



Sea Braggin'

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2008

Outgoing Presidents Report

By Kelly McFadyen

07/08 was a great year to be a member of St George Scuba Club. This year we enjoyed a record number of organised club activities:

1. 19 trips away: Osprey reef on Undersea Explorer (x2), Shellharbour, Port Stephens (twice), Solitary Islands, Forster, Jervis Bay, Ulladulla, Terrigal, Narooma, Truk, Coffs Harbour, Swansea, Papua New Guinea plus a few more to come before the end of this year.
2. 23 Club dive days at Swansea, Wollongong, Bass Point, Bare Island (a few times), Kurnell, Pizza reef, Tabbagai, Shiprock, SS Hilda, Minmi trench, Marley Point, The Leap (a couple of times), SS Duckenfield, Middle Ground, North Head, The Colours, Barrens Hut and a Photo Competition.
3. 39 Thursday night dives in Sydney, with an average of 10 divers each week. All dives were followed by Pizza or a BBQ dinner.
4. Social events including our anniversary dinner at Sutherland Thai, Christmas in July, a night out at Bexley and Snow Skiing.
5. A Free Club Boat Dive Day, with boat dives (at the value of \$25) subsidised by the club for members.
6. In addition, members have travelled far and wide including Vanuatu, PNG, South China Sea and Tasmania.

Member numbers reached 96 during the year and the membership fee remained at \$25 (the same amount for around 9 years now).

Members continued to benefit from the increased club away trip subsidy with a record \$1393 spent on financial members to either reduce the cost of the trip or to supply a BBQ dinner.

Our annual Christmas Party for members and their families was held in early December, with more than 50 members and family enjoying a feast of cold meats and salads.

We had 2 tank testing runs (Thanks to Heinz) which cost members \$15 rather than the minimum \$45. In addition, Michael organised 4 Dive Imports equipment orders valued at just under \$10,000.

The Club renewed its SCAN membership, which gives members 2 free BBQs each year and the opportunity to mingle with other independent dive club members. SCAN continues to represent our members on issues that impact on our diving.

General meetings have been well attended by members with a minimum of 3 raffle prizes made available at each monthly meeting. Prizes have included wine, diving books and dive equipment. A special thank you to those members who donated prizes during the year.

We have a healthy bank balance with some funds invested in an interest bearing account. Financial reports have been produced by Mark who has managed our

finances with accuracy throughout the year.

Michael McFadyen selflessly maintained the club website which is a source of information for new and existing members. This work is genuinely appreciated by the members of the club.

Jason Coombs has dazzled us yet again with a series of club newsletters that bring tales of diving experiences and information on events. Michael Wright has continued with this good work having taken the reins of Newsletter Editor in the later part of the year. Thank you to those members who have provided stories and photographs to make us all envious.

On behalf of all the members, a very special thank you to the boat owners – John Beddie, Les & Michael, Ian Gowan, Ray Moulang and Dave Casburn for making their boats available to members to dive from.

On behalf of all club members I would like to thank the Committee (Peter F, Mark, Sheila, Dave C) for volunteering their time and effort in managing the administration of the Club.

The future of the club remains prosperous with plenty of diving and socialising on the horizon. I look forward to spending time with you all under the sea.

Happy diving,

Kelly

Vanuatu

By Nancy Scoleri

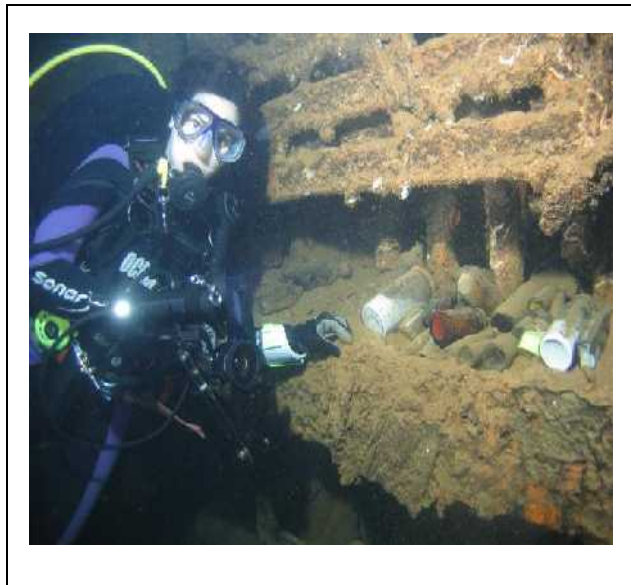
Photos courtesy of Gary Perkins

For scuba divers, Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu is the Mecca of diving in the South Pacific. In mid-September, Gary and I organised a two week diving holiday in Espiritu Santo in order to discover the well-known shipwreck, the *SS President Coolidge*.

