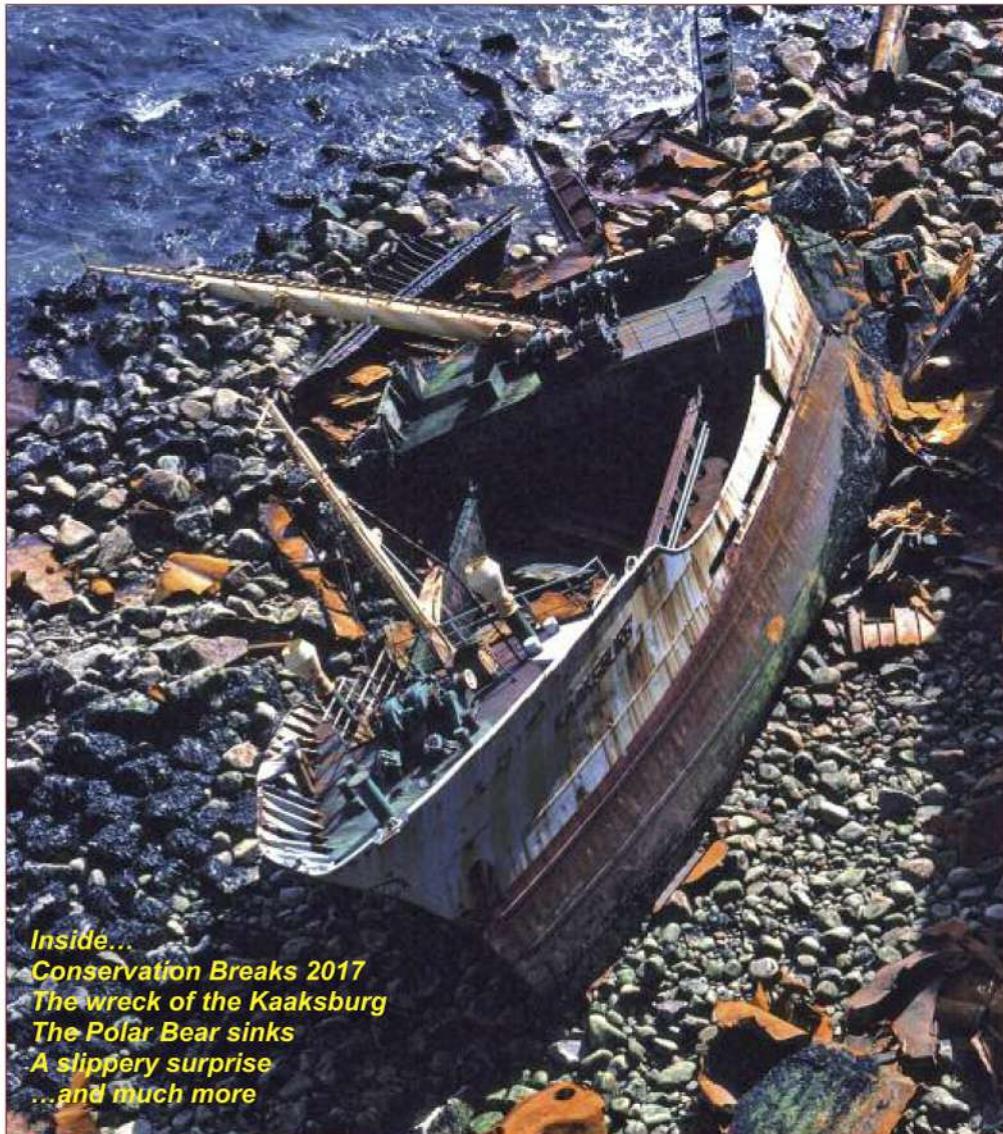




# DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 47, February 2018



*Inside...*

*Conservation Breaks 2017*

*The wreck of the Kaaksburg*

*The Polar Bear sinks*

*A slippery surprise*

*...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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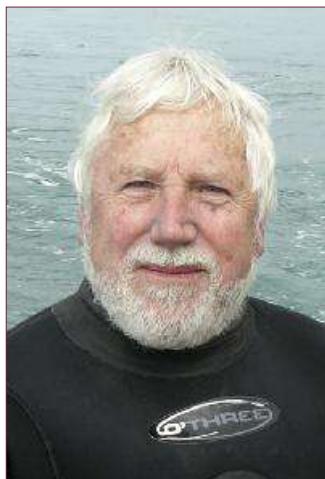
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for the next issue of *Discovering Lundy*.**

*Cover photo: The wreck of the Kaaksburg, aground off Lundy's East Side, in 1983 (see page 26). Photo by Tony Taylor*

## Words from the submariner



**A**t the 40th anniversary of the Society and the conference that we held to celebrate that milestone, I spoke with Professor Leslie Harvey who was co-founder (with Martin Coles Harman) of the Society. Leslie stayed involved for many years after ‘defecting’ to the Isles of Scilly in the early 1950s. He expressed surprise at being so welcome in view of his change of loyalties but, of course, his early work and continued contributions were very much appreciated. I visited Leslie and his wife Clare at their home on St Mary’s when I was doing field work there in the late 1960s and again in the 1980s. He lent me his extraordinarily detailed field notes from Lundy to photocopy. The meticulous nature of those records was very much ‘of its time’ and the originals are now archived at the Marine Biological Association (including non-marine work).

Some of those field studies have been re-visited (the paper by myself and Juliet Brodie in the 2016 issue of the LFS Journal) but much remains worthy of re-survey.

I missed the September LFS Committee meeting – I was double booked and, yes, I was in the Isles of Scilly. But do not take that as any portent of things to come. To my delight, I was invited to have dinner at Leslie and Clare Harvey’s lovely house by its now owners Professor and Mrs Warwick. It was Richard who handed over the original field notes to me to find a safe haven for them. Such records are invaluable. They have not been published as raw data and there are ‘nuances’ in them in the crossings-through and the margin notes that are invaluable to researchers.

Whilst this Bulletin is about the background stories to the activities that LFS members partake in, the observations of wildlife especially that you make are essential to keep track of. Members of the LFS though do not need to have risen to the dizzy heights of academia to make a contribution. There is much that you do and observe that is of interest to other members and significance for our understanding of the history, natural history and archaeology of Lundy. Do make sure that you record what you see and that the records are kept safe.

My thanks as ever to Belinda Cox and Tim Davis for producing another splendid Bulletin.

Oh yes, and those of you at the AGM will have noticed that I now sport a beard – not a disguise but part curiosity, part fashion, part laziness.

**Keith Hiscock**  
Chairman

**The jury's out on the beard, Keith ... verdict at the AGM!**



## Editor's chatterings

I am delighted to have been able to put together another *Discovering Lundy* for you. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed. I love reading everything that's sent to me, and learn so much about Lundy which may not be available elsewhere.

I stayed on the island over Christmas and New Year 2016/17, and was looked after very well. Since then I've stayed on four other occasions, including introducing four friends to Lundy, and taking part in the February LFS Working Party. I've also been over in the latter part of the year on *Obsession II* and *Shelly N* to dive, and have really enjoyed exploring Gannets' Bay and below Brazen Ward; the playful seals are very entertaining!

An LFS Committee meeting was held on the island in May, and I had an extremely enjoyable time with my fellow committee members – as well as getting lots of work done, we did of course have some relaxation time.

I've really enjoyed my time on the Committee and hope to continue for the foreseeable future. I have been made very welcome and have learned so much about Lundy. While there aren't currently any vacant seats, I would encourage anyone to join the committee when the opportunity comes up, and would be very happy to chat to anyone who is considering it – you really don't need an 'ology'!

I'm looking forward to receiving (and reading) your articles for the next Bulletin. They can be sent at any time of the year, and I'm very happy to provide support if writing for publication is something new for you.

Thanks again to those who have taken the time and effort to provide something for this edition, and thank you to the wonderful Tim Davis for another excellent layout.

### Belinda Cox

#### Corrections

A couple of apologies from your editor. I've been made aware of two errors in the last edition of *Discovering Lundy* and would like to apologise to the individuals concerned.

- On page 7, Bob's surname should read Bagatti, not Baggatti.
- On page 23, one of the quiz winner's names should of course be Rachel, not Helen.

I'll try harder this year!

## A new life on the granite pebble!

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**DEAN WOODFIN JONES, who arrived on Lundy in late January 2017 as the new Lundy Warden, writes about his first ten months on the island.**

I cannot believe it has been ten months already since my darling Zoë and I left our little corner of the great green isle to start our new lives together on this tiny granite pebble. I remember that first week so clearly; anxiously tiptoeing around an unfamiliar fog-cloaked island, demonic laughter emanating from the Fieldfare-laden trees as if they were mocking our futile attempts to navigate the island and our decision to make this cold and wet land our home.

After making it through the fog to the warming log fire in the Marisco Tavern, all uncertainties and haunting chills were soon dismissed as we were brought into the warming embrace of the lovely Lundy staff during a night of tipsy tales. A few chapters on and I now feel like I am firmly planted here on Lundy, like a fungal mycelium, intertwined with the life force of the island. But rather than exchanging vital nutrients between one another, the island provides me with love, inspiration and a sense of being in return for my protection and passion for broadcasting its love and tales upon others.

As I ponder back through the days gone by, I realise how remarkable this season on Lundy has been and how lucky I am to be a part of its daily majesty. After scarcely evading the island's dark winter days, I arrived on the island just as the birds had started their annual spring passage. Stonechat, Skylark and Meadow Pipit were aplenty and it wasn't long until my Lundy list gained some stonking birds like Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Black-crowned Night-heron, Red-rumped Swallow and Rose-coloured Starling.

