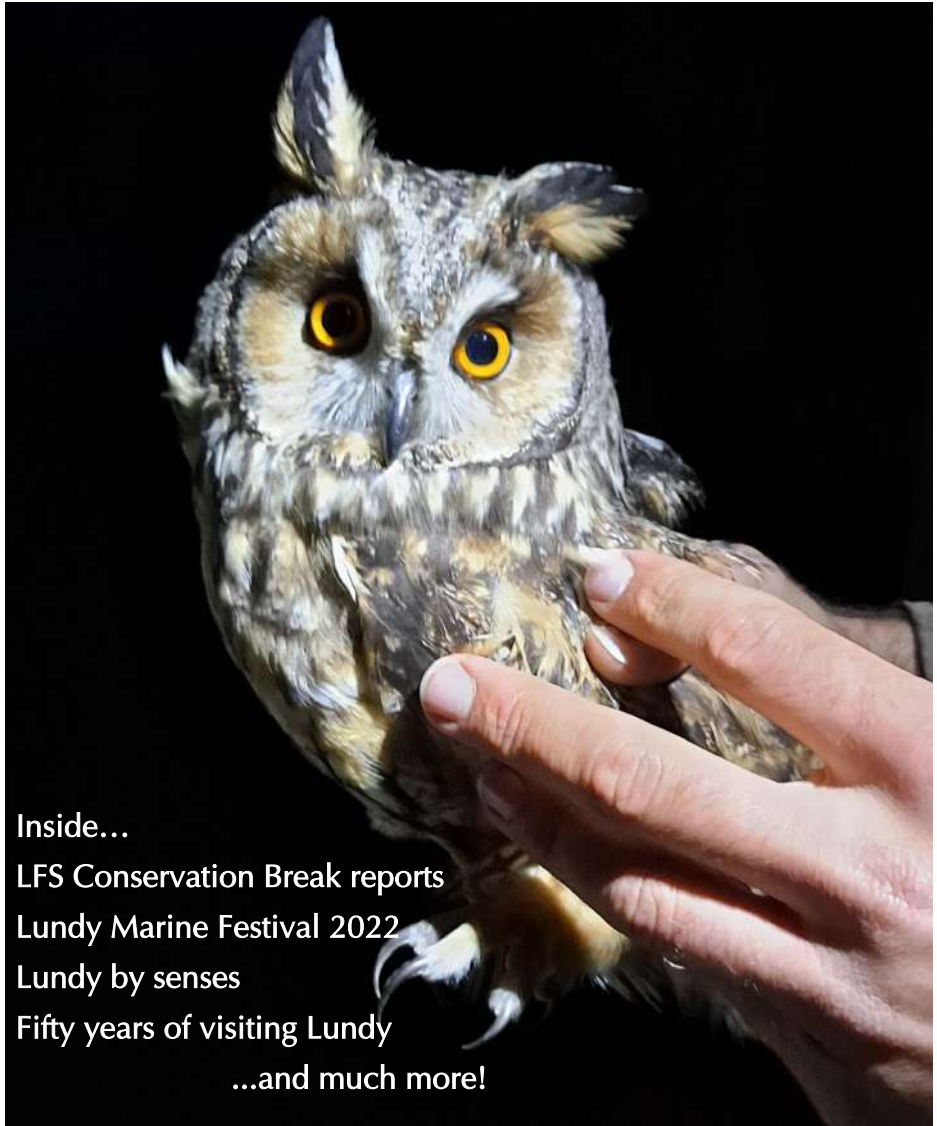




DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 52, February 2023



Inside...

LFS Conservation Break reports

Lundy Marine Festival 2022

Lundy by senses

Fifty years of visiting Lundy

...and much more!

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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 2024 LFS Bulletin: **31 October 2023**

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Published February 2023

ISSN 2397-9763

Printed by: That Copy Shop
thatcopyshop.com

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

www.lundy.org.uk

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Cover photo: Long-eared Owl caught in Millcombe Valley, 18 November 2022. Photo by Stuart Cossey.



A selfie with the Lundy Bluetits after the last swim of 2022. I'm the one in the red hat!

Editor's Chatterings

I've had a great Lundy year, managing several visits including some Ambassador days sharing my excitement and passion for the island with people visiting, often for the first time. I really think the guided walks are brilliant for giving island 'newbies' a taste of Lundy that they wouldn't otherwise get, and the Ambassador Team is a huge vat of knowledge; every time we get together I learn something new.

I was lucky enough to lead one of the LFS conservation breaks, something I love doing—the teamwork is always incredible! We facilitated 5 weeks in 2022, which you can read about later in this publication. We have 4 scheduled for 2023, and I'm very pleased to be leading the one in March.

The LFS is also arranging an LFS Day Trip at the beginning of June. More information and details of how to book are on page 6 of this publication.

The island staff have started doing Lundy craft fairs in the Wheelhouse once a week, selling candles, ceramics, soaps, greeting cards, items woven from old ropes and fishing lines collected from the beach—and so much more! All are made on the island by the staff, so you can't really get any souvenirs that are more 'Lundy'.

The Lundy Bluetits cold water swimming continues, and I've managed a few swims with them including on New Year's Day 2023. It was fresh, and certainly cleared any cobwebs remaining from the previous evening! I must admit to opting out of a couple of swims in the summer when there were hundreds of jellyfish in the Landing Bay. They were mainly Compass, Moon and Blue jellies, so not huge stingers, but I was a bit wimpy and didn't like the idea of having to swim through them. I did however bring some swimming friends from my home town, Clevedon, over for a day in July, and we managed a swim off the beach when it wasn't jelly-soup. There were a couple of curious seals though, which thoroughly spooked one of my friends!

If you or anyone you know enjoy wild swimming, it's always worth asking in the Tavern if there are any swims planned while you are on the island. If you're on Facebook, there's a Lundy Bluetit page you can join.

Something that really struck me on my visits this year is the diversity of weather across the seasons. Of course I know that Lundy has 'Lundy weather' different from the mainland, but the difference between the arid dryness in the summer where water supplies were at critical levels, and the amount of water on the island in December where there were streams and waterfalls in places I'd never seen them before was quite remarkable!

I would like to thank everyone who has sent me words and photos for this Discovering Lundy bulletin. I was quite overwhelmed by the number of articles this year! You may notice that the publication has more pages than usual, but I still needed to carry some of the articles over to next year. I think I've let all the authors know if their article is in my Bulletin no 53 folder, but apologies if you're expecting to see your words in publication and they aren't here; thank you for your contribution, you'll just need to wait until next year to read it!

Belinda Cox



*Our Chair in the bell tower.
Photo by Richard Breese.*

Words from our Chair

What a year this has been!

My first visit to Lundy this year was in March when I took Covid with me, resulting in Sandra and me being quarantined in Old House South. I did manage an island tour with John Hedger sampling freshwater fungi for the first few days. After that, we hardly managed to get out to sample any freshwater life and kept away from the Tavern, Shop and any staff.

Our second trip in June was taken up with our annual Lundy Cabbage count which seemed to be down on last year's bumper crop. We almost missed out on the count from the sea as the island RHIB was out of commission waiting for a replacement part. Jason Mugford, captain of the Oldenburg came to the rescue. He allowed us to use one of the Oldenburg's RHIBs. The result of our efforts was that, although cabbage numbers were down, they were at the annual average. Perhaps they had been affected by the early spring and had flowered a week or two early.

I made a brief day trip to attend the Service of Commemoration on the 18th of June when many of us paid our respects to our late President, Diana Keast.

Returning to Lundy for our summer break in June/July, the weather was glorious but very dry. None of the streams were running and most ponds were either empty or nearly so. I was fortunate to be able to assist with the recovery of a dead Risso's dolphin which had been washed into the Landing Bay. Eventually, it is hoped that it will feature as an exhibit similar to the more familiar Septimus the Seal. [Ed: See page 28]

As Chair of the LFS I attended another ceremony when the ashes of our great benefactor Pat Rodley were scattered on the island.

With the weather being less than conducive for any field work, I gave in to peer-pressure and visited all the Lundy Letterboxes to prepare for a third edition of my book. I hope to have this published in 2023.

A last minute weekend trip in October was arranged as a maintenance visit for the St Helen's Centre. I spent most of it in the bell chamber of the church helping replace eight refurbished clappers in the bells.

Our final, November, trip saw us doing much field work. The dry weather had ended with lots of rain – refilling my ponds and streams and bringing out the fungi for our annual airfield count of field waxcaps and the North End count of Grey Waxcaps.

During all these visits I was able to make good use of the new projector and laptop the LFS had funded which is now installed permanently in the Wheelhouse. I gave a total of six talks throughout the year on my pet subject – freshwater on Lundy.

Back home, we ended the year with a few days of snow and hard frost in North Cornwall effectively quarantining us for a second time this year. This time we were at home and able to get on with all those little jobs you put off. Sadly, we were advised by Rob Preece that yet another Lundy stalwart; "Brummie" Dave Preece had passed away.

What a strange year! I wish you all a better 2023.

Alan Rowland - LFS Chair

A very well deserved award!

MICHAEL WILLIAMS shares the news of an MBE in the King's New Years Honours.

Dr Keith Hiscock, Vice President and past Chair of the LFS, has been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours for services to marine conservation.

Keith has been a pioneer of using diving for underwater marine biology in the UK and using the knowledge gained to promote marine conservation. His marine conservation career began at Lundy. He was part of a small group from Ilfracombe that had started to promote the idea of marine reserves, and in September 1969 he was fortunate to be on Lundy when the church service to mark the handover of the island to the National Trust, and to be managed by the Landmark Trust, was held.



A pencil sketch of Keith done in 1971 by John Dyke.

Photo by Keith Hiscock.

He had just completed a few days diving around the island and was wowed by the marine life. Lundy was an ideal location for a marine reserve: it was small (so reasonably easy to manage), remote, had fabulous and varied marine life, and was to be owned and managed by organisations that had conservation at their heart. Keith plucked up the courage to speak with John Smith (later Sir John) and he passed Keith on to the new Agent, Ian Grainger, to pursue the idea.

By 1972 the management plan for a Voluntary Marine Nature Reserve was published in the Annual Report of the LFS (vol 23, 1972). Under Keith's drive and commitment, Lundy has led the way for marine conservation. The voluntary reserve became the first Statutory Marine Nature Reserve in 1986 and the UK's first Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in 2010. Lundy also led the way in becoming the first No Take Zone (NTZ) in 2003 where all fishing and other removal of wildlife are prohibited.

The Editor says sorry...

I must apologise to John Bradbeer, author of the article in last year's bulletin entitled 'Shipping at Lundy in the 1881 census'. I received this email from him:

'Thanks for the latest issue which arrived today. Just one thing, my article is attributed to Robert Bradbeer. As far as I remember from the researches of my cousins and their children, Robert was a first name rarely used in our branch of the Bradbeers back to the 1820s. Not to worry, as I am sure that I can put up with being misnamed, after all my grandfather, a professional gardener, used to have bulb catalogues sent from the Netherlands to "Mr Broadbean" a century ago, and in more recent times student work for me to mark often came in for Dr Badbear.'

I guess it could have been worse!

Marking the Death of HM Queen Elizabeth II

MICHAEL WILLIAMS describes what happened on Lundy at this historic event.

I was on Lundy in early September undertaking my Librarian duties, checking on the libraries in each of the holiday properties. Aware that the Queen was in deteriorating health, several of us were watching the news closely on Thursday 8th September and we had discussions about the plan of action should the Queen pass. The flags on Hangman's Hill (by the Ugly) and the church were not being flown so were put up at full mast in case they needed to be lowered and, as a bellringer, I worked out what ringing would be appropriate.

