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# *Up the Creek...*

## Summer, what summer?

This year's appalling 'summer' weather provides the backdrop to most of *Up The Creek*. The spring was exceptional. Optimists gained a false sense of good things to come, while pessimists feared that the year's quota

of sun and gentle winds might have been exhausted. Whatever, the summer thus far has proved to be far worse than anyone feared, or for which many parts of the country were prepared. Will it improve before this year's sail-

ing season is a bad memory: who knows? The Tollesbury Cruising Club will, however, endeavour to salvage something from the season's wreckage for its long suffering ralliers.

## Life-jacket Checks

The need to check life-jackets regularly has been emphasised by the recent experience of friends and the message being promoted by the RNLI in its latest publications. Life-jackets should be examined yearly. Checking the basic condition of a life-jacket is relatively straightforward: the jacket

can be inflated manually to check its air-tightness; the bulb can be unscrewed and weighed to check for leakage of gas; and the firing mechanism can be tested when the bulb has been removed. If everything is found to be in good condition, there is the additional satisfaction of having

gained greater familiarity with the construction and functioning of an essential aid to safety. If, as my friend found, two of his life-jackets has expired, then lives could be saved by a timely examination.

**Barry Jones**

## Stop Press

Readers of *Up the Creek* may be sad to hear that the application for restoration funding for The Granary to the Heritage Lottery Fund has recently been turned down. The Mid-

Essex Historical Buildings Trust, the lead agency for the bid, is now considering what, if anything, can be done to secure sufficient funding.

### Contents

|                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Editorial.....p 1          | Holed Up in Hell Fire Corner.....p 4 |
| Stop Press.....p 1         | To Calais..or Ramsgate?.....p 5      |
| Commodore's Corner.....p 2 | Ostara's Summer Cruise.....p 6       |
| Racing Review.....p 3      | The Salvagem Islands.....p 7         |

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# Commodore's Corner.....Andy Hobden

## The Calais Rally

What a successful weekend the Calais Rally was. Fifteen Tollesbury Boats in Calais made us joint second for club numbers. How will we (or anyone) ever beat Benfleet's fleet of thirty-two boats? Most had a superb sail across; *Tongue Twister* managed the crossing in about eleven hours, arriving even before the first bridge. A full sail, joyous romp across lively seas with a good stiff breeze on the beam made for a memorable trip.

Even more impressive was the sight of Glen on *Wai Loa* trundling into Calais a few hours after us. In conditions that sailing boats revel in, his twenty-eight foot motorboat had had to be nursed across the swells and waves all the way. With no auto-helm and single-handed, it was an impressive feat.

Thirty-six Tollesbury Members sat down to a meal in Calais on the Sunday night, a pretty impressive turn out, before departing to **Gravellines, Dunkirk** and further afield.

## The Early Summer Cruise

It seemed like a good idea at the time! A year ago when I suggested the early summer Cruise to the Channel Islands it seemed an attractive proposition: the best time of the year; long balmy days; short mild nights; and fair winds. You can always dream!

The reality was very different. The unsettled weather in June culminated in the half dozen boats that left Tollesbury on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June for the delivery trip to

Eastbourne arriving in Dover with a force six to seven south-westerly blowing and huge seas coming down towards us. The faster boats had an hour or so of these conditions, the slower ones, *Tongue Twister* included, nearly three as they lost the tide.

With the forecast of more of the same, and with previous experience of having to return to Dover from west-going trips after battling these Southwesterlies, we stayed in Dover for the week.

The unsettled weather continued and with more strong winds forecast many of us made the decision to fly off to foreign parts for the first week, in the hope of better weather on our return. *Tongue Twister* went to the Algarve, *Aloha* to Greece, and *Breezer* to Spain. Others stayed in Dover and became experts on Dover castle and other local attractions.

The weather started settling for the second week of the cruise but any hope of the Channel Isles had long gone.

## Still Hoping!

As I write this (in late July) the weather still has not settled into 'summer' and it is getting near the time to look towards the end of the season. We have a very active programme for September and October and are hoping for an 'Indian summer', which could go some way to make up for the lack of a proper one.

