



# DISCOVERING LUNDY

The Bulletin of the Lundy Field Society

No. 49, January 2020



**Inside...**  
**Conservation Breaks 2019**  
**The Lundy Half**  
**Back to the sea for Septimus**  
**HMS Montagu: the untold story**  
**And much more!**

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**See opposite for publishing details and copy deadline  
for the next issue of Discovering Lundy.**

Cover photo: **Small Cushion Star** or **Green Starlet** *Asterina phylactica* photographed by Andrew Cleave at low tide in the Devil's Kitchen, September 2019. Quite a rare species restricted to rock pools with Coralline seaweeds in the far south-west.



## Editor's chatteringings

It's hard to believe that once again it's time for the *Discovering Lundy* bulletin to fall through your letterboxes. This one has provided me with more challenges than the previous ones; as the very talented Tim Davis decided to hang up his bulletin -layout hat, I've had my first attempt for a good many years at using desktop publishing software. As you're now reading this, I must have been successful!

I've had eight visits to the island this year, including two day trips in my new role as one of the Lundy Ambassadors. My first ambassador trip was to shadow Mandy Dee who has completed two years in the role (see page 15), and the second was to do my first unsupervised walk. It was a bit of a bumpy outward crossing and there was incessant drizzle for the whole day, but I ended up guiding 27 visitors around the south end of the island, the biggest group of the year at the time! Rosie, the new Education Officer, accompanied me, apparently so I could train her, so no pressure! During two of my stays on the island I also managed to help Rosie with a school trip, and do my second unsupervised walk with a much smaller group of six visitors.

You may have heard that *MS Oldenburg* had a problem with rope around her propellers when the LFS working party were due to leave in March. I was there! You can read more about this adventure on page 8.

I stayed in Old House North for the first time in April, and Hammers for the first time in October. I can recommend them both as being very cosy and comfortable, but Hammers was my favourite of the 2 with spectacular sun rises and plenty of Pygmy Shrew action. Having said that, OHN is much nearer the Marisco Tavern for wandering home in the dark!

Your committee had a very successful weekend on the island in May, including the regular committee meeting and a workshop exploring how to 'futurise' the society. The major success of the weekend for the committee however, was the winning the Rhododendron Challenge cup in a skittles tournament against the Islanders, and the LFS working party who were on the island at the same time. Team 'LFS Bigwigs' won the hard fought competition by a single point! I'm looking forward to the next tournament, which



Our trophy! Photo by Keith Hiscock.

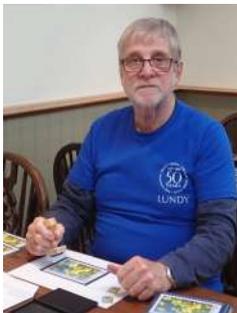
I'm guessing might be during the 2021 DISCOVERING LUNDY week (see page 4).

One of my highlights of the year was being able to attend the Golden Weekend in September, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gift of Lundy to the National Trust, and the Landmark Trust taking on the management of the island. It was a fabulous weekend, despite the boat being cancelled due to inclement weather on the Sunday. Simon Dell's report of the weekend is on page 21.

Your committee was delighted to be able to launch a range of LFS branded clothing earlier in the year, including hoodies, polo shirts, T-shirts, hats, and sweatshirts in a variety of colours, and in adult and children's sizes. Why not advertise your membership of the LFS on your next visit? It can be a real conversation starter! Details of how to order are on the back cover.

Thank you to all who have sent me stories, reports and photographs for this edition of Discovering Lundy. As always, I have loved reading them, and have received so many this year that I've had to save a couple for the next edition of *Discovering Lundy*. Don't be put off writing or photographing something for the 2020 edition, though; this publication is written by our members for our members, and it couldn't happen without you.

**Belinda Cox**



*Alan Rowland, happy in his work! Photo by Sandra Row-*

## Licking, Sticking & Franking

It has been a busy year for me as your Chair on Lundy. Not necessarily on LFS business, but getting into all sorts of different areas of interest.

I have completed a number of walks as a Lundy Ambassador, attended Parochial Church Council and other meetings, surveyed Lundy Cabbage, surveyed some ponds and just chilled out and appreciated the island we are all so fond of. And I'm sure some of these activities, which were shared with other members will be reflected in these pages.

Undoubtedly the major event of 2019 in connection with Lundy has to be the 50<sup>th</sup> Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the National Trust and Landmark Trust on Lundy. From the purchase of, and gift to National Trust by Sir Jack Haywood, the Lundy Company has restored, developed and maintained the island and its properties to its current high conservation status.

Although, we as the Lundy Field Society pre-date this connection, and indeed are looking forward to our own 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021, we congratulate them on this iconic milestone.

Despite all the challenges the weather threw at the island, and in the case of our Treasurer, illness, the LFS was well represented with Chair, Vice-

Chair, Secretary and Membership Secretary together with the increasing numbers of island-based members all present and taking part. Never has the relationship been so close between Lundy and the LFS who have representatives on the PCC, Lundy Management Forum and volunteers on regular working parties as well as informal volunteers.

The day of the anniversary featured a packed church service, speeches from Barty Smith, Mark Hibbert, Anna Keay with Derek Green as Master of Ceremonies. Food and drink was provided for a full Oldenburg but we managed to drink all the Prosecco and eat all the food despite being half the numbers. The celebrations were rounded off by the Dambuskers in the Tavern.

Your Chair, Secretary and Membership Secretary arrived early in the week of the event as volunteers to help with any planning and work needed for the celebration. In the event, we were welcomed into the Wheelhouse with open arms to prepare the “goody bags” for the visitors due on Sunday. This was not simply placing gifts into a carrier bag, but entailed preparing First Day covers and Stamped postcards for the planned commemorative stamp issue.

So despite being on the island for over a week, with the exception of Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> we saw little of the island, being closely closeted in the Wheelhouse and Office licking stamps, sticking them on postcards and envelopes then franking them with the special cancellation.

**Alan Rowland – Chair LFS**

## A date for your diary...

Building on the hugely successful DISCOVER LUNDY weeks in 2012 and 2016 your LFS Committee is organising a follow-up event in May 2021. The DISCOVER LUNDY week will give you the opportunity to learn much more about the island’s history and natural history with expert members of the LFS sharing their knowledge through a series of talks, walks and activities.

2021 is the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Lundy Field Society so we plan to commemorate the anniversary with special events during the week including a dinner in the Marisco Tavern. We will also hold the Society’s AGM on the island for the first time in our history. The Landmark Trust will also be marking the event with a commemorative stamp issue.

We have reserved accommodation for the whole week from Saturday 8th to Saturday 15th May 2021. Bookings will open after this year’s AGM in March. Booking forms will be circulated after the meeting.

Places are limited, so put the date in your diaries now and we look forward to seeing them!

Apologies to **Petra Pulkus** for the misspelling of her name in the auction report, Filling the Coffers, on page 19 of *Discovering Lundy* No. 48. Ed.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

### **GEOFF YELDHAM sets the scene and recalls the tale of the March LFS Conservation Break.**

*Twelve figures sit huddled in the corner of a crowded tavern, with faces weathered by prolonged exposure to the Lundy wind and hail. An easterly gale whips the rain against the sash windows. Three of them, men used to walking the Mendip Hills, have now been sitting in the same seats for so long that the wood beneath them has become moulded to their form. One takes a gulp from a glass of rum and shrub and exhales a long, slow sigh.*

### ONE WEEK EARLIER

The Spring 2019 work party met in Bideford and set off for Hartland Point enthusiastic and excited about the week ahead. There were a few episodes on the journey over to the island which might have deterred less intrepid volunteers – the helicopter was delayed by a day due to bad weather and a member of the Lundy Company staff was hospitalised following an accident with a quad bike – but we ignored these portents and arrived on Lundy to be greeted by bright sunshine and a pleasant, gentle breeze.

We convened in the barn with the ranger, Nick, to discuss the work schedule. We then had the chance to explore the island for a few hours, before settling in for dinner and starting to get to know our companions for the week.



*The Team. Photo by Nick Herbert.*

The following morning we set out on our first task – to hunt for the elusive Lundy Rhododendron. This once common plant is now critically endangered on the island and despite searching the entire area between halfway and three quarter wall we were able to find only one specimen. It was important that this rhododendron was spotted, because if none had been found at all then the section would have been declared a “Rhody-Free Zone” and would have been exempt from future searches; instead this wind-exposed area of dense gorse will now require a further search by a work party in a few years’ time. I know that the whole of the Lundy Field Society would like to extend their thanks to Mendip Nick for his diligence in finding this one plant.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

The jobs throughout the week gave us plenty of variety and allowed us to visit many areas of the island. We spent one morning nailing small, numbered plaques onto each of the trees, then recording the height and species to aid with future surveying work. Tree 535 is particularly impressive and is well worth seeking out on your next visit to the island. We identified many sycamores and oaks, and a number of other species including birches, beeches, alders and pines.

