
Club Dives
Weekends Away

Social Outings
Wreck Diving

Reef Diving
Boat Diving

Shore Diving
Night Diving

South Pacific Divers Club

Established 1960

Wet Rag

JUNE 2003

Jacques-Yves Cousteau

11th JUNE 1910-25th JUNE 1997

www.southpacificdivers.com



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The South Pacific Divers Club Newsletter "WET RAG" is published by South Pacific Divers Club and edited by Matthew Reeve. All material submitted to the newsletter should be sent to the Editor, P.O. Box 823 Bankstown, NSW 2200 or to zero_to_nine@optusnet.com.au

EDITORS CORNER

Not much to say this month but a pretty piss poor effort from the members who couldn't submit anything to be put in here yet a non member can send in 2 stories that are well worth the read. I can see why Duane give up the job of editor because no one sent anything in.

Ed: Matt 'Simon, Mini Bin' Reeve

PRESIDENTS POSSIE

May was a very exciting month for scuba diving and underwater photography, with the annual Hideaway Is Dive Festival and our George Roberts Underwater Photo comp.

Firstly, I would like to say thanks again to all of the members who entered the George Roberts comp, and our last meeting saw the winners for the month of April. Neil Vincent was the 1st place winner with his fantastic shots. Neil won a dive torch from Diving Solutions.

We will announce the overall winners and their prizes at this month's meeting, and I am sure there will be a few surprised members!!!

Secondly, Hideaway Island and Sea & Sea hosted the annual Dive Festival in Vanuatu from 25th May to 1st June 03. This was their fourth year of the event and Phill, Kristen and I attended for the first time.

What a great experience! There were 27 participants from all over Australia with various levels of photographic experience ranging from first time photographers, novices and to the not so novice.

Sportdiving Magazine was one of the official sponsors, with Belinda Barnes and Barry Andrewartha hosting such events as the Underwater Treasure Hunt, the fancy dress party and the 'Dickhead of the Day' award. And yes, yours truly managed to achieve 'Dickhead of the Day'. For my great troubles, I won a fantastic dive torch!!

Mark McCrumb from Sea & Sea hosted a free seminar on 'Introduction to Digital Underwater Photography' and all participants had the free use of a digital camera and housing for their dives.

Kevin Deacon was the guest speaker and gave nightly slide presentations on Underwater Photography tips and techniques, which was both educational and just down right amazing to see some of his work.

The week was filled with lots of prizes and give-a ways for both the diver and non-diver.

This year's dive festival coincided with the launch of the world's first manned underwater post office. Yes folks, Hideaway Island have an official Underwater Post Office! It is situated right out front of the Island within easy snorkeling distance in 4 meters of water. Everyday the post office staff sit in the post office on scuba and wait for the waterproof post cards to be posted by the island's guests.

The Festival ended with the Sea & Sea Photo comp. There were 6 categories, Open, Novice, Best MX10 photo, wide angle, Macro and Marine Image. All the entries were displayed in the usual form of a mini presentation and it was fantastic to see such talent. I managed to take the runner's up prize in the Open section, winning a return trip to Hideaway Island, a Delta BCD, a pair of Omer Sub Gloves and an Omer Sub Moonlight Torch!!! I still caren't believe my luck. All the prizes were generously donated by Aquanaut Pty Ltd, Omer Australia and Sportdiving Magazine.

I would like to finally add that this was truly a fantastic underwater photographic dive festival and most worthy of the dive industry in general. I hope that next year will also be a success and that divers and underwater photographers show their support by attending this great event. AND yes, you may even win a prize or two!

Well that is enough from me, hope to see you at the next club meeting.

Yours in diving

Amanda Taylor

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPORT

With nearly all of our sponsors responding to our request this years comp is shaping up to something big.

Soon all club members will be asked to sell raffle tickets and by the way a little promotion on the clubs behalf at your local dive shop or amongst your friends will be a big help.

We are currently lining up some brand new sponsors that have not participated before so we have definitely great value this year.

Some inquiries have found difficulty in downloading the comp entry forms and conditions off the webb site so if you experience any difficulties please let me know ASAP.

There may be two or three local shootouts before the comp finishes in August so keep an eye out for those.

Any One have any ideas for the AV night itself please send them this way and we will look at them.

Feedback from emails has been very positive so out there there is a wide range of interest.

Keep breathing and get those close up perfect.

Photographic Officer.

David Burns.

