



Established 1962

WET RAG

www.southpacificdivers.com

March | 07

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WE HAVE ALL THE NEWS
DIRECT FROM THE EVENT

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- AND MUCH MORE !



REMEMBERING
OUR MATE
RICK LATIMER





Club President's Report



Welcome to another edition of the Wet Rag. I'm sure you'll agree that Scott has really outdone himself this time. It might look easy but a LOT of work went into what you see. Just like with the Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year competition in the past, the Wet Rag isn't just only for club members but the good of the entire diving community - locally and around the world. All produced on a volunteer basis.

This month coverage of the OzTek 07 dive show is comprehensive, and that's without even reporting on the Awards Dinner due to being overloaded with material from daytime activities. Perhaps next year, we'll be able to send several reporters along.

Even though there's been a Tech diving feel over two editions and Rebreathers regularly appear in the Wet Rag, I'd like to remind everyone that our club caters for all types of diving. From 15m Grey Nurse dives at Magic Point to most of the Underwater Photography Group being amateurs, shooting with compact digital cameras, night dives and trips away for all levels of experience. There's a very flat structure – meaning that all sorts of divers can happily coexist in parallel.

Of course the generous support of club boat owners helps get people out to the best sites as well. Speaking of boats, the group has grown so much that we're in a position to provide crew for a number of new boat owners if you're someone who would like to join us. Boats are usually a bit of a handful in general, and many hands make light work. Please contact me if interested in getting involved.

As Scott mentioned, you won't hear from us 'guys' next edition as it's a 'Women's Only' issue of the Wet Rag. That is, contributions only from female members and friends.

On a more solemn note, March 19th was a day of remembrance, the day 11 years ago when our old mate Rick Latimer passed away of cancer. A few of us had a drink and told stories about the difference he really made. To be quite honest, one of my primary motivations for coming back to the club (and starting to dive again) last year was to help with the rebirth of South Pacific Divers Club in honour

of Rick's memory. He showed me the light and for that I'll always be grateful.

If you're reading the Wet Rag for the first time, South Pacific Divers Club is a non-profit organization, with aims of furthering diving & social activities – a group for diving friends. Feel free to contact me, Scott or any other members of the committee if you'd like more information.

See you at the boat ramp,
John Fardoulis
President, South Pacific Divers Club
john@southpacificdivers.com

Editors Report

Wow! What a month for diving! Clear water finally arrived in Sydney with some excellent viz on the wrecks in the first few weeks of March. We had a fantastic days diving with the GNS at Magic Point and a BBQ at the beach afterwards. Some night dives were also organised. You can read all the dive reports in this issue. Thanks to those people who continue to regularly submit articles. Now it's time for the rest of you to get typing and send something in for publication.

This month also featured the Oztek technical diving conference. See later in this issue for a full report and many pages of pictures. If you weren't there you should be able to get a feel for what it was like via the images in this

issue. A fantastic event and I'm really looking forward to the next one.

This issue is huge with dive reports galore and most of our regular features although a few were left out to make way for the OzTek content they will return bigger and better next month. Next month is a feature issue and the feature is 'Women in Diving' so if you are a woman and you dive then please submit something for next months Wet Rag. Deadline is Thursday 5th April so get those articles in now. Even I will be taking a back seat as there will be a special guest female editor as well as '100% written by and for women' content. Make it a real bumper issue girls and get those articles in now!

See you in the water sometime soon,

Scott Leimroth

The WET RAG is published by South Pacific Divers Club Inc.
Editorial content can be sent to scott@southpacificdivers.com
Deadline for each edition is the 5th of the Month.

February Club Meeting

Club member Andy Del was guest speaker at our last club meeting and gave a very informative and detailed presentation on the KISS rebreather.

Congratulations to Andreas who won the raffle of dinner for two at La Piccola Italian Restaurant.

Numerous dives were organised and plans were made to attend Oztek. There was plenty of discussion and socialising during the break. A big thank you to Andy for taking the time to bring his rebreather along and shows just how easy it is if you KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid!

Club meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at 8pm in the Bankstown Sports Club, Greenfield Parade Bankstown, in the Garrison Room. Many members arrive at 7pm and meet for dinner in the Greenfield Station Bistro inside the club. There is plenty of security parking available in the club so why not come along and find out what we are about.



SPDC Memberships February



DAVID & JO COULTHARD
NEW Family Membership



JON EVANS
NEW Single Membership



ANDREAS THIMM
NEW Single Membership



RICK JAMES
Rejoining Single Membership

Magic Point Shark Diving

by Dave Chillari

On Sunday 18th Feb 20 divers met at Long Bay beach for a day of diving with the majestic and beautiful Grey Nurse Sharks. With two club boats available the dive was organised in two runs of 10 divers. The first run leaving about 9.30am and the 2nd at 11.30am.

After a short run on a very flat sea, we arrived at the point at Maroubra. Joining a charter operator, we proceeded to moor at the site. After about 10 minutes the first 10 divers were in the water. This first dive, being an 'official photography outing' saw 8 divers sporting camera large and small to capture this magical sight (no pun intended, well, maybe a bit!)

Upon descending I joined the group of divers and buddied up with Rob Creaser who had dove here a number of times before. We then swam around for about 20 minutes checking out the site. We saw a Eastern Blue Devilfish and other assorted critters.

As we rounded another a boulder, I saw her out of the gloom, a large mass appeared out of the haze. This was what we have come for, the Grey Nurse Shark (*Carcharias taurus*). We were happy to see 10 beautiful specimens, with at least one sporting a set of fishing hook facial ornaments. We enjoyed the majesty of these beautiful gentle creatures who allowed us to approach very close for about 20 minutes.

After exiting the water we noticed a number of bluebottles, so a relaxing swim was out of the question...especially with all those man-eating sharks down there!



We picked up from the beach at Malabar and had a BBQ there after the dives.

Never trust a cheap Chinese Drysuit to keep you dry. There was around 2 ltrs of water in the boots by the time Scott finished the dive.



Also diving Magic Point on the day was the large Pro Dive boat. They had around 20+ divers on board and were anchored on the site when we got there for the second dive.

Photographic Group Shootout at Magic Point Dive Day

by Scott Leimroth

Almost half the divers attending our Magic Point dive day were members of the photography group and the boats on the first run were full of cameras. Unfortunately there wasn't much response from the photographers to the request to send in their pics from the day. We even offered prizes! With so many from the photography group in the water with cameras I really expected a better response. Perhaps they were afraid John and I might out do them, or maybe they didn't get any good shark shots, but the only entries received were from Dave Chillari, John and Myself. Dave is clearly the winner while I'm sure you'll agree I was a close second followed a long way behind John. I'm not sure if he was trying to achieve some special in camera effect. Maybe he just had trouble using his \$50 Chinese camera, I know I did. If I had been able to figure out how to use it I might even have come first :)



Left: GNS inside the Cave by Dave Chillari.

Below: Closeup of the pointy end of a Grey Nurse by Dave Chillari.



Left: Clearly a seasoned photographic model and not a photographer. My three shots are at best 'Happy Snaps'. I had a great excuse though in that I was using Johns El Cheapo Chinese Camera (works almost as well as the drysuit) and it took me most of the dive to figure out just what button to push to turn it on. It then took another 10mins to figure out how to take a photo and another 15 mins to work out that you had to 'wind on' for the next shot....in a digital?? Must be a Chinese thing I guess.



Right: All we can say about John's attempt at underwater photography is; 'He's a great club president'. Was it snowing down there John?? At least he managed to get the sharks in the shot and submit his images, which is better than the rest of the photographic group who's images are still MIA.

APRIL DIVE CALENDAR



When	Where	Departing From	Type of Dive	Contact	Other
Sat 24th March	Magic Point	Malabar Beach	Shark Dive - 15m	John Fardoulis	RSVP John Today
Sun 1st April	Magic Point	Malabar Beach	Shark Dive - 15m	John Fardoulis	RSVP ASAP Nearly Full
Sat 7th April	Bombo	Wollongong Harbour	Wreck - 30m	Geoff Cook	Nearly Full
6 - 9th April	Jervis Bay	Contact Bob for info	Reef	Bob May	RSVP Bob on 0245 791 053

Peter Iwaszkiewicz often dives on Thursday nights. Contact him at pf_plate@tpg.com.au or call 0424 812 483 for a night dive or better yet join our diving and events group by subscribing at <http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving>

Print this page out and stick it on the fridge so you remember what's on this month.

Spaces on boats are limited so it's best to book in as early as possible. A minimum of at least 3 days notice is required. Be sure to confirm the dive 24 hours before as weather conditions or other circumstances may result in a change of plans. If you need to cancel please try to find a replacement and notify the dive organiser or boat owner as soon as possible.



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That's right, join SPDC now and your membership lasts until 2008!**

Fill in the membership form at the back of the Wet Rag today!

CREATURE FEATURE

Australian Fur Seal

The Australian Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*) is the world's fourth-rarest seal species and along with the Cape Fur Seal, it is the largest fur seal in the world. Hunted to the brink of extinction last century, population recovery has been slow, and seals are now protected.

Being the largest of the fur seals they can eventually reach a weight of 360 kg for the males and 110 kg for the females. At birth the pups are black but after the first month they turn a greyish fawn colour with a pale throat before changing to either the male colour, of dark greyish brown with a paler ventral and coarse mane, or the female colour, of a pale fawn to greyish brown with a pale throat and a brown ventral.

The life span for males is 19 years with females living up to 21 years, although there is a pup mortality rate of 15% in the first two months. A small number of seals are killed by sharks (particularly White Pointers) and Killer Whales are also known to eat seals but these are rarely seen near the Australian Fur Seal colonies. Their main threats to the population are entanglement with lines and nets and also swallowing plastic bags as the seals think they are squid which is popular to their diet. Toxic pollution and oil spills also have a devastating effect on the colonies. The population is estimated at around 25,000 seals.

The Australian Fur Seal is found from the coast of NSW, down around Tasmania to Victoria and South Australia. It is the most common seal in Tasmanian waters and breeds on small isolated rocks in Bass Strait between October and January. It also hauls-out at various rocky areas around the Tasmanian coastline, especially outside the breeding season when many seals disperse from the breeding colonies.

There are many places along the coastline of southern Australia where seals can be seen in the wild. Places where organised viewing of seals takes place include Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island, Montague Island on the New South Wales South Coast, Seal Rocks in Victoria, various places in Tasmania and on accessible islands around Perth and Albany in Western Australia.