With my two years' tenure as Commodore drawing to a close, this is the last 'Commodore's Corner' that I will write. It is

therefore time to thank the Vice- and Rear-Commodores, and the rest of the Committee, for all their support and assistance. My aim has always been to welcome new members into our group of friends and the Pontoon Parties and Barbecue's we have instigated in recent years have proved to be great icebreakers. It has been a pleasure to add many 'new members' to my list of friends. I know that next year's Commodore and committee will continue to build on TCC's success.

It is still a regret that more of our motor boating friends have not joined us on some of our cruises (with the notable exception of Glen on *Wai Loa*.) With the abolition of red diesel for yachts, maybe many of our motor boating friends will convert to sail. Either way, you will always be welcome to join us.

Finally, congratulations to Roy Clare (*Harmony*) who has been awarded a CBE. Many of you will know that until recently Roy was Director of the Maritime Museum at Greenwich. Roy has kindly agreed to be our guest speaker at the Laying Up Supper so the good news is that you will not have to listen to me for very long.

Wishing you all good sailing for the rest of the season.

**Andy Hobden**  
Commodore TCC  
*Tongue Twister*

# Racing Review.....Dave Knight

**I don't have to mention the weather and its impact on this year's program, I think you are all too well aware of the conditions. Who's to know if it is due to the sea temperature, The El Nino and/or global warming?**

The first race on the 5<sup>th</sup> May was **The Pursuit** and proved to be quite a nice day with light winds taking us up to Harwich. We all arrived into Suffolk Yacht Harbour just as it was getting dark. Yet again Robin and Jean Kemp proved to us all what an excellent light airs' boat *Polo IV* is, taking line honours and finished first overall followed by Paul and Jill Atkins on *Hiawatha* and Richard and Mena Little on *Nikita*.

The following weekend I cancelled the **Goldie Challenge Race** to Burnham due to the high winds. However *Dionysus* and *Herald* braved the conditions and still made it there, but it did involve much short tacking up the River Crouch in winds gusting F8!!!!

On the 9<sup>th</sup> June, eight of our boats competed in **The Wallet Shield** against the Colne Yacht Club and Wivenhoe Sailing Club. Wivenhoe were the organising club and fielded the largest team and won the day with their first 3 boats taking 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Tollesbury Cruising Club fared well with Andy Hobden taking first, *Dio-*

*nysus* 6<sup>th</sup> and *Aloha* 14<sup>th</sup>. The weather was kind but with very fickle light winds, one memory I have is of us beating out to the Wallet Spit Way Buoy with Paul Noyland in our boson's chair up by the radar reflector trying to untangle the halyards before we had to tack.

In the evening, Wivenhoe Sailing Club supplied an excellent BBQ at their Club House. Commodore Andy organised a 32 seater coach from Brightlingsea for all of our competing members plus a few from the Twister Association, so we really arrived in style.

## Ladies in the Lead

The following Saturday was **The Teapot** Lady Helm Race. With the conditions again being light, it suited *Tongue Twister* with Phillipa on the helm. We were however, all caught out by a large squall, where visibility reduced to ¼ mile whilst we were being pounded by heavy rain and large gusts. I think we all enjoyed the race even though we were soaked through. 1<sup>st</sup> *Tongue Twister*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Dionysus* with Hazel helming and 3<sup>rd</sup> *Mimosa* with Mags Timmins helming.

On the Sunday we ran **The Boudica**, Ladies Only Race, alongside **The Teddy Bear Race**. With only 4 entrants for the Teddy Bear and with light conditions, we shortened the

course. 1<sup>st</sup> Richard Little in *Nikita*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Dionysus* and 3<sup>rd</sup> *Herald*. Sadly we only had 2 entrants in the Boudica this year, but Mags and crew sailed *Mimosa* very competently (so much that she could have shown some of us guys up!) and took the trophy.

## More to Come

Looking forward, I am re-running **The Goldie Challenge** on the 19<sup>th</sup> August and am hoping to get confirmation of our booking for a meal at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club.

I always regard the premier race of the season, to be **The Wallet Long Race**, which is to held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September and hopefully this year's conditions will make it as challenging as ever.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> September we have our very own, Round the Island Race, **The King's Head Cup**, where we compete against Tollesbury Sailing Club in a race round Osea Island.

I really hope to see you all out on the water and joining in these events.

