

South Pacific Divers Club

Established 1960

Wet Rag

www.southpacificdivers.com

SEPTEMBER 2003

EDITORS REPORT

Well I'm very sorry to all for this months Wet Rag being just a rag. I was in a bit of a rush and had everything set out when the higher powers of Bill stepped in and sent everything haywire. But there's a great review of a great book by Neil Vincent and a story about a dive we would all like to do by Martin Kandilas. Hopefully I haven't forgotten anything.

Matt

PHOTOGRAPHIC OFFICERS REPORT

This will be my first report since again taking on the much sort after job! of photographic officer. I was unable to have anything for last month as my computer like many in the world was struck down with the dread worm-blasted virus. However all is now right and here I am.

Firstly, the AV is approaching a great speed so it is full steam ahead to sort, judge and produce another extraordinary night for members to enjoy.

We finished up with 54 AV entries, not bad given the number of comps this year. Breakdown of entrants is as follows:

Masters : 5 Digital : 7

Open : 12 Video : 10

Novice: 20

Our wonderful prizes have been obtained from once again generous sponsors without whose support the comp wouldn't be what it is.

Just to give you a sample of what's in store this year, the door prize is "Motor Marine 2 camera & YS-60 Strobe +extra's" valued at \$2300. This could be yours for the price of a ticket!!!!!!!

While I'm on the comp don't forget to get your tickets as they are going fast and you don't want to miss out on a great night. (I'm also ticket sales co-ordinator).

Report is a bit rushed this month as I am off to Brisbane for a couple of days diving.

Peter Flockart
Photographic Officer

SPD CLUB MEETING

18th AUGUST, 2003

Apologies: Duane and Don.

Incoming Correspondence: Bank statement, re-investment notice and certificate. BOC statement. Doubtless & Diving newsletter, Self storage invoice, Sports Dive Directory info, NSW Fisheries re Syngnathids in NSW Waters and lots of AV night entries received.

Minutes: Accepted by Noel Taylor, seconded by Matt Reeve

Treasurers Report: Bank balances were read off bank statement, details still to be handed over to new Treasurer.

Photographic Officer: Over 40 entries and they are still coming in. Tickets for the night \$25.00. Meal \$20.00 each, children under 12 free. We will need to know numbers for meals. Door prize - Motor Marine 2 Camera and YS Strobe set. Have to confirm a couple more sponsors. Will soon need some helpers to phone dive shops etc.

Website: Committee has been updated.

Newsletter Editor: Bugger all content. The Photographic Officer's computer got a virus therefore no report.

DIVE REPORTS

Peter F - Sat Middle Ground - Sea Tamer II - 16 degrees, 5-10 mtr viz, long low swell. Lots of P.J's, wobbies - flooded new torch, no current - not too bad.
Week before Osborne Shoals - 14 degrees.

Noel - North Haven - Club Trip - 7 people went. 2 dives cod Grounds 20-30 mtrs viz, 20 - 30 sharks - Tom saw a tagged shark which had 2 tags and both tags had growth as big as your fist. Shark was apparently distressed and not swimming very well. Tom has previously sent off video evidence re the effects of the tags.
Saturday night wind blew up, therefore no diving Sunday.

John - Ulladulla 16 degrees, 10 mtr viz, good dive.

Phil - CYC cleaning the bottom of a boat.

Nick - Sea Tamer II - Osborne Shoals - 5 mtr viz, no current - was O.K.

Skirmish Report - 8 turned up - everyone got hit a fair bit. 1 x dislocated shoulder (tripped over a root - Nepean hospital, general anesthetic - Now OK) Plenty of other round war wounds. Matt alias Sly, 2,500 rounds - into his friends??? Lunch was great. Good fun day.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Saturday 23rd August - **Club Dive and BBQ** Cancelled re tides. Will be re-booked and an email send out.

Help needed soon to sort out brochures for the AV night. Will do at Rick's place a week or so before AV Night

Max Western - Sea Tamer II - great sponsor.

**** Donations for a farewell present for Max – Give any donations/ suggestions to Lesley, Shiprock Dive by the end of the month. Presentation to Max will be held at Shiprock Dive on the 21st September.**

SPD's contribution – TBA – Max has been very generous over the years.

New owner will still sponsor SPD. Steve will run the boat on weekends, Max will run mid week dives.

Guest Speaker – Steve Cross for his fascinating talk on bottle collection and collation.

