

WET RAG

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS' CLUB (established 1962)



PO Box 823, BANKSTOWN NSW 2200

JUNE 1996

THE JUNE MEETING WILL HAVE THE PRESENTATION OF THE GEORGE ROBERTS COMP



Meetings of the Club are normally held at 8 pm on the 3rd Monday of each month in the Emile McDonald Room of the Bankstown Sports Club, Greenfield Street, Bankstown. This month's meeting will be held on Monday, 17 June 1996.

President's Message

As was promised in the last "Wet Rag" the May meeting started right on 8 P.M. Possibly due to the bad weather there were very few dive reports and as a result the meeting was completed in record time. The motion on starting the meeting at 7.30 P.M. was debated. The motion was defeated by a show of hands but unfortunately there has been a protest lodged. It may be necessary to discuss this matter a little latter and vote by way of a secret ballot.

On Sunday the 26th of May 59 current and former club members, family and friends gathered at Bayview Park to be ferried out to the wreck of the Birchgrove Park for the casting of Rick's ashes. ESCAPADE IV was chartered by the club and 4 club boats were in attendance. DOUTLESS II was also there. The sun was shining and the seas were extremely calm as we paid tribute to one of S.P.D.'s more notable members. Sadly as our thoughts were with Rick on this day just down the coast a major search was in progress looking for another club member missing since the previous Friday. Tragically Pat's body to date has not been found and as is typical in diving fatalities the circumstances surrounding this incident will probably remain a mystery.

I managed to track down the "Gallopig Greek" in Turkey. After leaving London John shot over to Finland and managed to dive a couple of wrecks there. He has promised to send a dive report A.S.A.P. Nila spent 2 weeks in Cuba would you believe holidaying with her new beau.

To those members who missed out on the restaurant night down at Sans Souci you didn't miss much. The food (for want of a better word) was very ordinary, service not much better. The highlight of the night was back at the Gladstone Hotel, but I leave that story for Scott to tell.

Our club members didn't do real well at the recent paintball skirmish. It would appear that R.U.C. have been taking lessons from the NEW YORK YACHT CLUB and are going to hold onto that trophy no matter what. Ah well better luck next time guys.

REGARDS Leo B

Photographic Officer's Report

I would like to thank all those people who took the time and effort to enter the George Roberts Perpetual Trophy (Photographic) Competition.

All up I received 11 entries, broken up as follows:

Open Section	2
Novice Section	4
Individual Section	3
Video Section	2

Judging took place on 23 May 1996 by myself, Neil Vincent & Mark Spencer (the one from Coogee) and we were all impressed by the standard of this years' entries.

All competitors were judged using the same criteria as last year. (This is the same as that used in the Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year Comps).

Presentation will be at the June meeting, so be there to see who has been successful and who has improved in the wonderful world of photography.

Regards, Peter Flockart

PS I still have film and a camera for sale, so if you're interested in any of these items below, bring your money to the June Meeting:

1 Kodak Aquatic Camera :\$ 19.00

10 Rolls Of Ektachrome 100/36 at \$ 8.50 each or \$ 33.00 for 4 rolls.

Newsletter Editor's Message**APOLOGY**

On page six (6) of the May issue of "Wet Rag" we published an article from our correspondent under the caption DEATH TRAP FOR DIVERS, reporting matters concerning a new fishing line called "Spiderwire". Our correspondent was quoting extensively from an article in "Dive Log" and from diving sources.

Since publication we have ascertained that many of the negative imputations concerning the product are untrue and we apologize sincerely for any embarrassment caused to the manufacturers and distributors of "Spiderwire".

Sorry this newsletter is getting out to you late this month but I unfortunately was struck down with the flu and got a little behind in it's production, but as they say better late than never.

To help facilitate you getting your reports and articles to me you can now also fax to me on (02)217 1484.

