

Fathoms

Official Magazine of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group (est. 1954)

SUMMER 23-24



2023 Photo of the year - Peter Beaumont - Angry cuttlefish

Diving the Old Merimbula Wharf

Boat Training Day & Scallop Day

The Sports Universal Smartphone Housing 2.0

Nuie Trip September 2023

Hygeia - A Stately Bay Excursion Steamer

Decompression Illness



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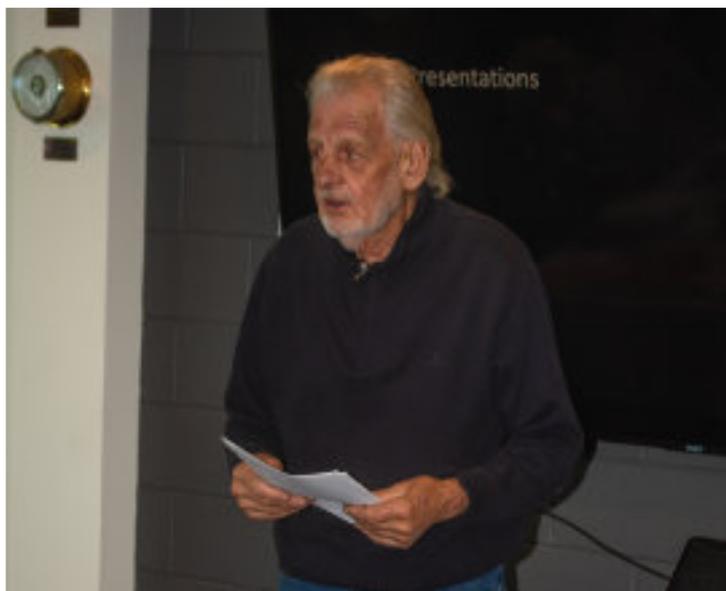
VSAG XMAS Party 2023

VSAG had it's Christmas party yesterday with over 45 members and partners in attendance at the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron. Many thanks to all that attended and especially those who contributed by coordinating, helping on the day and/ or bringing a share plate, making the afternoon event a phenomenal success. VSAG clearly likes to party!

During this event, we announced the Club Member of The Year for 2023 - Peter Beaumont - congratulations! Your name is emblazoned on the honour board. Further congratulations to Ian Scholey (2nd place) and Arthur Ohanian (3rd place). We also announced the Literary Award winner. This award is judged by one of our esteemed clubs life members, John Lawler, as having written the best article in our clubs magazine "Fathoms". Winners receive a certificate and a limited edition signed book by Des Williams "Pioneer Divers of Australia". This year it was tied.

Congratulations firstly goes to Matthijs Smith for his heart felt, sometimes emotionally raw article "Vale Luke English". Matthijs, your article was read aloud and a toast to Luke was done for his contribution to VSAG and the diving community of Victoria. And Des Williams for your article "The diver and devil fish". Congratulations to you both.

Finally, Photo of the Year was voted on by club members during the event. It was a highly competitive session, best of the best, but all votes were electronically registered, audited, thanks to Elliott English & Slido. The winner was Peter Beaumont's photo of an "Angry Cuttlefish". Congratulations to our award winners!



VSAG XMAS Party 2023



FATHOMS QUIZ

Decompression Illness

by Peter Mosse

How often have you taken the time to think about your knowledge and understanding of diving theory. In speaking to divers, I am sometimes surprised at how little they remember about important topics such as decompression illness. I recently asked some of the group at Lord Howe Island to list predisposing factors to decompression sickness. Mostly they didn't do too well. So here is a quiz for the rest of the VSAG club members.

The Quiz



Write your answers down. The answers are on page 15 (But don't peek until you have written down your answers).

The reference for the answers is Lippmann and Mitchell, Deeper into Diving (2005)

Decompression Illness Quiz Questions

1. List 8 predisposing factors for decompression illness?
2. List 12 signs and symptoms of decompression illness?
3. How long does it take for signs and symptoms of decompression illness to appear?
4. What is the DAN recommendation for flying after diving?
5. What is the immediate first aid for decompression illness?
 - Air dive to Nitrox dive.
 - Change the Nitrox percentage.
 - Increase your personal protection factor or level.
7. Do you know what all the information provided on your dive computer means?



LOCAL SHIPPING HISTORY

Hygeia - A Stately Bay Excursion Steamer

by *Des Williams*

I remember visiting the La Trobe Library in Swanston Street when I was a young lad and being drawn to the two spectacular builder's models displayed on either side of the staircase on the mezzanine floor. Inside these two very large glass cases, were 3m long, intricately detailed models of Huddart Parker's Port Phillip Bay excursion steamers HYGEIA and WEEROONA. Both were built in Glasgow, Scotland in 1890 and 1910, respectively. Both became legends during their decades of service.

I do hope they are still somewhere within the Museum's collection; they are beautiful. As a kid, it was always hard to get past those models, without spending a considerable time gazing at the incredible details in each scale model.

Also back then, my favourite shop along Swanston Street was the Model Dockyard, where ship modellers could buy all sorts of finely detailed, intricate accessories for their modelling projects: all sizes of tiny brass ship anchors, portholes, chain, capstans and rigging components. The museum's beautiful ferry models were finished with the same type of shiny brass accessories and components, which really made them sparkle.

Recently, my thoughts turned to the beautiful HYGEIA, which was buried in the Victorian Ships Graveyard on the 9th of June 1932. What a shame this lovely vessel could not have been saved to ply the Bay today. Her consort WEEROONA was dismantled in Sydney after her WW2 service in New Guinea. She was returned to Australia in very poor condition.



HYGEIA Goddess of Health.

The HYGEIA was named for the Greek goddess of health, quite appropriate really, as nothing could be healthier than the fresh sea breezes which this paddle steamer's 1600 passengers enjoyed during a cruise around Port Phillip.

Back in the day, the Port Phillip excursion steamers were extremely popular for trade union picnic groups, including the famous Butcher's Picnic, moonlight trips in the summer and regular excursions for holiday makers from both the city and country Victoria. Annual union workers picnics were enthusiastically anticipated by their members and families, especially those from country Victoria, who had few chances to cruise the Bay otherwise. My recent search of TROVE on-line, revealed many stories of the good old, inexpensive days of happy holiday cruising on Port Phillip in the excursion steamers, EDINA, OZONE, HYGEIA, WEEROONA, LONSDALE, COOGEE and COURIER.

The paddle steamers, especially OZONE, WEEROONA and HYGEIA seem to me to be the most romantic.



Bay excursion steamers OZONE (left), WEEROONA (centre) and HYGEIA (right).

The elegant HYGEIA at 91m long X 9.7m wide (18m across the sponsons) and 986 tons is certainly a vessel I would like to have cruised the Bay aboard. She was a comfortable vessel fitted with a massive four-cylinder triple-expansion engine, fed by six boilers which drove her two 8m diameter paddle wheels, to produce a top speed of 23 knots. She was luxuriously appointed, with teak promenade decks, saloons, dining rooms, bars and even a barber's shop to cater for her moustachioed travellers. Maritime historian Jack Loney described the HYGEIA as "probably the finest and fastest paddle steamer ever built."

For more than forty years her slim shapely hull sliced her way through the waters of Port Phillip, while her passengers lounged at ease in comfortable deck chairs or leaned on the rails near the engine room, watching the rhythmic rise and fall of the two massive cranks, which transmitted 3,300HP to her paddle wheels. She must have been a wonderful sight on the Bay, painted French grey, with pink and bone topping, her upper works were white and her two funnels buff.

Hygeia - A Stately Bay Excursion Steamer cont.

At the turn of the 20th century, HYGEIA was as fashionable as the severely corseted elegant ladies, in their large be-feathered hats and high heeled buttoned shoes, as they strolled the promenade deck, while the band played popular songs of the day.

So, with all the heyday romance of these fabulous vessels in mind today, it is sad when one researches just how cruelly they were disposed of at the end of their viable lives. By the late 1920s, a great fall in cruising patronage saw the HYGEIA laid up, as the newfangled motor car had replaced the need for ship transport down the Bay. A Melbourne businessman, H. W. Morris, bought the vessel in 1931, for dismantling.

During my trawl through TROVE, I came across some images of the final days of the superb HYGEIA, reduced to a skeleton in a matter of a few months during 1931. Images taken directly from TROVE pdfs, provide an insight into our great historical loss, and the lack of dignity shown to the HYGEIA when she was broken up, after forty years cruising the Bay.