A group of staff were in the Tavern having a drink after work when the news broke. Sue Waterfield had seen the breaking news alert on her phone. Immediately we sprang into action. Rachel Bedwin, Assistant Ranger, dashed off to the Ugly to lower the flag to half-mast whilst Rosie Ellis, Lundy Warden, and I went over to the church. Rosie lowered the flag to half-mast and I opened the baffles inside the belfry to ensure the bell I was about to ring could be heard. I then rang the tenor (the largest bell) for about five minutes – a solemn sound – suitable for the occasion and returned to the Tavern (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1538924>).



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Lundy in 1977, her Silver Jubilee Year.
Photo by Tony Walker.



Tavern proclamation.
Photo by Michael Williams.

Lundy being Lundy, it was likely that the other people in the Tavern would have had little idea of the day's events. I decided to write a message on the blackboard adjacent to the archway. I can vividly remember the background noise in the Tavern diminishing as I used the chalk to write, "Buckingham Palace has announced that Queen Elizabeth II has died." It made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck and, after I wrote the last word, a lady standing near me, watching me chalk the words up, was visibly upset. It was only at that moment that I realised what a moment this was. The end of a very long reign. A turning point in our history and our national memory. One of those moments in life when you will remember exactly where you were and what you were doing.

Postscript – For the record, it may be of interest to record what happened next as there was protocol to be followed to mourn the passing of the Queen and accession of the new monarch, King Charles III. At noon on Friday 9th September, bells were tolled or rung half-muffled across the country. I tolled the



MS Oldenburg tackles the waves
with her flag at half-mast.
Photo by Paul Dean.

tenor bell 96 times (one for each year of her life) at 10 second intervals thus taking exactly 16 minutes (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1539272>). This was advertised on the noticeboards and a number of people assembled around the church to listen.

The flags remained at half-mast until 1.00pm precisely on Saturday 10th when they were raised to full-mast for the proclamation of King which was taking place throughout the land. They remained at full-mast until lunchtime on the following day when they were lowered again to half-mast. (The church's flag was subsequently entangled in the lightning conductor and taken down.) The Queen's funeral was shown live in the church and flags were returned to full-mast at 8.00am the following morning, as set out in the protocol. The MS *Oldenburg* was also flying its flags at half-mast.

LFS Day trip 2023

We are pleased to be able offer a special day trip to Lundy for LFS members on Sunday 4 June 2023 aboard the MS *Oldenburg*. We hope that you will enjoy this opportunity to visit Lundy, meet other members of the LFS and enjoy the island at a time of year when it is looking its best.

In addition to a discounted fare of £30 (£15 for accompanied under 18s) we expect to be able to offer a selection of walks on the island focussed on various topics of wildlife and island history. Alternatively, you will be free to explore your favourite parts of the island in your own time.

Departure will be from Ilfracombe at 8:00 am, returning into Ilfracombe at 6:30 pm. Ticket numbers are limited so please book early to secure a place.

To book tickets, please visit the LFS website at:

<http://www.lundy.org.uk/latest-news/277-lfs-day-trip-2023>

Chris Dee

Some sad goodbyes...



Colonel Robert Gilliat MBE passed away on 7th February 2022 and his funeral was held on 21st February at Ilfracombe Parish Church. 'Colonel Bob' was the resident Agent on Lundy from August 1978 to some time in 1983. During his tenure there was considerable work going on across the island including the repairs to the Castle and the old hotel (now Old House and Square Cottage). He and his wife were the last residents of the new Bramble Villas, at that time a single dwelling, before it was divided and turned into holiday lets. He joined the LFS in 1981 and moved to Lee, near Morthoe, when he left Lundy.

*Col. Robert Gilliat.
Stock internet photo.*

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

You may well have heard the sad news of the passing of LFS working party stalwart **David Preece**, known to many as Brummie Dave, or occasionally the Lundy Troglodyte. He died in early December 2022 after a lengthy illness. An obituary will be published in the LFS Annual Report for 2022, due to be published during 2023.

Our thoughts are with his family; they hope to be able to organise a memorial to Dave on Lundy in the future.

TREVOR DOBIE



*Brummie Dave.
Photo by Trevor Dobie.*

We're sorry to record the death of **Cyril Matthews** in December 2022. Cyril was a keen birder and a regular bird ringer on Lundy in the 1970s and 1980s - Chris Dee recalls ringing birds with him for three or four years in the early 80s. Although he hadn't done any ringing on Lundy in recent years, he continued to visit with his wife Sheila who was visiting Lundy for her ringing interests, which was bell ringing!

Cyril's funeral was in January and we send our best wishes to Sheila and the rest of the family.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS



*Cyril (L) with
Brian Matthews,
in the Tavern
around 1983.
Photo supplied
by Chris Dee,
photographer
unknown.*

BOB BAGATTI reports on the first of the 5 working parties of 2022.



Taking a break in the nook.

Photo by unknown, on Louise Cookson's camera.

The first working party of the year took place from Friday 11th to Friday 18th of March with helicopter travel both ways. This was quite a deviation from the usual working party, as it was only a small party of six people rather than the usual 14. The party consisted of, in alphabetical order, Bob Bagatti, Louise Cookson, Keith Dobie (team leader), Tony Larose, Mike Towers and Kevin Williams.

We had a specific task to perform for the week - planting trees. Unfortunately, all the best plans don't go accordingly to form, and the trees we were meant to be planting had not arrived from the mainland.

However, as I'm sure most of you know, especially if you have participated on a working party, there is always a job to be done on the island, whatever the weather.

Although there were only six of us, we were still ensconced in the Barn. It was really pleasant to be able to spread our wings with three people in the downstairs dorm, three on the mezzanine, and plenty of room around the table. Despite only cooking for six, I still struggled to plan the correct amount of food, on the one hand being enough to fill my fellow workers, but without being wasteful. As usual, we had a fine selection of hearty meals. Over the course of the week, we were treated to bangers and mash, stilton flavoured chicken with ratatouille, fish pie, shepherd's pie, Portuguese soup followed by beef and Guinness casserole and chilli con carne.

I'm probably not doing our chefs the justice they deserve in the descriptions of the meals. We had dishes cooked with skill and flair, and with some of the chefs changing menu ingredients to accommodate some fussy b****r who doesn't like mushrooms. Thank you all immensely from the fussy b****r!

While we're dwelling on Barn life, a word of warning to future people staying there; they have supplied a new toaster which toasts infinitely quicker than the old one as Tony found out on the first morning. As Kevin commented, "Trust a fireman to set off the fire alarm!"

The conservation team who we worked with were; Matt Stritch the recently appointed Ranger, who had previously worked on the Ascension Islands and was no stranger to island life; Rosie Ellis, previously the assistant Warden and Education Officer, but now the Warden; and Stuart Cossey, who now commands Rosie's previous role. I've had the privilege of working with all 3 before while attending a working party last October.

The first two days were spent doing a variety of jobs. We took down the fence that runs from the village to Millcombe steps, chopping and bundling kindling for sale in the shop, (you can appreciate that we ensured a healthy supply for ourselves in the

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Barn), gully clearing, uprooting Alexanders, cleaning of the Old Light and St Helen's, and half a day helping Tom, the new farmer, shift a load of granite for future stone wall maintenance. Later in the week we also did another job for Tom by deconstructing a fence near the lambing shed and reconstructing it in a different position ready for the lambing season.

Monday was our day off and also Keith's birthday. I'm not at liberty to say how old he is, but let's just say it wasn't 21. We were treated to a fine day's weather and were free to do our own thing. I was invited by Kevin, Louise and the birthday boy to join them on a saunter up the island to observe birds. Thanks to all three for imparting their knowledge to me. I'm pleased to say that I observed a beautiful specimen of a Peregrine perched on a rock; a first for me. We didn't see any Puffins nesting but saw a number on the water in "rafts", a new term I've learnt. On a later day, Louise saw the first Swallow on the Island, which pleased her no end, and it soon went in the LFS log book.

I'm pleased to say that a batch of 37 trees came over on the Monday and we promptly planted those on the Tuesday, some near to Quarters but the majority on the slopes above Quarter Wall Copse. We also had a further 48 arrive on a very early Oldenburg crossing on the Thursday; they were planted by lunchtime of the same day, mostly in St John's Valley and a few in Millcombe Valley. The trees planted included Oak, Goat Willow, Hawthorn and Hazel. On the last day we were in overdrive, and in the session after lunch we had taken down the rickety fence between the Camping Field and Quarters, and then rebuilt it again, which was a satisfying end to the working week. Always good to look back and say "We did that!"

As usual, a good working holiday with great company and great food; despite the physical exertions I didn't lose any weight. Thanks to all for their company and humour.

The second working party of the year started a few days later; CHARLOTTE GARDNER chronicles it.

There were 11 of us in this working party who managed to steer clear of Covid in the weeks preceding our volunteering time on Lundy. We went out on the helicopter and back on the *MS Oldenburg*.

The weather was dry and mostly sunny, but with a cool easterly wind which was very evident when we were working on the east side of the island!

In no particular order our tasks, led by Matt the Ranger, included levelling the path between Millcombe steps and the Ugly, a beach clean (not too much found), Alexander bashing around the ponds at Millcombe (the whole plant is edible, apparently), sawing, splitting and tying up kindling (a bargain after all



The team with Warden Rosie Ellis after their Rhododendron survey.

Photo by Charlotte Gardner.

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that effort, at only £1 a bundle in the shop), filling in a few holes in the camping field, gully clearing, the dismantling and rebuilding of the wood store, moving it from the farm yard to the lambing shed, trying to replace posts into granite on the west side of Halfway Wall, searching and eradicating Rhododendron from the steps of doom northwards (with Rosie and Stuart donned up in their hazard suits), repairing the Threequarter Wall fencing on the east side from the end of the wall to the cliff edge, even more Threequarter Wall fencing to make right what we had done wrong (who knew there was a particular way round it goes?), sorting out the recycling (which was a favourite for a few), power washing and valeting the Land Rover in time for the boat season, dry stone walling, and varnishing a bench - the one outside the museum where we all go to sit and eat our ice-cream. [Ed: Phew!]

We were a great group who all got on well together, each having different abilities and levels of stamina. We all cooked amazing meals and even on the last night managed to use up all the left overs. We had games some evening after supper, and on two nights we all went outside into the camping field to see the International Space Station pass overhead; this was a first time of seeing it for a few of us. We were all so tired that we were all ready to go to bed at 9pm; no late nights for us! Our reward for the week was for Stuart to take our group up the church tower to see the view which is something I personally have wanted to do since my first visit in 1990!

The most important thing was that we had fun, made great friends, and helped with the conservation of Lundy.

The third working party took place in May. TREVOR DOBIE recounts the week.

After some last-minute changes in personnel, a full group of 14 volunteers assembled on a sunny Saturday morning at Ilfracombe for the May 2022 working party. Old friends and new faces soon became (re)acquainted, and a calm sailing with a brief dolphin show followed. All the new members joined the Lundy Ambassador walk on arrival, led by Bee Cox, and then joined the Warden, Rosie Ellis, for the very informative 'Lundy Above and Below the Waves' slideshow. Luckily we had exactly the correct gender make up to fit the Barn dormitories, so there was no need for any mixing. After a splendid sausage and mash supper prepared by Louise Cookson and me, an early night ended the long travelling day.

Our first workday was rhodi seedling searching on the east side from Sugarloaf northwards to the Terrace. "Seventy marker canes should be plenty", said Rosie, but more had to be summoned and even then we ran out.

"A pint to anyone that finds a rhodi in flower", was the next Rosie brag. Luckily, she



*Hard at work levelling the path
leading to the Ugly.*

Photo by Mandy English.

