

Sea Braggin'



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

- MAY 2010 - Edited by Ray Moulang -

Included in this issue are Dive Reports from: Mark Ridsdale, Dick Fish, Bram Harris, Ray Moulang, John Prior, Bill Purkiss and Peter Trayhurn; Eddie Ivers, Ron Walsh and Kelly McFadyen.
A big thank you goes to them.



Some pics from Philipines Trip by John P.



Dick with one of the Whale Sharks.
See Philippines story for more on this trip.
Picture by Peter T.

WHATS HAPPENING IN YOUR CLUB?

- MAY 2010 -

WHATS COMING UP SOON?

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT AND WHERE</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT AND WHERE</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
<u>Saturday</u> <u>1st</u>	Double Boat Dive Port Hacking	Ray Moulang 0403437974	<u>Saturday</u> <u>15th</u>	Shore Dive Shiprock	Eddie Ivers 95265910
<u>Sunday</u> <u>2nd</u>	Shore Dive and BBQ The Monument Kurnell	Peter Flockart 93710265	<u>Wednesday</u> <u>19th</u>	Club Meeting @ Rowers Club	Jason Coombs President
<u>Saturday</u> <u>8th</u>	Boat Dive Barrens Hut	<u>Natasha</u> <u>Naude</u> 97999785	<u>Saturday</u> <u>22nd</u>	Deep Dive SS Tuggerah/ SS Undola	Gary Perkins 95336869
<u>Friday 14th to</u> <u>Sunday 16th</u>	Week End Away Eden Wrecks Merimbula	Paul Pacey 95272501	<u>Sunday 30th</u>	Boat Dive Wedding Cake Island And Magic Point	Jason Coombs 93454599

- JUNE 2010 -

WHATS COMING UP SOON?

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

See what else is on this Year.

The 2010 Club Scuba Calendar is on the web site.

Boat dive to Barren's Hut for Saturday 8 May – 3 boats available and currently 8 places available

Contact Natasha if you're interested in coming along.

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

Wooli in November. 7th Nov to the 15th – for 8 nights & 7 days - Max 14 people.

We will be staying above the dive shop & prices are the same as usual.

If you want to go please pay \$50 deposit to the treasurer to secure a place.

Any queries let me know. Peter F.

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.

Deco Chamber Visit/Dinner – 4 May 2010

This has been postponed until September / October as the chamber at Prince of Wales Hospital is being replaced. We will be among the first people to visit the new chamber. I will provide details closer to the time.

Wedding Cake Island 30 May 2010

NOW FULL

The plan is to go out of Botany Bay do a dive at Wedding Cake Island and then stop off on the way back at Magic Point to do a second dive using the balance of the air in the tanks or a second tank.

I am taking names for this dive please let me know if you are interested, Jason Coombs (J.Coombs@unsw.edu.au).

Come and play with the seals in August! **Only 5 Spots left!**

Jervis Bay seal weekend **Friday 20 – Sunday 22 August.**

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

Diving:

- Ulladulla Dive Centre can cater for 12 divers <http://www.ulladulladive.com.au/crew/duckunder.html>
- Retail rates for double dives is \$100. Airfills for \$7
- If we have 9 divers, one of those will be free of charge (total cost apportioned equally).
- If we have 10 divers or more, we will get wholesale prices of \$85 each, plus one free of charge.
- 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? 7 confirmed so far: Natasha, Digby, Paul P, Mark R, Tricia, Carol and Debbie.

Room for 5 more divers plus 3 more non-divers.

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

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

St. George Scuba Club weekend dive trip to Merimbula and Eden. Friday night May 14th to Sunday May 16th 2010.

The main attraction for divers at Merimbula is the easy access to dive the three tug wrecks – The Empire Gladstone, the Henry Bolte and the Tasman Hauler. Even if you are not a wreck diver I believe that these wrecks are covered in marine life and attract hordes of fish too. The Empire Gladstone and the Tasman Hauler were specially prepared as diving wrecks so it's safe to go inside them even if you're not a die-hard wreck freak.

This trip will be a two day trip including two nights accommodation (Friday and Saturday night) and 2 double boat dives on Saturday and Sunday (4 dives total).

Note that the club program shows that this trip is scheduled for 21st – 23rd May. We had to move the trip forward one week because somebody else grabbed our proposed weekend first.

We will be diving and staying with Merimbula Divers Lodge (MDL).

Here is a link to their website... <http://www.merimbuladiverslodge.com.au/index.html>

There is a few other dive sites in the area as well – check out the MDL website for more information.

The accommodation is at the dive shop and they have three apartments each of which can accommodate eight divers.

The cost is \$260 per diver for accommodation, all air fills and 4 boat dives. If we get 8 divers then we get a “free of charge” which then brings the cost down to \$227.50 per diver. This is almost cheaper than staying home and cutting the grass. If you want Goofy Gas (up to 40% EAN available) then that will cost you an extra \$6 per fill.

The tugs are in no more than 30 metres of water. The water should still be warm-ish in May.

I have tentatively booked 8 spots – please get your deposits into Mark ASAP.

Please email me when you decide that you are coming and also when you have paid your deposit..

