

ANU SCUBA DIVING CLUB  
NEWSLETTER  
November 1994

## WOTS BEEN HAPPENING?

By now most of you would have heard of our boat that didn't want to come home from the reef trip. The Cherokee went adrift in Curtis Channel at night on the trip back to Gladstone. Despite a 3 hour search at night in most unpleasant conditions, and a light plane search the next day the Cherokee could not be found. Sadly we finished informing the Insurance company and Marine authorities and started to head home. Well, the good news is that the day after that a fishing charter found the boat adrift, still afloat and not yet aground on the rocks of Rundle Island. They took her in tow and brought her back in to port at the end of their charter. Then the legal battle began. Although Norm and Michelle were able to bring the boat back with them after their trip to Carnarvon Gorge, Capt. Zane's legal advisors and the sports Union's Insurance Company still haven't agreed on recovery costs. Anyway, we have our boat back and have had the towing point replaced (1/4 inch stainless steel bar broken) and the damage to the motor caused by Steve's boat trying to mount her (no wonder she ran away!) fixed. So, now you all know some of the gossip! here's more (trip reports):

### **LADY MUSGRAVE ISLAND I**

#### **A Flavour of Lady Musgrave Island**

July 1994

Bill Keating

What a superb experience ! Let's start with Manta Bommie. One hundred metres from the fringing coral reef you descend with your faithful companions to huge mushroom shaped coral outcrops. Six foot Maori wrasses cruise by through the clear tropical water. Suddenly, a stealth bomber glides effortlessly into view. It has a nine foot wing span and passes right in front of your face. Then another comes in, and yet another. You hardly have time to check out the big green turtles sprawled on the coral! Meanwhile, elsewhere on the big coral reef encircling Musgrave Island, fellow ANU divers are exploring the 'East Side Story'. Ask them

about the plate corals that are bigger than your dining room table and the beautiful sea snakes they had fun with there. Yes, this is the Great Barrier Reef.

Well the diving is outstanding but Musgrave embodies more than diving. On Musgrave taking out the garbage can be a thrill of a life time. For example, waking up bleary eyed one morning from the fabulous adventure of the previous evening, I noticed Jeremy single handedly hauling compost into the Cherokee. Want to go for a ride ? I flopped into the boat and on the way out to sea ... Whales ! Four huge humpback whales ! Back on shore I could barely contain myself as I scoffed Jaffle after Jaffle prepared in the best restaurant between the east Australian Coast and South America. The food on Musgrave is excellent ... whatever you want and whenever you want it. All you have to do is prepare it in the outstanding gormandising munchy parlour.

In the late afternoon after a full day's diving you might like to watch the birds come in to rest deep in the Pisonia forest for the night. One hundred thousand pairs of little wings make the air hum as they shoot by ten feet above your head. Out to sea thousands of birds flying in tight spirals provide an amazing sight against the backdrop of the red sun sinking into the ocean. Peaceful ay? Well its really much better than this description. There's only a small time for peace because once all the birds are home you know its time for a delicious three course meal, excellent beverages and good company. The main course prepared by two of the company might be followed by chocolate mousse or crepes suzettes with a dash of Grand Marnier.

The night divers re-appear as talking and laughing you enter the deep night. The stars shine brightly overhead and the pleasant sensations of various elixirs loosen your tongue. You lean back in your chair and look out over the dinner table to the low surfing washing the fringing reef. It's at this time that you most appreciate the top people who seem to come on this trip. For me Musgrave is the birthplace of some quality friendships. But you don't think about that as you prepare a night time walk around the island with some fellow

divers. Crunching through the coral sand you stop to observe the big red hermit crabs with their beady eyes on those long stalks. Then you climb to the top of the lighthouse to sample the heady scents of the *Pisonia* forest before they are blown away by the strong warm prevailing winds. Cutting back through the *Pisonia* forest you're just in time to watch a blood red moon sink like an ancient Greek Galleon into the ocean. You hastily prepare a late night snack before falling completely contented into bed.

