



Established 1962

# WET RAG

[www.southpacificdivers.com](http://www.southpacificdivers.com)

April | 07

## Women In Diving

**SPECIAL EDITION  
BY WOMEN FOR WOMEN**



[www.southpacificdivers.com](http://www.southpacificdivers.com)

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## EDITORS MESSAGE



I've really come to appreciate the amount of effort and co-ordination that goes into getting the Wet Rag out, not just in this issue, but in previous issues that SPDC has put out. It's a bit late this time 'round, but isn't late fashionable? A quiet thankyou to Joyce Lee, Fran Thai-Low, Kylie Suttor; Martina Broder & Jackie Rotenstein; these SPDC women set themselves a high standard in bringing together a plethora of women related articles while they juggled 'real jobs', uni, family commitments, illness and of course, dive time.

Though it appears on the surface that males do tend to dominate the dive industry, we have a growing number of female divers striving (quietly) to challenge dive industry norms on wrecks, in caves, dive instruction and leading, in business and in day to day / weekend diving. I use the term 'quietly' because of a reoccurring theme that continued to describe women in this industry – no ego's, no chest beating.

In this women's issue we cover passionate instructors, exceptional business owners, and arguably one of Australia's most passionate and experienced female wreck dive – Lesley Hillyer. Not forgetting to also thank Laura Betts who is part of international diving royalty, the first ever female Nitrox instructor, an accomplished Tech Diver, online retailer and all round nice person.

These women and many more within this issue have set and achieved goals through determination, passion and at times male adversity. We take a look at the funny side of male divers in 10 Things About Male Divers; DAN kindly provided an article on women's fitness in diving and Kelly Jandik talks about the Ladies SCAN weekend away.

I think the highlight of this month's theme was having Lesley present a talk of her experiences as business owner and as an accomplished (deep) wreck diver. Many faces sat awe struck throughout Lesley's presentation, and it wasn't just the chicks – even the guys were appreciative (dare I say respectful) of Lesley's diving explorations and adventures. Lesley has a natural ability at recounting experiences, and is has an enormous depth of knowledge that many members and guests tapped into. She truly demonstrated the genuine person that she is, coming across as someone who is passionate and knowledgeable about what she does; and it was also refreshing to listen to someone that who has achieved so much and who is extremely appreciative of the experiences and opportunities that have come her way. We've included a transcript of Lesleys talk for those who missed out.

A quick thanks also to Max Gleeson for his media presentation which took us diving with Lesley, was sensational; brilliantly put together with ACDC's "Long Way to the Top" belting over some brilliant images and video footage. Thanks for sharing with us.

I hope you enjoy this special women's edition of the Wet Rag. Don't forget that for next months issues deadline is the 5th of May; email Scott with dive reports and articles. |

Ange Jeffery

Don't forget to join our Diving and Events email list by subscribing at: <http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving>

The WET RAG is published by South Pacific Divers Club Inc.  
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# SPDC Memberships April



**ALAN MERRICK**

*NEW Single Membership*



**KAREN O'NEILL**

*NEW Single Membership*



**KIM BOTHA**

*NEW Single Membership*



**MARTINA BRODER**

*NEW Single Membership*



**MICHEL KISSO**

*NEW Single Membership*



**THE BEGG FAMILY**

*NEW Family Membership*



**JEFF DRURY(Scoob)**

*NEW Single Membership*



**JOHN SHIDIAK**

*NEW Single Membership*



**JONATHAN DOLDEN**

*NEW Single Membership*



**MARK SIMPSON**

*NEW Single Membership*

SPDC welcomes all our new members. We look forward to diving with you soon.

Membership provides many benefits. Diving and social activities are organised each month and include boat dives, shore dives and night dives. Dives range from beginners to advanced. We can cater for all skill levels and experienced divers are happy to mentor newer divers and buddy up with them to help improve skills. Boat diving is done from a range of private boats within the club as well as charter boats and organised diving trips away to destinations within Australia and abroad. You don't have to be a member to come to a meeting or join in on a dive. Contact one of the club dive organisers listed on pages 60 and 61 or fill out the membership application on the last page to join. Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month at Bankstown Sports Club, Greenfield Pde, Bankstown, Sydney NSW.

# MARCH Club Meeting

The March club meeting was held on the Monday night after Oztek so we were lucky to get Ron Micjan along as a guest speaker. Ron is an instructor from Canada and has a wealth of rebreather experience (see <http://www.tmishop.com>) Ron brought along his Megaladon rebreather and explained some of the finer details. He has a great sense of humour and kept the audience enthralled and entertained. We even managed to get a few songs out of him, in CCR mode, on the club piano. Ron is also the first person to dive his rebreather to maximum bet on one of the poker machines in the Bankstown Sports Club, a feat never achieved before and probably never to be repeated. God knows what club security thought of it all. I guess those rebreathers look like the back mounted vacuum machines the cleaners use so they turned a blind eye. The club extends a special thanks to Ron for coming along to our meeting and giving a fantastic presentation. Lots of dives were also organised and a great time was had by all.



Above: Ron's Megaladon Rebreather



Above: Ron belted out a few tunes. Lucky he had 100% oxygen available.

Below: Ron and the Meg clean up on the pokies.

Below left: Ron gave a great presentation on the Megaladon rebreather. He really knows how to entertain a crowd.

Below: Plenty of questions as the crowd prodded and poked Ron's rebreather.



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.



# APRIL Club Meeting

The focus of our April club meeting was 'Women In Diving' and what better guest speaker to have but Lesley Hillyer.

We had our usual club meeting to organise dives and give dive reports then a short break and raffle with some great prizes. After the break we watched a short video presentation put together by Max Gleeson on some of Lesley's recent diving. The video footage of the wrecks was amazing, particularly the footage of the large sunfish on the Bega wreck in 78m. Lesley then kept us entertained and even educated a few of us blokes on the ins and outs of deep trimix diving from a womans point of view. Lesley is one of the few women actively diving the deeper wrecks on a regular basis and she explained some of the particular logistics and equipment considerations that women (and men) need to take into account when doing these types of dives. With many women divers in the room this was an educational and inspiring presentation. Our thanks to Lesley for taking the time to come to our meeting and we hope to see her on a club dive soon.



Above: The audience listened intently as Lesley described some of the more challenging dives she has done.



Above right: Scott Leimroth (underwater supermodel) with his hero and mentor, the Great 'Aunty Noz'.

Right: Scott Willan with the macho scuba knife he won in the raffle, with Ange Jeffery and Wayne Phillips.



Below right: Women and Chocolate Cake!! What more can we say.

Right: Andreas, Hazel and Lesley.

Below: The crowd was enthralled by Max Gleeson's underwater footage.



# Surviving the first night dive

by Kim Botha

**Last Friday (30/03/2007) night I was invited to do my first night dive with the Club. Mention night diving and I think of “creepy crawlies and plenty of not too friendly sharks roaming about” However, with a little persuasion I decided to give it a go!**



L- R Matt Reeve, Wayne Phillips, Ken Heikkinen, Karen O'Neill, Kim Botha, Travis Meek, Dave Chillari, Ange Jeffery.

Editors Note: Poor picture quality due to it being taken with mobile phone.

I made it into the water ok, but then a few metres out realised that I had taken off too much weight and could not descend. The next 10 minutes was spent practising all sorts of weird and wonderful techniques to get me to sink. To top it my entire tank somehow dislodged itself and head butted me. Ouch! Rescue mission by Ange and Dave who had to go back to the beach to retrieve some weight and sort out my tank.

What a difference it makes you have the right weight! It was also a strange feeling to have a light strapped onto my left arm. After blinding a few people I realised that it was not diver etiquette to shine it in your fellow diver's eyes. Oops, sorry!



*Glowing Cuttlefish (left) weren't the only strange animals seen that night. Matt in his divemobile (centre) and Dave (right) trying on the latest in fashion...a car seat cover.*

Now for the WOW factor. Once underwater I could focus on my surroundings. The sea certainly does come alive after dark. I was lucky enough to see a cuttlefish eating an unsuspecting prey. It all happened so fast. Coming face to face with a Wobbegong shark was not so bad either. I am now ready to meet more of them (not too big mind you!).

As you can tell I am still learning but loving my diving. I still make mistakes, like on Sunday when I went on a dive and happened to lose my fellow divers and joined another group (at this stage everyone looks the same underwater). Luckily, once again thanks to the patience of my dive buddies, I was found and returned to the right group!

So will I do another night dive again?

Absolutely! Night dives rock!

Underwater Images by Dave Chillari





# Girls.....want to GET WET? Then you can't miss this dive day!

**What:** Chicky Babes Dive Day

**Where:** Terrigal, Central Coast

**When** May 12th

Boat Dive meets 7:30am @ Norah Head

Shore dive meet @ 9:30 Terrigal Haven

**Why:** Because we deserve it

**How:** Contact SPDC Dive Organiser ASAP

Ange Jeffery 0414207238

**The Goods:**

1 x Boat Dive to one of the selected Central Coast dive sites

1 x Shore Dive @ The Haven

**Champagne BBQ afterwards**

All served up by the fella's of Dive Imports Australia (Yes we have broken them in)

Limited spots available – so call up and book your self a morning of dive indulgence.

**SECRET WOMENS DIVE BUSINESS  
WOMEN ONLY - NO BLOKES ALLOWED!**



# MAY DIVE CALENDAR



When	Where	Departing From	Type of Dive	Contact	Other
May 12th	Central Coast	Norah Head	Boat & Shore	Ange Jeffery 0414207238	Ladies Day / \$40 pp
May 13th	Sydney Harbour	Little Manly	Boat - Reef - Wreck	Ange Jeffery 0414207238	Family BBQ Dive Day
May 19th	Magic Point	Malabar Beach	Shark Dive - 15m	John Fardoulis	RSVP ASAP
June 29th - July 1st	Forster	Forster	Sharks - Reef	Ange Jeffery	0414207238

We run regular weekly dives; sites are confirmed each week.

For more information contact the Dive Organiser or log onto <http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving> and put up a post.

Thursday Nights	Peter Iwaszkiewicz	0424812483	pf_plate (@) tpg.com.au
Friday Nights	Dave Chillari	0425209576	davidchillari (@) yahoo.com.au
Midweek: Charter & Shore	Jon Evans	0299684381	fishdiver (@) gmail.com

**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.





# 2 Months Free Membership Special



**Join South Pacific Divers Club  
and be part of our ongoing club activities  
including regular local club dives,  
trips away and great social events.**

**Sign up now and get the rest of this financial year FREE.  
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!**

# Forster Dive Weekend

Friday June 29th - Sunday July 1st

FANTASTIC DIVING AT A FANTASTIC PRICE!

South Pacific Divers Club Price  
\$168.00 Per Person

Minimum number of divers: 7  
Maximum number of divers: 12

4 boat dives (one day at Forster and one at Seal Rocks)

2nd dive tanks & all air fills

Dive master on all dives (to navigate for you!!)

2 nights accommodation at the Forster Motor Inn

BBQ on the Saturday arvo

Discounts at some of the better restaurants in Forster

CONTACT ANGE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

Email: ange (@) southpacificdivers.com

Phone: 0414207238

HURRY SPOTS ARE LIMITED AND FILLING FAST!





**LOOKING FOR SOMETHING MORE?**

**THEN WHY NOT JOIN ONE OF OUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

**PHOTOGRAPHY - WRECK - REBREATHING - ECOLOGY**

**Dives, events and projects are happening now!**

**Contact john (@) southpacificdivers.com to get involved**

Image by Noel Taylor



At 123scuba.com you will find great deals on quality, brand new scuba gear and snorkeling equipment. Great gifts, Super Scuba Package Deals, dive accessories and more are always just a click away!

123scuba.com have been providing Scuba gear, equipment and service for over 25 years. For 25 years now they have been putting scuba divers before dollars and have the following to prove it. Organizations such as Sea World, US Army, US Navy, along with police and rescue divers from around the world trust 123scuba.com with their purchases... Shouldn't you.

All of the scuba gear you order will come to you "Ready To Dive". That means that you will not have to assemble anything, just put it on and dive!

Check out their exclusive womens package at  
<http://www.123scuba.com/p-SYS518.html>

[www.123scuba.com](http://www.123scuba.com)



# CREATURE FEATURE

## Whites Seahorse

Whites Seahorse (*Hippocampus whitei*) is part of the family Syngnathidae which include seadragons, pipefish, pipehorses and seahorses. Of the 200 species within the Syngnathidae family, 35 have been identified as seahorses.

While seahorses can grow between 2.5cm to 35cm, the White's Seahorse commonly grows to 20 cm in length.

White's Seahorse is endemic is only found in Australia (although Project Seahorse also state that *Hippocampus whitei* has been identified in the Solomon Islands), within temperate marine waters along the south-eastern and south-western coasts of Australia to depths of 25 metres. This particular seahorse is also common within Sydney Harbour.

David Harasti (marine scientist) further describes the Whites Seahorse as having: "... an elongate bony body and long snout that it uses to suck up small prey such as mysid shrimp. They swim slowly upright in the water, or wrap their tails around objects such as seagrass fronds or sponges to hold them in place for feeding or for stabilisation during turbulent water conditions such as storms and currents. A quick fact on seahorses is that they are considered to be the slowest moving fish species in the ocean!"

The reproduction of seahorses is truly remarkable. The male seahorse has a pouch (a marsupium) into which the female seahorse lays her eggs. In White's Seahorse, the male fertilises the eggs and cares for them for about three weeks. During this time, he aerates the pouch, and most remarkably of all, nourishes the eggs through a capillary network in the pouch with his own 'placental fluids'. At the end of the 'pregnancy', the male gives birth to 100-250 fully formed young seahorses of about 1 cm in length which swim away to care for themselves. The male then 'becomes pregnant' again almost straight away. White's Seahorse is monogamous (females and males form permanent pairs) and breed from October to April.

