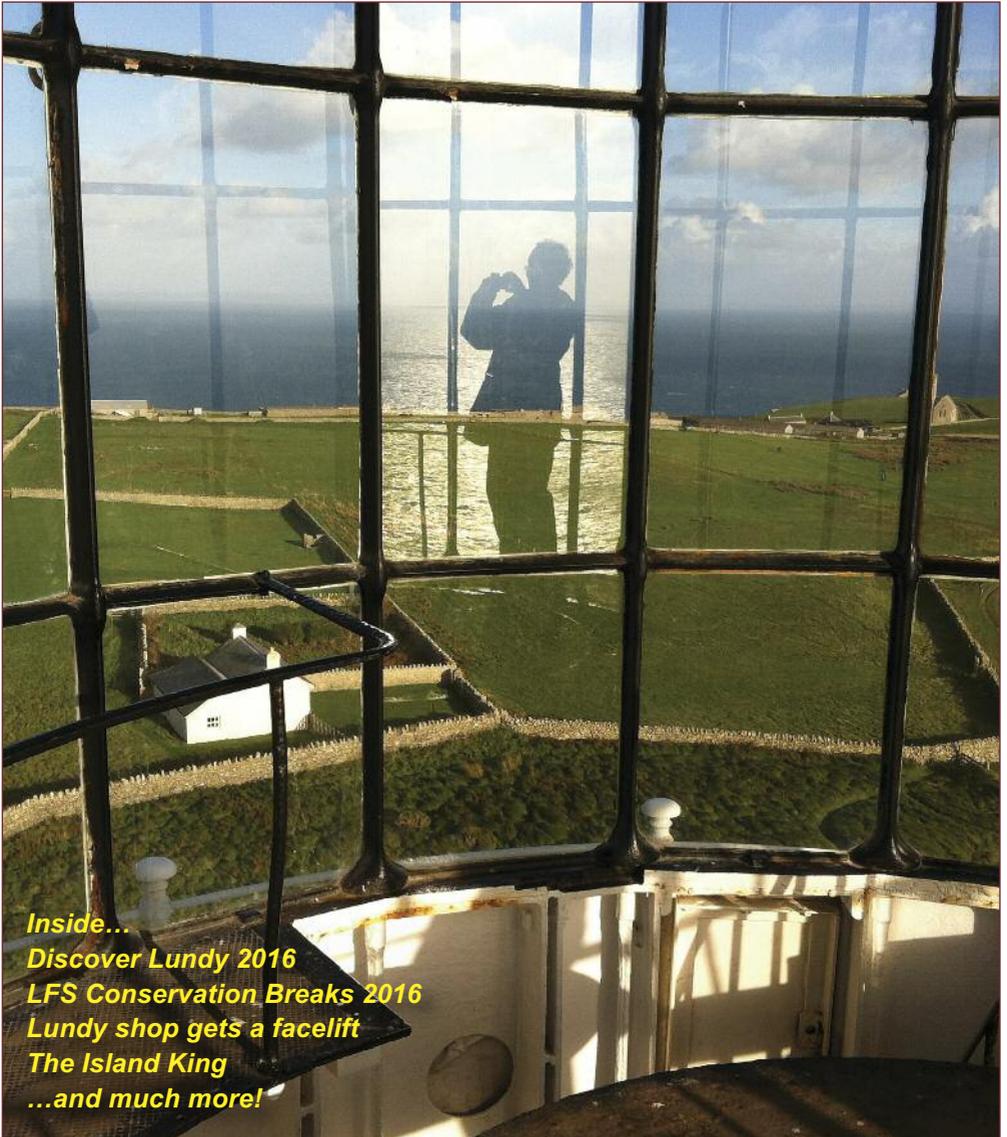




# DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 46, December 2016



*Inside...  
Discover Lundy 2016  
LFS Conservation Breaks 2016  
Lundy shop gets a facelift  
The Island King  
...and much more!*

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Contributions in the form of news items, short articles, illustrations and photos reflecting the aims and activities of the Lundy Field Society are welcome and may be sent, preferably by email, to the editor. Telephone enquiries to 07795 303933.

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*Cover photo: A reflective moment taken by Judy Edwards at the top of  
the Old Light during the Discover Lundy week.*

## Making the most of Lundy

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*Your Chairman on his way to Lundy in about 1953 with brother Ian on the left and father Stan on the right.*

*Photo by unknown.*

**M**aking the most of Lundy and the great variety of 'ologies that can be pursued on the island is what we did during Discover Lundy week at the end of September. A lot of people worked hard to make the event a success with Michael Williams as ringmaster – thanks to all. That aside (see more about the week later in this Bulletin), many of us visit the island just to relax, meet old friends and escape mainland life – and why not? Being a member of the Lundy Field Society doesn't mean that you have to do 'stuff' but I do hope that you enjoy the knowledge gained by the wide range of activities that many of us pursue. As for me, it's been a 'no research' year (except for one shore survey at Gannets' Rock) and the year in which I was able to take my grandchildren to the island for their first visit. It wasn't the full 'Lundy experience' though: the sea was flat calm, the weather beautiful and there was even a scramble (when offered) to pile into the Landrover for the trip up the hill. One day, perhaps they too will get the 'Lundy bug'.

2016 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Lundy Field Society [and the 50th anniversary of my first visit to camp on and explore the island]. This Bulletin, whilst demonstrating what interesting activities you can get up to on the island, is also tangible evidence of success that I hope our 'founding fathers', particularly Leslie Harvey and Martin Coles Harman, would have been proud of.

Members have had the opportunity to enjoy two publications in 2016: the latest edition of the Journal and the Annual Report. And we do 'good things' on the island. Just as an example, several of you have contributed to successful working parties ('Conservation Breaks') and I was astounded at the amount of work that must have gone into creating the 'Stairway to Heaven' to one side of The Ugly – well done to all involved. Now, you have the Bulletin, *Discovering Lundy*, which is crowded with much about the Society's Discover Lundy week. I hope that you enjoy it and may find the opportunity to thank the editor Belinda Cox and the production manager Tim Davis for pulling a fascinating and informative publication together.

### **Keith Hiscock**

Chairman





## Were you there? I was!

I managed to visit Lundy several times during 2016, including being part of two working parties. Without doubt though, my highlight was definitely the Discover Lundy week in September celebrating the 70th anniversary of the LFS. Huge thanks must go to all involved in the organisation of the event, but especially to our Honorary Secretary, Michael Williams, who spearheaded the team.

An amazing selection of events was provided, including bird ringing, fungus forays, pond dipping, star watching, a Manx Shearwater search, photography workshops, history talks, Lundy invertebrates and Lundy flora. There was even a golf tournament!

An abridged version of *Granite*, a play by Clemence Dane first performed in 1926 and set on Lundy around 200 years ago, was presented as a rehearsed reading. This was something I was involved in, taking the part of Penny Holt, a shy and retiring 16-year-old. While I certainly wasn't type-cast, I did have brilliant fun being part of the cast and would like to thank everyone involved in the production for their efforts, especially Roger Chapple and André Coutanche for enabling it to happen.

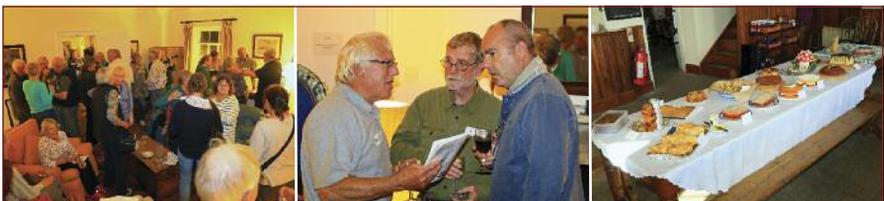
The Marisco Tavern hosted a few events during the week, including a 70th anniversary dinner, the Great Lundy Bake-Off, a quiz and an auction. Spoils from the Bake-Off were enjoyed by all in the beer garden afterwards, and jolly tasty they were too!

Thank you to everyone who provided articles for this edition of *Discovering Lundy*. I consider this to be a publication for the membership, by the membership – we couldn't do it without you. If you have any adventures on Lundy over the next year, or have had any in the past, please consider writing them up for the Bulletin. Don't let worries about spelling or grammar stop you – I will check anything you write. I love reading your thoughts and learning more about Lundy; there's always something new and exciting.

I already have several visits booked for 2017, including my first stay in Stoneycroft in March, just before the Society's AGM in Crediton, and I'm looking forward to meeting current and new LFS members while I'm there.