WHAT'S BUBBLING

Does nobody have anything they would like to bring up at the meeting? Send it to me and ill post it here.
zero_to_nine@optusnet.com.au

Classifieds

ONE NIKONOS V WITH 15 MM WIDE ANGLE LENS
AND VIEWFINDER - ONE 35 MM LENS
WITH NIKONOS CLOSE UP KIT - ONE TTL FLASH
UNIT (AQUA SEA) WILL SEPARATE.
\$3200.00.
PHONE GARTH BYRON AT 97745965.

ONE NIKONOS V WITH HELIX CLOSE UP KIT AND
AQUA SEA FLASH UNIT \$600.00
PHONE TOM BYRON AT 97745965.

DIVE REPORTS

1st of June 2003

OAK PARK SOLO PHOTO

7.1 mtrs depth 20mtrs viz Sea calm Weather
fine Temp 21 C

Looking at the tides on Friday and knowing I had a late night on Saturday I knew I would be flat out getting out and doing Kurnell at the top of the tide Sunday morning so I opted for Oak Park just after ten. Sinking into the shimmering blue with very small sets of waves crashing around me I headed out to do some closeby Macro work by myself. The conditions did not disappoint and the vis was quite good and there was plenty of fish life. First off I took a keen interest in a rather large Red Rock Cod (about 1.5 kg) got real close to him and five shots later I removed the lens cap. Well I will just have to keep my day job, still. Moving along the usual local large Cuttlefish were hanging around with one definitely not wanting me in his cave at all and he did not like the Strobe either! Schools of very small pike and white bait abound this day but with no show of he usual yellowtail, Mowies were found gathered together in an overhang along with schools of wrasse and on the way in a Banjo Ray skimmed the sandy bottom, by this time I was out of film, Anyway a nice quite dive after a very late Saturday night.
Dave B.

DIVE REPORTS

25th May

Dive with a difference

Its freezing cold, blowing hard, pouring rain and im on my way to a dive. On a motorbike. But this one was different. It was going to be dry. And warm. And the vis was going to be great. No we were not about to jump into the aquarium in drysuits. We weren't even near the water. We were at Pro-Diving Services in East botany standing next to a 1.8 metre twin lock decompression chamber getting ready for a 30 metre dive. After a briefing on the company and the all important chamber its off with the shoes and welcome aboard. Because we had a large group we split into two groups of five. I was lucky enough to be on the second group so I could see the cappers of the first group and try not to do the same. WRONG. Once inside with the door shut the chamber is pressurised to lock the door then its all go for 30 metres. After what seems like enough ear equalises to have you at 100 metres the attendant comes over the speaker to tell you the depth. 2 METRES. Well at least the fun has begun. Im the first to admit I get narced easy. But at 2 metres im feeling funny already. By 15 metres I cant feel my lips. 20 and were all talking like chipmunks. 30 and were all giggling like mad and wondering why our computers are all reading different. Ahh and its 29 degrees and warm. So we sit around for a while blowing up balloons and talking to the people on the outside over the P.A. system. Before we know it our 25 minutes on the bottom are up and its time to ascend. Ermm why is it getting foggy in here? Was the last thing most of us thought before it was a rush for the blankets so thoughtfully placed inside before we went down. The temperature dropped from the cosy 29 degrees to a chilly 11 degrees very quickly and the narcosis seemed to be subsiding. **BOOM.** There goes the first balloon of which there are now another six. Onward we go to the surface when **BOOM** again. We had all forgotten about the other balloons rather quickly. When we finally arrived at 9 metres with the narcosis pretty much gone it was time to swap from breathing the air in the chamber to pure oxygen in the BIBS. After the first couple of breathes the narcosis was gone and so was the noise of the other 4 loonies stuck in with me. Was it because of the BIBS masks? Nope it was because we all just remember we were making right fools of ourselves not 10 seconds ago. All in it was a great experience and one I would prefer not to have in an emergency situation but would do again.
Matt

CLUB MINUTES

SPD CLUB MEETING

19TH MAY, 2003

Apologies: Martin, Nick, Bernie.

Guest: Leo Hillyer - Aqua Sea - discussions re torches and camera lighting – very informative!

April Incoming Correspondence: Bank statement, re-investment statement and cheque book, Doubtless & Diving newsletter, BOC statement, Ryde Underwater newsletter, SCANS - emails re Coral Sea Trip 1-7 November, and Cod Grounds discussion paper.

