



October 2022 Newsletter

And a little bit of November



Cover photo by Russ Jones taken on the Bill Rowland Memorial Dive to the wreck of the Tuggerah on 5 November 2022. It's fitting that the slate was an item purchased by Russ at the auction of Bills dive gear.

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Phil Short
Jason Coombs
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Bill Rowland Memorial Dive to the Tuggerah wreck.

Saturday 5 November 2022

Text Phil Short. Photos by Russ and Kelly

After what has seemed like months of bad weather, the weather gods finally smiled on us. The dive day brought sunshine, light winds of about 5 knots from the north east and a fairly calm sea. This dive is on the calendar to celebrate and remember club member Bill Rowland. Bill was a partner to Jasmine, friend to many and a valued member of the club and organised many dives and trips away including the Frenchmans Bay dive day. He brought a unique sense of humour to every dive day and is truly missed.

The dive had a great response with four boats lining up, Dreamwave (Craig, Ray, Russ and Ian), Yes Dear II (Wayne and Peter), Makcat (Michael, Kelly, Maxine and Dick) and Argonaut (Jasmine, Peter, Aaron and me). Unfortunately Abyss Diving had also scheduled their dive to the Tuggerah that morning and they were going to drop a dozen divers on the wreck. Russ contacted them and they changed their schedule and brought their dive forward by an hour so we only had a short wait before we could anchor. Wayne continued down to the Undola and he reported similar conditions to the Tuggerah.

The top 15 metres or so was quite blue with over ten metres viz, but that gave way to greenish water with about 6 metres viz. The water was 17 degrees on the bottom with a slight current which made for a pretty relaxed dive. The normal fish life was present on the wreck as well as 3 large wobbies. Abyss had failed to take their pick off the wreck and Michael and I combined our efforts to get it off the wreck onto the wreck onto the sand. I have not moved a heavier pick off a wreck and if they drove it off it would cause substantial damage.

After the dive Argonaut unfortunately suffered a mechanical issue sounding an alarm and the engine went into limp mode and we could only do 6 knots all the way back. (BOAT – Bring On Another Thousand). We caught up with Craig and his crew back at Jibbon where we raised a glass to Bill.

As we did last year, contributions from Argonaut were donated to Sydney based Westpac Lifesaver Helicopter in memory of Bill. For newer members, the significance of Westpac Rescue is that some years ago a club members boat took on water and capsized. Westpac Rescue were doing some exercises near by and picked up the four divers, including Bill,

returning them to shore. Bill then organised a corporate day to raise money for them as a thank you.