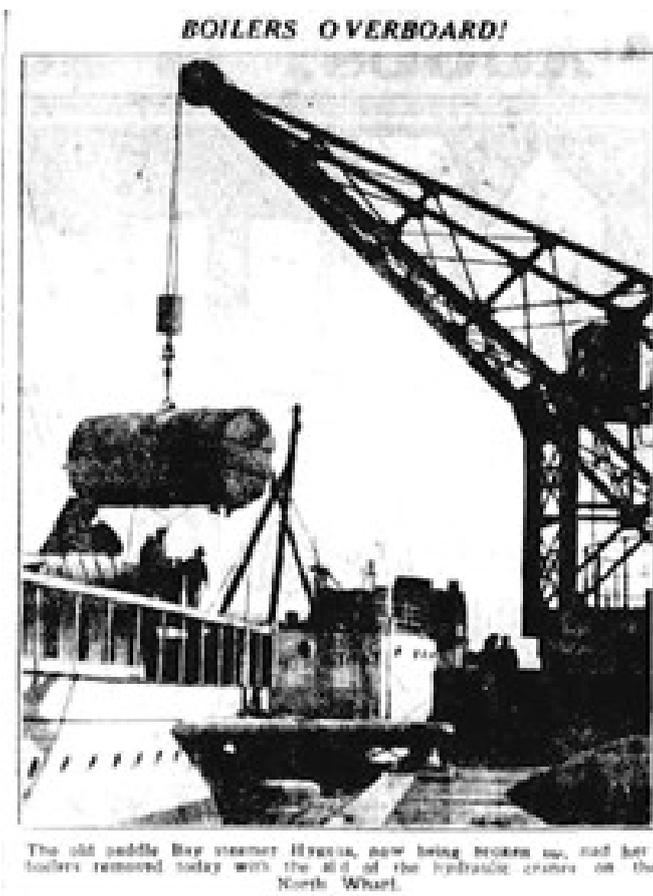
First, her six boilers were removed by hydraulic crane at North Wharf, then the vessel was towed out of the Yarra River and secured alongside the old Town Pier at Port Melbourne, where the sound of her impressive steam engine was replaced by the hiss of oxy-acetylene cutters, as her valuable 25 ton Lowmoor-iron crank shafts were cut up for scrap.



HYGEIA in her heyday on Port Phillip.

The photo at bottom left shows the boilers being removed and at bottom right, a workman taking a sledgehammer to the carved wooden figure of the goddess HYGEIA, on the paddle box.

Her gilt-worked sycamore panelling, mirrors, and internal fittings, including plush crimson furniture, were all sold cheaply. Oh, the shame!



Hygeia - A Stately Bay Excursion Steamer cont.

The Hygeia Being Towed to its fate



The tow tug struggles to control the HYGEIA.

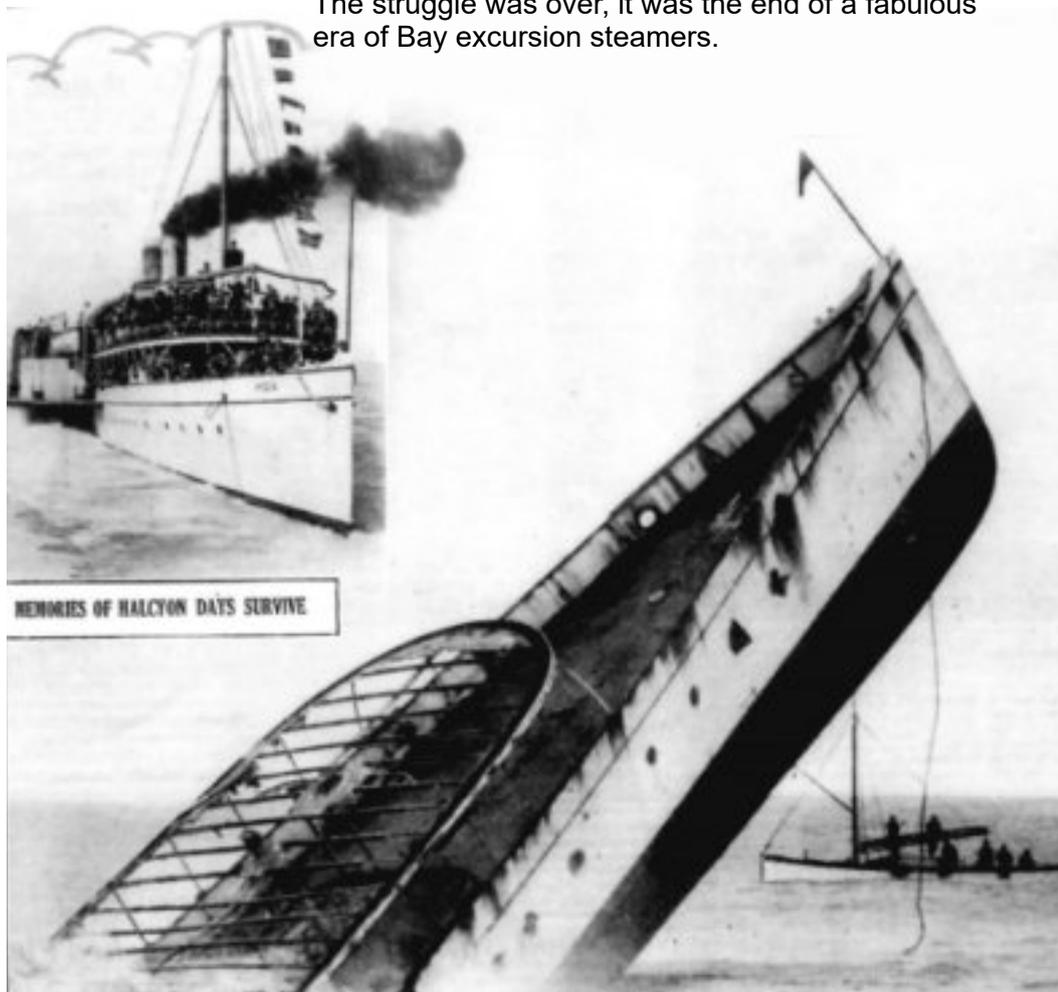
After suffering these insults at the hands of the wreckers, it is no wonder the HYGEIA proved to be a very reluctant corpse. It seems that Mother Nature also decided to protest the loss of this once beautiful paddle steamer. On the 25th of August 1931, the tug EAGLE left Port Melbourne for the Ships' Graveyard, with the HYGEIA in tow. However, a strong northerly wind came up forcing the funeral procession to hug the western coast of the Bay, until the tow-line eventually parted and the powerless HYGEIA drifted across the Bay with a "crew" of two explosive experts still onboard.

The EAGLE chased the runaway, without successfully recovering her charge, before the HYGEIA took to the shallow sands off Rosebud. At low tide it was possible to stand in knee-deep water alongside the wreck. The goddess of health was not ready for her grave outside the Heads yet! The explosives experts spent a dangerous, and no doubt cold and wet night on the vessel, until rescued the following morning.

A salvage team battled for ten months to release the HYGEIA from the sands at Rosebud, but eventually, on the 9th of June

1932, she was successfully towed out through the Heads over her grave, where 50 charges of gelignite broke her back, and she settled down in 65m to rest in peace in Bass Strait.

The struggle was over, it was the end of a fabulous era of Bay excursion steamers.



Farewell HYGEIA.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Unleashing the Kraken

by **Brian Heatherich**

A personal review of the Sports Universal Smartphone Housing 2.0 - Pro KRH07 and KRH08

As a keen amateur underwater photographer currently using an older Olympus TG4 with Strobe and Sealife video light I was keen to explore if the new Pixel8 pro Phone, which on paper has one of the best phone cameras about, would be able to take my TG4's place as my go-to underwater camera.

In addition, I was after a solution that would allow me to travel light on a planned trip to the Philippines, where diving was not going to be the main activity. By travelling light, I am meaning only using onboard luggage.

Case overview

The latest version of the Kraken universal smart phone housing fits most iPhones and Android phones and connects via Bluetooth and the Kraken app. This housing is made from aluminium and is tested to 85m - useful for those who go beyond the recreational diving depth of 40m. Some people worry about the battery life of their phone while using it on multiple dives, but this housing can charge your phone battery while in use.

For lighting, I would look to utilise my existing single Sealife Tray and Dragon 2500 light that I have been using with my TG4 set-up.

Based on this, I travelled and dived the Philippines; wreck diving at Subic Bay and muck diving off Anilao undertaking a total of 20 odd dives. I have also used the setup on dives since then, back in Australia.

My findings from these dives are as follows and broken down to the hardware, the software, and my overall set-up.

The good:

- A well-constructed case. It is heavy, but gives assurance it would protect anything it was holding.
- It fitted my gloved hand well and most of the functions were easy enough to operate while diving.
- The accessories included spare o-rings and grease to keep the o-rings lubricated and clean.
- A pump is provided and this does a good job in equalising pressure before the dive and stopped the camera fogging up in all the conditions and dives I was on.
- The case provides a wireless connection to Android and Apple phones.
- There is a clear back panel that showed what you were taking photos off.
- A battery is included which powers the case and provides additional power to the phone if required.
- A set of lights in the case show the status of the vacuum, the battery light and if the phone is using the case battery.
- A well-made carry case holds everything.

The not so good:

The carry-case is bulky and I did not see value in using it as part of packing to my tight requirements.

The provided pump is made of plastic and broke while travelling, so required some super glue and an on-the-fly solution, consisting of 3 plastic spoon handles and zip ties, to protect the nozzle from further breakage.



The Sports Universal Smartphone Housing 2.0



Sealife Tray and Dragon 2500 light

Unleashing the Kraken cont.

