



Sea Braggin'

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2009 - Edited by Ray Moulang.

Included in this issue are Dive Reports from Julius Maniago, Steve Shaw and John Conolly. A big thank you goes to them.

Members please submit reports as you do them not just as the month draws to an end.

2009 St George Photo Competition - Ron Walsh.

This year the competition will be in two parts

Part 1 – Month of April. Submit two photos of a Weedy Dragon and/or Cuttlefish.

- Photos must be taken on a Sydney dive (ie National Park to Palm Beach) during the month of April 2009.
- Photos can be either taken from a shore dive or boat dive.
- Details of dive location and date are to be included with each photo.

There will be two categories – dSLR and Point and Shoot.

1. Part 2 – Saturday May 9 at Bare Island

Submit two photos of any subject. High tide is at 8:15am

Once again there will be two categories – dSLR and Point and Shoot.

On Wednesday May 13 there will be a photographers gathering to show and tell all about the photos from the Saturday dive. This will be an opportunity to have your photos “critiqued” prior to submission.

General

- Manipulation of photos will be limited to cropping, despotting and color balancing.
- Photos are not to be watermarked to identify the photographer.

Photos are to be submitted by Friday May 15, 2008. The competition will be judged at the May Club meeting. Each category will be shown as a slideshow, with members then filling in a voting slip to select their choice. The photo with the most votes in each category will be the winner.

Prizes will be awarded in each category

EASTER CAMPING TRIP

If you are not going on the Club's Easter dive trip and would like to go camping, Kelly and I are planning a camping trip. We are leaving Sydney on Good Friday and drive via Cowra to Wedding Mountains NP west of Grenfell. We will be camping in the Ben Hall Camping Area for the next two nights. The next morning we will drive to Temora, about 75 minutes away. There is an air show on over the weekend so the plan is to be there before the start of the show at 11

am. After the show, we will return to Wedding Mountains. On the Sunday, we plan to drive to Nangar NP and camp there overnight before returning to Sydney on the Monday.

You do not need a four wheel drive as access to the camping areas is via good dirt roads. We have a few members coming along so if you are interested in doing the trip, contact Michael McFadyen on 9545 5596 or by email.

Double Dive Report from Julius Maniago 28th March, 2009.

Paul Pacey & I we're greeted by Scram, Captained by Ray & Andrew M & today we we're off to Mistral Point. Sea John also departed from the same boat ramp at Port Botany with John B, Heinz, Mike Scotland, Tanya and Pat and the first dive was north side of Mistral Point.

Paul & I buddied up and got in the water first. From the anchor, we took a compass bearing North. This was the first time I have dived this site and saw some great rock formations. Our depth was approx. 22m. We then headed south, past the anchor which I personally thought was a better dive. There we're some amazing over hangs and Paul pointed towards 2 Giant Cuttlefish. Photo attached. Sorry if the picture isn't that clear but the viz was pretty average, but I would say there length we're approx. 1m each.



When Paul & I reached the surface Andrew had burst either a high or low pressure hose so that ended his day of diving, but Ray had taken a little peak. Our total bottom time was approx. 48min at 22m depth. SeaJohn went into Long Bay for a copper and then had a second at K and M Reef. Pretty dirty water. Morning tea we stayed on Mistral Point. Ray, Andrew & Paul had an enjoyable morning tea while I was hanging on to the mermaid line.

Being in the water felt better then being on a rocking boat, my stomach & rocky boats didn't see eye to eye.

While in the water they guy's spotted what they thought was a turtle. My first thoughts we're "what a beauty", but then looked and confirmed that it was a big jelly fish, I must admit it was the biggest jelly fish I had seen. Not sure of the actual size but its diameter was about 1m.

Our second dive was south of the anchor with Paul, Ray & I. I personally felt colder this dive. Water temp. was 18°C. Our total bottom time was 37 minutes at 21m depth.

