

NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

NUPG NEWSLETTER Issue #23, Apr-Aug 2007

NUPG Web Site: www.nupg.org.uk

Colour Explosion: Jason Gregory's Ultimate Jewel Anemone.

Taken on a Nikon F90X, 60mm, Fuji Velvia Slide film. The Manacles, Cornwall.



- This Issue:**
- Meeting Information
 - Meeting Dates
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 - Summer Splash-In Report & RESULTS

Date for your Diary:

NEXT MEETING: 17th September 2007, watch website for date/details.

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
Mondays in 2007/8	White Barn Cuddington. See Website for dates/details	19.30pm - 22.00pm

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.

A reminder of the new committee:

Ken Byrne

Tony Gilbert

Derek Haslam

Mark Thomas

Paul Webster

The current committee is small in number and would welcome any more volunteers to help out. Thank You.

MEETING REVIEWS

April 2007

Spring has well and truly started and probably along with summer, is now over! A superb sunny evening and we managed to get into the long room, still with its long table in the centre.

Stalwarts that we are, we mucked on through after setting up the two projectors. About 20 people were there, quite a good gathering, for two hours, which is good to see.

Tonight's subject matter for the talks was wholly on the Canary Islands, and we had several presenters to go with that.

The Summer Splash-In date was announced as the 7th July, we had Derek's Fave Does, and the image competition was "Humorous".

We still need volunteers for the NUPG Committee, which was re-iterated, however it seems that the remaining committee could be really busy next year.



Image Competition: "Humorous"...

A difficult subject matter, especially when we are all serious photographers ... aren't we ☺

Several came up with some ideas though, and some interesting and refreshing ones, other than the crass humour you sometimes see in the popular diving magazines, such as bare items, people pulling tongues etc. All entries were digitised, about 10.

1st Mark Thomas

Farne Islands, "revenge of the seal", last October.

Mark has won a few online u/w photography competitions recently, with many shots from Capernwray.

2nd Bill Bradley

Turtle meets human in Sipadan.

Bill also has won an online competition recently (Hot Shots, "Old Kit").

3rd Paul Kay

A vertical diver on force fins.

Well done to all for their imagination and skill!

The Canary Islands

Recommended Reading:

- **Canary Islands, Lonely Planet**
- **Diving in the Canaries, Sergio Hanquet**

The Islands

For those who don't know, the Canary Islands are the edge of Europe/Africa, teetering on the Continental Shelf. These and several other islands in the chain, Madeira, Cape Verde, make up a region known as Macronesia. It is basically a series of undersea volcanoes that have broken the surface and formed islands, much like the Hawaiian Islands (although the latter are through a lava plume moving with a tectonic plate). Quite often some of the lava on the Canaries is referred to as Hawaiian lava.

These islands are split into two groups, East and West Province, and form an autonomous region of Spain. They are in the EU for Health and a few other things, but are not for duty free or food market. All the islands except Lanzarote and Fuerteventura are subject to the Gulf Stream, originating from Mexico, thus making the waters warmer than the other two other islands, which have slightly cooler waters, from the downward Canarian Current (a by product of the Gulf Stream).

Situated off the coast of Morocco and the Spanish Sahara, the inner islands are a mere 90km away from the Sahara, thus are referred to as a "chip off the old block". The more western the island, the greener and more fertile.

Tourism is quite prevalent on the larger of the islands, and has overtaken at least two of them, Gran Canaria and Tenerife. The large fat-cat property developers don't really care, or so it seems, so let's hope successive Canarian Island governments put a lid on these greedy eco-non-friendly "people".

Luckily, the other smaller islands haven't suffered so much at their hands, and certainly in Lanzarote it has been quite controlled. When I recently visited (Mar 2007), found out that the local government were thinking of stopping and pulling down recent developments of high-rise, before they were finished, in a bid to protect the eco-system!

The islands of the Canary Islands are made up of 7 main islands, 6 islets and a small set of rocks, listed:

Islands: Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, La Gomera, La Palma, El Hierro.

Islets:

Lanzarote: La Graciosa, Montana Clara, Alegranza, Roque del Este, Roque del Oeste.

Fuerteventura: Los Lobos

Low lying rocks: Las Bahas, Famara, Lanzarote.

