



# DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 54 January 2025



**In this edition:**

- Conservation break reports
- Recollections from years gone by
- LFS Field Studies Course
- The *Oldenburg* sets sail

And so much more...

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**Cover photo: Montagu III AKA Monty. Photo by Mandy Dee.**

# Editors Chatterings



*Sheltering at North End,  
December 2024.*

*Photo by Tim Jones.*

Well, what a year! Not only do I have the privilege of editing another *Discovering Lundy*, but at the AGM I was elected into the role of your Chair; very humbling, and thank you for having confidence in me. I truly hope that while I'm in the role I manage to meet your expectations.

I would of course like to extend huge thanks to Alan Rowland on behalf of the committee and wider membership for being in the Chair for the previous six years, and for navigating the committee through a couple of tricky issues. Alan is remaining on the committee, so we still have access to his knowledge and expertise relating to the island.

I've visited 'our' island on several occasions this year, including for one of the conservation breaks, a Lundy Management Forum meeting, a few Ambassador day trips, plus a couple of stays. As I write this in November 2024, I'm recently back from a weekend in Castle Keep North, where after two days of amazing sunny autumn weather, I took the opportunity to progress this edition of

the bulletin when some pea-soup fog and rain took over on the third day; thank goodness for the working space and wifi in St Helen's! I still have one more stay to look forward to before the end of the year.

I know that around a quarter of the boat days over the summer season were effected by bad weather, either being cancelled or changed into a 'splash and dash'. This has obviously impacted on the number of visitors able to visit Lundy in 2024, and it will be interesting to hear about the impact when Derek Green gives his report at the AGM in March.

Keep your eyes open for the new postcard style LFS publicity available in the shore offices, Hartland International, on the *Oldie* and of course on the island. Please share with people you might be chatting to and encourage them to take a look at the website and perhaps even join the Society!

The LFS committee is currently undertaking a review of the Society's governance using the Charity Commission's governance code as a baseline. As a registered charity we should aspire to demonstrate good governance practices, and there will be a progress report at the 2025 AGM, with the potential for recommendations to be agreed by the membership and implemented over the next couple of years.

It is of course our 80th anniversary in 2026, and we are planning a Discovering Lundy week on the island to celebrate; see page 25 for some initial information. More information will be forthcoming from spring 2025.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who has taken time to write copy and provide images for this publication. Without the efforts of the general membership, there would be (almost) nothing to publish! It's been fantastic reading the articles and learning more about the history and happenings of Lundy; I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Want to see your words or photos in print? Send them to me by the end of October 2025.

**Belinda Cox – LFS Chair and bulletin editor**

## A couple of introductions...



*Tara!*  
*Photo by*  
*Matt 'Roger' White.*

Hello! I'm **TARA MCEVOY-WILDING** and I'm the new Assistant Warden. At the time of writing I have been in the role for about 7 months.

I first came to Lundy as a volunteer for the Marine Festival in 2022 and I had a fantastic summer helping with lobster surveys, rockpool rambles and snorkel safaris amongst other things. I was gutted to leave at the end of my stint.

Luckily, I managed to come back for the 2023 season to conduct my master's research project investigating the effectiveness of a more sustainable method of sampling benthic infauna, and I spent many hours paddleboarding along the east coast collecting and deploying wooden frames with loofah segments in to act as a substrate for benthic infauna to colonise. In November I was offered the Assistant Warden job! I spent the winter writing up my dissertation and then came back to Lundy in March 2024 to start my job.

I love the variety of things I get to do in my role, but some of the highlights so far have been searching for Herring Gull chicks at the Old Light colony so they can be ringed as part of the new Herring Gull productivity monitoring, some fantastic rockpool rambles on big spring tides, and spotting new seal pups along the south-east coast.

When I'm not at work I like running along the west coast and swimming (mostly in the Landing Bay), and if the weather isn't so great I enjoy needle felting and have a stall at the Lundy craft fair with my boyfriend Roger, where we sell lots of felted Lundy animals; they make great Christmas tree decorations! I'm sure many of you have met Roger, the Lundy Ranger, when he's been working with the LFS conservation breaks.

I'm excited to see what the year ahead brings for the island and look forward to getting out on the water on the refurbished island RHIB to complete more marine and water-based fieldwork, and look forward to meeting many of you throughout the year.

Hi - my name is **MARK WEST**. My interest in the natural world began in my early school days with my mum and dad helping me to collect all sorts of things for nature displays in the classroom. I was fortunate to have two teachers who were keen birders and have vivid memories of watching a Spotted Flycatcher that nested behind a broken vent brick in an overgrown school wall. My interest has grown ever since, although I am not a specialist in any particular field, and very much consider myself an enthusiast rather than an expert.

My wife Sandie and I are both Devonians. We live about 25 miles south of Lundy as the crow flies and are regular visitors to the island. My family has both a rural and seafaring background and I run a small marine engineering consultancy having been an Engineer Officer on deep-sea merchant ships for a number of



*A selfie by Mark.*



years. Part of my job takes me to the International Maritime Organization as the shipping industry wrestles with how to reduce its carbon footprint, and I spend a lot of time reviewing papers on environmental matters.

To get away from my PC, I am still a birder although have a particular interest in spiders, so if you are on Lundy and see a chap lying on his back under a rock trying to take photographs, it could be me! I collate the arachnid records for the LFS Annual Report (please do keep them coming) and am currently a co-opted member of the LFS committee. I have a first task of creating an online image library covering all aspects of Lundy and hope to contribute to the ongoing good work of the Society and its members.

## Lundy ponies

### **CAROLE ANN LEE trots us through the history of the island ponies.**

It all started in 1928 when Martin Coles Harman brought to the island 34 New Forest mares with eight filly foals at foot. A Welsh Mountain stallion was added, and so began the story of the Lundy Pony we know today. Of course, there have been some ups and downs over the years. Following the difficulties arising from WW2 when no animals could be shipped on or off the island, careful and caring management has ensured a healthy herd at reasonable numbers for the small area they have to inhabit. The mix of hardy British native breeds has been supplemented with the Connemara to help maintain a vigorous gene-pool.

The Lundy Pony was officially recognised as a 'British Native Pony Type' in 1996.

Only one full stallion lives on the island these days, and our present "Daddy-of-them-all" is Bill. He was born on Lundy to Charlotte Louise, herself a Lundy pony. She had travelled to the mainland for a whirlwind romance with a Connemara stud.

The main herd roam wild and free beyond Quarter Wall, but Bill lives in the fields near the village with his current 'wives'. He has sired 6 fillies and 4 colts (so far!), all fine, strong, handsome ponies. The latest foal is Monty (Montagu III) pictured on the front cover. At the time of writing he is still with his Mum, Hannah near the village.



*One of the mares at Quarter Wall Pond.  
Photo by Bee Cox.*



*The team, raring to go!  
Photo by Bee Cox.*

### A shedload of fun!

#### **EMMA JONES reports on the first conservation break of 2024.**

A beautiful bout of sunny weather heralded the start of the first Lundy conservation break of 2024, even the sailing was super smooth. Not only did Bee organise our tickets and boarding, but she also then proceeded to conduct a guided walk around the south of Lundy, as well as rustling up a hearty meal with Kate of sausage, mash and onion gravy with caramelised bananas for dessert.

After we all settled into the Barn, some intrepid members of the party went for a swim, some attended the bird talk and others walked to the Old Light to watch the sunset.

For the first working day, a small group set off to varnish the new Bird Observatory shed, AKA The Hub. The remaining group worked on resurrecting the stone wall and wire top that the deer had knocked down the previous night. We enjoyed a real treat whilst lunching

at Millcombe pond, not only of a visit by a friendly Robin, but also a sighting of the Night-heron that was visiting the island at the time. The afternoon was spent rhodi hunting on the upper east side, where Tamsin was great at keeping us in order, and trialling a new GPS system for marking the locations of the plants for later treatment by lucky Roger who was about to become the new Lundy Ranger. We then removed some tree cages from trees that no longer required them. Nicky & Zdena cooked a delicious savoury mince and potato wedges with a DIY Eton Mess to follow.

More rhodi hunting for Monday morning, working along more of the east side, and yes, it was tremendously steep and only really suitable for deer, Soay sheep and LFS volunteers! A couple who suffered from vertigo even had to duck out and chop up some kindling instead. Over the two sessions, we found 51 rhodis, with Brian and Kate being the most prolific spotters. The group split in the afternoon to work on either replacing some of the mesh at the Heligoland trap or clearing rubbish and rolling up a quantity of plastic pipes from around the water tanks; in case you're interested, it takes 3-4 people to roll a plastic pipe! Dave & Emma blew the food budget with a Moroccan chicken & root vegetable couscous, and a fruity cream shortbread combo.

Tuesday saw us adding some more wire to the High Street wall to prevent the sheep escaping. This involved excavating the middle of the wall, inserting a braced piece of fence post, firming it back in and then attaching the wire – simple! Rob, Brian, Dave, Mandy and Carole had the mammoth task of rebuilding one section of wall that had completely fallen. Kate left the group to attend an interview for a conservation post in Northern Ireland, and we all wished her luck.

Corinne & Gareth made a really tasty chorizo and vegetable pasta, with a show-stopping lemon crunch dessert.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

Wednesday was exceptionally sunny, and luckily our day off. Most of us enjoyed a ramble around the island, spotting wildlife ready to report back at the Bird Bingo / Shout Out in the Marisco Tavern that evening. We all saw 'shedloads', which Joe didn't deem to be an accurate enough figure for inclusion in the logbook! Bee organised a quiz for us in the Tavern.

Much to some of the party's surprise, our task for Thursday was refilling the ditch around the church that had been excavated by them a year or so earlier, as the lightning conductor was now in place. There was a lot of sifting of soil to remove sharp stones to avoid puncturing the drainage pipes. Nicky did a sterling job of chipping away the mortar in the drains and we had just enough pea gravel to finish filling the trench. A good job complete at last!



*Happy to have rebuilt that bit of wall!*

*Photo by Rob Murray.*

Thursday night was party night, and we welcomed Matt, Roger, Tara and Joe for dinner, cooked by Carole, Mandy & Brian – a beast of a lasagne, with baked apples to follow. It was great to collectively wish Ranger Matt good luck in his new ventures, as this was his final working party before handing over the reins of Ranger to Roger. Joe stayed on to join us in a competitive game of Carcassonne, which he jointly won with Emma.

For the final working day, we were tasked with removing the fencing from the Willow nursery cage by Government House, painstakingly removing the staples from the posts to be able to re-use the wire. Given that it was such a large area, and the sheer volume of brambles, which had been checked by Thomas for ground-nesting birds, it was amazing that this was achieved in half a day, probably aided by Zdena working through her break to keep momentum. The removed items were carried back uphill ready for removal and re-use.

