

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 2006

Please accept my apologies that I am not able to attend the LFS AGM this year because of Landmark Trust business on the Island. I wish to thank Roger Chapple for presenting this Report for me.

Due to some fine weather and 'experienced decisions' by our ship's Captains, Colin and John, 2006 was a record year for Lundy in terms of Oldenburg sailings and the resultant visitor numbers. We transported 18,338 visitors to the Island by ship and helicopter, an increase of over 6% on 2005. Given the regular visits by Balmoral and Waverley, the Island had a total of over 20,000 visitors during the year, which led to a successful season financially. Accommodation bookings were also up as a result of our continued marketing campaign on the mainland. This led to an annual occupancy record of 83%, which is also an increase of 6% on 2005.

2006 saw few staff changes. In March, Steve Collinson the carpenter, with his partner Gemma and daughter Carla Louise, left for 'mainland schooling' and we welcomed Stuart Leavy with his partner Zoe to take their place. Seasonal staff arrived in April including Grant Sherman and Sophie Wheatley who have since joined the team permanently. Natural England was able to secure additional funding for a permanent assistant for Nicola our Wildlife Warden. Sophie has taken over this role which will enhance our conservation team over the winter months. The conservation team has had a busy year. Funding was secured for a chipping machine for use on the rhododendrons, which has reduced the volume of burning that is required following clearance. This was delivered to the East sideland in style by Sea King helicopter.

A number of projects were planned for 2006 with the road taking the first priority following further slippage which restricted the use of the road during certain weather conditions. A campaign was organised to raise the funds required for this work and to gain consent from the relevant authorities. We owe our thanks to the National Trust who donated a substantial sum of money towards the cost of the work. This, added to the funds provided by the Landmark Trust, has allowed the essential works to begin. The project was eventually started during the first week in December, but in true Lundy fashion, progress ground to a halt during the second week because of bad weather! Thankfully the weather improved early in January and we employed the services of a local landing craft to bring in the materials and the work is now progressing again. This work is expected to last until July, but the road should be passable in time for the forthcoming sailing season. Further strengthening works will be required on the foreshore and on the slopes below the road. The time scale for this part of the work will depend on the availability of further funding.

Other projects included the replacement of the main fuel tanks with modern 'bunded' tanks that meet current pollution regulations. External refurbishment and insulating the walls of Hanmers has been undertaken, the Castle roof has been insulated and renewed and the roof of the Linhay and the internal flooring have been replaced increasing storage space for the shop. The Barn has a new 'wet' central heating system using traditional cast iron radiators powered by the waste heat from the generator. Several buildings have been rewired including the Barn, Brambles East and Brambles West. It can therefore be appreciated that the maintenance team has had an extremely busy and productive year.

The Island resources were a matter for concern during the year as a result of the high number of visitors. This applied particularly to our water supplies, which were in short supply, and we took the decision to import bottled water to provide some relief for our reserves. This action is likely to continue this year with the high numbers of visitors that are expected. Electricity consumption also continues to be a matter for concern and alternative sustainable means for power generation are being investigated. We have to evaluate the feasibility of alternative methods of power generation for the Island as we strive to reduce our dependency on oil and to promote the self-sustainability of the Island for the future.

Recycling of waste materials on the Island has made good progress during the year with the addition of a glass imploder in our recycling centre. This machine reduces our recycled glass to a fine, safe, dust that can be used as a building aggregate in a variety of applications. This should reduce the quantity, over 5 tonnes, of waste glass that has been sent off the Island on the Oldenburg each year, and at the same time will cut our maintenance bill. This coming year, the Island Wardens will be focusing on visitor education with regard to recycling as waste management becomes an ever increasing problem nationally.

The farm has had another good year as a result of the good weather. Kevin Welsh, the Farmer and our Island Foreman was able to produce another good harvest of silage during the year which has reduced the need for winter feed to be shipped to the Island. The herd of Lundy ponies on the Island has been increased with the arrival of our new stallion 'George'. This provides the possibility that some of our thirteen mares may come into foal leading to the prospect that we may see a further increase in the Island herd. Lundy Lamb has also had another good year. Lundy Lamb has frequently featured on our new 'Lundy Menu' at the Marisco Tavern, as well as Venison, Soay Lamb and Goat. Lobster and Crab, which we now source from a local fisherman, reducing the need for 'imported' stores from the mainland, have also featured on the menu.

The rabbits have had a bad year this year following high population numbers which had caused overcrowding. As a result of this, an extremely vicious outbreak of myxomatosis occurred early in the year and this has wiped out most of the population. No sightings had been made since October until quite recently, when lone individuals have again been spotted. Our expectation is that the rabbits will eventually recover.

Notable Island events during the past year included the centenary of HMS Montagu hitting the Island. This event was marked with a commemorative stamp issue and a special beer was brewed. The Island also had the annual fly-in of light aircraft, with sixty-nine aircraft descending safely (thankfully) onto the airfield. Two weddings were held in the church for visitors who had chosen Lundy as their preferred place to tie the knot. The year 2006 also saw the establishment of Devon Fire and Rescue station 'number 61' when we established a formal fire fighting team on the Island. The Island fire team enjoyed professional training from Barnstaple fire brigade and are eagerly awaiting the new fire engine! (You will be pleased to hear that this is expected to be a vehicle appropriate to the Island and not a conventional fire engine!) The planned gig race from Clovelly unfortunately failed to materialise due to bad weather conditions, however, the Islanders made the most of the refreshments that had been laid on!

On the mainland, the shore offices have both had busy years. The new operation on Bideford Quay is working well in conjunction with the Oldenburg berth and storerooms. MS Oldenburg has just completed her dry dock period and has been certified by the MCA for another year. The crew have again done a tremendous job refurbishing her for the forthcoming season with a major overhaul of the foredeck crane. The future for MS Oldenburg is very well secured as the Lundy supply vessel. Next year brings her 50th Birthday in August and plans are being drawn up to celebrate her half centenary.

The helicopter operation has continued to prove successful and will remain for the indefinite future. The facility at Hartland Point is under review however, with improved arrangements for waiting passengers expected to be proposed for the 2008 flying season.

Looking ahead to the coming year, planned projects include the external refurbishment of the Old School and new roofs for the Marisco Tavern, Old Light West, Castle Cottage and Hanmers. Naturally all of this work will depend on the weather. The maintenance team is apparently hoping for high winds and rain!

The last twelve months on the Island have again been extremely busy and this has brought tough challenges to the Islanders, the ship's crew and the shore staff. However, they have prevailed relentlessly and the operation and condition of the Island and ship continue to improve year on year due to the dedication of the team who are to be applauded for their commitment. I am sure that the future will bring fresh challenges. Climate change, global warming, rising sea levels and increasing coastal erosion will have a direct impact on our life on Lundy. It is clear we all have to create a more environmentally aware society and that we must take care to avoid spoiling the Island and the magic that is Lundy.

I would like to conclude by thanking everyone for their continued support during the past year and to wish the Lundy Field Society a very successful AGM. We look forward to seeing you all in the Marisco Tavern.

DEREK GREEN
March 2007