The software

The unit comes with software that you download to your phone and it connects to the case for photos and photo management. On exploring this software, I found it very limiting and it did not seem to utilise Google's new AI photo processing capabilities that I wanted to take advantage of in post photo processing. So, I instead decided to use the opensource Dive Connect app available for Android phones. This application utilises the Android camera and I was able to then utilise Google's AI for post processing. The following are my findings:

The Good (Dive Connect)

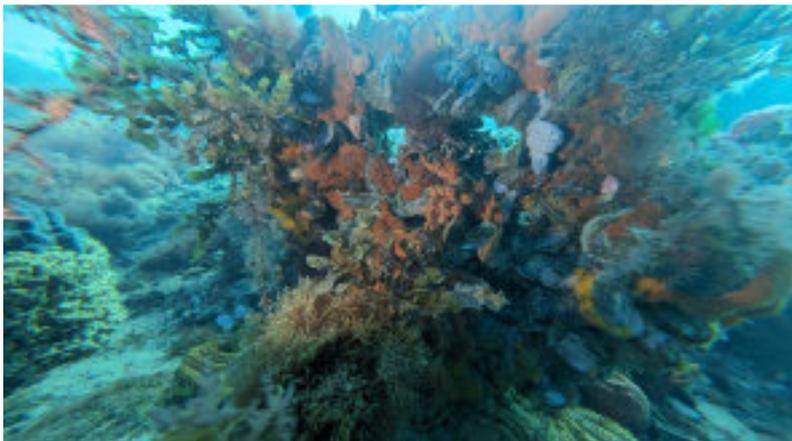
- The software worked well, when it worked, and had lots of good options to take photos.
- Was very easy to use and manage while underwater.
- The phone provides both jpg and raw formats for those photos where you want to do some extra postprocessing.
- Many of the photos taken by the Pixel8 pro were really good.
- The video capabilities of the Pixel8 pro were really good.
- The Google AI post photo processing was very impressive and really cleaned up photos well.
- There were many photos and videos that AI cleaned up really well and I was very impressed with it.

In general, it saved a lot of post processing time in cleaning up and processing photos.

The not so good (Dive Connect).

The software was finicky and often would stop, give an error message or the phone would either blank out or go to the lock screen.

This required additional pre-dive activity to unlock and open the case to restart the phone or just unlock it, and then having to close and lock the case, and then repressurise it, using the pump, which you had to have nearby and accessible.



Examples of the vignetting experienced

This fatal flaw meant that at times I only realised the camera had an issue when I was descending and it meant many dives I was carrying a 'dead' camera.

Some of the photos have a weird vignetting that could not be corrected in post processing. I am not sure what was the cause of this or how to correct it.

Difficult to focus for macro photos and take photo due to size and weight.

Although post processing AI was brilliant in many cases, it seems to need to be done on the phone and this causes an issue in reference to using such a small screen. The result being that some photos cropped and looking okay on a small 7 inch screen were not suitable for the larger screen of a laptop or larger desk monitor.

The overall Setup. (Kraken Case, Sealife Bracket, Sealife Dragon light.

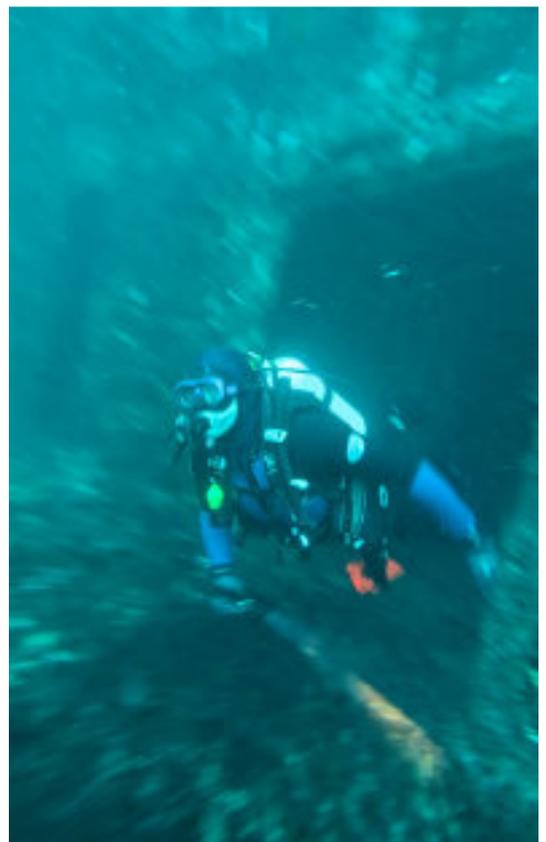
The good

- Overall the Sealife bracket and Dragon life light gave sufficient light for the camera.
- The Dragon light is a nice warm light that seems to fill all the camera's needs.

The not so good

- Due to the size of the case, the Sealife platform is not sufficiently long enough to house the case and leave enough room to hold the handle of the light.
- The bolt kept coming undone during the dive which required me to continually tighten it.

Both these problems were addressed with some retrofitting of the slot in the platform to make it longer. This provided additional room for your hand and allowed me to add an additional bolt to keep the camera firmly attached to the platform.



Unleashing the Kraken cont.

The overall experience.

With my original TG4 setup, I am able to set it up at home, test it and be assured that it will work when I clip it on and dive. This is important when diving on a small boat where you can set and forget about it with everything else that you need to get ready for a dive.

This is not so with the Kraken case and software. Instead, I need to bring the vacuum pump on board and ensure it is both at hand and protected from other heavy equipment on board the boat. I need to ensure that the camera is working properly and, too often, just before a dive I have been required to open the case to attend to software or locking based issues. It then needs to be closed and repressurised. This all needs to be done on a small boat with other divers preparing for the dive. Even then, on a number of occasions I would take a photo just before entry, and on decent have found that the camera has locked up or failed in some way and have basically taken a dead camera for a swim until I can surface again and reset it.

Another consideration is that photos taken on your phone are usually downloaded to your account, which can be a good thing as a backup or a bad thing if you are trying to keep your storage to a minimum. I need to make sure that I download these photos and then delete them once downloaded. An extra step that can be both beneficial and/or a downside.

From a photograph perspective, it can take some great photos and is especially good when the 3rd party app is used and combined with the Google AI post photo processing. Video is also very good. There were, however, a number of occasions where photos come out in a really weird wide-angle vignetting that is difficult to correct.

In conclusion, I would probably take it on another trip where diving is not the only activity and have a need to travel light, but the need to have the camera operate as a reliable device that I can 'set and forget' prior to getting on the boat is leading me back to reverting to my old dependable TG4 set-up, even with its known failings with video. I will keep an eye on software updates and will look to trialling it again with any significant software updates done by either Kraken or 3rd party software.



TRAINING

Boat Training and Skills Day

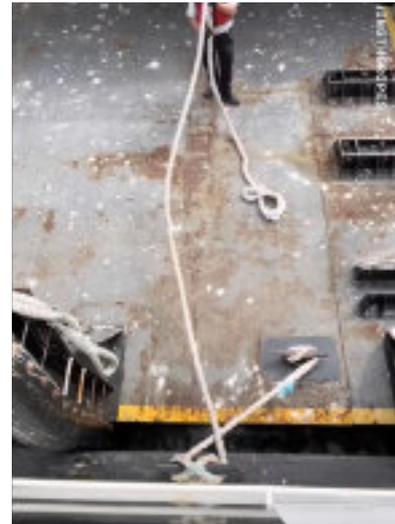
by *Steve Dawson*

A Day of Learning and Adventure

One could not have asked for a better day to spend under the trees in Sorrento for our recent VSAG Boat Training and Skills Day. The weather couldn't have been more perfect, and the knowledge shared under the shade of those trees was equally enlightening.

The onshore training commenced with David Geekie stepping into the spotlight, or perhaps folding a table, as he led us through the nuances of navigating the rip. His expertise extended to mastering the comprehension of tides, currents, winds, and swell, emphasising their crucial role in planning and executing a safe and successful dive trip.

Stuart Cousins, drawing on his experiences from the Coast Guard, captivated us with anecdotes from his time in service. His emphasis on the simple attitude of consistency should resonate with all, emphasising the importance of everyone being on the same page. Now armed with the knowledge of ZERO, EIGHT, and A HALF, we can confidently secure our boats to the jetty without the hassle of untangling knots.



Boat Training and Skills Day cont.

Peter Mosse, with his simple, uncluttered approach to boat setup for scuba diving (exactly as his dive gear) enlightened us on the significance of understanding individual boat owner instructions. His wisdom reminded us that simplicity is key, tailored to each boat's unique characteristics for safe and seamless diving experiences.

Grant Callow then led a discussion on the level of preparation required for serious trips, sharing stories from Hogan Island that highlighted the importance of meticulous planning to ensure safety. It made us reflect on the "what ifs" and reinforced the notion that preparation is paramount.

As we transitioned to the water for practical boat skills, the boat ramp circus came into focus. Perhaps next time, we can include trailer reversing training for the general public to elevate the skills at the ramp to speed up the process.

Acknowledging the different experience levels within our club, the decision to split boats accordingly worked seamlessly. In my group, with David Politakis, we had the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the boat before 'diving' into drills. From dropping a shot line using the GPS, to executing pickups and drop-offs with precision, the team's growing confidence culminated in a successful diver pickup, with Brian bravely playing the crash test dummy.

Stories from other boats hinted at the excitement of navigating serious swells through the heads, with multiple exits and entries. I, for one, will need a few more trips inside the bay before attempting to "slide down the waves" as vividly described by Amy McKernan.



Lastly, a sincere thank you to Andrew McKernan for his behind the scenes and on the day efforts. His enthusiasm was influential in ensuring the day's success, and we are grateful for his commitment. A genuine thank you also goes out to the generous boat owners who provided their vessels for the day. I am confident in conveying the gratitude from everyone present. It's through hands on experience, the only way we can truly acquire skills, that we appreciate your valuable contribution.