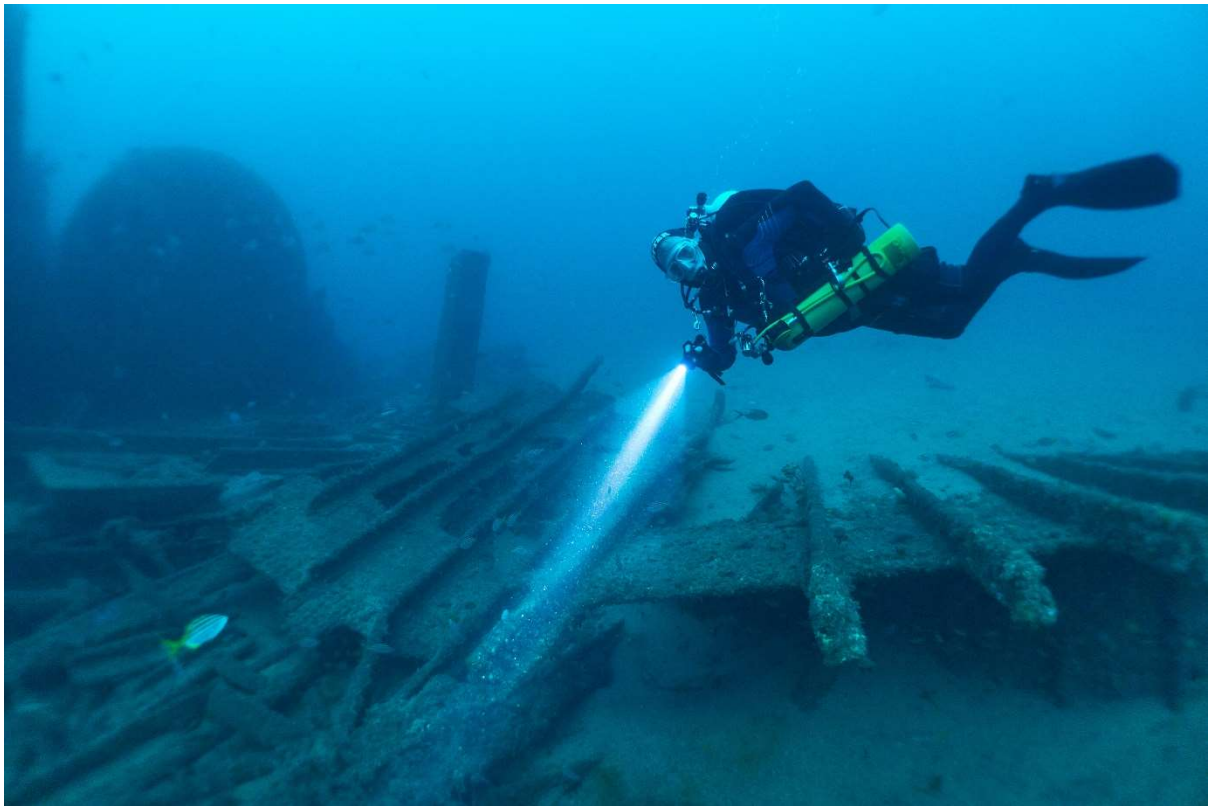


Kelly on Makcat
and Jas on
Argonaut.

Is this a selfie or
photobomb?



Left to right. Jasmine, Craig, Peter, Aaron, Russ and Ray.



Bill on Tuggerah wreck in November 2020.



Dreamwave on
wreck site.



Mermaid 2 Liveaboard Bali – Komodo Club Trip Part 2

27 August 2022 – 3 September 2022

Text and Photos by Jason Coombs

Komodo trip continued from part I in September newsletter. On the way into and out of Komodo National Park the boat stops at the Sangeang Island Volcano. Very much a live volcano it last erupted in 2014. On the aptly named Hot Rocks dive site you can see the methane bubbles coming out of the black volcanic sand. Every now and then the island rumbles and lets you know it's there.



The trip back saw us spend a whole day at Sangeang. We did 4 dives around the island including a night dive at the village of Bontoh. While the dives are predominantly black sand muck dives each one had its own special features and distinctive marine life.

The first dive at Hot Rocks has the most reef along with the sand. There are colourful soft corals, sea fans and whip corals that provide a great contrast to the black sand.

The site has a range of different marine life. The highlights included nudibranchs, an angler fish, whip coral shrimp and a pygmy seahorse on a fan.

In addition to the methane bubbles you can see the thermoclines of warm water and put your hand down next to it to feel the heat. Around the fissures where the gas and water escape there is a yellow colouring on the surface reflecting the sulphur present.

The second site was Deep Purple. There was a strong current running across the site and we were limited in where we could get to. We ended up in the shallows for an extended time. Fortunately there was more than enough to keep us occupied.



In the afternoon we dived a site called Tikno Reef. Above the dive site we could see steam coming out of the island on the side of the volcano. This was a pure black sand dive. We saw loads of nudibranchs, sea hares and sea slugs. There were too many to photograph in one dive.

The night dive was at Bontoh Village, the main village on the island. We were briefed to see 4 different octopus and we saw them all in the first 10 minutes. In fact we went on to see maybe 25 – 30. I can't even remember seeing so many octopus.

It was a great trip, my fourth to Komodo. And despite going there so many times I experienced four new dive sites on this time. There is so much to explore there.