BETTER DIVING

Divers who have only dived from the shore or from a RIB are forced to learn new methods when diving from a hardboat. On the other hand those divers who learn on holiday on a sturdy hardboat often find it a little intimidating when faced with the rocky shore dives or bouncing RIBs.



GIANT STRIDE FROM A BOAT OR PLATFORM

This is one of the easiest and most common entries - a familiar manoeuvre for those who dive regularly from hardboats or inland lakes.

1. Put air in your BC to avoid making a negative descent.
2. Make sure the area of water you plan to enter is clear of divers. Also, watch out for bubbles close to the surface, indicating divers down.
3. Hold your mask and regulator.
4. Go for a giant stride. Avoid jumping or hopping, as your aim is to get as far from the boat or platform as possible.
5. Look up at the horizon when you step, this will help you maintain an upright position.
6. Once in the water, move away from the entry platform, keeping the area clear for other divers to enter the water safely.

BACKWARD ROLL FROM A RIB

A backward roll is the easiest and safest way to enter the water from a RIB.

1. Starting from a seated position, put air in your BC.
2. Make sure your fins and all your kit are clear from any obstructions.
3. Hold onto regulator and mask with your hands.
4. Make sure no one is behind you in the water.
5. Go only when instructed by the skipper or dive marshall and in time with your buddy.
6. Keep your legs together and tuck your knees close to your body towards your chin.
7. Hurl your body backwards, so that you are clear of the boat when you hit the water.

TOP TIPS

Never leave yourself in the water wearing a weight belt and no buoyancy aid.

Always follow the instructions of the boat owner before entering the water.

Always check the water you are about to enter for any divers or obstructions.

Leave your mask on and in place.

Always make sure you have air in your BC.

Make sure that you do a full buddy check before entering the water.

Hold onto the line or boat while waiting to exit to avoid being swept away by the surface current.

Never attempt to exit the water if the diver before you is still climbing out.

Make maximum use of the buddy system for mutual support on difficult surfaces and when finally fitting fins.

If returning to a boat, make sure the boat knows you are there and all propeller movement has ceased.

Where possible, ask for your camera to be handed to you once you are in the water.

Make sure all hoses are clipped away and that no items are hanging loose in order to avoid these getting entangled.

If the entry or exit for a dive is unfamiliar, don't be afraid to tell your buddy or the boat owner about any concerns you may have.



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THE LATEST LAST MINUTE
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NEED A BUDDY?

**GOING DIVING AND WANT SOMEONE ELSE
TO COME ALONG?**

**Then join our Diving and Events email list
by subscribing at:**

<http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving>

**A number of night dives were organised
via this group last month and already this
week some midweek shark dives are on
offer. Join up now to find out more.**

<http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving>

DIVE REPORT

Clifton Gardens by Night

by Dave Chillari

The evening of Friday 2nd March saw Jon Evans, Olivia Hadisa Putra, Lee Parker and myself set out to find the not so elusive sea horses of Clifton Gardens. After gearing up we made our way down to the beach.

Upon entering the water, we spent a few minutes readying ourselves and finally made our way along the jetty. Jon and myself buddied up, while Olivia and Lee buddied up together. Visibility was about 3-4m. The first section of the jetty was quite uneventful with the odd Fan Bellied Leather Jacket and puffer fish. As we followed the bathing net the life got a little more interesting.

The marine growth on the net gets heavier the further you explore. The net is a myriad of sponges, squirts and other plant life. Living on the net are small crustaceans, small fish and the odd nudibranch. John proved himself to be a great spotter of macro life, pointing out 2 sea horses, and then finding a blue ringed octopus walking along the sand.

About halfway through the dive disaster struck. Olivia signalled to me to surface and told me that she had got caught up in fishing line and lost her camera while trying to struggle free. (no lanyard) We then attempted to look for the camera, but to no avail.

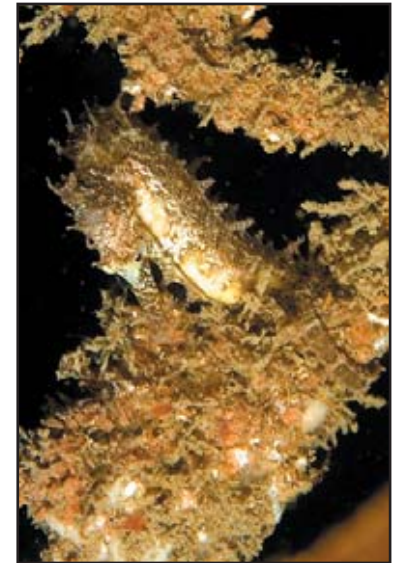
Olivia and Lee continued to search for the camera as Jon and myself returned to shore. On the return, we saw a small striped cuttlefish than kept burying itself in the sand.

2 points I should emphasize:

- 1) There is a lot of fishing line here so carry a knife/blade.
- 2) ALWAYS attach a camera or anything else with a lanyard.



Above: Blue Ringed Octopus

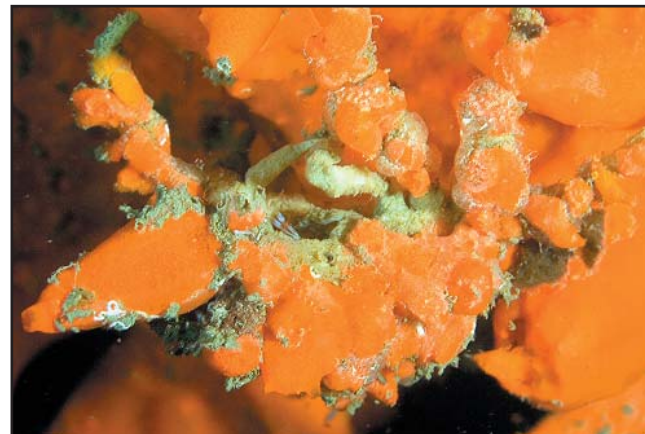


Above Right: Seahorse

Below: A sponge covered crab.

Below Right: A blenny hides in a disused clam shell.

Images by Dave Chillari



COME TO OUR NEXT CLUB MEETING

Special Guest Speaker

Lesley Hillyer will talk about women in diving. Lesley has been diving since 1982 and has been in the diving industry previously as a dive shop owner having run Shiprock Dive from 1993 -2006 . Lesley and her husband Leo now run Aquasea products. Lesley is one of the few female divers regularly undertaking deep dives on the wrecks off the Sydney coast and one of an even smaller number of women who dive trimix to wrecks such as the Koputai, Bega and Keilawarra. Come and hear about those dives from a womans point of view, how attitudes towards women in diving have changed over the years, and how some haven't, plus hints and tips on how to survive amongst all those macho blokes.

If you're a woman and you dive then don't miss this meeting!

Monster Club raffle of on the night!

When: 8pm Monday April 16th

Where: The Garrison Room,
Bankstown Sports Club
Greenfield Parade, Bankstown.

Members meet in the Greenfield Station Bistro for dinner at around 7pm so why not join us.

If you've been thinking of coming along to check us out then this meeting is a great opportunity to do so. Meet new dive buddies, sign on for a club dive, organise a dive, make new friends, hear exciting stories, and more!

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This month's Celebrity Diver

Patrick Stewart

Born in 1941, Stewart's acting career began on the stage at the Bristol Old Vic theatre school, and he has performed many Shakespearian roles. His distinctive voice has featured in episodes of The Simpsons, and in 1998 Stewart earned both Emmy and Golden Globe nominations for his Captain Ahab in Moby Dick.

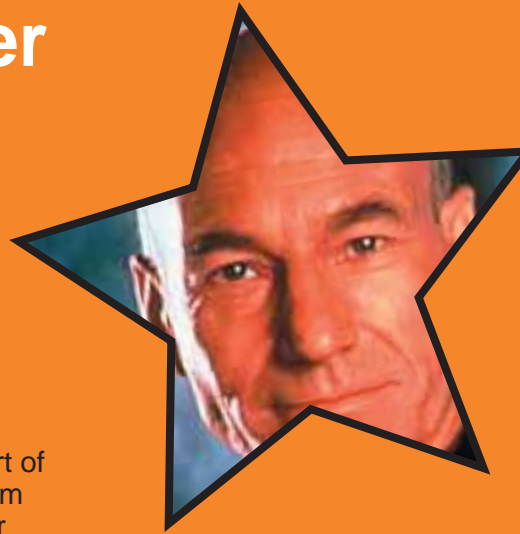
He is an accomplished theatre actor but worldwide fame came with the part of Jean-Luc Picard in Star Trek: The Next Generation, in which he starred from 1987-94. He also appeared in the blockbuster X-Men movies as Professor Xavier.

Patrick Stewart began diving in Los Angeles in 1993, while he was still filming some of his 178 episodes of Star Trek. He was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2001.

For Patrick Stewart diving is something he says he can't do without. "My first dives at Catalina were magical, those forests of kelp that I imagined would be frightening were an entrance into a magical world. Even after my first dive - all of 25 minutes - I couldn't wait for the surface interval to end so that my instructor Hal and I could get down there again."

Since then, Stewart has dived in the Caribbean at St Barths, the Bahamas, and Turks & Caicos. He's also been on a liveaboard in the Sea of Cortez, as well as to Fiji and Hawaii. Underwater, Patrick Stewart is equally happy to drift across a shallow reef or swim in the blue with a whale shark. "I saw them in the Sea of Cortez and the only problem with diving is not being able to shout with joy!"

