

Rebels and Recluses: Lundy's history in context

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Lundy's geographic isolation dictates a recurrent theme through history: it has been a redoubt for the rebel and the recluse, the reactionary and the refugee. As a consequence it has historical significance but a significance confined more to the footnotes of history than its main text. For all the island's rebellious associations, both political and economic, it has never enjoyed anything greater than regional importance, more often than not being the source of a little local irritation.

Had the port and market at Bristol assumed greater economic importance than London early on, the story might have been different. But London enjoyed closer proximity to continental Europe, and the invading Romans, Saxons and Normans necessarily established beach-heads in the south-east, before seeking to control the rest of the British mainland. Not until the trade routes to the New World were established was the economic and geographical focus of the kingdom re-balanced. By then London's political pre-eminence was unassailable. Lundy, therefore, stood on the threshold to the back-door during the formative cen-

turies of English history and it is within this framework that Lundy's history must be explored.

The history of Lundy has been the subject of much recent attention, notable of which is the work of the late Tony Langham (1994; Langham and Langham 1984), and Myrtle Ternstrom (1994). Both have produced detailed histories of the island, and it is not the intention of this chapter to replace them in any sense. Where this chapter does differ is that it has been written, as it were, from the outside in: viewing Lundy from the wider perspective of its contemporary political landscape, as opposed to exploring islanders' attitudes towards the outside world.

An historical framework

Lundy's history, in the sense of documented evidence of past events, begins in 1140 when episodes from the *Orkneyinga Saga* describe the squabbles of settlers largely oblivious to, and unaffected by, contemporary events in mid-twelfth century Anglo-Norman England. In the spring and summer of that year, Hold – a chief from Wales – used the island as a base from which to plunder the Scandinavian settlements on the Isle of Man in retaliation for earlier raids on the Welsh coast. The Vikings of Man, under the leadership of Svein Asleifarson, besieged Hold on Lundy but to no avail, returning to the Isle of Man in the autumn. The following year Holdboldi, who had taken part in the raids on Wales with Svein, revolted against him and sought refuge on Lundy, being welcomed there by Hold

(Pálsson & Edwards 1981, 146-7).

The western coastal regions to the north of the south-west peninsula were, at this time, mostly untroubled by authoritarian government. The sons of Harold Godwinson chose Devon as the area in which to launch an uprising against William I in 1068 and 1069, but the former Saxon king had been no more popular in this region than his Norman conqueror, and the sons failed to find support for their cause (Golding 1994, 38-9). On the northern shores of the Bristol Channel, King William had avoided the argumentative Welsh princes by establishing the Palatinate earldoms (Loyn 1982, 179) to keep the ungovernable at bay. And by the mid-twelfth century when Hold used Lundy, the Angevin empire of Henry II was emerging from the ashes of civil war which characterised Stephen's reign, and the politics of England were focused towards western France, from Normandy to Gascony. Taking advantage of this void, which persisted when the Francocentric Henry II was succeeded initially by the crusading Richard I, then the politically inept John and eventually the nine year-old Henry III, the Marisco family seized Lundy probably for no other purpose but to ensure privacy from royal government and baronial intrigue (the rightful possessors of the island were the Knights Templar: Lees 1935, 141).

It has been suggested tentatively that a direct blood link existed between the thirteenth century Mariscos and William the Conqueror (Langham 1994, 14).

However, the lack of sources renders the Marisco genealogy before the twelfth century impossible to trace with any certainty (Powicke 1941, 290), and the idea that the Mariscos wished to use the island as a base from which to mount a claim to the throne in 1238 (Langham 1994, 18) is speculation. It is a fact that the island was used by certain individuals of the family to avoid being brought to justice for the murder of a minor royal official. Professor Powicke's meticulous recounting of this incident (Powicke 1941) is probably as erudite and explicit an explanation as it is possible to achieve given that there were living contemporaneously more than one branch of the family, and a number of individuals named William de Marisco. Indeed the ministers enforcing the justice of Henry III seized the lands of the wrong William de Marisco on one occasion (*ibid*, 299), and if contemporaries could be so easily confused, it is understandable that later historians find it difficult.

