

FATHOMS

JUNE — JULY 2011



The A team with Kingies — David Geekie

www.vsag.org.au

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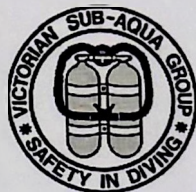


Gear setup in dive boats—read Lloyd’s story on Truk Lagoon -starts on Page 32



FATHOMS

Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group



In this June — July 2011 issue...

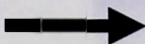
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VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

Editorial Submissions to:

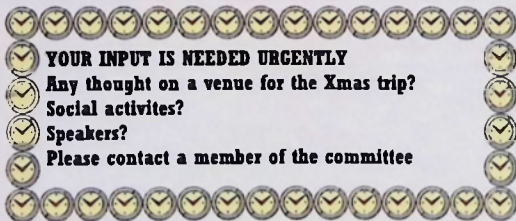
Maori Chief Hotel
117 Moray Street
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm
[join at 7pm for a meal!]
Alan Storen
15 Regal Court Vermont South Vic 3133
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The New
VSAG
Meeting
Place



Same Day
Same Time

The Maori Chief Hotel
117 Moray St
South Melbourne



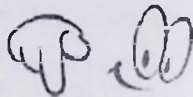
YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED URGENTLY

Any thought on a venue for the Xmas trip?

Social activities?

Speakers?

Please contact a member of the committee



**Reports on dives and other activities are
urgently needed. Please submit to the editor.
Photos also needed of club trips and social
activities.**

storens@bigpond.net.au

EDITORIAL



The poor diving weather has continued into Autumn but this has not stopped all the diving and some reports are included in this edition. Winter diving usually sees the best viz in the Bay so make sure you keep a watch for JL's emails.

Our May guest speaker, Stuart Cannon was fantastic and JL assures me that many more are lined up for the rest of the year so if you have not been to a meeting at the Maori Chief please try and make it soon. We had over 35 in the audience last time and some were in the 'standing room only' section at the back. Again watch for JL's emails re the actual speaker.

The Sabah trip will be underway as you receive this – departs 6th June and returns 16th June. Might even get an update of how the trip went at the next meeting (also on the 16th) depending on jetlag! Come along!

The Annual Fees have been set at the same amount as last year and you should have an invoice attached to this edition. Please pay by the end of June so that the treasurer does not need to hassle you. If you pay by bank transfer (the preferred method) then make sure you put your name in the appropriate spot so that we know who the payment is from. Last year we had some that only put 'VSAG Fees' and the Treasurer had to follow up to check who had actually paid.

The AGM is not for a few months but it is again time for several members on the committee to be 'retired'. The committee can have up to 12 members and up to 4 are retired each year. Retiring members can be renominated. This year both Greg Breese and I are 'retired'. There are also 4 other 'Vacant' spots that could be filled. Please think about those members that would make a good contribution to the running of the club and ask them if they wish to become involved. If you wish to discuss the commitment needed, please see one of the current committee. You are not nominated for a fixed position ie secretary, treasurer, etc. You go on the committee as a Director and, at the October meeting of the committee, the various positions are decided. (see page 6 for the current 'jobs'). Please consider!!

The Social Secretary (JL) would love to hear from any member who has a 'possible social event' that might be of interest to members. Xmas in July is on the backburner at this stage and we await suggestions.

The End of Year/Xmas trip away is also under discussion and if you have any suggestions please contact Greg Richards asap. Any and all input is welcomed – where you don't want to go is as important as where you do want to go!

The cost of Fathoms is also under discussion and please read page 25. The committee needs your input. Please respond to the committee or Greg Richards by email so that we can make an informed decision before the end of the club year. If you do not reply then it will be assume you are happy with any decision that the committee comes up with. Please add your contribution.

Alan

"got new scuba gear for my wife...sure was a good trade!".

Committee 2009 - 2010



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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month (except in January)
ALL MEMBERS WELCOME
Maori Chief 117 Moray St. South Melbourne

President's Page



Autumn is over and as we head into the Winter months we again have an action packed program of dives and social events lined up.

Each week we plan on diving locally up until July and hope to include some newer, less frequented sites on the agenda. Places like Charlemont Reef off Barwon Heads, the Rotomahana and Pyramid Rock. Recently some of us have dived new spots such as "The Steps" off San Remo, and re-visited old sites like the The Sth Channel Fort. Last winter we had some sensational diving in the Northern Bay on the Uralba and other rarely dived sites. The Canberra is now starting to be covered in life and shows real promise as a Winter dive.

Despite the curse of Cape Jaffa afflicting all 4 boats that went to Sth Australia in March, we recently had 3 new boat owners taking out 13 divers for a great day outside the heads. This influx of new boat owners augers well for the coming years.

The Committee has decided to hold fees for the coming year at \$80.00 for single members and \$100.00 for a family.

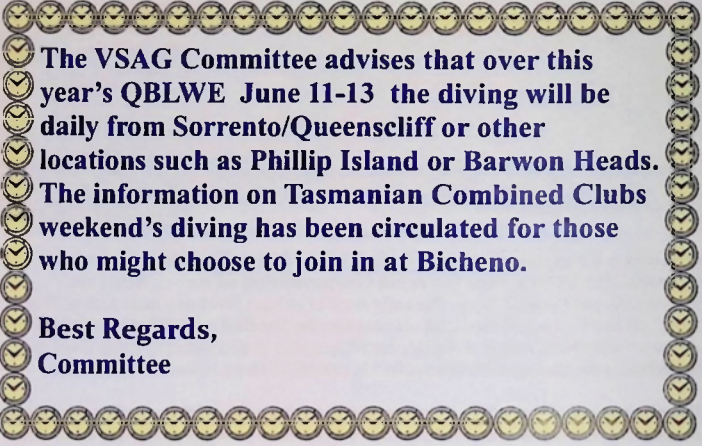
This time last year I wrote that...*"The committee has also decided that in the interest of fairness that, in future when we make bookings at the Prom (Easter or Cup Weekend) we will only book sites for people prepared to pay up front before we make the bookings. If you are not prepared to pay before we make our bulk booking then you will have to book your own. We haven't got the time to chase down 75 sites after the event, nor should the people who make the bookings be out of pocket \$400-\$500 for months waiting for everyone to pay"* As it turns out we are still waiting for Parks Victoria to refund the monies from this year's weather aborted Prom Easter Trip. We will advise each person owed money as soon as we know and reimburse accordingly.

The "Save the J5 Project" spokesman John Corby has recently asked us if we wish to contribute \$850.00 towards purchasing a sacrificial anode to be placed on the sub to prevent further deterioration and this issue will be put to a General meeting for discussion and debate over the May and June meetings.

Sadly, after several VSAG members dived the wreck of the SS Glenelg in January, the wreck has been subject to a ban on diving into the foreseeable future. It was noted at the time of our visit that the wreck had already been "done over" prior to our dive. Since our visit, the remaining artifacts have been officially removed from the site and the wreck is strictly off-limits, whilst the authorities investigate. Hopefully, the Government Department will realize that the wreck no longer has any appeal to the wreck bashers who pillaged her and will reopen the site before too much longer.

Winter is looking good, rug up and join in the action.

GRRR



The VSAG Committee advises that over this year's QBLWE June 11-13 the diving will be daily from Sorrento/Queenscliff or other locations such as Phillip Island or Barwon Heads. The information on Tasmanian Combined Clubs weekend's diving has been circulated for those who might choose to join in at Bicheno.

**Best Regards,
Committee**

Murphy, a furniture dealer from Dublin, decided to expand the line of furniture in his store, so he decided to go to Paris to see what he could find.

After arriving in Paris, he visited with some manufacturers and selected a line that he thought would sell well back home. To celebrate the new acquisition, he decided to visit a small bistro and have a glass of wine. As he sat enjoying his wine, he noticed that the small place was quite crowded, and that the other chair at his table was the only vacant seat in the house.

Before long, a very beautiful young Parisian girl came to his table; asked him something in French (which Murphy couldn't understand); so he motioned to the vacant chair and invited her to sit down. He tried to speak to her in English, but she did not speak his language. After a couple of minutes of trying to communicate with her, he took a napkin and drew a picture of a wine glass and showed it to her. She nodded, so he ordered a glass of wine for her.

After sitting together at the table for a while, he took another napkin, and drew a picture of a plate with food on it, and she nodded. They left the bistro and found a quiet cafe that featured a small group playing romantic music. They ordered dinner..... After which he took another napkin and drew a picture of a couple dancing. She nodded, and they got up to dance. They danced until the cafe closed and the band was packing up.

Back at their table, the young lady took a napkin and drew a picture of a four-poster bed.

And you know what? - to this day, Murphy has no idea how she figured out he was in the furniture business.

Member Profile: David Reinhard



Year joined VSAG: 2009

How long have you been diving?: I have been snorkeling since my early teens, and did a dive course in 1977 which means I have been scuba diving for 34 years.

First diving experience: My first dive was in the old Brighton Beach sea baths (now demolished). I had only just started the dive course (theory and pool) and happened to bump into a couple of guys diving in the baths. I started chatting with

them and they asked me if I wanted to have a go. Although I hadn't finished the course I wasn't going to say no.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne: I do a lot of dives between Brighton and Mordialloc, with Rickett's Point being my favourite. This area is very close to home for me and the fish life can be exceptionally good over the summer months. Some of us have been doing some boat diving to explore fishing marks around this region and have found some great diving, particularly off Parkdale. However, my favourite diving in Victorian waters is Wilson's Prom. I first dived there in 1977, straight after completing my course, and the Prom remains amongst the very best diving I have done. Unfortunately luck is often against me and I don't get there as often as I would like.

Most memorable diving experience: I have had many memorable dives so it is hard to pick out any particular one. Being surrounded by a school of many thousands of salmon at Rickett's Point was amazing. For over 20 minutes I was totally enveloped in fish, no matter what direction I swam in. This was probably the biggest school of fish I have ever seen, and at a dive site only 10 minutes from home. Diving the Coolidge was also very memorable, as was doing the Beqa shark dive. I was fortunate enough to see a Tiger shark on one of these Beqa dives.

I have a particularly fond memory of a dive in Indonesia. My teenage daughter was doing an Open Water course and she and the instructor were diving from the same boat as us. I felt some trepidation putting her safety in the hands of another person, as we went our separate ways. However towards the end of my dive I spotted her as she swam along the coral wall beside the instructor. She looked happy and comfortable in the water and it sure brought a smile to my face to see her safe and well. And then recently on a dive trip to Fiji my youngest daughter was snorkeling off the boat while we dived. I looked towards the surface during the dive and spotted her darting around the top of the coral bommie. I watched her moving confidently around the coral and then saw her wave happily to me. To others these may seem like insignificant moments but to me it was great to see my kids sharing my love for the ocean.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: I was diving off a smallish boat in Fiji with a number of relatively inexperienced divers and some people doing 'try dives' on board. There wasn't a lot of room to gear up in the boat for these 'floundering' beginners so the dive guide looked at me and said since you are geared hurry up into the water. So I rolled off the boat and after hitting the water noted that the current seemed quite strong as I swam around on the surface. It only took a few seconds to realize that there was no current - my failure to make progress was because I had forgotten my fins! The lesson I learned from this was never to let someone hurry you into the water without double checking that you are ready.



Most valued piece of diving equipment: I guess all of it is important, but I highly value my regulator as having it function flawlessly is so important to my survival in an environment humans were not designed to be in. My camera has become an important part of my diving, both for stills and video.

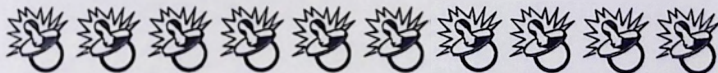
Do you have a dive boat?: No. It is much cheaper and less hassle to just dive out of someone else's boat!

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?:

I have been lucky enough to have dived a number of overseas locations such as Fiji, Vanuatu and Indonesia. Places high on my wish list are New Guinea, Galapagos, Yongala and the Red Sea. This July I will be diving the Philippines for the first time, along with my family.

Any diving words of wisdom: I think the saying "there is nothing down there worth dying for" is always worth keeping in mind. I have become a much more cautious diver since having a family. If someone wants to abort a dive for whatever reason that decision should always be respected.

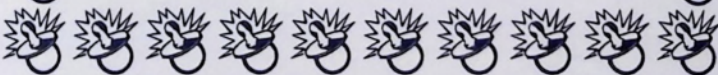
Any other comments: Watching Sea Hunt when I was a child was my inspiration to start diving. My fascination grew and I have been hooked ever since. Unfortunately work and family commitments, combined with Melbourne's fickle weather, means I don't get to dive as often as I would like.



My aunt, Dorothy Compton, like many elderly people suffers from Alzheimers.

