



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 453 Hurstville South 2221 NSW

August 2006

Diving Canada's West Coast.

By John Connolly

It was with a great deal of interest and trepidation that I considered diving on Canada's West Coast. Dennis, several weeks before when we were diving, had suggested it to me when I mentioned Toni and I were touring Canada in May/June. My image of the area was one of cold inhospitable waters. Wrong. Cold yes but not inhospitable.

Vancouver Island is 400km long and provides protected waters to the 'Inside Passage'. On the North end there is no habitation along the Mainland and little on the Island. The Southern part however is more populated and enjoys a mild climate.

Numerous, nay hundreds, of small islands dot this area of deep channels left over from the glacial period. Protected Diving sites are limitless. South of this area is, Puget Sound a huge area of water that extends from the inside passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland, right down to the numerous deepwater bays and inlets to the West of Seattle.

**Vancouver Island...
is a mecca for divers**

It came as a surprise to me to discover that Seattle is not on the Pacific ocean and indeed has a 100km wide peninsular between it and the open ocean. Puget Sound is the home of the USA's second largest naval fleet base, a factor in itself that has driven a huge Scuba Diving industry in the area. Diving magazines proliferate in Tourist Info shops.

Canada's Vancouver Island itself extends well South of the 49th parallel (the mainland border between Canada and the USA). The closest mainland to the very 'old world British' Victoria is

Port Angeles (15km South) and Seattle (42km East) both of which are in Washington state.

Vancouver Island, because of its ocean proximity, is very mild (compared to the rest of Canada) and is a mecca for divers. That's not to say it does not freeze your bloody balls off, but the cold water is tolerated.



Has Peter been logging swimming pool dives again?

No, but he is turning 40 see the end of the newsletter for your invitation.

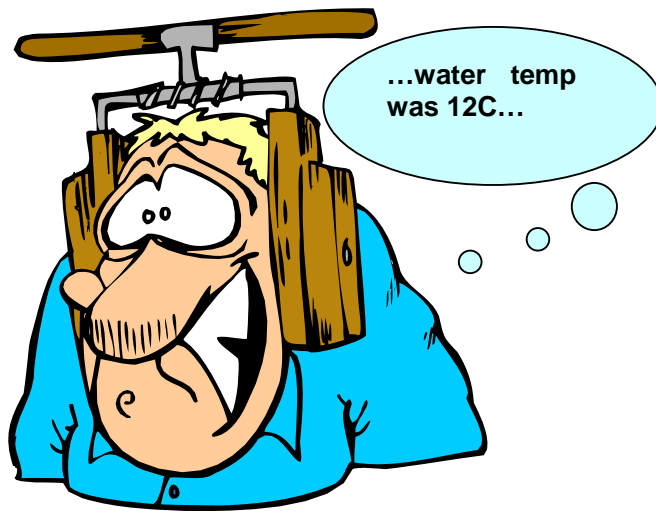
We stayed at Nanaimo, the island terminal city opposite North Vancouver and destination for the majority of the mainland/island ferries. It is also where two good size ships have been sunk for diving.

From here I did two dives.

The Saskatchewan - This is a 60m sunken ex-navy Frigate similar to the Brisbane and Perth. In 32m of water only 40m from Snake Island, its tower is only 12m down and most of it can be explored at less than the 20m level. Wall plates have been cut through fore and aft and a single

straight dive through almost the entire length of the ship is easily done through the central galleyway. The engine room is also easily accessed through large side cutaways.

My own dive on this was rather curtailed as I was buddied with a gorgeous 23 y.o. redheaded Ukrainian lass who was shit scared of descending faster than a metre a minute. Took her 15 minutes to reach the bridge! Features on the ship were the pure white plant growth. Huge metre long tube anemones, seaweeds and other growth were all white! The whitest white you can imagine. By way of contrast, the big fish (up to 1.2m) - some sort of cod, were deep purple. All over!!



The water temp was 12C which gave you a 'head in a vice' sensation, but two layers of 7 mm wetsuit kept the body warm. 35 pound of lead in an interesting 'jacket' that had pockets on the side gave a surprising degree of manoeuvrability - much more than my own 21 lb weight belt.