The actions of the Mariscos were typical of the age. The barons under Stephen and Matilda had the opportunity to assume virtual political independence and supported whichever of the two claimants suited them at any time in the conflict (Poole 1955, chapter 5). Richard I was never at home long enough to establish direct control over his tenants-in-chief. John succumbed to baronial power at Runnymede in 1215, acceding to the Magna Carta which, far from being the bill of rights it is so often claimed to be, established in codified form baronial privilege to

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exploit the lower social orders free from undue royal interference (*ibid*, chapter 14). The baronial label itself described a seigneurial rank within which were to be found a wide variety of tenurial and economic circumstances in a fluid social order (Mortimer 1994, 79 & 87).

Lundy's setting, physically removed from mainland influence, was the ideal place for a secondary branch of a minor baronial family to establish some small token of seigneurial independence. The limits of Marisco influence can be measured by their absence from, or at best their infrequent occurrence in the indices of major history books (McKisack 1959; Poole 1955; Powicke 1962). The Lundy Mariscos did however cause a significant nuisance in the Bristol Channel through piracy (Powicke 1941, 297-300). It was for this crime and his treachery that William de Marisco was executed in a fashion devised specifically for him (hanging, drawing and quartering: Langham 1994, 17, fn 21; Lewis 1987, 234-9). (See Fig.1.)

The family's notoriety was achieved through a single murder which is known about only because, by chance and unusually, the records of the judicial inquiry have survived (Maitland 1895). After the capture of the Mariscos (Powicke 1941, 300-301) Henry III took steps to secure his control of the island by placing his own men in charge of it. Arguably the king attached considerable importance to the island (Langham 1994, 19), though it is difficult to see why. Although in effect Lundy was a natural fortress, it

was far from any centre of political significance; nor was it held by a major baronial family. Above all, the economic resources of the island were insufficient to sustain a full knight's fee (Langham 1984, 49), never mind a concerted rebellion. The interest shown by Henry III in disposing of the island once it had been forfeit to the crown was no more than would have been shown to any other escheated estates.

Rebellion continued into the fourteenth century with civil war in the reign of Edward II. In 1326, fleeing from the rebel army, the king travelled from Bristol to Chepstow apparently intending to take refuge on Lundy and from there counter-attack. Storms prevented him sailing to the island and he was captured at Neath Abbey (McKisack 1959, 24, 86). If his only refuge in his own kingdom was a tiny island some twelve miles off the coast then the king's cause was probably lost already.

The south-west peninsula was as much a problem to Edward VI (1547-53) as it had been to the Conqueror nearly five hundred years earlier. The Cornish had rebelled against taxes under Edward's grandfather Henry VII in 1497, and in 1548 another rising swelled in Cornwall and spread to Devon, this time against the imposition of a vernacular prayer book intended to replace the Latin mass at a time when the Cornish spoke their own language; they could recognise the Latin liturgy but comprehended not a word of English (Beer 1982, chapter 3). The independent nature of those living in the south-west had

never properly been challenged. Royal rule was tolerated up to a point but local government was entirely in the hands of individual squires, none of whom had especially close affiliations to the politics of the royal court. Although the Tudor administration created the basis of modern government, their influence was weak in the south-west, and probably weaker still on Lundy. This was still true a century later: with the country in the grips of a civil war yet again, Lundy was once more home to a lost cause.

Possession of the island had now passed to Sir Bevil Grenville, a member of the gentry classes who enjoyed much independence in the south-west. Grenville also held land on the mainland and in 1641 had written, "make it known to all my neighbours and tenants.... that I shall take it ill if they grind not at my mill" (Davies 1937, 266). The seigneurial right of a lord to force his tenants to use the manorial mills and pay for the privilege rather than use their own mills or hand-querns, like all banalites, enabled feudal lords to exploit the economic surplus produced by their peasants (Bennet and Elton 1975; Harfield 1990, chapter 3). That it should still be enforced in the seventeenth century speaks volumes about social and economic relationships in the south-west peninsula at this time.

Grenville mortgaged Lundy to raise money for the royalist cause (Langham 1994, 38). On his death the island passed to another royalist, Thomas Bushell. The fact that Lundy was one of the very last royalist outposts to be surrendered to Parliament indicates not

that it had withstood military force to the end, nor that it was an important stronghold, but simply that it had no military or political significance and was thus not a target for Cromwell. The surrender of the island was achieved through negotiation after Bushell had sought permission from the imprisoned king.

