



St George Scuba Club Newsletter

August 2022



Whale Shark, Exmouth Western Australia

Courtesy Lynne Tuck

In the newsletter

*Jervis Bay Deep Dive w/e
Exmouth Western Australia
Kalinda trip GBR
Club Dive – The Balcony
South West Rocks dive and memorial dinner*

*Ian Roffey
Lynne Tuck
Mike Scotland
Ron Walsh
Phil Short*

Annual General Meeting of the Dive Club

After failing to have a quorum at the August meeting, the AGM of the dive club is now to be held on Thursday 15 September 2022 at the Ramsgate RSL Club. All committee positions will be declared open and nominations for committee positions will be taken from the floor. If you are thinking of putting your hand up for a committee position or just wish to support the club it would be great to see as many people as possible turn up. We only missed having a quorum by three members, so a few more people turning up will get the job done.

As some of you would know, Paul Pacey our Webmaster is standing down from the committee after years of doing an outstanding job for the club. Paul has looked after our email system, web site and membership applications and renewals which creates a fair bit of work. On behalf of the club, thanks Paul for all the work you have put in

Deep Dive Jervis Bay weekend.

August 7 th & 8th

By Ian Roffey

The weather was fining up for a nice weekend down at JB. Westerly winds were predicted which is perfect for diving outside the bay. Unfortunately, 3 of the 10 divers came down with one virus or other and didn't make it at short notice. However, it did make for more room at the accommodation.

This was the first time that I had been on the upgraded Avalon from Dive JB. The boat has had a total refit and now moves along at 18 knots. For those of us who have been on her before, it is a totally different boat. Faster and more roomy

As we headed out across the bay on Saturday morning, the westerly winds were building behind us and blowing white caps. It was a brisk ride. Once outside the bay and heading north the seas were much calmer, which is why we dive here this time of year. The first dive was Crossroads, my favourite wall dive that I do once a year. We used the original marks on my GPS and the divemaster dropped a weighted line & buoy just on top of the wall.

There was a bit of surface current, so the boat needed to manoeuvre a bit to drop the dive groups near the buoy. There were two dive groups, "Old men of the Sea" diving with just two cylinders, and the "Young guns" with three 12l's, Twins and a stage. We let the young guns go first, to make room on the boat. Then I went down with the second group. Once on the top of the wall at 25m we cruised over the edge down to 40m.

There is a lot of life on the wall. The face is covered with sponges' soft corals and fish up and down the wall. It is a multi-level dive. The most interesting features to me, along the wall are where it folds into crevices that you can swim inside and these are full of a variety of fish life and gorgonian corals. The crevices fold back behind the wall and you can swim inside and up to a shallower 30+ m and then out in front of the wall at a higher depth. From there you exit to wall face and go down again to the bottom. Vis was 20m but it was only 13 degrees at the bottom. Cold, even in a dry suit. Along the bottom there are large boulders and swim throughs. Then you come to another crevice to swim into and explore and work your way up. This time we came out over the top of the wall into 25 m. From here we checked main tank supply, (most were using a 25% oxygen mix), then begin our ascent and changed over to 50% O2 mix for a blue water deco. Avalon was there to pick us up. We then watched the surface marker buoy of the young guns drifting in the current doing their long deco.

The second dive was at the Devil's Cauldron, which is one of the small headlands jutting out from the cliffs. Unfortunately, here there are hundreds of sea urchins that have taken over the wall. We had to move further out and deeper than 25m to get beyond the sea urchins. Clearly the sea urchins are taking over an increasing area of the underwater cliff face. There was some discussion about what we, as divers, can do about it? This is something to think about and investigate further.

Dive Jervis Bay now has O2 cylinders and an O2 membrane system. All divers were able to get their preferred Oxygen mix overnight, as this was previously arranged.

Sunday morning the wind had died down but was threatening to turn from the west to the southeast. We headed out early to The Arch, which is closer to the headland along the same geological wall line. The Arch is much closer to the Cliff face and this time Avalon Anchored just above the Arch. With the same groups as before, we descended to the wall then found the gap between the wall and the top of The Arch and swam down. Once again, the vis was 20+ m and you can see the entire underwater structure by just swimming out from it. Still 13 degrees on the bottom. The Arch is at least 20m wide as we could see end to end. With a torch there is stunning life and growth underneath the whole length of the structure. I just rolled onto my back and made my way underneath the structure end to end with a torch exploring the colours of the soft corals and sponges. On the high side under the Arch is about 10M from the bottom and on the low side it is about 5m. In the middle the bottom falls away even further. There is plenty to explore at each end where the Arch meets the wall space.

