

Sea Braggin'



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

- JUNE 2010 - Edited by Ray Moulang -

Included in this issue are Dive Reports from : Tricia Henry, Peter Flockart & Carol Martin, Natasha Naude, Nancy Scoleri & Gary Perkins and Paul Pacey. A big thank you goes to them.



*Pictures by
Gary and Nancy*





WHATS HAPPENING IN YOUR CLUB?

- JUNE 2010 -

WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT
Saturday 5 th	Deep Dive SS Tuggerah/ SS Undola	Michael McFadyen 95455596	Saturday 19th	Deep Dive Rose Bay	Peter Flockart 93710265
Friday 11 th to Monday 14th	Long Weekend Central Coast	Jason Coombs 93454599	Sunday 27th	Boat Dive North Head	Eda DiCamillio 95606082
Wednesday 16 th	Club Meeting @ Rowers Club	Jason Coombs President			

WHATS HAPPENING IN YOUR CLUB?

- JULY 2010 -

WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT AND WHERE	CONTACT
Saturday 3rd	Deep Dive SS Tuggerah/ SS Undola	Michael McFadyen 95455596	Saturday 17th	Boat Dive Marley Point	Dave Casburn 0405186184
Sat 3 rd to Sat 10 th	Away trip North Haven	Gary Perkins 95336869	Sunday 18th	Deep Dive Rose Bay	Gary Perkins 95336869
Saturday 4th	Boat Dive The Colours / Rose Bay	Kelly McFadyen 95455596	Saturday 24th	Christmas in July	Peter Flockart 93710265
Wednesday 16 th	Club Meeting @ Rowers Club	Jason Coombs President	Sat 31 st to Sat 28 th Aug	Birdsville, Alice and Uluru Camping Trip 2wd ok.	Michael McFadyen 95455596

See what else is on this Year.

The 2010 Club Scuba Calendar is on the web site.

Palau Trip Organised by Dave Casburn.

15 Days /14 Nights Ex. Cairns \$2765 Ultimate Wreck & Reef

Diving Expedition 15 Days /14 Nights Ex. Cairns \$2765 Ultimate Wreck & Reef - Diving Expedition

- 21 October - 05 November 2010 –

TOUR COST INCLUDES: .

- Return flights Cairns to Palau - (flying with Continental Airlines) - Day Use of room at Ohana Bay View in Guam
- . Return airport transfers in Guam
- . 13 Nights Twin Share Acc. West Plaza Hotel - Palau
- . 12 boat dives (6 days of 2 dives/ day) incl. tanks, weights, belts, dive guide services, lunch and refreshments on diving days - Nitrox for nitrox certified divers
- . Snorkel Jellyfish Lake during diving surface interval
- . Return Airport Transfers in Palau
- . Day Use of room at Ohana Bay View in Guam
- . Australian departure and applicable airline taxes (\$240.00 and subject to change)
- Optional Upgrade - Extra 10 boat dives - \$685

See Dave for more info and to book.

A weekend in Jervis Bay in August!

Only 4 Diving Spots left!

Friday 20 – Sunday 22 August.

Double boat dives Saturday and Sunday (including one dive with the seals)

Note this is not *just* a seal diving trip – only one dive will be with the seals, conditions permitting! The remainder will be boat dives to local dive sites.

Diving:

Ulladulla Dive Centre can cater for 12 divers <http://www.ulladulladive.com.au/crew/duckunder.html>

- ✂ Retail rates for double dives is \$100 (\$85 for 10 divers or more, plus one free of charge)
- ✂ Airfills for \$7
- ✂ No tanks provided – if you take one tank and they provide one it will be an added charge of \$10.00, or you can hire both tanks (or take 2 of your own!)

Accommodation:

I have booked the house, “**Seahaven**” (<http://www.stayz.com.au/11509>) House comfortably sleeps 15 people, with 3 bathrooms and 3 toilets (main bathroom with large spa bath). There is a LUG for dive gear and a BBQ we can make use of. BYO linen! Total cost for 12 people for 2 nights is \$580 (plus \$250 refundable deposit).

Who's coming? 9 confirmed so far: Natasha, Digby, Paul P, Mark R, Tricia, Debbie, Sarah, Carol and a non-diving friend. Please ensure your deposits are paid to secure your place! Room for 4 more divers plus 2 more non-divers.

Contact Natasha if you want to come along, and please remember to send Mark your deposit of \$50.

