

## AGENT'S REPORT FOR 1990

Each year brings new challenges and projects for the island staff; 1990 was no exception to this.

We completed the major construction work on the cove access road and it is now possible to move freely from one beach to the other; this particularly attracts the sunbathers who traditionally lost the sun early in the afternoon.

The year was also one of the driest on record with all the traditional watering places drying up early in the season. It is very fortunate that we had our bore holes to fall back on. We used the two drilled in 1989 and with the help of the Royal Marines from Instow and the expert services of Devon Rock we transported a 15 ton drilling rig to the island and drilled a new hole almost 80m into the granite, this latest hole producing excellent water. As a result of this, we only imposed mild water restrictions; gone are the days of sea soap!

The centralised gas system is now fully operational, this means that most properties are free from the ugly gas cylinders which used to lurk outside.

During the early part of the year we altered the layout of the Castle Cottages making three smaller and more versatile units. We converted the Fridge and Radio rooms into one single person dwelling (especially for Tony Walker), and Old Light East into another. All of these are proving popular.

Later in the year we tackled the four Bartons, much in need of upgrading. These were virtually gutted and provided with new interiors, full central heating and double glazing. The occupants are delighted and moved back just in time for Christmas.

At the moment we are converting a small part of the Quarters to provide much better facilities for campers. This will include hot showers, toilets and washing facilities. The other project of the moment is the engineering workshop in the utility building; we hope that all maintenance will be carried out there leaving the Black Shed for luggage and stores.

As with every previous year the Oldenburg has proved her worth, carrying in the region of 18,000 passengers during the year. She recently returned from Fowey after completing her annual survey.

Farming has taken a step into the past in that we have now acquired a herd of Pure Red Devon cattle, which look and behave wonderfully, a Berkshire Sow who charms her way into every visitor's sandwich box and lots of free range chickens and ducks. Lyn, the Farm Manager, has taken an interest in the ponies and has rented a Pedigree Lundy stallion for the season in order to improve our herd. I must say they are looking very well.

We still run 200 breeding ewes and during 1990 had our best lambing year, with all but a few lambs being sold straight to the slaughterhouse for meat, something we have never done before.

It is unfortunate that whatever we do on the farm it still loses money, so once again this year we will have to review our farming policy.

The wind generator was taken down during November for annual maintenance and was up and running again for Christmas.

Christmas and New Year were disappointing due to appalling weather and many of our visitors were transported to and fro by helicopter; nevertheless we all had a great time.

Easter was slightly disappointing with bookings down on last year; those that did come experienced the full range of Lundy weather, which so far this year has not been kind to us.

During January we had the coldest weather I have experienced on the island with temperatures so low that sea spray was freezing on the beach road. It was fortunate that our wind generator was working as it supplied heat to properties that would otherwise have frozen.

Our daughter Emma, who is now 2½ year old and thriving on the island, was joined by her brother Thomas on January 22nd this year; they are both doing well.

Some staff changes occurred during the year. Tony Lillicrop our engineer, and his wife left, Tony's position being taken by Steve Husband.

Jill and Reg Lovell joined the team in September, Reg being a builder and Jill looking after cottages.

As ever, we now look forward to the main season and welcoming as many of you as possible back to Lundy again.

J. PUDDY  
April 1991

Rep. Lundy Field Soc. 41

### WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1990

The year was dominated by the weather and forecasters were constantly having to refer to new records being broken. In February, we had nearly six weeks of high winds, with the month ending in a long spell of strong southerly winds — it was this 'blow' which brought in the Great Spotted Cuckoo and whilst several others were sighted on the mainland, the Lundy one was the first by several days. Once again we had a hot dry summer and this put a severe strain on our water supply. The two boreholes drilled last year were made deeper and a third hole drilled at a site determined by a water diviner — between them they produce about 150 gallons an hour, which was sufficient to keep our restrictions at a lower level than many places in the South West. The autumn was generally an unsettled time and resulted in a number of Oldenburg sailings being cancelled. Temperatures throughout the year were above average. The strong winds continued to the end of the year and having taken a few days off for Christmas, Lorna and I took three weeks to get back to the island.

Farming on Lundy has now settled into its new pattern. The herd of Devon cattle are established and look good. From now on we shall concentrate on Cheviot and Suffolk sheep and the flock will be managed as a closed flock. This combination produced first class lambs. The sheep are good mothers and milk well, allowing the lambs to mature faster than some other breeds. We have acquired a pedigree Berkshire pig named 'Portia'; whilst not a rare breed, it is nice to have something other than the more common white. The ponies have been reduced to true Lundy stock and by loaning a Lundy stallion we hope to build up the herd once again.

The Soay sheep flock has increased in the last few years and it has been necessary to reduce the number of rams. The flock will be maintained at 120 animals for the next few years whilst we monitor the effect that their grazing has upon the vegetation at the North End. There are only six goats left, but the deer are maintaining a herd of eighteen. The deer have become far more visible during the recent cold weather, but they have also given us some problems with bark stripping around Millcombe.

An explosion in the rabbit population has caused problems on the sidelands and it has been necessary to reduce their numbers. The increase has coincided with the reduction in rats and it is likely that young rabbits formed a large part of the rats diet in the past. I have continued my assault upon the rat population and, whilst a complete eradication would be very expensive and difficult to achieve, the signs are that significant inroads have now been made into the island's population. To date I have fed the 'little beasties' something in excess of half a ton of bait.