CLUB EVENTS

Scallop Day

by *Maggie Jones*

Images by Brian Heatherich & Corey Doughty

Not a hunter

Not a gatherer

My ancestors would be disappointed!

When we saw the club was having a Scallop Day Event on the Mornington Peninsula, we thought what an amazing opportunity to be social, meet members and explore the Peninsula coast. It did not disappoint. Only my gathering skills did. Michael and I being from the "other side" in Winderloch, sorry, Inverloch.. decided to make a cute little vacation away for the weekend and got an Airbnb in Blairgowrie. On the Friday driving in, we stopped off at Blairgowrie Pier, saw the conditions, spoke to a local diver, decided to check into the Airbnb and hurry back.

That dive will live rent free in my mind forever as it cemented that my navigation skills aren't just lacking but inept. I get lost in Woolworths. You've all been forewarned. So, diving along the pier, it was rich with



sea life. So much to look at, so much to take in. We got to what I thought was the end and turned around, still taking in all the sea lettuces, coral, blowing bubbles with my beloved. Or so I thought. Michael then signaled to me to 'turn around'. I was stumped! I was like "hang on", we have already turned around. I looked him dead in the eyes to try and ascertain if he was narced and if his decision-making capability was intact. I also thought is he trying to kill me? I legit thought we had turned around. What could I do other than follow him into the deep abyss?

When we surfaced at the exact dock on the pier we jumped from I laughed. I said to him I thought you were trying to kill me.



Scallop Day cont.

On the morning of the Scallop Event we drove into Rye, stopped off at a café for coffee. We didn't really know what to expect but were super excited.

I was on Priya's Boat and Michael on Dave G's boat. (Editor's Note: I didn't realise Maggie and Michael were dive buddies and inadvertently separated them. Sincere apologies.) After a muster in the carpark with all the boats and divers, a rough plan for the day was laid out. Rumor has it, a few divers had done a reconnaissance dive earlier in the week for locations. When everyone was in the water, boats dispersed in all directions. Everyone seemed to be going rogue. We did the same. I luckily enough was with a crew who had been on a few scallop dives and knew certain hot spots. I was on the 2nd dive, so enjoyed the sun and calm waters and Priya and John's tales of their diving life together.

Christine and Darren surfaced with the scallop goods. Catch bags full. Now it was John and my turn. Yeeha. Did a ninja turtle roll off the boat and went down. When we got to the bottom, it looked like a barren desert down there. John had his catch bag ready in hand, bugger, mines on the boat. Ah well I thought to myself, I will be a sustainable diver and only catch what I can fit in my hand? New life ethos? Turns out two scallops can fit in my hand. About 20 minutes in, John signaled he was having issues with his regulator, and I could see the continuous stream of bubbles. He signaled he was going up to the surface. Me being a theatre nurse thought I was doing the right thing by going up with him, not leaving his side with a 'compromised airway' have now got it deeply ingrained in my head that there is no point 2 divers being down. What should have happened is for John to have taken my primary reg, and I my secondary



reg and we make a controlled ascent with a safety stop. Hindsight. Lucky for us no deco sickness or air embolism. If I was more confident, I could have stayed below and kept diving, vis was that good they could see us on the bottom from the boat. But why risk it for a biscuit. I want a lifetime of diving.

We all then turned for shore and gathered at the meeting spot where Stu and Donna had prepared a feast! I actually think shamelessly the lunch was the best part of the day.

I, as a junior diver with less than 50 dives, learnt a lot this day. New hot tip, bend the second stage regulator hose in half to see if that stops the continuous flow.

So glad /fortunate /grateful that Michael found this club. The wealth of knowledge, support and encouragement for a new diver is crucial.

Happy diving Mermen and Mermaids



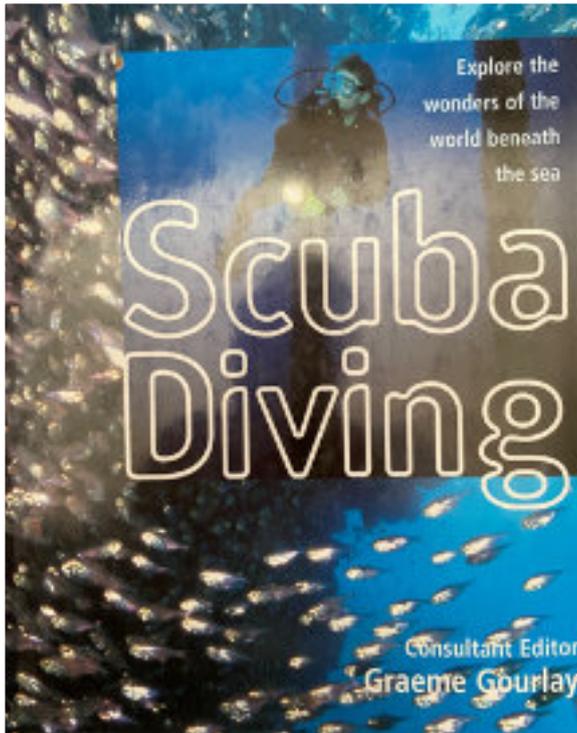
BOOK REVIEW

by *Arthur Kokkinos*

Scuba Diving

- edited by **Graeme Gourlay**

This edition of Scuba Diving was published in 2001. The main contributors to this book work with DIVE magazine in the UK. Consultant Editor Graeme Gourlay still works as Editor in Chief with DIVE Magazine. The book is well researched and is full of interesting information and will surely satisfy every reader no matter what aspect of scuba diving you like. It covers a lot of areas. With the caption on the insert sleeve of the book, "Imagine being able to swim with dolphins and schools of fish in clear blue tropical waters, or take photographs of sharks or immense colourful coral reefs deep beneath the sea. If you learn to scuba dive, the amazing secrets that are hidden underwater could soon be yours to treasure." describes exactly what this book is all about. Scuba Diving elegantly takes you on a journey to discovering the treasures that lie beneath the surface of ocean and a step by step guide to getting started, in depth information on recommended training and advice about how to choose the right course for you.



The book is an invaluable reference covering all aspects of diving, from the very basics through to advanced techniques. Whether you want to snorkel or dive in shallow waters or try wreck diving, cave diving, rebreathers, ice diving or driving scooters this book covers it all.

The chapter on the Aquatic Realm is very interesting. It covers the diving environments and the effects we could impose on the underwater landscapes such as coral reefs and on all fish species such as the manta rays, whale sharks, dolphins, whales and sharks.

There is also a comprehensive guide to the best diving spots in the world covering places such as Mexico, Florida Keys, The Red Sea, The Maldives, Great Barrier Reef, South Africa, Kenya, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Zealand, Hawaii, Galapagos, Cocos Islands, The Cayman Islands, The Bahamas, Bonaire, Bermuda, Scotland and even Ireland. Every location has a useful information section that covers the water temperature, climate conditions, currents, visibility, and if the location has a decompression chamber.



I found this book to be quite satisfying and full of useful information. After reading it back to front I felt like I had just completed a refresher course on scuba diving theory. Most importantly I will be using this book as a reference guide to future dive locations that are on my diving bucket list. Overall, it was a an enjoyable read and the colour photos throughout the book are perfectly spaced out and capture every underwater sequence to perfection. Get yourselves a copy and add it to your library.



My book review rating for this book is 10/10

Remember, if you're not diving, dive into a dive book!

FATHOMS QUIZ ANSWERS - from page 3

Decompression Illness

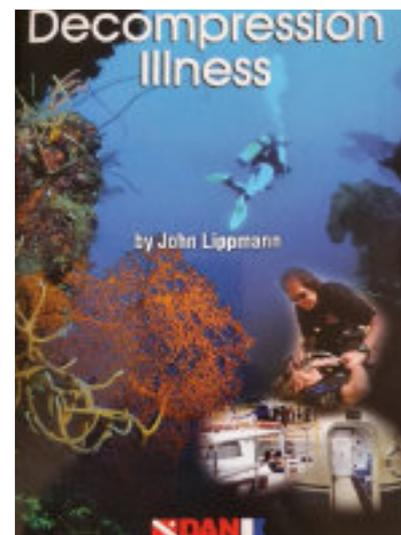
by Peter Mosse

- The reference for the answers is Lippmann and Mitchell, Deeper into Diving (2005)

Factor	Evidence	Comment
The Diver		
Body fat/obesity	Some	
Age	Moderate	<i>Set your dive computer to the "personal" protection level appropriate to your age.</i>
Being female	Weak	Apologies for misleading the Lord Howe Island Group on this one. I thought there was some definite evidence.
Dehydration	Moderate	Remember, alcohol plays an important role here. Moderate to heavy alcohol intake results in dehydration. Being well-hydrated but not over-hydrated is important.
Fitness	Some	Maintaining a good level of fitness is important for you to enjoy your diving and may reduce the risk of decompression illness as well. Respiratory health is particularly important in the case of arterial gas embolism (AGE).
PFO	Strong	Patent Foramen Ovale. This is an opening between the left and right heart that should close over after birth but doesn't always do so.

FATHOMS QUIZ ANSWERS cont.

Decompression Illness cont.



