



SEA BRAGGIN'

St George Scuba Club Newsletter

Trips

GBR and Yongala - Mike Scotland

Page 1

Shore Dives

Henry's Head and Cape Banks - James Dean
Australia Day Double, Bare Island - Michael
McFadyen

Pages 4, 12

Diving Mexico

Playa del Carmen and Costumel - Nancy Scoleri
Caves and Caverns - Gary Perkins

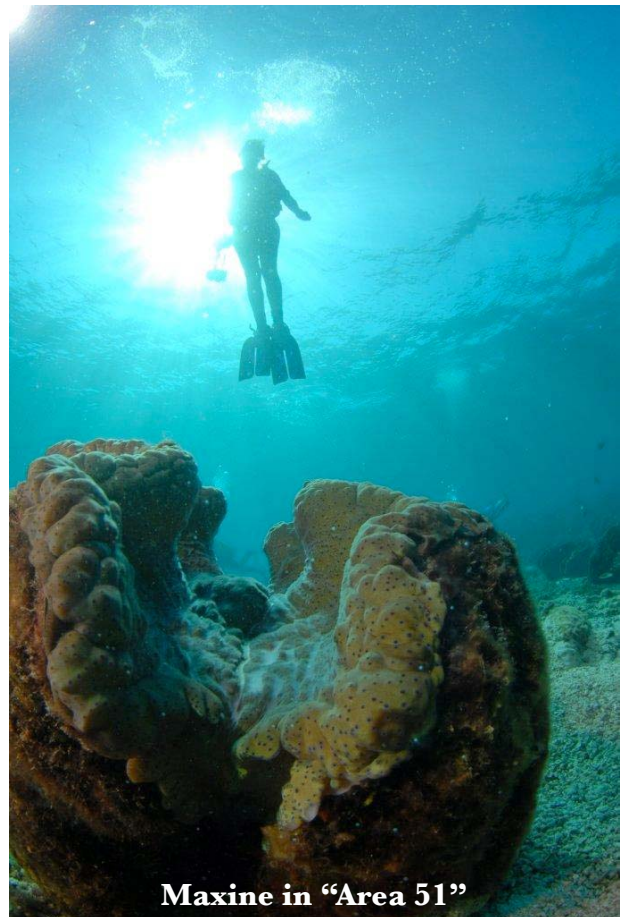
Page 8

TOWNSVILLE REEFS AND YONGALA WRECK

December 2012

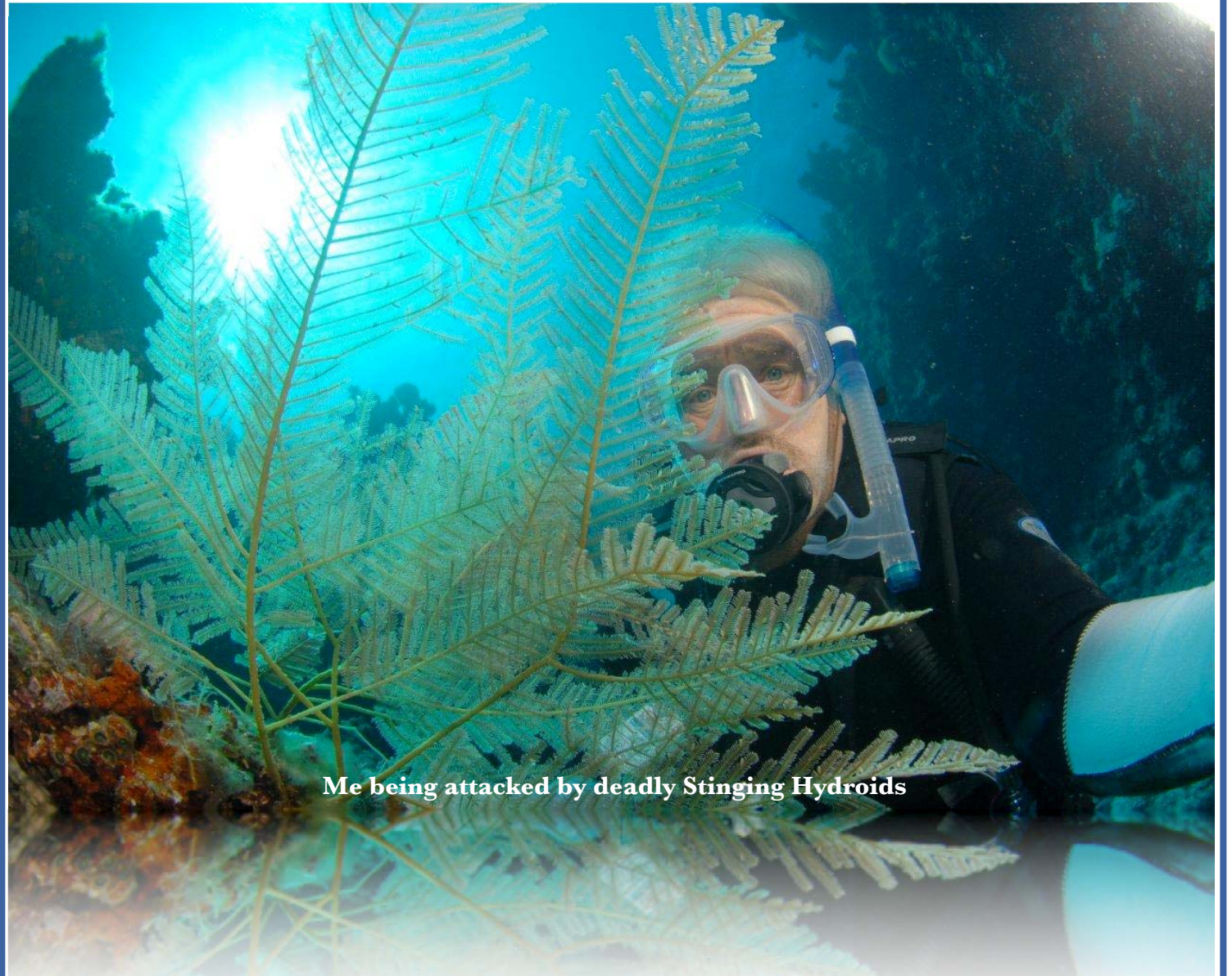
Seven very lucky members of St George Scuba Club joined the DOUTS club's second trip to Townsville. It was on December 1, two days after the full moon, perfect for coral spawning. They were Chris Heath, Maxine Hayden, Simon Hoad, Michael White, Jodie Wagner and myself.

