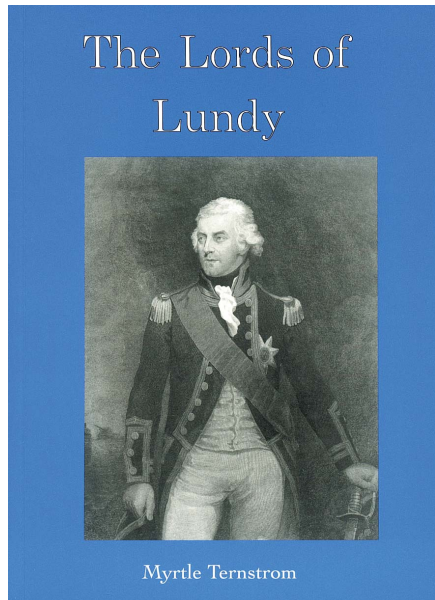


***The Lords of Lundy* by Myrtle Ternstrom**

M.S. Ternstrom, 6 Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2QE. 2010. 235 pages. ISBN 095061779-2. Paperback. £12.99 (including postage) from the author.

Attractive covers immediately draw the reader into this fascinating account of the lords of Lundy and their influence over almost a 1000 years, from the twelfth century Mariscos to the present-day National Trust. Who better placed than Myrtle Ternstrom, with her background of historical research and enthusiasm for Lundy, to introduce us to this captivating and central feature - ownership - which has shaped the island's destiny. The text flows easily, sometimes poetically, dipping into a wealth of anecdotal detail with copious illustrations that capture our attention and enhance the meaning of the story as it unfolds.



*The Lords of Lundy* can be appreciated by the newcomer to the island and day-tripper as well as the veteran visitor. Starting with Lundy's rich prehistoric and archaeological past, which has left its mark on the landscape, its history is described through the sequence of owners. This book is not just a factual historical account, but one that comes from a love of the island and the people who have contributed to its character. The organisation of the book moves the narrative forwards systematically with the author weaving together information from many sources. But in order to search for information, the reader would be aided by a table of contents and/or an index. Each chapter ends with a list of references and at the end of the book there are a summary list of Lundy owners and a section on notes for each chapter. While the book has a scholarly edge and accuracy embracing historical technicalities, it remains a thoroughly enjoyable read for a broad audience.

Each chapter has its special flavour, reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of its owners, skilfully set in contemporary context of local, national and international war, trade, pirating and smuggling. Lundy comes over as a very special island, unique perhaps, strategically located in the Bristol Channel and, after its succession of owners, still wild, tranquil and naturally beautiful. Most owners found it difficult to balance the books, let alone make a profit. Some owners seldom set foot on the island, as the fourteenth century Montacutes; others tried to make improvements following neglect, as the eighteenth century Warren; and later others, like the Heavens in the nineteenth century, loved Lundy, making it a place for living rather than merely existing. The blue gate, that I have admired and photographed from the back of the Marisco Tavern, was put into the wall by the Revd Hudson Heaven to enable islanders access to the little iron church beyond. The Heavens were followed by the Harman family who, with the Gades, took a personal interest in Lundy and introduced many initiatives and further improvements.

*The Lords of Lundy* enlivens my knowledge of the island today through its colourful historic connections, such as with the *Marisco* Tavern; *Knights Templar* Rock; and the *Grenvilles* of Bideford – these and other references are part of a fascinating tapestry with Lundy, geographically and over time. Much of the last two chapters benefits from the personal experiences and connections of the author and is especially vivid, with a lightness of style. The description of the 1977 Jubilee visit by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh and their informal walk from Brazen Ward to the Landing Beach is a good example.

Forty years ago Lundy was at a crossroads: private funding was no longer adequate to meet its needs. When in 1969 the National Trust came to the rescue by purchasing the island, Lundy passed from private to public ownership. The Landmark Trust, then a young four years old, agreed to a 60-year management lease and tackled the enormous challenge of renovating buildings and infrastructure. Much has been achieved over the past 40 years. Not least has been the recognition of Lundy's unique contribution to conservation and the natural environment (including a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the first national Statutory Marine Nature Reserve). *The Lords of Lundy* is a significant publication placing Lundy in a historical perspective at a still-challenging time. This story of ownership both entertains and leads us to a fuller appreciation of Lundy and its history which are our heritage.

*Ann Allen*