

# NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

## NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2002, Issue #6

NUPG Web Site: [www.nupg.org.uk](http://www.nupg.org.uk)

*Mark Walker: Winner of the NUPG September Meeting, Wet-Camera Slide Competition.*

A Batfish taken in Sipadan, photographed using a MotormarineII with a YS50 Flash and a 16mm wide-angle lens.



### **This Issue:**

- *Meeting Dates, Forthcoming Meetings & New Members. NUPG Members News.*
- *Future Splash-Ins & Events*
  - *Winter Splash-In 2003*
  - *Fun Quiz, AGM 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003.*
- *Exhibitions*
  - *Shell Winter 2002*
  - *Penrhyn Castle 2003*
- *Reports and Articles*
  - *Summer Splash-In August 2002*
  - *Article, Photo Mallorca por favor!*
  - *Links*
  - *Adverts*
  - *Talk Handouts - Mark Walker: How to Avoid Floods*
  - *Talk Handouts - Tony Gilbert: Sea & Sea MotormarineII Systems, Hints and Tips.*
- *Contributors this Issue:*
  - *Lucy and Paul Kay, for much of the Meeting Review notes, Summer Splash-In Review, most of the images and much more!*
  - *Ken Byrne for the Shell Exhibition details.*

### **Date for your Diary:**

**NEXT NUPG MEETING:** Monday November 11<sup>th</sup>, Windmill Pub J19 M6, Knutsford at 1930 prompt.

**Editor:** Tony Gilbert, e-mail: [NoDecoWarrior@hotmail.com](mailto:NoDecoWarrior@hotmail.com)

## MEETING DATES for your diary

A nice flyer has been produced by Jason Gregory which includes all the meeting dates and where. Pass on to your friends & colleagues who may fancy joining the club. **Please note the VENUE CHANGE.**

# The Northern Underwater Photography Group

Contact information, meetings & events - November 2002 to March 2003.

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
November 11th 2002	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	7.30pm
December 9th 2002	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	7.30pm
January 13th 2003	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	7.30pm
March 10th 2003	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	7.30pm
May 12th 2003	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	7.30pm

Xmas

AGM & FUN QUIZ

To find the venue please use an A-Z or road map

For further information contact 01248 681361 or 01274 852361 or 01253 395746 and our web site [www.nupg.org.uk](http://www.nupg.org.uk)

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

### 11th NOVEMBER 2002

**Speaker** : Brendan O'Brien, on "What might in Magazines"

All who are attending the meeting, should bring one slide, which they would consider good enough as a front cover.

**Competition Theme** : The Colour **GREEN**

**Technical Talk** : Steve Smithson, "Wide Angle Lighting"

**My 5 Slides** : **Ken Byrne** has the honour this time!

This is a chance for a member to "volunteer" and show their 5 favourite underwater slides, a sort of "Desert Island Discs" of NUPG!! Remember, you may have images and ideas, which inspire the rest of us, so it's a knowledge sharing experience! And, the "volunteer" has the honour of selecting the next "victim" for the succeeding meeting, preferably somebody who hasn't shown before.

### 9th DECEMBER 2002

**Speaker** : Members Evening, 5-6 members doing a 10-15 minute slot showing their slides.

**Competition Theme** : Best of 2002, with 2 Categories (2 slides per person, per category)

a) UK Shots taken within the last 12 months.

b) Tropical Shots taken within the last 12 months.

**Technical Talk** : None, this meeting.

**My 5 Slides** : A volunteer, to show maybe a turkey fish this festive time, or just their 5-alive shots.

### 13th JANUARY 2003

**Speaker** : tba

**Competition Theme** : Eyes or Mouths

**Technical Talk** : Paul Kay on Camera Maintenance.

**My 5 Slides** : Another visit to the strange world of the popstastic top 5, a swarre of colour & form could be yours ...

### 10th MARCH 2003

**Speaker** : Alan Mildren - an audio-visual show.

**Competition Theme** : Water

**Technical Talk** : tba

**My 5 Slides** : Dust off the covers, shake the sheets, clean up at Spring with your top 5 of seasons past.

## MEETING REVIEWS

Since the last newsletter we've had 2 meetings.

### 8th JULY 2002

#### **New Venue and the Verdict?**

This was the Group's first meeting at the new venue of The Windmill Pub by Junction 19 of the M6.

A cheaper venue for the group and more intimate than the East Cheshire building but a bit too cosy in the one room with noise from the bar. Booked two rooms for the next meeting.

#### **Speaker : NUPG's founder Chairman - Steve Smithson**

Steve's 'surprise subject' helped to give us a feeling of summer by taking us to the warmer, more humid climate of Indonesia - to Manado to be specific. Steve took us on a fantastic tour through some of the weird and wonderful species that he has seen and photographed on his visits to this spectacular centre of marine biodiversity (I didn't just make that up or decide to write it after Steve's talk! Credit has to go to Alfred Wallace 18??, who first recognized the rich variety of wildlife in this part of the world). Steve's pictures had been shot at various locations around the islands off Manado and also the Lembeh Strait as well as from the house reef of Tasik Ria resort.

(If members are interested in finding out more about the Tasik Ria resort & Eco Divers Manado, Lucy has a copy of an information leaflet from Steve).

#### **Competition Theme : Crabs and their relatives (crabs, lobbies, crawfish, shrimps & prawns)**

Some excellent slides resulted in a very varied vote with 2 tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place, 3 for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6(!) for 3<sup>rd</sup> place as follows:

1<sup>st</sup>: Jason Gregory - A shore crab photographed on a spooky dive in Loch Long

1<sup>st</sup>: Ken Byrne - An edible crab photographed on the Manacles

2<sup>nd</sup>: Antonio Sanchez-Capuchino - Hermit Crab from Majorca

2<sup>nd</sup>: Charles Wolstenholme - Close-up of shrimps from Tenerife

2<sup>nd</sup>: Steve Smithson - Shrimp from Manado

3<sup>rd</sup>: Antonio - Porcelain crab from Sipadan

3<sup>rd</sup>: Jason - Long-clawed squat lobster from a less scary dive at Loch Long

3<sup>rd</sup>: Charles - Squat lobster from St Abbs

3<sup>rd</sup>: Steve - Crayfish from Stoney Cove

3<sup>rd</sup>: Ken - Squat lobster from the Farne Is

3<sup>rd</sup>: Derek Haslam - Lobster.

#### **Technical Talk : Paul Kay, "What Film?, What Print?", making the most of your images.**

Paul introduced people to the idea of using colour negative (print) film for underwater photos. Although not as fine grain as slide film it has the advantages of a higher tonal range (can record more shadow and highlight detail) and greater exposure latitude (more tolerant of over/under exposure) which in particular provides advantages in non-SLR underwater cameras.

