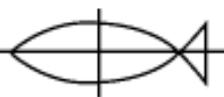


# in focus

No.84



The British Society of  
Underwater Photographers



Newsletter

Spring 2006

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**Spring 2006**

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**COVER SHOT:** The cover was one of Jane Morgan's  
winning Open Portfolio 2005 shots

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# Editorial

Somewhere on the South Coast: dateline Spring 2006

As I write these few words, the dawn chorus has just ended and I have time to reflect on yet another BSoUP *in focus* almost completed.

What a cracker of an issue! And - something I've only just noticed - an all-female effort this time; is this a first, I wonder?

Lesley Maw dices with death, or at least a camera flood, as she launches herself through the South African surf; Sam Bean peers down the world's biggest plughole and fears not; our own, our very own, Martha Tressler promises us great improvements and incentives for this year's Splash-In; Joss Woolf details her trip to Kinasi, and the wonders she saw there; Jane Burnett sends copy and photos all the way from New Zealand, with nary a hobbit in sight; and Elaine Whiteford allows us to reprise an article on Scottish Loch diving which first saw the light of day in another publication some months ago.

A big hand for the girls, I think!

(Am I still allowed to say, write or think this???)

Added to which, of course, last year's winning portfolios for the Beginner's and the Open competitions - how can we get such variety and value all in one magazine, I hear you ask?

It's a great issue to be going out on - for this will be my last stint as Editor, and I wish all the best to whoever follows me.

I have taken the liberty of adding one page in this issue to allow myself the luxury of a little reflection, and trust you'll forgive me for it.

Till next we meet, then, I remain

Yours in the bar,

Pat Morrissey  
Editor

# Diving with Sabrina (and her friends)

by Lesley Maw

I have always wanted to see a Great White in the water, and a business trip to South Africa seemed like a perfect opportunity. "Right, I need contacts" I thought, so I rattled off a quick email to fellow BSoUP member Tony White who now lives in South Africa. Within hours the unexpected reply came back - "Sod that, I can get you 90 minutes with tiger sharks" (not one to mince his words, our Tony). I naively thought this would be in a cage - "Oh no" Tony corrected me, "no cages, the current is too strong".

I decided to think about this for a few weeks. Diving without a cage with tiger sharks in baited water goes against everything I have ever learnt about diving with big sharks. They have killed humans and I was a little concerned. I decided to ask a few more questions. Peter Scoones, our esteemed co-founder, called them 'pussy cats'. Tony assured me it was safe. OK, that sounds promising. However, at that time I didn't know about Mark. If I had I would not have worried for a moment. Mark Addison runs Blue Wilderness. Or rather he is Blue Wilderness. This is the company Tony has dived with for many years, both with the tigers and for the sardine run. Mark has been guiding clients in with these sharks since 1998 and his client list is impressive - Doubilet being just one of many top names. Decision made, it had to be done.

Arriving in Durban, the weather did not look good. It was raining, cold, and worse, the sea state did not even look diveable. But, South Africans are a hardy bunch so we agreed to meet up the following morning. Now, if you have never experienced a surf launch, you haven't lived...

OK I'm exaggerating, but they are *damned* good fun. The large RIB had a full complement consisting of the Brazilian contingent (4, armed with cameras), Mark's 2 friends, a cameraman and me (8 being the maximum allowed). Oh yes, and a large pile of stinky, rotting fish.

After riding a large swell, we eventually arrived at the dive site and the bait was plopped into the water, anchored to the reef. The reef they use has a flat top and according to Mark, the tigers like this reef because they are less likely to be ambushed (what the hell ambushes tiger sharks, I think!!). We didn't have to wait long, and soon we were in the water, the bait was released, and we all drifted along together. After the Brazilians had got tired of chasing the sharks off with their cameras, soon enough there were 3 tigers around us and they stayed. One was identified as 3.2m Sabrina.

I did not feel at all threatened by these 3 girlies (or 'Mark's chicks' as I heard them referred to). One approached the Brazilian contingent below me, then turned and swam upwards towards me...she didn't stop and she didn't turn away when a few feet away, like they had all done before. The next thing I knew was my viewfinder was filled with grey and as I took the camera away from my face, a tail fin swept past my nose and she gently brushed my leg. This was not threatening behaviour, and it is something I don't think I'll ever forget. You really get the feeling that they have to trust you to approach that closely from the front. It's as if they don't want to risk putting themselves in any danger, so they have to be sure you will not chase them or hurt them. This really does have to be experienced to be believed.

The following day was a rather different experience! These are wild creatures. As humans we can tend to classify critters as either dangerous or tame and it is very important

to understand that there is a middle ground between the two. These sharks need respect. The weather had improved and there were only 2 of us in the water, the cameraman and I, with Mark as usual managing the scene on the surface by snorkelling and free diving. First, a male appeared but he was rather skittish, and as the girls sauntered in they made their feelings clear about the male interloper. After much dramatic posturing and jaw-chomping they chased him off, but by this time more sharks had turned up and the squabbling continued. I was mesmerised.

After around 10 minutes the cameraman had a problem and left the water. That left me, alone, with the sharks - and they still weren't settled. Now, being in open water surrounded by 9 slightly pissed-off tiger sharks is...well...a bit freaky. One thing you notice is that they love to creep up behind you. They were approaching much closer from behind than in front - I guess that is where the trust comes in on their part. There were sharks above me, below me, to the left, right, and much closer, behind me. Being the consummate photographer I looked down and realised I still had at least 10 shots of film left - matters were not helped by the fact the vis was not as good as the day before, so I had to get closer to get anything decent.

All during this time, Mark was in his element. He kept free diving down close to me and stayed for as long as he could as if sensing my trepidation. But he also had his own agenda, getting right in amongst the sharks and trying to take ID photos of the ones unfamiliar to him.

One remora had made the unfortunate decision to detach itself from its host who then proceeded to chase it - Tom and Jerry style - between and round the other sharks. It was quite comical. They both disappeared out of sight.

As even more sharks turned up and not just tigers, I decided that as my film had finished (hey, I'm a photographer I know my priorities!) it was time to go. With one last lingering look downwards as I was on the surface I vowed to myself I will come back. I have to visit Durban again for a conference in August 2007, but I just don't think I can wait that long.

