



DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 50, February 2021



Inside...

A couple of intros: Meet our new committee member & the new Lundy Ranger.

What happened to the old Church organ? We find out!

Lockdown on Lundy: the inside story.

In years gone by: celebrating 50 years of LFS membership

And lots more...

Editing and layout by: Belinda Cox (bulletin.editor@lundy.org.uk)

Contact address: Rose Cottage, 16 All Saints Lane, Clevedon BS21 6AY

Contributions in the form of news items, short articles, illustrations and photos reflecting the aims and activities of the Lundy Field Society are welcome and may be sent, preferably by email, to the editor. Telephone enquiries to 07795 303933.

Copy deadline for the 2020 LFS Bulletin: **31 October 2021**

Copyright of the articles published in this bulletin lies jointly with the author(s) and with the Lundy Field Society. Unless otherwise stated, extracts from articles can be used in 'not-for-profit' publications providing that the source is acknowledged.

The opinions expressed in the bulletin are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Lundy Field Society.

Published February 2021

ISSN 2397-9763

Printed by: Short Run Press

<https://www.shorrunpress.co.uk/>

The Lundy Field Society is a registered charity, No. 258294

www.lundy.org.uk

@DiscoverLundy



Contents

Editor's chatterings	Belinda Cox	2
A Missive from our Chair	Alan Rowland	3
LFS Conservation Breaks	Trevor Dobie	4
Money can't buy happiness...	Sandra Rowland	4
A couple of introductions:		
Our new committee member	Richard Breese	5
The new Lundy Ranger	Matt Stritch	5
The 2021 AGM	Michael Williams	6
The Warden's Words	Dean Woodfin-Jones	7
Rosie Ellis Reports	Rosie Ellis	9
Lundy Marine Festival	Robert Irving	10
Promotion for one!	Alan Rowland and Michael Williams	11
Feral Stock Management	Peter Hamlyn	12
Wondering about the old church organ?	Michael Williams	14
<i>Isaria farinose</i> : The Benson's Cave Fungus	Alan Rowland	16
Lockdown on Lundy	Sue Waterfield	18
The Lundy Webinars	Michael Willimans	20
In years gone by...		
Lundy on the horizon	Catherine Hubbard	22
A thank you note	Rosemary Linn	25
Some exciting times!	Cora Ann Gardner	25
The Paddle Steamer Tug <i>Aber</i>	Richard Breese	27
A Lundy Podcast	Olivia Jones	31
Was there an older light on Lundy?	Belinda Cox	31
Publications for sale through the LFS		inside back cover
LFS branded clothing for sale		back cover

**See opposite for publishing details and copy deadline
for the next issue of Discovering Lundy.**

Cover photo: **Round-leaved Sundew** *Drosera rotundifolia* photographed by **Mandy Dee** in May 2019 in the Quarries.



Editor's Chatterings

I feel extremely lucky to have been able to get three Lundy fixes in 2020; fewer than I normally manage, and that I had planned, but I am very aware this is more than a lot of people have been able to achieve.

The first one was before Lockdown 1.0, when I spent 4 February nights in my favourite property, the Blue Bung. It's such a lovely cosy property, and a perfect stroll home from the pub.

While adhering to the COVID rules, I was able to take some friends and their two young children for their first visit to the island in July. It was my first stay in Quarters, and I was pleasantly surprised at how comfortable and spacious it is. Sadly, the weather was very wet and windy, and with cold, damp children we weren't able to explore the island as much as we'd planned, nor to see the last of the puffins before they left. I did manage to introduce them to the Lundy Letterboxes though, and they now have a great excuse to return and find some more. While waiting to board the *Oldenburg* on our last day, we spent some time on the Hell's Gate beach playing with dozens of spider crab shells from a mass moult. A great learning experience for all of us. There was a seal in Devil's Kitchen too, which caused great excitement!

My sister accompanied me on a last-minute visit, staying a couple of nights in Old House North in October. It was her second stay, the first being about 7 years ago. She keen not to leave it so long until her third visit, but I don't think she'll ever be as much of a lundyphile as me. For me, one of the highlights of this trip was my first ever swim in the Landing Bay – it certainly won't be my last!

I've had to reschedule at least three trips over the year, including a week over Christmas, but while that is disappointing, I'm very mindful that Lundy will still be there when arms have been jabbed and we're settled into whatever the 'new normal' has become. Fingers crossed for this year's trips; I'm hoping to get to Old Light cottage in April.

Apart from Lundy, I've been keeping busy volunteering for a few organisations which support people with mental ill-health, homelessness and domestic abuse. It's been really interesting seeing how services have needed to change due to the restrictions and lockdown rules, and I've been extremely impressed at the speed things have happened.

COVID has of course provided many challenges for all of us, for me including the worry about having enough content to fill this bulletin! With only a few pages less than last year, I would like to thank everyone who has taken time to write something for publication. As always, I've learnt a huge amount, and I do have a certain smugness about being the first person to read the bulletin in its entirety.

So, a challenge for you: if you've never written anything for Discover Lundy, take some time in 2021 to put some words down about what Lundy means to you, to write about a trip to the island, or to report some history, archaeology or anything that interests you. If you need support, I'm happy to provide it. This publication is for the members, by the members.

Belinda Cox



An Alan Rowland selfie from the MS Oldenburg.

A Missive from our Chair

Well! What a year! We've all had lots of free time, but little opportunity to spend it on Lundy.

Some of us were fortunate enough to get to Lundy outside of lockdown, some made it and had their visit limited by restrictions and many of us have not managed a trip and just missed visiting our island.

Sandra and I were on the first visitors' boat on the 7th of July when the island reopened and stayed for our usual two summer weeks. Everything was so different. Sitting below decks, masked up with a "light to moderate" swell and bacon frying behind us was not much fun. We visitors, as well as the island staff, were trying to find our way through the restrictions – limited opening, one way systems and worst of all, no hugs. Apart from the Oldenburg, the Tavern and the Shop though, everything else was unchanged. The island was wonderful, the weather great and thankfully the virus did not make it over the Bristol Channel. Since our visit, there have been staff changes too so there will be exciting times to make new friends on our next visits.

Off island we all know how different things were. We all learned how to use Zoom or its equivalent. We had our AGM and committee meetings via Zoom and Michael has done sterling work organising the Webinars to give us our Lundy fix. I must thank Bee Cox for hosting our committee and Dave Richards for providing and managing the AGM and Webinars for us and Michael for hosting them and thus helping to recruit more members.

Despite the pandemic, you have all ensured the future of Lundy with the generous donation of personal gifts as well as through the LFS five-figure donation to the Lundy Appeal.

With all the time on my hands, I have not been idle. I have been working with others towards Discover Lundy 2021 to provide interesting things for the week. I have also been extracting all invertebrate records from our Annual Reports with the goal of uploading them to iRecord to preserve them for posterity and make them available for researchers – only 20 more years to get up to date!

Our editor forwarded the contents of this edition to me. I note the absence of Working Party reports that usually fill these pages. We had to cancel all Working Parties this year, but there will be at least one extra next year from which we will no doubt receive interesting reports. This means that in this year's Bulletin we have lots of new authors and different types of articles that I know I will enjoy and hope you will too.

As I write this, my county of Cornwall has joined Devon and Lundy in Tier 3 closing the Marisco for all except take-aways once again.

Let us all enjoy these articles about Lundy and look forward to setting foot on the island, safely inoculated against this terrible pandemic, in the near future.



*The 'Masked Knight'
Photo by Alan Rowland.*

Alan Rowland – Chair LFS

LFS Conservation Breaks 2020

An update from the LFS working party organiser, **TREVOR DOBIE**.

Well, what a year 2020 was! As you will have gathered, there were no LFS working parties to Lundy. Even when the island was open to visitors, the restrictions on social gathering from different households made the occupation of The Barn impossible for us.

However, always looking on the bright side, plans for 2021 are in place with plenty of work on our 'to do' list. Rhododendron seedlings are sure to need urgent attention, permission is being sought to refurbish the Terrace Heligoland bird trap, and as usual, there will be plenty of stones dislodged from the miles of stone walls that the sheep love to scramble over.

Please keep an eye on the LFS website (<http://www.lundy.org.uk/what-we-do/conservation-work>) for new information. As it now is official that The National Trust will not be running any working parties to Lundy the LFS may well be adding extra dates. Here's hoping!



Off to work on a chilly morning in April 2019. Photo by Belinda Cox.

Money can't buy happiness...

...but it can buy you an LFS membership! A note from our membership secretary, **SANDRA ROWLAND**.

Thank you to all members who have paid their 2021 subscription already, and welcome to all the new members who joined in 2020.

A gentle reminder if you haven't paid your subs yet that subscription rates remain at £25 for individuals and £28 for family membership, and that subscriptions are due in January each year. If you would like to set up a standing order payment please contact me for details, or you may pay by cheque if you prefer. Please contact me on membership@lundy.org.uk if you have any queries.

(Ed: All I ask is the chance to prove that money can't make me happy. Spike Milligan)

A couple of introductions...



A selfie by Richard from the summit of Rat Island.

New committee member RICHARD BREESE tells us a little about himself.

I live in Lambourn in the Valley of the Racehorse in deepest West Berkshire and work as a software developer for a supply chain management solutions company.

Apart from Lundy, I enjoy photography, architecture (particularly Lutyens and Voysey), industrial archaeology (particularly canals) and I have sung in a church choir most of my life.

