



Sea Braggin'

St George scuba club newsletter Jan 2015

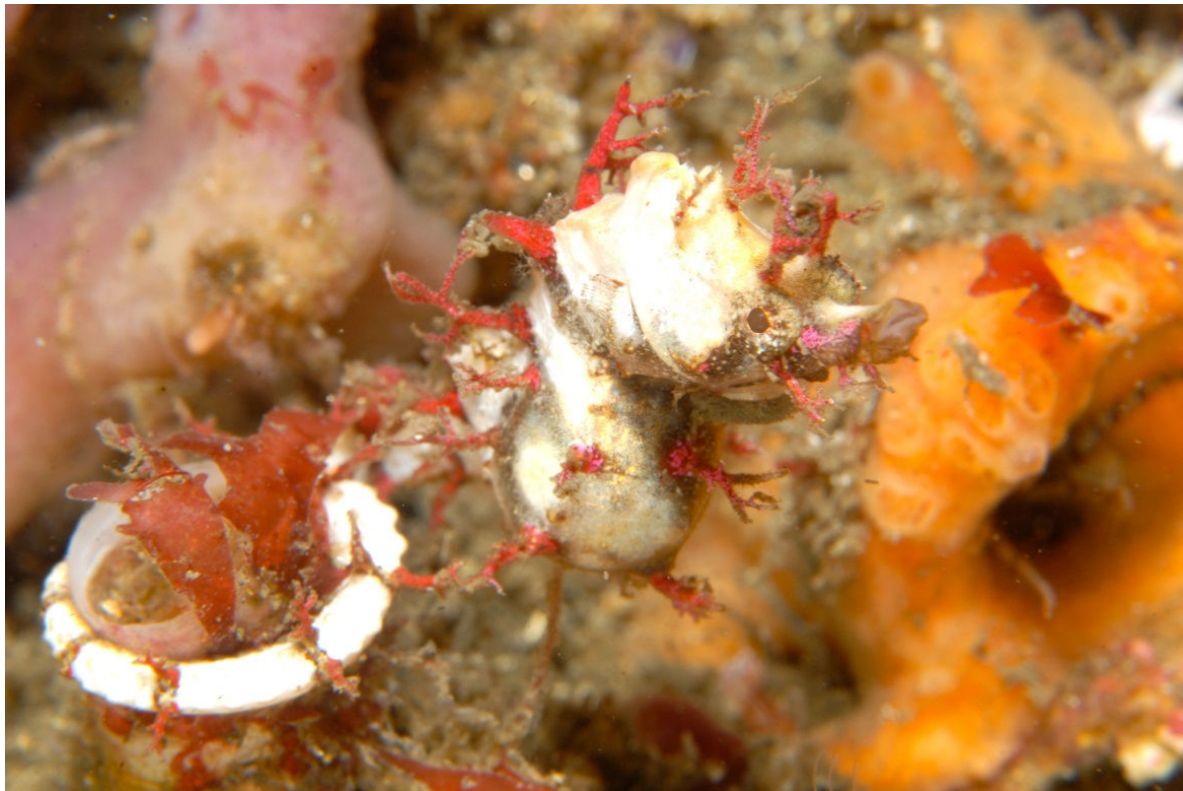


Photo of Pygmy Pipe Horse by Mike Scotland

A big thankyou to members for sending in articles and or photos:

Peter Flockhart, Ron Walsh, Bill Rowland, Shelley Breuseker, Wayne Heming, Mike Scotland, Jason Coombs, Kim Dinh.