This has to be the most exciting diving I have ever done. It's as if someone has slapped me round the face with a wet fish and said "hey! *Why* are you going to the Red Sea when you could be doing this!" I'm hooked and now I want to do the sardine run as well.

I booked my tiger shark diving with 'Tony's Harem' through Tony White's Sea of Dreams Tours ([www.seaofdreams.co.uk](http://www.seaofdreams.co.uk)) and I can't recommend it highly enough.

### **Advertising in *in focus***

Advertising in this magazine is a cost-effective way of reaching over 250 dedicated underwater photographic enthusiasts, their families and friends. By their presence on these pages, our advertisers demonstrate both their belief in BSoUP's importance in the world of underwater photography and their continuing support for the interests of our readers.

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(Half pages should be landscape)

# Photo Freedom

by Sam Bean

Exhaust gas bubbles can be a real problem when photographing underwater. Many marine creatures view the bubbling diver with panic, whereas the rebreather clad diver, or the graceful freediver seem to be treated differently, perhaps being viewed as just another fish? In the quest for bubble free encounters it became clear that a rebreather was not financially feasible at present, so the only way forward would be to learn how to freedive.

So, one cold January weekend the obvious place to be was on a freediving course with Deeper Blue ([www.deeperblue.net](http://www.deeperblue.net)) in the warm submarine escape training tank (SETT) in Portsmouth. This 30 meters deep tank has been designed for training crew to escape from their submarines, but it is also used by freedivers for training.

On arrival an introduction to freediving is given in the classroom and various stretching, yoga type exercises are performed to limber you up ready for the tank. Buddy pairs are then agreed for the practical sessions. Nervous tension can be felt building amongst the trainees as you leave the classroom and enter the lift that slowly climbs to the tenth floor of the SETT building. On arriving at the top of the tank everyone dashes in unison to the edge to peer down to confirm just what a long way it is down to the bottom.

The first day of training focuses on learning how to perform static apnea (breath holding on the surface, face down in the water) and free immersion where you pull down the tank and back using a line and no fins. Trainees are also taught rescue and recovery skills on the surface.

The freediving soon feels routine and as the course progresses the depth of dives gradually increases. All in the group easily achieved a freedive of at least 10 meters on the first day.

Only one diver in the buddy pair can dive at a time, the other must act as safety cover, swimming down to meet the ascending freediver and carefully monitoring for any signs of possible problems during the final 10 meters.

Things start to hot up on day two and the now confident trainees are given freediving fins to learn the discipline of constant weight freediving. Initially long bi-fins are used then the more powerful monofins are brought out. These were very tricky things to get the hang of, Tanya Streeter may look like a mermaid goddess in hers, but most novice freedivers find the bi-fins to be a much safer option!

By the end of the weekend the trainees look at ease with freediving and a few achieve the un-imaginable and make it down to 30 meters to say hello to the buxom mermaid painted at the bottom.

## **The New Look BSoUP Splash-In!**

by Martha Tressler

As many of you (I hope) have already heard we have a new look for the 2006 BSoUP Splash-In. Oh the basics are the same - you come down to Plymouth and all jump in the water on the same day to get those stunning UK images in amazing south coast visibility, under flat calm seas and brilliant blue skies. Yeah.... (Well it has happened - I'm sure it has!)

But the difference this year is that which ever of you does the best job of it will be going to the Red Sea for a week courtesy of Tony Backhurst Scuba. And Tony himself will be there to help select the winner of his holiday, along with a couple of other independent judges. Yes, we thought the grand prize was best awarded by a panel of judges. But the rest of it will still be voted on by all of you there, with the same 4 categories as last year (film and digital, close-up and wide angle), and as

well as trophies there are also prizes for each category winner provided by Alan James and others. So all of you warm water wimps might just consider a cooler plunge on 1 July!

And the Print competition has also changed. Your prints will be on display at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth from 10 June for voting on by the public. As a result there is an early deadline for the prints - 27 May. And we need 2 copies (one unmounted) so we can show them at the Aquarium and also at the Mount Batten Centre on 1 July. We are mounting the ones to be shown in the Aquarium, with a little help from Canon UK Limited.

You can enter 4 images this year rather than 3 (maximum 3 in one category - British or Overseas) so please start sorting these out now. We want lots of impressive images to wow the folks coming to the Aquarium, and the Aquarium management so they want us back again! Those of you who succeed will go home with handy vouchers to spend at Ocean Optics or Cameras Underwater (tell me you can't find lots to buy in one of those establishments!) and with a year's family membership to the Aquarium.

And now for a plug for one of our sponsors - the Aquarium and its charitable arm the National Aquarium (also giving us some running costs, needed as those costs have gone up quite a bit with all of this new stuff!). If you are in the Plymouth area it is well worth a visit - a new interactive section recently opened with information on climate change, mini subs (you might get a chance to play with some ROVs) and lots of neat stuff. Not to mention the odd fish or two (some very odd...). Enter your prints in the competition, then drag your friends and family to the Aquarium to show them off - and have a look around.

It's all on the website - details of prizes and rules and entry forms, etc. Or if you are not "web enabled" you can get entry forms and more details from Gill McDonald (07855 759946) - or ask any of your Committee!



# Morrissey resigns!

## *A nation mourns...*

Well, perhaps not quite true - but it makes a nice story, doesn't it?

Yes, after what seems like a long time, I have decided to hang up my pen as Editor of BSoUP's magazine, and I know I shall miss it a lot. However, having moved from London down to the Sarf Coast some years ago, and now being fully stretched as an English teacher at a secondary school in Bognor Regis, I just can't devote as much time as previously to the old mag - so far better to hand it over to someone who can, and head for the Dark Side in comparative peace and quiet.

A BIG vote of thanks to all who've helped me get the magazine out on time (more or less) - from Anthony Holley and the printers, to all who have sent in copy and pictures in response to my regular screams for help. BSoUP has some amazingly talented folk out there, and I should know - I owe most of them money...

It's been fun, most of the time, but I shan't miss the hours it takes to cobble this little booklet together every 4 months; it really can reduce a man to apoplectic rage (very few things can't, really) when everything suddenly disappears off the screen for no apparent reason after hours of fiddling about with layouts and text boxes; but there you are, 's no longer my problem.

