

NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

NUPG NEWSLETTER Issue #21, Nov-Dec2006

NUPG Web Site: www.nupg.org.uk

Winner of the November Echinoderms image competition, Pauline Blackie.



This Issue:

- Meeting Information
 - Meeting Dates
 - Meeting Reviews

WINTER SPLASH IN: Saturday February 24th, see website for further details.

Date for your Diary:

NEXT MEETING: Monday January 15th 2007, Bull's Head, Hale Barns, at 1930.

Editor: Tony Gilbert, e-mail: Info@Nupg.Org.uk, for the Editor ☺

MEETING DATES & EVENTS for your diary

Pass on the dates to your friends & colleagues who may fancy joining the club.

The Northern Underwater Photography Group

Contact information, meetings & events.

The NUPG meets regularly throughout the year to increase experience and knowledge of underwater photography. It's fun, informal, informative and fishy!

Date	Meeting place	Time
Monday Jan 15 th 2007	Bulls Head, Hales Barns	19.30pm - 22.00pm
Sat 24 th Feb 2007	TBA (prob. Capernwray)	09.00am
Monday Mar 5 th 2007	Bulls Head, Hales Barns	19.30pm - 22.00pm

Winter Splash-In

To contact or find out about NUPG, meetings and for further information,
See the NUPG Website www.nupg.org.uk

Note: Meetings usually start 1930 and finish at 2200 at the latest.

MEETING REVIEWS

November 2006

With the smell of autumn firmly in our nostrils, the faint scent of cinnamon, orange peel, and the distant sounds of jingling, the November NUPG meeting was underway.

A popular and warm evening at the Bulls Head with the seating arrangements much more to our liking. The huge conference table away in corner now left us with no projector platform! Oh well, you can 't have everything, so Gail, Clive and myself jostled with the heavy furniture, to provide a small table for Ken, and a projection platform. Colin, in the meantime, supervised ☺.

Tonight's evening was as jam packed as ever, threatening to run over the allotted time. It was kicked off with the image competition, a massive amount of subject matter – and entries! This was followed by two technical talks on using the imaging software.

After a small break, we continued into Derek's Fave 5, closely followed by Mark Thomas' look at the Emerald Isle's mid-west coast. Mark's talk started at 2135, so it was really touch and go, but he deftly manoeuvred his images into view, so we finished on time.

Not much news around at this moment, although Jason Gregory was awarded a prize at the St. Abbs splash-in Competition, held in August, for is humorous shot – a slight on the parking prices within the car park. Also, **JASON** is just about to turn **40** – and there was talk of a digital camera...

Image Competition: Echinoderms

A monster selection of imagery, and a very big thanks to Gail for sorting this lot out! 26 images of which, 5 were slides. The range of images covered mainly starfish, urchins and featherstars, although some cucumbers were seen lurking in the salad.

Many of the images were taken in the UK, but the majority appeared to be overseas, which is where the most colourful urchins seem to come from.

The quality and range of images was stunning, and those who couldn't make the evening, lucked out on the pleasure of seeing these. After Gail had done the counting, there was a winner, and second place, however 4 tied for 3rd, so it was decided to award the first two places.

1st Pauline Blackie

Unfurled black feather star on a colourful red gorgonian fan, Manado.