## Dave Knight

Rear-Commodore Racing  
*Dionysus*

# Holed-up in Hellfire Corner

Dover was dubbed 'hellfire corner' during the Second World War, when German bombs and shells rained down on town, docks and passing shipping alike. High winds and waves made it seem very like another kind of 'hellfire corner' for the gale-bound participants in this year's early season 'cruise to the Channel Islands'. *Zevkim* was one of some half a dozen boats which set out from Tollesbury early on the morning of Saturday the 23rd of June and battled against rising seas into Dover that afternoon, only to be stuck there, gale-bound, for anything between a week and ten days.

## Exploring Dover Castle

Fortunately, for the crew of *Zevkim* at least, Dover and the surrounding area was a new experience and is not without its points of interest. Dover Castle is a huge monument of major historic significance and considerable variety. The Roman lighthouse (Pharos), Norman keep, medieval walls and later buildings dominate the eastern side of the town and are in clear view from the harbour area. As the guide suggests, it could take a whole day to explore this amazing castle, inside and out, underground and over-ground. The under-cliff tunnels were constructed during the Napoleonic era and then extended considerably in the run up to the Second World War in time, fortunately, to provide an ideal base for the organization of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force, and allied troops, from Dunkirk in 1940. The scale and miraculous character of that evacuation

is difficult to exaggerate: the size of the force that was saved – over 250,000 thousand British troops along with some 80,000 allied French and Belgians - was some two and half times the total size of Britain's current armed forces. The benign state of the weather in May/June 1940 remains remarkable to those who found themselves wind-bound in Dover in June and July of Britain's summer of 2007.

On the day of our visit to the Castle, the strong north-westerly wind provided excellent visibility, giving wonderful views of the French coast. We could readily imagine how Vice-Admiral Ramsay, who masterminded the Dunkirk evacuation, could have surveyed the scene from the cliff-face balcony that adjoined his office in the tunnels.

## Bronze Age Boat

Dover Museum, in the centre of the town, is also fascinating for sailors. It contains the remarkable well preserved remains, and a partial reconstruction, of Europe's oldest sea-going vessel: a Bronze Age boat that was discovered when the new pedestrian under-pass was being constructed behind the sea-front some years ago. The display, and accompanying material, is of great quality: overall a gem of a discovery for the passing voyager.

## Eating and Drinking and other Essentials

Provisioning is also relatively easy in Dover. A large *Somerfield* supermarket is less than ten minutes walk from the marina and a central *Marks and Spencer's* has a modest food hall. *Somerfield's*

hot, roasted chickens, at some £1.79 a piece, were a great find. However, there are many possibilities for eating ashore, including the much visited (by bedraggled TCC sailors), one-price Chinese buffet at the *Chapter Eight* and the more up market *Cullins' Yard*, overlooking the Wellington Dock. The Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club offers the opportunity for a quiet drink in a welcoming and elegant surroundings. It is located mid-way along the Dover seafront and provides fine views across the harbour from its ground-floor bar and veranda. A gentle push on the main door at the 'back of the building' will allow entrance, even if all appears locked and deserted. Overall, Dover can meet many of the needs of passing yachties, including a well-stocked high street, a genuine 'old style' chandlers – *Sharp and Enright*, and the regular provision of detailed, up-to-date weather forecasts by the helpful staff of the marina.

## Regional Distractions

Once the pleasures of Dover have been exhausted, however, there are many other attractions in the *White Cliffs Country*, all readily accessible by bus or train: the architectural delights of *Sandwich*; the seaside resorts, and Tudor forts, of *Deal* and its close neighbour *Walmer*; and the other Cinque Ports of Hythe and Rye. Some of these will, however, have to await a future wind-bound episode for *Zevkim's* crew.

**Barry and Stephanie Jones**  
*Zevkim*

# To Calais...or Ramsgate?

## with Steve Swailes

“Thank goodness no-one from Tollesbury saw us coming in,” said Tammy, “that’s the worst bit of berthing that we’ve ever done...” Little did she know!

We had decided to join the Calais Rally on our first club-type cruise. *Meg Merrily*, our Sabre 27, was built during the late Middle Ages, but is a very solid sea boat. Unfortunately she has all the speed of an older lady out for a swim. We don’t normally notice this, but on a cruise in company relative speeds become depressingly apparent.