See you later, Russell

DIVE REPORTS

Seal Rocks Trip April 19-20

"Seal Rocks diving" trips are always considered a hit or miss affair insofar as weather and currents are concerned and I have been "panned" several times for planning trips there but my optimism of the area again paid off for the sixth consecutive time on the 19-20 April SPD Club trip. Perfect sunny warm weather, relatively smooth seas and sensational visibility of blue current! Eat your hearts out those who didn't make the effort 'cause you missed the trip of the year and one of the best dives I've done in over twenty years of diving.

Accommodation was in the absolute luxury of the Pacific Palms Resort, bungalow accommodation with endless hot showers, swimming pool, tennis courts, three spas, sauna, gym and games room complete with slow combustion stove fireplace surrounded by leather lounges that sets the scene which forces you to drink black sambuca and tell tales of the days diving.

On Saturday morning we arrived at Seals beach to the news that Steve had shot his nets as it was "Mullet Running" season which delayed our departure on the first dive by two hours. After a short detour via New Zealand and all points between we eventually hooked up on the bow of the Catterthun. Dropping 190 feet into pretty clear waters we encountered a little current which stirred things up a bit on the bottom but as usual this dive was nothing short of GREAT. Penetrating the bow section which has broken off and is now pyramid like and pointing towards the surface. Off to one side is the large windlass covered with soft coral growth. In the distance are large shapes which are most probably some of the moved wreck structure from the P & O supported "salvage" in 1991. A quick swim around the forward steam winches past the piles of horse bones saw my 18 minute bottom time complete and almost 60 minutes of deco above. But every dive on the Catterthun is well worth the effort. On the deco line we were soon joined by the others and were entertained by Rodney and his torpedo shaped scooter and as usual, Scott's mates, several bronze whalers who zoomed in and out of viz for several passes before leaving. Poor Ross Hipwell was a lonely figure hanging onto the anchor line for his deco stop, even when the whalers turned up, it was later found out that he had lost his weight belt on his descent had his dive and then returned and used the anchor line to hold himself at the stops.

On Sunday the we divided into two groups. One to the Catterthun and one to the Satara. (The largest diveable ship wreck on the NSW

coast). Traveling out the water was an amazing colour of a blue current and mill pond smooth. Gearing up with extra exuberance Steve Grow and I were soon first into the water when immediately Steve's O ring blew and in no time 1/3 of a monster 150 cu ft tank was lost before it could be shut off and replaced. Down into 150 ft we had picked next to the two huge boilers and the massive triple expansion motor was directly behind lying on its side. We had fantastic visibility and in true FAUI/PADI style Steve and I managed to keep within 80 to 100 feet of each other for the whole dive. Wow what a dive. Huge! Great! Mind-blowing!!! This was the first time I'd been on the Satara and it was so good that after swimming around from the middle to the stern and back than I just swam 20 metres off to the port side of the wreck and sat on the sand near the donkey boiler and took in the sight of this massive wreck with visibility almost to the bow and to the stern. There is so much to see on this wreck no-one wanted to leave. Bottom time was stretched out to 35 minutes followed by 53 minutes of decompression. Hanging at the 30 ft stop and looking down about 60 degrees the other 4 divers could all be seen over the wreck.

They eventually ascended to the stops and everyone took turns circulating on Rodney's scooter. Did I ever say that every time that I dive with Scott his mates turn up? Well this was no exception. Several larger whalers and solitary Mako Shark zoomed in on us from time to time which was unnerving because they would come from up current which had the sun rays directly behind. Anyhow unperturbed off went Leimroth on the scooter in 40 metre circles around the deco stop. He looked as though he was having a great time doing rolls loop the loops etc when we spotted a rather large whaler about 15 feet to his other side following the sideshow. I signaled him. "Look Scott a F@#^\$%N Big Shark is going to eat you. Look left and back a bit you idiot....." He signaled back. "Hey Look at Me....I'm the Mick Doohan of underwater scooters. This is great Nothing in the world could be better than this." No matter how often we pointed towards the shark following him around Scott never looked and thought that we were impressed....Luckily the shark lost interest and nicked off.

On the way back we jumped in to use up our air at the shark gutters and swam freely with the 18 resident grey nurses looking for teeth on the bottom of the cave.

