



Sea Braggin'

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April / May '19

TRIPS AWAY

Boy's Weekend Away, Nelson Bay.

Article by Michael McFayden.

Photo's by Ron Walsh & Ray Moulang

This year, for the first time, I decided to go on the BONG weekend (Boy's Only, No Girls). As it turns out, this was the 10th anniversary of the event (we think), all organised by Ray Moulang. As normal, the weekend was held at Nelson Bay and scheduled to align with high tides mid-morning. This year it was held over the weekend of 6 and 7 April.

Quite a few of us travelled up very early on Friday 5th April, to take advantage of the tide, to do a dive at The Pipeline before moving into the accommodation. This meant leaving home at 5 am to arrive well before the high of 9:17 am. Doing the dive were Ron Walsh, Aidan Slevin, Steve Boyd, Ian Hittmann and Mike Scotland. Ray arrived late due to heavy traffic so missed the dive.



We spent a very leisurely 60+ minutes diving the area to the east of the pipe and also a section of

the pipe. We saw at least 7 White's sea horses, 3 pipefish, some large kingfish, 4 spindle cowries, lots of small cuttlefish and octopus and some butterflyfish. We did not see a huge number of nudibranchs, but there were a few interesting ones.

After the dive we had coffee to warm up (it was raining but a warm 22C in water) before we moved into the accommodation. Due to the numbers attending (14) we had two separate houses at Fingal Bay and two others were staying elsewhere.

That evening we walked to the Fingal Bay Sports Club which was very busy. We had to wait a while for dinner, but it was nice.

Saturday saw a beautiful morning, sunny and no wind. We arrived at the Lets Go Adventure Dive shop (the old Pro Dive shop) at the marina where we set up our gear. We loaded the boat and after a delay while they refuelled it, we headed off about 9:15 am. It was 45 minutes to North Rock which is north of Broughton Island. There was a bit of a swell rolling in but it was not too bad, although a few on the boat were feeding the fish!

The dive here is off the northern side of the rock. The boat is anchored over a ledge which is about 4 metres deep. There is a shark gutter that extends quite a way to the east and west. As soon as we descended we saw lots of grey nurse sharks. They were everywhere. I was diving with Paul Pacey and Eddie Ivers and we only went a short distance and basically stayed there for a long time.



There were sharks constantly going past us. At one time I counted in excess of 40 sharks when I looked from left to right. This would mean there were at least 50 to 60 sharks present at the site. Visibility was generally pretty good, so everyone got lots of video and photographs. We also saw a small turtle when we went exploring. After a surface interval on the western side of North Rock which was only marginally calmer than the dive site, we returned and did a second dive. This time I accompanied Ron Walsh and Aidan Slevin around the eastern point of North Rock to The Amphitheatre. On the way we saw some eagle rays, large kingfish and plenty of bream. It was about 20 minutes to get there. This spot is a small inlet into the rock which is pretty spectacular. There was plenty of fish in there too.



On the way back we had some large bonito swim past and once again, the fishlife was

prolific, with thousands of yellowtail, silver sweep and ladder-finned pomfrets being the most prolific. Once back in the gutter we watched the grey nurse sharks again before ascending. A few of us even found some shark teeth. We had a very comfortable trip back.



That evening we all assembled at the main house near the surf club for dinner. Ray catered for us and provided an entrée of chicken winglets (cooked by Ron) with a main of lamb shanks and sweet potato mash. This was followed up with home-made apple pie and custard. An excellent meal, thanks Ray! The night finished with a few more drinks as would be expected.

Sunday saw us get an extra hour's sleep due to the end of daylight saving. We headed to Fly Point to dive, joining the dozens of others already there (and more arriving after we did). We dived in a number of groups, I went with Geoff Ward and Mark Arrowsmith. We did the normal dive, and saw lots of things including some fiddler-rays, wobbegong sharks, blind sharks and quite a few butterflyfish. On the way back to the exit, the small wall had huge numbers of sweep, stripeys, yellowtail, ladder-finned pomfrets, bream, small snapper and many more species. Once again, another dive over an hour (as were all our dives on the weekend).

