



Fathoms

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2015

*Photo by Hannah Smeeton
at Truk Lagoon*

*NEW MEETING VENUE
UPDATED EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST
ANNUAL FEES NOW DUE
...AND MORE*

Postal Address:
VSAG, 139 Overport Rd, Frankston South VIC 3199

www.vsag.org.au

NEW MEETING VENUE

"The Water Rat Hotel"

**Corner Moray & Park Streets,
South Melbourne**



Due to Bells Hotel applying a hire fee for the upstairs function room, which is unsatisfactory to our club, VSAG has moved to a new venue as above.

The hotel does however, require an income of \$300 from sale of food and beverages to offset the function room hire charge. Please support your monthly meetings!

The hotel is located in a strong residential area and parking can be at a premium...please check parking signage!



Fathoms

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

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NOTICES

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

All Members Welcome

The Water Rat Hotel, 256 Moray St, South Melbourne VIC 3205



**VSAG Monthly meetings are at 8 p.m. on the
3rd TUESDAY of each month**

at THE WATER RAT HOTEL

256 MORAY ST, SOUTH MELBOURNE

All are welcome to join us for a meal at 7 p.m.
before the meeting.

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 VSAG Committee 2014–2015

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

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HYDROZOA

by Jan Watson - Continuing her series of articles on Marine Biology for Divers

The Class Hydrozoa is a large and diverse group in the Phylum Cnidaria. It includes hydroids, hydromedusae and the siphonophores. Having a captive audience (if anyone reads these articles) I've spent almost 60 years studying and publishing scientific papers on hydroids, and am thus rightly or wrongly considered as an authority on the group.

Hydroids are fixed (sessile) animals, living attached to the substrate. There are about 5000 species worldwide and they are common in southern Australian waters with about 500 known species. We see many hydroids – if not recognising them, on every dive and I'm always adding to the list.

Being sessile, hydroids are static predators and love living in currents where their tentacles can easily capture passing microscopic prey. They grow in a huge variety of shapes and sizes ranging from microscopic to large bushy or tree-like colonies, some resemble miniature flowers, others feather-like, and every imaginable form in between.

Some hydroid polyps (called hydranths) are relatively large, about 1-2 cm across the extended tentacles and these tend to be solitary belonging to the Athecata (naked hydranth) the polyp being exposed to the water. The ones with smaller hydranths usually belong to the Thecata (covered hydranth) where each polyp is seated in a tiny cup composed of chitin, a substance like our hair and fingernails. Thecate hydroids usually grow in large colonies consisting of hundreds to thousands of individual hydranths, all connected through a network of nerves and canals for sharing of food.

ATHECATE HYDROIDS

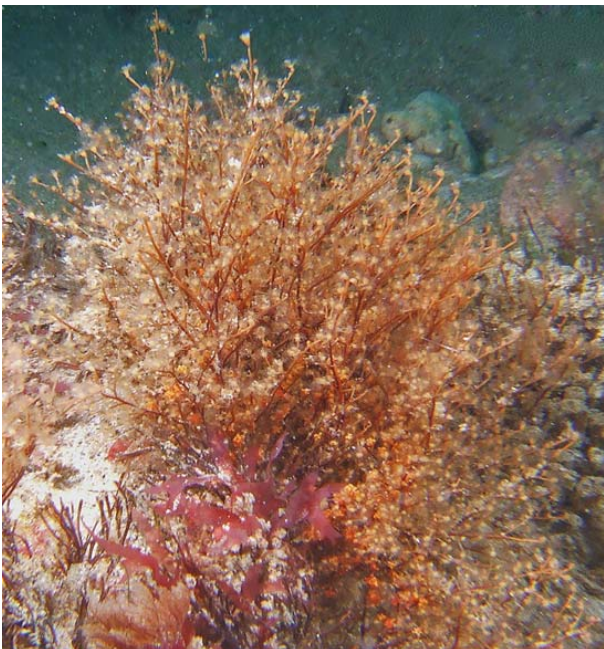
Ralpharia magnifica One of our largest and most spectacular hydroids. It is my favourite hydroid (I named it!). Colonies consist of single stems with a terminal hydranth growing from a sheet of greyish-brown soft coral on reef, sometimes on jetty piles. The two



Ralpharia magnifica Eagle hawk Neck, Tasmania, 6 m (Photo: Andrew Newton)

sets of white tentacles are for capture of food. The mouth is hidden inside the tuft of shorter tentacles, the orange bobbles are the reproductive gonophores which break off to be borne away by water currents to start a new colony.

Eudendrium balei. One of many local species of *Eudendrium*. Most are bushy colonies of many stems, yellow to orange in colour, some can be 10 cm high. Each tiny hydranth has one circlet of long tentacles. Small balloon-shaped orange gonophores are borne on the stems. Some species of *Eudendrium* grow in sheltered habitat on jetty piles while others prefer open water with strong currents. *Eudendrium* is often eaten by nudibranchs.



Eudendrium balei. Bushy fertile colony, open water, Popes Eye, 12 m

Pennaria wilsoni. Another common hydroid with bushy brown stems growing to about 10 cm high. The small white hydranths have a basal row of long thin tentacles and the row surrounding the mouth are short and club-shaped (capitate tentacles). Reddish gonophores are borne between the rows of tentacles. *Pennaria* prefers strong currents and is a favourite food of pycnogonids (sea spiders) and nudibranchs.



Pennaria wilsoni. Bushy colony, Popes Eye, 10 m.

Solanderia fusca. A hydroid we see on most ocean dives. It is unusual among athecate hydroids in having a thick chitinous outer skeleton to protect the delicate hydranths inside. Colonies are brown, fan-shaped, may grow to 20 cm high and stand out from ledges into the current. The white hydranths emerge at night or in poor visibility to feed. The larger colonies are several years old.



Solanderia fusca. Fan-shaped colony on rocky ledge, Chimney Rock, 20 m.

THECATE HYDROIDS

Plumularia setaceoides. Feathery white plumes, lives on algae and invertebrates in warmer months in fairly shallow habitat. The hydrothecae are arranged in rows along the side branches.



Plumularia setaceoides. On brown alga, St Leonards jetty, 2 m.

Stereothecca elongata. A hydroid with the hydrothecae set along the side

branches. Texture is tough and it retains its shape when dried. Prefers oceanic habitat, often growing on base of red algae. Although its colour is brown, it is often overgrown by a microscopic pink coralline alga like this one.



Stereothecca elongata. Colony on rocks under gannet platform, Popes Eye, 1 m.

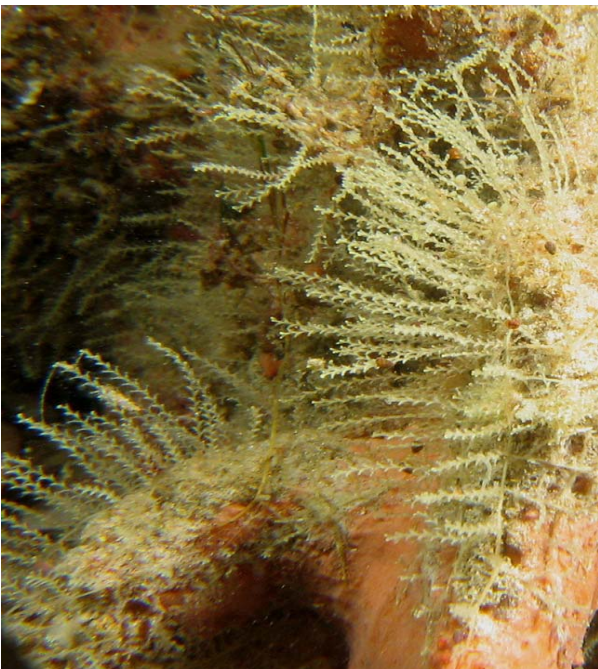
Clathroozoon wilsoni. A large grey-brown oceanic colonial hydroid growing to 25 cm high with many branches and woody texture. The hydranths are embedded in the branches. It is known only from southern Australia and particularly common in Victoria



Clathroozoon wilsoni. Large colony, Boarfish Reef, 12 m. (Photo: Andrew Newton.)

under sheltered ledges below 20 m. Colonies probably take decades to grow.

Symplectoscyphus indivisus. Grows on many substrates. Thick colonies of many simple short saw-tooth white to yellow stems, each “tooth” is a hydrotheca. Prefers shelter but is quite happy in the ocean and in strong currents.



Symplectoscyphus indivisus. St Leonards jetty, on sponge, 2 m

Southern Australia is the world home of feathery hydroids of the Order *Aglaopheniidae*. There are many species and here are some you see on local dives.

Gymnangium prolifer. This species grows to 15 cm high. Colonies usually brownish colour. Prefers strong tidal

currents. Found across southern Australia to Western Australia.



Gymnangium prolifer. Popes Eye, 8 m.



Aglaophenia divaricata. Nuyts Archipelago, South Australia, 10 m.

Aglaophenia divaricata. A very common southern Australian oceanic hydroid. Colonies grow to about 10 cm high in a dense canopy of feathery black, dark or light brown stems. Colonies abundant in winter.



Macrorhynchia whiteleggei. Popes Eye, 6m.

Macrorhynchia whiteleggei. A spectacular silvery-white hydroid growing to 12 cm high in a loose feathery canopy in oceanic waters. It grows over winter, dies down in summer then regrows next winter from the same buried rootstock. Very common in southern Port Phillip in strong currents. ❖



Photobombed!
There's one in every crowd!

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Car: Covered

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www.danasiapacific.org

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

MICHAEL ROELENS (VISITING DIVER FROM ST. GEORGE SCUBA CLUB) CONTINUES HIS DIVING TRAVELS AROUND AUSTRALIA....

After leaving the Mornington Peninsula - semi-exhausted from all the diving there - it was onwards to Mount Gambier. Ian Scholey from the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group (VSAG) had strongly recommended a dive at Ewens Ponds, just south of Mount Gambier. Ewens Ponds are three spring-fed limestone ponds connected to each other by a little stream, about 10m deep.



When I turned up at the Ponds, there was nobody there, nobody to be seen. I had a good look from the surface and even dunked my camera in there quickly. However spectacular it looked, I just wasn't convinced I should be diving there without anyone else nearby. So, I decided to catch up on some emails instead. Just thirty minutes later, two more divers magically rocked up. They had not dived there before either, so we kind of psyched each other up for a dive anyway. Well worth it, it turned out! Not all that much fish life to be seen, other than a few nice crayfish. The clarity

of the water was just spectacular however, and not having to rinse your wetsuit afterwards was a bonus too. Very fresh water!



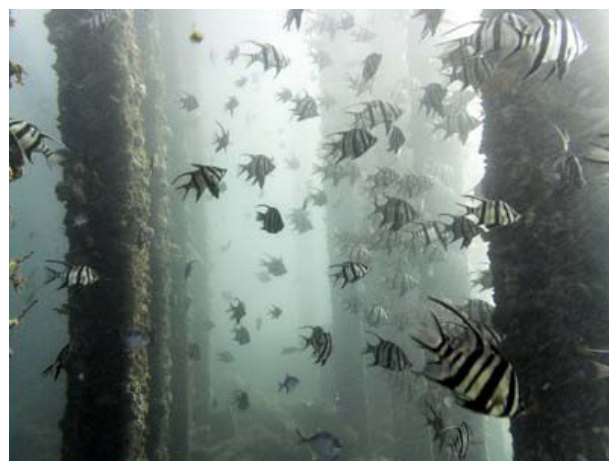
The best part of waiting there perhaps was that these two divers had just

come back from a place called Whyalla, and were on their way home to the Gold Coast. They handed me a map of Rapid Bay and its jetty, and told me exactly where to look for the Leafy Seadragon, the one creature on the top of my bucket list of my whole Australia trip. But hold on -Whyalla, what's there? They quickly mentioned that the cuttlefish had just started arriving again, after about 5 years of absence. As it was on my way, I thought I should stop there too eventually, but first on to Adelaide and its peninsulas.



At Rapid Bay, I had another good look at the map that these friendly divers gave me. Then looked up at the jetty, and the water conditions: everything looked perfect! Just not a single diver out there again, hardly any people in fact. There were a few fishermen on the jetty though. So, in I went. I sank down 5m to the sand line at the bottom of the pylon, and saw my first Leafy Seadragon within a minute of

submerging myself. Ian Scholey had shown me a picture of a Leafy in its natural environment, with the snout down into the seagrass, telling me that's what I should be looking for, and indeed, exactly like that it was! Thanks Ian!



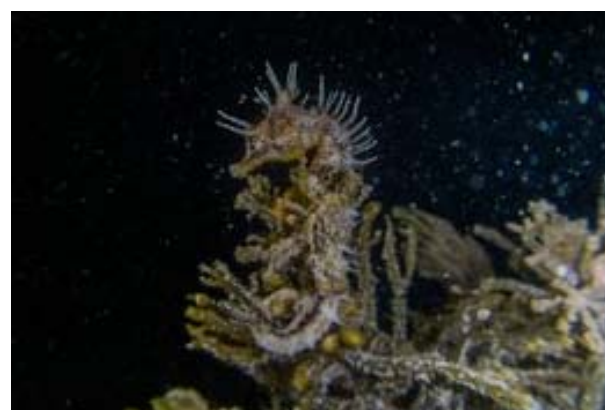
Then, I thought I'd see if there was an independent dive club in Adelaide. I stumbled upon a club called the "Sea Wolves", who have club meetings every Tuesday night. They made me feel particularly welcome at their meeting, and I even happened to win the raffle draw too. It felt like my luck was just not running out that week!

Only a day later, I found myself on a boat with Ben www.bensdive.com a keen diver from the Sea Wolves, off to explore a beauty of a wreck near Glenelg - The Dredge. It was only the second wreck I had dived, and this one was great: structurally well-preserved, yet fully covered by colourful marine life. I'm revising my opinion about wrecks now - they can be more than aquatic pollution, yes. Thanks Ben!!