Still, I was pretty angry to discover that the staff at her nursing home have nicknamed her:

'confused Dot Com'.





Jaffa 2011—VSAG style



Cape Jaffa 2011

Photos by Chris Llewellyn



Three different days—notice the sky and the flatness of the water!! Previous page are photos of the Saturday night cookup put on by Mick Kakafikas. No one went away hungry!



Hope it's not too Urgent!

Where is Cape Jaffa anyway??

Dive the Queensland - Darren Pearce JAN 2011

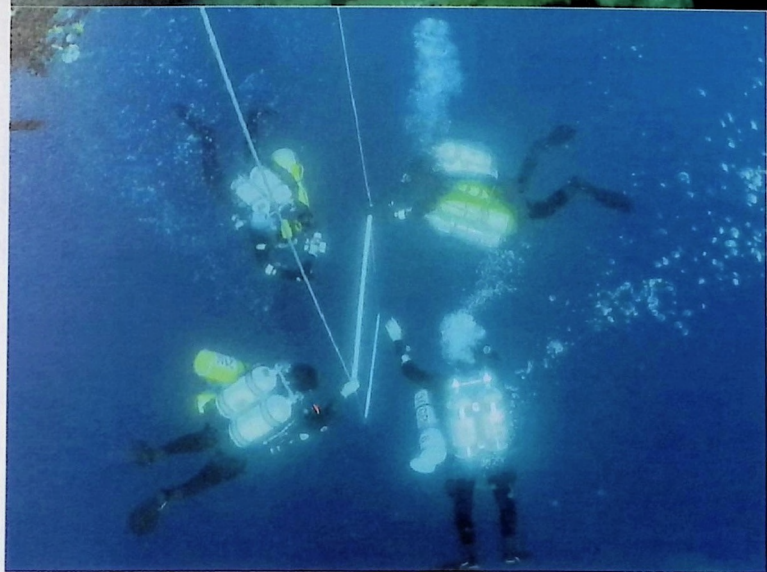
here some picture that
steve cartlidge took on the
day we dived the
queensland



Paddy takes his goldfish to the vet.
Vet asks what seems to be the problem
Paddy: "I think he's got epilepsy"
Vet: "Really? He looks fine to me."
Paddy: "I've not taken him out of the bowl yet".



Steve Cartledge 2011



Darren's Easter diving

Darren Pearce

Alan, ended up going down to Wilson Prom on Sunday, did two dives. Dived the Queensland on Sunday—was 15meters vis slight ocean current—on it saw heaps of plates and intact portholes.

The shot line got dragged off the wreck so had to shoot a SMB up from 55meters drifted over 2 nautical miles away from the site—on deco at that stage and was worried the boat had not seen our SMB as we could not hear the boat for 50mins. Was a good feeling after a hour and a bit of deco, surfacing, and seeing the boat next to us.

Was told shotline got dragged off the wreck....

Spent Sunday night camping down at refuge cove.

Next morning some of the guys went out and dived the Kanowna and in the afternoon I did a dive on the Cambridge with Steve Cartlidge from the get under dive club.



Had to drag myself all the way down to 55meters to the deck on the Cambridge as there was quite a strong current. In my view the Cambridge is massive—in my books its a truck lagoon wreck dive down here in Victoria—only draw back I was limited to where we could go on deck without getting swept off the deck in strong current. Could not see what was in the cargo holds as they went below 60meters.

Thats one dive I want to get back to and try and dive it again on a slack water so I can get a better look around on site

Here some photos Steve Cartlidge took of the Cambridge.



DIVE REPORT EASTER 2011

When "mother nature" gets angry there really isn't much the human race can do about that and we have seen many examples of her moods over recent months with the devastations in Queensland and Victoria....and of course the effects of her actions at Tidal River Wilsons Promontory!

Despite all the good work by Andy, Lloyd and others, making bookings and other necessary plans for the traditional VSAG dive sojourn, things really fell apart as the area was overwhelmed with massive downpours causing flooding at Tidal River proper, landslides blocking roads and a bridge partly closed.

Most members chose to cancel their bookings and Parks advised fees would be refunded.

So the dive plans were moved to Melbourne and Alan Storen, Lloyd Borrett and myself took over the roles as Dive Captions. Easter Friday was a blow out and dive plans cancelled.

With two boats and 8 divers booked in for Easter Saturday we arrived at Sorrento full of confidence that the weather forecast was predicting conditions good and safe enough for diving. However as I just passing through Frankston, Greg Richards came alongside and out of his car window muttered "not looking good"...How right he was!

The wind was almost howling at the Sorrento ramp and after some lengthy analysis of the pros and cons of diving in various parts of the bay the decision (wisely) was taken to call off the diving...again!

I parked my boat the Scuba Doctor rather than towing it back home, and for Mark Roche no travel problems as he lives close to Sorrento.

The Ex-HMAS Canberra was booked for Sunday but the wind forecast and predicted swells would not be good for that dive so again all diving was called off until Monday. Disappointing for all who had booked in but that's the way it goes..

Monday and we lined up again at Sorrento with two boats and 9 divers. My crew and I decided to check the conditions for a safe trip through the rip whilst Mark hung well back in the bay.

The swells were rolling and were well up even on the western side of the rip to about 3 metres with some just breaking. Half way through the swelly conditions I was just about to call the trip off and put power on the climb up a wave when we lost power!

Revs dropped down to 2000 which was only just enough to turn the boat around to North and try to surf down the waves...this was challenging as we were in a strong 8 knot ebb tide but calm basically prevailed. We had difficulty with the 27Mhz radios and communication was not possible from my boat to Mark's. A very large private fishing boat was near and we called on him to keep up with us in case the ebb became too strong, however after a while our boat was moving quite well so we waved him away with thanks.

Mark towed us back to Sorrento and my boat was parked at his home as a scallop dive was agreed on.

Plenty of good sized shellfish were found in two different areas out from the White Cliffs area and those who are into scallops were assured of a fine feast for dinner!

As we no calls for diving on Tuesday that was "Easter diving" 2011.

Footnote:

Analyzing the cause of the lost power in the Yamaha is a result of the computer detecting the level in the oil bottle in the motor falling below the safe level as it was not being topped up from the primary oil bottle...to avoid the motor seizing the revs are automatically cut to 2000.

The motor is currently being put through some tests to determine where the problem is.

Yamaha has provided a check flow chart and Alan Storen's friend who is a past Yamaha technician has given some good information...fingers crossed.

JL

A guy goes to the supermarket and notices an attractive woman waving at him. She says hello. He's rather taken aback because he can't place where he knows her from.

So he says, 'Do you know me?'

To which she replies, 'I think you're the father of one of my kids.'

Now his mind travels back to the only time he has ever been unfaithful to his wife and says, 'Are you the stripper from the bachelor party that I made love to on the pool table with all my buddies watching while your partner whipped my but with wet celery ???'

She looks into his eyes and says calmly,

'No, I'm your son's teacher.'

DIVE REPORT SATURDAY 2ND MAY

After the disappointment of the Easter diving cancellation this day was shaping up as a brilliant dive day..and so it was.

Weather forecast was for light Northerly winds, low swells and a sunny day..wow..!And it got better with 5 VSAG dive boats booking in and 14 divers which was one the biggest turnouts we have seen for some time!

Boats and diver crews:

GRR, Tim Skate, Wayne and their mate



Peter Briggs, Alan Storen and Christine Reynolds

Mark Roche, Denise Rogers, Alex Ivanov and Benita McDonough



Lloyd Borrett, Cheryl Lees and John Lawler

With all boats loaded and launched we had one major setback..Peter Briggs had his boat ready to launch on the ramp and the steering system had frozen and the outboard couldn't be turned..no amount of hard pushing and pulling would move the steering cable...Alan and Peter decided to work on the unit and Christine was relocated to another boat.

Sadly Peter had to pull out and headed for home, and Alan decided to dive Blairgowrie Pier.

Tim's crew decided on a dive at Castle Rock and after some GPS data transfer from Lloyd's GPS as to where the dive site was the other two boats headed for the J4...well so we thought!

Lloyd has recently purchased Dave Kelly's Haines Hunter and whilst the GPS, Side Scanner and other electronic systems he has inherited with the boat was just great..how to use the stuff!!!

Much time was spent trying to call up or identify the location of the sub but it was challenging.

Next plan was to put the J4 GPS mark from Lloyd's into Mark Roche's GPS which was a fine idea but his crew had some difficulty then calling up the "go to"...so I climbed in and found the right button and all was looking good and it was away all boats.

As these things go we didn't need to have worried too much as there was a private boat already anchored on the J4 site. We put down a shot line and deco bar on the site and dive crews geared up for one of the best dives for a long time on this iconic dive wreck.

My Buddies were Benita and Mark and no sooner over the side and after a 10 metres decent up came the magic sight of the fractured J4...the viz was fantastic and the shot line nicely positioned just on the starboard side of the conning tower..

Settling in we followed our dive plan to check out the torpedo tubes.The big school of bulls eyes fish that seem to live greeted us with calm as no doubt the sight of scuba divers in their world is very common.. And then a very slow trip through the sub to the stern area and out into the blue water. The reefs to the east looked good in the great viz so a quick look around there was done.

Back to the sub for slow check out of holes, nooks and crannies and a clean over of the plaque at the base of the conning tower remembering the divers who found the sub. This was diving at it's very very best and soon it was time to head up for an imposed decompression stop and back to our allocated boats.

We had some plans for diving the slack water flood inside the bay however the conditions in Bass Straight were so good we decided to find some good reefs and stay outside..this decision paid off as all divers finished the day with some excellent reef dives in calm conditions, great fish life and an odd cray for dinner.

The divers (3) were introduced to the system of personal drift lines each linked to the main orange surface buoy which allows for greater dive freedom but yet still safely connected....

The return journey to Sorrento was over almost flat ocean and bay waters...the best day's diving we have had for a very long time!

JL

From The London Times: A Well-Planned Retirement

A perfect example of government mismanagement.



Outside England 's Bristol Zoo there is a parking lot for 150 cars and 8 buses. For 25 years, it's parking fees were managed by a very pleasant attendant. The fees were for cars (£1 40), for buses (about £7).

Then, one day, after 25 solid years of never missing a day off work, he just didn't show up; so the Zoo Management called the City Council and asked it to send them another parking agent.

The Council did some research and replied that the parking lot was the Zoo's own responsibility.

The Zoo advised the Council that the attendant was a City employee.

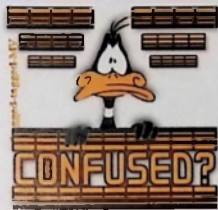
The City Council responded that the lot attendant had never been on the City payroll.

Meanwhile, sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain or France or Italy ... is a man who'd apparently had a ticket machine installed completely on his own, and then, had simply begun to show up every day, to collect and keep the parking fees, estimated at about £560 per day -- for 25 years.

Assuming 7 days a week, this amounts to just over 7 million pounds ... and no one even knows his name.

I think this is my favorite E-Mail ever!!

O x y m o r o n s



1. Is it good if a vacuum really sucks?
2. Why is the third hand on the watch called the second hand?
3. If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
4. If Webster wrote the first dictionary, where did he find the words?
5. Why do we say something is out of whack? What is a whack?
6. Why does "slow down" and "slow up" mean the same thing?
7. Why does "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the same thing?
8. Why do "tug" boats push their barges?
9. Why do we sing "Take me out to the ball game" When we are already there?
10. Why are they called "stands" When they are made for sitting?
11. Why is it called "after dark" When it really is "after light"?
- 12.. Doesn't "expecting the unexpected" make the unexpected expected?
- 13.. Why are a "wise man" and a "wise guy" opposites?
14. Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?
15. Why is "phonics" not spelled the way it sounds?
16. If work is so terrific, why do they have to pay you to do it?
- 17..If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?
18. If love is blind, Why is lingerie so popular?
19. If you are cross-eyed and have dyslexia, Can you read all right?
20. Why is bra singular and panties plural?
- 21..Why do you press harder on the buttons of a remote control when you know the batteries are dead?
22. Why do we put suits in garment bags and garments in a suitcase?
23. How come abbreviated is such a long word?
24. Why do we wash bath towels? Aren't we clean when we use them?
- 25.. Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
26. Why do they call it a TV set when you only have one?
27. Christmas :- What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?
28. Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

I dunno, why do we?

Our May Meeting—JL

Stuart Cannon was our return guest speaker on Thursday 19th May.

Stuart was a guest presenter at the most recent OZTek Dive Conference. Stuart's presentation was on the findings of the HMAS Sydney and the HSK Kormoran sinkings. Fantastic night!

