



P.O. Box 453 Hurstville South 2221 NSW
Visit our web page at www.ozemail.com.au/~diving/stgeorge/stgeorge.htm

November 2003



CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Sunday 7th December At Kurnell.

It is important to book yourself in so we can organize the catering.

So ring Elly on 9520 9421 to RSVP

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Don't forget to return the Xmas raffle butts and money by the December meeting. If you require more tickets, contact Les on 9520 9421.

*First prize is a ham worth about \$70

*Second prize is a carton of Crown Lager (donated by Russell)

*Third prize is a portable gas stove (donated by Heinz)

*Fourth prize is a bottle of "Decompression Port" (which is guaranteed to cure the bends) and two "St. George" port glasses.

UPCOMING DIVES

Solitary Islands Mid week Diving Adventure

Week Commencing Monday 8th March 2004

Diving with Dive Quest at Mulloway Divers

Cost: \$420.00

Includes: 4 double dives, Second tank free, all air refills included,

5 night's accommodation with Continental breakfast cereals, milk, coffee & tea

Non Divers

Cost: \$20.00 per night accommodation – includes breakfast

Washout: If either of the days Monday to Thursday is a wash out, then either of the following applies:

1. Dive Friday at no extra cost of extended stay and depart Saturday, or
2. A rebate of \$80.00 against package cost of \$420.00

Additional Diving: Should you wish to stay longer and do additional diving then the additional cost is: \$100.00 per day. (\$20.00 accommodation, \$80.00 double dive).

Dive sites will be organized based on the weather conditions but will include the NorthWest and North Solitary Islands with more experienced dive sites on request.

This is the best diving in NSW with blue water, 24 – 26 degree water and 15- 25 metre visibility – so don't miss out on the this great opportunity.

The suggested itinerary is to arrive Sunday 7th March in the afternoon, dive Monday through Thursday, with flexibility for further diving or departure on Friday.

This dive adventure is being organized by Mark Ridsdale (0419 243 717). Deposits of \$50.00 are preferred to be paid at the December Meeting.

Ulladulla Long Weekend

We have booked two cabins plus boat dives at Ulladulla for the long weekend in January. Plenty of spaces left at this time. Contact Les on 9520 9421 to secure your spot.

North Head Dive

The last club dive for this year is on Sunday 21st. December, at North Head. Ring Phillip Rose on 9543 0748 for details.

DIVE REPORTS**SCAN WEEKEND NOVEMBER 15 & 16**

12 divers from St. George Scuba club joined 12 other divers for a weekend of diving at Nelson Bay. The 12 divers (+ 2 non-divers) from SGSC came on Friday afternoon to Soldiers Point Caravan Park. We had dinner at the Bowling club and enjoyed the evening there. (Carol discovered that she likes 'dark & stormy').

Saturday, we enjoyed a leisurely morning together. The dive was organised for 12:53pm (!) = high tide at Halifax Park. I dived with Steve Shaw (President). The water was very dirty – approx. 3m visibility. We saw 5 large crayfish, baby wobbegong shark, blind shark blue groper, small moray eel and lots of other fish. Nice dive.



After the dive Steve & Sue Shaw and I climbed Tomaree Headland to the gun emplacements and summit. The view in all directions was well worth the climb. From the summit we could see large schools of fish near the beach below. We followed this with a swim at Zenith Beach.

Saturday night, back at the Caravan Park, we enjoyed a BBQ provided by SCAN (Thanks to Les & Elly Caterson). The evening was spent sharing diving stories with the other SCAN club members. A few of us watched the Wallabies annihilate the All Blacks on TV -much to our delight.

Following a Sunday morning sleep in, several members decided to have a day in the sun (no diving). 5 divers left Port Stephens and decided to have a drift dive at Swansea Bridge. We entered the water near the Swansea RSL at approx. 1pm on a strong incoming current. 40 minutes later we made

our exit from the water approx. 1.5km into the lake! It was a fast, exciting roller-coaster ride over (underwater) sand dunes ranging from 4 to 10m in height. Visibility was approx. 3m. We saw flathead, king fish, pipe fish and lots of litter & junk. A very different type of dive and well worth it.

