

Sunshine Coast Scuba Dive Club

Newsletter Feb 08
Issue 4

Club trips: Vanuatu

Snorkeling: Noosa

Diving: Red Sea/Truk

Environmental issues:
What can we do?

And more stuff...

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Editors note:

Well once again its newsletter time, firstly I would like to thank all those members that have contributed to making this issue happen.

It's not exactly been diving weather lately (as if you hadn't noticed), and every one itching to get back in the water, but until we can, lets see what's been happening!

In this issue we have the club trip to Vanuatu, tales from two lucky members who managed to get wet in Truk (Chuuk) and the Red sea.

We also have articles on the environment that will open your eyes and make you think.

Some members got wet on the inside at the Xmas party hosted by Darryl and Regan
Other members also undertook courses for the reef check program.

Anyway, hope you enjoy the mag and see you in the water soon, maybe!!

Pete Baker



Jo, Brad and Pete at the 'Coolidge'

Front Cover: Emperors Garden, Hideaway Island Resort, Port Vila.

Photo taken by Chas Simpson

Snorkeling Noosa

Keen to get in the water in between club dives, I've been checking out snorkeling & possible shore scuba diving sites... Flat Rock is OK every now & then, but I'm sure all of you have been there / done that, so here's a report on a couple more sites:



Lion Rock

Location: eastern tip of rock platform, south end Alexandria Bay (Noosa Headland).

Conditions: sea must be fairly flat. Check surf cam for Sunshine Beach

<http://www.coastalwatch.com/contents/default2.aspx>
also <http://www.seabreeze.com.au/graphs/qld1.asp>

Getting there: park in parking area, Seaview Terrace, Sunshine Beach. Walk north along dunes to National Parks sign (observe map), then up the cliff steps (phew!), follow the track along the cliff edge, then veer east (e.g. at the 'no entry' sign) before you get to A. Bay. There is a nice water entry from a ledge to the west of the rock.

Report on the day (mid-July): 10 metre viz, depth about 5-8 metres, huge schools of bream; also large trevally, luderick, drummer, surgeon fish, pomfrets, spotted eagle ray, turtle, giant puffer fish, dolphins, ? tailor, giant sweetlip & many others. Swim around the point to the south and check out Devils Kitchen (watch for surge).

Rating: awesome fish action, so let's say 7/10. Requires some experience. Would be great scuba dive, if only someone else carried the tank (and the bloody camera).

Picnic Cove

Location: east end of Granite Bay (Noosa Headland).

Conditions: same as for Flat Rock. Some southerly swell is OK. Check surf cam for Noosa. If no surf on the points, conditions are probably OK. If there is surf, you won't get a park anyway....

Getting there: park at National Parks. Follow the walking track past Boiling Pot, Tea Tree etc. to Picnic Cove, which is the small rocky bay at the east end of Granite Bay.

Report on the day (mid-July): 8-10 metre viz, depth 0-6 metres. Reef off Picnic Cove is barren (a few bream). Better to swim east & then south around the

corner of the headland. Nice gutters with some soft corals, tunicate beds and Octopus. Watch the barnacles feeding if there is surge. Good fish action (bream & drummer) under the white water on the corner. Collect sinkers if you like fishing (or melt them for weights)...

Rating: fun if it's clear, otherwise don't bother, so 3/10. Not worth scuba



Andrew Green

Plastic Soup / Whaling

It has been described as the world's largest rubbish dump, or the Pacific plastic soup, and it is starting to alarm scientists.

It is a vast area of floating plastic debris and other flotsam drifting in the northern Pacific Ocean, held there by swirling ocean currents. Discovered in 1997 by American sailor Charles Moore, what is also called the great Pacific garbage patch is now alarming some with its ever-growing size and possible impact on human health.

The "patch" is in fact two huge, linked areas of circulating rubbish. "The original idea that people had was that it was an island of plastic garbage that you could almost walk on. It is not quite like that. It is almost like a plastic soup," Dr Eriksen says. "It is endless for an area that is maybe twice the size as continental United States," he says.

Moore, an oceanographer who has made the study of the patch his full-time occupation, believes there is about 100 million tonnes of plastic circulating in the northern Pacific - or about 2.5 per cent of all plastic items made since 1950. About 20 per cent of the junk is thought to come from marine craft, while the rest originates from countries around the Pacific, like, Mexico, China and Australia plays its part too, he says.

