



# Fathoms

*DECEMBER 2015 - JANUARY 2016*

*MORE REVISED SAFETY GUIDELINES  
SWIMMERS, FLOATERS & CRAWLERS  
CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS  
CITY OF LAUNCESTON DIVES  
SOUTH AFRICAN TRIP*



*Merry  
Christmas*

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

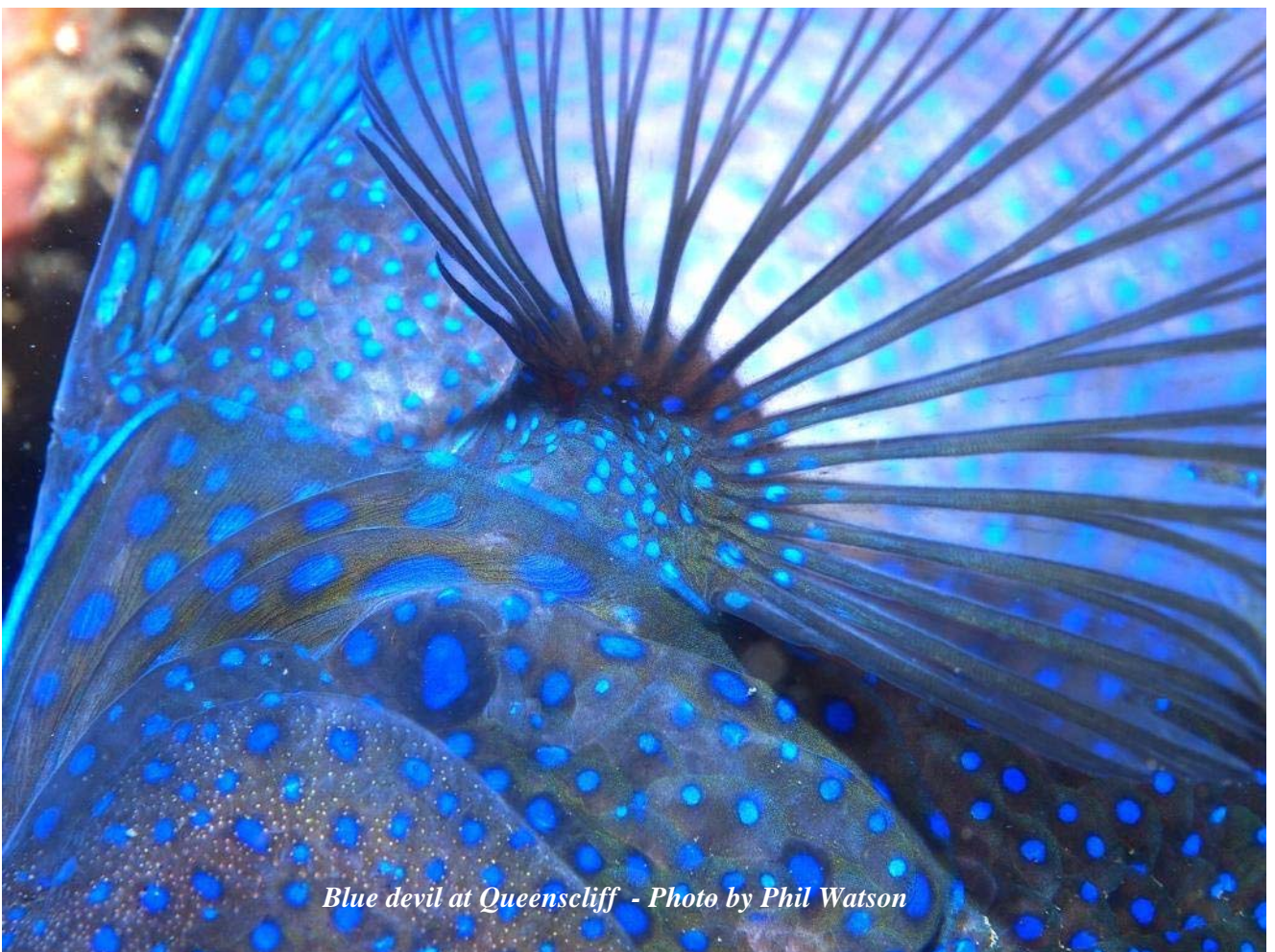
[www.vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au)





© 2015 Ian Scholey

*“I lined a shot up of this jelly and pressed the shutter just as Graham Ellis and John Ashley exhaled down below me. I kinda like the result” - Photo by Ian Scholey*



*Blue devil at Queenscliff - Photo by Phil Watson*



# Fathoms

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

**In this December 2015 - January 2016 issue...**

<b>Article</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Page</b>
Notices		4
VSAG Committee 2015–20156		5
Revised Safety Guidelines	VSAG Committee	6-11
Article: Swimmers, Floaters & Crawlers	Jan Watson	12-13
Photo Competition Winners & Runners-up	Ian Scholey & Michael Ngai	14-17
Article : VSAG Annual Awards Night	Michael Ngai	18-25
Articles : Another Addition to our Interstate Network	Ian Scholey	25
Article & Dive Reports: City of Launceston wreck		26-36
Article : South African Diary	Ian Scholey	37-52
Underwater Photography Facebook Details	Lloyd Borrett	53
National Geographic Film Night	Hannah Smeeton	54-55
Dive Report : Rotomahana, Golden Arch, Twin Bommies	John Ashley	56-58
Dive Report: Mornington Pier	Peter Beaumont	58-59
Dive Report : Hurricane Wreck & South Channel Fort	Peter Beaumont	60-62
Dive Report : Hurricane Wreck Night Dive	Peter Beaumont	63-64
Dive Report : SS Coogee & Golden Arch	Ross Walker	65-67
Dive Report : Same Day from Another Perspective	Peter Beaumont	67-71
Dive Report : Hurricane Wreck Double Dive	Peter Beaumont	71-74
Dive Report : Bare Island Shore Dive, La Perouse Sydney	Peter Beaumont	74-76
Dive Report : J4 Sub & Reef and Golden Arches	John Lawler	77-78
Diving the Web : Christmas Gift Ideas	Cheryl Lees	79-82
VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar	Peter Beaumont	83
Tidal Streams — December / January	Graham Ellis	84-85
New Emergency Contact Information	VSAG Committee	86-87
South Channel Fort photos	David Reinhard	88

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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](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 2015–2016

To email all VSAG committee members: [committee@vsag.org.au](mailto:committee@vsag.org.au)

## President

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# REVISED CLUB SAFETY GUIDELINES

*The next in the series from the Committee regarding VSAG's revised safety procedures*

## DIVER COMMUNICATIONS

**Communication means 'common understanding' and there are many ways for divers to communicate, both under and over the water.**

### Introduction

There are many signals and variants of signals that divers need to understand and practice to promote that common understanding.

### Attracting Buddy Attention

Attracting your buddy's attention underwater can be difficult, especially if they are engrossed in something.

#### Try the following:

- Touching and grabbing.
- Shouting into your regulator.
- Banging your cylinder with a knife or stone or use a dedicated tank banger.
- Clapping hands with one hand fisted.
- Using your torch.
- Banging stones together.
- Air sirens (these devices attach to an air hose, usually on your BC jacket).

## Hand Signals

Once your buddy's attention is gained, communication is usually in the form of hand signals or writing on a slate. It is important to remember that hand signals must be clear, slow and deliberate. They should all be acknowledged to inform the sender that they are received okay. It is good practice to agree on any hand signals before the dive.

Communicating underwater is an important skill to learn and can lead to a whole lot of confusion if it is not done well. With rebreathers and full face masks it is possible to have a reasonable verbal conversation, however for the rest of us, it's a wide assortment of hand signals or writing on a slate.

Hand signals are always responded to (usually with OK) so that both buddies know they have successfully communicated. Lack of response may mean the buddy has lost concentration, has something wrong, is cold on the way to hyperthermia, narcosed at depth or just plain rude!

When using hand signals underwater, they are usually done in front of the chest and generally require a response from whom you are communicating. They should be performed clearly, positively and strongly. Lethargic,



slow or inappropriate signals could be an indication that something is wrong.

When night diving, be sure to shine your torch on your hand signals and of course never shine the torch in other divers eyes, else you will damage their night vision for some time. Attract attention by moving the light beam from side to side preferably within your buddies field of vision.

## Underwater Hand Signals

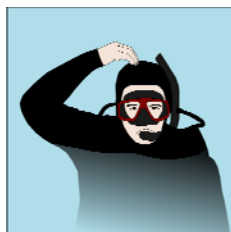
Many signals vary across the world and across diving Agencies. If diving with strangers, it is a good practice to agree on the signals you will use prior to the dive.

**The hand signals used by VSAG members.**

## Basic Signals



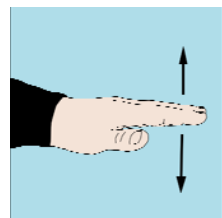
(Are you) OK?



OK on the surface



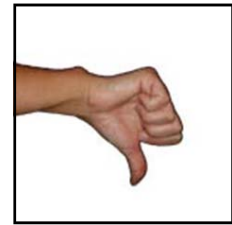
Stop, wait here



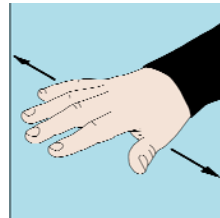
Slow down - move hand slowly down & up a few times



Up



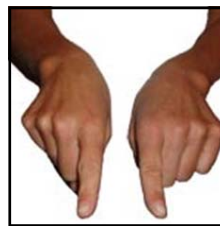
Down



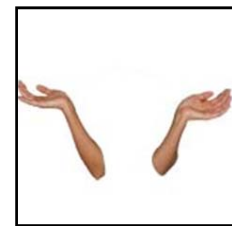
Stay at this depth - move hand left to right and back



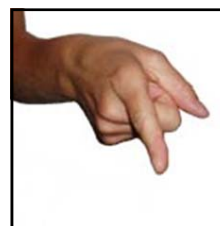
Stay together



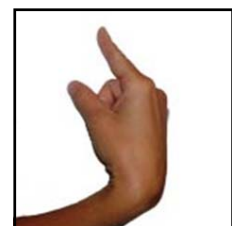
Move apart a little



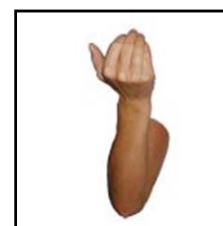
Where is your buddy?



You

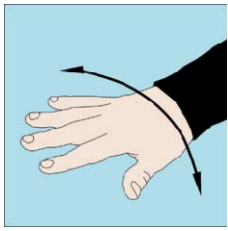


Me



Come here

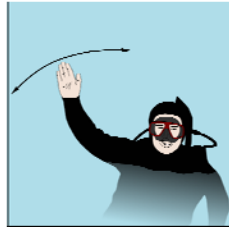
## Distress Signals



Not OK, something is wrong - rotate wrist lightly a few times then point to what ever is the problem e.g. mask or ear



Out of air - move hand across the neck left to right a few times



Distress on the surface - wave aggressively



Cramp - tight fist then point to where



I'm narked! - move index finger in circles



I am cold - move hands up and down

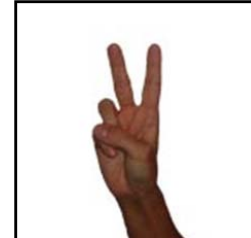


I am out of breath - move hand in & out at chest level

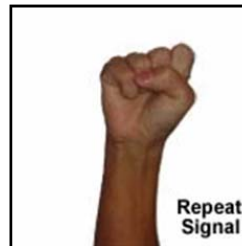
## Air Related Signals



How much air do you have?



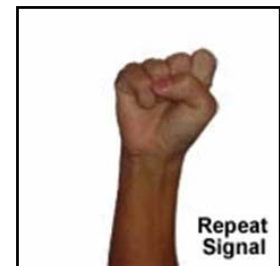
Response example 1 -  
50 bar, followed by 20 bar = 70 bar  
*\*Always round **down** to the nearest bar*



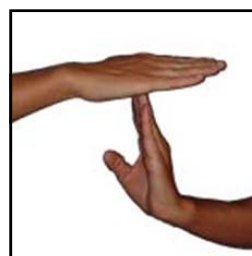
Response example 2 -  
Repeat 50 bar signal twice + 30 bar =  
130 bar



On Reserve or  
50 bar



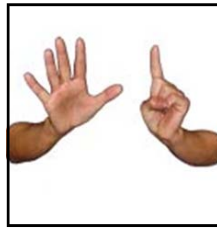
Repeat signal  
twice = 100 bar



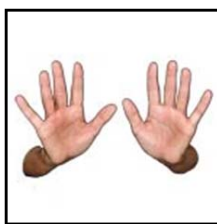
Occasional signal  
for 100 bar



## Depth and Time Related Signals



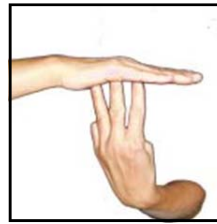
Ascend to a particular depth.  
Depth signalled afterwards e.g. 6m



Descend to a particular depth.  
Depth signalled afterwards e.g. 100m

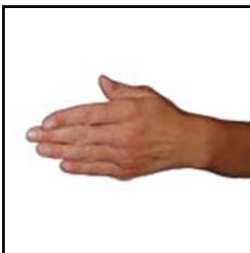


Time

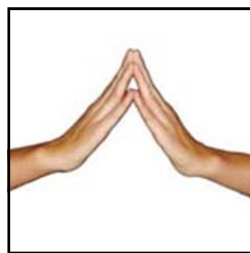


Stop for 3 minutes

## Directional Signals

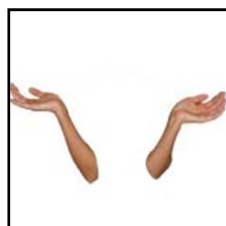


That way, point  
hand in the  
direction



Home

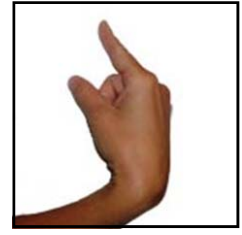
I don't know -  
shrug shoulders



## Training Signals



Look

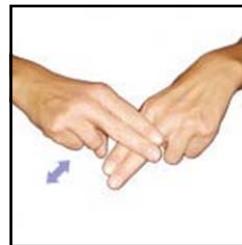


at me

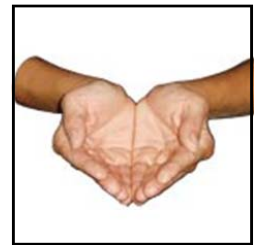


I'm in charge  
(Sergeant stripes)

## Other Signals

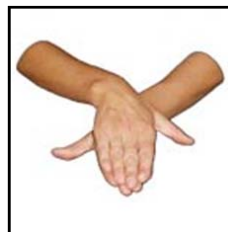


Do not touch -  
move top hand  
down to end a  
few times

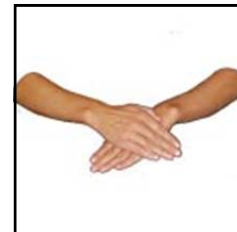


Boat

## Underwater Creatures



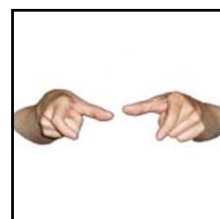
Turtle -  
wiggle  
thumbs



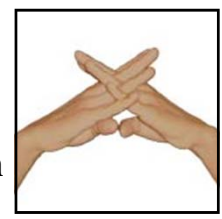
Large ray -  
flap fingers  
like a ray



Moray  
Eel



Lobster



Lionfish



Nudibranch



Shark



Hammerhead



Triggerfish

## Rope Signals

**You never know when you are going to need these. Commit them to memory now.**

All VSAG club boat diving is carried out using the "buoy line" system, unless a shot line or anchor is used. Thus these rope signals are important to know.

### Surface to Diver

Signal	Surface	Diver
One Pull	Are you OK?	I am OK
Two Pulls	Stay put	I am stationary
Three Pulls	Go on down	Going down
Four Pulls	Come up	Coming up
Continuous Pull	Emergency, bringing you to surface	Emergency, bring me to surface

## Buddy Line

Signal	Diver 1	Diver 2
One Pull	Are you OK?	I am OK
Two Pulls	Stay put	I am stationary
Three Pulls	Move away from me	I am moving away from you
Four Pulls	Come to me	I am coming towards you

## Flag Signals

### Diving Operations Flag

Victorian law requires that any vessel with divers operating from it must always display signals by day and night to inform other vessel users.

The daytime signal for divers is an International Code Flag 'A' of size 6 being at least 750mm long and 600mm wide. It should be placed to ensure all-round visibility.



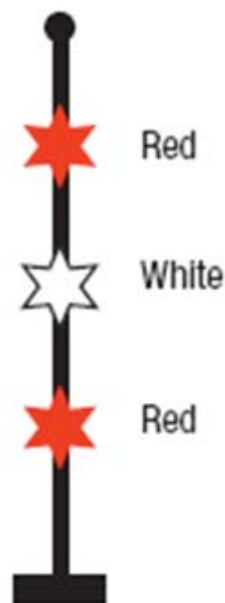
Divers operating without a vessel, for example from a jetty, should also display the International code flag "A". The flag should be at least 750mm long and 600mm wide. The flag may be displayed from a buoy. If displayed from a buoy, the flag must not be less than 300 mm in length and 200 mm in width. The flag must be clearly visible to all vessels operating in the vicinity.



## Diving Operations Lights

During night diving, a vessel must show the international signal for a 'vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre'. These are three lights in a vertical line, top and bottom are red and the middle one is white. The diver's boat should also show other appropriate lights such as an anchor light.

People involved in night diving without a vessel should display a yellow (orange) flashing light that can be seen from a minimum distance of 200 metres.



## Speed Restriction

In Victoria, Australia, a five knot (9.25 kph) speed limit applies to vessel operators and water-skiers within a distance of 100 metres (330 feet) of a vessel or buoy on which a diver below signal is displayed. ❖



Home: Covered   
Car: Covered

# Are You?

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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](http://www.danasiapacific.org)

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

# SWIMMERS, FLOATERS & CRAWLERS

by Jan Watson

Continuing her series of articles on  
*Marine Biology for  
Divers*

Medusae (or jellyfish) have the same basic body structure as other hydrozoans cnidarians – a stomach, mouth, tentacles and nematocysts. But they are so modified that the relationship to hydroids for example is not immediately obvious. They are simply upside-down polyps, the tentacles armed with nematocysts hanging below the body (the bell) and the mouth hanging from the inside at the top of the bell. They swim by expanding and contracting the bell, jetting out water. They have a primitive nervous system and eye spots for distinguishing light.

Smaller medusae may be part of the breeding cycle of the true hydroids. These are usually only 0.5-2 mm in size and seldom seen by the diver. Larger medusae begin life as tiny stalked polyps, and at a certain size, break off from the stem and swim away to grow to independent adults. They have a variety of feeding habits but are all predators, and depending upon their size, food ranges from microscopic plankton to small fish.

The nematocysts of jellies can sting, and that of the tropical Chironex can be fatal. Some jellies in Port Phillip Bay can sting.

*Pseudorhiza haeckeli* is a large medusa that has a bell marked in a wire-netting pattern, with frilly purple tentacles. It was originally restricted to South Australia, but with ocean warming is now quite common in summer in the bay. Does anyone have a good photo of it - I don't.

*Catostylus mosaicus* is the medusa that is seen most often during summer months in the bay, swimming in squadrons in shallow water. The thick tentacles are armed with nematocysts but the sting is very mild, sometimes producing only a slight itch.



*Catostylus mosaicus.*

Clifton Springs Jetty, murky water, 1 m.

*Cyanea rosella* with its long trailing white and red tentacles can deliver a nasty sting. (I know, I once sucked up a tentacle while snorkelling; diet of

soup for several days afterwards). It feeds on small swimming crustaceans and sometimes juvenile fish, but does not usually swim in swarms.



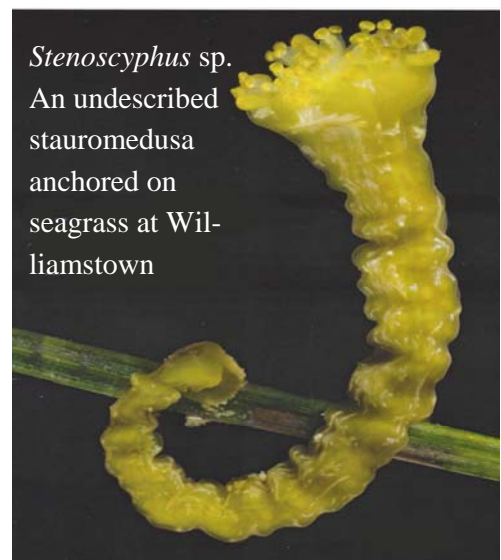
Many other medusa can be seen over summer months, particularly if you are hanging on the shotline outside the Heads you are likely to be entertained by many floating past.

