

## LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

2018 will be remembered in Lundy's long history as a year of extreme weather, with the island suffering freezing rain and snow when the full force of the 'Beast from the East' arrived in March. By contrast, tropical conditions arrived in early summer, leading to one of the warmest and driest periods in living memory.

Despite the extremes of weather and the subsequent damage caused, it was a successful year for the island with MS *Oldenburg* completing 97 of her 99 scheduled sailings and the helicopter having to be used on just two days during the sailing season. The ship carried 17,079 passengers over the season, (in 2017, it was 16,870), keeping the crew busy. The ship also completed two river cruises, three Lundy charters and four relocation cruises from Bideford to Ilfracombe.

The winter helicopter service completed its 15th year of operations with 36 scheduled flying days of which three days were delayed due to weather. The helicopter carried 1,329 passengers, a slight increase on the previous year. With the closure of the winter café at Hartland Point, we opened a small refreshment café at the rear of the passenger 'lounge'. The total attendance for both ship and helicopter was 18,404 (in 2017 it was 18,153).

Other summer visitors included the Hebridean Princess and the Waverley, who we have since learned has sadly been taken out of service until funds are raised to replace her boilers. With the Balmoral remaining out of service and now the Waverley laid up, I hope it's not the end of an era in the Bristol Channel.



*The MS Oldenburg leaving Ilfracombe. The vessel reached her 60th year in 2018.  
© Martin Thorne*

The *Oldenburg* sailed for Sharpness and her annual dry docking in November and, due to delays getting into the dock, finally left in late December. Eagle eyed members might spot that her after mast is missing whilst we fabricate a replacement during 2019. Maintenance costs remain high for the ship, which celebrated her 60th birthday in August. In total, we invested £189k in *Oldenburg* to keep her in service last year.

Work to improve facilities at Hartland is now complete with the arrival of our 'new' Ford Ranger fire truck complementing the service. The assortment of buildings provided well for the helicopter service and are a far cry from the early days of a small Portacabin and Portaloo (which used to blow over in the wind!) It always makes me smile when I read of new visitors writing about how basic the site is!

The islands maintenance programme took an unexpected turn after the arrival of the 'Beast From the East' which caused significant damage across the island. Over the space of several days during sub- zero conditions, damage was caused to the Beach Road, The Beach Building, The Jetty and Hammers amongst many other buildings. The wind was so strong that the flagpole on the ugly was snapped clean in half. It was timely and extremely fortunate that the roof of St Helens Church had recently been replaced and firmly secured to withstand such an onslaught. However, it is testament to the resilience of the the islanders and visitors alike to have endured the storm with good heart and sense of community to ensure that everyone was safe and kept as warm as possible during the freeze. The maintenance team quickly rose to the challenge and re-building works began almost immediately with the island getting back to normal after a few short weeks.



*One of the two cannons at  
The Battery restored in 2018.  
© Charlie Smith*

The Islands historic environment enjoyed further attention over the year following the award of a small grant from Historic England. The grant was stretched out with the help of regular stonemasons Charlie Smith and Rachel Thomson and a band of volunteers. With their help we undertook work on: the Isolation Hospital, Quarry Cottages, the staircase in the Old Light and notably, we were delighted to be able to finally restore the cannon at The Battery, thus completing works to the scheduled monument.



*Repairing the walls of the Isolation Hospital.*  
© Charlie Smith

Some of the village utility buildings had a makeover with the 'Black Shed' and outhouses being re-clad and tidied up.

Lundy remained a popular destination for holidays with occupancy of our letting properties maintaining a healthy occupancy of 85% of all available days.

Further improvements were carried out across the island with the fitting of more new kitchens and bathrooms along with fresh flooring being laid to many properties.



*The water treatment plant installed in 2018.*  
© Derek Green

Staff wise, Captain Mike Weston joined us on the bridge of the ship as First Officer and Rolf Newton took up the challenge of looking after the islands infrastructure in his new role of Island Engineer.

