



SEA BRAGGIN'

St George Scuba Club Newsletter

Shore Dives

Frenchman's Bay - Maxine Hayden

Clifton Gardens - Rianti Bieler

Sydney Diving in December - Peter Flockart

Pages 1, 10

Boat Dives

Summer Diving Highlights - Mike Scotland

Wednesday Boat Dives - Michael McFadyen

Middle Ground - Peter Flockart

Pages 3, 16, 17

Trips

Budawangs Camping - Paul Pacey

George Kermode Wreck - Peter Beaumont

Pages 6, 12

FRENCHMAN'S BAY

Sunday 30 March 2014

On Sunday 30 March, about 55 club members arrived early for our club dive and BBQ at Frenchman's Bay, La Perouse. Four boats did two runs, each taking divers out to Henry Head, Minmi Trench, Whale Watch and further afield. Others who missed out on a boat spot were happy to do a shore dive (see photos courtesy of Ron Walsh).

After a week of heavy rain which saw flooding across Sydney, expectations were not high for good conditions but we were to be rewarded when the Dive Gods granted us 10-15m viz and





Giant Cuttlefish at Minmi Trench



warm water at 23.7 degrees. I was on the first run out of Botany Bay on board Triple D. Calm, flat water gave way to a small bumpy swell at the heads. Ray had shoulder trouble and Nancy burst a high pressure air hose as she rolled off, leaving Gary and I to dive alone. Descending to the top of Minmi, we saw a pair of Red Cuttlefish, Blue Serpents, Black Margined and Splendid nudis and heaps of tiny juvenile Bennetts.

Gary pointed out a sleeping Giant Cuttlefish which woke up when I tried to photograph it, attempted to snatch the strobe off my camera and then proceeded to follow us for the next ten minutes, photo bombing every shot I took. We also saw a few Sergeant Bakers and

a school of large Trevally. After 46 minutes bottom time we headed back to the boat and in to shore where the next group of happy St. Georgians were waiting their turn.



Other divers reported seeing a turtle swimming around them on their safety stop off Kurnell and all divers commented they had equally warm water. Divers at Henry Head saw pygmy pipe horse, spiders galore, a spindle cowrie, weedy sea dragons and octopus. It was my first

boat dive since Byron Bay in December 2012 and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute! (Natasha.)

With the wet stuff out of the way, we did the next thing we do best. Eat! And what a feast we had. Nibblies were laid out with chips and dips, cheeses and crackers. The





barbie was fired up with sausages, burgers and onions, the table was full of salads, bread rolls and Steve Shaw's special chilli sauce and then of course came dessert. After gorging ourselves we sat around telling tall tales of dives gone past, overseas destinations, upcoming trips and new gadgets worth every cent spent on them. The weather held out with beautiful sunny skies until late afternoon after everyone had gone home. A magical day all round.

Many thanks to all who made it possible: Eda for organizing the lunch; John, Ray, Phil and Michael for providing their boats. Also, big thanks to: Peter F for buying the meat and chopping all the onions and cooking, Ken and Shalene, Tricia, Caroline Corcoran, Janine, Shelley and Greg, Caroline Rivals, Deb, Mat, Tony, Tordis and Victoria, Jasmine, Bill and Ian for salads, nibblys, desserts and bread, and for doing the cooking. Many hands made a great feast!

See you at the next one.

Maxine Hayden

SUMMER DIVING 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

Diving from Sea John and mid week dives

We have dived at Bypass reef a few times. This is an excellent spot with a wall of five metres at 28 metres depth. The last time we dived here, the vis was over 25 metres. We could see another big wall north which we will explore next time.

Sharks at Maroubra. Most of the eight Grey Nurses we saw have large hooks in their mouths. One had a small float on three metres of tracer line. This was likely to become entangled in a rock, killing the shark, so I cut it off. We saw four Ornate Wobbies and two Spotted wobbies as well as two Blue Devils. On another dive, we saw a massive ball of catfish, probably numbering over one thousand fish.

A giant Sea Hare, *Aplysia* sp. was found at the Leap. The larger one was just under half a metre long. Its mate was 35 cms. These are seen at Port Stephens but are uncommon at Sydney. There have been Anglerfish and Pygmy Pipe Horses at the Leap. Eddie Ivers has photos of a male Big Belly Sea Horse giving birth from late March.

