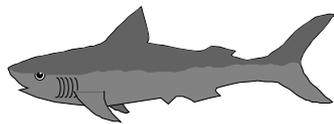


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# The ANU SCUBA Diving Club Newsletter

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**September 1997**

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Welcome to the start of the new dive season! Reports are that the waters are particularly warm and clear at the moment, so lets go diving! In addition to our traditional Montague Seal Dive, we have a number of events planned before Christmas: check out the updated dive calendar.

This issue we also have a number of trip reports from our South Coast divers as well as stories from Lady Musgrave '97!

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## Club tanks for sale

This year the Club has purchased a number of Aluminium tanks for our hire gear. We thus have a surplus of 68 and 72 cubic foot Steel tanks that we will be selling to our members at a good price. These tanks will be hydrostatically tested this month (September) and will then go on sale for \$100.

Preference will be given to those members who dive regularly and don't already own their own tank. There are a number of committee members who are keen to get their hands on these tanks, so get in quick!

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## Seal Rocks

*Christiane Funk*

*(Photography: Steve Greatbanks)*

To avoid all the heavy Easter traffic, Matthias, Steve and I started our trip to the north coast at three in the morning. Matthias' banana boat really had to suffer: three people, four tanks, but fortunately just one camping chair! Matthias provided some unintentional amusement when trying to eat a "hard"-boiled egg whilst driving — did he ever get the stain out of his trousers? After some minor problems (one hour traffic jam in Newcastle, Matthias falling asleep right at the second where he had to navigate and later pointing out a wrong dirt road) we arrived around noon at Seal Rocks and jumped into the boats for the first dive.

Blue sky, calm water, so we went to Big Seal to visit the sharks. Phil, who obviously knows every fish in this area by its first name, led us to a cave with two grey nurses, that were not very impressed by us and we could watch them from a very close distance. Later on we also saw a couple of Wobbegongs, an octopus and other really beautiful fishes. The visibility was really good in the first 12 meters, but deeper the water became cloudy and quite cold.

At the second dive trip, the sea was already a bit rougher. Fiona and I got lost under water and couldn't swim back to the boat. We decided to swim to the rocks instead. After I had lost my weight belt on the Big Seal in the current, Fiona placed hers in a "very safe" spot on the rocks. Poor Marcus had to fetch it later... It took quite a while until we got noticed from the people in the boat, so as a safety feature, all the Club BCs now have a whistle. Unfortunately, a certain diver was rather unclear on whether it was designed for underwater or surface use (having not attended a PADI whistle-handling course).

After a thunderstorm at night (where we could test, whether the tent was leaking or not — ours was), the sea was even rougher the next morning. The first dive had to be cancelled, because the current was too strong. Later we did a drift-dive starting from the Sawtooth Rocks. But instead of drifting along the rocks, Jerry caught a current that led us across the bay, so we saw a lot of sand and small rays and sand and small rays. The water got colder and deeper by the minute. Still the dive was really exciting in the bad visibility: you never knew if there would be coming something different from sand and rays...



Also the next dives had pretty strong current, but at least we could anchor. And we saw more sharks (grey nurses, Wobbegongs, cat sharks, Port Jacksons), a lot of fishes and even a turtle. We also played with some dolphins from the boat, but as usual they disappeared as soon as Matthias jumped into the water. An interesting scene occurred when Victor appeared at the boat, fully (well almost) geared-up and ready to dive. He only lacked a tank as, apparently, the air fairy had not come during the night to leave a fill under his pillow.

The night-dive we had to change into a night snorkel when we realised how strong the current was, even close to the beach. But still we saw magnificent luminescence and many huge stingrays, which even attacked our torches. Scary!

On Monday a thunderstorm started right above us, when we were anchoring at Big Seal again. The rain on the way out was so strong it was like having your face sandblasted. Everyone who could, put their mask on for the journey out to provide some relief. Luckily Goetz and I could descend as fast as possible whereas the people unlucky enough to be left doing the first shift of boat-watching were sensible enough to lower the aerials, and keep a (very) low profile. The effect was positively Wagnerian. This time the water seemed to be much warmer, the visibility was great and we saw 6 grey nurses in the cave. Perfect diving conditions (as long as you stay under water)!