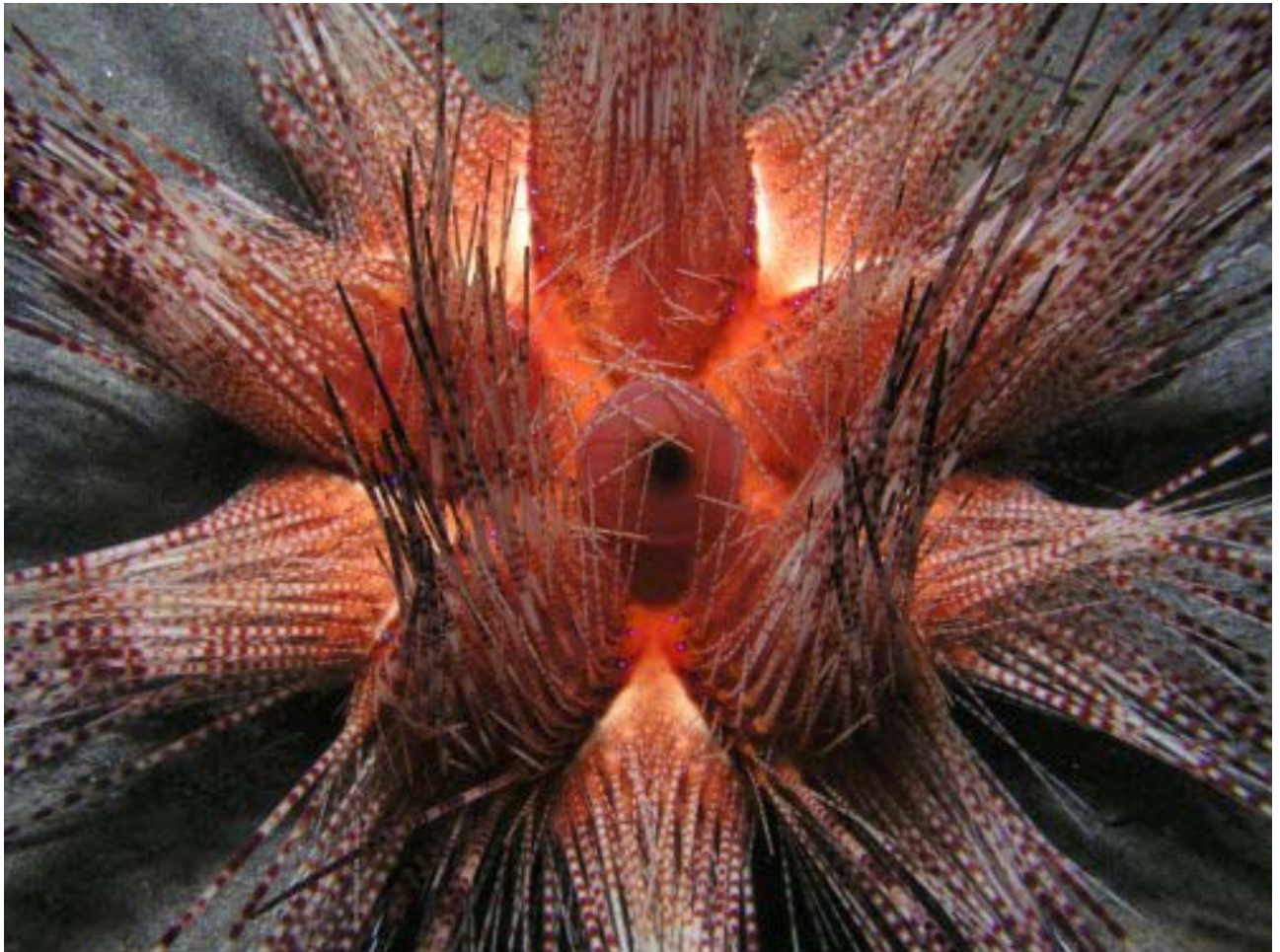
Well done to Pauline, for this great shot, taken with an Olympus C5050 Digital Compact camera, with an external strobe.

2nd Pauline Blackie, magnificent sea urchin

2nd Pauline Blackie

Another from Pauline, and with the same camera as first prize!

A very colourful close up of a magnificent sea urchin from Dominica.



Technical talks

Ken Byrne and Tony Gilbert presented two short technical talks, Cropping & Resizing, and Unsharp Mask, respectively.

Further details of these can be found on the NUPG website, www.nupg.org.uk

Favourite 5: Derek Haslam

Derek had kindly volunteered to do his favourite 5, sadly we didn't have enough time to view these mainly local images.

Trevor Pier, North Wales is the obvious place for taking macro marine life, especially when it's become diver friendly.

Shrimp: Full on common shrimp taken at Trevor Pier.

Baby Cuttefish: Trevor Pier, in superb visibility.

Shanny on grainy sand: Trevor Pier. All of the front of the shanny was in focus.

Scottish Polycera nudibranch, taken with 60mm lens (digital 95mm), very close up, on the recent Lewisian trip.

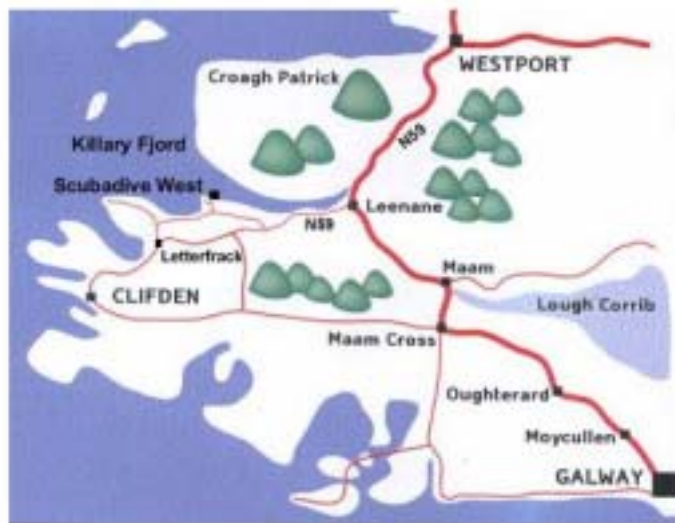
Goby, a two spotter, taken on the Summer NUPG splash-in, at Trearddur Bay on the islands near the "Haunted House".

