



# Sea Braggin'

## St George scuba club newsletter April 2015



Photo of Pygmy Pipe Horse by Mike Scotland

A big thankyou to members for sending in articles and or photos:

Ron Walsh, Michael Roelans, Phil Short, Natasha Naude, Mike Scotland (Editor)

# Diving in May

| Date          | Event                 | Contact       |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 27 th April   | North Solitary Island | Debbie Cooke  |
| Sat 9 th May  | boat dive Magic Point | Ron Walsh     |
| Sun 10 th May | shore dive The Leap   | Dave Casburn  |
| Sat 16 th May | boat dive             | Nancy Scoleri |
| Wed 20 th May | Club Meeting          | Natasha Naude |
| Sat 30 May    | Whale Watch Wall      | Bram Harris   |
| Thursdays     | night diving          | Ron Walsh     |

Note: lots of other diving happening. Please look up dive calendar.

Note: If you want to post a dive, the official channel for communication is by email. Most people send both an email and a Facebook notification. (Some people do not use Facebook.)

## CLUB DIVE DAY      BASS POINT

The drive to Bass Point takes about an hour from Sutherland. The plan was for everyone to meet at around 9am at The Gutter car park for a potential 2 dives and a BBQ lunch.

As luck would have it, the first dive would be Donna's 1000<sup>th</sup> logged dive. She has many more unlogged dives from the Caribbean when she was divemastering/instructing but this milestone was for logged dives only.

Donna & I arrived just on 9am to find the car park already full (we missed the last parking spot by a minute or so) so we had to park nearby on the edge of the road in – and we weren't the only ones!. Divers attending were Michael and Kelly, Nancy, Ken, Keith w, Jason, Bob t, Martin m, Donna & I.



The weather was beautiful and sunny with a slight north wind and very little swell. It was decided that the first dive would be The Gutter out to the sponge gardens.

The Gutter dive site faces north and can reach a maximum depth of over 20m. Entry is into a gutter in the rocks (hence the name) that has vertical sides and a depth of around 3m – very easy. You then follow the gutter north as it gradually gets deeper and at around 9m it spreads out with steep slopes heading left and right. You can follow these slopes either direction or do as we did and continue to head north across the kelp and sand gutters, gradually getting deeper, for around 100m, where you will reach a sponge garden at a depth of around 20m.

The conditions for diving were spectacular. Calm seas, water temperature around 23C and visibility around the 20m mark. It really was that good!

When swimming across the kelp you can normally find weedy sea dragons and large cuttlefish. We found a large cuttlefish blending spectacularly into the bottom, as well as a couple of small schools of mado.



The sponge garden consists of low level rock covered with various sponges and sea tulips.



There are some small under-hangs that often have eastern blue devilfish in them but not today. Several more cuttlefish were found, along with red scorpionfish and red morwong. Kelly found a nice sea spider and Michael a juvenile moorish idol.

On the swim back in more cuttlefish were found, along with an eastern frogfish and a green moray. After safety stops in the shallows, we exited (which is not as easy as entering).

After changing we all assembled at a covered concrete area, set up the BBQs and chairs and enjoyed BBQ chicken kebabs on bread rolls with onion, lettuce and tomato superbly cooked by Ken and Keith.

Nancy, Jason, Bob, Donna & I then decided on a second dive at The Gravel Loader.

The Gravel Loader is a long jetty that is used to load gravel from the nearby quarry onto small ships. Maximum depth is around the 10m mark. The bottom is usually very sparse and gravel covered but the pylons are covered in growth and masses of schooling fish use the structure for protection. There is also human debris in the form of tyres and metal structures including one large item that looks like part of a crane. Entry is off the boat ramp, followed by a shallow 100m dive at 4m depth across to the middle of the gravel loader. You then stay under the gravel loader and explore out to the end then return the same route.



The hardest part of doing a second dive is always putting on a cold wet wetsuit but thankfully the day was nice and warm and the wetsuits not too cold.

Visibility was around the 15m mark and the water was still a toasty 23C. We found a large anchor and chain on the way to the loader, and once at the loader had large cuttlefish in and around the pylons and also hiding in the sparse kelp on the bottom, large schools of mado and old wives, porcupine fish, and Jason even spotted an eagle ray. Nancy found a red banded shrimp hiding in a steel drum like structure and I found another juvenile moorish idol.