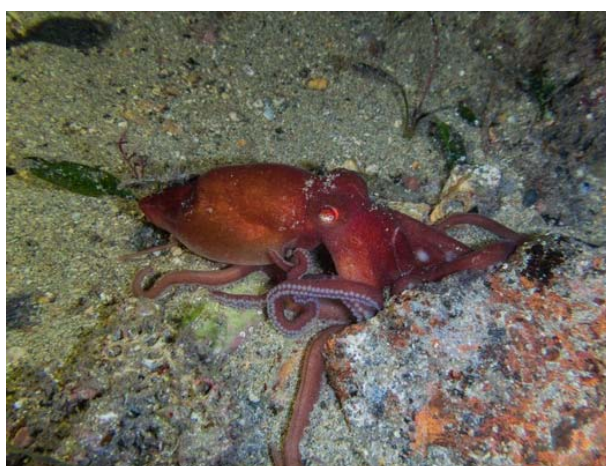
Also during that meeting, it was mentioned that people from BSAC Adelaide were headed for Edithburgh on the Yorke Peninsula that weekend, and that I'd be welcome to join them.

Gareth Morris (BSAC Adelaide) got in touch, and I was on my way further west once again. I had already developed a keen interest in jetty diving on the Mornington Peninsula (VIC), but seriously, the jetty at Edithburgh is something different! All sorts of marine life and each of my 9 dives was different: squid, octopus, nudibranchs, Port Jackson Sharks, Sand Octopus, Pyjama Squid, Bobtail Squid, a myriad of sea horses, and even a Leafy Seadragon.



In 13-14 degrees of water, doing three 90 minute dives per day for 3 days, does take it out of you. But what a weekend that was! I had not dived so intensively since my Divemaster

course. And once again, the people I met there were so welcoming and friendly. As for airfills, the BP service station in town does them, just make sure you give the man a bit of a warning if you are planning to turn up with a group of divers for the weekend.



Off to Whyalla next, finally. I arrived at the foreshore in Whyalla, and couldn't immediately see any dive-worthy spots. Google then taught me that the action is actually happening just outside Whyalla, at Point Lowly. And with action, I mean... ACTION! Each year, between May and August, there has been a massive gathering of Australian Giant Cuttlefish for breeding, except for the last few years it seems.



This year however, they have reappeared en masse, it seems. Perfect wind conditions, sunny weather and 20+m visibility in 13 degree water. Just what I needed to hang out with thousands of cuttlefish, for 2 hours each day. I just couldn't get enough of it for 5 days. Tony Bramley, from "Whydive" in Whyalla, gave me an incredible amount of information about these cuttlefish, and all the other dives I should be doing on the Eyre Peninsula.

Tony took a keen interest in how my dives were, and some of my pictures in particular.



There is no doubt left in my mind that Whydive is the friendliest dive shop in Australia, by a long shot. If only other dive shops could be so genuine! Absolutely world-class diving down in Whyalla too. I know it will sound like

I'm repeating myself, but it's simply spectacular to be immersed in a cuttlefish orgy! And if the cuttlefish aren't there, there's always the cute sea horses and Dumpling Squid in the Whyalla marina - regular night dives on Saturday night over there.



Now I've got one more dive to repeat down here - Tumby Bay. Allegedly four Leafy Seadragons to be found underneath this jetty at the moment. I went in for an hour already, but the visibility was only 30cm at the bottom. I did spot a nice seahorse, but that was about it... And then it's looking like I'll be doing "Dry July" until I hit Esperance in WA for the next part of my diving adventure. Stay tuned for the Chapter 3!

Special thanks to: Ian Scholey and Peter Beaumont (Victoria), two unnamed divers from the Gold coast for the Whyalla recommendation, Ben and Pat from the Sea Wolves (and everyone else I met at the Sea Wolves

meeting!), Gareth and Angela Morris from BSAC Adelaide for the mad keen diving at Edithburgh, and Tony Bramley, Teresa and Allan from Whyalla. I will be forever indebted to your kindness! Even better than the crazy diving I've been doing is meeting all these fantastic people all along my trip. ❖

Annual Fees now due

From Club Treasurer, Peter Galvin

\$80 for individuals and \$100 for families. You can pay by:

- 1) Transfer to the VSAG account:
BSB: 013322
Account: 938510327

If you go into a bank to pay this over the counter - please ensure you include your mobile number so I can identify who has paid. If you use someone else's account to send the money, again please identify yourself or send me an e-mail.

- 2) Bring cash or cheque to next Club Meeting.

- 3) Send Cheque to my address:

6 Dawsons Glen, Heathmont 3135

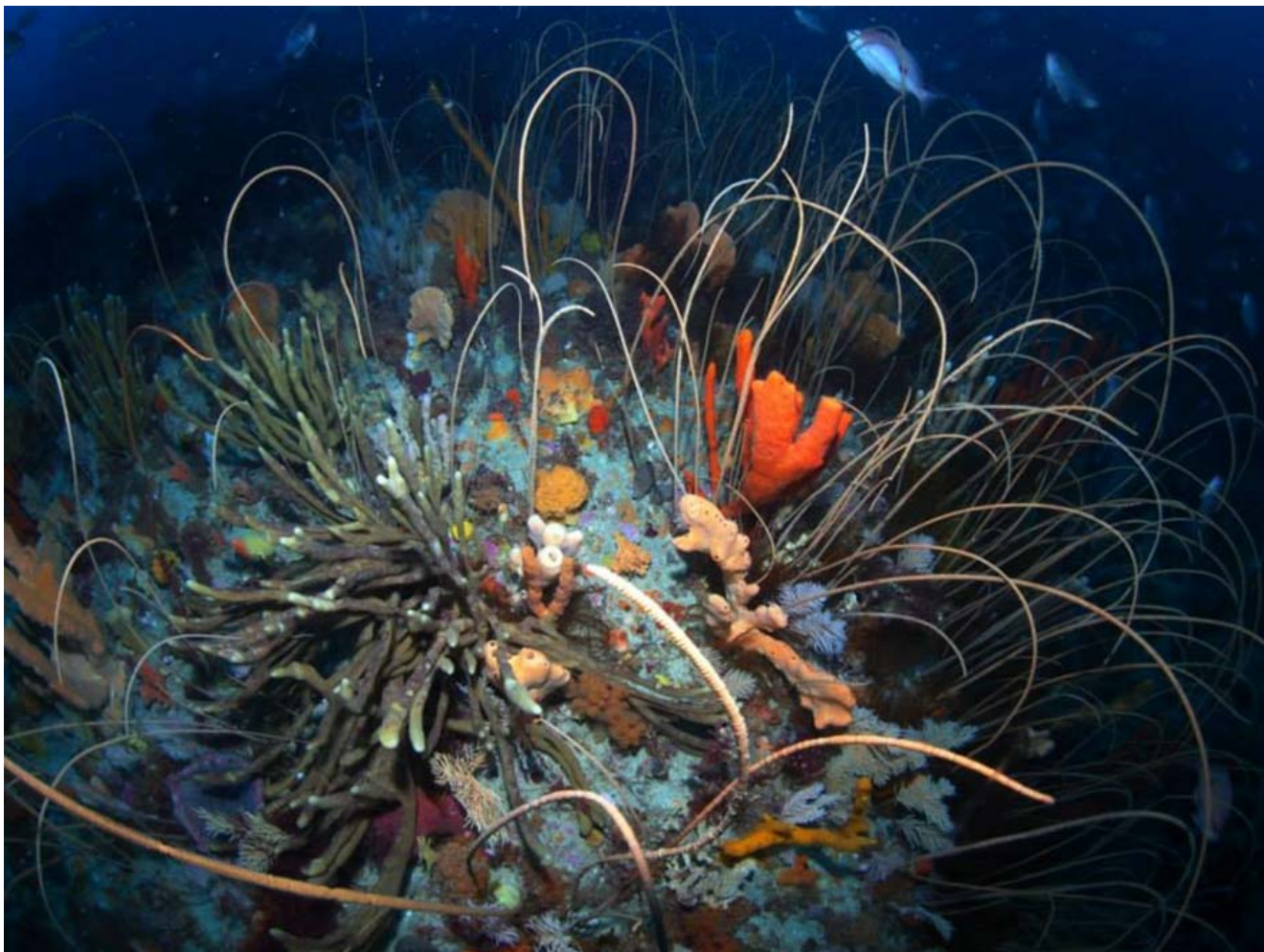
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

WINNER — MAY



Hannah Smeeton - A diver on the wreck of the Nagano Maru in Truk Lagoon

RUNNERS UP IN THE MAY PHOTO COMPETITION



2nd Place - Phil Watson - Sponge garden at Bicheno, Tasmania



As usual, the standard was high so well done to all the other entrants.

All the photos entered can be viewed on the VSAG website:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/vsag.divers/>



3rd Place - Phil Watson - Diver, Hui King Ho -amongst the kelp at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania

It's great to see more members getting out there with their cameras and entering the Photo Competition.

Keep up the good work!

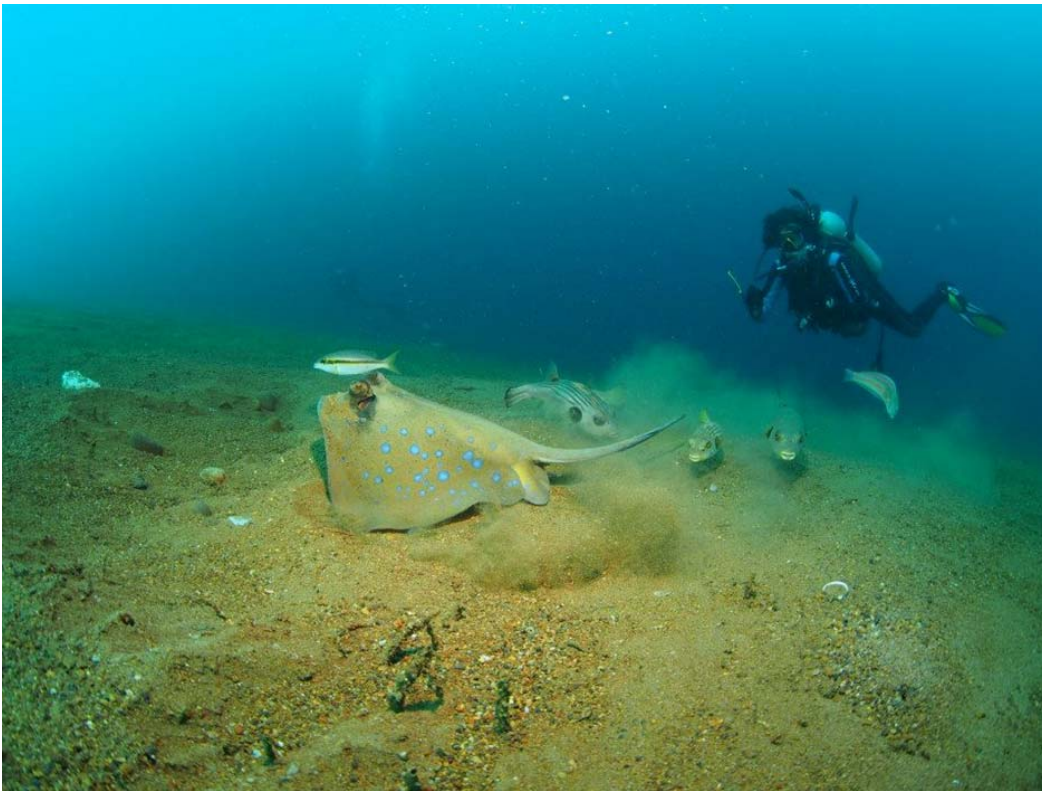


WINNER — JUNE



Something of a landslide vote saw **Carole Campisano** take out the June photo contest last night at the general meeting. Her shot of a Turtle taken at Nusa Lembongan, Bali was a popular choice and well deserved winner.

RUNNERS UP IN THE JUNE PHOTO COMPETITION



Tim Forster
Blue-Spotted
Stingray and
diver taken at
Anilao,
Philippines.

Equal 2nd

Carole Campisano
Moray Eel taken in
Bali.



RUNNERS UP IN THE JUNE PHOTO COMPETITION



3rd Place - Ian Scholey - Big-bellied Seahorse

Meeting Reports

June 2015

**VSAG CLUB MEMBER,
CHARMAINE ALFORD,
ON HER AMAZING
ADVENTURES ON
MACQUARIE ISLAND**



At our June Club Meeting, Charmaine Alford gave a presentation on her trips to Macquarie Island as a Communications Operator with the Australian Antarctic Division. She has recently returned from her 3rd trip to the island and has also been to Antarctica 4 times. Charmaine began her sea-going travels on the Young Endeavour when she was 16 and now works in Communications at the Port of Melbourne.



Travel to Macquarie Island departs from Hobart aboard the supply ship, *Aurora Australis*, which is managed by P & O and chartered for the summer by the Australian Antarctic Division. It usually takes 3 days to get

there and the round-trippers are mostly made up of marine scientists and biologists. Weather varies on these trips. Needless to say, the 4 helicopters on board are tied down very securely!



Macquarie Island is 35km x 5 km and is managed by Tasmanian Parks. It used to be used for sealing and penguin oil. In the past 3 years, rats, mice & rabbits have been eradicated by hunters and the natural vegetation & wildlife have regenerated. It is now a World Heritage Area.



All the buildings on the island have to blend in with the environment and consist of communications, work-

shops, heli-hangers, Tasmanian Parks buildings and living quarters. There is a surgery, gym and small living quarters with no privacy, but the food is fantastic. In winter, there are usually only 12 people stationed there.



All equipment has to be carried and walked in by people except for the heavy stuff that is choppered in. There are often 4 helicopters working at once.



Wildlife is everywhere - Gentoo Penguins that nest in the grass, King Penguins that are very curious, Elephant Seals that come in to moult & are not waterproof while this is happening, Rockhopper Penguins, Giant Petrels,

and of course, lots of young. Needless to say, there were lots of oohs & aahs from the audience when these photos were shown. ❖



King Penguin Photobomb!