The wind started to really pick up, so Matt decided to bring down the flags from the church and the Ugly. A lucky few of us were treated to a trip up the church tower to accompany him, followed by removing some more cages around trees near Millcombe. Others carried on with log-splitting and kindling tasks.

Rob and Tamsin had the unenviable task of concocting a feast from the leftovers. We were treated to French onion soup with cheesy croutons, baked potatoes with a medley of toppings, and a duo of desserts – baked apple crumble and caramelised oranges.

Due to the easterly wind, it was deemed unsafe for the *Oldenburg* to sail, so we departed by helicopter. So much accomplished during a lovely week on Lundy, with many thanks to Bee for leading and especially to Matt on his last LFS working party.



# A sunny June conservation break

### LOUISE MCKEE does it again!

Approaching mid-summer, we set sail from Bideford to the beautiful island of Lundy. Having first visited two years previously, I was about to start my fourth working party on this granite outcrop at the mouth of the Bristol Channel.

My first trip had been for just a day, and as all Lundy-lovers agree, not nearly long enough to fully appreciate such a stunning place!

Captivated, I was compelled to go back. With the discovery of the Lundy Field Society's working parties, I found a perfect opportunity to learn about the island, live and breathe Lundy life, contribute, and roam her paths without worrying about the end of day dash to the harbour to catch the boat.

Working party weeks have many things in common, but they are never the same each time. The changing seasons dictate some variation and there are often visits from experts and researchers. This week coincided with a marine study by Dr Keith Hiscock who has been coming to Lundy for many years, monitoring the presence of invasive species and chronicling his findings. We were fortunate enough to be invited to help him with his work and learn from his vast knowledge and experience.

Disembarking from the early Saturday sailing, many volunteers joined Keith on the jetty to start his survey with a count of wireweed, an invasive seaweed (formerly known as japweed) which was first seen on Lundy in 1999 and is now abundant on her shores.



*The Team ready to get to work!  
Photo by passing Lundy visitor on  
Neil Thompson's phone.*

By Saturday afternoon we were in the Barn, getting to know each other and receiving an overview from Roger the Ranger about the work ahead. A week of indulgence began that evening with our first gourmet meal and, with plentiful daylight, there was ample time after dinner to wander and enjoy the south end of the island. This became a pattern throughout the week, with frequent trips to the top of Old Light to watch the sunset.

Laying the groundwork for his marine survey, Keith started Sunday morning with an information session in the church detailing what we would be doing and why. He explained that there are 12 seashore and seabed non-native species around Lundy which he has monitored for many

years. His presentation gave context and broader information as to how invasive species establish themselves and those we were to look for.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

Our task was to assist him with the following:

- checking for the presence of inter-tidal non-native marine species
- classifying their abundance
- taking viewpoint reference images of species (although it was soon evident that both Keith's photographic equipment and skills were far superior to anyone else's!) repeating the "Anemone Cave" quantitative photography,

...and of course he also insisted that we enjoy ourselves!

We proceeded to Devil's Kitchen beach with Keith and Tara (Lundy's assistant warden and marine biologist) and, armed with crib sheets and photos, slowly combed an area of rockpools at low tide. Despite not finding a great deal of what we were actually looking for, there was much to see and identify.

In the afternoon we waded off the beach and into the "Anemone Cave" where Keith took photographs to continue his long-running survey of anemones.

Some finished this warm sunny day with a refreshing dip in the bay before going back up to the Barn for the evening.

On the following day we made the hazardous descent to Quarry Beach. The tide was out, and it was not easy to navigate the boulders, many of which were covered in slippery seaweed. Young Tara, however, had no problem skipping swiftly and blithely from one end of the beach to the other! Here we continued the hunt for invasive species and again, not much was found which Keith affirmed as good news.

The rest of the week saw a mixture of regular jobs, including dry stone walling, ditch clearing and the ever-popular rhododendron searches...

Rhododendron was first introduced to Lundy in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and it was a long time before their spread was recognised as being dangerous to native species, in particular the indigenous Lundy Cabbage. Measures to reduce them began in the 1950s, but an effective control strategy wasn't devised till 1998. Since then, clearance and control has been very effective, but it has been a long haul and is by no means over.

The rhododendron search always makes me think of the combing of a large crime area by the police. We, however, were not terribly disciplined, and the straight lines with equal distances we tried to maintain rarely stayed straight and regular for long – deteriorating quickly due to large prickly gorse bushes impossible to wade through (plus a touch of weariness and impatience!). There were patches where few rhodis were found (a good thing) and



*The rhodi searches can be hazardous!  
Photo by Neil Thompson.*

*[Ed: No volunteers were harmed in the taking of this photo!]*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

there was some tongue in cheek self-congratulation from those who had dug up the wretched plants on previous work weeks! Despite the humour, it was reassuring to know that progress has been made, with long-standing volunteers noting huge differences over the past 15 to 20 years. We had the added joy of finding small purple Speckled Heath Orchids – often hidden amongst the gorse and pinky-purple Bell Heather. At some point, the rhodi search turned into an orchid search and between us we counted 201 which was duly recorded by Joe the warden.

Our day off was the hottest day of the year, and I set out very early with a small group to walk the length of the island along the west coast where I saw Puffins for the first time. Along the way we saw remains of one of the planes that crashed on the island during WW2 and also explored the Earthquake area. By late morning we had arrived at the North Light, and after descending the full set of steps, relaxed in the shade by the water's edge watching seals bobbing about and seabirds – including Puffins – winging their way to and from the cliffsides.

On our final afternoon we were clearing the water channel by the church where grass from the banks frequently overgrows, restricting the flow. Having done the bulk of the clearing, it became apparent that a mother duck had made a comfortable base at the end of the ditch. Roger agreed that it would be good not to disturb her, but rather enjoy watching mother and ducklings and finish early – it was Poets Day after all!

Highlights of the week were seeing Lundy at mid-summer and swimming in the bay. As on the mainland, lofty Foxgloves bordered the paths, flutters of Meadow Browns hovered over flowering plants and Yellow Tormantil carpeted the grass. Sea and air temperatures were warm enough to spend a prolonged time in the clear water and explore what lay below. There was much wireweed, which in deep water stands straight and tall like thin lanky trees rooted in the sandy bed. Small Moon Jellyfish – translucent with bluey-purple circular – would float just below the surface.

We had a productive week and hope that our work has helped to maintain this wonderful place. I look forward to going back to make further contributions and enjoy both repeated and new experiences.



*An inviting sight after a hard day at work.  
Photo by Neil Thompson.*

# Many laughs were had from 5-12 October!

Here's what JON & RITA STEPHENS, two newbies both to Lundy the LFS working parties have to say about it all...



*The Team plus Ranger Roger (left).*

*Photo by Trevor Dobie.*

**The Island of Lundy:** Fabulous scenery, big skies and freedom to roam with no traffic. An absolute dream location for anybody interested in flora, fauna, fungi, history, geology and photography, to keep it short. There seemed to be resident or visiting experts in pretty much everything Lundy, so all your questions can be answered.

**The Accommodation:** The Barn – warm and cosy with plenty of seating in the downstairs living area. Radiators as well as an open fire (the latter not necessary during our visit). Two multi-bedded sleeping areas, in our case 6 men on the ground floor and the ladies on a mezzanine floor which has 8 beds. Two toilets downstairs, one with a shower. We were able to use the campsite facilities to ease pressure(!). We found the beds

comfortable with two pillows and a warm duvet. Sleep was disturbed, however, through nocturnal noises and comings and goings, multiplied by 13!

Kitchen – gas cooker with large oven and 5 rings. Standard size fridge-freezer which struggled to accommodate the fresh food and leftovers.

Plenty of Lundy-related reading material.

Power and lighting – single mains sockets with a lamp in the sleeping areas. Electricity is provided by the island's diesel generators, generally reliable, but they are switched off after midnight until about 6 am. A few torches are provided.

Limited mobile internet although there is Wi-Fi at the church if you need it. The church also has ringable bells, though sadly no visiting campanologists during our stay.

**The Convenience Store and Pub:** The shop is a short walk from the barn. It was well stocked and included both groceries and gifts.

There was a craft fair on Wednesday afternoon offering souvenirs made by Lundy residents.

A private postal service is available, and you can send postcards using the unique Lundy stamps; this seemed to generate a lot of interest within our group and many postcards were sent.

The Marisco Tavern is a nice place to have a drink at the end of the day. The walls are decorated with recovered items from past shipwrecks. It had a decent selection of draught beer which was reasonably priced.



## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

**The Working Group:** About 50:50 gender split, and again 50:50 of regular LFSers and people who had never or rarely visited the island. Everybody was courteous and caring. Many laughs were had.

**The Food:** Not bad at all!

Two or three people buddied up every evening to prepare a meal from scratch. Most of the food was delivered on the first day, but top-up shopping and some prep was done by the cooks on the morning of their turn. Whilst waiting for the shop to open general clearing up was done by the cooks for the day – wiping surfaces, sweeping floors, checking loos, etc. Wednesday was our day off, so we ate in the Marisco Tavern where the food was standard pub fare. The last day is traditionally leftovers day, however some of our group chose not to enter into the spirit of the occasion and opted for pub grub instead.

**The Voyages:** We should have sailed from Bideford but despite clear blue skies the *Oldenburg* was unable to sail due to prevailing easterly winds preventing docking at Lundy. We were excited to be able to take the helicopter ride, which was a thrill, taking just 6 minutes. Back by boat to Ilfracombe on calm seas which was pleasant but took a rather long two hours, which was followed by a well-organised 45-minute coach ride back to Bideford. Sailing timings are dependent on the tides, hence variations.

**The Work:** Every morning, we are expected to be ready for work at 8.30am. Our work for our week was a mix of clearing undergrowth, conservation, surveying and repairs. Rain did not stop play!

Paths, gulleys and a garden were cleared of mainly bracken and brambles.

Systematic combing of large swathes of the island were carried out for rogue rhododendron plants (a non-native invasive species). Eradication appears to be nearing the end, but continuing vigilance will be necessary for some time to come.

The construction and replacement of Manx Shearwater nesting boxes, siting them in steep ground and dismantling the old boxes. We hope this work ensures continued success.

Assisting archaeologists (who were visiting during our stay) in measuring and recording the current state of various sites, including Bronze Age round houses, standing stones and cairns raided by the Victorians.

Dry stone wall repairing.

Ferrying rocks for gabion baskets.

