

# Sea Braggin'



February 2017

## St George Scuba Club Newsletter



Remembering our dive buddy Carol Martin

## Carol Martin Memorial Dive Day & BBQ

By Ron Walsh

Photos by Donna Cassidy, Chris Heath & Ron Walsh



Saturday 11th February was forecast to be a hot day. But this was the day set aside to commemorate and celebrate the life of our dive buddy Carol Martin.

Carol was a long-time member of our club who passed away on 3 February 2011 on a Thursday club night dive. This is our sixth annual memorial dive day to celebrate our dearly missed friend.

We arrived early around 8:15am to find that there were already a number of divers there. Because the day had been declared a "total fire ban" day it was decided that the BBQ would be held using the electric BBQs at Frenchman's Bay and a number of our support staff headed down there to claim our spots.

The rest of us kitted up in the warmish conditions and headed down to dive with the Deep Wall being the preferred site. There



Along here we spotted most of the usual suspects including mosaic seastars, mosaic leatherjackets, blue morwongs, red scorpionfish and bennetts hypselodoris nudibranchs.

At the 15m reef on a small rock we found a really cute pygmy pipehorse then his mate nearby. By this stage other divers including Michael and Kelly caught up to us and shortly later after hearing Kelly squeal noted that she had found a large yellow striated anglerfish.



were around 12 divers and 28 people for the BBQ.

Donna, Chris H, Geoff S and myself entered at Carol's plaque and after a short surface swim around the point sank and headed down to the deep wall. Conditions were excellent on the high tide with only small waves, visibility around 10m and a water temp of 18C at depth and 22C in the shallows.

Once at the deep wall we turned west and slowly made our way to red indianfish reef.

Further on we found another two striated anglerfish together – one yellow and a smaller brown one – the great seahorse, small sulphur Noumea nudibranchs, splendid chromodoris and black margined glossodoris.



We exited the water feeling a little chilled but this did not last long as the hot weather had arrived.

After packing up the dive gear we walked down to Frenchmans Bay where the rest of the club members had set up marquees and were merrily cooking away at the BBQ – nice chicken kebabs, sausages, patties, lots of various salads and desserts. Special mention has to be made of Glennys Harris's ocean themed cupcakes with the manta ray "taking the cake".....



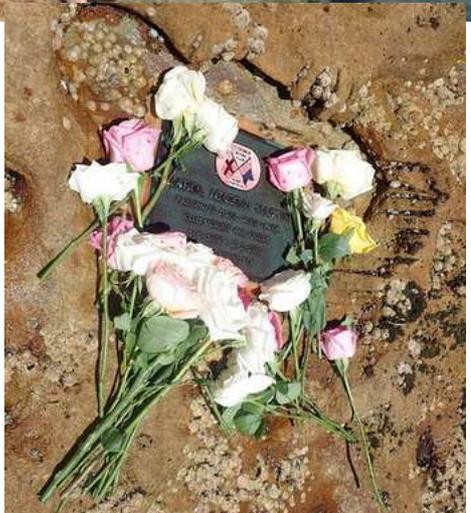
Carol's favourite colour was red so it is required of all persons attending to wear something of that colour. The prize of a nice bottle of wine awarded for best red outfit was taken out by Kim D.

After lunch it was time for the formal part of the day where we go to Carol's plaque, say a few words, drink the worst sparkling red wine possible, and generally remember the wonderful person and club member that we lost.

And so the day ended – back to Frenchmans Bay for coffee and to pack up, enjoy the seabreeze (as it was over 43C in the western suburbs) and then head for home.

Many thanks again to Kelly for organising a wonderful day and to the many helpers who volunteered their time to assist. Carol would have very much enjoyed the social occasion and the event is now an integral part of the St George Scuba Club calendar.





# SS Tuggerah & Barrens Hut

## 4 February 2017

By Peter Flockart

Photos by Peter Flockart & Wayne Hemming

This event was the first deep dive for the year & the weather during the week augured well for Saturday.

