



Fathoms

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2014

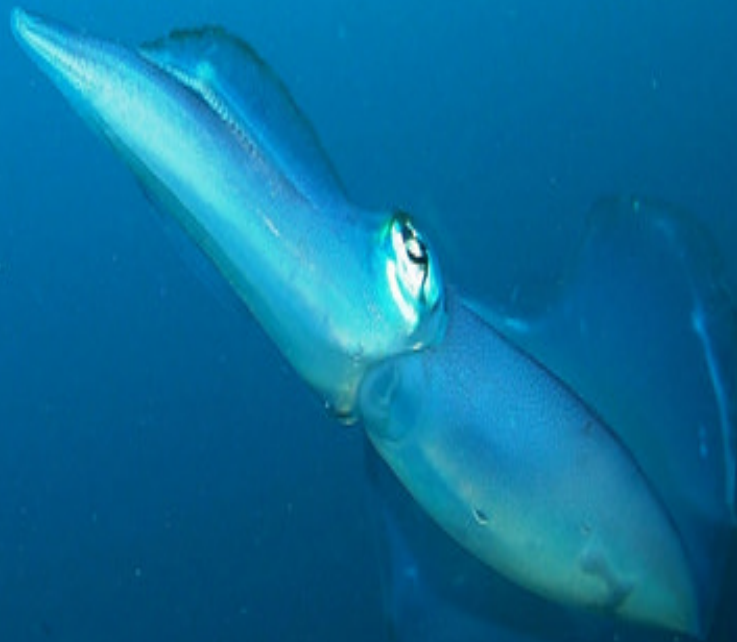


Photo by Phil Watson - Squid at Anglesea

60TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

DIVE REPORTS

PLANNED AFRICAN SAFARI & DIVE TRIP 2015

Postal Address:

VSAG, 139 Overport Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199

www.vsag.org.au

Dates for your Diary

VSAG CHRISTMAS PARTY



SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2014

**At the home of Lloyd Borrett & Cheryl Lees
14 Sheoak Road, Frankston South**

More details to follow

SOUTH CHANNEL FORT EXCURSION

**Please keep an eye out for an email with amended date for this event
(and hope for great weather this time!)**





Fathoms

Est. 1954 Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group, Inc.

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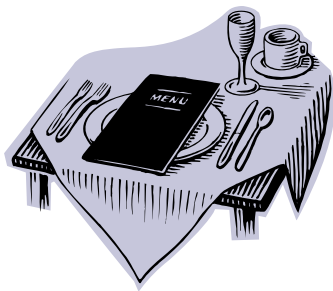
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NOTICES

VSAG Committee meets at 8 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month
(except in January)

All Members Welcome

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



**VSAG Monthly meetings are at 8 pm 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 7 pm
before the meeting.

Tuesday Night Special — all meals \$15

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.



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. ❖



Your New VSAG Committee

At the recent AGM, a number of people were nominated for the VSAG Committee.

At the following Committee Meeting, the Office Bearers on the Committee were appointed.

To email all VSAG committee members: committee@vsag.org.au

President / Secretary / SDFV Representative

Ian Scholey 139 Overport Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199
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Vice President / SDFV Representative / Webmaster / Assistant Newsletter Editor

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jlawler@aapt.net.au

Point Scorer

Michael Ngai pointscorer@vsag.org.au

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benita@mcdonough.name

Hannah Smeeton

Fathoms Editor

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cheryl_marj@hotmail.com

The following positions are yet to be filled:

Secretary, Assistant Secretary & Social Secretary

2013–2014 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by David Geekie — 18/08/2014



Having just attended the VSAG Diamond Anniversary function on Saturday night, this report will be submitted on a 'high'. A well organised and attended function resulted in a fabulous night where old and new friends caught up with each other in an ideal environment. The ambience on the night demonstrated the underlying strength of the club and augers well for the future. Acknowledging Jan Watson and Andy Mastrowicz by granting them life memberships was a fitting highlight of the night. To cap off the Anniversary Year there is book to be published that I am sure will be a credit to both the club and those involved in pulling it together.

VSAG has had a relatively quiet year,

once again without any serious diving incidents. Safety has received increased attention with the DCs now feeding back to the committee any incidents, near misses or operational items that could be improved. These are collated and discussed at the next committee meeting and the learnings presented to the general meeting the following week. This initiative has been put in place to ensure we keep safety at the forefront of our activities. The combined Safety Training day with BSAC was quite well attended and professionally run. It highlighted the need to regularly inspect our safety equipment as we found O2 kits were empty or not accessible.

Weekly diving activities and monthly meetings were the main routine activities of the club this year and there were very few weekends when the weather was forecast to be acceptable that we did not have divers in the water. The monthly meetings have moved back to Bell's and these meetings have generally been well attended. The introduction of the photo competition judged by members each month has been a great contributor to a socially based meeting.

This year has seen the start of some shore and night diving, a great initiative by

some enthusiastic divers that looks set to continue. It was also good to see the TED's advertising again this week.

Peter Galvin's hospitality at Inverloch is second to none and I would encourage members to take the opportunity to get to know other divers and enjoy a wonderful weekend away, particularly over the March LWE.

The hardest decision for the year was to discontinue the publication of a printed version of Fathoms. The committee discussed this several times with the general membership, sought alternative solutions but eventually moved to an emailed form. I very much appreciated the feedback from several members who acknowledged their disappointment at the outcome but acknowledged the logic of the decision.

The Christmas Party was another great opportunity to catch up with friends, have a good feed and raise some money for the club through the excellent raffle prizes. We were once again very appreciative of Lloyd and Cheryl's generous hospitality.

VSAG's finances are now secured and the opportunity exists to start investing in equipment or other items that will attract more current divers to the club. Our expertise in both local boating and diving conditions is a significant offering that could be better promoted to

the local diving population that wishes to grow their general diving competence.

On behalf of the general membership I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their commitment, dedication and willingness to challenge the status quo. The committee has been fantastic to work with and over the coming years will ensure the club builds on the solid foundations that have been established.

On a personal note I have found my work and personal commitments have made it difficult for me to allocate the time required for this role and so look forward to taking a reduced role within the club and enjoying more diving!

Thanks for all the support and best wishes for the future. ❖



The Club would like to thank David for his service as President since 2011. He has been a great leader and has overseen a number of positive changes in that time. Thanks also to his wife Pam who is a wonderful support to him.

TWO NEW LIFE MEMBERS

DR JAN WATSON



During her time on the VSAG Committee during the very early days of our club, Jan was Vice President, Fathoms Editor, and was on the Dive Committee. There is little doubt Jan would have played a major role in all other aspects of the Committee functions during her time.

Jan dropped under the VSAG radar for a long time after leaving the Committee, probably due to the immense body of work that was conducted in the ensuing years as *Dr Jan Watson*.

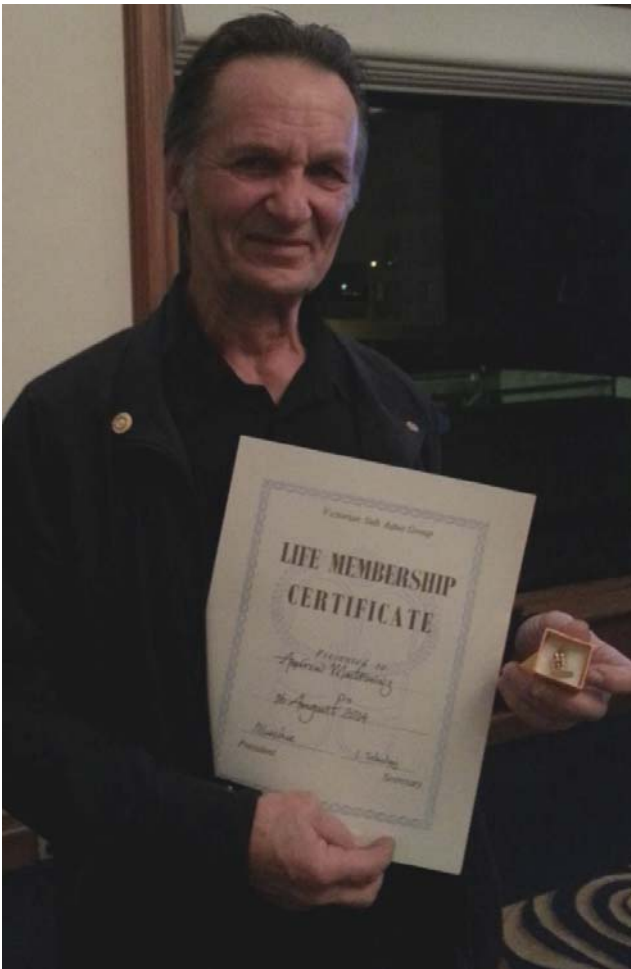
Jan became an Environmental Consultant and worked in Marine Science and Ecology. She gained a PhD in Biology from Deakin University. She went on to write no less than 50 articles and her work into Hydroids was featured in international journals.

She consults to Government and private enterprises such as BHP and the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron to name a select few. Jan is also an Honorary Research Associate with Museum Victoria.

Jan has been diving for over 55 years and was one of the first female divers in Australia. She has logged up over 10,000 dives, is still diving, is a boat owner and 87 years young.

The Committee was pleased to bestow a Life membership upon its first female recipient, Dr Jan Watson, at the 60th Birthday Celebration of VSAG on 16 August, 2014.

ANDY MASTROWICZ



During the mid to late 1980s, Andy joined the Committee and remained there for so many years, the current records don't recall how long.

Andy went on to be President and Vice-President and held other positions on the Committee during this long and productive time.

Highly regarded by the Club as a gentleman, boat owner, handyman and great organiser, particularly for arranging the many, many Easter trips to Wilson's Promontory.

The Committee was pleased to bestow on a very surprised and chuffed Andy Mastrowicz at the 60th Birthday celebration of VSAG on 16 August 2014. ❖

Words from John Lawler



Life Members who attended the 60th Birthday celebrations of VSAG

L-R: Pat Reynolds, Alan Storen, Alex Talay, John Goulding, Don Abell, Mick Jeacle (hiding), Barry Truscott, John Lawler, John Noonan, with Andy Mastrowicz.



About 80 people, past and present members and friends, celebrated this wonderful achievement by our Club on Saturday, August 16 2014 at Milano's, Brighton Beach.

There were speeches, presentations of awards, dancing, good food & wine and company, and of course, the raffle!! (I think there was nearly a prize for everyone present on the night - it certainly seemed that way!)

We received a number of emails from those who couldn't be there to celebrate with us and also from some members after the event who wanted to let us know how much they enjoyed the night. Here are a few of them:

From Peter Matthews —

“Very sorry I had to miss the 60th - still away with the family in Switzerland. VSAG is certainly an amazing and successful club — I am proud to be a member.”

From John Goulding —

“To Big Mick and the Organizing Committee, A very big thank you for the

wonderful night at Milanos last night... What an occasion this was. An excellent venue, music great, company superb and so many old bubble blowers to catch up with. David Geekie ... a great tribute to old and young VSAGers. John Lawler I reckon you will get that microphone right by the 70th.....but what I heard was good stuff. Lloyd...if it was you who did the video / movie stuffthen I want a copy. To all of you who were there, and to all who made it happen and to the big family of VSAGThank you. Carol and I had had a great night.”

From Don Abell —

“Congratulations to the VSAG committee. It was a great night and follows in the tradition of successful celebrations of the Club milestones. A well organised night thanks to the wonderful talents of the Big M. Now we just need that book.”

The following photos were provided by Chris Llewellyn, Hannah Smeeton, David Reinhard & Peter Beaumont.