Kayaking in Palau by Captain Fantastic (Steve Shaw)

Our last full day on Palau was a de-gassing no-dive day. The more sedentary members of the group elected to have an easy day around town. Those with energy in reserve wanted another day on the water so an intrepid team of adventurers was assembled to go in search of the fabled Mandarin Fish. The team of Sue, Eddy, Louise, Margaret and Geoff joined Captain Fantastic at 8.30 at Sam's Wharf, a tiny trading outpost on Malakal Harbour. Here, for the price of a few betel nuts and a packet of cigarettes we secured the services of two local guides and three brightly painted bark canoes.

Further negotiations secured a large trading craft on which to load the canoes and the services of Jefferson the captain. Then, with the canoes and provisions quickly stowed on board, the coconut fibre sail was hoisted and we were away down the harbour on a fair breeze.



Tropical plants cover everything

After about 30 minutes we arrived at Resol Bay where the two-man canoes were dropped into the water. The paddlers climbed in and for the next half hour we paddled around this



The gin-clear waters of Resol Bay

horseshoe-shaped bay with its vertical cliffs and dense tropical vegetation growing almost to the water line.

This bay was once used by the Japanese for aquaculture. The remains of the once massive gates across the narrow neck of the bay are still there to see. We then headed out of the bay around to Mandarin Fish Lake which is connected to the sea by a narrow channel.

This channel contained some spectacular coral fans about 1.5m across and of a beautiful pink colour. Securing our canoes to the boat we snorkelled into the lake where our guides demonstrated how effectively a blow-pipe could be utilised as a

snorkel.

Our head guide Lali quickly located the first of many mandarin fish that we were to find in the next 45 minutes. Close up, these little fish have a turquoise and crimson pattern on a deep green body.

They don't swim much, preferring to launch themselves from one bit of coral to the next using the pectoral fins. The lake also contained various types of trigger fish and many of the butterfly fish species we were familiar with on the ocean dives.

After an hour in the lake we loaded the canoes back onto the boat and headed round to the improbably named Lee Marvin Beach for lunch. It was here that Sue succumbed to some tropical illness and we weren't sure she would pull through. However the expedition had to continue. We made her as comfortable as possible, and leaving her in the care of Jefferson we piled back into the canoes and paddled through the swell around to Silent Lake.



The Mandarin Fish of Legend

The second guide was permitted to come aboard Captain Fantastic's canoe to assist with the paddling.



The entry to Silent Lake

Silent Lake could be entered via a wide channel or via a very low arch which required the paddlers to lie flat in the canoes and to push themselves through with their hands against the roof. The fact that Captain Fantastic's canoe almost capsized under the arch was in reality just a demonstration to the less capable members of the team how not to do it! Geoff and Margaret came through with arms and legs flailing in the air giving their canoe the appearance of a beetle on its back. This intrepid pair then paddled into a cave where they quickly realised that attempting to turn a 4.7m canoe in a 4m wide cave requires a bit of planning!

We paddled around the island in Silent Lake with kingfishers, tropic birds and a couple of fruit bats flying overhead. This is a beautiful piece of water and is very aptly named.

From here we paddled round to the very narrow Wreck Bay to meet our boat. This bay is named after a small Japanese vessel which was sunk by the Americans. It sits just below the surface at high tide and most of the deck is clearly visible from above.



The ship that couldn't hide

It had tried to avoid the aerial bombardment by hiding itself in this narrow channel but its cover was quickly blown followed by the rest of the vessel! Back on the boat Sue had made a remarkable recovery after having a nap and it looked like she would make it after all.



Returning to the Mothership

After photographs and drinks we loaded the canoes on board and cruised back towards Malakal. On the way we stopped at Coral Gardens in the outer channel where earlier in the week we had seen a manta ray at the surface. Here we jumped in the water for a 'drift snorkel' over mostly stag horn and boulder coral. An eagle ray was spotted but no mantas.

Finally our boat collected us and we were back at Sam's Wharf by 4.00pm. This had been a terrific way to end our visit to Palau.

