

NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

NEWSLETTER Issue #7, Nov-2002 – Jan 2003

NUPG Web Site: www.nupg.org.uk

Derek “Dirk” Haslam: Winner of the NUPG Dec2002 Meeting, UK 2002 Slide Competition

A baby seal in May 2002, at Porth Ysgaden, Northern Lleyn Peninsula, West of Caernarfon. Photographed in 5-7m of water, near the outside ridges. Well done to Derek.



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Date for your Diary:

NEXT NUPG MEETING: Monday March 10th, Windmill Pub J19 M6, Knutsford at 1930 prompt.

Editor: Tony Gilbert, e-mail: NoDecoWarrior@hotmail.com

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 - January 2003 to May 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	
Mar 1 st 2003, Sat	Capernwray Dive Centre	09:00pm	WINTER SPLASH-IN
Mar 10 th 2003, Mon	Windmill Pub (M6 motorway J19)	19.30pm	
May 12 th 2003, Mon	Windmill Pub (M6 motorway J19)	19.30pm	AGM & FUN QUIZ
Future Meetings 2003-2004	We will publish the new meeting dates for the coming year in the next newsletter, as well as an e-mail.		

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

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

10th MARCH 2003

Speaker : Alan Mildren - an audio-visual show.

Competition Theme : Water

Dive Destinations : Tony Gilbert on "Photography from Red Sea Liveaboards"

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

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.

The next 5-live showing will be Mark Thomas' selection.

Winter Splash-In Selection, Projection & Judging:

Hopefully by the time this meeting has come around the Winter Splash-In divers will be in a position to select their favourite two slides of the competition, after which, they are judged by the gathered throng.

So, why not attend the splash-in (Sat 1st Mar2002, Capernwray) & get snapping, come on down the water is warm! If you are interested see Future Splash-Ins and Events, below.

12th MAY 2003

AGM

This meeting is the Annual General Meeting, a chance for all members to voice their opinions, elect new committee members and shape the future of their club. It is also useful for suggesting further guest speakers & technical talks, perhaps some other activities or trips we haven't yet done.

Maybe YOU would like to give a talk as either a technical or guest speaker. If you do, either contact Lucy beforehand and sign up or make the suggestions at the meeting.

It's our club and we get out what we put in, so come on down, you know it makes sense.

Speaker : Dave Buckley on "Diving with Sharks at Walkers Cay, Bahamas"

FUN QUIZ : **It's Quiz Time! See "Future Splash-Ins and Events" for more information.**

Competition Theme : Gorgonia & Sea Fans

Technical Talk : None this meeting.

My 5 Slides : **MAY** we have a look at your 5 slides, spring into action before summer and "volunteer"!

MEETING REVIEWS

Since the last newsletter we've had 3 meetings.

11th NOVEMBER 2002

Speaker : Brendan O' Brien, on "What might get into Magazines"

All who attended the meeting were asked to bring one slide, which they would consider good enough as a front cover.

Brendan O'Brien gave an informative talk about the whys & wherefores of getting your underwater pictures published. He started by explaining how he had got into writing for DIVER magazine, going on to describe the sort of things you need to consider if you want to get your photos & articles published. His advice included getting an angle on a particular subject to propose as an article to a dive magazine, shooting your pictures with a view to telling a story. Exposure (of the non photographic kind!) is also important, by entering pictures into National Competitions is one way of getting your name known. At the end of the day, you need to have pictures and ideas magazine editors want. Brendan's talk also included a discussion of slides which members had brought along as potentially suitable for publication - either as magazine covers or to accompany an article. The lively audience participation showed how much everyone enjoyed this talk.

Competition Theme : The Colour GREEN

1st Mark Walker

Snakelocks anemone. Photographed at The Mewstone, Plymouth, using a housed Nikon F90 & single flash

2nd Jason Gregory

A diver in Cathedral Cave, St Abbs, Scotland; taken using a 16mm fish eye lens during the St Abbs Splash In.

3rd Jason Gregory

Fish in a wreck. This picture shows what can be achieved in some of the UK's freshwater sites - it was taken at Gildenburg, and the wreck was a double decker bus! The photo was taken using a 60mm lens on a housed camera

Technical Talk : No Technical Talk, postponed until January Meeting

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

Ken "the pikeman" Byrne stepped in the breach after Dave Buckley deferred until the Dec meet. He presented 5 slides using a variety of cameras past and present, and here are his interesting descriptions...