We left **The Leavings** at some ungodly hour with, I recall, a forecast north-westerly 4 to 5, locally 6. Andy Hobden whizzed past us looking full of confidence...what pretty boats Twisters are.

By the time we had reached the spitway buoy, everyone was disappearing ahead. We motor sailed for a bit and caught up a smidgeon. We passed north of the **Sunk Beacon**. Everyone had vanished. The wind against the tide was kicking up a nasty little chop. *Meg* was fine but her crew were not. Tammy was in her usual cruising in dodgy weather position...asleep below courtesy of heavy duty anti-chucking pills. We were whizzing, by *Meg* standards, along on a broad reach, rolling like the proverbial inebriated matelot. Through the **Fisherman’s Gat** we went. What on earth is a ‘Gat’? Is it the Russian pronunciation of ‘cat’?

After seven hours on the helm I worked out that we had another six hours to go to Calais. Isn’t GPS wonderful? I was starting to feel seasick; I never get seasick .....except on a rolling point of sail.

### Run for Ramsgate

I consulted with my crew. We decided that another six hours of throwing up was not exactly what summer cruising was all about and that we would make a run for Ramsgate. The run for Ramsgate was indeed that...ie a dead run. We goose winged and rolled even more.

Finally Ramsgate appeared. We had been there before when we stopped of on our way to a delightful sail to Boulogne last summer. I started the engine, set the radio to Port Control, and went to furl the genny. The stupid thing jammed. It has an open drum and if you don’t keep tension on the sheet and the furling line, it turns into a ghastly, tangliferous mess - which it did. I’ve been sailing for nearly fifty years. Do I let this kind of thing get me down? Yes, of course I do. I said some nautical things and set off forward. My hat blew off. “Hat Overboard!” I cried. A well-practiced rescue procedure swung into action....no it didn’t. We had two shots at getting my poor hat back and then left it to a watery grave.

We got the main down and I planned to put a lashing or two on the genny when we got in the shelter of the outer harbour. We got into exactly that place and I put two lashings around the forestay. The genny now looked like a wonky egg timer and continued to flap with the noise of mass applause.

### A Warm Welcome in Ramsgate!

We steamed into the inner harbour and straight down ‘H’ pontoon

which we knew were visitors’ berths. An official bloke shouted at us that the pontoon was full. We crept out backwards. *Meg* doesn’t handle brilliantly astern, at least not with me driving. But we managed to extract ourselves and moor on the big outside pontoon, between two Open 60s. Some nice French people helped us make fast. “You can’t stay here,” said the charming Ramsgate Harbour bloke. “There are some gaps down ‘G’ pontoon.”

I untangled the genny and the applause died away. We then did the only clever piece of seamanship that day by using a fender and a spring to get the stern sufficiently upwind to get off what was a Force Five lee shore. Round to G we went. First berth...with crosswind...we bounced in and wouldn’t fit. Some boats are very broad in the beam these days. Next hole I tried again. Another no go. Astern again narrowly missing a boat moored opposite. The owner stood watching from the cockpit. “There is no charge for the cabaret, today.” I said. He seemed less than amused.

Third time lucky and we made it, next to some friendly Dutch people. A helpful chap took our lines. Assuming he was off the Dutch boat I asked if he had come across the North Sea today? I spoke clearly and slowly to help him understand. “No,” he said “I’m from Tollesbury...just like you.” Blast!

**Steve Swailes**

*Meg Merrily*

# Ostara's 2007 Summer Cruise

## by Carole Robinson

This summer holiday was to be the first that we were able to take outside the school holiday period. About 10 days prior to departure, the Skipper began to get rather twitchy about the weather prospects. This was combined with his long hours spent in lawyers' offices where pauses between bouts of frenetic activity gave him time to fret and dream and allow his fingers to wander over the computer keyboard. The booking of a bareboat charter on the Ionian Sea in Greece just 1 week before the start of holidays was the result. Much to our delight, our eldest son was also free that week – and raring to go for some sunshine – as was one of his friends. So at 5a.m. on a rainy Sunday, the two halves of the crew converged on Gatwick airport, just ahead of the long queues forming as a result of the terrorist activity just a couple of days before, and a few hours later we landed in Preveza airport near the island of **Lefkas** in brilliant sunshine.

