



SEA BRAGGIN'

St George Scuba Club Newsletter

Shore Dives

The Hereward - Maxine Hayden

Page 1

Trips

Wooli - Deb Cook, Bob Walker, Chris Heath

ANZAC Weekend - Ian Roffey, Steve & Shaw, Jason Coombs, Rox Fea, Natasha Naude

Boys' Weekend - Ron Walsh & Ray Moulang

Pages 12, 16, 22

Antarctica

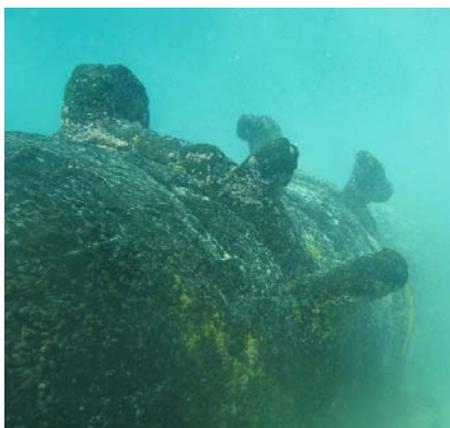
Steve Boyd

Page 5

THE HEREWARD RISES AGAIN

“Hey, Sis! The Hereward has been uncovered again. Do you want to dive it tomorrow?” my baby brother boomed into the phone.

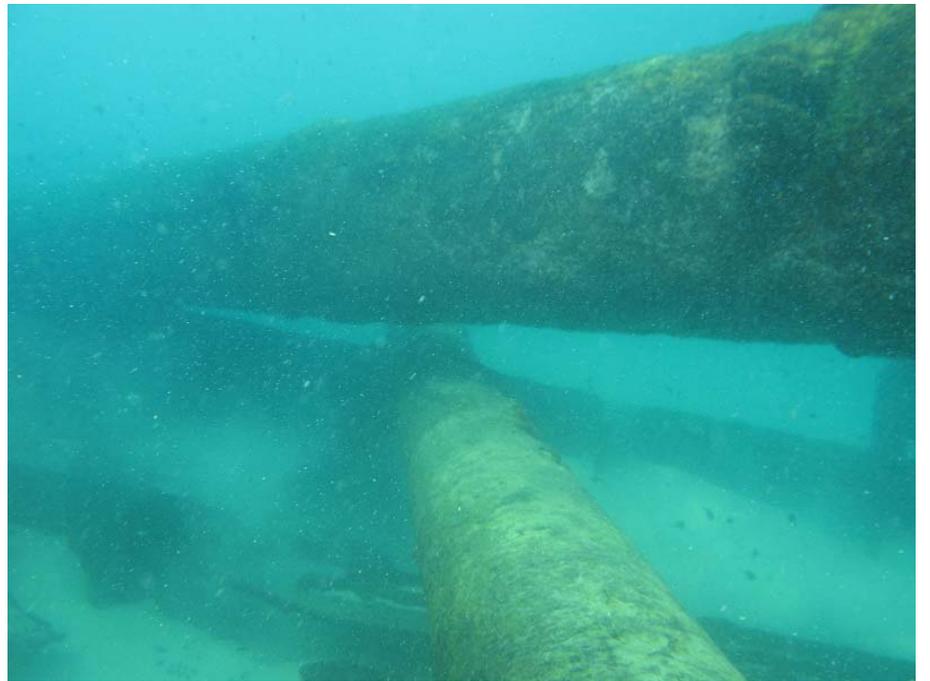
Having grown up at Maroubra Beach in Sydney, the wreck of the Hereward was a local identity and part of our history. The Hereward was an iron clipper built in Glasgow in 1877, measured 254 feet long and weighed 1513 tons. She was used as a cargo ship between London and Sydney and was on route from Java to Newcastle to load coal when disaster struck. After being run aground during a fierce storm in May 1898 and



after several failed attempts to refloat her, she finally broke in two and succumbed to the heavy surf in December of the same year. The ship's bell was recovered some time later and now sits proudly at the local primary school.

As surfing became popular in Australia, the jagged and rusting remains of the large ship became a hazard and Randwick council had the wreck blasted during the 1950's and 1960's until nothing remained. Or so they thought.

As kids swimming at the beach we were told not to go near it. We could see its dark shadow in the water at the northern end of the



beach and it became a hoodoo, a no go zone. Urban myths of kids having their bellies slashed open while trying to body surf over it were bandied about from time to time, yet board riders still used the area. I myself won a surf title here in 1982 riding waves right over the top of it. Still she sat in shallow water of between 2 to 5 metres deep and the ribs of the vessel reached up towards the unwary swimmer.

It was a bright and sunny day next morning when we arrived for our dive and the dark shadow in the water seemed larger than ever. A mere 30 metre swim from shore and the wreck opened up before us in warm, clear water. I had never seen it like this before! Recent heavy seas pushed down from a cyclone off the Queensland coast had sucked all of the sand from the top of the wreck. Completely exposed, the wreckage extended about 50 metres to the north parallel to the beach and was clean as a whistle.

Having been buried in sand for so long there was no sign of any algae or weed and no reef had formed over or near it. Fish life was minimal and even the surfers seemed to have abated for the day.

As the wreck lies in the surf zone, photography is challenging with every wave breaking over head stirring up the sand and making for cloudy viewing. The masts were laying in full view as if they had just been dropped. Cleats circling the mast showed where rigging was once tied. The ship cannot be penetrated as it has fallen apart outwards, probably from the blasting, and so lies rather flat but you can swim along its length between the framework running your hand over the iron plates that made up the hull.