Some species of medusa have given up swimming for a sedentary life crawling on seaweeds. They are not usually seen by the diver because they are shallow water species. For example, *Gonionemus* species unknown to science, large populations of which were found by intertidal collectors at Shoreham. It is 1-2 mm across extended tentacles, the bell is the usual circular shape, the four radial canal help hold the bell together, the central mouth and stomach is wide open, and the tentacles have clumps of nematocysts. The medusa crawls on and

sometimes swim around brown alga. I do not know what it eats, but probably microscopic crustaceans from the alga.



Other medusae have completely given up moving. This group, called the *Stauromedusae* cling to seaweeds or seagrasses, usually in shallow water. The bell is extended into a cap which clings to the substrate and the tentacles have clusters of nematocysts to catch prey. Although only five species are known from Victoria, they are probably quite common. So if you see any, let me know. ❖





**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST  
PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS**

**WINNER- SEPTEMBER**



*Phil Watson*

**RUNNERS UP IN THE SEPTEMBER PHOTO COMPETITION**



**2nd - Ian Scholey**

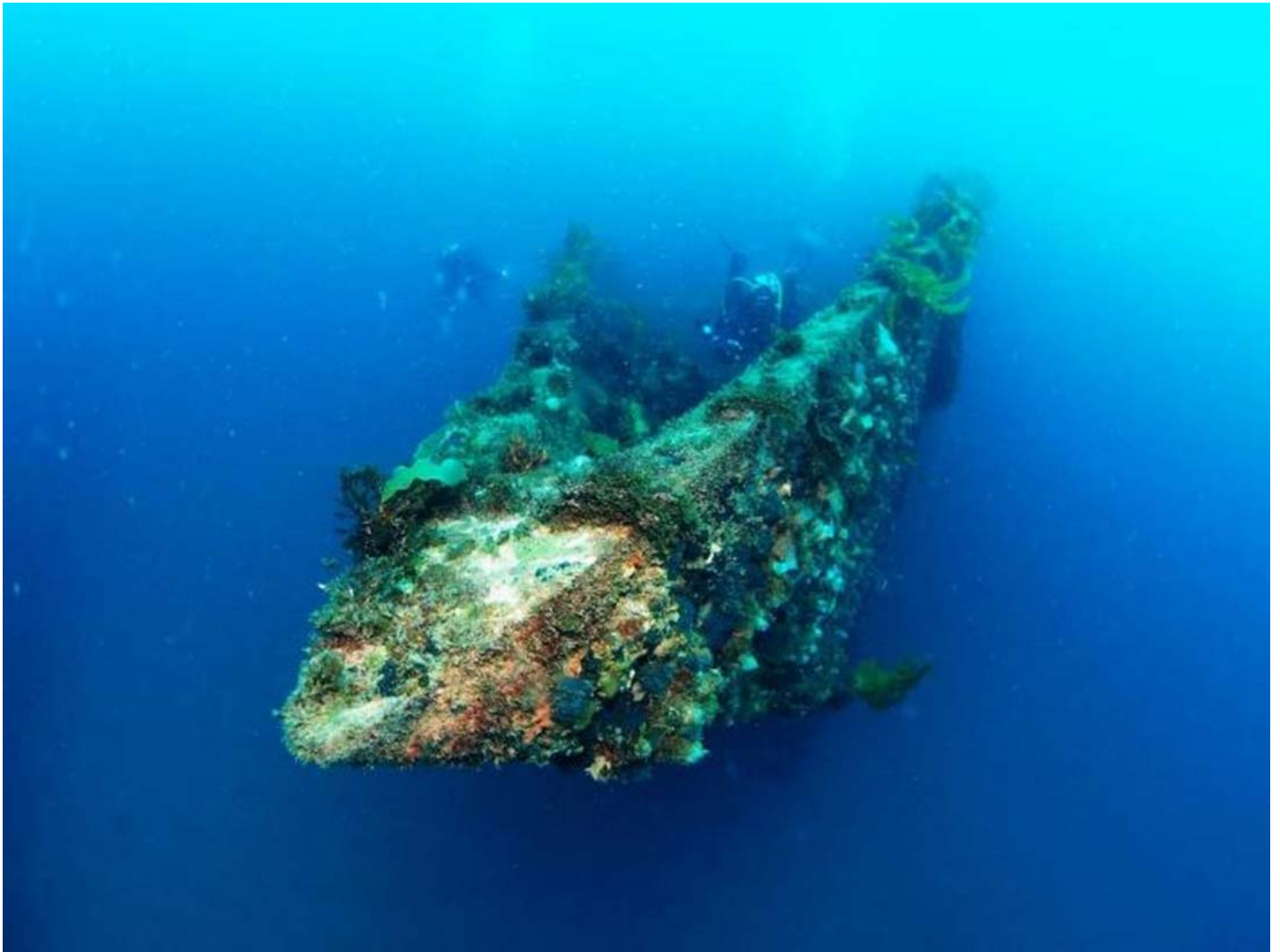
© 2015 Ian Scholey



**3rd - Tim Forster**



# WINNER — OCTOBER



*Phil Watson*  
*Bow of The Canberra*

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/>***

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

Keep up the good work!



**RUNNERS UP IN THE OCTOBER PHOTO COMPETITION**



**2nd - Charmaine Alford - Male Weedy with Eggs**



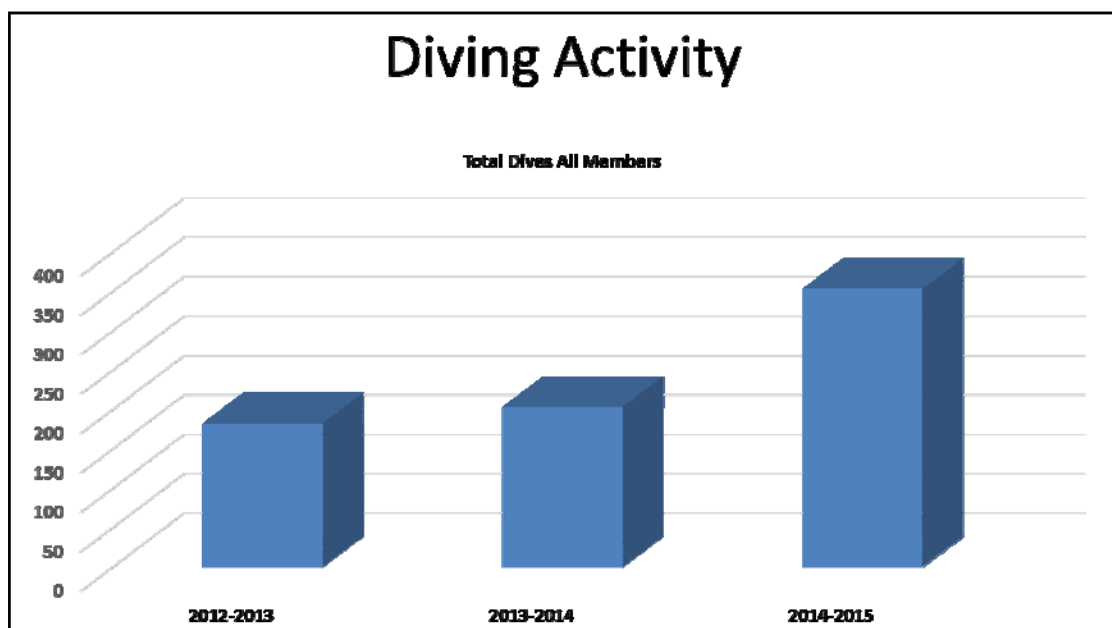
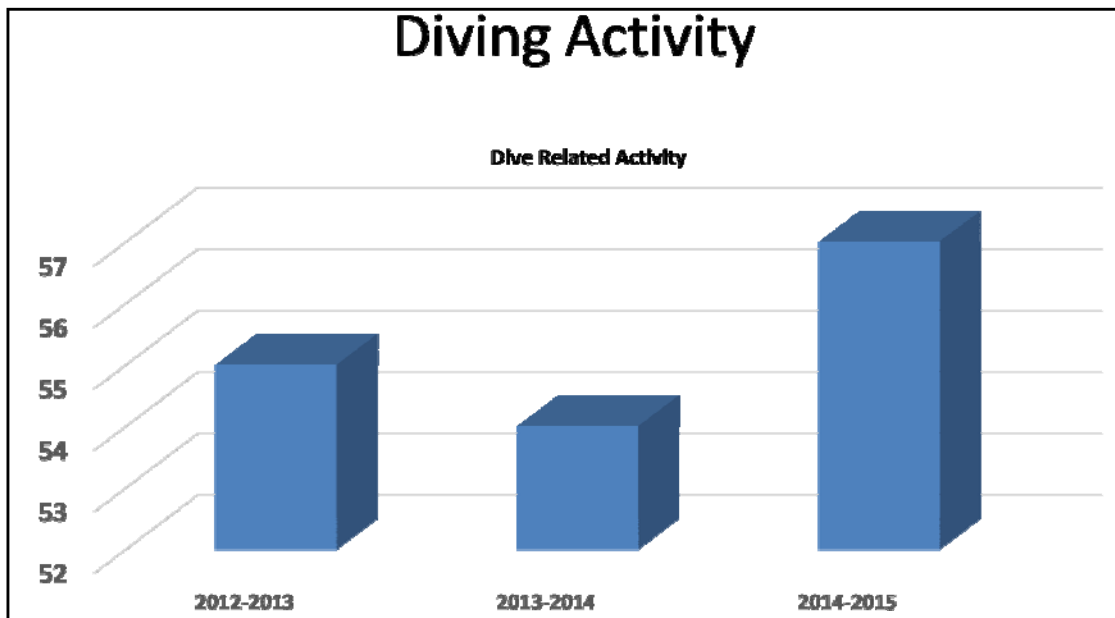
**3rd - Peter Beaumont  
The Coogee**

# VSAG ANNUAL AWARDS NIGHT

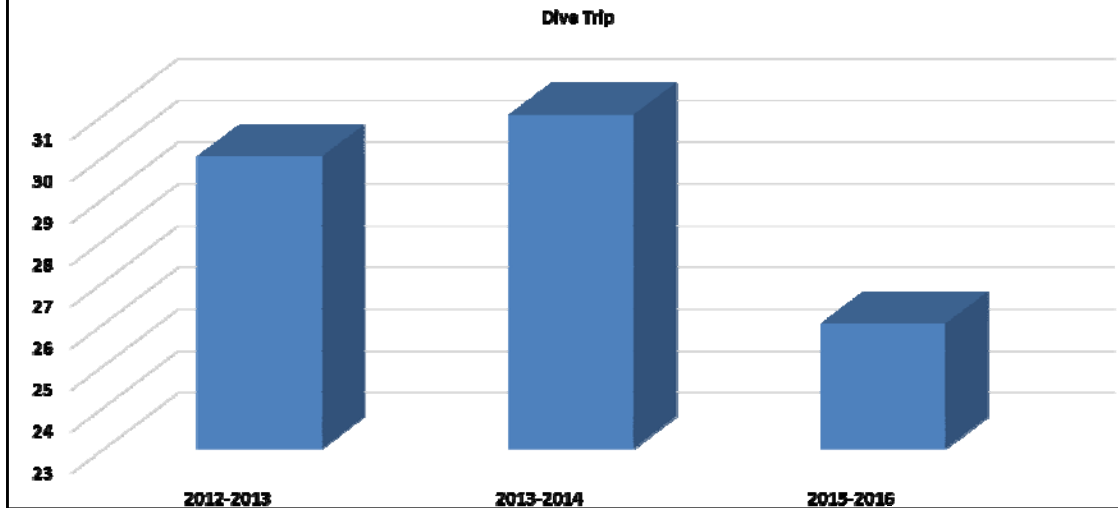
*Tuesday 20th October, 2015*

*Water Rat Hotel, South Melbourne*

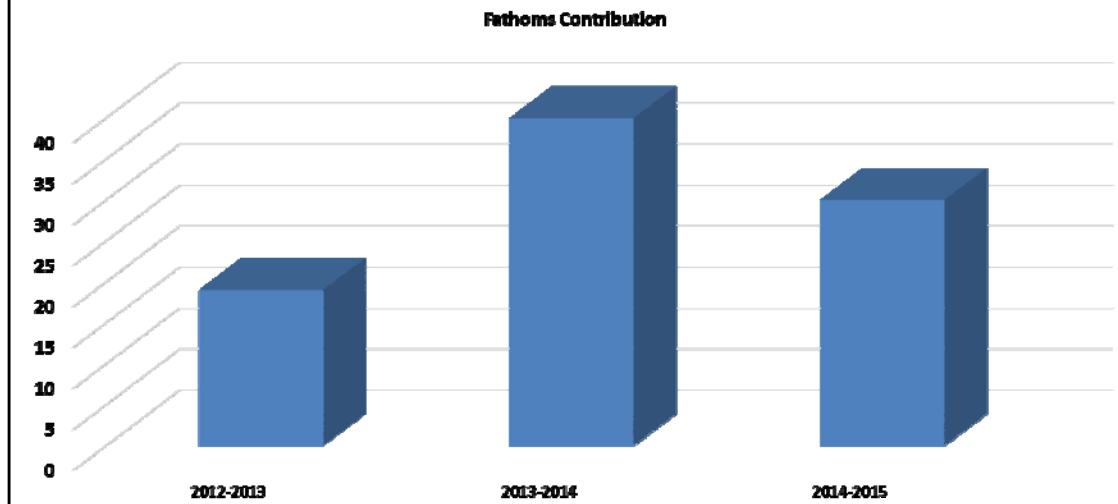
Before the Awards began, Michael Ngai, VSAG Points Scorer, produced a Club Snapshot PowerPoint presentation :



