



**Name:** Peter Morgan.

**Date:** Early 1990's.

**Location:** Skomer Island, Pembrokeshire.

**Title:** Benthic Surveys: Missing the seabird islands and the sea, 1990's.

**Memory:**

"In the early 1990's The Department of Zoology, NMW in conjunction with the University of Bangor, started benthic surveys of the Irish Sea.

On the first one I had the pleasure of counting marine mammals and seabirds using NCC standardised methods. The scientific recording, undertaken from a platform above the bridge gives an uninterrupted view of the sea ahead which one would think would permit easy identification of most things seen, but for wish fulfilment and over enthusiasm. Having dissected 2 Leatherback Turtles and never having seen a live one, even off the American Coasts, this was the time for one at last. Unfortunately the call on a bobbing black shape which required a small turn of the ship turned on close inspection to be a very bloated dead sheep which had lost all the wool off the belly!! My other records of birds and mammals during that survey are sound!

Two major memories of that trip remain forever; one as we approached the convergence, I could see Gannets diving and on closer inspection hundreds of Common Dolphin beneath then even closer Storm Petrels feeding with a Wilsons Petrel. At dusk the sea turned deeper and deeper pink, and as I looked towards Skokholm and Skomer I could see slight movement as hundreds of Manx Shearwaters made their way to the islands.

This area has a special significance for me since my great-grandfather, William Morgan was First Mate on the Rhiwabon when on 29th January 1884 it was shipwrecked on the Smalls. One of only seven to survive he continued to sail for several years, retiring like many a Master Mariner to live in Cardiff.

The Pembrokeshire coast and especially the islands always bring special thoughts.

Peter Morgan"