*We cut to the jetty. The sea is toying with a boat full of queasy looking passengers. A man grimly picks up a radio and calls for the Ilfracombe lifeboat.*

It was especially satisfying to do work that built on previous LFS projects. On one of the mornings we set off from the barn, went down the LFS steps and took the east coast path to St Helen's Copse, where there was an area of young saplings that an earlier work party had planted. We cleared bracken and broken tree guards from around the bases, while looking out over the channel and watching the peregrines and gannets soaring past. It is often said that the measure of a place being truly beautiful is that you are happy to stay there even if it smells strongly of dead goat. I am happy to say that by this metric we were working in one of the most pleasant spots in England, although we did try to stay upwind from the goat as much as possible.



*Relaxing after a hard day's work. Photo by Nick Evans.*

Further up on the east side, we also spent a couple of days fencing at three quarter wall, to foil the plans of the Soay sheep and goats who seem to think they have a right of way over the entire island. The existing fence was starting to collapse, so we took it down, erected fence posts, and tensioned new wire across them. As we finished a peregrine landed on top of one of the new posts, giving his tacit approval to our work.

*We cut back to the tavern. A man sips a pint of Lundy Landmark and gazes stoically out of the window, while fondly remembering wet, windy evenings in Stoke. Beside him sits a giggling woman, surrounded by embroidery thread and empty bottles of gunpowder rum.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

We spent any spare time completing other small tasks, such as sanding and varnishing the benches in the pub garden (see page 27. *Ed.*), removing invasive Alexanders and Spanish Bluebells and clearing the gullies on the road up from the jetty. The evenings were filled with plenty of delicious home cooked food and very pleasant company. We had a quiz from Bee, crosswords with Nick and a tutorial on wax modelling from Malcolm as well as many trips to the Tavern and chats by the fire in the barn. As we packed up on our final morning I think the whole party was wishing that they could stay a little longer.

The weather was quite windy and the Oldenburg was preparing to do a “dash & splash” – depositing the new holiday makers and collecting the returning travellers, including us. Unfortunately, while mooring up one of the ropes became tangled around the propeller, rendering her powerless and subject to the whims of the waves. Thankfully all of the passengers were able to safely disembark, however it quickly became apparent that we were not going to be able to leave. Having already checked out of the barn and with about 70 more people than beds now on the island our first concern was where we were going to sleep. Ultimately the majority of us spent the night in the church, which was a memorable and atmospheric way to spend our final extra night on Lundy. We helped the Lundy staff as much as we could as they set about preparing for the unexpected additional guests before settling into the tavern and waiting for further news.

On the second day of being marooned, due to concerns that the stockpile of pasties in the Tavern was running low, my Father and I were rescued by the Ilfracombe RNLI and safely returned to the well-stocked North Devon coast. The fate of the rest of the working party remains a mystery. Perhaps they returned



*One of the church banners in progress. Photo by Mandy Dee.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

to Bideford the following day on the MS Oldenburg? Perhaps they are still there in the Marisco Tavern, running up the bar tab?

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on Lundy, both because of the island itself and the people that I got to meet. It was lovely to see how proud the more senior\* volunteers were of their work from past trips, as they often pointed out previous LFS projects and reminisced happily about carrying them out. I look forward to returning to Lundy in future, checking that my fence post hasn't succumbed to the highland cattle and reflecting on a week well spent.

*[\*My choice of word would have been 'experienced'! Ed.]*



*Some of the working party searching for that elusive Rhododendron. Photo by Mandy Dee.*

## The Castaways

**BELINDA COX reflects on an unusual LFS Conservation Break adventure.**

I'm sure that at some point we've all been delayed getting off the island because the Plan A and Plan B transport can't run due to high waves, strong wind or fog. It's not usually a problem; one simply stays in their allocated property for an extra night or two, and takes a deeper breath before paying off the bar bill.

This time however, the 'splash & dash' didn't go to plan. *Ms Oldenburg* arrived in an easterly wind, and while attempting to moor on the jetty both

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propellers were fouled by her lines, leaving her stranded with no power.

The arriving guests had to wait for the tide to drop and the sea to settle before they were able to disembark. Of course once they had, there were double the guests on the island to be housed, fed and watered. We and the others who had been due to leave had moved out of our properties, and the housekeepers had already done their usual fantastic job of preparing them for the arriving guests who were very happy to move in. There were no helicopters available due to it being the Ascot Race weekend. We weren't going anywhere!

The island staff went above and beyond; they were absolutely amazing! The Wheelhouse was made available for people to camp in, spare beds in the properties were used, some staff gave up their beds or sofas for people to sleep on, and the Church was set up as a dormitory. Most of the LFS working party stayed in the church. We had one of the spare island mattresses or a blow up mattress donated by the staff, with duvets and pillows; we were very cosy!



*The cosy church. Photo by Belinda Cox.*

The Tavern kept us well nourished and hydrated. The new stayers were asked to cater for themselves in their properties, and the kitchen provided the castaways with 3 meals a day on the Lundy Company tab.

The Ilfracombe Shannon class lifeboat *The Barry and Peggy High Foundation*, and the Appledore Tamar



*MS Oldenburg with the Ilfracombe lifeboat.  
Photo by Belinda Cox.*

class lifeboat *Mollie Hunt*, came out to keep watch over the *MS Oldenburg* with her seven crew members on board as she waited on the jetty for commercial tug *Afon Alaw* to arrive from Pembrokeshire. The weather was settled when the lifeboats arrived in the early evening, but the forecast was set to change over the next few hours, with winds strengthening, and there was concern there could be damage to the ship. Fortunately it remained calm. The tug arrived just after midnight, and the

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lifeboats stood down and returned home once a tow had been established.

*MS Oldenburg* arrived in Ilfracombe shortly after sunrise, and was assisted onto her moorings by the Ilfracombe and Appledore lifeboats. I'm sure the crew were delighted to be safely moored!

The Ilfracombe lifeboat returned to the island on Sunday afternoon to evacuate a castaway with a medical problem. She also took off a gentleman who was due to have surgery the following day and his wife, as well as one of the LFS working party who was a surgeon with an operating list to carry out the next morning, and his father who was providing him with transport home.

A few other castaways had organised a RHIB to pick them up on Sunday afternoon. With the weather being windy, and the seas moderate it's not a journey I would have liked to have undertaken. I'm sure they were very cold and wet by the time they arrived on the mainland, and it would have been a very bumpy ride!

Repairs were made to the *MS Oldenburg*, and a rested crew returned to the island to collect us on Monday afternoon. The journey home was thankfully uneventful.

Thanks were given to the island staff and the crew of the 'Oldie'. They really were all fabulous!



*MS Oldenburg arriving at Ilfracombe with the assistance of the Afon Alaw, and the Ilfracombe (in view) and Appledore (not in view) lifeboats. Photo by Chris Dee.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

### TREVOR DOBIE reports on the summer working party's undertakings.

The May 2019 working party to Lundy had the full quota with an international mix of volunteers. Leonie Langford, Caroline Savage and Megan Debenham were the local Devon girls. We had Trevor Dobie, Louise Cookson, Keith Dobie and Helen Sloan from Wiltshire. Kevin Williams and Krysia Groves were the Welsh contingent. Mandy English joined us from The Midlands and Tony Larose was the bloke from 'up norff'. Mike Adams was the Surrey representative and Aneline Swee Kwan-Loo came from slightly further East but travelled from France as did Philip Jenkins.



*The May Team. Photo by Nick Herbert.*

After a pleasant crossing we soon sorted ourselves into The Barn with a few of the party attending the talk by Dean Jones with bird migration as the theme. A 'tri-team' skittles match between Lundy Staff, LFS committee and the LFS working party was arranged for the evening, and the LFS committee won in extra time to claim the trophy.

Our work started on Sunday at the tree nurseries in Millcome with general maintenance, weeding, and carpet fitting around the tender trunks. A total tree survey around Millcome Valley was also started with numbered tags attached to all mature trees and notes taken on species and condition. Trevor Dobie attended the LFS committee event held in Millcome House during the morning.

On Monday, more tree maintenance, this time in Quarter Wall Copse with the tree survey expanding along the island. The path to Quarter Wall Beach was tidied and a huge amount of rubbish was removed from Quarry Beach including much plastic and a large amount of fishing netting. The LFS committee meeting was held in Millcome all day with some of the senior Lundy staff attending after lunch.

Tuesday started for some with the renewal of the fencing alongside the 'Steps of Death\*' below The Ugly. Others continued with the tree survey while still more were found repairing walling near to the water tanks on Acklands Moor.

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019



*Working on the Heligoland trap. Photo by Trevor Dobie.*

Wednesday...ahhhh, a rest day. Many areas of Lundy were explored and puffins spotted.

The Heligoland Trap at The Quarries was tackled on Thursday. The flapping wire fence was removed and a new sheep fence stretched along its eastern side. The sloping path from Felix Gade's Hut was 're-gullied'. More walling was repaired, near to the helicopter shed and the wall near the water tanks was finished. A flowering rhodi search North of

The Quarries was undertaken but the result is still being looked at by V.A.R. [Video Assistant Referee. Ed]

Friday saw the end to the dry-stone wall repairs, memorial bench maintenance and a small group helped Kevin the Lundy Farmer with the reinstatement of the gate at Quarter Wall on the main track.

Many thanks to the whole group for a pleasant and successful working party, and well done to Tony, who struggled bravely on after twisting his ankle in the first couple of days.