The Convict Goby has been seen commonly at Shiprock. There are quite a few hiding in tiny crevices around the ten metre mark. I recently found some of these in Lembah, North Sulawesi. I could have saved thousands of \$ and stayed home! We have also seen a giant Bristle worm. This polychaete is a spiny segmented worm related to beach worms and is usually buried under the sand and is a predatory hunter with biting jaws.

Sydney diving is pretty special, as good as many of the so-called 'hot spots' in its own special way. We are fortunate enough to be part of the small number of people who understand how good it is.

There are quite a few photos of the local critters on my website. If you are looking for some extra help with id take a look at the Dive Sydney and Shiprock pages, as well as the night diving. It is a work in progress but there are plenty of local marine animals identified. See photos on following pages. Thanks to photographic models, Roger Lee and Eddie Ivers.

Mike Scotland

www.mikescotlandscuba.com

Editor's note:

For those interested, please note Mike's photo on the cover of the current Sport Diving mag. Mike also has articles in Depth Magazine and Dive Log for people who want to read about far off dive destinations.

www.depthmagazine.net

www.diveblog.net.au







SEA BRAGGIN'

CAMPING IN THE BUDAWANGS

22-23 March 2014

This trip was organised by Michael and Kelly and attended by Eda and Ray, Peter Flockart, Mat Peeling and Paul Pacey (moi).

The plan was to meet at the South Nowra CrapDonalds on the Saturday morning then head to the campsite as a convoy of sorts. The weather was very overcast but it didn't look like it was going to rain (Ehhhhhh, wrong again).

Matt decided that he would just go straight from home to the campground. I suspect that he's eaten at the Golden Arches once before and didn't want to be reminded of the experience.

Now, you've all probably heard of "the butterfly effect", where it's claimed that a butterfly flapping its wing in the Amazon rainforest can cause a Tornado in Texas (they probably deserved it anyways). Well, our fearless leaders were a little late due to a faulty pastrami slicer at Nowra Woolworths – this will now be known as the Pastrami slicer effect. After Michael and Kelly arrived and the dogs (Veto and Brandy) were introduced to each other we set off to Yadbora Flat, located in the Budawang Range, which is where we were going to camp overnight.

Yadbora Flat is a very pretty camping area on the banks of the Clyde River and nestled in the shadows of The Castle and Byangee walls to the north. I thought that this area was in the Morton NP but it is actually State Forestry, hence you can take your dogs along. The dogs had a ball although Veto was not too sure about the really BIG dogs with horns that were wandering around the camping area (because the local farmer doesn't bother fixing his fences). You just have to be a bit careful not to walk in fresh prairie cakes when walking around the area in the dark.

The Budawang Range is a high sandstone plateau that is located to the south-west of Nowra. It is located in the Morton National Park. The area is both rugged and extremely beautiful, with many attractions worthy of world heritage listing (Monolith Valley and Pigeon

**South West Rocks
Fri 27 June – Sun 29 June
2014**

A weekend trip up to South West Rocks - we have dived heaps with these guys and they are the best.

Here is the deal:

- 2 night / 4 dive package including 2 nights divers lodge accommodation
- continental breakfast
- four boat dives (double boat dive each day)
- use of tanks, weights and Nitrox
- Shared room/bunk accommodation \$320 per person
- Private/twin share accommodation \$360 per person
- Full equipment hire with dive package additional \$60

Please email me back if you are interested. Just getting numbers interested at present.

Contact Ray Moulang
rayscases2@gmail.com



House mountain come to mind). In many ways the geography is similar to the Blue Mountains, with deep gorges etched into the 900 metre high plateau by millions of years of weathering. Pigeon House Mountain is a famous landmark in the area and was named by Lieutenant James Cook as he sailed by in 1770 on his way north along the coastline. He noted that the prominent peak reminded him of a pigeon house. The peak is quite distinct and the top looks very much like a volcanic plug but is actually from the same sedimentary stone as the surrounding area. Our plan was to climb Pigeon House some time over the weekend.

The drive from Milton to Yadboro Flat is really pretty as it winds its way through old forestry areas and rainforest sections down in the gullies.

Upon arrival at Yadboro Flat Michael selected a nice campsite alongside the river and we all went to work setting up our tents for the night. Michael and Kelly undid a few straps and foompa their Ship Shape rooftop camper was, well, Ship Shape and ready for sleeping. Veto was a great help by barking the odd instruction. Whilst Michael and



Kelly were sitting down waiting for the billy to boil the rest of us were still trying to work out if the red poles go in the tent first or the blue poles?

