

WET RAG



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

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MARCH 1997



Photo by John Fardoulis

**COME ALONG TO THIS MONTHS MEETING
AND FIND OUT ALL ABOUT OUR LOCAL
MARITIME HISTORY AND WHAT YOU CAN
DO TO PRESERVE IT**

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, 17th March, 1997.

President's Message

What a great rollup of club members on the recent SCAN day. The day saw six club boats taking divers out to various dive sites, and without their co-operation a day such as this could never be successful. It would be safe to say, between members and their families, SPD had the biggest turn out. Members started arriving at 7am and there were a few hardcore drunks still there at 8pm. (Ed Note: Would that mean most members were still there at 8pm then?) Another important ingredient in making this day such a success was the support from Barry and Belinda from Sportdiving Magazine and Dive Log. We also appreciate the support from Cape Byron Imports and Hanimex. Well done Michael McFadyen for organizing a great day and supplying the pizza's late that evening.

In a few weeks time the Rick Latimer Memorial Dive will be on. Once again we are relying on the important input of the boat owners. Please make sure you satisfy their needs (Ed Note: This could be dangerous.) and be cautious of their boats. On this day we will be having a BYO picnic and drinks at Palm Beach. For more information concerning this day contact the dive organizers, Peter Foster or Scott Egginton. Also on this day we hope to be laying the plaque.

On Saturday 12th April SDP's most important function of the year will be held. THE AUSTRALASIAN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS NIGHT. We have been hosting this night for some sixteen years and we want to make this night the best ever. The club and committee has invested many hours and some twelve thousand dollars for this years night. To make this night a resounding success a full auditorium is essential. Members please organize your tables and book them at or before the next club meeting. The club needs the support of every member on this occasion.

at our next club meeting Tim Smith and David Nutley from the Department of Planning or Hysterical Society, whichever you may prefer, will be giving us an insight to a future project they would like the club to participate in. This will be a very interesting evening.

Regards, Leo B.

Photographic Officer's Report

Work on the audio visual is almost completed and by the time of the club meeting will be 98% complete. It will be a different and very exciting production on the night.

As you are probably aware the presentation will be done entirely on video, so there will be no slides being lost, misplaced or out of order. There will be back-up machines if we have problems.

As we have a new format for the presentation I'm

sure that if you all make the effort to attend and support the club that you will be impressed with the nights production.

Please remember that in order for this production to happen, it takes many hours of blood, sweat and heaps of tears by the photographic officer and his hard working sub-committee. Also an equal amount of bs&t from our production company.

Also we have been able to secure another speaker for the night; Malcolm Ludgate, a cinematographer of some note who I hope will be showing some footage of diving in the Antarctic, where it is very cold and very interesting. He has also done some work with the company who do the IMAX film productions, so he comes with good credentials.

So come lets get out there and buy the tickets and come along to what promises to be a really great night.

I've also had inquiries about the George Roberts Competition from some members. This will be run later in the year at a date to be fixed.

Regards, Peter Flockart

Editor's Message

This edition features a number of articles submitted by members in the past few weeks. I've also included some articles that should be of help and interest to the large number of wreck divers in the club. There are also some hot bits of goss from recent club events. Keep the articles coming as this is what makes the newsletter yours.

If you have any articles or other relevant information you have no excuses for not getting them to me. I can be contacted on Ph. (02)7596501, (048)771236, 019990864 or fax (048)771239 or email anscott@hinet.net.au or you can see me at club meetings or post to the club address. If you don't submit any worthwhile articles then you can't complain when I fill this newsletter with my own brand of drivel. So get pen to paper and start submitting articles **or else!** I'd like to thank Suzanne Evans for her help and time in printing this newsletter. My apologies to any members who didn't receive a WetRag last month.

Regards, Scott.

BSAC UPDATE

There is a BSAC branch meeting on the 13th of March at the Hero of Waterloo Hotel in the Rocks. We appreciate that this is short notice but we are not yet at this stage an official BSAC branch due to politicking within the ranks of BSAC. It is important for all those concerned that as many SPDC BSAC members attend this meeting so that we can voice our concerns about BSACs slack treatment of SPDC members so far. If you are a SPDC BSAC member then be there or don't complain about the \$100 plus you have spent and received only a magazine for.

THE AUSTRALASIAN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 1996

at ...Bankstown Sport and Recreation Club Greenfield Parade Bankstown

on... 12 April 1997 at 7 pm

The biggest and best underwater photo competition in Australia

OVER \$70,000 WORTH OF GREAT PRIZES

Great Night's Entertainment for all the family

Great Door Prize

**9 Day DIVE PACKAGE on Board 'M V MANTA'
Rabaul New Guinea**

PADI Travel Network

Air Niugini

Purchase your ticket before 7 March 1997 for your Second Chance for the Door Prize

MASTER OF CEREMONIES PETER FIELDS

special guest speaker...

Mark Spencer

Magic audio visual presenter: has spent many years photographing and presenting shipwrecks, dolphins, whales and sharks, but to name a few. He is one of the world's best.

**ALL FOR THE SAME PRICE AS THE LAST
THREE YEARS \$22 PER PERSON**

ICE...CAMERA...ACTION!!

Know what it is like to be cold? Know what it is like to be really cold? Under ice! Under the Antarctic ice shelf! One of our guest speakers does, he has filmed for IMAX films in the Antarctic. His talk will be a highlight of the night; one that is a must for every SCUBA diver in Sydney. So who is he? Well you will have to come on the night to find out!!!

GRAB A FRIEND AND COME ALONG.

See any Club Committee member for ticket details!

AUSTRALASIAN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 1998

WHAT DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE?

