

# SUB AQUA



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Volume 6, Number 2

**Has Mel Fisher  
Found Atlantis?**

**Top Secret  
Pirate Wrecks**

**Peter Benchley  
and Stan Waterman  
Recall *The Deep***

**Where is the Real  
Treasure Island?**

**Dive California's  
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# SUB AQUA

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Volume 6, Number 2

# Treasure...



Perhaps the most magical word in the English language. Not every diver focuses on physical artifacts, lost jewels and gold - many find visual, natural and emotional treasures. However, this **SUB AQUA** is about the goodies.

One of the things we continue to hear is that readers love our interviews - and the fact that **SUB AQUA** brings you personalities and features available *nowhere else*. In that case, this issue is a bonanza. Pull out all your other dive magazines and see

which ones have in-depth interviews with Mel Fisher, Peter Benchley, Stan Waterman, Pat Clyne or the exclusive column by Billy Deans (and that's just part of this one issue!).

We have the mission of making **SUB AQUA** "dive gear for your brain." Which means our editorial conferences are filled with discussions of "Can the diver use this?" "Who else can we talk to to balance this?" "What are the safety issues of this?" and "Can they find this in any other magazine?" Readers tell us that not only are they immersed in an issue from the second it arrives, but they are amazed at the practical, concentrated, and expert advice and knowledge they find. There's inside information in this issue which could even help a persistent diver to become a millionaire!

Treasure is romance. And we've brought you the two most famous treasure writers in the world - from Robert Louis Stevenson - whose *Treasure Island* infected the young Mel Fisher's dreams - to Peter Benchley, whose *The Deep* remains the most popular treasure novel and movie ever made. Talk about romance - Atlantis, The АТОСНА, Pirates, Prohibition Gambling Boats, The MONITOR, Execution Rock, and much more.

Treasure is controversial. Wherever there are treasure hunters there is opposition - governmental, environmental, and other pirates seeking their cut of the booty. **SUB AQUA** isn't taking a stand on whether you should dive for treasure - that's for you to decide. And after you read this issue, you'll have the tools.

Joel Silverstein, Publisher

# Secret Pirate Wrecks of New York

By Bill Bleyer



Wrecked galleons spilling gold onto the sea floor off New York? No way, you say? Okay, so it's true that Spanish treasure fleets never skirted Long Island's shores. But over the years dozen of ships carrying military payrolls, immigrant nest eggs and captured wartime booty did meet their demise in the region. And many of them are still out there waiting to be found.

"We don't have any Spanish galleons but we have a lot of pirate activity, a lot of privateers who were actually pirates for the King of England doing it legally," says Mike McMeekin, a Long Island treasure diver.

Gary Nilsen, another Long Island diver who founded the Institute for Marine Archaeology last year, says, "I would say there are probably a couple dozen treasure ships around Long Island and New York Harbor in the sense that they were carrying gold, silver or coins. The other aspect is that they are a cultural heritage treasure. Shipwrecks are a wonderful find because they are in essence a time capsule."

There is lack of agreement among maritime historians and treasure hunters on whether some of the ships are actually where they are reported to be or whether there is

any treasure on them. "Whether they really had money on them or not is questionable," says Henry Keatts, a professor at Suffolk Community College and author of several books on shipwrecks. "It is rumored that the HUSSAR had a British payroll aboard," when it sank in the East River during the American Revolution. "People have searched for it from the Revolutionary War through about three or four years ago when there was the last salvage attempt. Barry Clifford was looking for it and didn't find it either." Van Fields, a Long Island historian writing a book on area shipwrecks, says, "In this area ships



were more likely to be carrying coal or lumber than gold."

While there are divers who always have an eye out for the possibility of finding coins, precious metal or jewelry on a Northeast wreck, no one's doing it full time or making a living at it. "There's no Mel Fisher on Long Island. Florida is where all the good stuff was and there's still a few good ones down there," says Buzz Driscoll, a long-time diver from Shelter Island, New York. "But every ship that went down around here carried currency aboard. There were no credit cards back in the 1800s and when a ship went to a foreign port they had to carry enough money for provisions. So on almost any old sailing vessel you find that sank under conditions where everybody had to get off in a hurry, there's generally a strongbox if you're lucky enough to find it."

Driscoll, a former New York City police officer who's been diving for four decades, has found the occasional colonial era coin on a New York area wreck. And he had one big find, although it wasn't from colonial times.

"I did pick up some jewels, a small cache of somebody's jewels in the Western Sound in the late Sixties," Driscoll says. "We got sixty pieces, diamond stickpins and

things like that. It was near a wreck but whether it was from the wreck I don't know. There was a wreck there of a packet steamer called the MAINE that went down in February of 1920 on Execution Rocks [not far from City Island]. Right off there I found what I believe to have been a briefcase. There was a little brass padlock laying on what looked like the texture of wet cardboard in the sand. When I went for the little padlock I got a glimpse of gold. When I dug it up it was a whole bunch of jewelry all piled together. I didn't think it was real at first." Some of the damaged pieces were sold for their gold and Driscoll and his dive buddy split up the rest.

The biggest documented trove of colonial coins found in the region in recent years surfaced in 1994. Bob Dier of Southold, Long Island, was diving with his underwater metal detector in Long Island Sound when he came across 18 Spanish silver pieces of eight from the 18th Century.

Dier has been a regular treasure hunter working on a small scale with an underwater metal detector for about two years. "I always go looking for what I found but you never expect to find it," says Dier, who regularly finds old rings and scattered coins. "It was quite accidental. I was diving in a lake looking for old artifacts and I had a little bit

of air left when I came up and I didn't want to waste it. I just went down to the Sound and jumped in and I was looking for a couple of minutes when all of a sudden boom — they were just scattered on the bottom."

Dier is still doing research on the site which he keeps a closely guarded secret. He said there's a shipwreck in the area but it's at least a century newer than the coins.

The coins date from 1751 to 1782 and were probably used for local trade as a preferred hard currency. Mint marks on the coins show they were struck for Spain at mints in Mexico and Peru, says Cliff Benfield, curator of the Southold Historical Society's Nautical Museum in the Horton Point Lighthouse, to which Dier donated his find. The coins are believed to have been dropped or fallen overboard from a boat moving along the shore or a vessel that swamped. "There wasn't much cash around then; everyone bartered, but Spanish money was readily accepted," Benfield says.

Dier's not the only treasure seeker who is secretive about potentially productive sites. "There are rumors that ocean clam boats have been pulling Spanish coins from sites for years but there's nothing concrete," McMeekin says. "It's all rumors. Nobody is telling what they know." ■

## THE WRECKS

### Here's what researchers do know - or at least have heard - about the area's treasure wrecks:

**HUSSAR:** A 28-gun British frigate that supposedly was carrying an Army payroll of from \$1 million to \$5 million to Newport when it sunk after hitting a rock in Hell Gate in the East River in 1780. Jerry Roberts, senior curator of the Intrepid Museum in Manhattan, says "that's the biggest local gold story. For the last two hundred years people have spent literally millions of dollars trying to locate it."

Says Driscoll: "The ship did sink but there was never a cent on board." Adds Steve Bielenda, owner of the dive boat WAHO, "We did a lot of research on it. We got a hold of the court martial proceedings because after the ship sank they court martialed the officers. The one thing that was never, ever mentioned was any money. If it was going to be brought up anywhere it would definitely be brought up in the court martial. The only salvage they did at the time was to recover some of the cannons."

But McMeekin says there's good reason why the payroll was never mentioned: "The British didn't want to own up to the

fact that the wreck went down with treasure on board because they didn't want any salvage attempts."

**THE MONEY SHIP:** whose real name is unknown, came ashore in Shinnecock in 1716, according to accounts of the time. The ship, dismantled and helpless, washed ashore initially near Patchogue, according to a *Brooklyn Times* account, and a woman on the shore saw two lifeboats leave the ship and enter the surf, where they were overturned. Those on board apparently had strapped bags of Spanish silver dollars to their bodies and sank like stones when they were thrown into the sea. The captain and a boy were rescued along with some of the loot.

Meanwhile the ship began to drift eastward to its final resting place in Shinnecock, where people began finding silver dollars on the beach. The wreck was sold for salvage but nothing was done immediately with it. As the story goes, an enterprising local whaling captain, Henry Green of Southampton, decided to explore the hulk and saw a silver dollar on the cabin floor. Later investigation showed another silver dollar projecting out of the low wooden ceiling, which when pried open disgorged a cache of additional coins. Other coins were found under the floor. Green reportedly recovered 500 coins before the wreck broke up. Farmers brought their teams and plowed the beach, recovering additional money. And for years afterwards dollars were found in

the sand. But Driscoll doesn't buy any of this. "That one's a ghost," he says. "It really doesn't exist."

**PRINS MAURITIUS:** a Dutch ship carrying a governor and settlers for a colony in Delaware as well as money, supposedly went down off Fire Island in 1657 without loss of life. "Guys have looked for it with big expeditions but it's buried under the sand now so they'll probably never find it but historically it's a very important wreck because it was so early," McMeekin says. "They haven't found it looking off shore so it's probably buried in the dunes. It might have been in the inlet when it went down and then the inlet closed up."

**MEXICO:** was carrying a load of wealthy German immigrants to America with all their valuables when it sank near Long Beach in 1837 with a loss of dozens of lives. The passengers reportedly had \$1 million worth of gold as well as jewels. "There were rumors that somebody was working that wreck for a couple of years, but nothing concrete, just rumors," McMeekin says. "They were doing a serious job. They had a big boat. They were only working during the week so the weekend dive boats wouldn't see them. Technically it belongs to the state within three miles unless you get permits. They were doing on the QT. They weren't legal."

*Continued on next page.*

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## Treasure Hunting and the Law

If you wanted to get into the big-time treasure hunting, from a legal point of view you're probably seven years too late.

"The time to get into finding shipwrecks was prior to 1989," says Key West maritime attorney David Horan, who handled the litigation over the salvage rights to the ATOCHA, CENTRAL AMERICA and EL CAZADOR. "Prior to 1989, you could go out and find a shipwreck and file a salvage claim in the Federal Admiralty Court, and although the government would litigate against you, you could win."

"After the archaeologists and historians who work for the federal government got through lobbying, the Abandoned Shipwreck Act was passed in 1989," Horan continues. "What it said was that all the abandoned shipwrecks within the territorial limits of the United States belong to the government and the Federal Admiralty Court cannot maintain jurisdiction over a salvage action." For most of the states on the Gulf of Mexico, the territorial limit is nine nautical miles while

along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts it's three nautical miles.

"Within those areas the federal government owns all the wrecks," Horan says, "and implied within the statute it turned the title over to the individual states within whose borders the wreck is found." Each state was free then to pass its own set of rules on whether they were going to allow anybody to salvage these shipwrecks that they don't even know existed.

"Outside the territorial boundaries, the old rules apply," Horan says. There, salvage rights are still determined by Admiralty Court rulings.

Despite the hassles and red tape of resolving the rights to a wreck in advance, the lawyers say avoiding the issue is an invitation to bigger troubles. In the old days, pirates protected their treasure with cunning and treachery. Today the pen is mightier than the cutlass. If treasure is your game you should have your attorney's phone number memorized. ■

**HALCYON:** according to a log entry, was on its way back from the West Indies when it was caught in a hurricane in 1695. The ship was lost trying to make Jones Inlet. The bosun's log entry said the entire cargo had been taken from three French vessels, indicating the ship was either a pirate ship or a privateer, the equivalent of a legal pirate sanctioned by the government, working for the British Crown.

**ADVENTURE:** a pirate ship, went down off of Montauk in 1699 and has never been found. "That's supposed to have some treasure on it," McMeekin says, reportedly \$2 million.

**LIVELY:** a 14-gun schooner serving as a privateer, was wrecked in 1781 off Montauk with an undisclosed amount of gold on board.

**PRINCESS AUGUSTA:** sailing from Germany to the New York area carrying immigrants who had a lot of personal valuables, sank on the northeast side of Block Island around 1700.

**DEFENSE:** a 98 foot schooner serving as a colonial British privateer, sank in 1779 off Bartlett Reef in Connecticut with \$200,000 in coins on board.

**HMS MERCURY:** a British frigate, sank in 1777 after burning in the Hudson River. There was an attempt to raise the ship in 1823 and the ship was believed to have been carrying gold and silver for a payroll. The British made an

attempt the following year to salvage the wreck.

**HMS LEXINGTON:** sank in 1780 in the East River off the Bronx and was supposed to have been carrying \$1.8 million payroll.

**HERMIONE:** a sloop that sank in 1782 east of New London, Connecticut, was reported to be carrying \$100,000 in gold.

**LEXINGTON:** a 205 foot American paddle wheel steamer, sank in 1840 northwest of Port Jefferson, killing 10 of the 154 on board, after the ship burned to the waterline. Records showed that there were between \$18,000 and \$40,000 worth of silver coins on board but only \$800 was recovered two years after the sinking. There were rumors that the captain pocketed the money and used the fire as a cover story.

**HAROLD:** a barge that sank in 1903 off Staten Island carrying 7,678 silver ingots of which 80 percent was salvaged. "The 20 percent left is worth a small fortune today and there's been attempts to salvage some of it," McMeekin says.

**DE LA NAT:** a Spanish vessel, sank in 1866 in lower New York Bay with a reported cargo of gold. There was some salvage at the time of the sinking. ■



# 10 Questions You Must Answer

By Pat Clyne

Thinking of getting into professional treasure diving? Here are the key questions we at Mel Fisher's Treasure Salvors operation ask:

## 1 - How good are your lawyers?

Be absolutely sure that you check out all local, state and federal regulations in the waters that you're going to jump in, because, before you know it, if you pick something up off the bottom, you could be thrown in jail for conspiracy to steal federal property. Have damn good lawyers and lots of money to back them up. You need the dream team behind you.

## 2 - How good is your research?

You need lots and lots of research. Have a game plan as to what ship you're looking for. All treasure hunts begin on land, and most likely in libraries. Universities and people who are familiar with that time period might give you some insight into the wrecking of that fleet or ship.

## 3 - How patient are you?

You have to have great patience. You need a tremendous amount of persistence to start an undertaking like treasure hunting. Most people only see the results - the person coming up with the gold - they don't see the years and years of digging.

