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IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLACK ENSIGN: LUNDY'S PART IN PIRACY

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Pirates! The word simultaneously conjures images of fear, violence and brutality with evocations of adventure on the high seas, swashbuckling heroes and quests for buried treasure. Furthermore, the combination of pirates and islands excites romantic fascination (Cordingly 1995, 162-6), perhaps founded upon the popular and sanitised anti-heroes of literature such as Long John Silver and Captain Hook (Mitchell discusses how literature has romanticised piracy, 1976, 7-10). This paper aims to discover, as far as possible, the part Lundy had to play in piracy in British waters, and to place that in perspective. The nature of the sources for piracy around Lundy will be discussed elsewhere (Harfield, forthcoming); here the story those sources tell is presented. It is not a story of deep-water pirates who traversed the oceans in search of bullion ships, but rather an illustration of the nature of coastal piracy with the bulk of the evidence coming from the Tudor and Stuart periods.

LUNDY AS A LANDMARK IN THE EVIDENCE

The majority of references to Lundy and pirates mention the island only as a landmark (Harfield, forthcoming). Royal Navy ships are regularly recorded plying the waters between the Scilly Isles, Lundy and the southern coasts of Wales and Ireland (see fig.1) with the intention of clearing these waters of pirates, both British and foreign. For instance, Captain John Donner encountered English pirates *"fifteen miles distant from Lundy Isle"* in April 1557 (7.3.1568, *CSP(D)*). Nearly a hundred years later generals Blake and Penn wrote to the Admiralty Committee on 18.3.1654 to state they were *"leaving the Martin to ply about Lundy, for securing trade between the Welsh and Irish coasts, which we hear by General Monck is infested with Brest pirates"* (*CSP(D), Letters & Papers Relating to the Navy*). Captain Richard Cowes aboard the Cat Pink[1] plied *"between Kinsale* [Ireland], *the Land's End and the Isle of Lundy, for guard of those seas and intercepting the enemy"* (12.6.1654, *CSP(D)*).

Such references are typical and reveal no more to the historian than the fact that pirates operated in the seas around Lundy. The island was used as a means to pin-point pirate and naval presence upon the seas in much the same way as it is currently used to locate weather systems in the shipping forecasts.

THE NATURE OF PIRACY AROUND LUNDY

Two main types of piracy are generally recognised: deep water and coastal. However, superimposed on this typology was a further, semi-official form of piracy which operated in either theatre and which came to be known as privateering. This, particularly in ocean areas, was no less than piracy and provided a means both of authorised reprisal (in the absence of effective naval enforcement) and of economic warfare. Monarchs unable to fund the adequate naval policing of piracy issued letters of marque to merchants and ships' captains which permitted retribution at sea on those suspected of piracy. Such authorities were abused (Andrews 1964, 4-5). Deep-water pirates were either acting on royal authority or else were nautical outlaws, simply in it for themselves. Such men abandoned nationhood to adopt a lifestyle in which a few became very wealthy, and which came to assume democratic values designed to ensure that pirate crews were better treated than their naval counter-parts and that each received his due share of the plunder (Rediter 1987, 259-66). These deep-water pirates became the stuff of legend, pillaging the shipping lanes between Ireland, the Indies and the Barbary coast of Africa.

Less lucrative in terms of bullion, and consequently less historically glamorous,

[1] A Pink was a small sailing vessel, often used for fishing (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

