

Plantation renewed

When you visit in 2007, have a look at the northern edge of the plantation. You will find that 70m of the boundary fence is now 12m further out; the grass inside has been sprayed, and lots of small trees and shrubs planted. There is a shelter belt of *Griselinia* and conifers, which can be removed in future if not required, and the main part has been planted with hardwoods including oak, ash, wych elm, Italian alder and blackthorn. The aim is to produce new habitats for birds and invertebrates, and to provide shelter for possible renewal of the old plantation in future. This project has been talked about for several years, but gained added impetus when grants from Natur Gwynedd (for promoting biodiversity in Gwynedd) became available. This paid for the new fencing, shipping and labour, but not the trees. An appeal to Observatory members brought in cash for these, and we found we could source what we needed from Dingle Nursery at Welshpool, Glynllifon Tree Nursery and surplus seedlings from Iwan Edgar (Trust Council member) and Dafydd Thomas (Trust Island Officer, all those years ago!). An orgy of ordering and digging then followed, and the little trees and stakes were ready to transport to Aberdaron for shipping; after a considerable delay (remember those



north end

gales?), they finally reached Enlli in December. David Barnden then worked hard to put them in the ground. Let's all pray that most of them survive the harsh conditions on the island! Geoff Gibbs

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What's exciting about the sea around Bardsey?

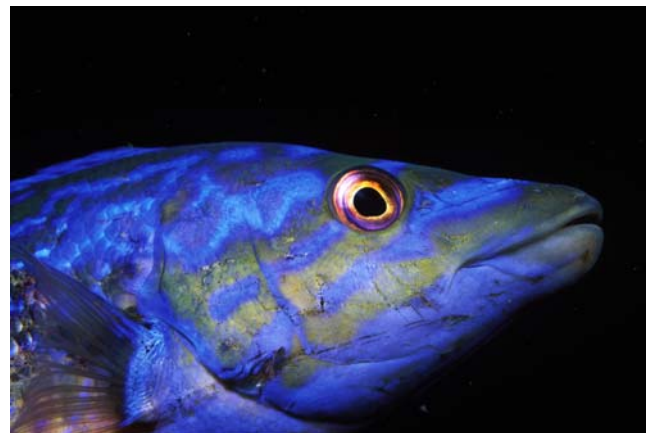


Figure 2: Sunfish

You may think that Welsh waters are cold and dark and not that exciting but nothing could be further from the truth. Welsh waters are cold but we have a fantastic array of marine wildlife in our waters. The area of sea around Wales equals the land area, so this gives you an idea of how vast our seas are. Back in 1992 the UK joined many other countries around the world at a conference in a bid to help our natural resources. As a result of this conference Europe decided to protect our wildlife and our habitats. To do this a network of sites have been established all over Europe and these are called Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). An SAC is designated if it has a good representation of a habitat or species that represents that area. Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC has twelve including bottlenose dolphins, otters, grey seals, sea caves, reefs and estuaries. The site begins in Morfa Nefyn on North Pen Llŷn and ends at the Afon Clarach near Aberystwyth. So the waters around Bardsey Island fall within the SAC. The two main habitats found at Bardsey are reefs and sea caves. Sea caves are full of animals that have

adapted perfectly to their surroundings such as bright anemones and encrusting bryozoans. As the coast is becoming more popular with dog walkers the caves are proving ever more popular with seals looking for a place to rest. The reefs around Bardsey are fantastic and are alive with all sorts of animals and colourful seaweeds. They provide shelter for thousands of animals ranging from delicate red seaweeds to lobsters. The most unique feature of Bardsey has to be the unusually deep waters around the island. These deep waters attract dolphins such as the Risso's dolphin and the Common dolphin that usually prefer deeper offshore waters. As you can see, our waters are much more exciting than they first appear and through the SAC we are hoping that they will stay this way for generations to come.

Alison Palmer Hargrave – SAC Officer



Boat to Bardsey-new arrangements

Visitors to Bardsey for the 2007 season will need to be aware of the new arrangements for crossing to the island. Weekly visitors will be traveling with Colin Evans aboard the Maria Stella / Benlli II from Porth Meudwy only. Transfer of luggage and provisions from Cwrt to the boat will be as usual. Boat tickets are purchased via the Trust office tel. 08458 112233 or post@enlli.org when your house booking is confirmed.

Daily visitors will travel with Tony Bruce from Pwllheli or Porth Meudwy aboard Highlander



II. Tickets are purchased directly by telephoning 07814 128620 / 08458 1136 554

drawing and painting in the academic tradition. Returning to North Wales in 1937 to live near Bangor with husband John

ISLAND ARTIST

BRENDA CHAMBERLAIN (1912 - 71)



Of the many visitors to Bardsey, those who have called in or stayed at Carreg will have viewed work by someone who belonged to a remarkable generation of artists and writers in Wales. Brenda Chamberlain possessed a combination of talents as both painter and writer of poetry and prose.



