

Torbay Splash-in 2025

by Tim Allen

The Torbay Splash-in underwater photography competition took place on Saturday, 13th September. Organised annually by Torbay BSAC 0008, the competition is open to all and attracts talented photographers from all over the Southwest. Photographs must be taken in the Torbay area and within a 19-hour period. There are four categories of entry: Beginner, Compact Camera, Wide Angle, and Close-up, as well as a Popular Vote prize.

Fourteen competitors registered and submitted a total of 50 photographs. Tim Allen, Torbay's Diving Officer, noted that strong westerly winds forced most competitors to go around to the more sheltered areas in Torbay, notably Babbacombe and Anstey's Cove.

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

remarked that the images were very impressive, given the difficult diving conditions on the day.

Beginner Category

The Beginners' Category is for those who have never won or been runner-up in an open competition before. There was a strong entry this year with 10 photos submitted.

The Beginner First Prize was again sponsored by O'Three, who provided a voucher for 50% off a new drysuit.



Beginner First Prize - Jane Tanasa

Peter Rowlands liked the very nice eye contact and the subject in the foreground, calling it a very powerful shot.

Jane commented: "We came across this patient and possibly sleepy small spotted catshark close by Mushroom Rock at Babbacombe. These beautiful and elegant creatures are always a joy to see and are often very tolerant of divers with cameras! The picture was taken with an Olympus TG7, with a wide-angle lens"

Second Prize - Darran Hill

Darran noted: "The photo was taken under the pier at Babbacombe on Saturday morning. I was focussed on photographing some prawns and getting them used to my video lights when I saw the crab glaring at me. I could get one of my lights behind it which added a nice backlit dimension, so I took a couple of shots before returning to the prawns. The photo was taken on an iPhone 16 in a Sealife SportDiver housing. I also used two Orca 710v lights and a small diopter lens"

Wide-angle - First Prize

Dan Bolt

Peter liked this photo the most of the two split-shot photos submitted of dogs swimming. The composition with the dog's face and pose, together with the background, combine for a very striking photo.

Dan commented: "This shot was completely unplanned. While we were kitting up, I saw someone throwing a ball into the sea for this dog (he's called Bailey), and so I quickly found the owners and asked if they would mind me using him as a model for the Splash-in. They were generous enough to agree and we had a good laugh trying to get him to swim in front of the camera. Of the 100-or-so images I took of Bailey, this one had the best eye contact, making it an easy choice to enter. Taken on an Olympus E-PL7 with Panasonic 8mm fisheye in an Olympus housing and a custom dome port in natural light"



Wide-angle - Second Prize

Dan Bolt

Dan commented: "Sometimes I do plan a shot and given the prevailing conditions I wanted to try something I'd not done before, a panorama split image. My buddy Kirsty kindly gave some of her time to be my model and it took quite a few attempts to figure out where the light was best, how deep, and far away she needed to be, and how much background I wanted in each image to make this a successful venture.

I'm very pleased with the way it turned out, and it has spurred me on to try this technique again. Taken on an Olympus E-PL7 with Panasonic 8mm fisheye in an Olympus housing and a custom dome port in natural light"





Compact Camera - First Prize Tony Reed

Peter Rowlands noted that this was a very effective shot that grabbed your attention.

Tony commented: "The swan shot wasn't planned at all. I saw an opportunity and took it as I was walking through the town by the harbour looking for anything that caught my eye. A local chap feeds the swans with swan food every day and has done since he was a child, he was telling me. There were a lot there and he said it would be fine for me to get to the water's edge and take some photos".



Second Prize - Tony Reed

Tony commented: "At Elberry Cove I found some nice, coloured seaweed which lit up well in the dark. With that and a break in the clouds for about 40 minutes, I left my camera running in live composite to capture the star trails and then merged the 2. It was all quite rushed due to time and conditions".



Close-up/Macro - First Prize Dan Bolt

Peter Rowlands liked the face-on pose of the two shannies and although they are a similar colour to the background, they still manage to stand out, making a very striking photo. Dan commented: "Given the strong winds from the south on this day, my buddy and I spent the day at Babbacombe. As my buddies and I always say the visibility there always looks good in the shallows, I decided to take advantage of the high tide and aimed to photograph the many shannies on the wall of the small pier in the relatively clear water. You have to be patient in this game, but after a while they grow used to your presence

and I was very fortunate as, just for three photos, these two sat looking at me and on the same focal plane giving me the perfect opportunity to capture their cheeky expressions. Taken on an OM Systems OM-1 with 12-50mm kit lens in an AOI housing and Sea & Sea YS-D3 strobes. I also used a Subsee +5 dioptre".

This shot also won the Popular Vote and Peter Rowlands was happy that the Popular Vote had agreed with one of his first prize awards!

Tim Allen
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