The morning of the last day is a flurry of clearing up. We were all assigned jobs, mopping floors, stripping beds, taking rubbish out, clearing out the fridge, cleaning the cooker, etc, etc.



*Digging up those pesky rhodis!  
Photo by Kristin Reed.*



## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

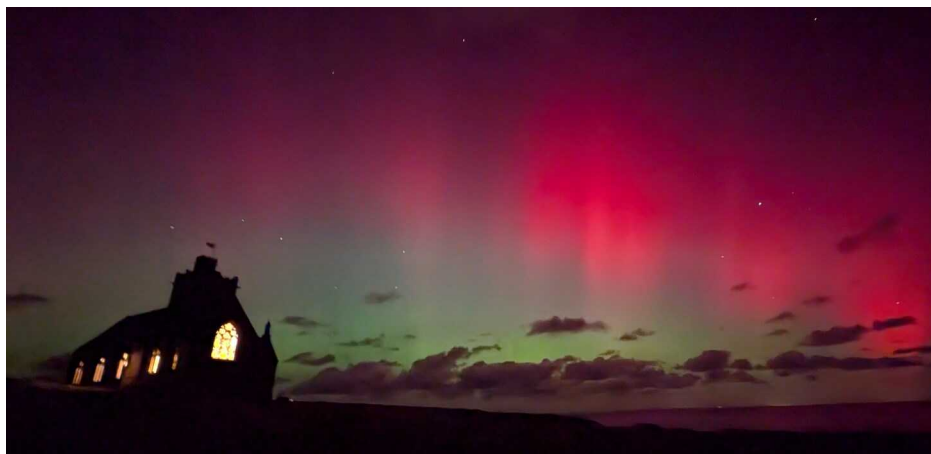
Some of the outdoor work was physically quite strenuous, involving walking long distances across uneven and steep ground near cliff edges, sometimes carrying heavy items.

An observation we made was that both volunteers and staff would benefit in having better quality tools, especially the shears and loppers to reduce the work effort! (Ed: now sorted!]

**The Fun:** Arriving by helicopter, the Marisco Tavern which is the centre of all local knowledge, starting with the *Above and Below the Waves* talk by the personable warden, Joe Parker. Swimming at high tide on our day off where a playful young seal decided to join us. Big thanks to Steve for bringing hot water bottles and hot chocolate. The aurora was an exciting event on the island; we got some great photos. Entertaining company, wholesome food, games in the evening (Steve again), pretty much all the jobs we did were enjoyable too. Getting up early to watch the sunrise, birdwatching, walks, taking photos and of course, exploring the island itself whilst revelling in the amazing views, sights and sounds. We also enjoyed some nice October sunshine and mild temperatures.

**Top Tips:** Bring your meds (inside joke, but serious), waterproofs, wellies, mains multiplug. [Ed: and ear plugs!]

So, should we have come? ABSOLUTELY YES!



*Aurora Borealis over Lundy. Photo by Jon Stephens.*

### The last one of the year...

#### JANE COLEMAN chronicles a muddy week of work!

We sailed across on a calm day, from Ilfracombe, happy to meet each other, some for the first time – I was a bit nervous! Some of us had met for a meal the night before. Manx Shearwaters followed us.

‘Didn’t we have a lovely day, the time we worked on Lundy....’

Our muddy gang, expertly led by Mandy, were Louise, Lou, Rob, Emma, Kristen, Katherine, Martin, Jane, Mike, Kath, Jon and Richard. Some were old hands who’d been before. It was perfect that Moira could replace Janet who was injured and sadly couldn’t come.

Some of us loved swimming off the jetty; the beaches were out of bounds due to seal pups on the sand. Some liked going to the Tavern for a pint, others did joint crossword solving and playing ‘that’s not a hat’ – a great game!

The barn was our cosy home for the week, shared with Shirley the Shrew, where we ate tons of bread, cheese and cakes, and drank copious cups of tea. Homely meals were cooked by Michelin-style cooks. We’ll remember egg-cellent discussions!

We all slept and snored in our dorms – some more than others. Last night moonlight shone through the window.

The boot lobby began all neat & tidy, but by the end of the week finding a path out was hard!

We all came because we love Lundy and wanted to help with its upkeep and conservation, plus get wet, muddy, and tired, get thorns in our hands and bramble scratches on our arms, as well as eat twice as much as normal. So we had to **work**!

Ranger Roger and Ewan, his seasonal volunteer, gave us our jobs each morning at 8.30am. There was always a bit of excitement not knowing what was in store for us – wellies or boots?

**Ponds & Streams:** We cleared Millcombe stream plus the silt, and later the stream in front of the church. The highlight was the visitor bringing us cans of Coke & Sprite as an appreciation – little things. What a joy to see things flowing again!

A visitor told me that the gullies were so clear after clearing them at the Battery, that water was rushing down and through the wall holes.

At the end of the week came ‘The Grand Pond Clearance’. Imagine 10 people standing in the mud, water nearly covering their wellies,



*Clearing the Flag Iris plants from  
Millcombe pond.*

*Photo by Kath Singleton.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

beaver away with spades, digging up weeds and iris roots, plus a chain system of buckets taking away all the roots and silt to barrows coming along like buses to remove it. A truly military operation! I took my job as chief of buckets a bit too seriously, and the sound of, "Bucket, who wants a bucket?" was ringing across the pond. It was rainy and windy, and a barrow fell down the gully where all the pond debris was hurled. Everyone worked so hard!

It was simply a matter of time before one of us fell in the water. Martin was first, then Katherine, Moira next and lastly Louise.

It was all such hard work. We were helped by the Lundy conservation team, but did Tara really wear a yellow high-viz jacket?! Everyone was wet, muddy and tired, but a good job was done.



*Repairing the wall near Old Light.*

*Photo by Jane Coleman.*

**Walls, weeds and repairing:** When you walk up to the village via Milcombe, all the steps and walls have been weeded and cleared including the steps behind the house.

Rocks were thrown down a chute to a gabion basket near a collapsed path at Brambles.

Dry stone walls were repaired at the south end of the island.

**Seal Survey:** I was privileged to be part of a team counting seals and pups around the island. We divided into four groups, each group taking a portion of the coast paths to survey. Between 70 and 75 seals were seen, mostly on the east side as predicted. Emma and I saw none on the south-west coast, but we really enjoyed spotting birds, goats and ponies instead.

**The Rhododendron Search:** For almost a whole day – 2 mornings – we scoured the bracken on the east side looking for rhododendron seedlings, alongside some climbers doing the scary bits on the cliffs.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2024

We (not me – 0 points again) managed to find roughly 60 plants despite the difficult terrain. We had sunshine and deer keeping us company, and no one fell down holes – result!

Moir & Ewan found a very old and special glass bottle from a Bristol water company. We imagined a well-to-do Victorian family picnicking, but with no awareness of recycling or taking their litter home!

**The Lighthouse:** We gave the Old Light a proper good brush from top to bottom. Some cleared the patio area and weeded it.

**Heligoland trap:** The wire mesh was replaced – quite intricate work I hear!

**Day off:** Being October, you don't expect sunshine, but typically on our day off the fog came down and it rained for most of the day. Those of us venturing around the island got absolutely soaked to the skin. Some stayed nearer home in the dry and warm, but it was a day to enjoy Lundy and was followed by a great night of food, drink and live music; some danced to the wee hours.

**Home:** As we pack to go home, there are so many lovely memories, some achy limbs, and the knowledge we've all done our bit to help keep Lundy a special place.

And oh, we've all met some great like-minded folk.

Until next year, thank you Lundy.



*The happy and muddy team! Photo by Jane Coleman.*



# The inaugural LFS Field Studies Course

**AMANDA YATES was so captivated by the critters that she has taken on the role of organizing the next LFS Field Studies Course.**

This course was first advertised during the 2023 LFS AGM by way of flyers placed on the seats in the Boniface Centre conference room. The flyer said, "Attendance on this course provides an opportunity to learn more about the seals, birds and freshwater ecology of the island; learn surveying skills and contribute to island data collection." As I was interested in helping with field studies on Lundy, this seemed like a good opportunity to achieve my goal.

**Day 1.** Ten of the twelve course participants gathered at Ilfracombe on a pleasant April Saturday morning. We were greeted by Chris Pawson, the organiser and host for the course, and Alan Rowland who was to be our first course tutor. After a pleasant crossing to Lundy on the MS *Oldenburg* some course participants went up to see if the Barn was ready and to collect the pre-ordered food from the shop. Later, Chris met with us in the Barn for a course briefing, before we went to the church where we met Carole, attendee no. 11 who was already on the island, and we were given a presentation by Alan Rowland entitled 'Freshwater Biology on Lundy.' Alan told us how he had become interested in this area of study, and then talked us through some of Lundy's freshwater habitats and their invertebrate inhabitants. This was followed by a safety and general information briefing with Chris before a yummy meal in the Tavern and the 8pm wildlife sightings recording session, affectionately called 'Bird Club' – although they recorded much more than birds.

**Day 2.** Two people got up early to observe the bird ringing, after which we regrouped, dressed in waterproofs and wellies, and made our way to the church for a talk from Alan entitled 'An Introduction to Freshwater Surveying.' The talk covered surveying techniques, an overview of the categories of freshwater invertebrates and the health and safety and biosecurity measures that need to be undertaken when surveying in freshwater. We then collected nets and buckets and walked to Pondsburry where Alan demonstrated the techniques, divided us into three teams and set us to do our own pond sampling along different parts of Pondsburry's edge. We carefully carried our buckets, now alive with little creatures in water, back to the church where we emptied the contents into white trays and left them to settle while we had our lunch. The afternoon saw us all bent over trays, microscopes and books, and all totally wrapped in wonder at what we had collected. We found and identified many of the species that Alan had previously found in Pondsburry but also a new species for Lundy, a Saucer Bug! This was all subsequently recorded in the LFS logbook by Alan. A fellow student, Rob M, kindly took the little critters back to Pondsburry.



*Going for a dip with Alan.  
Photo by Mandy Yates.*

We had time for a cuppa and a shower before attending an excellent talk in the Wheelhouse by our own Carole entitled 'Atlantic Grey Seals, Watching Seals Well on



Lundy.' I wish that every visitor to Lundy could listen to this talk; it would definitely help to decrease the incidence of seal disturbances. After an enjoyable meal in the Tavern we attended 'Bird Club' which got renamed 'Flight Club' by the volunteer wardens, and where we reported the birds that we had seen. Apparently, there was record attendance that night with 36 people present!

