

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 1997

1997 has been a successful if exhausting season with the number of stayers on the island up on the previous year. The island has drawn many old friends back and we know that it has made many new converts who we hope to welcome back again next year.

There has been much activity behind the scenes on Lundy this year with the preparation of grant applications and proposals for a new jetty, improved road access and a new infrastructure together with a number of improved facilities such as a Marine Nature Reserve interpretation centre and display area on the island. All the proposals have now been drawn up with the applications having yielded, to date, grants in excess of £2 million with hopefully a further £750,000 to follow. No matter how exciting it is putting together these large projects and obtaining grants, the normal day to day running of the island must carry on and this year we have significantly improved the internal appearance of many of the properties with a redecoration programme in the early part of the year and improvements to the heating in some of the properties. Bramble Villa roof has been reshingled and other maintenance such as new windows and doors has been carried out throughout the year. This year we have had three teams from the Prince's Trust volunteers and have concentrated on tidying up the island. A notable success is the clearing of Bull's Paradise, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which for at least twenty years had become the dumping ground for island scrap but which is now clear and occasionally grazed to keep it looking presentable.

The 7th June saw a well attended celebratory service for the centenary of St Helena's church led by the Rev Bill Blakey and attended by the Bishop of Exeter. This was followed by a home grown barbecue of culled soay, venison and wild goat arranged by the Lundy Bellringers. The sets of stamps issued to mark the occasion of the church centenary along with another stamp issue to mark the centenary of the lighthouse proved to be a great success and contributed to a bumper year for stamp collectors.

This year the island has continued to recover from the 1995 drought with the rather wet summer making the island look greener than it has done for quite some time.

This piece must end on a sad note. Regular visitors to the island may know of Jilly Lo-vel's fight against illness. This year, brave to the last, she died during the same extraordinary week as the Princess of Wales and Mother Teresa. Jilly was an integral part of Lundy and we will miss her greatly.

PAUL ROBERTS
June 1998