Then the day came when our beloved MS *Oldenburg* made her first seasonal voyage and all eyes were set to the visitors as the island's spring warden events got underway. This period also coincided with the return of our glorious seabirds, back from their unfathomable lives between the winter swells to their favourite spots on the cliff face where the birds will renew past loves and ready themselves for the busy period ahead. This year turned out to be a fruitful one for the majority of our seabird species, including our avian icon, the Puffin, which arrived in numbers surpassing all those noted from any other seabird census (1981–2017)! It warms the heart to know that our birds are thriving in a period of such anthropogenic sorrow, particularly when we consider the overall global downward trend of this charming and hardy little seabird. Even though I have spent much time on many an enchanted isle with these astonishing winged beauties, getting the chance to sneak a peek into their lives every breeding season is a privilege and something I will never tire of.

With the summer solstice behind us, the fear of the shorter days loomed. Here, many an eve during these late summer days was spent, a pint of Old Light in hand, stealthily shifting around the nook for a space bathed in the last rays of evening sun. Many fond memories flood to me as I look back during this time, but some are more prominent than others. Like the night Zo and I slept under the blinding starscape next to the north lighthouse, knackered from the excitement of watching Storm Petrels flittering back to their burrows, their white rumps illuminated by the beam of our dimly lit torch. The night the staff cosied up on tartan groundsheets next to Felix Gade's hut, where we were surrounded by the uncanny calls of passing shearwaters as we watched in awe as meteors fell *en masse* from the still blackened sky, or the numerous hours I spent wallowing in the Devil's Kitchen accompanied by silly



*Dean (left) with new Ranger, Nick Herbert. Photo by Belinda Cox*

seals, wondrous wrasse and colourful cnidarians. I could go on and on...

Then in the blink of an eye the island changed again as the autumn months approached. The trees have now locked themselves away in preparation for winter's embrace and the bracken coverlets which carpeted the east sideland have now browned and wilted, exposing new Sika deer fawns which had been hiding so well over the summer months. I have beheld the malice of storms Ophelia and Brian, which with their wrathful gusts created blizzards of hay and seafoam within the village and whipped up the channel's waters, creating multiple rainbows and a sheet of mist, making it hard to identify the courageous seabirds passing Rat Island. Now the winds have dropped and the island emanates a crisp winter feel, Redwing, Chaffinch and Siskin now fill the sky and the Fieldfare that once mocked me now seems to be calling to me in a different way: *schaack-schaack-schaack* – “that funny-looking Irish man in the flat cap is still here. What’s he been up to all this time?”

As the new year approaches, plans and preparations are already being made for next season, something that I am looking forward to with great anticipation and excitement. I would like to thank everyone in the LFS for all their help and enthusiasm during this first year. I am truly humbled to have met so many kind and inspirational people already within my short Lundy stint. See you all in March at the next LFS AGM.

All the very best!

**Dean Woodfin Jones**

### February

#### BELINDA COX reflects on working party that almost wasn't!

It didn't look good, but then fog rarely does. As we approached 'Hartland International Heliport' the visibility dropped to 'very poor'; so poor we couldn't even see the opposite side of the field! However, with hopeful hearts we checked in and sat to wait. Sadly, we ended up waiting four days before the weather allowed us to reach the island. I had travelled down with Trevor Dobie, Louise Cookson and Keith Dobie, and after staying in a local hotel for a couple of nights, they decided to drive back to Wiltshire for the night and return in the morning, whilst I stayed in Northam, exploring Westward Ho! and spending some time in Bideford with our Hon. Sec. Michael Williams, who was bidding his time staying with Sandra and Alan Rowland in Morwenstow. Other team members were Kevin Williams, Katherine Large, Ali Sheppard, Ian Davidson, Ruth Turner and Victoria Edwards.

For me, the highlight of our day in Bideford must be when we visited a bookstall in the Pannier Market. Looking through the books for sale, I found a few books about Lundy, and as I paid for them the stall holder said, "I have this book which is too small to sell. You can have it for free". He handed me a copy of Michael's *The Lundy Companion*. Laughing, I thanked him and pointed out that my companion was the author; he then suggested I get him to sign it. I declined, explaining that I already had a signed copy. Thanks to the stallholder I now have one of the rare unsigned copies of the 2001 edition as well!



*The February working party: (back row l-r) Kevin Williams, Ian Davidson, Keith Dobie, Trevor Dobie, Belinda Cox, Vicky Edwards and (front row l-r) Ruth Turner, Katherine Large, Louise Cookson and Ali Sheppard.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017

On Friday morning the fog finally cleared and a reduced number of LFS volunteers arrived on Lundy, including Lundy ‘virgins’ Ian and Vicky. Kevin and Ali had decided to chuck in the towel and go home, which was understandable considering the frustrations of the previous four days! Those of us who reached the island felt very aware that a full team which would have been available for a week’s work was reduced to a smaller team working over a weekend, so we wanted to get as much done as possible. After settling into the Barn, we said hello to (about to be) Ranger Nick and got down to chopping some kindling. In fact quite a lot of kindling; enough to last several months. Sue in the shop was very appreciative.

Over the course of the weekend we carried out rhododendron seedling surveys on the steep east sideland – a physically challenging task but one vital to the rhododendron eradication project. We found hundreds of seedlings which were recorded on a map and which will have since been treated by Nick with his trusty herbicide. We also transplanted several young trees taken from the sapling nursery to the top of the copse just south of Quarter Wall on the East Side, as well as removing some support stakes from older trees within the copse. It certainly helped us build up a sweat in the chill February weather.

We were excited to meet Dean, the new Warden, who worked with us over the weekend. It was also the weekend when Nick was undertaking a working interview for the Ranger post, which happily he was successful in securing. Vicky, one of the Lundy ‘virgins’ on the trip, successfully secured the post of Assistant Ranger for 2017, and it was lovely to see her again on subsequent trips.

As always, we ate well and had fun outside of working hours. Although we had such a short time together, it certainly hasn’t put me off engaging in future working party trips – and I’m still looking forward to the day when I get stuck ON the island!

## June

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### JAN PAUL picks up on happenings in the mid-year working party...

Thirteen of us met on the Quayside at Ilfracombe for what was to be one of the hottest weeks of the year. The volunteers were Keith Dobie, Louise Cookson, Mandy Dee, Sharon Wright, Dave ‘Brummie’ Preece, Bob Bagatti, Kevin Williams, Megan Debenham, Simon ‘Lofty’ Lofts, Danielle Agnew, Megan Adams, Cressida Whitton, Cathy Mulholland and Jan Paul. It was interesting to arrive early and to watch the groceries and provisions being loaded onto MS *Oldenburg*. Although our crossing was relatively calm, some of our party did not fare too well!

After an introductory talk by Keith, our leader, we had some free time to make ourselves at home in the Barn before attending the updated and informative talk in the Tavern which was presented by Siân, the Assistant Warden. After a supper cooked by Keith and Lou, some of us walked to The Ugly to take advantage of the wonderful evening.

We were met in the morning by Ranger Nick and his assistant Vicky, who took the group to Millcombe Valley where we cleared weeds and bracken in the fruit cages and tree nursery.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017



*The June working party on the steps of the Barn. Photo by Steve Pratt*

It was encouraging to see that, despite being very overgrown, the majority of the soft fruit bushes in the cages were surviving and some were positively thriving. We then moved to the tree cages on the east sideland and cleared them of weeds before moving to the Quarry area. After lunch we cleared the Heligoland Trap of weeds and removed ragwort from around Belle Vue Cottages. It had been such a hot day that, after work, some of us hot-footed it down to the landing beach for a welcome swim – a personal first for me on Lundy. A wonderful supper of shepherd's pie and apple and berry crumble was served by 'the hostesses with the mostest', namely Sharon and Brummie Dave.

On our second day, some returned to ragwort-pulling whilst the rest of us began the long task of replacing the fence running the length of St Helen's Field. New holes were dug to replace some of the poles which had rotted, and new poles were banged into place. This sounds a simple task but, as usual on Lundy, nothing was straightforward, and trying to get the posts set deep enough proved an exhausting challenge under a searing sun (the UK was basking in

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017

a heatwave with temperatures of up to 30°C recorded in London that day).

Tuesday saw us continuing with the fence work, replacing old barbed wire with new wire. Our group then reformed on the ‘killer steps’ (from the Ugly down to the Lower East Side Path) from where we began a vegetation survey of the slopes around the path. Having hoped that this was to be less strenuous than the fencing, we quickly realised that carrying a metre-square quadrat and several large reference tomes on some of the steepest slopes on the island was not the easy option we had anticipated!

Our day off on Wednesday was forecast to be hot and sultry and we all took the opportunity to do our own thing, some setting off early for a walk around the island, trying to avoid the midday heat. We all enjoyed a very good meal in the Tavern in the evening. Later that night three of us went to the Ugly and were rewarded with the sound of many Manx Shearwater and a very brief glimpse of one as it flew over – a very special moment for us.

Thursday saw us continuing with the vegetation survey on the east sidelands where the main plants identified were bracken, bramble, Yorkshire fog, soft rush, wood sage, stonecrop, tormentil and clover. Again, it was very hot and tiring work on the steep slopes but Nick was pleased with our efforts and findings. We finished the day’s tasks by replacing the top wire on the fence. For supper that evening we were joined by Nick, his assistant Vicky and Nick’s partner Rachel from the shop.

Our last working day was spent doing a bracken survey on the plateau. We split into two groups and, between us, covered both the east and west of the island on the upper coast path, recording bracken, including the approximate height and density of each patch. This proved to be a relaxing but informative end of the working week, which ended as it had been all week – hot and sunny. Once we had cleaned the Barn we were able to enjoy the rest of the day, some of us catching a wonderful glimpse of Puffins at Jenny’s Cove before the afternoon sailing. Another wonderful week shared with like-minded people all wanting to contribute to the conservation of a very special place.