After exploring the Arch, we went further south along the wall at 40m to explore. As my main cylinder was running down, I came up to 25 along the top of the wall back towards the anchor line. We started our ascent just as the anchor line came into view. By the time we got back on board the wind had turned southeasterly. Once all divers were on board, we headed south to our next dive site, this time south of Bowen Island.

The second site was tucked in behind a small headland to give us some protection. It's south of Spider Cave but doesn't have an explicit name. Avalon anchored in calm water,

and we went down the anchor line and headed east to explore. This took us over a number of barren rocks and boulders until we got to the sand line at about 27m. Here we found a lot of marine growth and sea tulips on the large boulders. We headed north and found the area to be a large underwater reef, made up of very large rocks full of life. Some of the rocks were 5 or 6 m high so created small walls themselves. In the deeper water the rocks were not as big, but still full of life and swim throughs. There was plenty to explore. At some point as we explored to the north, the growth on the rocks ended abruptly. From here we turned back and headed along the upper edge of the reef and back to the boat. Once all divers were back on board, Craig, the skipper winched in the anchor and the line parted, as the anchor was stuck. The divemaster spent the next 30 mins looking for it without much luck. Then he declared the site to be named "Craig's Anchor". By now the wind had turned more easterly. We had had the best of the weather diving and headed back around Bowen Island into the bay.

Overall, the weather was variable over the weekend, and we managed to get in the diving just before it turned at each site. It was a good weekend of deep wall diving and exploring outside Jervis Bay.





The deep dive group crossing Jervis Bay.

Exmouth, Western Australia

Photos and text by Lynne Tuck

My dad lives in Margaret River WA. I had planned to spend July with him but then realised it was WA school holidays, so I changed my visit to August, during my stay Dad and I planned to go north to Exmouth with his little camper, and I was using the swag. My Dad is now 83, but when he was 79 he swam with the whale sharks on Ningaloo. It has been a dream of his to take me up to Ningaloo to share this with me. On the way north we stopped at my nieces potato farm in Dandaragan, they warned us it is very busy up north in July, August and September because the farmers all bring in their crops and then head up north for their holidays. It is also the start of the wildflower season.

We were already on the road, I had tried to book some diving, and a whale shark tour online, but everything was booked out. We got to Exmouth and visited a few camping grounds, motels, everything was booked out! We were told that we could line up at the discovery centre for emergency overflow camping. While I was in the queue I started ringing dive shops about a whale shark tour and I was extremely lucky that someone had just cancelled due to illness, it was for the next day. Dad was happy for me to go solo as he had done it before andwe managed to get emergency camping in a footy field for 3 nights, with demountable amenities.

The whale shark experience was \$420 for the day but no guarantees to see whale sharks as it was towards the end of the season. They supply 3 complimentary photos of you with the shark.

I had a great day out on the water with Ningaloo Blue, a very professional and well organised day. We saw 2 whale sharks. The first one was just over 5m and very chilled and not bothered by the snorkellers. The second one a bit more mature, that swam a bit deeper.

There are restrictions when swimming with these amazing animals:

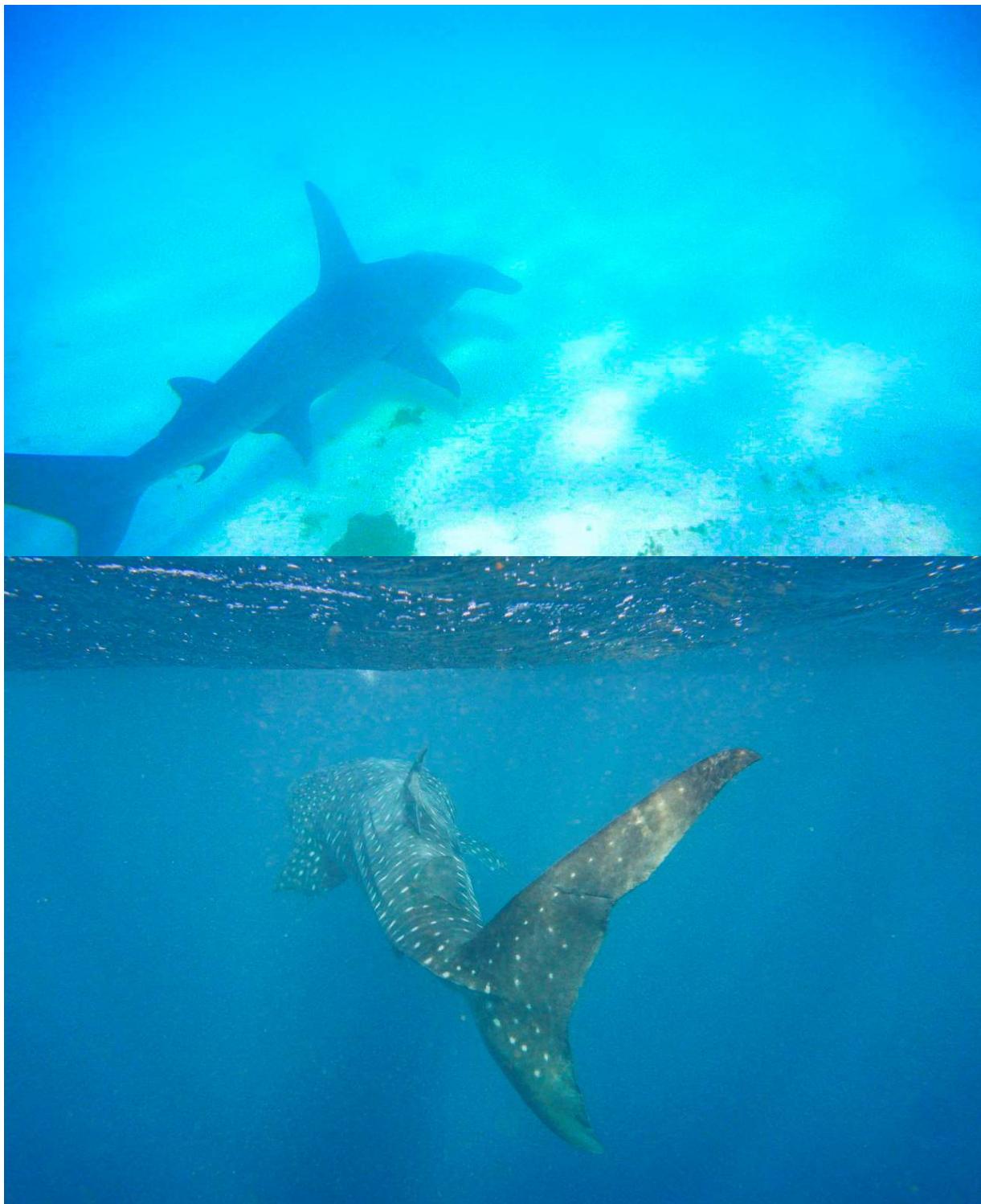
- operators are only allowed to spend 1 hour with each shark, even if there are several operators, they are limited to 1hr.
- you are not allowed to swim under, over or in front of the shark.
- you must stay on the surface, no duck diving
- you must stay 3m from the tail and 2m from the sides
- no more than 10 people in the water with the shark

In total we would have had 10 swims with the sharks and my favourite position was swimming behind it watching the movement of the tail and body through the water. We also got to snorkel on the reef, stunning fish life, a huge underwater playground to explore. The 3 divemasters and myself also got to jump in the water with a cruising Great Hammerhead Shark, I got a brief video , then it was gone! I didn't have time to change my iso settings but at least I got the proof!

A great experience but next time I will try and go before the school holidays in July.

Lynne Tuck







Live aboard dive trip on MV Kalinda, Great Barrier Reef

Text and photos by Mike Scotland.