Factor	Evidence	Comment
The Dive		
Repetitive diving	Strong	
Multiday diving	Moderate	
Deep diving	Moderate-Strong	
Variable depth diving	Moderate	Particularly toward the end of a dive.
Reverse profile repetitive diving	Some	Reverse profile is deeper dives following a shallower dive.
Heavy exercise during a dive	Strong	Some gentle exercise while at a decompression stop or safety stop may be beneficial.
Cold	Some	Particularly if the diver starts off warm and then chills rapidly on entering the water.
Maintaining a cramped position	Some	For example, holding a cramped position hanging onto an anchor line or deco line.
Rapid ascent	Strong	
Ascending too slowly	Some	
Post Dive		
Exercise	Strong	Don't rush to pull the anchor up.
Rapid warming	Strong	For example, a hot shower soon after completing a dive.
Altitude	Yes Strong	Careful about driving over hills. And don't fly too soon.

DIVING HEALTH

Decompression Illness

by Peter Mosse

Decompression Illness Signs and Symptoms

“Decompression Illness (DCI) may present in many different ways and very commonly follows dives that did not violate dive tables or computer limits” (Lippmann and Mitchell, Deeper into Diving). Read the article by David Geekie “A Bent Experience” in the January 2022 edition of Fathoms on this subject.

It is convenient to think of symptoms according to which tissues are affected.

Skin (Rashes)

- Skin mottling, red itchy rash

Joints (Bends)

- Mild to severe deep-seated ache, usually involving more than one site.
- In order of incidence: shoulders, elbows, hips and knees.

Inner Ear

- Dizziness, nausea and vomiting
- Ringing
- Hearing loss

Lungs (Chokes)

- Cough
- Chest discomfort
- Shortness of breath

Brain and Spinal Cord

- Loss of consciousness
- Disorientation
- Loss of coordination of movement
- Visual changes
- Speech changes
- Confused thinking
- Weakness
- Peripheral sensory changes (may affect only 1 side)
- Tingling to complete numbness
- Weakness
- Paralysis
- Impaired bladder and bowel control
- Headache

The six most common symptoms, in order of occurrence based on a 2011 Lancet report are listed below.

- Pain (head, torso, limb)
- Numbness and tingling
- Fatigue and malaise
- Dizziness / vertigo
- Muscular weakness
- Skin mottling or rash

DAN Recommendation for Flying After Diving

1. Single no decompression dive: 12 hours
2. Multiple dives per day or multiple days of diving: 18 hours
3. Dives requiring decompression stops: >18 hours

It is interesting to note that some dive computers give much shorter “no fly” times. Be careful. Be conservative as computers do not measure what’s actually going on in your body physiologically. Remember, dive computers are just “number crunchers”. It is generally recommended to avoid flying for at least 24 hours after your last dive. Why ruin your holiday by coming back sick and possibly having your diving restricted from then on?

Onset of Symptoms

As short as a few minutes after surfacing and usually within 6 hours, but some symptoms may occur up to 24 hours or more after diving, especially if flying or driving to altitude post dive is involved.

In the words of one of the very early books on Underwater Medicine by Miles and Mackay, “any symptom however vague after exposure to pressure should be treated as decompression sickness until proved otherwise” or something pretty close to that.

Immediate First Aid

- Commence CPR if necessary
- 100% oxygen.

If neurological symptoms occur within 30 minutes of surfacing, lie the diver down flat and ensure they do not sit or stand unless absolutely necessary

Longer Term First Aid and Treatment

- Seek medical advice
- o First call 000 if diver appears seriously ill

Then call the closest hyperbaric chamber (The Alfred Hospital in Vic 03 9076 2000) and follow the advice given

- Treatment will mostly be recompression.



The Quiz - SO HOW DID YOU GO?

Recommended Follow Up to this Quiz

There is a very useful little book written by John Lippmann. Get it and read it. And then re-read it, each dive season!

If you don't have a copy and would like one, let the club know and we can organize a copy for you.

DIVE TRIP REPORT

Niue Trip September 2023

by *Meg Johnson*

In September this year I spent a week diving at Niue. It was the best visibility I have ever experienced in my life. Gin clear water. Visibility of 50-60m or more, even on an overcast day. The visibility was truly astounding. And, I didn't see one piece of plastic or rubbish in the sea the whole time I was there, which again is extraordinarily rare in recent decades.



And there were humpback whales. Lots of them. We saw them from the boat, we heard them singing underwater, and on the first dive of the week two humpbacks swam right up to us - Aloha, and welcome to Niue!

Niue is a small coral atoll east of Fiji and Tonga, South/east of Samoa and North/west of the Cook Islands. It is an independent nation in free alliance with New Zealand. Its currency is the New Zealand dollar. It has a population of about 2000 people. According to Wikipedia about 95% of Niueans live in New Zealand.

They all need to go to New Zealand for their final years of high school and for university, and I guess most of them stay on, at least for a while. I met quite a few Niueans who had returned to Niue in their 50's and opened cafes and restaurants.

Niue was the first place in the world that the UN declared to be a 'special dark sky' place. It is way out in the Pacific with a tiny population and hardly any light pollution. The night sky is truly amazing.

Getting there: There is currently only one flight a week from Auckland, although I'm reliably informed that from November they are returning to the pre-Covid schedule of two flights a week. Flight time from Auckland is about 3.5 hours. The flight schedule is



Niue Trip September 2023 cont.

such that a stopover in Auckland both ways is necessary. I was OK with that as I wanted to spend a few days in Auckland catching up with friends anyway.

Where to stay? I stayed at the Scenic Matavai - the only 'resort' on the island. There are lots of other accommodation options, but the Scenic Matavai is in a lovely location, the rooms are nice and it's right on the sea. Whales frolicked a few hundred metres off shore, I could watch them from my balcony, and hear them at night while I was drifting off to sleep.

The dive operator: The other reason to choose the Scenic Matavai is that Niue Blue, currently the only dive operator on the island, is right next door, literally a 2 minute walk away. Niue Blue were great. Friendly, good operators, all the staff were great. They operate a couple of small boats and don't go far from shore. They do both dive trips and whale watching/snorkelling trips.

Transport: Renting a car is pretty much essential when you go to Niue. The Scenic Matavai is about a 10-15 minute drive from the main town of Alofi, and nothing is within walking distance. It cost me \$400 to rent a car for a week. It was a little Honda Hybrid. Petrol is expensive. It cost \$80 for half a tank of petrol for a very small car when the time came to fill it up before I returned it. There are a lot of advantages to having your own car while you're there - there are lots



of places to explore around the island when you're not diving, Niue Blue generally prefer you to take your own car to the wharf so they don't have to transport all of the divers, and the food at the Matavai is underwhelming, but there are a number of very good places to eat around the island farther afield.

The maximum speed limit on Niue is 60 kph and 40 kph in villages. Although the reality is that the state of the roads generally keeps speeds down to about 40-50 kph, at most, and often 20-30 kph. The roads are more pot holes than surface. While I was there a few Chinese road crews were re-surfacing a number of the roads. I'm no engineer, but it appeared to me that they weren't doing a very good job of it, and one day they cut through the fibre optic cable and shut down the internet for the entire island for a day.

Food: As I said - my only gripe about the Matavai is that the food there was pretty ordinary. But, I discovered lots of really nice places to eat elsewhere on the island.

Hio cafe up in Tuapa, was absolutely fabulous. It's right on the sea - so again - whales and dolphins swimming by every time I ate there, it was fabulous. Amazing tacos, with honey glazed pork or panko prawns, fabulous pizzas, all the food was amazing. Fana cafe near the Swanson supermarket does great coffee and lunches, really good Japanese (sushi, tempura) at Kaiika, great fish and chips at Vaiolama (again, great views, right on the sea), and Washaway Cafe on a Sunday is an institution. Great burgers and chips and a 'self-serve' bar that operates on an honesty system. Again, great location, overlooking the little harbour at Atavele.

The Diving: Apart from the visibility, and the whales, Niue has really interesting underwater topography. It reminded me a bit of Christmas Island - cliff faces with masses of caves and caverns to explore, canyons and gullies and swim throughs galore. And masses of sea snakes. I've never seen so many sea snakes! They were fascinating to watch as they hunted, swam and slept off their meals.

Some of the caves, when you surface inside them, you see stalactites, and around the cave on ledges and shelves, sleeping sea snakes, and scuttling coconut crabs.

All of the diving is off the east coast of the island. The west coast is pretty rugged and the sea is rougher and they don't go diving there.

In 2004 Niue took a direct hit from category 5 cyclone Heta. It destroyed most of the reef along the east coast, particularly in the southern end. The corals around Niue are predominantly hard corals, so a bit drab. But nonetheless, there are some patches of mature corals along the northern end of the east coast, and all along the east coast you can see the recovery of the coral reef is happening. With the crystal clear waters, there is no algal growth and Niue Blue has been running a program for many years that

Niue Trip September 2023 cont.

targets and destroys a particular destructive snail (whose name I have forgotten) and any invasive species that are detrimental to the recovering reef.

On the one hand - I would swim along looking at the topography and the coral substrate and think to myself - wow, this reef would have once been so very beautiful (this is a common thought for me when diving these days). But, on the other hand - I was happy to see the reef is clearly regenerating and it was a joy to dive in such crystal clear, pollution free waters.

There was less marine life than I had expected. I didn't see one shark. There were very few large fish. I saw a few barracuda, a few large Māori wrasse and bump head parrot fish. There were a few snapper and trevally, quite a lot of smaller fish. But it's not the sort of reef where you could sit yourself down and be entertained for an hour with the goings on within a square metre.

