

Nautilus SCUBA Club Newsletter

Cairns QLD Australia



January 2018

Dive Trips
Club Meetings
Guest Speakers
Trip Reports

Libby Sterling
PHOTOGRAPHY

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Cover photo: Libby Sterling

Local dive trips and get together information

*Please note that the news letter does not publish prices on trips offered

January 2018						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Club meeting This month's guest speaker will be our own Dr. Malcolm McDonald who will be presenting on "Ways of looking at diving and health"

February 2018						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28				



Club meeting



For our February Trip we have provisionally reserved 10 places on Tusa 6 on Sunday 11th.

Tusa does not reserve a spot until payment has been made in full.

To pay and book, or for more information, call Tusa directly on 4047 9100. You will need to be at A Finger of Cairns Marina at 7:40 for an 8:00 departure.

Remember to tell them you are a Nautilus member.

NB Tusa allows unguided diving, and they also have Nitrox tanks on board (subject to availability).

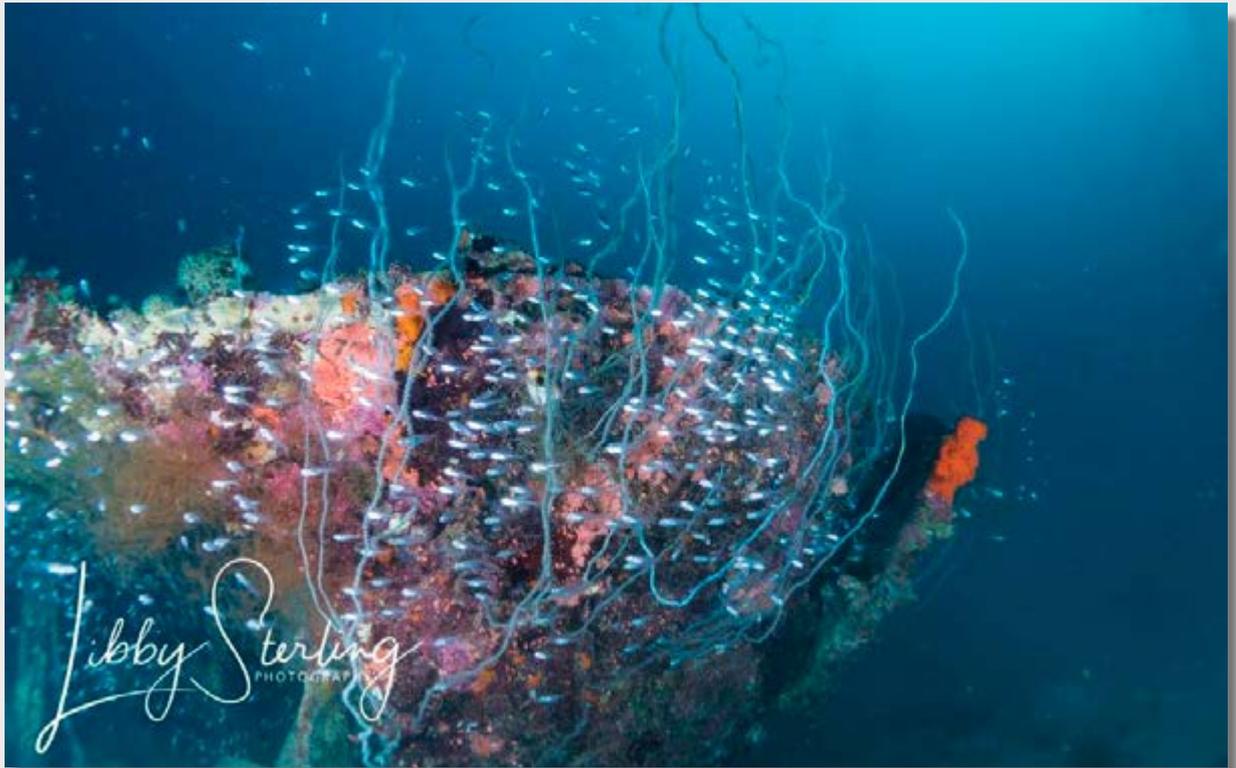
Special dives will be organised in addition to the regular monthly day trips, these could be with Reel Cray-Zee, Rumrunner, and could be day trips or weekend trips to the reef or the Yongala. Better watch your emails for future announcements.

The Nautilus Scuba Club Christmas Dive and After Party

Note from the editor, seems a good time was had by all, I lifted these images from the Nautilus facebook page.