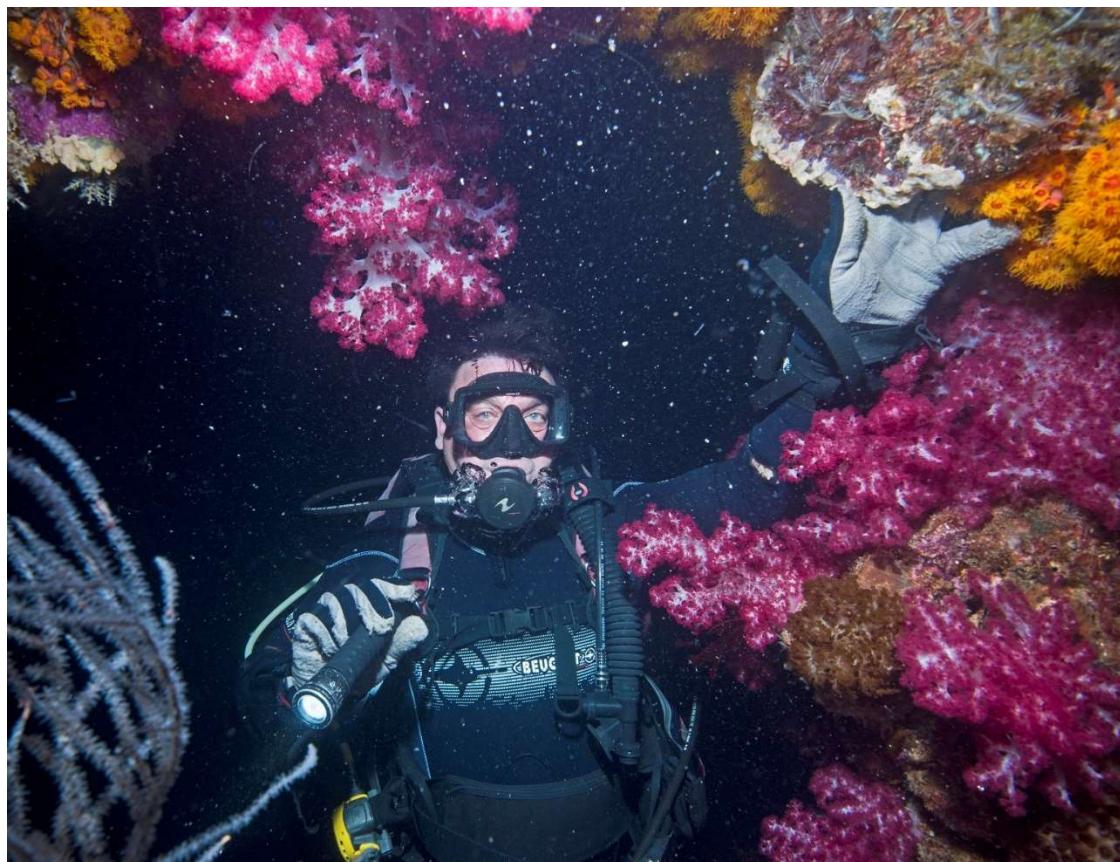
Fifteen St George divers dived on Kalinda for six days from July 23 to 29.

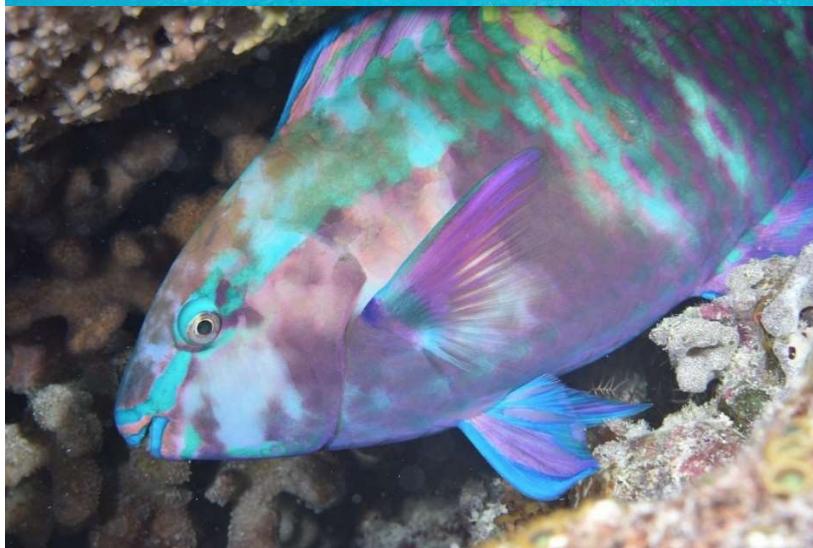
They were Alan Davies, Clyde Archard, Ray Moulang, Zorka Jakupec, Mike Scotland, Simon Hoad, Chris Heath, TomC ordukes, Chad Vadnjal, Geoff and Jill Ward, Rob Chenery, Mark Weeks, Aidan and Aga Slevin,

We managed five dives on the Yongala before the wind set in after the first dive on day two. It blew for the rest of the week and it was chilly. Still, Dave the skipper said that the weather on our trip was the best by far over the last two months. We even did a night dive on the Yongala, as well as night dives every night on reefs.