Paul also talked about digital prints and the different types of paper and ink that can be used. The choice of paper and ink can make a big difference to the prints that you end up with. Paul informed the group that Cambrian Photography, Colwyn Bay (who, incidentally did the processing for the Splash-In) can now produce prints on real photographic paper from digital files up to 10" x 15" or inkjet prints up to 24" wide (an example of which was shown at the meeting). The discussion also covered prints from digital cameras - the quality of the results from these is now improving - will slides have disappeared in 15 years from now? A future topic for discussion!

#### **My 5 Slides : By DEREK HASLAM ('DIRK')**

Dirk had selected his Fave 5 on the basis of particularly liking the shots, but also because each of them came with a story .....

- i. Trevallies (sometimes known as 'Jacks') in the Red Sea feeding on glass fish. Taken with a Nik 5, 20mm lens.
- ii. Tompot blenny, Trefor Pier. This was a lovely pic of Derek's tame tompot! Trefor pier is a great place to photograph these cheeky chappies and chapesses (Colin, take note!!). Taken with a housed Nikon F50 with 105mm lens and 2 strobes.
- iii. Reef shot, Red Sea (the Brothers) - a Red Sea Splash-In. Taking photos with no flash on - made friends with a freckled hawkfish.
- iv. Feeding basking shark, Cornwall. An exciting trip to see these magnificent fish.
- v. Dirk's favourite picture EVER - the shark of all sharks - the Great White. Photographed on a (sometimes scary) trip to South Africa this year. Taken with a Nikon F50 with a 20mm lens.

## **23rd SEPTEMBER 2002**

### **Speaker :**

**Tony Gilbert, "Getting the Best out of MotorMarine IEx Systems", delve into the world of MMII Wet Cameras.** (Or, as Lucy put it - NUPG's Mr Motormarine!!) . See Talk Handout at the end of this Newsletter.

Tony Gilbert was allowed to speak continuously for more than 15 minutes as he provided a Tour de Force of MotormarineII wet camera systems, from using a basic configuration (of a squeeze bottle, some sticky backed plastic and used toilet rolls) to using more advanced bolt on configurations. Many of the audience are users of wet-cameras and the techniques, hint & tips presented, based on 6 years of intense photography using these systems, went some way in assisting others to experiment further. The remainder of the audience are veterans of wet camera systems, and I am sure this brought back many a fond memory. The slide show was broken down in-built, macro & wide-angle lenses, single & twin strobes. Techniques were also covered, with ambient, wreck, balanced, close-up and fish photography. As one well known photographer remarked, he/she didn't realise you could get such a good quality shot from these systems, and many of the slides, along with Mark Walker's winning shot, on the cover, just go to prove it!

### **Competition Theme :**

**Open Competition, for Images taken ONLY with non-housed cameras (Motormarine, Nikonos V, etc.)**

High quality entries showed what results are possible from non-housed cameras. The winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Mark Walker - a picture of a bat fish and sunburst taken with a Motormarine II and 16mm lens at Sipadan.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Fiona Black - a dogfish face photographed at the Isle of Man using a Nikonos.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Tony Gilbert - fish shoal at the surface - taken using his trusty Motormarine IEx with 16mm lens and a combination of ambient & strobe light, 1/125th, F8/11, twin YS90 strobes.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Kirk Mottershead - close-up of a shrimp in sea grass taken using a Motormarine II.

### **Technical Talk :**

**Mark Walker, "How to avoid floods", protect your camera systems against the deadly camera killer - water.**

See Talk Handout at the end of this Newsletter.

Mark gave an extremely useful presentation about steps to take to avoid flooding your underwater photo kit. This included examples from other members at the meeting of horror stories of flooded cameras caused by accidentally knocking the lens port before diving, lanyards blocking seals or catching clips holding housings shut and broken o-rings in control levers. Mark produced a very useful handout of practical Do's and Don'ts to help avoid the underwater photographers' nightmare.

(A dive shortly after, with one who attended the evening, his video housing flooded at 20m, after checking the leak sensors, as per Mark's suggestions, and was able to save the video camera within – as a result, Ed.)

### **My 5 Slides :**

**Top 5 Slides, will you be showing yours? Well, Keith ('Chubby') Lloyd did, and impressive they were too!**

Keith had chosen a theme of 'low vis' for his Fave 5 - despite poor diving conditions when the pictures were taken, the images were extremely clear with very little back scatter, showing what it's possible to achieve even in low vis. All the shots were taken with Keith's camera set-up of a Nikon F50 in a Sea & Sea NX50 housing with twin strobes.

- i. Velvet swimming crab
- ii. Prawn - photographed at Trefor Pier
- iii. Cuttlefish photographed at Plymouth.
- iv. Pipefish photographed on a shallow shore dive at Criccieth
- v. Tompot blenny (the winning image from the very first NUPG slide comp!) photographed at Trefor Pier.

(Certainly I was impressed, and rather than hang my fins up for the winter (perish the thought) I am off to Trefor Pier to see whether Trefor Tompot is willing to have a framer dangled in front him! Ed.)

**The Hartford lads are back at it again, next meeting with Dave Buckley's top 5!**

### **Summer Splash-In Prints and Slides**

Lucy brought along the Splash-In prints for everyone to have a look at and also showed the winning Splash-In slides taken on the day. See article about the Splash-In in this edition of the Newsletter.

### **Venue**

All agreed that having both the rooms made a difference. Might get a bit crowded if a lot of people turned up, but altering the seating in the room may help sort this out.

## NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to **Mike Hyde** who recently joined the group. Mike's introduction to NUPG was turning up on spec to take part in the Splash-In!

## NUPG MEMBERS NEWS

- **Jason Gregory** was the *Winner* of the high profile St. Abbs Splash-In, held late August / early September. He beat many other contenders including several BSoUP entrants!
- **Steve Smithson** was recently awarded *Highly Commended*, in the British Gas Wildlife Photographer of Year 2002 competition, with his shot of a cheeky looking grey seal in the Isle of Man.

## FUTURE SPLASH-INS & Events

### **1. WINTER 2003**

Last years Winter Splash-In was held in a busy Stoney Cove, in March, on a brilliant sunny day with great visibility. Both wide angle and macro shots were taken and the results spoke for themselves. Although only a small number attended it was very worthwhile entering and taking part, so we are currently planning another. Watch this space, it's coming to a dive site near you...