1. Sea Squirts taken on the Rondo Wreck, Sound of Mull.

1:2 tube on a Nikonos V (had to be as that was the only tubes I possessed)! Started with a print as this was one of my earliest shots but after some fairly awful shots this was the first picture where I thought, I can do this.

2. Turtle taken on Big Brother. And, here it is...



A grab shot on a Nikonos V with 35mm lens. I was shooting using an attached close up lens, about 1:4 when this turtle just swam straight overhead. Pulled off the close up lens and got one shot.

3. Lion fish taken on a Nikonos V with close up lens in the Red Sea at Bluff Point, near the barge.

Attracted by the lights it just swam straight at me and into the frame, I had to back off to get the picture. I don't think I could get the same photograph looking through the viewfinder of a housed camera.

4. A Blue Spotted Ray just taking off, the Red Sea.

I like the ripple of the wing on this one as it decides it's had enough and leaves. Having bought my housed camera system I had no chance to test it before heading off to the Red Sea for a week long live aboard trip. I used around 20 rolls of film and didn't know what I'd get back, if anything. Overall I was pleased with the results and particularly pleased with this shot. It was taken using the standard 28-80mm lens using a dome port and a +4 dioptre. I used this lens as I'd not had chance to buy anything else before the trip.

5. Abstract of a Lions Mane Jellyfish. Farne Islands.

I like the colours that have shown up in this one, the flash has shone through the body. Although it is very close-up it's still possible to see what it is. This was taken with Sigma 50mm on a Nikon F60 in an Ikelite housing, whilst on a dive ascent.

9th DECEMBER 2002

The Christmas meeting held in the Windmill Pub was a cosy one, with just 15 of us huddled at one end, with a stonkingly great coal fire roaring itself into oblivion at the other! It was an informal open meeting, loosely chaired by Tony Gilbert.

As there were no technical/guest talks (and Dave did his 5 slides within his talk), it was a member's night with a small selection of attendees speaking on their chosen subject. After a few interesting, nay, comical encounters with the slide projection equipment, along with barracking from the audience, Gilbert got his act together and introduced the first speaker doing the "Xmas Excuse Me Waltz"...

Speaker 1: Roy Cash (with a little help from his wife, Pat).

Topic: Western Manado (mostly)

Roy & Pat travelled a considerable distance during the course of this year for one of their annual vacations, a destination visited by a number of tourists including divers. This was slightly different inasmuch that the majority of the diving was conducted off the western side of Manado, Sulawesi of Kungkungan Bay. It is a markedly different dive-stomping ground to the Lembah Straits, encountering reef walls & drop offs bathed in colour and life. We were taken on an underwater tour as well as a peek at Chez-Cash-Exotica (well for the holiday anyway). Impressive & glittering scenery was encountered both above and below the waterline. They also visited the Lembah Straits for a couple of dives showing us one of the high-sided boats.

Roy presented a great tip on not eating the local delicacies of rats or dogs, bringing along a couple of images to show why! The talk rounded off with a couple of burly diving bodybuilders, then a few slides of a nearby volcano walk (sorry, meant to say "gasping stagger"), closely followed by a great shot of the Singapore skyline whilst sipping occasional Singapore Slings at Raffles!

Speaker 2: Derek Haslam (a.k.a Dirk)

Topic: There isn't one!

Following on from the slide competitions, in between, the Yorkshire lad set about his festive offering of slides, mainly fish portraits. This was an open theme, in true Dirk style, which meant a mixture of the flamboyant along with plenty of gesticulation & talking on Dirk's part! Some impressive images were shown of fish peaking from behind corals and such like, whilst Dirk divulged his closely guarded techniques & secrets for his success in this area.

A sort of "Dirk Haslam's Holistic Photographic Agency"! There was admiration shown when he produced a series of slides including a gaping-mouthed clownfish, a large hawkfish, scorpionfish shots and finally a difficult shot of a very slippery looking customer - a butterfly.

Speaker 3: Dave Buckley

Topic: The Great White's in S.A. (**My 5 Slides, and a few more as well**).

South Africa was the destination of Dave, Fiona and Derek for a trip to see the great white shark in its natural environment. A special chartering of a boat, skippered by probably the most knowledgeable shark skipper around who has been used for many a documentary. "The water, terrestrial landscapes and weather here were very much in keeping with the Farnes Islands", said Dave, and proceeded to show us the great white's favourite meal of seals!

