

RESEARCH GRANTS 2025

Alan Rowland (acting Chair of the LFS Grants Sub-committee)

Due to the sudden death of Jenny George, I have been asked to act as Chair of the sub-committee. Jenny did not leave any notes, so this report is compiled from reports she made to committee during 2024, kindly sourced by Michael Williams, Honorary Secretary to LFS. I apologise for any errors or omissions.

Grants awarded for research on Lundy in 2025

Two grants were given this year, both mycological.

- Funding of £746 was awarded to Louise Tranter, a PhD student at the University of Aberystwyth, for a study of the ecology and molecular phylogenetics of Clavarioid fungi (Fairy Clubs) in ancient grassland habitats on Lundy.
- Postdoctoral researcher Dr Ruby Bye, also of the University of Aberystwyth, was awarded £1000. Her project used special air samplers to trap air-borne fungal spores. The samplers, which were placed on wooden poles, have rotating paddles covered by a thin layer of grease to capture the spores. Five samplers were placed on the Airfield, five on Aclands Moor and five on the Tillage field. Samples were collected and sealed in air-tight tubes and taken back to Aberystwyth for DNA analysis. The project provided a list of fungi species present and their abundances. This is a new unique method for collecting fungi spores and has been used by Dr Bye elsewhere, for example in Hampshire in 2023. The method could also be adapted to collect flying insects and plant seeds.

Both projects took place in November 2025, and feature in the section on Fungi and Slime Moulds. The results of the DNA studies will be appearing in the 2027 volume of the LFS Journal.

One of the grants (£460) awarded to Chenxi Zhang (Imperial College) in 2024 for monitoring Manx Shearwater calls has not yet been claimed, although the research was carried out. A short paper by Chenxi and others has been sent to John Hedger for the next LFS Journal.

In early September, LFS received a request for funding a light source (£1900) from Jamie Dunning, who has been working on Lundy Sparrows for several years. Jamie wanted to look at the relationship between bird plumage and light environments, as light has an effect on how colour is perceived. LFS usually gives grants to fund travel and accommodation rather than equipment – there are difficulties with maintenance and who keeps the equipment after the project concludes – but in the event, the funding was met by the RSPB and the device is now in use on the island.

Publications resulting from past grants.

The Lundy Field Society Journal Vol 9 (2025) featured a paper *Vocalisation behaviours of Manx Shearwaters on Lundy* by Yuheng Sun. She was funded by LFS to present this to EMPSEB28 (European Meeting for PhD students in Evolutionary Biology) in Scotland.



▲ Ruby Bye (Aberystwyth University) with one of her spore traps on Ackland's Moor in November (photo: John Hedger)