



**St. Abbs
June 1999**

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Trip Report by Mike McCarthy

The 'Foolish Four' were:

- Helen Cohen
- Darryl Spelman
- Kathy Gubbins
- Mike McCarthy

Monday 7th June

Sitting bored in my room waiting for my engineering reports to write themselves I stumbled upon the Times horoscopes which warned: 'You will have a bad day. Stay in bed until Tuesday at the earliest' Not being of a superstitious mind, and taking comfort in the knowledge that fellow Tauruses include Jonathan Aitken, Kevin Keegan and Slobodan Milosevic, I knew the wise sage who wrote this was having an off-day and had got his advice all mixed up. After all, I was going up to Scotland diving, what could possibly go wrong?

Eyemouth Dive Centre confirmed my optimism, 'There's a little wind, but boat diving's good'

Even the campsite believed my cover story that we were a nice happy family enjoying the sea-side for a couple of days, 'No trouble with collecting your keys when you arrive this evening'

With a cheerful spring to my step I wandered into the car hire firm: 'Ready in ten minutes'

As I sat outside with a nice prawn sandwich in my hand watching the butterflies flutter in the wind while the bees inquisitively sniffed at the rose bushes, I had a sudden realisation that it's the little things in nature that make us realise how beautiful and precious life is.

Two hours later, after the car hire firm had finally managed to crank the engine into life, I promptly drove over the rose bush with tyres screaming to make up lost time. My common sense kept pestering me 'You've signed a blank cheque for car damage', but after many years training I've learned to completely ignore it.

Two hours and 200 miles later it was time to book a boat skipper courtesy of those useful people at Eyemouth Dive Centre, 'Boat diving in this weather? Are you MAD?'

Undeterred we phoned that kind helpful woman at the caravan site to say we'd be a little late: 'There'll be noone around to give you a key, GO AWAY!'

When we arrived she eventually relented, spent 45 minutes moaning at us about how we were taking up her free time, shouted at us to be quiet and not disturb the children in the neighbouring caravan and eventually gave us the sacred key. I did wonder whether so much fuss over one crappy key which looked so cheap it could be duplicated by a twig was really necessary, but we were in Scotland after all.

[Webmaster's note - CUUEG in no way supports or agrees with the opinions of Mr. McCarthy. Unfortunately, as a Scot, I cannot delete the above without being accused of pettiness...so if it offends you, let me know so that I have an excuse to edit it :-)]

Tuesday 8th June

In the cold morning air the view from the caravan over Eyemouth bay actually looked quite pretty. The weather looked a reasonable force 8 gale and the sun was probably still out there behind the storm clouds.

On meeting the skipper, the unforgettable, full of made-up stories Pete Gibson, we 'sped' out across the 3m swell to a place called Wuddy Rocks. Dropping down to 12m the visibility was a surprising 8.45metres, meaning we could see literally hundreds of 'Dead Man's Fingers' and kelp around the rocks. Kathy and Helen saw an octopus and annoyed it until it squirted them with ink. We didn't. The Giant Squid Pete Gibson had promised proved elusive though.

Two hours on the shore provided just enough time for body temperatures to reach a sustainable 32degrees before we ventured off again, this time to the Skellies. My dive consisted off kit problems before aborting after 15mins, but Kathy and Helen saw lots of good stuff in the gullies.

Evening entertainment was provided by watching the Ragworms on the beach in a mating frenzy. This consisted of darting about in orgasmic

ecstasy before being killed by the many hungry crabs. Stupid creatures.

Wednesday 9th June

Morning dive was on some reef somewhere. The shallowest point we found was about 20m and it teemed with so much life it would have put the Great Barrier Reef to shame. We saw a couple of feathery nudibranches, some annoyed crabs, some star-fishy things and quite a few things which react when poked.

The sea was about at the limits of diveability so we abandoned plans to dive in the afternoon and went walking along St Abbs nature reserve instead. The weather consequently improved dramatically.

We found a nice little bay that looked diveable, though noone could be bothered to go and fill the cylinders so Helen and Mike went snorkelling. Helen, with too little weight on, saw some sand in suspension in the water. Mike, with his new camera, snapped a picture of a rock, and swallowed something which wriggled in the back of his throat and then in his stomach for a few minutes until the digestive acids finally killed it.

A nice fire on the beach, complete with exploding rocks and marshmallows flambe, rounded off a very enjoyable couple of days.

Thursday 10th June

All that remained was to return the car. The boot was soaked in highly-corrosive sea water but we knew the bloke would never think to open it and check under the carpet to see how the rust was expanding by the minute.

Except he did...