



Fathoms

OCTOBER 2013 - NOVEMBER 2013

Ex-HMAS Canberra

Photo by Phil Watson

VSAG President's Annual Report 2013

Meet your new Committee

Inaugural VSAG Awards Night

Member profile

Diving and Travelling with Coeliac

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*Blotched Hawkfish.
Bare Island, Sydney
Photo by Ian Scholey*



*Blue Grouper,
Magic Point, Sydney
Photo by Ian Scholey*



Fathoms

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VSAG General Meetings

3rd Tuesday in the month
Meeting starts at 8.00 pm
(Dinner starts from 7.00 pm)

Bells' Hotel

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NOTICES

Fathoms is now online!

VSAG's venerable Fathoms magazine is now available online. Yes, the previous 46 editions of Fathoms are now available for members to download from our web site. That's from the 'Fathoms December 2004 to January 2005' edition to the most recent edition you've received.

To see the list of Fathoms magazines available online, and download them if you already have the right permissions, go to <http://www.vsag.org.au/Downloads/e-8.html>. The magazines are in the 'Downloads' section of the web site, in the 'VSAG Fathoms Magazines' category.

You'll need to be logged onto the VSAG website using your account Nickname and password in order to access the magazine files. If you don't have access, email your website Nickname to Lloyd Borrett and he'll give your account the appropriate permission.

VSAG Committee meets at 8.00 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month
(except in January)

All Members Welcome

Bell's Hotel, 157 Moray St, South Melbourne VIC 3205

REMINDER

We love to receive your dive reports, articles, and photos for Fathoms—big or small—the more details, the better.

Editor — Cheryl Lees - email : cheryl_marj@hotmail.com or editor@vsag.org.au

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*** Please don't forget to put names and captions with them when possible.

VSAG Christmas Party 2013

Keep November 23rd free for this event
It will again be held at the home of Cheryl Lees & Lloyd Borrett
in Frankston South
More details will be emailed to you soon

VSAG on Facebook

Did you know VSAG now has a Facebook page? Check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/vsag.divers> and 'Like' us.



New Meeting Day, New Meeting Place!

VSAG will now be holding Monthly meetings at 8pm
on the **3rd TUESDAY** of each month at **BELL'S HOTEL** —
157 MORAY ST, SOUTH MELBOURNE

All are welcome to join us for a meal at 7pm before the meeting
All meals \$14 on Tuesday nights

VSAG Dive Equipment Box

VSAG now has a private transient equipment box located at The Scuba Doctor dive shop, 1/49 Peninsula Avenue, Rye VIC 3941. Equipment that is not in-use by VSAG divers and boat owners can now be held in our black storage box. Currently: 2 x Oxygen kits, 1 x DAN first aid kit, plus 1 x Boat Ramp Permit. Please use this facility responsibly. ❖

VSAG Committee 2013–2014



Back row : John Lawler, Ian Scholey, Lloyd Borrett, Graham Ellis, Trevor Williams

Front row : David Flew, David Geekie, Peter Galvin, Benita McDonough.

Absent: Christine Reynolds



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VSAG President's Annual Report September 2013

by David Geekie



As VSAG prepares for its 60th Anniversary next year it is pleasing to report that once again we have completed the previous year's diving without a significant diving injury or incident, living up to our 'Safety in Diving' mantra.

Operating and Diving safety has been a major focus again this year, continuing the agenda set in the previous year. A significant achievement for the year was the preparation and distribution of a 'Boat Owner Starter Pack' that helps ensure VSAG divers are placed on member's boats that are configured for safe diving operation. John Lawler and Lloyd Borrett did a huge amount of work in putting these packs together. It was also encouraging to experience the cooperation of the boat owners in general to this initiative.

The committee will also be offering to have experienced boat owners check over each other's boats at the start of the next diving season to ensure all safety aids are present and in date. Our club is recognized for its boat diving expertise and a committee priority this year was to put in place initiatives to ensure we continue to be leaders in this area.

The safety initiatives this year also included Lloyd's efforts in procuring a bulk deal on the Nautilus Lifeline VHF radios for VSAG members and the fact that we ended up with around 22 units

within the club illustrates the commitment club members have to implementing improvements in diving safety. Towards the end of the reporting period we also had a representative from Transport Safety Victoria give the June monthly meeting presentation. This was very well received by the members present. The presenter was in turn impressed by the membership's commitment to safe practices and has offered to return and provide training in other aspects of safe boat operation.

Earlier in the year several members attended the Alfred's hyperbaric chamber tour and presentation where we were told that it is really not a matter of 'if', but 'when' each of us divers would present ourselves for their care, given their statistics and our increasing age! As a club we have had very few incidents but we need to be vigilant in monitoring our fellow divers for DCI symptoms, particularly after incident free dives.

Safety management is always a journey rather than a destination and for the next financial year we are already in discussion with Mike Mallis from BSAC regarding a combined safety day that he would like to coordinate.

VSAG as a club has continued in reasonable health. Our major activity remains the scheduling of weekend diving on member's boats, weather permitting. I

I am not aware of any weekend where the weather forecast was acceptable for boating that we did not have boats available to dive from. On most weekends we had more boat spaces available than interested divers. One result of this was the frequent inclusion of members from other clubs on our boats to enable the trip to take place. Increasing the number of divers interested in diving each weekend is likely to be a focus of the incoming committee. Suggestions from members as to how to do this would be most welcome.

In addition to the weekend diving, the Top End Divers group within VSAG has flourished, frequently offering diving for those who have time available mid week. They have had some great days out, based around their ability to pick which day during the week offers the best conditions.

The financial report has shown that our income exceeded outgoings last year and is forecast to do so again next year. This leaves us in an excellent position to consider additional capital expenditure to enhance our diving capabilities and perhaps attract additional regular diving members.

Trevor Williams took on the initiative of reviewing the VSAG point scoring protocol and has turned this into a useful tool to acknowledge member contributions on a regular basis. The use of monthly awards has been a wonderful way to highlight member contributions to club life and hopefully suggests where other members could make contributions. One particular episode worth mentioning was the refurbishment of John Lawler's boat trailer, largely by club members. David

Flew did an excellent job of planning and supervising the process and from a personal perspective it was great working together with fellow club members on such a worthy undertaking. JL contributes more than most to the smooth running of the club and I can't think of a better way for a club to say 'Thank you' than what was done in this instance. My thanks to all who contributed. (The only time JL may have smiled as much is when he heard that Mary Malloy had found the camera he had lost at Boarfish Reef.)

The Christmas Party held at Cheryl and Lloyd's place last year was another great success and this – as well as the recent 'Christmas in July' event – emphasized our need for further emphasis on non diving, social events to give members a chance to get to know one another, as well as introduce non diving partners. Cheryl and Lloyd have offered their hospitality again this year, which we much appreciate.

