



Sea Braggin'

St George scuba club newsletter July 2015



Photo of Pygmy Pipe Horse by Mike Scotland

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

Michael Roelans, Ron Walsh, Michael McFadyen, Mike Scotland (Editor).

Diving in August

| Date | Event | Contact |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 15 th Aug | boat dives | Shelley Breuseker |
| 19 th Aug | Club Meeting | Natasha Naude |
| 22 – 23rd Aug | Deep dive | Gary Perkins |
| Sept | Satara Deep Dive | Jane Scarsbrook |
| Thursdays | night diving | Ron Walsh |

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

If you are organising a trip, can you either do a short trip report or delegate someone to do one for the club newsletter?

Note: If you want to post a dive, the official channel for communication is by email. Most people send both an email and a Facebook notification. (Please remember that some people do not use Facebook.)

DIVING IN SOUTH AND WEST AUSTRALIA

BY MICHAEL ROELEN

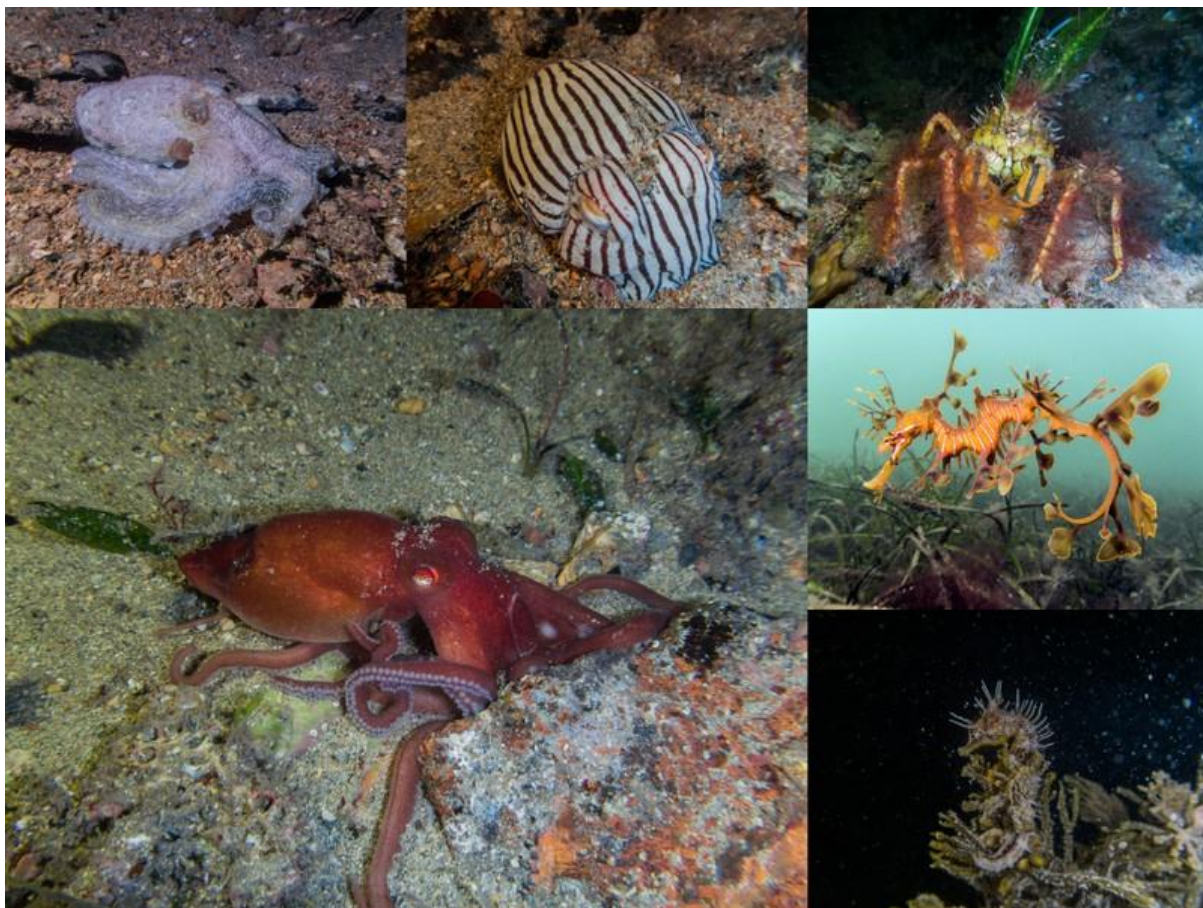
Please see the separate attachment. It is a PDF file which I cannot edit from Word so I am sending the newsletter in two parts. The newsletter plus Michael Roelens's article on his trip.