But all is not lost; the world has *not yet* heard the last of Obi Wan Morrissey! The more perceptive of you will have realised that these are the first few words I have put into the mag outside the Editorial zone since I took it over - and I like it! So the new Ed can rest assured she will be getting regular missives from 'Disgusted, Tonbridge Wells'!!!

Toodle-oo for now!

Pat Morrissey

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# A Week in Kinasi

by Joss Woolf

The arrival of our British Airways flight to Dar es Salaam, or "Dar", as it is more fashionably known, is delayed by our unexpected diversion to Nairobi in an attempt to save the life of a poor passenger who could only be described as "seriously ill".

Already now "seriously delayed", our eventual passage through customs might not have been quite so prolonged if one of our group hadn't neglected to acquire his entry visa BEFORE our arrival and then been relegated to the back of an enormous queue for insolence!

More than two hours since landing we are finally transferred to two small planes bound for Mafia Island, south of Zanzibar, off the coast of Tanzania in the Indian Ocean.

Mafia, whose name is derived from the Arab word "morfiyeh" meaning "group" actually describes an archipelago. The islands have in turn been occupied by the Chinese, Shirazi people from Persia, the Portuguese, cannibals from Madagascar, Omani Arabs, the Germans from 1890, then the British from 1916 until independence in 1961. The area became designated as a Marine Park several years ago.

The 45 minute flight takes us over red earth and village rooftops of corrugated tin, then huge tracts of undeveloped land before heading out to sea. Eventually we land bumpily on the earthen run-way that constitutes Mafia's tiny airport; the same red earth from which the island's highways are carved.

At the far end of the island, Kinasi Lodge, like an oasis, awaits us with a welcome lunch of cold beers and antelope pasties.

Next morning we congregate at the dive centre where "Audie", our erstwhile Afrikaaner dive guide expresses surprise at my request for a fresh-water tank on the boat in which to rinse my camera. He had never heard of such a thing.

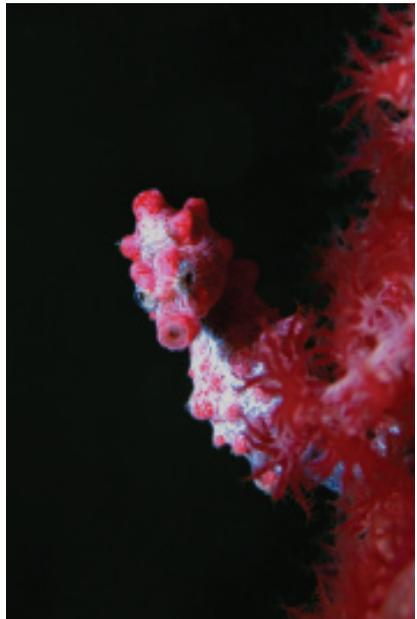
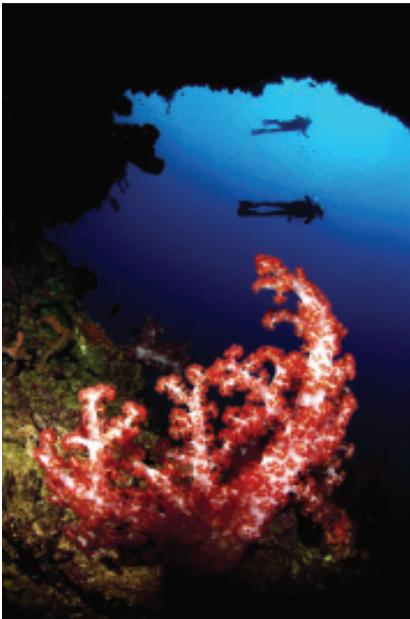
The islands are subject to extreme tides by which we would be governed all week diving either inside or outside the archipelago and our first dive of the day is to Juani Reef, on the outside, more than an hour away. "Hope you're not sea-sick any of you!" warns Audie as the swell increases by the minute. As we reach the open sea, the swells are huge and we are rocking and rolling big time. Visions of "The Perfect Storm" come to mind. Occasionally a daring wave just spills over into our crudely-made former fishing boat. "Never known it like this before", he adds, but none of us believes him. Then suddenly, we are in calm water again.

It was a typical easy first dive with abundant anemones, several huge spotted grouper and a turtle. Not bad! We pause for lunch just off a rocky outcrop populated only by black storks (African storks I suppose!) which reminded me of the "I dunno, what do you wanna do?" birds in The Jungle Book, and a sea eagle which, from time to time would threaten the storks, causing them to rise up into the sky in a single wave, hover and then gently float back down, threat over. The sea eagle, in turn, was teased from time to time by an osprey.

Very strong currents dominate our second day's diving. As a result, three of our group become separated and abort the dive. The rest of us proceed into the murky gloom towards the welcome sight of Jina Reef, with myriad nudibranchs of unprecedented design. Back on board, tension has developed between those who aborted the dive and partners who did not! By day 3, three more of our group have arrived and we are scheduled for a 6.00 am start. At that hour, only six of our "Ocean's Eleven" want to dive. It is a glorious morning and a wonderful time to be up - before anyone else. We are able, for once, to board the boat from our own beach, as it is high tide and we head off towards Kinasi Pass.

Poor Roger, one of the new arrivals, has to abort his first dive of the year due to a leaky high pressure hose. Why don't people get their stuff serviced if they only dive once a year? A huge

# BSoUP Beginner's



# Portfolio 2005



The annual BSoUP Beginner's Portfolio Competition was won by Shannon Conway - well done!

Originally from Poole in Dorset, Shannon and his wife Amanda now live in Worcestershire, and do much of their underwater photographic work under the auspices of Martin Edge.



"I use a Nikon D2x in a Subal Housing with twin Inon 220 strobes", he tells us.

All the best for the future, Shannon!

spotted moray eel is lured from its cave and cradled by Audie. A great fat thing, six feet long. It is all too easy to get into deco being totally mesmerised by the beauty of this underwater scenery and the many shoals of over-sized fish and during my stop, Audie attracts the attention of the remaining divers - two huge morays together, back down at 25m. Too far for me to go. We return to the boat for a luscious breakfast of tropical fruit and chocolate cake which looks like slabs of ox-liver.