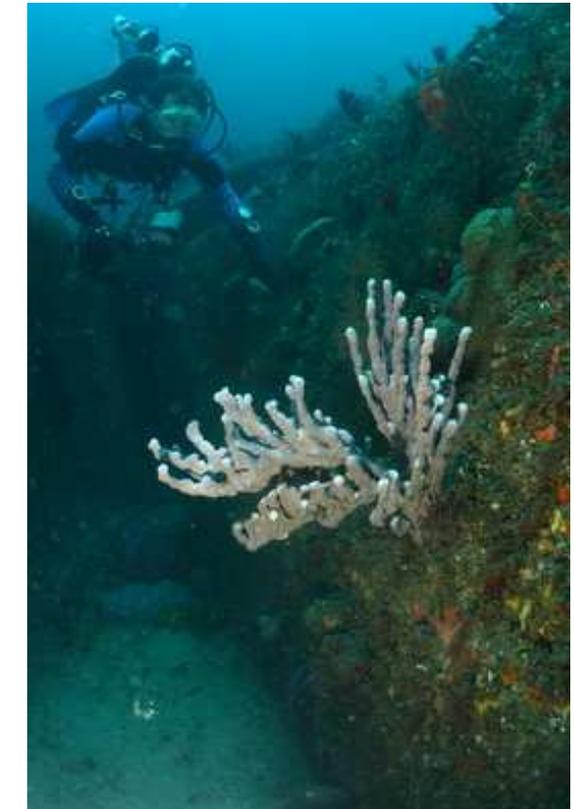
Saturday arrived & three full boats set out. Michael McFadyen launched from Yowie Bay while Ian Griffiths and Wayne Hemming launched from Dolans Bay.

The boats & crews consisted of the following members:

- MAK Cat skippered by Michael McFadyen: Aiden Slevin, Dick Fish & Clint Emmet
- Griffiti skippered by Ian Griffiths: Bill Rowland, Gary Perkins and Ian Roffey
- Yes Dear 2 skippered by Wayne Hemming: Deckie, Peter F, Leo Jones.

I was on Wayne's boat and he arrived promptly at Dolans Bay where we loaded and set off at 7.15am. It was a fantastic run down to the Tuggerah. We had clear blue skies, almost no wind and flat seas. Now all we needed was to have no current and good vis.

Once we arrived and dropped the anchor on the wreck we geared up. On dropping the decompression lines we saw that the vis was indeed good, no better, it was fantastic, at 20m plus. What we didn't know was there was a strong current on the bottom. On reaching the bottom there was no wreck in sight and it was impossible to drag the anchor over to the wreck which we could see in the distance.



I aborted and began the long ascent to the surface from 46m. Leo and Wayne tried in vain to get to the wreck before aborting also. While this was happening the other boats arrived and when their divers rolled in some 30 minutes later there was no current.

Once back on board and rested before heading into Marley for morning Tea.

While here we watched a national Parks chopper lift several pallets from one headland to the other. Probably building materials for a raised walking track.

Once surface interval was finished we headed up to the Split at Barrens Hut for a second dive. Only myself and Wayne dived as Leo still didn't feel well after the first dive – got a nasty CO2 hit and still had a headache.

We rolled into blue warm water at 25 degrees and descended to the bottom

where we had 15 -25m vis. You could almost see from one end to the other in the split – a rarity- and we both managed to take some great shots of the area as well as each other.



The highlight of the dive was that while looking for donut nembrotha's we found not one but five Okenia malettia or the Honey coloured Okenia

As Wayne had both wide angle and macro lens on his camera, he was able to get a good shot of one of them, as I had wide angle only.

I managed some nice WA shots.

After a very pleasant 40min dive we surfaced to a warm dry atmosphere for the run back to the ramp where we met Ian

Griffiths and his crew who all said they had a fantastic dive on the Tuggerah. We will just have try next month and hope there is "NO" current.

Thanks to Michael McFadyen, Ian Griffiths and Wayne Heming for making their boats available for this dive.



# Rebreather Try Day

## 5 February 2017

By Bill Rowland

A rebreather try day was listed on the St George calendar, and being curious, I thought it was worth a go.

It was hosted by Bob Thompson from Kentec Diving, who has taught a number of St George divers, and kindly organised by Ian Griffiths

The day duly arrived and I and new member Ricky rocked up, as well as David Longman a non-member with whom I dive.

I knew Bob, but never in an instructing capacity. It was a professional, thorough operation. I had only done one other RB try day which was a 15 minute jump in splash about and get out affair. This day was run as a full TDI "Discover Scuba Dive" for RB divers (with pre-requisites etc all documented too)



**Phase 2** was a very cut down training presentation, on a Hollis Semi Closed rebreather, followed by a Closed Circuit Rebreather review. I was even more ignorant of SCRs than I was of CCRs, so it was a good education. This was also a great chance for everyone to ask any number of questions on anything that wasn't sitting comfortably yet.

