



Eelgrass – the latest

The eelgrass awareness programme has moved on. The poster has been designed, printed and laminated. A copy is included in this newsletter and it can also be downloaded from the VMCA website.

Over 20 posters have been distributed by members of the HVMCA to sailing clubs, marinas, post offices/ village stores, chandlers and tourist "hot spots". People are generally very receptive and from my own observations the expanded "voluntary no anchor zone" has been well respected.

The publicity attached to the dispute in Studland has given rise to some fears but the situation in the Helford is fundamentally different. We have a well established voluntary approach based on cooperation and it seems to work very well.



*Images: Eelgrass in the Helford.
Andy Pearson www.oceansedgephotography.co.uk*



Progress on the eelgrass power point presentation is slow due to summer, studying, family holidays - I have any number of excuses! The plan is to have something ready for the end of the season.

Finally our eelgrass beds seem to be doing well this year, extending their range and growing again in areas where they have not been seen for a number of years. I don't think we can claim all the credit (Mother Nature is the major player) but the efforts over the years to provide protection, raise awareness and to undertake research means that the increase in the size of the beds is something that a wide range of people and marine organisms can feel good about.

Mike Langshaw, HMCG member and volunteer

The Helford River Survey - 25 years on!

The Helford River has long been known for the richness of its foreshores, that is the tidal area exposed between high and low water. With fully saline habitats ranging from muddy creeks to sandy bars and from low cliffs to exposed rocky reefs, the diversity of the marine wildlife is amazing and over the many years has attracted marine researchers, students, Victorian shell collectors and, more recently, seriously interested members of the public.

In the mid-1980s experienced marine biologists who had surveyed the shores since the 1940s noted some deterioration and such was the concern that moves were made to reverse this decline by designating the Helford River as a Conservation Area. Dr Norman Holme of the Marine Biological Association, Plymouth and Stella Turk, MBE, of the Cornish Biological Records Unit, University of Exeter and Cornwall County Council, led the campaign which also involved users and local residents such as Leslie Collins who later became an inspirational chairman of the group.

The first question that arose was "What is there to protect and has anything really changed?" and the sensible answer was to find out by raising funding to carry out an extensive study on the fauna and flora of the foreshores, the range of habitats with particular emphasis on the eelgrass (*Zostera*) beds, take account of historic data and, where possible, identify threats and make positive conservation recommendations. Problems arising from bait-digging, shellfish collection, depredations of the many educational

group visitors, recreational activities, the presence of non-native species, anti-fouling on boats and general commercial usage were considered.

In 1986 under the guidance of Norman Holme and Stella Turk, two young graduates were recruited, Roger Covey and Sue Hocking. One of their tasks was to establish the Helford River Survey choosing sites to be intensively recorded at regular intervals as resources allowed. Part of the study involved attaching a line at a right angle from the High Water limit directly down to the Low Water limit, some 50 to 250m depending on site, placing a 50cm square at selected intervals 5m to 10m and listing all living animals and seaweeds within it and also taking photographs. The length of zones and the seaweeds, animals and substrates within them along the lines were also noted.

It was important to carry this out in a non-destructive way so no digging was involved and samples removed for further identification were returned as soon as possible. The baseline report published in 1987 underpinned the designation of the Helford Voluntary Marine Conservation Area. The further work has been published as a series of reports with the latest HRS Monitoring Report No. 6, P.E. Tompsett published in hard copy and on-line in 2011 (HVMCA web site).

The nine sites chosen by Norman and Stella, reflected an interest in the historic intertidal eelgrass beds which flourished at Helford Passage Bar



Dr Pamela Tompsett surveying a Norman Holme transect in the Helford, 1996.

Beach, Treath and the Gillan inlet but these had disappeared by 1988, so, from 1996, the number of sites was reduced to six namely, Flushing Cove, Flushing Cove rocky, St Anthony, Dennis Head, Helford Passage and Treath.

I became involved with the earliest recording and subsequently led the repeat surveys in 1990, 1993, 1996 and 1999 but was not able to continue subsequently. As experts became available other species were targeted such as shore fish, bass, anemones and their relatives, molluscs – in particular cockles and eelgrass.

During the 1986 to 1999 period, changes noted included the loss of the intertidal eelgrass beds, fluctuations in the worm populations, a slight spread of non-native species and the recovery of several other species following the TBT ban in the late 1980s. The effects of algal blooms and climatic factors should not be forgotten.