I first became aware of Lundy when my choir was singing at Exeter Cathedral for a week in 1991. I was looking for a brewery for us to visit on our day off and I found Lundy listed in one of my beer books. Alas, it soon became apparent that a day trip to Lundy from Exeter, using public transport, was not viable (and still isn't to this day, I suspect).

Several years later I joined the Lutyens Trust and when I discovered that their headquarters, Goddards, was leased to the Landmark Trust, I bought a copy of the Handbook simply as a book about interesting buildings. Towards the back of the Handbook I rediscovered Lundy. We had been on day trips to islands in the past and found them rushed and rather stressful, so we booked a week in LSJ during Easter 2001. I enjoyed reading the LFS Annual Reports and became a life member. We visited once or twice a year until our daughter was born in 2007. We returned with Beth in 2012 and have visited increasingly frequently ever since. Last year I became a churchwarden of St Helen's.

My main interests are the history, industrial archaeology, and architecture of the island, but will happily spend hours sitting and watching the peregrines, seals or dung beetles. My favourite place is the southwest point, preferably in a force 9-10 southwesterly.

Several people have asked in the past whether I am related to ornithologist Dilys Breese - I am not.

Welcome to the new Lundy Ranger, MATT STRITCH!

Hello members of the Lundy Field Society. I would like to introduce myself, Matt, and my partner Jo. We arrived on Lundy mid-September, me filling the role of ranger and Jo of general assistant. We have already met a few of you and am sure if the restrictions were not in place, we would have met a lot more. Hopefully, this new year will allow us to meet many more of you.

Prior to Lundy I was previously working on Ascension Island, a small volcanic island in the centre of the Atlantic, as the assistant warden. This role was more like the ranger position here on Lundy with work revolving around path maintenance, public engagement and infrastructure of the national park while also assisting the plant and seabird teams. I met Jo on Ascension when she came to monitor the green turtle population during their breeding season. Jo returned to an office setting in the UK after the season, while I continued on Ascension until the end of my contract.

This was cut short due to COVID, and I was repatriated by the RAF back to Bude. Luckily, we were both able to work from home in Bude for a few months, where we would look across at Lundy on our daily walks, eager to make the move over.

Prior to Ascension I have worked in a variety of roles, all wildlife and environment based. The most relevant to Lundy was my time as warden on a small offshore Mauritian island known as Round Island. I have also worked with wild gorillas in Gabon, Bonobos in the D.R. Congo, and as a safari guide in South Africa.

Jo has split her time between the UK and Greece. Each nesting season Jo would head to Greece to monitor loggerhead turtles on the Greek island of Zakynthos. Out of season Jo was lucky enough to be able to return to her office work scanning documents.

As you can see, we are both island people and love the lifestyle they come with. We have already begun exploring Lundy during our days off but have so much more to see. We are both keen divers and once the Oldenburg sailings resume we are going to bring our dive equipment over and explore what Lundy has to offer below the waves. Everyone we have met has been lovely and the team have been very welcoming to us, especially during this strange time.



Matt and Jo with South light in the background. Photo by Jo Farrow.

We can't wait to see what the New Year brings.

The 2021 AGM

An update from Hon. Sec. MICHAEL WILLIAMS.

Our AGM will be on Saturday 15th May this year to coincide with our Discover Lundy week. Everyone is invited to join us for the meeting which will be held on Lundy for the first time in our history! It's a Bideford sailing day, departing at 08.00 and returning at 19.30 so members will have a long day on the island. There will be a short business meeting followed by the Warden's and General Manager's talks so a shorter format to normal to give members plenty of time to enjoy Lundy.

More details will be circulated nearer the time. We are also making backup plans in case restrictions prevent travel to Lundy.



*The walk back to the village.
Photo by Jasmine Dawes.*

The Warden's Words

DEAN WOODFIN-JONES tells us how it's been for him leading the Conservation Team in 2020

The strident calls of ravenous Rock Pipits fill the Village as birds relocate to soggy fields from their usual sea cliff haunts. Fearless flocks of gulls and corvids gather gregariously on the drier and blustery days to chase the farmer through High Street Field for his feed, and stunning Starlings serenade upon various Landmark properties - all hinting at the breeding season to come. Another year has passed and one which has seemingly done so quicker than ever before, it's that time again to reminisce, rejoice and to rally ideas together for the upcoming season – January shutdown!

As you are all too aware, the year 2020 has been a year like no other, not just for Lundy but for the entire planet as the coronavirus spread from the east - changing lives, forcing lockdowns, tier systems and social distancing from family and friends.

On the island, the season started off in a marvellous fashion, with around 200 trees being relocated from cosy nurseries into areas of Millcombe Wood and St John's Valley as well as lots of sorting and planning for a plethora of events and monitoring for the upcoming year. Shortly after this period however, post prolific work party with the National Trust in March - the nation went into full lockdown - just as we were getting geared up to welcome the first ship full of visitors. It was then evident as the weeks went on that the events and gatherings that we all know and love on Lundy would not be able to go ahead - like the eagerly awaited Lundy Marine Festival, the welcoming of numerous school children and Lundy Ambassadors for a day of exploration, all the LFS work parties, snorkel safaris and the company of regular visitors, researchers and friends from across the channel.

Despite all the losses encountered due to lockdown, it was in fact a remarkable time for the Conservation Team. Here the Lundy locals (under government guidelines) in their characteristic communal and dedicated demeanours, helped out on a voluntary basis where they could, resulting in a very rewarding and prolific time for conservation and general maintenance on the island.

Looking back, I can't actually think of words which would do justice to the incredible privilege we had here being on Lundy during lockdown. Skylarks took to building their nests right next to busy foot paths, the sika deer became fearless and were often seen roaming the Village in the day undeterred by Lundy staff, seas were ship-less and bustling with nothing but seabirds, seals and cetaceans, and the island's vegetation quickly reclaimed paths and engulfed benches in just a few quick months – all a reminder of how truly wild this little island is here in the Bristol Channel.

Finally, come July, the lockdown restrictions lifted which allowed us to get some lucky



Fiona Hepburn and Dean Woodfin-Jones get their hands dirty rebuilding a wall at Quarters. Photo by Rosie Ellis.

visitors over on the Oldenburg - although in much reduced numbers. Despite all the new rules to travel and access to the General Stores and the Marisco, it was truly magical being able to welcome visitors back to the island again – even though it was from a distance of two metres, or seven rafting Puffins depending on your fancy.



*Volunteer members of the Conservation Team 2020.
(l-r) Sophie Upton, Ben Hanson & Peter Hayes.
Photo by Rosie Ellis.*

During this time, we managed to get over some long-term volunteers for end of the season to help with the year's seal surveys and ranger duties. Once again I'd like to take the opportunity to say a massive thank you to Volunteer Assistant Ranger Peter Hayes! A young lad with a long history of visiting Lundy and one we managed to hang on to, keeping him on as our new Outdoor General Assistant. Also a huge thank you to Volunteer Assistant Wardens Ben Hanson and Sophia Upton who helped out in so many ways throughout the late

summer and autumn, particularly with this year's seal counts and surveys and of course for their top class company.

One person I must single out for all her amazing work and dedication towards the Conservation Team is Rosie Ellis, a lady who has truly outdone herself this year by stepping in on all the Ranger duties, helping on seabird surveys, ship duties and continuing with the island's ever growing education program amongst countless other tasks. Thanks you so much Rosie for all your help, is there anything you cannot do?!

I'd also like to thank the islanders, particularly Zoë Barton, Sue Waterfield and Tom Carr for all their help with this year's seabird studies, Pia Murrell, Rachel Sylvia, Matt Scantlebury for their help with fencing and Rhododendron clearance, Richard Goodman for his stellar work making Quarry Beach accessible again, Joe Burford-Redgrove for helping clear the Lower-east side path, Fiona Bradley, Tess Footitt and Cameron Alway for their help with building new dry-stone walls and walkways and to Matt Stritch, Rob Waterfield and Derek Green for all their support again this season.

As always, between all the glories of living in such a place, there has been some real stand out happenings and observations again for me this year. These include: the multiple nights ringing one of Lundy's most magical and somewhat mythical birds, the European Storm Petrel at the North End - those three incredible sea-watches where I was extremely lucky to see breaching Thresher Shark and two mighty Blue-finned Tuna erupt from glass-like seas - all those delightful evenings spent plodding through soggy fields in the rain in search of Woodcock and Snipe with Rob Duncan and Jamie Dunning – all the glorious rare birds I was lucky enough to set eyes upon, in particular the White's Thrush, Sora, Bridled Tern and Lundy's first White-tailed Eagle in 140 years [*Ed: more on page 26!*] and of course, each and every day I had the privilege to spend my time immersed in the busy lives of Lundy's incredible seabird colonies.

Last but by no means least, a HUGE thank you to you at the Lundy Field Society for all your on-going support, all of the very entertaining online talks and your constant dedication to the island. Also, thank you to all those who helped secure Lundy's

future by donating to the Lundy Appeal during what was, like everywhere else in the country, a very uncertain year.

The Conservation Team are very much looking forward to seeing you all back on the island very soon! Take care and stay safe!

ROSIE ELLIS Reports

The Education Officer and Assistant Warden tells us how it was for her.

As many would guess we had a very quiet year on the school visit front, with just one guided visit from a small group of masters students from Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit. I'm really looking forward to welcoming students back in 2021, and despite the uncertainties we have groups booking in for a well-deserved adventure.