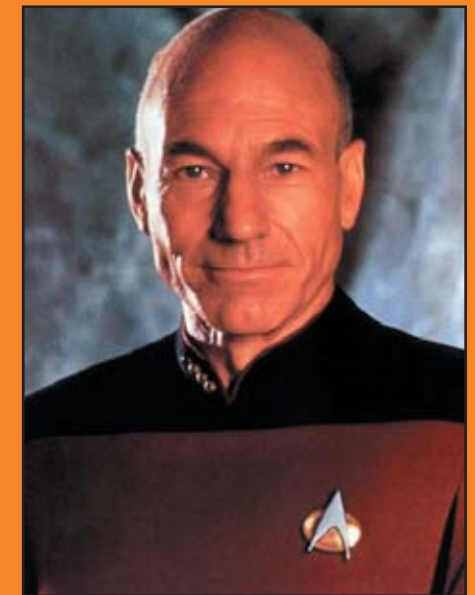
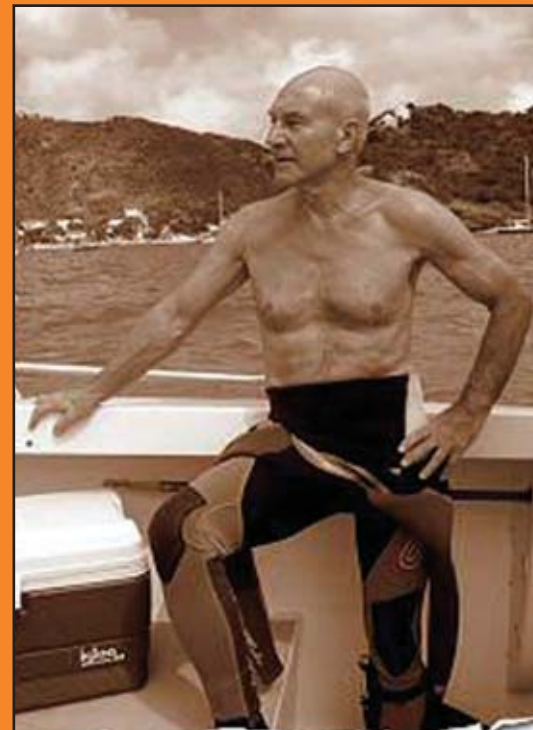
Mexican waters also provided memorable encounters with sea-lions. "Two of them danced around me for several minutes, and at one time I found myself staring straight into their eyes and being drawn closer and closer until the instructor tugged me away. I felt this strong sense of having shared the ocean with those magical creatures."



Above: Wheelchair bound 'mutant' Professor Xavier in X-men.

Below Left: Captain of the Dive Boat.

Below Right: Captain of the Starship Enterprise



Feeling Lonely?

We've got plenty of dive buddies for you to pair up and dive with. A lot of our diving is inexpensive and fun boat diving.

Contact john@southpacificdivers.com to find out how you can come diving with us, meet new friends and have some fun with our club on a dive. You don't have to be a member to come along and enjoy yourself.

A Little Nervous?

Come along to one of our relaxing, divemaster assisted, dives. We'll even hold your hand if it helps. Join us for an easy supervised dive.

The Next Step?

Been diving for a while and ready for the next step?
Sick of the same old dives?

Meet some of our experienced divers and learn from them. We cater for divers of all skill levels, from our active juniors group right through to our rebreather special interest group and beyond.

Contact john@southpacificdivers.com to join us on our next club dive or to simply find out more.

Remember, you don't have to be a club member to check us out.



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If we can get about 12 people in 2 groups of 6 divers can we charter the vessel for 1 week, with 1 group on the boat for 3 days and on an island for 3 and the other group visa versa. I understand there may be increased fuel costs.

We can organise basic accommodation very close to dive shop. According to the flight schedule, we will be needing the boat for 6 days.

If you're interested in this trip please contact:

David Chillari

www.southpacificdivers.com



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Fri 9am-4pm
Sat 5.30am-4pm
Sun 5.30am-4pm

Filmed by Paul Boler



Southern Cross Divers
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WET RAG March| 07

New Diver?

Need some equipment for your next club dive?

The Club has two sets of dive gear for you to use.

**Equipment consists of regs/guages, BCD,
Weight Belt, Tank.**

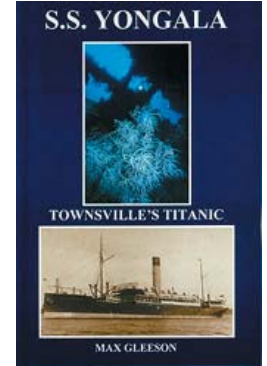
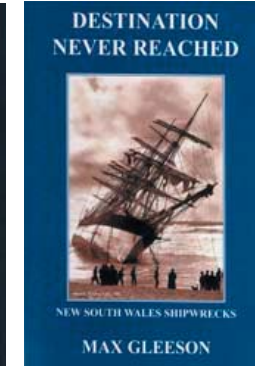
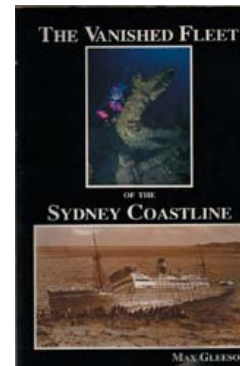
**You need to provide Mask, Snorkel, Fins and
Wetsuit.**

**Equipment is only for use by club members on
club dives. It must be washed before return
and the tank refilled.**

**Contact john@southpacificdivers.com
or phone 0400 888 888**

Shipwrecks of the Australian East Coast

Max Gleeson



Max has combined his passion for Australian maritime history, his love of wreck diving and his award winning photography to produce a three book series on NSW Shipwrecks, and one on Australia's premier wreck dive, the Yongala. Each book provides a rich insight into Australian Maritime history through the use of original historical photos, colour underwater shots of the wrecks as they appear today, detailed accounts of wreck disasters, the events leading up to them and the subsequent courts of marine enquiry.

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What is it?

MySpace.com (or MySpace) is a free service that uses the Internet for online communication through an interactive network of photos, weblogs, user profiles, e-mail, web forums, and groups, as well as other media formats. This all-inclusive service is sometimes called a social networking interface.

According to Alexa Internet, it is currently the world's sixth most popular English-language website. It has become an increasingly influential part of contemporary popular culture, especially in English speaking countries. With over 100,000,000 user accounts, the last available stats suggest that MySpace is currently signing up 500,000 new users a week. Many of these people dive and so it's only logical that myspace divers would gravitate towards one another.

Groups

MySpace has a Groups feature which allows a group of users to share a common page and message board. Groups can be created by anybody, and the moderator of the group can choose for anyone to join, or to approve or deny requests to join. South Pacific Divers Club now has it's own myspace presence via the South Pacific Divers Club group.

Below is a screen shot of our group page. We currently have over 60 members with mebership ranging from divers in the USA, Canada, Europe and of course Australia, to dive stores like Abyss Scuba. We have members who are commercial divers, professional photographers, rebreather and deep exploration divers, Navy Seals, cave divers, you name it. The beauty of myspace is that it connects people with similar interests who might never otherwise meet.

If you have a myspace account go to <http://groups.myspace.com/spdc> and join our group. See you in space!

Home | Browse | Search | Invite | Film | Mail | Blog | Favourites | Forum | Groups | Events | Videos | Music | Comedy | Classifieds

Group Url: <http://groups.myspace.com/spdc> [Back to Groups Directory](#)

South Pacific Divers Club

Category: Recreation & Sports

Type: Public Membership [twtp]
Founded: 02 Oct 2006, 06:18 AM
Location: Sydney, New South Wales - AU
Members: 60

[View Group Photos](#)

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Group Leader: John

We're a non-profit diving club with members all over Sydney (Australia), up and down the coast.

Very much like a diver friendship society, perhaps bordering on a volunteer underwater sporting association.

Club members vary in experience from raw newbies to those who have dived deeper than 100m on Rebreathers.

Our people are passionate about diving, particularly those in club Special Interest Groups. These currently include Rebreather Design, Underwater Photography, Wrecks & Archaeology, Explorers, Juniors and Ecology groups, with Cave Diving possibly being added soon.

We have a wealth of enthusiasm across several generations of divers.

We also believe in having fun, both in and out of the water. Come along to one of our themed Launch Nights or join us for a Sydney boat dive.

Overseas friends and visitors are welcome to join our myspace group.

Our monthly eMag can be downloaded from here www.southpacificdivers.com

South Pacific Divers Club (60 Members)

Wreck Diving - The BEGA

By Max Gleeson



In September 2004 I received a phone call from Stewart Pole-Bell, coordinator with the Sydney Project Dive Team. Stewart had been doing all the "behind the scenes" work organising the first ever dive on the wreck of the US liberty ship, William Dawes torpedoed off Tathra, NSW in 1942. In the process of arranging a suitable charter boat to the wreck, Keith Appleby of Bermagui Charters asked Stewart, "if he would like to dive the Bega also"? Temporally stunned by this statement, Stewart asked, "do you know where it is"? "Sure" said Keith, " the fisho's have known about it for years". The result of this conversation was Stewart's phone call to me, asking if I would like to join a trip to dive the Bega. My first and only reaction was a "yes". The wreck of the steamer was just one of the many which lie along the NSW coast, that to my knowledge had never been found. I was familiar with her story having covered her loss in detail in my 1996 publication of Shipwrecks, Storms, & Seamen of the NSW Coast.

The Bega was built of steel in Greenock Scotland in 1883 for the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, arriving in Sydney in July that year. On the evening of April 5th 1908 the Bega lay tied up at the Tathra wharf ready to depart. The week before a dispute between non-union and union labour caused a disruption between the shipping companies, and their employees. The strike spread to both the north and south coast causing great confusion to the passenger service and cargo movements. To compound the problem the Royal Easter Show began that week and many of the exhibitors of livestock were desperate to get their animals to Sydney for the judging.

With a slight list to port and loaded to capacity, the Bega departed the wharf at 7.00 PM with 74 passengers and crew.



As well as 176 pigs, and a number of bulls and horses the vessel was supposedly carrying a consignment of gold in the way of sovereigns and half sovereigns to the value of 1000 pounds.

It was a perfect night for travelling by sea with a smooth ocean and little if any breeze. In command of the ship was Stephen Bishop, a man of 50 years experience on coastal vessels. Bishop had gained notoriety in the wreck of the Kameruka, south of Moruya Heads in October 1897. He took over command when the Kameruka's captain was knocked out

after the vessel grounded on the shore. Bishop tied ropes to several pigs, jettisoned them over board and watched as the pigs swam the lines to the beach, enabling everybody to reach safety.

An hour after the Bega left port the captain noticed the ship's list was increasing. Bishop turned the vessel around and hoping to correct the list shifted the pigs to the opposite side. For a while the ship righted herself only to be followed by a far more threatening tilt to starboard. For the Bega and her complement these were desperate times and it called for extreme decisions. Bishop, for whom history seemed to be repeating itself didn't hesitate. He ordered the first mate to drive all 176 pigs overboard. In order to get them over the side as quickly as possible a substantial portion of the side railing was pulled off with the help of the steam winch.

However the Bega was doomed and shortly after the captain ordered abandon ship. The survivors in two lifeboat and rafts watched the ship sink and then set off, eventually coming ashore further down the coast. The Bega's only victim was David Clarke, a local resident. He died of a heart attack shortly before the ship was abandoned. His body was wrapped in a tarpaulin and put into a lifeboat. However with very little space available several of the survivors had to sit on it.

On their arrival back in Sydney, each member of the crew was interviewed separately by the management of the Steamship Company. The unusual situation of a vessel foundering in calm weather and the industrial dispute brought accusations that the crew had deliberately scuttled the ship by the opening of her sea cocks, but this was never proven.

