreck before to navigate around looking into and other fish on their Scorpion fish, Dwarf on the wreck. After touring the wreck with its considerable life still cursing the dark we headed back up the line to emerge from the silky black water having enjoyed another great set of dives on the ex HMAS Brisbane.

(Tash: Throughout the dives whale song was a constant presence but at night the whale's noises sounded eerie and impossibly close! We didn't see any whales during the trip but could hear them all the time under water. So exciting!) We then headed back to the apartments with a feast of takeaway pizzas and a few refreshing beverages to replenish us for our final day of diving.

sun to set slowly over the land turning the brilliant eerie black. The \$5.50 life saving glow sticks purchase) were attached and gear was donned took the leap of faith into the black still waters. We line from the front of the boat and followed it down splitting into groups on the deck. Some managed the entire wreck while others took their time under ledges to find painted lobsters, eels and nightly wanderers. Anemone fish, Moorish idols, Lion fish, Puffer fish and Nudi's were also spotted





### Day 3 (Natasha)

Back out the ex HMAS Brisbane in conditions as beautiful as the past two days. The Saturday morning trip was a bit more rushed as the boat wasn't running simply for the benefit of our Club and had to be back in time for an afternoon double dive, rather than the more leisurely morning and then afternoon/night dive we had chartered the day before.

Even so, the dudes at Sunreef were extremely patient and polite and allowed us all the time we needed – except for, perhaps, James and Fiona, who became notorious throughout the trip for staying down the longest... 50 min dives were clocked at 64 min dives etc... it is fair to say they got their money's worth and were having a great time underwater!! Our last two dives of the trip and we were all determined to make them count.

On the first dive Sarah, Digs and I followed Ian, James and Fiona down the front stack and into the engine and boiler rooms and we spent a long time cruising in and out of the various hallways and rooms of the ship.



There is a vast array of marine life to be found in every part of the ship, but what was most fascinating to me were the areas where the growth had not formed – while there was organic growth over all of the metal surfaces, there was dark navy lino on the hall floor, and navy and white lino tiles in one section which looked bizarrely out of place under water. We had fun sitting on the toilets and pretending to wash hands in encrusted hand basins, and chasing lobsters into cracks and tormenting the black damsel fish who kept biting our fingers, cameras, torches and anything else that loitered in their territories for too long.

Both dives were spent weaving in and out of the wreck, following the light through one part of the ship into another and taking time to explore. Down near the engine room on our very first dive we had seen a huge Queensland grouper lurking in the dark, but we couldn't find him again.

We had also spotted them gliding past the huge mooring line holding the wreck in place, in the distance.

The anemone fish on the wreck were curious and photo-friendly, so we spent some time trying to snap them, and a large lionfish was very accommodating for photographers on the main deck. The morays were more elusive, ducking back down pipes and refusing to come back out for a photo shoot. Coy creatures...

Large schools of surgeonfish and batfish hung around us while we slowly ascended up around the stacks – the safety stop at 5m is great as you hover around the top of the front stack and continue to investigate the residents until it is time to finally head to the surface.

It was a spectacular experience – it is a great, fun and easy wreck to dive and the crew at Sunreef were just great.

Mariner on the Pacific provided very comfy accommodation and a fantastic time was had by everyone.

## **Twin Engines are for Pussies**

I took this pic when in Bali diving, we crossed the Lombok strait is a huge speed boat, it went really well, just a tad overpowered I think, and the coxswain was in a take no prisoners kind of mood! What can I say but carrots! ! !

Cheers Dick



\*\*\*\*\***BREAKING NEWS**\*\*\*\*\*

*On a recent dive at Oak Park, member Maxine H spotted and photographed a hitherto UNDESCRIBED species of sea horse.*

*For the edification, education, illumination and enlightenment of fellow SGSC members I present on her behalf*

***Hippocampus Rubeus Globus  
Hayden***

***aka The red beaded seahorse***

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**REMEMBER YOU SAW IT FIRST IN THE SDW**

On a more serious note, Thanks again to those members who submit their photos and share them with their fellow members, the SDW would be pretty boring without them.

