



Sea Braggin'

St George scuba club newsletter June 2015

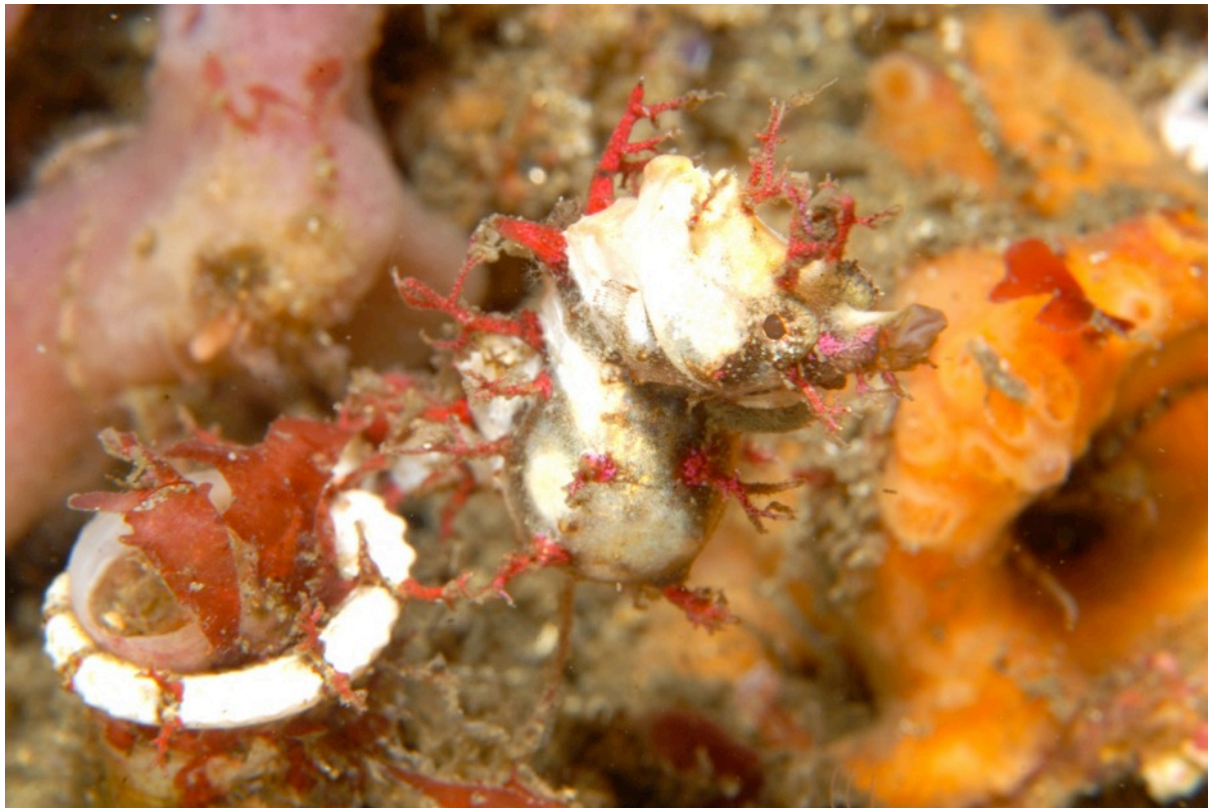


Photo of Pygmy Pipe Horse by Mike Scotland

A big thankyou to members for sending in articles and or photos:

Mark Ridsdale, Chris Heath, Ron Walsh, Steve Boyd, Rianti Bieler, Mike Scotland (Editor).

Diving in June

Date	Event	Contact
Sat 13 th June	boat dive, Wattamolla	Dave Casburn
13, 14 June	Boys Only No Girls W/E Port Stephens	Ray Moulang
17 th June	Club Meeting	Natasha Naude
Sat 20 th June	Boat dive, M & K reef	Shelley Breuseker
Sat 20 th June	shore dive, Inscription point	Eddie Ivers
Sat 4 th July	Seefood and Sea food dive Shiprock	Paul Pacey
Sat 11 th July	boat dive, Wanderers	Dave Casburn
Sat 18 th July	Deep boat dive, the Kello	Phil Short
Thursdays	night diving	Ron Walsh

Note: lots of other diving happening. Please look up dive calendar.

