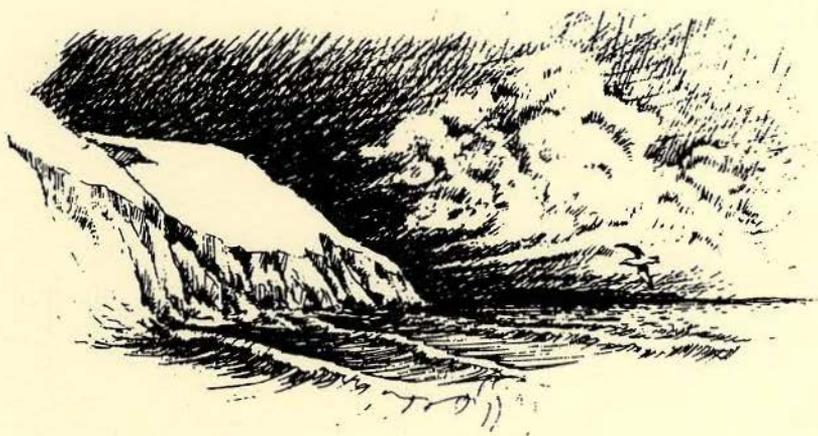


***Lundy Field Society
Newsletter***

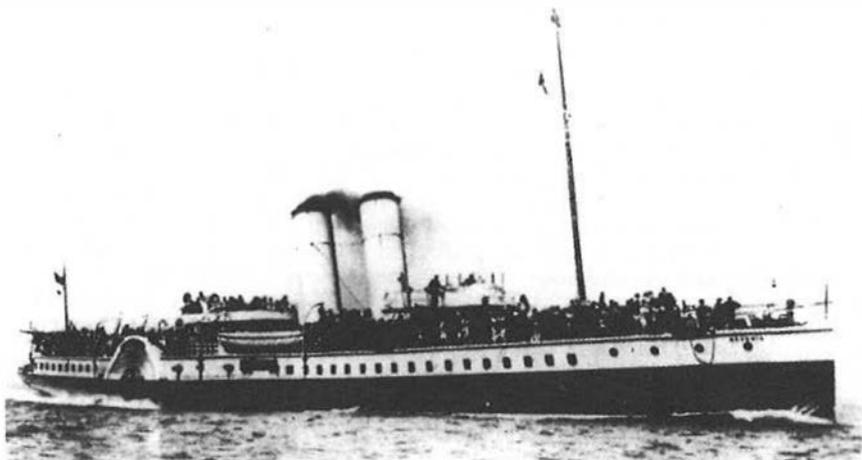
No 30



June 2000

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P.S. *Devonia*

Parent ship of the launch whose lifebelt in the Tavern marks the launch's demise. on the Divers Beach, (60s?) when she broke her mooring in stormy weather

From *West Country Passenger Steamers* by Grahame Farr. (Pub. T. Stephenson & Sons Ltd. Lancs 1967)

REPORT OF LFS AGM

Ann Westcott

The 54th Annual General Meeting of the LFS was held at the Peter Chaik Centre at Exeter University on Saturday March 4th 2000. There was the usual good attendance. This is such a splendid opportunity for meeting old friends and making new ones. Even the 20 apologies for absence show an awareness that members recognise the AGM as a special event. Seventeen new members were welcomed to the Society. Roger Chapple remains on the Committee and Ken Redley returns to it, as Terry Parsons leaves (we hope temporarily) so there were no vacancies as there were last year.

The Warden, Liza Cole, gave a full report on the activities on the island, as she was the only islander able to join the gathering, and make such a report; all the others were totally occupied (you will see why as you read this account of Liza's report).

The new jetty is also already a new wild-life habitat. There are going to be new dive-huts on the beach too. Another 'new' beach event was seals pupping on the Landing Beach, because it is now quiet for them. Because of the Marine Nature Reserve, and Lundy's status as a SAC (Special Area of Conservation) there will be further efforts made to raise awareness amongst diving groups, so that breeding birds and seals are not disturbed, nor wrecks vandalised, as John Heath reported the Gull Rock wreck was. (Ed's note. The St. Andrews Archaeological diving unit was inspecting the licensed sites this year as a routine matter. There is some 'diving material' elsewhere in this Newsletter: pp25 and 26) Another new thing is the rubbish collection, as the dump and incinerator are no longer allowed.

There have been more puffins sighted this year: 49 at once was the maximum sighting. Nine burrows were occupied, and one pair breeding; the others might be prospecting for next year: - and yet, sand-eels and rats were in abundance. The Warden could offer no explanations. Basking sharks came thick and fast, 136 during the season, with 16 being observed in one sighting. Unusual sightings were a trigger-fish and a porbeagle and a lesser octopus (a Lundy first) in the Devil's Kitchen. Another not so welcome first was Japanese seaweed in the Landing Bay.

Paul Roberts, Derek Oram, and Liza Cole are endeavouring to manage the Island with unobtrusive efficiency. (Your Ed., after visits at Easter and May, says, "well done those troops"). The main road north is being preserved from becoming wider and wider as the ground gets wetter and wetter, and softer and squelchier. Two 'ribbons' of stone for the low-pressure tyres of the Landrover to use as trackway will (eventually) be grass-covered. The stone for the trackway came from a hole in the Old Tent Field.

Lottery money and Lundy Friends money enabled the repair of the Battery path. (Your Ed. was loaned stunning pics of this excellent work [by P. Rothwell], but has mislaid them: next year you'll see them). A 'pitching' technique was used to make the path resistant to erosion. Winches and wheelbarrows were used to get the stone down the path (wow!). Paul, Derek and Liza have worked with MAFF (Formerly the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) to revise the Stewardship Agreement. MAFF is paying for bracken cutting and the treating of cut-down rhododendrons for 3 years running, and for footpath clearance, and more dry-stone walling. 450 volunteer days were spent doing this kind of work.

A rabbit scourge (RHD) and rain have, together, made for good grazing all year. Rabbits are coming back. There's been no soay culling.

Keith Denby and Landmark have two websites, one each, with a link between the two.

Looking forward into 2000, Paul Roberts has allocated the funds (to be used by 2001) for the new slipway; dive huts; an extra water-tank-reservoir; the old tractor-shed will become the new generator-shed (3 generators); electric cable will be laid and new water piped; heat from the generators will be re-cycled; the aero-generator is currently abandoned, but not necessarily for ever; use of salt water might supplement fresh water to lighten the supply problem; there will be more staff free to work on the draining of soggy footpaths, especially Upper and Lower East Side paths (to Brazen Ward); fences and walls are to be repaired; the

Helligoland trap has been used to monitor the consequences to sea-birds of the oil-damage off the French coast – will birds over-wintering in Europe return to Lundy? – monitoring might take 3 years to answer this question.

David Price is to do a Lundy sea-bird survey. There are 20 Lundy ponies, (more news from Jan and Brian Symons next time). Paul and Liza are to re-furbish Old Light West.

The Warden's Report was followed by John Grimes on the Jetty Construction. This was a re-worked version of his piece in the LFS report, with slides. The Jetty has already become a part of the beach scene, and may well become as well-beloved as the old Landing Stage (now at Clovelly), especially as JG reckons that, with careful maintenance, it has a century-long shelf-life.

Shirley Blaylock (the National Trust archaeologist for Devon) gave an up-date, with slides, of the archaeological "state of play" on the Island. (There's a note on her work elsewhere in the Newsletter, p10.) One of the slides was a nostalgic view of volunteers on David Thackray's excavation of the Castle, with Peter Cole (a former Secretary of the LFS) "volunteering". The '89 2-volume Blue Book Survey of Lundy's archaeology will eventually be replaced by the '89 – '96 National Trust work, which was helped by English Heritage funding. English Heritage is also funding work on the Churchyard stones, and giving a "New Interpretation" grant. A new Field Guide is hoped for in 2001, and a database on computer will be in the office, as a working tool. There are discussions afoot with Barnstaple Museum about the housing of a Lundy Collection. Virginia Straker of English Heritage is working on Pollen Analysts. The question asked about Quarry Cottages, "Crumble or Conserve?" is under discussion with an English Heritage Committee. (Ed's Note: late May 2000, they're crumbling fast.)

The meeting finished with gossip in the Bar. As always, the day was full of interest: and a not inconsiderable sum for LFS funds was raised by auctioning gifts from members and friends.

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EDITORIAL

Ann Westcott

'Dave' Davey, who was an essential part of the Lundy picture for many years, died in April. The funeral address (see p7) was given to your Ed, by Diana Keast, who attended the service. I know the sympathies of LFS members will go to Dave's wife Chris, as they will to the family of Denver Dantels who died of cancer in May. He was a committee member, and a regular observer of kittiwakes with his Exeter University students.

Hugh Norton (a visitor in the '50s and '60s) and his wife Joy, have a new daughter, Gemma. Your Ed, had lunch with them and Joy's parents on Lundy in May – more candidates for the 3-generations-of-visitors-to-Lundy Club. Ruth and Peter Harman Jones celebrated their Diamond wedding on June 7th. They were married in 1940 in Bournemouth in the same week as the Dunkirk retreat and Peter was given a day's leave from the Army Pay Corps. Peter Rothwell (a committee member) and Sally, his wife, had their marriage blessing on Lundy last August.

Members will want to congratulate Myrtle Ternstrom (a vice-president) on her PhD (see p48) and Katie Cole on her permanent appointment with English Nature, as Conservation Officer for Merseyside, with particular responsibility for the Sefton Coast – she's based in Wigan and started in March 2000. LFS good wishes also go to Simon Griffiths (see p47) on his 3 year fellowship at Oxford. His sparrow work on Lundy is being continued by Nancy Ockenden who is part of the same research 'stable' at Sheffield University.

Simon Griffiths and Nancy Ockenden work in the field of evolutionary ecology. Simon says (LFS report 1994) "...one of the most widely studied and productive areas has been the breeding behaviour of both male and female individuals in their attempt to optimise their

reproductive success." The finding that female sparrows can be profoundly flexible ("plastic") in their strategies to be successful, is the most encouraging evolutionary news for the whole human race that your Ed. has read for some time—*if we can only learn from it*. If the sparrow can adapt in this way, so can we. And how nice that this message comes from Lundy.

It is very pleasing to your Ed. to be remarking on the continuity and importance of Lundy and/or LFS-assisted research AND the 3-generational visiting. It would be so good if people would send such news: "if your particular piece of news does not feature here, it's because you didn't send it to me and I would have loved to receive it." (Ed.'s comment LFS Newsletter '99)

Two people who have let me have records of their private collections of Lundy material are Roger Allen and Paul Metcalfe. Roger printed 2 small catalogues for the Lundy Collectors Club meetings (29/11/99 & 1/8/99). He also has a very fine Lundy post-card collection. From his '97 pamphlet I particularly noticed that Mr Gade's '55, "Puffin Isle of Lundy" had French and German editions, and that Ian Linn (a vice-president) found 2 new fleas on Lundy in '88; but the whole list is of interest. The 2nd pamphlet not only includes Mr Gade's "My Life on Lundy", but "Granite" by Clemence Dave (produced in the Castle Keep some years ago by LFS members and friends, in a severely abridged version) and Peggy Loosemore Jones' love story "The Lundy Summer", and Dan Farson's "Window on the Sea", among other treasures. One tends to disregard one's collection made over the years, when one is not really a collector, but such collections can be useful as archive – before you write yours off, you might get in touch with Myrtle Ternstrom, who has an on-going listing of private collections: yours *might* be useful. Paul Metcalfe started his collection in '84 when Castle Air stopped coming and Paul acquired a poster because there weren't going to be any more. He has a puffin made by Jilly Dyke (as she then was) and one by Chrs Davey, and some Newton Abbot pottery Lundy jugs. Susan Metcalfe has made up a puffin 10p stamp tapestry designed by Louise Melhuish (mid '80s). Paul also has a collection of woven Lundy badges including an early lobster one; and some puffin dangly earrings. Just as an Army and Navy Catalogue of 1900 can be an interesting reflection of contemporary life (not to be gleaned from Hansard) so a look at Lundy souvenirs and personal memorabilia could be equally illuminating.

The newspaper trawl covers a wide range of subjects, but the most exciting news about the island is really in the Warden's AGM report on all Paul Roberts' and the team's projects for the Island. Your Ed. is able to say that the Tibbett's facelift has been so beautifully done that you hardly notice it, though I did very much appreciate the larger fridge and the shower.

Of all unlikely places I found the most intriguing newspaper material in the Sunday Times (undated) supplement, "Richest of the Rich – the wealthiest 200 in Great Britain since 1066". It lists "Fortunes won by sword and fire", and a small but dazzling sample of these robber-barons were closely connected with Lundy. We are accustomed to think of the Mariscos as *uniquely* "robber-barons", but the track-record of most of the keepers/owners matches the Mariscos'. The first Earl of Pembroke, whose son was Keeper 1265/66, was the richest man in England by the time he died, worth £10 billion in modern money – all figures are given in modern terms. He made his money through judicious opportunism. John de Holland (Keeper 1393-1400) served Richard II, conspired against Henry IV on Richard II's fall, and was executed: his son got his estates back, about £14½ billion. Hugh Despenser the Younger (Keeper 1322-26) – see p42 for illustration of his death – dominated Henry II and ran a personal reign of terror until the Mortimer rebellions when he was executed. Humphrey de Bohun the Younger (Keeper 1264-65) belonged to a family that caused trouble to Edward I, supported and then feuded with Edward II, but these dodgy politics did not impair the fortune of the 1276 Bohun (Earl of Hereford) who was finally worth £5½ billion.

William Montagu Earl of Salisbury (owner 1322-1334, and Lundy is mentioned by the Sunday Times) was another opportunist: he benefited from his close friendship with Edward II and died (at 43) worth £4+ billion. (William Montagu's successors held Lundy until 1754 with the odd political gap.) James Butler Earl of Ormonde (1457-1461) who married a Salisbury descendant) put his greedy foot wrong in the Wars of the Roses, and was executed by the Yorkists in 1461.

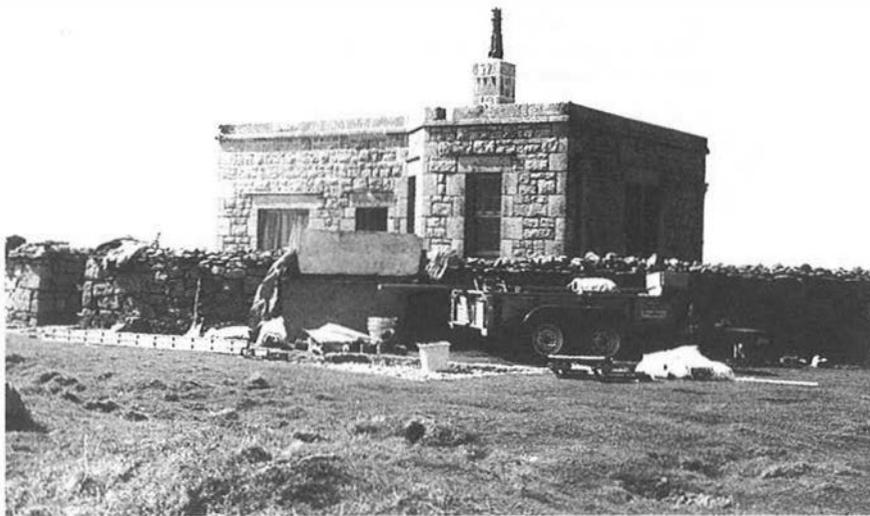
By the mid-18th century there were no more robber-barons keeping or owning the Island, though one of the most famous of the Leveson-Gowers (John Leveson Lord Gower owner 1711-54) was the Duke of Sutherland (d. 1833 worth £16½ billion) who is remembered for the eviction from his Scottish Estates of thousands of farming families; the Clearances. Benson was a most *suitable* lessee for the Leveson-Gowers.

A gap in the Salisbury line of inheritance was the Saye and Sele period (mid- 17th century, 1647-1660) the redoubtable Fiennes family is still making headlines. The Express, (Saturday 4/2/2000) interviewed Ralph Fiennes the "sensational" actor. He was "triumphant" in Richard II (Thurs 14/4/2000). Sir Ranulph Fiennes made another attempt to walk to the North Pole (Western Morning News 5/2/2000) – these are the amazing kinsmen of that S&S.

The Waverley is being restored in a £3 million scheme (WMN 22/12/99): very nice picture goes with the text. Her fragile state was highlighted (Times 15/6/99) under the headline "Up the Bristol Channel without a Paddle". The Waverley visited Ilfracombe and Lundy for the annual service at St Helena's then broke down 4 miles off the North Devon coast, and had to be towed in to Barry at 8.00 am next day. Prunella Scales and Timothy West kept spirits high. The WMN also recorded the event (15/6/99): Prunella Scales paid tribute to crew and passengers – "Everyone was good-tempered and the crew were absolutely amazing. They were brilliant."