*[\*After the LFS working party rebuilt these steps a few years ago, 'The Steps of Death' were actually renamed the LFS Steps. Lots of Flipping Steep Steps. Ed.]*

*A coffee break view. Photo by Trevor Dobie.*



## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

**GALE HALL and TRACEY WELLS reflect on their first visit to Lundy when they joined the October working party.**



*The October Team. Photo by Nick Herbert.*

If you ever get the feeling that you'd like to volunteer for something a bit different, do try this.

Lundy had been on both of our 'to visit' lists for a while, and when we read about the opportunity to volunteer for a week with the Lundy Field Society, we thought, this is it!

Gale: It sounded like a great way to get to know the island better, spend time there, explore and do interesting work that would be of real benefit. We signed up in different ways. For me it was a last-minute decision to take the place of someone who had to give their slot up; Tracey had signed up at the beginning of the

year.

Tracey: We travelled from different directions. It's a fair journey for me to get from the depths of Hertfordshire to this granite island outpost, and not so far Gale as she lives in North Devon. Before we knew it, we were both waiting on the Ilfracombe quay, meeting the other volunteers, looking up at Verity and waiting to board the boat.

After a slightly choppy crossing, the island, the seals, and their pups were waiting for us. What a lovely sound they made as we wound our way up the hill to the island's centre (read pub and shop). This is a bit different we thought...

We made the most of everything on offer – the talks, the advice, the stories that gave background as to 'how things work around here', and the repeated opportunities to go off for a wander and explore.

The fact we were given different jobs to tackle each day was great – we never got bored and often learnt something, whether tackling a fence that needed replacing, weeding steps and gullies, clearing a pond, sanding and oiling benches or hunting for the



*A Lundy trifle.  
Photo (and trifle!) by Mandy Dee.*

## LFS Conservation Breaks 2019

dreaded Rhododendrons. Also, with a group like ours, even the recycling was fun!

Ah the group! Ours was special, but maybe they all say that? Thirteen of us in the barn, sharing, cooking and doing our bit. Many a belly laugh was had over the week, and the meals that came out of that kitchen were top notch and divine - well done to us all! We were also fortunate to share a birthday celebration with one of our group, and our meal when we hosted Nick and his partner Rachel was an outright success.



*Another Rhodie search! Photo by Mandy Dee.*

It was a real privilege to share in Ranger Nick's news that after 6 years of working on the island he is taking up an exciting new post back on the mainland, and we wish him and Rachel all the very best with their next adventure.



*Digging out the Brambles pond. Photo by Mandy Dee.*

# A day in the life of a Lundy Ambassador

**MANDY DEE** ponders her Ambassador role.



*Mandy in her ambassadorial T shirt.  
Photo by Mandy Dee.*

It may be a sunny August Wednesday, but the sea is rough, and as the *Oldenburg* leaves the shelter of Ilfracombe harbour, she starts to dance around on the waves. The boatful of thinly clad holidaymakers are soon reaching for the blankets and sick bags, but those of us who make the journey regularly just start adding layers from our rucksacks, and settle down calmly to watch the horizon for dolphins and seabirds, which makes the journey less uncomfortable.

As one of Lundy's volunteer Ambassadors, I make the crossing regularly, and today is my eighth such trip this year, as well as a few personal visits and holidays. So my stomach has learned to cope, and I am soon enjoying my bacon sandwich and complimentary coffee.

As a solo passenger, usually sporting a Lundy hat even if my ambassador polo shirt is covered by other layers, I often end up in conversation with those around me, and enjoy answering questions, and advising on what to do on arrival ('No, you won't see puffins as they have finished breeding and returned to sea').

My job as Ambassador is to lead the guided walk, which after an Ilfracombe sailing like today, leaves from the Beach Building at the top of the Jetty, as soon as the last passenger disembarks. On the longer Bideford days, we allow time for folk to visit the facilities in the village first, and then the walk leaves from the Tavern.

As I wait by the board which advertises the walk, I smile and make eye contact as the passengers pass, and try to be a useful information point. ('No, the only toilets are in the village. No, you can't catch the helicopter back. Yes, it really will be smoother on the return crossing') Those who read the board, I usually encourage to join me, unless they are wearing flip flops or high heels! Soon I have gathered a gaggle of twelve, mostly first-time visitors, which I find is usually the case.

Now I introduce myself, and start to lead them around the south end of the island. We make many stops up the Beach Road, to allow them to catch up, and rest their legs, and each time tell them a little about the island. If we see seals, or peregrines, then I will talk about them. If not, then I



*Gather here for the walk!  
Photo by Mandy Dee.*

mention the rhododendron removal, the Lundy Granite Company, and the Seabird Recovery Project. Today we are treated to many Painted Lady butterflies, posing beautifully on the bramble flowers, and I talk about how far these wonderful little migrants have flown. Lundy Cabbage is always a good talking point earlier in the year. ('No it isn't just oilseed rape...')

I get asked many questions as we walk...how many residents...will we see puffins...('No!')...who owns the island...I answer all I can, but there is always one question that I don't know the answer to, and I make a point of finding out for next time.

In the sheltered valley of Millcombe I talk about migrating birds, and the Heaven family. Then we head to the castle for tales of pirates, and down to Benson's cave for stories of smugglers and slaves. Next we head across the South End of the island to the Rocket Pole and then South West Point. In spring I can wax lyrical about the wildflowers and the insects, and in autumn about the fungi. Today I find thyme to smell, and a wonderful patch of both bell heather and ling to talk about, along with coconut-scented gorse.

Shipwrecks and rescues, lighthouses and fog batteries are the topics as we finally make our way to the Old Light. ('No, there aren't any toilets here either')

Now my job is done, and I advise on where to go next, how to get to the Tavern, and what time to be back on the Jetty. Hopefully I have given them a deeper understanding of Lundy's importance to wildlife, its rich history, and the ins and outs of life on the island. More than anything, I hope that sharing my love of the island and my knowledge of what it is like to stay, and how much more there is to see and do, will encourage them to visit again.

Finding a quiet spot on the cliffs, I eat my lunch, and then have a little time to myself before returning to the boat, and the hopefully smoother crossing home. Time to look up the answer to this week's unknown question – how many sailors survived the wrecking of the Montagu? I shall know for my next walk, next week.



*Andy with his catch.  
Photo by Paul Moore.*

## Andy's Angling Achievement

Fishing on a de-barbed lure from the jetty on 9th May 2019, LFS member ANDY CHITTENDEN landed and quickly returned on light tackle, a beautifully coloured Ballan Wrasse weighing about 2lbs. This was the only fish landed on his four visits to the jetty.

This was Andy's second holiday on Lundy, and he was staying at Castle Cottage with his wife Gill. They managed to lock themselves out of their warm cottage whilst star gazing on a cold night. After a chilly walk into the village in the moonlight, Andy was delighted to find the Tavern still open and with access to keys, just after last orders; he was very grateful.

# An introduction.

## **ROSIE ELLIS, the new Education Officer and Assistant Warden introduces herself.**

I arrived on the island in August. Just a bit of background on how I got here...

After graduating from UEA in BSc Environmental Sciences I headed to live in the south west and started a volunteer position with the National Trust and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. I loved delivering Rockpool Rambles and running a small marine centre in Polzeath - and so I am very excited about the Lundy Marine Festival next year. I also helped to look after the National Trust's coastal strip from Tintagel to Holywell - scrub bashing, strimming the south west coast path, and digging holes in slate. I used to do butterfly transects around "Lundy Bay", keeping an eye out for the mysterious, distant island that appeared on clear days. I then worked on the island of Sal, Cabo Verde, doing night beach patrols under shooting stars (sometimes with military escort!) to dissuade poachers and moving vulnerable nests of the endangered population of Loggerhead turtles; sunrise with the Osprey hunting marked the end of each hard night's work.

Then back to the delights of my hometown, Reading, to do a masters in wildlife management and conservation. The fantastic professors and fellow students made it a great year there, with weekly field trips and hours spent staring down microscopes at the amazing, intricate world of invertebrates. After a summer spent in the lab doing my dissertation on microplastic ingestion in the Crustacea *Gammarus locusta*, I was ready to head back to the south west.

I began as the Ranger for a 7000 capacity holiday park in the beautiful Special Protected Area sand dune system next to Perranporth. After three years of wildlife walks, bird box making and fire lighting with a few thousand 6-18 year olds I decided it would be a relaxing change to race across the Atlantic on a 40ft yacht as one of a 10 all female crew; a very hot 25 days later we made it to Saint Lucia in one piece (minus a spinnaker, sorry Atlantic). The last two summers I have spent



*Rosie by the sea! Photo by Lynn Beermann.*

as an assistant beach ranger for the National Trust in Woolacombe, finding humongous spider crabs and running away from any vicious velvet swimming crabs, with a winter trip to New Zealand kiwi spotting and fruit

picking in between.

I would like to send a massive thank you to everyone for their welcome, knowledge and help so far to me here - especially the fantastic Lundy Ambassadors. I was made to feel at home immediately and look forward to seeing more of all of you at the LFS AGM.

