



Fathoms

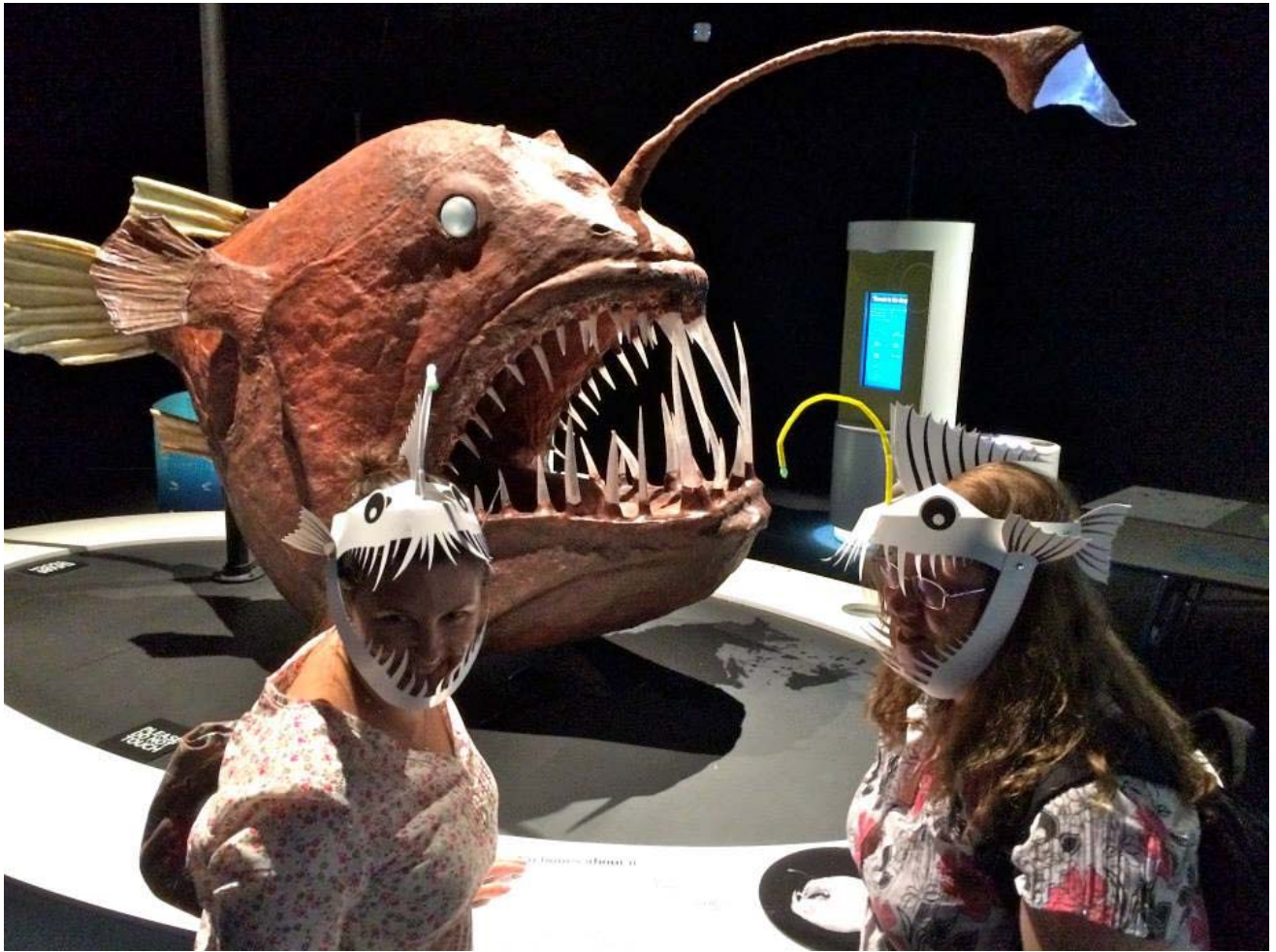
JUNE - JULY 2015

*Photo by David Reinhard
at Mordialloc*

ANEMONES
MEMBER OF THE MONTH
SOUTH CHANNEL FORT
...AND MORE

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

www.vsag.org.au



Charmaine Alford & Christine Reynolds connecting with their inner Anglers at the Deep Sea Discovery Lecture series



*Showing her romantic side
- a heart-shaped coral
taken at Gili Tepekong,
Bali by Meg Johnson*



Fathoms

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

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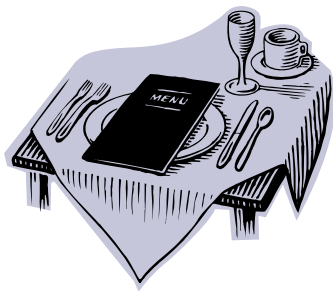
Cheryl Lees M: 0448 863 455
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NOTICES

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

All Members Welcome

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



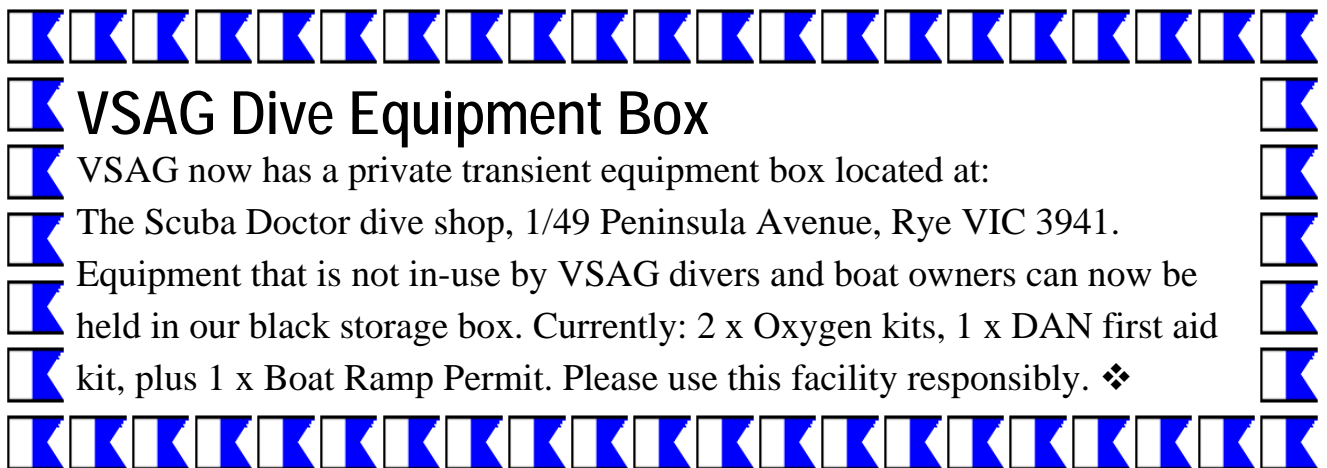
**VSAG Monthly meetings are at 8 p.m. on the
3rd TUESDAY of each month at BELL'S HOTEL
157 MORAY ST, SOUTH MELBOURNE**

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

Tuesday Night Special — all meals \$15

VSAG on Facebook

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



VSAG Dive Equipment Box

VSAG now has a private transient equipment box located at:

The Scuba Doctor dive shop, 1/49 Peninsula Avenue, Rye VIC 3941.

Equipment that is not in-use by VSAG divers and boat owners can now be held in our black storage box. Currently: 2 x Oxygen kits, 1 x DAN first aid kit, plus 1 x Boat Ramp Permit. Please use this facility responsibly. ❖

Your VSAG Committee 2014–2015

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

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Help Rediscover Port Phillip Bay's Shellfish Reefs



My name is Matt Crawford and I am conducting research as part of my Masters Degree in Marine Science and Management at Southern Cross University in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy. The title of this project is: Using participatory GIS and oral history to rediscover lost shellfish reefs in Port Phillip Bay.

I would like to invite you to participate in this oral history project to help locate oyster reefs that, until recently, occurred across a large area of Port Phillip Bay. Your participation is important as it will inform a crucial phase of the Port Phillip Bay Shellfish Restoration Project and help contribute to the overall improvement in the health of the Bay.

Native flat oyster (*Ostrea angasi*) reefs were once an important feature of Port Phillip Bay, and provided similar services to coral reefs in the tropics. Although individual oysters can still be found in the Bay, there has been a mas-

sive decline since European settlement. Today these reefs are virtually non-existent.



Native Flat Oyster (Ostrea angasi)
Photo by Paul Hamer

A project has now been initiated to restore oyster reefs right across Port Phillip Bay. It is expected that, if successful, this project will provide new habitats that will improve the health and productivity of the Bay. The first stage of this program is to determine where these reefs used to occur. Given your personal knowledge of the Bay, we are asking for your help to map the historic locations of oyster reefs.

The research involves the completion of a survey, and participation in an interview or workshop. You will be asked to identify, to the best of your ability, the locations of oyster reefs on a printed map of the Bay or using Geographic Information Science (GIS).

You will be notified once the study concludes, and will have the opportunity to receive a copy of the final research paper. In addition, you will be invited to a follow-up presentation where the results will be discussed.

This is a voluntary exercise, however refreshments will be provided at the workshops. If you would like to participate, please register your interest by contacting me:

Researcher: Matt Crawford
m.crawford13@student.scu.edu.au
or 0431909437

Supervisor: Associate Professor Steve Smith
steve.smith@scu.edu.au

Co-supervisor: Dr Chris Gillies
chris.gillies@tns.org

Workshops will run regularly in June and July at various locations between Geelong, Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula.

I hope to see you there,
Matt Crawford ❖



Oyster aggregation on a boulder in Port Phillip Bay

MEMBER OF THE MONTH AWARD

The VSAG Member of the Month Award in February was presented to

ALAN STOREN

who generously donated 4 scuba tanks to Club Property



Two tanks will be located at The Scuba Doctor and two tanks will be with Ian Scholey in Frankston South . If you

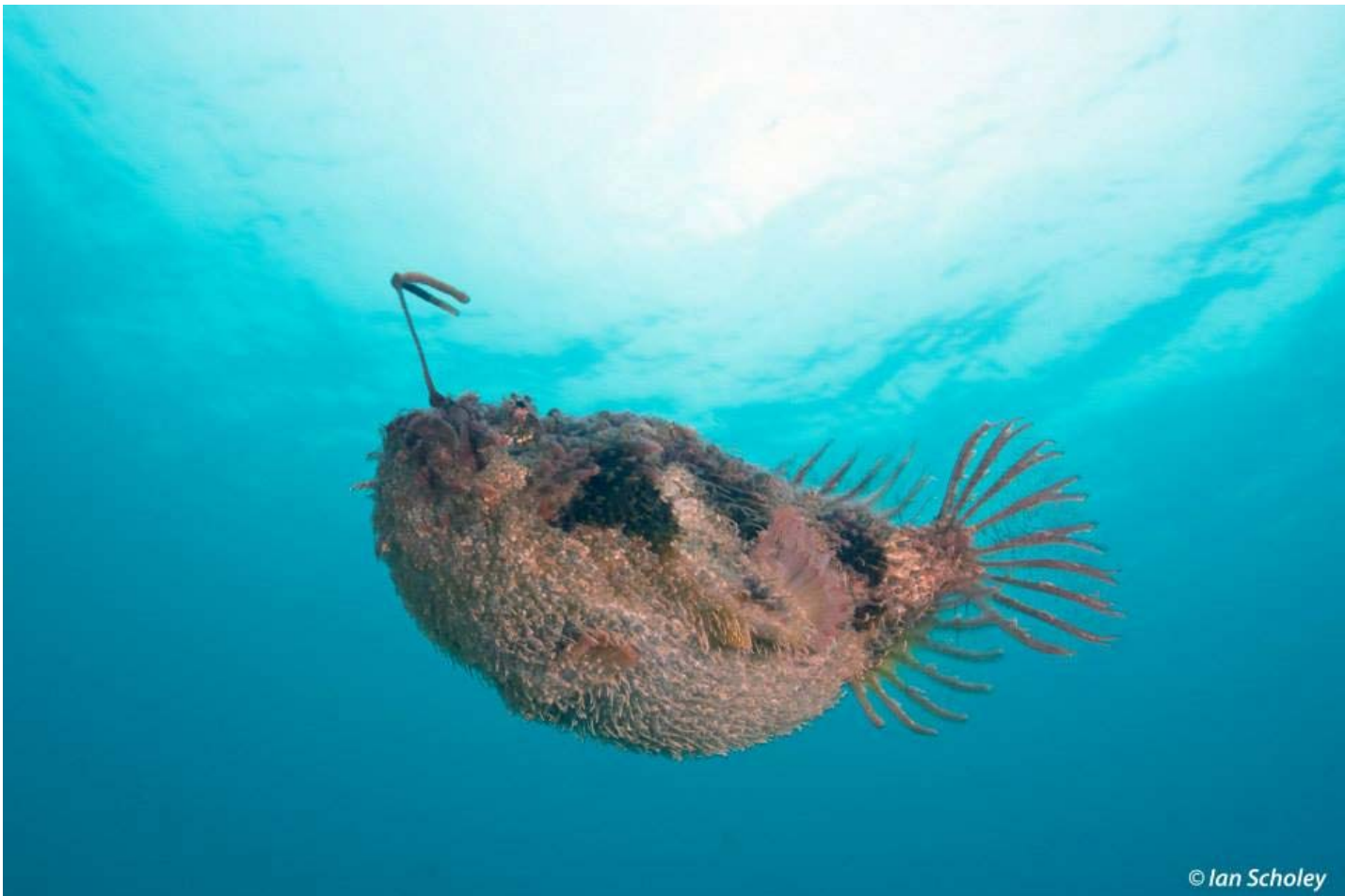


would like to borrow a tank at any stage then please book them by sending Ian an email. He will advise availability, arrange a time for collection from his place or advise Lloyd to release them to you at The Scuba Doctor.