Unfortunately we could do just one dive that day, because nobody was there to tow the Daffodil back in the afternoon. So we enjoyed the 2.8 kilo Mud Crab together with some swimmer crabs and Wallace Lake Flatheads, that Jerry had won in the Pacific Palms Community Centre the night before in a raffle. The woman at the desk had assured him that his was the winning ticket, and so it proved! At late afternoon

everybody headed off again and sooner or later (!) we all reached Canberra again.

It was a weekend of weight belts (two lost, one found and Victor's changed magically from blue M to green XL) and police stops (after having a very random breath testing before the night dive, Matthias' car got stopped on the way home again and also Jerry had to blow). But I must admit that Steve behaved very nicely this time: he didn't disappear and also did not vomit into the boat!

Thanks to Cathy, Marcus and Phil for this great weekend.

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## Jervis Bay

*Karine Tremblay*

Everything started with a mail from Jason asking me for a trip report about Queens birthday long week-end in Jervis Bay... Wow, writing something about JB? "There's so much to say and I know so few enthusiastic words in English," was my first thought... and "where to start from?"

Well, the first nice thing about JB is that it was 3 days away from BFC (Bloody Freezing Canberra). It was indeed rather nice to leave a cold and foggy morning to get into blue sky, sea and sun around lunchtime... this feeling in itself would had been a sufficient incentive to get there...

Second, Jervis Bay and its surroundings are just perfect to watch and approach wildlife... It started with Marcus on the way to JB, stopping in Fitzroy Falls where we saw 2 lyrebirds, so unshy that you

could almost pet them... Then, on arrival at the campsite, I noticed funny crested birds, with funny noises... Jann then told me that their name was “nasty kookaburras,” and that their noise was just a laugh. I also learnt that they were laughing at their last trick: stealing \$6 worth of meat from Jerry's sandwich. I have to confess that at that point, I found the story very funny, but changed my mind afterwards when it came to my own lunchtime and I started looking up in the trees with paranoia... There were also plenty of friendly skippies in JB campsite. That was, once again, very funny to see one of them try to steal food from Dan... but once again much less funny when the kangaroo turned to the other side of the table and came to me.

Then Dan probably had the best fighting show ever in the “woman against kangaroo” category. Skippy indeed decided to have some pita bread for lunch. But as I knew that bread was bad for kangaroos, but essential for human sandwiches, I didn't want to let him get it. I thus grabbed my pita-bag from one side, Skippy pulling from the other with his claws until the bag tore and the pitas flew over in the sand... Skippy thus had a nice pita lunch and me a much-less-nice sand sandwich... I also improved my knowledge of kookaburras later in the weekend, learning more about their hunting methods when one of them charged Jeremy to grab a toast just inches from his mouth... I also studied their means of displacement (they seem to fly faster than Jeremies run...) and their diet (besides Jerry's meat, they also eat jam toasts... but I still have to work out with Jeremy about the flavour). Unfortunately I didn't manage to find out whether they like eggs and bacon, as Kristina didn't agree to have her breakfast participate in the experiment... But for a non-scientist, that was still a pretty interesting experience!

But the main purpose of the trip was diving... And diving was just FANTASTIC! First, contrary to my (worried) expectations, the water wasn't cold at all, and was pretty clear... That was a good start. Most of you probably already know what JB looks like underwater, so I won't repeat again and again that there are plenty of boulders, arches and caves to explore. As an overseas diver, I also discovered sea tulips and corals... and that good JB diving spots can be almost as busy as a shopping mall at Xmas time...

But my best souvenir definitely remains the last dive, my best ever!!! OK, I know my diving life is still recent, but it was still the best out of 20 — so in the top 5% for an average diver... We went to Pyramid Rock, and saw a seal on the way (doesn't it look like a good start?). Then we jumped in, and within 30 minutes, saw 2 cuttlefish (including 1 baby), 1 dogfish, and thousands of tropical-like fish shoals (sorry, I don't know the names). After such an amazing dive, we got back on the boat and saw... 2 whales, right inside the bay! Waited for Jerry, Jeremy

and Matthias (how long can safety stops seem in some situations...) so we could go and see them closer... We managed to get about 200 meters from them, and it looked as if they were performing a show just for us, playing, being upside-down with the tail-fin and belly slowly going out of water (there's probably a scientific word for this, which of course I ignore...)... They were so beautiful and graceful... I was just ready to jump and snorkel with them (fins on, snorkel and mask in the hands), hoping they would decide to come closer to the boat... but they unfortunately decided otherwise. We had to get back to the jetty where we could enjoy the beginning of sunset before getting back to BFC...

