

# Everything A Picture At Splash-In Party

**This year's Splash In competition at St Abbs was special. It fell alongside the reserve's 21st birthday and it was also new Ranger Liza Cole's first experience of the photographic event. Here she reports on the highlights of the day and on the winners ...**



IT'S THE EARLY hours of the last Saturday in August and a group of intrepid but slightly windswept divers are patiently queuing outside the door of the old school at St Abbs. Why the early start in such an obscure location? To register for the Splash In of course!

August bank holiday weekend saw the St Abbs & Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve's (VMR) Splash In, just days after the Reserve celebrated its 21st birthday. In total 34 divers took part in this year's underwater photographic competition, with a range of different levels of experience; some had been taking underwater photos for years, whilst others had started the hobby more recently.

Although the weather was kind and the sea was calm, due to the south westerly winds, the underwater visibility was not too good; certainly not the clear waters that St Abbs is famous for! But this did not deter the competitors, some coming hundreds of miles to take part. It just meant that they had to get a little more up close and personal in order to get a good shot!

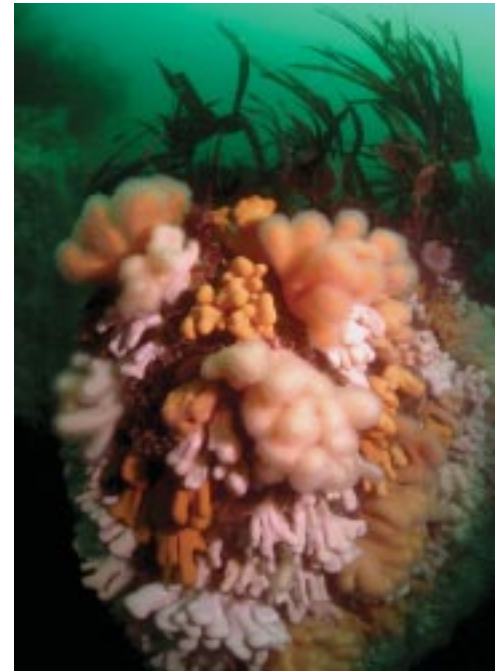
This was my first Splash In but I could not help noticing the lack of Scottish entrants, only two. Are there no underwater photographers in Scotland, or are they just shy? Next year let's have a few more - "and send them home to ..." well

you know the rest.

The Splash In is really two competitions running side by side. One for those using traditional film and one for those using digital cameras. In each, there are three categories: Marine Life Portrait, Reserve Atmospheric and The John Goldie Most Humorous Shot (in memory of the greatly missed local diver and character); prizes are also given for Best Beginner, and Best Image for each medium.

The photographers only have the Saturday morning to capture what they hope to be a winning image, but nevertheless, there were some really stunning shots taken of a wide variety of subjects. The judges definitely had a hard time choosing the winners!

On the Sunday evening the judges (140 of them!) convened in St Abbs village hall, where there was a slide show of all the images entered in the competition. Everyone in the audience was given a voting slip on which they wrote down their favourite image for each category. They then adjourned to the old school for drinks, nibbles and a chance to mingle whilst the votes were totted up. Suitably refreshed, the judges returned to the village hall for the presentation of the prizes by Lawson Wood, writer and founder of the Marine Reserve, and Sarah Goldie, daughter of the



Images overpage from top:  
 1st Marine Life Portrait and Best Digital -  
 Scorpionfish (JP Trenque);  
 2nd Reserve Atmospheric (film) -  
 (Peter Ladell);  
 1st Most Humorous (film) (Len Deely).

Images this page top left to right:  
 2nd Marine Life Portrait (film) -  
 Jellyfish (Peter Ladell);  
 1st Reserve Atmospheric & Best Film -  
 Diver in Kelp (Sandy McPherson);  
 2nd Reserve Atmospheric (digital) -  
 (Sam Bean).

Images this page below top to bottom:  
 1st Reserve Atmospheric (digital) -  
 Paul Buckley;  
 2nd Marine Life Portrait (digital) -  
 Ballen Wrasse (Ken Sullivan);  
 1st Marine Life Portrait (film) -  
 Snake Pipefish (Jason Gregory).

aforementioned John Goldie.

