

# Sea Braggin'



Feb/Mar 2016

## St George Scuba Club Newsletter

**Night Dive—Bare Island Deep Wall**

**11 February 2016**

**By Ron Walsh**



The club night dive was held at Bare Island on 11 February 2016. A beautiful balmy night with a threatening thunderstorm in the west. There were two divers only – myself and Michael Roelens.

There was very little swell rolling so we decided to dive out to the deep wall and return via the reef line to the boat ramp exit point. Entry was as usual at the back right of the island and we headed SW down to the deep wall. Water temp was a beautiful 23C and the visibility was up to 8m



Once down at the deep wall we explored around the sponge covered bommies before drifting with the current along the reef. We found lots of miniature hermit crabs, a couple of dwarf lionfish a green moray, and a made-up phyllodesmium (opera house) nudibranch.

Further along the reef near what we call red indianfish reef we were excited to find a brown striated anglerfish hidden amongst the sponges. We also found a red

indian fish, 3 pygmy pipehorses including a large pregnant one, sweet ceratosoma nudibranchs, a serpent pteraeolidea nudibranch laying eggs, eastern smooth boxfish, a fiddler ray, cuttlefish, octopus and a cardinal fish with mouth full of eggs

Once back into the shallows we were buzzed by the resident squid – they seem to be attracted by the divers torches.

We did a long dive at 75 mins and as a result we missed the pizza shop as they closed early this night.



# Carol Martin Memorial Dive Day

## 6 February 2016

Photos by Donna Cassidy & Graham Lehman



On 3 February 2011 during a club night dive at Bare Island we lost a long-time member of our club Carol Martin.

On the first weekend in February the club holds a memorial dive and BBQ day at Frenchmans Bay to celebrate and remember our dearly missed friend and club member.

This year was the 5th anniversary and it was held on Saturday 6 February. We were fortunate to have Carols sister June and her husband Bill travel out from Scotland to attend this years event.

Unfortunately the weather gods did not play nicely with scattered showers and dirty water following several days of rain resulting in nobody able to dive. We did however have a splendid BBQ brunch organised by Kelly with everyone turning up in their finest red attire (Carols favourite colour).

This was followed by a visit to Carols plaque and a few words from June, the obligatory glass of sparkling red wine, a few tears, and the tossing of memorial flowers into the water.

The prize for the reddest attire was awarded to Natasha.

Many thanks to all the volunteers for assisting Kelly with the organising — from salads and desserts to BBQ chefs.





# Torres Strait - MV Kalinda—Part 1

## 13—21 December 2015

By Peter Flockart

Photos by Peter Flockart

Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 saw 8 eager souls arrive at Mascot to commence the trip north to Horn Island. Flying firstly to Cairns –collecting 2 more trippers and having a short lay off before boarding a Qantas Link Dash 8 for the short 1 ½ hr flight to Horn Island.

We arrived at 3pm into 38 degree weather and a tin terminal building. The fans inside did nothing to reduce the oppressing heat. However the air conditioned bus ride down to the wharf did a lot to relive the heat.



At the wharf we met the other 2 members of the trip –Terry & Greg from Darwin who had flown in that morning - and boarded our vessel – The Kalinda – for a 7 day trip around Torres Strait before proceeding down the east Coast of QLD back to Cairns. But there was a problem the vessels' desalinator had broken down. Thus we had to wait while water was piped into the tanks. This setback meant there would be no showers for the trip & water would be rationed – thank god

for alcohol (by the time we reached Cairns most of this was gone as well).

Once we had loaded our gear on board it was just a short steam across to Thursday Island where we anchored & went ashore to the Grand Hotel for dinner & much needed refreshments.

After a great meal we were ferried back to the Kalinda for a much needed sleep.



Morning saw us up anchor for a short cruise past Thursday Island and the WW2 gun emplacements at the end of the Island to our first dive site.

This is the wreck of the SS Volga(1) – an iron hulled vessel built in Scotland in 1881 which was enroute from Newcastle to New York having started her journey in Melbourne. In the early hours of August 8<sup>th</sup> 1890 she struck the northwest end of a reef near Goode Island and began taking on water, finally sinking to the bottom in 13m. The steamer Albatross in the meantime arrived & all on board were plucked to safety.