Diving is a matter of luck. This time lady luck shone on us big time. We had weather and seas that were simply 'as good as it gets' for the entire five days. There were days when it glassed out and we could see fish reading the paper at 20 metres from the dive deck.



Brian and Anne Anderson at Area 51

Maxine in "Area 51"





We managed to dive plenty of really great reefs and saw many wonderful critters. I was delighted to see a school of Razor fish, giant Aeolids and Spine Cheek Clownfish. On the same dive as the Razor fish, a pure white, 10 cm long, baby Barramundi Cod was hiding in its hole a metre from the anchor.

One highlight of the trip was a dive called Area 51. It is known as Grubb Reef and has lots of giant clams. Area 51 has about 30 in a small area reminiscent of the movie Cocoon. All us noticed that we felt years younger after the dive. We were warned not to dive it more than once in case we reverted to babies.

Every night dive was a treat. The skipper actually advised us to dive at 8:30pm to try to see the coral spawning. (This is very unusual, as most dive crew want to eat dinner and hit the booze). There was some coral milt happening but not the full shebang.

Each night dive has a rich sprinkling of sleeping Parrotfish. Other highlights included Decorator Crabs, Squid, Lobsters, and some divers had an extremely close and scary encounter with a Grey Reef Shark and its baby. Both charged one guy from DOUTS at full speed, back arched and pectoral fins down. He missed the mother but got the baby on his GoPro. It was going really fast! Another night he got some very special attention from another shark. Needless to say he earned the nickname of Sharkman.

We dived the Yongala on day five. It was its usual spectacular self with plenty of big fish. The vis was down and we did dive it well before sunrise so it was a little dark. The wreck copped some damage from last year's cyclone and had collapsed half a metre in places.

Kalinda is a forty year old timber boat which is currently under renovations.

We had an excellent trip! (my 38th trip to the GBR) The food was great, the diving outstanding and the company great. Most of us did all of the 18 dives on offer. The next trip unfortunately had a lot of wind and some rough seas and was nowhere near as good as ours.

Mike Scotland



Baby Barramundi Cod



Copper Banded Butterflyfish



Roboi's Chromodoris



You are warmly invited to the

St George Scuba Club 40th Anniversary Dinner



WHEN: Saturday 23rd February, 2013 from 600pm

WHERE: Georges River 16' Sailing Club, Sanoni Ave, Sandringham

COST: \$45 per person (includes a complementary Happy Hour drink and a 3-course meal)

Purchase tickets at www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au/40yeardinnerbookingform.php

MEMBER PRIZE DRAW:

- ✚ Overseas Dive Trip (portion of trip for one person booked with a club group overseas trip, conditions apply) sponsored by Dive Adventures
- ✚ Mid-week Dive Package (conditions apply) sponsored by Wooli Dive Centre
- ✚ Double Boat Dive for two on HMAS Adelaide sponsored by Terrigal Dive Centre
- ✚ Weekend package for two (conditions apply) sponsored by Southwest Rocks Dive Centre

LUCKY DOOR PRIZES:

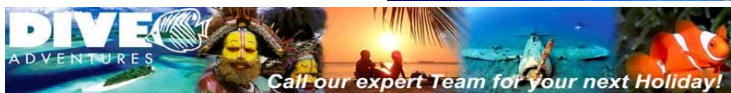
- ✚ Magazine subscriptions sponsored by Sport Diver / Dive Log
- ✚ Dive Equipment sponsored by Scuba Warehouse and Dive Imports

RAFFLE PRIZES:

- ✚ **INCLUDES** Dinner for two at Georges River 16' Sailing Club, hampers, wine, gift packs, dive equipment and more

Special 40th anniversary merchandise will be available for purchase.

Keep an eye on www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au





St George Boys' Weekend 2013

When: 4 - 5 May 2013

Where: Port Stephens

Diving

Double boat dives on Saturday and Sunday with "Let's Go Adventures" to Broughton Island via two boats – 27 places available

- Diving will be from \$104 for double per day (includes one air fill)
- Nitrox available at discounted price of \$17 if required.
- Shore diving if weather does not co-operate for boats.

Accommodation

- Accommodation in 8 units in Nelson Bay.
- Cost \$82 per head for weekend, available for Thursday/Friday/Saturday and Sunday nights at this price.

To book your spot, please pay \$50 deposit asap to St George scuba Club Account via eft BSB 062028 Acc No. 00800455 or directly to Kelly at a meeting.

When a payment is made, please email Kelly and myself to be added onto the list.

Any questions please contact me by email or at a dive or meetings.