***If you do borrow them, they will need to be returned, filled, within 24 hours unless otherwise agreed.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

WINNER — MARCH



© Ian Scholey

Ian Scholey - Tassled Anglerfish

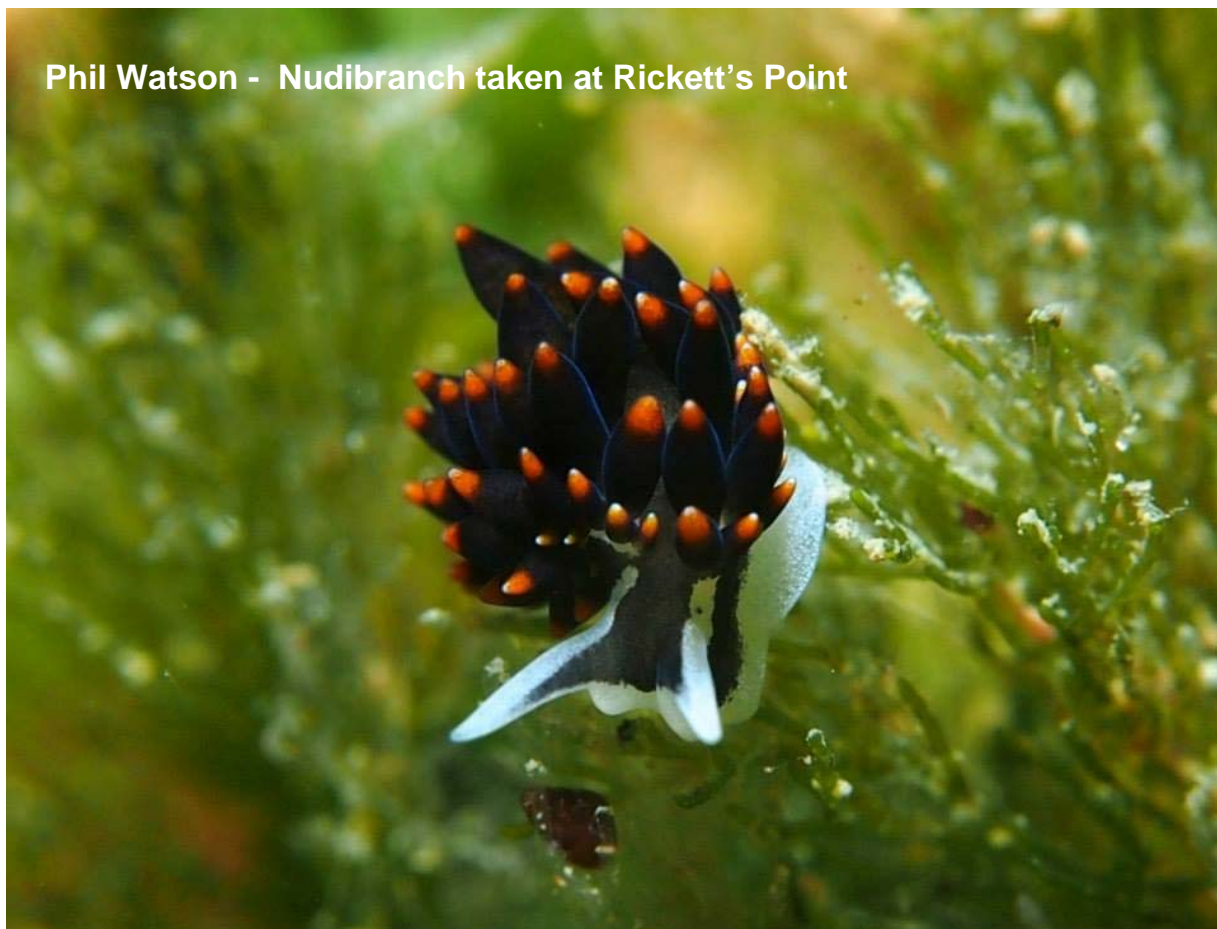
As usual, the standard was high so well done to all the other entrants.

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

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

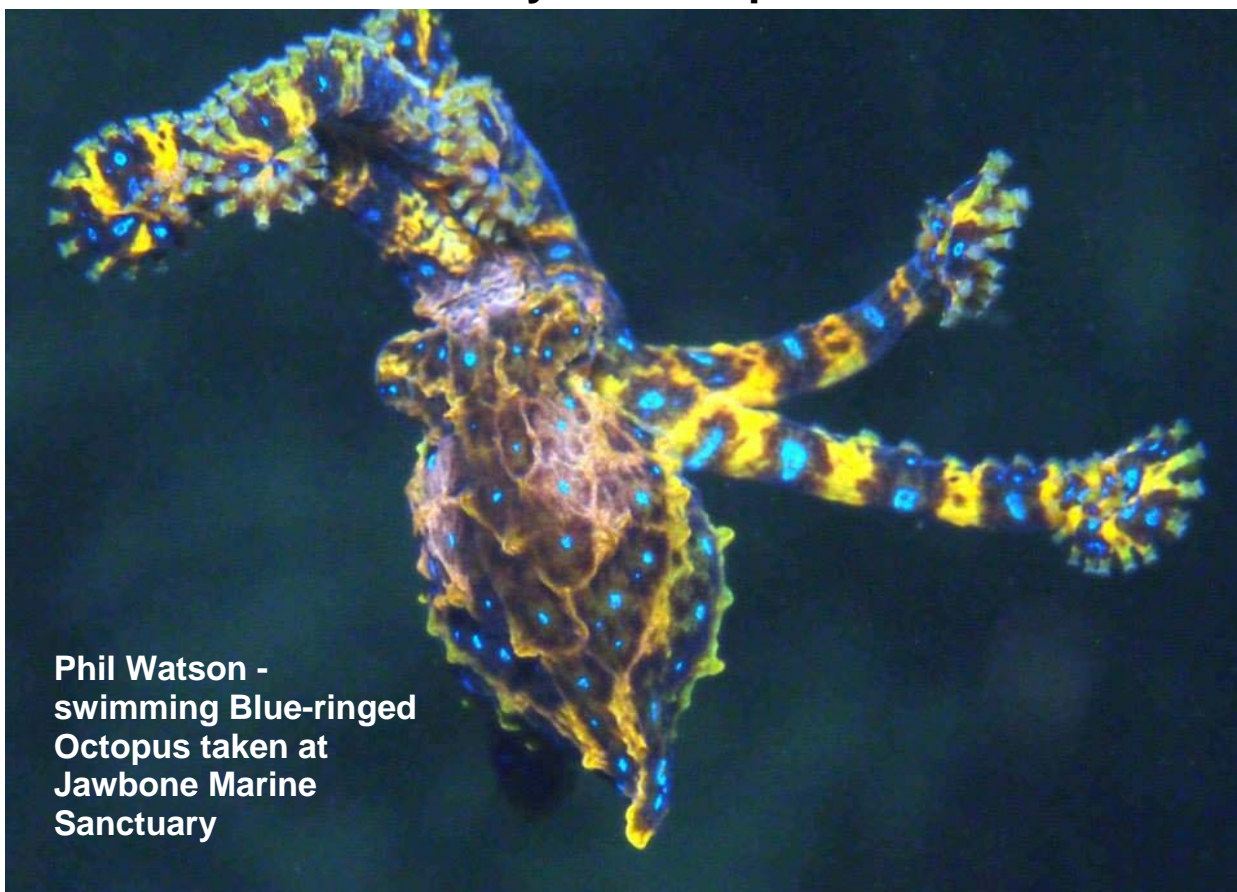
RUNNERS UP IN THE MARCH PHOTO COMPETITION

Phil Watson - Nudibranch taken at Rickett's Point



Three-way tie for Equal 2nd

**Phil Watson -
swimming Blue-ringed
Octopus taken at
Jawbone Marine
Sanctuary**



Equal 2nd - Meg Johnson - Green-eyed Cuttlefish
taken at Gili Tepekong, Bali



Equal 3rd



Peter Beaumont - Blue Devil and Port Jackson Shark taken at North Wall Corner



© Ian Scholey

Ian Scholey - Cat Shark taken while drifting towards Sponge Gardens



Most photos are worth
a thousand words.
Underwater ones are worth
at least a million.
- Stephen Frink

WINNER — APRIL



The winning shot of a seal, taken at Montague Island, N.S.W. by Carole Campisano

RUNNERS UP IN THE APRIL PHOTO COMPETITION



Equal 2nd :

**Charmaine Alford's shot
of two Gentoo Penguins
taken at Garden Cove,
Macquarie Island**

And

**Carole Campisano's Blue
Grouper shot at the
Empire Gladstone wreck,
Pambula, N.S.W.**



RUNNERS UP IN THE APRIL PHOTO COMPETITION

Threeway Tie for Equal 3rd :

**Phil Watson's Juvenile Weedy Seadragon
taken at Point Franklin**



**Ian Scholey's Garfish taken on the shotline to
The Hurricane**



© Ian Scholey



Ian Scholey's Baitball shot taken in New Caledonia

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

Keep up the good work!



Meeting Report

MARCH

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTER

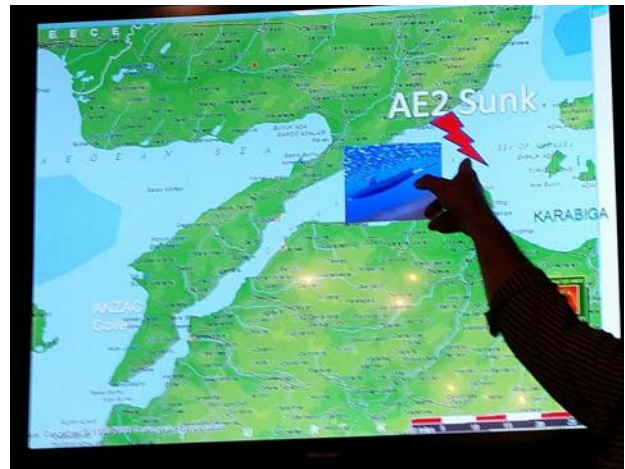
Tim Smith
Executive Director
Heritage Victoria



“PROJECT SILENT ANZAC”

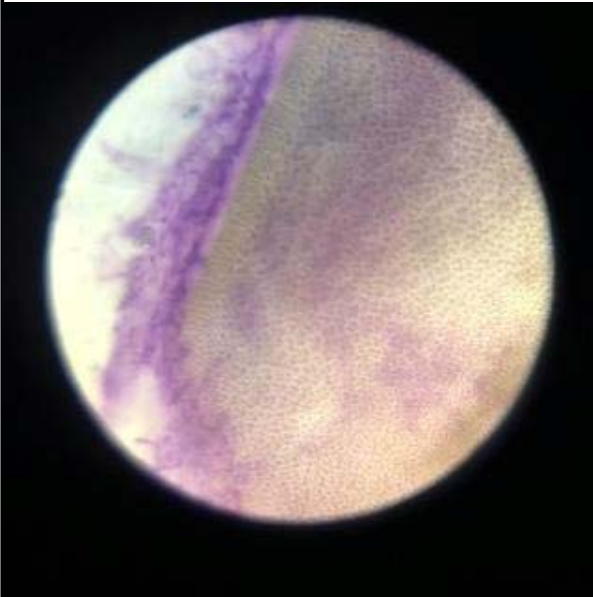
VSAG was very pleased to have Tim accept a return visit as our guest speaker for March. Prior to heading off for the mammoth expedition last year, to the AE2 Submarine site in the Sea of Marmara where the AE2 now rests, Tim gave an amazing presentation to our members...so much fascinating data and the use of very modern technology formed part of that presentation.

This time, Tim gave an update on the outcome of the expedition. Here are some photos of the meeting, taken by Hannah Smeeton. ❖



OF MICROSCOPES AND CAMERAS

from Sandy Webb



Now you might not be able to make sense of the photo above but it's a slide of seaweed.

