



P.O. Box 453 Hurstville South 2221 NSW

Visit our web page at

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~diving/stgeorge/stgeorge.htm>

August 2005

THURSDAY NIGHT DIVES

Thursday Night Dives

Remember, the regular Thursday night dives are still on. Some have been cancelled lately due to the weather and people being away, but they will still be held over winter.

If you are not on the email list for these, contact Michael McFadyen by email

michael.mcfadyen@environment.nsw.gov.au

and he will ensure you get advised of each and every dive. Starting time is normally about 7 pm.

AUGUST

Sunday 7th

Shore Dive at Terrigal.

I will be out of the country during the week leading up to this dive and will not be contactable. If you are planning on going, please contact Michael McFadyen who will take the names and will check with the dive operator up there to make sure conditions are OK to dive.

We will be doing a rock-hop to dive Terrigal Arch (or Skillion Cave as it now seems to be called). We will meet at Terrigal Oval at the carpark overlooking the dive site at 9.00 for a 9.30 high tide.

If you are coming please keep your mobile on as you drive up so you are contactable if there are any delays.

Contact Steve Shaw on 9868 4056

Sunday 21st

Bass Point Shore Dive and Picnic. High Tide 9.20am. Meet at the end of Bass Point Rd (dirt) at 8.45am.

Contact Philip Rose on 9543 0748

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 3

Deep Dive

Les will be away in Vietnam so Michael McFadyen is running this dive. For something different, the dive will be out of Sydney Harbour and to one of the Long Reef wrecks. Which one will depend be decided on the day, but the *Dee Why* and *Coolooli* are favourites. If you are interested (and suitably experienced and equipped), contact Michael on 9558-8181 [h].

Sunday 11

Yellow Rock

Yellow Rock is located at the outermost point of Long Bay and is where the Malabar Sewerage Works used to dump all its waste (yuk). However, it is now a very good dive spot, with shear walls very close to the rock platform. You can even swim up the old discharge pipe if you are game!

If you are interested in this dive leaving the Cooks River Boat Ramp at Kyeemagh (meet at 8 am), contact Michael McFadyen on 9558 8181 [h].

Sunday 25th.

Boat Dive to The Colours.

Contact David Vandervelden on 0414 240 992

NOVEMBER

**Solitary Islands - Mid week Diving Adventure
Week Commencing Monday 14th November
2005**

Diving with Dive Quest at Mulloway

Divers: Cost: \$420.00 Includes: 4 double dives, Second tank free, all air refills included, 5 night's accommodation with continental breakfast – cereals, milk, coffee, tea

Non Divers: Cost: \$25.00 per night accommodation – includes breakfast

Washout: If either of the days Monday to Thursday is a wash out, then either of the following applies:

Dive Friday at no extra cost of extended stay and depart Saturday, or a rebate of \$80.00 against package cost of \$420.00

Additional Diving: Should you wish to stay longer and do additional diving then the additional cost is: \$100.00 per day. (\$20.00 accommodation, \$80.00 double dive).

Dive sites will be organized based on the weather conditions but will include the North West and North Solitary Islands with more experienced dive sites on request.

This is the best diving in NSW with blue water, 24 – 26 degree water and 15- 25 metre visibility – so don't miss out on this great opportunity.

The suggested itinerary is to arrive Sunday 13th November in the afternoon, dive Monday through Thursday, with flexibility for further diving or departure on Friday.

This dive adventure is being organized by Mark Ridsdale (0419 243 717). Deposits of \$50.00 are preferred to be paid at the September Meeting or sooner to St George Scuba.

LAST MONTH

Bare Island Night Dive, July 7, 2005

By Adam Florence

It was a Thursday night, not unlike any other Thursday night. As the citizens of this fair city bunkered down for the evening to feast on the charred remains of their hastily prepared microwave dinners and nightly smorgasbord of American sitcom, four intrepid explorers, Michael McFadyen, Kelly Jandik, Jason Coombs, and Adam Florence set out upon a seemingly dangerous and potentially life threatening quest....

