

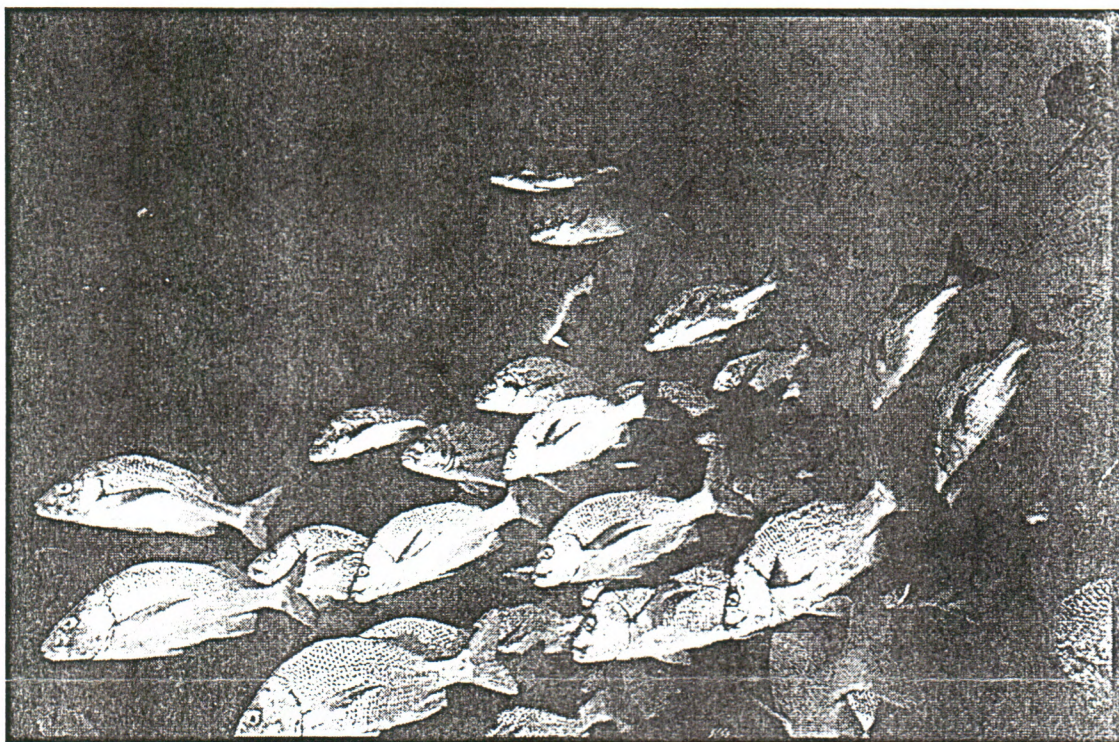
WET RAG

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



PO Box 823, BANKSTOWN NSW 2200
TELEPHONE: 0411 343 200

OCTOBER 1996



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, 21 Oct. 1996.

SCANS DIVE DAY

SCANS have organised a multiclub dive day and breakfast at Jibbon Beach on the 10th of November. As you would know from our own breakfast dives these days are great fun and the more people the better.

So get your name down with the club's dive organisers as soon as possible. This is one day not to be missed

President's Message

The recent spear fishing competition at South West Rocks has certainly stirred up a hornets nest. This months issue of Dive Log has pages of letters to the editor both supporting & opposing the event. From all the letters in Dive Log there appears to be a great discrepancy regarding the events that took place on that weekend. I have no personal affiliation with South West Rocks having been there only once. While it is a lovely area and the diving is great it is not the diving I prefer to do.

Having said that I know there are hundreds of divers who adore Fish Rock Cave and the surrounding dive sites at South West Rocks. If there is no action taken to stop these spear fishing competitions slowly but surely dive sites such as Fish Rock Cave will be reduced to nothing but bare sites devoid of fish life. Singularly we cannot compete against these spearas and the AUF and it is time action is taken from a much broader front.

Whether or not you have been to South West Rocks or whether or not you are a wreck/reef/photographer/cave diver etc all divers must band together to protect not only this site but others that may come under attack from spearas or other forms of misuse.

One of the SCUBA clubs association aims when it was set up was to protect the underwater environment, issues such as Ocean sand mining and the Provincial trader's removal may have ended more favorably if all divers would put their hands up and be counted. Apathy appears to have set in with a couple of our fellow clubs resulting in a loss of momentum within the combined clubs. Divers at this stage have no-one to represent their views to the various authorities. It is time for some of these other club committees, to get off their arses and make sure that they delegate someone to attend

future SCAN meetings so that it can become an association of clubs with an effective voice.