### Phase 3 - Hands on!

Three rebreathers needed assembly:

- Inspiration Evolution Plus
- Liberty CCR
- Hollis Explorer (SCR)

David was with Bob assembling the Liberty, and Ricky and I were with Bob's wife Jan assembling the Inspo. Both Bob and Jan were excellent communicators, and the hands on work helped me to understand how it all connected together - especially all of the extras... So many new hoses and buttons....

Ian and Jane dropped in at this point to check that no one had passed out from CO2 poisoning, or set off explosions from pure oxygen misadventure. We were pretty pleased to report that all was well and (thus far) no harm was done.

Sorb was packed. Seals were cleaned and lubed. Hoses were connected. Loops assembled, and finally the lid was closed on the final completed unit. A check list was worked through and all was ticked.



It was a hot hot day. Cars were loaded. Engadine pool here we come.

#### Phase 4 - Getting wet

We arrived at the pool. A well-oiled machine had the 3 tubs of rebreathers trolleyed down to the pool edge (plus enough lead to sink a battleship).

Did I mention it was a hot day? The 5/7mm wetsuit stayed in the tub and so I opted for the cooler but yet far more stylish boardshorts and tshirt. Priority one - get into the pool. Ahhhhhhhhh.

David and I geared up with the (front counter lung) Liberty and the (rear counter lung) Inspo, respectively, and we headed to the shallow end of the pool. My expectation was "here's a unit - here's some water (Bob had booked a lane for us) go for it", but no.

We entered the water and Bob led us through some OC/CC practice. He then suggested he drain our BCs and try to achieve neutral buoyancy "that should be good for a grin!". Whatever could he mean...?

It was such a different experience from open circuit. Part of it was the new equipment:

- Hoses were where they shouldn't be...
- Unusual obstructions were present behind my head
- Lots of extra unfamiliar buttons and valves, etc

And, in the back mounted lungs especially, trim was just weird... Some weight reduction and repositioning did the trick there.

I know it's a benefit for longer, colder, dives, but the warm recycled breath was so different from the cold blasts of open circuit breathing.

The buoyancy was the key difference though. In our amateurish and unbalanced state, we saw the tiles on the bottom of the



pool approaching. A lungful of air was instinctively taken to increase buoyancy. Nada. An extra deeper lungful of air was taken. Nada. Smack - headfirst we went into the bottom of the pool.... Doh... The BC wing was given a small blast of air, and yep - surface here we come.

With time, and subtlety, we managed a slightly less embarrassing degree of buoyancy - somewhere between the surface and the floor. How would I feel ascending from 25m without an anchor rope to hang onto - terrified...

We bounced all the way up our lane of the 50m pool. At the end, Bob demanded several drills underwater. Clear hand signals suggested we close and remove our breathing loop and shake any liquid in the loop down and out of the way. David and I performed said exercise after it was well demonstrated by Bob. We thought we did ok... Bob, underwater, politely but clearly suggested that we were rather wimpy with our shaking, so we had another more vigorous go.

The best part was just having time to go up and down a lane at our own speed. Think about buoyancy: try a few things (and end up on the surface or the floor) and then think some more and try some more. All up we spent about an hour in the water, swapping units after 30 minutes or so.

After that we loaded the 3 RBs back into his car and returned for a debrief.

#### **Part 5 - The conclusion**

I think the key takeaway message was the commitment that would be required.

Not just the obvious financial commitment of the purchase (and also ongoing running costs), but also the time spent practising with it (and preparing for each dive), and basically going back to dive-kindy to re-start ones diving experience from scratch again.

It was a fantastic day - highly educational from a technical/equipment perspective as to how Rebreathers worked, but also what it felt like to dive with. Thanks to Bob and Jan, and also to Ian for organising it. For anyone who is even "rebreather curious" - if another day is offered I would strongly suggest you take the opportunity.



# North Solitary Islands Dive Week

## 12—17 February 2017

By Michael McFadyen

Photos by Michael McFadyen, Jason Coombes & Alan Davies

It had been almost 8 years since I had dived the Solitary Islands and even longer for Kelly, so last year I decided to organise a weeklong trip for the club to Wooli so we could dive north Solitary Island and hopefully, Pimpernel Rock.