I saw some nice morays, a few peacock mantis shrimp, some nice shrimp and crabs, a few lonely anemones and clown fish. I'm told there are a few turtles about, but I didn't see any. I'm told they occasionally see orca.

The water temperature was about 27 degrees. It was considerably cooler in some of the caves under the cliff face where fresh water is entering through the cave. There was very little current or surge to worry about. It was pretty easy diving.

Anyway - that was Niue. Well worth it for the crystal clear water, the lack of pollution, the interesting topography and, of course, the whales.



AN UPCOMING DIVE TRIP OPPORTUNITY

The Three best places to dive in North Sulawesi

by *Deborah Dickson-Smith*

International Dive Travel Consultant at Diveplanit Travel

Have you heard about the world-famous muck diving in the Lembeh Strait? The phenomenal wall dives and turtles of the Bunaken Marine Park or the kaleidoscopic coral reefs of Bangka Island? These three locations offer some of the best and most diverse diving in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, and it's possible to see them all in one trip. The Indonesian province of North Sulawesi lies in the heart of the Coral Triangle – the most marine rich region on Earth. Whilst you may have heard of Bunaken, Bangka and Lembeh, you may not realise they're not that far apart.

So, diving the best of North Sulawesi doesn't mean you have to choose between locations – you can dive all three on a North Sulawesi Dive

Safari. Choose either land transfers between resorts – or dive your way between resorts – your luggage will follow you above water as you explore dive sites between locations.

Bunaken Marine Park

Bunaken Marine Park was one of the first Marine Protected Areas in Indonesia – and it shows. The dive sites around this small island are characterised by vertical coral walls which are teeming with life. The resident population of green sea turtles has grown from strength to strength and at some dive sites you'll lose count of the number of turtles you see in a single dive. Nearby Manado Bay is home to wide ranging marine life and diverse dive sites. It is becoming increasingly recognised for its volcanic, black sand muck diving sites which are home to a plethora of unusual critters from numerous cephalopod species through to seahorses, nudibranchs, and crustaceans. The Molas wreck is an exciting wreck dive and offers a myriad fish and critters. To the south of Manado Bay lays Poopoh – a record breaking site where 385 different species of fish were recorded in just one morning.





Bangka Island

Bangka Island is as beautiful underwater as it is on land. This lush green island is surrounded by white sandy beaches and a fringing reef of soft corals bursting with colour. Schooling snappers, passing reef sharks, occasional dugongs and an array of reef fish and critters have all made Bangka Island their home. The remote location also provides a chance to get completely off the grid on this stunning tropical island.

Lembeh Strait

The Lembeh Strait is home to the earth's highest concentration of rare and unusual marine life. Exploring the world famous muck diving sites is akin to opening a treasure trove of critters. Even the most seasoned of divers can't help but be impressed by the species found here: 8 different species of frogfish, flamboyant cuttlefish, wunderpus, mimic and blue ring octopus, bobtail squids, harlequin and tiger shrimps, three species of pygmy seahorses, countless species of nudibranch, bobbit worms, Ambon scorpionfish and rhinopias – to name but a few.

Diving your way around North Sulawesi

For some of us, the idea of moving from resort to resort can seem arduous, sometimes resulting in wasted diving days and involving a lot of planning and additional stress – not so in North Sulawesi. Several resorts in North Sulawesi including Thalassa, Murex and Bastianos Resorts offer multi-resort options.

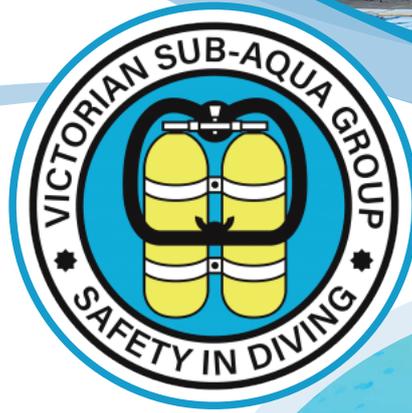
Murex Resorts' Passport to Paradise combination package provides the option to transfer between resorts by dive boat that include two dives along the way. Simply choose the number of nights you want to stay in each location – no wasted diving days, no logistical planning, no drying and packing gear, and your dive guide will stay with you from start to finish. Dive your way, hassle free, from one place to the next.

To join VSAG on a North Sulawesi dive safari this August, please see the following details.





Diveplanit Travel
Your personal dive travel agency



NORTH SULAWESI

PASSPORT TO PARADISE: BUNAKEN AND BANGKA

10 night dive North Sulawesi dive safari

Dive the stunning coral walls of Bunaken Island - a national park where you'll likely see more turtles than you can count on two hands! We'll then transfer by dive boat to Bangka Island, to explore the vibrant soft coral gardens and stunning pinnacles of Bangka Island.

Our package includes:

- 5 nights Murex Manado in a Deluxe Cottage
- 5 nights Murex Bangka in an Ocean Front Cottage*
- Daily breakfast, lunch and dinner, tea coffee, snacks
- 18 boat dives (inc tanks weights air and dive guide)
- Return Economy flights from Melbourne and all Indo transfers
- *Limited availability in Ocean Front Cottages, with compulsory upgrade to a Hillside Cottage once full - upgrade price AUD 204 pp

Optional 7-Night Bali Extension - 19-26 Aug 2024

Add on a week in Bali's Tulamben Bay, diving the world-famous USAT Liberty wreck, with 5 days of unlimited shore dives, 2 days of boat dives, FREE Nitrox and airport transfers for only **AUD 1285.00** pp twin share.

AUD 5,265 PP TWIN SHARE
DATES: 9 to 19 AUGUST 2024

Payment terms: Non-refundable deposit of AUD 2500 is due now. This includes an airfare ex-MEL which is non-refundable and any changes incur fees. Balance due 60 days prior to departure. Price for non-divers is AUD 3695 pp twin share. Standard Diveplanit T&Cs apply: diveplanit.com/booking-terms.

Phone Claire: 0408 708 828
claire@diveplanit.com
Visit website: bit.ly/VSAGmurex
or scan QR Code for more info



FROM THE FATHOMS ARCHIVE

PHILIPPINES

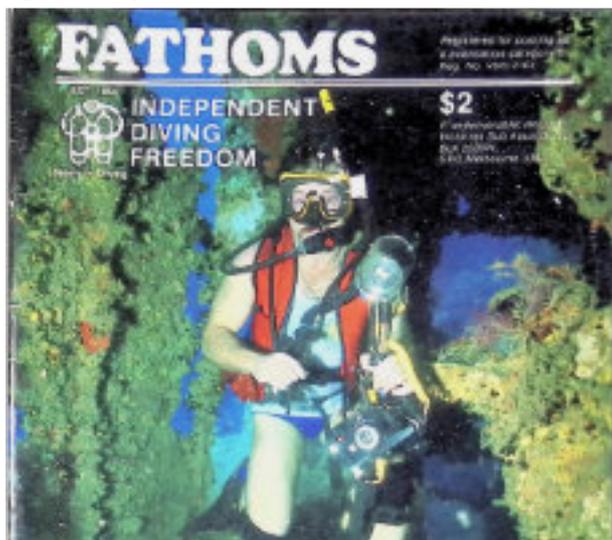
A Great Place for a Diving Holiday

by *Ian Scholes*

First Published May 1985 - Re-edited here.

It seems that not many Australians, consider going to the Philippines for a holiday and it seems that even fewer Australian divers know about the wonderful style of diving to be found there. This is probably partly as a result of the fact that even most of the travel agents don't seem to know a lot about the place.

I have been to the Philippines now on several occasions with work and have had the opportunity during that time to explore a couple of diving locations including one called "Moalboal" (not pronounced 'mal bowel'), which I believe is well worth including on your list of intended overseas diving holiday locations.



Fathoms May 1985 edition

Despite the publicity the Philippines gets in the local press, it is perfectly safe to travel in.

Moalboal itself is a primitive and tiny fishing village on the island of Cebu, and does not have most of the modern amenities (e.g. electricity, running water, etc.) however this is made up for by the fact that it is set on a beautiful island in an idyllic tropical setting with magnificent underwater and above water landscapes. The locals have also discovered that visitors like cold beer and in fact the major industry in the town, besides laying around and fishing, seems to be keeping beer cold.

The place to stay in Moalboal for divers, and I don't think anyone else goes there, bears the grandiose title "The Moalboal Reef Club". It is, in fact, a slightly larger than normal bamboo hut owned by my mate Oscar Regner. Oscar, whose previous employment before setting up the Reef

Club was as a pirate and gun runner, runs the club with his wife and charges visitors US\$20 per day for room, full board and as much diving around Moalboal as you want. The place is clean, well kept and the lack of modern amenities only adds to the charm of the place and the relaxation to be had there.

The diving around Moalboal is fantastic. Within 30 yards from your bedroom at the Reef Club, is a drop-off from 10 feet to 170 feet and another couple of hundred yards out it drops to over 3000 feet. All diving besides that done straight off the shore is done from native outriggers, an experience in itself, and the available dive locations are endless.

My favourite location is an underwater mountain starting at around 80 feet and going down who knows how far. This is inhabited by large numbers of large fish of all types and covered, of course, with coral. On this mountain it is not uncommon to see hundreds of scorpion and lion fish (a photographer's delight) in the one dive.