### **2. FUN QUIZ - 12<sup>th</sup> May AGM NUPG Meeting**

Open to all who attend the AGM, we have organised a small Fun Quiz for the evening. A series of underwater photo-related teasers broken down into a collection of loose categories. To challenge the imaginative mind we have Techniques, Films TV & Celebs, History of u/w photography, Science. Lastly, a "slide" clinic containing a small selection of house-of-horrors slides. It's fun stuff and most of the questions you'll know the answers to however there are a few that may just catch you out.

## EXHIBITIONS

### **1. Shell Offices, Wythenshawe, October/November 2002 – NOW RUNNING**

As you may remember, the previous exhibition last year at the Shell offices proved extremely popular for ourselves as well as the viewing Shell staff. 3 pictures were sold last time, and a small donation made to charity. The artists showing images in other shows range from students to semi/professionals, abstract works, paintings & photographs. The building is normally able to house about 40 images, which are seen on a daily basis along the corridors, by several hundred people.

Ken Byrne arranged another slot with the Shell Representative, Bernie Doerer and the exhibition is running for two months, Oct/Nov 2002. Another success story, where several suitable walls are now graced with our hard-photographed pictures! There have been many complimentary comments regarding the images, as many of the viewers don't get a chance to see some really great shots of the underwater world - up close and personal. Dave Buckley's Great White Shark and Mark Walker's Squid are just two of the more popular ones attracting attention.

An exhibitors evening was scheduled for the 1st November and a few members attended. The images were located in 4 galleries, located in three foyers and a central corridor. It gave a chance for members to view other member's works where otherwise they wouldn't have done. We had 8 exhibitors this year, with images ranging from fish (cuckoo wrasse cuttlefish, squid, goldfish), shipwrecks, crabs, urchins, starfish, plumose anemones, fireworks anemone to dolphins, sunfish and sharks. Many of the titles such as "Whitesnake", "Space Ship" & "Inner Space" let the imagination wander.

Thanks to the exhibitors for providing the images: Ken Byrne, Dave Buckley, Tony Gilbert, Derek Haslam, Lucy Kay, Paul Kay, Steve Smithson & Mark Walker, and **many thanks go to Ken Byrne** for all the hard work and effort gone into organising this event.

### **2. Penrhyn Castle, 2003**

A new additional exhibition "site" for us, is being put forward, which is Penrhyn Castle, one of the North's premier places for showing images to the public. Paul Kay outlined the details of this prestigious place - this could be our/your chance to shine, with an image that would capture the hearts of some of the 25000 visitors a year!!!

A large room is available, which is in effect, a blank canvas for us to experiment and show on. The image framing must be of good/excellent quality, and sized at preferably A3/20x16" or they will be lost in the room! This means each individual image would cost you around £50 to produce and frame, and we would mount them as well. The March meeting show of hands indicated a willingness to follow this further, and several indicated the same at the May meeting. We are looking for around 40-60 images (depending on size), so that's about 2-3 images per person.

**So, lets get moving with this, and if you are interested in showing here, let Paul know now, or the next meeting.**

## ARTICLES AND REPORTS

### SUMMER 2002 SPLASH IN : **The trophy heads East!**, report by Lucy Kay

The keen entrants for the NUPG 2002 Splash-In, held in Anglesey on August 31st, all turned up for the early morning start (0745-0815) for this year's competition. Despite having had calm weather the previous weeks and sun on the day, the wind was not in our favour and had stirred up Anglesey's finest sediments reducing vis to 2-3m max. The hardy Chester entrants braved the sea conditions and took out their club boats, whilst the others sought suitable shore dives that offered some shelter and, hopefully, interesting subjects to photograph. Some travelled to the Menai Strait, managing to catch slack water and get back in time to hand their film in - handy thing the new dual carriageway! 15 people took part this year but one person had gear problems and wasn't able to take any photos.

#### Splash-In Winning shots:

**1<sup>st</sup> Derek Haslam**  
**Double-Fanned Worm**

Congratulations to **Derek Haslam** for his shot of a double-fan worm - a clear winner.



Despite the Welsh entrants best efforts the trophy has slipped through their clutches and gone to Cheshire!

Also congratulations to **Neil o'May** and **Ken Byrne** for their 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> placed shorts.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Neil May**  
**Small Hermit Crab**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Ken Byrne**  
**Velvet Swimming Crabs**



**This year's Splash-In was held as part of the Holyhead Diving Festival. As a result of the advertising for the Festival 3 people new to NUPG found out about the Splash-In and took part!**

Temperate:

**Splash-In Print Competition**

As well as the on-the-day slide competition, there was also a Print Competition running. 25 entries of tropical & temperate photographs put on an impressive display as part of the Holyhead Diving Festival. All those coming to the Festival on the Saturday were able to vote for their favourite two prints, and the prints were also on display during the early evening at the Beach Hotel for last-minute voting before the Splash-In slide competition. From the high quality pics on display the winning shots were:

**1<sup>st</sup>  
Paul  
Kay  
Diver  
and  
Conger**



**2<sup>nd</sup>  
Paul  
Kay  
Octopus**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Lucy Kay  
Dahlia Anemones**



Tropical:

**1<sup>st</sup> Dave Buckley Great White Shark**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Simon Fielding  
Anthias and Sea Fan**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Bill Sanderson Whale Shark and Diver**



Thank you to all who took part in both the Splash-In and the Print Competition - your involvement makes the events a success (even if the Hotel wasn't willing to serve any food!!).

## ARTICLES

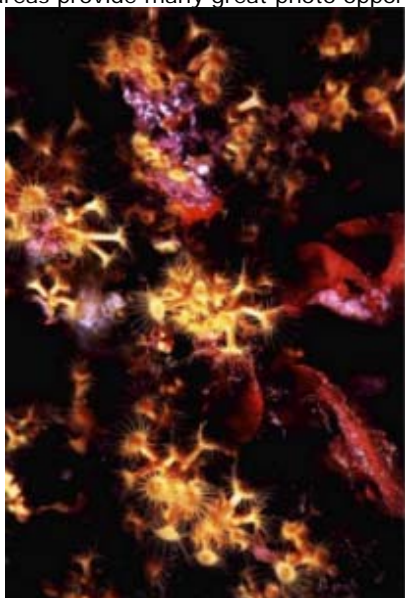
If you have a small piece you would like to see included in the Newsletter, please send it in .rtf format to the Editor and maybe a selection of images. It can be humorous, something about underwater photography, an interesting slant on diving, whatever really. Here are this Newsletter's contributions...

### ARTICLE ONE

What's this Mediterranean diving all about then and can I get some good photos? Tony Gilbert seems to think you can and explains why...