Second dive is at Coral Gardens - another giant spotted moray, crayfish, electric ray, moorish idols, junior imperial angelfish and clown trigger fish and, of course, the now regular spotted groupers.

Day 4 and another early start to catch the tide. Kinasi Wall is on today's agenda and cleaner shrimps galore, huge shoals of oriental sweetlips, tuna and two Napoleon wrasse.

Second dive at Milimani Reverse, produces yellow trumpet fish and a wonderful Spanish dancer in purple, black and white.

Day 5 and, for most of us, our ten-dive packages end today and subsequent dives are going to cost \$55 inside or \$60 outside the archipelago which comes as quite an expensive shock as most of us still have a couple of diving days to go. For those who choose not to pay for further dives, there is snorkelling, wind-surfing, mountain-biking and nature trails, or simply chilling out on the beach or by the pool.

Day 6 - at a reasonable start time today, we head for Kinasi Pass where we are rewarded with whip coral with those pairs of tiny fish that helter-skelter up and down the spirals; great static shoals of spotted sweetlips, two kinds of fusiliers in their thousands, an enormous moray eel (the fattest ever!) and barracuda. Many potato cod again, parrot fish, moorish idols and a pregnant pipe-fish.

Second dive, at Coral Gardens again, produces a mantis shrimp - beautiful colours and those crazy eyes (couldn't help thinking of the ones I had seen in a restaurant fish-tank in Manado last year, which we subsequently ate!), more Napoleon wrasse and

last, but not least, what can only be described as the "South African Courtship Ritual" by Audie, the dive guide.

One couple in our group have become disenchanted by the number of people to one boat and have chosen to take an afternoon dive, separate from the rest of the group. A couple of others and I decide to join them to see if it is really true that the fish are twice as big and ten times as plentiful as on the regular dive trips. So this, my third dive of the day, takes us back outside the reef to Dimdini Wall.

As we venture out of the reef enclosure, we come across a "set net", marked at each end by surface buoys. This is an illegal fishing net within the Marine Reserve which is like a huge vertical mesh wall which traps fish by their gills as they unwittingly try to pass through it. These nets are often left for several days before they are retrieved, together with many dead and decomposed fish trapped along with the live ones which are then sold. Audie is furious and calls the Marine Reserve Authority immediately to report it, at the same time doubting whether they will actually do anything about it.

At the dive site, we descend immediately upon several clownfish anemones of various stunning colours, which had "closed up" for the day. I wanted to linger with my camera but the rest of the group had already faded into the gloom. Countless grunts, spotted grouper, emperor angels, a leaf scorpion fish, a pair of remoras, together, looking for a new host, napoleon wrasse, electric ray, a cluster of tiny lion-fish, puffer-fish, crayfish, etc. etc. oh, and I nearly forgot, another turtle.

We return from the dive under sail with a few cold beers (a most welcome surprise) and just the sound of the waves, gently lapping against the sides of the boat. It is quite magical sailing into the sunset, observing Mars, the Moon and a very bright star which I am informed is the International Space Station. Fruit bats cross the sky in the last remnants of daylight as they make their way from Chole Island to Mafia on their way to supper.

Back on land, Audie is delighted to see that the Marine Reserve Authority is about to put to sea to go and inspect the reported set net.

Two more days to go and for the first time we are allocated two boats, although we still all dive together. Lovely first dive at Milimani with cleaner shrimps, electric ray, great nudibranchs, a black ribbon eel and inside the largest mantis-shrimp tunnel you ever saw, its two resident cleaning staff. But now my flash battery has decided to die. Horror!

Our second dive at Chole Wall Reverse was wholly missable as the viz was rubbish and one's concentration was spent entirely on staying together as a group, rather than seeking out the rather illusive wildlife.

On our return, we discover that the Marine Reserve Authority did indeed take action regarding the illegal set net and had pulled it up. It would be confiscated. They were now going to lie in wait for the unsuspecting owners to return, and hopefully catch them.

Friday and our last diving day. We head for the outer reef, Juani Beach. For the first time all week, the sea is like a mirror as our two boats cross the bay in parallel and the reflection of the clouds on the horizon is so perfect in the water, it looks like one of those ink-blot paintings you used to do as a child; a sharp contrast to the huge swell we had experienced on the first day.

A gentle sloping reef with more clownfish anemones than I have ever seen before. In one place alone, you could count over twenty. Two spotted morays, an octopus, crayfish, turtle, batfish, sweetlips, grunts, jacks, bannerfish and butterfly-fish drive by.

A wonderful dive to end on!

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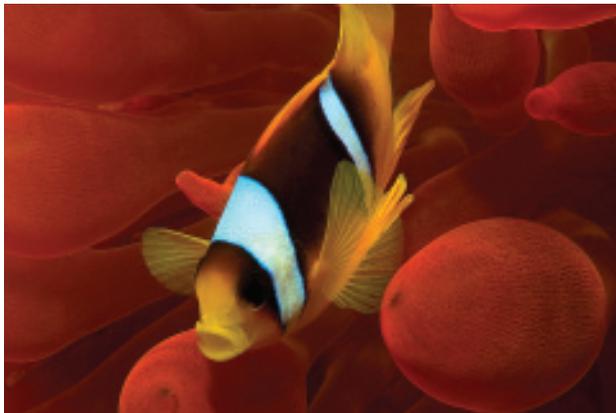
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# BSoUP Open



# Portfolio 2005



Congratulations to Jane Morgan on winning the Open Portfolio Competition.

'I am absolutely delighted to have won the Open Portfolio Competition as not only is it considered the most prestigious, but also 5 of the 6 shots were taken in my first year of digital. This last year has been a huge learning curve for me and my approach to photography has changed incredibly. I now work completely in manual and am happier to experiment as I'm not so worried about wasting film.'



The odd one out is number two, taken with a Nikon F90X in Gozo in 2004. The others are from various parts of the Red Sea, with a Nikon D70.

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## **A Whirlwind Tour of the Other 'Down-Under'**

by Jane Burnett

There's no getting away from it, New Zealand is a fair way to go for a dive. The flight to Los Angeles is 10 hours, then Auckland is a further 12. Add in all the time spent in airports and it is a long haul. Allowing the Americans to fingerprint and photograph us meant we got the American baggage allowance of 64kgs. It may be an infringement of our civil liberties, but who cares if we can take our drysuits and some warm clothes - not to mention all the camera equipment, laptops and other paraphernalia with which photographers travel.

