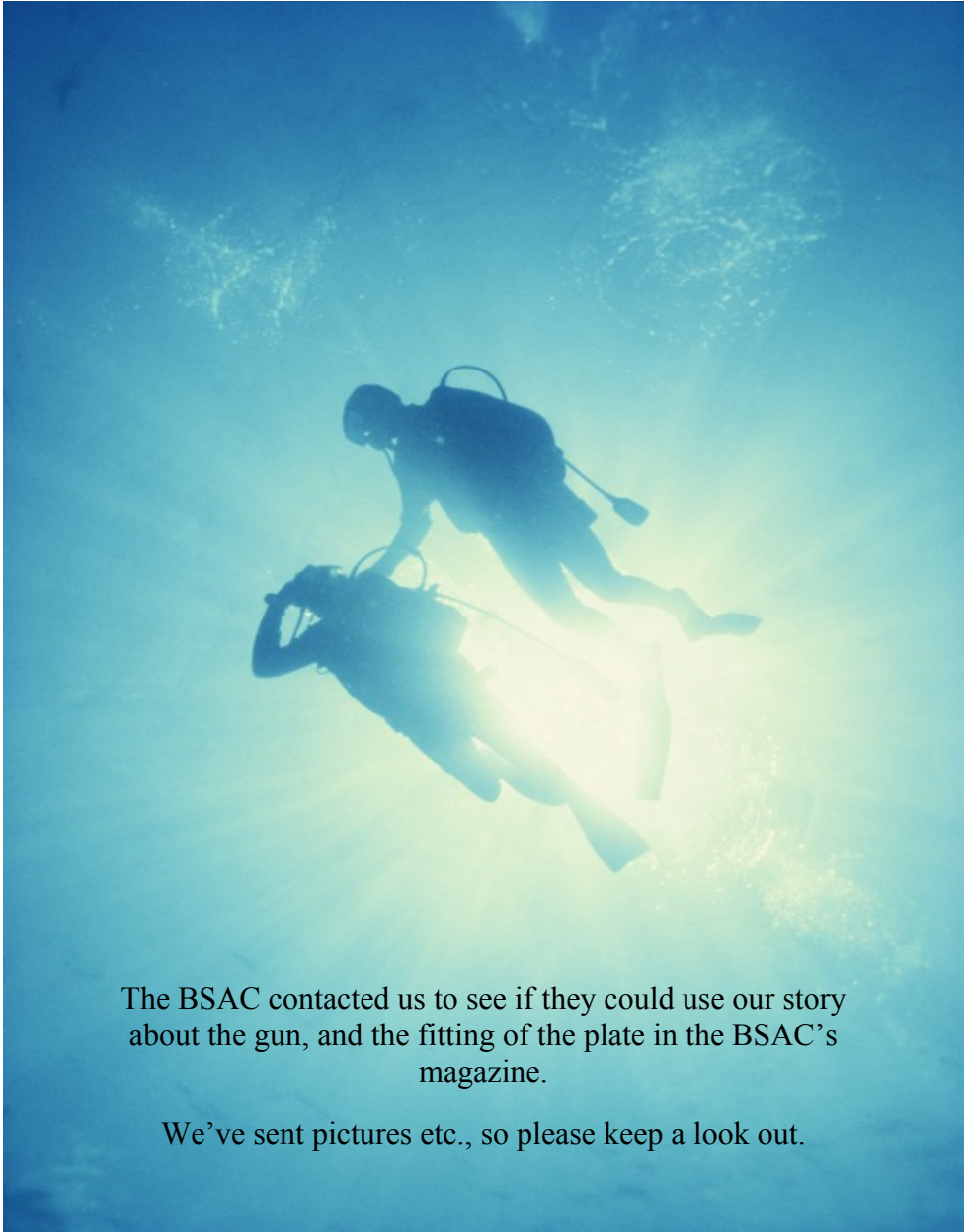


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**HULL BRANCH No 14
BRITISH SUB-AQUA CLUB
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The BSAC contacted us to see if they could use our story about the gun, and the fitting of the plate in the BSAC's magazine.

We've sent pictures etc., so please keep a look out.



