

On reaching the island, the men and stores were quickly ferried ashore by the small boats. By excellent arrangements, the tractor and trailer provided the lifting power we badly needed to haul everything to the Old Light, which was to be our operational base for the next six days.

Quick observation of the location, with reference to our Great Circle map, indicated that our main aerial, a three-element beam (rotatable) would need to be erected in a spot where a clear field of fire to the North-East and West could be gained.

All the radio equipment we used is mains voltage operated, therefore it was essential we had our own supply. For this we included two portable generators. To keep them running continuously for six days we used over sixty gallons of petrol. The fuel tank of each generator is not large enough and only gives a maximum of two hours running. With the aid of an alarm clock we were able to maintain a continuous supply of power for everything, including our electric kettle and razors.

It was exactly 1856 hours GMT on the Sunday that we made our first contact, probably the first ever amateur radio signals to be transmitted from LUNDY, with RHODE ISLAND, NEW JERSEY and NEWFOUNDLAND. By midnight we had logged another sixteen countries.

During the remaining five days our aim was to make as many contacts as possible, working in all the amateur assigned frequency bands. We used all known modes of operation, such as hand speed morse, radio teleprinter and voice. Our list of countries soon grew, adding THE AZORES, PUERTO RICO, MONACO, LEBANON, GAZA STRIP, AUSTRALIA, to name a few. ANGOLA, ZAMBIA, ECUADOR and ST. VINCENT dependencies came in at considerable signal strength after trying a special mode of transmission. We can boast a best rate of contact in one hour of eighteen; this happened during one evening session.

After one hundred and thirty-six hours of continuous working, the results achieved were quite surprising. A summary from the log book shows that 500 contacts were made throughout 70 different countries. Included in these were eleven of the Russian States.

The night before we finally closed the station, a small gathering in the Marisco Tavern was arranged. Here we had the pleasing of thanking Mr. F. W. Gade for his valuable assistance. We also presented to the islanders our regimental pennant, that had been flying from the aerial mast for the six days. This will at least signify "we were there"!

An interesting footnote is that just before leaving, Mr. A. P. Harman told us that a group of Belgian amateurs had enquired about getting permission to be the first amateurs to transmit from Lundy. Ironically our call sign GB3LPC had successfully been the first to do it.

BIRD OBSERVATORIES CONFERENCE OF THE BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY

The Annual Conference was held on the 8th and 9th of January at New College, Oxford. We are most grateful to one of our Members, Richard Carden, for representing the Society, and sending in the following comments.

The first formal session opened with a talk by Dr. Peter Evans on the "Relevance of Field Observations to Migration Problems", which was intended to be provocative. In it, he suggested for instance, that Observatories might only see the exceptional occurrences in migration—the spectacular fall of September drift migrants on the East Coast, where at Minsmere alone some 50 different species included 4,000 Wheatears and 7,000 Redstarts; the scattered rarities from South-Eastern Europe which occur in most years; or the odds and ends from America which find their way across the Atlantic in freak conditions. He thought that we should consider whether a collection of Observations from coastal Observatories,

built up wholly or largely of records of birds off course or held up, was really the best way of researching into migration. Without suggesting the whole system of Observatories was giving unrepresentative results, he wanted it thought over afresh. Perhaps the present picture of the routes birds were following and the times they were choosing to migrate was unbalanced because most observations were taken at places where the bulk of migrants did not touch down, and points which birds were only using when they were in difficulties. He brought the same criticism against the Inland Observation points, on the grounds that they probably only observed birds which were moving conspicuously low, or using natural features as aids to navigation, because of unusual weather conditions. All this seemed to leave very little of scientific value in the present organisation! The conclusion was that the only medium for really seeing birds moving en masse under natural and normal conditions was to use radar!

I thought this was the most interesting of all the talks actually. Certainly the clearest and most controversial. The gathering was pacified subsequently by Peter Davis, who said in effect that those Observatories which still felt so inclined could stay open for the benefit of people who indulged in the quite respectable pastime of bird-watching for pleasure!

The second talk was from Tom Gladwin, on the "Standardized Methods of Measurement". This was presented as a frayed and desperate appeal for some sort of system to be imposed on ringers taking wing, bill and tarsus measurements, and weighing their birds. At present, it appears, there are at least three ways of measuring some limbs, and several conventions with regard to rounding off weights. Mr. Gladwin illustrated his point with instances where the using together of sets of data conforming to different conventions had led to a margin of error which, given the smallness of the figures involved, rendered them worse than useless. The conclusion of this talk and the discussion afterwards was that as such measurements had to be really accurate to be useful, there was no purpose at all in using data from a number of different observers. If a person wanted accurate and reliable measurements for any purpose he should have to take them all personally.

