

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Lundy Lichens by Ann Allen**

Lundy Field Society, Bideford, Devon. 2007.  
48 pages. ISBN 0-9530532-9-6. £9.99

Compared with other forms of wildlife, lichens are rarely the focus of local field guides. Even rarer are lichen guides to Britain's small offshore islands. Ann Allen has achieved this with Lundy by combining her experience of lichen hunting in the Channel Islands and the islands of south-west England (in the company of Barbara Hilton and Peter James) with her love of lichens.

Lundy with at least 350 species is particularly rich considering its size (three miles long by half-a mile wide). This we are told is because of its oceanic position, pollution-free environment, diverse range of

habitats such as heathland, granite and man-made substrates, and the enrichment effect of large, local seabird colonies. The main appeal of the book is its photographs, 52 colour and 3 black and white, not to mention the stunning cover which nestles the title among an open clump of Golden-hair lichen *Teloschistes flavicans*, a Lundy speciality. The spiral binding and thick pages make it a tough little cookie for outdoor use. In many ways the author makes up for her personal absence as a guide by planning the book as a conducted tour so that one may, with book in hand, move easily around the island from one habitat to the next.

For the beginner, it may be daunting to try to hang onto the text from the start, so instead put the book in your rucksack and head off towards some quiet and distant spot. Then explore what lies within the covers. As a good number of the photographs depict known landmarks e.g. The Cheeses, Halfway Wall, Old Hospital, Beacon Hill Cemetery, it is highly likely that you will encounter them at some stage during your visit. Those who wish to probe further into the world of lichens will find sections of the 'Introduction' such as 'Looking at lichens', and the glossary and line drawings at the back, useful for reference.

As nature's artists it is the lichens which give the island its natural colouring: rag-rolling the cliffs, zoning the shoreline, investing the heathlands and enshrining the rocks. Any well travelled island hopper will want this book. Visitors are in for a treat and should be encouraged to buy, beg or borrow a small magnifying glass or hand lens in order to make their trip really worthwhile.

*Vince Giavarini*

