



## PBYC 2010 Cruise – The Log Part 3

### **Day 7 Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January**

Weather – Fine and sunny with a building NE sea breeze



***Coal Shaft Bay looking S.E.***

With a beautiful day on offer it was time to explore more of the underwater geography of the island. Crosby's & Gordon's headed off to snorkel the southern edge of Coal Shaft Bay (behind the Cobb Rocks) and were rewarded with the sight of lots of beautiful fish, wobbegongs and even Port Jackson sharks!

Vicki even found a new anchor for their dinghy.

With this much scenery and such clear water, you could almost believe we were on the Barrier Reef.

Before you know it is time for lunch and a little siesta.

The bay is getting busy with lots of power cruisers making the trip out from Port Stephens – fortunately most are only day-trippers.

Afternoon saw the arrival of *Quest II* (Brendon Gregg) as they headed up the coast on their own cruise.

Also caught up with two yachts from the Pittwater division of the Sunmaid group (James & Jennifer plus Noel & Jill) who we had met in Newcastle. Went aboard for afternoon tea on their lovely *Jenneau* and had a chance to swap some more stories.

As the sun begins to dip towards the horizon we are rewarded with the departure of most of larger cruisers so there won't be too much generator noise tonight.



***Free Spirit settled in Coal Shaft Bay***



Before you know, it is time to repair ashore and this gives Alice a chance to clean the catch of fish that Rob has managed to spear for our tea.

Fresh luderick & leatherjackets – yum !

Also spoke to a regular visiting yachting who told us about the Grey Nurse shark sanctuary at Spectacle Island ! None of us had heard about it before but now we have a plan for tomorrow – swimming with sharks (just hope they aren't very hungry).

## **Day 8 Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

Weather – Even better than yesterday

Early morning brought sunshine and the arrival of two more of our group with the Skinner and Groenhyde families bringing ice, beer and the Sunday paper plus some new stories. Gotta love those supply runs.

PBYC now has a fleet of 8 vessels in Coal Shaft Bay (until *Quest* took off on their voyage north). Spent the first part of the morning swimming around the fleet then it was time to get organized.



***PBYC fleet in Coal Shaft Bay.***

After a bit of too-ing & fro-ing the runabouts were assembled to transport us to Spectacle Island so we can dive with the sharks. The island is split in two by a narrow chasm and the swell surges through this gap. The sharks dwell at the bottom about 6 meters down and there are huge numbers of fish circling about. Being always safety conscious the majority held back until Rob McDonald (our resident navy diver) had been in and checked out the cave. We then went in relays to snorkel through the cave and enjoyed the spectacle of Grey Nurse sharks in their natural environment.



I counted six on my visit with the largest being around 2 meters in length. They seemed content to linger around the rock shelves and observe us.

It was truly magic to be in their world and not feel threatened by them. Shows how our knowledge of them has grown over time. As John Buggy pointed out from a book by Harold Vaughan, the Grey Nurse was considered "dangerous to man" not so long ago.

I also had the experience of being literally engulfed in a school of baitfish that just opened up and let you pass through. Once again the clarity of the water was as good as you will find anywhere in the Whitsunday's and exploring the cave was a truly memorable experience.

***Spectacle Island ("shark" cave is the gap in center)***

After such a wonderful experience it was back to Coal Shaft Bay to chill out and enjoy a lazy Sunday afternoon. Fortunately Thomas Skinner had other ideas and spent the time keeping us all amused with his antics. Brianna was not to be outdone and joined in the fun by upstaging her brother.

Eventually took a run ashore for the afternoon debrief and looked back on a wonderful day. Explored a grotto that may give the bay its name as it looks a lot like a Coal Shaft.

To be continued.....