By the time the camp was ready and we'd had some lunch the skies had cleared and it was quite hot. It was decided that it was too hot to be climbing Pigeon House so the girls decided that a swim was in order. Well, one in, all in. As I approached the river, Peter remarked that it was cold but after you get in it was fine. He wasn't kidding about the cold bit. I shoulda brought my wetsuit. But, he was right, after a few minutes I went numb and thereafter it was really quite pleasant.



I like to spend a bit of time in this area kayaking on the Clyde River but I noted that the river level was really low and not enough flow for kayaking at the moment. After the trip I checked the river level and found that it was 0.55 metres at the Brooman river gauge. You need a minimum of 0.8 metres at Brooman to kayak down the river. I checked the river height today (12/4/2014) and the river height is 1.14 metres – I think it's been raining good since we left. Kayaking down with a 1.14 metres height would be exciting (borderline scary for me).

Anyways, back to our camping. It was not long before it was time for fives (anytime after 3:00 o'clock will do) and a magnificent spread of exotic nibblies

appeared on the table. The nibblies were washed down with a fine selection of wines, of course. After all, St. George is a drinking club with a diving problem!

The pleasantries were interrupted briefly after we had to set up the tarpaulin as it had started raining lightly. This patchy rain continued all evening.

When dinner time rolled around Michael fired up his Biji BBQ which is kinda like a plough disc



with little fold down legs. I have never seen one before and was very impressed with how little wood it uses to cook on. It's strong too. It had to be as Kelly brought out a heap of T-Bone steaks that were so big they could have come off a dinosaur. I was thinking "dang – I shouldn't have eaten 1kg of nibblies". But I usually think that when dinner time comes around.

A pleasant evening was spent sitting around the fire (in between rain showers).

A nice sleep-in on Sunday morning then a cooked breakfast was a great start to the day.



It was decided that climbing Pigeon House would take too long (about 4 hours return) so we packed up camp and drove down south to the Mogood lookout to survey the sights. Whilst Mogood lookout is only 400 metres high it offers expansive views all around and is highly recommended if you're in the area. The fire trail past the lookout is suitable for 2WD cars but the track up to the lookout is a bit ratty and you need a bit of ground clearance on your vehicle to drive to the top. Michael had originally proposed that we do a 4WD trip to the lookout. So when we got to the top I had a look at the 4WD track coming up to the lookout from the north. Hooowee, that's not the kind of track that a Subaru would like (read \$\$\$ damage) – definitely Landcruiser-ish territory. Surprisingly, it was crowded on top of the hill and finding a parking spot was tricky.

After many photo's and discussions about the geography of the area we all set off back to where we had left Mat's car. We travelled via the village of Brooman. The only thing that lives in Brooman these days is the river gauging station. The village consists of a few deserted houses and what appears to be a small school building. The scene is very photogenic and Peter immediately set about capturing it. The village was first settled in the late 1800's as it was on the main road to the south coast. You had to travel via Brooman as it was not then possible to cross the Clyde river near the coast (Batemans Bay). Also there was a gold rush in the Clyde River area during the 1860's and the town would probably have flourished at that time.

After finding Mat's car again I headed back to the camp where I intended staying for a couple more days whilst the rest of the group headed for home. As it turned out I only stayed for one more night as it rained so heavily that I was worried about getting out across some of the creek crossings. It was very slippery driving out but, despite all the rain, the creek crossings were not a problem.

Heard around the campfire... The conversation had drifted onto the problems of getting older.

Anonymous: "Paul, are you stiff when you get up in the morning?"

Paul: For the first time in my life I was lost for words!

Many thanks to Kelly and Michael for putting this trip on the program I really enjoyed it and I'm sure the other guys, as well as Veto and Brandy, did too.

Any relationship between this report and the truth is purely coincidental.

Paul Pacey

SHOUT OUT FOR GREAT SERVICE

Two years ago I bought the Recsea Underwater housing for my Fujifilm 3d v3 video camera with suitable handles and tray to fit this set up and my conventional HD video camera and lights as a single rig. I bought from Mozaik Underwater in America.

Due to my method of detaching the housing from the tray it eventually caused the housing to flood this January, destroying the Fujifilm 3d video camera.