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had plenty of credit on her bar tab! Veggie curry was the tasty Sunday supper from cooks, Bob Bagatti and Hilary Winsor.

On Monday, we were split into groups for drystone wall repairs near Benjamin's Chair and trench digging and earth pile moving in Tent Field. In typical Lundy fashion, an electricity cable to the Castle had been damaged during a search for a water leak some time ago, and the trench was for a new cable to bypass the damage, with the earth pile being left over from the search. Evelyn Rita and John Boyle prepared a filling cottage pie to fill our aching tummies.

The main track gullies had their regular clean on Tuesday by a small group while others started on the task of moving the farmyard wood store and its cage to the Shippons behind the fire engine. Another group created steps to the diesel tanks after weeding the area. The wood cage had to be reduced in size to fit its new home, then carried using a sedan chair method and several scaffold poles. Carole Waring, Keith Dobie and Dave Powell produced our lovely supper of chicken and mixed vegetables.

Wednesday was our day off. A wet day was forecast, and most members set out in wet weather gear to explore the island. However, by 10.30am the skies cleared and a beautiful sunny day was enjoyed by most, with Puffins galore noted at the Battery and Jenny's Cove. A Marisco meal was enjoyed, with guests LFS Vice Chair Bee Cox, and LFS member Ali Shepherd.



'What do you mean we have to get all that earth in that hole?'

Photo by Hilary Winsor.

On Thursday the area behind the Blacksmith's Shed was cleared of greenery, a level base laid and a log store created for a fuel supply for the Marisco fire. More wall repairs near the water tanks were started, and the fuel tank area and steps completed. Lundy Warden Rosie Ellis, Ranger Matt Stritch, Assistant Warden Stuart Cossey, and Zac Wait, a seasonal volunteer, were all welcomed to supper prepared

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by Caroline Savage and Caroline Gaskin. A roasted vegetable and couscous salad went down very nicely with a few glasses of wine.

Our last working day was dominated by the completion of the trench and the complete removal of tons of earth from the water leak search in Tent Field. To level the pile all hands were put to pickaxes, mattocks, shovels and wheelbarrows, additionally a new sheep proof fence was installed along the wall behind St Helen's. Chris and Carole Knutt, and Susan O'Grady, used all of the leftovers to create a meal fitting for our last Lundy night supper.

All in all, this was a great week with lovely company and a great work ethic. We were complemented by Matt, the Ranger on the completion of all the planned jobs, plus a few more that cropped up.

Thanks to all the May 2022 volunteers.

HILARY WINSOR led the first of the two October working parties, and relates her experience here.

It was that time of year again...as October approached, people from all over the country, the world even, were anticipating their attendance on one of the much-coveted LFS Working Parties. A first for some, an innate "homecoming" for others.

So it was, with much excited trepidation, 13 lucky people made it to The Quay in Ilfracombe on a bright, relatively calm Saturday morning. The WhatsApp chat and various email instructions had ensured all were well prepared - whether this meant bringing one or two bags which had been packed two weeks in advance, to a few hours prior to boarding the good ole *MS Oldenburg*. Introductions and a few hugs later, a bond had been formed even before landing on the jetty – with a common purpose we had arrived on LUNDY.

It wasn't long before we were all settled into the Barn and ready to explore the island. Jan led the traditional walk around the south end of the island on what was a very pleasant afternoon, Jack's Store was raided, the shopping arrived, and Bob set to



A spot of dry stone walling to pass the time! Photo by Hilary Winsor.

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making his sausage casserole (a day early due to frozen chicken). At 4pm on the dot Matt, the Ranger, introduced himself to the team, and after a delicious evening meal and more team cohesion we were all ready to face the week.

Raring to go on Sunday morning and gathered on the Barn steps at 8.30am sharp, Matt soon put us to work. For some of us a spot of dry-stone walling around Rocket Pole, repairing the odd gap and crumbling sections of wall to prevent those pesky sheep escaping, whilst a few headed off to the Battery for some gully clearing. For the first day, breakfast and packed lunch preparation had been quite a relaxed affair, always a good sign, and the 8.am time-check was established. Rachel, the Assistant Ranger, sadly coming to the end of her six-month stay, led the way and we collected tools from the very impressive, Ranger's NEW Store.

Monday saw us Rhododendron searching (and digging!) between Quarter Wall and Halfway Wall on a fresh, breezy, sunny day. Rosie, the Warden, directed us on the "new" technique of digging out the plant and all the roots, rather than the marking and spraying method which has been used for several years but has its pitfalls. In all, 110 rhodis, large and small, were removed and left to wither in the weather. Apparently, this method was used many years ago on a much larger scale using diggers. During lunch, we had a recap on the importance of maintaining a straight line and how to do it to ensure no area was missed – watch this space for the PowerPoint version.



A quick break during work on the Heligoland Trap.

Photo by Hilary Winsor.

The Heligoland trap was tackled on Tuesday. Whilst Mandy, Elena and Louise M. put their sewing skills to work on the fiddly, wire netting, Dave C., Martin, Karl and basically anyone over 5'5" worked with Rachel and Matt on how to cover the rest of the structure with chicken wire. Once they got the knack, they were reluctant to stop, so an extra productive day was arranged. Others enjoyed clearing the gully down from the Time Keeper's Hut, clearing the

winch site and gathering rhodi wood from the east side slopes.

Throughout the week we were blessed with great weather, it only rained once – on our day off!! The Bell Ringers were practicing, so we had church bells ringing out for several days. Three of us were entertained in St Helen's during an inspection of the church organ and we all visited the birders during their ringing sessions, capturing lots of Swallows in Millcombe Valley. At least one of us was lucky enough to spot the Baltimore Oriole - a first for Lundy. A dip in the ocean (or Bristol Channel), was thoroughly enjoyed by several of the girls and Louise C. just swam and swam in the sea. Bob, the firestarter, gave lessons, helping to create a cosy feel in the Barn, whilst David C. provided the music and got out his fancy guitar – we didn't get around to David E.'s games, but two people were murdered in the kitchen with a jar of jam!

LFS Conservation Breaks 2022

As always, Thursday came around far too quickly and we were back at work, savouring the last two days. At Derek Green's request, some of the team were soon digging trenches around the staff accommodation - ready for the contractors to arrive and fix a leak and repair the heating ready for the winter. Wood was cleared from the farmyard, ready for the arrival of the new generator, more gullies were cleared from the village down to the jetty, Tom and Angus joined the team wrapping the Heligoland Trap in chicken wire and more Rhododendron wood was collected. In the evening, tables were laid in the barn and 17 of us sat down to a scrumptious Italian supper. Mandy and Louise M. working together with Elena, who produced a superb home-made Tiramisu.

Friday morning was spent sweeping the Old Light steps, filling in trenches (now that the heating was restored) and clearing the grass and weeds and distributing sawdust around the new trees that had been planted along Upper East Side Path, Millcombe House and in the valley. Saving the best 'til last, we all descended on Millcombe Pond in the afternoon. There was no hesitation in getting stuck in and with the support of Stuart and the Land Rover; bags and bags of muck were dug out and cleared – a tough, dirty task to finish on, but well worth the effort. Needless to say, there were a few grubby people in the Tavern at the end of the day.

Everyone produced delicious meals, particularly Caroline and Martin, who whipped up a feast on Friday with all the leftovers, ensuring there was absolutely no waste.

Saturday proved to be a Splash and Dash. Chores, last minute shopping and exploration complete, the gang gathered on the jetty to board *MS Oldie* and say their farewells, whether staying on the Island, spending the night in Ilfracombe or heading home as far as Germany, all were sorry to say "Goodbye", but couldn't help but join in a "Bottoms Up". *Energised, Inspired, Happy, Organised, Thought-provoking, Fun, Wild, Wonderful, Challenging Work, Big Blue Sky, Great Company, Mud* were just a few words to describe the week, but all in all a great week was had with the majority begging to return!



There's one! Rhododendron survey in progress. Photo by Hilary Winsor.

LFS Conservation Breaks 2022

NICOLE SMITH and JILLY MACKENZIE tell us about the final working party of the year.

The second October working party this year consisted of thirteen people, some returning after participating on previous working parties, and others about to get their first ever taste of Lundy, all under the guidance and care of leader, Bee.

The group began its work week on Wednesday with Rhododendron search and removal to further protect and conserve Lundy's native flora. Despite the harsh wind and intermittent showers, the work party persevered, and a large number of invasive Rhododendron plants were identified and successfully removed in their entirety from the roots. In the evening, the group partook in a spot of LFS-style ping pong – comprising table mats and ping pong balls.

Thursday looked like it would be overcast, but from late morning onwards the island was bathed in sunshine for the rest of the day. Using this to their advantage, the group, led by Ranger Matt and joined by Assistant Warden Stuart, worked on the Heligoland bird trap located on the Terrace, while Sue M. led a morning walk of ten day-trippers (go Sue!). The work party became experts at moving and adjusting a scaffold platform innumerable times; Bronte became the most trusted anchor, holding the scaffold with commitment and determination.

Corinne's creativity shone through as she drew up a sketch of the Heligoland trap which aided measurements and the subsequent cutting of materials greatly. While some of the group took turns in ascending the scaffold, stapling and sewing wire mesh, Bee and Gareth fabricated a sturdy door. This door will serve as a vital access point for researchers and bird ringers to enter the trap once it is completed. By the end of the day, a large part of the Heligoland trap was successfully fitted with wire mesh, and the group was adamant that they could finish it by the week's end. Fingers crossed!

Friday was a day of leisure, and everyone dispersed all over the island for the day, enjoying all that Lundy has to offer. Some went on long walks to the North End, and others on shorter walks to beloved points of interest nearby, while some partook in more harbour swimming. Everyone was thrilled to find a batch of freshly made scones in the Barn, baked by the fabulous Bee!



The team with Ranger Matt in front.

Photo by Stuart Cossey.

Later, bird experts Tim Davis and Tim Jones joined the LFS group in the Barn to deliver a delightful talk about the birds of Lundy and also reiterate the importance of the Heligoland bird trap which further inspired the group to try and complete it during the week.

The evening ended with the work party treating themselves to drinks and cooked meals at the Marisco Tavern, which began with a mad dash for the last five game pies – Sue M. made it to first position in record speed! There was much laughter, and everyone was in good spirits, re-fuelled and ready for the remaining working days ahead.

On Saturday everyone returned to the Terrace with resolve to finish meshing the roof of the Heligoland trap. With strong anchors steadying the scaffold (Bronte and Mandy) and Jilly and Julie braving the heights to help Matt staple the topmost parts of the trap. Stretching the mesh across the length of the trap took a tool as old as man; a stick (wielded by a determined Pippa).

On the ground level, Gareth, Corinne, Nicole, Christine, Sue M and Judith wielded their sewing and stapling skills once again - managing to secure the mesh walls of the trap.

The Heligoland trap is now completely meshed – we did it! And with some further sewing and tidying up, there is hope that the trap will see some action next year.

A truly interesting start to a Sunday morning was, while waiting for the tools to arrive, watching the Ravens swoop and play 'fetch' with a stick near Benjamin's Chair. Two new goals; replacing a stile with a gate to improve accessibility, and repair some collapsing dry-stone walls. Sue M., Judith, and Bee assisted Matt in building a new gate, and the group later witnessed its first use by a couple of lucky day-trippers! The rest of the LFS volunteers (including islanders Tom, Angus, and Stuart) tackled the wall.



The record-breaking wall-fixers!

Photo by Belinda Cox

Jilly drew upon previous training to aid in the construction of a section, whilst Corrine took charge of the wheelbarrow – delivering stone after stone needed to complete the wall. Gareth, Mandy, Pippa, and Julie repaired their section of wall in record time, and quickly moved on to another part of the wall in dire need of repair.