At the beginning of the year, we had one working holiday from the National Trust. Dean, the volunteers and I had a very windy and full-on week of Rhododendron searches, Steps of Doom* repair, fencing and tree planting. Looking back on the photos it seems a lifetime ago, and I hope that this year we will once again be able to host some LFS working parties when it is safe to do so.

By the next month, the country was in lockdown and the island's future, not least my job role, was looking very uncertain. Thanks to the furlough scheme, the National Lottery, grants secured, and generous donations from the LFS and individuals, the feeling was infinitely more positive by the time of the second lockdown, and my contract has been made permanent, sharing roles with the new ranger Matt.

Time has not been wasted and we have kept busy with rhodi searches (thanks Pia and Matt!), repairing quarry steps (thanks Rich and Pete!), rebuilding walls, repairing quarter wall fence (thanks Tom!), building a small boardwalk for bird ringing in St Johns Valley (thanks Cam and Tess!).

Dean and I are both now qualified to treat the Rhododendron, so we're ready for when it comes back out of the winter dormant phase. Many thanks to Hush Farms for their guidance, training and generosity getting us to this stage. If you are booked in for a work party this year start limbering up for days searching up and down the east coast and plateau.

The St Helen's Centre and Church has been an invaluable asset giving those unable to fit into the tavern a place to shelter from the elements. Many thanks to all at the Church of England for their understanding and help, especially Rev. Charles Booth (now a Lundy Ambassador!) who joined us for a month's sabbatical in the vestry.



A selfie by Rosie Ellis on an incredibly overgrown lower east path.

It was a quiet Christmas here on Lundy, like the rest of the country I am sure. It was touch and go with helicopters and the mist, but thanks to our regular pilot Richard offering to stay the night, we could stop and start when the fog cleared and got everyone over just in time for sunset.

I'm looking forward to 2021 and catching up with all of you properly. See you in the Tavern someday soon!

[*Ed: AKA the LFS steps— Lots of Flipping Steep steps!]



The Village at sunrise. Photo by Joanne Wilby.

Lundy Marine Festival - biding its time

Some reassurance from ROBERT IRVING, the Lundy Marine Festival Coordinator.

Back in mid-March 2020, the website for the Marine Festival - a three month salty water extravaganza at Lundy, due to take place over the summer - was just about to be launched. It had taken six months to get all the plans drawn up and for the interpretation to be put in place and then, as I'm sure happened with many other long-planned projects up and down the land, disaster struck! Perhaps it was no bad thing that the first national lockdown happened just before the launch - it saved an awful lot of back-tracking. So perhaps there was a silver lining to that particular cloud after all.

And rather than the Festival be cancelled in its entirety, we made the decision to postpone it. The choice was: do we delay for a year (until summer 2021) or for two (summer 2022)? Just to be on the safe(r) side, we've opted for the latter. I hope by then that we'll feel that the pandemic is well behind us and that we'll all be raring to go again, willing to sign up with renewed enthusiasm and energy for the Festival (part II). Fortunately, the website is being 'stored' offline and it will be revived at some point, with a few tweaks, during the spring of 2022 - assuming some other catastrophe doesn't happen in the meantime.

So watch this space is the message - I'll be planning to bring you up to date with Festival plans in the next edition of *Discovering Lundy* in Jan/Feb 2022.

Promotion for One!

MICHAEL WILLIAMS and ALAN ROWLAND on our newest Vice President.



Photo of Roger Chapple from his own archives.

At the AGM in September 2020 we were delighted to elect our retiring Honorary Treasurer, **Roger Chapple**, as a Vice President of the Lundy Field Society.

Alan Rowland nominated Roger on behalf of the committee and we reproduce below a brief biography of Roger and his connection with Lundy.

Roger has been visiting Lundy since the 1950s. His first visit was on board a Campbell Steamer. He later stayed at Signal Cottages in the 1970s before they were demolished, and has regularly visited the island since.

He is a Life Member of the LFS which he joined in June 1994. Shortly after the 50th Anniversary celebrations in 1996, he was elected to the committee. The committee was undergoing change and the LFS were considering a presence on what was then known as the World Wide Web.

During 1995 Roger held meetings with the Lundy General Manager to improve dialogue between the Society and the Landmark Trust. In 2002, Roger took over as Chair from Jenny George. This was the year that the winter helicopter service resumed, and the Seabird Recovery Project was underway which was very controversial at the time.

During his first year as Chair, meetings were increased to four a year. The LFS refurbished the Tavern library and display in the church with Roger also acting as a guide for the North Devon Walking Festival visits to Lundy. He was Chair during the 2006 60th Anniversary celebrations as well as at the Symposium held at Exeter University and represented the LFS on the newly formed Lundy Management Committee until he stood down in 2007.

On the retirement of the Treasurer in 2014, Roger took over this post. During the last six years he has moved our finances onto online banking, restructured accounts we had, been a member of the sub-committee establishing the Endowment Fund.

He fully intends to continue as an active member of the committee as well as continuing in the role he has made his own – the AGM auctioneer!



Roger looking contemplative (top centre) at the recent LFS Committee meeting. Photo by Richard Breese.

Feral Stock Management

PETER HAMLYN portays his experience with managing the numbers of deer, Soay and goats on the island.

In 2004 I began what has become a fascinating study of the feral stock on Lundy.

The initial aim was to gain control of the Sika deer herd which seemed to be only haphazardly managed since their introduction by Martin Coles Harman in 1927. A number of very old deer and poor stock had to be culled before we could begin to see an improvement in the quality of the herd. This process is still ongoing with only a very selective cull taking place annually.

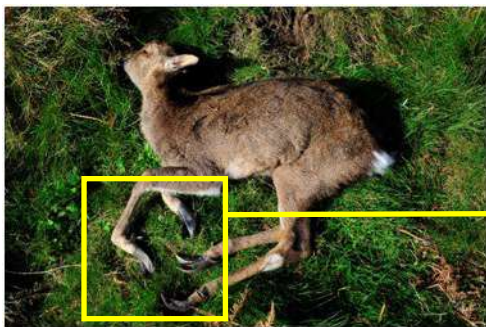
Over the past 15 years a number of observations have been made which may or may not be of significance.

- Deer that have been feeding on significant quantities of Tormentil never seem to suffer from intestinal worms or liver fluke;
- On two occasions over the 15 year period we have come across a deformity of the hoof known as Aladdin's Slipper, the cause is not really known, but records show that there was one case reported by Martin Coles Harman in the 1940s;
- We have been able to observe how the deer have adapted to a totally different environment when the Rhododendron were cleared, resulting in quite a few of the deer moving north to Brazen Ward and Gannets' Coombe.

The Sika on Lundy are smaller than their mainland cousins which is almost certainly due to the harsher environment they live in.

Soay sheep numbers also have to be regulated, and once again it has been possible to study the Soay's response to a significant change in their environment, namely the almost total eradication of the rabbit population. The resultant increase in grazing has meant that far more sheep overwinter successfully and more ewes are likely to bear twins each year. These factors bring their own challenges to the management of the feral stock with greater numbers having to be culled year on year but we do make use of the carcasses.

Just recently a Soay ewe was culled near the North Light, it was quite small and the thought was that it was perhaps 2 years of age. However, she had a broken mouth and was probably 10 years old as the growth rings on her horns indicated. The reason could be one of many; late lamb with winter too close to develop properly,



*Aladdin's Slipper - this calf had no chance of survival.
Photo by Peter Hamlyn.*

perhaps the mother died before the lamb was fully developed and then survived against all odds. Speculation is endless but does provide more and more unanswered questions as part of our ongoing quest to more fully understand the Lundy feral stock.

The goats are the 'Marmite' of the feral stock, but love them or hate them they too throw up some interesting issues.

- i) Do they destroy the Lundy Cabbage by their grazing?
- ii) Do they help to spread the cabbage by eating it and the seed being passed in their dung?
- iii) Do they inhibit the growth of the heather on the North End of the island by over-grazing?



*'Wingnut': a celebrity of his time.
Photo by Peter Hamlyn.*

The answer to i) is that they do graze the Lundy Cabbage as the survey carried out by Stine Marie Simensen and Markus P Eichorn testifies, however as far as ii) is concerned no study has been made of faecal matter after the cabbage has seeded. As for iii) an extensive look at stomach contents has been carried out on the goats shot on the North End and whilst small amounts of heather were found they appear to feed more on lichen and small amounts of grass.

Much still needs to be done to establish the benefit or otherwise of the goats to the island but it has been noted that visitors do in the main, regard them as an asset.

So how does this all work? The culling programme starts in March each year with a feral stock count being carried out where, as far as possible, every corner of the Island is swept by a team of volunteers. That team endeavours to count each species separating them by gender and to some extent age, this is obviously subject to a variable factor of + or -10% but over the years with experience of where to look and the evolution of a tried and tested system we can now have confidence that the numbers are as accurate as possible.

On establishing numbers it is then possible to make recommendations to the island management on numbers to be culled by gender and age and at what time of year.

The cull is generally carried out during the autumn for sheep and goats (usually late September and end of October) and during February for the Sika deer. These timings are largely dictated by humanitarian issues such as the condition of the beast in question or in the case of female stock whether or not there is dependant offspring.



Soay sheep. Photo by Keith Hiscock.

Carcasses are then brought back to the game larder and processed for use in the restaurant. This of course provides an economic benefit to the island as well.

