

72. St. Margaret's Island

South of Giltar Point, Caldey Island, near Tenby, Pembrokeshire

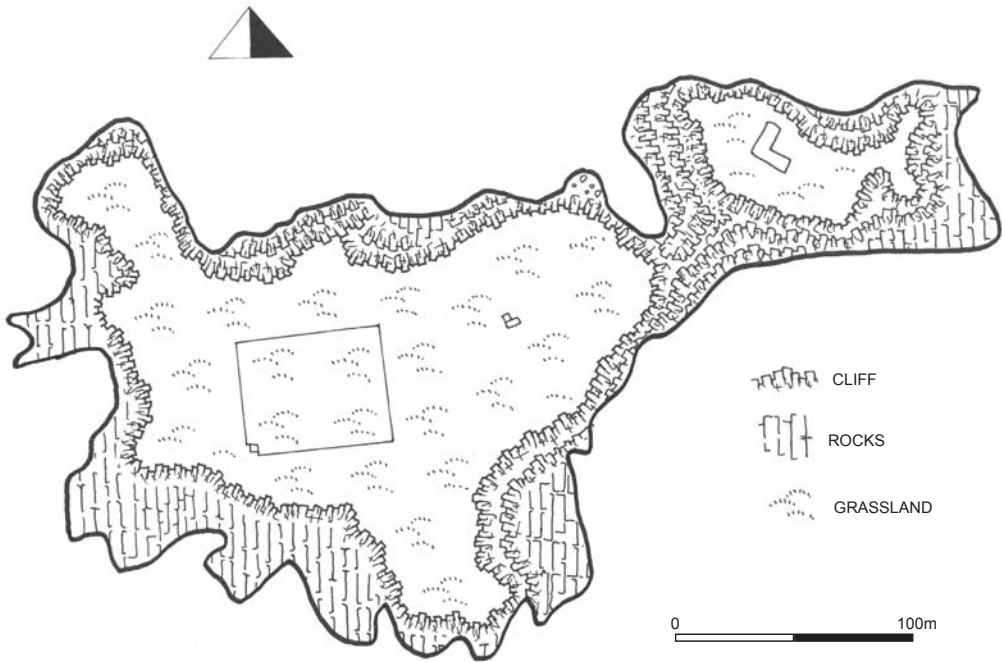
Grid References	O.S. Explorer map OL36 South Pembrokeshire. Site centre: SS120973
Status	SSSI.
Tenure	Leased from the Picton Castle Estate since 1950.
Size	7 ha (17.3 acres).
Location and Access Notes	Island situated near Tenby, off the western tip of Caldey Island. Access restricted and landings are difficult. Contact the Wildlife Trust Officer for Pembrokeshire for more information. Access across to the island via the boulder beach at low tide from Caldey is extremely dangerous and should not be attempted.
Public transport	Good views from the mainland at Tenby, and Caldey Island, which can be reached by boat from Tenby.

Description: The island is principally limestone with the spectacular vertical western cliffs being the southern outcrop of the famous South Pembrokeshire Syncline. The southern slopes are shattered and eroded, and there are several stacks of over 30 metres immediately south of the island.

Signs of past human activity include extensive quarry workings, and associated quarrymaster's houses, and a small field with a bothy on the large island. More extensive buildings on the small island include the ruins of three houses, formerly a large chapel, and there is evidence of religious connections since at least 1748. By 1851 the island had been abandoned.

The seabird colonies are mainly confined to the northern and western cliffs, with strong colonies of Guillemot, Razorbill and Kittiwake. The principal nesting species is the Cormorant, this being one of the largest in England and Wales. A few pairs of Puffins breed in rock fissures, but Brown Rats are known to be on the island which precludes the spread of any colonies. Shag also breed, as well as Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Great Black-backed Gull.

The top of the island is dominated by Red Fescue with Common Nettle, Hogweed, False Oat Grass and Cocksfoot. Vegetation on the seaward edges is poorer, although species to be found include Sea Beet, Common Scurvy Grass and Common Mallow, with Red Fescue.



Management Objectives: Current management is limited by difficult access, and confined to monitoring of the seabird populations.