## 4 - Are you a good leader?

Treasure hunting is a team endeavor. One of Mel's great strengths is the variety of ways in which he inspires his people, keeps their spirits up, and helps them believe that "Today's the day!"

## 5 - Is this a hobby or a business?

You have to decide. Are you going to do this as a hobby, part-time or do you really want to go into it full-time? This distinction opens up a whole new area of considerations before jumping in.

## 6 - Do you know the technology?

Proton magnetometers are still a mainstay in treasure hunting for shallow water shipwrecks, and also deep water shipwrecks. One of the things you're going to be looking for is metal objects. Any metal objects that are on the bottom are most likely man-made. You need to be able to get in the ballpark of what you're looking for. Plus, with computers and imaging technology advancing, you need to be aware of *all* the technological options available.

## 7 - Are you in good shape?

You have to be in fairly good shape in order to pursue the everyday drudgery of lugging gear and diving and doing all of the things that require more physical capacity than your 9 to 5 office worker.

## 8 - How crazy are you... really?

You have to be stable. Most treasure hunters have been considered as nuts to start with, so maybe *that* should be a prerequisite. Are you crazy enough to do it? Are you crazy enough like a fox? Got to be crazy enough.

## 9 - Do you have good support?

You need a lot of good emotional support from whoever may be in this with you. You have to have people who believe in you. In Mel's case, all Mel needed was his own idea that he was right and he pursued it, but I've seen so many treasure salvors go by the wayside because of all of the cynics who tell them they can't do it. When you hear that enough, it works on you, and you lose it.

## 10 - Do you love it?

If you don't really want to get into it, if it isn't a carryover from your adventurous youth, you're going to give up way too soon. There's lots of boredom, lots of apparent failure. You gotta love it. ■

# ATLANTIS: Myth or Dive Site?



By Kevin F. McMurray

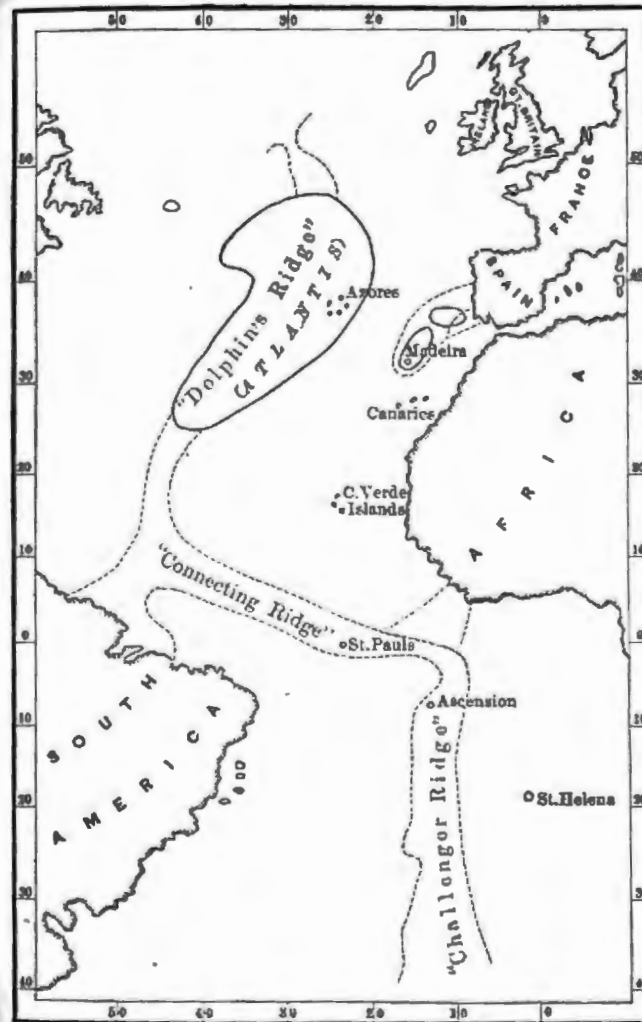
For some 2,500 years the location of Atlantis and its very existence has been a Holy Grail to some of the most respected people in the world of archaeology, paleontology, geology, volcanology, and, of course, treasure hunters. It is a subject sure to capture the public's imagination for it has all the ingredients of a great story - mystery, intrigue, treasure, and perhaps the key to our understanding of the very beginnings of our civilization.

There are some scholars and archaeologists who doubt that Atlantis ever existed. Yet, Jacques Cousteau believes he dove it. Famous treasure hunter Mel Fisher says, yes, it does exist but it is half a world away from where Cousteau claims it is.

The controversy got its start in the year 355 B.C. when the Greek philosopher Plato mentioned Atlantis in two of his dialogues. In the two accounts, *Timaeus* and *Critias*, Atlantis was described as an island that lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules and that it was larger than Asia Minor and Libya combined. Plato wrote in great detail of its flourishing culture as a utopian commonwealth at a time when the Athenians were still struggling with crude stone tools.

Plato wrote that the Atlanteans instigated a war against the Mediterranean people but were defeated by the Athenians. For punishment, Poseidon, the god of seas and earthquakes, wreaked havoc on Atlantis in the form of violent earthquakes and tidal waves and "...in a single day and night of destruction all the warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared."

Scholars of ancient history who believe that Atlantis is pure myth say that Plato's dia-



logues were allegorical and that he was simply expressing his views on corruption and war. Yet there are others, among them Cousteau, who believe Atlantis did exist and have some convincing proof to their claims.

In 1978 Cousteau and his team launched a diving expedition to find Atlantis. Cousteau and his son Phillippe also looked at Easter Island, Coco Island, and Bimini as possible sites for the elusive Atlantis. But their re-

search led them to the eastern Aegean Sea around the islands of Crete and Thera to do the bulk of their diving operations.

Geologists have long thought that Thera, also known as Santorini, was the mystical Atlantis that Plato wrote about. Thera lies 75 miles north of Crete and is part of the Cyclades Archipelago.

Cousteau and his team found it inexplicable that the Minoan civilization of Crete, with no safe harbor on its northern shore, could have ruled the Mediterranean for centuries during the Bronze Age. On Thera, Cousteau's divers found evidence of a once great seaport. Digging through sunken strata of sediment divers found artifacts from Byzantine periods, and beneath that Egyptian and Roman pottery. Before reaching solid bedrock Minoan artifacts buried under volcanic ash were found, indicating a great city once existed there.

As a result of the underwater digs, Greek archaeologists attached to the Cousteau venture theorized that with the destruction of Thera and surrounding islands Crete was left defenseless, which caused its untimely demise as a power.

The discrepancy in the location of Atlantis - since Plato implied it was in the Atlantic - is due to his claim that it lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules. The Pillars of Hercules is known today as the Straits of Gibraltar. But according to Charles Pellegrino, paleontologist and archaeologist, "beyond the Pillars of Hercules" was a common metaphor used by the ancient Greeks to describe the unknown. They would routinely put larger than life mythical stories in that vast void beyond the known world. Other scholars have claimed

the Pillars of Hercules actually was a landmark on the Greek peninsula of Peloponnesus.

More recently geologists and volcanologists have concluded, like Cousteau's team, that on Thera a once thriving Minoan city was literally blown into the stratosphere. They have proved it to have been ten times worse than the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883, the biggest in modern times. Pellegrino adds that cracks created by the shock can be detected through sonar mapping on the floor of the Mediterranean which radiate as far as 125 miles from the eruption center. The volcanic crater on Thera is 8 miles wide and it rests where once stood a mountain that soared a mile high.

Pellegrino spent his time on Thera studying the ruins, digging in the pumice, piecing together the layers of destruction. From his research, he believes the eruption of Thera took place over a two year period and that there was an attempt to reconstruct the city but that the city was eventually abandoned.

There is little doubt, Pellegrino says, that Plato was writing about Thera in his Atlantis tracts. Bull paintings, and carvings of bull ceremonies similar to the ones that were described by Plato in his Atlantis writings have been found in Minoan ruins on Crete. The Minoan civilization, or what was left of it, was absorbed by the northern Greeks after the cataclysmic eruption.

According to Pellegrino there is no way a large or even a small island could disappear, as Plato wrote, into the Atlantic in the course of one day. He claims there is no geological evidence on the ocean floor to back up such a fantastic claim.

A seminal work on Atlantis which brought together noted specialists in their fields, *Atlantis: Fact or Fiction* (edited by Edwin S. Ramage, Indiana University Press, 1978) backs up Pellegrino's assertions. A section of the book presented by Dorothy B. Vitaliano, a geologist with the US Geological Survey specializing in volcanology, states that although large masses of land have risen and sunk throughout geological history it is, "... an exceedingly slow process which has gone on constantly and is going on even now..." Vitaliano went on to assert that on the other hand "...rare cases of a collapsing volcanic island such as Krakatoa or Santorini (Thera) are seldom larger than a few dozen square miles."

How popular theory came to claim that the Atlantic Ocean is the last resting place of Atlantis grew mostly from a book that was written in 1882. The author, Ignatius Donnelly, was a former lieutenant governor of Minnesota, and a member of Congress. Donnelly was also a voracious reader who spent hours poring over books in the Library of Congress. Donnelly, in his book, made some startling claims about Atlantis. Among them were: The oldest colony of Atlantis was

# ATLANTIS:

## THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD.

*It's more than a myth Jeff!*

BY

IGNATIUS DONNELLY.

Egypt, whose civilization was a reproduction of the Atlantic island. That Atlantis led the world into the Bronze Age and were the first manufacturers of iron. That the Phoenician alphabet, the mother language of all ensuing European languages, was born in Atlantis.

The legend continued to grow into the 20th century particularly after the famous psychic Edgar Cayce spoke and wrote of Atlantis in the 1920's through the 1940's. Cayce was, and still is, the most famous clairvoyant of this century. Dubbed the "Sleeping Prophet," Cayce had made some amazing predictions that came true as well as performing miraculous cures for the sick. Cayce was a firm believer in reincarnation.

Cayce in his "life readings" claims that Atlantis reached its height about 10,000 B.C. and was destroyed by four catastrophes in 9700 B.C. Cayce claimed Atlantis was in the Atlantic and that it was the size of Europe and Russia combined, and it stretched from the Azores in the East to shores of North America. Cayce also spoke of the Atlanteans being "highly intelligent and civilized."

Perhaps his most bizarre prediction about Atlantis was that it would rise again in the year 1968 off the coast of Bimini Island in the Bahamas. Although that did not happen an interesting discovery was made in that year in the very same waters that Cayce said Atlantis would rise from.

A trio of divers discovered what they believed was evidence that Atlantis existed exactly where Plato, Donnelly, and Cayce said it was. Dr. Mason Valentine, a zoologist, Count Pino Torulla, an amateur archaeologist, and Charles Berlitz, an experienced diver, claimed their discovery was either remains of a causeway, stone buildings or a marble sculpture that were definitely of human origin and were carbon dated to the year 10,000 BC, an era when Cayce insisted Atlantis flourished.

Mel Fisher, the Key West treasure hunter seems to agree with the theory that Atlantis rests off the shores of America and that the so-called myths of Atlantis are based on fact.

Although he won't say exactly where he believes the ruins of Atlantis will be found he indicates that any discovery expedition would be huge and cost "millions of bucks." Fisher also hopes to get a group of investors together to bring the expedition to fruition.

As for Thera being Atlantis, Fisher says no way. Having visited Thera in the company of a Greek anthropologist, Fisher states Thera is "infinitely interesting." Its Minoan culture also had an influence on the ancient world but it is not old enough, or in the right place, to be Atlantis. Fisher says the search for Atlantis is too big a story and project for even him and that it belongs to the whole world because it is such a "neat thing."

Interestingly enough, Fisher does not believe that the stone causeway off of Bimini is part of Atlantis. That is about the only thing he and Charles Pellegrino would agree on. Pellegrino, along with several geologists, claim that the causeway is unquestionably a natural occurrence and there are examples of it throughout the Caribbean.

Pellegrino, however, does agree that some pieces of pillars and stone sculptures, possibly of Roman or Greek origin, have been found in the Caribbean. Some say it is more proof that Atlantis was just off the shores of America. But, according to Pellegrino, ships well into the early 20th century frequently used ancient human-hewn stone as ballast for their vessels and it would follow that some of it would turn up in the western Atlantic and in the Caribbean.

So, is Atlantis fact or fiction? And if it exists where is it? As it stands now no one can offer a definitive answer. But like a lot of mysteries on our planet it will continue to inspire and compel many to seek it out. ■



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On Bimini things are a bit more relaxed. The underwater stone causeway many believe to be the work of ancient human hands is called, none too surprisingly "Atlantis Road." In just 20 feet of gin-clear water Atlantis Road can be found just off the north end of the island. According to dive operator Bill Keefe, when you see it you will agree it is not a natural occurrence. Says Keefe, "Right angles and straight lines do not occur in nature, and it does here. The Atlantis thing aside, it will make you rethink history."

### Contact:

**The Hellenic Federation for Underwater Activities**  
(tel: 011-30-98-19961)

**Poseldon's Dive Inn at the Hotel Peninsula - Crete**  
(fax: 011-30-81-811291)

**The Diving Center Plagia**  
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**Atlantis Map and Book Title Page** from first edition *Atlantis, the Antediluvian World* by Ignatius Donnelly - Harper & Bros, 1882

**Autograph** by Mel Fisher, December 1995.

**Atlantis lyric on page 3** by **Donovan Leitch** Copyright 1968 by Donovan (Music) Limited, Administered by Peermusic Ltd. International Copyright Secured.

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# THE DEEP

## A 20th Anniversary Visit with Peter Benchley and Stan Waterman

A SUB AQUA exclusive by Jeffrey J. Silverstein

Peter Benchley's 1976 novel *The Deep* probably influenced more would-be scuba divers and treasure hunters than any other work of fiction in history. That year award-winning underwater cinematographer Stan Waterman joined a team of top Hollywood film makers and stars to make the definitive treasure diving movie. Listen in as these two old friends reminisce about some of their favorite memories.

**We watched a print of *The Deep* last night. Twenty years later it's still visually terrific.**

**Peter:** Unfortunately, when it was released as a movie it did not get the attention that it should have for the technology in it. It was not only the state of the art, it was vanguard photography at the time. People regard it as another treasure movie, which I don't think it was. Technically, it was brilliant. What Stan and Al Giddings managed to do had never done before.