May Incoming Correspondence: Marine & Coastal Community Network letter re funding, Bank re-investment notice, BOC statement, Ryde Underwater newsletter and Treasure Hunt 18th May (cancelled), SCANS - emails re Tuggerah Lakes environmental consultation, Cod Grounds discussion paper, Doubts Tafe Dinner 13th May and Entertainment Voucher Book - \$55.00 contact 9797 8291 Judy, Club Public Liability Insurance is due again, International Dive Expo 12-14th September details. Salvation Army Red Shield appeal

Outgoing correspondence: All unfinancial members have been sent a personal reminder to re-join or they have received their last newsletter.

Minutes: April - Accepted by Noel Taylor, seconded by Grey McNeil.

Treasurers Report: Term deposit rates - will not worry about this now until after the AV Night. Otherwise all accounted for. Please pay any outstanding memberships.

Website: Noel has updated. Next month will bring a list of profile forms.

Newsletter Editor: Thank you Matt for taking on job as editor. As always we need content - Any gear for sale etc. Also is setting up an email list for members to use to contact members and see what's happening.

Photographic Officer: Re AV night most sponsors are sourced, venue has been booked. Was told it's the 40th year of SPD running the photographic night? Will check into that. Also may have a former SPD member as a guest speaker - lips are sealed as to who.

DIVE REPORTS

Phil - South Solitary Island - Arch/ shark gutters 23 degrees, 24 mtr viz, flat seas, 3 large sharks, very good diving.

Matt - Club Dive - Kurnell - very foamy! 2 dwarf pipe horses, viz 1.5 mtrs. Sea was bigger on exit. Peter T. lost his weight belt and 1 x fin. 8-10 divers turned up. 5 keen divers, dived. 1 played rescue.

Dave - Drift Dive Kurnell- entered at leap, good dive.

Phil N. - Clifton Gardens - outside net/ under pier - shallow and good.

Dave - Ulladulla - Now are experts at cross words. Couple dirty dives on Sunday, Burrells Rocks - great dive Monday - came back in through the blessing of the fleet - which was interesting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Welcome new member. Paul from the U.K.

Sydney Divercity – proposed mid week night dive- more info to come
Boat Dive Cards available next meeting. (prepaid 8 dives \$200.00)

Digital Camera shootout – Club competition – T.B.A

SCANS – Coral Sea 1st-7th November, 2003 – Interested contact SCANS direct

Skirmish – 17th August, 2003. All welcome. I need names and “packages” by the next meeting.

All packaged include all gear (including semi-automatic gun hire and lunch.

- (a) Standard \$60.00 per person 300 paintballs
- (b) Top Gun \$90.00 per person 500 paintballs
- © Ultimate \$130.00 per person 700 paintballs
- (d) SLY \$160.00 per person 900 paintballs
- (e) Arnie \$220.00 per person 1250 paintballs (includes the best Level 7 Auto-mag paint gun)

SPD Club Equipment list forms – if you have any Club equipment, no matter what, can you please ask Sue for a form to complete so we can do an audit of all Club gear.

George Roberts Competition won by Neil Vincent

Raffle -

Shiprock - 2 air fills - Tom Byron
Sydney Divercity - Boat Dive - Duane
Max Western Boat Dive - Ben Rudd

Lucky Door Prize – Sydney Diver City – Phil Dale

CLUB SPONSORS: Please Support These Businesses

SEA TAMER II - Max Western. Dive Charters from Port Hacking.

SHIPROCK DIVE - Sales - Air - Service - Overseas Dive Trips.

SYDNEY DIVERCITY - Sales - Service - Air - Dive Schools.

LEDLIN PARTNERS - Business & Commercial Lawyers.

Phone: 9524 1818

Phone: 9526 2664

Phone: 9668 8200

Phone: 9708 2811

Committee Members

Amanda Taylor	0407-690077	President
Sue Tate	9681 3287	Secretary
Phil Dale	0418-975649	Treasurer
David Burns	0407-219100	Photographic Officer
Peter Flockhart	9371 0265	Asst. Photographic Officer
To be advised		Equipment Officer
Matthew Reeve	0419-208901	Newsletter Editor
Noel Taylor	0419-122629	Web Page Officer



Schedule of Events

• June 2003

- 16th — Club Meeting — Bankstown Sports Club
Dinner 7pm - Meeting 8pm
Guest Speaker — To be advised
- 29th — Club Boat Dive — Sea Tamer II
Reef Dive — 10am departure