After a day of heavy lifting, it was party night! First on the agenda was an insightful and interesting talk by Peter Hamlyn who leads Lundy's Feral Stock Management team, about how the island's free-roaming Soay sheep, goats, and Sika deer are managed and routinely culled. Afterwards, excellent chefs Pippa, Judith, and Christine cooked a delicious 18-person roast dinner (including islanders Matt, Stuart,

Rosie, Tom, and Angus). After gorging themselves, another round of LFS ping pong took place, umpired by Sue H. It is safe to say that a few enthusiastic swings may have left ping pong balls hiding in any nook and cranny within the Barn.

The final working day was, to say the least, muddy. Armed with wellies and shovels, everyone headed down to Millcombe with one goal in mind: pond clearance. After a morning of varied workshop tasks (bench sanding, Starling bird box reassembly, and kindling chopping), it is fair to say the working party put their all into shoveling and removing overgrowth from the pond.

Most of the group shoveled the debris into bags, while Stuart transported them up to the top of the island where Nicole waited to distribute it onto crop plots. As the bags piled up due to the hard work of the group in the pond, Bronte, Mandy, and Julie were deployed to help with the distribution. Whilst everybody else switched roles at least once, Christine persevered as chief digger, staying out in the ankle-deep sludge longer than anyone else, and slinging mud like a pro! Waterflow was restored to some parts of the old pond, and most of the excess foliage and overgrowth was removed, which was a sign that it was a job well done. A fun and messy task, reliant on teamwork, morale-boosting laughs, and singsong, to end a productive and thoroughly enjoyable working party on Lundy.



A muddy finish to the week! Photo by Julie Ross.

A report from the Conservation Team

ROSIE ELLIS updates us on the her exciting year leading conservation on the island.

After a beautiful, still, moonlit night looking for waders with the sound of squelching wellies, Snipe and a few alarm calls from the Sika all intermixing it was nice to have a chance to reflect on the year, and what a year! Our first whole, full, “new normal” since my arrival on the island over three years ago.

With our usual nesting seabird, seal and rocky shore surveys going ahead, we added a daily morning bird census, were joined by the RSPB for some large gull surveys and of course the small undertaking of the Marine Festival! Lots more to follow on the Marine Festival so all I will say is a massive thank you to Robert Irving and everyone involved and that we have hopefully created a few more lifelong Lundyites. Researcher Meaghan (A.K.A. American Meaghan) still on island and we have two new LFS members in Tara (who is due back on island next year for some masters research) and Daisy. It was especially great to see the church being a hubbub of activity for research and education with the lab set up for the BioBlitz and masters students utilising the Wi-Fi for writing up their masters research projects. Many thanks to St Helen’s PCC, the Heritage Lottery Fund and indeed the LFS for supporting the St Helen’s Centre project which came to a close this year. The legacy shall continue with the Lundy Company and the church continuing to work together to deliver the schools programme and much more.

On the practical side of conservation, we finally had all our LFS conservation breaks go ahead! Thanks to all who helped, finally getting the Heligoland trap stitched together and of course, a lot of miscellaneous digging, tackling some disappointingly healthy-looking Rhododendron and braving leeches digging out Millcombe pond, now the most pond-like I have ever seen it! We have also had a lot of moving about of the wood store and the ranger store, now referred to as “the old ranger store”, and our new base up at the lambing shed with more space! The ranger store move is to pave the way for more space to process our wild meat, and wood store shifting is to



Surveying in progress. L-R: Laura Pirateque, Zach Wait, Stuart Cossey. Photo by Rosie Ellis.

accommodate the shiny new emergency generator. A few will notice more pedestrian gates replacing stiles where possible to help the island become more accessible, very handy for guided walks! At the beginning of the year, we were joined by the Smallridge Brothers and their amazing fencing machine. Many thanks to them for their dedication and determination, auguring through granite in minutes what would have taken us literally days to dig and drill thorough. After a few weeks nearly 2000m was finished with the help of the LFS conservation breaks. Many thanks to the fantastic Assistant

Ranger, Rachel, for her help this season; I am sure those who met her will be pleased to hear she is doing well in Snowdonia.

During a very hot, dry summer the water was clearly the place to be. We have had some fantastic snorkel safaris with Lightbulb sea-squirts my new favourite. Volunteers Zach and Laura spent some sweltering days up at Jenny's Cove, surveying and helping visitors see the Puffins using a scope to void disturbing them. With news of avian influenza decimating breeding bird colonies we were lucky most of our cliff nesting birds escaped without any signs, the Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Manxies having a great season. I am sure LFS members will be pleased to hear the Manx Shearwater village built using LFS funds has had fantastic take up this year with 12 families moving in. We look forward to the full Manx Shearwater survey in June 2023.

Later in the year, however, our fears were confirmed when a Herring Gull tested positive for the avian influenza virus, and it was very sad to see ill and dead Gannets washing up in the landing bay. We will be stepping up monitoring of our large gulls next year, and continue monitoring for any signs in the breeding colonies. If you see an ill or dead bird on the island please do not touch it, and inform the conservation team so we can dispose of it safely to reduce the spread of infection and inform authorities tracking the impact of the disease.

On a lighter note, press requests have come thick and fast. Just when I thought becoming Lundy warden would be the pinnacle of my career I was proved wrong when I got a Blue Peter badge! We have also had writers from the Times, been named one of TIME magazine's World's Greatest Places, welcomed the "Trees a Crowd" podcast, been featured in Breathe magazine, and been on BBC Radio Devon twice! Keep an eye out for the "Wild Isles" series for the BBC who have been filming some footage of conservation success stories on Lundy.



Sika deer in the bracken.

Photo by Neil Thomas.

After a spring and summer full of schools, swims, photography walks and crafting it was time to start welcoming our autumn visitors. If anyone was watching ship tracker this autumn, they may well have seen an unexpected round the island back to Bideford cruise which I and our volunteers Tom and Angus were on. Quite the introduction to the island, but we were rewarded with great views of an Osprey. Tom and Angus surpassed themselves with the twitch of the year being the strikingly beautiful Baltimore Oriole.

Fast-forwarding through Christmas and our New Year's dress up, the island is feeling very busy with contractors and some of the ship's crew joining us for shutdown. The Great Northern Diver was calling in the landing bay this morning, which was beautiful, but the mist has set in now.

It's been a busy one for all the islanders and the conservation team. As ever many thanks to all our volunteers however you help, if it is for a walk or a week or the season we could not do it without you!



On the MS Oldenburg.
Photo by Robert Irving.

The Lundy Marine Festival 2022

**A look back on a summer where marine matters took centre stage
by ROBERT IRVING.**

In case you were unaware of it, a Marine Festival was held on and around the island for two months this past summer. I hope you were able to participate in it in some way or other, but in case you didn't, here's a brief summary of what it was all about.

The Festival had five main objectives: (1) to highlight the existence of the island's Marine Protected Area (MPA); (2) to celebrate its 50th anniversary (the longest existing in the country); (3) to undertake a number of projects to assist in the on-going management of the MPA; (4) to leave a worthwhile legacy behind once the Festival was over; and (5) to promote the cause of marine conservation in general. You can decide if any or all of these were met by reading on.

I'm sure it's mentioned elsewhere in this Bulletin but the excellent weather we were blessed with during July and August certainly helped in running several of the events. Day 1 (14th July) kicked-off with a press day when various members of the regional press and TV came over to the island, accompanied by invited representatives of funding organisations (including the LFS). This resulted in a number of mentions in various magazines and regional papers, a short piece on ITV's *West Country* followed and, to the amazement of all concerned, the prestigious US *Time* magazine also made mention of the Festival in its on-line August edition, thereby reaching a potential readership of 26 million!



Cartoon by Bob Foster-Smith.

A lot of thought and planning had gone into creating a dedicated

website for the Festival, which I hope you managed to get a look at. This informed visitors about the MPA and the Festival and encouraged people to come over to the island and to join in. With thanks to Derek Green, discounts were available on *Oldenburg* fares and on overnight stays in the specially-purchased and very spacious Festival tents.

The start of the Festival also saw the visit of various organisations involved with the marine bioblitz we had planned. Members of the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society, North Devon Coastwise, the LFS, Marine Biological Association and the Darwin Tree of Life team descended on the island for the first week of the Festival. The Church, in its guise as the St Helen's Centre, acted as a pop-up marine laboratory, with microscopes and sorting trays aplenty, and as a focal point for all on-island Festival activities. Here were also displays on British marine life (thanks to Paul Naylor) and on the first 50 years of the MPA (thanks to funding from Natural England). And the wall of pictures of children's favourite marine creatures which grew over the weeks of the Festival, proved to be a delightful and unexpected addition.



Paul Brazier & Anne Bunker identifying specimens in the lab.

Photo by Robert Irving.

For the Bioblitz, numerous intrepid biologists scoured the shores for signs of life - rummaging in rockpools, peering under boulders and delving deep into dark and forbidding caves. On the last two days of their visit, a dive boat took out 12 divers to record and photograph species below the waves. A final tally of records showed 478 taxa were recorded (the vast majority to species level) of seaweeds, invertebrates and fishes from various habitats both above and below the waves. All of these records will eventually find their way onto the national Marine Recorder database and thence to the NBN Atlas. Alongside the bioblitzers, the Darwin Tree of Life team (from the Natural History Museum and the MBA) searched for specific species from which DNA samples could be extracted. By the end of their 6-day stay, they were delighted to find they could tick off a further 67 species from their 'wanted list'.



Iona II and Montagu publications.

Photo by Robert Irving.

Thanks to a grant from Historic England and in partnership with the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS), we were able to run four Protected Wreck Days for divers over a long weekend in mid-August. As I'm sure you'll be aware, the MPA boasts two Protected Wreck sites (the paddle-steamer *Iona II* which sank in 1864; and artefacts at a site off Gull Rock dating from the 16th century) and one subtidal Scheduled Monument (HMS *Montagu* which ran into the island's SW corner in 1906). It was hoped that divers would get the chance to dive on one or more of these, as well as be taught more about that particular wreck. Sadly, south-westerly winds put paid to a dive on the *Montagu*, so the

Iona II became the destination of choice. To help with interpretation, a comprehensive guide on the *Iona II* was republished and a new leaflet on the HMS *Montagu* wreck was produced.

Historic England also funded a project to produce a photogrammetry 3-D model of the *Iona II* wreck. Over the course of three dives, Tim Clements managed to cover the whole wreck with his camera, allowing a near-complete digital model to be produced some weeks later, with the help of his colleague Simon Brown. They also managed to produce a similar model for part of the Gull Rock wreck site. It is hoped these will be available to view and virtually explore in the St Helen's Centre in due course.

One of the ambitions of the Festival was to introduce a number of new technologies to help with interpretation of the MPA in particular. One example was to use a wildlife recording app (iNaturalist) for recording species on the shore whose identities may be unknown to the recorder. Summer Grundy, data manager at the Marine Biological Association, kindly agreed to produce a bespoke page within the app dedicated to Festival use. Fortunately, the mobile phone signal now available through the St Helen's wi-fi system allowed offline photos to be uploaded and identified by experts 'hiding in the ether', thereby adding to the Bioblitz records. Another device we had use of were two virtual reality headsets, thanks to the generosity of local charity Plastic Free North Devon. These proved a real hit for visitors who ventured into the church and got the chance to have a 'dry dive' with Lundy seals. And finally, our thanks go to Jon Slayer, a freelance underwater cameraman, who came all the way down from London on two occasions to make a 360° film exploring the *Iona II* shipwreck. This can still be viewed on Youtube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Otdm6_kRO4c).



Sue and Rob Waterfield testing the VR headsets.

Photo Robert Irving.