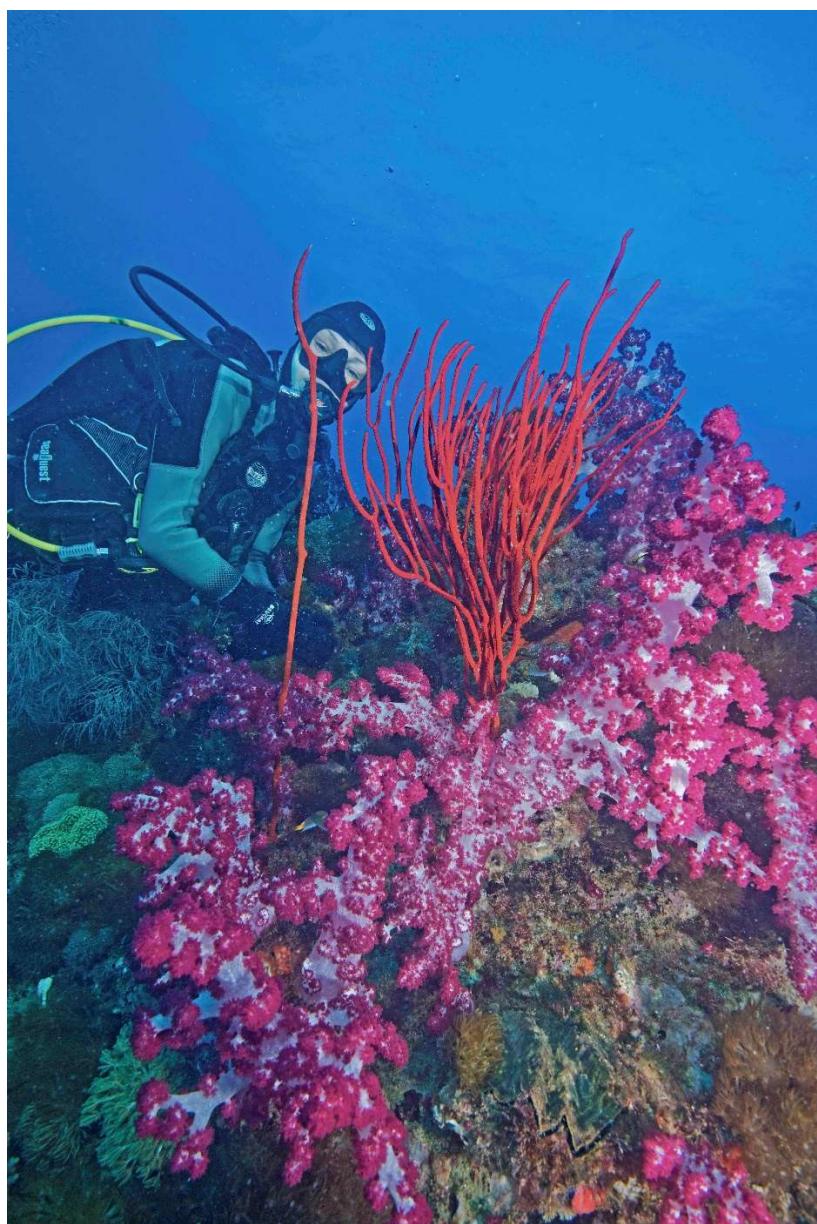
The highlights of the trip included a couple of baby Bull sharks on the wreck, a pair of large Tawny Nurse sharks, a huge Barracuda and plenty of great coral reefs. Whales breeched and cavorted the whole time and we are confident that they were also mating. Every dive was whale song heaven.
We stayed at the Mercure in Townsville on the last night.

Next year, we are doing Raine Island in Nov for ten days.