Email: natasha@bluecucumber.com **Phone:** 0410 074 677

June Long Weekend – Dive the HMAS Adelaide and Terrigal

The planned trip to Port Macquarie has been moved to the Central Coast to make the most of the sinking of the HMAS Adelaide - to get those all important before shots. The trip is from the 11th – 14th June 2010 and will involve:

2 dives on the HMAS Adelaide

2 reef dives at Terrigal (Foggy cave if possible)

1 Shore dive at the Skillion on the Monday (weather permitting)

We will be diving with Prodiver central coast \$90 for a double dive and \$10 a fill. The dive operators for the HMAS Adelaide and any additional cost for dining it haven't been confirmed yet. I will let you know when I hear.

The plan is to stay at Toowoong Bay Holiday Park: <http://www.toowoongbayhp.com.au/>

I expect accommodation to be about \$130 each for 3 nights.

We have 5 people already and can only take 12. A payment to the Treasurer confirms a spot.

Any questions please contact Jason 9345 4599.

NORTH HAVEN NEWS – (IT'S BACK ON THE CALENDAR)

HI ALL,

Due to an urgent knee operation to me in mid April I cannot make it to North Haven in early July 2010 for a week.
(Yes - not happy - John)

Plan “B” - My crew are happy to dive with Peter from “SCUBAHAVEN” divers and he has given me a good price of **\$65 per day, per person** for a double dive (this also includes 2 air fills in the price) this super price is for diveable days only. We now have minimum 5+ divers with a maximum of 10 divers (to fully book his boat a 7.5M aluminium hull “Orca” with twin 140hp outboards - so you can dive anywhere without any local (divers). Please see his **web site** for all information

regards the local dive sites – The main ones are the - **COD GROUNDS** – The largest site off the N.S.W. coast for big grey nurse sharks (100 sharks have been seen here in a single dive about 7 km's from the river entrance and only 18M deep) and the wreck of the “**TITAN**” crane in 40M. Other sites include Perpendicular Point which is just south and the reefs north off Lake Cathie / Bonny Hills.

His boat has been booked for the Sunday the 4th to Friday the 9th a total of 6 days of diving total cost \$390 with air. Subject to that you can dive all 6 days (weather wise)

Accommodation will be with Ray and his crew in a 3-bedroom house - already booked.

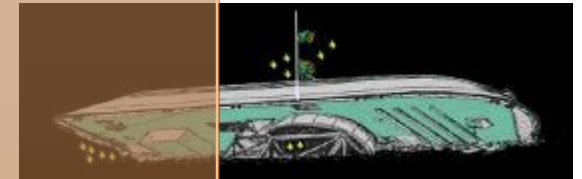
He only has a spare bed for a 1 diving couple or a 1 single diver. **FIRST TO REPLY GETS THE SPARE SPOTS !!!!**

Dates – Arrive Saturday the 3rd 2 pm to Saturday the 10th of July 2010

Pay Mark \$65 deposit for (boat deposit \$65) ASAP (cheque for the first day's diving must be sent to Peter sooner than later to book the boat)

Diving Deposit – is \$65 for the first day diving and then the remaining money to the operator per day.

John B.



SYDNEY MARINE PARK

THROUGHOUT SYDNEY'S MARINE ZONE, FROM INTERTIDAL SEASHORES AND ESTUARIES TO OPEN OCEAN, OUR TURTLES, SEAHORSES, OVER 580 SPECIES OF FISH AND MORE THAN 70 SPECIES OF SEABIRDS FACE AN EVERYDAY BATTLE TO COPE WITH THE IMPACTS OF POLLUTION, HABITAT DEGRADATION, INVASIVE SPECIES AND OVERFISHING. IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE THEIR BATTLE WILL ONLY GET MORE CHALLENGING. IN FACT MANY SPECIES FOUND IN THIS MARINE ZONE ARE IN DECLINE AND 41 SPECIES ARE NOW LISTED ON THE NSW DECCW THREATENED SPECIES LIST.

A Sydney Marine Park will afford greater protection to the marine environment while still allowing Sydneysiders continued enjoyment of all activities. As a Marine Park there would be better management, research and resources to help minimise pressures to its turtles, dolphins and other creatures. Recreational fishing in the majority of the park would be balanced by small pockets of sanctuaries where marine life can surge back to life, and seabirds and turtles can find safe nesting sites and sustainable food supply. Meanwhile a team of staff would be on hand to monitor the park's waters, keep check of invasive species and address pollution and other threats.

