

China Wall and Cherub's Cave



Club Dive - 18 Jun 05

John Kelley

A day out on the Club boat is more than a dive experience these days with whales and dolphins entertaining whilst on top. With almost ideal weather and an ideal sea China Wall on the outside of Moreton Is seemed like a good bet. As we approached the dive site we noticed a number of boats fishing the area, one being a large (possibly charter) boat. This has been a non-fishing area since Dec 04 and we made like officials (DIVER 1 looks official for a start) and noted their registration and boat names and did a lot of pointing and loud talking. It was not long before the area was clear of boats. These boats will be reported to Fisheries in an attempt to help enforce this law to protect these areas and increase the chances of the endangered Grey Nurse shark surviving and thriving.



Over the Arch at China Wall



The Northern Arch

As I hit the water I had expectations of a good dive. Water temp was 24 centigrade and visibility was about 30 metres. On descent the anchor was right next to the keyhole (excellent), a swim-through hole in a wall surrounded by small schools of fish. There was some surge and it pushed an invisible wall of water over the kelp-covered wall and through the hole.



Keyhole at China Wall



Graham Fisher

We followed around at 26 metres to find the Northern Arch. As some of the four had not dived here before I lead the way to the Arch finding a 2 metre Grey Nurse idly lazing under the Arch as I rounded the corner (picture proof). Excited to show Alan (new to the Arch) I

backtracked as no one was on my tail. All had their heads in the kelp around the corner and it took some time to attract attention. Of course the shark had gone by that stage. However, the sea was alive with schooling fish. Yellow-tail kingfish were abundant and screaming around. Schools of Yellow-tail Scad also graced our presence. On surfacing we were told of a couple of whales that were hanging around in close proximity to our site and a bunch of dolphins.



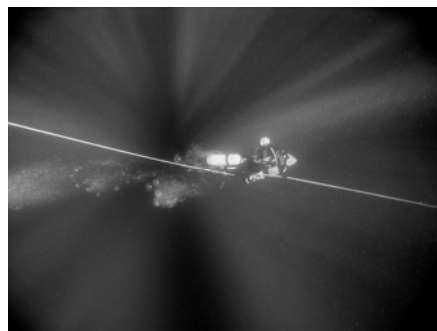
Matti in the Keyhole

For the second dive we re-located to Cherub's Cave a couple of miles to the south. The sea had a long swell, no current and no wind. While diving at Cherub's a couple of dolphins dived near us. I just saw them but Alan got a good picture as they came very close. Phil and Ash also said they had the pleasure of a couple of close encounters but, guys no pictures, no proof.

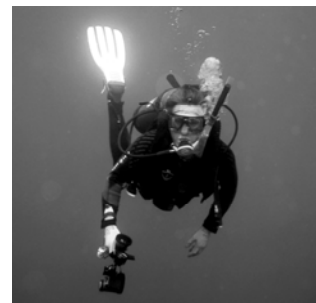
We snorkelled over Cherubs and could clearly see the divers at 26 metres. The sun's rays streamed down to the depths converging to "blue holes" and adding an eerie appeal to the sea. It was like some mystical presence where we would find some alien force with eternal life – gee I've got to stop doing deep dives. Speaking of deep and lengthy dives, the young lads had pushed the limits today and spent a little time on the deco line reviewing pictures and ensuring their own internal bubbles went to eternity. There were whales and dolphins around but they did not want to snorkel with us. Only a couple of salps drifted by me and, once again, I failed to get an in-focus shot of these mid-water drifters.



Harlequin Tusk Fish



Divers in Shafts of light in the Blue



Alan Reed

We had a fairly flat trip back – the sea that is. It became a little cold and it's good to remember to bring adequate wind protection and something warm. Thanks to Phil for, once again, getting the boat. Apart from the flat battery all worked well.