My own view, for what it is worth, is that while bill, wing, tarsus and tail measurements vary too much to have any purpose, it is possible to be careful enough over weighing a bird to make this at least useful. Also, the conclusions which can be drawn from a series of weights are more immediately interesting, I think, and this is another argument for continuing it.

After tea and in the evening session, a number of slides and films were shown by various contributors, followed by more lectures and talks.

On the second day of the Conference Peter Davis opened with remarks about the health of the various Observatories, welcomed new wardens, and appealed on behalf of Lundy for anyone who knew of a potential warden, or would like to take it over for a season—which was very good of him, I thought. Encouraging to know that someone at the centre cares about us!

There were remarks about the usefulness of the Conference itself at this stage, from which it emerged that people generally would like an opportunity for some if not all of the wardens to give reports individually—as I believe used to happen at one time. My own view, again, was that the timetable was too full and that there was not enough time for informal circulating to chat with people and see what they were doing. Not being a warden, I am not sure what they want out of the Conference, but I gathered from those I did talk to that they rather felt they had lost the limelight and been pushed to one side in the flurry of scientific ornithologists and travellers showing their holiday films! To my mind, if it is to be an Observatories Conference, then there should be more place for observatory business in the programme—and I think that would probably best be done informally. There seemed to be too much visual entertainment—quite enjoyable, but not altogether to the purpose, however interesting it is to see exotic species in their home habitats. The most interesting sessions were the two described above, and Peter Davis!

Peter Davis, having elicited comments on the nature of the Conference, proceeded to go through the "Guide to Ageing and Sexing" species by species, with the points that have been discovered during the past year. (I have access to copious notes on this stage of the proceedings, if anybody would like them). I suppose this was the most solidly utilitarian section of all. The points were each thrown open to discussion and many were contested by ringers from their own observations. There ought to have been sessions on the lines of this one, covering other topics, too. (Good 'conferring' at this point!).

After lunch on the second day we were shown more films and slides, and the Conference closed at 5.30 p.m.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS, LUNDY 1966/67

Introduction

The summer of 1966 saw the biggest archaeological expedition yet to visit Lundy. Some 30 people from all parts of England and two from the U.S.A., were engaged on excavations and surveying for two weeks, being visited at times by press and T.V.

Unfortunately Society funds do not permit full publication here but it is hoped to present a more detailed thesis in one of the mainland archaeological journals. This report must therefore be a summary of the results of recent field-work together with a resumé of the state of knowledge to date.

1. Middle Park II.

Following the identification of the huts and field enclosures at Halfway Wall as Late Bronze/Early Iron Age (L.F.S. 1964, p. 30) a brief investigation was carried out on a bi-cellular structure at SS/1370.4580. Again pottery of the first few centuries BC was abundant and further excavation is intended at a future date.

2. Beacon Hill I.

Seventy yards south of the Old Light at SS/1320.4425 are several apparent hut mounds. Excavation of the largest revealed a circular hut with 9 ft. thick cobble wall lined on the inside with granite slabs. Finds included a poor barbed and tanged arrowhead and a quantity of coarse pottery, again of the same broad S.W. type of the first few centuries B.C.

A low field boundary is noted running north-east, where it seems to be dissected by the Cemetery ditch, and continuing across field 32, possibly linking with the fields in plot 33 and 36, either side of the High Street.

3. Bulls Paradise Site III

Excavation continued on the ditched Medieval structure at SS.1365 44.28. An area N. of the 7 ft. wall was uncovered and with the aid of electro-resistivity equipment a second mass of masonry was discovered 60 ft. to the south.

The sequence of events here is now interpreted as follows:—

Phase I. Ditch and primary building represented by traces of a wall and flagstone floor. Pottery on floor and in primary silt of ditch is similar to mid 12th century fabrics from Devon and Cornish sites.

Phase II. Site levelled with pad of basalt 'concrete' sealing in pottery of a fabric similar to that found at Jenny's Cove I (q.v.). Main wall inserted in basalt pad.

Phase III. The northern wall shows signs of levelling and both this and the southern masonry is covered with rubbish of 13th century and later.

The general inference is that a defended building was constructed by the mid 12th cent., was levelled and rebuilt and demolished by mid 13th. This fits the period of the first Marisco occupation with a foundation date about 1150 A.D. an increase in fortification about 1220 A.D. and an enforced eviction and re-building scheme in 1242 A.D.