### Protection Status

As of July 2004 all species of the families 'Syngnathidae', 'Solenostomidae' and 'Pegasiidae' were listed as "protected" under the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994. It is now an offence to have in your possession, collect or harvest any species of seahorse, seadragon, pipefish, pipehorse, ghostpipefish or seamoths in NSW without a permit.

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act (1999) protects all syngnathids found in Commonwealth waters, making it is an offence to kill, injure, take, trade, move or export any members of the family without a Commonwealth approval permit.



The White's Seahorse uses camouflage to blend in with their surroundings before using an ambush predatory feeding behaviour on small crustaceans. Their colouration varies considerably and generally matches the colour of the plant, coral or sponge that they are living on."





# ***ATTENTION BOAT OWNERS!!!!***

## ***LOOKING FOR CREW?***

### ***WE CAN HELP!***



**The club is now at a point where we have a large pool of active divers,  
ready to assist as crew on most weekends.  
Many hands make light work.**

#### ***Fellow club members can help!***

- **Launch and retrieve your boat**
- **Pull up the anchor**
- **Provide experience in diving new sites**
- **Mateship**
- **Compare notes with other boat owners**
- **Trips away**



Above: Just some of our club boats.

**Whether you haven't been taking your boat out due to lacking crew or need experienced boat handlers to help you get more out of your diving.**

**WE CAN HELP!**

**Contact [john@southpacificdivers.com](mailto:john@southpacificdivers.com) if you're a boat owner wanting to find out more!**



Laura Betts

# Diving in a Man's World

Advice for Women Divers from Laura Betts

***One of the things that's pretty consistent in diving and technical diving is that guys get instant credibility.***

***For women, things can be totally different.***

For guys – their ability is assumed, until actions and behaviour prove otherwise. They walk on the boat with instant credibility! It's assumed they can do the dive. It's assumed that they're trained, until proven to the contrary.

For women It's the exact opposite – it's assumed that they don't dive, or they're not experienced, or don't have the correct gear. A woman has to prove herself or demonstrate her ability.

If you walk into a dive shop and a guy's behind the counter or answers the phone, would anybody ever ask him if he dives? It's pretty much assumed that he dives but I probably get two or three calls a week where somebody asks if I dive! That's a boundary that women have to continually to break down.

## Other Extreme

On the other hand, with some people I get credibility specifically because I'm a woman. If you look at the other instructor trainers in an organisation, using our [ANDI] organisation as an example - I get credibility specifically because I am a woman. Guys are just as good as I am but when we all sit around the table, I get extra kudos because I'm a woman. Once you get on the other side of things, it's like 'wow, that's really neat, she does the same dives and she's a woman'. Whereas with a guy – he's just another one of the IT's (Instructor Trainers). It



Image by Ross Armstrong

becomes 'interesting' that a woman can do the same things. Some divers aren't exactly in the best of physical condition either, so it's not about strength. It's a hard road but on the other side of things is a neat place to be.

## Find Your Groove

For me, I try to be more of a woman in the things I do, not less. I don't try and do it 'like the guy', I do it 'the best way for me'. I have long fingernails, long hair and a pedicure. They used to joke with me for years that I dove with a neoprene neck seal with long hair. I wear waterproof lipstick and mascara, but that's who I am and what I do. I'm not trying to do it like the guys. I'm trying to do what's right for me. There's something in technical diving for everybody - yes there's certain skills, techniques and fundamentals that are universal, but everybody has their own little thing that's going to work best for them.



You need to find the niche that works best for you. That's most the comfortable for you. What works for one person might not work for someone else. And for a woman, what works for a guy, might not work at all.

What I usually find is experienced people, those at the top end of things, not the wannabes, or a person who took one tech course - the people who are out there and have done it have a tremendous amount of respect for other people who do it as well.

### Talk is Cheap

Your ability is going to speak for itself in the long run. Not just for women but for everybody in general. When you get out on that boat, talk is cheap.

Standing up there saying "I can do this", "I can do that", personally I've chosen as a woman to take a more humble approach. I'm not going to engage them. Not going to debate them. Because it's an argument that's coming from an irrational ego, an argument you're not going to be able to win. They're not interested in fact, but more interested in 'posturing' or whatever their particular insecurity is.

My skills are going to speak for themselves. My equipment is going to speak for itself. It might not scream but that slow, steady – this is who I am approach does pay off in the long run.

### Information Overload

As a woman, people give you a tonne of information. People aren't going to be intimidated about giving you information. Whereas with a 6'2 guy on the boat, somebody might not want to walk over him and start criticising his newly purchased equipment. As a woman, you're going to get a tonne of information and three quarters of it is going to be wrong, or inappropriate or coming from a completely jaded point of view.

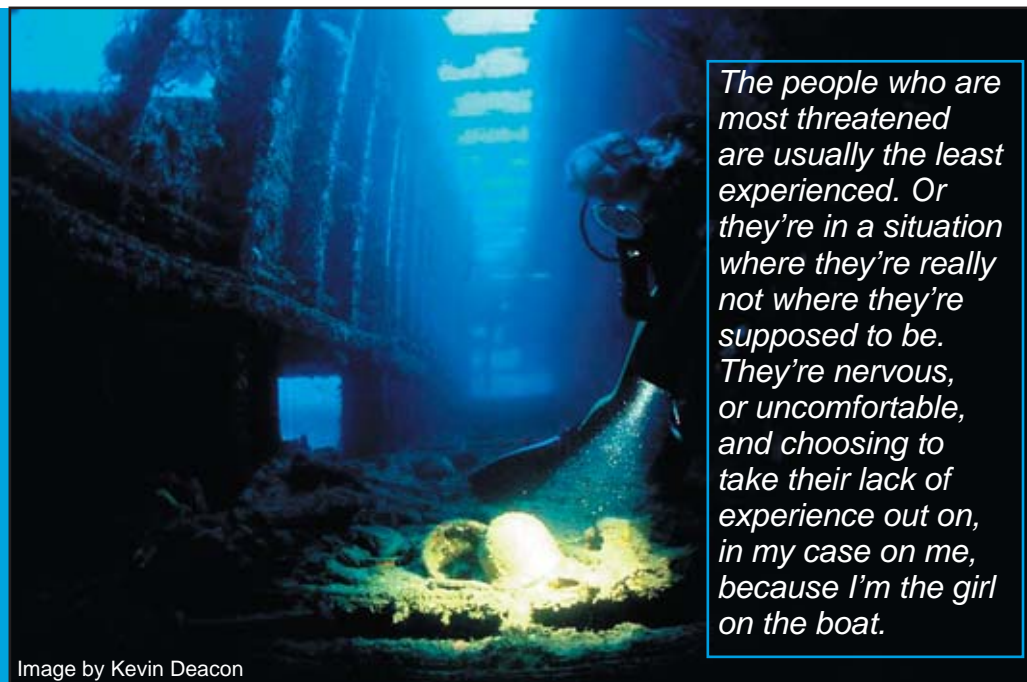


Image by Kevin Deacon

*The people who are most threatened are usually the least experienced. Or they're in a situation where they're really not where they're supposed to be. They're nervous, or uncomfortable, and choosing to take their lack of experience out on, in my case on me, because I'm the girl on the boat.*

### Hold your own

At the same time there's a point where you need to hold your own. I have some dives where I've been on a particular wreck – I've done 40 or 50 dives on that wreck. So when they're sitting there saying you should do this or do that, I might say I haven't done that on the last 40 dives, I'm not going to do it on this one. There is this assumption that as a woman, you're green.

Women will get criticised. Women will get questioned. So they need to be able to stand up in the way they dive and be confident in the way they dive and that will come across. I don't want to say that women have to do it – because I believe everybody has to do it, but because of the element that goes along and a comfort factor and because women are questioned because they just walk on there – they have to do it more. Every guy should do all of this stuff too, it's not just for women but it goes back to that whole; 'women have to prove themselves and guys already have the respect until they give-it-away'.

## Working Smarter, Not Harder

I would spend hours just sitting there with my gear, and my eyes closed. Close your eyes, 'did you reach it, did you grab it'. Close your eyes, 'did you reach it, did you grab it'. Clipping, unclipping. Every one of these things had the potential for task loading. Every one of these little things had the potential to cause a problem. I over skilled anything I could. Clipping and unclipping my light, how this was rigged, how that was rigged. Did I have to hyper extend to reach my cylinder valve? All those little details, and for a lot of women I think it's all about the details.

## Efficiency

***Efficiency is the key. My rig is super low profile. I didn't have the strength to be able to muscle it. Everything had to be really, really streamlined.***

Women typically have better gas consumption. Women in general are smaller, their lung capacity is smaller. Depending on the woman, at least in my experience, I've had to practice so much to be comfortable in the water that I've reached this level – it's almost yoga-ish, almost zen-ish. I'm in the situation where I'm not working harder. I'm relaxing, not 'muscling' the situation and letting the equipment do the work for me. I think women are like that in general.

When I started Tech diving, the smallest cylinder as a stage bottle was an Aluminium 50. Here I am a small 15-16 year old girl with double Genesis 80's on my back and having to handle an Aluminium 50 stage bottle. Dealing with an incredible amount of gear. Regulators all over the place. Not diving a manifold at the time, diving redundant – extra regulators, extra computers and on top of all that, having to sling a tank.



Image by Michael Cufer



## Technique over Muscle

Diving isn't really a strength sport. It isn't like weight lifting, or like boxing, where the stronger fighter is going to win. It's about comfort, skill and technique – how you're interacting with your equipment and environment. I probably did a lot of things that other people don't do. For example, for me to go out and do the kind of dives that I started doing, it was explained that I had to find every piece of gear on my body, the first time – without looking at it. Well that's not a skill that just comes naturally to anybody and it didn't come naturally to me as a 14 year old.

Image by Diane Armstrong



I had to come up with a way getting it on quick, get it off quick, have it low profile enough so it wasn't obtrusive in the water when we're wreck diving. A situation where I had to be really careful so when jumping off the boat it wasn't going to hit me. It took a lot to take all of those things – and remember this is before you could buy a stage bottle kit and set it to the right length. It took time, trial and effort but when it was all done, I had a very quick, efficient system. Mine was more streamlined than half the guys I was diving with.

***A lower profile in the water means less drag, less effort, you don't have to work as hard.***

Regulators easily accessible. Can I run the regulator over one way so I have to reach over and grab it? Yes, I can. But maybe I don't have the luxury of doing that because that way I have to let go of the line with one hand and I'm not strong enough to deal with that. All of these little things come together, that's where all of the details come into play. Planning it out, knowing the boat – look around, pick my spot, plan how many steps to get from here to there. Every one of these details is going to drastically affect my dive.

When you're doing recreational diving in 20 feet of water, it probably doesn't matter. But when you start doing advanced diving, where your task loading – every little thing matters. If you look at some of the things talked about on these pages, those are five or ten little things, a lot of them are small. If you get those things out of the picture, that's a whole bunch of stuff that doesn't become an issue in the water.

That's the thing with technical diving. Every time you have to transition, every time you have to change, every time you have to switch, that's where people have problems. The issue is on the transitions and the changes. When people have accidents they usually have it during a transition phase of the dive. When you're doing technical diving, you're so task loaded and there are so many transitions, gas switches, every time you add one of those things, you have to be smarter.

Women aren't going to be in situation where they're going to be strong enough to muscle out of a problem. Maybe they didn't check the information properly and now they're in a situation with a ripping current with deco do. Are you going to cry? No. You're going to take your Jane line and have a nice, easy, calm deco and make sure your equipment was configured in a manner for you to place the Jane line through the D-rings in your custom harness so you don't have to hold onto it! Your hands aren't strong enough to hold onto it for that long.

## Use the Line!

***“Any opportunity where you don't have to swim, you should take advantage of.”***

Use a Granny (cross over) line, trailing (mermaid line), Jon line – or in this case Jane line. All of those things are really important. A Jane line is really important. Why are you going to sit on the anchor line, getting bumped and kicked around? I don't think it would cost you 80c at the local hardware store to get a piece of rope, put a nice clip on it, then you're good to go. Then you're in another situation where there's another piece of equipment where you're hooking and unhooking off a line. Maybe you need to find a pole in your house somewhere and spend time hooking and unhooking so you know how to do it. That's a really good example. I've used a Jane line in a lot of situations where other people would say that conditions weren't rough enough to justify that type of equipment. But the way I look at it, I got beat up on the line less.

Reels too, use a reel, clips not hooks. One of my pet peeves is free hanging gear. If your gear is loose, you're going to have to use extra work to get to that gear. Being able to securely fasten your gear, know where it goes and being able to get to it and effectively deploy it. That's about working smarter.

## Better Technique

Technique is really down played. The use of a Granny (cross over) line is a good example. Here's me doing my dive. I'm looking out, boats usually rock from side to side, depending on the way the current is moving. I time my entry with the low side with the pivot of the boat, which is diving 101. So am I jumping six feet or four feet? Four feet's a lot nicer than six feet. In most boats I've dived off, the Granny (cross over) line is usually off to the right. Am I going to jump to the left? No. I'm going to look to the right and time my entry with the waves. Well that's four or five kicks I'm not going to have to swim. Can I swim them? Of course. But that's exerting less effort, less mental energy moving into the dive. And I'm going to grab that granny line and move hand over hand. I'm not going to stay on the surface. I'm already mentally prepared before I jump off the boat. What am I doing? Entering the water, grabbing the Granny line, getting to the anchor line, starting my decent, stop at 10 feet and regroup. I then stop, relax, recheck my configuration, look around. Did I lose anything? Is anything out of place? What's going on? So I'm calm when I go into the descent phase.