I would also like to thank the Blue Marine Foundation for sponsoring two of the main projects which took place as part of the Festival. The first investigated the effectiveness of the MPA's No Take Zone (NTZ) off the island's east coast, established in 2003. Special permission was obtained from Devon and Severn IFCA for a potting study to be conducted both inside and outside the NTZ, with all catches logged, measured and then safely returned to the water. The results showed that lobsters continue to benefit from the no fishing area, with four times as many occurring within the NTZ compared to outside it. In addition, those lobsters caught inside the NTZ were found, on average, to be larger both in length and weight when compared to those caught outside.

The second project was the making of a film about the No Take Zone and its value as a fishery resource. The Blue Marine Foundation are keen to see No Take Zones set up elsewhere in the country and hope to use this new film to promote the cause. A small team of film makers from North Devon Moving Image and Ilfracombe Academy

made the most of the good weather to get some amazing shots of the island, a lot of interviews and of pot fishing in action. It's hoped the finished film will have a public viewing in North Devon sometime during the second half of 2023.

It's not all been successes however and one disappointment was the poor response for volunteers to participate in one or more of the 20-odd citizen science projects on offer. This was particularly the case with the diving projects where take-up was non-existent for some projects. There are likely to be several reasons for this, with 'outlay' likely to be fairly high up on the list – diving is an expensive hobby and times are not conducive for such activities for many, apart from the die-hards.

On a more positive note, the Festival produced some new items available to purchase from the Shop (these will also be available at the Society's AGM on 11th March); two new letterboxing stamps to find; and a celebratory franking stamp for mail leaving the island during the Festival. We've also had some fascinating weekly talks presented in the church (apologies for the difficulties we've had trying to share these via the website) and a great Splash In! photographic competition.



Cuckoo wrasse jigsaw.
Photo by Robert Irving.

So all-in-all, it's been stimulating, novel, a learning experience and above all... fun! I do hope you concur if you were one of those who took part in the Festival in some guise or other. If you weren't, then sadly you missed out on a great 50th birthday bash!

TARA MCEVOY-WILDING describes her time working for the festival

Hello! I'm Tara and I was one of the two Marine Festival Wardens on Lundy this summer. This is a summary of what I got up to and my highlights of the summer! Summarising 10 weeks on Lundy into 900 words was quite a tricky job!

In the Sea

I love rock pooling, and Devil's Kitchen has some of the best rockpools I've been to. The species I wanted to see the most on Lundy was the Celtic Sea Slug (*Onchidella celtica*), a small, grey, knobby slug, and on one of my first trips onto Devil's Kitchen I saw over 40 of them, which I was very excited about! On the same day I also found the Solar-powered Sea Slug (*Elysia viridis*). One of the other highlights of rock pooling was when Rosie pulled back some seaweed and found a Conger Eel just as we were

walking back up the rocks - a great end to a rock pool ramble.

Despite being a bit cold while snorkelling, I always enjoyed it once I was in, and the jetty holds so much life. I really enjoyed taking people out to show them the beauty of British marine life and people were always surprised by how much there was to see. Seeing the little family of prawns hiding at the end of the jetty always made me smile and being able to see Plumose and Jewel anemones without dive kit on was amazing!



Celtic Sea Slug in Devil's Kitchen.

Photo by Tara McEvoy-Wilding.

I did seven dives over the summer and got to see the Sunset Cup Corals (*Leptopsammia pruvoti*) on the Knoll Pins, which were beautiful and so brightly coloured! I also saw some branching sponges and several new sea slug species to me; these included the Fried-egg Sea Slug (*Diaphorodoris luteocincta*) and *Doto fragilis*. We also got to dive the *Iona II* on a protected wreck day. Having just been to the talk about protected wrecks and armed with a dive trail guide, I think I managed to work out what all the bits of wreck were, and it definitely made me appreciate the wreck itself more because usually I am solely focussed on the invertebrate life growing on top of it!

Daisy, the other Marine Festival Warden, and I were lucky enough to go diving with Michael Pitts, who had come over to Lundy to do a talk on his career in underwater filmmaking. To film some of the lobster pots, Michael, Daisy, Robert Irving and I went out in a little grey RHIB, which took on a fair bit of water when the divers got back in the boat. It was an interesting journey back to the landing bay with four people and three sets of dive kit, but we made it!



*Tara on the Barbara B,
lobster in hand!*

Photo by Daisy Eagleton-Laing.

The Friday night talks provided an amazing opportunity to meet some marine scientists, archaeologists, and photographers, from whom I learnt about areas and jobs within the marine sector which I didn't know much about, as well as some interesting research. My favourite of the talks had to be Paul Naylor's as I think it really opened everyone's eyes to the fascinating lives of creatures that live right on our doorstep! I have followed Paul Naylor's photography for several years and always enjoy reading the descriptions about his latest blenny or a creature I've never heard of; it was amazing to meet him in person.

During the Marine Festival, Daisy and I went out on the *Barbara B* to help with some survey work. Much of this was measuring lobsters and crabs to see if there was a difference in size and abundance inside the No Take Zone (NTZ) compared to outside it, and you had to watch your fingers! It was really good to see the benefits of the NTZ for yourself, as there were so many more lobsters inside the NTZ and some of them were huge.

On the land

When seal pupping season started, I did seal surveys once a week. This involved walking the whole Lower East Side Path and counting the number of seals in each bay, as well as checking for pups. There was one survey where I saw the most amazing sunrise and then found four pups on one beach - which took me completely by surprise and made my day!

Although not very marine related, I did lots of moth trapping with Stuart (Assistant Warden), who was trying to get the highest moth year list for the island during 2022; this has now been achieved. My favourites were the Canary-shouldered Thorn (*Ennomos alniaria*), Oak Eggar (*Lasiocampa quercus*), and Light Emerald (*Campaea margaritata*) although there were so many pretty ones. Helping to check the Manx Shearwater boxes was another highlight as the chicks were so fluffy!



*Oak Eggar on Tara's finger.
Photo by Tara McEvoy-Wilding.*

Life on Lundy

What I miss the most about Lundy is definitely swimming, especially during all the hot weather. Getting a lift down in the Land Rover (and more importantly back up again!) and jumping off the jetty was my favourite thing to do, although you had to watch out for jellyfish. During the summer I was also lucky enough to get some climbs in thanks to Mick and his climbing group who took Stuart and me up the Devil's Slide with them.

I loved the simplicity of life in the lodge, where we played lots of games, did puzzles and sometimes cooked together. I also learnt how to do 3D needle felting, and successfully felted many different things including a quad bike and a Manx Shearwater.

I have almost certainly missed bits out of my account of the summer, but to conclude, spending the summer on Lundy as a Marine Festival Warden was amazing and all the marine and terrestrial life was incredible! Leaving Lundy was a very sad day, and I wasn't too keen to go back to the mainland; I will definitely be back!



*Seals hauled out on the rocks.
Still from a film by Robert Durrant
(see page XX)*

Lundy by Senses

TRACY BRITTEN writes about her experiences on Lundy as a registered blind person.



Paul and Tracy celebrate their letterboxing achievements.

Photo by Paul Britten.

My husband Paul and I have had four trips to Lundy, each being longer than the last as no stay ever feels long enough. When people we meet realise that I am registered blind, they are often curious about how I enjoy the island when so much of their own pleasure comes from the beauty they see all around. But I often wonder if many people miss out on the immersive experiences I have, as there is so much to be explored and enjoyed using senses other than sight.

Lundy may offer an array of picturesque views, but there is just as much beauty and even more variety in the sounds of the island. The sea provides a continuous background murmur on every clifftop, but what I hear is the enchanting music of the waves.

Each stretch of coastline offers its own collection of melodies that change with the shifting tides and unpredictable weather. Sometimes the song is a calming lullaby, with each gentle wave seizing a hoard of pebbles as it recedes, rhythmically dragging them to the sea. Sometimes it is like an energetic drum solo as the waves crash and thrash about the rocky base of cliffs. The music of the sea is endlessly varied and always so captivating to listen to.

The sounds and smells of the whole island envelope me in nature. The peaceful calm of Lundy is never silent. There is always the hum of insects, the songs of birds, the baaing of sheep or the trotting and grass chomping of the Lundy ponies. I love following the faint sound of trickling springs and streams or listening to strong gusts whipping all around from the refuge of the deck chairs in the Old Light. The fragrant scent of different grasses, plants and flowers follows me all about the island. There is the damp, earthy smell of the boggy areas we often find ourselves trudging through and anyone who has stayed in one of the castle dwellings may have notice the closer you get to home the stronger the smell of sheep poo.

I always enjoy using my hands to explore. Tactile interactions build great images in my mind of what's around. It's also just really fun to use my hands to scramble over rocks, navigate the rope to Quarry Beach, or pretend to fire cannons at the Battery.

My lack of vision does not diminish the magical influence the island has nor my keenness to explore it. I love to exchange my white cane, affectionately known as Michael, for two walking poles that help me feel around and balance. With these, and Paul guiding me using a system we have developed over many years that usually includes comical verbal instructions, we are always eager to head out in search of adventure. Something that is never difficult to find on Lundy.

One of our greatest adventures was a mission to find all the Lundy letterboxes on a four-night stay. We were intent on not leaving without earning our certificate. This meant early morning starts, something we are not fond of, and long days. But what an amazing adventure we had. A childlike excitement came over us with every box we

found. There was even some triumphant dancing when we finally discovered the box at Earthquake, having spent most of the previous afternoon searching for it.

There were a few boxes Paul reached on his own. With his guidance I generally feel I can do anything, but at times we have to accept some limitations. I will happily walk along any cliff edge, but I can't see the danger. Approaching a couple of boxes Paul was concerned about risk of a "fall to certain death". So, I reluctantly sat nearby with a walkie-talkie so I could still be part of the discovery and check he had not plummeted to his doom.



Tracy tackles the path to the Quarry.

Photo by Paul Britten.

Our biggest restriction is time, as I am slower on difficult terrain than most people. This meant Paul conquered Rat Island alone. However, having timed him at an impressive thirty-nine minutes from the jetty and back I'm pretty confident he can get me there and back without the need for a Coast Guard rescue. This will definitely be a challenge on a future visit.

Our early starts and dogged determination combined with Paul's excellent orienteering skills paid off as we found the last two boxes on our final morning and proudly took our stamp filled notepad to the shop to claim our certificate.

We began an extremely memorable impromptu adventure while having a relaxing morning cup of tea on the steps outside the Blue Bung. Our peace was interrupted by the agitated cries of a juvenile Peregrine after a Black Backed Gull snatched its food, an act the gull must have very quickly regretted as the young falcon was not alone. The commotion that followed led to us hurriedly leaving the bungalow and spending the morning trying to keep up with an incredible drama in the sky. Paul's graphic commentary of the ruthless aerial conflict was fantastic, but the frenzied vocal battle was intensely breath-taking. I will never forget the haunting, frantic screams of the panicked gull, interwoven with the ferocious, attacking cries of two angry parent Peregrines as they relentlessly chased down the thief. It was a true audio spectacular!

One of my favourite Lundy experiences came on a beautiful sunny day when we headed north in search of seals. As we approached the North Light a pungent waft of rotting fish hit me. Knowing this was very likely the smell of seal poo we eagerly hurried on and were soon enjoying a cacophony of deep, throaty barks and cries. The seals basked and tussled on rocks below us, but their boisterous howls and intense smell made me feel like I was immersed in their tumultuous colony. We spent quite some time excitedly appreciating our very first encounter with seals.