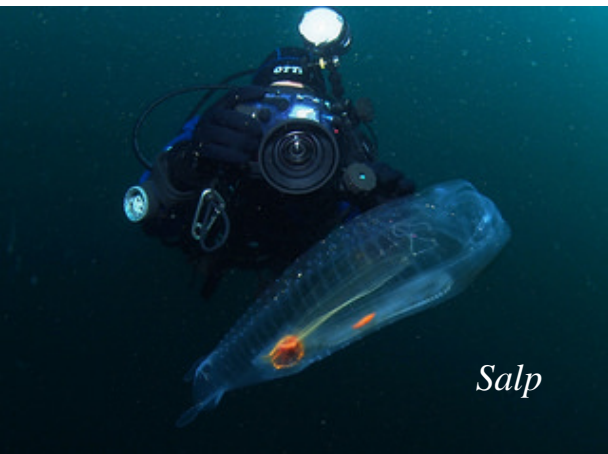
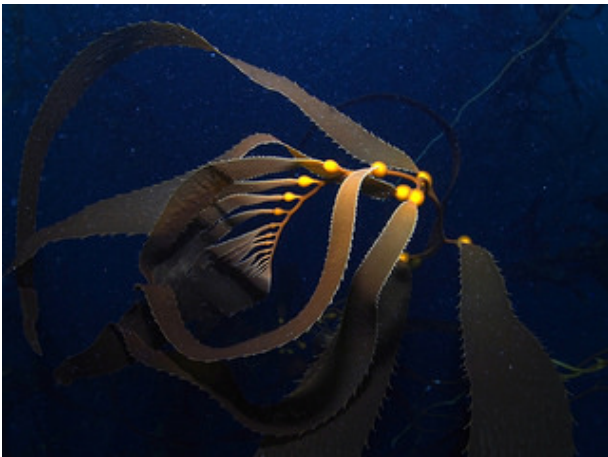


July 2015

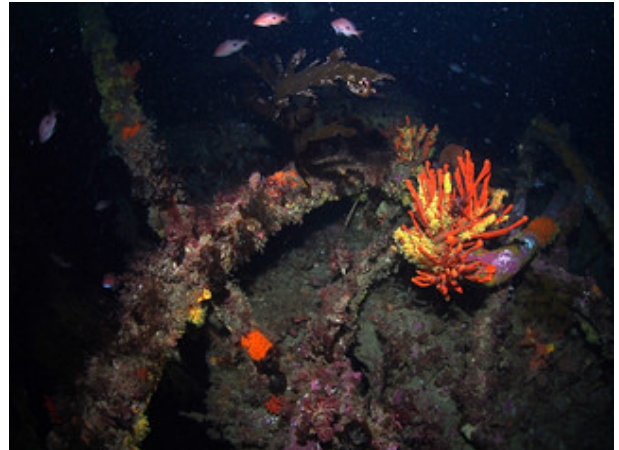
**VSAG CLUB MEMBER,
PHIL WATSON GAVE A
PRESENTATION OF HIS
PHOTOS FROM A
RECENT DIVE TRIP TO
TASMANIA.**



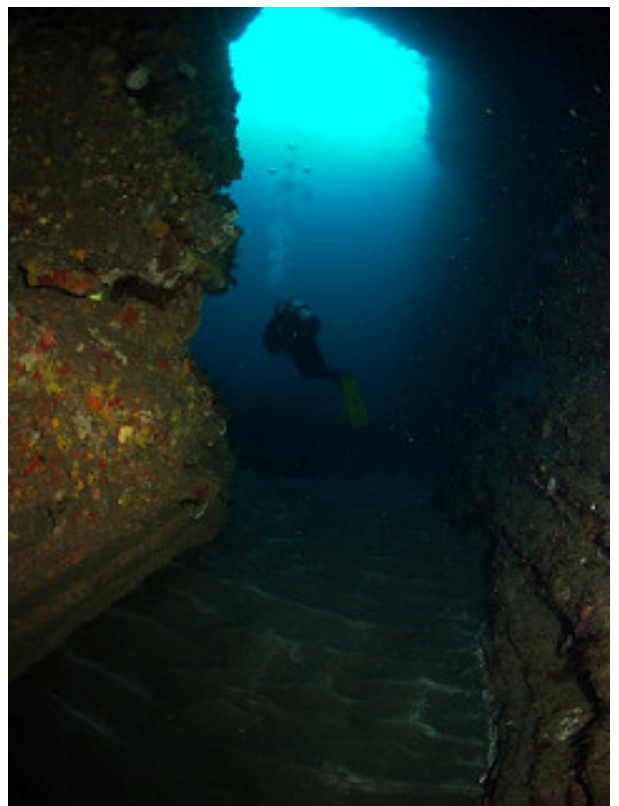
EAGLEHAWK - Kelp Forest



EAGLEHAWK - Wreck of the Nord



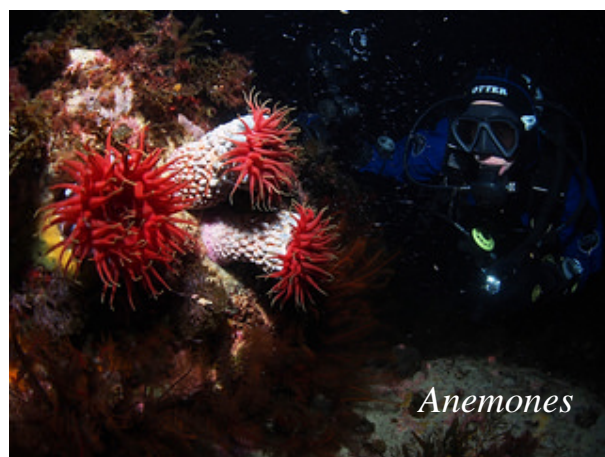
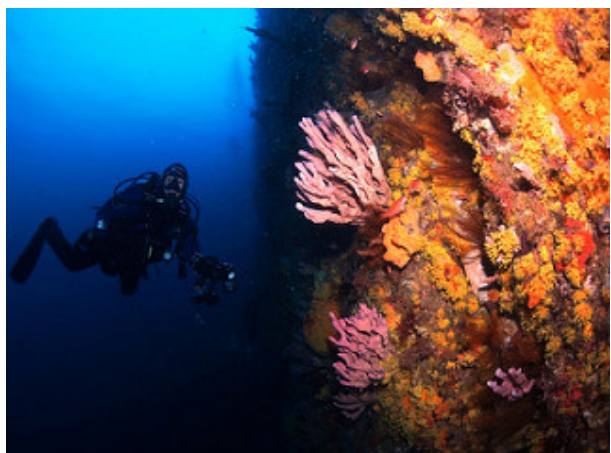
EAGLEHAWK - Sea Caves



EAGLEHAWK - Deep Glen Bay



BICHENO - Waubs Bay night dive



BICHENO

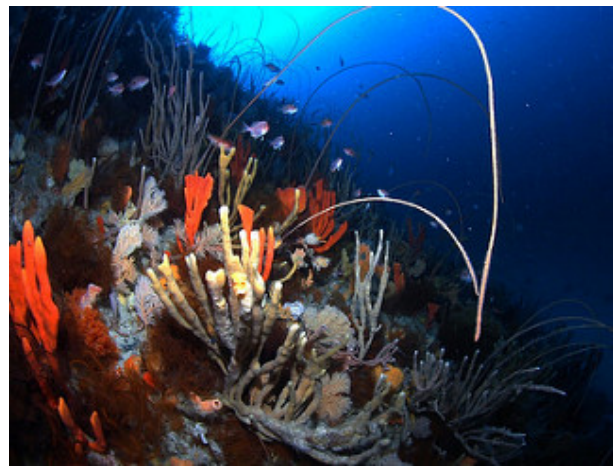


*Draughtboard
Shark*



Phyllopteryx

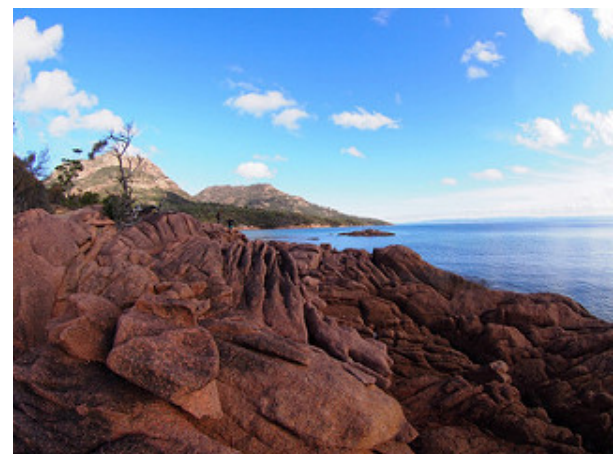
BICHENO - Golden Bommies



BICHENO - Sponge Gardens



FREYCINET PENINSULA





Jervis Bay NSW Trip September 2015

Last Minute Tassie Trip August 21-23

From Ian Scholey

Peter Beaumont and I were inspired by Phil Watson's presentation on Tassie diving at the last general meeting and will be heading down south to dive with Eaglehawk Dive Centre on the weekend 22/23 August.

A bit late I know but if anyone is interested in joining us then let me know. I will be flying out at 7.30pm on Friday 21st and back at 6.00am on 24th.

Email: ischoley@iinet.net.au

Mobile Phone: 0439 310 646

From Ian Scholey

As we will have the extra public holiday this year, we are considering trying to organise a Grand Final long weekend trip to Jervis Bay to go on the Ocean Trek Liveboard.

The trip departs at 9pm on the Friday evening and returns Sunday afternoon.

The cost is \$445 + a \$10 per day fuel levy and includes 6 dives and all meals.

At this stage I am looking for expressions of interest as we will only try to organise this if we can get sufficient interest.

If you are interested then please let me know ASAP.



Life Members Dinner

The VSAG Life Members' Annual Dinner was held on Friday 26th July at the Olive Tree Restaurant in South Melbourne. As can be seen in the photos, a good time was had by all.

Photos by John Lawler



Alex Talay & Mick Jeacle



Des Williams & Pat Reynolds



Peter Mathews & Frank Coustley



*Andy Mastrowicz, John Goulding
& Des Williams*



*Right: Alex Talay &
Mick Jeacle*



*Below: John Lawler & Andy
Mastrowicz*

Late Dive Cancellations

from Your Committee

Over recent months there have been several instances of club members booking in for dives and cancelling out at the last minute. Worse than this, we have also had instances of club members just not showing up for both dive days and a club event.

As you can imagine, this causes issues for those organising and participating in diving. At best it requires the dive captain to drop everything and try to find a replacement, while at worst it results in dive plans having to be changed, particularly when a boat licence holder is involved, due to compromised safety.

We have recently been forced into uncomfortable decisions between cancelling diving, leaving boats unattended or solo diving by inconsiderate members and this can't continue.

If you are not a 100% starter then please do not put yourself on diving or event lists. We understand that on occasions, circumstances change unavoidably.

In such circumstances please contact the Dive Captain as soon as possible. If the cancellation is within 24 hours then please contact via telephone (Dive Captains mobile numbers can

be found in Fathoms). Cancellations further out than 24 hours can be made via email.

Please remember that we are not a commercial operator, we are a dive club, and it is other members who are inconvenienced and left out of pocket when they are not treated with common courtesy.

As a committee we will be left with no choice other than to take action against members who cannot comply with this request.

We would also like to remind members of the importance of a gear check before loading gear onto boats.

Although other members are usually happy to help out with loaning of forgotten or malfunctioning equipment, it is something that we should be able to avoid with good pre-dive practices. ❖



TRANSPORT SAFETY VICTORIA

The following is included as a part of the Transport Safety Victoria's

Boating Safety News Bulletin just released. Please read on.

Are you a boater who uses a VHF marine radio in Australian Territorial Waters (within 12 nautical miles of the coast)?

You'll soon be able to apply for a more appropriate marine radio qualification from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) - the Australian Waters Qualification (AWQ).

All marine radio users (except those operating 27 MHz maritime radio stations) must be qualified, and boaters have to obtain a Certificate of Proficiency or an equivalent overseas qualification. It is expected that the AWQ will give a more streamlined option to relevant boaters. Once the AWQ is included in the Maritime

Class Licence, this new qualification will give boaters a better choice of appropriate marine radio qualifications. It is expected that this change to the law will occur by 30 July 2015.

In the meantime, ACMA's internationally recognised marine radio qualifications—the Marine Radio Operator Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP) and Marine Radio Operator VHF Certificate of Proficiency (MROVCP) have had a name change. Now known as the Long-Range Operator Certificate of Proficiency (formerly MROCP) and Short-Range Operator Certificate of Proficiency (formerly MROVCP), these certificates remain unchanged and are issued for life.

So, if you already have one of these qualifications, you don't need to do anything. However, if you're looking to get qualified and you operate a VHF marine radio only within 12 nautical miles of the coast, the AWQ qualification may be easier, cheaper and quicker to obtain. ❖



A Timely Reminder

written by John Ashley

Last summer, not that I'm an eavesdropper or anything, I overheard two divers talking about their recent dive and how it wasn't worth the money they had been charged.

It was a private club and not VSAG. I had no choice but to listen to the story as the conversation took place in the toilets at the Portsea Pier park and I was stuck in the cubical.

It seems that on this day the Viz was terrible and the private dive boats too small. Now the way I see it, these divers didn't pay for a dive, they actually paid for the boat ride, the dives were actually free.

I suppose if you don't want to spend the money, then try shore diving the Subs or maybe the Pinnacle even, but in all reality that's not possible.

This is a timely reminder of what other people bring to our club. The great photos and videos that we see on Facebook and in Fathoms don't just happen, people spend a lot of time, effort and money on cameras to bring us these shots.

