

DOWN UNDER

A complete rap up of all
the action from
2006/2007

Want to learn to Scuba Dive! Find out
what it is all about.

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Presidents Report.

The 2006/2007 Summer has, as always, been a busy one for the club with members getting in the water at every opportunity.

There have been a couple trips to the Yorke Peninsula at Christmas and again on Australia day with dozens of members getting amongst some of the best diving that South Australia has to offer. It is hard to pick highlights but Leafy Seadragons, numbfish, Port Jacksons, 4kg crayfish and harlequin fish all caught the attention of members.

The growing number of AUSC members with CDAA qualifications have continued to spend a great deal of time in the South East diving freshwater sites. The highlight for most was their first visit to Hells Hole during January – a site not often dived due to its challenging access requirements.

Locally the boats have continued to run at every opportunity be it on weekend or during the week when we have had sufficient interest. The improved capacity brought about by the acquisition of Stargazer in late 2005 has meant that there have been few times where we have had to leave members on the beach – excellent news for all!

A large number of members completed the DAN Oxygen Providers training held late in 2006 under the guidance of Divers Alert Network Asia Pacific Director, John Lippmann. The club flew John into Adelaide for the training to give our members access to the best possible information and training. While this was of benefit to members who attended the training its real benefit is to the wider club community

that now have a large base of DAN Oxygen Providers diving with the club.

Remember the club has 3 brand new DAN Oxygen Kits, with one located on each of the boats and a third available for use with other diving activities where there is an increased risk of DCI exists (remote shore diving, deep diving in the south east etc). The club provides these kits and the associated medical oxygen cylinders for the benefit and safety of all members.

One of the privileges of being President is that you get to meet and subsequently dive with many new members in the club, many just out of their Open Water Courses. While this sometimes brings with it some challenges, the 2006/2007 Summer has seen an increasing number of new Open Water Divers arrive at the club with vastly improved skills than those we have seen in the past. The only common thread linking all of those new divers that have proved to be well above the average we normally see is they have been trained through Southern Diving Centre. Well done guys!

See you in the water...

Dave

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Editorial.

Just a brief word as this is my last newsletter before the new committee is elected. I would like to thank all the members of the committee for such a great year, which has been a lot of fun for me as newsletter editor.

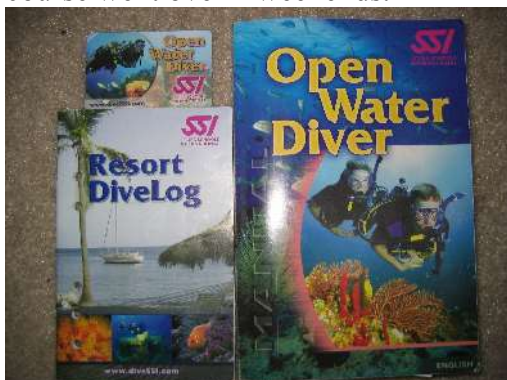
I would also like to give a big thanks for everyone that took time out of their busy schedules to write and review articles for me, even at short notice. I couldn't have done it without your willingness. Also to those that supplied photos it has been awesome to see what other members of the club have been lucky enough to observe.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading Down Under as much as I have enjoyed writing it and hope to see you all Down Under the big blue soon.

Gary Perkins
Newsletter Editor 2006/2007.

Learning how to scuba dive.

My scuba diving adventure started a couple of months ago after I decided to go to an open-water dive course at southern dive in Christies beach. The course went over 2 weekends.



On the 1st day of the course, I arrived to the dive shop very excited and looking forward to learning to dive.

First, I had to choose the basic equipment that is the mask, snorkel, fins and booties. Then, everyone met in the classroom to start the lessons. The instructor gave a little history of scuba diving and then went through the theory. We first learnt the different parts of the diving equipment and their role. He then explained the effects of increasing pressure on the body and how breathing compressed gas affects the body. He also described the causes, treatment and prevention of nitrogen narcosis and decompression sickness. This was very interesting and gave a good notion of what scuba diving is.

After those lessons, we took our first step under water. With the help of the instructor, we assembled the scuba unit: attaching the cylinder to the BC, the regulators, checking the pressure in the cylinder... Once the equipment was assembled, we slipped into a wetsuit, put on the weight belt, the BC, the fins and the mask. I was very excited but also very tense as I was wondering how it would be to breathe under water and mostly would I be able to do it! Nevertheless, I jumped in the pool which had a depth of approximately 2 m. Taking my first breath under water was different but an awesome feeling!!