Moore says he discovered the floating mass of rubbish by chance, after steering his catamaran into the gyre while returning home from a yacht race. Because the plastic is translucent and lies just beneath the surface, it is apparently undetectable by satellite photos. "It is not like going to a parking lot after a rugby match. It is not like a landfill," he says.

If the waste is to be controlled people must stop using unnecessary disposable plastics, otherwise it is set to double in size during the next 10 years, Moore warns.

Full Story: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23156017-23109,00.html>

Japanese "Scientific Research!"

Japan's decision to include **50 humpback whales** among the 1,000 whales they plan to slaughter in the **Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary**, brought forth a stream of protest from across the world. Rightly so!!

What can we do to help?

There is a growing movement, especially in the UK, to boycott Japanese goods. It is hoped that if enough people choose to buy goods produced in other countries, Japan would realize it's not just 'Whale Watching' nations that condemn the unnecessary slaughter, but just about the entire planet! Have a think about it!

Some interesting websites:

www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/forms/comment.html

www.greenpeace.org

www.seashepherd.org

Vanuatu 07

As they say, a picture speaks a thousand words, so all I am going to say; It was Brilliant!! and thanks to Simon Doughty for arranging the trip and looking after us. Before the photo extravaganza, a little quiz, place the person in the photo to the quote...

'Why is my computer beeping...' on boarding the dive boat.

'It's only a pile of rusty old metal....' Speaking about the 'SS President Coolidge'

'When are we going to the Kava bar....' Everyday!

'Did you see the name, F@#! F@#! F@#!' wanted a photo of the Coolidge name at the stern. Everyone else saw it!!

'Tusker Time!!' Spoke after the last dive of the day

'don't encourage him....' Talking about her partner

'Where's my Banana?' With pancakes for breakfast

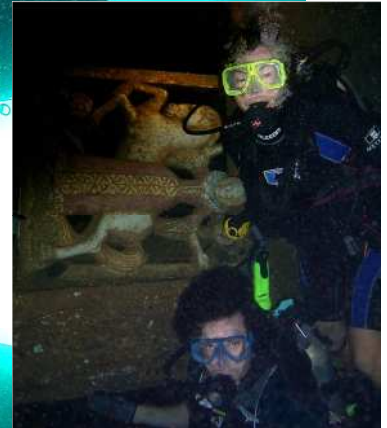
Nuke em!! - putting the world to right! **(Allan Power)**



Simon, Chas, Regan, Pete
Brad, Jo, Darryl



Vanuatu 07



Blue Water Dive

The last 6 Months at BLUE WATER DIVE has seen a few changes including a change of ownership. Rob and Mick are still permanent fixtures however the company has been taken over by David and Tracey Walsh from sunny Sheffield in the UK. They have brought with them a fantastic enthusiasm for diving and its exciting times ahead.

All diving activities are now going out from Mooloolaba with lots of exciting dive trips over the last few months and more planned for the future....

The last couple of months have seen us make regular exploration dives out to the reefs up and down the coast checking out new potential dive sites for all level of divers as well as some more advanced expeditions for the extreme lot (we recently embarked on a trip in search for a mysterious Wreck sitting in approx 45m 10miles off shore loaded with technical & recreational divers....Unfortunately our mission was unsuccessfully however undeterred there are more such like trips in the pipeline).

We also have a Big Cat Reality Trip booked and nearly filled running March 7th - 9th and another overseas trip to the Solomon Islands later in the year once Mick has returned from his famile checking it out for us....lucky git!!!!

At the Dive Centre we now have a full range of Scuba Pro equipment and diving bits and pieces as well as quality second hand equipment for sale...All Dive Club members are still entitled to 10% off all equipment and dive charters as well as cheaper air fills on production of membership card. Special rates can also be arranged for group dive courses. Check out our new website at <http://www.bluewaterdive.com.au/index.htm>

Hope you all enjoy your next dive adventure and hope to see you sometime soon.....

Blue Water Dive Crew



PADI
5 STAR

Dive EX-HMAS BRISBANE

We are the closest dive centre to Ex-HMAS Brisbane

MOOLOOLABA

5 STAR - Waterfront Dive Centre
Dive boat straight outside
with tanks & weights onboard
Have a fun time, not a hard time!

Phone
07 5478 3483

www.bluewaterdive.com.au
Email: divecrew@bluewaterdive.com.au

The banner features a background image of a coastal town at night with a white arrow pointing to the waterfront. On the right, there is a cartoon illustration of a blonde woman wearing a pink diving mask and a pink bikini, smiling. The text is arranged in a clear, readable layout with various colors and fonts.