Volcanoes

These are largely volcanic in nature, the most recent active has been Lanzarote with its full blown eruption in 1730-1736 increasing the size of the island by nearly 1/3rd and wiping out 11 villages. After this a small and very minor eruption occurred in 1841. By far the most barren is Lanzarote, followed by Fuerteventura. The latter has not had an eruption for many millennia, and boasts some of the best beaches in the world. The ancient extinct/dormant volcanoes have been weathered over time, creating picturesque landscapes, and rolling dunes of sand.

In contrast, Tenerife and Gran Canaria are similar in many ways, being of larger size and one volcano. Certainly Tenerife's volcanic activity was such that the original volcano collapsed leaving a mountain in its place, Montaña Teide. The original volcanic crater can be seen and is known as Las Cañadas. Gran Canaria exhibits a similar although a rounder structure and has many dunes, but deep cut ravines.

La Gomera, La Palma and El Hierro, were at the edge of the known world, and one created a cataclysm in the past that could be recreated by La Palma at any time. The island's structure could fall into the sea creating a monster tsunami which would wipe out the coastal districts of the eastern American seaboard!

These islands are wetter, and La Gomera probably more so, with its dense tropical and very green forest, in the interior.

Climate

Some times known as the Fortunate Isles (by Chris Columbus), the climate can be very pleasant, with water temps of around 18-24C, and air temps of around 18-22C (winter), 22-28C (summer), although this varies, as the Saharan Sirocco can come over and increase the temperature by another 10-15C. There are many plants, birds on the islands, and much to see and do. Each island has its own unique blend of flora, fauna, marine life and topography.

Diving and Marine Species

The diving is varied and availability is dependant on which island. The smaller islands are less touristy, but less accessible.

Much of the same species can be seen across the islands, although it does vary, specifically more turtles can be seen to the west. There are many species endemic to the islands (Macronesia or Canaries), such as Madeira rock fish, a specific variety of red scorpionfish, Canarian Lobsterette, which is a large spiny shrimp usually found in a deep red colour.

Typical marine species are a confluence of Mediterranean, southern Northern Atlantic and sub-tropical north Southern Atlantic and endemic, roaming around lava landscapes. These include octopus, cuttlefish, bream, grouper, anemones, nudibranchs, sharks, rays, morays and many others, too numerous to mention!

Canaries Talks

La Gomera & El Hierro, Paul & Lucy Kay

Two of the smaller islands, the latter contains many rays and has much darker sand. Floods in the recent past washed cars down the roads.

El Hierro is usually accessed by ferry, and return can only be made from the national park (La Restinga) after a day of off-gassing, as the route back is over very high passes. It consists of very volcanic and stunning landscapes. Restinga is the marine park, and much of the island consists of rugged coastline with very little beach.

The topography is variable, with strange lava formations, pine forest, is a biosphere and is often shrouded in mist & cloud. Many tree heathers, mossy forests and juniper trees exist.

Marine life includes Vieje (parrotfish) and scorpionfish, which are all over. Also, golden moray, dark moray, snake and trumpetfish. Lucy/Paul also showed a cow ray, bream, hermit crab, shrimps, sharpnose puffer & torpedo ray.

They dived with El Tamboril, run by Esta/Antonio, and Scuba Dive West run an operation out there.

Tenerife, Tony Gilbert

Tenerife is the largest of the islands, and has many tourist places, which means many dive centres. Much of the diving is conducted on the southwest and west coastlines. The main tourist areas Playa de las Americas / Los Christianos, Las Galletas, and further a field Santa Cruz. Many dive centres run boats and shore diving is possible in certain areas, but much of the coastline remains largely vertiginous rocks. The diving is slightly offshore to deep lava cliff drop offs. Night dives can also be conducted, and one of the most famous dives is to Las Galletas ray feeding station. Another is to the cement wreck which is now largely disintegrated. Dolphins, turtles and rays are frequent, and many sightings been made of whales.

Tony dived with Coral Sub situated in the Tenbel (Tenerife Belgique) complex of Las Galletas well away from the big tourist conurbations! Run by a Belgian, with multinational/lingual staff it made for some great diving.

Fuerteventura.Lanzarote, Colin Samuel/Tony Gilbert

Situated very close to the African Sahara, these islands can have desert like temperatures, and conditions, very hot by day and cold by night, especially during the cooler months. The ferocious Saharan sun can bake the islands and you quite easily!

Fuerteventura has many drop offs along its inhabited coastlines, mainly on the eastern side. Correlajo is the jumping off point for Lanzarote across the La Bocainya, a shallow stretch of sea which separates the islands. The nearby island of Los Lobos provides many diving opportunities. The small island has many small volcanic mounds, Hornitos, and usually rays, sharks and dolphins prefer its sandy sheltered waters.