## October

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**... and BOB BAGATTI provides a round-up of autumn's activities.**

Saturday 14th October saw us at the quay side at Ilfracombe, bags in hand, meeting our fellow team members for the week, re-acquainting ourselves with old friends and meeting new. I’m pleased to say we had a good mix of old hands (no offence intended here), new hands and three people new to the island. Due to loading problems on the *Oldenburg*, our crossing was delayed by half-an-hour, which was a blessing for one of our team who had traffic problems getting to Ilfracombe.

After a fairly smooth crossing for some but not for others, we arrived in the Landing Bay and made our way up to the village to regroup at the Barn. There were 15 of us, 14 in the Barn and one, Alan Rowland, our pond expert, bedding down in the Dairy. After a general briefing, the rest of the afternoon was free time to roam, explore or simply put one’s feet up and chill. Assistant Warden Siân gave an excellent talk in the Wheelhouse, well attended by LFS



*Millcombe Pond post-clearance. Photo by Bob Bagatti*

members and other guests. Dinner (sausage and mash, peas, leeks and onion gravy, followed by banoffee pie) was produced by Andy and Mandy, and the evening was spent either in the Barn or the Tavern.

Sunday was our first working day. We met Ranger Nick outside the Barn at 08.30 for a briefing on our first task. Most of the team were literally to be working ‘in’ Millcombe pond, clearing all the vegetation from the centre, allowing Alan a chance to examine the pond life. A solitary eel was found; we named him Neil. Three of us, who didn’t own wellies or waders, were put to the task of removing flax plants above the wall overlooking the allotment. It was a very strenuous day all round, but it was also very satisfying for both teams to look back and see how much had been achieved – always a plus on these breaks.

Retiring to the Barn to ease our aching bodies, Paul G and Ray fed us on spaghetti bolognaise (with a veggie sauce for Ruth) followed by apple pie and ice cream.

Monday was the 30th anniversary of the great storm of 1987 that ravaged the country. As if in celebration of that event, we were to experience hurricane Ophelia. Luckily the storm had somewhat abated crossing the Atlantic, but at its peak we were still experiencing gusts of force 10 winds on the island. That morning we resumed work at the previous day’s sites. Luckily it was relatively sheltered in Millcombe Valley, but it was evident that the wind was increasing,

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017



*A thatched fence after storm Ophelia. Photo by Bob Bagatti*

so we relocated to the farmyard for either recycling, painting or kindling-making duties. This had the advantage of being only a short walk back to the Barn, but the disadvantage that it was a real struggle to fight your way the 50 yards or so in the wind tunnel [*Windy Alley! Ed.*] up the side of the Barn! That evening, with the dubious assistance of her two sous chefs, Brummie Dave and myself, Ali produced a chili con carne and rice with a veggie option. For dessert we had tiramisu (meaning ‘pick me up’ in Italian), which in honour of Ophelia, Ali called ‘blow me down’, and a forest fruits crumble.

Tuesday morning we witnessed the result of Ophelia: hay from the Tent Field had been blown over the whole village. We helped to salvage as much of it as possible. There were many one-liners bandied around about hay, but it was “hay ho hay ho, it’s off to work we go” and we proceeded to rake it up from in front of the Shop and Tavern and so on, and finally around Quarters. When Kevin the farmer then proceeded to bail up the hay, I lost count of the number. In recognition of our efforts, he promised us a Soay sheep (to eat, not as a pet) and duly delivered it to us that evening in the Barn. (Apologies at this stage to any vegetarians and vegans amongst you!) Tuesday afternoon saw us in different locations doing various tasks: more flax tree removal, gulley clearing and water bottle stacking in the Shop to name a few. That evening Michael and Anna delighted us with a shepherd’s pie, roasted butternut squash and buttered leeks, with a bubble and squeak for Ruth. For dessert, bananas in a rum and

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017



*The October working party on the steps of the Barn. Photo by Bob Bagatti*

raisin sauce and pears poached in mulled wine, with mulled wine to sip. We also met LFS members Louise Cookson, Megan Debenham and Christina ‘Gabi’ Humphries, who came over on the Tuesday boat and were staying in Old Light Lower.

Wednesday was our well and truly deserved day off. After a lie-in and a leisurely breakfast, people trickled off to explore the island or visit favourite haunts. Many did a circular walk around the island, some clockwise, some anti-clockwise. I joined Ali for a walk around the island and to help hunt for Lundy letterboxes. We were generally successful, but Gull Rock thwarted us; a challenge for another time. Ruth incidentally completed her letterbox quest later on and proudly showed off her certificate. I posted my letter to ‘Lundy’; a young girl so named whose parents met on a National Trust working holiday in the late 1990s, fell in love with the island as well as each other, and had young Lundy. She has a letterbox in the Quarry Pond area and requests you write and leave a letter for her. They are collected every so often and sent on to her.

That night we dined in the Wheelhouse and were joined afterwards by Lou, Megan and Gaby. We performed a ‘flash mob’ and sang a song to Brummie Dave on his retirement from the conservation breaks. The words were written by Lou, Megan and Gaby and sung to the tune of *I'm Leaving On A Jet Plane*.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2017

Thursday saw us in sluggish mood on waking, but fortified with breakfast we set off to Ackland's Moor to construct a stock fence on top of a stone wall. Limited space does not allow me to explain fully how we constructed it, but it was quite ingenious and made the wall even more difficult, if not impossible, for sheep (or rams – the little devils) to scale. The job took all day but by the end we had completed some 200 yards of wall with posts *in situ* for Nick to finish off with wiring. Very satisfying!

That evening, we invited Nick (Ranger) and Rachel, Dean (Warden) and Zoë to dinner. Our chefs for the night were Sophie, Ruth and Alan. Sophie and Alan produced Lundy lamb (supplied by Kevin), one batch roasted in rosemary and the other in garlic and chilli, while Ruth produced a vegetarian lentil hotpot for our four guests, who are all vegetarian, and herself. We then enjoyed a well-stocked cheese board and crackers.

On Friday, our last working day, our first task was to clear away the flax trees still littering Millcombe Valley before the next storm (Brian) hit the island, Nick and a colleague ferrying the debris – some 15 trailer loads in all – to the burn site. At this point Anna and Sophie joined Dean for a seal pup survey travelling up and down the island. They came back shattered but very elated with their task. After a break, the rest of us walked down to Quarry Pond to repair the path and reset stepping stones across the wet areas. The work done shortly after 2pm, Nick generously gave us the rest of the day off. Thus, a lazy afternoon was spent for some in the Barn or the Tavern, or walking/letterboxing for others.

That evening we enjoyed the rest of the lamb cooked as a hotpot, chicken à la king, macaroni cheese and salad, produced by Hannah with the help of Joe, followed by the largest forest fruits pavlova I've ever seen. Lou, Megan and Gaby again joined us for dinner.

On Saturday, due to storm Brian, neither the *Oldenburg* nor the helicopter could travel. For most of us it wasn't a problem, although it was a bit of a bugbear for some. Some of us did venture out for a walk, Ruth and I meeting Alan on our travels. Otherwise it was a lazy day, which included a skittles match between the LFS and the island team, which the latter won by a margin of some 20 points. That evening most of us dined in the Tavern, some of us enjoying a late night.

Sunday saw us finishing off our packing, bed stripping and general clearing up. A helicopter briefing was given by Island Manager, Rob, and flights started at about 11am. Goodbyes and hugs were had before we each made our separate journeys home.

Apologies to anyone if my facts are a bit hazy (I blame my age) but it was a pleasure living, working and having fun with so many great people. We ate extremely well, despite the calorie-burning tasks; I for one didn't lose any weight. We drank moderately, and enjoyed great company. Old friendships reacquainted, new ones made. I'm putting my name down for next year!





Photo by David George

## The *Polar Bear* – the end of an era!

**MV *Polar Bear*, the former Lundy twelve-passenger supply ship, has sunk at her moorings off Portsmouth, Dominican Republic, fortunately without casualties. ROGER CHAPPLE reviews her history.**

Built in Denmark in 1960, as the *Adleg*, weighing 180 tons, and to Finnish ice-breaking standards, *Polar Bear* serviced the Greenland to Denmark route for her owners, the Royal Greenland Company. Her hull was lengthened by 4.8 metres in 1965. She ceased trading in 1969 and was laid up at Copenhagen and dry-docked in the summer of 1970.

She was acquired by the Lundy Company and first registered in the UK on 8th November 1971. Work to comply with Ministry of Transport safety requirements caused the first true cargo-carrying voyage to be delayed until 1st May 1972, after which she continued to work in tandem with the *Lundy Gannet* for some two years.

The acquisition of the relatively large capacity *Polar Bear* combined with the absence of a pier at Lundy, required a support vessel, the John Shearn-designed *Shearn*. Its capacious hold was capable of holding a trailer, cattle and building materials, and could be used to supplement the unloading of passengers. Fitted with wheels, the drop-fronted *Shearn* could winch herself up the beach to safety when not in use.

In fog on 14th July 1985, *Polar Bear* was involved in a collision with the larger *Arosa* – view the photograph in the Marisco Tavern showing her mast tips through the fog, taken from the *Polar Bear*. Fortunately, the damage was above



*Polar Bear* in dry-dock at Dartmouth.

*The Shearn in 1973, with the Polar Bear in the background. Photo from the Judy Corley collection*

the water line and repairs were completed in dry-dock at Dartmouth after temporary work to ensure safe passage was effected locally.

In May of 1986 the Lundy service was taken on by MS *Oldenburg*.

It is said that *Polar Bear* had always been maintained on a ‘no expense spared policy’. This continued, with work being carried out at Appledore where she was laid up, with the intention of resuming support cargo sailings to Lundy and short sea trading as appropriate. However, after visiting Sharpness, she sailed off across the Atlantic in August of 1987.

In 2009 she was renamed *Independence II*, and continued trading in the Caribbean. Various images record the gradual deterioration from her former glory, until she finally settled into Portsmouth harbour in March 2017.