Our Sydney Marine Park would be a world first as the only marine park based around a major city! This park is not only essential to protect the region's marine wildlife for future generations but for Sydney to achieve its other long-term sustainability goals.

PLEASE TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO HELP SAVE OUR MARINE LIFE

Take five minutes to help save our turtles, dolphins and seahorses.

Our politicians need to hear from you. Your personalised letter could make all the difference!

www.marine.org.au/marinesubmission.htm

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-Recent Club Happenings-

The Monument, Kurnell – 2nd May 2010 - By Tricia Henry - Pictures by Ron Walsh -

The conditions looked like it would be a perfect day for a dive - the sky was sunny, the water temperature a comfortable 20 degrees and the seas were flat. A group of eight club divers met at the Monument, Kurnell at 9:00am on Sunday 2nd May - Peter, Ron, Steve, Nancy, Gary, Graham, Clara and Tricia.



Disappointingly, on descent we found that the visibility had dropped to about 5 metres, decreasing to about 2 metres as the dive progressed. There was a lot of green weed and sediment floating in the water and draping over the rocks and sponges,

but as someone said, there's no such thing as a bad dive...

Although there was not a lot of the larger fish life around, there was still some interesting things to see, including a frogfish hiding in a crevice, common sea dragons, cuttlefish, scorpion fish, eastern blue groper, Maori wrasse, crimson banded wrasse, old wives, a moray eel and a few nudibranchs (Chrysanthemum Neodoris, Violet Pteraeolidia and Splendid Chromodoris).



The beach exit at the end of the dive was very easy and by then the morning had warmed up so we were ready for our breakfast of hot sausages cooked on the BBQ (interrupted by a helicopter flying low over the park on a “rescue” mission).

Thanks for organising the dive, Peter.

- Wooli Trip 18th to 23rd April 2010 by Peter Flockart & Carol Martin -

Sunday 18th

On leaving Sydney or Coffs Harbour the weather promised to be as good as the trip to Wooli last November. All of those going (Peter F. Bob T, Carol Martin, John McPherson, Margaret & Geoff Sanders, Dale Franke - friend of Geoff Sanders – Eda DiCamillo & John Prior) had warm / pleasant & uneventful trips up to Wooli. John Prior caused some anxious moments until his safe arrival around 9pm that night as he had left Sydney later than most of us.

Monday 19th We awoke to an overcast and damp morning. Before the dive we had to do the usual paper work, sign here, here and here, show your C - Card. Some people had forgotten theirs but Stan didn't seem to mind as others' vouched for the miscreants. Then it was time to put your gear together, get dressed and walk down to the Kracken, our dive boat. On the arrival of our skipper Mick we set out for North Solitary Island. The trip out wasn't the most pleasant but due to the speed of the "Kracken" you didn't seem to notice the swell.

Dive 1 - Bubble Cave

Surface conditions a bit sloppy but once below we split up & swam up or down gutters.

The divers lined up like lemmings to go through the cave. There were plenty of anemones, black coral & a small moray in a coral formation.



At 22m while waiting for other divers I glanced up to see a 3m Grey Nurse shark slide by & about 2 minutes later a 2m wobbly tried to run me over, so I decide to move. The others reportedly had a good dive also except Dale whose Mares Abyss reg free flowed uncontrollably which meant he only got in a 30 min dive, due to the excess air loss.

After a surface interval approx 1hr where we were served a variety of soup & cake we were back in the water with a fresh tank to do the Elbow Cave. Vis here was less than the first dive & marine life a bit on the sparse side with not much of note being sighted. Dale had another short dive. The problem was fixed by Stan after the dive much to Dale's relief.

Once back on board we headed home to Wooli for lunch & a rest which was to be the norm for the rest of the week.

Although some people decided they hadn't had enough exercise for the day & insisted on going for either a long walk or a jog before returning to the shop for (several) pre-dinner drinks before tucking into a hearty dinner.

Tonight it was a variety of curries cooked primarily by Mr Prior ably assisted by everyone else.

Tuesday 20th (by Carol Martin)

The seas still quite choppy with bigger swell than yesterday but the Kracken handled things beautifully although one side of the boat and the passengers got a bit wet.

We dived North Solitary again & this time went to the Canyons.