Rosie can be contacted at [assistantwarden@lundyisland.co.uk](mailto:assistantwarden@lundyisland.co.uk) or on telephone number 01237 431831

### **A Fabulous Fungus Foray! MANDY DEE reports...**

Visitors staying on the island on 7th November 2019 were introduced to the fascinating and colourful world of fungi by fanatics John Hedger and Mandy Dee. 35 species were found. For a full report, visit the website at

<http://www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/latest-news/172-fantastic-fungus-foray>

## **Lundy Conservation 2019**

### **Lundy Warden DEAN WOODFIN-JONES recaps another year on Lundy.**

The delicate calls of southbound Meadow Pipits, Grey Wagtails and Barn Swallow float pleasantly through my open office window, emerging fungal fruiting bodies and fuzzy Fox Moth caterpillars now coat the plateau and dizzying Sycamore seeds cascade throughout a windswept Millcombe. Yes it is autumn once again, where did that season go?!

As the pace of summer gradually starts to ease, we here in the Conservation Team are taking the opportunity to reminisce about yet another spectacular and eventful year on our magical wee Isle. What truly fortunate



*Team Seal 2019 (l-r) Volunteers Caitlin Cunningham and Samantha Nieto, Dean Woodfin-Jones (Warden) and Rosie Ellis (Education Officer). Photo by Zoe Barton.*

folk we all are to live in such an exciting environment full of remarkable wildlife, both above and below the waves, interesting and considerate people and a never ending schedule of exciting events and goings on.

Some of the best of these this year for me include...that beautiful day Zoë and I nearly choked on clouds of flying ants as we sat agape from amazement at the sight of a mammoth Minke Whale cruising past North Light...Those two hours I spent lying down on the main track, surrounded by sheep poo, as I watched the visiting Black-headed Bunting feed just metres away...Then there was those six weeks with the spectacular Cornwall Seal Group and Research trust and their didactic Grey Seal skeleton – Septimus...Each and every time I delved into the

idyllic waters of the islands MPA, particularly that afternoon where we were



*Caitlin surveying Kittiwakes. Photo by Dean Woodfin-Jones.*

joined by a monster Barrel Jellyfish...and the day the new embroidered banners were hung proudly in the church, all of which illustrate a love for the island and the unbreakable community spirit here in North Devon. Again I could go on and on!

As I write this brief insight into the goings on in 2019, the Lundy team is also getting ready for a very special event; the Golden Anniversary of the running of Lundy by the Landmark Trust and

the signing of its new 50 year lease. No longer are the LFS packed into numerous bunk beds with curtain dividers in Old Light Cottages, nor rats eating unborn burrow nesting seabirds, buildings lying roofless and unloved or destructive fishing methods plighting our seas. It is truly incredible how Lundy has transformed and prospered in what is really a short period of time in the grand scheme of things. Yet despite all this change, Lundy still retains its unfathomable charm, mystery and ecological and educational importance - and it's not done yet!

Once again I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given their time and energy to the island this year, including all you lovely folk in the Lundy Field Society. I must however single out the fabulous work of the Lundy Ambassadors who have helped with so many guided walks, outreach talks and school groups over the season, you have no idea how much you have helped the team this year. Then there are the Conservation Team Volunteers who have all worked their socks off to help with the running of the island and with the annual monitoring of the islands special inhabitants – namely our charming little Puffins and portly seal pups. I tip my tatty hat to you all!

And last but by no means least, a huge thank you to the little lady from the Valleys, Siân Cann for the spectacular job she did on developing the St Helen's Church project and for all her work with regards to school groups and visitor events during her stay. Lundy wishes you all the very best with your new life over there on the big island and for all you and your hubby Julian's future endeavours.

Following on from Sian - for those how have yet to meet her - is our new Education Officer, Rosie Ellis. Rosie came to Lundy after working as an Assistant Beach Ranger with the National Trust in Woolacombe and despite only being here for a few months now, has already excelled well beyond expectations, very much diving full throttle into her new role and Lundy life since she arrived here in late August. So much so that you'd think she's always been here!

With the days now ever shortening and the end of the sailing season near, once again thoughts are now focusing on the winter months ahead. Our beloved *MS Oldenburg* will shortly be in dry dock for a well-deserved break, General Stores will be close to bursting with lots of lovely goodies to keep us fuelled through winter and piles of old Rhododendron shifted to the Tavern fireplace to keep us warm during the dark days ahead. The Conservation Team will also be very busy planning for next season as well as finishing off the island's annual seal surveys, leading visitors on guided walks, the scribbling out of numerous reports, important biosecurity and somehow getting the ginormous pumpkin that Island Manager grew this year down to the Marisco for Halloween. There's never a dull day on Lundy!

Hope to see you all next season if not beforehand!

All the very best.

Dean can be contacted at [warden@lundyisland.co.uk](mailto:warden@lundyisland.co.uk)

## Golf on Lundy in 2021

Following the success of the Golf Tournament at the last Discovering Lundy week in 2016, DEREK CHEESEBROUGH has written to inform us of his intention to hold a 'Lundy Rules Golf Tournament' at the Discovering Lundy week in 2021:

- Great unserious fun;
- Six holes close to Old Light, only about 25 metres each;
- Regular golfers receive 1 stroke per hole handicap;
- There is no hole, only a metal bucket transported with progress (slow);
- When you hit the bucket – 'BONG!' you've holed.
- Other rules will be invented prior to commencement;
- Umpire and scorer will be Paula Chapple (takes no prisoners);
- Players are forbidden to keep their own scores (they don't cheat, but they can't count);
- Spectators invited - Premium seats are available at the top of Old Light with a donation to the LFS.

[You have just over a year to improve your handicap! Ed.]



# A Landmark 50 years.

## **SIMON DELL reports on the celebrations.**

The weekend of 28th September was exactly fifty years to the day of the Church service in St Helen's on Lundy which celebrated the giving of Lundy to the National Trust by Jack Hayward on 28th September 1969. How fitting it was that fifty years later on the same weekend in 2019 a Golden Jubilee celebration weekend was held on Lundy with a variety of invited people travelling over in the most tempestuous of weather!

The sailing of the Oldenburg was an experience which even seasoned travellers to the island found somewhat challenging. The day-trippers were cancelled and about 50 hardy souls braved strong winds to journey across. They were joined on the following day, Sunday 29th September, by invited 'VIPs' from various organisations including the National Trust and Landmark Trust as well as distinguished people such as Lord Owen – formerly Dr David Owen MP – who was one of the three Members of Parliament who worked so hard to save Lundy from private sale and ownership which would threaten its future.

The celebration of fifty years for any organisation is a momentous achievement upon which to reflect. In 1969 Lundy came into the ownership of The National Trust as a result of the generosity of Jack Hayward who provided the capital for its purchase. The Landmark Trust then stepped in and leased Lundy to manage, conserve and restore its buildings to their former glory and to look after its wonderful and unique landscape above and below the waves.



*Lars Liwendahl and Anna Keay, Director of the Landmark Trust, showing off the philatelic souvenirs. Photo by Shaun Barnes.*

The austerity following the Second World War meant that Lundy was badly lacking resources and the whole island was in need of repair and restoration. A complete rethink was required and over the past fifty years the fortunes of Lundy have been turned around as a result of the close symbiotic working partnership that has grown over that time between The National Trust and Landmark Trust.

The management of Lundy still lies in the control of both charities along with a number of other organisations dedicated to the long-term sustainability and enjoyment of this special place.

Members of the Field Society also attended and enjoyed a wonderful weekend of celebration, reflection and hope for the future and extension of the 50-year lease. The focus of the weekend was certainly the Church service in St Helen's on the Sunday, 50 years to the day where the service emulated that of 1969 with readings, prayers and hymns. Andrew Cleave did a



*Barty Smith (Landmark Trust founder, John Smith's son) narrating his tale. Photo by Shaun Barnes.*

stalwart job of organist despite the organ's best efforts to thwart his skills! Rousing and amusing speeches were held in the quadrangle in front of the Radio Room including Barty Smith presenting an erudite and enthusiastic account of his trips to Lundy and its sale using his Lundy Waders as a prop!

Evenings were accompanied by the ever-popular Dambuskers in the Tavern and the ubiquitous Lars was on hand to sell the celebratory issue of stamps, along with Michael William's launching the new Lundy Guide Book.

The return journey aboard the Oldenburg was much calmer than the outward trip and all agreed that it was a fitting and memorable occasion celebrating the past fifty years and looking forward with renewed hope and enthusiasm for the next half century of Lundy.

## Your society needs you...



**...if you know about branding!**

Your committee has set up a small working party to review the LFS branding.

We need advice and support from someone who has done rebranding work before, and who is ideally willing to provide support *pro bono*.

Is that you? Or a family member? Or a friend of yours?

Please contact Belinda Cox if you can help.

[belinda.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:belinda.cox@btinternet.com)

# Has the last Pleasure Steamer called at Lundy?

**PAUL DOUBLER reflects on the Lundy's relationship with the MV *Balmoral* and other great vessels.**

2019 is a very poignant year for me and lovers of pleasure steamers, of course inextricably linked with Lundy. For me personally it's forty years ago, 1979, when I sailed on the *MV Balmoral* from Porthcawl on a bleak Sunday for my first ever visit to Lundy. It's a funny thing fate, but little did I know then that both *Balmoral* and Lundy were to become two of the great loves of my life. Fate indeed as my dear Mother and I were not at all sure about making that particular sailing – weather was far from ideal. Against the odds, land on Lundy we did, via of course decanting into launches. The trip home being something of a horror voyage with such high seas and dreadful conditions. I know things were different then, but that sailing would not have been allowed today with greater restrictions, rules, and Health & Safety (those two dreaded words) being so prevalent nowadays.