It was therefore very pleasing to find that, in 2010, after a lapse of several years, enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers were coming forward, partly under the auspices of Abby Crosby's Your Shore project, namely Rob Seebold and partly from group members such as the new co-ordinator Charli Marshall, to take up the challenge of recording the important marine wildlife of the HVMCA. The transect recording has already started and will continue at the appropriate low tide periods in September and possibly October.

Although the current study focuses on the existing sites it is hoped that, in future, resources will become available to target some of the other species-rich areas such as the reefs at Prisk Cove. It is planned to arrange some identification sessions in advance so that we can set up an enthusiastic and well-trained team of recorders. There is also the possibility of running a public event alongside one of the surveys.

Dr Pamela E Tompsett, Scientific Adviser HMCG

Injured Juvenile Bass

When undertaking bass research netting in the Helford at Bonallack we were pleasantly surprised to find a bass of 32.8 cm (fork length) when we were only expecting small bass about 12 cm long. Nice fish until we turned it over when it had what looked like a pink growth on its lower left flank. It became apparent on closer examination that the "growth" was most probably part of its gut extruded from a wound.

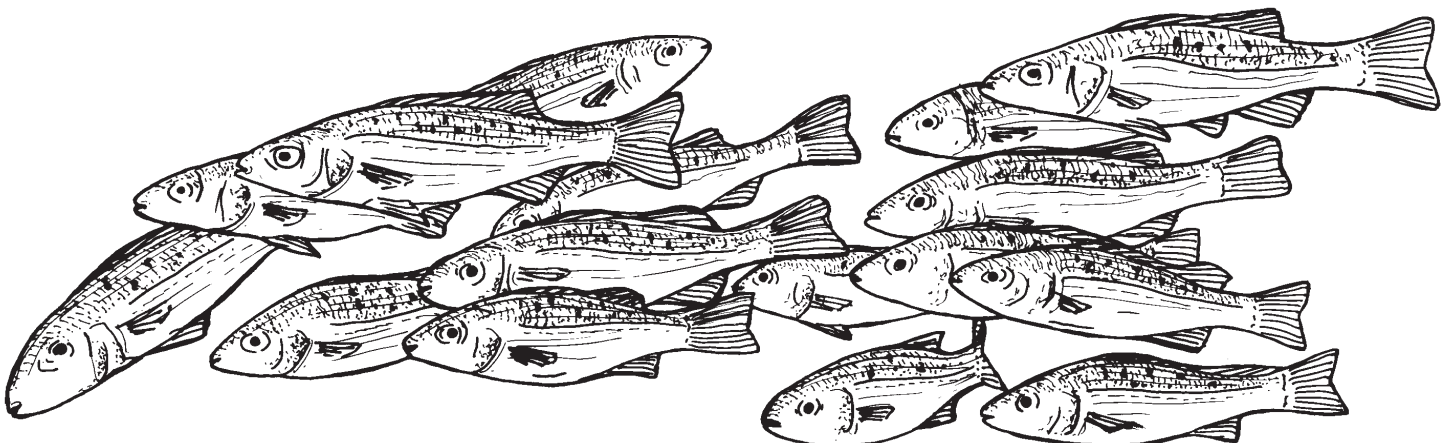
Sarah Walmsley at Cefas Lowestoft checked the scales and confirmed that it was a five year old fish. Cefas have been finding the annulus on bass were later than usual following the cold winter of 2009/10 and now it seems, judging by the scales on our fish, the cold winter of 2010/11.

Sarah attached a short paper by Pickett et al. (1988, MAFF Fisheries Laboratory) depicting a bass of 37.4cm (total length) with a hole in its side in the same place as

our bass. Internal examination proved that the hole was a functioning anus, connected to the intestine which had been severed at that point. A small blind section of the intestine remained attached to the now redundant anus. Examination of the scale pattern revealed that the fish was five years old, with normal growth for four years and thereafter less easy to evaluate. The authors suggested that a gannet could have stabbed the fish with its beak. The fish made good its escape after the bird bit off the protruding gut.