Amongst the marine species shown by Colin, were large scaled scorpionfish, small scaled scorpionfish, endemic scorpionfish – Scorpiensis canariesis, fireworm, moray, lizardfish and arrow crabs.

Much has been said about Lanzarote and this was no exception as Tony presented a slide show of images from his 15 years visiting the island, usually 1 or two times a year. If anything, the island is more unique than any other in the Canaries, or that was Tony's intimation. Borne of recent lava and fire, the coarse volcanic topography has given rise to a mixture of marine species never found anywhere else. Many endemic species occur, and a marine park in the north adds another facet. The land is littered with many volcanoes, some say 100 or more, and many ash mountains. The lava has created sharp dangerous cliffs, which have been tempered by the sea. These cliffs drop sharply into the water in places, to 1500m. This brings in many pelagic species of marine life.

The coastline around Playa Chica, which nestles between old and new town Puerto del Carmen is the main diving area, as the drop occurs close by. Here, a plethora of species occurs, which includes all those previous mentioned, and sea hares, tube anemones, tube worms, nudibranch varieties, cuttlefish, butterfly rays, several varieties of shrimps, flatworms, crabs, slipper lobster, and Canarian lobsterette.

Tony dived with Safari Diving, on Playa Chica, who he has been diving with for 11 years (and they still haven't folded).

Derek's Dirty Dozen

Dirty Harry or Kelly's Heroes has nothing on Dirk as he delivered a full broadside of imagery, fresh (water) from the quarries of this green and pleasant land!

Vivian Quarry in North Wales, Llanberis, where many a slate was mined, and nowadays the highlight is watching the eels go through in October.

Stoney Cove, no doubt a repository of rock destined for the Black Country motorways is the busiest inland quarry in Britain, and I wouldn't be surprised the world!

Capernwray or Jackdaw Quarry in the foothills of the Cumbrian Lake District with its unique blend of blue water, no doubt from the copper sulphate leached into the water, was used to build the north-south artery, the M6.

On show tonight were a selection of mainly "why dangles" from said establishments taken with his 10.5mm get-it-into-the-face lens. Listed below are just some of those shown in all their glory, quarries as you've never seen them before...

Vivian:

Miners trolley above the water on a steel cable, taken from under the water.

Vivian: Wall of, with sunbursts

Capernwray: Diver and trout

Stoney: Pike & diver

Stoney: Pike and weed

Capernwray: Podsnap bow

River Lune: Peat laden water in the Lune

Vivian: Surface edge tree systems

River Lune: Rocks and bear trees at the surface, from underwater

Capernwray: Silver trout and sunburst

Stoney: valve cluster and fried perch 😊

May 2007

The meeting was mainly taken up by the AGM, leaving only room for the image comp. and Tony's Tricky Twelve.

AGM

The meeting comprised of only 9 members, which was probably the worst attendance in the history of NUPG! Of those 9 members, 7 were from the committee. The weirdest thing was this was the only meeting to run over its time!

Resume of 2006/2007 – Tony Gilbert

Tony gave a resume of events over the past NUPG Year, which can be viewed at some stage on the NUPG Website. It has been a surprisingly busy year, with the many meetings, two splash-ins, Blue Planet & Dive Show.

Membership Report – Gail Samuel

The membership seemed to have remained steady at around 27 members, with a few non-members attending sporadically.

Finances Report – Lucy Kay

Lucy reported healthy books, with the club in the black. Not many outgoings, mainly expenses for guest speaker. Incomings aside from membership, was from the proceeds of the summer splash-in.

Website Report – Ken Byrne

Not much to report here, except that there is plenty of space remaining for imagery.

NUPG Future

With 5 committee members resigning this year, it left 2 committee members to carry on. We said farewell to Lucy & Paul Kay, Colin & Gail Samuels and Jason Gregory.

A big thanks from all of us present on the sterling work they have done in keeping NUPG going especially Lucy, who has probably been the busiest of all.

Paul Webster volunteered to come on to the committee. Clearly NUPG cannot function as a group with 3 committee members, and at this time it was decided to amend the constitution, the rules governing the dissolution of the club, and what to do with the proceeds. More on this later.

The caretaker committee will decide what is the best thing to do with the club. Two other potential members, at the time of the meeting were suggested. These were not present at the meeting.

