

SWIMMING TEACHER TURNED UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER

Very often, the STA is asked for information on underwater photographers so that they can add this now very popular service to their own swim school offer. Therefore it was interesting to receive this report from Beate Rothon recently, who as a qualified STA swimming teacher decided to take up photography herself. Such as been the success, Beate, who runs her own STARFISH baby and toddler swim school in North Cornwall, has now set-up her own company dedicated to underwater photography called Bubble Pixels.

Beate says: "Like many industries, underwater photography has been revolutionised with the advance of technology, and the latest digital cameras have made these pictures possible. Years ago, an underwater picture had to be taken by a diver dressed in black, with a mask and a huge camera with a powerful flash. This was not only expensive to organise, but it could also be a bit too much for the little ones."

With today's technology and with Beate being a trained swimming teacher, she can be more "relaxing and unobtrusive" than this monster of the deep! "And the instant gratification helps, too," she added. "Digital images can be viewed at once, so there is no need to develop photos with perhaps a bubble in the wrong place."

However Beate warns other swimming teachers who may be thinking of doing something similar, that in the early days it was not as easy to set-up as it sounds. "Yes, underwater



housing makes it possible for almost anyone to use a camera beneath the water, but it's not that simple and it can also have its dangers. I have a maximum of three seconds to take the image with the parent as the diver, and it took me years, using many willing parents and models and cameras to perfect this skill. After several years, I am only now confident to advertise my services. Yes the costs of cameras have reduced in price, but the costs of learning the secrets in working the way I do were very high."

"The worst experience I witnessed of the dangers of underwater cameras being cheap and readily available to 'parents', was an incident where a father wanted get a picture of his child under water. He did not have goggles or ankle weights. The result was that he made his child dive under water over 20 times, each time the picture was unclear. I had to step in and stop it, because the child began to turn blue. This is a stark warning of the potential dangers if you are not properly trained in underwater photography."

"I have always enjoyed photography and I love being a baby swimming teacher, so it's fantastic that I can now combine both for my work." concluded Beate.

To contact Beate for advice, please telephone 01840 261246. More information about Bubble Pixels can be found on the company's website, www.bubblepixels.co.uk