24 to 26 February, 2009. - The Pinnacle - Forster by John Conolly

On Tuesday 24th February, I went with Nick (Forster Dive) out to the Pinnacle off Cape Hawke near Forster. I had dived there on the first November weekend, and there was nothing there then. Well there certainly was this time !!!!! - February is the Pinnacle's month I reckon.

With 20m vis and 23C water, we descended down the mooring line, to be greeted by a mass formation of 2m bull rays, moving with the current's speed and therefore remaining stationary above the rock. They were in a pattern like a squadron of bombers - as far as the visibility allowed you to see. And amongst them, spiralling, ascending, descending - dozens of 1.2m kingfish and 1.5m jewfish and hundreds of 50cm yellowtail.

To cap it off, in the hollows and ledges of the top of the rock were many huge wobbies, the biggest over 3m. This spectacle stayed for the duration of our 30 minute dive.

The second dive was back at Latitude Rock and was the usual fish soup that reef always delivers. Two days later, we returned to the Pinnacle and did the same dive. This time the bull ray formation was not apparent but there were still a dozen of them swimming around with even more big kingfish, jewies, yellowtail, mackerel and a solitary grey nurse shark.

Then towards the end of our dive, one of the bull rays glided near us, looking at us intently. Nick held out his upturned hand and the ray happily accepted a rub underneath the right side of his flap as it glided past. He immediately circled around for more and this time he glided and rubbed across the upturned hands of Nick, me and a third diver. He loved it.

Wow ! Does a 2m ray look big that close! It would be interesting to know what Steve Irwin did to the ray that got him. Our second dive was on the Bennett's Head Bommie - lots of rays - Fiddler, Sand, Shovel Nose, etc. This is a shallow dive with a lot of surge, but the plant life is colourful and fish life plentiful.

Regular events

THURSDAY NIGHT DIVES

We have had some record turnouts in January and February for the night dives. A record equalling 15 attended the 22 January dive at Bare Island Isolated Reefs and two weeks later 18

members attended the 5 February Bare Island Deep Wall dive. Most of the dives have been very good, with nice visibility and good fish life.

Other Dives

Many other dives are advised in the news section of the Club's web site.

If you are interested in a dive, have a look at the news section a few days before a weekend and you may find others already planning a dive.

You can also place your own news item there (but remember it may take time to appear as it needs to be authorised by a web site administrator).

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Ulladulla

A trip has been organised to Ulladulla for the week-end of Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd May. We will be using Ulladulla Dive & Adventure again (large RIB) and the same Tourist Park. Numbers are limited to (20), so you will need to get in early with your \$50 deposit to secure your spot.

Accommodation

Harbour Cabins, Ulladulla Headland Tourist Park

\$85 per person for the week-end (estimate depending on numbers).

Includes a late check-out time of 2:00 pm

<http://www.holidayhaven.com.au/Ulladulla-Headland-Tourist-Park.html>

Diving

Ulladulla Dive & Adventure

Double Dive both days to local sites - \$75 for the double dive

Air fills are \$6.00

Depending on numbers, dives will be done in 4 single runs.

<http://www.ulladulladive.com.au/>

To book your spot, contact Kelly at kelly@michaelmcfadvencuba.info and pay your \$50 deposit to the Treasurer.

Ocean Trek

A trip to beautiful Jervis Bay on Ocean Trek has been organized for 15-17 May

The cost (\$400) includes:

- Accommodation on Fri & Sat nights
- All meals on Saturday
- Becky & Lunch on Sunday
- Six dives & air fills
- Good company & lots of fun

Places are limited to 10 people.

For further info re Ocean Trek click on the link below:

<http://www.oceantrek.com.au/>

So if you are interested in attending this great weekend let me know asap (either by email or phone) A deposit of \$ 50 is payable to secure your spot. So get the deposits to the treasurer, either at the meetings or via EFT.

DEPOSITS NEED TO BE PAID BY 11TH APRIL.

Vanuatu Trip

August 2009 Trip to VANUATU

We'll be living in a tropical paradise and diving spectacular reefs and wrecks including the world's largest and most intact WW2 wreck - the SS President Coolidge.

