

AGENT'S REPORT FOR 1992

1992 was a year when I imagine every one of us has been affected by the general recession. Lundy has struggled through with a minimal reduction in our lettings and the weather, as ever, has dictated our fortunes; during May and June alone, we estimate losses due to Easterly winds of £25,000 in the revenue generated by the ship. Throughout the summer adverse weather continued to reduce revenue.

The Landmark Trust, the charity which finances Lundy, fared little better with the recession affecting its income. During the latter part of the year the trustees met and decided that the 1992 Lundy deficit of £130,000 could not be supported in the future and asked me to produce a budget for 1993 which showed no loss. This is an almost impossible task; however a budget has been set and accepted and I believe that with a reasonable summer we will achieve it. The saddest part is that we have had to reduce our staff both on the island and on the ship. The island lost Andrew Jewels, Jonathan Jones, Adrian Cooper, Patrick Mayer and the ship lost Mark Perrin and Roy Pearce. The blow was very severe to all of these people and to us as we were losing good friends and part of the Lundy family.

We have investigated many ways of improving income, and to improve our property occupancy we have produced a new Lundy brochure with for the first time our own identity. It ties in nicely with our day trip leaflet and already has improved our bookings. We have also, with the help and support from Lundy Field Society officers, set up a new Friends of Lundy, which is described in more detail below.

The shore office is manned full time now and we have a full time promotion person who spends most of his time at shows or dealing with group bookings and charters of the ship.

We have taken a close look at property prices and booking procedures. Bed and breakfast has become popular; it is being actively promoted and short breaks are always available.

We have engaged a farm consultant whose job it is to make sure that we obtain available grants and manage the livestock in an efficient way.

All of these above measures have improved our situation very significantly.

I would like to say a little about the Friends of Lundy and hope that some of you may have already joined. The original thinking behind this organisation stemmed from the fact that many people who come to Lundy wanted to remain in contact with the island and the islanders in some way. As you appreciate the Lundy Field Society has a strong scientific and conservation orientation and it was suggested to us by the LFS and others that there was a gap which the Friends could fill. We felt that a lot of people who came to Lundy would be keen to do a little more to help keep the island an unspoilt and special place, but not only by helping on purely conservation projects. They would also have an opportunity to help in other practical ways, including working parties and other activities on shore. There are many skilled and professional people in all walks of life who are able to assist in any number of ways and whose skills may be more appropriately used - not everyone makes a good rhody basher! Indeed we have already benefitted from the advice of retired farmers, electricians and engineers. We in return send out a twice yearly newsletter and are planning a Friends dinner and outing to Lundy in the Autumn. During the course of the year it is hoped also to make special offers to members. Along with the Lundy Field Society, the Friends will play an important part in the future of Lundy as we know it. From small beginnings, we now have over 500 members and have raised nearly £6,000 towards the running of Lundy.

FARM

The future of the farm looks good. Having decided that the farm could not continue to be unprofitable we consulted an agricultural advisor and new policies were adopted. The number of sheep has increased from 200 to 535 breeding ewes. These are run as two

flocks comprising of Scotch and Welsh crossbreeds and pure Welsh. New rams were introduced to ensure lambs would be of good size and conformity.

The decline of the rabbit population gave an abundance of grass which benefitted all our stock. Such was the pasture that we were able to rent grazing, a definite first for Lundy and a boost to the farm finances.

The Devon cattle are doing well and this time were put to a Simmental bull, the resulting calves being more marketable than pure Devon.

PONIES

The Lundy pony appeal has been very successful with sponsorship and donations of £1200 being received during the year. We have now established a programme for the ponies which with continued support we can maintain for many years to come, thus ensuring the future of the pony on Lundy. I'll briefly detail how the money received has been spent: feedstuffs: £320; vet's fees and treatment: £275; tack and registration: £40; lease of Stallion: £200. This leaves a surplus for the year of £379.

During the past twelve months, the Lundy ponies have been examined by our vets and the resultant diagnosis on the herd was very encouraging. Belinda, our oldest mare was subjected to a rigorous examination by the vet who proclaimed her to be perfectly sound except for her back teeth which were rather sharp and would require rasping. This probably sounds quite painful but is not the case at all and Belinda being a pony that has never been handled to any extent, allowed us to perform the task with the minimum of fuss. Anyway fuss or not she can now boast a proper set of molars that certainly aid her grazing and digestion. One other task was to be performed and that was to geld Bewick. This was all completed during the third week of January 1993.

Other veterinary advice was to worm all the ponies with "Equivan" a rather more effective type of wormer. This is administered once a year in conjunction with our normal worming programme.

The mares are all carrying foals and have been brought in every morning since the middle of December and fed a concentrate feed to supplement their condition. The young ponies are also fed in a similar manner.

This program of care and feeding does not come cheaply and we continue to ask everyone to help us maintain the very high standards that we wish the ponies to attain by supporting the Lundy pony appeal.

STAMPS

We're pleased to say that Lundy stamps have been going from strength to strength. All philatelic issues now come only from the island - a policy which has been met with strong approval from collectors. Our active issuing policy after a relatively dormant period of nearly ten years has increased the interest in Lundy stamps to the extent that our mailing list of around 300 has grown to over 1,000. We held the first successful stamp meet last Autumn and are planning a second in October this year. Anyone who wishes to confirm that a good time was had by all should have a word with Roger Allen who gave us a glowing write up in the January Cinderella stamp club newsletter.

Sadly over the year, and apart from our redundancies, we have lost quite a few staff, namely Mary Squire who retired in the spring, Lyn Bushnell and Steve Husband, who both left in the spring, and the Laidlaw family who came and went within the season.

With reduced numbers this winter has been hard work for all of us, but everyone on the island understands the importance of the economies and without exception have put in tremendous effort.

There are some new, or should I say old faces back on Lundy. Nigel Walker and Linzi Takagi have taken over the Tavern and catering, returning after a four year absence last April. Just this week we are able to welcome a new family to Lundy: Philip and Debbie Congdon and their three children have moved in, Philip taking the post of island

engineer. This means we now have seven children resident, the most for many years.

The M.S. Oldenburg had a particularly frustrating season. With our new day return leaflet we had many more enquiries and bookings, but due to the weather conditions many sailings were cancelled and people turned away. Captain Roger Hoad now has a permanent crew of five people and between them they have managed to keep the ship looking as smart as ever.

The dry docking of the ship took place in January at a redundant dock in Appledore. This was to save money and due to the tremendous efforts of Roger, his crew and the support of local craftsmen, several tons of steelwork have been replaced in the ships hold. The ship was completely painted by Torridge Training, an organisation which offers unemployed people the chance to work for the community. The docking this year was significant in that the ship was in for class renewal which occurs every five years (like an extra severe MOT). The budget for the above was very tight (£20,000) and this has been adhered to; again, a credit to our staff.

During 1992 we completed our new workshop which is situated in the big tractor shed in the High Street. We finished off the road to the cove beach and created four-person accommodation at Old Light West which will be used for volunteers.

Due to our financial constraints, we have no projects planned for 1993 except that we would like to get the Brewery installed in the Black shed. Again volunteers are required.

John Steer, a superb mason, has been with us as a volunteer over the winter and has restored Threequarter Wall and improved many other walls around the island.

Unusually, Christmas was a success this year with perfect weather throughout, so much so that we were able to offer round-the-island trips with the Islander.

Bringing the dry docking of the ship forward has meant that we have been able to promote the recent half term which was a great success.

J. PUDDY.
MARCH 1993.