On the last day we had one dive at Sumbawa which coincided with Donna's 60th birthday. We were greeted by a swarm of banner fish and large schools of red tooth trigger fish. A very nice dive to end the trip which was followed by champagne and celebrations for Donna who was, almost unbelievably, doing her first liveaboard trip.

Thank you again to Kelly for organising such a great trip and at such a bargain price. It's a very good time to be travelling to places like Indonesia and enjoying their hospitality.

BEQA LAGOON, FIJI TRIP OCTOBER 2022

Text and photos by Maxine Hayden

On Saturday 22nd October, some intrepid members and their spouses set off on Mike Scotland's dive trip to Beqa Lagoon Resort on Beqa Island to the south of Fiji's mainland. This involved a 4am wake up to get to the airport, 3 hours for check in, a four and a half hour flight, three hours travel by bus then a 45 minute commute by boat to arrive in the dark and just in time for dinner. The purpose of the trip was to dive with the famed Tiger and Bull Sharks nearby.

Sunday morning saw us at the open air restaurant for breakfast then an 8am brief at the dive base with three other dive groups who were also staying at the resort. This included In Depth Dive from Canberra and Pro Divers Maui. Our divers were Mike S, Bram, Wayne, Robin, Peter, Andrew, Mike M, Marianne

and myself while the Dive Widows consisted of Kate, Glenys, Adrianna, Linda and John.

Gear was stowed on board for us then a short 10 minute trip out to Ridge Reef for our shake down dive. The reef itself appeared very barren with masses of broken white coral rubble on the bottom and made critter spotting very difficult. Second dive was to Beetle Reef which showcased a steel hulled wreck approx. 40 metres long. Pygmy Pipehorse were spotted on the upper deck along with several Lionfish. From here we moved to the nearby reef to continue our dive but more dead coral greeted us.

After a chat to the dive manager, the dives became increasingly better as the week went on. On Monday we dived Carpet Cove with another steel hulled wreck of similar size then Circus Circus where we encountered several Scorpion Leaf Fish, dark Moray Eels, heaps of Tomato Clowns in red anemones and more Lion Fish and Zebra Lion Fish. On Tuesday we headed through rough swell to Sea Fan Reef named for its many gorgonians. Here our guide found a blue and yellow Ribbon Eel which he coaxed out of its hole to our camera flashes. We also saw octopus, lobsters, various species of shrimp, garfish and flutemouths and a large sea cucumber covered in sea fleas and a tiny shrimp. After juice and coconut biscuits on the surface interval we dived Secret Garden/3 Mikes Reef/Coral Tree Forest (take your pick as it is un-named). Here the underwater landscape was covered in big bommies all covered in large dark green coral trees, a beautiful arch to swim through, juvenile giant clams and carpets of plate and mushroom corals. Clown fish again abounded.

Our après dive consisted of cocktails by the lagoon shaped pool, socialising, spa treatments and massages, cultural experiences and eating 3 course dinners. Firewalkers visited our resort for a performance while on other nights we had a kava ceremony, school choir, Fijian traditional dancers, a cooking demonstration and tasting and on our final night we were all treated to a buffet style Fijian lovo (feast) of local produce and meats cooked in the ground. Fish was a regular feature on the menu.

Pearl Rock and Yes Malabi were our dive sites on Wednesday. Here were several large cowries, ornate ghost fish, more ribbon and moray eels, soft bubble coral, nudies, masses of clowns and anemones every where and Wayne showed me a nice flatworm towards the end.

Thursday dawned and it was time for the sharks!! And after raining all week, the sun had come out. After packing some spare underwear, it was a 30 minute run over flat ocean to The Cathedral. Strict protocols were in place as these guys were BIG and hungry for our guides to feed them. We descended down

ropes set in the rocks to an arena where we nestled in behind a rock and coral man-made wall to enjoy the view. And didn't they come close! Lots of Bulls, too many to count as well as Lemon Sharks and Tawny Nurse Sharks but..., where were the Tigers? On the second dive a large Tiger turned up and dominated the arena. He was clearly 4 metres plus and was king over all the others who got out of his way and let him feed on the supplied tuna heads from large cages on the bottom. At all times our dive guides protected us with long aluminium prods to keep the big predators from getting too close to us. I originally had some concerns about diving with these sharks but suddenly I didn't want to come up. Some reef sharks came in at the end but refrained from the arena, leaving it to the big boys. My camera had malfunctioned on day 2 and I was so disappointed not to get any shots but our other divers got some beauties.