Members Update

Boat Grant

After all the effort and hard work put in by the guys, the submission to the EnviroFund for a grant to secure a club dive boat was refused.

But now, looking on the positive side, all the forms, letters and information have been assembled, and we will be in a good position to go for it next time!

Huge thanks to Darryl and Regan

Darryl and Regan hosted the club Xmas party this year, and as a bonus, it was Darryl's 40th birthday party too.

It was a great night, in fact it started Saturday afternoon and didn't finish till Sunday morning.

We pitched our various tents, camper trailers in their garden, and tucked into a great lunch, later, time to get into party mode, drinks and nibbles around a huge rustic table that Darryl had made, it could seat hundreds.

Later in the evening, two BBQ's were fired up and loaded with heaps of steaks, snags, chicken etc, accompanied by an amazing spread provided by Darryl and Regan, what a feast.

Some of their family/friends set up mikes and speakers for the live music, and it got better and better, as the night wore on some brave souls even got up and had a go themselves.

In the morning it must be said, a few people were feeling rather fragile, but after a quick clear up, a dip in the pool, and being treated to a breakfast BBQ, cooked by Darryl, normality was restored before we left for home.



Thank you both so much for the time and effort that went into making it such a memorable night.

Courses Taken for Reef Check Program

Congratulations to members who took courses late last year and a few did all of them!

These included, Jo, Smudge, Jonno, Ryan, David

- 🚑 First Aid / Advanced Resuscitation
- 🚑 Advanced Diver / Rescue Diver

The courses will also enable those club members to assist with the Sunshine Coast University's, Reef Check Program, when it starts, hopefully this year.



Emergency Oxygen

Thanks to must go to Chas, who has assembled an O2 resuscitation kit.

This is a great asset for the club, and will be taken on club dives.

We have several members who are qualified to use the equipment should the need arise.

Red Sea Diving

After four, freezing, wet, windy weeks in the UK, Jill found out I could fly to the Red Sea, have a week diving and fly from Cairo to Brisbane.

I booked a six day 12 dive package, bed and breakfast, at Oonas Divers in Sharm el Sheikh.

Having never been to Egypt or Sinai I had no idea what to expect and was very pleasantly surprised by the standard of accom, basically a divers hotel with a dive school underneath. This was amazing, big double bedroom, fridge A/C, TV, en-suite, balcony overlooking Sharm el Sheikh and Na'ama bay, roof top bar and great restaurant at Ground level, next to the dive centre, and to make life sweeter everyone there was either English, Australian or spoke good English.



Having arrived at 5pm, Corrie (asst manager of dive centre) filled in the PADI paperwork (much slacker than Oz, no medicals just an 'it's not your fault sheet' I had to sign). Then off to the dive store.

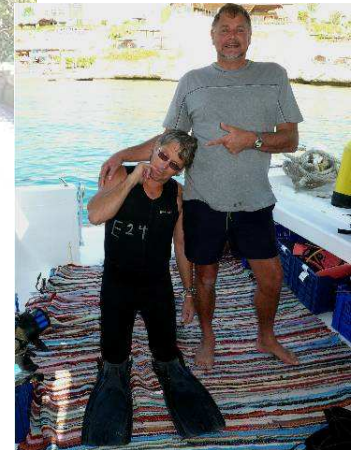
Due to the fact it was nearly mid winter everyone was kitted with 5mm long john and jacket which I thought was excessive as the water temp was a consistent 23 degrees. But they had no one piece so I was lumped with it, next I was asked how many weights I wanted, this was when I first heard about the 'Red Sea Effect'

Normally I wear 8kg, so I thought I'd try that first against local advice!

However Corrie decided to take a couple of extra weights with her, during the safety stop I took them both!! For the rest of the trip I used 11kg.

While on the subject of kit, in the Red Sea, no one is allowed a dive knife, not even DM's or instructors, also no one has safety sausages! Some DM's carried one, but not all. So if you ever plan to dive Red Sea take your own safety sausage, CD's and a good whistle.

After a great breakfast the bus picked up the divers for the drive to 'Travco harbour' where we would meet 'Oonas 5', our dive boat for the week.



The harbour was another experience, as soon as you got off the bus you had to queue to go through security, which included basic checks, head counts and everyone has to pass through an x-ray machine. Yep just like the airport ones!

Once through security the staff loaded all the tanks and gear, you just take your dive bag and cameras. Well the next 6 days were great, the boat and crew were brilliant locals, friendly helpful and observant and willing to help out in any way they could.