**Stan:** A few reviewers noticed that, I remember. And that was very gratifying - we did bust our butts to do it.

**Peter:** It's never been done since. It really stands - twenty years later - as the best ever done for the technical stuff.

**Stan:** ...we had expert help from the British director of photography, Chris Challis. Neither Al nor I had done any kind of staged shooting like that with lighted sets.

Chris Challis, with great tact, watched us for a while and then made general sug-



Stan Waterman

Peter Benchley

gestions. ...we had a lot to learn. We took his advice and his direction in lighting those sets. For every minute that we shot those underwater set scenes, there must have been a half hour spent working with those lights, setting them so that the shadows were just right and so they looked real... They were very carefully done.

**What triggered your interest in the story?**

**Peter:** The original idea came in the early '70s. The *Geographic* had put me together with Teddy Tucker to do a story about the history of Bermuda as told by the wrecks around it. I knew nothing about shipwreck diving at the time. I'd been diving already for fifteen or twenty years, and still I'd never dived on a shipwreck in my life. One of the ships that Teddy Tucker took me to in 1971 or '72 was the *CONSTELLATION* in Bermuda, which sank in 1943 full of 400,000 ampules of medicinal drugs being sent from Virginia to Honduras. Among those ampules were everything from penicillin to opium and alcohol, morphine, the whole range of medicinal drugs.

The ampules are today, as they were then, available to divers to find. I found a bunch of them, my children found a bunch of them. Teddy said one of the interesting things about this ship is that it sank in a particular area on top of not one but *two* other ships a hundred years apart.

...before 1784 there was no longitudinal navigation and people who wanted to know where they were, could tell by latitude, but had no idea from longitude where they were. So they used Bermuda as a landmark. Going home from the New World loaded with treasure or not, they saw Bermuda and then knew the time had come to turn eastward again. Oftentimes because the reefs extend twelve miles or more in certain parts of Bermuda, by the time you *saw* Bermuda you were *on* Bermuda. There were and are hundreds of ships on Bermuda. This tiny little 20 square mile volcanic peak in the middle of the Atlantic has got at least 400 shipwrecks on it.

**And that was the germ of *The Deep*.**

**Peter:** I got intrigued with the idea that

there could be a ship on top of a ship on top of a ship. What happens if you found the drugs, let's say, and somebody wanted to make something out of the drugs and lo and behold in the process you discovered there was another ship underneath it? ... you're digging through the sand in one area, you suddenly find an artifact that is a complete anachronism and it's out of its time by a hundred years...

Researching, I got to looking at what would be an interesting time to have one of those ships come from and came across Philip V. He's very good for treasure hunting because he reigned for a specific period of time and his coins were very specific.

Mendel Peterson had written a book called *Funnel of Gold* about the discovery of the New World and all of the treasures that were lost and found and unfound. That was a very helpful book, as well as a whole bunch of other things that Teddy had pointed me to, John Potter's *Treasure Divers Guide* and all sorts of other books.

So then I began to think, I'll take a position that a ship is coming from the continental United States heading for Europe and got caught in a storm and ended up banging up on Bermuda. Suppose, as would be logical, it came in the same way that a lot of other ships had over time... and sank on top of a ship that had sunk in 1715. That was the "what if?" Most of my stories are "what if?" stories.

#### ***The Deep* came right after *Jaws*...**

**Peter:** Two years. *Jaws* was the biggest grossing movie ever until *Star Wars*. I certainly knew I wasn't going to try to tell *Jaws* again. There was no point. I couldn't possibly hope to top myself, and I had no interest in telling a monster story at the time.

#### **The real terrors in *The Deep* are from human beings - the drug dealers.**

**Peter:** Right, but if you're going to tell an underwater story you'd be foolish not to include some animals. There are animals down there and people run into them, they use them as weapons, use them as parts of a story. There's a moray eel, and there's a shark...

#### **Was there a "sea life wrangler" just out of frame, letting fish swim into the shot?**

**Stan:** No, we took it as it came, and watched for it happening. There was a marine naturalist assigned to the set to introduce fish to the set and while they didn't prosper entirely we nonetheless had those animals around us there. When we shot on the RHONE, we were in the open...

There was an experience with Jackie Bisset and a barracuda, which shows the speed at which they can move. When we were shooting on the RHONE... a scene of Jackie Bisset feeding small fish and Nick





Nolte taking pictures of her with a Nikonos. A barracuda that lived under a plate of the wreck was watching this whole thing. ...it had to have been 20 or more yards away. As we were shooting, suddenly, a little coney that had responded to Jacqueline's offered bait disappeared in a "puff of scales." Nobody saw what had happened, except Nolte. Two days later when the 35mm dailies came back from New York, the blur was just on three frames - three twenty fourths of a second! Bisset had a look at the barracuda on the dailies and grew faint.

**Besides the RHONE there was a set...**

**Stan:** The set was built in the dockyard in a two million gallon tank that was excavated. It was very complex. It had many different sections to it, compartments and so on...

All exteriors were the RHONE, and some of the interiors in the early part of the film were also on the RHONE. Very complex shooting because of the depth of that main body of the wreck. So we had the RHONE itself, which was seen at the start when Bisset's double was beautifully brutalized by the eel dragging her in. It was really the divemaster from Tortola pulling her foot.

Then we took the whole second unit to Australia and out in the Coral Sea, just to be

sure we could get the shark action we wanted of Grey Reef Sharks.

**How did you keep image continuity?**

**Stan:** ...we had a continuity person, none other than *Skin Diver* magazine's Geri Murphy; it was her first diving job. We were very careful with costumes, everything that was worn, etc.

**The lighting was consistent from one section of the wreck to the other - a completely different set.**

**Stan:** We tried to keep the mood and I can only guess that in the post-production they balanced the color carefully, because there's no way we could have duplicated the lighting exactly. But some scenes like where Robert Shaw is being dragged through the set in Bermuda through the RHONE and back to the Coral Sea in Australia, grappling with the Grey Reef sharks - was a difficult one to manage.

**We loved the scene where the sharks got entangled in the air hoses.**

**Stan:** That was a very nice set piece done by hooking a bait fish on the air line. It was a dead end airline so there's air pressure in it, and as soon as the shark hit that fish and started tearing at it, the bubbles came

streaming out. We set that up right next to a coral wall, in which we set up our camera. It was very nicely improvised. It works.

**Everyone remembers the moray eel. Was that an animated model?**

**Stan:** An animated model exactly. In fact Peter still has it.

**Peter:** There were several models, as there were with the shark in *Jaws*. There was one that was on a sled and came and opened its mouth and bit a death mask of Lou Gossett.

**Stan:** We controlled it with a little joy stick with the mouth going up and down, but we couldn't use that model for the whole shot of the eel actually moving within that chamber. So they created a miniature set just for that chamber and let an eel get quite hungry. We crowded into it with a camera and shut the door and out he came charging around. I must say both Al and I had prickles on the back of our necks.

**Romer Treece is based on Teddy Tucker?**

**Peter:** Absolutely. ...he's just such a strong individual and such a remarkable character. He's an encyclopedia and therefore becomes the Greek Chorus in any story you do because he tells you everything you need to know... Teddy was on the set every





day. He ran all the boats, he ran everything. He was the only person who knew Bermuda well enough to know where you could shoot today, cause the wind goes around, the island is tiny and so every morning, you have to consult him...

**The late Robert Shaw, who played Treece, was fabulous, and notorious...**

**Stan:** Certainly the best actor in the whole thing, alongside Lou Gossett.

**Peter:** He was a difficult man... as famously difficult as Mr. Shaw was... he was worth it. There was a point when Shaw decided he was going to destroy Jackie... for reasons that I don't pretend to know. ...It was a passing fancy, she had a monologue to deliver in a complicated scene... a lot of lines to do without a cutaway. And Shaw sat and looked at her and with his eyes managed to terrify her and she broke apart. And they had to shoot it in sections.

One of Shaw's most irresponsible things ever, he was being interviewed during *The Deep*. He wore double tanks for something during the shoot, and some reporter asked him, "Why are you wearing the double tanks?" This guy knew nothing about diving. Shaw said, "Oh, it's critical. I keep one full of vodka and one full of air."

**Tell us more about the divers on the shoot.**

**Stan:** ...perhaps most notable in that entire underwater operation was the fact that there were no accidents. It was carried out so carefully by Denny Breeze who oversaw the safety of diving. We made as many as six dives a day on the *Rhone*, with sometimes as much as an hour and a half decompression at the end of the day.

That was almost entirely for crew and camera people who were down the longest. The cast itself, especially the principals, Jackie Bisset and Nolte and Shaw were very carefully watched.

**Peter:** They all dived, to their credit. Nolte dove all the time. Shaw when he had to, and Jackie when she had to, and I think they did a terrific job.

**Stan:** And Jackie, even more than when she had to, she began to get into it and really wanted to do her thing. She started out somewhat fearful and shy but then found that nothing was going to bite her, nothing any worse than the crew.

**She hadn't yet seen the barracuda frames.**

**Stan:** The water was clear and she'd had no experience like it, and she enjoyed it. Nolte of course was young, gung ho... athletic, and Lou Gossett had diving experience. When we were doing the underwater parts in Bermuda and the topside crew had time on their hands, Gossett went diving almost every day for recreation. He began to bring back whole bags full of these ampules.

**So Gossett was "getting into" the character of Cloche. He "wanted" those ampules.**

**Stan:** He was really into it.

**Peter:** We were all arrested at various times for that stuff, because the FDA and the Customs people were in a squabble as to whether that stuff could be still be live after 40 years.

**So, who broke one open and tested it?**

**Peter:** Well on one of the times... it must have been Customs.... They nabbed me for those damn ampules. They asked me if I had any. I said, yes, and I pulled out a band aid box full.... And the agent sort of shook his head, and said, "Oh hell, all right, let's go." so we went into the back room. I said, "Look, I don't mind that we're doing this, but I understand from the FDA that you're saying these things are not live any more and now Customs are saying they are live, so, if we could get a determination then we would be able to understand what to do."

He said, "Let's test it," so he took one, and at the time they had a test whereby you dump your drug into a clear solution, and if it's got a minor amount of narcotic in it it goes to yellow, and a little more and it goes to amber and a little more it goes to an iodine color and... he busted one open and put it in - and the solution went to black!

And he said the stuff was very good. I never brought any more out. But the whole crew, as I remember, on their way to Australia, was strip searched. They stopped the plane and they searched for ampules.

**Stan:** That same day that you were pulled out, we were going through on different lines... And I just stuck it all in my camera case.

**Peter:** In a cigar box, I hasten to tell you. Here I'm getting arrested... and Stan's saying, from the other customs line "Oh ho, old fellow, they got you again, I see." I at least had the sense *not* to say, "Arrest that man, because he's got \$750,000 worth in his bag!"

**Stan:** Well, it came to a bad end because I brought it all back, and I can't remember how many of these ampules I had. They looked wonderful, and we had them on display. My children were fascinated, you know, the "stuff." They began to hear something about street values and so on. Well, my wife Susie became very fearful that one night there was going to be a knock on the door, or maybe the door would just bust in, and a big dude would take over. While I was away, she smashed them all, completely.

**That memorable image of the ampules dancing - was it special effects?**

**Stan:** It happened. It was one of those fortunate happenings, and it was Al Giddings who noticed it. He went over and fanned over the top, and saw them bobbing... and so we fanned them and started shooting.

**Peter:** There were also Hollywood prop ampules, they made them all an identical color, so you wouldn't confuse an audience.

**Could you discuss planning the underwater scenes?**

**Stan:** They were planned every day in a briefing session. We planned what we were going to shoot, outlined it on a blackboard, with all the principals, their movements, set up the lights, and then went through rehearsals. Eventually we had underwater communication, and director Peter Yates, who wanted to direct from underwater, found that indeed he could use a hard wired full face mask and communicate his orders to shoot, take again, etc.

**I have to ask the obligatory question about the wet T-shirt. Was it written that way?**

**Peter:** It certainly wasn't written that way. I assume that producer Peter Guber, who was a smart marketer, said, *there's a really good way to market this movie*. I understand that Jackie was quite upset originally when this was being done.

**Stan:** Some of the publicity later made her very upset, which heightened the whole public awareness of it.

**Peter:** So, it was a good news, bad news thing. She was justifiably upset, feeling she



was being exploited. On the other hand, the fact that she was being exploited, and it got a lot of publicity, gave the picture an enormous boost, so I can take no credit or blame for it.

**Stan:** She had a great sense of quality. She had a lady like demeanor or maybe it was that she was fun to work with. She did have a good sense of humor and I got to know her quite well.

She had a boyfriend who came every weekend to stay with her and he paid me a real backhanded compliment. I was the only one the boyfriend trusted. I was probably also the oldest guy on the set except maybe for that wonderful character actor Eli Wallach.

**All that diving must have been very hard work for the actors.**

**Stan:** It was. Especially for the ones to whom diving was not natural — they did a remarkable job. ...The underwater stuff in Bermuda took a little over three months of shooting and I think we were on the road a whole month.

**What did *The Deep* cost to make?**

**Peter:** They brought that movie in for 11 million dollars which of course today it would be 50 million, if not more.

**Before Spielberg took on *Jaws* he'd been warned to stay away from the water.**

**Peter:** Well, that's why *The Deep* did not sell [to Hollywood] right away, it was a long time before anybody wanted to do it because they were scared to death of the difficulties of filming on water. ...After *Jaws* everybody thought, gee, maybe it can be done. ... It goes in cycles and then suddenly they weren't scared until two years ago, so they decided to make two movies, *Waterworld* and *Cut Throat Island*.

**Stan:** Peter, I think that it's fun for you to tell them about when they first approached you in New York about *Jaws*. Their approach to the shark, to the great white shark?

**Peter:** They were interviewing directors for *Jaws* and I sat down with one director in New York and with the two producers Zanuck and Brown. This potential director kept saying, "I've always wanted to make a movie about a *whale*. I've just wanted to make this *whale* movie ever since... I can't wait to make this movie." At the end of it, Dick Zanuck said, well, that's *that* guy.

**Are you working on anything now that you can talk about?**

**Peter:** Well, *Beast* is coming out as a TV mini series in May. I'm doing a couple of other things for NBC that may or may not ever happen. People keep talking about making *The Girl of the Sea of Cortez*. Whether they will or will not, I have no idea. It would make a wonderful animated movie. It would also make a wonderful live action movie but

they're scared again. Logically enough - you're dealing with live manta rays.