In the afternoon a few of us walked out to Fingal Lighthouse, a very nice walk. That evening we were going to go to the Thai restaurant at Shoal Bay, but after a few early drinks, we decided to get takeaway Thai instead. We had an excellent meal at the bigger house. Once again, a few more drinks ended the evening. Monday was another beautiful day. Quite a few had gone home yesterday (Roger Lee, Mark and

a few others) but the remaining ones once again went to The Pipeline. We had a very similar dive to Friday. I even found a tiny sea horse about 10 mm long! After the dive it was a good trip home, missing all the Sydney traffic.

Thanks to Ray for organising the weekend, it was a great success, helped by great weather for the weekend and Monday.

LOCAL DIVING

Wreck of the Amy Thirroul Beach

Article & photos by Lynne Tuck

I was recently sent a photo of parts of an old wreck by a friend that had been uncovered by shifting sands. It was the Wreck of the Amy off Thirroul beach. Early next morning, I took my dive gear and camera, not really expecting to find much - if anything at all!

With a vague description and not great visibility, it was like the Amy was asking to be found!

There were 2 large anchors, one completely visible that was embedded in a pile of rusty chain, the other just part of the fluke appearing eerily out of the sand. There were also several large metal cogs or spindles scattered around. Visibility was limited with a lot of sand and uprooted sea grasses floating around in the surging water.

I dived again the next morning, this time with conditions a little bit better. I was intrigued to find old wood planking and also what I assume is part of one of the masts and a large bollard. With work calling I only spent about 15 minutes in the water, planning to come back for more footage.



A couple of days later, conditions looked perfect with no swell, I was very disappointed to find the shifting sands had again covered most of the remains of the Amy. The Amy lies in about 4 metres of water and only gets uncovered every couple of years.

I posted some footage on You Tube which led to an ABC radio interview and news article the following week. The online story ended up being the third most popular story nationally with 189,000 views the day it was published.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVfESrc19-M>



The Amy was washed ashore during a violent storm in 1889, it was a wooden Brig with 2 masts and 107-foot-long, all 8 of the crew drowned with rumours of a woman and child seen by people on shore attempting to rescue the victims. No record of them was ever found and it was assumed that it was the wife and child of the captain. The cargo was coal/ ballast and it had left Port Kembla bound for Sydney. There is a monument to the Amy near Thirroul pool.

In a strange coincidence a local business the Coal Coast Brewing Co. released a new beer called "Ode to Amy" in tribute to the wreck in the same week it was uncovered. It is sold in Thirroul on tap at Jose Jones restaurant.



Shark Dive at Bushranger’s Bay – Bass Point, Shellharbour.

Article & photos by – Ian Hittmann.

I must have easily done over one hundred dives in Bushranger’s Bay over the early years of my dive career, and apart from seeing the usual stingrays on the sand, the friendly blue groper, old wives, the engine block, lots of urchins and untold numbers of other divers, the only unusual sighting I ever made was when a seal swam up to check me out one day.



Anyway, about a year ago a group of grey nurse sharks turned up at the gravel loader on the north side of Bass Point, and the word soon got out, and on weekends the area was invaded by hundreds of divers to see the sharks. Later the sharks moved to Bushranger’s Bay, and the crowds followed. I even heard on Wollongong radio that you could snorkel with sharks there if you wished. Needless to say, the parking area on weekends was chaos any time after about 9am. However, we decided to make an earlier start than that to get some photos, as well as a second dive mid-week, and we were rewarded with great conditions and about a dozen friendly sharks for some easy close-up wide-angle photos.



The best spot was just where the inner bay starts to drop deeper than about 7 metres, and we were surrounded by about 5 or 6 sharks the whole time, with viz of about 8 metres. How hard was that? From a photography point of view, you didn’t have to

move very far to get the sun behind, or above your subjects, and try all different angles for shots.



In the outer bay there was a gathering of PJ’s to check out. I was with Michelle, and we saw no other divers there either time, although when we exited the water at about 9.30am on the Saturday, there were about 30 divers about to enter the water. Most of the sharks were juveniles, with a couple of bigger ones around, but they all just stayed in the same area, and we certainly didn’t have to do much swimming to see them. The hardest thing about the whole dive was walking up the steps back to the car, and we finished with coffee in Shellharbour Village.