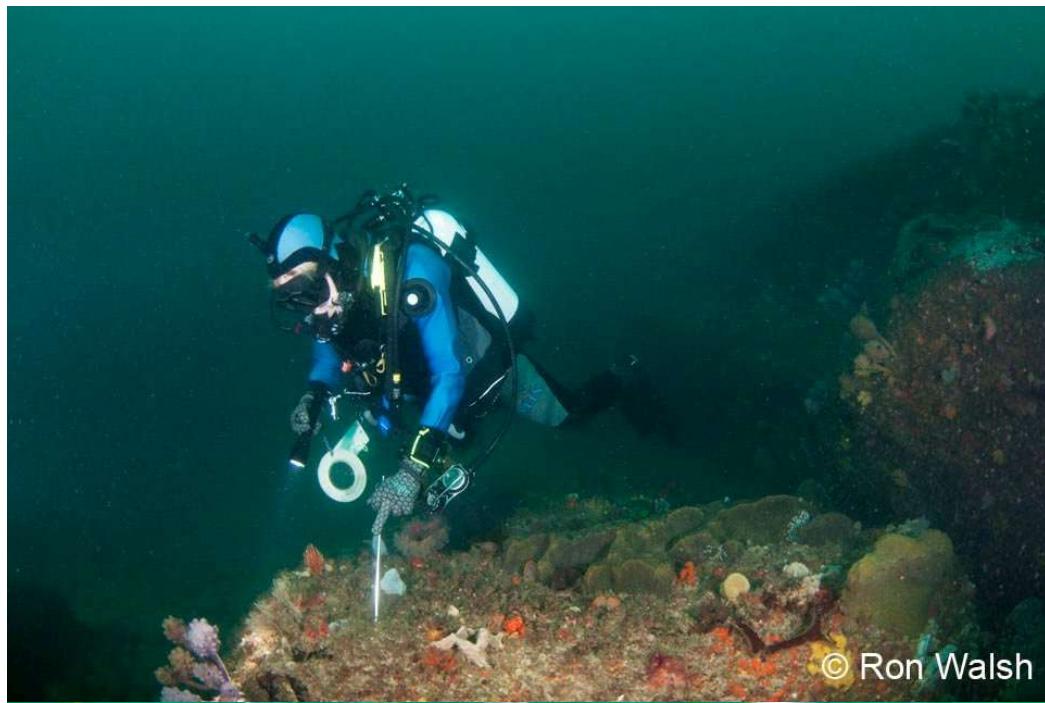
Club Dive - The Balcony 7 August 2022

Text and photos by Ron Walsh

A fantastic St George Scuba Club dive to The Balcony, off the Royal National Park on 7 August 2022. 12 divers on three boats, Dreamwave, Makcat and Yes Dear II. The day saw a flat ocean and around 6m visibility. And a scrumptious morning tea afterwards at Jibbon. Thanks to Shelley for organising the dive and arranging for good weather for the day



Dreamwave at anchor.



Donna on deep wall.





© Ron Walsh

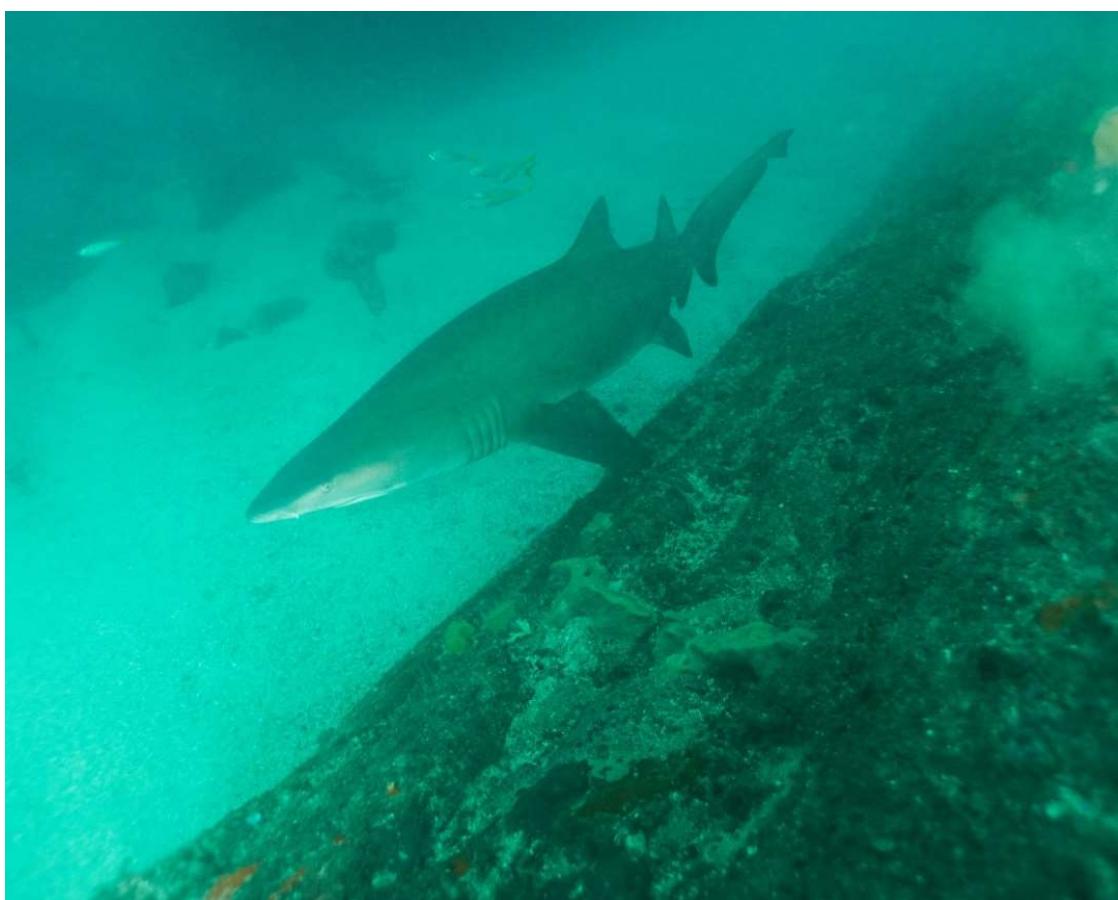
Fish Rock, South West Rocks – 6 August 2022.