Fig : The Doves by Brenda Chamberlain

At Gwynedd Museum & Art Gallery, Bangor from June 28th until 1st September this year a selection of Brenda Chamberlain's paintings and engravings of people can be seen. This exhibition is prepared in collaboration with Jill Piercy who has, over a number of years, researched the life and works of Brenda Chamberlain as well as being a regular visitor to Bardsey.

Born in Bangor in 1912, Brenda Chamberlain had a happy childhood and, about the age of six, decided to become a painter and writer. She spent five years at the Royal Academy Schools studying

drawing and painting in the academic tradition. Returning to North Wales in 1937 to live near Bangor with husband John Petts, they enjoyed an idyllic time drawing, painting and writing. Brenda was at this time searching for her own style of painting to breakaway from her formal art training. At the outbreak of war however she found herself unable to paint and turned to the writing of poetry.

A chance visit to remote Bardsey Island in 1946 resulted in her decision to make Bardsey her home where she stayed until 1962. She left the lakes and mountains around Bangor for the more intense isolation of sea-rock. Her marriage had by now been dissolved.

Despite the hard work of daily living on the island she began to paint again. She painted life there, the fishermen, the children, the Abbey, fish and the sea. Many of her paintings of this time are recognised by their strong outline, bold colour and statuesque figures as seen in 'Children on a Hopscotch Pavement' (1951). 'The Christin Children' won a Gold Medal for Brenda in the National Eisteddfod of Wales in 1953. She had also previously won a Gold Medal at the National Eisteddfod in 1951 with 'Girl with Siamese Cat'.

From 1951 onwards Brenda spent most winters away from Bardsey with an old friend and his family in Germany where she drew many portraits of the children. She also went on painting holidays to France during this time.

The paintings on Bardsey were often done in difficult conditions and echo the elements of nature that play so large a part in her work. She wrote *"It was blowing force 11 from the nor'west. I fixed the small*



canvas on the slate chimney-breast, on the hook where my rosary hangs. On that terrifying day it seemed the safest place in which to paint."

The later works on Bardsey are based on the theme of 'sea-change' and became more abstract and atmospheric. The many years Brenda spent on a small island, almost always in sight of salt water, gave her a very special regard for the sea's appearances and mysteries.

In 1958 'The Green Heart', a book of poems was published and in 1962 'Tide-Race', Brenda's book based on life on Bardsey. In the autumn of that year Brenda went on a driving holiday from Switzerland to Athens. The following year she went to live for the next five years on the Greek island of Hydra. She wrote her third book 'The Rope of Vines' and began to combine word and image as seen in her 'Poems with Drawings'. Her work at this time took on a freedom and exuberance partly abstract and based on themes of islands, rocks and pebbles.

In 1968 Brenda returned to London with all her Greek work for an exhibition there but the London Gallery closed before it was shown. This was a blow to Brenda who, tired and depressed, returned again to Bangor.

Her play 'The Protagonists' was staged in Bangor and in 1969 her book 'Poems with Drawings' was published. Brenda's work grew increasingly stark – some show humour, most show sadness and lament. These last drawings were exhibited in Gregynog Hall in 1971. In July of the same year, Brenda Chamberlain died.

To see a selection of works by Brenda Chamberlain and for the gallery opening hours contact **Gwynedd Museum & Art Gallery, Bangor – 01248 353 368**

FROM THE ARCHIVE....

North Wales Chronicle 21st September 1928 SPORT ON BARDSEY. FOOTBALL INTRODUCED TO THE ISLAND

Life at Bardsey Island, which is the smallest habitable island in Britain, is becoming quite modern. Sport is being introduced to the island, and a football match was played the other day for the first time. The lighthouse keepers and the engineers who are employed erecting the new fog horn on Bardsey challenged the crews of the steamer "Beacon" of Holyhead, and the fishing smack "Kathleen" (Capt E Wright, Pwllheli) which are transporting machinery and materials to the island. The game was played in a field near the lighthouse by teams of nine aside. Meurig Jones, a Pwllheli visitor acting as referee. After a keen game the sailors' team won by two goals to one.

Love Pritchard, the late "King" of Bardsey, when he saw a football match at Pwllheli for the first time in his life a few months before abdicating his "throne" strongly disapproved of the game, remarking that players should be punished for throwing each other down in such a silly manner. Whether it was due to the old "King" being against sport, being firmly rooted in the islanders, or to the importance of harvesting the corn, the inhabitants carried on unconcernedly with harvesting and not one attended the match.

Transl.