These highly trained and extremely brave individuals, (all members of the world renowned St. George Scuba Club), would dive into the inky, and near freezing depths, uncertain as to what creature from the abyss would await them.

Though scarcely a sound was made, one could sense the heightened tension that pervaded the scene as they prepared for their journey. One by one they plunged headlong into what the local fisherfolk, (congregated on the cold and miserable rock), must have thought was sheer madness and utter folly.

As they each hit the water it was as if the blades of a thousand tiny knives had pricked their skin, each unprotected cell crying out for warmth.

With only the faint beams of their torch lights piercing the all encompassing dark the brave divers descended into what was to be the most memorable of Bare Island Night Dives!

No sooner had Michael and Kelly descended than a school of low flying Kamikaze Longfin Pike commenced their attack run; both divers coming under heavy fire. One particularly ruthless pike made it past Michael's outer defences to score a direct hit and create maximum impact by lodging itself between his BC and wetsuit. Adam and Jason, (following some metres behind) were met with a scene of sheer confusion and carnage as Michael and Kelly valiantly attempted to remove the wayward fish...fins and scales going everywhere!

Finally, after a titanic struggle, the small assailant was removed and our team continued on....

Following the reef to the south for a little while proved to be gold as a Red Indian Fish was spotted out on the sand amongst some kelp. A little further on and it was decided to head north and follow the reef back around to the north/northwest and to the eventual exit point.

Buoyed by the news of the successful Longfin Pike sortie, the local fauna was out in force. Normally masters of camouflage, and steeped in the ancient art of guerrilla warfare, numerous Weedy Sea Dragons frolicked brazenly amongst the kelp, between 8 and 12 being spotted; some bearing the scars of previous conflict.

About 15 minutes into the dive, a lone figure loomed out of the darkness; a stealth bullray! Coming in for a closer look, the ray was estimated to be about 1.5-1.8 metres across the disc and 2-2.5 metres tip to tail (the figure of Michael in front of the beast added perspective!).

Battle hardened, the stingray maintained close contact with the group for a number of minutes, unafraid of the terrestrials that swam uninvited through his territory, and yet posed no immediate threat.

As the minutes of precious bottom time ticked past, and the distance to the exit point diminished, various other beasties greeted our team. Spider crabs, Hermit crabs, nudibranchs of various kinds, Octopus, Giant Cuttlefish, Long-snout Boarfish, Port Jackson Sharks, Beardies, Catfish, Goatfish, Crested Morwong, Cardinals, Wandering Anemones....creatures of every kind! Alas, with barely a few breaths left in their tanks, Michael, Kelly, Jason and Adam broke the surface and Bare Island had been conquered!

Cook Islands

By Michael McFadyen

Kelly and I had a week's holiday to the Cook Islands. This consists of about 12 islands located 3000 km north-east of Auckland, NZ. We flew on a new airline, Pacific Blue (an off-shoot of Australian airline Virgin Blue) which only recently started flying to the Pacific from Australia and NZ. It had intro fares for sale back in January so we got fares about 50% of normal cost.

Saturday 18 June

We flew from Sydney at 11:30 am to Christchurch in NZ and after a stop over of about 90 minutes, continued onto Rarotonga, the main island. We arrived there at 12:30 am on Saturday morning, having crossed the International Date Line. We had booked into a self-contained unit which was located on the edge of the capital, Avarua. This had a double bed on the mezzanine level and bathroom, small kitchenette and single bed on the ground floor. It was right on the waterfront with a deck that overlooked the beach. You could not swim here as the beach is coral and the water too shallow and filled with coral. However, it was a nice place to sit and have a few drinks watching the sun set each afternoon.