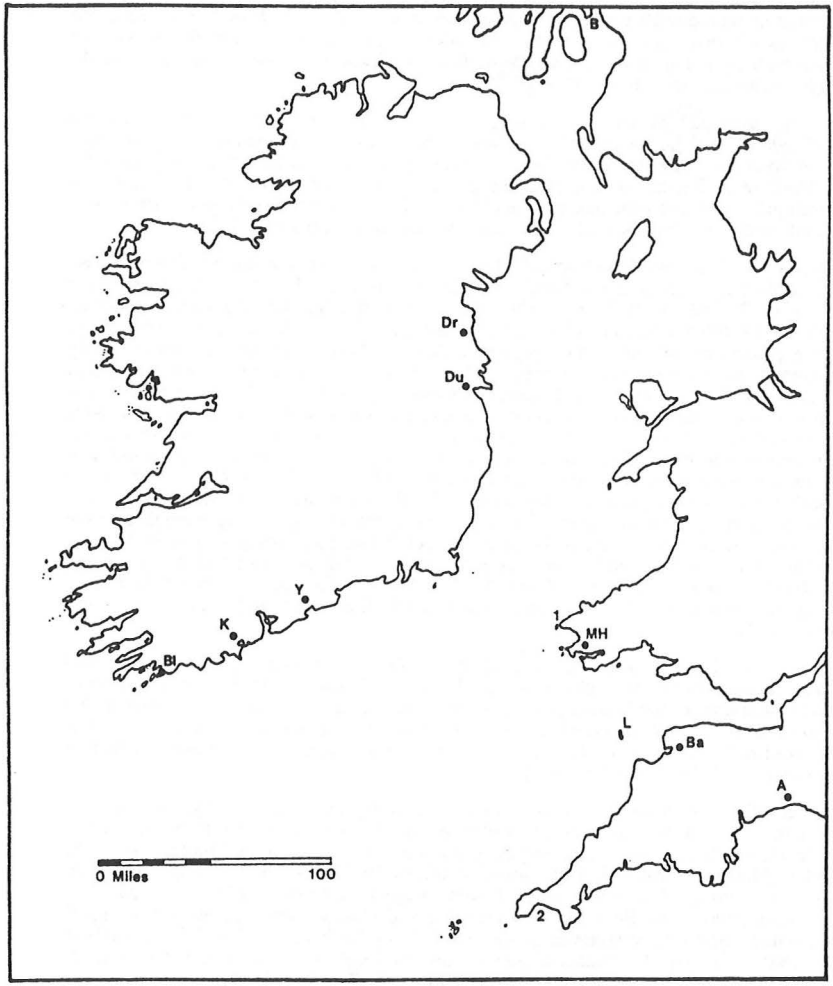

Figure 1: Some places mentioned in the text.

Key:

A	Axminster	L	Lundy
B	Isle of Bute	MH	Milford Haven
Ba	Barnstaple	Y	Youghal
Bl	Baltimore		
Dr	Drogheda	1	White Sand Bay (off St David's Head)
Du	Dublin	2	Mounts Bay
K	Kinsale		

coastal piracy thrived on the transportation of goods by sea in the absence of usable inland roads. This is the form of piracy which most enveloped Lundy, given its position on the sea-lanes between the Irish provinces and the English mainland, and those along the south-west coast. And there was certainly trade for pirates to prey upon: Sir John Pennington recorded Biscayners *"pilfering between Lundy and Mount's bay which rob small vessels that trade between Ireland, Wales and that place"*. He also noted that *"their greatest haunt is about White Sand bay, Lundy, in St George's Channel, and the mouth of the Severn"* (26.6.1634, *CSP(D)*).

It is apparent that the sorts of everyday cargoes which were conveyed between Ireland and England were just as attractive, if less lucrative, as the more valuable bullion ships which travelled back from the Indies. Flushing pirates robbed six ships bound for Cornwall from Ireland of bullocks, sheep, wool and tallow (3.6.1667, *CSP(D)*). The overall prize was less valuable, but the effort needed to steal it was proportionately less. Not all pirates had the resources with which to sail for the Spanish Main.

During the Tudor and Stuart periods, Ireland was an attractive place for pirates to base their activities. Governments faced virtually permanent rebellion and dissent there (Elton 1977, 383-94; Williams 1979, 345) and even after the Elizabethan conquest control was often nominal. The rugged coastline of southern Ireland offered many hiding places, as did the islands peppered along it. Some Irish coastal towns openly welcomed pirates and their families: *"Many of these pirates have their wives and children in these parts about Limecon"* (Roger Myddleton, 23.8.1611, *CSP(I)*). The Lords of the Council noted the assistance given to the pirates *"by natives who, from motives of interest or of fear, are ready to supply their necessities, or by persons of our own nation who have taken places there with the express purpose of commercing with the pirates with more convenience and security"* (18.11.1612, *CSP(I)*). Nor were the islands off southern Ireland the only haunts. Off the Cornish, Devon, and Welsh coasts there are forty-six islands (Shea 1981), of which twenty-one are big enough to have been used by pirates - Captain Richard Plumleigh chased a group of pirates from St George's Channel into the Severn where the pirates *"betook themselves to Lundy and the Welsh islands"* (15.3.1633, *CSP(D)*). The Isle of Man and seventy-eight islands along the western coast of Scotland provided additional hiding places further north (*Shea 1981*).

Lundy was thus part of a large network of isolated land-falls available to pirates, and it was recognised by the authorities that this network was essential to pirate success: *"their lordships* [of the Council] *are sorry to learn that the mischief has reached such a height that it can only be checked either by laying the islands and the sea-coast waste and void of inhabitants, or by placing a garrison in every port and creek, which is impracticable"* (18.11.1612, *CSP(I)*).

A second factor in the success of both coastal piracy and ocean piracy, was the need for a market in which to trade the stolen goods (L'Estrange Ewen 1949, 33). Local landowners actively participated in piracy providing both custom and protection for the pirates (Mathew 1924, 337, 339, 346-7; Williams 1979, 244); and, if English markets failed, the lords of southern Ireland were valued customers (Mathew 1924, 344; Ohlmeyer 1990, 128). Sir Edward Denny received Gascon wine seized from a French ship while Lady Denny received goods stolen from *"Brittaines"* (Sir William Herbert, 24.5.1589, *CSP(I)*). The Spanish ambassador to England, Mendoza, noted a ready market for pirates to exploit in continental Europe (23.7.1580, *CSP(S)*).