In a letter to Bob Carr -State Premier of NSW - on behalf of South Pacific Divers Club I alerted him to this savagery at South West Rocks and also brought to his attention had this mauling taken place on land based animals, criminal charges surely would have resulted. Coming from an organization of only 150 members this letter will carry little weight, coming from an organization with 1500 members such as SCANS is capable of, were it fully operational would have had a lot more bearing on the issue.

At our next club meeting we will be fortunate enough to have a copy of a video produced some time ago on the recently discovered Lady Darling. To those members who are going down this weekend I hope you all get crook air - just joking !! . I've had to miss out again on a trip away due to bloody work!!!!!!! (well that's what you get for gallivanting all around the world)

regards Leo B

Photographic Officer's Report

Progress for the AUPY is going well. Currently we have 11 confirmed sponsors and 4 refusals. If you want to know more about the sponsors I will be happy to answer questions at the next meeting.

Our Master of Ceremonies for the presentation night next year is Peter Fields, an old but well respected club member and joint discover of the SS Myola in 1995.

Entries for the competition are starting to flow in with the bulk expected in the last few days, a similar situation to last year. The sub committee is working hard in order to ensure that there are few problems as possible on the night next April.

Regards, Peter Flockart

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The next in this series of nights will be held on Friday the 15th of November and as usual will have a very interesting line up of speakers.

So if you want to go the club has obtained 40 tickets on a first in best dressed policy. See Leo at the October meeting or ring him on 0419 517 285.

DIVE REPORTS**NORTHERN EXPOSURE - ARCTIC DIVING****by: John Fardoulis****The "cold Power" washing machine dive**

Bodo is situated in Northern Norway, approximately 100km north of the Arctic Circle. In winter, for several months, there is total darkness. No sun. In summer, there is the midnight sun and twenty four hour daylight I was there in April, just as spring was having effect on the snow and cold conditions. Jokes were made about the funny light in the sky (the sun) and the colour of the sky (that's what blue looks like). It was a long winter.

Staying with some crazy Norwegians and diving with the local South Pacific Divers club member and friends was an interesting experience the first dive was at a place called Saltstraumen, about 30km from Bodo, the site of the world's largest Maelstrom. It's like a washing machine at times as an immense volume of water swirls and churns it's way through a 3km straight that links two fjords.

Our plan was to do a drift dive, as the water flow was due to change direction while we were in the water. Drift one way and return the other. The air temperature was about 8 degrees Celsius and there was light rain. After suiting up in our 6mm Neoprene dry suits, my trusty buddy pumped up my suit so I could be the Michelin Man. "Just testing" he said.

I entered the water, taking in the beautiful backdrop, snow covered mountains overlooking the Fjords. The water temperature was 4 degrees Celsius. This was going to be a drift dive with a difference. we swam out, following a rocky ledge that dropped down to about 35 metres. We glided along the wall, poking our faces in many holes and crevices. Nothing. Many lost fishing lures. It was definitely a popular fishing spot. Most of the growth was soft and spongy with many tube fans sticking out from the rocks. The bottom levelled out at about 20 metres, where a forest of 3 metres high Kelp grew. We drifted, turned and with our bottom time up and night fall approaching, we headed back to shore. we were about 30 metres down from where we started. The plan worked, drifting up and back.

WRECK DIVING ARCTIC STYLE - PRISTINE WW2 WRECKS

The next time we dived was a few days later. I was given a choice, ice diving or wreck diving. Stupid question! In Bodo a few hundred metres from shore lies the wreck of the Rabat. It's sitting upright in about 45 metres of water. It was a Portuguese transport ship of about 4000

tones confiscated by the Germans and put into naval services during World War 2. The Americans sank it in 1943. We headed out from the docks with fellow South Pacific Divers club members in his 6.5 metre aluminum dive boat. As far as I know, I am the only Australian club member to have dived in Norway so the guys were eager to show me around. After mooring the boat, It was time to gear up for a "Norwegian wreck dive. This time I was to try a full face mask as the locals used. My conventional mask during the last dive did leave my face pretty cold.

When I put the mask on over my tight fitting hood, I felt a bit claustrophobic. I have never been fond of hoods but a 6mm Neoprene drysuit with it's tight fitting hoods is a necessity when diving above the polar circle in 4 degrees Celsius water.