This year's cache of prizes was astounding, with over £2,000 worth being donated by local, national and international businesses. There was a chance to win anything from a romantic meal for two to an expensive piece of dive kit.

In the digital competition J P Trenque took first prize for the Marine Life Portrait category with his shot of a scorpion fish, Ken Sullivan was runner up with an image of a ballen wrasse. In the Reserve Atmospheric category Paul Buckley's shot of light shining through thong weed knocked Sam Bean's image of a reef covered in dead man's fingers into second place. The Most Humorous Shot category was a close run thing, but Ken Sullivan's picture of a pink octopus sitting amongst dead man's fingers just pipped Libby Bower to the post with her shot of Barbie and Ken in an underwater embrace. However, Libby could take much consolation from being voted Best Digital Beginner. The Best Digital Image prize was won by J P Trenque for his superb shot of the scorpion fish.

In the film competition Jason Gregory took first prize for Marine Life Portrait with his close-up of a snake pipefish, with Peter Ladell just being pushed into second place with his shot of a lion's mane jellyfish. For the Reserve Atmospheric category Sandy McPherson's image of a diver in a kelp

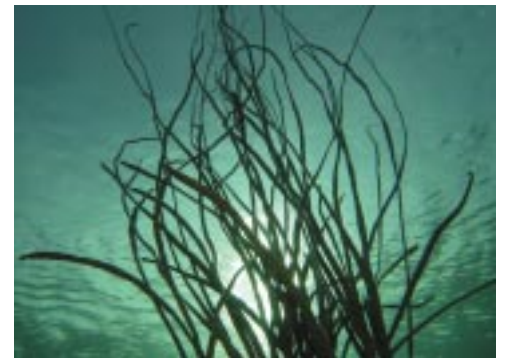
forest was victorious with Peter Ladell again taking second prize for his wide-angle shot of a diver exploring a gully strewn with dead man's fingers. Len Deely, and his portrait of a diver encountering a mermaid, stole first place for the Most Humorous Shot category from C Scatchard with his shot of a diver somehow managing to smoke a pipe underwater - who said that smoking and diving were incompatible?

Ric Waring won the Best Beginner (film) category but overall it was Sandy McPherson's image of the diver in the kelp forest that won Best Film Image.

All prizes and accolades having been distributed, the St Abbs Splash In drew to a close, with young and old, divers and landlubbers, locals and visitors alike all seemingly having had a good time.

Not only is the Splash In great fun, but it also gives non-divers a chance to experience the beauty to be found beneath the waves. In addition it provides a fantastic opportunity to promote the marine conservation work that has been going on in the VMR for the past two decades. Long may it continue to do so!

Many thanks go to all our sponsors for their generous support, and also to William and Bob at the St Abbs Dive Centre and Amanda at Scoutscroft Divers who helped to get sponsors on board and generally contributed to the event's success.



# ST ABBS SPLASH-IN

## winners

### DIGITAL

#### • Marine Life Portrait

1st: J P Trenque (MLP D1)

2nd: Ken Sullivan (MLP D2)

#### • Reserve Atmospheric

1st: Paul Buckley (RA D1)

2nd: Sam Bean (RA D2)

#### • Most Humorous

1st: Ken Sullivan (MH D1)

2nd: Libby Bower (MH D2)

#### • Best Beginner:

Libby Bower

#### • Best Digital Image:

Scorpion Fish, J P Trenque

### FILM

#### • Marine Life Portrait

1st: Jason Gregory (MLP 1)

2nd: Peter Ladell (MLP 2)

#### • Reserve Atmospheric

1st: Sandy McPherson (RA 1)

2nd: Peter Ladell (RA 2)

#### • Most Humorous

1st: Len Deely (MH 1)

2nd: C Scatchard (MH 2)

#### • Best Beginner:

Ric Waring

#### • Best Film Image:

Diver in Kelp, Sandy McPherson

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Images this page above top to bottom:  
2nd Most Humorous (digital) -  
(Libby Bower);  
2nd Most Humorous (film) -  
(C Scatchard);  
1st Most Humorous (digital) -  
(Ken Sullivan).

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