



SEA BRAGGIN'

St George Scuba Club Newsletter

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CLIFTON GARDENS DIVE AND PICNIC

28 December 2013

Divers: Natasha, Maxine, Greg and Shelley, Dave C, Ray and Cherie, Tong, Steven, Andrew, Frank and buddy

In late December I decided it was time to get back in the water before the year was up, not having dived since Australia Day! There is no easier dive than Clifton Gardens, so I put the word out and a small gaggle of divers and friends came along to pay exorbitant parking fees and make the most of a beautiful (but slightly windy) late afternoon/early evening. Cherie Moulang was back in the water after a prolonged break of 9-10 years, so Ray celebrated by leaving one set of fins at home... Being such a shallow site, Ray decided it would be OK for Cherie to take the fins (how kind!) and that he would make do, crawling along the sandy bottom. More on that later.

Digby stayed on land and looked after Mahla, while other friends flew kites, swam, and sat around eating and chatting while we went for our dive.

I dived with Maxine, and we decided to stick to the nets for our 56 minute dive. We headed around the nets to the end of the pier, then came through a break in the net to the inside. The old nets are very broken up, so new nets have been installed. The new nets are pretty much devoid of any life and a traverse around the outside of the nets means for the most part the interesting marine life is on the inside of the nets, where the old net still hangs. We didn't head out to the sunken boats nor buoys, although other divers did.

The viz was crap. A real pea souper. See pic by Steven. Bad even for this dive site! Max and I saw a number of seahorses, a stingray, some cuttlefish and a few octopus – the last of which was on the inside of the nets under a flat rock and



stevenIMAGE©



which decided to take umbrage at my presence and chase me, flashing different colours and looking decidedly cranky, before heading back to his bunker. Max realised the poor little dude was entangled in some fishing line, so undertook a rescue operation to make him more comfortable. Greg and Shelley later admitted they had been there before us, harassing him and making him upset, so I got the resulting bad attitude.

There is a huge amount of fishing line, hooks, sinkers and other paraphernalia in the water under the wharf and in the swim nets area. Max got snagged at one point and I picked up a lovely red fishing net, which clearly had been lost only very recently. Unfortunately a young child snatched it from me when I had scarcely left the water, claiming personal property rights. Bastard. I should have demanded proof and lawyered up. Possession is 9/10 of the law, after all.

We saw Ray and Cherie come back past us as we carried on to the end of the pier. I noticed Cherie had only one fin on so assumed Ray had pinched one from her so they could have one each. It transpires that Cherie's boot had come loose and the fin had been lost. Bugger. Further, Ray had been hit by a numb ray while crab crawling along the bottom. He had placed a hand on it and been zapped so hard it went right into his jaw. I admit I laughed when he told me. I just wish I had seen it... I've always wanted to see a numb ray zap someone other than me (sorry Ray!)

Some divers had seen 2 angler fish, but I sadly missed them. Tong and Steven buddied up and were gone so long we suggested they'd decided to become permanent fixtures, managing to stay in the water for more than 90 minutes each. Their dedication was rewarded with a further two angler fish, out on the buoy chains (and they didn't even count the same anglers twice – on the way out and on the way back! They provided photographic evidence of this.)

After the dive most of us hung around for a bit and had a picnic dinner. The wind was quite brisk and the viz so poor that no one chose to do a second dive.





Thanks to all who came along for their company, Tong and Steven for their photos, and special thanks to Max for being my buddy for my first dive since having Mahla. Despite the rubbish viz, it was a very enjoyable afternoon!

Natasha Naude

Photos by Tong Zheng and Steven Zhao





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SHIPROCK

19 December 2013

Divers: Eddie Ivers, Rob Trudgeon, Paul Watkinson and Paul Pacey

I was expecting that we would be the only divers there considering it was a Thursday but there were at least six other divers - it was pretty crowded for us mid-week divers.

Paul W got off to a bad start when he discovered that he was at Shiprock but his weight belt was still at Menai. But we managed to find enough lead floating around in our cars to get him underwater.

Mmmmm, warm water - love it! The vis didn't seem to be very good when we entered the water but the sun was so bright it made the 8 metre vis seem like 15 metres.