I believe it was 1886 that the first paddle steamer appeared on the Bristol Channel and of course Lundy has been one of their regular and most popular places to call ever since. They have over the years brought hundreds of thousands of "day trippers" to Lundy. Over so many years paddlers anchored in the landing bay, disgorging their passengers to make that traditional hard climb up to the tavern and shop. The island tea rooms in the days of Felix (and especially Mary) Gade were a well-planned military operation to cater for and feed so many folk. They must have been hectic days indeed. Great Paddlers such as the *Bristol & Cardiff Queens*, *Glen Avon* and many others. Landing fees and spend on the island were vitally needed for the island coffers.

Of course, everything changes, and the days of the great pleasure steamers has gone. It has been left to the *Balmoral* to try to keep that tradition alive especially on the Bristol Channel. With the *PS Waverley* sailing on the Clyde and making her brief, usually autumn visit.

These two fine ships have suffered greatly with the ever-changing weather patterns, increased marine legislation and sadly with mechanical breakdowns. *Balmoral* did not sail last year or this. She is laid up at her home berth in Bristol. In the past when areas of her hull needed replacing it was accepted practice for a plate to be welded over the existing. This technically is known as "doublers"; it is not permitted now. She will shortly go into drydock in Bristol to have a through underwater inspection and an exact cost of modifications derived. In addition, the authorities have advised that they do not think that the original crew accommodation of a seventy year old vessel meets current acceptable standards. It is not known exactly what changes are required or how much they will cost. Coupled together these two items will be extremely expensive. Its going to be a huge task, but a loyal group of faithful trustees and volunteers put in extraordinary efforts supporting and keeping *Balmoral* alive. There is no doubt it will be extremely difficult for

*Balmoral* to sail again and make it to Lundy once more - but hope has to spring eternal.

*Waverley* was due this year in the Channel for a five day visit and calling once to Lundy on a September Sunday. Sadly, to the huge disappointment of all steamer enthusiasts she has serious mechanical problems and needs two new boilers. To be bespoke built and fitted, these will cost £2.3 Million. Being a Scottish icon and based on the Clyde with much greater support than *Balmoral* it is expected she will sail again, but 2020 is already looking tight. At the time of writing (Aug 2019) only £500,000 has been raised after a major fund raising effort.

Of course, we Lundyites have mixed feelings about “day trippers” especially when we are staying on the island. But there is no doubting that coastal steamers have been an inextricable part of Lundy history. If nothing else their financial contribution to the different island owners has been immense. They also probably brought over on their first visit most of us who have gone on to love and be so involved with Lundy.

If they never call again it will be another part of Britain’s great maritime heritage that is lost for ever. They will be sadly missed at every pier and harbour they used to visit - especially Lundy.

For an update on *Balmoral*’s progress or to make a donation please go to [www.mvbalmoral.org.uk](http://www.mvbalmoral.org.uk).



*MV Balmoral from Castle Cottage.  
Photo by Mike Tedstone.*

## 'The Lundy Half' 2019

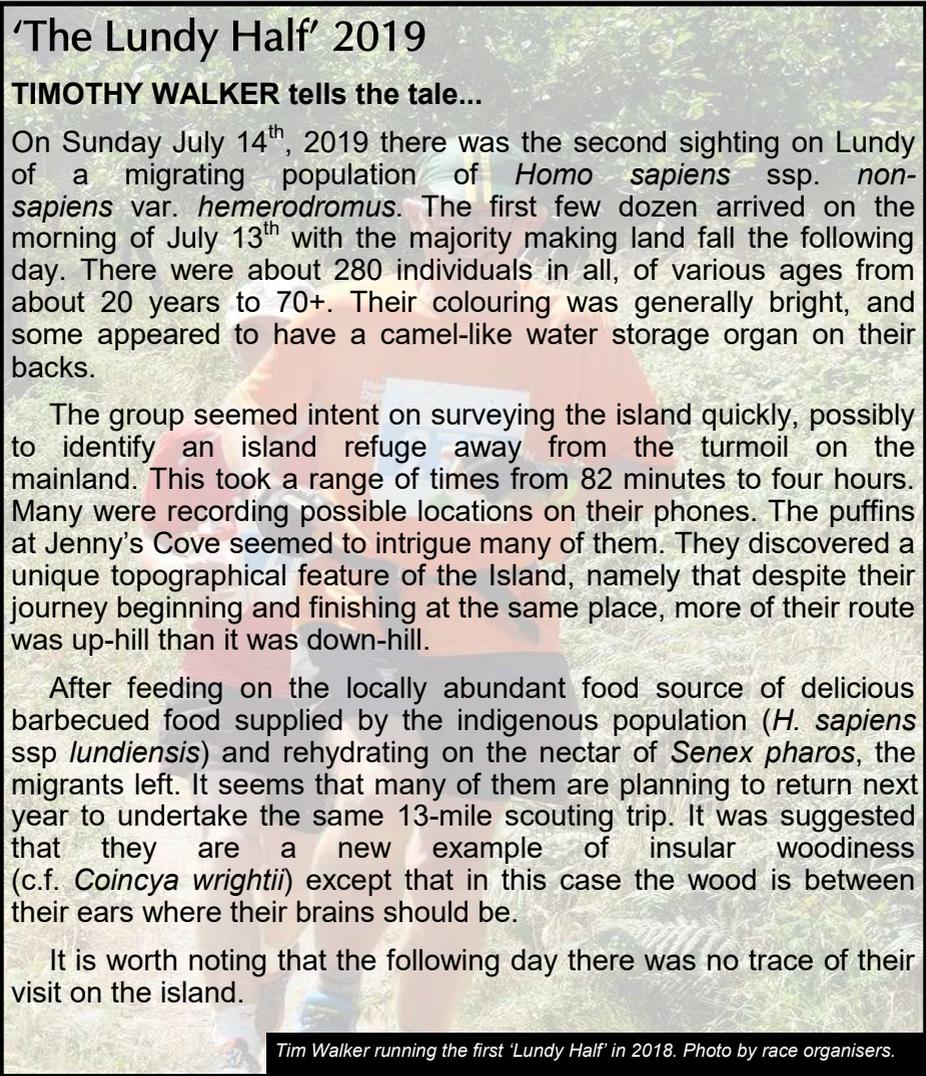
**TIMOTHY WALKER** tells the tale...

On Sunday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 there was the second sighting on Lundy of a migrating population of *Homo sapiens* ssp. *non-sapiens* var. *hemerodromus*. The first few dozen arrived on the morning of July 13<sup>th</sup> with the majority making land fall the following day. There were about 280 individuals in all, of various ages from about 20 years to 70+. Their colouring was generally bright, and some appeared to have a camel-like water storage organ on their backs.

The group seemed intent on surveying the island quickly, possibly to identify an island refuge away from the turmoil on the mainland. This took a range of times from 82 minutes to four hours. Many were recording possible locations on their phones. The puffins at Jenny's Cove seemed to intrigue many of them. They discovered a unique topographical feature of the Island, namely that despite their journey beginning and finishing at the same place, more of their route was up-hill than it was down-hill.

After feeding on the locally abundant food source of delicious barbecued food supplied by the indigenous population (*H. sapiens* ssp. *lundiensis*) and rehydrating on the nectar of *Senex pharos*, the migrants left. It seems that many of them are planning to return next year to undertake the same 13-mile scouting trip. It was suggested that they are a new example of insular woodiness (c.f. *Coincya wrightii*) except that in this case the wood is between their ears where their brains should be.

It is worth noting that the following day there was no trace of their visit on the island.

Tim Walker running the first 'Lundy Half' in 2018. Photo by race organisers.

## Filling the coffers

The Auctioneer and his 'glamorous assistant' once again took to the floor at the end of the AGM, and this year their endeavours brought in £167.00 for the LFS bank account. Thanks must go to all those who donated items for sale, which included items from the residue of Judith Langford's legacy, David Preece, and Gabrielle Schmidlein, as well as some unusual and interesting items from the LFS stock cupboard.

Of course, thanks as well to those who successfully bid for the items.

The Auctioneer and 'glamorous assistant' are already preparing the catalogue for the 2020 auction. Don't forget to bring your cash!

# The Name of Lundy's Church

**St Helen's or St Helena's? RICHARD BREESE clears up the debate.**

Ever since its construction started in 1896 there has been error and confusion over the dedication and name of the church built on Lundy by Hudson Grosett Heaven. Volume 1 of the LFS Journal (2008) included a paper by Myrtle Ternstrom which stated that "the consecration document and the foundation stone both clearly show St Helen", but no image of either was included. The confusion has arisen because the statue in a niche on the tower bears the inscription "Sancta Helena" - the Latin form of the name, just as the inscription beneath the tower's clock is also in Latin.



*Sancta Helena.  
Photo by John Tyrer.*

When the appeal was launched to restore the church and enhance its facilities, it was considered important to use the correct name for the church. The St Helen's Appeal Steering Group relied on secondary sources, such as Ternstrom, and members' knowledge when deciding on its name. The Parochial Church Council of the recently created (2013) ecclesiastical parish of Lundy also uses the name St Helen for the church.