Well that was Seal Rocks in a nut shell I could tell you about the marlin Scott and Rodney saw but this story would sound really like a fairytale... See Ya Barjumba.

Woniora - Sydney's Deepest Air Wreck.

By The Phantom Wreck Rat.

The wreck of the Woniora lies of Botany Bay in 64msw making it Sydney's deepest wreck that can be dived on air (66msw being the recommended limit for air dives). It sank on the night of October 28th 1882 in what was described by the only surviving crewman as the worst sea he had seen on the Australian coast. The wreck was discovered by Max Gleeson & Mae Elliot in May 1987 however it is not dived regularly because of its depth.

Being only relatively small and in such deep water the wreck can be quite difficult to anchor on. Although often swept by strong currents, on my last dive to the wreck there was no current at all and this, combined with flat seas, sunny weather and 20m plus viz made for a great dive.

The wreck lies on sand and forward of the boiler it is mostly covered by the sand except for 2 winches, a donkey boiler and a small section of the bow. The ship was one of the NSW coasts' 60 miler colliers and large chunks of coal can be found about the wreck site. The boiler has a large hole in the top, probably where a funnel once stood, and moray eels and large decorator crabs have made their home amongst the boiler tubes. On the port side just forward of the boiler lies a large spare anchor. The engine is behind the boiler and a large gauge can be found still attached. Aft of the engine is the flat rear deck and the stern rises five feet from the sand. The propeller is exposed showing only one of three blades. Various fish can be seen on the wreck as well as cuttlefish and other sea life. After exploring the wreck you begin the long haul to the surface and it's then that you appreciate how deep it is. After 18 - 20 mins on the bottom you can look forward to approx. 60+mins of deco on an Aladdin Pro. However when doing this sort of square profile dive custom tables with deeper stops and oxygen for the final stop are usually safer as I find that the Aladdin's first stop is usually only 12 or 9 metres.

An exciting dive, the Woniora should only be attempted after gaining considerable experience on the many other shallower wrecks in Sydney.

THE S.S. BOMBO By Barjumba.

On Saturday the 25 May 1996 the club dived the S.S. Bombo out of Wollongong. Meeting at Wollongong Harbour for a \$20 "commercial charter" to the "S.S. Bombo Boat Mooring" area. A very popular spot Saturday mornings. As a boat owner I found this to be so relaxing not having to worry about the boat and just hop in and enjoy the ride. It would have been perfect if it was a 'twin hull'. But that's another

story. Anyhow there were three other boats on site at the time we arrived.

After hooking up we waited a while and I listened to the tales between two (Non SPDC) "newly qualified" "very experienced" "Highly Self Opinionated" Advanced Divers and the pros and cons of their up market dive gear compared to mine. "Lucky" for us the other boat crew left the wreck to us and off we went into 20' C water. Viz was more than acceptable and everyone set off and did their own exploring. This is a great dive for wreck dive beginners as there is so much to see and the wreck, although resting upside down, retains an intact shape. Plates have fallen off near the engine and access into the bowels of the Bombo is easy. Penetrating into the forward hold and through the nannigai, The Phantom Wreck Rat and I found the worlds largest Cuttle fish. It's body was easily 4 feet long with eyes as round as a coffee mug. After short time the viz inexplicably went black. Calm investigation revealed that the to "Advanced Divers" had entered and really stirred things up.... We left it to them and the giant cuttle. The Phantom Wreck Rat and I squeezed out the value of the \$20 dive with 35 minutes bottom time and 18 minutes deco where it commenced raining new dive gear. What a blessing to an old diver.

These commercial dives are prebooked, however several "Last Minute Cancellations" by divers on this dive were again made unfortunately they have forfeited their deposit. There is however only one outstanding dive fee to be paid. Unless "She" coughs up at the next meeting **SHE WILL BE NAMED.** Happily though more dives are planned here in the future so be there next time.