Down the mooring, up to the shallows and went under one boulder and over the next.



A bit of surge was present to make things a bit more interesting.

We came out down the side of the canyon into a carpet of anemones.

It was absolutely wonderful- a living carpet swaying in the current - although all the anemone fish went ballistic at the sudden intrusion of 8 divers.

The photographers were very happy and snapped away. Peter F found & photographed several free floating anemones that were in effect moving house.

We followed the ridge around to the right, over the sandy gutters and back up to the ridge.

A big flathead in the sand went swimming off after being disturbed.

I saw a lovely little porcelain crab amongst some anemones and my all time favourite – school of blue tang up in the shallows.

Everybody wandered off in search of the anchor leaving me floating in 5 metres to do my safety stop.....with the boat directly above me ☺.

Good thing about being by yourself is that more fish come in for a look-see and I was treated to a big school of kingies and trevally going past nice and close.

The 2nd dive for the day was the Mackerel Run. This is a great dive site just round from the Canyons and known for its currents and the pelagics that it brings with it. There was quite a surge at the point but fine at the mooring. Down we all went – bit of a current but nothing that the hardy St George mob couldn't handle – well sort of.....a few people dropped off and stayed around the anchor but not before seeing a large eagle ray that came and circled around us. John P, Bob T and I carried on and saw more kingies and a small tuna. We managed to blind a very large crayfish under a plate coral while it was being photographed – I'm sure it would have recovered by nightfall. Drifted back to the anchor – rather quickly and then just hung around the shallows looking at the variety of nudibranchs & flatworms.

It was a great day of diving.

Some people were a bit ambitious in the amount of territory they covered & had a long surface swim back to boat.

After this we made our way back to base with the seas much calmer on our return trip.

Dinner tonight was a BBQ of steaks / chicken & a really yummy salad, all washed down by a variety of alcoholic beverages.

Wednesday 21st The swell had dropped further but it was still a bit on the surgy side.

Dive 1 was Anemone Bay where conditions were choppy with a bit of surge (this Russian diver is everywhere). In clearish water we all dropped to the bottom to be surrounded by schools of bream & sweep in mid water. Above us were schools of kingfish.

For those with camera there was once again plenty of life to photograph resulting in some great images from this site.

After the obligatory surface interval where we were once again served soup & cake it was back into the water to do a drift from Bubble cave to Elbow Cave.

We dropped to 15m & began our swim to the cave. It wasn't long before I was left in the others wake due to the fact that I stopped to take photos. Again walls were covered with anemones that made the bottom look like a carpet. The small spaces that weren't occupied by anemones were home to blennies, & the occasional nudibranch. In an amphitheatre I found & photographed a small (green?) turtle. Further along the water became slightly milky but there was still plenty to look at along the ledges which drop like steps to deep water.



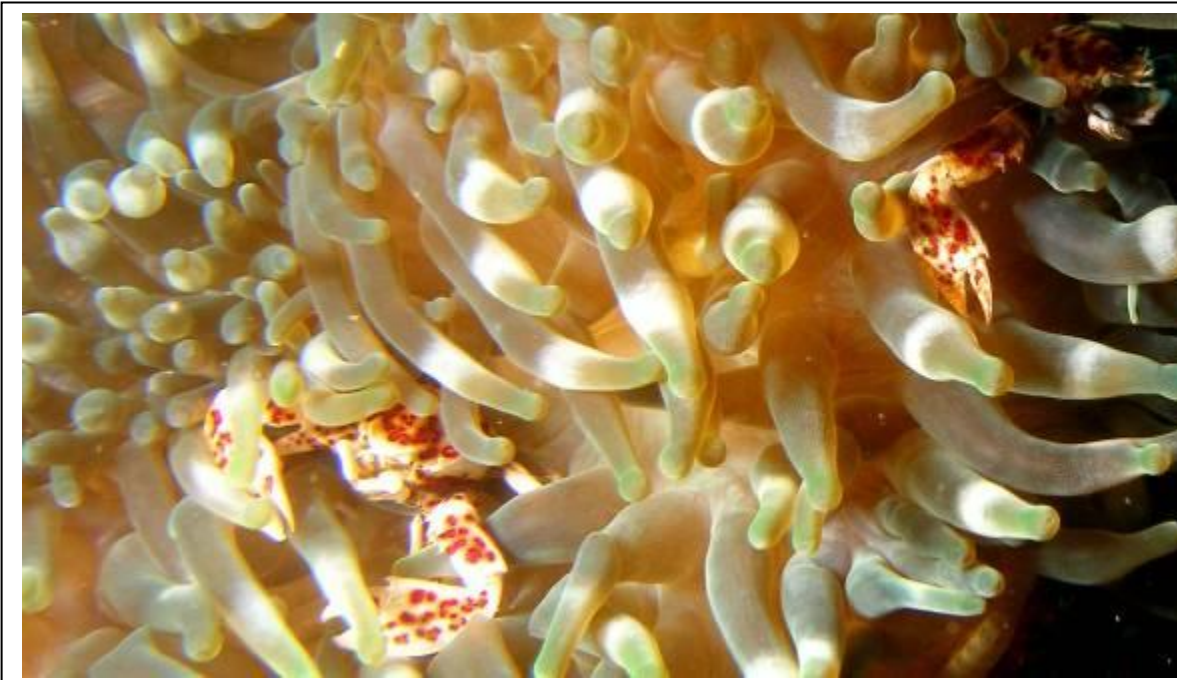
Tonight's dinner was cheap (\$10) meals at the local Pub. It was good also that the whole group could fit on one table making it easy to chat. Afterwards we watched a movie courtesy of John Prior back at the shop.