Small items can be found in and around the vessel; a golf ball, soft drink cans, a full bottle of (salt water?) wine fused into the metal, and then I spotted several small discs among the debris. Coins? Yes, indeed. After a bit of wrestling I managed to retrieve two and then six more on a consecutive dive. Were they 115 years old? From a bygone era? If so I would need to hand them in to the Commonwealth as salvage laws apply. However after gentle cleaning the first coin was a 1974 ten cent piece and the other a 1967 penny, both Australian. The other coins were several twenty cent pieces, a dollar coin and another penny. What were they doing on the wreck? Perhaps dropped by swimmers or maybe from the men who had exploded the charges back in the 1950's. The local newspaper later carried a short story that a small bronze canon had been salvaged just the day before we had dived it. What other secrets did she hold, I wondered.



My brother and I had dived it two years ago when it had been partly exposed after big seas but not to the extent it is now. As it sits in shallow water close to the shore, it can easily be snorkeled but keep out of the way of surfers. This is an excellent opportunity to explore an accessible piece of our maritime history, perhaps a once in a lifetime opportunity. Who knows when the Hereward may rise again.

MAXINE HAYDEN





Christmas in July Saturday 27 July 2013

Tickets will be available to those on the list at the June and July meetings, so bring your money with you. Tickets can be purchased by cash or a cheque made out to the St. George Scuba Club.

If you are paying into the St. George Scuba Club account by electronic transfer, please reference your deposit with the word "Xmas".

Christmas in July \$30 per head

DATE: Saturday 27th July
TIME: 6.30pm for 7pm Dinner
Bookings close Monday 22nd July

TRADITIONAL XMAS 2-COURSE DINNER with all the trimmings
PLUS Complimentary Glass of Wine
entertainment by **'SWEET TALK' duo**

RAFFLES
LUCKY DOOR PRIZE
plus special visit from **Santa**

Club Heathcote

24 Oliver St. Heathcote NSW 2233

The poster features a festive design with a red and green color scheme. It includes a large green Christmas ornament in the center, a cartoon Santa Claus at the bottom left, and a Christmas tree with gifts. The text is arranged in a clear, eye-catching layout with various fonts and colors to highlight key information.

Contact Les Caterson Ph 9520 9421 Mob 0427 369 511
Lecat2@bigpond.net.au



ANTARCTICA TRIP

In early 2012 I made some inquiries with an Australian company, Aurora Expeditions, regarding travelling to Antarctica and in particular diving in Antarctica. Aurora has a permanent charter arrangement with a 55 passenger Russian ship, the 'Polar Pioneer' for Antarctic and Arctic expeditions. Twice a year Aurora sublease the ship to a Holland Company, Waterproof Expeditions, who specialise in organising diving trips to Antarctica and the Arctic. After speaking to Waterproof Expeditions and seeing some of their photographs it took little persuasion to have me sign up for a 12 day trip to Antarctica leaving from Argentina.

In preparation I had to complete a Dry Suit Course and have a minimum of twenty dry suit dives.

Divers also have to supply all of their own equipment including dry suit, two first stage environmentally sealed regulators (two are necessary in case the main first stage freezes), suitable gloves and hood, as well as suitable cold weather clothing for land visits.

In early February this year I left home for Argentina with 45 kilos of check in luggage and 15 kilos of carry on. Luckily Aerolineas Argentinas have a very generous 46 kilo economy luggage allowance. After a few days in Buenos Aires and several bottles of their famous Malbec I flew 3000 kms to Ushuaia at the bottom of Argentina, which is the world's most southern town. Ushuaia is an amazingly beautiful small town situated on the Beagle Channel surrounded by snow-capped mountains with a glacial

park 15 minutes away. There I met up with the 23 other divers and guides for our trip. Twelve of the divers were very experienced cold water divers, including eight Russians and four ice diving instructors from Switzerland. The divers ranged in age from 11 to 72. The 11 year old Russian boy came with a

personal dive instructor and his father; the 72 year old was an Australian lady.

Over the next two days in Ushuaia the divers did four cold water preparatory dives in the Beagle Channel with the assistance of Ushuaia Divers. This is



SEA BRAGGIN'



the only dive shop in town and it is located in a tin shed, they have a limited amount of hire gear and a very small boat. A large local sightseeing boat was chartered for the two days, the regular local divers came and helped out, including the town's medical surgeon. The

diving was fantastic, with kelp forests and an amazing variety of crustaceans, including many King Crabs.

On the 11th of February we departed Ushuaia bound for Antarctica. Along with the 24 divers there were four snorkelers, five kayakers and 22 other passengers. The two and a half day crossing of the Drake Passage was rough for most of it with almost everyone suffering sea sickness. It was amazing on the second day how many people 'got their sea legs' even when it was still rough. The ship's bridge, which was always open to the passengers, was the best place to see whales, including Blue Whales and Fin Whales. Hourglass Dolphins and numerous birds, including the mighty Albatross were spotted while crossing the Drake Passage. On the second day of the crossing talks were also given by a Naturalist as well as dive and landing briefings.



On the third day we arrived in the South Shetland Islands where a 'check out' shore dive took place at Yankee Harbour on Greenwich Island after not being able to land at Half Moon Island due to the bad weather. The weather was very bleak with wind and rain. On arrival at the shore we were met by crowds of Gentoo Penguins who came to see their visitors. The shoreline was covered in blocks of ice resulting in a very bumpy entry and exit. Myself and Wang, my Chinese buddy, stayed in the 0 degree water for around 45 minutes, to the guides' amazement.

On returning to the ship we travelled to Deception Island, which is a flooded active volcano, which last erupted around 20 years ago for our second dive of the day. The dive took place in Whalers Bay, located on one side of the volcano rim. A number of derelict



buildings still remain on the shore, which was the location of a large whaling station for many years. Around 1.5 million whales were killed and processed there. The dive was interesting as many whale bones with growth on them were seen and full whale skeletons below 20 metres. Many colourful sea stars,

SEA BRAGGIN'



brittle stars, limpets, anemones and interesting kelp were in abundance. After the dive the divers still wearing drysuits, hoods and masks walked through the remnants of the whaling station buildings in the pelting rain and cold conditions.