### Belinda Cox

*A series of stills from Discover Lundy week by Mike Jones: Michael Williams, Keith Hiscock and Derek Green at the unveiling of the 70th Anniversary plaque in the Old Light (far left); the opening social in Government House (middle four images); and pristine entries in the Great Lundy Bake Off (right).*





## A message from our President

**LFS President DIANA KEAST was unable to attend the 2016 AGM, but recorded an address for the meeting. Diana’s text is reproduced here, both for those who weren’t able to be there, and for LFS annals.**

“I am so pleased to be able to send you my very best wishes for the AGM. I think we are all aware that 2016 is a special year for the LFS. Just as each decade is an achievement for a fledgling society, our 70th year shows signs of maturity.

We can be proud of our status, and reassured that as members we are giving support to those who offer special talents in pursuit of science. But the LFS offers something more. We all have our reasons for our connection with Lundy, and together we make a highly enjoyable communal experience.

There is another important element in this too: the islanders. Sometimes we become islanders for a short while, but we aren’t the real thing. They are the people who maintain Lundy, the place of such attraction for us. We are doubly grateful when they join the ‘society’.

How can we celebrate our 70th year? May I suggest that each of us thinks of their own way of ‘giving’ to benefit the island? One of the striking things recently has been the output from members who are writing, recording and publishing on our behalf in the Society’s regular journals and further afield. For our inspiration we might turn to a beautifully composed prayer to be found in the miscellany of Lundy poetry recently published by Roger Allen. The prayer reminds us of giving. We can make our gift a private and secret thing, or something shared; the choice is wide open. Have fun. There may be something you have always wanted to do.

Last year the Landmark Trust celebrated its 50th year of being, and for the 46 years that Lundy has been in the Trust’s care the LFS has grown and prospered. Let us look forward to the future; there is so much to be grateful for. It is truly a time for thanksgiving. Good luck and thank you.”

### ***SPECIAL DELIVERY!***

***The Lundy postbox, freshly painted blue and including the LFS logo in celebration of the Society’s 70th Anniversary. Photo by Gaby Schmidlein***



### March

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#### **MEGAN DEBENHAM reports on the first of three volunteer weeks in 2016.**

The early spring working party this year took place from 18–26 March. It was as usual fully booked, with 14 eager and energetic volunteers (some old hands and some on their first ever visit to Lundy) from two nations and the extremely independent Island of Canvey assembling at Hartland International for the helicopter flight to Lundy.

The warm welcome from island staff, especially Beccy and Steve, always gladdens the heart and sharpens the appetite for a good week's work ahead. We were soon settled into the Barn, with old hands initiating new recruits into the domestic routine before dispersing to make the most of a fine afternoon and explore/revisit the many island attractions. The evening brought a briefing from Steve and an outline programme of work for the week ahead (weather permitting).

Saturday found us divided into two parties. One group tackled gully and culvert clearing and renovation of footpaths above and below Quarry Terrace. This work helps to ensure good drainage on the paths and prevents their deterioration, either by water running down them, or by humans and animals walking through areas that have become sodden due to poor drainage. Maintaining established paths in good condition improves access for visitors, as well as reducing potentially damaging footfall to the sides of paths.

The other group was deployed on a 'search-and-kill' mission, stalking, marking and weed-killing rhododendron seedlings on the plateau in the Pondsby/Belle Vue area. This work, an essential part of the latter stages of the rhododendron eradication programme, destroys the young plants before they have a chance to seed and thus spread again. A few seedlings were found and destroyed in each of the areas that were searched. This is slow and steady work, with volunteers evenly spaced along a 30-yard line, moving together to ensure a thorough



*Assistant Ranger Nick Herbert and LFS volunteers repairing a drystone wall. Photo by Mandy English*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2016

search. The zephyrs blowing straight from Siberia tested the resolve of even those with the strongest rhodocidal tendencies, but after a short warming lunchtime break back at the Barn we tackled Ackland's Moor with renewed vigour in the afternoon.

Sunday was dedicated to stone wall maintenance and repairs on the long wall leading east from Stonecroft. The western end of the wall required top maintenance, with flat stones being placed to overhang the wall to make it difficult for sheep to jump up it, and with vertically placed capping stones to further discourage them. Further east, where a section of wall had collapsed, a second group undertook a full repair of the weakened section.

A third group improved the sheep-proofing on the eastern section of the wall by removing a 'V' section from the top of the wall and inserting wooden posts which were then 'strung' with wire between them. Maintaining the drystone walls is an important way to conserve the traditional skills involved, as well as ensuring the segregation of domestic sheep and feral Soay sheep (which were, as ever in March, producing the cutest chocolate brown curly lambs).

Monday continued the work on the wall, as well as cutting squares of carpet in preparation for sapling transplantation planned for later in the week. Of the drystone walling, our novices from Canvey Island later expressed the opinion that it was up there with Machu Picchu and the Great Wall of China among their most thrilling life experiences. Yes, really!!

Tuesday saw the drystone walling work completed, along with the remaining work on the gullies and culverts on the Quarry Beach and Felix Gade paths. A small group also helped in the construction of Manx Shearwater nesting boxes. When populated by shearwaters, the boxes will allow research access and observation of the nesting behaviour of these birds, for which Lundy is a very important breeding colony.

Wednesday was a free day, but while many of us chose to spend the day exploring the island, a small and dedicated band spent the day helping to install the shearwater nesting boxes on the western sidelands.

Thursday proved to be the exception, weather-wise, in a week which had warmed up a little and remained tolerably dry. It rained, not hard, but steadily, for most of the day. We were on the eastern sidelands, which at least kept us out of the wind. One group was tasked with clearing and burning rhododendron brash. This clears the old rhododendron sites of unattractive and potentially hazardous dead wood and brash, making it easier to manage the sites and to spot and deal with any regrowth, as well as allowing indigenous vegetation to recolonise.

Another group spent the day moving saplings from the tree nursery to their final planting spots. This involved making tree-guards from stakes and netting to protect the young trees from rabbits, goats and sika deer. The young trees were hauled up the slope to be planted and protected with the tree-guards and a 'mulch' of carpet squares. This was the most strenuous day's work of the week, achieved in less than perfect conditions, during which the volunteers showed commendable persistence and great morale. The development of further areas of native tree species will not only enhance the natural beauty of the environment, but importantly increase nesting habitat for woodland birds, as well as extend the shelter and food resource for migrating birds.

During the week, one of our volunteers, 'Brummie Dave' (Preece), sustained a minor injury

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2016

which required hospital attention and thus evacuation from the island. Fortunately, the Ilfracombe lifeboat was out on exercise and so picked Dave up for the first leg of his journey to the A&E unit of North Devon Hospital. Although he was soon patched up, sadly he was not able to rejoin us for the rest of the week [see *Shave Dave* article, Ed.].

Friday was our last working day and saw further rhododendron brash burning, as well as tree planting in Millcombe and fence repairs. The sun shone throughout.

Social highlights of the week included melodeon playing, Morris dancing in the Barn and the Tavern, a little bit of singing, a splendid range of evening meals prepared in turn by members of the party, and an evening (or three!) in the Tavern. Thanks are due especially to Steve for guiding us through our week's work – and ensuring that said work was varied, fun and informative – and also to all members of the working party for putting in the hard graft to make a real and valuable contribution to the conservation of the island. I can't wait for the next trip!

### May

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#### **BOB BAGGATTI relates the fun he had on his first volunteer week with the LFS.**

I write this article as a new member of the LFS who has just enjoyed a great week on lovely Lundy. I'm not new to the island, as I have three National Trust working holidays under my belt, as well as an independent working holiday staying in the Lodge. If you haven't yet been on an LFS Conservation Break, I hope this article gives you a flavour of what's involved and entices you to participate.



*The 13 members of the May 2016 LFS Conservation Break team. Photo by Trevor Dobie*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2016

I joined 12 other 'guys and gals' on the second working holiday of the year. Seven of us were LFS regulars, three were new to the LFS but previous visitors, and three were new to the island. Our crew, in alphabetical order, were Bob Bagatti, Andy Bell, Dave (Devon Dave) Chamberlain, Louise Cookson, Belinda (Bee) Cox, Jasmine Dawes, Keith Dobie, Trevor Dobie, Tony Larose, Jan Paul, Dave (Brummie Dave) Preece, Izzy Shelton and Gail Taplin.

We met on Ilfracombe quayside at 09.00 on Saturday 14 May for a prompt 10.00 sailing and a smooth two-hour crossing. Once on the island we made our way up to the village and the Barn, our home for the week. After settling in and a brief chat regarding dinner rotas and ground rules, we had free time to reacquaint ourselves with (or for some to discover) the island.

