



# SEA BRAGGIN'

## St George Scuba Club Newsletter

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2014

What a year it has been! The club continues to go from strength to strength, surpassing 200 members for the second year in a row. The diving continues to get more varied with mixed gases now being a common sight on most dives. Trips away have also been another highlight of the club's great success, with members or trips away visiting most corners of the globe. The only thing that has managed to stop members getting to their destination has been natural events on the nearly biblical scale. The local diving has been as busy as ever this year, not even the cold winter water could keep members land locked.

The club has also experienced some positive changes to its constitution ensuring the security of members' information in this dramatically changing digital era. Processes within the club have also been streamlined in an attempt to make organising events easy on volunteers so they can spend more time enjoying the great events than they do organising them.

My job has been made easy this year by the great support that has continued from the committee around me and all the members should thank them for all the tireless help that they donate to the club. A special mention to Michael McFadyen who is standing down as the Webmaster after an extended stay in this position. Much has changed digitally for the club, with the Facebook group starting up and Michael continues to help the club embrace these new features, allowing the club to grow. A special mention should also be made to all the organisers of events and club dives. You should be proud of the success of the club as it is only as good as those that support and donate time to the cause. Given how great the club is its future seems secure on the back of its members. Last but certainly not least a big thank you to all the boat owners who have been willing to take members out so they can see just what Sydney truly has to offer outside of the headlands. Having so many willing boat owners is as always a great part of the success of the club.

So I hope the last year has brought you all the diving that you wanted to do and wish every new and old member safe diving in the future.

**Gary Perkins**



## Yongala and Townsville Barrier Reefs

We have a fourteen people who have paid their deposit to confirm their booking on our Great Barrier Reef / Yongala trip from Monday 17 Nov until Saturday 22 Nov on board Kalinda with Dave Stewart for six days.

This will be the third year in a row that St George members have dived the Yongala and reefs around Townsville.

We have two spaces left. You can still join this excellent dive trip.

Total cost is \$1125.

For more information, see my website Great Barrier Reef section, Townsville. [www.mikescotlandscuba.com](http://www.mikescotlandscuba.com)

If you are interested, call me on 95217720 or 0415158168 ASAP.

**Mike Scotland**

[mikescotland@bigpond.com](mailto:mikescotland@bigpond.com)





## DIVING CHRISTMAS ISLAND

I was recently contacted to do some work on Christmas Island. Knowing that the Island is in the Tropics, I contacted the only dive shop on the Island, "Wet'n'Dry Diving", hoping to do some dives while I was there. I emailed and phoned the shop several times over a two day period, without answer. After visiting the Island now, this can be expected as most places are closed the majority of the day, and open at the strangest times. There is a large workforce of several thousand on the island who keep the detention centre and Phosphate Mine running. Most spend three months on and three months off, and there are very few permanent residents.

After a few days I received a reply to my email. It was from Hamma, the Dive Operator. I was arriving on the Island on the 10th July for four days, and he informed me that he was leaving the Island on the 11th to go on a Dive Trip to Komodo, so he would obviously not be taking any dives out, and said I should go past the shop when I arrive and there may be a shore dive organised.

My plane was delayed and I did not arrive on the Island till late at night. I now know that this is a common occurrence, and because of the location and weather the plane quite often does not land at all. I visited the dive shop the next day where Hamma told me that there were no dives going, but he would take my number and if someone came in to do a shore dive he would ask them if they were happy to take me along with them. I thought the chances were very slim. However, within half an hour I had a phone call from two locals who were going for a dive and offered to take me with them.





We met on a Sunday at 10am at Fish Cove. Expecting a shallow reef Dive with a maximum depth of 18m or so, I was soon surprised. The Island is an extinct volcano, which rises steeply and violently out of the sea. It is covered in tropical plants, has a vast array of bird life and 1000's of Crabs. About 100m off the shore, the Island drops off into the deep of the Atlantic Ocean. I asked why the Dive Operator takes out boat trips, and the answer was simply that the tourists did not know the drop off was there.

