

# WARRNAMBOOL SUB AQUA CLUB

Sub Aqua Club  
August/September 2007

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING...?

Winter is almost over and the days are trying to stretch out—be it ever so slowly. I am a lover of day-light saving and can wait till it starts again, even if the chooks go off the lay, the cows stop giving milk and the curtains fade?!

Our members have not been slacking off just because the water is cold, in fact I think they have been busier than ever. Three members have successfully completed their Cavern/Sinkhole course, (see the

article and pictures further inside). Some members have been back in the river doing some maintenance work on a jetty and a large group headed off to Whyalla for a long weekend of cuttlefish, shopping, sight seeing and eating, not necessarily in that order.

There seems to have also been a flurry of purchases recently with drysuits high on the list of priorities.

It was with sadness that we farewelled a fellow diver in

July. Colin Lange lost his courageous fight with cancer on 8th July 2007. He will be sadly missed both on land and in the water.

Thanks to those who sent in photos or articles for the newsletter, it really makes my job so much easier. So keep on sending them in. I don't care how short or long the story—I appreciate them all!

Linda

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\*Did you know that all Wrasse are born female—and that only one will grow and transform into a male and continue to harass and stop all the others from also making the transformation to male.

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*Michelle, Mick and Doug—3 of the CDAAs newest members at Piccaninnie Ponds.*



# SO YOU WANT TO LEARN CAVERN SINKHOLE DIVING!!!!!!

BY MICHELLE BOYLE



Recently Mick, Doug and myself decided to undertake the Deep Cavern course with Gary and Linda. Parko had previously done his course and we thought, well we better do it too. There was a lot of organization and planning involved to fit us all into the timetable, as we all have commitments of work and family. We managed to get some time in the Port Fairy pool, and some theory and rope sessions at each others homes. The first of our cavern sessions was in Gouldens in South Australia. Linda assured us that this would be our worst dive—she was right! We all experienced some difficulties adjusting to the twin tank set up as well as trying to maintain our buoyancy and get used to where everything was on our BC's. Adjusting to the cold factor was another difficulty and we all soon realized that Linda and Gary had the right idea going with the drysuits....I'd say the first caverns session was pretty crap and we could all improve on this. I personally have a near drowning experience, thankfully Linda recognized the sign of eyes bulging through my mask as "I need air now!" Second dive for the day was a little better, we also managed to do some reel work and see some fresh water crays and yabbies.

Shivering had started to set in by now and we managed to get out of the water and lug everything up the hill to the ars. At this point I quickly realized that my physical fitness was not what it could be and I needed to be somewhat of a Schwarzenegger if I was going to dive twins! Bodybuilding aside, we got our kits off and did some debriefing and laughing about our dive techniques. I personally found it very difficult to find where everything was on my BC, and Buoyancy was a big issue with me still being in Open Water positioning. It is easy to see how quickly small problems can become major issues in this environment. Stirring up silt is quite easy to do when you have no control over your buoyancy and panic sets in. So we all came

away from Gouldens with some things to think about. We managed to do some more theory sessions and a session at the breakwater in cold and dark conditions. I found that removing your mask at depth and using a reel virtually impossible, I kept going to the surface and losing the plot. I thought I might give up before I do myself some permanent damage. Self criticism quickly sets in when we are not able to do the things we think we can. So I walked away from that session pretty disappointed with myself and adopted the attitude that next time would be better....It better be! Our final part of the course was a weekend in Mount Gambier to complete some more work in the cavern environment. Mick and myself traveled to the Mount on Friday arvo and Gary and Doug arrived on the Friday night. Saturday morning was a session at Gouldens and before I had even gotten into the water I had managed enough nervous energy in my stomach that I needed to use the toilet immediately. Thankfully Gary (AKA Gary the Gadget Man) so happens to have a portaloos and quickly set up the loo complete with cover on the side of the road, where I was able to relieve myself and create somewhat

of a comical situation out of the fact that I was literally shitting myself about the dive. With all of the smelly stuff out of the way it

was down to business. Yes Mrs. Schwarzenegger appeared again to lug all of the gear to the water and jump in. Mick and I buddied up whilst Gary floated nearby watching us lay the line and do some tie-offs. Then it was time for Mick to take off his mask and wind the reel back in, which he did with no problems—he's amazing. Whilst all of this was happening I was looking for Gary who at any moment could appear and rip my mask off my head, I began to concentrate more on where he was that what I was doing. Needless to say, my turn did come and I did fill my mask with water, and then

Gary did get it off me in the end and I swam back holding Mick's arm and managed to keep my cool and breathing together. Yeah! The it was Doug's turn, Mick offered to stay in the water and buddy up with him. I stood on the platform and watched from above as the boys completed their stuff. The end of the session was over with Doug emerging from the water, gasping and coughing and swearing at Mick and Gary, who didn't realize that the mouthpiece of the reg Doug was given to share air from, was cracked and he was sucking in water, not air! He really is aqua man....

