

Supplement to Fathoms, August—September 2016

Shark Point, Clovelly

Tuesday, 17th May 2016

by Peter Beaumont



Depth: 20mtrs

Water temp: 20c

Vis: 20mtrs

Divers: Peter Beaumont, St George Club members - Ken, Roney & Simon

With Sydney's weather forecast indicating flat seas & low wind for a week or so, I decided to load the dive gear into the wagon & head off to Sydney to do some dives with the St George Club. I left Mornington at 3.30am on the Monday and after a few stops on the way, I arrived in Sydney at around 2pm.

With my accommodation sorted, I started setting up my gear for a shore dive at Shark Point the next day. I hadn't dived this site before so I met up with Ken & loaded the gear into his car & we headed off through the Sydney morning peak hour traffic.

Once we turned off the main road near Mascot airport, Ken took us through the back streets to our 8.30am meeting place of Eastbourne Avenue which overlooks the Clovelly ocean pool. Conditions were ideal with $\frac{1}{2}$ a metre of swell lapping the Shark Point shoreline entry point, zero wind & 25degs forecast.

Roney & Simon arrived shortly after we did so we discussed the dive, geared up & made our way across the rocks to the entry point. I buddied with Ken as he knows the site rather well. He pointed out the various exit points and we agreed to use one of the ocean pool concrete steps at the end of the dive for our exit.

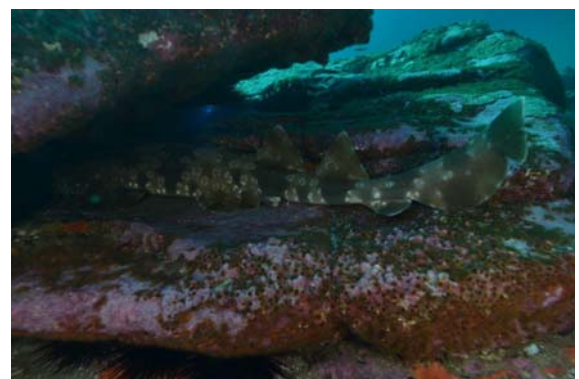
Entry was with a giant stride

into a wide gutter / passage in the rocks, with a water depth of about 3 mtrs, which dropped quite quickly to about 10 mtrs once you swam out a short distance. Once in, we quickly submerged & finned our way down through a channel in the rocks/reef & onto a sandy patch with surrounding sandstone rocks, boulders and overhangs at 15mtrs.



From there we swam around the shoreline, making our way slowly back to the ocean pool. Along the way we saw the usual Blue

Grouper(s) who would follow us around for the next hour or so waiting for a feed of sea urchins etc. We also saw a few large Cuttlefish, a 1.5 mtr long Wobbly resting on a ledge, an Eastern Blue Devil fish and smaller fish.



At the end of the dive there was a metre of water covering the ocean pool rock wall / wave screen so we were able to swim across the top & make our way to the exit steps and outdoor

showers before heading back to the car. I found the dive to be very relaxing with next to no surge or current present & with 20mtr vis it made for a very easy dive.

With the gear washed off we headed back to Ken's place to set the gear up and prep his boat for Wednesday's dive at the whale watch platform. ❖

Whale Watch— Cape Solander, Kurnell

Wednesday, 18th May 2016

by Peter Beaumont

Boat: Katz II

Launch Location: Port Botany Ramp

Depth: 23mtrs

Water temp: 20c

Vis: 25mtrs

Divers: Peter Beaumont, St George Club members - Ken, Peter F, Jeff & Jill

With a favourable boating weather forecast of flat seas & low wind for the next few days, Ken put out a St George Club email invite for a Wednesday

boat dive at the Whale Watch site. It didn't take long for 3 other keen divers to book on & all was set for an 8am meet, 8.30am departure from the Port Botany Ramp.

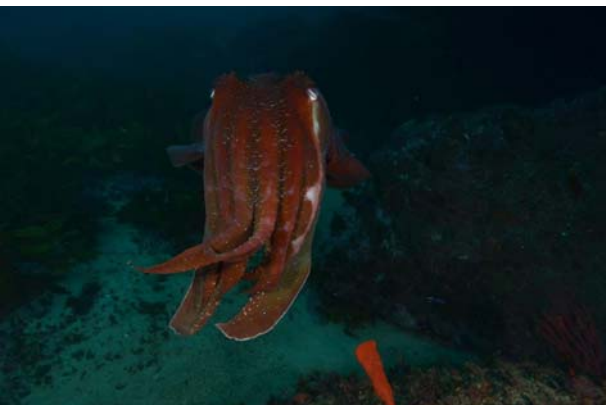
With Ken's boat prepped the day before and the gear set to go, Ken & I headed off through the Sydney morning peak hour traffic to the ramp. Once there, we started loading the boat but were distracted by what smelt like burning clutch/brake pad material. A quick check of Ken's car/trailer showed all was well, with the smell coming from another car/trailer combo that had pulled up alongside us. The driver was keen to go fishing & had left home in a hurry with the trailer handbrake on for the whole 15k trip to the ramp. Needless to say, the brakes/wheel bearings on that trailer received a rapid cool down, & probably sucked some water into the bearings, when the boat was launched a few minutes later.