Thursday 22nd This was to be our Pimpernel rock or The Pinnacle dive. Excellent travelling conditions up to the site had us salivating in anticipation. However on anchoring it found that the current was

definitely not playing ball. Mick our skipper volunteered to be the "Guinea pig" for the dive.

After reaching 17m & using 80bar he decided to abort. The current went all the way to the bottom & if you turned sideways your mask filled with water.

After recovering the anchor we headed back to do firstly Fish Soup then the Bubble Cave. Fish soup was attempted by most of the group except me as I preferred to stay look for photographic subjects.



Dale Franke made the observation that the dive should have been renamed the washing machine due the amount of surge encountered by them. They did however have a good dive,

Our second dive was the Bubble cave.

Here we found a small wobbly & sighted a small eagle ray & turtle but couldn't get photos as they were too far away. Most of the group spent their time swimming around looking at the sights while I & Bob T spent our time looking for porcelain crabs in anemones.

Dinner tonight was a large pot of Spaghetti Bolognaise cooked by Peter F & washed down with red wine. No garlic bread tonight as some people are allergic (so they say) to garlic.

Friday 23rd While most people headed home, myself with Bob T plus Carol & John Mc along two other divers went out to dive in absolutely excellent conditions. The sea was almost flat & the run out to North Solitary seemed to take almost no time at all.

Dive 1 was the Elbow Cave

An excellent dive (vis was the best we had had all week – around 20m) with a plethora of life. The ridges were covered in life & around us swam schools of sweep & surgeon fish.

Spent most of our time pottering around in the gutters before swimming to the edge of the wall & the fields of red *Dendrophytha* corals. Amongst the anemones we located several porcelain crabs & a small white cowry with its orange mantle out.



After the surface interval we did the drift dive along the mackerel Run to the canyons. After dropping in on the sand we moved to slightly deeper water before arriving in the canyons. There wasn't a great deal of life on the bottom but it was more compensated for by the schools of fish that swam around us. Carol excitedly pointed out a school of blue tang. As with all dives anemones & clown fish were prolific.

After returning to Wooli & washing our gear the four of us headed south to Fish Rock for the weekend, It had been another good week at Wooli.

By Peter Flockart & Carol Martin (article compiled from notes provided by all attendees)

Photo Credits: Photos 1 – 5 by Peter F
Group Photo by Eda DiCamillo.



Boat Dive – Barrens Hut / The Split – 8 May 2010

Dive Organiser: Natasha Naude

Divers: 22

Boats: 4

Maximum Depth: 26m

Dive time: 36mins

Water temperature: 21 degrees

It was a stunning Saturday morning when we all took off to Barrens Hut – 22 divers on 4 boats. Neither the weather nor the sea conditions could have been more perfect. Less than 1m swell, 18 degree air temperature and clear blue skies. Awesome!

Digby and I were first to dive off Down Under with Dave, and were amazed to put our faces in the water and immediately see the bottom – viz was just great and we could see the anchor lying at 26m. We dived the trenches and the chimney and saw giant cuttlefish, old wives galore, grouper, stripies, red morwong, large tooth beardy (I've been studying my fish ID book) and large numbers of Tassie trumpeters, who seemed most unconcerned to get out of our way!