**Did you two meet on the film or were you friends before the picture?**

**Stan:** First I ever heard of Peter he was on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine* section in an article called *The Making of a Best Seller*. And there was the great white shark jaw showing Peter in it and I thought, who is this man? Who was this man who was getting all this PR about sharks and I'm supposed to know all about them and nobody rings my bell? I wrote a little letter to Peter saying why don't we get together and talk sharks and that was the beginning of a long friendship.

**Peter:** Stan was a god to me of course, because anybody who knows sharks thought *Blue Water, White Death* was the greatest film ever made and still is the best documentary ever done on sharks. So, the gods that I had while doing *Jaws* were Stan and Gimbel and the Taylors. I thought, my Lord, I had no idea he lived in Princeton at the time. And so it was a great fortuitous thing for me.

**Did any books influence you towards this particular direction in writing?**

**Peter:** It wasn't so much reading - I grew up in the summers on Nantucket and we used to spend a lot of time in the water, so there were sharks all over the place in those days. So it was more experience than reading. Unlike Stan, I didn't have that active reading childhood. Then I was a journalist for 11 years. I would constantly be allowed to go do diving stories or shark stories, or that kind of stuff, so it was a good way to learn.

**If someone wanted to make an underwater movie today, what you do think hasn't been done?**

**Peter:** I don't know. The more adventuresome or ambitious ones are the easiest to do, because they're all high tech, they've become like outer space things. *Abyss* being a great example.... they made the mistake of turning it into a sci-fi movie.

I think, curiously enough, even 20 years later, the best underwater movie you could make would be the most realistic, which would be diving, just pure diving. ■

#### **Filming The Deep**

All the photographs were shot underwater on location by **David Doubilet** in 1976.

- 1- Jacqueline Bisset being filmed on the wreck of the RHONE.
- 2- Jacqueline Bisset swimming over the main section of the RHONE.
- 3- Nick Nolte, Jacqueline Bisset and Robert Shaw as they prepare to ascend through the sharks.

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# Mel Fisher: Dreams of the King

An exclusive interview by Jeffrey J. Silverstein

If the United States has an “end of the road” it’s Key West. At the very end of the end, presides self-proclaimed King of the Conch Republic, treasure hunter Mel Fisher.

In 1993 SUB AQUA was the first to break the controversial story of Mel’s quest for Atlantis. Mel invited us back to spend an afternoon learning more of his treasure techniques, and hearing of his latest find - a tantalizing clue to locating the lost stern of the ATOCHA.

When you enter Mel’s inner sanctum, he asks you to “hold out your hand.” He ambles over to his massive safe and produces what seems to be a river of sunlight. He holds his glittering auric chain high over your palm and lowers it, link by link. “Here it is... See how it shines... Do you feel its weight? Men have died for it... Nations have been lost for it... Alchemists have gone to their graves trying to create it... It won’t rust and it won’t turn green. It just keeps shining forever. Goes hand to hand through the centuries... When this chain gets to the bottom... you’ll have it too. Gold fever.”



J. Silverstein

**It’s the 2nd of December 1995 and literally days ago, you had a new find.** That’s correct, yeah. It began building up four, five days ago. We found a beautiful gold chain, in an area where I saw some eyeballs.

**Eyeballs?** From way up high. 8,000 feet up in an airplane. After I had a dream. The next morning I chartered a plane and went out there and started looking for it. It was far away from where we’d been working, and I couldn’t see anything because I was so high up, but I had all the boats go out there too. I had them throw some great big fluorescent orange and yellow balls out so I could get

them in the photographs. I can spot anomalies from an airplane with my eyes because there’s a halo. I was spotting halos, and I couldn’t see those big fluorescent buoys, because we were up too high, but I did see these two eyeballs, and they practically had halos around them, and it was really weird...

Your eyes are pretty hard to beat. Pretty good computers. Instead of just having the film developed we sent it to Miami and had it digitized. We put it in our computer enhancement program where we can make it several times bigger, and with 256 million colors in there we can do all kinds of things with it. You can take out the murky water.

You can remove the mud and you can see right through the mud and do all kinds of neat things. One thing we did do is we got a signature on a cannon. So now the computer is educated and knows what a cannon looks like, and hopefully, in the future, we'll be able to ask the computer where the rest of the bronze cannons are.

**Tell us about your dream.** I think... it was in Havana, and I dreamed that I was there when they were loading the ships and that the Bishop of Peru was sprinkling holy water on the ships. He blessed the ships, so they would have a safe voyage. The *ATOCHA* seemed like it was a person rather than a ship, and it really took this seriously and had the responsibility of making safe voyage for the church's treasure and the Pope's treasure.

The Bishop blessed all 28 wealthy passengers and the admiral, but no one else, not the crew or the slaves. They set sail and got in a hurricane and sank.

**How many days had the *ATOCHA* been sailing before the hurricane hit?** Not even one. They had been waiting in port for two weeks to avoid a hurricane. They felt one was imminent. It was just so quiet and so calm, that they kept expecting it to hit every day and it never hit. Finally the food started to spoil and everybody was running out of patience and then at last they took off. And about an hour after they got out of the harbor, the wind started to pick up. And after two hours, it was ten knots. At three hours, it was fifteen, and then twenty and forty and before they knew it, they were in a category five hurricane. The twenty-eight ships got scattered all over the place.

The *ATOCHA* and the *MARGARITA* were within sight of each other and the people on the *MARGARITA* saw the *ATOCHA* go down before their very eyes. All that remained out of the water was the tip of the broken mizzen mast. The *MARGARITA* went on and when it hit the quicksands area it broke up and tumbled and rolled.

**Was there more in the dream?** The *ATOCHA* sank in about 50 feet of water, and as if it were a person it sat upright, and it "understood" that it was in purgatory. It was worried because it wasn't going to get the treasure to the Pope, and so it didn't know whether it was going to Heaven or Hell.

The *ATOCHA* was carrying silver bars in its hold for ballast. The ship was a little over 100 feet long with the bars set in two piles. Above deck were the forecastle and the sterncastle five stories high.

Salvage ships were sent from Havana three days after the hurricane. They tried to send divers down, but there were just slaves - one of them got a broken eardrum, and the other one got a nosebleed. They gave up.

They weren't even divers. They just



Pat Coyne

#### **Treasures from the *ATOCHA* and *MARGARITA***

forced them to go down and tried to find some treasure. But they couldn't do anything. It was in deep water. So they went back to Havana and they sent out another salvage ship, where they had professional divers, a diving bell and a lot of equipment.

**What year was this?** 1622. The hurricane created 15 or 20 foot troughs between each wave, so the ship would stick out of the water for a few moments, and then the next wave would come and hit it. Every time a wave hit, the ship would rock back and forth on its keel but the silver bars just layed there like rocks. They just sat there 'cause each pile weighed 40 tons. After several hundred waves hit, the ribs cracked off. *This* is what I dreamt about - that the ribs cracked off from where they splice into the keel from this racking. Eventually the keel with the silver piles broke loose and the ship, mostly still intact, started to drift, spilling its contents a little at a time. I had never been able to, before the dream, figure out how it broke up and what happened to it.

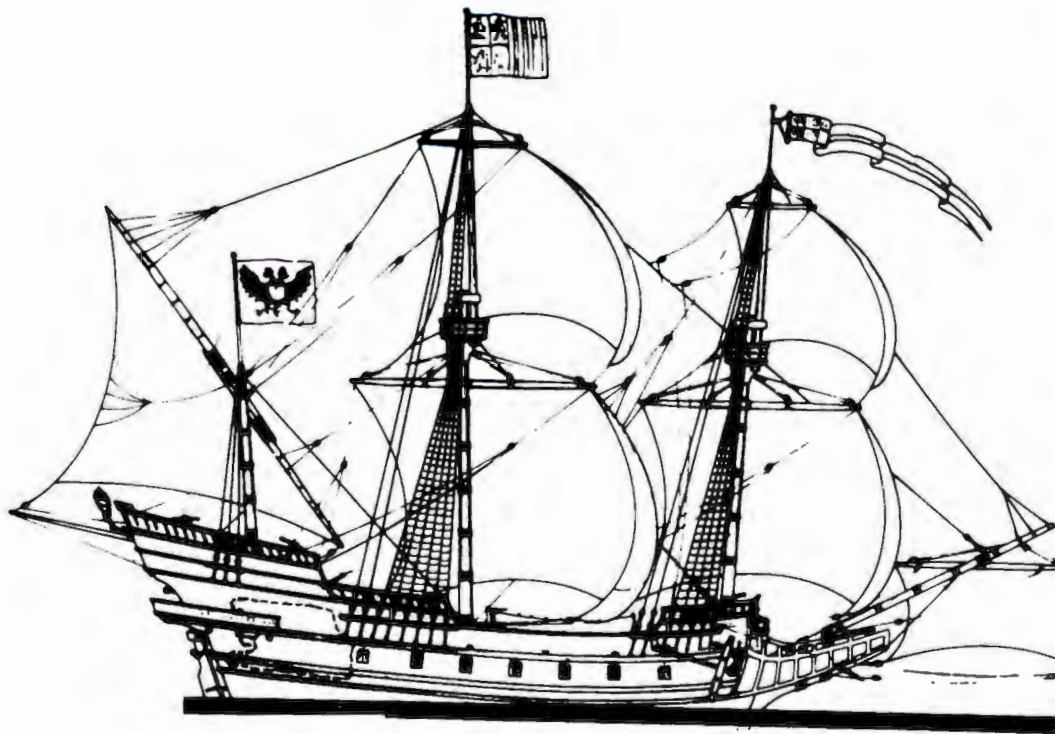
**How do we know about these positions when it sank?** It was seen three days after it sank. It was found by a small boat that was looking for survivors. They found five survivors in the *ATOCHA* that had hung on to the

spar. They would have drowned or died from lack of water and food, but there was a 12 year old cabin boy with them, hanging on. He was very fast and agile, and he caught sea gulls as they landed on people's heads and they'd eat the feathers and feet and everything for nutrition. Then they found the ship so they knew approximately where it was. They actually even put a small buoy on it made out of a spar. When they went back to get her, she had completely disappeared. They looked for it for six years, but never did find it.

I found two piles ten years ago. But in the dream the "ship made up its mind" it was going to go deliver the treasure to the Pope by itself without any people and get out of the Purgatory and go to Heaven.

It had 180 bales of tobacco loaded on top of the treasure, and the tobacco was all wrapped tightly in animal skins and dipped in tallow so it wouldn't get wet on the voyage across the ocean. Tobacco was not grown in Europe - they floated away I'm sure.

**I wonder what a 375 - year - old Havana cigar would be like...** We have found some tobacco. It was Cuban and from other places from this hemisphere. They were all floating up underneath the deck like on the ceiling. So, when it broke loose, the whole thing



was really the technology. It was working seven days a week — hard.

**So this find points towards the rest of what was on the Atocha? Hopefully, yeah.** There might be a big pile out in the middle and we will use the mailbox to open it up. It's a fairly simple device we put on a boat that fits over the propellers. Kinda like a big right angle pipe. We mount them on the stern of the vessel and make them so they can swing up into the air above the stern, so they can swing down and move around a little. The prop wash sends a big blast of water straight down and blows the sand away.

**The mailbox has been criticized by people who claim it damages the environment. I firmly believe that the environment had nothing to do with it.** I've been dealing with the Federal Government for a long time now, and they just want to trail you, it's that simple. The last time I had to go to the Supreme Court, they used archaeology as an excuse for why they should own the treasure. That's just ridiculous.

just floated up. And the whole ship - the sides and the two decks, the gun decks and the whole thing just floated away in the Hawks Channel. All the high value stuff was in the fore and stern castle, and that's where all the church treasure was, all the king's taxes... Five years supply of the king's 20 percent tax and the belongings of the 28 wealthy passengers. Plus there were 300 silver bars loaded in the bottom of the stern for some reason. Just a day before they took off, they moved them to the ATOCHA from another ship. We have a list of the weights of those bars and the serial numbers on them.

There's got to be 297 more of them there, 'cause I got the numbers on them and I found three of them. The numbers match and they were found very close to where we're working now. We also found a silver chess piece about four, five days ago. A pointed Bishop made of silver. They found several coins and some huge ballast stones. They're bigger than any we've ever seen. They're so heavy and big that they can't even budg them. I feel that what we have just found has got to be from the stern.

**Is this the first major new area that you found?** Yeah, I'd say so. We keep finding things from time to time. There's another major area I want to check out, but I just haven't had time to do it yet.

**You call this the Emerald City project.** Emerald City is where these two piles were. We removed these two piles of silver and some gold, but the emeralds are still there because we didn't know they were there at

the time we first got there. It was all covered with sand and sea shells and mud. We dusted it off with our mailboxes so we could see it all and make video and still photographs and do the archaeology work and bring everything up. When we had dusted it off, all the emeralds blew away in all directions - two billion dollars worth of them. Now we're vacuuming up all of that, and bringing those emeralds up on board and running them over screens and picking them out with our eyes.

**A couple of years ago you told us that it was tough to develop an "emerald detector"...** Yeah, we've tried a lot of things. We're trying different types of lights. Emeralds do have certain frequencies of light refraction and density, but it's very difficult and we've not succeeded very much, although we find with ultraviolet lamps at night on the boats in the dark, we can see the emeralds with our eyeballs easier than we do in the day.

Many times we look for the emeralds in the daytime, stack them in a pile and then go through it all again working till midnight every night. ...anytime any guy on the boat finds an emerald, everyone on the boat gets a bonus. So, that's an incentive. So, they keep on working and finding more emeralds.

**How far away is this new find from the original silver?** It's about 15 miles.

**Why did it take so long to find?** I think it was just the accumulation of data over 26 years and the things on these charts and everything that I keep in my head. And a lot of hard work and perseverance. I don't think it

erud Government for a long time now, and they just want to trail you, it's that simple. The last time I had to go to the Supreme Court, they used archaeology as an excuse for why they should own the treasure. That's just ridiculous.