On Friday most of us chilled out by the pool joining the Dive Widows group while Mike S, Bram, Robin and Peter decided to get another dive day in with the sharks. All in all, it was a great trip with lots of laughs and good friends. We even made friends with members of the other groups, especially the Americans who loved our accents and slang talk. I was continually explaining our conversations. Thanks to all who went and made it so fun and awesome. Thanks so much especially to Mike Scotland for organising the trip and look forward to seeing your photos in an upcoming Dive Log magazine online.

MAXINE HAYDEN





- Maxine's camera malfunctioned but we may get some shots of the shark action from returning divers.

Mermaid 2 Liveaboard, Komodo

Text and photos Ron Walsh

Following on from a week of diving at Tulamben was a trip on the Mermaid 2 liveaboard boat to dive the reefs in and around Komodo. After a transfer from Tulamben 15 club members boarded the boat on the Saturday afternoon at Benoa Harbour for an overnight crossing to near Moyo Island - which is around half way to Komodo. The good news was nice flat ocean conditions. The bad news was one engine was not working so the trip would be a bit slower - 7 knots instead of 9 knots - but the crew were confident that the one motor would be sufficient for the trip (and it was).

Our first day of diving we only were able to do one dive as the transit was slower than anticipated due to having to punch a 3 knot current. Still the dive at Moyo Island was fantastic and bode well for the dives to come. Overnight transit was to Sangeang Island on the north side of Komodo.

Over the next 4 days we did 16 dives in nice warm tropical water with a huge variety of sea life. Everything from sharks and manta rays through to various nudibranchs, shrimps and pygmy seahorses. There were drift dives, volcanic bubble dives, huge coral reef dives, turtle dives, muck dives and night dives