Ok so normally you start with part 1 and then you have part 2 but as you know, we like to mix it up in the Nautilus Club!!! So here we go (part 2 was published in the December issue, oops my bad...) I'll start with OMG what a fabulous trip! I have to admit I was wondering what it would be like with 24 Nauti members on one boat for 7 days,



Ghavutu



Tanavula



Twin Tunnels

and you know what? It's up there in the top 5 fun-est trips I've ever done. What a wonderful group of people to spend a week with. We laughed, we dived, we ate too much, we combed the ID books, we edited photos, sun baked, slept, napped, went on canoe rides, fell out of canoes, ate again, chatted endlessly for hours, snorkelled and dived in crocodile infested waters (OK well there was one croc, but luckily we didn't see it).

Getting there: Thanks to Air Niugini, the flights were easy and everyone's gear arrived as it should! Let's face it, that's always a relief! We were picked up from the airport and taken to a café for food and refreshments and the wait to get on board Taka. Finally it was time and the Taka crew led by Adam had all our gear organised quite quickly and small groups were taken over to the boat and settled in.

The Diving:

We spent two wonderful days diving the Florida Islands. We split up into 4 groups of 6 divers each. Each group had a guide and my group had Carmen (one of the two trip Directors on board i.e. The Boss). Carmen was fabulous and a wealth of information and a bit of a macro fanatic. When we didn't have Carmen we had Adam (the other TD & Boss), the other groups all had fabulous guides (John, Brian & Junior).

Now for excerpts from Akiko's dive log supplemented with my photos.

Florida Islands

Ghavutu Island: Relaxing check-out dive. Started off

by the pier and gradually made our way down the sandy slope to 26m. Saw stick pipefish, twin spot gobies, flatworm and nudis on the sandy bottom.

Twin Tunnels: Went down a tunnel in a single file, starting at 14m and coming out at 36m depth. Two tunnels were side by side, one, 3m in diameter, and the other one, 2.7m wide. Once exited, we swam along the wall covered in hard and soft corals and sea fans.

Catalina: Wreck dive: an American fighter plane sitting at 35m depth. Apparently the most intact



Catalina



Twin Tunnels



Mavis



Catalina

wreck despite it being in water for 75 yrs. This was a short dive, given the depth, but we hung around the mooring line for a while afterwards. 3 juvenile golden trevallies made me their home and hung around for 10 mins or so, but jumped ship the minute they saw Libby swimming down!!! Sorry Akiko, must have been the Seahorse leggings!

Mavis: Wreck dive: a Japanese fighter plane. Unlike the American planes with 2 engines and 28m wing span, Japanese ones have 4 engines and 24m wing span. Went down the mooring line to 32 m – quite murky vis at the bottom but we could see the pilot's seat, a toilet and some crates and bottles. Afterwards, we swam to the shallow shoreline and spent considerable time there. Beautiful large cabbage corals and elephant ear sponges, lots of pipefish, upside down jellyfish, etc.

Tanavula Point: Drift dive along the slope, and in places, vertical walls. Lots of fish cruising, though we didn't see any sharks or rays apart from a blue spotted sting ray in a crevice. Beautiful dive site with lots of huge Gorgonian sea fans all along the slope and huge elephant ear sponges in all sorts of shapes like vases and fans.

Switzer: This was a similar dive site to the previous Tanavula Point, drifting along the sandy slope and walls. Lots more fish on this dive though with schools of trevallies, fusiliers, anthias, redtooth triggerfish, and in the shallows,



Tanavula

went out with Carmen instead of John, DM. This site has two sea mounds and is apparently known to be visited by mantas and devil rays. We went to the deeper sea mound first to look for rays out in the blue, but unfortunately none were spotted. We then returned to the shallower sea mound where we spent

garfish, needle fish, trumpet fish, etc. Saw a giant moray, a blacktip shark, and a mappa pufferfish desperately trying to get rid of a trumpet fish sticking to its head!

Tanavula Point: Back by popular demand. This time the current wasn't so strong. John pointed out lots of nudis, flatworms and other macro stuff. We also saw a cuttlefish, yellow margin moray, band-tail scorpionfish, etc. Baby Cakes: This dive, Rigo & Jannemieke, Judy & I were swapped groups so we



Switzer

a lot of time looking in the sand and small coral bommies for macro stuff.

Saw a reef octopus in a hole, a pair of juvenile barred thick lip wrasse (looks like fish poo), filefish, fang blennies, etc.