Thomas (1978, 113, 116-7) suggests that the ravages of pirates led to the desertion of Lundy in the fifteenth century, but there is little evidence for this and poor economic prospects could just as easily have been the case. Although Holinshed's chronicles, written in the sixteenth century, record forty houses on the island, Thomas opines (1979, 20) that Holinshed was citing a fourteenth-century source. William of Worcester writing between 1478 and 1480 refers to Marisco castle but otherwise gives no evidence about whether the island was occupied (Thomas 1978, 117 quoting Polwehle 1806, 3:397). The strongest hint that Lundy was deserted comes from a complaint made by King Charles V of Spain in 1534 that three Spanish merchants, whose ship was seized by English pirates, were put ashore on Lundy *"that they might perish of hunger"*

(22.5.1534, document 354, *Letters & Papers, Foreign & Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII)* - they were rescued by a French ship. The English pirates would have known if Lundy was inhabited and so if the Spaniards were indeed marooned to die this is evidence that Lundy was deserted in the early sixteenth century. If the island was uninhabited this merely confirms that it would hold little attraction for pirates.

This helps to place Lundy's part in piracy in context. Lundy did not, and could not provide a market or a proper base for pirates. Its utility was as a temporary refuge. There was very limited potential to sell stolen goods or victual crews, and there were no secluded suitable beaches, such as other islands offered, to undertake essential and routine ship maintenance (Cordingly 1995, 116-7). Gardner suggests pirates only used Lundy as a look-out, with the majority of the crew remaining on board ready for a quick getaway (1970, 23-4).

POLICING PIRACY

Robbery is the use of force in order to steal: piracy is robbery at sea. It is as old as the organised shipping off which it preys, and so it comes as little surprise to find Charles Johnson, in his *General History of the Pirates*, beginning with the writings of Tully and Cicero when summarising the civil and statute law relating to piracy available in the eighteenth century (Schonhorn 1972, 377-9[2]). As early as c.594 BC the Laws of Solon refer to "associations of pirates" (Mitchell 1976, 11: see also p. 16 for comments on Cicero's definition of piracy).

Piracy in British waters had become a significant problem in the High Middle Ages. Convoys for shipping were introduced c.1242, and were a regular feature from the fourteenth century (L'Estrange Ewen 1949, 30). The anonymous author of the fifteenth century *Libel of English Policy* despaired of the scale of the problem when calling on the Crown to rid the seas of pirates (Williams 1979, 243; Warner 1926).

Elizabeth preferred to issue letters of marque rather than combat piracy with her own meagre resources, and the waters around Lundy were no exception to such private policing. On 14.11.1564 the Privy Council requested all *"Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, etc. to aid and assist to the best of their powers the Mayor, Aldermen and certain citizens of Bristol, to whom a commission is awarded out of the Court of the Admiralty to furnish and set to sea certain ships for the repressing and apprehending of pirates"* (Haltendorf *et al.*, 1993, 71). But letters of marque contributed as much (and possibly more) to the commission of piracy, as to its control.

James I accepted government responsibility for dealing with piracy, and although he refused to issue letters of marque (Senior 1976, 8), he did accept a Dutch offer in 1611 to patrol the Irish seas hunting for pirates. This was because the English navy, at that time, was not up to it and Dutch shipping was suffering for want of protection. The contracting out of naval policing to the Dutch degenerated into the problems which beset privateering and the arrangement quietly lapsed in 1614 (Senior 1876, 140-2.

The navy was a poor match for pirates. Pirate John Harris described the crew of one Royal Navy pinnace as *"beinge ragged beggars"* with just forty shirts among one hundred sailors (BM Cottonian MS Otho E VIII f.372, quoted in Senior 1976, 17). Naval vessels were either not suited to catching the swift pirate ships or else were not sea-worthy. The laws against piracy were also inadequate. Henry V had put piracy on a par with high treason (L'Estrange Ewen 1949, 31) while Henry VIII extended the scope of the law by including harbours and havens as places where piracy could be committed (Cornigly 1995, 6; Williams 1979, 244). But no one had thought to legislate against those ashore who helped the pirates and provided them with supplies and a market-place (Senior 1976, 125), an omission that was not set right until the second half of the seventeenth century. Many sailors who were either unemployed in the merchant service, or who fled the harsh conditions of the navy, or who were formally discharged from the navy when the sea-war with Spain ended on Elizabeth's death, took to piracy. The authorities were aware that strict enforcement of the death penalty on all those captured

[2] Johnson's true identity is disputed. Schonhorn believes him to be Daniel Defoe but Cordingly disagrees (1995, 11). He could just have been a pirate. He makes no mention of Lundy.

as pirates would rob the nation of potential naval crews in the event of future wars at sea (Senior 1976, 15-18; in 1578, 900 pirates were tried but only three were hung [Williams 1975, 150]).