ALL UNDERWATER

PHOTOGRAPHERS WE WANT YOU

Times have changed. Rules have changed. The Australasian Photographer of the Year Competition has changed. Changes are always taking place. Change is needed for growth, as technology and techniques improve, as we move forward into the next millennium.

If you are an underwater photographer or know someone with a vested interest in underwater photography we want to see you! Your opinion and input will be highly valued. Everybody is welcome.

Mark Spencer and Becca Saunders will be hosting an OPEN FORUM on the format and future of the Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year. This forum will be held on **Saturday 3rd May 1997**, at the Gladstone Hotel Cnr Regent St. and Meagher St. Chippendale at 12.30pm.

GUEST SPEAKER FOR THE APRIL MEETING

Going underwater is a potentially unsafe activity with risks which can be minimized by identification, understanding and preventative action

Health factors I have often been muted as a significant contributor to a diving incident but in fact, there has not been any substantial research to support this.

The authorities have shown little interest in researching the true significance of health factors and the ability to dive safely

Since the 1970s Dr Douglas Walker has been a lone voice in his endeavors to do this research. He is the coordinator of Project Stickbeak and project Proteus which investigates and reports on diving incidents.

He is a founding member of SPUMS (South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society), a past editor of SPUMS Journal

Dr Walker will be visiting our club in April and will give us a presentation on diving medicine and incidences of diving fatalities.

Project Stickbeak is an ongoing investigation seeking to document all types and severity of diving-related accidents. Information, all of which is treated as being CONFIDENTIAL in regards to identifying details, is utilised in reports and case reports on no-fatal cases. Such cases can be freely used by any interested person or organisation to increase diving safety through better awareness of critical factors

UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

Saturday 10th MAY

Dinner at Bev's Restaurant 7.30pm

Saturday 12th JULY

Bush Christmas in July including trip to Vicary's winery, free wine tasting, dinner and dancing in the Woolshed. \$34 a head plus coach travel pick up and return to Bankstown Sports Club approx. \$10 to \$15. Deposit of \$20 per person required.

To book either of these nights contact Debbie on 9750 4317 or 014 904 841. A.S.A.P.

THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS CLUB
1997 TRIP TO
TRUK LAGOON



In November this year we are off to the famous Truk Lagoon. This trip includes 8 nights on Moen Island from where we will do 12 dives, extra dives, night dives or extensions can also be arranged. The trip will leave on Monday the 3rd of November and return on Thursday the 13th.

Some of the wrecks we may dive include the Fumitzuki, Shinkoko Maru, Yamagiri Maru, Kensho Maru, Heian Maru, Nippo Maru, Fujikawa Maru, Rio De Janiero and Sankisan Maru. We will be having a series of articles over the next few months on some of these dives.

This is awesome wreck diving not to be missed.

Contact Leo B for more info.



***Most* memorable dive?** By Jason Rogers.

That's like asking which SO is the most memorable. They're all different, and they all changed you.

I can't pick, so here's some highlights.

**** My first snorkel dive on a Coral Reef.** Heron Island, about '72. Went out on my own, swimming over the reef, right out to the edge. I can't describe what it was like in those days. Imagine the best marine aquarium you've ever seen, but with 10 times the density of fish, that stretches out for 300 ft in all directions (that's what the vis was). Schools of fish in a line 30'X30'. The beginning before you got there, and the end half an hour later. Acres of unbroken coral. I was out there for six hours, and I had to walk/swim back. My mother walked out about 2 miles to bring me shoes, as she'd stayed and watched from shore the whole dive, and seen me coming back, walking in fins.

****First time I died on a cave course.** I'd been reeling in, no mask, buddy breathing. The air donor was clinging to my back, feeding me air as I worked. Fine till we got to the bloody dead tree in Gouldens. I was working on a particularly difficult tangle and somehow, the reg was dropped. I didn't know, and the air donor simply switched to his occy. Fumble fumble go the hands. "Hmmm, could do with a breath" thinks I. Fumble fumble. "Could really do with something to breathe, I wonder what's keeping it?" Fumble fumble. "Shit, I *really* need that breath, really soon" Fumble fumble "Damn knot! I'm going to kill the instructor when I get back, god I need some air" Fumble fumble "Shit I need some air!" fumble "~~Back~~ the course, I'm going to breath water if I don't....BZZZZZZZZZZZZZ (Higher level thinking stops, and blind panic takes over)

I turn around, and my "buddy" and instructor are calmly breathing and neither is offering me any air, so I piss off for the surface (not actually knowing if there is air or rock over my head) My instructor grabs me, and *jams* his reg in my mouth, and I breathe...

**** First ever dive on scuba.** Nothing site, but I'm sure that everyone remembers their first time...:) For me it was on a borrowed twin hose (USD I think) in about 20 ft of water. I saw a couple of fish and some kelp, but I didn't sleep for days.

**** Working in a "river"** formed by a flow of cooling water for a power station. About the width of a 6 lane highway, and flowing about 3 knots. It was absolutely forbidden for anyone to enter the area of the "river" because if you fell in, you'd be swept into the trash racks and drowned for sure. We worked with 60 pounds of lead and strong lifelines. Even so, one diver was killed just before I started. I guess the job is dead men's shoes. The fish were so tame you could almost touch them, and the filter feeders living in a constant strong current! Incredible! I don't eat fish, but one of the divers actually picked up a leatherjacket, and put him in his bag (about an 8 pound fish). The weed was long billows of green and when the sun shone, they looked like hair commercials ;)