**Day 3.** Unfortunately, it was too windy for bird ringing, and the day became 'Extreme Stream Sampling Day.' Clutching our buckets and nets, we had an invigorating windy walk to Punchbowl Valley where Alan gave a demonstration of stream sampling. We were once more split into three groups to sample Pondsby Stream, Punchbowl Valley Stream and Confluence Stream (the bit where the two streams are combined). The team sampling Pondsby Stream had an easy time as it was out of the furious wind that was blasting up the valley. The other two teams did a really good job of staying upright and actually managing to get their samples into their buckets, thus proving that LFS field studies students wobble but they don't fall down! Somehow the bucket bearers managed to get the buckets plus contents safely back to the church and emptied into trays before we all had lunch. We were keen, and when Alan arrived



*Captivated by the critters!*

*Photo by Mandy Yates.*

back from lunch, he was delighted to see us all pondering the white trays and beginning to identify the invertebrates that we had captured during our extreme stream sampling.

No new species for Lundy were found this day but a good list of stream inhabitants was compiled for Alan to later record in the LFS logbook. Considering that several people at the beginning of the course had said that pond sampling was not for them, we practically had to all be hauled away from the trays with shepherds' hooks in order for the creatures to be returned back to the streams by Sandy and Mark. After a quick clean-up and a coffee, we were back in

the church for a talk from Chris Dee entitled 'Lundy Bird Observatory – Bird Ringing on Lundy.' Chris gave us a plethora of information about how Bird Observatory status had begun, lapsed and was reinstated, what it meant to be a Bird Observatory, and how the information gained contributed to our knowledge and could be used in conservation. After another lovely meal in the Tavern we attended the 'Flight Club', always an enjoyable part of the day, and reported some of the birds that we had seen.

**Day 4.** Today was our day off. The wind had dropped, and it was my day to attend the bird ringing, so I and two others were up early to join the bird ringers in Millcombe. There was not much movement of birds, but they did catch a Blackcap, a Blackbird and a Willow Warbler. Kristin, Rob M and I met up with Alan and we walked the butterfly transect. This is a route that has been divided into specific sections to enable consistent butterfly recording to be carried out on the island. Later we were pleased to meet Alice who had just arrived on the *Oldenburg* and was to join us for the rest of the course. After a nice day of free time, we gathered together in the church for a talk from Rob Wells entitled 'Our Iconic Seals and Lundy Island.' Rob told us all about the biology and behaviour of the Atlantic Grey Seals that visit and breed around Lundy. He showed us how the Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust were able to recognise

individual seals via the patterns on their fur, and how they could use this to track the movements of individuals.

**Day 5.** Once again, some people got up early to attend the bird ringing demonstration, after which, with packed lunches, we then undertook our first seal survey with Rob W. We walked down through Millcombe to the Landing Bay where we began to count the seals that we saw, and those of us who had powerful cameras attempted to get photographs without disturbing them. Our route then took us up to the Castle and along the west coast to Jenny's Cove. We saw a total of 15 seals during our walk. After a little rest we attended a talk by Professor Tom Dickins entitled 'Approaches to Behaviour' which was a taster of how behavioural scientists think when watching species on Lundy. We were told about models of behaviour derived from theory and the behaviours and instincts of animals, and the 'fixed action patterns' that animals follow. We had another delicious meal in the Tavern and then attended the evening's wildlife sightings recording session where we reported some of the birds that we had seen and came out determined to participate even more next time.

**Day 6.** Some members of the group arose early and attended the bird ringing in Millcombe before we went for a longer seal walk. With our rucksacks heavily laden with food and drinks we walked up the main track to the North Light. Our route then took us along the north-east coast and onto the Lower East Side Path, then through the Quarries and back up onto the main track. During this walk we counted a total of 29 seals and more than 434 birds, and those were just the ones that I had managed to write down!

The evening talk, given by Rob Wells, was the story of Septimus. Septimus was a male seal that Rob had been watching, and one day he found that Septimus the seal had died. The Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust managed to acquire funding to recover the skeleton and have it reconstructed. This exercise not only provided an interesting exhibit of a seal's bone structure but also shed light on the health of the seal and told of injuries which alluded to several unfortunate events that the seal had been subjected to. This ponders a frightening question: was Septimus a typical example of a seal and have many other seals also suffered multiple injuries?

Another lovely meal in the Tavern was followed with our participation in the wildlife recording session. There had been a lot of birds moving that day and our 434 bird sightings were out-trumped by the Tims! [Ed: Tim Jones and Tim Davis, authors of *The Birds of Lundy*.]

**Day 7.** Again, there was an opportunity to watch the early morning bird ringing for those who had not yet done so. Another seal survey was then conducted during a shorter walk this time. We walked through the village and along the Upper East Side Path and then joined the Lower East Side Path to double back to the Landing Bay and then up the goat track to the Castle before going back to the village. We saw 19 seals and I recorded 341 birds including a Woodchat Shrike. Rob gave us another presentation, entitled 'Seal Stories' where we learnt even more about these amazing animals, the threats to their health and well-being, and how we can all help to protect them. This was followed by a course wrap-up talk from Chris Pawson, and an insight into his research project on the effects of seal disturbance from people and boats.

We had our last meal in the Tavern and our last wildlife recording session and topped it off with a ukulele sing-along with Joe the Warden, Kristin and myself singing and playing our ukuleles.

**Day 8.** We packed our bags, cleaned the Barn, and after spending our last few hours on the island, caught the *Oldenburg* home. Rob M and Zdena stayed on Lundy as they were joining the LFS Conservation Break. There were hugs aplenty at Ilfracombe baggage reclaim, and I left feeling very lucky indeed to have had the company of such wonderful people while gaining so much more knowledge about Lundy. A big thank you to Chris Pawson for organising the course, to Alan Rowland and Rob Wells for being such great tutors, and to Chris Dee and Tom Dickins for excellent talks. And a big thank you to all of the LFS members behind the scenes who made this course happen, and thank you very much to the LFS Committee for making the course so affordable by subsidising it. Many thanks also to my fellow students Alice, Carol, Helen, Kristin, Mark, Richard, Rob M, Sandy, Sue, Tony and Zdena for being such excellent company.



*Searching for seals.  
Photo by Mandy Yates.*

It was a pleasure and a privilege to attend the first ever LFS Field Studies Course. To me this course felt like exactly the sort of thing that the LFS should be doing. This is a way of bringing new members into the surveying team and will ensure that the wonderful work that has been carried out on the island in the past will continue long into the future.

## 2025 LFS Field Studies Course

**4th – 11th October 2025**

**This residential course will be held on Lundy with students staying in the Barn. The subjects this year will be fungi, archaeology and birds.**



**For more information please contact Amanda Yates at  
[fieldstudies@lundy.org.uk](mailto:fieldstudies@lundy.org.uk)**

# Living on the island

**SUE WATERFIELD, the LFS island rep, gives us a behind the scenes view of the January shutdown.**

2024 started for Rob & I with our usual Lundy New Year's Eve party in the Marisco Tavern. This is one of my favourite times in the Lundy calendar. Islanders, regular stayers and first-timers, all celebrating the turning of the year and having the night of our lives. The evening is themed, and it never ceases to amaze me how ingenious and creative everyone is, especially bearing in mind that any costume must be brought over on a helicopter. Having said that, I have been known to provide boxes, Sellotape and scissors from the shop, with only hours to spare, for party-goers who enjoy spending the afternoon cutting and sticking à la Blue Peter for their last-minute adjustments! It is great to see adults and children all enjoying the fun of a New Year's Eve party safely and happily. I'm not sure there are a lot of pubs on the mainland where you can guarantee a safe family-friendly night out at New Year.



*Beany Baby with Erin.  
Photo by Sue Waterfield.*

Last year was particularly significant for the Waterfields as we welcomed our second grandson into the world, and he was able to join us for the celebrations...dressed as a Beanie Baby toy! This year had a toys & games theme and everyone went to town on their costumes as always, with much dancing leading up to the countdown at midnight. It really is a special end to the year with so many regulars and a friendly, fun atmosphere before all our customers leave us for our 3-week shutdown in January. All the staff had cuddles with baby Arthur and somehow he managed to sleep through most of it!

Shutdown is another special time for us; not just because there are no visitors staying on the island for us to look after. It is our once-a-year chance to spend some quality time pampering all the properties as well as the Marisco Tavern and General Store, getting essential maintenance and building work done, and for our housekeepers to go to town, deep cleaning all the corners that the busy changeover days do not allow them time to blitz. Having said that, shutdown is also a time to relax and have some downtime together as a team, as we have the island – and pub – to ourselves. For these three weeks we all work 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. This allows us to arrange

a programme of social activities we wouldn't normally be able to enjoy together. We have film nights, a quiz, themed food evenings, karaoke, darts and pool tournaments – yes, we do have a pool table! We even have an island golfing afternoon! However, despite all the entertainment, this time in the Lundy year can be very challenging, with cold and wet weather hampering outdoor work and hold-ups with projects curtailing the cleaning jobs. Hair is often torn out! One year we even needed to use the pub as a canteen for all the staff when we had power problems which meant no one could eat in their properties.

Shutdown in the shop finds Helen beavering away defrosting freezers, cleaning

shelves, reorganising our storeroom, and checking for out-of-date stock amongst many other things, while I spend time, along with a few others, finalising the selection for the Lundy calendar photographic competition. We have a slideshow evening in the Tavern, along with all the staff and contractors. They are all supplied with score-sheets, so the final decision is a joint one of the whole team.

I have to wait for a spell of calm, dry weather to do the rounds of the Lundy letterboxes in order to clean them, replenish books, pens and ink pads and ensure they are safe in their hiding places. Last year we replaced most of the older green ammunition boxes with new dry-boxes in an attempt to keep the contents safe and dry. They seem to have been a success and, hopefully in the next few months, the rest of them will follow suit.

The other reason that shutdown is special for us is that five of our staff, including myself, Alice and Rob have birthdays in January, hence there are a few celebratory evenings!

Earlier this year, our daughter Alice, who was the front-of-house manager in the Tavern, left us all for the big island, which brought mixed emotions as we miss her of course, but she is loving all the bright lights of the mainland as well as her new job and lots of "auntie time". A fresh start for her and fresh changes to our staff on the island, which is always a positive boost to island life. There are quite a few new faces here this year and I'm looking forward to seeing them enjoying our New Year celebrations for 2024/25, with exciting times to look forward to next year...watch this space!



*A regular at New Year 'as Lundy'opoly (left), and 'King Rob' (right).  
Photos by Sue Waterfield.*



# 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of John Pennington Harman VC

Recounted by **RICHARD BREESE**

Following our 2024 AGM, Charlotte Carty, a trustee of the Kohima Educational Trust, presented an excellent talk, *John Harman VC and the Battle of Kohima*, to mark the 80th anniversary year of the Battle, and John Pennington Harman's death.