I'll work out dining arrangements after I make a visit to MDL early next year to eyeball their cooking and dining facilities.

Please note that you need to bring your own linen AND pillows. Paul Pacey (Home: 9527-2501)

(Mob: 0431 691173) **** NOTE MY NEW MOBILE NUMBER ****

(Email: Paul.Pacey@iinet.net.au)

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 diving 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.

Hello Divers, The Moreton Bay trip scheduled for June has been rescheduled to July as The Big Cat Reality now only does full liveaboard trips every third weekend. Sorry for any inconvenience, but the trip is now scheduled for 2nd to 4th July 2010.

Mike Scotland recently did a trip on this boat and had some good reports about the facilities available, and the quality of the dive sites.

Attached are the full details of the trip including costs and inclusions. Please indicate by return email if you are interested signing on for this charter as I need to finalise numbers and reservations with the company.

Please feel free to call me on 0414 701 292 if you need more information or have any questions.



We look forward to seeing some of you up North in July! Regards, Eric Brace 0414 701 292.

Live Aboard on Moreton Bay with 'Big Cat Reality' Organiser: Eric Brace 0414 701292
2nd, 3rd and 4th July 2010 (Depart Brisbane Monday 5th July)

Details

BIG CAT REALITY Includes:

- Up to 8 Dives
- Air fills
- All Meals
- 2 Nights Accommodation
- Linen
- Dive Master Services
- Tanks and Weights
- Arrange your own flights to arrive in Brisbane Friday 2nd July by 4.00pm
- Group bus transfer to BIG CAT REALITY from Brisbane Airport (aprox 1 hour)
- Boat departs 7.00pm Friday
- Boat returns Sunday afternoon
- Group bus transfer back to Brisbane accommodation
- Sunday night to off-gas and on-beer
- Arrange you own transport to Brisbane Airport (taxi) and return flights to Sydney Monday 7th June.

- Full use of all facilities on board

Costs (estimates only, but will be close)

Charter \$470.00 (\$403.00 if we have 7 divers,

Based on 6 paying 1 x free of charge)

Fuel Levy \$ inc Tanks & Weights \$20.00

Transfers (bus) \$40.00 (approx cost bus transfer Brisbane Airport to Big Cat to Sunday night accommodation)

Accommodation Monday Night \$ 50.00 (approx based on twin share)

Total: \$580.00 (\$517.00 if we get 7 divers)

What's not costed here? Your return flights to Brisbane, dinner on Sunday night, meals and other costs on Monday, taxi or other arrangement from accommodation back to Brisbane airport on Monday morning, soft drinks alcohol and chocolates etc on board the boat.

www.bigcatreality.com

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.

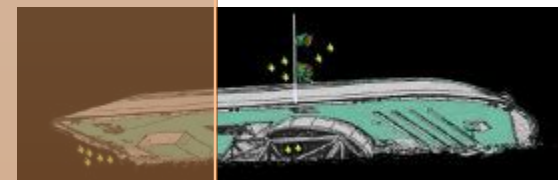
He only has a spare bed for a 1 diving couple or a 1 single diver. **FIRST TO REPLY GETS THE SPARE SPOTS !!!!**

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.



-Recent Club Happenings-

Overseas Club Trip to the Philippines. March 11th to 23rd, 2010.

Attendees:. Mark Ridsdale (Fearless Leader), Dick Fish, Bram Harris, Ray Moulang, John Prior, Bill Purkiss and Peter Trayhurn.

Whale Sharks at Donsol

After an extremely fast, but painfully early flight from Manila to Legazpi, we boarded a small bus for the long and nerve-racking bus drive from Legazpi to Donsol.

The journey to Donsol included a stopover for coffee and pastry, with a side order of SIM cards and credits for the SIMs. Of interest, the SIMs in the Philippines are both cheap and plentiful, I used the Globe SIM and found that it worked for the complete odyssey. Others had used the Smart SIM cards and the seemed to work as well if not better than the Globe SIM cards. Mark had even managed to get a Smart Broadband SIM, which came in very handy for that odd SKYPE call home, thanks Mark.

Arriving at Vitton resort, Donsol at midday we were, eventually, shown to our accommodation for a well earned sleep.

Our introduction to swimming with Whale Sharks involved watching a video on whale sharks, a very good place to catch up on sleep, and the dive shop for a briefing on departures and equipment rental.

The most convenient place to be when swimming with whale sharks is Vitton Resort, Donsol. This unique place offers the visitor the opportunity to swim with whale sharks, and to have, what were refereed to as interactions.

The resort is strategically located next door to the tourism office, and is only a short stroll from accommodation to boarding the boats.

There are a dozen or so cottages, air conditioned (window rattlers), bordering a well manicured garden. Insect screens on all windows, and the beds are large and comfortable, very comfortable.

The bathrooms are a little odd with the air conditioner exhausting directly into them, where the toilet is located.

So attending to nature or having a shower can be a very warm experience.

The dining and drinking area is outdoors fronting the beach. The dining area was well used for drinking and just sitting and watching the sun set. During meal times ladies from the kitchen come to the table and will take any order, a good touch. The menu is not extensive and quickly exhausted.