#### Photo Mallorca por Favor!, by Tony Gilbert

Three years hence we ventured off to the Spanish Balearic island of Mallorca on a family holiday, staying in a wonderfully quiet cove on the North East of the island. The month of September was hot, along the hot dusty roads to the east lay the coastal resort of Cala Millor; a bustling tourist metropolis of hotel complexes, a wide sweeping beach, along with many shops, restaurants, and finally diving facilities. This year, in August, another chance to visit the island materialised, and as we stepped off the coach at our resort, this time in the South East, the smell of nearby pine forests burning in the hot sunshine keened our senses. Staying in the resort of Cala d' Or / Cala Gran, we were lucky enough to have the half board hotel and its facilities within 25m of the white sand beach, better still the dive centre was also beachside! The diving in both places is similar in some ways, differs in others, but I am able to say that both areas provide many great photo opportunities.



Cala Millor had several little inshore rocks as well as number of steep sloping ridge walls, whereas Cala Gran contains many rock structures which tower and plunge, sea arches, swimthroughs; both profuse in aquatic life. Add to this the bright sunshine, clear blue water, varied rock formations, deep green sea grasses, then you have the makings of many a great photograph whether wide angle or macro. With depths which average 20m, and a water temperature of around 26-29C in Aug/Sep it makes this almost tropical!

Macro subjects abound, in the form of nudibranchs, octopus, large deep purple starfish, cnidaria and anemones, creating a vivid tapestry of colour amongst the swathes of encrusting sponges, star corals and tube squirts packed into every facet of every rock. Night dives only succeed in enhancing this further with an abundance of large deep red coloured scorpionfish. Wet camera system framers may have difficulty in capturing on film the skittish silver eel elvers that skud across the rippling sand during the night, however, a housed camera system may.

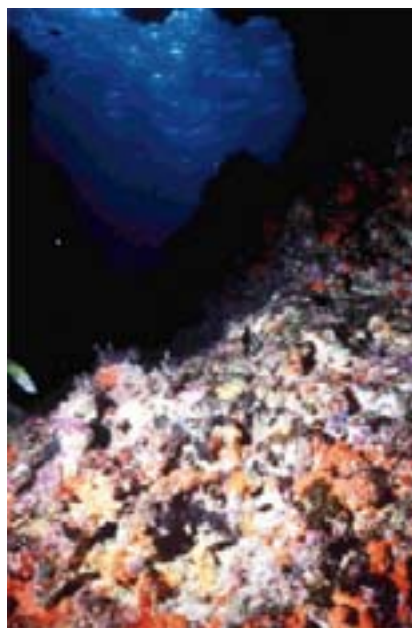
A profusion of fish species greets on most of the dive sites, in particular, Punta N' Amer in the north, the headland of Cala Millor is outstanding for the varied fish shoals of bream, barracuda, silversides, which swish this way and that in the dying embers of the late afternoon sunshine. Many sites also contain collections of boulders, especially at the base of sheer sided formations, creating dark cavities for the more nocturnal fish species, such as big-eye and their cousins.

Moray or conger eels may be spotted on most dives, sometimes within the same hole, normally the former is the brown moray, however, there are numerous fierce Mediterranean Morays, kin to the yellowmargin that like to wrap themselves around rocks during the day, just waiting for an unsuspecting photographer to come by!

The eastern coastline of the island is ideal for capturing the mood as the sun's rays are "offshore" thus creating silhouettes of the rock formations. The wide-angle lens comes in to play, and with Mallorca's coastline consisting of craggy weather worn volcanic rocks creating steep headlands, which plateau just below the shoreline, only serve to offer an interesting backdrop to any shots taken.

The island is famous for its distinctive sea arches, ridges, tunnels & caverns providing further opportunities for the creative mind. Shipwrecks there are several but the ones I've seen to date do not amount to much, however, life still tends to congregate around them. As for caverns, Cala Sa Nau is outstanding as it used to be a dry cavern containing stalactites and stalagmites, bunched in corners, some connected in the central room. The dark shadows created by the torchlight form hideous grotesque hob goblin type shapes that really should only be in your worst nightmares!

With regular flights, a short journey time of 2hrs as much as the travelling time from Macclesfield to Anglesey, you could be enjoying some of the best sites the Med. has to offer, like Cala Ratjada Rock (pinnacle), Grobe (Great) Reef (large reef ridge), Cala Sa Nau (Cavern), Cala Gran Spitze (headland and caverns).



## LINKS

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

- Dive Oz Website: [www.diveoz.com.au](http://www.diveoz.com.au)  
Having had a look at the website recently, I found it contains much information about diving in Australia, ALL Oz! That's a hell of a lot of coastal land to cover. Looking at some of the boat charters in the Queensland section, this contains a list, however, some of the well known ones, like Quicksilver and Tusa Dive were not there. I guess it's such a large area to cover that the data is being built up over time. It's easy to navigate around and has many dive site entries. There is also a photography gallery, which contains 20 or so photographers, with 10 images a piece; each image can be enlarged. The photographers are mainly Australia based, and some of the images are really great. Makes you want to go!
- Hebrides Web Site: [www.dive-and-sea-the-hebrides.co.uk](http://www.dive-and-sea-the-hebrides.co.uk)  
Recently returned from a week long dive trip to Skye, prior to this, I had a look at the web site of the dive centre, Dive and Sea Hebrides. If you want information, or links into Skye Online, then this is the place to go, it's jam packed with information on Skye above and below the waterline. There are many site descriptions & images, for wreck and scenic, as well as some superb images of many species of aquatic life. Skye is a must for photographers the waters are so clear and the aquatic is profuse. In one week, I used more film than on a Red Sea trip. Night diving is available, and you cannot beat seeing and photographing a baby feather star as it rolls and twists in mid-water, or large boulders completely covered in red alcyoniums, and the stealth tactics of the anglerfish, then add to this the impressive man made sites of Meanish Pier, Doris & Chadwick wrecks.
- The Ultimate Web Site Index???: [www.diveindex.com](http://www.diveindex.com)  
Another little discovery, an index of dive indexes! Dive Centres, Dive Organisations, Dive Clubs, Dive Photo Clubs, the lists are massive and the photography clubs, photo societies and photo individuals should keep you happy for a while. BSoUP website hyperlink is there as well as another - HUPG - Hawaiian Underwater Photography Group!
- Underwater Publications: [www.uwpmag.co.uk](http://www.uwpmag.co.uk).  
The Web Magazine ( Oct/Nov 2002) features tons of information suited to photographers, and has some really cracking images. A whacking 64 pages with a stunning front cover of a Sperm Whale by Tony Wu. There are also adverts and news. Features include Leafy Sea Dragons, Nudibranchs, Photo Techniques, British Fish and a piece on the Scilly Isles. Tony Wu's piece on the baby Sperm Whale is superb.
- Andy & Angela Heath's Web Site: <http://freespace.virgin.net/andy.aj/jscheck.html>  
After reading the previous magazine, I noticed a piece by Andy and Angela Heath, resident in Australia. They are underwater photographers and have their own labour-of-love web site. I took a look at it and it's really quite interesting. The thing that made me mention it here was our September meeting theme of "wet cameras". Many of the shots are taken with wet cameras AND they have a Motormarine Hints and Tips section - to rival the handout below!
- Underwater Photography Web Ring: [www.uwphotoring.com](http://www.uwphotoring.com)  
Here is a web ring of underwater photography web sites, with all sorts of individuals, groups and organisations, some you may recognise. It has over 200 entries in the ring, so you'll need plenty of time to surf this lot!