We hadn't even made it to the wall drop-off when a bull ray swam past us. I managed to find a small black anglerfish, maybe 50mm long, just at the bottom of the wall - Eddie managed to get a photo of it despite that fact that these things absorb all light produced by the most powerful of camera strobe.

I also managed to find a tiny yellow boxfish (15mm long) just near the plaque and a small gurnard near the main wall was kinda cute.

Rob was pleased that I found an Olympus camera lens cap laying on the bottom - as it was off his camera!

Other things spotted were Morays, Pineapple fish, various nudi's, hermit crabs and those really cute little yellow fish that hide in the crevices on the wall at the ramp- I'm told that they are Banded Reef Gobys.

A 75 minute dive and I didn't feel cold at all. Ahhhhh summer diving - bring it on!

After the dive a pleasant time was spent testing the food and coffee at the D'Lish cafe and chatting with Paul W's parents who are visiting from England.

Thanks to Eddie Ivers for the photos (see next page).

Paul Pacey

Photos by Eddie Ivers

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
rayscases@aol.com





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
rayscases@aol.com



St George Ladies' Weekend 2014

When: Friday 28 February to Sunday 2 March 2014

Where: Port Stephens

Diving: Halifax Park, Fly Point or The Pipeline

Accommodation: TBA

Cost: TBA

We usually dive from the shore at either Halifax Park, Fly Point or The Pipeline. We also have a very relaxing time just enjoying good food, drinks and some shopping! You don't need to be a diver to attend and it is a great way to get to know the other Ladies in the club.

For the accommodation, we have been going to Shoal Bay Holiday Park for the past few years. I was thinking about changing this year to either a different holiday park or to a house. In order to find out what are our possibilities, I need to have an idea of number of Ladies coming so could you please send me an email to let me know if you are interesting in coming along?

Contact Nancy Scoleri
nancyscoleri@yahoo.com.au



SEA BRAGGIN' MARINE BIOLOGY COURSE WITH MIKE SCOTLAND

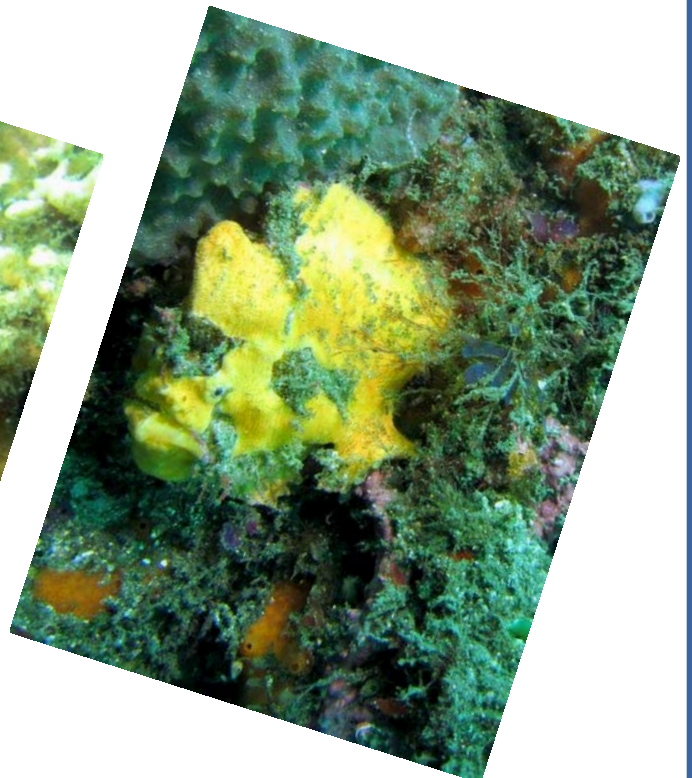
A group of us recently completed the Marine Biology Course conducted by Michael Scotland. He's the one that looks like Douglas Mawson in his diving hood.

