



June 2009 - Edited by Ray Moulang -

Included in this issue are Dive Reports from John Prior & Dave Casburn, John Beddie & Ray Moulang, Jason Coombs and John Conolly.

A big thank you goes to them.

To those who submitted items and not in this issue - remember there is always next month.

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

Club Trip Reminder

One of the reasons St George is such a successful club is the voluntary contribution of members. This is no more evident than with the number club trips each year which are generally organised by the same small number of members.

Club trips provide a number of benefits including a significantly lower cost than would otherwise be available to individuals. As the destinations we travel to are popular, and places for accommodation and boats limited, this is achieved by booking well in advance.

Trips are often filling up many months in advance. They are on a first come first served basis and only confirmed by paying your deposit to the treasurer at a club meeting or by bank transfer.

Club members get the booking and accommodation allocated to them by the trip organiser. If club members are not happy with their allocation or want the number of places on a trip increased and the organiser agrees special requests may be catered for.

However a club member can expect to pay for incremental costs (if any) associated with a special request. This may lead to a seemingly inequitable situation where a club member pays more to get the same accommodation as other club members.

The reason for this is that it is not fair for other club members to pay for special requests made by others. If you are sensitive to the price of the trip make this clear to the organiser before making any requests.

Please remember that trip organisers are not travel agents they are club members organising trips for the benefit of the club. When you make a special request they have more work to do. Organising trips can be stressful - in recent times we have had two boats sink just prior to overseas trips necessitating a total reorganisation.

Finally, just like dives on club boats, please remember club etiquette and help the organiser where possible during the trip. All of this helps to make the club a continued success and of great benefit and fun to all members. Happy diving.

Jason Coombs

President



Thailand Club Trip by John Prior and Dave Casburn.



The Similan Islands is a group of 9 uninhabited islands running roughly north to south they have been a National Park since 1982 and they lay north-west of Phuket in the waters of the Andaman Sea. The Similan islands are home to some 500 species of hard and soft corals; a myriad of marine animals.

There was a chance of meeting bigger fish, such as whale sharks, leopard and white tip shark.

In all there are approximately 25 dive sites visited by the Black Manta with an expected visibility of 25 to 40 Metres.

We were all located on the lower decks, the upper deck had the dinning and lounge area a great place to hang out and download your pictures.

Accommodated on board is in comfortable private air-conditioned cabins with en-suite bathrooms. The Cabins had been refurbished in April 2007.

The maximum number of guests is 20.

The cabins were kept clean and tidy throughout our stay. There is a large salon with wide screen plasma TV and state of the art audio visual equipment.

We boarded the MV Black Manta on Sunday morning.

After stowing our gear we were given a briefing on the amenities, the dive crews and the deck hands.



This was the double/twin en suite deluxe cabins shared by Bram and myself.

MV Black Manta is a steel hull vessel 32m long and 7m wide.
Designed for stability and comfort at sea.

Black Manta Deck Layouts



Sunday 15/03/09. Our first dive would be on Island 7 or East of Eden.

This dive site has an extreme variety of reefs and possibly the most variety of any formation in the Similan Islands. This is a typical east coast site featuring a healthy hard coral reef mixed with soft corals. There is often a gentle current, making for a good slow drift. We were prepared to see a wide variety of marine life and possibly a turtle or two.

Our plan to spend most of the dive on the Orchid Garden. This is an area of soft corals and varied marine life. We were told to expect to see Kuhls Rays garden eels manta shrimp, maybe a turtle and manta.

The depth planned for this dive was to a maximum of 30 metres for 60 minutes, the predicted visibility was to range from 15 m up.



Having been a while since diving in the tropics it felt strange not wearing a 5 or 7mm wet suit with all the associated lead, that's not a complaint, you have to love diving in 30C water.

Descending on a large broomie, Orchid Rock, the water was electric with the sight of so many strobes firing,

I don't know about the others but this dive was a bit short for me with only 53 min underwater, this was at 28m. I think being the first dive I was a titch excited and blowing a few too many bubbles.

The marine life was amazing, there were Coral Cod, Banner fish, Damsel Fish, Sweet lips, clown trigger fish, manta shrimp and of cause as promised a turtle (Hawkbill) on the surface Anthias yellow and gold gorgonians' and heaps of soft corals. If there was a complaint it was firstly there were so many divers on the sight, there were possibly 5 other large dive boats at this site, secondly that there was an expectation that the dives would get better, given the poor visibility due too many fish and other marine life the bar was set very high to keep us happy and they were very keen to keep us happy.