Perhaps our fish suffered a similar injury, more likely from a heron, but the loop of the gut was still extruded. Whether the injury will heal like the one examined at Lowestoft is possible, let's hope so. If you would like to read any of the bass survey reports in more detail, please contact Charli at coordinator@helfordvmca.co.uk

Derek Goodwin, HMCG Advisory Committee



Event profile – Prisk Cove Rockpool Ramble!

“What do you think we’ll find?”, asked Ruth. The hands shot up. “Crabs!”. “Certainly”. “Fish!”. “Yes, those too”. “Octopus!”, said a little boy hopefully. “Perhaps not”, smiled Ruth, “but we’ll all look hard”. With 29 adults and 37 children setting off to explore the pools there was plenty of looking power; and Prisk Cove rapidly lived up to its reputation as one of the best rock-pooling sites in Cornwall. Crabs, fish, prawns, anemones, in fact any creatures that moved, were quickly netted and transferred to buckets for Ruth Williams and her helpers from the Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) to identify. The conditions were perfect – a warm sunny day, with just enough breeze offshore for yachts to enjoy a gentle sail and with a low spring tide that enabled us to venture down to the kelp zone. Some brave souls went further, wading out to probe the weed-strewn rocks. One man caught a crab as large as his hand. “This could feed my family”, he said. Perhaps the animal understood, because it made a successful escape.

Crabs of all sorts and sizes were found – shore crab, edible crab, ‘body-builder’ crab, broad-clawed porcelain crab, velvet swimming crab and hermit crab. The fish were more difficult to capture, faster, more elusive. Some were so small that they slipped through the mesh of the net. However, among the finds were goby, snake pipe fish and a full-size (15cm) five-bearded rockling. Common starfish and brittlestar were added to the collection, plus common prawn and squat lobster. It was fascinating to see the latter propelling itself backwards at speed, pincers trailing, by

flicking its tail. In the pools of the upper shore, beadlet anemones had closed to brown jelly blobs to await the returning tide, but lower down a colourful gem anemone was discovered.

As ‘catching’ seemed to be a major objective, not much attention was paid to the less mobile animals, the large number of limpets, multi-coloured topshells, periwinkles and keelworms. The seaweeds, too, were largely ignored, which was a pity because they add so much to the beauty of the pools with their variety, colours and textures. Red calcareous algae, brown bladder wrack, serrated wrack, blue-green rainbow wrack and bright green sea lettuce were all present. On the lower shore were leathery kelp and the long thin fronds of thongweed. A few pools had been taken over completely by the wire-like invasive species, Japweed.

All too soon, the tide returned, fast. It was time to rescue a few individuals who had become stranded on rocks, empty the buckets, retreat to the beach and disperse. Ruth and her helpers were thanked fulsomely by participants who had thoroughly enjoyed the outing. HMCG, also, wishes to express its appreciation to Ruth and her assistants for a highly successful event.

PS. The two labradors and the spaniel had a marvellous time!

Paul Garrard, HMCG Events Coordinator



Photo by Charlotte Marshall

HMCG Members Committee Chairman's report Autumn 2011

Things continue to go well with activity and participation amongst members, volunteers, partner organisations as well as our committee members. Much is summarised in this newsletter.

In the last newsletter we advertised for a new co-ordinator to fill the vacancy arising from Abby's need to devote more time to her highly successful 'Your Shore' project run through Cornwall Wildlife Trust. We were sorry to lose Abby as co-ordinator but delighted to be very much involved with her and 'Your Shore'. However I am pleased to inform you that we have appointed Charlotte Marshall (answers to 'Charli') as our new co-ordinator.

We were fortunate to have had an excellent choice of applicants of well qualified and suitable people, 15 in all. Charli introduces herself in this newsletter but may be too modest to outline her impressive qualifications. She has a BSc in marine biology, an MSc in applied marine science and is submitting her PhD in marine conservation related study imminently. Her experience includes working for Wembury VMCA, project leader for the UK Marine Protected Areas Centre with the Marine Biological Association (MBA) as well as working on the Marine Life Information Network (MarLIN) with the MBA. In addition she has worked with volunteers and many partner organisations.

Charli started in the job on 1 June, is fully involved already and we look forward to working with her. The funding we have for the role allows for one day per week but if we can source further funding we would have more than enough work to expand the role.

I believe other current activities are reported on elsewhere in this newsletter but would briefly mention just some.

