

Sea Braggin'



June/July 2016

St George Scuba Club Newsletter



Shiprock Dive

25 June 2016

By Paul Pacey

The day was sunny and the sky clear but cold (16C) and we had a howling SW wind that made for a huge wind chill factor when getting out of our wetsuits after the dive.

Divers in attendance were Eda, Kelly, Michael.M, Ken, Paul (me) and Mark Arrowsmith.

Unfortunately the visibility had dropped from 5M on Friday to about 3M in patches and the temperature had also dropped from 18C to 17C. Some people reported 16C. I didn't feel cold until I got out of the water after an hour dive time, then I was freezing!



Despite all the negativity though, it was a great dive and we found numerous critters along the way such as...

Moorish Idols, Pygmy Lionfish, White's Seahorse, Convict Gobies, Pineapple Fish, Scarface (That's A-Moray), Wobby, Estuary Cod and all the usual offenders.

Mike was a bit late starting the dive, due to a malfunction at Macca's, but he not only caught up with us, he went right past us at about 5 knots+.

After a very cold 10 minutes whilst we were changing into dry clothes we headed to D'Lish cafe where hot coffee and the world's best (and largest) Wedges helped thaw us out.



Shark Point Dive

15 May 2016

Photos from Dama Torres-Pulliza



Wedding Cake Island

7 May 2016

By Bill Rowland

It was a long courtship...

2013 - Dive organised by Eda. Being a Midnight Oil fan, and not born and bred in Sydney, I thought a dive to Wedding Cake Island sounded appealing. It was called off due to weather.

2014 - My interest piqued, I took on organising a dive to WCI, and it was duly booked and then not successful due to weather.

Right - gauntlet thrown down now ...

2015 - I booked TWO slots this year. The first was cancelled due to weather. The second, later in the year, was booked and arranged. Captain Phil advised Argonaut couldn't participate and so as a result of his non attendance the dive would likely proceed this time. The other boats ended up going out, but not to WCI due to the weather.

I texted Phil after the dive to alleviate his guilt - it couldn't be his fault that we weren't making it up there. He replied immediately "maybe it's you?"

Oh - I hadn't thought of that...

Nahhh - What bad luck could I possibly experience around boats...?!

With Phil's subsequent advice regarding the best time of year, I put my hand up for mid May for another crack in 2016. It's getting personal now... Bird Noises is my favourite Oil's record. I've been to over a dozen of their concerts, and it's supposed to be a good dive too, so now I can't give up till I get there.

The forecast in the week leading up to the dive was variable. On the morning the wind was certainly higher than forecast. Not again... In the end the decision was made to head out in the shiny new Katz Too, and poke our nose out at Cape Banks to see what conditions were like. We did. They were good, and up we headed. Woohoo.

The trip up was calm and quite quick. Kraken arrived and anchored approx 100m East of the island. There were a number of spearos at the island and we didn't want to get too close. Katz Too moored a bit further away.

Keith and I went in first and headed due West until we hit a large rock formation rising up from the sea bed. Keith, as usual, was on fire as a spotter. Unfortunately the first few discoveries were a fishing

rod, a burley box, a tackle box (empty), and the pièce de résistance - a set of trailer wheels from a fishing kayak... (I did look, but no missing Bar Crushers were located, unfortunately).

We also came across Kraken's anchor, and divers (meaning we were still 100m or so from The Cake).

The topography underwater was fantastic. Lots of nooks and crannies, and plenty of life ensconced in there including an extremely large Wobbie, a friendly Cod, several Cuttles - the largest of which provided a 2 'finger' request for us please to go away. A decent sized Eastern Blue was also lurking along with many nudies.

Ken and Mike Scotland went next and covered similar territory.

The return trip saw us stop at Magic Point for morning tea and then back to Hole in the Wall to admire the freshly named Mak Cat, which had just returned from its first official outing, and naming ceremony. Wedding Cake and a "birthday" all on the same day.

A great day out with fun company, as always. I look forward to getting back there (hopefully within the next decade). Someone else can organise it next year - my therapist says I need a break.



"I learned to make my air last longer. I was clean shaven at the beginning of my dive."

Easter Montague Island — 25 to 28 March 2016

Photos by Marcus Campbell



Bananas on Boats

By Bill Rowland

On the fantastic Port Stephens dive trip last year, one of the divers on the boat (not a St Georgian!) pulled out a banana and started eating it. The looks of abject horror she received from both fellow divers and crew made her double check that she hadn't pulled out a hand grenade, or a disembowelled cat or the like. It was explained to her that bananas were bad luck on boats. She shrugged, said she didn't know, and continued eating her morning tea.

So - in the interests of communication : Bananas + Boats = Bad Luck ! (apparently)

Even Harry Belafonte's career was never the same after he wrote the Banana-Boat Song (Day-o)...

