

Contents

Underwater Photography

A web magazine
Jan/Feb 2005

- 3 Editorial
- 6 News & Travel
- 13 New Products



17 Nexus/Nikon D70

by Peter Rowlands



21 Ikelite/Olympus 5050

by Matt Segal



24 Libor Spacek

by Sabina Casarova



28 Tsunami

by Jason Heller



30 Yap's critter hunt

by Tim Rock



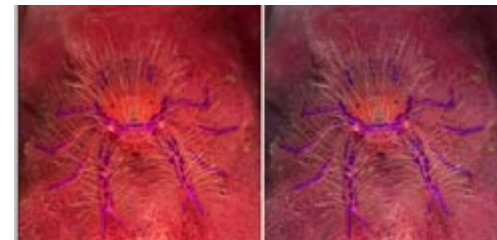
34 Tasik Ria and KBR

by Peter Rowlands



38 Photocolour Kit

by Alexander Mustard



42 Shooting blue

by Ethan Daniels



46 Nudibranchs

by Nonoy Tan



50 Hans Haas book

by Pat Baker



52 Book reviews

55 Classifieds

57 Parting shot

by Vernon Heagy

Cover photo by Libor Spacek

Editorial

Tsunami

So much has been written about this awful disaster which has brought death and destruction to such a vast beautiful area and I have little to add except to publish a first hand account by Jason Heller later in this issue.

It brings home the shock of deep fear, the sudden realisation of life threatening vulnerability on an ocean we have all felt was our second home. A place for adventure, enjoyment and productivity in the company of like minded souls. Yet such beauty is capable of such savage cruelty brought about by forces so far away whose power is unimaginable and whose effect seems so cold and merciless.

I hope like me you have donated whatever you can to help the rescue operation. Personally I chose The Disaster Emergency Committee www.dec.org but if there are any UwP readers who have not found the time to donate due to festive holiday commitments I urge you to do so.

www.dec.org.uk
www.google.com/tsunami_relief.html

UwP is back in sync

“Hi Pete,
Merry x-mas and a happy new year from down under. Now that’s out of the way, where is our bloody presents?? Got a twitch, goin’ stir crazy, need something to read!! Stop holding back on us you pommy bludger, where’s our magazine?? Too late, need medication!”

Bruce
(Australian)

UwP junkies (well the one above) have been e mailing me to complain that they’re not getting their regular supply of UwP crack.

It’s true we’ve skipped a beat in terms of publication dates and this was mainly to bring publication dates back in line with the calendar year. It also occurred whilst I and Deb Fugitt (in separate locations!) were overseas, away from internet access, and were unable to upload during December.

Anyway, UwP is back on track now and in harmony with the calendar year.

Calm down, Bruce. UwP is here. There, there. Everything’s going to be OK.

Live and learn

To be honest, it was the last thing I expected to see and I hope I never to see it again.

I was at 20 metres in the Red Sea trying out a new video housing which I had built for my Sony PDX-10 widescreen camcorder. The housing was polycarbonate so I could see all of the controls in the housing and I had housed a separate 5.6” widescreen external monitor powered by a home made 12v battery pack installed in the main housing.

All was going well for about 15 minutes into the dive but then the monitor screen suddenly went blank. My initial response was to assume that I had not fully charged the separate battery pack but, when I looked down into the main housing, it was rapidly filling up with smoke! The home made battery pack was shorting out and generating a great deal of heat and smoke.

As the horror sank in I watched in fear as the battery pack actually started to catch fire and a small blue flame formed at the rear of the pack.

At this stage I envisaged the whole lot catching fire taking my PDX-10 with it but fortunately the flame died down but the smoke continued to fill the housing.

At this stage the cost of saving my camcorder outweighed my own

life as I surfaced rapidly and then realised I didn’t know the signal for “My video housing is on fire”. Luckily the RIB driver sensed my unease and was quickly on the scene. His English was as limited as my Egyptian but we both spoke a universal language when, in the safety of the RIB, I opened the housing back and enough smoke came out to send smoke signals to all boats in the area if I had had a towel and a knowledge of the smoke signal alphabet.

With the battery pack unplugged and removed from the housing the danger had been averted but it left me with a depleted sense of confidence to use the system again so I concentrated on still pictures for the rest of the trip.

Upon returning home I set about building a new battery pack which now has so much insulation it would pass any safety test. However the thought of this sort of thing reoccurring underwater has made me very, very wary.

Fortunately my confidence has now been restored as I have come up with the ultimate solution.

I have now modified the housing and fitted a remote controlled fire extinguisher.

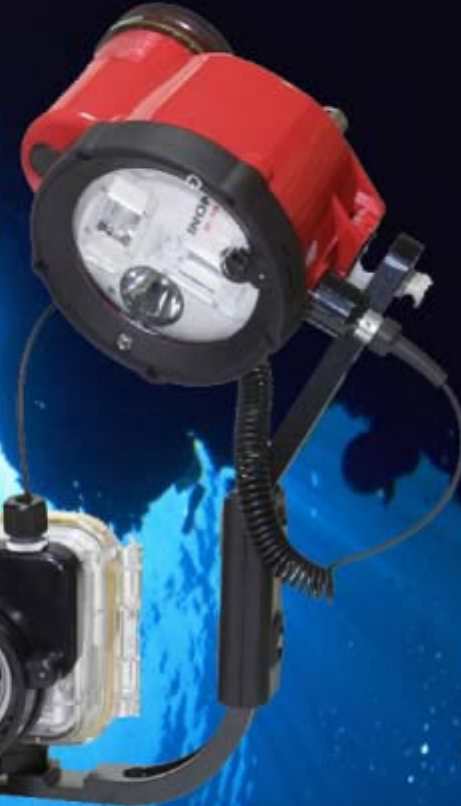
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