I was staying on Lundy a few weeks later on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of JPH's death, and had the Lundy Company's approval to organise an "official" commemoration. Unfortunately, it was a boat day which limited those who could attend, and I was keen to give staff the opportunity should they wish – and there was little point in marking the anniversary on another day. Staff were kindly given permission to finish their shift slightly early if they wished to attend.

From 3pm, the Lundy flag was flown at half-mast (thanks to Matt Stritch). At 5pm a small group of staff, volunteers and visitors (I represented the LFS as a trustee, and the St Helen's Centre as a churchwarden) met at VC Quarry, home to JPH's memorial. The citation for his posthumous Victoria Cross, published in the *London Gazette* on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1944, was read and an Act of Remembrance was held comprising the Exhortation, Last Post, Two Minute Silence, Reveille and the Kohima Epitaph.

During the silence, a wren memorably sang out and echoed around the granite walls – a sound JPH must have heard many times as a boy playing in the quarry.



*Photo by Richard Breese.*



*Matt Stritch hoisting the Lundy flag.  
Photo by Richard Breese.*

# An MA on Lundy

## JANE SHARKEY 'spins a yarn' about her degree.

I am a multidisciplinary artist and have worked on Lundy for just over three years. I have used this experience to complete an MA in Fine Art through University of Arts Plymouth. My Masters work centered on walking as an artistic practice on Lundy. This socially engaged practice explored how site-specific performance can deepen visitors' connections to the Lundy landscape: "I explore the layers of geography and history through mapping, drawing, poetry, writing, artist books and walking scores."

My projects have included Pocket Drawings, capturing movement through landscape by a pencil moving on paper held in a pocket, and a Lundy pilgrimage where the completion of the walk is represented by a special John Dyke stamp and a votive jar to collect a token from the walkers' journeys.

I also teamed up with Songways's Jane Harris to create a video featuring Lundy standing stones which can be viewed on YouTube. I have created a book containing visitors' Haikus written whilst visiting the standing stones, which will be available at the Lundy craft markets along with my other crafts which include weaving with wool from the island sheep and baskets made from ghost nets.

[www.janesharkey.co.uk](http://www.janesharkey.co.uk)

Instagram: Jsharkeyo2

Linkedin: [Jane Sharkey](#)

<https://youtu.be/X9KocEN5FAM?si=0xCPFFqf63ca2tMC>





## Celebrating the bells

### JOANNE WILBY reports.

Just over thirty years ago Andrew Wilby made a day-trip to Lundy and saw the bells of St Helen's Church (which were hung in the tower at the time of its construction in 1897) sitting in the church porch. As a bellringer his curiosity was piqued and, following a conversation with John Puddy, the island manager, a train of events was set in motion which resulted in the rehanging of the eight bells in 1994. Andrew was project manager of the scheme, which was supported by The Doris Field Trust, whose involvement was led by trustee Eric Church, a regular Lundy visitor.

In the years since 1994, well over 1,000 bellringers from around the world have visited Lundy, most becoming members of the Lundy Island Society of Ringers, with many of them coming back time and again having fallen under the island's spell. Many of us visit as often as we can, whether for bellringing or just to enjoy our favourite place. Ten years after the first LIS Festival Week, two more bells were installed in the tower, augmenting the peal from eight to ten bells.

Fast forward to 2024 and "LIS 30" took place at the end of July with nearly 40 members and friends of the Lundy Island Society joining a week of activities to mark the anniversary.

Ringling the bells played a large part in the proceedings, and three full peals (around three hours of non-stop ringing) were rung, as well as a handbell peal at Millcombe House on the set of handbells which were kindly donated to the Society a few years ago by Bob & Ruth Smith. In total, more than 400 peals have been rung in the last 30 years, as well as thousands of quarter peals. Six quarter peals were also scored, mainly during a combined quarter peal and striking competition which happened on the Wednesday.

Many other activities took place during a very enjoyable and fun-packed week, including:

- Boat trips around the island and a snorkel safari
- An early morning nature walk followed by a group brunch at Millcombe
- A barbecue at Government House
- "Lundy's History in 30 Minutes" – a talk by Michael Williams in the church
- A Lundy-themed quiz in the Tavern
- A celebratory service in St Helen's Church, led by Revd. Jane Skinner, the Society President
- Anniversary Dinner with speeches in the Wheelhouse...and a special edition T-shirt produced to mark the occasion.



*Bob Caton & Andrew Wilby modeling the first and most recent LIS T-shirts. Photo by Joanne Wilby.*

We were blessed with fabulous weather, camaraderie and laughter. Thank you, Lundy, you did not disappoint!

# A Lundy Limerick for LIS

JOANNE WILBY composes...

Way back when, when God was a nipper  
Andrew visited as a day tripper  
After three score and ten  
He came back again  
With a plan that was really a ripper!

The bell frame had rusted away  
With the bells on the church floor to stay  
But the Doris Field Trust  
Stopped the scheme going bust  
And the bells were put back – hip hooray!

Ninety-four saw the bells ring once more  
The first peal for the LIS scored  
A festival week  
Full of bellringing geeks  
And copious pints pulled and poured.

The ringers arrived in their droves  
And some even via Jenny's Cove  
We fell under the spell  
Of each pathway and dell  
The clifftops, the valleys and groves.

After ten years of ringing on eight  
Someone said, "Wouldn't ten bells be great?"  
Another plan hatched  
And two trebles dispatched  
And two decades have flown since that date!

More than 400 peals have been rung  
By ringers both ancient and young  
But the star of the show  
Is the island we know  
And its praises will always be sung.

I talk Lundy again and again  
I love it come wind, fog or rain  
But a task I was given  
So I won't be forgiven  
If I don't say some words about Jane.

Our President's name is Jane Skinner  
She supports us through thick and  
through thinner  
We're so glad she's here  
On this night full of cheer  
The LIS Thirty Years dinner!

The week has been nothing but grand  
With many a hard-working band  
We've laughed, quizzed and sung  
We've walked, swum and rung  
And now it is time to say "Stand."

[Ed: if you want to hear the ten bells of Lundy, there's a short recording here — <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/explore/history-people-and-places/history/ten-bells-of-lundy-video/>]

## A date for your diary...

**Discovering Lundy 2026**, May 16-23: Join other LFS members on the island to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society.

There will be a variety of activities including scientific walks and talks, and social get togethers.

Booking information and further details will be communicated to the membership in due course.

# Lundy 1962-1967, and 2024

**HUGH DARWEN shares his memories of Lundy in times gone by, and a more recent visit.**

In this memoir I tell of my annual visits to Lundy in the 1960s and the joyful return I was able to make fifty-seven years later. I am a lifelong obsessive birdwatcher, but emphatically not a twitcher. I prefer to keep a close eye on my local patch in rural Warwickshire.

## 1962-1967

In late summer 1962, three lads in their late teens, all keen birdwatchers, decided to visit Lundy. Two of them were brothers, whose parents had the year before moved to North Devon, having acquired a small farm near Torrington. I was the elder brother. The third lad was somebody I had met while birdwatching. He brought with him his pet Labrador and, sitting on his forearm, a Sparrowhawk!

On Lundy we were directed to Brick Field as a suitable place to pitch the small, green, boy-scout-style ridge tent in which the five of us slept each night of the visit, the Sparrowhawk on a bow perch at the front near the opening, the rest of us cuddled up at the back. There was an old bath in the corner of the field, to the right of the gate as you enter, which had a water feed from somewhere, intended for livestock. We used that for our water supply, carefully boiling it for drinking purposes, not being put off by the little red wriggly things that inhabited the bath.

The highlight of that visit occurred during a walk toward the north end. Somewhere beyond Threequarter Wall a flock of feral pigeons came flying fast from the east. We all immediately looked up, thinking, "Could there be...?" and there it was, high above the pigeons, a Peregrine Falcon! They weren't breeding on Lundy in those days, but they were at Baggy Point, nearby on the North Devon coast. The falcon went into a full-blooded stoop and at first appeared to be diving past the flock, but with a firm application of the brakes it turned itself upside down in the air and entered the flock from underneath. Apparently upside down, it struck out a foot at a pigeon, which fell to the ground amid a flurry of feathers. I regret to have to report that, in our ignorance, we collected the dead pigeon and fed it to the Sparrowhawk.

My brother and I, best friends as well as brothers, returned to Lundy every following year up to 1967. We always travelled between Bideford and the island on the *Lundy Gannet*, skippered by Trevor Davey. Abiding memories from those years:

- The LFS bird warden was Michael Jones and he spent time with us on various activities. We accompanied him to the Heligoland trap to ring Willow Warblers, and to ring Manx Shearwater chicks in their burrows. There were also night-time excursions to hear the wondrous calls of the adult shearwaters returning from the sea. I have a vague memory, too, of a descent to a Fulmar's nest, when Michael warned of the bird's defence mechanism of spitting foul-smelling regurgitated gunge. One day we actually witnessed such an attack on an inquisitive jackdaw, who was not well pleased.
- There were no House Sparrows on the island. Instead, Linnets abounded in and around the village, Tree Sparrows around Millcombe. On walks along the central path, we especially liked the Wheatears, flitting between the marker stones.
- We discovered a ledge in the cliff overlooking Gannets' Rock, where we habitually sat eating our lunch and enjoying the seabirds, especially the Kittiwakes, now sadly in steep decline.



- On one occasion we climbed down to sit on the rocks near the North Light. We sang songs to some inquisitive seals poking their heads up out of the water, and we also had a fairly close encounter with a Basking Shark. Puffins were on the grassy slopes.
- We spent the evenings in the Marisco Tavern, socialising with other regular visitors. There was much alcohol-fuelled jollity! Behind the bar was Arthur Strick, who we could occasionally persuade to play his trumpet. When he invented a new cocktail it was always called Shag's Nest and I still remember the lethal one composed of vodka and Campari. Further musical entertainment in the bar came from an older fellow who everybody knew as Banjo George.
- In the Marisco Tavern there hung from the ceiling an old-fashioned hay bale! It was supposed to deal with the excessive tobacco smoke that had stained the walls.
- On at least one occasion the weather delayed the *Lundy Gannet's* return to collect us on our final day. By that time we had completely used up all the money we had brought for the trip. When we sought help with our predicament, the island's shepherd, John Ogilvy, said we could earn a free lunch (and perhaps some drinks) by helping with the annual sheep round-up that was now due. So we did that and were duly rewarded.
- I remember being taken in a boat, pollock fishing in the area that is now a marine nature reserve. That helped to eke out our food resources.
- Finally, please forgive a disgraceful bit of name-dropping. On at least one occasion I found myself in the amazing gents' urinal that remains unchanged outside the Marisco Tavern, peeing with Albion Harman alongside me. He told me how much he always enjoyed the view over the wall, across the sea to the lights on the mainland. I fully agreed.