Stuart Cannon background

Stuart first dived on a shipwreck off the Cornish coast soon after his fourteenth birthday with his local BSAC club. His passions for shipwreck diving ultimately lead him to study naval architecture at university, with the primary aim of finding out what he was diving on. Whilst at University Stuart became a member of the Nautical Archaeological Society and spent many hours on the salvage project "die Frau Metta Catherina von Flensburg". Since his University days, Stuart has specialised in the performance of surface warships. During his research career he has been called in as an expert witness for a variety of ship losses including the Herald of Free Enterprise and the MV Derbyshire. In his current capacity he has advised the Australian government on a range of naval architectural issues associated with the major surface fleet. Most recently Stuart led the joint team that evaluated the technical aspects of the sinking of HMAS Sydney II and the HSK Kormoran. These investigations were presented at the Commission of Inquiry and formed the technical basis of the overall findings. He was awarded a Chief of Defence Force Commendation for this work.



Is this our newest member?

Also seen at the May meeting—Jackie Storen and her new baby—Olivia—about 8 weeks.



May 2011 The meeting that wasn't!!

Greg Richards

We had a ripper turn out of nearly 40 people for our May General meeting at the Maori Chief. The guest speaker Stuart Cannon gave a detailed and absorbing talk on the sinking and subsequent finding of the HMAS Sydney.

Due to the talk going overtime (and not complaining about that!) it became a little late to even contemplate having our regular monthly meeting.

A couple of points of importance were on the agenda for that night and I'd like to raise them here to get people thinking and get your thoughts on them.

(1) The committee has decided to leave fees unchanged for the forthcoming year.

(2) Fathoms is our major expense each year. The cost of Fathoms is roughly equal to your membership. It cannot be guaranteed that our current printing arrangements can be maintained. If our current relationship with the printer should change then we would be in dire straits. Alan has put together a cost break down of several options to consider. (Assuming current printing arrangement!)

Stay as is	6 Editions per year Full Colour	No savings.
Four Editions per year		Savings \$840
Colour Front page only 6 editions		Savings \$780
Mix of options 1 & 3 (20 in full colour)		Savings \$540
Reduce no of pages (to 40 from 60)		Savings \$600
Full Digital – Email Version		Savings \$2520
50/50	Hard Copy & Digital	Savings 1260

However, all this is predicated on Alan being able to use his current supplier, and frankly that can't be guaranteed. To be blunt I suspect it will cease sooner, rather than later. If we had to use, say Officeworks, then the cost would rise *dramatically*. We would have to either raise the fees accordingly, go broke really quickly or consider one of the above options.

When this was raised a few years ago the consensus amongst members was that the wanted to stay with 6 printed Fathoms Magazines per year. Very few wanted digital. Times move on and with the membership we have today I think we may have a different mindset.

If you have strong opinions on this please email the committee on committee@vsag.com.au as we will have to make a decision shortly and your input will be appreciated.

(3) The Save The J5 Sub project: The committee was approached by John Corby acting as spokesman for the J5 Project with a view to donating \$850.00 to help purchase a sacrificial anode (one of 4) that they hope to place on the Sub to stop/slow down the rapid deterioration of the hull and preserve the wreck for many years to come.

The response to the email circulated before the meeting mainly varied from luke warm to outright cold. Only one member was receptive. Don't be afraid to let the committee know your thoughts on this as we will be responding to them shortly.

My own opinion is that VSAG shouldn't be expected to pick up the tab for a project that is (a) likely to benefit the commercial operators who have deep pockets and a lot of self-interest and (b) a project that is not being driven by VSAG nor really involves us. (c) There are many more dive clubs than us and Getunder –not to mention the SDFV, who represent the private dive clubs as a whole. People suggested ideas such as a fund raiser, private donations and other ways to help the project. I am happy for a willing volunteer to step forward and take ownership of this. Go on ring me!

On a completely different note it was interesting to note that several people commented after the Non-meeting how much more they enjoyed the night without the boring formality of actually having a meeting! (I was one of them!)

FYI: the treasurer wasn't there however our current bank balances were
\$3,075.00 Chq a/c
\$7,779.02 Term Deposit
\$10,854.42 Total

These figures are slightly bastardised due to Easter at the Prom re-imbursments not being finalised. I believe as I write this (27/5) that most people would have received their refunds this week from Parks and if by the time you read this you haven't settled up with the club please do so asap.

Regards,

Greg Richards

God Saw you
Hungry
& created
McDonalds,
Wendy's, and
Dairy Queen.

He saw you
Thirsty
& created
Coke,
Juice,
Cocoa and
Water.



GOD saw you
In the dark
& created
Light.

GOD saw you
Without a
Good looking, *Intelligent*
Amazing,
FRIEND.....
So
He created



I think this was submitted by
Greg Richards!!!!!!!!!!!!

Emergency Evacuations
can cost as much as
US\$100,000



Did You Know that
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thousands of dollars... and possibly your life!*

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and join the Experts in Diver Accident Management

DAN Membership provides up to US\$100,000 Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage.
DAN Dive Injury Treatment Insurance is optional.

Member Profile: Neil Richardson

Year joined VSAG: 2009 I believe.
But please do not quote me on this..

How long have you been diving?: First learnt to dive in 1993, and then re-learnt in 2004.

First diving experience: First learnt to dive at Uni in Greenwich, so diving was more weekends away getting drunk rather than diving. My interest in diving unsurprisingly waned as the bright lights of London got brighter. Cannot tell you much more about my first experiences, other than it was drunken, involved swimming pools, cold water, and learning to drink beer underwater..



I then re-learnt to dive in 2004, in a shopping centre car park pond, in Tilbury, England, in January. Surface temperature was about 6c, water temp was about 4c, with a mild crust of ice on top. Vis in the water was about 10-30cm, and the water contained a heady mix of duck guano, weed, floating love fish, shopping trollies, plastic bags, and drinks cans. Ohh and devoid of marine life.

Figuring this was as bad as it could get, I retook up the activity.

Favorite diving location in Melbourne: The wall... this is quite simply a world class dive site, and no dive site in the whole of Australia (I'd argue) comes close to this.

Other than the wall, the Uralba. The Uralba being the only easily reachable wreck, that even has the faintest, remote feeling of being a proper wreck dive.

Most memorable diving experience: Where to start!!!!

Doing a drift at an average depth of 35m on the wall, at an average speed of 7-10knots, on a flood, without a SMB line...

Undertaking an ice dive with Beluga Whales in Vladivostok in Russia

My re-learning lessons in that car park pond

Swimming through the holds of the wrecks in Truk lagoon

Finding a decomposed body, on a wreck in Raboul harbour

Diving in Grand Comore, to look at a coelacanth nesting site

Diving the Lermontov

Diving Piccannine ponds for the first time

Diving with a Russian style O3 rebreather, in a former Russian submarine base in Balaklava, Crimea.

+ a few others

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: Where also to start!!!!

I recall diving to the tugs in Eden, without my weight belt. Found it hard getting down, then realised why, so attached myself to the shot line, and used that as ballast to get me to the surface from 30m, in order that I could get my weight belt!!!!

Ripping a hole in the neck seal of my drysuit, while on the Milora, resulting in a full suit flood + 20mins of deco.. Then trying to climb back on board Ozdive, looking like michelin man, while no one thought to give me a hand, and just looked on.

Seeing my cylinder shoot past my head as I was on a wall dive in Fiji, on my second dive of the day, after my guide had "kindly" re-attached my new second cylinder for me... this resulted in me sitting at 40m on the sand, putting my cylinder back in, with the DM sitting at 30m (he was only qualified to 30m) banging on his tank, telling me off for going so deep..

As for unusual, don't think you can get more unusual than diving with a Russian style O3 rebreather, in a former Russian submarine base in Balaklava, Crimea....

Most valued piece of diving equipment: My brain.. it's the only thing I do not have back up for.

Do you have a dive boat?: No.

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?: I've been trying to organise an expedition to the Aleutian Islands for a number of years now. Just the sheer diversity of marine life, unspoilt nature, soft and hard coral, and the fact they have a number of active underwater volcanoes, and pristine above water nature as well, makes this area a massive lure to myself.

Any diving words of wisdom: Okay, heres a few:

"Have fun.. but don't ruin somebody else's day by being insensitive or taking a risk"

"Think safety first, fun second"

"There's no rush to get to the surface from your last stop"

"Take more gas than you need for any dive, and always come back to the boat with at least 1/3^d of your starting gas"

"Very little of what you touch and see on a dive day is yours. Be responsible for your actions..."

"Its more fun in a group"

"SCUBA diving is a leisure activity, NOT a sport"

Any other comments: The more I see of this world, the more I realise how sensitive the marine environment is, and how much we treat with disrespect this same environment. I have no solution to this, but just ask others to bare this in mind with their actions.

Advice to an Old Guy...

An old guy (not in the best of shape) was working out in the gym when he spotted a sweet young thing...

He asked the trainer that was near by,

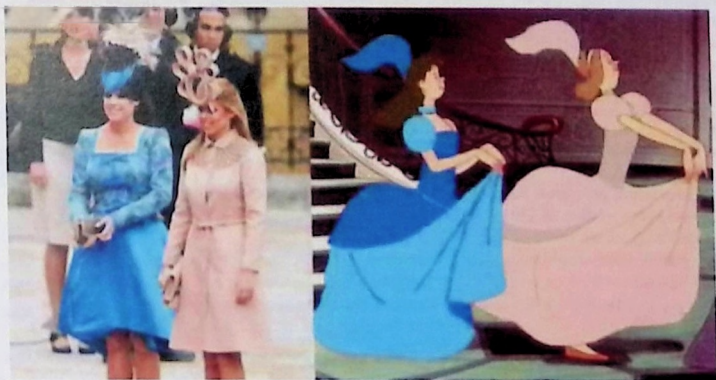
"What machine in here should I use to impress that sweet thing over there?"

The trainer looked him up and down and said

"I would try the ATM in the lobby



The Royal Wedding - Coincidence??



Well every other magazine seems to have a pic of the Royal Wedding!!!!

Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon

Lloyd Borrett reports on his May 2011 trip to dive the famed WW2 wrecks of Micronesia's Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon.

Some Historic Background

In 1920 the League of Nations handed over the Caroline, Marshall and Marianas islands to Japan as a reward for being on the winning side in World War I. While the Treaty of Versailles stated "... no military or naval bases shall be established in the territory," in a few years the Japanese started systematically breaking the treaty in preparation for their imperialistic designs on the greater Pacific region.

The only honourable thing to do was to leave the League, which the Japanese did in 1934, immediately posting "No Trespassing" signs all over the region. One very prohibited area was Truk Lagoon in the eastern Carolines.

After that 7 December 1941 day of infamy at Pearl Harbour, the Japanese Fourth Fleet established a command centre and anchorages at Truk. Soon they were joined by the Sixth Destroyer Flotilla, Seventh Submarine Flotilla and 17th Air Corps.

In August 1942, Admiral Isoroko Yamamoto, the guy in charge of everything with a rising sun ensign, made Truk his headquarters. At one time 40,000 Japanese were stationed on the islands in the lagoon. They constructed more than 1,200 buildings, including a huge hospital, communications centres, barracks and repair shops.

They also built fuel storage tanks, ammunition dumps, fortifications, anti-aircraft gun emplacements, seaplane and submarine bases, plus several deep water anchorages. All of these facilities, plus the presence of the Commander of the Combined Fleet, helped foster the belief that Truk was an impregnable fortress, a veritable Gibraltar of the Pacific.

By early 1944, the U.S. and allied naval forces of Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester Nimitz were well underway across the Pacific, systematically hitting one Japanese base after another. Task Force 58, one of the most powerful naval forces ever put together, commanded by Rear Admiral Marc Mitscher, had just devastated Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. Looking at a map, you wouldn't have to be a genius to deduce that Truk's days were numbered.

As if to confirm this, on 4 February 1944 a high flying, solitary B-24 was sent to take reconnaissance photos of Truk Lagoon. Once developed, these photos showed the anchorages crowded with all manner of warships and support craft.

However, this over flight hadn't gone unnoticed. Admiral Koga, who'd taken over in April 1943 when Yamamoto's plane was shot down, put two and two together and had his big combat ships make way to Palau. Kogo himself, apparently figuring he could get a better perspective on everything from a distance, hopped aboard the giant battleship Musashi bound for Singapore. (He would die a month later in an air accident.)

U.S. Rear Admiral Mitscher, his boss Vice-Admiral Raymond Spruance, and the other allied planners had heard all of that Gibraltar talk, so they ruled out an amphibious assault of Truk. Since there wasn't any land handy for land based aircraft, and since the Japanese fleet moorings were too far inside the lagoon for naval gunfire to reach them, they decided to try something unprecedented in the annals of naval warfare. An attack carried out solely by carrier based aircraft.