Nofel (pronounced Noofell) the skipper inspired great confidence, always quiet, friendly and his boat skills left nothing to be desired since he'd been doing boat 'stuff' since he was 8.

Food on board was cooked fresh everyday, it was an amazing feast considering it was all done on one gas ring!

Red Sea Diving

The boat itself is about 18mtrs long and with only 4 - 14 people on board daily there was always heaps of room, there were 2 dives done each day before returning to Travco. All dives were reef/wreck dives. Nearly all reefs in Ras Muhammad National Park, and the straits of Tiran are very shallow on top, but the walls dropped to hundreds of metres within 5 - 50 mts of the reef edge, our worst visibility for the week was 25mtrs, the best was 40+.

Water temp for the entire week was 23 degrees, a max depth of about 35mtrs. In many ways it reminded me of Hideaway Island with similar walls and fish life, in fact the only fish I saw that I hadn't seen elsewhere was a unicorn fish, each Bommie or wall was surrounded by a cloud of Orange Anthias (small fish), many Napoleon wrasse, Octopus, butterfly's and beautiful corals. As it was winter there was none of the 'big stuff' i.e. sharks, mantas, or whale sharks, in 12 dives only one turtle was spotted and he was out 'in the blue', as with Vanuatu there were patches of brilliant live coral and also patches that just resembled rubble, but even these patches were teeming with small life.

The entrance to the Canyon at Marsa Bareika was the only place I have seen so many lion fish congregated together all day every day 30 - 40 at a time.

The drift dives were pretty amazing as once the current picked up there was no stopping unless you found a bommie or ledge to tuck in behind, you were truly 'flying' and as always eagle eye Nofell had the boat to hand when you surfaced.

Weather for the week was close to perfect most days.

I was sorry when my 12th dive was over, all up, a superb first trip to the Red Sea and I had only seen a tiny part of it.

Would I go back to the Red Sea? Not from Oz as it's a fair trip and is very similar diving we can get within a couple of hours flying from Bris, however if back in the UK I would certainly do it all again.

Thanks Jill!!



Chas Simpson



SCUBA WORLD offer a range of benefits to club members

'Let your club members know that our retail manager (Brett) will do anything he can to get the best deal for them'. Phone 07 5444 8595.

www.scubaworld.com.au

Ian McKinnon (Managing Director - SCUBA WORLD)

More Stuff

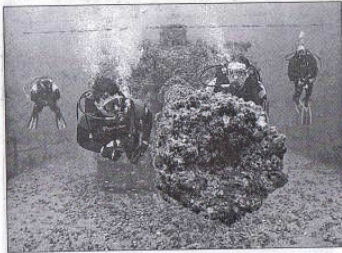
Quiz Nights

Hi everyone! There is a regular quiz night at Irish Murphy's Noosa, every Monday. We are trying to get a team together to participate, **FABULOUS PRIZES TO BE WON!!!!**

We will be there on the weeks opposite the dive club meetings.

Come along and show off your brain power, or for a chat and a few drinks, the more the merrier.

Brad Baker



DAMAGED . . . scuba divers at the wreck of the HMAS Brisbane which rests on the seabed off Mooloolaba.

couriermail.com.au

Huge seas cause dive site headache

James O'Loan

NEARLY two weeks of monster seas have left the popular dive site of the ex-HMAS Brisbane in need of immediate repair.

The former guided missile destroyer, just north of Mooloolaba, was battered by waves up to 8m generated by the intense low-pressure system which struck southern Queensland and northern NSW coasts.

Hand-wash basins bolted to walls, steel hand rails fastened to

bollards, aluminium bars screwed on to ceilings, soft corals and barnacles were all stripped from the wreck by constant pounding. Local divers said troughs in the monster swells probably allowed a series of direct hits on the ship's upper structures that normally rest 5m below the surface.

"It looks like someone's taken to (the exterior) with a razor," Sunreef Scuba Diving's co-owner Paul White said. "I'm sure we're going to find more minor damage as we keep diving."

Divers contracted to the Environmental Protection Agency would assess and repair parts of the site as soon as the weather permitted, an agency spokeswoman said.

The force and consistency of swells in the area also managed to push an 8.5 tonne navigational marker at the Gneerings, off Mooloolaba, about 100km north to Double Island Point.

Gold Coast beaches were inundated over the weekend with tens of thousands of tonnes of debris

from flooded rivers, while erosion — some of it permanent — ate into Sunshine Coast sand dunes.

