

OBITUARY

SIR JOHN SMITH

1923 - 2007

Sir John Smith was the founder of the Landmark Trust and a devoted lover of Lundy. It is appropriate to express immense admiration for the creation of the Landmark Trust, but we need to express even greater gratitude to Sir John, in partnership with the National Trust, for saving Lundy from at least three equally dismal possible fates; namely the possibility of becoming a vast gambling casino, becoming a centre for Scientology (and therefore closed to everyone else), or becoming a prison.

Sir John explained to long-time Lundy enthusiasts that the appalling mess associated with the necessary building work on the Island in the 1969/70s period was a temporary matter and he assured us that the work would leave the Island as the paradise that it had always had been. He wished that all the Lundy houses should have that quality of a 'loved and lived in' place that you can come home to from anywhere in the world and find waiting for you. As Lundy has always provided this welcome, the combination of Sir John, the National Trust and Lundy has worked extraordinarily well.

There were, of course, grumbles about changes, but one hasn't noticed that anyone has stopped coming because 'his' Lundy now allowed him to take a shower, or get here by helicopter if the wind blew in the wrong direction for the boat to land. The jetty project has turned out a success too.

Sir John also took on the problems of the Beach Road, with important support from the National Trust and other sources of funds. This is arguably the largest problem that anyone running the island faces.

All of the things that were always a part of the Island, birding, diving, climbing, botany, swimming, walking, archaeology, and just lying about ("...most of us did nothing very much, and the rest looked on.") could have been lost for ever without Sir John's Landmark offer at the time of the purchase of Lundy by the National Trust. At the time of the Queen's unofficial visit in 1977 Sir John asked us all, assembled in the Church, that we should allow Her Majesty the same peace that we came for and that we could then see her off on the beach and take photographs there. In a troubled world the Lundy oasis of simple eternal pleasures is a gift from Sir John. For this he deserves the most grateful thanks of the Lundy Field Society and all those who come to stay on the Island or in any other Landmark Trust property.