We were a group of eight experienced divers - the organiser Vicki, Paul Kay, professional underwater photographer, and his wife Lucy, Liz from Dublin, Gill and Jane from Bucks, Geoff from Surrey and me - and we had 3 weeks in which to fit in all the wonders of New Zealand's key dive sites. Every diver has heard of the Poor Knights and they are rightly placed amongst the world's best. However, what we really wanted in our logbooks was Awash Rock, Preservation Inlet. But, I'm getting ahead of myself ... let me start at the beginning.

We were diving under the auspices of the Marine Conservation Society so were particularly interested to dive in some of NZ's 28 marine reserves and to learn how New Zealanders protect their environment. Yes, 28. NZ is noted for its progressive thinking and action when it comes to conservation both underwater and on land. Cut off from the rest of the world it is home to numerous unique species - many that have suffered from over-exploitation as well as from introduced aliens. In 1975 NZ was one of the first countries in the world to start designating areas as marine reserves. In each reserve, the marine life is protected, fishing is banned and it is forbidden

to remove or disturb anything, living or non-living. The reserves are already widely spread across New Zealand and the Department of Conservation (DoC) aims eventually to establish a network of Marine Reserves to protect its full range of marine habitats and ecosystems. Certainly we were impressed by the profusion and variety of species we saw.

However, we started our diving not in a marine reserve but on the Rainbow Warrior. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1985 was the day the French Secret Service sank Greenpeace's flagship in Auckland Harbour - it's one of those dates that is forever etched on your memory. Two years later, she was towed north to the Cavalli Islands and sunk again to become an artificial reef. She now sits proudly on the seabed at 27m with her deck at about 15m. Covered with the growth of eighteen years, the Warrior makes a fascinating, if poignant, dive. An interesting phenomenon in NZ is that many things are familiar, but somehow not quite. So the jewel anemones that blanket the boat are very recognisable to us and yet are subtly different. They seem larger and more robust than the British versions ... somewhat less delicate. This being our first dive, I presumed we would see many more jewel anemones, and we did, but never in the same profusion as on the Warrior. They were glorious. It being a wreck, I'd gone in with wide-angle but the visibility was rather disappointing so my attempts to capture boat-like images ended in failure. However, the fish were friendly. In fact, throughout NZ the fish are almost too friendly. (Are they being friendly? Or are they defending their territory and trying to see you off? An on-going debate! I think we experienced a bit of both).

The Northland locals laughed at us in our drysuits. With the water temperature at 20-22°C, they felt we were a little overdressed. Only when we said we were going to Fiordland did they stop. 'We've always meant to go' they said, 'but it's cold down there'. Few of the dive operators were used to

drysuit divers. They never had enough lead, even though we'd warned them we'd need lots, especially with aluminium cylinders being the norm.

We stayed in a house by the beach at Matauri Bay. A quick hike up the neighbouring hill at dawn to the Greenpeace memorial brought home just what an idyllic spot they'd chosen as the Warrior's last resting place.

Next stop was the Poor Knights. NZ's most famous dive site and rated by many in the world's top ten, I have to admit it is pretty special. And yet, I don't think we really saw it at its best. The weather was a bit dodgy. Although Northland is described as 'sub-tropical', it is still subject to a temperate climate and the weather can be as unpredictable as our own.

The islands lie 24 kilometres off the northeast coast and, with two liveaboards at our disposal, the intention was to spend most of our 4 days out there. Unfortunately, the rough conditions meant we had to return to the mainland on all but one night. We still managed some incredible dives and got a real flavour of what was on offer. The islands have a spectacular mixture of sheer walls, massive caves, tunnels and archways. Some of the walls were exquisite. 'Meditation Wall' is a favourite, so called because when photographers find it they remain motionless for hours as if meditating (sounds familiar?). Or 'Magic Wall', just smothered in sponges, tunicates, anemones, hydroids and corals - a seemingly endless variety of encrusting life in the most fabulous colours. Nudibranchs, triplefins - they were all there. Never more than a few inches apart, literally thousands of male two-spot demoiselles guarded eggs. All the time, huge shoals of fish circled us.

*(Editor's Note: Part 2 of this story to follow...)*



Wherever .....



Whatever .....



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\* Photo trips: New Zealand (Poor Knights & Fiordland) & Tonga,  
Ireland and the Outer Hebrides & more.

## Editor's Choice Images, Spring 2006



My personal thanks to Jane Burnett and Sam Bean for these two excellent shots which further illustrate their articles in this issue.



# Loch Long Perspectives

by Elaine Whiteford

## Arrochar & Loch Long

Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long, is an ideal base for touring the striking scenery around the west coast sea lochs.

As a nineteenth century parish village, Arrochar was well-known as a terminus for the steam boats which used to ply the loch, in addition to being a popular summer tourist resort.

While the steam boats are not as numerous as they used to be, Arrochar is still a bustling visitor centre which is associated with a range of leisure activities including walking, climbing, cycling and fishing.

Loch Long provides a magnificent foreground to the village as well as to the picturesque backdrop of the 'Arrochar Alps' which loom above. The sixteen mile stretch of water is one of a number of sea lochs which characterise this part of Scotland's west coast and is a deep inlet of Firth of Clyde. As an estuary route, Loch Long was frequently navigated by the Vikings, most famously in 1263 when 60 Norse boats sailed to Arrochar and were then hauled overland to Tarbet to be relaunched in Loch Lomond.

The calm surface of the water belies this turbulent history and these days the nearest thing to marauders are the occasional large groups of motorcyclists who stop off along the lochside to refuel and admire the scenery. There are, however, less obvious sea-faring individuals who are a part of the loch scene in the twenty first century and those are the scuba divers who visit Loch Long most weekends. For Scottish sea lochs, as well as forming part of the landscape on the surface, also provide some wonderful opportunities for sight-seeing under water.

## Sea Loch Diving

Diving in Scotland is often imagined by non-divers to be cold, dark and murky; and, in truth, this can often be the case! However, when it is good, Scottish diving is very good and Scottish divers are the envy of many of their peers because of world class sites such as Scapa Flow, St Abbs and the Sound of Mull.