Diving in February

Sat 21 st Feb	Anniversary Dinner	Ida Di camillo
When	Event	Contact
Sun 31st Jan	Night dive Barrens Hut	John Beddie
Sat 7 th Feb	Carol Martin Memorial dive	Kelly Mcfadyen
Sun 8 th Feb	The Leap	Paul Pacey
Sat 14 th Feb	Wanderers Deep dive	Caroline Corcoran
18 thFeb	Club Meeting	Natasha Naude
Sat and Sun 28 to 1 March	Shell Harbour	John Beddie
Weekly	Shore dives	See calendar
Thursday nights	Night dives	Michael McFadyen
Sat 21 st Feb	boat dive Botany Bay	Shelley Breuseker

Note: lots of other diving happening. Please look up dive calendar.

CHRISTMAS DIVES PETER FLOCKART



pics by Peter Flockart

Wednesday 24th - The Leap

Mike Scotland & I together with Tong plus some of friends did this dive. We were all very warm after walking down the steps & after successfully leaping into the water swam out wide before descending thru cleanish water to the bottom at 22m.

Here the temp dropped to 15 degrees, meaning you had to swim briskly to stop freezing up. Vis on the bottom was around 15m. Life along the wall was good including 3-4 weedy sea dragons, 1 sea horse & plenty of nudibranchs – blue dragons, & sweet ceratosoma as well the usual fish life.

The exit was a bit surgy but we all managed to get out without any damage. One of Tong's friend had a huge camera setup but in spite of this he was able to get out without too much trouble.



photos by Peter Flockart

Thursday 25th - Bare Island

Had a great Xmas morning dive at Bare Island with three other St George Scuba Club members- Mike Scotland, Michael Roelens, Martin Mattingly plus two of Tongs' friends. The seas were flat on an incoming 2m tide. We went from the back of the island along the deep wall & back to the exit point under the bridge. 20 degrees on top & 18 on the bottom. A change from yesterday when it was 14 on the bottom. 8 - 10m vis on bottom but only 3- 5 in shallows which caused the group to get separated into 3 so we straggled out at the exit point. All had a good hour long dive. Afterwards drinks & Xmas mince pies in the warm sun.



photo of Michael Roelens by Mike Scotland

Sunday 28th - Magic Point Double boat dive on Sea John

Sloppy NE swell meant gearing up was a bit difficult. Eventually sorted out, we rolled into the water. Surface temp was 21 degrees. As the boat was securely anchored we all dived together- John Beddie, Peter F, Michael Roelens & Mike Scotland. We proceed to the cave. Water temp had dropped to 20.4 degrees. On the way Mike S had John pose for a couple of shots with the wobbies all the time trying to get him to go closer much to John's consternation? With the wobby getting a bit restless by raising up on his fins they decided that they had enough photos. In the cave there was about 10 large GNS who quite happy to circle while the divers watched. When other divers from the URG boat arrived they got a bit tense & a few swam out past the divers. On the return swim to our anchor Mike S said he saw a juvenile GNS about 1m in length. After a surface interval in Little Bay we headed back to Botany Bay to do a drift dive off the front of Bare Is.



photo of male Weedy Sea Dragon by Mike Scotland

Sunday 28th - Bare Island – Wide – drift Dive.

John stayed on the boat while the rest of us rolled in & descended to large boulders at 15m before swimming south to the sand line & turning west. Depth here at mid tide was 19m with a water temp of 19.3 degrees. Lots of sponge life along this stretch of reef, covering nearly every known sponge species. Also a large number of nudibranchs – all the usual suspects. Several pairs of small cuttlefish also seen & blinded with strobes from MS shooting WA and myself shooting macro. The highlight of the dive was MS finding a Verco tambja on the blue Bryozoan. (photo of this nudi and me taking a shot of it appeared in last month's mag) A very pretty dive that is a must do. On completion of the dive I launched my SMB & awaited collection by John Beddie. The others stayed longer, John cautiously circled until we sighted them on the surface & got them back on board.

Tuesday 30th - The Leap.

