

NORTHERN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

NUPG NEWSLETTER Issue #16, Aug2005 – Dec2005

AUTUMN / WINTER ISSUE

NUPG Web Site: www.nupg.org.uk

Reminding us all of the heady days of summer. The Isle of Lewis Trip in July, the second week was made up of mainly NUPG members.

One of the “regular guest speakers” Alan Mildren, seen here jumping with his video camera off the Cuma, whilst Paul assists with cameras.



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6th March
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 - NUPG Winter Splash-In
4th March
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Date for your Diary:

NEXT MEETING: Monday Jan 16th 2006, Corbans, Hale Barns at 1930.

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

MEETING DATES & EVENTS for your diary

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

The Northern Underwater Photography Group

Contact information, meetings & events.

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

Date	Meeting place	Time	
Monday Jan 16 th 2006	Corbans, Hale Barns (A538/J6 M56, towards Altrincham & Hale)	19.30pm – 22.00pm	
Saturday Mar 4 th 2006	NUPG WINTER SPLASH IN, CAPERNWRAY	19.30pm – 22.00pm	NUPG Winter Splash In
Monday Mar 6 th 2006	Corbans, Hale Barns (A538/J6 M56, towards Altrincham & Hale)	19.30pm – 22.00pm	Jane Morgan from DIVE
Monday Apr 3 rd 2006	Corbans, Hale Barns (A538/J6 M56, towards Altrincham & Hale)	19.30pm – 22.00pm	Judging Winter Splash-In
Monday May 5 th 2006	Corbans, Hale Barns (A538/J6 M56, towards Altrincham & Hale)	19.30pm – 22.00pm	Annual General Meeting

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

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

STOP PRESS!

NUPG Meeting March 16th features

J A N E M O R G A N



Jane Morgan is an award winning underwater photographer, currently working for DIVE magazine, who is on hand at the NUPG March meeting to talk about her photographic experiences.

See www.morganreefphotography.com

Information:

Wetpixel - the website for underwater photographers has a web forum section and NUPG has now a web forum set up here thanks to Ken Byrne.

Log on at <http://wetpixel.com/forums/index.php?showforum=44> and start using the forum to exchange views, ideas, information etc with NUPG members and others.

N. U. P. G. - Winter Splash-In! 4th March 2006

Capernwray, be there, it's exciting, it's fun, it's Photography!

Support YOUR Club!!!!

Address <http://www.dive-site.co.uk/frame.htm>

Current site info
(Temperature, viz and
course announcements)

Capernwray

Home
Facilities
Dive Site
Opening Times
Registration & Fees
Diving School
Gear Hire
Our Shop
Conference Facilities
Links
The Staff
Find Us
Contact Us
Feedback
Image Gallery

The Porthole Restaurant

Welcome to Capernwray!

Just a few years ago, the old flooded quarry at Capernwray, near Camforth, was disused and abandoned and visited only by a handful of local scuba divers. Today, Jackdaw Quarry, as it is known locally, is home to Capernwray Diving Centre, one of the most progressive and professional scuba diving operations in the UK.

The diving centre at Capernwray has been in existence since 1995 and has witnessed considerable growth and change in that time. In 2002, the opening of the **state-of-the-art clubhouse** signalled a new chapter in the development of the Centre. Designed by award-winning Manchester architect, Stephen Hodder and built by a small team of master craftsmen, the new building is simply stunning. Built on two levels, the ground floor features a restaurant and licensed bar whilst the first floor houses the conference room, together with a huge private terrace overlooking the diver's entry to the water. We will always continue to update and improve our facilities but the completion of this major project goes a long way to making Capernwray what we truly believe it to be, the best diving centre in the country.

Click to enlarge

It's open to anyone who fancies getting wet and taking photographs.

Capernwray Quarry makes an ideal place in which to practice our art. It's not about winning it's about taking photographs being there and sharing the experience.

See NUPG website & emails for further details ©

Judging April 3rd NUPG Meeting

MEETING REVIEWS

More on the Nov-Dec 2005 meetings in future issues!

