

ANUSC  
CLUB NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 1991



Since our last newsletter we've been diving to many distant places. Some went to the Pompeys and didn't exceed the Queensland depth limit diving the Blue Hole (did they!), others went to our winter playground - Lady Musgrave Island - to swim with the Humpbacks (well, we did see them). Here are a couple of reports of the latter jaunt. The first is by Eric, an impressionable Swiss research chemist now trying to extend his visa; and the second is by a Musgrave veteran, Kristina.

### **Lady Musgrave as seen by a Swiss**

The trip to Lady Musgrave Island was my first one outside Canberra since I arrived in Australia 2 months ago. I drove to Gladstone with Richard, and my first surprise was to see these long straight roads without nothing other than trees for 150 km. For somebody coming from a country where there is a village every 500 meters, this was something very unusual. The second surprise was to see all these dead kangaroos on the edge of the road. Leaving Miles where we spent the night, we were almost obliged to slalom between the carcasses.

We arrived in Gladstone on Sunday afternoon, and there we met all the other members of the expedition in front of a very small ship called "Voyager". When I saw all the food and the gear to be loaded, I asked myself how it could be possible to put all this (together with 18 divers and 2 children) on this poor little thing. But it was surprisingly easy and we were even able to add some sea water during the rough crossing to the island. Both the sea-sick and "unsick" were very happy to stand at last on the white sand of Lady Musgrave beach under the warm sun. After the boat was unloaded, the tents were built in the middle of hundreds of birds trying to pinch our food. The first night on the island was very appreciated even if I was sleeping with a centipede. I was obliged to hunt this ugly thing for a while instead of resting.

The dives we made the next day were beautiful, and I saw coral everywhere: corals shaped like trees, moose horns, brains, flowers, slabs, salads, shrubs, blue, pink, yellow, brown, white and even green ones. I also saw colourful fish everywhere and I met my first turtles and sea snakes. Wonderful!!!

The kitchen, a very important place of the island indeed, was organised. Every night, two people were cooking for the others and as a result I tasted a lot of different Australian specialities like spaghetti, curry and rice, rice and curry, curry and vegetables, fish and curry and gado-gado. I also learnt how to make this wonderful Aussie dish called "jaffle". All this, with some imported wine or beer, was yummi!

The second night was also surprising. It was raining and I was horrified to see my tent leaking. "Don't worry", said Jeremy, "it never rains on this island". He was right for several days, until the storm came...

The next day was grey and wet until noon, and the rain stopped just in time to go to the beach and see a Humpback whale breaching not far away. During the afternoon, a dive was organised and I learned how to ride a turtle. They have incredible strength and they can make a very useful underwater skooter.

The day after was the start of the mechanical troubles. The propeller of the yellow rubber-boat broke and its repair gave us time to prepare a guacamole. The dive we made later was very nice with a lot of fish, including some drunk Angel fish which were swimming upside down on the ceiling of the cave. This new spot was named "Guacamole Cave" and became one of the nicest diving spots of the holidays.

There also were some very stressing days. This one started very early, and we decided to go to a place called "The Caves" on the other side of the reef. Leaving the beach, we met a school of dolphins and ploof! We tried to snorkle with them, but they were just a little bit too fast... Arriving at our destination, second ploof! A very nice dive with two big and very curious sea snakes which decided to follow us. Inside the cave we were greeted by a huge stingray and we decided not to stay longer. Back at the camp, I had just enough time to swallow a small jaffle and a beer before the whales came back again. We rushed to the Zodiac so that we could follow them. We missed the whales, but we met the dolphins again, and third ploof! But again they were too fast for us. On the way back, we decided to dive at "Manta Bommie" and fourth ploof with

Clown Trigger fish and a Wobbygong. As the sun went down, a night dive was decided and we went for the fifth ploop! One must really like water...

There was also a dive at the Fairfax Islands. There were three boats at the start, but only one at the finish. The tinny's engine broke down, and the yellow rubber was more useful as a swimming pool rather than as a boat. After much "bush mechanics" we made a functioning boat from the two defective ones; still, every morning there was a race to get the last Zodiac.

The most beautiful dive I made was on Sunday at "Manta Bommie". Four crazy people woke up at half past seven: Rod, Richard, Gabby, and I. We just arrived at the bottom (23 metres under the surface) when we met a huge Manta ray which stood with us for at least 5 minutes. It was an incredible feeling to see it glide over us and I was happy to know it was harmless. Back to the anchor we started to return to the boat when a beautiful reef shark came to say hello. It was just swimming around us with an incredible speed. It is one of my best memories.

Two nights later came the storm with a multitude of lightnings strikes. I was just sitting in my tent watching the leaks and using all my clothes as sponges. Fortunately it stopped just before the water level reached the sleeping bag. There was a wind of 100 km/h which obliged some people to go and sleep with their neighbour. When the morning came there were new people on the island. A lot of new ships were anchored down in the lagoon to escape the fierce storm that night. The people of Sydney University had found their boat run aground on the reef. We found all this very funny until we saw the waves going over the Tinny which was sinking, filled up with water. A rescue expedition was organised and Rod saved the boat by making a crazy drive to the lagoon.

