

TREE PLANTING 1982 — 1983

THE SELECTION OF PLANTING SITES

Two criteria were important in the selection of planting sites.

First, it was thought important to plant trees that will eventually replace the mature, and in some cases dying and dead trees we have inherited from the Victorians. This is now an urgent task, hopefully to be completed in the near future.

Second, to plant in new areas so as to enhance the beauty of the island, support wildlife, and hopefully provide pleasure for visitors and islanders in the future.

To bring such a project anywhere near completion will take several years. The most reasonable course of action seemed to be, therefore, to start near the centre of population in the south, and work gradually northwards. The sites selected on this basis are as follows:- (see map for details — letters refer to letters on maps).

A. Millcombe Valley North. Above path, a large, clear area with overhanging branches of mature trees. This sheltered area was planted with field maple. Below the path, very mature Monterey pines predominate. A few beech and oak were planted, with the intention of further planting at a later date.

B. North of the Ugly. The grassy area between the rhododendrons and the Ugly. This seemed a choice plot for new planting. It is visible from the very popular walk around the Ugly, it is at the start of the upper east side path, while the lower path runs along the bottom. Planting here may also stop the march of the rhododendrons.

C. Millcombe Valley, Bluebell Wood. Perhaps the most popular and well established wooded area on the island. The majority of the beech were planted here underneath the now mature Victorian trees. Oak was planted in less shady areas. There is still scope for more planting in this area.

D. Millcombe Valley, extreme east. The bottom of this valley was unplanted, although the growth of existing trees on the upper slopes (especially oaks on the north side) suggest that this site may not be as affected by easterly winds as might be expected. Trees planted here will be visible from the road. It is also an important area for birds.

E. Millcombe Valley, path to Brambles. Underplanting with beech and a small amount of oak in mature woodland. Field maple was planted on the grassy area north east of Brambles gate to complement sycamores on the other side of St. John's Valley stream. The height of these sycamores suggest that this may be quite a sheltered area. Visible from the road as well as the Millcombe — Brambles path. Important area for birds.

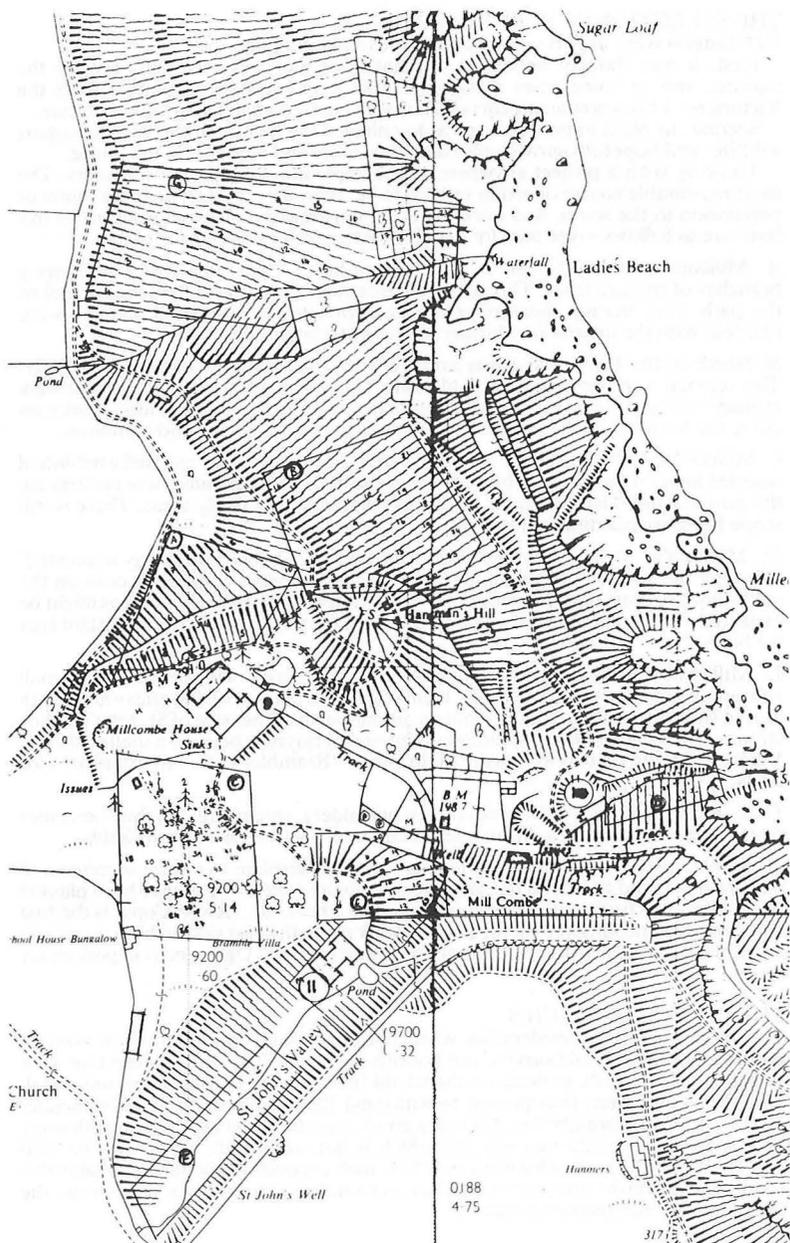
F. St. John's Valley. Twelve trees (aspen and alder) were planted in this sometimes boggy, very exposed area. More trees in this area would seem to be desirable.