The lifeline of our club are the boats - no boats make for a very boring dive club. Spare a thought for a minute of how much these guys have spent on their boats so we can go diving. It's actually very reasonable what we contribute and remember when we're having that Sunday night beer, these guys are still cleaning and washing their boats. ❖



Sunken Slave Ship, South Africa

by Herb Epstein

I started scuba diving in South Africa in 1971 (where I came from). By the time I emigrated to OZ in 1987, I had over 1000 dives logged, all across South Africa and Mozambique, and a few in the COLD ATLANTIC off Namibia (NO dry suits back then!!) Namibia is on the west coast, north of South Africa, and south of Angola.

In the seventies I lived in the suburb of Camps Bay, Cape Town, literally ON THE BEACH - an area known to be the "resting place" of over 600 wrecks, most registered in maritime ship registers of the Dutch East India Company as well as the Dept of Antiquities of South Africa. The earliest recorded wreck in that area (the Bay of the Cape of Good Hope) dates back to circa 1487.

Being keen and fit back then, I averaged four dives a week, mostly over weekends - wow that seems "a lifetime ago".

This past weekend I was reading the New York Times and came across an article that caught my eye - of my

local dive site that I had frequented many times. I found some odd, broken but interesting relics lying strewn on the ocean floor at this site, especially after the frequent violent storms that plague the region. These relics were reminders of the Dutch East Indiaman Ships that plied their way around the tip of Africa from Europe, enroute to the Dutch colonies in Java, present day Indonesia etc., LONG before the Suez canal came into existence.

Grim History Traced in Sunken Slave Ship Found Off South Africa

By HELENE COOPER
MAY 31, 2015

On Dec. 3, 1794, a Portuguese slave ship left Mozambique, on the east coast of Africa, for what was to be a 7,000-mile voyage to Maranhão, Brazil, and the sugar plantations that awaited its cargo of black men and women.

Shackled in the ship's hold were between 400 and 500 slaves, pressed flesh to flesh with their backs on the floor. With the exception of daily breaks to exercise, the slaves were to spend the bulk of the estimated four-

month journey from the Indian Ocean across the vast South Atlantic in the dark of the hold.



The Portuguese fort of Sao Louenco off Mozambique Island. The island was one of the main ports for the slave trade during colonial times.

In the end, their journey lasted only 24 days. Buffeted by strong winds, the ship, the *São José Paquete Africa*, rounded the treacherous Cape of Good Hope and came apart violently on two reefs not far from Cape Town and only 100 yards from shore, but in deep, turbulent water. The Portuguese captain, crew and half of the slaves survived. An estimated 212 slaves did not, and perished in the sea.

On Tuesday, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, along with the Iziko Museums of South Africa, the Slave Wrecks Project, and other partners, will announce in Cape Town that the remnants of the *São José* have been found, right where the ship went down, in full view of Lion's Head

Mountain. It is the first time, researchers involved in the project say, that the wreckage of a slaving ship that went down with slaves aboard has been recovered.



Underwater archaeology researchers explore the location of the wreck near the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

The story of the *São José*, like the slave trade itself, spanned continents and oceans, from fishing villages in Africa to sheikhdoms where powerful chiefs plotted with European traders to traffic in human beings to work on plantations in the New World. Fittingly, the discovery of the *São José* also encompassed continents and oceans. Divers from the United States joined divers in South Africa, while museum curators in Africa, Europe and the Americas pored through old ship manifests looking for clues.

In the end, the breakthrough that the shipwreck was of a vessel that had been carrying slaves came from something unexpected, the iron blocks of

ballasts that were used to offset the weight of slaves in the hold.



Iron blocks of ballasts recovered from the wreck of the São José, a Portuguese slave ship, on which they were used to offset the weight of the human cargo.

To read the rest of the story you can find it by following the link below:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/01/world/africa/tortuous-history-traced-in-sunken-slave-ship-found-off-south-africa.html?fb_ref=Default&r=0#

and CNN has it on the news too:

http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/01/africa/portuguese-slave-ship/index.html?fb_action_ids=382456891949809&fb_action_types=og.shares



I dived that VERY SITE in 1978 thru to 1982 as a shore dive - a short 20 minute swim to its location off a popular beach - not knowing EXACTLY what the wreck was OR ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (and collecting a few artifacts from the wreck too - that were lying on the ocean floor after storms).

Here is what one on my dive buddies wrote recently. . .

Right under our noses...

This nails me in the gut as I was one of the first to hold in my own hands the cannonballs set into this dreadful ship - that I pried out of the crevasse without realizing its significance....

I can't believe that we were diving this wreck in the late seventies, without knowing what it was!!

As you might remember, I lived directly opposite this spot when, in the mid 70's, another friend of mine found and registered this shipwreck. Nobody knew what it was - just cannon, cannon balls, nails and conglomerate on the bedrock that occasionally got exposed from under sand when conditions were right.

When he found it, Francios swore me to secrecy for some months until the registration process was complete. During this time we dived it a few times.

When registration came through, the authorities identified the ship as a late 19th Century coal barge doing rounds between Simonstown and Table Bay.... A very odd coal barge, I remember thinking - with the cannons and cannon balls we were finding.

Ironically, Francios was obsessed with finding wrecks and had, 3 years earlier, hauled me off during our matric June 1980 school holidays to the National Archives in the city centre where we'd pour over old shipwreck accounts.

I remember us identifying a slave ship from that period that was thought to have gone down in Camps Bay - the next bay over from this site. My mind wondered as to the misery of being chained in the hold as the ship foundered onto reefs in a storm. Little did we know that within a thousand days, he'd inadvertently find the very wreck and not realize it!

It wasn't so much a wreck, but rather (when the conditions were just right to denude the bedrock of sand) a jumble of cannons, nails, cannon balls, beams and other odds and ends in conglomerate rock. Indeed, it was just behind our favourite surf break off our favourite beach.

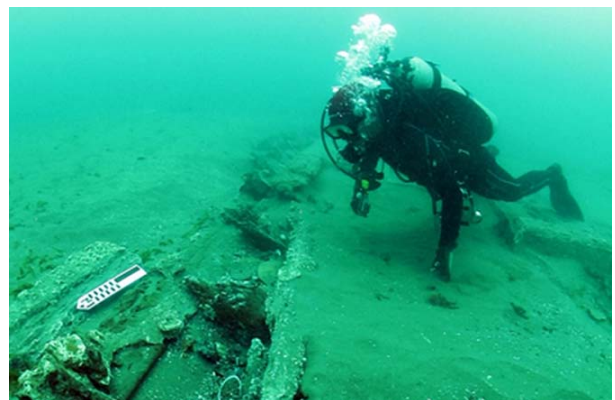
I took a few cannon balls and nails out, and these lay in our garden and

eventually got left behind when we sold our home and moved from Clifton. I even helped Francois take out an old iron cannon that we lifted on airbags and rowed with the dingy to a spot where we could battle up the beach with it.

So... Wow!!!

I can only imagine the terror - this site sits in the break line of the infamous 'far reef' that only a handful of us ever surfed. I often told people that there was a wreck out there, and people thought I was nuts. Then, earlier this year, I saw the diving boat working the site and swam out to chat to them - they were very tight lipped about what they were up to.

It was always the most extraordinary feeling to hold a cannon ball in my hands that very different hands had laid in the hold ahead of the voyage - it is stunning now to realize the wider significance of those artifacts. Sickening, really. ❖



A diver on the wreck of the São José

Dive Reports

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY LONG WEEKEND, 2015

Ian Scholey



On the way to Queenscliff for the VSAG weekend of diving. Weather gods allowing of course

June 7th, 2015

We knew it would be more challenging today but we still got our dives in. The Rip was beautiful but the swell had picked up outside and with 30 knots blowing we decided discretion was the better part of valour and came back inside after a quick look and see.

David Geekie and Christine Reynolds enjoyed slack water on the wall while Walter Medanbach and I had to settle for Cottage By the Sea. With winds gusting above 30 knots we then decided to head back into Queenscliff. We endured a few big waves around Shortlands Bluff but all good in the



end. We couldn't believe our eyes back at the ramp with boats still pulling up to launch. ❖

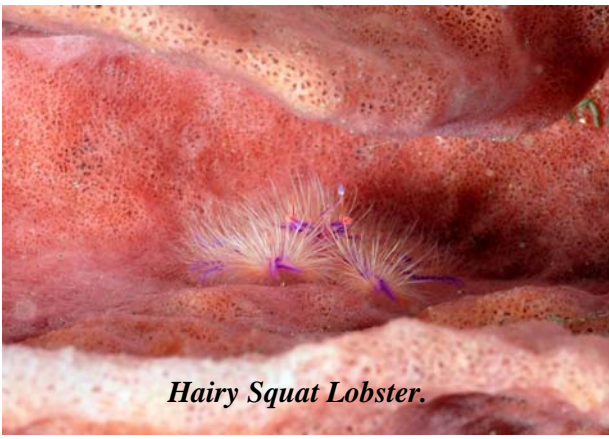
THE PHILIPPINES

July, 2015

David Reinhard

There is heaps of stuff for macro photography in the Dauin region of the Philippines. Staying at the magnificent Atmosphere Resort.

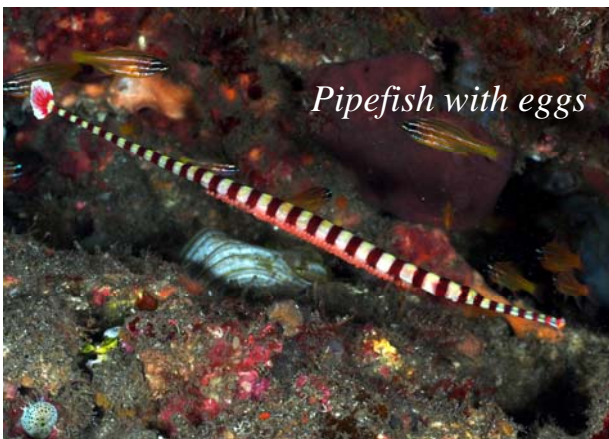




Hairy Squat Lobster.



The cutest and smallest cuttlefish I have seen.



Pipefish with eggs

Had some nice dives for our first day of boat diving here in the Philippines. There are lots of small and unusual critters in this area.



Had a great day snorkelling with whale sharks. This was the first time I have seen whale sharks so I can now tick them off my wish list of marine creatures I want to see.





I enjoyed the first dive so much that I went back in about an hour later for a second dive at the same site.



Banded Sea Krait

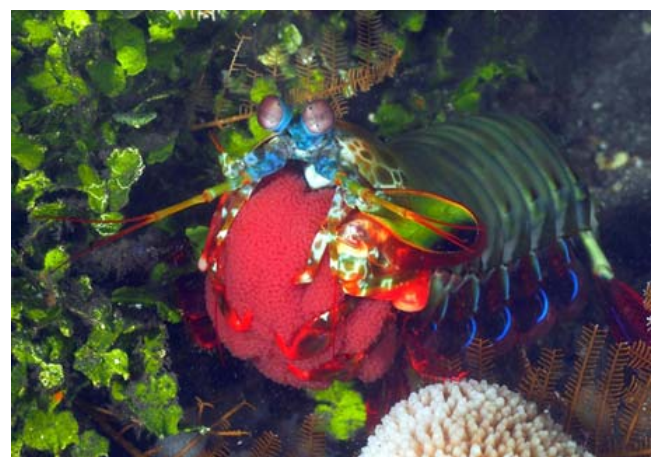


Frog Fish walking across the sand



A few more photos taken on the House Reef at our resort. We are being plagued by bad weather which has limited our diving options but fortunately the House Reef is excellent. We had a large school of barracuda, a school of jacks and a school of large batfish accompanying us. There were a number of sea snakes around, some lionfish and a very cute yellow frogfish.

A mantis shrimp with eggs was a great find and a shot that most underwater photographers seek. Also found some mating nudibranchs (they are hermaphrodites) and a cute frogfish.



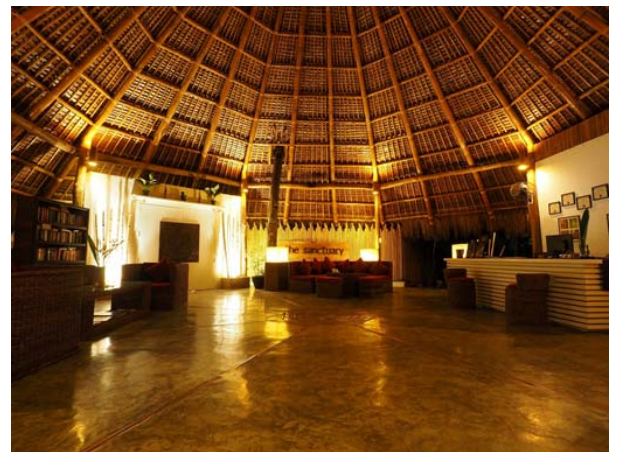
Lionfish



The wonderful Atmosphere Resort in the Philippines at night. The food at this place is to die for and I reckon there would be very few restaurants in Melbourne that could provide such an extensive menu. We had two special nights while we were there in which they set up some fantastic dining on the beach.



The spa facility known as The Sanctuary is magnificent and it is hard to beat for a great relaxation massage, or one of their many other offerings.



The staff at Atmosphere Resort just can't do enough for you...a great place for a family and diving holiday. ❖



David with his family - daughters Sarah & Emily and wife, Liz.

PHILLIP ISLAND

Saturday, 14th June 2015

By Graham Ellis ; photos by David Politakis, John Lawler, Ian Scholey & Phil Watson

Crews for the day were:

Toucans – Peter Beaumont and Ian Scholey

Signature 2 - David Geekie, Pam Dagle, Deb Serginson and Phil Watson

Bar Crusher – David Politakis, John Lawler and Graham Ellis

The initial indications for this weekend's diving were poor despite low winds, low swells and no rain for the lead up to the weekend – how does that work? Reports on the day before at Port Phillip Heads was of visibility of 5 metres.

Despite all of this, the three crews met at Newhaven and were all launched and on the water by 8.45 am. At Cape Woolamai we were met with low swells, the sun struggling to break through the cloud cover and still very low in the sky wherever it was.