After baiting the water of liver and unmentionable items, it was time to get wet; Dave showed us some really fantastic shots of the sharks coming and going in the green water. A one-man cage was used, where the incumbent was totally weighted down, no Scuba unit, with a long line regulator and a leap of faith into the top of it! "It was the only time Derek didn't talk, when he was in the cage", said Dave as he projected more images, some taken whilst dangling over the side of the boat. It was amazing to see the boat operator touching the nose of these large beasts in an attempt to open their mouths – nice!

Speaker 4: Neil (from Chester scuba club)

Topic: Doctor's Surgery

Neil and Simon of Chester SAC presented 10 slides. This was different as the selection of images was for input from the assembled photographers. A feedback session ensued of techniques from many of the group in order to assist and help them improve their photography. This was rewarding to both them and the group. The images covered macro subjects, like soft corals, deep blue encrusting sponges, to fish portraits and wide-angle shots. The images were taken with either a Sea & Sea MMIIEx using the 2T macro lens or an Ikelite housed camera system, so it gave us all something to think about!

Speaker 5: Tony Gilbert, but before Tony had a chance to speak, the meeting came to an abrupt end, as it was now nearly 2am, the plug being pulled from the projector (only joking!).

If you would like to speak on a topic of interest, hopefully connected to underwater photography in some way, please let one of the committee know.

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.

Well done to all and it was a close fought contest for the "NUPG Photographers of the Year 2002"...

UK 2002

1st Derek Haslam

Gracing this issues front cover, a great shot of a baby seal, taken in 5-7m of Welsh water in Port Ysgaden no less, in May. For those who don't know where it is, it's on the Northern Lleyon peninsula west of Caernarfon.

2nd Steve Smithson

With only 1 point separating 1st and 2nd places, a recent trip to the Scilly Isles gave Steve his placing with a super wide-angle shot of a diver exploring a vertical reef wall, in stunning visibility.

3rd Ken Byrne

Ken produced an outstanding image of a snakelocks anemone; shot somewhere around the North Welsh coastline. The image was produced by lighting the subject from the rear thus creating a different image altogether.

Non-UK 2002

1st Steve Smithson



Having just returned from Burma Banks, Steve was able to coax a really pretty cuttlefish into modelling over an impressive reef top laced with soft and hard corals, and a really blue background.

2nd Dave Buckley

Another close fought contest with only 1 point separating first and second place. Dave's shot of the great white in its full glory, teeth and all, inspired us to vote for the image. (See NUPG Newsletter #6)

3rd (joint) Ken Byrne

Ken's first offering was of a delicate little Red Sea longnose hawkfish in silver and red livery peaking out from amongst a plethora of golden coloured fan arms of a gorgonian sea fan, with a black backdrop.

3rd (joint) Ken Byrne

Ken became schizophrenic and split his placing with himself! Another hawkfish shot, the Forster, taken in the Red Sea.

13th JANUARY 2003

Speaker : None this meeting, however two excellent talks were undertaken, see below.

Competition Theme : Eyes or Mouths

Some weird & wonderful pictures on display for this theme – there be some strange things under that there sea...

1st Derek Haslam

A very close encounter with the mouth & eye of a plaice. A quite surreal picture taken with a NikonosV using an extension tube. Derek couldn't remember where and when it was taken, but it was a winner!

Three tied for joint 2nd:

2nd Steve Smithson

A stargazer fish, photographed on the house reef at Tasik Ria - after Steve had recovered his composure at meeting this somewhat scary critter on a night dive! Steve was using a Nikon F90 in a housing with a 105mm lens and twin strobes.

2nd Paul Maddock

Crocodile fish photographed in the Red Sea using 1:3 extension tube – the first time this set up had been used.

2nd Steve Smithson

A Grouper having its teeth cleaned – photographed on the house reef at Bonaire using a close up lens with twin strobes.

Technical Talk 1. : Steve Smithson “Wide Angle Lighting”

Steve's talk focused on the use of strobe lights for wide angle photography – presenting a range of ideas that people could try for themselves to find out what best suited their requirements. The presentation certainly succeeded in stimulating thought about how flash could be used for wide angle shots. From the viewpoint of his own experiences, Steve covered:

- i. Single strobe vs twin strobes
- ii. Strobe power
- iii. Angle / position of strobes
- iv. Strobe mountings
- v. Manual vs TTL

Steve himself started with a single flash unit on a fixed arm mounting (which he eventually found too limiting), moved on to hand holding his flash, which had the problem of not providing a consistently reliable flash position, and then moved on to flexi strobe arms – first using plastic flexi arms and then the Ultra-light jointed arm mountings which are what he has stayed with.