Once Peter F, Jeff & Jill arrived, we loaded their gear onto the boat, discussed the dive, then launched the boat. The final run to the anchorage consisted of lining up land marks &

watching for the reef wall on the depth sounder. With the boat picked in & holding in 23mtrs of water, Peter & I geared up for the dive while Ken, Jeff & Jill waited onboard for our return (3 up/2 down routine).



Once on the bottom, Peter & I set the anchor under a rocky ledge, then swam a short distance to the cave/overhang. Here we found 2 giant Cuttlefish that were happy to have their photos taken. Peter F kept a respectable distance as Ken had been recalling an encounter a few weeks earlier, where he was filming a smaller Cuttlefish that then decided to charge him



without warning. Ken had showed me the video which went well for the first 20 seconds, but the next 2 minutes was one of arms & fins flailing, plus lots of bubbles. I think Peter F was watching to see if the same thing was going to happen to me.



From the cave/overhang we swam along the reef wall & back. There was a small Blue Grouper hanging around for a while but it kept its distance & wasn't interested in coming any closer when I tapped a few sea urchins with my knife. Along the way, we saw sea tulips, Senator Wrasse, fan corals & the odd Weedy Sea Dragon.

By this stage I had run out of bottom time, so rather than go into deco, we ascended to 5 mtrs & followed the reef line in the general direction of where the boat was anchored. Upon surfacing, we found we were about 100mtrs from the boat but had the half metre surface swell pushing us towards it which made for a leisurely surface swim. With no surge or current present & with 20mtr vis it made for a very easy dive.

Once back on the boat, we helped Ken, Jeff & Jill gear up & get in the water for their dive, then sat back, enjoyed the mild conditions & studied the structure of the cliff face. Forty five minutes later Ken, Jeff & Jill were back onboard and we proceeded to Frenchman's Bay, La Perouse for morning tea before returning to the ramp and recovering the boat. Having said our farewells, Ken & I returned to his place to wash the boat and dive gear & get set up for Thursday's boat dive on the Hilda Wreck. Many thanks to Ken for making Katz II available for this dive. ❖

Hilda Wreck, Cape Bailey, North Cronulla

Thursday, 19th May 2016

by Peter Beaumont



Boat: Katz II

Launch Location: Yowie Bay Ramp

Depth: 26mtrs

Water temp: 20c

Vis: 15mtrs

Divers: Peter Beaumont, St George Club members - Ken, Glen, Helen

With the favourable boating weather forecast looking to come to an end on Friday, Ken organised a Thursday boat dive to the Hilda Wreck site. A detailed description of the dive site can be found here: <http://>

www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=64

With Glen & Helen booked on, all was set for an 8am meet, 8.30am departure from the Yowie Bay Ramp. With Ken's boat prepped the day before and the gear set to go, Ken & I headed off through the Sydney morning traffic to the ramp. Once there, we parked off to one side & started to load the boat.

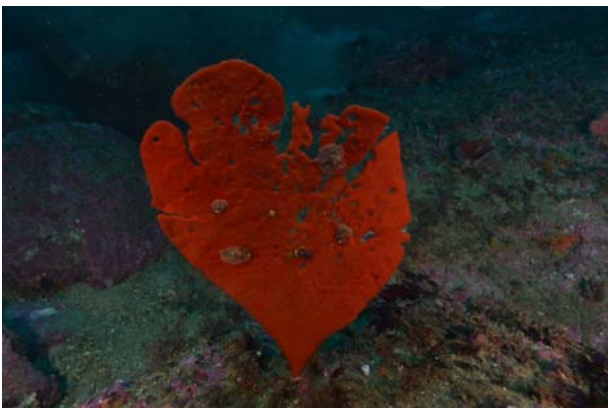
Glen & Helen arrived shortly after & with their gear loaded onboard, we discussed the dive, then launched the boat. The final run to the anchorage was interesting as Ken had the GPS marks on paper but not in the GPS unit. I counted down the live marks from the GPS unit in comparison to the paper marks & used hand signals to indicate which way to steer the boat. After about 10 minutes of manoeuvring into position, we were in the anchorage ballpark so we dropped anchor & picked in.

