



## South Llŷn Seasearch 2006 July 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006



### Seasearch divers who took part were:

Lucy Kay	Anne Carter	Liz Morris	Carol Dineen
Paul Kay	Andrew Hoban	Clive Field	Andrew Dineen
Graham Jones	Tim Davies	Maureen Frost	Ruth Sharratt

Altogether we collected seventeen Seasearch Observation forms and five Survey forms during the weekend. Many thanks to you all for the useful data collected, and to Al Gray and his hard boat Shearwater for looking after us over the weekend.



An abundance of marine life on the South Llŷn, including diverse animal turfs of hydroids (such as *Gymnangium montagui*, above left, and the branched antennae hydroid, *Nemertesia ramosa*, right), sponge, (*Amphilectus fucorum* the grated carrot sponge pictured with a Bloody Henry starfish). PK

### Species Summary for the South Llŷn - July 2006

Phylum	Common Name	No. of Species	Most Common Species
Porifera	Sponges	20	<i>Pachymatisma johnstonia</i> , <i>Cliona celata</i> , <i>Amphilectus fucorum</i>
Cnidaria	Anemones, Hydroids, corals, jellyfish	17	<i>Alcyonium digitatum</i> , <i>Nemertisea antennina</i>
Annelida	Segmented Worms	3	<i>Bispira volutacornis</i>
Platyhelminthes	Flatworms	1	<i>Prostheceraeus vittatus</i>
Crustacea	Lobsters, Crabs, Barnacles	13	<i>Maja squinado</i> , <i>Cancer pagurus</i>
Mollusca	Shells, Sea Slugs, Octopus	12	<i>Crimora papillata</i> , <i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i> , <i>Limacia clavigera</i>
Bryozoa	Seamats	8	<i>Bugula plumosa</i> , <i>Flustra foliacea</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, Urchins	4	<i>Asterias rubens</i> , <i>Henrica</i> sp.
Tunicata	Sea Squirts	5	<i>Clavelina lepadiformis</i>
Pisces	Fishes	14	<i>Labrus bergylta</i> , <i>Ctenolabrus rupestris</i>
Algae	Seaweed	14	<i>Laminaria hyperborea</i> , <i>Delessaria sanguinea</i>
Other			(puffin & guillemots seen at the Gwylan islands)
Marine Mammals			(grey seals spotted in vicinity of Maen Bugail)
<b>Total Species</b>		<b>111</b>	

The location for this weekend's Seasearch diving was the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at the tip of the North Wales coastline. The SAC was designated in 2004, largely for its marine areas of rocky and biogenic reefs, but there is still a lot to be learned about its marine environment. For this mini-expedition, sites that little were known about along the South Llŷn Peninsula were targeted in a fresh attempt to discover which habitats and species of interest are to be found in the rarely documented and tidally swept waters of the Bardsey Sound, the more sheltered waters of mainland coastline and the Gwylan Islands which are famous for their breeding puffin colonies.

Over the course of the weekend, Seasearch divers surveyed four sites and were lucky enough to come face to face with grey seals, puffins and diving guillemots in addition to a variety of unexpected marine life beneath the waves. Twelve Seasearch divers together completed twenty two survey forms (17 observer and 5 surveyor) at four sites within the SAC. In total 115 species of marine life were recorded over the weekend!

Table 1: List of the number of species recorded from each Phylum.