The next day you dive with the batfish, Queensland groupers and myriads of brightly coloured fish. You visit excalibur's underwater cavern and its purple translucent corals. With the images of the underworld and the whale songs still reverberating in your ears you are all happiness. The 1994 Musgrave trip was definitely a highlight of my life ... easily better than my overseas trips to far flung places.

I hope to see some of you on the next one.

## LADY MUSGRAVE ISLAND II

July 1994

Lisa Buttle

Lady Musgrave Island is a coral cay of the Capricornia group, at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. A coral cay is derived entirely from the sea and never formed part of the mainland, that is to say wave action on the reef results in the formation of tiny islands/cays of coral rubble and coral sand. It is possible to walk the circumference of the island in 20 minutes, but perhaps a more interesting path may be chosen through the centre of the dense vegetation. A slightly hair-raising climb (especially at midnight when a few parts inebriated) up the light-beacon situated centrally on the island provides a superb circumnavigational view, as far as Fairfax, the next northerly island. All types of fauna and flora found on these islands had to be either air or sea-born, Lady Musgrave is home to very few resident animal species. In its past history goats were introduced by seamen as an emergency food source in the event of a shipwreck. This had a disastrous effect on the vegetation, the goats almost reducing the island to a pasture field, such that since then with the advent of National Parks regulations all non-indigenous species have been eradicated, bar a few visiting humans. Fortunately no nasty poisonous snakes or spiders inhabit the island, thus it is possible to wander around barefoot as long as one doesn't mind the occasional native Bindi thorn in the foot. The island is now home to ants and centipedes, and

more interestingly Silver-eye birds, described as "mice with wings", and flightless Rails, both of which enjoyed sampling the delights of the cooking tent *via* the garbage bin! Other seasonal visitors include Black-Terns, by the thousand, who would arrive *en-mass* at sunset, wending a curious formation dance across the ocean before settling in the trees for the night, to leave after a noisy dawn chorus.

Access to the island is possible either by private yacht or boat charter from Gladstone (a hell-hole of an industrialised seaside town, just south of Rockhampton), or by a day-tripping ferry departing from Bundaberg. The Lady Musgrave ferry gets you out to the island in approx. two hours, allowing four hours to enjoy such exploits as snorkelling or reef-walking at low tide. Walking along the reef when only partially covered with water one can find blue starfish, the occasional octopus, and the odd Sea hare. The Sea hare, a large shell-less slug, has an unusual means of self defence when approached by a predatory crab, or prodded by an inquisitive finger it emits a cloud of purple ink providing a "smoke-screen" from the interested party. However, at \$95 for the day-trip, including lunch (must be a slap-up meal?), you might find the cost rather prohibitive. For the more adventurous, the caretaking National Park allows a maximum of fifty people to camp on the island at one time. Facilities provided are kept to the bare minimum, that is compost-generating toilets. This means that everything else that you require for the duration of your stay, including fresh drinking water, food, cooking facilities (open-fires are banned) and copious amounts of alcohol (Eric?), must be transported along with your other essentials.

The main interest of my trip was to sample some of the delights of the underwater world of the Great Barrier Reef. The island is surrounded by coral reef, almost continuous, and numerous coral "bommies" (small patches of coral) are accessible simply by swimming out from the beach. The depth increases quite rapidly down to a maximum of 25 metres at the sandy bottom, easily accessible with a scuba tank. For those wishing to view the underwater world by snorkelling the lagoon on the northern side of the island provides an abundance of marine life in only 2-7 metres of crystal clear water. One of the most striking features visible from the island is the variation in colour of the sea with depth of water, from clear

to green to darkest blue. The kaleidoscope of colours of both hard and soft coral species is surpassed only by the hundreds of variations of reef fish.