The following morning with the strong winds, rain and snow abating we did our next dive at Cuverville Island. This was our first iceberg dive, which was a small grounded iceberg. The dive was shallow, 5 to 10 metres and was very colourful with a lot of different types of kelp over the colourful rocks, with the glow from the 'berg' in the background. This is where I experienced my first pain to the forehead area which lasted for about four minutes after entering the water. This is apparently a common occurrence with cold water diving. The dive lasted 34 minutes and around 0 degrees.

That afternoon we cruised down the Errera and Neumayer Channels to Port Lockroy. The scenery was spectacular, with sheer sided mountains and many glacier fronts. That evening all passengers made a visit to Port Lockroy, an historical British Station now manned by volunteers.

Overnight the ship travelled to mainland Antarctica. The morning dive was at 'shag rock' near Paradise Harbour. This was a brilliant wall dive to around 20 metres with great viz. The wall was completely covered in a thick soft kelp with star fish attached to the kelp. After surfacing at the zodiacs we were met by around ten large 'shags' who thought it would be good to play with us in the water. The snorkelers had also found an aqua blue iceberg nearby and were enjoying the Palau coloured water near it.

The following morning and afternoon we cruised through the spectacular Lemaire Channel which is very narrow, with high mountains on each side and glaciers coming down through the mountains to the water. One of the glacier fronts took 15 to 20 minutes to pass. With a lot of ice in the water the ship had to manoeuvre around small icebergs. During the day all passengers spent around two hours in zodiacs in the 'iceberg graveyard',





which is a large shallow bay where thousands of icebergs have become grounded. We were followed by a curious leopard seal for thirty minutes and then two other leopard seals played around the zodiacs, one even arching up beside a zodiac and looking in. Some great photographs were taken here. In the afternoon a visit was made to Vernadsky, a Ukranian Research Station. It is the oldest research station in the Antarctic Peninsula, where the hole in the ozone layer was discovered. They also make their own vodka here and welcomed us to their bar for one or two hours. One dive took place that day in a channel nearby, but I chose to do all the land excursions.

The following morning after travelling to Enterprise Island the divers headed to a partially submerged wreck 'The Governor', an early 20th century whalers supply ship which had managed to sail to its final resting place in the bay. The wreck is now an historical site. Two Australian yachts were tied to the wreck when we arrived, after sheltering there for a couple of days. With very heavy snow falling we entered the -1 degree water. The visibility was at least 20m - the sand was a dark brown colour, with a lot of colourful limpets and anemones. After four minutes before reaching the wreck my buddies dry gloves flooded and our dive was over. The other divers said the wreck was fantastic with a lot of sponges and fish. The air temperature was between -5 to -8 at this site so it was warmer in the water?

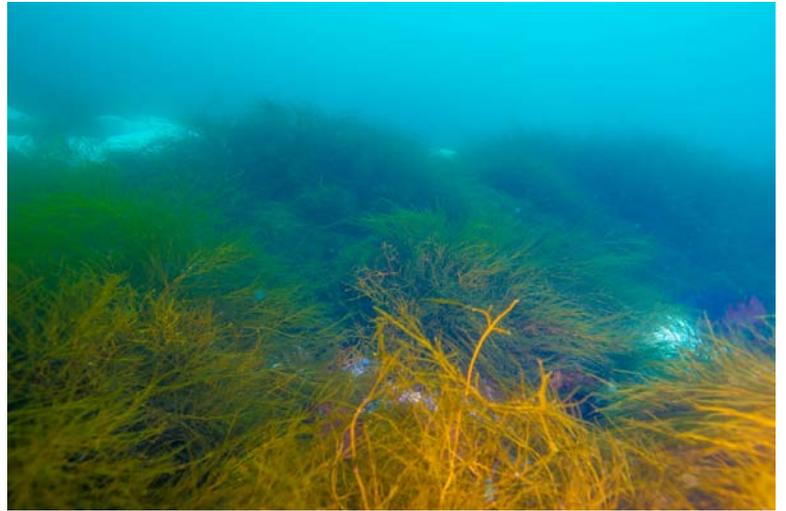
Altogether nine dives eventuated on the trip, of which I did seven, preferring to do land visits instead of diving. Probably the most interesting dive was diving a second iceberg which was dimpled like a giant golf ball. The visibility around the 'berg' was amazing and the zodiacs followed us from above where they could clearly see us.

The land visits were also amazing and the staff offered as many landings as possible, sometimes not returning to the ship until 10pm. Many different animals were seen, including four or five varieties of penguins, leopard, wetherell, fur and elephant seals and numerous large bird species. Whilst a five metre animal exclusion zone was in place, if you sat quietly penguins would come right up to you. On one visit I spent almost two hours walking about one hundred metres along the shore, there was just so much to see - hunting leopard seals, penguins flying out of the water so they wouldn't be the seals' next meal, elephant and fur seals going for a swim, etc etc and a glacier as a back drop to go with it.



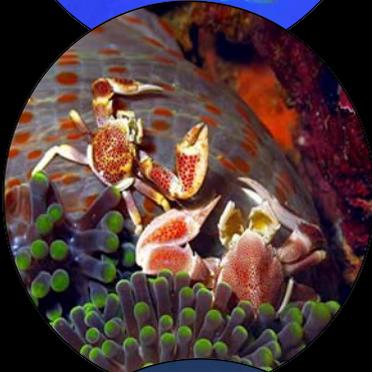
Our return trip across the Drake Passage was like a millpond. With time to spare the ship went within three miles of Cape Horn.