The sponges and mosaic sea stars were seen to full advantage in the clear water and it was a thoroughly enjoyable dive.

Kelly had a few ear problems so descended slowly, while Michael and Carol went on ahead and left Kelly to enjoy a solo dive around the site!

She made the most of it and made the find of the day, spotting an upside-down pipefish. Somehow she managed to find and hail Eddie to come and take a photo.

On the surface I decided the water temperature was better than the air temperature and snorkelled around while the second lots of divers were in the water.

Carol kindly thought I was in the water because I was seasick and mimed strenuous vomiting over the side of the boat – I'd like to take this chance to reconfirm I was simply enjoying the water!

I entertained myself watching the divers 25m below me, chasing their bubbles, pretending to be a seal, and watching Andrew doing his safety stop suspended upside-down on the shot line.

It seemed there was a lot of upside-down-ness going on that Saturday!

Once we were all back on board the four boats lined up for a delicious morning tea and we all enjoyed the warming sunshine. We were all reluctant to get going and I would happily have spent a few more hours out on the water. Ray and Andrew did – deciding to head back out for some fishing once the divers were all back on dry land.

Digby and I helped Dave rinse off and pack up Down Under and then we headed home, most satisfied with the morning's proceedings.

A very big thank you to Dave Casburn, Les and Michael, Ian and Ray for bringing all of your boats out.

It was a beautiful dive and a great morning.

And many thanks to Eddie for all plaintiff these photos which I have included without asking his permission first...

Thanks to all who came along on the day, Natasha.



- *Diving in Taveuni – by Nancy Scoleri and Gary Perkins-*

There are so many great places in the world to go diving that every time Gary and I have holidays we always ask ourselves this question: “Where will our next dive adventure be?” After many discussions with fellow divers, we decided that this time it would be in Fiji, in particular the island of Taveuni also known as the “Garden Island” due to its abundant flora. It is the third largest island and is lying to the east of Vanua Levu across the astonishing waters of the Somosomo Strait. Its famous dive site, the “Rainbow Reef” is described as the soft coral capital of the world and Fiji's most spectacular diving.

We arrived in Taveuni one week after the passage of one of their worst cyclone “Tropical Cyclone Tomas”. A category four storm, it destroyed many villages and had northern and eastern divisions of Fiji declared a state of disaster. From the sky, Taveuni was brown everywhere, most of the trees were lying on the ground and those still standing had no leaves left. There was no mistake on what the high winds had done to the vegetation: uprooted trees and damaging gardens and crops.

Our resort “Garden Island Resort” had no suffered any infrastructure damages; they mostly had a major clean-up to do.





The resort was situated on the waterfront of Somosomo Strait and the view from our room was stunning, especially at sunset.

Just across the resort's garden was the on-site dive centre "Aqua-Trek Taveuni". It is ideally located since the best dive sites on Rainbow Reef are only a few minutes away by boat.

The dive instructor confirmed with us that the reef had not suffered any impact from the cyclone and after filling the required paperwork we were ready to dive.

We had organised four days of double boat dives in the morning and a shore dive in the afternoon in front of the resort. On our first day of diving, the weather was superb with a nice blue sky and the sea was absolutely flat, not one ripple at the surface. We did our first dive

on the site called the "Great White Wall". To begin the dive, we went through a short tunnel which was covered with gorgonians fans and soft corals of various sizes. When we exited the tunnel, we were exposed to the splendour of the huge wall which is covered in a multitude of soft white corals. The fish life was also incredible and the different colours of the fish were contrasting with the white of the corals. As far as we could see in any direction was this magical



wall offering breathtaking underwater scenery. After a nice relaxing surface interval at a lovely beach, we dived at a site called the “Blue Ribbon Eel Reef”. On this dive, it is most likely to find the famous blue ribbon eel. Thanks to our guide, we saw one that he spotted buried in a hole in the sand. The eel had the characteristic blue colour body with yellow fins and its mouth was wide open.



This made it look quite aggressive as if it was ready to strike. We also saw three big sea snakes, two white-tip reef sharks, a big potato cod and many schools of different fish.

In the afternoon, we went for our first shore dive along the “house reef” in front of our resort. Unfortunately this shallow reef had suffered from the full force of the cyclone and was now divided in massive piles of broken corals on the sea floor. It was both very sad and fascinating to contemplate the force of Mother Nature and its destructive effect on the environment.

