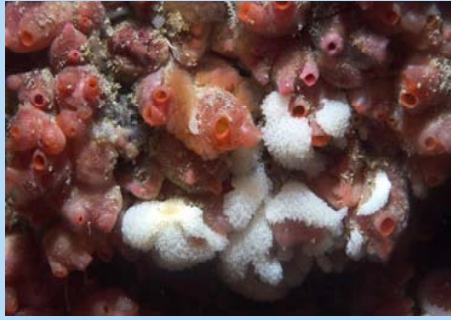


Men a Vaur ⑩ is a large split rock with a gully through the middle. The gully bottom was composed of scoured boulders and cobbles but the walls supported a thick covering of life including large numbers of *Dendrodoa grossularia* sea squirt with the often associated white sponge *Clathrina coriacea*, seen right. Recorded here were 14 species of sponge, a bloody henry starfish *Henricia oculata*, seen only at one other site, and the tiny cushion star *Asterina phylactica*.



Peter's Rock ⑫ to the east of St Martin's was a new dive site to be surveyed. A north east facing reef with kelp and much *Tubularia indivisa* at the top above a sloping face with *Alcyonium digitatum*, *Pentapora foliacea*, *Nemertesia spp* sloping to a rocky shelf with many hydroids and sponges including large colonies of the boring sponge *Cliona celata*. Silt and worm tubes covered much of the horizontal surfaces.

Flat Ledge ⑨ had been surveyed in 2004 when several sea fan anemones *Amphianthus dohrnii* were found. Another sea fan anemone was recorded in a similar place on this visit.

The wreck of the King Cadwallon ① on the eastern side of Hard Lewis was covered with life including red fingers *Alcyonium glomeratum* and pink and white sea fans. It lies against a granite wall with thickly growing oaten pipes hydroid *Tubularia indivisa*, jewel anemones *Corynactis viridis*, elegant anemones *Sagartia elegans*, bryozoan *Pentapora foliacea*, together with a variety of sponges and hydroids.



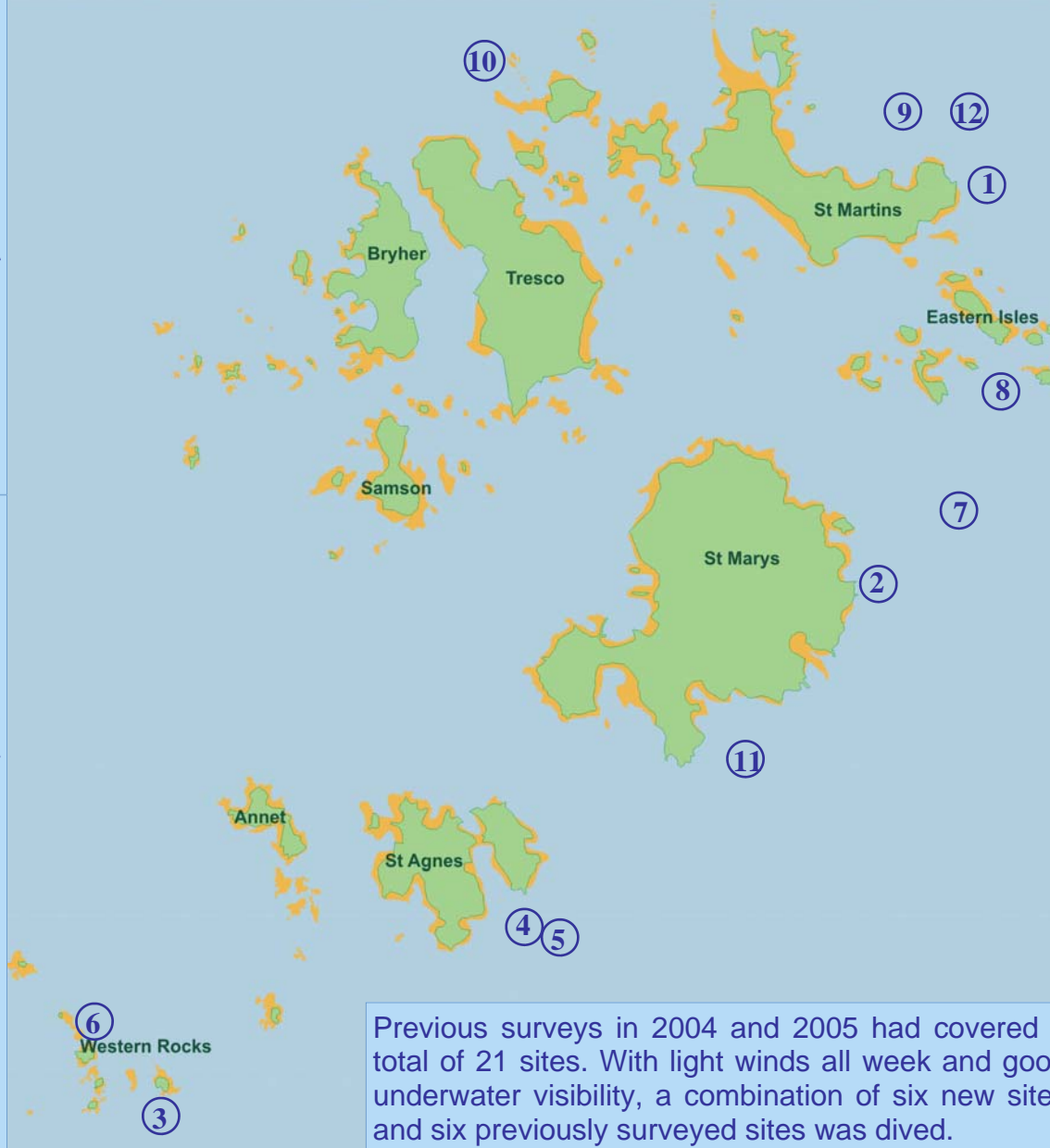
South Gilstone Reef ⑪, a rocky reef with deep gullies running across the top dominated by kelp, anemones and sponges, was surveyed in 2004. A vertical wall drops to ledges at 30 and 35 metres covered with plumose anemones, sponges and many very large football sea squirts at the base. The ledges had a contrasting fauna of sponges, dahlia anemones and cup corals. *Polymastia boletiformis* the hedgehog sponge shown left, *P. penicillus* and *Axinella infundibuliformis* were recorded as common. In total 11 species of sponge and 6 of sea squirt were recorded.