The same at the end of the dive. Done my dive, ascend, finished my



deco, look around. Can I see the line? Can I get to the line? Drift to the back of the boat. Timing climbing up the ladder with the rock of the boat so I'm going up when the ladder is under the water, instead of using strength and effort to pull myself up. I'm not strong enough to pull myself up the ladder in full gear. So I'm letting the water help me. To the average person it looks exactly the same – she's climbing up the ladder, getting on the boat. Little things like that. How many steps to the entry point, I'm not as strong as the guys – working smarter to only take three steps rather than ten. That's seven less steps that I have to worry about slipping and falling in full gear. Seven less steps to worry about something getting caught or somebody bumping into me, or the boat pitching.

## Practice at Home

You can practice these skills in a kitchen, you do not need a pool. If you want to be the best diver you can be, any situation is a training situation. Sitting in your living room with your legs crossed you can practice clipping and unclipping. Stand in your kitchen taking your fins on and off. If you have something that's not comfortable, put it on and walk around with it for a little while. See how it feels. That's how I got used to my neck seal. When I first got my dry suit, one of the issues I had to deal with was getting sea sick. I have about 10 minutes to get in the water from the time I get my dry suit seal on. We're diving in 7-13 degree C water (45-55 F), its 27 degrees C (80F) on the surface – so you're uncomfortable. It's like - get dressed, get in the water, quick, you don't have a lot of time to sit there screwing around. In order for me to efficiently don and remove my dry suit, I practiced!

I probably put my dry suit on 15-20 times before I used it for the first time. That's getting that skill down to get the neck seal right. So I don't hit 60 feet (18m) and get a nice trickle down my neck because I didn't put my seal on properly. There is no magic bullet for any of this stuff. The only way to get it right is do it over and over again. And you can do it over and over again without necessarily going diving. The concept of



***An efficient philosophy goes into the entire dive day. The 7 P's of diving. Proper, prior planning, prevents piss poor performance.***



drilling is really lost in this industry now with the 'overnight sensation' training program but nothing's going to compensate for skill and practice.

Any little thing! I just got a new dive light. Can I clip it and unclip it? Well, it would be a lot better to find out in your living room than at 60 feet (18m). Some of this goes for anybody but women's hands are smaller in general. The only way to become comfortable at it is to do it.

I've always used quick release buckles on my harness. I'd get out of the water, usually we had dressing tables, and remember we'd be climbing up the ladder in fins – because we have surface action, if you get knocked off the ladder if full gear, you need to have fins on. I'd get to the dressing table, unclip both quick release shoulders, open up my waist band and literally pop right out of my gear, popping my fins off as I'm doing that. And I'm out of my gear. Some other clowns are on the table fumbling with their equipment – and I don't have to say a word.

There's that whole piece of mind, because as a woman, you're going to be doubted. You're going to be questioned. So for me, I needed to know without a doubt that I could do it. So when I stood on the boat and they said, "gee, that gear's rigged a little strange, are you sure you want to be doing that" – I knew in my head that it worked for me.

### ***About Laura Betts:***

Laura has grown up around diving, her experience in the industry spans more than 20 years. Her father, Ed Betts, is a co-founder of American Nitrox Divers, Inc. ("ANDI") and her family have been involved in diving for many years. Laura did her first trimix dive at the age of 17 to a wreck in 178ft of water in low viz and a strong current. She has logged more than 1100 dives. Laura completed her first instructor rating at the age of 18, and then quickly followed that up by becoming the first female Nitrox Instructor in the world in 1991. She continued her professional education and later became one of the first female Nitrox Instructor trainers (ANDI IT #22). Since that time, Laura has dived throughout the world and has become a role model to a new generation of young female divers. Laura has been involved in the development of tech diving techniques and equipment before the term techdiving became popular. Laura is currently the owner of Island Scuba Corporation which helped pioneer the concept of online scuba service seven years ago through the 123scuba.com brand. Laura was recently named Southeast Regional Manager for ANDI and she will soon be announcing a series of technical diving training programs specifically for women. Laura can be contacted at [Laura \(@\) 123scuba.com](mailto:Laura (@) 123scuba.com)



*Laura has been diving for many years.*



Laura Betts

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Monster Club raffle on the night!

Image by Michael Cufer



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8. Improvement with Instructor Rating
9. Extra gear to loan out
10. Will dive anywhere, anytime with anyone.



## Top 10 Worst Things About Men Divers

1. Beer gut over borat Speedo's
2. Testosterone / Ego
3. Borat Speedo's
4. Disappearance with GF appearance
5. Assumptions chicks can't dive
6. Complains GF stops them from diving
7. Heavy to lift on rescue
8. Pulling up anchor in borat Speedo's
9. Talking Sh\$t
10. Expect you to dive anywhere, anytime, when everyone else has pulled out.



# SCAN Ladies Week-end Port Stephens

by Ange Jeffery

Well if you didn't go girls, you missed out!! During the weekend 16th to 18th Feb, 15 chicks from various SCAN clubs got together for a 2 - 3 day weekend without the blokes. It was a weekend well worth a mention and a round of applause for the event organiser.

Our mission, and we did accept it, was to descend upon Port Stephens for a weekend of diving and relaxation, from a female perspective. Members of the group started arriving from Friday lunchtime, with everyone gathered and accounted for by 9pm.



Diving started on Friday night with Nicole and Jenny from Jervis Bay Dive Club hanging out at a windblown Pipeline. Though I hear it was cold and choppy in the bay, it was no match for the JB chicks; they saw, they dived and conquered - while the rest of us stayed warm, dry and had dinner in the club next door.

Saturday morning - the winds had eased; it was a beautiful morning of diving ahead of us. Nicole and Jenny hit the pipeline again (I heard it was a bit of a car park with a Prodrive convention in town); while myself, Kelly, Julie, Wanda, Sue and Heather (RUC) hit Fly Point. The water was warm and clear, until the sponges started spawning! You've got to read Kel's article below for a recount of the effects this group of dive chicks had on the local sponge community!

Sunday diving didn't hold back either; good viz, warm water and lots to see. Our group again split between Halifax and the Pipeline for some amazing diving.

As I was tidying up this article for submission, I was looking through the various emails and came across something Heather (RUC) sent through, she says - "Forgot to mention that Shelley and I returned to Soldiers Point recently for the SCAN combined clubs weekend. Not nearly as much fun as the ladies weekend - no orgasmic sponges anywhere!"

Kelly Jandik (President, St George Scuba Club) worked wonders to bring so many divers together for the Ladies Weekend Away from so many clubs. Our accommodation was very comfortable and the cost of the weekend very economic. Kel promised us another one next year - we're all holding her to that promise.



# Estrogen overload sets off Spawning Sponges!

by Kelly Jandik

Saturday 17th Feb 8:30 am - the sun was warm and high in the blue sky. We stood, looking through the gum trees into the shimmering clear water. Our group of ladies were enticed for a dive. What would we see today, in the Fly Point garden? Alas, we chatted and relaxed awaiting the incoming tide to slow to a nice gentle glide.

It's time. Slipping beneath the surface I was pleasantly surprised by the trickle of warm water down my back. It was a nice change from the cold water of December and January. I promised the ladies, I would take them to my favourite section, which I call the 'deep gardens' as some of the group had not been there before. Following the natural slope of the sandy bottom we pass 'pineapple fish ledge', but unusually there were no pineapple fish in sight. Heading out further and deeper into the channel we glide.

We reach the gardens at 18 meters depth. Here we have 15 meters viz, so we spread out a little further. I stopped to tickle and play with a juvenile moray then I spotted a little yellow box fish under a neighbouring sponge. I copied his cute little pout and blew a kiss back. We continue to glide over the gardens pointing at morays, shrimp, pipefish and nudibranchs galore.

After 35 minutes the tidal flow had eased and was about to turn the other direction, so we left the deep sponge gardens and head in closer to shore. We reach the wall at 14 meters depth. Here, the viz dropped dramatically with patches of clear then cloudy water that shimmered like a thermocline. Looking closer, I notice the cloud of swirling water was flowing out from the vase sponges. The sponges were spawning! Had our large group of female SCAN divers set off the sponges into reproduction overload?

All of the sponges from here back to the exit point, were going hammer and tong, with clouds of sperm everywhere. Having never seen sponges do this before, I was transfixed. Water entered my mask as I giggled watching a morwong get a steam bath as he sat perched on a vase sponge with sperm rising like steam around him.

Passing Pineapple fish ledge again, we stop for a closer look. We hang around here for a while not wanting to get out of the water. After 67 minutes we finally surface, grinning from ear-to-ear.

Getting out of our gear we chat to the other ladies about their dive. We all agreed how great it was to have completed such a relaxing dive and have the rest of the day, free to do whatever we pleased.

So when you ask, why is there a ladies diving week-end? The answer is, for the reason above – great diving, great company and relaxation!

The inaugural St George Ladies week-end was in February 2005 at Jervis Bay, with 7 divers. Last year at Port Stephens, 10 divers attended from 2 clubs. This year we had 15 divers from 6 clubs, as follows:

Kelly Jandik, Carol Martin (St George Scuba Club), Shelley Bruseker (Ryde Underwater Club), Ange Jeffery, Jeci Saipa'ia (South Pacific Divers Club), Jenny Chillcot, Nicole Chillcott (Jervis Bay Scuba Club), Julie Delandro, Heather Armour, Wanda Whitaker, Sue Jackson (Ryde Underwater Club), Avril Davey, Vanessa Maltby, Dorina Basurto (Wollongong Uni Scuba Club), Judy Matthews (Dive organisation of University Technology Sydney).

Next February/ March we will have another ladies week-end, with the destination yet to be decided.



# A Woman's Point of View

By Lesley Hillyer



As I drove home from OzTek07 a few weeks ago, I reflected on the fact that of over 30 presenters, on all sorts of topics, wreck and cave, only one was a woman. Given the number of girls in the audience, the thought crossed my mind, why only one, why was there not more discussion about women in diving, let alone technical diving? The following day I picked up a message from Scott Leimroth asking me to speak about the same subject, so I guess I wasn't the only one with that thought.

***My first dive was at Seal Rocks in 1983.*** We were staying with some friends in Ron and Valerie Taylor's beach shack for a long weekend of water skiing. My friend, John asked if I was game for a dive, he explained a few do's and don'ts and off we went. That night we backed up for a night dive, and the sheer blackness of it hooked me.



Above: Lesley swims under the prop of the S.S. Tuggerah

I did a dive course shortly afterwards, but I was really more interested in water skiing and my horses, and I dived quite sporadically. In 1993 my 20 year career in IT systems and management took a major turn. I had quit my job and was looking for a change of direction. Sue Sainsbury mentioned to Leo that she wanted to sell Shiprock Dive. It was local, across the road from my kids' school, and seriously different from what I'd been doing. So, why not? Well, what a leap from the frying pan that was.

This was a steep learning curve, physically very hard work, relentless, and much more intrusive on my personal life than I'd anticipated, but there was no turning back. I recertified on one of my own courses so that I was up to date, but for the next couple of years I still wasn't diving much. Not only that, I had to deal with seasickness. Anyone who dives with me knows I have a PhD in seasickness – I can't dive at all without drugs. But then I organised a trip to Vanuatu to dive the Coolidge, and that meant I needed to get back in the water. Leo booked us on a dive to the Tuggerah (might as well jump in at the deep end). He told me we were doing a 7 (7!!) minute bottom time and we'd have to stage our ascent. I had no knowledge of decompression theory at that stage and my only thought was what a lot of rigmarole for 7 minutes! I remember dropping down onto the wreck and fortunately it was a good day. Through the fog of narcosis, I looked around and the thought went through my mind "Now I know why I learned to dive". That was it for me, I did the trip to the Coolidge, and reef dives would become a thing of the past. But how do you go about diving on the wrecks?

Some months later I met Max Gleeson, who offered to take me to the Undola after he got back from a trip to the Yongala. I mentioned this to Les Caterson, who promptly harrumphed and said "He'll job you one if you scratch his boat". On his return we journeyed down to the Undola on a dead flat sea but I still got sick. We started diving together, and over a decade and about a thousand dives



Above: A diver on the stern of the Myola wreck.



later, we're still diving, still arguing and still exploring wrecks most weekends. And I still get sick.

I sold the dive shop 6 months ago, primarily because our other business Aquasea is so busy I don't have time to run a dive shop, and because after 13 years I figure I've served my time and I want my weekends off. I like being out there now instead of standing in the shop listening to other people talk about it.

***One of the things I that was very evident during my time in the shop was the value of female instructors.***

Great for bringing in the guys you might think, and certainly there was an element of that with some of them. But women have a different centre of gravity, they are not as strong as men, and they have to do things differently to men. They tend not to have to prove how tough they are – no hero complex, and will approach a problem from another angle. So they were not only valuable for teaching girls, but also for teaching guys. I found that women were less intimidated walking into a shop that had females on the staff, consequently we taught a lot of women.

So given the number of women who dive, why don't more get involved in technical diving? I can't imagine that the wrecks are any less fascinating to the girls than they are to the guys. Certainly, I think girls don't tend to be "depth junkies". In fact I had a diver tell me once that the difference between he and I was that I was a wreck junkie and he was a depth junkie, and that was certainly borne out by his memories (or should I say lack of them) about his diving. More often than not, I'm the token female on a dive trip or on a Sydney wreck, and you could have knocked me over on a trip to the Bega last year when there was another female on the boat – and she was diving. Again, I think an "expedition" load of big tough divers with lots of black gear and big watches, big heads and Fatty Vautin swaggers can be quite intimidating. In fact, the pink stripes down the side of my wetsuit were a direct response to Barry Hallet's abject horror at the notion of "pink on a wreck".