It really sounds like a dream, but no, that's the kind of surprises you can get in Jervis Bay! My only regret is that the Queen doesn't have more birthdays in a year...

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## Lady Musgrave Island

*Danielle Skropeta*

If I squinted my eyes hard enough I could just make out the curves of some distant creature approaching. It glided through the hazy water in my direction and soon I could see the beautiful wings arching up and down through the water. My own arms began to gently flap in synchrony. Was I audience to an aquatic ballet? Another Manta appeared close on the tail of the first, and then another and another. My buddy and I glued ourselves to a bombie while four of these majestic animals circled and played.

Well if I have to tell you about our Lady Musgrave Island trip you will just have to go and climb the nearest tower at sunset and absorb the kaleidoscope of colours encircling you. Or perhaps you could sit on the beach reading this story while three humpback whales frolic in the glistening sea on a sunny day. Drinking a gin 'n tonic (with a dash of lime) on the beach and watching the birds returning to their nests from a days hunting at sea, is always another option...

OK, so it's also true that once you have done all of the above you could also lose your two boats and become party to a little tension caused by such an event. That a storm may break out the second everyone had set up their tents and were then about to unpack the fortnight's food supplies. You could decide to go natural on the boat ride to Lady M – no, not in the nuddy, just without sea-sickness tablets – and then spend the returning trip heavily doped with drugs and praising the lord that sea sickness tablets were invented...

But, when the day is done and you sit here on a computer in Canberra thinking of your trip there are

too many good stories to ever put to paper. The diving was fantastic, the evening meals sensational, the weather glorious (apart from the first couple of wet days), and the company a wonderful mixture. I'll close how I began, with one of my favourite diving memories from Musgrave...

A group of us tried to get a lift out to Manta Bombie on the Rangers rubber dingy, unfortunately half way there the boat filled with water and we rolled off into the sea, intending to snorkel the rest of the way. Steve and Tristan went "under" and Siggi and I snorkelled a bit further – against the current. Siggi was escaping me and I finned along breathlessly behind him wondering what was the hurry. Then I saw why: 10 to 20m in front of us was a pack of about 10 dolphins playing in the water. The more we finned towards them, they more they seemed to effortlessly somersault in the opposite direction. Then we had the feeling something was below us and looking down we saw 4 dolphins chasing a white tip reef shark.

Whenever work gets too tough here or I am feeling a bit down I just remember swimming with the Manta's or the dolphins chasing the shark. Sorry if it sounds a bit like "The Sound of Music" ... and "These are a few of my favourite things" ...but it was just magical.

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## Lady Musgrave Island II

*Tex (Jerry Heinz)*

After a 24-hour flight from Houston, Texas, a 2-day drive from Canberra, and an overnight boat ride to the Island, I was ready for a little relaxation. I was told what it would be like, but I did not think it could be as good as they said. I mean it **is** a deserted island in the middle of nowhere, I was expecting the worst, but got the best.

If someone were to ask me what I remember about the trip, I would have to say the food (three course dinners every night), the relaxation, the pure beauty of the Island, the people, and oh yah, I almost forgot: the SCUBA diving. It was the best diving I have ever done. Granted, before arriving on the island I only had 10 dives, it was still extremely beautiful.

Upon arriving we had to set up camp, I did not think it would be possible to fit everything we brought into the kitchen tent, but after about 2 to 3 hours everything was in its place, and Jan seemed to be the only person to know exactly where that was. Luckily, just after everyone set up their personal tents, it started raining. It poured down rain all that night, and most of the next day, I did not think it would stop, but it did.

The next day I woke up ready to dive – I was so excited, I had been waiting months for this trip, and nothing was going to stop me from diving – well almost nothing. Our first little problem was discovered by mid-morning on our second day on the island: the boats were gone!! We searched for them, using another Club's boat and the UHF radio, but after the first day it seemed hopeless.

Amazingly the next day it was reported that both boats were found and on their way to the Island. Only one boat made it back, the other drifted 50 kilometres inland to a farm. The farmers weren't the most intelligent people in Australia. After the boat crisis I knew we could get through anything.

Luckily we weren't tested with any other major problems. The rest of the trip was simply spectacular!!! It just can't be explained on paper. The dolphins, manta rays, whales, sea turtles, nudibranchs, the beautiful fish, and the coral all made the trip something that I will never forget.