This being the first dive of the trip there was some confusion with suiting up and diving procedures. Basically you don't do anything you put your wetsuit on the deck hands give you hand and zip you up, you sit down they unfasten your tank from the rack help you put your BCD on, you then stand move to the dive deck where one of the deck boys put your fins for you, bloody luxury, you step in and they hand your camera to you and your off, too easy, I think some of the boat owners could take a lesson from these operators.

Now that we had experienced the procedure for gearing up and down and preparing for the dive, the briefing and gearing became much easier.

Our second dive of the day was at Elephant Head Rock. This rock lies south of Island No. 8 (Ko Similan).

This is a spectacular dive site, composed of giant granite boulders, forming a maze of swim throughs, channels and gorges reaching depths of over 40m.

The rocks above the water line resemble an elephant, explaining its name. Currents can be quite strong, but shelter is available behind the boulders and rocks as such the dive is not difficult.

We were to commence the dive east of the rock, we expected good swim throughs, and marine life expected was ornate sweet lips fire gobies and whit tip sharks. The dive was planned to be maximum of 30 Metres for 60 minutes, the briefing for this dive was very brief, good really.

We commenced the dive at about 1600hrs. We entered the water and dropped straight down to avoid as much of the current as possible. The topography was varied with numerous smaller rocks and swim throughs; we spent most of the dive on the lee side of the rocks.

The marine life like all the dives was abundant and varied, banner fish damsels trigger fish nudibranch. Others had seen sea snakes leopard sharks and a sedate titan trigger fish. The third dive of the day was on an island called 3 trees, to me there looked to be more than 3 trees on this particular island, I am sure there is a good reason for the name.

This was a sloping coral reef starting at 5 metres and petering out at the sand, at a depth of 20 metres. After reaching the sand there are some small rocks scattered about, they were good for a bit of a peek. We expected a current but we would be drifting with it, so it was not to be too much of a problem. The marine life expected were napoleon wrasses, turtles, leopard sharks, white and black tip reef sharks, chevron barracuda and bat fish. We were to dive to a maximum depth of 30 metres for a maximum time of 60 minutes.

The dive started with a giant stride from the rear of the MV Black Manta.

As we weren't moored we needed to quickly descend and start our drift in a northerly direction. We were surrounded in schools of chevron barracuda which Peter T and David C swam into and were engulfed in, there has to be a good shot there.

Otherwise there were the usual coral cod, very large schools of glass fish, close to the rocks with overhangs. Others had seen dog toothed tuna, a large school, a large white fan, and a large amount of soft corals.

The last dive of the day was a night dive at Moring bay.

Basically sand with a couple of bommies and not much else. The dive was to only 12 metres we were to expect lobsters, crabs, morays and possibly a shark.

What we got were Japanese divers all over the place, lots of sand and a bommie or two. There were heaps of shrimp some beaded Cray's, parrot fish trying to sleep with there mucus doonas pulled over there head.

When we surfaced we were many many metres from the boat, didn't think my navigation was that bad, found out later that the boat had broken the mooring which the captain decided to take with us a place on another dive site we were to do the next day. Very pragmatic really...

Monday 16/03/09.

Monday started at 0630hrs with a bell and a call for coffee (this is real plunger coffee not that instant muck) and some munchies.

The first dive of the day was Christmas Pont, why call it Christmas point, ummmmm don't know.

This dive site has an abundance of boulders, soft corals, arches and passages spread out over a huge area on the west side of island no. 9. We were told that it would take more than one dive to gain an appreciation of this site.

Depth to a maximum of 35m. The site is known to have White tip sharks, beautiful soft coral gardens, and the sand and rubble bottom is great for nudibranchs and ribbon eels.

The plan for this dive involved swimming around and over a number of large rocks starting at 10metres and finishing at 24 metres, the bottom will drop away to approximately 40m, but this was mostly sand. It was located on the lee side of the island and we were expecting an easy dive. We were to do a maximum of 35 Metres for 60 minutes. You will have to excuse the poor level of detail, it was early. On entering the water we were greeted with a visibility of over 25 Metres, very nice for the first dive of the day.

We swam through and around most of the larger rocks till I had managed to drop the pressure in my tank to 50 bar, on the journey, we were visited by dog tooth tuna, titan trigger fish, numerous and varied parrot fish, Moorish idols, sweet lips and big jacks.

I had heard that others had spotted giant trevallies and unicorn fish.

The second dive of the day was **Koh Bon.**

This is an isolated island on the northwest edge of the Similan islands. There is a sloping reef from 10 to 40 metres with the majority of corals being stag horn and brain corals; there are large areas of flat plains between the corals.

This area is home to a number of reef sharks, with schools of yellowtail barracuda, fusiliers, trevallies, sweet-lips and black and white snappers are all common in the area, as well as octopuses, sea snakes, and nudibranchs.

This area we were expecting to see manta feeding.

