

Torbay Splash-in 2024

by Tim Allen

The Torbay Splash-in this year took place on Saturday, 29th June. This was the eighth year in a row that the Torbay branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) had organised this underwater photography competition. The photographs had to be taken on the same day and within the Torbay area. There were four categories of entry: Beginner, Compact Camera, Wide-angle, and Close-up/macro, as well as a Popular Vote prize.

Seventeen competitors registered and submitted a total of 54 photographs. As usual, the standard of photography was very high, with the judge recognising some 'Highly Commended' and 'Commended' entries, in addition to the First and Second Prizes.

In the evening, a presentation dinner was held at the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, where all the photographs were shown, and a Popular Vote held to select a 'peoples' favourite'.

Judging was conducted anonymously by Peter Rowlands, editor of Underwater Photography Magazine, who provided useful and helpful comments on every one of the submitted photographs.

This year, the competition again attracted sponsorship from some generous donors, with O'Three, Teign Diving Centre and Dr Paul Naylor donating prizes.



Compact Camera

First prize sponsored by Dr Paul Naylor

First Prize

Tony Reed

Peter Rowlands: "This is just an excellent shot, certainly for a compact camera, where it's very difficult to do splits. It's well-lit and moody. It's a fine shot and a deserved winner."

Tony commented: "This shot and the second-place wide angle shot were the hardest I have worked to capture a couple of

images. I got to Brixham on the Fishcombe side in the afternoon and set off exploring by kayak and found a couple of areas that might look good with some nice rocks covered in sea weeds and pointing in the direction of the sunset. As the evening started to draw in, I got my snorkelling gear and went a few metres out as the tide was coming in. I had to be quick as I was in a cut-off area in the dark, so I'm pleased to have won with these images.

I used my trusty Olympus TG4, PT-056 housing with a Weefine WFL-02 wide lens and a hand-held

Light & Motion Gobe video light which goes down to 80 lumens. No fancy settings, but the camera had been left in sunset mode which actually did a nice job with the colours”.

Tony also won a copy of Paul Naylor’s book ‘Great British Marine Animals’.

Second Prize

Jon Bunker



Peter Rowlands: “There were other shots, other subjects that were head shots, but here the eyes were spot-on in focus, in a very powerful composition. The fact that it’s just slightly tilted gives it more power and lifts it from a straight head-on, so a very appealing shot.”

Jon commented: “Long Spined Sea Scorpion. I actually spotted this one whilst trying to get a squat lobster in frame. Both species of our Sea Scorpions share a fearsome name but also rather beautiful, mottled colouration which they can of course change to better fit their surroundings. This one sat patiently, as they so often seem to, for his portrait. Perhaps he was convinced of his invisibility!

Camera was a Sony RX100m5a, 26 mm equivalent, f11, ISO-100, 1/125, Nauticam housing, single Backscatter Miniflash strobe.”

Beginner Category

First Prize sponsored by O’Three

First Prize

Richard Blair



The Beginners’ Category was underrepresented this year with only one person submitting entries. Although several competitors had registered for this category, they had mostly decided that their photographs on the day were too poor to submit, making Richard’s shot a worthy winner!

Wide-angle

First prize donated by Teign Diving Centre

First Prize

Malcolm Nimmo



Peter Rowlands: “I liked this very much. There were probably 4 or 5 jellyfish shots and this one has a different composition. As we do when judging the UPY competition, I took out all the jellyfish shots and put them on the screen at once so that you

have a direct comparison. This shot was by far the most interesting, well-lit and different.”

Second Prize

Tony Reed



Peter Rowlands: “This is a very strong shot, but the technique and location had been seen winning the previous category. So, it was a strong contender and slipped because of repetitiveness.”

Close-up/Macro

First prize donated by Dr Paul Naylor

First Prize

Terry Griffiths

Peter Rowlands: “Compared to all the others, this was completely different. A little bit bright top left, but the subject is fine, and I think it’s nice that he’s on a diagonal rather than at 6 o’clock, which makes it a more attractive image.”

Terry commented: “The photograph was taken at Babbacombe Pier along the side of the steps. You have to wait for the high tide as the Montagu’s blennies like to hide in the old red building bricks.



The size of the fish is about 25mm long.

Camera was a Canon R7 with a Canon 60mm macro lens, shot at 1/125, f11, iso800. Strobe was a Retra Pro flash with a Backscatter snoot fitted.”

Second Prize

Jon Bunker



Peter Rowlands: “This was a really early contender with a beautiful background and composition. Unfortunately, the right-hand tentacle is not 100% sharp and if it had been it would have really lifted it. But it’s a visually beautiful shot.”

Jon commented: “Okenia elegans. Torbay seems to have their fair share of these scarce but spectacular Okenia elegans wriggling about. I gather they eat sea squirts, though I’ve only ever seen them on sea lettuce. I recalled a similar shot of mine from the 2022 Splash-In, where Peter mentioned the green background was a bit stark. To avoid just taking the same shot again I got in as close as my wet lens would allow and kicked open the aperture to f4 for some bokeh blur, shifting position to try and get some curve from the sea lettuce around the nudibranch.

Camera was a Sony RX100m5a, 26mm equivalent, f4, ISO-100, 1/125, Nauticam housing, single Backscatter Miniflash strobe (with snoot).”

Popular/People’s Vote

Malcolm Nimmo

Peter Rowlands: “Very nice, straightforward. That’s a very strong shot.”

See you all next year.



Tim Allen

Torbay BSAC