Mitscher came prepared. His three task groups included the carriers Enterprise, Yorktown, Belleau Wood, Essex, Intrepid, Cabot, Bunker Hill, Monterey and Cowpens; the battleships North Carolina, Massachusetts, South Dakota, Alabama, Iowa and New Jersey; the cruisers



Sante Fe, Mobile, Biloxi, Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco, Wichita, Baltimore, Minneapolis and New Orleans; plus assorted destroyers and submarines.

Before sun-up on 17 February 1944 they were sitting about 145 kilometres (90 miles) from Truk, ready to launch Operation Hailstone. One after another 72 Hellcat fighters catapulted off the carrier decks with orders to destroy enemy aircraft and gain control of the skies over the lagoon. Then a second wave of 18 Dauntless dive bombers peppered the airfields with incendiaries and fragmentation bombs. Next came a wave of fighters, dive bombers and torpedo bombers bent on destroying every ship in the lagoon. Such was their enthusiasm for the task at hand that a number of pilots made a little more U.S. naval history, continuing their carrier operations right through the night.

Meanwhile, Mitscher's battleships, cruisers and destroyers were patrolling nearby waters looking out for enemy shipping. And outside the two unmined reef passes, packs of submarines sat, waiting to surprise any Japanese ships favouring discretion over valour. Other subs stood by to pick up downed airmen. One, the Tang, did itself proud by fishing 22 crewmen out of the water, some from inside the lagoon.

In reply, the Japanese didn't particularly distinguish themselves. They shot down some of the 26 planes lost

by the U.S. And towards evening on the first day they launched seven Kate torpedo bombers, one of which managed a hit on Intrepid, killing 11 men, injuring 17 and sending the carrier to Majuro for repairs.

This poor showing by the Japanese imperial forces was due in part to the quick destruction done to their airstrips, as well as a shortage of experienced pilots following the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. But mainly it was the result of some pretty fuzzy strategic thinking.

The Japanese command left the defence of this enormous, extremely important base to just a handful of troops and a mere 40 anti-aircraft guns. Sure they had their planes, but they weren't much use after the second wave.

By the end of the second day, 30 waves of planes had flown 1250 sorties, unloading 400 tons of bombs and aerial torpedoes – 15 times the ordinance dropped by the Japanese at Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. They had destroyed 90% of the Japanese shore installations and all of the airfields. They put over 250 planes out of commission.

Most importantly, they sank or crippled more than 30 major vessels, most notably the cruiser Naka, the auxiliary cruisers Aikoku Maru and Kiyosumi Maru, the destroyers Fumitsuki and Oite, the submarine tenders Rio de Janeiro Maru and Heian Maru, as well as six tankers and 17 freighters. So much for that Gibraltar of the Pacific myth!

Finished for the time being, Task Force 58 steamed on to Guam, Tinian, Saipan and Eniwetok. A couple of months later, near the end of April 1944, they paid a return visit to Truk and added another 93 planes to their total, 59 in the air and 34 on the ground. This time 35 U.S. planes were lost.

Subsequent attacks took place in May and June 1944.

Not only did all this spectacular carnage go a long way towards ending the war in Pacific, it also created the all-time greatest collection of artificial reefs anywhere in the underwater world.

It could have been a lot worse for the Japanese. Had the attack come a few days earlier, the Japanese Combined Fleet could have been reduced by an additional battleship, a couple of



carriers, five or six heavy cruisers, two or more light cruisers, over a dozen destroyers and nearly that many submarines.

Learning About Chuuk (Truk)

I first read about the graveyard of sunken ships at Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon soon after I started scuba diving in 2006. As I progressed in my diving and became interested in wreck diving, the idea of all of those huge wrecks resting in clear, tropical waters at Chuuk Lagoon so intrigued me that I vowed to dive them one day.

However, first came planning for a subsequently cancelled dive trip to Bikini Atoll in June 2009, and then a successful expedition to dive the HMS Hermes aircraft carrier off Sri Lanka in August 2010. Still, those who had been there kept telling me I just had to dive the wrecks at Chuuk Lagoon, so one day late last year I sat down with Peter Fear at The S.C.U.B.A. Doctor and we worked out a trip plan for 5 days of diving around my rather hectic work schedule. By the time it happened in early May 2011, there were 18 of us on the trip.

With a visit to Truk finally looking like actually happening, I started doing a little research on Micronesia in general, and Chuuk Lagoon in particular.

The books that I recommend you read are:

Hailstorm Over Truk Lagoon, by Klaus Lindemann

World War II Wrecks of the Truk Lagoon, by Dan E. Bailey

Ghost Fleet of the Truk Lagoon, by William H. Stewart

The name 'Micronesia' couldn't be more descriptive. From the Greek, it means 'tiny islands'. The current accepted tally is that there are more than 2000 dots of land, totalling an area of something like 3,200 square kilometres, lying scattered across nearly eight million square kilometres of the Pacific in a hot, wet belt between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer.

Some are coral atolls, others sunken mountains. Some are flat and barren, others covered by lush rain forests. Some have sparkling beaches, others mangrove swamps. Still others feature rugged cliffs and crashing shorelines.

Anthropologists believe most Micronesians came originally from the Malaysia area. Over the years they developed some regional differences, most obviously their languages – they speak nine with a variety of dialects; and their appearances – they traded genes with a series of Western colonisers.

In the 18th century the Spanish decided to bring their God to the island folk. The zealous, pious efforts of the Spanish met with considerable success, and today about half of all Micronesians look to the Vatican for spiritual guidance.

Following the Spanish-American War, Germany anxious both to become a colonial power and to take advantage of all the copra, bought the islands for 25 million pesetas. With the outbreak of the First World War, Japan moved in and seized everything they could get their hands on. Germany, having more pressing business elsewhere, withdrew without opposition. They left a legacy of increased production, expanded trade and disciplined administration. The Japanese brought progress. New roads, hospitals, cisterns, even a railroad system on Saipan to carry sugar to the docks. And, of course, they brought loads of fortifications.

Next it was the turn of the United States or, more correctly, the United Nations. When World War II ended, the islands became a U.N. trust territory, administered first by the U.S. Navy then the U.S. Department of Interior. The yanks undertook to prepare the islanders for the time when they would take their place on the world scene.



In accordance with the original intent of the trusteeship, the island groups began deciding their own fates. In 1977 the Northern Marianas became a commonwealth. Then the Marshalls and Palau Islands split away. And in June 1983 the Federated States of Micronesia, which included Truk, voted to end U.S. administration. They formed their own constitutional government on 10 May 1979, so becoming a sovereign state after independence was attained on 3 November 1986 under a Compact of Free Association with the United States. I suppose this leaves them free to associate with whomever they choose, or choose not to.

Chuuk (Truk) is not an island; it's the most populated state in the Federated States of Micronesia, with some 55,000 people. Chuuk means mountain in the Chuukese language and was known mainly as Truk (a mispronunciation of Ruk), until 1990.

Although the Chuuk state encompasses more than 100 separate atolls, none comes close to Chuuk Atoll and Lagoon in scope. North of New Guinea, it is located mid-ocean at 7 degrees North latitude. The atoll consists of a protective reef, 225 kilometres (140 miles) around, enclosing a natural harbour 79 by 50 kilometres (49 by 30 miles), with an area of 2,130 square kilometres (820 sq miles). It has a land area of 127.4 square kilometres (49.2 sq miles).

The area consists of 11 major islands (corresponding to the 11 municipalities of Chuuk lagoon, which are Tol, Udot, Fala-Beguets, Romanum, and Eot of Faichuk group, and Moen, Fefan, Dublon, Uman, Param, and Tsis of Namoneas group) and 46 smaller ones within the lagoon, plus 41 on the fringing coral reef, and is known today as the Chuuk islands.

Chuuk Lagoon would be something special to dive even without the impressive collection of historic wrecks.

One of my main reasons for researching Chuuk was to find out about the weather conditions. No-one wants to go so far to dive during a rainy season. Reports conflicted somewhat as to the length of the wet at Chuuk, but basically it seems to run from June through September.

Because of the lagoon's proximity to the Equator, the water temperature remains a pretty constant 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) all year round. Visibility, mostly due to a proliferous planktonic population, is not as great of some tropical locations, but superb in comparison to typical Melbourne conditions. I'm told it averages from 12 to 18 metres (40 to 60 feet), improving from October to May when the winds pick up. Naturally, these same winds can also chum the surface. The water gets really choppy when the local trades occasionally hit 55 to 75 kph (30 to 40 knots). Sediment is another problem. The wrecks, especially their innards, are blanketed by a deep cover of fine brown silt.

For these reasons it would be nice to pick a time to visit Chuuk Lagoon when the conditions were favourable, but the number of divers visiting minimal. The fewer fins stirring the silt the better. I simply didn't have that luxury, plus from what I saw, I'm not sure there is a 'quiet time' there anymore.

The Journey to Chuuk Lagoon

The Scuba Doctor and Bass Strait Aquatic Club combined together using Dive Adventures to book a total of 18 people for 5 days of diving at Chuuk Lagoon. Not everyone was from Melbourne, with two from the U.K. and one from Perth included in this large dive group. Officially, the trip started from Cairns. Thus we all made various plans as to how and when we'd get there.

I joined those who decided to fly to Cairns early on Thursday, 5th May 2011. So for me it was up at 5 a.m., leaving early for the airport at 6 a.m. so as to avoid peak hour traffic, and ending up in my usual area in the long-term car park.

At the Virgin Australia check-in there were long queues, even for those just dropping bags. The airline is going to have to improve this if they truly want to compete with Qantas for business travellers as they keep saying they are. My two bags were weighed at 22 kg and 19 kg. And they didn't charge me for any excess baggage. Yippee!

On arrival at Cairns I went to the international terminal to try to check-in for the flights to Guam and Chuuk, plus leave my bags there. No such luck. So I joined up with the others coming into Cairns early, as we took the courtesy bus to the Cairns Colonial Club Resort. Lunch and dinner at

the pool bar, and then off to the international terminal at Cairns airport at 9:30 p.m.

At the Continental Airlines check in for the Friday 12:30 a.m. flight to Guam, I tried to get an emergency exit row for the legroom, but was told they were all taken. I was also told that if there was a no show the crew might be able to move me. I managed to get allocated an aisle seat. Later aboard the aircraft I found the emergency exit seats weren't in use! The crew wouldn't let me move. The consolation was that I had three seats to myself.

Officially our trip started from Cairns, thus it was here at the airport that everyone came together from all of their various flights. In The Scuba Doctor group were Peter and Valerie Fear, Peter Chew, Laurent and Adelle Ailleres, Leo Scicluna, Damien, Paul Wembridge, Shook Ri, Jeff and myself. In the BSAC group were Denise and Paul Ridgeway, David and Shirley, Phil Watson, Roger (Ginge) Crook and Sophie.

Two other dive groups on their way to Chuuk Lagoon, one from Sydney and one from Brisbane, also checked in for the flight to Guam. Eventually we all boarded the plane and were on our way to Guam.

Transit in Guam was simply stupid. We're in transit, yet were required to go through immigration/customs, plus through a security check. Long queues and bureaucratic stupidity made this a totally negative, more than an hour long experience. And they fingerprint scanned us. When did I sign up for that invasion of privacy? What absolutely useless and senseless security theatre. Next they'll be making a cavity search mandatory.

In Guam I did manage to get Continental Airlines to change my seat allocations for the rest of my three flights with them to Seat 21D, an emergency aisle seat. It cost me US\$50 per flight extra, which was worth every cent for the extra legroom.

We had a long stopover in front of us at Guam airport. Duty free wasn't very comprehensive and the food options were pretty ordinary. We did find free Wi-Fi access at gate 9, but it was unsecured and thus of limited use.

Eventually we boarded and headed off for Chuuk. I was once again quickly into my usual flight mode with my Sennheiser PXC 450 noise cancelling headphones playing a music selection from the 15,000 plus songs on my Apple iPod Classic 160Gb. We were about 20 minutes from Chuuk when Peter Fear came and interrupted my listening pleasure, telling me that it had just been announced that we were heading back to Guam because of problems with the aircraft. I thought he was pulling my leg, but sadly he wasn't. We disembarked at Guam and waited a few hours as they moved everything to a different plane, plus got a new flight and cabin crew. Eventually we were headed off to Chuuk again.

Immigration, customs and baggage claim at Chuuk was quite an experience. What a total shambles. Someone went to a lot of trouble to make that as bad as it was. Pretty easy to improve it, but no-one seems to want to. People have to queue in the sun while waiting to get processed by one of three customs/immigration people who, of course, were working at island pace.

Baggage claim was totally shambolic. Eventually we all had our bags and headed outside of the terminal. Our bags were loaded onto trucks and we started a most educational, non air-conditioned, bus ride to the Truk Blue Lagoon Resort.