Ian & Sue Scholey



Lloyd Borrett presiding over the raffle



Mick & Annie Jeacle



Robert Swoffer & Barry Truscott



Hannah Smeeton, Chris Long & Claire Cooper



Graham Ellis & John Lawler

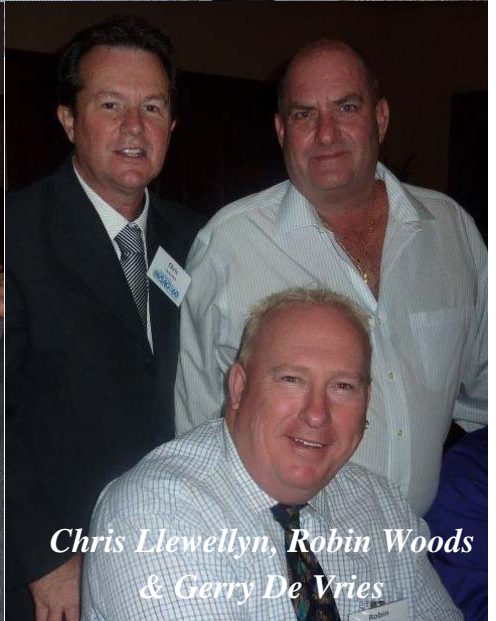
Leo Maybus & Paul Tipping



Don Abell, John Goulding & Pat Reynolds



Chris Llewellyn, Jude & Alan Storen



Chris Llewellyn, Robin Woods & Gerry De Vries



Don Abell, Mick Jackiw & Chris Llewellyn



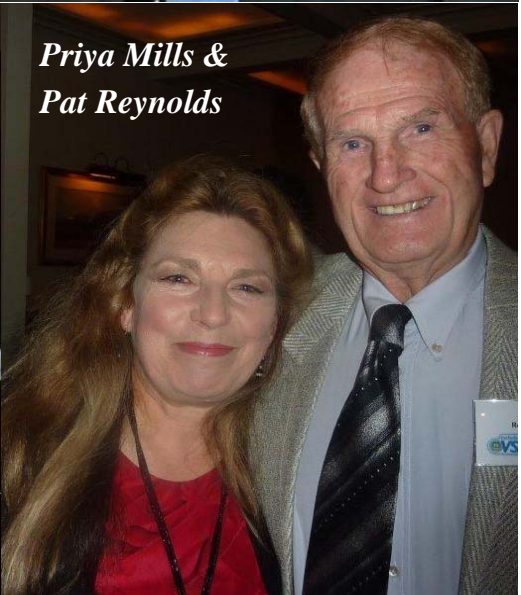
Barry & Marie Truscott



Graham Ellis, John Lawler & Don Abell



John Mills, Pat Reynolds, Meg Johnson & Don Abell



Priya Mills & Pat Reynolds



Lloyd Borrett, John Lawler, Hannah Smeeton & Graham Ellis



Josie Mare, Meg Johnson & Leanne van der Merwe

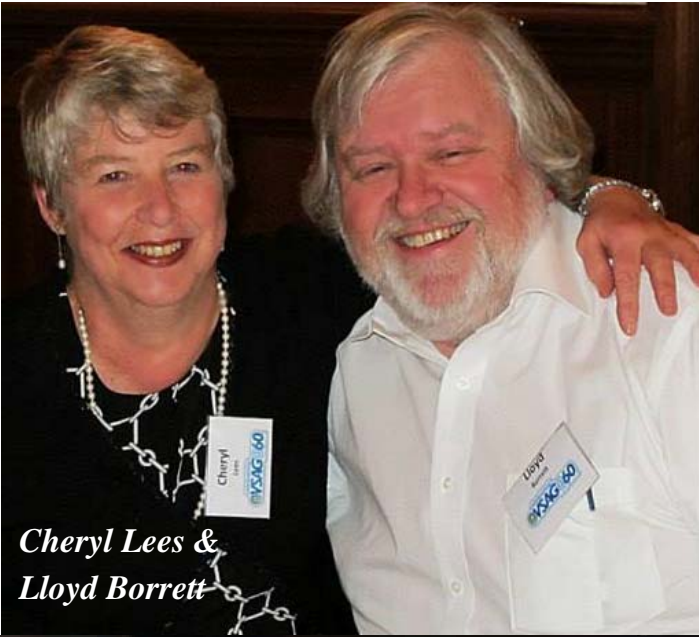


Chris Llewellyn & Don Abell

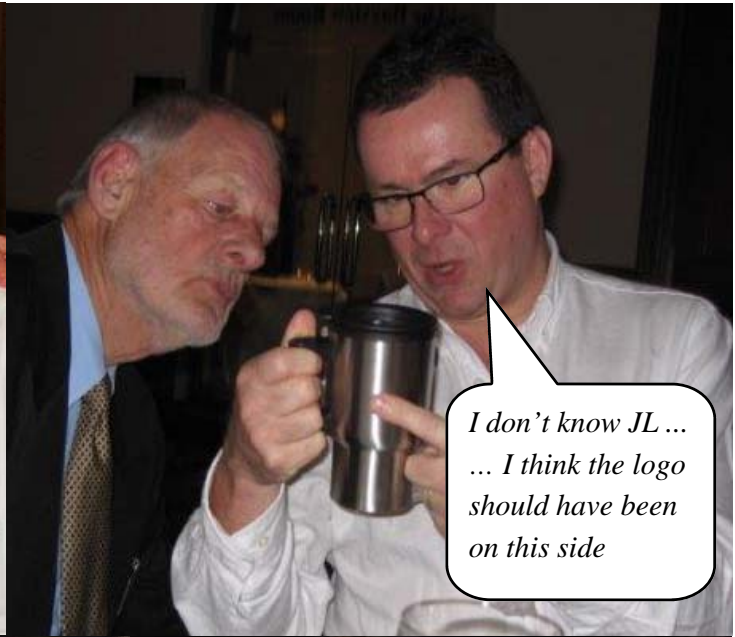
Charlie Brincat, Mick Jackiw & Andy Mastrowicz



Peter & Carole Campisano, Cheryl Lees, Steve & Julie Vadja and Graham Ellis



Cheryl Lees & Lloyd Borrett



*I don't know JL ...
... I think the logo
should have been
on this side*



Robin Woods & Ricky Pritchard



Ross Luxford & Paul Tipping



Arthur Kokkinos

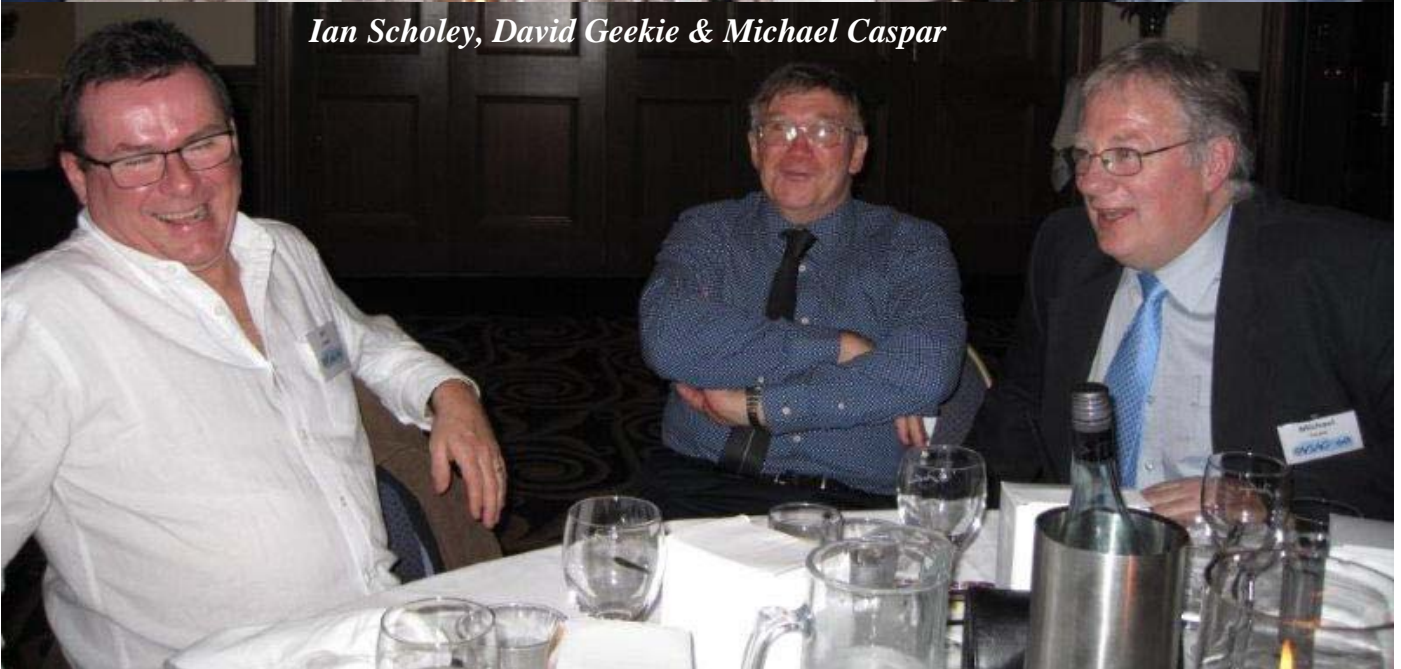


Ian Scholey, John Lawler & Benita McDonough

John Noonan, Jan Watson talking to Lloyd Borrett, Julie & Graham Ellis



Ian Scholey, David Geekie & Michael Caspar

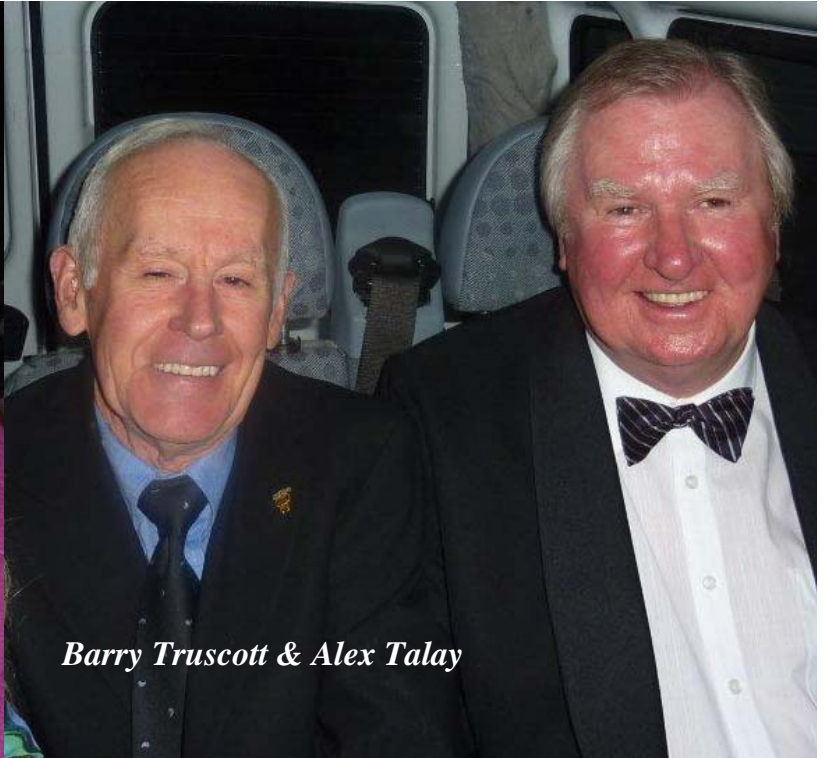


Carol Lovell, Don Abell talking to Ian Lockwood & Abigail Grier, Christine Reynolds