Ewens Ponds photos by Michael Roelens



Leafy Sea Dragons (LSD) photos by Michael Roelens



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ROELENS



CLUB DIVE – SHIPROCK 18 JULY 2015

text and photos by Ron Walsh

Friday was rainy, windy and cold. There were snow falls down to 600m in the Blue Mountains and the Great Western Highway was closed around the Mt Victoria/Lithgow region. The bureau had “large and powerful” surf conditions in its vocabulary however the forecast for Saturday was for clearer conditions. At worst we could sit around drink coffee and tell tall stories.



Saturday dawned nice and sunny at Bangor and there was little wind. There was a cloudbank to the east and the temperature wasn't too bad though still quite cold.

By the time I arrived at Shiprock, the sun had been replaced with cloud from the cloudbank and a southerly wind had sprung up. Water conditions however looked not too bad, so the dive was on. Entry time was planned for around 9:50am.

There were 7 divers in attendance – Nancy S, Kim D, Ken R, Gary D, Glen F, John P and me. Water temp was around 14.5C (quite chilly) and visibility in the 5-8m range – typical Shiprock.



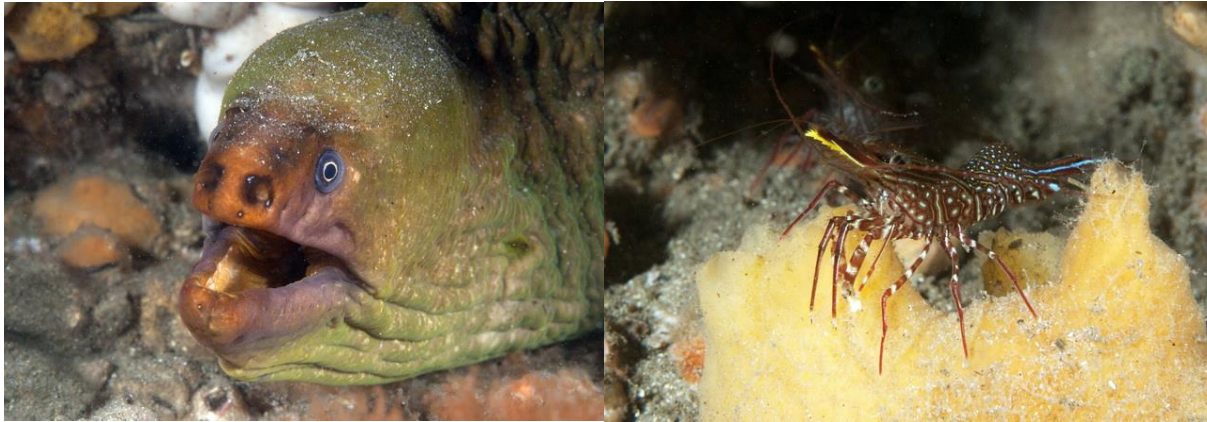
After entry we swam down the sand slope and dropped down over the wall before exploring along the bommies. We found all the usual critters – fortesques on the sand, fan belly and yellow finned leatherjackets hanging around the bommies, sea tulips, carijou coral and on the big bommie, horned blennies and 2 green morays. After cleaning the small algal growth off the plaque we headed over to the wall to find the pineapple fish – only 4 this time. Kim advised after the dive that there was a big wobblygong in the pineapple fish cave so this may have spooked them.

We explored further along to the last bommie with Nancy finding a nice made-up phyllodesmium (opera house nudibranch) before we turned and drifted back along the wall with the current. In the higher caves were stripeys (yellow and black striped fish), cuttlefish, red morwong, red scorpionfish, mados, eastern frogfish and in one spot several hinge beaked shrimp.