While the west coast sea lochs are less well-known to visiting divers, they are an open secret amongst Scots divers, who frequent their sheltered waters all year round. Sea lochs provide a safe bet when other sites are blown out - a not infrequent occurrence in Scotland - and they are also brimming with marine life.

## Ardgarten, Loch Long

Loch Long at Arrochar provides a clutch of dive opportunities which easily compete with other nearby venues, such as Loch Fyne and the Gareloch. The best dive sites near to Arrochar are at Ardgarten just a mile or so outside the village.

One of the good things about sea loch diving is that it is from the shore and at Ardgarten divers can simply park up, gear up and walk into the water - when carrying kit weighing several kilos this is most welcome.

As divers descend, their view may be blurred in the first few metres by a peaty halocline caused by the run-off of water from the hills. But once through that, it is generally clear. Visibility on a bright day can be surprisingly good and, when the sun is high in the sky, the diffusing light presents a very pretty picture, particularly on the boulder reefs which are a common feature of Loch Long.

*(Editor's Note: Part 2 of this article in next issue)*

# Articles



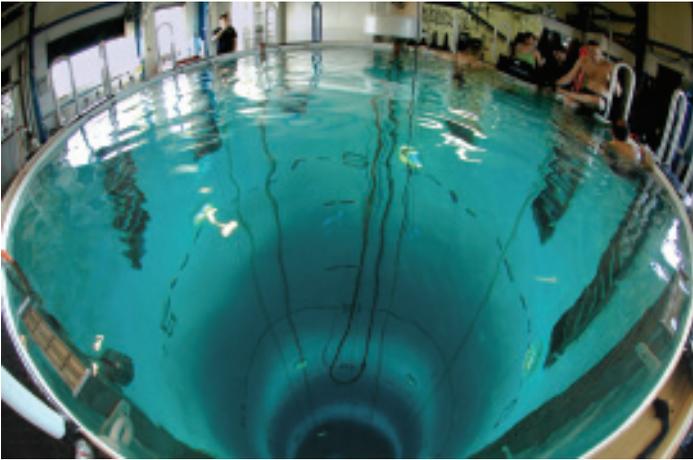
See Joss Woolf's article on p. 16 for more details on this critter...



Jane Burnett faced this chappie down - read all about it, p. 27...

# Illustrated!

Lesley Maw  
gets on the  
Tiger's back,  
p. 5...



Go down  
with Sam  
Bean,  
p. 9...

Learn all  
about lochs  
with Elaine  
Whiteford,  
p. 32...



# Monthly Meetings Reports

by Andy Clark

## December 2005 Meeting

Annual Event - Open Portfolio Competition

Main Event - Christmas Party

As the photographic prowess of BSoUP members (and non-members) built to a brilliant, visual crescendo, 2005 was drawing to an end. Christmas was upon us, festivities loomed and high jinks mixed headily with an air of expectancy which trembled with excited anticipation. The prestigious 2005 Open Portfolio Competition attracted the attention and drew in the crowds hopeful of success. The BSoUP Trophy, the £100 donated by DIVE magazine, together with the '1<sup>st</sup> place' title offered temptation enough to drive eager participants to distraction. But it wasn't going to be easy!

In joint 5<sup>th</sup> place, Pedro Vieyra shared the acclaim with Peter Scoones. 4<sup>th</sup> place fell to Heather Hammond. Len Deeley secured 3<sup>rd</sup> place with a perfectly balanced squirrely portrait, oceanic white tip and pilot fish shot, cowries on branching coral, two-banded anemone fish, hawksbill turtle and scorpion fish portrait. 2<sup>nd</sup> place awarded merit to Alex Mustard and his beautifully selected diver silhouette and soft coral, cheeky goat fish portrait, honeycomb moray eel and diver silhouette, pair of spawning rock beauty angelfish, silhouetted divers over reef and front curtain sync shot of dashing sergeant majors. But the winner of the 2005 Open Portfolio Competition, the delightful Jane Morgan with perfectly selected vibrancy and punch; red rope sponge and pyjama nudibranch, diver silhouette, peppered moray and coral, red coral and diver, anemone fish in anemone, and finally lion fish portrait. Congratulations!

*(Later, I strolled around the room and thought of you all celebrating. I thought of the merriment and cheer, the festivity and the folly and I mused quietly on the prospect of being part of such revelry, of being wined and dined in the affable presence of a very dear group of friends. I recollected too similar sentiments I had experienced during Christmas 2004, and I felt a certain contented pride at being a member of the British Society of Underwater Photographers.*

*You see, till recently my diving lacked direction, and to a degree, purpose. I had great notions, ideals of not only being able to take photographs underwater, but also being part of a regular gathering that shared my passion and was happy to offer guidance and counsel.*

*BSoUP provided that inspiration, that enthusiasm and wonder. It restored guidance and satisfied emptiness. I attended the meetings religiously and prepared for total absorption of the genius extended my way. And I learnt. I realised that the wonder of the world's rivers, lakes and oceans (and all that lived within) were places that I would do everything in my power to explore and behold. But more than that, I learnt that BSoUP members are some of the nicest and most inspirational people anyone would care to meet!*

*And so I toast BSoUP and you too, dear members! It's been another good year's diving and photography. The teachings have been many and varied and the success great, and what I proudly reflect upon now is a society that has positively encouraged new comers and sought to cultivate whole-hearted appreciation of our submarine playground. And what I see, through all your ardent diligence is a heartfelt humanity that grows from strength to strength.*

*There is every chance that 2006 will be even better. As long as we are all safe and continue to enjoy our passion for the underwater realm, everything will be right with the world.*

*Cheers! And a Happy New Year!!)*

## January 2006 Meeting

Focus On - Best Images of 2005

Main Event - Photoshop Workshop 2

Thirty eight stunning images kicked off the 2006 BSoUP calendar and, by all accounts 2005 was nothing short of pretty damn spectacular. Scribbling away at the back, I recorded every image; 'cuttle fish, white tip, shark, anemone fish, wrasse, napoleon, divers, goby, great white, big eye, wrecks, colour, impact, art, mood, isolation, barracuda, coral reef, macro crab, presence, shark, whale shark, ribbon eel, bat fish, mono, portrait, hammerhead, manta, hermit, green water, crocodile, sea hare, dragon (leafy sea) - and a couple of others....3<sup>rd</sup> place - with 23 points - Malcolm Nobbs and his image of an Australian toad fish, or banded frog fish, depending on where you come from! Jane Morgan took 2<sup>nd</sup> place - with 30 points - and her seal shot from the Farnes. But, leading the field and definitely setting the precedent - still with 30 points, but securing a greater number of 1sts - Peter Scoones and a beautiful shot from the Okavango Delta of a pair of swimming elephants. Welcome back Peter!