Peter Galvin's offer to host weekends away at Inverloch provides a great venue at a very affordable cost for weekends away with fellow club members. I encourage members to book in for these as a chance to get to know like minded people, rather than focusing on whether the conditions are ideal for diving. My thanks to Peter for offering his house for these weekends and for the exceptional hospitality he provides. If these become well attended then there might be more interest in re-instituting other trips such as Christmas and overseas diving holidays. This is an area that does need attention, if it still remains of interest.

There are several committee members of long standing who are not continuing on. Peter Briggs served as treasurer until last year and is now taking a well earned break travelling around Australia with Carol. His steady approach will be missed.

Alan Storen has also indicated he would like to retire this year. His contribution over the years has been incomparable, in particular the 68 editions of Fathoms as well as being either secretary or President. Alan's steadfastness, reliability, knowledge and work ethic will be difficult to replace.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other committee members for their contributions during the year. Thanks to their commitment VSAG has continued to evolve and is now in a position to consider new initiatives to make our diving even more enjoyable.

Thanks to the members who have participated in both the diving and non diving related activities this year. Without you the club would be an empty shell. The attendance at monthly meetings has been pleasing and the committee is hoping we may be able to enhance these meetings shortly – more anon.

David Geekie

VSAG President



David and wife, Pam Dagley on a recent dive trip to Exmouth, W.A.

**See report on page 18*



Home: Covered

Car: Covered

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Inaugural VSAG

Awards Night

Tuesday 17 September 2013

Bell's Hotel Meeting Room,

South Melbourne

The VSAG Awards began in 1972—41 years ago! The first winner was Frank Maguire. Throughout the history of VSAG, the Awards have been the pinnacle of the Club activities but over time this major event has lost its importance. In fact, it's almost disappeared.

There have been multiple winners over that time :

Justin Liddy—2

Tony Tipping—3 + Life Member

John Goulding—3 + Life Member

Alan Storen—4 + Life Member and winner of the Literary Award twice

Mick Jeacle—6 + Life Member, 3-time winner of the Literary Award & winner of the Wooden Weight Belt Award once

John Lawler—9 + Life Member, 2-time Literary Award winner, 3-time Editor's Award winner & winner of the VSAG Mile (for those who remember those days).

This year the Committee decided to try something new with the Annual Club Awards. Instead of them being included at the end of the AGM meeting, they thought it might make the awards more meaningful and special to acknowledge the winners on a separate night altogether. Thus, the Inaugural VSAG Awards Night was born.

Trevor Williams did an amazing job, compiling the points and statistics that formed the basis for Club Champion nominations & award. The Committee called for nominations for the Wooden Weight Belt Award and determined a short list. Don Abell set about reading Fathoms for the past year to decide on the Literary Award short list & winner (no mean feat). While Lloyd Borrett, the editor of Fathoms, had the task of selecting the Fathoms Award short list & winner for the member who had assisted him the most over the past year.

To get the ball rolling, Trevor, as MC prepared a PowerPoint presentation that started with some of the interesting facts that provided a snapshot of VSAG over the past year :

55 club members went on a dive-related club activity. This included new members who signed up after a try-dive.

30 people went away on dive trips.

The club had at least one dive activity every month (Oct 12 to June 13)

19 members contributed to Fathoms.

10 members attended committee meetings regularly.

31 people attended social events.

62 people attended a club meeting or social function.

Between 15 and 26 people each month attended club meetings.

8 members made some sort of presentation/report at a monthly meeting.

Trevor then went on to recap the Monthly Award winners - a new innovation this year to acknowledge Club members who go above and beyond the norm to help others in the Club or help to promote &

enhance Club activities.

Then for the Awards, Trevor thought a "Logies Style" format would be fun (although he drew the line at wearing a frock and high heels on the red carpet!!) So, nominations for each award were read out ... a pause to build the tension ... and then the winner announced. The only exception was *The Wooden Weight Belt Award* that was decided by the votes (somewhat loudly) of club members who attended on the night.

Nominations & Winners were :

Wooden Weight Belt Award *presented by Trevor Williams*

1. Philippines: Turtles lying on pristine coral. In need of company? Diver decides to join them. Coral is no longer pristine. Culprit: **Lloyd Borrett.**
2. Bass Strait: Reef diving off Point Lonsdale/Barwon Heads. Diver kits up and does buddy check. Undoes dry suit to refit neck seal. Into the water with dry suit unzipped. Recover and try again. Diver suffers one very wet and cold dive in dry suit. Culprit: **Dickon Roddie (& his buddy Trevor Williams).**
3. Bass Strait: Reef diving off Point Lonsdale/Barwon Heads. Underwater photography. Diver decides to leave camera on reef for other divers to use the following weekend. Culprit: **John Lawler.**

4. Nautilus First Outing: Brand new Nautilus Lifeline safety beacon on its first dive. Nautilus clipped to D-ring by curly cord. Or was it? Completed dive – found Nautilus missing! Culprit: **David Flew.**

Winner : Dickon Roddie

Fathoms Award—presented by Lloyd Borrett

Special Mentions—Photo Contributors:

Andrew Qusted
David Politakis
David Reinhard
Ian Scholey
John Lawler
Phil Watson

Special Mentions—Article Contributors:

David Geekie
David Politakis
Graham Ellis
Ian Scholey
John Lawler
Margot Johnson

Simone Lee

Special Mentions—Dive/Trip Report Contributors:

Andrew Qusted
Christine Reynolds
David Geekie
John Lawler
Michael Sesin
Simone Lee

Winner : Cheryl Lees

Literary Award—presented by Don Abell

Special Mention :

Lloyd Borrett—*8th wonder fantasy hole*
2nd Place : John Mills—*Planes, ships & automobiles*

Winner : Lloyd Borrett—*Diving the Nuclear Fleet at Bikini Atoll*

Club Champion—presented by Trevor Williams

4th Place : Trevor Williams (530 points)
3rd Place : David Geekie (930 points)
2nd Place : Lloyd Borrett (1670 points)

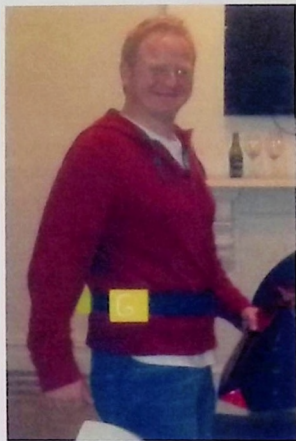
Winner : John Lawler (2120 points)

A great time was had by all judging by the laughter, smiles & hearty congratulations to the winners. The evening concluded with drinks & finger food. Let's hope it's the first of many such Awards Nights to come.