From here it was on to Little Blue where we did our rope and abseiling session. Yes I can say that we are all pretty good at going backwards over the cliff and reaching the bottom safely, with no broken bones and no major dramas. Then we geared up to dive Little Blue. It was almost dark by now and in we went. Initially Mick and I went down to 18m to wait for Gary and Doug. Where could they be... I don't know what happened next but I found myself following Mick up the shot line heading towards the surface at quite a fast pace. Upon reaching the surface I notice that Mick was caught up in the shot line and he managed to untie himself and the last I saw of him, he was heading back down but I wasn't sure he had a reg in his mouth. Not good! Gary appeared on the surface and when I told him I didn't think Mick had his reg and he was caught in the line, he looked a little surprised! He told me to stay put while he went for a look. He was gone for probable 2 minutes, but by this time I had convinced myself that Mick had drowned and I was planning eulogy on the pontoon in the dark. Gary finally appeared and that Mick and Doug were both fine and waiting t—for me at 18m. No way, no way was I going back in, what do you think I am crazy? After informing Gary that I was not comfortable about getting in, he decided that it was best I sit this one out. The boys managed to do the dive with Doug surfacing some 4 minutes before Mick and Gary and having

...I managed to convince myself Mick had drowned and I was planning his eulogy on the pontoon in the dark...



## SINKHOLE DIVING ...CONTINUED

staying down. Yep, another crap dive for me. We all headed back up to the cars and got out of the wet gear and headed back to the Mount for tea. I informed Mick in the car that I pretty much thought he was dead and that I don't think cavern diving is for me at all.

A hot meal and a drink managed to calm me down a bit and we all talked about the dive and how we can improve and problems that need attention. Sunday morning saw us all up early and heading for One Tree. This dive is a stride out from the edge entry and we all managed to get in with no problems. Down we went to 35 meters. At this point Gary approached us individually and gave us a mathematical problem on his arm slate, to make sure none of us had any sign of narcosis. Doug had some problems initially recognizing what it was Gary was asking him to do and a small tug-of-war took place over the slate, but he eventually got the idea. I too took a couple of moments to realize what the equation meant but then proceeded to correct Gary in the way he had actually set out the equation before completed the test. Mick managed to have no problems with his test and we started to make our way to the harvester. At the harvester we had to remove our masks and put them back on again, which we all passed with flying colors. We then proceeded to make our way around the wall at about 15m I realized that I only had 50bar left and I signaled to Mick and

he offered me his spare reg to use. On surfacing we all felt that this dive was by far better than the rest we had done to date. We are all still working on our buoyancy and adjusting to the sinkhole environment. Visibility was good and the water temperature was about 12 degrees. Yep, bloody cold in a wetsuit. Doug manages to go a really nice shade of pale blueish yellow when he's cold. After One Tree our final dive for the weekend was Picaninnie Ponds. We were all looking forward to this dive. Gary the Gadget Man appeared again with hot water to put in our boots and down our wetsuits and heat packs to put down our backs. HE'S THE MAN! In we went. From the first pond we proceeded to the chasm and down to the start of the dogleg. For a look. Then across to the Cathedral and a few pictures taken at crocodile rock. Buoyancy seems to be getting in here and visibility is great.



Parko, Michelle, Mick, Doug at pics in SA

Plenty of eels around and smaller fish hiding in the ledges. Gary even managed to say hello to me in a pocket of air in the roof where you can poke your head into and say HELLO to each other. We exited the chasm and returned to the first pond and had a bit more of a dive and look around in here. Yes this is well worth all of the training just to dive Piccaninnie, it would have to be my favorite dive to date and I'm glad I did do the course to be able to experience such a beautiful place. On exiting the water, Doug discovered that he had lost his weight belt somewhere along the way, but we think he may have lost it right at the end of the dive on exiting. Well we'll just have to go back for a look wont we? We all got dry and packed up and headed for the Nelson Roadhouse for some warm food and drinks, having spent the last 2 days getting in and out of a wetsuit, it was good to finally be warm. We are all very appreciative of Gary and Linda for their knowledge, education, training and extreme patience in taking us on this course. They both have very different ways of teaching and approaching students and are both very good at their jobs. Thank you both for your time and effort and thanks Linda for giving me air when I needed it and thanks Gary for the gadgets, especially the loo... Mick and I recently returned to SA to try out some drysuits we had been given, but that's another story.....stay tuned.

Michelle Boyle

## THE BEANCOUNTER COUNTS THE BEANS...

Our Treasurer reports that the club's bank account is in a nice healthy position with \$3801.64 in the coffers.

We still have some outstanding memberships due and are awaiting information about a grant that we applied for. Time will tell on that one.

If you still have not paid up your membership please get on to it soon as we cannot continue to send out newsletters to non-members. Please contact

Doug or any member if you have questions or queries re your membership or membership status.