If anyone is interested in any more information on the trip I would be happy to share any information with you. The Polar Pioneer is a very good ship for visiting Antarctica. It is a good standard, not five star, small enough in size to go close to landing sites. With only 55 passengers, everyone went on each landing with very enthusiastic Australian staff, who offered as much as possible to the divers and non divers. The kayakers also really enjoyed their experiences and experienced whales surfacing near to them. The twelve day cruise was \$7k plus a diving supplement which I thought was excellent value.



Steve Boyd





EAST TIMOR

Ultimate Dive Expedition

19 - 31 August 2013

13 Days / 12 nights Ex Darwin

Diver from \$2,090 per person

Price Includes: (Non Diver - \$995)

- Return flights ex. Darwin to Dili flying with Air North
- Return airport transfers in Dili
- 12 nights twin share bunk room air conditioned guest house accommodation at The Dive Guest House (shared kitchen and bathroom) - Dili, Sat TV, Internet Connection, swimming pool
- Breakfast daily at the Castaway Bar
- Half Day Dili city tour
- 22 Dives (6 shore local dives, 10 shore Dili surround dives and 4 boat dives and 2 complimentary night dives) Includes: tanks, weights, dive guide services, & transfers
- Australian Departure taxes (Value: \$240.00 - subject to change

Cost Does Not Include:

- Travel Insurance & Personal spending monies and Excess Luggage Surcharges
- East Timor Entry visa USD 30.00 (subject to change)
- East Timor departure tax USD10.00

Room Upgrade:

Upgrade to Twin Share (1 x Queen + 1 x Single) - additional \$92 per person for 12 night stay

Conditions Apply:

Prices are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

Booking Requirements:

To secure your place on this expedition, you will need to complete a booking form and return it together with a non refundable deposit amount of \$300.00 per person.

Booking Reference # S12695

Date : 06/11/12

FOR BOOKINGS AND MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT



www.diveadventures.com.au



Contact: Paul Pacey
Mobile: 0431 691 173



Timor Dive Trip 2013

We will be diving with Dive Timor Lorosae (DTL).
Check out their website at: www.DiveTimor.com

We will be staying in the guesthouse, which is located alongside the dive shop right on the beachfront in Dili. Above the accommodation is the Castaway bar and restaurant. The complex has its own pool. It is located in Dili itself so it's a short walk to other restaurants, shops, markets, etc.

The four boat dives will be to Atauro Island - see the DTL website for details.

We have also arranged with DTL that we can have an optional third dive per day, which will be at Pertamina Pier. This is one of the best muck dives in East Timor. If we choose to do a third dive, the dive operator will supply a driver to take us to the Pertamina Pier (a 5 minute drive) and wait for us to do our dive before transporting us back to our accommodation. These additional dives are \$25 per diver.

The trip is limited to 8 divers.

Contact Paul Pacey for more information or to book.

Contact Paul Pacey
Paul.Pacey@iinet.net.au or 0431-691173



SEA BRAGGIN'

WOOLI TRIP 2013

7 - 12 April

It wasn't a big group this year, but we still managed to have fun, cook up a storm and catch fish. The best accommodation - you jump out of bed, have a 30 second walk to the boat, and then 20 minutes ride out to the Solitary Islands. It's just all too much and we had to do this for a week!

North Solitary Islands: the visibility was at least 20 metres plus the water 24 to 26 degrees on most days. Our first day was Anemone Bay, where we saw a few turtles and thousands of anemones. There are two species of anemone fish: Barrier Reef Anemone fish



and Blue Lip Anemone fish. As always, it was a really nice dive.

Fish Soup: Awesome dive spot where there are only adult fish - no small ones are allowed! Black Cod, Jew Fish, Snapper, Spangled Emperor, Blue Groper, Mangrove Jacks, and huge Wobbegongs to name just a few.

Bubble Cave: Went looking for the Lion Fish, but we couldn't find any so headed south. We stayed in about 7 meters in water so clear that I looked

backed at the divers and saw rays of light bouncing of the reef and the fish life. What a beautiful dive.

Elbow Cave: Heaps of painted crays on this dive, large Wobbegongs, and Black Cod at a cleaning station. There were lots of cowries, Manta Shrimps, Spanish Dancers, Christmas Tree worms. I didn't find lots of nudies this year - maybe there were too much of the Big Stuff and couldn't focus on the macro.

The weather was great - it rained only at night but the second last night the wind came up. It blew all night and did it blow! The next day was our failed mission - the ocean was all over the place and Mick said this was the first time in 11 years he's had to turn





the boat back. So back at the Ranch what can we do?? GO FISHING! I bought a fishing rod from Stan's shop, went fishing, and caught dinner for that night. Yum yum. Next year I might spend a day going fishing with Stan - I'm only a Wooli fishing girl.

A fantastic trip: a big Thank you to Stan, Mike and Claire for always looking after us.
ALREADY LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR'S TRIP!!!!!!

Debbie Cook

Wooli

On Sunday 7 April, after an 8 hour drive, a group of 5 divers from St George Dive Club arrived at Wooli looking forward to a week of diving around North Solitary Island. As usual we stayed in the very comfortable accommodation located above the Wooli Dive Centre Shop. For those who have not had the pleasure of visiting Wooli it must be said that the standard of accommodation offered by Wooli Dive is as good as anyone could hope for.

The party consisted of Deb and Grant Cook, Bob Walker, Chris Heath and Steve Boyd. Over the following 5 days the Fair Weather Gods looked kindly upon us, allowing the group to experience Wooli at its best. The seas

were flat, with viz around 25 to 30 metres, water temp 22 deg C, and no current. We dived all the usual dive spots around the island including the Bubble Cave, Anemone Bay, Fish Soup and Elbow Cave.