Other than the photograph noted above, a plaque of the Royal Greenland Company can be seen in the Marisco Tavern.



**Adapted from *Dominica News Online*, Friday 10th March 2017, 17:29hrs**

### **Ship sinks off Portsmouth**

A ship has sunk in waters off the town of Portsmouth, Dominica. The reason is unknown. Dramatic footage showed the ship listing badly to one side before it slipped beneath the waves. It is unknown at this point where the ship is from and what was its purpose in Dominica. Photos taken from video footage of the incident show the sequence of events as the ship sank.



## Falling in love with Lundy

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JANE MAGGS, pictured below, recounts how she fell in love with Lundy.

I discovered Lundy in 1977. I was on holiday with my then husband, two young children and mother-in-law staying in Berrynarbor, near Combe Martin. We visited Ilfracombe and the day-trip to Lundy sounded interesting – something to do on a dull, drizzly day. I loved the trip over and the exciting leap from the *Balmoral* to the launch, juggling the children, grandma and a pushchair. Despite grizzly children and the grey weather, I immediately fell in love with this mysterious, wild island.

Months later I felt like a holiday on my own. Having no knowledge of Lundy then, I asked if there was accommodation for visitors. So, in May 1978 I sailed over to Lundy on the *Polar Bear*, walked up to Millcombe, then a hotel for 12 guests, run at that time by Ina Hinchelwood. My first night in Room 7 I found my nightie wrapped round a hot water bottle. I was woken with a cup of tea and then breakfasted with 11 other guests around the single big table. Here I was in a house built by the Reverend Heaven feeling I was in heaven. I explored as much of the island as I could and landed up in the Marisco Tavern and Stores, at that time just the long bar, open fire in the corner and the mural still on the wall. So cosy! I spent the week meeting the islanders of the time, Mary Gade and Steve Wing among others and other visitors including Tony Langham, who helped me get to know the history of Lundy and places to see. I walked and walked and fell in love again with Lundy and its magic. I returned every year after that for 11 years, sometimes twice a year.

In the 1980s I joined the Lundy Field Society and was even on the committee for a couple of years. I was part of the LFS working parties for three or four years. Most of the work entailed ‘rhodi-bashing’. I was with groups ranging from five to 12 and stayed in various properties including Old House South and Quarters. I remember very happy, fun-filled, exhausting and satisfying days; often very cold and wet in the months of February and March.

Lundy itself can never change – people change, the cottages have been updated, all electric and warm and cosy. There’s the jetty, now making landing much easier for passengers and the islanders. I do miss the more intrepid days though. The day the *Balmoral* had to anchor in Jenny’s Cove because of bad weather. We all somehow managed to land on *terra firma*, passengers and some crew forming a human chain passing island provisions including catering sacks of spuds, super-size jars of pickled onions, lavatory seats and many other bizarre objects to the top ... so many adventures.

I’m in my mid-70s now and have been back on day-trips and short holidays, the last one in August 2017 staying in Little St John’s with my partner Andy.

I fell in love with the island 40 years ago and the Lundy magic gets stronger.

Photo by Andy Leggett



## A Lundy baby!

Beccy MacDonald, who was Lundy Warden between February 2013 and September 2016, has married LFS member Simon 'Lofty' Loftus. Their baby, Isla, arrived in July. Congratulations to them all!



*Joan Rendell wonders whether anyone else has noticed the benign rock face she has known and greeted for years, and named Jenny's Guardian because he overlooks Jenny's Cove.*



## To Lundy

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MICHAEL WILLIAMS noticed this poem in the *Oxford Magazine*, an independent magazine, edited by members of the University, and we've been given permission to reproduce it in the Bulletin. (Aerial photo of Lundy by Jonathan Evans.)

### ***To Lundy by Vernon Reynolds***

“As I Walked Out...” and so it was with me,  
A young man off to Lundy to see birds,  
Headed for Bideford. On the quay  
The Lundy Puffin, broad shouldered and black  
Lay empty and forlorn, tossing as wind and rain  
Tugged at her mooring ropes. No signs of life  
Yet now was her departure time. I enquired.  
“Ah, too rough, skipper’s in pub I reckon”.  
Not in the pub. “Try his house” says the man  
Behind the bar. Do I see him smile  
As I turn away? I slog up to the house.  
A woman at the door. She smiles. I’m gangly.  
“Don’t know where he’s gone. It’s much too rough.  
Give it a day or two”. “But I have nowhere to stay,  
And not much money either”. “Come inside”.  
A cup of tea she makes, a cake she’s baked.  
I’m welcome, so she says. It’s getting dark.  
“D’you have a barn? I need a place to sleep,  
Anything at all, just a bit of hay.” “The barn’s  
Out there” she says. I sip the tea.  
“But’s cosier in here” she says.  
“Yes, but...” “E won’t be back tonight” says she.  
Primeval this, and me a virgin too.  
Sadly the shy boy makes the barn his home  
Sleeping with cows and chickens all night long.  
Next morning she says “Go!” and go I do,  
Down to the harbour where Lundy Puffin lies.  
Skipper returns (from where?) at ten.  
Wind’s died now, cast off ropes, move out  
Into the harbour mouth, the waves return.  
Just me and him. Does he know where I slept  
Last night? Is he biding his time?  
“So you’re going to Lundy? For what?” he asks.  
“To see the birds” say I, “gannets and all  
The other species on the cliffs. I want

To see the gannets fish, I've never seen that."  
"Yes, quite a sight" says he. "God's given them  
Eyesight you never would believe. They see a fish  
Six feet below the surface, even in wind. How they do that  
I'll never know. Only God, the Great Creator knows."  
"It's evolution" says the young man, self-assured,  
"By evolution has the gannet gained its sight,  
Nothing to do with God".  
"Nothing to do with God?" says he. "Who told you that?"  
"I learned at school". "You learned that? You learned  
The gannet's eye is not the work of God?"  
What have I said? The sea is getting rough.  
I spew over the rail. The skipper laughs.  
"He's telling you!" I hear. "You're wrong!"  
The Bible says God made all things."  
I spew some more. Should I pray?  
"The Bible, yes" I try. "But Darwin showed..."  
He cuts me off. "Don't say that name to me,  
Darwin's the Devil. English too. Should never have  
Been born. Should've died at birth. Or strangled  
Later. Or worse. Put on fire to burn, his own  
Fire, fire of Hell. That's where he should be".  
Poor Vernon, fresh from school, he's finding out  
About the Big Wide World and all that therein lies.  
I start to spew again but then, a miracle,  
The wind dies down, the sea is calm.  
"See now" he says, "the Lord's forgiven ye,  
And look! Gannets!" I see them, just,  
Out of my tear-filled eyes, plummeting.  
We dock at Lundy, my faith in science intact,  
But well and truly out of sight.

Vernon Reynolds taught Biological Anthropology at Oxford from 1972 to 2001 when he retired. He is now Professor Emeritus of Biological Anthropology at Oxford, and a Fellow Emeritus of Magdalen College.

This poem was written about his first visit to Lundy in June 1953, before his National Service and university. Later he joined forces with David Dickins who ran a field course each summer on Lundy, focusing on the Kittiwakes. He continued this for around ten years, going with him and the students each summer for a couple of weeks. David's son, Tom is currently a member of the LFS committee.

## Heavens at Oxford

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**Lundy connections with the University of Oxford are not new. LFS member EDMUND STANBROOK wrote a report in 1994 about the Heavens' education, and part of it is included here.**

William Hudson Heaven aged 18 years, entered Exeter College on 7th February 1817 for the Lent Term, and left at the end of the Spring Term in 1820. He took his BA degree on 10th October 1820.

Hudson Grossett Heaven aged 19 years, entered Trinity College on 5th March 1846, and took his BA degree in 1851, and MA degree in 1852.

William Walter Hope Heaven aged 18 years, entered Trinity College on 21st May 1847, and took his BA degree in 1852.

The Bodleian Library has informed me that the BA degrees gained by William Hudson Heaven and William Walter Hope Heaven were Pass degrees, and that the subjects studied would have been some aspect of divinity, such as the four Gospels, Latin and Greek authors, and Mathematics. For his MA degree, Hudson Grossett Heaven achieved a 3rd class honours in *Literae Humaniores*, and a 4th class honours in Mathematical Sciences and Physics.

These degrees had to be paid for, and the charges levied depended upon the financial status of the graduate's family.

William Hudson Heaven was a 'grand compounder' because he possessed property and income above a certain level. In 1820 the property required to be a 'grand compounder' was a financial income of £40 per annum, or property of other kinds giving an annual income of £300. This contrasts with a 'petty compounder' who was only required to possess an annual income of 5 shillings (25p) without reference to property.

Where the ordinary BA paid 6s6d (32.5p) on admission, the 'petty compounder' paid 17s, and the 'grand compounder' over £13. They all paid additionally for their MA degree and Doctor of Divinity awards. (Apparently here, rank was ignored, the same 'extras' applied to all). Exeter College concludes, "These fine social distinctions are no longer used in assessing fees" and "are now obsolete". Myrtle Ternstrom informs me that this system of charging became obsolete in 1853.

Trinity College referred to the two sons of William Hudson Heaven as being 'admitted commoners'. Chambers English Dictionary defines 'commoner' appropriately as "At Oxford, a student who is not on the foundation of a College and pays for his commons, or share of provisions". Exeter College states that "Todays commons pay their way only in so much as the money does not come from the College or University but from a combination of local council grants, and parent contributions".

Trinity College also states that in the 19th century, they did accept a limited number of 'scholars', "who were funded by the financial resources of the College itself" and "for a long time limited to 12 by the statutes which established the College". "These were in addition to the 'admitted commoners'". "Of the 21 people admitted to Trinity in 1847 (one of whom was William Walter Hope Heaven), two were 'scholars' and the rest were 'commoners'".