In the meantime, tasks were allotted as best they could, and other tasks were removed:

General Secretary and Newsletter: Tony Gilbert

Website and Finance: Ken Byrne

Venue: Paul Webster

Membership: tbd

Still, it wasn't all gloom and doom, as the Summer Splash-In was up & coming at the time.

Image Competition: "The Ultimate Jewel Anemone"

Well. To decide which were the winners of the image competition, was going to be more of a challenge. So many "jewels in the crown" to choose from, and like London Buses all came at once and all looked the same!

There 10 entries or digitised, and thankfully we had a winner and runners up. The jewel anemones ranged not in form, that was pretty much the same, but distinctive colours and the "prettiness factor", lighting and so forth.

1st Paul Kay

Achill Island, C. Mayo, obviously has the best jewels around. Taken in July 2004. Well done to Paul for winning what is an easy subject to photograph, but difficult to master.

2nd Jason Gregory

Evidently scanned slide images stand up against digital images, and this big image was of a little crop of colourful anemones, taken off The Manacles in Cornwall. Now gracing the front cover of this edition.

3rd Jason Gregory

Probably the same Manacles dive as previous, using Velvia 50 film and 60mm lens, the image was scanned and marginally cropped.

Tony's Tricky Twelve

As the last act of the current NUPG year, Tony closed the meeting with an array of 12'ish images, his chosen baker's dozen. He had chosen these all from 2007, both from overseas and UK trips already taken.

The images were:

Plymouth Easter:

- James Eagan Layne, 16mm Fish-Eye shot of the whole height of the stern piece of the bow section. Ambient light, 1/60th, F8, 10m vis. good light levels.
- James Eagan Layne, 16mm Fish-Eye of the bow top with bubbles and divers.
- Hand Deeps, 60mm Macro, Jewel Anemones, striking orange in colour.
- Hilsea Point Rocks. Clutch of rare Parazoanthus in a distinctive yellow colour.

Lanzarote, Playa Chica House Reef and surrounds (all taken with 60mm lens):

- Pregnant and laying eggs, large *Flabellina affinis* nudibranch.
- Small & colourful hermit crab in nearby cave.
- Scenic shot of a large colony of *Spirographia* (*Sabelladae*) Worms.
- Close up of one of the *Spirographia* Worms.
- Speckled flatworm, very rare to the Canaries and currently unidentified.

Egyptian Red Sea:

- Thistle gorm above Hold 2, ambient 16mm fish-eye shot of Diver in the middle of two railway locomotive tenders, which were on either edge of the deck.
- Coral head top glistening in morning sunlight, consisting of hard corals, with a reflective under surface of water.
- Port side locomotive, with dive and sun. Taken in 33m of water, at 7am, using 16mm fish-eye lens, Velvia/Provia 100F, F5.6/2.8, 1/30-60th sec.

Capernwray:

- Colourful rock face at surface, with a mirror surface. Taken at Splash-In.

1st Paul Kay

Paul's vibrant shot of jewel anemones won the day, and was the final winner of the competitions this NUPG year.



3rd Jason Gregory

Jason's Manacles moody shot won him 3rd place.



Well done to both Paul and Jason for creating some stunning imagery.

REPORTS and HANDOUTS

2007 Summer Splash-In Report and Results, Tony Gilbert

Roving NUPG reporter TonyG was already on his travels, as the NUPG Summer Splash-In started, on Saturday July 7th, as he was already diving on a club trip, over on the Lleyn Peninsula, with Al Gray & Shearwater.

Tony however turned up to the evening festivities, just on time!

Lashing it Down

Rain, rain, more rain and a double-dose of wind, just not what the doctor ordered, as the British summer continued on its wet way. Friday evening couldn't have started any worse, with driving rain in Cheshire, a depressing thought for the following day.

Travelling past Snowdonia a transformation took place and the Lleyn's microclimate kicked in. Reports were had of similar conditions on Anglesey's climate, both coastal areas of the Snowdonia National Park. Looking inland, the angry grey sky just sat there, while we basked in brilliant sunshine, and warm conditions. Diving on Friday evening was out though; too much wind around had reduced the visibility to < 2m.

That NUPG "go-and-get-it" Spirit!

The following day saw the entrants off to various places on Anglesey, such as Holyhead's MacKenzie Landing (or Pier as it is sometimes known), Trearddur Bay area including the reefs off "haunted house", or as far a field as Vivian Quarry!