Snake Island Wall - On the inland side of Snake Island (rather inappropriately named as there were hundreds of seals on the shore), this was a dive along a gully out to the 18m level whence it dropped off vertically to 49m I believe.

Along this wall we did get down to 34m at one stage but it was 11C there and nothing to see, so we went back up and along the pre-dropover shelf. Here everything was red. Red rocks, red fish and thousands of clustered red sea urchins - little ones.

Closer to shore we got to swim with the seals amongst the red kelp. My two buddies on this

dive were a Yank from Minnesota and a Finnish young man who thought this was a great temperature - he dives under ice at home in Winter! A pleasant dive and a lot warmer in the shallows near the shore.

All in all an interesting experience. The operators provide no refreshments, partly because the dive sites are less than 15 minutes boat ride from shore. There was no guide which surprised me as the other 3 divers, particularly the Ukrainian girl, did not have a lot of dives under their belt.

The divemaster simply told us not to go inside the ship, but that did not stop the other two. I felt a guide would have been able to show us a lot more features, especially on the Wall, where there were supposed to be 'wolf eels' which are some sort of 1m long skinny fish with a huge, distorted ugly 15cm round head. We did not find them.

For anyone thinking of diving this area, there are many other destinations close to the above two. Indeed there is a 23m tug sunk a year ago, and still with little marine life, less than 100 m from the Saskatchewan. There are 5 other sunken warships, near Nanaimo and along the coast near Victoria, 100km South. Puget Sound has even more.

Do you like diving?

Do you live near Kirrawee?

If you answered yes to both of these questions Mike Scotland wants to turn your hard earned cash into thin air!

An offer too good to be true?

New Bauer Junior compressor

Any one who wants to buy a share in a Bauer Junior compressor, call Mike Scotland on 0415 158 168.

Bought it new on 29 sept 2005 and it has done 106 fills since. (35 hours).

Annual Trip to South West Rocks with SeaJohn, TopCat and friends.

By Ray Moulang.

Once again the time came up slowly and then the break went way too fast for our recent holiday.

On the 1st of July John B, Heinz B, Michael M, Peter T, Mike S, Andrew M and I travelled up in various stages to SWR.



The main idea was to dive the first week and then for some to fish deep sea the second week. The diving was good as others will tell you with many dives being done from SeaJohn and TopCat.

The whales were so spectacular again and we were a bit blasé' about them.

On one occasion we went out the river to dive the Rock, following John out the mouth when a lesson was learned on how much water our runabout can hold.

We went over the first big one then the next broke right on us. John had them roll on him but the water ran off and the rest pumped out.

Half an hour of bilge pump action and bailing latter we were on our way.

We dived on the outer edge of the Rock and we were amazed at the shark action up there. The previous day we had dived out from the shallow cave entrance up into the gutters.

I was diving with Peter T and had a good look around and we were doing our safety stop when we spotted a massive school of Eagle rays. We knew we had to take a closer look and Peter even got some pictures of them going into the distance.



See the nearby pictures of SeaJohn anchored up near the Rock.

During the second week when out fishing, we depleted the stocks of flathead and snapper. I took out the trophy with the larges catch being an approximate 30 tonne whale which came directly under us when we were fishing in 50 metres of water. Unlike others I did practice the catch and release process.

Many thanks go to all who attended for a great time both above and below the water. Good mates and many a tale by same were shared constantly.



And another little gem from the Bare Island treasure chest...Rox found this juvenile painted anglerfish (antennarius pictus) on Saturday 29 July 2006, only 24mm long!

Ewens Ponds Conservation Park

Ewens ponds is located at Mount Gambier on the south cost of South Australia just across the border from Victoria.



Ewens Ponds is a unique spring fed system. It is a series of three shallow basin-shaped ponds that are approximately ten metres deep and are all connected by shallow channels. The clarity of the water enables plants to grow underwater to a depth of six metres.



A current will carry you along the top of the 1 point five metre deep channel and float past dense stands of plants while coming face to face

with variety of fish. The tiny, rare Ewens Pygmy Perch is found hiding in the cover of the reeds in these channels.