BECAUSE TELLING PEOPLE THE NAKED TRUTH RARELY ACHIEVES THE DESIRED OUTCOME

On my travels through the years I have come to notice that some things never change. Things like if you drink too much you wake up with a hangover, fuel prices defy gravity, Murphy's law is a universal constant ($E=MC^2$. Murphy Einstein 1905. where E=Emergency, M=Murphy, C^2 =the square of can happen constantly) and police cars are faster than mine.

Similarly, all divers fall into one of three categories. The first category consists of divers who won't learn. These divers tend to be inflexible, cocky and macho. They make the same mistakes year in year out. They execute quite hairy dives with a minimum of planing, inadequate gear, insufficient air, a conspicuous lack of redundancy, dubious dive practices and lots of good luck. They experience numerous near misses from which they continually draw

the wrong conclusions at first, - to a fatality at last.

The second category consists of divers who can't learn. These divers are just not capable of learning anything. They do not possess the mental capacity required to tie their own shoelaces. A gross of them have an I.Q. of 144 and they lack the intellectual development required to understand their own limitations. These divers tend to hang around with divers of the first category and as a result comprise a disproportionate number in dive statistics.

The third category consists of divers who have made mistakes. But unlike the divers in the first category they do not like to make the same mistakes over and over again. Divers in the third category tend to be more flexible in their thinking, more approachable to suggestions. They readily admit they don't know it all. They look for and can recognise good ideas or improvements. These divers draw the right conclusions from the mistakes they make or see happen. These divers then go out and acquire the necessary gear or knowledge, modify their diving practices, experiment with different equipment configurations to find out what WORKS the best and are open to change when something better comes along. Divers in the third category know and admit to others their limitations and won't be swayed by peer pressures into doing things beyond their level of comfort, equipment, experience or training.

Limitations define the parameters of safe enjoyable diving, and divers of the third category continually enjoy whatever type of diving they are into be it shallow, rock hops, no-stop, decompression, deep reef, deep wreck, night or cave diving. They enjoy it again and again and again and again without drama or reliance on good luck. They may have the odd incident, but through relevant pre-planning, the existence of contingency measures and their effective and comfortable application, these incidents are contained and don't escalate into accidents.

Just some food for thought because we're all in there somewhere people.

Safe diving Martin Atkins

DEEP AIR KILLS

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Deep Diving- A realm off limits to the average diver, but one that entices many when the opportunity arises. The 40mtr limit imposed on recreational divers is a reasonable one, in terms of decompression risk, limited air supply and

nitrogen narcosis.

50mtrs is also reasonable, for an experienced deep diver who is properly equipped with a pony bottle or twins. The danger area is below 50mtrs.

There is enough oxygen in air for it to become toxic at around 50-70mtrs. I say "around" as there is a definite grey area, and despite the practices of tech divers calculating oxygen doses to 1%, no really knows when a "hit" will occur. (A "hit" is a term describing definite symptoms of oxygen toxicity, which may include convulsions.) Using the calculation methods of tech divers, "hits" have occurred at only 50% while exposures equal to tens of thousands of % have led to no symptoms.

I believe that for SHORT EXPOSURES TO DEPTH ON AIR, nitrogen is the more deadly gas, not oxygen.

Nitrogen acts like a drug at depth, depressing the nervous system, and clouding reality. It is true that successive exposures at depth build a "comfort zone" due to familiarity with the effects, just like an alcoholic is apparently unaffected by several drinks. But the diver is still drugged, and the ability to deal with life threatening situations is significantly reduced.

Nitrogen is not a diver friendly gas for deep diving. Even if the narcosis is ignored, helium is still the gas of choice for deep diving. No matter how good a regulator performed in a test, the human is not equipped to breathe dense gases. The body can't rid itself of carbon dioxide quick enough while breathing air at depth. Helium, on the other hand, being 2.65 times lighter than nitrogen, can be breathed to at least 300mtrs without gas density problems.

Another less known fact is that Air divers have a higher incidence of spinal D.C.I. than helium divers. Apparently, nitrogen is particularly partial to the fat in the spinal column. Commercial diving has also shown that a helium bend is much easier to fix than nitrogen bends, and the helium diver is more likely to have a complete recovery.