12th December 2005

Xmas on the doorstep already! The Christmas meeting is traditionally a selection of mini-talks by members, accompanied by the “Best of 2005 Tropical & Temperate”.

The speakers were:

Bill Bradley – Indonesia, an audio-visual.

Roy Cash – Cocos Islands.

Jason Gregory – Small fish.

Competition Theme: “Best of 2005 Tropical & Temperate”

Temperate 1st Place:

Paul Kay, Flying gurnard, St. Tudwal’s Islands, North Wales – Digital Image.

Tropical 1st Place:

Bill Bradley, Red Sea Reef scene with snorkellers at the surface – Digital Image.

A BIG Thank You goes to Ken Byrne this meeting for sorting out the plethora of digital image formats & sizes for the competition theme.

See following pages for the “Best of 2005” Winners...

Best of 2005 – Tropical: Bill Bradley

Bill's shot of lithe snorkellers in the Egyptian Red Sea just makes you dial the travel agent to book your next diving trip, for next week!

Bill, you should get this shot on the front of a magazine!!!!



Best of 2005 – Temperate: Paul Kay

Just goes to show that diving around the North Wales Lleyn coastline can deliver some excellent marine life to photograph!



21st November 2005

This meeting's guest speaker was Colin Doeg, one of the founder members of BsoUP (British Society of Underwater Photographers).

Colin's two talks were:

- **Judging of Competitions**
- **The search for the flamboyant cuttlefish.**

Competition Theme: A Blend of Colours

J3rd Place: Derek Haslam, Nudibranch, Grecian style.

J3rd Place: John Spencer, Eye – Digital entrant.

2nd Place: John Spencer, Starfish – Digital entrant.

1st Place: Neil Blackie, Scorpionfish on Rock (Wakatobi) – Slide entrant.

3rd October 2005

With an Indian Summer raging, our second outing at the new venue of Corbans in Hale was much quieter than usual. An average attendance of around 20 people, and sadly owing to illnesses/accidents the planning of the meeting was changed at the last minute. Still, not to worry, the meeting went ahead and actually finished about 10 minutes earlier than the end time of ten o' clock.

Bill wasn't able to present his Fave 5 and Jason had to defer the meeting also. Ken presented some interesting information on the use of certain filter/levels within the mainstream imaging software, and Tony presented a talk on the dive destination of Dominican Republic. In amongst these activities we had the slide competition on rather an emotive subject matter.

Paul presented some news regarding future events & activities in particular, NUPG members were canvassed for support on stand at the NEC Birmingham Dive Show at the end of October, and for any images for the portfolio.

I reminder from Gail regarding the membership cards & dues, for those who either haven't collected their cards or paid their dues.

Competition Theme: Blennies & Gobies

I looked these up in the book to see exactly what they cover in terms of marine fish, which seems to include eel pout and gunnel, aka small butterflyfish. A decision was made to split the slides into two categories, "Tompots" and "Rest of known Universe" (the former after the competition were destined for the black hole parts of the universe – hah!). The intention was to have 1 Tompot Winner and 2 images for the remainder.

There were many entrants of each, and with a raft of pretty little tompots to choose from – even the tompot which graces our current membership card was displayed. Of the "others" a dolly-mixtures set of motley animals came and went including a butterflyfish-gunnel, the odd British and overseas gobies, but none of the classic "goby on red coral in exotic far-flung place". One notable Blennie which I must say most of us missed, including myself, was the monster daddy blennie of all – the wolfish.

It seems the masses of good old fashioned small British blennies are yet to be photographed! The mixture images were around 60% digital, 40% slide.

Competition. Results:

Category: Tompots R Us

3 first images:

Paul Kay: Tompot, Trevor Pier

Ken Byrne: Tompot, Anglesey Splash-In 2003

Derek Haslam: Tompot, Trevor Pier (probably the same photogenic tompot as Paul's)

The “Tompotteries” ...



“We are the cheeky boys, cheeky boys!!!”

Left: Paul Kay

Right: Derek Haslam

Don they make a fine pair.