There is still much to learn about the effects and benefits of the feral stock on the island of Lundy and hopefully over the coming years the continuation of the Feral Stock Management Programme will continue to benefit the Island and its economy.

Wondering about the old church organ?

MICHAEL WILLIAMS tells us how it arrived on Lundy, and what became of it with the St Helen's reburbishment.

Following the dismantling of the church's pipe organ in 2017, I wanted to provide a potted history of the instrument. It's often been assumed that the organ was part of the original furnishing of the church by the Revd Heaven, dating from 1897. Indeed, there was some concern raised along these lines when it was proposed that the organ be removed as part of the £1.6m restoration of St Helen's. In fact the organ had only been installed in the church in 1974 when it was transferred from Holy Trinity, Harracott near Barnstaple when that church closed.

The instrument was built as new in 1925 by Bishop & Son of London and installed in Harracott. It had two manuals, pedals and six stops – an account of its transfer to Lundy is appended below. When the Harracott church was made redundant, a new home was sought for various church furnishings and the organ found its home on Lundy. St Helen's was very active in the early 1970s. Donald Peyton-Jones was Priest-in-Charge, Ian Grainger was Agent and he was a licensed Lay Reader. There was an active congregation of islanders who would be swelled by visitors staying on Lundy.

Installation was undertaken by Mr Sims, assisted by Mr Banham. The first phase was completed by 25th July 1974 and it was first played for a service by Joan Dyke on the 28th. The second phase was completed on 29th October of that year.

The organ was blown manually until an electric blower was installed a year later when the church was connected to the island's supply. It remained possible to operate the organ by the manual blower and the author recalls operating the manual blower for a service in the 1990s when there was a power cut during a service!

It's believed the organ was serviced regularly with the last recorded service in June 1996, however conditions on Lundy led to the deterioration of the instrument. During a visit in 1999, David Godwin (who was working at the organ builder Harrison & Harrison at the time) undertook some minor repairs. Unfortunately it continued to deteriorate with pipes going out of tune and some pipes playing continuously (known as ciphering) as can be seen in this YouTube video that shows the deterioration over ten years:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp6pu1p2M2o>



As part of the building restoration project,

The organ being dismantled. Photo by Michael Williams.



The keyboard. Photo by Michael Williams.

the decision to remove the organ was taken. Part of the organ occupied the vestry so its removal freed up space to enable the conversion of the vestry into accommodation. The space in the chancel was restored to its original 1897 layout. Dismantling took place over a period of a few days in May 2017. Many of the wooden pipes were sold as souvenirs to raise funds for the restoration project. The metal pipes that adorned the front of the instrument were put into storage. Other parts were reused – part of the keyboard mechanism is used to display jewellery in the Lundy

General Stores!

A Wyvern digital organ has been installed in the restored building. Originally constructed in 1997, it was transferred from the church of St Oswald and St Thomas of Canterbury, Chester to Lundy in June 2018. A range of loudspeakers sit above the cupboards at the back of the nave. These will be shrouded by new panels containing the pipes retained from the pipe organ.

Full details of the old organ are recorded in the National Pipe Organ Register:
<https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D07221>

My thanks to Alan Rowland for information about the organ's installation from the church register.

Abridged account of the installation of Lundy, Illustrated Lundy News, issue 15, 1975:

The organ, newly installed and almost completed, was rescued from a redundant Church at Harracott, near Barnstaple, during the months of June to October, 1974. Unused for many years, dismantling the instrument posed special and considerable problems: damp, decay, and mice had all taken their toll, and it proved particularly difficult to take the organ apart without doing yet more damage to the delicate mechanisms. It would have been easier, really, to have shipped the organ to Europe-containerisation would have left it undisturbed all the way; as it was, some of the hundreds of parts were wrapped with sticky tape, tied in bundles, and packed in tea-chests: indeed, one particularly fragile mechanism was transported in a box which had been specially made to hold perishable large flowers. Large pipes and flat panels were fastened together for safe man-handling.

Some time in early July the whole load was taken by road to Ilfracombe Quay and shipped with infinite care and skill by the Captain and crew of the Polar Bear to Lundy. It had been emphasised that, should any part of the consignment be dropped into the sea, there would be no organ on Lundy, and it is to the eternal credit of the crew that out of more than two tons of irreplaceable material only one small piece of wood from the mouth of one bass pipe went astray.

The instrument was built about eighty years ago by



The metal pipes before going into storage. Photo by Michael Williams.

Bishop & Son, of London, organ builders of high reputation. It comprises two manuals and pedals, two stops on the Great Organ, three on the Swell Organ, one stop of thirty pedal pipes, and three couplers between manuals and pedals. The two flute stops have a distinctively pleasing tone quality and blend perfectly with the fuller sound of the Great Diapason. Full organ - almost beyond the capacity of the unfortunate person deputised to pump! - is more than adequate for the size of the Church.

The instrument has fitted fairly comfortably under an arch in the Chancel, with the loss of but three bass pipes, which are now housed at the back. The successful installation of the organ in this particular position sees the realisation of the ambition of the builder of the Church, the Rev. Hudson Grosett Heaven and his architect, Mr. John Norton, who made allowances in his design for the future installation of such an organ-almost a hundred years ago.



*The organ being played for a Christening in 1976 or 1977.
Photo courtesy of Alan Rowland.*

***Isaria farinosa* : The Benson's Cave Fungus**

A fascinating report from ALAN ROWLAND.

I happened to be on Lundy when I received an email sent to John Hedger (JH) and me, from Simon Dell. He described a strange fungus found in Benson's Cave. He had visited the island the previous day with a geologist friend and was leading a walk which visited the cave. The geologist was interested in the volcanic gas blow hole at the back of the cave where the white fungus was seen. Simon reported that this almost fluorescent fungus reminded him of "Pixies Matchsticks" he had seen on Dartmoor (*Cladonia foerkeana* Devil's matchsticks, or Bengal Matchsticks – Andrew Cleave). Simon reported this back to JH who asked if anyone could retrieve it. Being there and with an NE licence to collect, I volunteered to do so.

Richard Breese and I, armed with cameras, phones and torches set out and easily found the well described location at the back of the cave. It was about 1.5 metres up in the southern wall of the cave almost adjacent to the rear wall. The cave, which is now a scheduled monument, was cut into the shale certainly before 1709 which is the date of the earliest graffiti on its walls and is 19.5m in length, 2.5m wide and up to 2m high and runs southeast to northwest under the castle scarp.

We set about getting the best pictures we could in this difficult location. I then carefully scooped under the specimen with my hand to keep as much of it and the substrate as possible and stored it in a collecting box. Back at the Marisco, more



The Herald Moth hosting the Bensons Cave fungus.
Photo by Alan Rowland.

photographs, in better light, were taken where it was possible to see that the fungus was actually growing out of a Herald Moth (*Scoliopteryx libatrix*). Pictures and, eventually, the specimen, were all despatched to our expert JH who determined the species, as *Isaria farinosa*. This fungus infects Lepidoptera following contact with the spores, presumably in this case from spores already in Benson's Cave, slowly invading the body and eventually killing the host, followed by formation of the antler-shaped fruit bodies which burst through the body wall and become covered with a white

powdery mass of spores, giving rise to the species name, 'farinosa', meaning floury. It is closely related to *Cordyceps militaris*, The Scarlet Caterpillar Club, the small orange club of which emerges from parasitized larvae and pupae of moths hibernating in the soil and is often found in short turf in unimproved grassland in autumn. It has, however, yet to be found on Lundy, so this record by Simon Dell is the first for an entire fungus order, the Cordycepsales and also the first record of any fungus from Benson's cave.

Life Cycle of the Herald Moth

Herald moths are not uncommon on Lundy with Willow being a major food plant and frequently recorded in the LFS Logbook. The flight season is from August to November, then hibernation, before flying again between March and June. They are one of the few moths known to hibernate through the winter in its adult state and have been recorded over-wintering in outhouses, cellars, ruined buildings and caves. (Waring & Townsend 2011)

Waring, P. and Townsend, M., *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, British Wildlife 2011



Herald Moth *Scoliopteryx libatrix*
Photo by Nick Greatorex-Davies



Light along the east side of the island.
Photo by Joanne Wilby.

Lockdown on Lundy

SUE WATERFIELD recounts what it was like for her.

Rob and I have had six varied years here on Lundy with new challenges each season, but 2020 on Lundy has been like no other as it has been across the world.

In mid-March, as news of the pandemic began to unfold, we were anxious and confused about what we were hearing. We started to receive cancellations every day, until on 17th March we watched the Prime Minister inform us that pubs and restaurants were to shut. Two days later, the Tavern closed at the end of the evening, to be left empty until 4th July!

Finally, the decision was made to close the island from Friday 27th March. The last helicopter left us with the island to ourselves. We met outside for a final distanced staff meeting before we all left to self-isolate for one week in our properties.

This was nothing like our annual three-week shutdown in January; we were on our own in the spring sunshine with long light evenings!

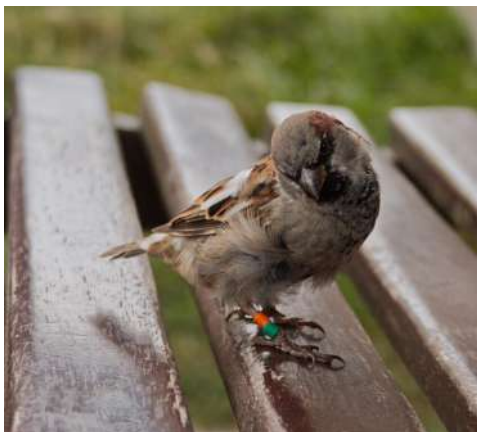
Of course, Lundy General Stores was still needed to provide groceries for our staff. We devised a safe Lundy-style “Click & Collect” service, whereby staff could email me and collect their shopping from the linhay.