Rhonda Llewellyn



Barry Truscott & Alex Talay



Feng Qui & Steve Vadja



Annie Jeacle



RossLuxford & John Goulding



*Arthur Kokkinos, Walter Medenbach
& John Noonan*

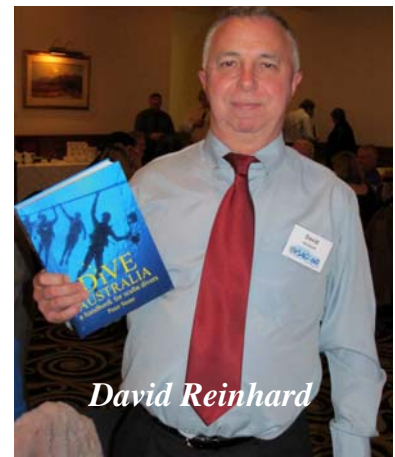
Some of the Raffle Prize Winners



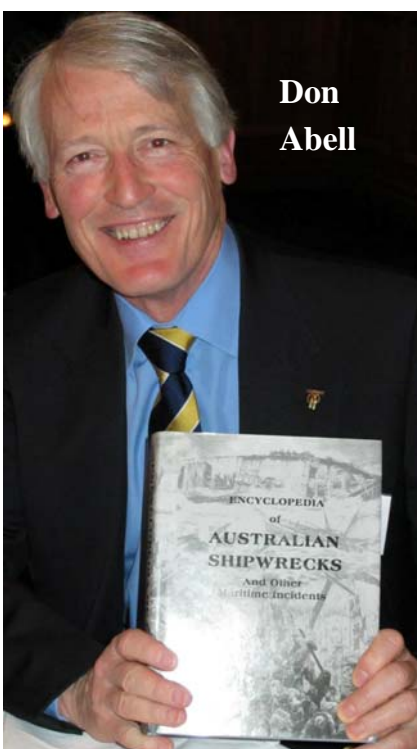
Lloyd Borrett presenting Graeme Rees with the main raffle prize — \$1,000 gift certificate to go towards Nauticus Belle Amie live-aboard trip off Mexico



Hannah Smeeton



David Reinhard



**Don
Abell**



Priya Mills



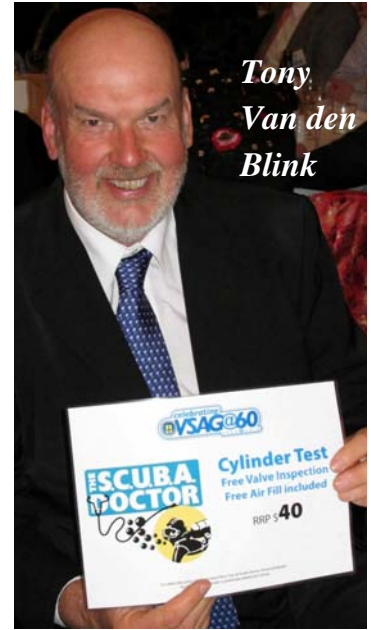
Jan Rees



Chris Long



Meg Johnson



Tony Van den Blink



Charlie Brincat



Benita McDonough



Look Lloyd
You've won an
abalone tool!



Andy Mastrowicz

President's Welcome to the 60th Birthday Celebrations

Good evening to you all.

Firstly I would like to thank you all for putting aside this time tonight to celebrate VSAG's 60th anniversary. Without your commitment tonight, all the effort put in by those organising this event would have come to naught.

As it is, this function and your presence tonight gives recognition and meaning to all the effort put into the club over the past 60 years and its resultant significant achievements.

Many of you will be aware of the effort it takes to keep a club such as this viable and have played your part to bring us to this point tonight. On behalf of all the current active divers and club members, please accept our gratitude for the legacy you have left us and for the opportunity still to be realised. I would also like to thank those club sponsors who, over the years, have provided us with our Christmas raffle prizes — these have been a significant source of funds to maintain our safety equipment, particularly the Oxygen kits.

Perhaps a small indicator of VSAG's place in progressing diving in Victoria over the past 60 years, came this week when the State Library has again chased us up for not sending them two recent editions of *Fathoms*. (We have continued to send them printed copies.)

I would also like to add my heartfelt thanks to those organising this Diamond Anniversary and the other activities surrounding this celebration. Without their efforts we obviously would not be here tonight nor would we have the commemorative 60th Anniversary Book that is to be published shortly. These activities serve to put a stake in the ground that will preserve our historical roots for the diving generations to come. John Lawler, Mick Jeacle, Benita McDonough, Lloyd Borrett, Des Williams and others have worked consistently over 12 months to bring this together. Given the pace of modern living and conflicting priorities, it is a credit to them that the arrangements have gone so smoothly.

We have some lovely door prizes tonight and on behalf of us all I would like to thank the providers and wish them success in their endeavours.

VSAG over the years has built up significant capital in terms of local expertise in both safe diving and boating practices. Our finances are now secured and the club is in a position to re-invest in safety and other equipment to aid it in attracting new diving members. The diving market is constantly changing but we have an offering based on our knowledge of local conditions that will enable us to grow if we market ourselves accordingly. The foundations are in place, the message will be communicated and I look forward to witnessing the future growth of the club.

Happy Diamond Anniversary to us all.

David Geekie

VSAG President ❖



David with present Club Members, Carole & Peter Campisano at the 60th Birthday Celebrations

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following people who have recently become VSAG members:

- Jan Watson (re-joined)
- Hannah Smeeton
- Andrew Meek
- Ross Walker



We hope you enjoy diving and socialising with the club....
... And we wish you safe and happy diving with VSAG.

Dive Reports

FIJI — August 2014

Report & photos by Meg Johnson

I recently took a short break in Fiji. It was kind of a family holiday — I flew over with some family members who were staying at the Sheraton on Denarau Island at Nadi for a week or two. Denarau is not really an ‘island’ — it’s a gated resort community on the outskirts of Nadi — very family friendly, golf courses, inflatable water slide parks, kid’s clubs, etc.

I stayed one night there then headed out on the big yellow catamaran to Drawaqa Island in the Yasawa Island Group, north west of the main island. The boat trip was about 2-3 hours from the Port of Denarau. All the way up, the volcanic island chain is visible, with groups of islands every half hour or so.

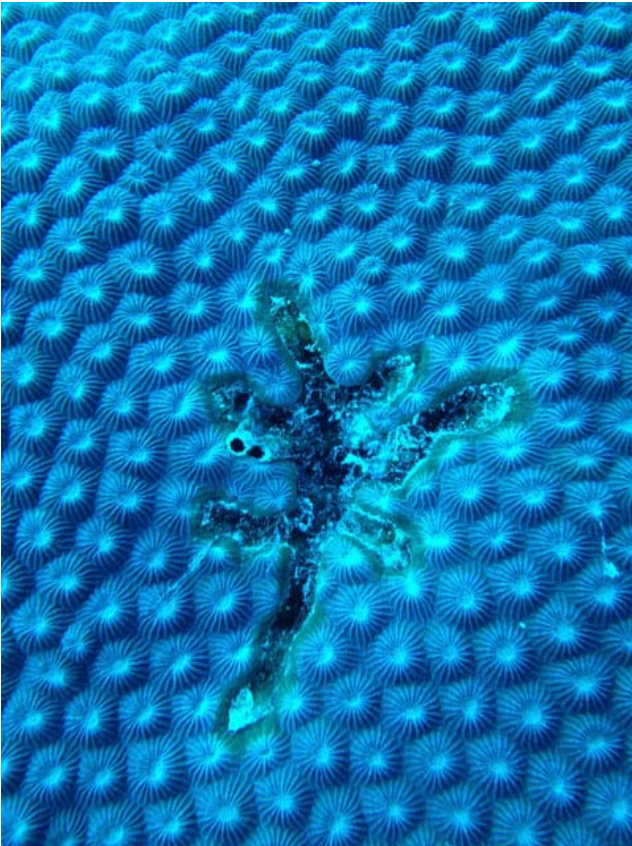
I booked through ‘Dive Adventures’. I wanted somewhere reasonably close to where my family were going, but not ‘too family friendly’; somewhere a bit ‘out of the way’. The website calls it ‘barefoot island’. It’s pretty basic — no hot water — and most of the guests are young backpackers skipping through the islands. I booked a ‘luxury en-suite bure’ — of which there are only 7 on the island. The remaining 12 or so bures are

either ‘dorms’ or twin share, with communal bathroom facilities. So, maximum of about 40 guest on the island at any one time. My hut was on the beach, at the end of the row, quiet, only metres from the beach, my own deck with my own hammock, and an open air en-suite at the back with toilet, basin and cold water shower.



I arrived on the Monday afternoon and did 7 dives while I was there. Diving was OK, but not fantastic. Visibility was not as good as I’d hoped — maybe 20-25 metres at the start of the week, deteriorating to 10-15 metres by the end of the

week. There were some pretty dive sites - walls, reefs, swim throughs and caves. I saw one small reef shark and one turtle, lots of feather stars, anemone fish, small reef fish, large hard corals and nudibranchs. I got quite fascinated with the markings on the hard corals - don't know what they were — maybe parasites of some sort that made really interesting markings on the coral.



The highlight of the trip was not the diving at all. It was snorkelling with the Manta Rays. It was just an awesome experience. Drawaqa is in a chain of islands, with channels about 300-400 metres wide, separating the islands. In the channel to the north of Drawaqa Island, at high tide, the Mantas come in to feed and play. There's an English guy named Ste-

ve who lives 6 months of the year on the island studying the Mantas. When they come in, the dive crew beats drums and calls out "Mantas, Mantas", and we would rush to the dive hut, grab our snorkelling gear and head out in the tinny to the channel.

The Mantas I saw at Drawaqa are relatively small — about 3-4 metres wing tip to wing tip. I'm told that the oceanic Mantas can get up to 20 metres across, which would be amazingly awesome to see! There were two types of Mantas in the channel — the Black Mantas and the Chevron Mantas. The Chevron Mantas have white bellies. The belly of the Manta is like our finger-prints, the markings are completely unique. Steve would snorkel under the Mantas to photograph their bellies to document which Mantas were coming into the channel and when.



I snorkelled with the Mantas three times, each time for about an hour. We got so close to them — it was just awesome! The channel had lots of other interest as well, while waiting for sightings of the Mantas. There were schools of mackerel

which were great — I love how their jaws open up like something of “Aliens” when they’re feeding. There were giant trevally hunting the mackerel, and blue pipe fish swimming just under the surface.



After 5 nights at ‘barefoot island’ I headed back to the mainland and had 2 nights back at the Sheraton before flying home. It was a nice little winter break.



THE HURRICANE, SOUTH CHANNEL FORT & SCALLOP DRIFT

— 3 August 2014

Report & photos by John Mills

As the weather of late has been quite windy, the daily ritual is to look at the wind forecasts over the week and hope it is suitable as the weekend approaches. The forecasts get more accurate the closer we get, normally what looks like good conditions on Tuesday, turns to custard by Friday.

In the case of the first weekend in August, the opposite happened and Sunday was shaping up to be favourable.

We had the National Geographic film night at the Arts Centre on the Friday night. The plan was to cycle in from work and meet Priya and some of the others from the club before the show. As I left work on the bike it started to get colder and the rain then started. I decided to head for the nearest railway station and take the train to Flinders Street instead of riding into the city. As I was struggling up the escalators at Flinders Street with the bike, the phone rang, it was Priya. I thought she must already be at the hotel with the others. She indicated that she’d cut her hand, was at the hospital and may need a couple of stitches, so she may be a bit late. I was a little

concerned but as I was in the city anyway, I took my bike to the Arts Centre and chained it up so I could take it to the car afterwards.

Walking back in the coldest and most miserable weather possible I thought, "This can't bode well for Sunday". I caught up with the others and had a meal. After the meal and a couple of cleansing ales Priya rang and said, "She was all patched up and had parked the car". I arranged to get some sushi for her dinner at Flinders Street Station and we eventually caught up at the Arts Centre. Priya had her meal and said that they glued her wound back together, but she was under strict instructions not to get her hand wet. No diving on Sunday for her. Again she would be the chauffer and I'd be the diver.

We enjoyed the presentation and photos from the show.

On the night, JL indicated that he had checked the video from our last dive at Popes Eye where I had a slight mishap with my dry suit inflator and he indicated there was a constant stream of bubbles coming from it. This gnawed on my mind and I thought that I should check this before the dive. As I set the boat and gear up on the Saturday I decided to hook the regulator and dry suit hose up to a tank - sure enough it free flowed and it could not be stopped. On closer examination it was noticed that the valve seat for the fitting was worn. I had two

options. Call into the Scuba Doctor on Sunday and see if I could get a replacement fitting or pack the wetsuit. The dry suit was packed and a wetsuit was put in the truck.

