

# NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

NEWSLETTER Issue #8, Feb-2003 – Apr 2003

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

*RoyCash: March Slide Competition theme of “water”.*

## Wastwater by sunlight.

A great shot of the mountain backdrop reflected in Wastwater, The Lake District.



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## Issue Contributors

Ken Byrne, Lucy Kay, Paul Kay, Tony Gilbert.

Date for your Diary:

**NEXT NUPG MEETING:**

**AGM Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003, Windmill Pub J19 M6, Knutsford at 1930 prompt.**

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## 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 - May 2003 to May 2004.

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	
May 12 <sup>th</sup> 2003, Monday	Windmill Pub ( <a href="#">M6 motorway J19</a> )	19.30pm	AGM & FUN QUIZ
Jun 2003, for 3 weeks	Penrhyn Castle Exhibition		NUPG Exhibition
Jun 30 <sup>th</sup> 2003, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	NEW VENUE
Jul 12 <sup>th</sup> 2003, Saturday	Trearddur Bae, Anglesey.	09.00am	Summer Splash-In
Aug 18 <sup>th</sup> 2003, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	
Oct 20 <sup>th</sup> 2003, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	
Dec 1 <sup>st</sup> 2003, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	
Jan 19 <sup>th</sup> 2004, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	
Mar 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2004, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	
May 17 <sup>th</sup> 2004, Monday	Swan Inn ( <a href="#">A556, between M6/J19 &amp; M56</a> )	19.30pm	

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

### 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 and 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"!

**Mark Thomas has a spring collection for us.**

*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.*

## NEW VENUE, for meetings from JUNE 2003 onwards

The Swan Hotel,  
Bucklow Hill,  
Knutsford, Cheshire  
WA16 6RD  
Tel: 01565 830295

**Located at the junction between the A5034 (from Knutsford) and A556, on the opposite side to the BP station on the A556.**

### **Directions:**

**1. From M6, take Knutsford J19 (exit both north and southbound), head towards Altrincham (not Knutsford or Northwich) on the A556 for about 3Km until reaching the second junction with traffic lights (the first was at Mere Golf Club/A50). The Swan is on this junction with the A5034, so turn right here.**

**2. From the M56, take Altrincham J7 (exit both west and eastbound), head towards Knutsford/Northwich on the A556 for about 3Km to the first junction with traffic lights. The BP garage is opposite; turn left onto to the A5034 for the Swan in the left hand filter lane.**

## MEETING REVIEWS

Since the last newsletter we've had 1 meeting.

*In Issue #7 of the Newsletter, we had two minor errors, and apologise to Derek Haslam for going too far east, and to Mark Thomas for mistakenly thinking he was Mark Walker! Thanks for pointing these out, and if you find and other anomalies, please do let us know.*

### 10th MARCH 2003

This evening, the rooms were full to capacity, with people & equipment, and the evening itself was jam packed with subject matter. The "Dive Destinations" & "Top 5 Slides" were postponed until another time.

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

Alan James had come along with Alan Mildren, all the way from Bristol to give an Audio Visual show on the sea & diving. At the beginning of the evening we were all intrigued by the mass of wiring, connecting the 4 slide projectors, mixing and sound boxes, and the surround sound speakers. We fitted ourselves around as best we could, and Alan introduced the first theme. Many thanks to Alan for the exciting show.

#### ● **James Eagan Layne**

Starting like the beginning of James Cameron's Titanic, with newspaper reports, and music to tweak the senses, the slides rolled, alternating between the two projectors. Images of war followed with the launch of the James Eagan Layne liberty ship, German submarines, sinking ships. A quiet scene of green calm water arose, as the Richard Burton-esque voice told the story. The ship sank in 22m of water in Whitsund Bay outside Plymouth, in two parts. We gazed in awe as slide after slide was projected, showing the remains of the ship, now clothed in carpets of jewel anemones, sponges, kelp topped in the bright green water, visited by divers over the years.

#### ● **The All Encircling Sea**

Based on the writings of Rachel Carson, the Cornish Coastline was the setting for this show, starting at the waters edge, on the beach. The sea, its exploitation and the influence of man. Tales of seafarers encountering monsters, ancient mariners, violent storms, they were all there. Eventually, slowly, we descended to see the remnants of rusting metal jutting out from stunning underwater rock formations. Many rocks were covered in colourful anemones, buzzed by wrasse, cuttlefish and the like. The music continued unabated, as did the rows of Devonshire cup corals.