The 200m long, 22,000 ton luxury liner turned troopship, complete with munitions, military supplies and personal belongings is one of the largest and most accessible shipwrecks in the world. She

lies close to the shore with her bow at 20 metres and her stern at 70 metres deep, therefore providing the perfect diving and training ground for extended bottom times and deeper diving. We decided to complete three Technical Diving International (TDI) diving courses while in Santo: Basic Nitrox, Advanced Nitrox and Decompression procedures. Our first week was mostly based around the courses. Topics covered included the use of nitrox mixtures to increase decompression efficiency and dive safety, gas volume management, equipment configuration, methods of regulating oxygen levels and effectively planning decompression dives to a maximum depth of 45 metres. As you can imagine, our first week felt more like work than a holiday! Our days were composed of a course dive in the morning, a theory class over lunch time followed by another course dive to put in practise what we learnt in the classroom. Then, more theory in the afternoon, and reading at night to prepare for the class the following day. The dives for the courses were very demanding and the instructors did not cut us any slack! We did pass the exams and the practical components and successfully completed the three courses.

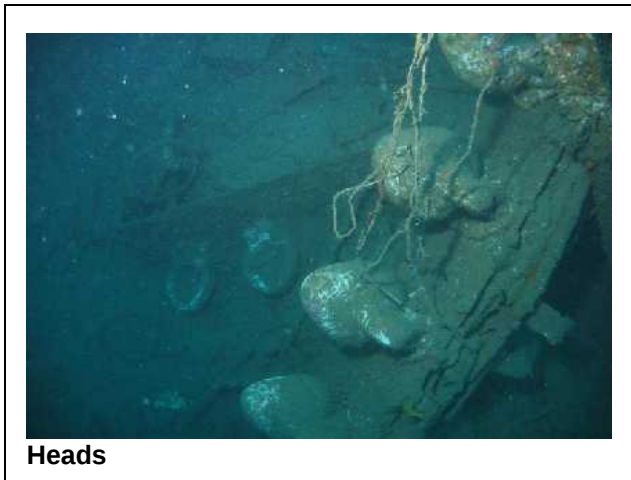
The second week was only pleasure dives, principally on the *Coolidge*. Our first dive was from the bow of the ship in 20 metres of water and around the Promenade Deck which unfortunately collapsed a few months ago. My first impression when I saw the wreck was pure amazement on its magnitude and majesty. The visibility that day was around 25 metres and as far as I could see in any direction was the endless structure of the wreck! In the afternoon, we went inside cargo holds 1 and 2 which are filled with aircraft drop-tanks, trucks, jeeps, tracked vehicles, steering wheels, tyres and various military equipment such as guns, cannons and munitions. We also saw the medical supplies, a collection of various sized bottles of medicines powders and syringes.



On each consecutive dive, we penetrated deeper and further inside the wreck. We made our way along corridors, up and down stairwells, through gantry walkways and a number of decks and rooms. At 42 metres, we visited the beautiful porcelain statue of "The Lady and The Unicorn." A little deeper, we explored the turbines, propeller shaft and the ship's engine room where we saw temperature and pressure gauges as well as the telegraphs.