**** Diving "The Shaft".** At one time, the largest known water filled room (now behind Dean's blue hole and Bushmansgat). It's a dive that lives forever with anyone who's done it. In an ordinary field, here is a hole, about 1.5 metres/yards in diameter. Looking like a well, dug in a rather strange spot, it is the top of a short tube. The tube opens to the topmost point of a dome shaped airspace. A pool about 30 metres in diameter, with a curving roof above. The day I dived was *bleak*. Not like the Paul Hogan ads at all. Overcast, about 5C (40F), blowing about 40 knts and sleeting The field was too soft to take cars onto, so the farmer made us walk. A bizarre

experience, walking across cowpats, in doubles, pushing your buddy's wheelchair, with all his kit piled up in it. Entry to the cave was simple. Stand at the edge of the hole, and take one step forward. In a flash my familiar world of shivering divers disappeared, and I was completely blind. You're only in the air for 1.2 seconds, but it's long enough to realize that you've made a serious error. The water belted into me from a completely unexpected direction. In a few moments, I resurfaced, my eyes adjusted and I could take in the room around me. An amazing sight, this natural dome, with the bright light above me. Then I looked down to what looked like pebbles 10 feet down. They were boulders, 110 feet down. The top of the debris cone. The cave bells out below the water level in the classic sinkhole shape, getting down to 80 metres at the bottom of the "tunnel" (or so says Sheck, who was the first to bottom this cave). The dive for me was to the top of the debris cone, where I stayed with Neil. It was simply too far for him to swim by handfining to reach the wall. I'm glad I stayed. The rest of the party (about 8 divers) had 400 watt lights. We could see them *clearly* as they swam around the wall 400-500 feet away. Not as clear as air, as they had a bluish tinge, but the tinge was all there was. Clear water... All they saw was what was in their own light, while Neil and I saw the half the cave as they swam around it (They actually only covered about 40 degrees of a circuit, while swimming for 20 minutes)

**** The day on the reef when I first dived a "bottomless" wall.** Huge sponges sticking out of the wall, 6-8 feet. Gorgonian fans, flat on to the current, in about 200 ft of water. Not a frond broken, and 20 feet across. Huge pelagics, cruising out of the mist 350 feet away, cruising past, and gone in the mist. Looking at the swells on the surface from 200 ft... The wall, *covered* in filter feeders. Magic.

****The day on the same trip, when they decided to film the shark feed, from outside the net.** That's OK, 40-50 six to eight foot sharks zooming around after bits of fish head. Then like a Larson cartoon, the sharks vanished all at once. Slowly a ****HUGE**** hammerhead swam into view. Looking at the photos afterwards, you could see that it was two "diver with fins" long, or about 14-15 ft. It wasn't interested in fish heads. It picked out the still photographer. (We think it might have been his strobe recycling that attracted it). It circled the three divers, who scurried over to a small bommie, and tried to make like coral. The fish circled for about 2 minutes, then made a run at the guy with the still camera. He fended it off by banging it on the nose with a Nikonos... Back to circling, then another run about 2 minutes later, with the same result. Back to circling, and the same thing again. By now the other two divers figured who'd been picked for lunch, and stood between the shark and diver. More runs followed, with the shark actually shoving the divers out of the way to get to the guy with the still camera.

In the end, the deckhand snorkelled out, with the boat hook, and shepherded the three divers back, fending off the shark with the 20 ft wooden boat hook.

Well that wasn't short, but I've barely scratched the surface. There was the dive on the Arch, before the growth was stripped, or the tunnel, or the dive in the sewer pipe, when the compressor stopped, or Picannine Ponds, at night, when it was so clear you could see the stars from 100 ft... Cheers Jason =:)

EYE SPY

Which Sydney dive club managed to sink some poor boat owners tinny as it lay at mooring on the SCAN day? Seems everyone is trying to make their own wreck if they can't find one.

Photographing the Southern Right Whale. By John Swzewcow

Named the Right Whale because it was very easy prey for hunters, therefore almost hunted to extinction and with only a few thousand animals remaining in the worlds ocean, I was about to embark on a true adventure.

These whales migrate in the Southern Hemisphere Winter to the Argentine coast and the Great Australian Bight. These are the mating waters for the Southern Right. In West Australia they arrive around June, not only for mating activities but, also, females pregnant from last season will give birth from this time. At the end of the season, around October, only the females with their new born calves remain. Over the last few months the cows have been nurturing their young, feeding, building up strength for the long journey to the South Pole.

My home town, Albany, on the South West of W.A. is the site of the last operational whaling station in Australia, ceasing activity after the 1978 season. The station is now a museum and well worth a visit.

During a trip to Albany in June '96 I visited Les Bail, a close friend, also manager of Whale World Museum and operator/owner of a whale watch boat. He is also the local dive shop owner. Les has a wealth of knowledge about Southern Rights.

During a slide night at Les's home I enquired about diving with and photographing these whales. "Not a problem. I'll organize it for you." I took this statement lightly, in the end I had a lot of negotiating with the local authorities to obtain a permit. I also arranged an inflatable boat as well as a support diver, who also owned camping gear. This all proved to be the right combination for a successful trip.

The Fitzgerald River national Park, halfway between Albany and Esperance, was the location recommended by Peter, the wildlife officer with C.A.L.M. The waters in this area are pristine, no pollution or river run-off. This water would have to be the clearest water in the world to photograph these whales.

The National Park is remote, with no large town near by, a four wheel drive is essential, after rain the clay roads are almost impassable. Standing on two feet is a challenge. Because of heavy rain we had to wait a few days for the park to re-open.