The Exeter Diocese Registry provided me (a member of the PCC) with scanned copies of both the Petition for Consecration and Sentence of Consecration. Both documents use the name "the Church of Saint Helen Lundy Island".

The date of consecration is also often given incorrectly, but both documents are dated 17 June 1897. The documents also make clear that the spelling of the Rev Heaven's middle name is "Grosett".

Some may prefer informally to continue to use the name "Saint Helena", but in fact and in law the church's name is "Saint Helen".

Since the creation of the new parish, it could formally, with a hint of anachronism, be referred to as "the Church of Saint Helen Lundy Island, in the parish of Lundy".

*And we do consecrate the same as and for a church for the use of the Inhabitants of the said Island of Lundy by the name of "The Church of Saint Helen Lundy Island" for the celebrations of Divine Service*

*A scan of the Consecration Document, courtesy of St Helen's PCC*

# Mark's bench

**NICK EVANS** reflects on a special task from the March working party.

We have all of us made use of a friendly bench to rest our weary bones, and perhaps take in the view. The chances are it was a memorial bench, with a plaque to say whose life, or lives, it was there to commemorate, having been placed there by the loved ones left behind.

Lundy has many such benches. One of my favourites is in the beer garden. The dedication reads:

***'Loving Memories of Stanley Newman. 1924 – 2004.  
Reunited with his beloved island.  
Mission accomplished.'***

Lundy does that to people; they fall in love with the place. He had lived a long, and hopefully a full life. This marks a happy ending.

I was there for my first visit during the first week of April of this year with two of my fellow Mendip volunteer rangers. We joined the Lundy Field Society, and made up a work party of a dozen who were there for a week to work at whatever Nick-the-ranger felt was best use of our efforts. The deal was that we laboured for free, while our accommodation in the barn was provided. It was a fair swap. The work included replacing a fence on a steep slope, searches for elusive rhododendron saplings, and an inventory of the island's mature trees.

Some of us were asked to help renovate some of the memorial benches. Without occasional sanding and oiling even the best of these benches will eventually succumb to the wild weather of Lundy. My trio was asked to work on a heavy hardwood bench of an unusual design. It is inscribed:

***'In memory of Mark. July 73 [to] Oct 1996.'***

There is a carving of a dolphin as a centrepiece. Despite being made of iroko (I later learned) it was in need of some attention after 23 years of Lundy weather. My colleagues Mike Gooding and Malcolm Parsons set upon it with gusto. Mike had once had a supervisory role in an automotive paint shop, and insisted upon that standard when it came to preparation.

Clearly this was a different set of circumstances from most benches. Here was a young man being remembered. I wondered about Mark's story, and why Lundy of all



*Mike & Malcolm at work on Mark's bench. Photo by Nick Evans.*



Mark's bench when new. Photo by Roy Howard.

places. On the reverse of the bench was the name and address of the maker: FE Howard of CREDITON. After some searching I made contact with Roy and Jean Howard, who still live in CREDITON, but are not now involved in making furniture. (The dust from this type of hardwood is very hard on the lungs, I was told). Roy told me he remembered making the bench in iroko. He was clearly, and rightly, proud of it, and he sent me a photograph of the new bench on his lawn before delivery.

Roy couldn't remember the client's name, but our own Belinda Cox spoke to her contacts in the area and came up with the surname Gannicliff. With such an unusual name I was able to make contact with Mark's father, David, who is now 90 and still lives in the family home near Bideford. David was delighted to hear that his son's bench was being looked after as his years make it difficult for him to get over to the island now.

Mark was the eldest of David and Lilli's two sons. David was a ship's master until 1980, before settling in Devon with a B&B business and smallholding. The family moved to a village on the outskirts of Bideford in 1988, when Mark was 15. David bought a River class launch, *The Almond*, which he moored upstream of the old bridge. It was during Mark's late teens that the family enjoyed the contact with Lundy, with them using *Almond* to sail and dive the area. They were happy times.

Mark was 16 when he collapsed because of an aneurysm. An operation saved his life, but he had a second operation a couple of months after the first.

If there were lasting concerns for his health Mark didn't allow them to stop him living a full life. He worked for a while as a sports manager at Wesley

College, Melbourne, Australia. He later backpacked across Australia with his girlfriend. When Mark returned to the UK he took a job as a lifeguard at Westward Ho!

His end came on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1996. He was surfing at Woolacombe beach when he had a heart attack and died.

My week on Lundy was special for many reasons: the place, the people, the wildlife. But perhaps my lasting memory will be of a young man I never met, other than through his memorial bench.



Mark. Photo supplied by Tom Carr.

## Back to the sea for Septimus

### SUE SAYER introduces Septimus to Lundy and the LFS.

Septimus is a 2.4m real skeleton of a seal that Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust (CSGRT) knew in life, death and decomposition. His bones have a shocking and chilling story to tell, which you can discover all about when you meet him! [*Septimus will be at our AGM in March 2020. Ed.*]

Invited to be a VIP guest on Lundy Island, Septimus jumped at the chance, as the centre piece of CSGRT's mobile, pop up marine centre exhibition.

St Helen's church has recently been beautifully renovated and made a spectacular setting for CSGRT's exhibition to help celebrate the island's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being managed by the Landmark Trust on behalf of the National Trust. As soon as Septimus had agreed to go, CSGRT Ranger Marion began making plans with island staff about the best way to transport him safely there.

Septimus was delighted to find this meant a return to the sea – albeit in the cargo bay of the Oldenburg, via a box and crane! At least that way Septimus got to fly as well! The wonderful Oldenburg team made Septimus feel very welcome and ensured his safe passage and transfer to land on Lundy's quayside. From there, the Lundy team took control, providing a new mattress for his comfort in the back of one of their Landrovers and he was duly placed on top by General Manager Derek, Island Manager Rob and Warden Dean.



*Septimus in 2014. Photo by Rob Wells.*

CSGRT volunteers Sue and Rob provided additional padding around Septimus' sides for the very rocky road trip up to the church. The team were delighted to find Septimus had arrived at his destination in the same three pieces he had left home in!

As soon as possible Septimus was released from his boxes and he

immediately became the centre of island visitors' attention. Rob shared his tale as Marion and Sue concentrated on setting up the bulk of the exhibition, which includes features on entanglement, microplastics and ecoproducts.

These help to illustrate simple everyday steps we can all take to help the marine environment. Visitors young and old were able to participate in a range of activities illustrating the lives of grey seals and the work of CSGRT as well as buy mementos of their visit.

Of course they all get to hear Septimus' story too!

Septimus' visit to Lundy has been made possible by a constant stream of amazing CSGRT volunteer chaperones, thanks to funded travel and accommodation provided by the Lundy management team.

CSGRT are hugely grateful to everyone who has made this great expedition possible for Septimus.



*Septimus on display in St Helen's. Photo by Sue Sayers.*

### **Septimus is returning to Lundy in 2020!**

He will be back in St Helen's from 14th August to 21st September as part of the Lundy Marine Festival (see page 31), and this time he's bringing *Augusta* with him. *Augusta* is the skeleton of a three day old seal pup.



# The Lundy Marine Festival 2020

ROBERT IRVING tells us about this exciting event!

For three months during this coming summer (23<sup>rd</sup> June - 20<sup>th</sup> September), there will be lots of marine-themed activities on Lundy. They will all come under the umbrella of a "Marine Festival". This will be the first time such an event has happened at Lundy and it's all to do with highlighting the importance of the island's Marine Protected Area, as well as promoting the cause of marine conservation in general.

The core of the Festival will be a Bioblitz. Many LFS members will be familiar with these taking place in various parts of the country, usually during the summertime. The purpose of a Bioblitz is to record as much of the biodiversity of a particular area as possible within a given timeframe. Typically this is a 24 hour period, or possibly a weekend. When they're held at the coast, they're timed to coincide with low water on a spring tide, to allow recorders to get as far down the shore as possible.

We'll not be able to accomplish much at Lundy if we were to limit a Bioblitz to just one low water period. Being an offshore island requires allowing visitors time for travel and hoping that the weather holds fair, so we've decided to extend the recording period to three months - that way folks can pick and choose their own time to visit and to record what they can.

However, the Festival will include a lot more than just a Bioblitz. A number of monitoring projects will also be undertaken, some of which will require input from volunteers with little or no marine biological know-how (we're keen to encourage as much citizen science participation as possible). Examples include assessing the island's grey seal population each month, checking for invasive non-native species on the shores, taking and identifying plankton samples, counting pink sea fans and checking their health, checking for the presence of spiny lobsters around the island, and assessing the state of the island's many shipwrecks. Many of these projects will be repeated at some time in the future, and thereby help to monitor the condition of various features over time.



*A Rockpool Ramble led by Keith Hiscock.  
Photographer unknown.*

There will also be a variety of marine-themed events and activities taking place over the whole summer on the adjacent mainland, including exhibitions, displays, talks from experts, marine-themed photo and video

competitions, the opportunity to listen and to record underwater sounds... and lots more besides!

There'll be more to hear about the Festival at the LFS AGM in Crediton in March, and an opportunity to register your interest to be kept informed of a programme of events nearer the time. We'll need as many participants as we can get. In the meantime, please keep your fingers crossed for a fair weather summer!