The dive brief described the dive site as a rock point that protruded from the island and goes to a depth of 30 metres.

We were to enter on the exposed side and swim around to the sheltered side, there was a swim through and a number of rock steps that descended. Here we were expected to see napoleon wrasse and sweet lips tigerfish leopard sharks and giant wrasse.

Like the earlier dive the visibility was over 25 metres, with a water temp of a comfortable 30C... We followed the reef to a depth of 30 metres. At this point there is some discussion as to what actually happened either we were visited by 4 mantas or by the same manta 4 times, whatever there was a lot of manta around.

Apart from the pesky manta or mantas, there were dog toothed tuna, titan trigger sweet lips, jacks glass bla bla bla, and there were lots of fish everywhere.

The next planned dive was to a point just off Ko Bon, Brocken Rock. We were to basically enter the water and head south along a wall; we were to keep to 25 metres and for 60 minutes.



This dive was basically the second part of the first dive, the current had picked up and this turned into a bit more of a drift dive that we were used to, this was planned as a round trip to return to the mooring point for pick up.

I found the current a bit strong to get too many photos, the camera was constantly hunting and I failed to have a focusing torch with me.

Given these shortcomings the dive was still productive, there were the usual titan trigger fish, large moray eels, banded snakes, napoleon wrasse, parrot fish, trigger fish and I was told a manta and a hammer head, however I did not see these so I rely heavily on the reports of others.

The last dive of the day was to Tachai Reef, we were told there would be strong current and that we were not to wear any gloves.

Tachai Ref is a large reef formed along the eastern side of the island going from the northeast to the southwest. The reef is from 10 metres to 30 metres. Hard corals cover this area with the majority being the more robust stag horn corals, pore corals, brain corals and fire corals.

There are many isolated boulders and rocks forming small islands on the sandy floor. This dive was basically to swim around the many large rocks forming crevices and small walls. The plan was to stay out of the strongest parts of the current. I being the only person to follow the instructions of the dive guides and not wear gloves received coral burns and urchin spikes in and to both hands.

Basically the dive involved going from rock to rock with short swims and a lot of finger tips holding onto rocks. We drifted roughly south to north there were some leopard sharks, crays, manta shrimp moray, sweet lips and scorpion fish.

We completed our dive with a depth of 25 metres for 61 minutes with a viz of 25 metres, a strenuous but pleasant enough dive. I was very glad I didn't take my camera.

Tuesday 17/03/09. Tuesday morning found us at Leopard Shark Point; this was referred to as Black Mantas Home Reef.

Basically this was a coral head sloping gently to sand and copious coral growth on the reef walls. We had expected encounters with rays, cleaner fish, spotted lion fish, goat fish, golden trevallies, big eye trevallies and barracuda.

For this dive we had clear skies with a temp of about 35c no clouds to mention and seas as flat as you could possibly want.

We dived to 29m for 60 min, moving along the wall to the north there were heaps of leopard sharks cruising and resting, glass fish hiding under the ledges much to the excitement of Peter T and large coral cod, gobies Spanish dancer fusiliers, reef runners, yellow butterfly fish and heaps of damselfish.

After a nice relaxing surface interval and some morning tea we found ourselves at dive 2 for the day. **Tachai Pinnacle.** These are a pair of submerged pinnacles located some 500metres from the island of Koh Tachai.

The bigger of the two pinnacles, to the south, is a dome shaped rock surrounded by large boulders. The bottom mainly sand is at a maximum depth of 45 metres. On the west there are large boulders forming good swim throughs and to the east smaller rocks covered in corals, to the north are colourful soft corals and sea fans.

From the 1st pinnacle it is a swim of about 50 metres to the second. The northern pinnacle lies in 18 metres of water. The northern pinnacle is much smaller than the southern and is home to large sea fans and corals.

The dive plan we received was to dive to 40m for 45 min.

This brief included what we were to expect to see, Leopard sharks, Napoleon wrasse, giant trevallies, emperor wrasse, chevron barracuda, giant barracuda, tuna and of course to keep an eye peeled for the Mantas.

The skies remained clear the seas had picked up a little there was a slight swell, well as compared to absolutely flat it was a swell, and by Sydney standards it was flat.

There was a current so this dive would be done as a drift. The diver ended up being to 35 m for 60 min. We descended on the first pinnacle as a group, resident on the pinnacle was a large leopard shark there was a strong current; we swam into the current to the second pinnacle, at the second pinnacle we noticed we had lost Mark and David.

We finally drifted into deeper water where the current lost most of its strength, Peter T had decided the current was too strong and he couldn't be bothered swimming so he stayed at the mooring and took a more than adequate number of photos.