When we booked in the lady told us that it was party night and the bars would be open till 2 am. Since it was only just after 9 pm our time, we went out and investigated a couple of bars, including one that we would later eat dinner at twice and which had the best location of all

restaurants and bars in the town. Yes, on Friday nights the place really rocks, with the nightclubs full of people.

Saturday 18 June (the second time)

We booked into diving for 12:30 pm since we were arriving so late and once we dragged ourselves out of bed about 10 am, we headed off to explore the town and buy a few supplies. It was less than 10 minutes walk to the centre of town and we checked out the cafes and restaurants for later use. After getting some soft and real drinks and nibblies, we returned to the accommodation to get our dive gear ready.

The dive shop picked us up at 12:30 pm and drove us to the dive shop which was about 1/4 of the way around the island in an anticlockwise direction. A short description of Rarotonga - basically a circular island, about 32 kilometres in circumference, with a road around the outside, a mountainous and jungle interior (over 600 metres high) with no other roads except a road about 500 metres inside the outside one for 75% of the way. There is a fringing coral reef located from 100 to 1000 metres off the shore. There are lots of resorts, large and small, scattered in four main locations, west side, south-east side, south-west corner and north-east corner. Town itself does not have any resorts, just some accommodation like ours. There are also other places like backpackers and similar accommodation to ours around the island.

Anyway, we were soon off diving. The operation we used had 4 RIBs (rubber ducks with fibreglass hulls) and we went off in the smallest one. They took us to the eastern side of the island where we did two dives. Basically, the coral is dead and the fishlife not that great, although we saw two sharks and a couple of turtles.



Each night we ate at a different restaurant/cafe (except one when we doubled up). Every meal was good, with some being very good.

Prices were similar to a similar place in Sydney. They use NZ dollars so it was not too bad.

Sunday 19 June

The Cook Islanders are very religious and the place closes right down on Sundays. Ten years ago when my brother went there, there was nothing at all open on Sundays and you could not even dive. However, it is a little more relaxed, and the businesses owned by Seventh Day Adventists in buildings owned by them are generally open. We did two dives at 7:30 am. All dives were similar, with 80% or more dead coral.



One one dive we saw 12 spotted eagle rays and that was the highlight of the trip. Visibility on every dive was a minimum of 40 metres!

Getting lunch and dinner was hard. At lunch only two places were open. The first one had us seated quickly but 15 mins later we still had not ordered and there were at least two other tables there before us who also had not ordered. We got up and walked out. The other place was very good in terms of food and service. Needless to say, we never went into the first place again.

For dinner, we walked the whole length of town and found not a single place open. We then decided to walk to a resort that we knew would be open (no buses on Sunday after 4 pm and no taxis at night at all unless you pre-book). This was about 3 km out of town. It started to rain and about 1.5 km along we saw a restaurant advertising board on the main road. We walked down a drive and found a fabulous old colonial style house which had been converted into a restaurant. We had a great meal, the most expensive I have ever had I think, but it was worth it. We found out we could walk back along the beach to our place so it was a nice night overall.

Monday to Wednesday

We dived twice each day. On Monday the weather was terrible so we put it off till the afternoon. We got very wet as it poured rain. This day was only about 20C while other days were 24-5C. We saw most of the island from the water while diving.

We were going to take Tuesday off and walk across the island but due to the huge amount of rain from Sunday, we decided to dive.

Thursday 23 June

Last night we hired a tiny car called a Fun Car (everyone hires motorbikes - quite amusing to see 65 year old couples on them). This was a three wheeled car, with training wheels on the single rear wheel. It was powered by a very small (lawn-mower size) engine. We went around the island on Wed night, stopping at a lagoon on the south side for drinks and to watch the sun set. Great. Then went to dinner at a restaurant out of town. Today we decided to drive around the island again. We stopped off at a nice lagoon for a swim, had lunch in a nice cafe and generally investigated the place.