This was the last occasion an occupier of the island was willing openly to defy the government of the day with force of arms. It was not, however, the last time an occupier would dissent from government. For William Hudson Heaven among the attractions of his new purchase in 1834 were the rights and privileges which it was claimed pertained to the island. Such claims were a throw-back to the days of baronial independence and civil war and do not appear to have been founded upon royal charter¹. Whatever the perceived rights and privileges, Heaven was keen to preserve them. He was mindful too, to preserve a foothold in democracy and so retained possession of certain mainland estates in order to maintain his electoral

1 It has been suggested that Lundy's unique tenurial circumstances were referred to in correspondence between Elizabeth I and Bishop Tunstall in 1559 (Langham 1994, 199) but this correspondence demonstrates merely that Lundy had traditionally been omitted from royal treaties; probably originally an error, this was perpetuated since Elizabeth I did not see fit to correct it. As such this is evidence of royal indifference, not of special tenurial privileges or rights of independence (*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth I: 12th and 16th May 1559*).



THE DEATH OF WILLIAM DE MARISCO

Fig 1 The Death of William De Marisco
From the Darawings of Matthew Paris edited by M R James
(Walpole Society 1926)

franchise. But as far as Lundy was concerned, his word was law. In 1871 he challenged the right of a mainland law court to hear a trial for manslaughter, following a death on the island. Having succeeded in his challenge, and therefore in making his point, he formally requested that the trial take place on the mainland (Langham 1987, 10). In the same year the authorities demonstrated some ambivalence towards the island when Devon magistrates objected to employing constables on the island in view of uncertainty as to whether or not the island fell within Devonshire's administration (Langham 1994, 200)².

By 1929 the magistrates at Bideford were satisfied that they did indeed have judicial responsibilities for the island, and convicted the then owner, Martin Coles Harman (Fig.2), of issuing his own coinage contrary to the Coinage Act 1870. Arguing that he was the owner and therefore governor of a self-regulating Dominion outside territorial waters which paid no taxes and received no central government services, Harman appealed against conviction on the grounds that the Bideford magistrates had no jurisdiction over him. The Lord Chief Justice found against him and an important test case had been established (Langham 1994, 203).

2 The magistrates were prepared to consider police provision if the island's occupiers were prepared to meet the cost (Myrtle Ternstrom, pers comm).

Harman also wished to make a point about Lundy's independence regarding the armed services. From 1929 onwards he charged landing dues to any uniformed military personnel who visited the island and at the outbreak of war in 1939 he publicly denied the right of the Government to requisition material or supplies from the island. Notwithstanding his claim to independence, he was prepared to offer full co-operation in a time of national emergency (*ibid*, 203-4).

The political independence claimed for Lundy in the last 150 years is merely symbolic, all the more so because the island, besides being *de facto* militarily dependent, was also completely economically dependent upon the mainland. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were thus periods of defiance and dissent rather than open rebellion. The island's tenurial circumstances in relation to the rest of the kingdom were clearly anomalous, but it was not until 1973 that the Government took the significant step of imposing taxes upon Lundy's residents. The Boundary Commission the following year incorporated the island into the county of Devon.

To summarise, two themes emerge from this overview: rebellion, both in the form of piracy and smuggling, and reclusion, and these display a chronological dimension which merits further consideration.

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Themes and variations

Piracy

The lifestyle of many of the settlers along the west coasts of Britain and its islands was not far removed from that which many would recognise as piracy. The need for subsistence piracy was simple: Lundy has only limited agricultural potential for the law-abiding. Those wishing to isolate themselves from contact with the mainland, including trading at markets, have virtually no means of surviving for long periods of time on what the island alone can sustain.

By the Tudor period sufficient information becomes available to place piracy in the Bristol Channel into perspective. The anonymous author of *The Libel of English Policy* called upon the Crown to clear English waters of pirates (Warner 1926, 31). The coastal waters of the Bristol and St George's Channels appear to have been particularly prone to piracy (Williams 1979, 244), although shipping in the English Channel was also at risk (Black 1959, 126).