This was a late afternoon dive to finish off the year for me. At 3.30pm 8 of us entered the water – Eddie Ivers, Paul Pacey, Mathias W, Bob Hill, John Prior, myself & Gary Dunnett. We moved out over the kelp beds in water that was very green with vis of about 3m. As we dropped to the sand line at 16m the water temp dropped to 19 degrees & the vis opened out to around 12m. We swam east along the sand line occasionally moving higher up the boulders in search of interesting life. Lots of nudibranchs seen blue dragons, marginata, bennetti, marigold, sweet ceratosoma & tasmensis. Also several small stingarees as well as one weedy seadragon that eggs on the tail. As the tide was going out exit was a bit tricky with several divers being rolled on the rocks on exiting, including your's truly.



photo of Ian and Michelle By Mike Scotland

Saturday 3rd - By-Pass Reef Double boat dive.

Slight NE swell & a bit of current meant it was a pull down the line with the camera. Anchor secured, we swam north for a way before turning back as the camera was difficult to handle in the current. After pottering around & not finding much to photograph both Ahmad & I decided to ascend just as Mike S & John Beddie came down. They said they found about 10 PJ's south of the anchor but were quite skittish to photograph. Current made deco difficult but was ok. On surfacing we noticed how hot it was & were glad to be at sea rather than on the land.

Dive 2 was M&K Reef

We anchored a bit further north than usual as Wayne Heming was in the area we normally anchor. Ahmad reeled out from the anchor until we located the shelf & from here we swam south picking up the area we normally dive. At one point I had a small cuttlefish following me – think he liked the camera. Also sighted was a resting swimming sea Anenome attached to the wall of a gutter. Again we saw lots of nudibranchs – blue dragons, bennetti, Marginata, tasmensis & a sweet ceratosoma. Mike Scotland found & photographed 2 weedy sea dragons which he later determined to be a male & a female.

Bottom time here was 50 mins. Back at the anchor we ascended to deco before running back to the ramp in Botany Bay.



photo by Mike Scotland

Night Dive Jan 8 by Ron Walsh

The club night dive for 8 January and the second for the year was organised by Michael McFadyen and was planned for Bare Island meeting at 7:30pm.

The night was lovely and warm with a strong North wind and calm waters. I arrived at around 7:20 to find very limited parking – there were at least 3 groups having wedding photos taken in and around Bare Island and also lots of sightseers due to the warm evening.

There were 10 divers in attendance – Michael M, Gary D, Mike S, Mark S, Martin M, Michael R and a friend, two new members Tom & Liz and me. The dive plan was to enter the water from the back right of the island, swim out to the deep wall then work our way back to the exit point at the small boat ramp cutting. The deep wall has a maximum depth of around 18m and has lovely sponge gardens fronting onto sand. The wall itself has a small cave, which in winter can fill with port Jackson sharks.

For this dive I decided to experiment and take my 10-17mm fisheye lens for the dive. I have only ever used my 60mm macro lens on night dives as all the lighting has to be artificial (i.e. produced by the strobes) so I was not sure what the effect would be.



photo by Ron Walsh



photo by Ron Walsh

When we entered the water the dive was not looking too promising as although the water was nice and warm visibility was less than 2m. It was difficult to stay together as a group as we made our way to the deep wall and I think we separated into a couple of groups – it was difficult to see fins and torches from the diver just in front of you. However when we

reached the deep wall the visibility opened up to around 7m although the water temperature dropped from 21C to around 18.5C! And we all made it!

We explored a couple of the sponge covered bommies where we found 2 dwarf lionfish – whether a mating pair I could not determine – before we turned NW to follow the reef line. Along this section of the reef for at least the last 6 months has been a resident colony of 3 sea horses but tonight we were only able to find one.

Further on there was a solitary RedIndian fish before we veered up the sand gutter heading to the shallower reefs. Near the large concrete block Michael found 2 more RedIndian fish, one of which was semi free swimming, and I found a mosaic leatherjacket trying to hide against a red fan sponge.