July 2003

- 6th — Club Day — Maybe White Water Rafting?????
- 11-13th — Sydney Divercity - Ocean Trek W/E
\$379.00 per diver
- 12th — Club Boat Dive — Sea Tamer II
Wreck Dive — 7am departure
- 20th — Club Boat Dive — Sydney Divercity
— Shark Dive — 8am depart
- 21st — Club Meeting — Bankstown Sports Club
Dinner 7pm - Meeting 8pm
Guest Speaker — To be advised
- 27th — Club Boat Dive — Sea Tamer II
Reef Dive — 10am departure

• August 2003

- 17th — Club Skirmish Day — Come and shoot club member you dislike without getting in too much trouble.
- 18th — Club Meeting — Bankstown Sports Club
Dinner 7pm - Meeting 8pm
Guest Speaker — To be advised

WANTED TO BUY OR HIRE

ONE STACK HAT OR HELMET IN
CAMOUFLAGE COLOURS.

MEDIUM TO LARGE SIZE.

CONTACT PETER F BEFORE
AUGUST 17TH

this may be why??

DIVE TRAVEL OCEAN TREK WEEKENDS



11 – 13 July, 2003

Í \$1/2 »\$ Ü·² »½-§ É »»µ»² ¼ß© ç\$
Ocean Trek ·² Ö³·- Þ ç\$. \$379.00 per diver

24 – 26 October, 2003

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Ocean Trek ·² Ö³·- Þ ç\$.
\$340.00 per diver (club members)
\$379.00 per diver (non-members)

These trips are extremely popular with our divers and book out quickly so if you are interested please phone us and book in early.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

October 18 – 26, 2003 - Sydney Divercity will travel to PNG, (Jais Aben) for the warm tropical waters, a "rust & reef" trip with 12 boat dives and un-limited shore dives, all meals and transfers, only \$2500.00 per diver (*There will be an additional cost of about \$60.00, which we cant pay this end for visa and PNG departure tax*)

Weekend Away at North Haven 26-27 July 2003

30km south of Port Macquarie

We will be staying at the
Woongarra Motel for two nights
accommodation and have 4 boat dives
with Scuba Haven Laurieton.
Some of the dives sites can include:
The TITAN (wreck) - 40m
COD GROUNDS - 18-32m
MERMAID REEF (shark dive) - 12-30m
TELEGRAPH BOMMIE - 0-18m

\$190.00 per diver (twin share)
\$70.00 non-diver (twin share)

Contact Noel on 0419 122 629
for more information

Muirfield seamount

In 2001 I was fortunate enough to dive on one of the most isolated seamount reefs in the world.

Situated South of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which is situated 900 km SW of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean.

The Muirfield seamount rises from 5,000 metres from the ocean floor to 18 - 20 metres below the oceans surface. The seamount has a reef top of only 2km x 1.5 km with 300 metre walls around it before it slopes away to the bottom, 5,000 metres below.

Invisible from the surface and not marked on any charts it was originally found when a freight ship passing by struck the seamount and started to sink in the 1970's. Struck again by another freight ship in 1998 where it was left high and dry for some time and caused serious damage to the boat. Fortunately, a passing ship, several days later rescued the crew, but the ship was eventually towed away and de-commissioned because of the severe damage it sustained.

The Muirfield seamount and its exact location is not very well known, however, some commercial fishers are aware of its existence and wanted to fish this tiny reef of its resources. Before they fished it out by mid to Deep Ocean trawling and long lining, it was decided to investigate the possible conservation resources by non-extractive means and determine its conservation value.

The first trip was with a research vessel and we deployed a deep-sea video camera to search the benthos for any significant fauna and flora. Not much was revealed. However, we had a better idea of what the seamount looked like and mapped the seamount out.

In 2001 I was fortunate enough to accompany a larger vessel that dropped a friend and I on top of the seamount where we photographed and video graphed a small part of the reef top.

Descending into the blue I new the reef was there (according to the skippers depth sounder) but hadn't sighted it until 10 metres away and then landed onto its surface. I had a sense of feeling of Mark Armstrong's first step on the moon as the landscape seemed very similar.

Sharks, spiraling and pinnacle coral, in which I have never seen before, and butterfly fish, surgeon fish, angel fish and more completed a picture of a pristine, un-damaged coral reef system.

Due to its location, with very strong sea conditions and water movement we could only move where the water surges took us and we could only dive a small section of the seamount. What we did see was fissures, deep gullies, ledges, large amphitheatre type landscapes and sand storms. I felt like Mark Armstrong on an aquatic Mars planet
Robert Thorn.