Then we moved to the Russell Islands for some truly spectacular diving! Now back to Akiko's log: Russell islands

White Beach: First dive at the Russell Islands group. This place



Baby Cakes Adam and Carmen



Baby Cakes Akiko and Judy

was called 'White beach', even though it's a water way with mangroves, a code name that the Allied forces used during WWII and has stuck as a name. (There are apparently other coloured 'beaches' – code names - that are not actually beaches around this area). The Americans drove all their tractors, ammunitions and supplies into the water when they left. We went to see the tractors and ammunitions first, then spent the rest of the dive in the shallows by the mangroves. Apparently 2 crocs were spotted and killed by the villagers recently! We saw archer fish



White Beach

in the mangroves, pajama cardinal fish, lots of common and spotfin lionfish, a banded sea snake, reef octopus, banded pipefish, nudis, etc.

White Beach: Same dive site but we dived a different part from the last dive. We divided into 2 separate groups to avoid congestion. We saw some fully intact tractors and supplies. Lots of marine life – banded sea snake again, crocodile fish, peacock mantis shrimp, bumphead parrotfish, twin spot gobies, lots of nudis (what else!?), etc.



White Beach



Rainbow Reef



Rainbow Reef

Rainbow Reef: Pinnacle dive, with the top of the sea mound being 14m in depth. We had to swim against a moderate current to stay on the sea mound. Saw a school of chevron barracudas, school of batfish, midnight snappers, and a lone blacktip shark.

Karamulon Reef: This dive site was a reef right next to a village on a small island. Lots of macro stuff to see – the obligatory nudis, orangutan crab, Anker's whip coral shrimp, etc.

Uncle Raymond's Back Yard: Night Dive: There were only 9 willing divers, so we divided into 2 groups. We stayed in the shallows (max 15m) with a sandy bottom and some coral bommies. Lots to see: spiny lobsters, slipper lobster, crocodile fish, giant moray, pepper moray, flat rock crab, etc.

Karamulon Point: This was to be a relatively short dive @ 45 mins as we had to fit in a village visit next. Live drop again, then we swam against the mild-moderate current to get to the sea mound and down to 30m. We hooked in to watch the fish and pelagics swim by. We saw 5 small grey reefs cruising and schools of yellowtail barracudas, chevron barracudas, and school of jacks. Also saw 2 hawksbill turtles, one at the beginning of the dive and one at the end.

Uncle Raymond's Village visit: We took a break from diving and visited Uncle Raymond and his village. Here we were treated to local dancers, music and lots of laughter. Beautiful village and generous people. A few of us had taken books and school supplies over for the kids and we handed these over to their delight

Leru Cut: We dived the crack that had developed in the middle of the island. As it was narrow, groups went in 30 mins apart. We went into the cave in single line, swimming at 3m shallow depth and coming out swimming at a deeper depth @ 15-18 m. The blue lights beaming through the cracks above created a cathedral-like mystical effect. When we popped up at the end of the crack, there was a big tree and some lush vegetation. The latter half of the dive was spent on the reef and the sandy shallows/coral bommies. Huge amount of anemones with a wide variety of anemone fish (Western clown, pink, skunk, bonnet, false clown, tomato anemone fish, and maybe more!).

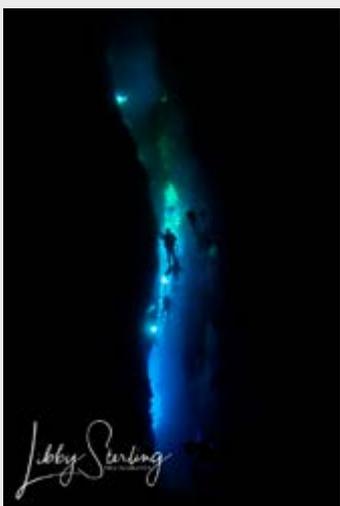
NE Mane Wall: This last dive ended up being quite late due to the village tour. Quite a few people opted not to dive so the groups got rejigged. Started off as a dusk dive, but was mostly a night dive! We went down a sandy slope and looked among the corals for marble shrimps, which we failed to find, but we did see several electric clams. Whilst everybody was busy looking amongst the corals, I looked into the deep blue and saw 2 grey reefs cruising, a huge school of jacks and fusiliers swimming at speed in every direction, creating quite a spectacle.