The crews of Toucan and Bar Crusher headed off to a site which we hadn't dived before about 2 km south of Pyramid Rock while Signature 2 headed to dive the George Kermode where Phil Watson had been spectacularly

unsuccessful in missing out on the last times he had ventured down to the "Island".

Peter and Ian were into the water very soon after setting an anchor on the new site. David and I were in shortly after with John helming Bar Crusher. We had just descended to about 5 metres after entering the water and as usual I hadn't switched the camera on or folded the strobe arm out. This was to be proven as a mistake because we were greeted by a Mako shark as it swam in twice to have a look at us both. These sharks can only be described as very sleek and silvery compared to most of the sharks we get to see. Lesson learnt - always have your camera at the ready.



David Politakis & Graham Ellis in the dark

The dive site started at about 22m depth and then went down to about 35m at the base of the bommie. With the sun at such a low angle it was like doing a night dive starting in dusk with torches a must. David and I



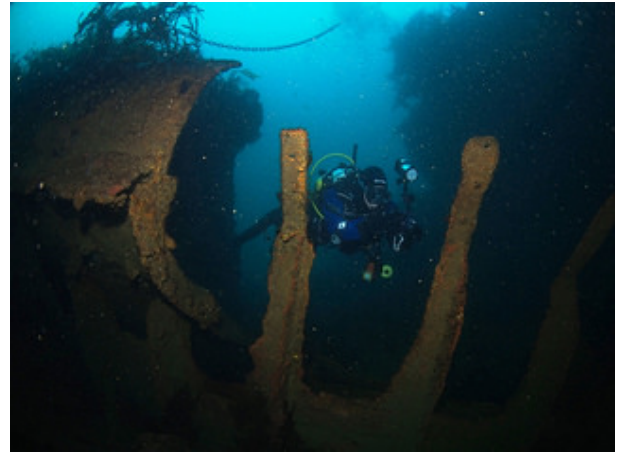
Peter Beaumont and camera at the ready

© Ian Scholey

swam around the site with the limited time we had to see if there was anything which was stand-out-spectacular or to talk about for the next few years but didn't find anything. The site is quite large and would need a lot of exploring which is not easy if you are at the base of the bommie, limiting bottom time.

The critters, growth etc are very similar to what is found on the pinnacles closer to Cape Woolamai. This site still deserves more exploration and I can see many repeat dives here.

The Signature crew all had good dives on George Kermode with substantial fish life which always goes hand in hand with this dive site.



Above: George Kermode photos by Phil Watson

For the second dives, Signature 2 moved over to the The Pinnacles and BarCrusher to Pyramid Rock to dive Crack Cave. David being the great host he is, set up the BBQ and cooked some lunch for the lucky BarCrusher

crew while we gassed off some nitrogen before the next dive.



Who wouldn't be smiling in conditions like these?

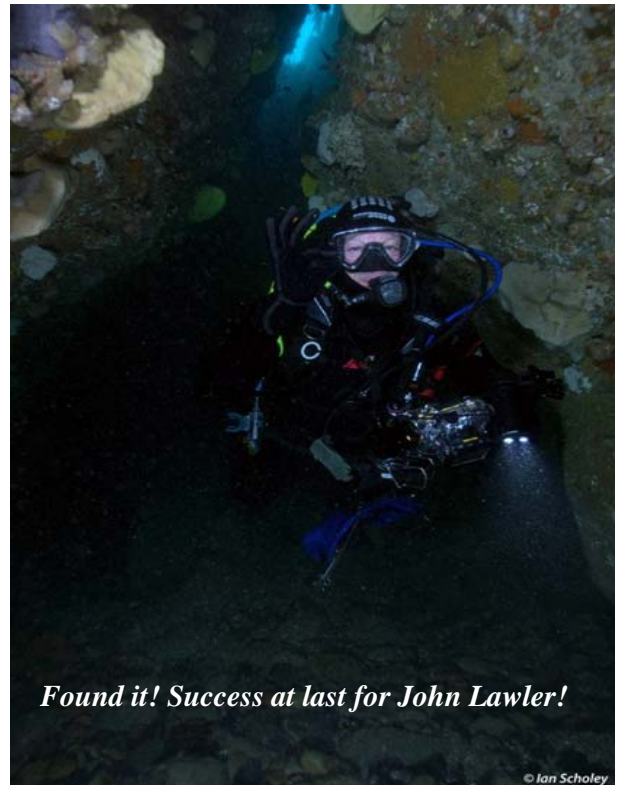
Once lunch was complete, we set up for the next dive. Ian dropped Peter in on the site and Peter then commenced his dive to confirm the cave entrance position with his DSMB which John Lawler dropped a shot line on. The shot line position was adjusted by Peter at the end of his dive. After Peter exited the water, a dive team of Ian, John and myself entered the water in an attempt for John to finally dive crack cave.



Peter Beaumont on the shot line

John is sure that the cave entrance keeps moving because he has been attempting to dive this site since

March 2011 and has had many goes at it.



Found it! Success at last for John Lawler!



Crack Cave from the inside



John Lawler following Ian Scholey into Crack Cave

© Ian Scholey

Success at last for John as Ian disappeared into the cave with John following and myself following John. This whole site is very similar to Wilson's Prom with the large boulders and spectacular terrain but not as extensive as the Prom. It is a good site which for me has much more area to explore further away from the cave. It has great fish life as well as lots of other critters of which some people



Boarfish

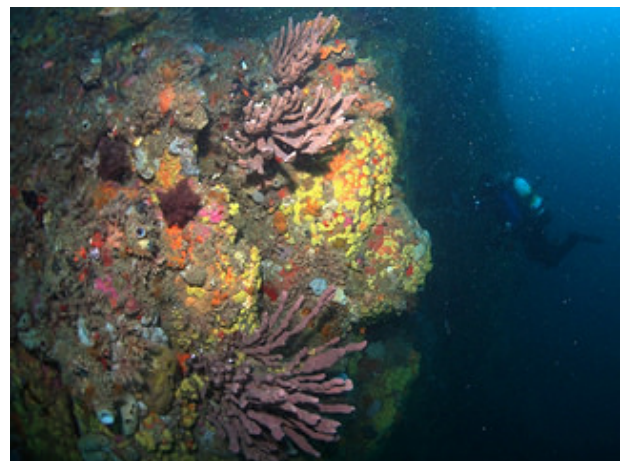
© Ian Scholey

keep putting in catch bags or just carrying them around the rest of the dive with them.



Ian Scholey with his catch on Peter Beaumont's Toucans

We all finished our dive and headed back to Newhaven passing Signature 2 who had their second crew down on the Pinnacles. (See Phil Watson's photos below - Ed.)





Signature 2 had a second great dive on the Pinnacles and we all met back at Newhaven for coffees and sustenance.

The success of this dive day could be measured highly on the fact that:

- * Phil got to dive the George Kermode
- * John Lawler finally got to dive Crack Cave after his 109th attempt
- * Ian caught a cray with his usual hunter gatherer equipment – massive camera and no catch bag
- * David Politakis and Graham Ellis got to see a Mako
- * A new dive site was explored
- * The vis was at least 10 metres despite the poorer 5 metre vis around the heads. ❖



Happy divers - John Lawler, Graham Ellis & David Politakis

THE SS KAKARIKI & THE VULTEE VENGEANCE PLANE WRECK

Sunday, 5th July 2015

report by John Ashley ; photos Phil Watson, John Lawler & Ian Scholey

It was a surprise to find myself diving on Sunday as the weather on Saturday was terrible. However, never say never when it comes to VSAG.



L-R: Owen Green, David Geekie, Phil Watson & Deb Serginson



L-R: John Ashley, Andrew Gyoper, Ian Smith, Ian Scholey & John Lawler

On Sunday, VSAG had two boats in the water with 9 very hardy (well 8 hardy divers plus me) leaving the Altona boat ramp for our first dive on the wreck of The SS Kakariki. The water

visibility was so clear that we saw the wreck from the boat in 6 metres of water and as most divers know, that is almost unheard of in the top end of the bay - 2 metres is more the norm.

The Kakariki was an 887ton steel steam ship on its way from Tasmania to Melbourne and was rammed and sank with a loss of 5 lives. There were many unsuccessful attempts to salvage the ship, but in the end it was dynamited. The remains are scattered over a large area and are lying flat on the sea bed.



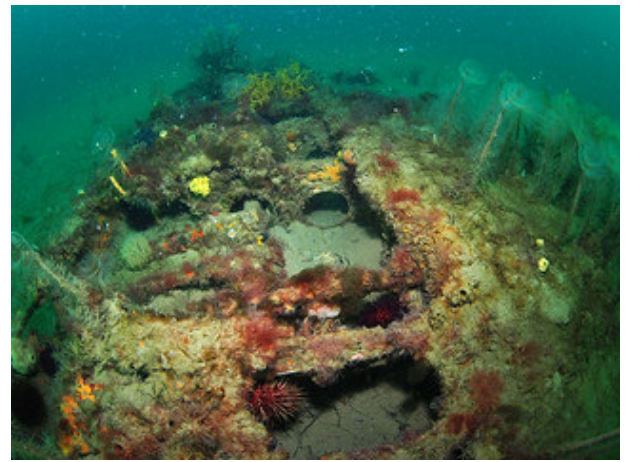
Ian Scholey at the beginning of the check-out dive with Andrew Gyoper (left) on the Kakariki

Lots of photos were taken and some of these are on the VSAG Facebook site. The divers who took these photos did a great job and we can be thankful that we have such talent in our club.

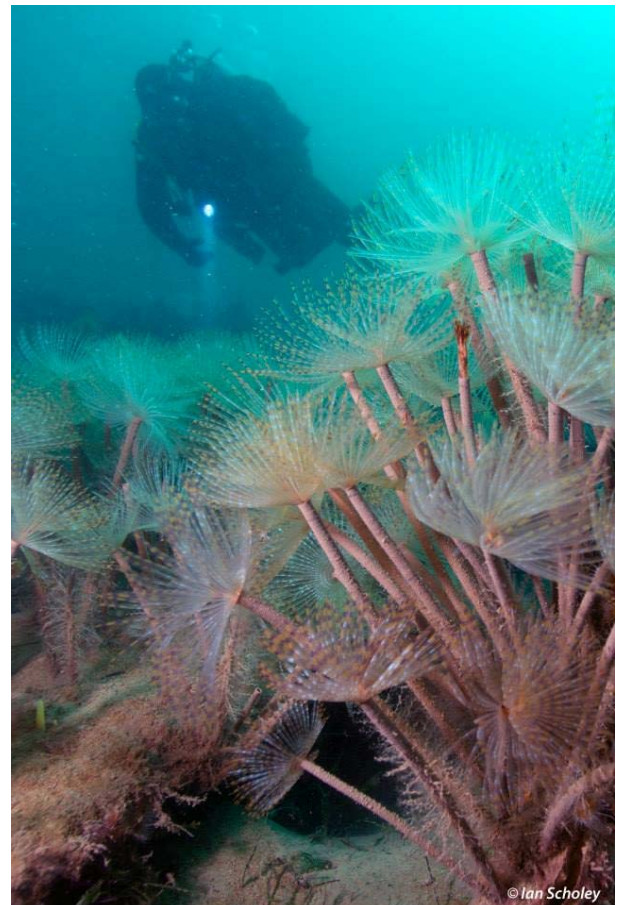




After a brief lunch break it was off to dive a plane wreck, something a bit different. This wreck is the remains of a Vultee Vengeance, originally a WW2 dive bomber. After the war these planes were used for such purposes as towing targets for gunnery practice. This particular plane got into trouble and ditched into the water just off Williamstown, however it has been moved to deeper water and sunk in about 10 metres.



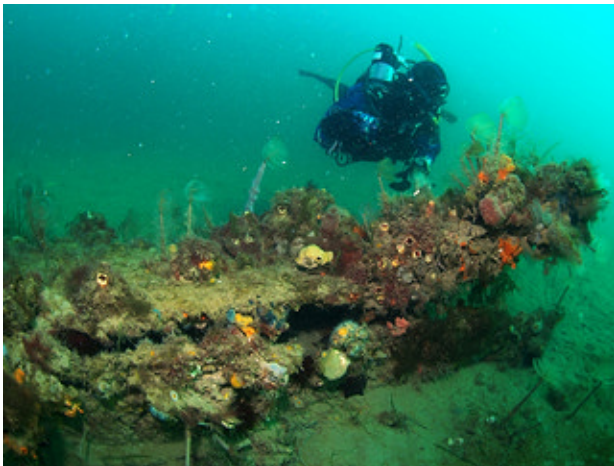
The only part of the plane we dived on was one of the wings and there was some further wreckage, possibly part of the tail, about 50 meters away. I'm sure the rest of the plane wasn't too far away. Once again the cameras were clicking away and some of these photos can once again be seen on our Facebook site. We estimate the visibility to be about 15 metres which surprised us all.





It was a great day's diving despite the temperature of the water which only just managed to break 10 degrees. A big thank you to the boat owners, photographers and Phil Watson for his information regarding these wrecks. ❖

**See also article & photos on pages 54 & 55*



GOLDEN ARCH & J4

Sunday, 19th July 2015

report by Andrew Quested ; photos by Andrew Quested, John Lawler, Simone Lee

On **Signature One**: John Lawler, Herb Mackay, Simone Lee, Ian Smith, Andrew Quested

On **Sea Eagle**: Ian Scholey, Michael Ngai

On **Toucans**: Peter Beaumont, John Ashley



L-R: Herb Mackay, Ian Smith, Simone Lee, John Lawler & Andrew Quested with Signature One

The morning of the 19th of July was the coldest Melbourne has experienced for 18 years. To make sure we didn't miss out on such a rare event, I and seven other questionably sensible VSAG members decided to get out of bed early, scrape ice off the

windows of our cars and head out for a dive. Driving to Sorrento my car told me that it was 1.5 degrees outside. It would have been warmer in the fridge.