***Technical diving is an expensive indulgence.*** Kitting out for diving is never cheap but this is a whole new ball game. You need multiples of just about everything: multiple tanks, multiple regulators, dry suit, big gun lights, computers, reels, a rebreather? The list is endless. It needs to be good reliable equipment and it needs to be well maintained. And you need a car big enough to cart it all around. And if the weather doesn't play ball, it can be an expensive waste of time. A single G cylinder of helium costs about the same as 5 cylinders of O2. On that same trip to the Bega last year the rest of the group were up from Melbourne and Adelaide. They had a huge trailer, a compressor, a booster pump, G's of helium, G's of oxygen and they had more tanks with them than I had in my dive shop. Max and I planned to dive the Saturday, and drive home the Sunday, secure in the knowledge, courtesy of Buoyweather, that Sunday was going to be a write off. They spent hours on Saturday night filling cylinders, hopeful that the predicted southerly would be late, only to drive back to Melbourne and Adelaide on Sunday complete with full cylinders, which of course were useless for anything but another similar trip.

Below: Lesley swims along the keel of the Tuggerah.



© Max Gleeson

***But that's only part of it. You need training; you need to understand decompression theory, gas theory and how to use your equipment.***

Throwing on a tank and jumping in the water is a lot different to twins and stage bottles (or a breather) and you need to practise. It's time consuming and it's expensive. You need plenty of experience and if you're going to dive beyond the mid-range wrecks like the Tuggerah you need gas. A dive on the Bega sees you carrying around \$250 worth of gas, riding on a boat that's setting you back at least \$100 for the day, with the ever present risk that you won't get out there, or if you do, you won't get to the bottom. Pulling down in a solid current to the Tuggerah or the Undola is quite doable if you're reasonably fit. But that distance is a bit over halfway on the Bega or the Keilawarra, and that can be daunting and a frustrating waste of gas and time and money if you bail out. But you have to have the presence of mind to do the maths. On our last trip to the Bega we had solid current both days. The second day, I asked myself at the 40 metre mark if a 7 or 8 minute dive was going to be worth all that decompression, hanging like a flag in a howling current for a good part of it until the last divers, who had not descended yet, released the anchor. And we were driving home that afternoon. My answer was no, and I bailed. Irritating and frustrating, but I like doing this enough to want to keep doing it. So I'd rather come back another day, than have a crappy, shortened and risky dive. So is it worth it for 20 minutes on the bottom? Well, when you get a day that's crystal clear and

so bright even at that depth, that you don't need a torch, and a myriad of fish parts in front of you to reveal something that's been sitting undisturbed for nearly a hundred years, then yes, I think it's worth it.

Left: The Bow section of the Birchgrove Park.

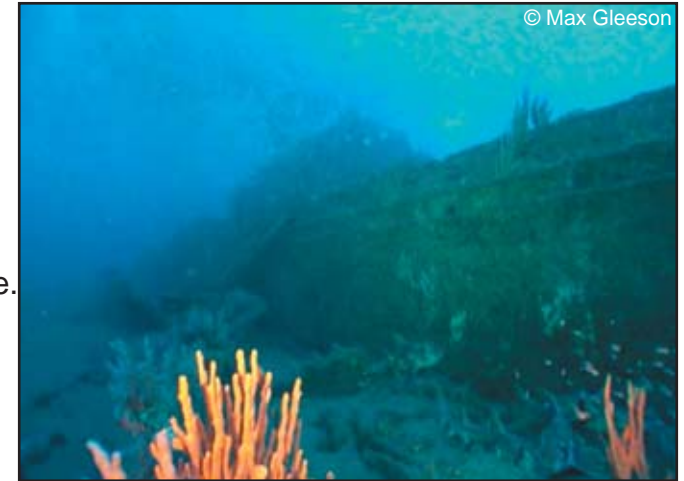


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***Technical diving is heavy, very heavy.*** I'm in the fortunate position of needing little gas so I can get away with smaller cylinders. But even if you don't breathe, it's heavy. Picking up a 50kg rig if you're a 90kg man is heavy. Picking up a 50kg rig if you're a 60kg woman is a major challenge. But that's what you have to do. And you have to control it and dive it and get it back on the boat. If you're going to do it, there are a few machines at the gym that you need to get friendly with, mostly to do with legs and back.

But I think the major limiting factor is opportunity. If you want to visit the wrecks you have to find someone who is prepared to take you there. I was fortunate. Max has provided me with the opportunity to see so much of our maritime history, with the added bonus of being accompanied by a walking, talking encyclopaedia. He's a harsh taskmaster under the water, particularly if he has a camera in his hand, and there's absolutely no mistaking what he thinks if you stuff up. But the result of that is you get to be good at what you do. We've graduated from taking photographs to video, which is great because I get to have a dive too and it has the added bonus that you can see what the wreck really looks like, over and over again.

We've dived wrecks up and down the NSW coast and all over the Pacific. My personal favourites are the Tuggerah for it's easy familiarity and abundant fish life (I consider this our home dive - I've done more dives on this wreck than any other dive site), the Bega for it's treasure chest of goodies and its consistently clear water, the Quetta in the Torres Strait for its huge chasm of a bow teeming with fish and the Aaron Ward in the Solomon Islands. The sight of a battle ship, upright, intact and with its guns pointing at the sky, sitting silently in 70 metres of clear water is something you can't adequately describe. Down in the crew's quarters,



© Max Gleeson

Above: Wreck of the Bega



clothing still neatly folded on shelves over 60 years later, the captain's chair lying on its side amongst the debris in the bridge, torpedoes still sitting in their tubes, the fire hoses abandoned when the crew jumped overboard. You can gauge my opinion of the Ward by the fact that I've made 6 trips to Tulagi to dive her and she is my 4th most dived site. At the end of the very last dive I did on the Ward last September, I swam way off the bow, turned around and cruised slowly back towards this magnificent sight, and the most bizarre thought went through my head. It was "if you died now, you'd die happy". I smacked myself around the ear and headed for the mooring line.

***One of the problems I have with dive training is the way divers are trained.*** There is not enough focus on what the risks are, how to assess them and how to make decisions about them and then to wear the consequences of those decisions. Divers move through the training quickly, learn some skills and think they're ok to dive just about anything. It's when the wheels fall off that you find out. One of my favourite sayings is "Trouble is like the schoolyard bully. He never attacks alone; he always brings his mates with him". You always get more than one complication to deal with, and there is no substitute for hours of diving when it comes to reflex actions.

We dive with what we call a "garden variety" approach. We carry only what we need for the dive. I choose to trust my gear and I maintain it accordingly. On the boat, I'm generally diving with people I know well. I choose to trust my buddy and I revise that choice and reconfigure if I'm diving with someone else. There are dives I simply would not do with someone else and I don't have a problem with calling a dive if I'm



© Max Gleeson

not happy. We revise our routine as necessary and I'm happy to look at other ways of doing things – I don't suffer from delusions about my own ability. But sometimes you get the newly trained techie full of theory and short on reality who wants to come in and tell me how I should be configuring my gear and what I should be

using and why I shouldn't be doing this or that. I listen politely and thank him and ask how many dives he's done. It usually works out I've done more dives on the Tuggerah. Thus far I'm still here. I don't suggest that others do what we do, it works for us. I suggest that you assess your situation and make an informed decision. But you also need to keep in mind that when you over configure your gear, allowing for every little possibility, you run the risk of over task loading also, and personally, I think that's where a lot of divers get into trouble.

What's it like being the only female in this bunch of blokes? I don't subscribe to the view that accepting help as an affront to my ability to cope. Every person on a team has a job and the best teams do their own jobs. I know my limitations, so I do the jobs I'm good at. On our home dives I chuck the anchor, I release the anchor, sometimes I even pull it up. But if there's someone around who's stronger than I, then they do it. I launch the boat, I load it on the trailer, and smile when the guy next to us at the ramp says "I wish my missus could do that". They wash the boat, I wash the gear. When we go away, well, you can predict who makes the coffee, who cooks, who walks around cleaning up. Who makes the soup and the coffee on the boat, provides the food. But that's fine. While I'm doing that, they who are much stronger than I, load the boat, lift the gear, do all that heavy stuff. I set my gear up, I test it, but I don't have to lift it. And that suits me just fine.



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Above: Diver on the stern of the Bega with fishing nets in background.

Left: Propellor on the Keilawarra wreck covered in growth.

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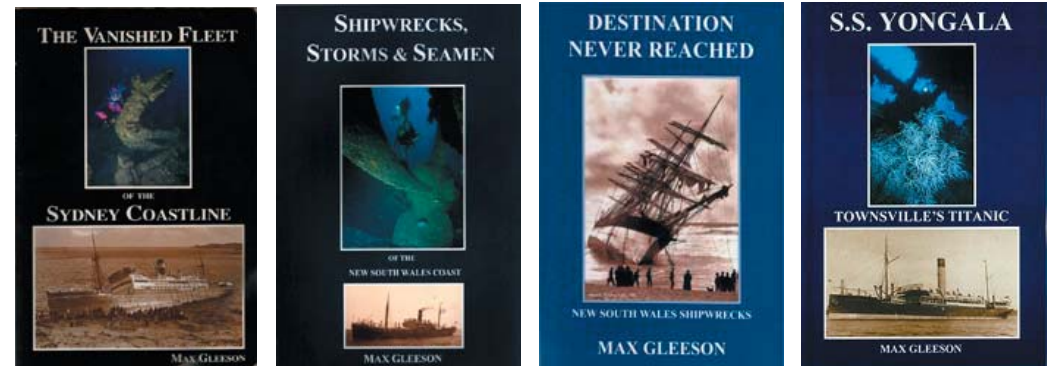
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# Club Dive Day at Malabar

by Fran Thai Low

It was another perfect Sunday for a club dive. This time the destination was the Magic Point. At around 10.30 the first boat-load arrived back on the beach. It was then that we found out that the weather was a little too rough to repeat the Point dive. Not the kind of dive we all had in mind. So Malabar it is, we all decided. The MV Malabar is probably one of the easiest wreck dives around Sydney. Most of the scattered debris resides under no more than 14 meters of water. On a good day finding the exact spot consists of getting roughly the right place and sticking your head in the water to make sure you're on top.

It is what it is. Another rust bucket that at best looks like a cutlery draw that's just been tipped up side down. But then what could one expect from a 70 year-old wreck battered but the worst that the ocean has to offer in Sydney and one dynamite fixated male diving pioneer name Barry May. Seems man just can't help themselves but to use brute force no matter what they do (hint, hint boys).



Left: The remains of the Malabar's engine are huge and covered in growth.

Above: Fishlife is prolific at Malabar.

Below: Some divers think they are fish too :)



We loaded the boat with a precious cargo of 3 girls and the token male diver, Peter. Since neither of us is crazy about the prospect of browsing through an underwater junk yard, Peter and I decided to make this dive a little more interesting. Instead of being dropped off at the Malabar we asked our kind skipper Scott to take us right to the point of entry to the bay and leave us there. The plan was to combine a little rust exploration with some real diving. We entered the water as planned and straight away dropped to just under 20 meters. The visibility was great and although a little choppy on the surface the water was very calm down below. Straight away we realised how good this dive was going to be.



That place was fantastic! Some of the best rock formations I have seen around Sydney with many overhangs and few interesting swim-throughs the place was buzzing with life. The richness of marine life was amazing. In few places we saw a concentration of fish I have only experienced in the tropics. We continued north for a little while and then decide to turn around and head towards the Malabar. After some 100 meters of swimming through a field of sea weed we finally got to what May and all the other memorabilia hungry divers decided to leave for us to admire. Straight away I got fascinated by the engine of the ship, not.... After a long inspection and a bunch of photos I took to kill some time, it was a time to surface. My ignorance was my buoyancy and the lack of marine life my motivation. We found the boat waiting for us only 20 meters away with our trusty skipper on a lookout for us. We exchanged friendly waves and promptly boarder the inflatable.



Above: Malabar is a great place for diving. Club members prepare to load the boat.



Above: Fran and Kim wait for the boat to leave.

All in all it was a very nice Sunday dive. I won't be in a hurry to dive Malabar any time soon unless someone finds that opium and tells me where it may be. If I've learnt one thing out of this experience it is that even as close as 50 meters away from a well known dive spot there could be a world just waiting to be discovered. A dive site that surpasses the original destination, one that's shielded from the vast majority of the divers by their determination to follow the foot steps of all the others. I know I'll never look at Malabar the same way again.



Left: Scott Willan, Karen O'Neill and Kim Botha  
Above: Martina Broder



Left: Dave Chillari  
Above: Alan Merrick  
Below: SPDC girls (L-R) Joyce, Martina, Fran, Kim and Karen.



Above: John Fardoulis.

Below: Joyce and Martina.



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# Girls can get rusty too!



By Amanda Garland



It is 7am on a chilly Saturday morning in late June, but I am snug in my drysuit and enjoying the fresh air, blue skies and, for a change, flat seas as I head with six other divers, all male, to Long Reef.

As we approach the dive site I finish kitting up. I have double 80 cuft air tanks on a Zeagle BCD, a five cuft tank slung under my left arm with an EAN 50 deco mix, a large torch mounted to the side of my right tank, also on my right side, attached to my BCD, is a 60m reel. On my left wrist I have a VR3 dive computer and a bottom timer for backup and a slate with tables for my expected dive and a bail-out dive. In the pocket on my drysuit I have a back-up torch, a strobe light, a bright red safety sausage and a "Johnny" line. With all of this I don't need much weight just six pounds for trim. Total weight of all this gear is about 45-50 kilo's, which, as I remind any guy who wants to tell me "if you can't carry it you can't dive it" is only 20k's short of my total weight while for them it is half, or less, of their weight.