#### ● **Heaven, on Lundy**

An obscure title you may think, however, read on. Alan introduced Lundy Island, located on the outside of the British Channel. Described was a short history of the Viking raiding parties, smuggling and tax evasion! Towering cliffs were our starting point, with its unique location smack bang in the gulf stream, far enough offshore, giving divers an opportunity to sample the rich underwater scenery. The Heaven family bought it in 1836, William Hudson Heaven, and this is where our story began, as did the haunting music! The speaker chose his words carefully as each slide showed a piece of ships wreckage smothered in sessile life forms. These belonged to the many ships, which have foundered, and the list of names seemingly endless. ... "The Jenny", "HMS Montague"... Seals in numbers are also present in addition to the vast array of marine life, including delicate pink sea fans. Perhaps a NUPG dive outing next year – in Britain's Marine Reserve?

#### ● **The Silent Serpents**

Both Alans spent vast quantities of time snorkelling just off the Cornish coastline in order to capture some moody shots of Basking Sharks, now a species protected in UK waters. These gentle giants were seen feeding, swimming close to the surface, and lest we forget, images of the past were shown. The slaughter for liver oil, and more recently for fins to satisfy greedy overweight business people mainly in the East. Plankton oozed in the sea as the sharks scooped the soup, whilst deftly avoiding jellyfish swarms.

#### ● **The Oceans**

Our final helping this evening was a short, which has been used by the MCS, on the subject of what us humans contribute to the sea, or rather discard in the sea. Images of pollution, monofilament netting, coupled with facts and figures were projected, with a backdrop of warm water coral reefs.

**Competition Theme : Water**

A difficult subject matter this time around, giving those old grey cells something to think about. A varied set of images were submitted & judged. So, how would you describe water, the environment we get into is all around us, what is the best way to show water and its use in images, tricky huh? Well, there were plenty of ideas, from terrestrial images of waterscapes with sunsets, fish, and various just under the surface shots.

**1<sup>st</sup> : Tony Gilbert, image entitled “Mirror Sea”**

A shot taken Jan 2003 at Ras Umm Sid, Egyptian Red Sea, off Sharm El Sheikh.



In the calm winter early morning, around 7am, the reef top glistens with low angled sunlight, the tendrils too weak to fully penetrate the water, more reflection than refraction. This creates a subsurface of mercurial silvery water, dappled by the brown & green coral top, just 2m below it. Between this a shoal of milkfish swim, whilst below us, a large Napoleon goes about its business, along the drop off to 1000m.

*Taken with Sea & Sea MMIIEx (wet) camera using a 16mm linear wide-angle, 1/125<sup>th</sup> sec, F5.6/F8, FUJI Provia ASA/100F, ambient light. As I mentioned at the meeting, no strobe lighting was involved.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> : Roy Cash**

Imagine, nearby, a steep flat-sided mountain bathed in the tender orange-yellow warm glow of a summer evening. This formed the backdrop to Roy’s shot, the mirror calm water completely reflecting this image in itself. There were many enquiries as to its location. The Red Sea? The Atlas Mountains? Somewhere in The East? Well, we were all mildly surprised to learn, as Roy explained, that it was shot at Wastwater during last summer. Where is that, I heard one ask. The UK in the Lake District, awesome! It now graces this editions front-cover.

**3<sup>rd</sup> : Lucy Kay**

Jagged shallow grey lava ridges being systematically ground into oblivion by the turbulent ferocious maelstrom of waves & foam just a metre away.



A densely packed masse of green tufted weed clung tenaciously to its outer flanks, as the surge threatened to uproot them. This was the main theme of Lucy’s image, and this is typical of the rugged volcanic waterlines of the Canaries.

Lucy took the shot in La Gomera in December ‘02 when both her & Paul visited the small island, just off the coast of its more prominent neighbour, Tenerife.

*Taken, using a housed Nikon F60, 20mm lens & port, with available light.*

## WINTER 2003 SPLASH-IN, Capernwray

This meeting saw the Winter Splash In slide selection & judging.

A big thank you goes to Ken Byrne for all his hard work, in organising this successful event.