This time, they're using the environment and ecology as an excuse for why they should own the treasure, and this is horrible. I think we have a wonderful government and a good judicial system because, after all, a little guy like me could beat the big Federal Government and the Supreme Court. But I can't believe now they're doing it again. As soon as a newspaper story came out... saying that we made a big find, about a week later the Federal Government sued me again, and they said that it's their treasure.

At this very moment, they still claim that they have jurisdiction over all the treasures beyond the three mile limit, and they don't just go out five miles or twelve miles. They drew a line way out in the Gulf Stream, a meandering line. They started a sanctuary.

I thought a sanctuary is supposed to be a small, religious place that's peaceful, but they're claiming a sanctuary that's five times as big as our entire county and that encompasses the entire Florida Keys. They want the area so they can own the shipwrecks and treasures.

The way I look at it, they're foreign shipwrecks. They were not *going* to the United States, they went down *before* we even had a United States, and they went down *outside* the United States. So I can't see any reason why they should own or have jurisdiction over this stuff.

**When you get a find like the one that just came in how do you feel?** Well, it's always a big high. It's very exciting. Every time we find something, it fascinates me and makes the adrenaline run. It's a never-ending source of fun and enjoyment in life, and makes everything operate easier, makes more people want to buy treasure and makes more people want to invest in treasure hunts. It makes a lot of kids interested in history and ancient cultures, and educational aspects. It's very rewarding to learn about even the more ancient of history, like Atlantean stuff, and I think some of the things we found on the ATOCHA are from Atlantis.

**Ah, Atlantis...** I think a lot of people are beginning to realize that most of the mythology is based on real happenings and real times in history and real cities and real people and it's just information that's passed down through the centuries. Sometimes, as some things do, it gets embellished or magnified a little, but some of it becomes more mystical like religion, rather than fact, and they mix it with gods. But I think most of mythology is based upon fact.

**Can you say anything about where your search has taken you?** I've been looking for that for many, many years. I still haven't got the wherewithal to get it done but I'm working on it now. I can see that it might work Atlantis is such a huge undertaking and it costs so many millions of bucks, but it's well worth it. I think I'm getting a group of large companies to come in and work with me on it. I think it *is* where it was said to be.

**Many say definitively that Atlantis is in the Mediterranean - the Island of Thera.** No, it's not. I considered that very seriously. I went to Greece and talked extensively to Dr. Marinatos who was head of Archaeology there, a highly respected man. He invited my wife Deo and I out for a few weeks and we went through everything. We went down into his diggings. Some of them were down deep, down, like in elevator shafts, and about everything there is Minoan.

Now, there may be some imagined stuff beneath that Minoan layer. They haven't gotten down that deep yet. But there's been several civilizations wiped out there. I think it's eleven of them that they've verified so far, and there are some clues that Atlanteans were there. That's not Atlantis though. Atlantis covered about two thirds of the world.

Signs have been found in many places and I've gone around checking the signs, and sure enough they were there. But, it's not *the* Atlantis, you know. Their religion and their culture had spread all over the world.

**People have found what looked like Greek columns in the Bimini area.** Yeah, I checked that out too. They're there. But they're not

**Mel inspects 24 feet of solid gold wedding chain recovered from the ATOCHA.**



Pat Clyne

Atlantis. And there's also the things that appear to be like big docks or highways and they're indigenous. They're not man-made. The stuff that's man-made is more modern, like columns from ship wrecks.

**Can you tell us exactly where you believe Atlantis to be?** Maybe in a year I can.

**Can you say which hemisphere?** I'd say it's in this hemisphere.

**Closer to us than further away?** I don't want to pinpoint anything further. Maybe a year from now you can come back, we can have you sign some non-disclosure papers... But then you can't publish it, you know, (laughs)... until I approve it.

I don't feel like I own Atlantis because it belongs to the whole world, and it's super ancient history. I think that a lot of people like me will look for it without getting rewarded personally, because it's a neat thing.

**So, what's next for this new find?** I guess, we'll just go ahead and bring in another four or five billion dollars worth of stuff.

**Why then do you need people to invest in this?** It seems like the more money I get, the more I spend (laughs). Right now I'd like to get some more of the newest, latest equip-

ment. They got a new kind of side scan sonar, half million, I need to have one. They got all kinds of neat things. They got robots to throw in the water, and it makes a search pattern out in the ocean... it goes for miles and miles and it saves all the remote sensing data, and comes back and brings it in.

**Is there anybody in the world who is looking for treasure on the scale that you are?** I think there are others, but I don't think any of them are doing it in an all-out manner like I am, with so many boats and so many people and so much research and so many different types of search equipment.

I was just thinking this morning on the way to work, I just got a new type of magnetometer, and it's more powerful and it has more adjustments, and I was thinking that I ought to get two or three more of them, I guess I'll let some more investors in today. So, just before you came in, I let a few more in, so now I can get another magnetometer.

**Do they get a little plaque that has their name on the magnetometer?** No, they'll be happy to take gold and emeralds.

**Well, that's not too bad.** Yeah!

**Are you still having a good time?** Yeah! Makes it fun. ■

# Pat Clyne's Treasure Methods of the King

Exclusive to SUB AQUA

Pat Clyne calls himself Mel Fisher's Media Consultant, but a look at his 25 year history with Fisher includes diving, artifact photography, piloting survey planes, and electronic imaging. We caught up with the multi-faceted Clyne to get the real work on just how the King of Treasure does it.

**How did you start in treasure?** I had been trained as a hardhat diver, and while continuing my studies I ended up on a shark hunting boat. Then I ran into Mel Fisher. He suggested that treasure hunting was safer and possibly more lucrative. As they say down here, I got "sand in my shoes" and treasure hunting life became a part of me and that was in 1972.

**The treasure Mel looks for isn't what most divers would consider very deep.** No, not deep at all. Down here in the Keys I would say that the deepest part of the АТОЧА, where we found the Mother Lode, was in 57 feet of water. But on the trail, through the expedition, we've been in water as deep as 60 feet and then in some cases we would be digging holes in the mud another 10 - 12 feet deep.

**What does a diver do when they sign on to one of Mel's boats?** Well the first thing a new diver would do is stay close to an older diver. One of the methods that Mel uses in locating treasure involves mailboxes. If you've never had any experience diving underneath the blowers, it's quite a unique experience the first time. It could be very scary.

**Describe the mailbox.** The mailboxes are deflectors that are lowered over the propellers on a 90 degree angle. The prop wash is turned on, forcing the water to the bottom which dusts away the sand and uncovers whatever might be lying below.



**Mel Fisher and Pat Clyne with gold from the АТОЧА.**

We use that technique when we have magnetometer hits. The divers check the hits and if there's nothing on the surface then it would have to be something that's buried under the sand. We lower the mailboxes and dust away the sand until we come to the object that gave us the reading.

**You tow a "fish" behind you?** Exactly. This is a technique that we use to locate a ballpark of where a wreck might be. When Mel first started in 1968, they towed a proton magnetometer for over 125,000 square miles before they actually found the first clue from the АТОЧА, which was the anchor and that was in 1971. That's a lot of diesel fuel.

**Sounds just like panning for gold.** Yeah, well, Mel started his search down in the

Matacumbes with everybody else because that's what the records indicated. *Potter's Guide to Treasure Hunting* indicated that based on the Spanish salvors' account, the fleet had sunk off the lower Matacumbes so everybody and their brother for years and years and years had been searching the lower Matacumbe Keys for the АТОЧА and her sister ship, the MARGARITA.

It took Dr. Eugene Lyon's research in Seville to realize that the Spaniards considered *all* of the Florida Keys as Matacumbe, so the interpretation of lower Matacumbe would be the very end of the Keys or Key West or the Marquesas. So when that interpretation was made and finally given to Mel, he moved all his boats down to Key West and actually began the search there and then further out to the Marquesas.



**Today most treasure hunters use satellite positioning.** All of our boats are equipped with the differential GPS but even when we have this equipment out here, we find that sometimes our own type of frequency navigation unit will pinpoint it even better. For instance, a Del Norte system is one that we used back in the '80s which was fairly effective. We had set up three towers with a transmitter on each one, transmitting the frequency that only our boats could receive and this would of course triangulate our position within that grid. We've developed a computer program that enables us to convert all of our old Del Norte readings into latitude and longitude so now we can go back out to those spots and areas where we had the old hits.

**Aerial photography helps you find and pinpoint a wreck's location.** This helps us in a large area. We have navigation charts that show us water depth and show us that there are rocky areas and coral areas, but you don't really have a true picture of what the bottom looks like until you get a physical photograph of it.

We take the photographic images, and we digitize them and then run them through a high-end software program that allows us to use certain filters and levels and curves... By using the filtration that's built into the system we can digitally remove the water, we can then adjust contrast and brightness... it is absolutely amazing. It will filter out things on the bottom after you've removed the water and then blow them up and produce a mask where we can sharpen the individual objects.

**And what kind of cameras are you using?** We're using Nikon cameras and Kodak Royal Gold 100 ASA film. Right next to the still camera, I built a bracket for the Sony video camera, with a monitor in the plane. What I do is, I fly the plane by the monitor and I see the tract. I get on the tract that I want, and then look at the monitor, and an assistant next to me is snapping the pictures every five seconds. This gives me an overlap of anywhere from 30 to 50 percent, and then I have a photographic documentation on film and video of the same tract. I can digitize from video as well. We're covered. If I miss something on the stills, then I could always look at the video and capture a frame and digitize that too. Everything then gets dumped into two Apple Power Macs. For the digitization of the video, we're using Videovision, which works really well. For the film, we scan those on a flatbed and digitize them that way.

**Has this technology allowed you to find things you could never find otherwise?**

Well, we're hoping it will. We've just started about a year ago with the digitization of this material. I had taken a photograph of the

MARGARITA tract and by removing the water and honing down into it, I found two objects right next to each other. Their measurements came out to be somewhere around eight to 10 feet. Mel was convinced they were cannons and they did look like cannons laying next to each other. So we did some triangulation on the image and came up with the location and sent our boat out. What it turned out to be was two planks from the MARGARITA structure that were laying there. Even though they were not cannons it sure helped find the spot. You wouldn't see it by looking at the conventional photography.

**You also photograph treasure. What makes a good picture?** We use two completely different photographic techniques. One of course is archaeological photography. That probably is done as much or maybe even more because everything that's located, whether it be a spike or a barrel hoop, needs to be photographed and catalogued and indexed. That's pretty much straightforward photography with a ruler in the picture. This is used for documenting the artifact before and after cleaning. Then you get into the photography which around here we call "Rah Rah" photography - those are the ones most apt for magazines and books and brochures.

**Glamour shots with attention to sparkle and detail...** That's right and we will do that under a controlled situation when you'd have the artifacts all cleaned and set up in the studio. We also do setup shots out in the ocean as well. If they were to find something out there this afternoon, I would get a call, go out in the boat, and we would try to re-enact the find as closely as possible as it happened with the person who found it.

I've been fortunate enough sometimes to catch actual footage as it happened. Back when Don Kincaid was shooting for *National Geographic*, we had jumped off the boat at almost the same time and he went to the stern to film some of the divers. I was swimming off with my camera to take some pictures of something else and I looked down in the white sand and there was a silver bar sitting there. I went and I got Don because I knew he'd want to film it as a hand fanned the sand away. I fanned the sand away, he moved back about four or five feet and I started hand fanning the sand and as I did that, a big gold wedding chain popped out. It was the largest linked gold chain that we found on the ATOCHA.

**Any tips to pass on to an amateur to make their artifacts look great in photos?** You can't use harsh lighting because of the reflection. You'll have a lot of white spots that won't look too good. You need a tripod and slow film and I try to shoot it around F32. In many cases my lighting is extremely subtle. I might use a main light and a fill light and

possibly a back light depending on what I use for a background, but it is very subtle and filtered. I expose for anywhere between eight seconds and 20 seconds depending on what it is that I'm shooting.

What I'm shooting for is the best depth of field. Some of the objects I'm very close in on because a lot of the objects are small and need the best depth of field because I want the entire thing to be in focus.

**Do you use a reflector or diffusion materials?** Yes, I like diffused light and I bounce it also. ...I also bounce light off of different colored cards to bring out some more warmth and color. I might want to bounce the light over a surface that would be sort of a beige for gold artifacts.

**The most important trait you need for a treasure hunt is...** Patience. Absolutely. You have to have the patience and you have to have the belief in knowing that what you are doing is right. This is where Mel comes in. Not only does Mel convince you that he is absolutely positive that you are going to find it today, but he has the charismatic personality that instills in you the very feeling that he has. That's why his motto "Today's the Day" has always been so effective.

He brings people's dreams to life. He brings out the child in them. The armchair adventurer who may not have the opportunity to go out and search for treasure can do it vicariously through investment or owning some of Mel's treasures. I don't know many people who can actually charm their beliefs onto you. I think it has something to do with wanting to believe it so bad too.

**What do you think of Mel's search for Atlantis?** Knowing Mel as long as I have I can honestly believe and tell you that he is on to something. It's not only because of what Mel has told me but it's the physical proof that he has also shared. A lot of it involves getting back into high tech scientific data that has been recorded not only from satellite imagery but also accredited scientists who have been working with him on the particular phenomena that they have uncovered.

The physical proof and every indication seems to lead in the direction of the information that you can find in most of the literature on Atlantis.

This has made him extremely excited about the next big adventure in his life. He's biding his time right now. The ATOCHA has a lot more in store for him and I think financially it will help him finance the expedition on Atlantis the correct way.

Mel Fisher has learned an awful lot about recovery of major historical sites. If anybody can not only recover Atlantis but also place it firmly in our future, as the past so rightly belongs, he can certainly do it. ■

# Diving California's Lost Casino Boats

By Patrick Smith

Just beyond the long arm of the law, in southern California's coastal waters, shadowy men owned and operated dozens of gambling ships in the '20s and '30s. The men who ran them were at times as violent and deadly as any 16th or 17th century pirate.

Despite periodic murders aboard the ships, and the exposure of cheating and rigged games on some of the boats, thousands of customers still flocked to these vessels. In the course of these jaunts, these passengers, or "squirrels" as one owner referred to them, lost millions aboard these ships, and made the owners rich. Could any of this wealth await divers who visit their remains?