## Some thoughts on an ancient Lundy stone

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**CHARLES ELLIS, with assistance from Debbie Williams, reflects on one of the ancient stones in the cemetery.**

At Beacon Hill on Lundy in the Burial Ground there stand four monumental stones. One is inscribed ‘Tigernus’. The late Professor Charles Thomas (a member of the LFS) suggests in his book *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak* that the full name might have read ‘Vortigern’. We believe the full inscription may have read “son of...son of... etc. Vortigern”.

On page 16 of *Historia Brittonum* by Nennius, it states, “Vortigern then reigned in Britain”. Nennius is referring to a date of about 410AD and was writing in 557AD; he is well known as a 6th century cleric. The events I am writing about did, I believe, take place approximately 20–40 years after the departure of the Romans.

Vortigern was at that time besieged by Scots and Picts, and his position was also threatened by the possible return of the Roman armies. He therefore sought help from European friends, one of whom was called Hengist, a warrior who arrived on the English coast with three fully armed vessels. Vortigern welcomed Hengist and his men and gave them the Isle of Thanet. In return, Hengist agreed to help defend England from its Northern invaders. We think this occurred about 447AD. As time went by, Hengist was joined by a significant number of ships and warriors, thus putting his relationship with Vortigern under pressure.

Finally, it seems that Hengist arranged a celebration, possibly connected to Vortigern asking Hengist for the hand of his apparently attractive daughter Rowena. At the end of the party Hengist’s men slaughtered all Vortigern’s followers, leaving him to live with Rowena and clearly losing control of his position as King.

Meanwhile the conduct of Vortigern in the Christian world had not gone unnoticed. He was accused of treason and treachery for handing over his country to foreigners. He also committed incest by marrying his own daughter with whom he had a son, Faustus. He was, probably from an early age, already married to Sevira, daughter of Maximus, Governor of Britain 370AD and Emperor of Rome 383AD, who died in 388AD, so he was well connected.

All this was too much for the Christian Church so the French Bishop, Germanus, came over to punish him for his sins, which also included denial of Christianity and adoption of old practices. Germanus drove Vortigern out of Southern England into North Wales where he took over a hill fort. Germanus continued his pursuit and drove him south to another hill fort which is located about one mile east of Llandysul in Carmarthenshire. Today the site is easily found above the River Teivy and is well documented. Local folklore tells us that he and his wives were besieged by the followers of Germanus and finally slaughtered. However, there are other stories that say he fled south into an area we now call Pembrokeshire.

Therefore, the stone on Lundy may be in memory of one who was very close to Vortigern, King of England after the Romans departed. As the stone has been dated 5th Century, this roughly fits with the estimated dates. The story invites further research for readers who might be interested in this unusual view of Lundy’s past.

*If you would like to share information with Charles regarding the stones, his email address is [charlesrellis23@btinternet.com](mailto:charlesrellis23@btinternet.com) (Ed.).*

## The story of aeroplane X-ray Charlie

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**ROBIN HELLIAR-SYMONS recounts the story of G-AJXC, an Auster which in the 1950s carried goods and passengers to Lundy.**

I recently contacted the Lundy Field Society for information about an aeroplane that I now own, and which once operated an *ad hoc* air service between RAF Chivenor and Lundy during the early 1950s; your Secretary asked me to provide some more information about it.

The aeroplane was built by Taylorcraft Aeroplanes (England) Ltd. Before World War II the company had acquired a licence to build the American Taylorcraft ‘C’ type, which accounts for the company’s name. The aeroplane initially produced was a modified version of the ‘C’ type, known as the ‘Plus C’.

Although it was to be operated by the Army, TJ 343 (its military registration) was owned and maintained by the Royal Air Force and first flew in late 1944. The RAF had decided that the type name for these aeroplanes was to be ‘Auster’. Over 1,600 were built during the war, of various type designations. After the War, the company name was changed to Auster Aircraft Ltd.

The designation of TJ 343 and some 789 others was AOP Mark V. AOP stood for Air Observation Post and the Roman numeral ‘V’ designated them as the Mark 5 version. The prime use for these aeroplanes was to find targets for ground-based artillery and direct fire onto these targets. Interestingly, these aeroplanes were flown by Army Captains and Majors, as it proved easier to teach an Army Artillery Officer to fly a light aircraft, than to teach an RAF pilot to control artillery! For each aeroplane, the RAF provided an airframe fitter and an engine fitter, and the Army two drivers/despatch riders. Each small unit had a 3-ton truck, which could carry a dismantled aeroplane and spares, tools etc., and a small truck, or motorcycle. Usually the aeroplanes were deployed in flights of four aeroplanes and they operated from any suitably-sized field near the battle-front.

TJ 343 was initially allocated to 665 Royal Canadian Air Force Squadron, which formed at Andover in February 1945. After a short period of training, they deployed to The Netherlands in April, only 12 days before VE Day on 8th May 1945.

During the immediate aftermath of the War, Austers were used to transport senior officers to meetings, and other communications work. Two months later, the Canadians were released to return home and TJ 343 moved to RAF 652 Squadron, which operated it until November 1945. It was then returned to the UK and was stored until its sale in May 1947.

As a civilian aeroplane, TJ 343 was registered G-AJXC and initially operated mostly in East Anglia, spending several summers giving joy rides and training new pilots. By 1952, it had joined another Auster, G-AJEA, at Chivenor and both frequently carried goods and passengers to Lundy. In 1954 the cost of a return flight was £6 per passenger.

On 20th August 1955, G-AJEA was flying back from Lundy with two passengers when the engine failed, and the pilot had no choice but to ditch the aeroplane in the sea. Fortunately, there was a boat nearby, so they were quickly rescued. When the Ministry of Aviation investigated the accident, they determined that in the future, commercial single-engine operations over the sea would only be allowed with a cloud-base above 6,000 feet. The cloud-base in the UK is most commonly between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, so this restriction



*A wing of G-AJXC ready for covering. Photo by Robin Helliar-Symons*

effectively limited the Lundy operation to exceptional days, and it became unviable. G-AJXC then continued as a training aeroplane at Chivenor until about 1960, when it moved to the Midlands.

There it saw very little use until sold to John Graves in 1963. At least John thought he had bought it, but a previous owner, Maurice Looker, disputed that it had been owned by the company which sold it. It was not until November 1965 that Looker gave up his claim and John Graves could have the aeroplane registered in his own name.

John Graves was a gliding enthusiast and often used the aeroplane for glider towing. Its last use by John is thought to be in 1981 and by August 1982, when its Certificate of Airworthiness expired, John had retired and moved to Spain. He intended to return, re-certify X-ray Charlie (aircraft are known by the last two letters of their registration, expressed in the phonetic alphabet) and take it to Spain, but he never did. The aeroplane sat in an open-fronted hangar at the private airstrip at Hook (beside the M3) until the infamous storm of 16th October 1987, which took the roof off the hangar. Other pilots based at Hook attended the next day to secure their aeroplanes and decided that the best solution for 'XC' was to remove the wings and store the aeroplane in the main barn. Eventually the owner of the farm decided that as John had paid no rent and shown no interest in the aeroplane for years, she would seize it and sell it to recover her losses.

I researched a fair price for what remained (by now in poor condition) and became the proud owner of this basket-case in September 1994. At the time, I was just about to move to a new house with space to build an extra garage. Just over a year later, I collected the aeroplane and installed it in my garages with the firm intention of starting the restoration myself. Twelve years later, at the age of 60, I still hadn't found time to touch the aeroplane, so

contacted Miles McCallum, who had a business restoring aeroplanes. I knew that if I didn't pay someone to do this work, I would probably never have the aeroplane to play with. (Did you know that the only difference between men and boys is the size of their toys!)

Nevertheless, there were many delays before Miles started serious work just under five years later in early 2012. In June 2014 the refurbished parts were moved to Henstridge aerodrome for final assembly, but further snags delayed the first flight until November.

The aeroplane has been externally restored to 1944 condition. The interior remains close to the original, but there is now a bench seat for two children in the back instead of the former sideways seat for an army observer, and modern radios have been fitted to make it useable in today's flying environment.

If you do see TJ 343 around, do come and introduce yourself as a Lundy enthusiast, and have a look at the last remnant of Lundy's air service. The aeroplane will definitely return to Lundy for one of the annual fly-ins.



*The newly fitted instrument panel (top) and X-ray Charlie – restored and ready for its first flight. Photos by Robin Helliar-Symons*

## Lundy classical music

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### Long-standing LFS member ROGER ALLEN reflects on a musical time on Lundy.

On Wednesday 2nd August 1973 I had arranged with the island to give an evening record recital in St Helen's Church. It might have been Angela Bendall or Joan Dyke who made the arrangements for the evening entertainment. They supplied and fixed up the gramophone in the church and I brought over some long-playing records on the boat.

It was to be an evening of Wagner and I chose selections from four of his operas. 1973 was only the third year since I first came to the island and I was still very much a new boy on the scene. It was perhaps a little presumptuous of me to think that I should or could arrange an evening of Wagner on Lundy; a composer who perhaps would not have been everyone's first choice. I was a member of the Wagner Society at the time and I wrote up the event on Lundy for their magazine. I quote below the short paragraph that appeared in their publication.

"The music of Wagner has no doubt been heard in many unusual places, but seldom in so unlikely a setting as the draughty Victorian church which stands up gauntly on the skyline of Lundy Island. Just over twenty persons attended a record evening in St Helena's Church on Wednesday 22 August and they amounted to quite a considerable percentage of the total number of inhabitants and visitors on the island at that time. The programme consisted of excerpts from Renzi; Der Fliegende Hollander; Die Meistersingers and Götterdämmerung. The princely sum of £2.50 was collected for the church fabric and full details of the event were entered in the register. R.E. Allen – Harrow.