Martin Hesp (WMN 25/6/99 and WMN 28/6/99) wrote warmly of the newly speedy Oldenburg – "Rare Isle nearer than ever", and the time he spent on Lundy, "my wide-awake dream on a magical island." Suzanne Hope (North Devon Journal 1/7/99) came over with Clive Pearson in the *Jessica Hattie* to swim with seals, which she did, in a wetsuit, in teeth chatteringly cold water. The Times (Crème 31/5/2000) ran an article on Diane Catrall's job as PA to Paul Roberts, complete with a rather nice photo of them both against a beach/beach road background. People leaving for the Island from Ilfracombe will, I know, be glad to hear that Damien Hirst is opening the Quay Restaurant (in the Old White Hart) (WMN 5/6/2000) – very nice picture of the harbour – no fish in formaldehyde.

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Tibbetts undergoing its splendid restorative treatment

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Jenny Whiteside

Two years ago, Jenny Whiteside, a regular visitor to Lundy, published a book of her poetry to raise money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer, a registered charity funding a new breast cancer research centre in London. Printing costs were covered by sponsorship from various companies, both national ones and some that are local to Bedford, where Jenny lives. So far, over £3,000 has been raised for the charity by sales of the "Breakthrough into Verse" books.

Visits to Lundy inspire new "Lundy" poems and Jenny is now planning a book of these, illustrated with photographs and possibly a few sketches. She is hoping to obtain some sponsorship again for the printing costs, and to donate all profits from the book sales to the upkeep of St. Helena's Church on Lundy. It is hoped that the book will be on sale through the Lundy shop, the Shore Office, local bookshops in Bideford and Ilfracombe, and possibly Tourist Information Offices.

Jenny will be writing to various local businesses in the hope of obtaining some financial sponsorship (in return for a mention on the acknowledgements page). If any Field Society member can help in any way with sponsorship or fundraising opportunities, please write to Jenny at 4, Dart Road, Bedford, MK41 7BT.

RENEWAL

The little ship ploughed through the cold, grey waves,
Tossed high but in skilful hands.
There was I, slightly pale, clutching camera and rail,
And watching for promised lands.

I stood at the rail and watched Lundy appear,
Dressed to thrill in horizon's mist:
Just a half hour more, then a lonely shore
- The hem that Neptune kissed.

Seven nights sped by in a candle's glow
And the glory of starlit sky;
Seven days of peace with a sweet release
- A chance to reason why.

I stood at the rail and watched Lundy fade
And my tears made a salty track;
But she whispered to me on the cold, grey sea
"Don't cry, dear! Just come back!"

© Jenny Whiteside (October 1997)

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CAN YOU HELP?

We seem to have lost touch with the following members.

Mr & Mrs Rodney & Amanda Bowman - 14 St Lukes Crescent, Totterdown, Bristol, BS3 4SD

Miss Diana Bertha Gray - Gapperies, West Porlock, Somerset, TA24 8NX

Mr J M B King - Ftweays, Bratton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6AZ

Ms Roz Lawson - 64 Hummer Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9BP

Mr & Mrs James & Brenda Murphy – 10 Bracken Close, Carterton, Oxon, OX18 1UB
 Mrs Sheila Narramore – Mill Cottage, Hittisleigh Mill, Hittisleigh, Exeter, Devon EX6 6LD
 Ms Clair Nicholls – 3 Melville Terrace, Lostwithiel, Cornwall PL22 0AN
 Mr Eric Parsons – 39 Moorland Avenue, Liswerry, Newport, Gwent, NP9 0LS
 Mr Bryan Sherwood – 65 Carshalton Park Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3SJ

Their AGM notices were returned indicating wrong addresses.

As this was the first year that the Society has put a return address on the envelopes, it is possible that these people moved some time ago. If you know where they are now, please get in touch with Maggie Shaw, who has taken over the membership records. Her address is: Miss M Shaw, 29 Brithdir Street, Cathays, Cardiff, CF24 2LE. Telephone: 029 20 229167 e-mail: Shaw@cardtff.ac.uk

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Funeral Address
 Robert Newman Davey
 'Dave'

(Received from Diana Keast)

Robert Newman Davey, 'Dave' to many of you, was born near Sevenoaks on 20th July 1916. In 1932, at sixteen, he enlisted in the Royal Navy and trained as an electrical artificer. Later he saw action during the Second World War ending his naval career on minesweepers. In 1942 he married Chris in Wales. For a time they were both at HMS Glendower where Chris was serving as a Wren. After the war the couple made their home in Bideford before opting to live for seventeen years on Lundy Island. And it is about those Lundy days that Diana Keast writes in a letter sent recently to Chris.

"What a great fight Dave had with his illness and how marvellously you both coped and made a life for yourselves. It was always lovely to visit you especially because we all shared together such a magic time on Lundy. Dave had such an enthusiasm for work and for everything that was needed to help the island along. There was always that sparkle in his eyes if there was a problem to solve. His skills were truly remarkable. He literally kept the show on the road with his monitoring of the electricity, water, gas, tractor, trailers and landing gear. These last years must have been really tough for you both and I do so admire the way Dave put up with life's restrictions."

Another tribute, which arrived, said very simply, "I shall always remember Dave's magnificent collection of bits with which he could mend anything. He always seemed unfailingly cheerful and I can see him now sitting on the beach road by the Lundy winch. He is part of such happy memories."

Dave and Chris returned from Lundy in 1981 and eventually came to live in Bideford again. It was in that very year that he began to suffer the first effects of the emphysema that was to handicap him later on. The first five years were very uncomfortable indeed; but with Chris to look after him he was still able to cope at home. At 5.30 pm on Thursday 6th April, Dave simply fell asleep in his favourite armchair. He was 83 years of age. Today we give thanks to God for his long and good life and that his sufferings have come to an end so mercifully. (Donations to Royal National Lifeboat Institute.)

From Margaret Marsh (née Brailley)

A Trip Down Memoir Lane

Having married in 1958 a husband who spent the next 30 years travelling from place to place in the Royal Navy and then embarked on a second career with the United Nations, with a further 8 years globe-trotting, it was not until 1998, after some 29 Changes of Address, that we settled into retirement with all our possessions under the same roof. Some of these possessions had lain untouched in various attics for over 40 years and sifting through them has brought back many memories. Of particular interest have been the photograph albums and of these, for me, the one which had brought about the greatest nostalgia is the album devoted to the times I spent on Lundy as a schoolgirl in the late forties and early fifties, culminating in the last visit in March 1953 after I had left my home in Fremington to start my career as an Officer Cadet in the WRAC.

My trips to Lundy all came about because my great friend at the Stella Maris Covent School in Northam was Mary Gade, daughter of Felix Gade, permanently resident on the Island as its Administrator. I stayed with "Gader" (as I knew her) in the school holidays as the guest of her parents.

As I turned the pages of the albums, the memories came flooding over me, both of the people and of the places: Gader's mother and father; the Farmhouse (going to bed in Manor Farm in the winter was not the warmest experience, but we were tough then!); Morris, Jim, John O., John V; Peter, Ken and Rose; Frank, George and Olive; the lighthouse Keepers and last, but by no means least, the dogs - Lass, Jean and, of course, Boggie. Walking across the Island to eat home-made Jam Tarts at North Light; Bramble Villa and Gannet's Cove, Benson's Cave and riding on a very old tractor; lambs being revived in the kitchen by the oven; kittens and goats and our names for them.... I experienced a strong desire to go back, whilst we were still physically fit enough to scramble ashore (not yet then knowing about the new jetty).

Fate then intervened in the shape of my cousin Roger Chapple.

Circumstance having dictated that we had seen little of each other for many years, it has been one benefit of our retirement that we now have the time in which to enjoy each other's company. One evening, over dinner, Roger was explaining his close involvement over many years with the Lundy Field Society when he volunteered: "would you like me to fix up a visit after the summer rush of day visitors is over?" Would I!

Thus it came to pass that I spent the first five days of October 1999 in Government House with my husband, and Roger and Paula. After gales and rain on the first day the weather just got better by the hour and it was hard to tear myself away when the time came to return to the reality of life in Somerset.

Based on this very short visit, both the Landmark Trust and the Field Society are worthy of the highest praise for their efforts to preserve a quite unique place, whether it be protecting the bird and sea-life and the flora or renovating the infrastructure. My own humble contribution is via Life Membership of the Field Society. And yes, we will be back again!

§

From Roger Chapple

(to Martin Boyle, B & T Publications, about Eddie Mathews)

I was delighted to read the latest in your series of Lighthouses of England and Wales, all of which I have enjoyed, being that on the Lizard Point.

As a committee member of the Lundy Field Society, I was particularly interested in your sections concerning 'The Lives of Keepers'.

I happened to be on the island at the time of Dermot Cronin's promotion to Principal Keeper, and have a series of amusing photographs to record the events of the party.

Concerning the Eddie Mathews' visit to Lundy, I think the innkeeper to whom you refer was Mrs Rene Gade, whose husband, Felix, was agent on the island for some 45 years.

Extract from:
Lighthouses of England and Wales
LIZARD POINT
by Martin Boyle.

Eddie has been posted to numerous lighthouses, with Lundy Island holding special memories. On one occasion at the local inn, a new keeper walked into the bar in civilian clothes. Mrs Gates, the landlady, introduced herself and welcomed the new keeper. Eddie was rather surprised as no one had told her about this new addition to the team. So he asked her how she knew he was a keeper. The reply was 'the smell'. Eddie then wanted to know what she meant, to which he was told about the 'piddle and paraffin'. Without a doubt Eddie knew exactly what she was talking about. The smell of mineral oil impregnated every piece of clothing, no matter what the keepers did to prevent it. Also if they were not careful with the "bucket and chuck it", the wind blew the spray from the contents of the can back over their clothes.

Available from: B & T Publications, 11 Lavender Close, Merry Oak, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 7SA. Tel/Fax: 01703 360231 e-mail: lighthsb@cwcom.net

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From Chris Price

I took a party of nine to Lundy on a Field Society outing. Most had never landed on the island, and they still haven't.

The weather on May 30 1999 was easterly, and there was no hope on the landing beach, so we took a despairing look at the embryonic jetty and then sailed around the island with Field Society officers giving commentaries.

After that we anchored on the west side, and the skipper kindly launched his two inflatables and gave all the passengers a half hour excursion in them. My party went last, and were intrigued by one particular high, deep cave where nesting Kittiwakes lined the top-most walls many feet above us, with lower down Guillemots and Razorbills in some quantities. The colours of the rock walls were very dramatic and quite superb.

We were so mesmerised that we crept closer and closer in until, suddenly, there was a loud clonk, and the bottom of the dinghy had hit a rock which had torn a rip in the bottom. There were cries of, 'don't panic, don't panic, these things can't sink', as we climbed into lifebelts and watched our feet gradually being covered by the Atlantic Ocean.

However, our guide kept his radio above water, and it was not long before the other inflatable came racing over to rescue us. No one concerned could have been more efficient and friendly, so I moved a vote of thanks for the Captain for the unscheduled excitement and demanded, and got, a brandy for each of us. The whole trip was really most enjoyable, which perhaps did not apply quite as much to the journey home where, at Bittadon, a hind leapt over the hedge straight into my offside wing causing over £500 worth of damage. The hind seemed all right, and so were my passengers who, however, demanded, and got, another brandy!

From Shirley Blaylock (NT Archaeologist for Devon)

Exciting archaeological discoveries have been made during the recent trenching work for new electric and water services. In Pigs Paradise (the camping field) over 1400 sherds of pottery dating to the 13th to 15th centuries were found together with some small finds and structural remains. The finds are now being catalogued. (see p47) examined and conserved and a full report is in progress. Many thanks to LFS member Tony Cutler for his assistance with the excavation. Elsewhere along the route occasional pottery and flint finds have been recorded including a Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead. A watching brief will be undertaken of the trench to the castle on June 6 and the results are awaited. A more detailed account will appear in the Lundy Field Society Annual Report



STOP PRESS

We could not have produced this Newsletter without the sponsorship of Carlton TV and the St Austell Breweries. It is most gratifying to find people willing to fund a small learned society's enterprises. Such generosity lifts the heart. A huge thank you to our sponsors from all our membership.

STOP STOP PRESS

Next LFS Newsletter will give details of the stupendous Millennium Jolly run by Roger and Paula Chapple; Diana Keast; Myrtle Ternstrom; your Ed. and a cast of 1000s on the Island June 10-17.

MORE STOP PRESS

It is with great regret that Westwell Publishing and Lazarus Press have to say that there was insufficient interest in the luxury edition of the North Devon Magazine (see LFS Newsletter June 99) to make the publication viable, so it remains on hold. Cheques will be returned to those who applied to purchase. 'Pixy Led in North Devon' has also suffered a severe set back from lack of interested purchasers, but, it is hoped, will appear later this year.

THE "VEST-POCKET DOMINION"*

By Gladys A. Williams

(From *Commonwealth and Empire Annual* 1956, Edited by Colin Clair. Published by The Gawthorn Press)



A real holiday. That is what I wanted. A rest from towns and rush and noise; the relief of seeing something different from shops and buses, trains and houses, an end of people talking, and quiet to hear myself think! But where could such delights be found in England in these days, with cars on the roads in their thousands, and bungalows and boarding-houses stretching in almost unending line along so much of the coast?

Then, out of the blue, a single word came into my mind....*Lundy*. Why and how it came, who can say? Perhaps one wild night by the winter fire an announcer's voice, hardly heeded, had come over the air, as you've often heard it...."Gale warning. Sea area Rockall, Mallin, South Irish Sea, Lundy...."

But now it was summer. Summer in Lundy. What did the *Gazetteer* say about the place? It said three things: that Lundy was an island three miles long and half a mile wide lying in the mouth of the Bristol Channel; that it had a population of about 50; and that it was a famous breeding ground for wild birds.

Fifty people! Then quite likely one could go and stay there. Why not write to the Town Clerk?

Fortunately there was no one to point out that the *Gazetteer* was hopelessly out of date, that today the number of permanent residents on Lundy is nearer five than 50, and that they certainly haven't a Town Clerk.

So off went my letter to a man who didn't exist, and, believe it or not, in two days' time an answer came back. The Post Office, guessing the contents of the letter, had delivered it to the Agent of the owner, who at once wrote back saying that it is quite possible to spend a holiday on Lundy if one wishes. There is a comfortable hotel with electric light, bathrooms and all modern conveniences, able to take up to about 16 visitors. He also enclosed a little booklet to give me some idea of what sort of place Lundy is before I committed myself to going there.

* So described by Martin C. Harman, its owner for thirty years.

I sat down and studied pictures of romantic craggy rocks; bracken-covered headlands empty of people and open to all the winds of heaven; great stretches of cliff-top grassland where wild ponies, wild goats and deer grazed undisturbed. There were no motor cars, no buses, no roads, no shops, no newspapers, no cinemas or fun-fairs. "Lundy," the little book said in dignified language, "is one of the last remaining resorts in this age of rush and tumult where philosophers and scientists can find the concentrated quiet essential for constructive thought."

I made up my mind at once and sent off in hot haste a telegram and a letter booking a room. Then two days, three, four, five, six, seven days passed....and no reply at all. Had I dreamed that answer to my letter? Eight, nine, ten days....I sent off another telegram, this time with pre-paid reply. By the very next post, before the telegram could have got there, came the long-awaited reply. It was quite all right. A room was booked for me....And ten days after that came the pre-paid reply to my second telegram. How odd, I thought. First answer so quick, second answer so slow, and now ten days for a telegram....I never thought to connect all this up with that announcer on the wireless...."Gale Warning, Sea area South Irish Sea, Lundy...." and so forth.



With the room booked, the next problem was how to get there. The little book said there were two ways to get to Lundy. In summer a line of coastal steamers made regular calls two or three times weekly, or one could hire a small private plane. Crossing by plane seemed altogether too dull and hasty a method of going to such an exciting place – like going by parcel post. A boat, a little boat, was obviously the right answer. Tossed by the waves, the wind in one's hair, drawing slowly nearer and nearer, stepping ashore on the immaculate sand of a little cove, hearing only the soft lap, lap of the water and the crying of the sea birds – that was the proper way to arrive on any desert island.

But the shipping company didn't seem to share my enthusiasm at all. After three whole weeks came a tardy letter regretting that summer schedules were not yet fixed. There would probably be steamers going twice weekly, weather permitting, but not on Saturdays. Confound them! Who wanted a steamer! Surely there was a boatman somewhere on the mainland who'd be quite pleased to earn a ferry fee. Ilfracombe seemed to be the nearest point to Lundy. Why not try the Town Clerk there? But the answer came back....sorry, nothing doing. There were paddle steamers

some days....and charter planes, flown by a private company at Wrafton.

There was nothing for it. Plane it would have to be, and Lundy first glimpsed from above, her grandeur dwarfed by altitude.