Day one and two boats set off to look for the whale sharks, Boat 1 with Mark, Dick, Bram and Boat 2 with John, Bill, Ray and Peter (who transferred to boat 1) leaving the beach at about 0830 hrs. Boat one took to the deeper water and boat 2 kept to the more shallow water, the visibility was obviously poor, well, the sharks are there to feed after all. The boats had numerous contacts, oh too brief.



Boat two returned to shore early exhausted after chasing sharks all over the pacific, boat one had more luck with its contacts, being more frequent and longer.

Day two found the second boat with a new guide and heaps of enthusiasm. Now remember boat one had Mark and Peter aboard, and were keen to apply the theories of Taylor (1856-1917) scientific management theory, or as I prefer to think of it as "money as motivation."



Boat two had not applied such theory, relying on the guide and crews skill. There were only two contacts, but what contacts. The first contact for 1.5 hours, some of us tied to return to the boat, but were called back to the shark to continue with the contact.

The second contact was a much shorter event, only one hour, a fantastic experience and i can't wait to return here to do it all over again.

FIREFLIES LIGHT SHOW AT DONSOL

On the second night at Donsol we were treated to a spectacular local phenomena, the fireflies.

Even getting to the site was something of an adventure considering that riding in tricycles on the local roads during the day was scary enough, this was at night. Once aboard the outrigger, feeling very safe with the first and only issue of safety vests, we motored up the mangrove lined river out of Donsol. For the first 15 minutes the only lights to be seen were those of the fishermen. Eventually our eyes were treated to a display of light coming from one species of tree. The tree seemed to pulsate with light and every now and again the odd 'spark' escaped from the main event. The best tree display had us intrigued for quite some time as the beetles were able to switch their lights off and on in unison to create a very lively display. The event was made even better by the darkness of the night. Peter was able to change that situation and effectively blinded every beetle from then to eternity with the multitude of flash shots. All for a good cause of course, many great pictures were produced. I have never seen such a large exhibition by fireflies before. Because they only inhabit one species of tree, conservation measures have been enforced to ensure their survival. A certain member of our group was fascinated with the creatures but was very disappointed when, 'according to the research', he found out they were not edible. Apart from being stuck in the mud on one occasion the whole experience was very worthwhile with our guides being very informative.



Ticao Island.

Day 1 - Wednesday - Getting There

We thought that our next planned adventure was to be diving at Ticao Is, but the transfer across rated it's own mention. I was told that the boat trip across from Donsol would take 1 or 2 hours (depending on who you were talking to) - both of these estimates turned out to be optimistic. Once again we found ourselves on the ubiquitous outrigger boat. When the crew started putting plastic bags on all of the baggage up front and moving the larger bags from the "cabin" roof to inside, we got the clue that this would not be like going on the Parramatta Riverercat. As the seas picked up, we soon starting experiencing the salt sedimentation process, as several layers were built up over us from the wind spray and regular splashes as we steadily



ploughed through the chop and swells. I found a nice spot for a snooze on pleasantly flexing bamboo rails until a big swell slammed into the rails with a bang and half drowned me. There were discussions about which bags contained the EPIRB and Radio, and roles assigned for who would get what. About 20 mins from Ticao Is we saw a stick poking out of the water, after which the boat turned slightly to starboard, so we expected that the turn-by-turn GPS directions being followed were "continue straight ahead until you reach the stick then turn slight right". A few minutes later we saw what could have been the mast of an outrigger poking out of the water and thought maybe that was the transfer that left before us; Pete thought: "mmmm, more food for me". As we rounded the point to the village we were heading for, a glimpse of paradise opened before us, with a sandy beach in a small lagoon, palm trees, little fishing village, and thatched-roofed huts lined up along the beach.

We settled into our well-appointed beach-side huts, met the people running the dive operation, signed all the usual waivers, ordered our weights, and proceeded to get our land-legs back chilling out for the rest of the day.

Day 2 - Thursday

8:00am we fronted up to the dive shop looking forward to some spectacular diving to match the picture-perfect setting. Unfortunately, reality was soon to set in a bit different to our expectations. Our first 2 dives were at San Miguel Is, a 30-45 min run from the resort, going past idyllic coastline vistas of eroded rocky escarpments, small caves hollowed out by the sea and postcard-potential villages of thatched roofed huts on isolated little patches of beach.



Our first dive saw 10-15m vis, 24m depth and 26 deg water, and no current to speak of, with a great profusion of soft corals. There were also 1.762 million (I think I counted correctly) yellow slugs impersonating nudibranchs, with ornate bits hanging hanging off their heads, along with some really well-fed real nudis. The seas were coming up with the wind as we exited.



Our next dive was nearby at **The Classroom**, another macro site around San Miguel Is, a bit sheltered from the building wind. More nudis, some Lion Fish, soft & hard corals, the usual reef critters, but overall a step-down from the first dive in overall scenery.