Contact Ray on 0403 437 974 or
rayscases@aol.com



St George Ladies' Weekend 2013

When: Friday 1 March to Sunday 3 March 2013

Where: Port Stephens

Diving: Halifax Park, Fly Point or The Pipeline

Accommodation: Shoal Bay Holiday Park

Cost: \$130-\$170 for the weekend, depending on numbers

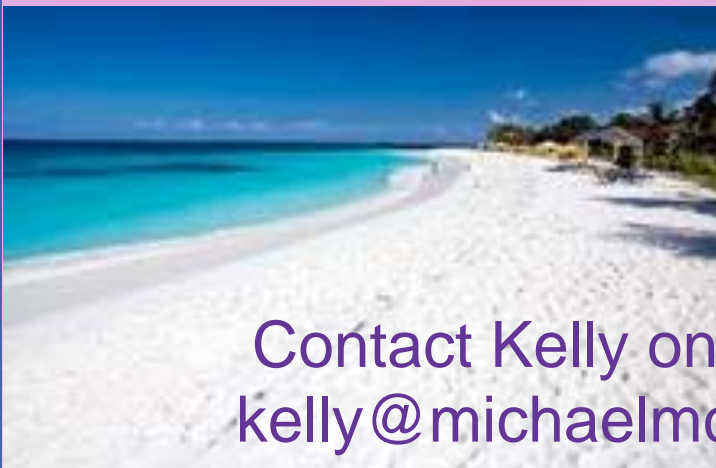
The Shoal Bay Holiday Park is across the road from the beach and has 4-star Villas. We can check out as late as Monday morning at 10am.

Have a look at <http://www.beachsideholidays.com.au/shoalBay.phtml> for more information.

The location of our Saturday night, club-subsidised feast is yet to be determined – maybe a nice restaurant in Shoal Bay (walking distance).

All of our ladies' weekends have been great trips away, with good diving and lots of laughs. And, lots of great food, some drinks, a little shopping and lots of relaxing. You don't need to be a diver to attend any female partners of STG members are welcome to come along.

So, to book your spot kindly deposit \$50 the St George Club account (BSB 062028 Acc 00800455).



Happy diving,
Kelly

Contact Kelly on 0410 599 186 or
kelly@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info



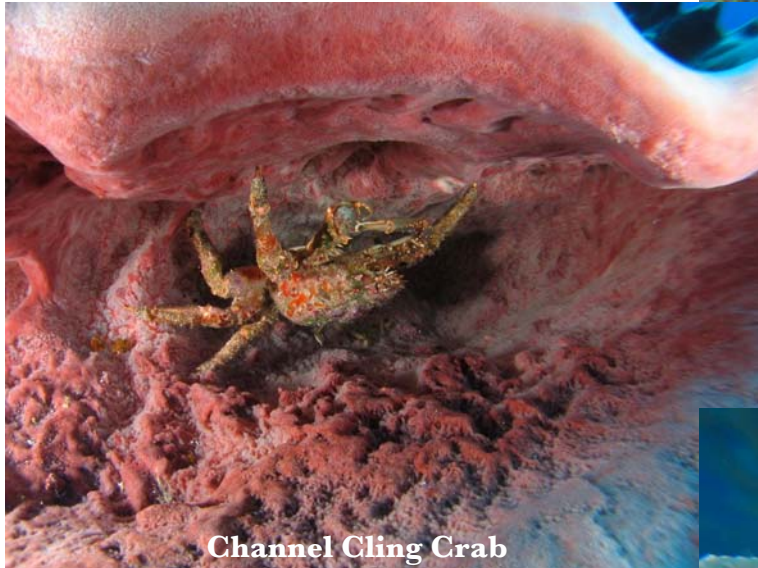
DIVING IN PLAYA DEL CARMEN AND COZUMEL, MEXICO

December 2012

From 15 - 21 December, Gary and I did 18 dives in various dive sites around Playa del Carmen and Cozumel. Playa del Carmen is located 45mins drive south of Cancun, Mexico, and Cozumel is an island directly opposite Playa in the Caribbean Sea. We dived with Tank-Ha dive shop, which is located in the middle of town. Their boat was moored at the beach, a short walk away from the shop. It was well set-up for diving and fully equipped with VHF radio, oxygen and first aid kit. In addition, they are the only dive centre in Playa to provide a direct boat ride to Cozumel (rather than having to catch the public ferry across and dive with a local Cozumel dive shop).



Arrow Crab

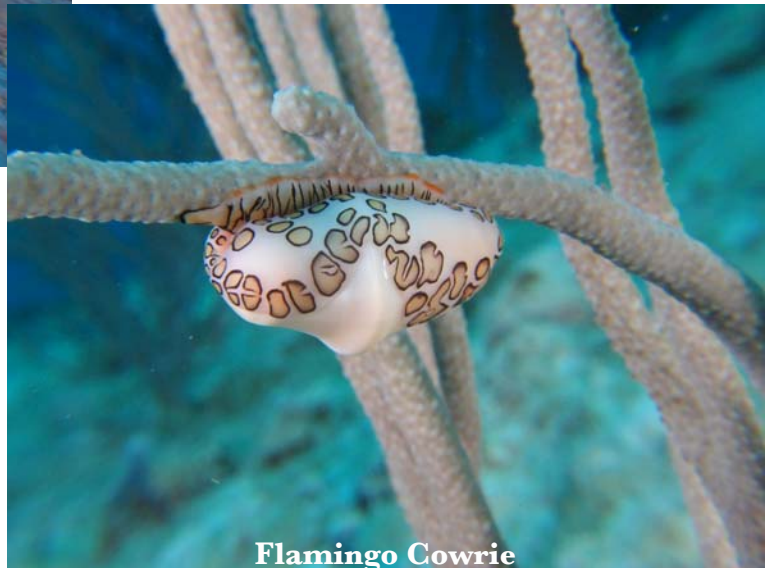


Channel Cling Crab

water was a very comfortable 27°C. The morning dives were usually between 20 to 30 metres deep, while the afternoon dives were between 10 to 15 metres.