For five of the next six days we worked under the supervision of Steve the Ranger. Our tasks for the week varied and were dependent on the weather. Sometimes we worked as a large team, sometimes in smaller groups. Our many jobs entailed rhodi seedling searching, scrub clearing, path clearing and maintenance, bracken slashing, gate maintenance and bench painting. Tony and Andy even built a new channel to rival the Manchester Ship Canal, as they put it. I suggested that if they built a pub beside it, it should be called 'The Rose and Bell'. (Apologies to anyone who may have done something that they were immensely proud of and who I haven't mentioned.) I don't think anyone would disagree that sometimes the work was hard and strenuous, especially working on the eastern slopes. Steve obviously doesn't want to kill off his volunteer force, but he has many a hard task to do and we were there to help him with them. I would like to think that we came home to the Barn, sometimes via the Tavern, tired and aching but satisfied that we did a good job.

Which brings me on to the next point: food. Did we eat well, or did we eat well?! Every night (except for Tuesday, our day off when we ate in the Tavern) two people were assigned to cook. In the morning the said two would visit the shop, buy the food required for the meal and then join the work force for the day's toil, but leave a little earlier to start preparations for the night's culinary delights. And what delights we enjoyed. We also had brownies made and brought over by Jan and home-made cookies brought over by Keith. Bee also made scones which we enjoyed with jam and cream on our day off. I for one, despite our calorie-burning workload, didn't lose any weight over the week, not that I didn't need to.

Then there was relaxing time, generally spent around the table in the Barn or around the table in the Tavern. We played the sentence game and the murder game. We also, shall I say, 'discussed' as to whether the midday meal was lunch or dinner, and whether the evening meal was tea, dinner or supper. The subject was not and probably will never be resolved. Also, are scones pronounced to rhyme with 'cones' or 'cons'? I don't recall us disputing the best way to enjoy the scones, either Devon-style or Cornish-style. Maybe a discussion for next year? We certainly had lots of fun and lots of laughs.

You may have heard that Brummie Dave had to be taken off the Island by the RNLI in March when he fell and badly cut his arm on some granite. As a thank you to the RNLI, he decided to have a sponsored "Shave Dave" in the Tavern on the Friday night to raise money for that veritable organisation. We all had a go at shaving his head, beard and even, with a bit of persuasion from Bee, his eyebrows. He raised over £350. Well done Dave (see *Shave Dave* article below).

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2016

We enjoyed reasonably good weather during the week, however on the Friday night the weather closed in and there was concern that the Oldenburg would not be doing its normal run, but a possible 'splash and dash' or possibly not even coming over on the Saturday but on the Sunday instead. A splash and dash is when the boat comes over without day visitors, drops the staying passengers and load, takes aboard passengers for the return trip and heads straight back to port, pronto. As it turned out the weather improved and a normal crossing entailed.

So a great week. To the three new visitors, Gail, Jasmine and Izzy (Jas and Izzy are both undertaking a Foundation Degree in Animal Conservation) I sincerely hope this was to be the first of many trips to Lundy, and that you were not put off by my snoring! Like the Mars advert, we worked, rested and played. Many thanks to Trevor for organising the trip and to everyone for making it so much fun. I for one shall be booking my place for next year.

### Shave Dave

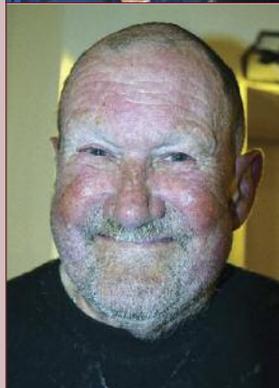
Following his evacuation from the island in March, LFS member and 'elderly gentleman' Dave Preece organized a 'Shave Dave' event to say thank you to the RNLI for his rescue. The shave took place in the Marisco Tavern on the evening of 20 May, raising a magnificent £395.54. It proved highly entertaining and Dave left the pub minus his hair, beard and eyebrows!

Dave would like to say a huge thank you for all the generous donations and to the budding Sweeney Todds for their effort to scalp him. Special mentions go to Michael Williams, his publicity manager, Sue the Shop for receiving and laundering the donations, and to Belinda for filling the role of treasurer and auditor, as well as for her enthusiasm and expert manipulation of a plastic razor ... eventually.

The winner of the prize for the best cutting implement – another empty Drambuie bottle for his collection – went to Ranger Steve.

### Belinda Cox

*Ranger Steve with the 'beard shears' and (below) Brummie Dave post shave. Photos by Belinda Cox*



### September

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#### **DEBBIE CURTIS sums up her first visit to Lundy as part of the working party in September.**

It's not often that you get the opportunity to live as part of a tiny remote-island community balanced on top of a rugged lump of rock poking out of the Bristol Channel. But that's exactly what I was invited to do when I joined the intrepid volunteer team of the LFS as a last-minute addition in September 2016.

I really didn't know what to expect, except that I'd get to live and work on Lundy Island, a place that had fascinated me since two wildlife crazy friends went there and brought back amazing photos and stories of craggy cliffs, Caribbean blue waters and wonderful wildlife. I was captivated and since then wanted to visit. So, it was with a mixture of excitement and trepidation that I turned up at the docks at Ilfracombe to meet the group of volunteers and travel to the island.

The welcome I received from the group was wonderful and they instantly put me at ease as we sailed over the rolling sea, spotting porpoises on the way. With the exception of four of us, the majority of the volunteers were experienced LFS volunteers and each one of them radiated infectious excitement at the thought of returning to Lundy. Each person seemed to have a particular part of Lundy that they couldn't wait to get back to visit, and what was so lovely was that they couldn't wait to share it with us newbies too.

After the steep climb up from the Lundy jetty, we all headed to the Barn which was our base for the week. With a cosy feel and plenty of space for group meals, it was great place to relax after a hard day's work.

The week's work was varied and physically challenging but very rewarding. Working with Ranger Steve and his assistant Luke, the whole group took part in a rhododendron transect survey, which involved walking in a line across the fields spotting and treating any seedling rhodies that had started to grow. Many years of dedicated hard work by previous LFS volunteer groups and the wardening team has resulted in this invasive and widespread plant being pretty much eradicated from the island; a significant achievement and a testament to the LFS's commitment to the island.

Other work was done in and around the garden of Millcombe House and we fixed a large gap in Threequarter Wall. It was great to have a go at drystone walling – it's so tricky! Luckily, not only did we have the expertise of Luke, the assistant Ranger, but one of the newbie volunteers, Mike, was a professional gardener and a dab hand at drystone walling. It was a remarkable feeling to be fixing a wall that has probably been there for 400 years.

With exception of one rather drizzly day and a very windy last day, the September weather was extremely kind to us, with gorgeous blue skies and stunning sunsets and sunrises. Tea breaks and lunch breaks were taken perched on rocks overlooking the plunging cliffs, spotting seals, pods of dolphins and enjoying Peregrine Falcon fly-bys. A brave few took a daily evening dip in the Landing Bay, attracting the attention of the local seals.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2016

Each evening we sat round the big dining table in the Barn and tucked into a hearty home-cooked meal. There was much reminiscing about previous LFS trips, with many Lundy stories being told and lots of laughter and friendly banter. Then it was down to the Tavern for some, or collapse exhausted into bed for others, in readiness to face the next day's challenge.

Our final few days saw us working as one large group building a new set of steps up the steep hillside just below the Ugly. The 'Steps of Doom', as they were known, had become almost impossible to use, so as a team we set about building more than 140 new steps by removing the turf, driving support stakes into the ground and then back-filling against the step riser. It was tough, physical work, but we were determined to finish. There was an incredible sense of achievement once we did. No longer the steps of doom, they are now a stairway to heaven!

For each volunteer, Lundy holds a special place in their hearts. For some it's a place to retreat from busy lives and enjoy sunrises and sunsets, solo cliff walks and revisit favourite nooks and crannies; for others a place to heal and reflect. But for all it is a place to meet friends old and new and make a difference by helping to conserve this unique island.

For me, I loved taking in the stunning views, being outside all day and close to nature, together with the feeling of remoteness from the bustle of the twinkling mainland on the horizon, as well as meeting a great bunch of lovely people. Lundy really is a place that gets under your skin.



*Some of the team resting at the bottom of the 'Steps of Doom'. Photo by Belinda Cox*

## Beccy bids a fond farewell

---

**Warden BECCY MACDONALD says goodbye to Lundy with a round-up of her busy final year on the island.**

2016 was yet another incredible year on the island, with many notable moments, including of course the wonderful LFS Discover Lundy week. The year started with the target of developing and publishing a new Marine Management Plan for Lundy, a document that would engage everyone who has an interest in the Marine Protected Area and coastline. After many months of hard work and consultation, the plan – which was released in October – is now available to download from [www.landmarktrust.org.uk/lundyisland/discovering-lundy/Conservation1/Marine-Protected-Area](http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/lundyisland/discovering-lundy/Conservation1/Marine-Protected-Area)). Do take some time to look at the parts that are of interest to you.

