

MEGAVISSEY HARBOUR AQUARIUM

Text by David Marshall

Photographs by Sue and David Marshall



Background

The Cornish coastal town of Megavissey is best described as a 'sheer delight'. Narrow streets (beware of traffic being very relevant), housing an amazing assortment of small shops, lead into what is without doubt the most picturesque small harbour I have ever seen.

The trail leading Sue and I to the Harbour Aquarium had begun a decade ago when Alan Holmes (a former Secretary of the now, sadly, disbanded York & District A.S.) told us all about the wonderful aquarium situated on the South Quay at Megavissey, which the local people proudly boasted of as being 'the smallest aquarium in the World'. Finally arriving in the town, September 2008, we could find no directions to the South Quay so asked the lady in charge of the local Tourist Information point, 'Do you have an Aquarium'? To this question the lady replied, in a very proud manner, 'We certainly do!' and pointed us in the right direction (you virtually walk as far as you can to the right of the main harbour area and underneath the cliffs).



Before we look at the Aquarium of today a little history. The Aquarium is housed in the former R.N.L.I. Lifeboat House. Opened in the mid-1950's The Aquarium remained relatively unchanged until 2004 when it was discovered that part of its concrete make-up had

deteriorated very badly. At this point the building was closed down before £50,000 was raised, with some help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, in order to make both the building safe and add modern information boards that would allow visitors to learn all about the various native marine creatures on view in the display aquariums. The newly restored Aquarium, thus, re-opened on 8th June 2006 as a seasonal attraction which is open from April to September, 11.00a.m. to 5.00p.m.

Today

Amazingly admission to the Megavissey Harbour Aquarium is free! Visitors are welcome to make a donation and all of the money raised goes towards the general upkeep of the harbour.

Walking through the entrance you are immediately struck by the impression that this is a 'much loved' enterprise. No gift shop or café area here, just seven large display aquaria in which all the exhibited creatures appeared to be very healthy and happy in the surroundings of well thought out décor. None of these aquaria are overstocked so the creatures, mainly fish, have ample room to move around.



The Aquarium Aquarist busy with maintenance work

At the time of our visit the opening aquaria was home to some very impressive Conger eels (*Conger conger*) that had Dogfish (genus *Scyliorhinidae*) and Lobsters for company. If you have never truly seen living specimens of many of the species offered for sale on your local fishmongers slab then here are Cod (genus *Gadus*), Plaice (genus *Pleuronectes*) and many more in all their living glory.



Dogfish



Conger Eel



Tompot Blennies

Some beautiful Wrasse (genus *Labrus*) caught my eye while the Tompot Blennies (*Parablennius gattorugine*), featured in one of our photographs, lazed about entwined in the décor.

In conclusion I strongly recommend a visit to Megavissey Harbour Aquarium. You will not be disappointed by the Aquarium itself or by both the natural and man-made beauty that surrounds it.

**The Harbour Office,
Mevagissey,
Cornwall PL26 6QU
Tel: 01726 843305**

[Street Map](#)