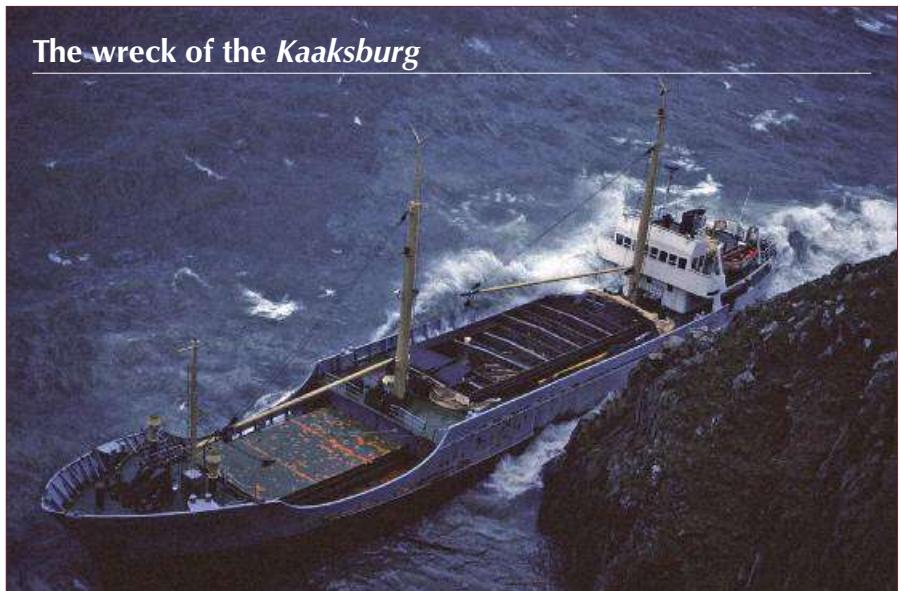
The editor added a footnote: "The success was no doubt due to Mr Allen's efforts, but he had also the foresight to choose a most auspicious day: King Ludwig II's birthday." King Ludwig II of Bavaria was of course the great patron of Wagner's music during an important period of the composer's life.

Less than a year later, in May 1974, I had the temerity to arrange another classical music evening in the church, this time the music of Richard Strauss and again excerpts from his operas: Electra, Ariadne in Naxos, Salomé and Der Rosenkavalier. I am afraid that I have no record of the event and cannot remember who or how many attended. Joan and John Dyke were living on the island at the time in Signal Cottage North and it was Joan who made the arrangements for the evening. I have a letter from her dated 6th May 1974 in which she tells me that "everything is in order for you to arrange your Strauss programme. I do hope that there will be sufficient people on the island to make it worth while – your last musical evening was in the height of the season."

I believe it was not a great success and that was the last time I ever tried to arrange anything similar during all my 45 years of visiting Lundy.



## The wreck of the *Kaaksburg*



Photos by Tony Taylor

**Tony Taylor recalls the wreck and subsequent disintegration of the MV *Kaaksburg*.**

In late October and early November 1980, Lundy experienced strong, cold and very persistent north-easterly winds. With no helicopter service in those days, the gales meant that instead of leaving on a Saturday boat on 1st November, those of us staying on Lundy at the time did not get ashore until the following Friday. This gave us an extra six days with free accommodation, in contrast to the unfortunate people who were due to have followed us.

We had the minor inconvenience of a limited choice of food in our last few days, but birds found themselves in a much more serious situation. At the start of the gales, very large numbers of thrushes and finches were migrating, and those that had not moved straight on to Devon became trapped on the island by the conditions. They huddled in the lee of buildings and walls, becoming weaker and weaker, and by the end there were many corpses scattered across these areas.

On the night of 6th November 1980, the 486-ton cargo ship MV *Kaaksburg* (pictured above the following morning) got into difficulties and was blown ashore below the Terrace. The crew had climbed the cliff and reached the village before we were aware of the drama. Later, islanders salvaged a number of items from the wreck. Among these were a lifebuoy (pictured opposite) that found its way to the Tavern, and the contents of the flag locker.

It has been fascinating to witness the gradual but unrelenting effect of the sea's power on the wreck since then. Being on the sheltered side of the island has given it less protection than one might have imagined.

In 1981 there were few obvious signs of damage from a distance, but there was a large hole where she was being battered onto the rocks each high tide (photos 1 & 2 opposite).

In 1982, this weak point had extended across the hull until she broke in two. The stern

section was destroyed quite quickly, and the pieces scattered on the shore or swept into deeper water (see front cover).

The bow was driven into a narrow inlet, where it has sometimes changed position but it has remained ever since (photos 3 & 4). It has gradually rusted and been reduced in size, until now there is no recognisable hull shape left on the beach, just a scatter of debris at the foot of the cliff (photo 5). In November 2017 the inlet echoed with eerie creaks and groans, as waves rocked metal plates among the boulders.



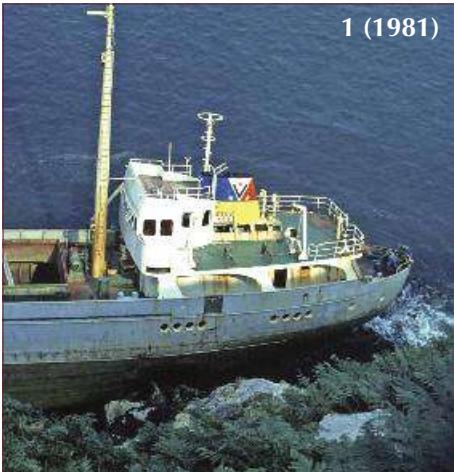
5 (November 2017)



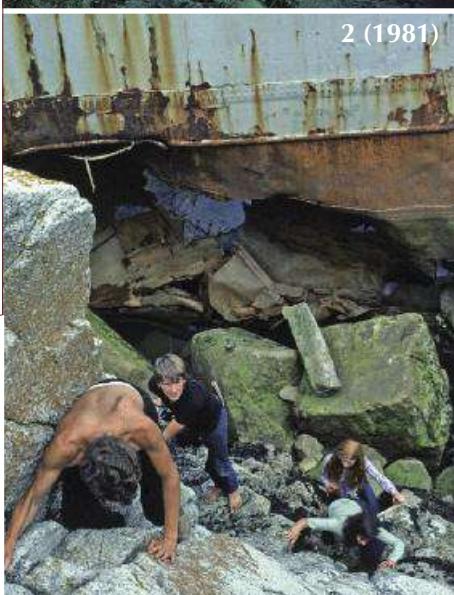
4 (2009)



1 (1981)



2 (1981)



3 (1989)





Photos from Alan Rowland's collection

## Chapels and Churches

**ALAN ROWLAND goes exploring to find out about the old Lundy chapel.**

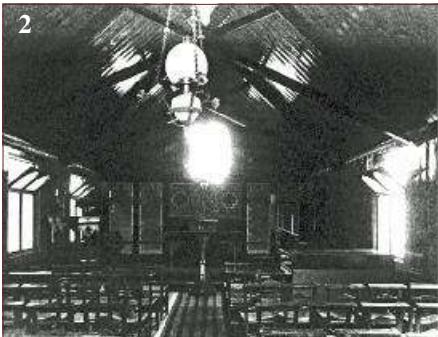
We all know St Helen's church which dates from 1897 and is currently undergoing a major refurbishment project. Some of us may also know of its predecessor, the prefabricated iron chapel (pictured above) which stood on a grassy piece of land near to where Government House was built in 1982. Close inspection of the site will show some of the granite blocks used as a foundation for the structure. After recycling, the site was used briefly in 1955 for a greenhouse.

The edifice was dedicated to St Helen on 29th August 1885 by Bishop Bickersteth, who described it as a "corrugated irony", and was used as chapel and Sunday school room with sittings for 82 people until St Helen's superseded it. Photo 2 shows the interior which was decorated with a fine reredos and had a pulpit and a lectern.

On 27th October 1910, the adjacent mainland parish of Hartland dedicated a chapel of ease for those parishioners living on the southern edge of the parish so that they did not have to trek four miles to St John's in the centre of Harland Town. St Martin's, appropriately in a field, near the West Country Inn on the A39, was another of the prefabricated iron churches (Photo 3). The vicar then was Ivon L. Gregory and he records in his parish book the following donations made by the Rev. H.G. Heaven, "Commandments + creed, Pulpit, Lectern, Zinc fronted painter, Font. These were in the old church on Lundy Island."

I was fortunate enough to be invited to look around St Martin's in 2005, shortly before it was put onto the market, and took some photographs of the interior and fittings.

Photo 4 shows the lectern and part of the "Commandments + creed" which is also visible in Photo 2. Photo 5 shows a kneeler, also on the right-hand side of Photo 2. The font, although mentioned as a donation, is not visible in the old picture of the interior of the old iron church. The zinc-fronted painter cannot be seen in either of the church photographs.



2



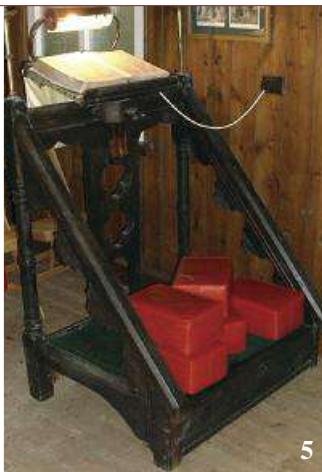
3

The reredos removed from St Martin's and now in the south apse of St Nectan's at Stoke, near Hartland, is not the original but a replacement installed in 1952. The whereabouts of the original and the other items donated from Lundy by Rev. Heaven have yet to be traced.

The final service held at St Martin's took place on 27th March 2005; it is now St Martin's Lodge, a holiday home and currently up for sale.