As we gradually got shallower the visibility lessened but the good part was the water got warmer. Other critters sighted included a large octopus, blue morwong, green moray, schools of mado, red morwong, lots of leatherjackets and red scorpion fish, various nudibranchs including a red lined flabellina, and a large porcupine fish.



Red Indian fish photo by Ron Walsh

We all made it back to the exit point after roughly an hour dive. After drying off and packing away the dive gear we headed to Maroubra Junction for pizza (which we pre order as we leave Bare Island).

I was really happy with the way the wide-angle lens went on the night dive. Lighting was not an issue – because it is such a wide-angle lens you have to get really close to the subjects so the strobes give more than enough light. In fact I had to turn the power of the strobes down a bit. It is advisable to have a focus light on the camera for focusing purposes though.



Mosaic Lj by Ron Walsh

TUGGERAH DEEP DIVE

Club Dive 4th January SS Tuggerah.Text PeterFlockart

This event was the first deep dive for the year & the weather during the week augured well for Sunday. Those of us who dived Saturday reported a hot day with a slight NE swell and warm water.

Sunday arrived & the 2 boats who were available for this dive arrived at the RMYC promptly at 7am to be met by eager crews ready to load gear for the run south to the Tuggerah. We decided to this wreck in preference to the Undola due to a strong NE wind warning for later in the morning. As the Undola is further south it was felt to be a more prudent choice.

The boats & crews consisted of the following members: DownUnder skippered by Dave Casburn: Jo Edney, Corey O'Keefe & Ian Roffey.

Argonaut skippered by Phil Short: Peter F, Aaron Malouf & Mike Scotland.

Once loaded & launched we set off. Past Jibbon Headland we were able to increase speed to a pleasant 20 knots over an almost flat sea, broken only by a slight NE swell.

Arriving at the dive site we were able to pick into the wreck on the first go, always a good thing. Lines were set & DownUnder was moored to the stern of Argonaut. It was now that we noticed a slight current on the surface but all thought it was diveable. I geared up first since I was diving with twins & rolled in at 8.31am, followed about 3 min later by Aaron. Water temp was noticed to be 21.5 degrees at this point. Descent was slow due to the current that eventually dropped at 35m. However the vis dropped from 10m on the surface to almost zero at 40m just above the wreck. This was rectified by turning on torches.



photo of Phil Short by Mike Scotland

With the anchor located – 43m - and holding we set off towards the bow. Bottom temp was cold at 14.8 degrees but with great vis – 12-15m. We swam along midships to the bow area before swimming back one on the port the other to starboard. Fish seen – Red morwong & schools of sea pike as well as some bulls' eyes. We noticed 15 baler shell egg towers on the inside of the wreck & 5 balers laying eggs. This is late for them as they usually lay Nov/Dec but I think the water temp is screwing them up. Mike Scotland reported that on the hull plate to starboard where the ribs are more prominent he had counted almost 100 shells laying egg towers. No eels or cuttlefish were sighted.

Also seen was a small yellow seahorse on the boiler & a 1m high stand of black coral – confirmed with Mike Scotland – on the grab bucket near the stern. On 15mins we were back at the anchor ready to ascend when Aaron motioned to me that his computer had “died”. I showed him my display & he was able to work out required deco + extra time.

On reaching the 20m we noticed the current had increased making deco rather unpleasant. While on the bottom we saw Jo & Corey come down & do their dive. Dave C decided not to dive as the amount of gear he has to carry with the rebreather made it difficult for him to swim against the current. Ian Roffey didn't dive as he had a swollen wrist & was acting as "boat boy".

During our deco Jo & Corey ascended to deco then returned to Downunder to complete deco on Dave's drop line. During the same period Phil & Mike had rolled in & swum past us for their dive. After completing deco I hauled myself aboard Argonaut & awaited the surfacing of the others. First came Aaron about 8 mins after me then Phil & Mike after around 30mins. Phil said getting the anchor out from the back of the boiler had been a struggle due to the current but in the end he had succeeded & we floated free awaiting their arrival at the surface.