## ADVERTS - follow ...

# 1. Underwater Photographic Equipment for sale Stock List - 22/10/2002

Contact Paul Kay/MWPA on (01248) 681361 or (07702) 411614 or [paul@marinewildlife.co.uk](mailto:paul@marinewildlife.co.uk) Underwater Photographic Equipment Bought, Sold, Serviced and repaired

Ex Demo (Unused)	<b>Igloo F100 Housing - demo - never been in water!</b>	£ 999.00
Ex Demo (Unused)	<b>Igloo F900 Housing - demo - only been in freshwater to test!</b>	£ 799.00
Ex Demo (Unused)	<b>Igloo Fisheye/Wideangle Dome port - demo - only been in freshwater to test!</b>	£ 399.00
Ex Demo (Unused)	<b>Igloo 60/105 Port/Extender - demo - never been in water!</b>	£ 299.00
	The above Igloo Complete Outfit complete (will fit all lenses 16mm ~105mm)	£ 2,400.00
Ex Demo ('Mint')	<b>Subal FP64B (28mm) Port Boxed</b>	£ 220.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal DPSWB Dome Port</b>	£ 275.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal FP84 60mm Port</b>	£ 135.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal FP84B (60mm) Port Boxed</b>	£ 140.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal FP94B (60mm) Port</b>	£ 135.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal FP117B (105mm) Port</b>	£ 135.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal FP117B (105mm) Port</b>	£ 135.00
New Custom Built	<b>Subal fit Aquatica 6" port extended for 18~35 AF Nikkor</b>	£ 250.00
Used ('Mint-')	<b>Subal EXR Ring</b>	£ 115.00
Used ('Exc')	<b>Subal 15mm Extension Port</b>	£ 89.00
Used ('Exc')	Subal Focus Gear for 50mm Sigma Macro Lens	£ 15.00
Used ('Exc')	Subal Focus Gear for 50mm Sigma Macro Lens	£ 15.00
Used ('Exc')	Subal Aperture Gear for 50mm Sigma Macro Lens	£ 15.00
Used ('Exc')	Subal Aperture Gear for 50mm Sigma Macro Lens	£ 15.00
Used ('Exc')	Subal Zoom Gear for 18-35 AF Nikkor	£ 30.00
Used ('Exc')	Hoya 77mm +4 Diopter Lens	£ 30.00
As New	Subal Strobe Housing (metal) for Nikon SB range	£ 300.00
Used ('Mint-')	Subal Strobe Housing (metal) for Nikon SB range	£ 250.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica 80 - 8" Dome Port & Neutralising Weight	£ 180.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica 80 - 8" Dome Port Shade for Fisheye Lenses	£ 35.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica 80 - 8" Dome Port Shade for Wideangle Lenses	£ 35.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica - Extension Gear	£ 10.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica - Focus Gear	£ 20.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica - Focus Gear	£ 20.00
Used ('Exc')	Aquatica - Focus Gear	£ 20.00
New	Ultralight SB105 Flash Adapter	£ 35.00
Used ('Exc')	TLC 4" Upper Arm Section (macro arm type)	£ 17.50
Used ('Exc')	TLC 4" Upper Arm Section (macro arm type)	£ 17.50
Mint	TLC 11" Upper Arm	£ 33.00
Well Used	<b>Nikon F801 Camera Body (no g'tee)</b>	£ 50.00
Used	Isotechnic 33ttl flash unit inc. lead, charger & neoprene cover (tested, working but no g'tee).	£ 150.00
Used	Isotechnic 33ttl flash unit inc. lead, charger & neoprene cover (tested, working but no g'tee).	£ 150.00
Used	Isotechnic 33ttl flash unit inc. lead, charger & neoprene cover (tested, working but no g'tee).	£ 150.00
Used ('Mint -')	Sigma 50mm Macro Lens in AF Nikon Fit (Boxed with instructions)	£ 120.00
Used Mint	Nikon 18-35mm AFD Nikkor Lens (Boxed with instructions)	£ 325.00
Used ('Exc ++)	Nikon 20mm f/2.8 AF Lens	£295.00
Used ('Exc')	Nikon SC17 Cord (Boxed with instructions)	£ 45.00
Commission Sale	Ikelite 300 Flash unit (Powerful but bulky) inc. lead (no g'tee)	£ 175.00
Commission Sale	Nikon F90X 1 year old, Mint and boxed with instructions	£ 430.00
Commission Sale	Nikon 28-200 AFD Lens, 1 year old, near Mint and boxed	£ 265.00
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## TALK HANDOUTS

**Talk Handouts - Mark Walker: How to Avoid Floods**

**Talk Handouts - Tony Gilbert: Sea & Sea MotormarineII Systems, Hints and Tips.**

### How to Avoid Floods

#### **Do's**

##### *Pre dive*

Remove examine and clean and grease O-rings that you have broken the seal of before every dive.

Examine the O-ring surface for debris (hairs) every time you break it.

Take your time over putting kit together.

Check every thing is tightened and clicked fully into place before immersing in water.

If possible test your housing in fresh water before putting in salt water.

If you have any serious concerns ( brand new port, new o-ring) test your housing without the camera in it.( good idea if not used system for a few months).

##### *During dive*

Check your leak detector soon after entering the water if you have one

##### *Post dive*

Rinse your system in fresh water after every dive, operating all levers to remove salt water and reduce risk of salt crystal formation on o-rings.

Find a dry area to work in (avoid where wet people may come by and areas you may get splashed etc).

Remove any wet clothing before working on camera. Make sure your hands and arms and head are dry before handling camera. Thoroughly dry of camera before opening.

Open up all doors downwards (drops fall away from camera)

#### Avoiding floods

##### *General*

When flying remove one of the main O-rings for the housing so as to avoid unnecessary reverse pressure on O-rings while flying.