The ineffectiveness of poorly drafted legislation, the implementation of which was not without adverse consequences, was limited further by inappropriate enforcement structures. The unpaid admirals and their deputies who were expected to bring pirates to justice, were at the same time expected to take as remuneration for their efforts a tenth of all prizes lawfully captured by privateers (Andrews 1964, chapter 2). This allowed scope for corruption, especially as the rewards for participating in piracy out-stripped those for fighting it.

The organisation of piracy on a commercial basis involved the active support of the local gentry to whom the authorities looked to suppress the practice. The Deputy Vice Admiral of Bristol was accused of taking bribes from pirates, the Vice Admiral of Wales was prosecuted for piracy (Mathew 1924, 338, 341) and a Lord High Admiral of England, Sir Thomas Seymour, faced thirty-three articles of treason, one of which was that he had seized the Scilly Isles and had every intention of seizing Lundy as a *"safe refuge"* and of *"conspiring at all evill eventes with pirates"* from there (23.2.1549, *APC*). Seymour was executed. Fifty years later the then Lord High Admiral, Charles Howard, was actively engaged in promoting privateering ventures (Andrews 1964, 26) and Sir Richard Hawkins, Vice Admiral of Devon from 1603-1610, was overtly sympathetic to any English pirates who attacked Spanish shipping and reputedly had dealings with every pirate in the west country (Senior 1976, 130-1). In Youghal, Ireland, the local admiral, Richard Jobson, employed pirates on admiralty business and had them acting as jurors in his court (Senior 1976, 139). Malpractice was so common that the instructions to vice-admirals included the charge *"to avoid the appearance on conniving at piracy"* (Williams 1975, 149); a careful choice of words that implies that asking vice-admirals not to connive was futile.

Lundy's role in the policing of piracy was limited. The island took no active part in the struggle other than on those occasions when islanders found themselves trying to repulse foreign pirates (30.6.1630, *CSP(D)).* Since it was never a permanent pirate base, nor a market from which pirates and gentlemen alike could profit, Lundy was an ideal place for the authorities to be seen to be doing something without serious risk and without damaging their own illicit interests.

In 1587 the authorities at Barnstaple initiated action against pirates sheltering on or near Lundy. The raid cost 5s 5d and 12s 1d was spent hiring six men to guard the pirates who were caught and held at Quay Hall, Barnstaple. Two shillings was spent on the prisoners' food (Chanter & Wainwright 1900, 2:130). Assuming the guards worked in pairs and in shifts this, together with the other relatively low costs, suggests a small-scale episode. Thomas (1978, 118) argues that this raid secured Lundy for several years to come. Maybe. There is no suggestion of a garrison on the island following the raid. Indeed correspondence from the Privy Council indicates vain efforts to persuade the owner, Barnard Grenville, to assume responsibilty for defending Lundy (25.2.1595 & 9.5.1596, APC). There is no evidence to indicate pirates avoided Lundy after 1587, but nor is there any direct evidence of pirates near Lundy until 1610.

In 1610 James I commissioned Charles Earl of Nottingham to give authority to the Earl of Bath and the mayor and aldermen of Barnstaple *"to send out ships for taking pirates"* (20.3.1610, *CSP(D)*). This appears an undefined authority, possibly *sine die,* and the pirates causing problems in 1610 may or may not have been using Lundy. It is possible that pirates referred to in the authority are those who accompanied Thomas Salkeld (see below).

It is not until 1612 that there is any record of this authority being evoked by the men of Barnstaple. That year the mayor and aldermen sent a ship called the John of Braunton with a crew of forty-two, and a barque called the Mayflower with a crew of twenty-six to the waters around Lundy following acts of piracy committed against a London ship and an Isle of Wight pinnace. The preparations for this raid were well documented and were discussed by Cotton (1886) although the original documents no longer survive. The sailors' names are recorded, together with the weapons that they

took with them: forty-one muskets, fifteen long pikes, fifteen short pikes, seven swords, two harquebus and eight calivers (these latter are early fire-arms: Cotton 1886, 193-4).

The result of the raid is recorded in a surviving letter dated 24.9.1612 from the mayor to the justices of Cornwall (North Devon Record Office B1/616; Cotton misread the roman numerals as the 31st, the arabic numerals on the reverse of the document confirm the date). Four named prisoners are recorded and Cotton concludes that the outcome was "certainly disproportional to the means employed" (1886, 196). This interpretation, together with the fact that he notes only the four named pirates, indicates that Cotton may not have been aware of the surviving records of the five pirates who were questioned about this matter by the mayor (NDRO B1/46/350; Harfield, forthcoming). This reveals rather more about the problem the authorities faced and suggests that despite the small number of prisoners, a force of sixty-eight men and two ships was not disproportionate to the threat. The mayor appears to have given the fifth man a generous benefit of doubt in deciding not to prosecute.