Having been foiled for ages by poor (cheap) digital 'scopes, incompatible digital eyepieces, collapsing tripods, sticky BluTak, etc.

The wonderful and very 'David Flew' setup (below) has at last allowed me to take photos down my microscope!



Thank you David! ❖



EASTER AT THE PROM 2015

From John Lawler

One day's diving is a treat out of Tidal River, two is a bonus, and anything beyond that a rarity. This place really has a mind of it's own when the weather is taken into account. Diving the Anser group and the Glennie group of islands is some of the best dive sites in the country, especially Skull Rock and Bum Rock.

So, over the 2015 Easter break, Friday and Sunday gave those who ventured down to this magic place, two great dive days. No VSAG boats or divers were present on Friday, David Reinhard and myself were the only diver exceptions. We were being hosted by the members of the Getunder dive club, me on the Beckhurst/Malloy boat "Freediver" and David on the Corby/Cartlidge boat "Ocean Runner". Mick Whitmore on his "Barchrusher" made up the fleet.

The launching of the three boats was done with the usual efficiency from past and vast experiences into the 2mtr ocean swells. "Practice makes perfect" it seems.

The technical divers headed for the deep wreck, the TSS Kanowna (83mtrs) and our crew decided to check out the Glennie Group of islands. The run out was a bit choppy but we made good time. The south side of Glennie Island was swelly so we checked out the North West side at a site known as "Eagle Neck" and it was prefect...happy!

I have dived this site many times over the years and it always provides the same magic on every dive yet it never seems to be the same, dive after dive. Huge, nay MASSIVE boulders shoulder to shoulder are an awesome sight, so big they cannot be seen all around! Massive swim throughs, deep holes, an abundance of fish life and silent swaying kelp leaves a diver in awe. Visibility here was 15-20+ mtrs and whilst the depth slides away to around 55 mtrs west from the island, there was no need to push beyond dive time saving depths of 20-25 mtrs - at these depths it was all there.

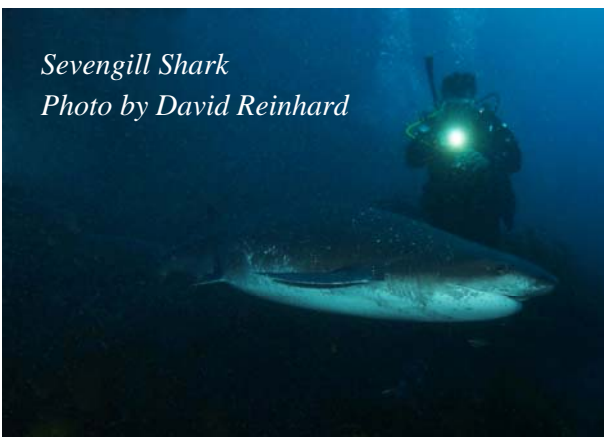
So good were the conditions here, all the diving by the team of Mary Malloy/Alan Beckhurst/Rob Kirk/Rob Laurie and myself was rated so highly, we decided to do all our diving in this area - says a lot about the site! Two excellent, exciting dives each here then time to go back to camp.

Boats out and up to the excellent boat and gear wash down site just out of Tidal River proper. There is a great stainless steel bench there for dive gear wash down with hoses and fresh water aplenty.

Saturday was a blow out with strong 20-25 knot winds making a Sunday dive not looking very promising. But this is Tidal River. Sunday arrives - almost no swell onto the beach and very little wind! WOW ! John Mills and Priya Cardinaletti arrived late Saturday with their relatively new RIB,

“Wave Runner”, so three boats made up the Sunday fleet. Leo Maybus made up the crew of three on the RIB. I was fortunate (and grateful) to be invited again onto “Freediver” and David Reinhard also got another ride on “Ocean Runner”.

Skull Rock was our target dive site. The south side was a bit too swelly so the North side was chosen and a number of divers splashed into the “Slot”. Slowly diving through the slot and a small cave, we exited into the bright blue waters only to be greeted by a large friendly Broadnose Sevengill shark! The shark made several slow passes and was just an arm’s length away on the last pass before heading off into the blue gloom. (Right place right time without any doubt!) All the passes were captured on my Intova camera and David captured additional video and stills as well. (See information about these sharks on page 22).



*Sevengill Shark
Photo by David Reinhard*

With David Reinhard back on board “Ocean Runner”, the technical dive team headed for the deep wreck “Cambridge” (67 mtrs) with a plan to link up later in the day, yet keeping in radio contact.

Next dive, to use up the remaining air, was with the seals. As soon as the masses of new pups and large bulls and females hear the boats arriving, hundreds splash in for their big event - divers to play with, and play they do... diving, fast turning, speeding towards a diver and turning just at the last second before colliding with an outstretched camera rig. In around 5 mtrs of clear blue water, plenty of time to watch and photograph the antics of these playfully entertaining marine mammals. Just so much fun and entertainment aplenty!



Photos by Mary Malloy



A dive site called “Twin Peaks” was next up but after two divers exited from their dive, they reported it was very swelly and dirty! We returned to Skull Rock as Alan Beckhurst was keen to see if the Sevengill was still around but no luck.

To complete the day we then linked up with “Ocean Runner” west of Skull Rock for the Technical divers to dive the deep wreck “Gulf of Carpentaria” (50mtrs). That done it was off home to Tidal River.

Two days of wonderful, safe and fun-filled dive days out around the islands from Tidal River...it just does not get any better!

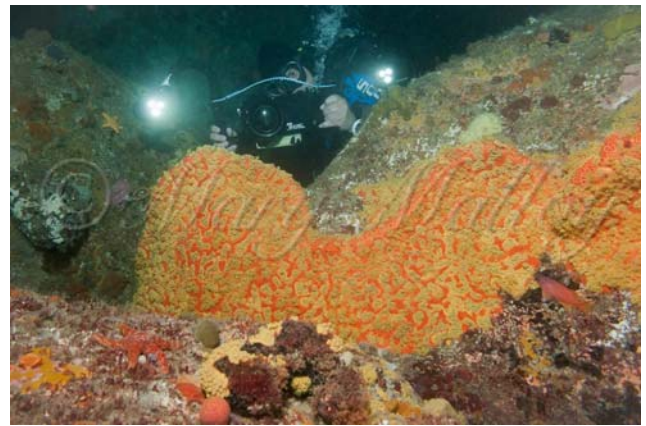
Finally thank you to the members of our sister club “Getunder” for the hospitality extended to VSAG. You are all great and we value our close relationship under, and above the water! ❖

Video by Alan Beckhurst



<https://vimeo.com/124276953>

More photos by Mary Malloy





From David Reinhard

Thanks to the Getunder crew at the Prom for looking after me, and fellow VSAG member JL. Your hospitality was much appreciated and I am very pleased to have got down to the Prom after missing out for the last few years courtesy of shift work.

Fortunately I had my GoPro mounted on my camera housing so I was able to get a bit of video of a visit by a Seven-gill Shark that cruised past us a few times (got a few still photos but not great due to lots of backscatter). It's not great quality video (e.g. my flip filter decided to flip itself in and out of shot at one stage) but it is a reasonable

record of one of those special moments in diving. Thanks guys!

Seven Gill Shark at the Prom

We were diving at Skull Rock when this shark swam past us a few times. Unfortunately the photos and video aren't great but they will certainly give an idea of just how close it came to me.

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=745508815556786>

Seals at The Prom - Kanowa Island

Of all the creatures in the sea it is hard to imagine that any could be more fun to dive with than seals. These wild animals just love attention from humans and deliberately seek interaction. ❖

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=745942918846709>



INFORMATION ON SIXGILL AND SEVENGILL SHARK SPECIES. (FAMILY HEXANCHIDE)

provided by John Lawler



There are four species in this group. Two of the species have six pairs of gill openings and the other two have seven pairs. The dwarf of the group is the Sharpnose Sevengill which rarely exceeds 1.4 mtrs. The largest is the Giant Sixgill Bluntnose, growing to almost five mtrs.

The two Sixgills & Sharpnose Sevengill roam mostly in deeper waters on outer shelves from 90 to 1875 mtrs. The Spotted Sevengill roams continental shelves, inland waters and bays and breeds in shallow bays. These sharks are wide ranging in coastal and off-shore waters of all cold, temperate to tropical seas and none are oceanic.

These sharks produce large litters of between 9 to 108 young. Their diet is large prey, bony fishes, OTHER SHARKS, rays, crabs, shrimp.

The Bluntnose Sixgill and Broadnose Sevengill are indiscriminate feeders on all kinds of carrion and live prey. ❖

An advertisement for DAN Asia Pacific. The background is a deep blue ocean with several divers visible. At the top, the text reads "Home: Covered" and "Car: Covered", each followed by a white checkmark in a square box. Below this, the text "Are You?" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. At the bottom, the DAN logo is displayed, featuring a red and white cross symbol, the word "DAN" in large red letters, and "ASIA • PACIFIC" and "Divers Alert Network" in smaller blue and red text. Below the logo, the text "Can You Afford Not to be a DAN Member?" is written in yellow. Underneath, it says "DAN Membership Costs Less than AUD\$6* per month" and "Be Prepared. Join the Experts in Dive Accident Management." followed by the website "www.danasiapacific.org". At the very bottom, in small white text, it reads: "*DAN Membership provides up to US\$150,000 Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage. DAN Dive Injury Insurance is additional."



AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

COASTWATCH

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A		I have a diver down; keep well clear at slow speed	N		No (negative or "The significance of the previous group should be read in the negative"). This signal may be given only visually or by sound. For voice or radio transmission the signal should be "NO".
B		I am taking in, or discharging, or carrying dangerous goods	O		Man Overboard
C		Yes (affirmative or "The significance of the previous group should be read in the affirmative")	P		IN HARBOUR — All persons should report on board as the vessel is about to proceed out to sea. AT SEA — It may be used by fishing vessels to mean "My nets have come fast upon an obstruction".
D		Keep clear of me; I am manoeuvring with difficulty	Q		My vessel is 'healthy' and I request free pratique
E		I am altering my course to starboard	* S		My engines are going astern
F		I am disabled; communicate with me	T		Keep clear of me; I am engaged in pair trawling
G		I require a pilot (When made by fishing vessels operating in close proximity on the fishing grounds it means "I am hauling nets")	U		You are running into danger
H		I have a pilot on board	V		I require assistance
I		I am altering my course to port	W		I require medical assistance
J		I am on fire and have dangerous cargo on board; keep well clear of me	X		Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals
K		I wish to communicate with you	Y		I am dragging my anchor
L		You should stop your vessel instantly	Z		I require a tug (When made by fishing vessels operating in close proximity on the fishing grounds it means "I am shooting nets")
M		My vessel is stopped and making no way through the water			Code Flag and Answering Pendant
NUMERAL PENDANTS * Note: Signal "R" not allocated					
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SUBSTITUTES					
First Substitute		Second Substitute		Third Substitute	

Report unusual or suspicious sea, land or air activities

Contact: At sea through OTC Coast Radio Service to Coastwatch or directly to Coastwatch aircraft on VHF Channel 16. On Shore free phone (06) 247 6666.

Dive Reports

ISLE OF PINES, NEW CALEDONIA

Easter, 2015

Report & photos by Ian Scholey

I was all set to go to Wilson's Prom for the usual Easter getaway but Fixtures-Resuluntil, an impulsive thought and a discussion with the family, had me searching the internet for a trip somewhere warmer.

Leaving these decisions late in prime getaway season doesn't do much for flight prices and I was soon put off the usual destinations of Fiji, Bali and Vanuatu by the sky high prices. I then remembered hearing on the radio about a new direct flight from Melbourne to Noumea in New Caledonia. We had stopped in there last year while on a cruise and had said then that we would return one day if possible. A quick check and the flights were booked for a very reasonable price, I guess that most people wouldn't know about the flight yet.

New Caledonia is made up of a number of Islands and sits to the South West of Vanuatu. It was once a French

colony and still has a very European feel to it. French is the spoken language and I had to dig deep into the distant memory of my school days to remember enough to get by.

We arrived at Noumea's international airport on Good Friday evening and had a bit of a nightmare getting to our hotel. Be warned, if you ever visit, you will need to book a taxi in advance. With no taxis available we had to wait for a shuttle bus. We finally made it to our hotel 3 1/2 hours after landing with our holiday enthusiasm somewhat dented.

A good night's sleep repaired our spirits and we were up early and in an elusive taxi to the domestic airport for a flight down to our final destination on the Isle of Pines. The short 30 minute flight was enjoyable with spectacular views of the reefs and islands.

The Isle of Pines is a small place with only a handful of hotels and a small main village called Vao. Unlike the previous day, I had the foresight to book a hotel transfer and it was a relief to see the sign held up for "Le Meridien Isle of Pines" as we came out of the arrivals hall. We were soon at the hotel and the journey was quickly forgotten

as we surveyed our home for the next week.