The features of Moalboal however, extend way beyond the great diving to be had there. They include:

The host Oscar who woke me up one night out of a drunken stupor by standing on his balcony shooting down coconuts with a machine gun (he didn't sell all his stock) because the boys had run out of coconut juice to go with the rum.

The locals love to entertain and sing with the guests. There is nothing else to do at night unless you head to Cebu City.

The "Anhilau", a type of local rum (jungle juice), which when mixed with coconut water puts you in fine singing voice before you pass out.

The car ride to Moalboal from Cebu City has to be seen to be believed.

The Philippines really is a great spot for Australian divers to head for and there are plenty of locations - many of them up market, if that's what you want, from Moalboal.

Of course, don't forget that even if you are going to the Philippines to dive that Manila itself demands a couple of days to look around. Manila is full of great night spots, entertainment as good as any in the world and is also a super spot, as good as Singapore and Hong Kong for shopping.

My recommendation is go to the Philippines if you are considering a holiday overseas.

DIVE REPORT

Diving the Old Merimbula Wharf

by *Peter Mosse*

My son had a spare week between jobs in June 2023. We thought about diving the Yongala, but neither of us could face airports and airlines and felt it would be nice to just drive somewhere and dive. I knew of a dive operator in Ulladulla who I had been wanting to meet for some time.

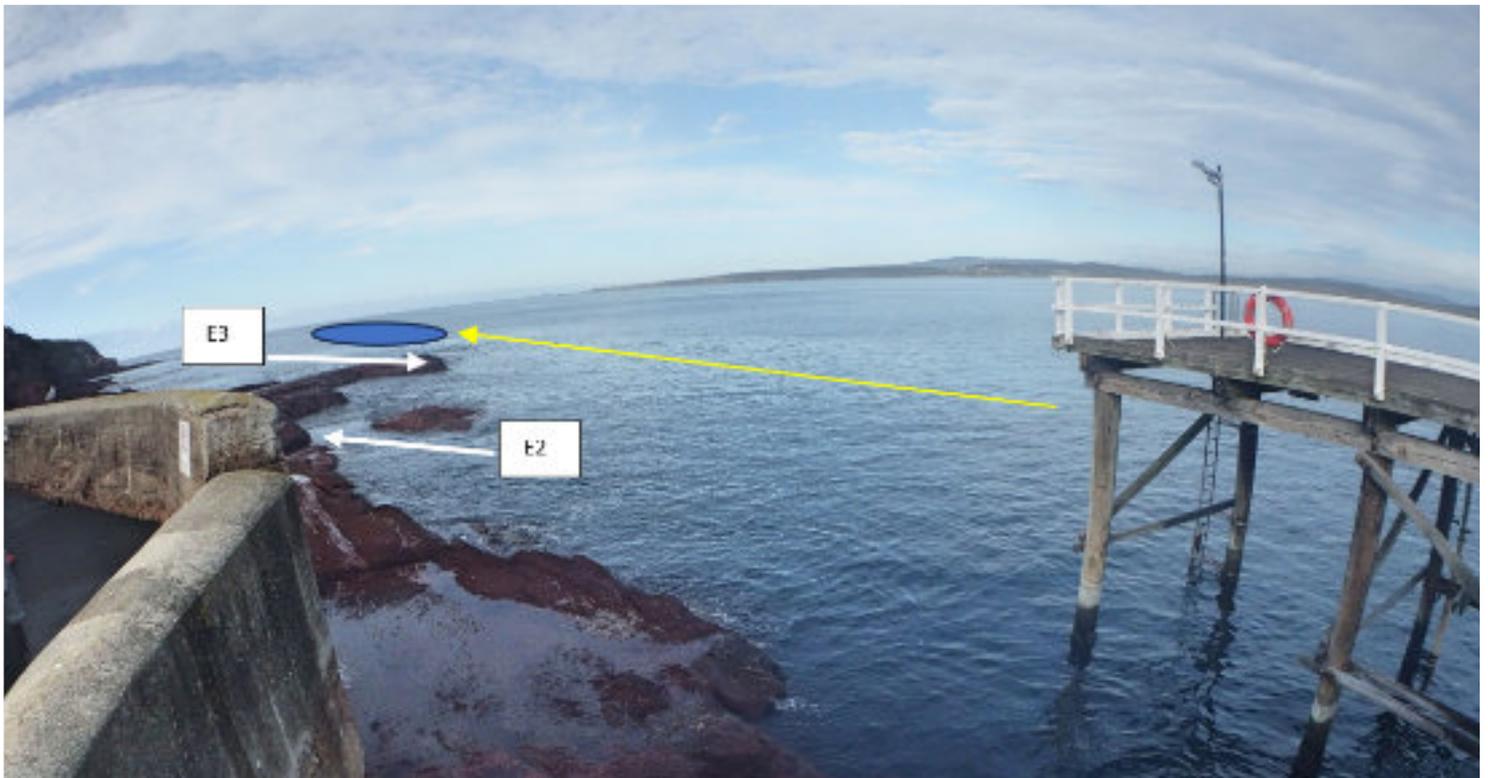
To break the trip there was the old Merimbula Wharf on the way. I had dived it many decades ago and had fond memories of the dive. We stayed in Merimbula for the night and took the opportunity to check out the dive site that evening. There was a fair roll on from the incoming swell and the entry and exit points were not obvious. I felt I'd remembered just entering directly in line with the wharf but it looked tricky. That night at dinner in the Italian restaurant in Merimbula (well worth a visit) I asked the waiter whether he knew of anyone who dived the wharf. As luck would have it, he in fact knew someone who dived there nearly every day collecting specimens for the aquarium. He gave us his mobile number and we called him that evening. He was full of excellent advice and considerably extended the range of where we could dive. My memory was just diving under the wharf itself, however there is very much more to see and explore. He also had some very good advice on the entries and exit points. So, for those of you who may travel

through Merimbula at some stage, take the time to stop and dive. You will be well rewarded.

There is a small car park area in front of the aquarium and café, so if you are there in peak tourist season parking could be difficult, so go early or late. Gear up and walk to the end of the car park and around the corner of the aquarium. Clamber over the low concrete wall and pick your way down along the rocks and across to the waters edge at one of the entry points shown in the photograph below.

While it is well worth diving under the wharf, there is so much more. There's a PVC pipeline that runs out at an angle from the southeast corner off the wharf. Follow this out until you reach a low profile drop off. Turn left and keep the reef on your left, head out for as far as you want to swim. It is well worth swimming a considerable distance to reach the sponge gardens.

The figure below shows the rough line of the pipeline, alternative entry and exit points, the rough direction of the reef wall, and also the approximate location of the sponge garden area. The choice of entry and exit points depends on the height of the tide and the amount of swell. Entry and exit is easier with a higher tide. There are also some rough steps cut into the rock at entry point E2, they're quite hard to find if you don't know where they are. You can also do a jump entry at E3, it is plenty deep enough, but the first jump can be a bit of a leap of faith.



The Merimbula Wharf. E1, E2 and E3 show alternative entry and exit points. E2 can be used when the swell is up since it is partly protected by the small rock island and the outer point. The yellow arrow shows the direction of the reef wall, and the blue oval, the approximate position of the sponge gardens.

On the swim out we were lucky enough to see a large grey nurse shark with a plume of yellowtail scad following it. Majestic sight. Where the pipeline reaches the edge of the reef there is an old Caterpillar track. This is a landmark worth remembering particularly on the return swim. The low-profile reef is typically NSW



with very little kelp and typically barren rocks. However, once you accept that and start looking, there are all sorts of things to see. Large red gorgonian fans are abundant. At least for me, quite a surprise. Lots of rock cod well camouflaged against the rocks suddenly surprise the diver.



Schools of yellowtail scad are plentiful and spectacular to watch when dive lights light up the silvery sides and highlight the yellow fins and tails.