Remove O-rings during long periods of storage store them in sealed plastic bags.

This helps prevent deformities that can occur with sustained periods of squeezing.

Have your housing professionally serviced at least every two years.

Every two years replace O-rings.

#### Don'ts

Over grease O-rings. It's just for lubrication and forms no part of the actual seal.

Rush any part of putting your photo kit together; give yourself time to do it properly.

Jump into the water with your system. Have it handed to you if possible.

Leave your system in direct sunlight.

Take your kit directly from a cold to a warm environment (condensation problems)

#### **FLOODS**

**If the camera floods its your fault!!! You probably**

**Assembled it poorly or in haste**

**Didn't do one of the do's**

**Did do one of the don'ts**

#### Damage limitation

Switch all power off. Remove all film and batteries.

If flooding extensive, soak damaged components in fresh water

(Depends on extent of flood)

Let worst of the water drip out then dry thoroughly with a hair drier, don't let camera get too hot. If you have the skills, strip down any wet components to allow thorough drying then place in plastic bag with silica gel and send off for professional service.

If not extensive flooding, say two egg cupfuls or less dry off components with towel then seal in plastic bag with quantity of silica gel and place leave for 24 hours. Check insurance policies! Pray!

# **MOTORMARINE IIEx CAMERA SYSTEM - HINTS AND TIPS**

By: Tony Gilbert, September 2002.

## **Introduction**

This document is for reference purposes only and acts as a guide to the use and maintenance of Sea & Sea Motormarine II Ex camera systems. It will hopefully help to reduce the risk of water ingress and physical damage, by suggesting ways to minimise the potential risks. This is based on constant usage of these systems over the last 6 years, with different configurations of kit. Some of the hints and tips described may be applied to other similar wet camera systems, when applicable.

Kit Used (over time): MMII Ex, with Sea Arm IV, V and VI's, YS50 & YS90 Strobes, Single/Multi Stay bases, Optical Viewfinder, Macro 2T, 3T, Wide Angle 16mm, 20mm Supplementary Lenses.

This is for those who are starting out with a wet camera system, moving from another system to MMII Ex or have been using one infrequently and need some further guidance. These are my opinions & conclusions and must only be taken as a general guide, and no responsibility is taken by the author if any damage occurs to your equipment!

## **General**

These are mainly those things that you may think of and forget, or see somebody else doing it, and think, "why didn't I think of that?". Mostly common sense things!

- Keep to hand a precision screwdriver set, if a leak occurs, you may wish to conduct first aid on the unit by unscrewing the mechanism and cleaning the water out.
- For those with multi-stay brackets or Sea Arm V / VI strobe arms, keep a small posi-drive screwdriver around.
- Keep a small (5p) coin, this is particularly useful for getting in to the battery compartment on the camera unit, and save on space in the case. I always store the coin in the o-ring remover packet, so I know where it is. It is also useful for tightening the screw on the macro framer plates to the macro lens mounts.
- O' Ring grease and a change of o' rings is always a useful thing to have to hand in your camera spares.
- A plentiful supply of kitchen towel, in the carrying case, for ready use, and a reserve roll in spares is extremely useful, when drying the camera, and cleaning o'rings etc.
- Plan each dive trip by calculating how many batteries you are going need for the strobe(s), the camera unit(s), and the spotting torch(es). Take about an extra 1/3 for spares.
- For all external user screws, eg macro framer screws, strobe arm fixing screws; smear a little o'ring grease on the threads to prevent salt water welding them together, and ease of extraction.
- For those with Sea Arm IV's, always soak the arm in freshwater as you do with the other pieces of camera equipment. Make sure the arm is extended, and the tightener is loosened. Clean any excess salt deposits off and occasionally use a little WD40 on the slide. This will help prevent seizure of the slide arm (which I have encountered before).
- If you have both macro lenses (2T & 3T), ensure you clearly identify which is which, by marking a numeral 2 or 3 on the plastic lens mount. This will reduce the risk of attaching the wrong lens to the wrong framer.

## **Film / Battery Changing**

I've seen it happen many times with others. They say "the camera inexplicably died" or "the strobe stopped working". On occasions it's the batteries, people expect too much out of them sometimes, that's why it's very important to conduct preventative maintenance.

### **Batteries**

- I personally favour non-rechargeable batteries, especially where foreign liveaboards are concerned. Having recently read a piece by John Liddiard on how he couldn't take photos because the batteries weren't charged, as a result of the generator being off, then it's best to have good quality batteries. I've tried several makes, and still find Duracell the best. I am looking for Fast Recycle Time on Strobes, enough max-power to power the camera for several films, and reduced battery failure.
- I have a system which works very well. Always record down after each dive, in your log book (preferably) on the correct dive page. The number of films a) the camera has had through it, and b) the strobe(s) have been used for. With this in mind, I always strive to replace the Camera Batteries after every 6 films, and the Main Strobe after every 1 or 2 films depending on the type of photography. The Slave Strobe gets changed every 4 films.
- When changing batteries, always have your battery compartment pointing downwards so gravity can take care of any water droplets. Clean the open compartment in this position. Also, always check for moisture in the compartments. Before water entry, ensure battery compartments are securely locked in position.

### **Films**

- A sticky label on the outside of the camera body, when the camera is empty, may help prevent taking the camera underwater in an unloaded state. I did this accidentally for three successive dives in the Red Sea!
- Keep a running record, each dive, of how many shots, and which, were taken on that dive, ie #1-10, 15-21 etc. I also record in the can next to the film, which dive number(s) the film was used on. This helps when trying to identify where you took the shots, very important when you want to go back and improve on it.
- When changing film, opening the camera back is the most dangerous thing and the most prone to error. I've seen people open it the wrong way, or not rewind the film first! First and foremost, try and find a clean, dry, dust free place away from spray and sand etc. Rewind your film and always dry the camera as much as you can before opening the back. Opening the back, you MUST open it so the back swings down, ie the lens is facing upwards, so drips do not get into the camera.

Once this has been done, remove excess water from the camera body rim where it contacted with the o'ring, then remove the film. Make sure no water remains on the body (still holding it with lens up) especially near the back release mechanism.

Turn the camera over, taking care not to get any water from the back, which is now fully open. When removing the o'ring, place your hand between the back and the open camera unit, to act as a guard against water droplets splashing from the bouncy o'ring. Clean the o'ring carefully, and clean the excess water from the camera back groove, check for droplets on the inside of the back

- When loading another film, ensure the film loads between its guiding tracks, and that you wind it on at least twice before closing the back.
- After the camera system has been assembled at the beginning of a trip, there is no need to dis-assemble any strobe to camera sync cords to change batteries or film. These can remain in place for the duration.