Note: If you want to post a dive, the official channel for communication is by email. Most people send both an email and a Facebook notification. (Please remember that some people do not use Facebook.)

DIVING IN THE PHILLIPINES

BY MARK RIDSDALE

Sabang Beach – Puerto Galera

March 14th – March 28th

Attendees – Mark Ridsdale, Steve Boyd, Ray Moulang, Chris Heath and Peter Trayhurn.

Ray, Chris and I took the Si-Kat bus on Saturday to Battangas and then the ferry to Sabang – a three hour trip arriving around 1.00pm. Steve joined on Sunday and Peter on the Tuesday.

Dick fish recommended diving with Sabang Fun Divers – new boats, great dive masters and all ran by a very lively Russian – Nickolay – He was a great host and also joined a number of the deeper dives.

Nickolay put on fresh sashimi, chicken wings, and crispy pork belly at the beachside on 3 occasions all washed down with Red Horse (7.5%) – and a guaranteed headache. Pete donated 3kgs of green prawns for variety on one of those occasions. Nickolay was very apologetic on one occasion as there was no fresh Yellowfin – had to put up with fresh Albacore – how nice was that.



photo by Chris Heath

There are around 34 dive sites in Sabang and we did around 16 of these and doubled up on a few for a total of 22 dives. We generally dived the 9.00 and 11.30 dives and rested the afternoons – small lunch, swimming in the pool, shopping, downloading and editing the day's photo intake. Then we

indulged in cheese, bickies and a few drinks at 6.30pm on the balcony before heading out to test the culinary delights on offer. Food Prices varied from \$6.00 - \$12.00 depending upon your taste buds, San Miguel at \$1.75 was the usual wash-down agent.



photo by Steve Boyd

The diving in Sabang is a macro enthusiast's paradise with a wealth of critters on offer. Sea snakes, the occasional turtle and a few pelagics added to the variety. We didn't see the threshers – they were there the previous week – Dick Fish saw them on 3 occasions.

One of the attractions is the opportunity to dive with the Thresher Sharks. We did four dives to two different sites to try and locate them. Unfortunately we did not sight them. Dick Fish was in Sabang two weeks before and sighted them 4 times! Another reason for us to go back and try to get them another time. One great drift dive we did was the Canyons where we were dropped off and swam with the current flying underwater and it was only a problem when you wanted to stop and take a picture of something. It's an easy dive just like almost all of the sites. At the end corner of this dive where the reef takes a right hand turn you fly over some boulders and there is a big Old Admiralty Anchor located there, if you react fast enough in the current, you can grab hold of it as it sticks up about a metre and a half and look back as the rest of the group arrives, before drifting off to do an ascent. Another good dive also was "Hole in the Wall". As it states the obvious the surrounding reef with its colour from Soft and Hard corals was just great to see.



The smiles say it all. Ray and Mark

On the lay day we organised a trip to the Waterfalls. A two-hour Jeepny ride followed by a 40 minute Bullock Dray ride across rivers and a jungle track ensured that a massage would be needed on return. The day was fabulous with swimming and a pounding from the waterfalls and a great lunch of Pork Belly, Chicken wings, Prawns and Mud Crab – oh - what a feast. The entire day cost was 1000pesos (\$35). The massage cost 400pesos (\$12).