We will be returning to Lundy in January 2023 for our third attempt to celebrate Paul's birthday in the Marisco Tavern having been thwarted by lockdown and a fog induced helicopter delay over the last two years. If you happen to see us there, come and say hello. We always love sharing experiences and a drink with fellow Lundy enthusiasts. And next time you're enjoying the island's beautiful views, try closing your eyes and relaxing for a while. You might just be surprised by what you experience, because Lundy is a true joy for all the senses.

Risso's dolphin, deceased.

JOHN TYRER writes about a very unusual find.

A pleasant day for it. In a summer of sometimes oppressive heat, this was a pleasant day for it. Overcast and warm; a break from the constant sunshine of summer either side of June 2022.

A relaxing walk down to the jetty to meet the *Oldenburg* and see how many day trippers would come on the guided walk around the south end of the island. It was one of my days to be the Lundy Ambassador; a guided walk for anybody wanting a brief introduction to the island.

My timing was perfect. I reached the jetty as the 'Oldy' slowed in readiness to meet the island. Rosie the Warden was already there along with other key staff to help the ship dock and greet the passengers. Something different where the jetty meets the rock of the landing bay though...floating, white and definitely not living... a dead whale?

On showing what I'd found to island staff the popular consensus was that it was the body of a Beluga whale. That made sense, it was the correct colour and had a rounded nose. Someone else said it had a dorsal fin and was therefore likely a Minke whale. Meanwhile the *Oldenburg* had docked and the people were getting off. No problem, a dead mammal is part of life's cycles. A school party were last to walk past the corpse. "Yes it's dead. No, don't drop stones..." Its body was bloated and it didn't take much imagination.

It was later in the day that Rob Waterfield solved the first mystery: "The book says a Risso's dolphin". The book in the Marisco. I looked later and compared the illustrations with my photo of the body. A point for discussions with experts and with lay people such as myself. Yes, a certainty; a Risso's.

The book showed it to frequent waters all around the UK and almost everywhere else bar West Africa and north of the Arctic Circle, but nobody on the island could ever



Risso's dolphin.

Photo by Michael Roberts.



*The deceased Risso's dolphin spotted by the jetty.
Photo by John Tyrer.*

remember seeing one, dead or alive. Another mystery given it's such a cosmopolitan animal, and some research necessary. I began by looking through social media photo groups in the UK. The Risso's dolphin is common in several parts of the UK. Off Point Lynas seems to be the best place to view them - accessible because the animals are close to the shore. I found some sensational images taken there off the east coast of Anglesey. North Cornwall too but quite a way off the coast. It's probable that the mammal that washed up on Lundy died off North Cornwall and drifted for several days before being washed up under the jetty.

So why don't we see them off or around Lundy? It seems that the reason is that they prefer deeper waters. Its prey exists in the darker, deeper sea; it feeds on squid.



A very much alive Risso's having fun! Photo by Michael Roberts.

The scars that decorate its torso are from social interactions with other Risso's. Some articles state they also come from battles with its prey. I wonder if Melville* had a Risso's in the back of his mind when he described the great white whale?

They leap and twist in flight much higher than the Common dolphins we see around Lundy; they do so as a display to their social group.

And a final mystery. What became of the corpse? A plan to have a boat tow the body out to sea and cut the line at a suitable location. Later it was suggested that the *Oldenburg* herself would do this perhaps between arriving and departing with passengers. The Risso's body was there the next day and in almost the same place. And the day after? Nothing. Gone, but seemingly not towed out to sea.

Buried on the island? We'll have to wait and see...

[**Herman Melville, author of Moby-Dick*]

The MARINELife Adventure 2022

AMANDA YATES relates an exciting and educational stay.

On my many trips to and from Lundy on the Oldenburg I have enjoyed meeting MARINELife Wildlife Officers. These people are volunteers who record cetaceans and sea birds seen from the Oldenburg. They also provide information to passengers about wildlife that may be seen during these boat journeys. I happened to stumble upon an advert for a 6 day MARINELife training course that was to be held on Lundy in April 2022. It seemed like an opportunity for a different kind of Lundy adventure and a great way of improving my identification skills. So I booked myself onto the course and secured my place in the Barn.

It was a bright and windy day on the morning of the start of my MARINELife adventure, the boat departed promptly at 9am and we enjoyed a gentle cruise along the estuary and then a lively trip out to Lundy. During the voyage we had a fleeting glimpse of two Harbour Porpoises and there were plenty of Manx Shearwater plus occasional Guillemots and Razorbills. As we got closer to Lundy there was an announcement telling us that it was too rough for us to dock and that we were going to sail around



Guillemots on the water at Jenny's Cove.

Photo by Amanda Yates.

to Jenny's Cove to shelter. As we neared Jenny's Cove there were Auk rafts on the sea and Puffins, Razorbills, Guillemots and Fulmars flew around and over us. After this enjoyable treat we docked and took a leisurely stroll up to the village for a visit to the Tavern before we joined a guided walk to Jenny's Cove that was led by Lundy Ambassador Tony. Tony was upstaged at one point by an incredible display put on by four Peregrine Falcons that were flying above us and calling loudly. Late afternoon we attended a talk "Lundy Above and Below the Waves" given by Assistant Warden Stuart and we followed that with a very enjoyable meal in the Tavern. Afterwards we made our way to the gate in the tent field to view a beautiful sunset which turned the clouds pink behind Old Light.

Day two. After breakfast in the Tavern we were joined by volunteer assistant Wardens Lara and Zach, and given a lecture in the Barn by Rick on how to identify Cetaceans and seals that are likely to be seen in UK waters. We were also given information on how to make a Heinemann Stick. This is a range finder which could be used for measuring distance at sea such as how far away a bird or Cetacean is from the boat. At the end of the lecture there was a quiz where we had to identify cetaceans and seals from photographs. This was quite challenging and would be even more so from a boat which could be bobbing up and down while the real animal only shows you fleeting glimpses of itself. In the afternoon we went for a walk to the Castle to do some sea watching and then we walked on to Benjamin's Chair, the bronze age Cist, the Rocket Pole and pond, and the Devil's Limekiln. Some Lundy Letterboxes were visited on the way and the Lundy Bunny stamp was found! On the way back we called into St Helen's and asked the magic Puffin some questions. After

a lovely meal in the Tavern the attendees of the course enjoyed a very companionable sunset walk to the Battery.

On the morning of day three some of the early risers went to Millcombe Valley to do some bird watching with trainer Rob. After breakfast we were back in the Barn for a lecture on the identification of seabirds which was given by Rob. MARINElife is interested in seabirds as well as cetaceans because seabirds are often associated with cetaceans and they give us information about the availability of food, pollution and the impact of fisheries. Additionally, many seabirds are dependent on the UK for breeding, and it is important to monitor them. Over 95% of the world's population of Manx Shearwaters and about 70% of the world population of Gannets breed in the UK. Many seabirds are becoming rarer in our waters, and it is important for us to monitor their numbers, such is the case for Balearic Shearwater. The seabirds lecture was followed by another quiz where we had to identify seabirds from photographs. After lunch in the Tavern, where I had rainbow cake and chips, we had a presentation in the Barn from Glynis about the species of plants and animals that we were likely to see when rock pooling around Lundy. We were then treated to a cream tea by a past alumni of MARINElife (If you are reading this, I would like to convey my thanks to you from the whole group, it was really lovely and very kind of you to do that for us). The tide was then just right for rock pooling on the Landing Beach and the Devil's Kitchen where we found an array of colourful rock pools containing wondrous things. I fell in love with the Strawberry and Snakelocks Anemones. After a gorgeous meal in the Tavern, we had a presentation in the Barn from Rob about the Moths of Lundy. We were then treated to a slideshow based on a holiday that Rob and Jane had been on entitled "Whale Watching in Baja California, the Sea of Cortez and Beyond". The photographs were absolutely astounding, evidently it was an incredible trip.

On the morning of day four we set out with packed lunches for a leisurely walk to North Light where we did some sea watching, enjoying views of Puffins, Razorbills, Fulmars, Gannets and assorted gulls. We tested our new skills by identifying and gauging the age of the various gull species that we saw. Rick gave a presentation at



The MARINElife group near North Light. Photo by Amanda Yates.

4:30pm in the Wheelhouse about the work of MARINELife; it was very well attended by our group and other Lundy stayers and staff. After a superb evening meal in the Tavern we played Trivial Pursuit (which I was absolutely terrible at) until it was time for Rick and Glynis to present a fun quiz which was open to anyone to join in. There were serious questions about wildlife but also lighthearted questions and even a section containing some very funny cryptic clues.

After breakfast on our penultimate day, we set out to walk to Jenny's Cove where we once again tested our sea bird identification skills and enjoyed the sounds and sights of the busy seabird colony. After a Tavern lunch we walked to the Quarries via the Upper East Side Path. As we reached the Timekeeper's Platform we were treated to the sight of about 12 Bottlenose Dolphins and had the pleasure of watching them for over an hour. At the Quarries Glynis showed us some insectivorous Sundew plants which I had never noticed before, they are so tiny! We had a lovely evening meal, and I owe a big thank you to the Tavern staff for putting on the Vegetable Lasagne (my legendary favourite) for my last supper of the holiday. In the evening we were taken for a walk in the dark to listen to the Manx Shearwaters flying in. A big thank you to Stuart accompanied by Lara and Zach for leading us to a great place to sit and listen to them.

Day 6 arrived all too soon and we packed our bags and exited the Barn. I went bird spotting in Millcombe and was very lucky to be able to spend some time with the Bird Ringers who generously showed me a Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, a Blackcap and a Redstart that they had ringed. The MARINELife group re-convened for a pub lunch in the beer garden, where I had my last piece of Rainbow Cake. I don't think that I ate the whole of the big cake but probably most of it, slice by slice, during my stay. After settling all of our bills, which included a competition as to who had managed to run up the highest Tavern bill - I did not win despite my high consumption of cake - we strolled down to the jetty. Here we were entertained by Oystercatchers on Rat Island, a diving Gannet and a young female Grey Seal who made it her business to swim up and down alongside to Jetty to inspect all the people who were queuing for the boat. We all sat together at the back of the boat and enjoyed a pleasant trip sea watching on our return journey to the mainland.

A big thank you to Glynis, Rick, Rob and Jane and all of my fellow attendees for a very enjoyable 6-day Lundy Adventure. Thanks also to all of the island staff who made our stay perfect.



Sunset from the Old Light.
Photo by Belinda Cox.

Lundy, the Glory of the Bristol Channel!

ROBERT DURRANT tells us about his film on what Lundy has to offer.

Many LFS members already know about my recent film 'Lundy, the Glory of the Bristol Channel' which is published on my 'Rob Durrant' YouTube channel, and also amongst the 'Discovering Lundy' webinars.

It was made as a creative "labour of love", but I hoped it would also appeal to others: those merely curious about Lundy, those thinking of going and wanting to know what to expect, those who already know Lundy but want to know it better, and those wanting to revisit scenes cherished in their memories. I've had extremely enthusiastic feedback from all these categories.

It displays the beauty and uniqueness of the island through an expert (to non-Lundyites!) guided tour, from the viewpoint of a traveller leaving Bideford and returning to Ilfracombe, showing why it's worth going and what to look out for. Included are most of the island's interesting features, geographical and man-made, including the village and farm; but the greatest emphasis is on the natural world.



From the cemetery to the church - a still from the film by Robert Durrant.

The film ranges all over the island, and covers seasonal changes, especially flora and migrant birds; and there is plenty of attractive footage of the free-running ponies, the Highland cattle, and the feral Soay sheep, Sika deer, and goats. There is special focus on the breeding seabird colonies: Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Guillemots, Razorbills, Puffins, and Manx Shearwaters. And there is extensive lovely footage of seals and endearing seal pups, highly-acclaimed for accuracy of information by a national expert.