Come Sunday all the cars were covered in a layer of ice. This added 20 minutes to the getting the boat hooked up process, as I had to defrost the windscreen on 2 cars. Gee it's hard to drive a car when you can't see out of it. Eventually the boat was hooked up to the truck and we were on our way to Rye.



We went to the Scuba Doctor and Lloyd sorted out my dry suit hose woes. That was a relief so the wetsuit could stay in the truck.

We met up with JL and the others in the car park (thanks to JL for the shot weights, our boat now has all the VSAG required safety gear), got dressed and set to launch. Again Priya did a great job of backing the boat down the ramp. I was a little reluctant to submerge the trailer as much as I wanted as the ramp is sandy

and shallow and I didn't want to put the wheels of the truck in the salt water. After a bit of pushing and gentle persuasion we got the RIB launched (Yes the bung was in) and I motored over to the jetty whilst Priya parked the truck. As I had the marks for the Hurricane, the others motored off and we met them there.

This all went to plan and we found our way to the site, two divers were already down and I arranged with JL to jump in with the next crew. The others surfaced and I geared up. I didn't quite get the weight belt sorted and it was slipping. So off came the tank and weight belt for a second go. This worked as I had positioned the belt higher.

We watched as the other boat dropped their divers in. They drifted off the shot line and they were trying to tow them back. This was to no avail. Ian got JL back onto Signature and radioed us to see if we could pick up Andrew. "Yep no problem" (Safety in Diving). I dropped my gear and helped him back into the boat. Andrew has the dubious distinction of being the first diver besides Priya and I to be on the RIB. Anyway we all got sorted (I geared up for the 3rd time), we dropped onto the shot line, let the air out of the BC and dropped like a stone.

We got settled at the bottom of the shot and looked around. I hadn't dived the Hurricane for some time, but it was still the same, just bits of wood and bits of metal. We cruised around for a while, surfaced and jumped back on the boats. I was pleasantly surprised as my garments under the dry suit were actually dry.

Maybe replacing the fitting had helped with the leak I had been having on previous dives. This may have been due to the poor valve seat; it was no longer a damp suit.

We headed off to South Channel Fort and tied up to the pier. A couple of the guys dropped in for a dive. We had lunch and relaxed. It was a great day with nice sun (pity the weather didn't behave itself the previous weekend as this was to be the clubs South Channel Fort exploration).



The next dive was to be a scallop drift. Some time at lunch was spent in setting up the drift line so we'd all be attached

to one another. We motored off to the scallop beds. I must admit that I was enjoying motoring along and was a little surprised that JL had stopped so soon, I throttled the trusty Honda back, and conferred over the radio about what we were doing.

We all dropped in, connected to the buoy and began gathering scallops. It was nice floating along selecting nice plump scallops. We got our bag limits, surfaced and headed back to the ramp.



Priya got the truck and I headed back to the trailer. I will admit that I am not a big fan of the Rye ramp as it is quite shallow and there is not a lot of room to manoeuvre. I decided to jump over and winch the boat on. JL was concerned about the amount of sand on the ramp and suggested that 4WD might be the go. The guys next to us couldn't get their boat up the ramp no matter how much pushing they did. They were eventually towed off the ramp with a snatch

strap. Our vessel was removed by the truck with little fuss. We did up the straps, removed the bungs and headed home.

I am enjoying the independence of having our RIB. It was nice to be able to help other members when they drifted off the shot. The advice from other boat owners is always appreciated. We got some advice on how to coax the boat off the trailer on shallower boat ramps using the inertia of the truck, which we may try next time.

We got home, unpacked the boat and truck, and washed them and the gear down in the dark. This didn't seem to matter as we had a great day out in the RIB.

The scallops were shucked. I drew on the advice that Big Mick gave on Australia day and got them done with no beard and black stuff (liver). We tried some fancy recipes that could be contenders for the next catch and cook. We were not quite there yet with any Master Chef creations for next year. The favourite came out to be those crumbed and fried with a little lemon juice. ❖

TRUK LAGOON SEPTEMBER 2014 (PART ONE)

Report & photos by Ian Scholey

Ever since I started diving back in 1998 it has been an ambition of mine to dive the Japanese wrecks in Truk Lagoon. So despite the awful departure time of 00.30am I was in an excited frame of mind as Peter Beaumont and I boarded the flight to Guam and the onward trip to Chuuk and the prospect of 10 days diving.

For those that don't know, Chuuk was a major Japanese naval base during WW2 and towards the end of the war in February 1944, the Americans caught the Japanese cold. In the two days of the naval carrier based air raids of Operation Hailstorm, the Americans sent 41 ships with a combined tonnage of 220,000 tons to the bottom of the ocean, damaged countless others and destroyed 250 Japanese aircraft. Although these stayed forgotten for many years, in the 1960s they were slowly rediscovered, many by the founder of the Blue Lagoon Dive Resort, Kimino Aisek.

All In all, It was a relatively comfortable flight although sleep was difficult. At Guam we completed the rigmarole of entering the US and were quickly back through security and enjoying what we suspected would be our last decent cup of coffee for a while. Soon enough we

were descending above the deep blue water of the lagoon into Chuuk International Airport on the island of Weno. For those that haven't been there, International Airport is stretching things a bit far. In front of the small single story tin roofed terminal building you can just about squeeze a 737 in but only just.



Blue Lagoon Dive Resort

From the airport the trip to the Blue Lagoon Dive Resort was interesting to say the least. The journey which would have taken 10 minutes on Australian roads took us just short of 50 minutes as we negotiated some of the biggest pot holes I have ever seen. After checking in we were introduced to our dive guide, Rio, who immediately asked if we wanted to go for a dive that afternoon. Despite the journey we weren't going to turn the offer down and quickly had our luggage dropped in the room and our dive gear down at the dive centre.

The dive centre is very well equipped with Nitrox, Trimix and O2 fills available and a separate area for rebreather users to stow gear and set up. They operate a considerable number of small boats with guides and boat captains staying with divers for the duration of their stay. The dive guides were well coordinated to make sure that different groups went to different dive sites to avoid crowding. We were also able to pick and choose which sites we wanted to dive although Rio seemed to have a pretty sensible plan for us with a deep dive first up and progressively shallower dives as the day went on.

Although we had two dives a day booked and paid for we quickly decided to max things out and do 3 dives a day. Our regular companions for our stay were 4 divers from The Netherlands who turned out to be competent divers and good company, if a little careless with their fins on occasions. However I soon worked out that I had to get my photographs inside the wrecks quickly and stay away from the areas where the Dutch divers were as much as possible if I wanted to avoid the back scatter in my pictures.

So, onto the diving. Here is my Truk dive diary.

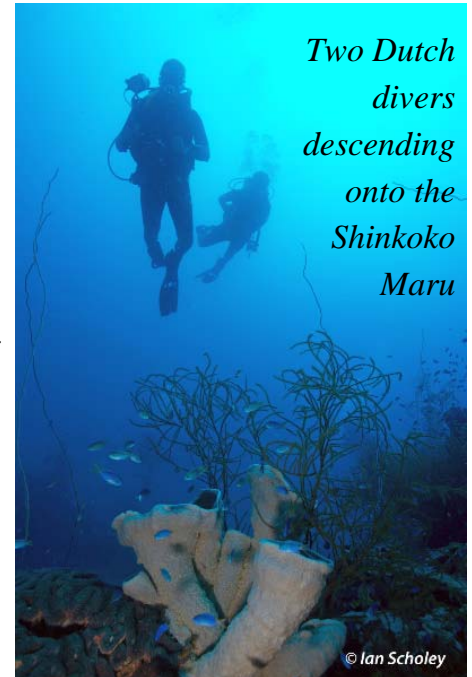
Day 1

Dive 1 — Shinkoko Maru, Max Depth 28.8 m, Dive time 44 minutes

This was a great wreck to start with. She is a huge tanker at 152 m long and

weighing just over 10,000 tons. The wreck sits upright on the sea bed at 38 m and was a truly impressive sight in the 40 m vis of the Lagoon. As the wreck looms below, she looks green against the blue of the water but as you get closer you see that every inch of her is in fact covered in coral growth of every colour imaginable.

The shot line was on the superstructure and we proceeded on past the bridge to the deck below. On the lower level of the superstructure, we entered the ship's medical room. Inside were numerous bottles and an operating table.



Placed on the table was a stack of human bones giving an immediate reminder of the reason the ship is where it is. Person-

ally I was not too phased by the presence of human remains but couldn't help wondering how any visiting Japanese divers must feel at the site.

Exiting the superstructure forward we headed to the bow of the ship, stopping here and there on the deck to photograph things of interest. In common with most of the wrecks, a collection of artefacts was to be found on the deck including beer and saki bottles, lamps, crockery and trays. At the bow sits a sizeable gun now completely encrusted in rich coral growth and swarming with small fish. The wreck was packed with life and we noticed Coral Trout, Trevally and a passing Eagle Ray as we headed back to the stern and the shot line. We still had time and air left to explore the bridge where we found the telegraph and steering column still in place.

Back on the boat there were smiles all around after a very good first glimpse of the treasures beneath the lagoon in 30 degree water with excellent visibility.



Having a look around the dive centre post dive, we were pleased to come across a VSAG sticker in the window

amongst the multitude from across the globe. Wonder who put that one there?

Day 2

Dive 2 — Fujikawa Maru, Max Depth 26.9m, Dive Time 50 minutes

The Fujikawa Maru is a 132 m long, 6983 ton cargo ship that sits upright in 34 m. Her primary role was as an aircraft ferry.

We descended to her deck and immediately dropped into the first of her two holds. Inside was a complete Zero fighter and several others a bit more broken up, together with a huge collection of spares — everything from complete wings to fuel tanks could be seen.

After spending many minutes exploring the hold we exited and made our way to the second hold. The contents were once



© Ian Scholey



Peter Beaumont exiting the hold of the Fujikawa Maru

© Ian Scholey

again aircraft spares with propeller blades stacked side by side and ammunition scattered across the floor and also in boxes.

At midships, a huge torpedo hole could be seen which would have been the blow that sent her to the bottom. We continued along the deck to the bow gun which, as with the one on the previous day, was completely encrusted in colourful coral and swarming with small blue fish.



Passing under the forward mast we headed slowly back to the superstructure to explore the bridge and other rooms. Once again we found the telegraph and steering column in place.

After a good dive we took a surface interval on one of the many islands.

Dive 3 — Heian Maru, Max Depth 28.7m, Dive Time 49 minutes

The Heian Maru is the largest wreck in the lagoon at 155 m long and weighing in at 11,614 tons. She was a Submarine tender and rests on her port side in 36 m. She was the star of the show when Jacques Cousteau featured her in his

famous Ghost Fleet episode of his TV series.

As you descend the shot line you wouldn't recognise her as a ship until you see her superstructure jutting out from her vertical deck. The side of the ship is completely covered in coral and looks like a reef until you spot a port hole or two amongst the growth. We followed the side of the ship towards the bow where the ship's name is still visible.

We then dropped over the side and descended across the deck to the forward hold. Inside we found many torpedoes scattered around. The outer casing had rotted away in some spots but the props were still in place and we were careful not to touch them.

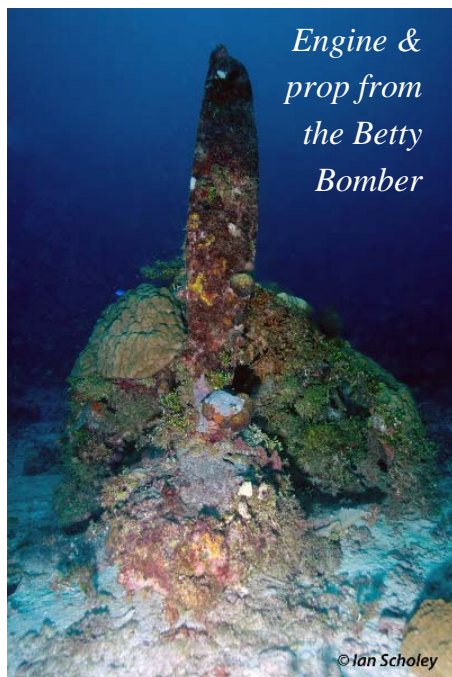
Exiting the hold we swam aft along a companionway where we found a spare periscope stored. Passing the bridge and funnel we continued aft to the prop before ascending back onto the side of the ship and returning slowly to the shot line.