From the five, sometimes conflicting, testimonies the following provisional précis has been constructed. The pirates sailed originally from Kinsale in August under George, Gregory and Arthur Escott and put into Oyster Haven, just east of Kinsale, where there came aboard between twenty-five and sixty extra men from amongst whom John Finch was elected captain (testimony of John Hoare). They sailed to Lundy *"to take what they could carry away"* and robbed a Clovelly fishing boat besides the two ships aforementioned (testimony of John Seath, identified by fellow prisoner Thomas Smyth as Finch). A goat was stolen from Lundy. Then they sailed to Milford Haven where they seized two more ships, one from Barnstaple. One of the pirate vessels was intercepted by the mayor's raiding party while the other escaped.

The records suggest that these are relatively isolated examples of success. The mayor of Barnstaple at this time, Pentecost Doddridge, took action against pirates on other occasions under the protection of letters of marque. In August 1590 his ship The Prudence sailed to the Guinea coast and returned in December with at least £16,000 worth of gold bullion. *"Such a prize as this was never brought"* to Barnstaple before; in January 1592 The Prudence brought home a prize worth £10,000 (Chanter & Wainwright 1900, 2:198). The actions in 1587 and 1612 would never have resulted in such prizes and these could be interpreted as actions of necessity or altruism because of the threat to local shipping posed on these occasions. If this were the case, it is surprising that other similar actions are not recorded elsewhere. It could be the fact that each incident resulted in prisoners which made them relatively unusual and worthy of record but this seems unconvincing given that, as has already been shown, as many as 900 pirates were captured and tried in one year, and that there are so many references to piracy in the *CSP*. And suggesting chance document survival begs as many questions as it so conveniently answers. All that can be said with certainty is that history has recorded just two occasions when the authorities took successful action against pirates on or near Lundy, that there is no reliable measure of how typical such incidents were, and that for all his wealth and prestige as a privateer and leading citizen of Barnstaple, Pentecost Doddridge found himself in court in 1618 accused of failing to maintain his chimneys and gutters (Chanter & Wainwright 1900, 1:51).

PIRATES ASSOCIATED WITH LUNDY

Those pirates who are recorded as being directly involved on Lundy tend to fall into two distinct categories. Firstly there are the deep-water pirates who attacked the island as a potential source of provisions when they could not steal what they needed from the vessels they robbed at sea (which was the usual means of revictualling, Cordingly 1995, 130). On 18.8.1625 (*CSP(D)*) the mayor and aldermen of Bristol reported that three Turkish pirates (presumably the crews of three ships) had captured Lundy. On the 25.8.1625 this report was both denied by Captain Harris aboard the Phoenix sailing in the King Road, and confirmed by Sir James Perrot, a deputy vice admiral who produced the eye-witness testimony of one Nicholas Cullen as supporting evidence. Later Turkish raids occurred at Baltimore [Ireland] in 1631 and at Penzance in 1640 (Hebb 1994, 149). The Bristol Merchant Venturers' Book of Trade reveals that between 1610 and c.1620, of forty-five ships lost, twenty-six had been *"taken by Turks"*, three by *"pirates"* (possibly English if Turk is synonymous with foreign) and sixteen were

simply lost at sea through misadventure including the Daniel which was *"lost uppon Londay"* (McGrath 1950, 78).

There is nothing to suggest that any or all of those ships lost to the Turks were taken in the western approaches. But the Bristol records demonstrate how active the Turks were and this is supported by their raid on Lundy. Turkish deep-water pirates, having been taught how to build and sail ocean-going vessels by British pirates (Senior 1976, chapter 4), scoured the Atlantic as well as the Mediterranean. Although generally referred to as Turkish, these pirate crews were often a cosmopolitan mix and there are contemporary records of Turkish pirate ships being captained by Englishmen (Long 1973, 8).

Three years after the Turkish raid French pirates came to Lundy. The *CSP(D)* reveals very little. On 25.4.1628 Captain Richard Fogg aboard the St James sailing in the King Road heard reports that *"a French man-of-war has taken some barks off Lundy"*. Fogg searched in vain for this lone French ship, which perhaps had already left the area, for on 2.5.1628 he reported that he *"could not see nor hear of the French man-of-war who has done spoil off the Isle of Lundy"*. No mention here of any raid on the island. At his Axminster home Walter Yonge MP had heard news of the French in the Bristol Channel which he recorded in his diary in late April 1628: *"four French ships took about twenty-six sails of ships in Severn and other parts of the coast, and took also the Isle of Lundy and rifled it, and so left the shore"* (Roberts 1848, 114). The lone French vessel which Fogg was hunting may or may not have been one of the fleet of four French ships at large in the Bristol Channel. This cannot be confirmed, nor can it be ascertained how long it took the news recorded by the diarist to reach Axminster, but the source dates are sufficiently approximate to allow the hypothesis that the two sources are describing connected events.