In a sequence of emails with Mozaik and Fujifilm, as a goodwill gesture, they serviced the housing and returned it ready to use. Mozaik then very kindly paid for a new Fujifilm 3d camera.

In today's world I find this service from Mozaik very enlightening. And those thinking of doing business with Mozaik, an overseas company, should be encouraged by this incident.

If any club member would like more information about the camera rig I use or more details of the cause of the incident please email me at barrand@divescape.net

Chris Barrand

SEA BRAGGIN'

THE QUEST FOR SYDNEY SEAHORSES

I am new to diving in Sydney so I have a very long list of creatures I would like to see. One Monday morning last month I headed off to Clifton Gardens for a dive with Janine. We had tried to find seahorses a couple of times before with no luck but she was confident that this time we would find one.

The weather was cold and gloomy and I was such a chicken with cold water so this didn't look too promising. On top of that, my yellow tank boot is broken and the tank has curved bottom so it can't stand. I only have two tanks and the other one is still empty from my last week's dive at Nelson Bay (I know, slack... should've refilled it straight away) so I had to gear up with the

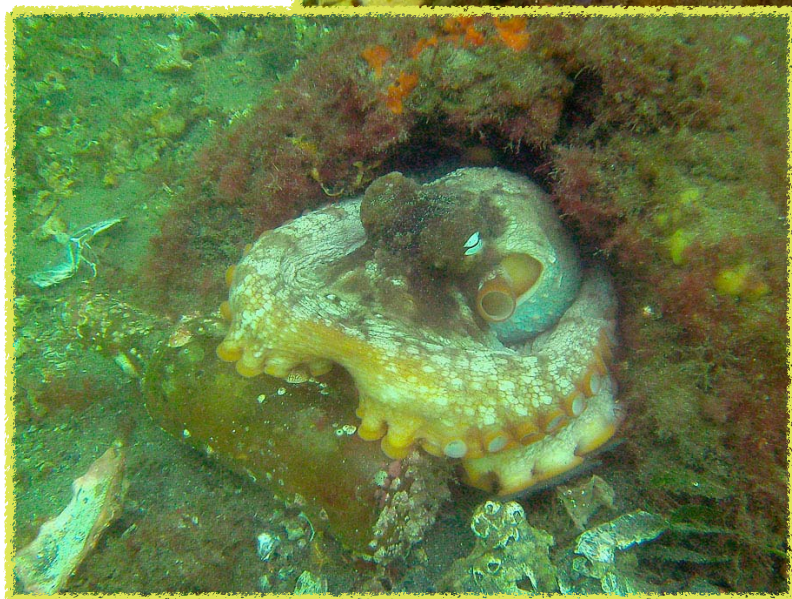
tank lying down. Talk about acquiring new skill. Bad luck #2, yellow octopus leaked BADLY to the point I decided to take it off. Lucky Janine brought the whole



of Bunnings with her and she had a spare first stage plug I could use. Bad luck #3, as we were walking to the beach my NEW torch strap broke! Gaarrgghhhhhh!!! But wait, I'm not done. Bad luck #4, five minutes into the dive the said torch died. Now I should probably consider turning

back, go home and curl up in bed.

Anyway, visibility wasn't as good as last time but soon enough Janine found the first seahorse! It's dark colored and seeing his big belly we thought it might be pregnant. YAY!! And she was right, as soon as you find one you'll see about a hundred of them. Ok, maybe not a hundred but I did see four. As soon as I turned around from the first seahorse there's another one at the next pylon. And another one. And another one. Seahorses galore! Thanks Janine for helping me tick seahorse off my list!





For some reason there were a lot of fish carcasses at the bottom. Guessing fishermen might be responsible for this? Also found a black fur jacket next to an octopus but decided to leave it there as it would be really heavy to take along. Next time I'll leave the camera at home and do a proper clean up. So much rubbish!

Found three octopuses, one of which was cradling a wine bottle. I would too with visibility like this! There were heaps of decorator crabs and I swear they are the most difficult creatures to photograph because they're just a blob of messy shapes. Or I'm just such a bad photographer! Just like the seahorse, once you see these crabs they're everywhere on the pylons. Saw a rather large crab as well next to a big nudie. Heaps of schooling fish today and I can safely say I am now in love with Clifton Gardens.