Travelogue – Connemara, Ireland, by Mark Thomas

Guinness, a famous Irish brew started Mark's talk. Connemara is an area on the west coast of Galway in Ireland.

Mark has been staying at a small cottage on the coast for the last 8 years with his family, and loves the place. Connemara is famous for ponies and fantastic beaches.

The waters around here are very clear as could be seen by the wonderful top side photographs.



Scubadive West is well signposted from Leenane.



Here is a list of the images Mark showed:

Anemones, Sagartia, and some strange green anemones.

Sea Snails, light bulb squirts, juvenile pollack, snake pipefish, 5 spined stickleback 2-spot goby, a pogge – a sort of scorpion/angler fish, hairy squat lobster, shrimp and a great shot of a shrimp's football rounded eyes.

A variety of shore and edible crabs, spider crab and crab adorned with sea squirts, a cuttle and flatfish.

Wide-angle shots included "scenic weeds", mooring ropes, plaice spider crab, sand eels and thornback ray.

Teaming up with Shaun a free diver, they dived Fryer Island, which provides an excellent place for wide-angle shots.

Lastly, being on the west coast, sunsets are one thing which can be seen easily, and can be beautiful, whilst the Guinness goes down well!

Paul Kay – Underwater Digital Imagery Techniques

Paul described some techniques he applies to his digital images, in the post processing. This could be called manipulation, or altering of the images, but there is very good reason for it.

Digital capture is linear, so Paul explained, showing a usual blennie scene loaded with backscatter, his next image optimised it, which was the power of the computer!

An interesting shot of Dublin Bay prawns, with these creatures showing their orange bodies. A normal shot, but perhaps a touch of colour enhancement to enrich and bring their truly colours out, which the image underwater couldn't provide. The next frame showed them in bright glowing orange, the contrast boosted in the raw stage.

Lobster at Wylfra headland contained masses of biological material in the water, one click, hey presto and it was gone, not the lobbie, but the backscatter and strange material. Perhaps a mass clear up from the power station, no, 6 hours of taking the dots out! Was it really worth it, was asked of Paul, the answer was yes. This is ideal for marine identification purposes, and closer look showed just why. The lobster besides having been in a fight, was regenerating its arms, and these were quite strange, so this has now been recorded.

Another useful technique was pitch exposure to the high side if the image, i.e. biased towards the highlight.

Paul proceeded to show a series of images of rarer species, which he'd found:

1. Pipefish, Cardigan Bay. Not your usually pipefish, but taking a closer look revealed it be a broad mouthed species, not previously seen.
2. Snake Pipefish, Ardmir/Cul a Bhogha, Ullapool
3. Transparent goby, Cardigan Bay. This was the 2nd only recorded in the whole of the UK.
4. Green background with Bayonnese wrasse, a rare visitor to the west coast of Ireland, during summer, when breeding.
5. Egg case of a thornback ray, which is stuck down with mucus., something not previously known.
6. Skate cases, photographed on Lewis on the recent trip there, Bo 'na Uinnegg
7. Menai Straits on a rich green background, with a spawning common starfish.
8. Still in Menai, scorpion spider crabs and coryphella (or facelina) nudibranch.

December 2006

What a jam-packed meeting we had tonight, both people and show alike!

The Xmas meeting is usually quite popular and this one was no exception, with three mini-talks, of which all had something to do with “warm” in them.

The Best of 2006 was amazingly well supplied with imagery, and it was indeed difficult to pick from these. Before we knew it, the meeting was over and running little late.

Lucy started the meeting, and the Winter Splash-In was announced, for the 24th Feb 2007, Saturday, likely venue of Capernwray. Judging 5th March.

Image Competition: Best of 2006

For a more up close view of the winning images see the image competition section on the NUPG website, www.nupg.org.uk

There were 4 categories, and up to two images per category could be supplied. 90% of the images were supplied digitally, whether sourced from film or digital, leaving a small motley collection in the ailing carousel!

Many thanks go to Gail and Dave Marsland for making the counts, hard work tonight, and thanks to Ken for the painstaking work on sorting through the images.

Unfortunately a couple of images were missed, possibly due to size in mailing, may have been blocked. So, when you do send images to Ken:

Ensure that you read the NUPG website (www.nupg.org.uk) instructions on sizing, and size the image accordingly, before you send.