We entered the water on the left side of Fish Cove, and snorkeled out 200m along the cliff face to the point of the Cove marked with a flag pole - looking at the coral reef as we went. We were going to descend at the edge of the wall and head right (clock wise) around the Island. There is a current on the left side of the point, and if caught in the current you will be ripped out to sea and on your way to Jakarta.

We descended straight over the wall, which starts at about 10m. We dropped straight down to the bottom of the wall which was at 52m, and from there the bottom slowly rolls deeper into the blue. At 50m I looked up at the wall which was covered in colorful corals and fans all the way to the top. The visibility was astounding.

The wall itself was absolutely pristine. Covered in large fans, sponges, and the usual collection of tropical fish – Parrot Fish, Morays, Clown Fish and many Lion Fish. Because of the remote location, and very few tourists, the coral reef was completely undamaged. I cannot recall a reef I have dived in such good condition.

We headed along the wall for approximately 30m, and then up on top of the reef for the final section of the dive. The reef went right up to the shore line, and when I popped my head up at the completion of the dive we were back in the middle of the cove within 10m of our car.

We had covered approximately 1/3 of the wall in front of the cove, and I was told that the diving was like this all around the Island. I did not see any large pelagics on this dive, nor any reef sharks. However I am told that they are there.

The coral and fish life on this deep wall mean it is the one of the best wall dives I have done, and it is all accessible from the shore. Christmas Island is definitely worth a visit.

Aaron Malouf







# SEA BRAGGIN'

## MY FIRST DIVE

It was hot, humid, and almost 50 degrees celcius, so I signed up to learn to dive with the Sharjah BSAC Club in United Arab Emirates in 1986. But first, I had to do several swimming tests: swim 100m, swim with 5kg weights; and pass a dive medical. Training was voluntary and divers taught less experienced divers – once you were trained you were expected to help with the next batch of trainees. My training started in August and my first open water dive was in October. Excerpt from my dive log: 10.10.86, Dibba Island, 1 hour 4 mins @ 15m. Pufferfish, surgeonfish, loads of corals, moray eels, anemone fish, sergeant majors, good viz, warm water, but cool below 10m!

The club had its own club house, compressors, tanks, boats and dive equipment, which was great because there were no dive shops around at that time and only one hotel offered air fills and boat dives but it was a 2.5 hour drive away.

I ordered my first Spiro ABLJ (BCD) from the UK, a lovely bright yellow "toilet seat" with an emergency cylinder. As our local dive site was a wreck, we dived in overalls which offered some protection from possible cuts from the jagged metal of the wreck. On a trip to the UK, I had a 'made to measure' wet suit made and was considered too "posh", but of course, I still wore the overalls over the top! It was more than a year later when I bought one of those new fan-dangled BCD's with a CO2 cartridge. A short time later the first dive computers became available, The Edge. I had a yum yum yellow one which I affectionately called 'THE BRICK', for obvious reasons, which screwed onto the contents gauge hose. The computer allowed multiple dive profiles and was perfect for dive holidays.

While moored on a wreck, between dives, our club boat and 3 of us got run over by a small roll-on-roll-off ship. We lost our gear and our boat was a write off. After the ship eventually came back and picked us up, we managed to get a deal arranged whereby we wouldn't report them to the police if they paid us for our lost equipment and a new boat. They paid up pretty quickly, and a week later we had incredible viz, which enabled us to find some of the gear, on the sea bed, 10m off the wreck dive site, so instead of having to buy all new gear, I bought my first underwater camera. Thus started a life long passion for underwater photography!

Carole Harris







## TULAMBEN JUNE 2014

This trip, organised by Eddie Ivers, was well attended with 15 participants.

The guilty party comprised Eddie Ivers, Ian Hittman, Chris Heath, Peter Flockart, Cherie Moulang, Ray Moulang, John McPherson, Kim Dinh, Eda Di Camila, Ray Edwards, Steve Boyd, Bob Trudgeon, Paul Pacey, Jo Edney and Graham Lehmann.