He initially went for the single most powerful strobe he could find – the Sea & Sea YS350, but found this to be pretty unmanageable. Steve now uses twin Sea & Sea YS120's on identical jointed arm set ups and has stayed with these flash units as they have sufficient power and angle of coverage, but are not too bulky.

Steve uses a straight flash arm position with both flash units, with both flashes facing forwards. The angle of coverage of the YS120's means that although this doesn't look like enough light would illuminate the subject, in actual fact it does. If the subject is very close up, he sometimes tilts the flashguns slightly inwards. An important point is to think about the lighting required for the subject you're photographing – think about where the light is going to hit the subject – will it be blocked by some feature in the way, or will it put lighting into the shot that looks out of place?

As to TTL vs manual settings on the flash – TTL is very often used and, a lot of the time, will produce good results. The downside is that it takes the control of the lighting out of your hands – TTL may not work at all well with very light or reflective subjects in the foreground, for example. Manual gives you the flexibility to use the flash lighting in different ways – so it is worth trying to get to grips with flash to subject distance and f-stops required.

The main message was 'think about what you're trying to do, and try different approaches for different subjects'.

Technical Talk 2. : Paul Kay on Camera Maintenance.

So who's ever had problems with their camera? Flash problems? Knobs seizing or dropping off? Other bits and pieces breaking? Routine maintenance can help prevent some of these things happening. Paul went over the things he routinely checks:

- Flash connections – can be very problematic if you get water in here. Try a squirt of electronic contact cleaner into the flash connections to displace any water.
- Flash cords – these can break internally, resulting in extremely frustrating flash problems. Try not to kink or bend the cords, and check how your flash is set up to make sure it doesn't stress the cords in any way.
- Bits & pieces bolted on to the camera / housing – disconnect these regularly (e.g. after a weekend / weeks diving). This will help to prevent corrosion or build up of salty deposits. Electrolytic corrosion can be a real problem if you leave things connected together.
- After using in saltwater, soak your camera set up in freshwater before drying and dismantling. While in the freshwater, operate all the controls to help flush out salt deposits.
- Use something like Loctite or equivalent when fixing mountings on to a housing – for example, attaching flash arm connectors to a housing. Loctite prevents water getting into the screw thread thereby reducing the likelihood of corrosion.
- Housings / wet camera bodies:
 - Internal o-rings: All the controls should feel smooth when operated. If they feel stiff or gritty, it's probably time to have the internal o-rings serviced.
 - Main o-rings – soap and water are best to clean any grot off these. Take care when drying them – don't use anything too abrasive that will damage the o-ring surface.
- Check the actual camera and lens periodically – its worth remembering that these may need servicing periodically.
- Lens ports – these can become scratched, particularly dome ports. For plastic ports, it is possible to polish out minor scratches using a mild abrasive (e.g. Brasso, jeweller's rouge) and a cloth. It takes a bit of time and patience. Glass ports are more problematical – Paul is currently trying to find someone who can polish out the scratches in these!

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

Dave Marsland did the honours this time. Dave's pics were taken with a Motormarine II using a single flash – Dave had selected his photos as they were his favourites:

1. Sealion – photographed in the Galapagos
2. Leopard shark – photographed in Burma
3. An extraordinary photo of a prawn having been grabbed by a brittlestar! Photographed in the Scilly Isles
4. Cuttlefish – photographed in Burma
5. Scorpion fish – another inhabitant of Burmese waters.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to both Richard Lockett & Fraser Durie who have recently joined the group.

NUPG MEMBERS NEWS

None

FUTURE SPLASH-INS & Events

1. WINTER Splash-In Saturday March 1st 2003, Capernwray, nr Lancaster.

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 & macro shots were taken, the results speaking for themselves. Although only a small number attended it was very worthwhile entering and taking part, another has been planned again by KEN BYRNE.

The diving and photography will take place on Saturday 1st March 2003. This time we are trying Capernwray as it is far more convenient for most members, if a little more challenging for photography! There is plenty to go at here and last year we had only 4 members attend, so come on support your club and splash in to Spring!

Splash-In Details:

Meeting time will be 09:00 and KEN BYRNE will be collecting in the films until 14:00. Provide your own slide film and the cost is £6 to cover processing. The first frame of your film should be a self-portrait or a slate with your name on.