With all the lines in, both boats & crew returned to the Jibbon beach area against an increasing NE wind & swell for a much deserved morning tea & post dive chat. After 30mins we returned to the ramp to put the boats back on their trailers & remove equipment. It was then time to leave & go home to wash everything - ready for the time. Thanks to Dave Casburn & Phil Short for making their boats available for the dive.

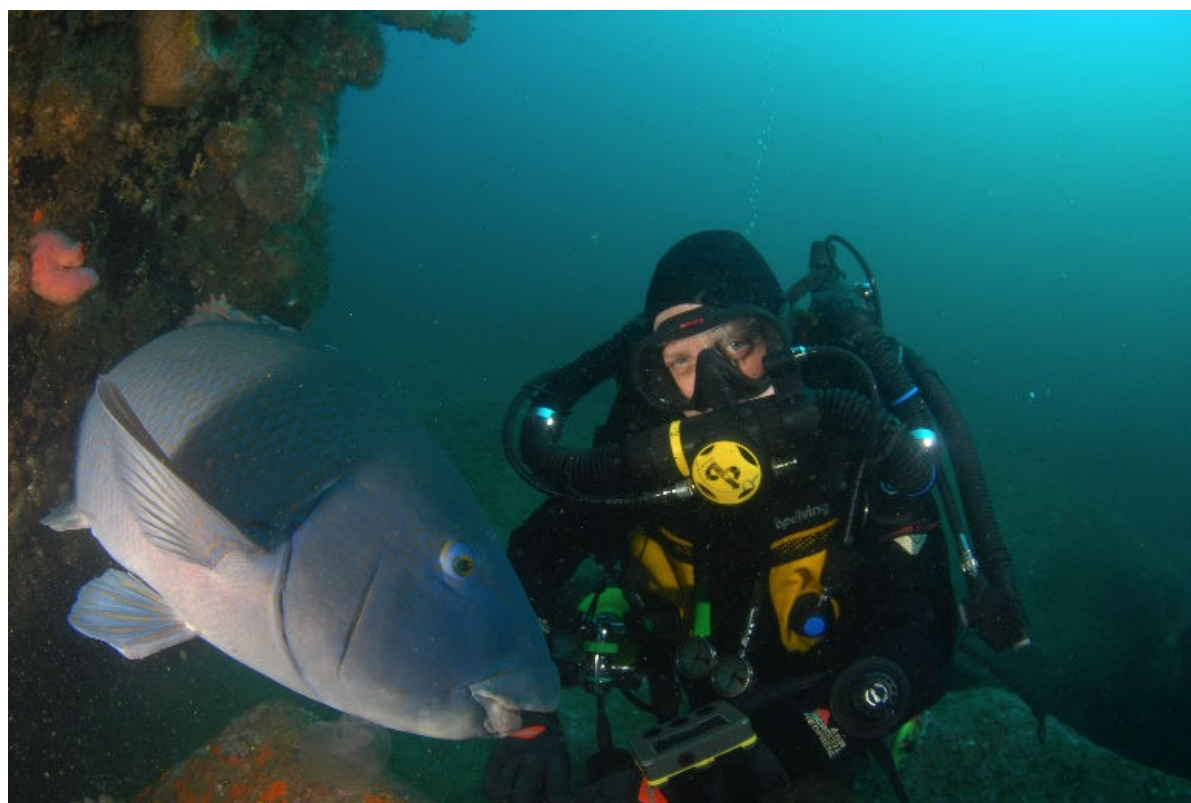


photo of Jane Scarsbrook at Barren's Hut with Phil Short's boat Argonaut by Mike S Jan 6.

CLUB DIVE ON 20TH DECEMBER 2014

Postcard 1 -South Bali :Sanur

5 days diving with "Joe's gone diving" in Sanur.

Day 1 : Dive 1 : Manta Point in Nusa Penida (one hour boat ride from Sanur)- No Mantas ! Nuff said.