On the afternoon of the 25th October I arrived in Bermagui. That day two members of the Sydney Project Dive Team, Dave Apperley and Samir Alhafith carried out the deepest ever wreck dive (133 metres) in NSW to the William Dawes. The following day we departed Bermagui on board the fishing vessel Binjarra,

bound for the wreck site. Because of the vigorous schedule by the divers the day before, only Kevin Okeby and myself would have the privilege of being the first divers ever on the wreck of the Bega.

The wreck lies approximately 14 kilometres south of Bermagui, the trip taking several hours to reach the site. A shot line was dropped over the side and after gearing up Kevin and I began our descent to the wreck. We landed near the bow, I checked my depth gauge, it was registering 76 metres (245 ft). While Kevin recorded the dive on video I set off down the wreck hoping to find artifacts that would possibly identify the ship. The visibility was good although dark, my 100 watt torch lighting the remains of hull. The first item I saw was a single tea cup lying upright in the sand. An inspection showed no signs of any markings. I continued on past porthole after porthole, some lying attached to the plating, others totally free from the wreck. I swam up to and over the single boiler and down the side of her engines. "This is the area where the gold should be", I thought. However my light revealed no sign of any coins.

In the distance a single dinner plate caught my eye. A closer look revealed a cross in the centre of the disc. There written was "The Illawarra and South Coast S. N. Co.". Yes, this is the Bega. Making my way aft I passed several bathroom sinks and a pile of bones, most probably the remains of the prize livestock destined for the 1908 Royal Easter Show. Rounding the stern the remains of a trawler net came into view, it hung suspended from her port propeller. Her twin props proving without a doubt that this was the long lost Bega.

Within the week both wrecks were given full protection from the Government. But were we the first there? Dives over the next few days failed to find the ship's bell or telegraph(s) and of courses her cargo of gold. The bell probably sits pride of place in someone's living room. As they say in the classics, C'est la vie.

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A Picture tells a thousand words!

Send in your captioned diving pictures.

If you're at a dive just pull out your mobile phone (most have a built in camera) and snap a few shots before or after the dive. No need to write a full article, just a few lines in point form and you're on your way to getting published.

Submit your articles or images by emailing them to: scott@southpacificdivers.com

Shipwrecks, Storms and Seamen at Charlestown Diving Academy

On Wed 21st Feb I travelled with Max Gleeson up to Charlestown, near Newcastle, to attend the Charlestown Dive Academy club meeting. The meeting was held at the local golf club with a nice bistro meal and drinks available. There was a really good turn out of people with around 50 attending. The evening started with club business and the presentation of awards and recently completed certifications. It was obvious that Charlestown Diving Academy has one of the most active clubs in the area.

Max gave a slide presentation and talk on various shipwrecks, particularly those on the NSW coast. He also showed some video footage taken more recently on wrecks such as the Tuggerah, Undola, Keilawarra and Bega. Max often travels to fishing clubs, dive clubs, historical society meetings and other functions and always presents and interesting and informative talk and visual show.

Any group interested in having Max along to attend one of their meeting and present his show should contact him on (02) 9524 8077 or email to maxglee@optusnet.com.au

After the show Max answered questions from the audience and autographed copies of his various books on shipwrecks. It was great to see such an active club full of keen divers. I also got to catch up with an old mate, shark expert and north coast diving legend Steve Purvis, as well as photographer Mal Yeo who I hadn't seen for ages.

Charlestown Diving Academy can be found at 103 Pacific Highway, Next to McDonalds, Charlestown NSW 2290
Phone: (02) 4942 1412



Left: Just a part of the crowd at the Charlestown Dive Academy meeting.

Above: Max signs books after the presentation.

Right: Photographer Mal Yeo and Shark expert Steve Purvis.



A Tribute to Richard Francis LATIMER

24/3/43 – 19/3/96

Rick Latimer was a one of a kind. “Larger than life” is perhaps an understatement in reference to Rick, a legendary Wreck Diver and mentor to many.

He was simply known by most as “Rick” or “Latimer” during my generation. Also “The Black Tick” or “Bruno” - in the early days. It didn’t matter how you referred to him, he made a real difference to a lot of people’s lives.



Even today, his legacy lives on. Two of Rick’s young apprentices have come back to help steer his beloved South Pacific Divers Club into its next wave of evolution. Unlike some of the other early generation divers, Rick embraced change, always into gadgets and new ways of doing things. His dive gear may have not always reflected this but he was very forward thinking regarding ideas for the dive club.

In the water, he always made diving look easy. A good way to describe his style below the waves is “majestic”. And he passed a lot of what he knew onto later generations of divers. Rick introduced a lot of people to ‘old school’ decompression diving, often using the Birchgrove Park wreck off Avalon in Sydney as an introductory experience.

As a person, he was a true mate, perhaps like a big brother for grasshoppers like myself, with an unforgettable laugh and boyish enthusiasm. Rick was a real character. With more wreck dives

under his belt than most people would achieve in ten lifetimes, he was also a very humble person, giving a lot back to diving - mentoring many, and increasing the passion for diving in general.

Just talking to Rick on the phone made you want to dive. It didn’t matter where, or how many times you’d been there before, his enthusiasm was contagious – even on wrecks he’d dived hundreds of times. One example of the difference Rick made relates to me. I’d been



diving with mates for a few years and after a number of trips up and down the coast, regularly diving around Sydney – from my own private boat, enthusiasm for diving began to wane. Seeing references to South Pacific Divers Club in Dive Log, I took a chance and went along to one of their monthly meetings.

Committee talk at the front of the room sounded interesting, but what really got me hooked was talking to one of the people from in the crowd, Rick. I knew I was speaking with a guy who truly loved diving. Someone who I later found out was a legend, taking dozens of people out on fishing trawlers, decades prior and teaching them Wreck Diving. A guy who pioneered the discovery of a number of wrecks. But so humble and embracing, there wasn't even a hint at truly how accomplished a diver Rick was.

Another fond memory I have of Rick was meeting Sue and Lynn, on a dive we once did to the Tuggerah. After parking the car and trailer at Water Street, I returned to see Rick sitting in the passenger seat in my boat, arms folded - laughing with a grin from ear-to-ear. Like the king of diving! Sue and Lynn were in their Long John's, holding either side of the boat - up to their armpits in water, waiting for me to come aboard and go diving. Putting things into perspective, Sue and Lynn weren't just Open Water divers but accomplished Wreck Divers and Instructors. Away from diving, one ran a University legal faculty, the other with a PHD in Agriculture. The feeling that these two were previous under studies was obvious.

Perhaps a little selfish, I guess this is my tribute to Rick, 11 years on. A lot of other people whose lives he had an impact on got to write their tributes in the April 1996 edition of the Wet Rag, but I was away overseas. I missed saying goodbye in person, instead talking to him on the phone from London about a week before he passed away. The most difficult phone conversation in my entire life. Speaking with Anne back in March 1996, she said Rick's days were

numbered, to ring back and have a chat to him.

What do you say on a call like that from half way around the world? Partly sedated, he talked about the good times we'd had over the precious few years I'd known him. All I could do is agree with everything he said.

After returning to Australia later in 1996, it was hard for me to keep up passion for diving without Rick around and soon after I stopped diving all together. What made me start again was when Cookie emailed saying there was a vote to close South Pacific Divers Club early last year, something that motivated me to get back into diving, fuelled by the passion for the club Rick left behind.

Even last weekend at the OzTek dive show, there were a number of reminders of the impact Rick had on the diving community. In preparing the extensive show coverage you see in this edition, Scott went around stand-by-stand talking to exhibitors. After mentioning where he as from, the majority of people said – "I remember that club, Rick Latimer used to talk to us regarding sponsorship". How about that? Still fond memories 11 years on, from a wide cross section of the dive industry.

March 19th, 2007 marked the 11th anniversary of Richard Francis Latimer passing.

Rick, we still miss you.

John Fardoulis

Photoshop in 8 simple steps.

by Dave Chillari as shown by Dave Harasti

1. Open image.

Open your chosen image in photoshop. All cameras on the market will give you a JPEG image. If you are fortunate enough to have RAW recording format on your camera, all the better. Although these files are bigger than JPEGs, they contain all the information BEFORE the compression of saving in the JPEG format. Therefore you will have total control over your finished picture. However if you feel more comfortable using JPEG images, your workload will be slightly less, but you will not have as much control. For a non-professional image, this format is fine.

2. Crop.

Removing any excess image will enhance your subject matter. When cropping, mentally divide your image into thirds. (Rule of Thirds.) Try to crop so that your subject matter is either along one of these lines, or better still place your subject where the lines intersect one another. This will generally give your image a lot more impact than having the subject in the centre of the frame. Images in the centre will dominate the viewer's attention and that will be all they will tend to see. By placing the subject in these imaginary lines of thirds, the viewer's eyes are free to explore the image, making for a more pleasing result. However, this is only a rule so it is meant to be broken. There will be times where having the subject centre frame is the way to photograph the subject. Depending on the resolution of your camera, you may want to limit the cropping to keep image detail. Competitions generally limit cropping to 30%.



3. Auto Levels.

This is perhaps the easiest step. To find auto levels, you go to <image>-<adjustments>-<auto levels>. This is a one click process that generally works well. If the results are over the top, you can fade the results by <edit>-<fade>. This fade feature will allow you to fade any effect you have applied from 0-100% but only IMMEDIATELY after you have applied it.



4. Brightness/Contrast.

The brightness and contrast control can be located at <image>-<adjustments>-<brightness/contrast>. The brightness/contrast control increases the definition between dissimilar tones and objects. As a general rule, like all adjustments, keep the changes small as too greater change can look very unnatural. I tend to adjust the contrast to +5 to +10 and I will drop the brightness -5 or so. I use the preview to see my changes. Again, small changes can make a big impact.



5. Shadows/Highlights.

Invariably pictures taken underwater will not be completely correctly exposed. Due to the limiting factors of light underwater we are normally forced to take powerful light sources (strobes) with us. These strobes, having a range of a couple metres at best, are still capable of overexposing an image. Coupled with underexposed backgrounds due to light loss at depth and overexposed foreground images, this can pose quite a problem with underwater photography. Thankfully photoshop has a solution- Shadows/Highlights <image>-<adjustments>-<shadows/highlights..> With this control you are able to brighten us the underexposed background and subdue the overexposed foregrounds. This tool generally works quite well, but an extremely underexposed or overexposed will still pose a problem. If there is no definition in the original image, photoshop is unable to create something from nothing. Again, small changes work best. If you need to improve again, you can apply the tool again.