We have two versions of this trip – "REGULAR" and "LIGHT".

The REGULAR version includes Port Vila and Santo (16 dives, 11 nights accommodation) **\$2335.**

The LIGHT version is Santo only (10 dives, 8 nights accommodation) **\$1730**

Itinerary – REGULAR (\$2335):

Depart Sydney on Monday 10th August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Port Vila.

Spend 3 nights in Port Vila with twin-share accommodation at "The Melanesian" with continental breakfast daily.

Two days diving (4 dives) with "Nautilus Scuba" (tanks, weights and dive guide services included)

Potential dives are: Twin Bommies, Mele reef, Pango Wall drift, the cathedral Cavern, MV Konanda

Depart Port Vila on Thursday 13th August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Santo.

Spend 8 nights in Santo with QUAD-share accommodation at "Deco Stop Lodge" with continental breakfast daily.

12 shore dive package with "Aquamarine Diving" (tanks, weights and dive guide services included). There are two scheduled dives per day. Potential dive sites are: The President Coolidge (obviously), Million Dollar Point.

Optional: Boat diving can be arranged once we get to Santo (we can convert some of the shore dives to boat dives).

Potential dive sites are: the USS Tucker wreck and the Henry Bonneaud.

Optional:

Upgrade Deco Stop Lodge from quad-share to twin-share = AUS\$128 pp for the 8 nights.

Upgrade some shore dives to boat dives (USS Tucker, etc) cost depends on numbers.

Depart Santo Friday 21st August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Sydney (via Port Vila).

Itinerary – LIGHT (\$1730):

Depart Sydney on Thursday 13th August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Port Vila.

Overnight stay in Port Vila with twin-share accommodation at "The Melanesian" with continental breakfast.

Depart Port Vila on Friday 14th August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Santo.

Spend 7 nights in Santo with QUAD-share accommodation at "Deco Stop Lodge" with continental breakfast daily.

10 shore dive package with "Aquamarine Diving" (tanks, weights and dive guide services included). There are two scheduled dives per day. Potential dive sites are: The President Coolidge (obviously), Million Dollar Point.

Optional: Boat diving can be arranged once we get to Santo (we can convert some of the shore dives to boat dives).

Potential dive sites are: the USS Tucker wreck and the Henry Bonneaud.

Optional:

Upgrade Deco Stop Lodge from quad-share to twin-share = AUS\$113 pp for the 7 nights.

Upgrade some shore dives to boat dives (USS Tucker, etc) cost depends on numbers.

Depart Santo Friday 21st August 2009 flying Air Vanuatu to Sydney (via Port Vila).

The fine print...

The prices are based on an Air Vanuatu "T Class" fares and are in very limited supply. If you miss out on a "T Class" fare then the next fare level will cost an additional \$313 to the prices quoted.

The **\$600** deposit is due NOW and payable to Dive Adventures. You can direct deposit or call Dive Adventures (9299 4633) and pay by credit card over the 'phone (extra charge involved – see below). Our agent at DA is Sharon.

The balance is payable no later than 45 days prior to departure.

Air Vanuatu have a 20Kg baggage limit plus an additional 10Kg for sporting equipment (30Kg total).

The price does not include travel insurance which is recommended.

Of course, it is recommended that you also have DAN coverage.

I need names ASAP – please email or SMS so I can advise Dive Adventures.

Also...

Do you want to upgrade to twin-share (from quad-share) accommodation at Deco Stop Lodge?

Are you interested in converting some of the Santo shore dives to boat dives to have a look at USS Tucker and/or the Henry Bonneaud? (No commitment needed - just an expression of interest).

Paul Pacey

(Home 9527-2501)

(Mob 0418 410245)

Paul.Pacey@inet.net.au

Dive Adventures direct deposit bank account details...

Direct Deposit Account Details:

Westpac (King St, Sydney branch) BSB : 032 003 Account Number : 188 500

SWIFT : WPAC AU2S

Important note: Please ensure that your file number and surname are included in the deposit details, when making

direct deposits.