We arrived at Trialgo beach. We knew the whales were here as a Japanese photographer who was joining me had chartered a light aircraft the day before for some aerial shots. He confirmed sightings of about 15 whales at this beach. Driving along the beach it was only a kilometre before coming across the first whale looking like a long log floating 50m offshore. (Editors note: I think I've seen the same thing off Bondi, logs floating offshore that is.) By the time we had organized ourselves, cameras and boats in the water, the whale was out of sight. We headed down the coast, soon spotting the whale. My impression was that we would anchor then a swim over to the whale. How wrong I was. Peter said the boats could approach no closer than 50m. Dropping into the water I finned towards the whale. However when I thought I was close I looked up and the whale was the same distance away. This went on for about half an hour. I had to re-think tactics. I felt a front on approach would succeed. Once in position I finned towards the whale who simply turned and headed the other way.

I was determined, traveling from the eastern side of Australia and having no close contact was not an option. I put the finning into top gear and kept at it, the boats followed behind. Through perseverance I found myself 10m away from the whale. At this stage the whale turned and headed straight at me. All of a sudden I felt helpless.

I was minuscule compared to this submarine sized head that was approaching me, white water foaming from either side of its head.

At this time lots of negative thoughts were going through my mind e.g. what the #?#! am I doing here, do I really want to photograph whales, I'm about to be railroaded by a 30 tonne monster. Then I thought, relax, I'm here to take photos, these are gentle giants, so I stood my ground. The whale approached within a metre, we had eye contact, stared at each other as the whale swam by. Its length and the size of its tail was amazing. What an awesome experience. Only after the whale had passed did I think about my camera.

The next contact was with a cow and its one year old calf. The calf was only 8m long. They approached and popped their heads out of the water to look at us. I could have easily touched them. At this time I was very composed and the shots I took of these two were my best.

I had many more contacts until my brief time was up. It was interesting to hear the whales sonar. They knew exactly where I was. Trying to approach from the side or the rear, the whales would not tolerate this. A few flicks of their tail and the water was boiling as though a strong current was passing and that was the last you would see of that whale. Also, the whales could turn in their own body length, so although they are large the photographic action was very fast, no time for adjustments to the camera, this was pre-set, I only had to compose the shot.

The trip had been a trial run. My 16mm full frame fish eye lens was the perfect choice, exposures were good, my assistant Colin was keen, has a boat, four wheel drive and camping gear, all essential. Plans for my '97 trip are finalized. I have secured a permit and have two weeks to play with. This year not only will we be snorkeling with the whales but we will be scuba diving the many reefs and islands in this pristine part of Australia.

D.Y.K.

23RD AUGUST 1996

Nuno Gomes of South Africa set a new world record for a surface to surface scuba dive with a dive to 283 metres of fresh water. In the dive lasting 12 hours, Nuno used 8 different gas mixtures, to go deeper than the previous dive in Bushmansgat by Sheck Exley in 1993. [Bushmansgat or Boesmansgat is a cave shaped like a trumpet placed vertically, with a "debris cone" of fallen stone directly below the entrance.]

Sheck also reached the bottom, however descended directly below the entrance, where the bottom is "only" 263mtrs. Nuno found the deepest part using sonar (to the side of the debris cone), and deployed a descent line from directly above this point, using a drum filled with air suspended on the roof at 50mtrs. The thin descent line took 7 minutes to reach the bottom with a 10kg lead weight. The cave is located at 1500mtrs above sea level, making the dive even deeper for decompression purposes, actually 337mtrs !!! according to the depth correction. (Lippman).

The dive was not without drama, as Nuno himself tells:

"With the help of my support team I got into the water and started my descent. It was necessary to go feet first, carefully, in order to get through the crack at 6 mfw (20 ffw). Once past 15 mfw (49 ffw) the descent rate was then increased as the cave became somewhat wider. Three minutes later the seventy metre tag was visible on the deco line. It was time to change to my traveling mixture of heliair 8.4, which would take me down to 160 mfw (524.96 ffw) and seven minutes into the dive. From that depth onwards I would only use the bottom mix of

heliar 5.25 and my 2 trusted Poseidon Cyklon 5000 demand valves. Full concentration relating to the way I felt and reacted was even more essential and critical at this stage. At 600 ffw (182.87 mfw) (both my computers read in feet since computers which read metres turn to zero once past 99 metres. Computers which read in feet are supposed to go down to 999 feet before they turn to zero) I felt the first signs of H.P.N.S. in the form of helium tremors. I had felt this before, therefore I was not alarmed. The tremors did not get any worse and 15 minutes into the dive I was at 900 ffw (274.30 mfw) (at this stage only one of my computers was still registering and one of the submersible pressure gauges from the main set was also flooded, but still working). Suddenly and unexpectedly the bottom came into sight, with only two of my torches still working (the two sabre light beams lit up the bottom clearly), the other two torch bodies had been squashed by the pressure and the terminals were not making contact (on the way up they started working again, once the pressure was decreased. They had however worked perfectly down to 252 mfw (825 ffw) previously. My view of the bottom and moment of glory was short and sweet. I saw a lunar type landscape of grey silt with the odd small rock sticking out. It was at this stage that I saw that there was some slack rope on the flat bottom. There were holes in the grey silt where the weights had gone in, as well as a small ledge which I had to get past to reach the deepest spot about 5 metres (15 feet) away horizontally. There was only one way, I had to swim horizontally whilst taking up the slack on the rope. Since I was negatively buoyant and was swimming horizontally and had no time to inflate the wings, I landed on the bottom on all fours. My worst nightmare came true, a silt out at the bottom of a very deep cave with a slack guide line while on all fours whilst under the influence of nitrogen narcosis and helium tremors. My first priority was to stand up in the silt and mud accumulated in this cave over millions of years without losing balance, the quads and the two side mounts did not help, and without losing the guide line or becoming entangled in it. I managed to do all this, I had to, there was no other option. The next priority was to get off the bottom. I tried to swim up, but due to the negative buoyancy and the mud and silt, I was not successful and felt a dizzy spell (due to the residual carbon dioxide in my lungs, I told myself don't be stupid). The alarm bells went off and I decided to relax and inflate my wings which took quite a while (all of 876 litres). It would take 30 kilograms (66 lbs) of lift to get me off the bottom from the mud and silt. I ascended for at least 15 metres (49 feet) before getting out of the silt and the cloud it had formed as a result of my previous efforts.