There were some twenty ports in England in the reign of Henry VII, to which can be added any number of creeks and small harbours (Mackie 1952, 219). Bristol developed trade with Ireland, Iceland and the Iberian peninsula and as early as 1461, William Cannings of Bristol controlled a fleet of ten merchant vessels which made him a powerful trading merchant. Henry VII actively encouraged English traders by



Fig. 2 Martin Coles Harman

forbidding the use of foreign vessels to conduct trade abroad if English ships were available, and by supporting Merchant Adventurers in the competition for trade with the Hanseatic League and the Venetian traders (*ibid*, 220).

In 1496, John Cabot began exploring the potential for trade with the New World from Bristol, and ten years later Bristol traders formed themselves into The Company Adventurers into the New Found Lands. Increased trade meant more prey for the pirates. The rewards were not great, but this was compensated for by the regularity of the captures (Mathew 1924, 338; McGrath 1950, 70-72, argues that losses to local pirates were minimal compared to losses to Turkish pirates in the Bristol Channel).

Lundy was not the only base for pirates in the Bristol Channel as the rugged coastlines of the south-west peninsula provided numerous hiding places and landing areas. Local landowners actively participated in piracy providing both custom and protection for the pirates (Williams 1979, 244). Collaboration between the pirates, the gentry and local officials ensured that pirate bases from Ireland to Dorset were safe from sudden attack (Mathew 1924, 337). Piracy had developed from a subsistence strategy to a commercial concern (*ibid*, 334).

Piracy complicated the then delicate relations between England and Spain. For example, in 1534 Don Pedro de la Borda, Vizino de las San Sebastian and Pero Minez de Malles, all Spanish sea merchants,

were put ashore on Lundy having had their ships seized by English pirates (Langham 1994, 28). Thirty years later the failure to address successfully the problem of piracy, despite the best efforts of the Privy Council, aroused suspicions in Spain that English piracy against Spanish shipping was unofficially condoned by the Crown. Indeed the activities of Sir Francis Drake in the waters off Central America supported such a supposition (Black 1959, 126, 248). On the other hand there were valid suspicions in the English court that Irish pirates exploiting English shipping were acting on the orders of Spain, thus linking piracy with treason (Mathew 1924, 344-5).

Effective action against the pirates was hindered by the independent inclinations of the local south-west aristocracy and gentry, and by the fact that the rewards for fighting piracy were out-stripped by the rewards of engaging in it. Crime paid. The Deputy Vice Admiral of Bristol was accused of taking bribes from pirates, the Vice Admiral of Wales was prosecuted for piracy (Mathew 1924, 337, 341), and in 1549 Lord Seymour, the High Admiral of England, was executed for piracy and consorting with pirates including with those on Lundy with whom he sought refuge (Langham 1994, 28). It is hardly surprising when those in charge of suppressing piracy were themselves engaged in it, that lesser, local gentry also became involved.

Lundy's position was vulnerable. It could only be a temporary base for pirates. It did not provide them

with a market for their plunder. It was not the home of a local minor aristocrat willing to sponsor pirate raids. If action against mainland pirates was ineffective because of the role duality in law-breakers enforcing the law, no such problems existed on Lundy where there were no persons with law-enforcing responsibilities. Under these circumstances Lundy witnessed official action against pirates. In 1587 the authorities at Barnstaple launched a raid on pirates staying on Lundy (Langham 1994, 31). It seems to have been successful as no pirates were reported there when Sir Richard Grenville visited the island a year later. Lundy was the only place in the south-west where the authorities could be seen to be taking effective action against pirates, and where corrupt public officials could act without adversely affecting their own private interests.

Success against the Lundy pirates was only temporary. The eviction of those in 1587 merely afforded others the opportunity to base themselves on the island in later years. In 1620 the mayor of Bristol reported to the Privy Council that £8,000 had been lost in one year due to piracy, and that consequently Bristol merchants could not pay their full contribution towards the cost of suppressing it (Stephens 1974, 158; McGrath 1970, 69 & 73). This suggests not only a recipe for disaster for the merchants, but also ultimately for the pirates who were seriously damaging the trade on which they preyed.