Whilst some people came early (John McPherson) and some people came late (Ray Edwards) most of us arrived on 8th June.

After a 3 hour bus ride from Denpasar to Tulamben we were welcomed on arrival at Villa Alba Dive Resort by the owners Jessica and Alex and their resort manager Made Kubali, who many of us knew from our last visit to Tulamben.

Villa Alba is named after the Kingdom of Alba, as Scotland was known in the early middle ages. Alex, by the way, is very proud of his Scottish heritage (as he should be).

Villa Alba is located about 5 minutes drive (or a pleasant 20 minute walk) north-west along the coast from the village of Tulamben and is actually located in the village of Kubu. The resort is modern, well laid out, can accommodate about 30 people, and has two swimming pools (including an infinity pool overlooking the sea, as does the dining area). Diving facilities are on site too, with a good washing and drying area. Nitrox is available and recommended for the type of diving you will be doing here.

After we'd been shown to our rooms it was time to unpack and set up dive gear and cameras ready for the adventures starting the next day.

A great start to the trip was having a cooked breakfast served on the deck overlooking the Java Sea. We were soon to discover a great dive site just 10 metres away from the breakfast table - right in front of Villa Alba.

The diving around Tulamben is mostly shore diving although one morning we did notice a few slackers sneaking out for a dive on board a couple of the local outrigger fishing boats.

Whilst Tulamben is famous for the wreck of the USAT Liberty, which was wrecked at Tulamben after being







torpedoed during WWII, there is a lot more to diving at Tulamben than the wreck itself (but the wreck is a darned good place to start!).

The usual drill was for the dive staff to set up your dive rigs and load everything onto the Suzuki utility and transport it to the dive site and then the ute would return to pick up the divers. Many of the dive sites are within 10 minutes drive from Villa Alba.

With such a large group it wasn't long before we were diving in shifts. If you wanted to dive the USAT Liberty wreck then a 6:00am start was the best approach as you got onto the wreck before the hordes arrived from the other dive resorts. Having said that though, there were nowhere near as many divers in Tulamben this time as we encountered on our last trip there.

Those of us that preferred a lazier start to the day (me for a start) arose for breakfast at 7:00am, and left for the dive site at a more civilised time of 8:00am. We would typically do three dives a day - two in the morning and one in the afternoon (often a meander around the home reef in front of the resort). One time, when we were out on the home reef, Alex came along with his dive scooter and scooted around us for a while – thus earning him the nickname “Buzz”.

The coast line around Tulamben is a series of rocky beaches interspersed with small headlands. Currents are not usually a problem either. The bottom terrain is black sand with scattered outcrops of reef. This makes the diving a real treasure hunt but the rewards can be immense. Ghost pipe and Angler fish are a real thrill to find but Pom Pom crabs, Harlequin shrimp, Pipe fish, Pygmy Seahorses, Porcelain Crabs, Garden Eels, Serpent Eels, Mantis Shrimp and much much more are to be found here by a determined diver (or you can just follow the dive guides around).



Ian Hittmann as Captain Hook on the Kubu

The Liberty wreck itself actually lies off the Tulamben beach and the sandy slope to the south of the wreck is known as The Wreck Slope. This slope runs down to well over 40 metres but the best diving is from 10 to 30 metres. Indeed most of the reef slopes are best foraged in the 10m to 30m depths and even using Nitrox we were regularly hitting our deco limits.

The headlands are not all accessible to divers but the headland that lies at the south end of Tulamben beach is a cracker dive site. This site is known as The Drop Off and is a beautiful wall of soft corals and fans from 5m down to 40m+ that quickly burns up the no deco time - even on Nitrox. This is one site that I would never tire of diving. Pygmy Seahorses, Ghost Pipe fish, juvenile Batfish, Leaf scorpion fish, the list goes on and on. The shoreline usually has rocky entries. These





**Harlequin Shrimp - Kim**

Bintangis).