Snorkelling in Nature's Aquarium

To say we were blown away would be an understatement. The hotel was everything you dream about for a Pacific getaway, white sandy beach, crystal clear blue water, tropical gardens and coconut trees.

The best thing about the hotel though is its proximity to one of those very special places that nature occasionally creates and the reason for our desire to revisit the Isle of Pines - Nature's Aquarium. The hotel sits on a piece of land that has been cut off from the

main island by the sea.

There is a salt water river that meanders through the jungle before opening up into a large pool, then continuing on to the ocean. The pool is every colour of blue imaginable and inside it sits coral outcrops that team with fish. There is nothing else there, just the magnificent natural creation surrounded by trees and no human development at all. We quickly dumped the bags in our room, grabbed our fins, masks and snorkels and followed the path to the pool and spent a happy few hours snorkelling.



Nature's Aquarium from the surface

There is just one Dive Centre operating on the island, Kunie Dive Centre, which is run by a jolly Frenchman called Bertrand. Here is my second tip for anyone visiting Isle of Pines - book your diving early. The Dive Centre runs a double tank dive daily using a single 9m RIB. The boat can take only 10 divers, including guides,

so capacity is really limited. I found the Dive Centre online and tried to book 5 day's diving but was only able to secure 2 days as the other days were already booked out. The Dive Centre is basic but has good quality hire gear and, despite the language barrier, the crew were very friendly.

The hotel sorted a transfer out for me to the Dive Centre which is on the North West of the Island. I had a chat to Bertrand about the day's dive sites and, on his advice, I rigged my camera for macro. The other divers were a pretty diverse group and comprised a Brazilian living in Brisbane, a Kiwi and his French wife living in Sydney, and a group of 4 from France doing a try-dive.



Pair of Filefish

With everyone kitted up, we took the short walk to the beach and climbed aboard the RIB for a 20 minute boat ride to the first dive spot. The dive site was called La Vallee des Gorgone (Valley of Gorgonian Fans).

The dive was a drift in a pretty mild current. We headed down to a nice cave at 20m and followed it down to the exit point at 26m. The cave was full of glass fish and as I swept my camera lights around I saw the walls were full of Crayfish sitting in their holes.



As we exited the cave, Narcisse, our guide beckoned us over to a Gorgonian fan and pointed out a Pygmy sea horse. I held back as the others took a look and was dismayed when the inexperienced Brazilian diver kicked sand up and destroyed the visibility before I got my turn. Narcisse was terrific and immediately signalled to me that he would find me another one elsewhere to photograph. A short swim later he pointed another one out and signalled that he would leave me for 5 minutes and take the rest of the group out of the way, leaving me to happily take my shots.

We continued to drift with the current along the wall, with the guide pointing things out as we went. High

lights included a large Moray with a white spot on it's nose, a leaf scorpion fish, harlequin shrimp and a single Grey Reef Shark that came in close for a look. The reef was one of the best I've seen in a long time. It seemed really healthy with little or no damage, heaps of fish and it wasn't difficult to see why they call it the Valley of Gorgonian Fans as these were everywhere. The water temp was a pleasant 28 degrees, the vis was 20-25m.



Pink Anemone fish at Garden of Eden

Between dives we pulled into the lee of an island and were fed coffee and biscuits as we enjoyed the sunshine. The second dive was on a spot called the Garden of Eden. Heading down to 20m we circled a succession of bommies all of which teemed with life. In one spot we stopped and watched a number of Grey Reef sharks cruising out in the blue before returning to the reef. I found a number of Nudibranchs during this dive which made for some nice photographs, and also snapped several different types of Anemone

fish. The boat ride back across the Baie de Gadje (Gadje Bay) was a real pleasure with small coral islands dotted amongst the turquoise waters.



Angelfish at Garden of Eden

Back at the hotel just after lunch, there was no rest for me, with my daughter Anna keen for an afternoon snorkel. The hotel sits on the Baie d'Oro (Oro Bay) and off shore sits a small island that looked like a possible snorkelling site. We were able to walk out half way in water up to our knees before donning our gear and starting the snorkel. As we approached the islet we saw it was in fact two islets with a small passage between the two. The hunch was correct and it was surrounded by reef in 6-7m which was full of fish life.

After an hour, and with the tide coming in, we decided to head for shore, this time swimming all the way back to the beach.



Islet & reef off the hotel

At the Dive Centre the following day, the brief was wide angle for the days' diving, with a promise of Leopard Sharks. It was a completely different set of divers with a couple of Japanese, an Englishman with his French wife and three Frenchmen. Once again the majority of people were doing a try-dive so it was just 3 of us and a guide who splashed into the slightly rough conditions for dive number one.

The dive site was called Kasmira which apparently is the local name for the yellow snapper which can be seen in large quantities on one part of the reef. The boat tied off on a mooring close to a shallow reef and we descended to about 6m before heading off into deeper water and a line of 6 progressively deeper bommies.



Drummer & bait ball in Nature's Aquarium

With rougher conditions, the visibility had dropped a little but was still somewhere between 15 and 20m. On the sand we found a large area of Garden Eels and sure enough, soon came across the promised Leopard Sharks. In the blue we could see both Grey Reef and White Tipped Reef Sharks, while the reef was alive with colourful reef fish. The school of snapper added a huge splash of yellow to the bommie they circled and I spent several minutes taking shots of the school as it passed. Back on the surface it was very choppy and it was a bit of an effort to get everyone back on the boat.

That done, we headed into calm water close to another island for coffee and our surface interval.

Heading back out into the bay, we first dropped the try-divers off on a sheltered reef before the 4 experienced divers were dropped onto a site called Passe de Giu. This was a faster drift with the reef topping at 8 m and dropping away to 50m at the far end of the passage. With the water movement, the fish life was fantastic with large schools of Barracuda, Snapper and Fusiliers. We were able to use the various crevices and canyons to get out of the current for a while before drifting further along the reef. As with the other dive sites the reefs were in excellent shape with huge Gorgonian Fans a real stand out feature.



Schools of fish at Passe de Giu

With my diving done, we spent the rest of the week snorkelling in the Nature's Aquarium. Each day a new set of fish seemed to have been captured inside. On our last day a massive school of baitfish

was inside, together with a dozen or so Barracuda tracking them. In all, I counted over a hundred and fifty different types of fish in the pool over the 5 days we visited the site. All that in a beautiful natural location and with no human development to spoil the view or entrance fees to pay.



Anna Scholey snorkelling in Nature's Aquarium

It was definitely worth the effort to get to the Isle of Pines and I would recommend the spot to those wanting a "get away from it all" type of holiday. The diving was excellent and left me wanting more and the Nature's Aquarium is firmly on top of my list of favourite places. The Le Meridian hotel was top class and is also somewhere I would recommend. The downside of the destination is the cost of things on the island. You really have no option but to eat and drink at the hotel and at an average of \$50 for a main course it can add up pretty quickly. That said, you get what you pay for and we left very satisfied with our holiday. ❖

MORNINGTON PIER & BLAIRGOWRIE PIER

17TH & 19TH APRIL,
2015

*A report and photos from guest diver,
Michael Roelens, from St. George Scuba
Club in Sydney (Peter Beaumont's NSW
Club)*

After a few setbacks, needing some unexpected car repairs in Narooma, I ended up at the car mechanic next to the dive shop. Parked there for 2 days, I was unable to score a dive: the boats were fully booked. Oh well, too bad. It was great checking out the seals on the rocks though. If only I could swim with them...

So, on to Melbourne, where I had arranged to meet a couple of good friends. This gave me some more time to sort out my car a bit more, and start looking out for local diving. I really like the St. George Club, and how it runs completely independently from dive shops. I was keen of course to find similar clubs down here around Melbourne, and later around the rest of Australia too. I got in touch with Ian,

from the Victorian Sub Aqua Group

It turns out Ian often dives with another St. George Club member, Peter Beaumont. It didn't take long before we arranged to dive together. The Club seems to have regular night dives on Friday nights here.

We did Mornington Pier in the rain on the 17th of April. A very interesting dive, actually - the Pier has deteriorated to the point that it almost looks like a wreck. You can swim (carefully) underneath a few ledges and platforms, around the boulders and pylons until... you see that giant cuttlefish shoot out from its hiding place.



Boar Fish

The place is absolutely full of starfish, both 11-armed starfish, and cute pentagonal looking ones in all sorts of colour schemes. As a starfish-deprived Sydneysider, I felt compelled of course to take heaps of pictures. I even thought of a business

idea: creating and selling pillows in the exact shape and colours of these starfish. Wouldn't that be cute?



The next dive was even more interesting - Blairgowrie Pier. It's amazing how colourful the sponges, fish, and crabs are down here. I could have never imagined a pier being so full of life. I had only seen a total of 3 anglerfish before coming down here. And then Peter Beaumont showed me another 4 spectacular ones. I can't wait to go again (that'll be tomorrow!).



If anyone knows of similar clubs as the St. George and VSAG clubs,

around Australia, please let me know. I'm keen to get in touch with each one of them. Would it be an idea perhaps to set up affiliations between these clubs? ❖



Ceratosoma Nudibranch

** This article appeared in the St. George Club newsletter - "Sea Braggin".*

ZEN HARMONY DIVE SAFARI, BALI

MARCH 2015

Report & photos by Meg Johnson

I went to Bali in 1982. I didn't dive then. Back then, Bali was still quite undeveloped and 'out of the way'. What a difference 33 years make!

I arrived in Bali on 7 March. The south of Bali is bedlam - 24/7 traffic jams, wall to wall Aussie tourists - not a place I'd go back to in a hurry!

After a couple of nights in the south, in Seminyak for 2 nights, then Tuban for 1 night, I was picked up by Kutut (I kid you not), for the drive north and the beginning of my 10 night "Harmony Dive Safari". I was quite attracted to the idea of a diving and yoga trip, and it was good. On my previous trip in 1982 I'd just spent time in and around Kuta (which was quite different then). On this trip I enjoyed seeing the north and east of the country, and of course, the diving. The drive north was nice, through the mountains, up in the clouds, with monkeys on the side of the road.

I spent 4 nights at the Zen Resort in Serririt, and 4 nights at Candidasa, at the Rama Beach, and did 13 dives over that time (and yoga every day). The water temperature was a pretty consistent 27-28° and visibility was quite good most of the time, mainly around 15-20 metres.

The Zen Resort in Serririt was an experience! It's a very small Ayurvedic medicine retreat and when I was there, it had about 8 guests, all women, mostly travelling alone and mostly German & American. It felt a bit like "Hotel Callifornia" with a Balinese twist!

All the guests (except me) were non-divers, there for the Ayurvedic medicine. I'm sure I scandalized them no end - sitting on my verandah in the evenings, filling out my dive log while I drank Cointreau on the rocks and smoked cigarettes! I enjoyed a couple of massage treatments while I was there, but can't say I subscribe to medical beliefs based on the state of scientific knowledge 5000 years ago. But... it was a beautiful place, lovely gardens, great pool, very serene. The food was good and I enjoyed my stay. The Rama Beach at Candidasa was just a regular resort hotel - on the beach, and again, more Europeans than Australians.

The Dives :

Puri Jati - Serririt

A 'muck dive' off a black sand beach. The highlight was the many mimic octopi. Also saw a coconut octopus, anemone fish, lionfish and lots of filter feeders.



Lionfish at Bantu Niti

Menjangan Island

I did 3 dives off Menjangan and all were great. The island has a Hindu Temple, with one resident priest and lots of beautiful statues. A huge statue of Ganesha, the elephant god, looks out to sea. Around the island are some fabulous wall dives, and beautiful reef. The highlight was a cave with lots of bright red electric clams - something I'd never seen before.



Moray eel at Blue Lagoon

Talumban

2 dives on the “US Liberty” and 1 at Bantu Niti aka Scuba Serraya, an artificial reef off another black sand beach. The “US Liberty” was good - a very old WWII wreck, quite broken up and covered with growth. Lots of fish life, coral, clams, bumphead parrot fish, blue spotted rays and lionfish.

The dive at Bantu Niti was also good - it's a relatively new artificial reef, only created in 2013. It's a great initiative to give the local villagers some income.

Each diver pays about \$5 to dive off their beach, which gives them an incentive to maintain and develop the reef. Lots of moray eels, nudibranchs, cleaner shrimps and lionfish. I also saw a peacock mantis shrimp.



Peacock Mantis Shrimp at Bantu Niti

Nusa Panida - off Candidasa

Nusa Panida is a lovely island, striking coastline, reminiscent of the coastline along the great ocean road in places, with off-shore rock structures and arches (a bit like the 12 apostles), and towering cliff faces. Dived Manta Point, a Manta Ray cleaning station. Only saw one manta, but saw lots of rays and octopi, and very nice terrain of bombies and boulders. Then did a drift dive along a sloping reef running parallel to the beach.