Chairman, Trevor Jones presented the Photographer of the year (UK) Trophy to Bob Higson at the Club's AGM



OBAN TRIP BY SARAH CLINCH

Six divers, Craig, Ivon, Paul, Bob, Rory and I set off for Puffin Diving in Oban early on Sunday morning. On the Sunday afternoon, we dived the Breda, a great wreck with lots of entry points into the holds to explore the cargo, including tiles and tyres. The sea was very calm and the weather was beautiful. Visibility was good, but could have been better. This continued for the whole trip. Unfortunately, the Breda wasn't on the schedule for Sunday, so we dived it again on Monday morning to get back on track after Craig rejected every alternative suggestion, all of which would "mess up the itinerary". Monday lunchtime was venison burgers in Lochaline. The itinerary said Monday afternoon was the Thesis, by which point we'd learned not to question. Tuesday started with another attempt to get through the bread allocation of one loaf per diver (Craig and Paul had doubled up on the shopping). The Hispania was on the itinerary, with its notoriously tricky slack. Rory and Bob were first in, followed by Paul and I. We surfaced after 44 minutes of hard work alternately pulling ourselves round the wreck and taking shelter inside the superstructure. Well, we wouldn't have wanted those rebreather divers to have to work too hard, so came up just as it was starting to slacken off. We went into Tobermory for air and deep fried scallops ("what's the story in Balamory, wouldn't you like to know").

Tuesday afternoon was the Shuna, a great wreck with lots of swim-throughs and a really interesting engine room. The line was right on the stern, which didn't stop Bob and Rory surfacing on a dsmb at the bow, having failed to find their way back to the line. Rory goes down in legend for this dive for managing to scare "5 bar Bob", surfacing with only 10 bar after 11 minutes deco.

Wednesday morning was the Rondo, max depth 50m, which was spoilt by the amount of fishing line on the wreck at depth and in poor light. The lunchtime air fill was disrupted by a royal visit in Lochaline. Craig did his best speed entry to the harbour and we all scrambled onto the slipway like scruffy ninjas, only to find a policeman at the top staring down at us, trying to figure out whether we posed a threat to Prince Edward who was opening an exhibition there. Bob's navigation failures recurred on Wednesday afternoon while scalloping at 34m. "Follow the wall, said Craig. Bob thought it might be better to have a nice bumble out into the centre on the bay instead and send up another dsmb. Ribbing Bob about his navigation skills continued until the next morning when Ivon and Craig came up on a dsmb from the Meldon, only meters from the shot. The Meldon was one of the highlights of the trip. Surprisingly difficult to find, despite being just below the surface; by the time the last pair came up part of

the wreck was a meter *above* the surface. For such a shallow wreck, it was remarkably intact, with a large prop and even portholes.

The final dive was left open on the itinerary. Craig tried to whip up enthusiasm for another 34m scallop dive, but as there were no takers, he dropped Bob and I on the Falls of Lora instead. We were initially planning to start inside the loch and drift out, but by the time Bob had thought about it, got kitted up, debated the direction and speed of the current and calibrated his compass (no navigation errors this time!) the tide had turned and we ended up diving it in the other direction. This meant that the dive started with a drift in some of the best visibility we'd had all trip before we were shot out and down into the pitch black on the loch.

There were the usual kit failures – burst LP hose (me), lost torch (me), reel bent out of shape (er, me again), broken

flask (yup, you guessed it). Paul spent the first 2 evenings doing battle with his not-so-drysuit armed with a tube of aquasure. On the third day, having reduced the leak from “soaked” to “damp”, he declared, “the suit and me have declared a truce, we’ll start again when I get more glue.” The suit got its revenge when Paul went for a cooling dip between dives, with the zip open. Rory and Ivon were also victims of the curse of the zip, twice in Ivon’s case. “No-one would possibly be stupid enough to leave their zip open twice,” he said, coming up from one dive having done exactly that.

Friday morning saw final victory as nearly all the bread was finished and it was time to go home. All in all, it was a great fun, very relaxed trip. We couldn't have asked for better weather and all came home with the traditional “drysuit sunburn”. Thanks to Craig for planning and organising such a great trip.

