

# Sea Braggin'



July 2017

## St George Scuba Club Newsletter

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Grey Nurse Shark, North Rock, Broughton Island

## Boys Weekend to Port Stephens, 12-15 May 2017

By Ron Walsh

Forecast for the weekend – sunny with not much swell. Sounded good for the Boys Weekend planned for Port Stephens.

This year there were 8 divers who attended – Ray M, Chris H, Paul P, Andrew, Geoff W, Alan D, Roger L and Ron W. A house at Fingal Bay was organized, and the boat diving was with Feet First Dive.

The plan was arrive on Friday night, double boat dive to Broughton Island on the Saturday, shore



dive to explore Halifax Park on the Sunday, and another shore dive on the Monday at The Pipeline.

The house was a two storey residence directly across from Fingal Bay beach – perfect location. It was a large house that easily slept 7 persons.

Most divers arrived late Friday afternoon and once settled in we walked up to Fingal Bay Bowling Club for dinner – an impressive meal with very generous portions. Excitement was high as the forecast conditions for the next



morning were very promising.

Bright and early Saturday we checked in to Feet First dive, located in the main street of Nelsons Bay. Dive process is to set your gear up, load onto a 4WD, then hop on a mini bus for a short trip to the Anchorage Marina where the boat is moored. The boat is around 8m long and takes 8 divers plus crew – perfect for our numbers.

Once the gear is loaded we had a leisurely 45 min trip out to Broughton Island in reasonably calm conditions. After assessing the minimal wave motion at The Looking Glass this became our first dive.







The Looking Glass is one of the signature dives on the east coast of Australia. The site consists of a narrow channel directly through the middle of a small island, with depths ranging from 7- 13m, a width of 3 to 4m, and a length of around 50m. On the south side of the island there is a wall that can be followed down to a couple of small caves at 20m depth.

The protocol for diving here is for all divers to stay in single file on one side

of the channel to allow the grey nurse sharks to pass by on the other side.

We anchored on the southern side of the island and were soon in the water and heading over to the



Looking Glass entrance. At the entrance there was a massive school of yellow tail that simply streamed past forever. As soon as we entered the narrow canyon we were passed by a small grey nurse shark that promptly turned tail and disappeared, probably because of our noisy bubbles. Inside the canyon there were several large wobbegong sharks sitting on the bottom, along with numerous schooling fish.

We made our way through the canyon and towards the far end where it opened up we came across around 5 grey nurse sharks cruising up and down the canyon. We stayed here for some time admiring the sharks and taking photos before heading back through the canyon.



Once we had returned we headed down the wall to the small cave. On the way Roger played with a large cuttlefish that was hiding under one of the large boulders. At the cave we were surprised to find a large loggerhead turtle sleeping within.

We returned back to the anchor line, all did safety stops before getting back on the boat. The captain surprised us with the variety of hot soups that he had on board. I have to

admit it is the first time that I have had a red curry soup.

After our surface interval we headed over to North Rock and its shark gutters for our second dive. This site consists of several long broad gutters in around 10m depth that the sharks love to cruise slowly up and down, parting the myriad schools of bullseyes as they do so.

This dive was no exception with around 10 sharks and large schools of yellowtail and bullseyes. There were also a couple of large wobbegong sharks resting on the bottom so care had to be taken with fins. The shark teeth search was had with a couple of fine specimens being found. There was also a couple of schooling short fin bannerfish.

Once back at the marina the gear was loaded back onto the landcruiser, superb hot showers had, before travelling back to the dive shop where a sausage sizzle was provided for a late lunch – all very civilized.

Saturday night we made use of the large BBQ at the rental house with clearly too much food being cooked (Ray had managed to find huge t-bone steaks) along with beer, good wine, fine music and excellent company.

Sunday after a bit of a sleep in saw us all heading to Halifax Park to explore the site and see how the site was rehabilitating after the sand coverage of the past years. There were quite a number of divers there so that boded well for the site having recovered.