It was an easy return back to the boat ramp where after changing we all had Nancy's cakes and Jason's grapes.



A memorable days diving to celebrate Donna's 1000<sup>th</sup> logged dive.  
Text and photos by Ron Walsh

## MICHAEL ROELANS TRIP REPORT, CHAPTER 1

After a few setbacks, needing some unexpected car repairs in Narooma, I ended up at the car mechanic next to the dive shop. Parked there for 2 days, I was unable to score a dive: the boats were fully booked. Oh well, too bad. It was great checking out the seals on the rocks though. If only I could swim with them...

So, on to Melbourne, where I had arranged to meet a couple of good friends. This gave me a bit more time to sort out my car a bit more, and start looking out for local diving. I really like the St George club, and how it runs completely independently from dive shops. I was keen of course to find similar clubs down here around Melbourne, and later around the rest of Australia too. I got in touch with Ian, from the Victorian Sub Aqua Group (VSAG), <http://www.vsag.org.au/>.

It turns out Ian often dives with another St George club member: Peter Beaumont. It didn't take long before we arranged to dive together. The club seems to have regular night dives on Friday nights here. We did Mornington Pier in the rain on the 17th of April. A very interesting dive, actually: the Pier has deteriorated to the point that it almost looks like a wreck. You can swim (carefully) underneath a few ledges and platforms, around the boulders and pylons until... you see that giant cuttlefish shoot out from its hiding place.



Boar Fish photo by Michael Roelans



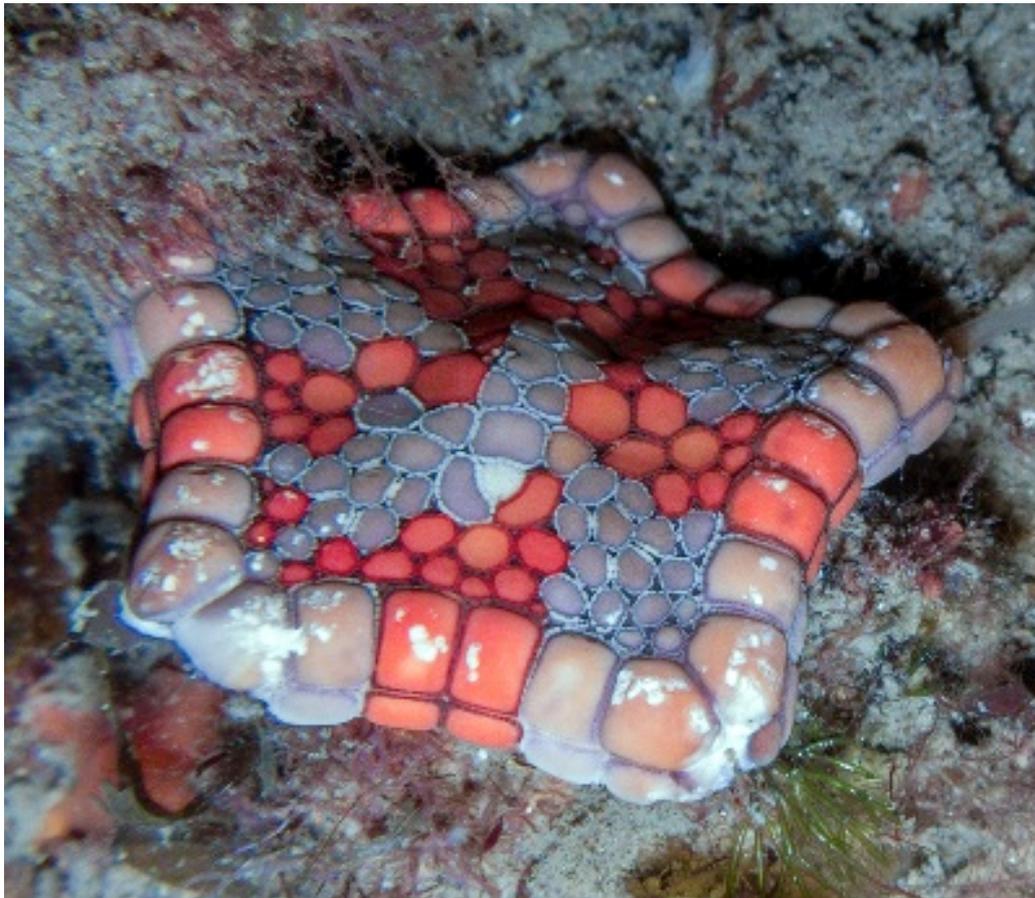
The place is absolutely full of starfish, both 11-armed starfish, and cute pentagonal looking ones in all sorts of colour schemes. As a starfish-deprived Sydneysider, I felt compelled of course to take heaps of pictures. I even thought of a business idea: creating and selling pillows in the exact shape and colours of these starfish. Wouldn't that be cute?