4



5



6

### Passing ships finally meet!

Strange how ships can pass in the night over a period of years without ever being aware of each other. Such was the case with Essex birdwatchers Julian and Maggie Bowden and the North Devon-based Lundy bird recorders Tim Davis and Tim Jones. Julian and Maggie's visits date back to at least 1979 when they were on the island, as was TimD, when Britain's second Rüppell's Warbler turned up on 1st June. They didn't meet then and although all four have visited in most autumns since, it was only in autumn 2017 that they got to know each other, largely thanks to a Yellow-browed Warbler – a 'lifer' for Julian – in willows near Quarry Pond.

## Amateur Radio on Lundy

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**Amateur Radio Operator, BRIAN WOODCOCK (call sign G4CIB), assisted by wife Leta (call sign G4RHK), reports on his recent attempt to contact the Isles of Scilly from Stoneycroft.**

Since 1995 when we first started staying on Lundy, I have usually managed to find room in our luggage for some amateur radio equipment. Unlike the occasional high-profile visits by amateur radio groups to Lundy, my operating comes under the category of ‘stealth radio’. By that I mean that you would have to look hard to spot my aerial, and I operate low power, usually 10 Watts. Also, my operating takes place when all other activities for the day have been accomplished. I have been a licensed amateur since 1969.

Many UK amateur stations have been contacted over the years and I’m always surprised how few people know where Lundy is located. I can honestly say that quite a few people have now discovered Lundy through the medium of amateur radio!

Looking through my logbooks recently, I decided to list all the countries I have been in contact with and was quite surprised by the total, which includes most of Europe and North America, with the occasional contact with stations in South America and the Far East.

Some of you may be aware that the propagation of signals on high frequencies (up to 30MHz) is affected by sunspot activity which runs in a ten-year cycle of peaks and troughs. We are currently in a period of declining sunspot activity, the previous solar maximum being in 2014, and making contacts on the HF (high frequency) bands is very hit and miss. In a few years we will be climbing out of the trough towards a period of increased solar activity, which is predicted to peak in 2024.

Propagation on the VHF (Very High Frequency) and UHF (Ultra High Frequency) bands is mainly affected by weather conditions, particularly high-pressure systems, although many other factors also play their part. I have heard on several occasions Lundy staff saying that TV reception can be very variable on the island, and during periods of exceptional propagation, interference from continental TV stations is not unknown.

With all these factors in mind I decided that during our stay in Stoneycroft in September I would concentrate on the VHF and UHF bands. Also, the early autumn months are often blessed with stable high-pressure systems which assist with propagation on these frequencies. A colleague of mine who is also an amateur happened to be staying on the Isles of Scilly at the same time, so a plan was formulated to establish a UHF link between the two islands. The band we decided to use is known as the 70cm band (70cm being the approximate wavelength of the signal), or in frequency terms 432MHz. The theoretical calculations showed that it was possible given average conditions. I won’t go into the technicalities here, but a sea path can, under some circumstances, enhance propagation of UHF waves.

The date chosen for the test was Monday 11th September, and although the weather that day was pretty dire – high wind, rain and rough seas – we decided to conduct the tests. With some difficulty I erected a small mast and aerial (see photo), an HB9CV (which is a compact beam with a small amount of gain) on the grass area in front of Stoneycroft and connected my transceiver, a Yaesu FT857 producing 35 Watts. I was encouraged when I heard the beacon station GB3MCB located at Hensbarrow Down, St Austell. This gives out a constant signal



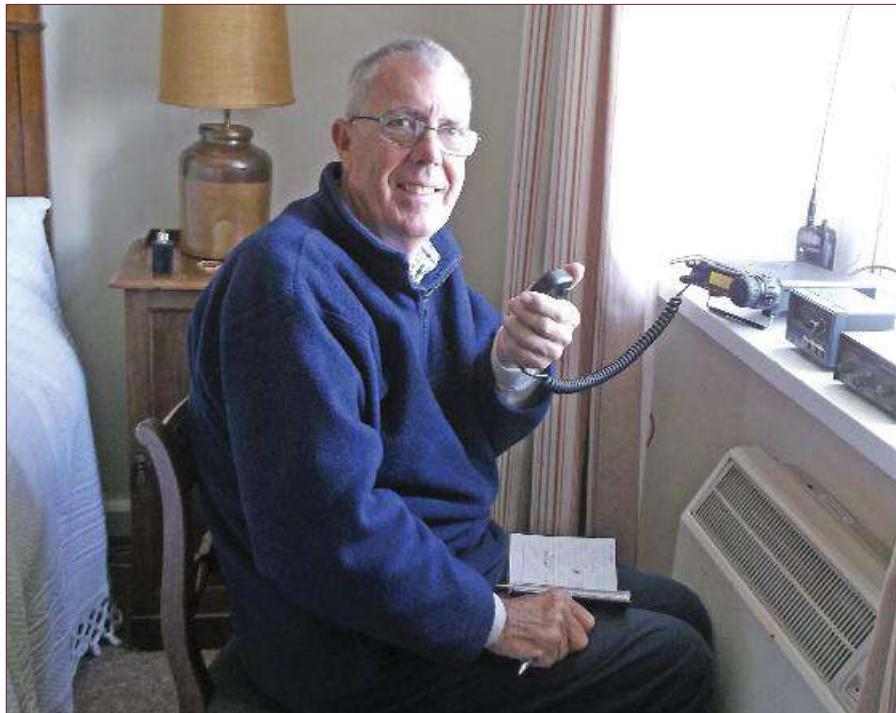
*Brian erects the mast and aerial outside Stoneycroft. Photo by Leta Woodcock*

(its call sign in Morse code, also a digitally encoded identifier) in the 70cm band to assist amateurs with checking aerials and equipment. At the allotted time I called my friend Dave G4BCA on the Isles of Scilly but heard no reply and after half-an-hour of calling I abandoned the attempt.

Dave G4BCA later wrote to me with the following account:

"I set up my station up on Halangy Down on the north-west corner of St Mary's, the largest of the Isles of Scilly. This is the highest point in the north of the island at about 45 metres ASL. This was a difficult job with the guys being blown around and entangled with themselves and brambles! At least the herd of Highland cattle were disinterested in my effort and maintained their distance. I was rather dismayed to find that the mid-Cornwall beacon, GB3MCB, was rather weak at a distance of 117km but later realised that MCB beams NE so the signal would have been received off the back of its beam. Unfortunately, nothing was heard either way on the attempted QSO [*a code commonly used for a contact between two amateur radio operators. Ed.*] between Scilly and Lundy (a distance of 180 km) and this may have been due to the lack of troposcatter. The weather on the day would have also not favoured the conditions for ducting over the direct sea path."

The following piece was written for our radio club newsletter by our resident radio propagation expert at the Gloucester Amateur Radio and Electronics Society, Tony G4HBV prior to the tests: "The projected QSO attempt between Dave, G4BCA/P Isles of Scilly and Brian, G4CIB/P Lundy Island on the 70cm band will be an interesting exercise. It is also interesting to examine the factors effecting the chance of success or failure.



*Brian G4CIB operating in Stoneycroft. Photo by Leta Woodcock*

First, we need to consider the radio horizon. The atmosphere immediately above us causes RF (radio frequency energy) to be refracted downwards, causing the radio horizon to be 1.34 times the visual horizon. If we assume both stations are located on cliff tops overlooking the sea, a simple formula gives 14 miles range for a height of 100ft and 20 miles for 200ft. Contact is possible if the horizons for the stations overlap, giving ranges of 28 and 40 miles for the two antenna heights above the sea. Note that propagation on 70cm is by direct wave (space wave) and not the ground wave used on say the 2MHz band, where RF is propagated by diffraction along the surface.

Beyond the radio horizon distances, propagation will depend on further refraction caused by changes in the composition of the lower atmosphere, termed scattering. Such conditions could extend the range to over 100 miles. On the map the path appears as 115 miles over water which increases the chance of success because colder, moist air immediately above the sea will act as a boundary to drier air above and hence refract the RF for longer distances. It is also accepted practice that horizontal polarisation is better for long distance at VHF and UHF. So success is going to be dependent on atmospheric conditions – a matter of chance.

Finally let's have a look at signal strengths we might expect over such a path. There is no way that we can calculate the signal strengths caused by the kind of enhanced propagation just described. What we can do however, is to calculate signal levels on the basis of 'Free Space' propagation. What this means is that we ignore the radio horizon and assume that a

direct (space) wave can exist between the two stations. The factors in such a calculation are twofold: firstly, there is the spreading loss – because RF is expanding outwards from the transmitting antenna so weakening the field strength as it progresses. Secondly, and rather complex, is the interaction of the field and the receiving antenna, which brings the frequency into the calculation. As I don't know the exact make-up of the two stations, going by what Dave told us in his ten-minute talk, I have made some assumptions as follows:

Both stations will be using low-power transmitters with modest antennas having a gain of around 5dB over a dipole. So I've done the calculations for two cases, assuming ERPs (effective radiated powers) of 10 and 20 Watts. In the two cases the field strengths come out at 70 and 100 micro-volts per metre respectively, which then give 16 and 20 micro-volts at the receiver inputs. This is more than enough for effective communications on narrow band FM, with sensitivities of around once microvolt.

When Dave, Tony and I met at our radio club after we had returned to the mainland, our analysis showed that the weather conditions, particularly the rough sea, had been a major factor in our inability to establish radio contact on the 70cm band.

We have already booked for 2018 – two weeks in Castle Cottage in September – and I am planning a further series of tests on 70cm.

## LFS AGM auction 2017

**The 'Glamorous Assistant', ALAN ROWLAND, reports on another successful auction.**



The 2017 auction raised an incredible £454.50 with keen bidding on some items. Many thanks are due to the generous bidders and donors. The late Judy Langford's archive formed the bulk of the auction and attracted great interest. Donation also came from the late Tony Walker's estate, Richard Breese and Keith McQueen (via Michael Williams). I must also thank our auctioneer, Roger Chapple, for his quick study and grasp of the lots I put together, and his hard work in achieving the high bids.