At night or on a cloudy day freshwater cray fish are seen scuttling along the pond's floor scavenging for food. All plants and animals are protected and must not be disturbed.



It is so clear that sometimes you can see from one side to the other – distance of 80 metres!

Peter Flockart was lucky enough to dive there in May this year. He sent in these great shots.

Snorkelling and diving in these ponds is available without fee or permit.

REGULAR EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 16th August 2006 at the St. George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street Woolli Creek at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

Thursday Night Dives

These are still very popular, with up to 10 members attending each dive in recent months.

If you are interested in coming along, let Michael McFadyen know via email Michael.McFadyen@environment.nsw.gov.au and he will add you to the night dive email list.

Night dives will run right through winter every Thursday night (weather permitting).

**Michael has been working on a new website. Check it out at:
www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au**

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Boat Dive - Deep Wreck

5th August 2006

This month's deep dive will be to the wreck of the hopper barge, Coolooli.

If you are interested, please contact Michael McFadyen on 9558 8181 [h]. Note that only suitable experienced and equipped divers will be taken on this dive.

Boat Dive – Wedding Cake Island

6th August 2006

This is an opportunity to dive one of Sydney's most undived sections of coastline.

We will do a dive off the eastern or northern side of Wedding Cake Island and perhaps drop in on the grey nurse sharks on the way back to Botany Bay.

If you are interested, please contact Michael McFadyen on 9558 8181 [h].

Skiing – Snowy Mountains Weekend

11th – 13th August 2006

Here are the details to the weekend snow trip. Please let me know if your thinking about coming along. The trip is being organized

through OZ Snow Adventures
www.ozsnowadventures.com.au

The cost starts at \$245.00 however you will be looking at approx \$500.00 including extra costs.

\$245.00 Includes:

2 x Nights accommodation at the Snowy Valley Resort, Jindabyne

All transport from Sydney to the Snowy Valley Resort in comfortable coaches.

Shuttle up and down the mountain each day

National Park fees

Complimentary 3-course dinner on Saturday night at the Lakeview Bistro

Party Night - Saturday is party night in Jindabyne!

2 x Hot breakfasts

Accommodation:

If there are 4 people per room the cost will remain \$245.00pp

If you prefer to share a double or twin room with one other the cost will be \$315.00pp

Buses depart Sydney, Central Station at 6pm Friday evening, returning late Sunday night.

Extra Costs

Equipment Hire:

Standard Skis, Stocks and Boots \$49.00 or

Standard Snowboard and Boots \$59.00

Parker and Pants \$29.00

Lift Passes:

Thredbo – 2 day lift pass (includes lessons) \$165.00

Perisher Blue – 2 day lift pass (includes lessons) \$229.00

Parker and Pants \$29.00

Please let me know if your thinking about coming along. David Vandervelden ph. 0414 240 992.

Shore Dive – Shark Point (Clovelly)

20th August 2006

If you are interested, please contact Dave Burns on 9531 4403.

Shore Dive – Bass Point

27th August 2006

Meet at the end of Bass Point reserve road at 9 am.

Maybe a BBQ afterwards would be nice so BYO lunch.

Contact Philip on 9543 0748 with any further questions.

Boat Diving – Labour Weekend**29th Sept – 2nd Oct 2006**

Originally scheduled South West Rocks on the calendar for Labour weekend but unfortunately it's a small place and it's fully booked!

So the plan is to head up to Nelson Bay only 2 hours north of Sydney.

The diving is with Pro-Dive Nelson Bay who have a very good reputation (see their website <http://www.prodivenelsonbay.com/>). The boat departs straight from their shop in the centre of Nelson Bay so no lugging gear, waiting at boat ramps or surf entries.

There are a wide range of boat dive sites including:

- Broughton Island – Grey Nurse shark (critical habitat) gutters and caves
- Fingal Island – pinnacle dive rising from 35metres to 5metres
- Wrecks – Oakland Collier (27m) Macleay (42m)
- Cabbage Tree Island – Sponge gardens, a couple of small shallow wrecks and home to one of the rarest nudibranchs the Donut nembrotha is commonly found here.