The next dive was even more interesting: Blairgowrie Pier. It's amazing how colourful the sponges, fish, and crabs are down here. I could have never imagined a pier being so full of life. I had only seen a total of 3 anglerfish before coming down here. And then Peter Beaumont showed me another 4 spectacular ones. I can't wait to go again (that'll be tomorrow!).

If anyone knows of similar clubs as the St George and VSAG clubs, around Australia, please let me know. I'm keen to get in touch with each one of them. Would it be an idea perhaps to set up affiliations between these clubs?



Ceratosoma Nudibranch and Sea Star photos by Michael Roelans.



## **Wreck dive: SS Galava**

On the 18 April 2015, five members of the club attended Terrigal to dive the wreck of the SS Galava, which is located in 50 metres of water about 3nm east of Avoca Beach. Bram, Jane, Corey, Bill Rowland and myself arrived nice and early about 7am at the Terrigal Dive Centre. Well known veteran diver, Les Graham is the owner of the dive business and he and his crew made us feel very welcome. Les discovered the wreck of the Galava in the late 1960's. A 50 metre recreational dive back then was a fairly big dive. No computers, aggressive dive tables, lower capacity tanks, and no oxygen enriched deco gases.

The SS Galava was a steel collier which operated between Sydney and Catherine Hill Bay. In the late hours of 8 February 1927, the vessel left Catherine Hill Bay bound for Sydney, with a cargo of coal and a crew of twelve. The vessel sank in the early hours of 9 February 1927 after taking on water through most likely her bow plates. Seven of the crew perished in the sinking. (Details courtesy of Michael McFadyen Scuba. Michael's site contains significantly more details of the wreck for those interested).

The conditions for our dive day were fairly good with a slight breeze and sea. Les dived the wreck the previous day and attached a mooring to the wreck so we would not have to muck around too much picking into the wreck. He reported no current and close to 50 metres visibility, so we were keen to get out there and have a dive.