Island Ranger Steve held a course on controlling invasive species with an enthusiastic group of National Trust Rangers. During the week, a considerable amount was learnt and a number of practical tasks were undertaken despite inclement weather conditions. Much to our delight, the surveys carried out showed that there has been a considerable decrease in the numbers of rhodi seedlings across the east coast and a large step forward has been made to Lundy becoming rhodi-free.

LFS volunteer groups worked incredibly hard with the ranger team this year, assisting with the rhodi and bracken management plans, as well as drystone walling and – the greatest achievement of all – rebuilding the ‘Steps of Death’ on the east sideland. A small group assisted me and the RSPB’s Helen Booker with the production of 30 artificial nestboxes for Manx Shearwaters that were installed in shearwater colonies along the west coast. The boxes were monitored throughout the breeding season, some being used (although as more of a porch than a home!) by some of the Manxies.



*LFS members and Assistant Warden Connor Willmott constructing Manx Shearwater nesting boxes (below left) which were subsequently installed in shearwater colonies on the West Side (right). Photos by Beccy MacDonald*



In other seabird news, Puffins were everywhere... or to be more precise, there are now colonies from just north of Battery Point to North East Point, with well over 200 individuals spotted on land during one survey, plus a further 40 rafting in different locations around

the island. As Puffin numbers have increased, so has visitor interest, and several hard-working volunteers joined us throughout the breeding season to engage with visitors at Jenny's Cove and to assist with productivity monitoring.

Last year, concerns were being raised by local skippers regarding the increase in local boat activity around the island and the threats that this poses to marine wildlife. We joined together with Kate and Andy at North Devon Biosphere to develop an accreditation scheme to support sustainable and responsible sea safaris. Two training sessions were held during the year and some 15 boat skippers have since become accredited. You can support the scheme by using operators who display the accreditation badge on their vessels.

After many hours of contemplation, I decided that 2016 would be my last on the island and so this is a farewell for now from me. My last summer was an incredible one. My thanks to everyone's wonderful support, including seasonal assistants Conor Willmott and Luke Knowles. Hopefully I will see you all again soon!

***Who is Lundy's new Wildlife Warden? Find out on page 36. Ed.***

### **LFS AGM auction 2016**

A very big thank you to everyone who bid at our auction at the 2016 AGM. We raised a record sum of £509 from just 13 lots.

Our donors deserve a very big thank you: Shelley Southon (two lots), the Tony Walker bequest (two lots), Myrtle Ternstrom (two lots), Douglas Penney, Richard Breese, Richard Campey and Alan Pitcher.

If you have any items to donate, please contact me before the auction ([morwenstow@btinternet.com](mailto:morwenstow@btinternet.com)). I can cope with the odd additional lot, but would much prefer to assemble the lots before I circulate to members and publish them on Facebook.

**Alan Rowland**



### All about fungi

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**JOHN HEDGER kicks off Discover Lundy week happenings with an account of the highly successful ‘Fungi Foray’.**

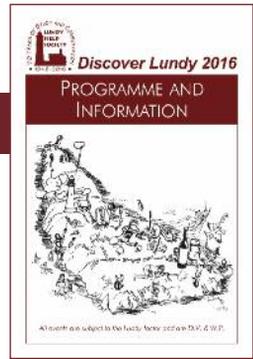
In my address on ‘Discovering Lundy Fungi’, delivered in St Helen’s Church on the first full day of the Discover Lundy week, Sunday 25 September, I gloomily suggested few fungi would be found on the Foray, or indeed during the week, because the island had had little or no rain for weeks. How wrong I was!

On the Foray itself, where we walked in sunshine along the track to just beyond Quarter Wall Pond, sharp-eyed LFS members found 31 species of fungi, including some lovely examples of bright red, orange, green, yellow and white waxcaps, and most exciting, a completely new waxcap for Lundy, the White Meadow Waxcap, *Hygrocybe berkleyi* (pictured). Foray examples of the gill fungi were taken back to the Barn to set up overnight spore prints, which were examined in the following morning session and found to be highly successful – indeed beautiful – and retained by some, after treatment with a miraculously provided hair spray. The opportunity was also taken to use a microscope to admire spores of a gill fungus, the Egg-Head Mottlegill, and a cup fungus, the Yellow Dung Disco. Many thanks to the Barn occupants for letting us invade their space!

The rest of the week continued to supply records of fungi found by LFS members on their excursions. The total to date is 96, including some identified from pictures later sent to me by



*White Meadow Waxcap (Hygrocybe berkleyi). Photo by Alan Rowland*



participants (more please!). Even more surprising than the total was the fact that it included 15 new records for Lundy! Of these, some of the most exciting were new finds from the Creeping Willow areas in Punchbowl Valley, including a very large bolete (tube mushroom). The picture shows the finder Mandy Dee, with Louise Cookson, admiring the (unfortunately partly rotten) fruiting bodies. The bolete's identity remains uncertain and is currently puzzling one of the UK's top experts on *Boletus* mushrooms!

All in all, an unexpectedly productive week for Lundy fungi, largely down to the enthusiastic recorders. Well done everyone. A full list of the fungi found will be published in the 2016 LFS Annual Report.



An unknown '*Boletus*' species in the Punchbowl Valley found by Mandy Dee (left), pictured here with Louise Cookson. Photo by John Hedger

### Delving into pond life

**The freshwater biology session (pond-dipping) on the afternoon of Tuesday 27 September was led by ALAN ROWLAND.**

The day dawned wet, windy and misty (to say the least!) and the morning activity, ‘Discovering Lundy’s Archaeology’, led by Chris Webster, involved a long trek to Widow’s Tenement, north of Threequarter Wall. By the afternoon, the weather had improved with no mist, no rain and the added bonus of sun, which encouraged 20 enthusiastic participants to venture out. I had planned to survey Brick Field Pond so as to make a comparison with data collected there during Discover Lundy week 2012. However, the six young Highland steers had been in the field for some time so the pond was well fertilised and quite cloudy. The long morning walk precluded me using Pondsburry so the choice was Quarter Wall Pond.

Owing to the interest of the Lundy ponies, which think that anyone squatting around ‘their’ pond must be getting out food, Quarter Wall Pond rarely gets surveyed. Happily on this occasion there were sufficient of us to deter interest by the ponies so we settled down to the session. Despite the low rainfall of earlier weeks, the pond had managed to retain a few inches of water throughout the very dry summer. Even so, I was surprised by the number and diversity of species our survey uncovered.

We recorded the pond’s water temperature as 18°C, and the air as 17°C. Altogether we registered 15 different species, including a large number of damselfly larvae and two first instar dragonfly larvae, which promises more Odonata flying next summer. A few small immature specimens of Horse Leech were found – rather than the fully grown ones seen occasionally in puddles near Quarter Wall gate – as were adult Water Beetles and Water Boatmen. Other varieties included flatworm, water mite, water flea, water louse, backswimmer and a diving beetle. A full list will appear in the 2016 LFS Annual Report. After a busy two hours, during which everyone had the opportunity to catch and identify specimens, a very happy group returned to the village.



*The pond-dippers at Quarter Wall Pond. Photos by Belinda Cox & Alan Rowland*



### **The ‘symbol’ of Discover Lundy 2016!**

If you stayed on the island during the week of Discover Lundy 2016, the one thing that will remain in your mind must surely be the ubiquitous craneflies.

They were everywhere! They were in the bath, on the ceiling, scrabbling at windows, and there were even a hundred or so in the moth-trap one morning.

Those who would normally run a mile when they saw them in their room were soon ignoring them. Indeed, so numerous were the craneflies that eventually people were picking them up and putting them safely outside. Not only were they desensitised to these creatures, they had morphed into humane entomologists!

For those interested, the vast majority were *Tipula paludosa* whose grubs are the crop-damaging pests known as leatherjackets.

**Alan Rowland**

# Discover Lundy 2016 – scenes from the 70th Anniversary



# Anniversary Dinner

Photos by Gaby Schmidlein & Tim Davis



### The Great Lundy Bake Off

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#### **SANDRA ('Mary Berry') ROWLAND reports on the delicacies concocted for the Great Lundy Bake Off.**

I must give huge thanks to everyone who entered the Great Lundy Bake Off during Discover Lundy week, and for making it such an enormous success. I was thrilled and amazed by the number of entries and by the variety and imagination demonstrated by entrants. The entries ranged from Victoria sandwich cakes through lighthouse biscuits and Puffin scones to fruit cakes and lavender biscuits. Mention should be made of the two fun 'mystery items', one depicting the (now departed) Antony Gormley sculpture and the other a toadstool.

