

On a recent trip to Gareloch a group of divers (who wish to remain anonymous) had an inkling that they were not alone - but who was watching? Read this amusing recollection to find out...

THE OLD BOYS of our branch along with one of our newbie sport divers (who we brought to help carry tanks) decided to head off for a nice easy dive on an autumnal Saturday morning. Our goal was the two small wrecks that lie close to shore opposite the Faslane naval base in Gareloch.

One member was unable to dive, but still wanted a day out, away from the hustle and bustle of family life, hoping to have the chance to read his paper in peace while giving shore cover.

When we arrived we noticed a hive of activity at the base with more ships moored than usual and helicopter flights going in and out plus the usual patrol boats.

Everyone got set up ready to go in, while our shore cover spread the bright red travel blanket on the beach and settled in to read his paper. We gave our usual goodbyes and headed into the water, aiming for the nearer of the two wrecks so we could find the cable that leads you to the larger one.

After about ten minutes underwater we could hear engines above that were not going away. I suspected that the MOD RIB was probably hanging about, but after another five minutes when we could still hear them I thought we'd better head back to shore. Luckily my navigation was spot on and we surfaced about a hundred metres from where we had entered.

Surfacing turned out to be a deafening experience - as we looked up there was a large grey and orange helicopter hovering about a hundred feet above. It could have been a sea-king but we did not have the club expert who has travelled in one recently to give a second opinion.

The RIB was at the shore with our cover standing at the front and looking particularly sheepish. This is when I heard the not so useful comments like: "You're the instructor." and "You organised the trip", coming from my two buddies before they disappeared to take off their fins.

I made my way up to the boat and noticed that we had company at the lay-by with a police car parked across the cars. To my surprise when reaching the RIB I was greeted in a far kinder manner than I had anticipated, with the question, "What were you up to?"

Trying not to give a cheeky answer as he did have a rather large automatic rifle

in hand, I explained we were exploring a couple of wrecks that lay close to shore, hence all the gear. The gentleman assured us that he knew a lot of divers used this spot, but unfortunately the boat moored opposite was an American destroyer - and, "You know what the Americans are like", he commented.

It was obvious that they had observed three athletically built divers getting into the water and the getaway driver lying on a bright red blanket on the beach!

The RIB advised us to pop into the gatehouse in future to report any diving and if possible to use an SMB so they know where we are.

The helicopter was waved off and all returned to normal. We sat and ate lunch on the beach while recovering from our

ordeal; knowing that the defenders of the free world were watching so we felt it only appropriate to wave and show our appreciation.

After checking our dive tables we decided enough time had elapsed for a second dive and so I followed the advice to deploy my SMB - only for them to circle it for five minutes during our dive - obviously it was a very boring day for them!

My advice from all of this; when diving in the Gareloch, report to the gatehouse first, this way they can summon all the patrol boats to annoy you during your dive.

Ever Get The Feeling You're Being Watched?



Anonymous Diver , Trip Organiser