When the day of the journey arrived, the mile-long queues at Waterloo Station and the packed trains made Lundy's aloofness savour of Paradise.

It was early evening when Wrafton was reached – a tiny station with wooden platform and tiny wooden waiting-room, and a vista of great stretches of open grassland. No one else got out.

"I'm flying to Lundy," I explained to the solitary man who was serving as ticket-collector, station-master and porter all rolled into one.

"Oh yes," he replied non-committally. "Just wait till I get this train off, and I'll give you a hand with the luggage."

Off went the train with its teeming holiday load, and I filled my lungs with the first breath of the healing magic of quiet. Even the restless wind was calmer and kinder. A great swirl of sky round the setting sun had been swept clear of cloud and the air carried the freshness of the sea.

"The airfield's there," said the porter, waving a hand towards the stretch of grassland, where I now noticed one or two wooden sheds. "But I don't think there are any planes going tonight. I think it's all shut up."

"But I've booked a seat," I said, aghast.

"We'll go and see," he said.

We went down a deserted track past shut doors. He paused at the last one. "I'll knock, but don't think there's anyone here," he cautioned.

A second of anxious suspense and then the door swung open, revealing a dark young man who smiled. "Passenger for Lundy? Come right through."

What a relief! After my luggage had been weighed, a few other minor preliminaries briskly effected. I was invited out to the front of the office where the smallest plane I had ever seen was waiting – an Auster designed to carry pilot and two passengers. Its sides and roof were of Perspex and one could see out almost as through plain glass.

A quick run up the field, a turn, and we were airborne, sailing up over the Devon fields out toward the sunset. It was more exciting than I had imagined. Great white clouds seemed to have ranged themselves deliberately to form a guard of honour on either side. Out went the plane into the solitude of a world of blue, white and grey, the roar of the engine drowning all other sounds. Regrets for the small boat were forgotten.

The pilot tried to point out landmarks – the Bristol Channel, probably, the coast of Wales to the north, Devon to the south – but the engine defied competition. Grey-blue water stretched away to infinity, looking soft and warm and still. Then afar off came a hazy glimpse of grey and green, hardening as distance shortened into towering crags and breaking seas.

At the near end of the island stood a toy lighthouse, hardly finger high. A ruined castle dominated the hill above. An odd criss-cross of lines caught the eye as if a giant had ruled straight lines with chalk. The plane dipped. The "roof" of Lundy was hidden. The pilot was flying along parallel to the east coast to give his passenger a chance to see the magnificent, awe-inspiring rock formations.

Alas, I was too inexperienced an air-traveller to sit back calmly and take it all in. The grandeur of nature was swallowed up in the overwhelming thought, "How on earth is he going to land?" At the far end of the island we rose, swung round and there was the



Lundy's "postman" waves to the pilot as the mail plane prepares to touch down on the island's turf. He has with him a bag containing the outgoing mail.



Many of the houses on Lundy are badly dilapidated as the result of furious gales from which the island is unprotected. Slates are frequently torn from the roofs.

rough triangle of grassland was a tiny double-fronted shop, like the very smallest, old-world general shop before a village green. Could that be the inn? The door defied vigorous shaking. Not a sound. The sun was setting. An air of melancholy brooded over the place as over Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights," inspiring a strange unease in the out-of-doors, an impulse to get in to where there was light, colour, cheerful talk and good food on the table.

The track led on down hill. Behind the wall on the left a much larger building loomed up, but there seemed no way to get through to it. Suddenly the wall turned sharply left, leaving the track to go its way alone, across the open down, past – strange unexpected sight – a large, quite modern-looking church, marooned out in the wilderness.

But the fact that there at last was a door in the wall seemed all that mattered at the moment. It swung open at a touch. Inside was a large garden, sadly overgrown but still sloping down in dignified beauty from a goodly sized house towards a deep coombe, sheltered by the stout strength of the great granite walls, but the small porch, front door and lights beyond were too inviting to encourage further investigation outside. I was soon led up a handsome curving staircase to my room.

"We've put you in the old part of the building," they explained as we went down a narrow passage that doubled back from the main landing, through an archway cut in granite walls a good foot wide. And journey's end was a pleasant little room with small lattice windows, looking out over the garden, down the coombe to the sea.

I had been on Lundy nearly four days before the first steamer put in and fresh visitors arrived at the hotel.

"We've been trying to get across since last Friday," they said. "We were actually going up the gang plank of the steamer when they told us

long stretch of Lundy's virgin grassland. Down came the plane, the wheels running lightly on the turf. We were there. A young man came forwards from a far corner of the field leading a horse-drawn cart.

"That's the way you go," he said, pointing to a gate in the direction from which he had come. "I'll take the luggage. Ask at the inn. They'll show you the way."

Looking round one saw that the giant chalk lines had reared up into vast granite walls. One ran the whole length of the island. Four others crossed at intervals. The gate was at the point where the two walls intersected. It led out to a rough white road bordered by stoutly built cottages, now empty and derelict, and more granite walls enclosing, one supposed, cultivated land or farm stock.

Set at right angles to the road and facing a



"The Big House," home of the owner of Lundy. Out in the one and only bay at South Point, a ship lies at anchor.

that the trip was cancelled. The weather was so rough that bookings didn't justify sailing. We tried to get a small boat, but the boatmen didn't want to risk their ships. And, finally, we phoned the airport and were told that the wind was blowing too strongly for a plane to make a safe landing."

Then, and only then, did I realize the extraordinary good fortune that had attended my own journey. I remembered the blustery day, the non-committal porter, the brief calm at sunset. Mine, in short, had been the only plane able to make the journey in the course of about eight days. As for boats, Lundy has a foul name with seamen. Many and many a ship has gone to doom on Lundy's rocks. Centuries ago the inhabitants of the island lived largely on the proceeds of shipwrecks, which they did nothing to discourage. It was not till 1819 that the first lighthouse (now known as the Old Light) was built, and today there are great modern lighthouses at both ends of the island.

All the same, in the Marisco Tavern (impressive name given to the tiny double-fronted shop which is the inn, post office and the only shop on the whole island) hang souvenirs of a vast number of ships lost on Lundy in the last 20 years. The most notable disaster in living memory took place on 30th May 1906, when, in a dense fog, H.M.S. *Montagu* mistook Lundy for Hartland Point and ran aground. No lives were lost, but the ship became a total wreck. Rough steps in the granite cliff, cut to assist salvage operations, can still be seen on the west coast at the point where she went down.

So, when gales blow, wise seamen steer clear of Lundy. Planes can't land on its narrow air-strip. Granite-based, veiled in the tempest, she rides out the storms alone. And that was why I had waited five days, six, seven, eight, nine, ten....for a letter.

But, when I awoke on my first morning, there was nothing to hint at this dark, sinister streak in the island's story. Rather it wore the aspect that Clemence Dane describes in one of her plays, appearing like the new Jerusalem that St. John saw in his vision, clothed in light, girdled with a crystal sea, cut off from worldly strife and taint.

I stepped out into the garden to explore. I wish I could describe the freshness of the air. First, I turned to study the house. It had originally been, I judged, a fair-sized box-shaped farmhouse. But successive owners had added an L-shaped piece at one end, to house a billiard-room and kitchens on the ground floor, and the staircase I had noted on my arrival and a number of pleasant bedrooms above.

All the same, especially as I got to know the island and its history better, I was glad my room was in the old part of the building, with its little lattice windows peeping out cautiously at the sea over the great bulwark of the wide granite walls. For it gave the nights a *Treasure Island* flavour to lie in bed and imagine the heavy foot of Thomas Benson on the stair....But I'll tell you more of Thomas later.



Passengers from a Bristol passenger steamer landing at Lundy. As there is no landing pier, they come ashore by boat.

In the bright sunlight I passed through the side door which I had entered as the sinister shadows closed in the night before, and stood once more on the narrow white track which, I soon found, was the nearest thing to a main road that Lundy boasts.

First, I decided, I would examine the church marooned so oddly on the crest of the downs at the south end of the island.

Inside the porch I made an unexpected discovery – a long, worn stone box, lying along and almost filling up one of the bordering benches.* It was of solid granite, hollowed out at one end. It was strange for a coffin to be made of stone; it was strange for it to be lying open and empty in the porch of a deserted church, but the strangest thing of all about it was its length. It was clearly the coffin of a giant.

I stood wondering, little realizing then that church and coffin were fascinating evidence of the wide sweep of history on this one tiny insignificant island. For, as the days went by, I discovered gradually, with amazed delight, that little Lundy – a window-box kingdom faithfully reproducing precisely the same line of growth as her mightiest sisters – has a history just like a thin slice cut out from the great cake of world history.

There, at the bottom, so geologists confirm, is the evidence of the rocks – relics of those savage, fierce, primeval days when restless volcanoes flung up at their will mountain ranges and plateaus, or let fall valleys and ocean beds, till the Creative Voice said, "Be still," and the seas settled and life began to creep up out of the waters.

Yes, Lundy was there right at the beginning, cut off even in those days from the mainland, and sustaining a life of her own. I almost said "giving birth" to a life of her own, but that would be jumping to conclusions. Did life spring up of its own accord on the island – or were the seeds carried over the water by birds and later by men?

That is a question that will be answered – if ever it is – only by years of patient study. One famous botanist, Dr. F. R. Elliston Wright, has found on Lundy one species of plant unknown on the mainland, and members of the Lundy Field Society have found two more. For the most part, however, plants and flowers are much the same as you'd find anywhere in Devon and Cornwall – great lovely stretches of purple heather, with little patches of lucky white; cushions of thrift; a charming pink-flowered stone-crop; the flaunting yellow of ragwort and furze; tall foxgloves; and, in spring, the grace of bluebells.

Animal life, too, has evidence to offer. Rove where you will through the bracken-covered wilderness, you'll never meet snake or adder, stoat, weasel, or badger – all of which exist on the mainland. The few mammals found on Lundy were almost all originally brought across by man – rabbits, goats, Soay sheep, ponies and deer – or, like the black and brown rats – carried unintentionally in ships. The only exceptions are seals and pygmy shrews. Seals can swim, but how did the first pygmy shrew arrive on Lundy? Nobody knows. Maybe it had been carried across on wreckage – astonishing passenger, adventurous journey – or was there, perhaps, some strong-minded Stone Age child whose parents moved house and who determined to take his (or her) pets along too?

Men certainly found their way to Lundy in the very dawn of human history. I walked one morning to the north part of the island beyond the farthest of the dividing walls and searched out the site where thousands of years ago the Stone Age men built a hut circle. In the same part of the island archaeologists have found traces of a tumulus and recovered flint implements. They found, too, another burial ground on the far south-westerly corner of the island. These all seem to be vestiges of the little dark men whom we associated with the label "Stone Age".

But Lundy has presented historians with another much more baffling relic – two stone coffins dug up not far from the Manor Farmhouse nearly 100 years ago. It is one of these that lies in the porch of the church. Both contained human skeletons of huge proportions. The taller was that of a man 8ft high! How this contrasts with our usual picture of Stone Age men, or even with the "great" men of mediaeval times who, as their armour shows, would today be considered very under-sized.

**The stone, known as the Giant's Stone, is long and rectangular, hollowed out at one end, to take the cranium of the body interred in the ancient kist. The skeleton was that of a man 8ft. 6in. in height, and a similar kist nearby held the skeleton of a woman 7ft. 8in. As the graves were unearthed in an old cemetery, it is assumed that both were Christians, and that they were probably of Celtic origin. Note by F. W. Gade, Agent at Lundy.*

Some of the wild goats which live on the rugged west coast of the island, 300 ft. to 400 ft. above the sea. There are about 50, all told, in Lundy.



Naturally this find occasioned much discussion, but no really definite conclusions have ever been reached. These two men may have been giants among a race of pygmies – they may even be representatives of a lost unknown race whom some legends suggest preceded the Stone Age men.

I can't tell you, but before I pass on to more modern times, let me mention one more very old relic on Lundy – a Logan-stone that stands on the top of the cliffs half-way up the east coast. Logan (or rocking) stones are giant slabs of granite balanced so delicately that even slight pressure will make them rock. Once again opinion differs as to how they came to be so delicately balanced. Some geologists think they are freak products of glacial action; others that prehistoric men aided the delicacy of balance by deliberately wearing away the foundations under these stones, and then consulted them as oracles. The stone on Lundy, worn by the tempests of centuries, has had, in modern times, to be shored up to prevent its falling, but you can still stand and look at it and set your imagination to work, picturing the scenes it *may* have witnessed, the eager or worried Stone Age people who may have sought its help.

So much, then, for the bottom strata of our cake. Rome's tramping Legions found their way to Lundy – at least one Roman did – for 50 years ago, in the little windswept graveyard on the south-west side of the island, they dug up a granite stone commemorating in Latin, "Tigernus son of Tigernus." It was found *within* the ruined walls of Lundy's first Christian church, dedicated to the English saint, St. Elen, and probably built of clay cement somewhere between A.D. 500 and 600. The outlines of the foundation can still be clearly seen. And here I went another day, making my way in a world of solitude between rough stones and crosses, simple mounds covered with rough grass and heather where rest a little company of ship-wrecked sailors and modern owners and inhabitants of the island, and laid my hand on the stone a Roman once handled, and wondered, had Tigernus died in exile on Lundy? Or was it once his miniature kingdom? Was he, perhaps, an early Christian? And did he have the stone carved in his lifetime? Or who was there after him who spoke Latin? Again Lundy leaves us guessing.

The Normans found Lundy too. And there is abundant evidence that they found it an island after their own hearts – evidence on the island itself and in written records on the mainland. They didn't get there, of course, quite so soon as they arrived in the home counties of England, but by the middle of the twelfth century one of the wildest, fiercest, most turbulent of them all, Jordan de Marisco, had established himself as Lord of Lundy.

What a stronghold Lundy was for that favourite Norman pastime – hurling defiance at the King. De Marisco built himself an impregnable castle at the south-eastern point of the island commanding the only safe landing beach, and for two centuries he and his descendants – as wild and turbulent as himself – played the old game. Twice kings gave away the island over the heads of the de Mariscos, each time granting it to those warrior priests, the Knights Templar. But in those times possession counted for more than the law. Jordan's castle defied dispossession. Its walls shout the story at you even today if you stand on the green turf within their still-linked strength while the wind tears through your hair.

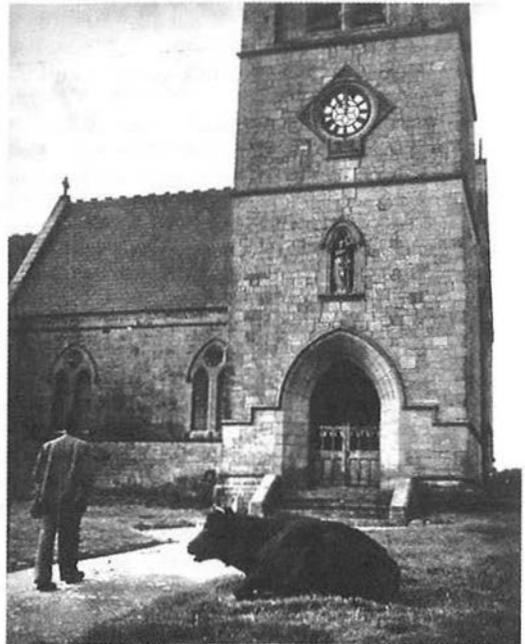
For 200 years the de Mariscos dominated – sometimes reconciled and in royal favour, often a law unto themselves. The most serious incident of all occurred in 1235. William, then head of the de Mariscos, was closely involved in the murder of Henry Clement, a clerk who was travelling from Ireland to Westminster on the King's business. Since clerks were priests the deed was a doubly serious matter, and branded William as an outlaw – his hand against everyman's. For seven years he lived a desperate existence, venturing out of his Lundy stronghold only to prey on passing shipping. He is said even to have plotted the murder of Henry III as the only way to get himself out of his predicament. But ultimately he was captured, taken to London, and executed in the Tower. And though his family was back in possession of Lundy some 40 years later, they never regained their old power. In 1321 the island passed out of their hands for ever.

And the next strata in our cake? The glorious days of Good Queen Bess, would you say?

The days of the great sea voyages of Drake, of defiance of the might of Spain? Yes, once again Lundy repeats the pattern. For who was Lord of Lundy in those days? None other than the famous Sir Richard Grenville of the little *Revenge*. Do you remember the matchless story? How Sir Richard chose to go down fighting 53 Spanish men-o-war single-handed rather than fly leaving wounded men ashore who would fall into the hands of the Inquisition? What a man! What a lord for Lundy!

Alas, after his death the island became the home of so many successive bands of pirates that the merchantmen of the west combined to rout them out, and King Charles I sent a scholarly man of first-class reputation, Thomas Bushell, to be Governor of the island. Thomas held Lundy loyally for his master right throughout the Civil War and relinquished it only when hostilities everywhere else had ended and King Charles, a prisoner, sent him written permission to lay down his arms.