Twenty entries altogether kept head judge Dave Bradley, Head Chef in the Tavern, and his assistant Rob Waterfield, Island Manager, hard at work for almost an hour to come up with the three competition winners.

First prize, of a Cornishware apron, went to Liz Mason for her feather-light carrot cake (*I concur with the judges that this was an amazingly delicious cake! Ed.*). Second prize, of Cornishware tea towels, went to Sue James for her delicious 'Old Light' biscuits; and third prize, of a 'Bake Off' spatula, was awarded to Angie Lister for her mouthwatering Victoria sandwich cake.

Thank you to everyone for making such a success of the competition, to the bakers especially, but also to everyone who enjoyed tasting the entries which made for a delicious finale to the picnic in the tea garden.

Special thanks to Dave Bradley and Rob Waterfield for judging the event, and for allowing

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### Bringing Granite to life (well almost!)

First performed in 1926, Clemence Dane's play 'Granite' is set on Lundy in the early 1800s. Described as a "romantic tragedy with supernatural overtones", we were advised by the play's arranger, Roger Chapple, to prepare ourselves for a Gothic experience. An experience it certainly was, and for those of us with the foresight to bring a cushion (mine was a pillow) a much more comfortable hour-and-a-half on the Church pews was had.

André Coutanche did a splendid job on producing the programme for the evening (two of the pages are reproduced here) and the six members of the cast, Roger Chapple, Lynne & Peter Rickard, Belinda Cox, Simon Dell and Michael Williams, with Paula Chapple as the Narrator in the pulpit, performed the "rehearsed reading" admirably. The programme mentioned several spurious "Previous Productions" by the ensemble, 'The Taming of the Pygmy Shrew' and 'Under Millcombe Wood' having particular appeal. Over to you, Roger.

**Tim Davis**

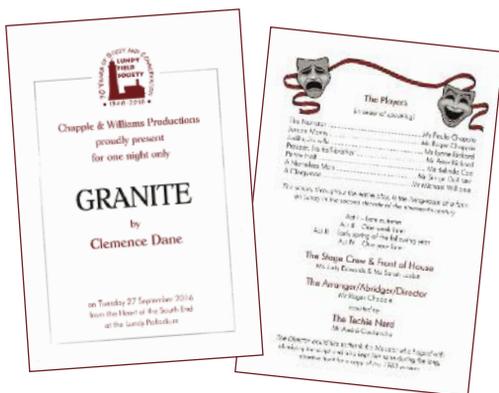
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the LFS to hold the Bake Off in the Tavern, and also to the Tavern Staff – I hope we didn't inconvenience them too much, and hope we made up for any disruption to their day when they helped us to tuck into some of the delicious entries!



The Great Lundy Bake Off table groans under the weight of the (delicious) entries. Photo Belinda Cox

[Ed's note: Sandra was in fact awarded a Highly Commended for her (Earl Grey tea loaf) but she was too modest to include this information in her write up!]



Left to right: Simon Dell as A Nameless Man, Lynne Rickard as Judith, Peter Rickard as Prosper, Belinda Cox as Penny Holt, and Michael Williams as A Clergyman. Photo by Gaby Schmidlein

# Discover Lundy 2016 – a week of high activity,



All about seashores with Keith Hiscock, Great Lundy Bake Off winner Liz Mason receives her prize from Rob Waterfield, Head Chef Dave Bradley is thanked for his culinary expertise, a fungi spore session in the Barn, and a bird ringing demonstration (here with a Meadow Pipit).



The (chilly) lunchtime Anniversary Picnic on 30th September included a flypast of 24 southward-migrating Cormorants.



# fun and some restful moments

Photos by Gaby Schmidlein & Tim Davis



*Derek Cheesbrough and ancient clubs, action out on the course, Quiz winners Nick, Shelley, Helen & Grant, exploring the rockpools of Devil's Kitchen, a wildlife photography workshop with Rob Read & Paul Sterry, and the end-of-week group photo (including the late-comers!).*



## Scraping the barrel!

**ALAN ROWLAND (who will grab any opportunity to play the glamorous assistant!) describes his most recent escapade in front of the auctioneer's gavel.**

A rather impromptu auction – hastily organised to follow the last-night quiz when everyone was mellow with food, wine and satisfaction from getting some questions correct – offered six eclectic lots.

Bidding for Lot 1 a ‘Puffin Nuffin’ T-shirt donated by Michael Williams (only worn a few times!) started slowly but was eventually knocked down to John Hedger for £12.

The next item was a brown envelope bearing provenance for the contents, a golf ball given by Derek Cheesbrough from the golfing tournament. The successful winner was Sarah Laslett who also won the prize for most shots in the competition – a most suitable recipient who won it for £7 but paid £10.

Lot 3 was a blue Sally removed from a redundant rope from the bell tower of St Helen’s Church. Bidding was brisk and became very competitive between Sandra Rowland and Bee Cox, the latter eventually offering the highest bid of £42.

Lot 4 was a white tie produced by Richard Breese bearing a map of Lundy. Sandra Rowland was not going to lose this lot and secured it for £25. It stayed around the neck of the ‘glamorous assistant’ who was modelling it.

Paul James already owned both items in Lot 5, donated by auctioneer Roger Chapple, but generously paid £10 for a 2012 Lundy calendar and Discover Lundy 2012 programme.

The final lot was a unique offering donated by Shelly Southon (now Sherman) – a 2015 road tax disc from the Lundy Fire Tender. Once again Bee secured another lot, this time for the princely sum of £21.

In all, the auction raised a total of £120, half going to LFS funds and the other half to the Church Restoration project. Grateful thanks to all who took part, especially those who bid and those who donated, and to the auctioneer, the ever ebullient Roger Chapple. And of course, to his lovely assistant!



*Alan Rowland, sporting a Lundy tie and out-of-date road tax disc. Photo by Tim Davis*

## My Lundy

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### **CAMILLA RHODES tells us why Lundy is so important to her.**

I first came to Lundy as a National Trust working holiday leader in March 2013 and was immediately under the island's spell. I so enjoyed that holiday that I returned in September with the LFS, and was struck by the warmth and enthusiasm of the Society. I returned again in April 2014 with a group of friends for Easter, when we rang the bells for Easter Day and enjoyed scoring a couple of quarter peals. I then volunteered with Ranger Steve Pratt for a few days.

I had recently met Jonathan Rhodes at Ickworth, an NT property near Bury St Edmunds, as a volunteer where I lead tours about the history of the estate. Jonathan at the time was the Volunteer Manager, and is now the Projects and Premises Manager. I invited Jonathan to join me on another working holiday, repairing the church wall with Charlie Smith in April 2015. It was Jonathan's first introduction to Lundy and, like me and so many others, he quickly became a Lundyite.

I love lighthouses, and to my delight Jonathan proposed to me on Lundy at the top of the Old Light at the end of our week there (we had to make a run for the boat!). For various personal reasons, the only person who knew of our engagement for some months afterwards was the sculptor Sir Antony Gormley. He had been on the island to oversee the erection of one of his sculptures commemorating the Landmark Trust's 50th anniversary, and kindly autographed our copy of his little guide to the sculptures.

We married at Ickworth on 2 April 2016 amidst great happiness with friends and family. Lundy has played an important part in our lives and is very close to our hearts. We will be back!



*Charlie and crew (Camilla is in the maroon-coloured coat). Photo by Greg Cross*

## The Lundy shop gets a facelift – and a new name

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**SUE WATERFIELD** explains the changes that have taken place over the last couple of years to the ‘Shop’, now the Lundy General Stores.

In the last few months, visitors to Lundy will have noticed that we no longer have a shop, but please don’t panic, the sign over the old Linhay now reads ‘General Stores’. Looking at Keith’s wonderful transformation of our frontage, I can’t believe that no-one thought to erect a sign and brighten up the shop front before; it looks so much fresher and more inviting now. We are hoping to develop the look of the shop further in due course, to reflect its history and Lundy’s timeless quality.

Since Nigel’s retirement last November and Patrizia saying goodbye to us in the spring, it has been quite a challenge for me to sustain and build on all the good work they put into the shop over the years. They did such a fabulous job of keeping up with the needs of all our visitors and islanders alike – it really is a unique store when you consider the diverse needs we are catering for. On some days in summer we have over 200 day-trippers, who all want ice-creams, drinks and souvenirs. Of course, we also have our loyal ‘stayers’, who return year after year and who expect good quality food as well as a selection of wines and beers to keep them in comfort during their stay. As islanders, we miss out on a lot of the home comforts of the mainland, so it is our task in the shop to try to think of everything we need to keep us fed and watered throughout the year.