The dive plan required an ascent rate of not more than 40 metres per minute (130 feet per minute) up to 160 mfw (524.96 ffw), which would also be my first decompression stop and change of gas, to heliars 8.4. At 650 ffw (198.11 mfw), on my way up, my submersible pressure gauge, for the main supply of bottom mix (three of the back mounted cylinders), indicated a pressure of 70 bar. I decided to start using the emergency cylinder of bottom mixture in order not to upset the buoyancy in the back mounted set by depleting three of the four back mounted cylinders. From the first deco stop on trimix, at 160 mfw (524.96 ffw), to the first deco stop on air at 60 mfw (196.86 ffw), it took another 34 minutes. I would only start warming up at the later deco stop due to the hypothermia caused by the helium. "

This dive is the deepest ever surface to surface scuba dive. Deeper dives are conducted by commercial dives every day, since the seventies, using transfer chambers and deck decompression.

WRECK DIVING TECHNIQUES-

Anchoring - A beginners guide.

-The most reliable technique for anchoring onto a wreck is to drop the anchor on its 'head' when it comes up on your sounder. If the wreck is deeper than about 25m don't bother dragging the anchor with the boat in the hope it may hook as all you will do is make the anchor rise off the bottom.

- If the wreck is on reef and there is wind or current pull the anchor up if it doesn't stick within the first 30secs or you will probably miss and hook the reef.

- If you have trouble anchoring due to current or wind and the wreck is in deep water you may have to motor the boat into the wind, forward of the wreck slightly, before you drop the anchor. This allows time for the anchor to reach the bottom before it is off the wreck.

- If all else fails the best way to hook in is to send a diver down with the anchor to hook it in. If you miss it probably won't be by much and they should be able to drag the anchor the short distance to the wreck.

- Always remain in contact with the anchor line on ascent and descent. (Just ask John Fardoulis about his drift dive on the Catterthun)

- Check the position of the anchor and that it is secure once you reach the bottom even if you are not the first one down. This will save you time looking for it at the end of a dive. (Just ask Eddie Labour about a recent dive on the Tuggerah)

- Tie the anchor into the wreck after descent and be sure the last one up pulls it out before ascent being sure to hold on as current or wind can cause it to drag away quickly after it is loose. If you are unsure that you are the last, or feel there may be someone still on the wreck, do not overstay your bottom time waiting for them. Simply untie the anchor and leave it hooked into the wreck by its prongs so it can be removed by the boat if no one else was behind.

-Be careful on ascent as current and wind can pull the anchor and any attached divers, to the surface. I once pulled the anchor off the Undola in a howling NE and didn't have to ascend the rope as the wind dragged us to 3m in no time. We hung onto the anchor at the end of nearly 200ft of rope being dragged through the water to complete our deco. Now I know what a live bait feels like being trawled behind a boat.

-If the anchor is not out when you ascend be prepared, for the above reason. When the other divers pull it out you may rise quickly or come to the surface.

- In the event something does go wrong do not panic. You can always ascend for a min. to settle yourself and adjust your gear, then re-descend to complete your deco. Or if you loose the anchor do a blue water deco which isn't so bad unless you have to swim for the boat afterwards.

THE THREE STOOGES -

By Hanns Christian McFadyen

Once upon a time there were Three Stooges, Larry, Curly and Moe. In fact, there were really five Three Stooges. As well as Larry, Curly and Moe, there were also two other Three Stooges, Shemp and Curly Joe. There was also their friend, Jerry. At a party one night, Jerry asked Shemp if he wanted to have a laugh on the wreck of the SS Tuggerah the next morning. Shemp said yes. Shemp then phoned Moe and asked him if he wanted to come too. He readily agreed, probably because he had not had a good laugh for a week either. Curly was also at the party. He was not real bright, probably the stupidest of them all, but he

said he would also come. While this was happening, Curly Joe heard about the plan to laugh on the Tuggerah and he was asked about his experiences of laughing at depth. While he had never laughed so deep off Sydney, he assured Curly, Jerry and Shemp that he had laughed very deep off Jervis Bay. They agreed that he could also come, but they were all a bit wary of him and decided that he might not be a very good comedian. With one more spot available on the laugh boat, Shemp phoned Larry, who as all fans of the Three Stooges would know, was honest but very, very stupid.

The next morning they all met at the boat ramp and loaded the equipment needed on Jerry's boat. Jerry backed the trailer into the water. Luckily the brake pad did not fall off the car this week like it did the week before and Moe did not pick it up and burn his hand again. Everyone climbed aboard and the boat sped off towards the Tuggerah under Shemp's control.

Soon they were over the wreck, with many fishers around, including one boat anchored right on the main part of the wreck. Shemp told Larry to drop the anchor. Unfortunately, the boat drifted right back until it was almost on the poor fishers' boat. For punishment, Shemp had to pull up the anchor from 45 metres and they tried again under Jerry's direction. This time they did not anchor at all and merely drifted past the fishers' boat. By this time another boat of comedians arrived under the control of Stanley. They successfully anchored right where Jerry had been trying to anchor so he had to try again in front of the fishers. This time he was successful.