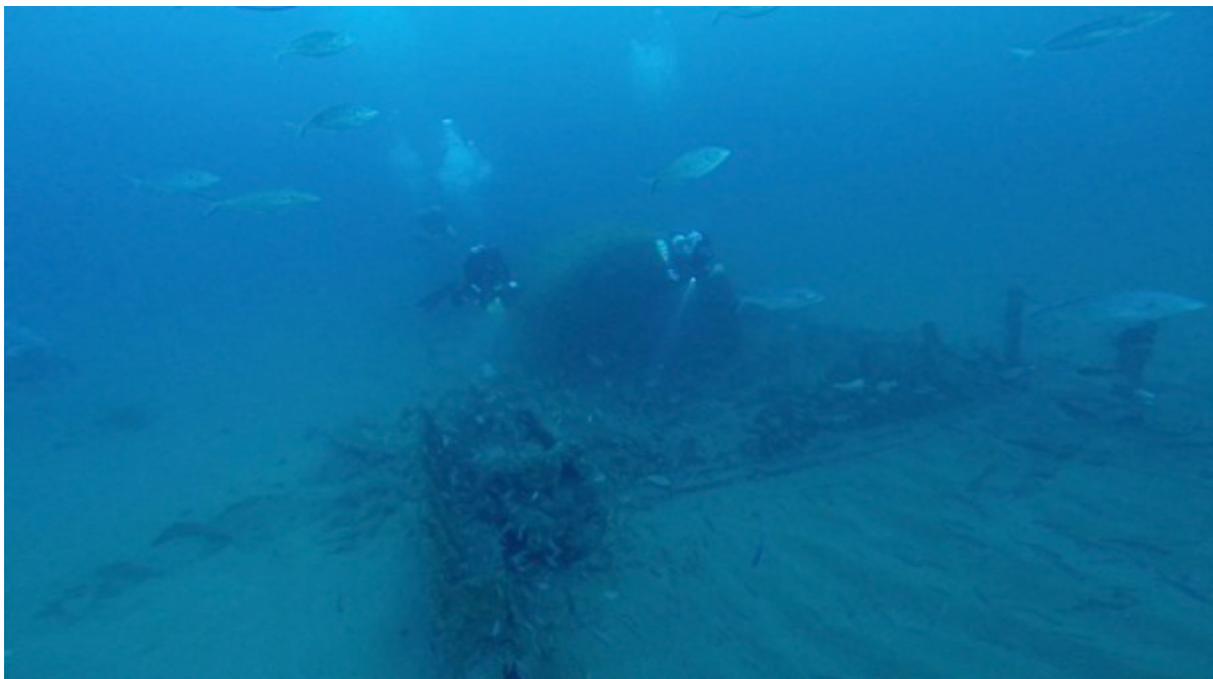


photo of boiler by Phil Short.

On arriving at the dive site we hooked up fairly quickly to the mooring buoy. Les's boat is fairly large and we geared up comfortably in our various rigs; single & sling, twins and sling & side mounts and slings. On descending to the wreck it was nice to have blue water and

excellent visibility from top to bottom. I'm not that good at judging visibility distance but I think it was around the 25 metre mark. Our mooring was chained to the stern.

The wreck is fairly small and is an easy swim and with good visibility, navigation was very easy. The wreck is now fairly disintegrated; the sides have collapsed and the main features are the stern and rudder assembly, ribs, boiler, engine, and large winches. The anchor and chain are in a neat pile at the bow. The fish life surrounding the wreck was prolific.

We were warned prior to the dive that the wobbegongs were active and a bit aggressive as one of the divers from the day before had received a slight nip. There were quite a few small wobbies on the wreck and they were quite active moving around the wreck, but no problems.

On a single tank I did 19 minutes bottom time for a total run time of 53 minutes. The other divers did about 21-23 minutes for a run time of around an hour. We all had plenty of time to have a good look around the wreck before a relaxing deco in 22 degree water. On exiting the water a pod of dolphins came right alongside the boat. A nice finish to a great dive.

Thanks to Peter Flockart for organising the dive. Unfortunately Peter had the flu and was unable to dive.





photos of Bill and Corey at the winch by Phil Short.

Phil Short

### [TRUK BOAT DIVE TO TRUK LAGOON 23/02/2015 TO 7/03/2015](#)

Text and photos by Mike Scotland

I was fortunate to go on board the Truk Siren for ten days of diving in Truk Lagoon and two days at Blue Lagoon. Most of you probably know that the Truk Siren has had three significant events since.

First, Cyclone Maysak broke her anchor and she ended up on a coral reef with hull damage and water in the engine room.

Second, the ship was vandalised and graffitied. See Facebook : "Siren Fleet"

Finally, this magnificent 140 ft long motor sailor was burned to the waterline.

Words simply fail to express the dismay at these three events, especially the two man made ones.

The owners say that whatever does not kill them will only make them stronger.

The latest word is that another boat is being organised. We will have to wait to see what the details are.



## NIGHT DIVING IN APRIL

text and photos by Mike Scotland

We had some great night dives at Bare Island. My buddy was Michael Roelans. This Sepia apama grasped an octopus when my torchlight lit it up. I felt so sorry for the octopus. The sneaky Sepia was hunting in our night lights. The occy is inside the tentacles.



Michael meets and greets a Red Indian Fish.

## DIVING THE LEAP WITH EDDIE IVERS OFF SEA JOHN

Eddie is about to have some limbs ripped off by this aggressive Cuttle at Whale Watch Wall.



Eddie is hypnotizing this pretty female cuttlefish. Photos by Mike Scotland



This big Bull Ray is resident at the Steps. Eddie says it was bigger than him. I reckon it was nearly ten feet wide.



John Beddie diving at M & K reef. Photo by Mike S.

