



▲ Oldenburg at sunset outside Sharpness dry dock (photo: Derek Green).

ISLAND REPORT

Derek Green (General Manager, The Lundy Company)

2022 will undoubtedly be remembered as the year we returned to a 'new normal' following the pandemic. Just as we were beginning to think that things would revert to pre-pandemic times, world events changed everything almost overnight with the war in Ukraine, which would ultimately go on to have an impact on everyone, one way or another. Spiraling energy costs coupled with a shortage of materials and vital components, so readily available before Covid, impacted the Island as well as many of our trusted suppliers, and we had to tighten our belts an extra notch.

The *Oldenburg's* dry dock became the focus of the 2022-2023 winter after the ship sustained damage at Sharpness. What should have been a relatively straight forward five weeks docking turned into a six-month refit of the engine room. Works were extensive, both main engines requiring a complete overhaul, both auxiliary generators were overhauled along with the engine management system and all other electrical components had to be replaced or refurbished. The ship is due to return to service in spring 2023 and we will miss the beginning of the sailing season. To transport staying visitors to and from the island the winter helicopter service has been extended and local supply vessels, the *Goliath* and *Grima*, have been providing regular stores and fuel runs to the island. Visitors to Lundy last year may recall *Goliath* carrying out refurbishment to the island jetty.

2022 was otherwise a successful year for the island with high numbers of day trippers (11,064); staying visitors numbered 5561. The winter helicopter service was busy transferring 1608 passengers. The total visitor attendance for the year was 18,200 despite four cancelled sailings and eight "splash and dash" sailings during long prevailing of easterly winds. The island's letting properties had an exceptional year with occupancy reaching a record 91.5%

and it is pleasing to see the Vestry becoming a popular addition. It was reassuring that the Landmark Trust and Lundy were rated the best holiday cottage company by 'Which' magazine when considering how much customers felt well looked after during and after the pandemic.

It was another busy year maintenance-wise with numerous repairs following the February storms. We also completed a long-standing project to install handrails to the Square, Barn, Old School ('The Blue Bung') and Little St John's to help with access. The new handrails were hand forged in wrought iron. Carefully installed by Ben Protheroe and his team of blacksmiths from Somerset, it feels like they've been island colleagues forever. During the autumn, Tibbetts had a makeover, with new electrical wiring throughout. Even though it's 'off grid' there are 12-volt pumps, batteries and a small solar panel, discreetly hidden, to make everything work. One of the biggest projects of the year was the installation of 'Blue Thunder', our new emergency generator which had to be transported over in sections and rebuilt due to its bulk and weight. Sitting under a new roof in the farmyard, and capable of powering the whole island, the new generator has already proved its worth as we suffered ongoing problems with the main generator sets.



▲ The new forged rails on the steps up to the Old School (photo: Derek Green).

It was a busy year on the farm with 'operation clear up' continuing and over 2kms of fencing replaced by mainland contractors. The island's high level stewardship scheme was extended for a further five years which ensures that Lundy is managed to the highest possible standard and which provides vital income to the island. We were delighted to welcome the new foals Kestrel and Benson to the pony herd.

Staff-wise we had very few changes but were delighted to welcome First Officer Tom Irving to the bridge of the *Oldenburg*, summer volunteer Meaghan Kendall joined us for the winter and long-standing summer seasonal booking assistant Kate Bennett retired from Ilfracombe Shore Office. With grant funding and government subsidy declining for the farm following Brexit we were delighted to welcome Theresa Jones as our dedicated Lundy fundraiser. Theresa will be reviewing all of our fundraising initiatives and I am sure she will be a regular island visitor for years to come. The Marisco had an exceptional year following the challenge of the pandemic and it was great to see the tavern menu and atmosphere returning to normal. Head chef Teresa Davis, front of house manager Alice Waterfield and barman Ash Garfoot have done an exceptional job of bringing things back to normal. The shore office team had a busy year with fine summer weather and, on top of managing both Ilfracombe and Bideford, took to flying the flag across the region and at the Royal Cornwall Show.

During the year, the island hosted several events, notably the memorial service for Diana Keast, last owner of Lundy who passed away at the grand age of 99. The postponed Marine Festival was resurrected and successfully ran over the summer, providing the opportunity to replace our diving air compressor in the beach building, just in time for hordes of divers to arrive looking for air!



▲ HRH Princess Anne talking to Warden Rosie Ellis after landing by helicopter in July (photo: Derek Green).



▲ Lundy staff in front of the Royal Helicopter (photo: Helicopter Pilot of the Royal Flight).

July brought a flying visit by Princess Anne, in her capacity as patron of Trinity House, to inspect the North and South lights. She took some time to meet some of the islanders en route, flying in to land on the airstrip in the Royal Helicopter. The island once again hosted two half marathon runs for hardy trail runners which proved successful, if a bit on the warm side, and this has become a regular feature in our calendar, although we are going to restrict the event to a single run per year in future. The fashion of cold-water swimming arrived on the Island with several of the team leading the way all year round (brrr!) and several visitors joining the fun.

Weather always impacts Lundy and 2022 was no exception with a series of storms followed by a long dry summer proving a challenge for everyone, most of all the farm, with vital winter fodder ruined and water supplies critically low. Plans for our new water tanks progressed and will be a welcome addition in 2023.



Early in 2023 we were delighted to regain the status of Bird Observatory following several years work by the conservation team and volunteers along with support from members of the LFS. To manage the new observatory a committee has been formed which includes the General Manager, Island Manager, Warden, Chris Dee, Tim Jones, Terry Burke and the island's bird warden. Plans are afoot for a new website, and I am sure that the observatory will grow from strength to strength. Special thanks to Dean Jones, Stuart Cossey and everyone involved in obtaining the status once again.

Looking ahead, we plan to continue to replace the island's power supply with renewables and increase the size of the water reservoir, along with a long list of improvements across the island. We very much appreciate the ongoing support of the Lundy Field Society and its members and look forward to welcoming you back to Lundy this coming year.

◀ Rob Waterfield in front of the new air compressor in the diving shed (photo: Derek Green).