All photos photos by Ron Walsh

By the time we got back to the exit point Nancy was starting to really feel the cold so we exited after nearly an hour dive to find the sun had come out and the weather warmed up (relatively speaking).



Photos by Ron Walsh

After a hot shower rinse and changing into nice warm clothes we all headed up to D'Lish at Lilli Pilli where we were joined by several non-divers – Peter F, Dave C and Keith W - for coffee and lunch in the sunshine.

A very pleasant way to spend a Saturday morning.

Ron

Catlypso's Adventures (part 1) by Michael McFadyen

As most members will know, last year Kelly and I purchased a Lightwave 38 sailing catamaran. It is 11.3 metres long (38 feet) and 6.6 metres wide. After almost a year of preparation, repairing things, adding things and just getting things to work like they should, Kelly, Veto (our dong) and I headed off north from Port Hacking on 4 May.

Our first leg was a series of day sails up the NSW coast. We had reasonably good weather and stopped overnight in Broken Bay, Port Stephens and Camden Haven. The next stop was Port Macquarie, where we met up with Phil Short.

Late last year, Phil helped his mate, Mick Stewart, sail Mick's catamaran from Sydney to Queensland. However, things did not go to plan and they were hit by lightning south of Camden Haven. Mick has been in Port Macquarie since getting all his electrics and electronics replaced as well as engines repaired.



Mick and Phil are going to sail with us to the Gold Coast. We arrive and moor up at the free berth at the marina that Mick has arranged. Later, they come over for sundowners (drinks and nibblies) and join our Port Macquarie members Ian and Sharon Gowan.

The next morning, we head off and have a bit of a scare as we cross the Hastings River and the waves really stand up once we are out. We crash over but Mick and Phil have a wave break on them. No damage however. We sail to Yamba and the next day to Ballina. In Ballina, Jo Edney and Graeme Lehman come and visit us for sundowners (they are up here house hunting) and later Shaun, Sharon and Ryan Reynolds come down as well. We end up getting pizza and have a nice evening with other members of the club.

The next morning we sail to the Gold Coast and anchor in Bums Bay which is just to the north of Sea World. We stay here a few days as Kelly's Mum lives here. Mick and Phil depart the next day for Moreton Bay and the Brisbane area.

After a few days, we head north again, this time going up between North and South Stradbroke Islands and the mainland. The weather has not been great and we have to stop at a place called Russell Island for a few nights and then again at Tangalooma. We then sail to Mooloolaba, where we met up with some other ex-Sydney friends.

After some victualling, we head north again. Ahead is Fraser Island and the most notorious river bar in Australia, Wide Bay Bar. This has claimed dozens of boats over the years as it is very long and involved a left hand turn after the first section. The best time to cross is high tide so we stop the night before at an open road anchorage (that is one that is open to the sea) at Double Island Point. This will let us head off at a reasonable time in the morning to get to the bar right on high tide.

We get there at the right time, but as we approach the first of the waypoints you need to follow to get into the bar, our chart plotter freezes. There is no way to enter without this working, so Kelly quickly has to turn off the power to the GPS and then back on again. We hang around waiting for it to get going again and then follow the track into the river.



Luckily the seas are very calm and we have a great crossing. The next day we motor up the Great Sandy Strait which is the waterway between Fraser Island and the mainland. The weather has deteriorated and we end up having to stay for three nights at one spot (it was very nice) and another off a resort (also nice). We then head for Hervey Bay where we do a bit more food and fuel shopping.

From here, we head to Bundaberg where we anchor in the Burnett River near the entrance. The next morning we sail 55 nautical miles (over 100 kilometres) to Lady Musgrave Island. This is out on the Great Barrier Reef and is a real coral atoll and island. We anchor in the lagoon and stay here for the next four nights.

During this time, we do four dives each. Two are inside the lagoon and are nice, but not great. The others are a drift dive from outside the lagoon in through the entrance. This is spectacular, with lots of very large fish, turtles, eagle rays and more. The last dive is one outside the lagoon and is also excellent. We see eagle rays, turtles, huge gropers and a shark we have never seen before, I still have not worked it out.