Another dive at Guacamole Cave the following day, a final dinner, and it was a hilarious walk bringing the compressor onto the beach. The end was here. Again the "Voyager" and mainland was under our feet again.

There are a lot of other things to tell but I don't want to write a novel. Just let me say that it was a fantastic holiday, without any stress of civilisation. The only problem I have now is to find the money and extend my visa, so that I can go back to Lady Musgrave Island next year.

Eric Wenger

## Version #2

Two years ago I wrote about Lady Musgrave Island as an escape from a cold, wet, Canberra winter to a tropical island paradise. This year, I am afraid, I would be somewhat misleading to describe the island in such terms as we certainly did not escape from the weather, but rather encountered somewhat worse than we had in Canberra for some time. Still, two weeks on a coral island is two weeks on coral island and one cannot complain. And we did get a couple of days of what one would have to describe as perfect weather.

The trip started on a beautiful Queensland day with a gorgeous 'sunset over the water' background as we loaded up the boat with box upon box of goodies and bag upon bag of gear ("who has left their weightbelt in their bag?"). Little realising what was in store for us over the night we headed into town for a meal. I guess by the time we got to the island there were those who were thinking they had wasted their money as that beautiful meal was now feeding the fish. How they managed to cope with five hours hanging over the rail in the wind and spray I do not know. Personally, I was quite happy to take to my bunk as the boat pitched and yawed and rolled, and did it all again. Mark certainly knew he was onto a good thing when he managed to steal 21 seasick pills from the Lady Musgrave later in the week. What a popular boy he became! But then again, maybe he thought he would need them all himself, being one of the exclusive rail club. So we arrived in the calmer water of the island at last and were met by Belldivers yobbos, beer cans in hand, to help us transport our gear to the beach, to find that the rangers were on site and fires were prohibited - turtles were still hatching.

With the scuffle for the best camp sites over and everything organised, at last it was time to settle down and enjoy what the island had to offer - while it still did. That is, before the rain and wind set in, the boats broke down and half the population got sick. An awful lot of time was



**October 19/20**

**Ulladulla and environs**

Planned to coincide with the last weekend of the October Sports Union diving course, this is a chance to welcome potential new club members. We'll be roughing it '(!?!?)' at the camping ground on the headland of Alan and Marie's caravan park and hoping to find water flat enough to get out to Burrill rocks; of course, there are always the old favourites - the Home Bommie and the Lighthouse Wall.

**Contact:** **Paul Hutchinson**  
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**October 31st, 8:00 pm in the ANU Union**  
**ANU Skindiving Club Annual General Meeting**

•It's time to hear a (very brief!) report on the state of the club and to decide who will get the chore of holding our official positions for another year. If you're keen to help organize more diving let me (Jeremy) know beforehand. None of us are powercrazed and would welcome keen committee members. I've been holding the Treasurers role for most of this year by default (David got a job in PNG) and I'm letting it be known that I'm not going to stand for President/Secretary unless I find someone to serve as Treasurer. Any volunteers please let me know before the meeting (it's not too hard - I'm a biologist and I can still manage to write the cheques!).

•We also get to choose where we'll dive this summer, and we'll try and talk some of our photographers to show us what their winter diving trips to more tropical climates were like. **See you there!**

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**November 16/17**

**Jervis Bay camping at Greenpatch**

One of our favourite camping spots when you can get there (ie. not school holidays), packed full of friendly wildlife and with those useful amenities, HOT SHOWERS! From Greenpatch you can easily travel to virtually any of the diving sites that Jervis Bay is so famous for. We will no doubt dive a few of these; I for one am still itching to see Stoney Creek and the large, but very mobile, Middle Grounds. So, escape from the cold Canberra winter and come down to the coast where conditions are much more pleasant.

**Contact:** **Jeremy Weinman**  
**247 3173 (h)**

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**Gear Issue and Return (Thursdays only unless you arrange otherwise)**

<u>Jeremy Weinman</u>	<u>Steve Harding</u>	<u>Kristina Sands</u>	<u>Michelle Karas</u>
2473173 (h)	2514134 (w)	2492222 (w)	2490635 (w)
2495051 (w)	2512834 (h)	2411269(h)	2411281 (h)
3.10.91	10.10.91	17.10.91	24.10.91
31.10.91	7.11.91	14.11.91	21.11.91

Remember, people will only attend if you contact them beforehand. Also, try to contact people at home. They need to work during the day to support their diving. (Steve is an exception).

**ADVERTISEMENT**

Now that the warmer weather is coming do you find yourself thinking of diving and wetsuits? I have a wetsuit that is just too small for me. I am a size 10 to 12 and 175 cm tall and the suit fits me - you can get it on and off - but only just. So if you are slightly smaller, female, and want a wetsuit its yours for \$200. It is only two years old and in excellent condition.

Kristina Sands 249 2222 (w) 241 1269 (h).