There wasn't as much seen on this dive, or were we just getting a bit blasé about the whole thing. There were however leopard sharks, oh dear not another leopard shark! Clown trigger fish, trumpeter and flute fish. The third dive of the day was the pick of the whole trip. **Richelieu Rock.** This has to be one of the best dives in Thailand. Richelieu Rock, visible at first as a rock pinnacle to the east of the Surin Islands. The rock forms a horseshoe formation falling steeply to 35 metres. There are numerous small caves packed with marine life.

The majority of corals are colourful soft corals jostling against the wall, accompanied by huge sea fans, hard corals and sea anemones. The corals, majority of which are a royal purple, gives the rock its name, Jacques Cousteau was so impressed by the red colour of the soft corals, he named the rock after Cardinal-Duc de Richelieu, one of the characters in Alexander Dumas novel the three musketeers.

The briefing for this dive was to expect ghost pipefish, frogfish, harlequin shrimp, seahorses, janss pipefish, cuttlefish, anemone fish, moray eels, zebra moray, white eyed moray, chevron barracuda, rainbow runners, big-eye trevally, fusiliers, snappers. We commenced the dive with clear skies, the surface temp was 30c, and there was a slight chop. The visibility was from 15 to 30 metres.

All of the above were seen as well as one of the most photographed ghost pipefish and ornate ghost pipefish which would definitely be visually impaired after an encounter with St George Scuba Club.



The last dive of the day was a night dive on RICHELIEU ROCK.

I don't think there any need to repeat the above, use your imagination and think of the last dive but with less light....

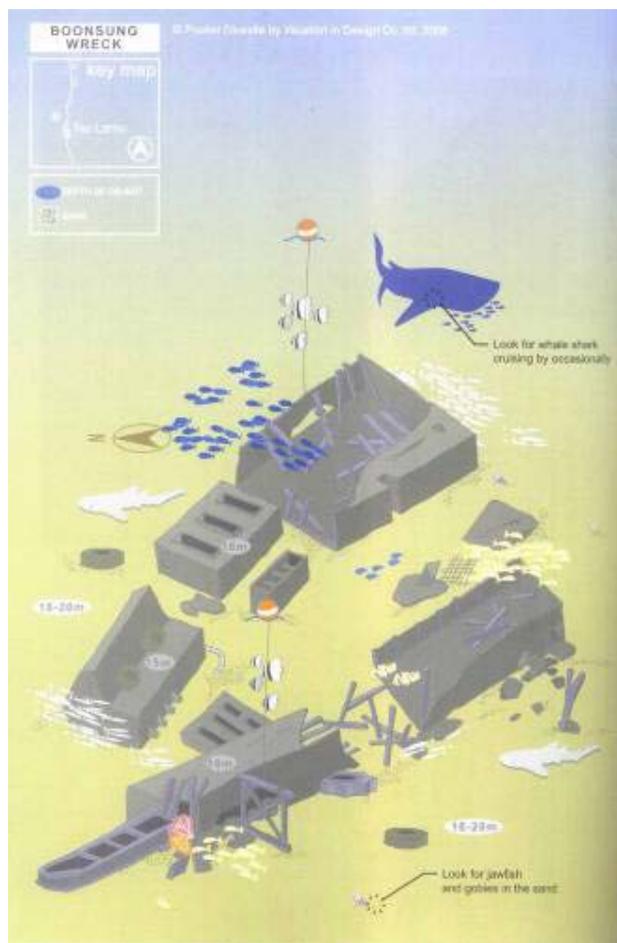
Basically, we dived the same profile as the afternoon dive. It was sunset so I suppose technically it was a twilight dive, the seas were choppy with no swell the air temp was 28 and the water was 30, how cool was that, get into the water to get warm.



Besides the reduced the light the main differences were the number of crabs visible soldier, anemone, cleaner crab, there were some technical problems with a Nikon camera but that is best left alone a mark.....there were a number of serious floods and a heavy loss of equipment. Otherwise I think I can speak for the others when I say these two dives were the best of the trip.

Wednesday and the last day of the live aboard finds our first dive at Ko Bon again and this time at Ko Bon Pinnacle. Koh Bon Pinnacle is 800metres North West of the island, the pinnacle lies in 18 metres of water and drops to 45 metres, it is

covered with yellow soft corals and large sea fans.



We had planned a dive to 30metres for a max of 40 min. On the deep pinnacle we were told to expect lovely soft yellow corals rays leopard sharks napoleon wrasse, moray eels snapper fusiliers peacock manta shrimp.

The dive profile was 37 metres for 51 min, the visibility 25 metres and the seas were calm, and the water temp was 29c.

