

China Wall & Flinders – Club Dive 15 Oct 06

John Kelley

You can't beat good luck. It was a rough trip out on the Sunday - choppy with spray-filled wind from the NNE. We pushed through to China Wall only to find a current that added doubt to the dive. I struggled down against this current to hit a wall of cold water at 15 metres that certainly made a chilling difference. This drop in temperature became a significant source of conversation after the dive with some divers who were obviously cold.



The Northern Arch



Peter & Patricia at the Keyhole

Now this was where the luck came in – the current declined to nil and the clarity was startling – over 30 metres! I've not been on the Wall with such a clear view of the Keyhole (if you can really see a hole) and the Arch. One Grey Nurse was "resting" under the Arch when we first appeared but he slowly left and was joined by another on the other side – no hurry. I was taken by the Schooling Banner fish that formed an uncoordinated school around the large black coral bush under the Arch. Will they ever get their act together? They're so colourful with their black and yellow bands, long fins and erratic movements. A couple of Yellow-tailed Kingfish darted about and schools of larger fish drifted above the kelp-coated ridge lines. Lovely stuff.



Schooling Banner fish



The Bryozoan called "Lace Coral"

We moved to the eastern side of Flinders for the second dive and, again, the clarity was the talk of the day as well as the large swim-through cave. I'm not sure why people get ecstatic

about swimming through holes – but they do. Peter saw a huge hump-headed Maori Wrasse but I concentrated on the smaller life.



Feather-duster worm



Tube worms

The wind had increased during the afternoon but it was a following sea on the way home. Although this still proved to be a wet ride, the close sighting of a large humpback and her playful calf, virtually in Moreton Bay, added so much icing to this cake-filled day that it is hard to put into words. The little 6m youngin' seemed to be breaching every time he had a breath – which was frequently. Perhaps he was still taking lessons for this critical part of his life. He cruised by us at about 30 metres distance bouncing up and down like a cork. We had seen another calf and larger whale earlier on the top end of Moreton. What a day.