

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 1998

People often ask the staff what it is like on the Island during the winter and the standard response is "wet and windy".

The beginning of 1998 was even wetter and windier than normal and the storms and gales that lashed the Island proved to be the last straw for the beach road which disappeared under the relentless waves and winds. This was the catalyst to kick start the grant funded works to improve the beach road. These works started on February the 14th with an anticipated completion date of May, however as with most things on Lundy it was not to be as straightforward as we had hoped for and the scope of the works had to be significantly increased with us eventually finishing much later in the year. However, we now have a much improved and hopefully permanent access road between the dive beach and the main beach which will provide the link between the new jetty and the road up to the village.

Whether or not it was because of the very wet weather at the start of the year but 1998 saw a magnificent display of flowering plants from the snowdrops and primroses of early Spring to the purple haze of heather that adorns the Island in the late Summer and Autumn. The Lundy Cabbage has had its best flowering year ever, its yellow blooms covered much of the east side of the Island and together with the foxgloves they provided a splendid dash of colour.

This year for the first time in many years the Island managed to produce some good quality hay and with the reintroduction of small square bales as opposed to large round ones, it was nice to see all of the staff out at the end of a sunny day loading the bales onto the trailers. Once the field was cleared of the bales a football match was arranged following a challenge from the road workers to the Island staff which ended in a ten-three win for the road workers.

The Island's livestock also had a good year with 650 healthy lambs being produced, five new Lundy foals and from the number of sightings closer to the village than usual it would appear that the Sika deer have increased also. Whilst talking about the farm I am pleased to say that Derek the farmer continues to make good progress in clearing up some of the unsightly silage that has been littering the Island for the past number of years.

On the 5th of August we had a group of bell ringers staying on the Island who organised a Lundy Festival Open Day. Over 31 day visitors joined in the day long bell ringing. On this day a thanks giving and memorial service was held for Eric Church. He and Wilhelmina, his wife, had been visiting the Island for many years and as chairman of the Doris Field Trust he provided the funds to restore the bells

in St. Helena's Church.

English Heritage have obviously focussed their attention on Lundy this year and we have now received notice that many new areas on the Island are scheduled as ancient monuments. I should imagine that Lundy must now be one of the most densely populated areas for scheduled monuments. Hopefully this will enable us to obtain grant aid for the upkeep of the Island itself.

PAUL ROBERTS
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