Our events programme for 2011 is well underway and we have been pleased to see attendances well up on last year. The Heron & Egret Survey went ahead again and is part of the longest running single species bird survey in the world, having started in 1928. The Conservation Cruise, again fully booked, was made even more interesting this year as it was in May. This meant we saw a seasonal variation compared to last year including some of this year's young birds, notably a brood of 9 shelduck chicks. We were also treated to a sighting of a peregrine falcon. Both Seashore Safaris had good numbers of people turning up. Those without children were able to behave like them. 66 people attended on 2 August. The Snorkelling Safari was also fully booked. Unfortunately the weather on 12 June prevented the Frenchman's Creek Bird and Botany event as it was just too bad to go ahead. It happens.

An interesting development this year has been in co-operation with the Budock Vean Hotel but more about that later in the newsletter!

If you have a camera and like to take pictures of our beautiful 'River' then you should consider entering the photography competition this autumn. Full details are in this newsletter.

Next year's events programme has been planned, is being organised and looks excellent as usual. On the subject of events: Paul Garrard, who chairs the events committee, is stepping down in 2012 after many years of dedicated work. This will leave a vacancy in the committee so we will be happy to hear from anyone interested in getting involved in this (or any other aspect for that matter).

The volunteer work reported previously, and in this newsletter, continues (beach cleans, birds surveys, bass netting studies) and we have recently restarted some of the shoreline transect surveys, which will hopefully continue into the future.

If you are interested in volunteering or getting involved in any way then we will be delighted to hear from you. The best way would be to contact Charli whose details are on this newsletter.

We would also like to recruit new members. Our membership is static at present and it would be good to increase the numbers. The more members the more involvement and awareness we can achieve. High levels of membership can also help us gain funding from other sources. Our membership subs must be the best value for money around so any new people joining will be most welcome. Join via our website or the form in our Events Leaflet.

Finally, we continue to put a priority on the development of the website www.helfordmarineconservation.co.uk with the aim of making it more useful. This is a continuing commitment with changes and additions ongoing. I am pleased to say that currently our finances are sufficiently healthy to enable us to do this. It is good to report that the HMCG members section is in good health.

May I thank everyone involved, the committee, volunteers, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, sponsors and all our members for your support.

See you at the events.

David Thomson, Chairman Members Section HMCG

Beach Clean success for the Helford

Could bin liners full of broken bottles, crisp packets and other discarded picnic rubbish be a thing of the past? The Helford VMCA and CWT have been working productively this year to raise awareness through appreciation of our amazing wildlife and the environment that we are so fortunate to still have around us. Amongst this campaign to keep our shores beautiful is the VMCA beach cleans.

My name is Al and I have been fortunate enough to take on the role of the coordinator of these beach cleans as well as taking part in the monthly clean at St Anthony's Helford. This is great for me as I have been able to see first-hand that the beach cleans do appear to be having a positive effect in that the amount of rubbish we collect has been positively less into the busy Summer season. We are currently developing a new spread sheet that will help us to not only compare what sorts of rubbish (from land or washed up) we are finding but will also help us to monitor invasive species that have craftily found their way onto our shores. Another development is that with many thanks to Mike Langshaw and his work with Charlie Watts from the National Trust we now have an



area in Durgan where we can recycle some of the rubbish we find. So the future is looking bright for the shores of the Helford and its marine life. Many thanks to all of you that have supported such a worthy cause and if anyone would like to join us feel free to contact me on as460@exeter.ac.uk. Any help with beach cleans, new ideas or advice is always welcome and appreciated.

Al Smith, HVMCA volunteer

Volunteer Profile – Rob Seebold

My name is Rob Seebold, I live in Penzance and regularly visit the Helford for personal enjoyment or as part of my conservation volunteering activities. Coming from the wilder area of West Penwith, I love the Helford for the contrast it provides to the rugged and wave swept shores of the west that I know so well.

My story and love of the local marine environment has brought me full circle. I grew up in Penzance and left in the late 1980s to go to university in South Wales. A subsequent 14 year career in market research took me through Brighton, London, Sydney, Leeds and back to Penzance. In 2009 my wife Tracie and I chose to relocate to this beautiful part of the world to bring up our daughter Libby, and I began a career change into marine conservation – a subject I am passionate about and where I hope to make a contribution by combining marine and conservation knowledge with a broader commercial awareness and management experience.