## ANZAC Day Dive and BBQ

The sun finally came out after more than a week of truly wild weather for the club's ANZAC Day dive and BBQ. The Botany Bay water could best be described as milk chocolate in colour, with blue water visible, but only if you swam approximately 2km out to sea! Caroline and Nicolas decided to brave it and went in - the only club members brave (some may say, mad) enough to do so. Ahi started to gear up but realised a) the water looked like chocolate milk; and b) he would be flying solo as there were no other hardy souls up to the task, so he sadly gave up on the idea and came to join the rest of us basking in the morning warmth. Dive report from Nicolas and Caroline was that in the shallows vis was approx 20-30cm, opening out to between 50cm - 1.5m as they got deeper. I didn't hear any report of what they saw apart from their compasses, but kudos to them for getting in when no one else dared (bothered).



At about 9.45am we started to assemble BBQs and cookers and quickly realised a slight problem. We had two cookers, one small, half-filled gas bottle, and no appropriate connector to get us up and cooking. Poor Digby left to head back to home in Ashfield to remedy the situation, while a couple of spanners and Steve, Michael, and Dave worked together to reconfigure the cook setup and get us underway. After a little delay, we were eventually cooking with gas! Thanks to all - and to Dave and Digs for manning the tongs.

We had beef burgers and slow-cooked chipotle shredded chicken rolls, followed by lamingtons kindly supplied by Steve and Sue. Mahla certainly enjoyed the latter! Attendees were me, Digs and Mahla, Caroline and Nicolas, Steve and Sue, Michael, Kelly and Veto, John McPherson (visiting from Melbourne), Greg and Shelley, Kim, Zhi, Dave, Ray and Cherie, Eddie and Mat. Thanks to everyone for coming along even though the dive did not really go ahead (apart from our notable exceptions). It was great to chill out and enjoy some stunning autumn weather. Thanks to everyone who helped us pack everything away - including watching Mahla to ensure we had free hands with which to carry it all! We were all safely packed up and home dry before the late afternoon crazy hail storm and flooding rains that hit later in the day. It's amazing how the weather changed from bright sunny skies to blizzard like conditions in a few hours! Attached are some photos of us all enjoying the morning sun, then a couple of photos of our place after the hail stopped falling.



Thanks to all for a lovely morning.

Natasha Naude

## NEWSLETTER MAY

Any members who have not sent in any items for the newsletter. That is ALL of YOU (except for a dozen extremely wonderful members), I would like you to send in one item per year. Sharpen up your pencils. Take a photo. Don't just do nothing. Support your magazine.

### [WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS](#)

A special welcome to our dive club and to all other new members who have joined recently.