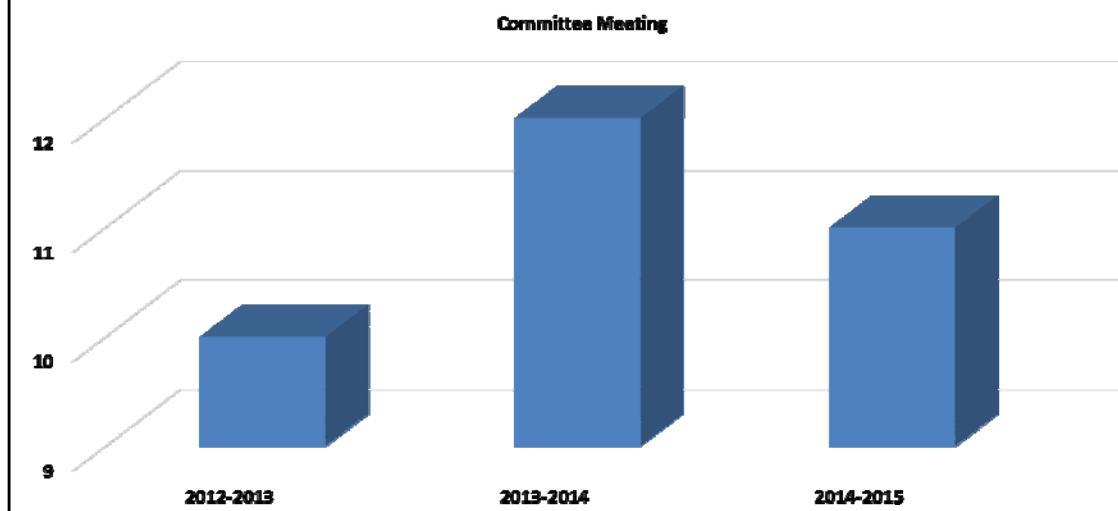
## Dive Trip



## Fathoms Contribution

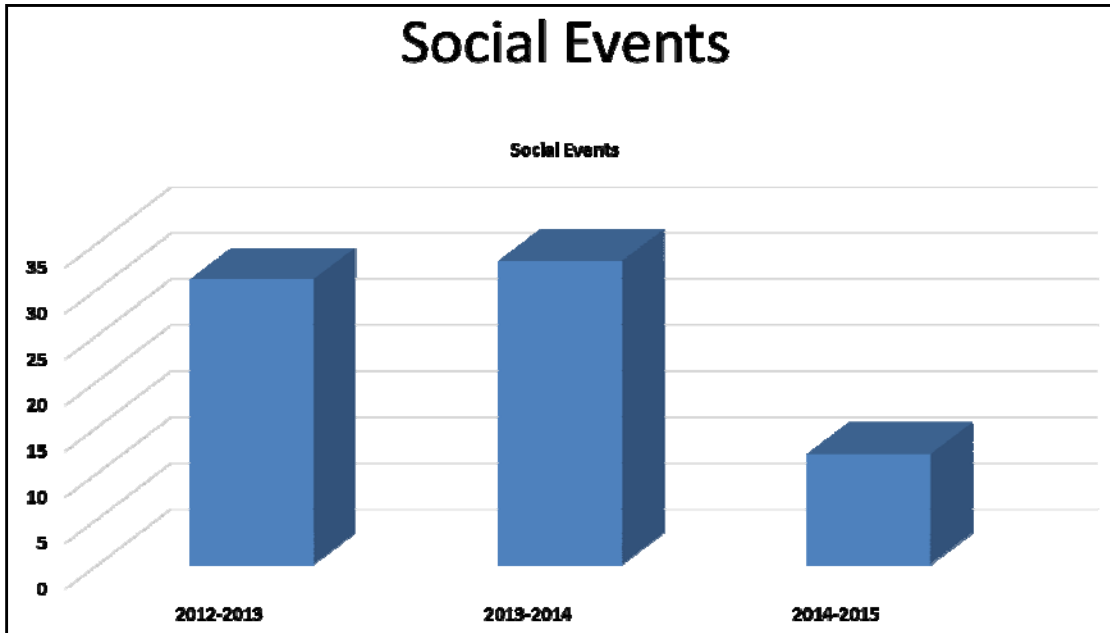


## Committee Meeting

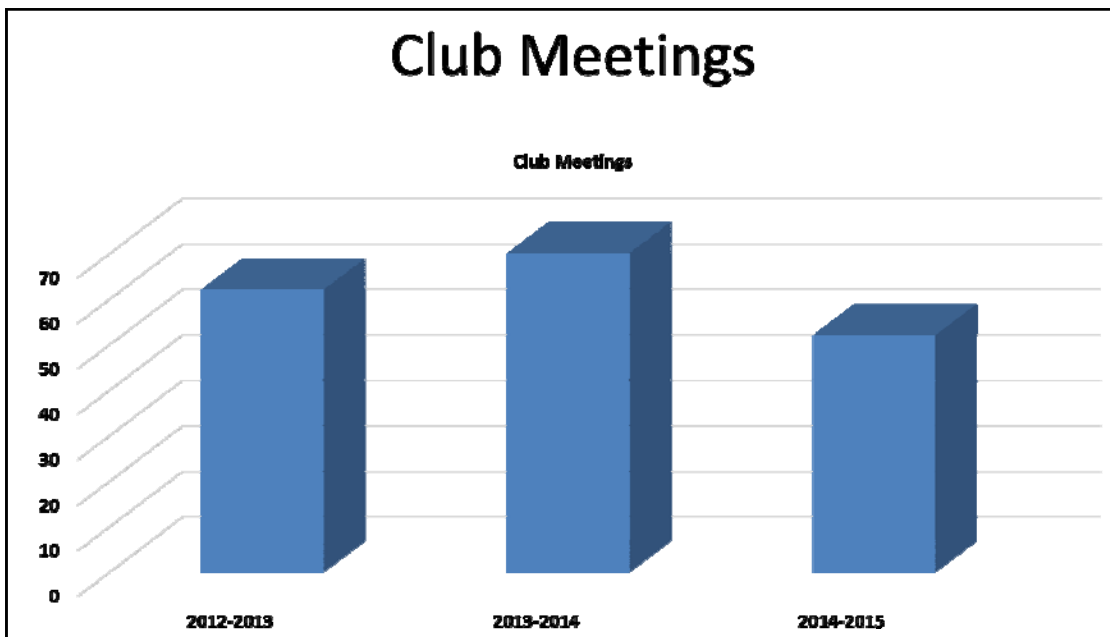




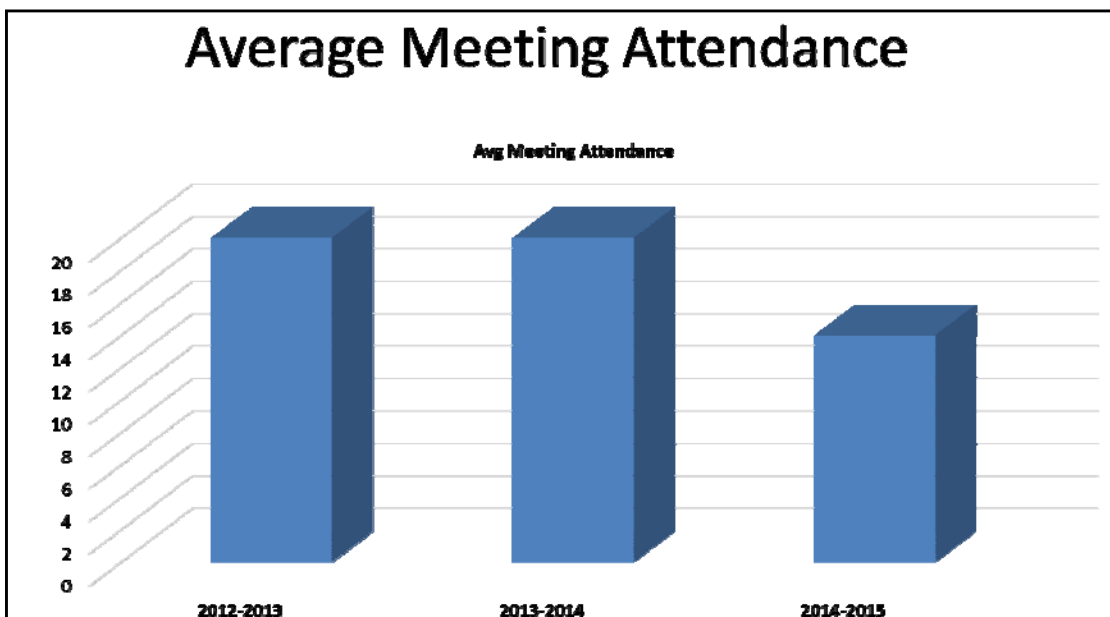
# Social Events

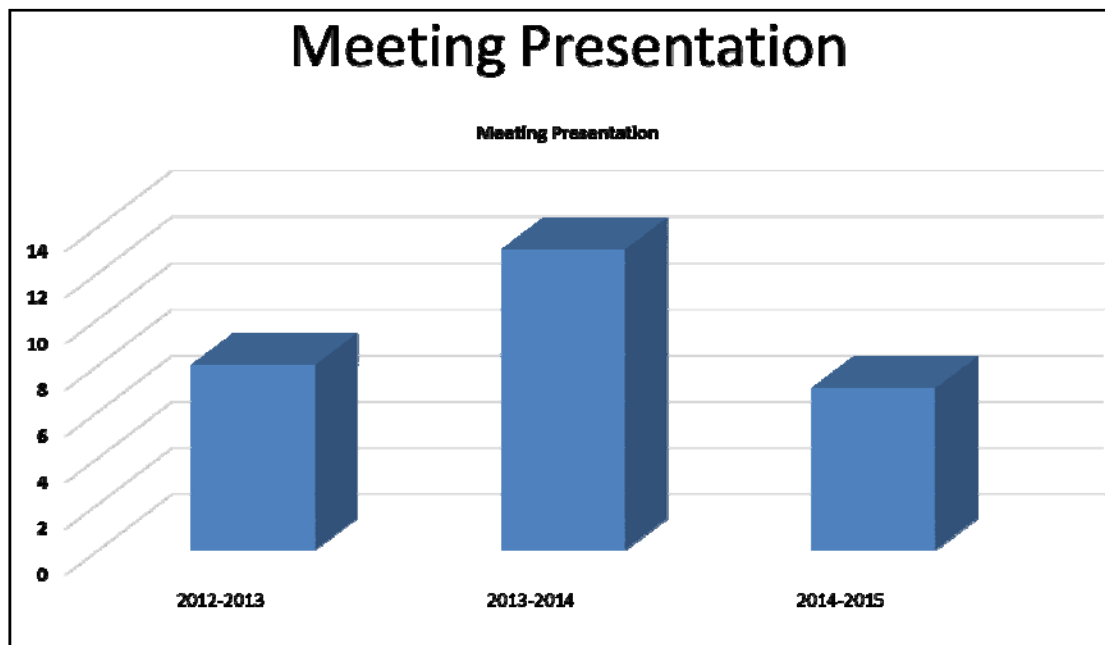


# Club Meetings



# Average Meeting Attendance





The following are the Awards presented on the night:

## WOODEN WEIGHTBELT AWARD

### NOMINEES:

**Location** : Phillip Island

**Incident** : Years of anticipation & searching for Crack Cave. Diver signalled via SMB for cave position, shot was dropped & GPS marked. Due to “unknown” technological failure, no GPS marks were found after the dive!!

**Culprit** : John Lawler

**Location** : Eaglehawk Neck

**Incident** : Diver enters cold water only to find that he’d forgotten to zip up his dry suit!!

**Culprit** : Ian Scholey

**Location** : Flinders Pier

**Incident** : Diver wants to provide free

search & rescue training for the next group. Decides to leave expensive camera equipment behind!! (Luckily camera found it’s way back).

**Culprit** : David Flew



**Location** : Queen’s Birthday Weekend Dive

**Incident** : Dive computer & torch lost before hitting the water! Searched High & low to no avail. (Luckily spares provided onboard). Computer & torch seemed to have dropped from the sky and into diver’s BCD pockets while gear is drying!!

**Culprit** : Walter Medenbach

**WINNER :**  
**Ian Scholey**

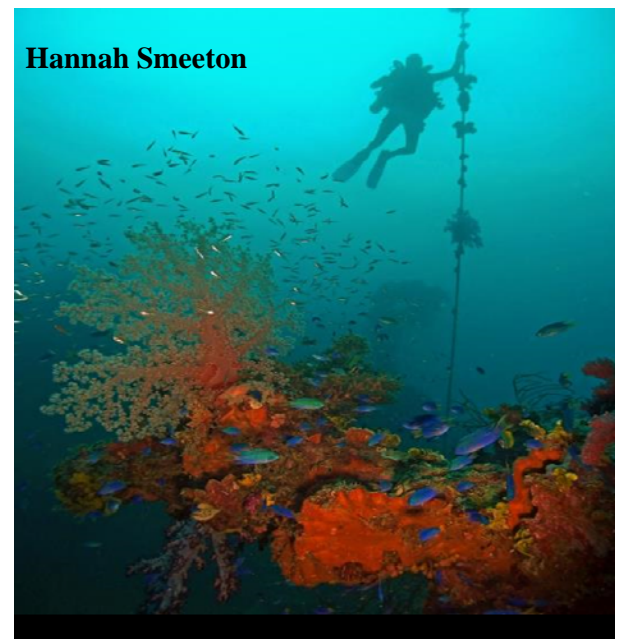


... by a very small margin from JL

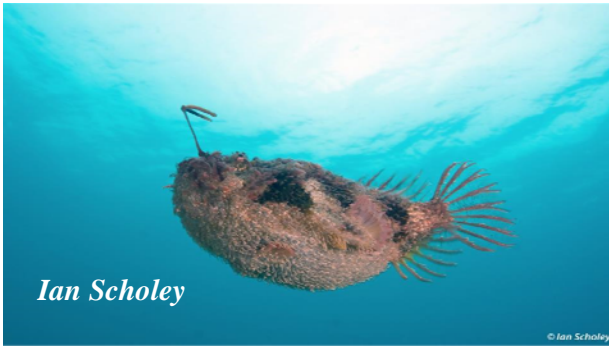
## **PHOTO OF THE YEAR AWARD**

### **NOMINEES:**

Winners of monthly photograph  
competitions :







**WINNER :**

**Carole Campisagno - for her photo-bombing seal**



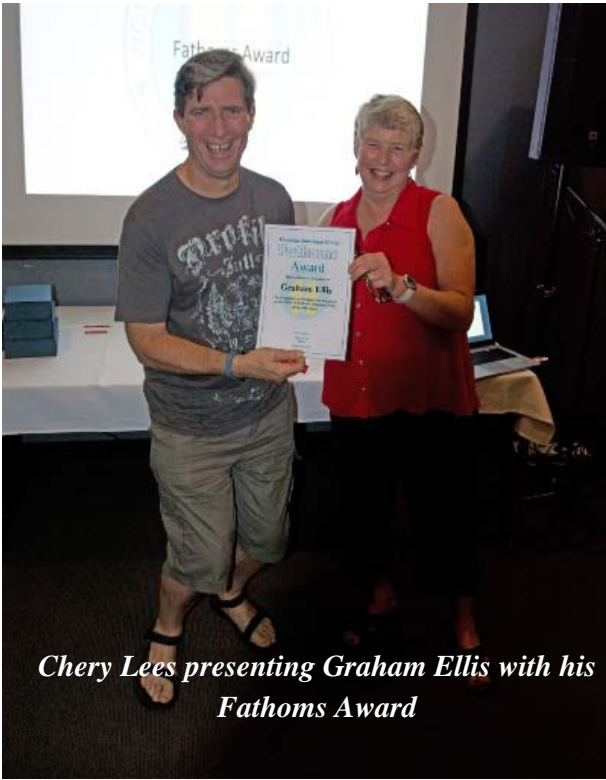
**FATHOMS AWARD :**

In recognition of the help given to the editor of Fathoms for the past year

**WINNER :**

**Graham Ellis who produces the Tide Tables and Club Diving & Meeting Calendars for every edition.**





*Chery Lees presenting Graham Ellis with his Fathoms Award*

## CLUB CHAMPION AWARD :

**WINNER :**  
**Ian Scholey - 4,220 points**



## LITERARY AWARD

**WINNER :** Ian Scholey  
 for his many excellent  
 articles & dive reports

**2nd :** John Lawler -  
 2,170 points



*Don Abel presenting Ian with his Literary Award*



**3rd :** Peter Beaumont  
 - 2,070 points



**A SPECIAL PRESENTATION WAS ALSO MADE TO SUE SCHOLEY FOR BEING SO SUPPORTIVE OF IAN IN HIS MANY ROLES IN THE CLUB (PLUS ENABLING HIM DO SO MUCH DIVING) - THANKS SUE!!!**



*David Flew presenting an explanation of the transition of VSAG to an Incorporated Association*



Thanks to all the members & guests who attended the Annual Awards Night ❖

## *ANOTHER ADDITION TO OUR INTERSTATE NETWORK*

*From Club President, Ian Scholey*



I am delighted to announce that we have now established another relationship with

an interstate club that will allow you to dive with them if you wish to and vice versa. The club is the Tas Uni Dive Club. You can check them out at [www.tudc.org.au](http://www.tudc.org.au)

The TUDC is the largest and most active dive club in Tasmania. With around 200 members, the TUDC promotes safe and affordable diving, catering to all levels of experience. We have dive sheds located at both Hobart and Launceston. With dives run across the state on a regular basis, you can see lots of our favourite dives on our Dive Sites page. Night diving, club trips, conservation programs, cheap gear hire and access to the club's boats and dive gear are just a few of the benefits of diving with us

The club currently owns two boats; a 20ft rigid inflatable *Trojan* (with two brand new Yamaha 115bs!) and a 15ft Tristar aluminium *Thumpin' Willy*. We also own a portable compressor, a tow vehicle, box trailers and a heaps of dive gear – BCDs/Regs/Tanks/etc. .

We have a discounted \$15 single trip membership and \$25 half year membership available for anyone from outside Tasmania. If any of your members come to Tasmania, we'd be happy to take them out for a bubble. We post our dives to our dive calendar, however if there is nothing planned let us know and we'll see if we can organise a dive and beer.

If anyone wishes to dive with TUDC at any stage then you can contact them [attasunih20@gmail.com](mailto:attasunih20@gmail.com)



# Wreck anniversary



*From Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure Heritage Victoria website, 14 October 2015*

## The 'City of Launceston'

(1863 – 1865) is in a Protected Zone but divers had the opportunity to dive on the wreck on the weekends of 14 and 15 November and 21 and 22 November.

Among more than 60 divers visiting the wreck on the first weekend, Alan Beckhurst filmed his experience :



<https://vimeo.com/145713407>

## History

The 'City of Launceston' was a 277-ton steamship, built in Glasgow for the Launceston and Melbourne Steam Navigation Company.

The newspapers of the day described the ship as elegant and commodious, with substantial and ornate fittings all designed for the comfort of the passengers. The steerage accommodation was supposed to be equal in comfort to first class accommodation on other colonial steamers. For two years, and without incident, 'City of Launceston' carried passengers, the Royal Mail and cargo across Bass Strait.

On November 19, 1865, within two hours of its 7.20pm departure from Melbourne to Launceston, the ship was involved in a collision with the inbound 500-ton 'Penola' from Adelaide. The 25 passengers and 24 crew were rescued by 'Penola' before 'City of Launceston' sank quickly by the stern.

The vessel was totally uninsured and every effort was made to salvage the vessel and its cargo. In the following months, vain attempts were made to lift the vessel using lifting chains. A final attempt involved the unsuccessful deployment of the newly patented Maquay's lifting devices (17 can still be seen on the deck today). The hulk,

'Eleutheria', involved in the salvage, sank nearby in July 1866.

'City of Launceston' lay undisturbed until 1980 when it was located by members of the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria. It lies in the middle of Port Phillip, upright in a muddy, silty seabed.

### **Significance**

'City of Launceston' has tremendous archaeological and scientific significance. The vessel is representative of a period in the steam trade and it was part of the flourish of activity stimulated by the Australian colonies forging strong independent identities. The 'City of Launceston' site is unique because of the extent of its structural integrity and the substantial archaeological deposits it contains. It is the only steamship in Victoria to have survived with such a degree of cohesion.

### **Site management**

The discovery of 'City of Launceston' in 1980 ushered in a new era for maritime archaeology in Victoria. Its discovery drove the momentum for the enactment of the first state-based legislation in Australia: the 'Victorian Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981' and the formation of a Maritime Heritage Unit to administer it.

A protected zone was placed around the wreck site in 1982 to prevent looting of artefacts and to protect the structural integrity of the site from damage by anchors and fishing line.

Through the work of Heritage Victoria's Maritime Heritage Unit and volunteers, unique information about passenger travel in the 1860s - the quality of cabin and saloon facilities, personal space and catering arrangements for long voyages as well as the Bass Strait crossing - have come to light through excavations completed in the early 2000s.

Since that time, zinc anodes have been clamped to the vessel's hull. These anodes corrode faster than the iron sides of the ship therefore slowing down corrosion of the wreck. Heritage Victoria replaces these anodes every couple of years when they are worn out.

### **What's left?**

Today, 150 years after the wreck, there is still plenty to see. The elegant curve of the 'City of Launceston's' clipper bow is still distinct, as is the sliver of 'Penola's' bow still wedged in the starboard side of the hull.

There are 17 of Maquay's lifting devices scattered across the deck and, behind the funnel, you can see the remains of the galley's stove and a

spiral staircase, leading down into the silt. There are still bottle racks and the occasional bottle sometimes protrudes from the mud. ❖

## Open days

Some lucky VSAG divers were able to access the site during the five 1.5 hour time slots available on each of the four open days - 14, 15, 21 and 22 November. Heritage Victoria staff provided an on-site pre-dive briefing on the wreck and its heritage values to each dive group. Below are some of their dive reports and photos.

### Saturday 14th November 2015

*by Sandy Webb*

What a great privilege to have been able to have the very rare opportunity to dive on this significant wreck in the very middle of Port Phillip Bay, just days short of the 150th anniversary of its sinking. The dive was well worth getting up before dawn for, and the very bumpy 24Km ride out from the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron!

On the day (our group was the first of the VSAG boats to do this dive at 8 am on Saturday 14 November) everything went very smoothly, in contrast to the massive flow of paperwork, emails and phone calls that had allowed it to go ahead.....

(In the process of making the arrangements for this dive, Graham Ellis received around 120 emails....Ian Scholey was also inundated with a flow of emails!)

As we arrived at the site we were given a nasty welcome by fishers on a boat anchored within the protected zone. This meant that we did not warn them that Heritage Victoria with Water Police on board would soon be arriving, so we had the 'pleasure' of seeing them sent on their way with a sizeable fine!

The wreck of this 54m clipper ship lies at 22m on a silty bottom. For our dive, the visibility was very good, allowing us to see clearly along the bows of the ship and over the deck for about 8m. The integrity of the hull is very good, but it is now very overgrown with algae, sponges, scallops etc. Benita McDonagh, who had dived on the wreck 10 years ago, noted that this time it was impossible to see the racks of bottles and other things lying on the deck that had been visible back then. The reward though was a very vibrant fish life - Old Wives, Leather Jackets, and Soldiers and a lone Banjo Ray.

Post dive, whilst chatting with the just arrived Getunder divers, the skipper provided croissants, jam, hot tea



and coffee ..nice!

Thank you Heritage Victoria, Graham Ellis and the very patient boat owners who have been working behind the scenes.

Thank you John Lawler and Signature One, and great buddies Graham Ellis and Benita McDonough. ❖



*Happy divers : L-R Sandy Webb, John Lawler, Benita Mcdonagh & Graham Ellis with Signature One*

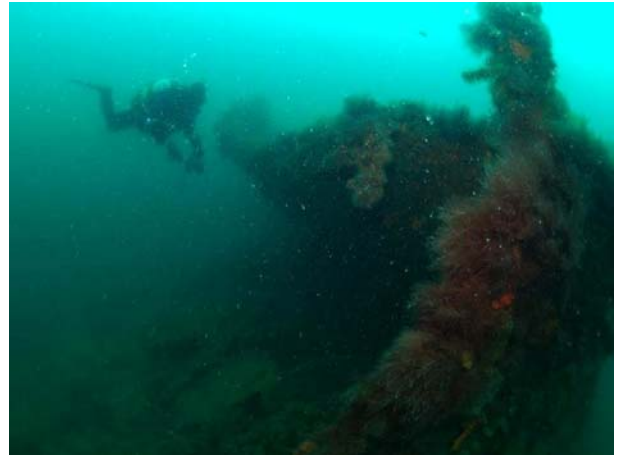


### John Lawler's photos - Sunday 22nd November 2015



**Phil Watson's photos - Sunday  
22nd November 2015**

\* Diver in photos is Deb Serginson



**Sunday, 22nd November 2015**

*Report & photos by Peter Beaumont*

Divers: Peter Beaumont, Ian Smith,  
Walter Medenbach, Brendan Mifsud

Boat: TOUCANS

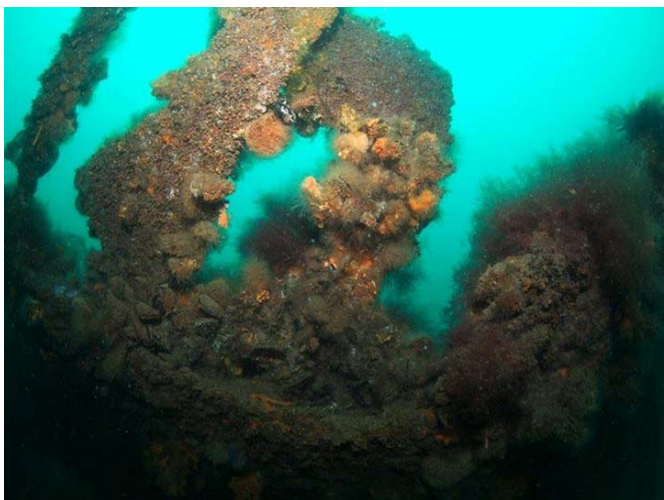
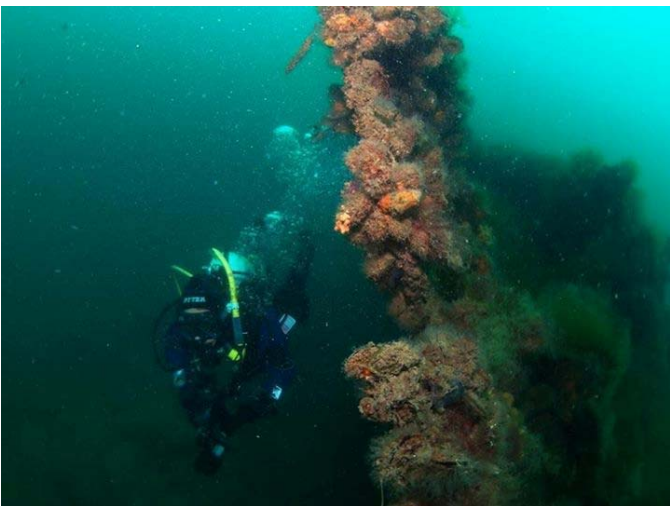
Ramp: Mornington

Dive time: 43 min/43 min

Water temp: 16 deg

Vis: 5 mtrs

With a permit allocation of 0930-1130 for four divers, I launched the boat from the Mornington Ramp, tied up at the lower landing and waited for the rest of the crew to turn up. Whilst waiting I checked out the newly installed public BBQs & thought “mmnn, that would make for a nice BBQ breakfast after an early bird Mornington Pier dive.”





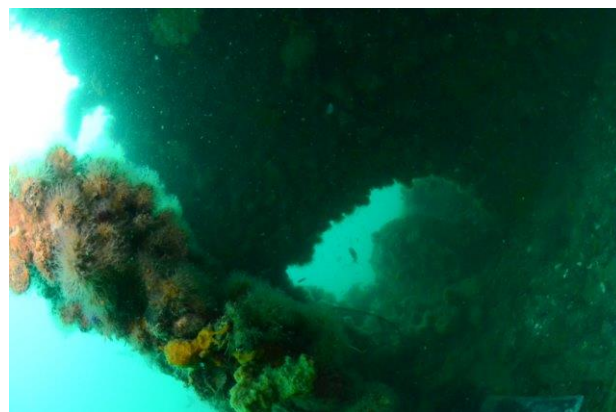
After loading the boat, completing the boat safety brief, dive brief and the Heritage Victoria release & indemnity form, we departed Mornington and commenced the 23km run to the dive site. The BOM forecast was for 10-15k S-SW winds, seas up to 1 mtr with Willy weather tide info from various sites in the bay indicating high water was around 11am so I was hoping for reasonable vis provided the bottom didn't get stirred up too much.