The indirect evidence of the diary is also interesting. Axminster is the far side of the south-west peninsula from Lundy, a long distance for news of such an incursion to travel so promptly in the seventeenth century. The news could have travelled overland but this begs the questions why and how should such news have reached Axminster? Yonge does not appear to be especially interested in piracy since he records only one other incident in the twenty-four years he kept the diary (a burglary at the Salcombe house of former privateer Sir William Courtenay during which the offenders both arrived and escaped by boat; Roberts 1848, 103). Piracy was so common that the usual might not be bothered with and only the exceptional recorded, but this argument merely offers a possible explanation as to why Yonge noted the episode; it does not explain how the news reached him. If it did not come by land, and there does not seem to be any special reason why it should, then it came by sea with the coastal shipping plying from port to port. It seems more probable that Yonge heard of the raid via the harbour chatter at Lyme Regis, just five miles from his home. These chance circumstances meant that a small piece of Lundy history survives which the official records had overlooked because a naval hunter could not find his prey.[3]

In 1633 eighty men from a Biscayner man-of-war raided Lundy, killing an islander called Mark Pollard before making good their escape with stolen victuals (30.7.1633, *CSP(D)*). The ensuing search for these pirates occupies a number of subsequent CSP entries (Harfield, forthcoming). Such sporadic raids continued infrequently and intermittently. As late as 1709 Thomas Jones, a Treasury servant posted to Lundy, complained that he *"was often robbed by the French privateers, and so was reduced to a mean condition"*. He begged leave to be posted to London (c.7.5.1709, *Treasury Papers*).

The second category of pirates directly associated with Lundy are those British pirates whose exploits earned them places in contemporary administrative records. In connection with action taken by the authorities, Finch and his cronies have already been mentioned.

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[3] Langham (n.d., 5; 1994, 36) attributes the report of the raid to Richard Fogg but does not reference his source for this. In the absence of any indication to the contrary it is assumed that Langham confused and conflated the different sources for 1628.

The island's most notorious resident, William, son of Geoffrey Marisco (not to be confused with his cousin William, son of Jordan Marisco, who owned Lundy) brought to Lundy an early association with alleged piracy. But was he really a pirate? The Marisco family history in relation to Lundy has been examined in detail by Professor Powicke (1941). William, son of Geoffrey, was a west country renegade and outlaw who in 1237 stood accused of murdering a royal official, and in 1238 was accused of plotting to assassinate the king, for which crimes he was declared a traitor and hunted down. He evaded capture from 1237 to 1242 during which time he took to the western seas off Britain ranging between the Galloway coast of Scotland and the Bristol Channel. Occasionally involved in plots with the Scottish king, William, son of Geoffrey, and his gang subsisted in part through attacking merchants trading across the Irish Sea. These he seized as hostages.

In his political vendetta against the king (Powicke 1962, 58) Marisco was interested not so much in the goods or ships, but in what ransom he could obtain from those willing to secure the release of the merchants who he kidnapped. This was behaviour consistent with baronial codes of conduct although tactically very different from the straightforward thieving associated with later piracy when prisoners were either enslaved or released. It was common for mediaeval tournaments to determine the economic and political pecking order of the nobility and knightly classes as an alternative to all-out war to the death. Victors sometimes held the vanquished ransom (Block 1965, 304-5; Denholm-Young 1948, 242), thus William Marisco would have been familiar with the idea of hostage-taking as an action suitable for one of his social rank. In his single, very brief reference to Lundy, Mitchell asserts that Marisco kept his hostages in a dungeon on the island (1976, 33). The source for this information is not cited and so cannot be corroborated here. It is possible that this has been confused with the suggestion that Benson's Cave was used to house convicts transported to the island in the eighteenth century (Langham 1994, 48-50).

William Marisco may have resupplied his ships from the stores of his prizes but his primary motivation was significantly different from the motivation of those who were to make piracy a common concept. For his supplies he mainly raided settlements ashore, an action not usually associated with later coastal pirates who needed friendly land-bases at which to trade their stolen goods. These are actions beyond the strict definition of piracy *(Oxford English Dictionary)*. Contemporary criminals such as Eustace the Black Monk were engaged in robbery on the high seas which is recognisable as piracy (Mitchell 1976, 32). Within this context Marisco's reputation as a pirate has, perhaps, been acquired by default simply because he extended his land-based rebellion to the sea. The mediaeval chronicler Matthew Paris, who had not a good word to say about any of the family and so should be read with caution, is prominent in promoting the image of Marisco as a pirate (Luard 1964, 4:193-6).

To have operated over such a wide range (virtually the whole of the western coast of the British mainland) it is reasonable to assume that Marisco would have had a number of different safe havens. He is not specifically recorded at Lundy until 1241 (Powicke 1941, 297): he may have visited Lundy before 1241 but there is no evidence to confirm this and other evidence to show he stayed mainly in the northern Irish Sea and Scottish waters. Following his outrages in the Irish Sea notices were sent to Dublin, Drogheda and Ulster calling for the arrest of Marisco and the return of the goods he had stolen (28.9.1237, *Patent Rolls*). Clearly that is where the king expected to find the rebel. Marisco is recorded as having accomplices in the land of the king of Scotland (18.6.1237 & 28.9.1237, *Patent Rolls*) which implies he also had bases there.

The appointment of William of Bath, sheriff of Devon, to keep the Devon coast free from the incursions of the king's enemies staying on Lundy does not identify the enemies (2.1.1242, *Patent Rolls*); nor are they identified in the mandate of all Devon to assist the four knights sent by the king to oust his enemies on the island (7.2.1242, *Patent Rolls*); nor in the instruction to William Bardolf to keep the peace in the region (21.5.1242, *Patent Rolls*). It has generally been assumed that the references concern Marisco because it was on Lundy that the king's followers eventually captured the rebel in 1242 (Powicke 1941, 301).

Marisco had been a particular nuisance. But he was as much if not more a political nuisance who funded his petty rebellion with incidental crime, than an ecomonic threat such as the later pirates were to become. Lundy was just one of his haunts. In an age when lawlessness and rebellion were rife, William, son of Geoffrey Marisco, was just another minor baron with ambition ultimately beyond the scope of his ability.[4]

Langham asserts that Robert Hickes, John Piers and John Callice (also known as Callys or Challice) were "better-known pirates" who "definitely used" Lundy, accepting that they may have done nothing more than shelter in the lee of the island (Langham n.d., 5). The evidence that Piers, at least may actually have set foot on the island is unexpected. When Piers was arrested "it was discovered during his interrogation that a neighbour had acquired his parrot on Lundy Island" (Cordingly 1995, 20; see also Rowse 1962, 162-4).

Hickes, Piers and Callice were all active in the second half of the sixteenth century (Mathew 1924, 342-3; William, 1975. 157, and 162-5 relates brief biographies of these three without reference to Lundy). At the beginning of the seventeenth century there appeared on the scene Thomas Salkeld, also called Sackwell or Saukewell, who declared himself king of Lundy. Such an extravagent claim was not unusual among pirates (Cordingly 1995, 173). Easton regarded himself as king of his own domain, and according to one contemporary ballad the pirate John Ward stated he would "reign as king at sea" (Senior 1976, 36: Senior also states that Thomas Sockwell, a former naval officer turned pirate, declared himself king of Lundy but does not cite his source and is probably referring to Salkeld). Salkeld seems to have been linked with another notorious pirate, Easton. Assuming here that it is the same individual, Senior (1976) discusses Easton's international career as a pirate at length without mentioning Lundy or Salkeld, and Cotton (1886, 189) notes Salkeld's presence on Lundy, contrasting it with the fact that Easton "also frequented the Bristol Channel". Langham speculates (1994, 34-5) that Salkeld and Easton shared a lair on Lundy. While this cannot be confirmed, evidence of some association between them comes with the manner of Salkeld's death (see below).

Salkeld's association with Lundy is not in doubt, but it is brief. In a frenzy of crime across the Bristol Channel in the spring of 1610, Salkeld seized vessels and took possession of Lundy for a few weeks having already attacked Milford Haven where he had set fire to houses and a church (28.3.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury* 21, 209).

This seizure of Lundy was recorded in the depositions of a number of persons involved. John Tanner and Thomas Clarke, Weymouth mariners, were on their way to Swansea when Salkeld seized their ships. They reckoned his band at 130 men with six or seven ships besides those he seized daily, yet he was in want of provisions on the island *(ibid)*. Their story was confirmed by two Dutchmen, Deo Seolphus and Arison of Ancusan, whose ship was attacked while sailing from La Rochelle to Bristol with a cargo of salt. Some of their fellow crew-members were imprisoned, others remained as crew on their own ship which was now under the control of the pirates (27.3.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury* 21, 210). Salkeld demanded oathes of allegiance on pain of death from his prisoners and forced them to build platforms on the island upon which he placed three pieces of ordnance. William Young, taken prisoner by Salkeld in yet another ship seizure, escaped from Lundy in a group led by George Escott (17.4.1610, *CSP(D)*). Escott, described as a merchant of Bridgewater, enlisted the help of the Earl of Bath in seeking recompense of five hundred pounds from the Privy Council for himself and his family as a result of what he claimed they had lost to the pirates, (15.4.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury* 21, 214-5: there is no suggestion that Escott's family were also prisoners). What he received was a pension of 1s 6d (Denson 1836, 309-310, quoted in Thomas 1978, 122). Escott may be the same man who attacked Lundy in 1612 and could therefore have been a disaffected associate of Salkeld who had turned against him rather than a genuine prisoner like Young. Other members of the 1612 raid had sailed previously with Easton.

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[4] Lundy fell forfeit to the Crown after Marisco's execution. The building of the castle confusingly named after Marisco began in 1243 at the command of the king, and was partially funded by the sale of rabbits farmed on the island (5.2.1243, *Liberate Rolls)*.