See the report in "Reports and Articles"

## NEW MEMBERS

None.

## NUPG MEMBERS NEWS

None

## FUTURE SPLASH-INS & Events

### **1. Summer Splash-In Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2003, Anglesey**

Last years Summer Splash-In was held during the Holyhead Festival, with some reasonable weather, along with the many attractions, including the Historical Diving Society.

### **Splash-In (and Print Competition) Details, From LUCY:**

The date for this has now been set - Saturday 12th July - I know this wasn't the preferred date for some of you, but definitely was the majority favourite, so I really hope it won't put any of you off taking part this year.

I've booked the Trearddur Bay Hotel, Anglesey, for the evening do (and, yes, they Will serve us food!!) - this is where we were the year before last. Same room.

Please let me know if you'd like to take part. I'll be collecting £5 deposits to secure each place. Total cost is £15 to cover film and same day processing.

Places are limited due to the limit on the number of films that can be processed, so please get back to me if you're interested. Capernwray in March was "warm & sunny", so Trearddur Bay and surrounds should be positively tropical in July! Hey, I can only be optimistic! I was going to say 'third time lucky and all that' but that was last year!

There will also be the **Print Competition** - tropical and temperate categories. Max size A4 prints - ideally unmounted. Entry £1 per print, max 4 prints per person.

There are some **Ab Fab** trophies to be won and a lot of **Fun** to be had.

*"Where will the coveted Splash-In trophy be heading this year?"*

Contact Lucy Kay to book your place & for more info ([lucy@wildmarinelife.co.uk](mailto:lucy@wildmarinelife.co.uk);  
Tel: 01248 681361)

### **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. NUPG Exhibition June 2003 - Penrhyn Castle**

Paul Kay has organized the 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.

Entry is open to all paid up members of NUPG. There is space for two pictures per member and **it would be great to see as many NUPG members as possible.**

Paul has agreed a deal with a local frame maker who can produce quality wood frames to fit A4 prints for £20 per frame, which assists in keeping reasonable costs.

Prints should be A4 size without a border. If you need help in arranging for slides scanned & printed, please let us know.

Pictures & payment can be sent to Paul by post at Vine Villa, Mount Rd, Llanfairfechan, Conwy, LL33 0TW. Alternatively, the May NUPG Meeting is the last opportunity to collect prints & payment. NB: Cheques should be made payable to 'Northern Underwater Photography Group'.

There may be space for members to show more than 2 pictures if not all members submit, but we hope that many of you WILL put at least one print into the exhibition.

Pictures maybe be offered up for sale, the price being up to yourself, however, please remember, the National Trust take 20% commission. Please let us know that wish to sell the image and the price at which the image is selling for.

#### VIEWING EVENING

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).

#### HISTORY of PENRHYN CASTLE



*Built on the profits of Welsh slate and Jamaican sugar, Penrhyn Castle is an extravagant example of early 19th century neo-Norman architecture.*

*It is filled with intricate carvings, stained glass windows and handmade wallpapers, and features a slate bed made for Queen Victoria and a spectacular Grand Staircase, which took 10 years to build.*

## REPORTS & ARTICLES

Winter Splash-In Report, by Ken Byrne

### **Daffodils and Dragons**

March 1<sup>st</sup> St David's day and a hardy 7 NUPG members braved the 4° temperature of Capenwray to challenge for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual NUPG winter splash in title.

After last year's splash in at Stoney Cove it was decided to try something a little closer to home.



*Ken, Mark, Paul & Dirk relaxing in the new purpose built clubhouse, after the splash-in.*

This made it easier for the competitors to attempt but created it's own challenges in the water. The range of available subjects was rather more limited with the life being confined to trout and small zebra mussels. There are also less objects of interest in Capenwray than in Stoney. The advantage of any splash in is the level field it provides so while they may have been less scope there was less scope for all.

Above water the weather was perfect, a clear sunny day and a pleasant air temperature. Below it was a little more trying and I heard a few complaints of shots taken unintentionally due to lack of feeling in the fingers. Very few people ventured a second dive.

A few competitors decided to help things along given the limited range of subjects. A bag of crackers to attract the trout worked well for around 10 seconds until a bold fish stole the entire bag. Not satisfied with the range of subjects on offer another photographer supplied his own in the shape of a small Welsh dragon and a large bunch of daffodils.