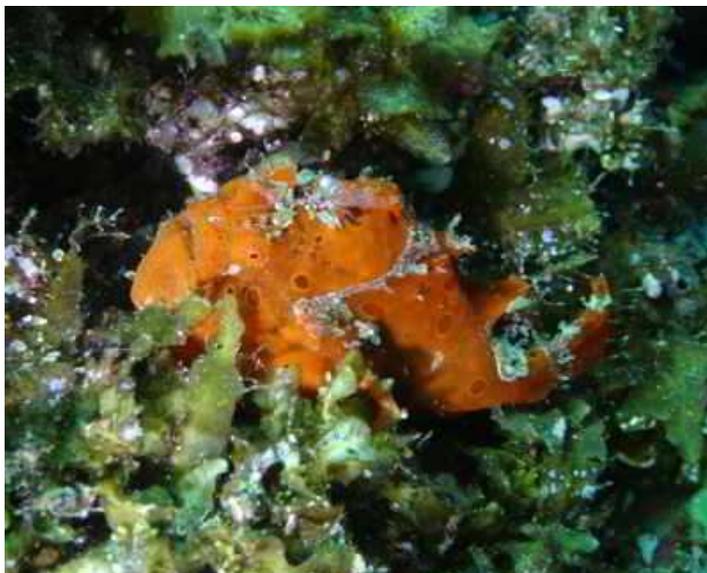
The trip was advertised by email and within a week it was full, all 14 dive spots taken (although later one pulled out and I already had a replacement). As well as Kelly and I, the members attending were Mark Arrowsmith, Ian Roffey, Steve Shaw, Jason Coombs, Dick Fish, Clint Emmett, Wayne Dyer, Les and Elly Caterson, Mal Yeo, Alan Davies, Geoff Ward and Jill McKenzie.

We are diving with Stan Young of Wooli Dive Centre and staying in his great accommodation which is above the dive shop and across the road from the wharf.

### Sunday 12 February

On the hottest day for probably 15 or more years, we drove north to Wooli. Thank heavens for air conditioned cars, it was a constant 45° or 46° for well over three hours, making morning tea and lunch breaks excruciating.

Thankfully it was a bit cooler at Wooli due to a nice north-easter. That night we went to Harrys Chinese Restaurant in the bowling club. The food was quite good. Early in the evening the southerly hit, cooling it right down, but of course making the seas a bit rough for tomorrow's diving.



### Monday 13 February

Starting time was 7:30 am and everyone was on time to load the gear on The Kraken. This is, without a doubt, the best dive boat in NSW, if not Australia. A purpose-built catamaran, with twin 300 hp outboards, it has so much room even when carrying a full load of 14 divers. Skipper is Mick who has worked for Stan for 23 years and has driven the boat every time we have gone out with him.

As expected, the winds were about 15 knots

from the south and it was a little bumpy on the way to North Solitary Island. Only one member lost his breakfast on the way! The only place to dive was Anemone Bay, which was fairly protected from the wind and seas.



The first dive was an excellent one, with numerous bronze whaler sharks seen by most divers, as well as turtles, an eagle ray, a huge crayfish and a nice nudibranch as well as the thousands of anemones and clownfish. There were a couple of hundred bream in one spot, lots and lots of fish everywhere. Visibility good and water warm.

The second diver was also here, most dived a different section of the bay to the first dive. We saw a large leopard shark out near the point and in the head of the bay a turtle and a small clown triggerfish. Some more nudibranchs, a large bullray, a couple of tiny yellow boxfish and all the normal fish made another excellent dive. Visibility even better this dive, at least 25 metres.

We had a barbecue dinner tonight, with some great scotch fillet, sausages and salads made by a few members.

### **Tuesday 14 February**

The seas were a bit worse than yesterday and wind stronger than forecast, but from the south-east rather than south. This meant we could dive the western side of the island. First dive was at The Canyons. We went to north along the deeper section and then back. Things we saw included an egg cowrie, a huge Spanish dancer, two turtles, a few different nudibranchs, glass shrimp, orang-utan crab, porcelain crabs and a big cod. Water temperature varied a lot as did visibility.



The second dive was at Elbow Cave. It was a bit surgy shallower than 14 m, but okay deeper. We saw a dwarf wobbegong, a white leaf fish, a huge crayfish, quite a few different nudibranchs, a small flutemouth, glass shrimp, banded shrimp, another orang-utan crab, a porcelain crab and more. The water was cooler and only fair visibility.