We descended down the pinnacle circumnavigating from 37 metres, absolutely full of life. Yellow and purple soft corals a wall of lion fish leopard sharks giant trevallies, fusiliers and heaps of cod. Barracuda, manta shrimps, anthias (yellow), Banner fish and of cause Moorish idols.

This being the second last dive of the

trip, following this dive we headed back to port.

On the way back with one more dive to do all including the boat boys headed to the upper decks, this was 0930hrs and whales were sighted, at least one large adult and a calf. These two were crossing our bow for approximately half an hour before heading off, it just gets better and better.

The last dive of the trip was the Boonsung Wreck, photo courtesy of Mora et al p106.. The Boonsung was a 60 meter marine tin ore processing vessel wrecked in 1984 and now laying in 20 metres of water. The vessel was again hit in 2004 by the tsunami and further broken up. At the moment the wreckage is scattered over a large area with the larger pieces lying together in the centre. The vessel is approximately 12 miles from Tap Lamu pier and is close to shore. There is encrusting soft corals on the wreck and the area is heavily silted.

A large amount of marine life can be found here includes, yellow snapper, trevalla, barracuda and batfish all in abundance here. On the wreck itself are lionfish, scorpion fish and many types of moray eel, there may also be a large marble stingray hiding beneath the structure.

We arrived at the Boonsung at about 1100 hrs. This was to be a macro dive there was not much around the wreck other than sand we were told to expect Crocodile fish scorpion fish, various nudibranchs, flat head, carpet fish, Cuttlefish, shrimp.

The dive profile was to 19.6metres for 60 minutes, the visibility was 5 to 10 metres. The skies were clear some clouds were rolling in no wind to speak of and very flat. There were plenty of lion fish, giant trevallies fusiliers, lots of nudibranch giant and banded moray eels, crocodile fish scorpion fish, spotted moray. I had trouble getting excited about this dive after what we had experienced. From here we packed up our gear, stowed what could be stowed, ate lots of food drank some beers and just relaxed till we entered port in early afternoon.

The temperature on shore was oppressive and the trip back a counterpoint to our adventures. It was doubtful anything that lay ahead would match the trip to the Simians, but that is another story.

The main reference was Chutinun Mora et al, Similan 2nd Ed, Vacation in Design, Bangkok Thailand, 2006. Photos were provided by David Casburn and input by all who dived the Black Manta.

The Great Southern Escape - Easter 2009

by Ray Moulang and John Beddie.

With great anticipation the planning was done. For at least the last five years maybe more we





have been to Jervis Bay each Easter and the last couple of years our plan has always been to dive the caves north of Point Perpendicular.

Up till now no success.

We awoke on Good Friday morning to overcast skies and light wind from the north. Our house backed onto the waters of Sanctuary Point and as we rose there was a beautiful pinkish tinge

in the clouds over the water as the sun rose.

We arranged boats and headed for Murray's Beach boat ramp on the inside south east corner of Jervis Bay. The three boats all headed for the northern headland and then up the coast.

The crews were set. SeaJohn had John Beddie, Heinz Bendinger, Mark Ridsdale, Janine Jenkins and Martin Mueller. Downunder had Dave Casburn, John Prior, Mike Scotland and Dave Gagan while Scram2 had Ray Moulang, Steve Shaw, Nancy Scoleri and Gary Perkins. Also joining us for the weekend were Kate Scotland and Sue Shaw.



With great conditions it was off to Cathedral Cave where we anchored nearby the outside and all proceeded into the cave.



I buddied up with Steve. Having been through a few caves before it was eerie to have your torch on and still be in almost total darkness as the cave was so big there was really no bouncing light off anything. Slowly we went up to the back of the cave about 70 metres in. The cave would be about 20 metres wide but narrows as it goes in. This was the best.

We did 47 minutes in 18 degree water with the max depth being 28.4 at the anchor with the depth in this cave about 15 metres. We went back to the boat after this mind blowing dive.

We then headed a little further north in behind The Drum and Drum Sticks. Last



year the best dive could do was to go around the outside edge of the Drum and Drumsticks. We did find on the outer edge a great cave overhang.

Everywhere else was horrible.

After our morning tea we went back near Cathedral Cave again but this time some of us couldn't find the entrance so had to be satisfied with a good look around the surrounding area.

Being Good Friday night we were invited to the Annual Jervis Bay Dive Club Seafood night. This is held in one of the member's houses and there would have been about 40 others there.

The prawns and barramundi were excellent. Just ask Mark.



Saturday came and we (now dubbed the afternoon shift divers?) headed to the ramp again.

Off to the north again to Smugglers Cave to find SeaJohn anchored already.

This one is really easy to find.

The entrance is above and below water. It faces north and so any sort of swell from this way wipes it out as a



dive as we were to find out on Sunday.

You swim over to the entrance then when you enter even on good days you ride the swell back and forward to get in.