Tortoise Rock ⑥ off Daisy Island in the Western Isles was a new site with massive granite boulders below a kelp forest which edged the island, falling to a sandy bottom. The boulders had many jewel anemones on their sides and overhangs. Urchins *Echinus esculentus* and mixed weeds were common on their upper surfaces. In the coarse sand were sand mason worms *Lanice conchilega*, cerianthus and dahlia anemones. Four species of nudibranch recorded here were *Diaphorodoris luteocincta*, *Coryphella browni*, *C. lineata* and *Cadlina laevis*. Cotton spinners *Holothuria forskali* were common at this site and appeared to be spawning – standing on end and releasing a white substance into the water column (see right). This behaviour was seen on the first three days of the trip but not subsequently. The burrowing cucumber *Aslia lefeveri* was also common.



Trenemene Wall ③ is a classic wall dive with a vertical granite drop from near the surface to 40m and below, thickly covered in weed, anemones, hydroids and sponges. *Simnia patula* the false cowrie was feeding on the dead men's fingers *Alcyonium digitatum* and there was a sighting of the nationally rare nudibranch *Doris sticta*, shown left.



Hoe Point ④ is a broad gully with side ledges and a boulder strewn sandy base. There were many species of sponge on the silty ledges including the tiny stalked *Guancha lacunosa*, seen right, together with sea squirts including *Sidnyum elegans*. Pink sea fans *Eunicella verrucosa* and Devonshire cup coral *Caryophyllia smithii* were recorded as common and the more unusual white sea fan was also seen here. Coral worms *Salmacina dysteri* were evident on the bryozoan *Pentapora foliacea*. The cushion star *Asterina phylactica* was also present.



Menawethen. ⑧ No trip to the Isles of Scilly would be complete without a dive with the seals. The terrain is rocky reef covered in thick kelp forest and interspersed with gullies. Underlying the kelp was shredded carrot sponge *Esperiopsis fucorum*, anemones and one of the gullies contained many specimens of the nationally scarce scarlet and gold cup coral *Ballanophyllia regia*, photo back page left.

East Trinity ⑦ was a new site at the eastern end of Trinity rock, a steep rocky reef with flat ledges falling to coarse sand at 32m where football squirts were common, some very large. Pink & white sea fans and the associated nudibranch *Tritonia nilsodhneri* together with 16 species of sponge were recorded including *Guancha lacunosa*, *Desmacidon fruticosum* the slime sponge, right, and *Homaxinella subdola*.



Darrity's Hole ② on the east side of St Mary's comprises a boulder slope dropping to an amphitheatre of fine sand, a very silty environment rich in sponges, sea squirts and a variety of cnidarians. The daisy anemone *Cereus pedunculatus* and the burrowing anemone *Cerianthus lloydii* were seen in the sand, the ginger tiny anemone *Isozoanthus sulcatus* and *Doris sticta* on the boulders. The pretty pink colonial sea squirt *Sidnyum elegans*, left, was also seen here and was common at many sights.



Gugh Reef ⑤ is a south east facing reef off Gugh Island. The main feature is a stepped wall covered in plumose anemones *Metridium senile*, dead men's fingers, red fingers, hydroids and sponges, surveyed down to 34m and continuing below that. Other species including many *Axinella infundibuliformis*, Devonshire cup corals and sea fans. *Simnia patula* was present together with featherstars *Antedon bifida* seen right and the football sea squirt *Diazona violacea*.