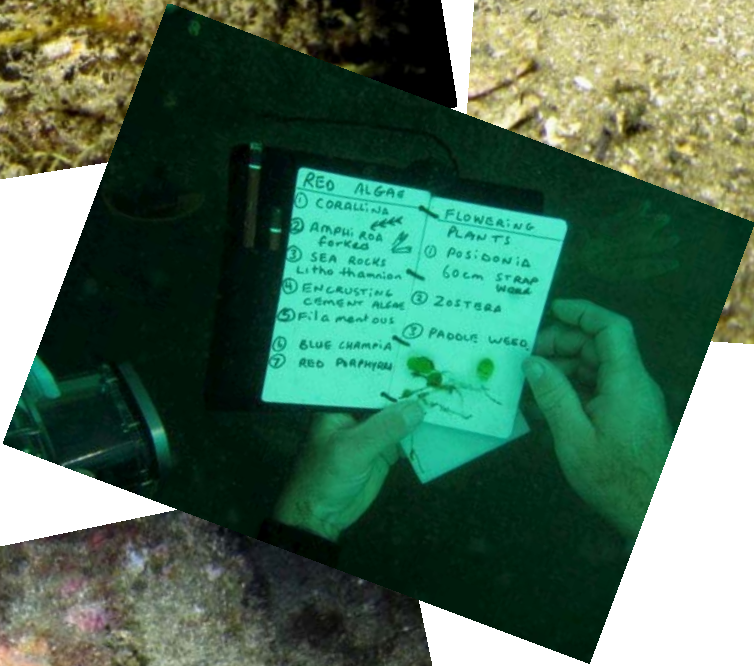
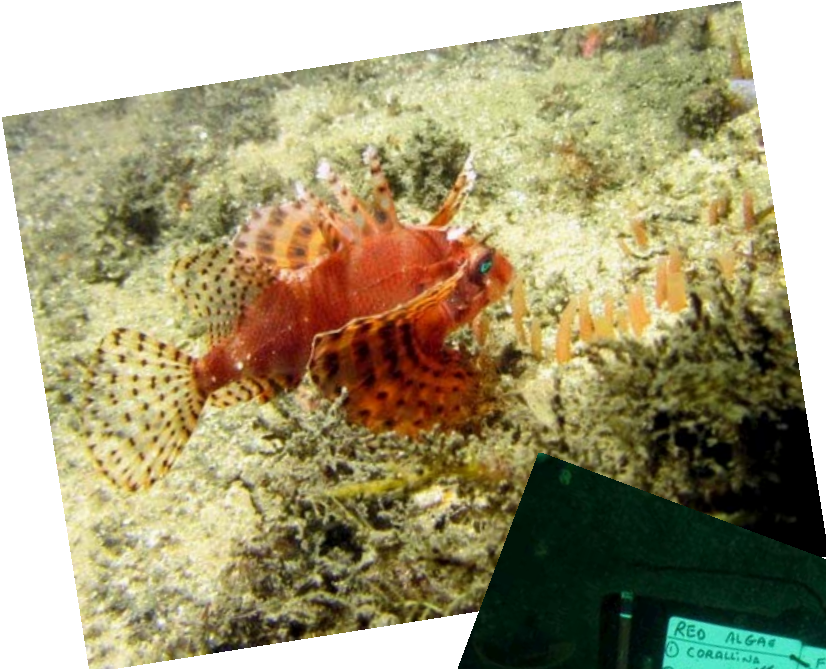
Well I didn't sign up for a degree but it felt like it when the information flowing in lectures, notes and the Latin names kept coming at me. We had 5+ lectures and 5+ dives, including the last night dive at Bare Island where the participating divers picture was taken. The attached pictures were from Oak Park, Shiprock, Bare Island, or The Leap. For someone that lives in Wollongong and has dived most places except Sydney, the expanded introduction to Sydney underwater diversity was timely.