Wreck dives during April / May 2019

Article & photos by – Phil Short

The weather and sea conditions were very kind during April and May so I took Argonaut out to dive the wrecks of the SS Undola, once and the SS Tuggerah on 5 occasions. The visibility was excellent during this period and the fish life on both wrecks was abundant.



A number of large wobbies have returned to the Tuggerah as seasonal visitors and large schools of nanny gai, sea pike, yellow tail and kingfish have been present. On some dives the yellow tail have blacked out the depth sounder they have been so thick. Seals have also been regular visitors to the wrecks.



On 17 May 2019, the club had a dive to the wreck of the SS Tuggerah to commemorate the 100th anniversary of its sinking. Makcat and Argonaut took 8 divers from the club for a fantastic dive. The fish life was the most abundant I have seen on the wreck for many years with huge schools of yellow tail and sea pike. A grey nurse shark was also cruising around the wreck with most of the divers having an encounter with it.

Fairy Bower Dusky Whalers

26th May 2019

Article & Photos by Jason Coombs

Every year from April to July there are juvenile dusky whaler sharks at Fairy Bower in Manly. The location is a nursery and an aquatic reserve. It is a surreal experience to dive with these mini sharks in 6 - 7 metres of water while swimmers and snorkelers pass by overhead.

This year we had 8 divers - myself and Rox, Natasha Naude, John McPherson (visiting from Melbourne), Kelly McFadyen, Helen Price, Michael Materazzo and our President Michael McFadyen. Digby Naude and daughter Mahla provided shore support.



It was an overcast day that brightened up to sun with a cool westerly blowing. The sea was flat and warm at 22c. We entered at the western end of Shelly Beach and headed out towards Fairy Bower.

While the dive site doesn't have great fixed life, I have always thought the fish life is underrated. On the day we had schools of old wives, hula fish, yellow tail pike and diamond / silver bat fish, spangled emperors, moorish idol, a small tuna / spanish mackrel, bream, snapper, goat fish and a large pregnant wobbie. There was also a large giant cuttlefish.



Rox and I only saw 3 sharks briefly on the way out though the others signalled to us they had seen more further back. So, we turned around and headed back. We settled out on the sand and waited. After a while a group of 5 - 6 sharks came past us several times. One had a hook in its mouth, unfortunately they don't know where the boundaries of the aquatic reserve are.



A couple of times they came really close. They are good at sneaking up on you and catching you by surprise. After getting lots of photos we eventually headed back to shore and surfaced after 106 minutes to find it colder out of the water than in.

It was another great dive there, well worth the drive and the expensive parking.

UPCOMING DIVE TRIPS

Christmas / Cocos Islands. 6th to 20th Sept. 2019 Organiser: Phil Rose.

Hello club members,
I still have 2 positions available for divers for this trip. The Christmas holiday season is now over so we need to get serious about final numbers for this trip. I need final numbers by the end of March please.

The dates are 6-20 sept. 2019 - that's a week at each location.
10 dives on each island. Cost is approx. \$4200pp ex Perth.

Please look at the website of each Island for more information and see how unique this trip will be.

If you are interested, please contact me as soon as possible as a small deposit is soon required to secure the prices. Call me for more information or to chat about this trip.

Ph. 0423 771 486

pvrose5@bigpond.net.au

Ticao Island & Sabang, Phillipines. March 2020

Organiser: Mark Ridsdale.

The trip departs Sydney on the 9th March 2020 and arrives Manila same day. Overnight in Manila and transfer next day to Legaspi on 10th March 2020.

We will be met at Legaspi Airport and transfer to Ticao Island. This will entail 2 hours by airconditioned van to Donsol and then a 2 hour banker boat ride to Ticao Island arriving after lunch.