- Usually Ken will revert back via an email.
- Bring along to the meeting a backup either on CD or USB stick anyway.
- If you had no reply from Ken, check at the meeting itself, well beforehand, so it gives Ken time to set them up for you.

So, what was it all about then? Well, the 4 categories were Temperate and Tropical Wide-Angle and Macro, and all images must have been taken in 2006.

The variety and quality of the imagery was superb, I think we can all give ourselves a pat on the back for the hard work put in to making these images.

There were many from far-flung exotic & tropical places, and the cold water aside from the UK, was from New Zealand. Even a number of freshwater shots, mainly Capernwray were featured. Certainly, for me, it's given a boost to my ideas for 2007!

The results...

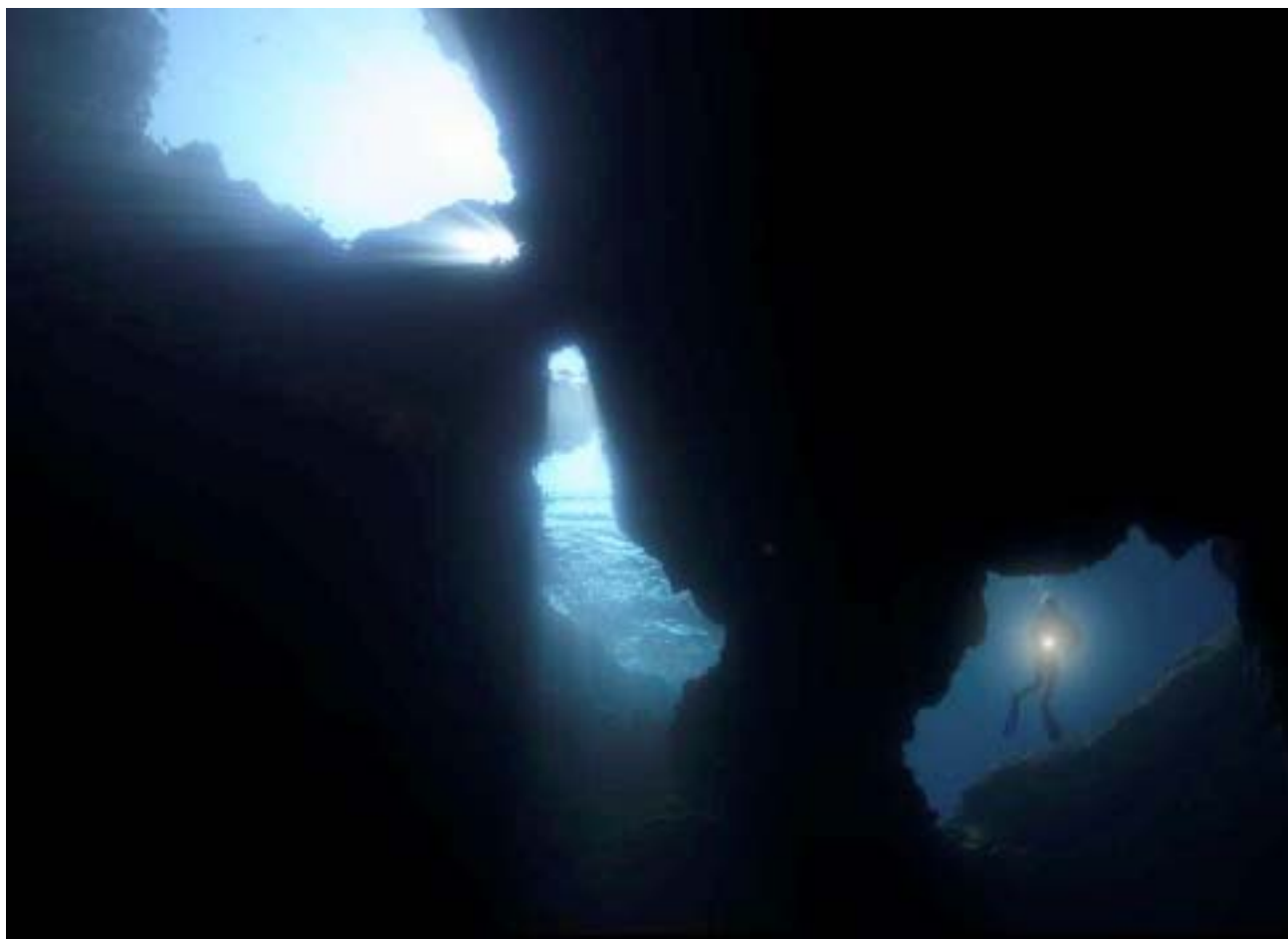
Tropical Section:

A mixed bag of images this year for all corners of the world. Images included mantis shrimps, goby, salp (pelagic hydroid), lionfish and hawkfish. Wide angle included whaleshark, fish/wreck shots, manta, divers, shoal of bigeye, turtles, caves, Thistlegorm.