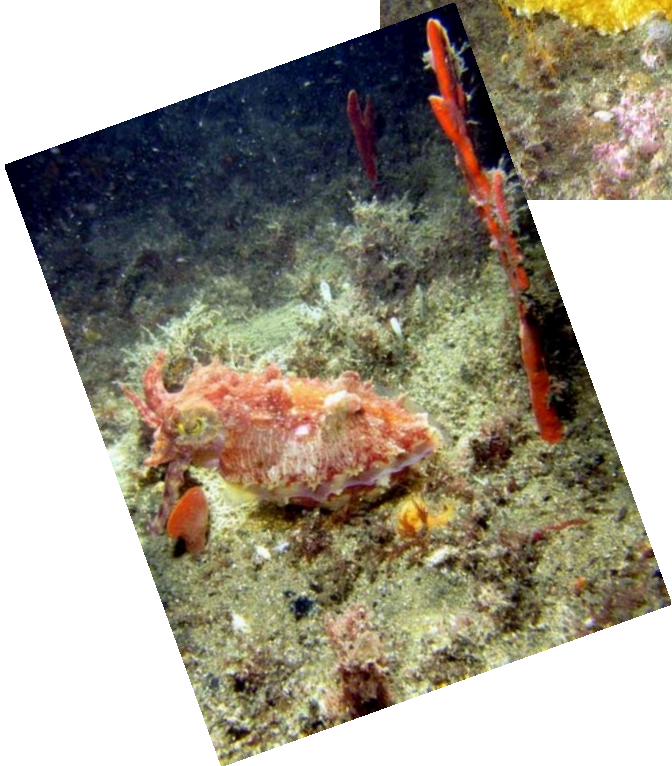
Now when I go diving I can say that I am looking at more and different things. It's been an eye opener to the world of classification of Marine creatures and plants. I can now seem more knowledgeable when I explain that the 'Nudi' we are looking at is part of a family of Molluscs but it could be something else, like the side-gilled slug photographed, or that a sea cucumber is a Holothurian and is in the Sea Star family of creatures. You have to understand the evolution of creatures, knowing their larval development and bodily structures to get it right.

The pictures are the usual suspects photographed by St George members but I would like to emphasise the biodiversity of Sydney waters.

Rob Chenery









TASMANIA

28 December 2013

In December John and I joined Hobart based Go Dive for two good dives: Both were at the mouth of the Derwent River, which flows past Hobart but the mouth is much further south. Here, two good dive spots were found – the first at a place called The Iron Pot, which is an old whaling station that did once have an iron pot on it for boiling down whales to provide whale oil to light the houses of England. The depth was only about 12 metres, surface temperature was about 19, which is warm for TAS.

There was a good cave to swim through, but most interest was really the coloured walls of the cave. We had lunch on an isolated beach in the hot sun and looking south towards the rock and lighthouse that is the Iron Pot today.

For the second dive we crossed back to the other side of



the river to a place called Tinderbox, which marks the western entrance to the River. Here we dived a marine reserve, an aquatic trail that was much more interesting. Only shallow, we kept to about five metres to follow the weed line and best life. The weed colours were red, green and brown,