I was born and brought up in Bideford, and returned to retire here almost 15 years ago, after a working life elsewhere. But despite living so close to the quay, I only



Puffin with Thrift.
A still from the film by
Robert Durrant.

'discovered' Lundy on what was intended as a one-off a brief camping stay in 2011. Lundy sucked me in, as it does!

I have visited regularly ever since, including participation in LFS conservation breaks, at first just taking still photographs. Later I started taking moving images for a better record, and was then inspired by attending a movie-making workshop to try creating films which combined my enthusiasm for photography with my lifelong love of the natural world. My first films featured Northam Burrows, and are also on my YouTube channel; but this is much more ambitious. It is exactly one hour long, created from the best of five years of filming.

Ideally, it needs to be seen on a big screen, laptop or television; but public showings are also in the pipeline.

I greatly appreciate the support I've received from several distinguished and truly expert Lundyites, as well the LFS itself, in promoting the film as worthwhile viewing. I hope that members of the public researching Lundy will encounter it and also succumb to the island's allure.



Hummingbird hawk-moth.
Photo by Neil Thomas.

Some personal reflections of Lundy follow...

JEAN AINSWORTH-SMITH remembers.

My husband, Ian, was a Life Member of the Lundy Field Society for many, many years and we used to love our trips to Lundy. Sadly, Ian died very suddenly last year, but among the many memories I have of fifty five years of marriage with him are wonderful ones of our trips to Lundy. In the seventies we used to go with my parents, and in the eighties we used to take our children who always looked forward to their trips there.

The last visit that Ian and I made was when we were able to make up the numbers on an ornithologists' trip in very inclement weather. We somehow all survived the sea crossing and had a happy but very wet time wandering around the island, visiting old haunts. The ornithologists reported that, despite being a large group, they had only

spotted four birds on the island in total the whole day. Almost everyone ended up in the Tavern, drinking hot chocolate – or something else warming but stronger – attempting to dry out. That was a very memorable trip especially, although we didn't know it at that time, it turned out to be our last visit to Lundy together. On that trip we met a colleague of Ian's whom we hadn't seen for many years – much reminiscing of past times.

There is always so much to explore and see on Lundy. We used to love to stop and listen to the Skylarks in particular; to watch the seabirds and the seals; looking for wildflowers. We loved the peacefulness and the clearness of the air. Over the years changes were made – perhaps the best being the jetty rather than the long climb up the hill upon landing.

A very special place.

JENNY DENNIS reviews her stay at the Live Like Birds Live week in March 2022.

Six of us joined Rev Chris Baillie, his wife Carol and son Matt, for a wonderful week of birdwatching on Lundy, with times of reflection. It was supported by the Hartland Coast Mission Community and Rev Jane Skinner was able to join us.

We stayed in Millcombe House which brought back great memories for me. It was 50 years ago when I last stayed there! Chris is so knowledgeable about birds and gave us a real insight on migration and how birds live in communities.

Inspired by Peter Rothwell, whose wife Sally was one of our party, I challenged myself to compile a small notebook with illustrations of some of the birds we saw. Once I had started the notebook, I soon realised that we saw far too many birds to fit in the small book, so I restricted myself to using some water colour pens, which made getting the correct colour almost impossible, and added a few words about each bird.



Drawing and photo by Jenny Dennis.

I am very grateful to Chris and the fellow retreat members for the wonderful experience I had during those few days. There is so much more to learn about birds!

Do you really stay on Lundy? MARK WEBBER certainly does!

Perhaps a differing take of looking at Lundy for this publication rather than something like reporting of the visit of a rare thrush from Asia or a Green Warbler but one of which I'm often asked by curious folk and have to answer frequently - now put onto paper - "Do you really stay on Lundy? – What's it like?" People often ask, "so you're going to Lundy again then?" "Yes, can't wait!" I reply - "Do you ever get bored of it?" they ask - "No we don't, it's an absolute sanctuary from a stressful occupation"...or words to that effect!

Growing up, looking at the sand dunes of Braunton Burrows from my bedroom window, seeing the slow strobe effect of Hartland Lighthouse shining onto my bedroom wall at night, Lundy was always just a rock off Saunton Beach and I really gave it no more further thought, not intentional but just never considered. There was an aborted trip in the mid 1970s as a kid aboard the *Balmora* as it wasn't possible to land, so it was a quick trip around the Island then back to 'combe! All I remember is

The view from the South Light. Photo by Andrea May.



lattice work on the North Light glass, an adjacent strange shaped building below it (foghorn), and the deep green swell of the sea and 'white horses' – funny what sticks in a curious young mind.

In my middle (20s to 30s) years, taking off from RAF Chivenor on the westerly 28 heading runway, once the Burrows had been cleared and correct angle of elevation (attack) achieved, Lundy quickly hove into sight, standing there defiantly above the waves, but you didn't have much time to glance at it as the cockpit instruments required your immediate attention often above an uninviting sea – that would be wetter than some of the late October trips we've had on the *Oldenburg!*

Life progresses, you do this and that and all the while, Lundy was always there, and remaining unvisited by myself and ignorant to what it was and what was there.

A day trip in the summer of 2009 saw me eventually set foot on the island for the first time, my wife had been a couple of times before on day trips with her family. After dragging our sorry ****s up the hill, we staggered to the 'Albion Harman' bench in Millcombe where we watched people (older!) springing past us, making us feel somewhat guilty. These sorry legs eventually staggered over to the west coast where the said sorry legs went down into a rabbit hole causing much mirth to my wife, not so much for me!

Fast forward to New Year's Eve 2014, when my wife, Julia, and I were running through ideas of places to go in the forthcoming year. Lundy got mentioned, I



Lundy goat! Photo by Neil Thomas.

think it was Julia actually, and we both looked at each other and dived into Google (other search engines are available) for info. A few moments later, a 3-day toe-dip-into-the-water stay at Castle Keep North was booked up! Still my favourite property, just a nice layout.

A most enjoyable stay led to a repeat performance the following year and it sort of snowballed after that. Because it's just the two of us coming over, we have covered CKN / CC / CKE/ BSJ / LSJ / OL Upper / Tibbetts / OHS / OHN – No point in booking up Millcombe!

Before the first ever staying trip, lots of reading up to see what we could expect. Dolphins on the way out – that'll be nice, lots of birds, some rarities possible – big tick, it's got an airfield! Another big tick!

The first thing we noticed about Lundy is that in general, it would appear to be full of like-minded souls, some who over the years, we have got to know, and it was easy to often engage in a conversation with people with similar reasons for escaping to the island. For me, the enjoyment starts as soon as we're sitting on the *Oldenburg*. I look up from the harbour to our house. "See you in X days," I think to myself.

If its bird ringing season, we may see Rob (Duncan) in Millcombe once the final beach road corner (always makes me feel as if I'm on a Mediterranean island going under the Turkey oaks) has been turned - bird ringer and an extraordinary fountain of ornithological knowledge with which his enjoyment of the subject is infectious - well something's got to take over the stress of being a Birmingham City supporter – he doesn't talk about supporting this team so I won't mention it...

Popping up possibly anywhere could be John (Tyrrer) – Lundy Ambassador, another football fan – Liverpool this time and a Punk Music aficionado like myself – both of us



No Discovering Lundy is complete without some Lundy fungi! Photo by Andrea May.

being fans of the Stranglers and other similar acts. You find these people in the Marisco at the end of the day where you can discuss the places visited, what you've seen and anything else that pops up. You sit and play cards and just wonder if your wife is cheating as she nigh on always wins, but I expect it's because I don't concentrate enough as my brain has gone into relaxed mode and not in the heightened sense of alert that it invariably is in otherwise.



Lundy Butterflies in development! Sea spray on the west side of the island. It was a windy December day.

Photo by Belinda Cox.

A glance of the weather forecast print out pinned up in the pub gives you an idea of how far you should stray from your property. No such thing as bad weather they say, just an incorrect choice of clothing... well that doesn't apply to us, I'm not walking in the wet if I can help it – too much reading to do!

A week very quickly passes, you have a look at the food stock you've brought out or ordered from the shop and it serves to act as a ticking clock that soon reminds you your time on the holiday, for this period, is coming to an end. We've done walks to our favourite spots, there must be several of those for all the people who come to the island. We've sat and watched the wildlife, my particular favourite being the Wheatear in the early

spring, a sign of warmer weather to come, in the autumn the last stragglers still hanging around, and I think of their journey ahead and wish them luck and hope to see them again the next year. I've seen so many personal firsts bird-wise on Lundy and for a kid then adult who is fascinated by all things that fly, a sense of excitement is always there, never quite knowing what will show up.

The holiday ends with a slow walk down to the harbour, or milling around the pub and beer garden if inclement weather has meant a helicopter return instead.

Once back home, a military style operation begins – washing machine loaded with the first wash, books returned to shelving, catching up with the kids, checking the pets; and then the thought goes to planning the next trip. Given that there are a limited number of properties for 2 people we have to get in quick or risk missing out, so we invariably rebook as soon as we come back.

A return to work usually sees comments on my Lundy suntan, which is never intentional, it's just me forgetting to wear a hat (not this year though, too many lessons learned!) and a return to the first paragraph - "Do you really stay on Lundy? What's it like?"

ANNE & TONY TAYLOR take us through a fascinating 50 years of visiting Lundy.

Ann:

My first sight of Lundy was when I was on a student placement in North Devon in the late 60s. Lundy was a mysterious lump on the horizon that seemed to alter shape as the weather changed. I learnt the saying “Lundy high, weather dry, Lundy low, rain and snow.”

It was not, however, until 1973 that I finally visited. I saw an advertisement for a field archaeology course on Lundy, and applied. Once accepted, I rashly volunteered to cook (never having cooked for more than two in my life). At that time any courses were expected to bring all the food they needed with them, so the organisation was quite a task. We stayed in Old Light and I quickly fell under the island’s spell.

The days in the open air made everyone very hungry and by the last night supplies were running low. I decided to pile all remaining food in a large pot and cook a curry of meat, vegetables, fruit and even porridge. Someone must have thought the painful looked like rubbish, as I returned to the kitchen to find some spent matches had been added! I fished them out, and needless to say didn’t confess what had happened.



A foreboding sky above Old Light.

Photo by Belinda Cox.

My cooking must have passed muster as the next two years I cooked for bird-watching courses. Everyone mucked in with the kitchen tasks and I was most impressed with the speed with which one person cut up vegetables. He explained that he worked in a zoo and cut up vast amounts for the animals. My other memory of the first course was a sunny day when we were searching for birds at Gannets’ Combe and some people decided to go for a swim. One man was very short sighted and left his glasses in my care. We were very amused to see him in the water conversing with a seal, convinced it was a course member!

During the second course the leader asked if I would cook for two extras who had been camping on the island for three months and doing their own cooking. Little did I know that one of them, Tony, would become my husband...

Tony:

In December 1972, when I was working at Newcastle University studying Guillemot behaviour, I went to the British Trust for Ornithology Ringers Conference. Nick Dymond gave a talk on Lundy, and I could immediately see from one of his slides that it would be an ideal place for fieldwork. I ended up spending four summers on the island.

In 1973 Lundy was still operating as a Bird Observatory. Nick was the warden, based

at the Old Light, which provided hostel-type accommodation for visiting birders and ringers, including me. My working days were spent in a hide in Jenny's Cove, watching and recording the daily lives of a group of breeding Guillemots. There were occasional distractions such as a passing Osprey that caused consternation among the local gulls, and the charming Black Rat (so much more appealing than the Browns) that sometimes wandered into the hide and potted round my feet. Outside work, I got to know the rest of the island, and did plenty of bird watching and ringing. The wealth of migrants to be found, with a mouth-watering sprinkling of rarities on top, helped to ensure that Lundy kept drawing me back.