Dive 4 — Betty Bomber, Max Depth 20m, Dive Time 52 minutes

Taking a break from ships for a while, the last dive today was on the Betty Bomber aircraft wreck. This twin engine bomber lies just off the Japanese airfield on Etten Island. The fuselage is largely intact with the nose of the plane broken off and one of the props still bent and twisted on the left wing. The other engine lies some distance away, having detached from the right wing on impact.

The wreck was absolutely full of glass fish and I immediately headed inside the fuselage to photograph them passing below the top gun turret and exiting through a very tight gap where the tail had broken off. I continued my dive, exploring around the wreck and under the wings where some larger fish were hiding. Once we had finished on the main wreck site we swam some distance across the sand and reef to find the second engine and prop.



Engine & prop from the Betty Bomber

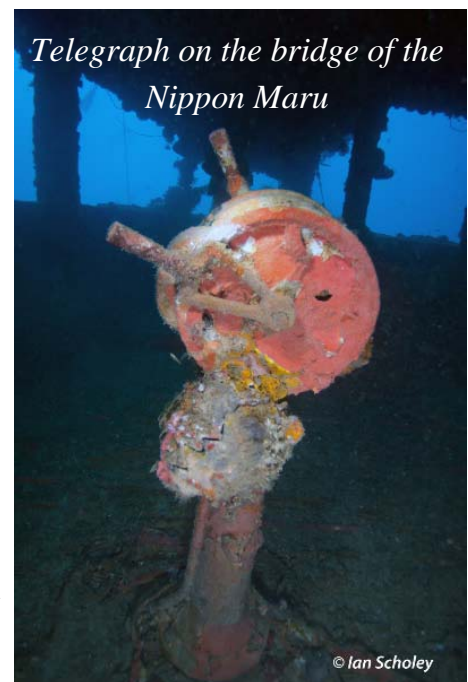
Day 3

Dive 5 — Nippo Maru, Max Depth 36.6m, Dive Time 36 minutes

The Nippo Maru is 107 m long, weighs 3764 tons and was an auxiliary water carrier. She sits upright with a slight list to port in 45 m of water. At this stage we were still diving with 12L tanks and to be honest we needed a bigger tank on this dive hence the short dive time.

This wreck had some interesting stuff on the decks, with a light battle tank next to hold number two and, a little further forward, a truck hanging over the port side rail. After taking a good few photographs of these two items we dropped into hold two to find another truck and scattered debris.

We then moved forward to the bow past several anti aircraft guns on the starboard side of the deck and inspected the bow gun. We then returned aft to enter the bridge area and photograph the helm and telegraph on our way back to the surface. We left this wreck feeling that we hadn't really started to explore it and a thought to return later in the trip.



Telegraph on the bridge of the Nippon Maru

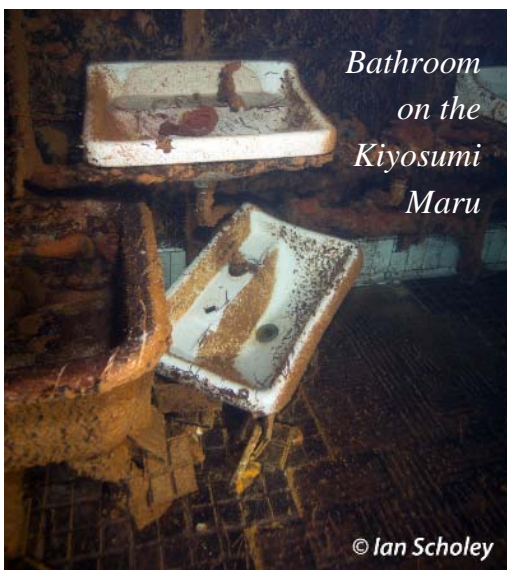
© Ian Scholey

Dive 6 — Kiyosumi Maru, Max Depth 25.8m, Dive Time 48 minutes
Our next dive was on the 137 m, 8614 ton passenger cargo ship Kiyosumi Maru. This wreck is resting on it's port side in 30 m of water.

We dropped down onto the side of the ship at 14 m and swam towards the stern where we dropped down to see the port side prop. After shooting a few pictures we swam along the vertical deck where we found some Torpedo launchers.

We then explored each of the aft holds. In the first one we found gas masks and water bottles and some human remains. The second hold contained a variety of artefacts with a bicycle being the thing that stood out.

With the holds explored, we continued forward past the funnel and bridge before ascending back to the side of the ship at the bow. Here, two large torpedo holes were prominent. As with all the wrecks, the ship was covered in coral growth and artefacts including some very nice lamps.



Dive 7 — Hoyo Maru, Max Depth 23.1m, Dive Time 53 minutes
The shallow dive for the day was the Hoyo Maru. This was another large tanker at 143 m, 8691 tons but now lies capsized and broken in two at the mid-ships on a slope down to 38 m.

We managed to get into the engine room despite the damage and found a nice set of engine gauges to photograph.

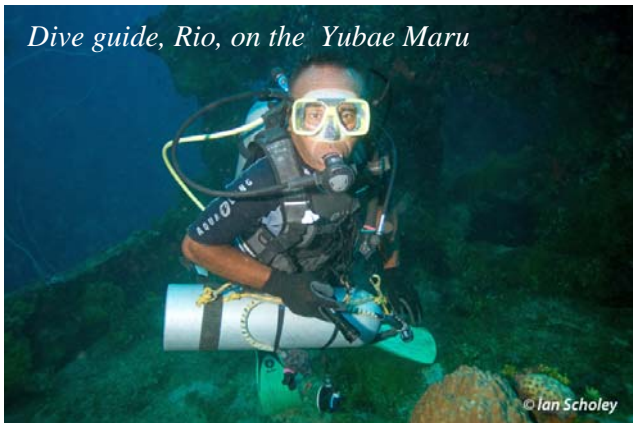
Back on the boat, our guide Rio apologetically informed us that the dive centre was to close for the day on Saturday. A new museum has been constructed on the resort complex and Saturday was to be the grand opening with a big party to celebrate.

As pleased as we were that we would get to see some of the treasures in the museum, and had an invite to the party, talk quickly turned to how we could get a dive in anyway. So, with a hastily constructed plan involving the other dive operation in Truk we headed back to get ourselves sorted out.

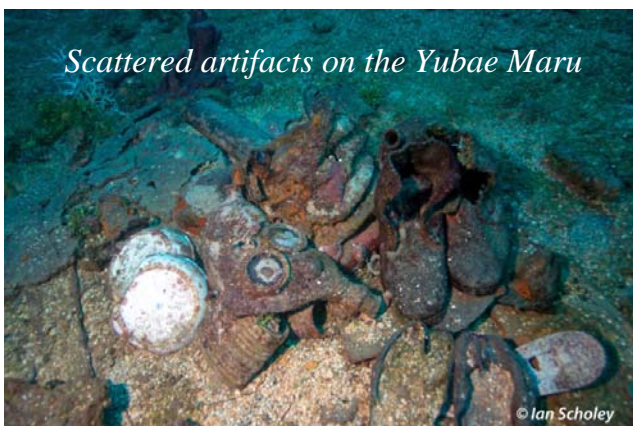
Day 4

Dive 8 — Yubae Maru, Max Depth 37.4m, Dive Time 42 minutes
The boat turned up with 15L tanks this morning so we headed off to dive the Yubae Maru. This was a slightly smaller cargo ship of 105 m, 3217 tons. She is sits in 37 m of water. We started our dive by heading to the deeper part of the wreck where we entered the engine room. Inside amongst the collapsed gangways we found and photographed a

nice set of engine gauges before having a good look at the engine itself.

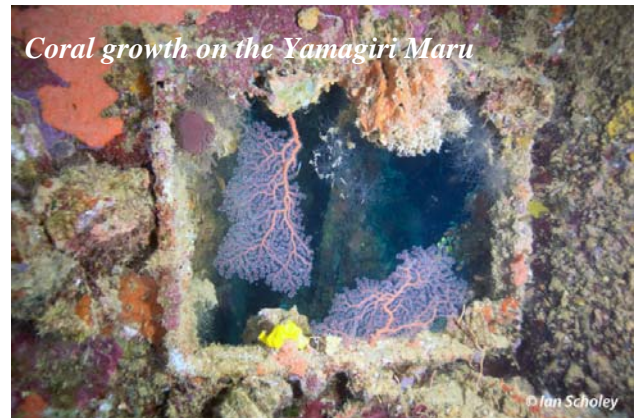


We then entered the holds where we found an array of oil drums and some ship prop blades. After a good look in the holds we entered the living area of the ship and found a nice bathroom complete with a tiled wall which had most of the tiles still in place. Exiting the wreck we explored the brightly coloured corals that covered every inch outside before commencing our ascent.



Dive 9 — Yamagiri Maru, Max Depth 28m, Dive Time 50 minutes
Next up was the Yamagiri Maru, a fully intact Passenger Cargo ship of 133m/6438 tons. She rests in 33 m of

water on her port side. The first thing I noticed on this wreck as Peter and I descended was the huge bomb hole just forward of the superstructure. Reaching the coral covered side of the ship with the superstructure looming below us we headed aft to find the props and rudder.



Staying deeper, we then headed into the rear holds where debris was scattered everywhere. There were gas masks, boots, thongs, water bottles and other personal equipment for troops to be found. We also noticed a lot of crockery and bottles of different sizes and colours.

Entering the next hold forward we found it stacked with large 14 inch shells which were used by the Japanese battleships so we moved around inside carefully. Already in deco we then headed slowly up via the bridge area to the shot line and our stops.

Dive 10 — Emily Sea Plane, Max Depth 16 m, Dive Time 54 minutes
The final dive of the day was on a huge 4-engine Emily Sea plane. The Emily sits in shallow water and is still largely intact. I made straight for the cockpit

area after spotting a large hole allowing access to the fuselage. Being first inside I was able to shoot some good shots of the cockpit before taking a slow swim down the length of the aircraft and exiting where the tail section had broken off.



Between the main body of the aircraft and the tail section, in common with many of the other wrecks we visited, was a selection of artefacts that had been placed together. In amongst this was the instrument panel from the cockpit and parts of the undercarriage. Nearby I also spotted one of the huge floats required to keep the aircraft above the water.

In places, the outside of the aircraft was coral covered and, slowly inspecting, I found a nice flat worm and a coral head covered with blue and white shrimp. Finally I took a good look along and under both wings where engines and propellers were still attached, if a little bent and twisted.

Back on the boat we cracked open the beers to celebrate the fact that this was my 1000th dive. Not a bad dive for that occasion.

Day 5

Dive 11 — Fumitzuki, Max Depth 36.2 m, Dive time 40 minutes

The Fumitzuki is a 103m, 1193ton Destroyer and has the distinction of being one of only two warships that were actually sunk in the lagoon during the American attack. The other is another destroyer the Oite which was too deep for us. She rests in 38 m of water with a slight list to port.

As we descended, the extent of the damage done to her is clearly visible, being very severe in the area of the bridge and first funnel. As we explored further aft, the hull is clearly buckled and bent. First stop for us was her propellers and rudder. Swim-



ming back along the deck we noticed depth charge throwers and passed the second intact stack before crossing the main area of damage and heading to the bow. We inspected the ships torpedo launchers and finally the forecastle gun.

The ship was a blaze of colour with a fantastic encrustations of hard and soft corals and schools of small fish. It's strange how the ocean can turn such a deadly fighting machine into a thing of such beauty, this ship was a stunner.