Check out the webpage of the Horsham Dive Club Waves'n'Caves on [www.wavesncaves.com](http://www.wavesncaves.com). The Horsham club, like ours, is a small local club but they have kindly put our newsletter onto their site. There is also a growing collection of photos on

their site taken by our members thanks in part, to Gary and Doug's photographic efforts. (Feel free to vote on



## Vale Colin Lange.

Colin Lange had lived in and around Warrnambool and Bushfield for many years and began diving some years ago. He quickly moved up through the training, took up cave diving and eventually worked his way up to instructor. Many local divers owe their love of diving to Colin's enthusiasm, patience and knowledge. He has introduced many divers to the wonders of the ocean. A keen wreck and photographic enthusiast, one of his favorite dive sites is the wreck of the LaBella. He, along with his wife Linda, have spent much time exploring this great wreck and photographing its many features. Unfortunately in July Colin lost his battle with cancer and passed away surrounded by his family. Colin's love of the wreck of the LaBella is not lost though. His family and friends aim to scatter his ashes on this wreck, where hopefully he may continue to watch over those of us who will continue to pursue our common love of diving and the ocean.

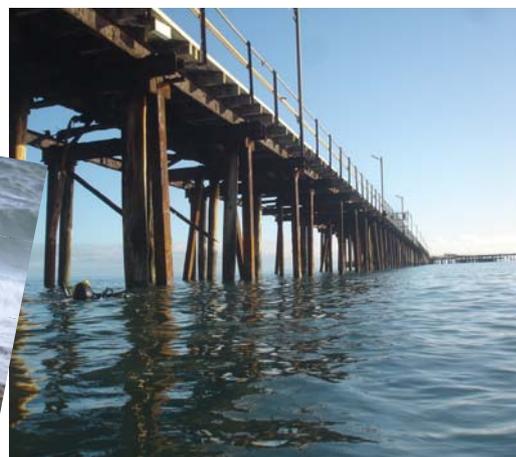
RIP Colin

08.05.1955 – 08.07.2007



## Range of Sub Aqua Club Clothing...

We now have a range of clothing with the Sub Aqua Clubs logo on it. Super warm beanies (check out Kellie's hot pink version), vests, jackets or polo shirts all available. Prices....hmmm—better check with Doug or Gary on that one! Sorry, I don't know how much they are at this stage. Only \$15 each all money goes back to club so lets support our club.



# STOP THE PRESS.

## Doug has got his new dry suit at last!



### The Saga of the drysuit,

Of all the things that can happen while waiting for a drysuit to arrive from the UK.

- 1/. Space ships have been to the space station and back ....no Drysuit
- 2/. Started and completed CDA Deep Cavern course ....Still no Drysuit
- 3/. Cleaned up the foul freezing waters of the Hopkins ..... Still no Bloody Drysuit.
- 4/. Whyalla Cuttlefish dives : - you guessed it no bloody Drysuit.
- 5/. Almost 90 days and a few ( well lots ) of tears later it finally arrived.

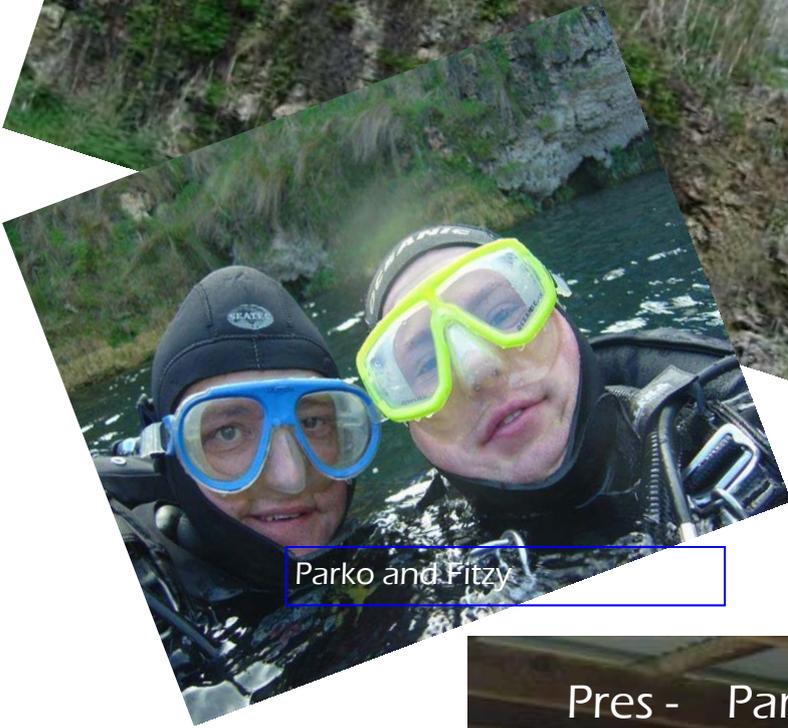
Many thanks to Parcelforce UK postal Service, Captain of the slow ship, and supporting crews For making this happen.

sub aqua at play

Mick and michelle at One tree Sinkhole



Parko and Fitzy



Pres - Parko at Pics