Next up was **Parcel**. Question to dive guide: "What will the next site be like?" Answer: "Clear water, NO CURRENT!!!" (ed. emphasis added). Reality: 10m vis, 8 missiles (that was us) flying over the reef too fast to see anything but a blur. On looking at us, our dive guide decided that we could all benefit from some exercise, so into the current we went. We disagreed, and after some clinging onto some big lumps of rock while the dive guide had a snooze, we let go and took off, doing a great job of sticking really close together, with all surfacing in the same



piece of ocean. We had arranged to do this site as a night dive that night, and even tried to arranged some post-dive pizza (well it was Thursday). Well, forget the night-dive, and the pizza had to be ordered over from the mainland (I have trouble getting pizza delivered 2 suburbs away), so back to the island for drinking/snoozing/checking out the village at a much slower pace than the last dive.

Day 3 - Friday Today the objective was to satisfy 3 Manta virgins with an encounter or 2 with what was reported to be huge Mantas, with all 3 dives for the day scheduled for ***The Manta Bowl***, a 20 min trip straight out from the island. With a name like that, how could we go wrong!! This was a 20 hectare site @ 18m-20m deep, 5-15m vis, dropping off to 200m at the edges - more a placemat than a bowl. The briefing described a 5-6 knot current, with the idea being to drop like stones and grab something big and solid, then wait for the Mantas to cruise by. Well, no Mantas (except for a brief distant shadow spotted by Ray (!) on dive 3), followed by frenzied finning for a couple of minutes to try and confirm the sighting. The rest of the time was spent hanging on for dear life, hoping the current wouldn't rip our wetsuits off. When we could convince the dive guide to let go we had some brief periods of rocketing across a reef where everything was hiding from the current. By the third dive, the current had dropped away to 1-2 knots and some of the local fish had come out to watch these weird lumps floating around, but neither us nor them saw anything very interesting.

The level of frustration was demonstrated in us providing our own entertainment with human trains/towers, some nice impressions of Mantas, and seeing how big a chunk of reef we had to hook to stop it being dislodged by the current (and several divers hanging off the single reef hook) - the answer is: a very BIG chunk.



Pete managed to blow 2 O-Rings (1 before jumping in, and 1 during the dive - lucky he had twins).

We all got safely back on board (no mean feat on the choppy surface), with 2 confirmed Manta Virgins still amongst us.



Getting back to the island, it was again time for drinking/snoozing/exploring the local villages.

Pete scored a couple of kilos of huge local prawns freshly BBQd for him, along with a pot of rice and some local firewater.



The local dogs had a disagreement in the restaurant and incurred the wrath of Angel, resulting in them being sent to their rooms (don't ask, but then again, why not).

Day 4 - Saturday

We started off at ***The Manta Bowl (Placement)*** for a 4th attempt to see some Mantas. The seas were much calmer, but the current was still raging when we dropped in and looked for something solid to hold onto. The nearest thing to a Manta that we saw was an Eagle Ray that went past looking for Mantas, so we resigned ourselves to the thrill of playing in the current again. As the bottom started heading off for 200m we started our ascent, still flying along in the current.



Enough of the Manta Placemat, we now headed back towards San Miguel Island, planning to dive Lapus Island, but the current was running dangerously hard, so time for Plan B;

Kagpating Island (which means resting shark, although they are now resting in peace due to too much dynamiting by the local fishermen to get them away from the area and the fish they were trying to catch).



This was a great dive amongst boulders, ranging up to the size of a 2 storey building, capped off with soft corals. This was swim-through heaven, with all the usual reef critters again, sea snakes, no current, and up to 20m vis.

The next dive was on the other side of the same island. The guide was going to drop us in half-way down the island to float with the gentle current along a wall dropping to 30m, with a plateau on top at 5m. We asked about being dropped in further up the island, but he said it hadn't been explored yet. Obviously we had to talk him into letting us doing some exploration, so we dropped in further up the island and found that the wall just keeps on going. By about 10m it was quite dark and gloomy, but as we lit up the wall with torches it revealed everything you could want from a wall as you lazily drift along. Pete and Dick explored the 30m level, while most of us stayed at 20m. Cray Fish, Coral Shrimp, Lion Fish, Anemones, Glass Shrimp, and all sorts of soft corals competed for space on the wall. Not much fish life until about the 8m level. Pete had a reg service @ 30m as his fell apart, and then near the end of the dive we heard a loud explosion. Everyone looked around expecting someone to be in serious trouble. Pete was nowhere to be seen, but the dive guide did not look worried. It turns out that local fishermen were dynamite fishing. Everyone ended up back on board recounting a very enjoyable day's diving as we spent 1.5 hours bashing back through the seas to our beach paradise.

After some negotiating with the local entrepreneur for some mud crabs to be cooked and delivered to us the next day, it was time for dinner and a movie (thanks John - not quite the big screen, but it did the job) and a bit of light entertainment from Angel as he/she shimmied and shacked his/her bootie behind the bar - you go girl/boy!