We were travelling on the island's main road and it was about the worst pothole riddled, mud rutted track I'd ever seen. The bus had to travel at walking pace most of the way, criss-crossing to either side of the road as it went based on the road state.

As we bounced along, I took in the sights. The tropical vegetation provided lush evidence of Chuuk's average 254 cm (100 inch) annual rainfall. The barefoot women showed a preference for muumuu-type dresses of brilliant parrot-plumage and floral colours. The cars and light trucks sighted, were a mixture of left and right hand drive, and even those only a few years old were in advanced stages of fatal corrosion.

The dwellings ran the gamut. I saw a few carefully restored Japanese style houses. Some cubistic structures made of concrete blocks. Some are double storey, but most are single storey with the

steel reinforcing sticking out of the roof, ready for when the second floor is to be added sometime in the future. You've just got to love their optimism. However, most common of all were haphazard shanties of corrugated tin and wood.

In my research I'd read how some years earlier the women of Chuuk cleverly countered a growing drinking problem in the district by organising a prohibition referendum. The clever part was in the timing of the voting for Sunday morning, when most of the menfolk were still too indisposed to participate. However, this prohibition is now long gone.

[pic: Blue Lagoon Resort 1- page 47]

The Truk Blue Lagoon Resort provided a startling contrast to the rather laid back aspect of all we'd passed on the way from the airport. Carefully manicured, emerald green lawns, with colourful shrubs and rows of stately palms greeted us.

Initially booked to share a room, Damian and I had decided to get separate rooms the weekend before, and appropriate arrangements were made. But none of these arrangements had made it to the people at reception. Thus I had a 45 minute wait for Room 411, upstairs in the long block of resort rooms between the resort office and the dive shop.

[pic: Blue Lagoon Resort room—page 47]

The room was spacious with wall to wall carpeting and twin double beds. It was comfortable thanks to the air conditioning. There was a new TV, but no aerial connection or DVD player, so it's possibly for decoration only. Floor to ceiling windows faced the water and slid open to allow me out onto the private balcony, where one could take in the magnificent views of the lagoon and islands.

[pic: Blue Lagoon Resort room view—page 47]

Before dinner I took a short walk to the local shop to purchase provisions of Fuji apples and bottled water, which all managed to fit in my room's bar fridge. I was just as intrigued by what the local shop did stock, as by what it didn't stock. A real insight into the lives of the locals.

Dinner that night involved a 30 minute wait to be served and an additional 45 minute wait for the meal to arrive. A large, cold, salty rib eye steak cooked well done not medium rare as requested, plus cold chips. No choice of sauces available. Obviously after the cook plates the meal, it gets to sit round for ages before being served.

After dinner, I made my way back to my room and was sound asleep by 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, 7th May 2011 started with breakfast at 6:30 a.m. There was a 15 minute wait to be served and a 30 minute wait for the wrong meal to be delivered.

Part of the meal was never delivered. On my trips to Bali and Vanuatu, the places I stayed at were run by ex-pat Australians. Here in Chuuk, the resort and dive shop were run entirely by the Chuukese, so one has to adapt to the differences this brings.

Time to go diving.

Diving at Chuuk Lagoon

I made the short walk to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop at 8 a.m. to unpack and setup my dive gear. A set of manifolded twin aluminium 80s (11 litres) with DIN valve fittings were waiting for me. (I needn't have packed my OMS dual cylinder travel bands and two Apeks DIN to Yoke adapters.)

I queried the length of one of the bolts on the bands but was told it would be okay. Of course it turned out it wasn't okay and we had to adjust it later on the dive boat. Thankfully Peter Fear had some tools with him on board.

There were two snorkelers and sixteen divers in our group, so Peter Fear had organised for us to have



three dive boats.

Peter Fear, Peter Chew, Laurent Ailleres and myself had all come equipped to dive using twins, so as to allow us to plan decompression dives with longer bottom times. We also planned to use stage cylinders with EAN60 on most dives to accelerate our decompression times. As our dive profiles would be quite different to the others, we took one of the dive boats for ourselves. Local Ansauo Renis was our boat captain and Tryvin Aisek our dive guide.

Fujikawa Maru

Our first wreck was the Fujikawa Maru, a large aircraft transport with six holds. Tonnage: 6,938. Length: 132.6 metres. Beam: 17.8 metres. Launched: 15 April 1938. She was sank by a single torpedo that hit starboard amidships, just aft of the superstructure. The Fujikawa Maru sank slowly by the stern while at anchor landing most orderly, almost perfectly on an even keel in 37 metres (120 feet) of water. We rode out to the dive site in the twin Yamaha 40HP outboard powered dive boat with Ansauo steering the way. We anchored on the dive site, and after Tryvin's briefing, geared up for the dive.

[pic: Fujikawa Maru 1 – page 55]

No stage cylinder for this dive as we wouldn't be staying on the bottom long enough to go into decompression. With 4 kg of lead in my weight belt and just wearing my non-buoyant Thermalskin for protection against scratches and stingers, it turned out I was well over weighted. I initially had some equalisation issues, but everything soon settled down and I was descending down towards the Fujikawa Maru. The 30 degree centigrade water was the warmest I'd ever dived in. Anyone got some ice cubes to cool it down?

As we started down I could see this awesome form lying below, like the body of some dead leviathan. Then came the straight lines that betray something man-made in the midst of everything else natural. A collection of geometric shapes of varying shades of blue. Squares, Rectangles. Circles. They gradually resolved themselves into the bridge, different deck levels, open holds and hatches, cargo booms, ladders, railings, cables, piles of debris. And guns.

Several different impressions vied for centre stage in my mind.

The size was enormous. The books said 132 metres (434 feet) in length with an 18 metre (58 feet) beam, but these are just numbers. I soon figured we could easily spend weeks just investigating this one ship.

The Quiet. Aside from the usual reassuring bubbling of used air, the clacking of shrimp and munching of parrotfish, the sensation was one of, to coin a phrase, deathly stillness. Exactly the opposite of what it must have been like that cacophonous day it went down.

Life. In direct contrast to the sombreness of the dead ship was the profusion of underwater life covering it. Just about anywhere light reached, something grew. Splashes of brilliant colour and fantastic shapes encrusted the length and breadth of the Fujikawa Maru.

The delicate, rainbow hued tree corals in particular excited my imagination, suggesting a master pastry chef had gone wild with his tubes of icing. The leather corals were huge in size and dense in numbers. Also in abundance were large, jagged-mouthed oysters. Sea whips. Frilly, white algae. Sponges. And so on.

I couldn't help thinking that there was something very ironic about having all of this beauty slowly but surely covering these weapons of war.

We headed to the large forecandle which has a large windlass. However, it is dominated by the large, old fashioned 1899 cruiser gun of 15.2 cm (6 inch) calibre, located on top of a circular platform. The barrel is slightly elevated and trained forward which suggests it was in action.

Though it's hard to believe that such a flat trajectory, single purpose gun would have been much use against attacking aircraft.

[pic: Fujikawa Maru gun—page 55]

In the bottom of the first forward hold we found several drums scattered around, with spare propeller blades, heavy machine guns and aircraft wings. Large six inch shell casings can also be seen, plus a large quantity of shells arranged in rows with their tips protruding above the brown sediment. It is probably ammunition for the bow gun.

There is also a lot of small arms ammunition, an outboard boat engine and drums orderly stowed. The tween decks of the hold have propeller blades, engine cowlings, aircraft fuselage parts, a torpedo body, tyres, coils of communication wires, porcelain insulators, and welding tanks. Ascending out of the hold and back on deck was the large winch house. The view up the mast was breathtaking and beautiful.

Down in the bottom of hold two we found several fighter aircraft. They were now an odd assortment of cockpits, fuselage parts, wings and tail assemblies. The tween decks of this hold contain radial engines and engine cowlings.

We passed over the third hold heading to the amidships area, through into the bridge and then onto the galley with its very large stove which extends almost the full width of the room. We came across a head, or bathroom, with toilet bowls and urinals.

We headed down into the engine room. The catwalks looked particular eerie at first. Plenty of machinery is to be found at various levels in the engine room, and at the bottom are the two rows of three cylinder heads of the main engine.

[pic: Fujikawa Maru engine room. Page 55]

Exiting the engine room we passed over the rear holds and headed towards the deck house at the stern. On top of the deck house is the second of the 15.2 cm (6 inch) calibre guns.

We then turned around and headed back towards the bow and our anchor line. As we ascended I did a two minute deep stop at 15 metres before rising to 5 metres where I used the EAN50 deco cylinder hanging from the boat.

Officially, this was our check dive where Tryvin could gauge for himself just how competent we were as divers. Thus it was a no decompression dive, to a maximum depth of 28 metres with a total run time of just 53 minutes. After successfully completing a simply magnificent dive we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop.

After a 20 minute wait to be served and then 40 minutes for the wrong order to be delivered to the table, lunch at the Truk Blue Lagoon Resort was finally over. Thankfully I didn't want the chips that were part of the dish, because they were cold.

Heian Maru

At 2 p.m. we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop. A 5 litre aluminium stage cylinder with EAN60 had been requested for me, so I analysed it (EAN61) and attached my stage regulators. With everyone aboard the dive boat, we headed out for the dive site of the Heian Maru, the largest wreck in Truk Lagoon, this time with 3 snorkelers aboard as well.

The Heian Maru was a large combined passenger-cargo liner which was converted to a submarine depot ship before the war. Tonnage: 11,616. Length: 155.4 metres. Beam: 20.1 metres. Launched: 16 April 1930. She was sunk on the second day of Operation Hailstorm by a torpedo and came to rest on her port side in 34 metres, with just 14 metres to her starboard beam.

[pic: Heian Maru 1- page 55]

Tryvin gave us another excellent dive briefing and we again geared up. I'd adjusted my weight harness down to 2 kg of lead. While gearing up I realised I hadn't put the harness on. I thought about it and decided zero lead weighting should be fine. Turned out I was right.

Hold two of the Heian Maru contained a large number of submarine torpedoes. They are 21 inches (54 cm) in diameter and quite long. Much larger than I'd expected them to be. On some the twin propellers can be seen at the tail end.

[pic: Heian Maru torpedo. - page 55]

For me the highlight of diving the Heian Maru was coming across four tubular shaped objects as we headed aft into a passageway on the promenade deck. They are approximately 6 to 10 metres long and about 25 centimetres in diameter. On one end some of them have folding handles, while the other end tapers to an asparagus-shaped head. These are spare periscopes for submarines.

As we headed further aft in the passageway we came across more of them. Periscopes are sensitive instruments with delicate optical systems. Thus they were kept out of the general cargo area and stored in the glassed in passageway for protection.

The two large ships propellers at the stern of the ship are certainly eye catching.

[pic: Heian Maru prop—page 55]

As we ascended I switched to the EAN61 on the stage cylinder at 14 metres and breathed it down to 50 bar by the end of the dive. Thus we completed a decompression dive with a maximum depth of 27 metres and 64 minutes in duration.

Subchaser/Gunboat

We headed over to the Subchaser/Gunboat for a snorkel. I didn't have a snorkel with me, so I put on my weight harness with 2 kg of lead (which turned out to be not enough), grabbed an eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with EAN61 in it, my mask and fins and went over the side. Being too buoyant, it was a bit difficult getting down to 5 metres and staying down. Grabbing on helped. Thus I had some fun taking a brief look around for 6 minutes with a maximum depth of 7 metres. With everyone back aboard after the snorkelling, we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop. Dinner at the Truk Blue Lagoon Resort was a BBQ night. What a disaster. Somehow the meat and baked potato were colder than the air temperature. Mind you, if I'd waited for the entertainment to finish before starting on my steak, it might have warmed up a bit.

Phillip and I decided to skip the set dessert and instead headed into the restaurant for a wider selection from the dinner menu. Yes, it seems it is possible to be served banana pancakes without a banana being involved in the process of preparing the dish. Still, the banana-less pancakes were delicious and I was in my room and asleep by 8:30 p.m.

The Resort and Diving Routine

And so I settled into the leisurely regime of the place. Up at 6 a.m. Sit down for breakfast at 6:30 a.m. Head out for the first dive of the day at 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Sit down for lunch at 11 a.m. Back out to dive at 2 p.m. A snorkel/dive after the second main dive of the day. Sit down for dinner at 6:30 p.m. Asleep in bed by 9 p.m.

Before and after dinner, some people would party at the resort's bar. At other times some people would be seen in the resort's reception area trying to get an Internet connection to the outside world. The problem is, 5 to 10 people trying to share a dial-up Internet connection really doesn't work very well. People would groan as someone else came into the room holding their smartphone or laptop computer. They knew their share of the already poor Internet bandwidth was about to get even worse.

A group of about 8 divers in our party organised a night dive one night. I passed on it as I'd already done two long and deep dives that day.