After the dive we all set off back home to Sydney. The whole weekend, accompanied by excellent weather, was great.

SHARKS GALORE!

Michael McFadyen

Well, after reading Les's article in the last newsletter about his recent shark encounter, I have to tell members about a recent dive that Andreas Thimm and I did in Sydney.

On 18 October, we were on Peter Field's boat with Mark Spencer when we decided to dive the wreck of the old Manly ferry, the SS Dee Why, off Long Reef. We had an uneventful dive on the bottom and came back up after about 18.5 minutes. Arriving at the first decompression stop at nine metres, I saw something swim pass. As we had seen a few dolphins on the surface just before we entered the water, I swam out to look thinking that this is what I had seen. Wrong! Two large sharks. I swam back to the anchor and indicated to the others what I had seen. Peter pointed out into the blue and there were more sharks. A bit of a worry, Andreas and I had to do about 20 minutes deco and there were many sharks about.

Each way I looked I saw sharks. These were black whalers or dusky sharks. These are a potentially dangerous sharks and believed to be responsible for attacks on humans. At one stage I saw quite a few together so I swam out towards them and counted six. As I turned to go back I saw another three and then another three. There were at least 12 sharks around us, just circling slowly, not harassing us, just going around and around. We felt a bit like cowboys surrounded by Red Indians! The sharks ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 metres in size.

Peter and Mark had done a lot shorter bottom time than us and used nitrox so they surfaced after about five minutes. This left Andreas and I alone. The sharks stayed around for another 12 minutes, only leaving

just before we finished our decompression. Back on board, we were having as cuppa when the No Frills Divers came up and told us that they had been harassed by a bronze whaler shark on the wreck of the nearby Trio.

We headed back to Sydney Harbour and went to the Watsons Bay Hotel. Soon after, Paul Wright (many members would know Paul), John Black and the wreck guru John Riley turned up. They had been out doing a very deep dive on the Koputai wreck and they reported that they had a mako shark swim past them.

Imagine that, three shark encounters on the one day! Very unusual.

Anyway, Andreas and I cannot beat the size or danger of Les's shark, but we beat him on the numbers and the length of time of the encounter.

SIMPSON DESERT TRIP

By Michael McFadyen

We drove to Yulara the next morning, passing Mt Connor, an Uluru lookalike, near Curtin Springs. After lunch we headed out to Uluru to see Ayers Rock and visited the Cultural Centre. We then had a look around The Rock before going to the sunset viewing area about one hour before sunset (6:18 pm) to the spot we had already picked out earlier.



The carpark was full by 5:45 pm and overflowing by 6 pm. Like nearly everyone else, we had beers, wine and nibblies while waiting for the sun to do its thing. This is something that everyone has to do, the changes in the colour of the Rock and the sky was amazing.



Over the next day and a half we do walks at the Rock and The Olgas. The Olgas were much better than I had ever thought that they would be and the Valley of the Winds walk

was excellent. It is about 7 km and takes almost two hours. The other interesting walk was the circuit around the rock, 9.6 km. I also climbed Uluru, very, very hard but worth the view I reckon. I was also lucky to get on a standby flight in a helicopter. This 36 minute flight went to Uluru and The Olgas. I would recommend it to anyone who has the money.

We all met up after lunch and head off for Curtin Springs. Here there is a free campsite and it was very crowded. After dinner, there was a huge communal campfire which was frequented by dozens of people.

The next day had the easiest travel, most of it is on tar. We travelled via Kulgera to Marla where we originally planned to camp. It was too early, so we decided to move on towards Oodnadatta. We found a good campsite at Coongra Creek, about 81 km from Marla.

The next day we decided to have a late start as we did not have to go far. However, when we went to leave at 10:30 am, Robby's car had broken a fan belt. It took no time to get the other two belts off so we could fit the new one, it took ages to get the belts back on due to the fact that the alternator would not move enough to enable fitment. It ended up taking 2.5 hours to change.

We finally got to Oodnadatta and had a look at the Pink Roadhouse and a beer in the Transcontinental Hotel. Even after the late start, we arrived at the Algebuckina Waterhole at about 4:30 pm. We have been travelling alongside the old Ghan Railway since well before Oodnadatta and alongside the waterhole is the Algebuckina Bridge, the largest bridge in South Australia.