❖written by Cheryl Lees

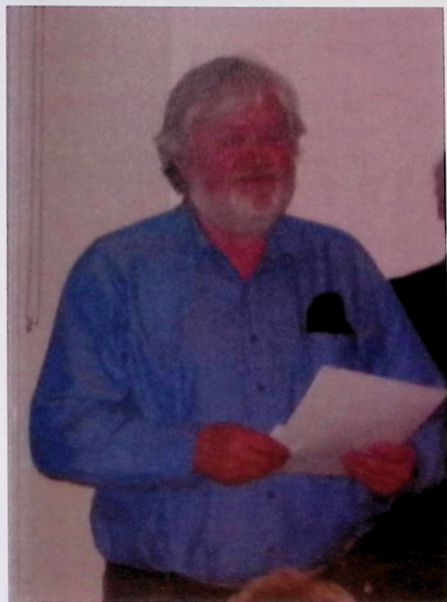


Club Champion 2013



Above : The proud recipient wearing his new Wooden Weight Belt

Left : Dickon Roddie & Trevor Williams with the new Wooden Weight Belt Trophy supplied by John Lawler



Below Left : Lloyd Borrett receiving the Literary Award

Below : Cheryl Lees receiving the Fathoms Award



Two Long-serving Committee Members call it a day

The following two members were acknowledged at the Awards Night for their outstanding service to the VSAG Committee :

Peter Briggs

Peter held the position as Treasurer for many years and never lost a dollar! He always had a calming effect on the Committee which from time to time was much needed. We thank Peter and his wife Carol (who we know was a significant support to Peter) for their efforts. Enjoy your travels and we look forward to diving with you for many years to come.



Alan Storen

Alan was President for four years from 2005—2009. As mentioned on page 10 he has been a VSAG multi-award winner.



Alan was also a member of the famous Victorian Artificial Reef Society which won the Ex-HMAS Canberra for Melbourne, was given a special award for Marine Education in 2005 and has an extensive involvement with the Army.

Alan has always been prepared, on time, seldom missed a meeting and always in command of the challenges. When the Good Ship Committee hit troubled waters, Alan stayed on the bridge, hand firmly on the tiller and steered the ship into calmer waters. Alan's knowledge of diving-related topics is scary—probably up with the best—and always good to listen to.

Alan is a 5000-dives diver and has produced no less than 68 editions of Fathoms! Outstanding! With all that said, sad as it is to see Alan leave the Committee, it is his time. We hope to see you back in the water soon mate. Thanks ever so much for your fine contribution to VSAG. It is very much appreciated.

Alan was presented with a Special Service Award and his wife Jude was given a gift in appreciation for her many contributions to VSAG over the years as well.

❖ *words from speech given by John Lawler at Awards Night*



New members

The following people are new VSAG members :

Ian Scholey

Feng Qui

Tony Hood

John Bowden

David Simpson

... and the return of Gavin Latimer.

Please make them feel welcome and ensure they enjoy their VSAG experience.

First diving experience: *A try-dive in Cairns. I took to it like a duck to water, so to speak.*

Favorite diving location in Melbourne: *It has to be the Lonsdale Wall. I also really enjoy diving the reef structures off Barwon Heads. Not to mention Cape Schanck – too many favourites.*



Member profile : Phil Watson



Year joined VSAG: 2011

How long have you been diving?: 5 years on scuba; 25 years freediving.

Most memorable diving experience: *I had some remarkable diving at Eaglehawk Peninsula in May this year. This is a must-do trip for Melbourne divers.*

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: *seeing Mola Molas off the east coast of Bali. They are weird-looking fish.*

Most valued piece of diving equipment: *All my wonderful buddies. And my drysuit.*

Do you have a dive boat?: No.

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

Diving and Travelling with Coeliac

written by Carole Campisano VSAG



Hi, my name is Carole and I have been a Coeliac for 25 years. My husband, Peter (non-coeliac), and I have been scuba diving all over Australia and Norfolk Island for the last 34 years. Recently we went for our first *real* overseas trip to Micronesia in the North Pacific Ocean. Naturally, I was quite apprehensive about my diet.

I contacted a specialist diving travel agent (Ian Lockwood from Always Travel in Ashburton Victoria) and discovered that he was very aware of the dietary needs of a Coeliac. Ian was able to organize all gluten-free food for me throughout my travels which included Melbourne to Cairns; Cairns to Guam; Guam to Truk Lagoon (Chuuk); Truk to Guam; Guam to Palau; Palau to Guam; Guam to Cairns and finally Cairns back to Melbourne.

My two domestic flights were with Qantas. I can't speak well enough of the great service they gave me. In fact, there was an occasion where they had not organized a GF dessert for me and the flight attendant gave me her own fruit platter and had something else instead. WOW!!

Flying United Airlines was a very different matter. In five out of six of our flights with United Airlines they had no GF food for me at all, even though Ian Lockwood had organized this for me three months earlier. Their response was that they had recently decided to discontinue providing GF meals on their flights.

In fact, my husband Peter would check with the terminal staff at each airport to make sure that there was a GF meal organized for me on each flight. They would check their computer and guarantee that a GF meal was on board for me. However, the reality was that no GF meals were available. I was lucky to get a few bits of fruit while everyone around me had hot meals. Some of our flights were nearly five hours long and at very awkward hours. I was starving and this lack of interest by the flight crew was really doing my head in.

Eventually, I was so hungry that I decided to take a punt on some plain boiled rice balls with a bit of salmon on top. They seemed to be ok and I was told there was only rice in them and nothing else. Big mistake! The next morning I was so sick I had to stay in bed all day, emptying out the little I had in my stomach in a bucket.

Luckily I recovered enough to go diving the following day. In Truk Lagoon the people there had no idea of what GF was, so I just stuck to very plain, grilled steak or fish with frozen vegetables. I had brought my own GF muesli which I had for breakfast every morning. I also had some Orgran dry biscuits. These were a real lifesaver for me.

Fresh fruit and veggies are very hard to get in Truk. The country is very poor with only the most basic infrastructure, but the diving is brilliant!

The water temperature was a consistent 30 degrees Celsius every day. We dived in our shorts and T-Shirt. Diving down to 40 metres without a restrictive wetsuit in warm, clear water was just magnificent!

After one week in Truk Lagoon watching everything that I put into my mouth, we finally landed in Palau. Thank goodness Palau was a lot more civilized.



Every day we went diving with a well-organized dive business called Sam's Tours. Ian Lockwood had organized a GF lunch for me on board the boat every day we dived. This was great - in fact, nothing was too much trouble for them. They even helped put my fins on and carry my tanks for me.