We arrived on site at approx 8.30am & passed the relevant paperwork to Heritage Victoria. I asked permission for two of our divers to join 2 *Dive 4*'s divers who were already in the water & they said "yep no problems". We then went & said g'day to Ross Walker, gave him a heads up on our dive plan then set about helping Ian & Walter gear up for their dive. Ian & Walter commenced their dive at approx 8.45am.



*Signature one* arrived on site shortly after so we said g'day & advised JL of

our current dive plan. *Sea Eagle* then put out a call on VHF Ch 73 indicating they were on their way. Both JL & myself replied to acknowledge the message as being received.



After 43 minutes Ian & Walter returned to the surface & once their gear was back onboard they gave a run-down on the dive. They saw some eels, cuttlefish, old wives, wrasse, heaps of old scallop shells etc & were generally happy with the dive.



After familiarising Ian & Walter with *Toucan's* engine controls, Brendan & I geared up then commenced our dive. As the aft shot line was located adjacent the deck bollards - port side midships, we dropped down the side of

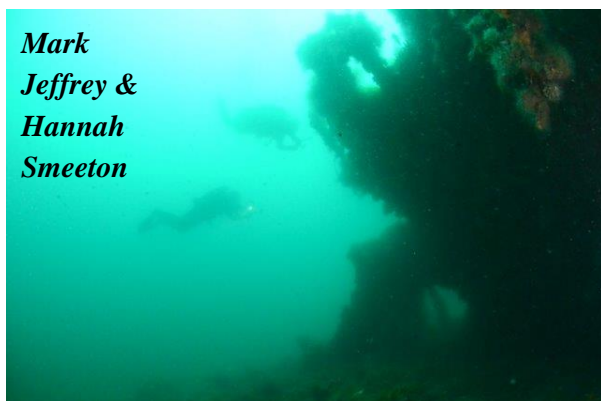




*Hannah Smeeton*

the wreck & swam to the stern section. Here we found the top of one prop blade sticking out of the sea bed & the rudder set to approx 30 degrees to port.

From there we swam back down the port side for a look around the bow section then down the stb'd side to check out the piece of damage caused by *Penola's* bow. We then moved aft to the prop/rudder then swam slowly



*Mark  
Jeffrey &  
Hannah  
Smeeton*



back/forth/side to side along the main deck.

At the 39 minute mark we ascended the shot line, completed our safety stop & returned to the boat. Shortly after, *Sea Eagle* arrived on site & presented their relevant paperwork to Heritage Victoria. When asked if they could put a spare boat driver on *Sea Eagle* so they could all dive at the same time Heritage Victoria said “sure no problems”.



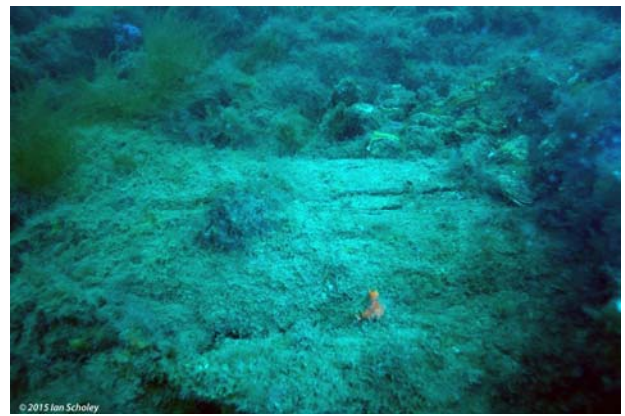
*Brendan Mifsud*



*Left : Mark Jeffrey  
Right : Hannah  
Smeeton*



With half of Sea Eagle’s divers waiting at the surface marker, Ian Smith took over the role of driving Sea Eagle & dropped the two remaining divers off at the surface float. With all four of Sea Eagle’s divers in the water we sat, drifted & enjoyed the ideal surface conditions. Meanwhile Heritage Victoria allowed another boat to tie up alongside their boat whilst the divers all jumped in for their dive.



With Sea Eagle’s divers back onboard & Ian Smith back onboard Toucans we bade farewell to Heritage Victoria & made a leisurely trip back to Mornington. Overall it made for a good day’s diving on a site which has limited access. Many thanks to Graham Ellis for organising all the crews & some decent weather on the day. ❖



**Ian Scholey’s photos 22nd November, 2015**







© 2015 Ian Scholey



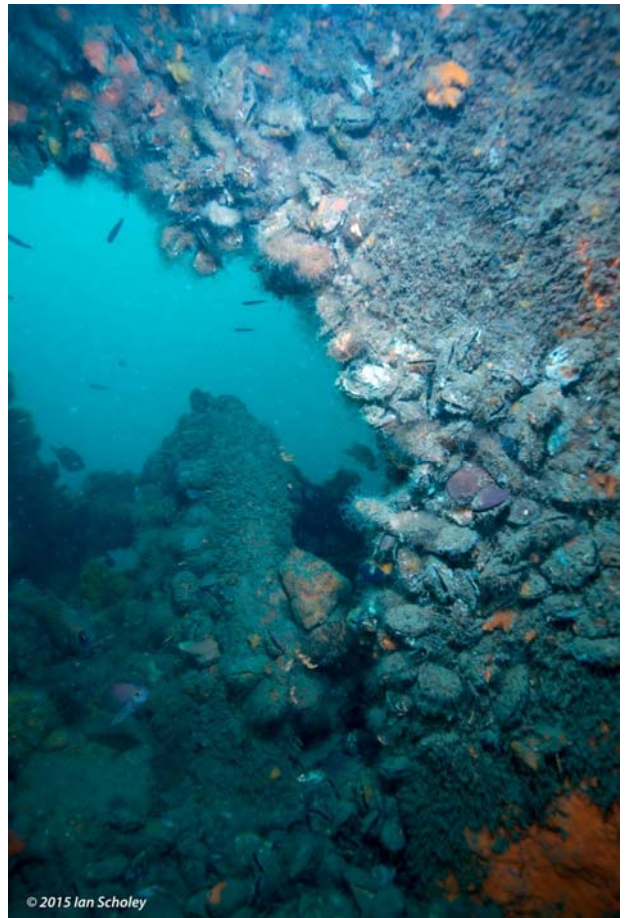
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**Video from Mark Jeffrey  
Sunday 22nd November, 2015**

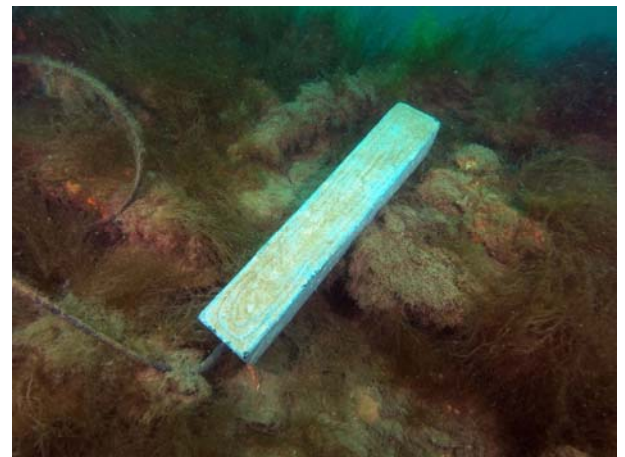
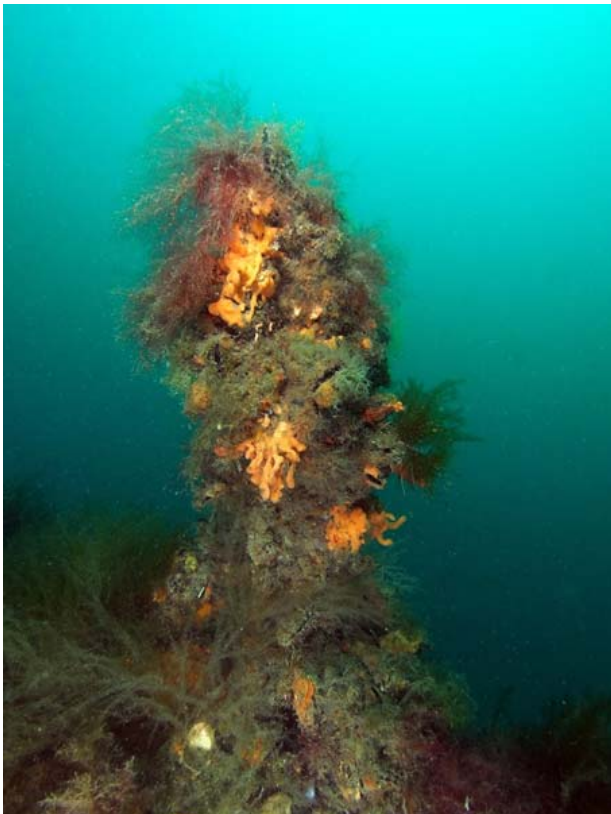
Special thanks to John and dive buddy Hannah for the chance to dive the City of Launceston yesterday. Here's a little video I put together from the dive.



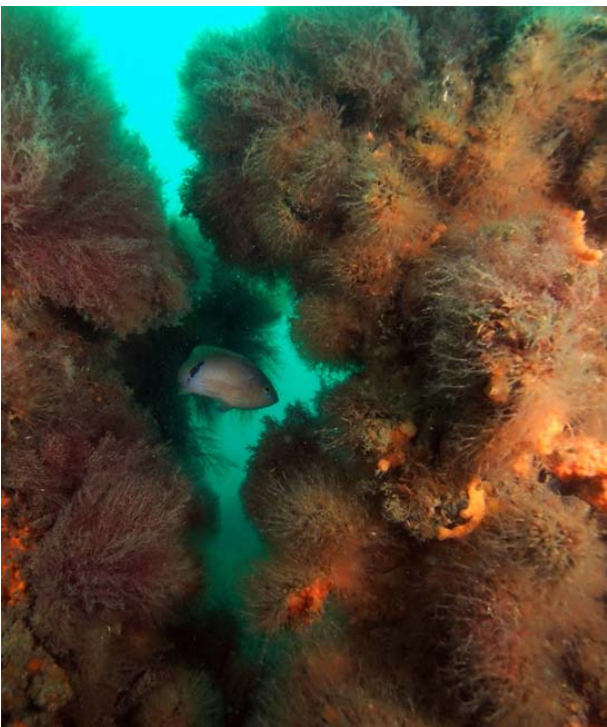
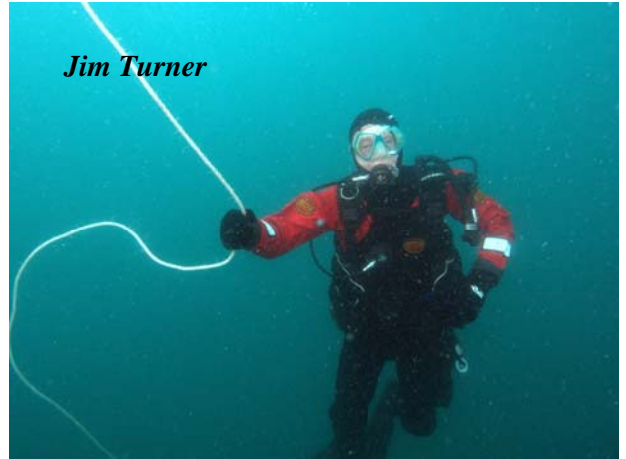
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8hrWcWYlwY&feature=youtu.be>



**David Reinhard's photos  
Sunday 22nd November, 2015**







# *SOUTH AFRICAN DIARY - Part 1 October - November, 2015*

*report and photos by Ian Scholey*

After months of waiting, the long awaited trip to South Africa and Mozambique was finally here. To say there was excitement in the Scholey household would be an understatement. As usual, I left everything to the last minute and Friday morning was a blur of packing interweaved with the stress of a disappearing cat. The little bugger can sense a trip to the cattery and this time he was ready for us and had well and truly disappeared. After making frantic calls to try and find a last minute cat sitter, he finally reappeared and was despatched to his temporary home.

Our group of 9 managed to negotiate the Friday afternoon traffic on the Monash and Tullamarine freeways to slowly assemble at the gate ready for the first stage of our long journey to Johannesburg via Perth. In the group were myself, wife Sue, daughter Anna, David Geekie, Pam Dagley, Tim



Forster, David Flew, David's wife Rae and Graeme Williams, a mate of Tim's. It was a night flight so most of us got as much sleep as possible on the 10.5 hour flight across the Indian Ocean. We arrived into Johannesburg at 4.30am.

It's always a stressful time waiting at the luggage carousel for your dive gear to turn up, but one by one the gear bags were grabbed. However, David Geekie's second bag containing his clothes was a no show. A fruitless trip to lost baggage saw us left with no choice but to leave the airport without David's stuff. David took the whole thing in his stride and didn't seem too phased, even though the underwater housing for his camera was in the bag as well.

After an excellent breakfast the discussion turned to plans for the day. With everyone keen to do something with our time we headed off on a tour of Johannesburg and Soweto. I don't think Joburg is ever going to win "Most in-



teresting city” contest but it was good to see it.

Soweto was much more interesting and not at all like I expected. It has a population of 2 million, living in 3 types of housing. The best areas were like



an Aussie suburb with nice looking houses, the middle class was pretty ok and the poorer areas were pretty basic but still better than what you can find in other parts of the world. We visited the only street in the world where two Nobel Peace Prize winners have lived - Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu - and then the scene of the Sharpsville massacre which was one of the key moments in the struggle against apartheid.

It was a pretty exhausted group that met for drinks and dinner that evening as the travel started to catch up with us. That said, we enjoyed a few beers with the Rugby World Cup on in the background and met up with Fern Perry from Nomad Africa (Our guide) who some of you may remember from her club night presentation.

After a good breakfast we set about loading our gear onto "Junior" our



transport for the trip. *Junior* is a custom made expedition truck equipped with everything you need for self sufficient travel in Africa. We also met Dennis, our driver, Menzeli, our cook and Ruth and Rob, a couple from the UK who made up our group. With everything stowed on board, we hit the road at 7.30am for a big day's driving North East out of Joburg towards the Kruger National Park.

First stop was a shopping mall so the crew could stock up on food while David Geekie bought a new wardrobe with his lost bag unfortunately still missing. Funnily enough, he declined my kind offer of some make over advice and headed off with Pam instead. The rest of the group stocked our onboard cooler with beers and soft drinks for the next few days.

After descending down from Joburg, which sits at 3000m above sea level, we crossed relatively flat farmland and mining areas. Our next stop was at a viewpoint called God's Window



*God's Window, Blyde River Canyon*

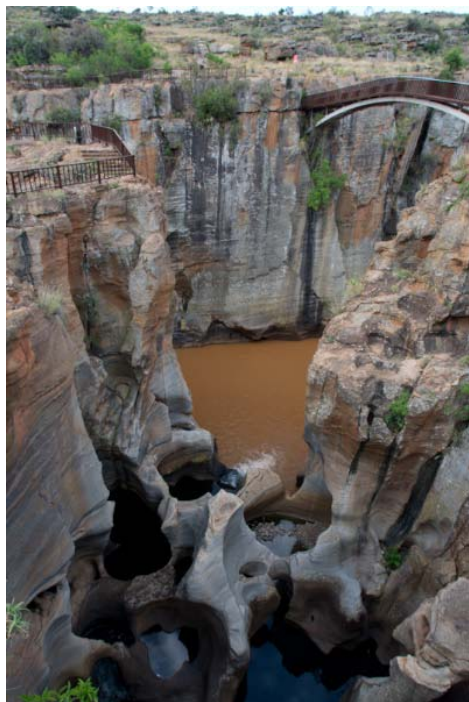
which was a stunning spot looking out across the start of the Blyde River Canyon.

Blyde River Canyon is the third largest canyon in the world after the Grand

Canyon and the Fish River Canyon in Namibia. The stunning scenery continued for the rest of the day as we continued through the high veld stopping at Bourke's Luck Potholes, a spectacular gorge and series of rock pools.

As the sun began dropping further on the horizon, a thunderstorm gave us brief respite

from the 38 degree heat. We now began to descend onto the outskirts of



*Bourke's Luck Potholes*

Kruger National Park. This area was a mix of citrus plantations and private game reserves and we soon started to see our first African wildlife on the side of the road. The excitement



grew as first we saw Impala and Warthog and then a trio of Giraffe grazing the tree tops.



Our campsite for the night was at Timbavati private nature reserve and we pitched our tents amongst the trees.



After a pretty good feed, courtesy of cook Menzeli, a few of us went for a walk around the campsite with torches hoping to spot some wildlife. Accompanied by Fern, we learnt that eyes reflecting white are good while eyes reflecting red or yellow mean - run away! Safely inside the camp we saw only the white eyes of a few Wildebeest although we could clearly see Where the local Hyenas had dug under our protective fence. Apparently they are cowards and would run if the





bumped into a human, I for one was glad we didn't have to test that theory.

Next morning myself and Anna were up early and out for a walk. We soon bumped into Tim Forster who was also out seeing if there was any game about. We couldn't find anything so headed back to camp for breakfast to find the trees around our campsite full of a troop of Vervet Monkeys. We all spent the next 45 minutes trying to stop Monkeys running in and stealing breakfast. Driver Dennis lost his peanut butter sandwich and another one grabbed the banana skins from the rubbish. We now understood the briefing we had been given about keeping the truck windows shut and tents zipped up. Monkeys may be cute but they are devious thieving little buggers as well.



Our day was spent at Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre where we were able to get up close to many of the animals we would see over the coming days. We were lucky enough to get to pet a Cheetah. The animal in question just sat there purring as about fifty people took turns at petting and



*Pam Dagley and a purring cheetah*

getting photos snapped. All of the animals in the centre were either

the victims of man, predominantly having been caught in snares, or young animals that were too accustomed to humans to be released.

It was good to get close to the animals and a great way to learn about the different species. At the end of our visit we were taken into an enclosure with several types of Vultures. Volunteers were asked to step forward and both David Geekie and I were too slow as the rest of the group stepped back. Together with four other victims we were invited to feed the massive Cape Vultures. With a full arm-length of leather glove to protect us, a piece of meat was placed in our hands and the giant Vulture jumped onto our arm. Trying to man up, I ignored the advice to support the gloved arm with the other and tried to take the weight of the bird on my right arm - trust me they are bloody heavy and I had to quickly recover before dropping it.

We took in more scenery as we headed to our next campsite just outside the Kruger National Park. We were all getting pretty handy with putting our

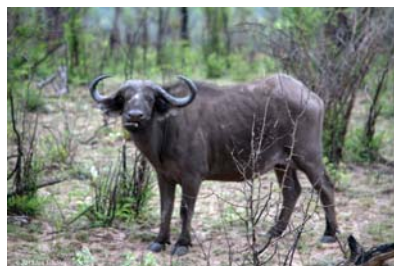


tents up now, so camp was sorted in no time. While some headed for the showers, the rest of us headed to the bar for a cold one sitting out overlooking a small waterhole. A couple of hippos were resident but nothing else appeared, so after a few drinks, we meandered back to camp for a fine meal of chicken stew and a briefing on our next day's activities. In Africa things start early so it was up at 5am in the morning and off to bed early. With no sign of jet lag but a definite feeling of excitement, I was surprised to find most of our group already up at 4.30am when I crawled out of our tent and headed for a shower. Promptly at 6am our two four wheel drive vehicles and guides arrived and we clambered aboard bristling with camera gear and expectation.

Everyone wants to see the African big 5 of Buffalo, Elephant, Rhino, Lion and Leopard. We had been told we had a great chance of seeing 4 of the 5 but that we were unlikely to see a Leopard. This struck a chord with Sue and I who travelled in Africa for 11 months in 1998. We visited about 25 different game parks and saw just about everything but never a Leopard. Their camouflage is so good that you really need to see one on the move to find it at all. We were also advised not to forget to enjoy the smaller things

like birds and antelope.

Sue, Anna and I were teamed with David and Rae Flew and guide Jason while the rest of the group headed off



5, seeing first Buffalos, then a herd of Elephants including a baby right by the side of the road, then a

in the other vehicle. Once inside the park we were soon ticking off the first of the big



pair of White Rhino, all inside the first 30 minutes. The various safari vehicles

keep in contact via radio so any animal sightings are quickly announced over the airwaves.

Although our guide was listening intently to the chatter, he didn't share things with us until we arrived at each spot. Next up was our first predator when we came across a couple of Spotted Hyenas sleeping in the early morning sun. As we pulled away a sharp eyed David Flew pointed out another half dozen or so Hyenas walk-



ing towards the road. The park is stuffed full of predator snacks and we saw large numbers of Impala, Wildebeest, Zebra and smaller numbers of Kudu, Water

Buck and Steenbok.