G. St. Helens Copse. The intention here was to underplant to ensure succession of mature trees, and to extend the wooded area up the valley. Trees have been planted quite thinly, so further planting could take place here. St. Helens Copse is the first wooded area encountered on the popular walk along the east side on both upper and lower paths. It is an attractive plantation viewed from the Ugly, and is important for birds.

THE CHOICE OF SPECIES

The most essential consideration when deciding which species to plant was, of course, that they should survive and flourish. The majority of the species that were selected were already growing on the island (beech, oak, hawthorn, mountain ash and alder) and were thus proven to withstand the rigours of the Lundy climate. However, it was thought that this was a good opportunity to experiment with some new species. The only tree selected which is not completely hardy was the field maple. However, as the idea was to see how such a species would fare (probably as a small tree or bush) and not to produce outstanding sylvi-cultural specimens, the choice of this tree seemed justified.

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The majority of the species chosen are native to Great Britain. Native trees generally support a richer wildlife than introduced species. This seemed an important consideration for an island such as Lundy, renowned for its wildlife, and an important sanctuary for many migrating birds. The planting of native species may also be an important factor in obtaining financial assistance (from bodies such as the Countryside Commission) in the future.

SPECIES PLANTED

Beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Good specimens of beech already grow on the island, proving that it is hardy and wind firm enough to withstand the Lundy climate. Although the leaves may be windburnt in severe gales, they do not usually fall until autumn.

Because of its ability to tolerate shade when young, it was thought very suitable for planting under mature trees, especially in Bluebell Wood in Millcombe Valley (area C on map). The replacement of dead and dying trees in mature woodland like Bluebell Wood was thought to be a fairly urgent matter. For this reason, more beech was planted than any other tree (a total of 50 specimens).

Beech also supports a quite large number of insect species and is important for some fungi. Beech mast is an important food source for birds.

Oak *Quercus cerris*. Turkey oak was selected, after a certain amount of deliberation, as it grows well on Lundy, even on shallow soils. It also has the advantage of being relatively quick growing. As oak is generally very rich in wildlife, it is invaluable for the island. Planted mostly in areas C, E and G, it also helps to preserve some of the character of these existing copses.

Field maple *Acer campestre*. A new species for Lundy, and a bit of an experiment. It is not expected that any magnificent specimens will be produced. Rather the mature trees will probably be more bush sized.

Hawthorn *Crataegus*. Hawthorn trees used to be planted around Millcombe House, and when in blossom apparently looked quite splendid. Six trees have been planted in the vicinity of Millcombe House in the hope that this will be so again in the future. Hawthorn is an asset to the island in that it is attractive, very hardy, and supports a rich wildlife. It could be considered as a hedging plant in the future.

Strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo*. Another species new to Lundy. It is reputed to be very hardy and resistant to salt winds. It grows well on other islands and should do well here. I have heard that it is reasonably easy to propagate, so this small evergreen tree with its attractive flowers and fruits could be valuable in prominent sites on the island.

Mountain ash *Sorbus aucuparia*. Rowan should do very well here. It could also be considered as a species that will provide shelter for more tender trees on new sites along the east coast. The berries are a good food source for birds.

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. The complete hardiness of this species, together with its tolerance of wet places seemed to make it ideal for the exposed, moist areas in St. John's and Millcombe Valley (areas F and D on the map). It supports a fair amount of wildlife, and could provide valuable cover.

Aspen *Populus tremula*. Again, this species is very tolerant of exposure and should do well in the same cold, windy and damp sites as alder. It is hoped that it will produce suckers and eventually form thickets, which will be valuable for bird cover.

Fruit Trees. Two pear trees were planted in the old garden at the foot of Millcombe lawn. It is hoped to plant more fruit trees here at a later date.