

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Sadly this year's report begins with the news of the recent passing of Sir Jack Hayward. Without question we owe him a great debt for his timely intervention to assist the National Trust and The Landmark Trust with the purchase and management of Lundy in 1969, securing the island for future generations to enjoy. Thank you from us all.

Lundy also lost a great friend with the passing of Ernie Downing last year. Ernie had a long association with Lundy going back to the Harman days, carrying out many of the island's plumbing and drainage works. His main passion was Lundy, birds and holding court at the bar of the Marisco Tavern.

2014 brought a prolonged hot summer and as a result the island enjoyed one of its best years for many. Day-trip numbers increased by 13% to 12,042, with staying visitors remaining constant with the previous year, accounting for 4,671 of the total compliment of 16,713 visitors.

Given the high number of visitors and lack of rainfall, the island raised awareness of the potential for drought and, with careful management, was able to sustain its water supply, avoiding the need to import water from the mainland.

To help improve access to Lundy, we introduced our long-awaited new website in the spring, which enables online property bookings as well as featuring a great deal of information about the island and all of its interest features. Online bookings quickly proved popular, with 60% of bookings now made online, bringing property occupancy to 77% for the full year. The change to short summer breaks was well supported, with increased summer bookings, ticket sales and secondary spend.

MS *Oldenbug* enjoyed a good season, achieving a record 57 sailings without disruption, cancelling only six times from our schedule of 97 sailings. The ship also began regular coastal cruises when relocating from Bideford to Ilfracombe, allowing over 400 passengers to enjoy fine views of the coast and the new sculpture – 'Verity' – in Ilfracombe Harbour from the sea.

Oldenbug entered dry dock in November for three weeks and with some maintenance successfully passed her survey. She is in good shape and although we have to set aside over £100,000 annually to maintain her, she should continue to serve us well for some years yet. The ship also contributed to the success of three emergency excercises which involved colleagues from the RNLI, HM Coastguard and RAF Chivenor.

The helicopter service had a steady year, flying 1,115 passengers from our base at Hartland over the winter. The fine weather gave us the opportunity to make further improvements to the luggage-handing facility, providing better shelter for returning luggage. We've also gone green at Hartland with the introduction of a small PV solar electric system which provides free power for the site as well as feeding surplus back into the national grid. Since its installation in September and December, it has generated an impressive 900Kw hours of power. (Proof that it can be occasionally sunny at Hartland, even in winter!)

The island enjoyed visits from several large cruise liners over the summer, including MS *Serinissima*, *Ocean Nova*, MV *Minerva*, along with two visits from PS *Waverley*. Unfortunately MV *Balmoral* is still out of service but we are hopeful that she will return to service in 2015.

The island hosted a variety of events over the year. In April we hosted a last-minute wedding filmed for the TV show *Don't tell the bride*, which brought its own challenges! In May the Bishop of Crediton paid a visit to hold a service in St Helen's Church to celebrate the newly formed Parish of Lundy. May also brought a new stamp issue, produced by our new Postmaster, Ceri Stafford, as we celebrated 500 years of Trinity House, .

July was extremely busy and brought another wedding which filled the island and required a transformed lambing shed to host the reception. Fortunately the weather held and a great weekend was had by all. The island also hosted a visit from BBC *Coast* and presenter Mark Horton, who filmed for a Lundy feature. Landmark Trust Director Anna Keay and new trustees paid the island a visit, enjoying fine weather and meeting the staff.

July saw a break with postal tradition with a second stamp issued to commemorate the 100th birthday of John Pennington Harman VC. The single stamp poignantly reminds us of the sacrifice that many had made for our freedom and liberty.

August brought our annual Air-day, with the police helicopter joining in the fun along with a host of other aircraft. We also hosted a discreet visit by a Royal Saudi Princess who was eager to climb the Devil's Slide. To ensure the day went smoothly, LFS Vice Chairman Alan Rowland acted as guide, with renowned Everest mountaineer Doug Scott leading the climb.

The island's maintenance team were as busy as ever, with work commencing on the restoration of the lower lantern room of the Old Light. The ornate Georgian curved window was removed and sent off for specialist repairs with a view to refitting it this spring. The Quarters had a new cedar shingle roof, Barton cottages had all their front windows refurbished and most properties now have new showers.

One other noticeable change was the introduction of Cornishware to replace the ever scarcer Old Chelsea crockery, which has been the 'signature' of The Landmark Trust for many years. Since Old Chelsea is now no longer produced, we've taken the decision to introduce Cornishware on Lundy, freeing up valuable stock of Old Chelsea for mainland properties. The new crockery quickly proved popular on the island.

The farm had another successful year, now supplying the Tavern with lamb, beef, pork, venison, soay and goat. Despite the low rainfall, Kevin was able to make a good harvest of silage for the winter.

Back on the mainland it was a busy year for the shore offices and the marketing team as they hauled the exhibition trailer around the South West, spectacularly winning best exhibition for its class at the Royal Cornwall Show!

There was good news for the church at the end of the year with the successful bid for Stage 1 lottery funding. This allows the church steering group to develop a plan to submit a bid for significant funding in the autumn of 2015. It relies however on match funding and so a campaign to raise funds will be launched in the spring of 2015.

Looking ahead, 2015 brings the 50th anniversary of The Landmark Trust. There are several events planned to celebrate the occasion, including the temporary installation of a sculpture by renowned artist Sir Antony Gormley, a new stamp issue and a special 'Anthem for Landmark'.

Sadly, 2015 brings the end of an era with the air-sea rescue service stationed at RAF Chivenor confirmed for closure as the aircraft comes to the end of its operational life. Whilst we are assured that the proposed new service based at St Athan, outside Cardiff, will continue to provide a lifeline to the Island, the familiar sight and sound of the yellow Sea King on Lundy will be missed. Our grateful thanks go out to all the crews who, over the years, have unquestioningly arrived to assist the island in times of need.

I would like to end by thanking all the Lundy team for their continued hard work in keeping the island in good shape for others to enjoy, and the Lundy Field Society for their ongoing support with many of Lundy's numerous activities, both on and off the island.

All the very best.

DEREK GREEN
May 2015

*Restoration of the Old Light lower lantern room gets under way with the removal of the Georgian curved window – October 2014
Photo: Derek Green*



*Air training day, September 2014 – 2015 will see the last Sea King air-sea rescue helicopter based at RAF Chivenor over Lundy.
Photo: Nigel Dalby*