## **O' Rings**

As with all o'rings on any piece of equipment particles of any matter can accumulate when the o'ring is either exposed, during removal, or when in place. Very fine sand is one substance which seems to find its way around them very easily. MMII and other wet camera systems have a plethora of user o'rings to maintain.

- To guard against possible water ingress as a result of damaged o'rings, and to reduce o'ring wear and tear; the initial clean should be to dab the o'ring with kitchen towel, in order to remove some of the particles along with the silicon grease. The dirtier the o'ring, the more fresh wipes you should use. Do not rub the o'ring around with this material as it tends to scour and pit the o'ring.
- Once the main debris has been removed in the manner previously described, then use fresh kitchen roll gently in the normal manner to remove all old silicon grease etc.
- Use more fresh kitchen roll to clean the o'ring guides on the camera and strobes, taking care not to scour these either.
- Never bend or twist o'rings, and only apply sufficient grease to lubricate the o'ring. Heavily greased o'rings are just as bad as dry o'rings. In addition, ensure the grease is spread evenly, and excess is discarded.
- Ensure the o'ring is sufficiently greased, checking for particles and other foreign bodies when closing back. Close the back slowly, ensuring the o'ring doesn't twist. After closing the back lock the shutter depress button to prevent unscheduled images!

## Water Entry/Exit & Boat Storage

Diving with the MMII camera system in the past, I've managed to dive in all conditions, on shore and boats, averaging about 100 dives a year with the camera alone. I've also managed to dive from many different types of boats, which have pitching, rolling, moving, or I've been in a tidal stream after entry, and on plenty of dives where 100's of metres of water are below you. Once you have set your camera up, you would like to take u/water photos and don't want a camera failure on entry, or exit. Exiting can be sometimes more dangerous especially for the camera, than entry. I've put together some guidelines on "boat-handling" the MMII.

### Pre-Entry "other buddy" check

- Prior to entry, check your strobe's battery compartment retaining cover is firmly locked in place, especially if the system has been soaking in a bucket with other cameras. YS90's in particular have angular retaining covers which can be easily disturbed.
- Check all screw fittings are tight, in particular synch connections, and the camera is secure on the mounting bracket. The lenses are locked in the caddy or in place.
- If you are using strobes which can be set into slave mode, ensure they are correctly set.
- Try and use a lens caddy for the supplementary lenses, this will help prevent forgetting to flood the air space between the prime and supplementary lens.
- Before you get into your dive gear, ensure the camera is in a safe place near you, ready. This will help other people on the boat as well as yourself, as getting in the water is a busy time for everybody.

### Exit/Entry

- In water entry from a boat depends on the type of boat. RIBs and low lying hard boats; try and arrange for a person to hand the camera to you once in the water. For those occasions where it is not possible to do this, a back roll may be necessary. In which case, ensure that your Scuba equipment is well tucked in away from cleats and ropes, and that your camera is completely folded and tightly tucked in to the stomach area, forming a ball. This will help reduce drag as you enter the water, although, you must also guard against the mask coming off!
- Giant strides are easier; hold the camera high above the head as you stride. As you hit the water in an upright position, fin, as this will reduce the depth that you go to, and the suction on the o'rings. It is crucial not to apply too much pressure to any of the o'rings, camera or strobe.
- Entry should also be made with the camera clipped on to your person, and a wrist lanyard, taking care not to snag any of boat on your way.
- Exit is best suited to handing your camera to someone on the boat, before climbing out. It's nice to have a lift! Ensure all strobes/lenses are off/stowed, camera locked and the person you are handing it to knows how to handle the camera, and where to place it. At this point, once satisfied with the person holding it, I usually unclip.
- After Exit, storage on a boat is very important. Those macro framers have a habit of being easily bent especially if somebody accidentally sits on one! Ensure you immediately rinse in fresh water, and store out of direct sunlight. I normally take onboard a 5 litre plastic can containing fresh water, and use half after the first dive, and the remainder after the second, but if you can take a bucket of water.
- When rinsing the camera, twiddle the manual control knobs to ensure that saltwater is flushed from underneath. Store the camera in a safe place if you can. Some people take a towel and wrap it up in a safe area, this is also a good idea.

### In water usage

Under the water can be particularly perilous, especially when other factors like wrecks, current, surge, SMB and buddy problems come into play. That's why it is important to keep as streamlined as possible, in order to be prepared to cope with the unknowns.

### 3T and 2T Macro

- 3T Macro assembly best resides on a lens caddy until ready for use. Store the assembly in the same geometric plane as the camera lies, thus reducing the sticking out effect, which can cause drag and lead to unwanted snagging.
- Never deploy the macro pins until setting up and ready to shoot, these have a habit of bending. For the 3T screw the pin on underwater, taking care not to drop it or strip the threads. In order to reduce the likelihood of framer pin loss, use a ladies ponytail tie around the framer arm.
- The limitation of a physical framer is not easily being able to close with your sometimes skittish subject, and on many occasions the subject maybe obliging but the framer is just not the right size to fit into a hole! Patience is sometimes needed, and there will always be other opportunities to photograph the same creature, so don't destroy the environment.

### Wide Angle

- Attach a small retaining cord around the wide angle lens with the use of cable tie, affix the other end onto the camera system, so as not to lose the lens.
- For wide angle shots, always use an adjustable viewfinder and not the in built one, in order to reduce parallax and to correctly frame the subject.

### General

- I use a clip system which allows the camera to be totally clipped to the person, or unclipped as necessary. A bungy allows for freedom of movement. This is for safety reasons and also so you don't lose the camera.
- A wrist lanyard is also useful for general use, when you've unclipped.
- Having the lanyard and clip system, will enable easier deployment of an delayed SMB. There maybe occasions where self-deployment is necessary - practice this skill. There are many occasions where two photographers go down and neither wishes to deploy the SMB - this will help save indecisions! For delayed SMB launches, allow sufficient time to lock your camera system down, prior to deployment.
- For darker dives or night dives, use a Mini Q40 strapped to the underside of the main strobe. The underside of the strobe is essential so the strobe can be positioned in such a way that the light will shoot over the top of the subject, thus reducing backscatter and target the subject more easier. This is useful for both wide angle and macro.
- Switching between supplementary lenses I would not generally recommend. There is a great temptation to do so with the MMII, try to avoid it, as quite often one setting is forgotten and film ruined. Go down with the sole purpose of using one lens and try and stick to using this single lens. I learnt the hard way. Another solution is to plan the first half of the dive one lens and the second half on the other lens, so only one change is necessary - this works quite well.
- For diving in the UK and similar, it is not always clear what the visibility will be like. I personally take a macro and a wide angle lens down, and will determine which lens to use once down there. This saves a possibly wasted photo-dive.
- Keep your camera streamlined underwater, and tucked where possible, this will reduce drag and any accidental reef collisions, especially where the MMIIEx macro arms are concerned. Around wrecks this is more important to ensure all equipment is streamlined.