Glen & I geared up first while Ken & Helen remained onboard (2up/2 down routine). Once in the water & on the bottom, we found the anchor was about 5



mtrs away from the Hilda's steam engine, so we moved it a bit closer & hooked it on to the rocky sea bed. From there we swam along the reef wall & checked out the boiler remains, steel girders, anchor, rudder, rudder post & prop. We saw 1 small Cuttlefish, 2 rather skittish Eastern Blue Devil Fish, 1 Blue Grouper (not interested in sea urchins for some reason), 1 Wobby on the move, Old Wives, sea tulips & fan corals.



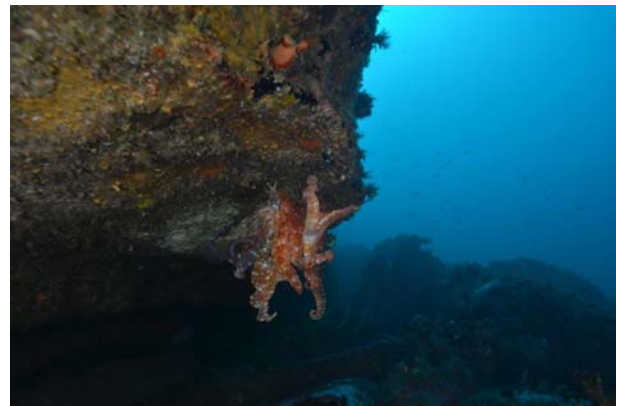


After a most enjoyable dive, & with my computer indicating I was about to go into deco, we headed towards the surface for a 5 minute stop at 5 mtrs. Once back on the boat, we helped Ken & Helen gear up & get in the water for their dive, then sat back & watched as the choppy surface conditions started to flatten off. Forty minutes later, with Ken & Helen back onboard, we pulled the anchor, after taking a GPS mark directly above the wreck, and returned to the ramp. With the



boat recovered to the trailer, we went for morning tea/lunch at one of the local cafés.

Having said our farewells, Ken & I returned to his place to wash the boat and dive gear & get set up for Friday's shore dive at Oak Park Cronulla. Many thanks to Ken for making Katz II available for this dive.



Oak Park Shore Dive, Cronulla

Friday, 20th May 2016

by Peter Beaumont

Depth: 10mtrs

Water temp: 19c

Vis: 10mtrs

Divers: Peter Beaumont, St George Club members - Ken, Eddie, Paul

With Friday's forecast boating conditions becoming less favourable from Thursday evening onwards, Ken suggested a Friday shore dive at Oak Park, Cronulla. A detailed description of the dive site can be found here: http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=314

With Eddie & Paul indicating they were keen for a dive, all was set for an 8.30am meet with a 9am entry. With the dive gear prepped and ready to go, Ken & I headed off through the Sydney morning traffic to our meeting point in Jibbon St, Cronulla. Once at the site, we checked the surface conditions, entry/exit point, then unpacked the gear from the car.

Eddy & Paul arrived shortly after & we discussed the dive site, then we geared up & walked down to the entry point on the right hand side of the salt water pool.



Once in the water, we dropped down & followed the reef around to the left before doing a U turn & heading back at a shallower depth along the reef wall. We saw 1 large Cuttlefish, 1 Blue Grouper (that followed us around & kept bumping into us & demanding more sea urchins), Nudis, Old Wives & sea tulips.



After a most enjoyable 1 hour dive, we climbed out at the entry/exit point, packed the gear into the vehicles and headed off for morning tea/lunch at one of the local cafés.

Having said our farewells Ken & I returned to his place to wash the dive gear out & I headed off to my sister's place to say g'day before returning to Melbourne the following day. Many thanks to Ken for his hospitality and for organising all the dives. ❖

Hurricane Wreck

Wednesday, 1st June 2016

Peter Beaumont

Water temp: 13c

Vis: 10mtrs



Went out for a Wednesday double dive on the Hurricane as the tidal flow rate was a manageable 3 knots incoming against a predicted 5-10k Northerly wind (which was more like 15k in real life.) Anchored the boat & watched the GPS distance to the mark for the next 10 minutes. The distance was increasing as the wind chop against the incoming tide was pushing the boat away from the wreck. I recovered the anchor, repositioned the boat then re-anchored.

Once in the water, I found the

anchor was hooked on what looked like a cargo hatch that had landed about 15 metres away from the stern section when the wreck was blasted. I grabbed the anchor & moved it back to the stern section of the wreck then had a good look around the area. The tide was still running in at about 2k, so once I finished checking out the stern, I moved anchor to the middle of the wreck & continued having a look around. I saw the usual Leather Jackets, Ornate Cowfish, Rockling, schools of fish, small rays etc. before I ascended & climbed back onboard the boat to change tanks.