Entry is very easy using the path between the rocks, and once in we explored most of the site down to around 20m. It is pleasing to see that the site is well on the way to recovery with most of the exposed rocks now showing a healthy covering of sponges and hard corals, and fishlife is starting to be attracted by this growth. Lots of morays, various nudibranchs including purple lined flabellina, purple lined







nembrotha, large dusky flathead, maori wrasse, stingrays and red banded coral shrimps.

All agreed that the site is definitely worth diving again.

Sunday night was our trip to the Thai restaurant in Shoal Bay. Again a very pleasant night with superb Thai food.

Monday the weather gods decided to play up a bit. Four of us dived The Pipeline, which required us kitting up in the rain.

The dive however more than made up for this minor problem. This site is definitely for those who love the little stuff. Paul P was quite chuffed when he found a small robust ghost pipefish. Other critters spotted included short tail ceratosoma, daphnes chromodoris, red banded coral shrimp, purple lined flabellina, lots of octopus and cuttlefish, and even a cat shark.

A fantastic weekend was had by all. Many thanks again to Ray M for organizing and I

look forward to next years weekend.



# Crane Barge Wreck

## 13 May 2017

By Jane Scarsbrook

A 4am rude awakening from my alarm clock and an hour and half drive up to Palm Beach! My first thought was 'I really hope the dive is worth it'. This was my second attempt to dive the Crane Barge Wreck and to successfully get myself and a team on it to both explore its wisdom and discover the new coordinates released of its position with thanks to Damian Siviero. The wreck lies 2km South East from the Birchgrove Park 33° 38.938'S 151° 24.362'E (WGS 85) and is relatively easy to find on the sounder as it is surrounded by sand and sticks out like a sore thumb.

Once the team congregated at 7am - the sun came up which was a sign of good things to come. The water was flat and the 15 minute ride out to the wreck was uneventful. A pick was dropped and quite sharply the team rolled off the boat into superb diving conditions.

The pick reeled out into the current making it a long way down into 20m+ viz and 21 degree water temperature. The whole wreck could be seen upon decent making it 'the best Sydney dive this year' (Chris Sutton). It's a relatively small wreck, kind of cute with lots of unique features and growth. To explore everything it takes about 15 minutes which is great because it sits at 56m.

Its relatively in-tact with heaps of fish life. The team found wobbies, cuttle fish, schools of kings and lots of growth. The original deck is missing, however, the crane arm and winches are still there.

This wreck is certainly worth another dive – I am sure some historians in the club could write much better write-up than me but I can confirm its well worth the effort of an early rise.



# Club Night Dive—Shiprock

## 25 May 2017

By Ron Walsh

It had been a quite a while since the club had a night dive, mainly due to poor weather conditions and dive organizers on holidays. So when the weather and tides combined in late May to provide ideal conditions the call went out for a Shiprock dive.



The night was one of those magical nights with no wind and a nice full moon. There were 6 divers – Bill R, Alan D, Mark A, David Q, Ron W and one of our new members. High tide was just before 8pm so it was a late-ish dive.

The steps down to the dive site are always easy – compared to coming up – but the dive more than makes up for it. Water temperature was around 19C and visibility up to 10m.

Once in the water we swam down over the wall then drifted along with the current exploring the bommies before returning along the wall.

Critters sighted included dwarf lionfish, horned blennies, a sieve pattern moray out hunting, a number of octopi, a large tun shell out exploring the sandy bottom, a huge wobbegong hiding in a cave waiting for his next victim, cowrie shells, delicate flatworms, eastern frogfish, boxfish, and a



very tasty looking blue swimmer crab.

Following our safety stop we surfaced to mirror water conditions that reflected the moon spectacularly. Due to the late start there was no pizza stop after the dive so after packing up we all headed home to wash gear and head to bed.







## Club Boat Dive—Pizza/Barrens & Osborne Shoals

### 17 June 2017

By Peter Flockart

Photos by Wayne Hemming

The weather had been odd all week but by Saturday it was still ok and 3 boat loads of eager divers prepared to set out.