The hotel we were staying in was called "The SeaPassion." Our holiday package included a buffet breakfast every morning. When I scanned the buffet at breakfast, I noticed there was very little GF food available. I was very disheartened. My husband (Peter) went directly to the chef and introduced himself. He explained my situation. The chef's name was Artoof. He was very obliging. He listened very carefully while Peter explained what I could and couldn't have. Artoof went back into his kitchen and 20 minutes later presented

me with a delicious GF breakfast of chicken and fresh veggies. He said he'd googled Coeliac Disease on the computer to make sure he hadn't inadvertently made a mistake. This was a truly delicious meal, even though it wasn't what I usually had at the start of the day.



After that, Artoof would present me with a special meal he had prepared especially for me. It was either fresh fish, chicken or eggs with steamed veggies. I felt so privileged to be catered for so exclusively and I soon got used to having a delicious, hot meal for breakfast.



By the way, the diving in Palau was amazing; beautiful, clear, warm water, gorgeous coral reefs and stacks of colorful fish life. This trip was an adventure of a lifetime for us.

❖ *This article was originally written by Carole for Coeliac Australia magazine.*

Dive Reports

30 March—13 April 2013

Exmouth—Ningaloo Reef W.A.

Text & photos by David Geekie VSAG

In February this year Peter and Carole Campisano mentioned to Pam and I that the Easter holidays coincided with the whale shark season at Exmouth, WA. They had been there twice before and found it a great holiday spot. Pam prefers warm water diving and typically we holiday around the equator but a 'local' holiday in 28C water with whale sharks thrown in was more than appealing, it was on the 'bucket list'.

We all met up at Perth airport on Saturday 30th March and took the Skywest flight to Leamonth (it leaves from the new terminal 2), arriving mid afternoon.

Peter surprised the Europcar attendant with an Entertainment Book voucher for a 25% discount and an upgrade! Eventually we were given a Nissan X-trail 4WD, an excellent vehicle for the sandy terrain near the beaches. Given Pam's daughter, Sally, had flown from Melbourne for the weekend whale shark dive, we needed the extra room!

We were told the coral spawns on the 8th day after the full moon in late March and this year the spawning was extensive. The seas were covered in a brown, dust-like material that indicated a huge amount of food was available.



It was a great season for whale sharks and we picked the peak!

There are several operators who run whale shark excursions and we chose "Three Island Whale Shark Dive" to go out with. It is not cheap, at a published price of \$385 per person (Peter again negotiated a cheaper rate) but the operation was efficient and well run. Their boat takes 20 guests and they have their own spotter plane so you are not sharing the sharks with other operators. They drop you in for a snorkel on some lovely reef after fitting you out with good quality snorkel gear and this gave me a chance to introduce Pam and her daughter to 'duck diving' for the first time.

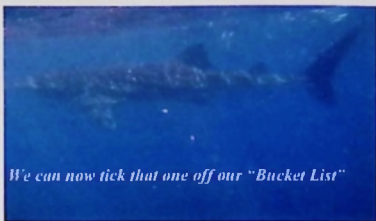
The boat then proceeded outside Ningaloo Reef (we went south to be away from the other operators) and then sped up once the spotter plan had found a shark. On reaching the shark, they drop a swim-

mer in with it to track the shark. The guests are divided into two groups of 10 and the first group is dropped in front of the shark, dividing into 5 either side and then swim with it. After a while this groups pulls away and the second group repeats this while the first group is picked up by the main boat and repositioned in front of the shark again. This way even poor swimmers get to see the shark several times as long as the shark cooperates! There is a RIB that acts as a safety boat in the event snorkelers get into any trouble.

We had brilliant weather, very calm and full sun. We swam with at least 3 different whale sharks several times each. Their lengths were from 4 – 6 or 7m, typical of this area.

Having completed our whale shark adventure we were taken to a snorkeling location outside the reef with an opening into the main reef. The currents were quite strong but the location brilliant – they do this spot very rarely. The fish life and coral was quite exceptional. The safety RIB was certainly required for some of the participants with an increasing chop combining with strong currents.

All in all a great day—we were lucky to strike such excellent conditions on our first day. Sally was flying out the next day so was grateful it all came together on the one day she had available.



We can now tick that one off our "Bucket List"

Pam and I had worried that there would not be much to do for the remainder of the 2 week the holiday if we were successful in seeing whale sharks on the first attempt, but this was not an issue.

The other activities included:

1. "Exmouth Divers" took us to Lighthouse Bay and another site off Ningaloo Reef for a double boat dive. The Lighthouse reef dive was superb with snakes, sharks, turtles as well as extensive adult and juvenile fish life.



Exmouth Divers use a large RIB for diving.

2. Later in the week Peter negotiated the loan of a 4WD with a tow bar and we



hired a 6M boat with a 150HP engine to self dive the Lighthouse reef area. Peter conned the dive shop to filling the tanks to 240Bar so we spent nearly 3 hours at 11m exploring several sites in the area. We found a site we later learnt to be 'Labyrinth' that was also spectacular.

3. Pam and I also joined "Exmouth Divers" on a double dive to the Murion Is. We did not find this to be as interesting as the Lighthouse Bay area but it was good out.



Pam on our hire boat at Lighthouse Reef

4. The Navy Pier 'shore' dive is expensive but very interesting. The only operator is "Ningaloo Whaleshark 'n Dive". The pier was built to facilitate the construction of the VLF transmitter and is now the home of the BFG (Big Friendly Grouper), many schooling fish, sharks etc. It is a jam packed dive site with something to see everywhere you look and it would take many dives to see it all.

The dive shop has to produce a passenger manifest as we are entering a restricted zone and every person had to have photo ID that matched up with the exact name given on the manifest. Peter (who apparently is actually Ross) caused quite a panic until he produced photo ID that matched the manifest. We were then

asked many times as we prepared for the day and then boarded the bus 'did we have our ID'. When we reached the 'checkpoint' the Aussie Federal Policeman stuck his head into the bus and said 'Does everyone have their ID cards?' We all held them up and he just said OK and left! The European visitors were speechless at this 'heightened security' due to the North Korean tantrums. The crew assured us there was a security official that did often check the individual cards...

5. The snorkeling down the west coast in the marine park was superb, particularly further down towards Yardie Creek. There are many different entry points, each with their own character. Turquoise Bay is beautiful, even without Elle Macpherson!

6. We drove south for 1.5hrs to Coral Bay to participate in a Manta Ray snorkel day that was very similar to the whale shark swim except we dived before and after the main event rather than snorkeling. The coral was good but the fish life was not exciting. On the second dive there was a reef shark cleaning station but there was only one shark in attendance while we were there and the vis was not great. Peter, Pam and I received tanks that had foul smelling air which spoiled the diving and actually made Peter sick. Carole's air was fine, indicating it was contaminated tanks, not the air from the compressor.