Phil Short

On Saturday the 6 August 2022 I dived Fish Rock, with South West Rocks Dive Centre. The divers were split into two groups, one large group from Newcastle University and the other being three of us who had dived the rock many times. On the first dive we dived the deep gutters and worked our way back to the aquarium. There were too many grey nurse sharks to count and some of them were huge and pregnant. The viz was about 8 metres and a bit green and 18 degrees. So not great, but it seems the new normal for the last 8 months or so.

On the second dive we went through the cave. We took our time and spread out to take a good look into the many cracks and crevices and enjoy the cave rather than rush through. I was last in and in the middle area of the cave my torch suddenly stopped. No other divers within sight and it was very black. Whilst it wouldn't be hard to bump your way along and travel the short distance to light, I was pleased that for the first time I had taken a back up torch.

There were a lot of grey nurse sharks in the aquarium and shallow entrance of the cave so we just pressed up against a wall and watched the show. As usual the service provided by Peter and Kevin was first rate. Each dive lasted for over 50 minutes and whilst the viz wasn't great, they were still two very good dives.

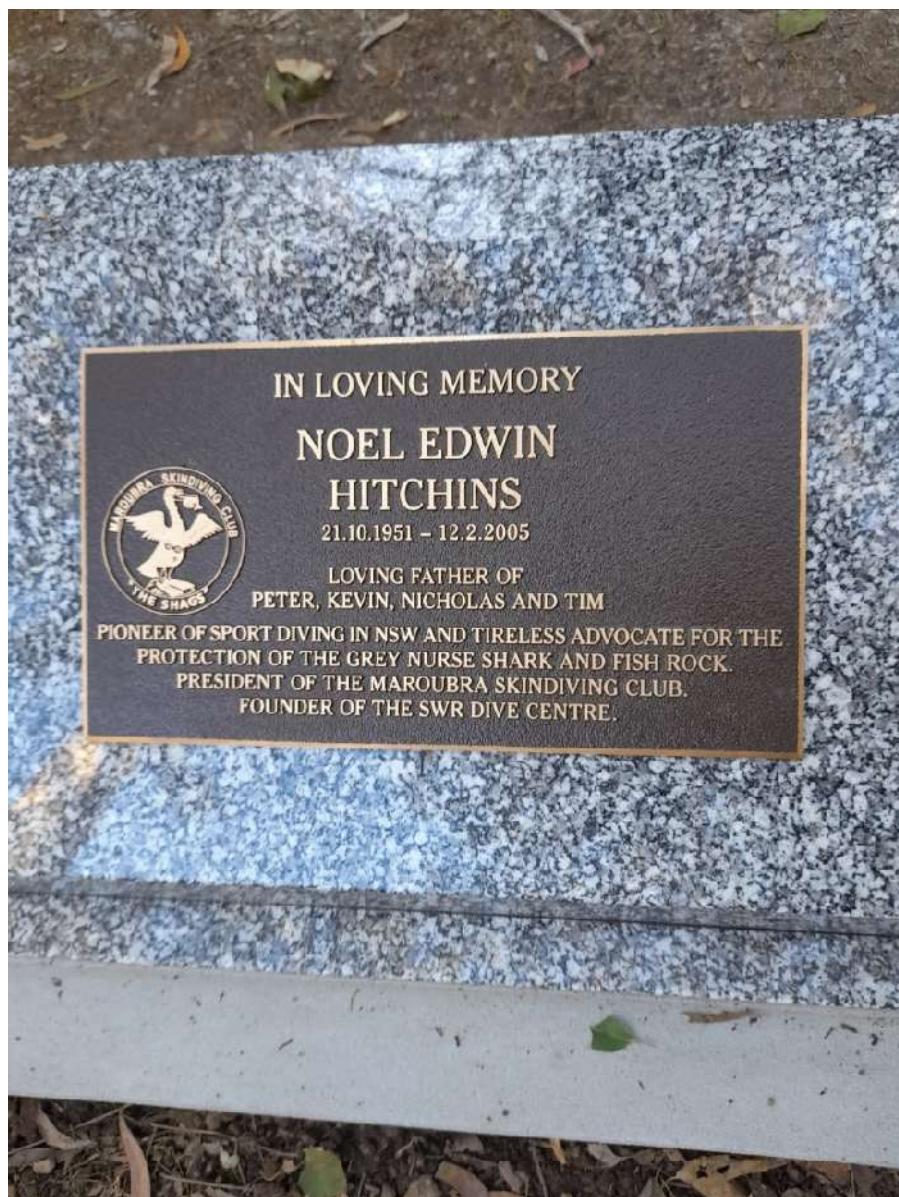


Memorial dinner for founder of South West Rocks Dive Centre

Phil Short

A number of longer term members will know the founder of the South West Rocks Dive Centre, Noel Hitchins. The dive centre is now operated by Noel's sons, Peter and Kevin

On the 6th August 2022, a function was held at the South West Rocks Surf Club to celebrate the installation of a memorial headstone on the grave of Noel Hitchins who passed away in 2005. . 65 people attended including 12 former members of the Maroubra Skindiving Club. Noel was the President of the dive club until he left Sydney to open the SWR Dive Centre in the early 1980's. Fellow St George member Dave Burns and I met Noel in 1971 when we joined the Maroubra dive club and it was great to catch up with a dozen old mates and remember Noel and tell some lies about our early diving days over a few beers.



Noel's headstone at
Arakoon Cemetery South
West Rocks



Landed! Five of the scuba divers display an anchor on the beach.