Courtesy of the Gwynedd Archive Service

Looking Back: A Y



Now that my first season and my probation period is over it's time to reflect on the year and its events.

Looking back you tend to remember only the good things, and block out the unpleasant ones, and the past year was no exception. I've had some very happy and fulfilling times, and there have been times of annoyance and even utter misery.

Reading through the three page job description (which included the phrase "And a thousand and one other things") should have raised suspicion, but the opportunity of working and living on this island, which is so special in the history and traditions of Wales, clouded objective judgement.

Having been offered the job, arrangements were made for a trip over to the island one bright, sunny January day. *Bring your wellies*, they said. The track up the island was dusty dry (in January!) *It's a very special place*, they said, *it hardly ever freezes here and it never gets really cold*. Paradise, I thought. Returning in Pedryn, clipping over the gently rolling swell across the clear Sound with Colin waiting at Porth Meudwy to haul us out of the water (boat and all), I could hardly wait to get home to write my acceptance letter. But why did they say wear wellies? I wondered. Everything was arranged for me to start work in February. And that's when my problems began!

When I left Saudi Arabia it took a whole week to get all my household goods delivered to the house in Denbigh. It took ten days to deliver my stuff from Abu Dhabi. From Denbigh to Enlli took a month – bad weather!

To get me across took another week – and *this* crossing was rough, bouncing over the waves this time, and despite having my best waterproof anorak on I still

managed to get wet. And where were my wellies? Safely packed in one of the boxes!

Crossing with us that day were Jo Jones, Jenny and the girls having volunteered to open up the houses for the season. This was one of Enlli's miracles. Where would I have been without them? They had to organise themselves and find all the stuff they needed, because I didn't know where things were, not even the names of the houses for the first few days. As luck (or was it?) would have it the weather got worse – it even hailed – so that they couldn't leave. By the time they could go they'd got all the houses except Plas cleaned up and ready.

And this is how the year passed. Spells of calm sunny weather, with calm and cheerful visitors; other spells of tempestuous weather with no boats. When I get woken up in the middle of a Friday night by the wind rattling the windows I know that's the end of sleep for me that night because come morning I have to go round the houses with the good news that there'll be no boat today. Of course the first question is "When is it going to take us home?" The answer that is almost guaranteed to infuriate is, "I don't know." It's not long before a bedraggled procession can be seen winding its way down to Dynogoch; and if Colin is frowning and says he's not getting out of his chair that day, I do my best to hide because it's not long before they've made their way back. "Rain is pouring in through our windows." "These heaters are useless." "Our toilet paper is wet, we need a new supply, and besides it's unhealthy to have such a draught coming up through the seat." "All these things should have been sorted out last year!" "And if everything in the house happens to be all right, "the telephone doesn't work."

Strange things happen on hot summer nights here also sometimes. Spending the night on the mountain can be romantic, they say, but being kept awake all night by a



frightening ghostly pounding was not planned for. Reassurance the next morning that the only ghosts on the island lived in Ty Bach would not placate the ladies! It took a

Bardsey Photographic Competition



Would you like to see your photograph produced as a postcard?
Are you visiting Bardsey this year?... then don't forget your camera.

Bardsey Island Trust are looking for up to six original photographic images taken in the last three years of or on the island that would make interesting or stunning postcards. The competition is open to members and all visitors to the island and up to three images per entry can be submitted. Photographs must be submitted in digital format on CD. Judging will be done by a panel of judges and winners will be announced in January, 2008. The winner will receive a week's stay in one of the houses on the island (excluding high-season, consumables and boat fare) and runners up will receive a ticket for a boat trip around the island. The selected photographs will be printed as postcards and proceeds from sales given to Bardsey Island Trust.

Please contact the Trust office for an entry form.

This edition of the Cafn was produced by Delyth Gordon, Esther Roberts and other contributors. If you have an article, please write to 'Y Cafn' at the Trust.

Changes at Tŷ Pellaf, the island farm, will be seen this summer as David and Libby Barnden have relinquished their lease after four years and left the island for new horizons. Gareth Roberts of Cwrt farm whom many of you will know has taken over care of the island stock whilst new tenancy is arranged. More news will follow in due course as new arrangements are confirmed. *Watch this space!!*

Be a Volunteer

Volunteering is an opportunity to support Bardsey Island and the work of the Trust in maintaining the land and buildings of this working island and to protect its wildlife and natural beauty. There are a number of different volunteering opportunities on Bardsey from gardening, path clearing, cleaning and basic decorating to more skilled work involving building repairs. Individuals, groups and families are welcome to apply.

If you are looking for an interesting way to make a difference in conserving the environment and heritage of Bardsey, whatever your interests or skills, the Trust would love to hear from you.