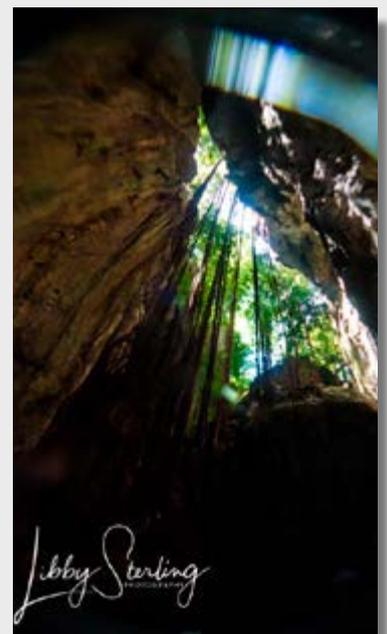
Bubbles visits White Beach



Karamulon Reef



Lenu Cut



Lenu Cut



Mirror Pond



Mirror Pond



Mirror Pond



Mirror Pond



Mirror Pond

Mirror Pond: This was where Adam spotted a croc lying on the edge of the pond previously. We went through a big cavern opening – I could see shelves on the cave walls - dark, where crocs could be hiding (!!)

but fortunately there were no crocs today... or was there!? We went through other mini caverns and swim-throughs with sunlight beaming through the cracks up above, creating a beautiful curtain of lights. The last cavern swim-through we went through was however too narrow, too dark and too long for my comfort. (Lib here again – I loved it and got to go off through even smaller tunnels following Adam... awesome!)

Bat Cave: Yet another cave, but this time with bats. We were told not to open our mouths as we could end up with bat poo! We went through a dark cave and surfaced when we reached a dead end. I could see some bats flying up above. As we headed out, the light beaming from the crack above and from the exit made it look mystical. We spent the rest of the dive going along the reef wall. More nudis and macro stuff!

Samsaen: Vertical wall dive, swimming against the current looking out into the blue for pelagics. Live drop. Lots of grey reef sharks cruising, schools of yellowtail barracudas, and a huge school of jacks swirling around, going up and down in speed along the vertical wall. 2 eagle rays, one big, one small cruising past up above. Quite impressive! ... but then the current died down and there was absolutely nothing to see apart from other divers (oh, and of course the nudis!). How quickly it all changed...

Lologhan Island: Wall dive with lots of super macro critters – even all the nudis seen here were super macro (apart from the banana nudis). Still kept an eye out in the blue but only noteworthy marine life seen was a juvenile maori wrasse. Finally I spotted a beautiful marble shrimp inside a little cavern. Half way through the dive, it got quite dark and my torch ran out of battery so I had to rely on what others would show me. We did see a huge hawksbill turtle at the end of the dive, which even I could see blind.

So that was the end of the Russell Islands and we steamed back to Honiara for the remaining two dives on the Boneghi's.

Guadalcanal

Boneghi #1: Wreck Dive (normally a shore dive): a Japanese supply ship called Hirokawa maru, that got sank by the Americans. Shallowest at 10m and deepest at 56m in a sandy slope. Shape remains intact but lots of coral growth and marine life on the wreck. Lots to see on this wreck and also in the sandy slope around it. Saw a sub-adult peacock razor fish (wrasse) and garden eels, each over a meter long swaying back and forth, dancing in the mild current.

Boneghi #2: Wreck Dive (normally a shore dive): a Japanese supply ship called Kinugawa maru, sank by the Americans. This one seemed more broken up than Boneghi #1, though Andrew's aerial footage shows a clear outline of the ship still intact.



Swimming with the Crocs



Katom Cave



NE Mane Wall



Surface Interval

Lots of coral growth and marine life on this wreck also. John, DM, showed us a huge machine gun inside a tube at 28m. Lots of anemonefish and juvenile fish.

Reality check (back to Libby): So that was the diving in the main part of the Solomons trip! Some of us had to get straight back to reality whilst a few lucky travellers stayed on (refer to part 2 in the December edition).

Fabulous well organised trip with fabulous company. I cannot wait to go back! Thank you Akiko and Lyn for all your hard work in organising it.

This trip has something for everyone, corals, caves, macro and of course lots of history and wrecks. If you haven't been, I highly recommend a trip with Solomon Island Dive Expeditions (SIDE), now

part of the Master-Siren fleet. The food was great, the crew fabulous, the boat (I love Taka) and the service second to none!

Also big thank you to Jo Archdeacon - my roomie, dive buddy and ever patient underwater model. It was a blast! Looking forward to next time.

Don't forget to come to the Club talk on 28th February (Lib and Jo presenting).



Photographer Libby and Dive Site Recorder Akiko

At the Club's underwater photo competition this year, I was very pleased to win the People's Choice Award for my photo of a Chamberlain's Nembrotha nudibranch.

The prize was a weeks diving at Lissenung Island, near Kavieng in PNG plus the return airfare.