In 1967 I had to leave the island earlier than my brother, to participate in the planning for my wedding that August to the girlfriend with whom in 1965 I also went camping on Lundy (in Tent Field that time). We're still together! She took these photos, the only ones I have from the 1960s:



Photos by Lindsay Darwin.

My brother told me that as I left he sat in the bothy overlooking the landing beach, watching the boat depart and shedding a tear or two as he realised that had possibly been the last Lundy adventure for just the two of us. And so it was.

He returned many times in the following years, a couple of times with a friend and many times from 1984 with his younger son, Tom. Tom's brother, Wil, joined them on a couple of occasions. Sadly, my brother died from cancer just before his 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday in 2007. He had asked for his ashes to be spread on Lundy and Tom duly came back once more to fulfil that wish.

## 2024

My return to Lundy for four days in April 2024 had been arranged as a surprise 80<sup>th</sup> birthday present from Wil, Tom, and my sons, Jamie and Nic.

When the great day drew near, I sent an email to the Lundy Field Society (LFS), telling why the trip was so important to me and asking if anybody from LFS would be there at the same time. I got a very friendly immediate response from Tim Davis, saying that he and Tim Jones would be there. It was great to meet them both and other LFS members, regaling them all with my stories from the 1960s and finding out about LFS activities and achievements over the past several decades.

I spent most of the journey on MS *Oldenburg* up on deck, leaning over the railing to watch for seabirds: a Gannet, several Fulmars and Guillemots, and a couple of Manx Shearwaters (I saw lots more of those on the way back three days later). There was also a White Wagtail, flitting over the waves alongside the boat. On arrival, just as I was starting the climb up to the village, I got my most surprising sighting ever in the British Isles: a Night-heron, flying overhead amongst the Herring Gulls. I hoped it had just arrived, so that I might be the first to report it, but no, two had been seen the day before.

There was plenty of time left for a good walk on that first day, and we weren't put off the idea by the mist that covered the island. I insisted on at least getting to Brick Field to show my companions where my brother and I used to camp. Two people were working near the entrance when we approached; they were surprised to hear why I was so interested in that field. I noted three changes: the bath full of water was absent, there was a great mound just in front of where my brother and I used to pitch



*Hugh and Will enjoying the view!*

*Photo by Nic Darwen*

our tent, and the all-important rhododendrons had gone from the far end. I had learned about the environmental damage caused by the 19<sup>th</sup> century introduction of these Asian plants during a visit to RSPB Arne, in Dorset. I was deeply impressed when I learned about the island's efforts in ridding the island of them.

We managed to extend the walk further down the east side and I was pleased to spot a Pied Flycatcher in the quarry area. In the early evening, after we had settled into the excellent accommodation of Old House South, three of us walked to the Old Light while the other two

prepared supper. I was pleased to find that the steps had been repaired some time since 1967 and even more pleased to succeed in climbing all 147 of them to enjoy the deckchairs at the top, with Wil. [Ed: *not quite 147 if you count them!*]

Sheep were in one of the fields we passed on the way to the Old Light and one of the ewes was apart from the flock, accompanied by a lamb. The lamb's very recent birth was evidenced by the state of the ewe's rear end, from which we eventually noticed a head emerging, so we stayed to witness the twin's birth. Almost immediately, a Raven appeared and stood close to the group of three. The first lamb was clearly in some danger, standing as it was between the Raven and the ewe, who was busy licking away at the second-born. Fortunately, it eventually decided against any action and flew off. When the shepherd came with quad bike and trailer to collect them, he told us the Raven would certainly have returned if mother and lambs had been left in the field.

Over the next three days we covered just about the whole island. On the Sunday we took the west path for the essential trek to the North Light, stopping at Jenny's Cove on the way. In the cove immediately before Jenny's we were pleased to be able to sit on high and watch auks, Fulmars, and a few Kittiwakes on the sea below. It had been decades since I had last had such an experience (in the Orkneys and the Farne Islands), so I was pleased to be able to identify the auks as Razorbills, along with a few Puffins. At Jenny's Cove some Puffins were to be seen on the grassy slope, claiming (or perhaps reclaiming) their burrows. Bird Observatory seasonal voluntary wardens Thomas and Lucy had placed a telescope for visitors to get a good close-up view of them, much appreciated by my sons and nephews, who hadn't had much success identifying the more distant ones I had tried to point out to them on the water.

I was pleased to manage the arduous descent to the North Light, where I wondered how it could have been possible for my brother and me to have got all the way down to those rocks.

On Monday the weather changed again with the arrival of a very strong wind, so we ventured out on the lower east path, hoping in vain for some shelter. I found the going rather tricky, nearly being blown over at times, especially when we chose to diverge into the slushy rough as we neared Gannets' Combe. In the combes we weaved among extraordinary waste-high tussocks that piqued our curiosity.

The weather improved on Tuesday, the day of our return. Thankfully, the wind abated just enough for the MS *Oldenburg* to sail. Before that, there was time for us to do some more exploring, so we went west again, this time to the Battery. I was pleased to manage the path and rugged steps down, and even get back up again! We sat beside the guns, again able to watch Razorbills, Puffins and Fulmars in the sea not so far below, along with a few Guillemots and Kittiwakes. What's



*On my way down.  
Photo by Wil Darwen.*

more, by the time we left I had counted 15 gannets flying south to north in dribs and drabs.

On Sunday and Monday we had dinner in the Marisco Tavern, where we enjoyed the game pie and the “trio of sausages”. After the dinners we joined Thomas and Lucy’s roll call of birds, along with more than 30 other people each time. Our contributions were extremely modest compared with those of the LFS experts, apart from when I proudly announced the female Orange-tip butterfly I had spotted flying on the east side. This turned out to be something of a rarity for the island. It was at first greeted with incredulity, but when I gave a detailed description and assured LFS experts of my familiarity with the species as a harbinger of spring, the sighting was accepted.

Finally, here’s a poignant little incident that I witnessed during our Monday outing.

Tom wanted to get to Brazen Ward, where he had spread his father’s ashes. I didn’t feel up to the steep descent from the lower east path, so I stayed sitting on a rock while the others went down. While I was thus separated from the group below, a Peregrine Falcon flew over the very spot. The reason why I found that so touching? Well, my brother’s name was Peregrine.

### **Acknowledgements**

Heartfelt thanks, of course, to my sons and nephews for the surprise birthday present and for looking after me so well during the visit (I was banned from all domestic chores!). Also, to my wife, Lindsay, for sanctioning the trip. Thanks, too, to Tim Davis for his friendly welcome, advice and encouragement, and to the Lundy Field Society for looking after the island and its non-human inhabitants so well over the years.



*Gannets’ Rock. Photo by Tom Darwen.*

## **Shout out for help with a bit of detective work...**

Bee Cox has started writing a booklet about the memorial benches on Lundy and would like some help with researching some of the stories about the people they commemorate.

Interested? Please email her on [belinda.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:belinda.cox@btinternet.com).

# Just a lump of metal?

**MARK WEBBER** says, “For some perhaps, but not to me it isn’t. It’s history in my hands!”

Two thousand and twenty-four saw two stays in Little St Johns – April & October to avoid a potential repeat of 2023, fretting about whether I would get home to watch West Ham in another European final if there was to be a repeat of 2023’s easterly winds [Ed: see *Discovering Lundy* No. 53, February 2024 pp43-46].

After the 20+ stays we have enjoyed on Lundy, there is always something new to stumble across, such as a Golden Oriole in April 2024 – our first one – yes! Hoards were looking for it in Millcombe, and there it was feeding off the path on the north side of the Ugly, just around the corner, with only me and Julia watching for a good ten minutes.

European final? Well, it didn’t happen. We came across a German team who had brushed aside all opposition all season long, and then going off on a tangent, it leads me to the ‘forgotten’ German Heinkel. There is a great little book on this subject, written by Graham Lewis, available in the Lundy shop, that fills in the gaps if you were so inclined to find out more. I can recommend it as it provides substantial information of the events, which means I do not have to repeat it here.

I have mentioned before, I have a strong interest in aviation. I used to fly military ‘things’, but now I am content with just reading about it. My last flight before a real sense of my own mortality kicked in and I stopped, was a flight which partly involved flying between Lundy and the North Devon mainland into North Cornwall. I look back without any pride in that episode. Low level, I remember us whizzing past a fishing boat heading towards Lundy and could see the whites of the fisherman’s eyes as he looked out of his cabin, startled – er...hello/goodbye – in a flash before proceeding towards the Devon-Cornwall border – makes me shudder looking back. We were idiots! Best not to dwell on it I think, but a tenuous link all the same to my main interest (other than football).

The crashed Heinkels – I had sought them out as soon as I was aware of their presence... eventually. The remains of the one just south of Halfway Wall were found



relatively easily but it took a few years to get around to visiting the remains of the second example on the west side. Armed with Simon Dell’s handy pocketbook on various island walks, we staked it out. I remember it was a scorching hot day; we always do OK for weather on Lundy, only ever seeming to encounter adverse weather on the last day, hence several returns via Castle Air. I quickly saw the engine block stuck between the rocks, ‘ticked’ the ‘mental’ box, and then moved on. I must have been too hot and bothered that day.

*The Forgotten Heinkel, engine block.*

*Photo by Mark Webber.*

Personally, on my maternal side, I lost relatives in WW2 before I was born. One was a Spitfire pilot who was lost to the



sea over the English Channel in the Battle of Britain and another whose Short Stirling Bomber disappeared without trace during a mission to Germany. All, there exists now is names etched into beige stone at the Royal Air Force memorial at Runnymede in Surrey. Lundy seems so far from the German crews' homes. There are obviously opinions to take on this; it is up to the free-thinking individual to form and have their own thoughts, but what is inescapable is that although all the crew survived the plateau crash, lives were lost on the west coast a long way from home, just like my Bomber Command ancestor.

April 23 saw us make a specific trip to see it, and there is more left than I thought and remember from that initial fleeting visit. As stated before, I must have been tired on the first trip and did not observe my surroundings. In my head, the theme tune of the excellent Battle of Britain film filled my mind as I clambered gingerly down to take in a good look at it.