The trend this year was towards wide angle with a superb shot of the small helicopter, by Tony Gilbert, who took second place, using flash balanced with available light to create a head to tail shot, reminiscent of a basking shark.

In third place was an interesting split shot, by Dirk Haslam, of the Capenwray café and the underwater scene below it.

Taking first place was a beautiful trout shot, by Lucy Kay, taken on a slow shutter speed and panned giving a great sense of movement.

**... AND HERE THEY ARE, THE WINNERS...**

## Winter Splash-In Selection, Projection & Judging

: Capernwray, 1<sup>st</sup> March was the venue, and Ken Byrne the organiser. At the succeeding March NUPG meeting the pre-mounted were slides were distributed, hopefully to their rightful owners! Light boxes & lupes came out, as the competitors scuttled away into various corners during a rest break between the Audio Visual shows of Alan Mildren's.

They were last seen pouring over a huge light box Derek supplied, it could have lit up half of Manchester, and we did hear the odd plane come in low over us!

The selection of slides produced many interesting results, and aside from the "Daffodil Diver from the Deep", "Nessie's Early-Spring Retreat", "Mr Froggie & friends", the assembled multitude managed to judge the remains of the day.

1<sup>st</sup>

: **Lucy Kay**



Simply enchanting I heard one soul say, and they were right, perfectly describing the winning shot. Lucy carefully expended all 36 images on the local kids on the block, the rainbow trout around the entry points in 3-7m. Both her & Paul were busy enticing the fish. Two trout came into focus, providing the opportunity for Lucy to shoot whilst panning. A sort of "Pan ~~fried~~ shot Trout" (hah!). In the conditions we encountered, this was quite an achievement, well done.

*Taken with a housed camera system (Nikon F60 in a Subal housing), using 1/15<sup>th</sup> sec, 20mm wide-angle lens and freezing cold hands!*

2<sup>nd</sup>

: **Tony Gilbert**



Mark Wakerly & myself had decided to buddy up trying the far side along with our friend Steve Watson. Watching the remainder of the group, including Mark Thomas, play with trout & daffodils, we passed overhead to make the 150m swim. The 45minute dive started with nudged settings, producing silhouettes of the Sea King Helicopter & Gnome Garden. Returning, over to the Dragonfly Helicopter, I used my fist to gently depress the shutter! With the remaining 10 shots I took the image of the helicopter from the front looking back, and it certainly reminded me of a metal representation of a Basking Shark, in green grey colour.

*Sea & Sea MMIIEx (wet) camera system, twin strobes both on, 1/15<sup>th</sup> sec, 16mm linear wide-angle lens, F5.6, FUJI Sensia ASA/100. (Thanks to Charles Wolstenholme for the slide suggestion, Ed.)*

3<sup>rd</sup>

: **Derek Haslam**



The lad was at it again, dauntless and living up to his flamboyant style.

"Never Mind the Buzzcocks, nor the trout or the rusting bits of metal".

Dirk had gone one better and chosen too take a split shot of the new clubhouse at Capernwray leading into the water to a grey vertical wall dropping below. An interesting technique to perfect, and quite difficult.

*The shot was taken with his selected weapon of mass photography, the housed camera system on manual settings, using a 16mm Fish-Eye lens.*

## 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...

### Night Photography, UK-Style, by Tony Gilbert

Ever wondered what it would be like to experience a night dive in the UK and photograph the marine life? The majority of divers I've come across who sea dive in the UK have never done a night dive there or don't want to. The comments are something along the lines of "there is nothing to see", "we can see all we want to during the day", "don't you think the vis. is such that we can do a night dive during the day!" The main barrier, probably above all is maybe the pub beckons, or the social aspect after a days hard diving!

Once you've made the decision and start to plan the diving, it becomes easier, however, a little forward planning is necessary. Many people were (or are) put off by night diving after completing a night dive course in a quarry, watching bits of detritus floating around as its stirred up, or maybe the odd crayfish - not a lot to inspire people. I was lucky enough to do my first night dive in Lanzarote, where an amazing array of marine creatures scuttled around, before I ventured into the quarry! That's not to say quarry night diving isn't necessary, but it has its place in the grand scheme of things. Below a few suggestions, to act as a rough guide only.