I heave myself over the side and I am relieved to hit the water as I swim forward and start descending down the anchor line. It only takes a couple of minutes to get to 30 meters and in the good vis (what a nice change) I can make out the top of one of my favourite Long Reef wrecks – the Coolooli. I stop at the bottom of the anchor, at about 46 metres, and attached my strobe. I am diving solo on this dive, which, while I know many divers will tut tut at, is not uncommon for a number of good reasons on deep wreck dives. However, most of the guys I am diving with are good friends and we normally check on each other a few times over my 20 minute bottom time, and again on the deco line, to make sure all is well. I penetrate the wreck just ahead of her large dredging buckets and swim through the midships section to the forward deck. She is getting old and beginning to break up, but she is still a great dive with lots of areas for easy penetration. She also attracts lots of fish life including Wobblygong sharks and very large cuttle fish. I am very pleased with the dive as I start back up the line and I feel a sense of satisfaction and relaxation after a stressful week of work.

I dive with a tech diving shop out of the Spit in Sydney. When I first started diving there in 1999 with my boyfriend at the time, the guys were pretty unfriendly but a few months later when the relationship ended but I kept going back, the atmosphere changed – I figure I got some respect for being there as someone who was genuinely keen on wrecks and not as what they might have thought was a "hang on" who needed help. Many of these guys are now some of my closest friends and I love spending time with them. In all that time I have only had one other regular female diving companion on my Long Reef wreck adventures – Laurie Cooper (Pixie) who dives a KISS rebreather and is also a close friend – alas she now lives in NZ. There are other women tech divers in Australia, but they are few and far between. My 44th dive was on the Yokohama-Maru in PNG to 61 meters so I got my taste for depth and rust very early on in my dive career. I love this type of diving because it does require a bit of thought and planning and a real involvement with the activity as the risks are high (I have lost one friend to Long Reef and my partner Jason got as close to dead as you can get and still be alive after a gear malfunction at 100m).

But women are good thinkers and planners, and we can do the dive tables, work the computers, we can stay calm, and with equipment becoming lighter and easier to manage, technical diving is a sport for women to enter. For example Pixie's KISS Sport only weighs 17kg fully mounted leaving her days of diving on twins far behind.. So there is no reason, other than maybe the intimidation of going where the boys traditionally dominate, that more women should not be getting a taste for rust. I hope to see some of you out there shortly. You can contact Amanda at [amandatravels \(@\) hotmail.com](mailto:amandatravels@hotmail.com).



Left: Jason McHattan (L) and Amanda Garland (R) on a dive.



Right: Women make just as good wreck divers as men.

# Diving dry - Girl's perspective on dry suit diving. by Fran Thai Low

***Every girl and guy will agree that girls do get colder than guys in the water.***

I have to admit I am guilty of always whinging about being cold and that I need to go to the bathroom. Double dives can sometimes be a nightmare, no girl wants to sit in a wet wetsuit freezing their butt off and having the cold tight material against their skin any longer than they have to, especially during winter months. But that's what diving is about, getting wet, and knowing that the good outweighs the bad. It's true that in some cases you can't have your cake and eat it too, but with the option of a dry suit, you can.

I can't speak for other brands but my experience with Brian at Seatec has made me realise, that the irresistible cake can be eaten. I'm not an expert on dry suits but I do know that it has changed my perspective on 'seasonal' diving. The cold is no longer an off-putting, excuse making factor. There are a lot of choices out there but I can only guide you through one.

If you park the price for a moment there are a three major characteristics of a dry suit which will ultimately determine your choice.

1. Thermal insulation of the suit itself (not to be confused with anything you put on underneath).
2. The toughness of the material.
3. The buoyancy implications.

Brian from Seatec has kindly offered his expertise on what is out there for divers, especially for female divers with my particular list of requirements. I reiterated my concerns to him and yet again whinged about the cold, the need for frequent toilet breaks and the fact that putting on a wetsuit can at times be a painful experience in itself.



Left: Micro cell 3.5mm Neoprene drysuit.



Right: Mens & ladies combination 3.5mm micro cell & 4mm compressed neoprene drysuit.

I asked for a miracle and sent Brian on a chase to deliver one; this is where he helped me to decide what Drysuit I wanted. He guided me towards a combination 3.5mm micro cell & 4mm compressed neoprene drysuit. This dry suit offered me ruggedness (diving is not graceful!) and comfort as well as warmth at the same time, it also promised to deliver a reasonable compromise as far as buoyancy is concerned and all that for a great price to match.

As soon as I tried the drysuit on, I thought, 'Yep, this is the one' Of course when I went to visit Brian I had the intention of buying a dry suit, the rest of you ladies, may only want advice or extended information on dry suits. Brian will be more than happy share with you his abundance of knowledge if it keeps you in the water.

As a rule Seatec makes all dry and wetsuits to measure so if you have a concern with your size or unique body shape, you need not be. After



some measuring here and there the dry suit is custom made to fit like a glove. However, in my case I decided to try one that was already pre-made. Their drysuit I tried on fitted perfectly on the bottom but was too loose on top. After a week of waiting it was as good as if it was custom-made for me. I tried it on and walked away with a big smile on my face.

OK, now for the dive part. You may have noticed in dive shops there is a course for dry suits. This leads new divers to believe you need a certificate to know how to dive in a dry suit. I believe it fits in the same category as a need for an octopus, a good way for some people to make money but not necessarily the best way for divers to gain a new skill. A little bit of training does not go astray but common sense and a sound advice from someone with experience goes much further and is free. I didn't want to spend over \$100 on a course when I could go to Shelley with an experience friend and learn for myself.

Your drysuit will compress in the water, and air will become trapped (don't forget you are water tight), when you're standing up to your chest in water and all the air from the dry suit is pushed up to your neck you don't need anybody to tell you to open your neck seal to let the air out. Inability to move your head will teach you that very quickly. The first dive was a little bit shaky; I was getting the general idea on what the whole inflation thing was about. You will quickly learn inflating the drysuit should never replace the need to control your buoyancy; use your BC to control buoyancy; inflating your drysuit is only done to reduce the discomfort caused by the water pressure.

You will discover rather quickly that the less air you put in your drysuit the better. As long as when you surface you don't have multiple hickies on your body, it means you put enough air in it during the dive. Remember, air always goes to the highest point so if you decide to dive down head first all the excess air will go to your feet and that can make for a very uncomfortable situation. It has been known for some divers to surface feet first and that's not only uncomfortable but can be dangerous.

Learn to dive without playing too much with your valves and practice and practice and practice, once you get the hang of it you will never look back. The one thing I never thought about during my whole experience is the temperature, I completely forgot about being cold and I wasn't busting for the toilet like I normally do. This also meant I used less air and could stay down for longer. Any surface discomfort I felt caused by my neck and wrist seals disappeared the moment I entered the water. Instead I feel dry, comfortably warm and able to focus on what the dive was really about.

Seatec offers a vast range of designs to cater towards most requirements and budgets. Don't forget all are made on the premises to measure and all are very well supported. Seatec also offers a range of accessories to compliment the wetsuit and drysuit ranges. Some of the more useful ones would be a specially designed ladies hood, as well as ankle weights to help trim your new drysuit.



Left: 3.5mm  
Neoprene Dry Suit



Right: 5mm  
neoprene dry suit

For all other details and quotes, please contact  
Brian at 02 96742025 or visit [Seatec.com.au](http://Seatec.com.au)

# From Desk Job to Dream Job : The Journey Begins

By Amanda Holder



Image: Me in the Dominican Republic

## 7:30am Monday morning.

After crawling through rush hour traffic with the stench of rotting pollution, I arrived at "work". To my desk I trudged. I sat down and watched the chain wrap around my ankle. As I looked at the surrounding beige, windowless walls, I had no idea whether it was now sunny outside or if my car had been taken hostage by a tornado. I was forced to wonder if there was something more...

I turned to the biggest source of information I could find, the Internet. I googled "jobs in the sun", "dream jobs" and that's when I stumbled onto the life of a scuba instructor! How perfect?! I mean, at first I would have to uproot myself from my life, as I had known it, and delve into something completely different. I won't lie, it was a scary thought.

I was 29 years old, my mother would have a heart attack when I told her and what would I do with my cat?

The Plan was born:

1. Sign up for my Open Water course. (I should at least see if I like it before running into my boss screaming "I QUIT!")
2. Do my open water dives in Dominican Republic on my Family Christmas holiday.
3. Find an internship to work my way up to my Instructor's certification
4. Pack my bags, sell my car, put my material things in storage, QUIT MY JOB, kiss rush hour traffic goodbye and head off to explore my new life.

Yep, good plan.

The call was made and I booked my sister Melissa and I into our first Open Water course that coming weekend.

First it was time to sign my life away. "In case of accidental death.... will not sue..." hmm...bit scary, but it was all just a technicality. Into the classroom for some much needed instruction; how water pressure works on human lungs (and how they might explode if ascending too quickly eek), air density, and how important it is to just keep breathing. Got it, off to the pool. There we put all our gear (very sexy I must admit), hopped into the pool and took our first breath underwater. What a surreal feeling!!! The world had become this silent place surrounded by tiny bubbles. 3 hours in the pool and I was looking like a very happy prune.



Most important lessons learnt:

1. BREATHING IS IMPORTANT

2. WATER UP THE NOSE WHILE CLEARING YOUR MASK IS NOT FUN!

After the weekend course was completed it was time for my open water dives. Off to the Dominican.

"Life does not get better than this," I thought as I jumped out of bed. Melissa and I set off down the beach to the Scuba Caribe Dive Centre. There we met with our instructor Alejandro (a guy with a smile that could rival the beautiful white sands of Bravero Beach). Plowing through the blue, we reached our first ever open water dive site. I must admit the nerves had set in but were quickly offset by the thrill of it all! Down into the water I plunged. Equalizing beautifully. To my surprise we had a welcoming committee of fish! Curious things they were, swimming around saying hello and following us through the reefs. It was if my whole world just expanded more than I ever thought it could. I found myself amused at the smallest of things. The way the sand moved with the swells, the way the plants seemed to dance for us as we swam by, and the way the quiet of the ocean seemed to be music to my ears. It was a wonderful first experience.

December 26 was our last day of diving. Almost running down the beach to the dive centre I just couldn't wait! The swells were HUGE that day but I didn't care, I wanted in. Jumped out of the boat and I was third in line to take the rope down. The swells were strong at the bottom and being all of 125lbs I was being pushed around by the ocean. I was at the ocean's mercy and it was like she was rocking me like a child in a mother's arms.

Time to explore. It was like a HUGE coral city! There were hundreds of fish going about their daily routines not paying us any attention. We swam through all these underwater alleyways, the swells sucking us deeper into this magical place. All of a sudden our instructor got really excited and sure enough he points out an octopus swimming 2m away from us! It was UNBELIEVABLE! It came to a halt once it knew we were there and blended seamlessly into the coral. It was like one thing

kept topping the next in a plethora of elating moments! We completed the dive and as we climbed back on the boat we were greeted with a handshake, were told that we passed our certification, and welcomed to the wonderful world of scuba diving!

So here I am, totally hooked on this wonderful sport. It is truly like entering another world; words cannot even begin to describe how it makes you feel.

My plan is half complete and I'm well on my way to living out my dream. My only regret is not starting it sooner.



From the office to the ocean. Amanda is well on the way to living her dream.



Below: Me and Mel





## Clair Fahey – Dive Instructor

Interview by Angela Jeffrey

***Clair Fahey is an intrepid dive instructor who started scuba diving 1987; becoming a dive instructor five years later - much to her dad's dismay.***

Clair explains, "He [Dad] nearly fainted because I wanted to be a dive instructor; maybe because I was scrawny, pathetic and I didn't like water. Dad dived since the 60's in pre-certification days; no BCD's, no gauges, tiny twin hoses that were put together in the garages. No balanced regs. Dad's first regs would blow lungs out, then at 10m it would be easy to breath and at 30m it would get harder to breath again. You know you were low on air when it got too hard to breathe!"

Clair grew up in Zimbabwe as a kid and reckons she was one of those kids who would scramble out of the water at the site of seaweed. Later on "I wasn't really a water-person; I was from a cosmetic department and stilettos. I worked 8 years for a big retailer running several departments including Cosmetics. It was a very demanding role. After my first marriage broke up I decided that I needed to do take a 'Sea Change' (literally) and do something for me. Diving seemed the most logical as it was something I loved.

When the bug did bite, Clair jumped into the water with both feet completing her Open Water in 1987 and becoming a dive instructor in 1992. Clair's current qualification are PADI Instructor and an SSI Dive Con Instructor, but is quick to point out that although she knew that the instructors badge was her goal, she purposefully spent 2 years as a DM to gain more experience. "I was really lucky as I was offered a full time job with a dive shop as soon as I had finished my DM course so I was working in the industry straight away. Although I could have gone straight on and done my Instructor cert soon after, I really did not want to be an Instructor with 100 dives under my belt and not very much real experience with different situations, so I tagged along with every course that I could and ran all the club dives for about 18 months before

I sat my exam. I think this was an invaluable experience. I don't want to condemn any one who does fast track the Instructor course as I have also met some damn fine Instructors who did this, it just didn't sit with me."

Up until five years ago, Clair worked full time in the dive industry, "I worked on a cruise ship for 21/2 years and then up in Cairns for 8 years but since the birth of my

daughters I keep my hand in by working on weekends. Balancing work and a young family is TOUGH! Because of all the childcare issues it is only viable for me to work weekends... meaning my husband works all week and then I'm off on weekends so not much time together as a family. We do set the occasional weekend aside to do something nice. Although this is not an ideal situation I couldn't imagine not working in the industry at all. This is what I do! Also my husband reckons I'm too grumpy if I'm not



*Left: Clair (R) gives Jo a dive brief.*

Clair describes some hurdles being a woman in the dive industry "I guess the biggest was my physical condition... I used to be a scrawny 61/2 stone (41kg) ....carrying 1 tank on my back was nearly impossible so I was concerned about the fact that if I actually had to rescue someone would I be able to!? I took myself off to the gym and did a lot of weight training and managed to put on about a stone and became quite fit and strong. The other issue was taking quite a decrease in pay; however I figure you only get one life so it is more important to be happy!