Again, the inevitable tide of piracy washed in until the days of the early Georges – the days when world-wide commerce and big merchant companies were developing, with London as headquarters. Then the times



The Church of St. Helen, built by the Rev. Hudson Grosett Heaven. It was completed in 1896 and, save for interior decorations, is built of island materials.

produced the first man to see Lundy with modern profit-making eyes. Thomas Benson, M.P., a merchant of Bideford, who leased the island from Lord Gower, the owner.

Thomas was a monster! A sort of combination of the ruthlessness of Captain Kidd, the cunning of Long John Silver, the duplicity of Ebenezer Balfour of Shaw's slave-owner, smuggler, swindler. Lundy proved a first-class base for his various shady transactions. One of his major villainies was to get a contract from the Government for shipping convicts out of England to Virginia. But he astutely took advantage of the wording of the contract, which actually stipulated only that the convicts should be shipped "out of the realm," and, instead of taking them to America, landed them on Lundy and used them as his personal slaves.

He set them to quarry out the granite, and it was they who built the vast dividing walls which had so impressed me when I first arrived. What a life those poor wretches must have led with the avaricious, heartless swindler in absolute power, in sight of land that held their homes and families, but cut off beyond all hope by the inexorable sea. Was it just chance that had made me sense an atmosphere of brooding melancholy as I walked at twilight that first evening unknowingly in the scene of their labour and suffering?

But slave-owning was only one of Benson's villainies. He was a prince of smugglers, too, and they still point out a little cove where he is said habitually to have smuggled contraband ashore, and a cave there that still bears his name. Heaven knows, too, how many ships he lured on to the rocks with false lights.

Ultimately, his cunning and his greed were his undoing. He heavily insured the cargo of one of his ships and claimed the insurance on the cargo. But one bold member of the ship's crew disclosed the plot and gave evidence against Benson, who was forced to fly from England and never dared return. He ultimately died in Portugal and tradition has it that he left a vast secret treasure hoard buried somewhere on the island and that his ghost still comes seeking to dig it up.

And so to the more benevolent days of Queen Victoria. Once again the prevailing mood in the great world outside seems to have been reflected in little Lundy. The island was purchased by a Mr. William Hudson Heaven and for over 80 years it remained in the possession of his family. They bought to their little kingdom a prosperity and serenity such as it had never known in the whole of its previous history. People called it "The Kingdom of Heaven."

The granite quarries were leased to a reputable company who brought over 200 men to work them. Stout granite cottages were built for the workers to live in, and it was Lundy stone that was used to build the Victoria Embankment in London.

For their own use the Heaven family built Millcombe House, a pleasant manor house beautifully situated in the shelter of the island's one deep coombe which runs down from the



High Street, Lundy, with its houses built of stone to weather the fierce Atlantic gales.

Manor Farm Hotel to the landing beach. They made a beautiful garden around the house, rising in terraces behind and at the sides, and dipping down in front to the sea. They planted it with fuchsias, hydrangeas, and all sorts of lovely fruit trees: cleared winding paths up to the cliff. Today (especially since the labour shortage of the last war) nature has claimed her rights once more, but often I passed out of the lower gate of the hotel garden which gave direct access into the grounds of Millcombe House and marvelled at the medley of growth, wayside and garden plants together in a Sleeping-Beauty jungle, while through the disordered profusion strutted great peacocks who fanned their tails and poked enquiring faces almost in mine if I sat down among the bracken.

When the penny post was introduced on the mainland the independence of Lundy was recognized. Today, Lundy still has its own postage stamps issued by the owner and printed with a picture of a puffin – that stubby, short-tailed bird which is so prominent among the many which find sanctuary on Lundy that the island has earned the nickname "Puffin Island."

The last representative of the Heaven family was the Rev. Hudson Grossett Heaven, who was both priest and squire of Lundy. He it was who built the modern church and served as its priest. He died in 1916 and once again the island was sold.

The next owner was Mr. Martin Coles Harman, who died in 1954. I have been told – and I'd like to think the story is true – that he first set eyes on Lundy as a small boy enjoying a day's outing with hardly a sixpence in his pocket. He looked up as he set foot on the landing beach at the beauty of Lundy, and exclaimed, "one day I'm going to buy this island."

At any rate, in 1925, after many years of hard work, he was able to purchase Lundy and in that paradise for children he brought up his own sons and daughters. I wonder of they often thought of the island's history, and those who had owned the "kingdom" before them.



Outside the Martisco Tavern visitors examine the lifebelts strung outside; relics from ships which have been wrecked on the island's rocks. This is the meeting-place of all the islanders.

One of them, at any rate, John Pennington Harman, caught and repeated the adventurous, gallant spirit of Sir Richard Grenville. He died with the jungle fighters at Kohima, Burma, in 1944, unaware that he would be awarded the highest mark of British courage, the Victoria Cross. A memorial has been unveiled to his memory in the V.C. Quarry on the east side of the island.

But island kingdoms today are not what they once were. Isolated communities, unless they can be entirely self-supporting, are always at the mercy of transport – and the cost of transport, especially with the mounting post-war price of coal and oil, has risen so enormously that living on an island anywhere is becoming something of a luxury. When I was on Lundy (Mr Harman's own boat, the *Lertna*, having been wrecked) all freight was carried by plane and the charge was 3d. for every pound. Just think what that means? Threepence extra on every pound of potatoes or pound of butter that you fail to produce from your own soil.

Fewer and fewer people are to be found who prefer the pure air and

silence of Lundy to the cinema lights and the company of the factories, and are willing to go and work on the island. Wages, too, have more than trebled since the days of the Heaven's beautifully kept garden.

So even in the glare and rush of our modern scientific age, Lundy preserves her silence, her beauty and her mystery. Even today, it seems, strange things can happen there. At any rate I was told the most circumstantial ghost story I have ever heard. It happened one night in the lighthouse at the south-east point. A new, inexperienced keeper had just come on duty, and, when the man going off duty told him that there had been an odd, uncanny sort of atmosphere in the duty-room in the early morning hours, he thought it was the usual "game" of trying to put the wind up the new boy. So young Ken Monk went cheerfully and quite unworried about his work. About one o'clock he heard a step in the passage outside the duty-room, and shouted, "Come in." The two lighthouse cats showed signs of extreme agitation. Then he saw the door open and a man standing in the doorway. To his surprise the visitor, instead of coming in, turned abruptly on his heel and walked off down the passage. Unable to leave the post of duty, he puzzled over the stranger's queer behaviour, and the next day mentioned it in the Marisco Tavern. "Some queer old boy, it was," he explained, describing the visitor's patched clothing and bearded face. "I suppose he's a hiker camping on the island."

The two men to whom he spoke looked at each other. They knew well there were no campers on the island, and that the climb to the lighthouse would be difficult enough to a stranger even in daylight. They also recognized beyond doubt the description of clothing and appearance the keeper had given. They knew these belonged to an old fellow, a lighthouse keeper of bygone days, dead before Ken Monk was born.

The late owner of Lundy Island, Mr. Martin Coles Harman, issued his own postage stamps, or, as the Post Office prefers to call them, "labels". Normally they bore the head of a Puffin, but the one here shown was printed to celebrate the 1,000th year since Eric Bloodaxe, last of the Norse Kings, was killed, for Lundy was once a Norse stronghold. Other stamps show animal life on Lundy and incidents from its history.



DEFEAT OF ERIC BLOODAXE • 954

Once Mr. Harman issued his own currency which he called puffins and half-puffins, but the Mint objected, and Lundy coins are now merely souvenirs. Outgoing letters bear Lundy stamps in addition to the normal postage rate in British stamps, a practice to which the G.P.O. raises no objection providing it does not "embarrass the postal service" and the labels are placed on the reverse side. They serve a purpose in publicizing the Bird Sanctuary island.

THE "KING" OF LUNDY

Martin Coles Harman, City financier who started as an office boy and worked his way up to the control of companies worth £14,000,000, bought the 1,000-acre island of Lundy, in the Bristol Channel and claimed that it was another State, not subject to the Crown. Its fifty inhabitants paid no rates or taxes in their small independent "kingdom". Harman was their king; but in 1930 he was charged under the Coinage Act, 1870, for issuing illegal coins, just for Lundy, known as puffins and half-puffins (below). Lundy Islanders also had their own special stamp. Harman was fined £5 and 15 guineas costs. He lost his appeal.



This is from a Daily Express publication "1919 - 1938 These Tremendous Years". It also records Sir Thomas Lipton and "Shamrock IV" being beaten in the Americas Cup; the R101 airship disaster; and Adolf Hitler winning the German elections.

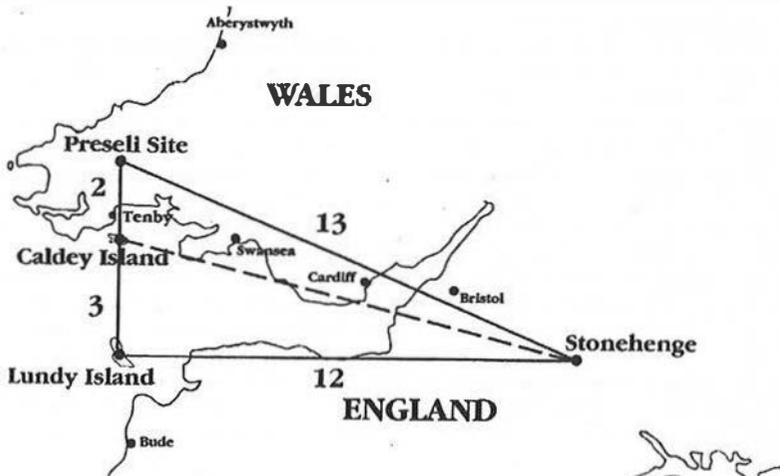
SUN, MOON & STONEHENGE: PROOF OF HIGH CULTURE IN ANCIENT BRITAIN

by Robin Heath. Bluestone Press. (Reviewed by Robert W. E. Farrah.)

Strange days indeed! Heath's book should be titled *Sun, Moon, Stonehenge and Lundy*, for Lundy is the fulcrum on which much of this esoteric history is centred. The book will not be easily categorised and will inevitably be by its very nature deemed controversial. It will take its place upon the bookcase together with works on Archaeoastronomy, Archaeology, Earth Mysteries and Anthropology somewhere between current orthodoxy and the twilight of the lunatic fringe.

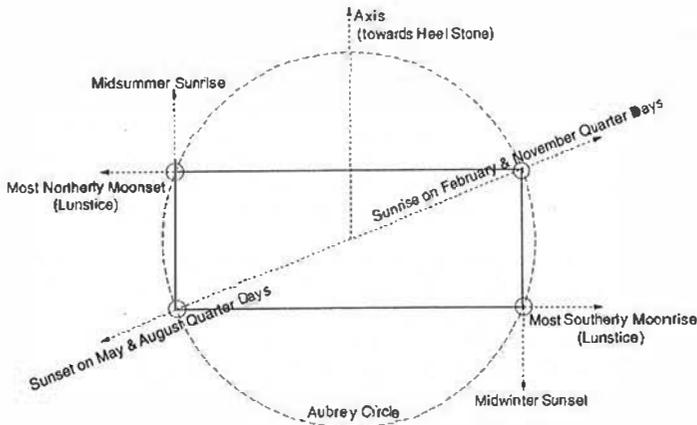
I first became acquainted with Heath's work when I read the review 'Lundy as an Astronomical Observatory' of his book *A Key to Stonehenge* in the Lundy Field Society Newsletter No. 26 January 1996. *The Sun, Moon and Stonehenge* is a much expanded and enlarged replacement to *A Key to Stonehenge* which has now become collectable and much sought after.

Robin Heath graduated in engineering and became Head of the Technology Department at Coleg Ceredigion in Dyfed. He now writes and lectures upon his lifelong interest in megalithic science. While trying to solve the mystery behind the inspired setting of Stonehenge and why the architects needed to bring the bluestones from the Preseli Mountains some 135 miles distant, he realised that a line connecting the source of the bluestone at Carn Menyn and Stonehenge formed the hypotenuse of a Pythagorean triangle. With their respective lines of longitude and latitude the exact site of the right angle is Lundy. Heath called this the Stonehenge-Preseli Lunation Triangle and demonstrated clearly how its geometry incorporates the practicalities of both the Solar and Lunar calendars. Both Lundy and Preseli are natural features, Stonehenge is man made. Stonehenge was built exactly east of Lundy to provide the defining point of this triangle. Heath acknowledges the help of the author and Celtic scholar Peter Berresford Ellis for his assistance in confirming the etymological source for Ynys Elen, an old name for Lundy thought to mean Elen's Island. It would seem that some place names which contain 'elen' have been incorrectly attributed to St Elen when they come from another word 'eli' or 'elen' which a modern Welsh dictionary interprets as 'angle, elbow or corner'. Lundy as Ynys Elen – the island of the corner, angle or elbow, seems descriptive of the lunation triangle.



The Stonehenge - Preseli Lunation Triangle.

The same pythagorean construct became the blueprint for the cathedral of the megalithic age – Stonehenge. It can be found at the very heart of the monument's foundations incorporated within the station stone rectangle which preceded the erection of the bluestones. The station stone rectangle contains many of the principal astronomical alignments which were to be retained in the later completed monument.



Heath furthers his research by exploring the many facets of megalithic science with chapters on anthropology, cosmology, geomancy, sacred measure and geometry. His more orthodox ideas are both original and easily rationalised and a genuine contribution to our understanding of these enigmatic monuments. Inevitably with such works he sometimes ventures into the more speculative byways of leftfield philosophies more open to interpretation. With these he comes full circle back to the sacred landscape centred on Lundy with further examples of an Arthurian triangle and a triangle based upon the geomantic habits of the early celtic saints. Fascinating as these are they are not easily rationalised by the cold eye of orthodoxy but Heath is only too aware that he is sometimes sacrificing academic respectability.

It was almost by invitation that I made contact with Heath. Reading the review of *A Key to Stonehenge* I read that "perhaps someone reading this article has a vital clue which can lead to a fuller understanding of these questions". There are many close correspondences between Heath's work and my own of which he was unaware. I brought to his attention my research into the megalithic astronomy of Lundy where I had stated that it was possible that the solar alignments found on Lundy could have been a prototype of the megalithic science which was later to flower at Stonehenge. This inspired the headline "Stones may have inspired Stonehenge" in the Western Morning News (17th October 1992). It seemed remarkable to me that two of the principal standing stones on Lundy were orientated to the midsummer sunrise the same as the axis of orientation for Stonehenge. I could further rationalise connections between Presell, Lundy and Stonehenge. Presell has been described as a megalithic Westminster from where Lundy is easily seen directly south beneath the sun at its meridian. This I feel would have been enough to have given Lundy special sacred status to an ancient sun worshipping priesthood. On Lundy with a knowledge of the meridian found by measuring the shadow cast by the midday sun it would be easy to ascertain a north-south line and so east in the direction of Stonehenge. There is evidence that such awareness was present on Lundy in two stones which seem to suggest astronomical trends to the rising and setting sun at the equinox. From the environs of Stonehenge which has been called a power house of the megalithic culture, Lundy lay

directly west in the region of the setting sun. This may have also contributed to the island's sacred status for such places became Otherworld islands but usually merit only the briefest of mentions. More recently in the *Archaeology of Lundy - Sacred Island of Annwn?* by Sharon Higgins, which appeared in *The Leyhunter Journal*, no. 130 is a summary of the fieldwork undertaken by the National Trust Archaeological Survey. This neglected corpus of island mythology is explored in some detail in my forthcoming paper, *'There was a holy race of men on Lundy.'*

The method by which the bluestones arrived at Stonehenge has been passionately debated, were they transported over land and sea or did they arrive by glaciation? The implications of the former strengthens the case for an elite order of astronomer priests capable of the geometric, cosmological and engineering expertise claimed for megalithic science. Recently Stonehenge became one of the first archaeological monuments to be dated according to Chlorine 36 dating. This new technique pioneered in America can reveal when a rock surface was first exposed to the atmosphere. The results showed that the bluestones were first exposed between 30,000 to 40,000 years ago. The stones could not have been transported by glaciation because the last ice sheet capable of doing so covered 650,000 years ago. It would seem that the claims for megalithic science are in the ascendant and thus proof of high culture.

Sun, Moon and Stonehenge retails at £12.99, but LFS members can buy it for £9.50. It is available from:

Bluestone Press (Sales), Maes Yr Awel, Cwm St Dogmaels, Cardigan, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA43 3JF
Telephone (01239) 613224

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LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE

Boldly going where no one has gone before by Liza Cole, Lundy Warden
(from Marine Conservation Society, Spring 1999)

Lundy is a 400 foot high, 3 1/2 mile long by 1/2 mile wide lump of granite that lies about 11 miles off the North Devon coast, in the mouth of the Bristol Channel. This strategic position and her natural defences made the Island an ideal haunt for pirates and smugglers in the past, but since 1969 she has fallen into the much safer hands of the National Trust, who lease it to the Landmark Trust. The Landmark Trust have restored many of the buildings on the island and let them out for self-catering holidays to birdwatchers, climbers, divers and anyone who just wants to get away from it all.

