

## TONY LANGHAM 1928 - 1995

In appearance and manner, Tony Langham was the complete antithesis of the rather strident 'anorak' image which the world at large associates with a society which claims to be a 'Field' society. Blessed with film star good looks, always impeccably dressed, softly spoken and unfailingly courteous and helpful, he also nurtured a fierce and comprehensive love for the island of Lundy in all its manifold aspects. He was a dental surgeon by profession, a calling which requires a wide range of disparate skills; considerable anatomical and medical knowledge, a high level of manual dexterity, and the ability to soothe and reassure nervous patients. All these Tony had in abundance, as the success of his dental practice showed.

The diversity of his skills was not confined to his professional life. The various books which he wrote or co-authored about the island showed clearly the comprehensive nature of his interests; from archaeology to zoology, all was grist to Tony's mill, and his lucid and informative style was always a joy to read. I remember being enthralled by the masterly exposition, in his very last book (*The Island of Lundy*, published by Alan Sutton in 1994), of the wider national implications of the political skulduggery which centred around the island in mediaeval times. There can be no doubt that the body of Tony's published work, much of it written in collaboration with his first wife Myrtle (herself a considerable expert on Lundy), stands as a lasting memorial to his achievement in sharing his enthusiasm and knowledge with others.

Tony's understanding of Lundy was no mere book-learning, of course. Despite the distance from his home in Reigate, he visited the island on every possible occasion, expanding his experience, and always ready to share his wisdom with others. His helpfulness to islanders and visitors alike is exemplified by the fact that when Felix Gade, the long-term island Agent, finally retired and was generously offered a retirement home on the island by the Landmark Trust, it was Tony and Myrtle, along with Cherry Richardson and her son Mark, who moved all his belongings and got the house ready for him.

Tony joined the Lundy Field Society in 1950, and by 1966, when a new Honorary Secretary was needed, his sterling virtues were well known in the Society, and he was persuaded to become the new Secretary. He held this post with distinction until 1980 when, since the Society could not afford to lose the benefit of his accumulated experience, he was promptly kicked upstairs to become a VicePresident. The Secretary in a society like the Lundy Field Society is a key post, and it is vital that it be filled by a person of outstanding qualities who is prepared to sacrifice a great deal of his or her energy and spare time to attending to the affairs of the organisation, without financial reward. Tony's efficiency and competence as Secretary were brought home to me very strongly when I became Chairman of the Society in the 1970s, and there can be no doubt that whatever advances the Society made during my period in office, which included a time of considerable financial difficulty, and the early adaptation to the Landmark Trust's stewardship of the island, were due in large part to the qualities of the two Secretaries with whom I had the good luck to work, Tony Langham and Peter Cole.

Tony Langham's urbane and friendly presence will be sorely missed by the Lundy Field Society. He is survived by his first wife Myrtle, his daughters Alexandra and Jennifer, and by his second wife Jennifer.

IAN LINN  
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