Category: Rest of known Pottie-less world

3rd Place: Michelle, taken in Knynsa South Africa

Sting couldn't have done any better, and rather than a message, a blennie in a bottle.
Taken on an Olympus 5050 zoom, offset external strobe.

2nd Place: Derek Haslam, Red Sea Lagoon

Derek said he couldn't get on it, but waited around for a while before clinching this shot of a blue blennie sticking out from some lobe coral.

1st Place: Derek Haslam, Red Sea Lagoon

Derek "Blennie-Boy" does it again, where is this lagoon, its obviously full of blennies, a veritable "Blennie-dom"!

Anyway, there he was, betwixt dives and in this wet tee-shirt competition, the first part of which was to get the tee-shirt wet by snorkelling. As he got into the water he spotted a blennie not 3m below the surface but it wasn't "avin-it". 2-3 days later he was down there again and got a great shot off while it was messing around in a load rubble unawares of Derek doing his stealth-bomber act. Needless to say he came first in the competition, tee-shirt one that is (he was the only entrant). Nice one Derek, right up your "tompot-alley"!



1st Derk Haslam's Blennie "havin some!"



**2nd Derek Haslam.
Playing peek-a-boo!**



**3rd Michelle Brooks took to
the bottle for this excellent
shot!**

Ken Byrne: One Step Photo Fix

Ken presented a short talk-ette on the use of colour/light level slides within the popular imaging manipulation software. Paintshop Pro (9) and Photoshop (6/7 CS). The audience for this technique is anyone using the software against either a digital or scanned image.

The idea is to intelligently use the different colour and light levels to produce a more pleasing image, or enrich the saturation (or not), and sometimes removing some of the unwanted colours.

The technique pre-supposes most underwater photos lack a certain amount of contrast, thus this technique is used to beef up contrast not at the expense of the image. Using midtones, shadows or highlights can also enhance an image.

Various images were shown and by looking at the histograms a better image can be produced. Examples included a butterfly fish with no contrast, enhanced with yellow, various “blue” reef shots, which once “tuned” appeared as normal colourful shots of orange anthias and pretty Red Sea reefs. This latter image was achieved by clicking the “white”.

There are options to save a definition for use on other similar images. Obviously all images are subjective and may need individual attention, and much of the software is down to the users interpretation of the final image required and what the software can provide.

Tony Gilbert: Dominican Republic

Last year (2004) Tony was fortunate enough to travel to the Caribbean however, the downside being hurricane season, September. True to fashion & general climatic change, Africa seemed to be squirting out weather systems every five minutes. These hurtled across the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean, many of which fizzled out, but some got through. Ivan passed Dominican Republic by a whisker and deposited its wet & windy cargo (much like the morning after a curry and a serious amount of lager), over southern American states.

We watched this on CNN (not the curry & larger), only to find Jeanne “whinging” its way towards the island of Hispaniola, of which Dominican Republic is the eastern half. In the meantime I got some in, 4 dives, until the camera flooded. The northern part of DR near Puerto Plata has the hotel complexes of Playa Dorada, with its nice beach now lapping with the “right-kind of waves”, thanks to the government of the early 80’s who decided it was best to destroy the reef system in front of it, by dynamiting it!

The hotel staff gave us all a briefing, after which the party game of the day, whilst the hurricane rolled in from the east, destroying villages in its path, luckily Samana Bay wasn’t too badly hit – where the over-wintering whales go. The game was to see who could do some simple arithmetic and those who couldn’t were to down a shot of hard Dominican rum. Needless to say the 20 or so guests doing this were plastered in about an hour, but heh, there was a hurricane coming and we could do nothing about it! The irony of it was that many Jamaicans had fled to DR from the onset of Ivan only to find themselves from the frying to the fire!

The hurricane arrived at 90mph, with horizontal rain for 15 hours and winds which threw boats into the beach mangroves. We along with many others battened ourselves down in our rooms, whilst mobiles were on talking to families back home, as we didn’t know what was going to happen.