Kerry Marais

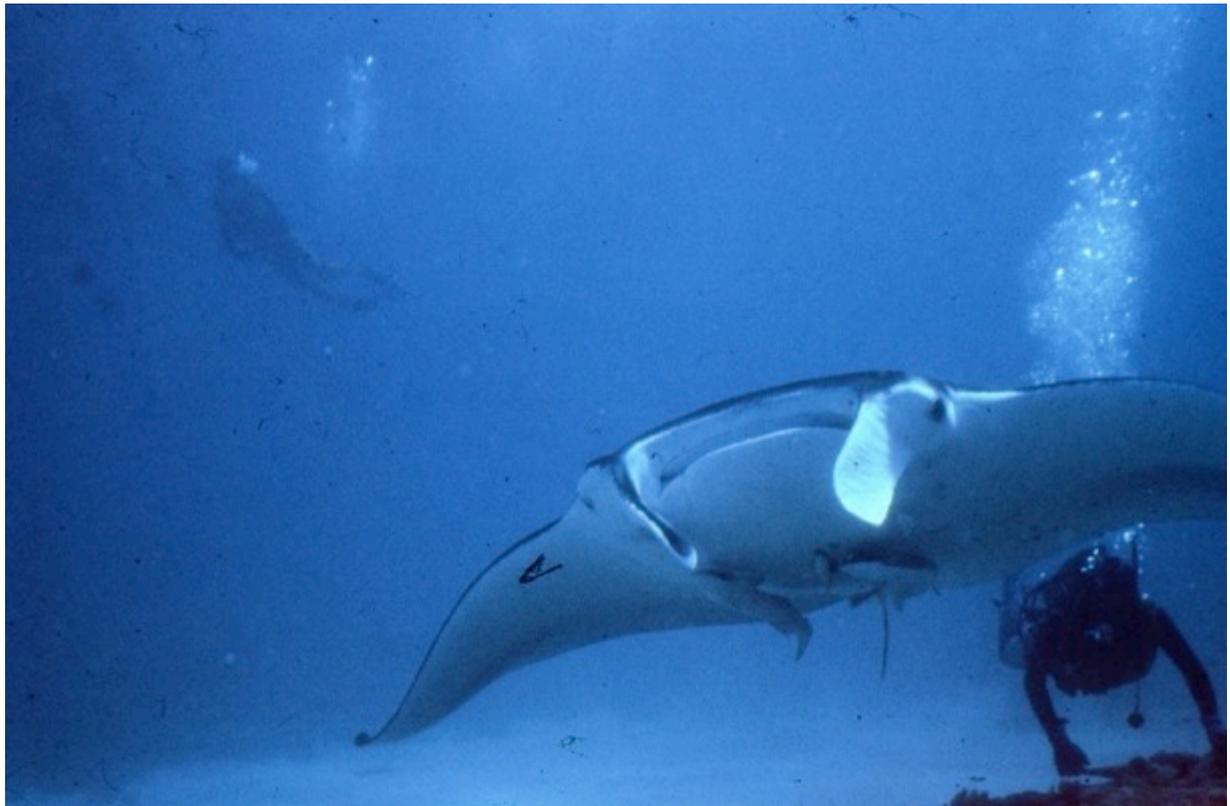
Anissa Lawrence

Paul Dale

LOST: Bright yellow, tank boot lost at Middle Ground dive site on Saturday 11th march. If found please, give me the boot. contact Maxine on 0418 630 146.

## DIVING IN THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES.

Here are a few photos that I would like to share from some of my dives in the 1970's.



I took this photo at Lady Musgrave Island in 1977 on my Nikonos II, my first reef dive trip.

Another shot of a Semi Circular Angelfish from 1979 taken at Heron Island bommie using my first Underwater Housing, a Sea Tite made in Engadine and a Nikon F with photomic head.



My Coral Cod photo was taken on the Yongala. I sold it as a post card in Cairns in 1987. It became the most stolen photograph in Australia with many copyright infringements.

Below is a selfie with a Grey Nurse shark at Seal Rocks in the 1980's.



This is a Marbled Angler from Shiprock in 1979.

GREAT BARRIER REEF / YONGALA TRIP MIKE SCOTLAND

I am organising the Great Barrier Reef Trip this year. The dates are Nov 8 to Nov 14. This trip is full with a waiting list. I will be doing it again in Nov 2016.



Here is a photo of Phil Rose from 2013 enjoying the Blue water at Grubb Reef on a dive with the giant clams called "Area 51".

Below is a photo of one of my favourite fish of all, the Copper Banded Butterfly fish.



## WHAT YOUR EDITOR HAS BEEN UP TO IN APRIL 2015.

I have a story out in Sport Diving in Australia on diving in Lembah Straights.

I also have a story out in Depth magazine on "Adventure diving in New Guinea."

[www.depthmagazine.net](http://www.depthmagazine.net)

Finally, I have two stories out in April Dive Log on Rabaul Mask Festival Dive trip on Febrina and Octopusses.

## Your Committee

|                            |                               |  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| President                  | Natasha Naude<br>0410 074 677 | <a href="mailto:President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au">President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au</a>   |
| Vice President             | Dave Casburn                  | <a href="mailto:dcasburn@iinet.net.au">dcasburn@iinet.net.au</a>   |
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| Newsletter Editor          | Mike Scotland<br>0415 158 168 | <a href="mailto:mikescotland@bigpond.com">mikescotland@bigpond.com</a>   |

## GUIDELINES FOR SENDING IN ARTICLES AND PHOTOS

Please send photographs as separate jpg files, (not png) rather than inserted into the article.

Convert them to about 120 to 200 kBytes.

Please rename with your name them from something complex such as 1N982A6T3012A7fSgphotosH987A6544R1%U#6^L&#6E\$S@ to something simple like "marys seaslug.jpg".

This will save me a lot of time, reformatting files, finding your photos and resizing photos etc.

Please run the spell check over your article.

Thanks.

Editor.