Gili Biaha, Gili Minpang, Gili Tepekong - off Candidasa

Dived these 3 small islands off Candidasa. Reef wall dives, lovely terrain,

lots of fish life and corals. Saw another Peacock Mantis Shrimp, moray eels, a painted lobster and some wonderful cuttlefish.



Coral at Gili Biaha

Blue Lagoon - off Candidasa

A lovely last dive on a pretty reef. Saw a turtle, baby white tip reef sharks, lots of fish and corals.

So, that was the diving. Also had some very nice meals - Bali has some great restaurants these days. I'd recommend "Gado Gado" in Seminyak, "Ma Joly" in Tuben and "Vincent's" in Candidasa. Also "Grain" in Seminyak for breakfasts.

All in all - a nice little dive holiday. Doing yoga every day was also nice, and a good counter-point to the diving. Took my new Olympus camera, that I recently purchased from Lloyd at the Scuba Doctor. It worked well. I've already booked my next trip - going to Sanbis Resort on Gizo Island in the Solomons in August. Looking forward to it. ❖

**See Meg's other Bali photos on pages 2 & 10.*

CHIMNEY ROCK & CHINAMAN'S HAT SEAL COLONY

*SUNDAY, MAY 17TH
2015*

*Report by Peter Beaumont ; photos by
Michael Roelens & Peter Beaumont*

Diving today:

Peter Beaumont & Michael Roelens
(fellow St. George Scuba Club member)

Boats in company(1st dive):

Barcrusher – David Politakis, Christine Reynolds, Herb Mackay, Ian Smith

For the past month or so Michael Roelens from the St. George Scuba Club has been camping / shore diving around Port Phillip Bay and patiently waiting for favourable weather conditions suitable for boat dives. Fortunately the weather improved enough for boat dives on the Saturday and Sunday so, as I'm a St. George Club member, I asked Michael if he was available for both days to which he replied yes. (I suppose Saturday's and Sunday's dives were the first ever combined VSAG/St. George Scuba Club boat dives).

Sunday saw both Toucans and Barcrusher head off to Chimney Rock with an ideal 24hr forecast of 0.5 mtr swell and 5-10k of NW/SW wind. This was Michael's first boat ride through The Rip and he was amazed at how much turbulence was being created by the incoming tide. By the time we had anchored and geared up, there was zero wind and the ocean surface was without a ripple. Barcrusher opted to remain live and use Toucan's anchor rope as the shot marker.

As this was Michael's third boat dive here in Melbourne and with the vis expected to be about 5mtrs, I ran a reel from the anchor chain to the sea bed where the sand met the reef wall. Once on the sea bed, we swam along the reef wall, under the overhangs, through the gullies, swim-throughs, etc. where we found blue devil fish, small rays, leather jackets etc. After a 35 minute dive (max water temp of 15deg) we ascended the anchor line and after a 5 minute safety stop climbed back into the boat.



Visiting diver - Michael Roelens doing his safety stop at Chimney Rock

Barcrusher's divers were back on board approx. 10 minutes later and after a quick discussion decided to head off to the Canberra for their second dive. As Michael was keen to see some seals up close we headed off to the Chinaman's Hat seal colony where Michael did a 20 minute dive whilst I kept the boat live. Upon his return to the boat Michael was surprised at how fast they move through the water and how they like to pull at your fins, snorkel etc.





After a bite to eat and some more seal colony surface pics, it was time to return to the ramp and call it a day. Overall it was another successful day's diving in Melbourne. ❖



CHIMNEY ROCK & CANBERRA

*SUNDAY, MAY 17TH
2015*

By Ian Smith - aboard "Barcrusher"

On a foggy Sunday morning, heading down the coast looking forward to a

dive, I received a phone call from John Lawler saying he could not come diving as he was having car trouble. John was understandably upset. As I was not far from the Scuba Doctor, I went to get my tanks filled anyway, and lucky for me, ran into David Politakis at the store. David was more than happy for me to come out on his boat.

After loading up, we left Sorrento boat ramp for the trip to Chimney Rock, following Peter's boat, Toucans. The bay was flat with no wind around and the sun was coming up. It was looking like a great day to be going for a dive.

Chimney Rock is not far from the shore near the outlet to the Barwon River with 24m to the bottom and about 18m to the top. Peter's boat Toucans had anchored on the rock.

Buddying up with Christine, we hit the water and it was a cold shock, a lovely 15°C at the bottom. With lots of swim throughs, under cuts & drop offs covered in sponges to investigate. Sadly no Cray fish as visibility was about 3m at best after all the rain over the past week. We did see Blue devils, Port Jackson sharks and lots of reef fish. I would like to come back here when the visibility is clearer.

Then we headed back up to the Canberra for our surface interval and warming up in the morning sunshine. With our wet suits steaming in the sun, David handing out his freshly cooked sausages from the BBQ, and with a calm sea, you could not ask for a nicer way to warm up.

David then dropped us on top of the Canberra but we could not see the

wreck as we descended until we landed on it. We did not let the visibility stop us from enjoying the dive - there's always something to see and it was nice just to swim around the wreck looking into different areas of the ship. After 25min, it was time for us to ascend up to the surface where the morning sun was once again there to warm us up as we headed back into the bay.

I would to thank Christine, Herb, Peter and David, for his great skippering skills. An enjoyable day was had by all. ❖

SHIPROCK MARINE RESERVE

THURSDAY 21ST &
FRIDAY 22ND MAY,
2015

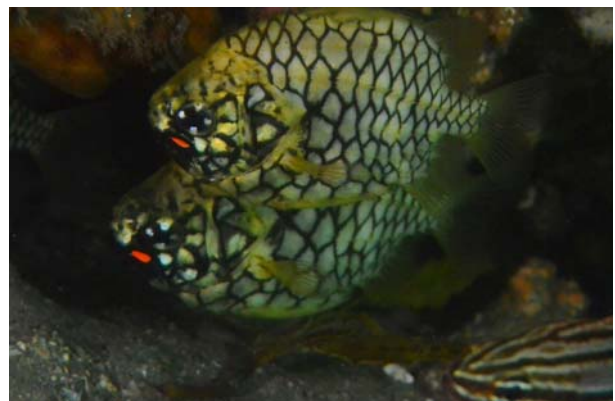
Report & photos by Peter Beaumont

As Judy & I were heading off to Sydney to visit family & friends, I also packed the dive gear into the car so I could fit in a couple of weekday shore dives at Shiprock. The site is a Marine Reserve located on the Port Hacking River in the Sutherland Shire

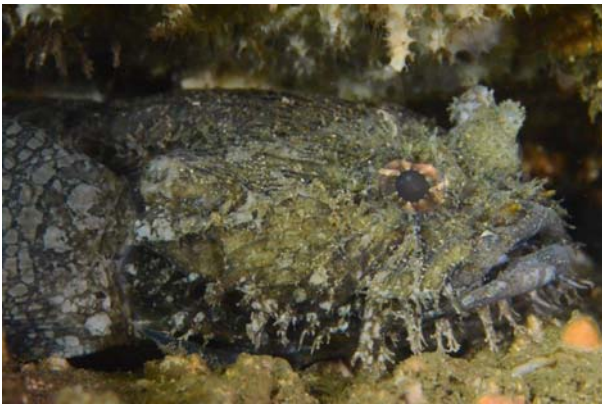
suburb of Lilli Pilli and was named after the shape of a large sandstone rock sitting on the shoreline which looks like the bow of a ship. Access is via a walkway from Shiprock Rd (cul de sac) and, due to the weekend popularity of this site, one needs to arrive approx 1.5 hours before high/low tide in order to obtain a parking spot. Alternatively one can drop their gear off at the bottom of the cul de sac (with a minder) then park further up the street or a block or so away & walk back.

Since the site is subject to tidal variances of up to 1.5mtrs, flow rates of approx. 5knots plus are possible so I tend to enter the water approx. 30 minutes before high or low water. As Burraneer Bay is close by I use this site <http://tides.willyweather.com.au/nsw/sydney/burraneer.html> to determine my entry times.

Thursday's dive was at low tide so I entered the water from the square grotto enclosure at approx. 3.50 pm, swam down past the usual rocks/boulders to the 4 mtr mark, then over to the crack in the reef wall. I then dropped down to the 12mtr mark, turned right & swam along the wall till I located the resident pineapple fish.



After taking a few pics I swam back along the wall, then out & around the three bommies, back to the wall past the bubble cave, to the 17mtr section, then back to the crack in the reef wall. During this dive I saw hawk fish, fan bellied leather jackets, bream, blue box fish, resident blue grouper, ringed toad fish, occy's, eels, catfish, a small cuttlefish, a port jackson and a couple of eastern frog fish.



From the crack in the reef wall I ascended & navigated around the usual rocks etc. back to my entry point where I exited the water & slowly climbed the stairs back to the car. After washing up the gear at the local boat ramp, Judy & I then headed off for dinner at Lilli Pilli's Dlish café.



Friday's weather had taken a turn for

the worse, with heavy rain & 35-40 knot southerly winds whipping up a 40cm surface chop across the Port Hacking River. A potential dive buddy from the St. George Club looked at the weather & decided to give it a miss, given the wind & rain of the past 12 hours. Taking the glass half full approach, I went down to the local boat ramp to check out the conditions. Despite the heavy rain, the vis was not affected & as it was an incoming tide, the vis had actually improved so I started getting ready for the dive.

I entered the water from the same square grotto enclosure at approx. 11.20 am & swam the same route as the day before. The vis the day before was approx. 8mtrs but now with the high tide, it was approx. 15mtrs. In addition to seeing the same marine life as yesterday I saw a couple of wobbe-gongs in the rock ledges plus a rather large and angry blue swimmer crab, actively swimming around the reef base waving it's outspread claws/nippers at me.



I managed to get a couple of pics without it grabbing hold of the camera, taking off a finger or slicing open the dry suit. As it moved past

one of the wobbegongs, the wobble' just looked at it and must have thought "That looks like too much trouble." By this stage, it was time to return to the reef wall & ascend to the 5mtr mark for a 5 minute stop before exiting the water.



The walk back up the stairs was easier this time due to the 35knot southerly pushing me up the stairs. As this dive site experiences a lot of overhead boat traffic, it's important not to surface mid-water as you'll most likely find yourself dodging boats and dealing with a surface current. Further site info can be found here:

http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=327

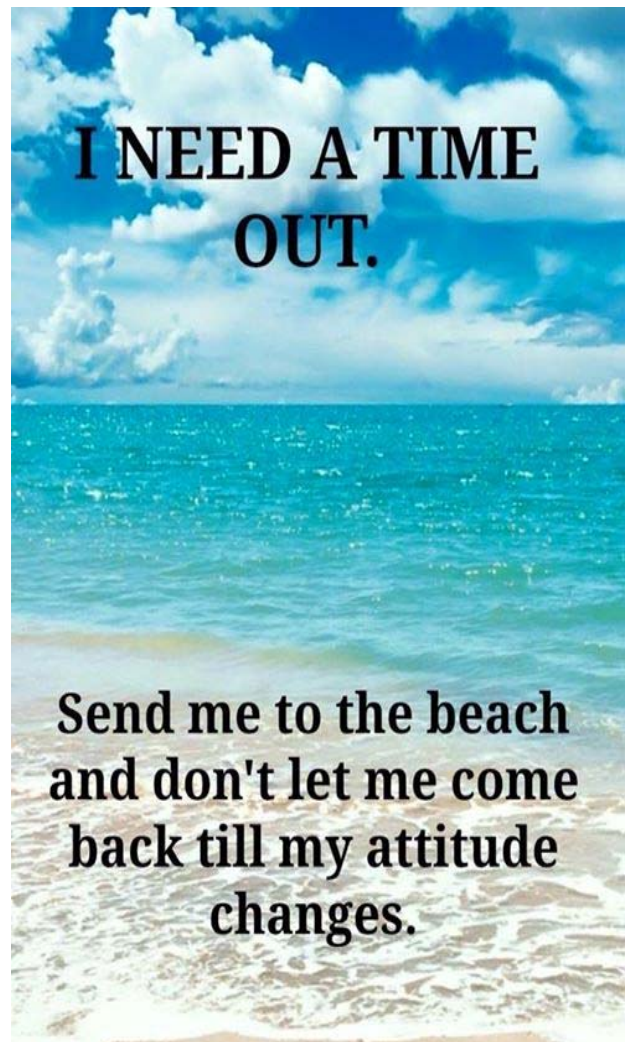


Judy & I found suitable accommodation during non-school holiday periods at Cronulla Cabins which is a 5 minute drive away. See website:

<http://www.cronullacabins.com.au/>



Whenever diving this site, I usually plan for either an AM mid week high/low water followed by breakfast/lunch at the local café. Overall this is a very enjoyable shore dive site with easy entry/exit points & lots to see. ❖



ANEMONES

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

Following sponges on the invertebrate evolutionary tree is the Phylum Cnidaria. This very large Phylum contains tens of thousands of related species. The name Cnidaria means “thread animals”, referring to their nematocysts. They have a newly evolved sac-like body enclosing a simple stomach surmounted by a mouth surrounded by tentacles. This major evolutionary advance allowed the animal (the polyp) to ingest food swept into the mouth by the tentacles, rather than by randomly sucking it in as do the sponges. Cnidarian cells are more efficiently arranged than in the sponges, the polyp consisting of several organised layers of cells - an outer layer (the ectoderm) an inner layer (the endoderm) and internal cells arranged in a primitive nervous system. Nature however, made a planning error as the mouth is inefficiently used both for intake of food and expulsion of food wastes.