While we didn't spot any Grey Nurses, there were a lot of Big Wobbegongs and a few friendly turtles. At one point on our first dive at Fish Soup it was impossible to see more than a few metres in front due to the number of Fusiliers swimming around us. When we finally cleared the school we were confronted with a variety of other fish including Clowns, Snapper and several variety of Bream.

Over the course of the five days we dived the Elbow Cave on two occasions, but both times we were unable to enter the cave as a huge Wobbegong has decided to take up residence at the entrance. It wasn't a disappointment as the area around the cave was spectacular, with a great variety of fish life. At the end of our dive we found ourselves back at the mooring line, which is near the cave entrance. Again we checked out the cave to see what our pet shark was up to. As it turned out he hadn't moved so we decided that we didn't want to upset him from what was obviously his favourite spot. While we were checking out the cave we were blown away by the number of Crays in the area, nineteen was the last count. It really explained why our Shark didn't feel like moving too far away.

On the last day the weather took a turn for the worst, swell was up and wind was blowing around 20 knots but Mick our Skipper said it was worth a look. We arrived at the Wooli Bar with a bit of white water in the waves, which were about 1.5metres. After a wait of about 5 minutes while Mick surveyed the seas, he gunned the two 300hp





outboard motors on Kraken and the big cat raced out across the bar. We were clear of the broken water in about 30 seconds and for the next 20 minutes made our way towards North Solitary Island. With a swell rolling in from both the South East and North East Mick stopped and advised us he was turning back. With swells from both directions diving would be unpleasant, especially considering the conditions we had experienced over the previous days. And so our dream week came to an exciting conclusion.

All agreed that this was a great week of diving, much better than we were expecting. A special mention has to go to Mick our Skipper for the week, who went well above what he is paid for to see that we had a great time. Also a big thankyou to Stan and his lovely wife Claire who go to such great efforts to ensure we come away wanting to return for another chance to dive the best diving site this side of Cairns.

Bob Walker

Dive Report for 10 Apr 13

First dive was Bubble Cave, which was a great dive as the elements were all in our favour. Good viz, into the mid teens, very little current and no surge, temperature 22 to 23. Boat mooring was not there but with little wind and flat seas not a problem.

Plenty of the usual fish suspects in fish and there were areas that were simply carpeted with anemones. Plenty of time for photos as the depth was a max of 18m.

Highlights: bubble cave, free swimming wobby that wasn't happy, manta shrimp, two small cuttlefish, anemones and corals. Steve took some great photos but alas without a memory card that's all they were - 'memory'.

Second dive was Elbow Cave

We were hit with a rain patch at entry time so the boat on the mooring was jumping around a bit. The mooring is straight on top of the cave. Could see remnants of painted crays on the floor and several in the overhead but behind the curtain of bullseyes was a huge wobby on the floor, so that fixed that for entry!

Little bit more current and a slight reduction of viz as we were at the corner of the island. The sink holes were empty of fish life.

Highlights: Elbow cave, smaller cave, small moray, spanish dancer.

Both great dives and an easy trip back to Wooli.

Chris Heath

All photos for trip report by Chris Heath





Great Barrier Reef and Yongala Liveaboard – “Kalinda”
10 – 16 November 2013
Ex Townsville

Come and have a great week's diving on the Great Barrier Reef, including the wreck of the Yongala. Diving for six days, with up to four dives per day. Sail from Townsville on Sunday evening, giving us a chance to fly up on Sunday (or earlier if you wish). Arrive back on Saturday, after a couple of dives in the morning. We will then overnight in Townsville and you can make your way back to Sydney on the Sunday.

Costs (ex gst) are:

- Trip cost \$1,000 per person, share cabin
- Airfares approx \$350-\$400 return Sydney – Townsville – Sydney via Jetstar
- Saturday night accommodation, approx \$130 for share accommodation
- Reef taxes etc. approx \$100, depending on number of days on Yongala (anticipate a maximum of two).

Optional extras could include a few days on Magnetic Island or try to win the cost of your trip back at Townsville Casino (or not).

To secure your place please pay a deposit of \$200 to the club account as soon as possible. Email the club treasurer and Ian Roffey when you do. Min of 10 required to secure this trip and there will be a maximum of 16 to make the trip reasonably comfortable.

First in best dressed for boat accommodation.

Contact Ian Roffey Ian.Roffey@team.telstra.com



SEA BRAGGIN' ANZAC DAY LONG WEEKEND

Seal Rocks

Tash organised this weekend to take advantage of Anzac Day falling on a Thursday, to give us a 4-day weekend of diving. While the numbers moved around a bit I think we ended up with 35 people (21 divers), making it possibly the largest trip in the Club's history.

Most people were arriving on Thursday and staying at Treachery Bay Camp in cabins but as Rox and I were arriving on Wednesday night we stayed in a cabin at the Seal Rocks Camping Ground.

On Thursday Rox and I dived Stasis Rock, which is an easy entry shore dive followed by a 200m swim out to the island. The water was a very respectable 23 degrees and vis around 10 metres. As soon as we dropped down we were surrounded by a cloud of yellow tail scad. After 20 minutes swimming in one direction we were still surrounded by thousands of them. I've never used the M word with fish but if there weren't a million of them there were certainly hundreds and hundreds of thousands. We also saw wobbies, fiddler rays, kingies and lots of tropicals during the dive.

That afternoon Rox and I went over to the camp for a few drinks, where everyone was getting themselves moved in and organised for the following days' diving.

The diving was with Action Divers from Forster. Given the numbers, we were diving in two shifts with a 'wet' entry off the beach. It was nice and flat but the rocks in the shallows and carrying your spare tank with you for the swim made it more challenging. (Arduously clambering over rocks in full gear in front of beachgoers reminded us of Tulamben! Rox.)

We were on the late shift on the first day. After a leisurely lie-in we boarded the boat for the short ride around the headland to the dive sites. Our first dive was at Big Seal. This is a site I've tried for unsuccessfully a few times but the weather has always been against me. This time we had good conditions with only a bit of ocean swell.

