

OVERVIEW OF 2019

Michael Williams (LFS Secretary)

For me in my role as Secretary, the highlight of the year was taking part in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Lundy's relationship with the Landmark Trust and the National Trust. LFS members were well represented, including significant involvement in the preparations for the weekend, ensuring the event ran as smoothly as possible despite the weather preventing MS *Oldenburg* from sailing on the day of the event. It was especially gratifying to meet many members of the Harman family, descendants of our co-founder Martin Coles Harman.

There were three working parties to Lundy in 2019. The first trip, led by Belinda Cox, kicked off in March and comprised a good mix of 12 hardy volunteers, some new and others experienced. The jobs enjoyed included rhododendron seedling searches, tree surveying (including numbering), sapling maintenance, Alexander control, and bench restoration. However, the visit will be remembered mostly for the headline *Holidaymakers Stranded on Luxury Isle*, as some national newspapers and other media outlets described the marooning, due to the *Oldenburg* suffering a rudder malfunction, and the extra couple of nights spent in either St Helen's Church or the Tavern Wheelhouse.

In May, Trevor Dobie was the leader and the week's visit coincided with an LFS committee meeting in Millcombe House. The work featured sapling maintenance, continuing the tree surveying and labelling, repairs to the Heligoland Trap, Quarry Beach cleaning, drystone wall repairs, and fence replacement along the 'Steps of Doom'.

Belinda was again at the helm for the 13 volunteers taking part in the October working party. More unusual tasks were helping to hang banners in St Helen's Church and clearing the pond outside Brambles Villa. All in all, a very productive year for LFS volunteers.

During 2019 a grant was made to support research into cetacean occurrence around Lundy, with fieldwork due to take place in 2020. We have also put in place an annual allowance for the Lundy Warden for conservation-related expenditure, which we hope will provide valuable support for the Conservation Team.

An enjoyable long weekend in Millcombe and Old House South for the committee gathering in May included a workshop looking at the results of the membership survey and a meeting with members of the island management and conservation teams in attendance. A Communications and Engagement sub-group (comprised of Belinda Cox, Tim Davis, Tim Jones and Chris Pawson) has been set up to consider ways in which the LFS can sustain itself in the long term and enhance its relevance as it moves towards its centenary in 2046. The first stage of the sub-group's work will look at opportunities with social media, and further consultation with the membership based on replies to the survey.

Preparations to celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2021 are well underway. A 'Discover Lundy' week will be held on the island during May and, for the first time in the Society's history, our AGM will be held on Lundy during the week.

Alan and Sandra Rowland have taken over the Lundy Cabbage surveys from Roger & Rosy Key and Steve Compton, who surveyed Lundy's sole endemic plant for 25 years. The survey took place in June, with numbers similar to 2018.

Long-term bird ringing studies continued, focused primarily on two migratory species that have increased on Lundy since rat eradication. Ringing of Manx Shearwaters provides valuable information on their growing breeding population, while colour-ringing and subsequent re-sightings

of Wheatears helps to show the year-to-year variation in (the currently healthy) island population. Storm Petrels were also caught in record numbers. With the addition of the many migrant birds caught in spring and autumn, a total of 3,041 birds of 49 species were ringed during the year. Ringers gave practical demonstrations of the ringing process for other visitors, and evening talks on the insights that it provides. Work has also continued on digitising Lundy's past ringing records, to facilitate analysis for research purposes.

In other matters, Chris Webster has held discussions with Historic England about the Heligoland Trap, erected on the Terrace in 1951 to catch and ring birds. They have agreed to advise the Secretary of State to grant consent for the replacement of the trap. Richard Breese has started work on scanning photos from the Harry Savory archive that was donated to the LFS by the family.

As outlined last year, we were in process of setting up an endowment fund in which to place the Society's cash reserves in order to provide a secure long-term financial footing for the LFS. I'm pleased to report this work was completed in the spring with £20,000 invested and a further £15,000 held as cash in an interest-earning savings account. Grateful thanks to our Treasurer, Roger Chapple, who has done the hard work.

At the end of 2019 Grant and Shelley Sherman left the island. Grant has been the Society's Island Representative for several years and regularly provided guided walks and talks, often during times when the Warden's post was vacant, as well as pursuing his personal interest in Lundy's Guillemot population. Grant would reliably plug the LFS during his talks, encouraging visitors to join. We thank Grant for his valued contributions and wish him and Shelley well for their future on the mainland.

A new volume of the LFS Journal will be published in early 2020. This will be the seventh and final volume edited by Jenny George, with André Coutanche supporting production. As our flagship publication, Jenny has built up the Journal from its start in 2008, typically publishing eight peer-reviewed papers on a biennial basis on subjects ranging from mycology, archaeology, art and history to birds, marine and freshwater biology, and animal behaviour. André has checked the technical data in the papers, ensuring consistency, and has produced the excellent layout. Thank you both for your enormous contribution. Tom Dickins will be taking on the editor's role from Jenny.

Lastly, I am very sorry to record the death of author and artist Peter Rothwell, a long-standing visitor to Lundy. Peter served on the LFS committee between 1999 and 2005. His obituary appears on p.22. We also note the death of Peter Davis, Lundy Warden 1951–1954, whose obituary appears on p.23

Thank you for your support in 2019.