#### Planning a UK Night Dive

UK night diving can open up a completely different world of marine life, seldom seen in this light (or lack of it!); there are several ways to conduct a dive, and I've experienced many of them. The planning for night diving is the same as for day, with safety first & foremost, however some extra logistics are involved, with additional consideration of when to eat? Good question, I hear you say. Well, it depends on the time of the dive, but personally I prefer to eat afterwards, but if you do eat beforehand, make sure there is enough time given to food digestion.

Other extremely important factors include adequate cover whether from a boat or shore, tidal patterns & weather. The selection of site should be in a calm area, shallower depths, with no strong tides expected. It is worth considering what facilities are available onshore, and how much boat traffic is likely to be around, and where/who are the emergency contacts.

#### Timing of a UK Night Dive

This is important planning; it is better to organise night dives when the water is at its warmest, probably around September. Another factor is the actual in water time. May/June or September/October, the sun sets around 2000-2100hrs, making it reasonable for a dive, pack up and eat afterwards. During the colder months it may be too uncomfortable as wind chill on getting out could be a problem. During summer months, the sun doesn't set until late. I remember doing a night dive in July, having to wait until 2315 before getting in (mad or what!)

#### Dive & Photo Equipment

It is essential to have at least a primary & backup torch, in addition, I normally pack a small mini-q40, just in case. A surface marker strobe should be affixed to your BCD, only switched on in an emergency, at the surface. A chemical light stick, or more eco-friendly a traser light, which takes two AA batteries with up to 50 hours burn time, is attached to your tank. Additional equipment should include a surface-signalling device, such as a power whistle, and at least a knife - so everything you probably take during the day! As for camera, make sure all is set up prior to darkness, and preferably attach a mini-q40 or suchlike to the system.

#### Types of Night Diving

Shore diving is the obvious choice, and where this is planned, it is extra important to have adequate cover. Diving in this way must take into account entry/exit points, how much surf, no tides & sheltered shallow depths. As no boat cover is available staying close to the shoreline is recommended. Typical examples would be Martin's Haven in Pembrokeshire, Porth Ysgaden or Trefor Pier on the Lleyn Peninsula in North Wales. Swanage Pier, and several other piers seem to be favourite choices of some divers, and given the chance, I would also like to dive Swanage Pier by night; it sounds intriguing. I know of some who have even done night dives in Liverpool's Albert Dock!

Boat Diving adds an extra dimension and probably is one of the best ways to sample something a little different. There are many skippers around the UK who are only too happy to escort a group of divers to a nice dusk-drenched spot. I've been lucky enough to dive from hard day boat and liveaboard, the latter along the deep wall of Heather Island, just outside Oban. A UK wreck night dive would also be something of a challenge, perhaps one day I shall do this, the closest to date being an early morning, at sunrise, dive on the Kyarra.

#### What can be seen in UK Waters?

Black is the colour of the water; rays of white light from divers torches pierce the inky blackness. A moving flashing herd of light comes over the horizon, whilst creatures go scuttling for cover. Critters normally holed up during the day are out in force, hunting, not scared of a damn thing! For the photographer this presents many additional opportunities, with many feeding anemones & soft corals brighter than normal in a stunning array of rich incandescent colours.

Fish are attracted to the lights, and several daytime species seem to still be active at night, like large lone pollack, suddenly coming out of the darkness.

As with all night dives, blackness is the background colour, which can be used to good effect.



*Luidia Ciliaris out hunting at night. These any many other creatures are seen more during night than day, allowing for more photographic targets!*

## Porth Ysgaden, Lleyn Peninsula, North Wales

This shore dive site is one of the easiest for our group of divers to get to, and is used for day & night diving. With its easy entry/exit beach, gentle sloping sand, an outer protective ridge of rock and boulders, along with the mainland wall and depths to a max of 10m, it is ideal. Porth Ysgaden is located half way along Lleyn Peninsula, just past the village of Nefyn and close by the village of Tudweiliog, along the B4407. B&B's, guest houses abound in the district, as well as campsites, so if an overnight stay is what you are looking for, look no further. We have normally included a night dive in a Lleyn diving weekend. The village of Tudweiliog has a pub, the White Lion, which serves a great hearty selection of food, so it's worth eating here beforehand if you can.