A telegraph



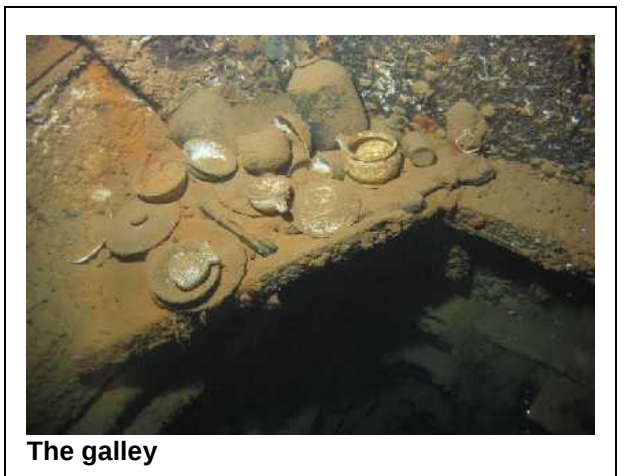
Heads



The Lady

On a different dive, we also swam through the crew's accommodation sections of the ship where we found various personal effects of the soldiers as well as rows of bathrooms and still intact light bulbs. A highlight of this dive was the Doctor's Office containing syringes, sutures, vials of medicine, tin boxes, and first aid kits.

At 57 metres, we investigated the galley. This was a fantastic dive where we saw food preparation tables, industrial size potato peelers and dough machines, the butcher shop as well as ovens, crockery and kettle drums.



The galley

On our last three dives of the ship, we decided to investigate the outside of the ship. We spotted the ship's 20 mm cannons, the crows nest and the spare anchor. At 57 metres, we went for "a dip"

in the mosaic-tiled first-class swimming pool. To conclude, we explored the stern of the wreck in 60 metres of water.



Couting the tiles

Our trip would not have been complete without few dives at Million Dollar Point. This is another popular site of Santo where at the end of WWII, the US navy disposed of thousands of tons of military supplies and machinery into the waters. In this unique dive site, we discovered a multitude of bulldozers, cranes, fork lifts, and trucks piled upon one another.



A tank at Million Dollar Point



Truck at Million Dollar Point

Gary and I had an amazing diving trip in Espiritu Santo and I highly recommend it. It is definitely paradise for any scuba diver: clear tropical waters, good visibility, and an amazing wreck as an underwater playground with a range of unique dives from 20 metres up to 70 metres. So go and experience it yourself!

M&K Reef

**10th August 2008
by Jason Coombs**

We had three boats (LeScat, SCRAM and Seajohn) with 11 divers for this trip out. Given the sea temperatures around the 14c mark it was a good turn out.

This reef recently discovered by John Beddie and his crew is named M&K as it is directly off the St Michael’s golf course clubhouse where Michael and Kelly had their wedding reception at Little Bay.

Michael, Kelly and I on LeScat anchored on the outside with the other two boats in closer. We dropped into some brisk cool water and started to explore the reef.

The reef had a series of small overhangs that curved around in a horseshoe shape with a dome reef in the middle. We saw a few pjs and some yellow tail pike on the reef.

Later the other two boats reported that wall becomes more pronounced further in and there’s a cave you can easily swim into.

With the cool water Kelly spent the deco stop doing underwater starjumps.

After the dive we headed back into Botany Bay for morning tea and to thaw out a bit.

Thank you to Michael, John and Ray for the use of their boats on the day.

The Leap

4th October 2008

By Eddie Ivers

Jason Coombs, John, Ray & Andrew Moulang, Julius and I dived The leap on a cool, overcast day.

This was to be a drift dive and a good way to use the residual air from last Sunday's boat dive. I was wrong...again!

This was not a drift dive but a swim all the way to the Steps.

NO incoming current, and the water was a Cold 13 degrees, OK for those insulated in their cosy dry suits but not for those like me in wetsuits.

Thankfully the sea was flat but the viz was ordinary, at best 6m.

Andrew at the start of the dive saw an anchor and chain but wisely considered his options and decided to leave it where it was.(A good decision)



Broken Weedy - By Eddie Ivers

I also saw a quite few PJs and a Large Blue Mowong.

Carol & John were at the Steps when we exited and joined us for a tea , brewed coffee biscuits & lamingtons in the shelter from the rain at the Whale Watch Platform

Thanks Paul for organising this enjoyable dive, however please next time some more incoming current??



Nudibranch - By Jason Coombs

However with marginal daytime viz , this dive developed into a good critter dive with even a Sea Pen open (believing it was still dawn), plus lots of Nudebranches and Weedies , one male with tail & its most of the eggs bitten off.