Staying 7 nights at Ticao Island with 6 days of diving --- 18 dives. (10th – 16th March Inclusive)

The diving at Ticao Island will involve 3 boat dives each day with the San Miguel Islands providing outstanding wall and reef dives. This area is rarely dived and the quality of the diving is outstanding. Depending upon group agreement we will start the diving at San Miguel for either 1 or 2 dives with the 2nd of 3rd dive being at the legendary Manta Bowl. The giant 6 metre Pacific Mantas frequent this area as it is an established cleaning station area. Last time we were there we also enjoyed up close and personal interactions with the whale sharks as well. An epic experience which may or may not be repeated but, we can only hope!

After the seven night stay we will depart for an overnight stay in Legaspi 17th March and then transfer to Legaspi Airport for a flight to Manila on 18th March. Stay overnight and depart by bus to Batangas and then ferry on 19th March.

Arriving Puerto Galera on 19th March and transferring to Sabang.

Sabang has outstanding macro diving sites, drift dives, reef and wall dives. Schools of jacks and barracuda are common for the wide angle enthusiast. Sabang is rated in the top 10 dive sites in the world. All boat diving but for those wanting a shore dive at HIGH tide it is also possible.

The accommodation is at Seashore resort which has comfortable accommodation, pool and onsite dive centre.

Trip Cost – Sydney to Manila by Cebu Pacific including 32 kgs of luggage is around \$680 return

Manila to Legaspi return is around \$140.00.

Return Bus and Ferry and trike \$55.00

Cost of all flights and transfers \$875.

Manila Hotel for 2 nights Share and food etc around **\$50.00 each night**

Ticao package from Legaspi airport to Ticao and return is around **\$1100.00**

Sabang daily cost including Share accommodation, 2 dives per day, meals and reasonable drinks is around **\$125.00 all up. Extra dives are \$22.00 each.**

The above costings are based on 37 pesos to \$Aud.

10% deposit is payable by mid July 2019 to secure the Ticao Island pricing.

There are a number of persons that have indicated an interest in the trip.

There is **one more spot available**

The deposit will be \$120.00.

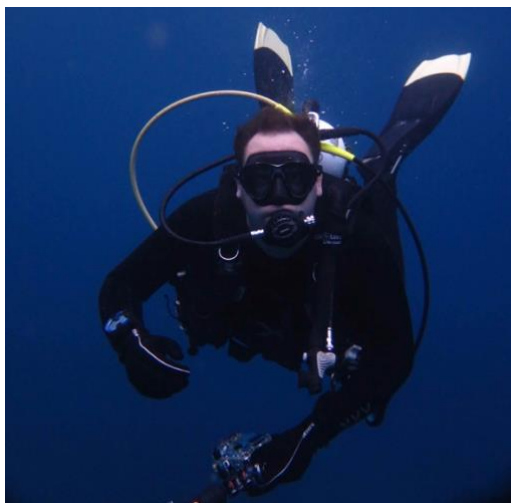
All persons will be responsible for booking their own flights from Sydney to Manila and Manila to Legaspi. Details of flights will be given for the Manila to Legaspi return flights. Manila Accommodation once agreed between all will be booked individually. My preference for the second Manila stay is City Tower as that is where the bus leaves from for Batangas and ferry to Puerto Galera.

Please contact myself – Mark Ridsdale on 0419243717 asap or via messenger after 13th May 2019 as I am returning to the Philippines. A fuller itinerary is available for those interested.

MEMBER PROFILES

The next 2 Member Profiles to feature are Jason Coombs and Daniel Tuka.