Lundy is Norse for 'Isle of Puffins' and although there has been a decline in numbers, Lundy still remains the largest seabird colony in south-west England. Birdwatchers come to observe the busy colonies of fulmar, kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill and puffin as well as keeping an eye out for unusual migrants. In addition to the bird life there is plenty more to attract the naturalist, and most of the Island has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its wildlife value.

It was not until the development of the aqualung, however, that it was discovered that the wealth of wildlife beneath the waves matched, or even exceeded, that above. It soon became apparent that there was an amazing array of marine animals and plants to be found in a small area of seabed, and in great abundance: one single square metre of seabed supports up to 80 different types of animal which can number up to 2,500 individuals. Not only is there diversity and abundance but also the occurrence of rare and unusual species including many Mediterranean-Atlantic species (like branching sponges, red sea fingers, sea fan and certain anemones). In fact Lundy was the first place in the British Isles where the sunset crop coral, *Leptopsammia pruvoti*, was found. Many of these brightly coloured species are rarely found in British waters but off the east coast of Lundy they can be found in abundance.

There are many factors that contribute towards this wealth, the first being the variety of different underwater habitats which attract a range of organisms with different needs, from the tidal-swept races at the north and south ends, to the walls and boulder scree off the exposed west side and the sand, mud and gravel plains off the sheltered east side. Not to mention the countless shipwrecks that Lundy has claimed, including the MV Robert which is one of the few intact wrecks around the British coast.

Another reason is the mere fact that Lundy is an island and is set far away from most mainland pollution sources whilst still enjoying the nutrient-rich coastal waters with the suspended food supply needed by filter feeders. This is mixed with the colder, clearer Atlantic water from time to time which other species prefer. However, this does not mean that the waters around Lundy are cold and murky, in fact they are touched by the Gulf Stream which carries in the Mediterranean-Atlantic species that are usually only found further south, and have been described as being 'as clear as gin'.

In 1969 it was first suggested that Lundy should be recognised as a marine reserve and a programme was started to identify all the plants and animals around the Island. Following this a report was produced by the Lundy Field Society in 1971 which recommended the establishment of a voluntary marine nature reserve. An advisory committee was set up in 1973 which produced a management policy and code of conduct for users of the reserve and a 'gentleman's agreement' was set up with Devon Sea Fisheries to stop trawling in areas where it could affect an unusually shallow population of Red Band Fish and fragile species such as sea fans and rock corals.

With the advent of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in 1981 it was possible to establish statutory marine nature reserves in this country and Lundy was an obvious candidate. By 1983 consultations were taking place and a draft Management Plan had been produced, the Lundy Marine Consultation Group was set up to discuss the feasibility of a statutory MNR. Then on 20 November 1986, after much discussion, consultation and negotiation, Lundy Marine Nature Reserve became the first statutory Marine Protected Area in Britain.

The primary objective of the MNR was to safeguard the marine habitats and wildlife but with a flexible approach, recognising the fact that the area had many different users and yet was still environmentally outstanding. So a way was sought to integrate the different uses with marine conservation, research and education. A zoning scheme was devised to direct ecologically damaging activities away from the most sensitive areas.

This approach has worked well over the last decade or so, but there is no lying back on laurels. The management of the reserve is continually being reassessed and updated. The Consultation Group has evolved into the Lundy MNR Advisory Group which meets twice a year and advises the Management Group. The most recent step in this evolution is the fact that Lundy is now a candidate Special Area of Conservation under the European Habitats Directive. This has necessitated some changes to the Management Plan and the Zoning Scheme to include any additional objectives but only goes to underline the international importance of Lundy's marine environment.

8

WRECK DIVING

From 'Preserve Your Heritage' leaflet produced by Department for Culture, Media and Sport

WHY SHIPWRECKS ARE IMPORTANT

All wrecks contain clues to our maritime past. Some wrecks may be important because of their association with well-known historical characters or events. Others may be important because they contain information about the past which is not known from any other source.

Generally, older wooden wrecks are more likely to be important than most modern steel wrecks, but there are many exceptions. Assessing the importance of a wreck is not easy, particularly if the vessel is unidentified. Some archaeologists and historians have special expertise and knowledge. Their help may be necessary to assess some wrecks, but others can be dated and identified by divers doing their own research.

FINDING A WRECK

If you find a wreck it can be as much fun trying to identify the ship from books and historical documents as actually exploring the wreck. There may come a time when you need specialist help. The organisations listed below (ADU and NAS) can give advice about the archaeological or historical significance of a wreck and, if they cannot help, they will be able to point you towards other sources of expertise. All enquiries can be treated in the strictest confidence if requested.

WRECK LISTS

There are probably hundreds of thousands of wrecks in United Kingdom waters but most have not been mapped. For many years work has been taking place on listing sites and monuments on land, and now the Government has initiated an inventory of all underwater sites, including wrecks. Evidence from divers, fishermen, hydrographic surveys, and historical references are used as sources of information. Divers are one of the most important because they can supply information about what actually exists on the seabed.

Separate inventories are being compiled by the three Royal Commissions responsible for recording archaeological sites in England, Scotland and Wales, as well as the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland. These are complemented in many coastal areas by local sites and monuments records, many of which now include underwater sites.

Enquiries are welcomed by the organisations that maintain official wreck inventories, but safeguards are in place to protect confidential information, particularly the exact position of sensitive, unprotected wrecks.

PROTECTING WRECKS

Keeping quiet about the location of a wreck you find can be an effective form of protection, but information often leaks out.

It may be worth considering whether the site could be designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. This legislation is used to control diving on important wrecks. Diving is allowed – but only when the divers are named on a licence. Anyone can apply for permission to dive on designated sites, but on some sites it may not be appropriate to issue a licence.

RECOVERIES FROM WRECKS

Some divers still regard the seabed as a free supermarket where they can keep anything they find. Fortunately this attitude is slowly changing. Responsible divers recognise that such plundering takes away some of the magic from the underwater world.

It is a legal requirement that all recovered wreck is reported to the Receiver of Wreck. This applies even to items recovered outside of UK territorial waters and those recovered by the owner.

Remember that all objects recovered from the sea had an owner when they were lost. If that owner cannot be traced, title usually passes to the Crown but in either case the finder is entitled to an award. In many cases the object is returned to the finder in lieu of the award but, where the object is of some archaeological or historical value, and a museum is prepared to buy it, the salvage award is normally the market value of the object.

Most objects which have been in the sea for many years, including materials such as pottery and bronze, will decay when brought to the surface unless stabilised. This can be an expensive process. The cost of conserving an eighteenth-century cast iron cannon recovered from the sea is likely to be more than its final value on the open market.

RECEIVER OF WRECK

The Receiver of Wreck is responsible for ensuring legitimate finders receive an appropriate award for material recovered. The Receiver is also responsible for trying to reunite property recovered from the sea with its legitimate owner.

The Receiver of Wreck is used to dealing with divers and works hard to look after their interests. The Receiver is prepared to be sympathetic to people who have unknowingly

broken the law in the past, but cannot overlook the activities of those who blatantly continue to disregard the requirements of the law. If you are unsure of these requirements you should contact the Receiver for advice.

The Receiver is usually in attendance at the major dive shows on the Coastguard stand, so that you can discuss things face to face.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIVING UNIT

The Archaeological Diving Unit (ADU) is a small team of specialist archaeologists trained in shipwreck investigation. The members are all experienced club divers who have gone on to acquire professional diving qualifications.

The ADU is contracted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to assist in administering the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. The ADU gives advice about shipwreck archaeology and regularly visits the sites of wrecks which are protected by law to help and advise divers who are licensed to investigate them. It also monitors the condition of wrecks which are not currently being investigated. An important part of the ADU's work is to assess newly-found wrecks to see if they are of archaeological or historical importance.

Members of the ADU are always willing to talk to divers about any aspect of shipwreck archaeology. If you are not always near a phone, just leave a message on St Andrews (01334) 462 919, and the ADU will return your call at a time to suit you.

GETTING INVOLVED

Many divers would like to get involved with a wreck investigation but do not know how to set about it. A simple way is to join one of the projects organised in association with the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS).

In addition to recognising the needs of divers, the NAS runs a variety of practical courses ranging from a basic introduction to underwater archaeology, through to the use of equipment such as magnetometers, side-scan sonars, and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs).

Call the NAS Training Office on 01705 818 419 for further information.

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LETTERS FROM A LIGHTHOUSE

The recipient of these letters was a family connection of Peter Ross (p44) who is Penny Oglvie's cousin – Penny allowed me to use these letters.

North Lighthouse
Lundy Island
Via Instow
N Devon

24.4.28

Dear Doris

As I always am, I was delighted to have your nice long letter on Wednesday last. You would hardly realise how much I have come to look forward to them. They are a very eagerly awaited event in a place where pleasures are few and far between.

If I am over the island for the mail, and your letter happens to be handed to me upside down so that I can see within the writing at the postmark, I say to myself, at once, "From Doris". I can never mistake them, because they are always so heavy and excitingly "plump" – I know from the mere feel of them, that I have a treat of page on page of absorbing reading in store, – and I'm sorry to reach the end.

How I detest letters that feel thin and flimsy; before even the envelope is opened, all interest evaporates; the touch alone, is sufficiently convincing of their lack of genuine friendship.

We have never seen each other, you and I, yet somehow, – probably because you write as you would speak, which in my experience of letters is rather a rare accomplishment – I seem to know you as well as if we *had* met. I have received letters, as no doubt everyone has, which are no guide whatever to a judgement of the writer – they are not written from the heart, only from the head and pen; but I prefer the “talking” letter every time.

No, Doris, of course I don't think you “forward” to commence letters with my Christian name, or to use it in them – what an idea! I asked you to do so because the stilted and formal “Mr” like the “Miss” is such a very poor start to a chummy letter – But I should not have thought you “forward” had you used it of your own accord. There is not, and there has never been, anything in any of your letters to me that could give anyone that idea – least of all me.

Before I forget to mention it, let me whisper a little secret – I am making you something – there, it is out! But you are not to know what it is until it arrives for you, which won't be for a week or two, as it's a thing that takes some little time to make; but it *will* arrive, and then you'll know! – That has set you guessing, hasn't it? But I'm sure you'd never guess if I gave you fifty guineas. You will be thinking of all sorts of things; but wait a little while – I always keep my word.

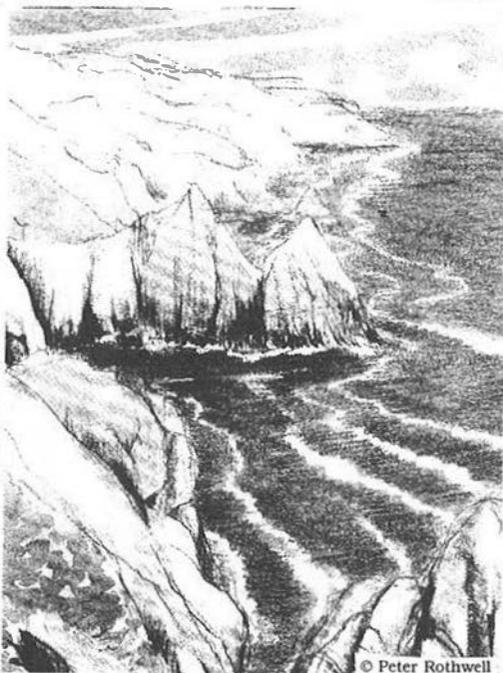
So you have left the Gazette Offices, Doris – Mrs Swire said as much in her letter to Mr Hall here. Well, all the best of good wishes and good fortune in your new situation; I'm sure you will “make good”, and you have every right to try to better yourself. I admire the ambition and pluck which will not allow you to remain “in one rut”; as so many do all their lives. Of course, it is always rather a wrench to leave familiar surroundings for new ones, but every place, and every occupation becomes familiar in time, don't they?

I found that the real wrench came, not when leaving one “job” for another, but when finally leaving *home*. I look back on my first year away from home and am not, now, ashamed to confess that I had a damp pillow very often! I know I felt awfully “big” leaving home “to keep myself” but I very soon discovered that lodgings are not home, and however “btg” and independent I felt in the day time; alone at night told a different tale! I remember as though it was only yesterday, the bouts of “homesickness” and the weary waiting for my annual holidays, to go home once more – the home I was much too eager to leave.

It is a great time, when one first earns enough to be able to go away from home and really keep oneself, but to one who has had a very happy childhood – as I had – it is a time of “homesickness” before very long too. Of course, it is soon got over, but very bitter while it lasts; especially when the sea is between you and home, as it was in my case.

But I took great pleasure in fulfilling an ambition of mine as a little boy – to buy my mother a gold watch “all out of my own earnings”! – that was a great day, and I felt very “big” indeed when I eventually took her out to get it – I forgot all the hours of “homesickness” on that great day!

I was very pleased to hear you had such a nice Easter, Doris. I should very much like to visit the Lickey Hills after your description. It is splendid among the Pines isn't it? I spent a good long time in “Pine Tree Country” – up in the Surrey hills, at



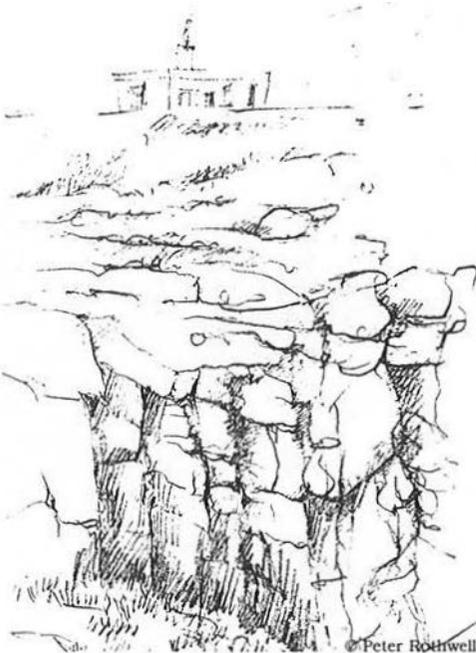
Charterhouse: and have very happy memories of it. Hindhead, the Hog's Back, Hazelmere and quaint little old world Godalming, were very familiar places to me then, and most of all I remember the Pines everywhere. I should imagine that the Lickey Hill must be very similar to those of Surrey.

What a gay time you had going and coming back! Guard's van going, terrific crowd returning! But it is all taken in good spirits at holiday time isn't it? Everyone is happy and good-tempered and makes light of little Inconveniences. You gave a splendid description of your trip, Doris! I could follow you all the way; but what did you want to lose yourself for? All past of the fun isn't it? I have frequently been lost in towns, but strangely enough, I can, anywhere out of towns, turn without hesitation to the cardinal points of the compass; I don't know why this should be, but it is so, even when it's too dull to see the sun; but in a town it is quite different: I'm far from "at home" then. I remember losing my way in Havre, and as at that time, I could not speak a word of French to ask the way, I was in a fine pickle, and was eventually "rescued" by a French soldier who had been a waiter in Exeter, and could speak English; but I have never felt as helpless in my life. If the trams had had place names on them, I should have been able to go by that, but they hadn't, only signs, such as triangles and circles. I was in a fine fix for the time, you can guess.

We are enjoying splendid weather, sunny and quite warm, and the sea nearly as blue as the sky. My time on Lundy Isle is getting very short now, I shall soon be going to the Depot in Swansea again; my two months at the light finishes on May the 7th, but when I am relieved, to go ashore, after that date, depends entirely on the weather. I am never very anxious to take advantage of the month's leave in every three months, during the summer time, because Lundy is very beautiful then, and there is none of the dust and noise of Swansea. We are supposed to be taken ashore every third month, for leave, "for the benefit of our health"; but this only means that we exchange duty on the light for duty at the Trinity

House Depot every day - that is, if the Depot can be called "duty" for we do no work there, but merely have to attend there every day, and "stand by" in case a keeper is suddenly required at one of the lights owing to illness or accident. Yet those long days between four walls are worse confinement than we ever experience here, but we *do* have the advantage of "all night in bed" which, of course, never occurs here at the light.

