



Sea Braggin'

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2008

Lady Musgrave Island

August

By Peter Trayhurn

I liked the idea of the expedition to Lady Musgrave Island rather than our normal dive trip. The logistics of getting my underwater camera gear to a very remote island was a challenge I undertook with relish. The diving was like a never-ending all you can eat buffet, everyone had as much diving as they could handle for just over two weeks. I paced myself and did 2 to 3 dives a day.

It all started when I finished packing at midnight and immediately drove to Canberra to be ready for the 5.45am convoy departure. In Canberra I picked my travelling buddy Paul and his gear and *The Pufferfish*, an IRB. The trailer and boat weighed 750kg unbraked. The drive from Canberra to Gladstone via Cowra, Molong and Narabri was 1557 km and took a day and half. After arrival in Gladstone I purchased a hand spear, 23 dozen[!] unopened oysters, tequila, Midori, vodka, scotch and 7 cartoons of icecream. I also found a bush phone Telstra dealer who made up an extension lead for my next g antenna, so I could hoist it up a tree. This worked fine on the island and let me make video calls to Ellie and the kids and surf the 'net pretty fast.

I loaded gear into big wooden boxes. These boxes were then loaded onto the barge by forklift. My two big tanks, two 80 watt solar panels and seven dive tubs were full of gear including solar power stuff, camera gear, laptop, camping gear and extra food, oysters and the 45 litre 12volt engel fridge. The other 15 people in the group all helped. We had a filling

dinner at the yacht club and the ferry left at 11pm. On the barge we had 2 rubber duckies, 8 x 200 litre blue plastics drums of water, 6 x 150 litre drums of unleaded, 2 compressors and the group's camping gear as well as a huge amount of communal food. Leaving Gladstone harbour at night was spectacular. The sleep on the deck was comfortable and dry. I awoke to a stunning sunrise and Musgrave Island. Unloading the barge and setting up the camp was hard work which deserved nice cold icecream which must have been enjoyed because the 2 litres disappeared very quickly at the hands of the hungry hoarde.



Communal mess - By Peter Trayhurn

The whales were signing on almost every dive and some of the group had a very close encounter. One morning while having breakfast someone called out whales really loud. I dropped breakfast and ran down to the beach and watched a mother and calf humpback slowly swim past our moorings with a group of my buddies in the water. The rest of watched with a mixture of awe and envy.

The site called the Manta Bommie was great and only a 10 minute run from the moorings. I saw a couple Mantas, one other group saw 15 mantas at one time. At the Manta bommie we were buzzed by the friendliest, biggest turtle I have had the pleasure of meeting and photographing. After that dive we were all on a high from a very special close encounter with a very friendly old turtle, who I suspect was as curious about us as we were about him.



A Massive Turtle - By Peter Trayhurn

Another must-do dive is the channel drift. Which we did on the incoming tide, so we didn't get swept away. We had a raging current the first time and it lasted 7 minutes, the second time last 12 minutes and the last time was 17 minutes. We did this on one tank. You don't go below 10 meters., I saw a Manta with 12 remorahs fighting the current and not making any progress. We also saw large Queensland groupers and big turtles leaving the lagoon and heaps of fish life.

Fairfax Island is a 20 minute run from Lady Musgrave Island and has great sites with caves and corals. We got there often because of the calm conditions.

Another memorable dive was loading up the wheel barrow with tanks, dive and camera gear and diving the eastern lagoon. Stunning blue water and patches of shallow colourful corals.

The weather was mostly calm and sunny. My favourite site was fish fingers which had a reef structure like your hand and had great fish life, good sponges and corals and huge currents. After the dive we agreed it was a 10 finger current because without 10 fingers you were dragged up the anchor rope.

The communal cooking was exceptional and all the meals were tasty and filling. I made French onion soup. Feeding 18 is pretty hard. We also invited some other campers to join us on the island.

In the middle of the trip the big compressor burst into flames when petrol was spilled while refilling the compressor. I assisted with pulling it apart and rebuilding it.

I would love to go next year and the ANU club were good company who eat, drink and dive to excess. Luckily I could just hold my own and told a few good Saint George Dive club stories. I played cards most nights with Paul, Wolfgang and Jeremony. This was Jeremony's 22nd trip to the island so he had a few stories to tell and helped out in many ways.

Marley Point

30th August
By Paul Pacey

Perfect weather greeted six club members gathered at Yowie Bay boat ramp for a spot of diving from *Le Scat*. The crew were Michael McFadyen, Carol Martin, Nancy Scoleri, Gary Perkins, John Conolly, and Paul Pacey.