I have been incredibly fortunate to find two fabulous assistants in Ceri and Rachel, who have helped me enormously over the last few months. Ceri has brought his expansive knowledge of our unique and historic postal service back where it belongs – into the shop



*Sue outside the Lundy General Stores. Photo by Rob Waterfield*

where our stamps can be bought and sent anywhere in the world. He is so much tidier than I am and I love seeing a regiment of Puffins on the souvenir shelf, all standing to attention, and packets of crisps neatly stacked in lines on dust-free shelves!

Rachel is my clothing specialist and we now have many new ranges of our Lundy leisurewear, with much more planned for the future. Watch this space! Rachel has also prompted the inclusion of a much wider range of vegetarian, gluten- and allergen-free products, which we are always being asked for by our customers.

In addition to my two regular assistants, you will notice other members of staff working in the shop from time to time, switching easily between their roles in other departments when required. It has been really refreshing to work with so many of my friends, who can now step in at a moment's notice.

Our opening hours have extended enormously over the last few years. Nigel began by opening regularly in the afternoons and now, during the summer, we open once a week for 'Late Night Shopping'. Well, after a day of walking on Lundy, 6pm seems like a late night!

We are very fortunate here to have so many regular, loyal customers and it has been a joy for me over the last two years to meet so many friendly, knowledgeable and loyal visitors to the island – LFS members being the most loyal, knowledgeable and friendly of all our island guests. We couldn't do any of the work we do here without you all and it continues to be a joy to serve you on your visits and enjoy your company.

## Still learning about Lundy

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### **SIMON DELL updates us on his Lundy activities in 2016.**

2016 proved to be as busy a year as ever for me, with numerous school groups and guiding for Warden Beccy, as well as engaging in groups with Assistant Warden Connor on several days.

The year also saw another week-long 'Seize The Moment' event in the Barn, with 12 youngsters reaping the rewards of time spent on Lundy. We investigated historic remains and, of course, looked at Puffins! Somehow one of the guided walks included taking one of the new Lundy ponies for a tour around the island, showing him the sights.

The relocation cruises (from port to port) have taken off big-time. There have been over half-a-dozen, with me doing the commentary from Bideford to Ilfracombe, and on the way reacquainting an old friendship with school-friend Vernon Hocking; if you are lucky you might hear us singing the Bideford Grammar School song when negotiating a particularly challenging Bideford Bar on a stormy sailing! Round-the-island cruises are also proving popular, with commentaries when I am on board.

It is said that every day is a school day, and I am no exception to learning about Lundy. When giving a Lundy talk to the Kilkhampton Probus club near Bude in September, I learnt a great deal about the amount of Lundy granite used in the Grenville tomb, where Sir Bevil Grenville, one of the Lords of Lundy, is interred. St James the Great church in Kilkhampton is well worth visiting with Lundy in mind. As well as the tomb, the font is a wonderful example of fine Lundy granite dating back to that period and bearing the family crest of the Grenvilles. The arch pillars are also of Lundy granite, which upon close inspection is so unlike Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor granite – very interesting!

A Landmark Trust 50 Years book is being planned for 2019, and photographs from the 1960s and 1970s if you have any would be most welcome. They can be sent to me at [simondell1958@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:simondell1958@yahoo.co.uk), preferably as high-resolution JPG files.



*Simon & Vernon on the bridge of MS Oldenburg (photographer unknown) and (right) the Lundy-granite bearing St James the Great arches. Photo by Simon Dell*

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## Mary Percy, 1932–2016

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**Mary, Lady Geoffrey Percy, who died in February 2016, was a good friend of Lundy and well known to the Harman and Gade fraternity, featuring in quite a few published Lundy photographs. ROGER CHAPPLE represented the LFS at her funeral and relates here an abridged version of the funeral address.**

Mary was born in 1932 in Orpington, Kent. Ralph, Mary's father, worked for the revenue office and the government department and the family were evacuated to Wales. They all loved it there and appreciated how lucky they were to be out of London.

When young, Mary was a talented ballet dancer and loved theatre; she was sent to the Arts

Educational school in London and she was given a speaking part in the chorus at the Windmill Theatre. Later, she trained as a secretary... her shorthand was legendary... which resulted in many interesting jobs, such as working at the Natural History Museum, and working for a man in the city who got sent to prison! When she was 18 in 1950, her brother David [Lea] got a job as warden on Lundy and Mary went as sub-warden, cook and cleaner.

They lived in the Old Light: conditions were primitive but Lundy had a glamour that captivated her. This is to become a theme in Mary's life. Lundy was privately owned at that time, partly by Ruth Harman-Jones, who, with her husband Peter, later became life-long friends and the best godparents ever to her daughter, Diana, and grand-daughter, Bryony. David later got a job at the Wildfowl Trust, started by the naturalist Peter Scott, and Mary went too, as secretary. It was there that she first met Geoffrey, the second son of the 8th Duke of Northumberland. Mary went back to Lundy for the summers to work, where she worked in the tavern, the shop and the hotel and looked after orphan lambs. She adored every moment on Lundy and passed on that love of the island to many people, joining the Lundy Field Society in 1960.

One early summer day Mr Gade found Mary and said "that Percy fellow is on the boat". They had radioed ahead and he had come to ask her to marry him. They were married at Bideford in 1955; no-one knew and there were no guests.

Soon afterwards Geoffrey took her to meet his mother which was very nerve-wracking for Mary – his mother seemed rather grand and relations between Geoffrey and his mother were strained. They went for a drive one morning and Geoffrey offered to drive; he then put on the



*From the Order of Service: Lady Mary Percy with her beloved grand-daughter Bryony.*

chauffeur's hat. Mary and his mother sat in the back with his mother saying to Mary "Does Geoffrey really have to do this? Can't you stop him?" This was to become another recurring theme.

As newly-weds they lived on a narrow-boat on the Grand Union canal where Geoffrey had an interest in a coal-carrying business. Mary told tales of long canal journeys to Birmingham, bed-bugs and discovering the vagaries of cooking on boats. Geoffrey always told the story of seeing flaming poppadums flying out of the window. They both loved the mix of people they met. Conditions were primitive but it was glamorous.

When daughter Diana was born, they lived in Leighton Buzzard, known as Leighton booze-hard. Geoffrey, ever restless, decided soon that they were off to the Isle of Man. In the late 1950s the Isle of Man was quite primitive but very glamorous and full of writers and artists which Mary enjoyed and made many friends. Geoffrey went to sea and became a lobster fisherman.



*Lady Mary Percy and her husband Geoffrey, taken from the Order of Service.*

Over the years Mary had to move house many times, eventually moving to West Cornwall, high up between Penzance and St Ives. Mary loved Cornwall, the moors, the sea and the arty crowd, making many friends there. The last move was to North Devon, a beautiful cob farmhouse near Monkleigh, sheltered in a valley so the wind didn't give Geoffrey angina, and finally he seemed settled. Mary became involved in his latest project, which was keeping racing pigeons. In true style, he was obsessed and Mary did everything she could to help. She said this was one of their happiest times together. They spent many hours in the shed at the back of the Newmarket pub with the Pigeon club. After he died in 1984, Mary was only 52 and she carried on racing his pigeons for the next year and amazingly, and with the support of the lovely Torrington Pigeon club, won races and was awarded the cup for Bird of the Year, which became one of her proudest achievements.

In the years after Geoffrey's death, Mary used her time, as for most of her life, giving other people a helping hand. She taught adult literacy, she taught people to drive. She loved her garden and grew vegetables, while one of the things she enjoyed most was looking after children, especially Bryony, her beloved grand-daughter, who brought Mary her greatest joy in later years.

*From donations at Lady Mary's funeral, £375 was presented to the Lundy Field Society.*

## A tribute to Reg Tuffin

**Reg Tuffin, postmaster on Lundy for many years, died on 9 November 2016. NIGEL DALBY, who worked alongside Reg in the Lundy shop, remembers him.**

I first met Reg when I moved to Lundy in 2002, but only in 2003, when we commenced working together in the shop, did I really get to know him. He was an intensely private man who tended to keep himself to himself, so while I know something of certain aspects of his life before Lundy, it is only a small percentage of what made him the man he was.

We worked together until he left the island in early 2014, and during that time I quickly came to realise that he was one of life's true gentlemen. He was always courteous, kind, and gave freely of his time and knowledge – but he did not suffer fools gladly.

I would imagine everybody reading this will know about his contribution to the continuing success of the Lundy Postal Service and the stamps. It is an incredibly time-consuming occupation requiring patience and a methodical way of working – and it is for his role as Postmaster that I think he will be long and best remembered.