Dive 12 — Shark Island, Max Depth 20.8 m, Dive time 53 minutes

For our second dive today we took a break from wrecks to see a shark or two. The boat anchored close to an idyllic little island and looking down into the crystal clear water we could see 15-20 Sharks circling below. Six divers rolling over the side of the boat initially cleared the area of the sharks but as we swam slowly down the sandy slope of the seabed towards a large bommie they soon started to reappear.

They were mostly reasonably sized Grey Reef Sharks with the occasional White Tip or Black Tip also coming into view. The sharks continued to circle around keeping their distance but gradually coming closer and closer. With the other divers heading off across the sand, Peter and I swam in to take a closer look at the cleaning station. With just the two of us in close to the bommie the sharks seemed to relax a little and soon the first one came in and stopped briefly above the bommie allowing dozens of the cleaner wrasse to busily give it a once over. At one spot on the bommie thousands of glass fish congregated and we spent a good few minutes taking shots of them.

Continuing to circle we also found a Lionfish tucked under one ledge. Eventually we headed back into shallower water and spent the rest of the dive on the reef finding more Lionfish and several Anemone fish colonies. Not quite as good as the wrecks but not a bad dive

was the consensus back on the boat.

Dive 13 — Patrol Boat 34, Max Depth 13.8 m, Dive time 55 minutes.

A nice shallow wreck to finish the day's diving. The Patrol Boat is 91 m, 1162 tons and is in very shallow water with the bow sticking out of the water. The stern is the deepest part and we headed straight there to examine the props and rudder first.

Next up, we squeezed into the engine room and took a good look around, finding another nice set of gauges still in place. Moving forward we again penetrated the wreck entering the troop quarters. Here we found the bathroom with fixtures and fittings still in place.



Because of its partial submersion, the Japanese were able to salvage the gun on this wreck so this was missing. Being in shallow water, the coral growth was significant and we spent the rest of the dive slowly examining the outside of the wreck and snapping away with our cameras.



Day 6

Every diver's worst nightmare for me today, waking up with an obvious sore throat. I soldiered on hoping that it wouldn't turn into a cold and stop me from diving. With the dive centre closed today we had made other arrangements for ourselves and our Dutch buddies and were picked up at the dock by a rather nice RIB belonging to the liveboard vessel Thorfinn. We were also joined by a couple of American divers.

After a quick chat with them to assess their skill levels, we selected our dive sites for the day and were on our way. We first headed to the I169 Sub but, finding another boat load of divers already on it, quickly reconsidered, it would wait for another day.

Dive 14 — Momkawa Maru, Max Depth 38m, Dive Time 37 minutes
The Momokawa Maru is a 107m/3820 ton passenger freighter which sits in 39 m of water. She sits upright with a severe list to port. We followed our now normal dive routine of heading to the

stern first and getting some shots of the props before heading into the holds to view the cargo.

The holds contained aircraft parts and shells mainly, together with a truck or two. The trucks have partially disintegrated with the front grill, engine, wheels complete with tyres, steering wheel, hand break and the chassis remaining. A sign of the times are the running boards which were still in place on some of them.

Departing the holds, we swam back to the superstructure and explored the bridge area, finding once again a telegraph and helm. Heading back to the shot line along the side of the ship there were scattered artefacts including lamps, saki bottles and a tea pot.

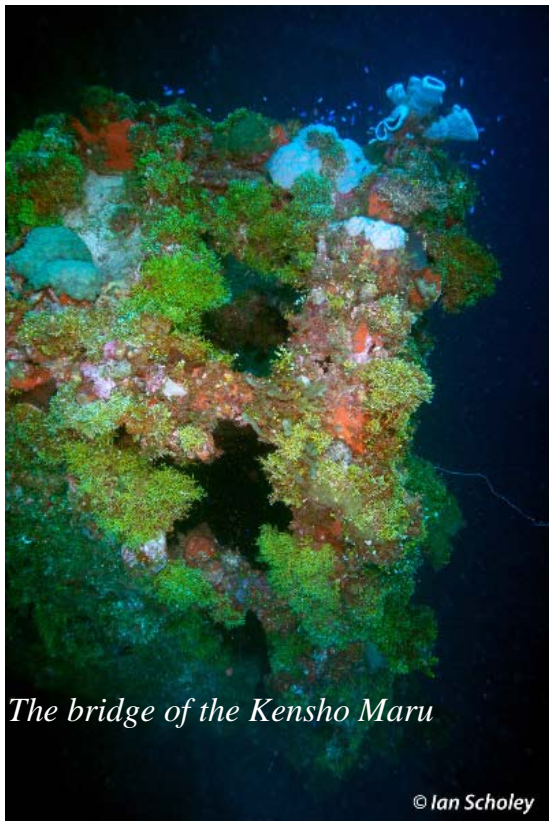
Dive 15 — Kensho Maru, Max Depth 31.7 m, Dive time 47 minutes

Second dive of the day was the Kensho Maru another freighter, 116 m in length and weighing in at 4862 tons. This one was in 36 m of water and she was upright with a very noticeable list to port.



We dropped to her deck at 24 m and headed into the holds. Inside we found

the usual oil drums and considerable numbers of both Saki, Beer and Medical bottles. This wreck apparently has a set of deer antlers somewhere in the living quarters but we were unable to find them. As we headed up to do our stops we were able to explore the Bridge area at 18 m.



Only having arranged two dives for the day, we were able to chill out for the afternoon, or in my case, grab some recuperation. The celebrations were under way with the families of all the resort staff enjoying the post museum opening party. Peter grabbed the opportunity of a first day visit to the museum reporting back it was a "must see".

In the evening, we were invited to the celebrations and were treated to an absolute feast of local food cooked by the

staff. The cray bashers out there would really have enjoyed it as the pick of the treats was the largest pile of Lobsters I've ever seen. Stuffed full, I headed off to bed to try and sleep off the sore throat with the party still going. Judging by the mess the following morning, I would say it was a good one, but I didn't hear a thing.

Day 7

Dive 16 — Hoki Maru, Max Depth 40m, Dive time 36 minutes

The Hoki Maru is a 137m, 7112 ton cargo ship sitting upright in 53m of water. The ship was sunk when a bomb hit her cargo of gasoline, so much of the fore-ship has disintegrated.

The target for our dive was hold no 5 and we headed straight to that area of the ship and dropped down into the darkness. Inside the hold we found a treasure trove of vehicles. Swimming slowly around we found bulldozers, trucks, tractors and a steam roller.



In common with most of the vessels, the hold was on two levels leaving some of the vehicles suspended on what remained of the top deck.

On this dive we stayed at depth for most of the dive before slowly ascending mak-

ing our required deco stops as we went. I really enjoyed this dive due to the variety of great stuff in the hold. ❖

** Ian's adventures at Truk Lagoon will be continued in the next edition of Fathoms*

TOM'S REEF & NEPEAN WALL 31 August 2014

Report by Denys Smerchanski ; photos from John Lawler & Ian Scholey

The start of the day was quite promising. After a smooth launch Ian, Graham and I discovered that there was hardly any swell and a trip outside was warranted. Fairly quickly it was decided that "Tom's Reef" was the choice and two boats — Graham's and John's — zipped along the almost glass-like surface.



L-R : Denys Smerchanski, Arthur Kokkinos, Graham Ellis, Ian Scholey, Michael Ngai & John Lawler

Ian and I plunged in. The visibility was on the average side of things but the fish life more than compensated for this.



First, we came across the gurnard perch that was happily sitting on the sandy bottom. The highlight of the dive came next — a cat shark, which was nestled among the seaweeds. Due to the current it took some time to get a nice photo of it.





After swimming around a couple of reefs we came across a cuttlefish pretending to be a piece of seaweed on the sandy bottom. Being careful not to agi-

tate it too much, we managed to get up close and Ian took a few good photos. Further along there was a ray, sleeping in the ledge, and a juvenile blue devil. A superb dive to say the least.

The Nepean wall was next, after a brief stop for lunch. Life on the wall was quite plentiful, lots of fish. The visibility did not improve and the beginning flood did not help. However, an excellent day all in all. ❖

DIVE SNIPPETS

BLAIRGOWRIE — 23 August 2014

Ian Scholey

After a few hours sleep I was back in the water at 7.30am this morning on a nudi hunt. Now I have to admit I had a bit of help from the best spotter I have ever met but I was wowed by the variety that was on show this morning. Most of them were in the 3-5mm size bracket and I'm sad to say I have been swimming past this stuff on hundreds of dives at Blairgowrie. It's amazing what there is to be seen at this site if you just slow down and really look.



TULAMBEN, BALI — August 2014

A gaggle of divers on the pebbles - Sandy Webb



Entering the water - David Flew



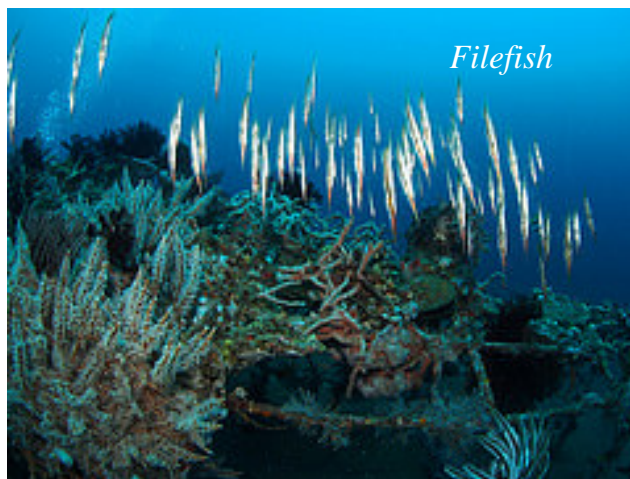
...and from Phil Watson



Sweetlips in a letterbox



Anemone



Filefish



Selfie with Pipefish



BLAIRGOWRIE NIGHT DIVE — 29 August 2014

Ian Scholey

Just the two of us on the night dive last night, myself and Peter Beaumont. Peter went looking for Tassled Anglerfish and found not one but three. I stuck with the little stuff and found some interesting things. Check out the Grass Clingfish and a weird little thing on some red weed. If anyone knows what it is I would love to know.



THE COOGEE — 8 September 2014

Claire Cooper

YAY! Great first dive outing as a VSAGer! What magic surface conditions. Below was a tad grubby on the Coogee.

Thanks JL and gang.



LAKE CATANI — 23 September 2014

Phil Watson

High altitude diving at the top of Mount Buffalo — 1,400m and 7° water.



VSAG CLOTHING NOW AVAILABLE!

The Committee have done some work on sourcing a few items of distinctive, quality VSAG clothing.

A minimum order of 10 units of each is needed before an order can proceed, but there are already lots of people interested.

We have the following available:



Polo shirt: **\$40**

60% Cotton, 40% Polyester



Beanie: **\$16**

The beanie is acrylic
One size fits all

The polo shirt comes in the following sizes:

Size	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	5XL
Half Chest	52 cm	55 cm	58 cm	62 cm	65 cm	71 cm	79 cm

NOW ALSO AVAILABLE



Club Fleece: **\$40**

Front zipped 350g fleece

The Fleece comes in the following sizes:

Size	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	4XL	5XL
Half Chest	51.5 cm	54 cm	56.5 cm	59 cm	61.5 cm	64 cm	66.5 cm	69 cm
Body length	70 cm	72 cm	74 cm 76 cm	76 cm	78 cm	80 cm	82 cm	84 cm

If you are interested in purchasing any items, then please email Ian Scholey — secretary@vsag.org.au or ischoley@inet.net.au — ASAP with your size requirements. He will then confirm back whether we have sufficient interest and will at that time advise payment details.



On Friday 1 August, a number of VSAGers and their families & friends went along to “Coral, Fire & Ice” at Hamer Hall in Melbourne where they were able to hear from renowned photographer, David Doubilet, and view some of his work.



Recently named an “Ocean Hero” by National Geographic’s Ocean Initiative, Doubilet’s powerful and emotional stories and ground breaking work inspire and connect audiences young and old to the incredible beauty and the silent transformations happening within the invisible and extraordinary world below.