The diving is with Pro-Dive Nelson Bay who have a very good reputation (see their website <http://www.prodivenelsonbay.com/>). The boat departs straight from their shop in the centre of Nelson Bay so no lugging gear, waiting at boat ramps or surf entries.

Alternatively if the seas are up we can shore dive at the famous Fly Point or Halifax park. These sites are high tide dives which will be at 1:24pm on Saturday, 2:39pm on Sunday and 3:53pm on Monday over Labour Weekend.

Accommodation will be at Pro dive – backpacker style opposite the RSL and right in the centre of Nelson Bay for convenience. We can structure it for 2 or 3 days boat diving.

The cost for 6 boat dives and accommodation is expected to be about \$300 - \$350 depending on how many people we get and the dive sites we go to. Also if we can get more than 8 we will have the comfort of the big boat (with toilet facilities) & be able to decide which sites we do.

I would appreciate initial interest from members at this point so that I can confirm approximate numbers and firm up the price and booking details. Please contact Jason Ph. 9345 0488 or J.Coombs@unsw.edu.au.

Boat Diving – Ulladulla**11th – 12th November 2006**

We need to start hearing expressions of interest so we can arrange boats & accommodation.

Please contact Philip Rose on 9543 0748 for more info.

OTHER NEWS**Message from your Treasurer**

Apologies for missing the membership details off the last newsletter.

Please check your details on the attached list and fill in only any changes as part of your membership renewal.

2006 - An Ocean Odyssey**Friday 17 November 2006**

After an absence of a few years, DIVE Log and Sportdiving are putting on another night of noted underwater adventurers.

The night will be held at the Clancy Auditorium, University of NSW, on Friday 17 November 2006. Guest speakers will include Jean-Michel Cousteau, Phil Nuytten, Ron and Valerie Taylor and Bob Halstead.

From experience, all of these speakers are quite interesting and worth hearing. Cost of tickets is \$16.50. As well, there are some trips to PNG to be won as door prizes.

Michael McFadyen is putting together a group of St George Scuba Club members to attend. If you are interested, please email Michael by 6 August and give him your money at the next opportunity so he can purchase sufficient tickets. Michael can be emailed at michael@michaelfadyenscuba.info.



EVENT

Peter's 40th Birthday

WHEN Sunday 27th August 2006

TIME 1.00 pm

LOCATION 16 Townson Street, BLAKEHURST 2221
(not our old house at Pyrmont or Sylvania we have moved)

RSVP PETER_TRAYHURN@BIGPOND.COM
Work 85054346 or home 95465112

THEME 80's

CHILDREN Very welcome

WHAT TO BRING BYO grog.
BBQ and salad and desert provided

PRESENTS Make a donation to your favourite charity

DIRECTIONS Head North along Princess Hwy. Second on your left after you cross Tom Ugly's Bridge.
From the city. Head South along Princess Hwy. Stay in the left hand lane. Just before Tom Ugly's bridge is a loop road underpass. Take this. Then it's the second on your left after you cross Tom Ugly's Bridge.

Tide Times for August 2006 (Fort Denison)