But it was about much more than birds. Like the whole island community, I usually spent my evenings in the Tavern. The current main bar room was a two-storey cottage at the time, occupied by the Gades and then by Mick and Win Rogers. So the Tavern was limited to what is now the food servery (the only foods sold then were nuts and crisps), and while there were a few small tables and bar stools, it was essentially standing room only. The great majority of islanders and visitors would be there, along with off-duty keepers from North and South Lights and the crews of local fishing boats that would anchor in the Landing Bay. The atmosphere was loud and cheerful – and of course in those days, smoky.

In 1975 the Old Light no longer accommodated lone visitors, so I camped, along with Chris Baillie who also spent that summer on Lundy. When Bob Britton invited us to join one of his LFS bird watching courses for meals, we were extremely grateful!

I knew the huge shearwater colonies on the Pembrokeshire islands well, and wondered why Lundy was not the same, given how suitable it looked for them. In 1975 with Ian Black, another bird ringer then working on Lundy as Ranger, I started catching them at night to find out more. Again, the fascination has continued.

Then, with my Guillemot work officially over, I returned for one more season, working in the Tavern and living in Pigs Paradise (as it was then known), while continuing to collect Guillemot data as well as bird watching and ringing.

Both:

A few years later we returned, married, and we have visited Lundy many times since then, often several times a year. The first time, we were arriving separately at the boat and planned to camp. Unfortunately Tony (who had the tent) missed the boat. Ann spent the voyage wondering what she should do, and imagined returning to the mainland the same day. However she arrived to find the island had been alerted to the problem and one of the islanders was on the quay to offer her a bed until Tony arrived on the



*Ann & Tony watching Wheatears.
Photo by Richard Taylor.*

next boat. This was the first of many kindnesses from islanders over the years.

On another early visit a feral kitten (there were several feral cats on Lundy then) attached itself to Ann's boot daily when we visited the Terrace, and was clearly not being fed by any mother, so we named him Boot and he travelled home with us.

Before the pier and its access road were built, we have been ferried to the beach in the *Shearn* landing craft – this always meant wet feet and often wet luggage too. We have been taken ashore in small boats to a moveable pier on wheels. We have landed at the Divers Beach and carried our luggage up to South Light, then down to the Landing Beach on steps that have since fallen away. In easterlies we have been landed at Pyramid Rock and climbed up the west side. Ann is never a good sea traveller so it was always a great relief to sight the island and know we would arrive soon. She cheered when the *Polar Bear*, with its dreadful rolling action, was replaced by the *Oldenburg*.

We returned with our first child as a baby and then as a toddler in a backpack. The strong, cold winds of that spring often proved too much for him. Luckily an island couple had a similar aged child and invited us in so they could play together. Our next visit was with two young children, and Ann remembers trying to dry terry nappies over the gas oven in Little St John's and singing one badly.

The island was a wonderful place for young children. On later visits they loved the freedom to explore within Millcombe or go to the shop without supervision, at a much younger age than on the mainland.

With us they enjoyed rock-pooling, climbing Rat Island, singing to seals, snorkelling, and walking the cliffs and the hidden paths through the Rhododendrons. We also took them

out at night to catch and ring shearwaters. They found the wait till the shearwaters started arriving quite long, but we kept them occupied identifying constellations and looking for shooting stars and satellites. One night our youngest fell asleep with his head pillowed on a mound of Thrift.

Now the children are grown-up, and living in the north, but they still manage to join us on Lundy occasionally.

Ann:

My personal memories of Lundy include many special incidents. Once I came round a rock to find myself face to face with a peregrine 2 metres away. It took off shrieking and flew straight at me. I don't know which of us was more shocked. We watched a Basking Shark breach twice in Jenny's Cove. I stood in a rock pool in bare feet while the incoming tide brought beautiful striped shrimps swimming over my toes.



Landing at Pyramid Rock.

Photo by Tony Taylor.

[Ed: thank goodness for the jetty!]

I love the ever-changing expanse of sea and sky: the vivid sunsets over Old Light, the subtler sunrises over the mainland, the cloud shadows streaking the sea turquoise and navy, foam butterflies rising up the cliffs in a gale. I never tire of watching the waves breaking at the foot of the cliffs and listening to the Skylarks singing.

There is always something new to admire – a rock formation not noticed before, a different light effect, a new bird or flower. Introducing friends and relatives to the Island and seeing them falling in love with Lundy is a pleasure, and allows one to look at it all through fresh eyes.

Above all, on every visit, there are welcoming staff to catch up with and the chance of finding old friends, or making new ones, among the visitors.



*Wheatear on Lundy.
Photo by Kevin Webb.*

Tony:

As Ann draws the line at October boats, some of my visits have been with ringing groups rather than family. The weather is certainly unpredictable then, and can be spectacular. In hurricane-force winds one night in Big St John's, there were several loud crashes on the roof. We found in the morning they had been slates from the church roof that had flown across the 100m gap. Another year there were easterly gales that wrecked the *Kaaksburg* below the Terrace. They kept us on the island for an extra six days, so everyone started worrying about food.

Several visits with extreme weather have produced exciting rare birds that have shown extraordinary endurance. As American species, some must have survived Atlantic crossings, while others have been similarly unlikely arrivals from far to the east. While it has been wonderful to enjoy these with ringing colleagues, there has been equal pleasure on occasions when less severe weather has channelled tens of thousands of thrushes, finches and starlings via Lundy, with flocks, hundreds strong, passing overhead every minute of the day. But for me the most exciting and emotional moments of all have come during two early autumn visits: seeing shearwater and Storm Petrel chicks on Lundy for the first time, after more than thirty years of visits, when rat eradication had made successful breeding possible for them.

Both:

An added bonus of rat eradication has been the phenomenal increase in breeding Wheatears. Since 2013, along with friends Rich and Rebecca, we have studied them, colour-ringing the adults so we can recognise them individually. It has been a great joy following the lives of these beautiful birds in detail, and marvelling at their return each spring after they have migrated across the Sahara for the winter. As with any work of this sort - and with Lundy in general - the more you know, the more fascinating it becomes. The study continually raises further questions, so you delve even deeper...

We hope we will be returning for many more years.

Virgin Tippetan KEVIN WATERFALL tells his tale.

We have only been coming to Lundy for a little over 10 years, but as for many it has become a special place for us. We first came for a week as volunteers at the start of a Puffin survey when we spent a windy and often wet seven days studying Puffin habits in Jenny's Cove and at the Phillip's Stone colonies.

We have stayed in many of the properties at all times of the year and our habit is to go out around the island throughout the day and have our evening meal in the tavern each evening. We have walked past Tibbetts on several occasions and were firmly convinced that it was too remote and not for us.

In 2022 we had not booked accommodation but were keeping our eye on the Facebook notifications from Lyndsey. One evening around Easter our granddaughter was staying with us and we saw that Tibbetts was available in July for three nights, followed by Bramble Villa West. Our granddaughter had always wanted to stay in Tibbetts so we were persuaded and went for it.

We went on the Oldenburg sailing on 16th July, just at the start of the Marine Weeks, so on reaching St. Helen's we went in to find out what intertidal Bioblitz opportunities there were. That day was an excellent low tide, scheduled for 14:43, and Festival Coordinator Robert Irving gave us a briefing. After lunch we went with Keith Hiscock and a few volunteers to Brazen Ward to carry out a survey of sea weeds and creatures in the rock pools, passing Tibbetts on our way.



Tibbetts in the morning light.

Photo by Kevin Waterfall.

At the end of the day we just had to go back to the cliff top to find a welcome cup of tea waiting for us in Tibbetts. You can look at floorplans and photos of properties all you like, but nothing beats stepping through the door for the first time.

Tibbetts with its wood panelling and many hooks and fixtures sets the mind racing, trying to imagine how the people lived who manned the lookout station and the signal mast. What were these brackets for? We worked out that some of them were for links to operate the semaphore, but only later were told that others were to hold pistols and .303 rifles; all locked in by the trigger guards facing downwards.

How did the watchmen get their water and where were the locations for the old kitchen etc.? We read the history book for this cosy nook and soon found that the living room was surprisingly spacious; it also has windows on all sides. We read the log entries and were warned about the combined loo and shower room, despite which on first use of the loo one of our party managed to inadvertently operate the dump shower whilst in there.

Without prior knowledge when we booked it was going to be the hottest point of the heatwave that we were there, but being that bit higher and with windows open on all sides we caught every breeze there was. You aren't far from the clifftop so sea

breezes are normal, albeit they were at 32 degrees centigrade.

Our Marine Week's contribution was several cetacean surveys, including particularly from Tibbetts, observing the waters off of the east sidings. Deck chairs and scope to hand you could pop inside to make a cuppa when you wanted to.

We provided a useful watering spot for a group of walkers who had got that far in the heat and found that they had drunk all of their water. For others the high outer wall provided shade for them to enjoy their picnic out of the sun.

We were reminded to keep the gates shut so that cattle and horses don't wander in and they were no bother. What we weren't expecting was the wonderful close up views of Meadow Pipit, Linnet and juvenile Wheatear on the top of the encircling stone wall, pecking at the lichen and seeking out small flies. Being remote the birds approach very closely and we had close encounters with various gulls, Peregrine and even Richard's Pipit.



Deckchairs looking east from Tibbetts.

Photo by Kevin Waterfall.

We focussed our time on exploring the north of the island, despite the heat, though it was obvious that getting out soon after first light and getting back to the cool of Tibbetts by 9am was a sensible way to spend the morning.

The walk back to the village proved not to be an issue as it was only 45 minutes, but we didn't need to go there as we were well catered for. The delivery of food and drinks from the shop on the day we arrived was perfect. We were pleased to find that we had a gas operated fridge and the water supply was always available, though as



Juvenile Stonechat at Tibbetts.

Photo by Kevin Waterfall.

requested we were abstemious in using it. The gas lamps in the evenings were reminiscent of our childhood and made such a comfortable level of light.

The day that we transferred down to Bramble Villas went perfectly with the ever attentive Lundy Staff collecting and transferring our bags whilst we were exploring the habitats of the Round-leaved or Common Sundew plants around Pondsburry and the Quarries.

As with many virgin Tibbettans we can see that this will not be our last stay in a wonderful property.



Above: South Light and Landing Bay. Photo by Mandy Dee.



Left: Looking north from Tibbetts on a foggy day. Photo by Belinda Cox

Below: Common Blue on Lundy. Photo by Neil Thomas.

Bottom left: St Helen's with flag at half-mast. Photo by Michael Williams.





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 occasionally. Members receive copies but others may order back numbers.

Vol 7 Jenny George (ed), 2020, 184pp.

Contents: LFS Archaeological Work 1960s; A Survey of Dung Beetles; Artificial Light and Moth Diversity; The Importance of two of Lundy's Temporary Ponds; A Comparison of Fruitbody and e-DNA Survey Approaches for Assessing Distribution Mycelia of Macrofungi in Grassland and Heathland of Lundy; Ecology of Common Guillemots on Lundy; Goldcrests on Lundy; Migration Strategy in the Chaffinch; Avian Communities on Lundy; A Particular of Lundy Island; The Clayton Manuscript; Book reviews: Lundy Fungi and An Intellectual Adventurer in Archaeology; Reflections on the Work of Charles Thomas. All six Volumes 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. (only a few copies left before this goes out of print) Covering the period from the 1920s to the late 1960s, the book includes stories which have never been told before and others which are well known but told here with new illustrations. The period photographs are from the collections of Diana Keast and other Lundy Field Society members, and many of them are published here for the first time. Memories and anecdotes from Diana Keast are the icing on the cake of a unique insight into a crucial period of Lundy's history.

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