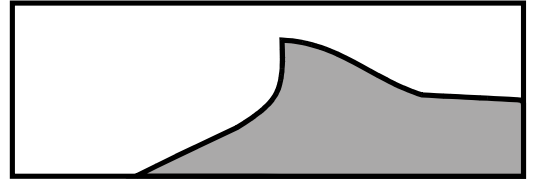


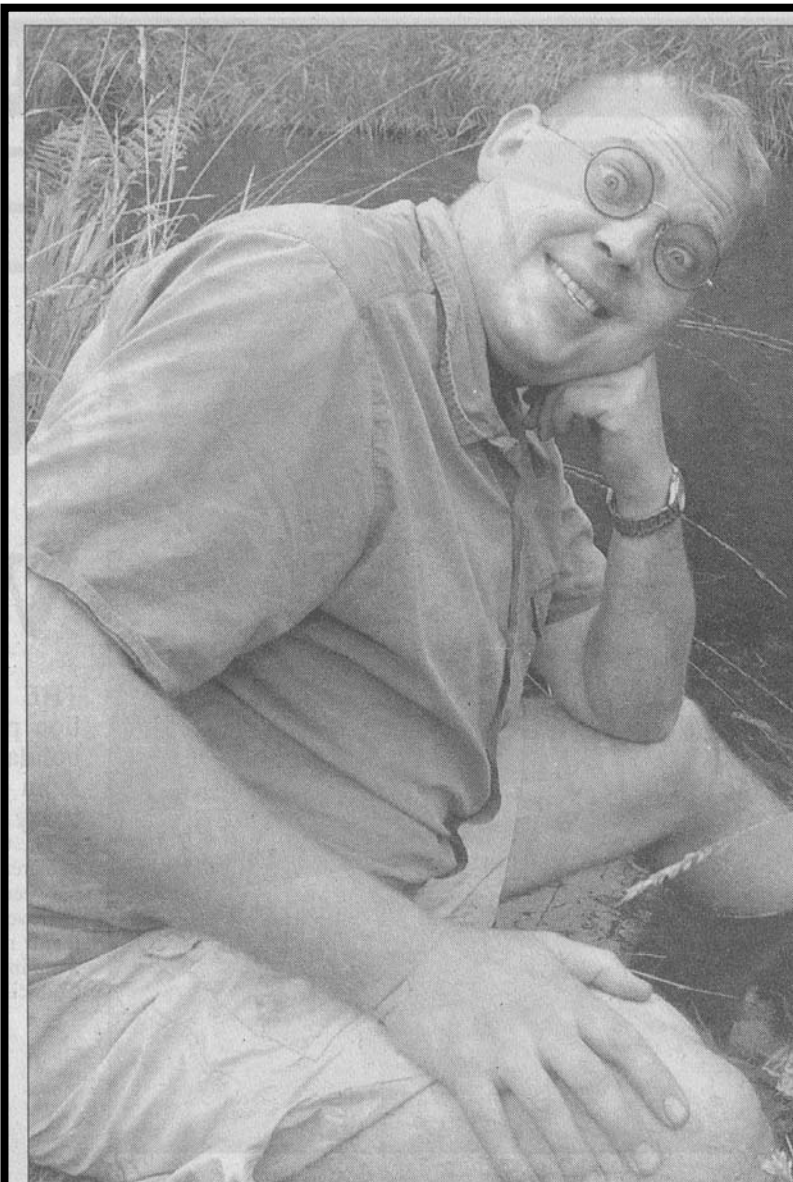
South Wales Porpoise Project

18 Mary Street, Neath. SA11 1PN. UK
(01639) 633947 • www.gmmp.org.uk • office@gmmp.org.uk



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PLEA South Wales Porpoise Project co-ordinator Howie Watkins

Pod leaves porpoises plan adrift

NEATH'S very own wildlife wizard Howie Watkins is all at sea after his pet project hit the rocks.

The Really Wild Show star is co-ordinating the South Wales Porpoise Project which uses sophisticated technology to help scientists understand more about the elusive creatures.

But the project has suffered a major setback after a listening device known as a pod mysteriously vanished offshore from near Port Talbot. The project has placed a string of pods from Kenfig to Carmarthen Bay. They are around 2ft long and look like a piece of drainpipe with a cap on the end.

With financial help from the Countryside Council for Wales and Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend councils, the project team has been using pods to listen for the high frequency clicks and peeps that dolphins and porpoises use to navigate.

"The pods are a sophisticated combination of detector and computer," said Howie. "They listen for sounds inaudible to the human ear and then record the ones we want, ignoring boat engines, fishing boat sonar, shifting sand and a whole lot of other sea noises."

"We've placed five of them in the Bristol Channel, in a line from Kenfig to Carmarthen Bay. Although they've only been in the water for two months, we've already made some fascinating new discoveries."

"The pod that's gone missing, Pod 109, had previously recorded porpoises nearly every day in the Kenfig area."

☎ Can you help? Call the project on 01639 633947.