Tonight, most of us went to the pub for Valentine's Day dinner! Excellent meals and nice beers and picked up and dropped back by their bus.

### **Wednesday 15 February**

The seas were a lot flatter today and the water warmer and bluer. We dived the Bubble Cave which is on the western side of the island. We went to the cave first, it was a bit surgy, but the cave is large. There was a large lionfish inside. We then went to south along the gutter and over a few more gutters to the west. I found a robust ghost pipefish on a gorgonia, beautiful. Other things seen included three dwarf wobbegongs, black coral trees, three cowfish, another orang-utan crab, glass shrimp and a couple of long-finned bannerfish. A great dive with very good visibility.



The second dive was at North West Rock, a small island located a short distance off North Solitary. Her the only dive is Fish Soup. To do this dive you moor on the western side and then once on the bottom, swim to the east through the two parts of the island. It was a little surgy going through the two parts, but nothing to worry about. The fishlife over there was awesome, no wonder it was given this name. I have never had a disappointing dive here. We saw thousands of bream, lots of trevally and hundreds of other larger fish. Also seen were quite a few black cod, sweetlips, snapper, all in and around the rocks. A small crayfish, maybe three spotted eagle rays (or one three times) made this another fantastic dive. Once back on the western side we saw some nice nudibranchs, small crabs and interesting little fish inside coral. The visibility was excellent.



Tonight we had a curry night, with Wayne, Jill, Elly, Ian, Kelly and me cooking a different curry. The food was plentiful and extremely good. We certainly got good value for the club's \$10 subsidy.

### **Thursday 16 February**

The current today was even stronger than yesterday and the opinion of Stan was that it would be too strong to dive Pimpernel Rock, so we had to

dive North Solitary. We decided to do a drift drive from the NW corner of Anemone Bay to The Canyons. This is called Mackerel Run. It was at least 40 metres visibility when we went in but it dropped to what looked like awful viz after about 8 minutes. However, it was still 25 metres, just shows how this change confused us at first.



We saw three turtles, an eagle ray, a bullray and a huge flathead. Some saw a leopard shark as well. Around the mooring we saw a few interesting nudibranchs, small crabs, a couple of orang-utan crabs out in the open, a small flutemouth, yellow boxfish, glass shrimp, Moorish idols and more. A great dive. The water temperature has increased from the 21° a few days ago to about 27° today.

Considering how the seas have dropped so much, we decided to dive The Boulders which is on the eastern side of the island. This dive starts off around some huge boulders (hence the name) and you then swim through The Slot which is a canyon between the two parts of the island to the eastern side.

When we dropped in on the site and went to the bottom, the viz was at least 50 m. No current at all in this spot. We looked around for about 15 minutes, there was a huge amount of fishlife. We slowly swam to the south till we found The Slot. This comes up to 6 metres. It was surgy but not too bad.

Back on the eastern side it was about 25 m viz. We went right over all the canyons to the west



and then back to the Bubble Cave mooring where the boat had moved after dropping us on the dive site. More orang-utan crabs, some Moorish idols, an interesting shrimp in coral, an amazing flower petal shaped nudibranch. A brilliant dive.



Tonight most of us went to the pub again for dinner. A nice night out.

### **Friday 17 February**

Our planned diving finished yesterday, but as the forecast for tomorrow down at South West Rocks (where 7 of us are heading) is not good at all, eight of us a few decide to dive

again here today. We repeat yesterday afternoon's dive at The Boulders, this time we dropped in a bit further north in a small bay.

The visibility again today was 50 metres, awesome. We hang around here for a while before going on the outside of a couple of huge boulders towards the south. We spend a lot more time on this side today before we cross through The Slot to the eastern side. As well as the larger fish seen yesterday, we saw a small turtle. On

previous dives here I have always seen grey nurse sharks, but it seems there are none around at the moment. The rest of the dive is similar to the previous one here and at the end, Kelly finds a small



orange painted anglerfish near the mooring.



The second dive is another drift dive, this time we dropped in near The Canyons mooring and drifted to the south and south-east back to the bubble Cave mooring. As none of us had done this dive before, we were not sure of the way, but we found the mooring alright, although a few were close to deco at the end. I refound the robust ghost pipefish we saw the other day. We also saw a turtle as well as lots of other fish. A really nice dive.

After the dive we pack up and for those us heading to South West Rocks, we have a leisurely trip down south.