I have recently graduated from a Marine Conservation degree at Cornwall College and am now looking for my first marine conservation related role. Alongside this I intend to complete a part-time MSc at the University of Plymouth in Sustainable Environmental Management focusing on sustainable management of marine resources.

I am a regular volunteer with CWT, and this has brought me to the Helford on a number of different projects over the past two years. As part of the Your Shore project, focusing on Cornwall's VMCA's, I have supported a Snorkel Safari at Grebe Beach, Durgan - helping members of the public engage with the Helford in new ways. Also part of the Your Shore project was a really fun and rewarding day spent supporting a School Seashore Safari at Helford Passage. This

is part of a marine education initiative working with local primary schools within the VMCA's. I have also Seasearch dived the eelgrass bed at Durgan and supported groups of Seasearch divers there.

Currently, I am working with Dr. Pamela Tompsett, Charli Marshall and Abby Crosby, helping to co-ordinate and conduct a repeat of the Helford River Survey mentioned earlier. Last conducted in 1999, the survey this year will be especially useful in highlighting any change that has occurred over the last decade, including abundance of native species, changes in shoreline zonation and whether any new, non-native species have arrived in the Helford.

Rob Seebold, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and HVMCA volunteer



Your Shore at the Half Way Mark!

By the time this newsletter is distributed to our members, Cornwall Wildlife Trust's 'Your Shore' project will have hit 1.5 years of its 3 year lifespan and I, as the project officer, will be looking towards the future of every Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) in the county and how it is achieving its aims and objectives, including the Helford.

The Your Shore project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims at supporting and developing the existing VMCAs in Cornwall to enable communities and visitors to learn about and develop an understanding and appreciation of Cornwall's marine environment.

When developing the project, it became almost instantly apparent that every VMCA is different, not just physically in terms of its habitats and species but by its uses and the pressures put upon it. For instance, Polzeath represents a very seasonal VMCA, which has an enormous pressure placed upon it by literally millions of tourists in the spring and summer months. The Helford VMCA, on the other hand, is a popular spot for visitors all year round and experiences a more local use throughout the months with its sailing clubs, riverside hotels, private fishery, and surrounding farmed land. But however we use these VMCAs one thing is consistent which ever place you go to – we must try and maintain our need of the environment with the need of the local wildlife. And that is what defines a VMCA – the balance. The Helford VMCA has achieved that balance through the development of the successful and prominent Helford Marine Conservation Group (HMCG), whose structure and activities have now become an example for other VMCAs in the county and who continue to lead the way. I hope all the other VMCAs achieve their aims as the HMCG have done over the years.

Due to its success, some may wonder what the Your Shore project could do for the HMCG? It is true, I often wondered so myself and have worked closely with the group to decide how best to use my time and the resources from Cornwall Wildlife Trust to support the group and its VMCA. What became evident was that one useful thing would be to use the project's energy to build up local support in a more proactive way – to start a volunteer team. This team could carry out the practical conservation work so needed by the VMCA, whether beach cleaning or local monitoring of the environment.

I am pleased to say that already in the first half of the Your Shore project, we have succeeded in recruiting over 70 local community members as volunteers and have started up 3 independent projects – our monthly bird surveys (which were reported in our Spring 2011 newsletter), our monthly beach cleans (reported in

this newsletter) and finally the start, this autumn, of a repeat of the famous Norman Holme surveys for the first time in over 10 years, again reported in another article in this newsletter. Although I am proud of this achievement, it is only thanks to the support of the HMCG group and its committee members and most importantly thanks to those volunteers who give up their time and, often, weekends (!) to help achieve our goals. So a big thank you to them all.

So what shall I be looking towards over the next year and a half that I have left with the Your Shore project? Yes I will continue to provide training for the volunteers and coordinate the next year's meetings, and we hope of course to start up more local conservation projects. But I will be looking forward to the HMCG taking over the responsibility of the group and continue to provide the wonderful volunteers with the support that they need. That is how this work will become sustainable.

Through the Your Shore project I shall also continue to work with the local Helford River schools and develop outdoor education workshops for teachers to use to ensure the next generation are appreciating our marine environment for how important it is. Oh sorry, haven't I mentioned my work with the schools before? That is a whole new article.... You will have to wait until spring 2012 for that one!