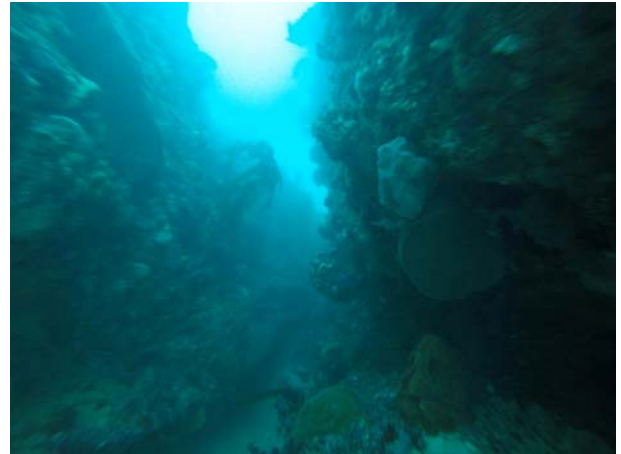


Ian Scholey & Michael Ngai with Sea Eagle

We all headed out to a ‘new’ dive site – the Golden Arch. It’s outside and west of the heads, and shares topography with many of the other dive sites in that region. Blobs of rocks wrestle a presence from a sandy sea floor, providing plenty of interesting formations. The arch itself is exactly as described – an arch. It’s goldenness comes from its coating of yellow zoanthids. The arch is big enough to swim through, and its bases nestle into rock formations that hunker over ledges that hide things that like to hide. Like crays, and blue devils.

Leading up to the arch on one side is a long rock gully, and it too offers many nooks and crannies into which you can shine your light and find all sorts of

eyes looking back at you. The blue devils we saw here were quite spectacular, iridescent as always, but really quite solid. These were big blueys.



Atmospheric ledges at Golden Arch

It was a big thumb’s up from me for the Golden Arch, and the other divers all also enjoyed it. As if to pay us back for braving the cold morning, the water was calm, the sky was blue, and the sun was shining. Relaxing on the boat while other divers were under was sublime. It was one of those days that was just great to be on the water. A nearby seal offered us a high-five. Or was it just sunning its flipper?



Calm seas off Signature One

The second site for the day was the J4. While we managed to drop the shot line not far from the wreck, we all managed to descend and then swim off in the wrong direction. Ian and Michael had the good sense to unroll a line as they swam off in the wrong direction, thereby enabling them to swim back and have another go and find the wreck. I was with Simone who was kind enough to allow me to lead as we swam off in the wrong direction without good sense, without a line, without a clue.

I can't report on the wreck as we didn't find it. But we did come across a ledge with a generous undercut that housed what I can only call a nest of Port Jackson sharks. I don't know what the collective noun for Port Jacksons is. A pyjama party?



It was one of those situations where you'd see one, and then follow it to another, and another, and then to a cavern crammed with them. All gently dozing, wafting their gills, looking serene. I always want to stroke them. They look to me like they're made out

of sandpaper. So while we missed the J4, we were pleased with our dive.



Overall, visibility was moderate at best, but despite the chilly morning we had a very enjoyable day on, and under, the water. ❖

Flinders Pier Shore Dive

Sunday, 26th July 2015

report by Walter Madenbach ; photos Owen Green

Some months ago I responded to the call for shore dive captains. Although I have only been diving for a shade under two years, it was time to help out. The date for the first dive had been chosen months in advance. Unfortunately the winds for most of the week leading to the day were strong. Winds of 25 knots or more gusting up to 40 knots, north to north west tending to west in the morning. Some chance of hail and even thunderstorms

were mentioned. Now, hail when in the water I can handle but thunderstorms conjure up lighting, and lightning and water don't mix. So number one rule for our morning was, if lightning was a possibility then diving was out.

I had read that during winter the water is clearest closer to the heads so I planned to dive the peninsula. Jeremy van der Beek, who responded to the first call, was good with all sites except Flinders. The last time he was there it was not diveable. That suited me as I had the same experience during a proposed VSAG dive there in similar conditions. After the boat diving was cancelled, Owen Green, Peter Beaumont and Ian Scholey expressed their interest in a shore dive.

On Saturday the forecast was still the same. This wasn't good for visibility at Blairgowrie, so the dive was now to be at Flinders. Understandably Jeremy pulled out. Peter said that he had dived Flinders that morning and the visibility was 15 to 20 metres. He would look at Blairgowrie in the morning. Ian was doing Blairgowrie as the Nudibranchs were calling.

I was nearing Flinders in the morning when Peter called. Blairgowrie was diveable though I suspect the visibility would not be great. This was good

news for the Blairgowrie boys. Reaching the Flinders parking lot, I was relieved - although the sky was overcast, there was no wind and the water was near flat. This promised to be a good dive.

The careful equipment check the previous evening was to no avail. Owen picked up that my BCD inflator hose was missing. I had done something similar at the VSAG Queenscliff long weekend. Then, even worse, I had "lost" both my dive computer and torch in a BCD cavity before our first Queenscliff dive. Only to have them reappear when moving my BCD at the end of the last diving day. Gone were my hopes of a new colourful OLED dive computer, but at least my dive log would be accurate as the computer surreptitiously participated in all dives. Maybe it wasn't so bad.

No inflator hose, no problem. Thankfully Owen is a man of experience and is quick to point out opportunity. I would be able to practise oral inflation in a safe environment. This was how it was done in the old days. No need to get the inflator hose from my car.

This was to be a day of much learning. At Flinders I have always entered the water via the beach. Owen had always used the pier. We walked to the pier, me with visions of jumping

off at some point. Imagine my surprise when reaching the first landing off the wooden pier, seeing stairs down to a second landing which was actually a metre underwater due to the high tide. We could don our masks and fins here and actually swim off the landing. The return was the same, except using the landing off the concrete pier on the other side. There we could swim on top of the landing. As Owen said, the best entry and exit points of any shore dive site.

Around 08:30 am Owen swam off the landing and I followed. Visibility was good, 15 to 20 metres. I had no difficulty in seeing my buddy during the dive. Heading towards the end of the pier, it was not long before Owen found the first weedy sea dragon above the sea grass bed. This was a large beastie. A little further away I found a smaller and poorer looking dragon. Throughout the dive, around twenty weedies were spotted. Flinders lived up to its reputation.



We dove the pier for 45 minutes with a maximum depth of around 5 metres and a temperature of 11C. I saw what looked to be a group of juvenile female Sixspine Leatherjackets. There were some greenish looking fish that may have been juvenile males. Owen pointed out a school of whiting but I am not sure what type they were.



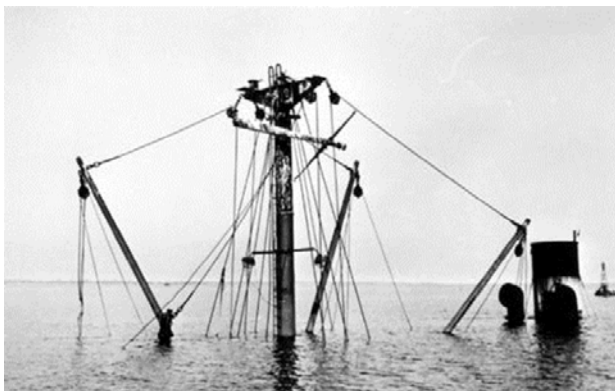
I have made a note to myself to get a small camera to help with identifying the marine life. The accompanying photos are from a previous dive that Owen did here in similar conditions though not as overcast. He showed me the soft coral that looks like a brain made of big jelly beans. He has never seen this creature anywhere else. My efforts to find it on the internet was fruitless. Maybe someone can help out? ❖

SS Kakariki Wreck



On the night of 29 January 1937 the SS Kakariki collided with the SS Caradale off the Gelibrand Pile Light in Hobson's Bay, Port Phillip. The Court of Marine Enquiry lay the blame for the collision on Kakariki

The Kakariki sank almost immediately, drowning five of her crew. Later salvage operations were hampered by the vessel being stuck in four metres of mud. Eventually, like many other wrecks, the boat was blown up . ❖



*The last of the steel steamer the Kakariki.
Photo from The Age*

Vultee Vengeance Wreck

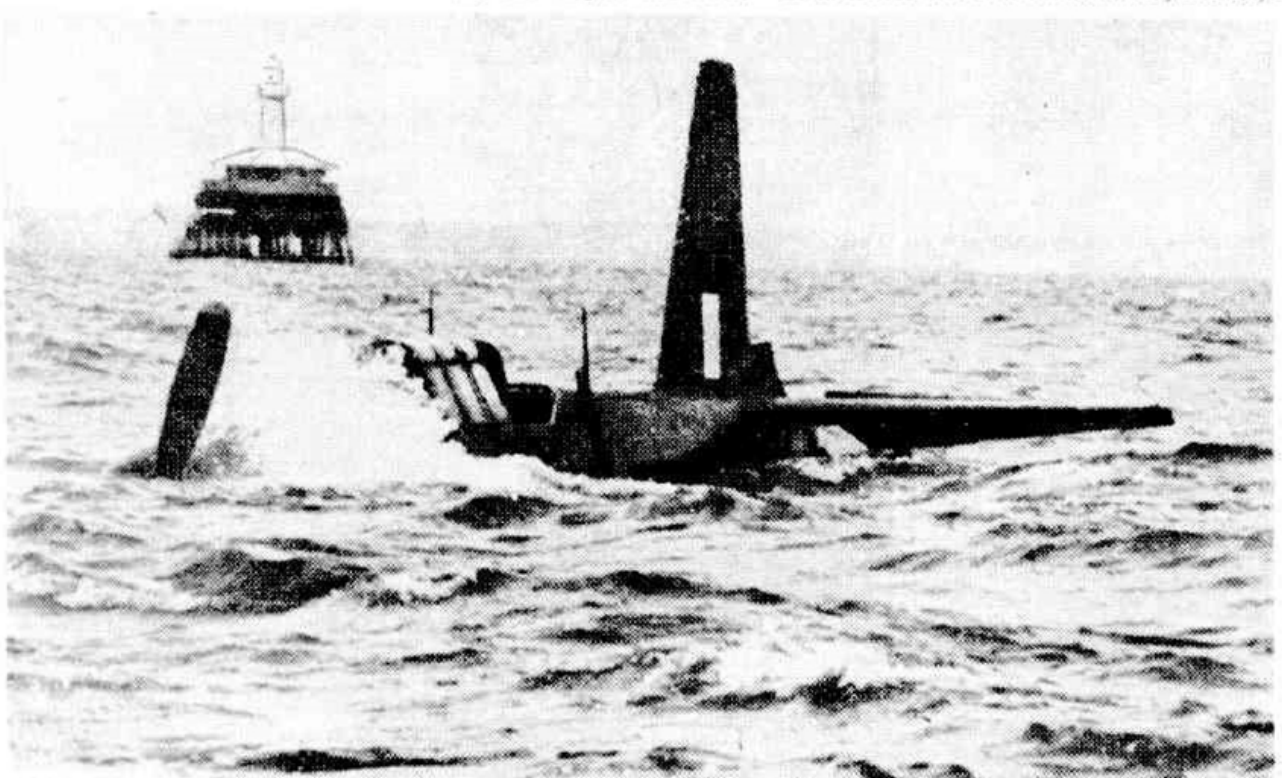


On the 6 March 1946, a Vultee Vengeance with pilot Warrant Officer F.O. Knudson from South Australia and observer, Warrant Officer L.R. Wastell of Northcote, Victoria, was towing a target for gunnery practice at the Point Cook Airbase.

While flying over St Kilda the plane got into some difficulties and it was forced to make a near perfect belly landing at Williamstown until it ran into some rocks. Knudson was later admitted to hospital with slight head injuries. ❖



*Photo taken in 1946 by 17yr old Alfred Price.
Emailed to MAAV July 2010, by Mr. Shane Collisson*



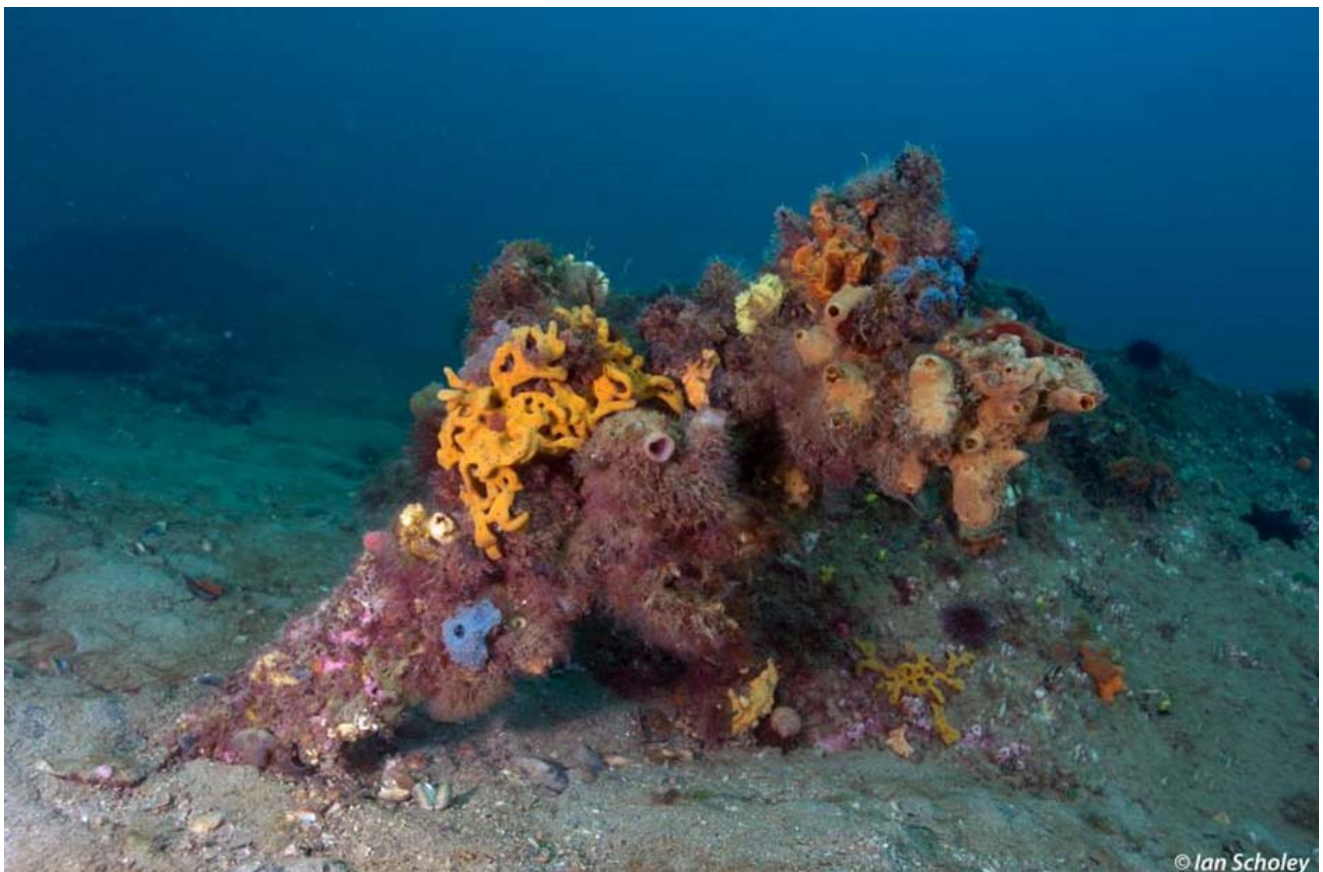
CRASH-LANDING ON ROCKS in the sea off Williamstown cricket ground, this RAAF Vultee Vengeance dive bomber was abandoned by the pilot and observer, who waded ashore. The pilot, WO F. O. Knudson, was injured about the face, but the observer, WO L. R. Wastell, escaped with a shaking.