The food at the Villa Alba restaurant is really good too and covers Balinese, Chinese and Western foods. They serve great spring rolls with a chilli-soy sauce that is hot enough to kick start a nuclear reactor. Steve liked this sauce so much he tipped a whole bowl of this sauce on his rice and, to our amazement, ate it all. After a few minutes he looked like he needed a lot of water followed by pure oxygen for a while. The real problem probably started the next morning! The Chinese Spicy Beef was also a dish to catch you out – super yummy though.

## Special sightings:

We were able to see Pygmy Seahorses at the Liberty wreck (two locations), The Drop Off and also on the Home Reef at Villa Alba.

On our first couple of dives we had not spotted any Ghost Pipe Fish, even though we had been able to find quite a few of them on our last trip to Tulamben. We were told that they are more common later in the year (September?). So I was quite chuffed to find a Ghost Pipe Fish on the home reef. As soon as we knew that there were definitely some of these critters around everyone started looking for them and I think most people found at least one during their stay.

Most of the sites also had Angler Fish on them if you looked really hard. Some of these things are only 15mm long and are VERY hard to spot (well, for me they are). Kim and Eddie found some of the prettiest examples of

rocky entries are the opposite of the Goldilocks rule. The small rock beaches are fine, the large rock beaches are also fine but some of the beaches have rocks about 20cm in diameter – these ones can be quite tricky to negotiate with your dive gear on and without falling over (or being knocked over by a wave). Often the dive guides will carry your rig into and out of the water for you at these sites and you just put your gear on when you get in – Easy Peasy.

One day we were told that we were going to a new dive site called “Secret Spot”. It’s further south along the beach from Seraya Secrets and we found later that it is actually known locally as Batu Niti. The appeal of this site is the diverse variety of tiny critters to be found, along with no current (usually) and an easy entry and exit. On our first dive we found two black angler fish, ribbon eels, porcelain crabs, and a ghost pipe fish – very tidy indeed.

For some people, the dive schedules had to be fitted around the massage schedule as Annie the masseuse was much in demand each afternoon. People having their massage poolside later in the afternoon often had to put up with the Hecklers on the deck that were partaking of their cocktails (OK, they were actually



**Ornate Ghost Pipe Fish - Kim**





Angler Fish - Kim



Angler Fish - Kim



Juvenile Batfish

these fish that I've ever seen (check the photos). On our last dive Eddie found a fantastic specimen just after we dropped down the slope – what a great end to our holiday.

We found a juvenile batfish hiding in a crevice at The Drop Off. At first I could not figure out what it was as it was hiding at the back of a crevice. It didn't so much swim as just flutter around. They are jet black with the brightest orange border around their body. It was one of most beautiful fishes I had ever seen, truly stunning. It was incredibly difficult to photograph in the crevice but a few of the photographers got some good shots. Kim said that finding one of these was on her bucket list so she was pretty happy with our find.

### A funny thing happened on the way to the dive site...

We had just started our dive when Eddie swam to me pointing at his empty weight pockets (seniors moment). No problem I thought and started picking up the perfectly sized rocks laying on the bottom and began stuffing them into his pockets. I had almost filled both weight pockets when Made realised what was going on and offered me a real lead weight which I duly stuffed in with the rocks. After the dive Eddie completed his safety stop and decided to dump all the rocks out before he got out of the water – bye-bye to Made's lead weight (another senior's moment)!

Sometimes, when the majority of us wanted to go to the same dive site, it was a bit squeezey in the back of the ute, so someone would have the joy of riding pillion on the back of a motor scooter. One of the funniest things was to see the terrified look on Peter's face when he was on the back of a scooter the first (and last) time. I should point out that you didn't have to ride on the scooter if you didn't want to.

Eddie and I decided to beat the T-Shirt sellers which are active predators at the more popular dive sites by buying a T-Shirt (or three) on the first day and then wearing them every day. Our theory was that, if we were wearing a Tulamben Wreck T-Shirt, the T-Shirt sellers would leave us alone. This theory backfired as it just identified us as people who were prepared to buy a T-Shirt. D'OH! Actually, the local T-Shirt sellers are really nice people who are just trying to feed their family. They are good to chat to and are not in any way obnoxious like some of the touts that you encounter at places down south in Bali, like Kuta.