War with France and Spain, and the pirates based

at Lundy, were specifically blamed for the decrease in trade at Bristol at this time (Stephens 1974, 159). In 1625 Turkish pirates seized the island (Langham 1994, 36), and the following year as many as fifty ships were reported lost in the Bristol Channel to pirates or shipwrecks (Stephens 1974, 159; McGrath 1950, 78). In 1628 a French fleet raiding the Severn also attacked the island (Langham 1994, 36; Stephens 1974, 159), and in 1631 a pirate called John Nutt proclaimed himself admiral of Lundy (Ternstrom 1994, 7). Such a catalogue could be presented for the rest of the seventeenth century, but in this period also there emerged a second form of economic rebellion which was eventually to supersede piracy.

Smuggling

Smuggling was recorded on Lundy in 1723 by customs officials who had been posted in the area since 1698 (Langham 1994, 46). Throughout the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century smuggling was a major problem for the authorities. The nature of surviving government records suggests that the problem was far more serious along the coasts of Essex, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, and Dorset than it was in the West Country, although clearly absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence (Atton and Holland 1908, 1910; Harper 1966, chapter 9; Smith 1989, 65). Once again it was the proximity of England's south-east coast to continental Europe which focused economic activity. Apart from the

country houses of the squirarchy, London provided the main market for smuggled goods. The economist Adam Smith remarked upon the hypocrisy of those who denounced smuggling when so many enjoyed its fruits (Harper 1966, 112). The Bristol Channel not only lacked a large customer-base; it also suffered perilous waters and a coastline far less suited to mass smuggling than the Kent and Sussex coasts (Smith 1989, 66).

Information about smuggling in the West Country comes largely from two smugglers who wrote autobiographies (Carter 1900, writing about a Cornish smuggling family; Rattenbury 1837, writing about smuggling in Devon). Compared with the trade along the south-east coast, smuggling in the south-west peninsula was economically insignificant to the extent that Smith has described it as "small fry" (1989, 65). When the number of dragoons employed to combat smugglers was doubled in 1733, it was to Essex, Kent and Sussex that the reinforcements were sent (Atton and Holland 1908, 231). The north Devon coast had to make do with four unarmed customs officers (Smith 1989, 116-7).

The government could not mount any effective action against smugglers such was the demand for smuggled goods. Accounts presented to the House of Commons in 1825 show that smuggled goods worth £282,541 in excise duty had been seized during the previous three years, but at an enforcement cost of £2,070,528 (Harper 1966, 160-2). Trade restrictions,

too complicated even for customs officers to understand (Atton and Holland 1908, 211), were relaxed in the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Atton and Holland 1910, 135). All the islands in the Bristol Channel were bases for smugglers (Smith 1989, 66). Those principally involved came from Ireland, and from the large number of pilots who worked the Channel waters (*ibid*, 62-3, 77, 79). The advantage Lundy had over the other islands was two-fold. Pilotage was compulsory from Lundy and therefore the opportunities to engage in smuggling under the cloak of legitimacy were many. Secondly, Lundy fell outside the jurisdiction of the Smuggling Acts (*ibid*, 79, 124). Customs officials were aware of the smuggling based at Lundy but could take no direct action against the island.

This legislative loop-hole was exploited by a Bideford merchant, Thomas Benson, who smuggled tobacco and also transported convicts to the island (*ibid*, 123-5; Langham 1994, 47). His contract with the government was to transport convicts to Virginia, but Benson's attitude to Lundy was like that of many of its owners. Having acquired the island in 1748 it had become his personal fief, separate from the kingdom of England. In transporting convicts to the island to work for him, Benson felt he had fulfilled his part of the bargain to remove the convicts from the kingdom. His smuggling base and private colony was strongly defended against Customs officials by gun platforms (*ibid*, 52).

Benson's removal from the island, following a fraud-

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ulent insurance claim on a ship he himself caused to be sunk (*ibid*, 50), left it free for others to use as a smuggling base. In 1782 Customs Officers seized 128 ankers (9 gallon kegs) of brandy. Three years later a smuggler called Knight, who operated on a scale similar to Benson, occupied Lundy having been driven from Barry Island (*ibid*, 57; Smith 1989, 126). As late as 1856, a tenant farmer on Lundy was convicted of the crime, but by this period the relaxation of trading legislation meant smuggling had become less lucrative. Lundy then entered a third phase of its history when those hiding from authority were replaced by those choosing merely to withdraw from wider society.