Rianti Bieler





GEORGE KERMODE WRECK DIVE

The George Kermode was a bucket dredge built in 1914, weighing 1380 tonnes with an overall length of 70 metres. The dredge was acquired by the Australian Government in 1917 then the Melbourne Harbour trust in 1941. After many years of service she was scuttled off the southern coast of Phillip Island on 1 April 1976. The wreck lies upside down in 22 metres of water, is broken in half, and has numerous entry and exit points along its length.

I had the pleasure of diving the wreck on 30 March with my long time dive buddy Mr Ian Scholey. The weather forecast was for near perfect conditions, so we launched Ian's boat the Sea Eagle (RHIB) from the Newhaven ramp and proceeded down the coast to the wreck. The forecast was spot on, with less than a metre swell and 5-10 knots of northerly wind. During the 40 minute transit to the site we spotted penguins, seals and the odd dolphin or two on the surface.

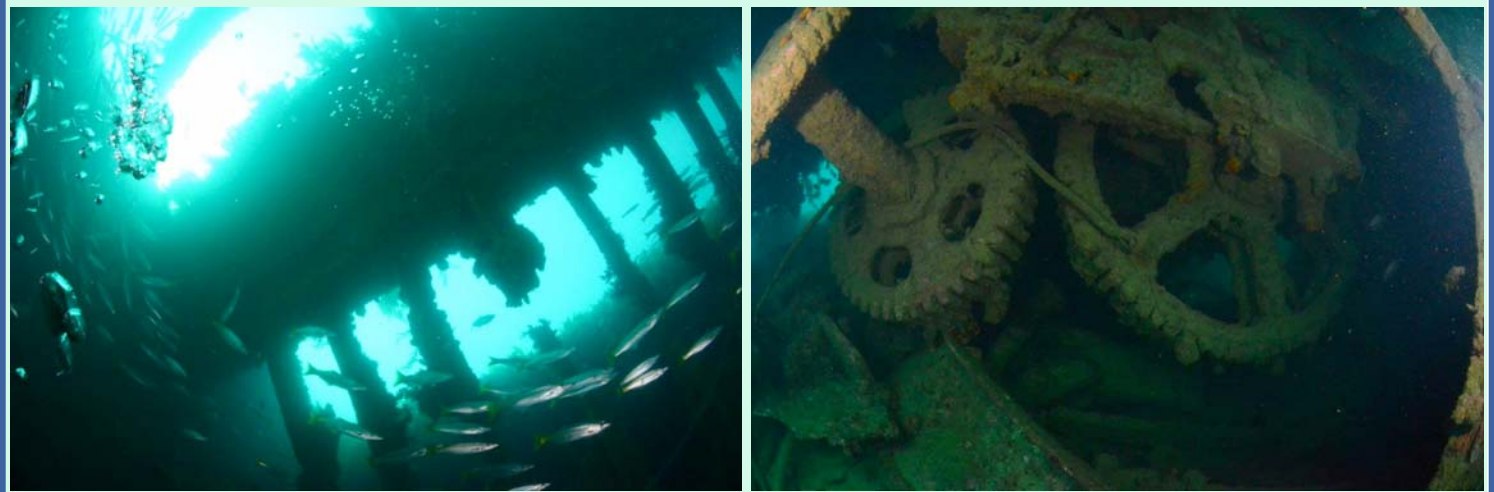
Once anchored we rolled in and swam around the wreck. Ian led the way as this was my first dive on the wreck. The 18 metre mark sees the top side of the wreck covered in kelp/weed, with schools of yellowtail pike, bullseyes, sweep, quite a few leather jackets and the odd Blue Devil fish in and around the wreck. The inside of the wreck reveals scattered dredging machinery, drive gears, boilers, pipe work, valves and other miscellaneous equipment. We spent about 45 minutes on the first dive before doing an hour's surface interval to have lunch, followed by a second 45-minute dive (followed by a deco stop) to have a further look around. There is sufficient light entering the wreck to make spotting the numerous exit points fairly easy and the rocky bottom makes for a good anchorage.

Overall both dives were very enjoyable, with vis being about 10-15 metres, 18 degree water temp and minimal surge. It is well worth doing again when conditions are suitable.

Peter Beaumont

Final Moments of the George Kermode
Scuttled off Phillip Island









St George Boys' Weekend 2014

When: Friday 2 - Monday 4 May 2014

Where: Port Stephens

We will be staying at The Halifax Holiday Park in Six Units side by side to enable plenty of off gassing talk time, Costs to be \$120 per head and this enables a nearby spot for excess cars for our use.