The plane did spot a manta ray and we started swimming above it, then it reached a cleaning station complete with two other rays. We then just took it in turns floating above the station watching

the mantas. We went to look at another one that was doing barrel rolls but it had ceased this behavior before we arrived so we then went and did a second dive.

We challenged the shop owner on returning to shore regarding the air and Peter had his money returned, however the owner would not acknowledge he had a problem. Pam marked one of the tanks but I doubt they will follow up. Upon returning to Exmouth we mentioned the problem to the dive shop who had booked for us and the young woman stated she had a similar problem last August.

Trip information: Flights to Perth on Tiger cost around \$130 each way with luggage if booked in advance. They soon will fly into Terminal 2, the same used by Skywest.

Flights to Learmonth (Exmouth) are around \$160 each way if booked in advance on either Skywest or Qantas.



Accommodation : We stayed at "Ningaloo Lodge" at \$140 per night for a double or twin share room. These were small bedrooms with an ensuite, however they have a large, well-equipped communal kitchen, BBQ area and laundry. The hosts were very pleasant and they provided milk, coffee, tea and laundry detergent. Once Easter had passed they gave us another room key

for storage at no extra cost. There is more expensive accommodation available but we really enjoyed our stay. The air conditioners and fans worked well, important with daily temperatures around 35C or more.

"The Novatel" offers high quality accommodation close to the marina. We went with some locals for cocktails one evening, definitely worth sitting by the pool as evening sets in!

Whale shark tours : We used "Three Island Whale Shark Dive" who were very professional. I believe "Ningaloo Whaleshark 'n Dive" are also good operators.

Diving :

Exmouth Diving Centre took us to Lighthouse Bay / Ningaloo Reef area and then the Muiron Is. on a separate trip. The boat was a huge RIB, rather crowded but it worked OK. The crew were very good and the dives well led. The diving on the Muiron Is. was not as good as we expected, it appeared to be fished out. It is better sticking to the sanctuary areas. Carol and Peter skipped this day based on their previous experience. Lighthouse



Bay and the outer Ningaloo Reef dives were brilliant.



“Ningaloo Reef Dive” at Coral Bay took us out diving as well as snorkeling with mantas. The crew did a good job but some of us had smelly air, most likely due to contaminated tanks. The owner disputed this but eventually refunded Peter who had sat out the day after the first dive. When we returned to Exmouth and talked to a staff member at Exmouth Diving Centre she said she had a similar experience last August. The diving and visibility was not as good as the northern areas.

“Ningaloo Whaleshark 'n Dive” took us to the Navy Pier, the crew were out to make the day entertaining and there was no doubt the BFG knew our dive leader ‘Red’- it was almost an intimate relationship! They also arranged, at short notice for us, to hire 8 tanks and weights (\$130) to enable us to hire our own boat for a day’s diving. We asked for ‘good fills’ and they topped them up to 240bar for us! This business is the only one that has access to the pier so if you book any-

where else you will still be with this group on the day. However they don’t do other dive sites at the moment.

“Exmouth Boat and Kayak Hire” provided a 6.5M alloy plate boat with a 150HP 4 stroke Yamaha on a trailer for \$340 per day. It was equipped with a good GPS plotter and sounder but only a short ladder. Our objective was to return to the Lighthouse Bay dive site where the buoys are quite close to the shore. The depth was only 11m and with the good vis we snorkeled to choose the best buoys to dive from. Our first dive was around 1hr 20 minutes so we split the next tank between two dives. The first dive site



Carole in the driver's seat of our hired 6.5m Ally. It was well fitted out with sounder and GPS with charts.

was Blizzard North, the third site was Labyrinth. The diving on these sites was exceptional for the varied marine life, great for photography.

We didn’t have a tow bar on the hire car and despaired we would have to pay a \$100 launch and retrieval charge. Peter and Carole were talking to the Italian owner of Pinocchio’s restaurant where

we had dined several times and he immediately offered us the loan of his 'bush' car. He uses it for hunting pigs with a bow and arrow! This worked out fine, though Peter struggled with the steering due to the massive front wheel tyres! This was typical of the locals, it is a very generous and relaxed environment.

Car Hire : "Europcar" did the Campos a great deal—it cost us \$749 for two weeks for the X-Trail. Most of the time we had 4 in the car and this vehicle was perfect for the terrain. It had an auto 4WD option for when exploring the gorges on dirt roads or getting close to the beach for snorkeling. We had purchased travel insurance through our Flight Centre travel agent (Pam's daughter Sally) that covered us for the car hire accident excess which helped to keep the cost down. ❖

Pinocchio's Restaurant in Exmouth had large, excellent meals. L to R : Pam Dagley & her daughter, Sally, Carole & Peter Campisano.



Majorca (Land of the sunburnt German)

By David Simpson — Friend of Peter Galvin and new VSAG Member

Majorca (Mallorca) is a small Island of about 3,640 Sq Km and boasts 554 Km of coastline in the Mediterranean.

It's only an hour's flight from Switzerland and Germany and most of the locals assume that you are German and speak it fluently. English is language number 3.



My stereotype of Germans was tested when I saw tribes of them walking up and down the streets in brightly coloured tee shirts, singing as loudly as they could and burnt red raw. The songs seemed to have a common chorus that featured the word "Prost" (Cheers) repeated many times.

As to getting sunburnt, they would get as red a beetroot and then go and do it all again the next day.

My trip to Majorca coincided with one of their cultural events in the courtyard of the Palma Cathedral. Not being a prude I decided to join in the festivities.

On returning to the hotel area I found a large music hall which was occupied with young ladies who had obviously forgotten or misunderstood the dress standards of demure ladies. Why they were on the tables is a mystery to me, but our German friends kept them company and seemingly happy with their Prost song.

One street away from this establishment is one of the 10 linked dive shops. Apparently you can purchase a dive ticket that is transferrable between the dive centres and they will arrange dive times for you. I purchased at *Club Nautico de Cala Gamba* but did not want to walk in off the beach. They cheerfully arranged for the dive to be undertaken in the Marine Reserve *Marina, Illa del Toro*. Cost was 35 euro and for an additional 10 euro they supplied everything. All I had with me was my dive card.

The Marine reserve is only a 10 minute short trip on a well-equipped 11.5 metre Zodiac. Drop off onto a 5 metre ledge, get

into a group and then progress along the ledge to a wall and drop down to about 28 metres.

The sea bed is covered with various plant life and quite a number of fish including a rather impressive moray eel. But I would not have considered the fish population overly abundant. I took this up with the dive master who looked like Jason Statham and spoke like Antonio Banderas (bastard). His answer was along the lines of "well the water temperature is too cold to dive (17 degrees) for most divers, and the reserve is only a reserve for 6 months of the year". For the other six months it gets its guts fished out.