## HMS Montagu: the untold story

**PETER SMITH** recounts a fascinating story from his Grandfather about the grounding of the Montagu.

Albert Ernest Smith, my grandfather, joined Trinity House just after his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1905. His father James John Smith was Principal Keeper (PK) at the West Usk lighthouse and his 22 year-old brother, George, was Assistant Keeper (AK) on the Inner Farne lighthouse.



*Albert Ernest Smith.  
Photo supplied by Peter Smith.*

After completing his initial training at the Blackwall Depot Albert was appointed as Supernumerary Assistant Keeper (SAK) to Lundy North.

All the keepers on the two Lundy lighthouses were either related or had worked together at other lighthouses previously.

Principal Keeper (PK) at Lundy North was John 'Lakey' Ellis who had spent 5 years (1894-1898) on Round Island lighthouse with Albert's father, James John. Senior Assistant Keeper (AK) was Thomas John 'TJ' Nicholas was married to Albert's older sister Mary Anne Alice. They would have met when 'TJ' was on the Bishop and Mary's father James John Smith was on Round Island (1897-1899). The families of the keepers on the Bishop and Round Island lived in two rows of Trinity Cottages that overlooked Porthcressa Beach, Hugh Town on St Mary's, the largest of the Scilly Isles. George Thomas the other AK had spent three years (1901-1903) with 'Lakey' Ellis on The Smalls lighthouse before they both were transferred to Lundy North in 1903.

David Nicholas had been PK at Lundy South since 1899 and was TJ's father. Charles Thomas, the senior AK, had been at Lundy South since 1900. He had also been on both Round Island and The Smalls with 'Lakey' Ellis and George Thomas (George and Charles Thomas were not related). The other AK was William Chavner who had been at the South Bishop lighthouse for seven years. The families of all the keepers on Lundy, South Bishop, and The Smalls all lived in rented accommodation at Neyland, Pembroke Dock, so they would have been well known to each other.

The SAK at Lundy South was Thomas Herbert who was two years older than Albert and he had joined Trinity house in 1904.

Over the years at the various stations the keepers had built up a friendly, healthy rivalry playing cards, mainly Cribbage and Euchre, and Chess. They were able to adopt a 'flexible approach' to watch keeping at the two Lundy lighthouses. The SAK's, Thomas Herbert and Albert would often 'swop' watches with the more senior keepers so that they could continue their card and chess playing. The keepers had known one another for ten years or more and this meant that this 'flexible approach' to watch keeping was unlikely to be discovered.

In 1963, a couple of years before my grandfather died, my father and I went to visit him in the Isle of Wight. He gave my father his gold pocket watch for his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and told us some stories of his early life working for Trinity House, including his version of the events on the night of the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> May 1906. As far as I am aware this story has never been told.

### **Albert's Story**

*It was agreed that on the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1906 Albert would go to Lundy South to cover Charles Thomas's morning watch. Charles was going to have an 'overnight' cards evening at Lundy North with 'Lakey', 'T J' and George Thomas.*

*It had been a warm, but misty and foggy day with virtually no wind. This meant that the keepers at Lundy North had had a busy day starting and stopping the Hornsby fog signal engines, as the mist came and went. Albert told us they were 'the very devils' to start.*

*After tea Albert climbed to the top of the island from Lundy North and started to walk to the South light. It was his habit when he reached the three quarters wall to climb to the top to take in the unique 360° view of the Bristol Channel. That night, off to the West, there was the largest Royal Navy squadron that he had ever seen. They had been on exercises all day and many were now anchoring for the night.*

*Through his binoculars he could see a bank of fog lying over the top of the North Devon coast and he knew that shortly after sunset and when the temperature fell that the fog would flow down over the cliffs and out over the sea.*

*He met Charles about halfway across the island and they agreed it would be thick by the morning. Albert called into the 'shop' had a drink and picked up some old newspapers that had been left by visitors to the island. The fog started to descend, and by the time he got to the top of the steps to Lundy South the light was in and they had started firing the Tonite charges from the jib on the tower.*

*Thomas Herbert was on eight to twelve watch and just after eight, PK David Nicholas went to bed. He was on middle watch and would be up at*

midnight. Albert and Thomas read the papers and they chatted about the Royal Navy squadron off to the West, the articles in the papers about the growth of the German navy, and the paranoia over the number of German spies that were supposed to be in England. When Albert went to bed at about ten the fog was 'as thick as a bag' and he couldn't see across the station.

Albert was woken at four by David, it was just getting light but he was still unable to see across the station. After his second sounding Albert decided to tidy up the kitchen. He went to the door to pour the old tea leaves into the bucket that was just outside the kitchen door. (The keepers kept all of their food waste for their compost heap that was used to improve the soil of their garden, which was very poor for growing vegetables).

It was still very calm and quiet and the fog was as thick as ever. There wasn't a sound and the station felt eerie when suddenly he thought he heard voices. He listened again, no one ever came to the lighthouse and particularly not at four in the morning, but definitely he heard talking. He recalled what he and Thomas had been reading in the papers and he convinced himself that it was German spies. He crept to the



Montagu aground, c. 1907. From Wikipedia.

stations' gate where he could see the steps and now could plainly hear someone coming. Looking down through the mist, he saw four men in uniform. Plucking up courage, he shouted at them.

"Who the devil are you. What do you want?"

The men stopped and looked up at Albert. The officer, Lieutenant Somerville Peregrine Brownlow Russell, replied that they were from HMS Montagu. He wanted to speak to Albert, in private. Albert and the lieutenant went into the kitchen and the AB's waited outside in the yard. Albert warned them not to go near the oil store or the store for the Tonite charges if they were going to smoke.

The lieutenant told Albert that he had been ordered to take the gig and find the lighthouse. As they rowed away from the Montagu they became totally disorientated once they lost sight of the cliffs and the Montagu. In the dark they spotted the loom of the South light and headed towards it hugging the cliffs until they arrived at the landing beach. When he found the lighthouse the lieutenant had been told to contact the Coastguard in Portland and the Admiralty and report that HMS Montagu had gone aground at Hartland Point at two am.

*Albert was taken aback by what Russell had said and told him that he couldn't do that as they were on Lundy Island.*

*Russell became very agitated and aggressive, and was insistent that they were at Hartland because that was what had been logged.*

*Although they were of similar ages Albert decided that he didn't like Russell as he had a very overbearing high-handed manner and didn't like the way he spoke to him.*

*Albert told him that he didn't care what Russell said; the log was wrong and he could think whatever he wanted but he was on Lundy Island. Russell eventually conceded that Albert knew where he was. He then began to realise that he had problem and he became very distressed and was convinced that he would get the blame for the stranding. (Russell had been officer of the watch from eight to twelve and had been responsible, at least in part, for the Montagu's manoeuvres during the night.)*

*Albert also had a dilemma; he might have won the argument with Russell but he was now involved with a major naval disaster. He was keeping watch at the wrong lighthouse and realised that there would be trouble for all the keepers on Lundy if this got out. He hatched a plan that would give credence to the Montagu's logging of Hartland Point and give him an opportunity to get back to the North and Charles back to the South light.*

*Albert explained to Russell the difference in the lights and fog warnings between Lundy North and South, and the similarity between Hartland and Lundy North. He suggested that things would sound better for Russell and the Montagu if he reported the grounding at Lundy North. Both lighthouses had flashing lights and high-low fog sirens and it would have been easy to confuse the two lighthouses in thick fog at night. (At that time Lundy North and Hartland were considered to be two of the most advanced lighthouses in the world.)*

*Russell was still very agitated and he argued with Albert. Eventually he agreed that reporting at the North light was going to be his best option. Albert had explained that to row up the East side of the island they would either have slack water or a following tide. He sketched a map of where the North lighthouse landing was as that this was really the only viable landing point. (Although it was daylight it would have been virtually impossible to climb any of the wet cliffs especially as they wouldn't have even seen the top of the cliff they were climbing.*

*Russell collected himself, straightened his uniform, went outside and told his men what he had found out and the plan to go to Lundy North. Albert recalled that one of the AB's said to Russell, "Told you so Sir, I've been to Hartland and this is not Hartland; the rocks are all wrong."*

*They shook hands, and Russell thanked Albert for his help and said that he should never tell a soul, as long as he lived, about their meeting and conversation and he would always deny they had ever met.*

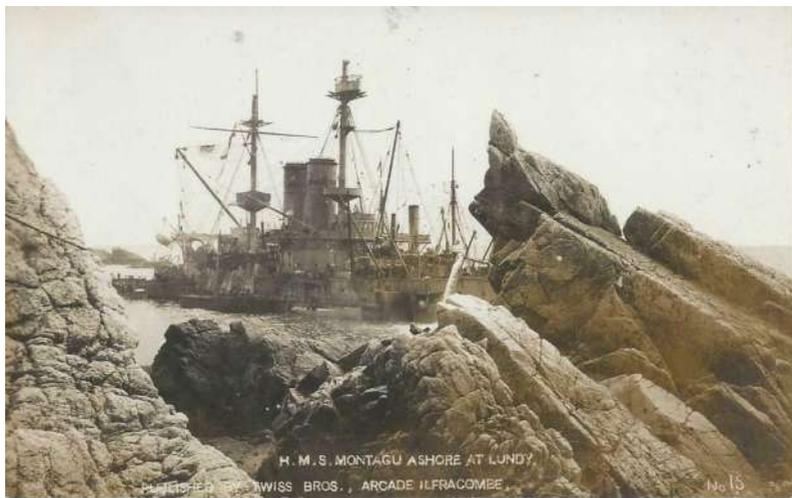
*Albert was relieved that he didn't ask his name but he still needed to get back to the North light and Charles back to the South. He watched the sailors go through the gate, and immediately woke the PK and told him about the Montagu, the lieutenant and the plan to go to the North light.*