South western nudibranch, *Crimora papillata*, on bryozoan, *Flustra foliacea*, observed at all sites. LM

Lightbulb seasquirts, *Clavelina lepadiformis*, recorded at three out of the four sites surveyed. Photograph by Paul Kay

Puffins, *Fratercula arctica*. at Ynys Gwylan Fawr. LM

Produced by Liz Morris for Seasearch and the Countryside Council for Wales on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2007  
All photographs Copyright of Paul Kay (PK) and Liz Morris (LM)



### Parwyd, South Llŷn

Parwyd is typical of inshore coastal dive sites in the area. The shallow waters next to the shoreline were scattered with large, angular, seaweed covered boulders on a gently sloping sea bed. Between 3m and 13m depth the boulders were topped with large, 'dusty' (or silted) kelp forests, with bryozoans, sea squirts and sponge living on their crevices and overhangs. Close examination of the mixed gravely seabed found it was teeming with life, including small fish and worms. One species of conservation concern, the nationally scarce *Axinella damicornis*, a branching sponge, was also spotted at Parwyd. The 'nobbled' nudibranch, *Crimora papillata*, which is usually a south western species, was recorded in high numbers at this site. This was possibly a first sighting of this species in North Wales, at least in the SAC.

### Maen Bugail, Bardsey Sound

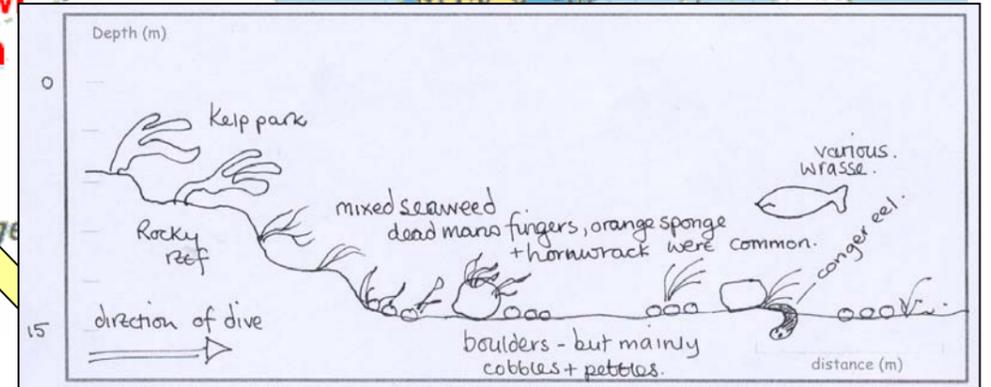
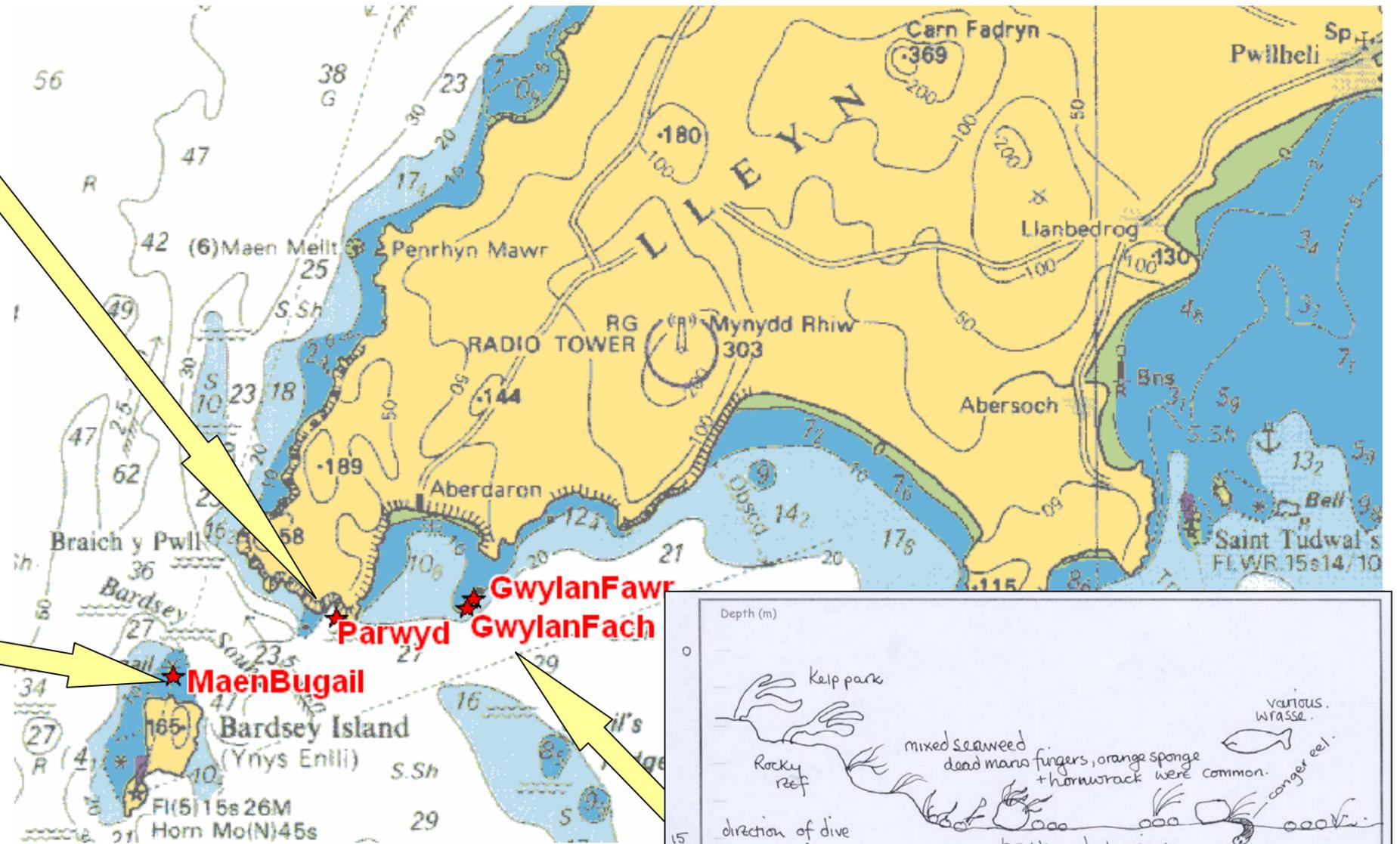