Once everyone was comfortable under water, the instructor made us practise skills needed for scuba diving. He showed us how to clear our mask from water, remove the regulator from the mouth, purge it and put it back in the mouth. This is not hard to do, you just need to practise it few times. The second part of the course involved a dive to 10 m in the pool. I just couldn't wait to do it!! This was very important as I could practice equalizing my ears while descending. We then carried out the same skills as before at the bottom of the pool. It was very impressive to

look up and see the mass of water above my head!! To conclude the dive, we did a safety ascent using the second regulator from our buddy. I was very proud of myself once I got back to the top!!



The second weekend was the most interesting part of the course. We got to dive in the ocean for the first time, at the jetty of Noarlunga. The 1st dive involved an entry from the shore and swimming a few meters before diving to 5m depth. We then practise (once more!) the various skills while kneeling on the sand. I could not resist looking around at the same time and seeing few seashells and small fishes. Our second dive of the day involved jumping from the stairs of the jetty - a stride entry. Once under water, we swam between the poles of the jetty towards the reef. There, a multitude of fish was swimming around us: pilot fish, strong fish, magpie perch, leather jackets... It was amazing to be there and encountering the marine life! At the end of the dive, we went back up at the stairs of the jetty and then started the challenge of walking back to the carpark with all the equipment on our back. This was not much fun but nevertheless, I got to the car and had a well deserved rest!!



The following day was the last one of the course. The 1st dive was very similar to the previous day. But the second dive was for pure fun - no more teaching of techniques involved!! We just had to enjoy the dive and discover what the ocean had to offer. We jumped from the jetty and headed towards the reef. After 10 mins in the dive, the instructor spotted a port Jackson shark. My 1st encounter with one - a beginner's luck!! We also saw three rays, a few port Jackson eggs, a brittle star, two orange sea stars, a cuttlefish and two small crabs. The 50 minutes of this dive were amazing and by the end of it, I could not wait to jump back in the water and go diving again.



© Gary Perkins

Nancy Scoleri.

The First AUSC Scuba Symposium.

Last year saw the first Scuba Symposium held by the AUSC, which included talks by Ken Smith, an experienced cave diver and John Lippman, director of DAN Asia Pacific. Special thanks must go to the Elizabeth Perkins, David Fielder and Michael Lyas for all their help in

making the night go off without a hitch.

Ken Smith's talk covered his recent trip to Kija Blue, which is a sinkhole located in the Kimberly. His first trip to Kija was a three-day trip with some other cave divers where they discovered what seemed to be a bottomless sinkhole with crystal clear water. With their appetites wet and the sound of discovery ringing in their ears they planned a more extensive trip to try and discover just how far the sinkhole went.

This time they planned a 10-day trip to the site. To get all the gear required to the site took 6 helicopter loads, which included several rebreathers and all the food and gas required for such a remote place. To begin with they started with "shallow dives" down to 60m, which just opened up to more blackness below. This is where the trimix rebreathers came into their own allowing the divers to go much deeper.

The 10-day trip finished with the deepest dive being 111m and required several hours of decompression stops on their way to the surface. Even at this depth the sinkhole still kept some secrets with even more water still opening up below this depth. While some divers were in the water Ken managed to get a chance to look

around and even discovered some aboriginal art. Even after the 10 days spent at Kija Blue Ken says they are keen to go back to find out just how far the sinkhole goes.

John Lippman's talk covered dangerous marine creatures. His talk covered animals from the seemingly harmless to the more noted dangerous animals of the water. Not only did he mention some dangerous marine animals, his talk also covered some of the treatments for the injuries. Some of the animals that were talked about included snakes, jellyfish, blue ringed octopus, cone shells, spine fish and the well-known great white. John's talk proved to be very educational and the best advice provided was that if you don't know anything about something don't touch because you never know what you may have come across.

All in all a great night was had by all with such positive feedback, people can't wait for the next scuba symposium hosted by the AUSC.

Gary Perkins.

AUSC Goes to Hell(s)

When divers commence their training with the Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDA) the first course they do normally includes a tour of some of the more significant karst features around Mt Gambier. A highlight of the tour is a visit to the aptly named Hells Hole where students stand atop a platform suspended 35m above the water below and gaze down in awe of the sight before them. For most Cavern Sinkhole divers this is as close to diving Hells as they get....