A really great dive week, one we have done numerous times over the past 20 years for the club, using a great operator. I hope someone organises the trip again next year, if they do, put your name down, or better still, organise the trip to ensure you get on it.



## Upcoming Events

### Frenchmans Bay Dive & BBQ Day — 19 March 2017

**Organiser: Jason Coombes**

The Frenchman's Bay Dive and BBQ planned for 12th March in the calendar will now take place on Sunday 19th March 2017 due to the availability of boats.

For our new members this involves running the boats out from the Frenchman's Bay beach at La Perouse to nearby dive sites followed by a club sponsored BBQ.

The day is free and a boat dive combined with the BBQ is your opportunity to get the benefits of your membership fees back in one go.

You need to be waiting on the beach with your dive gear on to be picked up by the boat at your allotted time. For the BBQ you need to byo chairs, drinks and cutlery.

Please let Jason know if you are diving. He will also need numbers for catering (family and friends are welcome). Please let him know if you are able to make a salad, or bring a BBQ or a gazebo etc.

If you are interested let him know as soon as possible for both diving and eating. You need to get in early as despite the generosity of our boat owners doing a couple of runs, this day has been oversubscribed recently.



## Upcoming Events

### Easter Weekend Seal Dive—Montague Island

**14—17 April 2017**

**Organiser: Roger Lee**

I am organizing Easter Long Weekend Seal Dive at Montague Island. Last year we had so much fun.

Check out Lucy video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmuJa2FH5no>  
and my video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhSiuJqF3qQ>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhSiuJqF3qQ>

We are chartering a boat and maximum is 10 divers.

Cost of the trip is AUD\$360 includes:

- 2 nights' accommodation at a Farnboro Motel (Friday and Saturday night)
- 2 double dives (4 dives in total) Saturday morning (15th April) and Saturday morning (16th April).
- Does not include equipment or tank fill. Air fill can be done at Ocean Hut Narooma.
- Saturday night BBQ

The plan is for a leisurely drive to Narooma on Friday and returning on Monday.

If tides are good, we will dive at Broulee Cave or Batesman Bay.

We meet for BBQ on Saturday night.

If you are interested, please email me and pay deposit \$100 to St. George Club treasurer ( St George Scuba Club Inc BSB 032 099 A/c No. 636 311, indicate in bank description EasterSeal-Yourname)



# Dive Club Calendar

## March 2017

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
4 March	Deep Dive	TBA	Peter Flockart
4 March	Anniversary Dinner	Doi Thai, Sutherland	Dave Burns
5 March	Clean Up Australia Day	Kurnell	Roger Lee
9 March to 7 April	Overseas Trip	Philippines	Mark Ridsdale
11 March	Shore Dive	Swansea Bridge	Shelley Breuseker
12 March	Shore Dive	Oak Park or Shiprock	Paul Pacey
14 March	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Greg Blackburne
18 March	Boat Dive	Magic Point	Greg Blackburne
18 & 19 March	Oztek Dive Show	International Convention Centre	
19 March	Frenchmans Bay Boat Dive & BBQ	Frenchmans Bay	Jason Coombs/Peter Flockart
25 March	Boat Dive	Barrens Hut/The Split	Ian Roffey
26 March	Shore Dive	Oak Park or Shiprock	Eddie Ivers

## April 2017

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
1 April	Deep Dive	TBA	Peter Flockart
2 April	Shore Dive	Shark Point	Ian Griffiths
8 April	Boat Dive	Barrens Hut/The Split	Tricia Henry
11 April	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Greg Blackburne
14-17 April	Weekend Away	Montague Island, Narooma	Roger Lee
16 April	Shore Dive	Bare Island or Kurnell	Paul Pacey
22 April	Boat Dive	SS Hilda	Greg Blackburne
25 April	Anzac Day Shore Dive & BBQ	Bare Island	Greg Blackburne
28-30 April	Weekend Away	SS Satara, Forster	Bill Rowland
29 April	Boat Dive	Pizza Reef	Shelley Breuseker
30 April	Shore Dive	Bare Island or Kurnell	Eddie Ivers

Thursday Night Dives – every week – email sent out early in the week advising location and time

Regular Shore Dives – advice is via email or facebook

## Your Committee

President	Greg Blackburne	<a href="mailto:president@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au">president@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au</a>	
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Sabre Tooth Blenny at Shiprock