Day 5 - Sunday

We arrived early at **Lapus Island** to glassy area is only about 40m square right in front that split and go around the island. Basically feel the current kicking in then turn around

This site was just total gob- to find a free area, vis was the absorbed by what opposite a village 8 single room huts make a beautiful scene for a deodorant commercial. Bill, Pete, Mark and Bram swam ashore to wander through the tiny



square inch to put a steadying finger down to take a photo. As usual for this usual 10-15m, but you didn't have to see that far, as you were totally was right in front of you. After the dive we pulled into a sheltered cove that sits on a tiny sand spit between two forested parts of the island, less than across. This looked a peaceful haven in the middle of paradise, that would village. The reality was a little less ideal, with people obviously living a subsistence existence far



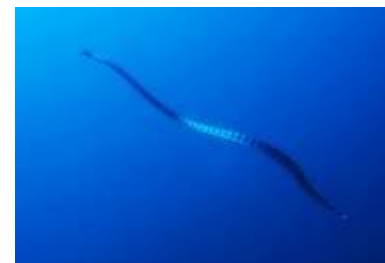
from any amenities. They did have some electricity, a few pigs, and chickens, and lots of outrigger canoes, but not much else. As usual, there were lots of kids, all who looked happy, once they got over their shyness. At one stage, one of the young girls was even taking photos of us – a bit of a reversal. Pete asked if he could buy a chicken (he was feeling a bit peckish – go figure), and he was directed to the next

village around the island; they obviously only had enough to meet their own needs. There was a small amount of fish drying at the back of the village, mostly tiny fish about 100mm long. Pete started throwing around a ball with the growing crowd of kids at the water's edge, and Bill accumulated his own little following of kids. As they swam back to the boat, the kids swam or floated out to the boat on sacks filled with something (probably coconut), or bits of driftwood, and climbed all over the outriggers before bidding us farewell.



Next up was **South San Miguel Is.**

This was another picturesque site with a cuttlefish, more soft/hard corals, clams, big flat worms, a very cute banded pipefish, and a banded sea snake which shot past us heading for the surface then dropped back down to play. One of the dive guides (GL) helpfully held onto it's tail so that Pete could get some good head shots – the other one (Ram(bo)) was too scared to get too close to it.



Then we headed back to ***The Manta Bowl!*** LET'S DO THAT AGAIN!! Well we gave the “non-manta placemat” one more opportunity to prove that there are actually Mantas around – attempt number 5.



When we arrived at the site this time, the seas were very calm, and there did not seem to be much current running, evidenced by the fact that someone from another boat that was already on the site jumped in without his weight belt and floated a bit past the boat until the others popped back to the surface, and they all managed to swim back to the boat to rectify the situation; this would have been an impossible feat on previous days.

When we dropped down to the bottom, there was next to no current, no Mantas, and no sharks (Threshers, Hammerheads and Reef Sharks were reported to be sighted here).

At least the small reef fish had come out to play instead of hiding from the current, but we basically had to resort to once again entertaining ourselves with Manta impressions and the like.

5 dives on the site, and no sightings except for one person getting a distant possible glimpse – not a good hit rate.

Goodbye Ticao Is

The crabs and prawns ordered from the local village were delivered and devoured before dinner, we settled our bills and settled down for our last sleep on Ticao, with a 4:30 wakeup scheduled to scoot back to the mainland.



After dragging ourselves out of bed and psyching ourselves up for another adventurous crossing to the mainland, we waved goodbye to our farewell party of locals and set off on glassy seas, accompanied by a beautiful clear sunrise – a fitting farewell to this picture-postcard location. The captain cranked up the motor to full bore and we sat back and relaxed (ie. slept). Some flying fish provided some entertainment, along with a pod of dolphins.

When the keel eventually hit sand at Donsol, it was a bit further out from the waters edge than we would have hoped, so a couple dropped their dacks to keep their pants dry and we waded ashore, carefully picking our way through the uneven rocks. Meanwhile, the captain and crew shouldered our heavy bags and just marched straight ashore without flinching or finding their footing as they went.



The diving at Ticao was a bit hit and miss, but overall a very memorable experience that I would not want to have missed.

Mount Mayan.

Following our triumphant return from Donsol we departed towards Legaspi, where we were to visit the Volcano which just happened to last erupt in November causing 50,000 plus people to evacuate. We were booked into the luxurious 5 star Hotel Venezia. We just had time to settle when we were to meet and climb the volcano. Bram, Dick, Peter, Bill and Ray left via mini bus to be delivered to the base of the volcano. They all got out of the mini bus but Ray saw what was ahead and thought better of it and jumped straight back into the van. (smart move) Later those not climbing found out you only walk, hike, trek etc. up to about 1/3 rd the way up. There you camp overnight and leave early the next morning for the final assault upwards.



Anyway the
climbers

return after about 4 hours all worn out and weary but better off for the experience.

One curious thing was on the roads off the main road was laid out Rice, drying, and the cars etc. run over it and it doesn't seem to worry anyone.

They come back full of stories I'm sure we will hear about for years to come around the many BBQ's and trips away. One story is how there is so much cloud around the mount that you normally don't get to see the top. Well. the view from our balcony says it all. Our climbers as were we were, surprised to see the pictures taken of the top still with smoke coming out of it.