The first gambling ships appeared off southern California in the late 1920s. This was a time when both styles and attitudes were changing, and as always in times of change, there were people out to make the quick buck. Ed and Clarence Blazer were two such enterprising gents. Though the JOHANNA SMITH wasn't the first gambling ship, she certainly was the most luxurious to grace the coast at that time. Previous gambling ships, or *gamblers* as they were known, had been pretty crude affairs. They were usually just an old cut-down sailing ship or flat-bottomed barge that offered a few slot machines and perhaps a couple of real floating poker games in addition to fishing. But the JOHANNA SMITH — once one of the largest lumber carrying steamers on the coast — was extensively remodeled into a posh floating casino, complete with faux Egyptian decor.

Anchored off Long Beach and serviced by a fleet of swift water taxis, the Blazer brothers' floating moneymaker operated very profitably — maybe too profitably — until July 22, 1932. At about 6:30 in the evening, fire erupted both fore and aft, and quickly consumed the 257 foot long gambling ship. Terrified passengers and crew as well as both the ship's safes were removed from the vessel by Coast Guard and Navy vessels that responded to the fire. Despite burning to the waterline and capsizing, the JOHANNA SMITH refused to sink. The once posh gambling ship had been reduced to a charred, waterlogged hazard to navigation.



**Interior of the posh JOHANNA SMITH just prior to her destruction by fire. Note the faux Egyptian decor.**

Initial efforts by the Coast Guard to blow up the remains provided a small windfall for local beachcombers in the following days. The local papers reported that "thousands" of nickels were recovered from within the wreckage of the JOHANNA SMITH that had come ashore. This precipitated an intense but short-lived treasure hunt along the local beaches that left most participants with a nice tan and little else.

Nearly immediately after the loss of the JOHANNA SMITH, divers were hired to search the sunken remains of the gambler to recover coins — mostly silver dollars — from the nearly 200 slot machines that were lost in the fire. Hardhat divers (who were searched after every dive to prevent misappropriation of the finds) spent some two weeks recovering melted lumps of coins, some weighing as much as 25 or 30 pounds. Did they recover

everything? Common sense would say no, but there have never been any further coin discoveries reported. The only treasure to be recovered from the JOHANNA SMITH over the last two decades has been sundry brass artifacts, including portholes, door knobs, a very nice telegraph enunciator, and a few large lobster. I believe there are probably a few small, melted lumps of coins still on the site, but I wouldn't make book on an easy find.

The remains of the JOHANNA SMITH lie in about 80 feet of mainly murky water off Long Beach. The site consists of disarticulated planking and plumbing, several moderately large pieces of machinery, fire brick, and all manner of trash that has accumulated around the wreckage over the years. Except for the machinery which is quite prominent, most of what remains is nearly obscured by a fine, thick, easily disturbed layer of silt

which can turn the usually poor visibility to zero in a matter of seconds. Typically the best time to dive the CASINO or the SMITH is in the winter months. The offshore wind condition known as Santanas tends to move the murky inshore water off the coast, causing an upwelling of colder, clearer water and visibility up to 60 feet. Santana conditions usually also provide a bottom current which helps to clean the area of any silt that might be stirred up during the dive. However, this is the exception, not the rule.

My last dive to the SMITH found visibility of about three feet and very dark conditions. To have any success diving the SMITH, precise buoyancy control is an absolute must, and something I miscalculated on descent. Because of the limited visibility, I hit the bottom and precipitated the blackout silt storm that is so typical of the gambler sites in San Pedro Bay. Quickly adjusting buoyancy, I began finger-walking across the site. This technique consists of maintaining neutral buoyancy and "bouncing" across the bottom from one piece of debris to the next using your fingers as the main source of propulsion so as to avoid stirring up the bottom. Despite my best efforts, my task that day of measuring dimensions on some structural timbers was doomed to be carried out by Braille. It seems that the site had become a favorite hang out for sand bass. Like most fish, they prefer to inhabit bottom areas of hard structure, and a great many of them had taken up residence around the timbers. As I approached and startled the poor creatures in the limited visibility, they exploded away into the murk leaving me in puffs of zero vis, eventually shutting down the entire area. Though I did get some measurements, it was not a pleasant dive. Even with the thought of finding coins, the thought of pawing around the JOHANNA SMITH is daunting. She's a gambler not for the faint-hearted.

If you *are* interested in anteing up, be aware that the area around the JOHANNA SMITH site has been designated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a source for dredge fill material to be used in a new container wharf project in Long Beach. Inquiries about protecting the site have had no response, so it seems that what remains of the gambling ship JOHANNA SMITH and her "treasure" is not long for this world.

Several other gamblers were destroyed by fire over the years the trade flourished along the coast. These included the JOHANNA SMITH II, the MONFALCONE, and the CASINO. It seems that fire was the method of choice to eliminate unwanted competition in the gambling ship fraternity. Of these losses, the JOHANNA SMITH II was completely raised and recovered, while both MONFALCONE, and CASINO were heavily salvaged. But the possibility of treasure on these two ships would be, as they say, a longshot.

Another vessel, the TEXAS, supposedly

retired from the gambling ship rackets in 1939, and was being operated as a fishing barge under the name STAR OF SCOTLAND. However recent documents prove that she carried several slot machines when she foundered in high seas a short distance off Santa Monica early in 1942. After an aborted salvage attempt in 1944, she was left alone until the early '50s, when a local diver recovered two of the one-armed bandits; divers have been looking for additional slots - unsuccessfully - ever since.

The STAR is a fantastic spot, and has something for photographers, hunters, and wreck divers. Less than three miles from Marina del Rey, she is visited often by divers, and is one of my favorite dives. Many areas of the wreck are still quite intact even after over half a century on the bottom. In the course of the search for slot machines, divers over the years have wrested numerous artifacts from the STAR including wonderful heavy cast portholes with unique "dog bone" shaped dogs, various steam and liquid sight gauges, light fixtures, coins, bottles, and escutcheon-type lock sets. She lies in about 70 feet of water with visibility ranging from zero to 80 feet and averaging about 10 feet. Her remains rise some 18 feet off the bottom, with her invertebrate-encrusted bow being most prominent. Penetration is possible, but not recommended because of structural weakness that has become noticeable recently. Despite this, the STAR because of her easy accessibility, intactness of her structure and usually acceptable visibility is the premier gambler dive in Southern California.

Probably the best and perhaps most difficult opportunity for discovering treasure associated with the gambling ships is the result of the enthusiastic raids which were periodically carried out by various branches of local law enforcement. In the course of these raids, many of which were later judged illegal in court, it was pretty much standard protocol for the raiding officers to take every opportunity to destroy or dispose of any and all gambling equipment they could find. In several cases, the U.S. Coast Guard, who were on-scene only to observe, ordered the law enforcement teams to cease their zealous disposal of craps and roulette tables over the side, since they presented a hazard to navigation as they drifted in coastal waters.

The Coast Guard didn't have any problem with the disposal of other less buoyant gambling equipment such as the roulette wheels themselves, slot machines, dice, gaming chips, and chuck-a-luck cages. If one were able to locate the site of one of these legal dumpings, one might hit the jackpot.

At a recent auction of gambling memorabilia, dice marked with the name of a local gambling ship were bringing up to several hundred dollars a pair, and chips marked with the vessel's name were going for fifty or more dollars each. Had there been raid items



**Salvage diver Roy Basham with the starboard light from the TEXAS in 1944.**

recovered from the sea available, such as a bronze face plate (the heavy bronze plate being the only part of a sunken slot that might reasonably be expected to survive) from a Kenning's *Bronze Chief* slot machine from one of the gamblers, I suspect the sky would have been the limit.

Determining the precise locations where this equipment was dumped is neigh on to impossible. Since most of the equipment like slot machines which did have metallic parts was either nonferrous or made up of small ferrous parts which would corrode away rather quickly, the use of a magnetometer for locating these sites wouldn't seem particularly effective. The same could be said for bottom profiling equipment such as side-scan sonar. Boxes of chips and dice, even when new, would not provide much of a profile change in the bottom.

As for the larger items like slot machines, since they were tossed overboard from all around the ship they would have never created a very large structure; after 50-plus years of saline soaking, whatever remains will be very low profile and difficult to differentiate from natural rocks and reefs. Plus, there is the consideration of the depths involved three or more miles off the coast.

Perhaps the best treasure one can hope for with the gamblers, is the opportunity to visit the remains of those that were lost. To dive down and touch their encrusted, broken hulls, and think about the hope and optimism of the customers, and the greed and opportunism of the owners. ■

*Patrick Smith has been a certified diver for over 34 years and is co-author of Shipwrecks of Southern California.*

# Mundane Treasures

By Rod Farb



**Artifacts from the U.S.S. MONITOR are a different kind of treasure than those from the ATOCHA.**

The U.S.S. MONITOR is not only America's most famous shipwreck, it is also the nation's first National Marine Sanctuary. In 1990 the Farb Expedition was the first civilian dive team to explore this historic site. Through work with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), divers from the Farb team have been carefully recovering artifacts from the rapidly decaying Civil War shipwreck. These photographs are just a glimpse of what has been recovered.



**They are not  
gold, silver,  
precious gems,  
or even very old.**

And they lack the glitz and glitter of great wealth treasures because they are only mundane items of daily sustenance. Nonetheless, coming from MONITOR gives the items high intrinsic value. The problem comes in defining their value in dollars. Are the artifacts from MONITOR more valuable than those from ALABAMA, TECUMSEH or HUNLEY? Archaeologists would argue that all artifacts have historical value. Purists among their ranks might argue that the only thing valuable about artifacts is the information they provide.

But collectors will pay more for a bottle recovered from MONITOR than the same bottle taken from grandma's cellar. This is so because the collector puts added value on its historical nature, on the effort expended to retrieve it and because the item is rare — so few have been recovered.

But, how do you put a price tag on its value? This becomes a real problem when insuring collections like MONITOR artifacts for exhibition. Insurance companies would love to insure a collection of mustard bottles from MONITOR for multiple millions of dollars because the premium would be worth a pirate's treasure chest. Thus, insureds usually select a middle ground for value that reflects, for example, the item's replacement cost, the cost to mount another expedition to recover more bottles, or the scarcity of the artifacts.

Auction galleries understand this phenomenon better than most. Frequently at auction, items perceived to have great value will draw only a fraction of the value while lesser valued items draw much more. Auctioneers will tell you that the value of an object is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it. The same is true for mustard bottles from MONITOR.

Understanding the reasons people pay what they do to acquire an object is a different matter altogether. This is where an object's history, circumstance, rarity and other such incalculable factors put a unique personal value on it that may be worth more or less to another individual. The bottom line is always that an artifact is worth only as much as you are willing to pay to acquire it. ■



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# The Real Treasure Island: A Tale of Two Stevensons



By Kevin F. McMurray



**Rob Stevenson - DORIA bound.**

Diver and fledgling novelist Rob Stevenson, like many of us, has fond childhood memories of *Treasure Island*. But for Rob they have a bit more meaning since he is a distant cousin and is named for the author of that book - Robert Louis Stevenson.

Rob remembers how his mother would read from the book when he was a child, and how the map of *Treasure Island* had always fascinated him. He has read the book several times over the years and he still marvels at what a wonderful, well-written story it is.

Rob is an avid wreck diver and a familiar face on dive boats that operate out of the

New York-Connecticut area. Like his famous ancestor, Rob has used some of his experiences - in his case diving - to pen a novel that his new publisher hopes to have out in bookstores in the near future.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), was born in Edinburgh, Scotland to a well-to-do family. His father pushed the young man into studying law but Robert insisted on pursuing his dream of being a writer. *Treasure Island*, written when he was 31, was his first success. Up to that time the author relied on the largesse of his wealthy father to survive. The book was serialized in *Young Folks*

*Magazine* from 1881-82 before it made it to hard cover in 1883.

As one might expect Rob Stevenson is privy to a lot of the lore surrounding the novel. He related how the book grew out of a pirate treasure map Stevenson drew up for his stepson, Lloyd Osborn. It intrigued the boy so much so that Stevenson decided to write a story to go along with it. It took him just 15 days to write the first 15 chapters but he put the book aside when he became bogged down in the 16th chapter. He did not finish it until a year later while he was living in Switzerland.

The island in *Treasure Island* is a composite of several islands that Stevenson visited in the Caribbean as well as the California countryside of Monterey and Napa where Stevenson briefly lived. The book was also originally titled *The Sea Cook* since the character of Long John Silver was hired on as a cook aboard the ship.

Two years ago at a treasure auction in Atlantic City, Rob met Captain Charles Mitchell, salvor of the Spanish treasure ship the *IGNACIO*. Mitchell is the living embodiment of Long John Silver, complete with long gray hair and beard. The colorful character related an interesting story about his progenitor's famous book. The famous lines "Fifteen men on a dead men's chest, yo ho ho and a bottle of rum" did not mean that the pirate captain had killed the men who dug the hole, and then buried them with the chest. Mitchell explained that it is based on a story of how pirates, after boarding a Spanish galleon, killed all the crew, stole all the gold, and had set the ship adrift. After the drunken celebration days later the pirates came upon the hapless galleon where it had



run aground on a reef by the name of Dead Man's Reef. That reef surrounds a small island in the British Virgins called Dead Chest.

Rob has made 26 dives on the ANDREA DORIA. On one DORIA dive four years back Rob and his dive buddy got lost for over 10 minutes deep within the bowels of the ship. Their harrowing story made news in several newspapers, dive publications, and a feature story about him in *People Magazine*.

Interestingly enough, Rob claims never to have been bitten by the treasure bug, though he's fond of his many DORIA artifacts. The historical aspect of shipwrecks is what appeals to him. Says Stevenson: "To me a shipwreck is an underwater cathedral. It's a place where you can enter and reflect on the course of history and the historical moment when the ship was sunk."

Rob's own entry into the world of literature is an embodiment of that thinking. The core of his novel is about deep cold water wreck diving. The plot revolves around a German arms dealer who attempts to salvage a million dollars worth of gold from a sunken World War I vessel. The ship is modeled after the U.S.S. SAN DIEGO. The book has plenty of intrigue and history and jumps back and forth between the present and 1917, an era Rob says, that has always fascinated him.