*David Nicholas, the PK, telephoned the North lighthouse, TJ, his son, was on morning watch and David told him what had happened and that he needed to wake 'Lakey' Ellis, and get Charles Thomas to come back to the South light as soon as possible. He then told Albert to go and wake up Fred Allday, who was in charge of the signal hut. He was to tell him about the Montagu and the plan to get the report made at the North light. Fred should go to the signal hut and await a call from 'Lakey'. (The signal hut was not usually manned at night and certainly there wouldn't have any one on duty that night because of the thick fog). Albert should then make his way back to the North and to avoid contacting anyone in case any more crew from the Montagu had come ashore.*

*The fog was as thick as ever and he followed the telephone poles back across the island back to the North light. The lieutenant had already left for the Montagu by the time Albert got back. 'Lakey' told Albert about his conversation with lieutenant Russell and he said that the lieutenant had put on a good act of not knowing where he was. They had telephoned Fred Allday who had then sent a report to Lloyds and, and is now known, belatedly to the Admiralty.*

*Albert never met Russell again and he kept his word not to tell a soul all his life. When he told my father and I the story sixty years had passed and he was probably the only person alive that was involved that night.*

*My father and I didn't discuss it with anyone and it's only as a result of researching my family tree that I have recalled the story.*



Albert was appointed AK at Lundy North on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1908. He was married, by the Reverend Hudson Heaven, to my grandmother, who was the cook in the Manor House, on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1911 in St Helen's church...but that's another story.

The rest of the story of the Montagu has been written many times by many people, but I think that its time that what really happened should be included.

Grandad retired in 1949 from Saint Mary's Island lighthouse, Whitley Bay and died in 1966 at the age of 82 in Ventnor, IOW. He requested that his ashes were scattered in the sea off St Catherine's Point Lighthouse where he was stationed between 1927 and 1933.

**From the BBC News on 20th September 2019**

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-49748797](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-49748797)

## **HMS Montagu: Battleship wreck given protected status**

**The wreckage of a battleship in the Bristol Channel has been granted protected status by the government.**

HMS Montagu became grounded near the isle of Lundy in 1906 and had to be salvaged and broken up.

The protection was granted partly as a result of archaeological material gathered by wounded veterans, who dived on the wreck last summer.

Among the findings were armour plating, gun turrets and shells left behind by the salvage operation.

The dives were organised by veterans' charity Help for Heroes, Historic England and Wessex Archaeology.

Dave Handley, from Help for Heroes, described the designation as "amazing news".

The new status for the wreck means the area is now considered a nationally important archaeological site.

A set of steps carved into the granite cliffs as part of the salvage operation was also granted the status.

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England, said the "distinctive" steps were "forever linked to the landscape" of the island.

"Combined, the wreck and the steps provide a rare group of maritime monuments," he added.

Recreational divers will still be free to explore the ship but the remnants will be closely managed.

Due to the salvage operation and exposure to the powerful waves around the island, little of the initial wreck is left.

# Lundy: A Capital Place

The Oldenburg and Millcombe House,  
The Marisco Tavern, The Blue Bung,  
Old Light Lower, Bramble Villa West,  
Castle Cottage, The Radio Room,  
Knotted Hedge Parsley, Royal Fern,  
Heath Spotted Orchid, Heath Pearl Wort,  
Round-leaved Sundew, Yorkshire Fog,  
Lundy Cabbage and Common Mouse-ear,  
Gannets, Guillemots, Razorbills,  
Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Great Black-backed,  
the call of Shearwaters, Puffins, Seals,  
Wheatear, Meadow Pipit, Spotted Fly,  
Jenny's Cove and V.C. Quarry,  
Brazen Ward and Benson's Cave,  
The Timekeeper's Hut, Quaking Bog,  
The Fog Battery, Quarter Wall Copse,  
Small Heath, Small Copper, Painted Lady,  
Fox Moth caterpillar, one Thrift Clearwing,  
Red Admirals and Green-veined White,  
Dumbledor and Green Tiger Beetles,  
Scalloped Hazel, Bright-line Brown-eye,  
White Ermine, first Netted Pug,  
Cetaceous Hebrew, Heart and Dart,  
Cream-spot Tiger, Marbled Minor,  
Albion Harman, The Heaven family,  
Michael from Oxford, Tom from Berkshire,  
Tim and Tim, Inspector Gatepost,  
Tall Grant Sherman, the star man barman.  
All these things and many more  
I'll take with me when I leave Lundy,  
as memories of time well spent  
with Andrew and the doctors Paul.

Jocelyn Dacie

June 2018

# Puffins & Curlews

## PHILLIP JENKINS considers the rise and fall of two of the birds of Lundy.

So many articles currently appear in the press referring to the steady decline in the numbers of British birds but fail to mention that the precise causes can vary dramatically between different species. This can be seen by comparing the situation for two of Britain's best-loved birds.

When I participated in the May 2019 LFS Working Party, it was the story of the decline and recovery of the Lundy puffin that most fascinated me. A search through the records in the Barn revealed that there had been more than 30,000 pairs early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but that their numbers were steadily declining, probably due to a reduction in the availability of their favourite sandeel diet. By the end of the century the puffin situation was dire, with only a handful of puffins left on the island and extinction staring them in the beak. Belatedly, the possibility that predation was the cause of their demise was taken seriously and, remarkably, a rat-eradication program from 2000 to 2003 was able to rid the island of the last rat. How would the puffin population react? Puffin numbers started to increase and now in 2019 there are more than 400 breeding pairs on Lundy, an amazing success story and undeniable evidence that rats were the major cause of the puffins disappearance.

I have just finished reading a book by Mary Colwell entitled *Curlew Moon*\*. It describes the dramatic decline in numbers throughout the country of another of Britain's iconic birds, a rare visitor to Lundy, over the last 100 years. Could the cause have been the same as that which decimated the Lundy puffins? It seems that predation by foxes, crows and mink *is* one factor, but the curlew situation is considerably more complicated.

In her walk from the west of Ireland to the east of England, Mary Colwell was able to highlight several reasons for the more than 80% reduction in curlew numbers in most of its strongholds in Britain and Ireland.



*A Lundy puffin. Photo by Shaun Barnes.*

In contrast to the cliff-top puffin, the curlew is a ground-nesting bird that favours bog, heathland and damp unimproved fields with coarse grass. In Ireland there has been an estimated 99% loss of the original area of actively growing raised bog, owing to peat extraction for

household, horticultural and power-generation purposes.

In Wales, curlews used to do well in the traditional mixed-farming environment, but the doubling in sheep stocking density between 1960 and 1990, encouraged by the Common Agricultural Policy, resulted in severe denudation of the uplands. In England the drainage of wetlands, forestry extension, agricultural intensification, increased use of pesticides and fertilisers, the replacement of hay-making in summer by silage-making during the curlew breeding season, as well as the use of heavy farm machinery capable of driving over and crushing unseen nests and eggs, are all factors that have brought about the catastrophic decline in curlew numbers. Ironically, it is on the grouse moors that curlews are now doing best.

Thus, the historic declines in puffin and curlew numbers have quite different explanations. Those for curlews also apply to birds such as corncrakes and lapwings, whereas the explanation for puffins also applies to the large population of Manx shearwaters on Lundy. But the overriding difference between these two groups of birds is the loss of suitable habitat for the ground-nesting curlews, leaving little hope for their recovery. However, for Lundy's puffins the outlook is much brighter, owing to the well protected island nature of their home, coupled with their preference for nesting in cliff-top burrows.

\*Curlew Moon by Mary Colwell, published in 2018 by William Collins

Information on the curlew recovery programme can be found at [www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/projects/curlew-recovery-programme/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/projects/curlew-recovery-programme/)

[I asked Tim Davis about curlews visiting Lundy. His reply:

*'Yes they do, passing through in spring and autumn migration periods, but in far fewer numbers than in years past. They have also nested on the island in the distant past (see The Birds of Lundy!).'* Ed.]



A curlew over Lundy.  
Photo by Shaun Barnes.



## PUBLICATIONS for sale through the Lundy Field Society

**Lundy Fungi: A photographic guide** by John Hedger & David George, 2018, 200pp.

Softback £12.50 plus £2.50 p&p / Hardback £15.00 plus £3.50 p&p.

The authors have produced a sumptuous photographic guide to over 250 species of fungi they have found and recorded on Lundy. The records and photographs are by themselves and many other people who have helped record over 600 species found on Lundy during the 70 years of the Lundy Field Society, and particularly since their project began in 2003.

### **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 artica* 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 £5.00 per copy plus £2.50 p&p. Visit [www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/journal](http://www.lundy.org.uk/index.php/publications/journal)

**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.

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