VILLIAGE LIFE

While sailing alongside the island of Ticao, there was a constant vista of steep hills rising from the shore which were densely covered in forest growth and coconut palms. Whenever a 100m or so stretch of sand appeared, there would be a village. Many outriggers would line the shore and bamboo and thatch huts would fill almost all the available space. These huts could range from just a few to thirty or so. A common layout would include a bamboo picket fence, an outhouse for the pigs, something to contain the chickens/chooks and the main house, which often did not have a front door. The floor was earth or sand. One hand pump would supply an entire village with fresh water for all purposes. The men could be found repairing nets, painting lures or preparing fishing lines for a particular species of fish. The children and women were always very welcoming and keen to know your name and where you came from. The men were more restrained but would make the effort to engage in a conversation. They all loved having their photos taken, yet one felt very reluctant to photograph their living conditions. The boys were experts at making kites out of any rubbish available and producing pop-guns made from bamboo, in which they took great delight in shooting each other but never at their faces.

Many houses had a sary-sary shop at the front. They sold a range of goods at very low prices, including Brandy and Rum being only \$1.20 for a 350ml bottle.

From these basic living conditions emerged students, impeccably dressed, qualified in a range of uni courses and displaying great dignity. Education is highly valued and recognised as the only way to break the poverty cycle. The primary school was depressing by our standards, no electricity, limited reading and writing resources, a muddy play area and positioned adjacent to the mangroves.

The main sport / religion is basketball with karaoke being the principle form of entertainment. Their singing ability was incredible, not just by one or two in the crowd but from the majority of them.

Thanks heaps to Mark for organising such a wonderful trip.

The cultural experience was as rewarding as the diving. I'll be back.

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Oak Park Shore Dive at Cronulla - 17 th March 2010 - Dive Organiser:- Natasha Naude - Divers :-7

Maximum Depth 11 metres, Dive time 69 minutes.

This dive was initially recorded on the club calendar to be at Bass Pt Shellharbour, however was moved to Oak Park when a special night dive & BBQ was organised at Kurnell.

The plan was to arrive for an early 8.30am entry and exit before the crowds from the local dive shops arrived.

The sea was fairly flat and the viz looked good with only a couple of optimistic board riders looking for a surf break.

We had an easy entry from the back corner of the pool and swam out to the drop off.



Heinz found a pretty Lined Nembrotha that I've never seen before at Oak Park.



Greg & Shelley found a juvenile moray, and Phil found what I think is a Pustulose Phyllidiella these are uncommon

Other sightings were a Red Cuttlefish, a Giant Cuttlefish and a large 2m+ Wobbly.

Viz was excellent, over 10m with schooling yellowtail, and the ever present schools of mado following us for the whole dive.

This dive would have to be one of my most enjoyable and interesting mornings shore dives at Oak Park.



Exit south side of the pool was comfy for those like me with a camera as there was minimal swell and surge.

After dive refreshments and an egg & bacon sandwich (thanks Phil) was a nice way to finish a pleasant morning dive.

Thanks Natasha for organising this dive and BBQ.

Eddie.

Frenchman's Bay Dive Report – 11 April 2010

I was part of the second wave of divers to arrive at Frenchmans Bay. The first wave had not had the luxury of a nice sleep in and had boarded the boats at 8:00am for the first dive. The day was bright and sunny with very little swell. We had two boats – Le Scat and Scram. Dave Casburn had organised the day to be a boat dive out of Frenchmans Bay followed by a club BBQ. All up there were 19 divers plus several BBQers. In addition there were two boats full of South Pacific Divers who had been invited to join us for the BBQ. After a leisurely kit up we



wandered down to the beach to await the boats. Right on schedule at 9:30 Le Scat arrived and after a quick change of crew we headed out. The first wave had dived the Whale Watching Platform Wall with 15m visibility so it was quickly decided that this is where the second wave would also dive. We anchored on the site near the large overhang, and with my buddy Eddie Ivers was first into the water. After setting the anchor we explored the wall to the north. We came across several giant cuttlefish in the various overhangs and

holes, as well as nice temperate red and yellow gorgonians. When the wall petered out we retraced our steps past the anchor and followed the wall south. Eastern Blue Devilfish were found in another large overhang, before we returned back to the anchor.



At the anchor Shelly (diving from Scram) grabbed my attention and pointed out a Magnificent Ceratasoma (a large colourful nudibranch) that is quite rare in Sydney. So after a few photos it was time to head to the surface.

Back at Frenchmans Bay Dave Casburn had set the BBQ running with nice steaks, sausages, onions, and bread rolls. After a pleasant lunch and a few refreshing drinks we packed up and headed for home. By Ron Walsh.



Easter 2010. Southern Escape to Jervis Bay, 1/4/10 to 5/4/10 by RayM.

Our plan started with three boats – but we ended up with one boat attendance - bummer.

With our expectations high after last years great success getting into all the caves we wanted to, most arrived on Thursday about lunch time and were unpacked into our two houses by mid arvo. We had eight in one house and four in the other. A rendezvous was made for the local club for 6pm for tea

All had nice Thai come Chinese meals. Friday arrived and we were into the diving. Scram 2 crewed by Ray M, Andy M, Clara and Paul Pacey headed out to find middle ground as the sth-west wind waves were whipped up on top of about a 2 metre south-east rolling swell, making for a very choppy time. It was easy to find, as there were many fishoes all over it. It runs north - south and is about 200 metres long and about 75mt wide where the good shelves and rocks are. The depth is just over 30 mt here and it was about 15 mt viz on the bottom.