Ken Ridley

## Messages regarding our Latest Bad Weather

All

I think we can all safely assume that there won't be diving of any kind this weekend. Ken Ridley

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Sundays Boat Dive

Dear All,

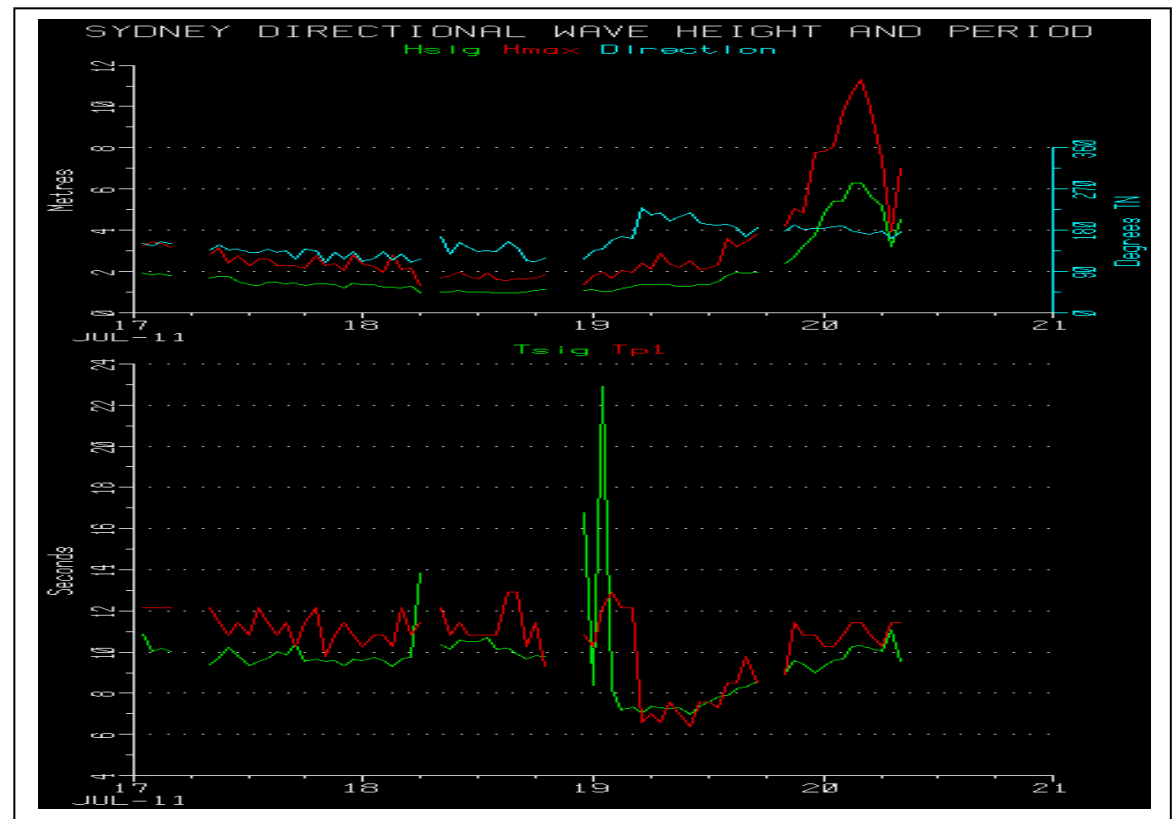
Having seen the white water at Malabar this morning I am bowing to the inevitable and cancelling Sunday's boat dive. It's probably a better weekend to go and see Harry Potter rather than diving.

Cheers Jason

Anyone for a boat dive. Waves only 12m MAX !!!!

From:

David Casburn



## SHORE DIVE WRAP

**18 – 24/7/2011**

Not much happening during the last week due to lousy weather and big seas.

Only received on report.