Photo that appeared in the "Argus" - Thursday, 6th March, 1946

Further information can be found on

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~maav/vultee.htm>.

<http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/shipwrecks/heritage/3>



SS Coolidge's Boris the Groper

from John Lawler

For those VSAG divers who have dived the US Navy's WWII warship, the President Coolidge off Santo, this will be of interest.



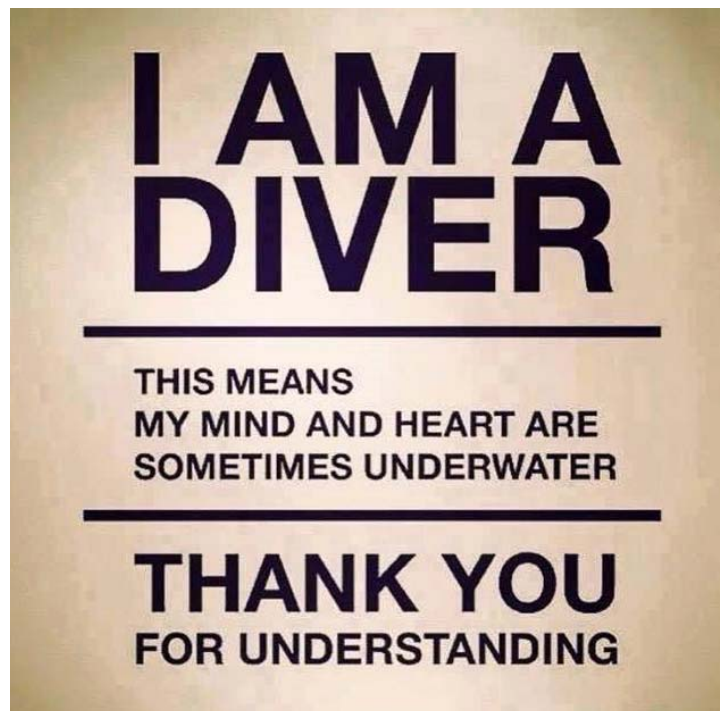
Wildlife photographer Andy Belcher was awarded the "British Natural History Museum's" 1997 Wildlife Photographer of the Year for his "captivating image" of the resident giant Groper "Boris".

The story goes that when Andy encountered the giant 400KG leviathan, Boris saw his own reflection in Andy's camera housing. Andy thought he was going to swallow it!! and had to back-up to focus the lens.

"After we finished our dives on the Coolidge we would off gas at the shallow reef garden, up from the bow,

mainly built up over the years by Alan Power and a succession of divers. It was there that we generally had Boris come to visit. Boris really was a gentle giant...but he was huge!"

Sadly, it was noted quite some time back now, that Boris had disappeared from the wreck site. ❖



DIVING THE WEB



Spider Crab moulting shell then eaten by stingray

Watch this AMAZING video of a spider crab moulting its shell, only to be devoured by a massive stingray! Filmed at Blairgowrie Pier

<https://youtu.be/fi54VaGo8og>

Landline : What lies beneath

Exploring spectacular underground caves in South Australian farmland

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2015/s4258867.htm>



Exploring Egypt's Underwater Oases

Alexander the Great believed that Egyptian desert springs — oases that sheltered mystical oracles who would confirm his divinity, and his destiny — were connected underground. An international team of technical divers braves the Arab Spring to retrace his footsteps and test his theory.



<http://www.scubadiving.com/advanced-adventure-exploring-egypts-underwater-oases?image=0>

DIVE SNIPPETS

Nusa Lembongan

June 2015

Peter & Carole Campisano have been diving in Bali

Photos by Carole



View from accommodation



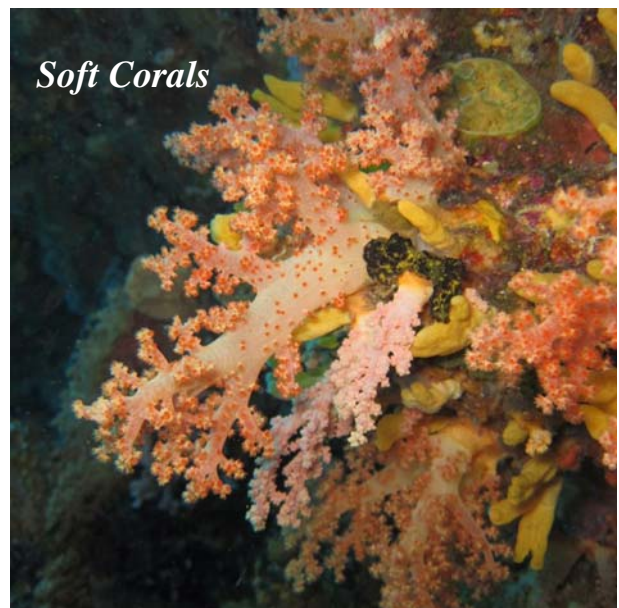
Leafy Scorpion Fish



Lionfish



HUGE Moray Eel



Soft Corals



Mr. Nemo getting annoyed that Louise Campisagno was hanging around his home



Blairgowrie

June 16th, 2015

Hannah Smeeton

My first chance to dive with the Spider crabs as all other years I have missed out for one reason or another. A chilly 12 degrees but a huge grin on my face! Spider crabs are just the most incredible critters!!! ❖



Night Dive, Mornington Pier

June 19th, 2015

Ian Scholey

Just Peter Beaumont and I diving last night. Not quite sure why, but it always seems to rain when I dive at Mornington. That said, last night the vis was absolutely spectacular, rain or no rain. I think the site is getting better each time I dive it with the growth, colour and life slowly coming back after the works. The water was a chilly 12 degrees but we toughed it out for an hour and a quarter. ❖





Phillip Island

21st June, 2015

Ian Scholey

Another fantastic day at Phillip Island today with two boats out and about.

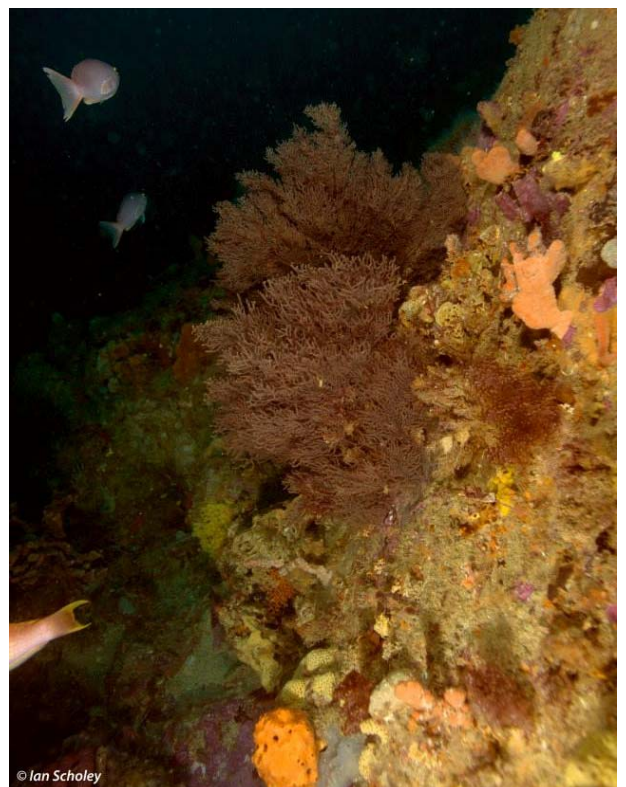
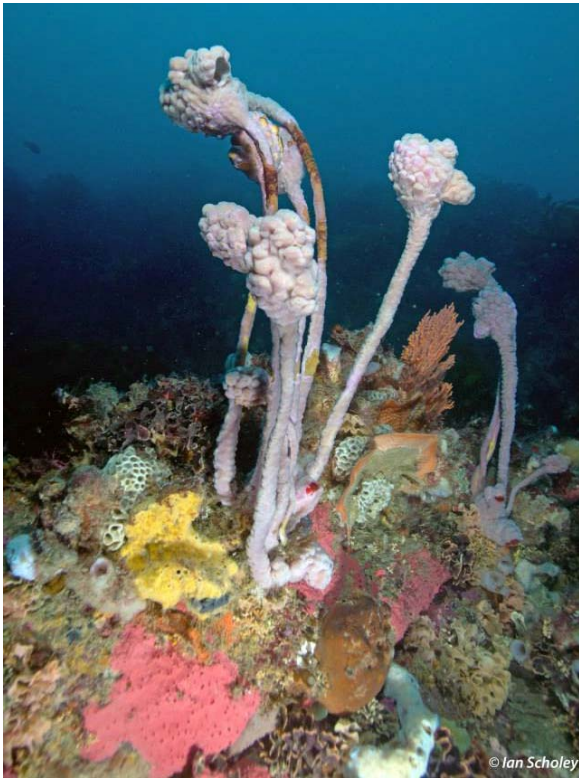
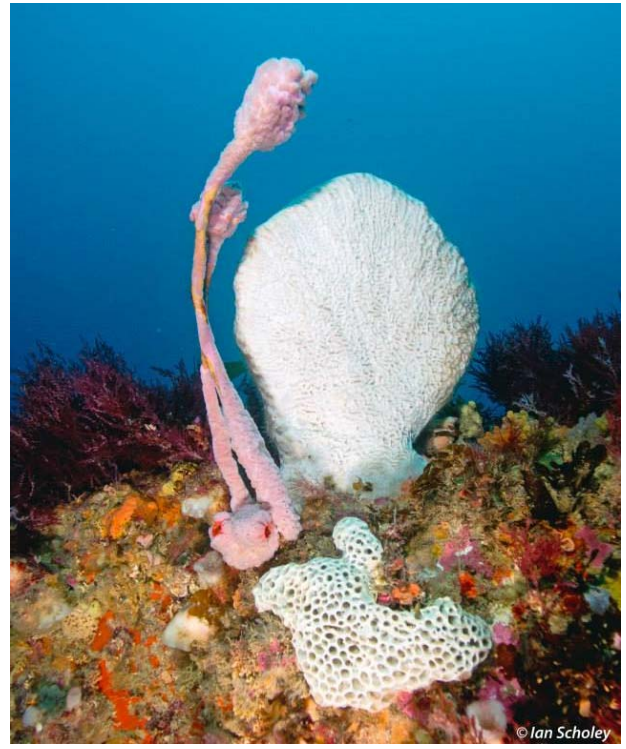


On Sea Eagle - myself and Peter Beaumont
On Signature One - John Lawler, Graham Ellis, Greg Richards and Ian Smith



For me it was a couple of deeper dives with further exploration of last week's new site Golden Bommie and a trip to the bottom of The Pinnacle. Cape

Woolamai, Crack Cave and The George Kermode were also dived by various crew members. Whales were spotted on the trip down today which was good. ❖





*Greg Richards having a nap aboard
Signature One*

The Hurricane

Sunday, 28th June 2015

Ian Scholey

On **Sea Eagle** were Ian Scholey and Peter Beaumont.

On **Signature Two** were David Geekie, Michael Ngai, Greg Richards and Mark Scoberg

After three weeks in a row outside, the swell was forecast to be up this week so we stuck in the bay today.

Signature Two opted for a later start and slack on the Wall while Sea Eagle started at first light and headed to the Hurricane.

Now I know that I often wax lyrical



about the dives I do but today was right up there. I have dived the Hurricane a lot of times but I have never seen visibility on the Hurricane like there was today. From the top of the shot line you could see about two

thirds of the wreck site - vis must have been 20m. Between us we found 3 Cuttlefish, 2 Goblinfish, Seahorses and just about every type of reef fish there is to see in the bay. After an hour and a half first dive we went back down for another hour and a quarter. A sublime day. ❖





Blairgowrie Night Dive

Friday, 3rd July 2015

Ian Scholey

Diving were just myself and Peter Beaumont.

A very nice dive last night, if a little chilly. We saw the full gambit of Blairgowrie critters. The remnants of the spider crabs are still there. The sea floor is littered with the shed skins and the crabs were mostly on the pylons, hiding from the rays .

There seems to be a bit of an explosion of Short-headed Sea Horses and the shallows were full of tiny Toadfish. As usual PB found a Tassled Anglerfish while I returned the favour with a Stargazer. ❖





Blairgowrie Shore Dive

Sunday, 12th July 2015

Ian Scholey

A day for die-hards, just Peter Beaumont and myself braved the rain for a dive this morning. Despite the rain, conditions were good.