6. Unsharpen Mask.

Due to the dynamic nature of the ocean, our underwater photography is always effected by movement. This can leave us with a picture that is slightly blurry. With the unsharpen mask <filter>-<sharpen>-<unsharpen mask> you can make a soft image sharp. Again only adjust in small increments, using the preview tick box to check the effect of the tool. Generally I try to use about 50% and up to 4 pixel radius.



7. Levels.

The final step to editing an image to to open up the Levels command. <image>-<adjustments>-<levels>. Here you will see a histogram with a black, grey and white arrow beneath it. Drag the black arrow to the right a few millimeters and the white arrow a few millimeters to the left.



8. Save.

The last step is to save the image. Most people will save their image as a JPEG. It is strongly recommended that you save the image at the highest resolution possible.

All of these steps, with the exception of the unsharpen mask are tools available to be used in most underwater photography competitions. The use of other tools can result in disqualification

Sharks at Shelly

Best kept secret
at Sydney's most popular site

By Fran Thai-Low

Cabbage Tree Bay aka Shelly Beach is one of the most popular beaches not just for swimmers, sunbathers and families but for scuba divers too. There is always one course or another going on; and you're guaranteed to find plenty of divers around. The funny thing is most divers stick to the right side of Shelly, playing with the wobbegongs and groupers. But if you venture to the left side, there is a whole new world stirring in the waters below.



I had always known there were Dusky Whalers at Shelly; I just never knew where so Peter and I went to explore their hide out. It was a beautiful day, the visibility was about 8m but there were 'bits' and 'stuff' floating in the water, making it hard to see through unless you were up close and personal. The great thing about Shelly is that it's shallow and you can stay down for ages. My grouper and wrasse are the highlight of every Shelly dive. But they were not my main attraction on today's mission; today we were searching for more unfamiliar faces. We swam, for what seemed like forever and then I heard an 'mmmmmmmm... mmmmm', it was Peter desperately trying to get my attention when a 2m Dusky Whaler had just swum past him, and I missed it! I was so disappointed to say the least I was fuming I wasn't paying more attention. I got my chance as I noticed something in the distance, something gliding along the waters, approaching us closer and



closer, it was indeed a dusky whaler, in all its glory. Long, streamline and graceful. The figure was definitely unfamiliar as its curiosity grew wondering what we were doing in its territory. Dusky Whalers have long pointed snouts and long pectoral fins, with a low ridge between the dorsal fins.

The grey shark swam up close and turned swiftly passing slowly and cautiously, its eyes never leaving us as it swam and began to circle around Peter and I, not threateningly, just curious. Peter



We went back the following week, but unfortunately we didn't find any this time, we spent a good while searching but they didn't want to come out to play. If you want to catch a glimpse of these Dusky Whalers you'd better get in the water quick, they tend to move on when the water cools down.



was filming the whole thing. Then we saw two smaller dusky whalers, they weren't as brave as the first one, they kept their distance. It was such an amazing sight to see them especially at such a place like Shelly. Good ol' predictable Shelley. I got to admire three sharks and Peter saw four sharks, he told me afterwards how the first shark was so much bigger than the others, but I didn't care, I was just happy to have seen them at all!

WEIRD & WONDERFUL PHOTOS

If you've got a weird or wonderful photo send it to scott@southpacificdivers.com. Here are just a few we received this month.



Left: Now that's an RIB!!
A bit underpowered?
Below: And this one was a bit overpowered.



Right: Ooops! Someone forgot to trim the boat.



Below: An Ore Carrier out of Dampier in very rough seas.

This sequence of images really makes you appreciate the sort of weather that can result in shipwreck.



Below: The Sygna wrecked on Stockton Beach at Newcastle with an RAAF helicopter above the deck. 30 years later the elements have taken their toll and all that remains is a small rusting hulk.





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Looking for a dive buddy?

We have members all over Sydney looking to dive every weekend. Come along to this months club meeting and arrange your next dive.

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the Month at 8pm in the Bankstown Sports Club, Greenfield Parade, Bankstown.

WOMEN IN DIVING

Is the feature topic of next months issue of the Wet Rag so come on girls, get typing and submit your articles now!

Deadline is Thursday 5th of April 2007

Next Club Meeting is Monday 16th April Featuring Special guest speaker - deep trimix wreck diver Lesley Hillyer

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OzTek '07



Held at Technology Park at Redfern in Sydney and billed as “Excitement without limits for divers who want more” this show certainly was huge.

The internationally acclaimed OZTeK Diving Technologies Conference and Exhibition featured a cast of speakers and presenters drawn from the among the world's most accomplished divers, a full-scale diving exhibition showcasing the very best and latest dive equipment that the world of diving has to offer as well as a photographic competition. The real value of the event was for divers to get together and catch up, something they rarely get a chance to do. With the who's who of the Australian diving industry present there was a lot of socialising over the two days. It was great to see so many familiar old faces and to catch up with what they had been doing.

A large group of South Pacific Divers Club members were present on both days and a handfull even purchased gold passes to attend all the presentations and seminars. The seminars were mostly interesting and informative and the equipment on show in the trade exhibition was enough to whet any budding tech divers appetite.

The event ended on Sunday night with a formal dinner and presentation of awards. Among the winners was Samir Al Hafith who received the tech diver of the year award, something that was probably long overdue considering his contributions to tech diving over the past few years. Congratulations Samir.



The displays featured all sorts of equipment but it was obvious that rebreathers are continuing to make an huge impact in the tech diving scene with two new rebreathers presented at the show and more on display than in previous years. I'd predict this market to grow even further and it will be interesting to see the number and build quality of rebreathers on display at the next Oztek show.

None of this would have gone ahead if it wasn't for the tireless (or should I say sleepless) efforts behind the scenes, and in front of them, by the two dynamos who had the vision to conceive this event - Richard Taylor and David Strike. They are probably still recovering and it amazes me how they manage to pull off such a huge event. They certainly looked full of energy whenever I ran into them at the show but I'm sure they were running on pure adrenaline by then. Congratulations Richard and David on an excellent and successful event. Something the diving industry in this country is crying out for and will surely miss if you ever decide not to put it on.

Finally, to the exhibitors and guest speakers and all the others who's efforts make this event happen. The exhibitors certainly had interesting displays and products and in the two days I was there I still think I didn't manage to get around and see every product available. I only managed to catch a few of the guest speakers and they were educational and well worth coming to see.

I guess we'll all have to wait until the next event to catch up again but it will probably take us all at least 12 months to get over this one. Well done to all concerned!

The following pages give you some idea of the people and equipment that was there. Despite using two cameras and attending both days I wasn't able to get everyone on film. I'm sure you'll recognise some of the faces and other, well who knows, someday they could be breaking new ground in exploration using new diving technology.



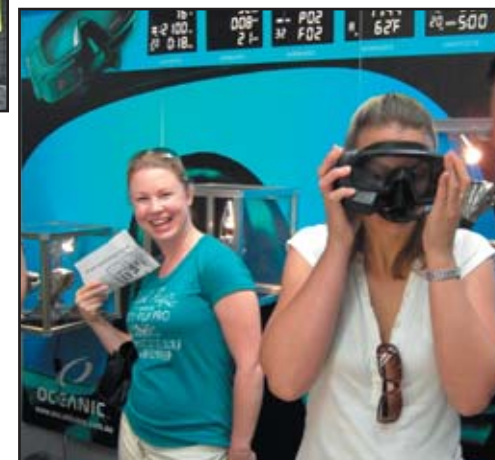
Above: Barry Andrewartha, a long time supporter of the South Pacific Divers Club and of the Scuba Industry in general. Editor of the legendary Dive Log and Sport Diving Magazine, Barry always has some words of encouragement and support for any diver no matter what their level. Barry has been diving since the early days of the sport in this country and also publishes a Spearfishing magazine and is the Australian agent for Omer equipment.



Above: Sport Diving Magazine currently has a subscription special. With each subscription you receive a free Omer folding knife, a pouch for the knife and lanyard to attach it to your BCD.



Above: Russell Kitt from Oceanic gave a great demonstration of the New Oceanic Datamask (top right)



Right: Kylie Prescott & Carmen Tencate have some fun trying out the Datamask.



Left: Kelly Moloney from Digital Diver with Louise Bernstein from Undersea Explorer



Right: The Tabata Australia Crew - Erin Hyland, Rebecca Pepper, Steve Cross and Sue Crowe.



Top Left: Kim Smith of Jetsam Technologies with the Sport KISS Rebreather.

Top: SPDC member Jackie Rotenstein

Left: Oztek organiser Richard Taylor hard at work (L), with Jason Blackwell of Dive Dive Dive, Brisbane (R)

Below: Just part of the retail displays on show at Oztek



Top Left: Jason Foster of Drager

Top: Richard Lundgren from GUE gives a talk on decompression theory.

Left: Club member Bob May.

Below left: The legendary 'Nipper', Merv Maher, looking to update some of his dive equipment.



Below: A unique mask with built-in snorkel.



Left: The Southern Cross Divers Stand was busy all day. With SCD being the only real experienced rebreather specialist shop in the country Barry's advice is always in high demand.



Above: Alan Studley at the KISS rebreather stand.

Below: Reece Calvert of Kirrawee and John Warner from Frog Dive



Right: Divetek Australia had plenty of toys on their stand with Greenforce lights, booster pumps and oxygen sensors among other things.



Above: Colin Willcox with the Eagle Scrubber.



Above Right: Club member Lyn Vincent with Gary Dunning.

Right: A jovial David Strike - Oztek organiser.



Below: Lesley Hillier of Aquasea and club member Neil Vincent.

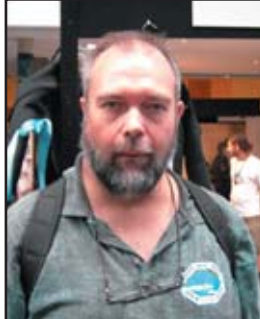
Below right: Club member Mark Pinna and Sven Paepke of the Sydney Project.





Above: Simon Hadwin of Divetekoz with Mike Scotland

Below: Club member Andreas Thimm with a camera shy John 'Blackie' Black.



Above: Club members Geoff and Mitchell Cook

Left: Peter Flockhart

Below left: Steve Loneragan, Ron Micjan, Andy Del Riccio and Derek Morton

Below right: Deep wreck diver and underwater model Garry 'Chicken' Dunning



Above: Theo Starr

Right: Conway Bennett of PADI

Below right: Tony Richardson from Vic, Richard Nichols of Halcyon Australia and Win Christie from NZ.