For the second dive I had a good look around the middle, bow section & found a Cuttlefish trying to blend in with the seabed. After taking a few more pics, I moved back from the bow section & started looking under some of the holes in the wreck, overhangs etc. for more Cuttlefish or the elusive Goblin Fish. After a most enjoyable dive & with my air down to 50bar, I moved the anchor to the sand then ascended for my 5m safety stop. Once back in the boat I packed the gear away, recovered the anchor & headed back to the ramp. ❖



Blairgowrie Marina

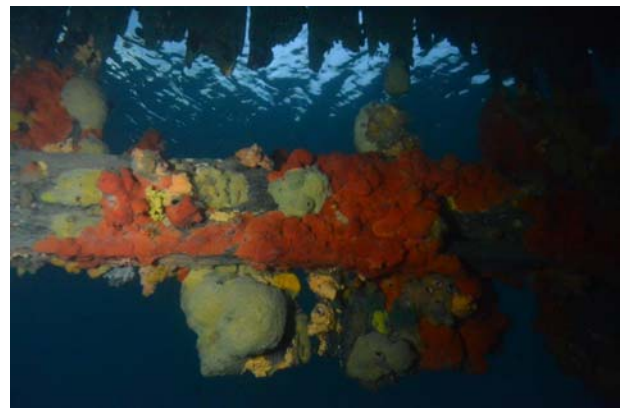
Saturday, 25th June 2016

Peter Beaumont

Water temp: 11c

Vis: 10mtrs

Dive time: 90 minutes



Went for an early dive as the wind forecast looked favourable despite an ambient air temp of approx 8c & some light rain. Swam around the marina & had a look around the pylons and-wave screen past the T junction. There were plenty of discarded spider crab shells around. Saw a cormorant chasing some fish



which managed to avoid becoming a meal.



On the way back to the entry point, a seal was busy swimming around the pylons & under the wave screen, trying to catch some of the fish which are now living in the gaps/holes under the wave screen matting.

It's not the first time I've seen a seal at Blairgowrie. First time was during a night dive about 18 months ago & it was using the torch light to find its prey. Was funny to watch a seal chas-

ing the light, especially when I started flashing it randomly around the marina. ❖



Flinders Pier

Monday, 27th June 2016

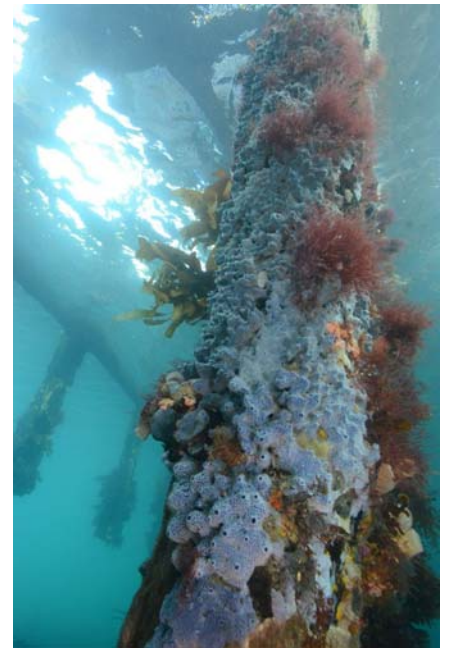
Peter Beaumont

Water temp: 12c

Vis: 10mtrs

Dive time: 90 minutes

Went for a mid-morning dive at the respectable time of 10am. Not another diver in sight but there were a few workers setting up to check and mark the pier timberwork for replacement. The wind was from the Nth at approx. 10-15k which was keeping the swell down so the sandy bottom was-



n't being stirred up as much & the vis was quite good.



At the entry/exit point I said g'day to the workers & let them know where I was diving as they had a work boat positioned under the pier for accessing the timberwork.



From there I swam out to the end of the pier checking out the pylons as well as the old pylon stumps off to the



left of the pier. I saw the usual Ornate Cowfish, a couple of small rays, Weedies, Leather Jackets, Dusky Morwongs, and Occys in hollowed out pylon ends etc. I was hoping to see the Eagle Ray which occasionally hangs around the pier, but it was a no show today. ❖





... And to add to the article about pier closures

Flinders Pier Maintenance and Renewal Works

Project **Flinders Pier Maintenance Works**
Contribution **\$500,000**
Completion **Spring 2016**
Information www.parks.vic.gov.au/flinderspier

The timber deck will be repaired and replaced to extend the functional life of the Pier.
Works will refresh two areas of the timber pier, the pier heads and a 135 metre long middle section.
Works have been scheduled during the winter months to minimise impact on anglers and visitors to Flinders.
Works are due to start in Mid June and expected to take three months, with favourable weather conditions.

GETTING ON WITH IT!

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Authorised by Parks Victoria, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne