

# St Kilda Gains Dual World Heritage Status

THE ST KILDA archipelago lying 64km west of the Outer Hebrides has become one of only 24 global locations to be awarded World Heritage Status for both natural and cultural significance.

The group of islands (the 4 main ones are Hirta, Soay, Boreray and Dun) are owned and managed by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS). Known for their outstanding beauty above and below the water, the islands are one of the foremost dive sites in Europe.

With St Kilda's majestic scenery, diversity of wildlife and underwater reefs covered with marine life, it was previously recognised as a World Heritage Site for its natural characteristics in 1986 (terrestrial) and in 2004 (marine). Now being recognised for its cultural record of a vanished crofting community, St Kilda has been given a status which ranks it in equal importance to other natural and cultural wonders such as

the historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu in Peru and Mount Athos in Greece.

Robin Pellew, Chief Executive for the National Trust for Scotland said: "What makes St Kilda so significant in cultural terms is that it provides evidence of how people lived and evolved since prehistoric times. It helps us to understand how people survived in extremely difficult and remote conditions over thousands of years. It is truly a unique and fascinating place."

Evidence shows that the islands were inhabited for more than 2000 years and probably visited as many as 5000 years ago. However the remaining 36 residents were evacuated in 1930 after they became less self sufficient and a series of stormy winters prevented supplies being delivered to the islands.



*the 'majestic scenery' of St Kilda*

August 29, 2005 is the 75th anniversary of the evacuation.

To mark this anniversary and the Dual World Heritage Status, an exhibition of photographs and items from St Kilda will be on display in the NTS Gallery in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh during the month of August. The exhibition will provide an impression of what life on St Kilda must have been like in the early 1900's.

For more information visit [www.kilda.org.uk](http://www.kilda.org.uk)



*one of last year's winning images*

## Birthday Splash-In At St Abbs

THE ST ABBS & Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve will be hosting its annual underwater photography competition - 'The Splash In' on Saturday and Sunday, August 27/28.

This year the competition coincides with the reserve's 21st birthday and all involved are in agreement that the Splash In will be a significant part of the birthday celebrations!

Following on from last year's success, a digital competition

will run alongside the traditional film competition, giving all entrants – regardless of camera preference - the opportunity to take, enter and display their images.

On the Sunday evening, St Abbs village hall will play host to a presentation of all the images taken over the weekend, everyone is welcome to come along and cast a critical eye over the entrant's work. Lawson Wood will be taking

time out from his travels to attend and present the winners with their prizes following a reception in the Heritage Centre. Entry is £2; payable on the door and includes drinks and nibbles!

Any divers interested in taking part in this year's Splash In should check the VMR website at [www.marine-reserve.co.uk/activities](http://www.marine-reserve.co.uk/activities).

# Get Ready For Antibes Action

THE PICTURESQUE French Mediterranean town of Antibes Juan-les-Pins will play host yet again to the Annual World Festival of Underwater Pictures in late October this year. This will be the 32nd year of the prestigious competition, to some 'the Cannes of underwater imagery', which over the years has found itself emerging as one of the largest events of the genre with visitor numbers exceeding 30,000 every year.

The venue for the festival, Antibes Juan-les-Pins, is a historic seaside town located in the French Riviera with exclusive Cannes and Nice for neighbours. Due to its location

it boasts 25km of coastline, making it the perfect base for a variety of water sports, including of course diving.

In the 1950s Juan-les-Pins was the place to be if you were a diving somebody, and Georges-Henri Clouzot, Jacques Cousteau and Jacques Mayol were all fans of the superb diving spots it had on offer. The town has played an important part in the emergence of the sport thanks to the aforementioned pioneers of diving using Juan-les-Pins as their base to discover a new world – the ocean!

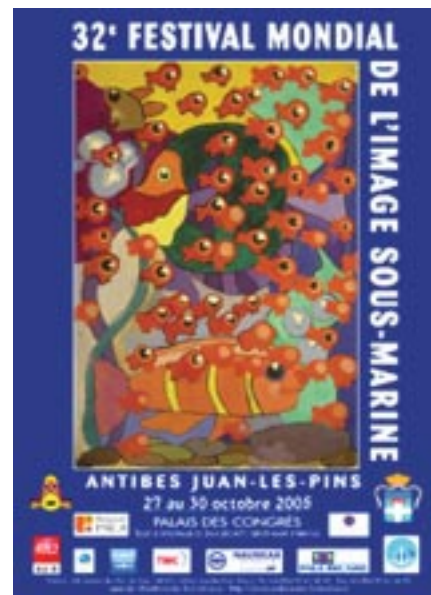
As always the festival's photography competition is

open to anyone and this year's lucky winners will walk away with a share of the 20,000 Euro (£13, 573) prize money.

Those attending are certain to enjoy the breathtaking images that show the secrets of the ocean's depths and will be enthralled by the many films and documentaries on the programme.

For those interested in submitting an entry, the deadline for registration and sending your

submission is September 15. Further information about the festival can be found at [www.underwater-festival.com](http://www.underwater-festival.com)



## Wildlife Photo Winners Set For North Berwick



*the winner of last year's competition (image reproduced courtesy Wildlife of the Year competition / copyright Doug Perrine)*

THE WINNING entries in the 2004 Wildlife Photographer of The Year competition are about to start a UK tour, giving the nation an opportunity to see the striking and breathtaking images for themselves.

The exhibition will visit Scotland in late November and stay through to late December, taking up residence at the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick. There are plenty of reasons to go and have a look, in particular to see Doug Perrine's winning photograph. The image is quite stunning and captures a bronze whaler shark

charging through a 'baitball' of sardines.

There are many different categories within the current competition, so it is pleasing to see that the overall winner of the contest was an underwater image. Indeed the section entitled The Underwater World has many amazing pictures and is certainly worth a look when the exhibition rolls into town!

For more information about the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition or to see the other exhibition venues visit [www.nhm.ac.uk/wildphoto](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/wildphoto).



## Channel Charity Crossing

THE LAST weekend in September will mark the start of an underwater challenge with a difference; seven experienced divers will attempt to cross the English Channel entirely underwater in a bid to not only enter the Guinness Book of Records, but to raise money for the Orchid Cancer Appeal and increase awareness of male cancers.

Colin Osbourne, cancer survivor and founder of Orchid, dreamt up the event and will be one of the seven taking part. The crossing could take up to 24 hours; each of the divers will

take it in turns to swim at a maximum depth of 10 metres for 30 min periods at a time.

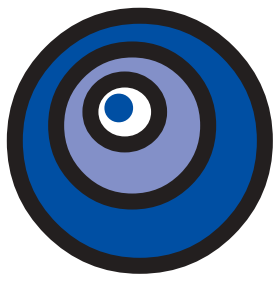
The divers are all highly experienced and will require technical competence, physical stamina and hopefully some kind British weather!

If you would like to show your support for this remarkable challenge there is a raffle with some great diving related prizes, or if you would rather you can make a donation.

For further information about the raffle prizes and where to get tickets from see: [www.orchid-cancer.org.uk](http://www.orchid-cancer.org.uk).

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN SHOTLINES, OUR NEWS REVIEW SECTION, PLEASE CONTACT**

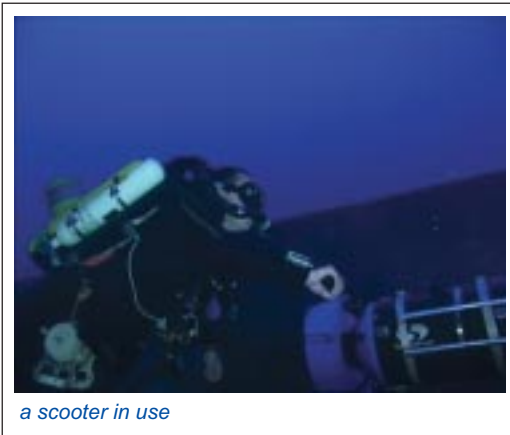
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# South African Rebreather Team Dive Mystery Wreck

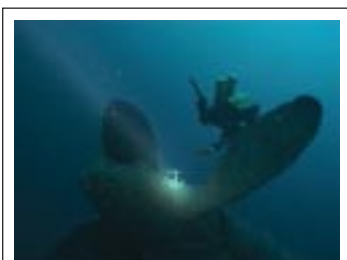
IN MAY 2003 a team of 4 top class divers set sail from Durban for the Hole in the Wall, Wild Coast in South Africa where they hoped to carry out the world's first dive to the wreck of the fateful *Oceanos* liner. The *Oceanos* was sailing from East London to Durban in 1991 when for reasons unknown it sank bow first into the depths of the Indian Ocean.