To kick off 2007, the growing contingent of AUSC members with CDAA qualifications vowed to find out what was at the bottom of Hells Hole and planed a trip to the South East to visit this infrequently dived sinkhole. The group that finally made the trip consisted of no less than 11 AUSC members with qualifications ranging from newly obtained Cavern/Sinkhole certifications through to Cave and Penetration tickets.



After a few frustrating 'challenges' like finding exactly who in the South East had the key to the gate, the group headed out to Hells Hole, located in a small pocket of native forest within a much larger Pine Forest just off the Mt Gambier to Nelson Road.



The site was rigged with ropes, wire ladders, abseiling equipment, pulleys

and a mechanism for using a 4WD to recover gear from the water.



One by one the divers were lowered over the edge of the gantry, commencing a 35m free swinging abseil down the straight sided sinkhole and into the drink. Greeting the divers in the water was a rather aggressive snake, no doubt agitated by the unannounced neoprene clad visitors. Considering the alternative was a 35m wire ladder climb directly out of the sinkhole without diving, all present overcame any preexisting fear of snakes and kept swimming around to avoid a confrontation!



After a 40-50 minute dive in the sinkhole the hard part began, extracting the divers and all the gear out of the water and up to the surface 35m away. A considerable effort for just one dive.



As to what is at the bottom of Hells and the question of was it worth the effort that would be telling!



Thankyou to Andrea Gordon and Max Marriot for making their own personal vertical equipment available for the group to use – without it, most of the group would be still standing atop the platform pondering what was down there.

Dave Fielder.

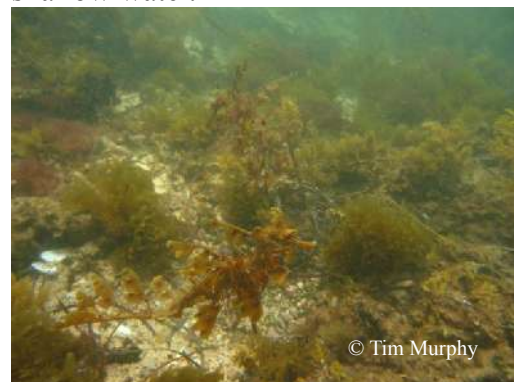
Australia Day.

Gum boots, ugg boots, lamb, leafies, BBQ, Coobowie, mint sauce, Coopers and a frequency of 105.5 are all synonymous with that one special day in January – Australia Day. On Thursday night a convoy of people and 2 superheroes headed down to the Coobowie Research Station, just like the 3 wise men in the baby jesus book, following a beautiful star in the sky – McNaught's comet. Trent and Superhero number 1, Scuba Joe – also known as The Mavis replacement were

first to arrive and got the fridges crankin' to cold ready for the ales, pales and lager.



On Australia Day a convoy of 4-wheel drives headed down to Kleins jetty, only to be met by the lady Acolade, loading her precious cargo. After testing brakes and 4 wheel-drive capability, we drove to the Wool Bay jetty. After a rather delightful conversation with some of the fisher-people, we went for a very rewarding splash. At the end of the jetty was one very large, slightly darker leafy and two leafy's together. This provided a good opportunity to take some snaps, which turned out okay considering the large amount of sediment in the shallow water.



On the way back there were huge schools of old wives (in the water, not on top of the jetty). It was then back to the Research Station for some lunch before a group headed to Edithburgh jetty.



Edithburgh remains one of the best jetties in the state – offering everything from large schools of fish, colourful sponges and soft corals, dumpling squid, normal squid, deck chairs, cuttlefish, nudibranchs and a leafy in the reef section just to the north of the jetty.



Back at the Research Station we ate much of the 4 food groups – dips, cheese, chips and beer.



On Saturday we awoke prior to the sun setting and dived under Edithburgh jetty. As usual there was the leafy and heaps of the common snook or *Scubajoeus baracudus* and it didn't take long for 90 minutes to pass by.



On Saturday afternoon Trent, Judy Wu (aka Cricket Wu or Superhero 2) and Jevon took the 900 metre walk to jump off the end of Giles jetty. They were rewarded with good viz, scallops, a plethora of fish and even a dolphin – named furless-water-dwelling-Sunshine. It was then back to the Research station where a BBQ feast was cooked up, nicely washed down with some bottles of red.