### Escape in the Sun

A 3 cabin Bavaria 36 – ironically named *Escape* - was waiting for us. After a drink at the nearby taverna, suggestions as to where we could go and a short introduction to the boat, we were on our way. Notes on the various islands had been supplied by Ionian Sailing. As I looked through it was taverna here, taverna there, indeed taverna everywhere. Used as we are to boat catering, all this taverna-ing seemed a bit much.

Well, when it came to it, we found that the tavernas were excellent and inexpensive and not only did we have our main meal at one each day at circa 60 to 80 Euros for all four, but the Skipper and I also had all but one breakfast ashore – and all but one of these was orange juice, bread, jam and coffee!

The weather was good, the sea was blue, the sky was blue, sailing was excellent and civilised without tides – overnight mooring was free! - the crew had a whale of a time, and there were several new experiences: mooring with the anchor out and the stern tied to a pontoon; and the use of lazy lines, not to mention negotiating the passeral. Well, for some of us! If there was water, you could sail, and if there was land you couldn't – no mud! The scenery was awesome – like Scotland with heat. We visited the islands of **Lefkas**, **Ithaca** and **Meganisi**. We also had a day out in a car, for the modest sum of 50 Euros and minimal paperwork.

### Back to the Wind and Rain

All too soon, we had to leave the sunshine and return to the UK. But we had missed the worst of the weather, and there followed a week on *Ostara* which was a very mixed event. We arrived at the marina in the rain. Good timing as Stewart and Wendy's new palace had just arrived so a glass of champagne and a tour of *Mornaque* finished off Monday nicely. We set off for **Calais** on

Tuesday at the reasonable hour of 8.30a.m. in fine weather and no wind so motored to **North Foreland** after which the sails took over and we arrived 10 hours later and were put in a box for the 2 nights we stayed. We had dinner in **Le Channel**, our favourite restaurant in Calais, and bought the obligatory and very nice croissants and returned with a large French tart before setting off back on Thursday before the predicted higher winds for the rest of the week. Not only did we get to North Foreland before a forecast Force 6 in that area, but it dropped there to a Force 3 and was the quietest part of the passage; this time sailing all the way but again for only ten hours - a marked reduction on the thirteen hours it used to take. We had one very windy night at anchor in **Pyefleet**, before returning to the marina for a couple of quiet nights and writing up the log of the cruise. Well, that was the intention, but rescues from the water and visits to Colchester Hospital did keep one busy. Our best wishes go to Peter of *Ciendra* for a speedy recovery.

We returned home on the Sunday evening to finish our holiday at the cinema – a rare event – to watch the latest Harry Potter film which is to be recommended.

Thus ended Ostara's early summer cruise for 2007.

**Carole Robinson**  
*Ostara*

# Sailing to the Salvagem Islands

## With Andy Hobden

It was summer 2006 as we approached **Salvagem Grande** gingerly. Anne Hammick's *Atlantic Islands Pilot*, (published by Imray) suggested all sorts of hidden horrors like the **Baixa da Pta Esphina** and the **Baixa da Joana**: rock's hiding just under the surface ready to jump out and attack us. Helpfully the pilot says that they only mention the worst dangers and that The Islands did not get their name for nothing.

The pilot even suggested that the islands were not exactly where shown and requested accurate up to date WGS84 GPS readings. (For your future interest the main anchorage in the centre of the bay at **Salvagem Grande** is 30°08'.394N, 015°52'.307W).

We had sailed *Lhasa*, Chris and Carol's Oyster 435 from **La Gomera** to **Madeira**, normally a 290 mile slog to windward against the prevailing north easterlies. Luckily the wind died 30 hours out so we motored the rest of the way, arriving in **Madeira** after 54 hours at sea. We moored in **Calheta Marina**.

The original plan to sail back to **La Gomera** by way of Lanzarote and the other Canary Islands was ditched in preference to doing Madeira 'properly.' So we stayed a week, hired a car and explored. **Madeira** is a stunning island and well worth a visit. The engineering in their tunnels and roads is incredible. You can drive up into the mountains, around 2000 metres high, to wander above the clouds, slide down the road from **Monte** in a wicker basket or walk through a volcano. It is an island of contrasts.