Page 19, The Messenger, Wed., October 4th, 1972

Scuba diving develops the mind, body and spirit.

Noel was always one to come up with ideas for things to do, like recover an anchor from South Maroubra in 1972.. Noel is in the middle and I am on the left. We strapped 44 gallon drums to it and filled them with air . After it floated we swam it to the beach. After being treated it was mounted outside the Daceyville Police Boys Club. This was well before the Historic Shipwreck Act came into force.

Upcoming Calendar Events

September 2022

★ Boys Weekend - Nelson Bay - Meet Nelson Bay

Date: **16-09-2022** Starts at: **6:00**

Contact Ray Moulang

★ Boat Dive - Six Fathom Reef - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date: **17-09-2022** Starts at: **7:00**

Contact Bob Hill

★ Club Meeting - GRSC - Meet Dolls Point

Date: **21-09-2022** Starts at: **20:00**

Contact Maxine Hayden

★ October Long Weekend - NEEDED - Meet

Date: **30-09-2022** Starts at: **6:00**

October 2022

★ Boat Dive - Marley Point - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date: **01-10-2022** Starts at: **7:00**

Contact Shelley Breuseker

★ Shore Dive and BBQ - The Monuments - Meet Kurnell

Date: **01-10-2022** Starts at: **9:00**

Contact Paul Pacey

★ Deep Wreck Dive - SS Tuggerah - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date: **09-10-2022** Starts at: **7:00**

Contact Ian Roffey

★ Shore Dive and BBQ - The Leap - Meet Kurnell

Date: **15-10-2022** Starts at: **9:00**

Contact Paul Pacey

★ Boat Dive - Yellow Rock - Meet Hole in the Wall/Port Botany

Date: **16-10-2022** Starts at: **7:00**

Contact Michael McFadyen

★ Club Meeting - GRSC - Meet Dolls Point

Date: **19-10-2022** Starts at: **20:00**

Contact Maxine Hayden

St George Scuba Club August 2022 newsletter

Please submit any articles and photos for inclusion in the newsletter by replying to my club emails which are sent out every month. The newsletter will be published every month or bi monthly depending on content received.

Dive stories and photos are not restricted to organised club dives. Things like "I learned from that..." recent courses, equipment and general interest diving / diving photography articles are also welcome. If you don't have time to write anything, just send me photos with where and when details.

Many thanks to all of the contributors.

Cheers. Phil