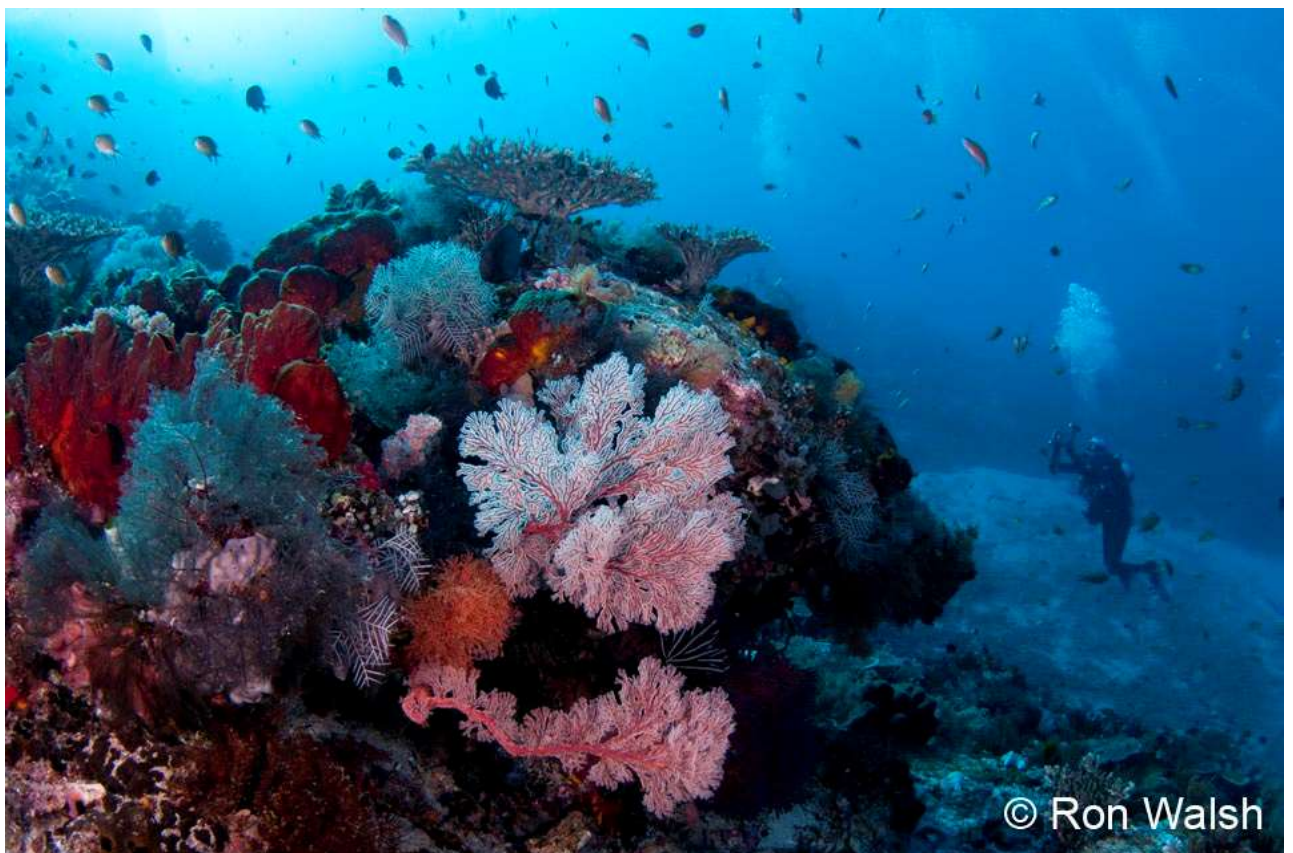
Highlights included a site called Tatawa Besar where our group managed to swim with at least 12 manta rays including 5 in one hit and Shotgun where you are swept through a small passage between islands and end up in a beautiful coral garden.

On the morning of the fourth day a group of us did a tour on the island of Komodo and managed to see at least 4 Komodo Dragons - and yes they are very big.

The boat itself is quite luxurious with a nice (though sometimes crowded) dive deck, more food than you could possibly want, a beautiful relaxing sun deck, and staff that went above and beyond to make everything a pleasure.

And the last day on the boat we celebrated my darling wife's 60th birthday with a fantastic dive followed by champagne and birthday cake.

Many thanks to Kelly for organising and to all that went for making it such a fantastic and memorable trip.