With the above water conditions worsening, I stayed in the boat and the other three went in and at the bottom went along the rocks, following cracks and gullies. Andrew noted that he saw between twenty and thirty discarded anchors some with rope trailing upwards. They did spot a particularly nice anchor and chain but could not lift it properly off the bottom.

A plan was hatched to return the next day to recover it using a lift bag. Fish life was not all that flash but there were quite a few Yellowtail Kingfish about. There was also a big stumpy-tailed Bull Ray.

This being Good Friday we were again invited to the local Jervis Bay Dive Club Seafood feast at Lyn and Roscoes house.



We started with cooked prawns and tasty oysters and ended with prawns and oysters but in between there was BBQ Barramundi, calamari rings, prawns with bacon and or salami from the barby, scallops wrapped with bacon etc. and more of the same.

All washed down with drinks of choice being beer and red wine.



Fully feasted and Andrew happy to have won a round of Heads and Tails we headed back for a good nights sleep. Saturday dawned and the wind was down to only about 10 knots. Mark, Mike and Heinz hitched a lift with local Roscoe's boat and dived Longnose Point which was pretty surgy, Nancy, Gary, Martin and Dave dived at Hyams Beach coming up to high tide. Yes, Dave is back in the water after the 10-week break. Some of the stuff they saw were Pineapple Fish, octopus, crested horn shark, goblin fish, black banded sea perch, Velvet fish, cuttlefish and numb ray. Back out to Murray's Ramp and out to Middle Ground again. Paul and Andrew went in first to retrieve the anchor and after about 40 minutes, Clara and I jumped in and proceeded to the bottom and along the rock shelves to the north. We ran across this massive black bull ray about 2 metres

across. It came really close and was a great site at such close range. There were large schools of bream, luderick and snapper swimming around then a big silver drummer cruised by. When we finished our dive we decided to meet the others for a shore dive, we went back with the boat on the trailer and dived at Hyams Beach. The viz was a bit poor as there was lots of suspended weed about, but there was plenty to see which was a relief, Snapper, wobbies, pj's bream, leatherjackets and all this to a max depth of just over 10 metres for just over an hour. John P had lined up for the shore dive but hit a problem with a zipper busting so he was a bystander and had to be satisfied dreaming of his next coffee and pastry, he denies he's putting on weight.

Saturday night saw us back at our place for the traditional BBQ sponsored by the club. Thanks Jason. We had nibbly chicken chunks then beautiful local scotch fillet cooked again to request by Dave sore back and all.

Salad was a hit thanks to Clara and Paul. Mark had weaved his magic on two crispy potato bakes with bacon. I had baked and iced a big chocolate cake and this was consumed with glee for dessert. I do recall Paul saying something about us being an Eating club that occasionally goes diving. You know he could be right. Mark was on his lovely red wine while Paul was on throw downs with small 750ml bottles for him. (Usually 1 litre)



Sunday came and it was back to Sydney for Heinz, Dave, John and Mike.

We went back out to Middle Ground again on Sunday. The wind blew up again, making it uncomfortable once we stopped so I stayed on the boat,

Clara, Gary and Andrew went in and as they did it began to rain. Soon it was torrential, non-stop for about 10 minutes. When it finally did, it took about 2 minutes to clear out the rainwater with the bilge pump.

They saw heaps of small kingfish with some tuna swimming with them and all the big schools of yellowtail were extremely nervous.

Sunday night's meal was a couple of curries made by the usual suspects Mark and Paul.

Truly another good meal at about a fiver a head.

Once again, Easter had come and gone and some of us got up on Monday morning and headed off back home. You guessed it, if where not eating we must be diving so of course the remainder did a really nice shore dive

over on the South Eastern side of Murray's Beach with glowing reports of massive fish and good viz all over the place.

Easter time dive wise was not as good as last year but we had a go and still did some good and most enjoyable dives. Ah, there's always next year.

Thanks to all those that came down and made it a great time away diving.

David Dvandervelden's Wedding.

Hope all is well with things back in Australia. I'm not sure if anyone remembers me. I was married to my lovely Thai wife on the 16 April 2010. We may come to live in Australia in 18 months time. A traditional Thai wedding. If you know David and want to contact him :...

dvandervelden@hotmail.com

Thanks very much,

David and Nong.



Public Consultations

Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve Draft Strategy: A submission was made on the draft strategy on 27 April 2010. The following points were made:

- Increased enforcement preventing fishing in the reserve is required especially given the juvenile dusky whaler sharks.
- Consideration needs to be given to making other nearby alternative dive sites more accessible.
- Limit or ban on open water courses in the aquatic reserve.
- Place recreational users ahead of commercial operators e.g. dive shops.
- Independent dive clubs need to be well represented at the proposed workshop.
- Brochures with alternative dive sites should be made available.