After a week, most staff were furloughed, leaving six of us to provide essential services. Managing the shop didn't fill my day though; it was strange not to be busy preparing for our holiday season. I found myself looking after the stamp orders as well as learning how to survey the puffin breeding sites, which was a wonderful experience. I drew the line at road resurfacing and clambering down cliffs to uproot rogue rhododendrons though! Thankfully, most of our staff are more practical minded than me and distanced mini-working parties did fantastic work on the road and the east side. I did rub down the window frames inside Quarters though!

After a short time, the Lundy Company chose to make better use of the furlough scheme and placed a further three of us on part-time furlough with one week in four to prepare for our stores sailings. The Oldenburg visited us regularly to ensure we had plenty of fuel, feed for the animals as well as fresh fruit and vegetables for us islanders. Thankfully, none of us suffered with scurvy during our Lundy lockdown!

We were very aware of how fortunate we were compared to our friends and family on the mainland. We had space and less chance of being exposed to the virus.

We noticed that the island environment was changing: paths became overgrown, the Sika deer moved closer to the village, new plants sprung up where we hadn't noticed them before and the newly fledged 2020 sparrows were left un-ringed with no sparrow



A ringed Lundy sparrow! Photo by Mandy Dee.

students to count and study them.

We became accustomed to this new lifestyle. It was a delight to truly relax; the usual stresses of life shrank away. We all had time to enjoy and immerse ourselves in nature. Rob and I focussed on gardening and looking after our hens. Our little bantam even managed to hatch some chicks. We got into the habit of enjoying a cool drink in The Nook on sunny evenings.

On July 4th we reopened and welcomed our first customers in 14 weeks! It was strange seeing new people and we had to learn how to do our jobs in different ways, with the new restrictions in place.

Of course, by the beginning of November we realised that all signs were indicating stronger restrictions on the horizon. The Prime Minister announced Lockdown #2 on the evening Rob and I were due to fly off the island on holiday. Luckily, minutes before our flight, in anticipation of a dramatic announcement, we chose not to step on to the helicopter. We then spent another month closed to visitors.

This time we were in a perfect position to get ahead of the game with our maintenance and property deep cleans. Rather than furloughing staff, the Lundy Company chose to keep most of us working and it became a very productive time for us. In the shop, I was also able to begin our end of year stocktake preparations.

With education continuing as usual this time, we were able to welcome a group of students from Imperial College London for their annual visit to study the sparrows. The university had been extremely thorough in their preparations for the visit and we



View from above the Quarries. Photo by Joanne Wilby.

all felt very safe while they were here. It was good to see fresh faces, from a safe distance!

We reopened on the 4th December and Christmas season began! Our visitor numbers were depleted, but everyone was so excited to be able to be here, we felt very festive. The new tier system required different practices, but everyone seemed to appreciate the fact that we were open and welcoming our customers.

With changes to the tier system, we knew we had to close to customers when the last helicopters flew from the island on the 2nd of January. We had a few uncertain days, waiting to find out if our visitors would be able to return on the 18th as planned after our annual shutdown.

At the time of writing, having last night watched the Prime Minister make his statement from Downing Street announcing Lockdown #3, we now must accept that in two weeks time the Lundy Company will be making further use of the furlough scheme and we will wait patiently for better times ahead.

The Lundy Webinars

How MICHAEL WILLIAMS has been supplying our Lundy fix!

The idea for the Lundy webinars came about after attending a similar online event run by the bellringers in Cambridge. As a bellringer myself, the webinar was a way to bring ringers together to learn about a topic or shared interest and I started to think about whether there would be a chance of running something similar for Lundy.

I had a chat with Dave Richards who was running the bellringing webinars and we came up with a plan to run a couple of webinars to test the water. I also spoke with Derek Green, Lundy's General Manager, to check he was happy for me to run the talks and he was happy for me to proceed. Simon Dell and Andrew Cleave were recruited to speak – both well-known and respected speakers in their areas of expertise. None of us had done a Zoom talk before so other than Dave's experience, we were all complete novices.

Simon's talk was up first in late April. I had hoped that we might get somewhere between 30 and 50 people to sign up which would make it viable to continue with more webinars. Promotion was limited to emailing LFS members and advertising in the Lundy group on Facebook. In the days beforehand, it was obvious there was plenty of interest as registrations went up and up. I think there were 180 people watching the first webinar!

Clearly it was a success so I set about recruiting more speakers. Volunteers started coming forward and I quickly had an outline plan of weekly talks taking us to the end of June. To date I have only been turned down once. Over the course of the spring we had 12 talks and learnt about Lundy's birds, wild flowers, archaeology and we've even had an illustrated photography workshop, a film show and a poetry recital.

There were many other potential speakers so the webinars restarted in October but on a less frequent basis and will take us into the spring of 2021. Recent talks have included moths and butterflies, fungi, wildlife photography and Grey Seals. We rounded off the year with an online Marisco Tavern Quiz!

Throughout these talks I purposefully avoided talking about the difficult situation we have all been experiencing. Although lockdown precipitated these talks starting – and I'm sure they wouldn't have started otherwise – I know for many people watching and for me too, they have been an hour or so of escapism from the situation where we can indulge ourselves in any subject or topic about Lundy for just a short time. They have been a welcome distraction for me over the past nine months.

Dave Richards has been an enormous support throughout this period. I don't think either of us expected these talks to grow into the success they have become with such high attendance. About 250 people watch each week and our biggest audience was 350 for the talk with Derek Green and Anna Keay when Lundy reopened in July.



*Although it looks like he's in the Tavern (see next page) this is really Michael's view for the webinars!
Photo by Michael Williams.*

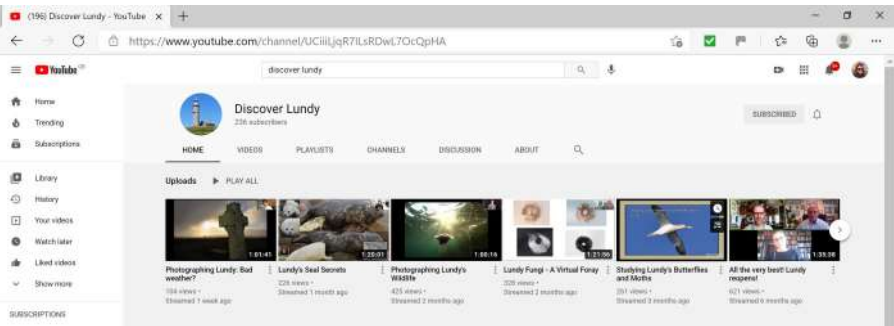
Two of the early talks have been watched on YouTube over 1,200 times!

Dave has done all the technical work, hosting the sessions, solving speakers' technical problems – and believe me, we have had a few hairy moments with sound, cameras or screen sharing not working! Dave also put together the magnificent countdown sequence using John Tyrer's photos.

Thank you to all the speakers who have joined me. Without the speakers and Dave this whole enterprise would not have brought so much enjoyment to so many people. We have had such a varied programme and everyone has given their time freely to talk to us. The LFS has benefitted too with somewhere between 50 and 60 new members joining – welcome to you all!

And thank you to all of you watching at home. Your questions, support and very generous words in the feedback surveys and in emails have really made this worthwhile.

Catch up on all the talks on the Discover Lundy YouTube site at: www.lundy.org.uk/webinars. Forthcoming webinars are announced by email so please ensure we have your up to date email address. Our Membership Secretary, Sandra Rowland, will be pleased to hear from you: membership@lundy.org.uk



Above: Some of the webinar titles available from the Discover Lundy YouTube channel.

Below: Michael pretending to be in the Tavern while introducing Rosie Ellis who really was in the Tavern (the office above the bar area). Rosie gave a very informative and interesting talk on her Lockdown on Lundy experience.

Screenshots by Belinda Cox



Information on forthcoming webinars is also available from the Lundy Island and the LFS Facebook pages.

In years gone by...

Over the past couple of years, 10 people have celebrated at least 50 years membership of the LFS, and have received a card and letter from our Chair, Alan Rowland, congratulating them on their achievement; some reminisce here for us.

In 1997 MARK HUBBARD recalled his first visit to Lundy. This was revised and edited by his daughter, CATHERINE HUBBARD for this publication.

Lundy on the Horizon.

Ever since I had pored over maps of the West County in my school atlas I had been aware that Lundy existed but it was not until August 1949 that Elizabeth and I saw the Island from Hartland.

We could see the church, the South Light and the cliffs of the south end of the island and would have dearly liked to visit it. But there was no bus leaving Hartland early enough to get us to Bideford in time to catch the morning sailing of the 'Lerina'.

So there the matter rested till four years later in August 1953 when a heat wave, a spell of leave and the possession of a car made a visit a practical proposition. When I learned that Campbell's had a sailing from Ilfracombe to Lundy on Tuesday 11 August I thought 'this is it!'.