It is gloriously sunny here today, and just now, when I went out on the gallery of the light, I saw something on the rocks below I should like you to see - a mother seal and her young one. They look very black and shiny, all wet in the sun. They spend hours on the rocks, just above the water. In sunny weather. They are fearfully clumsy creatures on the rocks, but quite graceful in the water. I'm sure you would love the little yellowish baby one. They make a fearful noise here sometimes, when several of them are ashore together - a kind of bellowing. You know, the full grown ones are huge beasts, very many times heavier than a man, yet they have one very vulnerable point - a heavy blow



© Peter Rothwell

on the end of the nose kills them at once. Of course no one ever kills them here, and they know they are safe too, for they allow us to approach close enough to hit them if we wanted to. According to the fiction writers, very large sharks too, are only found in the tropics, but looking down from here, I have seen monsters surtgng past as long as a whale-boat: probably not man-eaters, but very unpleasant customers to encounter bathing! (Ed's Note - basking sharks?)

With regard to Margaret's letter, I am dotng as you suggest, Doris; I think that will be best too: I did not really want to commence a regular correspondence with her, though as you say, I should at least, reply to her letter: it would be rather rude not to do so. I am very glad you have no intention of "handing me over" and I didn't really think you would do that: I should miss your letters very much.

I think sometimes, that I had better make the most of the enjoyment I get from your letters: you are flfteen now, but you will not always be flfteen, and one day, sooner or later, you will be writing to tell me what wonderful things have happened and of the "someone" who is taking up all your time! It is only natural it should be so, but it will mean the twilight of a happy friendship: and so, very selfishly perhaps, I hope that event will be several years ahead yet.

I have no photos of myself here, Doris, but I will send you a larger one than the snap you have, when I go ashore in May. I shall take your photo ashore when I go - she might be lonely, left behind here poor girl! - and I must write and tell you how Doris - the picture one - enjoyed the sea trip of about 200 miles. Of course, I don't mean that Lundy Is 200 miles from Swansea; it is really about 70 miles direct, but by the time we have been to relieve all the other lighthouses and lightships, very many miles apart, it is quite 200 miles, so "picture Doris" Is going for a long trip.

We have a beautiful, big, fluffy cat here, but by order of the owner of the island, all other cats have been destroyed; but the lighthouses stand on Trinity House property, so he can't interfere with us for keepng ours, but as it was born on Lundy and as we have had it from a very tiny kitten, it has never seen another cat - unless it remembers - so I am taking pussy ashore too, for a holiday. I wonder what she will thnk of it? She will be horribly ill on the way, judging by cats I have taken on board before, but they get their "sea legs" very quickly. I shall bring her back when I come back in June; hope it doesn't make her restless and discontented with Lundy afterwards!

There are thousands of dtferent kinds of sea-birds here now, but not one has laid an egg yet. They commence about the last week of April. The only eggs about so far are those of the Raven and the Peregrine Falcon - excluding all the small wild birds, of course. I often wonder how many hundreds of thousands of eggs are hatched out here in a year.

This morning, when I was driving in the engine room, a carrier ptgeon came in through the open door of the engine room and dropped, exhausted, on top of the engine that was not working. The poor little thing seemed too utterly tired out to trouble about the terrific noise of the other engine working alongside, and allowed me to pick it up quite easily. I could find no message on it, merely its identification number on a metal ring. I kept it for a hour or two, gave it water and rice, and then threw it up outside, and away it went again, out over the sea: they are wonderful birds.

Well, Doris, I must really stop - I'm sure you must be "fed up" before you reach the end of these long epistles! Hope I shall hear from you again before I go ashore. I'll wait and let you know when I arrive there, but that will not be for a fortnight yet. Write soon and tell me all about your new place, and what new friends you have made there, won't you? Cheerio! till next time!

Yours very sincerely

Will



26.6.28

I sincerely hope you will forgive me for my long silence, but circumstances have been against any correspondence. My sister – the only one, who was recently married – has been nearly dying. She has had the Doctor four times a day, and is still very bad. I have had a months special leave to go there, as she was asking for me, and now that I have had to come off here and leave her so very ill, I am very much worried, you see, she is the only sister I have.

I am grateful she has a husband who can afford every comfort and the best of doctors for her: but even money cannot save life sometimes. Every time the phone rings here, I am expecting and dreading a telegram. When she is out of danger and getting better, as I hope she will, I will try to resume my long letters to you. At present, I simply can't settle down to letter writing. I am sure you will understand how I feel and forgive me. Dorts, won't you?

I have not forgotten my promise to you and what I am making. I'll complete it in

less worrying times. Write a cheerful letter – "one of your usuals" where you have time. They always cheer me up here. Please excuse this very short letter – but there – I know you will realise what it means to be isolated off here when someone one loves is in danger.

Your sincere chum
Will

31.7.28

No doubt you have almost given up hope of a reply to your nice long letter; but you understand how very worried I have been isolated off here, and quite unable to settle down to letter writing – even to "my B.Ham chum". However, I am delighted to be able to tell you that my sister is now slowly recovering, and I am very grateful for it. She has gone to Southsea, convalescent, and her husband, of course, has gone with her. He too, is very delighted with her recovery, as he knows – we all do – that he very nearly lost her. At one time two doctors were attending four times a day. Of course, she is still very weak, and is still in bed the greater part of each day, but prospects are very much brighter, and I am ever so pleased to have the worry lifted and to be able to settle down to write to you with an easier mind than I have felt able to do for very many weeks. She is the only sister I have, and her loss would have been a terrible blow, so soon after our father's death.

It was so nice of you to understand and to sympathise as you did, Dorts, but I was grieved to hear you had lost a dear sister. We try to think and believe we shall someday, somewhere meet them again, but it is a terrible miss and requires a great deal of faith not to feel embittered. Your mother has my very deepest sympathy. I can hardly believe, Doris, in such a very remarkable coincidence – but my sister's name is Marjorie too! Isn't that strange?

Now I must commence telling you of all that has happened since I wrote you a *real* letter; but first, let me say how very much I enjoyed reading your last letter and what a bright spot it was in a very wretched time. I felt quite cheered by it, and it was very good of you, seeing what a short note I wrote, to reply with such a long one.

I was very interested in your doings on the last Bank Holiday, and am very pleased that you managed to have a few good times. Nothing like enjoying yourself while you are young and have the health and strength to do so. I was amused too, when you said you "camped" before reaching Carlswood – it must have been hot and tiring. So vivid was your description that I could almost see you struggling with the "pop" bottles! Very annoying when one is thirsty, aren't they? No doubt you were very proud of your brown skin when returning eh? nearly as good as the seaside! – I can hear you say, "oh no! Not quite!"

Many times, when writing, Doris, it has occurred to me to ask you if you had read "Westward Ho!" but on second thoughts I supposed it would not appeal to you. I am glad you have read it, as there is a little about Lundy Island in it, and it is a rattling good story as well. Yes, the Shutter Rock is just past the Lighthouse here, on the West side of the Island, and is the same place where HMS Montagu ran ashore and became a total wreck in 1906. I have often sat, on the cliff above, where Amyas Leigh sat in the story, yes, I have read "Westward Ho!" – twice. What lends a colour of fact to the story of the wreck of the Spanish galleon, is that two Spanish "doubloons" have actually been picked up in the vicinity of the Shutter Rock at low tide. That certainly looks as though a Spanish ship had sunk somewhere there, doesn't it?

There was considerable excitement on the Island last Saturday. While digging around, two visitors found two skeletons – only about two feet below the surface. They were very ancient, because *in the mouth* of one of them, they found a coin. This has been sent away for examination, but is believed to be old Roman. I saw the skeletons uncovered, and in the smaller one, I should think a woman's, the teeth were in a wonderful state of preservation – not one missing! The other, that of the man, must have been a perfect giant in life, as the skeleton is well over seven feet!

With regard to the coin in the mouth, I have read somewhere, that long ago, certain people made a practice of putting a coin in the mouth of the dead as a fee to Charon, ferryman over the river Styx. Haven't you read of that custom? I have one or two of the bones, including a finger bone from the woman's hand, but I should not care to send you such a very gruesome relic of Lundy!

Glad to hear you have started tennis, Doris – may you some day play at Wimbledon! It would be a very nice change to see "Doris Smythe" as a tennis star, as I am heartily tired of pictures and articles full of "Betty Nuttall" – it would be quite different to see *your* name – so plough in and get up your form and speed!! It's rather "hard times" to have to rise early for a game though – but I expect you have it all to yourselves then – that's a reward for early rising – but do you go to bed early to make up – I wonder!

I hope, in your swimming, you will be very careful with that "top-board" dive. I don't like the sound of that, unless you first become expert at lesser heights. You know, of course, that to strike the water wrongly from a big height, is almost as bad as falling on solid concrete. Be very careful of that "stunt". I know, I've had some, having fallen from the cliffs into the sea and struck the water flat – very nearly killed me.

Glad you liked the snaps of "pussy" – yes he's – it's a gentleman – a dear old thing. He wasn't a bit sea sick – but doesn't seem so settled here after his trip. I suppose he misses the cat chums he made in Swansea! My "picture Doris" went too, you know, but she wasn't sea-sick either; yet she doesn't say if she enjoyed it – she isn't very talkative! However, she is in her letters – the real Doris – so I don't mind the silence of the "paper one"!

I shall be going ashore on Aug 7th so if you reply Doris, please send it "Care of Superintendent, Trinity House Depot, Swansea, Glamorgan", as you did before. When I come back, on Sept 7th I'm going to "wire in" and really finish my little "surprise" for you, that has, alas, hung fire lately, as I've had no heart for anything.

By-by for this time Doris. Hope to hear from you when you have time. Best wishes to yourself and all at home.

Your sincere chum

Will

P.S. Has the "bike-accident rescue" developed into a romance? It should do, you know, to be like the book heroine!!! W.

15.8.28

I was delighted to find your nice long letter awaiting me when I reached here from Lundy. Very many thanks, too, for the "snap" you enclosed – I soon found you on it, of course, and think it very good indeed, only you seem much taller than you appear in the one I have of you sitting down; have you grown since then? You are the prettiest girl in the group anyway (you will require a new and larger hat after that, eh?)

I left Lundy Island on Tuesday morning, and arrived here at 1 am on Friday morning, and I think it was one of the worst times at sea I have ever experienced. I had to climb down the cliff to get on board the ship, for a start; then it was blowing a gale and a wicked sea running. Seas were coming over the bow and rushing knee-deep along the deck all the way to Swansea – and that in August too! The other keeper who comes ashore with me, was horribly sick, but I was still able to enjoy my meals, thank goodness. ● of course, had we come direct, we should have been in Swansea in about six hours, but we wander all over the place relieving light-ships and replacing any buoys out of position, and sometimes have the divers down blowing up wrecks before we get home; so it is often three or four days on board at relief times; but they pay us 3/6 a day for every day we are kept on board after being relieved at the light, over and above usual wages of course, so we are compensated a little for those days lost from our time on shore; but personally, I would rather come straight ashore and forfeit the extra money! Yes, it is too bad to be at this depot all our time ashore. Isn't it – from 8 am to 5 pm – but of course, our evenings are free and – greatest boon of all – we have no long night watches to keep. We appreciate that part very much. We don't do any work here at the depot – except for occasional visits to the bank. All the men ashore from all the light-ships, have to work, and work hard, clipping and painting buoys, scraping mooring cable and the general cleaning of the depot – but we are ranked as officers, and escape all that. Also, they are issued with the usual sailors' clothes – like a sailor in the navy – and not with the uniform we are; but they do the same time away on their light-ship, as we do at the lighthouses, and the same time ashore. They have a much harder life than we have, though. They have to sleep in hammocks in the lightship's forecastle, while we have furnished quarters – a bedroom and sitting-room each – also, when once we are landed at the lighthouse, we have finished with tossing about for two months, but they are heaved about all the time, a light-ship is never still; and being heavily anchored at the bow a light-ship rises in a sea, to be stopped with a sudden jerk, by the mooring chain; a rotten motion that no other ship ever has; for other ships, when at anchor, are usually at anchor in calm water and not the rough seas where Lightships are stationed. I should not like to be on a lightship instead of a lighthouse.

I am enclosing a view card of Swansea, Doris, so that you can see something of what the town is like. There are some very pretty places around here, but everyone is very "Welshy" in their talk; being English, and, in the estimation of Welsh people, "a foreigner". I never get used to their way of speaking. Not much real Welsh is spoken here, in the town, but the "indeed-to-goodness" "look-you" style of conversation is everywhere. I expect you have heard it! I expect you will laugh at the picture of the Mumbles train with the passengers on top like a tram! In fact, the carriages are exactly like trams, and the train goes from Swansea to the Mumbles at the terrific speed of seven miles per hour – *very exciting!!* Thousands use this train during the summer, as there are beautiful sands at the Mumbles and it is Swansea's favourite bathing place.

I was pleased to know you had such a nice day out, Doris, but I had to laugh at the way you went about it, to get the day off! Serves them right though, if they can't be a bit reasonable as to an occasional day off from work. I was thinking of you a great deal in the very hot days of July, wondering how you were feeling in an office in the city in that weather. It was very hot on some days, even on the heights of Lundy, where cool sea breezes always blow, so that I know it must have been terrifically hot in an office. I wished you too, could have stood on the Lundy cliffs then, where the sea-wind tans as much as the sun – I'm sure you would have enjoyed it, and you would love the deer. They are so wonderfully tame that

they will come up to be stroked: such beautiful and graceful creatures make the island more like a park.

The weather now, is so bad that I am wondering how you will fare for your holidays. I do hope it improves before the 18th when you commence: at present, there is very little sign of improvement, but perhaps you are being more fortunate as regards weather in Birmingham. I hope so anyway.

Very pleased to hear that you look forward to my letters so much. Doris, but don't neglect your "fud" for them!! I had to smile about that, for I have very often been treated the same by my own mother: it was always "eat your dinner first" with her; but it was usually a book I was deeply interested in, that I'd got hidden away; for I was forever trying to "sneak a look at that book" when I should have been eating my dinner.

My sister has returned from her convalescence at Southsea, and seems very much better for it; but although she is so much improved, her return to health is very very slow; she can walk about, only a little even now. Unfortunately she lives so far from Swansea, that I see very little of her when ashore; but mother lives close to her, so she has someone near. My mother is of a very independent spirit. She will live with neither Marjorie or myself since father's death, but insists on having a house of her own and living in it alone, which worries both my sister and me, but nothing we can say will alter it. We don't like her to live all alone, but she is very determined! I wonder are all mothers like that when their children grow up!

I am very sorry to hear you have an ulcerated throat, Doris, - it's a *real* ailment this time of course! *Not* another outing!! - But, joking apart, it is very painful I know, and I hope you soon get rid of it. Yes, I *have* had it, and it makes me feel very seedy all round; in my case though, it did not last long. I sincerely hope yours won't either.

I expect you *are* feeling envious of Gladys and her bathing, but never mind, - Cheer up!

Your time will come! Sea-bathing is delightful, but only under certain conditions. For instance, it's not a bit nice when the tide is out and one has to wlk over about a mile of sharp stones and slippery, seaweed covered rocks! Or when it is windy and cold, either. Weather conditions have so much to do with the enjoyment of sea-bathing; whereas indoor baths are not dependent on weather. Really ideal days for sea-bathing are all too rare in these recent summers. I have found; but then, you see, when bathing off Lundy I miss all the enjoyment that is made by a jolly crowd - solitary bathing and swimming is tame fun, I think; and when ashore here, I never go swimming, because it is a very long way from here in the evening when I'm off duty - it's true that the docks are just outside the door, but if you have ever seen the state of the sea-water in docks, you'd understand how small is the temptaion to bathe there - all sorts of rubbish floats on the water, and it looks what it is - dirty.



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Do you know, Doris, in spite of the change and more "life" on shore I am never very sorry to step on board and see the ship's bow swing out for the open sea beyond the dock gates; I love the island and the free and open life there. Going out, I usually, - unless heavy seas are coming on board - stand up in the ship's bows looking out across the sea for the first sight of "my Lundy home". It is always a wonderful sight to me to see the dim blue cloud far away on the rim of the sea, gradually grow into the height and shape of the island. Scores of times I have made the journey, yet I never grow tired of watching for that first splash of far-away blue that I know is Lundy; and I never watch it dying away astern without a little pang of regret, wondering when I shall watch it for the last time, to return and wander it no more; For I have been there eight years, an unexpectedly long time to remain at the same station, on one service. Someday, before long I shall no doubt have to say "Farewell Lundy" and I shall be very sorry, for lonely as it is, I have been very happy there, no traffic, no policemen, and the whole wide stretch of rocks and heather to ramble as we will. One can hardly expect much more on holiday eh?

Well, Doris, I'm afraid I must "cease fire" as they say in the Army! I'll write again soon. I do hope your throat is better and less painful. I've a good mind to write on the outside of this letter "TO BE TAKEN AFTER MEALS"!!!

"By-by for now" as the Welsh say. Best of luck and good weather for your holiday. Tell me all about it later!! Your sincere Chum.