We pulled up at a waterhole and Jason announced that two Leopards had been seen there. Scanning the scene in front of us we were able to pick out the spots of a Leopard in a clump of bushes next to



the water. The other animals didn't know it was there and, although they



could probably smell it, they couldn't see it, so continued to come down and drink. A large herd of Impala arrived and spread out to drink getting close to the Leopard's hiding spot. Next to arrive were a couple of Giraffes. While one seemed spooked, the other bent its long neck and started to drink. Suddenly the idyllic scene



changed to pandemonium as the Leopard sprang from the bushes at lightning speed and clamped its jaws onto the neck of an Impala. Impalas, birds and giraffes scattered as the Leopard dragged the unfortunate Impala away. Our vehicle quickly went from stunned silence to euphoric chatter as we absorbed what we had just witnessed. It all happened in a split second and I didn't have a chance with my camera. David Flew however was filming the Giraffe drinking and caught the whole thing on video.



*Sue & Anna Scholey, David & Rae Flew with guides after witnessing the leopard kill*

Watching it back later on, it was truly an awesome piece of footage that I'm sure will be shown many times at club meetings if it hasn't already been shown. Worthy of a BBC doco no doubt - well played David.

The Leopard dragged its kill off into the scrub and, try as we might, we couldn't get close enough for a decent photo. Giving up on the Leopard we headed off before stopping some 5



minutes later as Jason pointed out an Impala carcass hanging in a tree. Scanning the area, he soon spotted Leopard number two laying at the foot of the tree. By now we couldn't believe our luck, so much for Leopards being tough to see.



Now a few hours into our day, we stopped for a cuppa and caught up with the other group. We swapped war stories and we were pleased to find they had also seen the two Leopards.

So, not even half way through our game drive we had already seen 4 out of the big 5 and as we set off again we had Lions firmly at the top of our wish list. The next thing we saw had me convinced that this was our lucky day. The African Wild Dog is the second most endangered species in Africa and is something I had never expected to see. But there, right in front of us, was a pack of 10-12 animals snoozing under a large tree. We stayed quite a while snapping away at the dogs before hitting the road once more.

Crossing a river we were distracted from the hippos by fish swimming in the clear water below us. I think it was a first for our guide to have a crew of divers on board who were more excited by the fish than the hippos. Continuing our trip, we came around a bend and in the road ahead of us we saw a line of safari vehicles and cars at the side of the road.



Jason turned around and announced that lions were right next to the road.



We patiently waited our turn to get within a few feet of the king of the beasts. Doing what lions do best were two male lions and two lionesses while some distance away a third male

was under a tree in the shade. One of the males was snoozing on his back with his massive paws skyward while the other sat with his head up not in the least bit interested in us.



Finished with Lions and with our big five complete, a smug Jason asked through a big smile what we wanted





to see next. I guess he thought with luck like ours he could

find anything today. I did mention a cheetah would be nice but also said it would be good if he could arrange for the Rhinos to be closer to the road so we could get some better pictures. Jason eased the vehicle into gear and we headed off. Suddenly he did a quick u-turn and we headed off down a side road. Finding a couple of cars parked up we were wondering what was there to see when we were informed to look out for yet another Leopard. Sure enough, sat head up in the grass, was another of these truly beautiful animals. This one was posing nicely for photographs unlike the first two.



With our day coming to an end we retraced our way to the park

entrance. The eagle eyed David Flew spotted another White Rhino but we couldn't get a decent shot of anything but it's backside. Then half a Kilometre down to the road we found two more a few feet from the road. They seemed to pose for the cameras happily munching on the grass side by side. Last thing of the day was a lone bull elephant who wasn't pleased with our presence. After plenty of posturing he

came towards us and we drove away. The other group made a slightly more hasty retreat as he decided he really had had enough.



This day will go down as one of my best ever and the chat that evening was an excited sharing of a fantastic days adventures. The high-



lights were many with even our guide blown away by the Leopard kill, he said he game drives every day and had never seen anything like it before. But for me it has to

be the look on Anna's face every time we saw a new animal, just priceless.



In all we covered 175km

during our 9 hour trip through the Kruger National Park but we were warned that our next day's travels would be far more strenuous. Breakfast was to be at 5.30am and we were to have our tents down and gear stowed ready for a 6.00am departure.

So it was a bleary eyed crew that arrived at the organised chaos that was the Mozambique border. After a fairly easy exit from South Africa we then

endured a two hour process to obtain the Mozambique visa and get across the border. This included a comical process of having our photo taken and then our finger prints scanned. The machine was a bit temperamental and we were asked to clean our fingers. In the end this didn't work for everyone so the border guard just scanned his own fingers instead. African borders can be difficult and this was right up there in terms of the worst I have experienced. We were grateful for the assistance of our tour leader Dennis, who is fortunately from Mozambique.

After crossing the border we headed north, driving through the capital city of Maputo and onwards to our overnight stop on the beach at Bilane. The more active in the group (David Geekie) cooled off with a swim while the majority headed to the bar for a cold one.



*Pam, Sue & Anna enjoying the beach at Bilane*

Our briefing that evening finally got onto the subject of diving as we were due at Tofu, our first dive site the fol-

lowing day. It was great to hear that they were seeing both Whale Sharks and Manta Rays at the moment and for Anna, the news that an instructor was available to allow her to do an Open Water course.

The next day we were once again up and away early as we continued our journey northwards. The scenery became more tropical with Mango trees and Coconut palms dominating the landscape. We made good progress and just after lunchtime we arrived in the city of Inhambane. While the crew stocked up on foodstuffs, we explored the local market enjoying the colourful stalls and some good natured chatter with the locals.

A few short miles further and we arrived at our base for the next few days at Bay View Lodge. After several days under canvas, the sight of a proper bed was a welcome one. Later that afternoon we headed off to the small town of Praia Do Tofo and found Tofo Scuba Centre. The dive centre was



*Beach at sunrise, Tofo, Mozambique*



right on the beach and was well equipped with a secure area for stowing our gear, an onsite training pool and even its own cafe and bar. The staff were a mixture of British, South African and locals and they made us feel very welcome.



*Group meal at Tofo*

We were given some idea of what we could expect our diving to be like. There are about 20 sites within a 20k boat ride from the centre with most sites in the 20-30m depth range with no shallow sections. This is ideal for Nitrox diving and Nitrox fills were available free of charge which was refreshing in this age of pay for everything.



*Dive briefing at Tofo*

Returning to the dive centre early the next day we were soon set up and ready to go. Our guide Willan gave an extremely good dive briefing where instead of the usual chalk board he used models of the reefs created on wooden boards.



*Setting up in the sunshine of Praia Do Tofo*

Our kit was loaded onto the boat for us and we just walked down the beach to our waiting boat. The dive centre uses large well powered Ribs which they need to be to deal with the surf launch. As we held the Rib into the waves and walked it forward into the surf, we were battered by several large breakers before "the everybody on" shout went up and we jumped on board. We quickly hooked our feet into straps on the floor and the skipper powered forward through the breaking waves. The launch process was a whole lot of fun but did leave me wondering how we were getting back onto the beach later on.



*David Geekei, Graeme Williams, David Flew & Pam Dagley on the dive boat at Tofo*



A few hundred metres off the shore the engines were cut and we were treated to a Humpback Whale mother and calf breaching close by. We headed south through 2-3m swell with those on the wrong side of the boat getting a pretty good soaking much to the amusement of those on the right side of the boat.



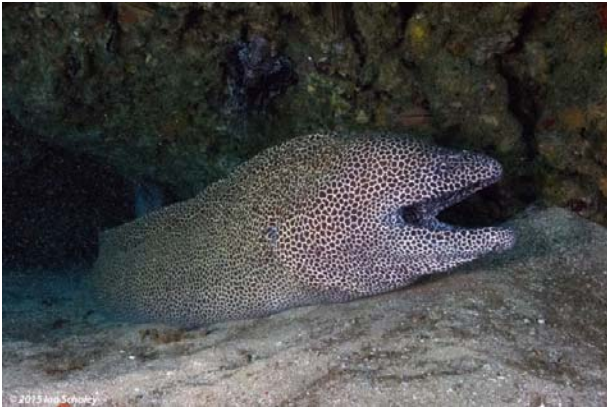
Our first dive site was a spot called Manta Reef. All of the diving in this area is drift diving and the entries are all negatively buoyant so that the group can stay together. The dive guide tows a buoy and all we had to do was stay between the guide and a second guide who brought up the rear.

As we descended on dive one we found the current was only slight so we could easily stop and take a look at things.

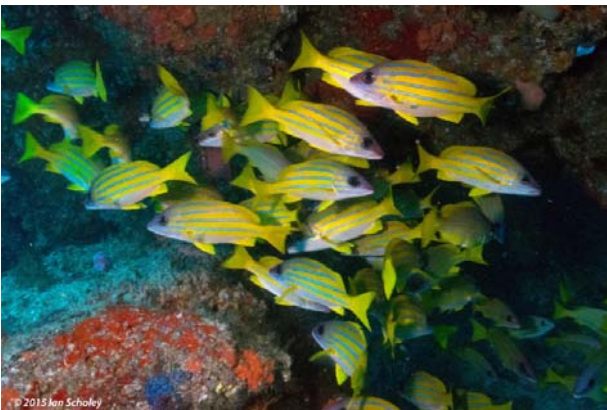


The reef was pretty bare of growth (it reminded me of Southern Qld/northern NSW) but the fish life was spectacular. There were large schools of bright blue Red-lipped Triggerfish, clouds of purple and orange Antheas and schools of Blue-lined Snapper creating a dazzling display of colour. A green turtle lazily rose from the reef and swam slowly between David Flew and I and David Geekei and Pam Dagley.



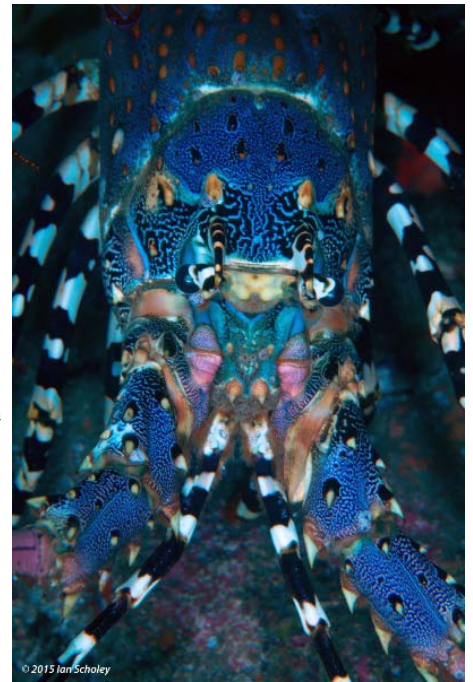


As we followed the reef along we found overhangs and caves. Entering one cave we found a pair of enormous Honeycomb Morays. These guys were too big for holes so were just laid on the sand. They are impressive animals with their girth being about a foot and a half. The other thing in abundance on this reef are Lionfish with many seen free swimming.



After about 30 minutes the air divers amongst us started their ascent while the Nitrox divers continued the lazy drift. With our no deco time down to 2 minutes we commenced our ascent as instructed in our briefing. Our total dive time was 53 minutes with a maximum depth of 25m.

Our second dive of the day saw us head south rather than north to a dive site called The Office. This reef has a flat part on the northern side and this is



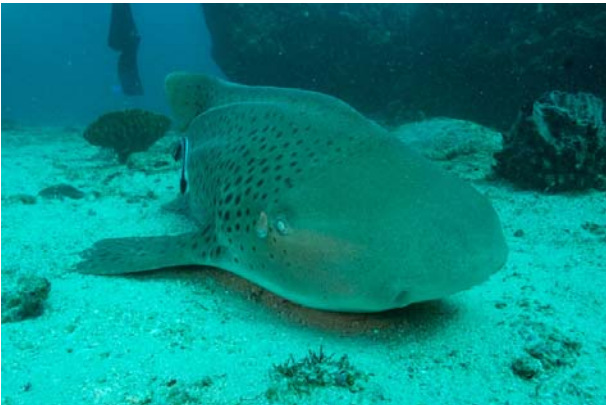
where we started our dive before drifting gently south. Once again most of the reef was in the 18-27m range. We drifted along a wall with many caves and crevices where we found plenty of Lobsters and more of the giant Honeycomb Morays.



The top of the reef has several cleaning stations but sadly there were no Mantas to be seen although once again there were huge schools of snapper and fusiliers to entertain us. With an average dive depth of over 20m the air divers started their ascent



after 30 minutes while David Flew, Pam Dagley, David Geekie and myself continued our drift across more cleaning stations and a patch of sand where we found a large Leopard Shark. We hit the surface after 46 minutes with a maximum depth of 26.4m.

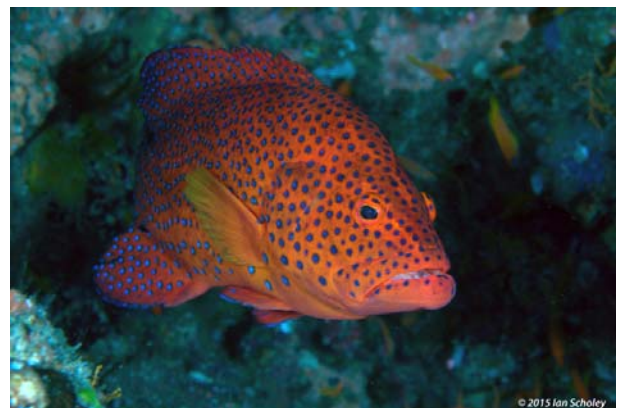


As we were to find, the wind generally picks up a bit in the afternoon. That made the return to the beach an adrenalin filled experience as, with perfect timing, our skipper wound up the power and ran the boat right up onto the beach with all on board hanging on for dear life.

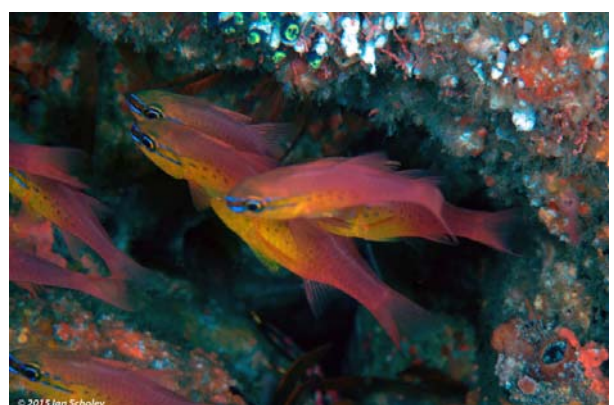
Back at the dive centre we hooked up again with my daughter Anna who had spent the day doing the theory part of her Open Water course. Under the guidance of our tour leader and instructor, Fern, she completed the tables section that evening and then sat her exam. To say she was delighted with her 96% score would be an understatement and it certainly made her dad proud.



The next day's plan was a pool session in the morning for Anna followed by her first two boat dives on the nearby shallow reef. As for the main group, we headed out for another two boat dives in slightly rougher conditions than the previous day.



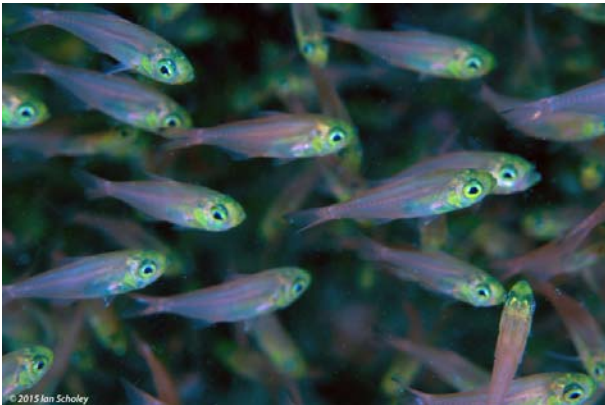
Our first dive of the day was at a spot called Hogwarts. This was my favourite spot of our three days with the fish life being fantastic. Midway through the dive we found a massive Potato Cod and David Flew and I stayed with it for several minutes while it got a





clean from the cleaner Wrasse. Once again the two David's, Pam and myself were the last ones up after a really enjoyable dive.

On the way back to the beach we spotted a Whale Shark and quickly donned our masks, snorkels and fins. In the instant it took us to do this the shark dived out of view and we were unable to relocate it which was a huge disappointment.



With the surf getting gradually worse and sea conditions worsening our second dive was a closer spot called Giant's Castle. This site bottomed out at 31 m and was the deepest dive we completed while in Mozambique. The top of the reef was flat and a 4 m high wall led down to the sand. Once again the sea life was prolific with a fantastic selection of reef fish together with

the ever present Lionfish and Honeycomb Morays. What really stood out about this spot were the clouds of Red-lipped Triggerfish. The topography was a bit ordinary with everyone agreeing that this was our least favourite spot so far.



Back at the dive centre we had some time to kill while Anna completed the second of her training dives, and Tom and Ruth our UK companions squeezed in a third dive. We headed into the small town to check out the market and found a spot for a cold beer while we waited for the others to reappear. A quick chat with Anna's instructor Mike confirmed that her first dives had gone well.

That evening we headed out to a local restaurant to try a local dish called Metapo at the recommendation of our driver Dennis. The dish has to be prepared the day prior so we had made a reservation the previous day. Accompanied by Dennis, Fern and our Zimbabwean cook, Menzeli, we all sat



down and enjoyed our Metapa in the beachside restaurant.

There was a choice of fish or sea snails as the protein in the dish. Unsurprisingly the majority went for fish. Fair play to Graeme and Tom who braved the sea snails. Tempted as I was, I couldn't quite bring myself to brave it - it seemed a little like eating Nudi's to me. As for Metapa, if you ever get the chance, give it a go, it was really nice, although I still have no idea what was in it.

Our final day's diving in Mozambique saw us once again heading North to a spot called Reggie's Reef. Once again we had a bumpy boat ride, this time with Anna a long for the ride although not for the dive. We rolled over the side of the rib and made a negatively buoyant descent so we stayed together in the current.



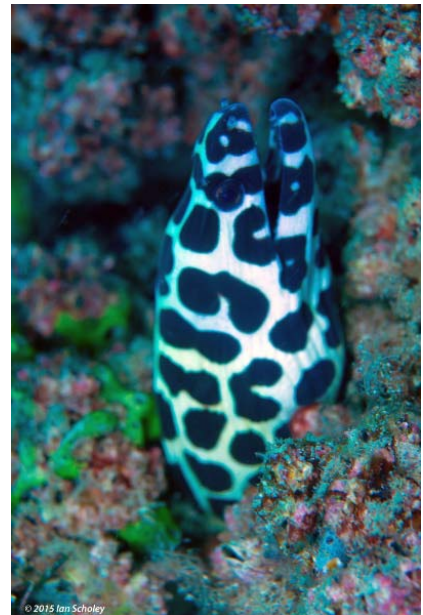
The reef bottomed out at 27.5m and we explored as we drifted in a reasonable current. Although the fish life

was once again spectacular, the reef was again disappointing and the Mantas stayed elusive. We did find a large Green Turtle when we first descended which seemed unconcerned with our presence. Enjoying the dive we cruised along, bottoming out at 27.4m with a total dive time of 52 minutes.

With the wind once again picking up, the second dive was again the closer Giant's Castle. While the others headed off, I switched boats and headed out with Anna for a double tank dive on a reef called 007. These dives were Anna's final two of her open water course so I got to check out some of her skills before we explored a 12m reef in quite surgery conditions and vis down below 10m.

Anna coped well with the conditions and enjoyed the fish. I really enjoyed this reef, finding loads of interesting stuff to show Anna including a pair of Leaf Scorpionfish, Blue spotted stingrays, a trio of different Moray

Eels including a beautiful white eel with black spots and the first Nudi's of the trip.





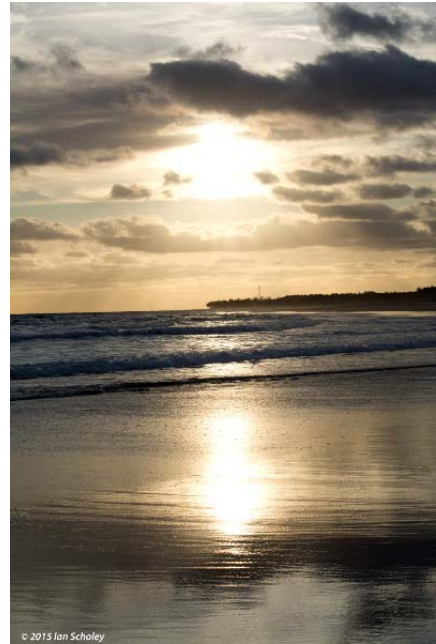
The other divers were already back when we returned to the dive centre and the reports of the dive were good. Three Nitrox divers had been circled by a group of Mobula Rays while doing their safety stop which was a fitting way to end our Mozambique diving.



***Congratulations Anna! Open Water Diver!***

All in all we enjoyed Mozambique but we were disappointed with the lack of coral. The fish life made up for the lack of colour with plenty of big fish and schools of fish but none of the Mantas and Whalesharks we had expected. That's the breaks I guess. The dive centre was excellent with good facilities and some of the most

professional dive briefings I have ever experienced. The dive sites are deep but Nitrox is free to those qualified so no issues there. Would I go back? On balance probably not. ❖



To view Ian's video of "Launching the boat African style at Tofo" use the link below :

<https://www.facebook.com/ian.scholey.3/videos/10207778944656872/>





<https://www.facebook.com/groups/underwaterphotographyvictoria/>

## Underwater Photography Victoria

Hannah Smeeton and Lloyd Borrett are now collaborating with Geoffrey Whitehorn to keep the Facebook group Underwater Photography Victoria going. So if you have photos taken while diving in Victoria, feel free to join the group. The rules remain as before and will be strictly enforced.