After four nights, we have to leave as the forecast is for winds over 25 knots and this is not the place to be for that. We sail back to the mainland and anchor off the town of 1770.

Continued next month.

For more details of our trip, go to http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=908.

Scapa Flow

Text and photos by Mike Scotland

Scapa Flow is a ships graveyard from WW1. These are some WW 2 wrecks and some civilian wrecks here as well.



photos of superstructure of Kron Prinz Willhelm

I managed to get a spot on a day boat for two days at fifty pounds a day for two dives. The boat had a compressor on board and the air fill for dive two was included as part of the package. The going price is between forty and fifty pounds around the country.

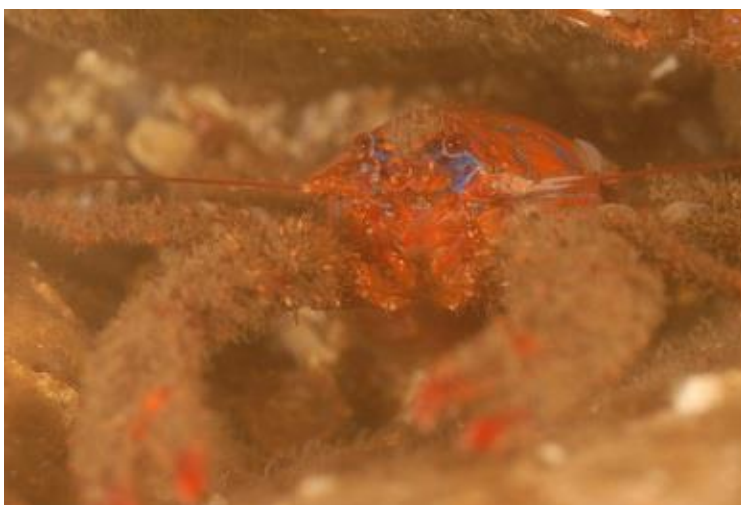
My first dive here was the Kron Prinz Willhelm. Like many wrecks here, it is massive at about 150 m. This one is lying upside down in 36 metres. It has lots of big guns, which you can see. The trick here is to go down to 36 m and you can see some of the super structure when you look up under the wreck. As it was my first dive, I decided to be conservative and remain above 31.5 metres with an average depth of twenty metres.

Diving over here is different to diving in OZ. Dive boats consider themselves as transport only. They do not get involved with the diving. Most divers dive as part of a club and frequently charter whole boats. What this means is that they look after themselves. What I did notice is that the system over here is much more heavily geared toward skills and practice and safety. (No two day dive courses) Divers here are very well trained and very self-reliant. They all seem to have a minimum of one redundant air supply and other emergency back-up features. Many have two. Typical divers here seem to have twins, a nitrox sling tank and /or an oxygen cylinder or 50% NO2 deco tank.



This is a male Cuckoo Wrasse on the WW2 wreck known as the F2.

The other thing I noticed is that no one here has a Dry Suit that leaks. Every single diver I have dived with in Sydney has had problems with their leaky suits. My brand new 'Hot N Dry' drysuit leaks like a sieve. I paid \$1600 for a real lemon. When I get home, I am going to try to get a refund. (Any helpful suggestions would be welcome. No flippant comments, please!) I have had it pressure tested here and the local manufacturer identified two major leaks in the zipper. He said no one here in the UK uses flimsy suits like these with lightweight zips, especially ones that have been installed badly. They have neoprene dive boots built in. Latex booties are only used for kayaking and are replaced every year. They are built to a much higher standard over here made so that they do not have problems for the first 5 to 7 years. I wish someone in the know had given me the right advice before I bought my Wet N Cold suit.