He reluctantly accepted technological progress and new ways, not because he was 'old school' or wasn't willing to learn, he just held a firm belief that there was absolutely no point in changing anything for the sake of it. I don't know who it was originally said "If it isn't broken, don't fix it", but it could very easily have been Reg!

When it came to radio and TV interviews about the island, Reg became the 'go to' person because of his Lundy longevity and his knowledge of the island, along with a succinct and friendly way of speaking to express his thoughts. He would always say to me beforehand that he really didn't like doing these interviews, but I came to learn that it was the anticipation which fuelled his apprehension – secretly I'm certain that he loved being given the chance to promote both the island and especially its postal history.

Reg enjoyed walking, regular Sunday lunchtimes in the Marisco, single malt whiskies, meat and (at least) four veg, jazz music, and he was an avid reader. But his greatest love, over and above everything, was Lundy.



Photo by Nigel Dalby

### **Luke wins Sir Jack Hayward Award**

Following the death of Sir Jack Hayward in 2015, the LFS Committee agreed an award will be made to a suitable grant applicant in memory of our late President. Our Grants Subcommittee has subsequently decided that the first ever Sir Jack Hayward Award will go to Luke Sutton for his continuing work on Lundy's Peregrine Falcons.

**Roger Chapple**

## Devon Bird Atlas takes wing

### ALAN ROWLAND reports on his attendance with Sandra at the launch of the *Devon Bird Atlas*.

Your Vice-Chairman and Membership Secretary were fortunate enough to be invited to the launch of the *Devon Bird Atlas 2007–2013*. On 29 January 2016, along with around 50 others, we crowded into the reception centre at Stover Country Park for the event.

Profuse thanks and appreciation were expressed by Dr Mike Lock (co-author of the Atlas) towards Tim Davis for his design and imaging skills which make the Atlas what it is – a superb snapshot of the bird population of Devon.

Lundy was also selected for particular mention by Nik Ward, a former chair of Devon Birds who is now a senior ecologist with Natural England. He spoke about the Seabird Recovery Programme which has allowed Puffins and Manx Shearwaters to re-establish successful breeding colonies on the island. The RSPB's Kevin Rylands, a regular visitor to Lundy and the newly appointed Devon Bird Recorder, who was greatly involved in the recovery programme was also present.

We were honoured to be invited to this event hosted by the organisation from which the Lundy Field Society germinated. We were also able to pick up our pre-ordered copy of the Atlas and have it signed by the authors, thereby donating the postage back to Devon Birds.



*Mike Lock and Stella Beavan, co-authors of the Devon Bird Atlas, show off the Puffin species account, the page sponsored by the LFS.*

## Rocket Mail

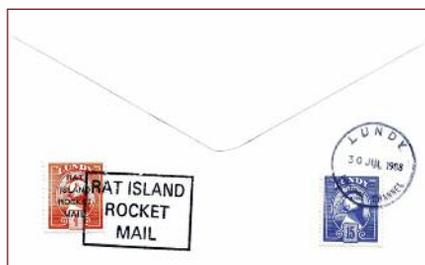
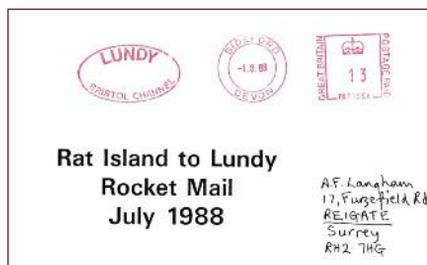
### **ROGER ALLEN, the ‘eccentric gentleman’ mentioned in last year’s issue of *Discovering Lundy*, responds!**

In *Discovering Lundy*, Bulletin No 45 for December 2015, Belinda Cox includes an article which she calls ‘A Small World’ which consisted of reminiscences of Lundy during the later Harman days and the earlier Landmark Trust years by Felix Gade’s niece, Mrs Pam Mitchell. Mrs Mitchell visited Lundy many times over a period from the 1960s up to 1988. Speaking of her last visit to Lundy in 1988, when she was staying at Millcombe, then a hotel, she mentions an “eccentric gentleman who was there to fire a rocket from the main island to Rat Island”. The ‘eccentric gentleman’ was in fact the writer of these notes and my reason for firing these rockets was simply because it had never been done before, and I had the permission of the Landmark Trust to overprint some Lundy stamps for use on the rocket mail. The exercise was in fact from Rat Island over to the main island, not the other way round.

Belinda’s short comment made the memories of that momentous day come flooding back into my mind and I thought that it was perhaps long enough ago to revisit the event. It was on the morning of 29 July 1988 that, armed with six rockets (Brocks fireworks), I and my wife Eva marched down to the beach. Tied to the stick of each rocket was a small plastic container, carrying up to twenty flimsy covers, later to be posted from Lundy in the usual way.

We clambered down to Hell’s Gates below Rat Island. Some eight other visitors came down with us and all were co-opted into the operation. Three of them, including a lady visitor, carried the rockets up to the top of Rat and took up a position at the very edge of the island facing the main island across Hell’s Gates. Other members of the expedition stationed themselves strategically around the Bay, up on the beach road and on the cliff side above the divers’ huts.

Eva and I remained just below the firing point in Hell’s Gates. The first rocket was a disappointment as it fired, but fell just over the edge of Rat down to where I was standing. The second rocket went off trajectory and fell into the sea but fortunately close to the beach, enabling Eva, who had changed into her bathing costume, to retrieve. Another rocket landed successfully on the rock face above the divers’ huts and was also recovered. Two rockets appeared to be duds and did not go off and another, successfully fired, disappeared in undergrowth high up on the cliff face and was never found.



*The front and back of covers of the July 1988 Rat Island to Lundy Rocket Mail – in this instance posted to former LFS Honorary Secretary Tony Langham.*

Each cover bore either a Lundy 2p or 4p stamp, overprinted with the words RAT ISLAND ROCKET MAIL. The stamps were placed on the reverse of the covers, and were tied with a rubber stamp, again reading RAT ISLAND ROCKET MAIL. The front of the envelopes had the inscription RAT ISLAND TO LUNDY ROCKET MAIL JULY 1988. The printing of the overprints and the envelopes was done by Lloyds Merchant Bank printing department. An unopened plastic container was sent to the Lundy section of the Ilfracombe Museum.

Full details of this event appeared in the *New Puffin Journal* of the Lundy Collectors' Club, issue no 22, Spring 2004. This article was fully illustrated with the stamps, cancellations and covers of the rocket mail. The event was also written up in the *British Private Post Study Group* of the Cinderella Stamp Club, Number 44, October 1988.

## Where the wild thyme blew

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**During 2016, naturalist and author Peter Marren published his autobiography *Where the wild thyme blew* (subtitled *Growing up with nature in the fifties and sixties*). The charming piece on Lundy (albeit from June 1971) is reproduced here.**

“Conservation seemed to be catching on, just then, even in the Bird Club. Brian wanted to make a serious contribution to bird monitoring and came up with a plan to count the nesting sea-birds on Lundy. This would entail camping out on the island for several days and scanning every inch of rock and cliff, perhaps even a certain amount of scrambling and boating. I was up for it. This was surely the sort of thing that nature blokes did: keeping an eye on the birds so that you noticed if their numbers were starting to fall, or if, for whatever reason, they failed to raise their usual brood. It meant getting to know the birds, too, lounging about on their rocks, and jabbering at one another whilst Dad brings in the fish.

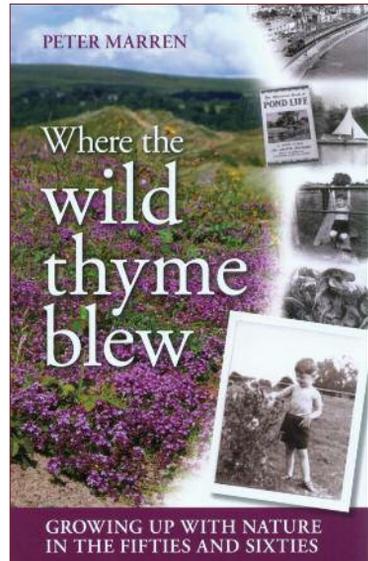
Four of us set out on the big adventure. I brought along the little green pup tent that Dad had bought with cornflake coupons. It didn't last the first night. After a blustery day on the cliffs, we retired under canvas after a few well-earned pints at the Puffin bar. I remember getting up at dawn for a pee and startling a Sika deer intrigued by the newcomers in its bosky habitat. Then the storm blew up. Rain galloped off the canvas; puddles leaked through tied door flaps and soaked into the bags. It soon looked as though we had chosen to camp in the middle of a pond. So, packing up our gear, we squelched over to see the aged patriarch Felix Gade, a kind of local Prospero who more or less ruled the isle. He kindly let us castaways use a barn.