We dropped in at the southern end of the rocky outcrop and headed east to the gutter that runs up the ocean side of the island. The vis wasn't the best, only 10 – 15 metres.

Almost immediately we had grey nurse sharks cruising past. There were probably 12 – 15 sharks in total. We also saw loads of schooling fish and big kingfish in the gutters. The highlight was seeing a couple of mature snapper with big bump heads, a very rare sight unfortunately. Our second dive was off the north end of Stasis Rock where we had dived the day before.

We were on the early shift next morning and made the most of the flatter conditions to head out to Edith Breaker. We were told to expect boulders the size of houses and that's exactly what we got – a really epic dive site. (I approve the use of this adjective for this amazing site – Rox).

We were anchored next to a larger gutter that was cut into the reef. There were three grey nurse sharks in the gutter. Some people went in search of a cave system called Jimmy's Cave but the entry is well hidden so it remained unfound.

Our second dive was back at Big Seal. This was a carbon copy of the previous day's dive except that the vis was better and the swell had dropped.

On our last day we planned to do a shore dive at a site called Sugar Loaf Bay which I had read about on





Dive Oz. It didn't really give it a glowing report but said it was worth doing. The site is the island directly opposite the camping ground at Seal Rocks. We geared up at our cabin and then walked across the road to the dive site (very civilised). Paul Watkinson joined us and we entered the water through the narrow channel between the island and the mainland.

That brought us out on the seaward side of the island so it was a bit surgy in the shallows. Early on we startled a turtle resting in the rocks. As it got deeper around the back of the island to about 10 – 11 metres the vis improved to 15 – 20 metres and so did the fish life.

Again we found ourselves surrounded by yellowtail scad, as well as tarwhine, porcupine fish and eastern smooth boxfish. But the stars were the rays. I stopped counting the fiddler rays but I easily saw 25 – 30 of them! Also 5 – 6 eagle rays, stingarees and a tropical visitor - a blue spot stingray. There were also 5 – 6 horn sharks. I have no idea what they were doing in water this warm.

It really was like diving in an aquarium. I would rate this as one of the best (and easiest) dives I have ever done. Certainly the conditions helped, 23 degree water and we dived right on the high tide.

After our dive we packed up and started our journey back to Sydney. A big thank you to Tash for organising (and reorganising several times) the trip. It's a great spot and if you can't get out for a boat dive there are a couple of solid shore diving options. I'm reliably informed by Tash and Digs that the snorkelling was very good too.



Jason Coombs and Roxanne Fea

Saturday Dive Skeleton Rock

It was Saturday morning at Treachery Camp, Seal Rocks. The day was warm and sunny with clear blue skies, which was the template for the entire 4-day weekend. The second group of divers, including myself, made our way to Boat Beach, where we had to negotiate our way across the sand and swim out to the dive boat with all our gear including two tanks for the morning's diving. The first group reported strong currents around the Seal Rocks site so we elected to go a bit further north to Skeleton Rock. Skeleton Rock is marked by a bit of rock which sticks up a couple of metres above the surface and is the tip of a pinnacle that goes down to about 26m. I dived with Ray and Andrew Moulang on this one.

At the bottom we noticed that the pick had just missed the rock and was on the sand and so, with Ray lugging the pick and Andrew and myself hauling on the chain we managed to drop one point of the pick behind a rock. All this activity was being watched by a 1.5m long wobby not an arm's length away. As soon as one prong of the pick was in, the wobby flapped over and flopped on the bloody chain! I had to shake the chain to move it so we could get a second prong of the pick down. This place should be renamed 'Wobby Central' because they were everywhere. We must have seen 30 on this one dive.

We decided to swim around the pinnacle as there was practically no current, the vis was about 15m, and the water was a relaxing 23 degrees. We were between 23m and 25m for most of the dive.

Besides big wobbies, there were plenty of reef fish around and we saw three or four grey nurse sharks in the first 15 minutes, but the most striking thing was the huge schools of yellowtail. They were there in their millions. They



would make a gap as we swam through and would then close up behind us again. They school was so dense that at one point we lost Andrew, who was somewhere behind Ray and myself. We just had to wait patiently for him to emerge from this mass of fish flesh before we could proceed. On the far side of the pinnacle we spotted a large Port Jackson shark and then, out of the gloom emerged the mother of all grey nurse sharks, heading straight for Ray and I. This was one big fish, which seemed to take up my entire field of view. John our skipper had mentioned earlier that exhaling suddenly is likely to frighten the sharks, causing them to immediately do the 'tail snap' thing and take off. Either one or both of us must have gasped a bit when we saw it because that's exactly what it did and we never saw it again. Looking back, I'm surprised that all I did was exhale. Had it come any closer I might have been checking the wetsuit for biological stains!

Andrew meanwhile was still surrounded by his adoring yellowtail groupies and missed the whole thing. We continued around the pinnacle seeing more wobbies and some big blue groper and eventually decided we had missed the anchor. We did an open water ascent and safety stop together, with Ray inflating his safety sausage. We surfaced to find we were a 100m or so from the boat. The sea was still flat calm so it was no effort to begin with a bit of a swim but the boat came and collected us a few minutes later. This had been an enjoyable and very memorable dive.

In fact the whole weekend was a very pleasurable experience with good diving, fantastic weather and great company. Thanks Natasha for pulling this weekend together (with some assistance from Digby).



Sue and I enjoyed every minute of it.

