

Parting shot

The first day of our (my wife Brenda and I) holiday in Egypt on the Red Sea. We had arrived the previous evening at the Sharks Bay Hilton and I had just signed up with the local dive centre for a few dives in the coming week. I had decided to get wet ASAP and informed the instructor taking my details that I intended to go snorkelling as soon as they were through with me. I asked if I could borrow a weight belt and a couple of kilos of weights. The instructor obliged and informed me that if I were lucky I might catch a glimpse of a dolphin that sometimes comes around the bay to play with the swimmers. Glimpsing my camera he remarked that it would be a good photo opportunity. Full of anticipation and excitement I headed straight for the beach. Lots of swimmers and snorkellors but no dolphin. My disappointment was short lived when I entered the water and encountered the multitude of reef life for me to click away at.

After about 20 minutes I heard what appeared to be an increase in the level of excitement of a group of swimmers about 50 meters away. Looking across at them I clearly saw the cause of this excitement – yes, the dorsal fin of a dolphin was just

ahead of them and they were frantically trying (and failing) to catch it. The visibility in the water was excellent but not that good that I make anything out of the dolphin or its pursuers underwater. The dolphin was heading away from me and I recognised the futility in trying to follow. I counted myself lucky to have caught site of the animal at all and returned photographing other smaller marine creatures.

No more that four or five minutes had passed when I was returning to the surface from a breath-hold dive to about 7 meters. Scanning the surface for fellow swimmers and snorkellors there it was, hovering effortlessly at a depth of about 3 meters and about 6 meters away watching ME intently. My need for air outweighed my desire to remain submerged. As I took several replenishing breaths the dolphin continued watching me. At this point I realised that I was in fact some distance from any of the other swimmers. I quickly readied my camera and submerged. Mid water I took aim and clicked away. To my astonishment the dolphin came closer. I was thrilled. It seemed as if the dolphin was posing. It moved slowly toward me seemingly fascinated by



my camera. After what seemed like an age but was probably only a couple of minutes the dolphin slowly moved away and out of site. I realised that other swimmers now surrounded me. It seemed a very personal encounter and I am pleased to have the

photographs to remind me of it.

Truly a remarkable start to a great holiday.

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Do you have a nice shot with a short story behind it?

If so e mail me and yours could be the next "Parting shot". peter@uwpmag.com