A short drive away down a series of single-track roads, terminating at a small head of land forming a natural bay. On the outside of the bay, the depth increases from 10 to 20m+ until a reef is encountered, covered in mussels and swept by strong currents – which is not where we want to be. Back in the bay, a few mooring lines are encountered from the small group of dinky fishing boats. Very large spider crabs swaying precariously on ends of kelp fronds greet our descent. As the depths are shallow here, it's more conducive to conduct dives on HW slack Neaps to give a reasonable depth with no currents. A forest of mermaids tresses stand erect, still, in the cool of the night. Small fish scamper around these, as we progress through them. A bed of weed and kelp is encountered, which soon gives way to thick sand. On the borders of this land a large lobster is encountered marching in a determined fashion, its tail “feathers” flashing royal blue & erect. A suitably placed camera is no match for this full-on creature, as the moon is high & full, it is out for a meal as the claws attack the metal camera framer!

A ridge of tumbled boulders forms a mini wall punctuated by holes, where maybe found groups of shrimps, cup corals and anemones. As we tour further, more lobster is sighted, and now several velvet swimming crabs also out and about.



*Out of the dark, a Lesser Spotted Dogfish rests on the shallow seabed in search of prey.*

As it is easy to navigate, following the inside main wall is best, however, try instead, the inside of the outer ridge. After a reasonable bottom time of over 60 minutes we make our way back to the beach, with its easy exit ramp. All around us is blackness; there are no streetlights, and just an inky black Irish Sea for company.

## Loch Bay Pinnacle, Isle of Skye

On a week long trip to Skye, aboard the hardboat Elena 'C', with Gordon McKay & Aileen Robertson, staying at Dive and Sea Hebrides, we enjoyed some superb hospitality as well as diving, not the least of which was a night dive at the nearby Loch Bay Pinnacle. Of the party of 12, 9 wanted to be first down the line this evening, and not down the Stein Inn. I just don't know how we all did it - tearing ourselves away from the great food in the Inn, probably because we knew we had it to come afterwards! This is what it's all about, when you are on a trip, and what better way to do it than with an experienced skipper, on a site just a beers throw from the pub and your accommodation!

The pinnacle is more of a slope to 6m, which terminates in a sheer drop to 20m, its ends, finger ridges & large boulders covered in a variety of colourful marine growth. There were 6 photographers contributing to the many strobe flashes. This was not surprising really given the amount and diversity of marine life encountered. All divers, whether with camera or not, were gob smacked by the experience!



*Baby Feather Star, swimming freely midwater, makes for a great opportunity.*

Our descent line led to the top of the pinnacle, where dense carpets of brittlestars & feather stars lay all around. As if that wasn't enough, large starfish like *luidia ciliaris* strutted its stuff, and many red or orange cushion stars had come out to play. Several squat lobsters & sea scorpions were encountered, but by far the most endearing memory was of the tiny feather stars.

Only a couple of centimetres across they launched themselves midwater, their tendrils writhing as they sought purchase from the salt water around them. As film supplies ran out faster than air, the flashes gradually dying to a murmur, the scene quietened down, as each buddy pair took in the whole scene. At the end of one of the ridges, several basalt columns lay horizontal adding further interest. It was finally time to ascend, and as we did so, encountered a large lions mane jellyfish pulsating out of the darkness. Breaking the surface, we looked up to clear star studded skies and the thought of our evening meal, after we had thrown the camera into a very big bucket!



The UK aquatic night underworld is by no means quiet, but very much alive & kicking, ready for you to photograph!

## LINKS

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



**South Shields Photographic Society:** [www.mlovell.freeserve.co.uk/index.html](http://www.mlovell.freeserve.co.uk/index.html)

After seeing Roy & Pat Cash's excellent Wastwater shot I thought it a good idea to mention the South Shields Photographic Society web site. Not quite your underwater stuff, but some serious ideas on land photography and masses of links into all sorts of photographic genre web sites. Plenty of photos of sea & landscapes providing further ideas, maybe for supplementary images to your underwater collection. Take a look, the Links page is vast - have a look at the Skye web sites.