Will,

12.9.28

I was delighted to receive your letter before coming off to Lundy once more. I think you are a very exceptional correspondent; I should have thought that by now your nice "fat" letters would have become rather thin ones - so many people trail off, from nice long letters to very much thinner ones - haven't you found it so? But not Doris! - Your letters are always the long and interesting ones they have always been, - and just as eagerly looked forward to, you may be sure. I like to read of all your little outings and daily doings, and never grow tired of reading them. In fact, I am always sorry when I reach the last page; they can never be too long for me; and you know, I am sure, Doris, how very much I appreciate the time you give up to writing to me; but I think if you knew what bright spots in a rather isolated life your letters are, you would feel a little repaid.

I wonder if you know exactly how long we have been chums, do you? It seems so queer to me, that we have been "pals" for so long yet have never seen each other; it proves that firm friendships can be formed by letters alone. I seem to know you quite as well as if I had met you; because your letters are written just as you would speak and I know they are "the real you". Of course, your photo helps a lot; to see you as you are, I have only to look at the photo and read one of your letters. I must admit though, that in imagining you, I was wrong in one thing - I did not picture you so tall as you actually are - somehow, I don't know why, I thought you much shorter than that.

You will notice, Doris, that there is a change in my address here. That is because the Signal Station on the South End of the island, where our mails have always been received for us, has been suddenly closed down by the Admiralty, and any letters for us now, have to be sent to the Captain of the weekly mail boat, which we must walk over the island and meet to get them. No doubt it is some of the present Government's very belated economy! In one way though, it is likely to be a very serious matter, for the men who manned the Signal Station, and who are leaving this week, are also in charge of the Rocket Life Saving Apparatus, and with the departure of these men, there are not sufficient left on the island to man it in case of a wreck. Apparently that has not been taken into consideration at all, and the next poor fellows wrecked on Lundy will look in vain for the roaring Rocket and its friendly line.

I don't suppose you have ever seen this apparatus at work so will hardly understand; but if I remember correctly, I have already described it to you. It is the only means of carrying a rope from the shore to a wrecked ship's crew, and has saved many hundreds of lives. I am

a member of the Life-Saving Crew myself, but *one* would be of no use, for every one is trained to be part of a rather complicated job and all work together exactly as a trained gun crew do. There is a great deal of preparatory work before the Rocket actually goes tearing out over the wreck dragging the line behind it. One man has a rather queer job – he has to stand by, with a small tub of water, to wet the rope where it joins the Rocket and for several feet back from it! That is to prevent the flame, from the tail of the Rocket, burning through the rope before it reaches the wreck. No one who has not seen half-drowned men – and women too – brought ashore by its help, can realise, fully, what its absence means in a wild and dangerous coast.

Do you know, Doris, I quite expect in time to come – I know it to be one of your ambitions – that a book will be published, with you as the authoress, in which some of the exciting situations will deal with storms at sea. Lighthouses and wrecks! You must have had material for very many chapters in that line from my letters! I only hope it doesn't bore you. At any rate, here is *one* certain reader of your book when it appears. There will, of course, be a "love interest" in it, but that part you will write better than a man could, I am sure. Why not have a try at it? – judging from your letters, you should be able to write a very readable book. You certainly have the gift of vivid description, which is half the battle. I should very much like to read the one you did attempt – but I suppose that is too much to ask, isn't it? Very much more though, should I like to read one you wrote now.

You must have found it rather hard, settling down after your week of freedom! You were not very fortunate as regards the weather, were you? But it has been very rough here too. It was a very rough journey coming here on Monday and Tuesday, and a high sea has been running for days. It was very mean of it to rain every day of your holiday though – it should have rained only in the nights – that would be nice for holidays, wouldn't it? In fact, a good arrangement all the year!



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So you have really seen the sea at last, Doris. That was a "Red Letter Day". Didn't you think it a grand sight? You say "Mighty in its age and eternally new" – Yes, that is the sea, and is what I feel too, but I could not have described it like that. Have you ever thought, or did you think as you watched the sea, of one very striking fact about it – that, mighty as it is, it is yet chained – you know that in many places, the ocean is five to seven miles deep, and that there is water enough in the oceans to cover "all the land on earth" to a great depth, but it doesn't do it. Why not? In that way, it is chained. I have read of course, that God has said "So far and no farther" to the ocean, but God works by such forces as winds, tides and volcanic action, where the sea is concerned; yet the force that prevents the ocean overwhelming the land is nothing so familiar as winds and tides, and often, watching the sea, I marvel at that everlasting barrier which we do not understand.

I should very much like to see the Robin Hood Theatre; it must be well worth a visit. "Robin Hood of

Sherwood Forest" was a great hero of mine as a boy. I was much amused at the practice of your firm of taking back "Rock" for each other! Of course, you refrained from having a go at it on the way back! Were you very much tempted?

What a pity that mist spoilt the view from the top of Great Orme. The weather was most unkind. - It ought to have done its very best for your first seaside visit. It hasn't been nearly so bad as that in Swansea, although that place is famous - or infamous - throughout Wales for continuous rain. There were many sunny days when the trams going down to the sands were crowded.

I must tell you, Doris - I forgot it before - about pussy and her milk, going ashore, in May. The steward gave her - (we always say "her" but it's not a lady cat) - a saucer of milk: of course, he put it down on the floor - on the deck, really - and pussy had never been on a ship's deck before, and as it was rather rough and the deck heaved up, then sank, then reeled from side to side, pussy's antics were really comical. Just as she went to lap the milk, the ship would heave over, and the milk lilt away from her; next time, when the ship rolled the other way, the milk would slop all over her face! Her astonishment was as plain as on the face of a human. Pussy stood with the feet all straddled against the motion of the vessel, with all "I'll lap it or die" sort of manner that made the crew roar with laughter. Poor Pussy! She crept to my bunk at night, and I hadn't the heart to turn her out of that. She had had such a strange and puzzling time: everything she was accustomed to see immovable, very much on the move. She was especially fascinated by the clothes and oil-skins on pegs in the bulk-head, swinging from side to side! I wonder just what she thought altogether!

No, Doris, I have not read any of Edgar Wallace's books, but have heard they deal with murder and mystery. Yes, books are great friends aren't they? Not that I read very many; I have so many other hobbies and interests. I am very interested in all forms of machinery

and have every opportunity here. Wireless, carpentry, mat-making, are all hobbies of mine, so that it takes me a very long time to read through a book, however exciting; but they are great friends, and life would be dull without them.

I remember that I have two unfulfilled promises to you. Your "surprise", and a photo of myself. I have by no means forgotten. The first is under way, but the second will be when I have mustered sufficient courage to face the camera!

Now I must really close till next time: it is midnight and my relief must now be roused from his slumbers! If he is having a very happy dream he will be so pleased to be roused for a lonely watch. Cheerio! Now Doris, love and best wishes.

Your sincere Chum,
Will

30.9.28

I was, as always, delighted to have your nice long letter on Wednesday last. I look forward to them very much, they are so long and



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interesting and I don't have to puzzle out the writing as I do in some simply awful letters received here. There is a clergyman who once visited here, and who occasionally writes, and, as a rule I can read about one word in three! Some people are very careless writers aren't they?

Yes, we have been chums for nearly a year. Doris, though I seem to have known you very much longer than that. I too, have kept all your letters, and frequently read them when I am waiting for another one from you; but I never find anything that I have missed in reading them the first time! I read them too carefully for that. I do like the nice solid feel of your letters before I open them, and know I am in for a pleasant few minutes.

You have had an adventure with police in your house! Really an awful crime wasn't it!!! As you say, Doris, there are no police here, but we certainly have chimneys, a great many of them. – but we can fire them to our hearts content and no-one to find fault with it. All our living rooms are built on to the tower of the light, and as there is a chimney for every room – eight – we have the chimneys alright. You see this isn't the same type as the Wolf Rock and the Longships Rock, both off Lands End, where the keepers are confined to a single tower. Our dwelling rooms are separate from the tower, which is, of course, very much better, with this confinement.

I have been stationed before, in the single tower type, and it is pretty bad. In the winter time especially, we had to close the stick shutters over the tower windows, making complete darkness inside in the daytime, and doing everything by lamplight. On the stick shutters of the living room, below the light room, the seas would be ceaselessly smashing; yet the living-room window was well over one-hundred feet above ordinary sea-level – think of it! On the Bishops Rock, one of the worst in the service, the seas frequently run off the roof and gallery, over one hundred and twenty feet above sea level! It is hard to believe, but a fact. There, the great seas roll in with three-thousand miles of ocean behind them, and they are an appalling size on arrival. A huge bronze bell, which once hung from the gallery, all that height up, was sheared through by a sea as by a gigantic knife. Portions of it are now in the museum at Trinity House, London. The power of the sea in a storm is tremendous. I have seen iron stanchions, thicker than a man's wrist, twisted like corkscrews, and huge boulders of granite, many tons in weight, hurled about like marbles. The great, the mysterious thing to me, all the years I have studied the sea, is this: – How does the wind first get that great mass of water in motion? It is a problem, when one considers the enormous weight.

I too, have read some of those articles on the reason of life and the problem of its origin, Doris, and I agree with you. I see no reason whatever, why such subjects should not be discussed. Man has not arrived at even that small knowledge of the workings of our universe which we possess now, without a great deal of discussion, wondering and probing. I am very much interested in such subjects, and read all I can of them, but with one type – the man who denies the existence of a God, the atheist, I have no patience or sympathy. To my mind, the atheist is on a par with the man who, gazing at a table, says "there never was a carpenter"; For, gazing on the world, he denies a maker. I am not, in any sense "religious", but I venture to say that not five per cent of the men connected with the sea, are atheists. Away from the cramped, artificial life of the great cities, and under God's open sky, men look on these things with different eyes. The ebb and flow of the tides, so regular, so accurate, that they can be predicted for months ahead, the glory of the ocean dawns and sunsets – Doris, these things are never governed and controlled by something the scientist can take to pieces and examine beneath the microscope.

There is, undoubtedly, a meaning and a purpose to life; it is, I think only a part of a great journey, and not perhaps, the best part. Of its origin, we know little; but it is my own personal belief that life appeared first, in a very minute form, not on the land, but in the sea; and has developed through the countless ages. By study and thought, scientists will yet learn much more of the construction and working of the universe, but they will always be faced, at the last, by the fact that nothing on Earth or in the Heavens is there because it "just happened" – nothing "just happens" – somewhere behind it all, is a controlling power and a vast scheme too mighty for the human mind to grasp.

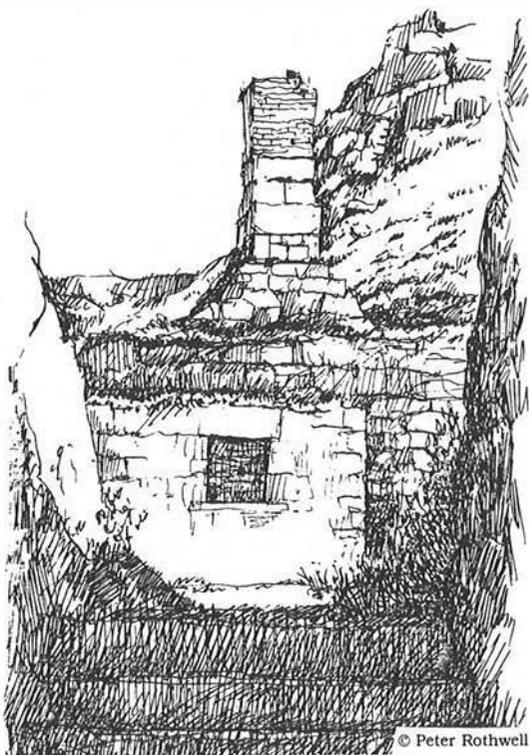
As to "Death", there are again, very many varying opinions, and a great deal of controversy; yet here I am satisfied in my own mind. It has been my fortune - or misfortune - to see a very great deal of death. I have seen hundreds of men die violently in battle, and more lingeringly in dressing-stations and hospitals during the war; and I have no doubt whatever, that at the actual moment of death, something goes out. We may call it "soul" or "spirit" or any other name we like, but that vital "something" that makes the difference between a man and a corpse, goes somewhere, and is undoubtedly indestructible and eternal. *Where* it goes, we do not know, but that *something* survives seems beyond question. At any rate, I am perfectly satisfied that what we call "Death" is not the end.

We cannot say, with any certainty, what exists and does not exist in this world. You know old Shakespeare said practically the same, very many long years ago - "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, etc." - and now, it becomes more true every day. We say a thing is there, because we see it, or because we hear it; but we can only see and hear very few things. There is not much doubt that there is a very wide range of sounds we cannot hear, and things we cannot see. I'll try to explain what I mean. Doris - hope you don't think it much too "schoolmastery"! - You must say if it bores you!!

We "see" a thing, because it gives off "waves" of a certain length, and the brain receives them, through the eyes, exactly as a wireless set does, but, like a wireless set too, there is a limit to the "wave-lengths" the human brain can receive, and below that minimum and above that maximum, there must be a wide range - light waves of too high a "frequency" may be given off, by many things in the world, for the human eye and brain to receive them: with the result that we do not "see" them, and deny their existence because we can't "see" them: but you would not deny that a certain wireless station did not exist because you could not receive it, would you?

Animals, I believe, are able to receive, and their brains form images from, light-waves of a length quite impossible to human eyes and brains. Who knows what the objects giving off those waves may be? , for those light-waves that make an object "visible" are given off by living and moving things, as well as inanimate. What can a dog see, when he goes ahead and growls, at what, to us, is empty space? haven't you seen a dog do it? - But I'll say no more about that.

Doris: it now approaches the "creepy" stage!! All this, of course, has been put forward by Sir Oliver Lodge, one of our greatest, if not the greatest, scientists; but when he goes on to the subject of spiritualism, there, great as he is in brain power, I venture to disagree. I have no faith in the re-appearance of the dead to the living. I think, if anyone could "come back" it would be a mother whose children are ill-treated after her death. That no mother has ever done so, though many motherless children have been ill-treated, is sufficient argument for me against "spiritualism". I do not say "communication



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with the dead is impossible" – I have an open mind on the question. I simply do not know; but I have no belief in the various "manifestations" published in the papers. "Table-rappings", objects flying around a room, etc. are, to my mind, very queer ways of occupying their time by those who have gone elsewhere. If communication is really possible, enormous indeed is the good those who have gone might do, but such childish "manifestations" benefit no-one on earth. One or two of our men are ardent "spiritualists" and one, at least is a "medium"; but personally, I don't think it a very wise study for lonely lighthouse keepers!

It is very good of you, Doris to take such an interest in writing to me, and you know that I appreciate it, but I wouldn't wish you "to burn the midnight oil", you are growing, and that would be very bad for you. I do it, very often, but not from choice! – You know we don't really burn the actual oil in the light here. A great many people fancy that lighthouses burn oil, but not one in the service does! Paraffin is used, it is true, but it is turned into vapour first, and the vapour burns, on a huge mantle, like a gas mantle, only twenty times as large; but the days when the pure oil was burnt, with wicks in it, have long gone by.

Very many lighthouses are electric, and within a year or so this will be made electric. The current, of course, being produced on the station – I shouldn't be at all surprised if you told me I was wrong on that last statement, Doris! – I know I am. Electricity has never been "produced" by man. Man has never *made* electricity yet. It exists, always. All we do, by the aid of dynamos etc. is to get it in motion, and raise the pressure – ie – the "voltage". A dynamo really acts as a pump, keeping the current on the move, and as in the case of a pump driving water, the pressure increases as more comes behind: only, in the case of electric current, the "pressure" isn't called "pressure", but voltage. That process is quite a different thing to "making" electricity. No doubt you can tell me all that – and a lot more too, I expect. Anyway, we are to have the dynamos put in, and large engines to drive them; but that will not be until the present work of erecting the broadcasting station and mast here is completed. It is almost finished now, and we shall probably be broadcasting in November. We are to have extra pay for that, as we shall have to look after it, as well as the light and fog signal.

I have had a head-ache studying the broadcast machinery these last few months: it is very complicated, and very delicate too, and fills two big new rooms that have now been built here. One of the rooms is almost entirely filled with accumulators, they cannot broadcast direct from the dynamo: the current is not a steady one as it is from the batteries; as we have to charge the accumulators every day.

I'm sure you would laugh if you could see me now, Doris! – Do you know what I'm doing? – *Baking bread!!* – and I have to keep getting up to see how it's getting on. Doesn't that seem funny to you – a man making his own bread? But we all have to do it, of course; just as we have to cook everything else for ourselves. Sometimes, the dinners dished up are a scream! But, on the whole, we don't do so badly. You may be quite sure that I hate the job very heartily. No doubt a lightkeeper is very domesticated! – there isn't much about a house he couldn't do, but as to liking it – not much!! If you only glimpsed us sewing on buttons etc you'd never want to go to "the pictures" I'm sure! It would be entertainment enough!