This Group has been created for members residing in Victoria, Australia, to post their photos of Marine Life, Reefs and Wrecks taken in Victorian waters, and is open to Underwater Photographers of all levels. Please feel free to add new members who share the same interests of this Group. We welcome members from outside of Victoria, but photos posted must have been taken in Victorian waters.

We reserve the right to remove any post or comment that we deem inappropriate to the smooth running of this Group.

This is not intended to be a dive Buddy Group and any discussion should only be related to Underwater Photography and Equipment.

Please :

1. Share location, equipment and settings with a brief description when possible;
2. any discussion on equipment or settings must be brief, friendly and constructive;
3. Only post or share your own photos to avoid any copyright infringements;
4. Only two posts per member a day so everyone gets to show their photos. Albums should be kept to a minimum;
5. No post of any fish/animal being handled, captured or harmed in any way;
6. No commercial, political or linked posts without permission from Admin. ❖

# National Geographic Live Oceans Wild with Brian Skerry

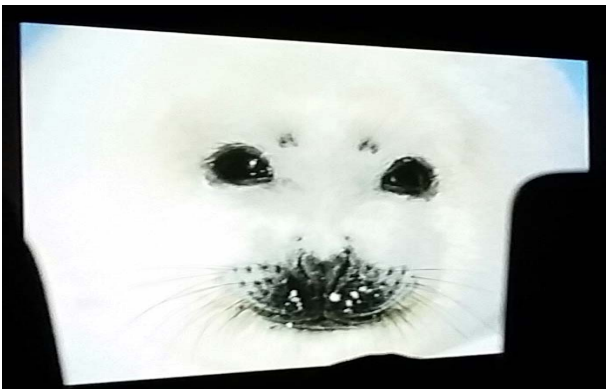
On Thursday October 29th, VSAG and GetUnder members gathered at Hamer Hall, Melbourne to listen to Brian Skerry talk about his life as one of National Geographic's most seasoned photographers.

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.

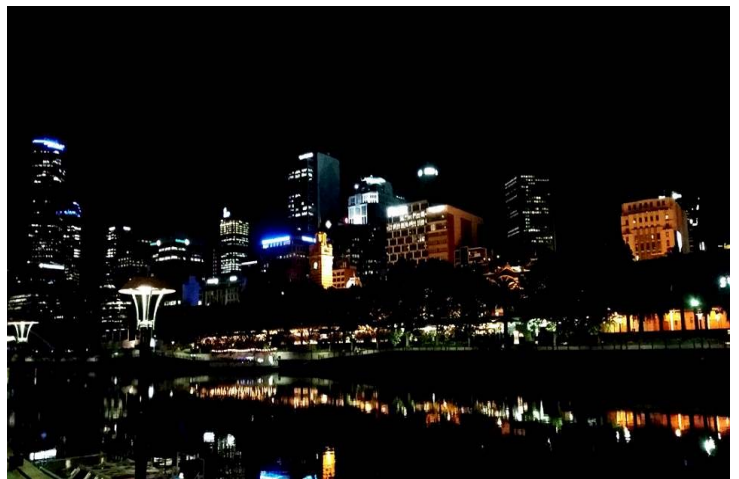


Brian has spent more than 10,000 hours underwater using his camera to tell the story of some of the ocean's most elusive inhabitants. His mission: to enlighten and inspire people to care about the beauty, bounty, and health of the world's oceans.

*Hannah Smeeton managed to capture some photos of the night.*

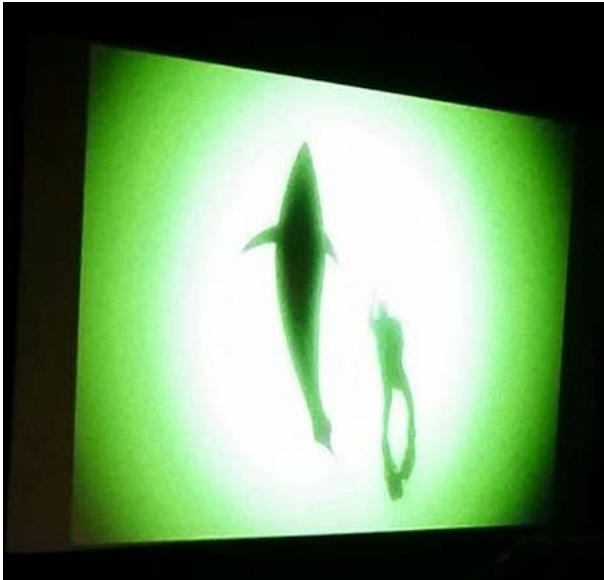


*Dinner before the show : Ian Scholey, Sherryn Meager, Mick Young, John Lawler, Lloyd Borrett, Heidi Herron, Kerry Shanahan & Geoff Rodda*

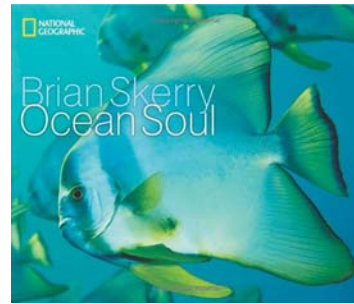


*L-R : Carole & Peter Campisagno, Kerry Shanahan, Geoff Rodda, Sherryn Meager & Mick Young inside Hamer Hall*





*Upon sending this photo to his Nat Geo manager her comment was 5 words - **“What.. Else. Have. You. Got?!!!”***



Brian has produced a wonderful book of his photos & travels that was sold out on the night.

To get a copy, go to the Book Depository website where you will find it at a very reasonable price and delivery is free!

<http://www.bookdepository.com/>

To view a YouTube clip about Brian's tour - follow the link below :



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyGWNah\\_6E4&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyGWNah_6E4&feature=player_embedded)



*...and, yes, a good time was had by all!!*

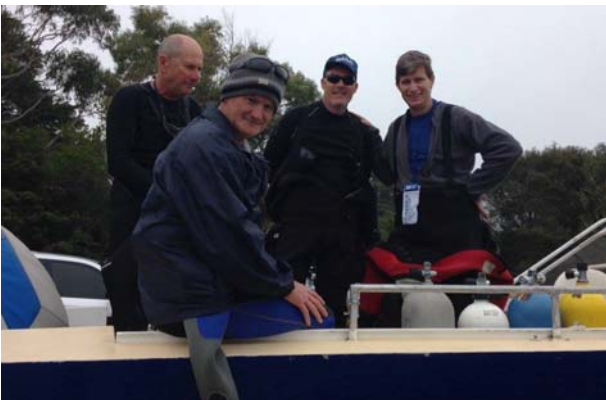
# Dive Reports

## *Rotomahana, Golden Arch, Twin Bommies*

*Sunday 27th  
September 2015*

*Report by John Ashley ; photos Ian Scholey*

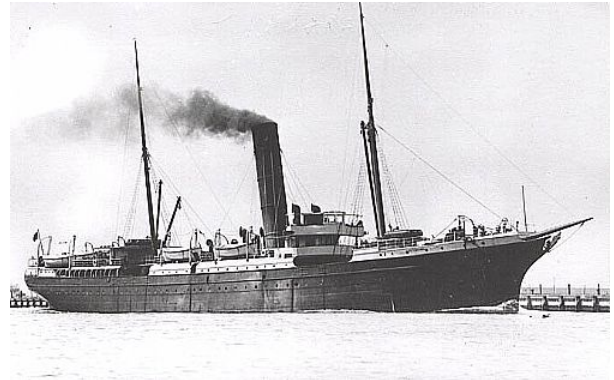
After last week's 30 metre viz there were 10 very eager divers spread over three boats. David Geekie launched from Barwon Heads with John Lawler and Graham Ellis launching at Sorrento.



*The ME3 crew — with John Ashley,  
Tony Knott and Graham Ellis.*

What a strange day with a pea soup fog down to 200 metres. We left Sorrento and apart from a large ship which we only saw 150 metres away,

we saw nothing else till we got to Queenscliff but once through The Heads it was perfect.



Our first dive of the day was on the Rotomahana (WHAT A DIVE). We descended the shot line which was perfectly positioned at the boilers in 39 metres and after swimming underneath them headed towards the bow. Every bit of our 17 minute bottom time was packed with things to see from schooling fish, corals and all manner of sponges. I last dived here in the early eighties and without a doubt there are a lot more Gorgonian corals. Check out Ian's photos they are fantastic and after a heap of Deco it was topside and lunch.







© 2015 Ian Scholey



© 2015 Ian Scholey

dive with viz about 10 -15 metres. We were pleased to have two new divers on Graham's boat and hope they enjoyed themselves.



© 2015 Ian Scholey

*One of our new divers, Craig Allan*



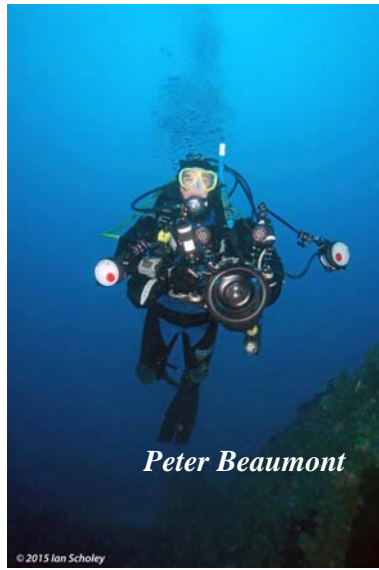
© 2015 Ian Scholey

*Buddy Peter Beaumont taking a photo of Ian Scholey inside the wreck*

Last dive of the day was at Twin Bommies which was simply brilliant. I've never done this dive and look forward to doing it again, - lots of broken reef in 16 metres with swim throughs, caves and gutters. A lazy looking Wobbygong shark meandered past with the usual schools of Whiting and all manner of reef fish. As it was reasonably shallow, the sun shone through, illuminating all the colours one would expect to see on our Bass Strait reefs.



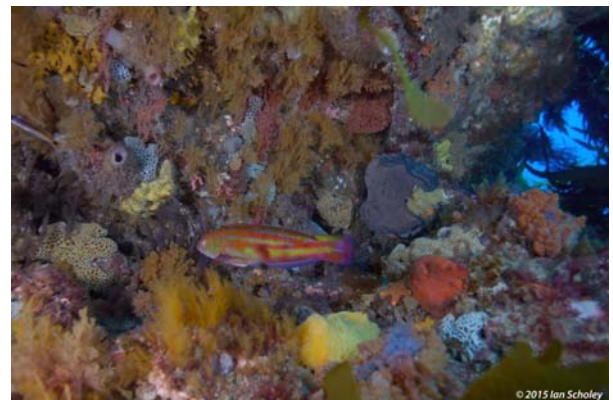
© 2015 Ian Scholey



© 2015 Ian Scholey

*Peter Beaumont*

Dive two was at the Golden Arch and from all accounts lived up to its reputation with the guys having a great



© 2015 Ian Scholey



Time to head back through the same Pea soup fog again and we didn't see land between Point Lonsdale and Sorrento. It was GPS sailing all the way. Thanks to the skippers and fellow divers for a great day and to the new divers on the day, we look forward to seeing you again. ❖



# Mornington Pier

Wednesday 21st  
October, 2015

*report & photos by Peter Beaumont*

**Dive time:** 1 hr 9min

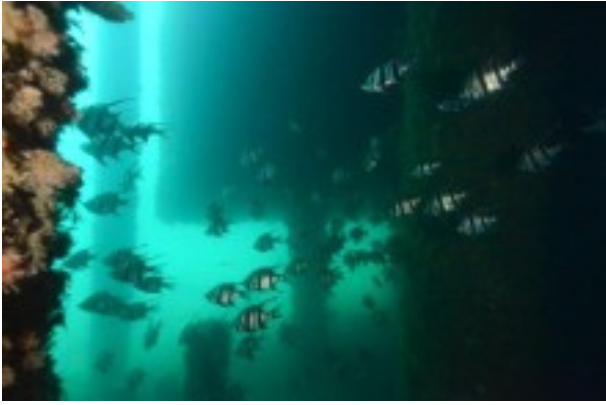
**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 8 mtrs

With the forecast indicating mid week weather as unsuitable for boat diving, I thought I'd put out an all VSAG email for a Wednesday morning dive at Mornington Pier. I mean what better way to relax than go for a mid week dive, enjoy the scenery & take a few pics?

Brendan Mifsud had some spare time available so was able to join in. After lowering the camera & dive flag/float into the water, we jumped in & made our way down the side of the pier & set the dive flag/float before descending & making our way towards the swim through. The school of Old Wives appears to have increased in size and moved out of the way as I took a few pics on our way to the swim through & onto the sandy bottom at the base of the reef.





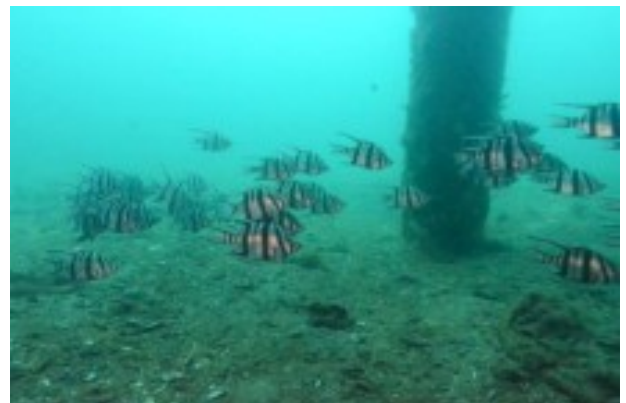
From there I took more pics as we swam towards the point. When we reached the end of the reef wall, we turned around & swam back along the reef towards the end of the pier. I then did a double take as a small ray flew past on its back. I thought WTF then saw the hook in its mouth and realised it was being reeled in as fast as possible by someone on the pier.

Moving towards the end of the pier, we found some large boulders/pieces of the old pier lying in the sand about 8mtrs away from the main reef & decorated with various pieces of fishing lines, lures, sinkers etc. After collecting a few sinkers for recycling we swam around a pile of rock dumped at



the end of the pier then moved under the pier to the inside of the wave screen. There amongst the stumps from the old pier we found the usual blennies, old wives, wrasse, morwong, zebra fish, pygmy leather jacket, beer bottle fish etc.

Mindful of the 8am start, 2hr parking limit, we collected the dive flag/float & headed back to the exit point where I checked out the hull growth on one of the resident boats tied up at the sea wall. We then surfaced, exited the water and headed off for coffee at the local café where the sparrows were busy flying off with the sugar satchels from the outside tables. Overall it a relaxing enjoyable dive despite the light rain & 10-15k SW wind. ❖



# *Hurricane Wreck & South Channel Fort*

*Friday 23rd  
October, 2015*

*Report by Peter Beaumont ; photos by  
Peter Beaumont & David Reinhard*

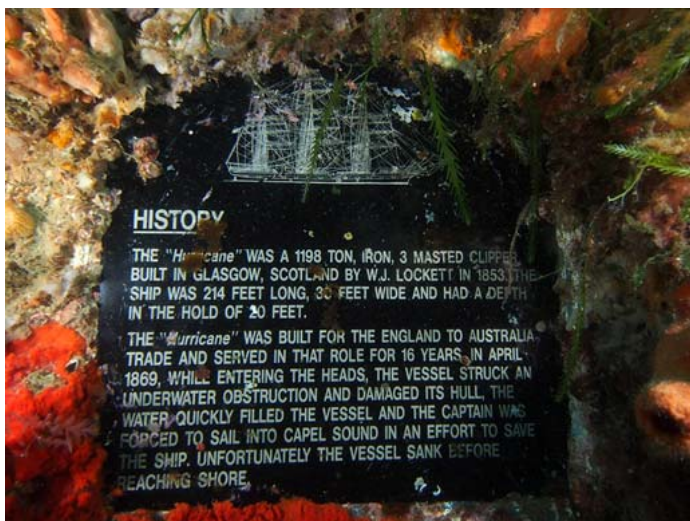
**Divers:** Peter Beaumont, David Reinhard

**Boat:** TOUCANS

**Dive time:** 55min, 50min

**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 8 mtrs



Just for something different I thought I'd start the weekend on a Friday so I put out an all VSAG email for a Friday dive on the Hurricane & SC Fort. I mean what better way to relax than go for a Friday dive, enjoy some good weather, the scenery & take a few

pics? David Reinhard must have been thinking the same thing & fired back an email saying he was keen. We decided on a leisurely 8am meeting time at Rye Ramp for an 8.30am launch.

From the ramp car park I watched the daily flow of traffic as people were going about their daily business ie: heading off to work, opening up shops, waiting in traffic at the lights etc. By comparison, the bay was flat, calm & inviting. I looked back at the traffic & thought to myself, "Have a good day at work people."

There was a work crew replacing some rotten timbers on the jetty & sure enough, no sooner did they start work when four or five boats were launched with people dodging power cables, generators, power tools, pieces of timber decking etc. One of the workmen muttered, "I didn't think it would be this busy on a Friday."

Departing the jetty we headed out the channel & towards the Hurricane.

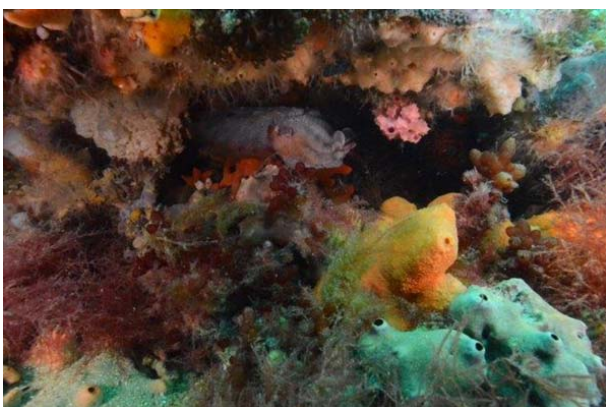
There were a few boats out fishing but none were on the dive site so we had it all to ourselves. We anchored, conducted a current check (rotating prop, mermaid line drift, hang line angle, GPS distance from mark check, etc) & waited for the incoming 3.5knot current to slow down.

With the current slowing down & the GPS indicating the anchor was hold-



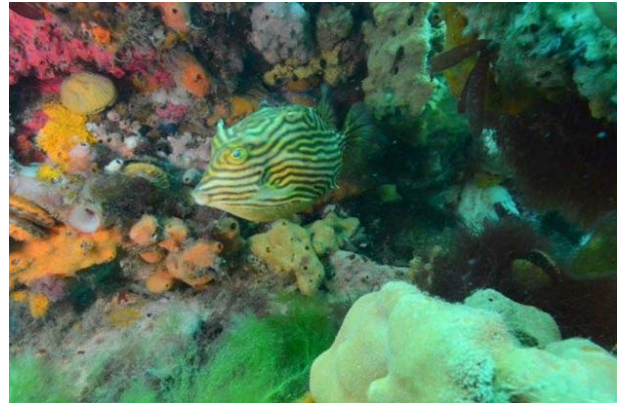


ing we rolled into the water, collected our cameras from the hang lines & followed the anchor line to the bottom. Vis was approx 8 mtrs & we could see various sections of the wreck as we descended.

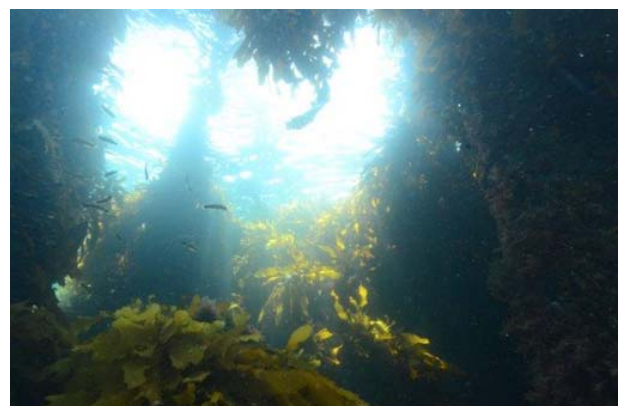


We checked/set the anchor then ran a reel & swam around the wreck. We saw the usual sea horses, rockling, leather jackets, rays, cuttlefish, school of long fin pike, pinkies, old wives,

ornate cowfish & the odd boarfish. Before we knew, it we were at the fifty minute mark so we cleared the anchor, did a 5 minute stop at 5 meters & climbed back onboard for some morning tea.

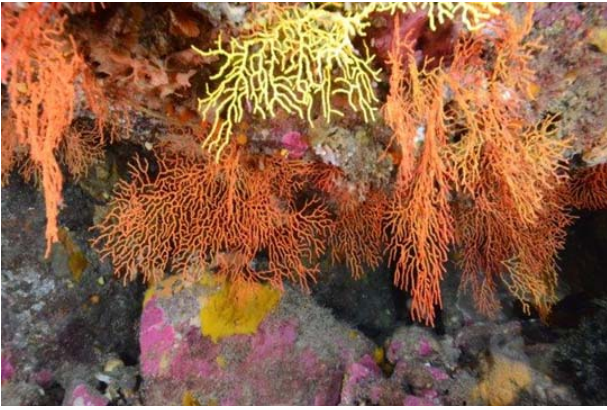


I had the usual cup-a-soup, muesli bars (bland) etc. whilst David had brought along a Bakers Delight feast - ummmnnn yum. After discussing the dive, photographs etc. we changed over tanks, retrieved the anchor & proceeded to SC Fort for the second dive.