Doubilet has spent five decades under the surface in the far corners of the world from interior Africa, remote coral reefs, and his recent projects in northern and southern ice.

A contributing editor for several publications and author of 12 titles, including the award winning *Water, Light, Time*. His photographic awards include numerous Picture of the Year, BBC Wildlife, Communication Arts and World Press Awards. He is a member of the Acade-

my of Achievement, Royal Photographic Society, International League of Conversation Photographers, International Diving Hall of Fame, and a Trustee of the Shark Research Institute.

Coral, Fire, & Ice sees David Doubilet on assignment with National Geographic as he shares his personal challenge to create a visual voice for the world's oceans.

We ventured with him into the rich coral triangle of Papua New Guinea's Kimbe Bay, the Philippines, and Indonesia – centre of the world in terms of marine biodiversity.

Also, we discovered an unspoiled wilderness of waters crowded with layers of life: fingernail-sized pygmy seahorses to 60-foot tall towers of barracudas.

Then we journeyed south to the cold ice waters of Antarctica to hear real life adventures of survival, leopard seals, and shipwrecks, joining Doubilet in his

newest work on the sculptural beauty of icebergs. A veritable visual feast that was enjoyed by all, enriched by hearing from the photographer himself. ❖



*Ian Scholey with his daughter Anna at
“Coral, Fire, & Ice”*



*Photo provided by John
Lawler*

*Taken at a seminar in
Perth in May 2006...the
man on the right is the
famous marine photogra-
pher Stan Waterman and
the man on the left is the
wonderful David Doubi-
let...the man in the middle
is a not so famous...
well....me...great men to
talk to...such a pleasure!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

WINNER — JULY

Peter Beaumont - *Green Moray*



Don't forget your entries to the VSAG Photo Competition

Members are invited to submit up to 2 photographs each calendar month for entry into the competition.

Your colour or black and white photo can be of any diving related subject. Both underwater and above water shots are acceptable. Photographs can be taken locally or overseas and they do not have to be taken on a VSAG dive day (although that would be even better). The only rules are that the photograph be your own work and should be taken in the calendar month of entry.

Entries should be in Jpeg format and sent via email to ischoley@iinet.net.au before the end of each month. Please include as much detail with your entries as possible e.g. Location, names of any people pictured, fish species if known.

RUNNERS UP IN THE JULY PHOTO COMPETITION

Ian Scholey - *Dumpling squid*



© Ian Scholey



Carole Campisano - *Stonefish*

WINNER — AUGUST

Ian Scholey -
*Dive buddy Denys
Smerchanski and a
cuttlefish taken on Tom's
Reef*



RUNNERS UP IN THE AUGUST PHOTO COMPETITION

Phil Watson -
*Pair of Moray eels taken at
Tulamben, Bali*





Peter Beaumont -
Shot of mating Dumpling Squid

Another Date for Your Diary

MELBOURNE DIVE FOR CANCER



FEBRUARY 22ND 2015 at Rye Pier

More details to follow



**Cancer
Council
Victoria**

PROPOSED VSAG DIVE TRIP

19 Day South African Dive Safari

October 2015

At our last Club Meeting, Fern Perry from *Nomad Africa Adventure Tours* gave a presentation on a 19 day trip that VSAG is planning to run next year.



Day 1 Johannesburg – Blyde River Canyon

Leaving the city of Johannesburg behind, we travel along the Panorama Route, one of South Africa's most scenic drives, where we will visit the Blyde River Canyon, God's Window and Bourke's Luck Potholes. Blyde River Canyon is the third largest canyon in the world and the view is dominated by the Three Rondavels, huge rocky outcrops at the end of the canyon.

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Timbavati Private Nature Reserve – www.timbavati.co.za

Facilities: Shared ablutions, hot showers, bar, swimming pool

Route: Johannesburg to Timbavati - 470 km

Travel time: 8-10 hours

Day 2 Kruger National Park

Today we start the day visiting the Mo-holoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, where injured or lost animals are rehabilitated so they can be released back in to the wild. After a full tour of the Mo-holoholo facility we travel to the world famous Kruger National Park for an afternoon game drive en-route to our camp.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Nkambeni - <http://www.nkambeni.com/>

Facilities: Drinkable water, shared ablutions, hot showers.

Route: Timbavati Area to Kruger NP -156 km

Travel time: 2 hrs



Day 3 Kruger National Park

After breakfast we will pack up camp and load everything on to our truck, however the day will be spent in open 4x4 vehicles in order to truly appreciate

the Kruger. Your 4x4 vehicles will be driven by specialist Kruger guides and by using these smaller vehicles we have a better chance of viewing the wildlife. The whole morning will be spent driving, at midday we will stop at one of the well appointed camps where lunch will be provided, before the afternoon game drive that will bring us back to the our overnight stop.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Camp: Nkambeni - <http://www.nkambeni.com/>
Facilities: Swimming pool, shared ablutions, restaurant, shop



Day 4 Kruger to Bilene

A very early start will see us crossing the Mozambique border and driving north to Bilene. This peaceful town, known as San Martino in the days of Portuguese Mozambique, is situated on a hill overlooking the sprawling waters of the Uembje Lagoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Complexo Palmeiras - <http://complexopalmeiras.blogspot.com/>
Facilities: Shared ablutions, hot water
Route: Kruger National Park to Praia Do

Tofo - 650 km
Travel time: 10hrs

Day 5/6/7/8 Diving Praia Do Tofo

The following three days will be spent diving the reefs of Tofo, home to the largest Whale Shark and Manta populations in the world. Each morning (day 6,7,8) we will depart early for a double dive trip, returning in time for lunch at the campsite. The afternoons will be free for you to enjoy any one of the optional activities or just lazing on this truly beautiful beach.



An evening during this stay we will have the honour of meeting Dr Andrea Marshall, Dr Simon Pierce or one of their representatives, who will give a talk on the Manta and Whale Sharks around Tofo, the threats facing them and the research being conducted. Both of these experts are extremely well respected in their fields. The Foundation for the Protection of Marine Megafauna is the first of our conservational contributions and you will be informed of the work that is being achieved with your contributions.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Turtle Cove -

<http://www.turtlecovetof.com>

Facilities: Shared ablutions, hot showers

Dive sites range from 10m to 37m catering for all experience levels, visibility varies between 10 and 30m and temperature is usually between 24 – 28 degrees

Day 9 Hlane Royal National Park Swaziland

Today we head south again and cross the border into Swaziland, entering the Hlane Royal National Park, a huge nature reserve, home to lion, elephant and white rhino. We will camp near a water hole where game can be seen coming to water.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Hlane NP -

www.biggameparks.org/3parks_hlane.html

Facilities: Shared ablutions, hot showers, water not drinkable, bar

Route: Praia Do Tofo to Hlane NP - 650 km

Travel time: 10-11 hrs and a border crossing

Day 10 Hlane – Sodwana Bay

After an early morning game drive we leave Hlane, cross the border back into South Africa and enter iSimangaliso Wetland Park. We arrive in Sodwana in the late afternoon and check into our bungalows at Triton Dive Lodge. That evening we will meet our dive guides

and have a briefing of the upcoming diving.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Two per room: Triton Dive Lodge (4 sleeper cabins)

www.tritondiving.co.za

Facilities: Shared ablutions, bar, swimming pool

Route: Hlane to Sodwana Bay -350 km

Travel time: 5-6 hrs.

Day 11/12 Sodwana Bay Diving.

The following two days will be spent diving a selection of the Sodwana Bay dive sites.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sodwana Bay is a small town on the northeast coast of South Africa, south of the Tropic of Capricorn. It hosts one of the most southerly and beautiful hard and soft coral reefs in the world. The dive sites are situated in the Marine Protected Area within the iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage site.



Day 13 Protea Banks

We meet our guides in the bustling city of Durban, which is South Africa's largest port and a popular surf destination. It is also home to the famous dolphin coast and some of the world's best Apex Predator shark diving. An hour and a half south of Durban is the small beachside resort of Shelley Beach, launch point for the infamous Protea Banks, our diving destination for the next 3 days.

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Dive House (no website available)

African Dive Adventures

www.africandiveadventures.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, shared ablutions, hot showers, bar, swimming pool, lounge and TV, shared bedrooms.

Route: Sodwana to Protea Banks - 490 km

Travel time: 1-2 hours

Day 14/15/16 Protea Banks Diving

Over the next three days we will have 5 dives on the Protea Banks Reef where we hope to see some of the world's largest marine predators. Diving both North and South Pinnacles we will have the chance to collect Sand Tiger Shark teeth and explore caves, swim-throughs and tunnels. An optional Tiger and Bull Shark baited dive at Protea Banks will be offered during our stay. This dive takes place in open water, hanging in the blue whilst possible Tiger, Bull, Hammerhead and Oceanic Black-Tip sharks come in to investigate the scent trail around us. A full safety briefing and training session is included and this is a breath-taking experience.

Here we will receive a conservational talk, regarding the sharks in the area, the threats to them and the work that our donation will be helping towards.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Route: Margate to Shelley Beach launch area - 20 minutes

Travel time: 1 hour daily



Day 17/18 Aliwal Shoal

The following two days we spend diving the equally famous Aliwal Shoal. Renowned for Raggie Tooth Sharks congregating in their hundreds, dolphins and the baited shark dive. Each morning we will travel the hour from our Dive House in Margate to the town of Umkomas, launch site for Aliwal Shoal. Over the two days we will do 3 recreational dives on the Aliwal Shoal, including the famous "Raggie Cave". The optional baited shark dive is well worth it, with Oceanic Black-Tip Sharks gathering in large numbers and Tiger Sharks investigating the bait. The baited dive is accompanied by a photographer/videographer for a permanent record of your shark encounter.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Accommodation : Dive House (no website available)
 Facilities : Drinkable water, shared ablutions, hot showers, bar, swimming pool, lounge & TV, shared bedrooms
 Dive Centre : Aliwal Dive Centre
www.aliwalshoal.co.za
 Route: Margate to Umkomas - 100km
 Travel time: 2 hrs daily



Day 19 Durban

We travel this morning to the Durban airport where our tour ends upon arrival at the King Shaka International Airport.

Meals: Breakfast
 Accommodation: Own Arrangements/post-tour accommodation can be booked through Nomad

Cost
 Approx. \$4015.00 + airfares (approx. \$1300.00 return)

We would need a minimum of 6 people and a maximum of 20.

Expressions of Interest
 Please email Ian Scholey:
secretary@vsag.org.au ❖

Home: Covered
 Car: Covered

Are You?

DAN
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 Divers Alert Network

Can You Afford Not to be a DAN Member?

DAN Membership Costs Less than AUD\$6* per month
 Be Prepared. Join the Experts in Dive Accident Management.

www.danasiapacific.org

*DAN Membership provides up to US\$150,000 Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage. DAN Dive Injury Insurance is additional.

THIS EVENT IS PART OF THE NATIONAL OCEAN DEFENCE FUNDRAISING TOUR BEING UNDERTAKEN BY SEA SHEPHERD AUSTRALIA THIS SUMMER.



[MELBOURNE]

11AM - 4PM | SUN 23RD NOV 2014

ONLINE TICKETS: Adults \$10 | Teenagers (12-17) \$5 | Kids (under 12) FREE

SEASHEPHERD.ORG.AU/DEFENDERS2014 * DOOR SALES AVAILABLE *

SEA SHEPHERD welcomes supporters and members of the public to be part of its annual fundraiser in support of the upcoming 2014/15 Antarctic campaign.

THIS FUN FAMILY EVENT WILL INCLUDE: - LIVE MUSIC - KIDS ENTERTAINMENT - RIDES - RAFFLES - AUCTION - SHIP TOURS - COMMUNITY & MARKET STALL PRECINCT

Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. More event info at [facebook.com/SeaShepherdMelbourne](https://www.facebook.com/SeaShepherdMelbourne)

Special Guests: Captain Peter Hammarstedt of Sea Shepherd's Bob Barker vessel, Jeff Hansen, Managing Director, Sea Shepherd Australia and Philip Wollen OAM, Kindness Trust

VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar

By Graham Ellis, Dive Calendar Co-ordinator, VSAG

Activity Details

Dive Coordinator (DC) nominated below.