The reefs along Playa del Carmen are really nice, they are really close together and share many similar characteristics. They are covered with big schools of so many different fish that it is hard to remember them all. There is a vast amount of sea life among its

Every day, the boat left the beach at around 9am for a double dive, returning around 1pm and then leaving at around 2pm for the afternoon dive or 5pm in the case of the night dive. All dives were drift dives due to the presence of ocean currents in the channel. The visibility was really good, varying from 30m to 40m+ and the temperature of the



Flamingo Cowrie



corals and many times we spotted a channel cling crab inside a big vase sponge, big green morays, lionfish, lobsters, and many small critters such as coral shrimps and hermit crabs.

In addition, each reef had its own “specialty” element. At Tortugas (turtles in Spanish), we saw many Hawksbill Turtles, either swimming along, resting on the reef or crunching big pieces of coral. “Barracudas” was not only special for seeing big school of barracudas but also for the bull sharks that were patrolling around at this time of the year. We were told that they are the pregnant females and they are very passive and are of no threat to divers! We saw them on five different dives, they were usually circling around us in the blue water but now and then an inquisitive one will come within metres of us. I have to admit, being a couple of meters away from a bull shark was quite exciting!!

Close to these reefs, a shrimp fishing boat, the “Mama Vina”, was purposely sunk to create



Bull Shark



Glass Shrimp

an artificial reef in 1995. The wreck lies on the sand at 27m and it is 20m long with two decks. We entered the wreck at the lower level and checked the inside rooms. They were filled with huge schools of glassy sweepers and one of the rooms still had the toilet bowl. We then made our way up to the bridge and watched

huge barracudas hanging around the outside. The current was really strong on this dive and as soon as we got outside the wreck we were taken away from it.

The afternoon dives were always on the shallow reefs of Playa (Moc Che, Chun zumbul and Shangri-la), which are the nursery grounds for many reef fish. The colors were the most vibrant at these shallow depths and these dives were really good for finding micro critters. The reef was covered with orange arrow crabs, small curly anemones with glass shrimps, hermit crabs, beautiful flamingo cowries hanging on a piece of coral, long-spined sea



School of Fish



urchins... There were many spotted moray eels in small holes in the reefs and, usually really close by, banded coral shrimps could be found. On every dive, we saw at least three Caribbean spiny lobsters of various sizes. It was worth looking in the blue as well during these dives as spotted eagle rays, stingrays and turtles will swim pass.

The night dive was on "Moc Che" reef which looked different than during the day. We saw many night critters such as brittle and basket stars, big hermit crabs, an octopus, two slipper lobsters. We found a turtle sleeping under a ledge, a moray eel was chasing food around the reef and a spotted eagle ray swam pass. It was a nice easy night dive with plenty of things to keep you entertained.

On two different days, we jumped on board the boat and did the 45mins boat ride across the channel to the national marine park of Cozumel. Diving in Cozumel is carefully regulated to protect the reef and you are not allowed to wear gloves or bring a knife on your dive. The reefs are exceptional and really different than the Playa reefs. The landscape is breathtaking, with very beautiful walls made of Elkhorn, brain and plate corals. The coral formations have developed into diverse shapes submerged arches, canyons and



"Mama Vina"



Spotted Moray eel

and sizes and we passed through caves. There is a huge array of marine life around the reefs. We spotted many big schools of fish such as barracudas, snappers, jacks and Atlantic spadefish. In the many different caverns, we



"Mama Vina"



Slipper Lobster



found many coloured tropical fish, lobsters, crabs, green and spotted morays. A nurse shark was also sleeping under a ledge. Our dive guide found a splendid toadfish, which is only present on these reefs and on a single reef off the coast of Belize. It is a small fish with dark and white stripes on its body and with bright yellow margins on its fins.



We had a really good dive trip in Mexico and enjoyed all the dives. The coral structures of the reefs in Cozumel were more spectacular than those in Playa del Carmen but I will recommend diving both places as we got to see many sea creatures in Playa that you do not see in Cozumel.

Nancy Scoleri

CAVE DIVING IN MEXICO

Mexico, in particular the Yucatan peninsula, has long been a mecca for cave divers, with some of the longest caves in the world found here. According to sources, Mexico has two of the world's top ten longest caves, with Ox Bel Ha at 242km and Sac Actun at 220km. The caves have formed within the limestone layer that makes up much of this region.

So with my older sister and her partner offering to host us for Christmas and take us cavern and cave diving what other option do you have but to pack nearly 100kg of gear and head to the airport. The first week of our trip was based around ocean diving but week two was all about the limestone caves.

The first day saw Alison, Cameron and I head off to Chac Mool. This is a popular site for cavern dives and made a great place to check gear and weighting and experience the halocline (the interface where the fresh and salt water mix), before heading off on some challenging dives.

On our first dive we headed downstream to see the Giant Flow Stone, which is a massive stalactite formation that comes out from the wall before dropping some 20 metres below. After checking this out we headed further into the cave, to the half-way point between the neighbouring cenote before heading back due to gas. On our return we discovered the "cavern" area aglow with small lights like fireflies at night, as cavern divers were lead around the gold line. This offered some light entertainment as we watched the conga line divers follow their guide around the cave.

After changing tanks Cameron and I decided to head upstream to find some tighter passages. This proved to be another great dive and also a good learning experience as I came to terms with the halocline that can reduce visibility to essentially zero within crystal clear water. There are a few ways to describe the feeling of been in a halocline but the best I have heard is "like looking through a kaleidoscope while on LSD"!

SEA BRAGGIN'

Day two we decided to do some cave and cavern dives in the one day, so we headed off to Grand Cenote. This is another popular tourist place, which offers a large opening for natural light to pure into the cave, making it possible to “cavern” dive.