KEN will return the films at the next NUPG meeting on Monday 10th March when selection, projection and judging will take place. Note: the images will be already pre-mounted.

Capernwray Details:

Capernwray is a freshwater quarry just north of Lancaster and is easy to get to. The quarry has a maximum depth of 21m with a fascinating collection of sites in various depths, including gnome garden, many rainbow trout, along with some interesting quarry ridges. Air/Nitrox on site, opening time is normally 0900.

If you've not been to Capernwray before/recently it costs £2 for lifetime registration and you will need proof of diving qualification, in addition to registration it is £6 per visit.



You can find more information about Capernwray including how to find it at:
www.dive-site.co.uk

Some additional information, following on from a recent visit...

- The visibility was a stunning 10-15m, especially on the more distant attractions, but can vary per time of year.
- A Cessna aircraft (minus engine), is now located in 12m at the end of the last rescue training platform.
- The gnome garden has increased in size, with many interesting gnome species.
- Podsnap (minesweeper) and CandidaII (cabin boat) showing signs of wear.
- The water is blue/green at present and many rainbow trout have grown in size.
- Entry/Exit Points some of which are ideal for divers with bulky cameras.
 - o Entry via giant stride from pier platform or concrete mini-jetty (with a little care).
 - o West Slip (the original & easiest entry/exit point).
 - o East Slip (the rescue entry/exit point – careful of sunken rocks).

Picture by, Tony Gilbert, 2nd in NUPG slide comp, Summer 2000.
"Orca Diver, Capernwray"



New Clubhouse

A new clubhouse facility has recently opened (see diving magazines), containing the Dive Centre & Shop; a Cafe-Bar serving food & drinks at reasonable prices.

The original bacon-buttie van has moved inside and all the old greasy favourites are there, like sausage egg bacon barmes etc. as well as some new selections, for the more discerning palate!

The Cafe is also a licensed bar, serving alcoholic drinks, and there is plenty of seating inside, and outside during warmer months.

2. FUN QUIZ - 12th 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. NUPG Exhibition June 2003 - Penrhyn Castle

Paul Kay is organizing a NUPG print exhibition at Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, North Wales. The NUPG exhibition will run for 3 weeks in June this year.

Penrhyn Castle is a National Trust property that has an excellent exhibition gallery open to visitors to the Castle.

The gallery will accommodate 60 framed, A4-sized prints. Paul has agreed a deal with a local frame maker who can produce quality wood frames to fit A4 prints for £20 per frame. This makes the cost of putting a picture into the exhibition quite reasonable, and keeps all the pictures to a standard size so that everyone is on an equal footing regarding picture size and cost.

Entry is open to all paid up members of NUPG. Initially each member will be allocated space for two pictures, with the option for more pictures if members do take up their allocation.

It would be great to see pictures from as many NUPG members as possible on show during the exhibition – so call or e-mail Paul now to say 'YES' to having your pictures on display! (Paul Kay: 01248 681361; paul@marinewildlife.co.uk). A deposit of £10 per picture secures your place.

There will be a viewing evening at the start of the exhibition, and any NUPG members with pictures on display will be able to go and view the exhibition for free (although you will have to pay to see the rest of the Castle).

REPORTS & ARTICLES

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...

1. Wreck photography in Lanzarote's Wreck Park

By, Tony Gilbert

Whether you are into wrecks or just scenic dives, there are occasions, which allow both to be conducted in one dive. The Old Harbour Wrecks is such a dive site, lying very close to the coastline of the Canarian island of Lanzarote, and even closer still to the current harbour of Puerto del Carmen. The site is so named because of its uniqueness, having not one wreck but a veritable battery of them, around 5 or so!

Lanzarote, a Moorish Quality

Lanzarote is famed for its barren wild volcanic landscape, colourful wind chimes, a rich collection of beautifully designed buildings overlooking some of the most stunning views, in symbiosis with the natural features of the land. These & many more are the creations of locale artistes and sculptors, in particular, the late great Cesar Manrique. Concentrated tourist centres are sprinkled around in such a way as not to detract from the natural beauty of the island, and in many ways enhance the atmosphere. The buildings retain a quality of the Moors and Moroccans with their minaret towers. Lying under the fierce unforgiving African sun, the atmosphere sometimes is coloured blood red by the Saharan Sirocco winds, which blow a dry heat across the dry Malpais (badlands).

