

PETER HYWEL HARMAN JONES, 1917–2014

We are very sorry to announce that Peter Harman Jones, husband of Ruth Harman Jones, brother-in-law to Diana Keast and mother of Marion and Peter, died on 9 November 2014, aged 97. Although he had not been able to get to Lundy for many years and will not be well known to many of those who are involved in the island today, his association with Martin Coles Harman and the Harman family, and consequently the island, goes back almost to the beginnings of the Harman period. He actually first visited Lundy before the war and he was there with the Harman family when war was declared.

His parents were involved in education in West Africa and Peter saw little of them for many years. His father, Sir Andrew Jones, was Chief Commissioner of the Northern territories of the Gold Coast, now Ghana, and he received a knighthood for his contribution to education. Peter was sent to Winchester Public school, for which he retained an affection all his life.

Peter was fully qualified as a barrister but never actually took up practice as a lawyer. He had suffered from polio since a child of eight, and walked with a limp all his life, but he was nevertheless conscripted during the war and worked in the Army pay corps. He became the senior paymaster for Aldershot and was demobilised from the army in 1946 with the rank of Major. He had spent some time on secondment in the United States, comparing their army pay systems with the British, and his army discharge papers were in fact signed by General Eisenhower. He was given leave in 1940 to marry Ruth Harman Jones and the marriage took place in Bournemouth. Immediately afterwards, he took her, to South Wales, where he was born, and Ruth obtained a post with the Ministry of Food continuing there during hostilities. Peter and Ruth were happily married for 66 years.

Peter joined Martin Coles Harman's office in Angel Court, Old Broad Street, and immediately became very useful to Harman, working closely with them throughout the whole of the Harman regime on Lundy, often as a director of various companies within the group. Peter was a very exact and precise man who paid attention to the details of the business for which perhaps MCH did not have so much patience. MCH never thought of Lundy as a business proposition and although Peter loved Lundy very much and with his family spent many happy times there, the difficult and irregular business of running an island gave him many headaches.

Peter was a very astute and knowledgeable businessman, greatly respected in the city, and in his life with the Harman family he had some very difficult responsibilities. After MCH died, it was Peter who had the tricky task of selling the British Bank for Foreign Trade which MCH in his affluent days had bought. When Albion died, it fell to Peter to wind up Balakhany Overseas, the West African drilling company that the Harmans had owned and operated. In 1969, when Lundy passed to the National Trust, Peter was closely involved in the hand-over.

Peter loved dogs and his pets meant a lot to him, especially in his last years. He also had a great love of horse-racing and a high spot was when in 1958 the Queen Mother came to Lundy and Peter was able to talk to her over tea about horses. He will continue to be missed by his daughter Marion, granddaughter Bronwen and his sister-in-law Diana. Although there are still many members of the Harman family keeping alive the memory of their ownership, Peter's death draws to a close that relationship with the island that existed when Martin Coles Harman and Albion Harman were Lords of Lundy.

ROGER ALLEN