After entering the water the suffocating feeling went away. With the water being a barrier to the surface anyway, it was diving as usual. We descended down to the top of the smoke stack where the mooring line ended at about 20 metres. The bottom was in about 45 metres of water. We swam near the bridge briefly and it was easy to see that it was a wreck well preserved for its age. Being on the bottom for over fifty years was hard to imagine as most of the hull and super structure were intact. The make up of the water and cold temperature are the key preservation factors.

We went back past the smoke stack to the bow area and holds, penetrating a narrow area that opened up to compartments on each side. The sediment, being past the definition of "silty," covered the entire floor. A coating of nearly a metre of mud was beneath us. Both my buddy and myself searched through the mud for interesting shapes and in no time, the time the whole place was silted out. An interesting experience, borrowed equipment in a tight compartment, 35 metres below the surface in pitch black surroundings, my buddy had turned off his torch as you couldn't see your hands in front of your face, so his whereabouts was a little unknown.

That's when I stated to wonder about a few things. How deep was I? Gauges were not visible through the cloud of silt. How much air did I have? It dawned on me, that's why Rick Latimer always used those old stem gauges. What was my deco status? Could I find my way out? And my hands were cold. The dry suit didn't seal with my gloves properly. An interesting five minutes as I probed the area, feeling for something interesting. I then decided to answer some of these questions. Now, where was that doorway again? Visibility was zero.

Well, there were only four walls so it was a process of elimination until I found the opening to the

hallway to get out. After finding the opening and squeezing through the passage way, I was out turning my torch on, I found that air was O.K., my depth was still about 35 metres, and then I was almost into deco. Everything was still cold. Then, suddenly out of nowhere, my buddy reappeared and turned his torch on.

We then proceeded towards the stern and as it got deeper, when adjusting air in my BCD, the power inflator jammed on. I had no choice but to disconnect the hose and dump all the air. A simple solution I thought. My dry suit would provide the necessary lift, wrong! The weights on my belt and small steel twin tanks were too much for the dry suit to lift at 35 metres. Then I thought of option number two, orally inflate the BCD. A little difficult with a full face mask wearing the full face mask was warmer than my previous dive but I couldn't take my regulator out, orally inflate the BCD and put it back in again. I had plenty of air and only just went into deco but I was sinking Like a brick.

Option number three was the only other thought, to ascend up the mooring line hand over hand. I bounced along the deck to the smoke stack, finned and pulled myself up some loose ropes and grabbed the mooring line attached to the smoke stack. Then started to ascend, hoping the expanding air would help lift. My buddy then appeared again, so I handed him the large torch I was carrying, giving me two free hands. I pulled myself up the rope, finished my short deco stop and climbed into the boat. Everything was fine, but my hands frozen solid. Then what did my other crazy Norwegian friend do? He slammed both his hands against my right hand, it felt like it was going to shatter. Having no sun in winter really affects peoples brains! A real taste of Norwegian Exposure.

During the visit, some of the guys showed off pilfered goodies. One guy had his entire basement set up like a maritime museum with port holes on the walls, countless engine telegraphs, a helm with genuine wheel not to mention hundreds of other knick knack's. An impressive display of a dedicated wreck diver's collection.

THE S.S. LADY DARLING

By The Phantom Wreck Rat

Two days after the last club meeting I was lucky enough to dive the newly discovered wreck of the Lady Darling near Montague

Island off Narooma. Only a handful of people have dived this wreck as its whereabouts are only known to local fisherman and Bert Elswick, the owner/operator of Island charters at Narooma, who was the first to dive the wreck.

I left my Southern Highlands retreat (every Phantom has to have a secret cave) at 4am for the 3hr drive to Narooma to meet the boat at 8am. On board were a number of local divers and a film crew shooting for a number of TV news stations. It was a double dive so I wore my twins so I wouldn't have to muck around with changing tanks and this drew astonished looks from the others as all the local diving is in 20m. While the wreck is shallow at 30m it is considered a deep dive by the locals who rarely go past 20m. The wreck is relatively easy to find on a sounder as it sits on sand and the stern rises high off the bottom.

We descended through murky water which cleared to 10 - 15m viz on the bottom. The stern of the wreck looks exactly like The Oakland at Nelson Bay with the rudder and 1 prop blade clearly visible. The engine and boiler are partly covered in sand however there is not as much sand inside the wreck as the Oakland. While the wreck is untouched it was difficult to find many relics for the growth. This wreck is absolutely, totally covered in sponges, jewel anemones, etc, and is a photographers delight (if you like that sort of thing that is). We did manage to find 4 portholes and what I think was the telegraph but apart from that all small objects were totally covered in growth.