**Mark's Site:** [www.seaimages.co.uk](http://www.seaimages.co.uk)

Ok, now check this out - its a must, cos' its our Mark's web site. Mark (Walker) has created a web site full of superb images of outstanding quality. Need I say more; have a look for yourselves, and some of the images maybe familiar! The sections are easy to navigate and the imagery has been broken down into Wide Angle, Close-Up and Macro.



**Sea Dragons:** [www.dragonsearch.asn.au](http://www.dragonsearch.asn.au)

The website is dedicated to the life, times and monitoring of leafy Sea Dragons, and is an Australian Web Site. It has much information having an impressive gallery of images, as well as video footage. If any of us get the chance to dive with these creatures (if you haven't done so already), this is a great source of information. Included in here is a Diving Code of Conduct - do's & dont's of diving with them. The links section lists many official bodies, like Australian MCS, Project Seahorse, Threatened Species Network to name but a few.



**Underwater Photographer Equipment:** [www.uwphotographer.com](http://www.uwphotographer.com)

The site is more for people looking for equipment etc., but seems to contain much more, with technical forums on all sorts of camera systems, Stolen Register (I'll be registering my stolen items in there!) Also, on the links section masses of UPS web site links.

There are more links on the next page, read on

## And now, let's go Digital...

### **Scanning:** [www.scantips.com](http://www.scantips.com)

Paul provided us with an insight into electronic forms of images with a Technical Talk some time ago, however, Ken has kindly passed this web site onto us. It contains a mine of information on tips for scanning, and especially goes into some detail on the different techniques employed or that can be indulged when scanning those awkwardly coloured images in. It has a piece on the Unsharp Mask, the Transparent Media Adapter, FAQ's, Scan Resolution suggestions, 72dpi what it all means, using Resizing & Resampling, with Actual/Print Size. Having had a look at this, it has also given me more of an insight into techniques needing further work, to get the best out of my current scanner equipment configuration.

### **Tips & Knowledge Sharing, by E-Mail: [UW-Photo List & Digest](#)**

In case you missed the e-mail, from Ken, via Lucy, the UW-Photo (or Digest) are e-mail bound knowledge sharing items. The idea is that e-mails are exchanged regarding Hints & Tips, discussion points etc., and people within the ring offer constructive comments etc. It sounds quite interesting, any many web sites associated with individuals seem to be quoted.

You subscribe to either UW-PHOTO or UW-PHOTO-DIGEST by sending an e-mail to [majordomo@world.std.com](mailto:majordomo@world.std.com) with the message:

"subscribe UW-Photo" or "subscribe UW-Photo-Digest"

You are sent an authorisation code which you reply to confirming your request to subscribe. The UW-Photo list sends you e-mails as they arrive the UW-Photo-digest sends around 1 e-mail per day.

The list subscribers are a mix of amateurs and professionals Jim Church was a fairly regular contributor and Ike Duane founder or Ikelite often comments, usually on Ikelite kit. The content of the list is varied and has some useful information any requests for help are generally well answered. There have also been some fairly long threads about malaria medication, films and airport x-rays and baggage restrictions so use of the delete key is needed sometimes more than others.

Following from Kens UW-Photo note, I took a look at the following, which is my first delve into the wonderful world of digital photography!

### **Pixel Power:** [www.wetpixel.com](http://www.wetpixel.com)

An interesting web site, as the title suggests "digital photography for divers". Shed load of reviews on the latest digi-equipment, many photo-related features, either on equipment or underwater marine life, even several on sharks, which humans seem fascinated with! The galleries, well, its awesome, make sure you have some microwave meals and plenty of air-time, cos' you are gonna need it! The galleries range from Egypt, Australia, Caribbean, Sipadan all over the place! Some of the images are ok, and quite a few really good shots. The Links section leads you into yet another maze of digital photography web sites! Its mainly American based, and is an easy to use site.

### **Cool Digi-Divers:** [www.digitaldiver.net](http://www.digitaldiver.net)

Wow! This site is really cool. There are some really impressive shots of both underwater life and topside. Digital photography has come a long way in the last few years, and the quality of the images on this site certainly proves it. Have a look at the Cozumel November 2001 images, especially the front image of the large starfish on bare sand, pin sharp. There are some interesting ones of ghost shrimps etc. There is also a technical forum and many other such features in this Florida based web site.

## **ADVERTS**

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

## **TALK HANDOUTS**

None this issue.