A half-day trip to White Beach with lunch at Talipanan – Lu Ca – was sensational. Nickolay gave us the large fast boat for 300 pesos each and a driver – Warren – a great guy who joined with us for lunch. A number of seafood dishes and pizzas – we must have eaten about 300 mussels that day. It was just so nice.



photos of a Sea Snake above and Peter Trayhern by Steve Boyd

photo of Mark R by Steve Boyd below

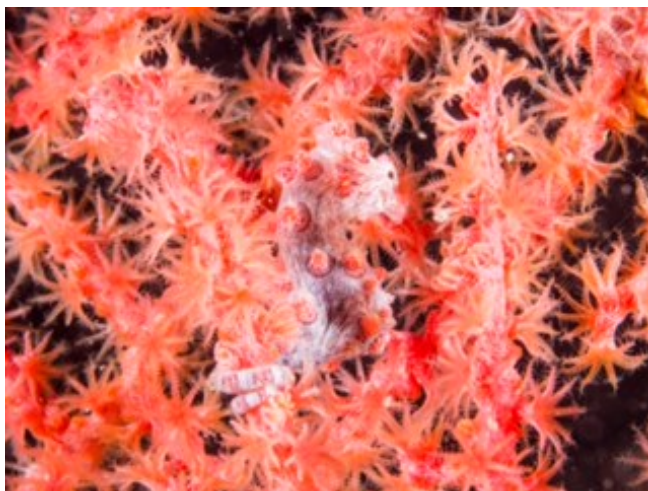


The trip and camaraderie were sensational. Another trip will be planned for the Philippines in latter part of February 2016, this time Donsol and the Whale Sharks and Coron - reef and wreck diving and for those with more time to burn a return to Sabang - Puerto Galera. For those with an interest let me know.

Mark Ridsdale



The 14 days went too quickly but fortunately Pete couldn't resist some last minute entertainment before catching the ferry – he took a short cut across the pool and fell in – 30 minutes before catching the ferry!



photos by Chris Heath and Steve Boyd

NIGHT DIVE LILLI PILLI – 14 MAY 2015

Text and photos by Ron Walsh

The club night dive for 14 May was held at Lilli Pilli. This was the first night dive for a couple of weeks due to copious rainfalls and the poor ocean conditions.

The night was cold with a slight NW wind blowing.



photos by Ron Walsh



There were 3 divers in attendance – Gary D, Ken R and me. The dive plan was to enter from the boat ramp, explore along the nets for seahorses, then head deeper around the moorings before returning.

There were quite a few seahorses on the nets, with Ken counting at least 12. On the sand we found frogfish, prawns, octopus, cuttlefish, more seahorses and heaps of sleeping or cruising fish including magpie morwong, goatfish, dusky flathead, yellowtail pike, silver bream, stripeys, and yellow finned and fan belly leatherjackets.



Exiting in the wind was quite cold but we soon warmed up with hot showers followed by hot pizza at the Lilli Pilli shop.

Photos of Sea Star and prawn by Ron Walsh



Ron Walsh

[DIVING IN THE NEW GUINEA MAY 25 TO JUNE 2 2015](#)

text and photos by Mike Scotland

Six members of St George Scuba club dived on the Live aboard, Febrina from Walindi resort in PNG. Members included Ian Hittmann, Michelle, Steve Boyd, Bob Trudgett, Paul Dale and myself. We dived Kimbe Bay, the Witu Islands and the Father's reefs.



Bob Trudgett is diving at Krakafat. He is posing near some clown fish after seeing huge schools of Trevally and Barracuda about forty metres to his right. Photo by Mike Scotland



Steve Boyd is posing with a Broadfoot Cuttle at Inglis Reef, Walindi. Photo by Mike Scotland