Dive site determined by DC and advised by email based on forecast conditions.

Boat Captains for the dive will be confirmed by email prior to the weekend.

Dive day can swap between Sat and Sun depending on conditions!

Dive Coordinator is responsible for organising a dive report after their weekend.

Dive sites adjusted on the day to suit divers and conditions.

Book in for a dive day ASAP after receiving notification via email. Please provide the Dive Captain with your full name, mobile phone number and email address.

You are required to call the Dive Captain between 6.00 p.m. & 7.00 p.m. the evening prior to the dive day to confirm that you will still be coming on the dive.

Oct 11/12	DC David Flew 0418 446 530
Oct 17	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Oct 18/19	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Oct 21	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Oct 24	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Oct 25/26	DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Oct 31	No Friday dive this week
Nov 1/2	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Nov 7	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Nov 8/9	DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Nov 11	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Nov 14	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Nov 15/16	DC David Flew 0418 446 530
Nov 21	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Nov 22/23	DC Benita McDonough 0419 399 000
Nov 28	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Nov 29	VSAG Xmas Party
Nov 30	DC Hannah Smeeton 0431 14 19 18
Dec 5/6	DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Dec 9	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Dec 12	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Dec 13/14	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Dec-19	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Dec 20/21	DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Xmas Period	Local diving will be advised by email

Tidal Streams at the Heads — October 2014

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack)
which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

September		October				
Mon 29	Tue 30	Wed 1	Thu 2	Fri 3	Sat 4	Sun 5
<i>6:04</i>	<i>0:25</i>	<i>1:02</i>	<i>1:41</i>	<i>2:23</i>	<i>3:10</i>	<i>5:06</i>
<i>12:13</i>	<i>6:43</i>	<i>7:23</i>	<i>8:06</i>	<i>8:53</i>	<i>9:44</i>	<i>11:42</i>
<i>17:41</i>	<i>12:46</i>	<i>13:20</i>	<i>13:55</i>	<i>14:35</i>	<i>15:24</i>	<i>17:28</i>
	<i>18:13</i>	<i>18:46</i>	<i>19:24</i>	<i>20:08</i>	<i>21:05</i>	<i>23:20</i>
Mon 6	Tue 7	Wed 8	Thu 9	Fri 10	Sat 11	Sun 12
<i>6:14</i>	<i>0:48</i>	<i>2:19</i>	<i>3:38</i>	<i>4:44</i>	<i>5:39</i>	<i>0:07</i>
<i>12:46</i>	<i>7:34</i>	<i>8:55</i>	<i>10:06</i>	<i>11:04</i>	<i>11:54</i>	<i>6:29</i>
<i>18:51</i>	<i>13:51</i>	<i>14:51</i>	<i>15:46</i>	<i>16:34</i>	<i>17:19</i>	<i>12:38</i>
	<i>20:17</i>	<i>21:29</i>	<i>22:29</i>	<i>23:20</i>		<i>18:02</i>
Mon 13	Tue 14	Wed 15	Thu 16	Fri 17	Sat 18	Sun 19
<i>0:51</i>	<i>1:32</i>	<i>2:11</i>	<i>2:49</i>	<i>3:26</i>	<i>4:05</i>	<i>4:47</i>
<i>7:14</i>	<i>7:57</i>	<i>8:37</i>	<i>9:17</i>	<i>9:56</i>	<i>10:38</i>	<i>11:24</i>
<i>13:20</i>	<i>13:59</i>	<i>14:37</i>	<i>15:15</i>	<i>15:55</i>	<i>16:40</i>	<i>17:34</i>
<i>18:43</i>	<i>19:23</i>	<i>20:03</i>	<i>20:43</i>	<i>21:27</i>	<i>22:17</i>	<i>23:19</i>
Mon 20	Tue 21	Wed 22	Thu 23	Fri 24	Sat 25	Sun 26
<i>5:38</i>	<i>0:34</i>	<i>1:55</i>	<i>3:08</i>	<i>4:06</i>	<i>4:53</i>	<i>5:35</i>
<i>12:16</i>	<i>6:46</i>	<i>8:08</i>	<i>9:22</i>	<i>10:19</i>	<i>11:06</i>	<i>11:46</i>
<i>18:42</i>	<i>13:11</i>	<i>14:06</i>	<i>14:55</i>	<i>15:40</i>	<i>16:19</i>	<i>16:57</i>
	<i>19:55</i>	<i>20:56</i>	<i>21:45</i>	<i>22:27</i>	<i>23:06</i>	<i>23:43</i>
October					November	
Mon 27	Tue 28	Wed 29	Thu 30	Fri 31	Sat 1	Sun 2
<i>6:13</i>	<i>0:20</i>	<i>0:58</i>	<i>1:38</i>	<i>2:19</i>	<i>3:03</i>	<i>3:50</i>
<i>12:24</i>	<i>6:51</i>	<i>7:30</i>	<i>8:09</i>	<i>8:50</i>	<i>9:32</i>	<i>10:17</i>
<i>17:34</i>	<i>13:00</i>	<i>13:36</i>	<i>14:13</i>	<i>14:53</i>	<i>15:38</i>	<i>16:31</i>
	<i>18:11</i>	<i>18:49</i>	<i>19:29</i>	<i>20:15</i>	<i>21:08</i>	<i>22:13</i>

Tidal Streams at the Heads — November 2014

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

October					November	
<i>Mon 27</i>	<i>Tue 28</i>	<i>Wed 29</i>	<i>Thu 30</i>	<i>Fri 31</i>	<i>Sat 1</i>	<i>Sun 2</i>
<i>6:13</i>	<i>0:20</i>	<i>0:58</i>	<i>1:38</i>	<i>2:19</i>	<i>3:03</i>	<i>3:50</i>
<i>12:24</i>	<i>6:51</i>	<i>7:30</i>	<i>8:09</i>	<i>8:50</i>	<i>9:32</i>	<i>10:17</i>
<i>17:34</i>	<i>13:00</i>	<i>13:36</i>	<i>14:13</i>	<i>14:53</i>	<i>15:38</i>	<i>16:31</i>
	<i>18:11</i>	<i>18:49</i>	<i>19:29</i>	<i>20:15</i>	<i>21:08</i>	<i>22:13</i>
<i>Mon 3</i>	<i>Tue 4</i>	<i>Wed 5</i>	<i>Thu 6</i>	<i>Fri 7</i>	<i>Sat 8</i>	<i>Sun 9</i>
<i>4:43</i>	<i>5:47</i>	<i>1:01</i>	<i>2:27</i>	<i>3:40</i>	<i>4:40</i>	<i>5:31</i>
<i>11:06</i>	<i>12:02</i>	<i>7:05</i>	<i>8:30</i>	<i>9:46</i>	<i>10:47</i>	<i>11:39</i>
<i>17:34</i>	<i>18:48</i>	<i>13:03</i>	<i>14:05</i>	<i>15:04</i>	<i>15:58</i>	<i>16:47</i>
<i>23:32</i>		<i>20:02</i>	<i>21:08</i>	<i>22:05</i>	<i>22:55</i>	<i>23:40</i>
<i>Mon 10</i>	<i>Tue 11</i>	<i>Wed 12</i>	<i>Thu 13</i>	<i>Fri 14</i>	<i>Sat 15</i>	<i>Sun 16</i>
<i>6:16</i>	<i>0:22</i>	<i>1:02</i>	<i>1:39</i>	<i>2:14</i>	<i>2:49</i>	<i>3:24</i>
<i>12:24</i>	<i>6:57</i>	<i>7:35</i>	<i>8:11</i>	<i>8:45</i>	<i>9:18</i>	<i>9:51</i>
<i>17:33</i>	<i>13:06</i>	<i>13:45</i>	<i>14:22</i>	<i>14:59</i>	<i>15:37</i>	<i>16:19</i>
	<i>18:16</i>	<i>18:57</i>	<i>19:37</i>	<i>20:18</i>	<i>21:02</i>	<i>21:52</i>
<i>Mon 17</i>	<i>Tue 18</i>	<i>Wed 19</i>	<i>Thu 20</i>	<i>Fri 21</i>	<i>Sat 22</i>	<i>Sun 23</i>
<i>4:00</i>	<i>4:43</i>	<i>0:06</i>	<i>1:26</i>	<i>2:41</i>	<i>3:43</i>	<i>4:34</i>
<i>10:27</i>	<i>11:07</i>	<i>5:36</i>	<i>6:52</i>	<i>8:23</i>	<i>9:38</i>	<i>10:35</i>
<i>17:06</i>	<i>18:01</i>	<i>11:53</i>	<i>12:46</i>	<i>13:41</i>	<i>14:35</i>	<i>15:27</i>
<i>22:53</i>		<i>19:02</i>	<i>20:03</i>	<i>20:57</i>	<i>21:45</i>	<i>22:30</i>
<i>Mon 24</i>	<i>Tue 25</i>	<i>Wed 26</i>	<i>Thu 27</i>	<i>Fri 28</i>	<i>Sat 29</i>	<i>Sun 30</i>
<i>5:18</i>	<i>5:59</i>	<i>6:38</i>	<i>0:38</i>	<i>1:21</i>	<i>2:05</i>	<i>2:49</i>
<i>11:23</i>	<i>12:05</i>	<i>12:45</i>	<i>7:17</i>	<i>7:56</i>	<i>8:34</i>	<i>9:13</i>
<i>16:15</i>	<i>17:01</i>	<i>17:47</i>	<i>13:26</i>	<i>14:08</i>	<i>14:52</i>	<i>15:40</i>
<i>23:13</i>	<i>23:55</i>		<i>18:34</i>	<i>19:23</i>	<i>20:16</i>	<i>21:15</i>

Tidal Streams at the Heads — December 2014

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

December						
<i>Mon 1</i>	<i>Tue 2</i>	<i>Wed 3</i>	<i>Thu 4</i>	<i>Fri 5</i>	<i>Sat 6</i>	<i>Sun 7</i>
3:35	4:25	5:22	1:03	2:23	3:33	4:31
9:52	10:35	11:23	6:33	7:58	9:20	10:28
16:32	17:31	18:35	12:19	13:21	14:24	15:24
22:22	23:40		19:41	20:43	21:40	22:31
<i>Mon 8</i>	<i>Tue 9</i>	<i>Wed 10</i>	<i>Thu 11</i>	<i>Fri 12</i>	<i>Sat 13</i>	<i>Sun 14</i>
5:20	6:02	6:40	0:37	1:13	1:47	2:20
11:23	12:10	12:52	7:15	7:47	8:16	8:45
16:19	17:08	17:54	13:30	14:06	14:41	15:16
23:17	23:59		18:36	19:17	19:58	20:41
<i>Mon 15</i>	<i>Tue 16</i>	<i>Wed 17</i>	<i>Thu 18</i>	<i>Fri 19</i>	<i>Sat 20</i>	<i>Sun 21</i>
2:52	3:26	4:02	4:44	0:42	1:59	3:09
9:13	9:43	10:16	10:52	5:40	6:59	8:34
15:54	16:35	17:20	18:11	11:37	12:30	13:32
21:29	22:24	23:29		19:07	20:06	21:03
<i>Mon 22</i>	<i>Tue 23</i>	<i>Wed 24</i>	<i>Thu 25</i>	<i>Fri 26</i>	<i>Sat 27</i>	<i>Sun 28</i>
4:08	4:57	5:41	6:22	0:25	1:11	1:56
9:53	10:52	11:42	12:28	7:01	7:38	8:15
14:37	15:39	16:37	17:33	13:13	13:59	14:46
21:57	22:48	23:37		18:28	19:23	20:20
December			January			
<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tue 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
2:40	3:24	4:09	4:58	0:50	2:05	3:14
8:52	9:29	10:08	10:52	6:00	7:17	8:46
15:34	16:24	17:16	18:13	11:42	12:42	13:48
21:20	22:24	0:35		19:13	20:14	21:14