FOR PAYMENT BY VISA OR MASTERCARD A CREDIT CARD MERCHANT FEE OF 1% APPLIES.

Forster

We are organising a weekend dive trip to Forster - Friday 11th September -> Sunday 13th September 2009.

Package price of \$305 per diver includes...

Double boat dives on Saturday 12th September and Sunday 13th September diving with Action Divers (four dives).

Second tank supplied both days plus one air fill on Saturday (so you only need to bring one tank).

2 nights accommodation (Friday and Saturday nights) in two bedroom villa's at Lani's Caravan Park in Forster (a nice place to stay).

Continental breakfast provided.

Barbecue dinner on Saturday night. Action Divers will provide the meat, salads, etc. and all we have to do is find someone to burn it using the big BBQ near the Villa's (Dave Casburn, come on up!).

Here are the fine details...

The villa's have two bedrooms. One has a queen bed (linen provided) and the other bedroom has four bunks (bring your own linen). Bring your own towels. There is also a kitchen and a small bathroom. The pricing is for three people per villa which means we'll have plenty of room for dive "stuff".

Your hosts from Action Divers are John and Kathy Duggan.

Action Divers office is at shop 4/1-5 Manning Street Tuncurry, cross the bridge and it's on the right in the first group of shops. The boat is a huge aluminium thing that leaves from a small jetty on the Forster side of the bridge in the small park just to the east of the bridge.

Action Divers will not be providing a dive guide for our dives.

Action Divers have Goofy Gas - a Nitrox fill will cost you \$16 extra per fill.

Action Divers provides home made morning tea/coffee between dives.

On Saturday we'll board the boat in Forster but on Sunday we'll board the boat from the beach at Seal Rocks. After diving on Sunday we'll be returned to the beach at Seal Rocks - thus we'll be 40 minutes closer to home than at Forster.

Dive sites, as always, will depend on the weather but "The Pinnacle" and "Latitude Reef" are obviously prime targets for Saturday and "Seal Rocks" and "Jimmy's Cave" are potential targets for Sunday.

The price is based on 9 divers (one is a "free" and the saving has been apportioned) and three persons per Villa.

If you want to camp or you have your own accommodation in Forster, the diving component of the price is \$200 and the Accommodation/Breakfast/BBQ component is \$105.

The boat holds 12 divers maximum - first in...

Please pay your \$50 deposit to Mark Ridsdale A.S.A.P. and please let me know by email or SMS that you have done so.

www.lanis.com.au

www.actiondivers.com.au

Paul Pacey (Home: 9527-2501) (Mob: 0418 410245) (Email: Paul.Pacey@iinet.net.au)

Solomon Islands Trip – September

The trip to the Solomons will be to Tulagi and Honiara. The diving here is a mixture of wrecks and some reef dives. The dives at Tulagi are deeper and would suit people experienced in deep diving. Details as below:

Thursday 17 September 2009

6:30 am - fly out of Sydney via Brisbane

2 pm - arrive Honiara

Transfer by boat to Tulagi

Stay at Vanita Lodge for 8 nights. 10 boat dives with Solomon Islands Diving.

Friday 25 September 2009

Transfer by boat to Honiara

Stay at King Solomon Hotel for four nights. Four shore dives with Sunreef and Wreck Dive.

Tuesday 15 September

2:50 pm - fly out of Honiara

5:05 pm - arrive Brisbane then to Sydney

Total cost for the above, assuming we get 8 divers, is \$2770. It will cost slightly more if we have less (the boat transfers cost more).

If we get the maximum of 8 divers, then we will get a substantial discount (free accommodation and diving for one).

If you are interested, contact Michael McFadyen as only 8 spots are available and 6 are taken already.

The Committee is:

PRESIDENT:	Jason Coombs	9345 4599	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
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Please send items for the Newsletter to me as you do them during the month with a deadline of 25th of the month.