The day after as Jeanne moved back out to sea, the waters calmed and we were able to dive once more. Managing another 4 dives on the more advanced reefs encountering further pristine corals. Like most of the Caribbean, American’s get in the way, and that was the last of the diving to be had, as the waves became choppiest (in my opinion F3) and due to liability laws it meant no diving! Another day later the visibility underwater dropped to less than 0.5m so there was no point in diving anyway.

But, having said all that, the diving we did was of superb quality on healthy reefs and I’d certainly go back for more.

The diving is 10 miles down the road is Sosúa where the inner reefs closer inshore are fine but used mainly for training and thankfully now, the dive centres allow the advanced divers to do to the outer reefs (they listened – back in 1998 when we were last there).

The dive guides are very eco-conscious and it is no surprise as these reefs are superb & pristine Caribbean reefs. Many gardens, but in particular walls, tunnels, swimthroughs, chimneys of corals, with masses of anemones, attendant shrimps, sponges, fish, morays and squid. All this life was topped off by sea whips & pillar coral, angelfish & morays.

5th Sept 2005

The September meeting saw a harvest of “home-grown” speakers from the last of the summer wine.

Paul Webster: Talked about Cyanotype Printing, a particular process, which was featured in a magazine, and the article is within this edition below.

Paul Kay: Described some of his images taken since he made the jump from film to digital.