While I would not lead a dive trip to Majorca – if I was in the vicinity I'd make sure I had my dive card with me.

The link to Mallorca diving is - <http://www.mallorcadiving.com/> which indicates that cave, wreck and shark diving is possible. I'd like to speak to someone who has greater experience than the one dive that I took before going to the expense of another trip there. ❖



Red Sea — Egypt

Text & pictures supplied by David Simpson, VSAG

Just prior to everything going off the rails in Egypt I was tempted by the absolutely fabulous week long holiday packages that the Swiss grocery store chains operate. Flights, hotel accommodation, food and drinks etc. for less than the price I could get for a discounted air fare to the same location. I put on my best procrastinating boots and delayed the decision to go to my preferred location "Sharm el Shiekh" and ended up booking into Dahab which offered the same dives and was close to the Blue Hole. That procrastination cost me dearly.

Landed at Sharm El Sheikh at 3:30am and was told that it is a 1 hour drive to Dahab. Then it got interesting. To get out of the airport, my passport is stamped, examined by someone else, then another person looked at it again and then another before I got out.

I was the only one going to Dahab so had a driver to myself. Got about 10 Km down the road into the middle of nothing, in pitch black and we were directed off the road to a road block. Blokes peered over heavily fortified barricades and an armed soldier argued with the driver and pointed to me. I tried to look inconspicuous and slide into the crack between the seats but I was lodged there in the spot-

light. We drove on and I asked the driver what it was all about - he said it was a licence check.

A few more questions like "Will this happen again?" - "Yes three more times before we get to the hotel". "Do you take this trip often?" - "Yes 4 times a day". The license answer was wearing thin. The truth is that Dahab is on the way to Israel and all sorts of precautions are taken. My driver tells me that Dahab is a beautiful town. Stretching the truth was his strong suite, as there was not one road that did not have extensive damage.

My hotel was located right on the beach with beautiful blue water. Things were looking good, so after a short nap, I called the local dive shop (every third shop seemed to be dive related), and booked in for the test dive at the local "house reef" called Lighthouse. Not a particularly impressive reef but good to get the feel of the equipment. The Red Sea is saltier than the open ocean. It's like swimming in clear warm Vegemite.



Everything tested out OK and I told the dive shop manager that my reason for coming to Egypt was to dive on the *Thistlegorm*, the *Ras Mohammed* and the *Blue hole*.

“No problem” she said “we have a dive trip tomorrow for the *Thistlegorm* and *Ras Mohammed*. We’ll pick you up at 3:15am and drive back to Sharm El Sheikh to catch the boat trip”.

The *Thistlegorm* is 50KM on a 22 metre cruiser – so everyone picked a padded bench and caught up with some sleep.

Three dives planned - two on the *Thistlegorm* and one in *Ras Mohammed* and the “Toilet Wreck” site.

The Thistlegorm

What a magnificent wreck. Discovered by Jacques Cousteau and apparently left dormant as most people did not believe that he had found it. A reasonable description of the wreck can be located on :

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Thistlegorm.

Dive 1 was down to the Bridge ; forward to the rail tankers ; along the port side ; over hold 4 and the tanks ; to the stern and propeller (massive and still intact) ; then up along the starboard side to the bow. The dive master then takes the divers through one of the three doors in the bow (shown below) and up through the anchor winch area. The last part of the dive is to test divers for the effects of diving in enclosed areas. Max depth about 28 Metres.

Dive 2 - Through the wreck.

Down to level two of hold 1 and then tracking along the starboard side crossing to port and then up to level one and following the same circular path. The holds are crammed with motorbikes, trucks carrying motorbikes, aircraft wings and motors and various munitions. The ship was carrying a locomotive which is about

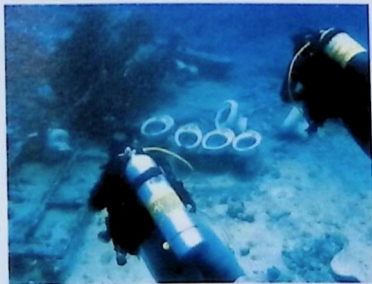


150 metres from the wreck which unfortunately I did not see. Describing everything on this wreck is beyond my capabilities, but I'd like to dive it again to get to know her. Max depth about 20 metres. Up to the boat and another hour's sleep as we travelled to *Ras Mohammad*.



Dive 3 — Ras Mohammad is the site where the *Jolanda* crashed into the reef and sunk; lay on its side then gradually rolled upside down before plunging over the reef down to about 170 meters. <http://www.aquatours.com/wrecks/jolanda-yolanda.htm>.

The *Jolanda* is commonly known as the “Toilet Wreck” as the cargo was mostly toilets, bath tubs and a BMW car. All that



remains are bath tubs and toilets. There are hundreds of toilets and as you would expect, divers have arranged them in rows for “sit on the Toilet” pictures.

While this is all fun, the drift dive there took our group past some of the biggest, ugliest Moray eels you would ever want to see. They were not in caves with their heads sticking out – they just lay partially hidden by coral. None of us seemed particularly interested in getting up close. Back to the boat to end a great day diving.

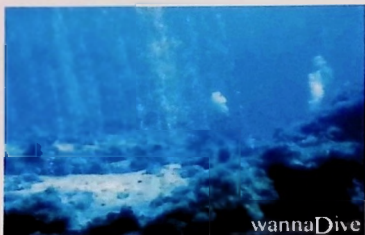
Day three - The Canyon and Coral Garden.

The Canyon is a very nice dive. The dive guide goes down first and the other divers enter the Canyon and go down to about 20 metres. The Canyon is not fully closed at the top so filtered light passes down to give a terrific light effect on the sand and fish life that occupy the Canyon.



Most interestingly, however, is the effect of the dive on the sand above the canyon.

The air escaping from my regs seeped into the rock and bubbled out of the sand above the canyon. So when I exited I travelled through a giant Jacuzzi.



Coral Garden

Same entry and exit points as the Canyon and this is where my dive guide demonstrated extraordinary fish spotting capabilities. Stone fish blend perfectly into the rocks they sit on. Our guide was able to spot them inside crevasses and positioned on rocks that none of us could see. That included another experienced local dive guide who came along for the ride.

Day four - Bells to Blue Hole and Eel Garden



Bells to Blue Hole starts at the Blue Hole site and you walk along the beach to the

entry site (Bells). Very easy entry and down a vertical groove in the wall that exits at 28 metres. Travel along a vertical coral wall, progressively getting shallower until you reach a saddle that allows entry into the Blue Hole.