Ghost Net

Removing a ghost net approximately 1.5 kilometres long x 8 metres deep found between 150 metres and 500 metres off shore at the southern end of the North Keeling Island (Pulu Keeling National Park). Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Indian Ocean

Ghost nets are lost or abandoned gill nets that continue to independently hang invisibly and move silently through the ocean entrapping and killing all marine life that falls within its path. They can also be a severe navigation hazard to ships.

This net presented a serious threat to the Pulu Keeling National Park the same way as a bush fire sweeps through the bush.

Remains of the net found around broken coral provided evidence of the destructive path as it slowly drags itself along the reef with the current and swell.

The urgency for removing the net was due to its location as it is where many dolphins have been seen with regularity over many years and appear to reside in that location of the National Park. Dolphins were present the day we found and retrieved the net.

The net posed a further threat to the historical shipwreck the SMS Emden. If the

net had wrapped itself around the wreck it could endanger the wreck by breaking away fragile remains of the boat as the net moved along. The net was removed approximately 50 meters away from the Emden.

At the time the conditions were suitable for removal of the net, but such conditions may not have continued for long.

Another strong wind and sea condition could have moved the net onto the SMS Emden making a salvage attempt more precarious. Something had to be done immediately to prevent further damage to the environment and during calm, flat seas.

The net was discovered on Tuesday 11th March 2003 by a group of divers visiting the Pulu Keeling National Park. Approaching the site of the "SMS Emden" the divers saw a number of floats on the surface continuing in a long line for about 1.5 kilometres along the southern end of the North Keeling Island.

Divers entered the water between the line of floats and the Emden.

Upon entering the water we could see it was a large green gill net with 1mm thick twine and 13.9mm mesh size. (Measured later).

The top of the net was submerged approximately 1.5 metres below the water surface and suspended up by large, round, plastic floats with smaller floats in between. The bottom of the net was caught around reef and rocks holding it down. The net created an invisible wall approximately 7-8 metres deep.

The net had dead fish and other marine debris in it as well as smashed coral where the net had been dragging along the reef. The many holes could represent sites where wildlife had been trapped in the past.

Three divers entered the water at the southwestern end of the net and descended immediately to start cutting the net away from the substrate in 8 meters of water. A snorkeller on the surface ensured the net would stay free by pulling the net up and as a safety observer. A small boat acted as tender to an 18 metre vessel and as a safety vessel so that the divers had a surface boat in case of an emergency.

The first team of divers continued for 40 minutes and cut a good length of net. (Approximately 500m). This section was then cut away. A rope was tied off to the end of the net and towed to the larger vessel where the crew started hauling in the net. Due to the length of net, it was extremely heavy to pull, so the net was then cut in half. The next team of divers entered the water, which at this time was adjacent to the SMS Emden site, and continued to cut away the net. The second set of divers were approaching shallower water and an increase in wind, swell and underwater surges made the net sway too much and was entangling the divers so that they needed to be cut free.

The dive team still managed to cut away three more sections of net that was hauled into 18 metre vessel.

The wind was increasing and the swell was picking up, so no divers entered the water again that day. Instead, an attempt was made to tie the middle of the net to the 18 metre vessel with a towline and tow the rest or as much of the net away from the shallow reef and out into deeper water to retrieve.

A large section of net broke free leaving a smaller, broken up section of the net in shallow water. The 18 metre vessel crew was dubious about entering into shallow water again to try another attempt to retrieve more of the net and due to the increasing wind and swell and because of the nature of work the 18 metre vessel crew decided to leave with the consent of all persons aboard. What little of the net is left will eventually disintegrate with the coming trade wind season that brings crushing waves onto the southern end of the North Keeling Island and will break down the net. The net at present poses very little threat to the marine life and the SMS Emden because most of the net was retrieved from that area. The remaining net is in shallow water and is entangled around the shallow, rocky shores that have broken down the wall of the net. However, if an opportunity should arise with calm weather, divers in a smaller vessel could retrieve what little net is left.

Upon closer inspection, the net was found to be made of twine that is breaking down (not long-lasting monofilaments).

The following day the net was loaded onto a pallet and then craned out of the 18 metre vessel and onto a truck, which was then driven to the tip. It is estimated that the net weighed approximately 1 tonne when lifting it with the crane truck.

Robert (Greenie) Thorn