Reclusion

With the compensation he received following the emancipation of his Jamaican slaves, William Hudson Heaven (Fig.3) bought Lundy in 1836 for the price of £9,870 (Langham 1987, 10)³. His intention was to use it as a summer residence although financial necessity eventually forced his permanent removal to the island (Ternstrom pers comm). Lundy had entered the Victorian age, described memorably by scholar of Victorian studies, Gertrude Himmelfarb, as a mirror

3 Langham (1994, 62) indicates the sale took place in 1834 but Ternstrom, who has access to the Heaven papers, can find no authority to support this (Ternstrom pers comm).



Fig. 3 William Hudson Heaven, 1869

image culture in which, "the underworld of pornography co-existed comfortably with the outer world of prudity" (1968, 277). The golden age of the English country house inspired by Palladian mansions visited on the Grand Tour was almost over (Royle 1987, 227), but for a Victorian gentleman aspiring to the squirarchy (if not actually the aristocracy) a country seat was a pre-requisite. Heaven immediately commissioned the building of his own Villa on the island, the house now called Millcombe (fig.4).

Educated at Harrow, Oxford and on the Grand Tour (Langham 1987, 10) and himself the son of a gentleman, Heaven married well and was listed in Burke's Landed Gentry. He was typical of his age. The price he paid for the island appears at first sight to place him in the greater rather than the lesser gentry bracket (Thompson 1963, 112), at a time when 29% of all the land in Devon was held by the gentry classes (coincidentally the national average for land in each county held by the gentry, *ibid*, 113-5).

Marriage alliances and the magistracy were the principal aims of the Victorian gentry classes (*ibid*, 128; Altick 1973, 26), and in acquiring his own island Heaven had gone one better than many of his class. He was not only in effect his own magistrate, but also his own law-maker, choosing at times to accept the jurisdiction of the mainland courts when his tenant farmer was prosecuted for smuggling, but (as demonstrated above) also challenging the rights of a mainland coroner to inquire into a death on the island.

Heaven found the island too expensive to maintain simply as a country seat (Langham 1987, 10), even though with Lundy at just over 1000 acres, he ranked as only one of the smaller landowners (estate size not necessarily determining social status: Thompson 1963, 109, 115). Attempts to sell the island in 1840, 1856, 1906 and 1912 all failed. Between 1856 and 1906 Heaven, succeeded on his death in 1883 by his son the Reverend Hudson Heaven, attempted to supplement his income by leasing the rights of quarrying on the island (Langham 1994, chapter 20) with a number of ventures only the first of which ever enjoyed brief success.

The Reverend Hudson Heaven's life on Lundy to some extent reflects the careers of his ecclesiastical contemporaries on the mainland (Altick 1973, 26; Thompson 1963, 208). He concerned himself with rebuilding the church in stone taken from abandoned buildings on the island, and with a night school and a Sunday School for the island families, leading the way to Spiritual redemption through education in much the same way as the Reverend John Coker Egerton was doing at the same time in the Weald, and the Reverend John Wycliffe Gedge tried to emulate in Buriton, Hampshire (Wells 1992; Harfield 1994, 203-6). Permanent residence on the island, a consequence of financial necessity, isolated the Heaven family from the mainstream of Victorian shire society and the 'Provincial Season', a gentry version of the aristocratic 'Season' in London (Royle 1987, 227-231). Between