Puerto del Carmen is one of the main tourist conurbations; this is where the eastern volcanic reef system is closest to land a mere 100metres or so. The diving can be spectacular with the towering subterranean cliffs, caverns & lava tubes providing a haven for the many & varied marine creatures. Sand gradually slopes to 25m where the reef wall drops mostly vertical to depths, meandering in a rough south westerly direction, towards Puerto del Carmen harbour, where a wide shelf occurs. An ideal position to drop a few wrecks! The lava shelf is clothed in a layer of sand, and is punctuated by stone ridges. The upper shelf lies in 22-24m of water; the lower shelf is a large expanse of fine white sand in 30-40m. The area is approximately 1Km², in a rough rectangle.

Parque de Wrecks

The Los Erizos Wreck Parque, residing only metres away from the harbour entrance, is only accessed by boat, the nearest of which is a mere 2 minutes ride from the Bar Playa small boat jetty near Safari Diving at Playa Chica beach, between the old and new towns. Safari Diving, owned by Rene & Dea Luuwen, run their hardboat to the wrecks 3 times a week. Other centres either charter from Safari Diving or their own boats (normally RIBs) if available. The 5 or so wrecks are a collection of old fishing & transport vessels, all around 40-50m long and are strictly no touch or entry.

The park attracts many species of fish in large numbers, both migratory and resident in addition to less mobile life. On occasions pods of dolphins and manta rays have swum past, the former probably hoping for a quick meal of silversides, so always look into the blue.

Photographing Marine Havens

The first indication anything is so close to the working harbour is the 5ltr plastic bottle on the surface, which is the permanent shot. This is the entry & exit point; you can guarantee an audience of at least one glass-bottomed boat as they have learnt the dive timings! The visibility is variable 15-20m on average; when dived in the afternoon, the suns rays create some really pleasant silhouettes.

On descent the portside of a steel hulled trawler at 12-15m comes clearly into view, the vessel's starboard side lying hidden in the sand at 20m. Two masts with gratings and masses of ropes from previous tie-offs attract much smaller fish life in the form of sardines, bogue & silversides, which in turn are preyed upon by large bream, barracuda, tuna & other jacks. The forward area with its now collapsed mast and missing deck area contains only cross members.

Numerous colourful female & grey male parrotfish graze the open areas whilst damselfish & chromis dance midwater. Hunters like the small red scorpionfish, endemic to the islands along with the small-scaled scorpionfish meld into the rusty scenery.





The pipework & holes provide ideal bases for the two varieties of *octopus* that seem to be able to squeeze themselves into very small apertures! Moray eels can often be spotted in particular either the Dotted or Mediterranean varieties. The volcanic salt-and-pepper sand harbours much life; dab, colourful starfish, pockets of weed containing nudibranchs. Proceeding sternwards its curve becomes noticeable the rudder now absent however one propeller remains. Around the stern the curvature of the port hull is lost in the distance. Look to your left and you may see the dim outlines of the deeper wrecks below, ropes dangling vertically upwards give their position away. The keel reveals itself as the wreck rests on bare volcanic rock, encrusted in sponges dotted with the occasional colourful globular anemone some with attendant scarlet lady shrimps or arrow crabs.

The cliff face drops away before the bow section of the wreck finishes, which is left to dangle precariously over the sheer wall. Resident trumpetfish lie motionless unafraid of divers, their eyes rotate in strange directions, reminiscent of a night out on the town! Moving away from the bow, you can make out the whole forward area in its entirety, with the anchor fastenings present. Circle the wreck in gradually ascending spirals until time to safety stop on the mast, and exit.