Congratulations and all the best for 2006!

Following the success of Photoshop Workshop, our intrepid quartet of Photoshop experts each occupied a creative corner and offered themselves up for demonstration.

Alex Mustard offered tuition on 'quick tips for fixing images for projection and websites.'

Martha Tressler gave guidance on 'selections.'

JP Trenque helped you around the mystery of 'monochrome.'

And, Anthony Holley took you a little deeper into 'layers - including masks and blending options.'

An informal evening that tuition in no way sought to 'fix bad images', but encouraged you to take good pictures and use Photoshop to make them better.

## February 2006 Meeting

Main Event - Making the Best of It - Simon Rogerson

Focus On - Monochrome

Photo Technique - Shooting Fish - Alex Mustard

There was a good deal of wisdom in Simon Rogerson's presentation, and wisdom gleaned from a good deal of first hand experience I suspect! What I read into this wisdom is that despite all that seems against you, there are opportunities out there for you, some of which may well have been overlooked had conditions been different! Even if, before donning your wetsuit, Simon recalled, 'a wasp-faced woman' who happens to be part of your dive package in some way, declares that, in fact she 'can't stand underwater photographers!' Not a good start, granted and certainly not a statement to fill you with that warm sense of hospitality! But don't be disheartened! The higher you leap, the smaller the hurdles are! Laugh in the face of defeat and get in the water! Once submerged, you're half way there!

It's a question of flexibility you see - if Plan A hasn't worked out, exercise Plan B. Use the environment and all that's in it to your advantage and don't ignore the 'boring'! There are many fascinating species of sea weed (and animals that live within) that may not only offer a decent shot alone but may well compliment a diver or wreck shot. Look for humour and animal interaction - capture the quirks, balance and subtlety, paint the mood, consider a story to accompany your images, think of all the photographic categories that BSoUP has annually and think laterally. Oh and remember to look up - there may be a completely acceptable shot just above your head! 'Where and how could I use this/these images?' is a question you should always ponder.

Remember classic underwater shots and try and replicate them - cast your mind back to favourite film shots - exercise some of the inspiration that BSoUP affords you - experiment, consider every audience and remember that images that conjure a sense of adventure and/or danger appeal to the wider audience. They appeal every time and if nothing else you would do well to capture and portray your chosen sport as nothing short of incredible.

Remember too that this is an opportunity for photographic technique. Even if there is a total lack of subject, play around with camera angle, ISO ratings and the like. Whatever opportunity present is yours for the taking. How you use it is up to you!

He's a good tutor, that JP Trenque bloke. One month after his endeavours to extend our education with monochrome photography and Photoshop, the audience has come up trumps with an incredible display of virtuosity. 35 entries for the Monochrome Focus On competition, and what a display! Illustrating that pretty much anything and everything can be successfully presented as a monochrome image: turtles, wrecks, stingrays, macro, pattern, schools of fish, silhouettes, interaction, locomotives, isolation, manatee (or was it a dugong?), abstracts, zoom-blur and much more. But you can't all be winners and this month's third place was grabbed by Peter Scoones - with 34 points - and his amazing image of swimming elephants. Steve Jones secured 2<sup>nd</sup> place - with 50 points - with an incredible interaction shot of diver and manta ray. But, just two points ahead - with 52 points - Alex Mustard and his beautifully atmospheric stingray image shot at dusk back home in Stingray City.

Congratulations!

Retaining the lime light, Alex offered teachings on the subject of Shooting Fish. 'Taking pictures of the cool fish we see while diving is what prompted many of us to pick up cameras in the first place', he correctly deduced and set to enlighten us all into the secrets of success with our slippery friends.

Firstly, what we should all understand is that not all fish are the most cooperative of subjects! It is true that some will play the game more happily than others, but ultimately your patience will be exhausted and your cunning tested to the limit. Secondly, to be successful in fish photography you need to shoot them from different angles, in different light and in a way that no one else is shooting them - you have got to make your fish photography stand out. '....great fish photos remain elusive ...' Alex will declare and implore you to ask yourself what images you are trying to achieve.

Make use of the X-Factor (instil some personality and character into your images, illustrate emotion and expression, look for fish features); the Angle of Attack (make a connection - get to eye level and get eye contact, capture facial expressions, use diagonals and patterns); Lighting (experiment with strobe positioning and try single strobe photography, experiment with ISO and aperture, don't forget silver fish often fool TTL); Subject Selection (consider your equipment and consider it's capabilities, play to the camera's strengths, don't keep shooting the same stuff); the Right Approach (control your breathing and camera movement, consider solo diving, make your subject feel comfortable with your presence).

And, should you need any ideas for shots, try these;

Identification - use basic shots and basic angles

Face Portrait - allow the face to dominate the image

Face Profile - use the shape of the face and allow isolation

Head On - illustrate subject trust and communication

Behaviour - cohabitation, mating, feeding - tell a bio story

Whole School - use patterns and numbers

Wall to Wall Fish - abstracts - add divers

Creative Effects - abstracts, add movement, silhouettes

*And if you're still short of ideas, look out for Alex's debut photographic book 'The Art of Diving' - 'The best book about diving since Jacques Cousteau's 'The Silent World' according to David Doubilet! Now there is accolade!!*

# Classifieds

## For sale

EOS 300D WITH 18-55 LENS, IKELITE eTTL HOUSING, DS50 STROBE, DS125 STROBE, DS125 CHARGER, TTL SLAVE SENSOR (NEVER USED), BOTH STROBES WITH BALLSOCKET ARMS, x1 SINGLE STROBE SYNC CORD, x2 DOUBLE STROBE SYNC CORDS, x1 DOMEPORT, x1 MACRO PORT, ALL IN PELICAN FLIGHT CASE, EOS SOFTWARE. The equipment has hardly been used and I am looking for £2,500 for everything. Mobile number is 07841 086198 and I live in Exmouth Devon. Ian Chenery.