Tim Williams – Bubblelog – Basically a log book on line. Photographic services and dive log. SPD will get commissions off any members joining. Members get a 10% discount and SPD get 10% commission. Dive logs can have photographs integrated into it from a members gallery and can be printed on waterproof paper/ books. There are also dive sites set up as a master with all the relevant depth/ GPS markings etc for use then you add your own dive details to it. Tim will prepare something for our next newsletter as a better explanation.

Raffle -

Shiprock - 2 air fills - Peter Flockart

Sydney Divercity – Adren gloves – Susan Tate

Sea Tamer II Boat Dive – Noel Taylor

Lucky Door Prize – Nick Nasr (Sydney Divercity)

Book Review By Neil Vincent.

Book Review - DIVING IN DARKNESS by Martyn Farr

Martyn Farr lives the life he writes about. He makes a living from cave diving photography and teaching technical and cave diving. His thirty years of experience are reflected vividly from the pages of his latest book, Diving in Darkness.

What is immediately obvious about this book is the great colour cave diving photographs which feature on every single page. As a "carry in your brief case" sized glossy coffee table book, it fulfils the role, spectacularly. The photographs are show stoppers for those friends, who continually ask "Why do you cave dive?" Diving in Darkness will illustrate just how beautiful diving in caves can be. Taking photographs in caves is more specialised and task loading than cave diving itself, however, for Martyn, who is one of the leading cave diving photographers in the world today, it is a passion he enjoys.

The foreword by Jill Heinerth, an extreme diver in her own right, is challenging and should be read not passed over as sometimes happens with Forewords. She begins "We had been submerged for over two hours in water at -1.6°C. The depth was just shy of 40 metres and our waiting vessel was 300 metres back through an ice cave in a rapidly increasing current....."

Diving in Darkness is technical guide to diving in overhead environments. As Martyn's specialty is cave diving, the book concentrates on water-filled caves. The basics are covered in the chapters, Overhead Environment, Equipment, Lights, Guidelines, Air Management, Depth, Stress, Dive Planning, Techniques, Emergencies and Advanced Techniques. The other overhead environments, Wrecks and Ice Diving, are addressed in their own chapters in the appendix.

The book is written in a very easy to read style without unnecessary technical jargon, and to explain the jargon that is used, there is a very thorough glossary at the end. Diving in an overhead environment is not to be taken lightly, Safety rules are emphasised and explained. Gear configurations and methods used to undertake certain tasks are explained and suggested. There is no dogmatic doctrine proclaimed. Martyn sets out his own philosophy and the tone of the book in the first chapter with these words. "This book does not say: "You must do.....this or that" It does say, "Keep an open mind." Be prepared to consider new ideas, and incorporate these into your diving practice as and when required"

Using his photographic skills Martyn has made close up photographs of equipment placement to enhance his descriptions. The diagrams are not line sketches but colours graphical representations further enhancing the information transfer.

Diving in Darkness is a book suited to those with a curiosity about the overhead environment, those undertaking training and wanting an informative guide book, and those experienced divers who just want it for the great photos they have never been able to take themselves.

Diving in Darkness
By Martyn Farr
ISBN 0-9526701-5-1
RRP £19.95
Publisher
Chris Howes
Wild Places Publishing
51 Timbers Square
Cardiff, CF24 3SH.
United Kingdom
pub@wildplaces.co.uk

Available in Australia from the Cave Divers Association of Australia
Check their website www.cavedivers.com.au

A Dive We Would All Like To Do

By Martin Kandilas

Seeing I haven't been seriously diving for the last 18 months or so I can't really give any recent dive reports. My son David (12) recently played for Australia in baseball and getting him to that level has taken up a lot of time for both of us.

As we now seem to have a lot of younger divers in the Club I thought about sharing an experience of many years ago with the members, especially some of you newer divers or those who haven't yet caught the wreck diving bug. (Is there any other?) But then again, of course there are younger members as I am officially now an old fart, or at least I'm told this by my kids, as I passed the big Five O a couple of years ago.

Anyway, in the good old days of twin hose regs, Fenzy's and those wonderful stem gauges. Don't know what a stem gauge is? Ask the respectable white haired gentleman who goes by the name of Tom.

It was way, way back at the dawn of time. Well, January 1977 anyway, and it ranks in the top three of more than 3000 dives I've had. I was diving with some of the members of the South Pacific Divers Club, even though I was yet to join the club. Rick Latimer had already hounded me for a couple of years and he had to keep it up a bit longer as I didn't end up joining until 1979. Lets see, there was Rick of course and Bob Smith (both sadly now deceased), Terry Mansfield, another guy named Ray - surname beginning with "L" -and Dave Bailey.