As a young RAF cadet, we used to stand, usually in the rain, in our uniforms in September shaking tins for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Society on Battle of Britain day, and years later I'm on Lundy seeing tangible local evidence of that type of conflict, touching the engine block, and wondering who worked on it last before its demise. Is it a Jumo or DB engine? I will plump for the former at a guess and then I mentally imagine the scene unfolding all those years ago as I look out to sea. I tend not to look down at the drops at exposed points as close as this to the sea, as nowadays I am not fond of heights! This Heinkel's position is about as near to a drop or an edge that I want to go in my new cautious times. I see images in my mind of my brother flying his then yellow Sea King close to the cliffs of Lundy, doing winch practise or picking up a casualty all under control. It was a differing view altogether for him as he inched towards the cliff so his winchman could 'do his thing' – but for the Heinkel crew, I have thoughts about what they were experiencing at that fateful moment and all that is left all these years later is some skeletal remnants akin to a deceased dinosaur in a remote, lonely setting.



*The Forgotten Heinkel in the rocks.*

*Photo by Mark Webber.*

I took some pictures which fascinate people who see them in my office.

The easterlies had returned just like last year. Good job we did not make it to the final, that's all I can say! So, flying home again. Two of the Lundy staff were on duty in the Black Shed and the radio was broadcasting the West Ham v Liverpool game. It ended up as a draw before my flight departed so I could go home content we did not get a 'hiding' as expected and that I had properly seen the Forgotten Heinkel.

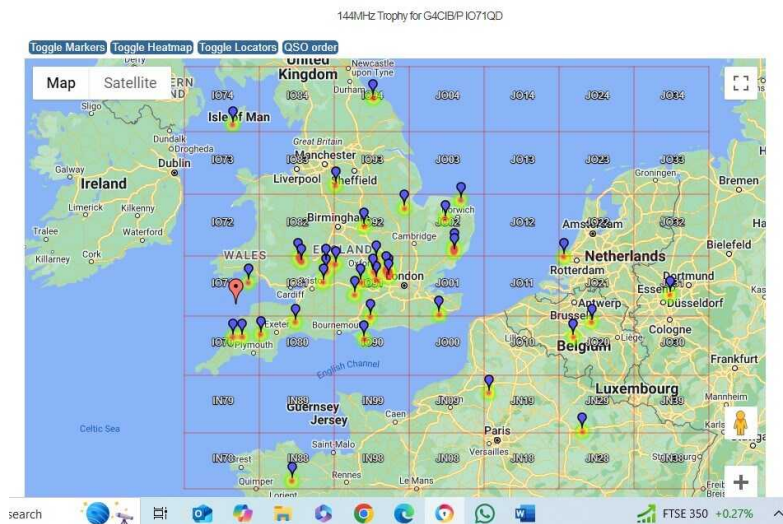
[Ed: Michael Williams, in his book *The Lundy Companion*, writes that the Forgotten Heinkel crashed into the cliffs just south of the Earthquake on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1941. Two of the German crew perished in the disaster, two jumped to safety and the rear gunner was badly injured. The islanders captured all three survivors.]

# BRIAN WOODCOCK G4CIB reports on VHF Amateur Radio on Lundy in September 2024

I wrote in *Discovering Lundy* no. 53 (February 2024) of my experiences of operating on a 144MHz (2-metre) contest during our stay on Lundy in March 2023, when I worked some 20 stations in 11 locator squares, all in the UK. Our stay on Lundy from 7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September 2024 coincided with a similar contest, but this time spread over 24 hours, from 1400 UTC on 7<sup>th</sup> September to 1400 UTC 8<sup>th</sup> September. For those participants who don't wish to operate for the full 24 hours (yes, I was that person many years ago along with many other young enthusiasts!), a six-hour section is available, which I opted to do. My initial session from 1515 UTC-1650 UTC yielded 13 stations, including two French stations and one Belgian station. Then, the Marsico Tavern took priority, and my next operating session started at 2005 UTC for just 25 minutes when I worked five more stations including another Belgian station, a French station and my old friend Richard GD8EXI located in the Isle of Man who first appeared in my station log on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1973.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September dawned a wet and dull day, not good conditions for VHF propagation, and my operating session started at 0806 UTC. During the next four hours I contacted another 20 stations including one located in Germany, call sign DB0DH, locator square JO31JJ, at a distance of 806km, by far the best 2-metre contact I have ever had from Lundy. Since the early days of amateur radio, operators have exchanged written confirmation (known as a QSL card) that a QSO (amateur radio shorthand for contact) has taken place, especially for any over long distances or with low power. DB0DH, the Duisburg club station, quickly sent a QSL card electronically confirming our QSO. In total I contacted stations in 18 locator squares (see map).

For information, I used a Yaesu FT857D transceiver with an output power of 50 watts and the antenna was the same lightweight three-element beam I used on the island last year. Our stay on Lundy in 2025 is again the second week in September and I hope to be active on 144MHz and beat my 806km distance record.



# A flying visit to Lundy in 1952

## RICHARD LOWES researches a fascinating story.

By strange coincidence, whilst reading Stan and Joan Rendell's excellent book, *Lundy by Air*, I spotted on eBay an album of photographs, including a number taken during the unidentified photographer's flying visit to Lundy in May 1952. Some of these images provide a tantalising flavour of the traveller's experience using the island's early post-war air service. And thanks mainly to the Rendell's book and Mr Gade's memoir, it's possible to flesh out some of the stories behind the images.

Perhaps the most crucial information the photographer provides is the date, placing their visit during highly uncertain times for both the air service and island transportation more generally. The long-serving *Lerina* was finally laid up in 1950, but it was not until 1956 that the *Lundy Gannet*'s arrival restored a regular sea connection. In the meantime, a hotchpotch of chartered vessels, the Trinity House tender, and the air service provided the only mainland link for islanders, visitors, provisions and even livestock.

Barnstaple Flying Club, defunct since the outbreak of war, was re-established in 1950 with former RAF Flight Lieutenant John Drabble as chief flying instructor. The photo below shows the single-engined Auster J/1 Autocrat monoplane, registration G-AJEA, purchased for the club by Drabble in September 1950.



*G-AJEA on the Airfield.*

Shortly afterwards, a Lundy air service was restored once Messrs Drabble and Gade agreed terms. The new company, Devon Air Travel Limited, principally operated a de Havilland Rapide biplane but also used G-AJEA as and when required.

### Near tragedy

On 20<sup>th</sup> August 1955, G-AJEA was lost, but mercifully without loss of life, thanks to the cool head of pilot Maurice Looker. En route to Wrafton Gate (RAF Chivenor) from Lundy and flying at about 3,000 feet, the single engine cut out. With no chance of gliding to land, Looker headed towards a Danish cargo ship, *Harrildsborg*, before ditching in the sea. The plane swiftly sank, but not before Looker and his two passengers, Mrs Nonie Ross and her 15-year-old son Peter, could

extricate themselves. Fortunately, the pilot was able to inflate his Mae West and support his passengers until the *Harrildsborg*'s launch rescued them about twenty minutes later.

The ditching was witnessed on Lundy and by the coastguard at Hartland Point. However, the ship was soon able to confirm that everyone was well, a huge relief to all, particularly Mrs Ross's husband, Maurice and their younger son, Tim, who had arrived at Wrafton Gate on the previous flight (the Auster could carry only two

passengers). The incident resulted in new rules governing single-engined aircraft flying over the sea.

In an amusing aside, the Rendells relate that on the *Harrildsborg's* arrival at Port Talbot, a customs officer asked the survivors apologetically whether they had anything to declare!

### John Vicary

Mr Gade recounts the unfortunate tale of John Vicary, "...young, barely twenty-one years old, and romantic; full of the stories he had read of life on lonely islands."

After visiting Lundy in 1950, John wrote to Martin Harman asking whether he would lease him some land so that he could live as a crofter. Much to Mr Gade's surprise, Mr Harman agreed, on the condition that John first work on the farm for a year to prove that he had what it took. So, in October 1951, at significant personal expense, John chartered the *Garlandstone*, the last sailing ketch trading in the area, to bring his belongings to Lundy, including:

"...his horse, his four-wheeled cart, a collection of wheels from other light horse-vehicles, his scanty collection of furniture, and a wonderful assembly of tools, bolts, nuts, nails and screws, and an anvil. He also had a beautiful, new ten-foot varnished sailing dinghy with a Seagull outboard petrol engine, mast, square sail, cordage, paddles, rudder and centre-board. The horse, Gay Boy, was a magnificent bay gelding of seventeen hands."



John Vicary (right) "attending the aero-plane, with Gay Boy in the shafts of the cart".

John moved into Stoneycroft and commenced his 'apprenticeship'. He had no farm work experience and proved a poor timekeeper, but he was enthusiastic and continued on the farm into the spring of 1952. Mr Gade says that:

"He was useful in attending the aeroplane, with Gay Boy in the shafts of the cart. He would take up a load of empties to be flown away, and bring to the Hotel, Store, or Tavern goods which had been brought over, as well as passengers' luggage."

Unbeknown to others on the island, John Vicary suffered from varicose veins, and



*Waiting for the plane to come in.  
A wonderfully relaxed scene with Mr Gade  
chatting to departing guests in the days  
before high viz and quadbikes!*

shortly after these photos were taken, he suffered a severe bleed, necessitating air evacuation, hospitalisation, and several operations. Sadly, it proved to be the beginning of the end of his life on Lundy.

Mr Gade also relates that John supplemented his modest income by providing "a kind of hire service between the Tavern and the North End, driving Trinity house men home after an evening in the Tavern." I'm sure that such a service would be well-patronised by inhabitants of Tibbetts these days!

Interestingly, upon inheriting some money in 1953, John became *Lerina's* penultimate owner. Always the romantic, he hoped to get her seaworthy and contract with Mr Harman for her continued service on Lundy. Mr Gade reports that John beached her at Cleave on the

Torridge and lived aboard for a while, "but he made himself unpopular with the residents there because of his nocturnal habits"! Ultimately, his creditors foreclosed, and the *Lerina* was sold at auction for £1.



*Mr Gade holds the door for departees with luggage  
strewn around to the plane's rear.*



## Aerial photos

Just as today in the helicopter, the flight presented our photographer with an opportunity to take aerial photos of the island. In this case, the images show a southern approach along the east coast. I particularly love the rugged beauty of the North End captured in the first photo (left).



## Our photographer

Although I'm unable to acknowledge our photographer by name, it would be wonderful to identify them. One of the photos features a possible suspect – his sole appearance in front of the lens. He's wearing a battledress jacket, maybe from war service(?), but infinitely sensible attire for the trip. (Note the still intact golf course greenkeeper's shed in the background.) His lady companion with a shooting stick also appears in two airfield photos.