A slug hunt kind of a dive for me resulted in a happy two hour dive. To say I was cold at the end of it would be an understatement!! However the winter Nudi's seem to have arrived which is what I have been waiting for. A couple of new ones for me today which was good. ❖



This one was about 4mm long





Night Dive, Blairgowrie

17th July, 2015

Ian Scholey

A two hour splash in 10 degrees last night at Blairgowrie. Just Peter Beaumont and I braved the cold. Sad to report that the works looks like it's going to impact diving, for a while at least, with the vis absolutely stuffed last night. Staying as much as I could in the clearer water of the shallows I still managed to find plenty of interesting life. ❖





eyesight largely failed me with nothing too out of the ordinary found. Peter B found four Tassled Anglers and we both found Giant Cuttlefish in different locations. ❖

**See Walter's dive report on Page 51*



Blairgowrie Shore Dive

Sunday, 26th July 2015

Ian Scholey

We had two groups of shore divers out today. Peter Beaumont and I headed to a wind swept Blairgowrie while Walter Medanbach and the main group opted for a more sheltered Flinders.

Blairgowrie is changing every time I return as the work continues at pace. Fortunately it doesn't seem to be affecting the life although it certainly makes the dive a bit like an obstacle course.

I was looking for small Nudi's but my



Blairgowrie Shore Dive

Sunday, 2nd August 2015

Ian Scholey

Great dive this morning. I think everyone else headed to Flinders so Peter Beaumont and I had the place all to ourselves. As usual I went on a slug hunt while Peter headed off to search for Anglers. A big school of Salmon was circling around in the shallows. As usual the critters were out in force and there were enough Nudi's to keep me happy for 2 1/2 hours - sorry for the late breakfast Pete. ❖



National Geographic Live Oceans Wild

Thursday October 29th @ 8pm

Arts Centre, Melbourne

Ticket Prices:
\$29-\$59

Dive deep into the world's oceans with one of National Geographic's most seasoned photographers. Watch as Brian Skerry's images illuminate the vast, hidden world beneath the waves.



Brian has spent more than 10,000 hours underwater using his camera to tell the story of some of the ocean's most elusive inhabitants. His mission: to enlighten and inspire people to care about the beauty, bounty, and health of the world's oceans.

Often Brian's office is icy, predator-infested water and his uniform a 7mm neoprene wetsuit. Some may see this as inhibiting, but he consistently delivers thought-provoking and captivating images that offer a unique and intimate portrait of the creatures from the deep, and draws attention to the large number of issues that endanger



their existence.

Join him live on stage for an intimate look at dolphins' intelligence, hang out with the endearing Arctic harp seal, and circumnavigate the globe in search of the world's most endangered whale.

Brian is a passionate spokesman for the oceans he loves to photograph. His riveting presentations inspire reverence for the marine realm, and most of all, they offer hope for protecting the vitality of the world's oceans.

A number of VSAGers already have tickets to this event.

If you would like to join them, book at The Arts Centre, Melbourne.

[https://
www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/
whats-on/forum-talk/ocean-wild?](https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/whats-on/forum-talk/ocean-wild?)

VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar

by Graham Ellis, Dive Calendar Coordinator, 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 e-mail address.

You are required to call the Dive Captain between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. the evening prior to the dive day to confirm that you will still be coming on the dive.

Aug 1/2	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Aug 8/9	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Aug 15/16	DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Aug 18	General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm
Aug 22/23	Boat Dive DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Aug 29/30	Boat Dive DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192
Sep 5/6	DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725
Sep 12/13	DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192
Sep 19/20	DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Sep 22	General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm
Sep 26/27	DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Oct 3/4	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Oct 10/11	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Oct 17/18	DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Oct 20	General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm
Oct 24/25	DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Oct 31/1	DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725
Nov 7/8	DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192

Tidal Streams at the Heads — August 2015

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.

August						
MON 3	TUE 4	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7	SAT 8	SUN 9
3:52	4:53	0:13	1:01	1:50	2:39	3:29
10:47	11:35	5:51	6:48	7:46	8:45	9:46
17:12	17:49	12:20	13:04	13:46	14:29	15:13
23:24		18:26	19:03	19:41	20:21	21:03
MON 10	TUE 11	WED 12	THU 13	FRI 14	SAT 15	SUN 16
4:20	5:16	6:16	7:20	1:05	2:14	3:15
10:50	11:58	13:09	14:15	8:22	9:17	10:05
16:04	17:05	18:26	19:55	15:12	15:58	16:36
21:52	22:48	23:54		21:07	22:02	22:46
MON 17	TUE 18	WED 19	THU 20	FRI 21	SAT 22	SUN 23
4:07	4:52	5:33	0:30	1:02	1:35	2:10
10:47	11:23	11:56	6:12	6:50	7:30	8:13
17:08	17:35	18:01	12:27	12:57	13:27	13:58
23:23	23:57		18:26	18:52	19:20	19:48
MON 24	TUE 25	WED 26	THU 27	FRI 28	SAT 29	SUN 30
2:47	3:27	4:13	5:09	6:16	0:03	1:26
9:00	9:53	10:55	12:05	13:16	7:29	8:38
14:31	15:07	15:53	16:59	18:31	14:19	15:11
20:20	20:56	21:42	22:44		20:02	21:11
August	September					
MON 31	TUE 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5	SUN 6
2:42	3:51	4:52	5:48	0:39	1:26	2:13
9:39	10:33	11:21	12:07	6:43	7:36	8:30
15:56	16:37	17:16	17:55	12:51	13:33	14:15
22:09	23:01	23:51		18:34	19:15	19:57

Tidal Streams at the Heads — September 2015

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.

Times have been adjusted for Daylight Savings

August	September					
MON 31	TUE 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5	SUN 6
<i>2:42</i>	<i>3:51</i>	<i>4:52</i>	<i>5:48</i>	0:39	1:26	2:13
9:39	10:33	11:21	12:07	6:43	7:36	8:30
<i>15:56</i>	<i>16:37</i>	<i>17:16</i>	<i>17:55</i>	12:51	13:33	14:15
22:09	23:01	23:51		18:34	19:15	19:57
MON 7	TUE 8	WED 9	THU 10	FRI 11	SAT 12	SUN 13
3:01	3:49	4:41	5:40	6:47	<i>0:57</i>	<i>2:09</i>
<i>9:25</i>	<i>10:22</i>	<i>11:23</i>	<i>12:29</i>	<i>13:35</i>	7:55	8:56
14:59	15:47	16:46	18:04	19:31	<i>14:33</i>	<i>15:19</i>
<i>20:42</i>	<i>21:32</i>	<i>22:32</i>	<i>23:41</i>		20:41	21:33
MON 14	TUE 15	WED 16	THU 17	FRI 18	SAT 19	SUN 20
<i>3:10</i>	<i>4:00</i>	<i>4:42</i>	<i>5:20</i>	<i>5:56</i>	0:26	0:59
9:46	10:28	11:04	11:37	12:08	<i>6:31</i>	<i>7:08</i>
<i>15:56</i>	<i>16:27</i>	<i>16:54</i>	<i>17:20</i>	<i>17:47</i>	12:39	13:09
22:15	22:50	23:23	23:55		<i>18:15</i>	<i>18:44</i>
MON 21	TUE 22	WED 23	THU 24	FRI 25	SAT 26	SUN 27
1:32	2:08	2:48	3:33	4:28	5:36	6:57
<i>7:48</i>	<i>8:30</i>	<i>9:18</i>	<i>10:12</i>	<i>11:14</i>	<i>12:21</i>	<i>13:26</i>
13:41	14:13	14:50	15:36	16:41	18:08	19:36
<i>19:15</i>	<i>19:49</i>	<i>20:28</i>	<i>21:20</i>	<i>22:32</i>	<i>23:58</i>	

Tidal Streams at the Heads — October 2015

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.

Times have been adjusted for Daylight Savings

September			October			
<i>MON 28</i>	<i>TUE 29</i>	<i>WED 30</i>	<i>THU 1</i>	<i>FRI 2</i>	<i>SAT 3</i>	<i>SUN 4</i>
1:25	2:44	3:51	4:49	5:42	0:13	0:59
8:15	9:21	10:17	11:07	11:53	6:32	8:21
14:23	15:12	15:57	16:41	17:23	12:37	14:20
20:46	21:45	22:37	23:26		18:06	19:50
<i>MON 5</i>	<i>TUE 6</i>	<i>WED 7</i>	<i>THU 8</i>	<i>FRI 9</i>	<i>SAT 10</i>	<i>SUN 11</i>
2:44	3:29	4:13	5:00	5:54	0:30	1:50
9:09	9:57	10:46	11:38	12:36	7:00	8:16
15:02	15:46	16:34	17:31	18:42	13:37	14:34
20:35	21:22	22:15	23:17		20:00	21:06
<i>MON 12</i>	<i>TUE 13</i>	<i>WED 14</i>	<i>THU 15</i>	<i>FRI 16</i>	<i>SAT 17</i>	<i>SUN 18</i>
3:03	4:03	4:50	5:30	6:06	0:20	0:53
9:26	10:22	11:06	11:45	12:20	6:40	7:15
15:23	16:03	16:38	17:09	17:40	12:52	13:24
21:56	22:37	23:14	23:48		18:11	18:43
<i>MON 19</i>	<i>TUE 20</i>	<i>WED 21</i>	<i>THU 22</i>	<i>FRI 23</i>	<i>SAT 24</i>	<i>SUN 25</i>
1:26	2:00	2:37	3:16	4:01	4:54	6:01
7:50	8:28	9:07	9:49	10:35	11:28	12:28
13:56	14:29	15:04	15:44	16:33	17:37	18:55
19:15	19:49	20:27	21:14	22:14	23:32	
October						Nov
<i>MON 26</i>	<i>TUE 27</i>	<i>WED 28</i>	<i>THU 29</i>	<i>FRI 30</i>	<i>SAT 31</i>	<i>SUN 1</i>
1:01	2:29	3:45	4:48	5:42	0:01	0:47
7:23	8:48	10:01	11:01	11:53	6:32	7:18
13:30	14:31	15:27	16:19	17:08	12:40	13:24
20:14	21:22	22:20	23:12		17:55	18:42

Emergency Contact Information

Anywhere on water in Victoria Ch 16 or 88 should be your first choice using Mayday or Pan Pan

**VHF Channel 16
27 MHz AM Channel 88**

Note: VSAG uses VHF CH 73 and 27 MHz CH 96 for routine communications. Check you are using the correct emergency channel.

VSAG Nautilus will be tuned to Ch 73 (Green button for routine comms) and Ch 16 (Red Button for distress comms)

Speak slowly and clearly

<p>Mayday Call – for grave & imminent danger requiring immediate assistance</p>	<p>Urgency Call – when the danger is not grave or imminent</p>
<p>Distress Call:</p> <p>Mayday, Mayday, Mayday</p> <p>This is: <u>“Boat call sign x3”</u> (Boat owners insert your call sign)</p>	<p>Urgency Call:</p> <p>Pan Pan, Pan Pan, Pan Pan</p> <p>All Ships, All Ships, All Ships (or the emergency service you want to contact)</p> <p>This is: <u>“Boat call sign x3”</u> (Boat owners insert your call sign)</p>
<p>Distress message after contact made:</p> <p>Mayday</p> <p>“2 DIVE 4”</p> <p>Give position-(see GPS for co-ordinates), nature of the problem, number on board plus any other relevant information</p> <p>Over</p> <p>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</p>	<p>Urgency message after contact made:</p> <p>Pan Pan</p> <p>“2 DIVE 4”</p> <p>Give position-(see GPS for co-ordinates), nature of the problem, number on board plus any other relevant information</p> <p>Over</p> <p>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</p>

All passengers on a boat should be familiar with the use of marine radio(s) in case of emergency.

Emergency Contact Information

Telephone contacts

Police – Ambulance – Fire : 000

Water Police no longer use the 1800 088 200 number

The new 24/7 No is : 03 9399 7500

DAN International Emergency Hotline: +1-919-684-9111 (from mobile)

0011 1 919684 9111 (from landline)

State Emergency Service (VIC): 132 500

Alfred Hospital Hyperbaric Unit: 03 9076 2269

Alfred Hospital switchboard: 03 9076 2000

Mornington Peninsula Area

Diving Emergency Service: 1800 088 200

Dr. John Roth:

Mornington Medical Group **03 5975 2633**

Rosebud Hospital:

1527 Nepean Hwy, Rosebud **03 5986 0666**

Frankston Hospital:

Hastings Road, Frankston **03 9784 7777**

The Bays Hospital:

Main Street, Mornington **03 5975 2009**

Southern Peninsula Rescue: (Sorrento) 0417 038 944

Mornington Bay Rescue Service: 0419 233 999

*Coast Guard (Queenscliff) **03 5258 2222**

*Coast Guard (Hastings) **03 5979 3322**

*Coast Guard (Safety Beach) **03 5981 4443**

Diving Doctors:

Dr Pamela Dagley (Eltham) **03 9439 2222 (VSAG member)**

Dr Vanessa Haller (Carrum Downs) **03 9782 6666**

Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento) **03 5984 4322**

Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud) **03 5981 1555**

***Coast Guard is not always manned & operates mainly during daylight hrs**



NEW Slider Drysuit and Wetsuit Powder!

Developed by VSAG's James Turner

- Get in and out of your suit easily and safely.
- Perfumed powder and talcum powder contains chemicals that will degrade the soft neoprene, latex and rubber seals on your dry suit.
- Australian developed and made **Slider** uses all natural, eco-friendly ingredients to protect and nourish your seals every time you use your suit.
- Also great for open cell neoprene suits, spearfishing, freediving, triathlon and swimming suits!



Photo taken by Ian Scholey at Mornington Pier

Anemone on a piece of kelp



© Ian Scholey



*There's always a clown in every group! Spider Crab at Blairgowrie
photo by Hannah Smeeton*