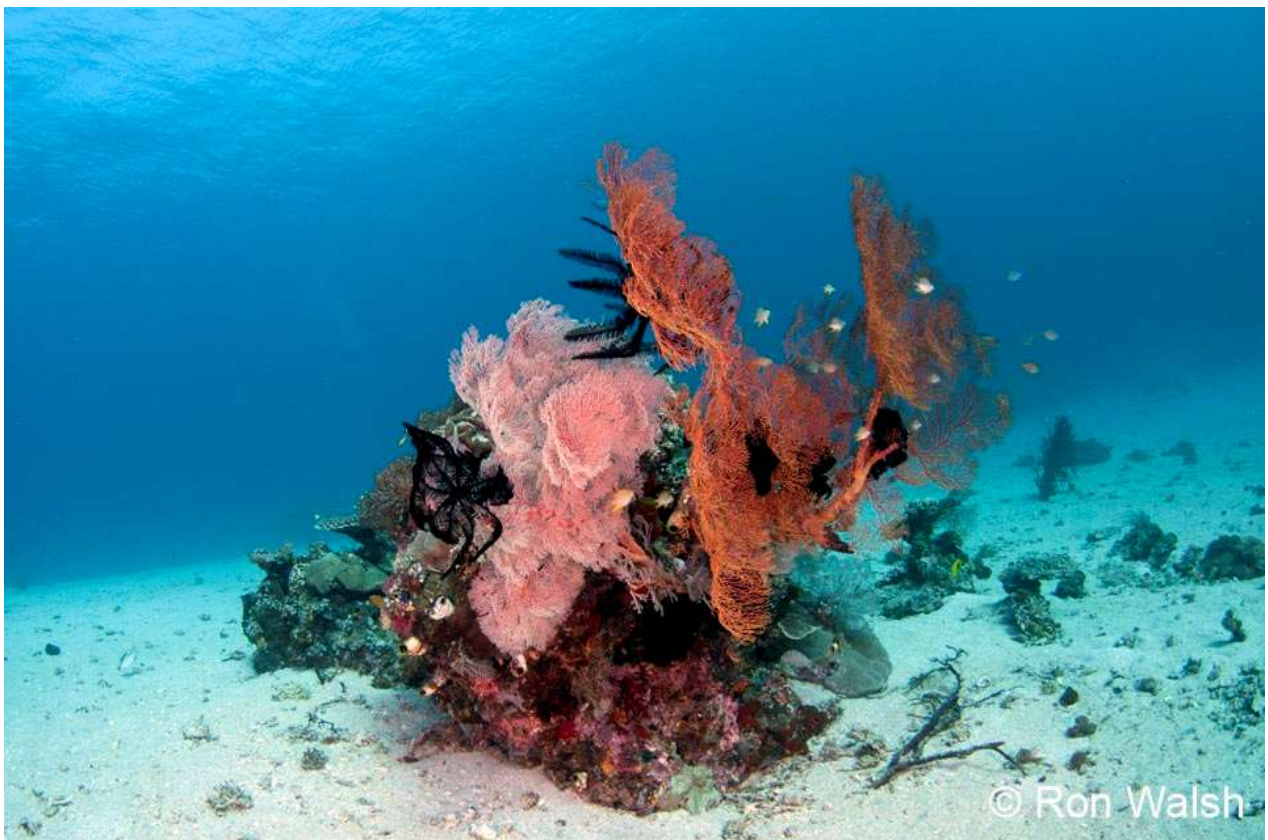


Gallery



Abyss boat behind
Argonaut.

Following are Komodo photos by Ron Walsh







Warty Anglerfish

Upcoming Calendar Events

November 2022

★ Bill Rowland Memorial Dive - SS Tuggerah - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date:	05-11-2022	Starts at:	8:00 DONE
Contact Phil Short			

★ Calendar Planning Night - GRSC - Meet Dolls Point

Date:	07-11-2022	Starts at:	19:00 DONE
Contact Michael McFadyen			

★ Boat Dive and BBQ - Frenchmans Bay - Meet La Perouse

Date:	12-11-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Peter Flockart/Jason Combs			

★ Boat Dive - Bypass Reef - Meet Hole in the Wall/Port Botany

Date:	19-11-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Bob Hill			

★ Week Away - North Solitary Island - Meet Wooli

Date:	20-11-2022	Starts at:	6:00
Contact Phil Rose			

★ Shore Dive - Bare Island - Meet La Perouse

Date:	26-11-2022	Starts at:	9:00
Contact Paul Pacey			

★ Boat Dive - Henry Head - Meet Hole in the Wall/Port Botany

Date:	27-11-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Jason Coombs			

December 2022

★ Boat Dive - Osborne Shoals - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date:	03-12-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Bob Hill			

★ Christmas Party - Botany Bay National Park - Meet Kurnell

Date:	04-12-2022	Starts at:	8:00
Contact Jane Scarsbrook/Dave Casburn			

★ Weekend Away - Fish Rock - Meet South West Rocks

Date:	09-12-2022	Starts at:	6:00
Contact Michael Materazzo			

★ Boat Dive - Pizza Reef - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date:	10-12-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Shelley Breuseker			

★ Club Meeting – Ramsgate RSL

Date:	22-12-2022	Starts at:	20:00
Contact Michael McFadyen			

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