



Cape Wrath 29th May - 1st June 1999

[Trip Report Index](#)

Divers:

- Sam Cockerill
- Andy James (CUUEX)
- Rob Critchley
- Jo Bond
- Nick Harrison
- James Anderson
- Guy Hewitt
- Philip Rae

Sites:

- Bon Ami 29/05/99 (1 dive)
 - N Loch Inchard 29/05/99 (1 dive)
 - Droman 30/05/99 (2 dives)
 - Loch Eriboll 31/05/99 (2 dives)
 - S Loch Inchard 01/06/99 (1 dive)
-

Loch Inchard

Our first dive is a shallow wreck, although calling the Bon Ami a wreck is fairly generous. This Spanish vessel (possibly a trawler?) sank only recently, but regular pounding from the North Atlantic has reduced the structure to a scattered collection of rusting panels and engine fittings. The narrow channel into which her final few yards took her has been divided by a boulder fall, and from the North side our dive requires us to practically surface to get across to her. The channel's walls nip down to less than a metre in places, funnelling a single column of light down to the slightly wider dusky seabed.

The Incident (Droman)

On Sunday we dived out of Droman pier, a small pebbled cove just North of Kinlochbervie.

We descend to 30m and, as has become customary with Guy, begin looking for dinner. After 10 minutes I find an 18" crayfish beneath a ledge and fish him out with a lobster hook. A few minutes later Guy spots a second crayfish under another ledge below us and we descend to retrieve him. After a few attempts Guy passes the lobster hook back to me and I continue prodding for a while before noticing that Guy is no longer by my side.

It later emerged that Guy's suit inflator was probably activated whilst he was reaching under the ledge. When he let go of the rock, he was fired to the surface from 23m in around 30 seconds, though remarkably suffering no ill effects due to swift provision of emergency O₂; an alternative (but less plausible) explanation is that crayfish have developed some fairly sophisticated defense strategies.

Loch Eriboll

A building South Easterly wind put most of the West coast out of play on Monday, so we pulled the boat onto the trailer and trundled over to Loch Eriboll. Towards the middle there are believed to be scattered relics cast overboard by captured U-boat crews during WW1, though at 50m+ we were not about to go treasure hunting.

Instead we motored up the Loch with a following force 5 and anchored in the lee of the West shore, where sea and wind seemed to reach an uneasy agreement. On a tip off from Andy, we took our goody bags on the off-chance finding scallops here.

The seabed here is coarse granite, neatly fissured into parallel gulleys, and blunted by the action of sea and sand. The result bears surreal resemblance to a Star Trek set or climbing wall. Nick and I descend to 22m over plateau and along gully, though our only scallop sighting is a lone juvenile the size of a thumbnail. Accepting the dive as a scenic cruise rather than a trip to the fish counter, we pocket our bags and enjoy the view. It is with some surprise, then, that on returning to the boat we find Phil and James struggling to heave their bulging bags into the RIB.

Their dive had been roughly similar for 14 minutes, but then a single scallop took off as they passed. As Phil turned in pursuit the motion set off another, then another, and soon the water around them was filled with an entire panicking colony clapping their random courses. After 10 minutes of grabbing and bagging, the pandemonium subsided and they returned with as many scallops as they could carry and, as it turned out, slightly more than even the eight of us could eat.