I think most dive shops are really keen for more female instructors! Some customers, often women or older people feel less threatened by female instructors... we can be more patient (not always!). Also while I was working in Cairns we launched a pool based dive course for 8 -10 YO kids and I found most parents felt more comfortable if the Instructors were female. That is not meant to be a discriminating comment, unfortunately it is a fact!

I have also had some really great bosses who put me positions that have always been male roles in the company i.e.: I was the first female in our company in Cairns to be the 'First Mate' and 'Senior Dive Co-ordinator' on our live aboard boat! When I was on the Ship we had 4 permanent crew, me and another girl became the first females to fill that full time role. (I think the boys were getting my boss into too much trouble with the Captain!) So any girls out there looking for a really exciting and rewarding career.... WE NEED MORE FEMALE INSTUCTORS!





Left: Jo Magee (L) and Clair Fahey(R)

I had Clair recall any negative experiences over her career, which and with consideration offered, "I think every job has its negative moments...I guess what I hate most is that some of the guys I have worked with have had huge egos and can be very sexist. They like to strut and make a lot of noise and chat anything that moves. I don't know if you know the joke... how do you pick a male Dive Instructor?? A: He has a big watch, small [censored], and talks about himself a lot.... This is not true of at least 99% of the guys out there (so don't form a lynch mob guys!) but I'm sure you have all come across at least one!!!

And on highlights, "Gosh... where do I start..? Lots of travel and diving in beautiful places; when I started the pool based kids course 'Scuba Rangers' in Cairns we had not run one in Australia before. I ended up launching the first. It was great, we ended up with about 40 club members and we made some major breakthroughs like getting permission for the kids to dive in the Oceanarium and also out on shallower parts of the reef. It was very rewarding.

Also, I know this sounds corny... but I love teaching people to dive especially Open water courses! I think the role of Dive Instructor is primarily as a teacher Anyone can dive well but it is not so easy to teach well, that's what makes a great Instructor! The next highlight will be when I find a way to get more women diving; it is my mission before I die... TO GET MORE WOMEN DIVING!!!

Dive Imports Australia run semi-regular outings that Clair runs and would like to do more often. She reckons that the ribbing that the guys get out of the 'Ladies Days' is well worth it. " Yeah I know they [shop guys] like to get a bit of mileage out of it... to be honest they rib me about anything they can ha ha....Although I would love to claim the glory it was actually Ian's (Dive store owner) idea to run a ladies day and he is also keen to get more women on courses and into diving, so obviously we are both on the same page with this.

I think there is a real need to offer a day where the girls can dive together, usually

on the dive boat you will find the majority are guys with only one or 2 girls diving. The general consensus after our first ladies day was that the girls really enjoyed the slower pace and spending more time poking around with other like minded people.

With our first ladies day we started with a boat dive and followed up with a shore dive off the 'Haven'. We had our lovely Dive master 'Asha' (who is not female) manning the B-B-Q and prepping the champagne for when we got out. The funny thing was that the B-B-Q was like Horse Poo to flies....before we knew it we were surrounded by Men! (Not too bad if you are single)."

**Clair on "One of the reasons I love what I do..."**

*"On Wednesday I had both the girls in school and so I had a child free day. I thought I would be really girly, I got all dressed up in a gorgeous dress, silver sandals, hair and makeup done and was planning on a day of shopping, I popped into the dive store on the way and the boys were heading out for a dive to test out the new dry suits that we had in...I changed my plans and went with, so there I was diving off the haven in a dry suit with my pretty frock under the dry suit... I felt like a female James bond.*

*I stepped out of the Dry suit, brushed the creases out of my dress, combed my hair and raced off to pick up my daughter. All the mums were sitting around waiting for the kids and I thought "I'll bet none of the other mothers have done that today !!!!!"*



Above: Clair Fahey (L) and Jo Magee (R)

**Clair's next "Ladies Day Dive" is on May 12th.  
Call Ange on 0414207238 for more details.**



*From the January/February 1999 issue of Alert Diver*

## DAN Explores Fitness and Diving Issues for Women

By Donna M. Uguccioni, M.S.,  
DAN Associate Medical Director  
Dr. Richard Moon, and Dr. Maida  
Beth Taylor

When I first began working with Divers Alert Network some 13 years ago, there was one group of questions that presented a special challenge to me: they were about women and some of their unique characteristics as divers.

At the time, it seemed that the answers provided by the diving medical community were not based predominantly on information or evidence that supported these responses, but rather on long-held biases with little substance. Women, for example, were considered to be more susceptible to decompression illness because they had more body fat than men.

Adipose tissue takes longer to offgas after a dive, so the more fat, the greater the chance of decompression illness, right?

Not necessarily. Many other individual and environmental factors must be taken into account.

Women, in fact, generally do have more body fat than men; but somewhere along the line, the connection was made that this was the cause of decompression illness in women. If that extra bit of body fat caused DCI in women, then it follows that men who have extra adipose tissue should run the same risk. This simply isn't the case.

When we break down dive injuries by the sex and experience of the diver, we find a much stronger relationship between females and their dive experience: women who have been diving for less than two years generally account for 39 percent to 50 percent of all injuries in female divers.

Many other questions remain about women's issues in diving: for example, what about pregnancy, breast feeding, breast implants?

Of the many questions commonly asked by or about women and diving, we have selected 11 of the most frequently asked. The following article is a collaboration of three main authors: Donna Uguccioni, M.S., DAN's diving physiologist and researcher on women-and-diving issues, DAN Associate Medical Director Dr. Richard Moon, and Dr. Maida Beth Taylor, who is an expert on the topic of women and diving and an author on these issues. These experts have produced the most current, realistic and logical answers for DAN's most commonly asked questions on women and diving. Dr. Taylor has added additional text and references for some questions that cannot be easily answered. We think the answers here can help dispel many unsubstantiated opinions in the diving community. Although we don't have all the answers for women-and-diving issues, DAN continues to research these topics and promote safer, healthier diving.

- Joel Dovenbarger, BSN, Vice President, DAN Medical Services

## BREAST CANCER, CANCER & SURGERY

**The Condition:** Tumors in the breasts are not uncommon, especially after age 30. Tumors may be cancerous (malignant) or non-cancerous (benign). Approximately one in nine women will develop breast cancer. Early detection can be made with regular, manual self-examinations of the breasts, but not all tumors can be detected in this manner. Mammography (X-ray of the breast) can detect tumors that manual examination cannot.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following:

1. Women 20 years of age and older should perform breast self-examination every month.
2. Women ages 20-39 should have a physical examination of the breast every three years, performed by a healthcare professional such as a physician, physician assistant, nurse or nurse practitioner.
3. Women 40 and older should



have a physical examination of the breast every year, performed by a healthcare professional such as a physician, physician assistant, nurse or nurse practitioner.

4. Women 40 and older should have a mammogram every year.

Tumors are often removed surgically and treatment of malignant tumors may involve surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy - or a combination of two or three of these procedures.

Both chemotherapy and radiotherapy can have toxic effects on the lung, surrounding tissue and body cells that have a rapid growth cycle such as blood cells.

#### ***Fitness and Diving Issues:***

Cytotoxic drugs (chemotherapy) and radiation therapy can have unpleasant side effects such as nausea and vomiting, and a prolonged course of therapy can result in greatly decreased energy levels. This makes diving while experiencing such side effects inadvisable. Radiation and some chemotherapeutic drugs can cause pulmonary toxicity.

An evaluation to establish the

safety of a return to diving should include an assessment of the lung to ensure that damage likely to predispose the diver to pulmonary barotrauma (arterial gas embolism, pneumothorax or pneumomediastinum) is not present.

Finally, before diving, healing must have occurred, and the surgeon must be satisfied that immersion in salt water will not contribute to wound infection. Strength, general fitness and well-being should be back to normal. The risk of infection, which may have increased temporarily during chemotherapy or radiotherapy, should have returned to normal levels.

### **OVARIAN TUMOR**

***The Condition:*** Ovarian tumors may be malignant (cancerous) or benign (non-cancerous). Tumors may be solid or a hollow sac (cysts). Cysts are sometimes filled with fluid and usually are the non-cancerous form of an ovarian tumor. Ovarian tumors are not all that uncommon and, if identified early, they can be removed surgically or with radiation treatments.

#### ***Fitness and Diving Issues:***

With respect to diving, the major issues are the effects on the body from the surgery and/or radiation/chemotherapy treatments (See the section above on "Breast Cancer and Cancer in Women").

### **PREGNANCY**

***The Condition:*** Being pregnant means there's a developing embryo or fetus in the body. The duration of pregnancy, from conception to delivery, is approximately 266 days, or nine months.

***Fitness and Diving Issues:*** There are few scientific data available regarding diving while pregnant: much of the available evidence is anecdotal. Laboratory studies are confined to animal research, and the results are conflicting. Some retrospective survey-type questionnaires have been performed, but these are limited by data interpretation.

Nevertheless, researchers theorize that diving is in some ways similar to taking a drug: the pharmacological effects of nitrogen or other inert gases and high oxygen partial pressure on a developing fetus are not completely known.



There is the possibility that diving may induce bubbles in the fetus. Also, fluid retention during pregnancy may cause nasopharyngeal swelling, which can lead to nose and ear stuffiness and the risk of ear or sinus squeezes. Pregnant women experiencing morning sickness, coupled with motion sickness, may have to deal with nausea and vomiting during a dive. This is at best an unpleasant experience, and it could lead to more serious problems if the diver panics.

Due to the limited data available and the uncertainty of the effects of diving on a fetus, it is recommended that scuba diving should be postponed until after the pregnancy.

***To be continued next edition.....***

# Judith McDonald from The Scuba Warehouse Talks About Women in the Dive Industry Business



**Judith McDonald is the Managing Director / Owner of The Scuba Warehouse in Parramatta, and has, over the last 23 years, put her life and soul into The Scuba Warehouse. The reward - a very successful dive business that continues to thrive in Sydney's western suburbs. As a woman in the male dominated dive industry, Judith chats about some of the highlights and hurdles that she and Scuba Warehouse have experienced during that time.**

***When did you start diving?*** 1979

***What are your dive qualifications?*** PADI Instructor 24 years

***Favourite dive location/s?*** Great Barrier Reef, PNG, Solomons, South China Sea

***When did Scuba Warehouse open?*** 1984

***Being a business woman in a male dominated industry, have you needed to overcome any particular hurdles to succeed?***

Where do I start? In the 80's it was a boy's world. I had lots of ups and downs. All I can say is it was heaps of fun, I had huge support from some really tremendous people in the early days, Bill Silvestor from Byron Bay Dive, Alan Clarke from Tabata Australia and John Axford from Land & Sea, taught me tons about the dive industry. I was also lucky to have some of the best dive instructors around, people like David Balsom incredible y passionate about diving, spearfishing and marine life who contributed huge amounts to the business.

***Scuba Warehouse has been nominated for various business awards, can you tell us a little about each award your have won.***

We've had over 18 major awards, but winning the Prime Minister's Small Business of the Year award, was a huge buzz and really unexpected.

Receiving the Scuba Excellence Award from Dive Australia in 1994 (for Contribution to the Growth of the Australian Diving Industry) and being the first woman or one of the first women in Australia to get the award. 17 years ago it was a pretty blokey sport....

Our Award last year from PADI last year presented in the PADI Hall of Fame at the US Headquarters was also a highlight celebrating our excellent safety record over twenty years as a 5-Star IDC Centre. I keep saying we are the safest dive centre in the world to learn to dive.. and now I have a beautiful trophy to prove it!

Winning awards is about having a great team - we've been super lucky with fantastic staff over the years. If you look at all the people who have really succeeded in the dive industry most of them have worked for stores like Scuba Warehouse or other like minded dive centres in Australia.

***What sets Scuba Warehouse apart from other dive stores?***

We're the first Dive Centre in Sydney to partner with National Geographic and run their unique Open Water course and train divers with the skills to go on National Geographic Dive Expeditions. We dive with the whales, sharks, whale sharks, dolphins, wreck dive, get involved with fish counts and a multitude of other ecology based projects. We have heaps of expeditions focusing on one of these activities that run all year round both in Australia and overseas.

On a practical side a female diver can come in and try on four different styles of BCD designed for a woman and another three styles of uni-sex bcd's. With that choice she is more likely to find something that fits her then if she just has just a couple of choices.



If you want to select a regulator we have 16 different models/brands in the shop you can put on a cylinder and breathe from them to compare.

We have also great kids programs running the PADI Seal Team training and specialise in kids dive clothing, wetsuits, Lycra suits, dive booties, mask snorkel and fins from age two. We even have a Barbie snorkeling set!

We stock nearly everything on the from rebreathers to full face masks to underwater scooters, dive lights and heaps of toys! We get every new item that comes out as soon as it is released. We even have a toy diver with underwater scooter, that is battery operated and whizzes around the pool!

To give good customer service you have to have time, money and good people that are well trained. A lot of dive centres are under resourced and struggle to deliver what divers these days expect. And believe me, customers' expectations are high. It is an area where our industry really falls down.

### ***Tell us about Scuba Warehouse's dive club***

We're pretty laid back; we run the regular free weekend shore dives, boat dives for divers at all different levels, trips away; a free wine & cheese night every Thursday at the shop so divers can organise their weekend's diving and go for dinner afterwards at Parramatta's "Eat Street".