## Sources:

My Life on Lundy: Felix W Gade 1978

Lundy by Air, The Island's Aviation Story: Stan and Joan Rendell 1999

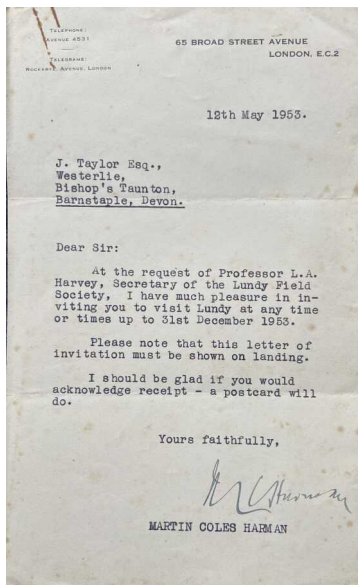
Lundy Packets: Mike Tedstone 2001

# First Stay On Lundy – 1953

## IAN TAYLOR reminisces.

I was 15, my friend Michael Huxtable was a year older. We had both become interested in birds while exploring the Taw valley at Bishops Tawton. We made lists of the birds we saw. Probably the most interesting to me were the Green Sandpipers in the autumn. Our first bird book was *How to know British Birds* by Norman H. Joy. Somewhat disappointing at first until I found the pictures in the back.

My father, H.R. Taylor who was fond of fishing and shooting, encouraged our bird-watching activities and was the person who suggested we should go to Lundy. I can't really remember how things worked out, but we joined the Lundy Field Society and in due course received a letter from Martin Coles Harman giving us permission to stay on the island. We booked to stay at the Old Light during Coronation Week, which turned out to be the same time that Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tensing climbed Everest.



*A scan of the letter from MCH.*

My father arranged for us to fly over to Lundy from RAF Chivenor as it was then. The pilot was Maurice Looker, and we flew over in quite a small plane. On the Saturday my father took the two of us to Chivenor, but after some debate Maurice Looker decided that the weather wasn't good enough. We went back again on the Sunday. This time the weather was a bit better and off we went. As we approached Lundy, I could see that most of the island was covered in cloud. To my surprise as we got closer, the cloud rolled away to the north and Maurice put the plane down and told us to hurry up and get out. He was gone again almost before we could turn around. Mist came down and Michael and I didn't know which way to go. Soon a horse and cart loomed up and took us and our bags back to Old Light. After a bit, some other people came in and I discovered that hot coffee was fine, but the only mugs were tin ones. You couldn't drink it straight away without burning your lips.

The warden was Peter Davis who slept in a room off the main room where the beds were. The only other person I remember was S.G. Madge, a teacher from Crediton. He was most helpful throughout our stay. He recommended us to join the Devon Bird Watching Society, which we both did. That year we sent our local N. Devon records in, and we were surprised and pleased to find that practically all of them made it into the report.

We had fine weather for the rest of the week and explored the island. The sea birds were of great interest. I had never seen Puffins, Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Guillemots or Manx Shearwaters before. When we were in bed, Hartland Light flashed through the window and we could hear the Manx Shearwaters calling.

The only unusual bird was a Red-headed Bunting sitting on top of a pine tree in

Millcombe. It was in full summer plumage but was considered to probably be an escaped cage bird.

The loo was in a shed some way outside and we took it in turns to empty the contents over the cliffs on the west side.

Gade called us in one day and asked how we had identified Common Sandpiper. We said we had heard it calling along the shore. These were frequently seen on the R. Taw during migration times, and they seemed to call whenever they took flight.

At the end of our stay we flew back to Chivenor with Maurice Looker. No trouble landing on the island this time.

It was soon after our visit that a friend who lived up the road from me in Bishops Tawton began to take an interest in birdwatching. This was encouraged when my father took me and Michael to see H.S. Joyce who was the Duck Count organiser for the R. Taw estuary. We counted the section from Barnstaple to Penhill Point. Four of us did the count, Michael, me, my father and this friend Tony Vickery. Tony later became the organiser and had more than a little to do with Lundy.

Another chance meeting was with a friend of Peter Davis. Peter asked him to give him a hand with the bird ringing in the autumn. This was Dudley Iles who had done a lot of birdwatching with Peter in the West Riding. Dudley spent quite a lot of his holiday time working on Lundy for a number of years. He and I taught at the same school in Wantage – King Alfred's School – for over 30 years. I took six boys to experience Lundy Island for a week in 1968. Dudley died in 2021.

I didn't meet Peter Davis again, although I called on him in Wales where he was working on Red Kites. While watching University Challenge one time, I was surprised to see that one series of questions was about Peter Davis and his work with the Kites.

## The Oldenburg sets sail

**Ploughing through old newspaper cuttings, TIM DAVIS recently came across the following report in the local (Bideford) Gazette of May 16, 1986. Tim kept the cutting as he happened to be on board the day that Oldenburg first took passengers across to Lundy on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1986.**

### **'Three hearty cheers for North Devon workmen'**

Lundy's new supply ship, MS Oldenburg, slipped out of Bideford on Saturday on her first voyage in her new capacity. It was a low-key departure as far as the public was concerned, but a great day for the men who had worked since December to bring her up to scratch.

The Oldenburg was built for the German national railway company in 1958 for use as a coastal passenger cargo ferry serving the Friesian Islands and Hellegoland (sic).

She was in continuous service until acquired by the Lundy Island Company last autumn. The company had long been scouring Europe for a vessel suitable for carrying cargo as well as passengers.

Oldenburg was dry-docked in Wilhelmshaven, Germany last November where she was inspected before her stormy crossing to Bideford the following month.

It was no easy task to transfer a ship into the British registry and many options were

explored before the decision was made to carry out the necessary adaptations alongside Bideford Quay.

An army of craftsmen, drawn from Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Bideford, descended on the vessel to carry out the difficult task of converting her to meet British Standards.

It was a decision which proved correct. The task was completed promptly and the owners were more than pleased with the standard of workmanship.

The work included the installation of fire insulation, alarms and sprinkler systems and improved life-saving equipment. It was required to qualify for an all-year-round Class 11a Passenger Certificate.

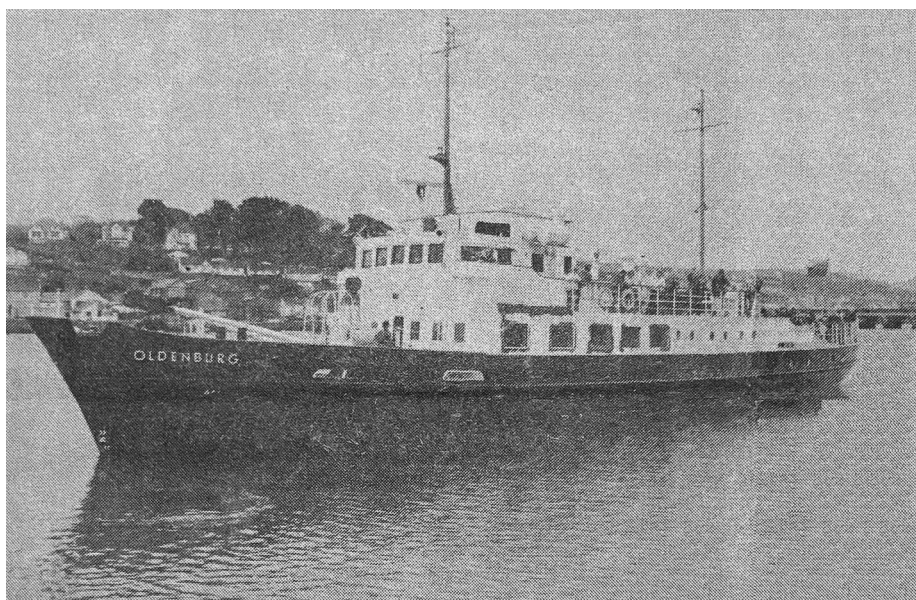
Most of the interior features which give the Oldenburg such character have been retained but improvements included replacement upholstery, flooring, catering facilities and a souvenir shop.

The ship has full central heating for those cold winter days and ample deck seats for the summer.

The crew of eight are all local people who are determined that the Oldenburg will be a success and that she will provide a boost to tourism in Ilfracombe and Bideford.

Besides the regular Lundy service – on which she replaces the Polar Bear – the Oldenburg is also available for charters, including sea and river cruises, private functions, conferences and wedding receptions.

Our picture [reproduced here from the grainy b&w white photograph of the ship leaving her berth on the Torridge Estuary] shows the Oldenburg slipping out of Bideford on her first official voyage to Lundy.





Left: A sky over the Battery. Photo by Adam Hobbs.

Below: Sika Deer. Photo by Adam Hobbs.



Above: Smoky spindles on the lawn. Photo by Mandy Dee.

Right: Water on the plateau. Photo by Mandy Dee.







## PUBLICATIONS for sale through the Lundy Field Society

### **Lundy's Archaeology** – new edition by Chris Webster

32 pages – full colour – all obvious sites described. Price: £5.00 plus postage (to a UK address) of £1.20.

People have lived on Lundy for at least 10,000 years but the traces they left behind are often very subtle. Archaeologists have been investigating these remains since the 1770s, culminating in numerous excavations in the 1960s and detailed survey work in the decades since.

This booklet is the third to describe the archaeological remains of the island following works by Keith Gardner (1971) and the National Trust (2002). It provides a description of the sites on Lundy, the story of the archaeologists who investigated them, and a modern interpretation of how they fit into Lundy's story and the wider world.

Chris Webster is an archaeologist based in Somerset who has been interested in Lundy since the late 1980s. His work on the island has involved geophysical survey, test pit surveys and writing up the unpublished excavations of earlier archaeologists.

### **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 8 Keith Hiscock (ed), 2023, 108pp.**

Contents: Lundy now internationally important for seabirds; The streams, ponds and wells of Lundy; A preliminary survey of aquatic hyphomycetes in Lundy streams; The ups and downs of Lundy Cabbage; A preliminary note of the rediscovery of marine fossils in Lundy slates; Sibling aggression between Black-legged Kittwake chicks; A preliminary investigation into environmental factors impacting the maternal behaviour of Feral Goats and Soay Sheep on Lundy; A particular of Lundy Island; All eight volumes are available at £5.00 per copy plus £3.00 p&p.

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

Softback £15 plus £3 p&p / Hardback £20 plus £4.00 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.

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

Softback in full colour £12.99 plus £3.00 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. Stories and anecdotes from Diana Keast are the icing on the cake of a unique insight into a crucial period of Lundy's history.

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

**LFS Sales, c/o Alan Rowland, Mole Cottage, Chapel Close,  
Woodford, Morwenstow, Cornwall EX23 9JR**

**For a complete list and overview of LFS publications, see**

**[www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/books](http://www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/books)**