View of entrance of Grand Cenote

On the first dive Alison, Cameron and I took a stage as well and headed off to see more spectacular formations. Along the dive we saw charcoal and even the soot where fires had burnt when the cave was dry. Once we got back Nancy and some other “cavern” divers jumped in and we explored the more open areas of the cave along the gold line. The fresh water lake had lilies and even tortoises swimming in the pool.

After this we headed off to Dos Ojos for another cavern dive. This dive wasn't quite as spectacular, as the sun moved lower in the sky but still offered a great dive.

Day three we headed out to Taj Ma Ha to visit the Chinese garden. Alison and I jumped off the cavern line and headed through the halocline down some tighter restrictions into a room that was filled with stalactites. These stalactites were not the normal white but contained a coloured, slightly green tinge, which gave a dramatic view as we swam down the passage. Once hitting our turn point we headed back to the cavern line to finish the dive, only to be confronted by

a single tank diver in just board shorts headed towards us down our line. He was quickly ushered back to the cavern line by his guide!

Christmas day was started at gentlemanly hours before heading off to X-tabay. Cameron and I headed to the cenote to experience some serious percolation. We swam past the first cenote before jumping off the main line through the small passage to the left. This led us down a passage not often visited by others. With fine white silt on the floor and small rocks falling from the ceiling and the stages running low we dropped them and head off further on back gas. Once hitting the end of the line we turned back only to see how much fine white silt has also fallen from the ceiling due to our bubbles hitting it. On our way back we picked up our stages in nearly zero vis, before taking a moment at the adjacent cenote to calm the nerves. On our way back we stopped off at the Wizards Den to get close up with massive stalactites that had been smashed when the boulders had fallen from the roof. After the



Lillies in Grand Cenote

dive we sat down for a picnic lunch before cooling off at the flat and celebrating Christmas with a nice diner.

Day five we headed to one of the deepest cenotes in the area “The Pitá”. This cenote drops straight down to over 120m but caves extend off the side from only 13m. This cave allows for two totally different dives. The first was a large passage that



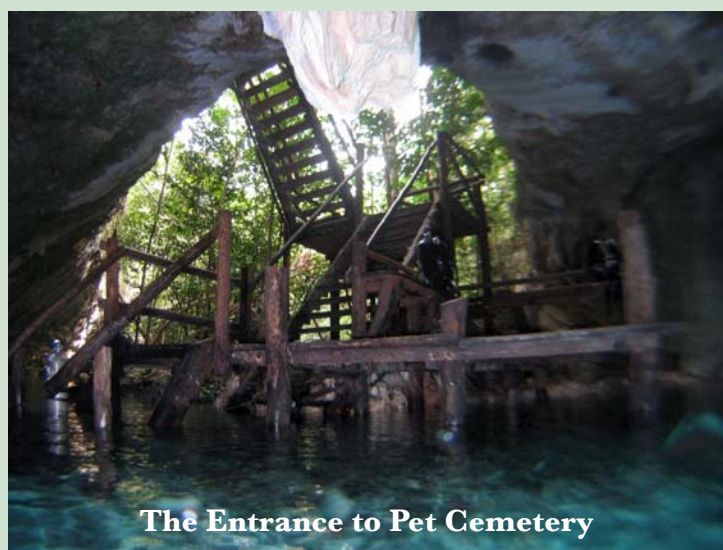
wandered its way through the stalactites to a small room that was really only big enough for two, but we had to fit three to allow everyone to turn around before heading out. The second was lots of tight passages with jumps in every direction like weaving through a rabbit warren. After 45 minutes weaving through several passages and the halocline we decided to call the dive and headed back to the surface.

Day six plan was for one big dive in the Pet Cemetery to an area called the Blue Abyss. Given that this could take over an hour to swim to we made sure that all our tanks had that little bit of extra gas in them.

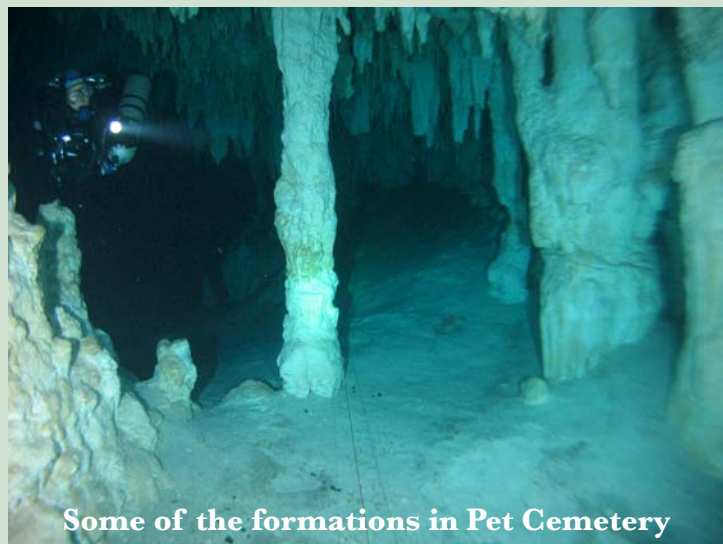
We made our way down the cavern line before making our first of two jumps off onto the cave line. After our second jump we dropped our stages before the cave decided to narrow down. This just made the Blue Abyss even more spectacular – as you emerged carefully from the restriction to open out into a huge room, which must have been 30 metres if not more in diameter, and the bottom dropped away further than our torches could penetrate. I remember looking at my computer to see the time only to realise that we could get only 10 minutes maximum to look around the chamber before we would have to complete the 1 hour swim back to the surface.

Given how well the cave diving was going I didn't think it could get any better but day seven saw us heading out to Nohoch Nah Chich. This cave is an extremely fragile and special cave amongst Mexico cave divers and is not well advertised. The ceiling and floor are covered in very thin stalactites thinner than your little finger. It felt like swimming through a china shop as the formations glittered under the passing torch light.