Maen Bugail is usually highly tidally swept and as a result rarely dived, yet covered in interesting filter-feeding life. This steep bedrock reef reached from the sea surface to large boulders on the seabed (20-27m). The reef was covered in both tall and short animal turfs, comprising bryozoans including *Flustra foliacea* and hydroids such as *Nemertesia antennina* and large areas of *Gymnangium montagui*. Upon closer inspection surveyors also found four species of nudibranchs: *Crimora papillata*, *Janolus cristatus*, *Limacia clavigera* and *Polycera quadrilineata*. At the seabed large boulders were interspersed with cobbles and pebbles. Unusual sitings for the area at the site included Montagu's blenny, *Coryphoblennius galerita*.



Sponge covered boulders at Maen Bugail. PK



South western nudibranch, *Crimora papillata*, with bryozoans, *Bugula* spp. Photograph by Paul Kay



Sketch of Ynys Gwylan Fach by Anne Carter

### The South Sides of Ynys Gwylan Fâwr and Ynys Gwylan Fâch

These two sites around the Gwylans were unusual for the area. The typical kelp-covered rocky reef fell away to fields of boulders and gravel. Boulders were covered in fields of dead men's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*, the antenna hydroid *Nemertesia antennina*, feather hydroid *Aglaophenia pluma*, and short animal turfs of *Flustra foliacea* and other bryozoans. Feasting on these rich animal turfs were many colourful nudibranchs, including the sea hare *Aplysia punctata*, *Limacia clavigera*, *Crimora papillata*, *Polycera faeroensis* and *Flabellina pedata*. Above water the Seasearch team was greeted by large numbers of puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) tending to their burrows in the Ynys Gwylan cliffs.



Antennae hydroids and rich invertebrate life at Ynys Gwylan Fach. Liz Morris