Steve and Sue Shaw

Sunday Dive Search for Jimmy's Cave

Back to Seal Rocks again and this time the weather was perfect, couldn't get better. I've been coming here for a long time and the seas can be hit or miss roughly 50/50. So after a great start on Saturday, I started agitating to do Jimmy's Cave and Edith breaker on Sunday. Edith breaker is hard to find. I had spent years looking for it previously before eventually finding it. There are no known marks as the coastline around is fairly featureless, so you have to have the GPS marks or a GPS and a chart. Four years ago I went there and was shown Jimmy's Cave, which is a large underwater cave with narrow entrances. So on Sunday morning I made sure everyone one on the dive had a torch so we could look for the cave.

The seas were dead flat and we had our normal beach entry to the dive boat. It's deceptive to get out there, even without any swell, as the bottom is very rocky and unsteady. It's not so easy to wade out with two scuba tanks. Wayne with his camera had that much





more work to do, as did other photographers. When we rounded the point the flat seas continued, so we headed south about 3 nautical miles from Seal Rocks. John tried to get us on the cave which is located under Edith reef. The pick went down and the vis looked great. John gave us a dive brief on how to find Jimmy's Cave and some other features. I'm not sure everyone was keen on the cave as it has a narrow entrance, from memory. Rox and Jason went hunting gorgonian fans and Paul, Greg and Shelly were in the other group. I teamed up with Wayne and Marko to look for the cave.

We went over the stern and then swam down the anchor line, which was anchored in 15m. Vis must've been around 20 meters and the water was warm. I headed north to go over the reef edge to the bottom. But there was no edge, instead I was swimming down over huge boulders. So I kept on going down over the boulder to about 32m. It was then that I decided that I was in the wrong area. So I decided to start looking for Jimmy's Cave, not really knowing now where it was. The boulders were huge so it was easy to descend between the cracks to have a look. As I went down into one it opened up to reveal large schools of bullseye's and plenty of growth. Could this be the cave? It opened up as I went further in, with Wayne and his high powered movie lights and Marko following me. Then I saw an opening up head and realised this was just a massive swim through. So I went through and bumped into a few Grey Nurse Sharks at the other end. Then I looked around and dropped down into another space between the boulders and found another massive swim through, covered in

marine life and fish. These were some of the largest swim throughs I'd been in. After that I realised that Edith breaker had lots of huge swim throughs, and exploring for Jimmy's Cave just leads to one giant swim through after another.

On top of one of the swim troughs I found a Wobbegong lying out in the open, next to another large boulder. Wayne was taking a photo from the front of the shark. He got me to get between the shark and the large boulder for some video. They gestured to me to come close to the shark, which I did. Suddenly Wayne got too close and the Wobby bolted towards me. I just had time to think, "oh shit!", when it swam right between me and the rock I was lying on. There must've been just enough gap for it to swim through, but I didn't know that! Looking forward to that video!

On the way back up I found an old rusted out engine block. According to John that was marking the entrance to the top of Jimmy's Cave. So we were obviously close, but not close enough. It was an awesome dive just looking for Jimmy's Cave. But I guess I'll just have to go back to Seal Rocks to look for it again. Thanks for organising a great weekend, Tash.

Ian Roffey



Treachery Camp

I booked Treachery Camp Beach Lodge for this trip - it was a great venue for a large group, but at \$880 per night it was necessary to make sure accommodation costs were paid up front for all comers, and no refunds available. The Lodge consists of 12 cabins - 2 with Queen beds, the remaining 12 with 4 bunk beds in each. We decided on no more than 2 people per cabin, unless individuals chose otherwise, to ensure everyone had plenty of space. The cabins encircle a large kitchen and dining hall for the exclusive use of Lodge guests. It is a huge, well equipped area, with plenty of fridge and freezer space, bench seats and huge tables, and large commercial gas cooktops and ovens for cooking up a storm. Kath Smart cooked up a couple of batches of wicked scones for us all, and it was great to see everyone cooking their meals and plenty of food was shared around between the different groups. We also had our own private BBQ area, and fire pit. After dinner we sat around the fire to swap tales and enjoy each others' company.





SEA BRAGGIN'



There were a few dingos present in the campsite, which kept us entertained, as we could hear their howls while sitting around the fire, and more than a few of us were startled on late night toilet visits. We used the campsite amenities blocks, which were functional and fine - it was a busy time and there had been a lot of rain, so muddy floors were the norm, but overall the bathroom experience wasn't too horrendous!

Attendees on this trip were a mix of members and friends of members, with a couple of families camping in the site nearby and joining us around the fire in the evenings.

Non-divers could visit one of several beaches surrounding the Treachery camp peninsula, walk to the lighthouse, visit markets in town (about 45mins drive away) or enjoy the fantastic snorkelling, as Digs and I did. The water temperature was lovely at 22-23 degrees, and we saw wobbegongs, a great number and variety of rays, dolphins, nudibranchs and countless other fish life on our snorkel.

Thanks to everyone who came along for great company and fine spirits.

Natasha Naude





SEA BRAGGIN'

BONG WEEKEND PORT STEPHENS

Boys Only, No Girls!

Friday

After kissing Donna goodbye as she headed off to work I finished packing the car and headed to Port Stephens for the boys weekend. I took the Friday off so that I could do a couple of the shore dives prior to the planned weekend boat dives.

Arrived at Nelsons Bay to be greeted by a number of the divers sitting at the Marina having coffee and cakes! Got the key, moved my stuff into the apartment, had a bit of lunch then set about going diving.

The plan was to dive a site that I had not dived before – Seahorse Gardens – which is located on the marina side of Fly Point, then do a second dive at Fly Point. I had been advised that the beauty of Seahorse Gardens is that it is sheltered from the current provided you do not go too deep, so can dive it any time. The best time to dive is around 2 hrs before the high tide, have a surface interval, then dive Fly Point.

Seahorse Gardens consists of a beach entry, snorkel across sand then sea grass then sponge covered rocks interspersed amongst kelp, sand and weeds. Maximum depth is around 10m before the current becomes too strong. The further out you go the stronger the current becomes. The site does not have the prolific sponge growth of Fly Point but supposedly contains seahorses and anglerfish for those with a keen eye – definitely a macro dive.