Several sites were tried and skipped, for the 2nd dive, due to conditions. They settled on "S.D." on the North of the island. Warnings were given about the potential for strong currents, but it wasn't until the Captain threw in an Angel line, which unfurled instantly in the current, and he said "ooohhhh", that it really got my attention.

It was a hell of a ride!

The 9 minute rocket ride ended when we aborted and surfaced. The cross (and down) currents became a concern, but until then it was a blast. The other group tried to surface and got up to 3-5 metres before being dragged back down to 20m+ : twice. The dive leader surfaced with 1 diver hanging off each arm, and the 3rd clinging to her tank valve! The depth profile on her computer was a perfect double sawtooth.

The next two days diving were at Padang Bay, about 45 mins car ride North of Sanur. Very enjoyable dives, especially at drifting into Blue Lagoon.

The first dive, at Japoon, had the added shock of running into a submarine. About the size of a minibus, this underwater vessel called "Odyssey" is the modern equivalent of a glass bottomed boat, and it succeeded in giving me a good scare - The guide pointed for me to turn around and I was expecting to look at a fish, not a motorized white whale.

We went back to Nusa Penida for 2 more days : one on the north (with no current) for two nice wall drift dives, and the 2nd day back to Manta Point where 4 mantas came to visit. Very nice - especially Crystal Bay for the 2nd dive.

I would recommend Joe's Gone Diving. They had good boats going to Nusa Penida. The dive guides are nearly all Instructors and were very good spotters. The Beef Rendang served for lunch at the shop afterwards was first class too!

In addition, it was nice to walk off the boat empty handed, and not see your gear again until the next day on the bus when they had washed it, dried it and picked you up the next day, with the bag in the bus.

Hard as this may be for some of you to believe, Jasmine was a tiny bit cheeky with one of the dive guides. Later that day, as we were disembarking the boat, I managed to fall out into the water - wearing shirt / sunnies / hat / the lot. The guide asked at lunch why I did a Backward Roll at the shore, to which I replied it was an accident. His immediate response was that it was Karma in response to him being teased earlier in the day. Jas reckons it's a pretty good deal that she can be mischievous and I get the punishment....

Postcard 2 - Tulumben

We cut our planned Sanur stay short by 3 days, based on the feedback (and great photos!) from St George members, and were very pleased we did. Villa Alba was great with a dive setup that wanted for nothing (ok, maybe a few less pebbles on the beach, perhaps) and fantastic service from all. They seemed extremely well setup for rebreathers too, with two separate courses going on (one Revo and one JJ) while we were there.

The main dive sites were covered, with The Liberty, the Dropoff, and Kubu reef being our favourites. Our guide (Kadek) was a fantastic spotter of little critters, but a hopeless explainer of the names of anything we saw! The Porters, carrying our already set up tanks, from the car to the water were awesome (I wonder if we can get some for Shiprock, or The Steps?) but they all hated my rig with its Stainless steel back plate. They would rather carry two 'normal' BCDs and tanks on their head, compared to mine... A couple of words from Kadek (perhaps involving an extra 10c worth of danger money) and the Industrial Dispute was resolved...

We will definitely be back to Villa Alba !



photo Bill Rowland

Postcard 3 - Sightseeing

Jasmine, a Bali veteran, was keen on some sightseeing activities too and I'm pleased she did. The Balinese are a beautiful folk, and far more spiritual than I had thought (and have adapted Hinduism to their local variant). We were there around the time of the Galangun and Kuningan festivities, and it was good to visit several temples and performances to better understand the people and their spirituality.

The food was a high point too!

Postage Stamp - Notwithstanding the many breathtaking sights on the roads, not a single accident was observed. The Gods must indeed be watching out. I think the only thing scarier than a new Australian driver in Bali, would be a new Balinese driver in Australia !