Below: Selina Barbour from Scuba Warehouse and Brendan Van Zyl from Divers Online



Above left: Club member Scott Willan and SPDC President John Fardoulis

Above: Club members Matt Reeve, Noel Taylor and Mark Pinna.





Top: Dave Pearce from Brisbane and Scott Jamieson of DAN Asia Pacific.

Middle: Kevin Okeby, Sven Paepke and Samir Al Hafith from the Sydney Project with NZ diver Peter Mesely.

Below: John O'Brien (PADI), Bronwyn O'Brien, John Thet (Scuba Diver), Jayne Jenkins (Scuba Diver), Tim Rowland (PNG Dive Association), David Espinoza (Scuba Diver).



Above left: Martin Hing (Sydney Dive Academy)

Above Middle: Terri Allen (Records and Publications director CDAA) and Helen Higgins (Products officer CDAA)

Above Right: Club member Andy Del Riccio

Left: Gary Barclay (Vic CDAA site director) and Warrwick McDonald (National Director of the CDAA)



Near Left: Linda Claridge (CDAA Instructor), Hannah Lang (Tourism Tasmania) and Gary Barclay (CDAA)



Near Left: Damon Blackwell, Jason Blackwell and Brett Hawkins of Dive Dive Dive, Brisbane.



Above: Masayuki Takashima (WA Travel and Dive Centre) with Chris and Kristina Lyons of Hotsuits Australia.



Above: Peter Grills (Newcastle CDAA Instructor) with club member Matt Reeves.



Above: Neil Dorrian (Cressi Sub), Josie Ruth (Dive 2000), David Hay (Cressi Sub)



Left: Jerry Witkowski of Dive Adventures with Steve Grow from Aquatic Explorers, Cronulla.

Right: Justin Andreson (Dive Gizo) with Mathew Kelly (NDiver/OMS)



Pedr Klein (Scubapro), John Seddon, Simon Doughty (Scuba World), the lovely Anja Sussmann (Scubapro), Peter Costello (Southern Diving Adelaide)



Left: Richard Taylor draws the lucky door prizes.

Below: Vince Misiti was one of the winners presented with a set of fins by Stuart Cannon.



Right: Des Williams (Diving Historical Society) with Max and Maryanne Marriott from South Australia





Above: David Strike with Sue Crowe (Tabata Australia)



Above: Anja Sussmann and Samir Al Hafith

Right: It's a small world - Andy Del Riccio - who used to go to primary school with Neil Yates, Scott Leimroth (Wet Rag Editor - who did his advanced course with Neil many years ago) and Neil Yates (Tulagi Dive)



Above: Lamar Hires with the Optima Rebreather



Left: Kim Smith with her KISS rebreather

Right: Ian Griffiths and Toby Bauer

Below: Stuart Cannon, Barry Hallett (Southern Cross Divers) and Paul Raymaekers with the rEvo rebreather



Below: Mike Scotland, John Fardoulis, Gary Dunning and Andreas Thimm





Above: Club member Steve Loneragan

Below: Ian McKinnon and Gemma Procak of Dive Queensland



Below: Mark Pinna

Right: Leo Hillyer of Aquasea Products



Above: Club members Andy Del Riccio and Max Gleeson



Left: Kristyn Ward from Dive Adventures

Right: Rod Bartlett and Yvette Studdock from Brisbane



Above: Jo Barkworth and Paula Williams from URG Queensland

Below: Michael Collins of trimixdivers.com and Max Gleeson.

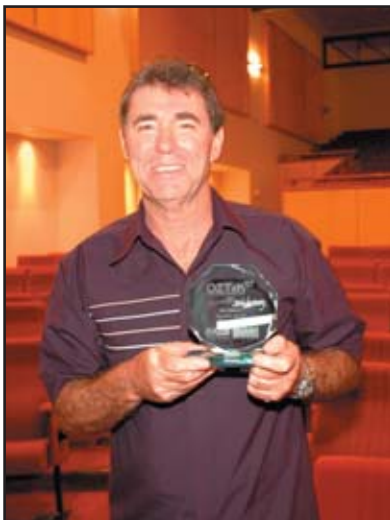




Left: Mark Spencer and Simon Hadwin watch the photo presentation.

Right: David Von Schill receives another award and a trip to Walindi Resort from MC Richard Taylor.

Far Right: David Von Schill and Kevin Deacon



South Pacific Divers Club cleans up at Oztek Photo Comp!

Club members Max Gleeson and Neil Vincent both won major prizes at the Oztek photo competition. Max came first in the video section with his five minute video titled 'Wreck Diving NSW'. Max has made the transition from stills to video very successfully. Neil came first in the Open Professional section with his cave diving shot "Tank Cave 90m Room" which is a composite of numerous images put together to create a panorama. Congratulations Max and Neil! Best in show was awarded to David Von Schill who is a novice and won numerous prizes in what was his first competition and really deserved his best in show win.

Left: Max Gleeson with his award for best video.



Left: Rod Pelling and Max Gleeson

Right: Max makes a speech accepting his award.

Far Right: Neil Vincent making a speech accepting his award.





Above: Peter Whielaw (Scuba Association Vanuatu) and Carol Gordon (Vanuatu Tourism)



Above: Carol and Gary Vane Tempest try out the Eagle rebreather.



Above: Inspiration Dreaming - Geoff Cook hands over his gold Amex card to a very happy Barry Hallett. Perhaps getting his boat running should be Geoff's priority.



Left: Tim Hochgrebe and Anja Sussmann

Right: Scott Willan, Steve Loneragan and Bob May examine the Eagle rebreather



Below: Lee Harvey and Steve Grow of Aquatic Explorers Cronulla

Below: Daryl Waters brightens up the day for Andreas Thimm



Below: George Evatt and Tim Hochgrebe



Below: Gerry Chia



Below: Wreck expert John Riley





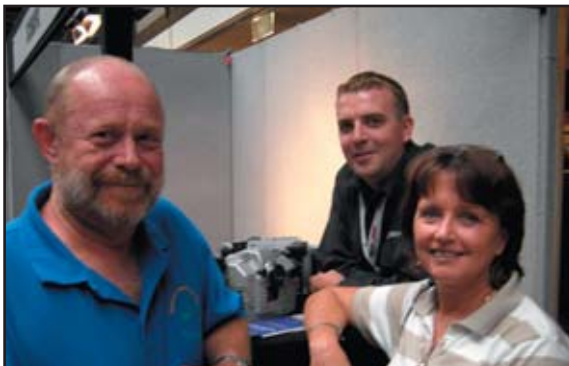
Above: Jo Anne Klocke and Mick Aitchison from Pelican Products with Jerry Witkowski (Dive Adventures)



Above: Jason McHattan (Sub Sea Systems), Jeff Giddins (Scuttlebutt Scuba) and Andy Del Riccio



Above: Samir proving that diving deeper than 100m is a great way to meet girls. Here he is with 2006 Rolex Our World Underwater Scholarship winner Delia Ni Chiobhain and Anja Sussmann.



Left: Jan Vanderkev from the Solomons, Cameron Thomas (Scubapix) and Lesley Hillyer (Aquasea)

Below: The Scubapro Team - Steve Wennel, Bruce Riley, David Strike, Steve Blume, Anja Sussmann, Rick Payne, John Sedden and Pedr Klein.

Below: Andria Schmitt (L&W Compressors) Richard Nichols and Anja Sussmann



Below: Mark Pinna tries on a harness.



Rebreather Roundup

By Jason Mc Hattan

Inspo/Evo

Let's start at number one, the best selling up until now, and for the foreseeable future. There's no one on the horizon to take the crown from these brothers. Refinements over the years make these very useable and ownable for the everyday rebreather diver. They just work. You do see them break down now and then, but that is almost always due to aftermarket devices, not the main beast. For dives to 40m, just strap the Evo on your back, no slings, no other crap, and go diving. Integrated deco, HUD, reliable controller, ADV....

Verdict:

Personally I wouldn't buy one as I don't like OTS lungs, but I never have any hesitation recommending these to new rebreather divers.

Revo

I'm glad to see someone is thinking outside the square. Actually, just thinking, where most other manufacturers don't. They just follow what everyone else is doing, cylindrical scrubber, tank on each side, OTS lungs, rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb. Paul has at least come up with something different, sort of. Basic layout is very Mk15. Counterlung on and close to your back, scrubber aft of this. Manual add valves on the bottom corners of the chassis. He has however used two scrubber cannisters, both axial, one after the other. A kind of axial axial if you like. Whether this will actually work the same as or different to a single axial of the concatenated dimensions is open to debate. The construction of this unit is excellent, better than most on the market. The first sub \$10k (ready to dive, training included) CCR on the Australian market.

Likes:

- Completely back mounted
- Solidly mounted manual add valves, not sitting on a floppy bag
- Rugged construction
- Compact size
- Versatile layout
- Good size handsets/gauges

Dislikes:

Too heavy, the chassis is overkill. 30kg+ ready to dive is too heavy these days.

Clunky electronics. They do a simple job, but are complex to operate.

Verdict:

Definitely one to watch. Will take sales from most others. Scope for improvement, but it's looking good. A couple of refinements and it will be a winner.

KISS

KISS Classic

Those who dive them love them, mostly. Well put together, rugged, with a reliable loop. BOV as standard is a plus. This machine is also an enthusiasts machine, with some tinkering always required. However, if you're happy to wield a screwdriver then this is a decent option.

KISS Sport

A well made recreational unit. If you don't ask too much of this unit it shouldn't let you down. A little wide for my liking, but otherwise neat and tidy. Quite useable/ownable for non-mechanical people, as long as they have a friend who can tweak it occasionally.

Verdict:

Good for enthusiasts and people who like to play with their gear. Can be slightly cheaper than other CCR units, but don't let that be your decision point.

RB80/clone

An absolute joke from start to finish. MASSIVE. Yes, it's only the size of an al80, but you need another two al80's to run it because it wastes so much gas. The BOV/ mouthpiece is MASSIVE too, it must weigh 2kg at least, and there's no way you could tilt your head to look down as it basically rests on your chest.

Verdict: A joke. SCR is dead.

Eagle

Available in mCCR (KISS style add) or eCCR, this unit is founded on a solid basic design. Most of the limitations of the base unit have been addressed. Having one bottle internal and one external may not appeal to some, but a lot of units (PRISM Meg Revo KISS) actually have both bottles on the outside. Having the 1st stages mounted on the unit, fed by HP lines, makes the unit neat and tidy, but does make offboard gas supply an issue. Maybe Colkan will have an optional feed for offboard gas like they do on their 15.5's?