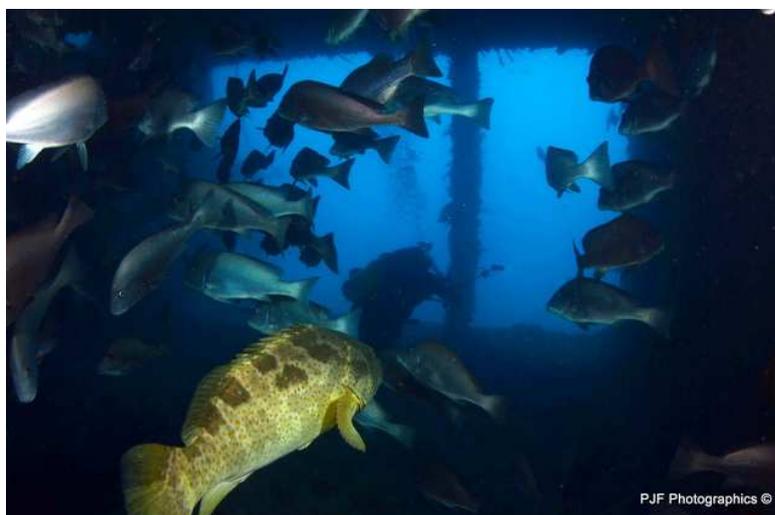
Today she lies upright in the channel with about 4m of water washing over here deck. The prop and rudder are still intact and can be viewed in the murky water. This wreck can only be dived on slack water as currents in the area can be as fast as 5 knots. Visibility on this dive was between 2 & 5m. The stern is intact and the wooden deck rail in much in evidence after 125 yrs underwater. There is a massive hole in bow where she struck & the masts are still visible, one being still attached to the deck but lying broken in parts on the sea floor. Fish life is amazing & unafraid of divers with large schools of slaty bream having to be pushed out of the divers' way. The Starboard side of the hull is covered in Sunshine coral – *Tubastrea faulkneri*.

After this dive we proceeded to the site of the Mecca & Phoenix. Both vessels striking the same underwater obstacle 14 yrs apart.

The Phoenix (2) which sank on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1855 was a 400 ton paddle steamer built in 1842 in England, on a voyage from Syd-



PJF Photographics ©



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ney to Singapore with 10 passengers when she struck Ippolite Reef in Torres Strait. All passengers saved.

The Mecca (3) which was to strike the same reef in 1869 was a vessels of 1450 tons. Built Glasgow, Scotland, 1873 for the British, India Steam Navigation Company. From Hong Kong to Sydney, ran on to Ippolite Reef near Thursday Island, Torres Strait, 24 December 1878. Her complement of 379 Chinese passengers and 38 crew were safely landed but the steamer was too badly damaged for salvage.

With this site we had to wait almost 3 hours for the current to subside enough for us to dive. A buoy was rigged between the site & Kalinda. Divers pulled themselves over & looked around the site which is really a mass of twisted metal. It is almost impossible to distinguish between the two wrecks although some said they saw pieces of both wrecks. The only thing I saw was the remains of the paddle wheel of the Phoenix. Depth was a max of 8m with vis around 6m. Marine life seen was a few hard corals & medium sized fish but lots of fire coral. The latter meant most people were stung to some degree.



Over dinner we recounted the days' events while steaming overnight to our next site – the wreck of the Fenstanton (4)

This wreck was a steam powered Iron barque of 2485 tons, which ran on to Morresby Rocks in Torres Strait. She was abandoned as a total loss on 16 September 1884 with no loss of life.

Today the intact stern of the wreck sits upright in 16m of water. It is possible to swim in and around her rudder & propeller. Doing this sees the diver meet the resident school of some 30 golden snapper, some





of which are up to 5kg in size and unafraid of divers. Midships forward the vessel is a total wreck lying in 3 to 4 m of water, covered in the most by large brain corals.

Midships to the stern is the most interesting with gorgonian and candelabra corals abounding as well large schools of fish. Nudibranchs and flatworms can also be found if you look hard enough. We were fortunate with the tides being able to do 2 dives here. One at 11am & another at 2.15pm. After the second dive freshly baked muffins were served to the divers on their return.

After this we up anchored and steamed east overnight to the site of the Quetta. During this several of us tried our hands at trolling for fish with only myself having any luck - a small 2.5kg Trevally.

To be continued.....



*"This sucks."*

## Fish Rock—South West Rocks

### 12-14 February 2016

By Jane Scarsbrook

Photos by Jane Scarsbrook

Fish Rock has to comfortably be one of the best dive sites in NSW!! In this instance, however, its not just the dive site but also the quality of operator in South West Rocks Dive Centre to complement the experience.

Ian Griffith and myself made the 6-hour journey up the coast on 12/2/2016 in anticipation to dive with Grey Nurse Sharks. Upon arrival we where welcomed into our accommodation by Steve Skinner and although its basic, its clean and comfy. Well equipped with complementary continen-



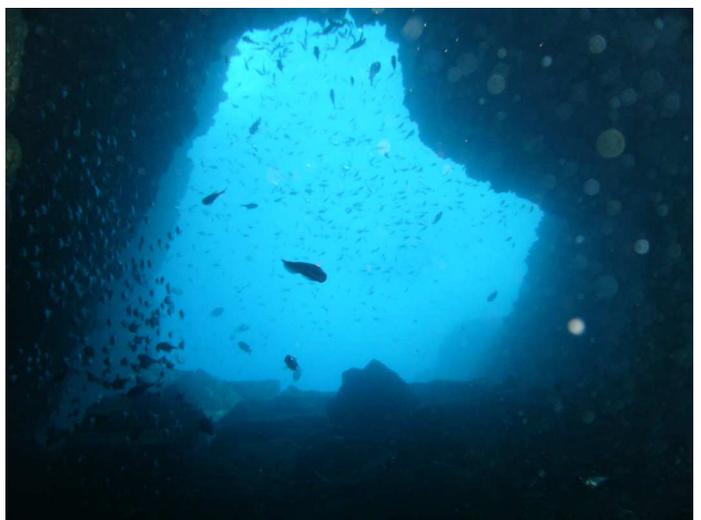
tal breakfast, linen, pool table and comfy sofa's just to mention a few.