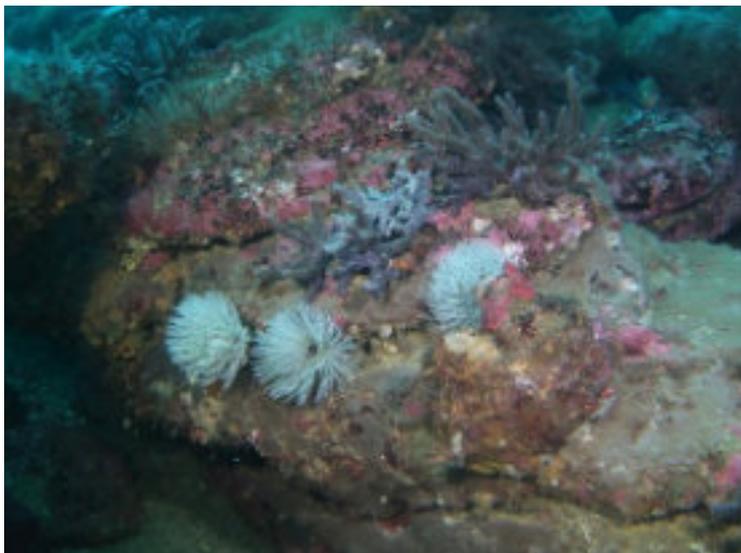
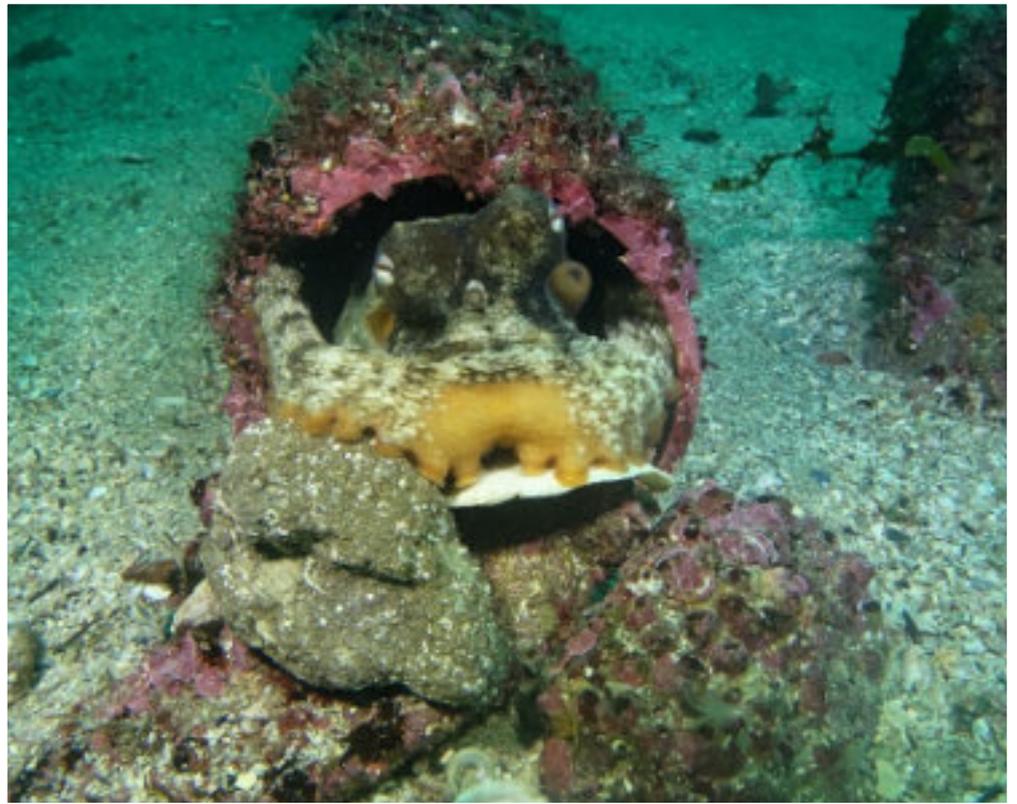
Swimming along the edge of the reef there was a hint of something more exciting in the sand ahead. As we got closer, the familiar outlines of a sea pen became apparent. First one, then a second then a third and then a whole field heading out across the sand for quite a distance. There must have been hundreds of them. I had only ever seen one or two of these majestic invertebrates. Here they were a plenty! But I cannot guarantee they will always be there.



For years I've looked closely at every gorgonian fan I've seen, hoping to find some small crustacean or mollusc living there, but without much luck. And then on this dive, there it was, a spindle cowrie with its beautiful red mantle extended.

And as I remembered from my first dive many decades prior, quite a few octopus.

The swim to the sponge gardens can be a long one but keep going. Just keep the reef wall on the left and the sand on the right. The reef drops a bit and opens out and the area is covered with a dense array of sponges, ascidians, gorgonians, feather duster worms and fish. Lots of rays and blue gropers and a large Melbourne (Whitleys) skate.



And not surprisingly there's a good range of nudibranchs and anenomes.

On the swim back, go past the Caterpillar track and you will come into an area which seems to be a fish nursery. On our dive, there were large schools of small old wives. Alternatively finish off under the wharf where there are a good range of fish, moray eels and octopus.

So, if you're driving along the NSW coast and have diving gear, have a look at the guide photo above and get in and dive. It is certainly an excellent dive with a maximum depth of about 15m. And, remember, time your exit carefully.

And while you're there, take the time to visit the aquarium and see all the marine life you might have missed and confirm those that you have seen.



NEW PUBLICATION - LIMITED TO 150 COPIES

Pioneer Divers of Australia

Salvage and Shipwrecks in the 19th Century

Critical to Australia's remarkable transformation from penal colony to a vibrant young nation, were divers who worked underwater, building infrastructure for our cities to rival the capitals of Europe. Importantly, with ships being Australia's only means of reaching the world from its remote location, they were the divers who salvaged and repaired the vessels that provided a vital lifeline. Australia's first commercial divers, were quick to invent their own diving apparatus and experiment with ways to overcome the 'bends,' which in the 19th century was still a mystery ailment for divers.

In *Pioneer Divers of Australia*, the author brings together the stories of over 70 colonial divers who toiled, often with inadequate or makeshift equipment, in deep, dark, and dangerous waters during the 19th century. Their work included salvage of many famous Australian shipwrecks, the recovery of bullion consignments, harbour works, flooded mines, bridge-building, body searches, underwater blasting, and even the search for a meteor. Such assignments were all in a day's work for the 19th century diver.

The divers of this era were courageous, versatile workers, many with little knowledge of the physiological effects of diving in deep waters. There were many accidents and deaths which are also related in the text.

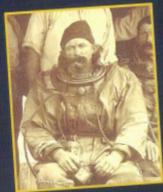
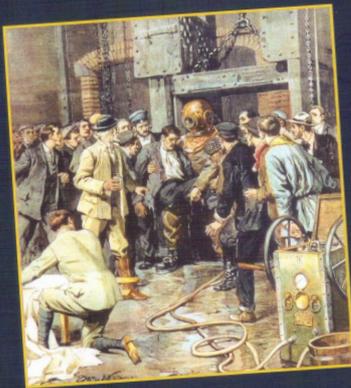
This publication covers the period 1810 to 1900, from convict breath-

hold and bell divers and includes the introduction of the copper-helmeted standard dress apparatus in 1837, in Sydney. There is also a section on Australian inventions and experimentation with new deep diving apparatus patents in the late 19th century.

The book is indexed, referencing over 250 colonial and international vessels, A4 format of 188 pages, with over 100 images, some in colour/sepia, it weighs 700grams.

Pioneer Divers of Australia

Salvage and Shipwrecks of the 19th Century



Des Williams

Price is \$40 (direct pick up in Melbourne) **OR** \$50 including postage within Australia. Available only from Des Williams:

deswill49@bigpond.com

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

May - 2023



Elodie Camprasse - Brought to light - Sorrento

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

June & Annual 2023



Peter Beaumont - Angry cuttlefish - Whyalla

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

August - 2023



Christine Reynolds - I See You - Fiji

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

October - 2023



John Olden - I don't bite-Solomon Islands

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

November - 2023



Imogen Manins - Piling - Portsea

PHOTO COMPETITION

Winner

December - 2023



Corey Doughty - Blue is my colour



Club Equipment

As a reminder to all, we have a range of club equipment for use by VSAG Club Members.

This includes Emergency Oxygen Administration and First Aid kits. These are typically provided on long-term loan to active Club boat owners and permanently located on their boats for the safety of Club Members.

Other equipment available for short-term loan includes:

- 2.8 litre pony bottles including 1st/2nd stage regs; redundant gas for deep or wreck diving
- Ambient carbon monoxide (CO) meter; for monitoring member's compressors.
- Automated External Defibrillator: with plans to increase the number of units over time
- Sand Launching Ropes

In addition, the Club owns a number of standard aluminum dive cylinders and a few smaller sized cylinders.

A full list of equipment available for loan by VSAG Club Members, and instructions on how to access this equipment, is available at the VSAG site: <https://www.revolutionise.com.au/vsag/vsag-equipment/>

For Club Members to access this equipment, the first point of contact is the Equipment Officer - Brian Heatherich.

The general email address to enquire about accessing of equipment is equipment@vsag.org.au.

The Equipment Officer will know the current location of pieces of equipment and can assist with arranging access. It is advised to make arrangements as far in advance as possible to ensure availability and sufficient time to collect the equipment.

For any further questions or requests, please contact Brian Heatherich.

Emergency Contact Information

Anywhere on Victorian Waters, your first response should always be to call

000

or call the Water Police on 1800 135 729

In the event you cannot place a call, use

VHF Channel 16

and follow the Radio Emergency Message Protocols shown below.

If all of the above fail, activate your

EPIRB

Radio Emergency Message Protocols

Ensure all vessel passengers are familiar with the operation of a VHF radio and the following process for placing a Mayday or Pan Pan call

Speak slowly and clearly

Mayday call

Vessel or an occupant is in grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance

Distress call

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday

this is

"Name of your vessel", "your call sign" x 3

Distress message after call has been acknowledged

Mayday

"Name of your vessel", "your call sign"

Vessel position (GPS, bearing, what3words)

Nature of distress and assistance required

Other useful information such as number of persons on board, vessel description, life-rafts, EPIRB, etc.

Pan Pan call

An urgent situation exists but there is no imminent danger

Urgency call

Pan Pan, Pan Pan, Pan Pan

All Stations x 3 (or *"specific station"* x 3)

"Name of your vessel", "your call sign" x 3

Urgency message after call has been acknowledged

Pan Pan

"Name of your vessel", "your call sign"

Vessel position (GPS, bearing, what3words)

Nature of distress and assistance required

Other useful information such as number of persons on board, vessel description, life-rafts, EPIRB, etc.

VSAG Committee & Club Roles 2023-2024

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