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High
Tue 1	12:02 AM EST / 1.38	6:26 AM EST / 0.52 m	12:55 PM EST /	6:59 PM EST / 0.72 m	
Wed 2	12:46 AM EST / 1.27	7:03 AM EST / 0.57 m	1:44 PM EST / 1.37	8:08 PM EST / 0.73 m	
Thu 3	1:43 AM EST / 1.17 m	7:48 AM EST / 0.61 m	2:43 PM EST / 1.40	9:27 PM EST / 0.69 m	
Fri 4	2:59 AM EST / 1.10 m	8:46 AM EST / 0.62 m	3:44 PM EST / 1.46	10:38 PM EST / 0.60	
Sat 5	4:17 AM EST / 1.08 m	9:51 AM EST / 0.60 m	4:43 PM EST / 1.54	11:38 PM EST / 0.49	
Sun 6	5:22 AM EST / 1.11 m	10:53 AM EST / 0.54	5:37 PM EST / 1.63		
Mon 7		12:31 AM EST / 0.36	6:19 AM EST / 1.16	11:50 AM EST / 0.46	6:29 PM EST / 1.74 m
Tue 8		1:19 AM EST / 0.25 m	7:10 AM EST / 1.23	12:44 PM EST / 0.38	7:18 PM EST / 1.83 m
Wed 9		2:04 AM EST / 0.16 m	7:58 AM EST / 1.31	1:35 PM EST / 0.31 m	8:07 PM EST / 1.90 m
Thu 10		2:47 AM EST / 0.11 m	8:44 AM EST / 1.39	2:25 PM EST / 0.27 m	8:54 PM EST / 1.92 m
Fri 11		3:31 AM EST / 0.10 m	9:31 AM EST / 1.46	3:16 PM EST / 0.26 m	9:41 PM EST / 1.88 m
Sat 12		4:15 AM EST / 0.13 m	10:19 AM EST /	4:11 PM EST / 0.30 m	10:30 PM EST / 1.78 m
Sun 13		4:59 AM EST / 0.20 m	11:08 AM EST /	5:09 PM EST / 0.36 m	11:21 PM EST / 1.63 m
Mon 14		5:43 AM EST / 0.30 m	12:00 PM EST /	6:13 PM EST / 0.43 m	
Tue 15	12:16 AM EST / 1.45	6:29 AM EST / 0.40 m	12:56 PM EST /	7:25 PM EST / 0.50 m	
Wed 16	1:18 AM EST / 1.28 m	7:19 AM EST / 0.51 m	1:57 PM EST / 1.58	8:47 PM EST / 0.54 m	
Thu 17	2:34 AM EST / 1.14 m	8:17 AM EST / 0.59 m	3:06 PM EST / 1.57	10:10 PM EST / 0.52	
Fri 18	3:57 AM EST / 1.07 m	9:24 AM EST / 0.62 m	4:13 PM EST / 1.58	11:20 PM EST / 0.48	
Sat 19	5:08 AM EST / 1.07 m	10:30 AM EST / 0.61	5:12 PM EST / 1.60		
Sun 20		12:14 AM EST / 0.43	6:03 AM EST / 1.10	11:27 AM EST / 0.57	6:03 PM EST / 1.62 m
Mon 21		12:57 AM EST / 0.39	6:46 AM EST / 1.15	12:17 PM EST / 0.52	6:47 PM EST / 1.64 m
Tue 22		1:32 AM EST / 0.36 m	7:23 AM EST / 1.22	12:59 PM EST / 0.47	7:25 PM EST / 1.66 m
Wed 23		2:02 AM EST / 0.34 m	7:57 AM EST / 1.28	1:38 PM EST / 0.44 m	8:01 PM EST / 1.67 m
Thu 24		2:32 AM EST / 0.32 m	8:30 AM EST / 1.34	2:15 PM EST / 0.43 m	8:34 PM EST / 1.67 m
Fri 25		3:01 AM EST / 0.32 m	9:03 AM EST / 1.39	2:51 PM EST / 0.44 m	9:06 PM EST / 1.64 m
Sat 26		3:30 AM EST / 0.34 m	9:37 AM EST / 1.43	3:27 PM EST / 0.47 m	9:39 PM EST / 1.60 m
Sun 27		4:00 AM EST / 0.38 m	10:11 AM EST /	4:06 PM EST / 0.52 m	10:13 PM EST / 1.52 m
Mon 28		4:29 AM EST / 0.43 m	10:46 AM EST /	4:47 PM EST / 0.57 m	10:48 PM EST / 1.42 m
Tue 29		4:59 AM EST / 0.49 m	11:22 AM EST /	5:33 PM EST / 0.62 m	11:26 PM EST / 1.31 m
Wed 30		5:30 AM EST / 0.55 m	12:01 PM EST /	6:26 PM EST / 0.65 m	
Thu 31	12:12 AM EST / 1.20	6:07 AM EST / 0.61 m	12:48 PM EST /	7:33 PM EST / 0.66 m	

The Committee for 2005 – 2006 is:

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Please send items for the Newsletter to me by the 28th of the month J.Coombs@unsw.edu.au.