Sunday 24/7/11...**James Dean** Double dive today at Parsley Bay. Was v interesting . 1-2 m viz but lots of morays, cuttlefish, octopussys that were all playful (probably due to the low light). Found a good fishing rod and a good reel on a broken rod.

Probably like everyone else, I am looking forward to a settling of conditions and getting back in the water. Ken Ridley

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## St George Scuba Club      Shore Dive Wrap 25 – 31/07/2011

Lots happening in the past week shore dive wise. , With divers getting in the water everywhere. Reports from emails and facebook compiled in one doc below.

**Oak Park 28/7/2011** Twinite dive. Jason, Matt, James, saw PJ, turtle, cuttlefish. 3 -4m viz 17 deg

**The Steps 29/07/2011 Matt W.....**,today at The Steps, anyone know ? Belongs maybe to the Pleurobranchiade family? First for me



**Oak Park...30/07/2011.** Michael, Kelly Gary D. Excellent conditions.

**Shark Point 30/07/2011...**Kevin, Matt, James, Josiah, Fiona, Ken. Great surface conditions, 17 degrees .5 to 5m viz, saw 2 x blue devils. [Fiona...](#) Great diving at Shark point this weekend. Calm seas and viz 5-8m. Cuttlefish, Port Jacksons, plenty of nudis, blue devil, Wobbie, ray and much much more [Matthias Wildermuth](#) And a little bubble shell in the pool. [James Dean](#) more like 5.5 m :) except at the 22m sand line where it dropped to less than 0.5m

**Bass Point 30/07/2011 [Jason Shelley](#)..**Myself, [Kelly Rudder](#) & [Glen Freeland](#) had some great Saturday diving at Gravel loader 2 dives viz 6-10 temp 16 deg. Masses of school fish large bullray did a lap around the huge 6ft lost anchor and it's massive chain. Kelly Rudder got some fantastic photos Good diving had by all. Finished off with the biggest burger in the south at the rock and roll diner next to the dive shop in Shellharbour Now to sleep it off

**Shark Point 31/07/2011...**Dive 1---Maxine –Fiona- Ken---Dive 2---Maxine- Fiona-Ken\_Simon....Xcellent seas, 17 degrees – viz from 1m to 6+. Saw blue devilfish and other MC's two most xellent dives. [Fiona](#) Two spectacular days at Shark point. Limited viz but lots to see. Sydney, have I told you I love you recently?

**Voo Doo 31/7/2011..**[James Dean](#) 2 dives at Voodoo . Viz 12m seas very flat . absolutely gorgeous dive. 5 PJs in one small crevasse. Followed with Night dive at Oak Park. Lots of cuttlefish out and PJ's out playing chicken and butting into divers. Great day.