There are a few coconut palms around the resort and these are harvested





regularly to provide fresh coconut milk and coconut flesh for the guests (Kim was very happy about this). They are also harvested before they take out a guest or two. To see the locals sprint up a coconut tree using bare feet and without any mechanical aids is amazing.

At Batu Niti there is only one house but it seems to shelter a couple of families as there are at least eight children ranging in age from about 4 to maybe 15 years old. The kids were fascinated as they watched us gear up to go diving. They also enjoyed it when we took photos of them and then showed them pictures of themselves. We thought they'd be impressed by this technology,



**Glass Shrimp - Chris**



**Mantis Schrimp**

BUT, after we had taken their photos, a few of the kids, to our amazement, pulled out mobile phones and started taking our photos too. Kids, they're the same everywhere!

One day, when we were at Batu Niti, Kim noticed that the villagers were growing Taro root in their garden and asked if she could buy some. She took the Taro back to the Villa Alba kitchen and they cooked it by boiling it according to her instructions. Most of us tried it and it had a nice taste to it. The next time we went back to Batu Niti the villagers lit a fire and, while we were doing our first dive, they cooked some Taro for us by throwing it in the ashes. We ate it for morning tea and it







was really good – much better than boiling it.

The quality of the photos that were being taken by our divers on this trip was stunning and there were lots of them. It was really hard to decide which photos to put in this newsletter. No doubt I have offended some photographers by not including their work or by including the wrong ones – sorry, but I have a deadline to meet.

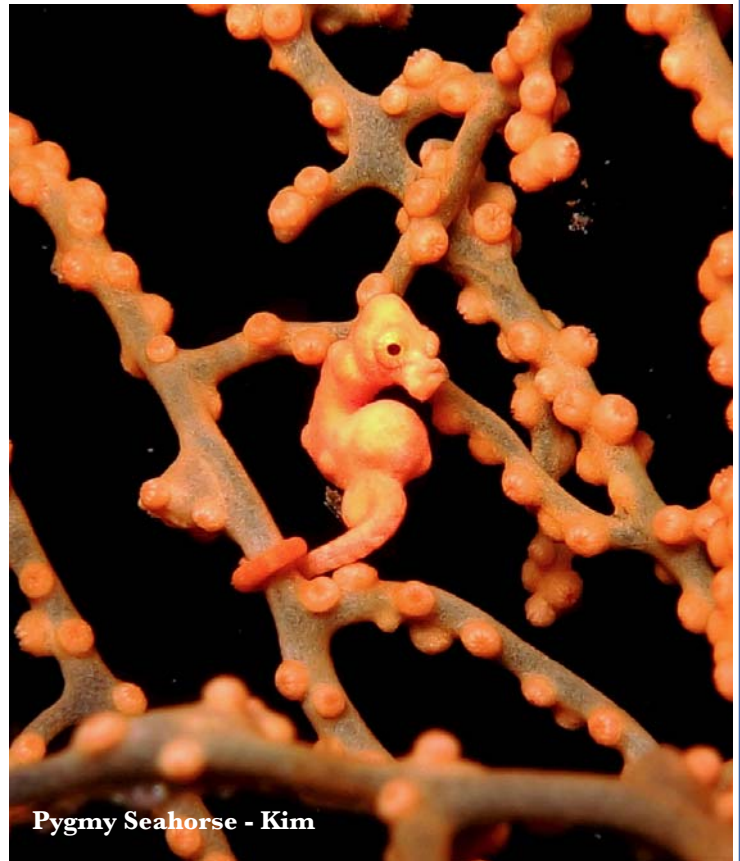
All the staff at Villa Alba are fantastic and nothing is ever a problem for them. Even after nearly three weeks of diving and relaxing, Eddie and I were sad to leave. We surely will return.

A special thanks to Eddie Ivers for organising the trip for us. Thanks also to Kim, Peter, Ian and Chris for their help, information and photos.

**Paul Pacey**

Here is a link to Kim Dinh's photos which she has put on Flickr...