Jason Coombs



- How long have you been a member of SGSC?
 - o 14 years since August 2004
- What inspired you to get into scuba Diving?
 - o I went on holiday to Fiji and went snorkelling but I was frustrated I couldn't get close to all the colourful fish so I booked my open water course.
- When did you first get certified?
 - o January 1998 in Titahi Bay in Wellington NZ. Even though it was summer it was raining and cold and the water was murky and 16c. It is fair to say every dive since then has been a pleasant surprise!
- How many dives have you logged?
 - o 1,751
- Level of certification?
 - o Rescue / Deep / Nitrox
- Favourite type of diving?
 - o I like shore diving, critter diving and diving new locations. My favourite dives combine those three things.
- Favourite dive sites?
 - o Port Stephens, Solitary Islands, Poor Knights Islands in NZ and anywhere in Indonesia.
- Favourite critters to see?
 - o I love seeing any new critters but especially angler fish and nudibranchs.
- Have you been on any dive holidays? (Australia or overseas)
 - o I have been fortunate to dive in 16 different countries. I have been to Indonesia for the last 8 years in a row.
 - o I have also made multiple trips to Queensland and dived in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia.
- Oh shit!! Moments?
 - o On my deepest dive at more than 60 metres depth on the stern of the Coolidge one of my buddies occy started free flowing emptying his tank. There were a few moments of concern but fortunately we had organised two pony bottles between the 4 of us in the group so we got back to shore OK.

- Things you've learnt?
 - o I have learnt so much from diving. I guess the overriding thing is how little we really know about the oceans.
- Has diving changed your life?
 - o Diving has given me great opportunities for travelling to interesting and unusual places; and I have met many great friends through diving.
- How so?
 - o Being a diver is like being a member of a huge worldwide club with likeminded people with the same interests. You can get on a dive boat with complete strangers and end the day with new friends simply thru your shared passion for diving.
- Does anyone else in your family dive?
 - o Yes Rox (my wife) and I did our open water certificates at the same time and we have logged 1,300 dives together.
- Anything else you'd like to add?
 - o When I joined St George Scuba Club I had about 250 logged dives but I had mostly followed someone else (a guide) around underwater. I have learnt an enormous amount from the combined experience of the people in the club and it has been a lot of fun.

Daniel Tuka



- How long have you been a member of SGSC?
Joined in August 2018.
- What inspired you to get into scuba Diving?
Loved going underwater and exploring.
- When did you first get certified?
2 years ago.
- How many dives have you logged?
89.
- Level of certification?
Rescue.
- Favourite type of diving?
Wreck.
- Favourite dive sites?
South West Rocks / HMAS Adelaide.
- Favourite critters to see?
Cuttlefish.
- Have you been on any dive holidays?
This year is a holiday (from Canada).
- Oh shit!! Moments?
*I hope to avoid these so not yet- Loose cam band on tank at Shiprock.
Thanks Ken.*
- Things you've learnt?
Need to slow down.
- Has diving changed your life?
How so?
Yes. It's made me see cool sites and think of ways to afford more trips.
- Does anyone else in your family dive?
No.
- Anything else you'd like to add?
When I return to Canada, I'd love to have people come join me for a fresh water wreck dive in the great lakes.

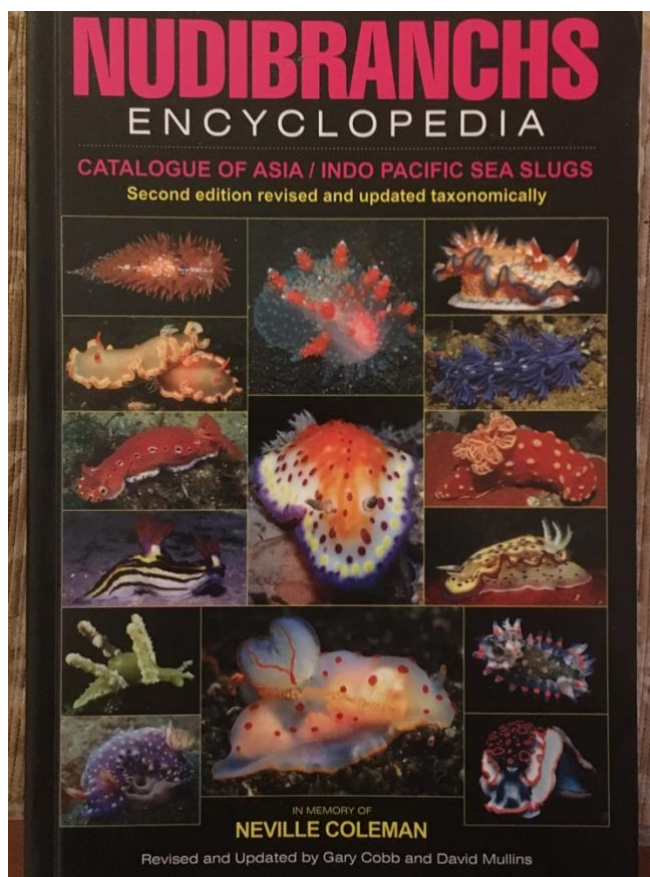
BOOK BUDDY

Another new edition to 'Sea Braggin' is a section called 'BOOK BUDDY'.

