



November, 1975

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS

Meetings: 3rd Monday of each month at the Haberfield Rowing Club,
Dobroyd Parade, Haberfield at 8.00 pm.

Committee

President: Bob Smith, 60/19 Queens Street, Newtown
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CLUB NEWS LETTER

In keeping with the expanding activities of our club members, we've enlarged our club notes to a record four sheet bumper Christmas issue. The editors hope that much of what is contained in this new format will be continued on a regular basis, and thank all contributors for their articles.

CLUB CALENDAR

Monday Nov. 17: Monthly club meeting. A richly rewarding experience for the dilettante, and highlight of your month's busy social calendar.

Sunday Nov. 23: Trawler dive, leaving Watsons Bay. This is not a free club trip, but well worth attending. Ring John Sumner (50-0268) beforehand for details.

Friday Nov. 28: Barbeque evening at Gary Ryan's place, 18 Beach Road, Stanwell Park at 8.00 pm. Bring your own meat, booze and bird.

Wednesday Dec. 3: Another Hassel night dive. Meet at the Camp Cove car park, Cliff Street, near the military reserve at 8.00 pm.

Saturday Dec. 6: Ho! Ho! Ho! The Annual S.P.D. Christmas Party will be held at Karl Herald's place, 9 Mainsbridge Avenue, Liverpool (telephone: 602-0594) at 8.00 pm. All Santas little helpers are asked to front up.

Monday Dec. 15: Club meeting - real fun, lots of falling about.

Sunday Jan. 18: Marine Biology Theory Day. Greg Hawken has arranged to show members through the pickle jar collection at the Macquarie University labs. This will provide us with a sound basis for classifying our own marine specimens. Members should meet at the front gate of the Uni at 10.00 am.

- Monday Jan. 19: Like a return of Blue Hills, yet another club meeting.
- Sat - Mon. Jan 24, 25, 26: Long weekend dives at Currarong, Jervis Bay. This is a camping weekend and members should meet at the Currarong Camping Area on Saturday morning.
- Wednesday Feb. 4: Night dive, at Fairlight. Meet at Margaret Street, near the pool, at 8.00 pm.
- Saturday Feb. 7: Dusk til dawn outdoor movie marathon at Dick and Brenda's house, Bundeena. Over 50 really awful condensed sound films, some of them running no longer than 8 minutes; others dragging on past 20. Bring your own ground sheets and grog.
- Sunday Feb. 15: Cave exploration dives at Catherine Hill Bay and Frazer Park. Hassel knows all the unlikely spots. Meet him and other members at the Pacific Highway at the Frazer Park Road turnoff, at 9.30 am. Barbeque lunch.
- Monday Feb. 16: For those who survived Hassel's cave trip, the monthly club meeting. The club is especially delighted to announce that noted authoress and marine biologist, Isobel Bennett, is coming along to give us a talk, with slides.
- End of Feb: The first free trawler trip to the wreck of the Undola, bookings will be taken at the February club meeting when date, time and place will be disclosed.

In keeping with the S.P.D. tradition, we proudly announce the club's dubious awards for 1975:

The Everglorious S.P.D. Over Achievement Award

To the organisers who laid out Bob Smith's bucks' party for showing just how much the club can pull together when we all put our hearts into it.

Under Achievers of 1975

To the handpicked S.P.D. Ocker Push Team, who after originating and organising the game, got swamped 14 -0 by the Bondi Diggers, in their first match. Next time fellas, let's think up Vietnam or something else we're more likely to win.

The Lizard Memorial Playmate of the Year

To Roger West. The Montague Island Seal of Approval. Arf! Arf!

The Nobel Prize for Literature

A refresher course in spelling bee lessons to Grant Batkin, whose command of the English language will go down in history along with Bligh's command of the Bounty.

The Sir Artie Calwell Oratorical Award

To Peter Stenbo.

The World Chicken Weight Belt

To those who stood and fought at Larry's bucks' party.

The S.P.D. Wretched Excess Citation

To Mike (Hassel) Byrnes, for giving Australia its first underwater organ. To Hassel's mum, for making him take back the candelabras.

The Wretched, Wretched Excess Award

To Bazza Lines for his 16 hour collection of bad Hollywood movies.

Runners Up Award

To S.P.D. Sydney to Surf jogging team.

This article is the first in a series on sunken vessels that lie off our shores. In Gary Ryan's description of the SS UNDOLA, I can confirm his observations of the marine life that abounds on it. There are two trawlers booked for the summer season to visit this vessel.....PETER STENBO

THE WRECK OF THE UNDOLA

The wreck of the coastal steamer UNDOLA lies in 130 feet of water approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the northern headland of Garie Beach.

Owned by Coalcliff Colliers Ltd., the UNDOLA was built in 1909. Her specifications were 429 tons gross, 185 tons nett, length 135 feet, beam 27.1 feet and depth 10.7 feet.