Driving my grey Standard 8 over the hills to Ilfracombe was a risky business as the vehicle was extremely unreliable. The run, with 4 adults, taxed the Standard to the limit and my heart missed a beat in Ilfracombe when a left hand turn to a car park confronted me with a road that seemed almost vertical. We were 15 minutes behind schedule but just in time to catch the Campbells' steamer - 'Britannia'- likewise delayed.

This marvellous old lady of a paddle steamer had been built and acquired as long ago as 1896. With 3 changes of boilers- the most recent in 1947- a second funnel added at the same time, she graced the waters of the Bristol Channel until 1956. Lundy was the jewel in the crown of the Campbell's cruising, and this was abundantly clear as she lay at anchor in Lundy Roads and for the first time in my life I looked at



Lundy on the horizon. Photo by Belinda Cox.

In years gone by...

the granite cliffs to the north and to those of reddish shale near at hand. There was the Lametor Peninsula topped by the South Light, seawards lay Rat and Mouse Islands and at the extremity Surf Point itself.



The Landing Bay before the extension of the Beach Road and building of the jetty. Photo by Judith Langford, from Belinda Cox's collection.

The water was marvellously clear. Three launches came out to ferry us to the rather insubstantial landing stage which could be adjusted to the state of the tide.

Along with all the other trippers we climbed the rough steep track known as the Beach Road - only just wide enough to allow the passage of a tractor. On the landward side was a steep rocky slope- crumbling in places- but perhaps just gentle enough for an athletic man to scramble up, but on the seaward side only a cliff unguarded by bank or railings. We noticed a yellow flowered brassica

growing on the slopes but were unaware that this was the famous Lundy Cabbage - a plant unique to the island. Wall Pennywort and Sheepsbit were plentiful. Then the road turned sharply inland along the side of a more gently sloping hanging valley shaded by Turkey Oaks and Sycamores to another left-hand hairpin bend leading upwards.

At this point a pair of iron gates, hard by a clump of Valerian mark the drive to Millcombe - the owner's house. This is a classically simple building with a front terrace. Lundy, we learned, was the personal fiefdom of Martin Coles Harman whose ambition it was to eschew all ties with the mainland. Before him it was known as 'the Kingdom of Heaven', a pun on the previous owner's name. It seemed wholly appropriate. A little rivulet ran through grass, ferns and bracken into a little stone cistern. It was an Arcadian peace.

A short ascent- still under the shade of the Sycamores - and we came out into the open on a levelled space - the Battlements. These are a crenelated wall built by the Heavens to be a safeguard against any carriage or cart falling over the edge and thence down the cliff. There was a breath-taking view of the Bay dominated by the South Light with the 'Britannia' lying serenely at anchor. No one could resist the temptation to take a photograph. I had the feeling that somehow we had been caught up in a Victorian time warp. There it all was - an old paddle steamer, bearded sun-tanned islanders, and not a car or uniform in sight.

Here the Beach Road is in conjunction with a steeper path- rugged in the extreme - the Old Road suitable only for foot or pack animals- and which leads to the Castle, or the Main Beach Road leading to the main part of the island. We took the path to the castle at the south east tip.

Here we picnicked on the smooth green turf cropped short by the sheep and set with yellow Tormentil, pink Thrift, blue Sheepsbit and studded with butterflies. Below, the

In years gone by...

ground fell away in first bracken covered slopes and then cliffs above the landing beach. There was a concrete post which once supported a flagstaff which was all that remained of Lloyd's signal station and behind us we were overlooked by the dilapidated keep and earthworks of the Marisco Castle.

The scene was so enchanting and romantic that to describe it adequately demands the accents of the travelogue. This is a self-defeating exercise since these provoke scepticism rather than credibility. But here we were, and even with closed eyes the distant sound of the restless surf, the murmur of the insects of high summer and the sharp repetitive cries of the gulls provided a filmic background.

Looking around with eyes open we gazed at the scene like a theatrical backcloth turned to reality- the sapphire sea, the distant coast and the cerulean sky of mid-August made a pictorial rhapsody in blue.

It seemed unbelievable and we were so taken with it that we hardly went any further into the island. But we were determined to return. And that we did.

The car got us home without mishap to my great relief. Before sleep I could hear the throb of the Britannia's churning engines and the watery splash of the paddle wheels striking the waters of the Bristol Channel.



Britannia at Lundy.

Photograph courtesy of the Clyde River Steamer Club.

In years gone by...

On receiving her card, ROSEMARY LINN wrote to thank Alan Rowland and has given permission to reproduce her note here.

10th October 2019

Dear Alan,

Thank you for my lovely puffin card and reminding me of my long association with Lundy.

I first visited as an undergraduate with Prof. Harvey. He and Martin Coles Harman were setting up the LFS and we stayed in the Old Light. There was no running water or electricity. In the summer of 1952 I spent 3 months cooking for the visitors to the Old Light. There was a rather temperamental oil stove - Florence!

Meat was still rationed and ours came by post from the mainland until I stopped it. Delays due to weather meant it often arrived rotten and had to be thrown away! We ate a lot of rabbit. Guests were sent out to catch supper.

Lundy was a manned rock station in those days.

I have many happy memories. I don't get over very often. I am not as agile as I was 50 years ago, but it is a special place.

CORA ANN GARDNER depicts some exciting times!

I first went to Lundy in the late 50s. At that time the Lord of the Manor was Albion Harman, and my husband had permission to survey and excavate some of the historical sites, Bronze Age and up. We usually visited in August (the monsoon period frequently) with a group of volunteers, usually damp.

I had to be useful to join the party, and cooked for the group at Old Light, Goat House, and on one occasion between the tents.

One time at the Old Light, after dinner, some bright spark suggested a séance, which we held. Why not? Abandoned lighthouse, next to a graveyard, stormy night, bring it on! There was knock at the door, a guy said, "There is a party in the bay." Enough said, séance terminated abruptly, off to the Tavern for supplies.

Someone carrying the séance glass fell over and cut his hand. At the Tavern someone offered to dress it, and suggested that alcohol was a good idea to sterilize the cut. A digger fetched some gin, the cut was bathed, the victim shrieked, grabbed the gin and drank it: Lundy Bloody Mary!

In years gone by...

John Ogilvy was the farm manager. John Dyke the artist was there; my younger son has Lundy Puffins on his wall as I write.

There was the time, in a boat (ours) when one merry soul decided that there was a nice moonlit path to the beach, got ideas above his station and tried to walk home.

On the day of the Queen's 25th Anniversary I did a splendid meal, Cottage pie, carrots and cabbage dyed blue with food colouring for the occasion. It was quite patriotic, arranged neatly on the plates.

I could go on but this is a snippet of 'way back when.'

Ah yes, I remember it well...



Islanders Zoe, Alice and Sophia keeping an eagle eye out for the White-tailed Eagle (inset) that graced Lundy's skies, and pitched on a cliffside for a short time below North Light, on 16th October 2020 – the first occurrence since the last one was seen on the island in 1880 (photos: Jamie Dunning & Dean Jones).

The Paddle Steamer Tug *Aber*

RICHARD BREESE tells a fascinating tale of the rise and fall of this vessel.

In December 2018, Derek Green, Lundy General Manager, received an addition to the Lundy Archive in the form of an original ticket for an 'EXCURSION to LUNDY ISLAND by the "ABER," On Monday, June 8th, 1868. FARES :—Fore Cabin, 3s'. The



The Lundy excursion ticket¹
Photo by Belinda Cox.

ticket had been kindly donated to the Landmark Trust by Larry Lewis who had found it amongst his late father's possessions. Henry (Harry) James Lewis had been in the Merchant Navy, but Larry did not know how his father had come by the ticket. There may be a connection with Swansea since that is where the *Aber* was based when she sailed the Bristol Channel, and Larry and his father lived in the Swansea area.

Derek enquired on Lundy's official Facebook page if anyone had any information. A quick search of the

internet and the British Newspaper Archive turned up some details and, over time, a remarkable amount of material came to light. This material consisted of a number of advertisements relating to the *Aber's* Lundy, and other, excursions; details of her owners; and an account of her sad fate.

The paddle steamer tug *Aber* was built in Sunderland for William Nicholson & Sons of Sunderland and completed in 1867. She is recorded in the 1866/67 Lloyds Register as a tug, and started running passenger excursions in the south west of England and Wales almost immediately. The *Aber* was still advertised as a tug in 1869 - it seems to have been common practice at the time to build tugs that could also carry passengers as an additional source of income.

The earliest mention of the *Aber's* excursions was in the West Somerset Free Press on Saturday, July 13, 1867. "*R. S. Date's excursion. A great treat before Harvest. A cheap excursion trip from Taunton, Minehead, and Watchet to Ilfracombe, and the coast of north Devon, on Monday, July 22nd, 1867.*" The advertisement also describes her as "*one of the fastest steamers in the Bristol Channel, quite new, cost £7,000 — 165 tons gross tonnage — 100 horse power — has disconnecting engines — classed A-1 — copper fastened — licensed by Board of Trade for passengers. There is a cabin expressly for women.*"

Another, perhaps less biased, source² gives her tonnage as 166 gross/81 net and engine power as 76HP. Her dimensions were 116' 4" x 21' 1" x 10' 11".

The Name

The partnership³ of William Nicholson, John Nicholson and John Taylor traded as

1. The vessel pictured on the ticket is not the *Aber* - it is a generic image. Similar images are used in many of the advertisements for excursions of the time on many different ships. No image known to be of the *Aber* has been found.

