

Book Review?

by Peter Rowlands

By a kismet trail of circumstances I was invited to Bob Reid's house, just over the water from me in Cornwall, where he has, what I think must be, one of the most complete collections of diving books, certainly in this country, if not the world.

Bob got his first book (Cousteau - Shark) for Xmas 1963 from his parents and the collection is now just over 2500 books including a certain 'Underwater Photographer's Handbook' which had to be signed before I was allowed over the threshold.

As if this wasn't enough (the books, that is), he also has a complete collection of Nikonos cameras and accessories. He bought his first Nikonos (IVA) in Singapore on a trip to Perth in 1983 but the collection was really put together in the last 3 years when he got the idea he wanted a set of all five models but then discovered there were at least 13 types! He now has 18 in total and every standard lens.

I spent a nostalgic afternoon dipping into these amazing collections a few years ago and when Pat Baker (see UwP116) was over here from Australia, I thought he, too, would



like a gander so we popped over the water recently for a mid morning coffee and reminiscences.

Now, by his own admission, Pat doesn't have as comprehensive collection as Bob but he does know what should be in one and I listened intently as he said "Have you got "So and so by what's his name?" and Bob would reply 'Yes. A first edition on that shelf to your left.'" "Wow" said Pat, and on it went.

After a career as an archaeological underwater photographer (including a stint on the Mary Rose), Pat asked the inevitable question: "OK. How about 'La Photographie sous-marine et les progrès de la photographie' by Louis Boutan?"

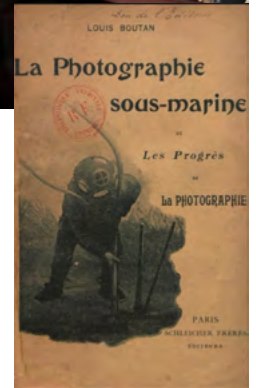
"The books are arranged in alphabetical order by author's surname" replied Bob so Pat followed the shelves along until he saw a very old looking book protected from wear by a plastic bag.

"May I?" he asked. "Be my



guest" replied Bob.

As Pat gently extracted the book from the shelf, he realised that he was touching (albeit through a plastic film) an original copy of the original underwater photographer's book. "I must have a photo of us together with this" and I gladly pressed the shutter and captured so many moments in one time.



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