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/74951162@N08/sets/72157645340889284/>



**Pygmy Seahorse - Kim**



**Porcelain Crab**



**Moray cleaning station**





## FIJI'S GRAND ADVENTURE

### The best diving Fiji has to offer

I have sailed a thousand miles around the sapphire blue waters of Fiji in search of the best diving. I have dived to the North, South, East and West until finally I have found the best.



It is the combo trip of five days diving at Voli Voli resort on the fabulous Bligh Water, the Vatu I Ra passage. Then, after your entrée to Fiji's best soft coral wonderland, a trip on Fiji's newest luxury diving motor yacht, the Fiji Siren. There is no better way to explore the wonderful aquarium diving that Fiji has to offer. Long famous for being the soft coral capital of the world, Fiji has numerous reefs that are a splash of techni-colour dreaming.

This ten day live aboard starts at Ngau Island East of Suva. There are aquarium dives and shark dives here. About a dozen Grey Reef Whalers usually attend. The best time for the shark feed is on the incoming

high tide. We saw two Manta rays on the low tide dive.

Heading north, we dived at Wakaya passage. This time we did not see the Hammerhead sharks and Manta rays for which this dive site is known. However we did see the amazing Winged Pipe Fish.

From here we dived at Fiji's best, the Namena Marine Park. It is fully protected. We dived North Save a Tack passage named after a sailing term. It is a real world class dive. There are Pygmy Sea Horses, Lemon Faced Gobies, Dog Tooth Tuna and Trevally here, along with sharks. There are





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coral caves, arches, and bommies filled with soft corals of all colours. These reefs are filled with all sorts of great marine critters, from Leafy Scorpionfish to Angelfish to Sharks. The great thing about this dive is that you get to do it twice. Once on the incoming tide and once on the outgoing tide.

We did a long steam up to Rainbow reef at Taveuni. Here we dived the White Wall, the Purple Wall, Jerry's Jelly and more.

On the way back home to Voli Voli resort, we dived the famous E6 and Hi 8 dives. These dives made front cover shots in many of the world's dive magazines in the 1980's. Both are fabulous wide angle dives. E6 has loads of swim throughs and caverns with great photo opportunities.

Hi 8 is now renamed to Mount Mutiny. It is a wall dive that drops to 900m. It has great photo opportunities with soft corals and sea caves.

The Fiji Siren is a great boat. It is expensive but there is a real feeling of luxury and great service on board.

Mike Scotland







## SEA BRAGGIN' SEAL DIVING WEEKEND, JERVIS BAY

### August 2014

Natasha, Digby and Mahla Naude, Mike Scotland, Ian and Mel Roffey, Ray Moulang, Roger Lee, Steven Zhao, Tong Zheng, Deb Cook, Nancy Scoleri, Greg Blackburne and Shelley Brueseker, Rianti Bieler and Steve Boyd

On Friday 15 – Sunday 17 August 16 people made the trip down to JB to stay once again in “Seahaven” in Vincentia. The house comfortably accommodates 15 adults but we were caught by surprise this year as the owners had changed some of the beds from what we were familiar with over the past 4 years and so a few people had the wrong linen or were faced with co-sleeping with people they really hadn’t planned on co-sleeping with! Still, after a bit of shuffling around of

furniture and last minute calls back to Sydney, we managed to sort beds out for everyone and Roger Lee and Mike Scotland felt relieved they were not sharing the cosy double bed as momentarily feared... although it did seem as though Roger would have been happy to stay in the massage chair for the whole weekend!

Saturday weather and sea conditions proved better than what was experienced in Sydney, and we managed to get out to Drum and Drumsticks for a great seal dive, then a fairly average but cruisy exploratory dive in the gutters nearby. The water was freaking cold. 14 degrees. Those in drysuits may have complained about getting hot and sweaty when dancing with seals, but the three of us in wetties really felt the cold. The boat Avalon (chartered from Dive Jervis Bay) was more comfortable







(toilet on board, shelter from wind and spray) compared with the RIB hired from Ulladulla dive in previous years, but I have to say the journey out and back across the bay and out of the heads was considerably slower and we were all nodding off in our seats during the hour long trip back in.