We have a picnic day/BBQ every month. The club is well equipped with shade clothes, tables, chairs, taups, cushions and bbq. So divers just pay \$10 for lunch and it is all provided for you. We have coffee and tea all day, cold drinks, nibbles for the divers after the dive and a great three course lunch, yes we have lamingtons and tim-tams for desert!

We have a regular graduation night for our divers finishing courses and book out a local restaurant for a meal once a month. We usually have a guest speaker, door prizes and a bit of fun with presentations. We recently had a great night with Mike Ball and he gave away a \$2,000 Mike Ball Expedition as a door prize, it was a great night.

***If you could pick one career highlight, what would that be, and why was it so special?***

Opening the new store two years ago! It is my dream store. I built it to open as a purpose built National Geographic Dive Centre. Everything I ever wanted in a dive store I designed into our current premises.

A bar with leather lounges for the divers to relax with a cappuccino after a dive, where

they can log their dive in comfort. We've just got a couple more flat-screen LCD displays so divers can watch National Geographic movies and dive documentaries.

A kitchen for the staff so they can eat properly when they are working; a great classroom with everything loaded into the PC, so Instructors can teach Open Waters through to Instructor courses with a click of the button.

A diving museum section with twin hose regulators, one of Cousteau's first single hose regulators, a hand-made regulator by Barnes and the first model of the Porpoise regulator.. It's great for new divers to have a sense of history when they learn to scuba - and the National Geographic philosophy of exploration and documentation fits in really well with how we like to teach diving. It's about what you can do with the skills we teach you, not just learning skills to get a license.

One of the best features is our drive-in airfills and hire department, the first available in the middle of a city. Divers can just order and pay for their hire gear over the phone and then just drive in and collect it with no hassle.

We put in a huge change room with two floor-to-ceiling mirrors, so two people can be in at once, which is great if you are trying on your first wetsuit/semi-dry or drysuit. You can have someone in with you giving you a hand. Any yes, you can answer that age old question "does my bum looks big in this?"

### **Judith's 5 Tips on Starting a Dive Business**

1. Love diving, make the commitment to live diving 100% and surround yourself with others with the same passion.
2. Get some business training; learn about retail and small business management. Make the commitment to life-long learning as an Instructor.
3. Get good financial advice and a good solicitor.
4. Have access to an excellent marketer.
5. Have at least \$500,000 to get started.





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# In The Pink

by Missy Perucca



Last night I was reading a couple of threads on ScubaBoard about peoples' opinions of colored dive gear. For the most part, the reception is semi-positive, but there always seems to be a sour comment or what seems like a bitter resentment from someone in the dive crowd about how the bright colors affect the "scenery" or is just plain "wrong".

Since when is dive gear supposed to be all black or blue? Let me state that \*I\* have never encountered someone who said anything negative about my pink gear, but I do get tired of reading about it online from others who have had a less than positive reaction from another diver...



Personally, I get a big kick out of my pink gear, not for the fact that it stands out in a crowd, but for the simple reasons that:

**(1) It will not get stolen. Period.**



**(2) You will be noticed underwater, which is great in bad vis.**

**(3) It's "ME". It makes ME happy. \*I\* like it, and that's all that matters.**



**(4) It will not deter fish. It will not attract sharks. It will not make nudibranchs hide. It will however, make a few other divers cringe (the DIR crowd..lol).**



(5) It's cheerful and bright, not bland, dull, or boring.

(6) It's great for people who are trying to find me, especially in a crowd.



(7) It shows up nicely in pictures!

(8) It shows that you can be an individual and not a dive sheep.



(9) It gives a male dominated sport a feminine aspect. I like black, but c'mon... it's hot in summer, it doesn't make you a better diver, and it's dull. Pink adds color and femininity (not good if you're male though).



(10) Last but not least, diving should be FUN. Have fun with your gear, your styles, your colours... As long as you have safe, dependable gear, why not personalize it and make your diving more enjoyable for YOU? Don't worry about what others think- their opinion is about as important as ...well... nothing !

Not to be offensive, but I don't give a flying \*f\* about what anyone thinks about about pink (or any other coloured) gear... As long as the diver who is using the gear likes it and is safe, then screw what others think!



# RUC Treasure Hunt

by Shelley Breuseker



The Ryde Underwater Club (RUC) Treasure Hunt was held on 24th March at Malabar Beach Long Bay. Unfortunately the State Government decided to hold their election on the same day, and this may have contributed to a smaller turn out than usual.

The sky was blue and clear, the temperature was hot for this time of year at 31 degrees, the sea was flat and the water warm and was the clearest I've ever seen at Long Bay. This all changed rather suddenly and dramatically just after 4 o'clock, when a storm came in from the south and brought with it a drop in temperature, thunder and torrential rain. We'd packed up by then so we didn't

complain, and we were pleased we had stuck with the date and not moved it to the Sunday, which continued to be cold, wet and windy.

We all started to arrive just before noon and assembled our cabana and barbecue under the big shady trees, before attending to the dive gear. John Fardoulis, who'd been running a dive to the sharks from there, came over for a chat while waiting for his boat to come back from the second dive.

In the meantime, the winner of last year's treasure hunt was out laying the potatoes, as is the tradition. This was John Rowe from Gordon's Bay Dive Club, and he was still well pleased with the wetsuit he'd

won, and more than happy to return the favour.

We geared up, had our rules and safety brief, and John told us approximately where he'd stuck the spuds. Then it was a 'le mans' start and we were off.

Being a bit awkward putting my fins on, I didn't get a great start. I figured from what John had said about the way he laid the spuds they were pretty much in a straight line, so the first diver that found one knew he was on the line and would scoop the pool. Still, I remained optimistic, and I put on a spurt of speed to get in front of a few others, in the hope that no-one had found the trail.

About 20 metres further on this paid off as I came across a potato rolling around in the surge in the bottom of a little gully. At least now I knew I was in the right spot, and I set my compass bearing due east and continued on. There were no other divers in sight, so I was hoping everyone else had gone off course.

When I hit the sand, at about 4 metres I kept on swimming out for a bit, before deciding that maybe I should surface and check out if I'd gone past the outer limit yet. At that point I spotted another diver, and he appeared to be surfacing, so snickering to myself, I waited to see what the outcome was. But after rising up a couple of metres, he dropped back down again.

I waited until he was out of sight, and then surfaced slowly, hoping the South Pac boat didn't choose that moment to scream past. I was about 50 metres past the limit, so I faced the direction I needed to go and descended again, took a bearing and kept going until I reached some rocks again.

By this stage I decided it was unlikely I'd find any more potatoes, as there were only 30 laid, and seeing as the vis was great and there were lots of juvenile fish about, I'd just mosey around heading slowly back to shore.

There was a school of baby blackspot goatfish zooming around and another school of pretty little pomfret, perfectly scaled down models of their parents, sparkling in the sunshine.

Then I noticed some juvenile striped catfish working their way across the sand. Being one of my favourite things underwater, I nestled down in front of them to watch, and as they passed by, there was a potato right in front of my face. Nice.

I continued to poke around the area, hoping to find some more overlooked spuds, and found a car tyre. There were golf balls everywhere, jammed into cracks and under overhangs and rolling around in depressions. Obviously overshoots from the many nearby golf courses, they had been washed across the sand until they got stuck in the rocks. I collected half



a dozen pristine white ones that looked like they'd only been in the water a day. Perhaps next year we could collect golf balls instead of spuds.

Further along there was another tyre, still attached to the wheel, with steering gear and other metal parts I couldn't identify due to the growth on them. It seems the local boat launching ramp doubles as a car launching ramp. If only they'd taken up diving, they wouldn't need to entertain themselves that way!

I hovered beside a school of about 8 juvenile flutemouths hanging in the water column, then I watched what appeared to be a salp, spiralling through the water. I gently caught it in my hand, and it looked more like a ribbon of nudibranch eggs. Lamenting that I didn't have my camera with me, I noticed how wrinkled the skin on my fingers had become and checked the time.

50 minutes. It was getting close to the 1 hour deadline, and I didn't want to risk getting disqualified, so it was time to turn west and head for shore.

I was second to last out of the water, and it seems everyone found some potatoes. I was right in my deduction that one person would find the lot, and that person turned out to be Mick Borsboom, who very generously left some behind for the rest of us to find. We do have a limit of 5 potatoes per diver that can be exchanged for raffle tickets, but that doesn't stop someone from collecting them all so others can't find them.

After struggling up the beach (I hate

walking up soft sand fully kitted up) and a quick wash down under the outdoor showers, we packed the gear away and fired up the barbecue. I'm always ravenous after a dive, so a couple of sausages washed down with a beer or two really hit the spot.

We held the prize draw after that, but



Above: Bruce presents Judy with her prize.  
Below: Greg Blackburn receives his prize.



I had to rush off to a kitchen tea for Kelly Jandik (RUC member & St George Scuba Club's Pres.) Well, it was a cellar tea actually, and I'd bought a really nice bottle of wine to give to her. I was lucky both events were held only a couple of kilometres apart, so I could attend both.

Shortly after arriving, we were sitting around outside when the southerly hit and the heavens opened up. Luckily my phone was set to loud, so I heard it over the thunder. I had won the first prize in the draw, a 3mm wetsuit.

I'm starting to get embarrassed. Since joining RUC I've attended 4 treasure hunts. The first one, in 2003, I won a solo diver course, which was second prize. First prize on that occasion was a Nitrox course and Richard Taylor of TDI/SDI had kindly donated both.

In 2004 I won first prize, a 5mm wetsuit. We didn't have a treasure hunt in 2005, because we swapped from holding the event in September to March. I had the honour of laying the potatoes in 2006, and now in 2007 I've won again, a 3mm wetsuit. Both wetsuits were generously donated by Frog Dive Willoughby.

Next year I'll be laying the potatoes again, or perhaps we'll go for golf balls and then I can participate as well. We'll see, but nevertheless, it's a great way to spend a day, having a fun dive, followed by a barbie and a beer with your mates. Winning something is just icing on the cake.

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# Women in the water

by Fran Thai Low

Being a female diver it is obvious I am a minority in the diving world. When it comes to scuba diving it's a fact that there are more male divers than female. Diving is a very social yet personal passion but whenever I have mentioned I'm a scuba diver to non-diving female friends, I am greeted with the same expression. First 'the look', the raised eyebrows, wide eyes and then, 'Oh, I've always wanted to try that'. It's as though it's a hobby so far from reality they can't comprehend diving is something that is possible to do on a regular basis. So, I decided to be a thorn in their side and harass them for reasons, excuses, and so-called explanations as to why they never took the plunge. The obvious question I asked is, 'Why haven't you



tried it?' I came across the same answers; it's too cold, too much hassle gearing up, and scared of sharks, fear of running out of air and getting bent. It was becoming obvious these were more excuses than reasons. There was nothing much I could do about these personal fears.

However, a couple of reasons stuck out that were doable. Firstly, the requirement of a boat to get to decent dive sites, this isn't just the case of non-divers, many scuba divers don't like shore diving simply because of the walking involved and if you are a wreck diver, most wrecks are not near the shore, and a vast majority are considered deep dives. The other reason was cost, cost to do the courses and costs for the initial set up of the equipment. I mean, let's face it; the equipment isn't cheap unless you have contacts or buy from overseas. This got me thinking that I was approaching the issue from the wrong angle, instead of asking why haven't they dived or what puts you off, I asked, 'What can the diving community do to attract you to become an active diver'. What I got in return was, 'Organise community groups

to dive together'. Belonging to a dive club is an attractive proposition. Whenever there is a dive with the club, there's always one of more boat ready to take you on an adventurous location, whether it is to a wreck or shark nursery or simply an easy and shallow (reef) dive, there's always somewhere to go and not to mention always plenty of dive buddies. This maybe verging on sexist but woman like to do things in pairs, even going to the toilet together! Men on the other hand have less problem diving by themselves and there is the whole, 'boys and their toys' perception. Men know their equipment and I think woman are less obsessed with the gear. To them it's all a complicated mess, but I'll be happy to be proven wrong!

Needless to say, there is no quick solution or short cuts to gaining active female divers, because everyone has there own reasons for diving and each person's enjoyment is different to the next. To attract more females to dive, a inexpensive diving club is the way to go. A club that can take them to sites they would not otherwise discover and, a place to meet other divers. This is SPDC I hear you saying, and you're right. But now it's our job to make others, whether female or male or undecided aware that there is an affordable and welcoming club for divers. We're heading in the right direction. Now...if only SPDC could offer cheap dive courses...







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# Club Trip to Truk Lagoon

By Joyce Lee

For weeks I was filing questions from workmates about where exactly I was going on hols. So much that I printed a map of Micronesia, circled Chuuk with a highlighter and stuck it on my pin board. My boss even asked whether my mobile worked in Chuuk, or Internet for that matter – I said no, with a grin. From impressions I got from the travel agent's 'Suggested Packing' list, seems we'd be lucky to find a concrete structure.

I set out to do two things on this holiday (and another two that I shall not mention) – become a better diver, and shut myself off from the world after a busy period at work. From the time I set foot at Sydney Airport on Thursday night, the onward journey took me further and further away from metropolis. I loved it.

Much has been written about Truk Lagoon from a technical and historical point of view – yet nothing quite prepares you for the first dive. Adding to the excitement was being told on arrival that we will be penetrating all wrecks!

We kicked off Operation Truk by diving the Nippo Maru, followed by Fujikawa Maru. The conditions were perfect – light winds, still ocean, warm seas, sun shining bright. Our dive guide jumped in to pull the buoy tight at the dive site. A concise and informative dive brief followed, setting the tone for the week ahead. Never had a seen a boat full of people get ready so quickly.