Green turtles of various sizes are visible on almost every dive, even in the shallow waters. On a couple of occasions we had to rescue late hatchlings from the beach (tiny turtles of approx. 10cm length), as they rather confusedly exhausted themselves in their quest to reach the ocean. One of the most poisonous snakes in the world, Sea snakes far from being the fearful monsters that I imagined, are comical, seemingly docile predators. One can happily watch a snake swimming harmlessly between the legs of a buddy diver, only to get a shock when one turns around to find another snake on your own tail!

For me, the most breathtaking moment of the trip was to come tantalisingly close to a small pod of Humpback whales journeying between the islands. On a previous day we had heard the eerie sound of whales calling to each other underwater, but knowing that the source of sound can be up to five kilometres away had not expected to see them. The sight of a gentle giant of the sea, a creature the size of a road-train!, from close range is simply awesome. Schools of dolphins passed by the islands quite regularly, but none would allow any divers or snorkellers in the water to get close to them at all. Another impressive sea creature, the Manta ray, allowed us a closer inspection. These huge filter feeders (reaching a 2-3 metre wingspan) enjoy sun-basking on the surface, seemingly impervious to the approach of humans.

Some highlights of my first experience of diving on the Great Barrier Reef, but hopefully the first of many. The ANU dive club run an annual trip to Lady Musgrave island in July for two weeks, providing a great opportunity for anyone with an interest in the underwater world.

**In 1995 we will do another 2 week stint up at Musgrave in July. This is a popular trip so book early. We keep a list of financial members declaring their interest and then give the first 22 a chance to pay a deposit by March/April 95. When some of these drop out (some always do), other members can then sign up in order of their place on the list. Until about February next year, names will**

**only be taken during club trips to ensure that regular club divers get the first options.**

## **Montague Island**

September

Usually we go to Montague to see the seals on the long weekend in October, but the last few years it's been like a marina at Darling Harbour. This year we went a week earlier to avoid being rammed by charter boats and having anchors dropped on our heads. There was a little crowding but nothing like the previous years long weekend traffic, and the seals were there in large numbers. We relocated our usual campsite to get a bit of sun which suited the fair crowd who turned up. On the Saturday night we went into town to celebrate Eric's birthday. The seals had a birthday present for Eric too; the next day one came up to him and kissed his mask! (Is this the elusive mermaid?) The conditions were pretty ordinary, a bit on the cold side with a reasonable swell and vis was only 10-20 metres, but the seals made the diving spectacular. Highlights for me were three of us in the midst of a boiling mass of 20-30 seals, all moving rapidly around and trailing lines of bubbles behind them; and then later the same dive the insistent seal which made me 'dance' to exhaustion. This seal swam rapidly around me, doing 360's and barrel rolls, all the time keeping those big eyes fixed on me and making sure that I was also twisting and turning to match its movements and maintain eye contact. A few minutes of this and I would be panting for breath and slow down. The seal would go up for a gulp of air and then come down and start all over again. This went on for a good 10 minutes and would've been the quickest tank of air I have ever used.

A great weekend and it didn't even rain (like it normally does!)

## The Diving Calendar

**November 12/13th**

**around  
Wollongong**

**DON'T contact Phil Herral**

**as he is away and will not be able to run this dive. (something about being away up at Lizard Island) Instead we will take the opportunity to get the new shed and boats ship-shape for the treasure hunt.**

**November 12  
Working Bee**

**10am  
North Oval  
gear store**

Come and be sociable and help do your bit to keep the clubs boats and gear in good working condition. Also a chance to welcome the arrival of the club gear store and help fit it out

**November 19/20**

**Treasure Hunt  
Weekend**

Steve's Beldivers club has run a Treasure Hunt and Inflatable Boat Race at Bawley Point for 5 or 6 years. In the Treasure Hunt numbered discs are hidden on the sea floor, on top of Numbrays, under octopuses, behind Morays etc.. Later at the BBQ each disc you have found gets you a chance to win a prize. To strengthen the traditional links between our clubs we've gone down and tried to win all the booty, and have been determined to win the inflatable boat race. This year the sacred rule 'the Callagari wins' has to be overthrown. Last year the Treasure Hunt has a \$5 entry fee for financial Beldivers, and \$15 for others which includes membership of their club [and will probably be the same this

year]: many of us are already dual club members, and we haven't been scared for life! In addition to these activities for the Saturday morning, in the afternoon and on the Sunday we go diving, and there is a big BBQ on Saturday night. Camping will be in Ulladulla (where the BBQ will be). Come down and have some fun, and meet a larger crowd of divers.