Abby Crosby, Your Shore project Officer, Cornwall Wildlife Trust



British Divers Marine Life Rescue 19th March 2011 (following AGM)

It is always a lot to ask of a speaker to provide a presentation straight after an AGM, so the 45 people who attended on 19th March at Gweek Village Hall are particularly grateful to Dave Jarvis for agreeing to. He certainly gave us a very informative talk.

BDMLR is a fairly new charity, set up in 1988 by a group of divers who were concerned at their observations of the phocine distemper virus in Britain's wild common seal populations. At the time, divers reported sick seals to the RSPCA. Recognising their unusually close encounters with marine mammals, and with many divers having an obvious concern for environmental issues, BDMLR was born. It now forms part of an international network of similar organisations. Remaining true to its roots, virtually all funding raised goes straight towards buying new equipment or on training and virtually all activities are carried out by volunteers – there are only three paid staff members. Dave stressed that you don't need to be a diver to be able to play a full role with BDMLR.

Dave then spent some time describing the details of BDMLR activity in each year from 2004. That year saw 31 call outs, including to nine cetaceans and 22 seals. Three profile-raising events and three medic-training events were held. Unusual species involved in 2004 were a minke whale and a harp seal, both extremely unusual in Cornish waters.

During 2005 call outs more than doubled to 67. These included a basking shark and two turtles. BDMLR was featured on a Radio 4 show – 'How to rescue a dolphin' – surely a pretty surreal event to conceive and execute through the medium of radio?!

2006 saw 75 call outs. One resulted in very high media coverage during the summer, when some CWT divers including Joana Doyle encountered a basking shark trapped in a fishing net off Newlyn. The divers put all their skill and training into action and managed not only to successfully cut the shark free but gathered some fantastic film of the process. I expect many people can remember this on the TV news.

2008 was an incredibly busy year. Of 129 call outs, 31 occurred in January alone. The year saw six turtles being rescued. Most of these have arrived from the Gulf of Mexico / Caribbean and go into a cold shock – like a coma – on reaching our shores. If found in time and given the right care, these can recover well enough to be repatriated back to their warmer climes.

Without doubt one of the highest profile BDMLR actions took place in June of 2008, when there was an unexplained mass stranding of common dolphins in various creeks of the Fal Estuary. The graphic TV images showed us bodies lined up on the shore – 26 died in total (24 prior to anyone discovering them) – but what we didn't see so clearly was the excellent 'pied piper' work done by BDMLR volunteers, who managed to herd more than 50 animals into deeper water, and safety. This was achieved by tying 2 stranded animals to a pontoon of rigid inflatable boats, then slowly heading down river. These 2 animals were clicking, and the volunteers were convinced they were encouraging their friends to join the procession. This occurrence clearly demonstrated the depth and capacity of BDMLR and its ability to respond at a moment's notice, involving as it did more than 50 medics.



Photo by Colin Speedy

Even closer to home, on 30th November 2008 volunteers were called to Frenchman's Creek, where a mother and calf common dolphin had become stranded on the mud as the tide fell. Both animals were in good condition and so, given the right care, would be likely to survive. Dave said that dolphins can probably survive for 24 hours out of water if kept wet. Throughout the afternoon quite a number of people assisted in keeping the animals doused in water while a vet gave them fluids. As the tide would not be returning for some time – by when it would be dark – it was decided to lift the animals onto some inflatable lilos, carry them bodily up the access track – no mean feat – place them into a car and drive them to Porthallow at a very sedate speed, while all the while somebody lay beside them to ensure they stayed upright. A major risk facing large stranded marine animals is that they lose the essential body-support from the surrounding sea, and succumb to internal injuries caused by the weight of their own bodies. Anyway, our story has a happy ending, as both mother and calf were successfully returned to the sea and the volunteers no doubt returned home tired but happy.

Dave reckons that about 4% of our Cornish seal population is affected to some degree by entanglements with fishing nets. Unfortunately it is not always possible to release animals, depending upon how serious the injuries are.

It is very clear that BDMLR is going from strength to strength. Dave has pondered over the increasing number of call outs each year and suspects it is partly a function of people being more in-tune with wildlife due to more TV programmes and partly due to Cornwall developing a more year-round tourist season, meaning that people are out on the cliffs more often. It is not possible to state that more animals are being trapped or injured now than before as a baseline does not really exist.