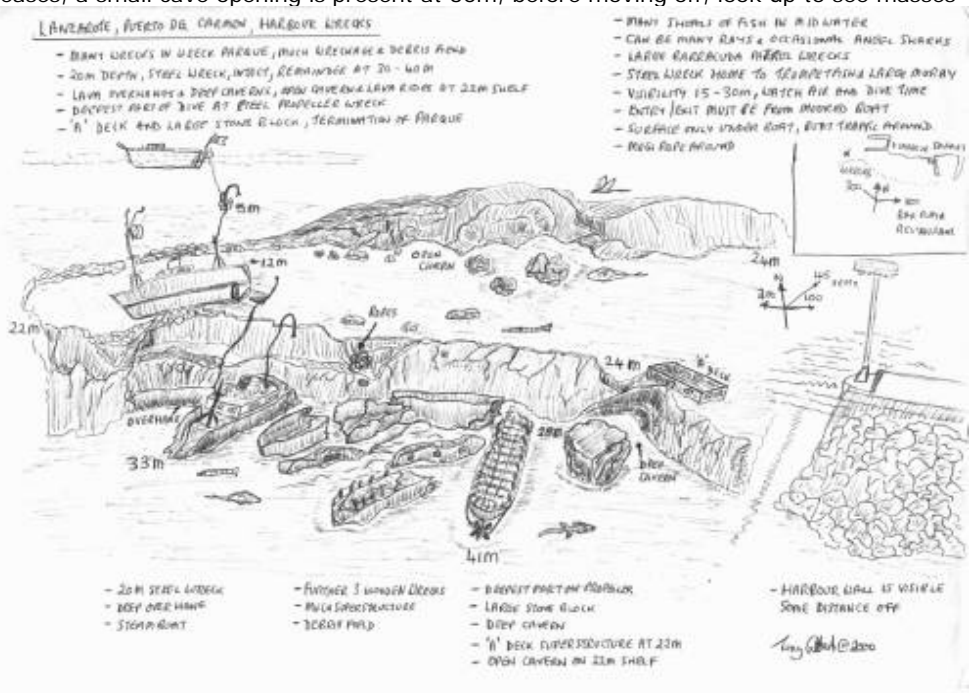
Diving the wreck at certain times of the day, allows the photographer, opportunities to create lively silhouetted compositions of the wreck, marine life, and other visiting divers.

One wreck is not enough!

Of course, for some divers one wreck is not enough! Those doing the deeper wrecks should completely ignore this shallower one, continuing straight down over the portside mid-ships, we can explore this on our return. The cliff wall races past as our descent increases, a small cave opening is present at 30m, before moving off, look up to see masses of fish & the upper wreck.

Turning around the first of the wrecks is visible & identifiable as such, much of the upperworks are still present including the funnel, around which numerous Turkish wrasse congregate. Continuing our journey deeper across to the left, several larger groups of marmour or black sea bream swim by, a very large solitary barracuda may put in an appearance, along with the odd eagle or stingray.

Cruising even deeper on a rough SE direction several crashed wrecks appear about 15-20m away. Grouper, trumpetfish may be seen amongst the melee of metal & wood.



It's like an underwater scrapheap challenge to identify pieces such as hull works, davits & boilers; they are all there in some shape or form.

As can be seen from the above diagram, the wreck park's situation lends itself well to both morning & afternoon dives, when the sun can play an important role in the composition of images. It's large enough to accommodate many dive groups, however, it is important to monitor gauges whilst diving and photographing at this depth.

Lair of the Barracuda

Rounding the end & last of these broken wrecks a further one rests solitary in its watery home. This is different with a long wooden hull top terminating in skeletal ribs, is the last & deepest at 41m retaining both the rudder and iron propeller. Look outwards onto the sand for colonies of garden eels several angel sharks along with the odd large ray. In good visibility, the harbour wall can be made out in the distance. Light levels at this depth are very good, the sun a burst of bright white light amongst the vast sea coloured a rich delphinium blue.

This is our halfway point, so now we make our way up the starboard side where bottom-feeding striped mullet scuttle around, but what's this? Several very large barracuda twist and turn amongst the ribbing, eyeing us warily, on occasions follow you, quite closely too. The ribs countdown until a large rectangular block of rock is to our right at 30m. Here, sponges, arrow crabs and nudibranchs graze. The main reef wall should be visible a dark area in front reveals a cavern at 28m with many sponges, low growing hard corals on its walls. We ascend here watching bubbles trickle after they've penetrated the permeable rock, a procession of wobbling air globules above the sand shelf at 24m. Looking to our right a top deck structure rests neatly on the shelf edge.

This area is deep, but lends itself to photography, especially for the wide-angle photographers, creating endless photo-composition opportunities.

Stumpy & the Stingrays

If air and time permit, approximately 20m to the north parallel to the reef wall, there occurs a ridge of volcanic rock fronted by a few boulders. On occasions very large rays are seen, on one such dive I counted 8 baby & two adult round stingrays! The star attraction may be another, probably the largest round stingray on the block, **Stumpy**.

He has a buddy, who is almost as large, both with stunted tails! They are seen flying effortlessly over the reef walls, whilst we clank & splurge our way back along the reef wall to the steel trawler, using the remaining bottom time and air to explore, before ascent and safety stop. The alternative is to cruise along the reef top back to the ascent point.