As it was all digital, there was no time limit as such, merely an 8am check-in, and to bring your chosen images to the comp evening.

Meanwhile, back on Planet Mars

The weather held, just a pity about the sea visibility of about 3m in the first 3m, but it was enough to shoot macro, and of course Vivian with 10m.

Meanwhile, back on the Llyn, TonyG was experiencing similar conditions, diving Rhiuw, a dive site (and nearby village name), just inside Hell's Mouth. The wind was dropping, but there was still some groundswell around. Here, were found a variety of nudibranchs, dogfish and large conurbations of common sea hares, 7 of which were stuck together mating at the same time! Vis. was only marginally better at 4-5m.

The Evening

The evening was glorious, wonderful sunshine over the Trearddur Bay Hotel, and all were in shorts. Ken & Co had already arranged the tables for the print competition, which was a complete reverse to last years, with very few overseas submissions, and a mass of UK. Attendance was certainly down from last year, with around 16 people.

Splash-In Competition

Given the below average conditions at this time of year it's a wonder anything was photographed, but there was a stunning array. There were 5 shooters ("guv"), and a total of 15 images. The dazzling array of salty submissions included Tompots (!), beadlet anemones, crabs and shrimps. Sweet water shots included subsurface shots of various floating flora, and a "duck's ass", fins of a diver in a bath, and t-rex himself!

The images were shown 3 times, and judging commenced. **Thanks to Heather and Gail** for doing all the counting and presentation, they've aged 10 years (or was that Derek – and could you tell?! In the judging there were more ties than at Burtons! With 6, second places, several re-trials were necessary, and eventually after much barracking and "discussion", there was a winner and a whole bunch of runner's up!

Winners and Runner's Up, in reverse order...

3rd Places:

Ken Byrne: Beadlet Anemone

Taken just off the “haunted house” in 0.5m depth. Incidentally the anemone is called Casper (and he's friendly).

Paul Maddox: Velvet Swimming Crab

Holyhead Marina and MacKenzie Landing provided Paul with the opportunity of snapping this swimming crab.

Derek Haslam: Leaves of the surface.

That is tree leaves, not Derek leaving! A Vivian shot of leaves resting in the surface tension.

Paul Maddox: Shrimp

“By eck chuck”, scampi! Nice looking shrimp with attendant particles in water, on a dusty seabed.

2nd Place:

Eventually 1 placing was chosen, and Mark “pretty famous” Thomas produced a corker. He nipped over to Florida using a quantum entanglement machine (beam me up Scotty), and met up with a guy called John A.T. Vivian, who showed him a:

Mangrove'y type swampy thing

He duly recorded his findings in pixellated form, and was back in time for tea & scones, but no time to recite a poem.

1st Place:

Derek Haslam was crowned NUPG SUMMER Splash-In Winner for 2007...

Derek produced a crispy shot of a duck with a selection of green vegetables...whoops, talking food again!

The atmospheric, and a-spherical shot of the duck from underneath clinched the coveted prize. Taken with a 10.5mm fish-eye practically tickling the webbed feet.