As the unofficial handy-people recommended by EB, we replaced the three toilet seats, so now there is no chance of getting your ass skin caught. After a thorough clean, we left the research station and made the trek back to Adelaide. Thanks to Trent for towing the banks over and for everyone helping out filling tanks and making it a relaxing trip.



Tim, Lesley, Jevon, Luddy, Trent, Judy Wu, Scuba Joe, Brendan and Steve – yes Steve Barber.

Tim Murphy.

DAN Oxygen Provider Course

On Saturday 2nd December 11 AUSC members gave up the opportunity to have a sleep-in, or more importantly the opportunity to go on a dive, so they could participate in the Divers Alert Network Oxygen Provider Course run by John Lippmann.

These members were very privileged to have John as their instructor as he is the Executive Director of DAN SE

Asia-Pacific and is highly known and respected in the diving community. John was flown into Adelaide by the club as a guest speaker at the Scuba Symposium and also to conduct this course, giving us the best training available.

The DAN 02 Providers course focuses on the administration and proper use of oxygen in scuba diving related injuries. It teaches people how to recognise possible dive related injuries as well as handle the equipment. This involved a race on who could set up a DAN 02 kit

the fastest and practicing CPR, along with all the mannequin jokes that went with it!

In the afternoon, another 6 members completed the Refresher course, in order to keep their qualifications current and tune up their skills. This included the same theory and practical work that was done in the morning. After the Refresher course the members got an opportunity to be introduced to the DAN Remote Emergency Medical Oxygen System (REMO2). This system is used to treat a breathing injured diver where there is a substantial distance to medical assistance. While the club does not own a REMO2 System, it could be useful for the private use of members participating in remote diving.

The skills learnt in this course will be invaluable to the club as it helps make diving safer for others. Well done to Laura, Lizzie, Martin, Hussam, Luddy, Paul, Tim, Scuba Joe, Nicki, Anika, Jevon, Gary, Max, Spaceman, Lesley, Dave and Andrea who all participated.

By Nicki Shearing

Cairns January 2007.

Having never dived in tropical waters before, the offer to take a trip to Cairns to catch up with family and do a dive trip at the same time, was too good to pass up. Flying up to Cairns the day before I was hit by the humidity of the place, which makes you sweat like it is a 45°C day here in Adelaide. The day of the trip everyone was up early excited with the prediction of not only great weather but also great diving to go with it. Before we had even boarded the boat we managed to find stingrays cruising the mud flats that are the beach off Cairns. Later that day we

boarded the massive boat called Taka with 26 other divers and motored our way north to the Great Barrier Reef.



The second day consisted of four dives. The first to a place called Challenger bay, which is a good place for people to get settled but also plenty to see. As we swam along the sand to gain some depth for the first dive we were lucky enough to see sand eels before they retracted back into the ocean floor. After then it was hard to remember all the things you saw. As you swam above the coral you could see flashes of every colour of the rainbow as fish darted back to the safety of the coral. Some of the highlights was a huge yellow nudie and watching a titian triggerfish as it built a nest for its mate.



The next two dives were at a place called Cod hole. This is where you could get up close and personal with a 500-pound potatoe cod as they hand feed them right in front of you. Afterwards we headed off for our first look at some anemonin fish along with the strange looking flute fish.



The last dive for the day was a night wall dive at Brad's Pit. As the sun set there was a dramatic change in the reef as the nocturnal animals ventured from their hiding places. I was introduced to the eye shine technic and the reef lit up with the eyes of hundreds of shrimp as

they went about their night time work. Brittle stars we also spotted along with some very active flat worms. After the dive it was nice to sit down to a warm meal as the boat pulled anchor and motored away for next destination.



On day three we had another four dives planned at a spot called Osprey Reef. This reef is an old volcano that rises up from 1000m to just under the water in near vertical cliffs. Standing on the top deck looking at to see no land at all you could imagine just how easy it

would be to either sail past or straight into the majestic reef. The first dive was at a place called North Horn, which in the calm clear water we drifted along only to be past by our first white tipped reef shark of the trip. It was a strange feeling to be happy to see a shark but there were more sharks to come. The second dive was again at North Horn but this time we got to sit and watch the sharks as they ripped at the tuna heads on offer. With over 30 sharks in the water it was an impressive sight as one shark gulped down a tuna head in one motion.