Over the next few days we counted guillemots and razorbills and kittiwakes and puffins. On the last day, while the chaps finished off, I conducted my own survey of a plant called the Lundy Cabbage. Although it looks too much like oil-seed rape to attract any attention, this is in fact one of the rarest flowers in the world, for it is found nowhere else except on Lundy. Presumably some ancestral cabbage had colonised these rocks and evolved in isolation to produce something unique and perfectly attuned to a life overlooking the Bristol Channel. I seem to have been the first person to have shown any interest in the Lundy Cabbage since its discovery, back in the 1930s. My subsequent article in the *Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society* became my first published paper based on original research, the very modest base for umpteen subsequent surveys. For conservationists are slightly more interested in Lundy Cabbage now.

It was while wandering about looking for cabbages that I underwent the only mystical experience of my life. I remember searching for an ancient enclosure called the Friar's Garden – a misnomer for Lundy never had any friars, nor many gardens either. All I knew was that it lay close by Parson's Well, but that was no help because I couldn't find the well either. And then, as I was pacing the ground looking for the faint shadows that mark an ancient field system, I distinctly heard the faint sound of tinkling bells. Aha, I thought, I'm thinking about friars and parsons so my mind has come up with a spontaneous peal of fairy bells. So I stopped and listened but it wasn't certain whether the chimes, which seemed to be getting louder, came from inside me, like a sudden tinnitus, or were out there on the wind, may be behind, may be in front, no wait a minute, they were everywhere. For perhaps thirty seconds the sky rang with phantom bells and then, all of a sudden, they stopped and all I could hear was the wind running through the grass. Am I, I thought, am I going to tell the chaps about this (one of whom was an archaeologist and might have had a few suggestions)? Once, on a lone walk in the Derbyshire dales, I heard cows humming a surprisingly tuneful dirge as they lay chewing the cud among the buttercups. Then, as now, with the mystery of the bells of Lundy, I decided that this is the sort of thing you should probably keep to yourself.

I loved everything about Lundy: the wonderful formations of its weathered granite, variously shaped like cheeses, slippers, the profile of an ancient knight; the sonorous gullies loud with the call of gulls (and the odd grey seal hauled up below); the rock where the grass grows so thick you can bounce on it; the stupendous cauldron in the cliffs with the sea boiling and spouting far below. I made sure I had an excuse to return there next year, now with a grant from the Lundy Field Society to study the rhododendron problem (another paper!). Lundy's magic gave me a lifelong love of islands, especially British islands, and for a time I tried to spend at least a few days on a different one every year. The actor Richard Burton was of the opinion that islands are prisons; he could not look at the sea for a minute without wishing for wings. For me they are the opposite: the siren song of the sea, the smile on the brow of the waters, summer isles of Eden beckoning from the shore. Britain is surrounded with islands like a string of precious pearls, and some of them are hardly ever visited except by naturalists. Yet even in such company, Lundy is peerless. It is for me the perfect island, the right size, without tarmac or traffic, and yet with sufficient amenities to sustain the island man. When I die you can scatter my ashes on Lundy. The perfect place does exist and it's here."

*With thanks to Keith Hiscock for seeking permission from the author to publish this extract. Peter Marren published an account of the Lundy Cabbage in the 1971 LFS Annual Report. Peter's book is available from NatureBureau (<http://www.naturebureau.co.uk/bookshop>) at a cost of £14.99 + p&p.*



## The Island King – A biography of Martin Coles Harman, Overlord of Lundy

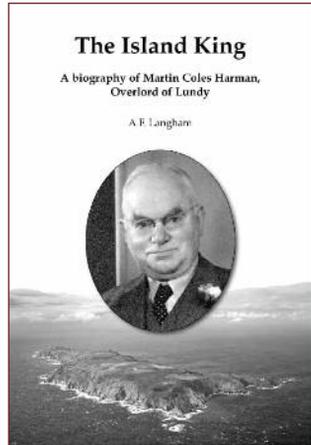
**ANDRÉ COUTANCHE** reviews the latest LFS publication.

It was very appropriate to mark the 70th birthday of the LFS with a biography of one of its founding fathers written by, if not quite another founding father, then a pillar of the Society for many decades. This biography of Martin Coles Harman was the last work written by Tony Langham. Following some detective work by LFS Vice Chairman Alan Rowland, the previously unpublished manuscript came to light and Diana Keast, President of the LFS, and only surviving child of MCH, agreed that the Society could publish it as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations.

Understandably with something written over twenty years ago, there was some debate about whether the typescript should be published ‘as is’ or whether Tony Langham’s writings should be taken as a starting point for a reworked and updated book. With some minor editing and a few factual corrections, it stands as it was written, greatly enhanced by Tim Davis’ clear and attractive layout and by 17 period photos and illustrations. Diana Keast has provided a preface, and Roger Allen a brief introduction about the author (whose biography he published in 2014).

LFS readers will inevitably find here much which is familiar in the overall story of MCH and Lundy, but there is also information which has come out of Tony Langham’s detailed research which most of us don’t know. Of course, this is the biography of a man, not a history of one of his land-holdings, though not surprisingly for a book written by the doyen of Lundy historians, the island is never far from the focus of the story.

The book was published with the consent and encouragement of Tony Langham’s widow, Jenny, and was launched during ‘Discover Lundy’ week in September 2016, which was the major part of the LFS’s birthday celebrations. It was a limited print-run, but any remaining copies will be on sale at the LFS AGM on Saturday 11 March for the bargain price of £5 (*alternatively, see opposite for purchase by post. Ed.*).



### **STOP PRESS – Lundy’s new Wildlife Warden appointed**

Following interviews in December both onshore and on Lundy, Dean Jones and his partner Zoe Barton have been appointed as Wildlife Warden and General Assistant, respectively, and are expected to join the island team at the end of January.

Hailing from County Antrim, Northern Ireland, Dean has a BSc in applied Marine Biology with a strong interest in seabirds. He has previously worked for the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Pembrokeshire Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, the National Museum of Scotland and Rathlin Island seabird sanctuary.

The LFS takes this early opportunity to wish Dean and Zoe all the very best.



## PUBLICATIONS for sale through the Lundy Field Society

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**The Island King: A biography of Martin Coles Harman, Overlord of Lundy**, A.F. Langham 2016. ISBN 978-09530532-5-4. Softback, black & white limited edition of this unique biography, Langham's last posthumous publication. 48pp, £5.00 plus £1.50 p&p.

### **Journal of the Lundy Field Society**

First published in 2008 and illustrated in full colour. Published biennially. Members receive copies but others may order back numbers.

**Vol 5 Jenny George (ed)**, 2016, 129pp, £10.00 plus £2.50 p&p.

Contents: The Climate of Lundy; Progress towards eradication of *Rhododendron ponticum*; Character and Status of Rocky Shore communities; A comparative investigation of the Plankton communities of three ponds; Status of the Peregrine Falcon; A Focal study of a Barn Swallow; Non-invasive sampling of Pygmy Shrew; Kristjan Magnusson: a forgotten Lundy artist.

**Vol 4, Jenny George (ed)**, 2014, 128pp, £7.50 plus £2.50 p&p. Vols 1, 2 & 3 are available at £5 per copy plus £2.50 p&p. Visit: [www.lundy.org.uk/publications/volume.php?vol=1001](http://www.lundy.org.uk/publications/volume.php?vol=1001)

**The Harman Family's Lundy 1925-1969** by Members of the Lundy Field Society, 2013, Softback in full colour, £12.99 plus £2.50 p&p.

Covering the period from the 1920s to the late 1960s, the book includes stories which have never been told before and others which are well known but told here with new illustrations. The period photographs are from the collections of Diana Keast and other Lundy Field Society members, and many of them are published here for the first time. Memories and anecdotes from Diana Keast are the icing on the cake of a unique insight into a crucial period of Lundy's history.

**Protecting Lundy's Marine Life: 40 Years of Science and Conservation**, 2012, 102pp, Members Hardback £15, Softback £11.50 / Non-members £16 and £12.50 plus £2.50 p&p.

After 40 years of marine conservation at Lundy, a record has been produced summarising how and when the major marine conservation landmarks occurred, describing some of the marine life highlights of the island and celebrating the success of all of those who have been involved over the years. The two people who have most consistently contributed to the development of marine conservation at Lundy, Keith Hiscock and Robert Irving, explain briefly (and illustrate profusely) what happened when and how, but also identify how much more there is still to find out about the marine wildlife of a fascinating island.

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

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