Saturday night was Mexican feast night and as usual everyone pitched in to make sure a delicious meal was had by all – thanks very much everyone for your tasty meals, for helping with food prep and for washing dishes and cleaning up afterwards. It really was a joint effort. Sunday morning conditions were atrocious – high winds and lashing rain. The wetsuit divers (me included) decided bed was better than diving so stayed home, ready to forfeit our shares of the boat charter for some warmth and comfort. Everyone else got themselves to the dive shop to be told conditions were too poor even for diving inside the bay, so happily everyone received a gift certificate for their cancelled double dives, with 12 months to use them. Score! Especially for those of us who had already bailed!

Leftovers were slowly consumed for lunch and everyone gradually departed for home over the rest of the day. Overall a very pleasant weekend. Mahla enjoyed the attention and apart from refusing to sleep on either night was a very happy girl. Thankfully it was only Digs and I who were kept up by her shenanigans and were grateful to get her home to her usual bed (and ours!) Thanks again to everyone for making it a very fun and relaxed weekend.

**Natasha Naude**

Photos by Roger Lee

## More firsts

As much as I dislike winter diving (yes, even in drysuit!), I have ticked more creatures off my to-see list in the cold water than in summer and on the trip to Jervis Bay I ticked two off in just two dives!

Saturday was sunny and the sea was flat so the one hour trip out to Drum & Drumsticks dive site was rather comfortable in the spacious Avalon. About thirty seals were sunning on the rock and a few of them jumped in the water as soon as the first diver was out of the boat. Underwater they were just fantastic! They were curious too and I had a couple coming so close to investigate my camera with a funny expression. I have never dived with seals before and I was grinning from ear to ear – it was all I could do not to lose my regulator.

Another form of entertainment was provided by buddy Natasha, who rolled around in the water and did many saltos to keep the seals interested for our cameras. I can safely say this dive has gone up the chart to become the best dive ever, replacing the one where I saw a school of hammerheads in the Red Sea. (Editor's note – schooling hammerheads is on my bucket list!)

Second dive at the Gutter (well, there's a gutter there anyway) was very quiet after the seals experience. And just when I was about to nominate it as an ordinary dive, Natasha signalled me to come and







look at the kelps. What a nice bunch of kelps, I thought. I'll take a picture of it if it makes her happy. Funny how she kept pointing and insisted that I keep looking at it. And then WHAM! A weedy sea dragon! My. Very. First. Weedy sea dragon woohoooo!! No wonder I've never seen it before, it blended so well among that nice bunch of kelps! What a stunningly beautiful creature it was. I always thought the colours on all the photos I've seen are the result of Photoshop but as my light shone on it, it glowed and the colours were so vivid and bright \*sigh\* THIS is one of the things that keeps us underwater, isn't it? This never-ending underwater beauty...

Sunday weather was terrible and the boat was cancelled but honestly, I didn't mind at all. I've seen seals and I've seen the weedy sea dragon and I was one very happy girl.

Thank you heaps to Natasha and Digby for organising the trip!



Rianti Bieler

## HOW TO BE A SEAL

I've dived with many seals over the years, but never quite like this on the recent club trip to JB's Drum and Drum Sticks in August. We were lucky with the weather and got off to a reasonable start out of Huskisson, past Point Perpendicular and north out of Jervis Bay.

Getting ready for the dive, our divemaster told us to interact with the seals, to keep them interested in us. They're very inquisitive creatures, but apparently think us divers are boring if we don't play with them. So when they come and look at you, they want to play. OK got that? What does that actually mean?

Ray and I decided to follow the dive group into some swim throughs. They were swimming down amongst the rocks when as usual I was trying to stay in open water, still within visibility of the others. It was only 15 meters deep and you could just see the surface. Then this seal comes down and stares at me. Eyes like a big puppy dog. So I decided to try and spin underwater, horizontally and the seal did the same. Then it swam off. I was a bit out of





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breath, so had to recover my breath before rejoining the others.