Rob's ancestor's work has stood the test of time, and is as popular as ever in Hollywood. Just this year there's *Muppet Treasure Island*, and *Mary Reilly*, based on *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. But the prospect of living up to the legacy of the literary name doesn't seem to worry the present day Stevenson. A best seller would certainly be nice, but he is writing about what he loves, and that is satisfaction enough. ■

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# Deans on Diving

## Goals, Planning and Gearing Up



By Billy Deans

Welcome to my new SUB AQUA column. There's a lot I've learned about diving over the years. I've been working directly with the editors to optimize this feature for your benefit. I'll be accepting reader questions in care of SUB AQUA. Tell me what issues you need covered, problems you have which would help other divers, and your concerns at *all* levels of diving. In this issue we will discuss how goal setting, planning and gearing up will help you to be a safer and more confident diver.

### Many divers live where diving is seasonal - how do they stay in shape year round?

The single most important thing you can do to increase your safety is to stay in good physical shape year round. A progressive weight training program and an aerobic program are essential. I'd recommend any sport with activities that ultimately help you in diving. People swim in a pool but they don't swim with fins — you need to work those specific muscles. Physical training, especially during the winter, keeps body fat low and strengthens you. When you get into those situations where you need it, your body will be in physically fit shape to handle it.

As far as special foods go, I prefer the current theme in dietary sports nutrition — a high complex carbohydrate diet combined with low fat. This will naturally keep the weight down. Your body will be a more efficient machine.

**Do you set goals for your diving?** I do set goals. My goals over the last few years have been related to my class training - to give my all to my students, to keep them safe, to make sure they have a good time, and to give them enough information so when they leave they will be competent, confident divers. Often special dive operations will pop up

on a relatively close time frame so I have to be in a state of readiness. So one of my goals is to make sure my "machine" is well oiled and if we have to pick up and leave in 24 hours, we can.

**Do you lay out your dive calendar at the beginning of the year?** Yes I do, and that helps me with my planning. For instance, it looks like I'll be spending quite a bit of time in Ireland and England this year so I'm going to have to get used to diving in cold water again. I'll be diving quite a bit with my cold water mitts down here in Key West. I'll also talk to the people over there and I will pick their brains. That way I can prep myself for those types of dives.

### How should divers plan their season?

Quarries are some of the best places to train in because you can go, spend the weekend, get in the water. You can mess with your equipment. Get into a relatively sterile environment and just get in the water and practice with the equipment using last year's configuration. Make sure you check your log book. A lot of people don't write their gear configuration in their log book - do it. Then start practicing emergency procedures. Before the big season starts schedule some no-stop dives on shallow local wrecks, and get comfortable again in a hostile environment.

It's not so much the depth that you look for in a personal training program, it's consistency in emergency procedures. I think depth is irrelevant on this point. I'd rather go out and do some longer dives on shallow wrecks. That way you get the bottom time in and you get time in your equipment and you can practice emergency procedures like sending up lift bags with personal ascent lines. You must get confident in basic skills at shallow levels so that if you go deeper, where problems can occur faster, the emergency skills have become second nature.

**You like to plan at least one big trip a year away from your existing environment.** I like to travel at least once a year. It's an adventure because people have that curiosity

of the unknown - you learn so much. When I go to other dive operations I learn a tremendous amount of information. I recommend taking a little throwaway camera. Shoot as many pictures of other equipment and configurations as possible. One picture is worth a thousand words. We've now made it mandatory for our students to have a camera. You can sit there and discuss equipment configuration but unless you take a picture of it you'll forget it.

**Are there specific checklists you use?** Absolutely. We use a standard checklist that helps us stay on track with what we need to know and do before, during, and after the dive. Everyone should be using a checklist of some type — it was taught to every diver in their first scuba course. The first checklist is individual **equipment** items. You run the checklist and make sure you have everything. The second check list is for **gas analysis**. Whether you're diving air, nitrox or trimix you must check off that you have all your gas analyzed. The third checklist is **emergency procedures** that you go over with your dive partner every time. Even though you think you know them, you go over 'em again, that way everybody is on the same playing field.

The checklist accomplishes quite a few tasks and introduces discipline. At first it may be difficult, but as you use it more and more it reduces the pre-dive stress. The last time I didn't run the check list — guess what? I forgot an item and I felt stupid. But I told everybody. Check lists are absolutely paramount.

**How do you implement the check list with dive partners and crews?** Prior to every embarkation and on the way out to the dive site, we go over emergency procedures. We discuss the *what-ifs* and the *what-happens-when* type questions. We discuss the signs and symptoms of the different maladies — decompression sicknesses, arterial gas embolism, blow-ups, omitted decompression, catastrophic gas loss. That way it's heard and seen and it has a tendency to be remembered.



Like that slogan in New York - "Bends is not a dirty word."

**How else should people plan for a particular mission?** The planning process needs to be extremely flexible. Get as much information on the wreck or destination as possible - that's the name of the game. Look through your back issues of *SUB AQUA*, do some research in the library, ask questions on the Scuba Forum or the Internet, read as much as you can. Talk to people who have dove the wreck. Talk to the captains who go there - they can put you in touch with the experts. The first time I dove the U.S.S. *SAN DIEGO*, off Long Island, NY I was pestering Captain Janet Bieser to give me the scoop on how the shipwreck lays. I read Gary Gentile's book and I spent time with Captain Steve Bielenda and talked about the traps and pitfalls of the wreck *before* diving on it.

I asked such simple questions as: "What should I wear?" and "Where should I go?" I also asked about average dive times - there's no point to planning a long or a short dive if the site doesn't warrant it. When you have a tremendous library of information, then it's not only a dive, it becomes an expedition.

**How far in advance before a big dive should you make a gear change?** My basic gear has not changed much in the last 3 years. The only major additions have been hoseless technology and the addition of EPIRB (electronic positioning beacon). You *never* dive with a new piece of equipment on the "big dive." You've got to integrate that into your system. If it's a minor piece of equipment like new fins, I like to use five to 10 dives as a general guideline. For equipment changes I like to get comfortable first on no-stop dives, preferably in a confined water or sterile environment. If you go into hoseless technology the computer is on the same high pressure port as your pressure gauge, then you need to get comfortable with the readout on the unit.

If it's a major change like hose configuration, where you are now introducing the use of a long hose [typical for cave and wreck diving] instead of your old short hose, you've got to know that stone cold sober. You can sit in your own apartment with the equipment set up and you can dry dive it. Sit in your rig, grab the regulator and go. Practice while on land, learn where the valves are, know how the hose wraps, reach back and shut off the valves.

Once you get your equipment set up, leave it set up as often as you can. When you walk by look at it and refresh your memory as to what goes where and how different things work. Even if you don't own a set of cylinders, you can still set something up. But have your equipment so you can see

it all the time. If you leave it packed in the bag and then you pull it out before the dive it's no longer familiar; you end up relearning what you could have kept current with just by looking at it.

**What's a good guideline for making equipment changes?** Adhere to the one piece of equipment philosophy. Never change your equipment by more than one new item at a time and when you change that piece of equipment make sure you integrate it into the complete system. Dick Long from DUI said "Just because you buy the equipment doesn't necessarily mean that you are competent in it." If you buy a reel, I would unspool all the line off and practice using that reel while on land, over and over again. Become so familiar with it that it becomes second nature.

**What particular drills do you use to prep for dives?** Gas shutdown drills and catastrophic gas loss are probably most important. Especially with dual outlet isolation manifolds and H valves you need to know what second stage goes to which first stage, and which accessory goes to which first stage. You must know your regulator configuration because if you have a gas failure in the open ocean you don't have a tremendous amount of time to make the right reaction. At Key West Diver we see a lot of people that have spent the money on the manifold, the regulators. When we do the first dry run of our emergency skills, about 50 percent of the people "die" right there on the docks.

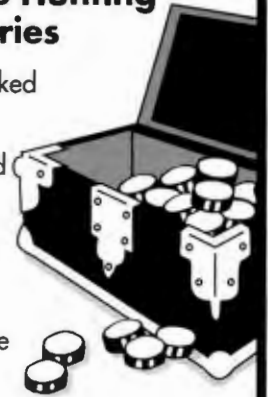
**What about using swimming pools?** If you have access to a swimming pool, by all means use it. Once you can dry run your gear take your dive partner to a pool and start practicing. Whether you have been diving 30 days or 30 years you need to practice. In a swimming pool lay a line and swim side by side a distance of 75 feet slowly exhaling with the regulator in your mouth, and then start sharing gas. That'll teach you real quick to stay extremely close to your partner, because even under ideal situations, you are going to be hurting for the gas to breathe. Replicate what *could* happen. Another skill to practice is swimming around without your mask. See if you can access all your stage bottles and valves without your mask. Most people probably can't do that on the first try but with practice you can be prepared - try out this drill.

Even with all the training, check lists, practice, and dry runs, you need to remember that this is all for fun. Granted there's going to be some seriousness on the dock and on the boat and when you run the checklists and go over emergency procedures, but all those are ultimately in the service of having fun. That's the bottom line. ■

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# The Republic and the Whydah

By Eric Takakjian



Southern New England has its share of treasure wrecks. Among the most exciting, and still shrouded in questions are the White Star Liner *REPUBLIC* and the *WHYDAH* (pronounced 'widda').

On January 23, 1909 the 15,378 ton White Star Liner *REPUBLIC* departed New York bound for the Mediterranean, with over 900 passengers and crew aboard. Locked deep in the hold of the 585 foot ship was a large shipment of gold eagle dollars destined for imperial Russia. This shipment was said to be valued in excess of 400 million dollars. There was so much gold on the *REPUBLIC*, the bank vaults in New York were said to have been empty when she got under way.

Early the next morning found the liner steaming east, south of Nantucket in dense fog. At approximately 5:45 A.M. the Italian liner *FLORIDA* loomed out of the mist on the *REPUBLIC*'s port side. There was no time for the two ships to avoid each other and the *FLORIDA* crashed into the *REPUBLIC*, cutting through three decks. Six men were killed instantly aboard the *REPUBLIC*. The mortally wounded *REPUBLIC* began to take on water, the boiler room flooded, the ship lost propulsion and electrical power almost immediately after the collision took place. Heavily damaged, the *FLORIDA* lowered her lifeboats and stood by the *REPUBLIC*.

The hero of the day was the *REPUBLIC*'s radio operator Jack Binns, who stood by his post in the wireless shack and transmitted the distress signal "CQD," along with the ship's identity and position. The distress call was received at Nantucket and relayed to other ships and revenue cutters in the area.

The freighter *BALTIC* was in the vicinity of the Nantucket lightship, when she intercepted the *REPUBLIC*'s distress signal. The *BALTIC* changed course to the *REPUBLIC*'s position. Captain Ransom of the *BALTIC* was able to home in on the radio signals transmitted by Jack Binns aboard the *REPUBLIC*. Due to the efforts of Binns, the *BALTIC* was able to rescue almost everyone from both ships. Rescue efforts continued well into the night.

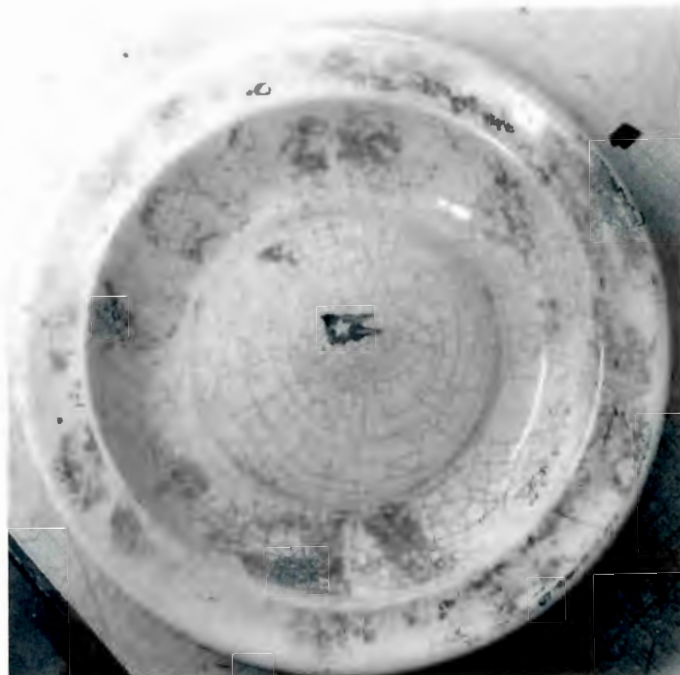
At dawn on the morning of the 25th the

fog cleared, and revenue cutters took the *REPUBLIC* in tow, while the *FLORIDA* limped back to New York. Shortly after being taken in tow, the *REPUBLIC* capsized and sank south of Nantucket Island. Captain Sealby, mate R. J. Williams, and Jack Binns were plucked out of the water by the Revenue Cutter *SENACA* after the *REPUBLIC* went down. This was the first time that radio was used in a rescue at sea, and it resulted in saving over 1600 lives. Jack Binns was later recognized for his heroism.

Today the *REPUBLIC* lies mostly upright in 225 - 275 fsw on a white sand bottom, in the clear blue water of the open Atlantic. Three commercial diving operations have been made to the wreck, in attempts to locate the gold. None have been successful.

In 1981 the wreck was located by Captain Steve Bielenda of the R/V *WAHOO* while under a commercial contract. At that time Captain Janet Bieser and Henry Keatts positively identified the wreck by actually diving on it. Other than these first dives the wreck had not been dove by recreational divers until a *SUB AQUA* expedition in July of 1993. Reports from that expedition indicate that the *REPUBLIC* is a spectacular dive with visibility reaching over fifty feet at times.

Despite the massive commercial salvage operations she is still loaded with artifacts including ornate china, brass fittings and many large portholes. Big fish were frequently seen cruising the wreck, including cod, the occasional yellow fin tuna, and even



**Dinner plate from the Republic**

Glen Butler

some large grouper.

The interior of the ship is accessible though most of the superstructure has deteriorated. Deck and hull plates have been peeled open by previous salvage operations leaving sharp edges everywhere. Somewhere inside the hull of the *REPUBLIC*, a cache of gold coins is waiting to be found. The *REPUBLIC* is a challenging dive requiring not only mixed gas but extensive deep water experience. Another *SUB AQUA* expedition is scheduled for this June.

Southern New England's most infamous treasure wreck would have to be the pirate ship *WHYDAH*.