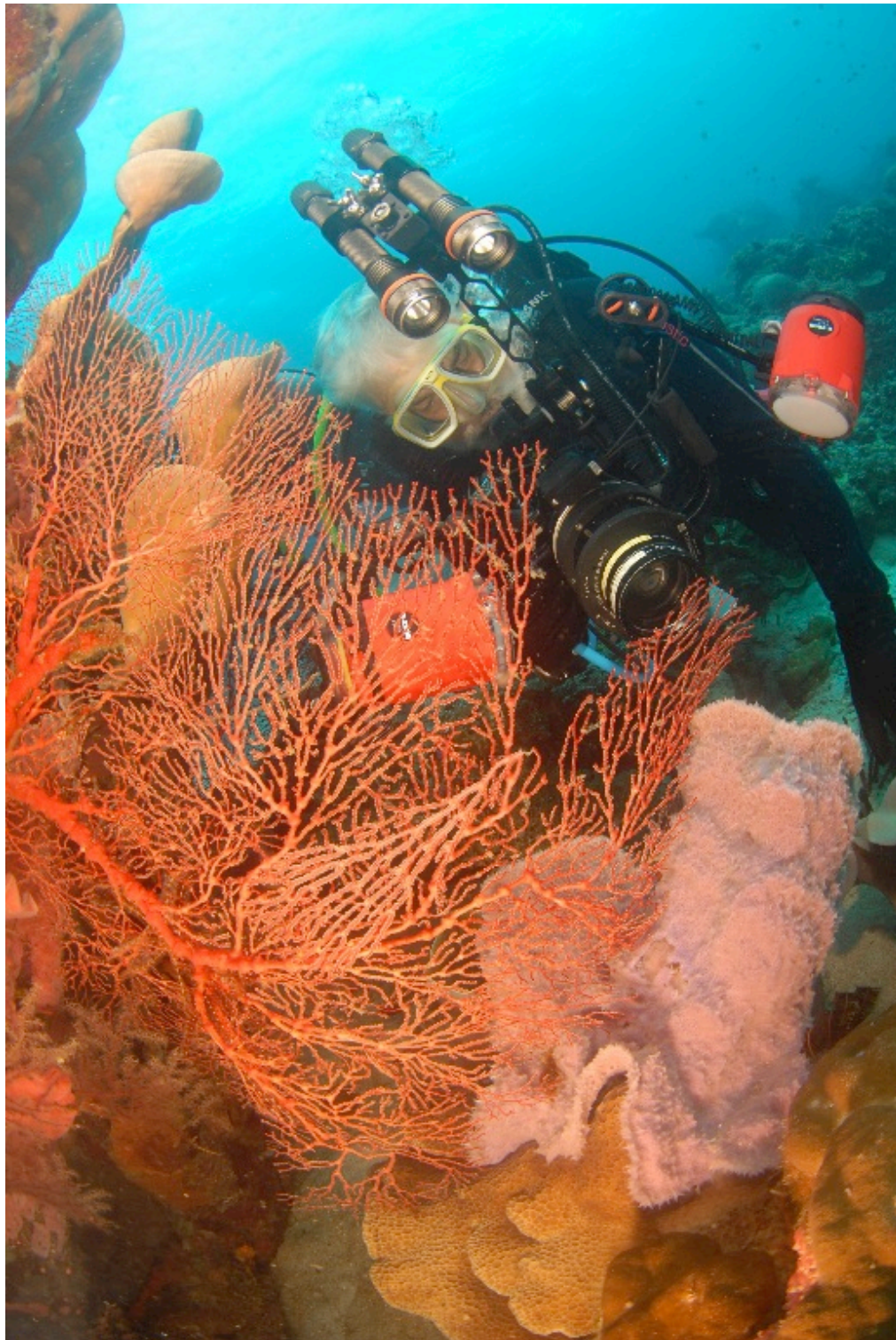


A pair of Coleman's Shrimps on a Sea Cucumber at Widu Harbour. Photo by Mike Scotland

We had a sensational trip. The camaraderie on board was excellent and we all got on very well. Most of us dived 33 dives. A big thankyou to Ian Hittmann for organizing the trip.

We are going again next year. If you are interested, contact me.

The only down side of the trip happened to me. I injured my hip a month before the trip. It became aggravated toward the end of the trip and I had to miss a few dives. Shock Horror!



Ian Hittman is seen here at Josie's reef under the Cabbage Coral garden.

Photo by Mike Scotland



I was trying to photograph the beautiful Flasher wrasse when my knee had a close encounter with this sea urchin. Photo by Mike Scotland



Photo by Mike Scotland of a Digger's Pygmy Sea Horse at the Arches at Witu Islands.