# **Fiji dreamtime - 2011 –** **- By Mike Scotland -**

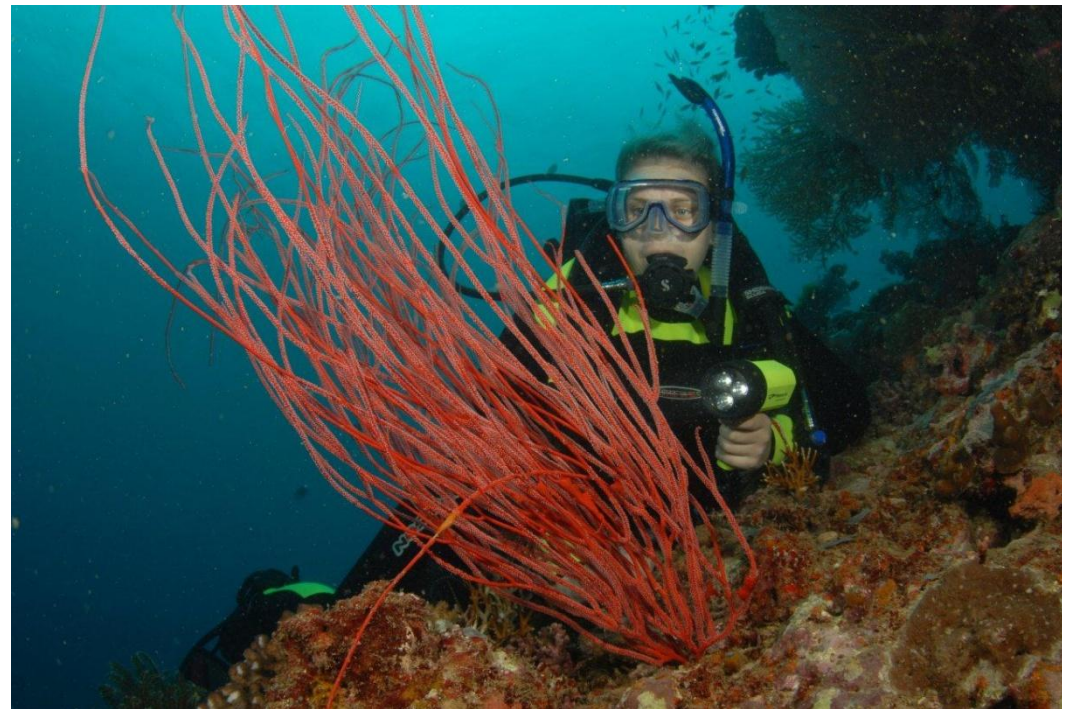
This year I dived 60 dives at three resorts in Fiji over 33 days.

I dived with my daughter for the first 19 days then with Pete Trayhern for some of the last fortnight.

Basically, the law of “You only get what you pay for” was well and truly proven wrong.

The most expensive resort on Kandavu was called Matava; it was like being thrust back in to the dark ages.

You pay a load of money to walk about with kerosene lamps after dark and to share your bure with heaps of bugs and mossies.





We have learned to beware the terms “award winning Eco resort”.

It means paying heaps while doing away with many of the most basic amenities such as clean water, hot showers, clean towels and sheets, refrigeration, fans in bedrooms and many more.

On the other hand, the diving was very good. The Fijian staff were great and the food was good.

We decided that it was the “fawltly towers of the South Pacific”.

The pommie manager has no idea about running a resort and

providing service to guests. We called him..... you guessed it..... “Basil”.

However, .....



There are stacks of great dives with Manta rays at one spot, some shark dives where a couple of baby whalers and white tips lived. Most of the dives were drift dives in channels in the reefs. One of the best features was the night dives twice a week.



We saw sleeping Parrotfish, Box fish, lion fish and plenty more.

The cheapest resort was Voli Voli on the north side of the main island. It had by far the best diving and the most comfortable accommodation by miles.

Air con, hot showers, sheer luxury as good as a 5 star hotel.

As well, the diving there is the best Fiji has to offer.

Diving is all very colourful drift dives, stunning colourful reefs.

The Bligh passage, 50 minutes to the East, is where the really expensive charter boats dive.

We dived there on 8 days some of which were next to the Naia where guests pay ~\$500 a day.

The Bligh is recognised as the best diving in Fiji.

The Bligh has stacks of incredible dives that have to be some of the most colourful anywhere on the planet.

As the dive guides say, you need currents for good marine life. Many of the currents were 2 to 4 knots.

The dives include Vatu Express, Purple Haze, G 6, (referring to the g forces), Pure Magic, Mellow Yellow and even May Tag (the washing machine) and great bommies such as Wheat fields.

Reef hooks come in really handy here.







To the west about 20 minutes are heaps of reefs such as Breath taker, their shark dive and Dream maker where Ghost pipe fish are regularly seen.

My favourite dive in this area was “the maze”. This is a really beautiful dive in 20 metres with five colourful bommies and heaps of caves and swim throughs and caves.

It is really a magic dive during which you do figure of eights.



Vole Voli was so good that Pete and I are going to organise a club trip there next year, probably in August.

More information later. Mike S.



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**Please send items for the Newsletter to me *as you do them during the month.***