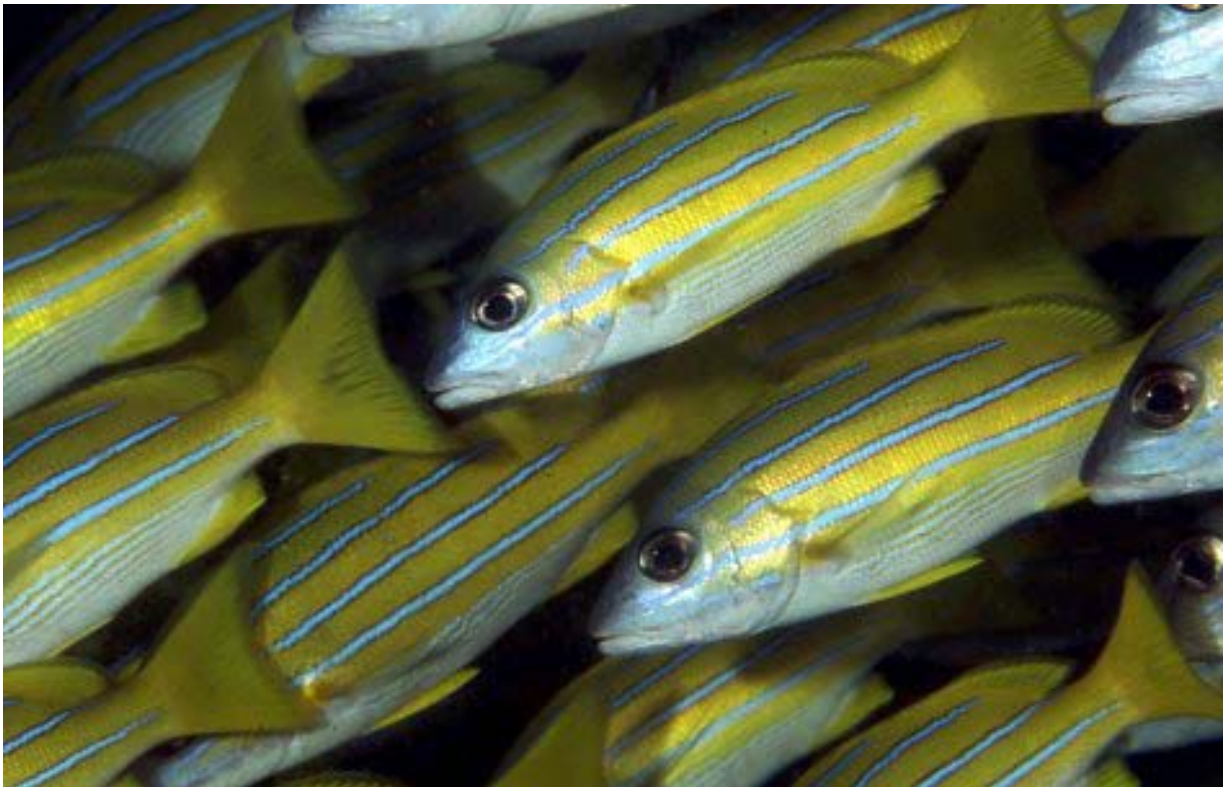
Competition Theme: The Colour Yellow

This could mean absolutely any marine creature, coral formation or flora in the underwater world! The audience settled with the following winners.

3rd Place: Ken Byrne, yellow damselfish.

2nd Place: Paul Webster with a shoal of snappers (see below).

1st Place: Derek Haslam, jellyfish in the Mediterranean.



NEC DIVE 2005, by Tony Gilbert

The NEC Birmingham was the venue for the Diver Magazine's DIVE SHOW 2005, and again we were lucky enough to share a stand with BSoUP for the second year running. Lucy sought willing volunteers amongst the NUPG throng and a select few came forward to "man the pumps" on Saturday & Sunday.

My stint was with Lucy, Paul, and later Colin, on the Sunday, and I duly started my journey at 0730 only to find that my daughter's car wouldn't start owing to an electrical fault. After ½hr and a set of jump leads later I was ready for the off once more. As I approached Birmingham the heavens opened and all cars slowed. I stopped off at services to forwarn Lucy of my lateness. About 10am a bedraggled harassed looking creature (that'll be me then) shambled across a shamefully damp car park to a plethora of buildings being surrounded in huge numbers by other people. Lucy came to greet me outside the halls and luckily an exhibitors pass was on hand.

Once inside the Aladdin's Cave of the dive industry, we jostled past many people already eyeing the jewels; all manner of stalls were busy trying to sell their particular brand of dive gear or offering something for free - which of course isn't, just a sales pitch. Dodging all the "children" in the candy shop was a task in itself as most were walking one way, whilst their heads and bodies were going in a different direction, as were their eyes and tongues, completely in another direction!

British Sub-Aqua Club	1411	www.bsac.com
The British Sub Aqua Club welcomes members, divers and non-divers to stand 1411 at this fantastic exhibition. Whether you are a current member, have been trained by another agency or are a non-diver – BSAC is the stand to visit. The BSAC is proud to launch the latest in our renowned set of manuals at the show: Seamanship: a guide for divers. Visit the BSAC stand to find out more details. Whether you are looking to start your diving career or are a more experienced diver, our specially trained staff are looking forward to welcoming you to the stand.		

Then, I saw a familiar face, that of Anthony from BSoUP and there was "our" stand in the middle of a whole row of stands tucked away in a far-flung corner of the hall. You could tell it was ours as it looked like the Alamo, completely surrounded and cut-off for most of the day, with a few throaty survivors holding out!!!

Dive 2005 NEC (National Exhibition Centre) - Birmingham	
Saturday 29th October 2005 - 9:30am-6:00pm Sunday 30th October 2005 - 9:30am-5:00pm	
News Exhibitors Talks Maps Accommodation Exhibitor Zone Press Zone	
It's All Happening at Dive 2005	
Of all the topside places in which you might find yourself over the weekend of 29-30 October, the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham has to be one of the best. It's all happening at Dive 2005!	

Paul said hello and promptly disappeared into the milling throng, perhaps a "forlorn hope" of olde? Lucy and I were then immediately assailed by a random assortment from the gathered crowd, with many questions on a whole raft of all things photography. Jane & Gill from BSoUP arrived as badly needed reinforcements for the flagging members, and like true British in the middle of a "war", we all had tea!

The stand itself was adorned on one side by BSoUPs "Compact camera" show. It was really impressive, showing just what you can do with a compact camera, the images were very very good. This served as a talking point for the many questions about compact cameras, in actual fact the bulk of the questions were regarding same. The back wall was dedicated to mostly excellent pictures taken with a variety of film & digital SLR cameras, and the NUPG wall was similar. Images ranged from mostly macro to a few wide-angles, but no ambient. "Our" wall looked really resplendent in NUPG imagery, from several members who had submitted images, thanks to Paul & Lucy.