In spite of this, fish were already coming back and making new habitats into the broken corals. The next couple of times that we dive this site, we discovered more schools of fish such as butterfly fish, angelfish, blue damsel and Clark’s

anemone fish who managed to find anemones amongst the broken corals. We also found few blue sea stars and many diagonal shrimp gobies and their shrimps digging holes in the sand. This gave us hope that though it will take time the reef will come back to its previous condition.

On the second day of diving, we first dive the site called “The Corner”. The current on this dive was strong and we did a drift dive along the edge of the reef. We admired the soft sponge gardens, the multitude of fish and the big sea cucumbers that were lounging on the sand. For the safety stop, we moved away from the reef and from the current and stayed in the blue water until it was time to leave. The next dive was at “Sam’s Point”. The current had dropped and was now a little more than a gentle helping hand along the way, guiding us along the reef. There was a large variety of soft and hard corals, including sea fans. Schools of beautifully coloured fish were present and we also found some nudibranchs.

For our third day of diving, we started at a site called “The Fingers”. The underwater scenery on this dive site was very similar to the “Great White Wall” but on a smaller scale. The reef had a variety of soft coral and sea whips and marine life included emperor angelfish, triggerfish, fusiliers, lionfish and a big octopus. After the surface interval, the dive crew decided to move the second dive to Korolevu Island due to strong currents on the Rainbow Reef. The dive consisted of a nice swim along the reef towards the island. This was territory for micro critters. We found many different



types of nudibranchs: Loch's Chromodoris, Varicose and Elegant Phyllidia.

Sea cucumbers were lying on the sand and many sea stars were also present as well as the destructive crown of thorn. The multitude of small fish was incredible with every rocks, sponges and coral formations surrounded by hundred of fish.

On our last day of diving, we first dive the site called "the Zoo" which has a reputation for the presence of plenty of pelagic fish species, barracudas and reef sharks. We saw six white-tip sharks at around 30 meters but did not see any other big marine animal. However, this dive was very nice as we spent more time enjoying the reef.

The second dive was at "Nuku Reef" which was a beautiful reef covered with purple soft sponges and diverse schools of fish such as triggerfish, anemonefish and surgeonfish.



In addition, we found six juvenile white-tip sharks under a large hard coral, Christmas tree worms, moray eels and clams.

To conclude our diving in Taveuni, we decided to go for a night dive at a site called "The Ledge".

It is a submerged reef with a ledge at a depth of around 15 metres.

The dive plan was to turn in clockwise direction around the ledge and discover what the reef has to offer at night time.

Well, it was one of the best night dives I have ever done!

We saw many parrotfish sleeping under the hard corals, small shrimps and crabs hiding in the anemones, curry shells and hermit crabs moving around on the sponges.

The feather stars were having a gathering, all of them wide open on the rocks. Under the rock ledge, we spotted a rock lobster as well as a slipper lobster. The Loch's Chromodoris nudibranchs were also there, having some "private" moments. Our last day in Taveuni was our "rest" day before flying the following day. Many activities can be done around the island from bird watching, golf, bushwalking & trekking, horse riding...

We decided to do a half-day tour to the nearby Bouma waterfalls which consist of three waterfalls.

We walked to the first one which is an easy ten-minute walk from the main road. The waterfall is very nice and approximately 30 metres high and it falls in a large pool where people were swimming.



The second waterfall is about 30 minutes away from the first one along a track for the more adventurous. The climb is quite steep but it is worth the effort as the view of part of the island and the sea is beautiful.

This waterfall is more spectacular than the first one; it is nearly double in height and width.

Unfortunately, we could not go to the last waterfall as the cyclone had damaged the path and fallen trees were blocking the access.

Taveuni was an extremely memorable dive destination with beautiful untouched reefs of multi-coloured hard and soft coral covered with an abundance of fish life.

We had a very enjoyable holiday and will recommend it to anyone.



Some other shots from Gary and Nancy's Trip



Some pics from Ron Walsh from SWR trip.



Merimbula dive report – Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th May.

Actually, due to the rotten weather on that weekend the Merimbula trip was postponed and this dive report is for our fall-back diving at “good ‘ole Shiprock”.