This is a place where members can send in reviews about any great dive related books they've read or even simply a suggestion of a good book you've read.

It could be a good novel or a book about sea animals... anything dive related!

This month's book suggestion is one of my own. "Nudibranch Encyclopedia" by Neville Coleman. (Revised & updated by Gary Cobb & David Mullins)



This book aids in the identification of Opisthobranch species found throughout the Indo-Pacific region and is great for divers, reef walkers, students, snorkelers, teachers and anyone interested in the world of Nudibranchs.

There is over 2000 full colour photographs representing 57 families and 1198 species of Nudibranch.

Nudibranch enthusiasts Gary Cobb & David Mullins have worked on this book keeping alive the life's work of an extraordinary underwater explorer and friend, Neville coleman.

NOTICE BOARD

This space is for any news or notifications or gear for sale. So feel free to send in anything along those lines!

*Here's a handy Buyers Guide by Scuba Doctor.

<https://scubadoctor.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8bfd1b031b8c01ddf8ccaa126&id=4f02c6191b&e=123b7b2bc7>

*An article about flash photography.

http://divemagazine.co.uk/hotshots/8423-flash-photography-harmless-seahorses?awt_l=EiBY0&awt_m=3lkB.2c8V0gV46Q

MEMBERS PHOTOS & VIDEOS

I know that there are quite a few keen photographers in the club so, get on board and send me some of your photos or links to video clips to be featured here!



REGULAR EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

The next 2 meetings of the St George Scuba Club will be held on Wednesday 19th June 2019 and Wednesday 17th July 2019 at St. George 16ft Sailing Club, Sanoni Ave, Dolls Point at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

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 need time to appear as it needs to be authorised by a web site administrator).

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Restaurant Night.

Saturday 15th June 2019

Place: The Big Mexican Rancho
13 Casuarina Rd, Gynea Bay.

Time: 6.30 pm

Cost: 2 course banquet which includes 3 dips with nachos as entrée, then your choice of main - \$40.00.

3 course banquet as above plus dessert - \$48.00

BYO alcohol (wine & beer)

<https://www.thebigmexicanrancho.com>

Contact: Eda DiCamillo

edadicamillo@bigpond.com

Australian International Dive Expo.

1st to 5th August 2019.

Exhibition Convention Centre.

Darling Harbour.

www.australiadiveexpo.com

Deep Diving Weekend.

Jervis Bay.

9th to 11th August 2019

Contact: Bill Rowland.

bill@rowland88.com

CALENDAR DIVES

Saturday 15th June 2019

Boat Dive
Big Saigon
Contact: Peter Flockart
pjflockart@speednet.com.au

Saturday 22th June 2019

Shore Dive
Oak Park
Contact: Paul Pacey
paul.pacey888@gmail.com

Saturday 29th June 2019

Boat Dive
Marley Sponge Gardens
Contact: Peter Flockart
pjflockart@speednet.com.au

Saturday 6th July 2019

Deep Wreck Dive
SS Annie M Miller
Contact: Ian Roffey.
ianroffey@gmail.com

Saturday 6th July 2019

Shore Dive
The Leap
Contact: Eddie Ivers
eddieivers@iprimus.com.au

Saturday 13th July 2019

Wreck Dive.
HMAS Adelaide.
Contact: Bill Rowland.
bill@rowland88.com

Saturday 20th July 2019

Shore Dive
Oak Park.
Contact: Paul Pacey
paul.pacey888@gmail.com

Saturday 27th July 2019

Boat Dive.
Mary's Reef.
Contact: Ian Roffey.
ianroffey@gmail.com

The Committee for 2018/19 is:

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