More Chuuk Lagoon Dive Details

Sunday morning, 8 May 2011 — Nippo Maru.

I switched over to using an eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with 150 bar of EAN61. Peter Fear suggested that as we would be doing a longer dive and using more air I should use some weight for when the aluminium cylinders became buoyant. So I grabbed 4 kg. Turned out to be way too much and I later went back to carrying no weights.

There was a group of rebreather divers already on the wreck of the Nippo Maru. Plus during the dive another boat load of divers took to the dive site as well.

The Nippo Maru is one of the most fascinating wrecks in the lagoon due to its unusual cargo. Tonnage: 3,763. Length: 107.3 metres. Beam: 15.2 metres. Launched: 16 September 1936. The wreck was only located on 16 June 1980.

[pic: Nippo Maru 1.jpg]

She was a water carrier, yet as well as this simple cargo, there are several disassembled coastal defence guns, three pieces of field artillery on wheels, a tank on deck, two trucks and a large amount of shells, shell casings and electrical components on deck and in the five holds. We proceeded to explore as much of it as we could.



The deco chamber !!!



Left: Nippo Maru tank on deck

Right: Nippo Maru gun]

Mindful of my air consumption I started to ascend with the dive guide while the others stayed for a while longer. Switched to the EAN61 in the stage and completed my deep stop, deco stops and safety stop. The others still had plenty of deco to do so I just hung around with them. Decompression dive of 57 minutes with a maximum depth of 38 metres.

Sunday afternoon, 8 May 2011 — Rio De Janeiro Maru.

Back at the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop after lunch, the other divers were already waiting on the dive boat, plus our three snorkelers were back with us. I had to check my stage gas. Turned out they'd filled the 5 litre cylinder used by Peter Fear on the previous dive, rather than the 11 litre one used by me. So Peter Fear and I switched cylinders.

As we geared up on the Rio De Janeiro Maru dive site, a dive boat from the Thorfin live aboard arrived.

The Rio De Janeiro Maru is a large passenger liner converted to a submarine tender and depot ship. Tonnage: 9,627. Length: 140.5 metres. Beam: 18.9 metres. The ship is lying on its starboard beam.

[pic: Rio De Janeiro Maru 1—page 55]

We headed along the port side which is now the top, back to the stern of the ship. Twin shafts emerge from the contoured bottom of the ship, with the keel separating them. Both propellers remain on the ship.

[pic: Rio De Janeiro Maru side of ship—page 55]

We headed towards the bow along what was the top of the ship and into a cargo hold. There we saw large 15 cm calibre gun barrels and shells.

We journeyed deep into the engine room. I followed our dive guide with the others behind me. There were a few times I thought there was no way I was going to make it through in some places, but managed to do so. It turned out the others were all thinking the same thing.

[Right: Rio De Janeiro Maru engine room]

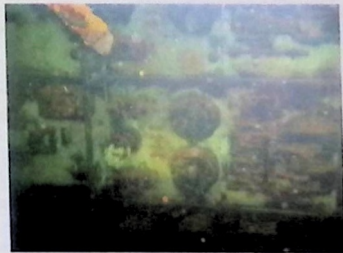
Eventually we made it to the bow and onto the port side.

As we came up to 14 metres I switched to the EAN61 stage gas. We did our deco and deep stops heading along the port side back toward the stern.

I signalled to Laurent and asked him to watch me shoot my DSMB and then did so. Turns out it wasn't in a situation that would enable him to sign it off as a part of my BSAC Sports Diver certification. Bugger! This was a decompression dive of 61 minutes with a maximum depth of 29 metres.

Sunday afternoon, 8 May 2011 — Japanese Zero.

We headed over to the wreck of a Japanese Zero airplane for everyone to have a snorkel. But again, I didn't have a snorkel with me, so I put on my weight harness, this time with 8 kg of lead (which turned out to be just right), grabbed an eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with EAN60, my mask and fins and went in.



I had a simply delightful short dive of 10 minutes with a maximum depth of 8.6 metres while checking out the features of the upside down Zero. Diving in such a minimalist fashion felt quite liberating. I was the last back aboard the dive boat and then we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop and dinner.

Monday morning, 9 May 2011 — Shinkoku Maru.

With everyone aboard we headed out at 9 a.m. towards the site of the Shinkoku Maru, one of the two mandatory dives in Chuuk. She was one of the eight fleet tankers which refuelled the Japanese Strike Force for Pearl Harbour. Tonnage: 10,020. Length: 152.4 metres. Beam: 19.8 metres. Launched: 13 December 1939. She now features magnificent coral growth and fish life after being hit by a torpedo and sinking to rest on an even keel.

[pic: Shinkoku Maru 1 —back page]

The boat crew were worried because of the rain and reduced visibility was making it difficult for them to navigate. We discussed switching to other dive sites, but decided to just proceed slowly and hope conditions would improve. They did eventually and we powered over to the dive site.

I was using an eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with 150 bar of EAN57.

In the midship area we explored the bridge, mess, galley, a bathroom and head, plus the sick bay with its operating table.

[pic: Shinkoku Maru 1 —back page]

On this dive we penetrated deep into the engine room. At first entering the engine room was like entering a large open space in a large building. From the catwalk the view was like being in a theatre. The huge cylinder heads are held in place with fist sized nuts. Low on the port side of the engine room the torpedo hit shows as a big jagged hole.

We saw lots of very spectacular marine life as we made our way around this ship. I switched to the EAN57 stage gas and deep my deep, deco and safety stops. This was a decompression dive of 65 minutes with a maximum depth of 39 metres. What a simply wonderfully varied, relaxing and spectacular dive.

Our dive guide, Tryvin, dropped his torch while getting aboard the boat. Ansaou, our dive boat captain, geared up, dived down and retrieved the torch. Impressive.

Monday afternoon, 9 May 2011 — Kcnsho Maru.

After lunch we headed out at 2 p.m. to the wreck site of the Kcnsho Maru, a medium sized, five hold freighter. Tonnage: 4,861. Length: 116 metres. Beam: 16 metres. Launched: 30 June 1938. A torpedo exploding at hold 1 caused the ship to sink in 40 metres of water.

[Right: Kcnsho Maru bridge]

Once in the water, we moved towards the bow. The starboard anchor is out with the chain leading around the bow and forward over the port bow, which implies the ship probably went down by the stern.

The forecstle is dominated by the large artillery gun mounted on it. The lush marine growth seems to be taking on the role of combat camouflage.

The double anchor winch amidships is large and impressive. The bridge is rather dark, and as we continued aft we saw the chart room.

We entered the dark engine room, eventually finding two sets of three large cylinders of the main diesel engine. Pieces of machinery and control panels were picked out by our dive lights.

[Right: Kcnsho Maru engine room]



After exiting the engine room I followed Tryvin as he went through another part of the superstructure, past the galley and a workshop. This time I got a bit stuck trying to exit a narrow passageway. Eventually I was able to readjust my gear and wriggle my way through. As we headed back towards the bow we came across another group of divers. I switched to the EAN57 stage gas and then stuck by Peter Fear as we worked our way back to where he'd left his stage cylinder near the base of the anchor line.

We then started our ascent, and completed our deep, deco and safety stops. This was a decompression dive of 60 minutes with a maximum depth of 32 metres.

Monday afternoon, 9 May 2011 — Hoyo Maru.

We headed over to the wreck of the Hoyo Maru, a large tanker, for the afternoon snorkel. Tonnage: 8,629. Length: 143.3 metres. Beam: 18.6 metres. Launched: 29 August 1936. It capsized and broke into two parts forward of amidships as it sunk. She now rests upside down in 34 metres of water, with just 3 to 9 metres to the ships bottom.

Some went in to have a snorkel. I again put on my weight harness with the same 8 kg of lead as I used the day before, grabbed my eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with EAN57, my mask and fins and went in.

I had a delightful short dive checking out the features of the upside down ship. I resisted the temptation to take a look inside. The outside of the hull was covered in lots of very pretty marine life.

My dive computer requested a 3 minute safety stop and I duly complied. A dive of 11 minutes with a maximum depth of 11 metres. I was last back aboard the dive boat and then we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop.

Tuesday morning, 10 May 2011 — San Francisco Maru.

I analysed the gas in my eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder: 200 bar of EAN60. Peter Fear wasn't joining us because of head cold and sinus issues. So it was just Peter Chew, Laurent Ailleres, yours truly and the boat crew aboard as we headed out at 9 a.m. to the San Francisco Maru.

The San Francisco Maru is a medium-large, old five hold freighter. Tonnage: 5,864. Length: 117.3 metres. Beam: 15.5 metres. Launched: 1 March 1919. She sustained very heavy damage from a close bomb miss on the port side and sank quickly by the stern.

[pic: San Francisco Maru 1—back page]

Another boat was already on the dive site. Tryvin gave us an excellent dive briefing and we agreed on a dive plan. We entered the water shortly after those on the other dive boat.

We headed down to the bow and checked out the gun on the forecastle. We then worked our way along the port side, towards the bridge and came across a battle tank as deck cargo. There are two more tanks on the starboard side.

[pic: San Francisco Maru tank on deck—back page]

In hold two between the tanks on the deck are two large tanker trucks. There is also a large radial aircraft engine and a number of 50 pound aerial bombs, standing on their tips with the tail fins exposed.

As we went along a companionway, Tryvin pointed out a shark off the port side. Hold 4 contains the remains of two large trucks, and the tween decks are filled with ammunition boxes. The shells are of 3 and 4 inch calibre. Hold 5 contains a large number of torpedo bodies scattered all about.

[pic: San Francisco Maru shells in hold - back page]

As we headed back to the bow along the starboard side I took great delight in watching a very graceful eagle ray making it way in the same direction off of the starboard side.

I switched to the EAN60 stage gas and completed my deep, deco and safety stops. This was a decompression dive of 55 minutes with a maximum depth of 55 metres.

With everyone back aboard the dive boat, we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop.

Tuesday afternoon, 10 May 2011 — Sankisan Maru.

At 2 p.m. with three divers plus Adelle aboard, we headed out to the wreck site of the Sankisan Maru, a medium sized freighter. Tonnage: 4,776. Length: 112 metres. Beam: 15.8 metres.

Launched: 29 January 1942. She received a hit in the aft hold, which detonated its cargo of ordnances, and blew the ship apart, devastating the midship superstructure in the process.

[Right top: Sankisan Maru 1]

This time Tryvin's briefing started a little bit differently, "Bow, no stem!"

We geared up and went in, and descended towards the bow. Hold 1 had a number of trucks and lots of ammunition cartridges. Hold 2 had more trucks, plus airplane engine cowlings for Zero fighters and radial engine exhaust manifolds.

[Right photo 2: Sankisan Maru truck.]

[Right photo 3: Sankisan Maru bullets]

We made our way aft to the area where the ship is now gone and instead there is a huge U shaped depression carved out of the sea floor. Awesome.

We headed back towards the bow and then circled one of the masts as we ascended. These were rich with colourful marine life.

[Right photo 4: Sankisan Maru mast coral]

I switched to the EAN60 stage gas and completed my deep and safety stops. This was a non-decompression dive of 58 minutes with a maximum depth of 27 metres.

Tuesday afternoon, 10 May 2011 — Subchaser/Gunboat.

We headed over to the site of a patrol boat for a snorkel. The others went in. As I asked Ansauo to pass me a stage cylinder, he noticed some sticks in the water and told Tryvin. They then said we'd have to stop and move because we couldn't snorkel or dive here. At first I thought they were joking, but no, they were serious and proceeded to summon the others out of the water.

The sticks indicated there had been a death in the family living ashore, and that they were in mourning. So we respected the local customs and moved to the Subchaser/Gunboat for a snorkel.

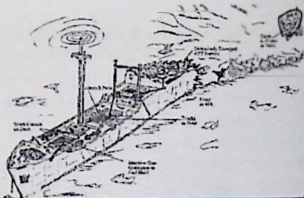
As I didn't have a snorkel with me, I again put on my weight harness with 8 kg of lead, grabbed an eleven litre aluminium stage cylinder with EAN60, my mask and fins and went in. This time I had no problems staying down and checking out the wreck. This was a non-decompression dive of 7 minutes with a maximum depth of 5.5 metres.

Wednesday morning, 11 May 2011 — Hoki Maru.

This was to be our last day of diving and the plan was to complete two dives before 1 p.m., which would give us more than 24 hours of surface time before we were due to fly out the next day. I headed down to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop early and checked my stage cylinder mix — 150 bar of EAN57 — and the twin cylinder fill.

Peter Fear was missing in action again, so with Laurent, Peter Chew, myself and our dive crew aboard we headed out at 8 a.m. towards the site of the Hoki Maru. The water was flat calm with a mirror polish as we skimmed across the lagoon.