Phil Shorts crew of Phil and Dave, Greg & Shelley and Eda Di Camillo launched from the RMYC, Ken Ridley's crew of Ken, Maxine Hayden, Zorka J and Bob Hill went from Yowie Bay. While Wayne Hemming's crew (Wayne, Heinz, Peter F and Bram Harris) left from Dolans Bay.

Wayne's crew thought they might have been able to dive Marley sponge Gardens. On getting to



almost no fish life. The usual suspects in the way of nudibranchs and sponges were of course present. One medium sized cuttlefish was spotted near the end of the dive. On pulling the anchor the swell made our deco unpleasant and getting back on board the boat without injuring yourself was quite an accomplishment.

It wasn't so easy for the divers on the other 2 boats who dived at Barrens Hut.

Ken Ridley's crew dived in two shifts with the first group having to be collected by Ken when they

Jibboun the swell soon changed their minds. They did however try and just past Tulip Reef with the swell became messier, decided to turn around and dive elsewhere. On the return leg to Pizza Reef they were escorted by 2 humpback whales one on either side – spectacular.

On anchoring at Pizza, Heinz decided not to dive as he was feeling sick. The others geared up and rolled into 18 degrees water and 20m vis. On the bottom there was no current and it was an easy circumnavigation of the reef. Apart from a few bastard trumpeter there was



missed the anchor. This required Ken to drop his anchor and with a retrieval device and collect them. Once the anchor was retrieved he and Zorka entered the water. On the bottom he attached his reel to the anchor line and swam over the reef to the sand line finding lots of squid and the Nembrotha nudibranchs. They then retired to Jibbon for a terribly nice caca of lamingtons, bikkies and other nice munchies.

Phil and Dave didn't dive since when his first group (Greg, Shelley and Eda) were returning to the boat the swell made re-boarding treacherous as one of these divers sustained a nasty injury to a finger on her left hand and was advised to go straight to Sutherland Hospital to have it attended to. It required not only an X-ray but stitches. Diver and finger are healing well.



Wayne's crew retired to Jibbon for our surface interval. Here we saw some yellow turtles in the water. These turned out to be re-breather divers from Dave Casburns boat. They had aborted their dive to Middle ground due to a very strong current. One of these "turtles" breached the surface near our boat and was fed some fruit cake with the warning that if you feed the animals they will keep coming back. Think Jane liked the cake but in the end returned to Dave's boat for more "enlightened banter"

Surface interval completed Wayne's crew headed out to Osborne Shoals for their second dive.

The surface conditions were much improved but still lumpy. Again Heinz didn't dive but the others did. The water temp was still around 18 degrees but the vis was now down to about 15m. We swam past the cave until the wall curves inwards and were amazed at the huge numbers of squid eggs hanging off just about every sea tulip. Here we saw a large school of yellow tails 2 small box fish that gave Wayne grief as he tried to get a photo. I noticed a larger than usual number of firebrick stars and quite a few G.marginata nudis more than I thought would be around at this time of year.

After a leisurely dive of around 40 mins we met back at the anchor, inflated the lift bag and ascended to our deco stop which in Bram's case was 10 min.

We then returned to Dolans Bay.

Thanks to the boat owners for making their boats available for the dive in interesting conditions.





# Organising and/or attending a St George Scuba Club Boat Dive

Please refer to the document on [Organising and attending a Club Boat Dive](#) :

You can find the document on the St George website (you need to log in first) in **Downloads -> Event Planning and Catering -> Organising and attending a club boat dive (PDF version)**

[http://www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au/downloads/Organising\\_and\\_attending\\_an\\_SGSC\\_Boat\\_Dive\\_v1.7\\_16\\_Dec\\_2016.pdf](http://www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au/downloads/Organising_and_attending_an_SGSC_Boat_Dive_v1.7_16_Dec_2016.pdf)

To the boat dive organiser:

Thank you for taking on the task. It's not hard, and is one of the tasks that makes for a fun club activity. I do think that everyone should try to organise a dive (both to contribute to club events, but also to understand what's involved)

**Rule #1** – we do these dives at the pleasure of the Captains and their boats. Every Captain has 'preferences' (from attendees, to gear placement on board, to diving/equipment styles, etc) and these should be catered to where possible. My suggestion, until you get to know each boat, is just to say you're new to organising and to ask the Captains for anything you need to consider.