Carina adeptly described how we all felt – it's like we were free falling into a bottomless blue, then suddenly this 5 storey high ship appears. The Nippo is sitting up right, and as accessible as a ship can possible come. This lady's hulls still contain unexploded missiles, with tanks and her main cannon still visible on the top deck. A gas mask sat neatly on the tank, as if they have belonged together for an eternity... reality is they probably have.

The Japanese repatriated much of the deceased in the 80s, though some skulls and bones are still visible – such as on the Heian Maru, where the skull is buried deep within the engine room.

Besides obvious signs of war – machine gun cartridges on Sankisan Maru, unexploded shells almost everywhere – there were also remains of the once living. Crockery and stationary on Kensho Maru, rubber soles of shoes on Fujikawa, medicine jars on Shinkoku Maru and a gully with wok in tact on Unkai Maru...



The Operation Truk divers; (L-R) Joyce Lee, Rob Creaser, Carina Gregory, Leo Bergagnin, Fred, Scott Hansman, Geoff Cook.



Ironically there were also moments of luxury – a magnificent deep Japanese bath is on the Aikoku Maru, while there was enough beer and sake to sink a boat on the Hoki Maru. Guess port wasn't the drink of choice for this fleet.

On Chuuk we stayed at Truk Stop Hotel, which was by no means a vision of luxury. However it was our very comfortable home for 1.5 weeks, and the staff was efficient in a Chuukese sort of way. We were treated to local cultural performances – twice! Firstly with the Discovery Network film crew, whom we shared the hotel with. Second time with the visit of Dan Bailey, who has published various books on Chuuk's wrecks, and his group (they weren't too keen on the food served at their hotel).



Above: Leo, Geoff, Carina and Joyce with some of the local dive guides.

Overall it was a lot of fun. Our group was very diverse and the different personalities created stories of their own. World Championship Uno bought out the best and worst of some, while other members of the group ventured deep to experience the local culture. We founded the wharf-a-que club, a gathering at Pier One and Only each evening post dive. Wharf-a-que members were required to contribute bottles of Cossack vodka, Red Horse beer or cans of Pepsi. All of which was complemented by the emergency esky i.e. plastic bag of ice.

So yes, very much escaping from the city into a surreal world. Talks already underway to make this an annual trip.

The score sheet;

Day 1 – Nippo Maru & Fujikawa Maru

Day 2 – Kensho Maru & Yamagiri Maru

Day 3 – Shinkoku Maru & Heian Maru

Day 4 – Nippo Maru & Fujikawa Maru

Day 5 – land tour and/ or shark dive

Day 6 – San Francisco Maru

Day 7 – Hoki Maru & Rio de Janeiro Maru

Day 8 – Aikoku Maru & Kiyozumi Maru

Day 9 – Unkai Maru & Sankisan Maru

Day 10 – Heian Maru



# Women can do anything – In diving!

By Jo Barkworth - URGQLD

Recently, it was International Women's day (strangely, there doesn't appear to be an international men's day...) and the slogan for the day was "Women can do anything". So I thought I'd say to all you dive chics – that's true in diving too!

Ok, just 'cos some of us dress in pink (very practical in poor viz!) doesn't mean we have to limit ourselves to falling off the back of a luxury dive boat, somewhere tropical, where someone will carry all your kit and lift you out of the water and welcome you with warm towels and a drink!! Hmm, can't recall ever having been on one of those trips – sounds nice...!

So just to inspire you as to where diving can take you, I thought I'd do a quick précis of my diving career to date – one that started out in 1994 with a very nervous Jo who only ever wanted to dive with the fishies.....

Ok, I was the original 'there's no way I'll do that' diver – I was very unsure about the whole idea, especially when I read about the skills that you had to do, but, well, once I was in the water and saw the fish (learned in the Med in Malta - 100% in the sea) it took me back to those Jacques Cousteau programmes I loved as a kid.



Back to the UK and fitted for my (Pink) dry-suit, it was out to explore the chillier waters of the NE coast of England and Scotland. I was hooked – but, no way was I going to progress to any more than a sports diver (British Sub Aqua qualifications), and certainly anyone who went inside wrecks wanted their heads examining.

But after several dives on the multitude of wrecks around the Farne Islands, curiosity finally got the better of me and during a trip to the Red Sea I finally became a bit of a wreck rat.

My Club Diving Officer told me I'd be an instructor one day (this when I could barely look after myself, so I thought) and so it came to be that I eventually enrolled on an instructor course and started teaching.



Left - Jo in her pink drysuit.

Above: Jo with Belizean student divers





Above: Cannon underwater at Cabo Verde

Right: Jo with a rare bronze cannon in the early stages of preservation.



The fascination with diving continued, and at a dive show in Birmingham, I saw this stand that had information on underwater archaeology in a place called Cabo Verde – so, like you, I said, where the hell's that, and before we knew it, me and my (archaeologist) partner had signed up, taken extended leave from work and found ourselves in these remote islands 500km West of the fat bit of Africa, staying on a Polar exploration vessel (perfect for the climate!!) diving on wrecks from the buccaneering days of seafaring.

Pretty exciting and pretty scary at times being so remote, particularly with a couple of idiot Germans in charge of diving operations (one of whom had already had to put himself in the chamber). A pretty challenging time, particularly when our (crazy Belgian paedophile) dive captain decided to try a bit of salvage work on the side while we were in harbour getting supplies and nearly pulled our boat over!

But being there and helping discover and identify a wreck from 1743 was pretty special (the Princess Louisa).

The taste of adventure now truly in the nostrils, this timid diver, with a love of a certain minimum of home comforts (OK, I was brought up on camping holidays in the UK so not a complete softy) found herself living on a desert island off the coast of Belize (Central America) – well a coral caye with no water and no beer was pretty much like a desert island – for 4 months, just a 'basha' for a bed and minimal rations, teaching diving and helping with a reef survey. Driving a Mexican skiff with dodgy engines and no radio signal or GPS half way up the Belizean coast for repairs was something I could never before have seen me doing!

Since then I've had a taste of diving the caves in Mexico, the wrecks of Scapa Flow in Orkney, Scotland and a further small dive survey in Fiji, during one of their many coups.

So girls, if you've never dived, give it a go, and if you think diving's just for holidays, and serious diving's just for guys (pah!) – try something a little bit different. Without the lure of diving, I would never have seen some amazing parts of the world – you can too!



Left: Visualisation before an extended range dive.



Right: Cave diving.

# SPDC MEMBER PROFILE

Lyn  
Vincent



## What's your nickname?

Our cave diving friends call me "pet" because when we go away on dive trips I'm always giving them hot soups and jaffles and I guess they appreciate this.

## How long have you been associated with SPDC?

I've been associated with SPDC for about 24 years. Always remember the weekends away were good fun. Some of the people in the club were into deep diving and this was a great thing for me to watch and learn other skills inside a club atmosphere. By the time we moved up the coast I was comfortable with twin tanks. Doing dive courses with other club members was a bonus whether it was an advanced course or a deep diving course and the fact that you always knew your dive buddy was great. The bottle collecting course has always been one of my favourites and we've still got some of our "glass finds" on show in our house.

## What sort of diving do you enjoy most?

Would have to say cave diving and if you asked me what the attraction was I guess I would say that it's the whole social aspect as well as the diving. Apart from the challenges it has to offer I enjoy the group comradship and trip planning that goes with all the dives. I also suffer with sea-sickness so even the thought of diving from a property is very appealing, I don't need to take any sea-sickness tablets and I hate diving with these things in my system.

## What is the most common misconception that people have about you?

At work, they know I'm a bookkeeper and they think that I probably do the same things that they do to entertain themselves on weekends or holidays. I don't even try to explain to them about my diving as I wouldn't even know where to start.

## What kind of music are you into?

I listen to most music but I guess I would probably say folk music is my favourite.





## SPDC MEMBER PROFILE Lyn Vincent

### Any phobias?

My greatest phobia would be doing a dive with Neil and him flooding his camera housing. Recently, in a tricky section of a cave dive we were almost to the end of that tunnel he called the dive and showed me the “flashing light” on his housing. I remember that I had an immediate reaction to this and I didn’t want to see the extent of the damage till we got out of the cave.

**What temptations are you powerless to resist?** My definite weakness is dark chocolate.

### What do you like to do in your spare time when you’re not diving?

I’m a bit of a home-body and I still love cooking and getting on my sewing machine. Sewing has been a very handy thing to have over the passed few years and I’m often making bits of dive equipment or bags for lugging gear/cameras in.

### Whats your favourite dive site and why?

Favourite dive site would be Tank Cave in Mount Gambier. It’s a great place to visit and although you’re diving in one cave all the time each dive has something different to offer ie. an airchamber at the end of a tunnel, a white room in the middle of nowhere or even the many fossils that are lying around on the floors or walls. The numbers all stack up. When you sit back and think “where have I been on holidays for the past five years?” And Mount Gambier /Tank Cave always wins.

### What’s your most treasured piece of dive equipment?

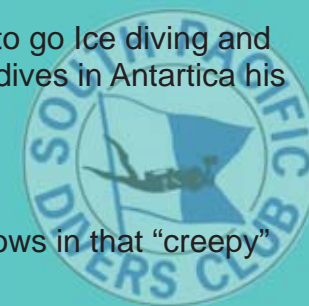
My most treasured piece of equipment would definitely be my dry suit. Since I purchased one seven years ago I can’t believe how much more comfortable I’ve felt on a dive. I really do feel the cold and layering up is such a great thing when you know that you’re going to be in the water for a while.

**What’s the most annoying thing someone could do to you on a dive?** Swim too fast. I don’t see the point in doing underwater aerobics in the water when I should be enjoying the view.

**If you could go anywhere on the planet to dive where would you go and why?** If I didn’t feel the cold I would love to go Ice diving and I guess that Antarctica would be a pretty good place to go. I always remember Kevin Deacon saying to us that after his dives in Antarctica his hands hurt from the cold about 1/2 hour later after the feeling started to come back in them.

### If you could have a ‘celebrity’ dive buddy who would you choose?

Jack Nicholson. It would be fun to watch his facial expressions underwater to see whether he could still move his eyebrows in that “creepy” way.



# Boat Owners & Dive Organisers



## BOAT OWNERS

### 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



### Bob May

Email: bobmay (@) hotkey.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



### Scott Leimroth

Email: scott (@) southpacificdivers.com

Phone: 0413 717170

Location: Cronulla

Boat Type: Inflatable, 3 shallow, 3 deep

Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



### Peter Iwaszkiewicz

Email: pf\_plate (@) tpg.com.au

Phone: 0424 812 483

Boat Type: 4.3m inflatable - 3 divers

Favourite type of diving: Various



### 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



### John Shidiak

Email: john (@) pulset.com

Phone: 9756 5000

Boat Type: 5.5m Half cabin - 4 divers



### Martin Kandilas

Email: mdk (@) speednet.com.au

Phone: 0415 400 403

Boat Type: 5.5m, 5 shallow, 4 deep

Favourite type of diving: Wrecks



### Max Gleeson

Email: maxglee (@) optusnet.com.au

Phone: 0416 041 021

Location: Caringbah

Boat Type: Marlin Broadbill, 4 deep

Favourite type of diving: Wrecks





# Boat Owners & Dive Organisers



## BOAT OWNERS

### Michel Kisso

Email: michel (@) engravingking.com.au

Phone: 9436 0999

Boat Type: 4.9m Quintrex - 4 divers



### 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



### 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



Contact a dive organiser if you would like help organising a dive or subscribe to our diving and events email list at:

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

and post the details of your dive. We currently have around fifty active members on that list and one or two dives a week are organised via the email list.

Please remember that our club boats are not charter boats and therefore you may be required to pitch in and help during launching and retrieval of the boat. Introduce yourself to a boat owner and see what you can do to help. Respect the requests of the boat owner/captain at all times and treat the boat with care.

## DIVE ORGANISERS

### Dave Chillari

Email: davidchillari (@) yahoo.com.au

Phone: 0425 209576

Location:

Favourite type of diving: Night dives, shore dives



### Peter Iwaszkiewicz

Email: pf\_plate (@) tpg.com.au

Phone: 0424 812 483

Boat Type: 4.3m inflatable - 3 divers

Favourite type of diving: Various



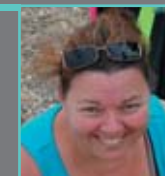
### Ange Jeffery

Email: ange (@) southpacificdivers.com

Phone: 0414207238

Location: Central Coast

Favourite type of diving: All types.



### Jeff Drury (Scoob)

Email: jeff (@) dplayground.com

Phone: 0433142685

Favourite type of diving: All types



### Jon Evans

Email: fishdiver (@) gmail.com

Phone: 0299684381

Favourite type of diving: Midweek, Boat.





## BUNYIP ON THE PROWL

*Which club member got Speeding ticket over ANZAC bridge (80 in 60 zone), then got lost getting to Shelly Beach (Manly)? Definitely not doing her bit for the reputation of female drivers.*

*Which club member didn't notice he had dropped his undies in Clifton Gardens car park. Another member pointed them mentioning something along the lines of 'going commando'*

*Which club member was 'lost' a total of 5 times during last weekends diving!!! This guy needs a child restraint harness.*

## WEBSITE STATISTICS

The Website has gone ballistic this month with a whopping 8143 downloads of last months Wet Rag!! That's up from 4433 downloads in January and 4356 in February. Not far off doubling the previous months downloads and that is with a few days left in this month.

Last issue we reported we had the most visits in January - 7814 and not far off that in February with 7688 visits but March has blown those figures out of the water with 13378 visits and the month isn't over yet!!

Wednesday is still our busiest day on average.

Most people visiting the website between 5pm and 10pm but this month we have a spike at 3am so I am guessing this is from overseas viewers in the USA and Europe.

We are currently working on updating the website to include a dive calendar and other bits and pieces.

Don't forget to subscribe to <http://groups.google.com/group/spdcdiving>

## 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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_