

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Last year brought a level of uncertainty to Lundy as economic concerns spread across the country. However, advance property bookings remained strong and with reasonable weather, Lundy enjoyed a sound financial year.

Sailing conditions were generally favourable, resulting in few cancelled sailings and as a result, 16,753 visitors subsequently arrived on the *Oldenburg* or by scheduled helicopter.

Total numbers were made up from 11,300 day trippers and 5,453 staying visitors with approx 2,000 other visitors arriving by other means, bringing our annual total to almost 19,000.

Letting property bookings were healthy with an annual occupancy rate of 86% which has remained constant in recent years and is already showing healthy forward bookings for 2011, with 63% of properties booked so far. 2012 bookings are following the trend with 11% confirmed bookings so far.

The winter helicopter service remains popular and I am pleased to report that the enhanced facilities at Hartland are now finally complete. This is a large wooden-framed building divided into two rooms with capacity for 100 and we now have a much improved warm waiting room complete with WCs and a briefing room.

The *Oldenburg* had a good season and remains in good hands with our regular crew. She dry-docked successfully at Sharpness again in November. This will become a regular routine until such time as we find a reliable alternative closer to home. The ship remains in good shape and there are no immediate plans to replace her. To inform us better of her future needs and challenges, a report was commissioned to help identify areas of expected maintenance spanning the next 15 years. Given no change to current legislation, there should be no reason why she shouldn't continue to serve us well for the foreseeable future.

At the island, along with her normal schedule, we introduced round the island trips on *Oldenburg* which proved popular and we plan to continue these on the longer sailing days.

Sadly, the *Oldenburg's* former Captain, John Hopkins, passed away in November after battling with illness. 'Gentleman John', as the crew referred to him, shared the Master's duties for three years with Captain Colin Darch before finally retiring at the age of 70 in October 2007.

On Lundy, with high property bookings, staff numbers are set to remain at 27 full time assisted by summer volunteers. Permanent staff changes on the island last year were minimal. We said goodbye to island ranger Chris Flower who has been replaced by last year's seasonal volunteer, Steve Pratt. Scott Staples, our trainee chef, left at the end of the summer season and we are currently in the process of replacing him. We had two summer seasonal members of staff in Mark and Lorainne Penrose to assist in the tavern and I was delighted when Mark took on the challenge of restoring the Smithy back to working order.

Property maintenance remained high on the agenda and now that the island's five-year improvement plan has matured, all properties are in good condition. However, maintenance is continuous on Lundy and there were several projects undertaken. The plumbing throughout the Old Light complex has been upgraded allowing the previously electrically pumped toilets to be flushed during the night whilst the generator is off.

To comply with new fire regulations, all letting properties have had enhanced fire detection systems fitted, with the Barn having a discreet sprinkler system installed throughout the building, made necessary due to its open plan sleeping accommodation.

Both Stonycroft and Castle Keep East have had full electrical rewire and all properties are mid-way through upgrades to their electrical consumer units to further improve electrical safety across the island.

The Marisco Tavern kitchen has had further works behind the scenes with a new state-of-the-art extraction system and further stainless steel wall cladding. The old beer cellar behind the kitchen has been transformed into a walk-in fridge to help cope with the volume of orders received.

We continued with further restoration work on Millcombe garden walls and sections have been restored to functional vegetable gardens. It is pleasing to see them being used for their original purpose once again and it's our intention that we will continue to slowly reinstate the gardens as far as is practical. We also commenced work on the partially collapsed wall at the end of the 'Chicken Run'.

Those that have volunteered on Lundy over the years will no doubt have fond memories of the basic caravans that we provide for accommodation after a hard day of 'rhodi-bashing'. I am pleased to report that the caravans are soon to be redundant as we replace them with a purpose built volunteer block. The building is expected to be complete in summer 2011 and is modelled in the style of the old 'Quarters' building, erected temporarily in 1972. When complete, the block will boast five bedrooms and have all 'mod Lundy cons', such as heating, running water and toilets. The new building is aimed at enhancing the volunteer experience on the island and providing a base for our seasonal volunteer, who we hope will qualify for external funding this year. We see this position enabling someone the opportunity to gain a stepping stone to a future career in conservation.

