

LUNDY AGENT'S REPORT FOR 1986

For Lundy, 1986 was a very exciting year, when most of our efforts were concentrated on an improvement in facilities and access for our visitors. It was the first time ever that Lundy has been able to transport day trippers and staying visitors in any significant numbers on her own passenger ship. The Oldenburg, although purchased in 1985 only came into service during the spring of 1986, and already has proved a tremendous success, she can carry 250 passengers in comfort and is able to transport cargo as well.

I'll run through the Oldenburg saga briefly for those of you who may not previously have heard my ramblings on the subject. During 1985 the Civil Aviation Authority altered the rules regarding the use of helicopters over the sea. The implication of this to us, was that passengers to Lundy would have to pay almost twice as much as the already high fares dictated by the helicopter operation to date. We were faced with a gloomy prospect for 1986 unless a solution could be found, the only answer was to find a suitable ship.

We started our ship search during July 1985 by contacting numerous ship brokers who all agreed that the type of vessel we required would not be easy to find. However by August we had quite a respectable list of "ships worth viewing", all of them laying in Norway, Denmark and Germany.

During late August Barty Smith, our Chairman's son and myself set off to find our ship. This was actually quite a depressing task as almost everything we saw was either in terrible condition or totally unsuitable. One of the last ships we saw was the Oldenburg. She slipped into our lives while we were enjoying lunch at a seafront restaurant and just sailed past the window bulging with happy looking passengers.

After endless red tape and seemingly impossible officials the ship became Lundy property, as always, the buying is the easy part. After a very eventful trip back from Germany, and a very brief call at Lundy which resulted in us consuming all our duty free drink, we arrived at our home port of Bideford a dry ship. The town band and the Mayor there to greet us and again, a good time was had by all.

To convert the ship to the British flag was a mammoth task which entailed ripping her almost to bits and then putting her together again, at least that's what we seemed to be doing under the ever watchful eye of a DOT official. The Oldenburg made her first sailing to Lundy as a British class 11a passenger ship during May of 1986 and has been operating a reliable and efficient service to the Island since then.

The staff of the Island have probably had one of the busiest summers for a long time with both the Balmoral and the Oldenburg running regular trips with up to six visits a week during peak times.

A few other notable improvements made for 1986, were the fitting of showers to both St John's cottages and The Blue Bung, Castle Cottage is getting its shower at this moment. The lower farm yard has been converted into a mammoth shed which can house all our equipment, hay and interestingly campers on those wet and windy summer nights. The building has contributed enormously to the tidy up Lundy campaign.

JOHN PUDDY
20.2.87