I had a smooth skin Lourme Spirotechnique wetsuit back then and it was probably the warmest, most comfortable wetsuit I have ever owned, and I have had quite a few over the years. Trouble was, it had two very significant faults. It was an absolute bastard to get on or off and it tore very easily, especially when you crawled over wrecks as I was already doing in those days.

I had twin 72's and a Seibe Gorman Mark 7 twin hose regulator which I donated to the Glen Percy Museum of all things Old and Mysterious in diving. It was affectionately known as a "Heinke Honker". That nickname was derived from the original manufacturers Heinke, and because it was very noisy when you exhaled. That in itself wasn't all that bad because your buddy could always hear you, even if he couldn't see you in low visibility.

Our target was of course the wreck of the Birchgrove Park, or the "Birchy" as we all affectionately know it by. It lay hard over on its starboard side in 165ft off Bungan Head having sunk on a stormy night in 1956. Back in the late 70's the wreck was virtually intact, even the wheel house was still attached. It still had loads of portholes and other goodies for us ardent wreck freaks. There was a resident school of large jewfish under the bow and heaps of kingies and nannygai everywhere.

On this glorious Sunday morning we all met at Palm Beach near where Atlantis Divers are (still?) located. The six of us went out in two boats, mine and Ricks - both De Havilland 15ft "Offshore" tinnies. Neither boat had a depth sounder but that wasn't a problem as Rick could find the wreck with his eyes closed. After about 10 dives I could almost do the same.

We got out nice and early to be greeted by the proverbial 'flat as a tack' sea and no wind. The forecast was for a typical nor'easter at about 11 a.m. and as it was late January we knew from experience that if we didn't get out of the water before 10.30 a.m. it could get really uncomfortable.

On the way out the first thing we noticed was the beautiful aqua colour of the wake. The sea was a deep, deep blue, and even with the sun only a little way up we knew we were all in for a treat if the vis. continued out at the wreck.

We had some trouble anchoring as there was no wind and no drift. The anchors just clank-clanked over the wreck and would not pick in, so we decided to send a couple of guys down first to lock the anchors in and the others would follow. I didn't have to ask twice to be first in !

Dave and I geared up and went over the side. WOW. I looked down the almost vertical anchor rope and could see a school of kingies way below us. They were immediately attracted by our bubbles and came zooming up to greet us like a couple of hundred ballistic missiles. A last minute buddy check and we were on our way. We didn't have to move a fin. All we had to do was dump the air from our Fenzy's and simply float down like slow motion skydivers.

It was the most exhilarating experience passing through all those big kingies, with their black eyes following our every move. There were even a couple of remoras in with them. At 40 feet down the dark shape of the wreck could already be made out on the bottom, and by 60 feet the whole wreck could be seen. It was the most spectacular visibility I had seen, only rivalled by the Coral Sea. I have seen water that clear only twice in Sydney in more than 30 years.

We got to the bottom and quickly locked the two anchors in, one at each end of the wreck. The ropes just hung limply - there was absolutely no current. What to do next? The vis. was so great we actually did very little, apart from take the most leisurely swim I can ever remember on a wreck. Dave gestured to me and pointed up. I couldn't believe it. There were the two boats, with divers going in over the side. We could actually see their splashes from 165ft below.

A couple of minutes later the others got to the bottom. Terry had his trusted housed Hasselblad and he started taking photos. Dave, Bob and I were at the bow and Terry, Ray and Rick were at the stern. To give an idea of the lateral visibility, the Birchy is 160 feet long and we were waving to each other from opposite ends !

Schools of fish cruised lazily by and you could see 150 feet plus out onto the sand. It was freakish. Then the real treat, we went into the engine room, squeezing up over the top of the boiler and past the access ladder. I will never forget what I saw next. Lying on the boiler was a huge wobby, eerily lit by the six round deadlights on the coach roof. It was the most spectacular sight, and at that moment I decided I had to get an underwater camera. There was a prize winning shot waiting, with a diver and his torch hanging over the wobby and the sunlight from the six deadlights streaming down. Some moments just stay etched in the mind forever, and that was one of them. I had cut the knees of the wetsuit almost to bits, but who cares?

Checked the watch. 18 minutes gone, time to go. Got outside in two minutes and back to the anchor. Checked the stem gauges (that's a hint), heaps left. What the heck, stuff the plan, lets stay as long as we can! I gestured "25" to Dave. He checked his stems and gestured "27".

So, we did a 27 minute BT and the laziest, slowest ascent I can ever remember. We did all the deco and stayed in the water until we were both almost empty, such was the visibility and warm water. I remember hearing the yells and grunts from the others as we just hung there 100 feet apart making gestures to each other. We later asked Terry about the photos and he said his camera had jammed on the first frame ! No wonder he was gesturing and making strange noises. I could understand every word perfectly.