You can find more information at the following link:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parkmanagement/pomdevCabbageTreeBayAR.htm>

Shiprock Upgrade: On 1 March 2010 the Sutherland Shire Council resolved:

- That the results of the community consultation in relation to the development of Shiprock Reserve be received and noted.
- That the masterplan for Shiprock Reserve be endorsed.
- That an Alcohol Prohibited Zone be created in Shiprock Reserve.
- That an Alcohol Free Zone be created in the road reservation of Shiprock Road, in the vicinity of Shiprock Reserve.

- That at the appropriate occasion, staff report on a fitting and substantial recognition of the donation of land and finances by Mrs Jeanie Louise Pyott Sinclair for the upgrade of Shiprock Reserve.

There will now be a Development Approval (DA) lodged which will detail the works involved.

There has been a proposal to upgrade the reserve since at July 1984. Action only started in 2005 because of the will of the late Jeanie Louise Pyott Sinclair. The late Mrs Sinclair had wanted to transfer part of her property, No. 4 Shiprock Road to be added to the Shiprock Reserve. In addition Mrs Sinclair left \$100,000 as a contribution toward the cost of constructing stepped access through the Reserve from Shiprock Road to the foreshore. This is a truly generous gift!

You can find more information at the following link:
<http://144.140.79.192/dir141/webpapr.nsf/61d3339b94bf76a5ca2574a5007fa00e/4e17412107ea2ad2ca2576a10015451d?OpenDocument>

Upgrade of the Anzac Parade loop road: On 24 November 2009 Randwick City Council resolved to:

- Endorse the amended La Perouse Loop Road Coastal Walk Extension - Concept Plan (Refer Attachment 3 to the report tabled);
- Exhibit the amended plan for information and notify the key stakeholders of the amended plan; and
- Organise a secure parking space for Sundays and public holidays for Mr John Cann to enable him to continue with his "Snake Man" shows, which are a very popular tourist attraction at La Perouse.

A Development Approval (DA) will be advertised in the future.

You can find more information at the following link:

http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/Your_Council/Community_consultation/Loop_Road_exhibition/index.aspx

Jason Coombs President

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2010 St George Scuba Club Ladies Week-end by Kelly McFadyen

Port Stephens, on the NSW coast north of Newcastle, is said to have some of the best shore dives in Australia. The ladies of the St George Scuba Club agree, with Port Stephens being the location of our annual Ladies diving weekend for the past six years.

Leaving work, husbands and children behind 13 ladies headed north with exciting anticipation for a weekend of great diving, relaxing and wonderful company washed down with a few glasses of wine.

BIG 4 Soldiers Point Tourist Park has large family cabins (around the same size as a two bedroom unit) with good outdoor dining, plenty of space to hang wet dive gear and a landscaped pool.

The Tourist Park is right next door to the Bowling Club where we converge for dinner. To our delight, we find that the bistro has now been refurbished and there has been significant improvement in the quality of the meals. We all enjoy our dinner and walk the 200 metres back to our cabins. We wake early to a glorious sunny morning for an early dive at Fly Point. We gear up and while we wait a few more minutes for high tide we run into Mike Boyce.

Mike is the author of the Nelson Bay Simple Shore Diving and Marine Life Guide. Wishing Mike a good dive, we enter the water.

The water is 22C and the visibility is like gin! We head straight out from the entry down to 10 metres, turn left keeping the sand dune on our right and float with the current towards the sponge gardens at 24 metres.



Curious moray eels pop their heads out for a scratch, decorator crabs scurry from one sponge to another and nudibranchs galore glide along the Fly Point sponge and coral carpet. The plethora of marine creatures entices us to stay a couple of minutes into deco.



The tide has now abated and we head for the wall at 12 metres. Here we are surrounded by schooling fish who wizz past and morwongs catching a nap in the vase sponges. Six pineapple fish were in residence with their location signalling that the dive was soon ending. Surfacing after 78 minutes, we grin from ear to ear and the silence is broken by excited chatter. By 10 am we had showered, changed, dropped of tanks to be filled and were sitting down to a cup of coffee and a hot breakfast overlooking the fancy boats at the marina. Some shopping and real estate window browsing followed, as we had time to kill before our next dive at low tide.

The Pipe Line is a great dive site for spotting nudibranchs, seahorses and more. We were hoping that the excellent visibility we had a high tide would mean that we would have reasonable low tide visibility. This was not the case. We ventured down to 8 metres and could barely see our hands in front of our faces, so decided to pull the pin.

Back at the Tourist Park we enjoyed an early afternoon drink and a dip in the pool. Before we knew it the sun was setting on what was a wonderful day. After Thai for dinner, we retired to bed dreaming of another great dive in the morning.

On Sunday Halifax Park did not disappoint us! Two dolphins frolicked in the shallows while we geared up. The visibility was the best that any of us had ever experienced at this site, in excess of 30 metres, except for when we could not see through the large number of schooling fish. At one point I looked up towards a bommie that was clouded by tropical fish and thought that I was at Osprey Reef. At the end of the dive a blue groper hung around for a scratch while we completed our deco stop. As we headed home, we reminisced on yet another great St George Scuba Club Ladies Week-end and began planning for next year.

Regular Events

THURSDAY NIGHT DIVES

We have had some record turnouts for the night dives.

Most of the dives have been very good, with nice visibility and good fish life.

Contact Michael if interested.

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