

Torbay Splash In 2019



The conditions the day before did not bode well but an astute change of the rules allowed diving over a wider area to include lee shores resulted in excellent images such as Dan Bolt's winner in the Wideangle Category.

The Torbay Splash In, in sunny Devon, took place for the fourth year running on Saturday 29th June.

Unfortunately the event was preceded by three days of unprecedented easterly wind; the worst direction possible for Torbay. The result was a very brown sea with a dangerous swell so the astute organisers made a last minute decision to open up the permitted diving area to... well.... anywhere; as long as you got back physically with your images to the organisers based in the Living Coast Centre in Torquay by 5pm.

The effect of the rule change on the underwater images was transformative and I was once again very pleased to be invited back as the judge.

22 entrants pre-registered and the proverbial starting gun was fired at 00:00 hours on 29th June. The day dawned in stark contrast with a cloudless sky full of promise for a productive day's diving. The effort and positive thinking of the entrants produced a crop of images that defied the conditions and helped make this the best ever year.



What sets this Splash In apart is the social get together of entrants and supporters at the excellent Living Coast Centre in the evening. With a glorious view of the now deceptively calm Torbay from the outside terrace next to the fully stocked bar followed by a tasty buffet it was the perfect opportunity to mingle with other entrants, swap tales of daring do and celebrate underwater imagery.

Two images were permitted per category - Beginner, Compact, Macro and Wideangle and by 5.45pm I was presented with a laptop and a quiet

place to view the images and make my decisions.

It very soon became apparent that the quality of the resulting entries had been greatly helped by widening the diving area and I would suggest this now becomes the norm as any windy conditions on the southwest coast, as with any peninsula, will always provide the shelter of a lee shore with safer diving and better visibility.

In addition to my deliberations as judge there was also a 'People's Vote' where anyone who attended could



Beginners Winner: Jo Rabineau



Compact Winner: Tony Reed



Macro Winner: Dan Bolt

vote for their favourite image. I have to say that this is the perfect combination and helps everyone feel involved and from a judge's point of view it also adds an element of competition hoping that I also came to the same decision!

Well fed, watered and socialised, the presentation started on the dot at 2000 hours. As always the club atmosphere produced good natured banter but with a genuine appreciation towards the eventual winners. True this is a competition but that never got in the way of everyone having a good

social time.

The results, I think, speak for themselves and provide a celebration of the talent we have and the marine life we are blessed with.

The Torbay Splash In has the potential to become a significant event in the UK underwater photography calendar. I am happy to have been involved and am available, should the organisers want, to help take this event to another level not seen since the much missed days of the Plymouth Splash In.

Until next year, safe diving and may your exposures be with you.

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PS I am also pleased, and relieved to report that my choice of Dan Bolt's Octopus shot in the Macro Category was 'The People's Choice' :-)

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter No
White Balance



Digital - No Filter Manual
White Balance



Magic Filter Manual
White Balance

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards. These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

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