REGULAR EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 19th November 2008 at the St. George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street Wooli Creek at 8.00 pm. Come along about 7 pm and enjoy a meal at the bistro.

Thursday Night Dives

If you do not currently get the email each week advising the location of the dive, please email

michael@michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

and advise that you would like to be added to the list.

Please make sure that you let Michael McFadyen know if you are coming in case the weather means we need to move or cancel the dive.

Other Dives

Many other dives are advised in the news section of the Club's web site.

If you are interested in a dive, have a look at the news section a few days before a weekend and you may find others already planning a dive.

You can also place your own news item there (but remember it may time to appear as it needs to be authorised by a web site administrator).

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Boat Dive 30 November

The Tupia Point boat dive originally scheduled for 30th November has been changed to 23rd November. Tupia Point is the Southern headland at Long Bay (near M&K Reef). It is proposed to go out of Botany Bay as usual.

Tasmania February/March 2009

Four people have already booked flights for this trip leaving Launceston airport 27th February and returning to Hobart airport 8th March. Cost is approximately \$1450 plus airfares to and from Sydney. Further details available on the club website

Thailand March 2009

Feeling adventurous - the following is some prices for a trip to the Simian Islands leaving Phuket for 4 days (5 Nights) on a liveaboard. Total of 4 days diving = 16 dives. the average cost per dive after discount assuming 28 baht :\$Aud is about \$56.00.I have dived with these guys before and now they have a new boat which looks great.

Obviously it would be great to stitch this excursion with an extended holiday. There are deals to be done or alternatively those that wish to stitch their own deal due to frequent flyers and timeshares can do so.

Indicative cost assuming Aud:28Baht and after 20% discount is detailed below.

The boat with all in cost is \$900 - \$1000 for the 16 dives.

Deals regularly offered is stay 8 nights, including airfares and transfers for about

\$1300 - \$1400. Add some spending money (Guys add \$1.50, girls \$1500.00) and that would be about right. I guess a budget of \$3000 will see you sloshed, well feed and some tailor made gear to bring home.

Check out the website www.diveasia.com the new boat comes on line in November 2008.

Thinking about the trip 28 - 14th - 18th March 09.

What I have done in the past is to arrive in Phuket in the AM of departure of the dive boat - check what I gear I don't want with the hotel I am booked to stay with when I get off the boat. Spend that day at the hotel (pool etc) and then get picked up and delivered back to the hotel - works well

For those that are serious a deposit will be required say 25% of the Dive boat cost (\$say \$250.00) to secure your spot. Let me know whether you want a Travel Deal or whether you want to do your own thing.

Please contact Mark Ridsdale if you are interested Ph. 0419 243717

OTHER NEWS

Thanks From Janine Jenkins

Thanks to all those in the club who sent me their best wishes, cards, flowers, phoned or visited me in hospital after my skiing accident. I was overwhelmed at the love and concern, and certainly appreciated all the funny jokes told. I'm doing really well now and should be up walking by Christmas.

Thanks from The President

A big thank you to outgoing committee members Kelly McFadyen (President) and Shiela Baldock (Secretary). They leave the club in great shape with nearly 100 members. Diving activities have also been breaking records with 5 boats and 22 divers at a recent club dive at Marley Point. That's more than anyone remembers for a club dive. The club benefits significantly from the voluntary contributions of people like Kelly and Shiela.

For Sale: Olympus C-5060 Accessories

Janine Jenkins (m 0412 508 377) has the following items for sale:

Item	Paid	Used		
Olympus PT-020 housing rated to 40m	450	twice	Olympus conversion lens adaptor	70 new
Full Ultra Light Dual Tray, handle ball joint arm system	538	twice	Inon UCL-165 M67 2x macro lens	275 new
Olympus 0.7x wide conversion lens	325	new	Inon dual M67 lens holder	110 new
			Athera optical 100 wide zoom port	660 new
			Olympus wide lens and step adaptor ring for C-5060	418 new

Reasonable offers will be accepted.

The Committee is:

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Please send items for the Newsletter to me by the 28th of the month