© Gary Perkins

After the sharks had consumed all the feed on offer we again drifted off to find our first Lion fish of the trip hiding under a ledge and wasn't very happy to be disturbed. Thinking better of playing with the poisons fish we headed back to shallower water and again your mind was blown away by just the sheer number of colours and fish. The next two dives were at a place called The Entrance with some of the highlights our first Turtle and a family of Glass Shrimp, which bounced around in front of the camera putting on quite a show.



© Gary Perkins

On day four we prepared for another four dives including arguable one of the best sites of the whole trip. We anchored up at a spot called Steve's Bommie named after a guy called Steve who none knew much about. Heading down in the clear water we headed out onto this small shelf where we saw our fish genuine Nemo fish, which appear to like all the attention as they posed for photo after photo and nearly seemed disappointed, as we had to swim off before we ran into deco.



© Gary Perkins

As we rose up through the water we came across the Red Flame Clam, which at this point we knew that we could swim a little away from the reef to get a closer look at some sharks. In the 40m vis this didn't seem a problem till all the fish would rush pass you to get back to the reef like little bullets from a gun. Luckily the sharks didn't appear hungry as they drifted past giving another chance to get a good shark photo. As we rose further up we found more Lion fish, other anemone fish, a small Pipefish and too many other fish to name them all.

© Gary Perkins



Dive three headed out to a spot call the Temple of Doom, which was a reef that had been struck by a ship and the reef did bear the scares of the confrontation. As we swam into the current we came across a cleaning station with three Barracudas pulled up.



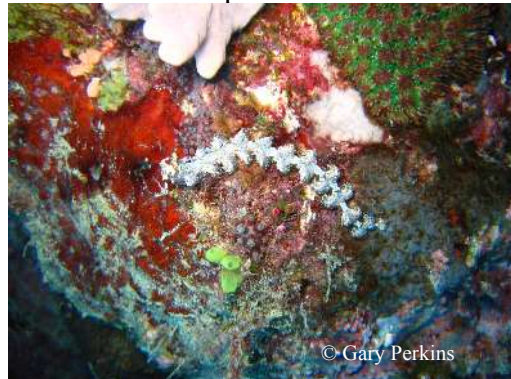
© Gary Perkins

More nudies were spotted along with a large collection of sea stars of all different colours. The last dive of the day was another night dive. Again the reef under went it's change and we were treated to the biggest Banded Coral Shrimp I have ever seen along with more flat worms and the odd hermit crab as they shifted their homes around on their backs.



© Gary Perkins

The last day only included two dives unlike the four of the previous days but we did have to make it back in time to pick up the next set of divers heading out to the reef. The two dives were at a place called Split Bommie. These two dives included a nudie with her eggs as they waved in the small current. A Scorpion fish was also spotted along with the coolest nudie I have ever seen plus a Scorpion Leaf fish, which sat patiently waiting for an unsuspecting meal to cross its path.



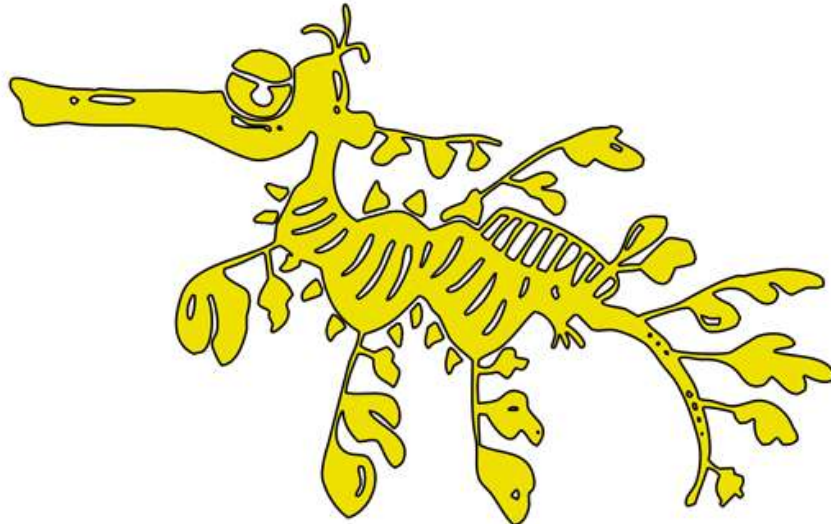
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All in all the trip was great fun and there is no way to do the reef the justice it deserves but to go and experience it for yourself, which I highly recommend.

Gary Perkins.

DISCLAIMER

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