Diving - Limited to 18 divers - Get in early - don't miss out!!

Boat Diving to be provided by Lets Go Adventures from D'Albora Marina at cost of \$104 per double boat dive.

Booked in for two each on Saturday and Sunday for 18 divers. The club has paid out the deposits for this so we need \$50 off each boy that wants to attend. Please forward \$50 to Kelly asap via Eft transaction and send an email to Kelly and myself stating you have paid.

Your early support is required and thanks in advance.

Any questions please contact me by email or at a dive or meetings.

Contact Ray on 0403 437 974 or
rayscases2@gmail.com



SEA BRAGGIN'

WEDNESDAY BOAT DIVES

As most members would know, Les started running boat dives on Wednesdays in about 2000 and since then he and then I have organised dives as often as weather and work allowed. In the past year Phil Short has also started going out on Wednesdays as well.

On Wednesday 2 April Phil and I both took out our boats and we had a total of 10 on board. On Le Scat were Les, Kim, Phil G, Phil R and myself and on Aquanaut were Peter F, Greg, Peter T (ex-member), David Q and Phil S.

The weather and conditions were much better than originally forecast and it was really nice to go out when the seas were absolutely flat. We had already decided that we would dive Middle Ground, so when we got there it was also great to find no wind and no current. We anchored, the water looked quite clean as we could see a long way down the anchor line which dropped totally vertically towards the bottom.

Kim, Les and I dived first. We dropped down the deco line and then the cross-over line which both went vertically to meet the anchor at the chain, it is not very often this happens. When I got to the bottom the anchor was just lying on the top of the reef. I moved it a short distance to a ledge. We headed off on a lap of the reef. As the bottom here is about 31 to 32 metres and the top about 28 metres, you have just enough time using air to do a complete loop around the reef without running into decompression.

The visibility on the bottom was between 15 and 20 metres, varying a little as we went around. A very slight current from the west was felt, but it had no impact on our dive. On the north-eastern corner of the reef an eastern blue devilfish was found in one of the small gullies. As we went around we saw a few largish seapike swimming up over the reef. There were plenty of nudibranchs on the reef top, especially purple dragons. Around this time we heard Aquanaut turn up and drop its anchor.

On the southern side of the reef we saw a few medium sized cuttlefish and then a very large wobbegong shark was seen near our anchor. Once back at the anchor, we spent a few minutes looking around before Les and Kim ascended. I was using Nitrox so still had plenty of bottom time. I headed over to the rocks off the reef and then back to the main reef where I found Aquanaut's anchor sitting on the top of the reef. I dragged it to the west about 15 metres till I found a spot to hook it in (the reef top has few places for an anchor to catch).

Back at the anchor the two Phils descended and a few minutes later I ascended. The Phils found another wobbegong on their dive as well as a safety sausage and reel. It turns out that they were both lost by David. We headed back to Jibbon Beach for money tea. We ended up finishing before the others turned up, Phil and Peter T had done longish bottom times and then on the way back in they had encountered a small school of spinner dolphins which had entertained them for a long time.

This was one of the best dives we have done in the past year, just behind a brilliant dive at Barrens Hut in early March. Hopefully we will have more conditions like this over winter, we deserve a few as the conditions have generally been poor for the past couple of years.

As I will be finishing work within a month or so, I will be taking the boat out most Wednesdays, weather permitting. If enough members are interested, we will take both boats. Look out for the emails.