She left Bellambi laden with coal on 20th December, 1918 with a crew of 13, but failed to arrive at Sydney.

Although the UNDOLA is a relatively new wreck to divers, locals have been fishing off it for years and members of the Stanwell Park Life Saving Club frequently fish it from surf skis. It wasn't until one of our members brought up an object which bore the name, that the UNDOLA was positively identified.

The state of the wreck supports the theory that the UNDOLA sunk as a result of an explosion. There were reports on 20th December, 1918 from local residents of an explosion at sea, and wreckage was found from Stanwell Park to Garie for some days later. At the time it was assumed that the explosion came from the UNDOLA, due to her non-arrival at Pt. Hacking.

During the winter of 1917, the German raider "WOLFF" laid mines along the south coast. The UNDOLA may have struck such a mine that had drifted from this minefield.

The wreck is an interesting dive. Massive schools of fish and numerous invertebrates inhabit it. The latter include some epifauna organisms which contain bacteria that gain pigmentation from the surrounding metal, thus colouring those organisms orange. Visits by kingfish during descent and ascent are common. The wreck is characterised by a white porcelain toilet bowl which sits upright in the middle of the deck.

Even with the use of a sounder, the marks for the wreck are not always easily distinguishable. Currents often make anchoring difficult: recourse for much bad language.

Like most wrecks, the UNDOLA has become associated with the local area. Two local streets are named UNDOLA, one in Helensburgh and one in Stanwell Tops. And a local black fishing hot spot is named UNDOLA rocks.

GARY RYAN

JULIAN ROCKS

As the dark grey clouds of winter gathered over Sydney, we packed our diving gear into the 16 ft. Quintrex, "Popeye", and headed north.

After reading his article on the Julians Rocks - S.P.I. Vol 5, No.1, I wrote to Bill Sylvester at Byron Bay enquiring about local conditions that time of the year. Receiving his reply, we decided to make Byron Bay our first stop.

After an uneventful day and a half's drive, we reached Byron Bay early Friday afternoon, and we set up camp at the first Sun Caravan Park overlooking the Bay and Julian Rocks.

Bill, who runs the local sports store and caters for divers with trips out to Julians, made me welcome when I introduced myself. He arranged for a diving companion to show me the Rocks the next day. To my surprise the only way to launch a boat is at a beach site at the Pass. After a near disaster on the first attempt, a system was devised.

Our first dive was at the Nursery and the water was very clear. Within a few minutes, we found the reason for the consistent clarity; a 4 knot current that runs past the Rocks making diving very uncomfortable. We persisted and had an enjoyable but exhausting dive on hooker.

Later Bill pointed out that even when the current is running, the south-east side is quite still.

We spent two weeks at Byron Bay, and regularly dived the Julians. My most memorable dive was in 50 ft of water on the south-east side where 8 ft growths of black coral thrive. Having not seen black coral before, I was amazed at the elegant white polyps that spread their tentacles to emulate a snow covered Christmas tree. Small Saddle Back Leather-Jackets live amongst the branches, and I tried hard to photograph them using the polyps as a backdrop. They would no co-operate so I was quite content to fill my viewfinder with the black coral.

The rocks are alive with fish ranging from the small, colourful species to large Cod and Groper. If you dive regularly in the vicinity of the fishs' homes, they eventually ignore you and resume their daily business.

Bill Sylvester has approached the National Wild Parks Board urging them to recommend that the Julians be classed as an underwater reserve. His conservation efforts are apparent in his discouragement of spear fishing and prohibition to divers who might remove the marine growth that abounds around the Rocks. If it hadn't been for Bill's efforts, someone would have long ago souvenired the black coral for their homes.

Byron Bay has many other interesting diving locations, most noteworthy being the wrecks of the Wollongbar and the Tassie III. The Wollongbar's stern post and boilers are exposed at low water and the Tassie III lies in 25 ft of water well within swimming distance from the beach. There is a third wreck, an old sailing ship, the Thorn, which is relatively unexplored mainly due to the shifting sands that cover many relics. However, under the right condition they are ripe for picking.

Other interesting dives are on the two 20 ton electric cranes that were used on the old pier. These are now lying in 30 ft of water, making a superb artificial reef. The cranes have now become the home of many large fish and the trick is to dive on the first crane, observe and photograph the fish until they shy away; then swim underwater to the next crane, 80ft away, and catch up with them again. This can go on all day; until you run out of air. There have been rumours that the cranes were alive with painted crays, but I can assure you there weren't any to be seen after we had left there. Byron Bay's Julian is a must for the keen diver. It is unusual in its topography of large underwater caves, and small enough in size to completely explore (within 50 yards of the rock) in 10 days of diving. The remaining time of a two week vacation can be spent most rewardingly amongst the wrecks and cranes. Great diving; thanks to Bill Sylvester.

GRANT BATKIN.