CLUB BOAT DIVE TO MIDDLE GROUND 10/01/2015

By Shelley Breuseker

The weather forecast was for a 2 metre swell and an 18 knot wind, however the boat owners conferred and decided the weather forecasters didn't know what they were talking about and decided to go ahead with the dive anyway.

Greg and I took our Kwells early, expecting a bumpy ride. As it turned out, everyone was delighted to see glassy seas, albeit on a good sized swell.

Anchoring at Middle Ground were 4 boats with 17 divers, with another two boats going out of Botany Bay, although we later heard one of them had to cancel due to car trouble.



photo by Shelley Breuseker

I hit the water first on our boat and noted that it felt cold, but it was a very muggy and hot day so I was not surprised. Greg joined me and we descended through clear blue water, then a layer of comb jellies, opening out to 15 metres on the bottom.

Our anchor had just caught the edge of a rock, so we made it more secure before heading off to see what we could find to video. There wasn't as much fish life as we usually see at this sight, but we did bump into a Dick Fish, which is quite rare these days.

There were Red Morwongs hanging around in the water column rather than on the bottom, a Blue Groper munching away at the rock, a couple of Blue Morwongs swam past,

Greg found an Eastern Blue Devil out in the open and he found a Baler Shell laying an egg casing. I'd always wondered what those white structures were!

Peter found a Pygmy Pipe Horse and a Black-Tipped Okenia and Michael saw a Wobbegong.

There was only slightly more breeze when we surfaced and when our B team (Breather) returned to the boat we headed in to Jibbon Beach for the usual morning tea.

Thanks to Peter Flockart for organising and the boat owners for taking us on board.



photo by Shelley Breuseker

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

- 1) Lizzy Lowe
- 2) Thomas Gutzler
- 3) Allyson Groth
- 4) Helen Vincent

A special welcome to our dive club and to all other new members who have joined recently.

MEMBERS MILESTONES

As you can imagine, St George Scuba club has a combined diving experience of over one thousand years. WOW!

Here are some individual milestones for some members.

PETER FLOCKHART

Passed	2500 hours
Passed	2016 hours equivalent to 12 weeks in underwater time
Passed	in Dec 2014 – I have been diving for 40 years.

Bram Harris Bram did his 500 dive on the Great Barrier Reef in Nov.

ROXANNE FEA Rox did her 1,000th dive at her favourite Sydney location Bare Island on 9th February 2014. The photo below is Roxanne straight after her dive.



KIM DINH As of 11-11-2014, I logged 1111 dives which became 1112 in the afternoon!!!. Also logged 500 dives at Bare island in Dec 2014.



photo by Kim Dinh

WAYNE HEMING did his 1000 th dive on the Tuggerah in Oct. Great way to make this Milestone, Wayne.



MIKE SCOTLAND I did 319 dives in 2014 and 1000 dives since retiring less than four years ago. Should hit 5,000 before winter this year. Amazing what you can do when not working!

Anyone else who has achieved a significant milestone, please share.

I am organising another Great Barrier Reef Trip this year. The dates are Nov 8 to Nov 14. I will organise bookings in a few months. I have 11 expressions of interest already.

What your editor has been up to.

I have a story in Depth Magazine www.depthmagazine.net on diving in Fiji on board the Fiji Siren. It is an e- magazine. You have to log on and register then download and read for free. It is 15 pages long.

There are also five other articles in the archives of Depth magazine on Palau, PNG and Fiji.

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GUIDELINES FOR SENDING IN ARTICLES AND PHOTOS

Please send photographs as separate jpg files, (not png) rather than inserted into the article.

Convert them to about 120 to 200 kB.

Please rename with your name them from something complex such as 1U9826P301Y2A7fgphotosB987U6544M1%#6^\$@ to something simple like "marysseaslug.jpg".

This will save me a lot of time, reformatting files, finding your photos and resizing photos etc.

Please run the spell check over your article.

Thanks.

Editor.