The Hoki Maru is a medium-large, old fashioned freighter, captured while on a run from Freemantle to Colombo on 12 July 1942, and utilised by the Japanese Navy during the war. She was formerly



the British-New Zealand ship M/V Hauraki. Tonnage: 7,112. Length: 137.2 metres. Beam: 17.8 metres. Launched: 28 November 1921. An explosion thoroughly destroyed the part of the ship between the forecastle and the bridge.

[pic: Hoki Maru 1— back page

Hold 5 was full of road building equipment: bulldozers, trucks, tractors and a steam roller. The hold amidships had munitions.

[pic: Hoki Maru bulldozer.—back page]

We penetrated deep into the engine room with its debris or torn and twisted plating. Lots of pretty marine life on the masts and superstructure.

I switched to the EAN57 stage gas and deep my deep, deco and safety stops. Laurent and Chewy had left the water and I was still hanging on the deco lines with Tryvin, when I spotted a nice looking shark checking us out. I pointed it out to Tryvin and he never took his eyes off of it from then on.

This was a decompression dive of 50 minutes with a maximum depth of 42 metres.

With the dive completed and everyone back safely aboard the dive boat, instead of heading back in, we instead headed over to a nearby island for our surface interval. There we found two old guys, two young boys and two dogs enjoying the tranquillity of a picture book tropical island. There was one main hut on the island which was divided into four separate rooms. People can book to come out and stay on the island.

Wednesday afternoon, 11 May 2011 — Yamagiri Maru.

With our peaceful break on the island completed, we headed over to the wreck site of the Yamagiri Maru, a large 6 hold freighter. Tonnage: 6,439.

Length: 133 metres. Beam: 17.8 metres.

Launched: 30 May 1939. She is now resting on her port side in 34 metres.

[pic: Yamagiri Maru 1.— right]

I had 100 bar of air remaining in the twin 11 litre cylinders and 150 bar of EAN57 remaining in the stage. Plenty for this dive, though I'd have to monitor my air consumption carefully.

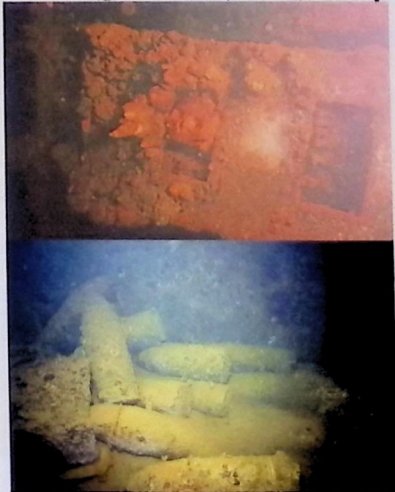
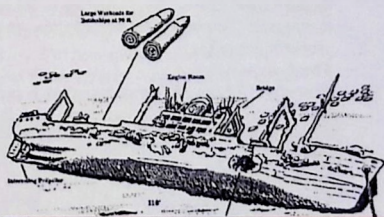
We headed down onto the wreck and deep into the engine room with its 2 rows of 3 cylinders. Tryvin showed us a skull stuck in between some machinery.

[pic: Yamagiri Maru skull]

We then made our way out and into hold 5 with its cargo of giant, armour piercing, artillery shells destined for the 46 cm (18 inch) guns of the battleships Yamato and Musashi. The nine 46 cm guns of these ships were the largest artillery ever put on board of any ship and had a maximum reach of 42 km. The shells are about one metre long and weigh about 1460 kg a piece. There is also a steamroller in this hold.

[pic: Yamagiri Maru shells]

As we headed back towards the bow, Laurent spotted a large shark and signalled me, but I couldn't see it. I switched to the EAN57 stage gas and did my deep and safety stops while admiring the coral growth on the side of the hull.



[pic: Yamagiri Maru hull coral]

This was a non-decompression dive of 36 minutes with a maximum depth of 26 metres.

Finishing Up at Chuuk Lagoon

Five days of magnificent diving was at an end.

The three of us discussed the different things we each remembered most as we headed back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop.

It was time to clean and dismantle our dive gear and take it back to our rooms for drying.

By 1 p.m. I had everything laid out to dry on

the balcony of my room and headed off for lunch at the Blue Lagoon Dive Resort.

After lunch I went back to the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop to settle up my bill: US\$410 extra for the twins, stages and nitrox fills; plus US\$250 for my merchandise purchases.

Some of the others had organised to go out on a fishing trip for the afternoon. I chose to rest at the resort. The fishing trip proved to be very exciting, but no fish were caught.

Dinner was a complimentary BBQ organised for our group by the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop. All three boat and dive crews joined us for this, plus cooked the BBQ feast. It was the best meal of our stay. I went up to the restaurant and ordered banana splits for Ansau and myself. Turned out he was a bit too under the weather by the time I got back to properly enjoy his.

The Journey Home

Thursday 12 May 2011 saw me up early packing dive gear. After breakfast I settled my US\$310 bill for all meals and extras with the Blue Lagoon Dive Resort. Very reasonably priced, I thought. Then it was back to the room to finish packing.

Once the packing was complete, I called reception and they had two guys come down to take my bags. I then went and waited for the bus in reception.

The bus ride to the airport was slow, as was check-in and the security check at the airport.

But then we were through into the air-conditioned gate lounge area. Finally we boarded the Continental Airlines Boeing 737 aircraft and were on our way to Guam.

Guam was a repeat of the same stupid handling of transit passengers. If I can avoid having to ever go through Guam again, I will.

Some 60 or so Japanese high school girls joined the flight for Cairns. It was amusing to see the highly organised way they did everything, plus how most of them wore face masks.

After waiting a few hours, we were finally on our way to Cairns and the delight of being back in an efficient system through the airport. The Japanese school girls all had their face masks securely in place as the disembarked the aircraft. Someone must have told them the air in Cairns is poisonous. Made me wonder if the customs guys were go to run Geiger counters over them to see how radioactive they might be.

While waiting on the courtesy bus to the Cairns Colonial Club Resort we learnt some of the others were being delayed because the baggage carousel had broken down. Oh dear! Seems the system wasn't so efficient for everyone.

We eventually arrived at the Cairns Colonial Club Resort, checked in and made in to our rooms. I was sharing with Damien.

Friday, 13 May 2011 started with a full breakfast and a bus trip back to the Cairns airport. No queue at the Virgin check-in. My bags were weighed in at less than they were at the start of the trip, but this time they insisted on charging me \$200 extra for baggage. Bugger!



And the flight was delayed 2 hours. Hey, I thought only Crapstar did this!
The consolation was that Cairns has a pleasant airport terminal to be in. I purchased some magazines and read. Finally we were aboard the flight and back in Melbourne.

Lessons Learnt On The Trip

I purchased a copy of Franko's Chuuk Lagoon Dive Map — www.frankosmaps.com — from the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop. It's printed on waterproof, durable synthetic paper, and provides a very useful guide to the locations of the wrecks relative to each other, plus their main features.

Avoid Guam airport if you possibly can. You'll need at least two hours between flights in order to make it through their stupid, totally bogus, procedures.

I didn't need to take my Apeks DIN to Yoke converters, my OMS twin cylinder travel bands, or my Analox nitrox analyser. The Blue Lagoon Dive Shop had this covered. There were so few people using nitrox that there were no queues for the dive shop's Trimix analyser.

The Blue Lagoon Dive Resort is the place to stay. I didn't see any other land based places that would come close. I don't see the benefit of staying on either of the two live aboard boats, especially given that they seem to mostly dive from the same size dive boats anyway.

The wreck diving at Chuuk Lagoon is the best I've experienced so far. I'm told my planned trip to Bikini Atoll in 2012 will top it, but the value for money at Chuuk Lagoon is simply unbeatable. I'll be heading back there again. Indeed, I'm now questioning why I'm heading off to dive the Darwin and Wolf groups at Galapagos in August 2011. For the price of that dive trip I could probably go back to Chuuk Lagoon three times!



This has come in from David Lennon at ReefBall...

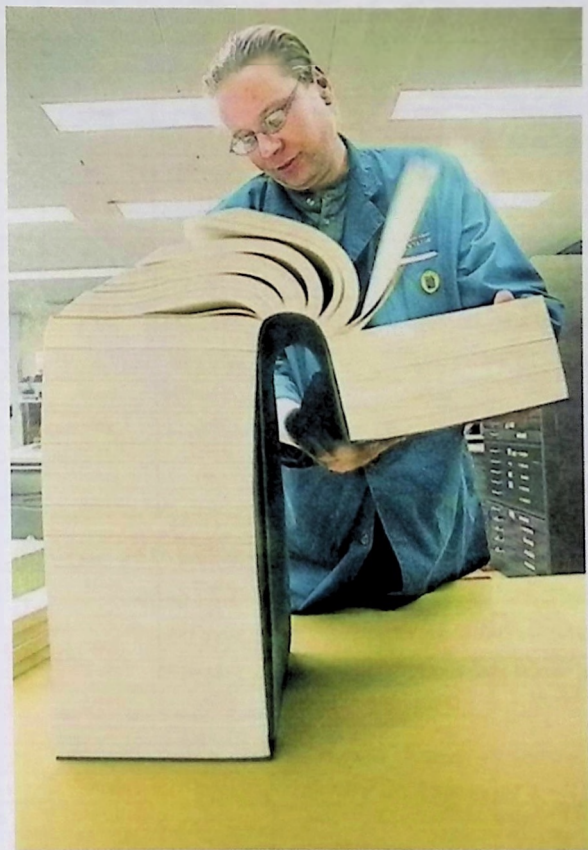
Something you and your club members may be interested in...I gave a talk at the Albert Pk Angling club. They had amazing stories of great fishing reefs that were destroyed by the mussel boats. That got me thinking. There could be the opportunity to conduct a trial in restoring one of these reefs. So we are in the process of collating existing knowledge and old maps and then we will tow video cams over the area to document what is there now. We may dive to help get details. We will also aim to document reefs that are still productive and gain an idea of why and then use all this info to design a restoration program to provide similar structure to the structure that was there before so it can be recolonised by mussels etc.

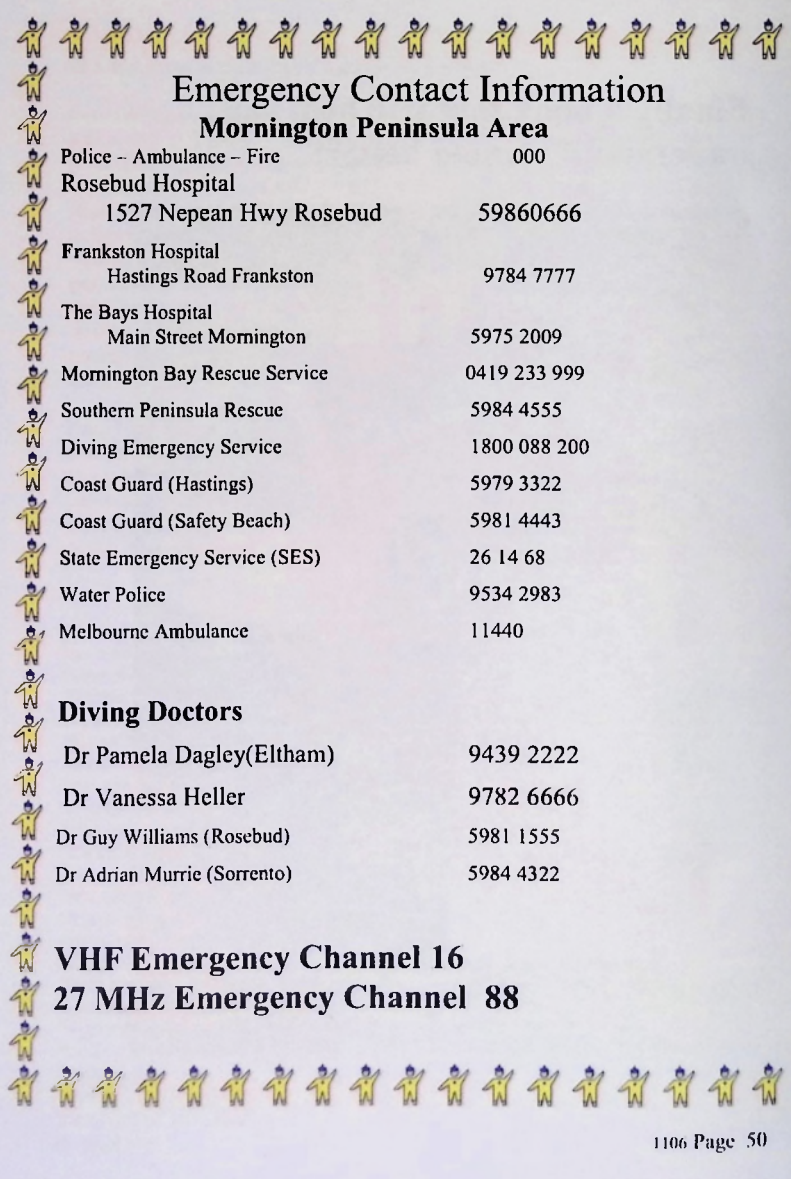
Paul Hamer has gained approval to deploy 3 more reefs in the Bay and is finalising guidelines for DSE that will make it easier for them to review reef applications. I don't think it will be easy to get permission to conduct a restoration trial but I think the mood is changing and that we have a chance. If you or your club have any other sites you think worth investigating for restoration let me know.