Friday 24 June

Our last day. We decided to walk across the island. We left our place at 9 am and about 11 am reached the high point of the walk. Quite hard going in places, narrow slippery track that gets very steep. Great views back towards town. Here we made a mistake and took the wrong track (there were three to choose from - one we knew was not it). This followed a pipe of some sort and once we had gone 20 mins we knew we were on the wrong track as there had been a lot less people using it. However, it kept going in the right direction, following a ridge to the west of where we should have been. However, after

about an hour it started going up a very steep hill and we had seen a track a minute or two earlier heading towards the correct track. We went back and down this one and 10 minutes later came across the main track (it was much wider). From here there were many creek crossings as we were following the creek and many tracks seemed to branch off and come back again. Finally, after about 4 hours we ended up at the waterfall and carpark that we had visited the day before when scouting out the track. I had a very refreshing swim in the pool under the waterfall. We walked the rest of the way to the main road and caught the bus back. A nice day despite getting lost for a while.

We went to an island night where they had some good dancing and singing. Soon after the show finished, we had to go back and prepare to leave. Our taxi arrived on time and took us to the airport. We booked in and since we had lots of time to kill, walked to the RSA Club (returned servicemen's) across the road and had a few drinks.

The plane arrived and at 1:30 am it took off with us on board.

Sunday 26 June

Crossing back over the IDL we arrived in Christchurch at 4 am and then onto Sydney where we landed at 7 am. Good to be back home.

Summary

A very nice place, but not for diving. Relaxed but with some sophistication and excellent facilities. Recommended.

FOR SALE

Michael McFadyen has three torches available for sale. The first one is his Ocean Graphics torch. This torch has a tank mounted battery pack with remote head. The batteries are gels providing 9 amp hour giving a run time of 90 minutes for a 50 watt globe. The torch comes with charger and tank mounting bag. The batteries are less than a year old. This torch provides fantastic lighting, with different downlight globes able to be used giving wide or narrow beam. Cost is \$250.



The second torch is his Aquasea video light. This is a hand-held rechargeable torch which has NiCad batteries giving about one hour for a 50 watt globe and 30 minutes for 100 watt. It is excellent for video work (which is what he purchased it for). It comes with recharger and some spare globes. Cost is \$200.



The third torch is identical to the Aquasea but is non-operational. It would make an excellent starting point for a home made torch, with new batteries and wiring needed to put it in running order (think about NiMH batteries in it!). It comes with all parts, but the batteries are probably dead (having flooded) and the switch also damaged. Cost is \$50.

Contact Michael on 9558-8181 [h] if you are interested in helping Michael get a new wetsuit!

COMMITTEE			
The committee of the Club for 2004 - 5 is:			
PRESIDENT:	Steve Shaw -	9868 4056	srcshaw@au1.ibm.com
VICE PRESIDENT:	Phil Rose -	9543 0748	pvrose5@bigpond.net.au
SECRETARY:	Carol Mapstone -	9531 1467	cmartin@nsccahs.health.nsw.gov.au
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Russell Stoker -	0412 963 527	rstoker@optusnet.com.au

INFO OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Many members are still enjoying “*Le Scat*” boat dives on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, with Wednesday being the most popular by far. Don’t forget that to book a boat dive aboard “*Le Scat*” it is only a matter of contacting Les by phone on 9520 9421 for Wednesday or Saturday dives or Michael by phone on 9558 8181 for Sunday dives. (Of course St.George Scuba Club members take preference.)

The July meeting raffle of a set of dive slates was won by Jason Coombs.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 17th August 2005 at the St. George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street Wolli Creek at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

NEWSLETTER

Please send items for the Newsletter to me by the 28th of the month rstoker@optusnet.com.au. Please note that if you want to send any digital photographs for the newsletter, they be resized to about 150 dpi and a size of about 75 mm wide or high. Change them to black and white and save as a jpg file. This will make the file much smaller and quicker for you to e-mail but still good enough to print.