Verdict:

Lots of potential. If it can come in at the quoted \$6800 (plus training?) for the mCCR version, it will kill most of the others.

Mk15.5

Still the ducks guts, even though it has many limitations in todays technical diving. If you buy one of these you have to spend time and money getting it to suit your way of diving.

Verdict:

An enthusiasts machine, but still the best, most proven CCR in existence.

Azimuth:

Big and heavy. Oh, and SCR is dead.

UBS40:

Small, light, and neat. I love this little machine. Basically an Azimuth made useable. Yes, it's SCR, and as someone said, SCR is dead, but this machine is so nice that it will make a great conversion to mCCR or eCCR. BUT, only as long as it's cheap enough to do so. If the base price gets above \$6k then forget it, this unit dies.

O2ptima

This unit will, in my estimation, be the second most popular rebreather over the next five years. Being American, it sells well to Americans. I personally don't like many things about this unit. I tried to like it, honestly, but I can't. As I've said before, Dive-Rite products are top notch, I have used them continuously for 15 years and will continue to, unfortunately many things on the O2ptima aren't from Dive-Rite.

Verdict:

No thanks.

Boris/Meg/PRISM

These were no shows. Kevin (Boris) was meant to be there and had a stand, but I believe he had a personal emergency to attend to, which is fair enough. The others obviously have disregarded the Australasian market. To not even have a unit plonked on someone elses stand is ridiculous.



Top: An early rebreather on the Historical Diving Society display.

Below; The new Eagle Rebreather



Above: Mitchell Cook with a Halcyon RB80 'clone' rebreather.

Below: Paul Raymaekers with his rEvo rebreather.





Lectures and Presentations were held in the rooms upstairs. I only managed to make it to the presentation by Richard Lundgren from GUE and it was very well attended with around 100 people packed into the room, many sitting on the floor and standing around the walls to fit in.

The equipment displays were well attended (left and below right) and often I had to return to a stand a few times to get to the piece of equipment I wanted to investigate just because there was such great interest.

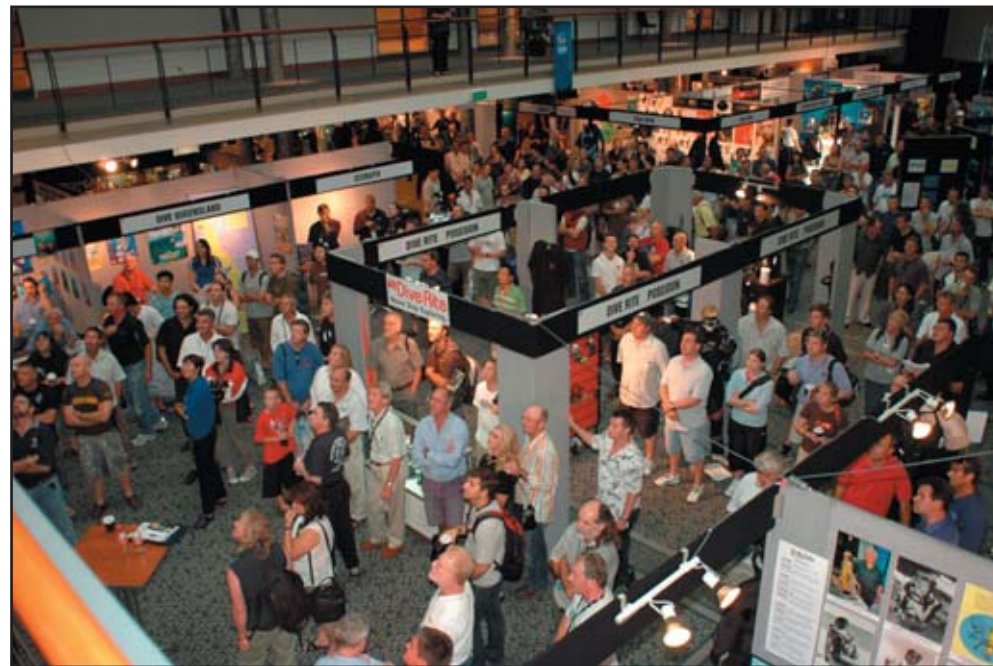


Above: Club members Simon Gayler, Matt Reeve and Mark Pinna

Below: Jo Barkworth (URGQLD), Scott Willan (SPDC), Jackie Rotenstein (SPDC), Samir Al Hafith (Sydney Project), Max Gleeson (SPDC) and Gary Dunning.



Below: The busy lunchtime crowd awaits the lucky door prize announcement.





Above: Club members Bob May, Mark Pinna, Matt Reeve, Neil Vincent, Shelley Breuseker (RUC), Scott Willan (SPDC) and Greg Blackburne(RUC)



Above: SPDC members Steve Loneragan and Jackie Rotenstein debrief with Ron Micjan (3rd from left), Jo Barkworth (right) and members of the Sydney Project.

The event finished with a black tie dinner and presentation of the Techdiver of the Year Award. Congratulations to Samir Al Hafith for winning a well deserved and long overdue award.

On the Saturday night a bunch of South Pacific and Sydney Project members, joined by a couple of URGQLD members got together at a local watering hole to debrief. Plenty of stories were told and plans made for future diving. Events like OzTek are instrumental in bringing divers together and creating opportunities for divers to meet.

When I arrived home on Sunday night I was totally worn out from taking photos all day long, discussing different pieces of equipment and bumping into people I hadn't seen for ages. I emptied my bag on the table and realised I now had hours of information and reading ahead of me to absorb all the things I had seen there.

Thank you and congratulations once again to David Strike, Richard Taylor and all who helped to make this an interesting, educational and successful event.

Bring on the next one!

Below: When I arrived home on Sunday night I found I had gathered a lot of information at Oztek, hopefully enough to keep me occupied until the next show.





HOT GEAR AT OZTEK

These two pages feature just some of the great diving gadgets and equipment we saw at Oztek. Among the standout pieces of new equipment was the Galileo Sol dive computer (bottom right) which is more than just a computer, it also has integrated heart rate monitor (Polar) so it can adjust your deco according to workload and it also has a built in digital compass and other amazing navigation screens.

The hydraulic cutting tool on the left would come in useful on a few wrecks but may require a bit of extra buoyancy as it was quite heavy.

The Drager booster pump (below left) was quite expensive but the service requirements are only every few years so maintenance costs wouldn't be high. It is mainly designed for military applications and is made for use in extreme conditions and exposure to the elements.

The Ocean Reef surface to diver communication unit (below) can be used with the Neptune system FFM (top left). Featuring a quick gas disconnect and neat looking led light array built into the mask this would be something to buy for the diver who has everything.



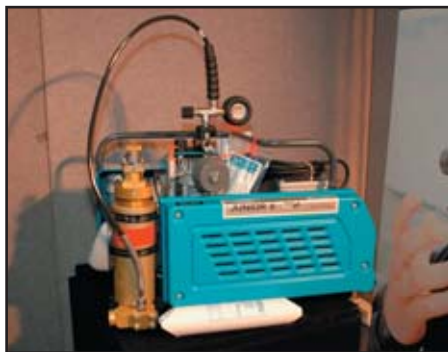
Above: Steven Meyer (Bright Weights/Chris Benz Watches)

Below: Pedr Klein with the Aladdin Galileo Sol - More than just a dive computer.





Below: This small Drager compressor would be great for a club or group of active divers to invest in. With limited maintenance requirements and full service and support by Drager you can be assured of a quality airfill everytime.



The innovative Oceanic Datamask contains a miniature liquid crystal display (LCD) panel, proprietary Digital Optic System, microprocessor, depth transducer, wireless cylinder pressure receiver, diver replaceable battery, and controlling software. The miniature LCD allows you to keep your eyes focused on the dive while presenting critical dive data including: current depth, elapsed dive time, cylinder pressure, and dive time remaining.

HOT GEAR AT OZTEK

There was plenty of different camera equipment on show. Various housings were on display at the Scubapix stand.



Above: Barry Hallett with the rEvo rebreather. The rEvo has back mounted dual counterlungs and twin scrubbers which keep the profile of the unit down making it very compact. Solidly built this unique design has a lot going for it.



Above: We're not sure what it is but if it's on the SxD stand you can be sure it's for sale



Right: Divetek booster pump. Great for those travelling to out of the way places where gas may not be readily available.

Right: Interesting sized alloy tanks from Frog Dive. These would make good sling tanks or a lite set of twins.





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Dive Report - Magnetic Island and SS Yongala

Text and Images by Dave Chillari

Saturday, 10th March saw myself loaded with dive gear, camera, strobes and other luggage board a Virgin Blue flight from Sydney to Townsville with the anticipation of diving one of Australia's best dive sights, as well as some nice relaxing island diving. After an aborted attempt to dive the Whitsundays in February due to the cyclone that formed in the Coral Sea, March saw me heading up to Townsville and over to Magnetic Island to do some shore diving and the SS Yongala, Australia's premier wreck dive.

After flying up to Townsville and taking a ferry to Magnetic Island I met the guys from Pleasure Divers on Magnetic Island. (or Maggie as it known to the locals.) I had been sent here to see a guy my mate had done his Dive Master course with in Nelson Bay.

I was looking forward to going out on their new liveaboard vessel, but due to low season lack of demand, the vessel was not running. Normally we would have done 4 dives on the outer reef and 3 on the SS Yongala. However, they were able to organize a trip for me with Adrenalin Dive out of Townsville, who picked up from Maggie.

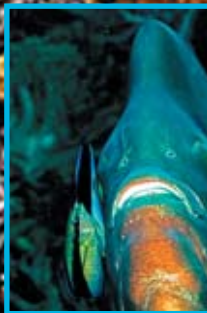
The first scheduled trip out to the Yongala was on Monday, so I had some time to do some island diving. The first night I went for a nice quiet night dive in the peaceful, calm Alma Bay. The night life was quite nice, with Coral Banded Shrimps, Spotted Blue Stingrays, Slipper crays, a strange frilly shrimp and some nice Nudibranchs being seen.

The next day I joined a larger group of diver to explore the local wreck. The wreck is a wooden German Barque, the Moltkie that sank in 1890's. She lays in 5-9m of water and is covered in soft and hard corals, anemones, sponges and a vast array of fish life. The wreck itself is in quite

good condition considering her age and depth. The crows nest is still recognizable and she also boasts two cleaning stations. Here blue Cleaner Wrasse are constantly seen cleaning Emperors, Batfish and other schools of fish. The visibility was about 8-10m and a lovely 29 degrees Celsius.