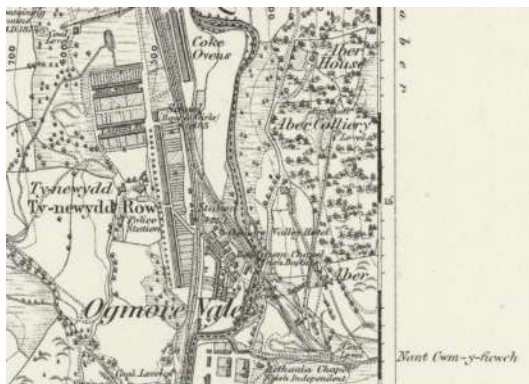
2. *The Short Sea Route* (Fraser & McHaffie)

3. The Nicholson brothers, or, more likely, father and son, John and William, appear to have started out in partnership with others as timber merchants, ironmongers, builders and agents of the Star Insurance Company in Shotley Bridge, County Durham in 1852 under the name John Nicholson & Co., [*London Gazette*, 25 June 1852, p1814] but the use of both "brothers" and "sons" in the firms' names is confusing. The partnership changed over time as the father and brothers came and went.

William Nicholson & Sons in Sunderland and had a number of tugs and barques stationed in Swansea, some of which ran passenger excursions during the summer months. They also had other substantial interests in South Wales.

In April 1864 Rev. Charles Tebbott Heartley (*b.1824*), the headmaster of Swansea Grammar School since 1862, married William Nicholson's eldest daughter, Louisa (*b.1826*), in a ceremony conducted by Rev. John Patrick, Rector, at St. Nicholas' Church, Bishopwearmouth, Sunderland⁴. The day was celebrated at Sunderland and at Swansea by dinners for Nicholson's employees. Pupils at the colliery schools in Sunderland enjoyed a celebration tea and vessels at both ports were dressed overall.

The partnership owned, or traded as, the Aber Coal Company in Ogmore Vale, Glamorgan, prompted by the construction of the Ogmore Valley Railway which was completed in 1865. The Aber slants⁵ colliery in Ogmore Vale was leased from Swansea Grammar School to exploit the bituminous coal measures of the No.3 Rhondda seam and coal was first struck in May 1865.



6-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1884 showing the Aber Colliery and associated river mouth

The author is quite sure there is no connection between the marriage of the Grammar School's headmaster to Nicholson's daughter, and the leasing of land owned by the school to Nicholson for his colliery shortly afterwards!

On 20 August 1866 seventy boys from the Grammar School, accompanied by the masters, walked down Mount Pleasant hill to the half tide basin of Swansea's

North Dock where they boarded the barque *William Leckie*. The vessel was towed to Porthcawl. During this short passage the boys took part in deck games and enjoyed a lunch of bread, beef, cheese and beer. At Porthcawl they watched as the first train of coal from the Aber mine arrived and was tipped into the ship's hold.

The colliery's name comes from nearby 16th century Aber-cwm-y-Fuwch farm ("the farm at the mouth of the Cwm-y-Fuwch river" - 'aber' is Welsh for 'river mouth' and is pronounced 'abba'). The colliery was ultimately not terribly successful and closed in 1877⁶, but initially they were clearly proud enough of the colliery to name the tug after it.

Excursions

The earliest excursion of any sort found during research, occurring on 22 July 1867, has already been described. No mention of the ticket's excursion on 8 June 1868 was found. The earliest excursion to Lundy appeared in the *North Devon Journal* on Thursday 16 July 1868 in an advertisement for a trip on 22 July. The *Aber* arrived at Lundy c.12.30 pm after a 2 hour crossing and departed at 4.30pm - little has changed, least of all the tides, in the last 150 years.

4. William Nicholson was an Alderman in Sunderland and built Nicholson House (now the Grade II-listed Carlton House) in 1850, one of the first mansions in the suburb of Bishopwearmouth. Until recently Carlton House was part of Sunderland High School.

5. In coal mining, a slant is similar to drift, but usually sloping much more than required just for drainage.

6. The colliery was sold by the firm in late 1880, and after fitful operation closed permanently in 1914. During its lifetime there were 17 fatalities, 2 of which were during the Nicholson firm's ownership.

Other ships, such as the *Prince of Wales* and *Princess Royal* also ran excursions during the 1850s and 60s. In the *North Devon Journal* of 19 August 1869 adverts for excursions on the *Aber* and *Prince of Wales* sailing two days apart appeared next to each other. The *Prince of Wales* seems to have been well known and is mentioned in the book *Lundy Packets* (Author Mike Tedstone), but the *Aber* seems to have been left out of Lundy's history. On 17 July 1869 the Brecon County times reported "THE IFRACOMBE EXCURSION. - A very pleasant excursion took place from Neath to Ilfracombe on Saturday by the Prince of Wales steamer, and on Monday the *Aber* again made the trip with a large party of pleasure-seekers."



MARINE EXCURSIONS.
ILFRACOMBE, LYMOUTH, LUNDY ISLAND.

THE New and Powerful Paddle Steamer 'ABER' (A. 1 for 10 years at Lloyds), JOHN FRANCIS, Commander, will make the following Trips on Wednesday next, July 22nd (unless prevented by any unforeseen occurrence):—Ilfracombe to Lymouth, 7 a.m.; Lymouth to Ilfracombe and Lundy Island, 9 a.m.; Ilfracombe to Lundy Island, 10.30 a.m.; Lundy Island to Ilfracombe and Lymouth, 4.30 p.m.; Ilfracombe to Lymouth, 6.30 p.m.; Lymouth to Ilfracombe, 8 p.m. *The Ilfracombe Season Band will be in attendance.*

FARES.—To and from Ilfracombe and Lymouth, Best Cabin, 3s. 6d.; Fore Cabin, 2s. 6d.; to and from Lymouth and Lundy Island, Best Cabin, 5s.; Fore Cabin, 3s. 6d.; to and from Ilfracombe and Lundy Island, Best Cabin, 4s. 6d.; Fore Cabin, 3s. No extra charge for landing or embarking.

The 'ABER' will call off LEE on her Trip to and from Lundy.

Refreshments on Board. Tickets at BRIGHT'S Library, Ilfracombe, or on Board. (2014)

An advert for an *Aber* excursion to Lundy
North Devon Journal - Thursday, 16 July 1868

The annual excursion season seems to end in September, although not all were successful. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* reported on 18 September 1869: "ABERTHAW. The *Aber*. - The excursion to Weston, which was to have come off in the *Aber* on Wednesday last, was a failure in consequence of no boat being forthcoming. However no blame can be attached to the proprietor⁷, Mr. Thomas. The agent for the boat having written him a letter explaining how wind and weather prevent his sailing." On 26 August 1869 the *North Devon Journal* reported "[...] This morning (Thursday) the *Aber* again started for Clovelly, with a full complement of passengers, but in rounding Pottington Point she struck a sandbank and could not proceed. She, therefore, steamed back to the quay and disembarked her living freight, who were thus disappointed of what promised to be a very pleasant trip."

By a strange coincidence, the earliest mention of an *Aber* excursion to Lundy on 16 July 1868 appears on the same page as an advertisement for "Canadian Mail Steamers (*Allan Line*)". That advert lists the company's "First-class powerful Mail Steamers" among them is listed the "*Prussian ... (Building)*". The *Aber* was to meet the RMS *Prussian* catastrophically three years later.

The Short Sea Route

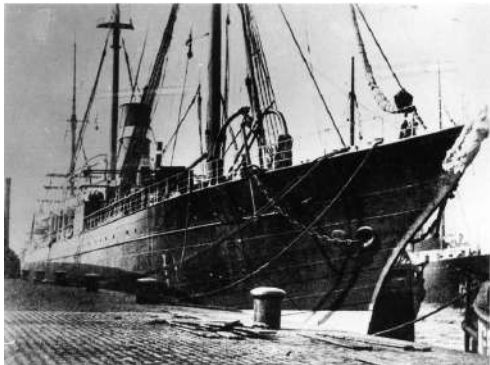
The *Aber* continued running excursions to the likes of Tenby, though not, it seems, to Lundy, for the next two years. The 1871 edition of the Bristol Channel Almanack has an advertisement for her and records that she was still based in Swansea⁸.

On 17 August 1871, still owned by Nicholsons, the *Aber* became the first vessel for some time to ply the "Short Sea Route" between Donaghadee, County Down, Ireland and Portpatrick, Wigtownshire, Scotland - a distance of about 22 miles. An advertisement (seemingly somewhat out of date) of 24 August announces the commencement of the service "in a few days" and gives the journey time as 1½ hours. It goes on to state that she had "just had a new boiler, together with a thorough overhaul, can cross in all weathers, possesses ample accommodation for goods and passengers, and will run in time for the arrival and departure of trains."

7. The description of a "Mr. Thomas" as the "proprietor" may not be strictly accurate.

8. Nicholsons also had a 79-ton paddle steamer tug *Haswell* built in 1844, which was at Swansea from 1849 and also ran excursions. She foundered off the coast of Gower in November 1877 when returning to Sunderland.

RMS *Prussian* was built by A & J Inglis in Glasgow and launched on 31 October 1868. She measured 340'4" x 40'5" and weighed 2,794 tons gross and was owned by the Allan Line, Liverpool, serving their trans-Atlantic routes, mainly to Canada.