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## Christmas Party

Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup> 1997

We are giving early notice for the Christmas Party so that you can put it in your diaries now. The venue is yet to be decided, but last year's jaunt down to the Cotter proved quite popular.

Further details will be announced closer to the date.

Kristina Sands

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6249x2222 (W)

Email: Kristina.Sands@anu.edu.au

# The Diving Calender

If you want to go on a dive please get in touch with the trip organiser around one week beforehand.

## Montague Island Seal Dive

**September 27 – 28<sup>th</sup>**

It's seal time again! This is our traditional post-winter dive and we're off to visit the hundreds of seals that come to play on Montague Island.

Accommodation will be at Mystery Bay "primitive" campsite

Jason Haines

Phone: 6282-5049 (H)

6279x8175 (W)

Email: Jason.Haines@anu.edu.au

## Ulladulla and Brush Island

**October 11 – 12<sup>th</sup>**

This weekend should give us a great opportunity to visit the Brush Island pinnacles and see how our gnome colony is progressing!

Matthias Regner

Phone: 6247-0975 (H)

6249x3084 (W)

Email: Matthias.Regner@anu.edu.au

## Port Hacking

**October 25 – 26<sup>th</sup>**

At this time of the year, the waters are warmer in the north. Port Hacking is a national park on the southern edge of Sydney, and so should be just about perfect right now.

Christiane Funk

Phone: 6249-8723 (H)

6249x5892 (W)

Email: funk@rsbs-central.anu.edu.au

## Annual General Meeting

**The Student Union Bridge**

**7pm Thursday November 13<sup>th</sup>**

Yes, it's time for our annual general meeting. After hearing reports from the outgoing committee it will be time to elect a new committee for 1998.

Jason Haines

Phone: 6282-5049 (H)

6279x8175 (W)

Email: Jason.Haines@anu.edu.au

## Working Bee — Club Gear Shed

**10am Saturday November 15<sup>th</sup>**

This will be a good time of year to get the Club boats and gear ready for the busy dive period coming up. There are always plenty of things to do and things to learn, so come along and lend a hand.

Bill Keating

Phone: 6282-0780 (H)

6244-7296 (W)

Email: billkeating@netinfo.com.au

## Beldiver's Treasure Hunt

**Bawley Point and Ulladulla**

**Saturday November 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Every year our sister Club, the Beldiver's hold a Treasure Hunt weekend at Bawley Point. This is a great event and a great chance to meet some other Canberra divers.

The Treasure Hunt involves snuffling around Bawley Point to collect disks that are later used as raffle tickets during the afternoon barbecue. In addition to winning lots of great prizes, the Club usually does well in the Great Inflatable Boat Race.

Jann Ollerenshaw

Phone: 6254-7502 (H)

6274-7847 (W)

Email: JOlleren@email.dot.gov.au

## Jervis Bay

**December 13 – 14<sup>th</sup>**

Jervis Bay is a great pre-Christmas dive. We will be camping at Bristol Point, which will give us great access to some of the dive sites on the south side of the bay.

Jason Haines

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Email: Jason.Haines@anu.edu.au

# 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 in the green double garage on North Oval, 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/Student card and may be checked against the list of current members. You can not borrow a 2nd set for a non-member,
- 2) Gear is available free of charge on Club dives - subject to a \$10 deposit, refundable when the equipment is returned **the next week**, complete and not abused, 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) Equipment may be borrowed and returned around 5:30 p.m. 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. **If you don't ring a gear officer, or a Club official if you can't contact one, to arrange return of your gear you must expect to lose your deposit.**
- 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.**
- 7) 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.**
- 8) **NEVER EVER leave tanks or hoses or vests in your car in the hot sun.**
- 9) **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 by the borrower.**

Gear Maintenance Officer Marcus Schortemeyer

Phone: 6282-3679 (H) Email: marcus@rsbs.anu.edu.au  
6249x2406 (W)

## Gear Issue and Return

(Thursdays only unless you arrange otherwise)

\*\*\* Remember, people will only attend if you contact them beforehand \*\*\*

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25/09/1997 02/10/1997 20/11/1997 27/11/1997 04/12/1997	09/10/1997 16/10/1997 11/12/1997 18/12/1997	23/10/1997 30/10/1997	06/11/1997 13/11/1997

In an emergency (only) call President Bill 6282-0780 (H) 6244-7296 (W)