Once underway we were keeping a watch out for the club's newest boat – *DownUnder* (skipped by Captain Casburn) as we thought that they were heading out from Wally's Wharf. As we

headed south through calm seas we could not find *DownUnder* anywhere. Michael tried the radio to no avail, so we decided to go diving without them!

Marley Point got a good response from the crew and Michael set the GPS upon the task of finding it. John said “isn’t it just over there” pointing at Marley Point. John, if you have the technology, you have to use it!

The sea conditions were excellent for diving close in on the cliffs in the light westerly wind and we were soon anchored on the edge of the reef in 18m of water. Looking down the anchor line showed excellent visibility (but we’ve been tricked by this before). Michael, Nancy and Gary hit the water as the first group while the “B team” enjoyed the morning sun and chatted.

After a while, *DownUnder* radioed and said they were at Yena Gap and diving in green water. We felt even better after finding this out!

As “team A” returned to the shot line I jumped into the water and was instantly reminded that it’s not summer yet, the water was freezing - 15C according to John’s computer. Thankfully, I had put two hoods on for the occasion. However, the viz was very tidy at 15M+.

I have only dived here once before and that is a shame because it is such a nice dive site – particularly if you like a real cruisey dive with lots of swim-throughs and cave-like sections to explore, as I do.



A Weedy Sea Dragon at Marley Point - By Paul Pacey

A lot of these swim throughs and caves have miniature sponge cities that are not only fascinating to look at but are also interesting to search in for macro life. We only saw one Weedy Sea Dragon and he was carrying a huge brood of eggs on his tail. It would be fascinating to watch the process of transferring the fertilised eggs from the female to the male – pretty tricky without arms I imagine!

There were quite a few Wirrah’s drifting around as well as a Pygmy Leatherjacket, outcrops of Beautiful Ascidians and all the other usual suspects were in attendance. Strangely enough I didn’t see any PJ’s or Wobby’s?



Fish life at Marley Point - By Paul Pacey

When we returned to *Le Scat* we found *SeaTamer* anchored nearby with Max on board so we were able to scam some free lollies before heading back to Dark Bay for morning tea. Hah, beat that *DownUnder*!

Thanks to Michael and the rest of the crew for a great day diving.

REGULAR EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

The next meeting of the St George Scuba Club will be held on 22nd October 2008 at the St. George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street Woolli 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

Black Streak

A dive out of Botany Bay, scheduled for 11th October. Please contact Michael Wright if you are interested in coming

The Wanderers

This dive has been postponed from Monday 6 October to Sunday 12 October. This is a deep dive and can only be done by experienced divers with suitable equipment. This dive is to 39 metres on the top of the reef and drops to 45 or so metres. The dive is suitable for members who have previously dived with the Club to 30 or so metres at places like Middle Ground and who want to advance to the deeper wrecks. If you are not a regular deep diver with the Club and are interested, contact Michael McFadyen to discuss. For those who dive deep with the Club, contact Michael to book on the dive.

Bombo Dive

Sunday 26 October. Please contact Dave Burns if you are interested

Swansea Dive and Stockton Beach 4wd Trip

Come along for a dive at Swansea Bridge and then some 4 wheel driving on the sand hills of Stockton Beach to our camp site for the night in the sand.

Sumptuous BBQ for tea around the campfire.

Dates are 15th and 16th November.

Contact Ray Moulang if attending and also if you need a ride as some spaces are available.

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 tripSM 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.

Will be confirming in about 60 days time with Dive Asia - so check out your holidays and \$\$\$cash availability.

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

AGM

The AGM will be held 22 October, after the October regular Meeting.

Calendar Planning Night

This year's Calendar Planning Night will be held at the Rowers Club on 21 October at 8pm. The calendar planning night is where we schedule all of the diving and social events for the following year. Please come along and help plan our trips, a dive or a social event. It would be great to have more members offer to organise an event to share the load. The club will be providing finger food on the night.

OTHER NEWS

Club Constitution Review

As there have been no adverse comments on the proposed constitution changes, these will be put to vote at the AGM in October. The changes have been advised

to all members with email addresses and the draft document together with explanatory notes can be viewed on the Club web site. Basically, the changes legalise the way the Club has not been operating for the past 15 years for things like committee elections, membership, notification to members etc. For any members without access to the internet, please contact Michael McFadyen and he will provide you with the documents.

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
Inon D-180 Strobe with Difuser	792	once
Inon Fibre Optic Cable	143	once
Full Ultra Light Dual Tray, handle ball joint arm system	538	twice
Olympus 0.7x wide conversion lens	325	new
Olympus conversion lens adaptor	70	new
Inon UCL-165 M67 2x macro lens	275	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