We swam through the swims throughs and out the other side, still in amongst the boulders. I came out from the boulders and then swam into open water again. Sure enough some seals came back and I started spinning again. I had a dry suit on, all the scuba gear, and 32 pounds of lead. Horizontal, I put my arms down my side and front and then just waved my lower right arm around to get my body spinning. When spinning my only reference point was the surface light flashing past my eyes. So I knew I was spinning horizontally and not really out of control. Tilting my head up I could see three seals spinning in front of me. Then I got dizzy and stopped and just let myself sink. My heart was pounding and I was gulping down air to get my breath back. Luckily I still had half a cylinder of air. Then they were gone again.

The group made it back to the anchor line, so we hadn't gone very far. Once again I headed out a bit into open water and this time five seals came to me. I started spinning again, gaining quite a bit of momentum. I quickly realised I was spinning quite fast. Then this big fur seal started swimming around me in a circle. I could see his ears clearly as he swam around me and I could've easily reached out and run my hand down his coat. But I'm not sure how he would've reacted. Pretty sure he could bite if he wanted to. Once again I had to stop when I got dizzy and then let myself sink to the bottom and recover.

Now I was just about out of air and had to get back to the boat. Getting out of my dry suit I was drenched in sweat. Being a seal is quite exhausting.

On the surface the seals were everywhere. So was the smell. It was my best seal dive ever, and now I know how to be a seal. Try to be a seal. From a seal's point of view. Play with a silly human.

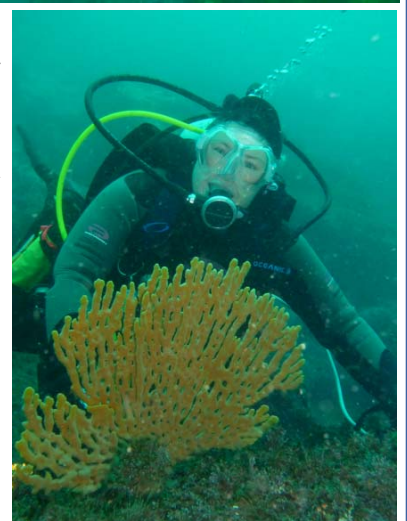


Mike Scotland



Natasha being a seal, by Nancy

Ian Roffey



## Note:

This is my final newsletter as editor and I hand over to Mike Scotland. Thanks to everyone who contributed while I was holding this position.

Note also the new committee details on the last page. Email addresses remain the same, so please get your articles in to Mike ASAP for the September issue so he can make a more timely effort of it than I have of late.

Thanks, Natasha





# SEA BRAGGIN'

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Sat 13 Sept	Boat Dive Xanadu	Caroline Corcoran <a href="mailto:carolinecorcoran@yahoo.com">carolinecorcoran@yahoo.com</a>	Sun 14 Sept	Shore Dive Voodoo	Eddie Ivers <a href="mailto:eddieivers@ipri-mus.com.au">eddieivers@ipri-mus.com.au</a>
Wed 17 Sept	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Natasha Naude <a href="mailto:natasha@bluecucumber.com">natasha@bluecucumber.com</a>	Sat 20 Sept	Boat Dive SS Hilda	Shelley Brueseker <a href="mailto:shellsb@bigpond.net.au">shellsb@bigpond.net.au</a>
Sun 21 Sept	Deep Dive SS Myola	Gary Perkins <a href="mailto:perkinsdive@gmail.com">perkinsdive@gmail.com</a>	Sat 27 Sept	Boat Dive Xanadu Marys Reef	Phil Short <a href="mailto:phsasso@optusnet.com.au">phsasso@optusnet.com.au</a>
Sun 28 Sept	Shore Dive Yena to Steps	Ken Ridley <a href="mailto:kenridley49@gmail.com">kenridley49@gmail.com</a>	Sat 4 Oct - Mon 6 Oct	Open slather - plan some dives!	<b>Your name here</b>

## CLUB COMMITTEE

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