It was decided that Jerry and Curly Joe would laugh first, so they started getting their gear together. Curly Joe was getting a bit hot (and perhaps a bit sick) so he hopped in the water and held onto the funny line. Unfortunately, as Jerry went to put on his tank, he discovered that it was leaking from the O-ring. A problem, Jerry had only recently purchased this tank and he had not thought to buy some spare O-rings. A search of his gear found some O-rings, but they were all too big or too small. Shemp, who carried every possible spare, also did not have this strange size O-ring. So, poor Jerry had to miss out on the big laugh. Shemp decided that as Curly Joe was not really an experienced deep diver, he would go with him and keep an eye on him. It was a bit of a rush but soon Shemp was on his way to the bottom with his trusty video camera.

About 10 metres from the bottom Shemp decided to put a bit of air into his BCD but discovered that he had not connected his low pressure hose. Therefore, he lay his camera on the wreck and hooked it up. Yes, it still worked, and worked and worked and worked. Shemp remembered that he had meant to pull the power inflator apart and clean it as the last time he went laughing the thing had stuck on and made him look like a pufferfish. So he now disconnected it and used his quite large mouth to top it up. Curly Joe had no problems and together, they swam around the wreck.

While on the bottom, Shemp and Curly Joe saw the famous underwater laugher, Oliver who had his ever present camera with him. He was laughing from Stanley's boat. A few minutes later, Larry, Curly and Moe entered the water together. The fishers asked them to remove their anchor from the wreck. Moe decides that instead of going down their own anchor, they will descend the fishers' anchor line. They get to the bottom and throw the anchor off the wreck and then begin their exploration around the wreck. They soon run into Shemp and Curly Joe. As a big group, they all swim to the bow of the wreck where the anchor to their boat is located. Shemp and Curly Joe finish their laugh (already a good one) and return back to the boat. Larry, Curly and Moe keep swimming around the wreck and as they come to the end of the laugh, remember that they have not come down the anchor line from Jerry's boat. The reality is that they really do not know where their anchor was located. Moe (as leader) decides that the anchor in front of the boiler is theirs so he tells the others to go up. Larry, although he could not tell a really good joke from a bad pun, knew that this was not their anchor. He attempts to tell Moe but Moe does not take any

notice. Moe tells Larry to throw the anchor on the sand so they can drift away from the wreck. Larry again tries to convince Moe he is wrong, but as all fans of the Three Stooges know, Moe is always right.

Meanwhile, Curly has ascended, not caring if it is the right anchor as he does not have enough air to search for the correct one. As they ascend, they encounter two other laughers from Stanley's boat. Yuk, yuk, yuk says Larry as he pokes Moe right in the eyes. I was right- he tells him as they drift away in the strong current. At the same time, Shemp knows something is wrong as the Three Stooges have not yet come up to the laughter stop. He does his stops as shallow as possible so he can get out of the water and inform Jerry what has happened. Shemp gets back on the boat and tells Jerry that the Three Stooges are lost, maybe drifting aimlessly. They scan the water but cannot see any safety sausages (like a cream pie but used to save yourself) that Larry and Moe carry. The hope is that the Three Stooges are under Stanley's boat, being so stupid that they have gone up the wrong anchor.

As soon as Curly Joe ascends (he was a bit deeper while doing his laughter stops), they put a float on the anchor and speed down to Stanley's boat which is by now about 400 metres away. Sure enough, there are the Three Stooges in the water, looking particularly stupid. The winners of this pie fight are certainly Oliver, Stanley and their three laughers. After dragging them onto Jerry's boat, they go back to get their anchor which is, of course, stuck hard in the wreck. It is stuck very hard. Moe, once again showing his brains and leadership, leans right over the front of the boat as he directs Jerry. He is holding the rope in his hand. As a large wave comes through, the boat lifts, the line tightens and Moe is pulled over the side into the water. Fair dinkum, if he had any more brains he would be dangerous. Maybe it is the effects of the malaria that he caught on a comic trip to PNG last year. So, if you are interested in a good laugh, go diving with Larry, Curly and Moe and the other comedians.

EYE SPY II

It has been brought to our attention that a certain club member is currently in the Phillipines, supposedly under the guise of a diving holiday. It has been suggested that perhaps there could be wedding bells sounding for this member in the near future.

DAY OF THE JACKAL???

Well the Watsons Bay Dive Day was a success (for some), with four boats and a hoard of divers and non divers also. Two boats went to the Myola and two to the Annie M. Both groups reported good diving however disaster almost struck the club at the Annie M.

The committee was almost decimated as Leo narrowly avoided joining his two associates from his nitrox course in Davey Jones' Locker. El Presidente wasn't looking too well before the dive (he claims he didn't have a drink the night before and went to bed early so perhaps this was why) Russel also felt crook and decided not to dive. Perhaps Leo should have taken option No1 also. He had problems with his mask and gear as he got in and he only just made it back to the surface alive from 10m after problems worsened. Martin (in true Mitch from Baywatch fashion) had to jump in to rescue him saying later he felt blessed he didn't have to give Leo mouth to mouth (Yuk!) Meanwhile Leo's buddy, Barbara, was at 40m trying to figure out how she was going to get to the surface alive after her reg malfunctioned. She made it, just, exclaiming as she hit the surface "I can't get any air" to which Mitch cruelly replied "Yes you can. You're on the surface". So out of four divers on Cookies boat only one got down and back without problems. The important point is they all came back alive. Leo took a while to recover but was fine after a few beers.

INTERNET NEWS

Some dive related web pages (put <http://www>. in front of them all) can be found at

geocities.com/Yosemite/9613/ and

geocities.com/Yosemite/9647/ and

mm.wa.gov.au/WEBFM/Shipwrecks/shipsarch.html and

rust.net/~sps/shipwrecked

Some Email addresses are

Paul Howlett paulsd@rpf.net.au

John Fardoulis jandj@terrigan.net.au

Scott Leimroth anscott@hinet.net.au

Mark Dietz mdietz@tpgi.com.au

We'd like anyone else who's 'online' to let us know so we can update you with club information.

