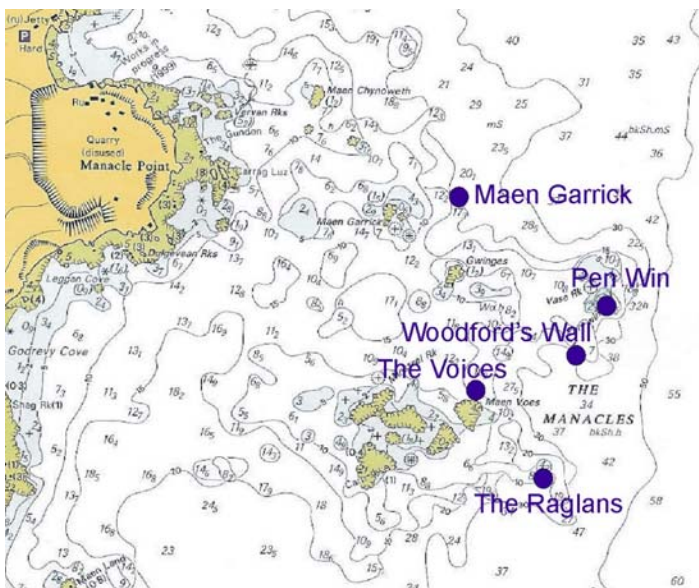


Manacles Weekend - 25th-27th July 2003

Seasearch surveys and Seasearch training were carried out as a part of a Marine Conservation Society Member's Dives weekend at The Manacles Reef on the Lizard Peninsular Cornwall. The weekend was organised by Brod Mason and boats and air provided by Dive Action, of St Keverne. Divers taking part in the training and recording were - Mary & Roy Restell, Phil Reynolds, John and Karen Williams and Chris Wood.

The sites from which records were made are shown on the chart.

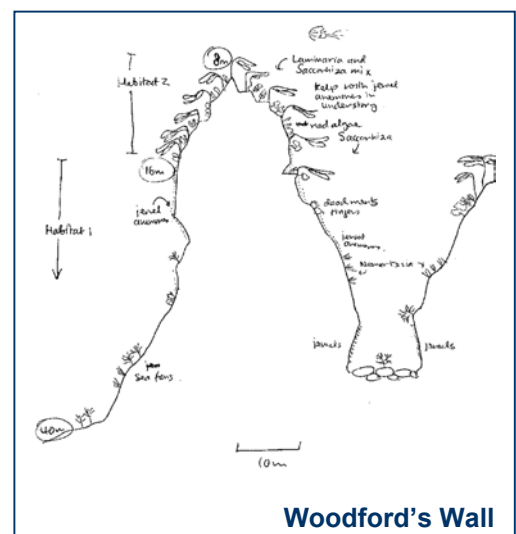
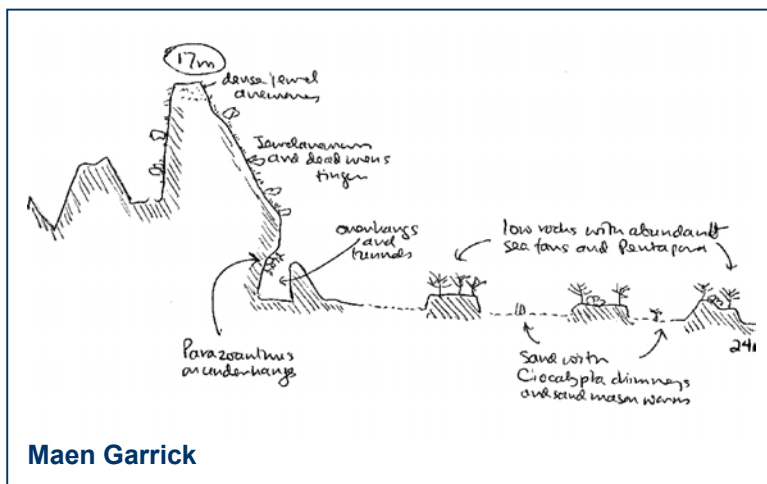


Maen Garrick is not a regularly dived site. Here we found steep rock faces from 17-24m below sea level (bsl) and then a flat area of mixed low lying bedrock and sand.