Swimming forward past the boiler the wreck is covered in sand a la the bow of the Tuggerah, with only ribs and some hull plate exposed. A large donkey boiler and winch can be seen on the starboard side and the wreck begins to reappear as you approach the bow. The bow is on its side and looks very much like the bow of the Catterthun. A large anchor can be seen however the bell is probably buried as is the case on so many wrecks on sand. There was so much growth it may have been just sitting there but camouflaged by some huge sponge. There were also numerous fish on the wreck.

This dive is perfect for the novice because of the shallow depth however I was informed that charter boats will only take advanced divers to it because they consider it to be relatively deep. The water was a chilly 12 deg. and I was the only one with a dry suit so I had to put up much winking about the cold. One diver couldn't speak properly and another couldn't use his fingers to undo his wetsuit they were so stiff and numb.

Hopefully this wreck will remain intact,

I SPY

Which male club member was recently seen at Hellfire with a number of other divers. They had all dived that day but were certain they were diving into the depths of Sydney nightlife by what they saw at Hellfire that night. Especially the new uses for Glad wrap and baby oil.

FOR SALE

Steel 72cf Tank,

In hydrostatic test till June 97,

Excellent condition \$120.00 or near offer.

Contact Suzanne Evans AH: 9891 1964

18 foot aluminum boat on trailer Centre consul,
90 hp Evinrude motor 12 to 14hrs run time
\$7500.00

Contact B.J. on 9709 5535

INTERNET

Michael McFadyen has set up a home page on the Internet about diving including his articles on Sydney, N.S.W. and South Western Pacific dive sites. As a sub page of this he has set up a South Pacific Divers Club Page which also has information on the Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year Competition, it's Presentation Night and also entry information.

So if you have access to the net it's well worth a look, you can find it at <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~diving> or you can Email him on diving@ozemail.com.au

This site has already attracted attention from the USA, the UK and Europe with someone from the U.S. already having e-mailed Michael about diving in Sydney while on holidays and Michael took him diving in early October.

Michael also received an e-mail from the "Greek" in Turkey telling him that he has been diving some ancient wrecks, some WW1 wrecks at Gallipoli and a fresh water lake 1060 mtrs above sea level. He also mentioned he was interviewed on live radio about his diving activities, at Bogazici University. He must be becoming a very important person in diving in Turkey!

CLUB XMAS PARTY

To be held on Sunday the 8th of December at Clovelly Bay. More information will be available at the next club meeting and next months newsletter.

MAG UPDATE :-**Scott Liemroth**

The mag has been getting a work out lately. We met the fisho on the Undola at 7am, after traveling down in a rough southerly sea. We'd

been up since 5am and the trip had taken longer than expected. The mag was tested over the wreck and found to be working.

We headed south and out to a spot in 60mtrs of water where the fisho swore he was fishing a wreck. He pointed down as he ran over his marks and we followed his path with the sounder running. Sand only. Then, suddenly it appeared. A great mark on the sounder, the right height and size for a wreck and with a mass of fish on it as well. We tried to take marks but it was difficult as we were a long way out and in an area of coast with few buildings or large structures visible. We ran around again and dropped a buoy and prepared to run the mag. We motored off a way and calibrated it away from the wreck. I was almost scared to run over the wreck as the sounding looked so good. My excitement was building but I did not want to be disappointed. The mag was working fine but as we approached the wreck it didn't change. That's okay I thought, as it was pretty deep, but it was huge and I was sure that if we ran right over it, it would go off. Suddenly it appeared on the sounder again, as seconds passed the mag refused to respond. Shit! Maybe if we tried again. We did, and silence again, we stopped over the wreck and dropped anchor and it could be felt to be dragging over sand and then rock. It didn't pick in but it didn't bounce either like it does over a wreck.

Damn. We'd missed again. Oh well, back to the drawing board. We thanked the fisho and headed back to a great dive on the Undola. It was dirty up top but clearing on the bottom with a great view of the wreck on descent and ascent. We looked around a spot where I'd found a protractor and some draw locks the week before but nothing else was found.

We've since been contacted by the fisho who says he has another mark further to the south and we hope to check this out in the near future.