Once inside the cave opens out to the left and right.

We went into the right offshoot and had a good look around.

The fish life was almost non-existent except for some big wobbies. Steve

and I also found a small Long Tom.

We went back out inside the cave to the other offshoot and ran into Mike, he pointed to the surface so we went up all of 6mt to see the inside of this cave and had a long talk about how great this was. Mikes best comment was "Isn't this marvellous'.

This cave also has an exit off here but we were warned it was a long swim back to the front so we didn't go out there. We did 65 minutes to 23.1mt depth in 16 degree water.

We had a cupper in the quieter waters just up a bit and after this we went and located the entrance to The Amphitheatre Cave.

Well I thought Cathedral was good but this was excellent. As you go in you see about a 50 metre wide hole. It goes in a good 70 meters also to where you hit some walls and there are crevices you can go further up. Inside the roof would be about 15metres for the ground. Just stunning. There are rows of seat rock shelf ledges which give it the name. As you swing inside to the south there is a bit of rock which is still joined from top to bottom.

As the water swirls around this you are led to the outside at the corner of the headland and a short swim back to the boat. This dive was 55 minutes at 28.5 metres max in 17 degree water.

On Saturday night we had some of the local steak (the club subsidy at work again) that was of cause cooked to perfection again to order by Dave C.



Sea John and in the distance is the Local Liveboard boat up near Smugglers.

This time the salad was fantastic due solely to the preparation of Nancy and Kate. On Sunday we left early (never to be called the afternoon shift divers again) and were anchored near The Arch before SeaJohn arrived. BBQ cook king (David C.) had good faith in the G.P.S. marks supplied by Michael.



We had about 6 boats there - Ryde, Jervis Bay Divers and another boat with 3 divers – talk about George street traffic with all the divers.

A great dive again as the vis. was over 20 metres and we did 31 minutes with water temp 19 degrees at 35.8mt max depth.



Seajohns crew were so lucky to have the resident seal play with them for about 10 minutes and so didn't see much of the arch, Martin has some great video footage of the seal and people at play which he showed at the April club meeting.



The Arch was covered with fish and it was good fun swimming through them.

If this dive was all you could have done it would have been great but having done those caves this was the icing on the cake.

Following this we had a cupper outside

Yellowtail, Pomfrets, Pike etc. and one lonely Boar fish.

Smuggles then we attempted to get into Smugglers again as this was so good yesterday.

Well it was a little surge and we went in about 10 metres and made a hasty retreat still intact.

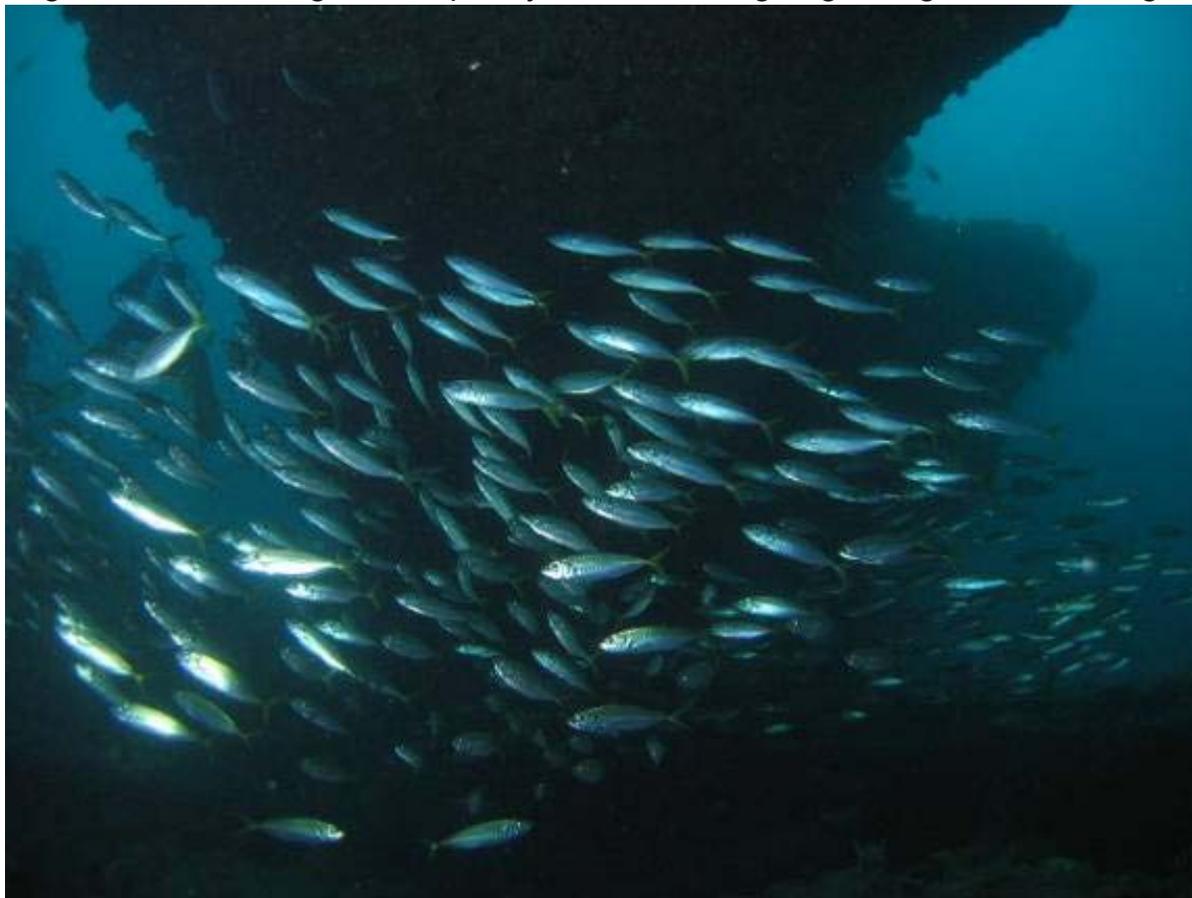
We actually missed the entrance to start with as it was in the white water and we had an nice adventure dive around the corner and seeing as we were there we tried to find the south facing exit but were unable to.