There was also a second-hand book sale year staffed by Marie Jo Coutanche and Robert Irving, who between them raised a total of £338, selling off donated and new books. Again, many of the second-hand books were from Judith Langford's estate, as well as our more recent current publications. Thanks to everyone for your hard work.

Our Treasurer (Roger wearing a different hat) informs me that once again a generous member and their employer have provided matched funding against these bids, sales thereby doubling the total of £942 raised to an unprecedented grand total of £1,884. Huge thanks are due to our anonymous benefactor, their employer and our Treasurer for securing this amount.

Further donations or queries about this or future auctions or book sales, do not hesitate to contact the 'Glamorous Assistant' at [morwenstow@btinternet.com](mailto:morwenstow@btinternet.com).



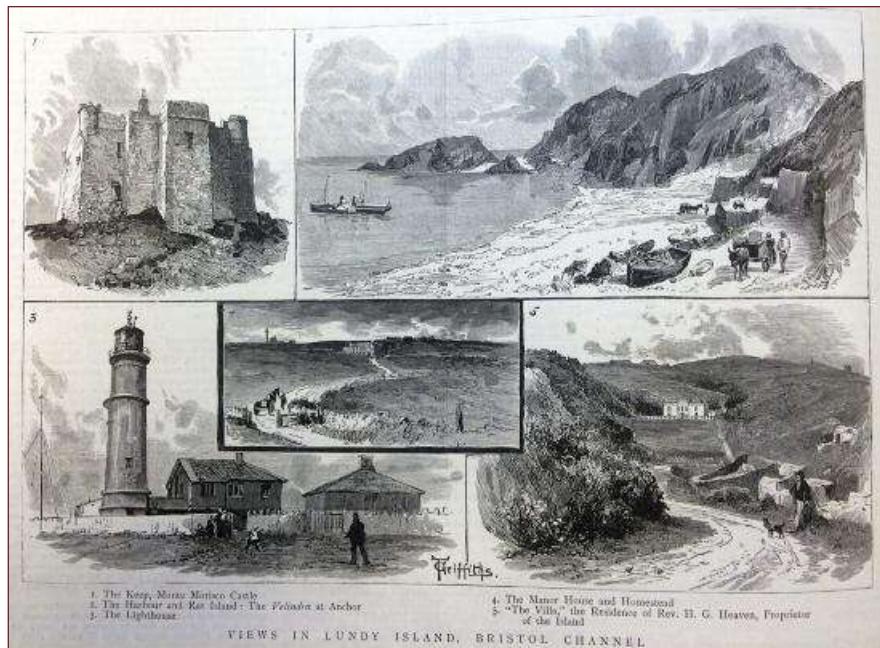
## The Catford photographs

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**CHRIS BLACKMORE tells a fascinating story about some historic Lundy photographs.**

In the early 1900s, my grandfather, Charles Huxtable, a monumental mason, was running the family business of marble and cemetery works set up by his father in Ilfracombe. Charles' two daughters, my mother and aunt, told us that they would sometimes accept goods in lieu of payment for a gravestone from those in unfortunate circumstances. On my grandfather's death a number of old books and two large photograph albums gained in this way passed to my mother and aunt who had an album and half the books each.

The albums were in very poor condition. My mother's album measured 19"x13" and both the front and rear covers, although present, had become separated and the pages were loose. The photographs themselves, A4 landscape size, were glued two to a page into what was obviously not the original album intended for them. Most of the photographs, all of Devon and some showing Lundy views, were in much better condition, though some had damage. My aunt investigated renovation of her album, but it was deemed irreparable. When my mother died in 2007, I agreed with my brother and two sisters to share the loose pages between us, and because of my interest in the island it was agreed that I would have the five Lundy pages as well as a number featuring other views of North Devon. I also retained the front and rear covers. My mother had written some personal details in the rear cover and my grandfather had also written "Catford, photographer, High Street, Ilfracombe". My aunt also sent me a copy of a typed obituary for James Stoyle Catford which had appeared in the *Ilfracombe Gazette and Observer* dated 18th February 1916. This details Catford's work as a photographer (initially in Ilfracombe and later around other parts of the



*The engraving that appeared in 'The Graphic' which provided the link to James Stoyle Catford being the photographer who took the early Lundy views.*

country) and states that he was the first to introduce landscape postcards into England in the 1870s. My aunt has always believed Catford to have been the photographer who produced the pictures in both albums, but there was no proof of this.

I began to research Catford to see if I could positively identify him as the photographer of the Lundy views. I noted during my research that some of the photos I have also appear in various Lundy books credited as either part of the Heaven Archive or unknown. Research into Catford at Ilfracombe museum, which has a good Ilfracombe and Lundy archive, only unearthed the original newspaper with Catford's obituary in it. I also found Catford's parents grave in Ilfracombe Parish Church cemetery, along with other family member's graves.

Despite all this work, which inevitably raised more questions than answers, I was unable to find a positive link for Catford being the photographer and put the search on hold. However, in September 2015 I was given details of an original engraving (18th September 1886 issue of *The Graphic*) from which the National Trust issued a reprint, which probably most LFS members will have seen (I've got a copy myself). This included the statement that "Our engravings are from photographs taken recently by Mr Catford of Ilfracombe, and forwarded to us by Mr Thomas H Wright, lessee of Lundy Island". When the five views in the reprint are studied, it leaves little doubt that they were produced from the Lundy photographs which I hold. At last, the link to Catford. I believe this shows that he was indeed the photographer responsible for these Lundy views.



One final question remains over whether the Catford family gave my grandfather the albums in lieu of payment for his gravestone. This appears unlikely as the obituary shows that Catford had become a successful businessman by the time of his death. Besides, in 1916, at the time of Catford's death, my grandfather had joined up for war service as a sapper with the Royal Engineers and was serving in Salonica. There is no record of who was overseeing my grandfather's business during the war years, so a definitive answer to this question is not possible.

As an end note to this article, my grandfather Charles Huxtable appears in a photograph in Mary Anne Lauder's book, *Lundy Puffin Island*. He can be seen standing far right behind the VC Memorial stone on page 13.

I should like to thank Alan Rowland for his invaluable help and support in this project.

#### About James Stoyle Catford

An Ilfracombe man born there in 1846, Catford was one of six children of a schoolmaster. He commenced business as a photographer at 5 High Street, Ilfracombe before moving to Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey in around 1896. At the time of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee in 1887, he was one of the prime movers in the preparation of a handsome album of views of the neighbourhood which was presented to Her Majesty. In 1901, by then living at Hampton Wick, he was described as a landscape photographer. He is noted as being the first photographer to produce postcards of landscapes. He suffered an unfortunate accident when he was knocked off his tricycle, subsequently dying of his injuries in February 1916.

## A slippery surprise

**When the October 2017 LFS working party started to clear the invasive vegetation from Millcombe Pond, they were in for a big surprise. ALAN ROWLAND reports.**

We were working hard in wet and muddy conditions, up to our knees in glutinous mud digging out iris roots when Andy said: "What's that? Is it another slowworm?" I was prepared for a survey of the pond so had net, bucket and sampling tray to hand. A few slippery minutes later we had the creature in the net and then a tray where we could see our latest find – a European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)!

We were extremely surprised to find an eel at the 125-metre contour point almost vertically above sea level. But there was no doubt about it, we had an adult European eel living in Millcombe Pond. I recalled that Andrew Cleave had mentioned eels on the landing beach some time ago and checked the reference. He had reported eels in the Devil's Kitchen in 2010 and mentioned that Diana Keast remembered seeing "eels in the streams many years ago". A group from North Devon Coastwise also found an eel in August 2010. In 2011 Andrew Cleave reported seeing eels in the Jetty/Landing area and a warden-led Rockpool Ramble found a juvenile eel in 2012.

The earliest record I can find is a news report of the 1956 LFS AGM when members were informed by the then LFS secretary, Leslie Harvey, that an eel had been seen near the Manor Farm Hotel. In the LFS Annual Report for 1977, Roger Pullin reported eels in his list of Lundy fishes: "Common at mid tide line, in rock pools at Hell's Gates, especially in long gullies with abundant algal debris in summer ... Occasionally on shores." The latest sighting prior to our discovery was in 2015 when Steve and Nick, the Rangers, called Warden Beccy MacDonald to see an eel they had found in the culvert that runs through Millcombe gardens.

Eel larvae travel from the Sargasso Sea in the Western Atlantic and drift towards the UK on the Gulf Stream. At three years old they change to their characteristic eel shape and ascend rivers as 'glass eels'. They then change colour to yellow, with a grey-brown back, and live in fresh or brackish water for between 5 and 12 years. Their final change is to a silver colour before they are assumed to return to their spawning grounds. Known to cross damp grassland, this eel ascended around 200 feet of extremely steep terrain to find freshwater in Millcombe Pond.



*The eel – nicknamed 'Neil' by the LFS working party – found in Millcombe Pond on 15th October 2017. Photo by Alan Rowland*



## PUBLICATIONS for sale through the Lundy Field Society

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### **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 6 Jenny George (ed)**, 2018, 116pp, £10.00 plus £2.50 p&p.

Contents: A Particular of Lundy Island; the Clayton Manuscript, Clutch Size in Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*) on Lundy, Cliff Nesting Seabirds on Lundy: Population Trends from 1981 to 2017, Pollen Beetles and Reproductive Success of the Endemic Lundy Cabbage: the Consequences of an Apparent Invasion Event in 2007, An exploratory study into the behaviour of Atlantic Puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) on Lundy, The Secret Life of the Lundy House Sparrows, Black rabbits on Lundy: Tudor treasures or post-war phonies?, Monumental Standing Stones in the Burial Ground on Lundy, Bristol Channel.

Vols 1, 2 , 3, 4 and 5 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 Softback £5 / Non-members £8, 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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