Pen Win, Woodford's Wall and The Raglans are all popular dive sites and have steep rocky faces from 20m+ to within about 5m of the surface.

The Voices (Maen Voes) reach the surface at low water and there is vertical face on the north side with wreckage at its base. There is then an extensive area of low lying bedrock with sandy patches at a depth of 23-26m bsl.

Profiles of two of the sites are shown below.

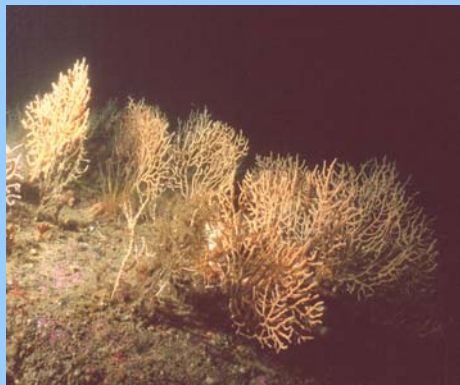


The Manacles are unusual in having steep rocky walls and pinnacles on an east facing, and thus relatively sheltered, coast. They have not been identified for protection as a Special Area of Conservation despite having a number of rare and scarce species. As a result of its Pink sea fan survey in 2001 and 2002, the Marine Conservation Society has recommended to English Nature that they be better protected.

Species Recorded

There was a good range of sponges, anemones, soft corals and fishes recorded, as the table shows, but very few worms, crustaceans, molluscs and sea squirts. The lack of crabs and lobsters may be due to over-exploitation either by fishermen or by divers since the habitat appears to be suitable for them.

Phylum	Common Name	Number of species	Common Species
Porifera	Sponges	13	Boring sponge <i>Cliona celata</i>
Cnidaria	Anemones,	14	Jewel anemone <i>Corynactis viridis</i>
	corals, hydroids,		Pink sea fan <i>Eunicella verrucosa</i>
	jellyfish		Dead men's Fingers <i>Alcyonium digitatum</i>
			Sea beard <i>Nemertesia antennina</i>
Annelida	Segmented worms	3	
Crustacea	Crabs, lobsters, barnacles	2	
Mollusca	Shells, sea slugs	5	
Bryozoa	Sea mats	6	Potato crisp <i>Pentapora foliacea</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, sea urchins, sea cucumbers	7	Common starfish <i>Asterias rubens</i>
			Spiny starfish <i>Marthasterias glacialis</i>
			Cottonspinner <i>Holothuria forskali</i>
			Common urchin <i>Echinus esculentus</i>
Tunicata	Sea squirts	2	
Pisces	Fishes	13	Pollack <i>Pollachius pollachius</i>
			Cuckoo wrasse <i>Labrus mixtus</i>
			Goldsinny <i>Ctenolabrus rupestris</i>
Algae	Seaweeds	6	Cuvie or Kelp <i>Laminaria hyperborea</i>
			Furbebows <i>Saccorhiza polyschides</i>
	Total Species	71	



Part of a dense colony of pink sea fans at Maen Garrick



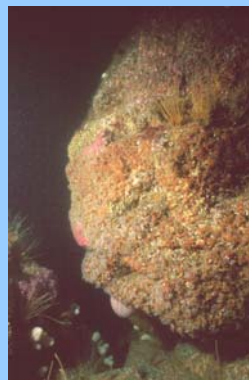
Sea slug *Acanthodoris pilosa* on a finger sea mat



Elegant anemones, *Sagartia elegans*, at Pen Win Pinnacle. These are 2 of the 5 colour variations - *venusta* (orange and white) & *rosea* (pink)



Jewel anemones at Maen Garrick. In close up (above) and covering a wall (right)



The photographs show some of the prominent species in the survey area. The dense groups of both jewel and elegant anemones on the vertical walls, and the forests of sea fans on the flatter rocky areas are both characteristic of The Manacles and rarely found together in such profusion elsewhere.

Text and images by Chris Wood

Seasearch is a volunteer underwater survey project for recreational divers who wish to contribute to conserving the marine environment.

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