It is known as Coleman's Pygmy Sea Horse but I am renaming it after Digger who showed it to Neville sixteen years ago in Milne Bay.

PHUKET

Text and photos by Rianti Bieler

I went to Phuket last December to meet up with my Norwegian mother-in-law, sister-in-law and her family. Due to having the family commitment, I could only spare one day to go diving and went with the highly recommended Aussie Divers.

Leaving dive booking to the last minute means most boats were full already (it was high season). I didn't have any choice of destination at all. The very helpful Justin from Aussie Divers managed to squeeze me in a boat going to nearby Racha Noi and Racha Yai. He was very apologetic about sending me to a not-so-exciting destination but I was happy to be diving at all!

Getting all my gear ready, I was annoyed to find out that I have forgotten to bring my camera strobes! And my video light attachment was broken so I had to improvise with a few hundreds of my daughter's hair band to fix it to the camera housing. Arriving at the busy Chalong Pier in the morning I was assigned to go with Emily as the dive guide and two other

divers. Yay for small group! Aussie Divers doesn't have its own boat and they used Kamala Dive Centre boat that day. It was a massive boat and I found out there were 70 (yes, seventy) other divers on board!! I was dreading having to fight 69 other divers to gear up and get in the water but my worry was unfounded.



The local Thai lady who managed the boat ran a very tight ship and everything was done with military precision. There was a map on deck with detailed layout of where everyone's group is. The dive master, instructor and guides were assigned a bench in the middle of the deck with their name and tank location on the map. Our gear doesn't move because after each dive, the boat crew would fill the tank on the spot and put the regulator back on. And somehow, even with 70 divers + crew + everything else the boat did not feel crowded at all and gearing up was quite relaxing as each group got assigned different time to jump in.

First dive was at Marina Bay in Racha Noi. Water temperature was a perfect 28° C, the sea was flat and viz was a great 30m. However Racha Noi suffered heavily from coral bleaching in 2010 and it was quite depressing to see the dead corals strewn on the sea floor. I was happy to see that there were a few massive sea fans, plate corals and brain corals in great condition. As I was the only diver bringing a camera I was always lagging behind the other three divers but luckily the viz was great so I never lost sight of them and they were very patient as well and would wait for me at times. There were Banded Sea Snake, Moorish Idol, Butterfly Fish, lots of Nemos and all the other usual colourful suspects of tropical water.

We did Camera Bay on the other side of Racha Noi Island for the second dive and then moved on to Racha Yai for the third and last dive of the day. The coral bleaching was worse here than Racha Noi but there were some interesting structures underwater and lots of lion fish – one of my favourites! There were also barracudas hanging around looking grumpy.



We were again spoiled on the way back to Chalong Pier with the resident cook serving us pancakes and tropical fruits. It was a great day out and while I wish I could've visited some more exciting sites such as the wreck of King Cruiser, it's great to see some tropical fish again. Photos by Rianti Bieler



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A special welcome to new members who have joined recently.

Noel Chia

WHAT YOUR EDITOR HAS BEEN UP TO IN JUNE 2015.

I have a story out in Sport Diving in Australia on diving in Lembeh Straights, Sulawesi.

I will have a story out in Michael Aw's magazine, OCEAN GEO in the upcoming July issue on the marine biology of Crustaceans. It is called Ocean Gladiators.

Finally, I have a story out in June Dive Log on Sharks in Bega Lagoon.

Your Committee

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Convert them to about 120 to 200 kB.

Please type the story into Word rather than in your email. Email text is impossible to reformat. I do not have the time to retype your article.

Please rename with your name them from something complex such as 196312f7photos97641%#6^\$@ to something simple like "marys seaslug.jpg".

It will save me a lot of time, reformatting files, finding your photos and resizing photos etc.

Please run the spell check over your article.

Thanks.

Editor.

Note: If you send me a story in an unusable format that I cannot process, then sadly I cannot use it. Please read the guidelines.