On the south side it rarely rains. On the north side, only a few miles away, they get over 2 metres of rain a year. *Levadas*, water channels built centuries ago to transfer water across the island now form the basis for the islands extensive network of footpaths. Our time there flew by too quickly.

### On to the Salvagem Islands

Although we had intended to sail straight back to La Gomera, a chance conversation with an English yachtsmen working in **Funchal** suggested that a stop at the Salvagem Islands would be worthwhile. **The Salvagem Islands** are

Madeira group and belong to Portugal. There are only three anchorages where it is allowed (and possible) to anchor and technically a permit is required to land. With the help of our new friend, the Permit was quickly gained although we later found out that the staff of Calheta Marina will arrange it as part of their service.

We made an early start from Madeira hoping to arrive at the Salvagem Islands with the sun high enough to show up any submerged dangers. We sailed for a while and then motored towards the Salvagem Islands as, once again, the wind died on us. Our course from



*Lhasa at Salvagem Grande*

tiny, **Salvagem Grande** is less than a mile square and barely shows as a dot on my Atlantic Chart. The Islands form part of the

Calheta Marina was 157°T the distance 169nm. None of the offshore underwater rocks shown on the

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

chart were seen as the swells were not big enough to break over them.

A few miles out we were joined by Atlantic Spotted Dolphins for a while. A bit later a large amount of splashing seen towards the ho-

recently been placed just outside The Bay. Meant for the supply ship (AKA the Portuguese Navy) visiting yachtsmen are welcome to use it when vacant: safe, but a bit exposed to the swells. When we arrived there were two Norwegian yachts tied to it so we crept into

nesting place for the *Corey Shearwaters*. Their haunting 'nag nag, nag' cries sound like a little old lady. One Norwegian Gentleman probably did not impress when he asked what they tasted like 'as in Norway we would eat them'. Hopefully he was joking.

One or two yachts a day visit the islands in the summer. None in the winter when southerly gales cause the waves to break over the wardens' hut. There is a single fresh-water spring on the island but we were told 'it does not taste very nice'. The 'rainy' season is from November to March but 'it might not rain for five years'.

We finished off our day at the island with a superb barbeque on board as we enjoyed the sunset in probably one of the most beautiful but spooky and remote anchorages you could wish to find.

Next morning we again manually hauled up the anchor and motored across to have a look at **Salvagem Pequena**, the only other 'inhabited' island. The pilot says the anchorage is only for calm weather and the wind and swells had picked up overnight. As we approached we watched the long Atlantic rollers turn into stunning turquoise breakers as they crashed onto the eastern end of the Island. Salvagem Pequena gets far fewer visitors due to the more exposed anchorage. The wardens here apparently get lonely and welcome visitors as they get so few but the anchorage looked uncomfortable and with the thought of manually pulling up the anchor again we reluctantly turned *Lhasa's* bow towards **La Gomera** and the end of our cruise.

Andy Hobden  
*Tongue twister*



*Corey Shearwater Chick*

zizon turned into a school of the much larger Bottlenose Dolphins bounding over to us, as if to welcome us to the island.

There are two permitted anchorages on **Salvagem Grande**. The one on the east side of The Islands is said to be OK in westerly winds but looked very exposed when viewed from the cliffs in a north-easterly. The normal anchorage and probably the only safe landing is on the south side and is overlooked by the wardens hut. The Islands are now a nature reserve. The only human inhabitants are the wardens and other scientists who come to study the wildlife.

### **Lotus Eating in The Bay**

A large ships' mooring buoy has

the Bay and anchored in about 14 metres over a rocky bottom. The anchor promptly dragged which was when we found out that the windlass had seized up. We pulled up the anchor manually and tried again, fortunately successfully. It is probably not an anchorage to spend weeks in, overnight was enough and many people would find it better to arrive early, see the island, have a swim, and leave at dusk for a more comfortable night at sea. We were lucky in that it was quite calm

The snorkelling in The Bay is highly recommended, especially around the slipway. The wardens gave us a guided tour round the Islands explaining the ecology and the importance of the Islands as a