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## For sale

Aquatica housing for a Fuji S2 digital camera + the dome and extensions. I also have the zoom adapter for a Nikon 17-35mm f2.8 AF-S lens. It comes complete with half a trillion spare 'O' rings and is in a Tenba camera bag.

Also two Nikonos flashes, one 102 and a 105, both complete and with more spare 'O' rings. I am looking to get rid of the lot because I want to change digital cameras and the housing is camera specific.

I also have Fuji S2 digital camera for sale, which I can put together in a job lot, if anyone is interested.

1. The price for the housing and flashes is £3,000.
2. The camera, which I shall have serviced at Fuji before selling, is £900.
3. However, together as a package £3,500.

Kevin Wilton, wilton@eeek.tv



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## Forward planning...

Spaces are available on two **Red Sea** trips being organised by Len Deeley, Sudan 2nd - 18th June 06 and Southern Egyptian Red Sea 24th November - 1st December 06. Full details on Len's website at [www.imagine-photography.co.uk](http://www.imagine-photography.co.uk)

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17 November 2006. Jane Morgan & JP Trenque are organising a photography workshop on board the **Celebes Explorer** to visit the marine park islands of Sipadan, Mabul and Kapalai in **Borneo**. Cost for 8 days is £1,539 including flights, FB accommodation and diving, with optional extra days in Kapalai, Mabul, Layang-Layang, Lankayan or Sangalaki. More information on [www.hiddendepthdivetours.com/celebestour](http://www.hiddendepthdivetours.com/celebestour).

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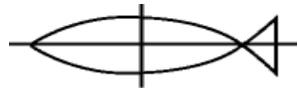
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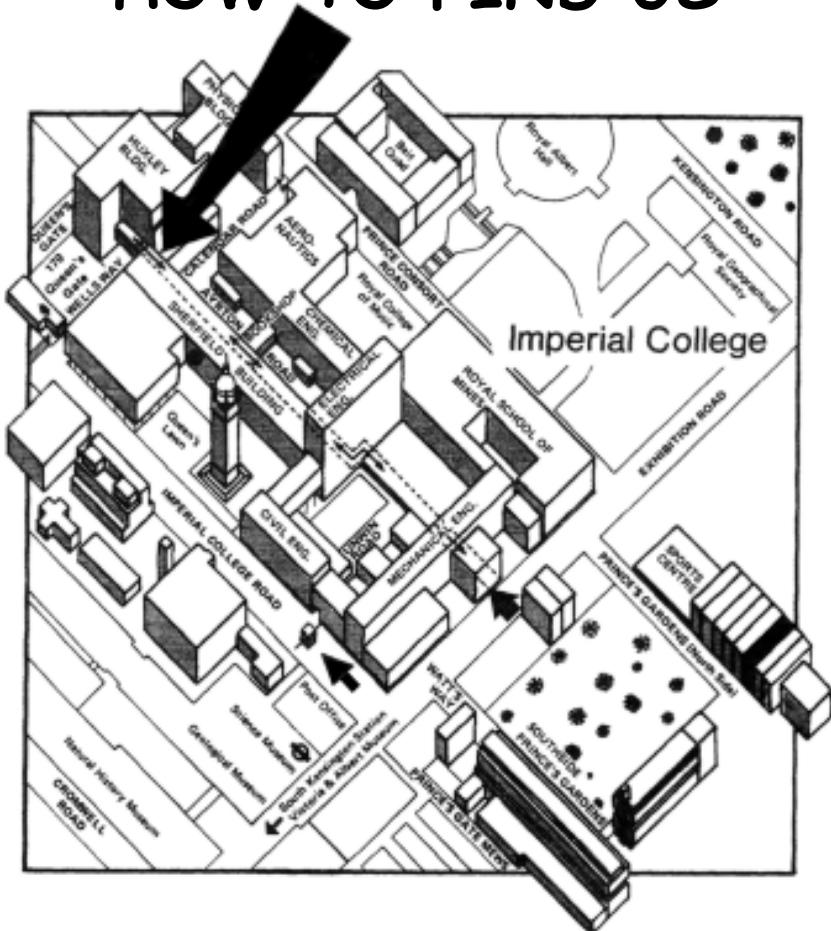
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They are for sale at most monthly meetings (if I am there!) or you can order by post or email and I'll bring them to the next meeting or mail them to you for a small extra charge.

# HOW TO FIND US



BSoUP meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 20.00hrs in the function room at the Holland Club, Imperial College, London. From South Kensington tube station take the tunnel to the Museums and Exhibition Road. Continue north and turn left into Prince Consort Road. Turn into the entrance to the grounds of Imperial College, walk down the hill and go through the white double doors facing you into the Holland Club. If you are coming by road, turn into the College grounds from Exhibition Road, take a parking ticket at the barrier and ask directions to the Holland Club. When you leave you must pay at the barrier (currently £8.50) for the evening (after 18.00hrs). Do not arrive before this time as the 'evening' parking could cost you £16. Alternatively, there are parking meters in the surrounding roads which finish at 18.30. Take care as there are also lots of Residents Only bays which operate all evening. There are bar facilities in the Club and snacks are available.

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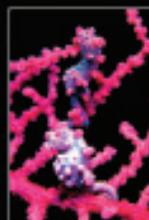
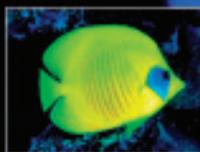
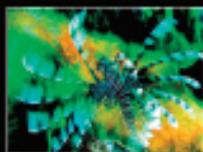
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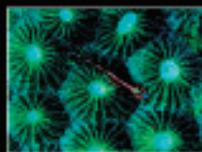
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# DIVEQUEST

The Ultimate in Diving

Photo: Pat Morrissey

An underwater photograph showing two divers swimming in clear blue water. A large, dark boat is visible in the lower right, with a rope extending from it towards the divers. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up towards the surface.

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