This has been a tour de force however many variations on a theme may

be made in order to explore & photograph other facets of this wonderful place. Each time this site is dived you are never bored as there is always something different to see and experience.

As you can see, with frequent excursions to the wreck park, it is possible in one vacation to build up a considerable stock of wreck photographs, with the multitude of opportunities available. Macro life is also widespread, so it's always worth trying your hand at this! Above photo is of Stumpy near the stern of the propeller wreck, at 41m.

LINKS

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

- **Lanzarote Videography Web Site:** www.uwfilm.com
With my numerous visits to Lanzarote, I've got to know Willem de Meeleer who worked as a dive instructor for Safari Diving. He has now branched out into underwater videography specifically in Lanzarote, Miragua Productions. As he knows the sites very well and has a particular eye for moving images, then has produced some really great shots. His web site is testimony to the hard work of making videos that don't look like your "home video" and instead very professional. The one thing I would like to get to do is to photograph the blind white crabs in the pools of one of the terrestrial lava tunnels, Jameos del Agua, Willem succeeded in achieving this!
- **Photographers Web Site:** www.oceanlight.com
I am unsure where I came across this American site, but there are some really great images especially of the larger aquatic mammals & animals, including Whales, Sunfish, Sharks and Manatees. Phillip Colla is a natural history photographer and videographer. He also shoots the Californian kelp forests. It's an easy web site to use and navigate with plenty of good images..
- **The French way:** www.underwaterphotographie.com
An interesting French photographer's website, but couldn't find his name! Had a quick look and there are some interesting colourful shots, plenty of photography techniques, hints & tips. It seems to be a labour of love for want of better words!
- **PYO Dive Website:** www.scubaduba.com
It's surprising what you do come across whilst just browsing around. One thing you can be certain of though is that there seems to be a never ending supply of diving-related websites and I think there must be several million photographers of all levels out there, who just like to publish on web sites, don't care who's!
(Ok, I admit it, yes, I am on several also, so kettle-pot-black).

Anyway, this one above caught my eye, it's a diving web site, however is slightly different inasmuch as any diver can potentially supply information to it, so it's self sustaining. I think if you do want to submit items, then this needs to go through a central contact point etc. There is a list of some obscure dive sites from people all over the world, so it's a global thing. I came across it whilst searching out "Richies Place in Lanzarote". I quite enjoyed reading other peoples synopsis on sites I know.

There is a section which I think can expand even further and is of more interest to ourselves, it's the "Photo Galleries and Exhibitions", and I picked two people, one I have heard of and seen some images, Peter Hince, but I don't know Ed Robinson. See below for details.

- **Ed Robinson:** www.maui-scuba.com
Ed has been diving for some considerable amount of time and now runs a diving business over in Maui. He is also an avid photographer, as can be seen by some of the superb impressive images on show. You can of course make purchases etc., but my interest is not commercial, but images as a whole and ideas thus gained at seeing them. Having myself dived in the Hawaiian Islands a couple of years ago it brought back fond memories. It also brought a yearning to return, especially after viewing some of the images here.

The thing I liked about Hawaii was the remoteness and the large amount of endemic species, some of which are endangered. This meant I was seeing & experiencing a marine world not often visited, even less visited by European divers, especially on the island of Kauai, where we stayed.

The images I liked of Ed's were the Monk Seal shot in shallow blue water, the Bomber wreck at 65m with Black Coral against a bright sun (even at that depth - he pushed the Provia film), and the rare, rarely seen, Dragon Moray Eel. On the latter, I saw two on a night dive but my shots just didn't cut the mustard like the one here! Take a look for yourselves you won't be disappointed.

- **Peter Hince:** www.oceanimages-uk.com

Peter has had images published in several of the popular UK diving magazines, including front covers, and one would assume worldwide. From what I've seen to date, the images are mainly black & white, with an atmospheric touch, but not as "grained/manipulated" as Julian Calverley's.

I particularly liked the shot of the jacks, and the image of the striped barracuda, mainly because this is something I've was taking over the Thistlegorm in Jan 2002, with great results.

From a NUPG perspective this is interesting as we've recently had a talk, by Brendan o' Brien, on images in magazines and front covers. We've also had a recent wet camera meeting and I do note (with no bias intended) that many of his images showing on this web site are not only black & white, but have been shot using a Nikonos V with either a 28mm or 35mm lens!

ADVERTS

If you have any equipment for sale and would like to advertise, please let us know.

TALK HANDOUTS

None this issue.