Grandparents

- *What a bargain grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million dollars' worth of pleasure. ~Gene Perret
- *Grandmothers are just 'antique' little girls. ~Author Unknown
- *Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. ~ Welsh Proverb
- *A grandmother is a babysitter who watches the kids instead of the television.
- *Never have children, only grandchildren. ~Gore Vidal
- *Becoming a grandmother is wonderful. One moment you're just a mother. The next you are all-wise and prehistoric. ~Pam Brown
- *Grandchildren don't stay young forever, which is good because Grandfathers have only so many horsey rides in them. ~Gene Perret
- *It's such a grand thing to be a mother of a mother - that's why the world calls her grandmother
- *It's amazing how grandparents seem so young once you become one.
- *If your baby is 'beautiful and perfect, never cries or fusses, sleeps on schedule and burps on demand, an angel all the time,' you're the grandma. ~Teresa Bloomingdale
- *Grandparents are similar to a piece of string - handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of their grandchildren.
- *A grandparent is old on the outside but young on the inside
- *I wish I had the energy that my grandchildren have - if only for self-defence. ~ Gene Perret
- *You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. ~Proverb

**Finally a book that will help you
understand women better!**





Emergency Contact Information Mornington Peninsula Area

Police - Ambulance - Fire	000
Rosebud Hospital	
1527 Nepean Hwy Rosebud	59860666
Frankston Hospital	
Hastings Road Frankston	9784 7777
The Bays Hospital	
Main Street Mornington	5975 2009
Mornington Bay Rescue Service	0419 233 999
Southern Peninsula Rescue	5984 4555
Diving Emergency Service	1800 088 200
Coast Guard (Hastings)	5979 3322
Coast Guard (Safety Beach)	5981 4443
State Emergency Service (SES)	26 14 68
Water Police	9534 2983
Melbourne Ambulance	11440

Diving Doctors

Dr Pamela Dagley(Eltham)	9439 2222
Dr Vanessa Heller	9782 6666
Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud)	5981 1555
Dr Adrian Murrice (Sorrento)	5984 4322

VHF Emergency Channel 16
27 MHz Emergency Channel 88

Tidal Streams at the Heads—June

Italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack)

[RED = best diving conditions near the Heads]

Mon 30	Tues 31	Wed 1	Thurs 2	Fri 3	Sat 4	Sun 5
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
559		9	101	153	243	331
1313	650	741	828	912	953	1033
1815	1417	1510	1555	1634	1711	1745
2318	1948	2052	2141	2221	2256	2329

Mon 6	Tues 7	Wed 8	Thurs 9	Fri 10	Sat 11	Sun 12
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
	3	40	120	204	254	351
420	511	603	659	800	907	1027
1111	1149	1227	1304	1345	1430	1523
1818	1850	1920	1949	2018	2053	2133

Mon 13	Tues 14	Wed 15	Thurs 16	Fri 17	Sat 18	Sun 19
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
455	600	706	26	135	243	346
1153	1315	1426	807	901	950	1034
1631	1802	1945	1525	1615	1659	1738
2222	2320		2057	2153	2243	2328

Mon 20	Tues 21	Wed 22	Thurs 23	Fri 24	Sat 25	Sun 26
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
	10	50	129	205	243	324
443	535	623	711	800	853	958
1114	1151	1225	1259	1332	1408	1446
1812	1842	1909	1935	2002	2030	2100

Mon 27	Tues 28	Wed 29	Thurs 30	Fri 1	Sat 2	Sun 3
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
409	500	557	655	4	110	214
1116	1232	1342	1440	751	844	930
1533	1636	1821	2008	1529	1609	1645
2131	2211	2301		2109	2153	2231

Tidal Streams at the Heads—July
Italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack)
[RED = best diving conditions near the Heads]

<i>Mon 4</i>	<i>Tues 5</i>	<i>Wed 6</i>	<i>Thurs 7</i>	<i>Fri 8</i>	<i>Sat 9</i>	<i>Sun 10</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
316	416	514	27	109	155	244
1014	1055	1134	610	707	806	912
1717	1749	1820	1213	1252	1332	1415
2308	2345		1850	1919	1948	2021

<i>Mon 11</i>	<i>Tues 12</i>	<i>Wed 13</i>	<i>Thurs 14</i>	<i>Fri 15</i>	<i>Sat 16</i>	<i>Sun 17</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
335	433	536	643	0	121	238
1025	1139	1253	1403	747	845	936
1502	1602	1722	1914	1503	1552	1634
2100	2148	2247		2039	2139	2230

<i>Mon 18</i>	<i>Tues 19</i>	<i>Wed 20</i>	<i>Thurs 21</i>	<i>Fri 22</i>	<i>Sat 23</i>	<i>Sun 24</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
344	437	525	23	56	128	202
1019	1058	1132	609	652	736	822
1710	1740	1806	1204	1235	1306	1338
2312	2349		1831	1856	1920	1945

<i>Mon 25</i>	<i>Tues 26</i>	<i>Wed 27</i>	<i>Thurs 28</i>	<i>Fri 29</i>	<i>Sat 30</i>	<i>Sun 31</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
238	318	405	502	609	717	43
915	1021	1138	1253	1400	1451	818
1413	1451	1538	1644	1845	2026	1532
2012	2041	2117	2208	2320		2118

Tidal Streams at the Heads—August

Italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack)

[RED = best diving conditions near the Heads]

<i>Mon 1</i>	<i>Tues 2</i>	<i>Wed 3</i>	<i>Thurs 4</i>	<i>Fri 5</i>	<i>Sat 6</i>	<i>Sun 7</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
201	314	416	515	5	49	135
912	959	1041	1121	611	706	804
1608	1642	1714	1745	1200	1240	1319
2201	2242	2322		1816	1847	1919

<i>Mon 8</i>	<i>Tues 9</i>	<i>Wed 10</i>	<i>Thurs 11</i>	<i>Fri 12</i>	<i>Sat 13</i>	<i>Sun 14</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
222	312	406	508	618	730	125
904	1007	1111	1219	1330	1431	831
1400	1446	1542	1658	1854	2023	1520
1955	2036	2128	2230	2355		2122

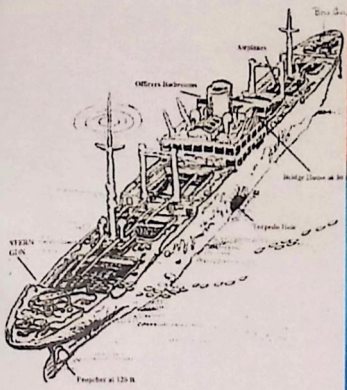
<i>Mon 15</i>	<i>Tues 16</i>	<i>Wed 17</i>	<i>Thurs 18</i>	<i>Fri 19</i>	<i>Sat 20</i>	<i>Sun 21</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
241	341	430	514	554	18	49
922	1005	1043	1115	1145	832	712
1600	1633	1701	1727	1751	1215	1243
2207	2245	2316	2347		1815	1839

<i>Mon 22</i>	<i>Tues 23</i>	<i>Wed 24</i>	<i>Thurs 25</i>	<i>Fri 26</i>	<i>Sat 27</i>	<i>Sun 28</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
123	158	234	316	408	517	640
752	836	928	1030	1144	1256	1354
1313	1345	1419	1501	1559	1731	1934
1904	1930	2000	2038	2132	2256	

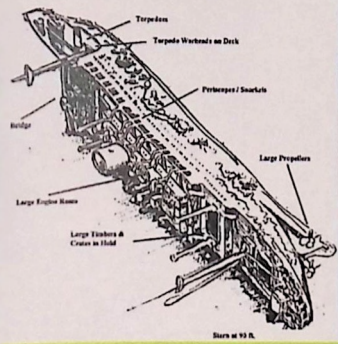
<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tues 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thurs 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
34	201	315	416	513	607	25
754	854	944	1028	1108	1148	700
1441	1521	1558	1632	1707	1741	1228
2040	2129	2213	2256	2340		1816

VSAG Meeting and Dive Calendar

Date	ACTIVITY DETAILS (probable date of dive is listed but could be changed subject to weather—ring/ email DC— see page 6) Can swap between Sat and Sun depending! Dives adjusted on the day to suit divers and conditions
Jun 4/5	The George Kermode Wreck and Pyramid Rock. DC: David Geekie: 0419 300 686 Meet at Newhaven @ 9.00am
Jun 6-16	SIPADAN TRIP
Jun 11/13	Queens Birthday diving TBA—watch for emails Day dives depending on weather. DC Lloyd Borrett.0418-170 044
Jun 16	GENERAL MEETING @ Maori Chief 8pm
Jun 19	Fathers day (in the USA anyway!)- Fathers : Stay home and lap up the attention.
Jun 25/26	Knawsome Reef; High water slack @10am. DC John Lawler 0414-922 916 Meet at Sorrento at 8,30am.
July 2/3	No Dive Planned but watch for emails if 25/26 Jun cancelled
July 10	Wreck of the Uralba DC Greg Richards 9783 4249 Dep TBA
July 15	Come Howl at the Moon. Mornington Pier under a full moon! DC TBA Meet @7pm
July 16/17	No Dive Planned but watch for emails if 10 Jul cancelled
July 21	GENERAL MEETING @ Maori Chief 8pm
July 23/24	Sub and the pub! Best sub of the Day. DC Alan Storen: 0417-017 446 Met @ Sorrento 9.00am [single dive!]
July 30/31	No Dive Planned but watch for emails if 23/24 Jul cancelled
Aug 6/7	The Canberra & twin Bommies: DC john Lawler 0414-922 916
Aug 13/14	No Dive Planned but watch for emails if 6/7 Aug cancelled
Aug 18	GENERAL MEETING @ Maori Chief 8pm
Aug 20/21	Best Dive of the day- DC's choice DC Lloyd Borrett 0418-170 044

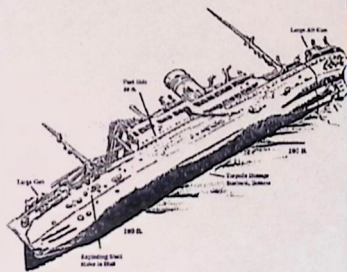


Fujikawa Maru — top 3 photos



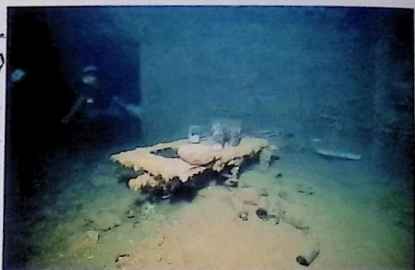
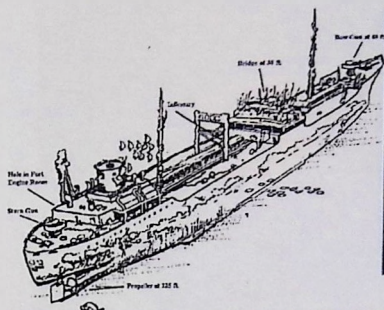
See Lloyd's story page 32

Hein Maru - Middle 3 photos

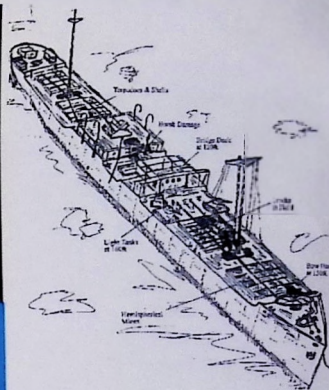


Rio de Janeiro - bottom two photos



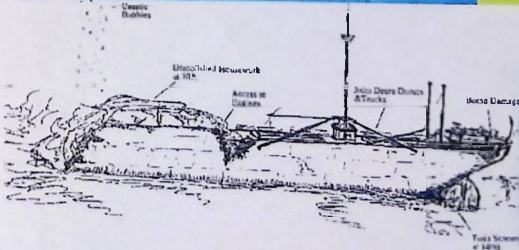


Shinkoku Maru — Operating theatre



San Francisco Maru

Photos on this page and 2nd back page to accompany Lloyd's story on Pages 32 to 37



Hoki Maru