There were 4 of us for this dive – Chris Heath, Daniel Noble, James Dean and myself. We parked at Fly Point, kitted up and walked down the hill to the beach. It is a very easy entry and a very easy dive. Visibility was not that special at around 5m. Did not cover a lot of territory and spent most of the dive looking amongst the rocks and kelp. We



found red lined flabellina nudibranchs, octopus, cuttlefish, speckled morays, leatherjackets, red morwong, juvenile threadfin butterflyfish, big flathead and large variable aphelodoris (pancake nudibranch). We did not find any seahorses or anglerfish – the cunning buggers obviously stayed hidden.

After a surface interval we did a second dive at Fly Point, this time with a number of additional St George divers. Visibility this time was even worse being at best 4m – it was a bit like a night dive. I buddied with Chris and James and we explored the sponge gardens before returning via the small wall. Again lots of red lined flabellina nudibranchs, green morays, blind sharks, red scorpionfish, red morwongs, maori cod and near the end a large



short tail ceratasoma nudibranch. The plaque is now totally covered in growth – next time I dive here I might bring a steel brush to clean it!

After the dive we went to the dive shop, washed gear, showered at the unit then went for dinner at the RSL club.

Ron Walsh



Saturday

Having all arrived and bedded down ok, we awoke to blue skies and a little if nothing breeze. It all looked good but there was a problem coming in the form of a southerly later in the day we knew about.

The aim was always to get some dives at Broughton Island up North from Port Stephens. We all went down to the marina to find one of the local dive operators <http://letsgoadventures.com.au> by the designated 7:30am time. We loaded our gear into trolleys and it was shuffled around to the boat. With 21 of us we didn't know how this was all going to run, but it was soon apparent that they are very capable of running large groups. Soon we were loaded, counted and travelling.

Out around the islands and north we go. It was great to see so many blokes all talking and having fun on the way there.

When we arrived at Broughton we looked at Looking Glass but the usual Western side was already too windy for the captain's liking, so around we went to the Eastern side to find everyone and their dog there. Ok then let's do North Rock they say! About 10 minutes later we were anchoring up there. They showed us the layout and we buddied up

(as if this helps, but it's a good start till we hit the water!). A few opt as I did to follow the local dive guide. Fantastic, into a school of yellowtail. Millions of them - we were soon to get used to them being all around us. Down along a gutter and straight away we saw the first of many Grey Nurse Sharks. We stayed to the side as suggested and they just paraded as expected up and down in front of us, ranging in size from probably 2 to 2 1/2 metres. To start there were about 6 then 10 or more. We went around the corner in about less than 10 metres depth, with viz decreasing due to all of us at the same spot.

We went back up another gutter parallel to the one we came down, and paused next to large rocks just watching the sharks. The photographers had trouble getting their pics of the sharks with all the yellowtail about. We headed back over the ridge and back to the boat – it was an easy, great dive. It was stated it was world class and many agreed.

Most had smiles as wide as the Grey Nurses we had just seen.

It seems everyone approved. We upped anchor and headed back over to the eastern side of Looking Glass. We were on our own now as the others had moved on. A quick dive brief, which was to stay one side of the large slot that goes from one side of the rock through to the other, and let the sharks go up the other side. Well this worked out great, and a little bit of swell had us swaying our way back and forth going through. Once out at the other side we headed south to find a couple of small cave overhangs. Back around and heading towards the slot we found a massive giant cuttlefish, which Daniel wanted to befriend. None of us bought that and said if you want to cuddle it you do so on you own and gave it a wide berth. We headed back at a really casual pace and looked around the rocks under the boat doing a small safety stop.



Photo by Jason Coombs

When the boat had picked up everyone, we headed back into a big southerly wind which was about 15 to 20 knots. Up and down made for a slow uncomfortable trip back, but really no one was complaining as we had done two great dives.

Thanks to all the guys who attended for your support and for making it a great weekend away as usual. We successfully had 21 divers. Thanks to Letsgoadventures for their service and for their very competitive prices. For accommodation we were in seven units with three maximum each unit. These were from O'Meara Properties and seemed quite ok as well.

You would have to think we will be back next year.

Ray Moulang



Photo by Jason Coombs



Photo by Chris Heath





WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Wed 19 June	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Jason Coombs j.coombs@unsw.edu.au	Sat 22 June	Night Dive Kurnell	Gary Dunnett garydunnett@exemail.com.au
Sat 29 June	Boat Dive Wattamolla	Shelley Brueseker shellsb@bigpond.net.au	Sun 7 July	Deep Dive SS Tuggerah/ Undola	Michael McFadyen michael@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info
Sat 13 July	Shore Dive and BBQ Kurnell	Paul Pacey paul.pacey@iinet.net.au	Sun 14 July	Boat Dive Minmi Trench	Jason Coombs j.coombs@unsw.edu.au
Wed 17 July	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Jason Coombs j.coombs@unsw.edu.au	Sat 20 July	Boat Dive Marley Point	Digby Naude digby@bluecucumber.com

CLUB COMMITTEE

President	Jason Coombs	9345 4599	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Vice President	Peter Flockart	9371 0265	pjiflockart@speednet.com.au
Secretary	Digby Naude	0403 896 985	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Treasurer	Kelly McFadyen	9545 5596	treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Assistant Secretary/ Treasurer	David Casburn	0405 186 184	dcasburn@iinet.net.au
Webmaster	Michael McFadyen	9545 5596	webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Naude	0410 074 677	newsletter@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au

Please send items for the newsletter to me as you do them during the month.
Please send any photographs as separate .jpg files rather than inserted into the article.
If you don't mind, please don't insert a copyright symbol and your name into the image files.