The next day I awoke early to meet the boat at the wharf. I boarded the boat and got the usual safety drill. We then spent the next three hours motoring to our destination, the SS Yongala, off Cape Bowling Green. The seas were very calm, with a rolling half meter sea and no wind. We saw a few schools of fish feeding on the surface, and I even picked out an olive sea snake from 50m as we motored past.

We were given a brief on the SS Yongala dive and a brief history lesson. The SS Yongala was a luxurious passenger and cargo vessel that ran from Brisbane to Townsville. She sank during a cyclone in 1911 with the loss of



all 121 lives onboard. Due to the mass gravesite classification, the vessel is only allowed to be dived by a few operators and penetration is strictly forbidden. The vessel lies in 22-27m of water, running south to north with her deck facing east.

The plan was to make our way down the stern descent line. After gearing up we were told that the wreck has an extremely strong surface current. To make matters worse, we had a 100m swim to the descent line. After entering the water, I attempted to make my way to the descent line, but the current raging against my camera and wings made getting to the descent line for me impossible. I opted to abort the dive rather than risking an underwater problem. After lunch I had the guys from the boat drop me in the tender on top of the descent line. This made for a much easier descent.

As we made our way down the line the SS Yongala appeared below. I could hardly believe my eyes. The wreck was a seething mass of fish, corals and sponges. I now see why this is so highly regarded

as a dive site. We explored the deck, looking in the holds with our lights, seeing masses of Bullseyes in the gloom. Above deck were many types of tropical fish and Barracuda, Golden and Black Trevally, Loggerhead, Green Sea and Hawksbill turtles. Also seen around the wreck are four types of sea snakes, sharks, big rays, and occasionally whales and dolphins.

I repeated the experience on Wednesday, but this time there was absolutely no current and we were surrounded by huge schools of Batfish and Giant Trevally. We descended down to the bow of the ship and were greeted by schools of baitfish being chased by Giant Trevally and Barracuda. There were fish coming in from all angles, which made for an exciting dive. The dive leader was even surprised when he turned around and saw a banded sea snake curled up on his shoulder. We had about 15 m visibility and the water still a lovely 29 degrees.

Back on Maggie I dove Alma Bay with a very nice coral garden. Visibility was good on the surface, but a chilly thermocline made vis

below 4m very poor. This made for a nice relaxed dive with some great photo opportunities.

Reluctantly I packed my gear away and prepared for the painful journey back to Sydney. Wish I was back there.



SPDC MEMBER PROFILE

SCOTT EGGINTON



What's your nickname? EGGERS

How long have you been a club member? ABOUT A YEAR THIS TIME ABOUT 4 YEARS THE FIRST TIME

What sort of diving do you enjoy most? WRECKS

What is the most common misconception that people have about you? I AM NICE

What kind of music are you into? ALL TYPES EXCEPT FOR OPERA AND YODELLING

Any phobias? SNAKES

What temptations are you powerless to resist? RUST

What do you like to do in your spare time when you're not diving?
RIDE MY MOTOR BIKE OR ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE WATER

What's your favourite dive site and why? ANY SHORE DIVE, NO I WOULD SAY THE TUGGERAH

What's your most treasured piece of dive equipment? MY BOAT AND CROW BAR

What's the most annoying thing someone could do to you on a dive? TAKE A CAMERA.
NO SOMEONE MAKING OUT THEY ARE EXPERIENCED AT A DEEP OR CHALLENGING
DIVE WHEN THEY ARE NOT AND END UP IN TROUBLE WOULD RATHER THEY WERE
STRAIGHT UP AND YOU CAN THEN KEEP AN EYE ON THEM

If you could go anywhere on the planet to dive where would you go and why?
BIKINI ATOLL

If you could have a 'celebrity' dive buddy who would you choose? BOB BALLARD



byron underwater festival 07

10th - 13th May 2007

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Underwater Art Exhibition

Underwater Village



The Byron Underwater Festival is aimed at everyone wanting to experience our marine environment for themselves. Participate - whether you want to learn more about it, dive it, snorkel it, kayak it ... or even paint it.

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Australia

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0403 357 969
or visit the website

What will be happening ?

byron underwater shootout

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\$20,000 prizes - dive gear - dive trips - photographic gear and more

snorkel tours + underwater camera try-outs

snorkel with turtles at Julian Rocks

discover the wreck of the Tassie II

introduction to SCUBA - resort dives

blow bubbles for the first time at Julian Rocks

become inspired

Kayaking with dolphins

including information sessions on dolphin biology and more

Critter identity workshop - What did I see ?

with Neville Coleman

each afternoon at venues around Byron Bay

Marine wildlife and artists presentations

Underwater Naturalist - Neville Coleman

The dolphins of Byron Bay

Humpback and other whales of Australia - Oceania Project

and many other presentations

Documentary screening

Byron Underwater - where tropical and temperate waters merge

Underwater arts

Underwater Art Competition & Exhibition

see Byron Bay transform

Boat Owners & Dive Leaders



BOAT OWNERS

Geoff Cook

Email: geoff@southpacificdivers.com
Phone: 0404 554 554
Location: Barden Ridge
Boat Type: Shark Cat, 5 shallow, 4 deep
Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



Scott Leimroth

Email: scott@southpacificdivers.com
Phone: 0413 717170
Location: Cronulla
Boat Type: Inflatable, 3 shallow, 3 deep
Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



Martin Kandilas

Email: martin@mdk.au.com
Phone: 9525 9399
Location: Dolans Bay
Boat Type: 5.5m, 5 shallow, 4 deep
Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



John Fardoulis

Email: john@southpacificdivers.com
Phone: 0400 888 888
Location: Lilyfield
Boat Type: RIB, 5 shallow, 4 deep + 7.5m half cabin,
6 shallow, 6 deep
Favourite type of diving: Helping novices



Scott Egginton

Email: pennynscott@optusnet.com.au
Phone: 0406 049 449
Location: Milperra
Boat Type: 5m, 4 shallow, 3 deep
Favourite type of diving: Wrecks and Deep



Scott Willan

Email: swillan@thomascoffey.com.au
Phone: 95437095
Location: Bangor
Boat Type: Runabout, 4 shallow, 3 deep + Yacht
Favourite type of diving: Fun Dives



Bob May

Email: bobmay@hotmail.net.au
Phone: 0428 295 516 or 02 4579 1053
Location: Windsor
Boat Type: 6.5m Marlin Broadbill, 8 shallow, 7 deep
Favourite type of diving: Reef & Photography



Max Gleeson

Email: maxglee@optusnet.com.au
Phone: 0416 041 021
Location: Caringbah
Boat Type: Marlin Broadbill, 4 deep
Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



DIVE LEADERS

All boat owners are dive leaders. In addition, the following are also shore dive co-ordinators and dive leaders.

Scott Hansman

Email: scott.h@southpacificdivers.com
Phone: 0403 843 521
Location: Cronulla
Favourite type of diving: Reef dives, shore dives



Paul Stranger

Email: paulstranger@hotmail.com
Phone: 0432 860 501
Location: Newtown
Favourite type of diving: Night dives, shore dives





BUNYIP ON THE PROWL

Which female club member was recently stopped by a drug detection Beagle when going through a major Australian airport? Seems the Beagle had a taste for hot chocolate.

Which club member forgot his passport, then forgot the keys to his flat when he went there to get the missing passport, then almost missed his flight when the US vice president turned up and stopped traffic at the airport.

Which famous underwater photographer and wreck diver was recently seen diving at Jibbon beach in 3m of water searching for an elusive Harlequin fish?

Which club member recently lost some dive gear on a wreck dive. The embarrassing part is that it was lost on the surface. It's amazing how a little inflation can save the day but sad when you forget your open water basics and forget to 'Inflate your BCD' when on the surface. Maybe a refresher course is needed. An expensive lesson.

WEBSITE STATISTICS

The Website received an average of 175 visits per day from users all around the world in March. Downloads of the WetRag have increased from just over 2000 a month last year to 4009 in January and 3343 in February.

We had the most visits in January - 7814 !!

In February we had 7688 visits to the website.

Wednesday is still our busiest day on average.
Most people visiting the website between 5pm and 10pm.

Join Us



Like to join the South Pacific Divers Club?
Membership has many benefits including:

- **Like minded people** to dive with.
- **Mentoring** - Learn more about diving. Increase your diving skills by diving with others. Experienced members are keen to help you learn more. Group organised education such as first aid and boat handling courses.
- **Adventure** - New places to dive. New things to see.
- **Boat Dives** - Charter boats at discount rates and a number of members boats are available to dive from. Not for profit diving with new friends.
- **Develop Special Interests** - Rebreather, Photography, Ecology, Wrecks, Exploration.
- **Free Independent Advice** - Equipment, sites to dive, trips away, etc.
- **Social Activities** - BBQs, Barefoot Bowls, Wine Tasting, Movies, Charity events, Paintball, and much more.
- **Life long friendships** and contacts in the diving industry - Not just a club, it's a way of life.

To **join** simply fill in the form on the next page and post to
P.O. Box 823, Bankstown, NSW, 2200.

Better yet, come along to one of our **club meetings** held every
**3rd Monday of the month at Bankstown Sports
Club, Greenfield Parade, Bankstown.** Email
john@southpacificdivers.com for more information.



ESTABLISHED
1962

Join the Club.

Membership Application Form

Complete this form and post to: **South Pacific Divers Club, P.O. Box 823 Bankstown NSW 2200**

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

☐ I wish to apply for 1 year's membership.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Post Code: _____

Phone: _____

Work: _____

Home: _____

Mobile: _____

E-Mail: _____

Diving Certification: _____

Certification Number: _____

Are You a Boat Owner: ☐ yes ☐ No

If yes, type of boat: _____

Join now and membership lasts until end financial year 2008

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Single \$50.00 Family \$75.00

Please Note that Membership for 2006-07 has been increased to cover Insurance

DIVING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I/We _____ hereby apply to join South Pacific Divers Club Inc. I/We understand the Club is non-profit, non-affiliated with any training organisation and is for certified divers. South Pacific Divers Club Inc does not offer instruction, advice or supervise its members' divers. It is a condition of Club membership that members exercise their own judgement in accordance with their training in deciding whether and/or how to participate in any particular dive, the technique used, or choice of equipment and that any clarification in regard to these matters should be referred to a qualified instructor or my/our certifying agency.

I/We have read the above conditions and accept same as a condition of membership.

Signed _____

DATE _____