To capture food, and to ward off predators, the tentacles are armed with batteries of buried stinging cells called nematocysts. These microscopic capsules fly open when disturbed, ejecting a long poisonous spinous thread. Most cnidarian nematocysts are small and harmless to humans but some tropical species can give a nasty long-lasting or even fatal sting. Even

in our southern waters some people are sensitive to stings so it's wise to wear gloves when handling cnidarians.

Classification

The Cnidaria is divided into several Classes, the ones we most often see in southern Australia being the Anthozoa - anemones and relatives, the hydroids (Hydrozoa), corals (Scleractinia), sea jellies (Scyphozoa) and sea-combs (Ctenophora).

In Australia, there are few taxonomists (I'm one) researching the Cnidaria, so it is often difficult to have specimens and photographs identified. This issue shows some of the commonest anemones.

Anthozoa – the Anemones

There are about 7000 anthozoan species known world-wide and about 2500 known from southern Australia.

Anemones belong to the Order Actinaria within the Anthozoa. While having the usual simple cnidarian body plan they also have an external strong supporting column and their stomach is divided into folds for more efficient digestion. They reproduce sexually by release of sperm and eggs into the water or by budding. All are sessile, living fixed on firm substrate in the one place, but some can creep slowly on the pedal disk at the base of the column until they find a suitable place to settle.

Like all cnidarians, anemones catch passing food with the tentacles, the nematocysts disabling prey and then passing it to the mouth. They are hardy

organisms and generally are not a favoured food resource by other marine organisms. A few are preyed upon by pycnogonids (sea spiders) which tear them apart and some are eaten by nudibranchs, but generally, they are left alone.

I have a delightful biography (a gift from Sandy Webb) of Anna Thynne, a pioneer marine biologist, who in 1846 collected anemones at Torquay in the UK and learned, with the help of numerous servants delivering fresh seawater to keep them alive in her marble bath.

There are many anemones on our coast, some large, others finger-nail size.

Actinia tenebrosa is a conspicuous species, which, if like me, you don't often see because it grows in the intertidal on rock platforms. It looks like a blob of red jelly when the tide is out. It is uniformly deep red, and has a slit-like mouth and numerous tentacles.



Actinia tenebrosa, in shallow water beneath gannet platform, Popes Eye, 0.5m

Anthothoe albocincta is our most common subtidal anemone, distributed throughout the bay in groups or growing singly. It likes sheltered water under jetties. It is small, to 5 cm across the extended tentacles and has an orange/white striped column and up to 200 white to grey tentacles surrounding a central orange disk and paler mouth. The mouth is closed during daytime but opens for feeding at night. Tentacles of the colony under St Leonards jetty are blue at certain times of year.



Anthothoe albocincta, with greyish-blue tentacles, St Leonards jetty, 2 m.



Epiactis australiensis is a less common, but beautiful anemone usually hiding in sand underneath ledges in sheltered habitat. The column is striped orange and green, the orange mouth is surrounded by up to 60 stubby white to mauve, purple-tipped tentacles.



Epiactis australiensis, showing striped column and tentacles. St Leonards jetty, 2 m

Epiactis thompsoni is a close relative of *E. australiensis* but is less common. It is distinguished by its overall orange/pinkish colour and a longitudinal yellowish stripe down the tentacles. It is known from South Australia and although not scientifically recorded from Victoria, it is sometimes present here in rocky habitat.

Aulactinia veratra is a dull olive-brown anemone, about 6 cm in diameter with multiple rows of green/brown tinged tentacles. It is found just below low water mark in bayside sands. When touched, it shrinks below the sand. Food resources are unknown.



Epiactis thompsoni, Steeles Rock, near Portarlinton, 2 m



Aulactinia veratra in sand just below low water mark, Clifton Springs

Phlyctenactis tuberculosa is a large “swimming” ball-sized anemone. It is often seen on algae under jetties or clinging to seagrass stems. It moves around by releasing its grip and bowling along with water movement to new habitat. The vesicles on the column are egg-shaped and variously coloured orange, brown, blue or green. It is a night-feeder, the large tentacles being completely withdrawn during the day, extending at night to capture small swimming amphipods. (I missed a picture of it feeding at

night – the fibre-optic cable broke!)



Phlyctenactis tuberculosa, daytime shot showing vesicles, St Leonards jetty, 3 m

Anthopleura aureoradiata is a small greyish-brown anemone with multiple rows of greenish-grey tentacles. It saves energy in looking for new habitat by hitching a ride on shells of the bivalve *Katelsia scalarina* which ploughs through soft bay sands. The anemone is only a few centimetres wide and the dull colour matches that of the sand. When touched it withdraws to a small blob.



Anthopleura aureoradiata hitching a ride on buried *Katelsia* shells, Clifton Springs, 2 m

Species Unknown. An anemone probably belonging to the Family Aliciidae. I haven't been able to get it identified. It is delicate pure white, about 1 cm in diameter across the long extended tentacles. It appeared in thousands on the bay seagrass *Herostera nigricaulis* in summer of 2012 along the Bellarine coastline. I have seen only a few since. Can anyone identify it or provide more information? ❖



Unknown anemone on seagrass *Heterozostera nigricaulis*, Clifton Springs, 1 m.

Erratum - In the last edition of *Fathoms*, a mistake appeared in Jan's article on sponges (Editor error)

On page 27, the word **digitate** morphed into **digital**.

DIVING THE WEB



Into the Unknown : The wreck of the USS Peterson

E/V Nautilus dove on an unknown sonar target, thought to be a 500 foot long shipwreck. After a survey of the vessel, the Corps of Exploration successfully identified the wreck of USS Peterson (DD-969).

<http://nautiluslive.org/video/2014/07/10/unknown-wreck-uss-peterson>

The benefits of joining a Dive Club

The signature feature of most Dive Clubs is their ability to add a new dimension to your diving experience.



<http://scubadiverlife.com/2014/09/14/benefits-joining-dive-club/>



Authorities find skeletons in underwater lawn chairs

A man snorkelling in the Colorado River near the Arizona and California borders was terrified - and later embarrassed - when he came across two fake skeletons sitting in lawn chairs about 40 feet underwater.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/27692059/authorities-find-skeletons-in-underwater-lawn-chairs/?cmp=fb>



Freediving with a friendly Blue Shark

Brett Illingworth spoke about magical encounters out in Bass Strait at a recent VSAG meeting. Here is an example of one of his youtube clips.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTXkq5bQUJA#t=16>

Toroidal bubbles

Extraordinary and beautiful examples of toroidal vortices produced by dolphins, beluga whales, humpback whales, volcanoes, hydrogen/atomic bombs, and man



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHyTOcfF99o>

Rethink the Shark - Chair



This is the Panda Award winning campaign which belongs to shark and marine conservationist & campaigner, Lesley Rochat, and the organisation she founded - AgriOceans Conservation Alliance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htpxGX0lh3U>

SOUTH CHANNEL FORT MEMBERS, FAMILY & FRIENDS TOUR

Report by John Lawler ; photos by Michael Webb and Ian Scholey

The journey to this day on Sunday 24th May 2015 started way back in 2014 when two scheduled tours to this iconic place in Port Phillip Bay were cancelled due to strong wind forecasts and foul weather...but today all was so good!

The pre-advice that the tour was to be conducted went out a few weeks prior to the event. When the weather forecast showed the conditions were excellent, the final confirmation that the fort tour was on reached our members. The response to bookings was overwhelming! 52 people, 4 boats and one RIB!



8.30am - The boat owners met at the Rye boat trailer parking bay for a briefing on the logistics of safety, boarding, disembarking, launching, retrieving

and site management. Peter Galvin and Ross Walker provided two way hand held VHF radios to ensure strong communications between the fort and Rye ramp persons.



9am - All participants assembled for an excellent detailed briefing by President Ian Scholey, a fine mixture of safety guidelines, waiver forms handed out and some light hearted (Scholey style) humour. Care of the fort site was also emphasised. Finally, boat allocations by co-ordinator JL, then all was set. Boats were progressively launched and headed off for the approx. 7km run to the Fort.



ALL ABOARD!





9.45am-12.15pm - “THE KEEP”

A unique and highly significant 19th Century artificial island built in the 1880s, it was part of the strategic defence network of Port Phillip. In its heyday, from 1890’s to 1916, around 100 officers lived and worked on and under the island. The island contains gun emplacements, a labyrinth of underground passages and magnificent panoramic views over Port Phillip Bay. It is also the breeding ground of White-Faced Storm-Petrels and other important birdlife.

Christine Reynolds (AKA The Big Banana) was the designated site marshal and what a superb job she did! Ensuring the visitors were well guided and informed, keeping safety in mind and generally ensuring that all went to plan and it did!



The underground tunnels were the main tour feature of the island on this day and not generally open to the public. What an experience this was - a real step back into the protective war-time history of our state. Lighting has been installed throughout, powered by solar, thus making what would have been a very dark experience, a very safe pleasure. Around 30-45 minutes is the time needed to inspect the tunnel areas.





Boats diverted to and from the fort to visit the “Chinaman’s Hat” channel marker to see the seals who breed and live there. Only a few were there on this day but enough to excite those who had not seen these fur seals up close.





Back at the Rye ramp it was boats out, people moving off for additional attractions, and quite a few very hungry ones heading for the great Rye Hotel for a hot lunch.

Another great very, very successful VSAG social day...it makes one feel so proud to be a part of this great 60 year-old club.

A VERY BIG THANKYOU TO OUR BOAT OWNERS ON THE DAY :

Ross Walker - "2dive4"

David Politakis - "Barchrusher"

Graham Ellis - "Me 3"

Ian Scholey - RIB "Sea Eagle"

John Lawler - "Signature One" ❖



DIVE SNIPPETS

Macquarie Island

April 2015

Charmaine Alford via email from the "Aurora Australis" resupply ship to Macquarie Island

I was hoping to be back in time for the Club Meeting but, as is usually the case with the Macquarie Island resupply, we're running late! The weather has dropped a bit now and it is a whole lot more pleasant on board. If you're interested, check out our webcam : <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/webcams>



A group of King Penguins at Gadgets Gully, Macquarie Island

**See Charmaine's photo of Gentoo Penguins on page 13 ❖*

The Hurricane

Sunday 12th April, 2015

Ian Scholey



Rockling on The Hurricane

Is this the most depressed fish you've ever seen? Someone give it a hug. ❖

Blairgowrie Shore Dive

Sunday 26th April, 2015

Ian Scholey

Looking for slugs this morning. Found a few but nothing out of the ordinary today. Just myself, Peter Beaumont and guest diver, Michael Roelens, braving the early start.



Montague Island, NSW

Wednesday 29th
April, 2015

Carole Campisano



Diving off Montague Island today, I was filming away and this fella came real close and barked at me! It scared the bejesus out of me and I nearly dropped my camera!

<https://www.facebook.com/carole.lois/videos/o.252023381571536/1612083835701029/?type=2&theater> ❖



Wreck of the Empire Gladstone, Pambula NSW

Thursday 29th April, 2015

Carole Campisano



Night dive, Sorrento Pier

Friday 1st May, 2015

Ian Scholey

I hadn't dived Sorrento Pier for years until last night. I am still asking myself "Why not?" this morning, Wow, what a great site. You have to wait until the ferry stops running and you get a bit of current, but that is certainly good for the growth and life. Four VSAGers enjoyed a great dive - myself, Peter Beaumont, Tim Forster and Dickon Roddie. It will not be long before I am back there again. ❖



© Ian Scholey



© Ian Scholey





SS Rotomahana & Chimney Rock

*Sunday 3rd May,
2015*

Ian Scholey

Great conditions on the water today. We had the two RIB's, Sea Eagle and Toucans out with myself, Peter Beaumont and Michael Ngai on board.

First dive was on the SS Rotomahana. With grey skies on top, average visibility underneath and the 40m depth, there wasn't a lot of light around and I struggled a bit with my camera on this one. Still, we had a good dive never the less.

The second dive was on Chimney Rock which as usual was full of colour and Bluedevils and was much more camera-friendly. I've taken a lot of photographs of Bluedevils over the years but think I topped them today with one I really liked.