Ring **Jeremy Weinman** h **2547502**

w **2495051**

**November 24 Upstairs in  
Thursday 8pm the Union  
The**

**AGM**

Time to gather our members around us, report on the last year and plan an even better one for 1995. Come along and tell us where you'd like to dive this summer and help us plan the next dive calendar. We'll get Eric to show us his great slides of the seals at the end of the meeting.

## EQUIPMENT RULES

### TANKS - VESTS - REGULATORS

The ANU SCUBA Diving Club has several sets of SCUBA equipment, purchased and maintained with a combination of Sports Union grants and Club generated funds. This equipment, stored in the relocated ANUSC gear store next to the Sports Union recreation office, is subject to constant and demanding use so the following rules have been formulated in the interests of all club members, of the Sports Union, and of the issuing and maintenance officers.

- 1) One set of gear is provided only to qualified divers who are current members of both the ANU SCUBA Diving Club and the Sports Union. Persons not known to the issuing officer may be asked to show their Sports Union card and may be checked against the list of current members.
- 2) Gear is available free of charge on club dives - subject to a deposit (currently \$10), refundable when the equipment is returned on time, complete and unabused, clean and with the **tanks full**. Borrowers are not guaranteed exclusive use and may be required to share with other club members on a dive.
- 3) When not required for club purposes, equipment may be hired for private use at a fee of \$20 per set, plus the usual deposit. Equipment is for the support of diving as a club, and is not available for private use when a club outing is scheduled, regardless of however many sets appear to be spare. The club does not accept advance bookings for the use of equipment.
- 4) **Note that Sports Union staff do not have a key to the club storage room and do not accept gear for return.** If you leave returned gear at the office you must expect to lose your deposit.  
Equipment may be borrowed and returned around 5:30 pm on Thursdays, via the rostered issuing officer, **who attends only on request**. In order to allow everybody fair access, gear **must** be returned by the Thursday following the week of issue.
- 5) The member signing for gear remains fully responsible for it until it is signed back in. Negligent loss or damage will be treated in accordance with current policy of the Club and the Sports Union, which retains ownership of all club equipment. Borrowers are expected to keep track of all gear issued to them, particularly on dives where it is shared.
- 6) **To avoid damage, please remove jacket vests from tanks before transport.** After use wash ALL gear in fresh water, rinse out vests internally, and return them half-inflated. Hose down your tanks and tank boot. **Ensure that the dust cap is tightly fitted to the reg before soaking. Water in the reg will damage it and can result in total failure of your reg or gauges. Apart from the danger to you or other users, this costs us lots of money to replace.**
- 7) **NEVER EVER leave tanks or hoses or vests in your car in the hot sun.**  
**In the interests of safety and to avoid inadvertent re-issue, all faulty gear must be labelled as such on return, AND reported personally to the gear maintenance officer.**

Gear Maintenance Officer: Eric Wenger - phone 2493641 (w) 2546874 (h)

### GEAR ISSUE AND RETURN

(Thursdays only unless you arrange otherwise)

**\*\*\*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.

<u>Siggi Schmid</u>	<u>Eric Wenger</u>	<u>Kristina Sands</u>	<u>Marlene Davey</u>
2471417 (h)	2493641 (w)	2417812 (h)	2464125 (w)
<u>2495408 (w)</u>	<u>2546874 (h)</u>	<u>2492222 (w)</u>	
3/11/94	10/11/94	17/11/94	24/11/94
1/12/94	8/12/94	15/12/94	22/12/94

**In an emergency (only) call Jeremy (h) 2547502, (bh) 2495051.**