**Well done to all entrants,
runners-up
and winner
alike!**

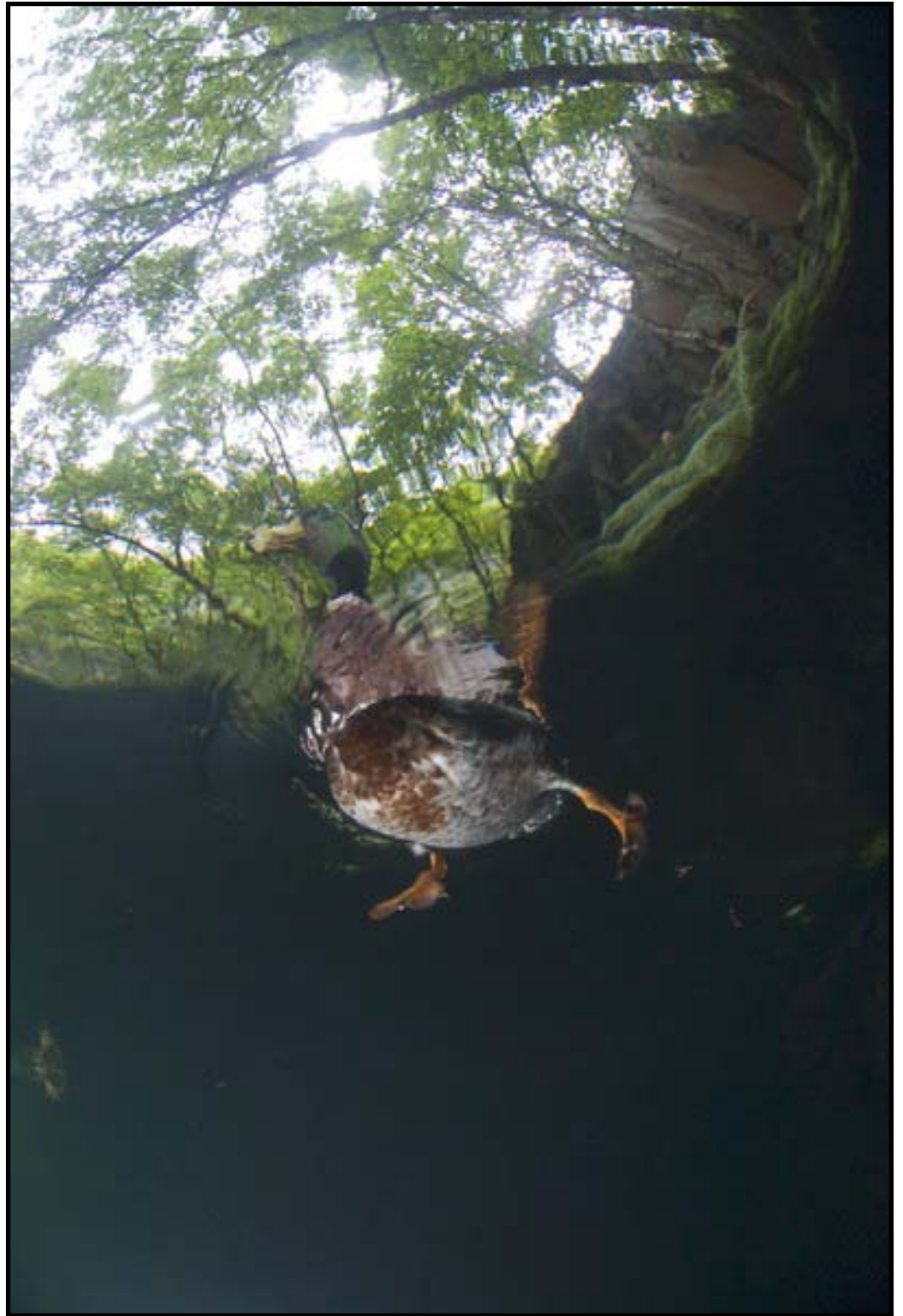
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1st Derek Haslam

Duck-Dude

The duck got it, and never saw it coming... bung us an orange!



2nd Mark Thomas

Mark's Mangrove Mania... and now children, let's see what's through the round (Snell's) window shall we...



**Joint 3rd
Ken Byrne**

Ken kept a beady eye on this colourful little creature, in the shallows off haunted house.

Joint 3rd Derek Haslam

Derek cleans up the wine store with this Lilliputian look from the inside of Vivian Quarry.



Joint 3rd Paul Maddocks' two images:



On Paul's menu today, was a Shrimp & Crab Bisque.



PRINT COMPETITION

Last but not least, the print competition...

Time to vote for the print competition. Submitted were 6 overseas prints, shark, stargazer, butterflyfish, turtle & tube worms.

UK prints were very well represented, with 19 images, of skate, lobster, jewel anemones, trout, red deadmans fingers scene, goby, grey seal, bottle brush hydroids scene & a snorkeller.

And the winner's and runner's up, in reverse order per category are:

Overseas

2nd Place

Derek Haslam produced a fine shot of a shark, or was it the other way around?

1st Place

Derek Haslam, again, had his turtle shot "well-ninja'd".

UK

Stiff competition, but the Cheshire men hit the bull's eye again.

2nd Place

Ken sealed this placing with his "w-eye-man" Farnes seal.

1st Place

Mark Thomas produced an interesting apnea-orientated shot. Free diving snorkeller, who he regular sees, provided Mark's ideal photo opportunity.

Well done to all who entered.

LINKS

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

www.deepimage.co.uk

A web site, containing many images from Leigh Bishop, and has a more "commercial" feel to it, one of wreck discovery and salvage.

It does however contain some interesting articles, and impressive deepwater images. For those into photographing metal and deeper diving, this is a good read.