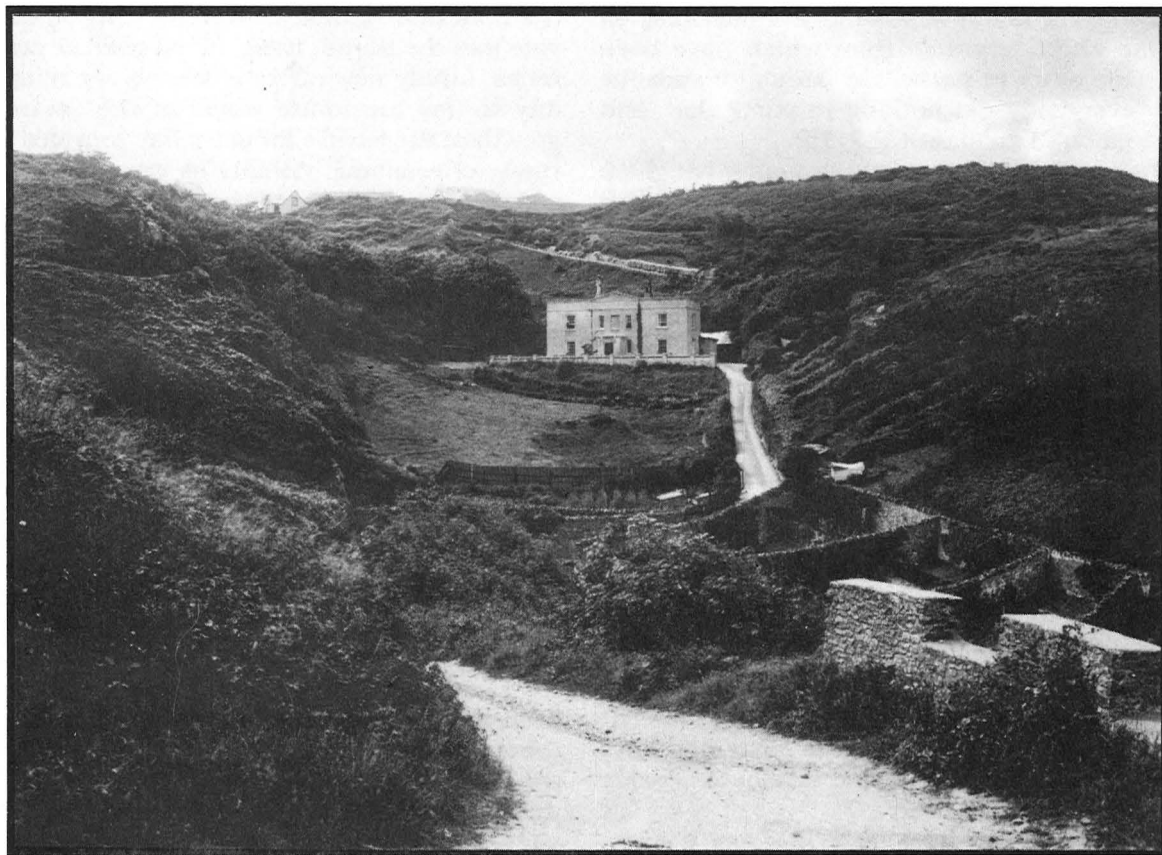


Fig 4 View of Millcombe taken between 1885 and 1897

1870 and 1905 the family kept a diary of their time on Lundy, some short extracts from which have been published. One entry in particular seems to sum the island up: "everybody did nothing in particular and the rest looked on" (Langham 1987, 15).

In 1918 the island was sold to Augustus Langham Christie whose stated ambition was that of the landed recluse because he "could not bear to see from his house any land that he did not own" (Blunt 1968, 51). In 1926 Martin Coles Harman, "an enthusiastic naturalist and individualist" bought the island (Langham 1994, 67)⁴. His defiance against the mainland authorities by issuing both coinage and stamps for the island demonstrates perhaps recalcitrance as much as reclusion. His passion for Lundy was manifest in his founding of the Lundy Field Society, the fiftieth anniversary of which marks his enduring legacy, and is celebrated with this volume.

Harman's vision for Lundy was as a place of resort for like-minded persons. It was a vision which has persisted through the generosity of both Jack Hayward (Fig.5), who provided the finance which enabled the National Trust to purchase the island, and of the Landmark Trust, whose leasing and subsequent investment in the island has helped to sustain it since 1969. Whether visitors today come simply to observe

the flora and fauna, or whether they choose to excavate into the island, hang off its cliffs or dive round its rocks, Lundy now offers a temporary refuge from the day-to-day mundane world of the mainland. The growth of the leisure industry has provided the opportunity of economic viability as greater spending power among the majority allows others to share the peace and tranquillity sought by the island's owners from Heaven to Harman. The irregularity of leisure patterns in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been replaced by the twentieth century concept of structured holidays (Royle 1987, 260), arranged in week-long parcels which the Landmark Trust markets to such good effect.