As a result of this the Earl of Bath described Lundy as *"a place so dangerous to all passengers"* to Barnstaple and Bristol that it was impossible for anyone to avoid being attacked by Salkeld (28.3.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury* 21, 209). Sir William Monson was sent to the Severn estuary in response to the Earl's desperate plea for something to be done about Salkeld. Monson found his intended ship, the Advantage, *"so unserviceable in men, victuals, sails, powder and all things else, that it was impossible to fit her to sea"*. (10.4.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury,* 21, 212). Intelligence suggested that Salkeld had by then fled Lundy for Ireland but was himself so badly provisioned that he could not stay at sea long and was likely to have to put ashore in the south-west or Wales. Monson could do little more than alert the coastal ports accordingly (10.4.1610, *HMC Marquess of Salisbury,* 21, 213). There is a suggestion that Salkeld ransacked the island and then abandoned it (19.4.1610, *HMC Marquess of Downshire* 2, 279). Thomas suggests (1978, 121-2) that the reports of Salkeld both using the island and ransacking it are contradictory and therefore mutually exclusive, but it is suggested here that they can be interpreted as sequential actions. Although the mayor and altermen of Barnstaple had been granted authority in 1610 to take action against unspecified pirates, they appear to have taken no action against Salkeld and his gang, possibly reasoning that he might prove too strong an opponent and fearing the sort of punitive action inflicted in Milford Haven. Salkeld escaped the authorities who regarded him as *"a petty rebel"*, but in July that year he was reported slain, his body thrown overboard by Easton (19.7.1610, document 818, & 21.9.1610, document 871, *CSP(I)*); these sources do not support Harrison's suggestion, 1958, 222, that Easton, clearly a pirate leader in his own right, was one of Salkeld's men at the time of Salkeld's death).

The pirate John Nutt plied all the western coastal waters of the British mainland and ranged as far as Spain (22.7.1632, *CSP(D)*) with bases on Long Island [near Baltimore, Ireland] and on Caldy Island [Wales] (29.7.1632 & 4.9.1632, (*CSP(D)*). Capain Richard Plumleigh planned to seek him out aware that some of Nutt's gang might be on Lundy (22.7.1632, *CSP(D)*). Nutt was eventually located on the Isle of Bute but when Plumleigh tried to engage him in battle Nutt just sailed away, easily out-running the sluggish naval ship (4.9.1632 (*CSP(D)*).[5]

The most notorious and successful pirate of his day was Captain Thomas Kidd. His legendary exploits in the Caribbean make compelling reading in the annals of the *CSP(AWI)*. In contrast, his association with Lundy provides a brief and inauspicious footnote. Captured in America (8.7.1699, *CSP(AWI)*, document 621), Kidd was among the first pirates to be repatriated from the colonies to stand trial in London following a general ordinance to this effect issued in November 1699. After the long trans-Atlantic crossing Lundy was the first land-fall, and there Kidd was held whilst an escort to London was sent for (9.4.1700, *CSP)D)*).

CONCLUSION

Had Lundy a large part to play in piracy this would have been reflected in the available records. This is not the case. References to piracy are many but those that include Lundy are relatively few and usually refer to the island only as a means of identifying a general location. Nor did Lundy play any significant part in the smuggling which was to replace coastal piracy in the eighteenth century. The vulnerability which made Lundy susceptable to raids and blockading by pirates meant it was also too vulnerable to be used by them as an important base. For those pirates whose crews did visit the island briefly, Lundy was just one of many refuges. The Salkeld episode was short and exceptional. Time and again the sparse evidence tempts us to assume: the gaps in documentary record invite inference. Yet neither assumption nor inference necessarily permit conclusions. Though the subject matter demands a dramatic portrait painted in bold colours, the Lundy evidence warrants only the circumspection of an exploratory pencil sketch. Surviving references indicate that although never in the limelight, just occasionally Lundy fell in the shadow cast by pirates.

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[5] Senior (1976, 144) refers to Robert Nutt and John Downes, pirates who 'led the navy a merry chase in the south west' in 1631 using Helford as a hide-out. The coincidence of the dates may mean that John and Robert Nutt were related, but Senior does not cite his source and it has not been possible to coroborate it.

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CSP - *Calendar of State Papers.* HMSO, London, various series: Domestic (D), Foreign (F), Irish (I), Spanish (S), and America & West Indies (AWI).

HMC Marquess of Downshire - Historic Manuscripts Commission. *Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire. 2. Papers of William Turnbull the Elder.* HMSO, London.

HMC Marquess of Salisbury - Historic Manuscript Commission. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable Marquess of Salisbury*, 21 (1609-1612). HMSO, London.

Liberate Rolls - *Calendar of Liberate Rolls.* HMSO, London.

Patent Rolls - *Calendar of Patent Rolls.* HMSO, London.

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