

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

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### 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.

Various archaeological surveys are continuing (this volume) and the one being undertaken by David Thackray of the National Trust is planned to have covered the whole island by 1992. Not only is it important to have a full map of the archaeological sites, but they also provide valuable management guides to the way in which we apply conservation.

We depend upon volunteer work parties to help with many of the jobs we undertake in the areas outside the farm. Field Society groups have been active during the year and carried out some excellent work — at last we are beginning to see the end of the rhododendron clumps at Brazen Ward. When this last big area has gone, our problems may even increase, as there are still enough seeds around to keep us going for years to come. The cleared sites are immediately taken over by bracken, which is almost as bad as the rhododendron it replaces. We have recently acquired a motor sythe which should greatly assist our bracken control without the hazards associated with most other methods. Volunteers have also helped with many other jobs and we appreciate all the effort that has been given. One thing which shines out is the enthusiasm the volunteers show, whatever the job, whatever the weather.

The new beach road has proved excellent for getting to the equipment and boats located around the Dive Beach. It has also had a dramatic effect upon the way that visitors use the area. Since the roadway was completed, virtually all swimming and other recreational activities have centred upon the Dive Beach, leaving the Landing Beach almost deserted. Because of this increased use, the diving complex has been improved and decorated; as an extra facility we have installed a generator for power and lighting.

Marine matters were given considerable attention during the year. I had the opportunity to attend two courses run by the Marine Conservation Society, and I thank the Field Society for its help towards the cost of these courses. Both courses were aimed at making the Marine Reserve more interesting and accessible to the average visitor. It is frustrating that apart from a small number of divers, few people have any idea of the spectacular beauty and variety of marine life around Lundy. Whilst useful tools, slides and photographs are only partly site orientated and do little to give the viewer a feeling of involvement.

The ideas looked at included an underwater nature trail, an underwater video and some form of glass bottomed or viewing boat. I had the opportunity to try out many of the techniques and most would lend themselves to the Lundy environment. If we had such a facility, it would go a long way towards providing that sense of involvement which is missing at present. In order to try to make these techniques available, I am launching an appeal to raise the necessary funds.

Early in the season, divers were reporting a deposit of slime covering much of the marine life — particularly the Jewel Anemones. Whilst it did reduce as the season went on, there is a fear that the clear water around the island is being affected by pollution. I would like to trace the source of this slime and in any case monitor the reserve for any further signs of pollution. The Nature Conservancy Council provided a team of divers led by Robert Irving, to bring our sublittoral monitoring up to date. To date monitoring has been restricted to the east side, but I am hopeful that future monitoring will include sites on the west side. Two worrying reports from visiting divers were the number of broken sea fans encountered and the lack of sightings of lobsters and edible crabs; we seem to have less of these creatures than similar areas which have not been designated marine nature reserves. For most of the year we have had up to 1800 lobster pots close inshore around the island and I feel that it is time to seek at least a partial ban on potting, or even a closed season. Within the reserve, a second wreck has been listed under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). I have mixed feelings about protecting wrecks within a marine nature reserve, as I feel that the necessary protection should already exist. A listed wreck can only be visited by licence holders conducting research. This leads to resentment by the sports diver and, as they are people who find most wrecks, could lead to newly discovered wrecks being kept even more secret than they are now.

Once again, as a result of the hot summer, there was an abundance of plankton and throughout July and August there were regular sightings of Basking Sharks; also we had a visit from a Pilot Whale and a large Sea Turtle was seen about one and a half miles off the North End. Several divers reported seeing a Sunfish in Gannets Bay — it was about two feet in diameter and stayed around for some weeks.

One visitor to Lundy which received an extraordinary amount of attention was the Ancient Murrelet, first seen on the day of the RSPB charter. Lundy then became the centre of the twitchers universe for the next three weeks. Over 4,500 people came to see the bird and about two thirds of them had the sort of view that I would consider to be a genuine sighting. With some of the others it was wishful thinking and some did not see it at all. This included one man who came over seven times and a group who came on the Oldenburg once and a helicopter twice still without seeing it.

The day after the first sighting was wet and raining. You can imagine my horror at seeing over 150 people running down steep sheep tracks on the sidelands above Jenny's Cove only yards from the cliff edge. My worry was more that an accident would involve a helicopter rescue, which would mean an end to Puffin breeding in Jenny's Cove, than for a casualty. It was obviously a great thrill to have such a rare bird on Lundy, but our regular breeding birds are, I feel, equally important.

In November we had a visit from a French film crew, who wanted to record the life of the residents. Unfortunately they came with preconceived ideas about our way of life and our reasons for wanting to live on an island, which we were not able to break down. We hope the film turns out all right, but there are a number of residents who are concerned that, in trying to please the French, we may be portrayed more as actors than islanders. One classic line an islander was asked to say was, "I like Daisy because she gives me milk!"

There are many projects where we are making steady progress and I hope that with the help of further Field Society working groups, we shall soon see off the rhododendron from all the areas north of the Quarries, complete the repair of the road to the North End, reclaim Middle Park from the bracken and start the repair of Threequarter Wall. From my point of view though, 1990 was a good year for Lundy.

A. GIBSON  
April 1991

### OBITUARY: JOHN OGILVIE

It was with regret that we heard of the sudden death of John Ogilvie in the Summer of 1990. John first went to work on Lundy in the 1950s and later became the island's farmer. A member and friend of the Lundy Field Society from its early days he was an excellent field naturalist and observer. John and his wife Penny served the island well, leaving it in the Autumn of 1988 to live in Bideford.

A.F.L.

### WORKING PARTIES

For details of these, telephone (evenings) or write to:

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A most enjoyable way of visiting Lundy and working for the benefit of the Island.

P.B.F.C.