Blairgowrie

10th May, 2015

Troy Kenward

The last pics taken before the demise of my trusty old Panasonic DMC-FT4. After yesterday's dive, it still turns on/off, but no other buttons function at all. Given the relatively cheap nature of the unit, time to move on.



There was as much action top side as down below with Dolphins just inches from the boats at the Rotomahana, and then a couple of playful seals at Chimney Rock who hung around for 45 minutes or so. ❖





Last one is a mystery shark tooth found under the pier. ❖

Flinders Pier

Sunday 10th May, 2015

Ian Scholey

Today was a day for the desperate diver only. Rain topside and vis at about 0.5m greeted Peter Beaumont and I at Flin-

ders this morning.

Having made the effort to get there, it would have been rude not to dive so we went for it despite the conditions. With the vis the way it was, it was a case of seeing just what you bumped into but I didn't do too badly. The highlight was a large Maori Octopus. I'm not sure which one of us was more surprised by the encounter. ❖





The Pinnacle & George Kermode

Saturday, 16th May, 2015

Ian Scholey

With the massive swells last week, we were worried about the visibility today. As it happened, it wasn't too bad and we found 8-10m vis at Phillip Island for our dives on The Pinnacle and George Kermode.



We had two boats out:

On Sea Eagle - myself and Brendan Mifsud and on Toucans - Peter Beaumont and guest diver Michael Roelans.



The Pinnacle was at it's spectacular best - in places you struggled to see the reef through the schools of Barber Perch. I also found a Banded Morwong which I hadn't seen outside of Tassie before. ❖



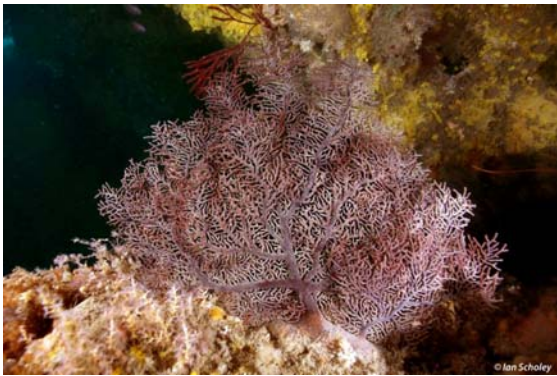
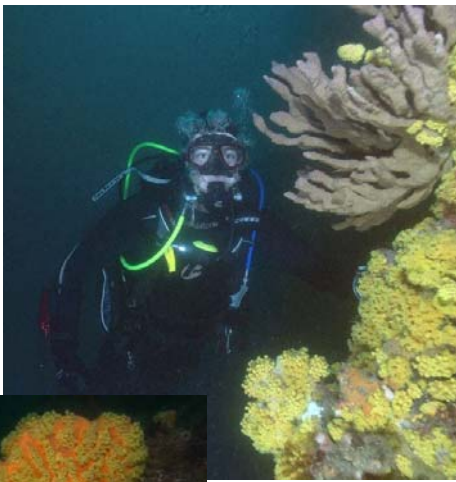
Blairgowrie Night Dive

Friday 22nd May,
2015

Ian Scholey

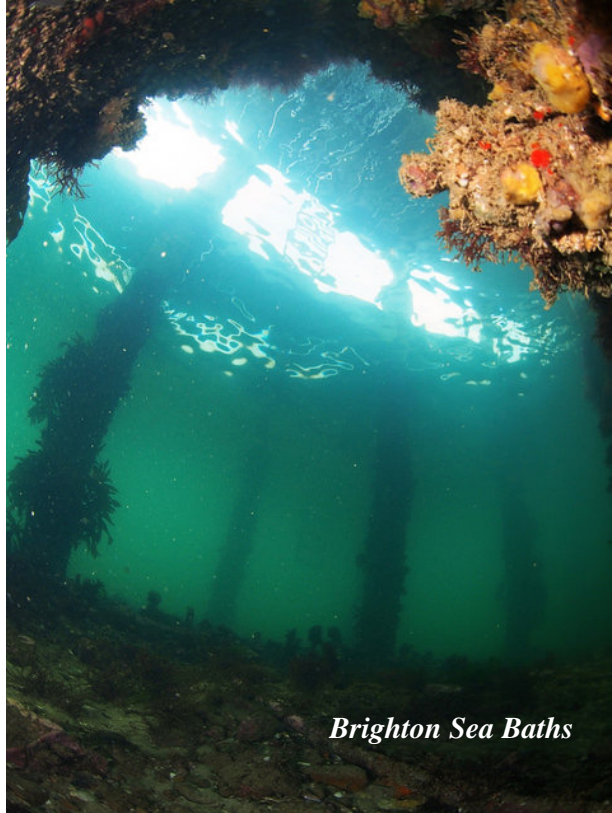
It's getting colder at 14 degrees and more and more people are switching to dry suits. That said, the diving is still spectacular and last night was a good one at Blairgowrie.

There were three divers - myself, Brendan Mifsud and David Politakis who was sporting a drysuit that has been stashed away somewhere for a while. Welcome to warm diving David. Plenty to see as usual with plenty of Octopi about and a hungry short headed worm eel munching on the fisherman's bait.





..and the latest from Phil Watson



Brighton Sea Baths



© Ian Schabley



Port Jackson Shark - Queenscliff





*Deep Glen Bay,
Eaglehawk,
Tasmania*



Fanworm - Night Dive at South Road, Brighton



Ibacus - Night Dive at Williamstown



Ex-HMAS Canberra



*Point Franklin with
Michael Mallis*



Point King, Portsea



Sponge gardens - Bicheno, Tasmania



*Spider crabs -
Blairgowrie,
4th April, 2015*

WE STILL NEED HELP WITH SHORE DIVE CAPTAINS

From our Club President, Ian Scholey with photos from some recent shore dives

Hi All,

Since I have stepped into the President role with VSAG I have been working with the rest of the committee on some objectives for 2015.

One of the targets we would like to set ourselves is to increase the number of members who are actively diving with the club. What has been obvious to us for some time is that we don't provide a shore diving option for our members.



I have seen my Friday night shore dive grow steadily in popularity and with some recent bad weather leading to boat cancellations, we have started to offer shore diving as an alternative with great success. In fact, what we have seen is that members who were not booked on the boat dives have

joined the shore dive when we have advertised it. All of this tells me we have demand for an alternative to a full day boat dive programme.



What we are looking to do is to widen our dive captain numbers with the addition of a group of club members who would be prepared to take a turn to organise and lead a shore dive as an alternative to our boat dive. I know that you are all keen shore divers and was wondering whether any of you would be prepared to play this role?

We would see this as a trial with each person initially agreeing to organise one weekend. We would then review, based on demand and the feedback of

those leading the dive. If it works and we can identify a group who are prepared to play this role going forward then we will add the shore dive to our calendar.



We would consider the role as light touch compared to the main boat dive captain role.

For shore diving the dive captain role would consist of:

1. Sending out an email invite to members.
2. Choosing a dive site, meet time, meet place and dive day based on weather conditions and diver availability.
3. Confirming the dive is going ahead to those who have expressed interest the day before.

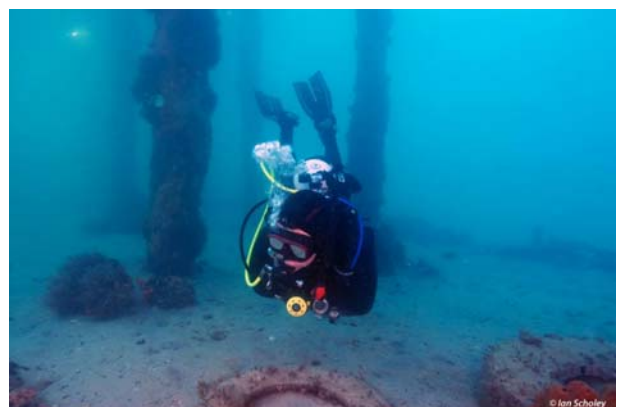
4. On the dive day, making a final check of the dive site conditions and advising divers if the site is considered unsafe.

5. Making sure people are buddied up.

6. Confirming who has dived for point scoring.



If you are interested in playing this role then please let me know, together with any weekends you are prepared to play the role. If we have enough takers I will pull a draft schedule together. If this isn't for you I understand, so no pressure to accept. Either way your feedback on the idea would be most welcome. ❖



VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar

By Graham Ellis, Dive Calendar Co-ordinator, VSAG

Activity Details

Dive Coordinator (DC) nominated below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jun 6/7/8	Queen's Birthday Weekend - Boarfish Lodge DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Jun 13/14	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Jun 16	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Jun 20/21	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Jun 27/28	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Jul 4/5	DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725
Jul 11/12	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Jul 18/19	DC Peter Galvin 0417 061 564
Jul 21	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Jul 25/26	DC John Lawler 0414 922 916
Aug 1/2	DC Graham Ellis 0403 070 920
Aug 8/9	DC Ian Scholey 0439 310 646
Aug 15/16	DC Michael Ngai 0414 894 684
Aug 18	General Meeting, Bells Hotel, 8.00 pm
Aug 22/23	DC David Geekie 0419 300 686
Aug 29/30	DC Ross Walker 0417 376 192
Sept 5/6	DC Peter Beaumont 0403 410 725

Tidal Streams at the Heads — June 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.

June						
MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6	SUN 7
<i>0:13</i>	<i>1:05</i>	<i>1:58</i>	<i>2:48</i>	<i>3:36</i>	<i>4:22</i>	<i>0:06</i>
<i>7:37</i>	<i>8:27</i>	<i>9:13</i>	<i>9:56</i>	<i>10:38</i>	<i>11:20</i>	<i>5:09</i>
<i>14:25</i>	<i>15:20</i>	<i>16:06</i>	<i>16:47</i>	<i>17:26</i>	<i>18:04</i>	<i>12:02</i>
<i>20:02</i>	<i>21:07</i>	<i>21:59</i>	<i>22:44</i>	<i>23:25</i>		<i>18:41</i>
MON 8	TUE 9	WED 10	THU 11	FRI 12	SAT 13	SUN 14
<i>0:47</i>	<i>1:31</i>	<i>2:17</i>	<i>3:07</i>	<i>4:02</i>	<i>5:01</i>	<i>6:04</i>
<i>5:57</i>	<i>6:49</i>	<i>7:45</i>	<i>8:47</i>	<i>9:57</i>	<i>11:15</i>	<i>12:36</i>
<i>12:44</i>	<i>13:26</i>	<i>14:09</i>	<i>14:54</i>	<i>15:44</i>	<i>16:44</i>	<i>17:58</i>
<i>19:18</i>	<i>19:55</i>	<i>20:32</i>	<i>21:11</i>	<i>21:53</i>	<i>22:43</i>	<i>23:40</i>
MON 15	TUE 16	WED 17	THU 18	FRI 19	SAT 20	SUN 21
<i>7:08</i>	<i>0:42</i>	<i>1:44</i>	<i>2:45</i>	<i>3:41</i>	<i>4:32</i>	<i>0:12</i>
<i>13:53</i>	<i>8:09</i>	<i>9:05</i>	<i>9:56</i>	<i>10:42</i>	<i>11:25</i>	<i>5:20</i>
<i>19:23</i>	<i>14:59</i>	<i>15:55</i>	<i>16:44</i>	<i>17:27</i>	<i>18:05</i>	<i>12:04</i>
	<i>20:42</i>	<i>21:47</i>	<i>22:41</i>	<i>23:29</i>		<i>18:40</i>
MON 22	TUE 23	WED 24	THU 25	FRI 26	SAT 27	SUN 28
<i>0:53</i>	<i>1:31</i>	<i>2:09</i>	<i>2:47</i>	<i>3:27</i>	<i>4:11</i>	<i>4:59</i>
<i>6:05</i>	<i>6:49</i>	<i>7:33</i>	<i>8:20</i>	<i>9:12</i>	<i>10:11</i>	<i>11:19</i>
<i>12:39</i>	<i>13:13</i>	<i>13:45</i>	<i>14:18</i>	<i>14:53</i>	<i>15:32</i>	<i>16:20</i>
<i>19:12</i>	<i>19:41</i>	<i>20:10</i>	<i>20:39</i>	<i>21:09</i>	<i>21:44</i>	<i>22:23</i>
June					July	
MON 29	TUE 30	WED 1	THU 2	FRI 3	SAT 4	SUN 5
<i>5:51</i>	<i>6:46</i>	<i>0:05</i>	<i>1:05</i>	<i>2:06</i>	<i>3:05</i>	<i>4:02</i>
<i>12:32</i>	<i>13:44</i>	<i>7:42</i>	<i>8:35</i>	<i>9:26</i>	<i>10:15</i>	<i>11:02</i>
<i>17:24</i>	<i>18:50</i>	<i>14:46</i>	<i>15:38</i>	<i>16:23</i>	<i>17:03</i>	<i>17:42</i>
<i>23:10</i>		<i>20:15</i>	<i>21:20</i>	<i>22:13</i>	<i>23:00</i>	<i>23:46</i>

Tidal Streams at the Heads — July 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.