There were reports of a muffled explosion shortly before the boat lost power, but as yet no one has been able to substantiate a reason for the liner's demise. In order to satisfy these unanswered questions, Barry Coleman decided to coordinate an expedition to the resting place of the *Oceanos*.



*a scooter in use*

Barry, from Zimbabwe, now lives and runs his own dive centre (Meridian) in Durban with his wife Celia. The talented 37 year old not only holds the highest diving qualifications, but also boasts a similar standard in sailing. However, what makes Barry even more remarkable is the fact that he is a double amputee, having lost both feet in an accident when he was only 15. This is something that Barry does not regard as a big deal though and ever since the accident he appears to have made it his mission to show that there is



*barry alongside a propellor*

nothing he can't do – diving included!

However, his dream of visiting the *Oceanos* was not as easy to fulfil as it might sound. In order to carry out his plan, Barry had to study the Agulhas current for two years so that he could find a window period when the current either slowed down or stopped altogether. The Agulhas current is the largest volume of water movement in the world and subsequently moves at a phenomenal rate; other factors that added to the complicated nature of the proposed dive included the isolation of the area, weather problems and the tides.

Finally Barry was ready to carry out the dive, having recruited a

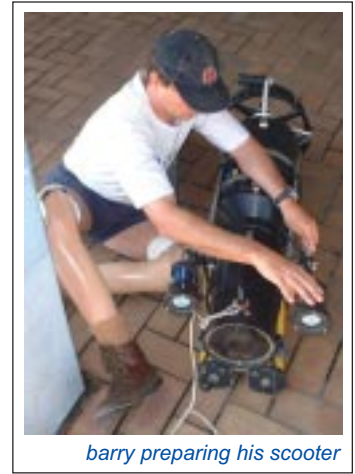
team of three top class divers who would join him at depths of up to 95 metres. On this initial visit the team managed to carry out two successful dives to the bottom, achieving 60 metre penetration of the wreck on the second trip. This was a first for one of the most difficult wreck dives in the world.

Hoping to prove that this window of opportunity wasn't

pure luck, Barry decided to dive again in May 2005. This time, only closed circuit rebreather (CCR) divers were to accompany him to the *Oceanos*, and they would ease their trip to the bottom by using state of the art scooters.

When on the first day the current was so strong that it pulled one 44 gallon and two 20 gallon drums underwater, the expedition members knew it was going to be an interesting few days. However, on the third day they found only a slight surface current meaning they could use the scooters. The descent had to be quick so that they could use the lee of the wreck without fighting the current all the time, and after 45 seconds they had reached 76metres! (This sort of rapid descent should not be attempted without the correct training on a CCR).

They spent 25 minutes at the bottom and in this time managed to get some great video footage of the wreck. They cut the line free at 90 metres and started their ascent; the



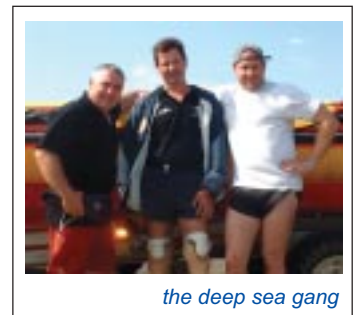
*barry preparing his scooter*

dive was made an objective base and not a time base, this was possible due to the six hours available dive time on their CCR and with the added help of dual VR3 dive computers which worked out their profiles.

To some this might sound dangerous, but Barry points out that they had multiple printed dive tables for bail out and plenty of open circuit gas in the unlikely event of CCR failure. He also explains that exploration like this reduces workload and as a result allows divers to concentrate more on the dive in hand and appreciate their surroundings.

At the end of the day, Barry was especially pleased that his calculations regarding the current had worked for a second time and that it wasn't just chance. He was also pleased that all the dives had been safe and rewarding.

In fact Barry plans to visit the *Oceanos* again in May 2006 to carry out yet more research into her mysterious sinking. If you would like to know more about Barry's expeditions to the *Oceanos* or you would like to know more about the Meridian Dive Centre contact [meridiadive@intekom.co.za](mailto:meridiadive@intekom.co.za) or visit [www.meridiandive.com](http://www.meridiandive.com) or [www.indigoescapes.com](http://www.indigoescapes.com)



*the deep sea gang*