Glad to hear you have commenced evening classes again; I shall quite understand if you are not able to write quite such long letters, as I'm sure you will have your hands full; in the office all day and then classes in the evenings. I expect you feel pretty well done up. I am quite confident that the first test didn't worry you very much – they would have to choose some other subject to trip you I think, but I'm very sure that "Shakespeare's *Miranda*" would have floored me completely! And as to "parsing sentences" – Wow! I've had some! How about this – "I didn't never not have no breakfast this morning" – take a bit of "parsing" wouldn't it?

Yes, Doris, certainly I am ambitious for your future! I want to see you get on; and I believe you are going the right way to do it too. I wish I had had the opportunity of attending night classes when a boy. I should have felt the benefit of them very often since. Most boys and girls are "happy-go-lucky" and do not consider the future much, and I'm very glad you are

an exception; there's no doubt you are increasing your earning power later on. by your studies now. Good luck to you!

By the way, Doris, I don't quite agree with the theory of the Yorkshire labourer you told me of – that the meaning of, and answer to existence is "love". – All our lives are vastly influenced by love of course, there is the love that binds together a woman and a man, and that other type of love which binds all homes together; but great as its influence is on our lives, there is another side to the question.

Even allowing it – his theory – to be true in the case of human beings, what about all other forms of life? There are hundreds of thousands of living things that exist only by preying on, and frequently devouring each other – the whole wide range of parasitic and wild life – the answer to *their* presence on earth, and lives, is certainly not "love" – yet they all come within the meaning of "Life on Earth". In the case of all other lives than human, another reason for, and answer to existence must be sought. "Love" cannot explain the meaning of *all* life. Certainly it is a beautiful idea, as you say Doris, but I am afraid it is an idea that will not survive analysis. Even among human beings – apparently the labourer deals with human life only – think of the countless thousands on the world, into whose lives love never enters. Can "love" be responsible for the terrible leper colonies of the East, the countless penal settlements all over the world, and such horrors as the great Indian famines? No: "love" slips up badly somewhere, as a theory of existence on earth; but that's only my opinion.

Yes, the weather has turned very much colder now, but you would feel it more than we do, Doris, – places surrounded by the sea, as this is, are usually much warmer than the mainland. I have seen snow here, only once in eight years, still it finds our "marrows" too!!

Now I really must finish up or you will, I'm sure, be too terribly bored to read as far as this. Write again soon Doris – all your daily doings and adventures as you usually do – I like that. All the best, till "next instalment".

Ever your loving chum
Will

S



Right: The execution of Hugh Despenser the Younger in 1326 (see p4). Here depicted in Froissart's Chronicle from the late 15th century. (Taken from Sunday Times supplement)

(Bridgeman Art Library)

AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF BENSON

(from: 'All the Year Round, a Weekly Journal conducted by Charles Dickens'
Saturday July 11th 1885)

Off Bideford Bay lies the strange, little-visited island of Lundy, that rises from the sea like a fragment of a sunken land. Lundy was long a sort of no-man's land, hardly owing allegiance to the British Crown – a kind of crow's nest on the seas, the haunt of pirates and filibusters. Sometimes the French, sometimes the Spaniards, sometimes even Turks, and Moors, and Sallee Rovers would make a depôt of Lundy, and harass the neighbouring coasts. But the strangest part of its history dates from the middle of the last century, when it fell into the hands of a Devonshire man of the fine, old, bold, predacious stock, whose misfortune it was to have come into the world a couple of centuries too late. This was Mr. Thomas Benson, of an old Bideford family, the Bensons of Napp, a family of merchants trading with France, Portugal, and the Colonies. Mr. Benson was one of the first to discover the opportunities afforded to shipowners by the practice of insuring against sea risks. He chartered a vessel called the *Nightingale*, for Maryland, loaded her with brickbats and rubbish, and cast her away somewhere on the coast of Ireland. But he was a man much respected in his neighbourhood, was Member of Parliament for Barnstaple, and had sufficient influence to obtain a Government contract for transporting convicts to Virginia.

At that time, gangs of poor wretches who had saved their necks from the merciless laws of the period, were marched, linked together by ropes or fetters, to some seaport on the coast, thence to be transported to his majesty's plantations in Virginia or elsewhere, so much a head being allowed to the contractor who undertook to convey them across the seas. To bold Benson occurred the luminous idea of saving the cost of their transport and of turning their labour to account. And thus he leased or purchased Lundy Island, landed his convicts there, and set them to work to build their own huts and raise their own provisions, while their leisure time was employed in building a home and castle for the self-appointed governor. This castle Mr. Benson armed with cannon, and was most punctilious in making all passing vessels dip their flags to his. If they omitted, bang went a gun, and, thus showing that he would stand no nonsense, our adventurer generally carried his point.

But Benson's projects did not stop at this. He aimed at establishing his convict settlement as a general depôt for contraband goods, whence they could be landed at convenient points on the English coast. And this at last aroused the vigilance of the executive. The misdisposal of convicts, after all, was a trilling matter compared with the depletion of his majesty's Customs. Indeed, Benson was inclined to brazen out the former offence. "They were transported from England," he urged as to the convicts, "no matter where it was, so long as it was out of the kingdom."

One would like to hear of bold Benson holding his fort to the last, and then blowing it up, and ascending skywards with its ruins. But instead of this heroic finish the poor man fell a victim to a Government bombardment of fines, escheats, and penalties, and soon, from being governor of an island, he became a penniless exile from his native land.

LUNDY AIRCRAFT LANDED IN SEA BESIDE VESSEL

Passengers and pilot rescued after engine had failed.

From the North Devon Journal-Herald Thursday August 25 1955

Capt. Maurice Looker, of Devonair Ltd., was making a routine flight from Lundy to Chivenor with two passengers in his Auster aircraft on Saturday afternoon, when suddenly the engine stopped completely. Faced with having to make a forced landing in the sea, Capt. Looker brought the plane down near a passing vessel whose crew picked the occupants out of the water after 15 minutes.

Mr Maurice Ross, a dentist of Limers Lane, Bideford, had been holidaying on Lundy Island with his wife and two sons. Earlier in the day he and 12-year-old Timothy had made the air crossing without any trouble.

Then at 3.30 on Saturday afternoon, Mrs Nora Ross and 15-year-old son Peter took off on a second trip to join the others at Chivenor.

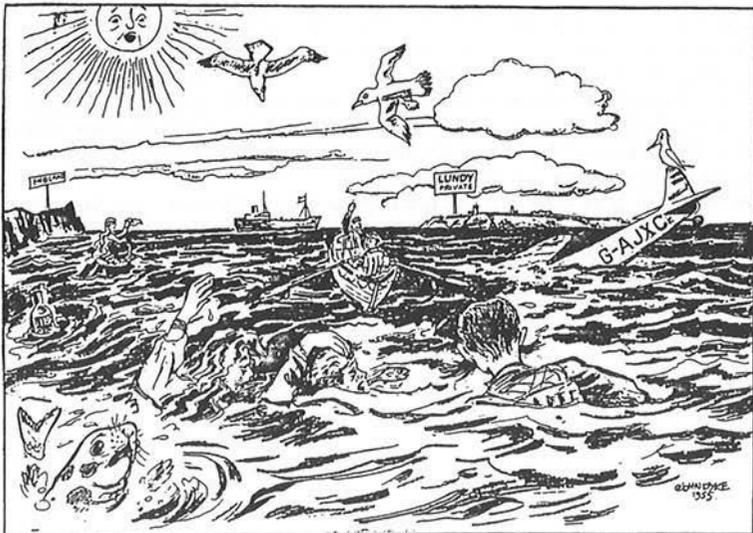
They had only been flying a few minutes when the engine cut out. "One moment we were flying along quite safely and the next the engine had stopped completely," said Capt. Looker.

He spotted a boat down below in the bay and made a forced landing quite close to it, midway between Lundy and Hariland Point.

The three scrambled out of the sinking plane and had to spend about 15 minutes in the water, where they kept afloat by swimming and life-saving apparatus from the plane.

Meanwhile the Danish ship S.S. "Harrildsborg" had launched a boat and the three were picked up and taken on board. The ship continued on its course and they were landed at Port Talbot later in the day.

Mrs Ross was full of praise for the wonderful way in which Capt. Looker had handled the situation. There had been absolutely no panic and the landing in the sea had been just like one on a normal aerodrome, she said.



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LUNDY ADVENTURES OF 'A LEICESTERSHIRE LADY'

Peter Christie.

From 'Christie's Histories', North Devon Journal, June 17 1999

In the nineteenth century the *Journal* editor often reprinted articles from other newspapers if he thought his readers would be interested in them. In 1886 he reproduced 'The Adventures of a Visit to and Scenes on Lundy Island' by *A Leicestershire Lady* from an unnamed paper of that county. I am unsure who the writer was although she talks of the lessee of the island, T. H. Wright, being her cousin.

Arriving with a female companion at Ilfracombe she stayed in the Royal Britannia Hotel but the weather was too rough for Captain Reid of the *Velindra*, which visited the island once a week, to attempt a crossing. Thwarted, the women travelled to Instow and the next day set off at 7am in the *Gannet*, sailed by Captain Dark.

Unfortunately a sharp current caused the boat to run into a ship at anchor in the estuary and Dark had to shout out "All lie down flat on deck" in order to avoid the other ship's bowsprit mast as it swept across them. Worse was to come. As their boat crossed the Bideford Bar it "shipped water rather freely" and the passengers were drenched. So bad did it get that Dark decided to return to port.

His two passengers, along with six others, had to wait another two days until September 10 before setting off again, the crossing taking some three and a quarter hours. Arriving at the Lundy anchorage they found several sailing craft and steamers already present. The writer records that at times more than 100 craft were anchored there.

Coming ashore they were taken up from the beach by a carriage belonging to Miss Heaven, a member of the family who owned the island. While on Lundy they stayed at 'The Linc Ranche' [Ed's note - where is this?] cottage which had a "grand" view over the sea and cliffs. Once unpacked they began to explore the island.

Their first stop was the "pretty little iron church" erected by the Heaven family. This was a prefabricated affair which nonetheless could seat 100 people. It was to be another 10 years before the present church of St Helen's was begun.

They then recorded the agricultural activity they observed. Oats, turnips, barley and swedes were grown and 100 cattle and 1200 sheep raised. These latter were sold either to passing ships or in the markets on the mainland.

Travelling around the island they came across a "series of chasms" running parallel to the cliff edge which reached up to 20ft wide and 80ft in depth. These, so it was claimed, appeared in 1755 at the same time as the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon in Portugal. However they were formed, the chasms were full of ferns, greatly prized by Victorian collectors who dried and mounted them in albums.

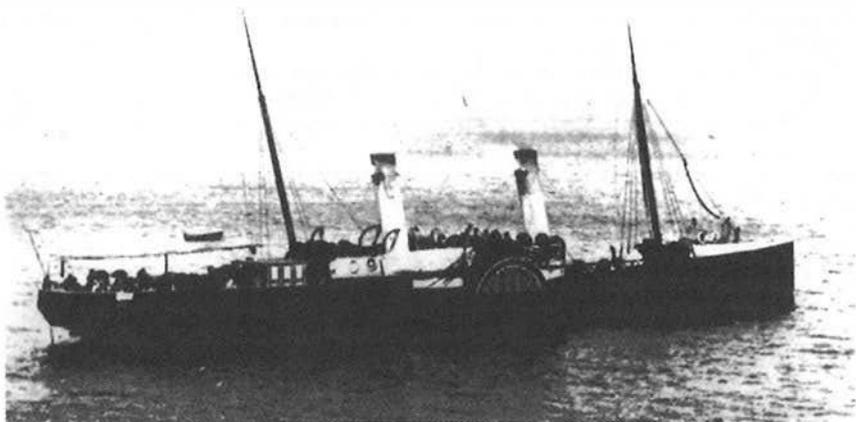
Reaching the lighthouse they climbed all 127 steps reckoning the view from the top "well repays the fatigue" experienced. A walk to Marisco Castle followed but the writer admitted: "I feel myself quite inadequate to attempt to do justice to any account worthy of an old ruin fraught with such graphic and daring annals of loyalty, rebellion, romance, brigandage, piracy and bloodshed."

Getting up the next morning they were confined to their cottage for a few hours until a heavy mist lifted. When it cleared they explored the Devil's Kitchen and various other areas. The next day the *Velindra* arrived from Ilfracombe with 50 day trippers - mass tourism to the island is nothing new.

In order to avoid these visitors the two women walked to a ruined seventeenth century fort at Brazen Ward. The guns from this had been thrown into the sea by a French raiding party at some time but had been recovered by the tenant of the farm, who sold them to a man named Crawshaw, "who mounted them on his yacht". One wonders where these relics are today?

The two visitors stayed on the island until October 19 when they were due to leave. Unfortunately they were informed that the main landing beach was not accessible and they

would have to climb down the 400ft cliffs on the western side of the island to Pirates Quay. [Ed's note – Pilot's Quay?] The writer describes how "my legs trembled, and how sick with fear I felt at the inevitable before me." Happily they got down without accident boarded their boat arriving safely at Instow where "we were complimented by our friends on our greatly improved looks, and healthy tanned complexions."



P.S. *Velindra* (1860)

Calling of Clovelly

From *West Country Passenger Steamers* by Grahame Farr, (Pub. T. Stephenson & Sons Ltd, Lancs 1967)



Lundy Gannet (1949)

Arriving at Bideford Quay, 1960

From *West Country Passenger Steamers* by Grahame Farr, (Pub. T. Stephenson & Sons Ltd, Lancs 1967)

REPORT ON CONTINUING RESEARCH WORK ON LUNDY

Ann Westcott

I suppose some of this 'Report on Research' might seem more properly to belong to the LFS Report, but I am presenting it, not within academic conventions, but as an account of achievements that LFS funding has had some share in. We can be proud to have had that share in the work of Simon Griffith: and in enabling publication of Shirley Blaylock's Catalogue of Finds resulting from Rescue Archaeology [Trench Digging Spring 2000 for laying water pipes and electricity cable.] Myrtle Ternstrom's Thesis is something many LFS members will want to consult and the Newsletter seems a good way to help them do that. Simon Griffith has let your Ed. have a copy of his paper 'Female choice and annual reproductive success favour less-ornamented male house sparrows' from the Proceedings of the Royal Society (Biology Series B). He has already published some of his findings in the LFS report 1994, and addressed the LFS AGM on the topic, and this paper is a further growth of the work, which he first undertook on Lundy.

I have selected from the paper the statements that seemed most interesting and important to me, and so this comment on the Griffith paper is mine not his. People who want to read the whole fascinating paper, which presents the evidence (as I haven't the space to do) can ask any library for access to a copy.]

'Why should females prefer males with elaborate ornaments? The "good genes" hypotheses predict that the sexual ornaments of males will reflect favourable genes that can be passed on to their offspring.... The "direct benefit" hypotheses predict that male ornaments will reflect tangible benefits that females will acquire as a result of their preference. Fundamentally both the "good genes" and "direct benefit" models predict a positive relationship between the reproductive success of a male and the size of his sexual ornaments.... The single exception to this apparently general rule is the finding... that female pied flycatchers... prefer the duller brown males where they breed in sympatry with the collared flycatcher, presumably to avoid the costs of hybridization. Although this unique example seems to be a special case, there are several other reasons why females might be predicted to not always prefer the most ornamental or dominant males.

[This paper presents] results from a study on an ecologically isolated population of the house sparrow... which enabled a thorough examination of female preference and reproductive success in relation to the male ornamental trait.

Owing to the unique nature of our study population we were able to measure the reproductive success of all individuals accurately. The population lived on an island (Lundy) and the lack of natal dispersal allowed us to assess the production of viable offspring by breeding individuals. The scarcity of natural breeding sites and the birds' acceptance of artificial nest-boxes allowed us to monitor every breeding attempt and identify those individuals that failed to breed... These unique features of our population allowed us to monitor total annual reproductive success precisely and so test the predicted relationship between reproductive success and the size of sexual ornament.

... Our finding of a female preference for the least showy males is of greater interest when put into the context of other studies of sexual selection in the house sparrow. Our result completes a continuum from a Danish population in which there is a strong female preference for large-badged males... through several other populations in which there seems to be no specific preference with regard to male ornament size... to the Lundy population in which there is an apparent preference for small-badged males.

The fact that different populations of the same species exhibit such profound difference in the female preference... can be most easily reconciled by the idea that the female preference is extremely plastic i.e. the same females will express different preferences under different circumstances.

We suggest that... differences in female requirements occur between house sparrow populations because some males can provide eg. good nest sites and some, eg. good parenting and females select males with ornament signals that suggest they can provide resources scarce for that particular population.

Myrtle Ternstrom PhD has given permission for the contents section of her Thesis to be reprinted in this Newsletter. She has given the addresses of 2 libraries – see below – which will have copies that you can borrow. The contents list will help you see which bits you might be specially interested in.

The British Library, Euston Road, London. Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, The Park, Cheltenham

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