## For boat dive organisers: Preparing to organise a dive

2-4 weeks before the dive, send an email to [boatowners@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au](mailto:boatowners@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au) seeking boat availability from the Captains for the dive you are organising.

If you are new to organising, ask them for any extra guidance / feedback and you will usually get very helpful info back.

Try to determine:

The Boat ramp from which they intend to launch (and if it is Yowie Bay, try to determine whether the meeting spot is at the bottom of the hill near the ramp, or up the hill near the school - it can depend on the time of year and how much parking is likely to be available)

Single/Double dive preferences

Any regular crew coming with the boat already

Spare spots after the Captain and crew are allocated. Due to the vagaries of the English language, don't be afraid to clarify numbers if you are unsure of the Captain's reply (as the most important thing the organiser cares about is how many remaining spots they need to fill with club members)

Any preferred regular divers who, if they are doing the dive, a Captain would ideally want allocated on to their boat.

This is not just about grouping friends together, it's also usually to make sure that there's someone capable who can help with the launching and retrieving of the boat at the ramp. In addition, it's to have someone on the surface when the Captain is diving (usually dives are done in two tranches), in case the anchor comes loose or divers drift off and need collecting etc.

The person boat minding is a boat driver.

Meet/departure time. This is important! You want to determine the time that the boat wants to meet and load its divers. **This is the time by which the divers already need to be dressed and kitted up and ready to load gear on board, with departure shortly after.** Different Captains/different wordings but you need to make sure you have the time when the boat wants pre-prepared divers to load.

Some / many Captains will reply immediately. Others need some follow up. Quite often you'll get a conditional reply "probably yes but..."

Usually about 2 weeks prior, send an invitation to the [Stgeorge@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au](mailto:Stgeorge@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au) distro list. It does not need to explain how many spaces / boats are available (as quite often you will not know at this stage). A sample email is attached in the appendix. Feel free to customise as you see fit (but a word to the wise, going too far and drafting it in the style of a lawyer offering Nigerian inheritance dives for only a modest sum can only end badly...It did yield some of the funniest replies I've ever seen, but... please learn from my mistake...)

Try to not overuse the StG distribution email list. It can support, approximately, one email per hour. If you've seen another email sent recently, wait for an hour before sending yours.

When sending the invitation, it is usually helpful to indicate the general launch area (usually Botany Bay or Port Hacking), and include the link to the specific dive site from Michael's website <http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/news.php>

It is also usually worth noting the approximate maximum depth and anything else special for the dive site.

It is normal that some people will email you to book onto a dive before you have sent the invite

The dive site is always subject to weather conditions on the day as well as the preference of the boat Captain & crew.





## Indonesia Captures Maritime Grave Robbers

Somebody has been stealing warships from Southeast Asian waters – more specifically, sunken warships, which are prized for their scrap metal value. Indonesian authorities now believe that they have caught one of the perpetrators: they allege that the 8,000 gt Chinese grab dredger *Chuan Hong 68* was responsible for illegally scavenging the wrecks of the pre-WWII Japanese destroyer *Sagiri*, plus the passenger vessels *Hiyoshi Maru* and *Katori Maru*, the steamship *Igara* and the tanker *Seven Skies*.

It is the second time that maritime authorities have caught the *Chuan Hong 68* in as many months. On April 20, the Indonesian Navy detained her in the waters off Natuna in the Riau Islands on the suspicion that she was engaged in illegal dredging. She escaped on April 22 and fled to Malaysia, where she was detained once again by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency.