Studies in the U.S. have implicated nitrogen in the stiffening of blood vessels at depths deeper than 40mtrs, and there is growing belief that this causes micro-circulatory damage, including blocked blood supply to the bone, and dysbaric osteonecrosis. Again, helium is the answer.

so basically, with the availability of helium for deep diving, you would have to be a bloody idiot to deep dive on air.

EDEN DIVE TRIP.**21-22-23 JUNE.**

A Dive and Social Weekend is planned at SPDC Member and club Sponsor Peter Halls Divers Lodge.

This is a relatively cheap weekend diving with 2 double boat dives planned and the opportunity for a Night Dive Saturday Night.

Accommodation Costs \$15.00 Per Night

Double Boat Dive \$55.00

Including 2nd Tank if Necessary

Current Water Temperature is a surprisingly warm 19.2 Degrees C !

Dives Planned (1) Henry Bolte

(2) Tasman Hauler

(3) Jackos Caves

(4) Dragon Dive

Cooking facilities and TV in the lodge.

Take your own sheets and blankets or sleeping bag.

Contact Scott or Geoff for Confirmation.

Car Pooling down and back may be organised

BRING YER MONEY WITH YA!

Due to the ever increasing attendance at club dive days and other events, and the difficulties encountered organising them, we have decided the easiest way for all concerned will be for members to pay for events, either in full or at least a deposit, at each club meeting. You will be issued with a receipt which is your record that you have paid and if an event is canceled a refund will be given. If you have paid but can no longer attend a refund will be given if possible but this may depend on you having to find someone to take your place as the running of the event may rely on numbers. It is hoped that this system will result in smoother running of events without organisers having to chase up money or ring around to confirm numbers. SO, BRING YER MONEY WITH YA....OR MISS OUT. Exceptions to this may be negotiated with the organiser of an event.

Cut this out and put it on your fridge so you will remember for the next club meeting.

CLUB MERCHANDISE

The Club has the following available for purchase and/or loan/hire.

Inquiries to the committee re:

- Club T-shirts
- Stickers
- Safety Sausages
- Bum Bags
- 2 x Oxygen Units
- Magnetometer
- Hand held marine radio
- Portable BBQ

MAGNETOMETER UPDATE ...

The mag spent a comfortable few nights in Scott Leimroth's bedroom recently (I hope he treats it with more loving care than he treated a recent love of his life or it might leave him alone as well)

LOST

If anybody has seen or heard of an Aladdin Pro dive computer which went missing at Kurnell Peninsula on a recent shore dive please contact Joe Ingeneri (017 811 900) or the committee A.S.A.P.

I SPY

Which committee member was forced to leave an inner city hotel after another committee member had inspected his dates eyes, hair and teeth to make sure she was up to his usual high standards.

I hope one of the club members wedding plans are better organised than an event recently or otherwise the church and reception house may get a call the day before telling them to expect a wedding party the next day.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Isn't amazing how you always run out of air as you breath in and not when you breath out"
Scott Egginton

CHEAP GEAR

Fun Dive Stanmore is having a closing down sale until the end of the month so if your in the market for some SCUBA gear don't miss this opportunity for some good prices.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following members are on the committee for the 1996 year.

Position	Name	Home No:	Work No:
President:	Leo Bergagnin	558 2592 Mobile: (041) 951 7285	517 2853
Treasurer:	Barbara Sweetman	550 1712	Pager 430 6285
Secretary:	Carina Gregory	(046) 25 8630	(046)20 1423
Photographic Officer:	Peter Flockart	371 0265 Fax: 374 2688	374 2382
Publicity Officer:	Paul Howlett	746 6720	377 3030
Dive Organizers:	Scott Leimroth Geoff Cook	759 6501 543 5817 Mobile (018) 29 4897	(019) 99 0864 [m] (018) 29 4891
(Nightdives Only)	Michael McFadyen	558 8181 Mobile (015) 27 6556	585 6434
Social Secretaries:	David Bilbow	564 1119	566 4333
Newsletter Editor:	Russell Stoker	799 2663 Mobile (018) 96 3527	217 1739

BOAT OWNERS CONTACT LIST

The following members of the Club are boat owners. They generally go out diving most weekends and often need extra divers to make up numbers. Why not give them a call one day. If you are a boat owner, why not give a non-owner a call (see the membership list distributed regularly) and invite them along with you.