As with most shows, this is a time to make contact with people, and many a familiar face was around somewhere, like Tony White, Linda Dunk, Mark Walker, John Liddiard, John Bantin and Linda Pitkin. It's also a good place to see if NUPG members could persuade some to do talks at future meetings. Thanks also for the support of several NUPG members who called in for a chat, like Dave Marsland.

As with all good things, they must come to an end (sadly), and it was indeed time to start thinking about packing up, but not after some more tea!

Now, where did I put the car – 10 full car parks containing mostly silver cars – arrrgh!

Paul Webster, Photographic Article

Paul wrote an article for AG magazine, see link <http://www.picture-box.com/ag37.html>, part of which is here in words and pictures....

I've been scuba diving for more years than I care to remember and for most of that time I've been taking photographs underwater. Starting with an amphibious camera (a camera that is specially designed for underwater use, with specially strengthened body to withstand the pressure, water tight controls and specially design optics). I subsequently moved on to using a conventional SLR in a housing. The housings are generally specifically designed for each model of camera, since the camera controls are operated by controls on the housing that have to match exactly the positions of the controls on the camera. The housings are usually either polycarbonate or aluminium. Divers/photographers have been taking photographs underwater for many years, originally with ambient light but moving onto flash when it became available (a friend told me that when he started he had to carry around a bag full of flash bulbs and change them underwater after each shot. The bulbs being positively buoyant meant that the bag floated above him as he swam). With the advent of faster, finer grained films and electronic flash, underwater photography has been revolutionised (not to mention digital).

Most underwater photographs are taken using flash, either as the main source of light or else as fill. I can pretty much guarantee that when I show a flash lit photograph of coral or a tropical fish to most people that ask was it really was that colour. The answer is yes and no, since water absorbs red light, once you are a few meters down most things start to look predominantly blue (or green in UK waters), it's strange cutting yourself underwater and bleeding green blood, but once artificial light is used to light the subject, then it's true colours become apparent. Flash is great but it does present a number of problems, including water and electricity don't mix very well, even the strongest flashes are limited to a few feet, and problems of backscatter which is where the flash lights up and particles in the water as well as the subject which leads to the photograph looking like it was taken in a snow storm. This is why I've been moving more and more away from flash light pictures to ambient light. Certainly in the cases of photographing dolphins underwater with the speed of the dolphins, the cumbersomeness of the equipment and the lack of range of the flash then ambient light would be my first choice for subjects like this (also dolphins are fairly monochrome anyway). These images were taken in the Red Sea and the Bahamas using a Canon EOS 50 in a Subal housing with a 14mm lens. Typically wide angle lenses are popular for underwater photography since they allow the diver to get as close to the subject as possible and thereby reduce the amount of water between the camera and the subject.



The Bahamas pictures were made on a trip to Bimini a few years ago. There are special dolphin watching trips organised which attracts a wide cross section of people from photographers, families, people looking for some spiritual outcome of interacting with dolphins, etc. The trip consisted of the boat sailing backwards and forwards between the various islands. We weren't looking for dolphins and definitely not chasing them, we were hoping that the dolphins would see the boat and choose to interact with us on their terms. There would be no point chasing the dolphins since if they weren't interested they could certainly out swim the boat, never mind any divers. The days revolved around the boat sailing between the islands, with the passengers amusing themselves. When a pod of dolphins became interested enough to swim up to the boat (which they did on a fairly frequent basis) everyone would rush to the stern of the boat, kit up and wait (a bit like the films of the pilots during the second world war "scrabbling" ready for action). We didn't scuba dive since we wanted to be as agile as possible. The boat would slow down slightly and if the dolphins didn't swim off immediately everyone would jump in the water whilst the boat was still moving. If the dolphins were interested in what was happening at the back of the boat they would come to investigate, other times they would swim off and we wouldn't even catch site of them. It was a great experience but I certainly wouldn't claim it as being spiritual, jumping off a moving boat with a camera in hand, trying to avoid people jumping in the water all around you, trying to snorkel down to the dolphins (who seemed to know just how long each person could hold their breath for and stay just that bit too far away until you couldn't hold your breath anymore). Maybe it's just me. Sometimes the dolphins would swim straight off, sometimes they would stay for a brief period and other times they would stay for half an hour. All too often people try to impose human values and motives to animals, in my limited experience, the dolphins are intelligent animals that have much better things to do with their time than to play/rescue humans on the whim of a human. If they choose to interact it is on their terms until they loose interest or find something better to do with their time.