With the boat tied up close to the Fort's loading dock we set the fenders, dive flag & anchor. We waited approx 10 minutes then geared up, rolled in & swam around the pylons





then along the reef (till we could feel the outgoing current) then back to the pylons.

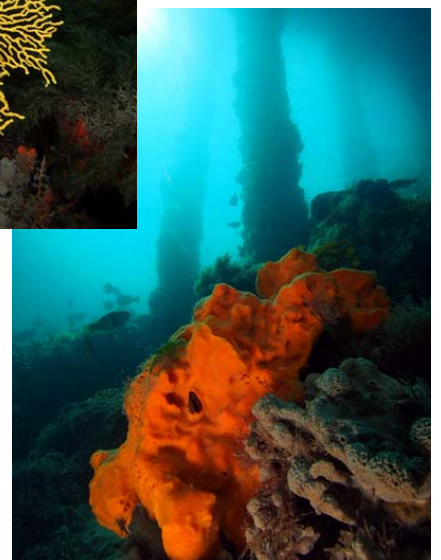
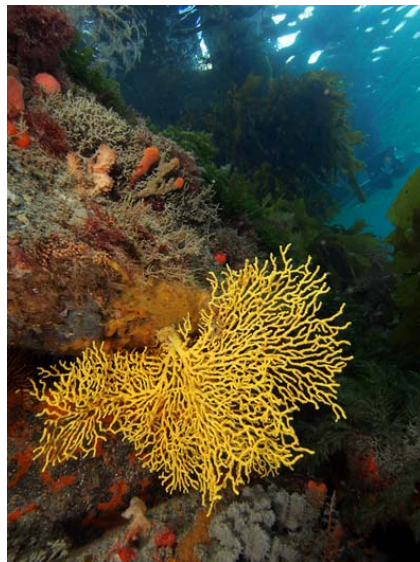
There was the resident school of globe fish avoiding the current, nudi's, wrasse, fan corals around the pylons & in the undercut sections of concrete in the old loading dock area. Visibility was between 5-8mtrs & after spending a good 20 minutes checking out the shallows of the loading dock I re-



turned to the boat whilst David happily continued taking pics.



With David back onboard we stowed & secured the dive gear before heading back across the Bay (chopped up by a 15k NE wind) to Rye ramp. Overall it was an enjoyable day out & with a night dive planned for the Hurricane we recovered the boat, changed over tanks & headed off to the Scuba Doctor for a coffee/chat. ❖





# *Hurricane Wreck Night Dive*

*Friday 23rd  
October, 2015*

*report by Peter Beaumont ; photos by  
Peter Beaumont & Ian Scholey*

**Divers:** Peter Beaumont, Ian Scholey

**Boat:** TOUCANS

**Dive time:** 1hr/1hr 15

**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 8 mtrs

Seeing as Ian had received no feedback for a Friday Blairgowrie night dive, I suggested a night dive on the Hurricane as the  $\frac{3}{4}$  moon, forecast light winds plus the 2.6k incoming tide made for ideal conditions.

Ian was interested, so with the day dives completed, I parked at the ramp then went to the Rye bakery for lunch. After lunch I went & topped up the boat fuel, checked over the dive gear & had a lazy afternoon till Ian arrived at 6pm. With the boat loaded we launched and proceeded to the dive site.

By this stage of the day most of the fishing boats were returning to the

ramp and we had the dive site all to ourselves. We anchored, did the usual current check (rotating prop, mermaid line drift, hang line angle, GPS distance from mark check etc.) & with the GPS indicating the anchor was holding, we rolled into the water, collected our cameras & followed the anchor line to the bottom.



The vis had improved slightly from the earlier dives, so after checking the anchor was set & fitted with a strobe, we ran a reel & swam around the wreck. I was looking for some of the resident goblin fish but was out of luck. I did find some ornate cowfish which were willing to hang around for a few pics along with the odd cuttlefish, rockling, leather jacket etc.





At the 55 minute mark I indicated to Ian I was surfacing so I handed him the reel & moved the strobe further up the anchor rope. I did the usual 5 minute stop at 5 meters & watched Ian's focus lights/strobes moving around on the sea floor. Back onboard the boat I recovered my camera, dive gear & had a look around the bay. The night was clear, calm & the ¾ moon was doing a great job of lighting up the bay.

Meanwhile on the sea floor, Ian was preparing to ascend & had finished moving the anchor when a somewhat startled maori octopus flared up in front of him without warning & scared the >>>%%#@# out of him!

We were back at the ramp car park by 9.30pm unloading the boat. I did have

a spare tank on the boat and had considered doing a second night dive but thought better of it. A quick stop off at the local servo (10pm) on the way home to freshwater run/flush the engine for 5 minutes startled a few passers by but I figured better off doing it here than at home. Overall it was a worth while day's diving which made for a good start to the weekend. ❖





# *SS Coogee & Golden Arch*

*Sunday 8th  
November, 2015*

*report by Ross Walker ; photos by  
Peter Beaumont*

## ***Boats / Divers present :***

***Toucans*** with Peter Beaumont & Michael Ngai

***Carmine*** with Peter & Carole Campisagno, Stephen Vadja & myself

As there were only enough divers to fill 2 boats – I decided to leave *2DIVE4* at home and “do it easy” on someone else’s boat. So Sunday bright and early saw me heading down to Sorrento @ sunrise – conditions then being, a light breeze with some cloud. By the time I reached Rye and could see the Bay, the cloud cover had mostly left and the Bay was calm and sunny.

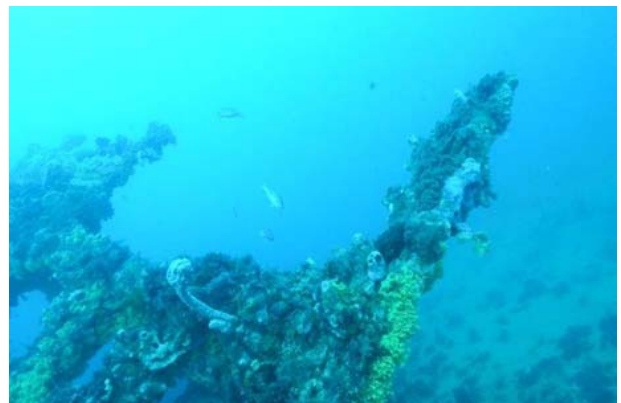
Everyone gathered at the top carpark of the boat ramp before the agreed 8am and following greetings etc., the skippers gave their respective briefings to their passengers and we moved

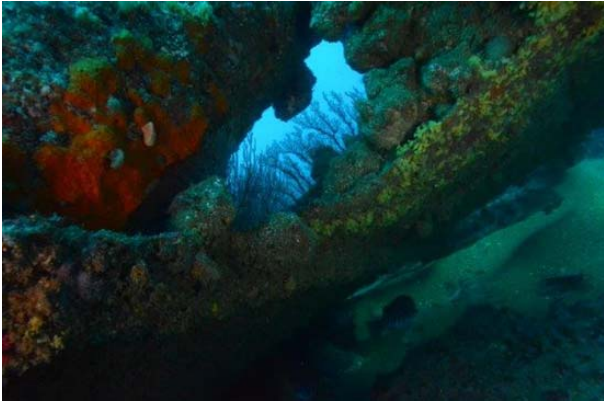
the boats to the ramp. Toucan’s out-board decided to test Peter with a bit of the old refusal to start – but after a bit of a “talking to” it came around and behaved for the rest of the day.



The small fleet then proceeded to the Heads to check on the swell outside. Conditions were very good and so the Coogee @ 33m was the first dive chosen. Toucans was first on the scene joined by us.

Stephen and myself were the first divers in on our boat and so we rolled over the side into the water and followed the shot line down, to discover that The Campo’s had neatly laid the line across the wreck next to the stern (nice going crew!). Soon after hitting





the bottom, Stephen had a mask malfunction. After distinguishing that it wasn't just hair etc. and the fact he could not see too well through the mask, he decided to "call it a day" and followed the line back up.

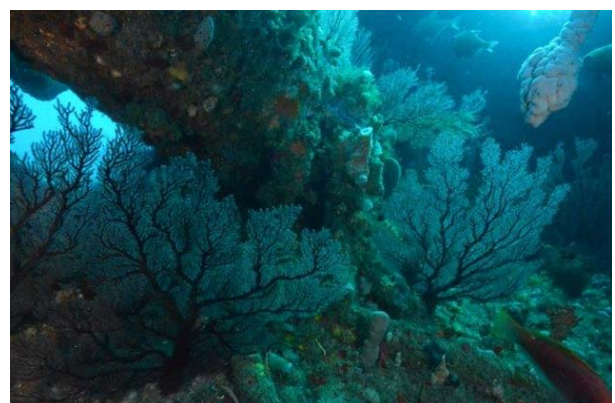
Conditions were a little murky, but still good enough to enjoy the wreck. Anyone who has done a dive on the "Old Girl" will remember the steering gear etc. at the stern is festooned with yellow zoanthids. This and the resident school of fish make it a lovely spot to linger. A very large Boarfish was hiding inside the stern. I finished the dive with a short stroll to the boilers and back to the shot. The Campo's then had their turn to get wet, during which Toucans, having finished, scouted out the next dive site.

Upon Peter and Carol's return, we raised Toucan's on the radio and discovered that they chosen the Golden Arch @ 16m for the second dive, so we proceeded to join them.

Again Stephen and I buddied up (Stephen borrowing a mask from the Campo's) – as this dive is a bit shallow there was some surge here though nothing to really mention. Again a little murky but well within the good viz. margin for reef diving.

We followed the shot to the bottom where we met Michael, who pointed us in the right direction to the Arch. Upon arriving there, we were greeted with some nice fish life within, and some good tulip sponges, outside the arch. Continuing along the reef, we came across a large group of fish milling about, and upon further investigation, discovered that between 1 – 2 dozen fish of various species were taking turns "pigging out" on a broken abalone.

The top of the Ab. had been broken into with a big hole that the fish were sticking their mouths into and taking bites. The Ab. was still attached to the bottom – I have never seen this before and do not know what can break the top of an Ab. like that (and before you ask - NO we did NOT do it! – though





I'm thinking about it for future dives of this type.

The fish were so engrossed in the feeding frenzy that we were able to lay on the bottom and get our faces to within 1-2 feet of them. So of course we spent quite a while watching the spectacle, with the magnificent colours of the fish being fully appreciated in the sunlight at this depth. You just never know what you will come across during a dive !!!

All too soon it was time to "call the dive" and surface to the boat. Peter and Carol decided to forgo the second dive and so we headed back inside the Bay where we met up with Toucans and raced back to the boat ramp, over a surface that had gotten so calm you could skip a stone across the Heads.

The usual unloading proceeded and a BIG thank you from all of us to the "Skippers" for providing a great day on (and under) the water !

Also, the Campo's are now to be known as gear lenders extraordinaire as, apart from loaning Stephen a mask, they generously loaned me their daughter's fins. WHY, I hear you say! Mine were left in my car (a friend asked to borrow it at the last minute

the night before, for my towbar and in transferring my gear over in the dark, the fins were left behind in the boot). No excuses I hear! So I guess a wooden weight belt nomination will be forthcoming!

*Postscript:* Stephen and myself proceeded to The Scuba Doctor for airfills, where Stephen booked an appointment with the Doc. After updating him on his symptoms, and following a comprehensive examination, the Doc. diagnosed - "Buggered Mask condition". The Doc. then prescribed a new mask to heal it. Stephen and his new "friend" were last seen healthy and happily embracing whilst driving off home, "looking" forward to the next dive. (Sorry couldn't help the pun) ❖

## *Same Day - from another perspective*

*report & photos by Peter Beaumont*

**Dive time:** 25min, 36 min

**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 8-10 mtrs

With a favourable forecast of a 1.1m slight SW swell @ 13 sec intervals dropping to 1 mtr, 10k NE wind & 25



degrees, we headed off from Sorrento in company with *Carmine*. As Michael was diving with a rebreather (pretty impressive & lightweight piece of gear), I confirmed that he was comfortable with diving the Coogee's 34m. Conditions at the RIP were fairly calm & with the pilot boat in a hurry to exit the bay, we slowed down, let it pass, then resumed our course for the Coogee.



Once anchored I did the usual current check (rotating prop, mermaid line drift, hang line angle, GPS distance from mark check etc.) & waited to see how the boat would ride as there was a bit of wind chop from a 15k NE. The incoming tide was producing a slight current which was the GPS indicating the anchor was

holding the mermaid line at 90° to the stern of the boat. With the GPS indicating the anchor was holding, we reviewed the conditions and geared up for the dive. By this stage *Carmine* had placed a shot on the wreck and her divers were preparing for the dive.



Once ready, we rolled in then met at the anchor rope to check all was OK before descending to the bottom to do the initial anchor check/setting. Once there, we found the anchor was sitting on the sandy bottom so I handed the camera to Michael and dragged the anchor/boat approx 5 mtrs and set the anchor on a solid piece of reef so it wouldn't drag. I attached the reel to the anchor line then we swam towards the bow section so I could take some





*Michael Ngai*



pics of the yellow xanthoids, fan corals, fish life etc.

Mean while, Michael was happily having a look around the bow & the ever inquisitive fish life were swimming around him, wondering why there were no bubbles. I must admit it does look different watching another diver swim around without any bubbles.

From the bow we moved back and checked the anchor then moved on to the boilers for a few more pics. By this stage I was down to 2 minutes no deco time so I indicated to Michael I was heading up and for him to unset the anchor before he came up. I then ascended whilst Michael had a look around the boilers/stern section etc. After a 5 minute safety stop at 5 meters I clipped my gear off on the hang lines, climbed back into the boat, recovered the gear and changed tanks for the 2nd dive.

Twenty five minutes later after unsetting the anchor, clearing his deco

time and clipping his gear on the hang lines Michael was back on the boat. With *Carmine's* first group of divers back on the surface, we moved anchorage to Golden Arch for morning tea and monitored VHF Ch 73.

Having done the usual current check (rotating prop, mermaid line drift, hang line angle, GPS distance from mark check etc.) & found everything to be OK, we did a 1hr 30 minute surface interval, geared up, rolled in and did the initial anchor check. The anchor had hooked on to a large rock & the rope was clear of the reef wall.

Having set the anchor, attached & handed the reel to Michael, we swam along the reef wall where we found a large female bull ray sitting under one of the ledges. I moved in slowly to take some pics while Michael stayed a respectable distance away so the ray had room to manoeuvre. After a few minutes of sitting on the bottom, the ray slowly moved to



swim away but was having difficulty finding a way out due to the overhangs/reef etc. After about 10 minutes of slowly swimming in circles, bumping into the reef and me it finally swam away towards and over the top of Michael. A truly fantastic critter encounter!



From there we swam to the Arch where a smaller male bull ray slowly swam in for a couple of looks before it



too moved away. I think it was interested in Michael because of the lack of bubbles / different noise etc. generated by the rebreather. We swam further along the reef & saw a couple of crays (1 in berry), the usual blue devil fish, wrasse etc. We swam back & checked the anchor, then along the reef in the opposite direction where we found more blue devil fish, ornate cow fish etc.



At the 30 minute mark I indicated to Michael I was ascending and completing the dive. After a 5 minute safety stop at 5 meters, I clipped my gear off on the hang lines, climbed back into the boat, recovered & re stowed the gear. I then called *Carmine* on Ch 73 (drifting 100 mtrs away) & offered



the use of the anchor line for her divers to descend.

By the time *Carmine's* divers reached the bottom, Michael was back at the anchor and guided them to the arch. He then completed his safety stop, returned to the boat & re-stowed his equipment. We retrieved the anchor then placed *Carmine's* shot line on the site before we drifted & had a bite to eat. Once *Carmine's* divers returned to the surface & were safely back onboard, we returned to the ramp. ❖

## *Hurricane Wreck Double Dive*

*Monday, 9th  
November 2015*

*Report by Peter Beaumont ; photos by  
Peter Beaumont & David Reinhard*

**Divers:** Peter Beaumont, David Reinhard

**Boat:** TOUCANS

**Dive time:** 55min, 50 min

**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 5-8 mtrs



After checking the forecast for the following week I saw that Monday had a tidal flow rate which favoured a double dive on the Hurricane. With a forecast of warm sunny weather, NE winds and a forecast maximum incoming flow rate of 2.4 knots at 10.26am followed by slack water at 1.18pm, I thought “What the heck” and put out an all VSAG email for a Monday dive with a 7am meeting time at Rye ramp for a 7.30am launch, returning to the ramp at midday.

People must have thought, “What? A 7am Monday start after boat diving the day before - he’s dreaming.” It’s also easier if you wash your gear in the boat the day before and leave it there for the following day’s diving.

David Reinhard replied to the email and was keen to have a dive so we organised Monday's activities.

Whilst setting up the boat in the car park, I briefly looked at the passing traffic and thought, "Phew, thank goodness for self declared long weekends." There was a bit of wind chop on the bay from a 10-15k NE wind but the bay still looked inviting. The jetty repair work had been completed so we didn't have to dodge any work crews, missing timbers or power tools, etc.

We headed out the channel & towards the Hurricane. There were even fewer boats out today so once again we had the dive site all to ourselves. Once anchored, I did the usual current check (rotating prop, mermaid line drift, hang line angle, GPS distance from mark check etc.) & waited to see if the boat would stay nose into the wind or swing around into the current.



The current was pushing the mermaid line towards the bow of the boat so I tilted the engine up to prevent the line

being caught around the leg of the outboard.



With the current running slowly, the GPS was indicating the anchor had dragged slightly due to the 10-15k NE wind. We rolled into the water, collected our cameras from the hang lines & followed the anchor line to the bottom. I passed my camera to David then grabbed the anchor and dragged the boat back along the drag mark to the wreck then set the anchor. At this stage the vis was approx 5 mtrs & we could see various sections of the wreck around us.



With the reel hooked up, we swam around and saw the usual sea horses,



rockling, leather jackets, rays, cuttlefish, school of long fin pike, old wives, ornate cowfish & the odd boarfish. Before we knew it we were at the fifty minute mark so we did a 5 minute stop at 5 meters & climbed back onboard for some morning tea.



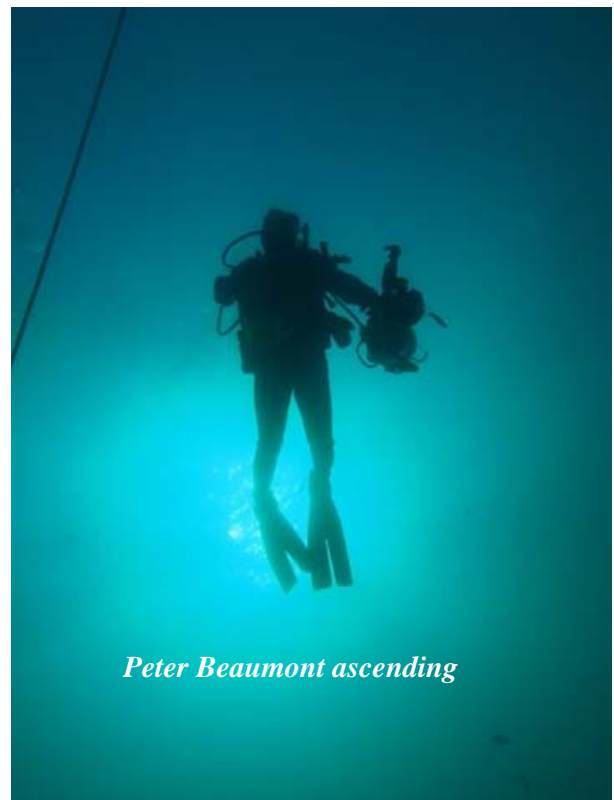
Yes, you guessed it, my usually bland morning tea was no match for David's Bakers Delight feast ummmnnn yum. After discussing the dive, photographs etc. we changed over tanks. I changed the camera setup from a wide angle lens with dome to a macro lens/port so I could vary my photo collection.

With the gear change overs and surface interval complete we commenced the 2nd dive. This time I decided to have another look for the elusive goblin fish. Despite looking under pieces of timber, sponge, old roofing slate (leftover Hurricane cargo) and other debris, I couldn't find one. They are there but there are literally dozens of hiding spots for them. I did manage to get a few macro shots done and after

45 minutes had passed it was time again to ascend for a 5 minute stop at 5 mtrs then return to the boat.



By this stage, the NE wind had died down as well as the surface chop. We arrived back at the ramp at 11.25am where there was a delay in recovering the boat due to a number of jet skis being launched & a 7.5mtr cat sitting on the middle ramp with one of the 2 engines running, not able to engage forward or reverse. The two guys who



were trying to sort it out were having a good head scratch/choice words etc. I waited till the jet skis cleared the ramp then changed lanes & reversed the trailer down to recover the boat.