Conclusions

It is worth considering finally the uses to which the various authorities have considered putting the island. The fact that the Government did not take formal responsibility for the island until 1973, suggests that, in these terms, no real use for the island was envisaged before then, yet suggestions had previously been made which imply that this was not necessarily the case. For example, the authorities from time to time considered Lundy as a repository for those unwanted in society. In 1765 Merchants at Bristol suggested using the island as a fever colony (*Exeter Flying Post* March 29th 1765). Twenty-one years later the government speculated about the island's future

⁴ The conveyances for the sales of 1918 and 1926 are preserved in the Lundy Museum Archive. There appears to be no authority for the date of 1928 suggested by Langham (1994, 67).



Fig. 5 Sir Jack Hayward's visit to Lundy, 1969

as a penal colony (*The Times* October 25th 1786). Thomas Benson MP had, after all, already demonstrated the potential in this idea in the sort of parliamentary scandal which so exercises the Press of today. Nothing came of it on this occasion, but the Earl of Malmesbury noted in his diary for October 22nd 1852 that the idea was once again seriously considered in government (Langham 1994, 63). Finally, in 1915, a suggestion that the island be used to house prisoners of war was rejected because of the logistical problems in feeding and accommodating a large number of persons on the island (*ibid*, 67).

Closer government attention to Lundy might have been expected had the island been of any particular military significance. In fact there has been little to gain by housing a garrison there. Henry III built the castle on the island after he had seized Lundy from the Marisco family (after whom the castle is misleadingly named). His intention apparently was to prevent the island's use by pirates (Ternstrom 1994, 1). Given the later history of Lundy, this plan appears to have been a well-intentioned failure.

The island was noted as a good anchorage in the Armada Pilots Survey of the English Coastline, October 1597. The traitorous Captain Eliot sought permission from the King of Spain to seize Lundy and garrison there 100 Spanish and 40 English soldiers. How useful the island would have been in the event of an invasion is uncertain, but only four years later the idea was still current because Robert Basset set up a

base on the island in order to assist an anticipated French invasion (Langham 1994, 31-3). Significantly Queen Elizabeth ignored Basset's presence on the island and did not regard him as any particular threat. He fled Lundy for France in 1603, the hoped-for invasion never having taken place.

The French threat during the reign of Queen Anne caused the government to survey the defences on Lundy in 1787. A note was made of the guns in position around its coast. But when the French did invade south Wales in 1797, they appear to have paid the island no notice other than to shelter in its undefended lee (*ibid*, 58; Smith 1989, 48). In 1881 Vice Admiral Phillimore, reviewing the nation's defences, advised that three large guns with a range of two and a half miles be placed on Lundy in order to assist in the defence of the Bristol Channel. Technology overtook this idea almost immediately, and the defence of the Bristol Channel was left to the crews of the new and versatile torpedo boats. The guns were never sent to Lundy (Langham 1994, 65).

When the Second World War broke out, ironically the island and its lighthouses guided the Luftwaffe on bombing raids to Bristol. The Admiralty leased the Old Light from Martin Harman for £400 a year, and stationed a sixty-year old Lieutenant and six ratings on Lundy to staff a watching post. Their presence, although only the most minor of naval shore stations, ensured that the islanders received regular supplies of food during the war. Despite the fact that the

Women's Land Army sent one volunteer across to help with the farm, the Devon War Agricultural Committee did not regard Lundy as a viable farming project. No further help was sent to the island (Gade and Harman 1995). The islanders themselves contributed to the war effort by staffing boats which were used to patrol the waters between Lundy and the Devon shore, and by forming a four-man Home Guard unit on the island which captured Luftwaffe air crew from the two planes which crashed there.

The chronology of events in Lundy's past have been well catalogued elsewhere (Langham and Langham 1984, Langham 1987, Langham 1994, and Ternstrom (formerly Langham) 1994). The themes into which these events fall are defined both by the circumstances of the island itself, and those of the ages through which it has been occupied. Never at the centre of national events, its peripheral position has enabled lesser individuals to earn a place in the pages of local history.

It is difficult to think of any square mile of the United Kingdom which has been so-much studied by amateur and professional alike, across such a broad spectrum of academic and scientific disciplines. Its days of petty politics and piracy over, Lundy is now enjoying a new significance founded upon the natural beauty of its isolation and the bounty of its nature.

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