The *WHYDAH* was an English slave ship, built around 1710 and captured by the pirate Black Sam Bellamy off the coast of Cuba in February of 1717. Sleek and fast, with the ability to carry thirty cannons, the *WHYDAH* was an ideal pirate ship. Black Sam was originally a merchant seaman from the west coast of England, who turned

to piracy as a lucrative way of making a living. A drinker and womanizer, Black Sam had a number of friends in New England, including a 15-year-old girlfriend, Maria Hallett in Eastham on Cape Cod. After capturing the *WHYDAH*, Black Sam continued to rape and plunder his way across the Caribbean, before turning up the East Coast of the United States in the spring of 1717. Sailing in the company of another pirate ship, the *MARY ANN*, Black Sam and his crew captured a ship loaded with Madeira wine off Block Island in early April. Proceeding up the coast, the *WHYDAH* and the *MARY ANN* encountered a storm on April 26th, while off the back side of Cape Cod.

Blinded by wind and wine, Black Sam ran the *WHYDAH* hard aground just south of Cahoons Hollow beach in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. A similar fate befell the *MARY ANN*, a few miles to the north. As the ships began to break up, their crews were washed overboard by the storm. The majority of the 142 pirates aboard the *WHYDAH*, including Black Sam, drowned in the surf. The local residents didn't take lightly to pirates, and provided a welcoming committee on the beach. What pirates survived the shipwrecks were placed in irons and marched to Boston, where they were hanged after languishing in jail for several months. At the time of her sinking the *WHYDAH* was carrying an estimated four million in gold, silver, jewels and ivory tusks. After the wreck, local residents didn't waste any time in unloading the *WHYDAH*'s cargo, and dividing it up amongst themselves. Thus began the fortunes of a number of prominent Cape Cod families.

The *WHYDAH* remained forgotten until the fall of 1982, when salvor and promoter Barry Clifford from Martha's Vineyard set up salvage operations at the site. He actually found remains of a wooden ship, and was able to interest many investors in the prospect of salvaging a sunken pirate treasure. However that effort was highly controversial and according to current information, has been scrapped.

For now, Black Sam Bellamy's notorious ship remains an infamous legend among New Englanders. Her riches could be waiting down in Davy Jones' locker for some brave and diligent searchers with gold in their eyes and skull and crossbones on their drysuits.

These are only *two* of the scores of great treasure dives in Southern New England. Treasure wrecks are still out there, and a lot of treasure is yet to be found. For some divers it may just be a matter of being on the right charter at the right time. But for the more intrepid, it may involve pursuing your own treasure wreck. ■

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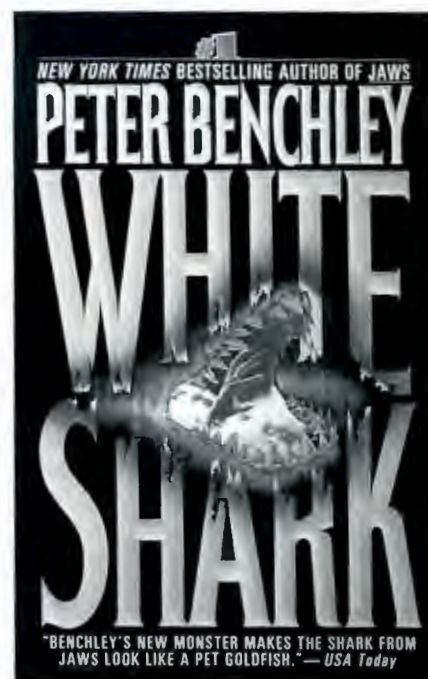
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## Book Review



### WHITE SHARK

by Peter Benchley  
St. Martins Paperback

Benchley knows the ocean like Tom Clancy knows spooks and Anne Rice knows vampires. *White Shark*, released over 20 years after *Jaws* terrorized swimmers and made Spielberg a star, is classic Benchley. Sort of a *Jaws* for the '90s, *White Shark* has themes of politically correct environmentalism, but with touches and plot twists which would be at home in *Marathon Man*, *Frankenstein*, and *Jurassic Park*. His antagonist - imagine crossing Hannibal Lecter, Freddy Kruger, and a Velociraptor (but he can swim) - is not an appetizing fish. There's a reason we found this book in the Horror section. Though people sometimes call this type of novel "beach reading," don't wait till the sun comes out. Benchley, a seasoned former Washington Post reporter and Newsweek editor, does his homework and gets his details straight from primary sources. He's the master of the genre he created - with best sellers like *The Deep*, *The Island*, *The Girl of the Sea of Cortez*, and *Beast*.

*White Shark* is great learning, great fun, and has that patented Benchley page-turner tension. You'll be reminded what made *Jaws* the biggest hit of its time, and become immersed in scientific expertise, political intrigue, the obligatory romantic interests - and the scariest varmint who ever put the bite on you. Plus, adorable sea lions, a chamber ride DAN would *not* approve of - and oh yeah, things are never as they seem. Don't miss it. Bring tranquilizers. ■

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# Bob the Diviner

(Oh yeah right.)



By Joe Weatherby

Although my firsthand experience with diving was limited to watching Mr. Haney attempt it on *Green Acres*, I kept an open mind as my curious adventure unfolded...

I'd finished securing the dive boat for the evening and was helping the instructors stow the equipment while shooting the breeze with the day's charter. It's always a busy time of day at the shop - compressors blasting, gear being sorted, rinsed and put away or packed into cars, tanks being moved and clients being booked or their paperwork finished. Amid the mayhem I noticed a buddy of mine pull up on the side of the building and unload a few tanks to be filled. He's hard to miss - the Cadillac he drives is completely covered in loudly painted cartoons. A trained commercial diver, he doesn't do wrecks or lobster and to him the only pretty fishie comes on a plate.

I stopped what I was doing and nonchalantly moseyed over to where he was standing his tanks. "Whatcha up to?" I asked. His grin gave him away instantly. "Nuthin'," he responded, quickly looking away. "Treasure?" I whispered. "I'm going." "No way, Joe, the boat's full." "How many divers?" I asked. "Just me," he said. "You mean you're planning to make a working dive on a new site in low vis with no safety diver... I'm going," I chiseled. "Yeah, my wife hates it," he relented. "I'll ask the guys. Call me later."

I called later that night and he agreed to take me, gave me the time and place, details of the expedition to be discussed at the dock in the morning. I needed only to bring my personal gear, a couple of jugs of Gatorade and some ice.

On arriving at the dock my buddy met me with some café con leche and we loaded the dive gear onto the boat. The vessel to be used was sleek and muscle-bound, a very modern cigarette-type hull outfitted with two big 250 hp outboards. I had barely slept but when I saw the boat my excitement really began to mount. As we finished loading the gear the other members of the crew showed up. There was the boat owner — an expatriate restaurateur from Venezuela, there was the guy with the numbers — a famous Key



**Joey's ride to gold fever.**

West sailing skipper, there were the divers — my buddy and I. And Bob.

We had loaded all of the dive gear and although I had helped load a few sophisticated strap-on, hand-held metal detectors, I didn't see any side-scan sonar, magnetometers, or heavy duty digging equipment usually associated with this type of undertaking. When I asked my buddy about it he informed me that the main gear for locating treasure today was — Bob. It seems Bob, a former ranch owner from California, is a diviner with a long history of locating water up to 2000 feet deep. His talent is also element specific, a rarity among diviners I'm told. As this was explained to me I guess my skeptical nature showed on my face because my buddy began to punctuate his explanation with "No, really!" and "Wait, just hear me out!" He let me know that he didn't blame

me for what I was thinking. He'd thought the same thing and that was why he'd put Bob to the test. He'd buried five gold items in a sand parking lot and Bob not only located the items in short order but he'd even found something extra.

We boarded the boat and blasted out of the harbor at a monstrous pace, we had a long way to go. We wedged ourselves into the boat's protective padding and hung onto the rails. All talk was of treasure as the adrenaline began to pump. Everyone was very optimistic and had a story to relate about hunts, finds and legends. The day was gorgeous as we blitzed past mostly forgotten Keys and world famous treasure sites.

After a long ride, well out of sight of anything recognizable, we arrived at the site. The boat was put into idle and we settled down to watch Bob work. Diving is an an-

cient method of finding water (and other things) by the use of metal rods or a forked stick. Bob's special talent allows him to touch the particular metal he is looking for to the divining stick, and the stick (and his internal sensors) will *look* for that metal. Whatever feeling was building inside me, excitement or pure lust for gold, I managed to keep it in check as we ran patterns over the site. I know that the others aboard were feeling some of the same things I was because all the happy chatter of the ride out turned to stares, finger chewing and furrowed brows.

Bob began his search with a pair of identical brass rods, one in each hand, bent near the ends, forming long capital L's. He closed his eyes and the rods seemed to move independently of him and of each other, sort of like antennae on a bug's head, seeking...

"I got a hit!" he cried after some minutes, the electricity zooming around the boat now a physical thing. The boat circled a couple of more times and he repeated the hit in the same place each time, although he couldn't see the loran or the GPS. I was becoming a true believer.

Bob decided to double-check his work with the forked stick, which he claimed was better for the "detailed work," and again duplicated the performance. We marked the spot at either end with our prepared buoys and anchored the boat over the site. You've never seen two divers don gear faster than

my buddy and I did that morning. We had to make supreme efforts to slow ourselves and double-check each other's equipment and go over the dive plan twice more.

At last we went over the side. Checking the anchor line first, I began my task of setting up the grid lines between the two buoys. My buddy began sorting out the metal detecting apparatus. These were accomplished in short order and we began our sweep search, and you wouldn't believe how quickly we had a hit! It was so solid that I could hear it clearly outside his headphones.

We began to dig. The effort was hampered by the fact that the bottom was quicksand. It was like trying to dig a hole in a chocolate milkshake. But dig we did, using our air at a rate much faster than we should have at this shallow depth. Faster and deeper we dug, as the gold fever gripped us...

The ride home was a rare experience, the late afternoon clear, the sunset perfect. The beer at the dock tasted just a little colder than usual. We sat at the dock, boats and gear cleaned and put away and all agreed the day was like something out of a story.

Oh, you want to know if Bob is the real McCoy? You want to know if it's just a fairy tale? You want to know what we found? I guess you'll have to find me one warm night at the Half Shell Raw Bar, ply me with some smoked conch and a couple of Red Stripes, and maybe, just maybe, I'll tell. ■

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If you're not a subscriber to *DeepTech* then you didn't see the awesome photos of the Mexican Cenotes in our last issue. You also missed a hilarious interview with Bret Gilliam, the President of TDI, plus articles on Hogarthian gear configuration, Diving Risk and the Law, Decompression Software, The Truth About PFO, and Whitefish Point—the Deep Wreck Holy Land of Lake Superior. Don't miss another issue, call today and subscribe!

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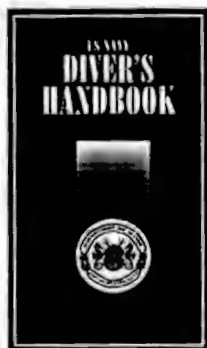
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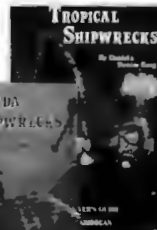
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Oct 11 - 18 Tortola

## Florida

### Eagle's Nest

Capt. Howard Klein  
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Apr 6 USN Algo  
13 Mystery/Black Warrior  
14 Bald Eagle  
20 Lizzie D  
21 British Corvette

27 Asfalto  
28 Arundo

May 4 Lizzie D  
5 Pinta / Macedonia  
11 Stolt D'Agali  
12 Asfalto  
18 Masadonia  
19 Lizzie D  
25 RC Mohawk  
26 Immaculata / Cindy

June 1 Gypsy / Asfalto  
2 Lizzie D  
8 Pinta / Bald Eagle  
9 New Mystery Wreck  
15 Valerie E  
16 Liberty Ship  
19 Local Wrecks *Night*  
22 Immaculata  
23 Arundo  
26 Local Wrecks *Night*  
29 Steam Ship  
30 Asfalto / Bald Eagle

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7 USS San Diego  
13 Oregon  
14 USS San Diego  
20 USS San Diego  
21 Oregon  
27 Oregon  
28 USS San Diego

May 4 USS San Diego  
5 USS San Diego

8 USS San Diego  
11 USS San Diego  
12 USS San Diego  
15 USS San Diego  
17 Frank Buck 150'  
18 Oregon  
19 USS San Diego  
22 USS San Diego  
25 USS San Diego  
26 Oregon  
27 Tarantula  
29 USS San Diego  
31 Deep Wreck

June 1 Oregon  
5 Virginia 180'  
14 Coimbra 180'  
20-28 Super Trip Andrea  
Doria - Republic-Spikefish-  
Block Island Subs - Leave from  
Montauk - Call 203-367-8948

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(919) 986-1056  
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### Margie II

Capt. Art Kirchner  
(201) 361-3018  
Hatteras, NC

### Rapture of the Deep

Capt. Roger Huffman  
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Capt. Doogie Pledger  
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# If You Feel Any of These Symptoms Tell Someone:



1. Get on 100% O<sub>2</sub>.
2. Tell someone.
3. Monitor your changes.
4. Call for help.

- Don't worry about "ruining" a trip.
- Don't let anyone minimize your symptoms.
- The sooner decompression illness is treated the better the outcome.

*Good Divers Get Bent. Nice People Get Bent.*  
**Bends is Not a Dirty Word.<sup>SM</sup>**

 **City Island Chamber**  
North American Hyperbaric Center

222 Fordham Street, City Island, NY 10464

A public service notice from ERDO – City Island Chamber  
a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit organization.



**City Island Chamber**  
24 Hour Hotline:  
718-885-3188



**Divers Alert Network**  
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# More Than Exploration

The accomplishments of Project Nahoch 95 are monumental. In addition to surveying nearly five miles of new passageway, team members for the first time connected a major Yucatan cave system to the sea.

Exploring such a system is challenging enough. Imagine the hurdles faced by film maker Wes Skiles, who documented the

expedition for the PBS/Bill Kurtis series, *The New Explorers*. How can one diver effectively transport seven cylinders, two scooters and video equipment over 12,000 feet into the Nahoch Nah Chich system?

Wes' solution was the Transpac. As he puts it, "The Transpac provides logical solutions to all your technical diving needs." ■



# DIVE RITE

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ANOTHER  
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ANOTHER  
CHANCE TO  
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HEALTHY.