With the trip fast coming to a close, on day eight we decided to do smaller dives and go looking for some ancient Mayan artefacts and some bones. So we headed deep into the jungle down a road that would nearly be considered 4WD only – a lot of banging occurred under the vehicle! We finally made it to an open space to be greeted by three shirtless Mexicans. After a brief discussion in Spanish that I couldn't follow we were ready to head into the water. The first dive was Phenomenon, which contained the pot and the Mastodon bones. Alison led the dive because she knew the point to jump off to the bones, as there is no marking on the line. We jumped off to view the bones – you could clearly still see vertebra lying delicately on the silt. With great care I managed to get some photos before heading deeper into the cave to find the pot. The pot lies just off the line and is meant to be over 200 years old. There are a few pieces missing from the pot but it still made an absolute highlight to the dive. We turned at this point, making sure not to damage anything on the way out.



The Entrance to Pet Cemetery



Some of the formations in Pet Cemetery



To finish the trip off we decided to do a dive that none of us had done before. Working off a vague

we took the right line that appeared to head deeper into the cave. After passing a couple of jump points the decision was made to head off the main line to see what a side passage had on offer. Of all the dives we did this was the most special, experiencing the formations above and below, with new mineral deposits on the floor. This could only be described as electric! I looked at my pressure gauge in disgust to see that we had hit our turn pressure, we just wanted to keep on swimming as the cave just got better and better as we headed in but unfortunately we had to head home. So with that last amazing dive we sadly had to call the cave diving leg of our trip over.

Gary Perkins



Mastodon Bones

description from the cenote owner we geared up and went down to the entrance lake to discover that it was only knee deep. We searched the shallow pool to discover hidden in one corner a white cave line heading down the slope. We did our gear checks and one by one with the visibility getting worse headed off through the sandy silt. To our amazement the cave dropped away fast and the visibility cleared up. Not knowing what to expect we had decided that we would stop at jumps and intersections to decide as a group where to go next. First were two tees, which



Mayan Pot



Pacific Jewel “Live Aboard” Cruise and Dive Trip Tuesday 9 July – Wednesday 18 July 2013 Cruise the Pacific and dive at each port!

The plan is for group of St George Scuba members to travel on the same Pacific cruise and to dive at all the ports along the way. With a minimum group of six divers we can pre-arrange the dive centres to pick us up directly from the wharf at each port, ensuring the maximum amount of dive time.

While in port, any non-diving partners will be able to arrange other activities either by themselves or together, making this trip ideal for members with non-diving partners!

As there is in effect no weight limit you can bring as much dive gear as you want, cameras and all. I have even taken my own lead on past trips (trim weights only)!

While many members may have dived in Vanuatu before, not many may have dived at Easo on Lifou. Lagoon Safaris is a boutique operation, in a pristine location, run from a shipping container by expat Annabelle. Lifou is part of the Loyalty Islands group: <http://www.lagoon-safaris.nc/>

With return airfares costing about the same as the whole trip it is a rare opportunity to sample diving at the Isle of Pines: <http://www.kunie-scuba.com>

In Port Vila, Vanuatu we may possibly dive with the new dive operator, Devil's Point Dive: <http://www.devilspointdive.com>

While on cruises I have scuba dived many times overseas and there is a lot to be said for it. No luggage limits; no need for non-diving days when travelling at sea level; personal fibreglass lined shower for washing and drying your gear. Also, you arrive where you dive (the Ocean) so direct transfer is possible and you get to sample multiple locations.

Finally, you have limited guilt over non-diving fellow travellers!!

Pricing and itinerary on next page...

Contact Marc Werner Mob: 0407239080





Pacific Jewel “Live Aboard” Cruise and Dive Trip Tuesday 9 July – Wednesday 18 July 2013

Preliminary costing twin share

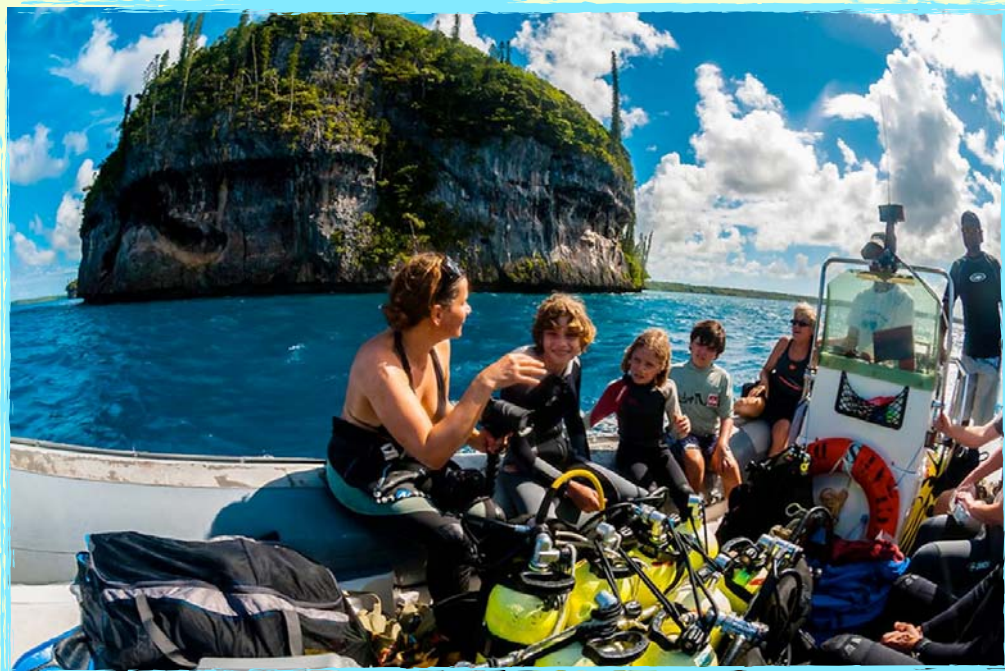
\$1200 non diver (cruise only twin share)