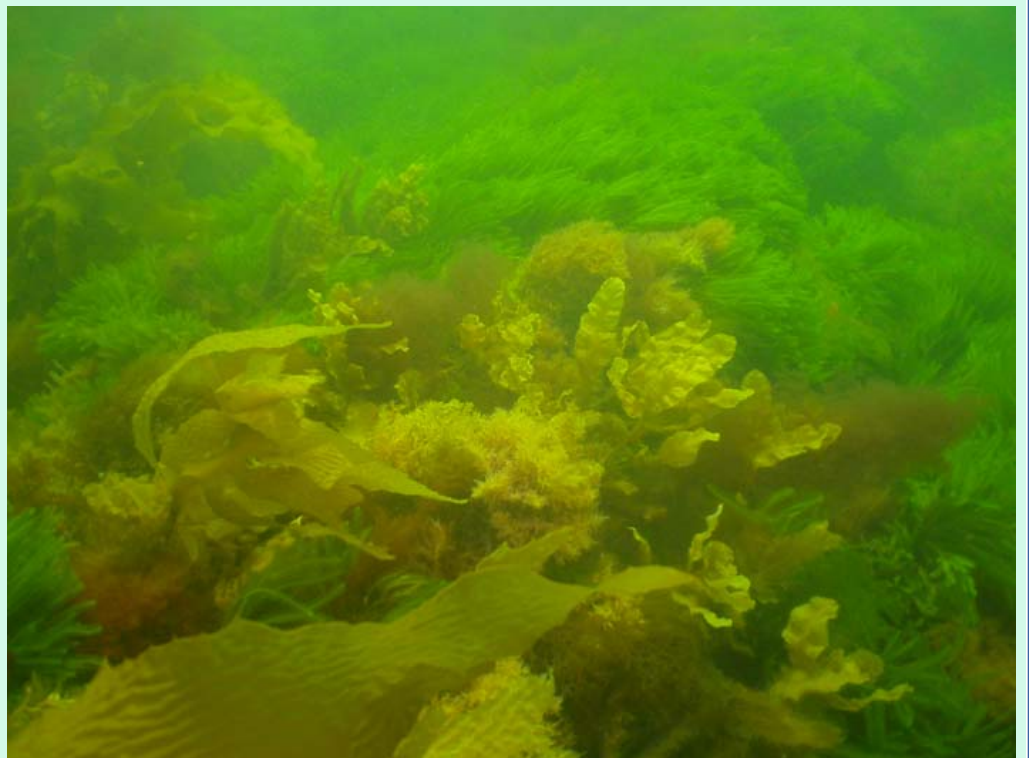


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bright in the sunlight filtering through. The visibility was about 8-10 metres and with the tide it was really a lovely drift dive. We saw cow fish, gurnards, parrot fish, leatherjackets, sand rays and the biggest crayfish you will ever see. They are protected, of course, within the Reserve and cannot be taken. The police monitor this site regularly and the locals overlooking the site are quick to report illegal fishing. The crays we saw were about five kilos in weight and we were warned that if we tried to touch them, they could inflict bad wounds.

It was a very windy day, strong out of the north west so the aptly named North West Bay lived up to its reputation by the time we returned to the jetty. We couldn't keep eyes open as we headed back, into the almost gale force winds. This is a beautiful part of the world, with mountain views, inland waterways, sea cliffs and great diving.

Tim Kennedy and John Crawford





SYDNEY DIVING IN DECEMBER

18 December - 31 December 2013

The Hilda, 18 December

Dived the Hilda with Phil Short, Dick Fish, Ken Ridley and Keith Williams out of the RMYC in Woolaware Road. The vis on bottom around 10 – 12 m and a bottom temp of 19.8 degrees. No current. We dropped down onto boiler before swimming south to the remains of the rudder and prop. I fanned a few holes looking for “goodies” but no luck. I did appreciate the Nitrox fill on the dive as it gave me about 15 minutes more bottom time than those on air.

The Leap, 21 December

We dived the Leap from Wayne Heming’s boat with Leo Jones, and Heinz B out of Port Botany. Again we were blessed with 10 - 12 m vis on the bottom. We swam east along the wall which is about 3m high for about 20 minutes. There are lots of crevices and sponges. At this point Wayne turned up with 2 weight pockets indicating they were mine. Thinking I had dropped them I checked and to my surprise had forgotten to put them in before rolling over the side. I didn’t miss them, which proved to me that I was diving over weighted. Put them in and resumed the dive. On our return to the anchor we were surrounded by club members who were doing the Leap to the Steps dive. There was utter confusion for a few minutes as people sorted themselves out. We ascended and they headed for the Steps.

After our surface interval, which was opposite the Steps, we went back to the same area for the second dive. While we were enjoying our SI we watched other members crawl out of the water and trudge up the steps to the carpark. At this point we agreed that doing it as a





boat dive is far more civilized!

Dive 2 was about 100m west of the first site. The site was again along the wall and over several large boulders. Wayne found and took photos of two large pot bellied seahorses - *Hippocampus abdominalis* – one white and the other yellow. Also seen were a huge number of Blue Dragons, Sweet Ceratosoma's, Marigold, and Black-lined Marginata nudis, as well as one very tiny Red-lined Flabellina. Just as we were about to ascend Wayne found a



large weedy sea dragon and took several shots.

Shiprock, 24 December

I dived Shiprock as an after work treat with Dave Casburn and Eddie Ivers. Overcast conditions and only 1 – 2 m vis and 20.5 degrees in the water. Dropped down to the deep bommies where I saw a large ball of catfish and 2 crested horn sharks, before swimming back to the wall. Not many nudis sighted but as I poked in the crevices along the wall I found a small dwarf lionfish and Eddie found his little yellow fish and took a really nice close-up of it. Dave said he saw a 3m long moray that had a largish head. After 72 minutes we surfaced and walked up to the cars for Xmas pies and a chat before heading up to D'lish for coffee and home.

Bypass Reef, 28 December

Dived By-Pass Reef with Wayne Heming, Heinz and Ken Ridley out of Port Botany. Sloppy seas and low vis again, around 5 – 8m, with cool water of 18.2 degrees. On top of the reef at 22m I we dropped over the wall to 27.5 m before reeling out across the bottom. Not many fish seen. On a solitary ascidian I spied a small blue flatworm - *Pseudoceros* sp. After a surface interval inside Cape banks we headed over to Whale Watch for a second dive.