"I laud the Malaysian authorities, in this case the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, which has been cooperating with the Indonesian Navy, to seize *MV Chuan Hong 68* in the Pengerang waters, East Johor," said Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti in a statement. She added that the practice of illegal salvage was unfortunately common in Indonesian waters, by foreign as well as domestic vessels.



The Jakarta Post reports that the Chinese government believes the *Chuan Hong 68* was operating under charter to a Malaysian firm. "It has been engaged in offshore engineering in the waters specified by the Malaysian side according to the contract,"

the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

As of Monday, the *Chuan Hong 68*'s AIS signal showed her at anchor at the Pasir Gudang Anchorage off Pengerang, Malaysia. Recent images of her topsides show a heavy crane mounted all the way forward on her bow, rigged to a giant pointed grapple. Scrap is shown strewn about the decks aft of the crane.

Unlicensed wreck removal has affected a significant number of maritime war graves in Northern [European](#) and Southeast Asian waters. Many warships sunk in World War I and World War II have been vandalized for their bronze propellers, the copper in their boilers and even for their scantlings and hull plating. Vessels built before 1942 have steel that was smelted before atomic bomb testing put radioactive isotopes into the atmosphere, and this "low-background" material is valuable for making sensitive scientific instruments.



The plundering continues despite the fact that these ships are designated war graves. Two Dutch vessels that went down in the Battle of the Java Sea have completely disappeared, along with a section of a third. The wrecks of HMAS *Perth*, HMS *Electra*, HMS *Exeter*, USS *Houston* and USS *Perch* have also been affected.

UK newspaper The Guardian [found](#) that local institutions in Indonesia – including a university and a maritime authority –

were involved in "licensing" at least one WWII vessel salvage operation. Photos of that operation taken by local residents and provided to the paper (below) correspond closely to the appearance of the *Chuan Hong 68*.

## Upcoming Club Meeting Events

11 July - Chuuk Show – Peter Flockart

Covering a series of photos that Peter took during a 2 week trip to dive the WW2 wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon

8 August - Annual General Meeting

12 September - iNaturalist Site - Mark McGrouther, Australian Museum

Mark's talk is about his project within iNaturalist, which is a dive site where people upload photos to be identified and to record the sighting. Mark has a project within that site for Australasian Fishes so people that upload a photo of an Australasian fish are tagging it to the project.

10 October - Syngnathids (seahorses, pipehorses, pipefish, seadragons) - Andrew Trevor Jones, Australian Museum

14 November - To be advised

12 December - Christmas Meeting





# Dive Club Calendar

## July 2017

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
1 July	Deep Dive	TBA	Peter Flockart
8 July	Boat Dive	Osborne Shoals	Jason Coombs
9 July	Shore Dive	Bare Isle or Kurnell	Paul Pacey
11 July	Club Meeting	Rowers on Cook	Greg Blackburne
15 July	Boat Dive	Wattamolla	Shelley Breuseker
22 July	Boat Dive	Yellow Rock	Natasha Naude
23 July	Shore Dive	Oak Park or Shiprock	Eddie Ivers
29 July	Dry Dive	Pro Diving Services	Jane Scarsbrook

## August 2017

Date	Description	Location	Organiser
5 August	Deep Dive	TBA	Peter Flockart
8 August	Club Meeting - AGM	Rowers on Cook	Greg Blackburne
12 August	Boat Dive	Marley Point	Shelley Breuseker
13 August	Shore Dive	Bare Isle or Kurnell	Eddie Ivers
18-20 August	Weekend Away	Jervis Bay	Ian Roffey
19 August	Boat Dive	Barrens Hut	Eda Di Camillo
26 August	Boat Dive	Red Flag	Natasha Naude
27 August	Boat Dive	The Bombo	Aidan Slevin

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>	
Vice President	Peter Flockart	<a href="mailto:vpresident@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au">vpresident@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au</a>	
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Weedy Seadragon, The Leap, Kurnell