A whole day was also spent with the mag off Barrenjoey looking for the Toncurry but to no avail. The seas were rough and the wind blowing so it was hard to keep our runs accurate with the GPS however it did detect the Valiant before we realised there was a buoy on it. We will soon return to this area to continue the search in better weather. The search was done in an inflatable in rough seas as I said. Come on you boat owners with larger boats, where is all your enthusiasm you showed when voting to purchase the mag. The more people out looking the better chance we have of finding something. And believe me it's only a matter of time.

although it doesn't really matter as there aren't many relics to see anyway. If all the portholes are removed it will still look the same and be a growth covered photographers dream. (*I know they don't move much but growth covered?* Editor)

Addendum: On 2KY's High Tide program last Sunday a Bermagui fisherman rang in complaining about the 150m exclusion cone placed around the wreck. He was upset that they could no longer fish the wreck they had been fishing for the last 15 years and was very pissed off with the Dept. Planning. He said all they had to do to find it was ask at the local co-op. I think with treatment like this it's no wonder fishos keep their wreck marks a closely guarded secret. I don't think they will be too keen to tell anyone about any others they know of if they will be stopped from fishing on them. As usual the fishos seem to know where everything is long before us divers. It will be interesting to see if the fisho whose net snagged the wreck resulting in its 'official' discovery receives some recognition or if the pretty plaque the dept. gives away will go to someone else.

ON SUNDAY THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER I DIVED THE WRECK OF THE ST. PAUL. © RODNEY NAIRNE

The St. Paul lies in 42mtrs of water between Cape Morton and Flinders reef, and is a vessel reputedly to be 80mtrs long. (Anyone seen my Jack Loney book.) I can say it is a single screw vessel with 2 large boilers, and is very intact for a vessel which went down in 1912. There is no penetration possible at the stern, however there is some railing still attached to the wreck, which indicates that this is very seldom dived.

The vessel hit Smith Rock while waiting for the pilot vessel to enter Morton Bay, and went down in 5 minutes. The Captain went down with the ship, as did several crew. Newspaper reports stated that the wreck site was teeming with huge sharks days after the event eating the bodies as they floated up, bloated from decomposition. All that was found was a small piece of human flesh.

The St. Paul was carrying a cargo of chromium ore, which is presumably still there. I would have more to report on the dive however there were other things to keep me busy during the dive. On Booking I was assured that all the divers were instructor or divemaster rating, so that there would be no problems. Unconvinced, (and remembering rule No 1, Never dive with strokes) I nevertheless booked the dive as I had no idea of the wrecks whereabouts. I was only allowed to use twins after I stated that all the divers would be bringing two tanks anyway,

only I would be bringing them on both dives, and that I promised to only breath from one at a time.

On descent, I waited for my instructor buddy on the surface, where we both gave the OK and descent signals. My instructor must have got his PADI S.A.F.E. rule mixed up, as he was still near the surface when I turned to check on him at 25mtrs. He then spent the rest of the dive with his eyes glued to his gauges, looking at the pretty numbers on his computer. He later stated he was wacked out, even though he had only 35mtrs on his computer.

On ascent at 33mtrs, I was mildly amused too see a diver, having descended from somewhere above, present with a mask full of water, and no reg in his mouth. Thinking of the consequences of not helping him (I might miss lunch) I had my long hose reg in his mouth in microseconds. You should always breath off your long hose reg, as an out of air diver may not be able to contain their panic while you search for an occy, and will invariably go for the reg in your mouth. Also occys are notorious for their malfunctions, due to never being used and dragged through sand. Giving them a malfunctioning reg is a recipe for disaster.

The thing is that had he gone too my other diver, there might have been a double fatality or case of DCI, as no other diver had enough gas to get themselves and this stressed diver to the surface safely. (He used 100 bar out of a 95cf).

The fact that a single just won't have enough gas for gas donation on a deep deco dive is a mystery to many. I have had in the past this argument with an "experienced" instructor who knew that twins were dangerous, and singles were the way to go for all deep dives. This stroke failed to realise that while he may have enough gas, he does not have enough for anyone else, including students in his care, or divers he may be leading on guided dive. The fact that this stroke is perpetuating dangerous dive practices as an instructor is unconscionable. This stroke had hundreds more wreck dives than I, but I would not even trust him to make coffee after a Sydney deep wreck dive.