## Relevant Photo Techniques

Listed below are some techniques, although not new, are particularly pertinent when using MMII systems, which I have found useful.

### Wide Angle / Fish Shots

- Without an adjustable viewfinder, the wide angle lens is all but useless, as the shot becomes more difficult to compose. It is also far easier to use this type of viewfinder with the built in 35mm lens to assist in parallax reduction. Make sure the correct viewfinder plate is attached, and remember either select a wide angle lens or use the built in 35mm, you cannot use both!
- Having the strobe(s) firing over the subject is a distinct advantage as this bathes the subject and helps to reduce backscatter. If you have a YS50/60 main, with a YS90 slave, have the slave further away from the subject. If equal power strobes have either both at same distance or slave slightly away. Normally I use TTL throughout and find this works well.
- When using the slave, always check that it has recycled ready for use as well as the main. Make sure you switch the slave off when not required. I've found also, other cameras around can activate the slave, so take this into account. I tend to shoot with main, then with slave, and sometimes angle the slave. It's quite useful for backlighting.
- Both the 16mm and 20mm lenses have their place, and it's your personal preference as to which one you use. Personally, I favour the 16mm because you can get in closer, however, there are occasions the wide angle of the 16mm (91 deg) is too much for the composition and a 20mm (80 deg) will suffice, given the depth of field in focus.
- The 16mm lens is ideal for large fish, like sharks, grouper, rays and large shoals of fish where you can get in close. Remember the flash is only going to reach 2m maybe 3m in clear water, so you need to reduce the water column to get a correctly lit balanced light shot.
- The built in close up (CU) lens is best for smaller fish and small coral scenes. The 35mm lens is in some ways redundant as the 16mm is just that much more flexible, however, for those shots of the smaller fish, like goatfish, Red Sea scorpionfish and specific smaller coral scenes. 16mm focuses down to 12".
- For in shot sunbursts, stop down to at least F16 on the 16mm, bracket slightly, but be careful not to overexpose with the sun in shot. For out of shot sunlight, bracket more. The 16mm can give you some very ghostly images, which I particularly favour.
- Freezing sunlight, normally best done in the first 7m (ie sunbeams), increase the shutter speed to 1/125, and the best times are sunrise or late afternoon, when the sunlight is at a very oblique angle.
- For fish in the shallows, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish these from the bright water. Use F8/11 on 1/125 and shoot with flash to highlight the fish bodies.
- Capturing moving fish, mammals and birds underwater; you must shoot shallow where possible and set the shutter speed to 1/125th to capture the movement.
- The MMIIEx system is ideal for snorkelling, whether using a supplementary wide angle or the 35mm lens (natural light only).
- I personally think the wide angle lens used on the MMII's can rival the wide angle shots using similar lenses on housed camera systems. It comes down to confidence in using the wet camera system, and correct composition.

### Macro

- A mini Q40 affixed to the underside of the main strobe light, pointing to the centre front of the framer is a good position so the strobe fires in the correct place. This is a good starting point for macro photography.
- A secondary strobe can be useful for filling in or softening shadows, however I've found it's best to have this slightly back from the main strobe. Try side angles as well. Be careful not to white-out your subject.
- For backgrounds other than black, as the Aperture and Distance settings are fixed, reduce the shutter speed to 1/30th or even 1/15th on 3T macro. Consider what background colour you want, will it compliment the image, ie Red/Pink subject with blue. Also consider what else is in the background, you probably want nothing else, so shoot a plain background.
- To get the best out of the macro imagine the plane of focus as a piece of card across the framer end. It's almost a 2-dimensional plane. Consider carefully what you want to be in this plane, what is going to be in focus what is not, and what is going to be in the background. If you cannot fit the whole of a subject in, focus the eyes or horns or tassles, and have it dropping away into the distance.

### Success using MMII

Below, some considerations that may assist in producing successful images with the MMII, again, only my personal viewpoint of observations!

- Take many different shots of a subject. With macro I find 3 or 4 is about right, using differing planes etc., although on some subjects I shoot 10, it's up to you but if you do find a great subject, go for it. With wide angle just keep shooting until you are satisfied with the shots, changing the settings, the mood, the composition slightly. I quite often shoot 10-20 shots on one subject - you are NOT wasting film - as you are shooting the subject you want to shoot, why stop with 2 or 3, get the best out. You need to seize the moment, and get in close. The MMII Ex is not a "snappy" camera, so use it properly - and yes I used it in the past to "record" the dive with 1 shot here, 1 shot there, until I realised it was a waste of time and film!
- Including divers is a great thing, and the MMII is good for getting shots with divers in. I have particularly found divers with some colour in their suits are the best, and quite often brief a "group" that I intend to photograph and perhaps use some as models if that is ok. Try and dive with a regular buddy who doesn't mind modelling, and go through some on land storyboards, you'd be surprised that this actually works! (I did this for the winter splash-in)
- Perform repeat dives on the same site. This enables you to build upon your previous successes, and if you have recorded your dives down in your log book, this can help in getting maybe a great shot of the fish you didn't get last time. An example here would be Gota Abu Ramada banner fish, where I produced much improved shots second time around, or St. Abbs, where a Sunfish was shot, and some great scenic shots on Big Green Carr. It is especially useful to return to wreck sites, familiarising yourself with a wreck allows more time to work out which shots to take of the wreck, rather than working out the wreck!
- Try something different, experiment, and take your camera in whether you intend to use it or not, treat it as part of your equipment configuration, just like your torch or your BCD.
- Good buoyancy is essential, with all the sticky out bits of the MMIIEx camera system you need to have it. Good buoyancy enables a stable shooting platform, and you need to be very still sometimes for those macro shots of skittish subjects. Also this will help you not trash the environment which we all respect and love.
- The use of Nitrox (where possible and practicable) is a definite advantage, as it allows you more bottom time to compose those shots (assuming correct dive planning and air consumption).
- Lastly, and most importantly, the buddy pair is composed of two humans, who are diving for mutual pleasure and experience sharing, so make sure that you are attentive to your buddy's needs as well. There is always another dive, and another similar subject on another dive.

This is not the end, only the beginning ... (\*\*\*) See also LINKS for Andy & Angela Heath website.)