It was a steep learning curve for Rolf with his arrival coinciding with the installation the islands new water treatment plant to finally end the need to import bottled water and recycle approx. 32,000 plastic bottles annually.

The island farm had another good year with the arrival of a new foal in June. 'Lundy Mary' was born to mare Annie, poignantly named after Mary Squire neé Gade, who sadly passed away in 2018.

The island hosted a number of events over the year including the first ever Lundy 'trail run', a well organised and supported half marathon which took place on one of the hottest days of the summer.

250 enthusiastic runners arrived and spent two hours running around a carefully selected route to ensure that impact and disruption to the island and its wildlife were kept to a minimum. Keen ornithologist David Lindo ('The Urban Birder') covered the event for Radio 4 and I'm delighted that he's agreed to become an Ambassador for the island following his visit.

In May, Julie Welsh was invited to represent the island at Prince Charles 70th Birthday garden party along with other selected members of the Landmark staff representing each of the Trust's departments and regions.

On the 27th May, we were reminded of the combined force of the sea and Easterly wind when the yacht 'Millie D' was wrecked on the Landing Beach. Fortunately all on board escaped but it's a stark reminder of why so many life-rings adorn the walls of the Marisco Tavern.



*Interpretation panels in the St Helens Centre.*  
© Siân Carr

The refurbishment of St Helens was completed and the church proudly opened its doors on the 30th June. The occasion was marked with a beautiful service taken by the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter on a fine summer Sunday. As well as the refurbishment of the building, new interpretation panels were installed to help visitors understand more about the island history, wildlife, communities, and many other features along with the history of the church.

Mobility on Lundy was improved with the introduction of our 2nd 'Tramper' to assist less able staying visitors get around the island. Our thanks go to Rachel Johnson for tirelessly fundraising to provide the means to lease both vehicles.

Back on the mainland, the marketing team visited all of the notable events with our exhibition trailer across the summer, flying the flag for Lundy amongst the large number of visitors to the region enjoying the fine weather.

As we enter our 50th anniversary year, talks with the National Trust continue to renew the lease of the island. New Director General Hilary O'Grady and Dr Anna Keay visited Lundy in 2018 and held productive talks to help drive the complicated process forward.

Finally – I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the islanders, ship's crew and shore staff for their good work during a challenging year and the Field Society for their ongoing support and advice. We look forward to continuing to work in close partnership with you during the coming year.

All The Very Best,

DEREK GREEN  
June 2019

## CONSERVATION TEAM REPORT

As I sit here in my cosy office, distracted by the sound of scuttling Pygmy Shrews navigating the wall space, I am trying my best to reflect upon the many delightful happenings throughout the year. Once again I am reminded of so many wonderful experiences, wildlife highs, meteorological delights and water level woes, as well as an odd shipwreck thrown in for good measure. We of course have also had many a celebration and meeting of friends in the Marisco but for me to cover ALL these events I would need my own personal annual report so instead I will paint the seasons for you all in brief.

Winter on the island this year was a harsh but exciting affair, and one that will be forever rooted in my memory. At times you could have mistaken Lundy for an island in the Svalbard archipelago as thick sheets of ice adorned the cliff sides and snow drifts towered over village gates. As Lundy luck goes this was of course the perfect time for two of our generators to pack it in, leaving most of the staff and visitors with no electricity or heating for a number of days, a challenging accompaniment to the lack of running water due to frozen pipes. Luckily we were all able to seek sanctuary in the warming embrace of a log fire and comforting hot spiced cider shared with great friends in the trusty Marisco Tavern. A delight that was also shared by the hardy frost bitten LFS work party volunteers, thirsty and cold from a busy afternoon making snowmen inside the Barn with snow breached through the wind-blasted windows. As horrible as it sounds it was truly awe-inspiring to see the island in this inhospitable manner reminding me that nature is truly in control here rather than us blue shirted Landmark folk.