Michael McFadyen



MIDDLE GROUND

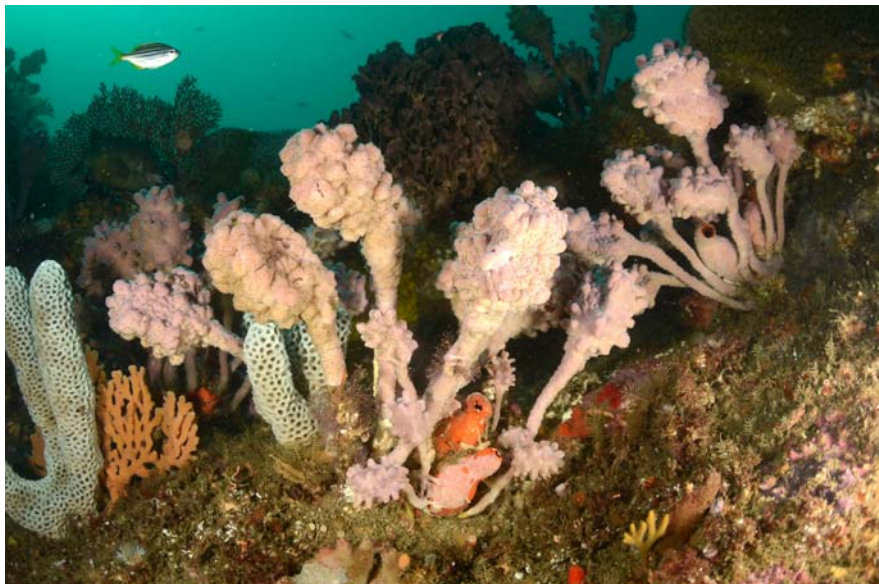
Wednesday 2 April 2014

I arrived at the RMYC in perfect conditions - blue sky and no wind - just as Phil Short arrived with the boat. After waiting for Greg Blackburne, Peter Tibbetts and Tong Zheng we loaded and launched the boat. As we ran out of Port Hacking the sea was almost dead flat with just a little swell.

After gearing up Greg and Tong slipped over the side and descended to the Middle Ground Reef 26m below. I went next and as Phil handed me the camera I remarked you could see the cross over line meeting the anchor line at 20m. Vis on the bottom wasn't as good, with a dirty water layer at 20m. Photos show it was a tad dark but clear on the bottom at 31m. Greg took some great footage on his go-pro.

While on deco both Phil and Peter passed us on their descent. Peter was using his new Pathfinder re-breather and loving it. After 50 minutes they were back on the boat.

As we began pulling up the anchor we were surrounded by a large school of spinner dolphins chasing bait fish.



They played under the bow of the boat - Argonaut - and jumped and surfed in the boat's wake. We stayed and played with them for some 20 minutes with Greg getting some footage. We then headed into Jibbon to meet Michael McFadyen, who had also dived out on Middle Ground, for morning tea.

It had been a fantastic day, flat seas and warm sun - 26 degrees air temperature with a water temp 23.2 on top, 17.4 on bottom and 10 to 15m vis. Beautiful gorgonians and cuttle fish. The real bonus had been the spinner dolphins as we made our way back in... just magic.

Peter Flockart





Yongala and Townsville Barrier

When: Monday 17 Nov - Saturday 22 Nov 2014

Where: ex Townsville

We have a booking from Monday 17 Nov until Saturday 22 Nov on board Kalinda with Dave Stewart for six days. This will be the third year in a row that St George members have dived the Yongala and reefs around Townsville.

The cost is \$1200 each based on fifteen divers. At \$200 a day for four dives, food and accommodation, it is extremely good value. Last year, we did 21 dives. We had near perfect conditions and had three superb dives on the Yongala.

The best way to do this trip is to fly up on Sunday 16 November, dive the six days and stay one night in Townsville to off gas. Then fly home on the Sunday 23 November.

Please let me know asap if you are interested in this excellent dive trip.



Contact Mike Scotland
mikescotland@bigpond.com



WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Sun 27 April	Shore Dive Shelley Beach, Manly	Ken Ridley kenridley49@gmail.com	Fri 2 - Sun 4 May	Boys Weekend Port Stephens	Ray Moulang rayscases2@gmail.com
Sat 10 May	Deep Dive The Wanderers	Dave Casburn dcasburn@iinet.net.au	Sun 11 May	Shore Dive Bare Island	Gary Perkins perkinsdive@gmail.com
Sat 17 May	Boat Dive Middle Ground	Shelley Brueseker shellsb@bigpond.net.au	Sat 17 May	Restaurant Night Elissar Lebanese	Ken Ridley kenridley49@gmail.com
Sun 18 May	Shore Dive Shark Point, Clovelly	Jason Coombs J.Coombs@unsw.edu.au	Wed 21 May	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Gary Perkins perkinsdive@gmail.com

CLUB COMMITTEE

President	Gary Perkins	0422 286 263	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Vice President	David Casburn	0405 186 184	vpresident@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Secretary	Digby Naude	0403 896 985	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Treasurer	Kelly McFadyen	9545 5596	treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Assistant Secretary/ Treasurer	Nancy Scoleri	0421 415 104	ast@stgeorgescubaclub.org.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.