In response to a question at the end, Dave said he is convinced that dolphins at least know they are being helped – he has had frequent close eye contact to form this view! This must give the very dedicated volunteers a huge reward and sense of purpose when standing, kneeling or even lying in cold, wet conditions for hours on end.

Dave gave us a real insight into the hands-on nature of this organisation and the volunteers certainly deserve our support and respect. Anyone wanting to get involved or to find out more can look at the website www.bdmlr.org.uk.

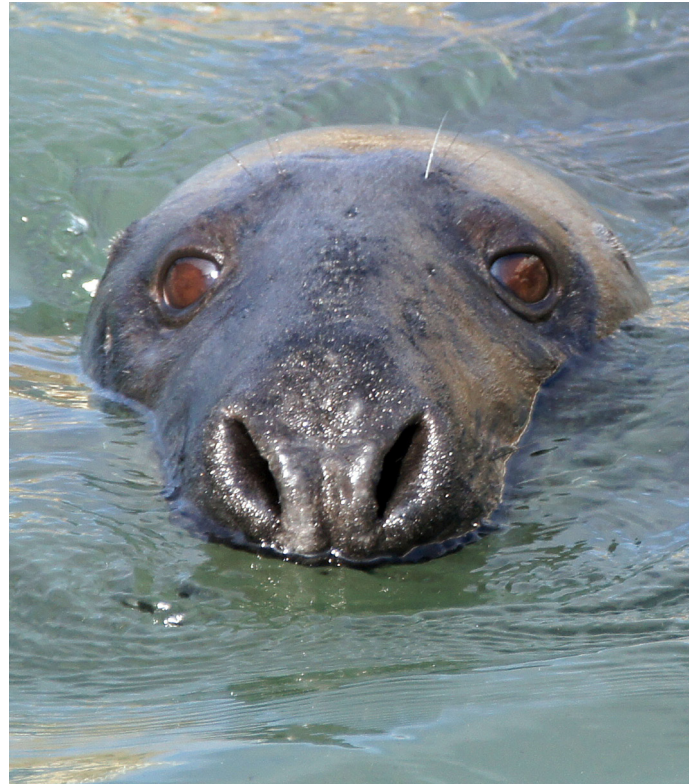


Photo by Jayne Herbert www.jayne-herbert.co.uk

Supporting Business Profile : Carwinion Garden

Carwinion Garden in Mawnan Smith has kindly supported the Helford Marine Conservation Group for a number of years. Carwinion is one of Cornwall's famous gardens, running down through a delightful wooded valley to the Helford River at Porth Sawson where it joins the coastal path.

The garden was established by the Rogers family, cousins and neighbours of the Fox family of Glendurgan. Anthony Rogers and his wife Jane have restored the gardens in recent times whilst maintaining the wild nature of the 12 acre garden and woodland. Carwinion is internationally famous for its 220 varieties

of bamboo as well as for the untamed spring garden of primroses, bluebells and ferns.

Carwinion is also well known locally for their splendid morning coffee and afternoon teas.

B & B accommodation is available in the 18th Century house. The gardens are open all the year round and dogs are welcome.

For further information see www.carwinion.co.uk or tel 01326 250258

Charles Richardson, HMCG Committee Member

Coordinator introduction

Thanks to Dave for his kind introduction and to everyone I have so far met through the HMCG who have made me feel very welcome. I would also like to formally thank Abby for all her help with the handover and for answering my near constant barrage of questions over the first few weeks.

I was splashing around in rockpools at Gwithian from an early age and this instilled in me both a passion for marine biology but also a love for the coasts of Cornwall and so it is with great pleasure that I can now work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group. As Dave mentioned, I will very shortly be submitting my PhD thesis. But once it finally goes to print, and the celebrations have quietened down, I will be putting together a funding bid to try and expand the coordinator role from the one day per week we are currently funded for through the generous support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This will allow us to achieve more regular survey work, organise more events, further website development and have the time to get involved in other local events. So if you've got any ideas about projects you think the Helford would benefit from, or specific groups that we should be aiming to work with then please get in touch with me and we can try and develop the ideas together.