\$1550 diver (as above + 3 double boat dives) including tanks, weights and cruise ship transfers

Itinerary

Tuesday	09JUL2013	Depart Sydney 1600hrs	Australia		
		at sea			
Saturday	13JUL2013	Vila	Vanuatu	TBA	Double
Sunday	14JUL2013	Lifou	Loyalty Islands	Lagoon Safaris	Double
Monday	15JUL2013	Isle of Pines	New Caledonia	Kunie Scuba Center	Double
		at sea			
Wednesday	18JUL2013	Arrive Sydney 0700hrs	Australia		

Anyone with questions on this trip or diving while cruising contact Marc Werner.



Contact Marc Werner Mob: 0407239080



EAST TIMOR

Ultimate Dive Expedition

19 - 31 August 2013

13 Days / 12 nights Ex Darwin

Diver from **\$2,090** per person

Price Includes: (Non Diver - \$995)

- Return flights ex. Darwin to Dili flying with Air North
- Return airport transfers in Dili
- 12 nights twin share bunk room air conditioned guest house accommodation at The Dive Guest House (shared kitchen and bathroom) - Dili, Sat TV, Internet Connection, swimming pool
- Breakfast daily at the Castaway Bar
- Half Day Dili city tour
- 22 Dives (6 shore local dives, 10 shore Dili surround dives and 4 boat dives and 2 complimentary night dives) Includes: tanks, weights, dive guide services, & transfers
- Australian Departure taxes (Value: \$240.00 - subject to change

Cost Does Not Include:

- Travel Insurance & Personal spending monies and Excess Luggage Surcharges
- East Timor Entry visa USD 30.00 (subject to change)
- East Timor departure tax USD10.00

Room Upgrade:

Upgrade to Twin Share (1 x Queen + 1 x Single) - additional \$92 per person for 12 night stay

Conditions Apply:

Prices are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

Booking Requirements:

To secure your place on this expedition, you will need to complete a booking form and return it together with a non refundable deposit amount of \$300.00 per person.

Booking Reference # S12695

Date : 06/11/12

FOR BOOKINGS AND MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT



Contact: Paul Pacey
Mobile: 0431 691 173

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Timor Dive Trip Weekend

We will be diving with Dive Timor Lorosae (DTL).
Check out their website at: www.DiveTimor.com

We will be staying in the guesthouse, which is located alongside the dive shop right on the beachfront in Dili. Above the accommodation is the Castaway bar and restaurant. The complex has its own pool. It is located in Dili itself so it's a short walk to other restaurants, shops, markets, etc.

The four boat dives will be to Atauro Island - see the DTL website for details.

We have also arranged with DTL that we can have an optional third dive per day, which will be at Pertamina Pier. This is one of the best muck dives in East Timor. If we choose to do a third dive, the dive operator will supply a driver to take us to the Pertamina Pier (a 5 minute drive) and wait for us to do our dive before transporting us back to our accommodation. These additional dives are \$25 per diver.

The trip is limited to 8 divers and as at 13/11/2012 we have 4 spots available.

Contact Paul Pacey for more information or to book.

Contact Paul Pacey
Paul.Pacey@iinet.net.au or 0431-691173



SEA BRAGGIN' HENRYS HEAD AND CAPE BANKS SHORE DIVES

15 January 2013

Henry's Head and Cape Banks on the North Head of Botany Bay contain some fantastic reef similar to that on the Kurnell peninsular, but more pristine and protected from North East swells. These are usually dived from boats but can actually be done as a shore dive. Both sites' main challenge is parking and walking, with actual water entrances, dives and exits quite easy. Both dives were done with Abyss Scuba Diving, who are running some more adventurous shore dives for experienced and keen divers. Both sites are accessed from within Botany Bay National Park (turn left into park before reaching Bare Island), where there are no facilities but quite a few walking tracks. The centre of the park is a private golf club making access a bit more difficult.

Cape Banks is accessed by parking at the Helicopter base and walking (about 10 minutes) past the old bunkers then turning right along the hilltop and down and across the bridge to the 6th Tee (almost an island on the cape) where there are easy paths down to the water's edge (west of cape for protected site or if seas are very flat you could dive ocean side.)

On the protected side the small bay here is almost like an amphitheatre, with levels of rock gradually dropping down to around 14 metres and the occasional large crack running through. Seawards from the entrance we saw many old boat anchors, remnants of an old boiler, plus some mats (used for shellfish propagation I believe) and a lot of healthy weed, which meant 3 Weedy Sea Dragons and a few Octopus.

On the second dive (after walking back to swap tanks) we went along the bay towards Bare Island and found and collected 50+ golf balls in varying states and saw an Angel Shark, Cuttlefish, Clinger fish and quite a few large schools. Visibility was around 8-10m on both dives (low tide) and temperature was around 17-18C.

Photos at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151169663096048.441195.636451047&type=1&l=4967bd1f6d>

Henry's head is accessed by a fire trail that connects to the exit road from the golf course car park, but pending feedback from National Parks you are forced to park on the main road outside the Gold club gates. A good idea is to gear up then drive around and drop your buddy and equipment at the fire trail then drive back and park. Once ready, head down the fire trail then turn right and follow the signs to Browns Rock. This is a 400m walk (from the start of the fire trail) and has a long downhill stretch, but the view is great and the trail is in good condition. Once you reach the bottom there is a large concrete platform about 3m above the water at high tide. If you are keen you can find a place near this to do a giant stride entry, or you can head left and clamber down the rocks to the water's edge. Once in we headed due south along the weed and boulders that gradually turns to broken rock reef at a depth of around 12m.