Category: Wide-Angle

1st Jim Gorland

Jim's shot of a Croatian Blue Hole, with his wife as model won the day in the tropical wide-angle section. Taken with a Canon EOS5D, 16mm wide-angle lens and one of Alex's magic filters on. Well done to Jim.



2nd Neil Blackie

A Philippine dive boat with two outriggers lying on the surface some 15m above, provided Neil with a great photo opportunity.

Category: Macro

1st Paul Kay

New Zealand is obviously the place to go, with both tropical and temperate waters. A blue eyed triple fin in a very colourful surrounding of sagartia anemones gave Paul the tropical macro accolade.

(Given this was a tropical entry, I didn't expect to see sagartia anemones, how intriguing).



Category:
Macro

2nd
Pauline Blackie

Manado enabled Pauline to create this excellent shot of a pipefish attempting some form of camouflage against a deep red scarlet gorgonian fan.



Category: Macro

2nd **John**
This just sounds like a drink to me, shrimp in Margerita, but John managed to down this fine shot of a shrimp on an anemone.



Temperate Section:

Mark Thomas cleaned up the trophies (and bottles of red wine) for the temperate categories, however, let's not forget all the hard work NUPG members put in this year, diving and photographing the rich & diverse shores of this green land.

Images included grey triggerfish/diver, sagartia anemones, shrimps, gobies, pipefish, fish face, tompots, red deadmans fingers, cuckoo wrasse, scorpion spider crabs, jewel anemone and fish eye.

Category: Wide-Angle

1st Mark Thomas

A baby seal stuck its snout almost onto the lens port of Mark's Nikon F90 in the Farne Islands. With clear water and a sprinkling of kelp, this gave Mark the accolade of winner!



Category: Wide-Angle

2nd Mark Thomas

Capernwray during the winter has fascination for some, mainly Derek and Mark who like playing in the cool clear waters. Here, Mark has Derek in a reflective pose next to a bunch of pretty reeds.



Category: Wide-Angle

3rd Paul Webster

A wreck's propeller and rudder, looks really good in the bright ambient light, and a well deserved placing for Paul. The wreck is the Duke of Buckloo (apologies for spelling). As Paul explains how the image was taken, the whole audience I think were thinking the same thing.

A truly amazing image, given that it is ambient light, cold water and in the English Channel ... wait for it ... at 60m depth!



Category: Macro

1st Mark Thomas

Well deserved place for this amazing shot of a shrimp's football eyes. Needless to say it taken in Connemara Ireland, so perhaps the bulbous eyes were from the odd Guinness or two?



Category: Macro

2nd Derek Haslam

This intriguing shot of a Welsh cuttlefish wooed the audience in to awarding it second place. Taken under Trefor Pier in 2006 must have meant a little danger was involved from any possible falling pier – and outfall!



Category: Macro

3rd Lucy Kay

One of several very inquisitive blue cod lined up to take a look at Paul & Lucy, whilst they were off on their jaunts around New Zealand, Stewart Island.



Category: Macro

3rd Paul Maddox

The image that won the NUPG Summer Splash-In competition gained another accolade tonight. Paul's superb just under the surface shot of a jellyfish, taken in full sun, but with a high shutter speed and ISO.



Mini-Talks

Time flew by this meeting and three mini-talks were organised.

Ken Byrne

Ken did an audio-visual presentation on the Red Sea. His May 2006 Red Sea trip provided the material for the audio visual, and he used Adobe Premier Elements, which costs around GBP40-50 for the software.

He was able to stretch/shrink the time-lags between the images, and fade in/out the music to suit.

Tony Gilbert

Tony was also presenting imagery from the Red Sea trip he attended in Jan 2006. Unfortunately the slide projector packed up just when it was getting interesting, at a nice shot of a basket star! Oh well, perhaps another time.

Jason Gregory

A family holiday in North West Scotland gave Jason ample opportunity to dive, sightsee and generally enjoy the surroundings. Jason had some wonderful underwater shots of unusual creatures found close inshore, including a flame anemone. Also he and his family encountered wonderful beaches, a smooth worm and snakes, as well as pretty flowers, and plenty of scenery.

REPORTS and HANDOUTS

LINKS

If you have any photo-type web links you wish to share, let us know... (Also see previous issue(s) for many others).