FROM THE RATS LAIR

By The Phantom Wreck Rat

Here are some more co-ordinates for possible wrecks. No one's reported back about any of last months marks so I'll just assume either no one went looking or they are keeping it too themselves. Good luck and start searching.

Unknown No7 - 33 53 22 - 151 19 14 (65m)

Unknown No8 - 33 52 31 - 151 21 13 (70m)

Unknown No1 - 33 49 48 - 151 19 48 (50m)

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

Position	Name	Home No:	Work No:
President:	Leo Bergagnin	9558 2592 041 9 517 285(m)	9517 2853
Treasurer:	Barbara Sweetman	Leave message on 0411 343 200	
Secretary:	Deborah Egginton	93172126	
Photographic Officer:	Peter Flockart	9371 0265 Fax: 9374 2688	9374 2382
Publicity Officer:	Paul Howlett	9746 6720	9377 3030
Dive Organizers:	Scott Egginton	93172126	0419 619 866(m)
	Peter Foster	95642654	0418 435 774(m)
Social Secretaries:	Les Stewart	9728720	97154302
	Debbie		
Newsletter Editor:	Scott Leimroth	97596501 or (048) 771256	(048) 771236
	Email: anscott@hinet.net.au	019 990 864(m)	Fax (048) 771239
Special Operations Officer:	John Fardoulis	(043) 422939	email jandj@terrigan.net.au

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.

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	
John Cassidy	9546 3538	0411 398 675
Peter Cassimatis (Brisbane area)	07 3847 8082	
Geoff Cook	9543 5817	018 29 4891
Mark Dietz		
John Fardoulis	043 422 939	0419 230 244
Martin Kandilas	9725 7808	9725 7808
Bob May	045 79 1053	

CLUB SPONSORS

The South Pacific Divers' Club is honored 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 2658 or (018) 28 0791
Selera Restaurant, Level 1, 264 King Street Newtown, 9557 5186
Shiprock Dive at Lilli Pilli, contact Leo or Lesley 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

DON'T FORGET THE CLUB PHONE NUMBER IS 0411 343200

CLUB GEAR

The Club has a variety of gear for sale, hire or loan. This includes T-shirts, Stickers, BumBags, Shirts, Sweaters, Caps, The Magnetometer, Two sets of Oxygen equipment, BBQ, and much much more. Inquiries should be directed to the Equipment officer.

Rick Latimer Memorial Dive Day - Palm Beach, 23rd March.

The Club is holding a dive on the Birchgrove Park in memory of Rick. I'm sure Rick would have chuckled at this as being 'just an excuse to go for a dive on the Birchy' because I know he was always happy to find any excuse to dive his favorite Sydney wreck. It is hoped that we will be able to place a plaque on the wreck in memory of Rick. If anyone with commercial diving experience in the club has any ideas about this please contact the committee ASAP. While it will be a solemn day of remembrance I'm sure Rick would not want us to be too sad, but rather to remember him in fun and we should have lots, with diving available on the Birchy and the Valiant and a BBQ back at the beach next to Atlantis afterwards. So call Scott to book your place now.

From the Dive Organizers.

Just a quick note from Peter and myself to thank the boat owners for their support. On the SCAN day we had 6 boats, by far the largest turnout of any club, with Peter Fields - not even a club member - taking out some of our club members. Mark Dietz was a hit with the kids - towing them around on his skibob (Mark are you trying to put 'Grandpa' McDonald out of a job??) We also had 4 boats at the Watsons Bay day, with special thanks to Martin Kandilas, who made his boat available at very short notice. Once again thanks to all boat owners for your support and we look forward to your continued support as these days would not be so successful without it.

Also don't forget that deposits will be required for all trips away and any chartered boat days.

Keep up the diving - Scott and Peter.

DIVE CALENDAR TILL JUNE 1997

Palm Beach / Latimer Memorial Dive	23.03.97
(Scott)	
Bombo	6.04.97
(Scott)	
Long Reef Dive	20.04.97
(Peter)	
Nelson Bay Weekend	2-4.05.97
(Scott)	
Bundeena Breakfast Dive	25.5.97
(Scott)	
Norah Head Day Trip	8.6.97
(Peter)	

Contact the Dive Organizers to Book your place on any of these arranged dives. If you wish to go diving and nothing is organized call the dive organizers and make a suggestion or call one of the boat owners to see if they are going diving.

Please ring the dive and social organizers or the club phone

0411 343 200

on the Tuesday or Wednesday before the event to confirm details etc



Minutes of the meeting South Pacific Divers Club at Bankstown Sports Club - Monday 17th February 1997

Meeting opened at 8:00pm, members and guests welcomed by Club President, Leo Bergagnin. Leo welcomed our guest speaker for the evening Annie Nute from the "Victory" Jervis Bay.

Apologies: Suzanne Evans, Steve Grow, Lee Harvey, Bob May, Greg Blackburn, Ilona Kandilas,
Michael McFadyen

Acceptance of previous Club minutes:

The previous minutes were accepted by:
and Seconded by:

Rod Muir
Gordon McDonald

Incoming/Outgoing correspondence:

Other dive club newsletters, Letters from Trans Nuigini Tours, questionnaire regarding spearfishing,
Dive Eden - Hard Hat over Anzac W/end Promo/Ad, Divercity Swansea, 97 Heron Is Dive Program,

Treasurers Report:

Barbara Sweetman

Expenses for the month of January:

\$589.60 in / \$180.00 out

Balance of Cheque Account:

\$ 4,780.79

Balance of Investment Account:

\$11,486.66

Treasurers Report accepted by:
and Seconded by:

Geoff Cook
Martin Kandilas

Photographic Officers Report:

Peter Flockart

- AV is on track, sponsors are OK, have some more prizes - Weekend for 2 on Victory also Weekend for two on Ocean Trek. Have a possible second speaker - Malcolm Ludgate who would give a talk on Atlantic diving.
Audio/visual production is doing very well. This year we are not using slides, but are putting everything onto video, the resolution is very good. Also TV Monitors will be strategically placed in the *hard to see areas* as well as at the bar and a cameraman will be wandering through the audience during the night and this will go directly to the monitors - *audience-cam*
Mark Spencer is going to interview the *Birchgrove Park* survivors and give a talk on this.
- Rick Latimer Memorial Dive Shoot Out - Canned due to lack of sponsors, dive still to go on.