We looked under all the rocks and overhangs but unfortunately we must have been too low in the water and travelled too far trying to find it.

SeaJohn crew dived in the large cave (new spot for me) just south of Crocodile Head northern headland on the vertical face in 24/26M of water, clean water and heaps of leather jackets – as least 4 species, trevally, a few wobbies, but we were safe - Mike S. was not with us this time.

On Monday some went home while the rest went out again. With the sea just starting to come up a bit nasty, Scram 2 did North Bowen Island. Here we found the great swim throughs and plenty of fish. Just going along the sand edge was





great. As I was starting to come up the anchor line, a massive Black Bull Ray swam past with a fishing line trailing over 50 metres behind it.

I grabbed the line and it parted at least a bit closer to it.

We were greeted with the typical weather we seem to get down there.

It blew a strong wind from the south and a sea from the S.E. - Pyramid rock drop off east of Bowen Island in 32M was the first dive site clean water but the rocking boat meant a "get in quick, get the dive over and get to shelter of the mooring on the west side of Bowen Island". The 2nd dive saw Mark and

Martin dive Middle Ground clean water and 1 new reef anchor recovered.

Martin, Heinz and I stayed for another night in the house, meanwhile Mark and Janine had to go home but they kept us informed regards the long talks they had while stuck in the traffic home.

All said and done, those that missed out would never believe just how good we had it down there this trip. The pictures do it a bit of justice but it was better in real life. Thankyou to everyone that went and made the whole weekend a special event for all. Pictures by Gary Perkins, Steve Shaw and Ray Moulang.

SCAN Weekend – Nelson Bay

20th – 22nd March 2009 by Jason Coombs.

We had 12 representatives of St George for the SCAN weekend at Nelson Bay. Rox and I, Geoff Sanders and Margaret, Steve and Sue, Pat Morin and Tania Whitehead, Ray Moulang, Carol Martin, Dave Burns and Eda Di Camillo made it a 50/50 male / female trip.

It's the first time I can remember having an even number and hopefully the first of many.

Other clubs were represented including 8 members from University of Wollongong, 6 from DOOTS and 2 reps from Ryde Underwater club.

Rob Mapstone was there with the team from Uni of Wollongong.

With the tides not ideal for the high tide dives a few members arrived early on Friday and enjoyed a dive at Halifax Park late in the afternoon.



Our first dive was about lunchtime at the Pipeline on the low tide on Saturday. This is a great muck dive I haven't done as often as I'd like to.

We were not let down with a number of small wobbies, box fish, banner fish, pineapple fish, seahorses, pipefish and lots of nudibranchs reported. The vis was about 4-5m which proved to be the best of the weekend.

We followed this up with a dusk dive at Fly Point. Not great vis at 3-4 metres but as always no shortage of life to be found. It was a great evening and the sun went down just as we were exiting from the dive.



Once we got back to the Soldiers Point Holiday Park we had the BBQ well organised by Avril from Uni of Wollongong. Lots of food and a catch up with some of the members of the other clubs.

Reinforcing our reputation the St George team stayed up having a few drinks and exchanging stories after the others had gone to bed. We were so loud Geoff got up and told us off!