Squat Lobster from St Abbs

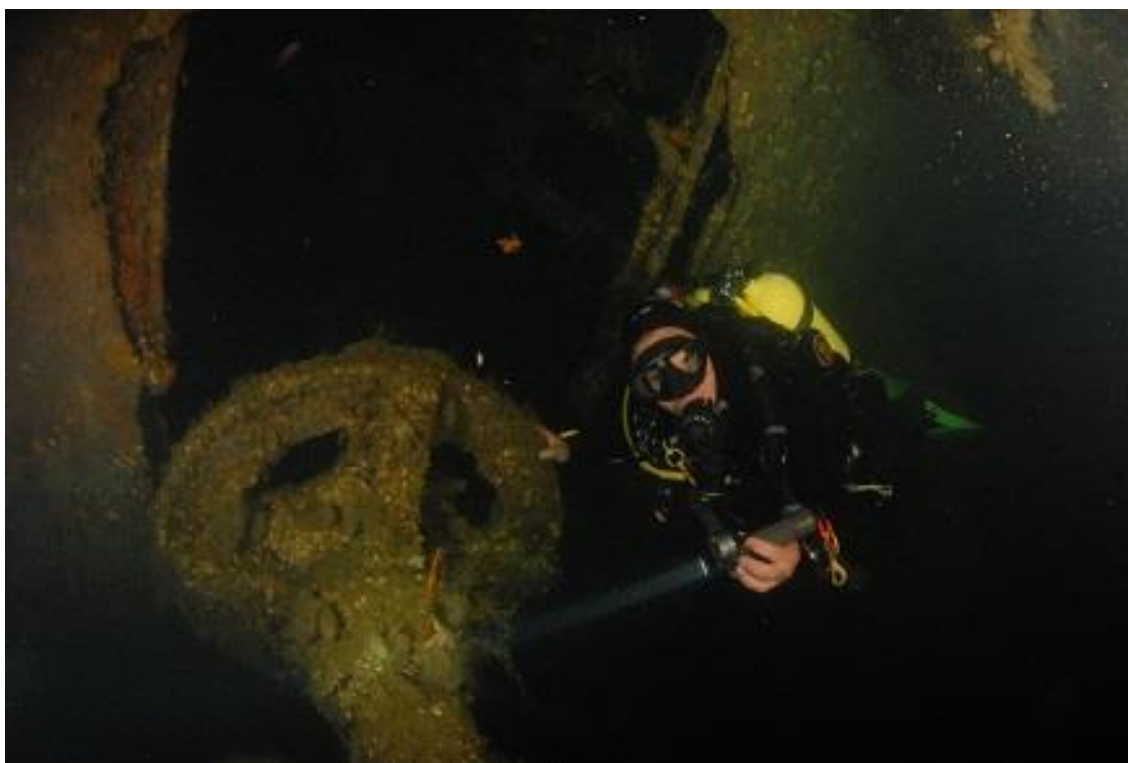
It can be difficult in some places as a single diver. Dive boats try to sell whole boat charters. The silence was deafening when I asked for a dive buddy. I dived on my own mostly. Even the deckhand does not check your gear before your entry. Naturally in the long run, I prefer to dive without a buddy but here in 12 degree water in a new environment, I would have preferred one, at least for the first dive. However, when you are part of a group, they do adhere very strictly to buddy diving and they are more safety conscious than we are.



Dive two was a WW 2 German war ship called the F2 and its barge. It was blown apart but still has lots of metal structures that you can recognise. The fish life here was great. Bright blue male Cuckoo Wrasse were similar to Blue groppers in that they swim around you hoping for a feed. The wrecks are covered in Sea Stars, brittle stars, Plumose Anemones and crabs. The water temperature has been 12 degrees on every dive. I did have 10 degrees down south where I did two dives at St Abbs Marine Park, South of Edinburgh. The viz has been between 7 and ten metres.

I also got to dive the Koln and the Karlsruhe.

I got in touch with the BSAC club here in Orkney six weeks ago. I dived with them on their six metre Rib boat, a red rubber duckie. I was worried about the day because we had had a lot of cold, windy rainy days. Our dive day on the rib was simply perfect. Light winds, sunny skies and eighteen degrees. We dived the Brummer and the Dresden. The three local divers were Craig, Ivan and Penny. They are the friendliest and most welcoming people you could meet. We developed good friendships immediately and had a brilliant days' diving. We had careful buddy systems and gear checks and responsible diving on these dives.



