



# Stars Beneath the Sea: The Extraordinary Lives of the Pioneers of Diving

*Trevor Norton*

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## **Stars Beneath the Sea: The Extraordinary Lives of the Pioneers of Diving** Trevor Norton

This is a remarkable true story of some of the brave, brilliant and often barmy men that 'invented' diving. It is a story of explosive tempers and exploding teeth, of how to juggle live hand grenades and steer a giant rubber octopus. The book reveals the eccentric exploits of these underwater pioneers. They include Guy Gilpatric who held a world altitude record when only sixteen, wrote a film for Humphrey Bogart, invented snorkelling and loved his wife enough to shoot her. Roy Miner wore a bucket over his head and stole a coral reef. William Beebe wearied of fishing with dynamite and wrestling deadly snakes, so he sealed himself in a metal coffin to dangle half a mile beneath the ocean. John Haldane discovered how human breathing was controlled and saved divers from the deadly bends underwater. His son, Jack, experimented on himself and ended every test unconscious, bleeding or paralysed. Cameron Wright tested the bouncing bomb for the dam busters, made a plastic ear for a dog, a false testicle for a bull and invented a mantrap disguised as a lavatory. He ascended from a depth of 200 feet without breathing equipment to see if his lungs would burst, then studied the effects of underwater explosions by standing closer and closer until shattered by the blast. The book also traces the evolution of divers from spear fishermen to conservationists, from treasure hunters to archaeologists, from photographers to philosophers. The sea is a secretive and seductive place and the author describes the magic and mystery of being beneath the waves. You may never have wanted to dive, but after this book, it would be a hard heart that wouldn't be tempted to try. --- Trevor Norton, Professor of Marine Biology at the Univ. of Liverpool and Director of the Port Erin Marine Laboratory on the Isle of Man, has authored over 150 scientific publications and is an authority on the history of scientific diving.

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