We started a fire as soon as we arrived as Elly was cooking a baked lamb dinner for us all. What a feast - lamb, pumpkin, potatoes, carrots, onions and other veges, damper, red and white wine. We even had pancakes for dessert. A great meal.

The next morning was the coldest of the trip, -2C. A little down the road we decided to go to Peake. This was 16 km off the road along a very rough track. There were excellent ruins, many buildings with a mine and a smelter. Well worth it.

In the afternoon we stopped at William Creek and had a beer in the pub (if you have not already guessed, we stopped at virtually every pub on the trip). From here we go to Coward Springs, a great private campsite alongside some old Ghan buildings. Here I decided to cook pizzas for dinner, a success! Next morning we went to Blanche Cup and then The Bubbler. These are mound springs and the pools are on the top and the water flows down the sides. The Bubbler was very warm, perhaps 35C.

Just after here we came across some Germans driving a HQ Holden stuck on the side of the road. They had pulled a little off the road and got bogged. Les told them all they had to do was drive straight ahead and this got them back on the road.

From here we went to Curdimurka Siding where there is 4 km of track, a fairly good rail building, water tower and desalinator. To the west there is a long bridge, the second longest in the state over a creek that leads into Lake Eyre.

Next stop was Lake Eyre South and then Marree. The wind was now blowing gale force, perhaps 90 km/h. Due to the wind, we had lunch in the pub. The plan was to go to Farina, an old deserted town, and camp there. It would have been interesting but the wind was still the same and dust blowing everywhere. We headed on, stopping at the Ochre Cliffs. Very interesting, with orange, yellow, white, red, purple and other colour ochre used by local Aboriginals.

Arriving at Lyndhurst we found that the camping ground was on the exposed side of the Lyndhurst Elsewhere Hotel, so it was a bit pointless to stay there. We decided to stop in a room attached to the pub. The next morning we go to Talc Alf's Art Gallery. What a weird bloke! We continued along the Strezlecki Track and had lunch at MacDonells Creek which is next to the homestead formerly called Mount Hopeless and then Blanchewater. This is where Burke and Wills were heading when they died as it was the northern most property in SA. I find the whole of this track quite boring and not worth doing again. We were going to stop at the Monte Collina waterhole but it was a

very poor campsite so we went on to Merti Merti and camped east of the homestead.

The end of the trip is fast approaching. The next day we headed to Cameron Corner and then on to Milparinka. We go the long way, though properties like Waka and Hewart Downs. We visit Depot Glen and Pooles Grave (again for Frank and I), before returning to Tibooburra (where we have another beer at the Family Hotel).

We leave Dead Horse Gully early the next morning and drive via the Mount Wood Pastoral Museum and the Wanaaring Road to White Cliffs. If there is a more uninteresting place on this trip, I must have blinked.

Day 28, Friday 8 August 2003, Robby, Carol, David and Irmgard decided to leave very early and drive to Sydney in one go. We opt for a later start and drive to Wellington where we camped. The next day we drove home to Sydney.

All in all, I drove 8,835 km, used 1,194 litres of fuel costing \$1,271, averaging 13.5 litres per 100 km (21 mpg) and had a fantastic time. Many thanks to Les for organising the trip.

GENERAL BUSINESS

A complaint regarding the food at the Rowing Club was lodged following our last meeting. The manager has promised to look into the matter and will get back to us within the next week. Meanwhile if you haven't already done so, think about becoming a member of the Rowing club. In this way we may have a bit more say.

Robyn Hewitt was last heard of travelling around Kangaroo Island.

Michael and Heinz have gone off to Port Moresby for a spot of diving with Mark Palmer.

NEWSLETTER

Please send items to me by Email

rstoker@optusnet.com.au

The more you send the better the newsletter will be.

RAFFLE

1st prize Book: Sharks and Rays a Glass and key ring was won by David Vandervelden who had already won the book donated it back which was then won by Steve Shaw

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on **17th December, 2003** at the St. George Rowing Club, Levy Street Arncliffe at 8.00pm.

COMMITTEE

The committee of the Club for the 2003-4 Year is:

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Seadragon taken by Dave Burns