AV Night - Leo mentioned that Carina Gregory is handling ticket distribution.

Mark Dietz asked if there was a childrens rate - Leo said he'll check with the committee.

SHORT BREAK TO FIX VIDEO/TV

Guest Speaker - Annie Nute from the Live-a-board 'Victory' out of Jervis Bay -

Annie presented some slides showing the fit-out of the boat and its facilities, with some lovely scenic shots as well. Annie mentioned that they generally do 3-4 dives on the Saturday and 2-3 on the Sunday but this is dependant upon what the divers want to do. They generally only take 8-10 divers.

SCANs Day 23/2/97 - Leo mentioned that there are club T-Shirts on sale \$15 each normally, but if bought tonight only \$12 and that we are looking for all members to wear them on the SCANs day this coming weekend.

BREAK

Guest Speaker - Annie Nute Cont'd with her video presentation, we saw some footage on the dive sites at Jervis Bay, concluding with an extensive look at an Angle Shark who in the end got it's own back on the videographer. - **Thank you Annie for a wonderful presentation.**

Raffle prizes and winners: Drawn by Annie Nute,

1st prize	A boat dive on Max Western's <i>Sea Tamer II</i>
Won by:	Les Stewart
2nd prize	T-Shirt, donated by Aquatic Explorers, Cronulla
Won by:	Paul Agwin
3rd prize	Two airfills courtesy of Shiprock Dive, Lilli Pilli
Won by:	Geoff Cook

Publicity Officers Report:

Paul Howlett

AV publicity well under way, a fax out to all drivable distance dive shops regarding the AV will be done shortly.

Dive Organisers Reports:

Scott Egginton and Peter Foster

Peter said that the weekend at Seal Rocks is filling fast, should be good with dives on the Satara, Shark Gutters and Catterthun planned. Also there will be 5 club boats and 37 divers at the SCANs day with dives commencing at 8:00am. Scott said there are plenty of dives planned for the next few months and that the lists will be handed around for these, some may require deposits closer to the time.

DATE	VENUE	ORGANISER
23/2/97	1997 SCANs Day	Peter
02/3/97	Watsons Bay Diving, lunch at Doyles	Scott
7-9/3/97	Seal Rocks Weekend	Peter
23/3/97	Palm Beach / Rick Latimer Memorial Dive	Scott
06/4/97	Bombo Dive, Wollongong Day Trip	Scott
20/4/97	Long Reef Diving	Peter
2-4/5/97	Nelson Bay Weekend	Scott
25/5/97	Bundeena Breakfast Dive	Scott
08/6/97	Norah Head Day Trip	Peter
22/6/97	Pittwater Diving and Picnic Day	Peter

Leo then mentioned the Truk Lagoon Trip it will be sometime in November the price is good, if you are interested see Leo about this one.

Leo also mentioned the cancelled Narooma trip in relation to our use of the local charter boat permits to dive the 'Lady Darling' there now seems a good reason to contact David Nuttley in as much as we could not borrow anyone's permit to dive the wreck as we had been told by him that we would be able to do.

Members Dive Reports:

Scott & Debbie Egginton - Dived the Himma in a very strong current possibly about 1/2-1 knot, once again Bob Mays' brilliant anchoring skills were to be applauded (it wasn't his fault we were on the wrong wreck).

Rod Muir - Recently dived in Jervis Bay with John Beddie, they did the Docks and saw 4' Grey Nurse Sharks and did lots of sand dives. Somebody lost their weight belt and did a lot of floating, had a good weekend there.

John Beddie - On the same weekend John saw a swordfish on the sand, never seen one before.

Scott Leimroth - Dived the Catterthun it was very clear whilst on deco he saw a 10' Marlin, 7' Bronze Whaler and about 10 dolphins who where content to hang around for a while, but it was dirty on the Satara.

Craig Harwood - Recently did a dive at Oak Park with 79 divers from Frog Dive in the water at once it was a nightmare dive but had good socialising afterwards.

Geoff Cook - Went to do the Undola but had a shocker of a start to the day and ended up doing Barons Hut in very dirty water.

Special Item - The Wet Rag on the 'Net':

Points bought up - Good exposure for the club, needs to be very professionally done to do the club justice, AV advertised but no tickets sales, personal info must be removed, to monitor enquiries use unusual names for responses

It was decided by majority vote to hold a decision over until the next meeting.

General Business:

- Peter Flockart - Mentioned that he still has some calendars for sale at \$12.00 each.
- Ray Malang - Asked if anyone had a Nikonos 3 for sale.

Social Organisers Report:

Debbie Davis

Debbie mentioned the Wine Tasting Night at Chippendale Wine Cellars on Saturday 22nd February at 7:00pm, she also talked about the possibility of doing a harbour cruise on a small 60 miler type steamship, also mentioned was a pub crawl which sounds quite good. Also suggested a night out at Bevs' as we haven't done that in some time.

MEETING CLOSED 10:20pm