Onto the diving... the trip to the site is a 40 mins journey which soon passes when you are not feeling sea sick!

Anyhow: once attached to the mooring spot we began our first of 4 dives that would be carried out over two days. Fish Rock island is famously known for its Grey Nurse Shark population and on my previous

trips you cannot move for sharks. On this occasion, however, they had all gone apart from a few wobbegong sharks. There were no grey nurse sharks! The place was empty, characterless and a lonely unsatisfied feeling dawned on us.

The viz was 15m and the water temperature a lovely 25 degrees but a ripping current made it a challenging site making it impossible to progress to land of the giants. On the second dive we





were lucky to spot one juvenile (1mtr length) grey nurse lost from the pack. This would be the only shark we would encounter on the weekend.

The cave is still a spectacular dive filled with critters and wobbegongs, I managed to capture the exit with its impressive turquoise blue light. On the second day, the water viz had improved and the current had slowed but the sharks were still on vacation. We witnessed an abundance of life including eels, yellow tale, kingfish, lionfish and batfish.

For sharks to not reside at Fish Rock is a rare event. Locals commented on this occurrence happening “years ago”. We visited the rock on an unlucky weekend. In my humble opinion, they have gone on vacation in preparation for our club trip on the October long weekend.

**What to look forward to in the October long weekend trip club trip!!**



## Upcoming Event

### Clean Up Australia Day—6 March 2016

Roger Lee is organising Sydney Dive Australia Clean Up, Sunday 6th March 2016 . The event includes a free BBQ and airfill for registrants. The event combines together St George Dive Club, Abyss, Accenture and UTS Diving Club (DOUTS).

#### Sydney Shore and Dive Clean Up

Lots of rubbish from our activities goes into our ocean unnoticed. Items such as plastic bags can choke our sea turtles and grey nurse entangled with fishing lines can cut deeply into the shark (<http://goo.gl/pNXtZz>).

Join us for a Sydney Dive Clean Up Event organised by Accenture Digital ANZ and will be joined by other community clubs such as St. George Scuba, DOUTS and Abyss Scuba.

**Date:** Sunday 6th March

**Location:** Kurnell, Botany Bay National Park

#### Dive Clean Up

**Dive Site:** The Steps and Monument

**Gear Up Time:** 9.00am

**In the Water Time:** 9.30am

**Dive Equipment:** Own Equipment or hire from Abyss or DOUTS

**Requirement:** Must be certified Open Water Scuba or equivalent

#### Shore Clean Up

Family and friends of are welcome to join us for shore clean up and BBQ Lunch for the event.

**BBQ Lunch Time:** 12.00pm – 2pm.

Accenture Digital ANZ will be sponsoring BBQ food and salad. Drinks BYO.

As we are very eco friendly, please bring your own plates and cutleries.

If you have sun shades (marquee) and chairs, please bring along too so that we can enjoy the lunch together afterwards.

Kindly goto the link so that I can record accurately the numbers required for catering and also free Air Fill vouchers !!!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sydney-clean-up-australia-day-2016-tickets-21072501419>

Regards

Roger

0432798934



# Dive Club Calendar

## March 2016

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
5 March	Boat Dive	Cancelled	Ron Walsh
6 March	Clean up Australia Day Dive	Kurnell	Roger Lee
12 March	Boat Dive	Xanadu	Dave Casburn
13 March	Shore dive & BBQ	Bass Point	Jason Coombes
16 March	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Natasha Naude
19 March	Deep wreck	TBA	Caroline Corcoran
19 March	Restaurant Night	TBA	Ray Moulang
24-28 March	Easter Long Weekend	Narooma	Roger Lee
24-28 March	Easter Long Weekend	Jervis Bay	Ray Moulang
25 March	Boat Dive	Bypass Reef	Shelly Brueseker
26 March	Shore Dive & BBQ	Oak Park	Eddie Ivers

## April 2016

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
2 April	Boat Dive	Pizza Reef	Tricia Henry
3 April	Boat Dive	M&K Reef	Natasha Naude
9 April	Deep Wreck	TBA	Peter Flockart
9 April	Shore Dive	Voodoo	Roger Lee
10 April	Shore Dive	The Leap	Roger Lee
16 April	Boat Dive	Marley Reef	Eda di Camillo
17 April	Boat Dive	Pistol Crack	Bill Rowland
20 April	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Natasha Naude
23 April	Boat Dive	The Balcony	Shelley Brueseker
25 April	Anzac Day Shore Dive & BBQ	Bare Island	Natasha Naude
30 April	Boat Dive	Marys Reef	Phil Short

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



Cardinal Fish with Eggs



Cardinal Fish with Hatchlings

## Your Committee

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