We all went back to the Newport Arms for lunch and a few beers and this time we didn't have to swap tall stories about an absolutely incredible dive. January 1977 was a long time ago, but how could you forget ? Ahh, the old SOS deco gauge and US divers tables, where would we have been without em?

Some dives just can't be repeated. And to date, this one hasn't. Hope you like the story. It is true, it happened.

A Few Upcoming Events To Mark Down

SEPTEMBER 15th: **Bankstown Sports Club - 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown.**

Meeting starts at 8:00pm or be there for Dinner at 7:00pm in

the Bistro.

Guest Speaker: Max Glesson - A talk on the wrecks along

the NSW

coastline.

OCT. 18th: **THE AUSTRALASIAN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER
OF THE YEAR 2003**

AT THE GREYHOUND SOCIAL CLUB YAGOONA

140 Rookwood Road, Yagoona NSW 2199

18th October 2003 - 7.00pm

Dinner available from - 5.00pm – 6.30pm

\$20.00 per person (Children under 12 - free dinner)

OCT. 25-26th: **JERVIS BAY - Weekend Away - on board OCEAN TREK**

includes 2 nights share accom, all meals and dives

Need to know numbers - BOOK NOW!!!!

\$340.00 per person (diver)

SCANS WEEKEND AWAY

Soldiers°Point°Holiday°Park.

Located°in°a°picturesque°area°o°Port°Stephens°and°surrounded°by°its°
beautiful°waterways,°Soldiers°Point°Holiday°Park°is°only°15°minutes°from°
the°heart°of°Nelson°Bay°and°a°ten°minute°walk°to°the°Soldiers°Point
Bowling°Club°and°corner°store.

The°park°is°ideally°located°next°to°the°Soldiers°Point°Boat°Ramp°&°
Marina°complex°with°a°choice°of°cafes°&°restaurants°all°within°walking°
distance°from°the°park.°Soldiers°Point°Holiday°Park°offers°a°relaxing,°
quiet°holiday°option.°°On°site°the°park°offers°spacious°&°shady°camp°&°
van°sites°most°with°water°views.°Here°are°tennis°courts°for°hire°and°the°
adjacent°beaches°are°ideal°for°sunset°walks.

Our accommodation ranges from our luxury Waterview Villas which offer two large bedrooms, a fully self contained kitchen, large living area with TV and video, laundry, bathroom with corner spa and a great deck complete with outdoor furniture and lots of other special extras.

We have one villa setup for a couples escape, which is our Sunset Villa. It has two queen size bedrooms, both with ensuite, and a large kitchen, dining and lounge area. The decking offers great views of the water and beautiful sunsets.

Our Headland Villas are 4 star Cabins, again, with two bedrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, large living area and decking with filtered views through trees. As close to nature as it gets.

Pets are not permitted within the cabin accommodation at any time. So much for some of the club members. Small dogs are permitted on the van/tent sites outside of School Holiday periods only.

Currently, for the dates you are after (14 & 15/11/03) availability is as follows:

Waterview Villas - Yes - \$378.00 for 2 nights for 2 adults and up to 4 children

Sunset Villa - Yes - \$338.00 for 2 nights for 2 adults and up to 4 children

Headland Villas - \$258.00 for 2 nights for 2 adults and up to 4 children (Please note that extra adults are \$15 per person per night per cabin.)

Tent/Van Sites - powered - Yes - \$58.00 for 2 adults

Tent Sites - unpowered - Yes - \$48.00 for 2 adults

(Please note that extra adults are \$8 per night per site, children are \$4 per child per night.)

For further information about our Holiday Park, Tariffs, etc, please see our website - the address is as quoted at the bottom of this page.

If you would like to book - please contact us directly on 1800 600 204 - alternatively, email us with your phone number and we would be happy to ring you back.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us or call the park directly.

Here is the information re Soldiers Point accommodation for our next SCAN get-together on November 15 and 16.

Please make your own bookings with Fiona and don't forget to mention that you are with the SCAN group.

Please keep the group informed as to numbers so that we can plan our free BBQ etc

Soldiers Point Holiday Park

Tel: 02 49827239

Fax: 02 49827734

Website: www.beachsideholidays.com.au

CLUB SPONSORS: Please Support These Businesses

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

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

DIVERCITY - Sales - Service - Air - Dive Schools.

LEDLIN PARTNERS - Business & Commercial Lawyers.

Phone: 9524 1818

Phone: 9526 2664 SYDNEY

Phone: 9668 8200

Phone: 9708 2811