I had a closer look at the cat as I walked to the jetty & climbed onto the boat. The cat had heaps of cobwebs on the trailer as well as around the wind-screen, cockpit area, etc. Looks like it needed a lot of TLC & a few \$\$\$\$ to get it up & running again. Shortly thereafter I had the boat back on the trailer and the choice words had become more frequent & louder. I lis-

tened with amusement as I climbed down, hooked the boat to the trailer & drove off the ramp. Overall the day worked out well & as I set off home to clean the boat/dive gear, David was busy setting up to dive Rye pier. ❖

## *Bare Island Shore Dive, La Perouse, Sydney*

*Monday, 2nd  
November, 2015*

*report & photos by Peter Beaumont*

**Dive time:** 55min, 55 min

**Water temp:** 15 deg

**Vis:** 10 mtrs

With some promising weather forecast, we decided to visit both families in Sydney so we loaded the dive gear and personal effects into the car & headed off for a leisurely drive up the Hume Hwy. We had lunch at Albury then stopped overnight in Gundagai where we had a look around the township and had dinner at one of the local pubs.

The next day we arrived in Richmond





(base of the Blue Mountains) where we checked into a Motel for a couple of days so Judy could spend some time visiting her mother and catch up with her elder brother. With Judy's family visits completed we checked out of the motel & headed off to Blakehurst (part of the St George area) to visit my sister & brother in law.



My last couple of dives in Sydney have, due to foul weather, been at Shiprock as this is an all weather dive site whereas sites like Bare Island are subject to large seas/ surf conditions in southerly winds. After checking in and unloading the car, we went for a drive down to Bare Island (Sunday afternoon) to check the conditions. The wind was from the NNW at 10-15k which was flattening off the sea, plus the tide was incoming so the vis would be improving.



It was a typical Sunday afternoon at La Perouse with loads of people out & about, all car parking spaces were full and everywhere you looked there were divers gearing up, returning from a dive or looking for a parking spot. There were even a couple of boats (with dive flags flying) anchored on the right hand side of the Island on the 25mtr wall. As the conditions were forecast to remain the same till early Tuesday, we decided to return on Monday morning & have brunch at one of the local cafés after the dives.

We returned at 8am the following morning & the car park was virtually empty. I went & checked the entry point for the left side of the island (10 mtr side) adjacent to the foot bridge, then geared up.



Once in the water, I followed the reef around to the front of the Island that faces the heads of Botany Bay. After five minutes in the water, one of the resident Blue Groupers came in close for a look and seeing I had a camera decided to pose for a few shots. It followed me around for about 10-15 minutes so I dislodged a few of the sea urchins which it swiftly devoured before it swam away.



I continued along the reef & saw a school of balling catfish, cuttlefish, a large crayfish, nudis, rockling & the odd green eel. At the 40 minute mark I turned around & used the incoming tide to assist in the return to the entry point. After poking around the reef at 5 mtrs for 5 minutes I exited the water and returned to the car park to change tanks & have a 1hr surface interval.

By this stage, there were another 6 divers walking across the rocks towards the right side (25 mtr side) entry point. With the surface interval completed and ambient temperature at about 32 degrees I headed back to the

Island's left side to check out the sponge gardens. The grouper was a no show for this dive but I suspect he was over on the deeper side of the Island playing with the other divers and munching more sea urchins.



I had a look around for a Red Indian fish but couldn't find any so I swam along the reef wall overhangs etc. & found a few more cuttlefish, wrasse, nudis, bulls eyes, rockling etc. At around the 45 minute mark I turned around & used what was left of the incoming tide to assist in the return to the entry point.

I did the usual reef/environment cleaning during my 5 mtr stop by picking up a quite a few sinkers to add to my recycling collection before exiting the water. Afterwards Judy & I had brunch at one of the local cafes before returning to the motel. Later on we had dinner at one of the local restaurants with my sister & brother in law. The following day, we headed off for a leisurely drive back to Mornington. ❖



# J4 Sub & Reef, Golden Arches

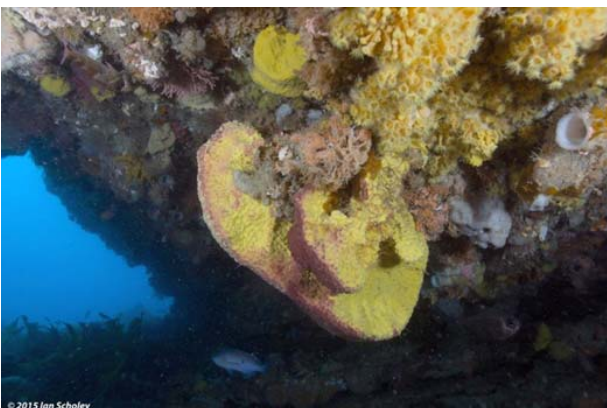
Sunday 29th  
November, 2015

report by John Lawler: photos Ian Scholey

An overcast start for the day with sun poking through as the day wore on but nice and warm and very little wind. Two VSAG boats took to the oceans today.

**TOUCANS CREW:** Peter Beaumont and Ian Scholey headed out early at 7.30 from Sorrento for the deep sub but whilst they had the mark and put a shot line down, they didn't find the sub...these things do happen.

Their second dive was on Golden Arches and looking at Ian's photos it was up to the usual high standard dive site.



**SIGNATURE ONE CREW:** Benita McDonough, Rob Kirk and Andrew Quested made up the crew for the run to the target dive site J4 Submarine.

After a quick load up we were on the water at 8.45am. On arrival we were greeted by Dive Victoria's *Ocean Diver* dropping 18 divers onto the wreck. *Lazarus* had 10 divers soon to follow and our VSAG member John Ashley, with buddy Darren Pearce, already diving on the wreck. John's son was the dedicated boat driver.

We were offered JA's shot line for our first two divers but were asked to retrieve it when the dive was over as he was keen to return to the bay. We deployed our shot line and deco bar. After kitting up and splashing into brilliant blue water... shock!... the shot line had become unclipped.... not a nice site.

Back onto the boat, we held a discussion and the kind Kirky and Andrew offered to return to the sub and find the shot line. This was a success as pretty soon an DSMB popped up with the shot line attached.....

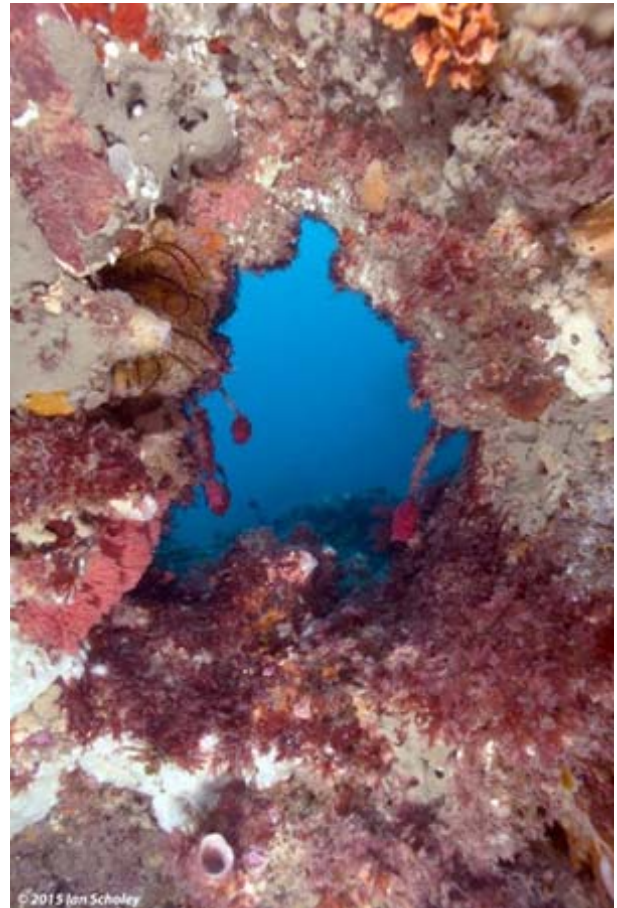
My turn for action. The shot seemed to have snagged! I kitted up and followed the 40mtr line down into brilliant clear blue water at 23mtrs, expecting to see the sub loom up... but

no sub!

The shot must have dragged away and was now wedged in a ledge in the most glorious area just east of the J4. The place is called Sub Reef. My dive time of 30 minutes was taking in this place of real beauty in brilliant visibility.

Andrew and I planned a dive on Excellent Reef which is west of Castle Rock - brilliant territory. The swell was noticeable here and being closer to shore the viz was a bit murky. We were looking for crays but not our day despite the ledges and holes that should have be a hiding place for bugs.

Back to Sorrento, boat wash down and tanks filled at the Scuba Doctor and off home. Another great VSAG dive day. ❖





# DIVING THE WEB



FOR THOSE OF YOU LOOKING FOR UNIQUE CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR THE DIVERS IN YOUR LIFE, CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE :

[https://www.etsy.com/au/market/scuba\\_diver\\_gift](https://www.etsy.com/au/market/scuba_diver_gift)

It has everything from -



\* Nudibranchs and sea creature ornaments made from clay

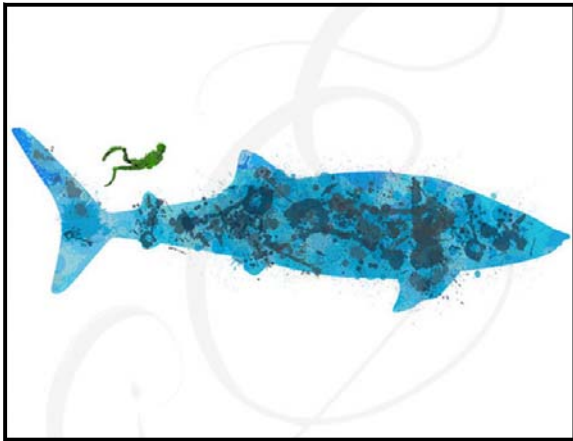
TO -

\* Jewellery





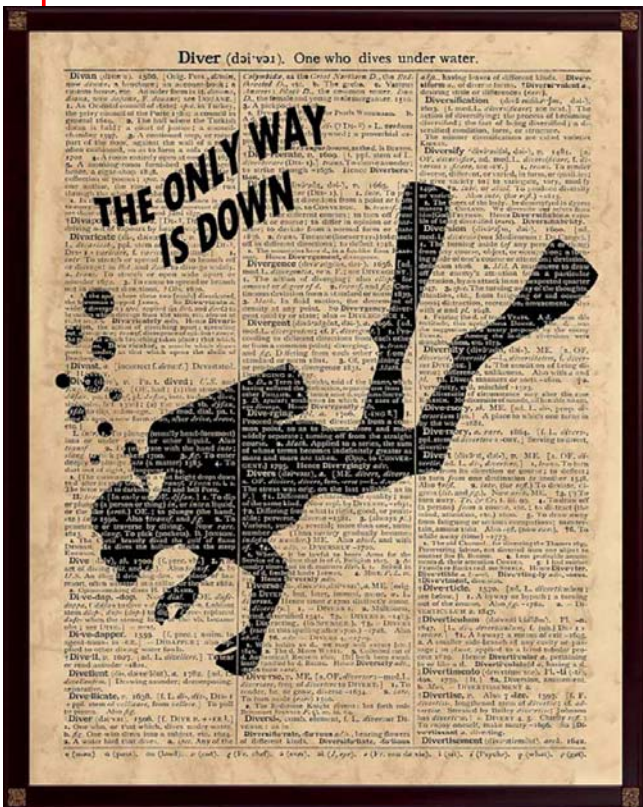
**\*Prints**



*Personalised Prints*



*Vintage Prints*



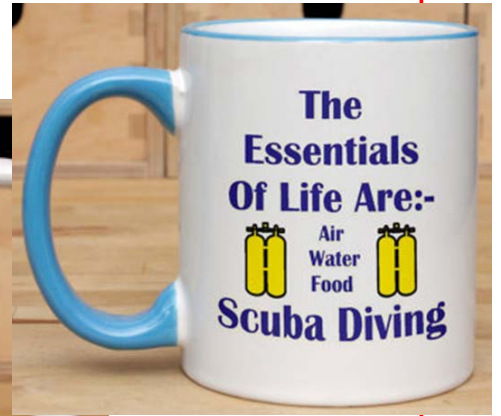
Kalkoenvisch (*Pterois volitans*). 1/2 v. d. ware grootte.



**\*Bookmarks**



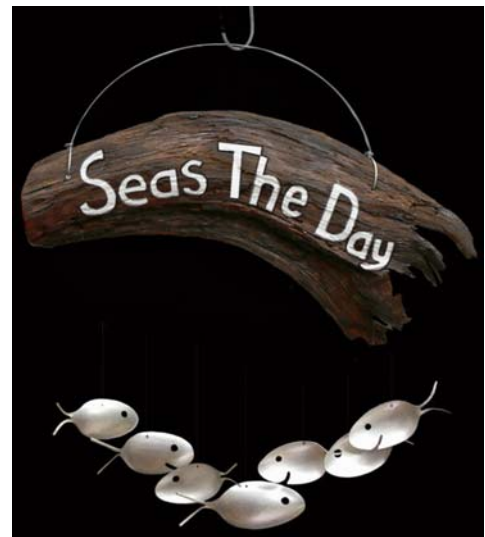
**\*Mugs**



**\*Glassware**



**\*Wind Chimes**



**\*Christmas Ornaments**



**\*Keyrings**



**\*T-shirts**



**\*Magnets**

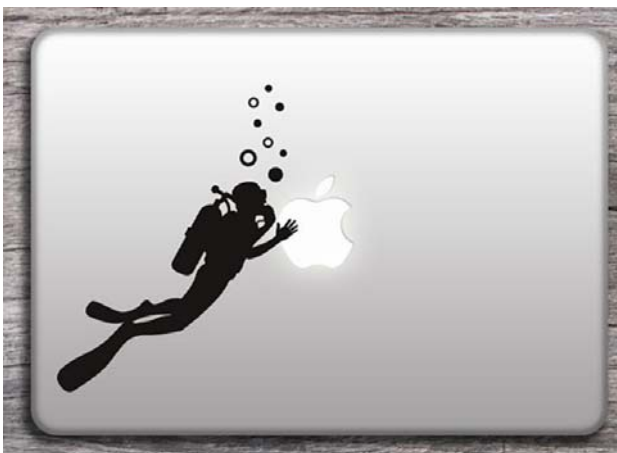


**\*Soft Toys**



**\*Luggage tags**

**\*Laptop Stickers**



**\*Metal Dioramas**



**...and much more**



# VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar

by Peter Beaumont, 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.**

Dec 12/13	Boat DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Dec 19/20	Boat DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Dec 22	<b>General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Dec 26/27	Boat DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725
Dec 27	Shore DC Walter Medanbach 0408 899 881
Jan 2/3	Boat DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192
Jan 9/10	Boat DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Jan 16/17	Boat DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Jan 19	<b>General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Jan 23/24	Boat DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Jan 30/31	Shore DC Walter Medanbach 0408 899 881 Boat DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Feb 6/7	Boat DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Feb 13/14	Boat DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192
Feb 16	<b>General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Feb 20/21	Boat DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Feb 27/28	Shore DC Walter Medanbach 0408 899 881 Boat DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Mar 5/6	Boat DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Mar 12/13/14	Shore DC Walter Medanbach 0408 899 881 Boat DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Mar 15	<b>General Meeting, The Water Rat Hotel, 8.00 pm</b>
Mar 19/20	Boat DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Mar –Easter weekend 25/26/27/28	Boat DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Apr 2/3	Boat DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Apr 9/10	Boat DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725

## Tidal Streams at the Heads — December 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.

November	December					
<b>MON 30</b>	<b>TUE 1</b>	<b>WED 2</b>	<b>THU 3</b>	<b>FRI 4</b>	<b>SAT 5</b>	<b>SUN 6</b>
0:25	1:09	1:49	2:27	3:04	3:40	4:19
7:03	7:44	8:22	8:57	9:31	10:04	10:39
13:13	13:56	14:38	15:20	16:02	16:46	17:34
18:22	19:10	19:57	20:45	21:36	22:33	23:39
<b>MON 7</b>	<b>TUE 8</b>	<b>WED 9</b>	<b>THU 10</b>	<b>FRI 11</b>	<b>SAT 12</b>	<b>SUN 13</b>
5:05	0:53	2:09	3:15	4:09	4:54	5:33
11:17	6:04	7:26	8:54	10:02	10:54	11:39
18:28	12:02	12:54	13:49	14:45	15:37	16:26
	19:25	20:21	21:11	21:58	22:41	23:22
<b>MON 14</b>	<b>TUE 15</b>	<b>WED 16</b>	<b>THU 17</b>	<b>FRI 18</b>	<b>SAT 19</b>	<b>SUN 20</b>
6:10	0:02	0:42	1:22	2:02	2:44	3:27
12:18	6:46	7:21	7:55	8:30	9:04	9:40
17:12	12:56	13:34	14:13	14:54	15:38	16:27
	17:56	18:42	19:29	20:20	21:16	22:21
<b>MON 21</b>	<b>TUE 22</b>	<b>WED 23</b>	<b>THU 24</b>	<b>FRI 25</b>	<b>SAT 26</b>	<b>SUN 27</b>
4:13	5:07	0:56	2:17	3:28	4:29	5:21
10:19	11:05	6:15	7:39	9:08	10:22	11:23
17:22	18:23	11:59	13:03	14:11	15:18	16:21
23:35		19:28	20:33	21:34	22:30	23:21
<b>December</b>				<b>January</b>		
<b>MON 28</b>	<b>TUE 29</b>	<b>WED 30</b>	<b>THU 31</b>	<b>FRI 1</b>	<b>SAT 2</b>	<b>SUN 3</b>
6:06	0:08	0:50	1:28	2:06	2:39	3:12
12:14	6:47	7:24	7:57	8:23	8:52	9:21
17:17	13:00	13:42	14:21	14:58	15:34	16:11
	18:08	18:56	19:41	20:23	21:09	21:58



## Tidal Streams at the Heads — January 2016

**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				January		
<i>MON 28</i>	<i>TUE 29</i>	<i>WED 30</i>	<i>THU 31</i>	<i>FRI 1</i>	<i>SAT 2</i>	<i>SUN 3</i>
6:06	0:08	0:50	1:28	2:06	2:39	3:12
12:14	6:47	7:24	7:57	8:23	8:52	9:21
17:17	13:00	13:42	14:21	14:58	15:34	16:11
	18:08	18:56	19:41	20:23	21:09	21:58
<i>MON 4</i>	<i>TUE 5</i>	<i>WED 6</i>	<i>THU 7</i>	<i>FRI 8</i>	<i>SAT 9</i>	<i>SUN 10</i>
3:46	4:25	5:11	1:04	2:18	3:25	4:19
9:51	10:24	11:02	6:11	7:35	9:06	10:15
16:51	17:35	18:26	11:47	12:41	13:45	14:51
22:52	23:54		19:22	20:20	21:17	22:10
<i>MON 11</i>	<i>TUE 12</i>	<i>WED 13</i>	<i>THU 14</i>	<i>FRI 15</i>	<i>SAT 16</i>	<i>SUN 17</i>
5:05	5:44	6:20	0:32	1:15	1:57	2:38
11:07	11:52	12:35	6:55	7:28	8:02	8:36
15:52	16:48	17:40	13:17	13:59	14:43	15:28
23:00	23:47		18:31	19:23	20:16	21:12
<i>MON 18</i>	<i>TUE 19</i>	<i>WED 20</i>	<i>THU 21</i>	<i>FRI 22</i>	<i>SAT 23</i>	<i>SUN 24</i>
3:20	4:03	4:52	0:31	1:47	2:59	4:03
9:13	9:52	10:37	5:52	7:09	8:42	10:04
16:15	17:05	18:00	11:30	12:32	13:44	14:58
22:13	23:18		19:00	20:06	21:12	22:13
<i>MON 25</i>	<i>TUE 26</i>	<i>WED 27</i>	<i>THU 28</i>	<i>FRI 29</i>	<i>SAT 30</i>	<i>SUN 31</i>
4:55	5:39	6:18	0:37	1:13	1:46	2:17
11:07	11:59	12:43	6:51	7:22	7:49	8:16
16:05	17:04	17:55	13:22	13:57	14:30	15:02
23:07	23:55		18:41	19:23	20:03	20:44

# *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><b>Mayday Call</b> – for grave &amp; imminent danger requiring immediate assistance</p>	<p><b>Urgency Call</b> – when the danger is not grave or imminent</p>
<p><b>Distress Call:</b></p> <p>Mayday, Mayday, Mayday</p> <p>This is: <u>“Boat call sign x3”</u> (Boat owners insert your call sign)</p>	<p><b>Urgency Call:</b></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><b>Distress message after contact made:</b></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><b>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</b></p>	<p><b>Urgency message after contact made:</b></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><b>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</b></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 (new number)**

**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**

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

**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**

Dr John Roth (Mornington) **03 5975 2633**



*South Channel Fort photos by David Reinhard*



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