And one last thing (hot of the press); thanks to keen eyed Angie Gall from CWT, who joined Rob and I on our most recent Norman Holme survey, we found a

stalked jellyfish! Although awaiting confirmation of the species we are pretty confident that it was a St John's jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*); a Biodiversity Action Plan species and a fantastic record for the Helford!

I look forward to meeting you all in due course.

Charlotte Marshall, HMCG Coordinator coordinator@helfordvmca.co.uk 07740 090 777



Budock Vean Hotel - Discover the Natural Wonders of the Helford

We are delighted to be working with the Budock Vean Hotel this autumn on a new joint initiative – a conservation themed holiday break at the hotel along the north bank of the Helford River. The hotel is set in 65 acres of parkland and woodland with river frontage at Perran Cove in Porth Navas Creek.

The Budock Vean Hotel is a long-established family-owned hotel which has supported the HVMCA with sponsorship from time to time. During a recent discussion about further support for our organisation, Martin Barlow and his colleagues at the hotel suggested working together on a special wildlife holiday for people wanting to learn about the natural wonders of the Helford.

The week long event will cover a wide range of topics including bird identification, coastal flora guided walks, rocky shore exploration, bats and boat trips on the river. All of the guides will be volunteers from the HMCG. In exchange, the hotel will donate 10% of the price of the stay to HMCG. (The price for the six night stay at Budock Vean is £606 per person).

For further information from the Budock Vean Hotel telephone 01326 252100 or visit their website www.budockvean.co.uk

Charles Richardson, HMCG Committee Member



Upcoming Events

Saturday 22nd October 2011

Leatherback Turtles and their Jellyfish prey

Leatherback turtles have the widest distribution of any reptile, moving through tropical and temperate waters. During the past two decades much has been learned about their everyday lives. With ecologist Dr Matthew Witt we will dive into their lifestyles and look at the behaviour and favourite foods of these long-lived, but at-risk, creatures. Cost: £2. Group members & children free.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: Gweek Village Hall, beside the National Seal Sanctuary, TR12 6UG

OS Ref: SW 709 266

Contact: Paul 01326 341030 or Charles 07795 845696

Saturday 19th November 2011

Helford's Heritage Trees

Ancient trees are immensely important habitats for a diverse range of wildlife, but in addition they can yield a record of past routeways, boundaries and holy sites. Loveday Jenkin, from the Cornwall Ancient Tree Forum, discusses the significance of great trees in the Helford district and elsewhere.

Cost: £2. Group members & children free.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: Gweek Village Hall, beside the National Seal Sanctuary, TR12 6UG

OS Ref: SW 709 266

Contact: Martin 01326 561952 or Pamela 01209 842316

Saturday 10th December 2011

Predators and Parasites!

It's a dog-eat-dog, or should we say limpet-eat-limpet, world in the marine environment and in response to the daily battle for survival marine creatures have evolved some incredible behaviours to ensure continued existence. Abby Crosby delves into the realms of the unreal with aggressive mussels and parasitic barnacles – not one for the faint-hearted!

Cost: £2. Group members & children free.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: Gweek Village Hall, beside the National Seal Sanctuary, TR12 6UG

OS Ref: SW 709 266

Contact: Rhiannon 07710 956734 or Abby 07917 765581

Saturday 14th January 2012

Coastal Ketches and Inside Barges

The Helford River has not always been regarded as a tranquil retreat. For more than 2000 years it was a busy waterway for commercial traffic and industry. Andy Wyke, from the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, explores the ships, boats and trade from this forgotten past.

Cost: £2. Group members & children free.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: Gweek Village Hall, beside the National Seal Sanctuary, TR12 6UG

OS Ref: SW 709 266

Contact: Paul 01326 341030 or Ian 01872 863171



Aim: To safeguard the marine life of the Helford River by any appropriate means within its status as a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area, to increase the diversity of its intertidal community and raise awareness of its marine interest and importance.

For further information relating to the Helford Voluntary Marine Conservation Area please contact
the **HMC Group Co-ordinator:** Charlotte Marshall Tel: 07740 090 777 Email: coordinator@helfordvmca.co.uk
Newsletter Editor Charlotte Marshall coordinator@helfordvmca.co.uk **Chairman:** David Muirhead

Design: Sheila McCann-Downes, Cornwall Wildlife Trust **Illustration:** Sarah McCartney, Cornwall Wildlife Trust