The ongoing concern of the future of the church remains. The diocese has however confirmed that it would ideally like to see the building restored to its original condition with perhaps some minor alteration internally. As such, it has commissioned an in-depth condition report which is expected soon. In the meantime, we were fortunate to have a sympathetic roofing contractor visit last autumn who enjoyed climbing; and he repaired the holes in the roof!

The farm on Lundy is always busy and, after the wet winter, we had an average lambing year. Members will recall that we introduced pigs in 2009 and last year we added to the family by bringing across 'Bruce' the boar. Two litters of piglets quickly followed!

Lundy Ponies had a good year with the birth in February of Lundy Redwing, the first foal to be born on the island for many years. Charlotte Louise gave birth to Lundy Chandam Roc & Roll – stable name Bill. He is growing quickly and when mature will run with selected island mares to help keep island numbers at a healthy level.

2010 brought many events to the island during our 40th anniversary year with one of the highlights, on a fine day in May, being the unveiling of the resurrected Lundy flag. The flag had last flown on 'The Ugly' some 40 years ago and we were delighted when Mrs Diana Keast carried out the honours by raising the new flag which is to be flown on high days and holidays.

On what was a busy day we also took the opportunity to launch the new issue of Lundy wildlife stamps. The new stamp issue received some 550 orders initially which kept Reg rather busy!

In June, the high quality of the recently completed repairs to the beach road was recognised by winning the South West Civil Engineering project of the year 2010. The award was made at a ceremony in Bristol which was attended by Dr John Grimes, Russell Yelland and me.

As well as the now well established underwater photograph competition, and the Clovelly to Lundy Gig Race, the annual Lundy 'Fly-In' took place in August which narrowly topped the 2010 record of small aircraft landing on the island with 75 attending. 2011 will bring the 10th visit from the Devon Strut who help to organise the event.

September marked ten years of training on Lundy delivered by Petroc, the college from Barnstaple, and a celebration took place on the island to mark the occasion. Over the last ten years many members of staff have received training such as business and administration, customer service, food safety, housekeeping and food preparation to NVQ level.

Island staff continued to provide emergency cover for the fire, coastguard and ambulance services. Over the years we have developed strong ties with all emergency services and continue to receive good support and training from all three agencies. It came as a relief that the proposal to reduce 24 hour cover provided by the search and rescue service at R.A.F. Chivenor has reportedly been postponed.

On the mainland, the shore offices were busy and the Lundy exhibition trailer with our team visited all the local events and shows including The Royal Cornwall, North Devon, and Potwalloping among many others. To assist with towing the trailer around, we recycled the island Land Rover to the mainland team after it had clocked up an impressive 8,000 (hard) miles on the island over the past 4 years. The *Oldenburg* was tasked with delivering a replacement vehicle to the island in April.

Looking ahead, 2011 brings the 40th anniversary of the Marine Nature Reserve and there are several events planned to mark the occasion. As we issued a new stamp issue just last year, the island has marked the occasion with a new rubber cancellation stamp which we will use all year; and we produced a limited edition cover, featuring the marine nature reserve issue which we hope that collectors will find interesting.

The proposed Atlantic Array wind farm is an ongoing concern and the developers are still collating data to understand the potential impact on the environment and Lundy in particular. The proposed site has been confirmed and at a recent meeting, we were informed that there could be anything from 188 to 417 turbines. The turbines will rise to a maximum height of 200m to blade tip and be spaced 1km apart. Unfortunately, the 23kV generated is far too large for domestic use on the island. Further survey work continues with consent applications due for submission for consultation by the end of 2011 and sent to the government infrastructure Planning Committee by mid 2012. If consent is gained for the project, then developers expect to be generating power by 2015. We are carefully watching progress.

2011 has already started as a busy one for the Lundy team with early property bookings strong and the island almost to capacity throughout February. Every year our season seems to extend further as Lundy remains ever popular as a place of tranquillity and retreat from the fast pace of the mainland for many visitors, both old and new.

Thank you for your continued support. All the very best!

DEREK GREEN
March 2011