On the way there I passed a cleaning station where the fish kindly cleaned my ears. Other divers swam though: this area with the hands on their ears – but what the heck, in for a penny in for a pound.

The Blue Hole is notorious for diver deaths. The research I undertook indicated that 40 divers had lost their lives there according to the official statistics. The locals tended not to comment. However on the walk from the Blue Hole to the Bells I had to pass the memorials of divers who did not make it. A cable is strung across the blue hole which the Free Divers use to start their decent and hopefully safe return. At a maximum depth of 110 metres (130 according to some reports), good luck to them.

Tech divers use a cave that starts in the Blue Hole at about 50+ metres and travel about 26 metres out into the ocean.

We lunched overlooking the Blue Hole with the other SCUBA and free divers before the ***Eel Garden dive***.

Again, walk in from the beach (90% of dives in Dahab are walk in) and down to the Eel Garden.

It was impressive watching hundreds of eels swaying in the water, and then retracting into the sand as I approached. Following that, we drifted along the coral, taking in the sights and exited safely (other than a Stone fish sitting directly in our path).



Some people have the misguided view that diving is dangerous. It's not, but eating lunch in an Egyptian restaurant is lethal. Lunch at the Blue Hole restaurant introduced me to the Pharaoh's revenge, which is like Deli Belly's ugly gun toting brother. Next day I managed to get to the dive centre to inform them of my ever so slight predicament. Every non-Egyptian diver had a packet of Antinal in their possession and handed them out like free lollies. At 10 Egyptian pounds per packet (about \$2:50) they are the best thing I have ever taken.

And so the dive component of the holiday came to a premature end. I had intended to take the 8 dive package for about 160 euro (plus dive equipment hire). The *Thistlegorm* was additional cost but that

was the principle reason for going to Egypt.

The tour company wanted me to leave Dahab a day early and stay at Sharm el Sheikh as I would again be travelling at 1:30 am up to Sharm el Sheikh. They cited security reasons and I had no problem with that.

The principle difference between Dahab and Sharm el Sheikh was that in Dahab the Koran was chanted over loud speakers for most of the day while in the 5 star resort in Sharm I was greeted with "Your Mama can't dance and your Daddy can't rock and roll". All alcohol was included which may have contributed to me locking myself out on the balcony and needing to call for help.

If you are seriously considering a dive holiday there, you are welcome to discuss your plans with me. ❖

**Articles originally written by David for BRUDG.*

Wednesday August 28 2013

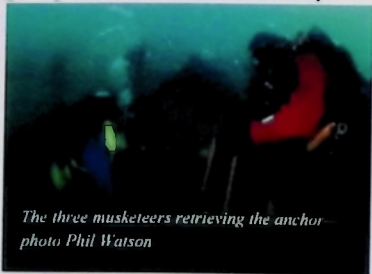
Midweek divers —

Uralba by David Flew VSAG

Our much postponed mid-week dive on Uralba finally came together - 5 divers - VSAG members John Lawler, David Flew and Phil Watson along with Owen Green and Mark Scoberg. John had found a fellow VSAGer (warm water diver, can't say I blame him....) Charlie Brincat who was happy to come along and help drive the boat—the Karingal.

The plan was just one dive, and a focus on recovering some of the anchors we knew were there. John really wanted a "Sarca" anchor we had found and failed to recover on a previous dive. This is a popular fishing site, and anyone who anchors directly on the wreck stands a poor chance of getting it back!

It's about a 40 minute run from Mordialloc to Uralba on slow old Karingal, but this gives time to set up gear, prepare shot lines, don drysuits, and have a chat. Uralba is a very silty site! We dropped the shot on what looked like a good place and anchored a little way



*The three musketeers retrieving the anchor
photo Phil Watson*

off. Phil was to dive with Mark and we gave them a while for photography before we went anchor hunting and ruined the vis.

Once geared up, we could see the bubbles right next to the boat, so we went down the bubble column - found the wreck with a chain right across it. There was a lot of chain - wrapped over, under, around and through the wreck - took an effort to get it clear, and it sure stirred things up! Phil and Mark passed by, Owen went off into the green gloom to send the anchor to the surface with his lift bag. Meanwhile John and I tackled the "Sarca" - it was well and truly stuck under some debris and we made an impenetrable cloud of silt and gave up.

Back on the surface Phil and Mark were back on the boat, Owen's lift bag was holding the anchor on the surface - but only just. There was a rush to get back on board and winch up the anchor. As we approached the lift bag it sank slowly out of sight. No way Owen was losing the lift bag - so back into his gear, grabbed his pony tank, and down again. A short time later the lift bag surfaced with an anchor just out of reach under it..... Phil and I struggled to get hold of the anchor from the swim platform. With the anchor on board we pulled up more and more chain - eventually got it all up, and Owen surfaced a short time later.

A nice quiet run back to Mordialloc, unload the gear, and head off for the rest of our day.

I don't think anyone got cold despite the low water temperature - we were working

pretty hard stirring up the silt - let alone recovering what turned out to be a 15 kg anchor and more than 50 m of chain. The chain has been put to good use on Karingal - it suits the winch perfectly. The anchor is way too big, so I'll be looking for someone who can make use of it.

All in all a good day's winter diving!



The happy Midweek divers : David Flew, Owen Green, Phil Watson, Mark Scoberg, John Lawler, Charlie Brineat.

7-8 September 2013

Sydney Dive Weekend

text & photos by Ian Scholey, VSAG.

I've always wanted to photograph the Red Indian Fish. I don't know why, there is just something about it. So when I get the chance to hook up with my old buddy Peter Beaumont in Sydney for a dive or two, I always take it. So with my postal

vote sorted out I headed off to Sydney for the weekend. The Red Indian Fish are out there in Sydney waters somewhere and I'm determined to find one. Apparently they are often spotted on night dives in Botany Bay.

Armed with this information I shot an email to Peter "Fancy squeezing in a night dive while I'm up for the weekend?" The reply was a swift "of course". Peter likes his diving as much as I do.

I arrived at Peter's on Friday evening and the conversation was quickly onto the next day's diving. The conversation went something like this :

"What time do you want me up tomorrow morning?"

"3.30 should be ok."

"Excuse me?!"

"You wanted to do a night dive"

Stunned silence.

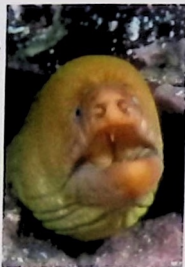
I had to admit it would definitely be night all right but that wasn't the part of the night I had in mind. Still, I really wanted to see a Red Indian Fish so I suppose I was in.