* Just inside Morton Bay is the breeding ground for White Sharks and a haunt for huge Tiger Sharks, who feed on the abundant spanner crabs in the bay. When Cousteau was looking for White's in S.A. (out of season) and found only one or two he stated that there may be less than 20 remaining. Most of the Whites leave S.A. in the winter and some travel to Morton Bay for breeding. In the week after Cousteau's statement, Vic Hislop captured 7 Great White Sharks in Morton Bay.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

| Position | Name | Home No: | Work No: |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| President: | Leo Bergagnin | 9558 2592 Mobile: (041) 951 7285 | 9517 2853 |
| Treasurer: | Barbara Sweetman | 9550 1712 | |
| Secretary: | Carina Gregory | (046) 25 8630 | (046)20 1423 |
| Photographic Officer: | Peter Flockart | 9371 0265 Fax: 9374 2688 | 9374 2382 |
| Publicity Officer: | Paul Howlett | 9746 6720 | 9377 3030 |
| Dive Organizers: | Scott Leimroth Geoff Cook | 9759 6501 9543 5817 Mobile (018) 29 4897 | (019) 99 0864 [m] (018) 29 4891 |
| (Nightdives Only) | Michael McFadyen | 9558 8181 Mobile (015) 27 6556 | 9585 6434 |
| Social Secretaries: | David Bilbow | 9564 1119 | 9566 4333 |
| Newsletter Editor: | Russell Stoker | 9799 2663 Mobile (041) 452 1507 | 9217 1739 Fax 9217 1484 |

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 | 9697 2248 |
| Martin Atkins (lives in Jervis Bay area) | 044 43 4631 | 042 74 0210 |
| John Beddie | 9820 4272 | 046 20 1746 |
| BJ | 9709 5535 | |
| Peter Booth | 9529 3818 | |
| Geoff Cook | 9543 5817 | 018 29 4891 |
| Bruce Cremonesi | 9668 8126 | 9645 0286 |
| Martin Kandilas | 9725 7808 | 9725 7808 |
| Bob May | 045 79 1053 | |

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, 9527 1518
Beverly's Restaurant at Chippendale, contact Bev on 9310 4878
Dive Quest, Mullaway, contact Chris or Gary on (066) 54 1930
Max Western's *Sea-tamer II* charter boat, contact Max on 9567 8658 or (018) 28 0791
Selera Restaurant, Level 1, 264 King Street Newtown, 9557 5186
Shiprock Dive at Lilli Pilli, contact Leo or Leslie on 9526 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

Please ring the dive and social organisers or the club phone 0411 343 200
on the Tuesday or Wednesday before the event to confirm details etc.

UPCOMING DIVING ACTIVITIES

Contact Numbers: Scott Leimroth 9759 6501 [h] (019) 99 0864 [m] and Geoff Cook 9543 5817 [h] or (018) 29 4897 [w]
Night dives: Michael McFadyen 9585 6434 [w] 9558 8181 [h] (015) 27 6556 [m]

OCTOBER

18-20 Narooma/Montague Is. Diving with the Seals and the wreck of the LADY DARLING (Geoff)

NOVEMBER

Sat 2nd "Helmet Fetish" at Manly (Geoff)

10 Nov SCAN Breakfast Dive Day Botany Bay (Geoff)

22-24 Nov Norah Head Dive Trip with Seabreeze dive (Dep \$30.) (Geoff)

29 Nov-1 Dec Combined Club W/end with St George D.C. Ulladulla Club Boats (Scott)

HEROES NEEDED 6 days liveaboard on "The Hero" leaving 11th Nov diving the Yongala and Gothenberg wrecks off Townsville. Only \$750.00. Limited spots. Fully escorted by Max Gleeson - author of the book "SS Yongala - dive to the past" (Scott)

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES Contact Numbers: Peta Williamson (h) 9580 1474 (w) 9522 1935

The Night To Remember on the 15th of November the club has 40 tickets available

The club Christmas party on the 8th of December at Clovelly Bay

ON DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Interclub trivia night

Interclub Skirmish match (See Joe)

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Remember, this month's meeting will be held on **Monday 21st October, 1996**, starting at 8 pm sharp in the Emile McDonald Room of the Bankstown Sports Club.

FUTURE CLUB MEETINGS

Monday 18th November, 16th December 1996 and the A.G.M. on the 20th of January

ph Paul
Fri / Wed / Fri
Sat 20th 22nd
16th
6-7pm

Wet Rag, the South Pacific Divers' Club
Newsletter, is published by South Pacific Divers'
Club. Edited by Russell Stoker.



Send material to 36 Hanks Street, Ashbury.
Phone: (02) 9799 2663[h] or (0414)521 507 [m].
Deadline for articles is the last day of the month.