The Merimbula trip was canned late on the Thursday prior to the planned weekend. That Thursday was a nerve-wracking experience for me as the weather which was supposed to be clearing for the weekend just refused to do so. Many phone calls and emails saw the trip status change from a “maybe” to a “definitely going” then late Thursday back to a “don’t waste your time coming down – it’s getting really ugly” status. Situations like this are always difficult to work through but when the travel distances involve a 6 hour drive (each way) and one of our divers (Eric) was flying down from Brisbane the pressure is even greater to make the right call. In hindsight the dive operator said that we did make the right call and, if we had gone down, we would have only got one day of diving (maybe) and that would not have been great diving either.

The final decision was made about half an hour after I bought \$90 worth of prime filet steaks for the Saturday night BBQ – D’OH!

After deciding to postpone the trip, I started looking for alternative sites to dive on the weekend. There was a big swell rolling in from the south east and it was being fanned by a strong south/south westerly wind. Oak Park was making a lot of surfers happy but was not diveable. Bare Island was great to watch as it was being absolutely belted by the swell and there was a surf running over the isolated reefs. There were surfers out at Yena Gap! At Inscription Point I watched two divers trying to get into the water (on the run out tide???). It was not a pretty sight seeing them being knocked over all the time but they somehow managed it. I really don't know why they bothered as the water was filthy dirty.

That left Shiprock (or Lilli Pilli) as the only dive sites available south of the harbour.

We had quite a turn up – I didn't count heads but I'm sure that we had at least a dozen divers and there were lots of other random divers there too.

The dive began in the usual format – everyone for themselves. Your newsletter editor (you know who you are Ray) got to the entry and realised he'd done the old "left the weight belt in the car" trick.

Eddie and I ducked under the water and hadn't gone 10 metres when we met Heinz heading back towards the exit making some PADI hand signals associating visibility with sexual intercourse.

This may have had something to do with the visibility being less than 2 metres. Heinz should have persevered as the viz improved to nearly 5 metres at the bottom of the wall.

OK, the viz wasn't great, but at Shiprock it was good enough to have a good dive. I really hoped would improve, after all, Eric had flown all the way from Brisbane to dive this.

The gatekeeper didn't seem to mind the poor viz – the Gatekeeper is a really cute and friendly Gobie that lives in a bottle just near the entry point. Eddie got a shot of him here...



After passing the gatekeeper, Eddie and I went around in circles for a while whilst scouring the bommies for interesting critters for Eddie to photograph.

One interesting thing we came across was a tree branch that was laying on the sand between the bommies. The tree had clusters of cuttlefish eggs clinging to it – the cuttlefish must have figured it made an interesting change from laying their eggs in the kelp. From time to time other divers appeared out of the gloom and then faded back into the gloom.

Sometimes I would lose sight of Eddie but I would just wait a few seconds and head towards the inevitable camera flash and there he would be.

Somewhere near the end of the bommies we passed Kelly and Michael heading back towards the wall.

After about 40 minutes we ran out of bommies and the search for the elusive pipefish began.

This is where I lost Eddie – he didn't lose me because I knew exactly where I was, therefore it was all his fault.

I could not find a pipefish. But Eddie did, here's the proof...



After a while I ended up at the Pineapple fish cave and evidently Eddie did too as here's his proof...



When the current changed I decided on a leisurely cruise through the shallows back to the entry – keeping an eye out for my ex-buddy along the way. One thing that I noticed was a larger than normal number of octopuses (octopi?) wandering about the place. I found one up in the shallows that could be classified as a man-eater. This thing was a metre across and there's no way I was going to mess with it. Besides I don't have a frypan that big.

When I reached the exit I was doing that safety-stop thingy that you do and who should swim along? We started the dive together and we ended the dive together, that was our plan all along.

After the dive most of us headed along to the Lilli Pilli coffee shop where Dave Casburn had organised a table for us. The table was too small but the coffee and sweets made up for it.

It must have been a good day as most of us decided to do it all again on Sunday - the only difference being that, after the dive, instead of going for coffee we went back to my house and barbequed some of the fillet steak that I had purchased for the Merimbula trip (I may put the rest of the steaks on eBay).

So, whilst the Merimbula weekend didn't go to plan we did get two dives in at Shiprock, had some fun and we didn't drive for 6 hours to not go diving!

Maybe next time we'll actually get to Merimbula.

Thanks to Eddie for the photos.

Paul Pacey



Some favourite shots from Peter T.



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Please send items for the Newsletter to me *as you do them during the month.*