Ange and Dietmar Amon, the owners of Lissenung Island Dive Resort, have very generously been providing this prize to the Club for the past few years.



Air Nuigini also sponsored the competition by kindly providing the return airfares for a number of the PNG prizes including this one. They are a great airline to travel with, especially for dive trips, as in addition to the 30kg baggage allowance they provide an additional 15kg if you are carrying dive gear!!



In late November I headed off from Cairns to Kavieng via Port Moresby. Carrying 25kg of dive and camera gear plus some small outboard engine parts for the Resort. I was met at Kavieng Airport by 'uncle' Pete and driven down to the waterfront for the 30 minutes or so boat transfer to Lissenung Island. Dietmar was at the beach to greet me along with dogs, Roxy, Sooty and Missy. The shoes came off for the rest of the week and the holiday commenced!



Lissenung Island is quite small, and you can walk around it in 20 minutes or so. It has its own fringing reef, sandy beaches and swaying coconut trees. A little



paradise!



Accommodation is in comfortable bungalows with two units per bungalow which are scattered around the island, but all within easy walking distance from the "haus wind" where meals are served and the "sunset cocktail bar". Each bungalow has a verandah, are insect screened and come with a ceiling fan and private bathroom with hot showers. No shortage of power points either for charging up batteries.

Meals are tasty and varied, however what's on the menu depends a lot on what is available in the local markets in Kavieng.



The day's typical program is; breakfast between 7:00AM and 8:00AM, depart around 8:30 for two boat dives and then back for lunch around 1:30PM. In the afternoon there is a choice of another boat dive, a shore dive on the House Reef or a siesta (hammocks provided!) (photo 9)

The diving is quite varied with a choice of plane and ship wrecks, wall and reef as well as muck/macro. On this trip I dived the wrecks of the "Der Yang", the bow of which is in about 35 metres, the Catalina and a "Jake" seaplane, plus various sites in Albatross Passage, as well as Helmut's Reef, Danny's Bommie, Peter's Patch and the Lissenung Island House Reef which is only 6 to 8 metres deep.



The decision on which area is to be dived is usually made in the morning and is dependent on wind and tide conditions. An incoming tide benefits those sites to the west like Albatross Passage with improved visibility and more large fish action. Most of the sites in Albatross are in about 25 to 30 metres of water.





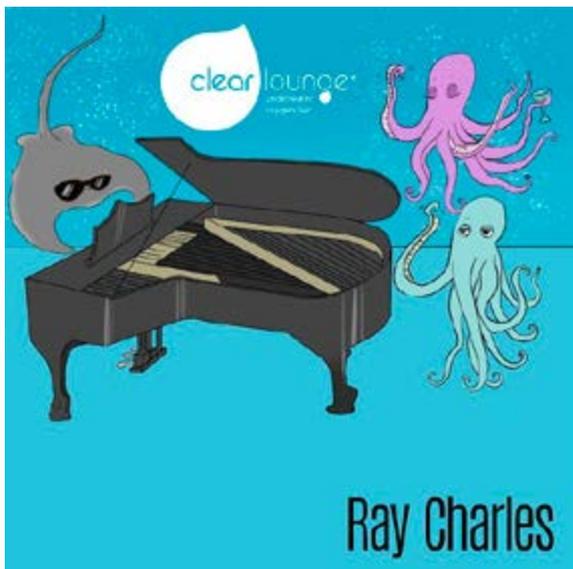
During the week the water temperature was a balmy 29 to 30 degrees. Visibility on average was 25 to 30 metres although in Kavieng Harbour that can drop to below 10 metres at places like the “Jake” seaplane. The House Reef is mainly for macro so the lower viz isn’t a problem.

Before I knew it, it was time to go. A quiet no-dive day, drying gear and taking some top-side snaps before packing up for the trip back home.

All-in all a great trip. Many thanks once again to Ange and Dietmar of Lissenung Island Resort and the good folk at Air Nuigini, as well as Phil Woodhead who did such an outstanding job securing the tremendous sponsorship for the Club’s underwater photo competition. ■



THINGS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT NEED TO KNOW



The 2018 Nautilus Photo competition is coming, categories same as last year, details to follow soon.

Good tip.

Take a photo with your phone of your certification and your Nautilus Membership card, you may forget them, but I doubt if you'll forget your phone.

Supporting the Nautilus Scuba Club



Air Niugini



DIGITAL DIVER
- take only pictures, leave only bubbles -



MV CHERTAN Milne Bay



PARTING SHOT



Spotted Sicklefish,
by Phil Woodhead

Drepane punctata,