Over the years I've printed the pictures in many ways but found that the cyanotype process particularly suited the images, not just the fact that the images are blue and so was the water, but it just compliments the images so much.

LINKS

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

www.glaucus.org.uk

As it indicates on the front page of the web sites, it's the British Marine Life Study Society. I found it very informative on events past & present relating to all things marine-news and what is being done regarding surveys, data collection and so forth. There are many people hard at work out there in the ether collecting marine data. Reading wise, it can sometimes be heavy going and you do need time to digest some of the subject matter. My personal opinion is as photographers we should take note of events in the marine world and contribute to its well being where possible.

British Marine Life Study Society
(Incorporated 1993)
Vociferous verities

GLAUCUS HOUSE : 14 COREYH CRESCENT : SHOREHAM-BY-SEA : SUSSEX :
BN13 6PQ
TEL: 01273 465400
E-Mail: Glaucus@hotmail.com

- I am pleased to introduce the British Marine Life Study Society. We are responsible for producing the journal **GLAUCUS**, which is the first publication exploring the marine life of the seas surrounding the British Isles available to the general public.
- We also publish the quarterly **SHOREWATCH** Newsletter and the **TORPEDO** Electronic News Bulletin.

Purpose and Aims

- to stimulate interest in the scientific world and natural history of the seas, and related subjects.
- to bridge the gap between the popular books and scientific literature by publishing readable and informative articles on marine life and the ocean environment.
- to liaise and co-operate with conservation and fishery organisations and other wildlife groups.

MISSION STATEMENT
MEMBERSHIP FORM

www.gordonyu.com

Sunyu, or Sonja as I know her, currently runs a dive centre on the Malaysian island of Perhentian, at the Perhentian Island Resort. She does however do much videography and has a particular flare for this, along with her boyfriend. Together they produce video-clips and related material for much of Asia, judging by the web site.

Sunyu has an eye for detail and picks out many marine gems, as can be seen by these great quality images on the commercial web site. Certainly the house reef next to the dive centre she is currently working at has much to offer especially at night – I can also vouch for that!



www.digitaloceans.net

David Da Costa originates from Bournemouth, but has travelled several places around the world doing u/w photography. He now uses a Nikon D1x in a Seacam Housing (I can see Paul's face lighting up!).

The images (although some for sale) are a cross section of where he's visited to far flung or lesser visited places such as Fiji and Saba. The imagery is superb with many a great photo.

www.betterphoto.com/gallery/gallery.asp?mem=117312

Although an amateur Ian Jones has won / placed in several photographic contests and has had work used by Shell Americas and Shell International. A photo-shoot he did on the subject of "diversity" is due to be published as a 10,000 print run glossy brochure for Shell's internal use.

He is a keen wildlife, travel, people and underwater photographer. Having travelled, dived and lived in many locations around the world. He is from Wales in the UK, but has lived in USA, France, Seychelles and the Netherlands. He currently lives in Malaysian Borneo.

Photo credits include:

- Winner SUBIOS Film Festival 2003 digital shootout
- 2nd and 3rd SUBIOS Film Festival 2004 digital shootout
- Shell / National Geographic Photo Comp - Highly Commended
- Shell USA Diversity Poster
- Shell Americas Diversity Brochure

As an underwater photographer he's produced some stunning images, I particularly liked the Turtle resting on coral, with sunburst.