No major damage was inflicted on central Queensland's coastline, including the Whitsundays.

A Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority spokeswoman said there had been no reports so far of damage to the reef from the low-pressure system. Impacts on the outer reef and the effect of run-off from flooded rivers on water quality in central Queensland may not be known for some time.

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Mark Woods

The dirty side of the Red Sea



Further to the 'plastic soup' article (page 3) : All my diving in the Red Sea was done from Sharm el Sheikh/Ras Muhammad, a large area including Na'ama bay, this entire area is kept extremely clean, neat and tidy due to the fact it relies almost entirely on tourism.



On one of my days off from diving, Jill, Luke and myself decided to take a one hour bus ride up the east coast of the Sinai peninsular to the well known diving mecca of Dahab, **WHAT A DIFFERENCE!!!**, despite being a lovely laid back town, it was filthy with litter, (see photos) outside the dozen or so dive schools/outlets there are numerous signs declaring their reefs as 'precious' so be careful not to damage the reefs!!

Divers have also been commenting on the decline in turtle sightings, **DUUUURRR!!!** I wonder why!! Since turtles regularly die of starvation due to swallowing plastic bags they have mistaken for jellyfish, their main food source.

Further to this I will let the dive outlets know I will never recommend anyone dives from there till their act is cleaned up.

Chas Simpson

Diving Truk Lagoon

TRUK LAGOON (MICRONESIA) - A WRECK DIVERS PARADISE

Being a wreck diver fanatic I have been planning a trip to Truk (Chuuk for the politically correct) for twenty years and was not disappointed. If you love wreck diving, **warm water**, clear visibility, little current, easy access, short boat trips, tropical paradise and a cultural experience then, Truk has it all.

Located about 5 hours by air from Cairns, north of PNG and to the west of Hawaii Island, Truk has a year round temperature of about 27°C and water temperature between 28-30°C.



Doug in the pilot's seat

After the Pearl Harbour attack the Americans were "not happy Jan" and decided it was pay-back time. On 17-18 Feb 1994 the US Navy launched a devastating air attack called "Operational Hailstorm" on the Japanese Imperial Fleet located at Truk.

The Japanese losses included two light cruisers, four destroyers, three sub-chasers, one motor torpedo boat, one armed merchant cruiser and 31 miscellaneous auxiliaries. Also, 250 Japanese planes were damaged or destroyed. More than 60 ships were sunk in the Lagoon by the end of the campaign. It was the largest naval loss in history with 220,000 tons of shipping sunk.



It was bloody nice of the Yanks to provide divers with a wreck diving paradise. But wait, there is more, the fish life is excellent with lots of soft and hard corals etc; it is not just wrecks. *(Ed: See Joll!)*

The pictures say it all; I will be doing a "show & tell" at the club meeting on 19 Feb 08, not to be missed.



Doug Alford



Vice Presidents Update

The last six months has been disappointing for local diving because of poor weather. The weather has been particularly bad this wet season and my heart goes out to the local diving operators, and naturally the local divers. I was speaking to Ian from SCUBA World and all shops have had a shocker this year. Please support our local operators.

The club continues to grow with membership steadily rising and the activities of the club becoming more diverse and interesting.

Some highlights since the last newsletter include:

- The club trip to Vanuatu with diving at Port Villa and also the awesome President Coolidge. Our first overseas dive trip - see the article in this newsletter.
- The partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) is steadily progressing. A number of members have completed the required training - congratulations to those dedicated divers.
- The club is starting to become heavily involved in environmental issues and I believe we all have a role to play in protecting our unique environment. In my home office I have a quote from Jacques Cousteau (1910-97), one of the world's greatest undersea explorers - quote "Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans"
- The Christmas party was hosted by Darryl and Regan and from what I hear it was a blast. A big thank you to Darryl and Regan.

Another overseas trip is being planned and details will be made available ASAP to allow interested people to plan and save.

Lastly, the annual general meeting (AGM) is to be held on 18 Mar 08 at the Sunshine Beach SLSC starting at 7pm. Please show your support for the club and make an extra special effort to attend.

Remember, active members are the heart and soul of any club - become involved.

Safe diving.

Doug Alford
Vice President

Sunshine Coast Scuba Diving Club QLD Incorporated

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.geocities.com/luvin2dive

Phone: Doug 07 54506452
Chas 0416 058605

Meetings: 1st & 3rd Tuesday
Sunshine Beach SLSC