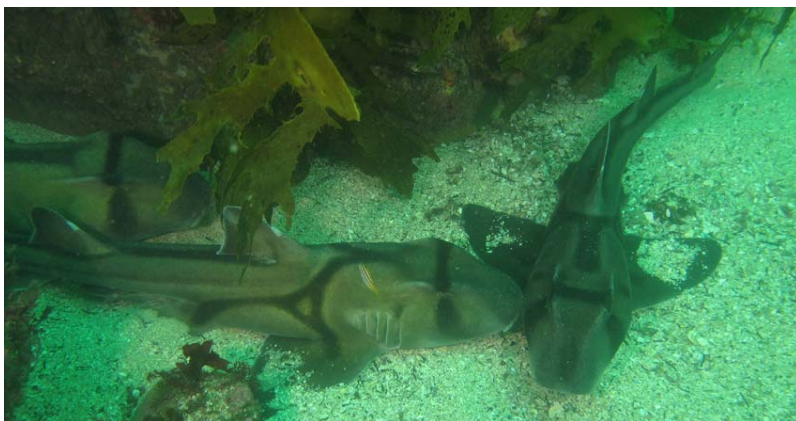
Dive 2 was the Drop-off and boulders south of the whale-watching platform. Vis again was poor, around 5 – 8m, but warmer on the bottom at 20.2 degrees. After swimming over the edge of the wall we headed





south over boulders and gutters before turning east over the sand line. Here in a gutter we located ten Port Jackson Sharks just sitting around. On the return to the anchor we passed a crevice full of a wide colour range of small gorgonians.

The trip back to Port Botany was interesting, given that the wind had picked up as had the swell. At one point on this return trip we were hit by wave that caused the boat to stop suddenly, unfortunately for me I wasn't holding on as tight as I should have been, resulting on me continuing forward and hitting the metal deck rather forcefully. This impact resulted in a nasty bruise on my chest.



Shiprock, 30 December

On the high tide of 1.77m I dived Shiprock along with seven other club members. I had gone out to La Perouse on Sunday to check on conditions there, which were horrible. There was white water from Tabbagi to The Monument and 2 -3 m waves breaking on the Bare Island Bommie. The colour of the water was brown / black.

Saw the usual suspects at Shiprock: the pineapple fish, Daphne's Chromodoris, lots of small wrasse and black faced triple fins amongst the sponges. As we approached the point I was dived bombed by a large numb ray – fortunately I managed to avoid him. He landed about

1/2m from Matthias in a cloud of silt. It was CACA at d'lish afterwards

Shiprock, 31 December

The last day of the year saw 5 divers (me, Bill Rowland, Bram Harris, Kim Dinh and Eda Di Camillo) line up for the last dive of 2013. Dave Casburn missed the dive as he slept in. However he did join several people for CACA after the dive. We were in the water by 8.30am for better vis on the tide. Kim went looking for her black angler fish on the deep bommie while the rest of us cruised along the wall. Saw lots of nudi's, a crested horn shark and a small Port Jackson. Plenty of the usual sponge life was seen and one small long spine blenny at the end of the dive. It was a good way to end 2013.

Peter Flockart

Photos by Wayne Heming



SEA BRAGGIN'

WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Sun 19 Jan	Shore Dive The Leap	Jason Coombs j.coombs@unsw.edu.au u	Sun 26 Jan	Aust Day Dive & BBQ Kurnell	Gary Perkins perkinsdive@gmail.com
Sat 1 Feb	Carol Martin Memorial Dive & Brunch Bare Island	Kelly McFadyen kelly@michaelsmcfadyenscuba.info	Sun 2 Feb	Shore Dive The Leap	Paul Pacey paul.pacey@iinet.net.au u
Sat 8 Feb	Boat Dive Marley Point	Peter Flockart pjflockart@speednet.com.au	Sun 9 Feb	Shore Dive Bare Island	Carole Harris carole_underwater@yahoo.com.au
Sat 15 Feb	Shore Dive Shiprock	Eddie Ivers eddieivers@ipri-mus.com.au	Wed 19 Feb	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Gary Perkins perkinsdive@gmail.com

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