Ivan had worked as a Dive Instructor and guide on the wrecks here for two years and gave me a guided tour of the Dresden pointing out many features. Craig dived with a seven mm neoprene dry suit. He said that it is as warm as toast even after a two hour dive in four degrees Celcius. That is what I want! They were very amused when I tipped out the two litres of water out of my "Dry Suit" and even asked to photograph me wringing out my undersuit. Penny, Craig and Ivan dive through the winter and say that like Sydney, winter diving has calm clear days with good viz. They say winter diving here is a treat. You just have to wait until ten a.m. for the sunlight to appear and finish diving before 3:30 when dusk begins. Usually, they do single dives only in winter.

We stayed at a two bedroom attached unit belonging to the local butcher in Stromness. It was nearly brand new and extremely comfortable with every mod con and level of luxury you could think of. The view from our unit is world class scenery. It was across green fields across the sea water, Burra Firth, to the double mountains of the island of Hoy. This is the sacred mountain that marks the winter solstice from the 5500 year old Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar. (Like Stonehenge but 1500 years earlier.)

After eight days of staring at this magnificent mountain, I am convinced of its hypnotic beauty. It constantly changes colour and is a focal point for storm clouds and moon rises.

We went for a walk to the Kitchener memorial. His warship hit a mine in 1916 killing seven hundred sailors and Lord Kitchener. The wreck is in 60 metres. We also saw the bell of the Royal Oak inside the 850 year old Cathedral, St Magnus. The Royal Oak was WW 2 Navy boat sunk by a German Submarine in Oct 1939. 830 sailors died. It was only a few weeks after war was declared with Germany.



Orkney is a paradise for divers who like a bit of history and archaeology. There are many excellent five thousand year old archaeological sites here that you can visit and medieval castles. There are many viking sites and museums. I did not have time to see the Scapa Flow museum but I was told that it has many of the best salvaged features from the wrecks on the island of Hoy. The coastal scenery here is very beautiful, the roads are excellent. The locals are very friendly and very helpful. Most important of all, I see my name in lights nearly everywhere I go. I love this place and would come back here for two weeks and try to get twenty dives in and see more of the islands. If you plan to come to the UK, I can give you a few helpful tips.

[WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS](#)

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

[WHAT YOUR MEMBERS HAVE BEEN UP TO IN JULY/AUGUST 2015.](#)

Mike Scotland

I have a story out in Sport Diving in Australia on diving on the Live aboard Febrina from Walindi, New Guinea.

Finally, I have a story out in July Dive Log on Our summer of diving and another one on Cowries. In August, I will have a story out on Truk Lagoon and one on Puffer fish and Toadfish.

I have a story out in Depth Magazine on Truk Lagoon. www.depthmagazine.net. Sign up for free and download the e Magazine.

I also have a story out in Michael Aw's magazine, Ocean Geographic called "Ocean Gladiators". It is all about the marine biology of Crustaceans. Go to www.ogsociety.org. Sign up for free and you will be able to download the "O" edition of the magazine. If you like it, you can pay \$50 or thereabouts and get a hard copy magazine for a year. (6 editions)

Michael McFadyen has a story out in Sport Diving magazine on wreck diving.

Your Committee

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| President | Natasha Naude 0410 074 677 | President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au |
| Vice President | Dave Casburn | dcasburn@iinet.net.au |
| Secretary | Nancy Scoleri | secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au |
| Treasurer | Caroline Corcoran | treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au |
| Assist Secretary/Treasurer | Shelley Breuseker | see membership list. |
| Webmaster | Paul Pacey 0431 691 173 | webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au Paul.pacey@iinet.net.au |
| Newsletter Editor | Mike Scotland 0415 158 168 | mikescotland@bigpond.com |

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 type the story into Word rather than in your email. Email text is impossible to reformat. I do not have the time to retype your article.

Please rename with your name them from something complex such as 196V31O2f7Tphotos9E76F41O%#R6T^A&S#H6\$@ to something simple like "marys seaslug.jpg".

It 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.