Continuing along we reached 22m then turned due to a strong outgoing current (eddy from and incoming tide) and worked our way back in. Visibility was 12m once below 10m deep, and around 5m above, and the temp dropped from 20C at the surface to 16C on the bottom. Lots of anchors, wreckage from at least two boats including a long wood hull, and lots of marine life. Sponges and weed seem healthier than Kurnell, I suspect to less silt dropping here and less activity. On the walk back up, stop to check out the view and again use your car to shuttle gear back to the car parking area.

Photos at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151195648391048.444973.636451047&type=1&l=45d4e26222>

Both sites were great and I'll be going back soon but do keep in mind the relative difficulty of access of both sites and avoid these walks on a hot day.

James Dean



AUSTRALIA DAY DOUBLE DIVE

Bare Island

As Australia Day this year fell on a Saturday, we decided to have two events to celebrate, this double dive and a BBQ dive on the holiday Monday. As it turned out, the latter was cancelled due to bad weather. However, Australia Day itself had good weather, at least in the morning.

We planned the dive for quite early, as previous experience had shown that Bare Island was normally very busy on Australia Day. This year it was nowhere as busy, so the early start was probably not needed. In any case, we had about 29 members turn up for the dive. The plan was to do a dive to the Deep Wall for the first dive. Everyone geared up and we split up into a number of groups.

Diving today were not only a lot of the usual group (Gary D, Gary P, Ron, Kelly, Eddie etc), but also quite a few of the newer members and one member who had not dived with us for a long time, Eddy Labour. Eddy and I have done 348 dives as buddies before today, but we have not dived for over four years together.

Dive 1:

We all walk to the western point where the dive will start. Kelly, Eddy, David Qi and I head off as one buddy group and find the water very warm, at over 21 degrees. The visibility is not great in the shallows but once we reach the wall, it improves to about 12 metres. We have a look around and Kelly finds three Pygmy Pipehorses almost straight away.

We head back along the wall and find lots of things. Some people see a Red Indianfish and Kelly finds some more pygmies. We cross over to the 15 Metre Reef and then Sea Horse Corner. A Horned Shark is sighted, and a Dwarf Firefish. Back near the caves, I find two more pygmies. Kelly later sees a squid grab an Old Wife.

We arrive back at the exit after a dive of over 63 minutes.

While not everyone is doing a second dive, those that are grab a coffee and we share some morning tea while we swap over tanks. I am not sure how many did the second dive, perhaps 12 or so.

Dive 2:

This time some people (led by Ron) decided to dive the eastern side while the rest of us decided to dive the Isolated





Reefs. Again, we started from the western point.

When we hit the sand at about 12 metres, Tong, who was bringing up the rear, followed two other divers who we encountered here. That was the last we saw of him. He realised after a few minutes that he was with the wrong group but could not find us



again.

We headed up the inside of the reef and had even better visibility than the first dive. It was now about 15 metres. We went along slowly, but somehow managed to lose more divers. We went right up to the end where there has been a lot of change. Some huge boulders, at least the size of a bedroom, have moved off the top of the reef onto the sand.

Once on the southern side and heading back towards the island, we find two Sea Dragons, one with eggs. It has been quite a while since I have seen any Sea Dragons at Bare Island. Further on I find a small Red Indianfish. We decide as the current is now outflowing, we will cut across between the two reefs and go back on the northern side. Here we re-find Gary Perkins.

We head back to shore, looking again at the pygmies. We surface after another long dive, very satisfied with it.

These two dives have probably been the best two dives of the year. Thanks to all the members who came along and made it a good morning.



Michael McFadyen

Photos Natasha Naude



ANZAC Day Long Weekend 2013

When: Thurs 25 - Sun 28 April 2013

Where: Seal Rocks, Treachery Camp

Diving

Double boat dives on Saturday and Sunday with "Action Divers"

- Up to 24 divers in 2 groups each day
- Diving will be from \$105 for double per day (includes one air fill)
- Nitrox available at \$18 if required.
- Shore diving if weather does not co-operate for boats.

Accommodation

- Accommodation in Treachery Beach Lodge, <http://www.treacherycamp.com.au/>
- Cost \$220 per room for three nights (sleeps 4 in bunks) - two rooms available.

Any questions please contact me by email or at a dive or meetings.

Contact Natasha on 0410 074 677 or
natasha@bluecucumber.com



WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Sat 16 Feb	Boat Dive M&K Reef	Natasha Naude natasha@bluecucumber.com	Sun 17 Feb	Shore Dive & BBQ Oak Park	TBC
Wed 20 Feb	Club Meeting and Tank Testing	Jason Coombs j.coombs@unsw.edu.au	Sat 23 Feb	Club Anniversary Shore Dive Bare Island	Phil Rose pvrose5@bigpond.net.au
Sat 23 Feb	Club Anniversary Dinner	Kelly McFadyen kelly@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info	Fri 1 Mar - Sun 3 Mar	Girls' Weekend Port Stephens	Kelly McFadyen kelly@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info
Sat 2 Mar	Boat Dive Middle Ground	Dave Casburn dcasburn@iinet.com.au	Sun 3 Mar	Deep Dive SS Kelloe	Michael McFadyen michael@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

CLUB COMMITTEE

President	Jason Coombs	9345 4599	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Vice President	Peter Flockart	9371 0265	pjflockart@speednet.com.au
Secretary	Digby Naude	0403 896 985	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Treasurer	Kelly McFadyen	9545 5596	treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Assistant Secretary/ Treasurer	David Casburn	0405 186 184	dcasburn@iinet.net.au
Webmaster	Michael McFadyen	9545 5596	webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Naude	0410 074 677	newsletter@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au

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