RMS *Prussian*, 1869
Photo from <http://www.theshiplist.com/pictures/prussian1869.shtml>

On 28 August 1871, after only eight voyages on the route, the *Aber* was run down by the RMS *Prussian* and sank. The *Aber* had left Portpatrick for Donaghadee with 14 passengers and their luggage, and very little cargo. Shortly after six o'clock dense fog set in, reducing visibility to a few yards. Captain John Wells, who is reported as having had the reputation of being a very experienced and cautious seaman, placed men on the lookout, and had the fog whistle sounded. Suddenly, about mid-channel, a large steamer was seen close by, and less than two minutes later the *Aber* was run into by the *Prussian* on her passage

from Quebec to Liverpool. The *Aber* was struck in front of the starboard paddle-box and was almost cut in two, with the foremast and funnel almost carried away. Both vessels hung together for about five minutes, during which time most of the passengers and crew, who were on deck at the time of the collision, succeeded in getting aboard the *Prussian*. One or two passengers of the *Aber*, who had jumped or fallen into the water, were also rescued and no lives were lost. Two passengers were injured and the doctor of the *Prussian* suggested they stayed onboard the *Prussian* to Liverpool for treatment. The *Aber* sank five minutes after the collision in 20 fathoms. Captain Datton, of the *Prussian*, proceeded as close to Donaghadee as possible and landed the remainder of the passengers in small boats. The sinking resulted in another lengthy suspension of the "*Short Sea Route*" service and, not surprisingly, the cancellation of boat trains to Donaghadee.

Coda

The Nicholson partnership was principally a family partnership - parents retired; siblings joined - and the name changed to reflect these changes. On 12 January 1875 the South Wales Daily News reported on a case in the Court of Chancery. The plaintiffs were Mrs. Louisa Heartley (née Nicholson) and Rev. Charles Heartley, of Swansea; the defendants were Louisa's brothers: William and John Nicholson. The will of their father, William Nicholson, senior, left £3,000 and some colliery company shares (not *Aber*) in trust for Louisa. She claimed he had already left her some shares, and that those in the will were in addition to these shares. This was the crux of the matter. The Vice-Chancellor found for the defendants and declared that Louisa was not entitled to additional shares since the shares she was left in the will and those she already had an interest in were one and the same. The financial costs of both parties came out of their father's estate. One suspects there were other, less tangible, costs as well.

Acknowledgements

Carl Smith - former teacher at Swansea Grammar School
Ogmore Vale Local History Society

A Lundy Podcast

Following her visit to Lundy, **OLIVIA JONES** shares her project with us

I've created a podcast commissioned by artists group Bristol Bristol that explores Lundy's volcanic history and how those living there have engaged with the material of the island over time. The recording includes conversations with warden Dean Woodfin Jones and recent volunteer assistant warden Sophia Upton, Bristol based artists Rodney Harris and Alice Cunningham, and geologists Morgan Jones and Dougal Jerram from Centre for Earth Evolution & Dynamics at the University of Oslo.

Link to the podcast:

<https://www.bricksbristol.org/2020/11/episode-2-olivia-jones-lundy/>

Spotify - search 'Bricks Bristol'

Was there an older light on Lundy?

BELINDA COX shares some information passed to her by **ROGER CHAPPLE** about St Ann's Chapel.

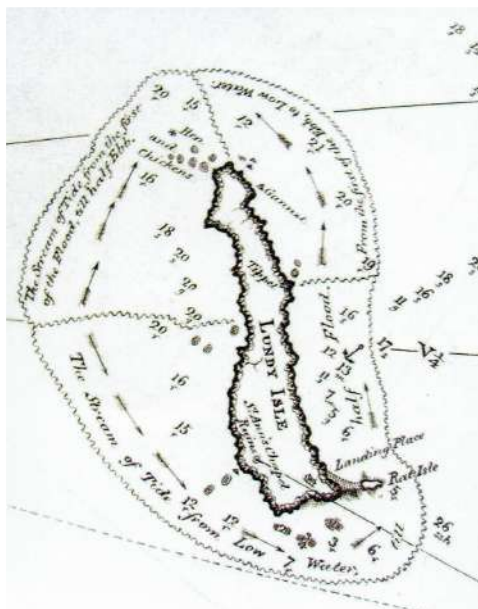
A little while ago I received an email containing some fascinating and brand-new information (to me!) – I'm always excited to learn more about my favourite island. Roger sent me a clip from an article by Chris Preece, which had been published in The Association of Lighthouse Keepers quarterly periodical, *Lamp*¹.

Chris had written about Lightkeepers in the later Medieval period, and during his research had discovered St Ann's Chapel on Lundy. The image to the right shows the chapel near the current situation of the Old Light on a 1722 chart by Mackenzie.

The section of the article referring to Lundy is reproduced here:

'Lundy Island, St Ann(e)'s

Although there is some confusion with dedications to St Helen's, the eighteenth century maps of Donn^[2] and Cary^[3] both depict St Ann's, the latter showing it as the only point of interest as does Mackenzie's chart in the Hydrographic Office. Given the maritime connotations of the dedication this suggests a light was shown. The need for one is evident



Mackenzie' Chart of Lundy (1722) showing St Anne's Chapel.

as the large number of wrecks around Lundy testify. Several lighthouses were subsequently built on Lundy and the chapel's position on the chart is very near the Old Light and Beacon Hill.'

In an email to Roger, Chris wrote:

'In the later medieval period, hard evidence is sketchy. We are fortunate in the South-West in having the Bishop's registers, some notes by travellers, grants, bequests etc. which provide most of the documentary evidence for some sites.

We also have the granite lantern from St. Michael's Mount and the bay window from Ilfracombe in terms of structural evidence.

The practice of hermits tending lights however was well researched by Rotha Clay^[4] who spent 20 years studying hermits and anchorites and it is unlikely that only the type sites I mention exhibited lights, as the need would have been widespread.

Myrtle Ternstrom's book^[5] published in 2007 would not have had any mention of a later medieval light as at that stage it hadn't been suggested as a possibility. I would say (as I state in the original paper from which I was asked to condense the Lamp articles) that I only maintained that there were other likely sites and that these could be extrapolated based on six factors: dedications, locations, date, toponymy, size and continuity of need. All of these apply to St Anne's on Lundy.

Islands are a particular hazard for shipping and Lundy (which I can see from my study window) frequently disappears into the mist, undoubtedly a factor in the many wrecks around its shores - so many in fact that Richard Larn's book 'Devon Shipwrecks' has a whole chapter devoted to them.

It's also been suggested that Lundy, as a special place for Christians (witness the cemetery at Beacon Hill), had an early monastic community, and these are often linked to hermit's lights.

So, in conclusion, we can't be 100% certain but given all these factors, I find it more likely that a light was shown than not.'

Do you have any more information, or would you be interested in researching this further? If you would, please get in touch with me.

1. A Solitary Calling: Lightkeepers in Devon and Cornwall in the later Medieval period
Part 1 – Lamp 119 Spring 2019
Part 2 – Lamp 120 Summer 2019
2. Donn, Benjamin 1729-1798. English Mathematician.
3. Cary, John c.1754-1835. English Cartographer.
4. Clay, Rotha Mary. 1914. The Hermits and Anchorites of England. Methuen & Co. Ltd.
http://www.historyfish.net/anchorites/clay_anchorites.html
5. Ternstrom, Myrtle. 2007. Light Over Lundy: A History of the Old Light and Fog Signal Station. Whittles Publishing



*The Old Light, December 2017.
Photo by Belinda Cox*



PUBLICATIONS for sale through the Lundy Field Society

Lundy Fungi: A photographic guide by John Hedger & David George, 2018, 200pp.

Softback £12.50 plus £2.75 p&p / Hardback £15.00 plus £3.50 p&p.

The authors have produced a sumptuous photographic guide to over 250 species of fungi they have found and recorded on Lundy. The records and photographs are by themselves and many other people who have helped record over 600 species found on Lundy during 70 years of the Lundy Field Society, and particularly since their project began in 2003.

Journal of the Lundy Field Society

First published in 2008 and illustrated in full colour. Published biennially. Members receive copies but others may order back numbers.

Vol 6 Jenny George (ed), 2018, 116pp, £10.00 plus £2.50 p&p.

Contents: A particular of Lundy Island: the Clayton Manuscript, Clutch Size in Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* on Lundy, Cliff Nesting Seabirds on Lundy: Population Trends from 1981 to 2017, Pollen Beetles and Reproductive Success of the endemic Lundy Cabbage: the Consequences of an Apparent Invasion Event in 2007, An exploratory study into the behaviour of Atlantic Puffins *Fratercula artica* on Lundy, The Secret Life of the Lundy House Sparrows, Black rabbits on Lundy: Tudor treasures or post-war phonies?, Monumental Standing Stones in the Burial Ground on Lundy, Bristol Channel.

Vols 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are available at £5.00 per copy plus £2.50 p&p. Visit www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/journal

The Harman Family's Lundy 1925 - 1969 by members of the Lundy Field Society, 2013.

Softback in full colour £12.99 plus £2.50 p&p.

Please send orders (with cheques payable to 'Lundy Field Society') to:

LFS Sales, c/o Alan Rowland, Mole Cottage, Chapel Close,

For a complete list and overview of LFS publications, see

www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/books




Now available...

LFS BRANDED CLOTHING!

Available from Initially Yours, Bristol. Your garments can be collected from any of the 3 branches, or delivered to your preferred address by post.



www.initiallyyours.co.uk/clubs_and_teams/lundy_field_soc/society_clothing.htm

 0117 956 0909