The table to the right shows how many species were recorded in each group and some of the most widely distributed species.

Sponges

A wide variety of sponges were recorded especially on the more silt-covered sites such as Gugh Reef and East Trinity although a large number were also found at the surge gully site, Men a Vaur. The tiny *Guancha lacunosa* and the chimney-like *Desmacidon fruticosum* were two of the more unusual. *Axinella damicornis*, nationally scarce, was recorded at Darrity's Hole and East Trinity.

Anemones, Corals and Hydroids

Being more easily recognised, these were commonly recorded at all sites. The rare sea fan anemone *Amphianthus dohrnii* was found at Flat Ledge with sea fans *Eunicella verrucosa* recorded at seven sites varying from common to rare. Scarlet and gold cup coral *Balanophyllia regia* (below) was found at Menawethen.



Crabs, Lobsters and Molluscs

Crabs and lobsters were recorded in small numbers at 6 sites. Molluscs were more frequently recorded with 12 species of nudibranch. *Coryphella browni* featured most (seen right laying eggs) and nationally rare *Doris sticta* recorded at Trenemene Wall and Darrity's Hole. The sea fan nudibranch *Tritonia nilsodhneri* was only recorded at East Trinity.

Bryozoans

Large *Pentapora foliacea*, the potato crisp bryozoan were seen on many of the sites, especially on exposed walls and ledges. Much of the kelp had a covering of sea mat, *Membranipora membranacea* which becomes more common during the summer.

Phylum	Common name	Number of species	Common species
Porifera	Sponges	24	Shredded carrot sponge Hedgehog sponge <i>Amphilectus fucorum</i> <i>Polymastia boletiformis</i>
Cnidaria	Anemones, corals, hydroids	22	Sea beard Dead men's fingers Red fingers Plumose anemone Elegant anemone Jewel anemone Devonshire cup coral <i>Nemertesia spp</i> <i>Alcyonium digitatum</i> <i>Alcyonium glomeratum</i> <i>Metridium senile</i> <i>Sagartia elegans</i> <i>Corynactis viridis</i> <i>Caryophyllia smithii</i>
Annelida	Segmented worms	7	
Crustacea	Crabs, lobsters, barnacles	9	
Mollusca	Shells, sea slugs	16	<i>Coryphella browni</i>
Bryozoa	Sea mats	7	Potato crisp bryozoan Sea mat <i>Pentapora foliacea</i> <i>Membranipora membranacea</i>
Echinodermata	Starfish, sea urchins, sea cucumbers	11	Common urchin Cotton spinner Spiny starfish Burrowing cucumber <i>Echinus esculentus</i> <i>Holothuria forskali</i> <i>Marthasterias glacialis</i> <i>Pawsonia saxicola</i>
Tunicata	Sea squirts	10	Pink sea squirt Football sea squirt Orange sea squirt <i>Sidnyum elegans</i> <i>Diazona violacea</i> <i>Stolonica socialis</i> <i>Morchellium argus</i>
Pisces	Fish	11	Pollack <i>Pollachius pollachius</i>
Mammalia	Mammals	1	Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i>
Algae	Seaweeds	15	Cuvie Sea beech Branched brown weed Dulse Coral weed Red Rags <i>Laminaria hyperborea</i> <i>Delessaria sanguinea</i> <i>Dictyota dichotoma</i> <i>Palmaria palmata</i> <i>Drachiella spectabilis</i> <i>Corallina officinalis</i> <i>Dilsea carnosus</i>



Fish

A large variety of fish were recorded but generally in small numbers. All five wrasse species were present.

Seaweeds

Commoner and more easily recognised species were recorded in shallower areas.

Starfish, Sea urchins and Sea cucumbers

Most notable were spawning cotton spinners, *Holothuria forskali* (inside page left). The recently recognised species *Asterina phylactica*, the cushion star (right), occurred at Hoe Point and Men a Vaur.

Sea Squirts

The pink sea squirt *Sidnyum elegans* (inside page right) and the football sea squirt *Diazona violacea*, typically a northern or offshore species, occurred at several sites.



Seal at Menawethen



Reef scene



Jewel anemones

This Seasearch survey was organised as part of the Marine Conservation Society's Member's Dives Programme. Surveyors and recorders were: Sally Sharrock, Vicki Billings, Fiona Ravenscroft, Ruth Sharratt, Ray Drabble, Debbie Baukham, Kate Brice, Nick Reed, Peter and Jane Lilley. We would like to thank Tim Allsop of St Martin's Diving Services for an excellent week of diving. Text by Sally Sharrock. Photographs by Sally Sharrock and Vicki Billings.

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