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## THIS ISLAND LIFE

### DISCOVERING BRITAIN'S OFFSHORE GEMS

*Mary E. Gillham*

Few of us have not dreamt of living on an island, away from it all, and sovereign over our own land. Yet few of us ever realise our dream, even for a few days, despite the wealth of opportunities a mere boat trip away from our shore. *This Island Life* takes the reader on a journey to a variety of Britain's islands, some well-known, others less frequented, and explores through words and pictures the flora and fauna, and human occupation found there. From precipitous crags to coastal sand bars, from acid bogs to limestone pavements and from clamorous sea-bird colonies to bleak heather moors, each island has its own unique quality. On some the islanders scratch a living from tiny walled fields in a land of more rocks than grass, while on another an Italian garden has been conjured from the rockscape, by courtesy of the Gulf Stream.

Each of these unique eco-systems, each with their own special wildlife, provide scientists with a barometer of change and, as a professional ecologist, the author studies the fragile balance of nature, now under threat from global warming.

**Dr Mary E. Gillham** was born in 1921. The pressing of flowers and writing of nature diaries loomed large in her formative years, and she worked through the war years in the Women's Land Army. After training as a professional botanist specialising in island ecology, she became a lecturer, principally in the University of Wales at Cardiff, but for shorter periods in Universities at Exeter, Melbourne, Palmerston North (New Zealand) and Kano (Nigeria).

Field work was an important part of her lecturing years and she conducted parties (of undergraduates and interested adults) on eco tours at home and abroad. Her 'guided walks' ranged from regenerating coal tips to the Seychelles – her island research studies from the sub-Antarctic to the Tropics. In retirement she lives on the lower slopes of amountain near Cardiff.



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*An Island Revisited*
2. **Cape Clear, Co. Cork**  
*An Island Bird Observatory*
3. **The Skelligs, Co. Kerry**  
*Island mountains*
4. **Garinish Island, Co. Cork**  
*An Island Garden*
5. **The Aran Islands, Co. Clare**  
*A Sea-girt Limestone Reef*
6. **Inishbofin and Achill Island, Connemara**  
*Moorland, Wild and Tamed*
7. **Manx - The Isle of Man**  
*A Little Bit of Everything*
8. **Walney Island, Cumbria**  
*Sand Spit, Dune and Saltmarsh*



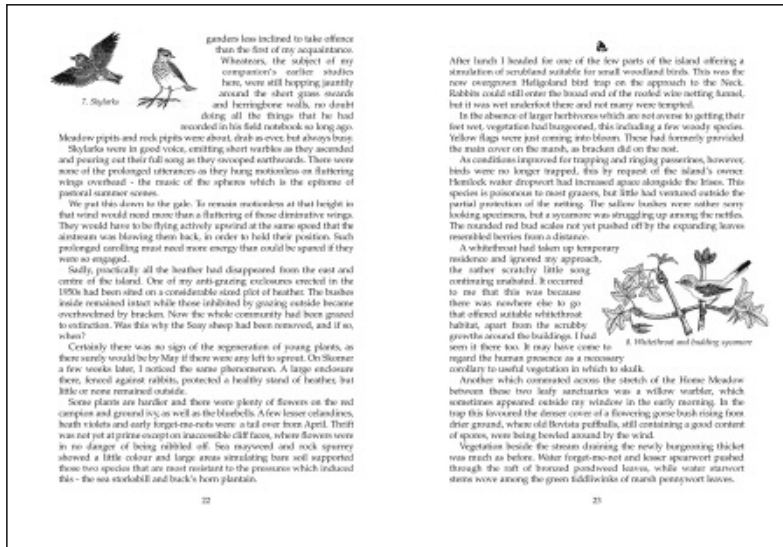
O'Driscoll's Castle, used by gulls and Hooded Crows



Puffins



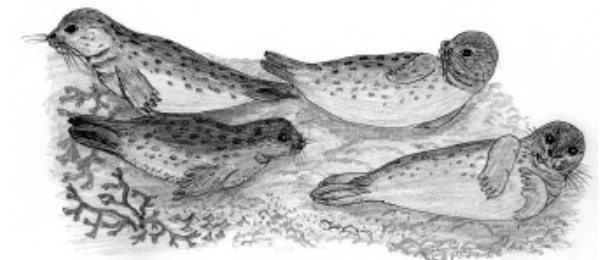
Skokholm Neck, view to Skomer and Middleholm



Example of a double page spread.



Bloody Cranesbill, most colourful of grike colonisers



Harbour Seals



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