What got me curious though, was why this was such a widely and strongly held superstition. I had thought that, apart from the obvious risk of slipping on discarded peels, it was just because Bananas tended to accelerate the ripening of other fruit stored nearby (which would be undesirable for long sea voyages, such as to Wedding Cake Island, or the Undola), but there are so many other (alleged) factors bolstering this belief :

- Because they spoil so quickly, bananas needed to be transported quickly to their destination. This led to risks being taken on the journey, and sometimes ships were lost. From a fisherman's perspective, the acceleration also impacted their ability to get a good catch. There are a whole swag of fishing-specific banana superstitions that are too numerous to cover in detail here (such as oil from banana skins being transferred by hands onto fishing tackle, spooking the fish...)
- When the stored bananas were heated en-route , they emitted a toxic / dangerous gas which was not safe for either man or vessel. It's not clear whether this gas is ethylene or something else as well (or whether in a confined hull the gas just displaced air and suffocated the sailors).
- The final 'evidence' for this crime, is that a venomous animal (such as a spider or snake) would sometimes hide in bunches and kill crewmembers. Bacteria has also been blamed for killing everyone on board.
- At a more anecdotal level, in the old days often when a top-heavy cargo ship did sink, sometimes the only flotsam remaining was a bunch of bananas on the surface.

Daylight come and me wan' go home !

...Phew... I got through the whole article without mentioning El Presidente once !

Upcoming Events

Christmas in July — Club Heathcote

Saturday 30 July 2016

Organiser: Les Catterson

Every year the club celebrates Christmas in July with a social event at Club Heathcote

The cost is \$35.00 per head and it runs from 6pm to 11.30pm.

Traditional 2 Course Meal+ complimentary glass of wine

Show Band Entertainment + Lucky Door Prizes

To purchase tickets contact Les Catterson -

email: lescat2@bigpond.net.au or phone: 9520 9421 or attend the Club meeting on 20th July

There is no such thing as a bad dive, it's just that some are better than others.



Live aboard Trip December 2017 (not 2016)

Raja Amapat in West Papua

Organiser: Bob Trudgeon

A number of the club's members have mentioned a liveaboard dive trip to Raja Amapat in West Papua is on their "bucket list"

I have kicked the ball with enquiries to Mermaid (boat Mermaid 1), Aggressor & Black Manta for December 2017, Sorong to Sorong. I mentioned a group of 8 as a carrot for discount. Below are basic details from replies received. The comparisons are based upon "budget" cabins. There are other "delux/master cabins at a higher cost.

1. Mermaid 10 days - 9 nights 3 to 12 December 2017 3300 euros less 20% discount - 2640 euros - approximately AUS \$3900.
2. Aggressor 10 days - 10 nights 11 to 21 December 2017 US \$ 4500 - 8 guests, 7 paying & 1 free - 12.55 discount - US \$ 3900 - approximately AUS \$ 5250. In addition to being more expensive, the dates are close to Xmas.
3. Black Manta 8 days - 9 nights first Raja Ampat trip is 21 to 29 December 2017 rates yet to be determined but indication is approximately US \$ 3000 less 10% discount - US \$ 2700 - approx AUS \$ 3600 - shorter period & more expensive than Mermaid.

Six members have indicated they wish to do the Mermaid 1 liveaboard. Although 8 participants will attain the discount, it would be preferable to have at least 10 people indicate a willingness to overcome any late cancellations

Rather than list details of itinerary, boat facilities etc , "Mermaid Liveboards" is an informative web site. There is also comment on trip advisor.

Please also note:

1. I shall not be doing a group booking & each person would have to book direct.
2. Should a participant withdraw after payment, it would be that persons obligation to find a replacement.
3. Air flights are additional cost

If you are interested please contact Bob

Dive Club Calendar

July 2016

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
2 July	Shore Dive	Shark Point, Clovelly	Ian Roffey
2 July	Restaurant Night	TBA	Ray Moulang
3 July	Boat Dive	Red Flag	Digby Naude
9 July	Boat Dive	Wattamolla	Dave Casburn
16 July	Deep Wreck Dive	TBA	Caroline Corcoran
20 July	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Natasha Naude
22 – 24 July	Weekend Trip Away	South West Rocks	Ray Moulang
23 July	Shore Dive/BBQ	Oak Park	Eddie Ivers
30 July	Boat Dive	Marley Sponge Gardens	Peter Flockart

August 2016

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
6 August	Boat Dive	Bypass Reef	Shelley Breuseker
7 August	Shore Dive	The Skillion, Terrigal	Jason Coombes
13 August	Deep Wreck Dive	TBA	Peter Flockart
20 August	Shore Dive/BBQ	Oak Park	Paul Pacey
27 August	Boat Dive	SS Hilda	Nancy Scholeri

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	Natasha Naude	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au	0410 074 677
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	ast@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au	
Webmaster	Paul Pacey	webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au Paul.pacey@iinet.net.au	0431 691 173
Newsletter Editor	Ron Walsh	rondwalsh@gmail.com	