June		July				
MON 29	TUE 30	WED 1	THU 2	FRI 3	SAT 4	SUN 5
5:51	6:46	0:05	1:05	2:06	3:05	4:02
12:32	13:44	7:42	8:35	9:26	10:15	11:02
17:24	18:50	14:46	15:38	16:23	17:03	17:42
23:10		20:15	21:20	22:13	23:00	23:46
MON 6	TUE 7	WED 8	THU 9	FRI 10	SAT 11	SUN 12
4:57	0:31	1:19	2:07	2:57	3:49	4:44
11:48	5:53	6:49	7:48	8:50	9:57	11:09
18:19	12:32	13:15	13:58	14:42	15:29	16:23
	18:55	19:31	20:07	20:45	21:27	22:14
MON 13	TUE 14	WED 15	THU 16	FRI 17	SAT 18	SUN 19
5:43	6:44	0:13	1:20	2:25	3:24	4:17
12:23	13:35	7:45	8:43	9:36	10:23	11:05
17:30	18:53	14:41	15:37	16:25	17:05	17:40
23:10		20:17	21:27	22:23	23:10	23:51
MON 20	TUE 21	WED 22	THU 23	FRI 24	SAT 25	SUN 26
5:04	0:28	1:03	1:37	2:13	2:49	3:28
11:42	5:48	6:29	7:11	7:54	8:42	9:34
18:11	12:16	12:48	13:19	13:50	14:23	14:57
	18:39	19:05	19:31	19:58	20:27	20:58
July					August	
MON 27	TUE 28	WED 29	THU 30	FRI 31	SAT 1	SUN 2
4:11	5:00	5:56	6:58	0:25	1:38	2:48
10:34	11:42	12:56	14:05	8:01	9:01	9:56
15:37	16:29	17:42	19:15	15:04	15:52	16:34
21:35	22:19	23:16		20:38	21:41	22:34

Tidal Streams at the Heads — August 2015

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

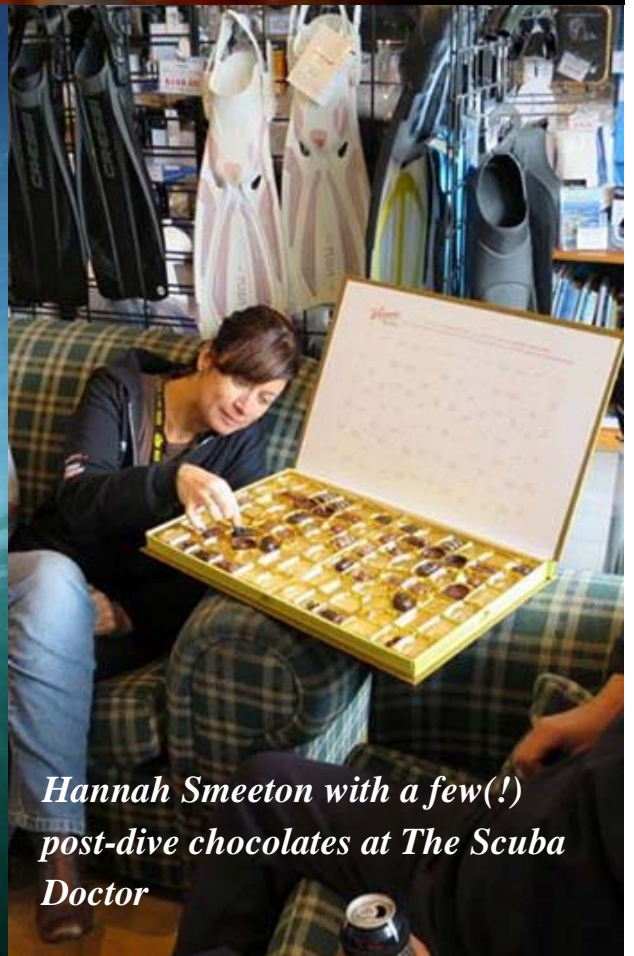
August						
MON 3	TUE 4	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7	SAT 8	SUN 9
3:52	4:53	0:13	1:01	1:50	2:39	3:29
10:47	11:35	5:51	6:48	7:46	8:45	9:46
17:12	17:49	12:20	13:04	13:46	14:29	15:13
23:24		18:26	19:03	19:41	20:21	21:03
MON 10	TUE 11	WED 12	THU 13	FRI 14	SAT 15	SUN 16
4:20	5:16	6:16	7:20	1:05	2:14	3:15
10:50	11:58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



Ascidian - Charmaine Alford



Jellyfish, Mordialloc - David Reinhard

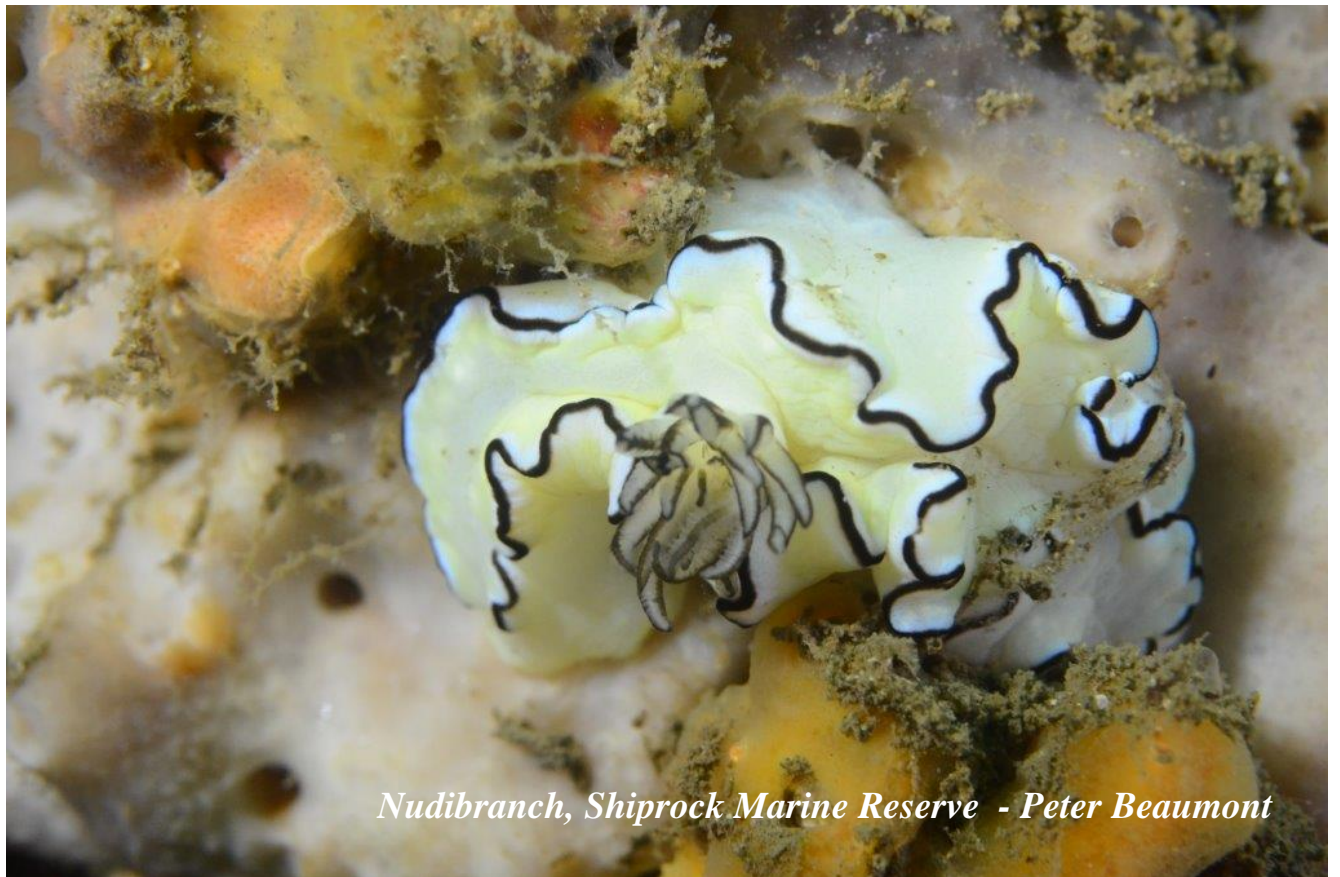


*Hannah Smeeton with a few(!)
post-dive chocolates at The Scuba
Doctor*

Blue Devil Fish, Chimney Rock - Peter Beaumont

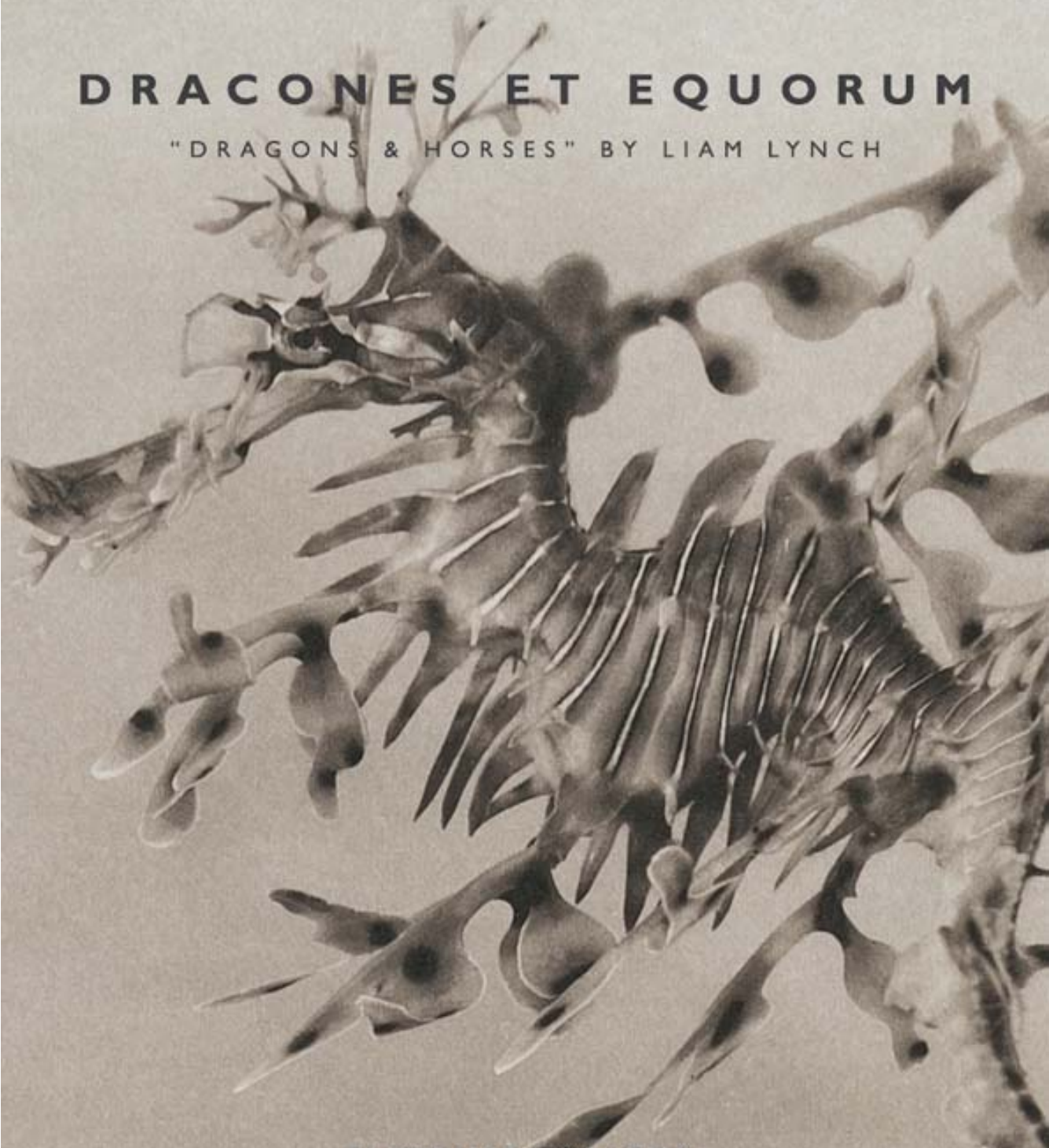


Nudibranch, Shiprock Marine Reserve - Peter Beaumont



DRACONES ET EQUORUM

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- Wildlife and maritime heritage
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Entries must be emailed to:
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ACCOMMODATION AND
DIVE WITH YONGALA DIVE
CENTRE, AND MORE ...



Should the quality of entries fall below the standard required, the organisers reserve the right not to award prizes. Some prizes are subject to conditions.