Name	Home No:	Work No:
Sue Armstrong	042 94 2769	697 2248
Martin Atkins (lives in Jervis Bay area)	044 43 4631	042 74 0210
John Beddie	820 4272	046 20 1746
BJ	709 5535	
Peter Booth	529 3818	
Geoff Cook	543 5817	018 29 4891
Bruce Cremonesi	668 8126	645 0286
Martin Kandilas	725 7808	725 7808
Bob May	045 79 1053	

Remember, the following dive charter operators support the Club. You are encouraged to utilise their services when diving in the area they serve.

Max Western, *Sea-tamer II* (Port Hacking area), 567 2658 or 018 28 0791.

Peter Hall (a Club member), Twofold Dive at Eden, 064 96 3384.

Steve Grow and Lee Harvey (Club members), Aquatic Explorers, Cronulla, 527 1518 or 018 55 3858.

If you are going to Jervis Bay (or want to dive there) how about phoning member Martin Atkins who lives in the area. He is always looking for dive buddies. See his numbers above.

“SPIRIT OF THE SOLOMONS” LAST DAYS

SO GET IN QUICK OR YOU MIGHT MISS OUT!

This live-aboard trip in September organised through Allways Dive Expeditions is almost booked out with only two spots left, at approximately \$2500 it includes airfares, transfers, accommodation, meals and seven days of unlimited diving suitable for all levels and tastes. We will be departing on the Seventh and returning on the Fifteenth of September. This trip can be extended by anyone wishing to spend more time in the Solomon's. For further information and to secure a place contact Leo B. as soon as possible

Please ring the dive and social organisers on the Tuesday or Wednesday before the event to confirm details etc.

UPCOMING DIVING ACTIVITIES

Contact Numbers: Scott Leimroth 759 6501 [h] (019) 99 0864 [m] and Geoff Cook 543 5817 [h] or (018) 29 4897 [w]

Night dives: Michael McFadyen 585 6434 [w] 558 8181 [h] (015) 27 6556 [m]

June:

21-22-23 Eden dive trip see inside for details

July:

7th Bass Point B.B.Q. and dive. Call Scott or Geoff for details

19-20-21 Jervis Bay weekend away. Contact Geoff or Scott to book and for more details

September:

Trip to the Solomons see previous page for details

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES Contact Numbers: David Bilbow 564 1119(h) 566 4333(w)

Date T.B.A For a tour of Northhead Quarantine Station \$17.00 check with David for more details

NEXT CLUB MEETING WHICH WILL STARTING AT 8 PM SHARP

Remember, this month's meeting will be held on **Monday 17 June 1996**, starting at 8 pm in the Emile McDonald Room of the Bankstown Sports Club.

FUTURE CLUB MEETINGS

Monday 15 July, 19 August and 16 September 1996.

CLUB SPONSORS

The South Pacific Divers' Club is honoured to be sponsored by the following:

Aquatic Explorers, see Steve or Lee at 7 Beach Arcade Cronulla, 527 1518

Beverly's Restaurant at Chippendale, contact Bev on 310 4878

Dive Quest, Mullaway, contact Chris or Gary on (066) 54 1930

Max Western's *Sea-tamer II* charter boat, contact Max on 567 8658 or (018) 28 0791

Selera Restaurant, Level 1, 264 King Street Newtown, 557 5186

Shiprock Dive at Lilli Pilli, contact Leo or Leslie on 526 2664

Southern Cross Divers at The Spit Marina, contact Barry on 9969 5072

South West Rocks Dive Centre, contact Noel or Belinda on (065) 66 6474

Twofold Dive Charters, Eden, contact Peter or Lorna on (064) 96 1778