The next day we packed up and most members went to Halifax Park about 1pm for a dive on the low tide. The vis was pretty disappointing at only a few metres. There was a huge amount of fish life including, morwong, pomfrets, wobbies, banner fish, eastern wirrah etc.

Overall another great trip to Nelson Bay with St George members well represented. =====

What's Happening Soon-etc.

- Just as this issue was about to go out, I received this from John Conolly.

Hi Ray,

Did a dive yesterday in the Rio Grande up here in Northern New Mexico, but it is highly overrated. Temperature was only 11C and the vis about 2cm.

Some nice rapids though.

Believe you have been having some bad diving conditions in the 3 weeks we have been away. Cheers, John Conolly.

FOR SALE, Dacor Outback BC (rear inflation), Suitable for twin tanks / integrated weights, Good condition - Asking price \$300 Contact Peter Flockart either by phone 0409 304 959 or email pjflockart@speednet.com.au

Wedding Cake Island & Magic Point Sharks

A club dive is planned for 21 June leaving 8am from Botany Bay to dive Wedding Cake Island and a dive using residual air at Magic Point. Spots on boats are limited, so first in first served. To reserve your spot contact Kelly on 0410 599 186 or kelly@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

Club Dive Weekend to South West Rocks.

From Friday 20th November to Sunday 22nd November, 2009.

A deposit of \$50 needs to be paid to Mark via cash or EFT to club account, (details available off Club Web Site Page.)

Please pay the deposit before the end of May to ensure your spot.

Based on 20 divers attending the cost is \$242 each. More can go if required up to 24. This includes a 10% discount for our Club and also takes advantage of a Generous Numbers Subsidy from **South West Rocks Dive Centre** and Air fills Free. We will be doing Double Dives Saturday and Sunday and the pick up start time is 7.00 AM and you should bring at least 1 tank each, 2 if you want steels and all air fills are free. Arrive on Friday and the Accommodation is above the Dive Shop in Double Bunk style beds. Any questions ask away by e-mail or in person at the meetings.

Thanks RayM.

Regular events

THURSDAY NIGHT DIVES

We have had some record turnouts in January and February for the night dives. A record equalling 15 attended the 22 January dive at Bare Island Isolated Reefs and two weeks later 18 members attended the 5 February Bare Island Deep Wall dive. Most of the dives have been very good, with nice visibility and good fish life.

Other Dives

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

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

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

Vanuatu Trip

August 2009 Trip to VANUATU

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

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

Itinerary – REGULAR (\$2335):

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

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

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

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

Forster

We are organising a weekend dive trip to Forster - Friday 11th September -> Sunday 13th September 2009. Package price of \$305 per diver includes...**Double boat dives on Saturday 12th September and Sunday 13th September diving with Action Divers (four dives). Second tank supplied both days plus one air fill on Saturday (so you only need to bring one tank). 2 nights accommodation (Friday and Saturday nights) in two bedroom villa's at Lani's Caravan Park in Forster (a nice place to stay). Continental breakfast provided. Barbecue dinner on Saturday night. Action Divers will provide the meat, salads, etc. and all we have to do is find someone to burn it using the big BBQ near the Villa's (Dave Casburn, come on up!). Here are the fine details...**

Action Divers office is at shop 4/1-5 Manning Street Tuncurry, cross the bridge and it's on the right in the first group of shops. On Saturday we'll board the boat in Forster but on Sunday we'll board the boat from the beach at Seal Rocks. Dive sites, as always, will depend on the weather but "The Pinnacle" and "Latitude Reef" are obviously prime targets for Saturday and "Seal Rocks" and "Jimmy's Cave" are potential targets for Sunday. The price is based on 9 divers (one is a "free" and the saving has been apportioned) and three persons per Villa.

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

www.actiondivers.com.au

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

Solomon Islands Trip – September

The trip to the Solomons will be to Tulagi and Honiara. The diving here is a mixture of wrecks and some reef dives. The dives at Tulagi are deeper and would suit people experienced in deep diving. Details as below: **Thursday 17**

September 2009 6:30 am - fly out of Sydney via Brisbane - 2 pm - arrive Honiara, Transfer by boat to Tulagi,

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

Friday 25 September 2009. Transfer by boat to Honiara

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

Tuesday 15 September. 2:50 pm - fly out of Honiara, 5:05 pm - arrive Brisbane then to Sydney

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

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

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

The Committee is:

PRESIDENT:	Jason Coombs	9345 4599	president@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Peter Flockart	9371 0265	vicepresident@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
SECRETARY:	Eddie Ivers	0403 014 241	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
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EDITOR:	Ray Moulang	04034 37974	newsletter@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au

Please send items for the Newsletter to me **as you do them during the month** with a deadline of 25th of the month.