Have you ever woken up at 3.30am? That is not a time any sane human being gets out of bed. After a quick cuppa, the boat was hooked up and we were on our way to Port Botany to launch. I have to say this boat ramp is spectacular. It has a 4 – car wide ramp with 2 extremely long piers and plenty of parking bays. It is situated alongside the runway at Kingsford Smith airport so huge aircraft thunder by as they land or take off. At that time of the morning we had the whole place to ourselves.

Our first dive site of the day was the deep wall at Bare Island, a short boat ride across the bay. We anchored the boat and splashed in at 5.19am. The water was flat calm, with minimal wind and a drysuit-toasty 18 degrees temp.

Bare Island has large boulders with patches of sponge gardens. The colour is beautiful with a fantastic selection of sponges to be seen. With a slight current running we hugged the bottom at 18m and moved slowly from spot to spot. Out on the sand, Port Jackson sharks were active and our lights attracted them in for a closer look. The rocks and sponges were covered with multi-coloured nudibranchs and there were numerous hawkfish about.

In one spot I found a Green Moray Eel who posed for photographs unafraid. I noticed that it's right eye was damaged and sightless which is quite a common thing in this area.



Try as I might though, there was no Red Indian fish to be seen. Reluctantly, with the light starting to filter down and air supply running low we headed back to the surface after our very relaxing 1 hour 10 min dive.

We took a quick breakfast break before heading the boat out of Botany Bay and southwards along the Kurnell Peninsula to the wreck of the SS Hilda.

The SS Hilda was built in Glasgow in 1879 and operated as a collier, running between Newcastle and the Illawara coalfields to Sydney. At 125ft long and dis-

placing 222 tonnes she was not a large ship. Her end came on 20th July 1894 when, with a crew of 11 and in calm conditions, she ran into the rocky cliffs while under the control of the helmsman and the master below decks. They managed to reverse away but, fatally holed, she sank 5 minutes later with the crew abandoning ship, rowing into Botany Bay and walking into Sydney.



In 1958 the wreck was dynamited so it is pretty broken up and sits at a depth of 24-27m. There are several large pieces of wreckage to be seen including the engine, winches, boiler pipes and casing and the anchor. There was plenty of fish life to be seen and photographed including the Eastern Blue Devilfish, Red Morwong and a small Giant Cuttlefish. With both Peter and I close to our no deco time we ascended slowly up the shot line adding plenty of extra safety stop time in with a third dive to do that day.

Our third dive of the day was at one of Sydney's best dive sites - Magic Point. This site has a fairly large cave in 17m, which has an ever-present population of Grey Nurse Sharks.

After a quick boat ride back north past the entrance to Botany Bay we arrived at the dive site just as Pro-dive Manley de-

posited about 20 divers into the water. Not wanting to share our dive we decided to sit tight, extend our surface interval and lie back and sleep in the sunshine for a while and wait for them to finish their dives. After an hour we had the ocean to ourselves and descended the anchor line. A great shot even if I do say so myself, with our anchor sitting 5m in front of the cave. The vis was less than perfect, looking like the previous divers had kicked up plenty of sand in their excitement at seeing some sharks.



I headed straight into the cave to see what was inside and also as I like to shoot my photographs outwards from the cave to get a nice blue background.

There were half a dozen Port Jacksons sleeping inside and a ball of schooling catfish. As for the stars of the show, there were 4 female Grey Nurses cruising in and out of the cave. After spending 35 minutes happily snapping Sharks we headed off to the right of the cave where an overhang runs along the reef wall. We found several Cuttlefish and, as often happens at Sydney dive sites, we were followed closely by a couple of Blue Groupers, one male and one female. After an hour in the water and with no deco time fast running out again we returned to the boat.

At the boat ramp I got the best deal, loading 6 empty tanks in my car and heading off to St George's Scuba Centre for air fills while Peter headed home to wash the boat down.

The original plan for Sunday's diving had been Barrens Hut and Osbourne Shoals, down towards the south. However, with the wind now blowing at 15 knots from the southeast, we decided to stay in Botany Bay and tuck in behind the cliffs at Kurnell. So, two dives at different spots on Kurnell Wall that provided another shot at Red Indian fish and prompted a change to a macro lens for me. Kurnell Wall has a mixed terrain of large boulders covered in sponge growth,



sandy bottom and kelp bed. At 13m it is an easy dive with a great variety of life to see. Once again a close inspection of the rocks and sponges revealed a huge variety of coloured Nudibranchs, the most



Nudibranch - Hypselodoris bennetti



common being the large Purple Dragon (above), with at least 30-40 spotted on each dive. As I was crossing the sand on the first dive, a school of about 20 large Kingfish swam close. I suspect that Peter heard the swearing through my regs – “Why didn’t I go for the wide-angle lens instead of the macro?” It’s always a tough call which camera configuration to go with and even after all the years I have been diving it’s still frustrating when you get it wrong. Being fairly shallow gives you the chance for a long dive and we maxed our time on dive one being under for an hour and 50 mins.

After a surface interval and an on board breakfast we splashed for dive two of the day. Similar to dive one, Nudibranchs were the main attraction but we also found Port Jacksons and a large Estuary Catfish, which was a new species for me. All too soon the air was exhausted and we headed back to the surface.

All in all a great weekend’s diving, although even with the early start, I never found my Red Indian fish. Still, that gives me the excuse to go back again and have another look. The clock may be ticking though as Peter Beaumont will be returning to Melbourne in March and is looking forward to joining VSAG.



August 2013

Diving Sipadan

text & photos by Meg Johnson, VSAG

Diving Sipadan has always been on my ‘bucket list’ – it’s always on those lists of the ‘top 10 dive sites of the world’. I booked early in the year – 8 nights at the Kapalai Dive Resort. At the time DFAT was saying ‘use extreme caution’ and after I booked they upgraded that to ‘reconsider your need to travel’, then again to ‘just don’t go there!’... but, I went anyway. And it was fine. There’d been some trouble around Semporna early in the year (long story, something to do with the defunct Sultan of Sulu and a dispute with the British North Borneo Company going back to the 1700’s), but it was all fine in my time there.

I flew via Kuala Lumpur to Tawau (3 hours from KL), then 1.5 hours by road to Semporna, then 45 minutes by boat to Kapalai. Kapalai is a ‘water village’ on stilts in the middle of the sea. The chalets are very nice, quite large, private, high ceilings, open to the sea, each with its own decking over the ocean where turtles surfaced to breath and fish abounded. The hills of the mainland are just visible in the distance. It was remote, soothing, surrounded by water, fish and turtles. The resort is expanding, rapidly. It currently accommodates about 100 guests, and about 100 staff, and more building was going on while I was there. But still, it was totally relaxing – water and sky – storms and calm – immersion in diving. It was heaven.

Up until a few years ago it was a much smaller resort, and the guests were pretty